

**Between Men *and* Between Women: Homosocial Bonds in Shakespeare's,
Heywood's, and Middleton's Lucretia Narratives**

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ABSTRACT

Considerable research focuses on the ways in which Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594) depicts the destructive nature of emulative male homosocial bonds and challenges the early modern English attitude that male-male friendship is virtuous and idyllic. As effectively as Shakespeare's poem makes this critique, Thomas Heywood's *The Rape of Lucrece* (1607) and Thomas Middleton's *The Ghost of Lucrece* (1627) provide stronger parodies of ideal same-sex friendship and open up new possibilities for exploring how these competitive relationships harm women and how women themselves construct same-sex relations. This thesis builds upon existing scholarship on homosociality in Shakespeare's poem and draw attention to the significant contribution that Heywood's and Middleton's lesser-known texts make to studies of early modern homosocial bonds. This project reveals how, in the three Lucretia narratives, both men *and* women are involved in rivalrous same-sex friendships, however; because of the female characters' common need to protect themselves from patriarchal threats, the bonds between women are notably stronger than the bonds between men.

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Introduction

1st Soldier: Stand, who goes there?

2nd Solder: A friend.

(Thomas Heywood *The Rape of Lucrece*)

Thomas Heywood's *The Rape of Lucrece* (1607) and Thomas Middleton's *The Ghost of Lucrece* (1627) stress the significance of, build upon, and even satirize the male and female homosocial bonds and rivalries that are mapped out in Shakespeare's version of the Lucretia legend (1594). Furthermore, these texts highlight and critique the idealization of same-sex friendships in early modern English literature. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick relates that "[h]omosocial is a word occasionally used in history and the social sciences, where it describes social bonds between persons of the same sex; it is a neologism, obviously meant to be distinguished from 'homosexual'" (1). Sedgwick challenges the distinction that scholarship makes between "homosocial" and "homosexual," "draw[ing] the" former "back into the orbit of 'desire'" (Ibid). It is important to note that, following Sedgwick, my analysis of same-sex connections will not ignore the possibilities for erotic male-male and female-female relationships among the characters in the literature I examine. Extensive scholarship focuses on male homosociality in Shakespeare's *Lucrece* and details the ways in which the author depicts the Roman matron Lucrece's body as a site of male contestation and violence, but fewer researchers explore how Heywood's play and Middleton's poem treat this issue, and scholars do not provide a detailed and extensive examination of the connections and

disparities among the three works. In addition to extending the discussion of homosociality in Shakespeare's Lucretia narrative to include Heywood's and Middleton's, this project will move beyond an analysis of male-male bonds and explore female homosocial connections. The relationships established between female figures in each of these texts are also characterized by competition and, just as the male characters require other men to define and assert their masculine identities (which are dependent on their performances on the battlefield and their dominion over their wives' bodies), the female characters require other women to define and assert their feminine identities (which are dependent on their dedication to their husbands and, most of all, their chastity). But, as I argue, although same-sex connections are essential to a man's sense of self in Shakespeare's, Heywood's, and Middleton's narratives, due to the male-dominated societies of these texts, the female characters' needs for homosocial bonds are much more urgent, as the women in Lucrece's world must build strong relationships with other females in order to keep their chaste images intact and to cope with patriarchal pressures and dangers.

The theory of emulation is useful for understanding where the powerful attraction between male rival soldiers originates and for understanding the unstable and threatening military environments that Shakespeare's, Heywood's, and Middleton's women are situated in. Wayne A. Rebhorn describes emulation as such: "To be...moved by emulation means both to want to destroy and to identify with and love the other member of one's class. A paradox, emulation...makes for class disintegration as well as class cohesion and places the individual in a state of utter self-contradiction" (95). While a significant portion of the research on emulation is concerned primarily with men (Roman

soldiers in particular), Sedgwick and René Girard add another, more complex layer to the discussion by taking into account the position of the women who are frequently the cause of such male competitiveness. Both Sedgwick and Girard view male homosocial bonds as operating within “an erotic triangle [structure]...in which two males are rivals for a female,” where “the bond that links either of the rivals is as intense and potent as the bond that links either of the rivals to the beloved” (Sedgwick 21). This model is evidently applicable to the relationship established between Collatine, Tarquin, and Lucrece in Shakespeare’s, Heywood’s, and Middleton’s texts. But while Sedgwick’s and Girard’s theories are valuable contributions to an analysis of homosociality, it is important to move beyond the main “erotic triangle” in these narratives and explore the ways in which each character (male and female) is caught up in various competitive bonds and, thus, turns to members of the same sex to create his/her sense of self.

The rivalrous nature of the Roman soldiers’ relationships with one another is established in Shakespeare’s, Heywood’s, and Middleton’s texts, but Shakespeare merely summarizes the men’s contest about their wives’ chastity in “The Argument” that prefaces his poem and places the majority of his focus on Tarquin’s and Collatine’s relationship. Heywood and Middleton, however, provide much more detail and openly parody male-male emulative bonds. Suggesting that these early modern male authors critique patriarchal culture in their work, as opposed to supporting and maintaining it, are perhaps problematic. Specifically, there is the concern that, as modern feminist critics, we might project our contemporary, more progressive gender views on literature written in a different historical context and optimistically discern that Heywood and Middleton were much more radical during their time than they really were. As Kim Solga notes, in early

modern England, rape was widely regarded as more of a violation of male property than a violation of a woman's body:

Rape was a crime against a household, a husband or a father, his goods, property and honour... violence against women was a serious social and legal problem – rape mattered; unreasonable cruelty against wives also mattered – in part *because* it was defined...by its relationship to patriarchal pride and necessary forms of social control. (emphasis in original 7-8)

If such a view was predominant in Heywood's and Middleton's society, how is it possible to know if these authors are satirizing the treatment of women as male possessions and not demonstrating their acceptance of this attitude about gender relations? This thesis substantiates its claim that Heywood and Middleton criticize patriarchy in their Lucretia texts by finding evidence of similar criticisms in their other work, such as Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1607) and Middleton's *Women Beware Women* (1657).

Both Jean Howard and Paula McQuade argue that Heywood has been wrongly labelled a traditionalist and suggest that his work exhibits an enlightened perspective on women's social positions. Howard asserts:

While Heywood has sometimes been seen as a conservative and sentimental writer, interested in preserving the status quo, his plays often challenge that status quo in subtle ways...often through their innovative representations of women who, used to enhance the affective dimensions of performance, also often complicate the overt moral or homiletic thrust of his plays. (121)

In her analysis of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, McQuade goes much further than Howard in her praise of Heywood's representation of women and argues:

...most modern critics of the play have insisted on Heywood's patriarchal traditionalism. My reading, by contrast, places *A Woman Killed with Kindness* at the forefront of seventeenth-century English 'feminism.' The

play illustrates the disastrous consequences of female subordination and male domination on both husband and wife. (249)

In *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, Heywood's criticism of male tyranny is strikingly similar to his criticism of the same subject in *The Rape of Lucrece*. Both texts stress how men consider their chaste wives "decorative object[s]" (McQuade 242) and illustrate the ways in which male-male bonds put women at risk (Ibid 243-246). Howard's and McQuade's challenging of Heywood's "conservative" (Howard 121) image, along with the parallels between the author's critical attitude about the subjugation of women in *A Woman Killed with Kindness* and *Lucrece*, supports this thesis's argument that Heywood's Lucretia text parodies male homosociality and patriarchal structures.

Like Heywood, Middleton's work outside of his interpretation of Lucrece's rape, in particular *Women Beware Women*, reprimands men's oppressive treatment of women. Middleton's play, in which the female protagonist Bianca is raped, similarly focuses on the objectification of the female body and the ways in which women are, to use Anthony Dawson's words, "caught in a fierce economy of sexual exchange" between men (304). Dawson's analysis also highlights how *Women Beware Women* can be read as a satiric text in regards to its treatment of "Petrarchan images" (305). He writes:

In this play, and indeed in a good deal of Renaissance literature...silence is tied up with Petrarchan images, where, as Nancy Vickers argues, the original male transgression of gazing and the subsequent punishment of dismemberment, figured in the Actaeon myth, are reversed and the lady is ultimately silenced while the poet sings in praise of her scattered beauties. What matters here is the woman's body, how it is viewed, imaged, handled, and exchanged. (305)

Dawson suggests that Middleton criticizes this popular early modern literary representation of women. He examines the scene in which Leantio excessively peruses

Bianca's body and argues that "[t]he thrust of the scene is clearly voyeuristic, and fetishistic, insofar as the woman's parts are enumerated and investigated severally. It thus parodies the Petrarchan mode" (306-307). In *The Ghost of Lucrece*, Middleton has a comparably parodic approach to the ways in which men regard women as merely objects to inspect, trade, and violate in whichever way they please. Of course, by having Lucrece herself chastise this gender dynamic, Middleton's *Ghost* offers a much more severe judgment of harmful male relations than *Women Beware Women*.

This thesis will closely assess the various ways that Middleton and Heywood construct their criticisms of Lucrece's patriarchal surroundings. For example, Heywood creates a scene where the Roman generals Scevola, Aruns, Brutus, Collatine, and Sextus relentlessly defend their wives' honour, which demonstrates the extent to which the rest of the men battle each other to assert their masculinity. In this section, and throughout the entire play, Heywood presents the soldiers as puerile fools who are desperate to out-do their comrades (1.10.55-130). This representation of the men not only challenges the early modern idealization of male friendship, but also subverts the chivalric code these soldiers profess to uphold. In *Ghost*, Middleton does not focus on the soldiers' interactions at all but, like Heywood, "mirrors, usurps and undermines the chivalric aspects of Shakespeare's *Lucrece*" (Carter 71) and de-romanticizes male comradeship. As I argue in Chapter Four, Lucrece's *Ghost*, the main narrator of Middleton's poem, performs such undermining in her "Tarquin my Kinsman" speech (150-163). Her use of rhetorical questions and her repetition of the word "kinsman" establish a satiric tone and suggest that male-male relationships, which are deemed superior to male-female bonds in

Tarquin's military environment, are unstable and do not conform to the honourable customs that such kinships are expected to follow.

The critiques that both Middleton and Heywood make of idyllic male bonds has not yet been explored in depth by scholars and, while an analysis of such relationships is crucial, female homosociality has been given even less scholarly attention. Playing off the phrase "Between Men" in the title of Sedgwick's book, it is instructive to grant a voice to the female trapped in "between" the quarreling and possessive male figures in Shakespeare's, Heywood's, and Middleton's texts. Carter, Celia Daileader, and Richard Meek are a few of the scholars who shed light upon female-female relations in the works I examine. Focusing on Lucrece's response to the painting of Troy in Shakespeare's *Lucrece*, Meek demonstrates that Lucrece identifies with, pities, and even competes with the "suffering" Hecuba (391). Carter also explores female homosociality but focuses primarily on Heywood and his choice to include the female character Tullia. Tullia is the antithesis of Lucrece and embodies a violent, warrior lifestyle and does not appear in either Shakespeare's or Middleton's texts. Carter relates that, although Lucrece and Tullia do not establish a competitive friendship for themselves, they are set in opposition to one another by the male characters in the play and by the structure of the text itself (64). Daileader's "'Writing Rape, Raping Rites': Shakespeare's and Middleton's Lucrece Poems" is perhaps the most provocative examination of female relationships in Shakespeare's and Middleton's narratives. Criticizing Shakespeare for his "misogynist" (70) text, Daileader argues:

[Lucrece's] decision to commit suicide...is expressly *about other women*. In this sense, Vickers' reading of Lucrece's status as a homosocial pawn calls for completion in a reading of the poem for its *female* homosocial subtext... Lucrece kills herself to influence, in effect, so that other raped

women will also kill themselves...[i]n Shakespeare's version of the story, even her suicide—the one decisive action history affords Lucrece—falls to someone else's credit. (75-76)

Daileader continues to critique Shakespeare's representation of Lucretia's connection to other women and, instead, praises Middleton's treatment of such bonds in *Ghost*:

[I]nstead of blaming...female deities—as Shakespeare's Lucrece does with the feminine supernatural entity of 'bawd' night—*Ghost* uses them to sacralize and uplift the very values (chastity, honor, industry) that Shakespeare's poem praises in purely masculine terms. Even more surprisingly, Middleton invokes a golden age in which female deities reigned. (81)

As Daileader shows, Shakespeare places women in opposition to one another based on their connections with other women and other men. Such an argument can also be made about Heywood's *Lucrece*. Both early modern authors include in their narratives supposed bawdy women such as Collatine's comrades' wives who, in stark contrast to the chaste Lucrece and her maids, interact freely with men. Emphasizing and critiquing the dichotomy between the virtuous woman and the lascivious woman further, is Heywood's addition of the character Tullia who, unlike Lucrece and her female companions, operates outside the domestic sphere and surrounds herself with male warriors, even assuming a military identity herself. An analysis of the female characters in the three Lucretia texts ultimately demonstrates that, for both men and women, same-sex friendships are bound up with competitive urges and are central to the way both sexes shape their gender identities.

Although Shakespeare's *Lucrece* depicts hostile female-female relationships, as Daileader suggests, such an argument does not account for the moments in the poem when Lucrece yearns for female companionship (785-98) and when Lucrece's loving maid cries on her behalf and makes numerous attempts to comfort her violated mistress

(1215-95). Thus, Shakespeare's representation of female bonds in *Lucrece* is even more complex than Daileader's analysis allows. Like Shakespeare's poem, Heywood's play frequently places women in competition with one another while also demonstrating the ways in which women look to members of their own sex for advice, protection, and comfort. Heywood's *Lucrece* acts not only as a Mistress to her maids, but as a teacher, advising them to act virtuously in order to avoid public scrutiny and, of course, to preserve her household's wholesome and honourable reputation. *Lucrece* might maintain an authoritative position over her servants; however, her relationship with her maid Mirable is quite warm and intimate. The pair spend time sewing and reading alongside one another (3.3.378) and when *Lucrece* is grieving after she is raped, Mirable shares her mistress's sorrow just as the maid does in Shakespeare's poem where she "fetch[es]" her "viol" so that she "can sing [*Lucrece*] fast asleep" (5.1.404). It is true that *Lucrece* is not on the same social level as her servants, and such loving moments do not overthrow this power dynamic. Additionally, when *Lucrece* urges her maids to remain chaste, she seems primarily concerned about the effects that their behavior will have on *her* reputation. Regardless of such motives and social barriers, in Heywood's *Lucrece*, like in Shakespeare's and Middleton's, groups of women must support one another and ensure that they each perform in ways that do not collide with their society's rigid gender categories.

Adrienne Rich's theory of the "lesbian continuum" in her article "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" helps explain the complexities of female-female relationships:

I mean the term *lesbian continuum* to include a range—through each woman's life and throughout history—of woman-identified experience; not simply the fact that

a woman has had or consciously desired genital sexual experience with another woman. If we expand it to embrace many more forms of primary intensity between and among women, including the sharing of a rich inner life, *the bonding against male tyranny*...we begin to grasp breadths of female history and psychology which have lain out of reach as a consequence of limited, mostly clinical, definitions of 'lesbianism.' (648-649)

Rich's mentioning of "the bonding against male tyranny" as one of the various "forms of primary intensity between and among women" is especially pertinent to an examination of female friendship in the three Lucretia texts. As I argued previously, Lucrece and the rest of the women in Shakespeare's, Heywood's, and Middleton's narratives are confined by the patriarchal order of their societies and must rely on one another to have as much social and economic stability as possible.

