capias, inde foedum inceptu, foedum exitu, quod uites (pref. 10)—a perspective that holds out the possibility, at least, that if one is willing to learn from the past, then the ills of the present may not after all be irremediable. The concurrence of these two attitudes toward the past (as escape or as model), implying as they do two different attitudes toward the future (as irremediable or hopeful), reinforces a sense that the final questions of Roman identity are as yet fundamentally unresolved.[71] This conclusion, I hope to have shown, is the consequence of a sustained effort to develop contemporary ideological themes in a narrative of Rome's foundation and it reflects certain unavoidable contradictions inherent in the effort to adapt traditional material to contemporary ideology: for example, tensions between the ideal of the new man, with its emphasis on self-sufficiency, and associations with divine ancestry and supernatural interventions in the traditional story of Romulus. This uncertainty about Roman identity is also reflected by Livy's inclusion of elements that seem to express a willful acknowledgment of ambiguities, uncertainties, and contradictions inherent in the play among contemporary Roman ideologies: for example, Livy's references to the possibility that Romulus' rule may have been a kind of tyranny or to the twin's desire for *regnum* as an *auitum malum*. Together, then, ambiguity, uncertainty, and contradiction reflect less on Livy's failings as a thinker than they do on the depth and candor of his engagement with the prevailing ideologies of his age.

71. For a different sort of argument for narrative indeterminacy in Livy, see John Henderson, "Livy and the Invention of History," in *History as Text*, ed. Averil Cameron (Trowbridge: Duckworth, 1989), pp. 66–85.

Chapter 5

The First Roman Marriage and the Theft of the Sabine Women

Thus far I have focused exclusively on Livy. Although I have drawn comparisons with other ancient authors, I have not been concerned with alternative narratives in their own right, nor have I used other narratives to identify any of the underlying qualities that distinguish Livy's narrative. Rather, such comparisons have been in a sense incidental to my larger argument, serving primarily to clarify specific points of interpretation relating to one or another particular passage in Livy. Thus they have called attention to many individual examples of Livy's distinctiveness and originality. Their cumulative effect, however, suggests something more, that Livy's narrative is exceptional for the extent to which it engages (sometimes directly, sometimes implicitly) issues of methodology and ideology inherent in Livy's material. We have seen already, for example, how Livy grapples unsuccessfully but openly with the problem of evaluating the relation between material and oral evidence, or how within his story of Romulus he includes elements, often suppressed in other narratives, that problematize his own argument about Roman self-sufficiency and the larger contemporary ideologies that inform it.

In this chapter comparisons between Livy and other ancient authors will be our principal focus and will be developed fully. The basis of comparison will be extended still further through models from anthropology that help isolate essential cruxes in the narratives that I have chosen. This exercise will give some sense of the range of ancient responses to an ideological issue that was particularly significant for Livy and his contemporaries, the nature and function of marriage. This range of alternatives in turn provides a context within which to argue not only that Livy's narrative is complex and rich but that it is exceptionally so by the standards of other authors who concerned themselves with the same traditional material as he. This is not necessarily to argue that Livy was more radical in his vision than others. My point here is rather to show how Livy's characteristic efforts to integrate all aspects of his material into a coherent narrative, to avoid loose ends, to fill in gaps in conventional ideology, to make connections, and to offer explanations raise issues that other less ambitious narratives do not engage.

I

The story of the theft of the Sabine women occupies an important position in Roman ideology. It was closely associated with the foundation of Rome, as one expression of the daring and resourcefulness that characterized Romulus, the city's legendary founder. The story, moreover, figures prominently not only in Livy but also in the ambitious works of other major authors of antiquity who sought to provide a comprehensive interpretation of Roman character. Thus, for example, the story is included in Cicero's *De republica,* written between 54 and 51 B.C.E., during the turbulent last years of the Roman Republic. Cicero's adaptation of Plato's *Republic* locates the potentiality for an ideal state not in theoretical speculation but in specifically Roman traditions and institutions. During the following decades, under Rome's first emperor, Augustus, the story was included both in Dionysius of Halicarnassus' *Antiquitates Romanae,* an encyclopedic review of early Roman history that attempts to reveal the essence of Rome to Greek readers, and in Ovid's *Fasti,* a poetic survey of Roman religious festivals as expressions of traditional Roman values. A century and a half later, the Greek Plutarch included the story of the Sabine women in a biography of Romulus, which he paired with that of Theseus, the legendary founder of Athens. These works, spanning the critical period from the collapse of Republican government at Rome through the consolidation of the Empire, offer different versions of the theft of the Sabine women and present it as a cornerstone of Roman society.[1]

The ancient narratives associate the theft of the Sabine women explicitly with the origins, and thus with the essence, of Roman marriage.[2] Livy and Plutarch, for example, trace the origin of a specific element of traditional Roman wedding festivities, the cry "for Thalassius" (*Thalassius* in Livy's spelling, *Talasios* in Plutarch's), to the occasion of the Sabines' abduction (Livy 1.9.12; Plut. *Rom.* 15). In Cicero's *De republica* the abduction is followed by a formal marriage supervised by Romulus, although Cicero says nothing

1. Other, briefer mentions of the story are cited in T. P. Wiseman, "The Wife and Children of Romulus," *Classical Quarterly* 33 (1983): 445–52.

2. The passages with which the following argument is primarily concerned are Cic. *Rep.* 2.12–14; Dion. Hal. 2.30–47; Livy 1.9–1.13.8; Ov. *Fast.* 3.167–258; Plut. *Rom.* 14–19. I have chosen not to include Ovid's version of the theft in *Ars am.* 1.101ff. among my primary passages, because, even though narrated from a different perspective, it seems to me to offer essentially the same interpretation of the theft as Ovid presents in the *Fasti.* Julie Hemker, "Rape and the Founding of Rome," *Helios* n.s. 12 (1985): 41–47, has contrasted the narrative of the Sabine women in the *Ars* with that of Livy in terms that adumbrate the fuller contrast that I draw below between Livy's narrative and that of Ovid's *Fasti.*

about the nature of the ceremony in his spare narrative (*Rep.* 2.6.12). Dionysius of Halicarnassus identifies that marriage as the basis for subsequent ceremonial. He says that after the abduction, but before consummation of the marriage, Romulus assembled the Sabine women and their husbands-to-be and formally married them "according to the ancestral customs of each woman, solemnizing the marriages with a sharing of fire and water, just as they are performed down to our times" (Dion. Hal. 2.30.5–6; cf. 2.24.4–25.6).

The narratives of Livy, Ovid, and Plutarch do not report a formal wedding after the abduction.[3] Nonetheless, even though the relationship between Sabine women and Roman men begins with abduction, it ends in these narratives with a legitimate marriage. According to Livy, when the abducted women intervene between Romans and Sabines as they confront each other in the Roman Forum, the women describe their fathers as fathers-in-law (*soceri*), their abductors as sons-in-law (*generi*), their own offspring as the grandchildren of their fathers (*nepotes*) and the legitimate children (*liberi*) of their abductors (1.13.2).[4] In appealing to their fathers and abductors to cease hositilities, the women claim, successfully, that kinship and marriage ties exist between them: "if you regret the ties of marriage among you, if you regret our marriage," *si adfinitatis inter uos, si conubii piget* (1.13.3). The terminology of Livy's narrative is echoed in Plutarch (*Rom.* 19.6–7), where the Sabine women make their appeal in the name of "fathers-in-law" (*pentheroi*), "grandfathers" (*pappoi*), "kin" (*oikeioi*), and "in-laws" (*gambroi*), as well as with the ambiguous "men/husbands" (*andres*). In Ovid's narrative, moreover, the conflict between the Romans and the Sabines who seek to avenge their women's abduction is seen from the very first as one between kin; it is a prototype, in fact, for civil war. Immediately after reporting the women's abduction, Ovid continues: "The [people of] Cures swelled [with rage], as did the others who experienced the same grief. Then for the first time father-in-law bore arms against son-in-law," *Intumuere Cures et quos dolor attigit idem / tum primum generis intulit arma socer* (*Fast.* 3.201–2). The absence of any mention of a formal wedding ceremony in these narratives makes such language all the more striking and calls attention dramatically to the fact that somehow Roman abductors and their Sabine captives have

3. In Livy's narrative, Romulus does, however, promise the newly abducted women that they will be married (1.9.14).

4. For *liberi* not just as "children" but as originating with the more particular sense of "freeborn, legitimate children," see Émile Benveniste, *Le vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes* (Paris: Les éditions de Minuit, 1969), vol. 1, pp. 324–25.

succeeded in constituting an actual marriage without taking part in a formal wedding ceremony.

In his analysis of Indo-European myths about marriage, Georges Dumézil understands the theft of the Sabine women as incorporating each of several types of Indo-European marriage and as epitomizing an imagined evolution in Roman tradition from abduction to *confarreatio* (a religious ceremony in which the bride was formally transferred from the authority, or *manus,* of her father to that of her husband) to *usus* (a kind of common-law marriage that nonetheless assured the husband the power of *manus* over his wife) to *coemptio* (a fictional sale of the bride to the groom, who thereby acquired legal authority over her).[5] Of these, Romulus is represented as formally instituting *confarreatio; usus* and *coemptio* are represented as evolving out of the initial theft—*usus* through the conversion of the abducted women, *coemptio* through the indemnification of the women's fathers.[6] In Dumézil's reading (based primarily on the narrative of Livy and secondarily on that of Dionysius of Halicarnassus) the theft itself represents no more than the first, but otherwise essentially incidental, element in the succession of developments that characterize the evolution of Roman marriage in the story of the Sabine women: "It is useless to insist upon the rape: . . . it conforms in all points to the *rakṣasa* mode. But it evolves rapidly."[7]

These forms of wedding also help to define the social context within which the story of the theft of the Sabine women would have been understood by Romans. Each of these three types of Roman marriage involves arrangements between male-headed households in which the bride is transferred from the *manus,* "hand," or formal authority of her *pater familias* to that of her husband.[8] The most elaborate of the wedding ceremonies, *confarreatio,* reveals that, in addition to its economic and political functions (assuring the husband control of his wife, her property, and their offspring), the transfer of *manus* had a religious aspect. As Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges long ago demonstrated, the ceremony of *confarreatio* took place in the context of a family religion that was organized around worship of ancestors in the male line.[9] The ceremony provided for the deconsecration of the bride from the religious unit comprised by her father and his agnates and her consecration into the religious unit comprised by her husband and his agnates, thus assuring that both religious units remained pure and that there would be no danger of divided loyalties within the husband's household to threaten the fullfilment of his religious responsibilities to his ancestors. In the most general terms, then, these traditional wedding ceremonies may be understood as strategies to domesticate a potentially disruptive outsider upon her incorporation into a new household.

