

3-2006

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Citation of this paper:

Solga, Kim, "Rape's Metatheatrical Return: Rehearsing Sexual Violence Among the Early Moderns" (2006). *Department of English Publications*. 9.

<https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/englishpub/9>

Rape's Meta-theatrical Return:
Rehearsing Sexual Violence Among the Early Modernsⁱ

In a recent article in *Theatre Journal*,ⁱⁱ Jody Enders tells the story of Mrs Coton who, on the night of 1 May 1395, was gang-raped in Chelles, France, by a group of men in town to see a show. Historians, Enders argues, have long employed this story “as one of the foundational narratives of medieval French theatre history”ⁱⁱⁱ but only after effacing Mrs Coton, her trauma and her shame from the standard annals of the discipline. The rape itself has been regarded as a diversionary incident that led, happily, to the discovery that there might have been a play. Enders uses Mrs Coton to write a revisionist history of her own, and along the way she makes several claims about the relationship between theatre, extra-theatrical sexual violence, and the latter's routine elision in medieval Europe. She suggests, provocatively, that rape's normative, even morally instructive stage representations in the medieval period may have proved an important virtual standard by which the crime was “habituated” in broader legal and social arenas, and vice versa. And, in an important corollary argument about intentionality, Enders asks: “what are the moral ramifications of theatre's own scripting and virtuality? If the script of a play constitutes a virtual performance, then is it not the case that a conspiracy to commit rape also constitutes a script that is legally actionable even if never performed?”^{iv}

I rehearse Enders' argument because its own ramifications are much farther-reaching than its limited historical context may at first imply. Enders is not just reclaiming the rape of Mrs Coton from its erasure at the hands of medieval theatre history; she is asking theatre historians and theorists to pause a moment over the ethics of the script and of performance, and to ask ourselves for what, exactly, theatre is willing to take responsibility. At what point do our basic

scholarly assumptions about the “essential” difference between, say, rehearsing a rape on stage and plotting a rape in the “real” world begin to break down? If, as Enders points out, performance studies has come of age assessing “theatrical performativity” as a vehicle for “social change,”^v what are the consequences, for all of us who count ourselves performance scholars, of understanding theatre as a potentially malevolent, as well as a potentially efficacious, form of public art and expression? How do we account for those moments when theatre poses genuine risk? And, more importantly, how do we build a response to, an ethics of, that risk into our own work as scholars and practitioners?

As I probe these questions, I too find myself transported to another moment in our theatrical past. It is London, 1594. A young noblewoman is raped and mutilated in the woods outside the city.^{vi} She is educated enough to know the standard script to which she must adhere in order to make her rape and its authors known to the authorities and to clear herself of any wrongdoing. She also understands that, because she has had her tongue and hands badly mauled, there is no way she will be able to perform the “ritualized recitation”^{vii} rape’s telling demands according to precedent and expectation. A chance for justice, the shape of her future, perhaps even her life hangs in the balance.

This paper is about the pernicious theatricalization of sexual violence in early modern England,^{viii} a world and more than two centuries away from that fateful night when Mrs Coton makes theatre history. Like Enders, I am interested in the moments when theatre and sexual violence converge – specifically, in the ways in which early modern culture constructs rape victims as actors in a perverse theatre of trauma designed to externalize and thereby legitimate the crimes they are ostensibly reporting. How, and to what end, does rape become a script, an event constituted after the fact in carefully arranged word and gesture, to be performed for the

edification of an authorizing public *before* any legal appeal can be made? How does theatre figure in this arrangement? And how, as contemporary makers and readers of theatre, might we reframe it to mount a more ethical performance of sexual violence in the early modern texts we choose to study and to stage?

Echoes between the “performance” of rape on and off the early modern stage suggest that the law and the theatre may well be mutually informing where sexual violence is concerned, each working to help “habituate” the look and feel of rape for the other. Rape is never staged directly in this period,^{ix} but its exit stage left is less remarkable than its return elsewhere: having disappeared into the tiring house, the act break, the narrative, rape in the early modern theatre makes a grand re-entrance via a stock, self-consciously stagey “return”.^x The rape victim enters to her witnesses onstage and off as a contemporary Lucrece, Virginia or Philomela; she may clutch a sword or a prayer book, or her suggestively torn garments, as she passionately relates her wrong. Her use of standard symbolism and rhetoric, and her plain citation of chaste mythical precedents, serve to locate her within an ongoing extra-theatrical narrative about what rape means and how it should be reported: they both confirm her innocence and remind her male friends and relations what they must do next to avenge her/their honour. Indeed, I would suggest as a prelude to my arguments below that the most likely reason for rape’s inevitable stage absence is that its representation in the early modern theatre is designed to reflect not the experience of rape as *we* understand it – as a heinous bodily and psychic violation – but the experience of those to whom rape is reported, who can know it only as vicarious witnesses, and yet who wield the power to absolve the victim of any potential complicity and mobilize the force of the law.^{xi} Rape is staged in early modern England as it is made known in the world beyond

the stage: as a rehearsal for public confirmation, as an event that has the scent of meta-theatrics always about it.

To a contemporary viewer (and, most likely, to more than a few historical viewers as well), the tableau of rape's on-stage return is pure titillation, pure spectacle; its purpose is the sanctified sexual enjoyment of an unapproachable act of sexual violence bracketed at a safe distance from the pleasures of the theatre. But if we travel a short distance beyond the theatre, we find that this self-consciously voyeuristic convention is a well-known legal trope as well as a favoured theatrical device. Drawing on long-standing precedents in legal theory, one of the major legal documents of the period, *The Lawes Resolutions of Womens Rights* (1632), couches its advice to wronged women in a stage direction: it instructs rape victims to behave more or less as their dramatic counterparts do, using a standardized combination of show-and-tell to report their violations to trustworthy men in the nearest town and seek what justice may be forthcoming.^{xii} The processes of confession and the processes of fictional representation – the conventions of a standardized mimesis – are mutually reinforcing and determining: theatre makes rape knowable, understandable, and, most importantly for someone like Mrs Coton, believable to those who were not – could not have been – there to bear witness.

The imbrication of performance in confessing and proving rape in the early modern period appears, at first glance, to suggest the opposite of Enders' argument. Theatre seems more hero than villain in this story: a rape victim shows and tells her wrong, and the men for whom she performs lay their faith in her proof and lead her to justice. Of course, such a rosy picture avoids the hard truth of rape among the early moderns, where the crime was rarely successfully prosecuted and women were frequently disbelieved, their willingness to speak of sexual matters becoming itself a possible proof of complicity in the crime.^{xiii} Rather than use rape's meta-

theatrical return to counter Enders' provocative arguments about theatre's potential dangers, I would like to read the two side by side to tease out a few unexpected collisions. What are the consequences of theatre for the early modern rape victim? How are the conventions of the meta-theatrical return, if not exactly malignant, then not exactly benign? For whose benefit is rape's public rehearsal staged? In the early modern period, as in much of the medieval period, rape remains principally a property crime committed against a woman's male relations and stands as an emblematic threat to men's control over women's unruly bodies.^{xiv} The meta-theatrical return allows rape to take up its proper role as a phallic transgression committed and controllable within social space, as it is torn from women's bodies and identified with the men who govern and command those bodies. The risk of theatre for the early modern rape victim, then, is no less than the fate Mrs Coton suffers: as rape becomes theatre, its consequences for her body, her psychic well-being, even her future prospects fall out of the frame.

