

‘RITUAL WORK ON HUMAN FLESH’:

LIVY’S LUCRETIA AND THE
RAPE OF THE BODY POLITIC

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The question may suggest itself to some persons why it is that, in the many changes that carry a state from freedom to tyranny, and from servitude to liberty, some are effected by bloodshed, and others without any. In fact, history shows that in such changes sometimes an infinite number of lives are sacrificed; whilst at other times it has not cost the life of a single person. Such was the revolution in Rome which transferred the government from the kings to the consuls, where only the Tarquins were expelled, and no one else suffered injury . . . [W]hen such a change is effected by the general consent of the citizens, who have made the state great, then there is no reason why the people should wish to harm any one but the chiefs of the state. Such was the case with the government of the kings in Rome, and the expulsion of the Tarquins . . .

Machiavelli. *Discourses*, III.7

... we see that women have been the cause of great dissensions and much ruin to states, and have caused great damage to those who govern them. We have seen, in the history of Rome, that the outrage committed upon Lucretia deprived the Tarquins of their throne, and the attempt upon Verginia caused the Decemvirs the loss of their authority. Thus, Aristotle mentions as one of the first causes of the ruin of tyrants the outrages committed by them upon the wives and daughters of others, either by violence or seduction; and we have discussed this subject at length when treating of conspiracies.

Machiavelli. *Discourses*, III.26¹

I. The One for the Many

Machiavelli is not famous for his compassion, but even so his momentary erasure of the victim whose destruction marks the founding of the Republic in III.7 is provocative, since he mentions Lucretia explicitly in a later chapter of the *Discourses*. This slip of the pen—or momentary lapse of memory—signifies no minor omission on the part of one of the

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Western tradition's most cynical and incisive political theorists. Here Machiavelli provides us with a glimpse of the sacrificial mechanism at work on a textual level: just as Tarquin was expelled from Rome, Lucretia is temporarily expelled from the historical record. Why? Is she the "no one" of the first citation? Or is Lucretia the "one" who is killed in place of the many, the "infinite numbers" who otherwise would have been "sacrificed"—thus the symbolic non-person or "no one" of the surrogate victim?

Memory of the female victim, raped and killed, is hard to sustain. Memory of the tyrant is not; nor will memory of the Tarquin family's many attempts to recapture dominance of Rome fade from historical memory for Machiavelli. How is it that a writer this smart can, in one chapter of his text, claim that "no one" other than the expelled tyrant suffered by the revolution of 510 BCE, while in another he refers to the linked stories of violated women, Lucretia and Verginia, each of whose deaths marks the overthrow of a tyranny and the reaffirmation of the rights of the common people in Rome? In one moment, the victims and the violence used against them are suppressed; in another, they are held up literally as classic political proof-texts. The contradiction is not original to Machiavelli. It is part of the long literary tradition of these stories.

In what follows, I will concentrate on Livy's account of the rape of Lucretia, commemorated by tradition as the event that precipitated the overthrow of hated monarchy and the founding of the Republic about 510 BCE and the attempted rape and actual murder of Verginia, which mark the establishment of the Twelve Tables of Roman Law and the overthrow of the corrupt Decemvirs in 450 BCE. In both instances, the

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leaders of the revolution are linked by blood and marriage to the female victims; in both cases, these champions of the popular cause (*libertas*) achieve new political status as a result. From the rape of Lucretia the first consuls are created; from the murder of Verginia the Tribunes are reestablished with new powers. How do the two women figure in all of this?

Lucretia and Verginia are surrogate victims whose gender, sexuality, and relationship to men mark them as targets of violence. The primary target of violence, however, are the two political men who violate them: Tarquin Sexlus, son of the king, and Appius Claudius, virulent enemy of the commons, who attempts, in the name of the law, to hold his temporary authority in Rome permanently. The violence each man works against the woman is always represented as double. The overt claim in the narrative is that the violence is erotic, that is, it is represented as *spontaneous* desire or lust.² But it is clear from a wealth of textual detail that the violence is not erotic but political, the logical culmination of an intensifying *mimetic* desire, a rivalry among political men waged against the chastity or purity of their rivals' wives or daughters. In ways that are neither simple nor obvious, the tradition Livy inherits and passes on with marks of his own narrative genius insists upon a causal link between female chastity and its destruction and the founding and preservation of Rome. Chastity and rape in these narratives are both literal and figurally, and, for reasons I hope to make clear, it would be naive and dangerous to read them as only one or the other

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Livy's narrative tells a doubled tale: the one he means to tell, and the one he has no idea he is telling. The historical reality of women's suffering as recovered and interpreted by feminist historians and scholars has made it impossible to read Livy from Livy's point of view. We read more from the position Girard describes as the achievement of Western culture in *The Scapegoat*. We take the signs of persecution and oppression seriously, but not the mythic characterization of the victims.'

Lucretia and Verginia are not victims of sexual desire as such, but victims of a mimetic desire that circulates among rival males and vents itself on the unlucky female who occupies the most critical and, therefore, most vulnerable position between them. The female's marginal status in Roman culture is marked clearly in Livy's narrative, although it is never explicitly acknowledged or interpreted as such. Livy betrays no understanding of the female's double status as outsider within or the perils that accompany such an ambiguous position. For him, as for the tradition he is part of, rape represents the arbitrary passion of a ruler who, roused beyond the limits of just rule, becomes a tyrant. But rape must always be distinguished from marriage, or right exchange, which must never be recognized as violational.

The danger of the female's status appears to be invisible not only to the men who enforce it but, most painfully, to the women themselves. Girard has argued that this culturally induced amnesia (as I call it) or blind lucidity (as he calls it) is part of the successful functioning of sacralized violence. The prohibition on seeing and articulating the methods by which a culture protects itself from collapse from within is as strict as the prohibition

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on internal violence itself. So long as rivalry is held in check by carefully enforced codes of honor or is redirected outward as warfare against a common external enemy, the consequences of the Roman female's double stains remains hidden. But book 1 of Livy's *History* is full of moments of crisis in which the female suddenly becomes visible—and with her, one of the fundamental and most carefully concealed contradictions in Roman culture: the distinction between good violence and bad. By reading the rape of Lucretia in the context of several exemplary tales of crisis, I hope to bring to light an aspect of "founding" or original violence mentioned but too little understood by Girard. Founding murders alternate in Livy with founding rapes, and there could be no victims without the concept of sacralized chastity—an aspect of the birth of religion out of sociopolitical necessity, which is one of the "things hidden since the foundation of the world."