These formalities gradually became obsolete during the last two centuries B.C.E. Nonetheless, to the extent that Roman marriages continued to be arranged among males with political, economic, or social ends primarily in mind, the general pattern of relationships expressed in the older forms of wedding persisted, even when marriages did not entail actual abduction or a formal transfer of legal guardianship from father to husband.[10] Émile Benveniste has pointed out that the perception of women's essential passivity in marriage was perpetuated in Latin idiom. In marriage, men characteristically acted upon women, while women changed their condition: a father "gives his daughter into marriage" (*filiam dare in matrimonium*); a man "leads

5. *Mariages indo-européens suivi de quinze questions romaines* (Paris: Payot, 1979), pp. 73–76. On the question of whether the story of the Sabine women should be understood as the vestige of an actual marriage theft, see the survey of literature in J. Poucet, *Recherches sur la légende sabine des origines de Rome,* Recueil de travaux d'histoire et de philologie ser. 4, fasc. 37 (Kinshasa: Éditions de l'Université Lovanium, 1967), pp. 171–72 n. 134.

6. Dumézil, *Mariages,* p. 76.

7. Ibid., p. 73. R. Köstler, "Raub-und Kaufehe bei den Römern," *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte: Romanistische Abteilung* 65 (1947): 53–54, sees in the story of the Sabine women the memory of a time when bride theft was actually practiced in early Rome. Whether there was an original theft of Sabine women and it was preserved in Roman lore because of its cultural suggestiveness or, to the contrary, the story gradually evolved as a way of expressing values and attitudes deeply embedded in Roman society seems to me to be beyond clear resolution, and in any event to be more of antiquarian than of cultural interest. For an excellent discussion of the practice of bride theft, its functions, and attitudes toward it during the later Roman Empire, see Judith Evans-Grubbs, "Abduction Marriage in Antiquity: A Law of Constantine (*CTh* IX.24.1) and Its Social Context," *Journal of Roman Studies* 79 (1989): 59–82. I know of no study of bride theft for earlier, historical periods of Roman history.

8. Jane F. Gardner, *Women in Roman Law and Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 152.

9. *The Ancient City* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1956), pp. 46–48; and, more recently, Gardner, p. 152.

10. See Susan Treggiari, *Roman Marriage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), on the motives for marriage, esp. pp. 83–160; for the conditions under which women might play a part in or even initiate marriage negotiations see Susan Treggiari, "*Iam Proterva Fronte:* Matrimonial Advances by Roman Women," in *The Craft of the Ancient Historian: Essays in Honor of Chester G. Starr,* ed. J. W. Eadie and J. Ober (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1985), pp. 331–52; and Jane E. Phillips, "Roman Mothers and the Lives of Their Adult Daughters," *Helios* n.s. 6 (1978): 68–80. See A. S. Gratwick, "Free or Not So Free? Wives and Daughters in the Late Roman Republic," in *Marriage and Property,* ed. Elizabeth M. Craik (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1984), pp. 38–53, for a valuable caution against misconstruing the motivation behind the practice of marrying women *sine manu* and also against overestimating the consequences of that practice.

someone's daughter into marriage" (*alicuius filiam ducere in matrimonium*), but a woman "enters into marriage" (*ire in matrimonium*).[11]

Roman marriage as it is epitomized in the theft of the Sabine women, then, is framed by larger social and political relationships among men, and it is in terms of those male relationships that the relationship between man and woman is defined and takes on its full meaning. Accordingly, all of the major Roman sources identify social and political considerations, not personal or private, as the primary motive forces behind the theft of the Sabine women.[12] Cicero in his brief account says that the theft was motivated by the Romans' desire to "safeguard resources," *ad muniendas opes* (*Rep.* 2.12), but the other major sources are more specific. Plutarch considers two explanations: first, that Romulus planned the theft in order to provoke war with the Sabines; second, that he planned it because he regarded theft of the Sabine women as an opportunity to stabilize Roman society, both by assuring that all Romans (rich and poor) would be able to have wives and by providing an occasion for intermingling and political union (*synkraseōs kai koinōniās archēn*) between Roman and Sabine peoples (*Rom.* 14.2). Of these explanations, Plutarch favors the latter, in which the acquisition of women for unmarried Roman men is understood as a means for effecting social and political alliances. Later in his narrative, when the Sabines demand return of their daughters, Plutarch reports that the Romans not only expressed their determination to keep the Sabine women but demanded in addition that the Sabines grant them *koinōniā*, which can denote both "partnership" in a general sense and, in a specific usage, "community of marriage."[13] Dionysius of Halicarnassus acknowledges three possible motives for the theft: to make up for a shortage of women at Rome, as a pretext for war with the Sabines, as an excuse to make an alliance with the Sabines. Of these, he, like Plutarch, explicitly favors the last (Dion. Hal. 2.30.1–2, 31.1).

Livy and Ovid, too, consider multiple reasons for the theft of the Sabine women and likewise give primary emphasis to the Romans' desire to establish alliances with their neighbors. According to Livy, shortly after Romulus has succeeded not only in fortifying his city but also in attracting to it a substantial population of settlers, the otherwise flourishing community faces an unexpected crisis: "due to a dearth of women, the greatness of Rome was only going to last one generation," *penuria mulierum hominis aetatem duratura*

11. Benveniste, vol. 1, pp. 239–44.

12. For a slightly different analysis of the motives ascribed to the Romans by different ancient authors who narrate the theft of the Sabine women, see Poucet, *Recherches*, pp. 164–67.

13. See LSJ[9], s.v.

magnitudo erat (1.9.1). The obvious interpretation of this statement might be that the existing population could not survive without women simply because it would not be able to procreate new members. However, Livy's narrative glosses this assertion with a somewhat more complicated explanation: "inasmuch as they had neither expectation of offspring at home nor the possibility of establishing marriage rights with neighboring peoples," *quippe quibus nec domi spes prolis nec cum finitimis conubia essent* (1.9.1). Of course, it is possible to take the second part of that compound clause as a further explanation of the Romans' inability to produce offspring: "there was no hope for children at home [since there were no women there] and [no hope for children from abroad since] there was no possibility for marriage relations with neighbors." This is surely one meaning of the clause but not its only meaning. The actual expression here identifies *conubium* itself, "intermarriage between two groups of people or . . . the right to intermarry," as essential to the Romans' continued existence.[14] The Romans' subsequent plan to steal wives is attributed to their neighbors' rejection of Roman offers to establish relations of alliance and marriage, *societatem conubiumque* (1.9.3).

Ovid's narrative, similarly, understands the Romans' desire for wives in relation to their need to populate Rome and to secure effective alliances with neighbors. After sketching the modest scale of early Rome, Ovid sums up:

> iamque loco maius nomen Romanus habebat,
> nec coniunx illi nec socer ullus erat.
> (*Fast.* 3.187–88)
>
> Already the Roman had a reputation greater than his territory, and he had neither wife nor any father-in-law.

In fact, in Ovid the Romans are motivated as much by wounded male pride as by practical necessity.[15] His narrator, the god Mars, continues:

> spernebant generos inopes vicinia dives,
> et male credebar sanguinis auctor ego.
> in stabulis habitasse et oves pavisse nocebat

14. *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, s.v.

15. This aspect of their behavior is underscored by Ovid's introduction to the story. There, Mars attributes the course of events to rivalry between himself and Minerva: he claims responsibility for the events of the following narrative and offers them as a demonstration that he, the god of war, can serve the interests of peace just as well as Minerva can (*Fast.* 3.173–76).

iugeraque inculti pauca tenere soli.

. . . . . .

extremis dantur conubia gentibus, at quae
Romano vellet nubere, nulla fuit.
(*Fast.* 3.189–96)

Neighboring wealth spurned destitute sons-in-laws, and I was scarcely credited as the founder of the race. It counted against the Romans that they had lived in stables and grazed sheep, and that they possessed a few acres of uncultivated soil. . . . Marriage rights are extended to the most remote peoples, but there was none that wanted to marry a Roman.

From the first, then, all versions of the story are in essential agreement. Women or wives are not objects of value in and of themselves for the Romans, but as means to three other closely related but separate necessities: the propagation of offspring, the contraction of alliances through marriage, and the acknowledgment of Roman worth by neighboring peoples. Of these, the last two consistently receive the most emphasis.

Paradoxical as it may seem, abduction of brides is not inconsistent with these goals. Study of contemporary Cretan communities, for example, has documented a perception that bride theft is analogous to the theft of livestock.[16] In both cases the immediate object of the theft is not the primary goal but rather the means for establishing an alliance between the thief and the relatives/owners of the stolen object.[17] In particular, such theft is perceived as a way in which the thief may display his manhood, his resourcefulness,

16. Michael Herzfeld, *The Poetics of Manhood: Contest and Identity in a Cretan Mountain Village* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 25, 162, 252.