Theatre may not be the "hero" of this story, but neither need it be the condemned. In the first half of this paper I explore in depth the structure and function of the meta-theatrical return by examining the language of *The Lawes Resolutions* through several lenses, from early modern anxieties about women's sexuality to the culture's conflicted relationship with specularity to contemporary feminist performance theory. And I wonder: how does theatre work here, and how might it work differently? If *The Lawes Resolutions* implies a carefully coded performance of ravishment, what happens if we switch the codes, play the victim in a different key? In the paper's second half I venture one possible answer to that question by turning back to the theatre, to the infamous rape of Lavinia in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and the play's uncanny troubling of the conventions of rape's return. I then invoke the troubling of *Titus Andronicus* by filmmaker Julie Taymor, and advocate for her film as a possible feminist response to the

macabre tradition of rape's easy theatricalization. Taymor turns the play's penchant for all things theatrical into her medium and her message, exposing the sinister processes of the return even as she celebrates the enduring plasticity, the malleable potential, of the stage.

1. The politics of "hue and cry"

[S]he ought to goe straight way, [...] and with Hue and Cry complaine to the good men of the next towne, shewing her wrong, her garments torne, [...] and then she ought to goe to the chiefe Constable, to the Coroner, and to the Viscount, and at the next Countie to enter her Appeale [...] ^{xv}

Because it lacks a witness, rape poses a fundamental epistemological dilemma. The raped enfold their stories of suffering within their flesh, bones, hearts and brains; as Mieke Bal argues, "rape cannot be visualized because the experience is, physically as well as psychologically, *inner*. [...] In this sense, rape is by definition imagined." Taking place within the most intimate recesses of the (typically female) body and psyche, rape can only appear in social space as an aftershock, "can only exist [...] as *image* translated into signs." ^{xvi} It can only be made "real," be made to matter (made a legal or a social matter) at a distance from the suffering body, as a carefully codified representation of an arguably inaccessible event.

In early modern England, the anxiety circulating around the defining lack of an objective proof of rape, combined with misogynist prejudices about women's sexual independence, meant that the legal burden fell directly upon victims to prove rape's occurrence by *first* proving their own sexual innocence. By the time Elizabeth's reign neared its end, rape had come to be defined by the absence of a woman's consent to sexual intercourse with any man who was not her husband. ^{xvii} For a significant portion of the 13th through the early 16th centuries rape was largely a property crime, centered on a woman's chastity as her family's asset and defined principally by its "theft" from them with or without her consent. ^{xviii} Beginning with the Bracton treatise in the

early 13th century rape is elided with defloration,^{xxix} and then in the first statute of Westminster (1275) with the abduction of a marriageable woman by, or her or elopement with, “an unacceptable suitor.”^{xxx} In her recent re-assessment of medieval rape law, Kim Phillips helpfully notes that the Glanville treatise of 1187 had earlier placed particular emphasis on the raped body as bleeding or assaulted, and thus on rape as, if not a specifically sexual crime, without question a corporal one.^{xxxi} As time passed and the interests of the gentry gained legal and political prominence, legislative emphasis began to shift away from the physical experience of the rape victim and onto her symbolic commodity value.^{xxxii} By 1285 rape was fully enshrined as a property crime, and remained so until statute changes immediately before and near the end of Elizabeth’s reign, in 1555 and 1597, began once more to focus rape’s specificity on the body – but this time on the *sexualized* body, and specifically on the absence of a woman’s sexual consent in determining the crime. In her influential reading of early modern English rape law, Nazife Bashar has argued that this new focus helpfully reframed rape as “a crime against the person,”^{xxxiii} but in practice the old emphasis on property remained, to be awkwardly negotiated alongside the new emphasis on women’s agency. (Bashar notes that convictions remained most likely in cases where rape’s economic consequences were most clearly tangible – in the assault of young virgins [42]). In fact, the 16th century emphasis on a woman’s non-consent as the ultimate arbiter of rape, combined with misogynist assumptions about women’s loose sexual appetites, resulted in renewed fears of what Deborah Burks calls women’s sexual “defection.” Was she raped, or did she give herself (her husband’s property) away? Failing to prove non-consent, a woman became not only complicit in the crime but, in popular prejudice, her own rapist.^{xxxiv}

So rape comes, by the turn of the 17th century, to rest on the proof of female sexual innocence, but the proof is trickier than it sounds because an “innocent” rape victim not only must refuse consent to her attacker, but must also find a way to make her non-consent visible to a public deeply skeptical of women’s sexual motives. In my epigraph above, *The Lawes Resolutions of Womens Rights (LR)* describes a simple but effective solution to this conundrum, arguing that a victim’s successful appeal to the authorities relies on two separate but related actions: verbal complaint combined with physical demonstration (the victim must lament her suffering while “shewing” her wrong by offering up her “garments torne”).^{xxv} Neither word nor image is enough: although the early moderns’ emerging sense of interiority typically registers as a laddering of the power of language over the veracity of visual imagery, rape confounds the dynamic. Proof of rape’s interior affect cannot easily or assuredly be seen, since the crime is by definition invisible (taking place, as Bal argues, deep inside the body), but it also cannot be established by words alone, since popular prejudice imagines women to be notorious dissemblers, and since for an innocent woman merely to speak of sexual matters implies, confoundingly, a troubling lack of innocence. Images are rakes, and words are a trap; the solution is a turn toward the complex semiotics of the theatre.

Michael O’Connell’s recent investigation into early modern humanism’s distrust of the visual makes a special case for theatre as the bane of humanist iconoclasm. Since its “stock in trade” is neither image nor language but the performative interpenetration of the two^{xxvi} the theatre, O’Connell argues, is one of the chief cultural sites at which humanism’s anti-visual bias is explicitly challenged in the early modern period. Against the impoverishment of the image on one hand and the totalizing claims of language on the other, theatre argues that spectacle – defined as the weave between visual and aural, the marriage of spoken word and image – is a

legitimate “way of knowing,”^{xxvii} a pragmatic alternative to a short-sighted reliance on any one sign system. Theatre might not always show you the truth, but it can use the intersection of the visual and the aural to interrogate the legitimacy of each one’s claims. In practice, theatre should be able to catch out the liars and dissemblers, leaving audiences in possession of an at least provisional knowledge of what happened.

In light of early modern uncertainty over the transparency of image, misogynist fear of women’s tongues, and apparent appreciation for and understanding of self-conscious dramatics, *LR*’s construction of the hue and cry makes pragmatic sense. Making rape known, it implies, is a matter of staging a familiar process of show-and-tell that relies on the mutual reinforcement of word and image people will recognize from, among other places, the theatre. In the earlier treatises – Glanville and, more directly, Bracton – from which *LR* takes the bulk of its wording, verbal proclamation of the crime is always implied at the appeal stage, but primary emphasis during rape’s initial revelation is placed on a victim’s show of injury and blood; the implication is that visual evidence carries the burden of proof, and that subsequent official proclamations are made possible by that initial visual evidence.^{xxviii} *The Lawes Resolutions*, while maintaining the substance of this structure, envisions an updated spectacle that makes fully manifest the theatrical paradigm implicit in the earlier legal scripts governing rape’s telling. In *LR* rape’s revelation becomes more overtly a staged tragedy, the victim a tormented heroine: she is to go to the nearest town and raise the hue and cry by “complain[ing]”^{xxix} of the crime while at the same time showing her ripped clothes and bodily wounds in the public street. Her damaged body, spoken through her lamenting voice, will sign the truth of her narration despite its unsavoury content, producing her innocence via the dramatic convergence of action, speech and sight.

