

T. Davina MCCLAIN

Id cuique spectatissimum sit: Outer Appearance and Inner Character in Livy's Narrative of Sextus, Brutus, and Lucretia

Scholars have explored the dissembling of Brutus and Livy's emphasis on spectacle in the story of Lucretia, and even the lies of Sextus, but no one has yet noticed how Livy crafts Sextus and Brutus as parallel characters who succeed by dissembling. Moreover, the true characters of Sextus and Brutus are revealed because of Lucretia's inability to hide her character from others. Livy, therefore, has closely linked the stories of these three characters through the disjunction of outer appearance and inner character and the ramifications of revelation.

Although Feldherr (1997: 148) asserts that it is the monarchy which seeks "to use appearances to conceal rather than to reveal," Livy's Brutus is just as adept at concealing his character. In this respect, Brutus and Sextus have much in common in Livy's narrative: each gains control by hiding his character beneath a false appearance. Brutus is introduced as a young man far different in character from the appearance he had adopted (1.56.7). Brutus' pretense allows him the chance to accompany his cousins to Delphi, present a gift to Apollo which mimics the disjunction between his own appearance and character, then hear and fulfill the oracle designating the next ruler. By hiding his true character, Brutus survives to choose the right time to reveal himself and ultimately to become Rome's first consul.

Sextus too hides his true character until he gains entrance into Gabii, pretending to be a refugee from his father's abuse (1.53.3-6), gains the confidence of the townspeople, convinces them that under his leadership they can defeat the Romans, and destroys the leaders of the town, and hands it over to his father. Sextus then uses the same tactic to gain entrance to Lucretia's home and to her bed: by pretending to come as a guest, he obtains the opportunity to rape Lucretia. In both instances, once Sextus' actions have revealed his character, he leaves the scene of his crime behind, thinking that he has defeated his enemy.

Unlike Brutus and Sextus, Lucretia is not given the opportunity to choose whether or not to display her character. When her husband and his companions arrive, Lucretia's beauty and obvious chastity (1.57.10: *spectata castitas*) arouse Sextus' lust. Here Livy suggests that there is no distinction in Lucretia between her outer appearance and inner character: both are equally visible. When Sextus returns to satisfy his lust, he succeeds in coercing Lucretia only by declaring he will create a display that would contradict her true character. Lucretia understands the significance in the difference between the visible and what is hidden in human character: when Lucretia describes Sextus' actions, she states that he came "as an enemy in the guise of a guest" (1.58.8: *hostis pro hospite*). In declaring her innocence, Livy has her make a distinct between her mind (inner character) which is *insons* and her body (outer appearance) which is *uiolatum* (1.58.7). The men too use the distinction between mind and body (1.58.9: *mentem peccare, non corpus*) in their attempt to persuade her not to commit suicide. Lucretia's refusal to be thought of as someone she is not inspires Brutus to reveal his ingenium.

Livy's crafting of these three characters and the events which surround them challenges the validity of Collatinus' statement: *id cuique spectatissimum sit*. Appearance can be manipulated in order to deceive, impress, destroy, or inspire, and is not, therefore, the best evidence of character. Lucretia's refusal to allow her appearance to conflict with her inner character reveals both Sextus and Brutus for the men that they truly are.