II. Purity and Danger

In Ovid, as in Livy, spontaneous erotic desire, "passion" or "lust," is a cover story for violent political rivalry among princes, a rivalry acknowledged only in its effacement. Its meaning passes unseen. First, the political anxieties that fuel the myth are transformed into erotic conflicts, then the responsibility for lust is displaced onto the pure woman. In a way Mary Douglas never intended from the title of her remarkable book, *Purity and Danger*, these terms are linked for the female because her purity—that is, her intact hymen if she is a virgin or her well-defended hymen if she is a chaste matron—is a sign

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of her father or husband's political power. As Roman historians tells us, "within the Roman community the absolutism of the king was paralleled, though not limited, by the absolutism of the father of the family, the *pater familias*, who exercised undisputed rule over his wife, his children, and his household."⁴

We cannot grasp the relevance of this double *imperium* of father/ruler unless we situate ourselves on the "other" side of the equation: daughter/ wife / ruled. History and anthropology must be read together for a feminist perspective to be grounded in the larger conceptual framework at hand in rape narratives. Levi-Strauss' description of the function of exchange among primitive cultures in *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* proves illuminating in light of the double *imperium* of father and inlet in early Rome:

The total relationship of exchange which constitutes marriage is not established between a man and a woman, where each owes and receives something, but between two groups of men, and the woman figures only as one of the objects in the exchange, not as one of partners between whom the exchange takes place.⁵

Even here, "the woman *figures*" as the object of exchange. But Levi-Strauss, unlike Guard, does not press himself to wonder, first, what the true "object" of an exchange might be and, second, what the structure of exchange looks like from the point of view of the human being who has been reduced, by some prior but unacknowledged event, to a mere object. Although I disagree with Levi-Strauss on other points, I find his argument that ". . . the rules of kinship and marriage are not made necessary by the social state. *They are the social state itself*" is a necessary concept in understanding how much

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is at stake in these rape stories (*ESK*, 490), because rape is a failed exchange. And as Levi-Strauss has not recognized, but as Girard has, the exchange of women and therefore the "fabric" of the slate "woven" by the men who exchange them is sacrificial in origin and nature.⁶

In my reading of rape narratives, I begin from two premises: that the rules of marital exchange define and enforce cultural and political boundaries both internal and external, and that rape constitutes a crisis of boundaries, both political and intellectual, a dangerous, polluting transgression. When an exchange fails, the violence that the exchange of the female's body was meant to hold in check by defining the precise boundaries of power between groups of men will be acted out upon her body.

In *Natural Symbols*, Mary Douglas discusses a dialectical exchange of meanings between the "two bodies" (one biological, one sexual) which is relevant to any feminist analysis of the role of gender in the sexualization of violence.⁷ But Douglas, for all her insight, wit, and learning, speaks of "the body" as if gender and sexuality were not part of the ritual inscription of the social body's "meaning" on the human body, like Girard, she speaks against our resistance to a full recognition of the nature of sacrifice- when the victim is human; but Douglas (as well as Girard) leaves the feminist application of this insight unexplored:

It is easy to see that the body of a sacrificial ox is being used as a diagram of a social situation. But when we try to interpret rituals of the human body in the same way the psychological tradition turns its face away from society, back

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towards the individual. Public rituals may express public concerns when they use inanimate door posts or animal sacrifices: but public rituals enacted on the human body are taken to express personal and private concerns. There is no possible justification for this shift of interpretation just because the rituals work upon human flesh.⁸

It becomes easy to see that the body of the virginal or chaste female is being used as a diagram of a social situation in rape narratives, if we read from the point of view of the victim rather than the agent or historian of violence

In patriarchal cultures like the martial Rome Livy describes, the female body serves as (be unacknowledged ground of cultural differences. Power relationships are articulated through the inscription of meanings upon the orifices of the subordinate and vulnerable female body. In this system of ideas, the hymen becomes a powerful signifier—directly related, as Ardea (in Shakespeare) and Gabii (in Ovid) silently witnesses—to the *limen*, or boundary wall of the city. As Shakespeare's Tarquin says, Lucretia becomes the "sweet city" he will take instead of Ardea — that impenetrable foreign city whose sturdy walls emasculate the martial Roman princes incapable of rupturing the enemy's boundaries.'

The exchange of women is the underlying cultural structure that makes these stories not only mythical texts but persecution narratives in which the victim is blamed for the violence used against her and then used as a mouthpiece for the convictions of the persecutor just before she is destroyed. The prior "founding violence" unrecoverable here

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is a struggle that ended with the enforced subordination of women. The sign of that struggle is the patriarchal identification of the female's virginity or chastity with the power and honor of the man to whom she belongs—the man who has the power to form (or frustrate) alliances by giving (or withholding) her body: first, her father, then her husband or brother.

To understand how Livy's text works, I would like to refine the distinction Girard makes in *The Scapegoat* between "the scapegoat released to us by the text," who is "a scapegoat both *in* and *for* the text" and serves as "the clearly visible theme"; and "the scapegoat that we must disengage from the text for ourselves," who is "the scapegoat *of* the text" and serves as "the hidden structural principle" (*TS*, 118-19). I would add a third category, a text that is neither but partakes of both. In other words, in the case of these rape stories we find victims whose innocence is not only proclaimed but absolutely necessary to the resolution of the sacrificial crisis, the collapse of structuring ideas and the internal hierarchical order established as the slate of Rome. This order is impossible without a system of exchange: exchanges of wealth, land, power, cattle, women, and violence. At any time, "woman" as sign can refer to any of the other non-human members of the category of "the exchangeable:" thus the metaphorical tradition of woman as currency, and the less visible but equally powerful identification of the female with threats to possession of what she signifies—land, power—and what her exchange is meant to hold in check — violence.

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Lucretia and Verginia would not be marked as victims to the violence within Rome if they were not pure. The mark of their purity is a well-guarded hymen. Lucretia is a chaste matron; Verginia, a daughter inscribed as female virginity incarnate. The latter speaks no words even when her life is at stake. As a mute representation, Verginia brings to light more vividly and explicitly the status of virginal female as unwilling mediatrix.

III. Chastity and the Founding of Rome

Not long after Romulus founds the city of Rome, he decides that his crude bunch of hoodlums and fugitives require wives if they are ever to breed, become civilized, and band together into a powerful state Livy writes:

To help fill his big new town. (Romulus) threw open, in the ground—now enclosed— between the two copses as you go up the Capitoline hill, a place of asylum for fugitives. Hither fled for refuge all the rag-tag-and-bobtail from the neighboring peoples: some free, some slaves, and all of them wanting nothing but a fresh start. That mob was the first real addition to the City's strength, the first step to her future greatness. (1.9)

But there were not enough women, and . . . added to the fact . . . there was no intermarriage with neighboring communities." Thus, Romulus sends to neighboring towns and cities "to negotiate alliances and the right of intermarriage for the newly-established state." The messengers return with (he news that the new city has a bad

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reputation; no one will enter into alliance and thereby agree to seal their bonds not to destroy each other by intermarrying. The refusal to exchange women leads to a rape, a collective theft of a rival city's women. As the famous story goes, Romulus invites the neighboring Sabines to a huge festival and, at the appointed moment, gives a signal whereupon his armed men kidnap their women."¹⁰ The "rape of the Sabine women" is among the most famous rapes in Roman history. But the story of the Sabines' attempted revenge is where we learn the most about the female's position in culture.