The Lawes Resolutions describes (prescribes?) rape's theatricalization as a process of making rape known, but it is actually a process of making rape *real*, a substantiation as well as a translation. (Note the structure of action embedded in all the legal scripts: only *after* a victim has properly performed her trauma for "the good men of the next towne" can she make an appeal to the authorities. The performance is designed to legitimate her legal action.) Just as in the theatre, where the heroine's "return" stands in for an act that exists only as a gap in the script, the meta-theatrical return shifts rape away from the (mysterious, unknown, feared) internal landscape of a woman's body and transforms it into an event native to public space, the matter of (and not just of matter to) the men that are that space's guardians. It is not just a re-enactment of an event that has passed; it is a "rehearsal" that is for public purposes an original, the event that can be witnessed and so can subsequently be acted upon. If rape is a negative image, a crime that trumps the eye, then it is ultimately much more than an assault on a body or its/her relations: it is an assault on knowledge itself. It points to the limits of our specular power, the limits of speech and language, the limits of humanist epistemology and its claims about women's bodies and sexuality. By reproducing her rape as a performance in which a standardized version of her suffering registers as proof of chaste intention before a body of citizens designated as its official witnesses, the victim mitigates the anxiety born both of those witnesses' failure to see her original trauma, and, beyond that, of the impossibility of their ever really knowing the truth or falsehood of her claim of non-consent. (Women's sexual pleasure is, of course, the truly worrisome intangible clouding this scene.) The return renders the raped body transparent, transforms it from an opaque cipher into a medium for their knowledge, and thus makes its social appropriation possible as the power-brokers of early modern patriarchy neutralize its larger epistemic threat by claiming it as their own. And here, in turn, lies the paradox of the meta-

theatrical return: rape is (re)staged in order to allay fears about its initial, invisible “staging”, but in the process it goes missing again, metamorphosing from a woman’s trauma into a matter of masculine honour, an occasion for heroic deeds undertaken by wronged fathers, husbands, brothers in the defense of family names and family purses.^{xxx} Theatre is a double-edged sword: it both “solves” the problem of rape – it cannot be prosecuted if it is not known, and it cannot be known if the victim refuses to raise the hue and cry – and effaces it at the same time, solves it, in fact, *by effacing it*.^{xxxii} Made a spectacle, turned into theatre, rape slips away from the woman it haunts as its inner, invisible effects effectively disappear.

The public rehearsal of rape – both in the high street, as in the legal literature, and in the early modern theatre; both in the pre-modern period and, one might argue, even today – thus relies for its functionality upon a well-preserved reality-effect. Not only does the victim need to fill the gaps left by the originary act of violence, but she must also do so without calling undue attention to the fact that she is performing a preordained role, playing both “herself” and the self she is expected/hoped/feared not to be. Although the conventions of the early modern meta-theatrical return are so stock as to be self-conscious, the performance itself needed to be seamless. Young women would have to be “coach[ed]”, lest they erred in their testimony or failed to render it believably.^{xxxiii} Standard details or plot points would be added: the woman would have been working at her chores, or otherwise ensconced in her wifely routine, when she was rudely torn from it.^{xxxiiii} In short, the return mimes a web of standardized beliefs about how women are in the world for men, staging an ideal in order to ward off the possibility that they might *not* be in the world *for (their) men alone*. It is the calculated demonstration of woman’s suffering as a function of patriarchal expectations about the “true” subject of that suffering, and of men’s authority in choosing whether or not to take that suffering seriously, making it a perfect

example of what Elin Diamond has called “patriarchal mimesis,”^{xxxiv} the process by which woman serves as man’s mirror-up-to-culture, reflecting his image of his own centrality by masking his pernicious absence from – and her complex, multiply-vectored presence at – the immediate scene of representation.

Patriarchal mimesis, a product of Platonic prejudices and Aristotelian teleology, demands that mimetic copies correspond exactly to their models, pointing to the absolute truth, the irrevocability, of the model’s cultural primacy. Following Luce Irigaray’s playful excavation of Plato’s cave in *Speculum of the Other Woman*, Diamond doesn’t buy the model-copy correlation, preferring instead to see the resulting mimetic structure as inherently unstable, self-subversive. Mimesis is always a residual act; it leaves a trail of breadcrumbs pointing to the choices it has made in constructing its universe. Likewise, theatre is a fundamentally residual space; grounded in an economy of substitutions, theatrical events always contain both more and less than a traditional (patriarchal, Euro-centric) mimetic model can account for. So what happens, Diamond asks, when the system breaks down? What happens, we might ask in turn, when the symbols, the stock narratives, the tropes and echoes by which the early moderns “know” rape begin to “break down,” grow excessively, overtly, self-referential, or appear as somehow oblique, alienated from their anticipated referents? Obviously, the question is far from theoretical, since failing to realize the return would have had serious consequences for a rape victim as well as her family. But, at the same time, the theory probes a possibility: what if, somehow, the logic of the return crept back into its performance? What might it reveal to a sympathetic audience? Could it allow us to craft an ethical, contemporary response to the early modern history of rape’s representations?

The fragmentation, the disorientation, the rage, and the gaping sense of loss that attends the sexual and psychological experience of rape in the moment of its happening and in its immediate

aftermath is, of course, what rape's rehearsal must evade even as it brings it, in surrogacy, back to life.^{xxxv} The sanitized symbols of loss – torn clothes, proper speech – organize the terrorizing confusion that attends sexual violence into a coherent metonymic structure that can sign outward from the body, make sense of the body in its neatly disavowed fragmentation. This is the groundwork of the return's "patriarchal mimesis": it hides the fractured corpus, the simultaneous sense of alienation from and entrapment within one's flesh that rape produces. In order to re-frame the meta-theatrical return as a potentially ethical performance of sexual violence, a *feminist* performance of sexual violence, we need to ask: what would it mean to re-imagine the return as a performance of just this kind of fracture, of the residue of violence (lamenting voice, torn clothes, bruised body) *unassimilated* into the pre-fabricated logic of the convention?

Although classical feminist performance theory investigates the violence of the gaze (pace Mulvey), the meta-theatrical return involves less a totalizing gaze (although the latter is hardly absent from the scene) than a collective blink, a strange *refusal* to look embedded within a pernicious, obsessive need to see. Rape's return lives on the edge of invisibility, sanitizing sexual violence for the sake of its social appropriation; a feminist strategy for the politicization of the return must play upon that edge, play with "what the given to be seen fails to show,"^{xxxvi} the "unmarked" experience of sexual violence that goes missing (is deliberately misplaced) during the tightly controlled mimesis of the return's performative transfer. What would it mean to stage rape as a rehearsal of this loss – of the loss occasioned by sexual trauma as well as the loss of specular power, the impoverishment of the witness that rape menaces and the return covers up? And what would it mean to re-cast the victim/performer neither as pure body (the feared) nor as pure symbol, idealized icon (the domesticated), but as "the emblem of a body" gesturing

uncannily, desperately, angrily at the limits of the known, the knowable, “in its newly-exposed holes and hollows”?^{xxxvii}

The public square is too high-stakes a place for such an experiment, such an unexpected, inexplicable hue and cry; to find performers willing to take the risk we need to turn back to the theatre proper, to the secular, self-conscious, early modern stage.

2. Messing up (in) the theatre of sexual trauma

Titus Andronicus is famous for its missing limbs, and Lavinia, centerpiece of its violence, is not simply famous for being raped. She is famous for out-Philomela-ing Philomela, for losing tongue and hands as well as spotless chastity to the rough handling of Demetrius and Chiron. Appearing on cue at the end of act two, Lavinia finds herself unable to enact the meta-theatrical return: without tongue or hands, she lacks the means either to show or to tell. She is a spectacular puzzle, a cipher of loss pointing incessantly, in her terrified desperation to find a way back to language, to the gap in her mouth and the stumps on her arms. Meanwhile, she leaves her father Titus, her uncle Marcus, and her brother Lucius in the dark about what exactly has happened to her, whom they ought to be fighting. A body riddled with holes, a body that becomes a hole, Lavinia exposes a crack in the logic of the meta-theatrical return. She reveals how it relies upon the ruse of a stable performance body to reflect another ruse: the ruse of public order and coherence imposed upon a fundamentally disordered, deeply disorienting experience.