17. Ibid., pp. 174–75, 180. On bride theft alone, see Michael Herzfeld, "Gender Pragmatics: Agency, Speech, and Bride-Theft in a Cretan Mountain Village," *Anthropology* 9 (1985): 25–44; and id., *Anthropology through the Looking-Glass* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 179. Other studies of Mediterranean societies demonstrate that bride theft can be motivated by quite other considerations than establishment of the thief's manhood as a means to alliance with the bride's family. It can, for example, be a means for a romantically attracted couple to circumvent parental disapproval (i.e., a kind of elopement) or a means for families to sanction a marriage alliance without the groom's family having to incur the expense of a bride-price. For alternative motives for bride theft, see D. G. Bates, "Normative and Alternative Systems of Marriage among the Yoruk of Southeastern Turkey," *Anthropological Quarterly* 47 (1974): 270–87; M.-E. Handman, *La violence et la ruse: Hommes et femmes dans un village grec* (La Calade: Édisud, 1983), p. 85; W. G. Lockwood, "Bride-Theft and Social Maneuverability in Western Bosnia," *Anthropological Quarterly* 47 (1974): 288–303; P. J. Magnarella, *Tradition and Change in a Turkish Town* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1974), pp. 112–18.

establish that he is someone to be reckoned with, and in this way command the recognition of individuals or family groups who might otherwise be indifferent or hostile to him.[18] When practiced against lowland farmers, it provides a means of self-assertion against the higher status enjoyed by farmers over pastoralists "in rural Greek mixed-economy communities" and serves to recast "the economic and social margin . . . as the moral center."[19] A recent proliferation of animal theft for purely monetary reasons is perceived by traditionalists in these shepherd communities as a disturbing and disgraceful perversion of values.[20]

The theft of the Sabine women clearly functions much as the bride theft and animal theft analyzed in contemporary Crete. It not only leads, in fact, to eventual alliance between Romans and the more established neighbors who formerly spurned them; in particular it is used as an opportunity by the Romans to demonstrate their claims to be taken seriously. This is most clear, of course, in the wars provoked by the theft in which the Romans convincingly demonstrate their manliness and military prowess in an impressive succession of victories. It is further emphasized in Livy's narrative, where the religious festival that gives the Romans their opportunity to abduct the Sabine women also serves as a means of continuing negotiations with their neighbors indirectly, after the neighbors have refused the Romans a formal hearing: it is an occasion for the Romans to demonstrate their qualifications as prospective husbands and allies. They use their imagination and their resources lavishly to make the festivities both "distinguished and anticipated," *claram exspectatemque* (1.9.8). Once their guests arrive, they invite them "hospitably," *hospitaliter,* to view their homes, the site of the city, its walls, and its populous civic center—efforts by which they succeed not only in distracting but also in impressing their guests (1.9.9).

The element of theft also emphasizes the passive role of women in the traditional Roman wedding: they are objects transferred from the ownership

18. Animal theft as a means of displaying manhood and of making alliances is a central theme of Herzfeld, *Poetics,* but see especially chap. 5 ("Stealing to Befriend"), pp. 163–205. The fact that bride theft rarely, if ever, takes place today in the communities that Herzfeld studies does not diminish the force of the perceived analogy with animal theft. In the context of the villagers' own concept of *simasia* ("significance" or "meaning") "any distinction between 'how the Glendiots [Herzfeld's name for the villagers of his study] tell stories' and 'what actually happened' is entirely artificial. Both the event and the narration of event are social constructions, each reinforcing the other. . . . Glendiot theory recognizes this in the conflation . . . of the concepts of *exciting event* and *story* in a single term, *istoria,* which also significantly happens to be the official term for 'history' " (p. 207).

19. Herzfeld, *Poetics,* p. 228.

20. Ibid., pp. 267–69, 224.

of one male to another. This, of course, was their formal religiolegal role in the traditional wedding ceremonies by which women were transferred from the *manus,* "hand," of their *pater familias* to that of their husband. According to Plutarch, the custom that a husband carried his bride over the threshold of her new home was a survival from this first marriage in which brides were acquired by abduction (*Rom.* 15.6), would not willingly enter a building where they were about to lose their virginity, and could only be kept in their new homes under constraint (Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 271D). The perpetuation of such explanations for a Roman wedding custom suggests that abduction continued to express one aspect of the marriage relationship as Romans perceived it. Plutarch reinforces this point of view by including in his account of the theft a reference also to the traditional practice of parting the bride's hair with the point of a spear, an act that he interprets, again, as reflecting the first marriages, when brides were captives, won by the spear (*Rom.* 15.7).

The dominant role played by men in Roman marriage is further underscored by the explanations that both Livy and Plutarch give for the origin of the traditional wedding cry "Thalassio/Talasio." Plutarch offers three explanations (*Rom.* 15.1–5). One is that it refers to spinning and to the fact that the women will enjoy a privileged status in their new marriages, their only responsibility being to spin wool. Another explanation is that "Talasio" (for whatever reason) was the signal given by Romulus to begin the theft. But the first explanation offered by Plutarch and the one developed at greatest length by him is that the cry originated when some abductors of low status attempted, successfully, to protect their claim to a particularly attractive Sabine by calling out that they were taking her to Talasios, a young man, but one of good reputation and worth (Plut. *Rom.* 15.1–2). The marriage, Plutarch adds, was a particularly happy one. For Plutarch, then, the cry "Talasio" constitutes a good omen. Livy's narrative, on the other hand, reports only the last explanation for "Thalassio," with some modifications. His Thalassius is a young man of position; the abductors of the beautiful Sabine, his agents; Livy says nothing about the success of the resulting marriage (1.9.12). All of these etiological stories locate the origins of distinctive aspects of the marriage ceremony in the theft of the Sabine women and interpret them as recalling the original condition of Roman brides as captives. More specifically, they call attention to the women's role as prizes in male competition, to their passivity, and to their good fortune. According to the version favored by Livy and Plutarch, the repetition of the cry "Thalassio/Talasio" at Roman marriage ceremonies perpetuates a view in which every Roman bride is a prize chosen for her beauty; every

groom, a distinguished young man whose good standing in the community is a shield of protection for his bride and promises a happy marriage.[21]

Thus the fact and circumstances of the Sabines' abduction exaggerate elements typical of Roman marriage, and by doing so throw them into relief. Claude Lévi-Strauss has observed that "when an exotic custom fascinates us in spite of (or on account of) its apparent singularity, it is generally because it presents us with a distorted reflection of a familiar image."[22] The story of the theft of the Sabine women does the reverse of this: it introduces an anomalous element into a familiar custom. That is, bride theft and warfare between neighboring communities function here as metaphors that offer "perspective by incongruity" through "purposive nonconventionality."[23] They make the familiar strange, making it possible to see the familiar with new eyes. The rivalry between Rome and its neighbors, for example, can be understood as a magnification of rivalry, or the potential for it, between families that are not bound by ties of kinship; the comparative youthfulness of grooms and their need to prove themselves to prospective in-laws are exaggerated in the youthfulness of the Roman community and the contempt its neighbors hold toward it; the passivity of the brides and the trauma of their separation from their families are exaggerated in the forcible abduction experienced by the Sabine women; at the same time, the resourcefulness and youthful manliness of the grooms are magnified by the Romans' abduction of the Sabines and in their success in the wars against the women's vengeful relatives; the groom's social respectability and the bride's beauty, in the story of Thalassius/Talasios.

The final reconciliation effected by marriage is similarly exaggerated by the theft of the Sabine women. In the historical period (within which our accounts of the theft of the Sabine women fall), a marriage survived at the pleasure of the respective partners' fathers: thus a woman's father could

21. The same idea is suggested by Cicero's assertion that Romulus "placed [the Sabine women] in marriages with the best households," *in familiarum amplissimarum matrimoniis collocavit* (*Rep.* 2.6.12).

22. *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), pp. 238–39.

23. On "perspective by incongruity," see Kenneth Burke, *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose,* 3d ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 89–96; and id., *Perspectives by Incongruity,* ed. Stanley Edgar Hyman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964), pp. 94–99. For a review of theories of metaphor and their usefulness in anthropological interpretation, see Michael Herzfeld, "Exploring a Metaphor of Exposure," *Journal of American Folklore* 92 (1979): 285–87. On "purposive nonconventionality," see Malcolm Crick, *Explorations in Language and Meaning: Towards a Semiotic Anthropology* (New York: John Wiley/Halsted, 1976), p. 135.

legally dissolve his daughter's marriage, even against the will of the married couple.[24] The potential hostility and interference of the wife's father in a conventional marriage, then, is magnified and made patent in the actual warfare initiated by the Sabines. In response to their challenge, the Sabine women not only affirm willingly their status as Roman wives; they risk their lives in order to reconcile warring peoples. In doing this, they fulfill the original purpose of the abduction and their original function in it. Only then do they finally win the full measure of their husbands' and their relatives' affections: "After such a sorrowful war, joyous and unexpected peace made the Sabine women dearer to their husbands and relatives and above all to Romulus himself," *ex bello tam tristi laeta repente pax cariores Sabinas uiris ac parentibus et ante omnes Romulo ipsi fecit* (Livy 1.13.6). From separation, rivalry, and hostility comes a legitimate marriage of husband and wife, not just a reconciliation but a willing union of peoples.

The foregoing representation of the first Roman marriage as an institution subordinated to male purposes, and of women, consequently, as subordinate to men, is closely related to the Romans' perception of themselves not as an autochthonous people but as a self-made community of immigrants. It is noteworthy that the ancient narratives present the story of the Sabine women in close association with passages describing the motley character of Rome's early population and Romulus' efforts to attract immigrants to his new city from throughout Italy.[25] The Romans' perception of themselves

24. For a father's right to effect a divorce between his son and daughter-in-law, see Alan Watson, *Rome of the XII Tables: Persons and Property* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 32–33, who observes: "Nothing could better illustrate the fact that marriage was an arrangement between families, not just between individuals." Sarah Pomeroy, "The Relationship of the Married Woman to Her Blood Relatives in Rome," *Ancient Society* 7 (1976): 221 (and also p. 220), calls attention to the evidence of Cic. *Att.* 13.3 that Cicero "even considered breaking up Tullia's marriage to Dolabella when she was expecting a child [because of] political rivalry and the difficulties involved in paying the installments on Tullia's dowry." It should be noted, however, that the formal prerogatives of the father with regard to a daughter's marriage were often exercised in fact by the mother. See Phillips, "Roman Mothers," pp. 69–80.

25. Livy's description of Romulus' sanctuary and the indiscriminate band of men that it attracted (1.8.4–5) is separated from the story of the Sabine women by only a brief few lines on Romulus' organization of the city's population. Plutarch (*Rom.* 14.5) notes in his introduction to the story of the Sabine women that the new city was filling with aliens, most of whom were "a rabble of the needy and obscure," *migades ex aporōn kai aphanōn*. Dionysius makes it a point to deny that Rome, being a Greek settlement, was a refuge of barbarians, fugitives, and vagabonds (1.89.1). He acknowledges the tradition that Romulus welcomed numerous immigrants from other communities, although he sanitizes it by asserting that Romulus accepted only free men (2.15.3). Romulus' immigration policy is not mentioned

as a community of immigrants may be related, in turn, to their immemorial policy of controlling neighboring populations through assimilation. This was achieved in large part by extending various degrees of citizen status to allied and subject peoples.[26] While the rights to participate in Roman voting assemblies (*suffragium*) and to hold public office at Rome (*per magistratum*) were among those extended relatively late and very selectively to non-Romans, *conubium*, the right of intermarriage, was among the earliest citizen rights that non-Romans might receive.[27] The particular function of *conubium* was not so much to assure the availability of marriage partners as it was to assure that the union formed by a Roman and a non-Roman would be legally recognized at Rome, so that their children would be regarded as legitimate and would, with their parents, enjoy the protection of Roman laws, particularly those governing inheritance. This, as A. N. Sherwin-White observes, "is no small exception to the exclusiveness of local politics in fourth-century Latium."[28] Thus the story of the Sabine women is in part about one of the most important ways in which the Romans had, in historical reality, extended their community and their *imperium*. It constitutes a partial explanation of how and why that process worked.

