“AY, IN THE TEMPLE, IN THE TOWN, THE FIELD, YOU DO ME MISCHIEF”:

THE REPRESENTATION OF RAPE AND THREATENED RAPE IN SHAKESPEARE’S WORKS.

by

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Abstract

Shakespeare returned to the theme of rape on a number of occasions throughout his career, but only *Titus Andronicus* and *The Rape of Lucrece* include a rape within their narrative context. This study will examine the representation of rape in the context of the Early Modern understanding of the concept. The study will show that Shakespeare metaphorically represents the rapes of Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus* and Lucrece in *The Rape of Lucrece* and that these metaphors are repeatedly reflected in later works which include a theme of threatened rape, giving currency to the threat and introducing the possibility of a tragic outcome. A key point of originality in this study is that it will show that the narrative of the four lovers in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a comic re-working of the rape plot in *Titus Andronicus*.

This work will also examine how contemporary complaints of rape reflected the evidential requirements of the hue and cry process, and will show that knowledge of this process contributed to the Early Modern concept of rape. A key point of originality in this work is that it will show that Shakespeare establishes rape and threatened rape within the contemporary context of the hue and cry process, and that this signposts the audience and reader of texts which include a threatened rape, to expect that a rape will occur.

Dedication

For David,

and for Mum and Dad.

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Introduction

When Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* responds to Demetrius' threat to rape her saying, "Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field, / You do me mischief"(2.1.242-243), she indicates that the threat of rape is ever present. This is an astute observation given that English rape law had evolved from the premise that a woman was more likely to be raped in "the field" where her cries for help would not be heard, than "in the town" where help was assumed to be at hand. Rape is and has always been a complex crime that is difficult to prove and equally difficult to define and the question of what constitutes rape has long troubled society and the legal system. Part of the reason for this complexity is that there are many forms of inappropriate sexual conduct which can be interpreted as rape. There are numerous examples in Shakespeare's work of acts which result in sexual intercourse occurring without the apparent or fully informed consent of one party, however at the time that Shakespeare was writing not all of these would have been regarded as rape.

In order to examine the representation of rape in Shakespeare's work it is important to understand what he and his audience would have understood the concept of rape to be. In order to do this, the first chapter of this study will provide a summary of the development of English rape law from the earliest times through to the Early Modern period. This will show that for much of the period up to when Shakespeare was writing, rape was considered as a form of property crime and that as such the term rape was applied to either an act of forced sexual intercourse – a definition that is in line with our modern understanding of the term – or to the forcible abduction of a woman, as well as to an elopement where it occurred without the consent of the woman's family. This study will focus on the actual or threated sexual rape,

of a woman by a man.

The first chapter will also include a review of complaints of rape that were made by contemporary victims, this will show how English rape law was understood and applied in Early Modern society. The summary of the development of rape law will show that there was a perception that rape was more likely to happen in a remote environment where the victim's cries for help would not be heard. This emphasis on the location of an assault was a key factor in the complaints of rape, which tended to include a reference either to the remoteness of the location, or an explanation of why a woman raped in an urban location or domestic space was unable to summon help. The review of rape complaints will also show that a woman who was raped was expected to raise the hue and cry immediately after the assault and to present evidence to confirm that she had been raped. If a woman was a virgin at the time of her rape, she was expected to be able to provide a showing of blood to confirm that her virginity had been taken, and if she was not a virgin it was expected that she would display torn clothes or physical injuries to prove that she had fought with her attacker. Having established what an Early Modern audience would have understood rape to mean, and how the victims were expected to behave, the remainder of this study will examine how Shakespeare reflects this concept of rape throughout his work.

Rape is a common theme in Shakespeare's work and he returns to it on a number of occasions throughout the course of his career. However he only represents sexual rape within the narrative context of two of his works: the early tragedy *Titus Andronicus* and his narrative poem *The Rape of Lucrece*. In the tragedy Lavinia is the victim of two forms of rape because she is abducted in the opening scenes of the play and is later subjected to a grotesquely

violent gang rape. The narrative poem is a re-telling of the classical story of Tarquin's rape of Lucrece which first appears in Ovid's *Fasti*. The second chapter of this study will discuss the representation of rape in these two works in the context of the Early Modern understanding of rape. The first section of this chapter will examine the role of the location as a facilitating factor in both rapes. Anne Barton's work explores the nature of the Shakespearean forest such as that which forms the location for Lavinia's rape in the tragedy, the woodland location is in keeping with contemporary cultural perceptions of the nature of forests and of the expectation that a woman was more likely to be raped in a remote rural location, where her cries for help could not be heard.[1] However, this study will show that Lucrece's bedchamber also offers the isolation and opportunity for rape and that it takes on many of the characteristics of the forest location. Although, the locations for the two rapes are very different, this study will show that it is not the type of location, but the isolation and opportunity that it provides that is significant and that the combination of these factors can both facilitate and inspire rape.

The hunt that is arranged to celebrate the emperor's marriage acts as a narrative device to lure Lavinia into the forest where she is raped, and Shakespeare uses hunting and poaching imagery in connection with the rape. Edward Berry writes about this imagery, discussing the relevance of the contemporary context.[2] This study will show that metaphors of hunting and poaching recur elsewhere in Shakespeare's work where they reflect the earlier tragedy and signify the possibility of rape.

Although rape is a key element of both of Shakespeare's rape texts, the rapes themselves are not directly portrayed within the narrative and this chapter will examine how

the rapes are given currency through metaphorical representation. This aspect of the two works has received considerable critical attention. Karen Bamford writes about the representation of the sleeping Lucrece in the narrative poem, and both she and Peter Smith discuss how the language used in the poem engages the reader in the rape itself.[3] A number of critics including Jonathan Bate, Deborah Willis and Joan Lord Hall have also discussed the extent to which violence is graphically portrayed in the on-stage action of *Titus Andronicus*.[4] This study will show how the metaphorical representation of both rapes causes the audience and reader to engage more directly with the assault as they must imagine the intimate horror of a violation that could not be sensitively and effectively enacted on stage or portrayed through narrative description.

The final section of the chapter will show that despite being silenced by their rapists to prevent them from summoning help, Lavinia and Lucrece comply with contemporary expectations of the way that victims of rape should behave. Both women raise the hue and cry after their assaults, making statements in the presence of witnesses in which they reveal the nature of their complaint and the identity of their rapists. Despite the fact that neither woman was likely to have been a virgin at the time of their rape, both provide a showing of blood in keeping with the requirements of the evidential process. This section will also show that blood is itself an important metaphor in the two works, signifying both the loss of the victim's chastity as a result of their rape, and their subsequent redemption.

Having established the metaphors that Shakespeare uses to represent rape in the two rape texts, subsequent chapters will show that these metaphors are used later in his work to highlight the possibility of rape. The study will also establish that there are frequent

references back to *Titus Andronicus* and *The Rape of Lucrece* in later works which include a threatened rape, and that where these reflections occur they serve to emphasise the immediacy of the threat and to introduce the possibility of a tragic outcome.

Chapter three will discuss threatened rape in two of Shakespeare's comedies, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, both of which include a consensual elopement which serves as a narrative device leading directly to a threat of sexual rape. Proteus' threat to rape Sylvia in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* has received a significant level of critical attention and much of this work focusses on the troublesome resolution of the play in which Valentine readily forgives his former friend for threatening to rape his betrothed. The work of Robert Graves Hunter and Alison Shell suggests that this scene is indicative of an act of Christian forgiveness.[5] In contrast this chapter will show that Shakespeare demonstrates that Valentine displays a troubling attitude towards courtship throughout the play in which he appears to regard a woman's consent as something that can be coerced, or disregarded and that, while the key elements of Christian forgiveness are present in the final scene, it is Valentine's attitude to sexual relationships that is behind his willingness to forgive his friend for threatening to rape his future wife.

Demetrius' threat to rape Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is often disregarded by critics including Joseph Summers and Joan Stansbury who argue that it is a threat that Demetrius is unlikely to carry out.[6] Even Jan Kott, whose work examines the darker elements of the play, focusses on the sexual threat that is evident in the relationship between Titania and Bottom and disregards the earlier threat of rape.[7] Kott also dismisses the link between Theseus and Hippolyta in the comedy and their origins in classical literature, origins that Peter

Holland suggests are difficult to ignore.[8] This study will show that the play contains frequent reflections of *Titus Andronicus* – to the extent that the narrative of the four lovers appears to be a comic re-working of the earlier tragedy, the difference being that while the rivalry between two men over one woman in the tragedy results in a brutal gang-rape, a similar conflict in the comedy ends in marriage. I will also argue that the reflections of *Titus Andronicus* which pervade the comedy make the threat of rape very real, and present the possibility of a tragic denouement, undermining the resolution of the play which ends with Helena marrying her would-be rapist. This chapter will also show that key elements of the evidential process that are identified in the contemporary claims of rape victims are present in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. These features emphasise the fact that Demetrius is in a position where he has the means, the opportunity and an excuse to rape Helena and that when he makes the threat to do so, it is intentional and very real and this too has disturbing implications for the future of the relationship.

The final chapters will examine the threatened rapes in two of Shakespeare's late plays. In *Cymbeline* Innogen is placed at risk of rape as the result of a wager, which is instigated by her husband and is intended as a trial of her chastity. The wager along with Iachimo's subsequent invasion of her bedchamber are a reflection of the plot of *The Rape of Lucrece*. The similarities between the two works have previously been the subject of critical attention and Valerie Wayne suggests that an audience familiar with the narrative poem would expect the bedchamber scene to result in the rape of Innogen.[9] J.K Barret also comments on the reference to the story of Tereus' rape of Philomel in the bed-chamber scene which creates a link back to *Titus Andronicus*.[10] Maurice Charney suggests that the reference

to the earlier tragedy at this point in the play leads to an understanding that while Innogen is not raped, what happens in her room is nevertheless a form of sexual assault.[11] This study will highlight the significance of the reflections of the earlier works and will suggest that Shakespeare intentionally directs his audience to view the play in the context of both rape texts.

The key elements of a contemporary complaint of rape are present in *Cymbeline*, where it is evident that Innogen is at risk of rape in both rural and domestic environments, that she is deprived of the opportunity to cry for help when Iachimo violates her private space because she sleeps throughout the assault and that the hue and cry is raised in the proof of the wager. Finally, having evaded a further threat of rape from Cloten, Innogen makes a showing of blood. The reflections of the hue and cry process emphasise the severity of the sexual assault that Innogen suffers and undermine the resolution of the play, leaving the audience to wonder at the future that awaits Innogen who remains with the husband who put her chastity on trial thereby placing her at risk of rape and murder.

The final chapter explores threatened rape in *Pericles* where Marina is abducted by pirates and sold into a brothel where she is at risk of rape from a number of men. Marina nevertheless escapes the brothel with her virginity intact and creates a profound impression on her would-be clients, so as to apparently deter them from future patronage of the brothel. Much critical work explores how Marina is able to dissuade her clients from raping her when she refuses to entertain them sexually. Leo Paul S. de Alvarez suggests that Marina performs some form of spiritual conversion while other critics including Lorraine Helms suggest that it is the force of Marina’s personality and the strength of her argument that enables her to

dissuade her clients from raping her.[12] In all of Shakespeare's works which explore the theme of rape or threated rape, metaphors of monetary value are used to quantify the virginity or chastity of the victims and in each case the imposition of a valuation on the quality appears to offer it up for corruption. This concept is brought to a logical conclusion in the brothel in *Pericles*, where the metaphors of value become linked to sexual trade in prostitution. This study will argue that it is the commercial value that is placed on Marina's virginity when it is offered for sale that enables her to construct an argument to defend it and provides her with the means to escape the brothel.

There are other examples in Shakespeare's work of sexual behaviour that comes close to rape, but does not meet the definition for inclusion in this study. Male rape is outside the scope of this work because it is a concept that did not exist within a legal context when Shakespeare was writing, at that time forced sexual intercourse between men would have been considered as buggery which was illegal whether consensual or not.[13] Also excluded is the indiscriminate threat of rape made by King Henry in Henry V when he warns the governor of Harfleur that if the city does not surrender to the English forces, there will be a mass rape of the city's virgins by the invading English forces ("the fleshed soldier … shall range … mowing like grass / Your fresh faced virgins" (3.3.11-14)).

Chapter five discusses the threat of rape in *Pericles*, but as Deanne Williams suggests "incest lurks in the dark corners of the play" and the first relationship depicted in the work is an incestuous union between Antiochus and his daughter who is "mother, wife and yet his child" (1.1.70).[14] However, while a modern audience would likely consider an incestuous relationship between father and daughter to be child abuse and probably rape, the incestuous

relationship between Antiochus and his daughter is beyond the scope of this study.

The bed-trick is a fairly common plot device in English drama in which one character is deceived into having consensual sexual intercourse with another while believing them to be someone else. One example of the bed-trick is to be found in *Measure for Measure* where Angelo is deceived onto consummating a relationship with a woman that he had previously abandoned. In *All's Well That End's Well*, the bed-trick device is used to force Bertram, to consummate his unwelcome arranged marriage to Helen. The jailer's daughter in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* also becomes the victim of a bed-trick; she is driven mad by her unrequited love for Palamon and taking advantage of her insanity, the Wooer convinces her that he is Palamon in order to have sexual intercourse with her and to marry her himself. All of these bed-tricks involve deception and coercion and come uncomfortably close to rape, but fall outside the scope of this study.

There is also a version of the bed-trick in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* where Oberon uses the magic potion from the love-in-idleness flower, to cause Titania to sleep with Bottom the weaver, who is temporarily transformed into an ass. In her drugged state, Titania is coerced into a sexual encounter that she would not otherwise consent to and when the drug is lifted from her eyes she cannot understand the attraction that she experienced, "O, how mine eyes do loath his visage now!" (4.1.80). It could also be argued that Demetrius is the victim of a form of the bed-trick because he remains under the influence of the 'love-in-idleness' drug when he agrees to marry Helena at the end of the play, having ended a previous relationship with her and clearly stated that "I do not nor I cannot love you" (2.1.205).

There is a further example of sexual coercion in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* when Oberon sexually humiliates Titania because she "hath forsworn his bed" (2.1.62) and is withholding an orphaned changeling child from him. He intends to "torment [Titania] for this injury" (2.1.146-147), by rendering her "full of hateful fantasies" (2.1.258), while his continued presence in the wood suggests that he watches her humiliation. Titania's drug induced fantasy leads her to seduce the transformed Bottom in what Jan Kott defines as an act of rape, "The monstrous ass is being raped by the poetic Titania, while she keeps chattering on about flowers".[15] What actually transpires between the couple in Titania's bed is unclear, but it is evident that Titania shows little regard for Bottom's consent as she tells him "Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no" (3.1.145), finally leaving him without a voice to refuse her when she instructs her fairy attendants to "Tie up my love's tongue; bring him silently," (3.1.193) . This act of silencing *is* indicative of rape and would have been perceived as such by an audience familiar with Shakespeare's two rape texts, in which Lavinia and Lucrece are silenced before they are raped. However as this aspect of the play is a combination of a form of male rape and sexual coercion, it is outside the scope of this study.

The History of Cardenio is generally believed to have been a collaborative work by Shakespeare and John Fletcher based on the story of Cardenio from Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. A play entitled *The History of Cardenio* by Fletcher and Shakespeare appears in the Stationers' Register on 9 September 1653 and there is evidence to suggest that the play may have been performed at least twice in 1613, but the text was excluded from the first folio edition of Shakespeare's plays and no confirmed extant copy of it survives.[16] In 1728 Lewis Theobald published *Double Falsehood*, a play based on the Cardenio story, which he claimed

to have adapted from an original text by Shakespeare and Fletcher. *Cardenio* may have been the third work by Shakespeare to include a rape within the narrative context, because when Henriquez in *Double Falsehood* fails in his attempt to seduce Violante with a musical serenade, he subsequently rapes her in her bedchamber. The attack occurs off-stage, but Henriquez's own account of it implies that while his victim did not consent, he does not consider that it was rape because she did not cry out for help:

> Was it rape then? No. Her shrieks, her exclamations then had drove me from her. True, she did not consent: as true, she did resist; but still in silence all. (2.1.36-39)

The location of the rape is interesting because, like the rape of Lucrece and the assault on Innogen in *Cymbeline*, it occurs in the victim's bedchamber, where Violante should have been safe from predatory male aggression. Henriquez's appraisal of the assault is also indicative of the culture of the hue and cry process and of the expectation that a woman threatened with rape will cry out for help. It is tempting to see Shakespeare's hand in the elements of *Double Falsehood* that are evocative of his work and to compare the rape of Violante with the rapes of Lavinia and Lucrece but, due to the uncertain provenance of the texts on which Theobald based his play and as no other text of *The History of Cardenio* is known to exist, it cannot be included in this work.

In summary this study will outline the Early Modern concept of rape and will demonstrate that a woman threatened with rape was expected to cry for help, to raise the hue and cry and to provide evidence of the force used if she was raped. The study will show that this contemporary understanding of rape and the evidentiary process is reflected in all of Shakespeare's works which feature threatened or actual rape. The study will also show that

the representation of the rapes in *Titus Andronicus* and *The Rape of Lucrece* is reflected across other works, and that the reflections of these earlier works establish the severity of threatened rapes and introduce the potential for a tragic outcome which undermines the resolutions of these later plays.

Chapter 1

"I cried mainly out and struggled with him as long as my breath would serve"
Rape in England

Only two of Shakespeare's works, *Titus Andronicus* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, include rape as a central theme, but the subject occurs regularly as a sub-theme in other plays. In order to develop an understanding of how Shakespeare represented rape in his work, it is first necessary to establish how he and his audience would have understood rape as a concept. This chapter will provide an overview of the history of rape law in England, and will examine how legal and cultural attitudes to rape were represented in the complaints of contemporary victims of the crime. Rape has always been a complex and confusing crime and although it is a private interaction, which occurs usually between two individuals, it is imbued with cultural influences and perceptions that make it much more than a sexual matter. In twenty-first century Britain, rape is still a complex crime even though we understand it to be a matter of forced sexual intercourse, but defining rape from the earliest rape laws to the reign of Elizabeth I when Shakespeare wrote about rape was far more problematic.

The complexity of rape begins with the lexical origin of the term itself. The word 'rape' has a Latin root in the word raptus, derived from the verb rapere, meaning to seize or take away by force. From the earliest rape laws, the word retained its original meaning to refer to abduction as well as to acts of forced sexual intercourse. When the term raptus first appeared in Roman law, it was also used to refer to abduction, so that "cases of *raptus* might in actuality involve rape, abduction, or elopement. [17]

As the law developed in later communities, this conflation of offences within the same terminology led to a complication in attempting to examine the history of rape in English law, because at times it is difficult to establish whether court records of rape cases refer to sexual crimes, acts of abduction, voluntary elopements, or to a combination of these very different events. It is evident that Shakespeare was aware of this use of the word rape to refer to an abduction because he uses it in *Titus Andronicus* to refer to Bassianus' seizure of Lavinia when Titus offers her in marriage to Saturninus, the newly elected Roman emperor.

The biblical laws that are written in the Old Testament books of the Bible may also have influenced cultural attitudes to rape in England. The book of Deuteronomy treats rape as a property crime focussed on the theft of a woman's virginity, rather than as a sexual crime against the person, and "actions in such cases lay against the man for stealing the woman's virginity, thus decreasing her value on the marriage market".[18] Although the loss of her virginity did not prevent a woman from getting married, it did mean that she was a less valuable commodity, and as a result the 'victim' of rape was seen to be the woman's father rather than the victim herself, because he had been cheated of his daughter's marriageable value. The damage done to a woman's status on the marriage market due to the loss of her virginity was reflected in the punishments meted out to convicted rapists. The biblical laws provided different penalties for rapists convicted of raping a virgin to those found to be guilty of the rape of a woman who was already married, or one who had been betrothed to another man. According to the Old Testament book of Leviticus the penalty for adultery was death:

> And the man that committeth adulterie with another man's wife, because he hathe committed adulterie with his neighbours wife, the adulterer and the adulteres shall dye the death.[19]

Similarly, the rape of a betrothed or married woman carried the same penalty as that inflicted upon adulterers, presumably because the crime destroyed the woman's chastity. In the case of an unmarried virgin who was not yet betrothed the penalty was less severe for the perpetrator, even though the criminal act was essentially the same and this reflected the idea that restitution for the 'theft' of the victim's virginity was possible. It is prescribed in Deuteronomy that:

> If a man finde a maide that is not betrothed, and take her, and lye with her, & they be founde,
> Then the man that lay with her, shal give vnto the maides father fifty shekels of siluer: and she shall be his wife, because he hathe humbled her: he can not put her away all his life.[20]

Fines paid by convicted rapists during this period, were "payable to the father of the victim, who was in effect deemed to have been the owner of her now-vanished virginity and was therefore entitled to compensation for the loss".[21] There is no suggestion that the victim had the option to refuse to marry her rapist and the intent was evidently to provide recompense to the family, who had lost the possibility of securing an economically and socially fortuitous marriage for their daughter, and "in order to protect the family honour after 'defilement'".[22] Of course, the system also provided future economic security for the woman herself, who, as she was no longer a virgin, might otherwise have been unable to find a husband.

The methodology that was used to determine whether a woman had been raped, relied upon proof that she had resisted her attacker. This burden of proof lay predominantly on where the alleged rape had taken place, and if a woman claimed to have been raped within the city walls, both she and her attacker were condemned to die just as they would have been if they had committed a consensual act of adultery:

> Then shall ye bring them bothe out vnto y gates of the same citie, and shal stone them with stones to death: the maide because she cryed not, being in the citie, and y man, because he hathe humbled his neighbours wife[23]

The woman who became the victim of a rape within the city was presumed to have 'consented' to illicit sexual intercourse on the basis that if she had cried for help in an urban environment she would have been heard and accordingly was to receive the same punishment as a woman found guilty of adultery. Where a rape occurred outside the city walls, however, the penalty was applicable only to the rapist:

> But if a man finde a betrothed maide in the field, and force her, and lye with her, then the man that lay with her, shal dye alone[24]

The woman who was raped in a more remote location could not be held accountable because if the rapist, "found her in the fields: the betrothed maide cryed, and there was no man to succour her".[25] The idea that the guilt of a rapist could be determined by whether or not his victim had resisted the assault by crying for help, or offering some form of physical resistance, was also to develop in English rape law, and to continue through Shakespeare's time onwards, creating a legal culture in which it has for centuries fallen upon the victim of rape to demonstrate that she withheld consent, resisted her attacker and was overcome, rather than on the alleged rapist to prove his innocence.

We know that Shakespeare was familiar with the Old Testament because there are numerous references to it in his works. Although we cannot be certain which bible Shakespeare used, it seems likely that he read the Geneva Bible. Andrew Hadfield suggests that Shakespeare was familiar with the Geneva Bible because "it was the only easily available and affordable English translation".[26] Naseeb Shaheen also suggests that Shakespeare read the Geneva Bible:

> Shakespeare's references are often closer to the Geneva Bible than to any other version. It was the most popular version of the day, and it is only natural to assume that he owned a copy. There are approximately thirty passages … in which Shakespeare clearly refers to the Geneva Bible, besides several others in which he seems closer to that version than to others.[27]

The Geneva Bible includes the books of the Old Testament and Shaheen identifies a large number of Old Testament references across Shakespeare's plays, including numerous references to Deuteronomy. It is therefore possible that the representation of rape in Shakespeare's works may have been informed by his knowledge of the relevant passages in the Geneva Bible.

During the rule of the Roman Emperor Constantine (AD324 – 337) the legal definition of rape included abduction and elopement as well as forced sexual intercourse. The main difference between the three offences was the nature of the punishment that could be imposed on the victim, the severity of the penalty being determined by the level of resistance that the woman had offered. Elopement was treated as adultery, and therefore any woman who had willingly gone along with her abductor, in what was effectively considered to be a consensual act of elopement, was executed along with her accomplice. The law treated the case of a woman who was proven to have been abducted against her will or raped more leniently, but the victim was still punished on the grounds that her resistance had not been sufficient because she would otherwise have been successful in preventing the attack.[28] It seems that during this period it would have been incredibly difficult for a woman to prove that she had been raped because the fact that the assault occurred at all was deemed to be proof of her complicity. Britain was under Roman occupation until 410 AD, and the development of English rape law may have been influenced by Roman law during this period.[29] The Biblical

laws concerning rape, which are laid down in the book of Deuteronomy, may also have achieved cultural transmission to influence English law during the reign of Æthelberht of Kent (589 to 616 AD) who became the first English king to convert to Christianity.[30]

It was not until the reign of Alfred the Great, which covered the period from 871 to 899 AD that English law began to recognise rape as a sexual offence, rather than as a crime against property. During Alfred's reign a law code was produced which had a direct link with early Christian laws, including a translation of the ten commandments into English. A key feature of Alfred's law code was the use "of the verb *nidnaeman*, meaning to assault a woman for the purpose of having sexual intercourse."[31] This law code emphasised the seriousness of rape as a stand-alone sexual offence, and in doing so strengthened the position of women in Anglo Saxon society. Importantly the law:

> distinguishes between abduction, rape and lesser forms of sexual assault, and stresses that the seriousness of these offences is magnified by the fact that they have been committed without their victim's consent.[32]

The penalties imposed on convicted rapists during this period were determined through a system of fines that was largely based on the social status of the victim, with the rape of a higher ranked woman who was a still a virgin attracting the greatest penalty. This complex system of compensation, together with the fact that the fines were paid directly to the victim rather than to her family was probably a reflection of, "the relatively high status that women enjoyed in Anglo-Saxon society."[33] Significantly, this system of financial compensation addressed the issue of withheld consent, and identified the victim of rape as the woman who had suffered an intimate sexual assault, rather than the family who had been deprived of the value of her virginity in the marriage market place.

The development of rape law continued on into the medieval period through the work of the twelfth century jurist, Gratian, whose textbook of canon law the *Concordia Discordatium Canonum*, was published between 1139 and 1159. This work formed the first part of a collection of six legal texts, which became known as the *Corpus Juris Canonici*, and was used by canonists of the Roman Catholic Church until 1918. As England was officially under the authority of the Roman church until 1534, when the first Act of Supremacy made Henry VIII the Supreme Head of the protestant Church of England, it is likely that Gratian's work influenced the development of English rape law. In his textbook, Gratian defined rape as either the abduction of an unmarried woman from her family home against the will of her father, "id est a domo patris ducta,"or unlawful sexual intercourse, "raptus est illicitus coitus". Gratian also identified violence as "a necessary element in the offence of rape", regarding evidence of violence as a means to distinguish between an act of sexual seduction, "where a girl was induced by guile and promises to agree to illicit sexual relations" and forced sexual intercourse.[35]

Following the period in which Gratian's work was produced, the assize roll for Cornwall at Launceston for 1171 recorded a complaint of rape that demonstrated the use of violent force against the victim:

> Marina daughter of Everwin appeals Roger de Barid of rape, that he threw her down and took from her virginity, and this she offers to prove as the court shall adjudge. It is attested that she was seen bleeding and that this was done to her.

The reference to the fact that the victim was 'seen bleeding' at the end of the account may refer to evidence of both the victim's loss of virginity, and of the violence used in the assault. A

further account from the period again recorded that the victim was ‘seen bleeding’ after she had been raped:

> Malot Crawe appeals Robert son of Godfrey of rape and he has come and denies the whole. It was attested that he so raped her and that she was seen bleeding.[37]

This indicates that there may have already been a cultural understanding of the need to demonstrate that the victim of rape had been a virgin before the assault had occurred; but the emphasis on the bleeding body may also have been intended to imply the use of violence and lack of consent in order to create an implicit distinction between cases of actual rape and those of elopement or abduction.

Gratian saw no impediment to the marriage between a rapist and his victim, provided that the victim and her parents consented to the match and that the rapist, “repented of his unlawful actions and performed appropriate penance”.[38] In the case of Malot Crawe’s appeal, although her rapist is reported to have denied the assault the resolution was nonetheless that the couple were married, as “they are brought into agreement by licence of the Justices, in as much as he has taken her to wife”.[39] The traditional use of marriage as a form of resolution for rape is reflected in some of Shakespeare’s works which feature a threatened rape, for example, in the final act of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* Helena marries Demetrius, who threatened to rape her earlier in the play.

A key feature of English law from the tenth century onwards was the system of communal policing which became known as the ‘hue and cry’. This system relied on the principle that a woman was more likely to be raped in a remote location where her cries for help would not be heard. Although the hue and cry process began as “customary law,” it was

formally incorporated into the legal system by the second Statute of Westminster in 1285 when "Edward I included the pursuit of the hue as part of his plan for the defence of the realm". [40] The hue and cry process was key to maintaining order within communities to the extent that:

> Raising the hue and cry in medieval communities was not only a method of social control but also a tool of community policing of certain types of unacceptable behaviour within communities.[41]

The hue and cry procedure operated on the basis that the victim of a crime, or a direct witness to it, would cry out for help in an action which became known as raising the hue and cry. Anyone who heard the cry raised was expected to respond to the call, either to help with the apprehension of the culprit, or to add their independent witness to the incident. This system of communal policing eventually became one which itself attracted the force of the law, as it became an offence either for a victim of a crime, or a witness to it to fail to raise the hue and cry, or for anyone who heard the cry to ignore it. Raising the hue and cry without cause, or as a false accusation against someone also became an offence. The nature of the hue and cry process, and the fact that it was dependent upon the cry being heard, was to become critical to the development of rape law in England, and was subsequently reflected in the testimonies of rape victims for many centuries. Kenneth Duggan cites a successful example of the use of the hue and cry to prevent a rape:

> in a Bedfordshire coroner's roll it is said that on 24 May 1270, Emma daughter of Richard Toky, was gathering wood when Garglof grabbed her and 'wanted to throw her to the ground and deflower her, but Emma immediately shouted (statim clamavit) and her father Richard Toky, came'. A hue and cry raised in circumstances such as these was meant to summon anyone nearby, and, ideally result in the capture of the malefactor.[42]

We know that the hue and cry was still relevant at the time that Shakespeare was writing because he makes two direct references to it, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* ("Hue and cry, villain, go! – Assist me knight, I am undone!/Fly, run, hue and cry, villain! I am undone!" (4.5.65 -66)) and in *Henry IV*, *Part I* ("A hue and cry/Hath followed certain men unto this house" (2.4.372-372)). Although neither of these references is made to the raising of the hue and cry following an act of rape, this does nevertheless establish that the process was still followed at the time and would have been known to Shakespeare and his audience.

The next clear stage in the development of English rape law came during the reign of Henry II, with the issue of a treatise on the laws and customs of England which was attributed to Ranulf de Glanvill, Chief Justiciar of England. This document, which has become known as 'Glanvill', was written between 1187 and 1190, approximately thirty years after Gratian's textbook of canon law.[43] 'Glanvill' was notable because it included a definition of rape that referred specifically to the forced violation of the victim – "in the crime of rape a woman charges a man with violating her by force" – very clearly emphasising the sexual element of the offence, and creating a degree of separation between the sexual crime of rape and acts of abduction and elopement.[44] Significantly, Glanvill also identified the actions which were to be taken by a women after she had been raped:

> A woman who suffers in this way must go, soon after the deed is done, to the nearest vill and there show to trustworthy men the injury done to her, and any effusion of blood there may be and any tearing of her clothes. She should then do the same to the reeve of the hundred. Afterwards she should proclaim it publicly in the next county court.[45]

This element of the treatise established a format for the conduct of the rape victim, who was effectively required to raise the hue and cry and to display herself to witnesses. A woman who

had been a virgin was expected to be able to show the blood stains which confirmed the loss of her virginity, and other injuries or torn clothing that would indicate that there had been a violent struggle, thus demonstrating that she had withheld her consent and had resisted her attacker in so far as she was able.

Amongst the surviving records of appeals of rape, the thirteenth century case which was brought by Lucy Ballard against Stephen Hoket demonstrates the developing culture of rape testimony in medieval England, while at the same time raising some intriguing questions around what the actual nature of the incident may have been, and demonstrating as it does so the complexity of the concept of rape in a culture where it could mean several different things. Lucy Ballard alleged that her assailant accosted her:

> when she was going to the vine on her return he took her and led her into his booth and lay with her by force, and for the whole night he kept her with him in his booth so that she could not go out, and when she cried out his kin came and put a lock on the door of his booth, so that because of the night, she could not raise the cry, and this she offers to deraign against him. Stephen came and said that she was his mistress and that he knew her for a year before she appealed him. The serjeant of the hundred bore witness that she was seen bleeding.[46]

This complaint is interesting because it includes many of the elements that were to become increasingly evident in rape testimonies. The complaint includes a clear reference to the hue and cry together with an explanation as to why, having cried out, the victim's cries were ineffectual, and the reason why there was a delay in her raising the hue and cry until the following day. The accused also entered in mitigation the fact that he had a previous relationship with his victim, who he claimed to have known as his mistress for at least a year. Hoket's claim was possibly contradicted by the evidence that Lucy was reported by a reliable witness to have been 'seen bleeding,' a fact that seems intended to suggest that she lost her

virginity as a result of the incident. Although Lucy claimed to have been the victim of rape in its sexual sense, the circumstances reported in this account suggest that there may have been more to this. The complaint includes an account of Stephen's 'kin' responding to her cries by locking the door of his 'booth' so that she could not escape, and this suggests that this case could have been an abduction intended to lead to a forced marriage. Whatever the truth of the situation, the case was upheld and Stephen was fined, but the final resolution was achieved through the marriage of the couple:

> For 5 marks which Stephen gives the king they are brought into agreement by licence of the Justices, in as much as he has married her.[47]

The next landmark stage in the development of English rape law came in the work of the prominent jurist Henry of Bratton (c. 1210-1268), commonly referred to as Bracton, who produced a legal commentary, *Legibus Et Consuetudinibus AngliÆ*, that was to influence English rape law for many years, and which echoed Glanvill's instructions on the actions that a woman should take in order to report a rape:

> Forthwith and whilst the act is fresh, she ought to repair with hue and cry, to the neighbouring vills, and there display to honest men the injury done to her, the blood and her dress stained with blood, and the tearing of her dress.[48]

As in Glanvill, the evidential process required the victim to display the physical injuries she had sustained, or failing that, the damage done to her clothing that had resulted from a physical struggle with her rapist.

In Bracton's treatise, as in previous legal documents, evidence of violated virginity was an essential element of the proof that was needed to confirm that a rape had occurred. In the event that a man denied raping a virgin, according to Bracton the victim was required to submit to an intimate physical examination:

> in which case the truth may be proved by the inspection of her person, and by four loyal women sworn to speak the truth whether she is a virgin or has been deflowered.[49]

This must have been a humiliating procedure for a woman who, having endured a serious sexual assault, had already been required to display her injuries to a group of prominent men, before submitting to an intimate physical examination. In order for this jury of women to be able to determine loss of virginity, the assault had to have been sufficiently violent so as to have produced injury to the vagina, or at least to have resulted in a bloody de-hymenisation. Kim Solga comments on the emphasis in medieval law, and in particular the works of Glanvill and Bracton, on the showing of blood in the hue and cry process:

> primary emphasis during rape's initial revelation is placed on a victim's show of injury and blood; the implication is that visual evidence carries the burden of proof, and that subsequent official proclamations are made possible by that initial visual evidence.[50]

Bracton emphasised the value of virginity in his views on the appropriate punishments for rape, and while he acknowledged that "the king ought to protect for the sake of his own peace," all women, he went further to draw a distinction between the penalties that should be imposed according to a hierarchical categorisation of victims who were not virgins at the time of their rape including a "Married [woman] or a widow, living a respectable life, a nun or a matron, a recognised concubine or a prostitute – plying her trade".[51] Bracton distinguished between these groups of women stating that "there will not be in each case a like punishment", recommending the most severe punishment for a rapist who took away the virginity of his victim:

> when a virgin is deflowered, she loses a member, and therefore the deflowerer should be punished in that member with which he has offended, let him therefore lose his eyes, on account of his looking at the beauty, for which he coveted possession of the virgin, and let him lose his testicles, which brought

> on the lust of ravishment.[52]

As Donatella Pallotti suggests, “rape depends, for Bracton, on two factors: first, the (potential) relationship between the raped woman and another man: second, the quality of the loss”.[53] So important was the loss of virginity, that in the case of an assault which involved repeated rapes by more than one assailant, Bracton asserted that, “only one shall be liable for deflowering her,” and that while those who raped her afterwards should also be punished “the like punishment should not follow each act,” because only the first rapist was responsible for taking the victim’s virginity.[54] For Bracton the essence of the crime was in the actual destruction of the hymen, the physical manifestation of the victim’s virginity. As Barbara Baines suggests:

> The quality of the damaged property determines the punishment, and virginity, signified by the hymen, is “a member” that literally “embodies” chastity, thus rendering a moral virtue visible in the body and thereby defining the value of the woman.[55]

Once she had been raped, the woman’s hymen was torn and she was no longer a virgin, the extent of her subsequent resistance to further assaults seemed irrelevant as her status as ‘virgin’ was irrevocably destroyed. That the loss of physical virginity made a woman less desirable as a potential marriage partner is evident from the nature of punishments inflicted upon rapists, and in the fact that from Old Testament times onwards, a rapist could make restitution for his offence through marriage to the victim and payment in compensation to her father, recompense in fact for the theft of her valuable virginity. Bracton also allowed for the possibility that a woman might spare her rapist from facing punishments of life and limb by agreeing to marry him. As Baines comments, “only a society conceiving of the raped woman as “defiled” – Glanvill’s and Bracton’s recurring term – and thus as an unmarketable commodity

would conceive of such a solution".[56] Bracton did however insist that marriage between a woman and her rapist could only be arranged at the request of the woman, in order to avoid the possibility that a "serf or ignoble man" might rape a woman of higher social status in order to advance his own position through marriage.[57]

Bracton's treatise was of further significance because it included an outline of the format that ought to be used by a rape victim in her appeal:

> A. being such a woman for instance appeals B. that as she was in such a place, on such a day, in such a year &c. as above, or when she was going from such a place to such a place, or when she was in such a place engaged in doing such a work, the said B. came with violence and wickedly and against the peace of the king had connection with her, and took away her pucelage or virginity.[58]

The inclusion of reference to 'taking away' the victim's virginity, and to the use of violence in this pro-forma statement appears to have had a lasting influence on the way in which rape victims presented their accounts within the legal process, as thereafter these statements frequently included an explanation of where and when the rape had occurred, described the level of violence used by the rapist against the woman during the attack, and where applicable made reference to the resultant loss of virginity. An example is to be found in the 1248 complaint of Margery, daughter of Emma de la Hulle, who alleged that Nicholas, son of Geoffrey of Whatcomb, "came to her between Bagnor and Boxford in a certain place which is known as Bagnor Wood … and raped her virginity".[59]

Kim Phillips, commenting on rape testimonies from the early thirteenth century, observes that, "it is notable that the locations described are usually at some remove from a domestic setting – a wood, a park, a moor".[60] This seems to coalesce with Bracton's requirement that a rape victim should raise the hue and cry on her return to a more heavily

populated area after the assault. Caroline Dunn suggests that the emphasis on remote locations in accounts of rape from the medieval period may have been a matter of convenience, because "would-be rapists needed privacy for both capturing a woman and assaulting her".[61] Dunn makes a distinction between the typical locations for rapes in the countryside and in the town:

> Women were most vulnerable in sparsely populated areas … Rural women tended to be raped at the site of their capture, or brought to other outside locations before they were raped … While most rural women were violated out-of-doors, urban victims almost always alleged that the assault occurred indoors, even if they were taken from the street outside.[62]

This is interesting because some internal urban spaces would have created similar conditions of isolation to the remote external locations in which a lone woman was acknowledged to be at risk of rape, thus rendering some private spaces equally hazardous. Location is a key factor in Shakespeare's works that include rape or threatened rape. The rape of Lavinia takes place in a hostile woodland location, and in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Demetrius threatens Helena with rape in a similarly remote environment. The sexual danger inherent in the intimacy of a private space is represented by Lucrece's rape in the narrative poem which is echoed by Iachimo's violation of Innogen's private space in *Cymbeline*.

Jeremy Goldberg cites the case of Agnes Grantham as an example of the medieval attitude towards rural locations, which was evident in some rape appeals. Agnes brought a case of forced marriage against her husband, John Dale, claiming that he abducted her by force on the highway and took her into nearby woods:

> To the medieval mind, this represented not a transition from the bustle of town life, … a couple of miles outside York, to the tranquillity of countryside and nature, but something much more threatening … Woods were the haunt of wild animals and outlaws. In woods, travellers are attacked, women violated. They were frightening and threatening places.[63]

Similarly in the appeal of Christian Woodstock against Simon, lay brother of Standley, it was alleged that, “he came to her in a certain park which is known as Dedemore in Wicklesham on the Friday [25 May 1246] before Whitsun before the hour of vespers in the 30th year and there raped her virginity”.[64] As Vespers occurred at sunset in the middle ages, this reference to the timing of the assault in this account is significant because it implies that the attack occurred in twilight, where the implicit danger of a remote location might be assumed to be greater than during daylight hours. It is also the case that the hue and cry might be less effective in evening and night time hours when darkness provided cover both for a crime to be committed and for the protagonist to escape, Kenneth Duggan suggests that as a result:

> Villagers put much effort into ensuring that clerks recorded whether or not crime had occurred at night, thereby providing their communities with a justifiable excuse for not apprehending suspected criminals.[65]

In *The Rape of* Lucrece the seclusion provided by the night time darkness serves to facilitate the rape, and in *Cymbeline* Innogen’s bed-chamber is invaded at night while she sleeps.

In a complaint of rape which was presented in Shropshire in 1256:

> Agnes daughter of Adam Mason of Wrockwardine appealed Adam Turner in the shire court, [alleging] that when she was in the peace of the lord king in Newport … Adam came there and seized her and dragged her outside that township to a place called the Weald Moors, and there he threw her down and maltreated her and raped her of her virginity by force.[66]

This case includes several of the components of the proforma rape appeal recommended by Bracton as it contains a description of the location of the assault, reference to the level of violence that was used to overcome the victim and a claim that her virginity was taken in the rape. Making reference to a similar record, Kim M. Phillips suggests that this “narrative represents … a perfect crime of rape, as seen in the era between Bracton and Westminster I”,

referring to an assault "in such a wood" where Alice de C's assailant called her "vile names" and then:

> seized her, feloniously as a felon, and laid her down beneath an oak tree, tied her hands together with the cord of his yew bow; with his left hand he held her so feloniously by the throat that she could in no wise escape from him nor shout nor make a noise, and with his right hand he forced open her legs and thighs, and, by violence and against her free will, he raped her [virginity] in such a way as to make a thorough job of it.[67]

Here again, the account refers to the remote location of the assault, which is implied by the reference to the oak tree, to the force and threat of force (he was clearly armed with a bow), and to the fact that the victim's virginity was lost. In this instance it is also documented that the victim was unable to call out because her assailant was strangling her, and this is a feature which appears in a number of accounts where an explanation is recorded to account for the fact that the victim either did not cry out, or was unheard if she did attempt to call for help during the assault. In both of Shakespeare's rape texts the victims are silenced by their rapists at the beginning of the assault and are unable to cry for help.

From the medieval period onwards the reliance on the hue and cry as the process for initially reporting a rape was also a means by which the prevalence of the crime could be vastly under-estimated. The process relied upon the victim of an offence, or a witness to it, raising the hue and cry, and as there was most often no witness to a rape, this burden fell predominantly upon the victim herself, as Miriam Müller observes:

> On the one hand the 'offence' had to be witnessed in order for the hue to be raised, and on the other, [...] if the witness in question decided to ignore the crime, no hue was raised.[68]

This meant that if the rape victim chose not to raise the hue and cry, the crime went unreported, and if she did decide to raise the cry, and she was not heard, she had to provide

physical evidence to support her claim of rape, together with an explanation of why her cries for help had not been answered if she was in a populated location at the time. Of course, even if she did so there was no guarantee that she would be believed, or that her rapist would be convicted and, if the appeal was not upheld, the victim could face a charge of making a false appeal.

Having undergone the humiliating process of raising the hue and cry and providing details of the assault in her appeal, it appears that it might still have proved difficult for a woman to sustain her case and have her appeal upheld. There was a legal and cultural attitude to rape which necessitated evidence of the use of force against the victim to prove that she had withheld consent to sexual intercourse with her rapist, and it appears that an appeal of rape could be undermined if there was evidence to suggest that a woman had previously consented to sexual intercourse with the same man, the assumption being that once given, consent stood in perpetuity. In a case which was brought during 1218 to 1219, Simon, son of Alan, was acquitted of raping the complainant, Aldusa de Eton because, “he had had her for almost a year with her good will”.[69] Similarly, in a case brought before the Warwickshire Eyre in 1221, the defendant, Reginald, was acquitted of the rape of Mergery, daughter of Aelfric, “because a long time before this he had had her of her own free will, and again two years afterwards in the house of her father, and they say no cry was raised”.[70] In this case the accused cites evidence of a previous consensual sexual relationship with the victim, and her failure to cry for help within the secure environment of her own father’s house as evidence of consent.

With the legal system having made some progress towards separating the sexual crime of rape from abduction, elopement and associated property issues, the next significant piece of legislation which was to impact on the perception of the crime of rape in England appears to have resulted in a retrograde step that once again placed the interests of the raped woman in a secondary position to the interests of her family. The first Statute of Westminster in 1275 "forbade the ravishing, or taking away by force, of any woman, under age, maiden, wife or other," thus once again conflating the sexual offence of rape with abduction.[71] The statute also allowed for the king to start an action against the perpetrator of such an offence if no appeal was brought by the victim or their family within forty days. There was also a significant reduction in the level of punishment that a convicted rapist could expect to receive, as the brutal blood punishments recommended by Bracton were replaced by a far more lenient sentence of up to two years imprisonment and payment of a fine. The first Statute of Westminster therefore had the effect of downgrading the crime of rape to attract exactly the same punishment as abduction, which had previously been regarded as a trespass rather than as a felony. As a result of this reclassification of the offence "simultaneously the focus shifted from the rights of the female victim of forced sex to the interests of her family," in legislation that appears to have been designed more to address concerns about "issues of land tenure and inheritance," which could be undermined by abduction, than to address the plight of the victim of forcible sexual assault.[72] The reality of rape cases in medieval England was that many cases may have been forced abductions rather than sexual assaults, and cases that were prosecuted as abductions were sometimes elopements, "carried out with the full consent of the 'victim,' who was essentially fleeing home in order to enter into a marriage of which her

family did not approve".[73] In one case of abduction that came before the King's Bench in 1282:

> Rose, daughter of Nicholas le Savage, appeals John le Clifford of rape … John together with other unknown men wickedly and in felony aforethought … took the aforesaid Rose in his two arms forcibly and against [her] … will … And when she was disrobed he took her in his two arms and made her sleep with him … in the same bed and there held her all naked … and moreover he held Rose's hands with his left hand and raped her virginity so that the aforesaid Rose departed all bloody.[74]

From the limited details recorded in this appeal, the case appears to have been an abduction which culminated in forced sexual intercourse. It is clear that the incident began with an abduction, because it is recorded that Rose was taken away by her rapist and his accomplices before she was raped in his bed. There is no record of the outcome of the case, but it is reasonable to assume that having been kept for the night in her rapist's bed and forced to endure an assault which took her virginity, Rose may well have been forced to agree to marry him, and it is possible that this was the intended outcome of the abduction. It is, of course, also possible that the events recorded were not a rape at all and that Rose's appeal effectively disguised a consensual elopement as a felony. As in so many similar cases from the period, it is impossible to determine the real story behind the legal record.