Long the whipping-child of the Shakespeare canon, *Titus Andronicus* was rescued by Peter Brook and Laurence Olivier in the 1950s but only came of age with the rise of deconstruction in North American literary studies. The subsequent explosion of scholarly interest in the play came to rest on its penchant for punning and wordplay, its obsessive meta-textuality

prised through its obsession with the fragmented body.^{xxxviii} Lavinia, not surprisingly, is the silent centre of this critical action, and the substantial body of feminist criticism on the play has staged a protracted debate about whether or not Lavinia is an author when she finally scratches the names of her attackers in the sand and, if so, what kind of author she might be.^{xxxix}

Resuscitated by scholars raised on Barthes, Foucault and Derrida, *Titus Andronicus* slowly turned from a play-text into *pure* text: its play with property limbs, with feigned madness, with its own self-conscious theatricality slowly tumbled by the wayside as the relentless critical focus on speech, silence, and the tribulations of the linguistic sign quickly obscured the play's equally compelling focus on performance. In its latter half, *Titus* is self-consciously stagey, mixing madness with acting in an often-uncertain *mélange* that prefigures the more carefully wrought machinations of that most meta-theatrical of Shakespeare's revenge tragedies, *Hamlet*. The pinnacle and frame for all this playing on play is Lavinia herself.

To a scholar of performance theory, Lavinia is not an author, but an actor in a play that goes awry when she loses her hands and tongue, the means by which all performers participate in the uniquely aural-gestural economy of the theatre. Similarly, her central scene – during which she inscribes Demetrius' and Chiron's names in the dirt, alongside the word "stuprum" – is not just a matter of reading and writing. It is a *performance* of writing, an active, painful, full-body gesture that rehearses Lavinia's violation not by way of any well-worn convention but by crudely miming the awkward, struggling contortions and oral invasiveness of forced sexual encounter. The repressed returns with a jolt as she drags Marcus' staff along the ground, propped by her arms and mouth.^{xl} Lavinia marshals the comparative clarity of the written word and replaces the "map of woe"^{xli} she had become with the *image* of the signifier (two names plus a deed), neatly and unequivocally summing up her suffering by folding language into image at a staff's length

from her body. A near literal re-enactment of the deed to which it is only supposed to gesture in discrete symbol and pre-screened language, Lavinia's long-awaited meta-theatrical return puns on its own formal process, riffing almost parodically on how its strategy of show-and-tell makes an externalized abstraction into rape's incontrovertible proof. Lavinia acts out her undisclosed scene of suffering in a manner that is without question more risqué than *The Lawes Resolutions* would recommend, but one that nevertheless provides her male relatives with the certainty, the specifics – the who, the what – the lack of which has so vexed them. This traumatic rehearsal safely returns Lavinia to her father's mimetic fold, and dissolves her hysterical stage.

Lavinia's hysterical stage is the one onto which she steps, bloodied and excessively torn, at the end of act two. She is discovered by Marcus who promptly invokes the story of Philomela and Tereus (2.3.26) in such a manner that we should be certain he has already guessed the source of Lavinia's suffering. But our expectations are quickly thwarted; no sooner does Lucius ask Marcus to explain the sight of her than Marcus is unable to comply (3.1.88-91). The Andronicii seem unable, or unwilling, to recognize the rape, despite the entirely conventional spectacle of shamed modesty Lavinia makes. Their third-act confusion over Lavinia's ravished body has generated a fair amount of speculation among critics and indeed does pose several questions. Why does Marcus speak of Philomela at the end of act two and then promptly forget the connection? Why doesn't Lavinia's heavily troped body function according to convention? As an extension of Emily Detmer-Goebel's argument that the confusion emphasizes the importance of Lavinia's own testimony, I propose that the problem is not that the Andronicii do not understand that Lavinia has been raped, but rather that because they do not yet know *who* is responsible they are unable to conceive of the rape as a homosocial assault – an assault on their own bodies (or their family body) by another man – and hence they are unable to conceive of the rape *as rape* at

all.^{xlii} The confusion and anxiety Lavinia's body incites has less to do with what it may symbolically reveal than with its performative limits, which in turn mark the limits of its ability to return evidence: the bloody stumps where Lavinia's hands and tongue used to be speak of her as Philomela *in extremis*, but they also prevent her from accusing her attackers, and thus as indices of *her family's* experience of the rape they are incomplete. Her audience can only watch in distress as an otherwise clear picture of her experience dissolves, leaving emptiness in place of a surfeit of symbol.

A hysterical theatre is a theatre riddled with holes, where meaning slips ever sideways – a theatre of loss.^{xliii} The hysteric cannot make meaning according to normal symbolic processes: her words collide with the literal, abrogating the distance between signifier and signified necessary for conventional semiosis, turning the referent into an obscure (and potentially terrorizing) memory. A hysteric's experience literally does not signify: it lacks "sense," is otherworldly, beyond imagining. Elin Diamond reads Julia Kristeva's feminist hysteria as a kind of mimicry, a logical extension of the transgressive mimetic power articulated by Irigaray in her reading of Plato. On a hysterical stage, the connection between model and copy necessary for patriarchal mimesis collapses, leaving a copy that refuses modeling. The hysterical performer does not act: she does not make motions that correspond to *a priori* meanings, let alone seamlessly ape well-worn conventions. Instead, she thwarts both word and gesture, signs missing-ness, traps her interpreters within her disorientation, her terror, her fragmentation. Act three of *Titus Andronicus* – what I am calling Lavinia's hysterical stage – sets a scene in which Lavinia's trauma can be recognized, but cannot, for lack of an accused, for lack of the means to express accusation, yet be translated out of her body. Arrested in the moment when it is meant to become public, homosocial – the moment of show-and-tell, of the meta-theatrical return – but

cannot because she cannot act, cannot complete the performative transfer to patriarchal space, Lavinia's trauma can only be *about her, within her*. Although her mutilated appearance causes Lucius to insist "this object kills *me*" (3.1.65, my emphasis), in her not-quite-fallen state Lavinia cannot be co-opted. She is less an emblem of castration ("such a sight will blind a father's eye" [2.3.53]) than she is a ghost of the mythical castrated woman, suspended in the lost moment of her never-acknowledged violation, *before* it becomes a mirror of male subject-formation.^{xliv} Lavinia's unmediated violation is in fact the ultimate castration terror: a spectre of violence that refuses transference. Her obscure grunts and flailing gestures collapse into her damaged body and cannot traverse the distance between her experience and that of her family, cannot signify within the limits of their imagining. Hence young Lucius' terrorized cry: "I know not what you mean" (4.1.4), and Titus' fraught, anxious reply: "Fear her not, Lucius – *somewhat* doth she mean" (l. 9, my emphasis).