The Sabine women are themselves central to this explanation in two ways. First, they produce children in whom the family lines of both mother and father are united and who, therefore, provide a basis for common interest between separate peoples. However, in every narrative in which the children are introduced as mediators between Sabines and Romans (that is, in all of the narratives except for Cicero's very spare account), it is the Sabine women themselves who call attention to the children, and, in several versions, they even carry them onto the field of battle between Sabines and Romans and present them to their fathers and grandfathers for acknowledgment.[29] The role of the children, therefore, is subordinate to that of their mothers. Their presence on the field of battle reflects the Sabine women's own initiative, their own desire to put an end to the hostilities between Sabine and Roman men, and their own affirmation of attachment and loyalty both to Sabine fathers and to Roman husbands. It is this initiative, this desire, and this

either in the very brief narrative of Cicero or in Ovid's narratives in the *Ars amatoria* and *Fasti*, neither of which is organized as a chronological history of Rome.

26. The standard treatment of this practice from earliest times through the Principate is A. N. Sherwin-White, *The Roman Citizenship*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973).

27. On *suffragium* and *per magistratum*, see Sherwin-White, pp. 35–36; on *conubium*, see p. 34.

28. P. 34.

29. Dion. Hal. 2.45.4–5; Livy 1.13.2; Ov. *Fast.* 3.213–24; Plut. *Rom.* 19.1–6.

affirmation that are decisive in uniting Sabine and Roman peoples and in fulfilling Romulus' original purpose.

Viewed from this perspective, the story of the Sabine women displays the essential elements of a rite of passage as it was first characterized by Arnold Van Gennep, inasmuch as its subjects move from separation through a transitional, liminal period to final incorporation into society in their new roles.[30] Moreover, as Loring Danforth, for example, has documented in *The Death Rituals of Rural Greece,* a rite of passage may operate on several interlocking planes simultaneously. In the customs that he describes, death separates from society both the deceased and the female relative who survives him or her. The survivor then passes through a period of mourning before being reincorporated into more normal social relations, while the deceased is regarded as going through a period of purification until his or her bones, cleansed of decomposed flesh, are removed from the earth and placed in an ossuary above ground, a sign that the spirit, too, has been cleansed and received into the afterlife.[31]

These models from anthropology help both to clarify the essential structure of the story of the Sabine women and to illuminate the value of specific details as they may be related to that structure. In the story of the Sabine women, it is the progress of community and that of individuals that parallel each other and are interdependent. As we have seen, the narratives begin with hostilities between Romans and Sabine neighbors, who are disdainful of the young community growing up in their vicinity. They end with a reconciliation of Roman and Sabine peoples. The versions of Cicero, Dionysius, Plutarch, and Livy record not just the cessation of hostilities, as does the version of Ovid, but the formal union of the two peoples, who share citizenship, religious rites, and a common name, although they maintain their separate centers of habitation.[32] At the same time, the story moves

30. *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960). The three stages characterizing rites of passage are represented schematically in Edmund Leach's summary discussion of the subject, *Culture and Communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), chap. 17, pp. 77–79; Leach's schema is on p. 78. Both M. Torelli, *Lavinio e Roma: Riti iniziatici e matrimonio tra archeologia e storia* (Rome: Edizioni Quasar, 1984), p. 75, and Jean Gagé, *Matronalia,* Collection Latomus 60 (Brussels: Revue d'études latines, 1963), pp. 273–76, see the historical accounts of the theft of the Sabine women as preserving the memory of an archaic rite of passage based on a perception of marriage as entailing the forcible separation of the bride from her parents. See also Köstler, p. 53.

31. Loring M. Danforth, *The Death Rituals of Rural Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 43.

32. Cic. *Rep.* 2.13; Dion. Hal. 2.46.3; Plut. *Rom.* 19.9; 20.1–3, 5; 21.1; Livy 1.13.4–5.

from the abduction of the Sabine women and their separation from their homes and families of birth to their reunion, when Sabines and Romans join as one people, and many parents of the abducted women (abducted Antemnates and Crustumini as well as Sabines) move to Rome to be close to their daughters.[33] This, in turn, is related to a change in the women's status from victims of male violation to objects of male respect.[34]

Finally, as rites of passage often begin with elements that are inverted at their conclusion to mark formally that the transition from one state to another has been completed, so the story of the Sabine women is marked by contrasting festivals near its beginning and at its conclusion. Before their abduction, the Sabine women observe the Consualia as outsiders.[35] Indeed, this festival is the lure that is used to attract them and their families to Rome from their native towns. At the completion of their transformation into wives, the Sabine women, now Roman *matronae,* participate in another Roman festival, the Matronalia.[36] Specific characteristics of the two festivals make their contrast in this context particularly striking. The Consualia seems to have been an agricultural celebration featuring contests among men.[37] Ancient authors associated it with secrecy and the making of plans, both because of apparent etymological connections between *condere* (to store, bury, or hide), Consus (a god associated with stored harvests), and *consilium* (plan), and because the Consualia was associated with Romulus' plot to abduct the Sabine women.[38]

By contrast, although exact details of the Matronalia are imperfectly known to us, such evidence as there is indicates clearly that women not

33. Livy 1.11.2 and 4.

34. Livy 1.13.6–7; Dion. Hal. 2.47.2–4; Ov. *Fast.* 3.227–28; Plut. *Rom.* 19.9; 20.3–4; 21.1.

35. On inversions in rites of passage, see Leach, *Culture,* p. 78.

36. For the Sabines as observers of the Consualia, see Cic. *Rep.* 2.12; Dion. Hal. 2.31.2; Livy 1.9.6; Ov. *Fast.* 3.199–200; Plut. *Rom.* 14.2–6. For the Sabine women as celebrants of the Matronalia, see Ov. *Fast.* 3.167–70, 229–58; Plut. *Rom.* 21.1

37. The evidence is summarized by James George Frazer, ed., *Publii Ovidii Nasonis Fastorum libri sex: The "Fasti" of Ovid* (London: Macmillan, 1929), vol. 3, pp. 50–57, *ad Fast.* 3.189, and by Franz Bömer, ed., *P. Ovidius Naso: Die Fasten* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1957), vol. 2, p. 156, *ad Fast.* 3.199. Of particular relevance to the present discussion are Ov. *Fast.* 1.345; Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 48; Dion. Hal. 2.31.2; Wallace M. Lindsay, ed., *Nonii Marcelli De compendiosa doctrina libros XX* (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1964), vol. 1, p. 31, quoting Varro *De vita populi Romani* s.v. *"cernui": ibi pastores ludos faciunt coriis Consualia;* Festus s.v. *"Mules,"* in *Sextus Pompeius Festus,* ed. Wallace M. Lindsay (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1965), p. 135.

38. See Dion. Hal. 2.31.3; Plut. *Rom.* 14.3; Tert. *De spect.* 5; Lindsay, *Festus,* s.v. *"Consualia,"* p. 36; Serv. *ad Aen.* 8.636; Bömer, vol. 2, p. 156, *ad Fast.* 3.199, citing Alios Walde and J. B. Hofmann, *Lateinisches etymologisches Wörterbuch,* 3d ed. (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1938–56), vol. 1, p. 266.

only participated in this festival but were its principal and honored celebrants. Aspects of the Matronalia that have parallels in the Saturnalia are of particular relevance to interpreting narratives about the theft of the Sabine women. The Matronalia seems to have been an occasion when women entertained slaves, just as men did at the Saturnalia.[39] Similarly, it was an occasion when men gave presents to women, just as presents were given to men at the Saturnalia.[40] These parallels have led to speculation that the Matronalia should be understood as a kind of Saturnalia in honor of women; and, indeed, the most striking feature of both festivals is that for one day at least they give preeminent status to a part of the population that is normally more or less marginal. Inasmuch as the Matronalia is associated with Juno Lucina, goddess of childbirth, and its origins are traced to the theft of the Sabine women, it identifies women's claim to status in the community with their role as intermediaries between male kinship groups, a role that derives in large part from their ability to produce offspring that are common to both kin by marriage and kin by blood.[41] As a virtual mirror image of the male-oriented Consualia, from which women were excluded, the Matronalia signals the transformation of the Sabine women from outsiders to insiders and completes their incorporation into Roman society.

The conditions just summarized represent the extreme points of the rite of passage, the beginning and end, respectively. Between them occur the critical liminal experiences that make transition from one extreme to the other possible. Here in the liminal zone the Roman men prove themselves to the Sabines in warfare, and there is a change in the women's behavior from passivity, as largely incidental objects caught up in a conflict between males, to action, as agents in the reconciliation among men, when, on their own initiative, they intervene between warring communities and affirm their married status. Between the two extremes one or several of the following help to establish affective bonds between Roman men and Sabine women: formal

39. Evidence for the Matronalia is summarized by Bömer, vol. 2, p. 154, *ad Fast.* 3.167, and by Frazer, vol. 3, pp. 48–49, *ad Fast.* 3.169. The following are particularly relevant to the present discussion: Macrob. *Sat.* 1.12.7; Lydus *Mens.* 4.42, in the edition of Ricardus Wünsch (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1967), p. 99.

40. See Suet. *Vesp.* 19.1; *Corpus Tibullanum* 3.1.1–4 and 4.2.1; Plaut. *Miles gloriosus* 691–93; Tert. *De idololatria* 14; *Digesta* XXIV 1.31.8.