The theories of Dympha Callaghan, as outlined in the collection *The Impact of Feminism in English Renaissance Studies*, have heavily influenced the direction of this project, providing the most beneficial way to understand and explain the intricacies of female characters' lives as represented in Roman-inspired early modern literature. In Callaghan's introduction to the text, she discusses how scholars have primarily viewed the early modern woman through two lenses: the "revisionist" feminist perspective or the "exclusionist" feminist perspective. According to Callaghan, the former perspective "stresses women's agency and participation in culture and pulls back from the more traditional feminist emphasis on women's oppression and subjugation" (5) while the latter follows "the adversarial politics of blame" (13), focusing primarily on the injustices women face because of patriarchal structures. While acknowledging the importance of these "two divergent perspectives," Callaghan suggests that, instead of choosing to centre an analysis on one of these views, scholars should merge them to create a "nuanced picture of women's simultaneous participation *and* exclusion from early modern culture"

(7). Callaghan then concludes this idea by arguing that “[w]omen’s status in early modern England is, paradoxically, that of *excluded participants*” (7). This notion of women as “excluded participants” is pertinent to my study of the female characters’ tenuous yet powerful stances in Shakespeare’s, Heywood’s, and Middleton’s Lucretia narratives. It would be an oversight to downplay the suffering of women under patriarchy in texts that are based on a woman’s rape, but; it would be just as neglectful not to take into account the degree to which women in these narratives are powerful and productive members in their societies. Drawing influence from Callaghan’s theory of early modern women as “excluded participants,” this paper will attempt to merge “revisionist” feminist theory and “exclusionist” feminist theory and feature the complexities of female characters’ statuses in the three Lucretia narratives under examination.

This project is divided into three chapters, with the first dedicated to Shakespeare’s more well-known and extensively commented-upon narrative and the final two chapters to the lesser-known texts by Heywood and Middleton. By structuring my argument in this manner I hope to demonstrate how Shakespeare’s poem has been treated as an authoritative version of Lucrece’s rape and a major source of literary inspiration for writers like Heywood and Middleton. Most scholars agree that Middleton’s *Ghost* is heavily influenced by Shakespeare’s *Lucrece* (Shand, 1987), but the extent to which Heywood’s play draws from Shakespeare’s poem is a subject of debate. In his introductory notes to Heywood’s *Lucrece*, Alan Holaday suggests that Shakespeare’s version inspired Heywood to write his own interpretation of the rape (4-5). Barbara Baines, on the other hand, argues that “Holaday’s hypothesis is not convincing” and she questions his claim that Heywood’s play was written “in 1594, shortly after

Shakespeare's poem appeared" (104). Although I do not intend to focus on this particular debate in my thesis, I will examine key similarities between Shakespeare's and Heywood's, and Shakespeare's and Middleton's works and demonstrate the ways in which Heywood and Middleton provide more explicit and parodic critiques of the emulative homosocial bonds that Shakespeare depicts in his interpretation of the Lucretia legend.

Chapter one will examine recent scholarship on male friendship in Shakespeare's *Lucrece* and illustrate the author's tendency to create erotic, obsessive, and dangerous rivalries between male soldiers in much of his work. In this chapter, I will draw on Sedgwick's and Girard's theories of the "erotic triangle" to help demonstrate the effect that close, hostile male relationships have on the female figures in Shakespeare's narrative poem (Sedgwick 21). Here, I will briefly explore the way that Lucrece is used as "a homosocial pawn" (Daileader 75) by Tarquin and Collatine, but I will pay significant attention to the emulous relationships that Lucrece establishes with other women such as her maid, Hecuba, Philomel, and future generations of women whom Lucrece believes might suffer the same fate that she has. The main argument that this chapter will pursue is that, in Shakespeare's *Lucrece*, female companionship offers women a sense of safety and a sense of self while simultaneously pulling them into the same conflicting and destructive rivalrous bonds that the men are involved in.

While extant scholarship provides valuable insight about male homosociality and the envious relationship between Tarquin and Collatine in Shakespeare's *Lucrece*, not many scholars explore how Heywood and Middleton represent and satirize such bonds. Chapter two will concentrate on Heywood's play, which emphasizes, to a greater extent

than Shakespeare's poem, the ludicrously misogynistic nature of the chastity battle between the Roman soldiers by giving this part of the Lucretia legend significant and parodic attention in his text. Furthermore, in this portion of my argument, I will focus on the vulgar and sexist songs about women that the character Valerius performs for and with the men of the Roman camp, demonstrating how, although such musical interludes bind the men as comrades, they ultimately diminish the stoic nature of the soldiers' friendships and reveal their lewdly hypocritical attitudes about virtue and chivalry. Many scholars, particularly Ian Donaldson and Lorraine Helms, express discomfort with these songs and tend to dismiss them as something that Heywood includes merely for comedic relief. Donaldson argues that the "bawdy catches" (86) in the play "[allow] audiences a hearty response to those parts of the story which may have seemed to them implausible, titillating, or overwrought. Heywood does not openly parody the story, but he moves near the brink, opening up the comic possibilities" (87). Helms goes further to suggest that the song that Valerius sings about Lucrece "subverts the chivalric ideology that makes the aristocratic female body a boundary marker and its unlawful penetration a pretext for civil wars. But Heywood's strategy for subversion authorizes a randy trio of goons to mock the victim of sexual violence" (52). While Donaldson's suggestion that the play's music is a source of entertainment for the audience is not incorrect, it would be an overstatement to regard the songs merely as such. These moments in the text do, in fact, "openly parody the story" of Lucrece, primarily by emphasizing the male characters' cruel treatment of the women around them. Additionally, although Helms acknowledges the music's satirical function, it is also useful to explore how the songs create more of a critique of the men who are singing them than of Lucrece herself. Nora Corrigan argues

that, “although dismissed by critics, [the] musical interludes are integral to the play’s action, offering commentary on Tarquin’s political and Tullia’s domestic tyranny and, crucially, providing for the lords’ resistance to Tarquin” (12). These nuanced ideas offer an excellent starting point from which to begin a further exploration of the wider social and political significance of Heywood’s use of music in his text, and this chapter will attempt to provide such an analysis. The concluding section of chapter two will focus on the other central female figure in Heywood’s play, Tullia, and analyze how the exaggerated manner in which she rejects both Lucrece’s domestic lifestyle and her need for female companionship parodies stereotypical feminine and masculine roles and further subverts the rigid gender categories that are outlined in the Lucretia legend. While Shakespeare certainly offers his own parody of traditional male assumptions of honour, chastity, and same-sex friendship in his *Lucrece*, the second chapter will argue that Heywood takes this mockery much further in his version through his use of music and his inclusion of the militant Tullia.

Like Heywood’s play, Middleton’s *Ghost* satirizes the traditional representation of gender roles and relations that Shakespeare depicts in his Lucretia narrative. The third and final chapter of my thesis will examine Middleton’s approach and argue that he provides Lucrece with a more prominent voice than either Shakespeare or Heywood does, a voice that criticizes, in a harsher and more explicit manner than that offered by the other two authors, how men band together and transform women’s bodies into territories that they can conquer in order to uphold their own masculinity. But that is not to say that Middleton’s Lucrece does not face the same gender constraints that Shakespeare’s or Heywood’s Lucrece figures encounter. As Donald Jellerson remarks,

“[Middleton’s] poem depicts [Lucrece] as bound in an eternal embrace of sin with her rapist. At the same time, however, it is dedicated from beginning to end to detailing Lucrece’s mighty, if doomed, struggle to emerge as a subject with a will of her own” (58). Lucrece’s position in *Ghost* is evidently complex and, although Middleton creates the most aggressive and outspoken Lucrece among the three works, as Jellerson notes, Middleton also places various patriarchal restrictions on his Lucrece character. Whereas Heywood parodies the male characters’ poor treatment of women by presenting the soldiers as a group of childish fools, Middleton performs a similar critique by having Lucrece’s ghost mock the men and their competitive urges herself. For example, Lucrece satirizes the notion that her raped body is like a besieged city and even challenges Collatine’s status as a mighty warrior when she declares, “Come, Collatine, The foe hath sack’d thy city, / Collatium goes to wrack. / ... True-man, thou sleep’st at Rome / Even while a Roman thief robs thee at home” (269-275). In addition to mocking the men’s treatment of women as property in her society, Lucrece shifts the power dynamic between the sexes by infantilizing Tarquin and putting herself in a dominant position where the rapist depends on her body for sustenance: “Thou art my nurse child, Tarquin, thou art he! / ... Here’s blood for milk; suck till thy veins run over! / And such a teat which scarce thy mouth can cover!” (141-142). My analysis of Lucrece’s “Tarquin my kinsman” speech (150-163), which calls into question the chivalric nature of idealized male friendship, will also play a significant role in this part of the thesis.

Unlike Shakespeare and Heywood, whose Lucrece characters adhere solely to feminine norms, Middleton’s *Ghost*, while still preferring the chaste domestic life and the company of women, expresses certain aggressive masculine traits herself, which will be

discussed in the concluding half of chapter three. Lucrece's hybrid gender identity puts her in a position of power and mocks the violent hyper-masculine and tame hyper-feminine lifestyles that the members of her society idealize. When denouncing Tarquin, Middleton's Lucrece is not passive and mild, but, similar to Heywood's Tullia, expresses ruthlessness and a need for vengeance. Addressing her rapist she proclaims, "...I will haunt, and hunt, you to despair" (184). Lucrece subverts the gender roles that she and Tarquin play in the Lucretia legend by transforming herself from the hunted to the hunter, gaining a level of agency and mocking Tarquin's cruel, animalistic behavior in the process. Middleton also criticizes the combative attitudes of the men and the dangerous world that such attitudes create by shedding positive light on the bonds that Lucrece has with her maids and the female goddesses: "'Sing merrily, my maids! Our wheels go round!... / For Vesta is the goddess of our lays'" (298-303). The sense of joy and solidarity between the women in the text is juxtaposed against the envious and hostile relationship between Tarquin and Collatine. Lucrece shows how the women in her society need other women during times of hardship so that they can uplift one another and escape the perils of their male-dominated, military surroundings. Although, as Daileader notes, "Middleton invokes a golden age in which female deities reigned" (81), such female fellowship does not mean that Lucrece abstains from emulative relationships with women. For example, Middleton's Ghost puts herself in opposition to "Roman dames" who were "tickled with pride and lust" (346) and who did not stay within the confines of the "home" (351). Middleton evidently de-romanticizes both male and female homosocial connections in his poem and, unlike Shakespeare and Heywood, places significant emphasis on how the women in Lucrece's world depend on one another not

just for comfort and fellowship, but for social stability. Although Heywood also brings female homosociality to the forefront and mocks sexist male behavior in his narrative, this concluding chapter will show that Middleton gives Lucrece, and subsequently the women around her, much more attention and agency than either Heywood or Shakespeare does.

Chapter One

“No cause, but company”: Combative Men and Comforting Women in Shakespeare’s

The Rape of Lucrece

Shakespeare’s *Lucrece* opens this analysis of emulative same-sex connections for two reasons: first, because the poem is one of the most recognized and researched interpretations of Lucrece’s rape; and secondly, because of the author’s practice of making idealized male bonds a major focus in his literature, a practice that, as will be discussed later, both Heywood and Middleton illustrate in their own work. Tom Macfaul’s description of early modern English society’s outlook on friendship helps to explain why homosocial relationships are prevalent in the literature produced during the period:

Renaissance Humanism had a clear if fragile ideology of friendship as the centre of man’s life, which can be summed up fairly simply: a friend is a second self with whom one shares everything, friends are virtuous and similar to one another, and the friend is chosen after long and careful assessment of his virtues; the purpose of such friendship is the promotion of virtuous thought and action. . . This is clearly an idealization, and was often recognized as such, but even so it had a persistent ideological force.”(6)

A poem that repeats the word “friend” fifteen times, Shakespeare’s *Lucrece* consistently demonstrates the early modern man’s preoccupation with and “anxiety” about idyllic male companionship (Macfaul 4). Furthermore, as Girard points out, Shakespeare creates both an intimate yet destructive relationship between Collatine and Tarquin that is characterized by envy or “mimetic desire” (*Theatre of Envy* 21). Although scholars have primarily focused on the friendship between Tarquin and Collatine, in “The Argument,”

Shakespeare shows that loving yet competitive male bonding is central in the lives of the other noblemen:

...the principle men of the army meeting one evening at the tent of Sextus Tarquinius, the king's son, in their discourses after supper *every one* commended the virtues of his own wife; among whom Collatinus extolled the incomparable chastity of his wife Lucretia. In that pleasant humour they all posted to Rome; and intending by their secret and sudden arrival to make trial of that which *every one* had before avouched. (my emphasis 7-14)

The repetition of “every one” in this passage conveys how men who connect to one other through competition dominate the poem’s military environment. It is also interesting to note the ways in which Shakespeare presents the chastity contest as something that casually occurs during a jovial conversation between the soldiers following supper. The men are “in...pleasant humour” (12) and march to Rome like a group of amused children who are eager to win a game. Such a depiction starkly contrasts with the serious and devastating consequences that the contest has later in the poem and suggests that the structure of supposed virtuous male bonding is flawed because of its dependence on rivalry. Thus, in opening lines of “The Argument,” Shakespeare shows how competition is normalized in *Lucrece*’s patriarchal world and then reveals the dangers of that normalization when Tarquin decides to rape Lucrece and, in his own mind, conquer Collatine.

Lucrece herself is not the target of Tarquin’s desire, but is merely an object or a piece of property that the soldier violates to battle his comrade, and Shakespeare illustrates this dynamic by using the language of commerce and possession to describe the Roman matron. Nancy Vickers makes a compelling case for the complex relationship between the poem’s main characters and she demonstrates the applicability of

Sedgwick's and Girard's theory of the "erotic triangle" to Shakespeare's *Lucrece* (Sedgwick 21). Vickers examines the poem's figurative language and argues that "metaphors commonly read as signs of a battle between the sexes emerge rather from a homosocial struggle, in this case a male rivalry, which positions a third (female) term in a median space from which it is initially used and finally eliminated" (96). Vickers' own language points to the objectification of Lucrece in Shakespeare's poem. She refers to Lucrece as a "term" and as something that is "used" and "eliminated," emphasizing how the female figure is just a disposable component who is only a part of the equation because she is necessary for the men to perform their rivalry. To use Patricia Parker's words, Shakespeare depicts the title character as a "passive commodity," a lifeless product that Collatine owns and that Tarquin desires to steal in order to defeat his fellow soldier (qtd. in Ritscher 61). Shakespeare writes:

...why is Collatine the publisher
Of that rich jewel he should keep unknown
From thievish ears, because it is his own?
Perchance his boast of Lucrece' sov-reignty
Suggested this proud issue of a king. (33-7)

These lines dehumanize Lucrece with the clichéd label of "jewel" and, even more insulting and derogatory, an "it." The speaker also has an instructive tone and assigns blame to Collatine for boasting about his wife's extraordinary qualities to the men of the camp. The gloss for the word "publisher" in the Arden edition of the text states: "According to the *OED*, the word had not yet acquired its modern sense of one who issues books, but it is related to *set forth* which could mean to publish books (*OED* set v. 144c). Cf. 1852" (33N). Collatine is, in fact, very similar to a modern publisher, as he promotes Lucrece to his comrades like a book that everyone wants to purchase. The speaker cautions against

this marketing tactic with the use of the auxiliary verb “should” in the line “that rich jewel he should keep unknown / From thievish ears.” This moment re-emphasizes the competitive atmosphere of the poem and illustrates the prevalence of “thievish ears” or envious, combative men in Collatine’s society.