A body in violence to which no stable homosocial assignation can be made, Lavinia throws the stage into disarray. The Andronicii, in turn, attempt to recuperate their damaged mimesis by competing zealously for the privilege of echoing Lavinia's trauma on their own bodies (in, for example, Aaron's macabre hand comedy [3.1.151-206]). Meanwhile, fearing their entrapment in a "dumb show" (l. 132), Titus takes matters into his own hands and adopts the role of director. He lectures the company assembled at dinner "on the proper theatrical gestures to express outwardly their passion,"^{xlv} and casts Lavinia's continued suffering directly in terms of her inability to act it out (to purge it by performing): "Thou map of woe, that thus dost talk in signs, / When thy poor heart beats with outrageous beating, / Thou canst not strike it thus to make it still" (3.2.12-14). To the heels of this instruction Titus attaches another, much more sinister: "Wound it with sighing, girl, kill it with groans, / Or get some little knife between thy

teeth / And just against thy heart make thou a hole” (ll.15-17). Marcus’ protests at this suggestion (ll. 21-2), though they may echo early modern England’s own discomfort with suicide (including the self-immolation of violated women), do not grasp the essence of Titus’ instruction. He is less teaching Lavinia about suicide than he is trying to teach her how she might, despite her limitations, play Lucrece instead of Philomela and bring her performance of the ravished heroine to its inevitable conclusion. Her death may then prove beyond doubt her non-consent and complete the transfer of suffering from her body, moved beyond its misery, to his, left to the exigencies of conventional mourning.

Titus’ backstage instruction in the gestural codes of the meta-theatrical return yields high drama, but not much pragmatism; it might be suitable for the mythical heroine but offers little help to the more mundane victim. For the latter, the play turns to Marcus. In 4.1 he borrows the role of director from Titus and shows his niece how she might play Philomela instead of Lucrece: by taking his staff in her mouth while guiding it with her severed limbs she can provide her relations with the information they need to seek justice (vengeance). The specifics of Marcus’ suggestion are notable not only because they initiate the crudely literal rehearsal of Lavinia’s rape that I describe above, but also because they are designed to fill her empty mouth, replace her missing hands – to provide her with the prosthetics of performance. As Lavinia both shows and tells (shows-to-tell) her tale of woe, she becomes once more a fully functioning actor within her family’s drama, taking up her (appropriately subordinate) role within Titus’ revenge scheme, which may now, with the identification of its objects, at last be scripted.

The staff-in-mouth rehearsal of Lavinia’s rape works to resuscitate Titus’ wounded mimesis, the victim of Demetrius’ and Chiron’s scheme to rob Lavinia (and by implied extension her father) of all representational power. But does it succeed? Certainly, relief floods the stage as

Lavinia is able finally to play her part. Titus goes on to plan an elaborate dinner theatre which will give revenge tragedy's fifth-act death-by-drama its due; Lavinia becomes demonstration object to the performance, playing her swan-song as Virginia to Titus' Virginius in one last attempt to suture her damaged body with the familiar pleasures of known narrative.^{xlvi} Yet the moment of rehearsal itself remains problematic. In contrast to the metonymic frame governing rape's revelation in the *The Lawes Resolutions* – garments and cries stand as associative substitutes for the missing act, parts seamlessly stand in for the whole story – *Titus Andronicus*' show-and-tell is scripted around a much more literal process of substitution in which word becomes image, staff becomes phallus, mouth a *vagina dentata*, and Lavinia her own ravisher. In short, it stages the deep prejudices, assumptions, and expectations of the meta-theatrical return, rather than the return itself. The risk assumed by such a staging is exactly the risk posed by staging rape itself, unmediated by figuration: that it may draw undue attention to the substitutive quality of theatrical process, to the fact that the "original" act to which Lavinia's rehearsal refers is in fact no act at all, but a gap in the iconography of the play. Lavinia is not simply re-enacting her rape; the actor playing Lavinia is creating it *for the first time*. His/her performance has no precedent – aside from the displaced gestures of Marcus in his tutelage – and, in homage to the substitutive logic of the return, the substitutes s/he employs collapse into their referents: his mouth *becomes* her vagina. Lavinia's rehearsal stages her rape as an essentially theatrical matter: her copy has no model, is a copy of Marcus' copy of nothing but the blank space between scenes. In this sense, the macabre rehearsal may not dissolve Lavinia's hysterical stage at all, but represent instead its apotheosis.

I am not suggesting that *Titus Andronicus* teaches us that rape is representational rather than "real"; for the early moderns as for us, rape was as real and as obsessed-over a crime as any

in the land. But I do want to suggest that *Titus Andronicus* reveals how rape's theatricalization *becomes* its reality at this moment in time, and moreover goes on to demonstrate how essential that theatricalization is to the return of an ordered homosocial space in 1594. The play stages many of the anxieties about rape's epistemology circulating in early modern culture by foregrounding a concomitant anxiety about Lavinia's status as performer, as one charged with reproducing her experience for her male protectors in such a fashion that it becomes, seamlessly, about them. Instead of returning her pain to their space, Lavinia reveals what the meta-theatrical return is in fact organized to mask: that rape can be neither so easily known nor co-opted; that, observing from the vantage of the social, we will never be able adequately to witness sexual violence, know all its detail, the true extent of its consequences.

In 1987, Deborah Warner directed *Titus Andronicus* at the RSC in a widely hailed, groundbreaking feminist staging that presented the rape and its aftermath as an experience of profound personal trauma for Lavinia.^{xlvii} Essential though this performance was, it was not, I would argue, a feminist performance in the sense I have been developing. By engaging Lavinia's trauma so earnestly as *her* trauma Warner foregrounded something often missed, but also missed in turn the opportunity to engage that trauma as a function of its representational history. As I have implied in my reading of *Titus Andronicus* above, a critical feminist response to this play needs to deal with that representational history, with the pernicious and pervasive logic of the meta-theatrical return as it organizes what we see and understand of Lavinia not simply at the level of character development but more broadly and deeply at what Catherine Belsey calls "the level of the signifier."^{xlviii} A feminist staging of *Titus Andronicus* needs not to be earnest with Lavinia, but responsive to and ingenious with its reproduction of the theatrical trap into which

her rape plunges her. If the rape turns Lavinia into a freak show, where is the *Titus Andronicus* that offers audiences a critical, disturbing, provocative glimpse through the peephole? Julie Taymor's film version of the play, *Titus* (1999), though neither overtly feminist nor particularly interested in Lavinia's rape as a centering principle, comes closer to managing what I envision as a feminist performance of sexual violence: a performance that articulates and exploits rape as a function of its meta-theatricality, as a historical and historicized act constituted by its own double edge, its notorious refusal to appear coupled with its crude, even shameless specularity.

Taymor's film has become well known for its explicitly stagey quality. *Titus* is based directly upon Taymor's 1994 Off-Broadway production of the play, notable for its "Penny Arcade Nightmares" and other gruesome vaudevillian touches; it also borrows heavily from previous film Shakespeares (most obviously Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet*, kin to *Titus* in its heavy glam-rock quotient and its self-referential "red curtain" motif), the play's own stage history, as well as a variety of cross-cultural theatrical traditions.^{xlix} But add to this patchwork legacy the smarmy fairground quality Taymor retains from her stage version in many of the film's cruelest moments and an engaged viewer quickly realizes that Taymor is not just interested in *Titus* as a piece of theatre traceable through long-standing performance traditions. The film is compelled by theatricality itself as the play's principal ethos and the primary device structuring its revue-style bloodbath. *Titus Andronicus* is a tight-rope walk on the thin (blood) red line between violence as ritual and violence as ritual entertainment; between violence as a talisman, a sacrifice to sublimated terror, and violence as titillation, the perverse production of sublimating pleasure. Taymor transforms the cathexis at which the play renders the dual pleasures of violence into a multi-faceted audio-visual signifier of the line *Titus Andronicus* latently manifests – the border violence shares with theatre.¹