41. On the Matronalia as a women's Saturnalia, see Frazer, vol. 3, pp. 48–49, *ad Fast.* 3.169; on the role of Juno Lucina in the Matronalia, see *Fast.* 2.425–52, where Juno Lucina is credited with fostering the childbirths without which Romulus would have regarded the theft of the Sabine women as futile; on the origins of the Matronalia, see Ov. *Fast.* 3.167–70, 229–58; Plut. *Rom.* 21.1.

weddings, informal courtship of the abducted women by the Roman men, and the sharing of common offspring. Stages in the rite of passage are outlined in the following chart.

Beginning	*Liminal Period*	*End*
Romans and Sabines separate peoples	War between Romans and Sabines	Romans and Sabines one people[a]
Sabine women as Sabine daughters	Sabine women won over by Romans (through marriage[b], courtship[c], children[d])	Sabine women as Roman wives
Sabine women objects of dispute		Sabine women agents of reconciliation
Sabine women abducted from families		Sabine women reunited with families[e]
Sabine women objects of violence		Sabine women honored for their intervention[f]
Sabine women observers of a Roman festival		Sabine women celebrants of a Roman festival[g]

Unless specifically noted below, each of the elements listed above occurs in all of the narratives discussed here.

a. Cic. *Rep.* 2.13; Dion. Hal. 2.46.3; Livy 1.13.4–5; Plut. *Rom.* 19.9; 20.1–3, 5; 21.1.

b. Cic. *Rep.* 2.6.12; Dion. Hal. 2.30.5–6 (cf. 2.24.4–25.6).

c. Livy 1.9.16.

d. Livy 1.9.14.

e. Reunion is implicit in all the narratives that record the joining of Roman and Sabine peoples; it is explicit only in Livy 1.11.2 and 4, where it is asserted that many Antemnates and Crustumini moved to Rome after their defeat in order to be with their daughters.

f. Livy 1.13.6–7; Dion. Hal. 2.47.2–4; Ov. *Fast.* 3.227–28 (by fathers only); Plut. *Rom.* 19.9; 20.3–4; 21.1.

g. Ov. *Fast.* 3.169–70, 229–34; Plut. *Rom.* 21.1.

One advantage of looking at the narratives of the Sabine women as narratives of a rite of passage is that the logical centrality of the role played by the Sabine women themselves becomes clear. Their spontaneous and decisive intervention between warring Roman and Sabine men identifies their own transformation from passive objects to active agents as essential

to the resolution of conflict. The movement from extreme to extreme that characterizes this story emphasizes the importance of the critical liminal stage in which the women's transformation is effected, and underscores the fact that it is their transformation, their successful initiation as Roman wives, upon which the final incorporation of male and female, Roman and Sabine, into a single community depends. As I have already emphasized, however, the Sabine women's initiation is framed by a story about the fulfillment of male goals and the realization of Roman masculine prowess. According to this story, all of the first Romans are men. The action of the story is set in motion by their needs (the Romans' need for children to populate their city, for allies to secure Rome's greatness, and for recognition of their own manliness). The story reaches its natural conclusion, accordingly, when the Roman men have achieved those goals by fathering children, winning allies, and demonstrating their prowess. Although the role of the Sabine women in this process is both central and essential, their story is subordinated to that of male achievement and is told from an exclusively male point of view. Thus there is a tension between the logical requirements of the story, which point to the women's role as central, and the male perspective from which the story is told and which treats the women's experience as irrelevant or at best of secondary interest.

II

While all of the narratives have this much in common, they nonetheless differ considerably in how they negotiate the distance between the two perspectives noted above. In the process they offer widely divergent responses to the ideological foundations of Roman marriage and gender relations. These differences of perspective emerge most clearly, in fact, in the different ways in which the individual narratives deal with what their exclusively male perspective makes most problematic, the nature of women and the manner in which women come to play an active role in the events surrounding them. In this regard, the narratives under consideration may be divided into three distinct categories. The first embraces the narratives of Cicero, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Plutarch. The second is represented by Ovid, and the third by Livy.

The narratives of Cicero, Dionysius, and Plutarch are characterized by an essential lack of interest in the process by which the Sabine women are initiated into their roles as Roman *matronae* and by a tacit assumption that there is nothing problematic about their initiation. Cicero essentially bypasses

description of this process: he reports that Romulus organized a formal wedding between the Sabine women and their Roman abductors (*Rep.* 2.6.12), but he offers no details that might suggest why and how the formalities of a wedding ceremony transform captives into active and willing marriage partners. The narrative of Dionysius of Halicarnassus expands only superficially on Cicero's stark reference to marriage. Dionysius presents the wedding arranged by Romulus as a concession to the Sabine women's sensibilities: the men refrain from actual intercourse until after the wedding, and the wedding ceremony itself is based on the women's own traditions (Dion. Hal. 2.30.6; cf. 2.24.4–25.6). But Dionysius does not reveal what makes the Sabines' traditional wedding ceremony an effective vehicle for initiating Sabine women into Roman society. To call attention to the Romans' deference to Sabine formalities is to offer the illusion of an explanation, but at the expense of trivializing the Sabine women, who, it is suggested, could be won over by the merest gesture of consideration on the men's part.

Plutarch approaches the problem somewhat differently. In his narrative, the Sabine women vaguely justify intervention on behalf of their Roman abductors by reference to the neglect of their own families and to the necessities imposed by time:

> ἁρπασθεῖσαι δ'ἠμελήθεμεν ὑπ'ἀδελφῶν καὶ πατέρων καὶ οἰκείων χρόνον τοσοῦτον ὅσος ἡμᾶς πρὸς τὰ ἔχθιστα κεράσας ταῖς μεγίσταις ἀνάγκαις πεποίηκε νῦν ὑπὲρ τῶν βιασαμένων καὶ παρανομησάντων δεδιέναι μαχομένων καὶ κλαίειν θνησκόντων. (*Rom.* 19.4)
>
> After we were abducted, we were neglected by our brothers, our fathers, and relatives for such a long time that we have become mixed up in the most hateful circumstances by the greatest necessities and have been made to fear on behalf of those who criminally took us by force when they engage in battle and to weep for them when they die.

Thus the narrative of Plutarch, just as those of Cicero and Dionysius, rather than describing or explaining the Sabine women's transformation, proceeds as though there were nothing problematic about it. To the extent that they do no more than refer to formalities, to the Romans' limited gestures of goodwill, or to the healing effects of time, these narratives offer an illusion of explanation that is persuasive only insofar as their readers are uncritical.

If the narratives of Cicero, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Plutarch proceed as though the details of the Sabine women's initiation were of no interest because there is nothing problematic about it, Ovid's narrative takes

a radically different approach. It makes explicit and emphatic the male perspective that is implicit in all the other narratives. Even though Ovid is male, he marks the particular maleness of this portion of his narrative by identifying its narrator as the god of war. Mars takes a proprietary interest in this story, because the festival that Romulus created to entice the Sabines to Rome was presented in his honor. Mars himself is represented as perceiving the theft of the Sabine women in terms of his own rivalry with the female divinity of peace, Minerva. He offers the story as proof that he can outdo the goddess in her own special sphere, inasmuch as the theft of the Sabine women issued in peace between hostile peoples.[42] The god introduces his story belligerently: "I do not regret this undertaking; it is a pleasure to linger over this part also, that Minerva may not think that she alone can do this [i.e., excel in the arts of peace]," *nec piget incepti, iuvat hac quoque parte morari, / hoc solam ne se posse Minerva putet* (*Fast.* 3.175–76).

Just as Ovid's narrative emphasizes the male appropriation of the story of the Sabine women, it minimizes deliberately the role of the women. It says nothing of any Roman overtures to the abducted women; there is no wedding or promise of one, no Roman efforts at courtship (such as we will find in Livy's narrative). Rather, after promising a later description of the actual abduction and of the festival at which it took place—a promise that is not in fact fulfilled—Mars moves on directly to note the anger of the women's relatives and the consequent wars between son-in-law and father-in-law (*Fast.* 3.199–202). The abrupt transition from plans for abduction to the outbreak of war ignores the women so conspicuously that it calls attention to their absence from the narrative and to the paradoxical assumption that the theft alone, the mere possession of Sabine daughters, is sufficient to make the fathers fathers-in-law, the abductors sons-in-law.

The women's own status is left ambiguous, and this ambiguity is sustained in the subsequent narrative, where they are referred to with seeming indifference once as *nuptae* (*Fast.* 3.205), but other times as *raptae* (*Fast.* 3.203, 208, 217). The very next couplet offers a comparably stark and brutal report of the unions' fruitfulness: "Already the abducted women generally had the name 'mother' also; the wars between relatives had been protracted by long delay," *iamque fere raptae matrum quoque nomen habebant, / tractaque erant longa bella propinqua mora* (*Fast.* 3.203–4). No mention here, as we will find in Livy's narrative, of mutuality, of fortunes that are shared or are the source of *caritas*, "dearness," or of any other binding sentiment. The women's new

42. Hemker, p. 44, emphasizes the inconsistencies that discredit the anonymous narrator of Ovid's account in the *Ars amatoria*.

status reflects only the physical consequences of their abduction and rape and the length of time that has passed. It is significant, too, that there is absolutely no mention of or even allusion to the Sabine women themselves up to this point in Ovid's narrative: they exist, insofar as they exist here and throughout the narrative, only by virtue of their relations to others. They first get a title, "mothers," only when they have produced children, and it is only after that that they are identified as brides: "the brides gather in the shrine known as Juno's," *conueniunt nuptae dictam Junonis in aedem* (*Fast.* 3.205). Even Romulus' wife, Hersilia, identified by name in the accounts of Livy (1.11.2), Dionysius (2.45.6), and Plutarch (*Rom.* 14.7–8), is referred to by Mars anonymously as *nurus*, "daughter-in-law" (*Fast.* 3.206). When the abducted women are at last identified as the celebrants of Mars' rites by a proper name, that name, Oebaliae, identifies them as the descendants of a man, Oebalus, Spartan ancestor of the Sabine peoples (*Fast.* 3.230).