When the Sabine men decide, at long last, to avenge the abduction and rape of their virgins by waging war on Romulus, the two armies meet at the boundary that divides them. At a critical moment, the Sabine women situate themselves "as a body" between the Romans and their Sabine kin. As if he had not written the preceding account of why and how the women were abducted and forced to consent to sex, marriage, and childbirth with the Romans, Livy speaks of the women with marvelous self-forgetfulness:

. . . the Sabine women, the original cause of the quarrel, played their derisive part. The dreadful situation in which they found themselves banished their natural timidity and gave them courage to intervene. With loosened hair and rent garments, they braved the flying missiles and thrust their way in a body between the embattled armies. They parted the angry combatants; they besought their fathers on the one side, their husbands on the other, to spare themselves the curse of shedding kindred blood. "We are mothers now," they cried; "our children are

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your sons—your grandsons; do not put on them the stain of parricide. If our marriage—if the relationship between you — is hateful to you, turn your anger against *us*. *We* are the cause of the strife; on our account our husbands and fathers lie wounded or dead, and we would rather die ourselves than live on either widowed or orphaned." The effect of the appeal was immediate and profound. Silence fell and not a man moved. A moment later the rival captains stepped forward to conclude a peace. Indeed, they went further: the two states were united under a single government, with Rome as the seal of power.

(1.13, emphasis in the original Latin)

The "dreadful situation" in which the Sabine women find themselves is not the true origin of violence; nor can they be said in any way—except by a twist of symbolic reasoning we now recognize as sacrificial—to bear primary responsibility for the "strife" between their fathers and their husbands.¹¹

Livy records two contradictory versions of the story of the Sabine women's position in Rome: first, they are abducted and raped, forced to consent to marry; then they are said to identify themselves as the origin of violence between men. In doing so, Livy both preserves and participates in distorting the historical evidence that the woman who knows where she is situated and how violent her mediating position is possesses tremendous political power, provided that she chooses to use it. In other words, the text speaks against itself; it embodies the contradiction of the culture without recognizing it.

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In the Girardian sense, Livy's *History* reflects, rather than reveals, the mechanism of the surrogate victim as the end point of uncontrolled mimetic rivalry among men.

When the Sabine women use their social position of in-betweenness symbolically—by assuming the position of victim/cause, by displaying themselves publicly in the style of ritual mourning, by asserting that their third, most recently achieved social status is definitive (they are *mothers*, not daughters or wives)—they manipulate the system of exchange. The text is structured beautifully and perversely to reveal this: here the patriarchal system is truly at war with itself. The threat to the entire structure, should the Sabine women *see* this and learn to use their interstitial position and the dangerous power it holds to subvert rather than preserve the system of exchange, is only implicit in the narrative structure.¹²

At the very point when the internal illogic of Roman martial and marital codes is revealed, a new fiction—a phony voice—is installed to deflect attention from the crisis. For the first time, in an historical event that is construed as literally originating, a community of women act and speak together, and their articulation of a bond among women marks a moment when the female voice is actually powerful. But to what end? The "Sabine women" silence the men. Struggle gives way to stasis; war, to mediation and compromise. But we must observe that the state with the power to steal and keep the females achieves primacy: Rome absorbs the Sabines, not vice versa. As the little community of outsiders within suggests, the war ends not because they appeal to the males' love for themselves, but because as mothers they appeal to their husbands' and

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father's love of their male progeny The system reproduces itself by affirming its commitment to tight control on reproduction. The female herself must never control reproduction, whether of cultural systems or of human beings. She must also never see, and certainly never speak about, what she learns from her position. This is dramatically illustrated by turning back even further in Livy's text to his narrative of the "founding of Rome."

While rape is the violence that was necessary to secure the bonds of social life in Rome—commemorated in the rape of the Sabine Women — tradition marks the "founding" of Rome with Romulus's violent triumph over his twin brother, Remus. To treat this murder as the "origin" of the Roman state is to ignore a prior violence without which there would have been no twins. Before the murder of Remus, the twin who must be eliminated, there is an equally critical act of founding violence: the rape of Rhea Silvia, the first Vestal Virgin.

The institution of the Vestal can be read as an origin story for the birth of state religion from political violence. Livy records evidence which supports the feminist argument that at the root of patriarchal power is the violent will to regulate and control reproduction in order to preserve the existing male-dominated power structure. Even in the case of a usurpation, the rival to the throne does not want the legitimacy and power of the throne destroyed—only its current occupant.¹³ Thus chastity, not rape—a *prohibition*, not a transgression — is the necessary gesture to put an end to successive moves to occupy the seat of power.

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The concept of sacralized chastity is the product of a will to dominate, and the object of the prohibition is quite specific: the gate to the legitimate king's lineage, his virgin daughter's hymen, which is sealed by kingly decree to prevent "issue":

Amulius drove out his brother (Numitor) and seized the throne. One act of violence led to another: he proceeded to murder his brother's male children, and made his niece, Rhea Silvia, a Vestal, ostensibly to do her honour, when actually by condemning her to perpetual virginity in lire, hide the possibility of issue

But (I must believe) it was already written in the book of fate that this great city of ours should arise, and the first steps be taken in the founding of the mightiest empire the world has known — next to God's. The Vestal Virgin was raped and gave birth to twin boys. Mars, she declared, was their father — perhaps she believed it, perhaps she was merely hoping by the pretense to palliate her guilt. Whatever the truth of the matter, neither gods nor men could save her or her babes from the savage hands of the king. The mother was bound and flung into prison; the boys, by the king's order, were condemned to be chow tied in the river.

(1.3ff)

Patriarchal violence is acted out on the flesh of this woman twice: first in the ritual sanctions meant to "protect" her hymen, and then in the double transgression of virginity — not only is she raped, but she is raped by the sacred. Which half of the ritual marking of political boundaries on female flesh constitutes the "founding violence" of Rome: the sacralization of female chastity or the loss of such control, the rape of the

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Vestal Virgin? In truth, they are one: prohibition (sacralized chastity) and transgression (rape by the sacred) are two sides of one coin. Here, the tale literally comes into being through a rivalry for control of access to the critical female's womb.

The object of desire the female body represents is supreme authority, but this power proves utterly dependent upon the hymen as the gateway to the womb.