Although Shakespeare’s *Lucrece* sheds light on the persistence of emulous male-male relations beyond the main “erotic triangle” in the text, the rivalry between Tarquin and Collatine remains the poem’s focal point, and Shakespeare demonstrates the obsessive and erotic nature of such a relationship by emphasizing how both of the rivals are more fixated on each other than they are on Lucrece, the supposed object of both their desires (Sedgwick 21). Girard writes of the connection between envy and eroticism in the poem:

Only in the glare of envy can a Collatine truly appreciate the beauty of his wife. To him, envy is the aphrodisiac par excellence, the true philter of love. Tarquin’s desire is envious, but so is Collatine’s. His envy of Tarquin’s envy makes him just as mimetic as this rival, identical with him. The difference between hero and villain is undermined. (*Theatre of Envy* 23)

Girard’s argument points to the ways in which Collatine values his hostile bond with Tarquin much more than he values his marriage to Lucrece. More important, however, is Girard’s notion that “envy is [an] aphrodisiac” and his emphasis on the soldiers’ shared identity. “Aphrodisiac” is a suitable word to describe the effect that envy has on Tarquin and Collatine because, as the following passage shows, there is a strong connection between the men’s hatred for one another and sexual seduction:

He stories to her ears her husband’s fame
Won in the fields of fruitful Italy,
And decks with praises Collatine’s high name
Made glorious by his manly chivalry
With bruised arms and wreaths of victory. (106-10)

Here, instead of flattering Lucrece, Tarquin lists his rival's accomplishments in an attempt to manipulate and lure the female figure into his threatening grasp. But Tarquin does not merely employ this strategy to prove his love for his "dear friend" (237) Collatine and impress Lucrece; rather, Tarquin's appears to be feeding off of his hate for his rival and energizing himself so that he can seize Lucrece and finally defeat her husband. Thus, reinforcing Girard's point that envy is an aphrodisiac in the poem, it is not Lucrece who is arousing Tarquin, but Tarquin's jealous thoughts about Collatine.

As Tarquin aggressively persists in his efforts to "ensnare" Lucrece, the narrative highlights the privileging of male bonds more explicitly and presents such relations with homoerotic undertones (584). The speaker proclaims, "Within [Tarquin's] thought [Lucrece's] heavenly image sits, / And in the self-same seat sits Collatine" (288-89). Katherine Duncan-Jones mentions that the word "thought" "may allude to the pleasure of sexual fulfillment" (288n, 338n). The fact that Collatine plays a prominent role in such an intimate vision emphasizes just how fierce and intense Tarquin's infatuation with his rival is. Returning to Girard, such a violent obsession impairs the soldiers' abilities to maintain individual identities. Shakespeare draws attention to this issue when Lucrece tries to ward off her rapist: "In Tarquin's likeness I did entertain thee: / Hast thou put on his shape to do him shame?" (596-97). Although "his" might refer to "an evil spirit" (597n.), it is possible that the pronoun refers to Collatine and is a comment on Tarquin's brutal attempt to usurp his comrade's position as Lucrece's sexual partner. The alliteration of "shape" and "shame" is also notable because the close connection between the two words suggests a negative attitude toward emulative activity. According to Lucrece, by mirroring Collatine and assuming his "shape," Tarquin is not only destroying

his female victim, but he is also destroying his comrade's reputation. Lucrece continues to stress this perspective when she informs Tarquin,

For princes are the glass, the school, the book,
Where subjects' eyes do learn, do read, do look.
'And wilt thou be the school where Lust shall learn?
Must he in thee read lectures of such shame? (614-18)

Lucrece makes Tarquin her student, a relationship which temporarily puts the female protagonist in a superior position over her eventual rapist. Lucrece outlines the destructive pattern of mimetic relationships between men in her society in these lines and illustrates just how cruel and foolish Tarquin is for his willingness to make himself a negative model that other males will emulate in the future.

But while Lucrece boldly condemns male-male competitive friendships, her attitude toward other women is especially hostile and demonstrates how, similar to the men around her, she forms antagonistic bonds with members of her own sex. Daileader focuses on Lucrece's treatment of "female deities" and Helen of Troy to argue that Shakespeare's representation of female homosociality in the poem is misogynistic (81). In particular, Daileader is concerned about the ways in which Lucrece places more blame for her rape on figures, which, she notes, are "personified as female," such as Night, Opportunity, Time, and Helen than she places on "the rapist himself" (75). Lucrece's berating of Night for allowing her rape gives credence to Daileader's argument and demonstrates how the placement of blame in the poem is quite problematic because the male perpetrator is not held fully responsible for his actions:

'O comfort-killing Night, image of hell,
Dim register and notary of shame,
Black stage for tragedies and murders fell,
Vast sin-concealing chaos, nurse of blame,
Blind muffled bawd, dark harbour for defame,

Grim cave of death, whisp'ring conspirator
With close-tongued treason and the ravisher!
(764-770)

Lucrece does not solely blame the actual individual who violated her body, but blames the dark space where Tarquin performed the brutal act. She uses theatrical language to attribute blame to Night and makes it appear as if the “black stage” is the cause of her plight instead of the violent actor Tarquin. Even more important and disturbing is the feminization of Night and how Lucrece describes it as a space that houses prostitutes in the line “blind muffled bawd.” It is not Tarquin whom Lucrece associates with sexual deviance, but the female persona Night, which adds insight to Daileader’s point that the poem has a misogynistic agenda. In fact, Lucrece goes to great lengths in chastising Night instead of her actual rapist. Shakespeare structures her speech like an excessive list and Lucrece’s anger and frustration accelerate as she names the various aspects of Night that she loathes, intensifying her insults and ending with an exclamatory line. The enjambed final two lines and the exclamation point following “ravisher” emphasize this tension and suggest that Lucrece is overwhelmed by her hatred of the goddess. In addition to blaming Night for Tarquin’s abuse, Lucrece reproaches Time and Opportunity, labelling the latter a “notorious bawd” (886). It is therefore no surprise that Daileader concludes that Lucrece’s distribution of blame in the poem and Shakespeare’s depiction of female-female relations is sexist. But, while Daileader’s interpretation is well-founded, there are other possible explanations for Lucrece’s response to Tarquin’s assault. First, by not making Tarquin the sole target of Lucrece’s anger, Shakespeare makes a comment on the impact that rape has on individuals and highlights how such violation can deprive victims of their ability to think rationally and assert themselves over

their attacker. Another way of looking at Lucrece's lofty accusations of the female goddesses is by focusing on the exaggerated nature of these particular speeches. The hyperbolic language that Lucrece uses and the significant time that she spends criticizing female figures instead of Tarquin can be read as Shakespeare dramatizing and parodying the misogynistic nature of Lucrece's patriarchal world. Thus, although Daileader is correct to argue that Lucrece's reaction to her rape in Shakespeare's poem is problematic, it is also important to consider how these moments in the text reveal Lucrece's fragile psychological state and signal her society's troublesome gender politics.

As her attitude towards the goddesses demonstrates, Shakespeare's Lucrece establishes emulous relationships with members of her sex; however, unlike the men around her, Lucrece shows an awareness of the dangers of competitive friendships and expresses genuine affection for other women. Again, because Daileader places significant emphasis on female homosociality, her arguments are useful for understanding the female-female dynamic in the poem. Further emphasizing her view that Shakespeare's text is chauvinistic, Daileader relates, "Lucrece kills herself to influence, in effect, so that other raped women will also kill themselves...[i]n Shakespeare's version of the story, even her suicide—the one decisive action history affords Lucrece—falls to someone else's credit" (75-76). It is definitely unsettling that Lucrece presents her suicide as a model for other female victims to emulate in the lines, "No, no,' quoth she, 'no dame, hereafter living, / By my excuse shall claim excuse's giving'" (1714-1715). Here, Lucrece reveals again that rivalrous bonds are not exclusively formed between men in her world and illustrates how relationships between women can also cause psychological and physical damage.

But as much as Lucrece promotes female competitiveness, her character also shows concern for women's well being. As Richard Meek observes of Lucrece's reaction to the Troy painting in the poem, "Lucrece comes to pity the figures in the painting—especially Hecuba—because they are unable to give voice to their suffering, and she goes on to narrate the plight of Hecuba, Priam, Hector, and Troilus" (391). Unlike Daileader, Meek does not present Lucrece's emulation as entirely negative but remarks that Lucrece feels a close sense of kinship with her female predecessors and feels responsible for keeping Hecuba's struggle documented in history. The following passage depicts such female camaraderie:

'Lo, here weeps Hecuba, here Priam dies,
Here manly Hector faints, here Troilus swoonds,
Here friend by friend in bloody channel lies,
And friend to friend gives unadvised wounds'
...Here feelingly she weeps Troy's painted woes
...So Lucrece, set a-work, sad tales doth tell
To pencill'd pensiveness and colour'd sorrow;
She lends them words, and she their looks doth borrow.
(1485-1499)

The parallel structure of the lines "Here friend by friend in bloody channel lies" and "And friend to friend gives unadvised wounds" emphasizes the futile nature of friendship that Lucrece observes and identifies with in the painting. The former line shows a sense of unity and equality between friends while the latter conveys contention and violence. Additionally, Shakespeare's use of the adverb "feelingly" to describe Lucrece's weeping accentuates Lucrece's compassion for the artwork's subjects. The affinity that Lucrece feels for Hecuba conflicts with her prior speeches where she places herself in opposition to the goddesses Night, Opportunity, and Time, further challenging Daileader's argument that Shakespeare chiefly portrays female kinship through a negative lens.

In fact, one of the most touching and intimate moments in Shakespeare's *Lucrece* occurs between two women, Lucrece and her maid: a scene that contrasts sharply with Collatine's and Tarquin's contentious friendship and suggests that the women in the poem are much more capable of securing strong and meaningful connections with members of their own sex than the men. Quoting Michel de Montaigne's essay "On Friendship," John Garrison argues,

Writers in antiquity typically excluded women from ideal friendship, an idea that Montaigne's essay on friendship echoes when he claims that women's 'souls do not seem firm enough to withstand the clasp of a knot so lasting and so firmly drawn' (Konstan 6-8, 9-91; Montaigne 210). As noted throughout this essay, however, Shakespeare does depict strong female friendships in his work. (372-73)

While the relationship between Lucrece and her maid might not be as central to the narrative of *Lucrece* as the relationship between Tarquin and Collatine, the poem's female-female dynamic clearly demonstrates Shakespeare's habit of "depict[ing] strong female relationships" that Garrison observes and draws further attention to the destructiveness of male-male bonds in the poem. Shakespeare first indicates the significance of women's friendships following Lucrece's rape when the female protagonist yearns for the companionship of women who have experienced the same violation that she has:

'Were Tarquin Night, as he is but Night's child,
The silver-shining queen he would distain;
Her twinkling handmaids too, by him defiled...
So should I have co-partners in my pain;
And fellowship in woe doth woe assuage,
As palmers' chat makes short their pilgrimage.
'Where now I have no one to blush with me...
But I alone, alone must sit and pine,
Seasoning the earth with showers of silver brine.'
(785-796)

It is unsettling that Lucrece wishes for the company of other raped women so that she does not have to cope with her grief alone. But instead of interpreting this moment as another means by which Shakespeare's poem deserves criticism for being misogynistic, it is more useful to see this speech as the author's attempt to emphasize just how critical it is in Lucrece's world for women to have the support of other women.

For Lucrece and the females around her, economic and social stability depend on their chastity, and in order to maintain virtuous reputations, the only men they can spend time alone with are their family members; they must spend the rest of their time within the home where they are solely in the company of other "pure" women. According to Susan Frye and Karen Robertson,

[early modern] men and women...condensed their understandings of community and relationship in the classical image of the beehive [where] the single individual subject invokes household, kin, and class, just as the bee invokes the hive. Women in particular appropriated the hive and the bee not only to validate the place of women within their own society, but also the connections between women themselves. (4)

Shakespeare uses hive imagery frequently in his poem. For instance, Lucrece labels herself "a drone-like bee" and a "chaste bee" and refers to her home as "a weak hive" following her rape (835, 839). Lucrece evidently values a stable "hive" where the members of the household are closely connected, so that it is no surprise that, in the speech above, the Roman matron desperately seeks the comfort and support of Diana's "twinkling handmaids" (786n). The feeling of isolation that Lucrece expresses in the lines "now I have no one to blush with me... / But I alone, alone must sit and pine, / Seasoning the earth with showers of silver brine" conveys just how important female fellowship is to the female protagonist. By mentioning her blushing, Lucrece portrays her

modesty and the ways in which her rape is a visible, public issue and a stain on her honourable reputation. Particularly notable about this section of text is Lucrece's declaration of a singular sense of self with the phrase "I alone, alone." Here, Lucrece transforms herself into a social outcast and demonstrates how the loss of her chastity segregates her from Diana's hive of virtuous women. The repetition of "alone" emphasizes Lucrece's alienation and her emotional struggle as she tries to come to terms with her tragic situation in this speech. This moment in the text reveals that a lack of a female support group is crippling to not only to a woman's social status, but also to a woman's identity.

However, Shakespeare does not merely demonstrate the misery that Lucrece experiences in the absence of women's bonds; instead, the author creates a scene where Lucrece's faithful maid fulfills her mistress's longing for fellowship, which suggests a level of intimacy and tenderness that is lacking between men in the poem and insinuates that the model of female friendship is much less destructive. When exploring the relationship between Lucrece and her maid, it is important to consider the power dynamic between the two characters. In her analysis of female homosociality in *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* Jessica Tvordi relates, "[b]ecause the only institution in which early modern women consistently exercised authority was within the home, focusing on household governance reveals that woman's negotiation of power within the domestic power structure was similar to man's negotiation of power in the public sphere" (116). Although Lucrece's society confines her to the home, within that home she is a figure of authority: "With untuned tongue [Lucrece] hoarsely calls her maid, / Whose swift obedience to her mistress hies; / For fleet-wing'd duty with thought's feathers flies"

(1214-1216). The use of the word “hies” emphasizes the maid’s dedication to and even fear of Lucrece. Additionally, the alliteration in the line “For fleet-wing’d duty with thought’s feathers flies” evokes the rapid movement of the maid as she rushes to meet her mistress’s demands. As much as there is a clear power division between the two women, Shakespeare also unites Lucrece and her maid and provides another instance in the poem where female-female connections are privileged. When the maid reports to Lucrece, “she doth give demure good-morrow, / With soft-slow tongue, true mark of modesty, / And sorts a sad look to her lady’s sorrow” (1219-1221). While the maid’s shy greeting and her gentle disposition are another way that Shakespeare emphasizes her character’s low social position and her separation from Lucrece, the maid’s imitation of her mistress’s sadness draws the two women together. Again, Shakespeare’s use of alliteration is significant: “With soft-slow tongue, true mark of modesty, / And sorts a sad look to her lady’s sorrow.” The repetition of “s” sounds in these lines creates a connection between Lucrece and her maid. The maid’s “soft-slow tongue” and the way that she “sorts a sad look” directly link to “her lady’s sorrow” because of the alliterative language. Lucrece’s need for “co-partners in [her] pain / And fellowship in woe” (788-789) is finally met during this encounter.