The persistent refusal to acknowledge the Sabine women, their effacement in the narrative, and the practice of referring to them only indirectly—in terms of their relationships to others—are factors contributing to the relative denseness and economy of Ovid's narrative, but the significance of those factors cannot be exhausted by stylistic considerations. It is precisely the fact that these women are allowed no identity apart from their fathers, husbands, and children—apart from others—that motivates their intervention between husbands and fathers and also determines the manner of that intervention. When Mars' daughter-in-law summons the women to meet, it is in response to a crisis:

> o pariter raptae, quoniam hoc commune tenemus,
> non ultra lente possumus esse piae.
> stant acies, sed utra di sint pro parte rogandi,
> eligite! hinc coniunx, hinc pater arma tenet.
> quaerendum est, viduae fieri malimus an orbae:
> consilium vobis forte piumque dabo.
> (*Fast.* 3.207–12)
>
> O fellow victims of abduction—for we have this in common—we cannot be calmly dutiful any longer. The battle lines are drawn. On which side to evoke the gods, choose. On one side your husband, on the other your father is in arms. We must consider whether we would rather become widows or orphans. I will give you strong and responsible advice.

Unless they intervene in the imminent battle, they will become "widows" and "orphans"; they will be diminished by the loss of their men and by the

loss of identity and protection that goes with it.[43] It is for this reason that piety is presented to these women not as an expression of loyalty or even of obligation but of necessity.[44]

Even when the abducted women do intervene in the battle between fathers and husbands, their own role is minimized, barely transcending their original passive anonymity. The women assume the appearance of mourning and take to the field of battle, but once there virtually their only act is to assume a posture of submission (*Fast.* 3.213–20). In contrast to Livy's narrative, in which the women call on their men in the name of their children (1.13.2), here the women actually bring the children onto the field with them—a critical difference, since in Ovid's narrative the children, not the women, are the only ones actually to speak. Insofar as the women speak,

43. The idea that the Sabine women fear that they will be made widows or orphans occurs in Livy's narrative, and that is very likely Ovid's source for it. However, the significance of this fear is quite different in the two narratives. In Ovid it is presented as the reason for the Sabine women's intervention and as the only reason for it. In Livy's narrative it is part of the women's appeal to their fathers and husbands. It concludes their appeal to the men to recognize the relationships by which they are bound to each other through the Sabine women, and it is presented as an expression of the women's concern on their behalf (1.13.3).

44. This passage echoes the appeal of the Sabine women in Livy: "better that we perish than that we live without either of you, widows or orphans," *melius peribimus quam sine alteris uestrum uiduae aut orbae uiuemus* (1.13.3). Women's dependence on men for their identity is vividly expressed in India when a widow casts herself—or is coerced—onto her husband's funeral pyre in the ritual act of sati. This behavior has been attributed to, among other things, a perception that "because of the very close identification between a man and his wife [among certain Hindu castes], indeed to the point where she is subsumed under his identity, she is considered, at his death, to be socially dead" (Elizabeth Leigh Struchbury, "Blood Fire and Mediation: Sacrificing and Widow Burning in the Nineteenth Century," in *Women in Nepal and India*, ed. Michael Allen and S. N. Mukherjee, Australian National University Monographs on South Asia 8 [Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1982], p. 36; see also p. 43). V. N. Datta, *Sati: A Historical, Social, and Philosophical Enquiry into the Hindu Rite of Widow Burning* (Riverdale, Md.: Riverdale, 1988), pp. 207–21, calls attention to this and to other complementary motives for widow burning. In general, "it has been observed that the more the bereaved defined themselves in terms of their relationship to the deceased, the more the death threatens their socially constructed world" (Danforth, p. 138, citing Jack Bynum, "Social Status and Rites of Passage: The Social Context of Death," *Omega* 4 [1973]: 323–32, and Robert Blauner, "Death and Social Structure," in *Passing*, ed. Charles O. Jackson [London: Greenwood Press, 1977], pp. 174–209). At Rome women's dependence on men for their identities is expressed literally in the naming of women by the feminine form of their father's clan name and in the traditional formula by which a woman accepted her role as wife: *ubi tu Gaius ego Gaia*. A woman is first her father's daughter and then her husband's wife. These are precisely the claims to identity that the Sabine women find threatened. For other implications of the naming conventions noted above, see Judith P. Hallett, *Fathers and Daughters in Roman Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 76–83.

it is only through their children. The children wave to their mothers' fathers; those who can, call out to their grandfathers. Even when their children cannot speak their grandfathers' names, the mothers assert themselves only so far as to coach the children:

> et, quasi sentirent, blando clamore nepotes
> tendebant ad avos bracchia parva suos:
> qui poterat, clamabat avum tunc denique visum,
> et, qui vix poterat, posse coactus erat.
> (*Fast.* 3.221–24)
>
> And, as though they understood, with ingratiating clamor the grandchildren were holding out their small arms to their own grandfathers. He who could was calling out to his grandfather, then seen for the first time, and he who was hardly able to had been forced to be able.

The women of Livy's narrative make their appeal themselves and in the name of their own marriage (*conubium*) as well as in the name of their children. Where it is the women in Livy's narrative who become *cariores* because of their initiative (1.13.6), here it is the children who are "dear guarantees" or "tokens," *pignora cara* (*Fast.* 3.218). In Ovid's narrative, the women are voiceless, (almost) entirely passive, never more than vehicles for children: they bear children and then literally carry them onto the field of battle.

By implication the women are of little or no value themselves. This view is confirmed even in Ovid's subtle recasting of significant elements in Livy's narrative. In Livy the Roman men appealed to their Sabine captives with "blandishments," *blanditiae* (1.9.16). In Ovid, the women are the objects of no such attention: *blanditiae* here are associated instead with the childishly inarticulate appeals (*blando clamore*) that the children address to their grandfathers (*Fast.* 3.221). In Livy's narrative the children were the basis for a shared relationship between mother and father, "than which nothing is dearer to the human race," *quo nihil carius humano generi,* and the Sabine women become *cariores* to husbands and parents alike because of their intervention (1.9.14; 1.13.6). As a mark of honor the tribal divisions, *curiae,* into which the newly unified people were divided took their names from Sabine women—even if names were perhaps chosen for this honor on the basis of the husband's status (1.13.6–7). In Ovid, however, we hear only that the women were honored by their fathers: "fathers-in-law . . . / embrace their honored children," *soceri . . . / laudatas tenent natas* (*Fast.* 3.226–27). The contrasts noted here between Ovid and Livy are the more telling inasmuch

as Livy's text was available to Ovid, and so departures from it are likely to reflect conscious revision of the story on Ovid's part.

At the end of the story, Mars observes that from the day of their intervention, the Sabine women have had the weighty obligation of celebrating his day, the Kalends of March. But whether this obligation reflects upon their heroism or Mars' own masculine prowess is unclear even to the god himself:

> inde diem, quae prima mea est, celebrare kalendas
> Oebaliae matres non leve munus habent.
> aut quia committi strictis mucronibus ausae
> finierant lacrimis Martia bella suis,
> vel quod erat de me feliciter Ilia mater,
> rite colunt matres sacra diemque meum.
> (*Fast.* 3.229–34)
>
> From that time, mothers descended from Oebalus have this obligation, not a light one, to celebrate the day that is my first, the Kalends of my month. Either because they had dared to confront drawn sword points and through their tears had brought the wars of Mars to an end or because Ilia [whose rape by Mars produced Romulus] was a mother with good results because of me, mothers formally observe my rites and day.

This reflection upon the god's own prowess brings us back to the introduction of the story and to the assertion there that the theft of the Sabine women and their subsequent intervention between fathers and husbands were the consequence of Mars' desire to prove himself superior to Minerva in her own arts of peace.

For Ovid, then, the Sabine women are responsible (indirectly) for bringing an end (or at least a temporary halt) to internecine hostilities, but the incorporation that they effect is conspicuously incomplete, and it is incomplete specifically because of the kind of recognition that is given (or not given) to women. As mere vehicles for children, they have no direct power to engage the affections and loyalties of their husbands. It is to their maternal grandfathers alone that the children make their appeal. It is the Sabine fathers-in-law who take the initiative of offering their hands to the Roman sons-in-law; and it is the Sabine fathers alone who honor the women. Save for the vague assertion that "the men's weapons and their spirits drop," *tela viris animique cadunt* (*Fast.* 3.225), the narrative makes no mention, offers no suggestion, of concessions on the part of the Romans. There is no mention of the formal reconciliation between Roman and Sabine that is the capstone of all the other narratives. The narrator's earlier

assertion that "then for the *first* time father-in-law bore arms against son-in-law," *tum primum generis intulit arma socer* (*Fast.* 3.202), is allowed to echo ominously through this conclusion.

Livy's narrative falls somewhere in between those of Cicero, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Plutarch, on the one hand, and that of Ovid, on the other. Like the former narratives but unlike Ovid's, it presents the story of the Sabine women in an essentially positive light, emphasizing the achievement of harmony between men and women, Sabines and Romans. But unlike the narratives of Cicero, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Plutarch, it does not take for granted the process by which the theft leads, paradoxically, to harmony. In Livy's narrative, as in Dionysius', Romulus plays a mediating role, but within a more complex and ambiguous pattern of circumstances. The women are abducted, some (as the woman intended for Thalassius) taken off to the homes of their prospective husbands, "their hope for themselves no better, their indignation no less [than those of their relatives who fled Rome]," *nec raptis aut spes de se melior aut indignatio est minor* (1.9.13); Romulus himself goes among the women justifying their abduction by reference to the intransigence of the Sabine men, promising the women marriage and a partnership of fortunes with their Roman husbands, and counseling them to give their affections (*animos*) to those to whom fate had given their bodies (1.9.14–15), but the exact sequence of events is unclear. There is no mention of Roman restraint, only the promise of marriage ceremonies, and Romulus' tone here seems to be as much admonitory as conciliatory.

Nonetheless, his admonitions do identify one basis for accommodation between the Sabine women and their abductors:

> illas tamen in matrimonio, in societate fortunarum omnium ciuitatisque et quo nihil carius humano generi sit liberum fore; . . . adnisurus pro se quisque [Romanus] sit ut, cum suam uicem functus officio sit, parentium etiam patriaeque expleat desiderium. (1.9.14–15)
>
> they nonetheless will be married and will share in all the fortunes and in the state, and, what is dearest to the human race, in legitimate children; . . . each Roman will strive on his own behalf not only to perform his responsibilities in his turn but also to satisfy the [women's] desire for parents and fatherland.