"Supremacy or hegemony in the cultural world" is how Girard describes the object of mediated desire among men." This model serves extremely well in reading Livy's story of Rhea, a story that becomes the origin story for the transcendence- of imperial Rome. There is no question that any male desires Rhea; they desire what she represents. She is transformed into a mediatrix between rival brothers and can serve as such only by being violated. Responsibility for the violence identified even here as "original" or founding violence—not murder but rape—is projected onto the sacred. Now the raped virgin disappears from the narrative, expelled from historical memory (just as Lucretia and Verginia are momentarily expelled from Machiavelli's text)—but not until one last ritual gesture is recorded, one aimed at denial by disfiguring the violence: the suggestion of the rape victim's complicity.¹⁵

IV. *Hostis pro Hospite*; Enemy/Guest, Guest/Enemy

The immediate cause of the rape of Lucretia is usually considered to be the wager on their wives' womanly virtue that the young princes make while bored and restive during

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the Roman siege upon the city of Ardea. Yet few critics seem troubled by the inconsistencies beneath the obvious connection between the wager and the expulsion of the king and his kin. The beautifully orchestrated drama (a set piece Shakespeare takes as model for his prologue) conceals the fact that Livy is in fact delaying and burying details that make the motivation of such a clear narrative sequence suspect. Livy offers us no other names but the crucial two: Sextus Tarquinius, third son of Tarquinius Superbus, and Collatinus. He suppresses the detail that they bear the same name, and thus are "rival brothers," until book 2 of the *History* when he discusses how Collatinus is eventually forced into exile because he bears the hated name of Tarquin, although Brutus, the third critical figure in the story, also a nephew of the king, is not. Brutus is not only traditionally Rome's first consul, but also the one who persuades Collatinus to leave Rome voluntarily lest he be expelled.

Sextus Tarquinius, as Livy has carefully told us in earlier anecdotes, is an ambitious, shrewd, and ruthless politician, capable of fraud and murder (1.52-54). As the one who expects to succeed his father and hold the greatest power in the state, Tarquin is, of course, unwilling to be bettered in any competition. His wager is like all the other triangles Girard has studied in literature in which the prestige of the rival moves the subject to offer up his woman as object, temptation, and prize. But as the men are now all each other's rivals, they all offer up their wives. The "test of virtue" is always a sign of mediated desire; it is always violent at root; it always includes the possibility that the virtuous female will be violated so that the disequilibrium among male rivals will

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yield to clear rank at the expense of the victim, the silent third party. As Girard argues, "This is the paradox of human desires. They can never be reconciled in the preservation of their object but only through its destruction; they can only find agreement at the expense of a victim" (*TS*. 146).

The wife, not (he husband, will suffer the violent effects of a mimetic rivalry that she does nothing to enflame and of which she remains ignorant, even as she kills herself. Indeed, the virtuous Roman woman would seem to be politically naive and preternaturally innocent of violence. Lucretia is dehumanized in her ignorance and innocence and is marked more as "victim" than "person." As Shakespeare's *Lucrece* makes abundantly clear, Lucretia lacks the one fact that could transform her understanding of why she was raped and what she might do in response: she does not know that her husband was her pander. While Collatinus's part in inflaming Tarquin's desire is preserved and passed clown in the narrative tradition, it is rarely, if ever, recognized for what it is.

Once the princes ride lo Rome and find their wives revelling, a distinction is established between the revelling of the other princes' wives (who are too much like their husbands, it seems) and the virtue of Lucretia and her maids. Like Penelope, Lucretia spends her waiting time at the loom. But the Roman woman possesses none of the gifts for manipulating and complicating the rivalry among her suitors of Homer's Penelope. Livy's interesting slip—"which *wife* won the contest," like his "kill *us*, *we* are the cause of

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your strife" of the Sabine women —implicates Livy in the violence of mythic tradition which displaces responsibility for what follows onto the victim.¹⁶

When Tarquin later decides to return to Collatinus's house and Lucretia welcomes him as a guest (*hospes*), the plot of sexual dominance as a sign of political dominance moves forward. Tarquin does not want to be received as enemy (*hostis*), he wants Lucretia to yield her chastity, to cease being peerless so that he may become so (1.57-58). In truth, Tarquin desires neither Lucretia nor her death. This and much more is clear in the power he must finally use to silence her and make her yield And (his is not the power of the sword—which Lucretia does not fear— but the power of words. His version of the story will define the way the visible evidence is interpreted. Tarquin bears witness to the potential violence of narrative authority as he persuades Lucretia to yield to sexual assault: if she will not, he will kill her and a male slave and arrange their naked bodies in her bed. He will manipulate their corpses to "tell the story," which he will merely amplify in informing her husband that he caught her in the act of adultery and killed the guilty pair, exacting punishment without a formal hearing." Here, it becomes clear that the issue is not erotic desire but the use of Lucretia to dishonor Collatius in revenge for winning the wager.

Trapped by the threat of a narrative her corpse could not contest, Lucretia falls silent and submits. This kind of rape is by definition a contest of the word: hers against his. Lucretia fears the public authority of false witness, its power to dishonor her

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husband. Therefore, she chooses to live, which means she must "submit" in order to survive and bear witness to Tarquin's crime.

While it is obvious that Lucretia is a victim in this scene—she is pure prey (lamb) to the prince's predatory lust (lion)—what is harder to discern is how the narrative tradition is using Tarquin. He is a victim of narrative violence as much as Lucretia.

Within the story Tarquin is made to propose the very narrative strategies the tradition has itself performed: the substitution of one kind of violence for another, one kind of victim for another, one version of the story for another.

In his discussion of stereotypes of persecution, Girard offers us a model for teasing out the hidden logic of this rape scene. As Ogilvie has noted, whatever the occasion for the overthrow of the Etruscan monarchy (that is, even if there was no rape of Lucretia), what is clear from archeological and historical evidence is that Rome was in crisis, suffering the "chaos and insecurity" of "invasions and revolts," "contemporary upheavals and movements of population."¹⁸ As Girard has noted, these are hallmarks of the sacrificial crisis in which natural and social forces "weaken normal institutions and favor *mob* formation. Such spontaneous gatherings of people can exert a decisive influence on institutions that have been so weakened, and *even replace them entirely*" (*TS*, 12, my emphasis). The stories of both Lucretia and Verginia commemorate the destruction and replacement of forms of government by mob uprisings. But the crime, the criminal, and the victim are all disfigured representations. As Girard has shows, the

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"crimes" that justify violence against the surrogate victim whose death marks the turning point in a chain of violent acts are predictable:

First there are the violent crimes which choose as object those people whom it is most criminal to attack, either in the absolute sense or in reference to the individual committing the act: a king, a father, the symbol of supreme authority, and ... the weakest and most defenseless, especially young children. Then there are sexual crimes: rape, incest, bestiality. The (crimes) most frequently invoked transgress the taboos that are considered the strictest in the society in question. (*TS*, 12. 15)"

Livy's text satisfies this requirement on both counts but in a way Girard's description does not yet include: both targets are those it is most criminal to attack, and one (the most powerful) is pitted against the other (the weakest and most vulnerable), and the crime (rape) is an assault on chastity that, we have already seen in the story of Rhea Silvia, constitutes a prohibition at the very foundations of Rome. Tarquin and Lucretia may both be read properly as pawns in a struggle to legitimize revolution, insurrection, expulsion, and murder.