Shakespeare continues positively to represent female-female emulative bonds as the scene between Lucrece and her maid progresses, and the latter character not only expresses sympathy for her mistress, but also mimics Lucrece’s grief and sheds tears on her behalf. In her discussion of the bonds between early modern women within the home, Tvordi states, “the participants in this relationship support one another in the face of male challenges to female authority, and they rely upon one another to secure their

positions within social and economic hierarchies” (114). The scene between Lucrece and her maid illuminates Tvordi’s point that women turn to other women to cope with patriarchal constraints. While there is a clear power division between the maid and Lucrece, such stratification gradually erodes and the two characters unite because of their sex and their understanding that, as females, regardless of their positions in the household’s hierarchy, they are both restrained by the male-centered structure of their society. When Lucrece’s maid begins to cry, the power dynamic between the two women starts to break down: “Even so the maid with swelling drops gan wet / Her circled eyne, enforced by sympathy” (1228-1229). The gloss in the Arden edition of the poem suggests that Shakespeare’s description of the maid’s eyes as “circled” might simply mean that her eyes are “rounded,” but the gloss also suggests that the description might mean that the woman’s “eyes are puffy from crying” (1129n). The latter idea further emphasizes the maid’s sympathy for Lucrece and illustrates that the two women do not just have a working relationship as maid and mistress, they have a meaningful friendship. The following passage best articulates the connection between Lucrece and her maid:

A pretty while these pretty creatures stand,
Like ivory conduits coral cisterns filling:
One justly weeps; the other takes in hand
No cause, but company, of her drops spilling:
Their gentle sex to weep are often willing;
Grieving themselves to guess at others' smarts,
And then they drown their eyes or break their hearts.
(1233-1239)

In the first two lines of the stanza, Shakespeare unites Lucrece and her maid by referring to them both as “pretty creatures” and as “ivory conduits,” which are both descriptions that highlight the women’s shared feminine identities. The adjective “pretty” has obvious feminine associations, but the colour “ivory” calls for closer analysis. Earlier in the poem,

when Tarquin is in Lucrece's bedroom and plotting his attack, Lucrece's breasts are described as being the colour "ivory" ("Her breasts like ivory globes" (407), "Rude ram, to batter such an ivory wall!" (465)). Ivory is associated with chastity and Shakespeare's choice to use the same colour to describe the maid suggests that her character is also virginal and maintains a reputable image like her mistress. Another means by which Shakespeare aligns Lucrece and her maid, is through the use of plural pronouns such as "their," "themselves," and "they." But it is the phrase "their gentle sex" that most explicitly joins the two women in this passage. Even though Lucrece has dominion over her maid within the household, both women are considered the "gentle sex" in their world; they are alike and can connect to one another because they belong to that social category. This compassionate exchange demonstrates how the women in the poem not only desire each other's company, but *need* each other's company because they are all victims of patriarchal control.

As this chapter has shown, in Shakespeare's *Lucrece*, this urgency to develop and sustain intimate friendships with members of the same sex is prevalent in the lives of both men and women. While such relationships are considered to be a social and even an economic necessity in the text (particularly in the lives of women), the combative framework of these homosocial bonds is ultimately crippling to one's identity and even one's physical body. Lucrece's hostile attitude toward her female predecessors and successors reveals that the friendships between women in *Lucrece* are comparable to the competitive friendships between men, proving that the poem's treatment of female emulation requires much more scholarly attention. The ways in which Shakespeare counters the volatile woman-to-woman moments in *Lucrece* (and the volatile man-to-man

moments) with the compassionate moments that Lucrece shares with women such as her maid and Hecuba, also calls for further explorations of the poem's portrayal of female connections that are beyond the scope of this thesis. As this chapter has demonstrated, even though *Lucrece*'s women can be overly contentious with one another, Shakespeare also places a great deal of emphasis on supportive and protective female bonds, providing a contrast to the author's antagonistic depiction of male friendship. Such a portrayal suggests that women who face potentially fatal patriarchal oppression find refuge and even a sense of autonomy through their relationships with other women who experience the same plight. Although Heywood's play does not delve deeply into the psychological implications that *Lucrece*'s misogynistic culture has for its female characters, as the following chapter will show, by placing such satiric focus on the soldiers' interactions and by including Lucrece's militant character antithesis Tullia, Heywood comically yet forcefully criticizes the threatening and combative nature of the text's male-dominated world.

Chapter Two

"Curse your hot lust, and say you have wronged your friends": Heywood's Mockery of Hyper-Masculinity in *The Rape of Lucrece*

The attention that Heywood pays to the wife wager in his play contributes significantly to his mockery of the patriarchal environment he depicts and allows him to parody, more fully than Shakespeare, the ways in which the Roman comrades dangerously use women as “pawns” in their homosocial battles (Vickers qtd. in Daileader 75). Laura Bromley criticizes Heywood for being more concerned with the political relations between men and claims that he ignores “the moral and psychological consequences of Tarquin's rape of Lucrece” (210). Shakespeare's text is undoubtedly more focused on the effects of sexual violence on Lucrece's psyche than Heywood's is; however, Heywood's emphasis on male relations sheds important light on the combative male environment that ultimately destroys Lucrece. As Katherine Duncan-Jones argues, “Shakespeare does not put as much stress as...Heywood...on the culpability of Collatine in putting his wife at risk” and does not emphasize “that it is...irresponsible for a husband to boast in male company about his wife's virtue, since such a boast may be taken as a challenge by other young men” (131-32). In the scene where the chastity battle takes place in Heywood's play, the author depicts the threat that this competitive, hyper-masculine atmosphere poses to women. Tarquin shares with his comrades his chauvinist opinion of women, which anticipates his violent treatment of Lucrece six scenes later. He declares:

What's Lucrece but a woman? And what are women
But tortures and disturbance unto men?
If they be foul they're odious, and if fair,
They're like rich vessels of poisonous drugs,
Or like black serpents armed with golden scales:
For my own part, they shall not trouble me.
(10.55-60).

Tarquin's use of the word "vessel" to describe "fair" women points to his society's commodification of the chaste woman's body and illustrates how females are merely considered objects in the trade between men. This speech also emphasizes the paradoxical set of circumstances in which women in his society are trapped. Even if a woman is "fair" and outwardly suits societal expectations, she is still considered a toxic enemy because, according to men like Tarquin, her pure appearance is merely an illusion that hides her inner deviance. Tarquin describes this supposed internal corruption as venom and further dehumanizes women by transforming them into "black serpents." Tarquin's portrayal of women as disguised tricksters and as predatory creatures is grossly hypocritical, considering that, in Scene 15, Tarquin hunts Lucrece like a snake stalking its prey and assumes a gentlemanly façade so that he can lure her into his violent grasp. Tarquin goes to great lengths to portray women as villainous forces that de-stabilize men, but as the scene progresses, it becomes increasingly clear that the men's competitive urges and sexist attitudes are the major threat to both sexes.

Following Tarquin's speech, the men quickly plunge into a contest about their wives' virtue, which Heywood effectively mocks, thus depriving the men of their noble soldierly images and criticizing their emulous friendships. Brutus is the first soldier to respond to Tarquin. He boasts, "Tarquin, sit fast; for I proclaim myself a woman's champion, and shall unhorse thee else" (10.61-62). As I noted in previous chapter,

Vickers applies Sedgwick's and Girard's "erotic triangle" theory to Shakespeare's *Lucrece* and draws attention to the author's likening of the female body to a battlefield upon which men "first figuratively and then literally" perform their rivalry (96). The militaristic language that Brutus uses in the lines above to describe his supposed success with women shows the relevance of Vickers' analysis to Heywood's text. In particular, Brutus's use of the word "unhorse" equates the competition between men over women to warfare and demonstrates the aggression that men in Brutus's society will employ to prove that they are the champions of women's bodies. Heywood parodies such arrogance when the rest of the Roman soldiers relentlessly defend their wives' honour, which is, of course, simultaneously a defence of their own manly honour. Much of the humour in this section of the play derives from the quick pace at which the men converse, their hasty, stichomythic dialogue portraying their need to out-do their comrades as excessively desperate and childish. For instance, when Brutus remarks that Scevola's wife's lack of beauty keeps her from being unfaithful, Scevola replies, "I should be angry with him that should make question of her honour" (10.71) to which Brutus quickly responds, "And I angry with thee if thou shouldst not maintain her honour" (10.72). Aruns then interrupts: "If you compare the virtues of your wives, let me step in for mine" (10.73) which prompts Collatine to proclaim, "I should wrong my Lucrece not to stand for her" (10.74). The back-and-forth movement of this exchange reads like a song, as the men swiftly pick up on each other's words and attempt to use them against the person who speaks before them. For example, Brutus repeats the words "angry" and "honour," which Scevola uses in the previous line, and Collatine's use of the verb "stand" is alliterative with Aruns's use of "step" in the line that prompts Collatine to speak. After Brutus attempts to bring

“this controversy” to a halt with a lengthy speech, the speed of the scene accelerates again as each man refuses to lose the challenge (10.89). When Collatine re-emphasizes Lucrece’s honour, Aruns interjects: “Yet she for virtue is not comparable to the wife of Aruns,” which begins another frantic exchange between the soldiers, further mocking their competitive dispositions (10.102). In this scene, Heywood provides audiences with a parodic glimpse of the emulous male bonds that not only render the noble men foolish, but also, as Lucrece’s fate later reveals, render the men dangerous.

Another means by which Heywood’s *Lucrece* criticizes the men’s treatment of women and challenges early modern England’s idealized conception of male friendship is the author’s inclusion of the Roman soldiers’ bawdy, misogynistic songs. Paulina Kewes defends such songs and argues that they function as commentary on the tyrannous political atmosphere of the play:

Far from being gratuitously lewd, Valerius’ songs are integral to the play’s portrayal of Roman politics. The songs *are* odd, but that is something that the characters themselves are perfectly aware of: it is Tarquin’s despotism that reduces his subjects to the level of babbling fools, madmen, and ballad-makers. (258)

The political function of Valerius’s songs that Kewes recognizes is evident from this clownish figure’s introduction in the play. Valerius enters and once Horatius and Lucretius greet him, he immediately sings “When Tarquin first in Court began, / And was approved king: / Some men for sudden joy ‘gan weep, / But I for sorrow sing” (4, 79-82). Valerius notes a division between men under Tarquin’s authority; those who shed happy tears and those, like him, who are deeply saddened by their tyrannical leader and his commanding wife. Valerius’s sorrow and his political frustration are shared among the men in this scene, and such discontent is juxtaposed against the cheerful tone of

Valerius's music and his absurdly comical lyrics. However, Valerius's male peers do not immediately accept his lively tune during their time of grief. For instance, Horatius grumbles, "This music mads me; I all mirth I despise" (4.128), compelling Lucretius to bemoan, "To hear [Valerius] sing draw rivers from mine eyes" (4.129). This scene portrays music as a strategy that helps groups collectively confront and endure the troubles they face during times of political distress, which is a method by which the men continuously turn to as the play progresses and civic strife worsens. Scevola is the first of the men to accept Valerius's songs as a mode of escape and counters Horatius and Lucretius by stating,

[The music] pleaseth me; for since the court is harsh,
And looks askance on soldiers, let's be merry,
Court ladies, sing, drink, dance, and every man
Get him a mistress, coach it in the country,
And taste the sweets of it.
(4.130-134)

Valerius's musical response to Scevola launches a pattern in the play where the grieving soldiers repeatedly ask Valerius to uplift them through song, which is a task that the boisterous musician enthusiastically performs:

Why since we soldiers cannot prove,
And grief it is to us therefore,
Let every man get him a love,
Trim her well, and fight no more
(4.136-139)

Thus, Valerius's songs are not just notable because of their politically charged lyrics; they are also a significant component of a sort of bonding ritual between men. However, although the male characters benefit from these musical moments, which unite them against Tarquin's corruption, such bonding occurs at the expense of female dignity and even female safety. Music is not the only method these men employ to cheer themselves

up; conquering women in the way that they would conquer an enemy army is one of their highest forms of entertainment.

Kewes's analysis, therefore, while illustrating how Heywood's inclusion of music represents the soldiers' political discontent, does not take into account the dangerous misogyny that such songs reveal. Valerius's sexist lyrics not only portray the men as "babbling fools," but also, more importantly, emphasize how the women in the play are under the constant threat of male oppression. Nora Corrigan considers the relationship between *Lucrece's* songs and the patriarchal world of the play: "While [the songs in Heywood's text] radically expand the boundaries of appropriate masculine and aristocratic behaviour, the interludes of jest and music constitute a form of male bonding from which women are conspicuously excluded" (149). The only way that women are *included* in these friendly musical exchanges between the men is as objectified figures in the songs. For example, in an attempt to distract the lords from "the tyrannies of the court," Valerius sings:

Shall I woo the lovely Molly,
She's so fair, so fat, so jolly?
But she has the trick of folly,
Therefore I'll ha' none of Molly
No, no, no, no, no;
I'll have none of Molly.
(6.231-236)

Valerius's focus on Molly's body and his possessive language emphasizes the misogynistic nature of this verse. The use of the verb "ha'" suggests ownership, with a sexual double entendre, of Molly's body, and the verb is repeated throughout the rest of the song and applied to number of women who are deemed unacceptable to Valerius. The verse's heavy use of rhyme is also notable because it evokes a sense of play and

childishness, demonstrating how vulgarity and the objectification of women is not taken seriously by the soldiers and is, instead, considered a source of light entertainment among men. The final “catch” that Valerius sings with Horatius and the Clown in Scene 18 more explicitly depicts just how threatening the male-dominated world of the play is for women (Holaday 85):

Val: Did he take fair Lucrece by the toe, man?

Hor: Toe, man?

Val: Ay, man.

Clown: Ha ha ha ha ha, man!

Hor: And further did he strive to go, man?

Clown: Go, man?

Hor: Ay, man.

Clown: Ha ha ha ha, man, fa derry derry down, ha fa derry dino!
(18.172-179)

This jovial reaction to Lucrece’s rape leads scholars such as Donaldson and Helms to describe the play’s songs as tasteless and merely a source of inappropriate comedic relief. However, it is perhaps more useful to look at these songs as Heywood’s attempt to emphasize the misogynistic culture of the play and to critique the male characters’ practice of bonding with one another through their objectification of females, which, as Lucrece’s rape shows, is a practice that can have tragic results.