To turn *Titus Andronicus*' abiding theatricalization of violence into something more than the theatricalization of violence, Taymor frames the play's collapse of violence into theatre with theatre's encounter with the real: the moment when play becomes risk and then disaster, the moment when terror crashes in on performance and throws ethical choice into relief. *Titus* opens in a kitschy 1950s kitchen, where the boy who will later be young Lucius eats his lunch while playing war games with his toys. His play becomes violent, and in the moment it loses control *Titus Andronicus* crashes in. Young Lucius is swept off to the coliseum where Titus' troops are returning from battle in formation; they are at once Roman warriors, chorus-line dancers and video-game soldiers, marching in stylized formation. This trans-historical, trans-generic playfulness defines Taymor's aesthetic universe, but it does not imply solipsistic self-referentiality. Meta-references fly like Titus' arrows here, but their purpose is plainly ethical. The story of the film is in many ways the story of young Lucius, of his journey through and finally away from the oblivious cruelty of war-gaming, of violence-as-play and its historical legacy. Taymor opens as he tortures his toys in a familiar-to-us domestic space, tracks him back in time through his generous care of Lavinia once she becomes a macabre stand-in for his brutalized, long abandoned playthings, and closes on a sentimental image of him carrying Aaron's baby into a digitized sunset. The film ends in an uncertain future but transports us back to our beginning, to Jody Enders and Mrs Coton, relentlessly asking the all-important question: when does theatre cross the line, and, once it does, how will we respond?^{li}

Given its extreme stylization elsewhere, *Titus* renders Lavinia's first "ravishment" scene (2.2, in which Demetrius and Chiron murder Bassianus and torment Lavinia before dragging her away) with an odd realism. The forest is a forest; Lavinia's dress and that of Tamora and her sons is largely consistent. The frame is intact: the players are what we see. But when Lavinia

returns in 2.3, the tables have turned. She lands in a muddy, post-apocalyptic swamp, punctuated by gnarled trees; she awaits discovery atop a tree stump – a blatant reference to her own stumps, which have been costumed to end in branches. The branches make a queer echo to text as well as image when Marcus eulogizes “her two branches, those sweet ornaments / Whose circling shadows kings have sought to sleep in” (2.3.18-19). At this point in the play Lavinia is typically a visual negative, a body riddled with holes, emptied of signifying power; Taymor casts her instead as a literal sign of (and therefore excessive to) her sorrow. Lavinia is a hysterical symbol, simultaneously sign and referent, morbidly, uncannily sufficient in herself. She moves slowly but not without elegance, a “ruined prima ballerina.”^{lii} Framed for our consumption, she seems at first charming despite her obvious trauma, but when her mouth opens and blood spills out in a long, slow arc, the spell breaks and Lavinia becomes the image of a Fury.

For Lavinia, the trauma of rape marks a shift away from realism and into a series of more self-consciously performative modes. Young Lucius attempts to outfit her with new hands; he visits a doll maker and purchases two prosthetics that give Lavinia the quality of a living puppet. In Shakespeare’s play, Lavinia is an awkward, oblique signifier through act three; in Taymor’s film, Lavinia spends act three as theatricality incarnate. But then, in the climactic rehearsal scene, Lavinia leaves the theatre, too, behind. Marcus shows her how to tell her woe with his staff as per the usual script, but Lavinia refuses the obvious payoff of direct substitution the lesson implies. She looks long and hard at the staff’s crown (shaped to be, unquestioningly, a wooden penis) and rejects it – vomits it, in fact, after almost but not quite taking it in her mouth. Pressing the staff instead into the crook of her neck like a violin, she roars into action accompanied by a hard-core metal track; the effect is an extraordinary audio/visual dissonance, the edgy music seeming to fly from Lavinia’s manic bow. Taymor meanwhile crosscuts

Lavinia's speech/act with a stylized, blue-washed flashback sequence (the celluloid version of her 1994 production's infamous "Penny Arcade Nightmares") that turns the show-and-tell into a music video. Lavinia is the centerpiece, costumed as she was in the swamp but with a hint of the coy vixen about her; though she wears a look of vulnerable terror she channels Marilyn Monroe, her skirt flying above her waist, her arms grimly inadequate to keep it in check. Demetrius and Chiron flash in and out in profile, looking vicious, demented; meanwhile, tigers attack a young doe to complete the image allegorically. Set to the pounding beat, the clip compounds the dissonance already at work within the main action of the scene.

David McCandless compares *Titus* unfavourably to Taymor's 1994 Off Broadway staging of the play, much of his argument hinging on his belief that the Penny Arcade Nightmares (P.A.N.s) of the original simply cannot be translated onto film without reifying the cheap titillation they were designed originally to critique. In the stage version of the P.A.N. accompanying Lavinia's rape, "Lavinia stands atop a pedestal, clad only in a white petticoat, with a deer's mask on her head and prosthetic deer legs on her arms, while Chiron and Demetrius, manipulating life-sized tiger cut-outs, execute stylized predatory lunges at her"^{liiii}; the photo accompanying McCandless' article suggests a classic Brechtian *Verfremdungseffekt*, complete with low-budget vaudevillian production values. This stage sequence is translated more or less directly into Lavinia's "tell-all" video for the film, but for McCandless the transfer is a failure: the P.A.N. becomes a "surreal" projection from Lavinia's "battered" mind, inexplicably stagey as her own traumatic recollection, and inexplicable to a film audience without the Brechtian frame of reference Taymor's carnivalesque ethos lent the original.^{liv} McCandless' reading of Taymor's original staging of the rape is exciting and astute, but he misreads the implications of the film P.A.N.'s new, high-tech frame because he over-privileges the

deliberately low-tech optics of Taymor's live *Verfremdungseffekt*. In live performance, Taymor shifts the rape into vaudeville, turning Lavinia literally into the freak show implied by the logic of the meta-theatrical return. On film, Taymor effects an equivalent shift by upping the production values and transporting Lavinia into a much more contemporary freak show: mainstream pop video, the spectacle of "innocence" circa 2000. Lavinia becomes Britney: the signifiers of chastity are always in question, though the performance of chastity, like the hint of danger, remains bubble-gum perfect.^{lv} She might appear to be a bit of a sex kitten, but her anguished gestures and (failed) attempts to hide her body cite the conventions of a "good" girl with just enough sass to keep her this side of chaste. Meanwhile, we learn the identity of her aggressors without having to witness anything unseemly, and without her having to speak of their heinous deeds; reference to the tiger gives us a familiar iconography.^{lvi} The loud music, blue wash, and windswept look give the clip the air of VH-1 cool; this is the representation we've all, supposedly, been craving.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the celluloid negative, Lavinia in "real time" crafts a different kind of show-and-tell. Refusing to take the staff in her mouth, she refuses what the video embraces – the carefully wallpapered money shot, the "payoff" of easy visibility,^{lvii} of a meta-theatrical return based in conventional reality-effects and upon pervasive expectations about who she is and what her experience is/ought to have been. Working against the substitutive equation staff/penis, Lavinia displaces her real-time "act" into a rough gesture that deliberately *does not* reference forced intercourse, hints at nothing remotely sexual, is rather a kind of solo improv that allows Lavinia to release some of her own pent-up anguish along with the information (and its attendant catharsis) her family has been seeking. This version of Lavinia's "telling" is neither crude vaudeville nor high tech video schmaltz but a jarring, straining dance:

she dances against the ravished and vulnerable, ballet-beautiful icon from the swamp, against the sexually provocative figure in the video – against the sexual prejudices that frame her woman’s body and its experience of violence, against the performance frames designed to contain and perpetuate those prejudices – in order to express in and through her maligned body something of the fractious, erratic, sensory-overloaded quality of her violation. Rather than embrace the tools of Marcus’ conventional mimesis, Lavinia displaces signifier (staff/pen) from signified (penis/rape), and crafts the telling of a more complex story, woven through her body into a dissonant, cacophonous, violent and raging music.