The second statute of Westminster which was enacted in 1285, ten years after the first statute, was significant in that it regularised the 'hue and cry' process. The second statute provided that anyone who witnessed a crime *must* raise the hue and cry, and that all able-bodied men who heard it were obliged to assist in the apprehension of the offender; it also became an offence to raise the hue and cry falsely. The second statute, like the first, was concerned with addressing the property issues which arose as the result of abduction and elopement, by making it an offence to remove goods belonging to the husband of a married

woman in the course of a rape. When an abduction was reported in circumstances where the woman voluntarily left the marital home and took items with her, this was still considered to be a property crime. This change may have been introduced "to protect the property interests of the male head of the family as much as to preserve females from abduction and rape".[75] J.B. Post observes that:

> the Statutes of Westminster turned the law of rape into a law of elopement and abduction which inhibited the purpose of the woman herself … and fostered the interest of those who wanted material recompense for the material disparagement wrought by self-willed womenfolk and suitors.[76]

This is true to an extent, although the second statute also reintroduced the severe blood punishments for rape prescribed by Bracton, and in doing so addressed to a limited degree the inadequacies of the first statute. One case, from the period after the second statute, shows the potential enactment of a blood penalty when a defendant was convicted of raping his victim's "maidenhead by force" and it is recorded that his fate was left in the hands of his victim, so that because he was a married man and marriage was therefore not an option, unless the victim:

> had on advice withdrawn her appeal, it would have been adjudged that she should tear out John's eyes and cut off his testicles … but if he had been single, the judgement would have been that he marry her or have the same punishment.[77]

It is not recorded what the outcome of this case was, but clearly the victim was placed in an impossible position as she had to either personally inflict the brutal penalty on her rapist, or withdraw her complaint and allow him to go unpunished for his crime against her.

The Statutes of Westminster also extended the laws on rape to cover the rape of married women as well as virgins. Although the changes in the law brought about by these

statutes made it possible for married women to pursue their attackers through the courts, obtaining the necessary proof that they had been exposed to extreme force and had not consented to sexual intercourse must have been very difficult. As the married rape victim was highly unlikely to have remained a virgin after marriage, she was therefore denied the usual bloody proof of the de-hymenisation that constituted the evidence of rape that it was necessary for a virgin to provide. If it could not be proved that a married woman had offered sufficient resistance to her attacker she was deemed to be at fault and the accused could not be convicted of rape, although the Westminster Statutes did permit a much less serious charge of 'lesser ravishment'.[78] Indeed, it was not until 1845 that it was first legally recognised in England that rape could occur when consent was withheld even without the use or threat of force.[79]

Some records from the period after the enactment of the second Statute of Westminster record rapes which feature a combination of both abduction and sexual assault, some of which appear likely to have been enacted with the intention of forcing the victim to marry her assailant in order to obtain inherited property. The case of the widowed Maud Fullere, which was brought in 1384, combined both the property issues relating to forced abduction and rape in the sexual sense, and demonstrated that widows – as well as unmarried virgins – could become a target for abduction as a means to force a marriage. Maud claimed in her appeal that she was forcibly abducted, before being subjected to sexual intercourse against her will, and she complained that she was attacked by a group of six men who:

> ravished her outside her house there, put her on a horse to abduct her, and, because she would not sit or lie upon it, beat her, brought her back into her house and threatened her that if she would not marry him [William Wlips] they would immediately kill her, made her promise and compelled her to go to bed with him, and that he (the said William) feloniously knew her against her will.[80]

Given that the appeal records that Maud was a widow, it is possible that that the abduction and rape was part of what was effectively a plan to obtain the property that she had retained from her first marriage by forcing her into a situation whereby she would have few options other than to marry her assailant. There were, however, cases recorded during this period that were clearly rape in the sexual sense, with no property motive that is evident from the limited information contained in the record. The case of Emma de Feribi records that she was raped by an intruder in her home:

> John de Gernesaye entered by night the close of John de Feribi and feloniously seized Emma, the said John's daughter, drew her into her house, and lay with her against her will.[81]

The records of the Lincolnshire Peace Sessions for 1381, record the violent rape of twelve-year-old 'Agnes', whose attacker, "cut her with his knife … and … raped her and knew her carnally against her will".[82] The reference in this record to the fact that the victim was 'raped' together with the additional information that she was 'carnally' known 'against her will,' seems intended to emphasise that this particular case was most definitely rape in the sexual sense. Similarly, in a case recorded in the Yorkshire Peace Sessions for 1363, the seriousness of the assault on Ellen Kate Mayden is emphasised by the explanation of the nature of the attack:

> Elias Warner … feloniously raped Ellen Kate Mayden … and lay with her against her will and assaulted her and so battered her that she died within the next three days.[83]

Examples of this level of explanation are to be found in a number of additional cases from the period following the implementation of the Statutes of Westminster. Two such cases, both of which are recorded in the proceedings of the Lincolnshire Peace Sessions, clearly define

attacks classified as ‘rape’ as cases of forced sexual intercourse. In 1306, a case in Trailbaston in Wiltshire records that Henry Hawys “rape[d] the virginity of Alice Godhyne and carnally knew her”.[84] In the records for 1388, a case recorded that the accused, “raped, lay with, and violated,” his victim, and in 1395, “John Helwell … bound Alice … feloniously raped her there and violated her body”.[85] In all of these cases the language used makes the sexual nature of the assault explicit, so that there can be no doubt that these were sexual crimes, rather than matters of elopement or abduction. James Sharpe suggests that as early as medieval times, courts were capable of making the distinction between crimes of rape and abduction, and that this differentiation was evident in the terminology used to record details of an offence where “a charge of rape might well specifically state that the accused had had carnal knowledge of a woman against her will or had violated her body”.[86] The case of Joan the daughter of Eustace who appealed a case of rape against Reymund de L. presents what seems to have been an unusually graphic description of a rape:

> And in the midst of the room, the same [Reymund] … took this same Joan … between his two arms and against her consent and will laid her on the ground with her belly upwards and her back on the ground, and with his right hand raised the clothes of the same Joan … with both his hands separated the legs and thighs of this same Joan, and with his right hand took his male organ of such and such a length and size and put it in the secret parts of this same Joan, and bruised her watershed and laid her open so that she was bleeding and ravished her maidenhead.[87]

J. G. Bellamy has commented on this rape appeal noting the similarity with an appeal of homicide:

> telling where the deed was done (the assailant’s chamber), how the victim was physically seized (laid on the floor and derobed), what type and size of weapon was used (the penis, of certain dimensions), and what injury was received (bruised her watershed …)[88]

The level of detail provided in this description of the assault may have been intended to demonstrate clearly that this had been a serious sexual assault, and not a case of abduction, or consensual sexual intercourse.

There is some evidence in court records of cases where adult women faced prosecution for procuring young women to be raped and possibly to enter a career in prostitution. Ruth Mazo Karras cites two such cases including that of Agnes Smith who encouraged nine-year-old Agnes Turner to enter her house where she had:

> conceal[d] a certain young man … and then the door of the said house being falsely and damnably closed, the said Agnes Turner would have been damnably deflowered by the said youth except for the people who came running at the cries of the said Agnes Turner, and she was easily rescued.[89]

Clearly, Agnes Turner called out and escaped rape because her cries were heard and she was rescued, but the thirteen-year-old victim in the case of Elizabeth Knight, was less fortunate after she:

> went with a man to the said Knight's house, and when she was come there she was sent up to the chamber and the said Elizabeth Knight shut fast the lower door and there she found the said man ready, who took her in his arms, and she cried, and he stopped her mouth and against her will he had to do with her.[90]

From classical times whether or not there was evidence of physical force and resistance to sexual assault a general lack of medical knowledge led to inaccurate theories about the nature of conception, which persisted to the end of the seventeenth century, and which served to further complicate the issue of rape. The writings of the classical physician and philosopher Galen suggested that women also experienced ejaculation and that this resulted in the production of the female 'seed', the implication being that in order to conceive a child it was necessary for a woman to experience an orgasm:

> Medieval texts of theoretical medicine and of natural philosophy establish, under the influence of Galen, a strong connection between sexual pleasure and conception; in fact, the medical consensus is that conception does not occur without the *delectation* of the woman as well as the man.[91]

Galen's works influenced European medical thought well into the nineteenth century and Shakespeare was certainly aware of them as he made four references to Galen in his work.[92] This theory of conception provided mitigating circumstances for many men to defend themselves against an accusation of rape, because if a woman conceived a child by her rapist, it was thought that she must have had an orgasm and had therefore experienced sexual pleasure, and thus by implication consented to the act of sexual intercourse, so that "in the context of … forced sex, pregnancy imprinted guilt upon women's bodies".[93] The theory that conception could only occur as the result of consensual sexual intercourse was certainly used in medieval times as a potential defence against an accusation of rape. Corrine Saunders commented that the "legal status of rape appears to have been further complicated by the popular medical belief that a raped woman could not conceive a child".[94] An unproven case of rape from the Year Book of Edward II for 1313 -1314 records a defence from the accused of a previous sexual relationship with the complainant as "he had lain with her in the 13 year and she spoke of no rape." Furthermore, when it became evident that the accused was the father of his victim's child, he was found not guilty, "because a child could not be engendered without the will of both".[95]

A significant development in the legal treatment of rape came in 1487 during the reign of Henry VII when the 'Act against taking awaye of women against theire willes' was passed. Key within this act was the fact that it made the stand-alone offence of abduction a felony. Nazife Bashar suggests that this act, together with the two statutes of Westminster,

were intended as a means of protecting property rights, “rather than to protect a woman’s rights and sexual self-determination,” and Kim Phillips suggests that this 1487 legislation completed a process begun in the Westminster statutes whereby, “the crimes of abduction and rape, previously distinct as trespass and felony respectively, become conflated”.[96] However, by making abduction a stand-alone felony, there may have been a consequential reduction in the number of prosecutions which featured abductions and elopements that were intentionally disguised as claims of rape, meaning that rape cases brought to court thereafter, “were probably about rapes in the modern sense, that is assaults for sexual purposes”.[97]

Complaints of rape which came before the courts during the period in which Shakespeare was writing show a degree of homogeneity in the format of their presentation, and many of these reports reflect the emphasis on raising the hue and cry, which was developed from some of the earliest cultural and legal procedures. In particular, there seems to have been a common emphasis on providing a description of the location in terms which demonstrated that it in some way facilitated the rape, either because of its rural remoteness, or its isolation within an urban environment. A number of accounts were written in a manner that demonstrated how the nature of the location in which the rape had occurred somehow prevented the victim from raising the hue and cry at the time of the assault, or meant that if she did cry for help, she could not be heard. In a case which came before the Essex Church Courts in 1590 Joan Somers was charged with fornication, and as her defence she claimed that:

> Upon a certain working day, happening about Christmas last, she being in a plough field serving of her dame’s cattle, Rice Evans came unto her and told her that she might now cry her heart out before anybody could hear her cry, and so

> indeed as she saith he did violently abuse her body and committed fornication with her.[98]

This entry in the court register is apparently left unfinished so there is no record of whether a conviction for fornication was brought against Somers, or if Evans was subsequently tried for rape, but what it does show is an awareness of the fact that a lone milking maid in a field populated solely by cattle presented the possibility of sexual misconduct, and whether it was Evans who seized the opportunity to assault the innocent Somers, or she who saw the prospect of a believable defence against an accusation of fornication is impossible to ascertain.

The Assize records for the Home Circuit during the reign of Elizabeth I, though containing only basic details of each case brought before the Justices of Assize, include references to the outdoor, and fairly remote locations of some rapes. Examples include the cases of Nicholas Nicholas of Reigate in Surrey, who was alleged to have raped Elizabeth Lyffe "in a field", James Purser of Ashford was accused of raping Agnes Wevell, "in a field near the village," of Ashford, Edward Earles was accused of raping Alice Thurston "in the highway at Gadshill," and John Fox of Rainham was found guilty and sentenced to hang for the rape of Agnes Briseden, "in a field called 'Symes' at Rainham".[99] The case of Anthony Casse further highlights the potential danger faced by a woman who ventured into a secluded outdoor location, as it is recorded that Casse, "fearing that Judith would reveal the fact that he had earlier ravished her, took her into a field … where he broke her neck and threw her into a pond".[100] It is recorded that Casse was found guilty of the offence, and was sentenced to hang, though whether the death sentence was imposed in this instance because the rape had led to the murder of the victim, rather than as a result of the sexual offence is not known. The

testimony of Margaret Hesketh, while documenting the thirteen-year-old's frantic, and unsuccessful attempt to flee from her rapist also emphasised the remoteness of the rural environment in which the assault occurred:

> John Wolfe … said he would fuck me and I said he should not and I forthwith run away as fast I could and got over two hedges and John Wolfe and Joseph Lowe run after me and overtook me in the next field but one.[101]

The location ultimately provided the isolation needed for the rape to be completed as throughout the assault Margaret recalled that there was, "no person passing by to interrupt him".[102] While ultimately unable to avoid being raped, Margaret Hesketh emphasised in her testimony that she cried out and did everything possible to resist her attacker who could have been in little doubt that she did not consent to sexual intercourse, as in addition to saying that "he should not", she claimed that:

> I cried mainly out and struggled with him as long as my breath would serve … I endeavoured to hinder him as much as I could, all the while crying and struggling with him according to my strength.[103]

Legal records from the reign of Elizabeth I also demonstrate that the danger of rape and sexual assault was not confined to remote locations, because there are also a number of records which refer to rapes having occurred within a domestic environment. Garthine Walker observes that "in narratives of sexual abuse, doors and walls could serve as barriers between women and either rapist or escape," so that private spaces, which would generally form places of security, could also on occasion provide a man with the isolation and opportunity needed to commit a rape.[104] Indeed, it seems in some instances that the intimate space of a private residence could provide a different form of isolated wilderness, in which closed doors and locks proved as effective in entrapping the victim of sexual aggression, as

they might have been presumed to be in providing security from assault. This is evident in the case of Margaret Baker, who claimed that she was taken by her assailant, William Hill, into his house where he “shut his doors upon her and in his bedchamber did rear her up to a chest” before raping her.[105] Another man, John Hardye, was accused of the rape of the nine year old Fargood Bradbelt, which took place at an unspecified urban location within Hardye’s home town of Hatfield Peverel, and the rapes of Uria Chapman, and Margaret Jennings, both occurred “in the house of John Harding”.[106] Madeline Soper’s account of her rape at the hands of a bellringer explains that her cries for help could not be heard because the assault occurred in the ‘turret’ of the Royal Exchange where “being so high she could not be heard although as she saith she tried very loudly”.[107] The Assize records for Kent show that John Henshaw was accused of the rapes of sisters Alice and Agnes Keeling in two separate incidents, both of which occurred in the house of Richard Halpenye. The deposition of Earth Bickley, recorded in March 1598, records the rape of a married woman sent by her husband to the home of her rapist to sell yarn. The account given provides a detailed record of the assault, which includes an explanation of how Earth was trapped by her assailant within his home, before being subjected to a violent rape:

> He did put to the chamber door, and then took her fast about the middle with both his arms in forcible manner against her will. And did cast her down against the edge of a certain coffer and did by the means of the sudden assaulting and laying of violent hands upon her so astonish her that she does not remember whether she did call or cry out for help or not. But says and affirms that he did immediately thereupon forcibly and against her will ravish her and had carnal knowledge of her body without any consent yielded by her.[108]

Having mitigated for the fact that Earth had been unable to raise the hue and cry at the time of the assault, and had evidently not been heard to cry out, an account is given of the injuries she

sustained as a result of the violent force used in the attack:

> he had thrust her so violently against the said coffer, that her back was very sore; so that upon examination by her husband he did 'perceive to be black and blue behind in the lower part of her back'.[109]

Earth was a married woman, and was presumably therefore not a virgin, so there was no showing of blood to support her claim of rape, but the account suggests that she nevertheless complied with the requirements of the 'hue and cry' format by explaining why she could not cry out, or why she had not been heard if she did, and displaying visual evidence of her injuries on examination to determine at the very least that force had been used.

There are numerous other records from the period which demonstrate that the domestic environment was potentially as dangerous for vulnerable women as was a remote rural location. Some of these accounts recall situations in which the victims possibly knew their rapists, as either the victim or rapist appears to have been invited into the home of the other. One such case is that of John Corbett, who was accused of raping Mary Blunte "in his house at Southwark," and that of William Poynet of Ulcombe who was accused of raping Susan Haslam "in his house".[110] In a case from the Surrey Assizes, John Davie was accused of raping Anne Wood, "in the house of Agnes Wood, widow, his mistress".[111] There is nothing in the record to suggest the nature of the relationship between these two women beyond their shared surname, but the account implies that Davie had a relationship with Agnes at the time that he assaulted Anne, so it would appear likely that one or other of the women invited him into the property where the rape occurred.

Other cases in the assize records refer to rapes which occurred alongside another offence, such as that of John Goslyng of Southwark who “broke into the house of Robert Darby … and raped Margaret Darby, his daughter”.[112] In what appears to have been a similar incident from the Essex Assizes, there is a record of the indictment of Pierce Meredes (or Harris) for the rape of Mary Allington, which occurred when he “broke into the house of William Allington,” and George Burley was found not guilty of the rape of Joan Elliot, who alleged that he raped her after breaking into her home.[113] In these circumstances, the records may recall an opportunist assault which occurred spontaneously during a burglary, however the assize records contain only very brief details of each case, and it is possible that the reports do not accurately reflect the true nature of all cases. J.G. Bellamy comments on records of rape cases from the period where it appears that a rape occurred alongside an act of theft:

> The majority of rape indictments in the plea rolls of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as well as mentioning the attack itself give the additional information that goods were taken. Although we cannot prove it, there is every likelihood that this property was in the personal possession of the victim and that she was being abducted for the purpose of marriage, or at least cohabitation, rather than being sexually assaulted *in situ*.[114]

This view casts a slightly different slant on those cases where it is reported that an assailant broke into the home of another man, raped a member of his family, and stole property from the house because some of the cases could actually represent a situation where a daughter eloped voluntarily from the family home, or a wife left her husband with another man, taking her own property with her, and the disaffected father or husband lodged a case of rape and burglary against the man concerned:

> These indictments usually state that the miscreant had broken into the house of X, raped his wife, and taken his goods, but since the charge was very likely based on the husband’s bill of indictment or his information to the indicting jury, the breaking-in may in fact have been a letting-in and the goods, in

practice, the wife's.[115]

Bellamy goes on to suggest that indictments brought during the reign of Elizabeth I generally refer only to an assault and do not make simultaneous reference to the theft of goods, thereby implying that "in the sixteenth century the verb *rapere* referred usually to sexual assault".[116]

An entry in the Church Court records of the Canterbury Diocese for 1559 to 1565 suggests an apparent abduction:

> Henry Lawe of Sittingbourne has taken away a maid for the parish who was servant to Thomas Nethersole. No banns or marriage.[117]

Whether this case represents the actual abduction of a woman against her own will, or a consensual elopement is unclear, but in either case a marginal note in the record records the subsequent marriage of the couple which presumably settled the matter, as there is no record of any penalty imposed on either party. Notably this account also contains no reference to any form of sexual assault, to the use of violence, or to any injury sustained by the victim, unlike some other reports from the reign of Elizabeth I where the use of force is clearly documented. This is evident in cases produced before the Justices of Assize during the relevant period, which, despite containing only very brief information about the offences, on occasions include details of violence, or the threat of violence used either against a woman during the course of the assault, or by the victim in an attempt to fight off her attacker. The Surrey assize records include an account of the alleged rape of a married woman, Elizabeth Lyffe where the threat of violence is implicit in the fact that her assailant was "armed with a bearing-bill and a dagger". The records of the Kent assizes for the same period, contain very sparse information, but nonetheless it is recorded that Edward Earles "assaulted Alice Thurston of Higham in the highway at Gadshill and raped her" and that William Collingborne "assaulted Susan Janson

and raped her".[119] Neither record contains any reference to the use, or threatened use, of a weapon during the attack, or of any injuries sustained by the victim, but it is possible that, as in earlier records, the references to both 'assault *and* rape' in these accounts implies that the victim was violently assaulted during the course of the rape. Jane Bingley's deposition to the Northern Circuit Assizes records that her rapist used violent force, and the threat of death to prevent her from crying out for help, as he:

> forcibly and violently threw me downe on the ground there and did hould both my hands, and lay upon my body, and had Carnal knowledge of my body against my will. And when I Cryed out for helpe he swore that if I did Cry out as I did, and not hould my tongue he would kill me.[120]

In a further case form the Northern Circuit Assizes, Hester Burton recorded details of a violent rape, as she alleged her assailant:

> tooke my horse by the bridle beating me on the face with his fist till I was bloody and forced me to alight … and being downe he fell upon me, struggling with me, almost strangling me with my hood and there forceably ravished me and had the Carnall use of my bodye against my will, I cryeing out but none came to helpe me.[121]

Garthine Walker suggests that the sexual component is absent from both of these depositions, and that "the imagery is all that of physical violence – actual or threatened – not of sex".[122] It is however, impossible to determine the extent to which the legal records of rape from this period record the actual testimony of the victim, and we cannot know whether these are verbatim accounts of the incident, or third party transcriptions, which were edited by a legal clerk to substitute "stock legal phrases for more colloquial expressions".[123] It is of course, also possible that victims self-edited their accounts when they gave evidence in order to include what they understood to be the elements of an assault that would have been required in order to define it as a rape. Mary Janson reports in her testimony how she was able to fight

off her attacker and avoid being raped, stating that William Cookson:

> threw me upon a bed and endeavoured with all his force to have carnal knowledge with me, but I struggled with him, and overcame him, and so with my maine strength I prevailed that he did not lie with me, and … I did not crye out because I saw I was strong enough for him.[124]

Although Mary was not raped, it seems that she still felt it was necessary to provide an explanation in her complaint of why she did not cry out during the assault, suggesting the possibility that Mary, or the court officers who transcribed her testimony, were following a pro-forma of the format for a complaint of rape, and needed to explain why the victim was unable to meet some of the evidential standards required to demonstrate that she had withheld her consent to sexual intercourse. Frequently victim testimonies made reference to environmental factors which facilitated the assault, and recorded how women were surprised in a wilderness location where there was no one to hear their cries, locked into a bedroom by their assailant, or assaulted by an intruder in their own homes. Once again, we cannot know whether these testimonies are a verbatim record of the women's experience, or if they were written by officers of the court who may have prompted the victim in order to fill in all sections of a proforma statement, perhaps in circumstances where:

> A scribe may have believed in a defendant's culpability and consequently inserted extra text in the appeal or indictment narrative that was later read to the jury.[125]

Many of the contemporary accounts of rape made by victims from the early medieval period and onwards through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and beyond suggest that there was an attempt either by victims or those who recorded their testimonies to adhere to the expectations of the 'hue and cry' evidential process. Victim accounts recorded that they called out, or included details of how they were prevented from doing so by their assailant,

who for example “stopped her mouth with his hands”.[126] Other victims detailed the level of violence, or threat of violence that was used in order to violate them by force. Virgin victims reported loss of blood, and married women and others who could no longer claim loss of virginity, catalogued bruises, scratches and other physical evidence of force. This emphasis on violence as the only acceptable proof of ravishment became so deeply ingrained in legal and social attitudes that it was still evident in the latter years of the twentieth century. Such attitudes can be traced amongst law enforcement authorities in Britain as late as 1975, one year before rape was finally defined in the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1976 (c.82) as sexual intercourse with a woman without her consent.[127] Writing in *Police Review*, a journal for police offers which was published in England until 2011, a senior police officer suggested that:

> the offence of rape is extremely unlikely to have been committed against a woman who does not immediately show signs of extreme violence.[128]

As this reliance on violent resistance to support a claim of rape persisted for so long, it seems likely that women living at the time that Shakespeare was writing would have known that proof of violent assault was an essential component of an appeal of rape.

The hue and cry process, in which the victim of rape was required to display her injuries in order to demonstrate the force used to overcome her, and the blood shed through de-hymenisation where she had previously been a virgin, was an attempt to provide visual evidence of a crime that did not always leave visual signs. In the same way the format of statements which appear through legal records of rape complaints make representation in writing of the crime, so that the evidential proof of the offence is in the compliance with the format of the appeal proforma. But in any case, these testimonies demonstrate a shared legal

and cultural perception of how rape should look, and of how it differed from consensual sexual intercourse, and the related offence of abduction and acts of consensual elopement. The process of recording a victim's complaint of rape in writing was therefore a key element in the legal process. Shakespeare would have been aware of this and in *Titus Andronicus* Lavinia, who is unable to speak because her rapists cut out her tongue, makes a written complaint by scratching the names of her rapists in the sand.

We also know that from the earliest times, it was very difficult for a woman to sustain a complaint of rape through to conviction:

> A woman, to have any hope of proving ravishment, had to complain at the time of the offence, to inform reliable people as soon as possible afterwards, must not conceive with child and must not have put herself in the position where the attacker could claim she had slept with him previously.[129]

The inaccurate theory that conception could only occur if both participants in sexual intercourse experience an orgasm also made it very difficult for a woman who conceived as the result of a rape to demonstrate that she had in fact withheld consent, and this too may have led to a reluctance amongst women to report a rape when it led to pregnancy, or to fears of conception. While many records from the reign of Elizabeth I represent the rape of a married woman, it remained the case that a woman who was not a virgin at the time of her rape could have her previous sexual history used against her, either to demonstrate that she was typically unchaste, and by implication lying, or to demonstrate that she had previously consented to sexual intercourse with the man she was accusing of rape. As in medieval times, when a woman who had not been a virgin prior to an attack complained to the courts, her previous sexual history could be used by the alleged rapist to undermine the complaint which had been made against him. F.G. Emmison refers to records of a case brought before the

church courts in 1602 in which a woman claimed that:

> a man 'did attempt her chastity and would have been naught with her', but her story was at once discounted when a third party testified that she had slept with two young men.[130]

Looking at rape today we benefit from a clear definition of the crime in English law.[131] But while the legal definition may be clear, from a cultural perspective there are still innumerable factors that blur the boundaries between what signifies consensual sexual intercourse and what constitutes rape, so that "one person's rape may be another's bad night".[132] Amidst these contradictory, confusing and constantly evolving perspectives, it is clear that rape remains the most intimate form of assault, and the views, experiences and responses of every victim of rape are individual and unique, to the extent that while there is a clear legal definition of the crime, individual women may have very different perspectives on where to draw the line between sexual coercion and rape. In sixteenth century England, the situation was subject to even greater complexity. Shakespeare wrote about rape at a time when the legal history and cultural attitudes to the crime allowed for confusion between forced sexual intercourse, abduction and elopement. We cannot always be certain which of the surviving court records from the period are actually representative of sexual crime; neither do we know how many instances of rape went unreported, or precisely how many of the complaints of rape that were lodged failed to result in conviction. We do know that location was considered to be a key factor in enabling or preventing a rape and that remote rural locations were considered to carry an inherent risk of rape for a lone woman and we would expect to see this reflected in Shakespeare's work. From looking at how rape laws developed and reviewing the testimonies of rape victims, we also know that there were clear

expectations of how a woman should behave if she was raped. At the time that Shakespeare was writing about rape, the women in his audience knew that if they were attacked they must cry for help, and that if they were raped, they must explain why their cries went unheard; they must also display the physical signs of rape: vaginal bleeding if they had been a virgin, or torn clothing, cuts and bruises if they were not as evidence that they had resisted their attacker. These women would also have known that, regardless of whether their testimony complied with the cultural and legal expectations, if they had a previous sexual history with their rapist, or if they fell pregnant as a result of the rape, they would not be believed and could be punished by the law for bringing a false appeal. If his audience knew this, then Shakespeare must have known it too, and we would expect his work to reflect the relevance of location, to include an attempt to raise the hue and cry and a showing of blood or evidence of the use of violent force whenever he wrote about rape.

Chapter 2

Rape in *Titus Andronicus* and *The Rape of Lucrece*

This chapter will discuss the representation of rape in *Titus Andronicus* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, which are the only works known to be written by Shakespeare that include a rape within their narrative context. The first section will look at the relevance of location in the two works and will show that Shakespeare's two rape victims are silenced by their attackers to prevent them from calling for help. The rape of Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus* occurs off-stage and Lucrece is raped between the lines of the narrative poem and the second section of this chapter will show how Shakespeare represents the rapes metaphorically to give them currency within the narrative of the two works. The final section will show how the hue and cry evidential process is represented in both of the works, from the silencing of the women,

through the raising of the hue and cry and the provision of a showing of blood as evidence that a rape has occurred.

I

"Fitted by kind for rape and villainy"

At the time that Shakespeare wrote *Titus Andronicus* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, the dangers lurking in remote woodland locations had been acknowledged for centuries in traditional attitudes to rape and in English law through the 'hue and cry' process. As explored in the previous chapter a cultural and legal tradition had developed which found the rape of a women in a remote location, where her cries for help could not be heard, to be more easily proven than an assault in an urban location. Forests would seem to have provided ideal locations for the worst kinds of criminal behaviour because they combined the seclusion of dense woodland with a distinct separation from heavily populated areas. Wooded areas would have offered an environment where there was natural cover to enable would-be attackers to stalk and hide from their potential victims and in which the victim of an assault could cry loudly without much hope of being heard. Anne Barton observes that "forests have always been, and remain to this day, favoured locations for rape and murder" noting that "it is the nature of forests both in literature and life, *not* to be safe".[133] There is little doubt that Shakespeare's audience would have been aware of the dangers that could befall a woman who found herself alone in the woods and they would have recognised the forest outside the city of Rome as a characteristic and expected location for the rape of Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus*.

In fact, Lavinia is the victim of two incidents which fall within the contemporary context of rape. The contrast between the city of Rome and the forest beyond it is evident in the different outcomes of the two incidents she suffers, both of which are described as rape. When Titus attempts to give his daughter in marriage to the Emperor Saturninus, the act is witnessed by her brothers who quickly rescue and restore her to Bassianus, her betrothed and the brother of Saturninus. It is an act that the emperor describes as rape with a warning that initiates the cycle of revenge that runs throughout the play: “Thou and thy faction shall repent this rape” (1.1.407). As demonstrated in the previous chapter there was a long established cultural and legal tradition in which the term rape was used to refer to abduction as well as to the sexual crime. The first use of the word rape in the play refers to the crime of abduction, but has the effect of prefiguring the sexual assault that is to come because the precedent has already been set for Lavinia to be exchanged between a pair of brothers, in an incident that is described as rape. Whitney Sperazza suggests that “the entire opening scene … unfolds as a series of readings of and increasingly aggressive claims to Lavinia from Bassianus, Saturninus, Titus and finally, Chiron and Demetrius”.[134] In this way the abduction of Lavinia in the opening scene leads into her subsequent physical rape where she segues from her role as a potential bride, passed from Titus to Saturninus and back to his sibling Bassianus, to that of her ultimate objectification as the victim of a brutal gang rape.

When Bassianus and Lavinia encounter Aaron, Tamora and her sons - Chiron and Demetrius - in the forest, the outcome of the encounter is very different from the exchange between Saturninus and Bassianus in the city because there is no one to protect them from murder and sexual violence. It is Aaron who establishes the suitability of the forest location for

Chiron and Demetrius to commit rape, making clear the distinction between the emperor's court where the "palace full of tongues, of eyes, of ears" (2.1.134) provides many potential witnesses for any misdeed, and the woods which in contrast are "ruthless, dreadful, deaf and dull" (2.1.135) and as such are "Fitted by kind for rape and villainy" (2.1.123). When Lavinia and Bassianus encounter Aaron and Tamora in the forest, Lavinia comments that "This valley fits the purpose passing well" (2.3.84), Lavinia's reference here to the woodland is to its purpose as a location for an adulterous assignation between Tamora and Aaron, but unconsciously Lavinia's observation about the suitability of the spot for illicit sexual activity prefigures another 'purpose' because it is also where she will be raped. Towards the end of the play Tamora, disguised as Revenge, makes a direct association between the remote wilderness and the crimes of rape and murder:

> There's not a hollow cave or lurking place,
> No vast obscurity or misty vale
> Where bloody murder or detested rape
> Can couch for fear
> (5.2.35-38)

Tamora's words here foreshadow the designation a few lines later of Chiron and Demetrius as "Rape and Murder" (5.2.45) so that the two brothers become personifications of the crimes they have committed. This reference back to the woodland location for the murder of Bassianus and the rape of Lavinia draws the focus back to the crimes and prefigures the punishments that are soon to be inflicted on all three protagonists.

The location for the rape of Lucrece in Shakespeare's narrative poem is different: unlike Lavinia, Lucrece is raped indoors in her home where it might be supposed that she ought to be safe. Yet in fact, it becomes apparent as the narrative progresses that there are a number of factors which combine to make the domestic environment as equally suited to acts

of 'rape and villainy' as the forest. In both works, a key element that enables rape is opportunity. In *Titus Andronicus*, the hunt provides a reason for Lavinia and Bassianus to enter the forest, and a distraction for the remainder of the emperor's court, which ensures that no one is available to come to their aid. *The Rape of Lucrece*, begins with Collatine lodged in a military encampment, trading boasts of "the incomparable chastity of his wife" (Argument, l.9), with his companions. Joan Lord Hall suggests that:

> the poem is situated in the patriarchal society of Rome, where men compete not only for military honour but for who owns the most beautiful and chaste wife.[135]

It is this sense of masculine competition that inspires Tarquin to commit rape, Lucrece is established to be both beautiful and chaste, but primarily it is the fact that she belongs to another man that motivates Tarquin to want to possess her himself. This boasting leaves Tarquin, "inflamed with Lucrece' beauty" (Argument, l.16) and chastity, "Haply that name of 'chaste' unhappily set / This bateless edge on his keen appetite (ll.8-9), as Kaye Stanton suggests, "had she not been the epitome of chastity, Tarquin's desire for her would not have been so inspired".[136] Aroused by the description of Lucrece, Tarquin promptly leaves Collatine and the remainder of the troop behind in the camp and travels to visit Lucrece at her home where he knows she is without the protection of her husband and therefore potentially vulnerable.

After the rape, Lucrece makes it clear that she in part blames the opportunity afforded by Collatine's absence at the time of the assault. Lucrece personifies 'opportunity' who becomes a character in the narrative and as such is complicit in her rape – "'O Opportunity, thy guilt is great!" (l.876) – suggesting that it was the 'opportunity' of her solitary

situation that created the circumstances in which she could be raped:

> My Collatine would else have come to me
> When Tarquin did, but he was stayed by thee.
> (ll.916-917)

However, it is not solely the opportunity afforded by Collatine's absence that enables the rape. The assault is also facilitated by the fact that Lucrece is isolated within her bedchamber, unconscious of the danger lurking outside. This vulnerability in the isolation of the domestic environment is ironic because the development of rape law and cultural attitudes suggested that it was the wilderness of a remote countryside environment which presented the greatest danger to a lone woman. Yet the contemporary complaints of women raped within the domestic space demonstrate that this environment could also offer the seclusion that a rapist required. The vulnerability of a lone woman in a private home is evident in the case of Earth Bickley whose rapist "did put to the chamber door" and of Margaret Baker whose attacker "shut his doors upon her".[137] In both cases, the women were trapped by their attackers in a domestic space before being raped.

As shown in the previous chapter, there are numerous further examples from contemporary complaints of rape, which demonstrate that it was relatively common for rapes to occur within an urban indoor space. There is also a strong sense that the wilderness invades Lucrece's bedchamber while she sleeps alone. As night falls, the narrative suggests that the environment surrounding her room progressively takes on many of the characteristics of the forest:

> Till sable night, mother of dread and fear,
> Upon the world dim darkness doth display
> And in her vaulty prison stows the day.

(ll.117-119)

This description of approaching night creates a sinister impression, and like the "ruthless, dreadful, deaf and dull" (2.1.135) forest of *Titus Andronicus*, the night-time world of Collatium is temporarily inhabited by no one, "Save thieves and cares and troubled minds that wake" (l.126). Later, when Tarquin embarks on a course that will lead him to commit rape, he calls upon the seclusion of darkness to hide his actions, so that night becomes a further accomplice in his crime:

> The eye of heaven is out, and misty night
> Covers the shame that follows sweet delight.
> (ll.356-357)

As discussed in the previous chapter darkness made the apprehension of criminals more difficult thereby exacerbating the dangers faced by a lone woman in night-time hours and following her rape Lucrece describes the night as:

> Dim register and notary of shame!
> Black stage for tragedies and murders fell!
> Vast sin-concealing chaos!
> (ll.765-767)[138]

Just as the "many unfrequented plots … fitted by kind for rape and villainy" (2.1.122-123) conspire with the opportunity of Lavinia's presence in the forest to create a situation where she can be raped, the domestic night time solitude of Lucrece's bedchamber provides a form of intense isolation, removing her just as effectively from the protection afforded by civilisation. When Lucrece begs Tarquin to spare her, she "Pleads in a wilderness where are no laws" (l.544), suggesting that in the presence of Tarquin, her bedchamber has become as wild and hostile as a lonely outdoor space. Tarquin's evil intent combined with the opportunity of Collatine's absence and the cover of darkness effectively allows the isolation of the forest into

Lucrece's home, transforming her bedchamber into a perilous wilderness.

Opportunity similarly combines with location in *Titus Andronicus* to facilitate the rape of Lavinia and the murder of Bassianus, and a key factor in this is the hunt which has been arranged as a celebration of the emperor's marriage. Lavinia and Bassianus leave the relative security of the city and enter the forest in order to participate in the hunt little knowing the brutal fate that awaits them both. This hunt, however, is of far greater significance than a simple narrative device to move the characters into an appropriate location. Hunting images pervade the early scenes of the play and would have resonated with the contemporary audience, "many [of whom] would have been avid hunters".[139] The scene begins with Titus greeting both the dawn of the new day and the planned celebratory hunt:

> The hunt is up, the morn is bright and grey,
> The fields are fragrant and the woods are green:
> Uncouple here, and let us make a bay
> And wake the emperor and his lovely bride,
> And rouse the prince, and ring a hunter's peal,
> That all the court may echo with the noise.
> (2.2.1-6)

The tone of Titus' words here is positive and optimistic as he goes on to suggest that the new day brings with it a fresh start and a sense of catharsis. The war with the Goths is over, the disputes within Titus' own family and with the emperor over who Lavinia should marry have been resolved, and there is no sense yet of the horrific events that await the Andronicus family:

> I have been troubled in my sleep this night,
> But dawning day new comfort hath inspired.
> (2.2.9-10)

There is a sense of the positive courtly rituals of hunting in the descriptions that follow Titus' words. The hunt is to involve "horse and chariots" (2.2.19); the hunting dogs which Marcus describes appear to be superior creatures, able to "rouse the proudest panther in the chase / And climb the highest promontory top" (2.2.23-24); even Titus' horses are so fleet of foot that they will "follow where the game / Makes way and runs like swallows o'er the plain" (2.2.25-26). However, Edward Berry suggests that in contrast to the celebratory tone of Titus' words his greeting of the hunt reflects the traditional ending of the pursuit where the prey is slaughtered, and in doing so prefigures the later tragic denouement of the play:

> Titus' noisy salute is the hunting variant of the customary reveille by which newlyweds were awakened the morning after their marriage. The action itself, however, the uncoupling of hounds and making a bay pushes merriment to the edge of assault. It mimics the final stage of the hunt, when the hounds are released and the exhausted and encircled animal stands at bay to meet its death.[140]

There is certainly an ironic sense to the words that Titus speaks because his optimism is misplaced, and it is soon to be followed by events that will lead to the virtual annihilation of the Andronicus family. This device of using a character's words to foreground events that are yet to occur is used elsewhere in the play. In the opening scenes, Lavinia asks Titus, "O, bless me here with thy victorious hand" (1.1.163) and this prefigures the moment when Titus sacrifices his own hand in a futile attempt to save the lives of two of his sons – "Lend me thy hand and I will give thee mine" (3.1.188) – and his final actions where he uses his remaining hand to butcher Chiron and Demetrius – "This one hand yet is left to cut your throats" (5.2.181) – before using it to kill his daughter. This foreshadowing of later events has the effect of making the tragic denouement ever present within the narrative. As later chapters will show, the two rape texts themselves foreground the threats of rape in Shakespeare's

other plays ensuring that an audience familiar with *Titus Andronicus* and *The Rape of Lucrece* is aware of the possibility of a tragic outcome in these later works.

The optimistic sense of celebration that is conveyed by Titus before the hunt is soon degraded by the presence of another 'hunt' that runs parallel to the main event, and this is a very different kind of pursuit. Demetrius makes the nature of the illicit secondary hunt very clear when he effectively excludes himself and his brother from the legitimate sport. In doing so, he marks their pursuit of Lavinia as an activity that is set apart from the formal event:

> Chiron, we hunt not, we, with horse nor hound,
> But hope to pluck a dainty doe to ground.
> (2.2.27-28)

Lavinia is the 'dainty doe' referred to here and the use of the word 'pluck' in the last line implies the sexual nature of the enterprise. Gordon Williams glosses the word 'pluck' elsewhere in Shakespeare's work as referring to the taking of virginity.[141] Thus, in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Dumaine reads a sonnet in which the lover uses the word 'pluck' in this context saying:

> But alack, my hand is sworn
> Ne'er to pluck thee from thy thorn.
> Vow, alack, for youth unmet,
> Youth so apt to pluck a sweet.
> (4.3.104-107)

The word is used again in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, where Emilia refers to her virginity when lamenting that "I, a virgin flower, / Must grow alone, unplucked" (5.2.173-174). In the context of *Titus Andronicus*, Lavinia is presumably no longer a virgin because she is a married woman and the hunt takes place the morning after her wedding night, so that in this instance the term 'pluck' is indicative of rape both in terms of the violent act itself and the fact that this

represents the forcible taking of another man's wife. Jeanne Addison-Roberts notes the use of the hunt to suggest both the courtly sport and sexual conquest in Shakespeare's work suggesting that:

> The doubleness of the metaphorical hunt inevitably linked to the forest, is repeatedly insisted on throughout Shakespeare's works, regularly suggesting both pursuit of animals and sexual pursuit.[142]

The hunting metaphors that are used in *Titus Andronicus* are indicative of the pursuit and rape of Lavinia, and these images are also used to indicate the potential for rape elsewhere in Shakespeare's work.

There are a number of further references to hunting in *Titus Andronicus* that are directly associated with Lavinia's rape and which are indicative more specifically of poaching, rather than of a legitimate sport. Indeed, Edward Berry observes that:

> some of Shakespeare's most aggressive images of the hunt probably derive not from legitimate hunting but from poaching … the attack on Lavinia is conceived as an episode of poaching.[143]

It is Demetrius who first equates the intention to rape Lavinia with the poaching of deer:

> What, hast not thou full often struck a doe
> And borne her cleanly by the keeper's nose?
> (2.1.97-98)

The reference here to having 'struck a doe' has a double meaning as it implies an act of sexual intercourse as well as killing. Given the sexual sense of the metaphor at this point and the fact that Chiron and Demetrius are plotting to take a married woman from her husband, the suggestion that the brothers have *"full often"* taken a doe "*by the keeper's nose*" also implies that they have both poached in the actual sense of illegal hunting, and possibly even raped before. The line "borne her cleanly by the keeper's nose" also suggests the act of stealing a

woman from her husband either through abduction, rape or adulterous sexual intercourse, making clear as it does so the dubious character of the two men and emphasising the sexual peril that awaits Lavinia in the forest. Aaron responds to Demetrius' poaching analogy with one of his own saying:

> Why then, it seems some certain snatch or so
> Would serve your turns.
> (2.1.99-100)

The use of the word 'snatch' here develops out of hunting terminology to suggest both a brief act of sexual intercourse (Jonathan Bate describes it as the equivalent of "the modern 'quickie'") and the act of stealing something, Bate further suggests in an editorial note that the word "begins as a development of the hunting language, from the grey-hound's sudden grab of its prey; [and] develops into sexual play".[144] The use of the term 'snatch' here, where the subject to be 'snatched' is another man's wife, reflects Bassianus' initial taking of Lavinia from Saturninus in the opening scene and anticipates the forthcoming rape setting it very clearly in the metaphorical context of the 'hunt'.

Later after Marcus encounters the post-rape Lavinia for the first time, he continues the hunting metaphor telling Titus that:

> I found her, straying in the park,
> Seeking to hide herself, as doth the deer
> That hath received some unrecuring wound.
> (3.1.88-90)

This image of the wounded deer 'straying' alone recalls Aaron's incitement to Chiron and Demetrius to "single you thither then this dainty doe" (2.1.124), thus separating their quarry from the herd, or in Lavinia's case from the protective company of "Roman ladies" (2.1.120). Maria Fahey observes that in these lines, "[t]he transformation from metaphor to violent

reality comes full circle when Marcus figures Lavinia's reality with one of the same metaphors that provoked Chiron and Demetrius' assault on her," so that once again Shakespeare's use of metaphor causes the audience to glance back at a previous moment in the play.[145]

The poaching metaphors are significant because they impact upon the audience's perception of the rape. The difference between the two simultaneous hunts reflects the contemporary attitudes towards hunting and poaching that were prevalent at the time that the play was written. In Tudor England, hunting was regarded as a noble pursuit and as Roger Manning suggests, it was "among the pastimes which were deemed worthy of a gentleman" so that some noble men and women chose to indulge in poaching alongside the legitimate sport of hunting.[146] Anne Barton observes that it is a matter of public record that poaching "was an activity cheerfully engaged in by an overwhelming number of the gentry and even nobility, including Queen Elizabeth herself".[147] While hunting involved the legitimate pursuit of prey, poaching was also regarded as a sporting activity in which landowners with their own deer, who had no need to hunt elsewhere, would nonetheless invade land belonging to others with the express purpose of killing as much of their livestock as possible. Poaching in the sixteenth century was a commonplace activity amongst the nobility, but the nature of it was somewhat different to that which we might suppose today because the practice frequently involved the wanton slaughter or 'havocking' of livestock, which Manning explains:

> goes considerably beyond the idea of poaching or deer-stealing. The term carries the meaning of utterly destroying the deer in a hunting preserve and implies a kind of warfare. The word is occasionally used in Star Chamber complaints to describe poachers who wantonly killed more deer than they could possibly carry away, leaving many carcasses behind to spoil.[148]

Anne Barton also comments on the practice of havocking, suggesting that "the hunt could, at a word, transform from a courtly ritual … to a scene of apparently indiscriminate slaughter".[149] As Manning suggests, "poaching seems to have been regarded as an excusable naughtiness in a warrior aristocracy".[150] This attitude is evident in *Titus Andronicus* where the celebratory hunt is perverted to become the sexual poaching and abuse of Lavinia, and by reflection the woodland itself is symbolically transformed from a haven of tranquillity and refuge to a dark and desolate location well suited to accommodate the acts of rape and murder that occur within it. Anne Barton suggests that poachers in the period "did it for fun, although family vendettas might also be involved", and the rape of Lavinia and murder of Bassianus are without doubt partially motivated by a desire for revenge against Titus for the capture and murder of Tamora's son Alarbus.[151] Nonetheless, the association of the rape with poaching suggests that Chiron and Demetrius also rape Lavinia in sport, for fun, and this enhances the brutality of the assault.