Romulus here views marriage between husband and wife as a kind of microcosm of the political alliance between families and peoples that it is supposed to effect. It is an "alliance," a *societas,* just like that which the

Romans sought unsuccessfully with the Sabines.[45] It offers the same sharing of fortunes and above all sharing of community that the Romans and Sabines will ultimately agree to. It is precisely because marriage constitutes a kind of substitute for (as well as a means to) an alliance between states that Roman husbands can promise to satisfy their wives' desire for parents and for fatherland. In marriage as Romulus views it, children will perform the same function in relation to mother and father that the Sabine women will perform in relation to husband and blood relations: they will be the mutually valuable object that will bring parties together. In fact, their role as catalysts extends beyond mother and father to grandparents. When the Sabine women intervene between their husbands and their fathers, they appeal to them to think of their children and grandchildren, respectively, as evidence of a shared relationship and as reasons to cease hostilities (1.13.2).

Similarly, the most important basis for the couples' own alliance is the *caritas* of their children. As we have seen, Romulus qualifies his promise of shared offspring with the assertion that nothing is more dear to the human race: *quo nihil carius humano generi sit* (1.9.14).[46] *Caritas* in Livy is the quality possessed by things, people, and relationships of exceptional value. It is used, for example, in the sense of "very expensive" to describe grain supplies during times of famine.[47] It is the source of the power that both children and the Roman homeland have to evoke strong sentimental attachments.[48] The *caritas* of children to their parents and of Rome to its inhabitants are very similar—*caritas liberum* and *caritas patriae* are the only two kinds of *caritas* described as "innate" (*ingenita:* 1.34.5; 8.7.8)—and, in fact, are closely associated. At 2.1.5 the narrator observes that the motley assemblage of immigrants to Rome only became a coherent community capable of self-government "after the guarantees of wives and legitimate children and after dearness of the soil itself . . . had allied their minds," *pignera coniugum ac liberorum caritasque ipsius soli . . . animos eorum consociasset. Caritas,* then, is an important constitutive element of community. Conversely, *caritas* may be

45. Columella *Rust.*, pref. 12.1, citing Xenophon's *Economicus,* characterizes marriage as "life's most useful alliance," *utilissima uitae societas,* which serves to preserve the race and to provide for the couple's old age, but for the husband it is an alliance based on an essentially economic division of labor in which male and female natures each make their distinctive contributions—the man farming and fighting abroad, the more timid woman charged with stewardship of the household (pref. 12.2–6).

46. This sentiment is expressed somewhat differently and more fully in Dio 56.3.4.

47. E.g., 2.12.1, 34.2; 10.11.9; 44.7.10.

48. See, for example, for children 1.34.5; 5.42.1, 54.2, 3; 3.49.3; and 8.7.18, 34.2; 40.9.3, 15.15 for homeland.

attained by contributing to the community: the Sabine women will be described as "dearer," *cariores,* to both fathers and husbands for bringing an end to their hostilities (1.13.6). Romulus' reference to the *caritas* of shared children adds to our understanding of why and how Sabine women are transformed from passive and incidental tokens of male rivalry into active and valued participants in Roman society, but it does not provide a full explanation. It moves from a political perspective that is by definition in this society essentially male (*societas fortunarum omnium ciuitatisque*) to a sentimental perspective that can include both men and women (*caritas liberum*). But it acknowledges no distinctively female point of view, no particular stake for women that corresponds to men's political stake in *societas.*

While Romulus appeals to the Sabine women with the voice of male authority, in the name of formal alliances undertaken for mutual interest, and in the name of sentiments associated with kinship and community, the women's abductors appeal to them in quite different terms: "There were in addition the blandishments of the men, who excused their deed by desire and love, prayers that have the greatest effect on woman's nature," *Accedebant blanditiae uirorum, factum purgantium cupiditate atque amore, quae maxime ad muliebre ingenium efficaces preces sunt* (1.9.16). The term *blanditiae* and its cognates are uncommon in Livy; they occur only thirteen times in the extant narrative. They are associated especially with women (24.4.4; 27.15.11; 29.23.7; 30.7.8; 32.40.11), more generally with the immature and the weak, both as their own characteristic manner of appeal or as a means of appealing to them: the young Hannibal begged his father to take him on campaign "with boyish blandishments," *pueriliter blandientem* (21.1.4); the Senate attempts to manipulate the plebeians with *blanditiae* (2.9.1).

Blanditiae are also associated with irrational behavior or emotions: threats, pity, fickleness (32.40.11; 30.12.18; 27.15.11), and, in particular, with the powerful irrationality of love. Hasdrubal manipulates the Numidian king Syphax—a man personally "inflamed with desire" (*accensum cupiditate*) and belonging to a people "beyond all [other] barbarians unrestrainedly given to lust" (*ante omnes barbaros . . . effusi in Venerem*)—through "the blandishments of his young wife" (*blanditiis . . . puellae*) (29.23.7).[49] Needless to say, *blanditiae* are associated with the very antithesis of male, public virtue. At Capua the insidious influence of sleep, drink, banquets, whores, baths, and leisure was made "daily more seductive by virtue of habit" (*consuetudine in*

49. On *Venus* as simply "lust" in contrast to the broader semantic range of *amor,* see Hirta Klepl, *Lucrez und Virgil in ihren Lehrgedichten* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967), p. 21 nn. 28 and 29.

dies blandius), until it completely enervated battle-hardened troops (23.18.11). Thus the Romans' recourse to *blanditiae* to win over their new wives is in keeping with their evocation of desire and love and implies a particular perception of female nature (its characterization by passion rather than by reason) and a concession to its weakness. The concession is a critical one, for it is immediately after reporting it that Livy observes: "Already the feelings of the abducted women had been greatly softened," *iam admodum mitigati animi raptis erant* (1.10.1).

Thus while Livy's narrative presents women as subordinate to male goals and relationships, it nonetheless presents women's contributions to those goals as justifying or necessitating concessions to the distinctive nature that is ascribed to them. The liminal period between the initial abduction of Sabine women and their final incorporation in marriage consequently entails a double accommodation. Women are, first of all, invited to join in an alliance, a *societas,* and to enjoy the benefits of shared fortunes and citizenship that follow from such an alliance, as well as to join in the ties of shared children—ties that are not unique to husbands and wives but extend to fathers, fathers-in-law, grandfathers, and others as well. That such *societas* is conceived of in an essentially, if not exclusively, male context is revealed by the absence of reference in the narrative to any women other than the abducted Sabines: when the Sabine women appeal to the ties embodied in their children, they do so only in terms of male relationships—fathers, grandfathers, sons, sons-in-law, grandsons, and so forth; they say nothing, for example, of sisters, mothers-in-law, or grandmothers. Participation in such an alliance entails primarily an accommodation of women to masculine values and society. The second accommodation is that made by men to women's nature as they perceive it: their acknowledgment of women's weakness and susceptibility to strong emotions. The accommodation reached between Roman men and Sabine women comes about because each party—man and woman, husband and wife—to some extent enters into the world of the other, at least as those worlds are perceived by men. It is noteworthy that the narrator himself affirms the perception of women held by Roman men in his narrative, when he observes that appeals to desire and love are especially suited to woman's nature.

As a practical solution to the problems of how to achieve stable marriages and lasting alliances among families joined by marriage at Rome, Livy's story of the Sabine women is scarcely realistic. This is most evident both in its failure to acknowledge any separate identity for women and in its exaggeration of the distances that must be bridged in more normal relationships: instead of the distance between bride and groom, one between captive and captor; instead of that between separate families, one between warring communities. As Lévi-Strauss has observed, such exaggerations serve "to justify the shortcomings of reality, since the extreme positions are only *imagined* in order to show that they are *untenable.*"[50] In Livy's narrative this tacit acknowledgment of the dissonance between ideal and reality is borne out in specific detail. There, even though the union of Romans and Sabines seems complete—even though the two communities are finally bound by ties of kinship, are joined as one *civitas,* recognize a dual kingship, accept Rome as the common capital, and share a common name, Quirites, after the Sabine town of Cures (1.13.4–5)—peace between them is not lasting. In fact, tensions between the two communities surface even during Romulus' lifetime. When disgruntled Laurentians murder Tatius, the Sabine king, in a riot at Lavinium, Livy notes: "They say that Romulus was less distressed by this than was becoming, whether because the alliance of kingship was unreliable or because Romulus thought that [Tatius] had not been killed at all unjustly," *Eam rem minus aegre quam dignum erat tulisse Romulum ferunt, seu ob infidam societatem regni seu quia haud iniuria caesum credebat* (1.14.3). Romulus not only declines to avenge the murder of Tatius but actually renews a treaty with Lavinium.[51] Thereafter, both Livy and Dionysius record a succession of conflicts between Rome and Sabine communities until Rome won a decisive victory over the Sabines in 449 B.C.E.; Livy even records a subsequent Roman conquest of the Sabines as late as 229 B.C.E. (*Epit.* 11).[52]

This imperfect political union between Sabine and Roman communities has a parallel in the relations between male and female in Livy's narrative. As noted above, a decisive step in the reconciliation of the abducted Sabines to their Roman husbands was taken when the Romans appealed to their individual brides through *cupiditas* and *amor,* the Roman men seeking to justify their deed (*purgantium*), according to the narrative, "by desire and love," *cupiditate atque amore* (1.9.16). This statement might mean that the men sought to win their brides over by the expression of actual desire and love for the women, but the context suggests a different reading. The participial phrase *factum purgantium cupiditate atque amore* explains *blanditiae* and is followed by the relative clause *quae maxime ad muliebre ingenium efficaces*

50. "The Story of Asdiwal," in *The Structural Study of Myth and Totemism,* ed. E. Leach (London: Tavistock, 1967), p. 30; and see p. 28.

51. Dion. Hal. 2.51–53.1 offers a similar but more detailed account of the circumstances leading up to the murder of Tatius and the murderers' acquittal by Romulus.

52. Livy 2.16ff.; 3.38.3ff.; Dion. Hal. 5.37ff.; Plut. *Val. Publ.* 20–23.

preces sunt, "which prayers have the greatest effect on woman's nature" (1.9.16). In other words, the men's self-justification is depicted as essentially rhetorical; it entails primarily, if not exclusively, words or external show, "blandishments" and "prayers." The narrative is pointedly silent about the nature of the men's actual feelings. Thus while it records the Romans' response to woman's nature as they perceive it, the narrative also suggests a distance between the Roman men and that nature. The men accommodate it, but they do not share it. Just as the alliance between Sabine and Roman communities attempts to create a single community from two, while preserving the separate identity of each, so Roman marriage aims to achieve a union that seeks to accommodate but cannot completely harmonize two distinct natures. At the most private, most intimate level of the relationship between Sabine bride and Roman groom there remains a note of reserve—at least on the part of the men—and distance.