By incorporating Tullia into his text, Heywood is able to stress further the intensity of the men’s demeaning attitudes towards women in the Lucretia legend, particularly women who do not adhere to normative patterns of gendered behaviour, and to emphasize the soldiers’ view that the opposite sex is a disruption to virtuous male relations. Tullia is the source of much anxiety for the men in the play because she, not Tarquin’s male comrades, is the figure to whom Tarquin turns when he needs to make a political decision. Lucretius expresses his discomfort with and concern for Tarquin’s

distance from his men when he announces to Horatius and Scevola: “[Tarquin] has took upon him such ambitious state / That he abandons conference with his peers” (4.26-27). In the opening scene, Heywood immediately illustrates Tarquin’s heavy dependence on Tullia for political guidance, which isolates Tarquin from his male friends with whom the tyrant is expected to consult, and places significant power in the hands of his wife, challenging his society’s patriarchal structure of leadership. Tullia is the first character to speak in the play demanding, “Withdraw! We must have private conference / With our dear husband” (1.1-2). By giving Tullia the first line and making the initial word in that line an exclamatory command, Heywood establishes Tullia’s boldness and authoritative position in the play. The militaristic nature of the word “withdraw” contributes further to Tullia’s strong, stereotypically masculine image and shows that she does not perform the non-confrontational feminine role that she is expected to perform in her world. Tullia directs this order to Sextus, Aruns, Lucretius, Valerius, and the Senators, creating a physical separation between Tarquin and his male peers and leaving only the married couple onstage. This moment points to the profound influence that Tullia will frequently prove to have over her husband and underscores the ways in which such influence alienates the two characters from the others in the play. Also notable is Tullia’s use of the word “conference,” which is the same word that Lucretius uses above when he mentions how crucial it is for Tarquin to discuss political matters with his male comrades. By having Tullia echo that language, Heywood affirms Tullia’s status as Tarquin’s main “political adviser” (Carter 64) and further alienates Tarquin from his male counterparts.

The question that Tarquin poses to Tullia once the men have left the stage, “What would’st thou, wife?” (1.3), echoes throughout much of the rest of the play, as Tarquin

repeatedly listens to and asks for his wife's input and Tullia repeatedly ensures that her input is valued higher than anyone else's, regardless of her sex. In Scene 6, Heywood exhibits Tarquin's privileging of Tullia's political advice over his men's, as Tarquin orders Collatine, Scevola, Horatius, Lucretius, Valerius, and the Lords, "Attend us [Tarquin and Tullia] with your persons, but your ears / Be deaf unto our counsels" (1-2). While, in the opening scene of the play, it is Tullia who divides Tarquin from his men so that she can counsel her husband, in this later scene, it is Tarquin who pushes his comrades aside and ostentatiously favours his wife's opinions. Making this gesture even more insulting and emasculating is the manner in which Tarquin's men are forced to stand on the side in silence, unable to contribute to or even hear the plans that their leader makes with Tullia. Continuing to play the dominant role in her marriage, Tullia bolsters Tarquin's order by imploring the men, "Farther yet" (6.3). The men's marginal physical position on stage, again, mirrors their marginal position in Tarquin's structure of government in which Tullia constantly asserts control. Once the men have been cast aside, Tarquin asks his wife plainly, "Now, Tullia, what must be concluded next?" (6.4), and the couple begin an exchange where Tullia drives the conversation forward. Overturning her stereotypically passive role as wife and assuming the masculine leadership role that Tarquin is expected to play, Tullia outlines specific political plans while her husband simply encourages her to continue plotting by responding to her with single adjectives such as "good" (6), "better" (9), and "excellent" (12). Even when Tarquin reveals to Tullia that he has, on his own initiative, stripped her father of his funeral rights, Tullia responds with, "No matter," a cold, business-like reaction that is

unconventional for a woman who is expected to honour her father in her patriarchal environment (6.19).

Tullia's relentless appetite for power is not a trait that the men in her society admire; in fact, because she is a woman, such ambition renders Tullia grotesque in the eyes of men like Brutus and labels her a threat to the male-centered political environment in which she is situated. Mercedes Camino relates that "Tullia expresses her aspirations to worldly power in terms that make her a hermaphrodite 'monster.' She assumes the masculine qualities her husband is shown to lack" (qtd. in Carter 63). Drawing on Camino's analysis, Carter writes, "By assuming these qualities, Tullia is exposed to criticism revolving around her perceived unnaturalness and dual nature" (63). In the opening scene of the play, Tullia not only performs a clichéd masculine persona by acting aggressively, expressing a desire for political control, and dominating the conversation with her husband, but she also openly interrogates her society's construction of gender roles by lamenting how her sex restrains her from attaining the level of authority that she desires. Interrupting Tarquin, who pleads "Hear me, wife" (1.26), Tullia declares:

I am no wife of Tarquin's if not king:
Oh, had Jove made me man, I would have mounted
Above the base tribunals of the earth,
Up to the clouds, for pompous sovereignty.
Thou art a man – oh, bear my royal mind,
Mount heaven, and see if Tullia lag behind.
There is no earth in me, I am all fire;
Were Tarquin so, then should we both aspire.
(1.25-33)

This speech reflects Tullia's obsessive hunger for social and political ascendance and articulates her overwhelming desire to achieve the same level of power and glory that many of the men around her are free to achieve. Tullia pronounces her dissatisfaction

with her title by marking a contrast between the sky and the earth, portraying the former as a space that offers prosperity and mobility, while coding the latter as lowly and restrictive. She creates this juxtaposition by associating the verb “mount,” which means to rise or soar, with the sky and by using the verb “lag” to stress her refusal to move at a slow pace while Tarquin rises to victory. Aware that she cannot transform herself into a man and, like Tarquin, “mount heaven” on her own, Tullia makes it clear that, in order to transcend her stagnant earthly position, she must ensure that her husband gains the crown. In the final line, Tullia switches from using the nominative singular pronoun “I” to the plural pronoun “we,” stressing how critical it is that she and Tarquin work closely together so that she can gain the power that, as a woman, she is unable to gain on her own. By forming such a close alliance with Tarquin, Tullia evidently disrupts emulous relations between her husband and his men, however; she consequently establishes a competitive relationship with Tarquin that mimics the bonds that he would customarily have with his male counterparts. Additionally Tullia challenges the traditional marriage dynamic, stripping herself of her “wifely” identity, and transforming into Tarquin’s hyper-masculine comrade. Tullia’s establishment of such an unconventional relationship with Tarquin suggests her awareness that gaining political authority in her environment is inextricably linked to being an ambitious and competitive man, and she is more than willing to assume that role.

Camino and Carter discuss Tullia’s performance of a masculine identity and the ways in which she is demonized by men who cannot fathom the thought of a daring, militant woman. Brutus is the most vocal about his disgust for Tullia’s violent treatment of her father’s dead body:

This slaughter made by Tarquin; but the queen!
A woman, fie, fie: did not this she-parricide
Add to her father's wounds? And when his body
Lay all besmeared and stained in the blood royal,
Did not this monster, this infernal hag,
Make her unwilling charioteer drive on,
And with his shod wheels crush her father's bones?
(3.6-12)

Brutus explicitly conveys his society's double standard with regards to gender: violent acts committed by men are permitted and even expected, while women who behave ruthlessly are branded monsters. Brutus repeatedly stresses Tullia's gender through the use of the words "queen," "woman," the addition of the pronoun "she" to the word "parricide," and his description of Tullia as a "hag:" a characterization that further emphasizes the ways in which the men in the play value women based on their physical attributes. Brutus even associates Tullia with the devil by referring to her as "infernal," stressing just how inhuman it is for a woman to perform violent acts, particularly on her father. Brutus's hideous portrayal of Tullia is reminiscent of Tarquin Sextus's declaration in Scene 10 where he generalizes about women as "vessels of poisonous drugs" (59) and "black serpents" (58). This echo demonstrates a pattern in the text where men depict women, especially women who take on forceful, masculine identities, as hazardous creatures. Tullia, therefore, represents more than a disruption to male relations because of her dominion over Tarquin; she is a disruption to her society's strict categorization of the "proper" woman. Tullia is not just an exaggerated embodiment of the type of women that the male characters loathe, but, more importantly, she also functions as a parodic comment on the aggressively competitive, male culture of the play. Male characters might perceive the ruthless tactics that Tullia employs to climb the social and political ladder as excessive and repulsive; but such a perception only exists because she is a

woman. Between the play's men, ferocious competition thrives and Heywood makes a mockery of that relationship by having Tullia consistently perform an animated, combative masculine identity.

Unlike Tullia, who enthusiastically submerges herself in "male" activities and refuses to be submissive to patriarchal authority, Lucrece consciously performs the role of obedient wife and does not interfere with her husband's affairs, creating a competitive relationship between the two women even though they never encounter one another in the text. Carter describes this antithetical relationship: "Lucrece is set in deliberate contrast to Tullia. Though seemingly central to the play's action and outcome, Lucrece is strictly bound by the classical representations of the story, defined by the single concept and her virtuous chastity and by others' opinions of her...Lucrece is 'framed' by [the] domestic enclosure that Tullia is seen to reject" (64). Early in the play, Heywood conveys this rivalrous connection between Tullia and Lucrece when Lucretius privately chastises Tullia for her cruelty towards her father:

I have a daughter, but, I hope, of mettle
Subject to better temperature; should my Lucrece
Be of this pride, these hands should sacrifice
Her blood unto the gods that dwell below;
The abortive brat should not out-live my spleen.
But Lucrece is my daughter, this my queen.
(2.103-108)

Lucretius demonstrates the possessive nature of the father-daughter relationship model that he follows by stating that his own hands would put an end to Lucrece's life if she were to act like Tullia. Again, the queen is portrayed as malformed and is dehumanized when Lucretius refers to her as an "abortive brat." The word "brat" also strips Tullia of any authority because it evokes a sense of unruliness and even stupidity. Lucretius draws

a clear line between Tullia and Lucrece, using the auxiliary verb “should” to indicate that there is only the *possibility* that his daughter, who has, so far, not shown any disobedience, would ever mirror Tullia’s actions. Lucretius also asserts his authoritative position as patriarch, by affirming that “should” Lucrece misbehave, he would not hesitate to make an example out of her. The structure of the speech’s final line, in which Lucretius’s thought about Lucrece comes before the comma and his thought about his queen comes after, further divides the two women.

Tullia and Lucrece are also placed in opposition to one another through music, as the former figure is portrayed as a disruption to harmonious sounds while the latter finds herself the praised subject of one of Valerius’s songs. In Scene Four, Horatius remarks, “Think, Valerius, / What that proud woman Tullia is; ‘twill put thee / Quite out of tune” (4.96-97). Like Lucretius, Horatius condemns Tullia for exhibiting the typically masculine trait of “pride,” depicting it as an interruption to the men’s music. As previously discussed, singing songs is an activity that bonds the men of the play, and the fact that Tullia is supposedly disturbing that activity confirms her position as an interference to male friendship. Lucrece’s virtue, on the other hand, encourages this musical form of male bonding, as Scevola urges Valerius, “Come, come...let’s have a song in praise of [Collatine’s] / Lucrece” (18.38-39). In contrast to Tullia’s marriage to Tarquin, Lucrece ensures that she does not interfere with her husband’s military duties and frequently shows her respect and affection for his comrades. Lucrece does, however, request time alone with Collatine, but she asks for his mens’ permission to do so and does not badger anyone when that request is denied. In Scene 11, Lucrece proposes, “But my lords, I hope my Collatine will not so leave his Lucrece” (114) to which Sextus replies,

“He must: we have but idled from the camp, to try and make a merry wager / About their wives, and this the hazard of the king’s displeasure” (115-116). Similarly, in Scene 12, Lucrece asks for her husband’s company and when both Horatius and Collatine gently deny her request, Lucrece responds, “I am bound to your strict will; to each, good-night” (142). Such excessively polite responses are radically different from the ways in which Tullia speaks to Tarquin’s men and, again, place the two women in opposition to one another in Heywood’s text. Even in Lucrece’s letter to Collatine following her rape in which she asks for him to return home, Lucrece does not exclude her husband’s comrades, asking him to bring along his closest friends (18.126). Just as Tullia’s overly militant demeanor parodies her society’s strict perception of masculine honour, Lucrece’s extreme passivity and her enormous respect for male relations makes her an extreme example, if not a caricature, of the feminine ideal that dominates her environment.

Also placing Lucrece and Tullia into competition with one another is the protagonist’s strong community of female friends, which offers Lucrece a level of autonomy and comfort in the face of male danger, but does not ultimately protect her, suggesting that, in the world of the text, even if a woman acts according to social customs and spends her time alongside female peers within the home, she cannot escape the perils of patriarchal oppression. Tvordi outlines the enabling aspects of domestic female homosocial bonds: “[T]he participants in these relationships support one another in the face of male challenges to female authority, and they rely upon one another to secure their positions within social and economic hierarchies” (114). Like the Lucrece in Shakespeare’s narrative, Heywood’s Lucrece is conscious of how critical it is for her to maintain her household’s reputation and, consequently, her own reputation, by ensuring

that her maids do not stray from “appropriate” feminine behaviour. Heywood builds upon this idea by creating scenes in which Lucrece instructs members of her household, particularly the women, on how to conduct themselves properly. For instance, the first time the audience sees Lucrece she is scolding her maid Mirable and the Clown for behaving “amorous[ly]” towards one another (7.12) and, in Scene 11, Lucrece conveys how her reputable wifely status is dependent on the actions of her maids: “Good huswives, when their husbands are from home, / To eye their servants’ labours, and in care / And the true manage of his household state” (15-17). Mirable seems to be the closest maid to Lucrece and takes her mistress’s advice seriously, emulating her demure attitude so that she can protect both Lucrece’s household’s honour and secure her own position as an honourable woman within her mistress’s home. Mirable demonstrates this mutually protective, emulous relationship with Lucrece when she chastises the Clown and Serving-man for their late-night “conjuring and caterwauling” while their mistress is sleeping, urging them to go to bed (14.18). Such a moment recalls Tvordi’s analysis noted above and reveals the necessity of reciprocal support between women within the domestic sphere. Mirable is not just stifling the men’s boisterous activity so that Lucrece gets a satisfying sleep, she is performing femininity according to her mistress’s demands, ensuring that the home in which they both reside does not acquire a bawdy reputation, which, as the soldiers’ attitudes throughout the play show, permanently stains a woman’s public image. But Lucrece’s and Mirable’s relationship is not solely based on the management of the household’s respectable image; there is a level of closeness between the two women that illustrates the importance of intimate female-female friendship in a male-centred environment. For instance, in Scene 11, Lucrece directs Mirable, “Here,

take your work again, a while proceed, / And then to bed, for whilst you sew I'll read” (11.42-43). Although Lucrece makes demands in these lines, her statement that she and Mirable will perform feminine activities such as sewing and reading simultaneously (though presumably in separate rooms), suggests a sense of unity and companionship.