Hunting metaphors also appear in *The Rape of Lucrece* where, as Rebecca Ann Bach suggests, "the poem divides its creatures perhaps primarily in predators and prey", and in the section of the poem that anticipates the rape, Tarquin is depicted as a predator and Lucrece as his prey through comparison to predatory relationships from the natural world.[152] Joan Lord Hall suggests that Lucrece "is depicted, overall, as a victim who lacks the power to defeat her aggressor" and "the dominant image of Lucrece is that of a helpless creature" and when Tarquin meets Lucrece for the first time, her virtue and innocence are emphasised through metaphorical comparison with vulnerable creatures that have never experienced an encounter with their natural predators and as a result do not recognise the danger that the

predator represents.[153] Lucrece welcomes Tarquin into her home because she is oblivious to the nature of his intentions:

> When at Collatium this false lord arrived,
> Well was he welcomed by the Roman dame,
> (ll.50-51)

Subsequently, Lucrece is compared to birds who have not been trapped and therefore since "never limed no secret bushes fear" (l.88), and to fish who have never been caught: "She touched no unknown baits, nor feared no hooks" (l.103) and the impression that these metaphors convey is that of prey that would be easy to catch because it had no reason to fear the predator, and this serves to exemplify Lucrece's vulnerability to Tarquin's predatory intent. As Bach suggests, "the poem classifies her with harmless easily hunted birds, whereas Tarquin is compared to birds who hunt and kill".[154] Lucrece fails to suspect or question Tarquin's motives for visiting her home in the absence of her husband because her own intentions are pure, and "unstained thoughts do seldom dream on evil" (l.87). She has presumably not previously encountered someone who wished to do her harm and, as a loyal wife, her previous sexual encounters have been solely with her husband, therefore she has no reason to suspect that Tarquin poses a threat to her sexual integrity.

Later, while Tarquin makes his way to Lucrece's chamber, the metaphors of predator and prey continue as Lucrece is portrayed sleeping and oblivious to her vulnerability in the face of the approaching danger:

> No noise but owls' and wolves' death-boding cries.
> Now serves the season that they may surprise
> The silly lambs: pure thoughts are dead and still,
> While lust and murder wakes to stain and kill.
> (ll.165-168)

In this quotation Lucrece is compared to a lamb which would be vulnerable to harm from a hunting wolf. When Tarquin is about to enter her bedchamber, Lucrece is again depicted sleeping in a state of vulnerability where she may be easily hunted by a stronger predator, "The dove sleeps fast that this night owl will catch" (l.360).

When Lucrece awakes to find Tarquin in her room, the hunting metaphors change to reflect the gradual dawning of her understanding that the man she earlier welcomed into her home as a guest now intends to do her sexual harm. Lucrece's earlier trusting innocence is gone to be replaced by fear of what is about to happen:

> Wrapped and confounded in a thousand fears,
> Like to a new-killed bird she trembling lies:
> (ll.456-457)

Tarquin is now described as "like a falcon tow'ring in the skies" (l.506) while Lucrece lies beneath him "marking what he tells / With trembling fear, as fowl hear falcons' bells." (ll.510-11). After Tarquin outlines his plan to rape and kill Lucrece, leaving the body of a slave in her bed if she does not submit to him, "'So thy surviving husband shall remain / The scornful mark of every open eye" (ll.519-520), her realisation that she is trapped is reflected in metaphors comparing her to a creature ensnared in the claws of its predator: she is "a white hind under the grip's sharp claws" (l.543) and "the weak mouse" (l.555) held in the claws of the "foul night -waking cat" (l.554). In the final moments before the rape, Lucrece pleads with Tarquin using poaching metaphors to illustrate her argument:

> End thy ill aim before thy shoot be ended.
> He is no woodman that doth bend his bow
> To strike a poor unseasonable doe.
> (ll.578-580)

Lucrece compares herself here to a doe that is hunted out of season, implying that the 'woodman' is hunting deer outside the legitimate arena of the hunt and the act of poaching that this implies is an analogy with the taking of another man's wife and a clear reflection of the rape in *Titus Andronicus*. The use of the word 'strike' at this point in the narrative poem calls to mind the rape of Lavinia, the "dainty doe" because Aaron encourages Chiron and Demetrius to "strike her home by force, if not by words" (2.1.125). Maria Fahey suggests that:

> The line between words and force is blurred as Aaron moves the brothers from their plan to woo Lavinia with words, using metaphors conventional in courtship-as-hunt love poetry, to the plan to hunt her physically with force.[155]

Thus creating a parallel between the degradation of the noble sport of hunting through poaching and the perversion of courtship when the intention is actually to rape.

Both of Shakespeare's rape texts reflect contemporary attitudes to hunting and poaching. Edward Berry says that:

> the object of killing game in the Elizabethan and Jacobean period was neither the protection not the sustenance of society … Elizabethan hunters ate what they killed, but the feasting was incidental to the joy of the chase … the venison collected at a hunt was a trophy … not a necessity.[156]

This approach to poaching is evident in *Titus Andronicus* and in *The Rape of Lucrece*. In *Titus Andronicus* Chiron and Demetrius' joint enterprise to rape Lavinia is a sport that develops out of their earlier sword play. In the play and the narrative poem, the victims are both married women and each rape is primarily motivated by the desire to take something of value from another man. Both works contain metaphors of hunting and poaching which emphasise that the rapes are brutal acts of theft intended to defile the marital chastity of a married woman. Having been previously established as chaste, both women become trophies to be taken in the hunt. The poaching metaphors also imply the callousness of assailants who are prepared to

rape a woman in order to humiliate her husband, together with the vulnerability of the victims confronted with men who are set on a course to commit sexual assault.

The locations for the rapes in *Titus Andronicus* and *The Rape of Lucrece* are very different, but both combine opportunity and isolation to facilitate acts of extreme sexual violence. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, there was a clear expectation that a woman who found herself confronted by a potential rapist should call out. This cry was important for two reasons: firstly there was the possibility that the woman's calls might be heard and help summoned and secondly because if she failed to cry out her attacker, and subsequently the court, might assume that she consented to sexual intercourse. As shown in chapter one, the testimonies of rape victims repeatedly reinforce this expectation as they record either that the victim cried out but was not heard, or that her rapist gagged her, or prevented her from calling out by some other means. Lavinia and Lucrece are very clearly raped and it is therefore to be expected that the texts would show that the women attempt to defend themselves verbally and to call for help.

When Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus* witnesses the murder of her husband and realises that she is in sexual peril, she attempts to talk her way out of the situation by begging Tamora either for help, or "present death" (2.3.173) in order to escape rape, but her arguments prove to be futile. Tamora is unmoved by the other woman's pleas because she is determined to revenge the sacrifice of her son by Titus:

> I poured forth tears in vain
> To save your brother from the sacrifice,
> But fierce Andronicus would not relent.

(2.3.163-165)

Lavinia finds herself completely unable to construct an argument that has any impact on Tamora, or on her soon-to-be rapists. She retains the power of speech, but her message is rendered ineffective by the words she uses. Lavinia's modesty renders her unable to name the act of rape that she fears, referring instead to the 'thing' "that womanhood denies my tongue to tell" (2.3.174), so that as Derek Dunne suggests "before she ever loses her tongue, her speech is impaired by what it is possible or proper for a woman to say".[157] Ironically, the words that Lavinia uses to express her inability to speak of rape prefigure one of the atrocities that her rapists inflict upon her body. Thus as Jane Hiles suggests, Lavinia provides the "verbal cue" for the act of mutilation that robs her of her tongue: "she suggests to Chiron a way to 'stop [her] mouth'". [158] The Goths' amputation of Lavinia's tongue is a "literalization of her overstated claim to be unable to speak of rape" and she is finally denied the capacity for further speech when the brothers remove her tongue.[159]

Before she is permanently silenced, Lavinia finds her voice to appeal to Tamora as a fellow woman – "thou bear'st a woman's face" (2.3.136) – to kill her in order to spare her chastity:

> O, keep me from their worse-than – killing lust,
> Tumble me into some loathsome pit.
> (2.3.175-176)

When Lavinia begs to be thrown into a "loathsome pit" her words echo Tamora's earlier description of the "abhorred pit" (2.3.98), and locate the forthcoming assault within the imagery that will later represent Lavinia's offstage violation. However, yet again Lavinia's message is undermined by the language that she uses to express it, which is inadvertently

sexual and "lends itself to lascivious misreading," "tumble me" implying sexual intercourse, the very act that she is desperate to avoid. [160] As Gordon Williams observes, "the sexual irony matches that of the sinister coital parody when her brothers tumble into their hole" so that once again there is a metaphorical prefiguring of an event which is yet to happen.[161]

Lavinia's words fail to move Tamora or her attackers, Tamora dismisses her immediately when she begins to beg for mercy saying, "I will not hear her speak, away with her" (2.3.137). It is Demetrius who intervenes suggesting that Lavinia should be allowed to speak, albeit in order to harden Tamora's commitment to revenge:

> Listen, fair madam: let it be your glory
> To see her tears, but be your heart to them
> As unrelenting flint to drops of rain
> (2.3.139-141)

Although Demetrius entreats his mother at this point to 'listen' to Lavinia, he then suggests her response to a visual cue only: "see her tears". Lavinia is to be permitted to speak, but will not be heard. Lavinia's final speech "Confusion fall –" is cut off mid-sentence by Chiron "Nay then, I'll stop your mouth" (2.3.184) and we do not hear Lavinia speak again. It is possible that in production Chiron stifles her speech at this point with his hand or silences her with a kiss, as in *Much Ado About Nothing* where Benedick silences Beatrice by kissing her: "Peace! I will stop your mouth" (5.4.99). It is in any case, the first oral assault upon Lavinia and the fact that Chiron's interruption ends her final line of speech shows that he literally takes her words away from her, as Derek Dunne observes: "within the space of a single line of pentameter the rapist's voice supplants that of his victim".[162] This act of silencing anticipates the subsequent offstage removal of Lavinia's tongue and Jeanne Addison-Roberts suggests that in this way the rapists "create in the mutilated Lavinia a gruesome icon of the 'perfect' sex object – silent and

powerless".[163] Certainly, the removal of Lavinia's tongue renders her powerless to continue her verbal resistance and this act of physical silencing begins the humiliation that reaches its climax when Lavinia stumbles back onto the stage post-rape, mutilated, ravished and pursued by her rapists who having permanently silenced her, taunt her with her inability to cry out because "She hath no tongue to call, nor hands to wash" (2.4.7). The reference here to Lavinia's inability to 'call' suggests that she is unable to raise the hue and cry simply because she can neither call for help, describe her assault, nor speak the names of the men who attacked her.

In the time that elapses between the moment in *The Rape of Lucrece* when Lucrece awakes from "sleep disturbed" (l.454) to find Tarquin in her bedchamber with his hand "on her bare breast" (l.439) and the commencement of the rape, she makes it clear to Tarquin, in a prolonged and sustained argument, that she will not consent to have sexual intercourse with him. Following the rape, Lucrece agonises over her potential complicity in the act, but in fact she offers clear verbal resistance to the assault and it is evident that she does not consent. Lucrece itemises a number of noble qualities as she appeals to Tarquin in the name of:

> high almighty Jove,
> By knighthood, gentry and sweet friendship's oath,
> By her untimely tears, her husband's love,
> By holy human law and common troth,
> By heaven and earth and all the power of both,
> (ll. 568-572)

But like Lavinia, Lucrece's argument is subsequently undermined and rendered ineffectual by the language that she uses. In a desperate attempt to preserve her chastity Lucrece argues with Tarquin using images and language that, rather than constructing a sensible case that will allow decency and reason to prevail, ironically evokes erotic images that seem certain to

arouse him further. She pleads in terms intended to elicit Tarquin's sympathy for her distress:

> My sighs like whirlwinds labour hence to heave thee
> If ever man were moved with woman's moans,
> Be moved with my tears, my sighs, my groans;
> (ll. 586-588)

But her words contain some extremely sexual and erotic imagery and as John Roe comments, "it is an ironic plea, since it is conventionally erotic love, not chastity, that speaks in this fashion".[164] Lucrece's use of the word 'labour' in a feminine context is suggestive of child birth and thus evokes a sense of fertility and she most certainly does 'move' Tarquin with her 'woman's moans', 'sighs' and 'groans', though not in the way she intends because these words unavoidably convey images of sexual arousal, the passionate heavy breathing of sexual pleasure, and the sounds of orgasm. This effect is continued in the following lines:

> All which together, like a troubled ocean,
> Beat at thy rocky and wrack-threat'ning heart,
> To soften it with their continual motion;
> (ll.589-591)

The sense of the 'continual motion' of the sea suggests the movement of bodies in an act of sexual intercourse, and rather than dissuading Tarquin from his intended assault, the underlying sexual tone of her words has the opposite effect and arouses him further. Lucrece's pleas for mercy stimulate both mental and physical responses in her assailant, strengthening his conviction to rape, and preparing his physical readiness by increasing his erection:

> 'Have done', quoth he, 'my uncontrollèd tide
> Turns not, but swells the higher by this let.
> (ll. 645-646)

Ironically, the words Lucrece speaks in her own defence are tainted with unintentional sexual imagery: her language anticipates the non-verbal sounds and physical motion of sexual consummation. Like Lavinia's pleas to Tamora in *Titus Andronicus*, Lucrece's appeals serve to prolong the commencement of the rape, heightening the sexual tension and eroticism of the text in much the same way as the play teases the audience with the growing anticipation of the rape that is to follow. Jennifer Edwards observes that, "language so often operate[s] against the female subject whose 'no' can be rewritten as 'yes'" and language certainly works against Lucrece whose argument fails completely to dissuade Tarquin from raping her.[165]

In both works Shakespeare represents his victims' resistance using sexualised imagery which works to undermine their verbal arguments. Neither Chiron and Demetrius or Tarquin are dissuaded by the verbal resistance offered by Lavinia and Lucrece, despite the fact that there can be no doubt that the two women do not consent to sexual intercourse. By having Lavinia and Lucrece speak in sexualised language Shakespeare projects the rapist's fantasies onto their victims and this has the effect of highlighting the powerlessness of the women. In a wider context this also exemplifies the difficulties facing rape victims at the time given the need to meet the established criteria to prove that a rape had occurred. Just as the verbal resistance offered by Lavinia and Lucrece is undermined by the language they use, in circumstances where a rape victim was not heard to cry out, did not display signs of force or resistance, fell pregnant, or had a previous relationship with her attacker this might well compromise her case because she could be deemed to have consented. The audience in turn are directed to view Lavinia and Lucrece from the perspective of the rapists who, in their determination to rape, regard the resistance and distress of their victims as foreplay. The

failure of the women's resistance also exemplifies the traditional two-fold concept of rape as a property crime as well as sexual assault. The rape of Lavinia is intended as revenge for Titus' treatment of the Goths and for the sacrifice of Tamora's son Alarbus. The assault is also a parallel act of rape to that enacted in the opening scene of the play when Bassianus snatches Lavinia away from Saturninus and her father, making her a trophy to be won in a dispute between men. Fundamentally the rape is intended to punish Titus and Bassianus by taking and destroying something that belongs to them – the chastity of their daughter and wife. In the narrative poem, Lucrece's rape is instigated when Collatine boasts of his wife's chastity; by raising her up as an exemplar of virtue, Collatine elevates his own status, prompting Tarquin to assert his own masculine authority by raping her. In both texts the hunting metaphors are used to demonstrate that the rapes are motivated by a desire to humiliate a rival by taking and destroying their property. By metaphorically aligning the rapes to poaching, Shakespeare represents them as the wilful and excessive decimation of another man's property, much like the contemporary practice of havocking deer. In this context the sexual act of raping the women is secondary to the impact of the assault on their male relatives. Lucrece and Lavinia behave in the manner that is expected of a woman who is threatened with rape, but the verbal resistance that they offer is inappropriate and ineffectual because they cannot find the right words to use. In fact, there are no words that would save the women once their assailants have committed to their course of action because the assaults are directed at the women's male relatives. Lavinia and Lucrece are collateral damage in disputes between men and they are not heard because their rapists will not be deterred by any argument from them.

In *Titus Andronicus*, Tamora closes down Lavinia's pleas for mercy by saying that "I will not hear her speak, away with her!" (2.3.137). Likewise, Tarquin in *The Rape of Lucrece* states his refusal to listen to any further arguments from Lucrece using very similar language: "'No more', quoth he, 'by heaven, I will not hear thee" (l.667). Tarquin's use of the same words, 'I will not hear', to reject the arguments of his victim create a link between the comparative moments in both works. Just as Lavinia is silenced by her rapist directly before she is removed from stage to be raped, so Tarquin silences his victim before the sexual assault begins, smothering her final cries:

> For with the nightly linen that she wears
> He pens her piteous clamours in her head
> (ll.680-681)

Tarquin "entombs her outcry in her lips' sweet fold" (l.679), presumably by gagging her with the bed sheets or her nightclothes, but the line also conveys a none too subtle reference to her vagina. Peter Smith notes that the image is "heavily connotative of a labial cleft" and Coppelia Kahn suggests that "we can discern an upward displacement of that "sweet fold" below".[166] As Laurie Maguire suggests:

> Shakespeare's Lucrece is gagged with her own nightgown while Tarquin cools
> 'his hot face in the chastest tears / That ever modest eyes with sorrow shed'.
> There can be no ambiguity here: Lucrece is raped (in our modern sense).[167]

Considered in the context of English rape law and the 'hue and cry' tradition, Lucrece's behaviour at this point is that which would be expected of a woman confronted with an imminent threat of rape: she attempts to call out. The fact that Tarquin smothers her "outcry" strongly suggests that there is no consent given and that the sounds she tries to make are cries of desperation, distress and resistance, as Tarquin "pens her piteous clamours in her head"

(l.681).

In both works the silencing of the victim signifies the final denial of withheld consent and the first attack on the personal integrity of the woman. The physical silencing of Shakespeare's rape victims reflects the real-life silencing of women to prevent them from crying out for help, which is detailed in some contemporary rape testimonies, such as that of the victim who recalled that her rapist, "stopped her mouth with his hands".[168] The emphasis in English rape law and cultural tradition on remote environments as likely locations for rape hinged predominantly on the concept that the cries of a potential victim would not be heard in such a location. The contemporary evidence from the complaints of rape victims suggests that women were aware that they should cry out when they were assaulted, and these complaints frequently include an explanation of why the victim was either prevented from calling for help, or if she did so, why her cries went unheard. This is evident in the case of Margaret Hesketh who "cried mainly out and struggled" with her attacker "for as long as my breath would serve when she was assaulted, but still did not escape being raped in a field because there was "no person passing by" to help her.[169] Unsurprisingly in this context, both victims of rape in Shakespeare's work are raped partly because they are prevented from crying for help. In both of Shakespeare's rape texts, the act of silencing which signifies the commencement of the rape is brutal, Lavinia's mouth is 'stopped' in an act that prefigures the subsequent removal of her tongue, and Lucrece is smothered with her bedclothes implying the suffocating intensity of the sexually charged darkness in her chamber as her rapist extinguishes the light and destroys her chastity.

Shakespeare's representation of the events leading up to the rapes of Lavinia and Lucrece reflect the cultural and legal views of rape at the time. The relevance of the location is established in both works, but whereas Lavinia is assaulted in a remote, woodland location where she might be expected to be at risk of rape, Lucrece is raped in her own bed where she would be presumed to be safe. By locating the rape of Lucrece in her home, Shakespeare makes the important point that the privacy afforded by a domestic space can also provide the opportunity of isolation to enable rape to occur and this reflects the evidence of contemporary victims who reported rapes in urban locations as well as in the countryside. Both women are ensnared in isolated locations which facilitate the assaults and both are physically silenced by their rapists to prevent them crying for help. However by showing how the ineffectual arguments of the two women arouse their rapists, Shakespeare challenges contemporary attitudes towards rape which allowed a brutal assault to be regarded as the theft of one man's property by another, exemplified by the prevalence of hunting and poaching metaphors in the texts.

II

"speak and strike, brave boys, and take your turns"

A great deal of critical work has focussed on the way in which Shakespeare metaphorically represents the rapes of Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus* and Lucrece in *The Rape of Lucrece*. However, it is necessary to look again at how the rapes are depicted because the imagery that signifies rape in these two texts is reflected in later works which include threatened rapes. The representation of rape in the two rape texts also reflects the contemporary perceptions of rape.

The representation of the assault on Lavinia as a brutal gang-rape begins even before her rapists encounter her in the forest, and apparently before they themselves have considered the prospect of raping her. The sequence of events that reach a dreadful climax with Lavinia's rape, begins with Chiron and Demetrius vying for who is most able to court her and while Chiron declares that, "I love Lavinia more than all the world," (2.1.74) Demetrius counters with the assertion, "Lavinia is thine elder brother's hope" (2.1.76). The rivalry between Chiron and Demetrius in this scene echoes the dispute between the other pair of brothers over who will marry Lavinia in the first act, but while that argument ends with Lavinia's lawful marriage to Bassianus, there can be no satisfactory, legitimate resolution to the dispute between Chiron and Demetrius. As a married woman, Lavinia is no longer free to consent to a relationship with any other man; however the irrelevance of her consent is established by the complete failure of either brother to consider this. Both men appear to regard Lavinia as available to them because "She is a woman, therefore may be wooed … won … loved" (2.1.86-88). The language used in this initial exchange between the brothers is that of romantic love, Chiron and Demetrius speak in terms redolent of conventional courtship and seduction, but in reality, their ultimate intent is to take Lavinia by force if it is necessary to do so. Although Lavinia is indeed a chaste and so far, faithful wife to her husband of less than twenty-four hours, significantly she is no longer a virgin and to Demetrius it appears she is consequently easier to obtain, and this attitude in itself perhaps lessens the importance of consent to the two brothers: "and easy it is / Of a cut loaf to steal a shive, we know" (2.1.90-91). Jonathan Bate says that, "Demetrius means: "once a woman is no longer a virgin, no one is to know how many times she's been had" and this is indicative of the contemporary hierarchy

of sexual crime in which the rape of a married woman was regarded as a less serious offence and attracted a lesser penalty than the rape of a virgin.[170] As Gillian Murray Kendall aptly points out, with regard to Lavinia's marriage and her rape:

> The other characters speak of her as if she were an object – to be bestowed, seized, praised, raped, mutilated.[171]

This is explicit in the way that Aaron is able to re-direct Chiron and Demetrius' declarations of 'love' into conspiracy to commit rape. It falls to Aaron to raise the matter of consent:

> What, is Lavinia then become so loose,
> Or Bassianus so degenerate,
> That for her love such quarrels may be broached
> (2.1.67-69)

Lavinia of course is not 'loose' and neither she nor Bassianus seem likely to indulge in consensual adultery, so Aaron is quick to establish that she will not be seduced by conventional courtship:

> Lucrece was not more chaste
> Than this Lavinia, Bassianus' love.
> A speedier course than ling 'ring languishment
> Must we pursue,
> (2.1.115-118)

Lavinia's consent is dismissed before either brother considers or requests it, it is discounted as an irrelevance and Lavinia is effectively silenced well before she loses her tongue.

Tamora is indifferent to Lavinia's appeal for help and it is evident that she sees the opportunity to punish Titus for the lack of mercy that he showed to her own son, who was murdered as a ritual sacrifice in the opening scenes of the play:

> Remember, boys, I poured forth tears in vain
> To save your brother from the sacrifice
> But fierce Andronicus would not relent.
> (2.3.163-165)

But she seems largely indifferent to the means of Lavinia's suffering and death until her sons persuade her otherwise with Demetrius' argument for rape before murder, "First thrash the corn, then after burn the straw" (2.3.123). Sonia Brockman notes the distinction between the act of personal revenge that would satisfy Tamora, and her sons' desires:

> Whereas Tamora wants to kill Lavinia with a poniard, her sons seek to rob her of the very thing she holds over the empress – her chastity – in as horrific a fashion as possible.[172]

While Aaron skilfully redirects the brothers' rivalry for Lavinia's love towards a joint enterprise of rape, urging them to, "speak and strike, brave boys, and take your turns" (2.1.136) it is ultimately Tamora who consents to the rape, urging her sons to, "use her as you will: / The worse to her, the better loved of me" (2.3.166-167). While Lavinia was unable to name the act of rape, Tamora does not shy away from doing so as she denies her the quick death she begs for stating that Chiron and Demetrius are to "satisfy their lust on thee" (2.3.180) and "this trull deflower" (2.3.191). As discussed in section one above, Lavinia's inability to defend herself verbally against her rapists is exemplified by the fact that the language that she uses is redolent of erotic imagery and this is mirrored by Chiron and Demetrius who speak in the language of romantic love while plotting rape and murder.

The Rape of Lucrece like *Titus Andronicus* is concerned with the rape of a virtuous married woman. Lucrece is established very early in the text as an exemplar of chastity and virtue, indeed when she is first mentioned, she is defined by her sexual status as "Lucrece the chaste" (l.7). Kay Stanton notes that, "in both the argument and the poem proper, Lucrece is not mentioned until she has been contextualised", suggesting that both elements of the text, "treat chastity as an integral element of Lucrece's identity, almost part of her name."[173] There

is no doubt of Lucrece's loyalty to her husband, she is a personification of marital fidelity, and is identified by the quality of her "incomparable chastity" (*Argument)*, however there is also a clear sense that Lucrece's unblemished virtue unwittingly invites its violation. Tarquin says as much in the moments before the rape when he attempts to silence her pleas for mercy with the accusation that, "Thy beauty hath ensnared thee to this night" (l.485). Camille Paglia makes reference to the concept of beauty inciting its own corruption in suggesting that:

> beauty itself may be an incitement to destroy … there is a frenzy of primitive pleasure in torturing captives or smashing things …When babies, nuns, or grandmothers are raped it can be understood only in terms of what pagan antiquity called "pollution," a sullying of the sacred.[174]

Tarquin attempts to elicit Lucrece's consent to sexual intercourse saying that his intention is to "beg her love"(l.241), but he is always fundamentally aware of the fact that she will not willingly submit to his advances and he acknowledges that because she is a married woman who is deemed to belong to her husband and "she is not her own" (l.241) she cannot consent to have sex with him. Like Chiron and Demetrius whose talk of courtship and love is quickly re-directed towards rape, Tarquin is undeterred by the fact that Lucrece is a married woman who is renowned for her chastity and he intends to have her, knowing full well that he will not do so with her freely given consent. Having failed to seduce Lucrece, Tarquin attempts to achieve her submission by coercion, threatening to kill and shame her by branding her an adulteress if she does not consent:

> For in thy bed I purpose to destroy thee.
> That done, some worthless slave of thine I'll slay
> To kill thine honour with thy life's decay,
>   And in thy dead arms do I mean to place him,
>   Swearing I slew him seeing thee embrace him.
>   (ll.514-518)

It is evident that the most significant element of the threat here is not the prospect of death, but the ruin of Lucrece's personal reputation so that having once been a paradigm of purity and marital chastity, she would become an exemplar of adultery and "have thy trespass cited up in rhymes / And sung by children in succeeding times" (ll.524-525). A.D. Cousins suggests that:

> one of the most important elements of Lucrece's characterization is her externalized sense of her ultimate self: her existence as a chaste Roman matron. That sense of who she is clarifies her profound consciousness of herself as an exemplar of chastity and her profound fear of becoming an exemplar of unchastity.[175]

Tarquin is aware that Lucrece would rather die than be cited as adulteress, like Lavinia who sought 'present death' in preference to rape. Although Tarquin's warning to Lucrece that "I purpose to destroy thee" may be interpreted as a threat to kill her it also implies the threatened destruction of Lucrece's chastity and of her sexual reputation. Ewan Fernie suggests that: "The basis of female shame is unchastity or a reputation for unchastity" and this is the exact opposite in fact of Lucrece's reputation before the rape, and of the reputation that she confers upon her husband by association.[176] Tarquin is fully aware of the fact that he has no justifiable reason to rape Lucrece, and like Aaron in *Titus Andronicus* he views the assault in terms of his relationship to her husband, rather than considering the impact on the victim herself:

> Had Collatinus killed my son or sire,
> Or lain in ambush to betray my life,
> Or were he not my dear friend, this desire
> Might have excuse to work upon his wife,
> As in revenge or quittal of such strife;
> But as he is my kinsman, my dear friend,
> The shame and fault finds no excuse nor end.
> (ll.232-238)

The threat to Lucrece goes beyond one of personal reputational damage as this "blemish that will never be forgot," (l.536) is to be a blight on the lives of Collatine, and of his bloodline because Collatine's reputation will also be damaged by the rape and any children that Lucrece might subsequently bear would inevitably be tarnished by the possibility of illegitimacy:

> 'So thy surviving husband shall remain
> The scornful mark of every open eye,
> Thy kinsmen hang their heads at this disdain,
> Thy issue blurred with nameless bastardy;
> (ll.519-522)

It is also the case that were Lucrece to fall pregnant with Tarquin's child as a result of the rape, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, this would condemn her as an adulteress because she would be believed to have consented to sexual intercourse with the man who raped her. Ultimately Tarquin makes it clear that he intends to have sexual intercourse with Lucrece, whether by mutual consent or by raping her if it is necessary to do so:

> 'Lucrece,' quoth he, 'this night I must enjoy thee.
> If thou deny, then force must work my way,
> (ll.512-513)

The use of the word 'must' in the line above demonstrates the level of Tarquin's commitment to the enterprise. It is evident that he is sexually aroused by Lucrece and the prospect of raping her, but also there is a sense of an abdication of responsibility and perceived loss of free will at this point. Tarquin has already shifted the responsibility for the forthcoming rape to Lucrece, blaming it on her beauty, and there is a clear sense of inevitability in his words here where it appears that he believes that he has no choice other than to commit rape if Lucrece will not submit to him. This reflects contemporary attitudes to rape, where a victim was perceived to be complicit if she did not cry out or offer effective resistance to her assailant, and in this

instance Tarquin denies personal agency by shifting the blame for the assault to Lucrece herself. There is a dual significance in the use of the word 'must' here as it also indicates the nature of the crime of rape in which ultimately Lucrece can offer Tarquin verbal and physical resistance, but her anatomy, her relative physical strength, and the vulnerability of her situation renders her powerless to avoid enforced violation.

Once Tarquin enters Lucrece's bedchamber he is confronted by the spectacle of her sleeping form. The lines which report Tarquin's gaze on the unconscious Lucrece are effectively pornographic at this point – detailing the female form as it arouses the soon-to-be rapist. Lucrece sleeps chastely in the marital bed which, like her body, she has previously shared only with her husband, her essential innocence implied by the description of her as "holy-thoughted Lucrece" (l.384). However while Lucrece remains asleep, as yet unaware of Tarquin's presence and the danger he poses, the purity of her sleeping body serves only to arouse Tarquin further:

> Her lily hand her rosy cheek lies under,
> Coz'ning the pillow of a lawful kiss,
> Who, therefore angry, seems to part in sunder,
> Swelling on either side to want his bliss
> (ll.386-389)

Once again the imagery is sexually suggestive, the pillow which 'part(s) in sunder' creates a sense of something opening, perhaps the lips mentioned in the line above parting as if to bestow the previously withheld 'kiss', and Jonathan Bate suggests that the use of the word 'swelling' in the following line may have, "possible phallic connotations and suggestion of sexual frustration".[177] The depiction of the sleeping Lucrece and of Tarquin's gaze upon her creates a sense of sexual tension. Lucrece is the loyal chaste wife sleeping alone in her marital

bed in the absence of her husband, and she is blissfully ignorant of Tarquin's presence in the room and of the danger of her situation. She is described lying like an effigy "a virtuous monument" (l.391), yet in the description of her sleeping body she is displayed for Tarquin's view so that the rape is prefigured by an ocular violation in which she is "admired of lewd unhallowed eyes" (l.392). The description creates a picture of her chaste beauty while simultaneously counterposing sexual allure. The perfectly white hand which rests on her bedclothes is adorned with "pearly sweat" (l.396), as from the heat of sexual passion and Lucrece's "hair like golden threads played with her breath – / O modest wantons, wanton modesty" (ll.400-401). This use of the oxymoron 'wanton modesty' continues the sense of Lucrece's unconscious sexuality and throughout this section of the poem as she is displayed through description, the reader notes Tarquin's desire and the beginning of a phallic response, "in his will his willful eye her tired" (l.417) while he admires 'her breasts', her 'azure veins', her 'skin', her 'coral lips', her 'chin' (ll.387, 419-420) , "with more than admiration" (l.418). However Tarquin's gaze on the sleeping Lucrece soon becomes insufficient as:

> His rage of lust by gazing qualified,
> Slaked, not suppressed, for standing by her side,
> His eye, which late this mutiny restrains,
> Unto a greater uproar tempts his veins.
> (ll.424-427)

Evidently at this point, the view of Lucrece's body has prompted a physiological response from Tarquin and he has achieved an erection. The imagery continues through the next two verses creating a sense both of Tarquin's growing arousal and of his progression towards a climax in the violent assault that is to come:

> Smoking with pride, marched on to make his stand
> On her bare breast, the heart of all her land,
> (ll.438-439)

The reference to 'his stand' in the final line is a further allusion to his physical readiness for sexual intercourse. The writing in these verses is intensely sexual, and equally disturbing as Lucrece lies helpless and vulnerable at the mercy of a predatory trespasser in her room, as Karen Bamford observes:

> There is a prurient, breathless quality to the verse as it pores over her body … In effect the reader becomes, with Tarquin, a voyeur, watching Lucrece with "lewd unhallowed eyes"[178]

The description of the sleeping Lucrece is certainly highly eroticised, existing as a narrative image of a helpless woman's body unconsciously displayed for the sexual gratification of the man who is about to become her rapist. However, as Bamford suggests, it is of course not only Tarquin who gazes on the sleeping Lucrece, the "lewd unhallowed eyes" which dissect her unconscious body include those of the reader. The voyeuristic gaze at this point is shared by reader and rapist alike, Tarquin's eyes see Lucrece's form, but the reader both sees her body through his eyes and simultaneously views Tarquin gazing with 'lustful' eyes upon her. Peter Smith suggests that:

> The poem is reprimanding us as Peeping Toms but we know, in the safety of our scopophilic hide-out, beyond the frame of the poem itself, that we will never get caught."[179]

Certainly the reader is uncomfortably associated with the rapist at this point. The individualistic nature of the reader's response to this element of the text highlights a key difference between the representation of rape in a work that is intended to be read, as opposed to a theatrical production where the experience is shared amongst the audience and its reception is influenced by their collective response. Smith goes on to suggest that:

> In the privacy of the relationship between individual reader and poem as opposed to the publicity of being part of an audience, this secrecy is all the

more intimate.[180]

As Smith observes, the reader of the poem engages privately and directly with the immediacy of the text and this intimate interaction becomes almost indecent. Tarquin intends the rape itself to be a private act of violation conducted in the secluded privacy of Lucrece's chamber, and concealed by the darkness of a "direful night" (l.741), yet the reader is in the room with him and this creates a sense of complicity between reader and rapist in the ocular assault upon Lucrece. Both Tarquin and the reader are uninvited intruders into her bedchamber and this shared gaze on the sleeping woman has the effect of allowing the reader to share in the rapist's anticipation of the sexual assault that is to follow.

The reader of the narrative poem is permitted to accompany Tarquin into Lucrece's bedchamber and watch until the rapist "sets his foot upon the light" (l. 673) and in *Titus Andronicus* the audience is present in the moments that anticipate the assault on Lavinia, but Shakespeare does not directly portray either of the rapes themselves. William Webber suggests that *Titus Andronicus* "contains as much gruesomeness as the rest of his plays combined… the excess of violence knows virtually no bounds", while Jonathan Bate refers to the play's reputation as "an un-relenting gore-fest" and suggests that the tragedy is "the closest Shakespeare comes to what may be described in a modern sense as horror".[181] As Deborah Willis observes "we are confronted with traumas of the most extreme kind" but the rape and mutilation of Lavinia occurs off-stage out of sight of the audience.[182] Play-goers of the period would not have been unfamiliar with the depiction of physical brutality in the theatre and the horrific visible bodily mutilations that Lavinia suffers at the hands of her rapists could be realistically imitated on the Elizabethan stage. Andrew Gurr observes that

"bladders and sponges of vinegar concealed in the armpit and squeezed to produce the semblance of blood were not unknown" and explains that there is evidence to suggest that executions including decapitations could be effectively enacted:

> A late anonymous play printed in 1649, *The Rebellion of Naples*, has a stage direction for such an execution, I'He thrusts out his head, and they cut off a false head made of a bladder fill'd with bloud. *Exeunt with his body.'*[183]

Although Lavinia's hands are chopped off and her tongue excised behind the scenes, the acts of mutilation could have been realistically represented on stage using similar techniques to the simulated decapitation that Gurr describes, and in fact when Aaron cuts off Titus' hand the action appears to occur on stage where it is directly witnessed by the audience. However while the physical mutilation of Lavinia could have been effectively presented, the staging of an act of heterosexual rape would have been more difficult in the Elizabethan theatre, particularly given that women's roles were played by male actors, and it is difficult to imagine how Lavinia's rape could have been enacted with any degree of realism or sensitivity when audience and players alike were aware of the gender of all actors on stage. Celia Daileader comments on the significance of the off-stage space in the context of the difficulty of portraying realistic heterosexual sex with an all-male cast:

> A crucial factor in the magnetism and magic of such moments … is the voyeuristic response of the reader /audience, which varies in intensity depending upon the way the textual "gap" is framed by the dramatist, by the editor, and/or by the director. Off stage sex … encapsulates the paradoxical nature of male/female erotic representation on an all-male stage.[184]

David Mann comments on the level of black humour which builds in *Titus Andronicus* as the sexual banter between Chiron and Demetrius and Lavinia's prolonged interaction with Tamora draws the audience in to anticipate the denouement of the rape. In Shakespeare's

theatre this slow, tantalizing progression towards the assault must have provoked a level of anticipation in the audience as they speculated on how the climax of the scene would be achieved between three male actors, who could in reality neither enact or replicate heterosexual intercourse without almost inevitably introducing an element of absurdity and bawdy humour:

> this black humour and its attitude to rape and mutilation are the creation of an all-male ensemble. High on the list of what would be difficult to achieve convincingly in this context, were that their aim, must surely be the anticipation of rape from a female perspective.[185]

It is certainly difficult to imagine how the rape could have been portrayed by an all-male cast without a significant element of homoeroticism undermining the realism of the portrayal of a brutal sexual crime enacted by a man against a woman. David Mann suggests that in order to avoid "the inherent bathos and inadvertent humour in trying to represent realistic sexual violence in an all-male theatre" the rape of Lavinia occurs offstage out of sight and hearing of the audience. [186] A.C. Hamilton, writing about the levels of violence in the play suggests the crucial difficulty in representing rape when he comments on the stage direction which indicates Lavinia's return to the stage after she has been assaulted:

> The S.D. "Enter … Lavinia, her hands cut off, and her tongue cut out, and ravish'd" displays that excessive violence though its deliberate catalogue, especially in that last detail so needlessly insistent (how may she enter "ravish'd"?)[187]

The stage directions are not necessarily Shakespeare's own, but nonetheless, Hamilton raises a critical point in his question, "how may she enter "ravish'd?" because while Lavinia's external mutilation can be visually portrayed, the internal injury and psychological trauma that has been done to her cannot be visually represented on stage. Compliance with this stage

direction would therefore have presented a significant challenge to the actor who must convey the essence of the intimate sexual assault that has occurred without the benefit of speech, as Marguerite Tassi suggests, “Spectators must feel not only that they are confronted with the unspeakable, but the unseeable, as well”.[188] Jennifer Edwards suggests that:

> there is something about Lavinia’s rape that Shakespeare cannot, or will not, express: it is utterly unutterable. The ‘counterpoint of pit and rape’ is … for Shakespeare in some way *necessary*, for how could Lavinia’s undoing be aptly narrated or depicted on stage.[189]

Sonya L. Brockman also comments on the staging of the rape, suggesting that it is the stage direction that provides the first indication that Lavinia has been raped:

> Because sexual assault was “unstageable” for the Elizabethan theatre (Kerrigan 1996, 196), the act of violation takes place out of sight. When she appears in the following scene, however, stage directions alert us that the rape has occurred by describing her as “LAVINIA, her hands cut off and her tongue cut out, and ravished” (2.4).[190]

However, the fact remains that although the stage direction is only a textual indication that Lavinia has been raped and mutilated. As Joan Lord Hall suggests “mercifully – and for practical reasons – the act itself … takes place off-stage” and the audience is spared the horror of witnessing the rape and mutilation itself, so some other indication is needed to confirm that Lavinia has been raped.[191] In fact, while the rape has occurred elsewhere, the audience is already very well aware of the assault because Shakespeare graphically represents the rape through metaphor and allusion in the on-stage action while the sexual assault occurs in the imagined parallel off-stage reality. As Jennifer Edwards suggests, “Lavinia’s rape is not dramatized but is rather evoked through the simultaneous action of the pit scene.”[192] Maria Fahey also notes the necessity for symbolic representation of the rape on the Early Modern stage:

> with the possible anachronistic exception of high-tech effects, Lavinia's bodily mutilation can be staged only with symbols.[193]

Karen Bamford says of the treatment of Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus* that:

> Shakespeare treats Lavinia's rape and mutilation with a shocking realism, unequalled by any representation of sexual assault on the Jacobean stage.[194]

As Bamford suggests the rape is clearly represented through graphic imagery and is perhaps more horrific because it occurs offstage and has its actualization in the imagination of the audience. Given the level of violence that is presented on stage throughout the play, the fact that we do not see the rape has the effect of making it all the more shocking, precisely because it is hidden from us and occurs only in the minds of the audience. When Lavinia returns to the stage the audience can see the bloody stumps where her hands have been removed and blood running from her mouth to indicate that her tongue has been cut out, but in a play where severed hands and fragmented bodies are commonplace, Lavinia's physical appearance has far less impact than the metaphors which depict her unseen injuries. Overdone though much of the on-stage violence is, Shakespeare creates a very powerful impression of the brutality of the unseen rape itself.

The metaphorical representation of the off-stage rape begins with Chiron's physical silencing of Lavinia "I'll stop your mouth" (2.3.184) as he takes her away to be raped and her mouth is used to symbolise the mutilation that cannot be shown on stage – the penetration and tearing of her vagina in the act of rape itself. Gordon Williams refers to the use of the term mouth to signify vagina elsewhere in Shakespeare's work but does not comment on the metaphorical relationship between 'mouth' and 'vagina' in *Titus Andronicus.*[195] When we next see Lavinia with her "hands cut off and her tongue cut out, and ravished" (2.4) Demetrius

taunts her about her severed tongue, locating his reference back to the first silencing of their victim and projecting his words on to the rape and the violence that has been done to her mouth:

> So, now go tell, an if thy tongue can speak,
> Who 'twas that cut thy tongue and ravished thee.
> (2.4.1-2)

Given that a woman who was threatened with rape was expected to cry out for help it is significant that the rapists clearly silence their victim before raping her. After the rape, Demetrius alerts us to the fact that Lavinia has been permanently silenced and that as a result, she is unable to raise the hue and cry in order to report the assault.

At the same time that Lavinia is being assaulted off stage, the rape is symbolically represented in the 'pit-scene'. Albert H Tricomi's observation that the pit "carries at least a suggestive reminder of the rape of Lavinia that is simultaneously transpiring off-stage," rather understates the sexually graphic imagery of the pit which in fact leaves the audience in very little doubt of what is happening concurrently elsewhere.[196] David Willbern comments on the effectiveness of the pit scene as a metaphorical representation of the off-stage rape:

> The symbol of this pit lies at the absolute core of the play … the description – considered symbolically – is almost anatomical. It represents a detailed natural image of a violated vagina (the "flowers" … recall the word "deflower" used ten lines before to refer to Lavinia). This onstage symbolic event occurs simultaneously with the offstage rape of Lavinia by the other set of brothers. Any unconscious expectation of Lavinia's ravishment, frustrated to an extent by its apparent enactment offstage, is satisfied by its symbolic substitute.[197]

The audience's attention is directed towards the pit when Chiron instructs his brother to cast Bassianus' corpse into "some secret hole"(2.3.129). Chiron is of course referring directly to the pit, but through his choice of words he also makes reference to another 'secret hole' that is

specifically Lavinia's vagina, secret because until she is raped it is 'known' only to her husband. As the rape occurs off-stage, the pit that is first described as a 'secret' place, a description that invokes a sense of private intimacy and seclusion becomes "loathsome" (2.3.193), it is "unhallowed and bloodstained," (2.3.210) a "detested, dark, blood-drinking pit" (2.3.224), the location for rape and murder.

Very shortly after Lavinia has been dragged from the stage by her soon to be rapists, stumbling across the pit, Quintus asks:

> What subtle hole is this,
> Whose mouth is covered with rude-growing briers
> Upon whose leaves are drops of new-shed blood
> (2.3.198-200)

John Kerrigan suggests that:

> One answer to Quintus' question would be that the place is Lavinia's genitalia, after her marriage night and before the lustful brothers tumble in.[198]

The image though is more powerful even than this, because it gives currency to the injury that is being done at that moment to Lavinia's vagina as she suffers repeated non-consensual violation; the 'new-shed blood' no longer that of virginal de-hymenisation, but indicative of the internal injury caused by the brutality of repeated violent vaginal rape. Joan Lord Hall comments on the effectiveness of the pit imagery in signifying the brutality of the rape, suggesting that:

> The grotesquely incongruous simile comparing 'new shed' vaginal 'blood' to morning dew on flowers, compounds rather than assuages the horror of the unseen rape.[199]

When Lavinia returns to the stage following her rape we can clearly see her external injuries and the imagery of the pit leads the audience to visualise her intimate internal injuries. In this

way the audience is witness to the most intimate injury done to Lavinia and thereby shares in the traumatic experience of the rape itself.

Martius and Quintus stumble upon a body in the pit, which Martius is able to identify as the corpse of Bassianus because:

> Upon his bloody finger he doth wear
> A precious ring that lightens all this hole,
> Which like a taper in some monument
> Doth shine upon the dead man's earthly cheeks
> And show the ragged entrails of this pit.
> (2.3.226-230)

The reference here to Bassianus' 'bloody finger' adorned with 'a precious ring' has a metaphorical significance which also links the image to the offstage rape. Stanley Wells suggests that "often in Shakespeare ring has vaginal connotations," and Gordon Williams says that the word "symbolizes a woman's chastity or sexual organ," and in this context the 'ring' can be seen to symbolise Lavinia's vagina.[200] The 'finger' also operates as a metaphor for penis at this point, and Gordon Williams suggests that 'finger' is "allusive of penis" elsewhere in Shakespeare's work.[201] The symbolism that is inherent in the ring worn on Bassianus' finger creates a graphic impression of Lavinia's lost virginity, the metaphor is given a further poignant dimension by the fact that the ring and finger referred to at this point belong to Lavinia's husband suggesting both the presumed consummation of their marriage the previous night, and the destruction of her marital chastity the following day in the brutal act of rape. In this way, the ring operates as an image of chaste human sexual love sanctified by marriage and this provides a stark contrast to the symbolic representation of Lavinia's post-rape internal injuries. The reference to "the ragged entrails of the pit" (2.3.230) creates a further symbolic representation of Lavinia's vagina, implying as it does both the remnants of

her torn hymen, and the brutal internal tearing of her body by her rapists.