This brings us to the difficult problem of Lucretia's suicide. No one seems to notice how deliberately Livy tells the story to avoid any suggestion that she was murdered by her father or husband (who are depicted by Shakespeare as rivals for her corpse (1791ff.) or perhaps by Brutus, the shrewd politician and future ruler of Rome who according to tradition *pulls* the bloody knife from her wound, kisses it, and swears to avenge her death. If we ignore the misogynist tradition of interpretation and compare

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Lucretia with other chaste female victims in Roman history, we can find precedents for men taking the logic of patriarchal *imperium* to its logical extreme. The obvious analogy is the story of Verginia, the virgin daughter falsely claimed as a slave by the corrupt decemvir, Appius Claudius. Once Verginius realizes that his daughter will be taken against his will and raped by Appius, the father decides that honor is more important than life. His honor, signified by her hymen which only he can "unlock" for the male he designates "son-in-law," must be preserved intact—even if this means she must die.²⁰

As Livy tells it: "Then he snatched a knife from a butcher, and crying: 'There is only one way, my child, to make you free,' he stabbed her to the heart. Then, looking behind him at (the tribunal, 'Appius,' he said, 'may the curse of this blood test upon your head forever!'" (3.48). This story situates the violence in the symbolic heart of Rome, the Forum, even as Verginius literally aims it at his daughter's heart. Verginius (and Livy) seeks to uphold a distinction between good violence, the father's execution of his own will on the flesh of his daughter, a murder, and bad violence, the tyrant's intended rape. But as Girard has argued, "the illusion that there is a difference within the heart of violence is the key to the sacrificial way of thinking" (*TS*, 27).

In the long tale of the political events that lead up to and follow from the murder of Verginia, the only crime ever mentioned, the violence that is to be avenged, is rape. But no rape has occurred—only a judgment rendered by Appius that Verginia was originally a slave and not a free woman and, therefore, can be reclaimed legally by her owner (who happens to be his client and pander). The effaced political issues here are the

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distinction between slave and free person and the ongoing, increasingly heated and embittered "struggle of the orders" that led to the establishment of the decemvirs who were charged with the task of publishing the newly revised and codified Twelve Tables of Roman law. The "rape" of Verginia occurs between the posting of the first Ten Tables and the call for two more. A close examination of the Tables reveals that this narrative is a well-orchestrated set of *exempla* meant to reflect die plebians' rightful demand to know the letter of the law.²¹ Commentators seem blind to the founding violence or "ritual work on human flesh" at the foundation of law: before the rights of the people are dug into the strong metal, they are inscribed on the flesh of the surrogate victim who mediates between ruler and ruled.

Traditional scholars also fail to see in this "beautiful and powerful story" die fearful likeness that political rivalry brings to light between tyrant/Appius and father/Verginius. Verginia is as much a slave to her father's will as she would have been if Appius's scandalous abuse of legal power had succeeded. Here, "rape" is a substitute for the oppression of "the people," as the traditional accusation that the Decemvirs have become "ten Tarquins" suggests. The struggle to lay hands on Verginia's never-penetrated body represents the struggle to determine who will control the body politic.

As Verginia's betrothed, Icilius, demonstrates in his speech defending his right to a chaste bride (3.4(5)), the rape that occurs after the founding of Republic commemorates the second great change of government in Rome. As we would expect, the concept of chastity shifts to correspond to the newly constellated problems of a populace eager for

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liberty. Now "chastity" signifies the inviolable rights of the people in Republican Rome that Icilius as ex-tribune would champion. But no one in the story or in the act of interpreting it seems to notice that the mute victim the crowd backs away from and allows to be taken finally has no rights to self-determination at all.

The story of Verginia is universally recognized as a late but probably unhistorical revision of the story of Lucretia. The analogies are set out as prologue to the story by Livy, who speaks of the "crime" against Verginia as originating in "lust, and in its consequences it was no less dreadful than the rape and suicide of Lucretia which led to the expulsion of the Tarquins. The decemvirs, in fact, met (he same end as the kings and lost their power for the same reason" (3.44). With the traditional analogy in mind, I would like to turn back to Lucretia as she lies dead and bleeding, whether by her own hand or someone else's.

Lucretia becomes a mouthpiece for an ideology that dehumanizes her even as it is taken by tradition to make her a "hero." She kills herself saying: "And hereafter no unchaste woman shall go on living because of Lucretia's precedent" (1.59).²² These same words in the mouth of her husband or father would mean something radically different. In her mouth, they sound extravagantly conservative. But this is one of the most stunning marks of her status as a victim: she goes to her death willingly (*TS*, 57ff.) In a text filled with the effect of mimetic illusion, this is perhaps the most paradoxical effect of all: the victim exacts symbolic revenge against herself, eliminating herself as a source of dangerous and confusing pollution—the threat that she had conceived and thus might

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become a bearer of further ritual pollution, a bastard in the blood line.²¹ Lucretia, raped and alive, would be a sign of contradiction that cynical and less virtuous women might interpret to their own ends. Lucretia, raped and dead by her own hand, neatly circumscribes and seals off the potential pollution of her sexual violation. Now only political violence and pure mimetic rivalry for power among men dominate the tale. In fact, Livy anticipates Machiavelli here in never again mentioning Lucretia once her body has been hoisted aloft and carried through the streets to rouse the people to revolution. She has far more power as a corpse than as a living woman. There is no record of her funeral or of any monument to her. It is as if she ceases to figure in any meaningful way once her function as sign has been fulfilled. The same is true of Verginia: Livy offers no record of what is done with her corpse after it has been used to make a political gesture.

V. Rape and Revolution

As tradition has it, Brutus Dullard becomes Brutus Liberator in the moment following Lucretia's suicide. Her death wakens him to new political life. His feigned stupidity falls away as he draws "the bloody knife from Lucretia's body, and holding it before him cries" that he will avenge Lucretia (1.59). A moment of extreme ambiguity and potential new rivalry to the death—whoever avenges Lucretia's death would be in a position to usurp the king and claim central authority in Rome—inspires Brutus's quick interpretation. The focus of his exclamation is blood, chaste blood that a tyrant has

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polluted. The kissing of Lucretia's bloody knife and the swearing of an oath are ritual gestures, assuring everyone that the blood-letting to follow will be pure and justified. The most important paragraph in the narrative is the one that follows, as it describes the incitement to violence, the overt shift from erotic, "private" crime to political, "public" revenge. Here, Brutus reverses the direction taken by Tarquin, moving outward from the house to the Forum, from the domestic to the political. Tarquin had undermined the power of the throne by making visible the fragile and arbitrary distinction between political and private force. Brutus exploits this error by troping rape as the violation of the body politic:

[W]hen Brutus cried out that it was time for deeds not tears, and urged them, like true Romans, to take up arms against the tyrants who had dared to treat them as a vanquished enemy, not a man amongst them could resist the call, the boldest spirits offered themselves at once for service; the rest soon followed their lead, Lucretia's father was left to hold Collatia; guards were posted to prevent news of the rising from reaching the palace, and *with Brutus in command the armed populace began their march on Rome.*

(I 59. my emphasis)

The rise of the populace marks the onset of the sacrificial crisis Brutus now leads the crowd, which Livy describes as a "mob" into the Forum. It is only now that we learn from Livy that Brutus has held a position that would have defined him as a rival to the king from the outset: Tribune of Knights. Now Brutus, not Tarquin, possesses the power to narrate Lucretia's story to meaningful ends. But what ends? And what story?