But it is not until Scene 19, following Lucrece's rape, that the audience sees just how critical it is for the women in this play to have the comfort and compassion of other women during periods of tremendous hardship. Like Lucrece's maid in Shakespeare's poem, Mirable adopts Lucrece's sadness and reveals her deep affection for her mistress: “Truth, you make me weep / To see you shed salt tears: what hath oppressed you?” (19.29-30). This display of genuine sympathy confirms that the bond between Lucrece and Mirable transcends that of mistress and maid. Mirable continues her attempts to soothe Lucrece: “Sweet lady, cheer yourself: I'll fetch my viol, / And see if I can sing you fast asleep; / A little rest would wear away this passion” (19.44-46). By lovingly addressing Lucrece as “sweet lady,” Mirable gently breaks down the division of power between the two women and displays a friendlier, more intimate side of the women's relationship. Mirable's proposal that she will use music to comfort Lucrece is also important, as the harmony produced by her viol both reflects the harmonious kinships that are established between women in Lucrece's household and draws attention to Mirable's attempt to provide the troubled Lucrece with a sense of personal tranquility. Such tender moments of female camaraderie are noticeably absent from the scenes containing Tullia, whose closest companion is Tarquin. In fact, Tullia does not share any dialogue with female characters and does not even appear in any scenes with other women. Lucrece has clearly built the loving and protective band of women that Tullia

lacks, but, as the protagonist's rape proves, such kinship, although economically, socially, and personally beneficial, cannot permanently shield women from male tyranny.

Neither Lucrece nor Tullia survives in the play and their deaths highlight the ways in which the two women are both unknowingly involved in an emulous relationship with each other and, like the men in their lives, are also fully aware that their deaths will provide a model for others to judge and mimic in the future. In the passages leading up to Lucrece's suicide, Heywood's protagonist resembles Shakespeare's Lucrece and blames the gods for her rape, instead of her actual rapist Tarquin; however, unlike Shakespeare, Heywood does not depict the gods as females or create lengthy speeches in which Lucrece fiercely chastises various goddesses for orchestrating her violation. But such a contrast between the two narratives does not mean that Heywood's Lucrece does not have the same competitive urges towards other women that Shakespeare's Lucrece has. Following her short rebuke of the gods, Lucrece agonizes:

Is it my fate above all other women?
Or is it my sin more heinous than the rest,
That amongst thousands, millions, infinites,
I, only I, should to this shame be born,
To be a stain on women, nature's scorn?
(19.22-26)

Similar to Shakespeare's Lucrece, Heywood's protagonist compares herself to and isolates herself from other women following her rape. Lucrece's line "I, only I" mirrors the expression "I alone" (795), spoken by Lucrece in Shakespeare's poem, which stresses how significant it is for the title figure to have other women to relate to and bond with. Heywood's Lucrece acknowledges her difference from other women now that her body has been assaulted and indicates how her difference will be remembered by referring to herself as "a stain on women." The use of the word "stain" conveys permanent

discoloration, which is significant because Lucrece is repeatedly described as being white or ivory prior to her rape. “Stain” also has sexual undertones, suggesting the bodily fluid that might have been expelled during Tarquin’s brutal attack on Lucrece’s body. In this speech, Lucrece emphasizes that instead of conforming to social norms and relating to women who have maintained their chaste images, she now stands out in her world like a blemish on a white background. Lucrece continues to compare herself to other women when she declares that she is “no more to rank / Among the Roman matrons” (19.90-91) and when she gives her final speech before her suicide:

Then with your humours here my grief ends too:
My stain I thus wipe off, call in my sighs,
And in hope of this revenge, forbear
Even to my death to fall one passionate tear;
Yet, lords, that you may crown my innocence
With your best thoughts, that you may henceforth know
We are in the same heart we seem in show...
Let all the world learn of a Roman dame
To prize her life less than her honoured fame.
(19.134-143)

Lucrece addresses this speech to a room full of men, which furthers the argument that she, unlike Tullia, enables male-male relationships and, more importantly, structures her monologue as a performance *for* men. Lucrece’s use of second-person pronouns such as “you” and “your” suggests that she is well aware that she is performing her honour and her suicide, which occurs a few lines later, for Collatine and his kinsmen. Additionally, by switching to the plural pronoun “we,” Lucrece reinforces her affiliation with this group of men. Lucrece’s final lines in this speech, and in the play, “Let all the world know of a Roman dame / To prize her life less than her honoured fame,” confirms Lucrece’s awareness of womens’ emulous relationships with one another. Lucrece is

conscious of the fact that future generations will hear of her struggle and, more importantly, hearing of her choice to preserve her honourable reputation, will model themselves according to her actions. Although Lucrece directs this line at “all the world,” her frequent need to compare herself to other women reveals that Lucrece is targeting future females in this section of the monologue and acknowledging the pattern of emulous female-female bonds in her world.

Tullia who, to use Carter’s words, is “killed in an appropriately masculine manner” (64), draws an even stricter division between herself and Lucrece by welcoming her brutal death on the battlefield, but Tullia is also comparable to the supremely feminine protagonist because of the connection she makes between her death and the impression that she will leave for posterity. Certain that he and his wife will be slain shortly, Tarquin pleads with Tullia:

Fair Tullia, leave me; save thyself by flight,
Since mine is desperate; behold, I am wounded
Even to the death. There stays within my tent
A winged jennet – mount his back and fly –
Live to revenge my death, since I must die.
(24.20.24)

Tarquin and Tullia have been an inseparable unit since the beginning of the play, with Tullia always giving her input on matters from which women are traditionally excluded from; in this speech by contrast, Tarquin attempts finally to detach himself from his wife and to force her outside the masculine space of the battlefield. The motifs of flight and mounting in this section of text echo Tullia’s speech in Scene 1, when she tells Tarquin, “I am no wife of Tarquin’s if not king: / Oh, had Jove made me man, I would have mounted / Above the base tribunals of the earth / Up to the clouds, for pompous sovereignty” (25-28). While Tullia associates ascendance and mounting with victory,

Tarquin connects such actions with escape, which, ironically, points to the couple's fall from power in the play. Tullia continues to toy with the notion of flight in her response to Tarquin, choosing to keep her feet firmly on the battlefield:

Had I the heart to tread upon the bulk
Of my dead father, and to see him slaughtered,
Only for the love of Tarquin and a crown,
And shall I fear death more than loss of both?
No, this is Tullia's fame; rather than fly
From Tarquin, 'mongst a thousand swords she'll die.
(24.25-30).

By referring to Servius as "bulk," Tullia dehumanizes her father and transforms him into a object: a strategy that, considering how women are typically the objectified figures in her society, also feminizes Servius. Additionally, Tullia's description of her father reinforces her emotional detachment from his death, which is another means by which Tullia denies the more emotional and fragile feminine role that is customary in her environment. Tullia also dismisses Tarquin's authority and takes ownership of her fate by answering her own question with a self-assured and sharp, "No" and emphasizes this desire for personal autonomy further by speaking of herself in third person. Tullia rejects Tarquin's suggestion of flight because, in this particular situation, such a word conveys retreat, and as the final line shows, Tullia would prefer to stay and welcome combat. Tullia's switch from using the first person pronoun to the third person pronoun not only reflects her narcissistic attitude, but also makes the final line of the speech read like an epitaph. Like Lucrece, Tullia wants to have her memory permanently inscribed in history, in a favourable manner, of course. But while Lucrece wants to be remembered as the embodiment of the chaste, feminine ideal, Tullia wants to be remembered for her warrior-like courage. Tullia's final line in the play, "Come on, ye slaves, and make this earth

divine!” (24.42-43), reasserts her bloodthirsty image and establishes a critical contrast between Tullia and Lucrece. Tullia’s command that the men “make this earth divine” by shedding her blood, can be read alongside Lucrece’s line in Shakespeare poem in which, referring to her tears, the protagonist bemoans that she will “[season] the earth with showers of silver brine” (796). This contrast between blood and tears, the former bodily fluid indicating masculinity and the latter indicating femininity, reinforces the vastly different imprints that these two women want to leave behind. By drawing upon Shakespeare’s language and toying with it to enforce Tullia’s soldierly demeanor, Heywood makes a mockery out of the rigid gender categories that the Lucretia legend establishes. When perusing the battlefield, Valerius informs Collatine, “Besides [Tarquin] lies the queen, / Mangled and hewn amongst the Roman soldiers” (24.52-53), reaffirming Tullia’s sense of belonging in the masculine sphere and also providing her with a markedly grotesque final image. Although Tullia’s disfigured body might appear to distance her from Lucrece who presumably had a less gruesome death with the swipe of a knife, Tullia’s deformation mirrors the mutilation that Lucrece’s body is subjected to due to sexual violence. Thus, while there are clear barriers between these two characters, which place them in textual competition with one another, both women become figures whose violated bodies reflect the perilous outcome of a patriarchal, aggressively masculine society.

In the scene when Collatine returns home with his men in Heywood’s play, Brutus encourages the noticeably grief-stricken Lucrece to share her plight by saying, “Speak, lady; you are hemmed with your friends. / Girt in a pale of safety, and environed / And circled in a fortress of your kindred” (19.68-70). This statement portrays friendship

as stable, comforting, and secure, which is a strikingly idealistic and distorted view, considering how Lucrece is about to reveal that she has been sexually violated by her and Collatine's kinsman. As this chapter has argued, Heywood consistently disrupts such romantic perspectives on friendship, which were prevalent in early modern English Humanist discourse, by satirizing the excessively competitive nature of male bonding and revealing the dangers that this friendship model poses to women. He achieves this mockery of emulative homosocial friendship by providing a more extensive examination of the chastity wager between the Roman soldiers that Shakespeare summarizes in 'The Argument,' and by exaggerating the combative attitudes amongst the men in the camp. The misogynistic songs that Valerius performs for the soldiers intensify Heywood's parody of ideal male friendship and emphasize the tenuous positions that women hold in the male-centred environment of the play. Like Shakespeare, Heywood directs our focus to both rivalrous and compassionate female-female relations, and, to a greater degree than Shakespeare, stresses the prevalence of these bonds by showing the audience just how influential Lucrece is to her maid, and by positioning Tullia in the narrative as the female protagonist's impetuous hyper-masculine foil. While repeatedly putting Lucrece and Tullia into competition with one another, Heywood also draws parallels between the two women during their deaths, emphasizing their desires to leave imprints on history and, most importantly, demonstrating the devastating impact that the play's cutthroat, male-controlled society can have on the female body and mind, whether the woman follows accepted feminine expectations like Lucrece or overthrows them like Tullia. Heywood's use of extreme and frequently shocking humour offers a much more developed and harsher critique of emulous relationships, both between men and between women, than

Shakespeare does in his narrative. As the following chapter will argue, Middleton, too, creates a satiric Lucretia narrative and is even more forceful than Heywood in his critique of male competitiveness and his celebration of female unity as a form of defence against male oppression.

Chapter Three

“Like the three sisters”: Middleton’s Celebration of Female Bonds in *The Ghost of Lucrece*

While Heywood critiques virtuous male friendship by making the soldiers’ interactions a focal point in his text and portrays these interactions as childishly competitive and outright foolish, Middleton gives Lucrece *herself* the opportunity to expose the hypocritical and hazardous nature of the male bonds that govern her world. Like Shakespeare’s poem, Middleton’s text is concerned with Lucrece’s psychological condition following Tarquin’s sexual abuse. What distinguishes Middleton from Shakespeare, however, is Middleton’s choice to ignore Tarquin’s own personal struggle leading up to the rape and, instead, to make Lucrece’s battle and her opinions about the corruption of both her body and her patriarchal environment his principal focus. As Donald Jellerson observes, scholars like Heather Dubrow categorize *Ghost* as a form of “complaint poetry” in which “famous women return from the grave to lament the conditions that led to their deaths” (fn.6 77). Although *Ghost* can be read as such, Laura Bromley’s suggestion that “we shift our perspective from that of complaint to that of satire” is a useful one because it both affords Lucrece much-deserved agency and makes the poem’s mockery of male tyranny far more effective (264). Bromley writes:

If Middleton’s purpose, unlike that of the complaints, was to reveal the immorality of his society, no one could better speak of this than Lucrece, envisioned not...as a woman striving to purify herself, as in Shakespeare’s poem, but as a creature infected by the diseases of society, tormented but forever trapped in a union with Tarquin. (“The Lost Lucrece” 264)

By labelling Lucrece a satirist, as opposed to a lamenting figure pining for a better fate, Bromley not only demonstrates Lucrece’s significant social and political function but

also removes any sense of self-pity or peevishness from Lucrece's character, portraying her, instead, as an individual with fierce wit and knowledge about the tyranny surrounding her.

The tone of *Ghost* is drastically altered if the poem is read as satire instead of complaint. As the following speech shows, Lucrece the satirist does not simply express lamentation, but maintains the voice of a wise and clever critic who belittles supposedly honourable male relations. Lucrece denounces her rapist for completely abandoning the noble principles that he is expected to adhere to:

Tarquin my kinsman: O divinity,
Where art thou fled? Hast thou forsook thy sphere?
Where's virtue, knighthood and nobility?
Faith? Honour? Piety? They should be near,
For "kinsman" sounds all these. They are not here.
Tarquin my kinsman: was it thou didst come
To sack my Collatine's Collatium?
(150-155)

If read as complaint poetry, Lucrece's numerous rhetorical questions might simply indicate her hopelessness or her mourning for a time when individuals, noblemen in particular, would wholly devote themselves to and protect their family and friends. However, if the poem is read as satire, Lucrece's tone is no longer melancholic; it is sardonic, and her questions become direct accusations, indicting Tarquin for being a hypocrite and a degenerate who has violently disregarded his loyalty to his kin. (It is important to note that Lucrece's husband Collatine and Tarquin are second cousins (150N), hence Lucrece's use of the word "kinsman"). By repeating "kinsman" and naming the various principles associated with the word, Lucrece reinforces her mocking tone and places herself in a position superior to Tarquin, whose cruel actions, she suggests, demonstrate his inability to comprehend the true meaning of "kinsman."

Lucrece's repetition of "kinsman," therefore, is not merely an act of bemoaning the loss of dedicated kin, it shows Lucrece stressing that she is making a serious argument that proves that Tarquin, and his society, are brutally violating their moral principles. By switching from the auxiliary verb "should" in the line "They should be here" to the present indicative verb "are" in the line "They are not here," Lucrece strengthens her position as social critic, signalling the virtuous manner in which kinsmen should act and then plainly stating the ignoble way in which men like Tarquin are actually acting.

Lucrece's terse and frequently monosyllabic expression in these lines, which, notably, are answers to her own questions, also accentuates her bluntness and depicts her as a self-assured figure who is fully aware that her society has lost its integrity. In the final line of the verse, when Lucrece refers to herself as "Collatine's Collatium," the protagonist further demonstrates her sharp wit, making a mockery of the way that men in her society treat women's bodies like battlegrounds for homosocial struggles and likely parodying her own position as Collatine's property. Lucrece's use of alliteration and assonance in this particular phrase also has a comedic effect and contributes to her incisive critique of the ways in which her body is branded to signal male ownership. As this particular section of *Ghost* reveals, if we follow Bromley and interpret Lucrece as a satirist, the female figure can be seen to profess cleverness and knowledge more than grief, creating a narrative that reprimands patriarchal culture more forcefully than Shakespeare's or Heywood's texts do.