Towards the end of the scene, Quintus offers Martius his hand to help him out of the pit, but as he does so, he expresses a concern that lacking the strength to assist his brother, he may also fall in and "may be plucked into the swallowing womb / Of this deep pit" (2.3.239-240) and in this image the pit once again becomes synonymous with the vagina as the entrance to the womb. Finally when Saturninus discovers the brothers trapped in the pit, there is a further vaginal reference:

> I'll see what hole is here,
> Say who art thou that lately didst descend
> Into this gaping hollow of the earth?
> (2.3.246-249)

The pit also has a significance that extends beyond the metaphorical representation of the rape because, considered in the context of the play's production, the pit into which the actors portraying Mutius and Quintus tumble could also have been accessed through the same trap door in the stage floor that is used to portray the Andronicii tomb in the opening scene, and of course it also functions as a temporary tomb for the body of Bassianus, cast aside by Chiron and Demetrius. The burial of Titus' sons is a sterile image implying the commitment of dead bodies to a cold and dusty tomb; yet at the same time contains images that are suggestive of sexual intercourse and prefigure the rape that is to come ("sheathe my sword" (1.1.88)). Gail Kern Paster suggests that:

> The physical and spiritual centre of the city – the Andronici family tomb – gives way to its horrible counterpart, the pit that becomes the death chamber of Bassianus and a trap for the two Andronici sons. Repeatedly described in strongly sexual imagery … the pit becomes a predatory womb taking rather than giving life.[202]

The physical link that is formed between these two moments in the play by the trap-door in the stage is another example of Shakespeare's technique of pre-figuring a later event and in this instance the burial of the Andronici children anticipates the rape of Lavinia and the eventual annihilation of the majority of the family.

Quintus' words as Martius tumbles into the pit are a quite literal statement of fact, "What art thou fallen?" (2.3.198) because Martius has indeed fallen, having just disappeared into the trap. However the use of the phrase "art thou fallen?" has a further significance because the word 'fall' also has a sexual meaning, which Gordon Williams glosses as to "succumb sexually," and the phrase therefore also implies the concurrent off-stage rape of Lavinia. [203] John Kerrigan suggests the link which the pit forms between tomb and womb: and the significance of the use of the word 'hell' signifying both the actual stage space beyond the trap door and as a reference to Lavinia's vagina:

> The pit is, then, a tomb – a dark refiguring of that 'receptacle' which had dominated Act I. Yet it is also, in its hideous way, anatomical, and, being so, it relates the death of Bassianus to Lavinia's rape. The sexual assault was unstageable, but Shakespeare rose to the challenge by implying it parodically, with a dead husband and two brothers crammed unceremoniously into a hole while Chiron and Demetrius set to work backstage. … in practical terms the stage-trap, the pit is a theatrical 'hell', and 'hell' in Elizabethan slang meant the female genitals.[204]

The pit therefore also functions as a physical representation of a descent into an actual hell that is both the stage space of the pit and a symbolic representation of the rape itself. David Willbern also draws a link between the reference to the pit as hell and the representation of Lavinia's body:

> Of course, the "pit" … is also Hell. The theatrical trapdoor "Hell-mouth" which serves as the actual pit in performance makes this allusion visibly possible. But this parallel significance by no means alters the basic bodily source, since for

> Shakespeare “Hell” … can also symbolize female genitals.[205]

The rape of Lucrece in Shakespeare’s narrative poem is represented in a way that is equally graphic to the metaphorical depiction of Lavina’s rape in *Titus Andronicus*. Almost the first seven hundred lines of the poem deal with Tarquin’s physical journey to Lucrece’s chamber and the mental transformation of his desire for Lucrece into the decision to rape her. Immediately after the assault commences, the focus of the poem shifts to Lucrece’s post rape anguish, so that the actual rape occurs unseen in the space between lines 683 and 684. As Sonia Brockman comments:

> The actual act of rape in Shakespeare’s epyllion takes place, as it does in so many texts, in the margins, the spaces between what is written.[206]

Just as Lavinia’s rape occurs off stage but is represented through graphic imagery, so the rape of Lucrece, while occurring in the ‘margins’ of the text, is also metaphorically represented. The narrative takes the reader with Tarquin on his journey to Lucrece’s bed and creates a clear impression of Lucrece’s desirability and of his growing sexual arousal, it is the extended narrative foreplay leading the reader to a climax that, like Lavinia’s rape, is not directly recounted, but is given currency through explicit metaphorical representation.

Tarquin sets out on the journey to rape with the evident stirrings of sexual desire “with swift intent he goes / To quench the coal which in his liver glows” (ll.46-47). At the time that Shakespeare wrote *The Rape of Lucrece*, the liver was considered to be the seat of sexual desire and the reference to a glowing coal suggests its early stirrings, indeed the first reference to Tarquin in in the opening section of the narrative poem describes him as “Lust-breathèd

Tarquin" (l.3), so that even before the rape he is defined by his desire for Lucrece, just as she is in contrast defined by her chastity.[207] As Tarquin progresses towards the rape he is repeatedly identified with sexual desire, he is described as "this lustful lord" (l.169) with "his lustful eye" (l.179) and there are further images which imply his state of growing arousal. Tarquin wages an internal battle "'Tween frozen conscience and hot burning will" (l.247) as he debates whether or not to rape Lucrece, but the reference to his "hot burning will" overtly describes his desire and also hints at his growing arousal, suggesting that perhaps the battle is already lost. The use of 'will' in this line has an alternative meaning of penis and was used in this context elsewhere in Shakespeare's work and this suggests that Tarquin's free-will has been overcome by his sexual urges at this point, so that he *will* go on to commit rape.[208] A few lines later, as Tarquin moves ever closer to his objective, Shakespeare uses imagery to create a representation of his ever increasing arousal, the image of the clock hand pointing upwards to twelve at the hour being suggestive of an erection:

> Stuff up his lust, as minutes fill up hours,
> And as their captain, so their pride doth grow,
> (ll.297-298)

Jon Roe says in his note to this line:

> There may be a subdued or discreet touch of bawdiness to this image, … 'as minutes fill up hours' the minute hand stands upright pointing towards twelve. But the decorum of this poem ensures that such effects, while conveying the crude energy and character of lust, never betray its expression into licentiousness or titillation.[209]

Alison Chapman also writes about this use of clock imagery to imply Tarquin's growing sexual arousal suggesting that the association with the hands of the clock describes "how Tarquin's forward progress through the house stiffens both his penis and his resolve" and the metaphor

concludes a few lines later, “And they would stand auspicious to the hour” (l.347); Shakespeare uses this imagery to make it clear that when Tarquin reaches Lucrece’s bed, the encounter is likely to be a sexual one.[210] The use of the time imagery also gives the rape a sense of inevitability by creating the impression that the rape will happen and cannot be averted just as the progress of time cannot be slowed or halted – “as minutes fill up hours”.

As Tarquin continues his mental journey towards the decision to commit rape and the simultaneous passage through the house to Lucrece’s bed chamber, he encounters a number of physical barriers which provide a temporary impediment to this progress. Continuously associated with these barriers are images of force and reluctant yielding which allude to the physical reality of the act of rape. “The locks between her chamber and his will,” (l.302) are all “by him enforced” (l.303) the references to ‘her chamber’ representing Lucrece’s vagina and ‘his will’ Tarquin’s penis. As each lock is forced they, “all rate his ill” (l.304), and Jonathan Bate glosses this as “reprove his wickedness (by squeaking)” but the sound here could also be representative of the cries of pain and distress omitting from the rape victim at the moment of forced penetration, and also perhaps to the cries for help that contemporary cultural attitudes to rape expected potential victims to utter.[211] The sexual imagery continues as Tarquin moves closer to Lucrece’s ‘chamber’, prefiguring the rape that is soon to come:

> As each unwilling portal yields him way,
> Through little vents and crannies of the place,
> (ll.309-310)

The portals here are ‘unwilling’ as they give way, implying that consent is withheld and that penetration is achieved only by force and, much as Lavinia’s violated body is displayed metaphorically through the ‘pit’ scene in *Titus Andronicus*, Lucrece’s vagina is also exhibited

here in the reference to ‘vents and crannies.’

The frequent imagery of enforced yielding implies a further sense of inevitability about the rape and demonstrates the ultimate futility of Lucrece’s resistance, because like the locks which enclose her bedchamber, her body can be penetrated by force and her physical resistance will eventually give way. Similarly, when Tarquin finally reaches “the chamber door / That shuts him from the heaven of his thought” (ll.337-338) he finds it secured “with a yielding latch and with no more”(ll.339). The ‘yielding latch’ on the ‘chamber door’ metaphorically represents the entrance to Lucrece’s vagina, symbolically it is similar to the hymen that if she was still a virgin, would form an easily breached physical barrier to bar the rapist’s way for a brief moment, a barrier that is of such intrinsic significance because its breakage is synonymous with the loss of virginity. Gordon Williams glosses this use of the word door as an allusion to Lucrece’s vagina, and further suggests that it is used as “a prolepsis of rape” at this point.[212] In the case of Lucrece, the breach of the door to her chamber signifies the fragility of chastity, as it is something that can so easily be taken by force. The ease with which Tarquin breaches this final barrier perhaps also represents the idea that the rape of a married woman was traditionally regarded as a lesser offence than the rape of a virgin, recalling the metaphor of “a cut loaf” (2.1.92) from *Titus Andronicus*. There is a similar use of barrier imagery in *The Comedy of Errors*, where doors are imbued with sexual symbolism. When Antipholus of Ephesus finds himself locked out of his own house he decides to visit a courtesan “Since my own doors refuse to entertain me, / I’ll knock elsewhere, to see if they’ll disdain me” (3.1.128-129). The ‘doors’ here refer literally to the entrance to his home, but the fact that he intends to visit a prostitute suggests he is choosing illicit intercourse because he

has been denied access to marital sex and the door thus also has a sexual significance.

III

"rape, I fear, was root of thine annoy"

By the time that Shakespeare was writing, English law had established a precedent which required that a woman provide physical evidence to prove that she had been raped. In the case of a virgin, this was the blood of dehymenisation, but for a married women who would not have been deflowered in the assault, evidence of force or resistance provided crucial proof that a sexual encounter with a man other than her husband had been rape rather than consensual adultery. As a result, contemporary complaints of rape made by married women often included evidence of the force that had been used against them by their assailant, as in the case of Earth Bickley who was seen to be "black and blue behind in the lower part of her back" after she had been pushed against 'a coffer' while she was raped.[213] Derek Cohen remarks about the rape of Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus:*

> The rape of a married woman like Lavinia is an act of secrecy which leaves no visible evidence of its having happened. There is no virginal blood to mark the legs of the victim, no sexual sign of the rape.[214]

Indeed both of Shakespeare's rape victims are married women and although there is no firm evidence that either marriage had been consummated, it is reasonable to assume that neither Lavinia or Lucrece was still a virgin at the time of their rape. However, both works contain plentiful evidence of the violence used against the women and a significant showing of blood which in both cases provides evidence of the fact that the women *were* raped. This section will examine how blood is used to signify rape and as a symbol of corruption and absolution in

both the play and the narrative poem, and will show how both women effectively raise the hue and cry, despite being silenced by their rapists.

Lavinia is subjected to extreme violence in the course of her rape and her external injuries are clearly visible so that there is no doubt that her rapists used violent force against her. Lucrece, however, bears no external injuries to confirm that she was raped or that she offered resistance to her attacker. Nonetheless Shakespeare does make it clear that Lucrece's rape is also violent and aggressive. Tarquin warns Lucrece that if she does not "yield to my love … enforced hate / Instead of love's coy touch shall rudely tear thee"(ll. 668-669), a clear indication that he intends to use force against her. Shakespeare's use of metaphors of conquest and invasion also conveys a sense of rough and aggressive penetration. Tarquin is a "Rude ram to batter such an ivory wall" (l. 464), an image that suggests that he forces himself into Lucrece's unready and unwilling body, and as he feels her heart pounding in distress:

> This moves in him more rage and lesser pity
> To make the breach and enter this sweet city.
> (ll. 468-469)

The use of the word 'breach' in this last line, implies a forced incursion into the city beyond its fortifications, and in this case symbolises the violent penetration of Lucrece's vagina. Bate and Rasmussen note the use of the word breach in this line as "a vaginal image" and as a "gap in fortifications caused by a sustained bombardment".[215] This 'breach' of Lucrece's body is followed by a further image of forced penetration when Tarquin reaches the door of Lucrece's chamber:

> His guilty hand plucked up the latch,
> And with his knee the door he opens wide.
> (ll.358-359)

This is a powerful image which is clearly indicative of Tarquin forcing Lavinia's legs apart with his knee and as such it conveys the force used to rape her. Following the imagery of violation, Tarquin apparently silences Lucrece by smothering her with her night clothes:

> For with the nightly linen that she wears
> He pens her piteous clamours in her head
> (ll. 680-681)

This final image of the rape creates a sense of Lucrece's distress which has a suffocating intensity leading the reader to imagine her rapist restricting her cries and her breathing as he lies upon her. The previous chapter demonstrates that the contemporary accounts of the rape of married women frequently included evidence of violence or references to the threat of force and these elements are clearly present in Shakespeare's representation of the rapes of Lavinia and Lucrece, so that, although the two women are assaulted under different circumstances and in very different environments, there can be no doubt that both women are raped.

Shakespeare's audience would have understood that a rape victim should raise the hue and cry and provide evidence to support the claim that she had been raped, and in the case of a virgin this evidence would have been expected to be the bloody stains of dehymenisation. The testimonies of contemporary rape victims from the period, as well as those who preceded them include references to this bloody evidence. Despite the fact that neither Lavinia nor Lucrece is likely to still be a virgin, both of Shakespeare's rape victims effectively raise the hue and cry and provided a showing of blood to comply with the evidential process. Lucrece sends a messenger who at her command "brings home his lord and other company" (l.1584) to whom she discloses the details of her rape before committing

suicide in front of them. Lavinia's rapists attempt to prevent her from naming them and their crime by leaving her without a tongue to tell "Who 'twas that cut thy tongue and ravished thee" (2.4.2), or hands to "write down thy mind" (2.4.3). Only the external signs of her physical mutilation exist as testimony to the intimate sexual assault she endures. Lavinia is unable to speak the names of her assailants or to present a direct verbal account of her assault so that the play "dramatises a process of inquiry where the chief witness cannot speak."[216] Derek Dunne quotes Barbara Shapiro's comments, suggesting that in rape cases:

> 'firsthand sensory experience might provide "best evidence" for "matters of fact", but … was unattainable by courts.' The job of the early modern law court was to establish the truth of the matter from such ephemeral facts; this required, necessitated even, a belief that 'it was possible to gain adequate if not perfect knowledge of events that could not be seen, heard, or repeated in court.'[217]

When Shakespeare wrote about the rapes of Lavinia and Lucrece, he was faced with a similar difficulty to that experienced by the rape victim in court in that he had to effectively depict an act that could be no more effectively enacted on stage or described in narrative than it could be evidenced in a courtroom. Lavinia nevertheless is able to disclose the nature of her assault by using the stumps of her severed hands to leaf through a copy of *Metamorphosis* to the page which begins "the tragic tale of Philomel / And treats of Tereus' treason and his rape" (4.1.49-50), leading Titus to a realisation of the full nature of her injuries, "rape, I fear, was root of thine annoy" (4.1.51). She then completes her disclosure by making a written statement as she writes the names of her rapists, and the nature of her assault in the earth with a staff held in her mouth and guided by her stumps: "Stuprum, Chiron, Demetrius" (4.1.80), thus effectively raising the hue and cry and completing her testimony of rape.

There was an expectation that a woman who had been a virgin at the time of her rape would be able to provide a showing of blood to prove that her virginity had been taken. While neither Lavinia or Lucrece were likely to have been virgins, both the play and the narrative poem include significant blood imagery, which fulfils this evidential element of the hue and cry procedure. After Lucrece's eventual suicide Brutus directs Collatine's attention to the fatal consequences of the rape making reference to Lucrece's bleeding corpse, "For his foul act by whom thy fair wife bleeds?" (l.1824), and we cannot help but acknowledge the wider significance of the implication that *all* women bleed. The book of Genesis implicitly links female fertility with the sins of Eve, the first woman, and the first to bear the burden of corrupted innocence. Genesis presents details of the nature of the curse imposed upon all women as punishment for Eve's part in the first sin. According to the first book of The Bible, women are condemned for all to time to endure the agony of childbirth and a state of sexual subjection to their husbands:

> Unto the woman he said, I wil greately increase thy sorowes, & thy conceptios. In sorowe shalt thou bring forthe children, and thy desire shal be subject to thine housband, and he shal rule over thee.[218]

Margaret Sommerville observes that, in the Renaissance, this part of Genesis was taken as justification for the subjection of women to the authority of their husbands:

> Fortunately for the Renaissance biblical scholars who argued that women were naturally and divinely ordained for obedience, Genesis left them in little doubt that the Fall was definitely Eve's fault and that her punishment (along with labour pains) was being subjected to her husband's rule.[219]

Barbara Baines goes further to suggest that this passage in Genesis may actually have led to the development of a cultural 'tradition' of regarding rape within marriage as lawful:

> Perhaps it is the last part of God's judgment upon Eve, "thy desires shall be subject to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee," that to this day in most

> places allows a husband to rape his wife.[220]

It is likely that much of Shakespeare's audience were familiar with the account of the punishment of Eve in Genesis; indeed Hannibal Hamlin suggests that these chapters were "among the most familiar of all biblical stories," with references made to them in the services of baptism, marriage, the Visitation of the Sick, the burial service and:

> in the rite for the Churching of Women, the minister gave thanks for the woman's delivery "from the great paine and peril of childe birthe," which congregants would have understood as God's punishment for Eve's sin: "In sorowe shalt thou bring forth children" (Gen. 2:16)[221]

If the pain of childbirth was regarded as part of God's punishment of women, then menstrual bleeding is associated with the same curse. This bleeding that is common to all women, and is associated with the attainment of sexual maturity, has been represented as a source of uncleanliness from biblical times. In the Middle Ages menstruation:

> was firmly associated … with uncleanliness, and with certain deleterious physical effects, usually relating to the transmission of diseases … by heredity or contagion. The malignity of menses is chronicled in ancient medical texts, notably in Aristotle, Columella, Pliny and Plutarch.[222]

In The Bible the book of Leviticus defines menstruation as a time of impurity during which, not only is the menstruating woman 'unclean', but she is also liable to contaminate and defile "whosoever toucheth her," who "shalbe vncleane unto the euen," and "whatsoeuer she lieth vpon in her separacion, shall be vncleane, and euerie thing y she sitteth vpon shallbe vncleane", further reinforcing a position of female subjection and inferiority.[223] The concept that menstrual blood forms a contaminant capable of defiling even the bed sheets on which it falls, calls to mind bedsheets stained by the blood of de-hymenisation, and this image implies a sense of the eventual loss of virginity. In *The Rape of Lucrece*, Shakespeare creates an

impression of the transient nature of chastity, as a quality which is easily spoiled. As Tarquin struggles with his conscience in the moments preceding his decision to go ahead with the rape, he acknowledges the fact that his action will corrupt what he sees in Lucrece as ultimate purity of body and soul:

> And die, unhallowed thoughts, before you blot
> With your uncleanness that which is divine.
> Offer pure incense to so pure a shrine.
> Let fair humanity abhor the deed
> That spots and stains love's modest snow-white weed.
> (ll. 190-196)

The degree of purity that Tarquin attributes to Lucrece before he rapes her is suggested by the reference to spots and stains in the final line of this verse; she is a married woman, but the image his words create of 'spots' of blood on 'snow-white' sheets is indicative of wedding night bedsheets stained with blood from first sexual intercourse and could also be used to describe the rape of a virgin. It is likely that Shakespeare would have read the 1560 edition of *The Geneva Bible*, and if he did so he would have read the note to Deuteronomy 22:17 which comments on the proof of virginity that was to be provided in circumstances where it was disputed whether or not a woman was a virgin on her wedding night. In these circumstances the woman's father was expected to exhibit "the tokens of [his] daughter's virginitie" before the city elders, and the note to this verse explains that this "meaning the sheete, wherein the signes of her virginitie were".[224] Tarquin makes further reference to the act of raping Lucrece, a chaste married woman, in terms that could equally apply to the forcing of a virgin when he states his conviction that "I must deflower" (l. 348). When Tarquin invades the privacy of Lucrece's chamber, "And gazeth on her yet unstained bed" (l.366) the use of the word 'unstained' suggests the purity of the lawful, marital sex that Lucrece and Collatine have

previously shared in the bed, which was chaste because it was sanctified by their marriage vows, but once again, the language used suggests a sense of inevitability in the corruption of this chastity, almost as if the virtuous wife like a virgin, is merely a woman who, like the marital bed, has not *yet* been defiled.

There is also a sense of the vulnerability of chastity in *Titus Andronicus*, when Demetrius encourages his brother to conjoin with him in a plan to rape Lavinia, suggesting that because she is a woman, she may be "wooed … won", and "loved" (2.1.82-84). Louise Noble has suggested that:

> When Demetrius and Chiron plot Lavinia's rape – and thus her sexual pollution – her womanhood, already understood in gynaecological terms as a flawed and tainted thing, not only justifies their planned violation of her, but, in an extraordinary example of misogynistic logic, makes her somehow responsible for their actions.[225]

Lucrece's undoubted loyalty to her husband, is identified by the quality of her "incomparable chastity" (Argument l.10) when the narrator first speaks of her as "Lucrece the chaste" (l.7), she is thereby established as an exemplar of chastity; yet, just as the menstrual bleeding of a virgin anticipates the spotting of blood that will eventually signify the loss of her virginity, so there is a clear sense that Lucrece's unblemished virtue unwittingly invites its violation and even before Tarquin meets her for the first time her reputation stimulates his desire for her:

> Haply that name of 'chaste' unhapp'ly set
> This bateless edge on his keen appetite,
> (ll. 8-9)

The pit metaphor in *Titus Andronicus* is undoubtedly explicit, but arguably the most shocking image in the play is the single 'river' of blood which flows from Lavinia's mouth when she returns to the stage following her rape. Whether Chiron silences Lavinia physically with his

hand, or with a kiss or a gag before she is dragged off stage to be raped is not made clear, but the action is linked directly to the moment when she is encountered by her uncle Marcus immediately after her rapists have left her, and the blood that runs from Lavinia's mouth is the first sign that she has been raped. A few lines later when Marcus encounters Lavinia, although he catalogues her evidently horrific physical injuries, it is the trickle of blood that alerts him to the fact of her rape:

> Alas, a crimson river of blood,
> Like to a bubbling fountain stirred with wind,
> Doth rise and fall between thy rosèd lips
> Coming and going with thy honey breath.
> But sure some Tereus hath deflowered thee
> And, lest thou shouldst detect him, cut thy tongue.
> (2.4.22-27)

Marcus' reference to Ovid's story of Philomel exemplifies his growing understanding that the 'crimson river of blood' is a sign that his niece has been raped. While *Titus Andronicus* features numerous murders and mutilations, this small river of blood is one of the most understated, yet intensely powerful images in the play. Luc Borot, F. Laroque and J.M. Maguin comment on how the force of this image was enhanced by the general lack of blood elsewhere in Deborah Warner's 1987 production of the play:

> Warner avoided the use of excessive blood on stage, often substituting mud, so the impact of blood when it appeared was doubly shocking, as when Lavinia opens her mouth to reveal a stream of blood instead of a tongue[226]

The river of blood represents the hidden internal violence that has been done to Lavinia in the act of rape as well as the loss of her tongue. This stream of blood is a sign of injury to a hidden internal area, reminding us of the bleeding in other private parts of her body that have been violated, and casting another slant on Chiron's words, "I'll stop your mouth" (2.3.184) by

implying the possibility that the first penetration may have been an oral one. This “crimson river” can be interpreted as a metaphorical representation of the blood flowing from an internal vaginal injury caused by brutal, repeated forced penetration, the reference to “rosèd lips” having a parallel with female genitalia. Although Lavinia is a married woman who is assumed to have consummated her marriage, there is also a suggestion of the spots of blood which indicate the rupture of the hymen of a virgin through first sexual intercourse – this is indicative of the destruction of Lavinia’s marital chastity through the rape, if not the actual loss of her virginity. Lavinia is awash with her “ loss of blood” (2.4.29) and, as demonstrated earlier, the pit imagery represents her brutal off-stage violation and this “crimson river” acts as a metaphor for the bleeding in other parts of her body that have been violated.

The blood that ‘spots and stains’ Lucrece’s bedsheets, and flows in a ‘crimson river’ from Lavinia’s mutilated body signifies that they have been raped and symbolises the destruction of both women’s chastity, and the inherent shame that these victims absorb from their violation. A major issue concerning the rape of a married woman in Renaissance times, as throughout history, was the effect that such an assault must also have upon her husband. This matter is explored in both *The Rape of Lucrece* and *Titus Andronicus*, and Shakespeare uses blood imagery to convey the domestic consequences of rape in both works. In the tragedy, there is an explicit intention that the attack upon Lavinia should be implied as a gross insult to Bassianus, as Aaron remarks to Tamora:

> This is the day of doom for Bassianus;
> His Philomel must lose her tongue today,
> Thy sons make pillage of her chastity,
> And wash their hands in Bassianus’ blood.
> (2.3.42-45)

Joan Lord Hall suggests that:

> the brothers are part of the Goth nation that has been subjugated by the Romans in the recent war. Sexual conquest, combined with their murder of Lavinia's Roman husband, can assuage their sense of having been dominated by the enemy.[227]

And this insult is brought to a hideous physical manifestation in Chiron's incitement of Demetrius to lay Lavinia on her husband's corpse, "And make his dead trunk pillow to our lust" (2.3.130) as they violate and mutilate her body. The reference in the final line of this quotation, to the rapists "wash[ing] their hands in Bassianus' blood" is yet another metaphor of the hunt, suggestive of the end point where the participants in the hunt would revel in the slaughter of the animal, so that "here the imagery of human sacrifice merges with the ritual that marks the death of the deer".[228]

Although Lucrece argued with her rapist and did not consent to have sexual intercourse with him, the outcome is much as it would have been had she consented to commit adultery, and she is unavoidably soiled and shamed by the rape. Immediately after she has been raped, Lucrece cries out in hysterical anger cursing Tarquin:

> Disturb his hours of rest with restless trances;
> Afflict him in his bed with bedrid groans;
> Let there bechance him pitiful mischances
> To make him moan, but pity not his moans.
> (ll. 974-977)

The language that Lucrece uses in this verse creates an inversion of the imagery used in her earlier pleas for mercy, so that here Tarquin's suffering replicates that of his victim. Lucrece visualises the sleepless Tarquin uttering 'groans' and 'moans' just as her earlier pleas were interspersed with ''woman's moans" and 'groans'. Heather Dubrow acknowledges this relationship between the two scenes, suggesting that:

> the woman who believes she has assumed some of the worst qualities of her assailant is here wishing that that assailant in turn assume the role of his victim.

After the rape, Lucrece "bears the load of lust [Tarquin] ... left behind," (l.734) and as Peter Smith suggests, this is literally his "ejaculate".[230] Like the marital bed which has been stained by "prone lust" (l.684) Lucrece is no longer a representation of chastity because she has become "spotted, spoiled, corrupted" (l.1172), she did not consent to have sexual intercourse with Tarquin but nonetheless she is tainted by the act. Lucrece is innocent of adultery, but her innocence has still been corrupted because she has had sexual knowledge of a man other that her husband, albeit against her will. Jan Blits suggests that she:

> Dreads that she would become an excuse for unchaste women to evade their deserved punishment. Women caught in adultery would claim that they, too, submitted out of fear of death and use the fact that Lucrece was excused as an excuse for themselves.[231]

Lucrece is aware that the rape places her at risk of becoming an exemplar of 'unchaste' behaviour, and she kills herself to prevent this, saying that "no dame hereafter living / By my excuse shall claim excuse's giving"(ll. 1714-1715).

Like Lucrece, Lavinia is innocent of any complicity her rape, there can be no doubt that she was brutally raped, and there is no question that she withheld consent, yet as Derek Cohen suggests:

> Her innocence is known and affirmed by every character in the play, including her father who eventually kills her. Her conduct is under no suspicion, yet to her father and the emperor of Rome she is dishonoured. Once it is publicly known that Lavinia has been raped, she is understood to have been shamed.[232]

Titus justifies his killing of Lavinia by reference to the story of Virginius who killed his daughter Virginia to prevent her being raped by Appius Claudius or as in some versions of the story he killed her because she had been raped. Titus asserts that Virginia was killed "Because she was

enforced, stained, and deflowered" (5.3.38), and again the language of 'staining' is used to indicate the aftermath of rape. The imagery of corrupted blood that flows throughout the narrative poem, illustrates the capacity of rape to contaminate the bloodline of future heirs. Alison Chapman suggests that in addition to Tarquin soiling Lucrece's body with his semen, the rape carries with it, "the possibility of an unwanted pregnancy."[233] Lucrece refers to the possibility that she may conceive a child as a result of the rape, and it is significant that she acknowledges the possibility of pregnancy as a further disgrace to her honour and to Collatine's family name immediately after she first considers the possibility of committing suicide:

> This bastard graff shall never come to growth:
> He shall not boast, who did thy stock pollute,
> That thou art doting father of his fruit.
> (ll. 1062-1064)

Lucrece becomes strengthened in her conviction to shed her own blood by the realisation that doing so will prevent the contamination of her husband's family by the illegitimate child of her rapist. There is, of course, another aspect to Lucrece's fear of pregnancy because it was believed at the time that conception, "occurred from the mixing in the womb of a male and female seed emitted at orgasm."[234] As late as the mid-seventeenth century when Nicholas Culpeper's *Directory for Midwives* was published, it was difficult for a woman who conceived a child as the result of a rape to bring a successful prosecution against her attacker because:

> If it was … found that she was pregnant from the rape, she had no case since she presumably enjoyed herself, experienced an orgasm, and thus produced seed to add to the rapists.[235]

If Lucrece were to conceive Tarquin's child as a result of the rape, the implication of this contemporary theory of conception would be that she was an adulteress who had consented

to sexual intercourse with the man she had accused of rape. There is no suggestion in *Titus Andronicus* that Lavinia becomes pregnant as a result of her rape, but nevertheless the play does demonstrate that a bloodline may become corrupted as a consequence of infidelity, through the example set by Tamora's adulterous relationship with Aaron; this illicit relationship results in a pregnancy, and in the birth of "the base fruit of … [Aaron's] burning lust" (5.1.43).

Lucrece is made an exemplar by Collatine when he boasts of her chastity and she is aware that the choice Tarquin gives to her when he threatens to kill her and "bear thee / Unto the base bed of some rascal groom / To be thy partner in this shameful doom" (ll.670-672), is about much more than whether or not she survives the assault, it is fundamentally about how history re-defines this exemplar. The agency of suicide enables Lucrece to take back the control that the rape denied her and redeem herself from her shame, Jan H. Blits comments that:

> Where Tarquin threatens to make her a shameful example, Lucrece deliberately fashions herself a noble one. Anticipating herself as an *exemplum*, she acts to make "[her] resolution" "[her] example" (1193,1194). While her death at his hands would make it impossible for her to refute Tarquin's threatened shame of dishonour, only death at her own hands, witnessed by others, can remove her shame and redeem her honour.[236]

The means by which Lucrece commits suicide recalls some of the earlier imagery that is associated with her rape. Lucrece stabs herself and the use of a blade refers back to the sword imagery that serves to symbolise the rape itself. As Tarquin resolves to commit rape "His falchion on a flint he softly smiteth,/That from the cold stone sparks of fire do fly" (ll.181-182) and the reference to 'falchion' in this line has clear phallic connotations, as it is the weapon that he will use later in an attempt to coerce Lucrece to submit to sexual intercourse. Heather

Dubrow suggests that:

> The falchion which is clearly phallic, draws attention to the connection between sexuality and military aggression.[237]

The sword is the weapon that Tarquin uses to threaten Lucrece, and it also acts as a metaphor for his penis, the weapon with which he will commit the rape. Just as the sword signifies the rapist's weapon, it also symbolises the violence of the assault. Later as Tarquin attempts to intimidate Lucrece, "he shakes aloft his Roman blade" (l.505) and in a subsequent verse the pleading Lucrece begs him to "draw not thy sword"(l.626). The threat from the blade as a weapon of rape anticipates the moment where Lucrece takes her own life in the final section of the poem; where, making Tarquin complicit in her suicide, she accuses:

> 'He, fair lords, 'tis he,
> That guides this hand to give this wound to me.'
> (ll. 1721-1722)

The sword is used as a metaphor for 'penis' elsewhere in Shakespeare's work and significantly it is also associated with rape in *Titus Andronicus* where Chiron and Demetrius engage in sword play to determine who has the right to 'woo' Lavinia, before committing to a joint enterprise to rape her:

> I am as able and as fit as thou
> To serve, and to deserve my mistress' grace
> And that my sword upon thee shall approve
> (2.1.33-35)[238]

In the final moments of her life, Lucrece's body is again penetrated, this time not by a penis, but instead with a "harmful" (l.1724) and "murd'rous knife" (l.1735) "sheathed in her harmless breast" (l.1723) letting her own blood in expiation of the act which began with her rapist's hand on the same "bare breast" (l. 439). As Catherine Belsey suggests, "The remedy is

paradoxically a repetition; release from the consequences of Tarquin's crime also re-enacts it."[239] The manner of Lucrece's suicide therefore reflects her rape and completes the circle back to the act which precipitated it.

Lucrece's death when it comes reveals the complexity of the plays' blood imagery. The suicide is cleansing and cathartic. At the time that Shakespeare was writing, the letting of blood was widely used as a treatment for a variety of illnesses and inflictions and the idea that Lucrece sheds her own blood to cleanse herself of the impurity of the rape seems to be in keeping with this practice. John Roe suggests that "Lucrece's suicide threat refers to the medical practice of leeching or bloodletting, the theory being that contamination or fever, or any *corruption* may be 'bled away'" Shakespeare has Lucrece proclaim that her "gross blood be stained with this abuse," (l.1655) and subsequently acknowledge her intent to purge her body as she stabs herself:

> The remedy indeed to do me good,
> Is to let forth my foul defilèd blood
> (ll. 1028-1029)[240]

Throughout the description of Lucrece's death and its aftermath, Shakespeare directs the reader's attention to the blood that flows freely from her self-inflicted wound. When Brutus removes the knife from her body, it releases her blood in a "purple fountain" (l.1734) to encircle her:

> And bubbling from her breast, it doth divide
> In two slow rivers, that the crimson blood
> Circles her body in on every side,
> (ll.1737-1739)

But as the blood flows from her body, it appears to separate into two streams so that:

> Some of her blood still pure and red remained,
> And some looked black, and that false Tarquin stained.

(ll. 1742-1743)

As the blood "stained" black flows from her body, Lucrece makes a physical revelation of the nature of her condition in support of the accusation that she made against Tarquin a few moments earlier, reminding the reader of the 'crimson river' that offers a sign of Lavinia's rape in *Titus Andronicus*. William Weaver suggests that Lucrece's blood is described in the poem as "a kind of legal testimony" confirming the nature of the crime that has been committed against her: "the testimony of Lucrece's blood is the final word … By drawing blood in her forensic performance, she provides the definitive sign of a crime against her person."[241] Her body drained of its symbolically corrupted blood, Lucrece achieves spiritual and physical absolution, as Ian Donaldson observes: "Like a religious sacrifice, the suicide seems to cleanse the effects of pollution, and to restore lost purity and innocence."[242] After Lucrece's death and in the presence of her bleeding body, Brutus swears an oath of revenge against Tarquin in the name of "chaste Lucrece' soul," (l. 1839) proclaiming the restoration of her status as an exemplar of chastity. But the letting of blood has a greater significance than simply that of an act of physical cleansing. Jan Blits suggests that Lucrece:

> fears that even Collatine would doubt her innocence without her bloody proof: "She dares not thereof make discovery, / Lest he should hold it her own gross abuse, / Ere she with blood had stained her stained excuse" (1311, 1313-16). Even in the eyes of her devoted husband, only the stain of blood, she fears, can bleach the stain of dishonour.[243]

Amy Greenstadt says that "Lucrece decides that her words (the "stain'd excuse") must be reinforced by the visible proof of her innocence offered by her suicide", by the letting of blood. As the blood "stained" black flows from her body, Lucrece makes a physical revelation of the nature of her condition in support of the accusation of rape that she made against Tarquin.

This action is reminiscent of the procedure for making an accusation of rape in the hue and cry tradition because, having summoned her husband, father and other men to witness, Lucrece accuses Tarquin of rape and makes a showing of blood to prove it.

Rape is a crime which has always been difficult to prove, not least because it is an assault which "does not necessarily leave any physical evidence on the body of the victim".[245] In both *The Rape of Lucrece* and *Titus Andronicus*, a bloody representation appears to be required in order to redeem the reputation of the victims. In the tragedy, Lavinia is clearly shown to be spoiled and stained as a result of the rape she has suffered. Chiron and Demetrius continue their assault on their victim before they leave her after the rape, adding verbal insult to physical abuse by tormenting her about the fact that she cannot cleanse herself of the assault, "call for sweet water, wash thy hands / She hath no tongue to call, nor hands to wash" (2.4.6-7). Whilst drawing attention to the horrific extent of Lavinia's physical injuries, the words of her attackers also present an important truth about the emotional and spiritual extent of her suffering, because Lavinia cannot be cleansed of the physical, emotional and social consequences of her attack by washing, and like Lucrece she must be purged by the letting of blood.

Before Titus enacts his revenge upon his daughter's rapists, he calls upon their mother to 'witness' the signs of the trauma that he has endured in an act that is indicative of the raising of the hue and cry. Titus reveals the signs of his own physical injury and mental torment in terms that suggest a judicial testimony with repeated invitations to the disguised Tamora to 'witness':

> Witness this wretched stump, witness these crimson lines,

> Witness these trenches made by grief and care,
> Witness the tiring day and heavy night,
> Witness all sorrow
> (5.2.22-25)

The reference to 'crimson lines' at this point once again recalls the "crimson river of warm blood" (2.4.22) that is both the outward sign that Lavinia has lost her tongue and a symbolic representation of her rape. Derek Dunne notes the evidential element in Titus' words, suggesting that:

> Titus is next to call on a witness, in this case his own body, as he is confronted with the appearance of Tamora disguised as Revenge … The anaphoric repetition of 'witness' stresses the need to assert a truth-value, and in the act of swearing Titus links this to the grief and violence suffered by the Andronocii. However, like his daughter, Titus's body is a silent text, an issue of fact to be interpreted according to what the audience / jury know.[246]

Titus calls on Tamora to witness his suffering before taking action to punish those who were responsible for it.

Titus intends to execute his daughter's rapists and use their remains to bake a pie that he plans to feed to their mother in an act of enforced cannibalism that Deborah Willis suggests is in itself a form of rape, "Tamora's sons will be forced back inside their mother's body, in what amounts to a kind of oral rape by Titus".[247] The killing of Chiron and Demetrius is enacted in the form of a ritual slaughter, which Titus explains to his gagged and bound victims in the moments before their death, "Hark, wretches, how I mean to martyr you; / This one hand yet is left to cut your throats" (5.2.180-181). The reference to the cutting of throats indicates that Titus intends to drain the blood from the bodies of his victims and use it to make a pie, "I will grind your bones to dust, / And with your blood and it I'll make a paste" (5.2.186-187) and this method of execution creates a link back to the earlier hunt which led to Lavinia's

rape. Titus plans to kill Chiron and Demetrius in the manner in which an animal might typically be slaughtered and Roger Manning describes the ritualised killing of prey at the end of a hunt:

> after the hunting party came upon the fallen deer it was customary to allow a guest or the most important personage present to slit the throat of a stag or buck if it needed to be dispatched.[248]

Titus' intention to exsanguinate the bodies of his daughter's rapists and to use the blood from their execution as an ingredient in the pie that will shortly be served to their mother creates a further link to the hunting metaphor that pre-empted Lavinia's rape because, having despatched Chiron and Demetrius in the manner of the deer at the end of the hunt, he serves them "baked in that pie / Whereof their mother daintily hath fed" (5.3.60-61) and as Edward Berry observes:

> Saturninus' stepsons are devoured in pasties, which for festive occasions were commonly filled with venison.[249]

Having themselves subverted the original hunt to murder Bassianus and assault Lavinia, in the final moments of the play it is fitting that the poachers, Chiron and Demetrius, become themselves first the hunter's quarry and finally the spoils of the hunt. This link to hunting practices creates a connection between Titus' planned revenge and the crime that precipitated it.

In Shakespeare's narrative poem, Lucrece hopes that the impurity that has contaminated her blood should live on after her death to pollute Tarquin's, "My stained blood to Tarquin I'll bequeath" (l.1181), and likewise the "guilty blood" (5.2.183) of Lavinia's attackers is contaminated with the stain of their offence. Jonathan Bate suggests a reflection of the silencing of Lavinia in the killing of Chiron and Demetrius:

> the gagging of Chiron and Demetrius and the slitting of their throats: it answers exactly to their gagging of Lavinia and cutting of her tongue.[250]

This passage also creates a link to an earlier scene where Titus, having just received the heads of Marcus and Lucius says:

> For these two heads do seem to speak to me
> And threat me I shall never come to bliss
> Till all these mischiefs be returned again
> Even in their throats that have committed them.
> (3.1.272-275)

This is another instance where a character's words unwittingly anticipate a later outcome. Titus' reference to the "return of mischiefs" to the "throats that have committed them" foreshadows the final execution of his revenge on Chiron and Demetrius where his vengeance is literally enacted on their throats. Christopher Crosbie suggests that:

> This shift into literalness occurs precisely because proportionate exchange requires a material equivalent return.[251]

Titus' revenge also echoes the sacrifice of Tamora's son, Alarbus, in the opening scenes of the play, so that the play draws close to its ending with an act of revenge which reflects the event that precipitated the entire revenge cycle. A.C. Hamilton suggests that Lavinia's active participation in the killing of Chiron and Demetrius also links back to an earlier scene in the play, again reversing the roles of victim and aggressor:

> it is not murder that we witness, nor even personal revenge, but a solemn sacrifice. ... That earlier moment when Lavinia knelt before Tamora pleading for death is now, with full justice, reversed as Tamora's sons kneel before her.[252]

Titus executes Chiron and Demetrius by cutting their throats, but before doing so he invites Lavinia to "Receive the blood" (5.3.197) of her rapists in "a phrase that darkly parodies the language of the Eucharist, in which we are redeemed by the blood of Christ".[253] Stephanie M. Bahr also identifies a parody of the Eucharist in Tamora's consumption of the flesh of her own

children baked in pie, calling the act: “a cannibalistic vision of the Eucharist”.[254] The image of the handless Lavinia catching the blood of her rapists in a bowl held “’tween her stumps” (5.3.40) is an horrific one, in which David Goldstein suggests that, “the bowl becomes metonymic for Lavina’s own work as a vessel, as both a mouth and a womb,” and there is a sense in which an association between the bowl and the womb makes this image a metaphorical representation of the act of rape itself, as the blood of the rapists enters the bowl held by their victim, just as they have previously violated her body.[255] Marguerite Tassi suggests that there is an element of agency in Lavinia’s role in the execution of Chiron and Demetrius, noting that she is able to “participate in this brutal, bloody rite her father undertakes to avenge her rape and mutilation” calling to mind the legal practice of calling upon a victim to inflict a blood punishment upon her rapist when her case was upheld.[256] The mode of revenge also creates a letting of blood that parodies the bloody evidence of rape that a woman who had been a virgin was expected to provide to prove her allegation, as Tassi suggests, Lavinia participates in “a symbolic collecting of the rapists’ blood to compensate for the loss of her virgin’s blood”.[257]

Immediately after the execution of Chiron and Demetrius, Titus kills Lavinia making it clear that his intention is to erase the shame of the rape, “Die, die, Lavinia, and thy shame with thee” (5.3.46). However, the subsequent line, “And with thy shame thy father’s sorrow die” (5.3.47) reveals that Titus’ action is also intended to relieve his own suffering. Unlike Lucrece, Lavinia is denied the agency of suicide, because she has “no hands to … knit the cord” (2.4.10), and it is unclear in the text whether or not she willingly submits to death at the hands of her father, Lavinia cannot ask to die because, “She hath no tongue to call” (2.4.7) so that the act

which is intended to cleanse her of the stain of her rape, is as much a redemption of Titus' honour as it is of her own. As Karen Bamford, observes, "Titus' words underline his appropriation of her pain: *Her* shame is *his* sorrow," it would appear that Titus at least is unable to "survive her shame" (5.3.41).[258] Lavinia was contaminated and rendered impure through rape, and she is cleansed through a perversion of the absolution of sin in Christian communion before she too is sacrificed by Titus and the evidential process is completed by a showing of the blood of both the rapists and their victim. Whereas Lavinia is killed by her father, Lucrece takes her own life acting as "mistress of [her] fate" (l. 1069). When Lucrece dies she leaves behind a father and husband who are no longer able to possess or control her and are left with title only over who has experienced the greatest degree of loss. The two men appropriate Lucrece's death in much the same way as Titus appropriates the shame of his daughter's rape:

> 'O', quoth Lucius, 'I did give that life
> Which she too early and too late hath spilled.'
> 'Woe, woe,' quoth Collatine, 'she was my wife,
> I owed her and 'tis mine that she hath killed.'
> (ll. 1800 – 1803)

In both *The Rape of Lucrece* and *Titus Andronicus*, blood is used as a symbol of corruption, as a sign of sexual violation and as a means by which to purge the uncleanliness of rape. Both Lavinia and Lucrece begin their narratives as exemplars of chastity, but despite their deeply held desire to remain virtuous, they are raped and come to bear the 'stains' of the abuse of their bodies by men. Both narratives reinforce the attitudes of patriarchal society towards female chastity, where the victim is shown to be soiled and shamed by the act of rape. Lucrece's blood is literally blackened as a result of her rape and both women can only be

cleansed and absolved of the sins enacted against their bodies through their deaths, and the letting of blood. Yet while the blood that cleanses Lavinia's shame is shed by her father's remaining hand, Lucrece takes her own life despite the agreement of her men folk that her spiritual innocence exonerates her from any accusation of complicity in the rape, "Her Body's stain her mind untainted clears" (l. 1069). A modern audience would perhaps prefer to see both of Shakespeare's rape victims achieve exoneration and acclamation as survivors of rape, and would want Lucrece to behave differently, perhaps turning the knife against her attacker rather than herself, but although her action is self-destructive in physical terms it is also an empowering assertion of ultimate freewill. As Laura G. Bromley points out:

> Lucrece asserts her independence. When she freely chooses to take her own life, she is guided by a conception of herself that is not imposed upon her, but is her own creation. It is she, and not the men she summons, who understands the implications of her rape and realizes the extent of Tarquin's tyranny; it is she who feels the necessity of opposing that tyranny.[259]

Catherine Belsey acknowledges that "Lucrece does the best she can" in the circumstances because, "she publicly places the blame where it belongs; she erases the possible taint on the family name; and she reaffirms her own sovereignty in an action that is deliberately and independently chosen".[260] Joan Lord Hall suggests that:

> Once she resolves to commit suicide, Lucrece becomes a more active agent, planning to restore her family's reputation even as she ensures the downfall of her rapist.[261]

As the contaminated blood flows from her body Lucrece's chastity is returned to her, but it no longer represents a quality that has been externally imposed upon her; "Lucrece the chaste" (l.7) was a personification of an abstract quality whereas the title "chaste Lucrece" (l.1839) has been hard won and represents a quality of innocence achieved through emotional suffering

and self-examination. Although the male dominated society in which both women live creates the conditions which enable rape and make it difficult for married rape victims to function as ‘unchaste’ wives, the deaths of both women are shown to be redemptive, and for Lucrece, who retains the agency and freewill that is denied to Lavinia, her “self-destruction is her self-redemption” and the shame of her rape is cleansed by the corrupted blood shed in her suicide.