When Lavinia confronts Marcus’ staff, and with it the prospect of a “patriarchal mimesis,” theatre crashes in. The “video” tries to keep her representation in line but Lavinia is unruly. The moment of show-and-tell, as I have been arguing, is the moment when theatre attempts to cross a line, to frame and contain an experience that cannot be so easily boxed into a proscenium. It is the moment – to invoke the questions with which I began – when the meta-theatrical return poses risk and threat alongside the (admittedly often dim) hope of justice, but it is also the moment through which we may frame an ethical response to that threat, a respectful response to the disorienting terrors of sexual violence. In Taymor’s film, the moment of show-and-tell becomes a moment of ethical choice, when Lavinia must decide how she will confront her violation, how she will make it public, make it social, give it a reality beyond her body. Choosing to do so *through* her body, in a series of gestures that resists transparency even as they reveal her attackers’ names, that combine avant-garde dance and musical performance with the traditional semiotics of the theatre (the image of the signifier), Taymor’s Lavinia complicates the logic of the return, implies that its meta-theatricality makes it inherently plastic, inherently malleable, open to a variety of rehearsal forms. The meta-theatrical return does not need to be a

re-enactment; it can also be a recreation, or a just plain creation. It can take several forms; it can mimic expectations while meeting them, or it can mime expectations and produce something new, an expression of something not seen, not quite visible, as the residue of expectation. It can meet a social as well as a personal need; it can incarnate rape's extra-corporeal afterlife while also respecting that such an afterlife does not replace, negate, or overcome the complex, fractious, angry inward resonance of violation. It can be the beginnings of a feminist performance of sexual violence, but it cannot be an end.

ⁱ My thanks to Ric Knowles and Joanne Tompkins, and to *Theatre Journal's* editors and anonymous readers, for their helpful comments on drafts of this paper.

ⁱⁱ Jody Enders, "The Spectacle of the Scaffolding: Rape and the Violent Foundations of Medieval Theatre Studies," *Theatre Journal* 56 (2004): 163-81.

ⁱⁱⁱ Enders, "The Spectacle of the Scaffolding," 181.

^{iv} *Ibid.*, 179-80, 167.

^v *Ibid.*, 179.

^{vi} Unlike Mrs Coton's, this story is fictional. As will soon become clear, however, I have in mind a certain theatrical precedent.

^{vii} Barbara Hanawalt, "Whose Story Was This? Rape Narratives in Medieval English Courts," in *'Of Good and Ill Repute': Gender and Social Control in Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 126.

^{viii} The term "early modern" is often employed loosely by scholars in a number of fields, and remains contentious. I use the term here to refer roughly to the late Elizabeth, Jacobean, and early Caroline periods in England.

^{ix} Jocelyn Catty, *Writing Rape, Writing Women in Early Modern England: Unbridled Speech* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1999), 108.

^x I am not suggesting that every early modern English play dealing with rape or attempted rape follows this pattern, or does so in the same way; there are, as Karen Bamford notes in the introduction to her valuable book on sexual violence in the Jacobean drama, simply far too many of them to generalize effectively (*Sexual Violence on the*

Jacobean Stage [New York: St Martin's, 2000], 1). The pattern of the return, however, is typical enough to warrant exploration as a central convention (and even to warrant parody, in *The Revenger's Tragedy*).

^{xi} Jocelyn Catty also explains rape's conventional off-staging at this time as a function of its unstable specular position in the culture at large (*Writing Rape*, 22, 108-9).

^{xii} T. E., *The Lawes Resolutions of Womens Rights* (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum/Norwood, N.J.: Walter J. Johnson, 1979), 392-3.

^{xiii} Garthine Walker, "Rereading Rape and Sexual Violence in Early Modern England," *Gender and History* 10.1 (1998): 5, 8; see also Nazife Bashar, "Rape in England Between 1550 and 1700," in *The Sexual Dynamics of History: Men's Power, Women's Resistance* (London: Pluto Press, 1983), 34.

^{xiv} Bamford, *Sexual Violence*, 3.

^{xv} *Lawes Resolutions*, 392-3.

^{xvi} Bal, "Calling to Witness: Lucretia," in *Looking In: The Art of Viewing* (Amsterdam: G+B Arts International, 2001), 100.

^{xvii} A substantial amount of feminist legal and literary scholarship deals with rape's notoriously mutable historical definitions, its persistent tendency to be classed as a property crime and elided with abduction through a large part of the medieval period, and the evolution of a woman's refusal of consent as essential to fixing the crime. My definition here is based on the influential research of Nazife Bashar (see above and below); on the persistence of rape's property-crime frame and its vexed relationship to women's consent see also Deborah Burks, "'I'll Want My Will Else': *The Changeling* and Women's Complicity With Their Rapists," *ELH* 62 (1995): 759-90 and Barbara J. Baines, "Effacing Rape in Early Modern Representation," *ELH* 65 (1998): 69-98. Karen Bamford's *Sexual Violence on the Jacobean Stage* contains a helpful overview of definitional shifts from medieval to early modern (2-3).

^{xviii} Burks, "'I'll Want My Will Else,'" 765. See also J. B. Post, "Ravishment of Women and the Statutes of Westminster," in *Legal Records and the Historian*, ed. J. H. Baker (London: Royal Historical Society, 1978), 150-64, and Kim M. Phillips, "Written on the Body: Reading Rape from the Twelfth to Fifteenth Centuries," in *Medieval Women and the Law*, ed. Noël James Menuge (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 2000), 125-44.

^{xix} Phillips, "Written on the Body," 132.

^{xx} Post, “Ravishment of Women,” 158.

^{xxi} Phillips, “Written on the Body,” 129.

^{xxii} *Ibid.*, 141.

^{xxiii} Bashar, “Rape in England,” 41.

^{xxiv} Burks, “‘I’ll Want My Will Else,’” 766, 770.

^{xxv} *The Lawes Resolutions*’ instruction to raped women has several legal precedents, including the influential medieval treatises by Glanville (c. 1187) and Bracton (c. 1218-29). At its base, its advice is stock; by 1632, when *LR* is published, victims of rape have been told to raise the hue and cry by showing their injury to the reeve and the coroner for centuries. There are subtle but important shifts in the *LR* language, which I discuss below, but what compels me here is the implicit theatricality of the “hue and cry” as it is passed down to *LR*, *LR*’s explicit emphasis on the union of speech and show as it frames the hue and cry for a 17th century female readership, and the uptake of the hue and cry’s theatricality in the early modern drama both preceding and following the publication of *LR*.

^{xxvi} Michael O’Connell, *The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm and Theater in Early-Modern England* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 119.

^{xxvii} *Ibid.*, 144.

^{xxviii} Glanville makes no mention of a verbal proclamation before the official appeal stage: “A woman who suffers in this way must go, soon after the deed is done, to the nearest vill and there *show* to trustworthy men the injury done to her, and any effusion of blood there may be and any tearing of her clothes. She should then do the same to the reeve of the hundred” (qtd. in Hanawalt, “Whose Story,” 126, my emphasis). Bracton, whom *LR* cites as its own precedent, calls for the victim to go “at once and while the deed is newly done, with the hue and cry, to the neighbouring townships and there show the injury done her to men of good repute” (Henry de Bracton, *On the Laws and Customs of England*, vol. 2, trans. Samuel E. Thorne [Cambridge, MA: Harvard/Balknap, 1968], 415). Bracton immediately goes on to lay out the specific text of the formal appeal – exactly what a raped woman was to say, and how to say it (416); Hanawalt points out that deviations from this official script could mean an appellant could be fined or imprisoned for making a false appeal (“Whose Story,” 127). Performing perfectly was a serious matter for injured women.