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"The Rape of Lucretia" immediately becomes a story of "the sufferings of the commons condemned to labour underground clearing or constructing ditches and sewers," a program of public works that the king had begun to distract the populace from their poverty and oppression and to glorify his name. Lucretia once more becomes the pretext for someone "catching fire," but now it is not the prince but the people: "The effect of his (Brutus's) words was immediate: the populace took fire, and were brought to demand the abrogation of the king's authority and the exile of himself and his family" (1.60). Spontaneous desire—now the mob's inflamed desire for revenge—is linked once again to the sexual violation of the female.²¹ Just as Lucretia mediated between king (via his heir) and rivals to the throne, now she mediates between Republican leader and the people. The pierced and bloody female body is now received by communal assent as the sign of the wounded body politic. Lucretia as "word" has been "spoken" by a man and the definitive interpretation of this linguistic/sacrificial gesture seals a pact that goes down in history—and is passed on in literature—as an agreement to remain silent about the real nature of the crisis at hand and, thereby, to silence the victim. Lucretia as sign has achieved her immortality as the sacrificial victim whose destruction redirects the internal strife and unifies the populace against a common enemy: not Ardea, but the king himself.

The internal violence that the king hoped to forestall by attacking a neighboring city first turned back into Rome when the assault failed and became a siege. Then his son proved unwise enough to direct violence back into the city, into the home, into his own

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family. The substitute assault upon Lucretia ignites the flames of indignation and sets fire to the desires of the people to reclaim their rights. But who are "the people"? The male citizens of Rome. That this revolution is antirevolutionary for women is clear from Lucretia's suicide speech. Essentially a prohibition on imitation for women only, Lucretia's verbal and physical gestures constitute the only prohibition on mimetic desire in the text, an antimimetic gesture that hedges in and constrains the possibility that women may see and understand their ambiguous place in culture, including the structure of violence continually used against them.

Not only is it unlikely that Lucretia, whatever real victim she represents, killed herself, but I find it equally unlikely that Brutus, even before he became consul and condemned his treacherous sons to death (Livy 2.5), was the virtuous defender of the people tradition takes him to be. Livy himself tells us much earlier that before the assault on Ardea and the wager on wifely virtue, another rivalry among men occurred that ended with Brutus's secret victory.

In the pages preceding the rape of Lucretia, we learn that the king fears the restive population and has undertaken two projects to divert attention and energy from his will to expand not only the boundaries of Rome but also the boundaries of his power: the building of the temple to Jupiter on the Capitoline and the excavation of the great sewer, Cloaca Maxima. Signs and portents terrify the king: a dead man's head is found where the Romans dig the foundation of the temple, an arresting sign of founding murder beneath the edifice of the sacred; and a snake slides out of a pillar within the palace. The Likus of

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violence is the center of power. The temple not only cannot conceal this, it actually reveals it, although the sign is interpreted by everyone (as Livy has it) as an auspicious one: the decapitated victim's head is taken not as a reminder of Rome's bloody origin, but as a symbol of its magnificent future. The uncovered victim is interpreted as a sign "that on this spot would stand the imperial citadel of the capital city of the world" (1.56).

Tarquin sends two of his sons—but not Tarquin Sextus, his chosen heir—to Delphi to consult the oracle on the meaning of the signs. Because no one fears him, Brutus is allowed to accompany them. After the question of the snake's meaning, another question is put to the oracle by the sons (1.57): "Which of them, they asked, would be the next king of Rome?" The oracle replied: "He who shall be the first to kiss his mother shall hold in Rome supreme authority." Literal readers, the sons think they must hurry back to Rome to kiss their mother; they draw lots (forestalling another rivalry to the death) to see who may kiss her first. Brutus, however, proves a shrewd reader, a figural reader. As Livy is careful to tell us, Brutus carries with him a sign of the doubleness he incarnates: "He is said to have carried with him, as his gift to Apollo a rod of gold inserted into a hollow stick of cornel-wood—symbolic, it may be, of his own character." But (his sign is yet again double, for the cornel-wood is linked in Roman memory with Romulus. Thus Brutus, in carrying it, gives the lie to his ambition to rule Rome and the violence he is willing to work in order to satisfy his desire.

True to his role as humbler, Brutus, hearing the Delphic oracle, pretends to trip, and when he falls, kisses the earth. His future is sealed: he will be next to "hold Rome in

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Supreme Authority." But Livy passes over this detail, marking his text with the lack of a narrative transition, a silence or gesture of non-interpretation, after Brutus kisses (he earth. No overt connection is forged between this secret scene of divine prediction (or Tarquin the Proud's violence toward Brutus's own near kin) and his moment of conversion as he holds the bloody knife taken from Lucretia's body.

Brutus's pious gesture, "his lips touched the Earth—the mother of all living things," is contrasted with the scheming of the king's two sons. Their plot to exclude the third brother excludes both of them from the real rivalry for control of Rome, and the outcome of this trip to Delphi establishes new, clearer lines of struggle: the points of the critical triangle are now the omitted son Sextus, Brutus, who has secretly responded to the priestess's words, and Collatinus, his coequal and cousin. As the narrative is constructed, however, it appears that Collatinus becomes the third figure by accident; indeed, it appears that both Sextus and Collatinus are drawn into the conflict unexpectedly. In this respect, the narrative is at odds with itself, offering Brutus's success at Delphi as the prologue to the events culminating in the rape of Lucretia, the expulsion of the Tarquins, and Brutus's conversion into the leader of revolution at the critical moment — Lucretia's suicide.

From Delphi, Livy's perspective abruptly shifts back to Rome and the assault Ardea, a city attacked without provocation because the king needed money and because the commons are beginning to rebel against his extensions of kingly authority. The people are being treated as slaves, Livy tells us (1.57): Brutus will reiterate this claim,

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amplifying it, when he rouses the commons to act "like true Romans, to take up arms against the tyrants *who had dared to treat them as a vanquished enemy*" (1.59, my emphasis). The claim will be hurled against Appius Claudius fifty years later when he attempts to claim Verginia as a slave in order to rape her. The rape of the defeated city's females is a gesture of dominion over the "vanquished enemy." But it is experienced, as the language of outrage among the male citizens attests, as a violence against their persons, not as violence against women.