The rape of Lavinia occurs in the imagined off-stage reality of the forest and in contrast, Lucrece is assaulted between the verses of the narrative poem, but as stated above, both rapes are metaphorically represented in the texts. The fact that both rapes occur within the margins of the texts demonstrates the difficulty in achieving effective dramatic or narrative representation of this most intimate and invasive of assaults. This difficulty in describing rape is evident also in the linguistic failure of both Lavinia and Lucrece to construct effective arguments to defend themselves against their attackers. Rape truly is something that “denies [the] tongue to tell” (2.3.174), but by using imagery to force the audience and reader to imagine the intimate assaults on both women, Shakespeare enables them to experience something of the horror of rape and displays an empathy with the plight of the women.

As I will demonstrate in subsequent chapters there are significant similarities between the two rape texts and later works which include the threat of rape as a theme. The hunting and poaching metaphors which precede the rapes in both plays, occur in other works where they serve to highlight an imminent threat of rape, and many other aspects of the rape texts can be seen to foreground later threats of rape.

Both works can also be viewed in the contemporary context of the hue and cry process. Before they are raped, both women are silenced to prevent them crying out for help, but while Lavinia is raped in the forest which is culturally determined as a suitable location for criminal activity, Lucrece is raped inside her own home. In fact, Lucrece's bedroom takes on many of the features of the forest and proves to be equally well suited to rape. The comparison between the two locations demonstrates that it is in fact the isolation and opportunity of both environments that facilitate the rapes that occur within them, and this too has implications for later works where an audience familiar with the rape texts would be likely to recognise the potential for rape in similar circumstances.

Despite being silenced before their rapes, both Lavinia and Lucrece are able to raise the hue and cry after they have been assaulted and they publish the nature of their assaults to their chosen witnesses. Just as the traditional showing of blood confirmed that a virgin had been raped so the letting of the blood of Lucrece and Lavinia confirms that they too were raped, and simultaneously cleanses both women of the impurity of the assault restoring their chastity. As well as reflecting contemporary attitudes to rape, these two works set the pattern for the portrayal of rape, when it is threatened in later works, and as the forthcoming chapters will demonstrate, when Shakespeare's audience recognised the echoes of *Titus Andronicus* and *The Rape of Lucrece* in other works this would have indicated that there was an imminent and significant threat of rape.

Chapter 3

Threatened Rape in the Comedies: *"The Two Gentlemen of Verona" and "A Midsummer Night's Dream"*

While only *Titus Andronicus* and *The Rape of Lucrece* include the execution of a rape within their narrative scope, Shakespeare returns to the theme of rape on several occasions in other works. Although there is no rape committed in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, threatened rape is a theme in both works and both comedies depict the vulnerability of women to sexual violence and to the threat of rape in remote locations. This chapter will examine the threatened rapes in the context of the contemporary cultural perception of rape which regarded it as abduction, elopement or sexual assault. The chapter will also demonstrate the relevance of the hue and cry process and will identify reflections of the earlier rape texts which serve to emphasise the possibility of rape and to introduce the potential for a tragic outcome in both of the comedies.

I

"They would have stolen away"

English rape law developed from a long tradition of conflating the sexual crime of rape with acts of abduction and consensual elopement, and both of Shakespeare's comedies, which have a threat of sexual rape as a key theme, also include elopements to avoid arranged marriages within their narrative. In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* the Duke of Milan's choice of Sir Turio as a husband for his daughter, Silvia, threatens to thwart her relationship with Valentine. Indeed the Duke claims to have taken quite considerable steps to protect Silvia from the attentions of unwelcome suitors:

> I nightly lodge her in an upper tower,

> The key whereof myself have ever kept;
> And thence she cannot be conveyed away.
> (3.1.35-37)

The tower has a dual significance, it protects Silvia from the dangers inherent in unwelcome male attention, but it is also a prison which prevents her from indulging in a consensual relationship with a man of her own choosing. Jeanne Addison-Roberts suggests that in the case of the Duke of Milan, "the concern of the father is not for his daughter but for his own control and choice."[263] The image of the tower demonstrates how men in a patriarchal society have the power to contain and corrupt female sexuality, to both preserve virginity and to defile it. The tower preserves Silvia's virginity by placing it under lock and key, yet as a clearly phallic symbol it is a constant reminder of her vulnerability to sexual transgress. The tower is clearly intended to protect Silvia, but ironically it exposes her to the potential dangers of an isolated location precisely because it confines her within a solitary space. While Silvia should be safe in her bedroom, it calls to mind Lucrece's violation within her bedchamber where the "hateful, vaporous and foggy Night" (l.771) and "vile Opportunity" (l.895) render her vulnerable to rape within the privacy of her own home, and the real-life record of the rape of Madeline Soper in the turret of the Royal Exchange whose cries for help went unanswered because "being so high she could not be heard."[264] The Duke's statement that "she cannot be conveyed away" acknowledges the risk to a wealthy virgin of abduction in order to force a marriage against the consent of her father. Indeed, in order to pursue his desire to court Silvia and prevent her marriage to Turio, Valentine sees little option other than to plan an elopement, which in the mode of its execution demonstrates that Sylvia is actually still vulnerable while confined within the tower:

> With all the cunning manner of our flight,

Determined of: how I must climb her window.
The ladder made of cords, and all the means
Plotted and 'greed on for my happiness.
(2.4.184-187)

Interestingly both Lucrece in Shakespeare's narrative poem and Silvia are vulnerable precisely because they are known to be alone in their bedrooms at night, which suggests that the risk of rape is inherent in the isolation afforded by a location, rather than in the nature of the location itself. Although the plan to elope is a consensual act, Valentine stating "we are betrothed" (2.4.183) his intention to gain access to Sylvia through her chamber window and his reference to the plan as a "cunning", secretive elopement suggests an underhanded, furtive event. When Proteus warns the Duke of Milan of Valentine's intentions he does so in language that further emphasises the devious theft-like nature of the plan which "The law of friendship bids me to conceal" (3.1.5). He tells the Duke that Valentine "intends to steal away your daughter" (3.1.11) and that she will be "stol'n away from you" (3.1.15). Proteus emphasises the deceptive nature of the elopement by describing it as "their disguising and pretended flight" (2.6.37) and describes to the Duke the means by which Valentine intends to liberate Silvia from the tower:

they have devised a mean
How he her chamber-window will ascend,
And with a corded ladder fetch her down.
(3.1.38-40)

In the Early Modern period the terms 'tumble' or 'fall' were sexually suggestive and both were used to imply sexual intercourse in connection with the rape of Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus*, and similarly the phrase 'fetch her down' suggests an act of violation, and hints at the potential reputational damage that would face Sylvia if she were to elope and then return

home unmarried to her father.

Valentine is subsequently tricked into revealing his intentions to the Duke, who pretends to be seeking advice on how to gain access to a woman who has resisted his own advances and is “kept severely from resort of men, / That no man hath access by day to her” (3.1.108-109) and is lodged where “the doors be locked and keys kept safe, / That no man hath recourse to her by night” (3.1.111-112). The image is very much a representation of constrained virtue and Valentine’s response that, “what lets but one may enter at her window?” (3.1.113) conveys an image of breaking into a property that acts as a metaphor for sexual intercourse. Indeed, the courtship advice which Valentine gives to the Duke while inadvertently disclosing the details of his plan to elope with Silvia conveys a transition from elopement and abduction, to metaphors of sexual rape. Valentine reveals a misogynistic attitude to women in his advice on seduction that Alexander Leggatt says is at best a “cynical detachment” and a “calculating assessment of female behaviour” as well as demonstrating a complete disregard for female consent.[265] Valentine suggests that gifts are a useful aid to courtship:

> Win her with gifts if she respect not words;
> Dumb jewels often in their silent kind
> More than quick words do move a woman’s mind.
> (3.1.89-91)

This implies a somewhat patronising, insulting and misogynistic view of women’s mental capacity at least concerning issues of love and consent. Given the fact that on so many occasions in this play the women are presented as objects to be won, given, stolen, gazed at and acted upon, it is hardly surprising that one of the central characters should relate the emotional responses of a woman to the desire to obtain objects of value. The Duke responds

to Valentine's suggestion that "dumb jewels" might win him a woman's consent with some reluctance, "But she did scorn a present that I sent her" (3.1.92). Valentine's response is to dismiss this objection on the basis that "A woman sometime scorns what best contents her" (3.1.93), an attitude that introduces the possibility of rape as a response to withheld consent. The superior knowledge of the audience, who are aware of the Duke's reasons for pushing Valentine towards the inevitable visual comedy of the revelation of a ladder hidden beneath his cloak, serves as a filter to lessen the impact of Valentine's words. The fact is, however, that he is effectively trivialising the concept of consent and legitimising the use of coercion. The exchange continues, and it seems that for every objection that a woman might raise, Valentine has a counter argument. The persuasion is relentless, and at times suggests the possibility of resorting to force when seduction or coercion fails. If a present is rejected Valentine suggests that the Duke should:

> Send her another; never give her o'er,
> For scorn at first makes after-love the more.
> (3.1.94-95)

There is a hint here of the use of coercion to 'persuade' a woman to accept a present, and therefore a suitor. The reference to 'after-love' is suggestive of heightened pleasure in sexual intercourse after a woman has at first resisted, and Valentine goes on to emphasise his point:

> If she do frown, 'tis not in hate of you
> But rather to beget more love in you.
> If she do chide, 'tis not to have you gone,
> For why the fools are mad if left alone.
> Take no repulse, whatever she doth say,
> For 'get you gone' she doth not mean 'away'.
> (3.1.96-101)

Kurt Schlueter says in his note on this section that the word 'fools' is used here as a term of affection, yet this could equally be patronising and reflect a male opinion which neither credits women with the intelligence to know their own minds in matters of sex and love, nor suggests the need for potential suitors to take any account of it.[266] Valentine's argument throughout this scene suggests that he believes that any woman could be persuaded to submit to a persistent suitor. When Valentine says "Take no repulse whatever she doth say," he urges the Duke to ignore a verbal denial of consent and in so doing he denies the female voice as effectively as Chiron and Demetrius in *Titus Andronicus* who silence Lavinia first with a threat, "I'll stop your mouth," (2.3.184) then with a hand, and finally a sword.

The idea that withheld consent invites further persuasion or coercion is also evident in Julia's words after she has begged her servant, Lucetta, to withhold a letter that was sent to her by Proteus:

> And yet I should I had o'er looked the letter.
> It were a shame to call her back again
> And pray her to a fault for which I chid her.
> What fool is she, that knows I am a maid
> And would not force the letter to my view,
> Since maids, in modesty, say 'no' to that
> Which they would have the profferer construe 'ay'.
> (1.2.51-57)

The final two lines of this quotation are similar in meaning to Buckingham's advice to Richard in *Richard III* to feign reluctance to accept the crown, saying "Play the maid's part: still answer nay and take it" (3.7.49). In both plays the implication of this is that it is understood that a woman's withheld consent is assumed to be an invitation for further attempts at persuasion. It is an excuse which Valentine espouses and that the circumstances of the play make available to Proteus when he threatens to rape Silvia in the woods. Silvia has a number of qualities that

make her desirable: she is the daughter of a wealthy man, she is a virgin, and she remains indisputably loyal to the man she has fallen in love with. Elsewhere in Shakespeare's work chastity and virtue are shown to be qualities which place women in danger of rape, as if purity somehow invites defilement. In *Measure for Measure*, Angelo is aroused more by Isabella's purity than he has been by women who would consent to have sexual intercourse with him:

> Never could the strumpet,
> With all her double vigour – art and nature –
> Once stir my temper; but this virtuous maid
> Subdues me quite.
> (2.3.186-190)

As shown in the previous chapter, Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus* becomes a focus of desire for Chiron and Demetrius only after she is rendered unattainable by her marriage and their intention to rape her seems to be at least partially inspired by a desire to punish her loyalty to Bassianus, "This minion stood upon her chastity, / Upon her nuptial vow, her loyalty" (2.3,124-125), and in the narrative poem, Lucrece is violated in part because her husband boasts to other men of her virtue:

> Perchance his boast of Lucrece' sov'reignty
> Suggested this proud issue of a king,
> For by our ears our hearts oft tainted be.
> (ll.36-38)

Valentine appears to regard virginity as a quality that invites corruption and the echoes of Shakespeare's two rape texts at this point emphasise that his courtship advice comes perilously close to advocating rape.

Valentine continues his advice to the Duke making a none-too subtle link between vocal courtship and sexual foreplay and suggesting that:

> That man that hath a tongue, I say, is no man
> If with his tongue he cannot win a woman.

(3.1.104-105)

The implication here is that if a woman cannot be seduced by fine words, persuasion and even gifts, or sexual technique can assure success. Valentine equates sexual potency with masculinity and implies that a man may prepare his way for sexual intercourse with his tongue, both with words to persuade consent, and with oral foreplay to physically ease penetration if it is withheld. The crude implication of 'to win a woman' with his tongue implying bringing her to orgasm and consequently complete surrender by oral stimulation; as Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen observe in their annotation on this line, this "plays on the idea of oral sex".[267] The entire conversation about seduction between Valentine and the Duke is crucial to an understanding of the threatened rape at the end of the play because it demonstrates how a woman can be viewed as an object to be taken and used by a man who has behaved appropriately in other contexts. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, in *Titus Andronicus* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, Shakespeare uses metaphors to represent the rapes that occur off stage in the play and between the lines of the narrative poem. In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Valentine's advice on seduction is also a metaphorical representation of rape. Members of Shakespeare's audience who had read *The Rape of Lucrece* might well recognise elements of Valentine's approach to courtship that are reminiscent of Tarquin's actions in the narrative poem. He advises the Duke that the determined suitor, like Tarquin, should seize the opportunity of darkness to conceal his actions, "I would resort to her by night" (3.1.110), and disregard his victim's withheld consent, "Take no repulse, whatever she doth say" (3.1.100) in order to penetrate her private space, "What let's but one may enter at her window" (3.1.113). Valentine talks of elopement and courtship, but the language he uses

is filled with metaphors of coercion and rape and this has implications for how the issue of female consent is represented throughout the play.

A Midsummer Night's Dream features a consensual elopement early in the play, when one of the two pairs of lovers run away together to escape a forced marriage. Faced with the prospect of separation from the man she loves and a loveless marriage to one that she doesn't, Hermia agrees to run away from Athens with Lysander. Hermia's lover is very practical when it comes to planning their elopement; in suggesting the flight into the woods he presents a carefully considered plan for their future financial security:

> I have a widow aunt, a dowager,
> Of great revenue; and she hath no child.
> From Athens is her house remote seven leagues;
> And she respects me as her only son.
> There gentle Hermia, may I marry thee;
> And to that place the sharp Athenian law
> Cannot pursue us.
> (1.1.157-163)

Lysander's plan would allow him to achieve a highly satisfactory outcome from what at first sight appears to be a desperately difficult situation. In planning to marry Hermia without her father's consent, he risks losing the dowry that he might otherwise have expected to receive from his father-in-law at the time of marriage, but by fleeing to the house of his wealthy aunt, Lysander mitigates against the financial impediment their marriage might otherwise suffer. It could be said that Lysander's careful plan turns the seemingly desperate act of elopement into a sound investment in a financially and emotionally secure future. The plan enables Lysander to rescue the woman he loves from a situation which could result in her death or committal to a convent, whilst ensuring that he can support them both financially, and in this respect Lysander's intentions appear to be honourable. However, there are elements of the text

which suggest the potential peril of the situation. When Lysander proposes that the couple should run from Athens and meet in the woods, he mentions a previous encounter with Hermia in the same woodland location:

> Steal forth thy father's house tomorrow night,
> And in the wood, a league without the town –
> Where I did meet thee once with Helena
> To do observance to a morn of May –
> There will I stay for thee.
> (1.1.164-168)

David Wiles comments on the significance of the allusion to May Day customs at this point and elsewhere in the play:

> May Day was an occasion for romantic assignations and sexual arousal – and ...
> the possibility of illicit sex gave the occasion much of its excitement.[268]

Wiles clearly emphasises the potential uninhibited sexual nature of these woodland encounters. However, while Lysander appears to refer to an earlier Maytime woodland visit, his words to Hermia demonstrate a clear difference between what happened on the previous occasion and the usual behaviour of lovers in these circumstances, because of course they were previously not alone – Hermia was effectively chaperoned by the presence of her best friend Helena. The presence of Helena on the occasion of the couple's first woodland visit raises an interesting point, in that it is possible that Hermia sought to have her friend's company and support at that time in order to ensure that there was no possibility of any sexual encounter between herself and Lysander. Taken a stage further, this has implications for what actually does happen after Hermia and Lysander elope. Hermia's previously circumspect behaviour suggests that she was aware of the potential sexual peril and risk to her reputation in the opportunity afforded by a lone, night-time woodland encounter. Because of

her cautious behaviour in seeking her friend's company and support, no damage could be done to Hermia's reputation as a result of her first woodland meeting with Lysander, while in contrast the impropriety of the second, a night-time private liaison between two lovers, could utterly destroy it. The drastically different nature of the two meetings is emphasised by the words Lysander uses when he speaks of them. The first meeting was an act of "observance" to a popular festival, but the second encounter was very different and Lysander's choice of expression emphasises the contrast because he urges Hermia to "Steal forth thy father's house." The use of the word 'steal' is doubly significant in that it implies both the secretive, underhanded nature of the elopement, and the fact that the couple plan to leave against the wishes of Egeus and Demetrius. Proteus uses similar language in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, when he warns the Duke of Milan that Valentine "This night intends to steal away your daughter"(3.1.11).

In fact Lysander is planning an act that in English Law would traditionally have been considered to be a form of rape: the 'theft' of a daughter from her father. It was established in the first two chapters that remote woodland locations created an ideal environment for rape and murder and the word 'steal' also appears when Demetrius speaks of his plans to rob Bassianus of his wife's chastity in *Titus Andronicus* – "and easy it is / Of a cut loaf to *steal* a shive" (1.1.586-587) – and an audience familiar with the tragedy might well suspect that when Lysander's urges Hermia to 'steal forth thy father's house', the encounter will end in rape. Although Hermia is a willing participant in the elopement, the comparative notion of theft in the two plays casts a different perspective on the event; Chiron and Demetrius' theft of Lavinia's chastity is an act of non-consensual sexual violence, while Lysander and Hermia's

elopement appears to be motivated by the couple's desire to be together in a desperate situation, but nevertheless, the use of the same word creates a link with the earlier tragedy which introduces the possibility of rape into the comedy. The language of stealing is also used frequently in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in connection with the elopement and the relationship between Hermia and Lysander. Egeus accuses Lysander of stealing his daughter's love saying that the other man has "stol'n the impression of her fantasy" (1.1.33), "filched my daughter's heart" (1.1.37) and that the couple "would have stolen away" (4.1.158).

After successfully persuading Hermia to run away with him, Lysander's conduct is of further interest here. When we first see the couple in the wood, Lysander is heard to express the dutiful concern of a lover for his partner's wellbeing:

> Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood;
> And – to speak truth – I have forgot our way.
> We'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good,
> And tarry for the comfort of the day.
> (2.2.34-37)

But Lysander's emphatically insistent expressions of concern at this point may lack sincerity, as his ensuing comments would suggest. Lysander emphasises the fact that he is unsure of the way, as he subsequently reveals that Hermia's comfort may not be his primary concern after all:

> One turf shall serve as pillow for us both;
> One Heart, one bed, two bosoms, and one troth.
> (2.2.47-48)

Lysander's use of the word troth at this point suggests that he regards the elopement itself as an act of betrothal, and indicates the possibility of consummating what is in effect a common law marriage. B.J. and Mary Sokol comment on Lysander's proposal and Hermia's rejection of

it in terms of the relationship to Elizabethan views on marriage and pre-marital sex:

> Hermia denies Lysander's wish to sleep by her side, despite his claim that their 'Two bosoms [are] interchained with an oath; / So, then, two bosoms and a single troth' … So, as far as Hermia was concerned, but not Lysander, betrothal is not full marriage. Both in some sense were right; the Church condemned his wish to consummate a marriage before solemnisation, but also saw those who were 'interchained with an oath' as fully married.[269]

The puns on lying which follow in Lysander's next lines, indicate the possibility of an element of duplicity in his intentions, and draw attention to the sexual potentiality of the situation:

> Then by your side no bed-room me deny,
> For lying so, Hermia, I do not lie.
> (2.2.57-58)

This short exchange between the couple serves both to demonstrate the sexual peril that a contemporary audience would recognise as inherent in the woodland location, and to show that Lysander is seeking to consummate the couple's relationship. However, while he tries to persuade Hermia to sleep with him, there is no suggestion that he would take advantage of their isolation to rape her, as Mark Taylor observes:

> Lysander is eager to enjoy the fruits of his love before marriage … but only with the acquiescence of Hermia.[270]

Hermia's vulnerability in this situation is highlighted by the strange dream that she experiences when she does finally sleep:

> Help me, Lysander, help me! Do thy best
> To pluck this crawling serpent from my breast!
> Ay me, for pity. What a dream was here?
> Lysander, look how I do quake with fear.
> Methought a serpent ate my heart away,
> And you sat smiling at his cruel prey.
> (2.2.144-149)

Until Hermia and Lysander enter the woods, all the couple's exchanges focussed on the emotional side of their relationship and the threat to it from Egeus' determination to arrange a marriage between Hermia and Demetrius against her will. However, once they are within the woods, the thoughts of both Hermia and Lysander appear to turn to the apparently as yet unexplored sexual aspect of their relationship:

> Lysander has presented Hermia with the problem of his sexual desire, and her dream enacts her anxiety about it.[271]

Hermia is exposed not only to the problematic nature of her awakening sexuality and to the difficulty of withholding consent to sexual intercourse should she wish to do so, but also to the stringent punishments of Athenian law should her father catch up with her before she and Lysander have had the opportunity to marry. Of course Hermia is also in a situation where she is extremely vulnerable and, as if to emphasise this, at the time that she has this dream, Lysander has left her sleeping alone at night in the woods and an audience familiar with *Titus Andronicus* would be aware of the inherent risk of rape in this situation.

When the lovers are discovered sleeping together after spending a night together in the woods, Egeus responds in the traditional manner of one who has discovered that a crime has taken place and he effectively raises the hue and cry:

> They would have stolen away, they would, Demetrius,
> Thereby to have defeated you and me:
> You of your wife and me of my consent,
> Of my consent that she should be your wife.
> (4.1.158-160)

What is more, Egeus is aware of the fact that this is a breach that is punishable by law, causing him to "beg the law, the law, upon his head" (4.1.157). While Theseus spares Hermia the harshest penalty that is available under Athenian law, "to die the death or to abjure / Forever

the society of men" (1.1.67-68) he settles on marriage, which was a resolution that had frequently featured in English law as restitution for abduction, elopement, and rape:

> For in the temple, by and by with us,
> These couples shall eternally be knit.
> (4.1.182-183)[272]

Although Egeus is over ruled by Theseus, and deprived of what he regards as his right to choose a husband for his daughter, "As she is mine, I may dispose of her" (1.1.67-68), the elopement does achieve the outcome that was desired by Hermia and Lysander. However, it is interesting to note that when the two pairs of lovers are discovered after spending the night together in the woods, no one present in the scene (including the couples themselves) knows whether or not they had sexual intercourse. Theseus orders the marriages between the 'lovers' without establishing whether either relationship has been consummated and it seems that his action mirrors the penalty which might have been imposed on them had either woman complained of rape.

While Theseus adjudicates Egeus' claim over his daughter, he too is on the verge of marriage and the nature of his relationship introduces another possible element of 'rape' to the play. Theseus has not courted Hippolyta, his bride to be, in a romantic manner; she is his former enemy and as Theseus himself admits has been brought to his side after a period of hostility:

> Hippolyta, I wooed thee with my sword,
> And won thy love doing thee injuries.
> (1.1.17-18)

Theseus' reference to his sword implies acts of violence leading to the eventual submission of the weaker combatant, rather than a more traditional courtship culminating in romantic love.

His use of the word ‘sword’ also implies the possibility that the relationship has been formed from enforced submission rather than freely given consent. Here, as elsewhere in Shakespeare’s work, the ‘sword’ also has connotations of sexual violence. In *Titus Andronicus*, the blade is synonymous with the penis as it penetrates and mutilates Lavinia’s body in the act which destroys her chastity, and in *The Rape of Lucrece* where Tarquin “shakes aloft his Roman blade” (l.505) as he prepares to rape Lucrece. In this context, the use of the word ‘blade’ suggests the possibility that the first sexual encounter between Theseus and Hippolyta may actually have been sexual rape. W. Thomas MacCary suggests that the nature of the courtship has stemmed from violent aggression as a kind of foreplay leading to submission if not consent:

> First there is aggression against a woman who fights like a man; when she is subdued, the man can imagine a sexual union with her.[273]

This is the action, in fact, of the commander of an invading army, humiliating and subduing his powerful opponent through sexual, as opposed to military, conquest. Peter Holland observes that:

> Hippolyta has been conquered, defeated into marriage. Theseus is well aware that his courtship has been entirely military but his language leaves unclear whether she has agreed through defeat or whether she is now in love with him … Her ‘love’ may be nothing more than enforced and constrained consent.[274]

In this context there is a further discernible similarity between *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *Titus Andronicus*. Both plays open with the public exhibition of conquered warrior queens by triumphant male soldiers. In *Titus Andronicus* Tamora, queen of the defeated Goths, is brought on stage as a prisoner along with her sons:

> brought to Rome
> To beautify thy triumphs and return,
> Captive to thee and to thy Roman yoke?

(1.1.109-111)

Unlike Tamora, Hippolyta may not exactly be a prisoner of war as she is introduced from her first appearance as Theseus' bride-to-be, but it is possible that she was abducted by her future husband. Both women are effectively displayed on stage as spoils of war, and both are promised in marriages of convenience overtly intended to form a union between countries previously at war, effectively subduing these powerful warrior women to the authority of their male conquerors. Tamora enters as a "prisoner to an emperor" (1.1.258), but her status quickly changes through marriage to Saturninus:

> Behold, I choose thee, Tamora, for my bride,
> And will create thee empress of Rome,
> (1.1.321-322)

Theseus also suggests some sort of recompense through marriage for the damage that he has done to Hippolyta and her country during past conflicts:

> I will wed thee in another key-
> With pomp, with triumph, and with revelling.
> (1.1.17-18)

His use of the word 'triumph' implies that he sees the marriage at least in part as a celebration of victory over a former opponent. Clearly the forthcoming festivities are intended to mark the end of a conflict and the triumphant return of a leader as much as they are to be nuptial celebrations. The offer of marriage reflects the traditional use of marriage as restitution for rape and abduction.[275] The echoes of the display and marriage of Tamora in *Titus Andronicus* also calls to mind the fact that this event in the tragedy was one of the factors that led to the brutal rape of Lavinia.

The perception of Theseus is strongly influenced by the classical significance of his name because, as Harold Bloom observes, "Theseus and Hippolyta belong to ancient myth and legend."[276] Theseus has his origins in classical literature, and Laurie Maguire suggests that "Theseus' story was available to the Renaissance from many sources", but "the most extensive account appears in Plutarch's *Life of Theseus*".[277] David Ormerod suggests that:

> Theseus was a figure with specific overtones and associations. Plutarch describes him as the founder of Athens and allots to him the parallel life of Romulus, founder of Rome. His gravity and dignity and above all, his rationality, thus receive great stress.[278]

Within the turbulent world of the play, amidst the confusion of adolescent love with its inherent promiscuous possibilities and the jealous passions of Oberon and Titania, Theseus and his new bride initially appear to stand out as an example of the stable, responsible and socially correct love of mature adulthood in a patriarchal society. David Ormerod suggests that Theseus is:

> an image of a correct sexual hierarchy with reference to his conquest of Hippolyta and his assertion of the dominance of the male principle in amorous situations.[279]

Jan Kott chooses to dismiss the classical allusions implied by the names of Theseus and Hippolyta as virtually irrelevant to the play, suggesting that:

> The Greek queen of the Amazons has only recently been the mistress of the king of the fairies, while Theseus has just ended his liaison with Titania. These facts have no bearing on the plot, nothing results from them. They even blur a little the virtuous and somewhat pathetic image of the betrothed couple drawn in the first and fifth acts.[280]

However, Peter Holland suggests that "the mere presence of Theseus" in the play "makes the whole of the Theseus myth available", and as the text refers us back to the classical origins of these names we cannot ignore their implications.[281] Theseus exists in his own right as Duke of

Athens in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, but because of the baggage of legend and reputation that he carries with him, he is a troublesome figure, "a man on the stair who will not go away".

Plutarch establishes Theseus' importance as a prominent figure in the classical world in his *Life of Theseus*. His introductory comments compare Theseus with the parallel life of Romulus, the founder of Rome, and lead us to make a comparison between Theseus' roles in classical history and in Shakespeare's play:

> both were very wise, and strong besides of body. The one of them built Rome, and the other the city of Athens, two of the most noble cities in the world. The one and the other were ravishers of women.[283]

Plutarch portrays the Theseus of legend as a man whose commendable achievements as a leader and warrior are marred by a dubious sexual reputation as he "resorted to the rape of women".[284] Plutarch describes Theseus as a man who modelled himself on Heracles "determined to do no man any wrong, but to punish those who offered him violence," but it appears that this did not prevent him from abducting and abusing a number of women. Oberon accuses Theseus of 'ravishing' Perigouna' (2.1.78) and refers to his relationships with other women – Aegles, Ariadne and Antiopa (2.1.79-80). Classical evidence of these relationships is again to be found in Plutarch's work leading David Schalkwyk to suggest that "Theseus, is a serial seducer and rapist".[285] Harold Bloom comments that "Theseus is credited with many ravishments" and as Plutarch writes:

> the transgressions of Theseus in his rapes of women admit of no plausible excuse. This is true, first, because there were so many: for he carried off Ariadne, Antiope, Anaxon of Troezan last Helen, when he was past his prime and she had not reached her prime, but was an unripe child, while he was already of an age too great for even lawful wedlock. [286]

Plutarch's reference to Theseus' 'carrying off' Helen is unclear as to whether this was an abduction or a sexual rape, but the suggestion that Theseus was at the time "of an age too great for even lawful wedlock" implies the possibility of a sexual motivation. John Trussell's work *The First Rape of Faire Hellen*, which was published in 1595 and appears in some respects to resemble Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece*, has Hellen say in response to the abduction that:

> Bearing the loade of lust that Theseus left me,
> And wanting that whereof he had bereft me.[287]

The phrase "bearing the loade of lust" is very similar to Shakespeare's description of the raped Lucrece who "bears the load of lust he left behind"(l.734) contributing to M.A. Shaaber's "assumption that Trussell had read 'Lucrece'".[288] This similarity between the two poems led Shaaber to suggest that Trussell intended his verse to imply that Theseus had raped Helen and Laurie Maguire suggests that this "presents Theseus raptus unequivocally as physical rape of a minor".[289] It is unclear how well known Trussell's poem was amongst his contemporary audience, but given that it is dated 1590 and that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was first performed around 1595, it is possible that some members of the audience would have been familiar with this work and would have recognised the clear suggestion that Theseus was guilty of rape.

It seems entirely credible that the references and allusions to the classical origins of Theseus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* would have been recognised by Shakespeare's audience. As Peter Holland suggests the references made in Oberon's words to Titania:

> Summon into being and cannot then eliminate that other Theseus so substantially different from the one seen in the play, the vicious ravisher who balances in Plutarch the heroic warrior and ruler ... The very frequency of the rapes and seductions is part of the indictment; what is more they are not the

> product of warlike conquest, as with Hippolyta in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, won with his sword, but of something creeping, deceitful and thief-like, dark and vicious deeds of the night, so unlike the activities of the moonlight night of the play's wood.[290]

Shakespeare's audience would have recognised Theseus as a figure from the classical world and his presence in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* must therefore introduce echoes of his previous existence into the narrative which inevitably impact on the audience response to the play. The allusions to the Theseus of classical legend serve to undermine the image of Theseus conveyed by the play and to cast doubt upon the reality of the 'love' that has developed between the Duke and his new bride. The presence of a character within the play whose existence beyond it has associations with abduction, elopement and possibly also with sexual rape is one of the many shadows of rape that exist within the play and which introduce the possibility of a tragic denouement.

II

"I shall do thee mischief in the wood"

Elopement and abduction are not the only form of rape to be represented in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and in both plays an elopement serves as a narrative device to lead a female character away from the presumed safety of the city to a potentially hazardous woodland location. Valentine is banished from Milan as a punishment for his plan to elope with Silvia, who then follows him and Helena follows Demetrius into the woods when he pursues the eloping Hermia and Lysander. Once in the woods, free from the restrictive city environment, both Helena and Silvia become potential victims of rape. Factors that were key elements in legal testimonies of rape from the period appear in both texts, and these combine with echoes of *Titus Andronicus* to present incidents that would have been perceived by Shakespeare's audience as clear threats of sexual rape.

Titus Andronicus and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* include hunts within their narrative, and as demonstrated in the previous chapter, in the tragedy the hunt functions both as a narrative device to bring the characters that participate in the rape of Lavinia and murder of Bassianus into the forest and as a metaphor for the rape itself. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the hunt comes at the end of the play as the narrative approaches its conclusion and the lovers are awakened by the arrival of Theseus' hunting party to find that the tragic potentiality of their night in the forest has been averted. In *Titus Andronicus* Titus opens the second act by announcing that "The hunt is up, the morn is bright and grey" (2.2.1) and as he prepares for the day ahead, he recalls his experiences of the previous night and reflects upon a disturbed night's rest:

> I have been troubled in my sleep this night,
> But dawning day new comfort hath inspired.
> (2.2.9-10)

Titus' confidence in the healing catharsis of the "dawning day" seems to be echoed in Helena's words after she collapses exhausted at the end of her traumatic experience in the woodland setting of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:

> O weary night, O long and tedious night,
> Abate thy hours; shine comforts from the east,
> (3.2.447-448)

Helena speaks of her desire for an escape from the pain of reality in the solace of healing sleep:

> And sleep, that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye,
> Steal me awhile from mine own company.
> (3.2.451-452)

When the lovers awake, it is to discover that the problems that seemed so impossibly traumatic the previous night have been resolved; their pain appears to be over and their waking heralds marriage and a progression into the supposedly happy ever after world of the comic resolution. However, the morning that greets Titus is very different because his relief at waking from a night of disturbed sleep is momentary and fleeting and the day begins a waking descent into pain, loss and ultimate madness. As Joel Fink observes, "The world of *Titus Andronicus* is a nightmare-world far from any midsummer night's dream," hinting at a link between the two plays, although he fails to extend his observation to a further exploration of the connections between them.[291]

In both of Shakespeare's rape texts his victim's chastity is rated in terms of monetary value. In *Titus Andronicus* the rapists Chiron and Demetrius are urged to "revel in Lavinia's

treasury" (2.1.138) and In *The Rape of Lucrece* the chain of events that lead to Lucrece's rape begins with Collatine's boasts of his wife's chastity where he:

> Unlocked the treasure of his happy state:
> What priceless wealth the heavens had him lent
> in the possession of his beauteous mate
> (ll.16 – 18)

When Demetrius in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* finds himself alone with Helena in the Athenian forest he reminds her of the vulnerability of her situation by making reference to the "rich worth" (2.1.223) of her virginity. The threatened rape in the final scene of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is pre-empted by references which link Silvia to a financial value. When Valentine speaks of his intention to elope, he measures his love against valuable commodities:

> And I as rich in having such a jewel,
> As twenty seas, if all their sand were pearl,
> The water nectar and the rocks pure gold.
> (2.4.173-175)

Valentine suggests in this quotation that the Duke of Milan's preference for his "foolish rival" (2.4.178) Sir Turio is financially motivated because he is preferred: "Only for his possessions are so huge" (2.4.179). These references to items of monetary value have the effect of objectifying Silvia, so that by the end of the play, she has become a valuable commodity to be exchanged between men.

It was established in the first chapter that remote rural locations were traditionally regarded as environments where women would be particularly vulnerable to rape. Chapter two shows how this attitude translated to *Titus Andronicus* where the isolation of the forest facilitated the rape of Lavinia. In *The Two Gentlemen of* Verona and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the female characters are shown to be vulnerable to sexual assault when they leave

the presumed security of the city and venture into a remote location, where if they were assaulted their cries would not be heard, just as in the 1590 case of Joan Somers whose rapist found her alone "in a ploughed field" and "told her that she might now cry her heart out before anybody could hear her cry."[292] We have seen that the Duke of Milan in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* takes extreme measures to protect his daughter's virginity and when she leaves the court in search of Valentine she is careful to take a male protector with her. Once Silvia becomes separated from her escort, it soon becomes apparent that as a lone woman in the woods, in the company of outlaws who by definition are beyond the laws and patriarchal authority that would seek to protect her chastity, she is at risk of rape. This is highlighted by the fact that her sexual vulnerability is clearly on the mind of one of the outlaws even as he attempts to reassure her that their leader "bears an honourable mind / And will not use a woman lawlessly" (5.3.12-14). However, despite this attempted reassurance, this is an environment in which abduction ("Myself was from Verona banished / For practising to steal away a lady" (4.1.48-49)) and murder ("And I from Mantua, for a gentleman / Who, in my mood, I stabbed unto the heart" (4.1.51-52) are regarded as "petty crimes" (4.1.53) and respected as "an honourable kind of thievery" (4.1.40). Jonathan Bate says of the wood:

> it is a place where the polished veneer of civil society is stripped away allowing people to act impulsively on their desires.[293]

And Anne Barton observes that:

> This woodland … exists tangibly in Shakespeare's comedy both as a place to journey through, and as a refuge for outlaws, men banished from the cities in which they have committed various crimes, who prey upon such travellers.[294]

The environment certainly has its part to play in creating the circumstances where Silvia is threatened with rape. Not only does the absence of social constraint render her vulnerable to

violation, but the woodland also permits the possibility of rape to enter Proteus' mind. Normal laws do not apply here, and it seems that Proteus' 'love' for Silvia becomes suddenly translated to pure lust when, having attempted to court her for much of the play, Proteus loses patience with his futile endeavours and threatens to rape her:

> Nay, if the gentle spirit of moving words
> Can no way change you to a milder form,
> I'll woo you like a soldier, at arm's end,
> And love you 'gainst the nature of love – force ye.
> (5.4.57-60)

Kurt Schlueter glosses 'at arm's end' as meaning 'at sword's point' pointing out the use of this "bawdy innuendo".[295] This compares the unwelcome invasion of the body by a sword, to phallic penetration against the will of the victim, but the phrase 'at arm's end' also creates here a sense that Proteus is pushing Silvia away, as if in embarking on a course of action that leads to rape Proteus acknowledges that any romantic connection between the two is impossible. His journey of emotional development has led him to the realisation of an important truth: that a woman does have the mental and spiritual freedom to withhold her love and that if she chooses to do so there is nothing anyone can do about it, but that the physical reality of the male and female anatomy means that, while she may attempt to withhold her consent to sexual intercourse, if strength prevails, she can be violated against her will.

Proteus' threat to "woo you like a soldier" also creates a link with *The Rape of Lucrece* in which metaphors of conquest are used to represent the rape – "Under that colour am I come to scale / Thy never conquered fort" (ll. 481-482) - and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* where Theseus claims to have subdued his warrior bride in battle: "I wooed thee with my

sword" (1.1.17). Sylvia responds to the initial threat with a shocked exclamation, "O heaven!" (5.4.61) which also implies the traditional requirement of the hue and cry that a woman should cry out when threatened with rape. Proteus responds to her cry with a repetition of his threat, "I'll force thee yield to my desire" (5.4.61) leaving Sylvia and the audience in little doubt that he intends to rape her. Proteus is not alone among Shakespeare's characters in abandoning hopes of love in favour of fleeting sexual gratification, just as Chiron and Demetrius in *Titus Andronicus* abandon their rivalry over Lavinia in favour of a joint enterprise to enjoy "some certain snatch or so" (2.1.99) in the forest.

The "movement out from 'civil' society into a 'wilderness' or green world, where surprising developments take place" in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* also anticipates the circumstances that permit the threat of rape to occur in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.[296] Anne Barton comments on the essentially intriguing nature of the wood that forms the setting for much of the action of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:

> Are its moonlit glades beneficent and beautiful, or merely frightening, the place of error and unreason?[297]

The wood is indeed mysterious: it is a place of contradiction and conflict, confusion and revelation. It can be seen to exist simultaneously as an environment that offers sanctuary and freedom for the eloping Hermia and Lysander alongside trauma, sexual abuse and threatened violence for other characters who find themselves within it. Stanley Wells suggests that the wood is:

> a place of liberation, of reassessment, leading through a stage of disorganisation to a finally increased stability.[298]

This is a perfectly valid assessment of the nature of the woodland location for it is within its boundaries that the conflicts between Oberon and Titania and the lovers achieve their resolution. But the wood also has a darker significance and other critics have come to regard it as a far more frightening place. Jan Kott suggests that the wood has profoundly evil associations and that the magic worked within it is closer to the black magic of witches and goblins than to the harmless spells of delicate airy spirits:

> it is … a forest inhabited by devils and lamias, in which witches and sorceresses can easily find everything required for their practices.[299]

The contradictory nature of the wood in the comedy contributes to the sense that the resolution of the play is overshadowed by the tragic potentialities of real life. It is a place which initially provides the possibility of refuge and protection, a space through which Hermia and Lysander pass in order to escape the laws of Athens, which would prevent their marriage and possibly also threaten Hermia's life. Yet because the wood is a wild and secluded place outside the confines of the city, it is also a potentially dangerous environment in which a lone woman is at risk of rape. When Helena follows Demetrius, Hermia and Lysander into the woods, she soon finds herself facing sexual peril and there is a comparison to be made with the woodland setting for the rape of Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus*. In both plays the characters with sexual violence on their minds regard the woods as dark and desperate places ideally suited to the crime of rape. Aaron compares the "ruthless, dreadful, deaf, and dull," (2.1.135) woods with the emperor's palace which is "full of tongues, of eyes, of ears" (2.1.134) and suggests that:

> The forest walks are wide and spacious
> And many unfrequented plots there are
> Fitted by kind for rape and villainy
> (2.1.121-123)

In comparison, Titus' response to his environment when he first enters the wood is very different because he fails to recognise the danger it presents and responds positively to the location:

> the morn is bright and grey,
> The fields are fragrant and the woods are green:
> (2.2.1-2)

Jeffrey Theis responds to the differing perceptions of the woods that are conveyed by individual characters suggesting that:

> these different accounts of the wood not only reveal mood, they also indicate that people experience the same space in different, highly personal ways and that the early modern forest contains varied topographies. The role one plays shapes one's perceptions of the forest, even as the forest eventually limits the power of that role.[300]

This is comparable to the impressions which Dunsinane Castle makes on Banquo and Duncan in *Macbeth* when they see it for the first time. Duncan observes that:

> This castle hath a pleasant seat: the air
> Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
> Unto our gentle senses.
> (1.6.1-3)

And Banquo echoes this sentiment with his observation that "The air is delicate" (1.6.11). Yet these impressions of a 'pleasant' location are at odds with the reality of the castle in which Duncan will soon be slaughtered before Banquo meets his death nearby. Dunsinane Castle, the Roman Forest and Lucrece's bedchamber all initially appear to be pleasant environments; however, they are all used to isolate unwitting victims. All three locations are manipulated by characters who are intent upon doing harm and who recognise the potential for evil in the same environments. It seems that there is an inherent danger in not recognising the potential

risks that exist within these locations. Duncan and Banquo fail to appreciate the perils that await them in Dunsinane and Titus is too eager to accept that the war with the Goths is ended and that they no longer pose a threat to him, and in both works the misjudgements have tragic consequences. In the comedies, we see characters misjudging the threat that is posed by an isolated environment in a similar way. The Duke in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* fails to see that locking Sylvia in a tower provides an opportunity for a potential assailant or seducer to "enter at her window" (3.1.113) and Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, disregards the risk of entering the forest alone. This disregard for the dangers of an isolated environment that is "Fitted by kind for rape and villainy" introduces the potential for a tragic outcome to the comedies and this potential is highlighted by reflections of *Titus Andronicus* in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

It is significant that in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, while Silvia gains first-hand experience of the dangers that face unaccompanied women in a remote location, in contrast Julia appears far less vulnerable because she has chosen to protect herself from sexual harm by dressing in masculine clothing "As may beseem some well-reputed page" (2.7.43) and "Not like a woman, for I would prevent / The loose encounters of lascivious men" (2.7.40-41). Having chosen to leave the city in male clothes, as Leah Scragg observes her masculine dress, effectively "supplies a defence from aggression."[301] Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has no need of a disguise to protect her because she travels through the woodland with her fiancé, but Helena travels alone, without masculine clothes to hide her vulnerability and is soon shown to be at risk of sexual harm, as Laurie Maguire observes:

> The danger is exacerbated when one considers that the women in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, unusually in Shakespeare, leave the city without the benefit of protective male disguise.[302]

When Helena catches up with Demetrius, he makes it clear that he no longer has any romantic feelings towards her, “I love thee not” (2.1.192), and urges her not to continue her pursuit, “Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more” (2.1.198). A few lines before he threatens to rape Helena, Demetrius appears to be exasperated by her refusal to leave him alone warning her to:

> Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit,
> For I am sick when I do look on thee.
> (2.1.215-216)

Demetrius then proceeds to itemise the ways in which Helena has placed herself in a sexually vulnerable position:

> You do impeach your modesty too much,
> To leave the city and commit yourself
> Into the hands of one that loves you not,
> To trust the opportunity of night
> And the ill counsel of a desert place
> With the rich worth of your virginity.
> (2.1.218-223)

Demetrius’ words seem almost to anticipate the hue and cry process as they include the key elements that would have been expected to appear in an appeal of rape at the time. He accuses Helena of placing herself in in a vulnerable position by “leav[ing] the city” where she might be assumed to be safe from sexual assault, to enter a “desert place” with a man who “loves [her] not”, where as a virgin, she might also be assumed to be more vulnerable to rape because she carries with her “The rich worth of [her] virginity”, a commodity that invites theft. The reference to the “opportunity of night” creates a link to Shakespeare’s rape texts where opportunity is a key component of the rapes of both Lavinia and Lucrece. Lavinia falls victim to rape because the celebratory hunt led her and her husband to leave the comparative security

of the city, placing them in a remote environment, "Fitted by kind for rape and villainy." Tarquin in *The Rape of Lucrece* is able to invade Lucrece's bedroom and rape her in her own bed because her husband is not at home, and Lucrece subsequently accuses the personified 'Opportunity' making it Tarquin's accomplice in her rape "'O Opportunity, thy guilt is great!'" (l.876).