^{xxxix} The Oxford English Dictionary defines “complain” during this period as synonymous with “bewail” and “lament,” especially in pain or suffering (the term’s earliest use is given as 1374, approximately 150 years after Bracton and 100 years after Westminster I). It may also refer to breast-beating, which, interestingly, is how Titus Andronicus encourages his Lavinia to express her sorrow after she has been robbed of the ability to complain of her rape verbally (see below). *LR* thus calls for a particular kind of *tragic* speech to instigate the familiar hue and cry.

^{xxx} Perhaps nowhere is the meta-theatrical return’s kinship with the return-of-the-repressed clearer. I am acutely aware of how Freud haunts the scene I am conjuring, and I explore his relationship to the return in slightly more detail in connection with *Titus Andronicus* below.

^{xxxix} There is a rich and growing body of critical literature on the problem of rape’s “effacement” in early modern literature and culture. See for example Coppélia Kahn, “The Rape in Shakespeare’s *Lucrece*,” *Shakespeare Studies* 9 (1976): 45-72; Baines, “Effacing Rape in Early Modern Representation”; and Bamford, *Sexual Violence on the Jacobean Stage*.

^{xxxix} Hanawalt, “Whose Story,” 128.

^{xxxix} Chaytor, “Husband(ry),” esp 384-5; see also Hanawalt, “Whose Story,” 125.

^{xxxix} Elin Diamond, “Mimesis, Mimicry, and the ‘True-Real,’” *Modern Drama* 32.1 (1989): 64.

^{xxxix} I do not want to imply that there is no room for the articulation of any such “deeper” feeling within the structure of the meta-theatrical return; surely many early modern women found a way to convey something of their sense of horror and confusion in the process of saying and doing all the correct things for the authorities. Nevertheless, the structure of the return offers little room for dramatic improvisation, and Hanawalt’s findings suggest (as Chaytor’s likewise imply) that such improvisation may have had the unwanted effect of negating the efficacy of an appeal.

^{xxxix} Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 32.

^{xxxix} Peggy Phelan, *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 82.

^{xxxix} See for example Mary Laughlin Fawcett, “Arms/Words/Tears: Language and the Body in *Titus Andronicus*,” *ELH* 50 (1983): 261-77, and Gillian Murray Kendall, “‘Lend Me Thy Hand’: Metaphor and Mayhem in *Titus Andronicus*,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40.3 (1989): 299-316.

^{xxxix} In addition to Fawcett and Kendall, see Marion Wynne-Davies, “‘The Swallowing Womb’: Consumed and Consuming Women in *Titus Andronicus*,” in *The Matter of Difference: Materialist Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*, ed. Valerie Wayne (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 129-51, and Karen Robertson, “Rape and the Appropriation of Progne’s Revenge in Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus*, Or ‘Who Cooks the Thyestean Banquet?’” in *Representing Rape in Medieval and Early Modern Literature*, ed. Elizabeth Robertson and Christine M. Rose (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 213-37. Emily Detmer-Goebel offers a historically sensitive reading in “The Need For Lavinia’s Voice: *Titus Andronicus* and the Telling of Rape,” *Shakespeare Studies* 22 (2001): 75-92.

^{xl} A number of critics have suggested that Lavinia’s writing constitutes a re-creation of her violation. None, however, take this argument to its logical conclusion and consider the scene in terms of its theatrical qualities. In fact, the tendency is to cast this re-creation in distinctly contemporary terms, as a “reliving” of trauma rather than a re-enactment of it with a specific, historical purpose.

^{xli} William Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*, ed. Jonathan Bate (London: Routledge, 1995), 3.2.12. All subsequent citations will appear in the text by act, scene and line number.

^{xlii} Lucius’ anxious question on 3.1.88 isn’t “what happened to Lavinia?” but rather “who did this to Lavinia?” The “who” supercedes the “this”: until the problem of the former is solved, the latter is of little matter to anyone.

^{xliii} I am indebted here to Julia Kristeva’s “The True-Real” (trans. Seán Hand, in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi [New York: Columbia University Press, 1986], 216-37) and Elin Diamond’s adaptation of it for feminist performance in “Mimesis, Mimicry, and the ‘True Real.’”

^{xliv} As Freud’s boy-child notoriously witnesses his mother’s lack of a penis, he imagines her as the object of a violent punishment that might also fall upon him, and dissolves his Oedipal complex by projecting his fleeting image of her long-lost suffering onto his own body. The notion of what might have happened to *her* never crosses Freud’s mind except as a function of what might happen to him. Her suffering, even more theoretically far-fetched than his, is without meaning in and of itself; his symptom is her/its uncanny, meta-psychical return.

^{xlv} S. Clark Hulse, “Wresting the Alphabet: Oratory and Action in *Titus Andronicus*,” *Criticism* 21.2 [1979]: 114.

^{xlvi} In the space of a few short scenes Lavinia has added no less than three mythical heroines – Lucrece, Philomela, Virginia – to her repertoire. If she was once unnervingly empty, she is now an excessive theatrical sign.

^{xlvii} See Alan C. Dessen, *Titus Andronicus* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1989), 51-69, and Jonathan Bate, Introduction to *Titus Andronicus*, 62-9.

^{xlviii} Catherine Belsey, *Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden: The Construction of Family Values in Early Modern Culture* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1999), 5.

^{xlix} Pascale Aebischer, Rev. of *Titus*, online at the Institute of Film Studies, University of Nottingham, <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/film/journal/filmrev/titus.htm>.

^l Lisa Hopkins, “‘A tiger’s heart wrapped in a player’s hide’: Julie Taymor’s War Dances,” *Shakespeare Bulletin* 21.3 (2003): 65.

^{li} The film’s final scene produces the most startling image of Taymor’s ethics. One moment we are in Titus’ dining room, watching the final scene’s bloodbath unfold. The next, we have been transported back to the coliseum, the set for which was an extant Roman ruin in contemporary Croatia populated by Croatian extras playing ancient Roman spectators (Hopkins, “‘A tiger’s heart,’” 64). The bloodbath is, manifestly, real (for the spectatorial extras much more so than for English or North American audiences in 1999), but it is also clearly a play, and thousands of onlookers stare down upon it, stunned into silence. How will they read the moment? Will they applaud? Move away? Rush in? As Courtney Lehmann, Bryan Reynolds and Lisa Starks argue, “Taymor’s film redefines the subjective territory of spectatorship as a perilous negotiation of, and ultimately a choice between, alliance-building and terrorism, accountability and complicity” (“‘For Such a Sight Will Blind a Father’s Eye’: The Spectacle of Suffering in Taymor’s *Titus*,” in *Performing Transversally: Reimagining Shakespeare and the Critical Future*, ed. Bryan Reynolds [Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003], 223).

^{lii} Lehmann, Reynolds and Starks, “‘For Such a Sight,’” 229.

^{liii} McCandless, “A Tale of Two *Tituses*: Julie Taymor’s Vision on Stage and Screen,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 53.4 (2002): 494-5.

^{liv} *Ibid.*, 501, 501-2.

^{lv} Spears’ uber-saccharine ... *Baby One More Time*, with its own disturbing undertones of violence-as-sexual-play, was released in early 1999; *Titus* premiered on December 25, 1999.

^{lvi} Lisa Hopkins offers an excellent summary of the use of tiger imagery throughout the play, and compares it to Taymor's augmented use in the film ("A tiger's heart," 61-2).

^{lvii} Phelan, *Unmarked*, 19.