As the poem progresses, Lucrece's judgment of Tarquin, Collatine, and her society as a whole becomes increasingly harsh, and such shrewd, powerful criticism provides the protagonist with a degree of personal agency that exceeds the power that

either Shakespeare or Heywood affords their Lucrece characters. Challenging overly optimistic interpretations of Middleton's Lucrece and defending the poem's categorization as "female complaint" (1986), Shand argues, "Though the poem's satirical and vengeful impulses are strong... the impotent status of Lucrece's circumscribed condition is even stronger: there is no avenger to hear her hell-bound ghost, and in any event Tarquin is already dead and damned with her. Her potential is confined to lament" (1987). Shand's concern about Lucrece's entrapment both in hell, alongside her rapist, and in the text itself reminds readers that, regardless of Lucrece's fierce and dominant voice in *Ghost*, her position as a raped, "dead," and "damned" woman does not change. Following Shand, it is critical to keep such factors in mind when reading Middleton's text and not to read Lucrece's strong persona as an indication that *Ghost* does not also inhibit the protagonist with constraints analogous to the ones she was subjected to in patriarchal Roman society. As important as these concerns are, however, Lucrece's confinement in Middleton's poem does not make the opinions that she fiercely and intelligently voices any less powerful, as Lucrece effectively exposes the corrupt social and political situation that pulled her into hell. Chiding her society's choice of tyrannical leadership, Lucrece asserts:

Tarquin the prince: had Rome no better heirs?
Thou mistress of the world, no better men?
Thou prodigality of nature's fairs,
Are tigers kings? Mak'st thou thy throne a den?
Thy silver glittering streams black Lerna's fen?
Thy seven hills that should o'erlook thy evils
Like seven hells to nurse up Roman devils?
(164-170)

In this verse, Lucrece describes Rome, “Thou mistress of the world,” as a feminized space that is inhabited and led by animalistic, predatory men or “tigers.” This depiction both reiterates the misogynist idea that the female body is a territory that exists for male domination and also challenges the civilized image of the Roman man. The reference to tigers seems to be an instance of Middleton’s borrowing from Shakespeare, as it bears a resemblance to Titus’s line in Shakespeare’s *Titus Adronicus* (1594), “Rome is but a wilderness of tigers” (3.1.54). When Titus, who deems himself the personification of Roman virtue, speaks this line, he is justifying his vengeful tactics to his son Lucius by arguing that their rapacious environment demands such violent conduct. Lucrece’s speech above conveys a similar sense of a hypocritical Roman world, which is praised by its male citizens for upholding civility, even though those very men act like beasts, leading tyrannical regimes and freely violating women’s bodies. Lucrece portrays Rome’s duplicitous image by transforming the dignified symbol of the “throne” into a “den,” a primitive, animalistic space. In the following line, Lucrece builds upon this criticism of Rome as a bestial local by suggesting that Rome’s “streams” are converting into Lerna, “a marsh in Argolis (a region of ancient Greece), [and] traditional home of the many-headed Hydra slain by Heracles” (Shand 168N). This reference to Lerna, which highlights a moment in Greek history where a famed male warrior destroys a sea creature set upon him by a woman (Hera), illustrates the historical pattern of men performing the role of conqueror (Slater 349). Additionally, the stark contrast between the “silver glittering streams” and “black Lerna’s fen” suggests that such men taint Rome with their violent dispositions. If we consider at this point Shakespeare’s treatment of silver in his *Lucrece*, where he associates the colour with Diana, “The silver shining queen” (786),

Middleton's choice to make the streams silver is quite evocative. Silver, according to Shakespeare's text, symbolizes female virtue and autonomy. Thus, by stating that the "silver glittering streams" have turned "black," Middleton's Lucrece stresses that female purity and power are under threat. In the final line of the verse, in which Lucrece proposes that Rome's "seven hills" have been transformed into "seven hells," the slight sound difference between "hills" and "hells" counterpoints the sharp distinction between the Rome that existed before tyranny and the dangerous Rome that exists because of tyranny. The use of the verb "nurse" also feminizes the landscape, suggesting that tyrannical men, or "Roman devils," have robbed women of their honour by defiling female bodies. As mentioned above, that feminized locale is also hellish, which further degrades women while stressing that it is men who have inflicted that deterioration.

Middleton's use of feeding motifs intensifies the poem's denunciation of bloodthirsty, animalistic "Roman devils" and strengthens Lucrece's position as a social and political critic. Much of *Ghost* presents Lucrece's body as a source of nourishment for cruel and lustful men. For instance, in the Prologue, Middleton uses graphic cannibalistic imagery to describe Lucrece's vulnerable state and the ways in which men like Tarquin are free violently to feast upon women:

Desire's true graduates read in Tarquin's books,
Be ye our stage's actors. Play the cooks:
Carve out the dantiest morsel—that's your part—
With lust-keen falchion, even in Lucrece's heart.
(47-50)

In the first line of this section, Middleton points to the pattern of emulous male bonds in the Lucretia myth, suggesting that future generations of men, or "Desire's true graduates," will learn from Tarquin and mirror his cruel crimes against women.

Middleton also uses theatrical language, labelling men “actors” and using words such as “play” and “part,” which both reinforces how men violently act upon women’s bodies and also conveys the idea that men are performing *for* other men, teaching a male audience to emulate their barbaric treatment of women. Middleton also seems to borrow from Shakespeare’s *Titus* again with the request, “Play the cooks,” mimicking Titus’s line “I’ll play the cook” (5.2.204), spoken by the play’s protagonist as he prepares to serve Tamora the bodies of her sons as a form of twisted revenge for their rape of Titus’s daughter Lavinia. In addition to using an almost direct quotation from *Titus*, Middleton creates a tragicomic effect in his representation of violence that is similar to Shakespeare’s treatment of the subject in his play. For example, Middleton uses the verb “carve” and the expression “daintiest morsel,” coding the ruthless act as a celebratory feast in the same way that Titus depicts his cannibalistic meal as a casual dinner party. The word “carve” portrays the female body as a piece of meat, while “daintiest morsel” suggests that the men are preparing a choice dish, further undermining the brutality of the situation. It is also notable that, in the scene from *Titus* to which Middleton appears to allude, Titus performs a ritualistic torture of rapists Chiron and Demetrius for the raped and mutilated Lavinia, while, in *Ghost*, the men perform their grotesque violation of the female body for other men. As Middleton’s poem continues, however, Lucrece begins to express a hunger for revenge similar to Titus’s and to plot her torture of her rapist in the afterlife. Such points of comparison between *Titus* and *Ghost* are important because Shakespeare’s play strips Rome of its noble reputation and exposes the bestial actions of Roman men. Middleton achieves a similar criticism of Roman virtue in his poem by echoing Shakespeare’s cannibalistic language, demonstrating further how patriarchal

Roman society views the female body as both the property of and sustenance for competitive males.

Middleton's Lucrece frequently criticizes this rapacious culture both by repetitively portraying her body and her chastity as sources of food, and also by converting herself from feast to feaster, embodying a typically masculine predatory persona and expressing a fierce appetite for vengeance. Lucrece warns goddesses of the prevalent threat of lust's fire: "Saints, keep your cloister-house. Vesta, make speed, / Take in thy flowers, for fear the fire consume / Thy eternal sweet virginity-perfume" (82-84). This cautioning reflects the culture of protective female companionship that Lucrece values and the ways in which that culture is in danger because of sexually abusive men. Lucrece assumes an authoritative yet nurturing role in these lines, delegating tasks with commanding verbs such as "keep," "make," and "take." The ways in which Lucrece lists the various precautions that the goddesses must take also evokes a strong sense of urgency, stressing that the threat of menacing and lustful men is imminent. Again, Middleton uses alliterative language, connecting "flowers," "fear," and "fire." By banding together flowers, which signify growth and life, with fear and fire, which signify evil and destruction, Middleton intensifies the danger that lust's invasion poses to women's productive and peaceful lives in Lucrece's world. What is most notable about this section of verse, however, is Lucrece's use of the verb "consume" to describe the fire's method of destruction. While "consume" is a conventional way to characterize a fire's extinction of its surroundings, in the context of *Ghost*, where women are considered meals for men, Middleton's use of the verb is especially evocative. In fact, a few lines later, Lucrece declares that Tarquin's flaming "desire...consumed [her] chastity to dust, /

And on [her] heart painted the mouth of lust” (89-93). Here, Lucrece does not only repeat the word “consume,” she also notes how lust has a “mouth,” coding it as a monstrous cannibal whose image is permanently marked on her body. Further in the poem, Lucrece builds this criticism of Roman men’s bestial treatment of women through the use of animalistic imagery, referring to “Rape[’s]...paws of blood and fangs of lust” (255) and proclaiming, “When tigers prey, the seely lambs must yield” (259). In *Ghost*, men such as Tarquin are evidently the tigers, making the women lambs for the men to prey upon. Lucrece criticizes this ferocious environment through her use of predatory and carnivorous language.

Lucrece’s society might force her into the passive category of lamb or prey, but, similar to Heywood’s Tullia, Middleton’s protagonist mimics the men’s tiger-like dispositions and is hungry for power, specifically revenge, continually voicing her fierce need to be fed retribution for her rape. Early in the poem, Lucrece addresses Tarquin: “To thee, I say, the ghost of what I was / Plains me and it, sith thou so long hast fed / The ravisher and starved the ravishèd” (173-175). This announcement illustrates Lucrece’s desire to disrupt the cycle of feeding that serves lecherous men’s appetites and to give those women whose virtue has been “consumed” by such men the opportunity to taste vengeance. Lucrece gives herself that opportunity by seizing the conventionally male role of the hunter, belittling Tarquin and making him her prey. She targets her rapist for his shameful and treacherous behaviour, concluding, “Thus will I haunt and hunt you to despair” (184). In addition to using animalistic rhetoric to claim a domineering position over her rapist, Lucrece uses cannibalistic language when she summons the goddess Diana to restore her chastity, portraying virtue as a form of female nourishment:

...O feed my spirit, thou food angelical,
And all chaste functions with my soul combine.
Colour my ghost with chastity, whose all
Feeds fat lean death and time in general.
(550-553)

The notion that chastity is a source of food for Lucrece is significant because, as previously argued, chastity is consumed by men. Thus, Tarquin's violent consumption of Lucrece's purity has starved his victim, who, as the verse above shows, desperately needs sustenance. Lucrece's statement that her virtue "feeds fat lean death and time in general" points to her honour's high value and the ways in which it "feeds" her world. The use of the adjective "fat" codes Lucrece's virtue as rich and enticing meat and is juxtaposed with the "lean," or bare, "death and time" that she has fed and bloated through the loss of her chastity.

Middleton also uses the motif of nursing to delineate this feeding pattern. For instance, Lucrece declares that the flame of lust is "Nursed with [her] blood, weaned with [her] tragedy, / Fed at [her] knife's sharp point upon [her] hand" (96-97). Thus, Lucrece's physical pain and her traumatic experience sustain the evil lurking in her world. One of the most evocative references to nursing in the poem occurs when Lucrece pronounces, "Thou art my nurse-child, Tarquin, thou art he... / Here's blood for milk; suck till thy veins run over, / And such a teat which scarce thy mouth can cover" (136-140). Lucrece here infantilizes the supposedly noble soldier, Tarquin. The protagonist might still be a feast for a violent man, but she also gains power through Tarquin's need for her bodily fluids. Additionally, Lucrece does not feed her rapist milk; she feeds him blood, which portrays Lucrece as a hellish or perverse motherly figure and reasserts her powerfully dangerous persona. Shand argues that this moment in the poem is not enabling for

Lucrece but is, instead, Middleton's use of "[t]he common Renaissance trope of the leaky vessel" (1986), which suggests that women are incapable "of bodily self-control" (Paster 25). Shand's analysis is a useful reminder not to overstate Lucrece's authority; however, Daileader rejects that argument and uses the notion of "the leaky vessel" to empower the protagonist and demean Tarquin. Acknowledging that "the weird eroticism of this [moment]" could be "further self-victimization," Daileader asserts that "it is also, as conjuration, *forced upon [Tarquin]*—a force-feeding of [Lucrece's] violator that reduplicates the rape upon *him*...this proposed vampiric suckling will have the effect of transforming Tarquin *himself* into a feminized leaky vessel" (78). Thus, while, as argued above, Lucrece gains agency through her desire to be fed *herself*, Daileader adds complexity to this analysis of cannibalistic language by suggesting that Lucrece takes on the role of a ruthless male figure, violating Tarquin's body and finally getting and giving a taste of revenge.

As much as Tarquin is the target of Lucrece's chastisement in Middleton's poem, the protagonist does not hesitate to scold her husband Collatine and denounce the rivalrous bonds that the men in her society build with one another, making a strong statement about the dangers of male competition and the ways in which women's bodies are owned by and at the disposal of men. Jellerson argues:

Legally speaking, Lucrece's chastity is the property of her husband, Collatine; so when prince Tarquin rapes her, the act represents one more abuse of private property by an already tyrannical regime...Tarquin's appropriation of Lucrece's body stands in for a political appropriation, for his family's having usurped property that should belong to free male citizens. (67)

As previously mentioned, when Lucrece refers to herself as "Collatine's Collatium" (155), she appears to be mocking her title as her husband's territory. Such moments in the

poem reflect Jellerson's notion that Lucrece's rape is more of a violation of Collatine's legal rights than a violation of Lucrece herself, transforming the protagonist's body into a metaphor for her society's corrupt political regime. Lucrece makes various references to her body as a piece of property in Middleton's text and such moments not only function as astute critiques of her society's objectification of women, they also openly parody the emulous male bonds that promulgate such objectification. Lucrece calls out:

Come, Collatine, the foe hath sack'd thy city,
Collatium goes to wrack. Come, Collatine.
Come, Collatine, all piety and pity
Is turned to petty treason. What is thine
Is seized upon long since, and what is mine
Carried away. True-man, thou sleep'st at Rome
Even while a Roman thief robs thee at home.
(269-275)

Lucrece intensifies her parody of Collatine's ownership of her body by using militaristic language like "sack'd," "wrack," and "seized," purposefully degrading her own body and speaking of it as if she has no personal connection to it. Lucrece addresses Collatine as if she were summoning a soldier to action, extending her mockery of her society's representation of women's bodies as competitive male battlefields. Again, Middleton repeats the phrase "Come, Collatine" three times in as many lines, emphasizing the futility of Lucrece's cry for help and Collatine's distance from and failure to protect his wife. Lucrece also uses possessive language such as "thine," to refer to her body as Collatine's possession, and "mine," to refer to her purity and her reputation. These lines mark an important distinction between what is at stake for Collatine and what is at stake for Lucrece: Lucrece's body (i.e., Collatine's land) has been "seized" through rape, but it still remains in his possession; Lucrece's chastity, which is her most critical possession, however, is "carried away" and permanently lost. Like Shakespeare, who places blame

on Collatine for gloating about Lucrece's purity (33-5), Middleton targets Collatine in this section of *Ghost*, but his criticism is even stronger. Middleton's Lucrece first compliments Collatine by referring to him as "True-man" but immediately undermines that compliment and challenges Collatine's warrior identity by denouncing him for sleeping while Tarquin invades his territory. Furthermore, she emphasizes the corruption in her society by labelling Tarquin a "Roman thief," stressing how, within the perimeters of supposedly "civilized" Rome, criminal, barbaric behaviour is taking place. In this verse, Lucrece's focus on Collatine's "foe" and the "Roman thief" Tarquin accentuates the ways in which the protagonist's rape is considered to be of greater consequence to a homosocial battle between men, than a violent crime against Lucrece.