By emphasising that Helena's conduct has placed her in a situation where she is vulnerable to rape, Demetrius diverts the blame for the possibility of a sexual assault away from himself and on to his potential victim. The passage places Demetrius in a passive role while making Helena the active participant and the phrases used relate to Helena's actions ('*You* do,' 'commit *yourself*') and not to his. This re-direction of blame begins with Demetrius' warning to Helena to '*Tempt* not too much the hatred of my spirit' and continues to the point where he threatens to rape her:

> I will not stay thy questions, let me go;
> Or if thou follow me, do not believe
> But I shall do thee mischief in the wood.
> (2.1.239-241)

Here again, Demetrius' choice of language re-directs the responsibility for a possible rape towards Helena: the implication is that the rape will happen if Helena fails to heed the warning and does not 'let [him] go'. The use of the word 'shall' is also significant at this point. Writing about the use of modal verbs in Early Modern English, Lynne Magnusson suggests that:

> Early Modern English "shall" and "will" can pose a challenge for definitive interpretation of modal meanings. Similar on the epistemic scale, they differ in deontic coloring. "Will," … can take color from its original main verb, meaning "want" or "desire," and so express volition. "Shall" can take color from its original main verb, meaning "owe," and express necessity or "What is appointed or settled to take place."[303]

In this instance, given that Demetrius has already itemised the ways in which Helena has 'tempted' him by behaving so incautiously as to invite rape, the use of the word "shall", rather than "will" in the line "But I *shall* do thee mischief in the wood" not only creates a sense of the inevitability of the outcome if Helena continues to pursue him, but also suggests that Demetrius has shifted the agency for the assault from himself to Helena – essentially he says that he is unable to avoid raping her. Demetrius' abdication of responsibility for the threatened rape and his suggestion that Helena has in some way invited it through her incautious behaviour reflects the attitude of Proteus in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* who would rape Silvia because she rejects his attempts to seduce her. As demonstrated in the rape texts too, the rapists apportion blame to their victims whose beauty and chastity is perceived by their assailants to have invited their assaults. This shows us the attitude of the contemporary patriarchal society in which a victim of rape is likely to be held responsible for it, particularly if she failed to raise the hue and cry, or was deemed to have placed herself in a position where she was at risk of rape due to incautious behaviour.

Modern day responses to this scene in the play often underplay the threat of rape. Joan Stansbury, for example, suggests that Demetrius makes "exasperated threats that he is unlikely to carry out".[304] Joseph Summers also dismisses threats of sexual violence suggesting that:

> we must laugh when he attempts to frighten her with a hint that he might harm or even rape her – an obvious impossibility under the circumstances.[305]

It is difficult to see why Summers suggests that it would be an 'obvious impossibility' for Demetrius to rape Helena at this point in the play, but one possibility is that the opening scenes established that Helena is in love with Demetrius and would likely consent to marry

him. However, viewed in the context of Early Modern attitudes to rape the scene suggests that rape is a very likely outcome because Helena is a virgin alone in the woods with a man who clearly does not love her. Summers also ignores the possibility that Shakespeare's audience would have responded very differently to Demetrius' threat to rape Helena and that they would have recognised that Helena was alone in a location that was culturally associated with rape and would have seen that Demetrius was not only precisely in a position where he would be likely to be able to carry out an assault, without bystanders to answer the cries that Helena was expected to make, or to witness the offence. Evidence from the testimonies of actual contemporary victims of rape suggest that if Demetrius *had* raped Helena and she survived the assault and made a complaint, it is unlikely that she would be believed because she was known to have had a previous relationship with her assailant – "Demetrius … made love to Nedar's daughter Helena" (1.1.108) – and was still clearly in love with him.

An audience familiar with *Titus Andronicus* would also have recognised the use of the same name for Helena's would-be rapist as that given to one of Lavinia's rapists in the tragedy. Mark Taylor comments on the link between Lavinia's rapists and the man who threatens to rape Helena:

> It is perhaps significant that Shakespeare gave to this young man the name he had assigned earlier to Tamora's son, the despoiler of Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus*.[306]

Certainly, there are sufficient links between the tragedy and the later comedy to suggest that the sharing of a name by these two men cannot be coincidental. However, Lavinia is of course raped by two men, so it follows that if Shakespeare intended his audience to recognise a link between Lavinia's rapist and the threat to Helena at this point, there must be a reason why he

chose to use the name of Demetrius rather than that of his brother Chiron who also raped Lavinia. In fact the name Demetrius is significant because it is the name given to the elder of the two brothers in *Titus Andronicus*. This is established early in the play when the two men quarrel over who will court Lavinia and Demetrius asserts his right of choice saying that "Lavinia is thine elder brother's hope" (2.1.76). As Demetrius is the eldest it follows that when they rape Lavinia "by turn to serve our lust" (4.2.42), he would assert this right and be the first to violate her. As demonstrated in the first chapter, Bracton's view was that, in circumstances where a woman was raped by more than one man, the first to rape her committed the most serious offence, because he took her virginity – or in the case of Lavinia, her marital chastity, and in this context the offence committed by Demetrius was greater than Chiron's, a fact hinted at by Mark Taylor who calls Demetrius the '*despoiler*' of Lavinia. It therefore makes sense that Shakespeare would give his 'would be' rapist of Helena the same name as the first man to rape Lavinia if he wanted his audience to recognise the echoes of the tragedy in the later work.

Writing about the understanding of violent crime in the sixteenth century, Martin Wiggins suggests that 'murderous action' was explained in a number of ways:

> the influence of Satan, a criminal career, the influence of a violent environment, the dominance of the passions or of the humours. It is notable that in every case, the act is referred back to something prior to the will of the murderer. This means that there is an absolute distinction between the causes of a murder and the motives for it, and that motives were not considered to be of substantive importance: they are construed as excuses or pretexts for something the criminal would have done anyway, authenticating details on a par with the clothes he was wearing at the time; even in cases of passion, where it is accepted that the killer acts for a reason, he none the less has no choice.[307]

Although Wiggins is writing about murder here, the implications for other serious crimes such as rape are clear, and looking at the factors which cause Demetrius to threaten to rape Helena, the conclusion to be drawn is similar; Demetrius finds himself alone with a vulnerable woman in a remote location and what he perceives as Helena's incautious behaviour leads him to believe that he will rape her because he has no choice other than to respond in that way. This is reflected in the language of the threat, where Demetrius says "I *shall*" not 'I will' because he believes that the outcome is already inevitable.

A further echo of *Titus Andronicus* is to be found towards the end of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the rivalry between Lysander and Demetrius when, under the spell of the 'love-in-idleness' drug, they compete for Helena's love. In *Titus Andronicus*, Chiron and Demetrius are seen to be on the verge of conflict over who will court Lavinia; the word-play that proceeds potential sword-play is loaded with sexual innuendo that anticipates the rape that is to follow. The two men trade insults in which each questions the other's sexual performance, Demetrius says:

> Go to: have your lath glued within your sheath
> Till you know better how to handle it.
> (2.1.41-42)

While Chiron counters:

> Foul-spoken coward, that thund'rest with thy tongue,
> And with thy weapon nothing dar'st perform!
> (2.1.60-61)

This exchange is recalled in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* when Puck leads Demetrius and Lysander separately through the darkness, imitating their voices so that each one believes

they are being challenged to fight by their rival, saying to Lysander in Demetrius' voice, "Here, villain, drawn and ready. Where art thou?" (3.2.415) and to Demetrius as Lysander, "I'll whip thee with a rod, He is defiled / That draws a sword on thee (3.3.424-425)". An audience familiar with *Titus Andronicus* could not help but recognise the allusions in this scene of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to the parallel moment in the earlier tragedy, or to recall that in the tragedy the dispute is resolved by a decision to unite in brutal gang rape.

The meta-drama of Pyramus and Thisbe, which the mechanicals present to the newly married couples at the end of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, also has a close relationship with the spectres of rape which haunt the woodland scenes. Kristian Smidt suggests a similarity between two of the couples in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:

> The tragedy of Pyramus and Thisbe mirrors the comedy of Lysander and Hermia. Both the latter couples woo in secret and elope to escape the tyranny of parents. Lysander and Hermia are simply more fortunate than their counterparts, though they are haunted at the start by the fear of a tragic outcome to the course of true love.[308]

In fact, the possibility of a tragic outcome haunts the entire play and the mechanicals' production serves to highlight this tragic potentiality in the relationships depicted throughout the comedy. Within the context of the narrative, the production of *Pyramus and Thisbe* is intended to form the entertainment on the evening of the weddings of the three newly married couples, but its tragic elements foreground the fact that all of the marriages within the play have grown out of dissent and for the most part remain problematic. The marriage of Theseus and Hippolyta began with enmity, Egeus would have separated Lysander and Hermia to force a marriage with Demetrius, and Helena and Demetrius teetered on the brink of sexual violence just a few hours previously. Just as all of the relationships in the play appear at times

to be headed more towards a tragic ending rather than a happy resolution, there is a confusion about the genre of the mechanicals' production. Early in the play when the mechanicals prepare to rehearse a production for the Duke's wedding celebration, Quince introduces it to his fellow performers as "'The most lamentable comedy and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisbe'" (1.2.11), but by the time the title of plays offered are read out on the day of the marriages the title has become "'A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus / And his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth'" (5.1.58-59). Just as the confused titles indicate that the mechanicals themselves are unable to distinguish between tragedy and comedy the mechanicals' play illustrates the way in which the play as a whole operates in the margins between the two genres.

The newly married guests watching the mechanicals' play are passing the time between their nuptial celebrations and the consummation of their marriages. Given that the evening moves the couples inexorably towards sexual intercourse it is unsurprising that the mechanicals' play contains some sexual innuendo; however, the highly sexualised language and imagery appears to have a greater significance. Pyramus and Thisbe whisper through Wall's "crannied hole or chink" (5.1.161), which is a similar use of imagery to the "little vents and crannies" (l.310) which symbolise Lucrece's vagina in *The Rape of Lucrece*. Thisbe's description of her distress at being separated from her lover by a wall continues the use of sexual imagery:

> O wall, full often has thou heard my moans,
> For parting my fair Pyramus and me.
> My cherry lips have often kissed thy stones,
> Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.
> (5.1.190-193)

Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen suggest in their editorial notes that ‘stones’ “plays on the sense of testicles” and ‘lime’ is “probably pronounced ‘limb’ thus playing on sense of penis”. These images combined with the reference to ‘cherry lips’ is suggestive both of oral sex, and of sexual intercourse. There is no actual sexual encounter between the lovers in the play who do not meet on stage until after Pyramus has taken his own life, believing his lover to be already dead, but as in *Titus Andronicus* where Lavinia is raped off stage while the assault is clearly represented through metaphor in the language of the relevant scenes, the use of sexualised language and imagery in the meta-drama foregrounds its sexual potential. When Pyramus finds Thisbe’s blood-stained mantle lying on the ground, he assumes that she has been killed, exclaiming as he sees it:

> O dear!
> Thy mantle good,
> What, stained with blood!
> (5.1.281-283)

While Pyramus believes that Thisbe has been killed his language betrays fear of a different kind of violence when he says that “lion vile hath deflowered my dear” (5.1.292). Bate and Rasmussen suggest in their note to this line that the use of the word ‘deflowered’ is “presumably Bottom’s mistake for ‘devoured’ (5.1.292)”; undoubtedly this is the case given Bottom’s tendency to use malapropisms throughout the play, however the use of the word ‘deflowered’ coming immediately after the discovery of the bloody mantle is also suggestive of an act of rape rather than one of murder with the mantle as a symbol of violation. Ariane Balizet suggests that the blood-stained mantle is a “metonymic association with the figure of the bleeding bride” and that the bloody cloth existing as a prop in an entertainment to celebrate marriage anticipates the imminent off-stage consummation of the three marriages

and the de-hymenisation of the virgin brides:

> The appearance of Thisbe's bloody mantle only minutes before the new husbands and wives head off to bed seems to present the bloodied wedding sheets of consummation in miniature, reminding the couples not only of the perils they have avoided but also the dangers awaiting the three women, as Hippolyta, Hermia and Helena will be expected to play the role of bleeding bride soon enough.[310]

If the bloody mantle anticipates the three sets of wedding night linen stained by the blood of first sexual intercourse through consummation of the new marriages, it also seems to cast the focus back to the earlier scene where Demetrius threatens Helena with rape, particularly if considered in the context of Pyramus' assertion that the Lion has 'deflowered' his lover. There is also an echo of the "spots and stains" that represent the rape of Lucrece in Shakespeare's narrative poem and a suggestion of the hue and cry process, where the rape victim was required to display bloody evidence to prove that the rape had destroyed her virginity. Neither Thisbe or Helena is raped, but the violently spilt blood on the mantle serves as a metaphoric representation of the hymeneal blood that in different circumstances could signify either consensual consummation, or the violation of a virgin victim of rape. Balizet infers that the bloody cloth fulfils a similar function in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* where "the shedding of hymeneal blood through sexual penetration, unlike murder, cannot be shown onstage," and this metaphoric display also recalls the authorial technique in the two rape texts where Shakespeare's use of imagery evokes the otherwise unseen rapes of Lavinia and Lucrece.[311]

In the final scene of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* with Valentine and Proteus having been reconciled, all that remains is the question of how the relationships between the two couples will be resolved. Although Silvia has already made her feelings for both men very clear, and these remain constant throughout the play, she is not consulted by either man in its

final moments. It is not even clear whether she remains on stage, although as there is no reference to her leaving it is reasonable to assume that she stays as a silent witness while the men decide her fate. Turio and Valentine argue over who will have her:

> TURIO Yonder is Silvia, and Silvia's mine.
> VALENTINE Turio, give back, or else embrace thy death.
> (5.4.132-133)

The Duke's response is an act of forgiveness towards Valentine which ends with the gift of Silvia as a reward. Interestingly, the Duke's speech reads like a legal retraction and is clearly intended to state the terms of transfer of the 'ownership' of Silvia from one man to another:

> Know then I here forget all former griefs,
> Cancel all grudge, repeal thee home again,
> Plead a new state in thy unrivalled merit,
> To which I thus subscribe: Sir Valentine,
> Thou art a gentleman and well derived;
> Take thou thy Silvia, for thou hast deserved her.
> (5.4.149-154)

There is a real sense that this is a transaction between men, a business deal and legal contract for the exchange of property in which the woman concerned has no part to play. Silvia's consent is neither formally sought nor given in any sense other than through silent acquiescence. However, when it comes to resolving the matter of Julia and Proteus' relationship the issue of consent is different because, although Julia's identity has already been revealed, she remains in her masculine disguise and is able to voice her own consent to a marriage with the errant Proteus:

> PROTEUS Bear witness, heaven, I have my wish for ever.
> JULIA And I mine.
> (5.4.124-126)

Julia temporarily achieves a degree of autonomy that eludes Silvia who remains a possession to be passed from one man to another.

The ending of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is problematic because the final scene of the play includes Valentine's apparently all too easy forgiveness of Proteus' threat to rape Silvia. Kristian Smidt remarks that:

> The play's most glaring improbability … is the readiness with which Valentine forgives Proteus after the latter's attempted rape of Silvia and his offer of Silvia to Proteus after all his own protestations of passionate love.[312]

It has been suggested that there is a religious significance in the pardoning of Proteus, which would have been readily understood and possibly accepted by the majority of Shakespeare's audience. Robert Graves Hunter commented that forgiveness:

> is a central tenet of Christianity – the religion which Shakespeare shared with his audience. Proteus informs Valentine that he has experienced "hearty sorrow" – contrition – for his sin. Valentine replies, with complete orthodoxy, that contrition alone makes satisfaction for sin, and that the wrath of the God of Judgment is appeased by repentance. Sinful man must prove worthy of his own ultimate forgiveness by pardoning those who trespass against him. Such considerations … do … make … acceptance by Shakespeare's audience more comprehensible and more interesting, and it is a clear testimony to the power of the concept of forgiveness that Shakespeare could depend upon the invocation of it for the success of so arbitrary a dramatic moment as Valentine's forgiveness of Proteus.[313]

And Alison Shell suggests that:

> This is as explicit a dramatization of contrition and forgiveness as any in Shakespeare's work.[314]

Indeed, all the elements of an act of Christian forgiveness are present. Firstly, confession "My shame and guilt confounds me," then contrition, "Forgive me, Valentine," penitence "if hearty

sorrow / Be a sufficient ransom for offence, / I tender't here; I do as truly suffer / As e'er I did commit" (5.4.77-81) and finally absolution:

> Then I am paid;
> And once again I do receive thee honest.
> Who by repentance is not satisfied
> Is nor of heaven nor earth, for these are pleased;
> By penitence th'Eternal's wrath's appeased.
> (5.4.82-86)

There is however a darker side to this act of forgiveness. Earlier in the play, when Valentine inadvertently divulges his plan to elope with Silvia to the Duke, he also reveals his own disregard for female consent. Valentine has previously shown himself to believe that a woman does not always know what is best for her ("A woman sometimes scorns what best contents her" (3.1.93)), that a suitor should ignore rejection ("Take no repulse, whatever she doth say" (3.1.100)) and that if his advances are rejected he may use force to get what he wants ("What lets but one may enter at her window" (3.1.113)), and it is therefore not surprising that he is able to forgive a threat of rape as if it were a minor transgression between friends.

The ending of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* initially appears to be more satisfactory than that of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* because the young lovers are paired off, and dissent in the relationships between the more mature lovers appears resolved in keeping with the resolution suggested by Puck in the proverb: "Jack shall have Jill / Nought shall go ill" (3.2.477-478). But in fact, the resolution is far from satisfactory, and as Harold Bloom comments:

> Puck … carefully re-arranges Lysander's affections to their original object, Hermia, while keeping Demetrius enthralled by Helena. This raises the happy irony that the play will never resolve: does it make any difference at all who

marries whom?[315]

But, given the events that have transpired during the play, it is perhaps more disturbing that Helena and Demetrius have married at all. Of the four married couples present at the end of the play, it could be argued that only Lysander and Hermia have a chance of happiness because their love wavered temporarily and only then under the influence of the love-in-idleness drug. Titania remains married to Oberon who used supernatural powers to sexually debase and humiliate her and Hippolyta is married to Theseus who conquered her in battle and may have also abducted and raped her in the sexual sense. Interestingly Peter Holland notes that the outcome of the marriage of these two characters from classical literature is already known:

> *A Midsummer Night's Dream* leaves entirely open the question of what the issue or outcome of this marriage of Athenian and Amazon will be, describing and blessing the future without directly stating what might or rather *will* happen (*will* because it is already accomplished, already fixed unalterably in the Theseus mythography). In all versions of the Theseus story Theseus does not stay with his Amazon bride.[316]

Most telling of all, Puck does not lift the 'love-in-idleness' spell from Demetrius' eyes and he marries Helena while still under the influence of the drug. Meanwhile, although Helena herself is married to the man she has loved from the start, he is also her would-be rapist and has shown himself to be capable of considering sexual violence towards the woman who is now his wife.

The Two Gentlemen of Verona and *A Midsummer Night's* Dream represent threats of rape that do not come to fruition and both are fleeting events that pass briefly through the narratives, with little impact on how the relationships within the plays are resolved at the end. However, an audience familiar with *Titus Andronicus* could hardly fail to recognise in both

comedies the vulnerability of the women who ventured alone into remote rural locations, and would have been aware of the fact that location was a key factor in determining whether a sexual encounter had been rape in Early Modern English law. The audience would also have recognised the frequent echoes of Shakespeare's earlier tragedy that are to be found particularly within *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the verbal and thematic reflections which call to mind elements of sexual violence in the tragedy and cast a shadow over the resolution of the comedy. Demetrius may share his name with Lavinia's rapist and he most definitely recognises his potential to commit sexual violence but in the end he simply runs away. There is no rape in either comedy, and no bloodied victim to raise the hue and cry, other than Thisbe – and the impact of her death is lessened because it is seen through the filter of the meta-drama's unintentional comedy and genre confusion. Nevertheless, rape has been established as a potential outcome in both plays and their resolutions are unsatisfactory because Helena is married to her would-be rapist and Silvia to a man who has shown himself able to condone and excuse rape.

Chapter 4

“With that suit upon my back, will I ravish her”

Threatened rape in *Cymbeline*

Shakespeare returned to the theme of rape again in his late plays. In *Cymbeline* which was likely to have been performed for the first time circa 1610, the king’s daughter Innogen, is at risk of rape from two men.[317] The narrative includes the trial of Innogen’s chastity in a wager plot which introduces significant reflections of *The Rape of Lucrece*. Innogen escapes rape, but this chapter will show how references to the earlier rape texts, *Titus Andronicus* and *The Rape of Lucrece* emphasise her vulnerability to the threatened rapes and foreground the severity of the sexual assault that does occur. The chapter will also locate the work within the contemporary context of rape and show how the adherence to the hue and cry process in the play places further emphasis on the severity of the pervasive threat of rape.

Shakespeare was writing in a country where the effects of disputed succession had been keenly felt and were well understood. The historical context reminds us that this was a country only just over one hundred and twenty years removed from the civil unrest of the Wars of the Roses, and which had since been plagued by issues surrounding the transfer of rule from one monarch to another; an issue which was itself documented by Shakespeare in his history plays. While Shakespeare was writing much of his work, the country was ruled by Elizabeth I, a single woman with no child or obvious heir, whose own rule was vulnerable to frequent plotted insurrections, and Shakespeare’s audience would have been familiar with the issues that could arise from disputed succession to the throne. *Cymbeline* presents us with a domestic situation in which the threat to the integrity of the monarch’s bloodline due to

Innogen's elopement is set alongside the prospect of imminent invasion by the Roman army, and the possible rape and murder of the king's only known heir. Indeed, the unrest in Cymbeline's own family is given a status of national significance through its parallel with the root cause of the quarrel with Rome: Innogen's decision to marry against her father's wishes is not solely a domestic matter, because her choice of husband has implications for the royal succession. As daughter of the king, Innogen's private life is essentially inseparable from public concerns, a fact which she acknowledges when, mourning the lack of news from her banished husband, she refers to herself not as just as Posthumus' wife, but also as a personification of Britain that reflects her role as a British princess: "My lord, I fear, / Has forgot Britain" (1.6.129-130). Innogen is defined as much by her social position as Cymbeline's heir, as she is by her marriage to Posthumus; as Peter Holland observes, she "is repeatedly referred to by her title as "princess".[318] In an act of disloyalty that runs parallel to Innogen's elopement, Cymbeline refuses to pay a tax which is traditionally due to the Emperor of Rome and the consequences of this act of disobedience are sufficiently serious as to pose a threat to national security. There is a parallel between the threats of physical rape made against Innogen later in the play and the landing of the Roman army at Milford Haven. Marissa R. Cull comments on the significance of the Welsh port in itself, suggesting that:

> Critics have rightly noted that *Cymbeline* seems desperate to exploit the symbolism of Milford, the famed landing spot of Henry Tudor in his march toward overthrowing Richard III, but the consensus on Milford's significance is far from settled. While some have argued that the famous port is invoked to highlight a celebratory moment in English history, others have eschewed the Tudor connection to Milford Haven, arguing instead that Shakespeare is likely playing on English anxieties about Milford as a potential landing ground for enemy trespassers, a locus for lingering anxieties about the fealty of the Welsh – and by extension, the fealty of other inhabitants of the British Isles who might be tempted to join forces with foreign invaders.[319]

In light of the latter symbolism as a point of possible entry for foreign invaders, the port of Milford Haven becomes a fissure, a point of vulnerability in the integrity of the British Isles. Given that Innogen is the presumed heir to the throne, and is at times in the play a personification of Britain, it creates a parallel between the prospect of invasion by a foreign power and the threats of rape to which Innogen is subjected. The British defeat of the invading Roman forces in battle ends with Cymbeline's promise to recommence payment of the disputed tax: "we submit to Caesar, / And to our Roman empire; promising / To pay our wonted tribute" (5.4.546-548). We are reminded of the nature of Cymbeline's allegiance to Rome, in his fond, almost filial re-collection of the Roman leader: "Caesar knighted me; my youth I spent / Much under him; of him I gather'd honour" (3.1.74-75). The implication of this is that Cymbeline's neglect of his duty to Rome was more than a matter of state, coming close to the disobedience of a son to his father, and this in fact is a similar fault to Posthumus' perceived ingratitude in marrying Innogen against the will of his king, and adopted father. The apparent similarities of these acts of disobedience to patriarchal authority serve to emphasise the potentially disastrous consequences of Innogen's defiance of her father, and of the unhealthy state of Cymbeline's kingdom. Essentially nothing is as it should be. The country is at risk of invasion by an external power and is, perhaps, more seriously weakened from within by disruption at the core of the central family unit.

Posthumus was adopted by Cymbeline following the death of his father and raised in the royal household alongside Innogen:

> The king he takes the babe
> To his protection, calls him Posthumus Leonatus,
> Breeds him, and makes him of his bed-chamber,
> Puts to him all the learnings that his time
> Could make him the receiver of,

(1.1.45-49)

An upbringing of this kind clearly allowed Posthumus to grow up in close proximity to Innogen and to develop a familiarity with her that was to lead to their marriage. The unequal status of the couple and the proximity of their upbringing within the household is similar to the circumstances of Caliban in *The Tempest*, which dates from a similar point in Shakespeare's career. In *The Tempest* Prospero complains that, having initially afforded Caliban the hospitality of "mine own cell" (1.2.406) the island's native inhabitant then "didst seek to violate / The honour of my child" (1.2.406-407) and as David Bergeron observes this "could be Cymbeline talking to Posthumus as he banishes him".[320] Caliban's alleged attempt to rape Miranda occurs outside the narrative context of the play and we cannot be certain whether or not Prospero is referring to an actual attempt to have forced sexual intercourse with his daughter. Caliban responds to the accusation of rape saying:

> Would't had been done!
> Thou didst prevent me: I had peopled else
> This isle with Calibans.
> (1.2.408-409)

Because the alleged attempted rape occurs outside of the context of the play its reporting is subject to considerable ambiguity, Julie Reinhard Lupton comments on Caliban's response suggesting that the statement is "ambiguous, neither a denial nor a confession."[321] It is not clear what Caliban means when he responds to Prospero's allegation saying "Thou didst prevent me", this could refer to a variety of different circumstances ranging from a decision to separate Caliban from his daughter to protect her from the possibility of sexual contact, to an urgent physical intervention to interrupt an assault. Although Caliban's response certainly implies a sexual element, it is not clear whether it is an admission of guilt or merely an attempt

to mock, or torment Prospero with the possibility of a sexual relationship between Caliban and Miranda. Mark Taylor suggests that:

> There is nothing unclear or ambiguous about the meaning of the word "violate," which surely denotes an attempt to possess Miranda sexually, against her will, to rape her, but it is a very real question whether this is in fact what Caliban did or rather the interpretation that Prospero chooses, or is forced, to put upon a perfectly honorable action.[322]

However, it is difficult to see what kind of 'perfectly honourable action' might be misinterpreted as attempted rape. Miranda herself says nothing about the incident, but she does describe Caliban as "A villain … I do not love to look on" (1.2.364) and as "Abhorrèd slave" (1.2.411), and these references suggest that there may be some degree of truth in the accusation of attempted rape. As shown in chapter two[323], the victims in Shakespeare's two rape texts are unable to find the appropriate language to construct an argument that will defend them against rape, so it would be unsurprising if Miranda – a young, sexually inexperienced virgin – was unable to verbalise the details of a sexual assault. The link between the two plays is further emphasised by Cymbeline's description of Posthumus as "Thou basest thing" (1.1.142). Cymbeline's attitude to Posthumus is similar to Prospero's description of Caliban as something less than human, "A freckled whelp, hag born not honoured with / A human shape" (1.2.331-332) and as "the beast" (4.1.152), and to Miranda's claim that the uneducated Caliban "wouldst gabble like / A thing most brutish" (1.2.416-417).

The Tempest is largely outside the scope of this study because the attempted rape occurs outside the narrative context of the play, however the links between the work and *Cymbeline* are of interest because the two plays share a common theme of threatened or attempted rape. Both works deal with the outcome of sexual relationships that develop out of

an initial familial bond between step-siblings raised in the same household. In *The Tempest* the sibling bond is destroyed by the possibility of a non-consensual sexual relationship between Caliban and Miranda and the links with *Cymbeline* raise some uncomfortable questions about the nature of the relationship that develops between Innogen and Posthumus. The latter couple's relationship is formed before the play begins, so we know nothing of their courtship, but as the narrative progresses we learn that Posthumus is capable of violence, extreme mistrust and of placing his wife at risk of sexual assault and this, together with the reflection of the fact that Caliban possibly tried to rape his step sibling, introduces the possibility that the relationship between Posthumus and Innogen may have been founded upon some form of sexual coercion.

Cymbeline's response to his daughter's disobedience is to banish her husband and encourage his step-son Cloten to pursue his courtship of Innogen. There is, however, no moral justification for Cymbeline's behaviour in threatening the sanctity of his daughter's marriage:

> Cymbeline ignores not only his daughter's adulthood, but the very fact of her marriage. He encourages Cloten to court her, making a mockery of the traditional father's role. Not only does he separate her from her husband; he actively endorses bigamy.[324]

Shakespeare's audience would most likely have regarded the prospect of any such polyandrous union as:

> terribly wrong. Certainly, Innogen's secret marriage was irregular, but once she was married, her bond with Posthumus was to be honoured and maintained. A father who interfered was severely condemned.[325]

Cymbeline's attitude and behaviour towards his daughter seems to be amongst the very worst kind of domestic tyranny and it has precedent elsewhere in Shakespeare's works which

include rape or threatened rape as a theme, in the actions of Egeus in *A Midsummer Night's* Dream, the Duke in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and Titus in *Titus Andronicus*, all of whom would have chosen to disregard their daughter's wishes and enforce their consent to a parentally arranged marriage. It is amongst the most unjust and immoral behaviour of any of the fathers in Shakespeare's plays, and it is easy to view Cymbeline simply as a petulant, overbearing patriarch, angered by his only daughter's display of free will. Yet his actions are more understandable when considered in the context of his social position and early modern understandings of marriage as a form of strategic alliance between patriarchally organised households that had yet to be completely superseded by the emergent idea of 'companionate' marriage. As King of England Cymbeline needs to establish a secure line of succession to avoid civil unrest after his death, and with this in mind he finds Innogen's choice of an apparent commoner as a husband simply unacceptable. He banishes Posthumus with the words "Away! / Thou'rt poison to my blood" (1.1.144-145) and Posthumus is exactly this as he threatens to 'corrupt' Cymbeline's bloodline by introducing heirs with a father of non-royal blood "Thou took'st a beggar, wouldst have made my throne / A seat for baseness" (1.1.63-64). There is some irony in this accusation because it is Cloten, Cymbeline's preferred choice for son-in-law, who is a base, self-advancing individual. Cloten is a threat to the future of Cymbeline's family and to the security of the crown itself. His encounter with Guiderius and Arivargus in Wales is a metaphor for the danger which he presents to the security of the succession: he fights with Cymbeline's long-lost male heirs, and though it is he who is killed, the conflict presents the possibility that Guiderius and Arivargus might have died instead, thus depriving Cymbeline of his sons, and Britain of its future, rightful king. Guiderius unwittingly

hints at the threat to the succession when he justifies his beheading of Cloten, saying:

> I am perfect what: cut off one Cloten's head,
> Son to the queen (after his own report),
> Who call'd me traitor, mountaineer, and swore
> With his own single hand he'ld take us in,
> Displace our heads where (thank the gods!) they grow,
> (4.2.153-157)

Cloten does indeed seek to 'displace their heads', albeit unwittingly, because his intention to marry Innogen would place him in direct succession to the British throne and thereby cheat Guiderius and Arviragus of their birthright.

Innogen is simultaneously exposed to two separate threats to her chastity, the first of which occurs as the result of a wager based upon her presumed fidelity, and in this respect the play reflects the events that precipitate the rape in *The Rape of Lucrece*. In the narrative poem Collatine participates in a contest where he and other men of the king's army trade boasts of their wives' chastity before returning home "intending by their secret and sudden arrival to make trial of that which every one had before avouched" (Argument). Lucrece being the only woman to be found "spinning amongst her maids" (Argument), Collatine is judged the winner and Tarquin is aroused by Lucrece's evident chastity and inaccessibility and by the status that this bestows by association on her husband. Similarly, Posthumus is very much defined by his marriage because it confers upon him a status that exceeds his own social position. The relative status of the couple and the dependence of Posthumus' position upon Innogen's is established in a conversation between two courtiers, one of whom observes that:

> To his mistress,
> (For whom he now is banish'd) her own price
> Proclaims how she esteem'd him; and his virtue
> By her election may be truly read
> What kind of man he is.
> (1.1.55-59)

Iachimo is quick to recognise the vulnerability of Posthumus' position in relation to that of his wife "wherein he must be weighed rather by her value than his own" (1.4.15-16) and it follows that any damage to Innogen's reputation must inevitably detract from that of her husband. It is in the context of his dependence on Innogen's status and reputation that Posthumus makes the dangerous mistake of insisting that other men judge his wife in terms of her chastity, allowing Iachimo to see the potential to exploit his vulnerability. As in *The Rape of Lucrece*, boasting and rivalry amongst men separated from their wives leads Posthumus to assert his wife's superior virtue. The problem with this is that when something is given an absolute value it can only decrease in worth, and when Posthumus places a 'value' on Innogen's reputation, he greatly increases his own vulnerability as well as exposing his wife to sexual peril.

It is evident that Posthumus has made a similar boast before. A Frenchman in Philario's house is a prior acquaintance and reports a previous instance where Posthumus bragged that Innogen was "more fair, virtuous, wise, chaste, constant, qualified and less attemptable than any of the rarest of our ladies in France" (1.4.62-64). The Frenchman recalls that on this occasion the issue of Innogen's chastity became a matter of proof, to be determined through a duel. Innogen's chastity was to be tested through "the arbitrement of swords" (1.4.51-52). The obvious phallic symbolism associated with a sword makes the implication of this line a highly sexual one, and not unlike the quarrel between Chiron and Demetrius over who should 'court' Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus*, where the brothers initially explore the possibility of settling their dispute through swordplay:

> And that my sword upon thee shall approve,
> And plead my passions for Lavinia's love.
> (2.1.35-36)

The parallel with the earlier play here suggests that in a trial of female chastity, a possible solution is for men to resolve the matter with their weapon, either through fighting or rape. This also provides a comment on the nature of male attitudes to female virtue, that it is a matter for them to decide and to prove, irrelevant to the wishes or consent of the woman concerned. In the matter of the wager between Iachimo and Posthumus, it is also suggested that the two men may ultimately take up arms to settle the matter of Innogen's honour:

> If she remain unseduc'd, you not making it appear otherwise, for your ill opinion, and th' assault you have made to her chastity, you shall answer me with your sword. (1.4.165- 169)

There is a degree of irony in the symbolic implications of the reference to the sword here, as this is indeed a wager to be proved with a 'weapon', either with penis or sword, because if Iachimo is unable to seduce Innogen and obtain subsequent proof of her dishonour, the two men intend to settle the matter with a fight. The idea of a duel over the honour of a noble woman suggests an idealised concept of marriage in which Posthumus should be the protector of his wife's physical virtue and of her reputation; yet, his attempt at chivalrous behaviour clearly has limitations. Not only does Posthumus virtually invite Innogen's defilement by entering into the wager, but he also makes it clear that he will only protect her if she remains chaste, for if she is no longer chaste she becomes "not worth our debate" (1.4.165). The echoes of *The Rape of Lucrece* in the wager of chastity and of *Titus Andronicus* in the sword fight that may determine the outcome serve to foreground the possibility that this behaviour amongst men could result in Innogen falling victim to rape. It is also key that Innogen has no active part to play in the trial of her chastity, she is presented as an item of property whose value is to be appraised by the outcome of a contest. The matter of Innogen's

consent is relevant only in that it would serve to determine the outcome of the wager and even before Iachimo begins his attempt to seduce her, she is silenced as effectively as Lavinia and Lucrece are silenced by their rapists.

The sword imagery continues into the later scenes of the play where, shortly after arriving in Wales, Innogen stumbles upon a cave in which, coincidentally, her estranged brothers have been raised. Tired and hungry she determines to enter the cave and search for food and as she does so she seeks protection from the sword which forms part of her masculine disguise:

> Then I'll enter.
> Best draw my sword; and if mine enemy
> But fear the sword like me, he'll scarcely look on't.
> (3.6.24-26)

In this context the sword is directly intended to serve as an assertion of Innogen's adopted masculinity and as a weapon of self-preservation. But given the symbolic link between the sword and penis, there is a subtle hint of her desire to preserve her chastity and of the natural sexual fear of a lone woman in a remote location – who 'fears the sword' – and who would have been perceived to be at risk of rape under English law as demonstrated in chapter one.[326] Throughout Shakespeare's work, location has a clear part to play in creating the possibility of rape. In *Titus Andronicus*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and in *The Two Gentlemen of* Verona remote woodland locations are shown to facilitate and inspire rape and an audience familiar with these earlier works would recognise the risk that Innogen takes by leaving the city and travelling to Wales. Interestingly, when Innogen approaches the cave she is about to enter a domestic living space and yet she is clearly afraid of what she may find inside and this calls to mind the fact that Shakespeare also established the danger of isolation in an indoor space in

his earlier works, in Lucrece's bedroom and Sylvia's tower. This is in keeping with contemporary legal records which demonstrate that women reported having been isolated by their assailants in a domestic space where they fell victim to rape.[327]

Sword imagery is also used to convey the possibility of rape in relation to Cloten's plan to murder Posthumus and to take his wife. When Cloten leaves court intent upon violence he is suitably equipped for the task ahead and, given that he plans rape as well as murder, the reference he makes to preparing his sword has a double meaning: "out, sword, and to a sore purpose!" (4.1.22-23), referring both to the blade he intends to use to kill Posthumus, and to the penis with which he will commit rape. Gordon Williams glosses the use of the word 'sore' elsewhere in Shakespeare's work to mean "vulva", which in this context would support the allusion to the intended rape.[328] In Posthumus' parallel revenge plan, he states his intention to murder Innogen as a punishment for her adultery. Yet he has no intention of wielding the knife against his wife himself and his plan to have her killed by proxy, gives added rape symbolism to the sword image because his intention is that it will be another man's blade which penetrates her body, ironically mirroring the act of alleged adultery which was also carried out at his instigation. The use of the sword here as a metaphor for penis echoes the use of similar imagery in association with the rapes of Lavinia and Lucrece in the two rape texts, and of the possibility of sexual violence in the courtship of Hippolyta and Theseus that preceded the narrative context of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.[329]

In both of the wager scenarios, the virtue of women features as a quality that men decide needs to be tested and proven. The women concerned are not willing participants in

either challenge, because both are fundamentally trials between men, founded upon jealousy over the status that is conferred upon them by the exemplary conduct of their wives. Karen Bamford suggests that, "the wager that sends Iachimo to prey on Innogen … is purely a function of male rivalry" and Iachimo implies as much when he says to Posthumus, "I make my wager rather against your confidence than her reputation" (1.4.115-116).[330] Although Innogen is not physically assaulted during Iachimo's execution of the wager, she is subjected to a complete invasion of her privacy as he enters her bedchamber and gazes on her sleeping and at least partially naked body; this in itself is a violation and Jonathan Bate suggests that this "is the direct consequence of Posthumus' own proprietorial display of his wife's chastity when he brags about it in the wager scene".[331] The repercussions of the wager are so severe that Innogen's reputation is temporarily damaged and her life is placed at risk, and the potentially dire personal consequences of the wager which face Innogen are highlighted by comparison with the outcome of Collatine's boastful appraisal of his own wife's chastity in *The Rape of Lucrece*. It is not a coincidence that Iachimo, like Tarquin, is lured to the bedroom of his victim by her husband's boastful appraisal of her chastity.

When Posthumus prepares to leave Innogen following his banishment, the couple exchange gifts of jewellery which they intend to symbolise their love and devotion for each other. However, these love tokens have the effect of placing a monetary value upon the couple's relationship, and as such contribute to the circumstances that enable the wager to take place. Posthumus places a bracelet around his wife's wrist and in return Innogen gives her husband a ring, a symbol of her love that contains her mother's diamond (1.1.126). Innogen's gift to Posthumus is a realistic appraisal of the duration of love: she asks him to

retain the gift and, therefore, to maintain his love for her for the rest of her life, the limitation in fact of the terms of the marriage contract:

> But keep it till you woo another wife,
> When Innogen is dead.
> (1.1.127-133)

The ring is also of sentimental value to Innogen precisely because of the link to her mother. Posthumus' acceptance of the ring is however overstated and unrealistic and whilst he takes it as a sign of his commitment and fidelity to Innogen, the sense of his response is in essence a dismissal of Innogen's idea that he should love again after her death:

> How, how? Another?
> You gentle gods, give me but this I have,
> And sear up my embracements from a next
> With bonds of death! Remain thou here,
> While sense can keep it on:
> (1.1.129-133)

There is an inequality in the terms of the contract that the couple make with this exchange of jewellery. As Diane Dreher suggests:

> she offers her ring, a ritualistic pledge of woman's fidelity in marriage ... Deprived of family bonds, Posthumus cannot value the ring for what it represents. Nor can he value Imogen's devotion and fidelity. Their gifts reveal their differences. She gives her ring in a ritual bond of love and commitment.[332]

The gifts are not the same, and neither is their symbolism. Posthumus' gift to Innogen is given in a sense that implies greater censure of the freedom of his wife:

> For my sake wear this,
> It is a manacle of love, I'll place it
> Upon this fairest prisoner.
> (1.1.136-138)

It is a gift of love and the most tender of bonds, yet it is given as a statement of possession and the reference to a manacle is perhaps an early indication that Posthumus may not completely

trust his wife. By bonding Innogen metaphorically to him through the gift of the bracelet, Posthumus not only identifies her as a possession, but also denies her the freedom to love him and remain faithful in his absence of her own free will. Rather than a token of true love and affection, the bracelet is "a symbol of possession by force".[333] Later the bracelet is stolen from Innogen's sleeping body by Iachimo to be given to Posthumus as proof of her infidelity, symbolically stating the completion of the wager transaction and of the theft of her marital chastity. Philip Collington comments on the symbolism associated with the bracelet, in terms that define both the patriarchal structure of marriage and the nature of Innogen's role as heir to the throne:

> spouses are *yoked* together in marriage; a bride becomes her husband's "fairest prisoner" [1.2.53-54], at its most literal level the bracelet reminds audiences that the princess is a captive.[334]

Just as the gifts exchanged between the lovers suggest an inequity in the marriage contract, they also hint at the darker side of its sexual component. Gordon Williams suggests that the ring is used to symbolise female chastity or the vagina and this has a parallel with the sexual symbolism that is associated with Bassianus' ring in *Titus Andronicus*.[335] Previously placed there as a symbol of fidelity, the ring becomes inseparable from the concept of Posthumus' presumed ownership of his wife's sexuality. Innogen's ring also calls to mind the "precious ring" (2.3.227) that Bassianus wears "Upon his bloody finger" (2.3.226) where it "lightens all the hole, … And shows the ragged entrails of the pit" (2.3.227 / 228) into which his body has been thrown. Bassianus' ring becomes part of the metaphor depicting Lavinia's off-stage violation, just as Innogen's bracelet metaphorically represents the violation of her honour and reputation. An audience familiar with Shakespeare's earlier works would be likely to recognise

the ‘ring’ metaphor, which might well lead them to assume that Innogen will be raped during the execution of the wager. This creates a further link back to the earlier tragedy and in doing so foregrounds the possibility that the relationship between Proteus and Innogen, like that of Bassianus and Lavinia, could be destroyed by rape.

The exchange of gifts between Posthumus and Innogen at their parting recalls yet another of Shakespeare’s earlier works which includes a threatened rape. In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Proteus and Julia exchange rings before they are parted with words that hint at the marriage ceremony. Julia urges Proteus to “Keep this remembrance for thy Julia’s sake” (2.2.5) and, after Proteus gives her his ring, the couple “seal the bargain, with a holy kiss” (2.2.7) before Proteus offers Julia his “hand for my true constancy” (2.2.8). The exchange of gifts in the two plays occurs at similar moments in the narrative, but the similarity does not end there because in both works the gifts of jewellery, which are initially intended to symbolise love and commitment, later become indicative of infidelity and betrayal. In *Cymbeline*, the bracelet that Posthumus gave to his wife is taken by Iachimo to prove her infidelity, and in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, having abandoned his love and commitment to Julia, Proteus urges the disguised woman to “Take this ring with thee / Deliver it to Madam Silvia” (4.4.71-72) confirming that Silvia has replaced Julia in his affections and that he has broken the contract that the ring represented. The link between the two works at this point is significant because in both plays rings are endowed with sexual symbolism. In *Titus Andronicus* the ring operates as a metaphor for rape and in *Cymbeline* Innogen’s bangle, as well as Posthumus’ ring also become symbols of sexual assault.

It has been established in previous chapters that in works which include a theme of rape or threatened rape, female virtue is quantified in metaphors of monetary value, and Innogen's chastity is similarly commodified. In the early scenes of the play Posthumus rates Innogen more highly than any physical possession. He responds to Iachimo's attempt to compare her worth with that of the ring, saying:

> the one may be sold or given, or if there were wealth enough for the purchase, or merit for the gift. The other is not a thing for sale, and only the gift of the gods. (1.4.86-89)

However, as the transaction of the wager progresses Innogen becomes inextricably linked to commodities of measurable and merchantable value. Innogen is compared to gold, jewels and treasure, until finally, a specific value is determined for her chastity and the ring which represents it: "I will lay you ten thousand ducats to your ring" (1.4.132). Indeed, so irrelevant is the person of Innogen to this trial of masculinity, that she is eclipsed by the ring. She becomes no longer the ultimate prize in the wager, but merely the means by which the purse may be won. Peter Holland suggests that at this point Innogen is:

> now equivalent to the diamond ring. From a romance language of the identification of the loved woman as beyond value, Imogen becomes part of a wager of mercantile exchange.[336]

Posthumus acknowledges this equivalence when he accepts the wager saying, "I will wage against your gold, gold to it: my ring I hold dear as my finger, 'tis part of it" (1.4.137-138). The reference to the ring on his finger is clearly identifiable with the representation of female genitalia and is suggestive of the male and female sexual organs linked in an act of sexual intercourse.