In both the Lucretia and Verginia narratives, the pierced, lifeless corpse of a female is paraded through the streets, her "wound" openly exposed. The "slab to the heart," the showable wound, serves as a double for the vagina, the natural opening that must be covered. The bloody stab wounds are used to rouse the angry mob to revolution in a political counterpart to the "private" lust Collatinus provokes from Tarquin by verbally displaying his wife's chastity. For example, when Verginia's "lifeless body" is lifted high "for the crowd to see" in the packed Forum, we learn that "one thought was uppermost in their minds, one theme, above all, on their lips," and it was not the innocent suffering of the young woman, but "the loss of the tribunate and the right of appeal, and *the tyrannous oppression of the people*" (3.48. my emphasis). Verginia — mute, sacrificed to a rivalry between oppressor and father who cannot see their likeness—stands for the oppressed people— the male citizens—but her death, like Lucretia's, purchases no power for women.

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In a startling way, these narratives trope the body politic as virgin/ bride/daughter and the ruler, when legitimate, as groom/husband or father, and when illegitimate, as adulterer, incestuous father, or rapist. The question remains why violence is doubled to begin with, why political violence is eroticized. This shift is itself a sacrificial gesture." Blame for incitement to violence comes to rest on the victim, as suggested by Machiavelli's disingenuous title, "How States Are Ruined on Account of Women."

"Charming stories" are what Ogilvie calls these rape stories, that is, *romances* that prove diverting in a deadly way: the mimetic effects that operate among the men who give rise to the events commemorated in these texts also give rise to a whole new cycle of mimetic exchange. The iconographic tradition (whether verbal or visual) disfigures (misrepresents) the violence and has invited us, as readers, thinkers, and makers of works of art, to share in forgetting or, worse, blaming the victims—even when that has meant (for women before feminism) blaming ourselves. The male-generated literary tradition invites the female reader to aim the text against herself.²⁶

We have the emergence of, first, a community of ardent feminist writers and, now, Girard—through his work on the scapegoat as a reality in both the text and the world—to thank for the ability to see that rape is not erotic, but represents a violent cultural imperative that only the vision and voice of the victim who refuses the sacrificial interpretation of her suffering can disclose. As Girard has said, not realizing how his work underscores the achievements of feminist scholars, "the choice is clear: one must either do violence to the text or let the text forever do violence to innocent victims" (*TS*,

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8). I would situate my own act of disturbing the economy of Livy's narrative in the transition from mule female victim to powerful feminist writer; between Shakespeare's troubling couplet for Lucretia, who does not know the cause of her own destruction, "And that deep torture may be called a hell/ When more is felt than one has power to tell" (1287-88), and the imperative to recover an authoritative female voice in the work of the contemporary poet, Olga Broumas:

Like amnesiacs
in a ward on fire,
we must find words or burn.³⁷

Notes

1. Niccolo Machiavelli. *The Prince and The Discourses*, with an introduction by Max Lerner (New York: Random House, Modern Library Edition, 1940, 1950). pp. 436-37, 489.

I would like to thank John Freccero for first drawing these two passages to my attention. I would like to thank also Yale University for a Morse Fellowship (for 1986-87) in support of my research on rape narratives, and Gordon Williams and Frederick Griffiths for helpful suggestions in revision.

2. The number of commentaries that rehearse this formula is too great to cite them all. See the synopses of various versions of the Lucretia "story" in Ian Donaldson, *The Rapes of Lucretia. A Myth and its Transformations* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1982).

3. Rene Girard, *The Scapegoat*, trans. by Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); see chapter 2, "Stereotypes of Persecution."

4. F. F., Adcock, *Roman Political Ideas and Practice* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1964), p. 7.

5. Claude Lévi-Strauss. *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, trans. James Harle Bell. John Richard von Stunner, and Rodney Needham, ed. Rodney Needham, rev. ed. (Boston: Beacon, 1969). p. 115. All further references will be cited in the text.

6. See my discussion of the difference between Girard's and Lévi-Strauss' reading of exchange in "The Voice of the Shuttle is Ours." *Stanford Literature Review*, 1.1 (1984), 34-38.

The references to the exchange of women "knitting" or "weaving" the bonds between men that make up the state are explicit in Lévi-Strauss (479-81). See also Plutarch's narrative of the rape of the Sabine women as the origin of the ritual bridal cry, "*talasius*" (from the Greek *talasia*, "spinning") in his *Life of Romulus*.

7. Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols, Explorations in Cosmology* (New York: Pantheon, 1970, rpi. 1982). p. 70: "... the human body is always treated as an image of society. . . . Interests in apertures depend on the preoccupation with social exits and entrances, escape routes and invasions. If there is no concern to preserve social

boundaries. I would not expect to find concern with bodily boundaries. The relation of head to feet, of brain and sexual organs, of mould and anus are commonly treated so that they express the relevant patterns of hierarchy."

8. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966. rpt. 1980). p. 115.

9. See Adcock (above, note 5), pp. 10ff., for a discussion of the Etruscan heritage of "the sacred boundary of the city itself" in Rome under the Tarquins.

10. For the details of the place and the festival, see the commentary and sources cited in R. M. Ogilvie, *A Commentary on Livy, Books 1-5* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965).

All quotations of Livy's *History* are taken from Livy, *The Early History of Rome. Books 1-5 of the History of Rome from its Foundation*, trans. Aubrey de Selincourt (New York: Penguin Books, 1960).

11. There is no space here to discuss what strikes me as the most revealing example of the danger of the female's in-between status: the story of Horatius's spontaneous murder of his virgin sister for weeping at the Capena gate on his triumphant approach to Rome after slaying her betrothed (Livy, 1.23-27).

12. The women, in identifying war between the Romans and Sabines as not only murder but parricide, testify to the internal illogic of the system of exchange as well as to the nature of the crisis as a loss of distinctions. For a different reading, see Julie Hemker's interesting essay arguing for a distinction between Livy's and Ovid's treatments of the

rape of the Sabine women; Hemker favors Ovid's "irony" over Livy's "justification" as responses to the wedding of violence and love. "Rape and the Founding of Rome," *Helios*. 12 (1985). 41-48.