In the following verses, Lucrece adds to her parodic commentary on competitive male friendship and highlights how, even though she is the one who has experienced brutal physical and emotional violation, Collatine's and Tarquin's rivalry takes precedence. Additionally, Lucrece demonstrates a wife's subordinate role in her society, and the dangers of such subordination, by underlining Collatine's distance from their home. Lucrece continues relentlessly to beckon her husband:

Come, Collatine. 'tis Lucrece bids thee come,
Or shall I send my pursuivant of groans
Unto proud Rome from poor Collatium
To make all private means by public moans,
Discoursing my black story to the stones?
Come, Collatine, 'tis Tarquin's dreadful drum
That conjures me to call, and thee to come.
(276-282)

This verse marks another moment in the text where Middleton seems to be drawing inspiration from Shakespeare's *Titus* in order to strip away Rome's noble façade and comment upon its deeply hostile and uncivil environment. The allusion to *Titus* appears

when Lucrece suggests that her “black story” be told “to the stones,” resembling Titus’s speech in 3.1 where he tells Lucius, “Therefore I tell my sorrows to the stones.../ A stone is silent, and offendeth not, / And tribunes with their tongues doom men to death” (35-48). Titus’s speech, in which he chooses to share his plight with stones instead of the tribunes in order to avoid harsh judgment, relates to Lucrece’s struggle because she, too, is battling to be heard and, once her story is voiced to the public and her loss of purity is publicized, Lucrece will face tremendous scrutiny. Of course, as Lucrece’s speech above shows, the protagonist would prefer to reveal her pain to her husband, who is not answering her pleas. The fact that Lucrece initially declares “‘tis Lucrece bids thee to come” and then, later in the speech, announces, “‘tis Tarquin’s dreadful drum / That conjures me to call, and thee to come” is critical because this shift functions as a criticism of Collatine’s privileging of soldierly male-male bonds over his relationship with his wife. Lucrece’s addition of Tarquin’s drum, an instrument that signifies military spirit, suggests that the sound of Collatine’s rival warrior invading his territory is more powerful and more important than the sound of Lucrece’s cry for help. Lucrece’s use of militaristic language, therefore, not only mocks her role as a human site for male combat, it also satirizes how Collatine’s obsession with defeating his male peers leads him to neglect his duties to his wife.

Bromley makes an important distinction between Middleton’s and Shakespeare’s interpretation of the Lucretia myth which helps highlight the ways in which *Ghost* criticises Collatine’s treatment of Lucrece. Bromley writes, “In Shakespeare’s poem and in all of its sources Collatine is with the Roman army at its camp in Ardea. But in *The Ghost of Lucrece*, Collatine is in Rome...Lucrece states outright her belief that if he had

been at home, rather than in Rome, she would not have been raped” (“The Lost Lucrece” 267-268). Middleton makes Collatine appear even more irresponsible and neglectful of Lucrece by not locating him in Ardea where he would be performing his soldierly duties. Instead, Collatine is merely spending time in Rome away from his wife without any good reason, leaving Lucrece to maintain the household by herself and, more critically, leaving her in a vulnerable position. Lucrece explains the implications of Collatine’s absence from the home:

How like Arachne turnéd I my wheel!
Each of my maids how like a sheperdness!
Had Collatine, my shepherd, held the reel,
We four might well have made a country mess.
But one abroad makes one at home the less.
My Collatine, my shepherd, was at Rome,
And left poor me to feed his flock at home.
(353-359)

Although Lucrece is confined to the domestic sphere because of her society’s strict gender expectations, as the verse above shows, Lucrece is quite productive in the home and appears to participate happily in traditionally feminine household activities. Lucrece even proudly boasts about her weaving skills by comparing herself to Arachne, the figure in Greek mythology who challenged Athena to a spinning competition and was transformed into a spider as a result (Janet Parker et al. 63). The enthusiastic and celebratory tone in this passage is strikingly different from the biting, dark verses previously discussed, emphasizing the sense of joy and purpose that Lucrece gains from her domestic duties alongside her maids. Of course, the protagonist’s satiric voice is not lost in this section of the poem, as Lucrece uses this moment to criticize Collatine for his absence from the home. Notably, Lucrece does not pine for the company of her husband because she desires his affection; she requires his assistance with overseeing the

household. This reasoning reinforces how Middleton's Lucrece is not merely a hyper-feminine, lamenting woman; she is a productive, hard-working, and valuable figure who keeps Collatine's home in order while he does what he pleases in Rome. The repetition of "Collatine, my shepherd" is not an expression of endearment, but, instead, has a sardonic effect and emphasizes Lucrece's frustration with Collatine's absence and challenges his image as a dedicated, noble husband. The rhyming of "Rome" and "home" in the concluding lines positions the two opposing choices that Lucrece believes Collatine has; he can either be "abroad" or spend time with and help his wife in the household. Lucrece clearly outlines how Collatine's prioritizing "Rome" over "home" stifles domestic activities, but, as the protagonist continues her rebuke, she, more importantly, stresses the role that her husband's distance played in Tarquin's brutal assault.

Those moments in Middleton's text where he emphasizes Lucrece's performance of domestic tasks, while illustrating her sense of authority and productiveness, also focus attention on the harmonious relations between women in Lucrece's household and provide a significant contrast to and, thus, critique of the envious and hostile friendships between the men of the Roman camp. Daileader argues that "The feminine employments of spinning and weaving are only touched on in the 'Argument' of Shakespeare's poem... Middleton, however, celebrates these traditionally feminine tasks. Ghost boasts of having 'deified' the gods and goddesses she wove into her bed's canopy, and then turns to a nostalgic depiction of the peaceful domesticity that the rape disrupted" (80). Daileader's argument can be built upon by analysing Middleton's depiction of intrusive men. Middleton indicates that, while, to use the words of Heywood's Brutus, women are perceived as "tortures and disturbance[s] unto men" in Lucrece's society, violent men

such as Tarquin are the real threat and disturb the amicable and balanced relations between women. Lucrece plainly states that, prior to Tarquin's intrusion, she and her female companions happily carried out their work as a friendly group:

The night before Tarquin and lust came hither—
Ill token for a chaste memorial—
My maids and I, poor maid, did spin together
Like the three sisters which the fates we call,
And fortune lent us wheels like worlds. On mine alone
Stood fortune reeling on a rolling stone.
(290-296)

The motif of movement that the act of spinning creates and the symbol of the wheel signal mobility and freedom, each of which are aspects of Lucrece's life that are stolen from her when Tarquin rapes her. Wheels also symbolize unity and mimic the strong connection between Lucrece and her maids, whom she considers her "sisters." The fact that these sisters are the three fates and that Lucrece includes herself among this group reflects the level of control that Lucrece has over her own future. As made evident through her rape, Lucrece does not have authority over her fate and this lack of control is further emphasized in the "reeling" of the wheels. The movement in this verse is not consistently smooth and harmonious; instead, as Shand notes, the word "reeling" means "whirling unsteadily" and is the act of "winding up thread," which is a task that "Collatine should have been present to do" (296N). Thus, Lucrece adds another scathing remark about her husband's absence, which both affects the household chores and leaves room for "Tarquin and lust" to intrude. The enjambment on the second last line makes the word "alone" a focal point and accentuates Lucrece's vulnerability and lack of protection, which supplements Shand's argument above. However, in the following verse, Lucrece's tone becomes livelier, as she reflects on the songs that she would sing with her maids as

they worked and fondly recalls the swift movement of their wheels. Again, Middleton employs repetition in an exaggerated manner, consistently referring to the wheels whirling about and the movement of the women's fingers, and echoing the phrase "Sing merrily, my maids" (298).

Such excessive repetition of vigorous and cheerful activities is not just a portrayal of happier and safer times in Lucrece's life prior to Tarquin's violent intervention; it creates a major point of contrast between the enabling bonds between women and the constraining bonds between men in the world of the text. Lucrece continues to emphasize the strong connections between herself and her maids when she states, "but think what maidens be: / They are the very string that ties their hearts, / The pillars of their souls' pure purity" (304-306). Although these lines point to the ways in which Lucrece and her maids are bound together through their common "purity," which is a gender expectation that they are forced to adhere to because of patriarchal pressures, the women's act of coming together to cope with and protect each other from societal scrutiny displays a level of dedication and closeness that is not displayed between male relations in the Lucretia narrative. Lucrece, however, does portray a competitive side that mirrors the hostility that men demonstrate toward one another in her society. She places herself in opposition to "Roman dames" who are "tickled with pride and lust" while she remained "at home" where she "grated [her] wheel upon the axeltree" (346-352). There is clearly a division between chaste and bawdy women that Lucrece establishes; but, unlike Shakespeare's and Heywood in their Lucretia narratives, in *Ghost* Middleton puts much more emphasis on both the comforting structure of female-female friendship and, more

importantly, the ways in which women work together as a group to thrive socially and economically.

Conclusion

By discerning and analyzing connections between Shakespeare's, Heywood's, and Middleton's Lucretia narratives, scholars can better understand the competitive dynamic between men that is persistent in early modern representations of Roman culture and how that dynamic endangers and can ultimately destroy women. The inclusion of Heywood's and Middleton's lesser-known texts in this analysis not only offers a parodic perspective on the ways in which early modern English society emulates the violent, hyper-masculine elements of Roman society, but opens up new avenues for exploring the position of the women who are victimized by male-male bonds. As I have argued in this project, Shakespeare's poem does function as a critique of male homosocial relations and the dangers those relations pose to women, but Heywood's and Middleton's texts provide much more explicit and effective criticisms of these types of friendships.

Sedgwick's and Girard's theory of the "erotic triangle" (Sedgwick 21) has played a major role in the development of this analysis, but, as I have shown, it is imperative that scholars move beyond this triangular structure to take into account the competitive environments of such texts and the ways in which emulous bonds of various kinds dominate various characters' lives. Sedgwick's and Girard's theory, while prompting an exploration of how women are victimized by male friendship, has also encouraged this project to move beyond victimization. Inspired by Callaghan's idea of early modern women as "excluded participants" (7), this thesis offers an in-depth examination of how the women trapped between violent men structure their own homosocial friendships and seek to survive in their patriarchal worlds. Female characters do not feature as prominently as male characters do in scholarship on emulation and rivalrous bonds in

early modern literature. This project highlights the ways in which both male *and* female identities are dependent on competitive same-sex relations in Shakespeare's, Heywood's, and Middleton's Lucretia narratives, drawing attention to how such friendships simultaneously enable and constrain the individuals involved. As the sections of this thesis concerned with female homosocial bonds demonstrate, the women, like the men around them, develop potentially destructive bonds with members of their own sex, although there is a degree of intimacy and compassion between the female characters in these texts that does not prevail in the relationships between male characters. Such a contrast, I have argued, is inextricably linked to the women's shared tenuous positions in their patriarchal worlds and their need to align themselves closely with other women in an attempt to endure the male restraints to which they are all subjected to. I hope that my work on homosocial bonds might encourage future scholars to not only include women in their discussions of emulation, but also simultaneously to examine the ways in which women are constrained by tyrannous environments *and* to explore how they cope with such danger while asserting varying levels of authority.

Although the scope of this thesis did not allow for a detailed discussion of the political outcome of Lucrece's rape, the destruction of a tyrannous regime and the founding of the Roman republic, it is important to mention Shakespeare's, Heywood's, and Middleton's treatment of this aftermath and consider its impact on this project's argument that these texts criticize patriarchal culture. One major question arises: do these authors ultimately celebrate the fact that peace in Rome has been restored at the expense of Lucrece's body and, subsequently, her life? Kewes compares Shakespeare's and Heywood's approach to the political context of the Lucretia legend. She argues:

By placing Lucrece's rape in the context of power struggles extending from Tarquin's regicide and usurpation to his death and the foundation of the republic, Heywood necessarily abandons the psychological and moral complexities of Shakespeare's treatment, yet he makes the rape's political consequences far more momentous. (247-48)

As Kewes notes, Heywood's narrative is more obviously politically driven than Shakespeare's, which primarily highlights Lucrece's personal plight. Unlike Shakespeare, who, at the end of his poem, briefly focuses on Brutus's plan to avenge Lucrece's rape and overthrow the monarchy, Heywood not only incorporates various characters' perspectives on the political atmosphere throughout the play, but also includes the battle that defeats Tarquin and rids Rome of its corrupt leadership. But that does not mean that Shakespeare does not conclude his poem on a celebratory note. The final stanzas of Shakespeare's text boasts of Brutus's plan to publicly shame Tarquin for his "foul offence" (1852) and instigate a revolt in order to achieve "Tarquin's everlasting banishment" (1855). While the ending of Heywood's play can be read as comparably victorious, such triumph is undercut by moments during the battle when the soldiers revert to foolish or excessive behaviour. First, there is the scene in which Scevola accidentally kills the Secretary instead of Porsenna and punishes himself by burning his own hand off (22.14-33) and then there is the concluding scene in which Collatine, Horatius, Lucretius, and Scevola childishly argue over who gets to kill Tarquin (24. 83-87). The question of whether or not Shakespeare's and Heywood's narratives commemorate the social change generated by Lucrece's rape is evidently much more complex than it might seem, and such complexity deserves further critical attention.

Middleton's *Ghost*, however, plainly and frequently demonstrates the brutal cost that Lucrece had to pay for Rome's freedom and does not have the same victorious tone

as the other two Lucretia texts. As Jellerson argues, “The poem turns . . . not to political revolution—the overthrow of tyranny in favour of republicanism—but to biblical revelation, a vision of the corrupt world’s inevitable destruction” (59). Unlike Shakespeare’s and Heywood’s narratives, Middleton’s *Ghost* does not conclude with a republican celebration. Instead, the pain that Lucrece faced because of her rape and *still* faces in hell with her rapist remains the focal point of the poem. Lucrece’s final line, “Now Tereus meets with ravished Philomel, / Lucrece with Tarquin in the hall of hell” (596-97), and The Epilogue’s final line, “First Tarquin-life clad her in death’s array. / Now Tarquin-death hath stol’n her life away” (653-654), are void of any hope for a promising future. Thus, *Ghost*’s criticism of the violence that women face at the hands of cruel men remains pronounced until the very end of the poem. Middleton’s, Shakespeare’s, and Heywood’s treatment of the political ramifications of Lucrece’s rape require comprehensive studies, and this thesis hopes to inspire such projects.

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