Iachimo responds to Posthumus' acceptance of the wager saying "If you buy ladies' flesh at a million a dram, you cannot preserve it from tainting" (1.4.139-141) and the underlying implication of this is that if a woman's chastity is given a marketable value it immediately ceases to be the inestimable quality Posthumus previously referred to as "the gift of the gods," and becomes a measurable commodity, an item with a definite price which can be bought and sold in marriage and prostitution and which is vulnerable to theft and depreciation through rape and adultery. Posthumus loves his wife as a 'treasure' "which may be easily stolen", much as Collatine in *The Rape of Lucrece* becomes:

> the publisher
> Of that rich jewel he should keep unknown
> From thievish ears because it is his own
> (ll. 33-35)[337]

The terms of the wager which Posthumus and Iachimo agree are a betrayal of Innogen and of the couple's marriage vows, and when Posthumus passes the ring given to him by his wife in testament to the sanctity of their marriage to Iachimo, he inadvertently also offers him her chastity. As Iachimo rather deviously points out when he later provides 'proof' of his success:

> I now
> Profess myself the winner of her honour,
> Together with your ring; and not the wronger
> Of her or you, having proceeded but
> By both your wills.
> (2.4.65-69)

Through the terms of the wager Iachimo effectively obtains Posthumus' prior 'consent' to have sex with his wife and to take her chastity, if he is able to obtain it, "If you can make't apparent / That you have tasted her in bed, my hand / And ring is yours" (2.4.70-72). Unsurprisingly, in a play which places a precise monetary value on the virtue of a loyal and

loving wife, images of the darker elements of human relationships abound. No sooner has the wager been agreed than images of prostitution and rape replace and devalue concepts of courtship and marriage. When a specific price is placed upon virtue, prostitution seems a logical currency for sexual relationships, and Innogen rejects Iachimo's attempted seduction, accusing him of behaving as "A saucy stranger … to mart / As in a Romish stew," (1.6.173-174) or brothel.[338] Innogen's words at this point are ironically accurate as they link Iachimo with prostitution while Innogen remains unaware that her sexuality has become the subject of a financial bargain between men.

An audience that was familiar with *The Rape of Lucrece* could not have failed to recognise the echoes of the rape in Lucrece's bedchamber within the comparative scene that is set in Innogen's bedroom, and the echoes of the narrative poem at this point lead us to acknowledge the sexual peril which threatens Innogen while she sleeps with Iachimo hidden in her room. The reader of the poem would also be likely to recognise the similarity between Tarquin's pre-rape appraisal of the sleeping Lucrece and Iachimo's inventory of the body of the supine Innogen. Maurice Charney suggests that "It's surprising how close the scene with Iachimo in Imogen's bedchamber … is to *The Rape of Lucrece*".[339] However, given that Shakespeare repeatedly uses echoes of the two rape texts to indicate the possibility of rape in other works, it is hardly surprising that he recalls the rape of Lucrece in order to demonstrate Innogen's vulnerability when Iachimo enters her bedchamber. The terms of the wager between Posthumus and Iachimo, and the latter's failure to achieve a consensual seduction of Innogen, together with the obvious vulnerability of her sleeping form when he emerges from the trunk, initially implies the possibility of imminent rape. As Karen Bamford observes, "We

are surprised by Iachimo's appearance and probably apprehend a physical assault".[340] There are indeed some significant similarities between *The Rape of Lucrece* and *Cymbeline* at comparable points of the narrative. Unlike Tarquin who reveals nothing of his intended purpose to Lucrece when he first meets her – "Far from the purpose of his coming thither / He makes excuses for his being there" (ll.113-114) – upon meeting Innogen, Iachimo first defames Posthumus accusing him of consorting with other women – "he is vaulting variable ramps" (1.6.155) – before directly attempting to seduce Innogen, asking her to "Let me my service tender on your lips" (1.6.162). Having been immediately rebuffed, Iachimo excuses his behaviour as a test of Innogen's loyalty to Posthumus, "to know if your affiance / Were deeply rooted" (1.6.185-186), and asks her to take care of a trunk containing items of value overnight. When Innogen agrees to accommodate Iachimo's trunk in her bedchamber, she inadvertently uses language which echoes imagery from *The Rape of Lucrece*. In the narrative poem, while Tarquin lies in bed waiting for darkness to fall so that he can enter Lucrece's bedchamber to rape her, he is described as "Pawning his honour to obtain his lust," (l.156) and in *Cymbeline*, Innogen agrees to receive Iachimo's trunk using the same words:

> And pawn mine honour for their safety, since
> My lord hath interest in them. I will keep them
> In my bedchamber.
> (1.6.219-221)

In both works this use of the phrase "pawn mine honour" occurs at the point at which the progress of the narrative towards the opportunity to rape begins, and 'pawn her honour' is, of course, precisely what Innogen inadvertently does by facilitating the circumstances through which Iachimo gains access to her bedchamber and to her body. In his study of the social history of pawnbroking, Kenneth Hudson notes that "there are reliable references to

pawnshops by the end of the sixteenth century" and comments on the meaning of the word at the time which "may signify 'goods instead of money' and 'pay in goods not money'", so that the use of the term 'pawn' at this point in Cymbeline is in keeping with the theme of the monetary value of a woman's virtue and also implies sexual trade as the prostitute gives her body to her sexual partner in exchange for money.[341] It is also an indirect reference to the resolution of the play in which Innogen's reputation is only temporarily damaged by the wager and, like pawned goods, is ultimately returned to her intact. This is further emphasised at the end of the exchange between Iachimo and Innogen when she confirms the arrangement saying:

> Send your trunk to me, it shall safe be kept,
> And truly yielded you.
> (2.1.239-240)

There is a wholly unconscious innuendo in these words, trunk potentially having an alternative meaning as a euphemism for penis. Gordon Williams does not provide a glossary for the use of the word trunk, but does suggest a possible link with penis, referring to Eric Partridge's explanation of the term 'trunk-work ' to mean "furtive copulation in large clothes-trunks" and Partridge also suggests that "there may even be an allusion to penis" in the phrase and it seems reasonable that this could also apply to the use of the word 'trunk' in *Cymbeline*.[342] Although Innogen's words are entirely innocent, given the possible bawdy pun on trunk here, they could also be interpreted as an invitation to sexual intercourse. This unintentional innuendo here creates a further reflection of the two rape texts in which Lavinia and Lucrece inadvertently use sexually suggestive imagery in their attempts to dissuade their attackers from raping them. Innogen agrees to accommodate only the chest and its treasure, she is

completely unaware of the true nature of its contents, but here, as throughout the exchange, she unconsciously draws the attention of the audience to Iachimo's plan to dishonour her by ruining her sexual reputation. These lines also recall the rape imagery from Tarquin's journey to Lucrece's chamber when his forcing of the locks which keep him from his victim is described with similar language, "As each unwilling portal yields him way" (l.309) until he reaches the chamber door, "Which with a yielding latch and with no more / Hath barred him from the blessèd thing he sought" (l.339/340). The verb 'to yield' is suggestive of consent in the context of sexual seduction, but in *The Rape of Lucrece* the word actually indicates an act of violence because each door gives way 'unwillingly' and in *Cymbeline*, while it is true that Innogen agrees to receive the trunk "Willingly" (1.6.218), she does so having been deceived as to both its contents and purpose.

When Tarquin and Iachimo gain entrance to the bedchambers of Lucrece and Innogen, the parallels between the two works continue. Iachimo's stated purpose of gaining evidence to win the wager together with the echoes of Shakespeare's two rape texts signpost the audience to expect Innogen to be raped in the bed chamber scene. A recognition of the links with the narrative poem and with *Titus Andronicus* is key to gaining an appreciation of the very real possibility that Innogen is about to be raped. It appears that it was Shakespeare's clear intention that his audience would make this connection between the works because he has Iachimo remind them of *The Rape of Lucrece* when he emerges from the trunk to view the sleeping Innogen and makes a direct comparison between his own actions and those of Tarquin:

> Our Tarquin thus
> Did softly press the rushes, ere he waken'd
> The chastity he wounded.

(2.2.14-16)

The reference to the story of Tarquin and Lucrece at this point foregrounds the possibility of rape in *Cymbeline*. Valerie Wayne suggests that in the bedchamber scene the play is:

> especially close to *Lucrece* … when Tarquin surveys the sleeping Lucrece. The scene's suspense would be heightened for those who knew the popular story … since they would expect that Innogen will also be raped.[343]

David Mann suggests that with this invocation of Tarquin:

> All is thus set for a physical assault. Instead, it takes the form of a symbolic rape, a destruction of her honour, and intrusion into her sanctuary.[344]

By having Iachimo take Tarquin with him metaphorically into Innogen's bedchamber Shakespeare encourages the audience to anticipate a rape that does not occur, but their heightened awareness of the links with the narrative poem help to establish that what does take place in Innogen's bedchamber, though not actual rape, is still a form of sexual assault. Iachimo's reference to Tarquin also demonstrates that he is aware of the classical rape and that he understands that he could behave like Tarquin and rape Innogen, and this heightens the tension of the scene by creating a degree of complicity between Iachimo and the audience who together must recognise the opportunity for rape. Ultimately, Iachimo is not Tarquin and it becomes clear that rape is not his intention; instead it is his "design: / To note the chamber" (2.2.25-26) for the purpose of providing the proof that he needs to win his wager with Posthumus. As J.K. Barret observes, "just at the edge of either blazon or rape, he unexpectedly snaps himself out of his lover's swoon".[345] A further strong suggestion of the possibility of rape comes a few lines later when Iachimo observes the reading material that has sent Innogen to sleep and in doing so recalls the rape in *Titus Andronicus*:

She hath been reading late,

> The tale of Tereus. Here the leaf's turned down
> Where Philomel gave up. I have enough.
> (2.2.46-48)

This reference to another classical rapist recalls the fact that Lavinia is compared to Philomela in the moments before she is raped: "His Philomel must lose her tongue today" (2.3.43) in a threat which anticipates the manner of the assault, and this also foregrounds the possibility of rape. Jonathan Bate comments that "Iachimo completes the line 'Where Philomel gave up' with 'I have enough': the sight is all he needs" and in this line Iachimo both acknowledges and rejects the possibility of rape because his intention is only to obtain the information that he needs to convince Posthumus that he has been in Innogen's bedchamber and that, by implication, he has had sexual knowledge of her.[346] J.K. Barret also comments on Iachimo's interruption of his own reference at this point, suggesting that, brief though it is, the invocation of Philomel is sufficient to establish a lasting impression of the possibility that he could have raped Innogen:

> the implications of the threat he has posed are perfectly clear because his words conjure Philomel's story in its entirety.[347]

For an audience familiar with *Titus* Andronicus, the references to literary incidences of rape foreground the sexual danger which threatens the sleeping Innogen; as do the reminders of Lavinia's rape in *Titus Andronicus*. Maurice Charney comments on this moment in the play, suggesting that:

> As she went to sleep in II.2 Imogen was reading the tale of Tereus' rape and mutilation of Philomela, perhaps where Shakespeare himself had read it, in Book 6 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In *Titus Andronicus*, the raped and mutilated Lavinia had used her nephew's copy of Ovid's narration of this brutal act to explain to her father what had happened to her. In *Cymbeline* the myth serves as a hint of what might physically have occurred. But if Imogen is not raped in the conventional meaning of the word, the penetration of her room and the visual exploration of her sleeping body constitute a rape of another and

devastating kind.[348]

Charney is correct to suggest that the echoes of *Titus Andronicus* at this point emphasise both the possibility of rape and the severity of the assault that does occur. However there is a greater significance to this scene because, as Charney suggests, the reference to the written text of *Metamorphoses* recalls the scene in the earlier tragedy where Lavinia uses the same text to report her own assault. As discussed in chapter two, this scene is comparable with the raising of the hue and cry and, robbed of the ability to communicate verbally, Lavinia uses the text to indicate that she has been raped before making a direct accusation by writing the names of her rapists in the sand. When Iachimo emerges from his hiding place in Innogen's bedchamber she is sleeping and is oblivious to his presence in the room and of course she does not cry out for help. Innogen has fallen asleep with her copy of *Metamorphoses* open at the point where Philomel is raped, the same page that Lavinia finds in her copy and this effectively declares that she is at imminent risk of rape. This moment is comparable with the raising of the hue and cry because it alerts the audience to the presence of a potential rapist in Innogen's bedchamber.

The recollection of the stories of the rapes of Lucrece and of Philomel in the bedchamber scene also impact on how Iachimo is perceived. When he identifies with Tarquin, Iachimo places himself in the role of the rapist and acknowledges the sexual temptation that is inherent in the situation. Maurice Charney suggests that "Like all good voyeurs, Iachimo is exciting himself by his own fantasy of erotic participation."[349] He progresses within a short scene from this identification of his and Innogen's comparative roles with characters in 'rape' literature to scopophilic appraisal of Innogen's naked body and his desire for a "kiss, one kiss"

(2.2.17). Tarquin in *The Rape of Lucrece* is clearly sexually aroused by the presence and vulnerability of the sleeping Lucrece, by the sense of sexual power this gives him and his potential dominance over his victim:

> standing by her side,
> His eye, which late this mutiny restrains,
> Unto a greater uproar tempts his veins
> (ll.425-427)

When Innogen announces her intention to sleep to her waiting woman it is noted that the time is “Almost midnight” (2.2.4). This reference to the midnight hour recalls the clock metaphor in the narrative poem “Stuff up his lust, as minutes fill up hours” (l.297) which, through the image of the minute hand on the number twelve pointing upwards, exemplifies Tarquin’s growing erection. The glance back to the similar image in *The Rape of Lucrece* just before Innogen falls asleep suggests that Iachimo also becomes aroused as he anticipates the time when he will step out of the trunk.

The language that Iachimo uses in his appraisal of Innogen’s body also recalls *The Rape of Lucrece*. Iachimo remarks on the whiteness of Innogen’s skin and of the bedlinen, “How bravely thou becom’st thy bed; fresh lily, / And whiter than the sheets” (2.2.17-18) and this image of purity recalls the comparable moment in the narrative poem when Tarquin, entering Lucrece’s chamber, anticipates the corruption that the rape will bring when he “gazeth on her yet unstained bed” (l.366). Iachimo’s ocular violation of Innogen continues to glance back at Tarquin’s pre-rape perusal of the sleeping Lucrece as he itemises the features of her body that he intends to memorise as ‘evidence’ of his presence in her bedchamber. Tarquin indicates:

> Where like a virtuous monument she lies,
> To be admired of lewd unhallowed eyes.

(ll.391-392)

This description of the sleeping Lucrece foreshadows the moment where Iachimo gazes with lewd eyes on Innogen, likewise comparing her to a monument as her urges her to remain asleep so that he can compile his “inventory” (2.2.32) of her body:

> O sleep, thou ape of death, lie dull upon her,
> And be her sense but as a monument
> Thus in a chapel lying.
> (2.2.33-35)

Iachimo’s words here cause sleep to become an accomplice in his actions, and the personification of sleep in this line implies a more physical violation of Innogen and once again alerts the audience to the sexual danger she is in. Iachimo, about to commit his ocular violation of her body, calls upon sleep to render her senseless of the assault just as an actual rapist might urge an accomplice to hold down his victim, as in the real-life account of the rape of Hester Burton who claimed that “being downe” her rapist “fell upon” her.[350] Also the idea of Innogen lying like a monument to the dead while sleep ‘lies on her’, given the sexual undertones together with the association with death, has necrophilic implications. This association of sex with death is to be further developed later when Innogen awakes from a sleep, which is then literally an “ape of death”(2.2.33), to discover Cloten’s decapitated corpse lying beside her.

When Tarquin enters Lucrece’s chamber, the reader knows that his intention is to have sexual intercourse with her and the metaphors of conquest and force which occur throughout the scene lead the reader to understand that it will be rape. The echoes of the *Rape of Lucrece* and *Titus Andronicus* in *Cymbeline’s* bedroom scene ensure that an audience who is familiar with the two rape texts will understand that Innogen is in serious sexual peril.

The direct references to Tarquin and to Philomel and the motifs that link the play to the earlier texts ensure that the audience understands that if there is sex, then it will be rape. As J.K. Barret suggests:

> Iachimo … alerts the audience to the stakes of our own double vision: we see the staged scene and, concomitantly, imagine something that does not take place.[351]

An audience who recognises the allusions to the classical rapes and to Shakespeare's rape texts will expect Iachimo to rape Innogen. A familiarity with the earlier texts will overlay the experiences of Lavinia and Lucrece on to the non-rape in Innogen's bedroom, so that the metaphorical representations of rape in the earlier texts once again give currency to a rape that is not seen. Furthermore, although Innogen escapes a physical assault at Iachimo's hands, the invasion of her private space is not an insignificant event. The evidence in the text suggests that Innogen falls asleep with the trunk and its occupant in her room shortly after midnight and, although Iachimo's appraisal of her body occurs over just a few lines of text, given that the clock strikes "One, two, three," (2.3.53) when he returns to the trunk, Iachimo must have been with Innogen for almost three hours. An acknowledgement of the duration of this time period makes the ocular assault on Innogen seem much more significant because it has not been a brief glance at her body, but a prolonged and sustained appraisal of her sleeping form, while she remained oblivious to her vulnerability and to the presence of danger.

The significance of the bedroom location for Iachimo's violation of Innogen's private space is clearly emphasised by the echoes of *The Rape of Lucrece* which are present throughout the scene. As explored in previous chapters, the period's traditional attitudes and

the nature of the treatment of the crime of rape in English law had created an expectation that rapes would occur predominantly in remote outdoor locations, but Shakespeare's narrative poem suggested that the privacy of the domestic environment could prove equally conducive to rape. Ultimately, we understand that "Iachimo's purpose in approaching Innogen's bed is not rape" but he is tempted to go further, exclaiming "That I might touch!" (2.2.19), and the fact that he compares himself to Tarquin - "Our Tarquin thus /Did softly press the rushes" (2.2.14-15) - demonstrates that he is aware of the sexual potential of the situation.[352] However Iachimo concludes that rape is ultimately an unnecessary development, declaring "No more: to what end?" (2.2.44). From Iachimo's point of view Innogen does 'give up' all that he requires for the purpose of winning his wager with Posthumus, because by agreeing to accommodate the trunk in her bedchamber she allows him opportune access to her body.

Significantly, it is at the same time that Iachimo is hiding in Innogen's bedchamber that the second threat to her chastity begins to take shape as Cloten, finding himself increasingly frustrated at Innogen's refusal to submit to his suit, considers the possibility of bribing one of Innogen's servants to allow him into her room:

> Let her lie still, and dream. By your leave, ho!
> I know her women are about her: what
> If I do line one of their hands? 'Tis gold
> Which buys admittance (oft it doth) yea, and makes
> Diana's rangers false themselves, yield up
> Their deer to th' stand o' th' stealer:
> (2.3.67-72)

Like Iachimo, Cloten is not dissuaded by Innogen's rejection of his advances and in fact both men simply resort to alternative means to achieve their objectives. Similarly, Cloten equates Innogen's bedchamber with her sexual self and regards access to it as the means by which to

attain possession of her. His choice of words and expression in this passage imply his intention to rape if necessary and here, as elsewhere in Shakespeare's work, the use of the hunting imagery stands as a symbol of sexual pursuit. The reference to the 'stand o' th' stealer,' suggests an element of subversion in the pursuit; it is poaching rather than lawful hunting, assault not seduction. It is significant that Cloten makes these comments while Iachimo is still hiding in Innogen's bedchamber, and this gives a predatory sense to the memory of the other man concealed in the trunk within her room. The use of the word 'stealer' here conveys the stealth employed by the hunter as he stalks his prey. Cloten's decision to "Let her lie still and dream" (2.3.67) also unconsciously reminds us of Innogen innocently sleeping throughout Iachimo's voyeuristic assault. The idea of a hunter hidden from view of his victim by "th' stand o' th' stealer" (2.3.72), watching his prey and waiting for the right moment to attack evokes the poaching metaphors that are prominent in Shakespeare's other works where rape, or threatened rape is a theme. The use of this image once again refers back to *Titus Andronicus* where, as discussed in chapter two, poaching metaphors are used to convey the intention to 'hunt' and rape Lavinia. An audience familiar with *Titus Andronicus* might well have recognised the shared use of hunting metaphors and this would lead them to recognise the potential risk to Innogen of rape.

There is a direct comparison to be made between Cloten's words and Iachimo's actions, but a world of difference in the comparative intentions of the two men. For Cloten the role of voyeur is insufficient to meet his needs, and were he successful in gaining access to Innogen's bedchamber there can be little doubt that he *would* rape her. Unlike Iachimo whose intention is only to gain evidence to win his wager with Posthumus, Cloten clearly

states an intention to rape Innogen, and the brutality of his intended behaviour is matched by his language. Even his attempts at romantic courtship are full of images that suggest force or coercion:

> I would this music would come: I am advised to give her music a mornings, they say it will penetrate. Come on, tune: if you can penetrate her with your fingering, so: we'll try with tongue too: if none will do, let her remain: but I'll never give o'er.
> (2.3.11-15)

Here Cloten is discussing his plan to awaken Innogen with a serenade, but his choice of words reveal a sexual motive. The implicit reference is to the use of manual and oral foreplay as physical stimulation in preparation for sexual intercourse. The note of persistence at the end 'but I'll never give o'er', suggests a total disregard for Innogen's right to resist his advances and reflects the advice on courtship given by Valentine to the Duke in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, where he suggests:

> That man that hath a tongue, I say is no man
> If with his tongue he cannot win a woman.
> (3.1.104-105)

The wording is also suggestive of Iachimo's attempt to seduce Innogen, when having failed in his attempt to achieve the consensual seduction that would render her an adulteress, he uses his tongue to verbally defame her, destroying her reputation and threatening to sever the bond of marriage with her husband in an action that has similar consequences to those of rape for Innogen's reputation.

Cloten finally decides to rape Innogen when it becomes clear that he will never directly obtain her willing consent to sexual intercourse or marriage. However, it is not so much his failure to win her love which prompts the attack, but an angry response to the terms

of her final speech of rejection. It seems that for Cloten the intended rape is motivated more by the prospect of revenge for a personal affront and the desire to humiliate the woman who rejected him than it is by sexual desire. Innogen becomes a potential target for sexual assault, because like Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus*, she "Stood upon her chastity / upon her nuptial vow, her loyalty" (2.3.125-126). Cloten is enraged by the terms in which Innogen states her rejection of him and her preference for her husband:

> His mean'st garment,
> That ever hath but clipp'd his body, is dearer
> In my respect, than all the hairs above thee.
> (2.3.146-148)

This is an insult which unfavourably compares Cloten's physical attributes to those of another man, and makes an implicit comparison of worth and status. Much is made by both Cymbeline and Cloten of the low social position of Innogen's chosen husband and consequently, Innogen's comparison of Cloten with Posthumus' 'mean'st garment' implies an unacceptable position of inferiority. It is almost certainly as a result of this that Cloten determines upon the perverse manner of his revenge, declaring "I'll be reveng'd: / 'His mean'st garment!' Well" (2.3.174-175). Innogen has insulted his masculine pride and it is no longer sufficient merely for Cloten to seduce and marry her; in order to revenge this insult he must take her directly from her husband in a manner which asserts his masculine superiority over Posthumus and his authority over Innogen:

> She said upon a time … that she held the very garment of Posthumus in more respect than my noble and natural person; together with the adornment of my qualities. With that suit upon my back, will I ravish her: first kill him, and in her eyes; there shall she see my valour, which will then be a torment to her contempt.
> (3.5.156-163)

There is a strong similarity between this and the circumstances of the rape in *Titus Andronicus*, where Lavinia is forced to watch the murder of her husband, Bassianus, before her rapists "make his dead trunk pillow to our lust" (2.3.130). Both acts are intended to punish a woman for her loyalty to her husband and her marital chastity; and both are to be enacted in such a way as to show the victim that her husband is being humiliated by the act. Despite the fact that Cloten intends to marry Innogen, he plans to punish and humiliate her and to "mock and usurp Posthumus' potency".[353] Like the wager plot which precedes it, Cloten's plan to rape Innogen is founded upon issues arising out of male social and sexual rivalry. The reflections of *Titus Andronicus* in the mode of Cloten's plan once again force an audience familiar with the tragedy to anticipate and to visualise a rape that never actually occurs.

Cloten's attitude to the rape he intends to commit, and to Innogen's role as his victim, are further indicated by his sexual punning on the word 'fit' as he dresses in Posthumus' clothes:

> How fit his garments serve me! Why should his mistress who was made by him
> that made the tailor, not be fit too? The rather (saving reverence of the word)
> for 'tis said a woman's fitness comes by fits.
> (4.1.2-6)

Nosworthy glosses this reference to 'fitness' as relating to sexual inclination, implying Cloten's bewilderment at Innogen's failure to find him attractive, an interpretation that reveals Cloten's arrogance and sense of self-importance.

When Cloten threatens to rape Innogen he speaks directly against Posthumus and all references to Innogen are limited to statements which reassert Posthumus' ownership of her:

> Posthumus, thy head (which now is growing upon thy shoulders) shall within
> this hour be off, thy mistress enforced, thy garments cut to pieces before thy

face.
(4.1.15-18)

Cloten's reference here to torn garments is prophetic because it foreshadows the events which are to follow, and the virtual assimilation of Posthumus' identity, which is completed through Innogen's misidentification of Cloten's headless corpse. Cloten plans to tear Posthumus' clothes, and is himself literally torn apart, the loss of his head leading to the temporary confusion of the identities of the two men. Both references to 'torn garments' relate directly to the form of revenge which Cloten plans, a denouement which would result in the death of Posthumus. The phrase also echoes the metaphor used by Innogen herself when she compares herself to a torn garment in response to Pisanio's report that she has been accused of adultery:

> Poor I am stale, a garment out of fashion,
> And, for I am richer than to hang by th' walls,
> I must be ripp'd: - to pieces with me! –
> (3.4.52-54)

Cloten's plan to rape Innogen shows him to be little more than a misogynistic brute, happy with the concept of using rape and murder to win a wife. Unlike Lavinia's rapists, however, he does not view the planned attack as "some certain snatch" (1.1.595), but as the impetus for marriage. In what Stanley Wells calls "a far subtler study of the psychopathy of lust than *Titus Andronicus*" Cloten "horrifyingly imagines his violation of Innogen" and his plan does not end with rape, because after he has assaulted her it is his intention to "knock her back, foot her home again" (3.5.167) to court where, after facing some disapproval from her father, "who may (haply) be a little angry for my so rough usage" (4.1.19-20), he will finally get what he wants.[354] Building on the Queen's influence over Cymbeline to overcome any parental

objections to his assault on Innogen - "my mother, having power of his testiness, shall turn all into my commendations" (4.1.20-21) - and with her husband now dead, he clearly assumes he will be free to legitimise the marriage that he has already consummated by force. It seems that, for Cloten, rape is an acceptable means by which to obtain a wife. It is also a method of forcing a marriage that Shakespeare's audience would recognise from the judicial process which accepted marriage between a woman and her rapist as an acceptable recompense for rape. Cloten's confident assumption that his mother's influence would counter Cymbeline's initial displeasure over the rape of his daughter is hardly misplaced when we consider her attitude throughout to her son's ill-advised and immoral courtship of a married woman. In fact she openly encourages Cloten to continue his suit in spite of Innogen's resistance and obvious displeasure:

> frame yourself
> To orderly solicits, and be friended
> With aptness of the season: make denials
> Increase your services: so seem, as if
> You were inspir'd to do those duties which
> You tender to her:
> (2.3.46-51)

Ultimately, she encourages him to persist regardless of Innogen's own wishes and with a contemptuous disregard for her denial of consent:

> in all obey her,
> Save when command to your dismission tends,
> And therein you are senseless.
> (2.3.51-53)

This is an attitude that echoes Valentine's advice on courtship in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* where he urges the Duke to:

> Take no repulse, whatever she doth say,
> For 'get you gone', she doth not mean away!
> (3.1.100-101)

In both plays this indicates a complete disregard for female consent by the male characters.

The final scenes of the play deal with the outcome of the wager. Innogen survives the two attempts on her chastity without being raped, but for a time it appears that the impact on her reputation will be no less severe than that of an actual rape. The evidence that Iachimo produces to win the wager precipitates a rapid decline in Innogen's reputation and in Posthumus' level of regard for her. When he enters into the wager, Posthumus is confident of his wife's fidelity stating "I am bold her honour / Will remain hers," (2.4.2-3), but this does not hold when it is put to the test. Innogen, just like Shakespeare's actual rape victims, is initially commended for her chastity, but her reputation, like those of Lavinia and Lucrece, is tainted through no fault of her own and she declines from the position as an exemplar of chastity to the status of a prostitute. As Posthumus baldly puts it, "She hath bought the name of whore, thus dearly" (2.4.128) and Diane Dreher reminds us:

> So fragile is woman's identity in patriarchal society that when she fails to match men's dreams of perfection, she becomes a victim of their deepest fears and doubts.[355]

When the terms of the wager were agreed Innogen's worth was considered to be beyond price, it was "not a thing for sale, and only the gift of the gods" (1.4.88-89), but when Posthumus believes that she has committed adultery, she becomes associated with images of prostitution similar to those which were evident in the exchange between Iachimo and Innogen as he attempted to seduce her. In the letter which Posthumus writes instructing Pisanio to murder Innogen, he suggests that his wife "hath played the strumpet in my bed"

(3.4.22-23), and accuses Pisanio of choosing to act as “pander to her dishonour” (3.4.32) if he fails to accept the role of her executioner. Posthumus’ suggestion that Pisanio has acted as a pimp to prostitute Innogen’s sexual honour is echoed in Cloten’s reference to him as “you precious pander” (3.5.96), and indeed on hearing that her husband believes that she has been unfaithful to him, Innogen herself remarks that “I have heard I am a strumpet,” (3.4.122). When Lucrece is raped she fears the reputational damage that she believes she will incur when her assault becomes known, so that having once been viewed as an exemplar of chastity she will be transformed into the antithesis:

> And thou, the author of their obloquy,
> Shalt have thy trespass cited up in rhymes
> And sung by children in succeeding times.
> (ll. 523-525)

In keeping with the idea of sexual commerce, Shakespeare continues a theme evident elsewhere in works connected with rape and sexual infidelity, using images and vocabulary of theft in connection with the sexual possession of one man’s wife by another. As James Edward Siemon observes, in the literary language of rape “to be stolen is also to be violated sexually”.[356] Having failed to seduce Innogen, Iachimo provides false proof of the wager, and this evidence is also conveyed through terms of sexual commerce:

> If I have lost it,
> I should have lost the worth of it in gold –
> I’ll make a journey twice as far, t’enjoy
> A second night of such sweet shortness which
> Was mine in Britain; for the ring is won.
> (2.3.161-162)

Frankie Rubenstein glosses the use of the word ring here as meaning ‘vulva’, clearly punning on the sense of having literally won Posthumus’ ring by having had sexual intercourse with his

wife.[357] Given that Innogen was established as a personification of Britain earlier in the play when she claimed that Posthumus "Has forgot Britain" (1.6.130), the use of the phrase "in Britain" here operates as a sexual innuendo implying that Iachimo had sexual intercourse with Innogen.

When Iachimo presents the stolen bracelet as 'evidence' of Innogen's adultery, Posthumus is briefly persuaded by Philario to consider the possibility that "one of her women, being corrupted, / Hath stol'n it from her?" (2.4.146-147) and repeats the accusation of theft in his request for further evidence "Render me some corporal sign about her / More evident than this: for this was stol'n" (2.4.150-151). The word 'stol'n' here refers to the action of the servants, but also implies the possibility of rape because, although the bracelet is produced by Iachimo as evidence that he has had sexual intercourse with Innogen, it does not necessarily indicate that it was a consensual act. The comment is also ironic, because of course, the bracelet *has* been stolen by Iachimo and Posthumus has unwittingly hit on the truth. Iachimo cultivates seeds of doubt in Posthumus' mind by equating sexual knowledge of Innogen with possession of the bracelet, which is an object that may be easily stolen:

> You may wear her in title yours: but you know
> Strange fowl light upon neighbouring ponds. Your
> ring may be stolen too: so your brace of unprizable
> estimations, the one is but frail and the other casual.
> A cunning thief, or a that-way-accomplished
> courtier, would hazard the winning both of first
> and last.
> (1.4.92-98)

Gordon Williams suggests that the use of the word pond here is a reference to 'vagina' and that Iachimo "warns of adulterous wives".[358] The sexual imagery here is suggestive of adultery, but the reference to the 'cunning thief' calls to mind the poaching metaphors that

are indicative of rape in *Titus Andronicus*, so that unconsciously his remarks come close to acknowledging that what transpired in the bedchamber was a form of sexual assault. Iachimo's remarks are also suggestive of Leontes use of poaching imagery in his comments on adultery in *The Winter's Tale*:

> There have been,
> Or I am much deciev'd, cuckolds ere now;
> And many a man there is, even at this present,
> Now while I speak this, holds his wife by th' arm
> That little thinks she has been sluic'd in's absence,
> And his pond fish'd by his next neighbour,
> (1.2.223-228)

The poaching allusions here are powerful because they link back directly to Shakespeare's rape texts where, as we have seen, poaching is frequently used as a metaphor for rape, and specifically for the rape of a married woman.

Innogen is not raped, but Iachimo's words and behaviour within her bed-chamber are highly sexual. Iachimo is in the presence of a beautiful woman and he is sexually stimulated both by her physical beauty and her vulnerability. He uses some of the play's most sexually voluptuous imagery as he contemplates the mole which will provide substantive evidence of his intimate knowledge of Innogen's physical body:

> On her left breast
> A mole cinque-spotted: like the crimson drops
> I' th' bottom of a cowslip. Here's a voucher,
> Stronger than ever law could make; this secret
> Will force him think I have pick'd the lock, and ta'en
> The treasure of her honour.
> (2.2.39-44)

The notion of 'crimson drops' staining a perfect flower is suggestive of the spots of blood that indicate loss of virginity and reminiscent of the image of wounded chastity symbolised by the 'Love-in-idleness' flower, "now purple with love's wound" (2.1.170) in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The crimson drops also call to mind the "spots and stains" (l.196) which signify that Lucrece has been raped and suggest the visual showing of blood that a woman who had been a virgin would be expected to produce as evidence that she had been raped. Thus, the mole itself implies violation; it is an imperfect mark upon the otherwise spotless body of Innogen:

> For further satisfying, under her breast
> (Worthy her pressing) lies a mole, right proud
> Of that most delicate lodging. By my life,
> I kiss'd it, and it gave me present hunger
> To feed again, though full. You do remember
> This stain upon her?
> (2.4.168-173)

Used in the context of the wager, it is also the substance of Iachimo's sexual proof, and the 'stain' that convinces Posthumus of her sexual infidelity. As Peter Holland so rightly comments:

> There are few moments in Shakespeare in which the female body is quite so sensuously itemized and sexually available. ... Visual knowledge of her body is enough to represent to her husband sexual knowledge of it.[359]

J.K. Barret also comments on Iachimo's references to Innogen's mole in this scene, suggesting that:

> its evocation finally convinces Posthumus that Imogen "hath bought the name of whore" (l.128). It becomes a "stain" marking her propensity to "[play] the strumpet" (3.4.21-22), and, through Iachimo's words, it is the very engine of insatiability and seduction.[360]

Iachimo's 'assault' upon Innogen's chastity, though it falls short of actual physical penetration, nevertheless represents a violation of her sexual integrity. It has been variously described in

critical works as "a rape that is not a rape", a "specular rape", a "stealthily semiotic rape", and an "imagined rape".[361] The difficulty in definition stems from the fact that while Innogen does suffer sexually motivated assault her body is not penetrated. However, the fact that Iachimo can describe the mole and its location (under her breast) in such detail indicates that Innogen was either at least partially naked or that he lifted her clothing in order to view her naked breasts, and while this was not rape, it was a violation of her personal integrity and a form of sexual assault. Unlike Shakespeare's victims of rape, Innogen is not conscious during the assault and neither does she suffer actual physical harm as a result, but as Karen Bamford suggests, the damage to her reputation is the same as it would have been if she had been raped:

> Iachimo has access to Imogen's body without her consent. Because he can prove this access publicly, he "steals" her honour, just as a rapist "steals" the chastity of the woman he rapes. In terms of the wager plot, the effect of an actual rape would be the same as that of the lesser, specular violation: Iachimo could prove his intimate knowledge of her body in the same way, and Imogen would be the same faithful wife and unconsenting victim.[362]

Not only is Innogen's reputation damaged, but the false accusation also has the potential to lead to a tragic outcome. In Shakespeare's narrative poem, Lucrece, having once been upheld as an exemplar of chastity, finds herself unable to live with the shame of her rape and she takes her own life by stabbing herself in the chest:

> Even here she sheathed in her harmless breast
> A harmful knife, that thence her soul unsheathed.
> (ll. 1723-1724)

When Innogen hears that Posthumus plans to have her killed because of her presumed adultery, she says:

> Look
> I draw the sword myself: take it, and hit

The innocent mansion of my love, my heart.
(3.4.68-70)

Oliver Ford Davies calls this “a masochistic self-sacrifice” and describes the moment in the play as “A turning point, where her self-determination is finally crushed, and tragedy is at hand.”[363] Innogen’s plea for death here echoes Lucrece’s suicide, as does the manner in which she asks to die and the backward glance to the narrative poem hints at the possibility of a tragic ending to the play. This comparison between the two works emphasises that Innogen is the victim of a sexual assault, albeit an act of voyeurism rather than rape, but which, if left uncorrected has the same destructive potential as rape itself.

There are four versions of the events which take place in Innogen’s bedchamber, and these are significant because they demonstrate the vulnerability of a woman’s reputation which is subject to interpretation by others. Innogen’s reputation for chastity was conferred upon her by Posthumus who held it up for challenge through the wager and her reputation is temporarily damaged by the misrepresentation of the events in her bedchamber. The first version of the bedchamber scene is the reality which is played out on stage and witnessed by the audience, and this version establishes that Innogen is the entirely innocent and non-consenting victim of a sexual assault. The second version is that which Iachimo recounts to win the wager and which is understood by the audience to be a fictionalised representation of the bedchamber scene. Iachimo deviously exploits the weakness he perceives in Posthumus:

First, her bedchamber,
(Where I confess I slept not, but profess
Had that was well worth watching)
(2.4.83-85)

He cleverly draws Posthumus further into the lie that will win him the wager: in reality he did nothing but 'watch' Innogen, yet he words his confession so as to imply that he enjoyed a night of consensual sex with her. Iachimo's account of how he obtained the bracelet however, is a direct lie and the audience knows that he took it from her arm as she slept:

> She stripp'd it from her arm; I see her yet:
> Her pretty action did outsell her gift,
> And yet enrich'd it too: she gave it me,
> And said she priz'd it once.
> (2.4.128-131)

The use of the word 'stripp'd' here implies consent and is also a very sexualised term in this context as it suggests the provocative removal of clothing, but it could not be further from the truth of Innogen's adamant rejection of his advances in the previous scene. It is of course feasible that Iachimo might have believed that Innogen effectively gave him the bracelet because she did not wake up, regarding her inertia during the ocular rape as a form of consent; this is after all in keeping with the sense that was culturally prevalent at the time that women had a responsibility to protect themselves from rape. The prevalence of the idea that rape was more common in remote rural locations carried with it the implicit notion that lone women should avoid all such environments. It has been established in previous chapters that Shakespeare's victims of rape and threatened rape were blamed by their assailants for having somehow enabled the assault or potential rape. Lavinia's rapists claimed that she "Stood upon her chastity" (2.3.124), Tarquin raped Lucrece because her "beauty hath ensnared thee to this night" (l.485), Proteus threatened to rape Sylvia because "Women cannot love where they're beloved" (5.4.44) and Demetrius saw the motivation for rape in Helena's incautious behaviour which led her "To leave the city and commit yourself / Into the hands of one that

loves you not" (2.1.219-220). It was also expected that a woman confronted by a predatory male would cry out for help and Innogen could not do so because she was sleeping and was wholly unaware of Iachimo's presence. From the male perspective then, she 'gave' the bracelet to Iachimo because she did nothing to prevent him from taking it from her, just as the victim of rape might have been seen to have invited the assault had she ventured alone into an isolated location, and if she had not been heard to cry out for help, or did not display signs of injuries caused by an attempt to resist her attacker.

Innogen is herself fully aware of the ease with which issues of consent rest upon male interpretation, knowing that silence can be perceived as submission:

> But that you shall not say I yield being silent,
> I would not speak.
> (2.3.103-104)

In Shakespeare's two rape texts, silencing is the first controlling act that is taken against the victims. Lavinia and Lucrece are actively and aggressively silenced by their rapists to prevent them from offering verbal resistance or crying out for help. While Innogen sleeps in her bedchamber she would be presumed to be safe from harm, but in fact although she is not raped, her reputation is still at risk and she is liable to censure and disbelief because she did not cry out to prevent Iachimo's assault. Shakespeare's actual rape victims are silenced by their attackers to prevent them from calling for help, but Innogen does not cry out because she is unaware of the danger that surrounds her. Nevertheless, when she is subsequently accused of adultery, she is conscious of the fact that her physical chastity and spiritual innocence do not guarantee that she will be regarded as virtuous, and this is evident in the fact that she acknowledges that the loss of her bracelet may mistakenly be believed to represent

her infidelity:

> I hope it be not gone to tell my lord
> That I kiss aught but he.
> (2.3.161-162)

Innogen knows that her reputation is conferred upon her by men and that in matters of rape and adultery the truth is subject to misrepresentation and misinterpretation by others.

The third version of the bed chamber scene is that which exists wholly within Posthumus' mind. In this version Posthumus creates an imaginative fictionalisation of events in which he sees Innogen cavorting with Iachimo as a wholly silent, and therefore presumably willing, participant: "She hath been colted by him" (2.4.166); "Perchance he spoke not, but / Like a full-acorn'd boar … Cried "O!" and mounted" (2.4.208-210). This fictionalised development of Iachimo's false version of events is a representation of human sexuality at its most base level. Devoid of the dignity of seduction and consent, it is merely the coupling of the beasts. Here Innogen's consent is presumed to have been given because she offers no resistance and fails either to resist or to cry for help. Karen Bamford suggests that this version of the scene is:

> a grotesque caricature of this "Imogen," a pornographic cartoon in which she is reduced to an orifice for Iachimo's lust.[364]

Ironically, the most depraved version of events and that which comes closest to a depiction of the reality of rape is this imagined account of a consensual act that Posthumus himself creates. It is interesting that this version of the scene is constructed entirely from Posthumus' imaginative interpretation of Iachimo's account of the event. Posthumus re-creates the scene in his mind in much the same way as the audience of *Titus Andronicus* and the reader of *The Rape of Lucrece* construct a version of the rapes from the metaphors that Shakespeare uses to

represent them in the texts. By making direct reference to the two rape texts in *Cymbeline* Shakespeare causes his audience to look back at them. Iachimo's references to the classical rapes of Philomela and Lucrece alert the audience to the possibility that he could rape Innogen, but these references have an even greater impact because, when Iachimo recalls the two rape texts, this has the effect of bringing Lucrece and Lavinia into the bedchamber with him. The metaphorical presence of Shakespeare's two rape victims foregrounds the possibility and brutal reality of rape, and causes an audience familiar with the two earlier works to re-enact the rapes of Lucrece and Lavinia in their imaginations to construct the final version of the scene. While Iachimo peruses Innogen's body and contemplates how he will ruin her to win a wager, the audience similarly gives substance to a rape that occurs only in their minds, superimposing Tarquin's forceful violation of Lucrece – "Rude ram to batter such an ivory wall /… To make the breach and enter this sweet city" (ll.464/469) – upon the bedchamber scene, and the brutal rape of Lavinia – "some Tereus hath deflowered thee / And … cut thy tongue" (2.4.26-27) – over Cloten's plan to force Innogen to submit to him through rape and murder.

Shakespeare's audience would have known that there was an expectation in English law that a woman who claimed to have been raped would produce physical evidence of her violation and if she had been a virgin at the time of the assault, the expectation was that she would have a showing of blood to confirm that her virginity had been taken and as demonstrated in chapter one, contemporary accounts of rape frequently recorded that this bleeding was seen.[365] *Cymbeline*'s continued reflections of the two rape texts ensure that there is bloody evidence in the final scenes of a rape that has not taken place. Although the

fortuitous intervention of Guiderius foils Cloten's plan to rape her, ironically Innogen does not escape the sexual humiliation which Cloten intended her to suffer. She wakes from her death-like slumber beside Cloten's headless body, and garbed as it is in Posthumus' clothing, mistakenly identifies it as that of her estranged husband through an inventory of its body parts:

> I know the shape of's leg: this is his hand:
> His foot Mercurial: his Martial thigh:
> (4.2.374-375)

The description is, unwittingly, as false as the inventory of Innogen's body which Iachimo uses to destroy her reputation. This separation of Cloten's identity into a collection of body parts is reminiscent of the metaphors of dismemberment that pervade *Titus Andronicus* creating a further reflection of the earlier tragedy. The intensity of Innogen's grief is unsurprising as we are already convinced of her love and loyalty for Posthumus, yet her physical response to the situation is shocking, "O/ Give colour to my pale cheek with thy blood" (4.2.394-395). The obvious implication of these lines in performance is that, as Nosworthy suggests, she must stain her face with the blood of the corpse:

> There seems no escape from the gruesome conclusion that she smears her face with his blood, or is about to do so.[366]

Although Lavinia and Lucrece were presumably no longer virgins when they were raped, they do participate in the shedding of blood to revenge their rapes and cleanse themselves of the impurity of rape, and this reflects the evidential element of the hue and cry process. Blood is a heavily loaded image in Shakespeare's works which explore the theme of rape and it operates frequently as a symbol of sexual guilt and impurity. At times the loss of blood is associated with the practice of letting blood for medicinal purposes, to purge the body of impurities, a

concept which is suggested by Arviragus' remark:

> Poor sick Fidele!
> I'll willingly to him; to gain his colour
> I'ld let a parish of such Cloten's blood,
>
> (4.2.210-212)

Ironically, Arviragus remarks convey a sense of the truth of Cloten's murder: that the letting of his blood *has* preserved the purity of Innogen's. Lucrece's unclean blood is shed in her suicide, cleansing her body and soul of the impurity of the rape she has suffered, and the blood which pours from Cloten's headless trunk spares Innogen the possibility of a similar loss of chastity. However, the imagery still operates as a metaphor for rape because the taking of a head in violent circumstances also implies the symbolic loss of a maidenhead as the result of rape. Although Innogen escapes Cloten's plan to rape her, this scene is a crucial moment in her humiliation and as Simon Palfrey suggests:

> Falling upon Cloten's body, she is made temporarily complicit in the regime that, from various directions, would have her raped, killed, or stopped. The necrophilic union appears to fulfil such rapacious desires: wiping her face in the remnants of that of her 'husband', Imogen paints with antic grimness a post-coital tableau of bloody dehymenization;[367]

The woman whose chastity has remained steadfastly intact in spite of the various attempted violations is symbolically 'deflowered' on stage. Innogen retains her marital chastity, but smeared with the blood of the man who would have raped her, she appears to be soiled, stained and corrupted and this reminds us of the "chaste blood so unjustly stained" (l.1836) which flows from the body of Lucrece after she has committed suicide. The image of the bloodied Innogen alongside the decapitated corpse creates a reflection of the rape and mutilation of Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus*, a link that is further emphasised when Lucius asks as

he approaches Innogen: “Who is this / Thou mak’st thy bloody pillow?” (4.2.432-433), recalling Chiron’s invocation to Demetrius to rape Lavinia on the body of her dead husband and “make his dead trunk pillow to our lust” (2.3.130). The image is also an ironic representation of the rape that Cloten had planned where, following the murder of Posthumus and rape of his wife, Cloten would find Posthumus “on the ground, my speech of insultment ended on his dead body …when my lust hath dined” (3.5.163-165).