13. See Adcock (above, note 5), p. 8.

14. See Chapters I and 2 of Book III of *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987).

15. There is no time to make my full argument here, but I believe that Livy's narrative of the rape of Rhea Silvia provides us with ample evidence to expose the sacrificial/patriarchal reasoning of Jean-Joseph Goux's argument for "a secret identity between Hestia (Greek for the Roman Vesta) and the sacred. Hestia is not one among many manifestations of the sacred, she is the root of the sacred itself." *Representations*, I.i (1983), 95. Goux, for all his apparent theoretical sophistication, reproduces the violence of the patriarchal tradition when he asks: "Who is this Vesta, in her presence, and in her relation to being, who brings representation up short, as against a limit?" She is, as this essay means to argue, a founding victim. This is why she must not be represented. The prohibition against violating Vesta, like the prohibition against intercourse with the first Vestal, has nothing whatsoever to do with concern with the "inviolability" of the female, but with terror of revealing the violence at the heart of this feminized "sacred."

16. Alan Watson, *Rome of the XII Tables, Persons and Property* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 35, note ad loc.: "In Livy's version there is a touch

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of conscious or unconscious irony which should be mentioned but need not be stressed. In the contest of womanly virtues which preceded the rape and which the decorous Lucretia won, *her rivals*, the king's daughters-in-law, were discovered passing the time "in convivio luxuque cum aequalibus" (1.57.9). Presumably these ladies—who seem to be Etruscan—were drinking wine (as one can assume *convivium* implies) which, as we know, was conduct meriting death at Rome" (my emphasis). Here, sexist criticism, which locates the rivalry among the women who know nothing about the wager between their husbands, abets myth and helps do violence.

We need not assume, with Oglivie, anything about how derelict the communal gathering of women seems to be here: (his is part of the fear of the female's power to create bonds among women and thus frustrate exchange. In fact, the drinking women, banded together, actually prove- effective in protecting themselves from being marked as targets of male rivalry. Furthermore, this *convivium* is the proof that Lucretia is an arbitrary victim: whichever wife proved chaste Tarquin would have raped. Lucretia is "peerless" in an ironic and pathetic way: separated from her female peers, she stands isolated by tradition from the most intimate and potentially resisting female kin—mother, sister, daughter. This suppression of evidence of positive female community is part of the sacrificial nature of these narratives. To the extent that Girard is too often blind to the female as subject, agent, and mother, he implicates himself in the very process he wishes to expose.

17 For the legal precedents in the Rome of Lucretia's time see Watson, pp. 35-36: "Livy's account should not be robbed of its legal significance Lucretia killed herself because death was the appropriate punishment for infidelity. She summoned both her father and her husband—in that order—because they were the persons who above all others were entitled to exact the penalty. Each was to bring a friend, because in a *iudicium domesticum* friends could help with advice. Tarquin's threat to kill Lucretia and place a slaughtered slave beside her implies, as Diodorus Siculus 10.20.2 expressly noted, that a husband's close relative had the right to kill a wife whom he caught committing adultery."

18. Ogilvie (above, note 11), pp. 23-24. Similarly, Ogilvie records (25ff), without understanding, the connections between the popular uprising commemorated by the story of Verginia with a period of extreme crisis marked by famine and debt.

19. "The weakest and most defenseless" are marked not only in biblical and modern times, but in classical texts and times. Were Girard to include the victims of "sexual crimes" he would have his categories in order, for this is where the female becomes most conspicuous as surrogate victim and scapegoat in and for the text.

20. Once again, I refer the reader to the story of Horatius's murder of his sister, this time to hear the father, who resolves the crisis by blaming the victim: he persuades the crowd "that his daughter deserved her death" (Livy, 1.26).

21. See Watson (above, note 17), pp. 96-97, including his note (p. 97) arguing with Ogilvie's interpretation of the story in his *Commentary*, pp. -176ff. Ogilvie offers

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the interesting detail that the specific location where the father kills his virgin daughter, the shrine of Coacina (or Venus Cloacina, its other name) links the murder to "the twin ideas of purification . . . and, perhaps, of concord" (187). He goes so far as to suggest that "the myth of Verginia is the aetiological myth of the cult." What Ogilvie cannot see is how this brings to light the virgin daughter's status as ritual victim whose destruction purges the community of violence and restores internal peace

22. I wish to thank Cordon Williams for offering me this translation.

23. See Watson, Ogilvie, and Donaldson (above, note 2) for discussions of the problem of bastard progeny in interpreting this scene

24. Indeed, Lucretia and Verginia (like so many "beautiful" and pure females) seem to be incitement personified to the male imagination. In this scene, we can trace the outline of an origin of the association of the female with mob violence, (like furor in Vergil's *Aeneid*), specifically the threat of class conflict and the chaos of the sacrificial crisis

25. "It is the knowledge of violence, along with the violence itself, that the act of expulsion succeeds in shunting outside the realm of consciousness." Rene Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), p. 135. Also note Girard's argument that when collective violence disappears from representation, it is replaced by *individual* violence. In the Roman stories of Lucretia and Verginia, both forms of violence are preserved, but the movement to cover up the real violence (mob uprisings) is preserved in the manufacture of the erotic

"Ritual Work on Human Flesh': Livy's Lucretia and the Rape of the Body Politic"
HELIOS 17:1 (Spring) 1990, pp. 51-70.

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crime as first cause (this is especially clear in Verginius's reiteration that "rape" is the "crime" the mob is to avenge by overthrowing the ruler).

26. See Lucrece's fatal imitation of Philomele in Shakespeare, *Lucrece*, 1128-41.

27. Olga Broumas, "Artemis." *Beginning with O*, Yale Series of Younger Poets 72
(New Haven: Yale University Press. 1977)

11. Klindienst, Patricia "Ritual Work on Female Flesh: Livy's Lucretia and the Rape of the Body Politic." *Helios* 17, 1990, pp51-70.

12. Beard, Mary "The Erotics of Rape: Livy, Ovid and the Sabine Women." in Setälä, Päivi and Liisa Savunen, eds. *Female Networks and the Public Sphere in Roman Society* (Institutum Romanum Finlandiae, 1999). Volume II: Women in Religion. 13. Talalay, L.E. "A Feminist Boomerang: The Great Goddess of Greek Prehistory," *Gender & History* 6, 2, 1994, pp165-183. 14. Davis, E. 1986. "Youth and Age in the Frescoes of Thera." *American Journal of Archaeology*, 90, 1, 1986, pp1-14.

"Ritual Work on Human Flesh": Livy's Lucretia and the Rape of the Body Politic". *HELIOS*. 17 (1): 51-70. Kraus, C. S.; Woodman, A. J. (1997). *Latin Historians*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 51-81. Levene, D. S. (2010). *The Eye Expanded: Life and the Arts in Greco-Roman Antiquity*. Berkeley: University of California Press. pp. 206-232. Walsh, Patrick G. (1961). *Livy: His Historical Aims and Methods*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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Lucretia! MALE CHORUS Collatinus is politically astute to choose a virtuous wife. MALE CHORUS Tarquinius does not dare, when Tarquinius does not desire; but I am the Prince of Rome and Lucretia's eyes my Empire. It is not far to Rome Oh, go to bed, Tarquinius