Despite the moving reunions of the final scene, the resolution of *Cymbeline* falls well short of an unqualified happy ending. The abuse of Innogen has drifted too close to the boundaries of tragedy and sexual perversion to be readily forgotten. After a lengthy absence from the stage, Posthumus’ reappearance is a dramatic one, he enters carrying a cloth which he clearly presumes to be covered in the blood of his ‘dead’ wife:

> Yea, bloody cloth, I’ll keep thee: for I wish’d
> Thou shoulds be colour’d thus. You married ones,
> If each of you should take this course, how many
> Must murder wives much better than themselves
> For wrying but a little?
> (5.1.1-5)

In the wager scene, the Frenchman recalls that Posthumus had previously boasted of Innogen’s virtue, “at that time vouching – and upon warrant of bloody affirmation” (1.4.60-61) and ironically, what Posthumus has obtained at the end of the play is a ‘bloody affirmation’ of his wife’s supposed infidelity. The bloody cloth becomes the proof of Innogen’s murder, “Some bloody sign of it” (3.4.138) that Posthumus required of Pisanio. On a more subtle level, moreover, it reminds us of the importance to the wager plot of proving sexual ruin, and suggests the showing of blood required of a former virgin to confirm that she had been raped.

A sense of disquiet with the resolution is further developed through echoes of *The Rape of Lucrece* and *Titus Andronicus*, which ensure that the play's final moments remain problematic. We see the royal family gathered on stage; confusions of identity are resolved; and Cymbeline's succession and the stability of Britain is, for the foreseeable future, secured as his lost sons, "the issue of your loins, … / And blood of your begetting" (5.4.394-395), are returned to him, the family reunited and the ruptured bloodline restored. As Arthur Kirsch comments:

> erotic disorder is associated with disorder in the kingdom. The separation of Posthumus and Imogen is continuously juxtaposed with the war between Britain and Rome and the loss of Cymbeline's sons; and the reunion of Posthumus and Imogen and the reconstitution of their marriage is coextensive with the reunion of Cymbeline's whole family and with the peace and union between Britain and Rome.[368]

However, the scenes of reunification are undermined by the use of imagery which has echoes of other more tragic denouements. The image contained in the Soothsayer's predicted resolution when from "a stately cedar shall be lopp'd branches, which, being dead many years, shall after revive, be jointed to the old stock, and freshly grow" (5.4.521-522), is reminiscent of the hideous mutilation of Lavinia, her violated body "lopped and hewed and made … bare / Of her two branches" (2.4.17-18). The two plays are also linked by the paternal experiences of the two fathers, because Titus like Cymbeline loses his sons, and his daughter suffers a violation. The reunification of Cymbeline's family and the restoration and purification of his bloodline, in essence the 'revival' of the 'lopp'd branches' on the 'lofty cedar', is a just cause for celebration:

> Laud we the gods,
> And let our crooked smokes climb to their nostrils
> From our blest altars.
> (5.4.564-565)

These obsequies, however, are suggestive of the sacrifice of the eldest Goth prisoner, at the start of *Titus Andronicus*:

> Alarbus limbs are lopped
> And entrails feed the sacrificing fire,
> Whose smoke like incense doth perfume the sky.
> (1.1.143-145)

Two such disparate sacrificial pyres could hardly be imagined, yet in the time of Cymbeline's greatest joy, the reflections of the moment of ritualised cruelty which sets in motion the events that result in Lavinia's rape and precipitates Titus rapid descent through stark emotional torment, to virtual madness and death, somewhat undermine the resolution. Cymbeline too, intends the sacrifice of his prisoners to appease the bereaved and honour the dead, but ultimately stops short of committing an act of such brutality.

In the final scene all conflicts are apparently ended as Iachimo confesses his deception. His final descriptions of Innogen are a complete retraction of the previous slander:

> That paragon, thy daughter,
> For whom my heart drops blood, and my false spirits
> Quail to remember
> (5.4.174-176)

In a moment reminiscent of the death of Lavinia at the hands of her father, and the suicide of Lucrece in the presence of her husband and father, it is Iachimo who bleeds, metaphorically, before Posthumus and Cymbeline to redeem Innogen's chastity. The apology is, however, not made to Innogen, but to the two men he has wronged by devaluing her chastity:

> Well may you, sir,
> Remember me at court, where I was taught
> Of your chaste daughter the wide difference
> 'Twixt amorous and villainous.
> (5.4.222-225)

As Iachimo gives the ring and bracelet to Posthumus in cancellation of the wager there are echoes of the marriage ceremony:

> but your ring first,
> And here the bracelet of the truest princess
> That ever swore her faith.
> (5.4.494-496)

In returning the items of jewellery to Posthumus, Iachimo is symbolically returning Innogen's chastity and removing the stain from her reputation; yet, the suggestion of marriage creates a sense of him giving possession of her chastity back to Posthumus, much as a bride is 'given away' by her father in the wedding service. Innogen has no part to play in this 'remarriage', her consent is not sought, though it is implicitly given by Cymbeline in his reference to Posthumus as "son-in-law"(5.4.502).

The resolution of *Cymbeline* is an uneasy ending, which is pervaded by shadows of Shakespeare's rape texts and other works which present the possibility of rape. Much like *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Pericles*, which end with the prospect of the women being married to their would-be rapists in the closing scenes, *Cymbeline* has a similarly disquieting ending to a narrative in which the central female character threatened with rape and murder directly experiences the associated reputational damage. This chapter demonstrates that Shakespeare used reflections of the rapes of Lavinia and Lucrece to give substance to the possibility that Innogen will also be raped, and to emphasise the severity of the sexual assault that does occur. The echoes of *Titus Andronicus* and *The Rape of Lucrece* cause an audience that is familiar with the earlier works to witness the bedchamber scene through a filter of the brutal rapes of Lavinia and Lucrece and to construct an imagined alternative version of the scene in which Innogen is raped.

As in Shakespeare's other works which include a theme of rape, an adherence to the hue and cry process is evident in the representation of the threats of rape in *Cymbeline*. Innogen is shown to be at risk of rape in the intimate isolation of her bedchamber, once again challenging the perception that rape is more likely to occur in a remote rural location. She is also shown to be vulnerable in the Welsh wilderness and because she is rendered unconscious in both locations, she is unable to cry for help, however the hue and cry is raised metaphorically because Iachimo's invocation of the rapes of Lavinia and Lucrece in the bedchamber scene alerts the audience to the imminent risk of rape.

Although ultimately Innogen is not raped, there is a showing of blood which meets the evidentiary criteria to confirm rape and emphasises the seriousness of the threatened rapes. Innogen smears her face with Cloten's blood, recalling the letting of blood in the two rape texts and emphasising how close she has come to being raped. Despite retaining her chastity, Innogen's reputation is damaged by the false accusations of adultery, just as if she had been raped. Lavinia and Lucrece are purged of the corruption of rape by the letting of their blood as they die at the end of the two rape texts and in *Cymbeline*, it is Iachimo who symbolically bleeds to restore Innogen's chastity when he admits to lying in order to win the wager.

Shakespeare demonstrates in *Cymbeline* that in a patriarchal society chastity is a quality that is conferred upon a woman by the men who possess her, and that as such it becomes a quality that can effectively be stolen. The metaphors of financial value that are used to measure virginity and chastity in all of the works which include a theme of rape, become indicative of prostitution in *Cymbeline* and Shakespeare explores this theme further

in *Pericles* which is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 5
“He that will give most shall have her first”
Threatened rape in *Pericles*

This chapter will discuss the threat of rape in *Pericles* in the context of the hue and cry process. Other works by Shakespeare that include a theme of rape use metaphors of financial value to indicate chastity and to quantify its loss and this chapter will show that in *Pericles*, the imagery of value that is attributed to chastity is linked to sexual trade and prostitution.

Pericles’ daughter, Marina, is threatened by the prospect of rape on no less than five occasions, leading Simon Palfrey to suggest that “rape is constantly in sight in the world of *Pericles*”.[369] Ruth Nevo similarly observes that Act four of the play is “conspicuously full of imminent rape”.[370] It has been demonstrated in previous chapters that location has a key role in facilitating the possibility of sexual assault and this is as much the case in the private spaces of *The Rape of Lucrece* and *Cymbeline* as it is in “the ill counsel of a desert place” in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (2.1.22) and *Titus Andronicus* where the prospect of a remote woodland locations “fitted by kind for rape and villainy” (2.1.123) seem to inspire the act itself. Location also has a key part to play in facilitating the circumstances which make rape a possibility throughout much of *Pericles*. There are two locations in the play in which Marina is exposed to imminent threats of rape. The first such instance occurs after Marina agrees to “o’er the sea margent / Walk with Leonine” (4.1.26-27), who has been hired by her guardian, Dionyza, to murder her. An audience familiar with *Titus Andronicus* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* would understand the inherent danger of rape in remote woodland locations and would understand that this risk was also present in the isolation of the sea shore. Within a few

lines of Marina discovering that Leonine intends to kill her at Dionyza's behest, she is abducted by pirates who are quick both to note her commercial worth, "A prize, a prize!" (4.1.99) and to acknowledge the possibility of raping her. As Marina is seized, the third pirate comments, "Half part, mates, half part!" (4.1.100), which Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen gloss as meaning "fair shares (either in selling Marina or in raping her)."[371] The fact that the pirate goes on to urge his accomplices to "Come / let's have her aboard suddenly," (4.1.100-101) suggests that the possibility of a gang rape is very much on his mind and the sexual implications of the phrase "let's have her" are very clear; Gordon Williams glosses the use of the word 'have' in Shakespeare's work as meaning "to possess sexually" and as Simon Palfrey suggests, at this point the pirates appear to "relish the thought of a gangbang".[372] The potential for sexual violence in the situation is also acknowledged by Leonine, who comments after witnessing the abduction that:

> Perhaps they will but please themselves upon her,
> Not carry her aboard. If she remain,
> Whom they have ravished must be slain by me.
> (4.2.106-108)

Leonine's decision to kill Marina if the pirates merely rape her rather than carrying her away is no doubt the result of his commission to murder her, but this also recalls the fate that befell Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus*, murdered by her father because she had been raped, and Lucrece in *The Rape of Lucrece* who commits suicide following her rape, reinforcing the notion prevalent in the rape texts that once raped, a woman "should not survive her shame" (*Titus Andronicus*, 5.3.41). Leonine's observations about the potential outcomes of Marina's abduction also have a parallel with the representations of rape and potential rape elsewhere in Shakespeare's work. Marina may be murdered and "thrown into the sea", or the pirates

may just “please themselves upon her”, leaving her “ravished” to be “slain” by Leonine who, as Simon Palfrey suggests, “anticipates an off stage ‘stage’ of violation, degradation, and pitiless sacrifice”.[373] Ruth Nevo also suggests that “Leonine expects the rescuing pirates to ravish Marina”.[374] As in *Titus Andronicus* and *The Rape of Lucrece* where the rapes occur at the margins of the text, and *Cymbeline* where an audience familiar with the earlier rape texts anticipates and even visualises a rape that does not ultimately occur, Leonine’s speculation invites the audience to imagine an off-stage sexual assault, super-imposing the brutal rapes of Lavinia and Lucrece over the off-stage non-event in *Pericles*.

The inherent danger facing a lone woman in a remote outdoor location is evident in the fact that Marina experiences the possibility of imminent death, a violent gang rape and finally becomes the victim of an abduction. However, the pirates do not rape Marina, a fact which they themselves confirm when negotiating a price to sell her to a brothel in Mytilene when the first pirate responds to the brothel keeper’s question “You say she’s a virgin?” (4.2.39) by confirming that her virginity remains intact: “O, sir, we doubt it not” (4.2.41). While Leonine might well have been surprised to witness the pirates’ restraint, having expected them to rape Marina, the play’s contemporary audience might not have been so surprised because although the innuendo at the time of her abduction suggests the likelihood of a gang rape, there is a precedent in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* where a group of outlaws claim to “detest such vile base practices” (4.1.74) as acts of violence upon women, despite admitting to various crimes such as abduction and murder. Significantly in the earlier comedy, the greatest threat to Silvia comes not from this group of outlaws who are men with violent criminal pasts living outside of society and its laws, but from Proteus, an ardent gentleman suitor, who

threatens to rape her when she will not submit to him. In *Pericles* too it transpires that Marina is not at direct risk of sexual harm from the pirates, but nonetheless her abduction precipitates events which place her at serious risk of rape by several men including the governor of Mytilene, a man who is regarded by reputation as "an honourable man" (4.5.49).

The fact that the pirates sell Marina to a brothel places a commercial value on her virginity and, as demonstrated in previous chapters, female chastity is portrayed in terms of a monetary value elsewhere in Shakespeare's work. Having had the expectation that the pirates will rape Marina clearly established in the abduction scene, it is interesting to consider why this does not happen. One reason for this may well be that the pirates decide that the monetary value attached to Marina's virginity as a commodity for sale is a far greater benefit to them, than taking her virginity themselves in a gang rape. In *Titus Andronicus*, Lavinia's rapists "Revel in [her] … treasury" (2.1.8), while Demetrius in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* warns Helena that her incautious behaviour threatens "the rich worth of her virginity" (2.1.223), and the chaste Lucrece in the narrative poem is "that rich jewel" that Collatine "should keep unknown" (l.34). There is a strong sense in all of these works that virtue is corrupted or made corruptible when it is measured against a monetary value, and in *Pericles* this is further developed through the concept of prostitution. In the Mytilene brothel the value of each prostitute decreases according to her usage and this is demonstrated by the fact that the brothel is losing money despite a glut of custom. These financial losses are partly the result of the brothel having too few prostitutes to satisfy the demand for their services:

> Mytilene is full of gallants, we lost too much money this mart by being
> too wenchless.
> (4.2.3-5)

However, it is also because the women that they do have are inadequate because "they with continual action are even as good as rotten" (4.2.8-9), having contracted sexually transmitted diseases. The derogatory descriptions of these spoiled, sick, exhausted women whose commercial value in the sexual marketplace has been all but eradicated – "The stuff we have, a strong wind will blow it to pieces, they are so pitifully sodden" (4.2.18-19) – are in marked contrast to the terms in which Marina is described when she is sold into the brothel:

> She has a good face, speaks well, and has excellent good clothes: there's no further necessity of qualities can make her be refused.
> (4.2.45-47)

Once Marina has been purchased from her pirate captors, the brothel-keeper's servant, Bolt, is despatched to the market place to offer up her virginity for sale to the highest bidder. This almost certainly ensures that she will be raped in the brothel:

> 'He that will give most shall have her first.' Such a maidenhead were no cheap thing, if men were as they have been.
> (4.2.56-58)

Pander instructs Bolt as to how he should market Marina to potential customers, telling him to:

> take you the marks of her – the colour of her hair, complexion, height, her age – with warrant of her virginity,
> (4.2.54-56)

This itemisation of Marina's assets reduces her to a commodity for trade in what Lorraine Helms calls "a pornographic advertisement", and calls to mind the objectification of Innogen's body by Iachimo in *Cymbeline*.[375] As demonstrated in chapter one, from the time of Glanvill onwards, the hue and cry procedure required a virgin to provide evidence of her de-hymenisation in order to prove that she had been raped, and the fact that Bolt is to take

'warrant of her virginity' suggests a parody of this evidential process because he is to provide proof that Marina is a virgin in order to facilitate her rape.[376] This seems to be a comment on both the evidential element of the legal process, which required that a woman publicise the fact of her rape before submitting to the invasive process of displaying the blood loss or intimate injuries that confirmed her rape and on the patriarchal society in which a woman is regarded as a possession to be exchanged between men, her value determined by her virginity, chastity, or lack of these qualities.

Marina's beauty as well as her virginity is established as a valuable commodity which contributes to the price that she will fetch in the market place, and to her onward value in the brothel itself. There are parallels to be drawn here with the exploration of the theme of rape elsewhere in Shakespeare's work where both Lucrece and Innogen are placed in sexual peril as a result of their husband's boasts of their chastity. Marina has cause to bemoan her beauty when she finds herself about to be sold into prostitution, responding to the bawd's question, "Why lament you, pretty one?," by saying "That I am pretty" (4.2.65 – 66). This recalls the moment in *The Rape of Lucrece* where Tarquin, having previously proclaimed that "Desire my pilot is, beauty my prize" (l.279), effectively shifts the blame for his imminent assault on Lucrece to her beauty which he suggests, "hath ensnared thee to this night" (l.485). Bolt also asserts the role of beauty as an inspiration for sexual arousal when he says that, "thunder shall not so / awake the beds of eels as my giving out her beauty stirs up the lewdly inclined" (4.2.141-142), implying that Marina's beauty as well as her virginity will create the demand for her services in the brothel.

Having been sold into servitude at the brothel, Marina is confronted by numerous severe and imminent threats to her virginity and if she will not consent to work as a prostitute and "taste gentlemen of all fashions" (4.2.74-75) it seems inevitable that she will be raped. Faced with the prospect of brothel life, Marina nevertheless remains determined to preserve her virginity against all the odds:

> If fires be hot, knives sharp or waters deep,
> Untried I still my virgin knot will keep.
> (4.3.145-146)

The first potential assault on Marina's virginity occurs before she is even introduced to the first of her clients, when Bolt plans to sexually initiate her before putting her to work. There is an element of deception involved in this plan because it has already been established that the brothel keeper plans to sell Marina's virginity to the client who will pay the highest price, yet Bolt and the bawd reason that the former has the right to have sexual intercourse with her before she is sold on to a paying customer. Since virginity is a commodity that can only be consumed once, Bolt would be stealing an illicit taste of the merchandise from his employer:

> BOLT But mistress, if I have bargained for the joint –
> BAWD Thou mayst cut a morsel off the spit.
> (4.2.128-130)

The bawd's words here recall Demetrius' suggestion in *Titus Andronicus* that a married woman is easier to seduce than a virgin – "easy it is / Of a cut loaf to steal a shive, we know" (2.1.90 – 91) – and this link to the early tragedy foregrounds the imminent threat of rape that faces Marina. There is a similar degree of irony in the fact that Pander asks his wife to educate the newly arrived Marina in the craft of the prostitute saying, "Wife, take her in, instruct her what she has to do, that she may not be raw in her entertainment" (4.2.51-53). This suggestion that

she should be schooled in how to satisfy her clients implies that in the environment of the brothel, virginity is regarded as an entirely physical state and that it is separated from the concept of innocence: Marina is to be advertised and sold as an inexperienced virgin, yet the implication is that her clients will nonetheless expect her to possess some of the sexual skills of a seasoned prostitute. The use of the word 'raw' here is interesting because while it clearly implies Marina's innocence, as Joe Nutt suggests, alternative meanings of the word also convey a great deal more about the nature of what is intended to be Marina's first sexual experience:

> In one sense we know it refers to Marina being innocent, a novice whore. The word 'green' might have been equally expected but we have 'raw' not 'green'. The effect, taken in conjunction with earlier imagery is to sharpen our sense of Marina's danger and increase our sympathy. Something 'raw' is also something vulnerable, something acutely sensitive to touch and we wince at the Pandar's ugly sense of humour.[377]

In this way the use of the word 'raw' conveys something of the brutality and physical trauma of the enforced violation that seems almost inevitable if Marina remains in the brothel. The suggestion that she will be 'raw' recalls the metaphorical representation of Lavinia's brutally torn genitalia in *Titus Andronicus*:

> What subtle hole is this,
> Whose mouth is covered with rude-growing briers
> Upon whose leaves are drops of new-shed blood
> (2.3.198-200)

The bawd tells Marina that "men must comfort you, men must feed you, men stir you up" (4.2.88-89) and the repetition of the word 'must' implies that Marina has no choice other than to submit. The idea that a woman is prepared to be compliant in Marina's enforced violation also casts a backward glance at Tamora's complicity in the rape of Lavinia in *Titus*

Andronicus. Refusing to comply with the bawd's attempts to sexually educate her, Marina asks, "Are you a woman?" (4.2.78), and this is comparable to Lavinia's unsuccessful pleas to Tamora for the other woman to protect her from rape: "No grace? No womanhood? Ah beastly creature, The blot and enemy of our general name" (2.3.82-83). The motivation for the two women to refuse requests for help and understanding from a woman in sexual peril is different in each case; Tamora's motivation is predominantly one of revenge, while the bawd's is a commercial one. However, Tamora's response to Lavinia nevertheless hints at commerce as she says:

> So should I rob my sweet sons of their fee
> No let them satisfy their lust on thee.
> (2.3.179-180)

This reference to a 'fee' creates a further link between the two scenes, foregrounding the bawd's financial motivation for refusing to help a vulnerable woman at risk of rape. The bawd's role in attempting to initiate Marina into prostitution also calls to mind the real-life cases of Agnes Smith and Elizabeth Knight, both of whom were prosecuted for procuring young girls for what was effectively rape and could, ultimately have led to a career in prostitution.[378]

It was demonstrated in the first chapter that at the time that Shakespeare was writing there was an expectation that a woman who was threatened with rape would cry out for assistance. Shakespeare's two rape victims are silenced by their attackers before their rape, rendering them unable to call out for help; Lavinia has her tongue cut out, and Lucrece's cries are muffled in the bedding as Tarquin assaults her. Prior to their rapes both women attempt to persuade their attackers not to proceed with the assault, but both find themselves

unable to reason effectively at least in part because they stumble into using language and metaphors that are sexually suggestive and which, rather than preventing rape, appear to further arouse their assailants. Marina is trapped in circumstances where if she was to cry out, whilst she would be likely to be heard, it is unlikely that anyone would actually come to her aid. However, unlike Lavinia and Lucrece, she is able to reason with the brothel's clients and successfully dissuades them from raping her.

Marina's resilience in the brothel proves to be so effective that she not only persuades the men who visit her not to have sexual intercourse with her, but also produces a remarkable change in their attitude towards prostitution. Marina's encounters with each of her first two clients take place off-stage and her argument is unheard by the audience, but the men report almost religious conversions in their conversation as they leave the brothel. From the comments of the First Gentlemen, it is evident that Marina has been able to reason with him in a manner which has the opposite effect to the attempts made by Lavinia and Lucrece to offer a verbal defence to their rapists; he reports that: "to have divinity preached there – did you ever dream of such a thing" (4.4.4-5). Lorraine Helms suggests that "Marina converts her clients through the power of eloquence", and certainly her argument is strong enough to turn her clients away from all future debauchery.[379] The Second Gentleman claims that "I am for no more bawdy houses" (4.4.7), and the first responds that "I'll do anything now that is virtuous, but I am out of the road of rutting for ever" (4.4.8-9). There is no doubt that Marina has a profound impact on her clients, but whether this is result of her ability to enact some kind of spiritual conversion is not known because we only have the word of the First Gentlemen that "divinity [was] preached there".

There is a sense in which the brothel in *Pericles* is a less hazardous location than the bedchambers where the rape and voyeuristic assault occur in *The Rape of Lucrece* and *Cymbeline.* Lucrece is raped in her home and Innogen is sexually assaulted in a very similar environment. In Shakespeare's narrative poem, Tarquin's journey through the house to the door of Lucrece's bedchamber is marked by images which are suggestive of yielding and of forceful penetration, and the doors which bar his way create a metaphorical representation of virginity and withheld consent, so that his entry into the room has a symbolic parallel with his forced penetration of Lucrece's body. The narrative poem foreshadows the bedchamber scene in *Cymbeline*, causing the possibility of rape to permeate Iachimo's perusal of Innogen's sleeping body. Neither Lucrece nor Innogen in any way consents to the assaults that occur within their bedrooms, but there is a sense that when they invite Tarquin and Iachimo into their homes, they unconsciously allow them access to their bodies. By contrast, in *Pericles* the brothel is an open house to paying customers, but it is not Marina who invites her would-be clients in and her confident assertion of her virginity enables her to metaphorically bar the door of her chamber to the men who would have sexual intercourse with her against her will. This effectively renders Marina, the virgin in a brothel, less vulnerable than the two chaste married women in their own homes.

There are limitations on the extent of Marina's wider influence, however. Leo Paul S. de Alvarez somewhat overestimates the impact of her presence when he suggests that she "has transformed the brothel into a place where divinity is preached and souls converted," because although Marina successfully dissuades her own clients from raping her and patronising the brothel further, there is nothing to suggest that her influence extends beyond

her personal interactions.[380] Presumably the remaining prostitutes continue to ply their trade while Marina turns her customers away. As stated previously, the financial ruin that the establishment faces was evident before Marina's arrival, as the very reason for her purchase was the fact that the existing prostitutes were riddled with the pox and with "continual action are even as good as rotten" (4.2.8-9), so that the brothel required "fresh ones, whate'er we pay for them" (4.2.10-11). Although Marina buys her freedom from the brothel, and persuades her clients to reconsider their behaviour, the brothel does not close and ironically the money that she pays in order to leave it ensures that it can continue to trade. Rather than inspiring the spiritual conversion of her clients, which over-romanticises the effect that she has, it seems that the force of Marina's personality and the intelligence of her argument enables her to survive the brothel with her virginity intact until she finds the means to leave it.

Although the audience does not see Marina's encounters with her first two clients, they are privy to her exchange with Lysimachus when the governor arrives at the brothel seeking some "wholesome iniquity" (4.5.24). Lysimachus is introduced to Marina by the bawd as "an honourable man ... the governor of this country" (4.5.49, 52), but Marina is quick to point out that a man who holds a position of authority does not necessarily demand personal respect beyond that which is attributable to the office held:

> If he govern the country you are bound to him
> indeed, but how honourable he is in that, I know not.
> (4.5.54-55)

Indeed, the nature of Lysimachus' character is problematic, and it is never entirely clear whether or not he is in fact an 'honourable' man. The fact that he is in the brothel, apparently seeking to deflower a young virgin, must certainly cast doubt upon his character. Ruth Nevo

comments on the enigmatic nature of Lysimachus:

> What was Lysimachus doing in the brothel in the first instance? … We cannot make out whether he is caught out in a visitation the like of which it is his custom to make – he is certainly familiar enough with Boult – and subsequently converted.[381]

As Nevo suggests, the manner in which Lysicmachus is greeted by the brothel's staff seems to suggest that this is not his first visit to the premises. Bolt greets the governor saying that "I am glad to see your honour in good health" (4.5.21), and while this might be merely a polite, observational greeting, it is equally possible that the comment has more significant implications. Sexually transmitted disease is evidently rife in the brothel, where not only are the prostitutes themselves riddled with disease, but their clients inevitably are also infected: "the poor Transylvanian is dead" (4.2.21), and another customer "cowers I'th hams" (4.2.104), which Bate and Rasmussen suggest implies that he is "bow-legged, indicating his sexual debility".[382] Joe Nutt notes that Bolt's observation on Lysimachus' good health is "an obviously knowing remark considering the fate of other brothel customers", and this combined with the fact that Bolt certainly knows Lysimachus, suggests that it may well not be his first visit to the brothel.[383] Lysimachus' response to Bolt's greeting that "it's better for you that your resorters stand upon sound legs. How now? Wholesome iniquity have you that a man may deal withal and defy the surgeon?" (4.5.22-25), suggests that he considers himself to be free from disease and wishes to retain his physical integrity by having sexual intercourse with an equally healthy prostitute – in this case, the virgin Marina.

There are also some aspects of the conversation between Marina and Lysimachus that imply unsavoury elements to his character that go beyond his willingness to pay for sex in a brothel. When Lysimachus asks Marina, "How long have you been of this profession?"

(4.5.71) and she replies "E'er since I can remember" (4.5.72), his response touches uncomfortably upon the sexual abuse of young girls: "Did you go to't so young? Were you a gamester at five, or at seven?" (4.5.73-74), leading Duncan Salkeld to observe that Lysimachus is "A voyeur, fantasist and possibly paedophile".[384] Certainly Lysimachus' comment here introduces a troubling perspective given that the play opens with the representation of the incestuous relationship between Antiochus and his daughter. It is evident in Lysimachus' initial dealings with Marina that his intentions are not those of an honourable man because it is clear that he is intent upon having sexual intercourse with her using persuasion, coercion or force should it be necessary. Lysimachus makes his intention to have sexual intercourse with Marina clear when he says to her "Come, bring me to some private place. Come, come" (4.5.89-90). Joe Nutt suggests that:

> The repetition of 'come' and the imperative 'bring', combined with Marina's outright pleas for kindness, suggest that Lysimachus has physically taken hold of Marina and is close to considering rape[385]

Marina's response, however, is to reason with him by challenging his social position and relative behaviour:

> I hear say you're of
> honourable parts, and are the governor of this place.
> … If you were born to show honour, show it now,
> If put upon you, make the judgement good
> That thought you worthy of it.
> (4.5.79-80, 91-93)

Suggesting that Lysimachus must earn the reputation befitting the governor of Mytilene by behaving in an honourable manner. Marina turns the tables on Lysimachus here by suggesting that he should be judged and valued according to his reputation, just as she has been apprised in relation to her virginity. Whilst Steven Mullaney suggests that "she wins Lord Lysimachus

not by anything she says but by the nobility and breeding evident in any word that passes her lips", this actually undermines the force of Marina's personality and the effectiveness of her argument and these are important factors, given that the women in the two rape texts are shown to be incapable of constructing an effective verbal defence against their attackers.[386]

As in the evidential element of the hue and cry process where a raped virgin would provide evidence of the assault she had endured, Marina makes clear what has happened to her since her abduction and declares, not that she has been raped, but that she has survived the corrupt environment of the brothel with her virginity intact:

> For me
> That am a maid, though most ungentle fortune
> Have placed me in this sty, where, since I came,
> Diseases have been sold dearer than physic.
> (4.5.96-98)

Ultimately Lysimachus does not succumb to the temptations of the brothel and does not assault Marina; instead, he adopts the role of the 'honourable man' and buys his own reprieve from dishonour by giving Marina money to aid the preservation of her own:

> Hold, here's gold for thee:
> ...Thou art a piece of virtue, and I doubt not
> But thy training hath been noble.
> Hold, here's more gold for thee.
> (4.5.113-115)

It is ironic that, having been offered up for sale as a virgin to be deflowered in the brothel, the only payment that Marina accepts is that which is offered to preserve her virginity.

Despite the fact that he resists the sexual temptations that brought him to the brothel, Lysimachus remains an enigma to the end of the play and beyond the narrative. Unlike Marina's other clients, Lysimachus appears to deny that he has undergone a

transformation when he says that:

> Had I brought hither a corrupted mind,
> Thy speech had altered it.
> (4.5.105-106)

Lysimachus reasons very cleverly here, because rather than either admitting that his reason for entering the brothel was to engage the services of a prostitute or giving an alternative explanation for his presence, his use of the conditional tense creates some doubt as to the nature of his intentions, so that he suggests that *if* he had been so inclined the force of Marina's argument would have deterred him. The statement is disingenuous, and together with Lysimachus' claim to find the brothel unpleasant ("for to me the very doors / And windows savour vilely" (4.5.111-112)) it casts further doubt on his integrity. As Anne Barton suggests, this claim to be uncomfortable in the brothel seems to be at odds with his earlier behaviour:

> He has certainly created the impression in the scene as a whole, that he is a man perfectly at home in a house of prostitution, and intimately acquainted with its ways.[387]

There is also a clear indication that Lysimachus was enticed to visit the brothel precisely because Marina's virginity was for sale, meaning that he could, therefore, be entertained with some "wholesome iniquity". Indeed, there is much to trouble us about Lysimachus' change of heart. Joe Nutt suggests that:

> Lysimachus's transformation from frequenter of brothels to noble suitor happens at break-neck speed and consequently perturbs our appetite for realism.[388]

While we cannot be certain that Lysimachus has been in the habit of frequenting brothels before his encounter with Marina, it is certainly troubling that he is subsequently accepted by

her father as a suitable husband, a man that is judged by Pericles to be "This prince, the fair betrothed" (5.2.83). It is also impossible to know whether his decision to buy his way out of the situation rather than resorting to rape is due to Marina's persuasive argument, or to the fact that the governor's perspective changes in response to Marina's intelligent discourse so that he begins to regard her as a possible wife, rather than as a common prostitute. Lorraine Helms suggests that:

> *Pericles* derives a dramatic plot that permits Marina to escape the brothel but not to evade the marriage that reinserts her into the patriarchal structure of Mytilene.[389]

But in actual fact, the narrative ends with the possible marriage between Marina and Lysimachus unresolved and Kay Stanton suggests that the union which Pericles hopes for is not a foregone conclusion, implying that Marina's silence on the matter does not necessarily indicate her consent:

> Marina says nothing either way about the intended marriage … As Thaisa had chosen her own fate in regard to marriage, as Marina had been so adamant in the brothel about preserving her virginity, and as they are now at the Temple of Diana herself, there would be plenty of support for Marina if she wishes not to marry – Lysimachus or anyone else. The ambiguity allows the readers and audience members to imagine what her choice will be.[390]

The lingering prospect of a marriage between Marina and Lysimachus calls to mind the practice that had been common in English law of marrying a rape victim to her rapist in recompense for the assault. The fact that Lysimachus gives Marina the money with which she buys her freedom from the brothel, making her free to marry him, is not too far removed from the commercial transaction between client and prostitute and the legal resolution for rape through the marriage of rapist and victim. As in Shakespeare's other plays where the threat of rape is ostensibly averted, the play ends with a potential marriage that does not sit

comfortably within the discourse of the happy ending. If Marina does marry Lysimachus, then the imagined reality beyond the play finds that she has not after all entirely escaped from the brothel because marriage would result in her losing her virginity to the man who would otherwise have taken it from her.

Marina is purchased by the keepers of the Mytilene brothel to enhance their business, but her rejection of all her clients inevitably means that she becomes a financial liability rather than the asset they had hoped for. Faced with the prospect of a prostitute who will not service their clients, the brothel keepers who initially valued her virginity as "no cheap thing" (4.2.58) and toted it throughout the market place, ultimately come to regard it as worthless. This leads Pander to remark that "I had rather than twice the worth of her she had ne'er come here" (4.5.1-2) because, as Oliver Ford Davies suggests, Marina "appears bent on destroying Mytilene's sex industry".[391] The fact that Marina turns out to be a financial liability in the brothel also casts another slant on the pirates' decision to sell her on rather than raping her. The fact that the first pirate responds emphatically to the question of whether she is still a virgin saying, "O, sir, we doubt it not" (4.2.41) may possibly indicate that Marina rehearsed her argument in defence of her virginity with the pirates, well before arriving in the brothel and may in fact have actively dissuaded them too from raping her. Finally it appears that the only solution is to take Marina's virginity by force and to rape her. Joan Lord Hall suggests that "Shakespeare's late romances return to the idea of how crude male lust may trigger attempted rape", and it is interesting to note that in *Pericles* rape becomes a commercial enterprise motivated by the need to preserve the business of the brothel by servicing "crude male lust", rather than by overwhelming lust itself.[392] The bawd comments that "We must

either get her ravished or be rid of her" (4.5.4-5), and Bolt announces that he will rape Marina – "Faith, I must ravish her, or she'll disfurnish us of all our *cavalleria* and make our swearers priests" (4.5.11-12) – echoing their earlier conversation where the two characters discussed a plan for Bolt to sexually initiate Marina before she was put to work in the brothel. The bawd suggests to Bolt that he "use her at thy pleasure: crack the glass of her virginity and make the rest malleable" (4.5.143-144). Bate and Rasmussen argue that the reference to glass here "alludes to the fragility of the hymen and of women's sexual reputation" and certainly this line implies the ease with which a woman's sexual status can be irredeemably altered.[393] Although Marina's virginity is ultimately perceived as a worthless commodity in the brothel, it is evident that its value is dependent upon the individual perspective of whoever appraises it. When she is offered for sale by the pirates who abducted her, Marina's virginity fetched a high price of "one thousand pieces" (4.2.49). Later when it transpires that the brothel keepers are unable to make a profit from Marina because she refuses to work for them, Bolt describes her resilient purity as "peevish chastity, which is not worth a breakfast in the cheapest country under the cope" (4.5.124-125). Finally, once it becomes evident that she will not relinquish it voluntarily Bolt acknowledges that to Marina her virginity is still "the jewel you hold so dear" (4.5.155), its value undiminished by the time she has spent in the brothel. There is no suggestion of the force and brutality evident in the assaults on Lavinia and Lucrece in the proposed rape of Marina; indeed, Bolt's request to her to "come your way with me" (4.5.153) is an invitation and an attempted seduction rather than a threat of force, despite the fact that the audience and reader know that if all else fails he intends to rape her, although its phrasing recalls Lysimachus' earlier insistence that she "Come bring me to some private place" (4.5.89).

This approach is however in keeping with the nature of the women's work in the brothel, because ultimately the brothel keepers need Marina to learn to be compliant with the desires of their customers, the implication being that once she is no longer a virgin she will accommodate the demands of life and trade in the brothel: "These blushes of hers must be quenched with some present practice" (4.2.123-124). Oliver Ford Davies suggests that Marina preserves her own honour by "hold[ing] a mirror up to men's better selves" in her encounters with the brothel's customers, but reason alone is insufficient for her to escape this final threatened rape because 'holding up a mirror' to Bolt would reveal only the wholly corrupt pimp. [394] Anne M. Haselkorn observes that:

> While Marina does not make Boult a believer as a result of her proselytizing, she is able to convince him of her apodictic need to remain chaste … And, of course, in "fairy tales" pure unstained princesses marry princes (or converted governors) to live happily ever after. But a note of authenticity creeps in when cynical Boult is sure that an ordinary virgin could not have swerved Lysimachus: "The nobleman would have dealt with her like a nobleman" (iv.vi.137) intimating that he would have used her as a whore and would have ignored both her railing and her cries of innocence."[395]

Bolt cannot be converted by words alone, and as Lorraine Helm suggests:

> For those employed in the whorehouses of Mytilene, economic need is impervious to the persuasive powers of a moralizing rhetoric.[396]

Bolt and Pander purchased Marina because they saw her as commercial opportunity which was subsequently thwarted by her "virginal fencing"(4.5.56) and Bolt determines upon rape as the solution to their financial problems because it is a means by which to transform Marina from the financial liability that she has become into a commercial asset. But because Bolt's motivation was purely economic, it is a straightforward matter for Marina to purchase her freedom with the money given to her by Lysimachus. Suzanne Gossett suggests that the

scenes in the brothel foreground "the familiar daily economics of sex work" so that "Marina escapes violation but not the cash nexus: even when released from the brothel" she must pay a price to purchase her freedom.[397] There is some degree of irony in the fact that, having been offered for sale in the brothel, it is Marina herself who completes the financial transaction by effectively purchasing her own virginity along with her freedom to leave the establishment.

Against all the odds, Marina retains her virginity and fails to be corrupted by the moral wilderness of the brothel. Darlene Ciraulo observes that:

> her extreme chastity, or "virginal fencing" (4.6.56), is cultivated for her own sense of integrity, not for the benefit of any one man.[398]

It is true that unlike the married victims of rape and sexual assault in other works by Shakespeare, Marina's determination to retain her virginity is a personal quest and not one undertaken in part from loyalty to a husband.

The contemporary context of the hue and cry is reflected in *Pericles* in the locations where Marina is exposed to the risk of rape. The affirmations of her virginity that are made at times by Marina herself, by the pirates and by Bolt operate as an inversion of the evidential element of the hue and cry process because evidence is presented of the retention of her virginity, rather than of the loss of it. In other works which include a theme of rape, chastity and its loss are represented through metaphors of commercial value, and in *Pericles* the reduction of human sexuality to its most base level in sexual trade is emphasised by the fact that a monetary value is placed on Marina's virginity which is offered for sale. Most significantly in the brothel, where women are exchanged between men for sex without the pretence of courtship and seduction, Marina is able to rise above the constraints of the patriarchy because she engages with it on its own terms, using the money that Lysimachus

pays her to preserve his own reputation to buy her freedom and preserve her sexual integrity.

Conclusion

Before threatening to rape Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Demetrius warns her that:

> You do impeach your modesty too much,
> To leave the city and commit yourself
> Into the hands of one that loves you not,
> To trust the opportunity of night
> And the ill counsel of a desert place
> With the rich worth of your virginity.
> (2.1.218-223)

In saying this Demetrius provides a convenient summary of the Early Modern concept of rape, demonstrating the perils of a remote location, that the value of Helen's virginity invites its corruption and warning that her incautious behaviour shifts the agency for rape from rapist to victim.

There was an expectation in Early Modern England that women would take pre-emptive action to prevent themselves falling victim to rape. That they should avoid venturing alone into remote locations where a rapist might be waiting, and if they were assaulted they should cry out and offer physical resistance to counter any force that was used against them. An adherence to these criteria is manifest in the contemporary victim accounts of rape, which frequently record that the rape occurred in a remote location, or where it did not, provide an explanation as to how the victim was prevented from crying for help, or why her cries went unheard. Complaints of rape from the period also record that women complied with the evidential requirements of the hue and cry process either by a making a showing of virginal blood, or by providing evidence of physical injuries sustained in the struggle with their assailant.

Shakespeare’s two rape texts, *Titus Andronicus* and *The Rape of Lucrece* reflect the contemporary Early Modern concept of rape, while extending an understanding of the reality of the crime and of the victim experience. While Lavinia in the tragedy is raped in a remote forest location, Lucrece’s rape occurs within her own bedroom, where cultural perceptions of rape would have us believe she should be safe. In fact, Shakespeare demonstrates that Lucrece’s bedchamber takes on many of the features of the forest so that it too becomes an ideal location for rape to occur, demonstrating that it is the isolation and the opportunity that facilitates and inspires the rapes of the two women rather than the nature of the locations themselves.

Shakespeare chooses not to stage Lavinia’s rape, or to describe the rape of Lucrece, and instead the two assaults are metaphorically represented within the texts. By representing the rapes in this way, Shakespeare avoids sensationalising the two assaults and forces his audience to visualise them in their own imaginations, thus enabling them to directly experience something of the horror of rape and displaying a degree of empathy with the plight of the women. The difficulty of effectively describing rape is evident also in the linguistic failure of both Lavinia and Lucrece to construct effective arguments to defend themselves against their attackers. Rape truly is something that “denies [the] tongue to tell” (2.3.174), but the fact that both women’s verbal defence serves only to further arouse their attackers makes a clear comment upon the nature of rape in a patriarchal society, which views women as possessions to be exchanged between men in marriage and stolen in acts of abduction and rape. Lavinia and Lucrece are raped in order to steal their chastity from their husbands, and they are viewed as trophies to be won. Amidst their evident distress both women make the

mistake of appealing for the preservation of their chastity, but this argument will never be successful when the assault is aimed at their husbands rather than themselves. Lavinia and Lucrece fail to construct successful arguments to defend themselves, because there is nothing that either of them can say that will deter their rapists from the assault.

In *Titus Andronicus* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, Shakespeare uses hunting and poaching imagery to establish rape as the theft of a woman's virginity or chastity which is in keeping with the origins of the concept of rape as abduction as well as sexual crime. The rape of Lavinia is represented as the perversion of the hunt that has been arranged as a marriage celebration through metaphors of poaching and Lavinia "the dainty doe" (2.1.124) becomes the quarry of Chiron and Demetrius, while Lucrece compares herself to a "poor unseasonable doe" (l.580). Hunting and poaching imagery is used again in later texts, where the reflections of the brutal assaults in the two rape texts emphasise the imminent threat of rape.

Both rape texts also use images of monetary value in connection with the chastity of the victims: Chiron and Demetrius "revel in Lavinia's treasury" (2.1.138) and Lucrece is "that rich jewel" (l.34) that belongs to Collatine, and by placing a mercantile value upon the concept this has the effect of objectifying the women's chastity so that it becomes something that can be stolen through rape or purchased through sexual trade. These metaphors of monetary value pervade all of Shakespeare's plays which include a threatened rape. Marina in *Pericles* is however able to offer a verbal defence to preserve her virginity. The audience does not see how she deters the pirates and her early brothel clients from raping her, but she successfully persuades Lysimachus not to have sex with her by showing him that his own reputation as "an honourable man"(4.5.49-50) must be deserved by appropriate behaviour. This is also the

approach that Helena takes when she is threatened with rape in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, where after Demetrius itemises the ways in which she has placed herself at risk of rape, leading him to assume that he has no choice other than to rape her, she responds "Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field, you do me mischief" (2.1.242-243) not from the perspective of the victim, but by shifting the agency back to Demetrius, so that in the end he simply runs away. When Boult threatens to rape her in order to destroy the troublesome virginity that is preventing her from working as a prostitute, Marina negotiates a price for her freedom, thus preserving her virginity by operating within the commercial structure of the brothel. The patriarchal society has placed a value on her virginity and this enables her to buy it back from the brothel.

A virgin victim of rape was expected to make a showing of blood to demonstrate that her virginity had been taken in the assault, and blood is a significant image in both of Shakespeare's rape texts, where it operates as a metaphor for corrupted chastity and for the final redemption of both victims. The imagery is used again in later works to indicate the possibility of rape. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Thisbe's mantle "stained with blood" (5.1.283) is indicative of the maiden blood that is shortly to be shed when the three newly married couples consummate their marriages, but it also serves to recall the threat of rape that occurred earlier in the play. In *Cymbeline*, Innogen daubs her face with the blood from Cloten's corpse, in a metaphorical representation of the rape that does not happen. The damage done to her reputation by Iachimo's false accusation of adultery is the same as that she would have experienced had he raped her, but finally it is Iachimo who 'bleeds' to redeem her and to restore her chastity.

All of Shakespeare's plays which include a threatened rape end either with marriage or the prospect of it, and the reflections of Shakespeare's two rape texts and the presence of elements of the hue and cry process have the effect of foregrounding problematic elements in some of these relationships at this point. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Helena is married to Demetrius who threatened to rape her earlier in the play, and this undermines the ostensibly happy resolution, particularly given that Demetrius remains under the spell of the love-in-idleness drug. Sylvia in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is promised to Valentine in marriage, just moments after he has forgiven Proteus for threatening to rape her. *Cymbeline* ends with the marriage between Proteus and Innogen achieving acceptance by the king who refers to the other man as "son-in-law" (5.4.502), despite the fact that he placed his wife at risk of rape and murder. Only Marina may avoid being absorbed back into the patriarchal structures of society because at the end of *Pericles* it is not clear whether or not she will accede to her father's wish that she marries Lysimachus, who was prepared to force her to have sex with him in the brothel. The fact that all of these works end with at least the prospect of marriage recalls the traditional restitution for rape of marrying the victim to her rapist, and this undermines the otherwise happy resolutions of the plays by leaving a narrative strand which is not neatly tied off at the end. All of the women have been threatened with rape either by their husband or betrothed as a result of his behaviour towards them, and this raises the question of what awaits them in the imagined off-stage future beyond the end of play.

Titus Andronicus and *The Rape of Lucrece* are clearly located within the Early Modern context of rape. It is evident from the compliance with the hue and cry process in both works that Shakespeare represents rape in a manner that his audience will recognise and this

representation continues to resonate in his later works. When Demetrius threatens to do Helena "mischief in the wood"(2.1.241), a contemporary audience would likely regard this as a serious threat of sexual violence and expect that the play will take a tragic turn. They should expect this outcome because the reflections of *Titus Andronicus* in the location, the parallel narrative strand of the four lovers, the hunting metaphors and the sharing of Demetrius' name with the first man to rape Lavinia tells them to anticipate rape. In *Cymbeline*, Shakespeare clearly signposts the audience towards rape when he has Iachimo metaphorically take Tarquin and Lavinia's rapists into Innogen's bed-chamber with him. An audience familiar with the two rape texts cannot help but recognise their echoes in the bedchamber scene and would expect that Innogen will be raped. Shakespeare represents rape within the narrative context of only two of his works, but the rapes of Lavinia and Lucrece are ever present and they are re-written in the imaginations of the audience in every subsequent work where there is a threat of rape.

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Chapter 1

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