This distance, viewed as a consequence of the inherent nature of women, calls attention to the existence of potentially disruptive elements that can never be totally expunged at the very heart of Roman society. Marriage and thus the alliances based on it remain dependent in part on notoriously unpredictable and uncontrollable passions, "desire and love," *cupiditas atque amor.* The precariousness of loyalties that are based, even in part, on these emotions is exemplified in the story of Tarpeia, a story of betrayal that occurs within and complements the story of the Sabine women's loyalty. The story of Tarpeia has several versions, which support a variety of interpretations. In one version Tarpeia betrayed the Roman citadel in exchange for the gold bracelets that the Sabine attackers wore on their left arms. This story is reported by Livy (1.11.6–9), Plutarch (*Rom.* 17.2), and Dionysius, in whose version Tarpeia's betrayal is attributed specifically to *erōs . . . tōn pselliōn,* "lust for bracelets" (Dion. Hal. 2.38.3). According to another version, Tarpeia betrayed the citadel not to the Sabines but to the Gauls and was motivated by her love for the enemy general, a version reported but rejected by Plutarch (*Rom.* 17.6–7; see also Prop. 4.4). In a third version, reported by Livy (1.11.9) and Dionysius (2.38.3; 39.1–40.1), Tarpeia did not in fact intend to betray Rome but rather sought to trick the Sabines into giving her the shields that they wore on their left arms, thus leaving them defenseless. This version, rejected by Livy, is favored by Dionysius, although in the end he disclaims any certainty in the matter and leaves a final judgment up to the reader (2.50.3).

The ancient authors record disagreement also as to why the Sabine attackers murdered Tarpeia by burying her under their shields: they hoped by so doing to hide the fact that they had taken Rome by treachery rather

than by force (Livy 1.11.7); they despised her as a traitor to her country, even though she was aiding them (Livy 1.11.7; Plut. *Rom.* 17.3–4); they killed her in anger at her attempt to trick them out of their armor (Livy 1.11.9; Dion. Hal. 2.40.1); they killed her out of anger at the size of the reward that she claimed (Dion. Hal. 2.40.2). Plutarch even reports, if only to reject, the possibility that Tarpeia was herself a Sabine woman (daughter of the Sabine king, Tatius), who betrayed Rome because she had been forced to live with Romulus against her will (Plut. *Rom.* 17.5).

In this context it is particularly significant that Livy's narrative also acknowledges contradictory versions of the tradition about Tarpeia, even if it favors one version over the others in the end. The point of the story, then, is not so much that women are inherently disloyal, but that, being perceived by men as constitutionally susceptible to emotions of desire and love, their motives are regarded as inherently suspect, difficult to predict (the Sabine attackers are either deceived or not, according to different versions), and difficult even after the fact to determine with confidence. Thus, in contrast to the Sabine women, whose susceptibility to *cupiditas* and *amor* contributes to their identification with Rome, stands Tarpeia, in whom those same emotions might just as well have led to betrayal.[53]

Livy's account of Tarpeia and her motives creates still further complications for the narrative, for it raises questions about the behavior and nature of the Roman men who appealed to the Sabine women in terms of the very passions for which Tarpeia is subsequently held suspect. If the men were actually motivated by the feelings of *cupiditas* and *amor* on the grounds of which they excused themselves to their captives, then the implicit moral of Tarpeia's story, that the qualities that make women malleable to men's purposes also make them unreliable members of community, must apply to Roman men as well. This reading is supported within the immediate narrative context, which contrasts the initial resolve of the avenging Sabines with

53. This ambivalence toward Tarpeia in the literary tradition is reflected in the lack of consensus among modern scholars on how to interpret pictorial representations of Tarpeia; see Jane Evans, *The Art of Persuasion: Political Propaganda from Aeneas to Brutus* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), pp. 122–23. This ambivalence may derive ultimately from a widespread mythological type associated with the foundation of cities. Joseph Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 160, noting that Tarpeia was the recipient of the state sacrifice that opened the *dies parentales* (public holidays in honor of the dead) at Rome, identifies her as a particular type of heroine who figures in many foundation stories from around the world. She is, according to Rykwert, "the virgin at the sacred hearth [through whose] guilty or substitute intercourse with god or hero, as well as its punishment, a new city, a new alliance, a new nation, a new state are founded."

that of the Romans. Of the wars provoked by the theft of the Sabine women, according to Livy, that with the Sabines was the greatest (*maximum*), because by them "nothing . . . was done with anger or desire," *nihil . . . per iram aut cupiditatem actum est* (1.11.5). After capturing Rome's citadel, the Sabines did not leave that stronghold until "the Romans came up to meet them, anger and desire to recapture the citadel arousing their spirits," *ira et cupiditate reciperandae arcis stimulante animos in aduersum Romani subiere* (1.12.1). The danger of the Romans' irrationality is underscored both by their putting themselves in a tactically disadvantageous position (coming up from the flat plain below to meet the Sabines) and by the rout that occurs when the Roman's audacious leader, Hostius Hostilius, is killed early in the fighting (1.12.1–3).

The problem of passions and of the Romans' susceptibility to them takes on even wider implications in light of the preface to Livy's narrative. There, Livy ascribed the decline of contemporary Rome to a general, undifferentiated desire for wealth and to the play of passions that excessive wealth makes possible: "In fact, the more modest its affairs, the less greed there was. Recently wealth has introduced avarice, and abundant pleasures have introduced a longing to perish and to destroy all things through extravagance and passionate desire," *Adeo quanto rerum minus, tanto minus cupiditatis erat: nuper diuitiae auaritiam et abundantes uoluptates desiderium per luxum atque libidinem pereundi perdendique omnia inuexere* (pref. 11–12). If we are to understand that men as well as women are motivated by *cupiditas* and *amor,* then the whole distinction between stronger, more rational men and weaker, more passionate women that justifies the abduction and accounts for the women's transformation from captives into wives dissolves. Men are revealed to be no more competent to govern rationally than are women. The implicit justification for their exploitation of women is exposed as spurious; the singling out of women in the figure of Tarpeia as a particular source of danger to the community, as disingenuous.

The men, however, may only have been feigning *cupiditas* and *amor,* and their appeals may have been merely rhetorical. There is, as we have seen, much to support this view. The phrase "excusing their deed by *cupiditas* and *amor*" is ambiguous: it could mean excusing themselves by the *cupiditas* and *amor* that they actually felt, but it could equally well mean excusing themselves simply by *claiming* to have been motivated by *cupiditas* and *amor.* The placement of that phrase between characterizations of the men's appeals as *blanditiae* and *preces* favors the latter interpretation. In this case, we must recognize that the men are compounding their original act of violence by an act of bad faith—they are, in fact, increasing the distance between themselves and their captives even as they seem to be bridging it, and they are evoking and fostering the very passions that threaten the integrity of their community. Thus they become implicated in Tarpeia's crime.

III

The narratives of the theft of the Sabine women in Cicero, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Livy, Ovid, and Plutarch begin with assumptions about the nature and function of marriage that were widely held and were the basis for actual practice among those authors' contemporaries.[54] For members of the Roman aristocracy, marriage typically entailed the union of young men of perhaps age twenty-four and girls of fifteen or so. Half of these girls would still have been under the legal authority of their fathers at the time of marriage, an even greater proportion at the time of their betrothal.[55] Among these Romans, marriage was regularly employed as a means of securing social, economic, and/or political advantage through alliances

54. I am aware that ideology and practice did not necessarily or always coincide. See, for example, Suzanne Dixon, *The Roman Family* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), p. 50, and her "Family Finances: Terentia and Tullia," in *The Family in Ancient Rome,* ed. Beryl Rawson (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 95. See also Mireille Corbier, trans. Ann Cremin, "Family Behavior of the Roman Aristocracy, Second Century B.C.—Third Century A.D.," in *Women's History and Ancient History,* ed. Sarah B. Pomeroy (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), p. 190, who concludes: "The most surprising feature [of aristocratic family behavior] remains the coexistence of ideals and of practices which were to a high degree mutually contradictory, as if the supreme achievement . . . lay in *not* [original emphasis] using all the resources of 'law.'"

55. See K. Hopkins, "The Age of Roman Girls at Marriage," *Population Studies* 18 (1965): 309–27, who argues persuasively for a "typical" married couple composed of a pagan female of fifteen and a pagan male of twenty-four (the ages are somewhat different for Christian couples) (p. 325); and, more recently, Bernard D. Shaw, "The Age of Roman Girls at Marriage: Some Reconsiderations," *Journal of Roman Studies* 77 (1987): 30–46, who argues for some variations in age at marriage according to region and to social class but confirms, nonetheless, that it was the general practice in first marriages among all Romans for women to marry men several years older than themselves. As Richard P. Saller, "Men's Age at Marriage and Its Consequences in the Roman Family," *Classical Philology* 82 (1987): 21–34, has argued, ancient life expectancy rates suggest that at the age of first marriage perhaps half of senatorial women and one third of senatorial men were still *in potestate,* legally subject to the *potestas* of their fathers (p. 32); see also Saller's "*Patria potestas* and the Stereotype of the Roman Family," *Continuity and Change* 1 (1986): 7–22. For the age of women at betrothal, see Treggiari, *Roman Marriage,* pp. 153–54.

between male-headed households.[56] In this process women were the necessary vehicles through which marriage alliances were made. The political history of the late Republic and early Empire provides numerous examples that illustrate the subordination of women to this end—Cicero's daughter, Tullia, and Augustus' Julia are only among the most notable.[57] In its broad outlines the story of the Sabine women provides a precedent and a sanction for such marriages of convenience. It does this by asserting, at least on its most explicit level, the extraordinary efficacy of an institution that can unite not only separate families but even hostile peoples in a mutually beneficial relationship.

This kind of marriage functioned within a society that was explicitly divided into a formal hierarchy: senatorials, knights, undifferentiated plebeians, freedmen (former slaves formally manumitted by their owners), slaves, and noncitizens, whose relationship to Rome might be defined in a variety of ways. The most influential segment of Rome's senatorial leadership, the *nobiles,* came from a long-established aristocracy and justified their privileged position in part on the basis of a tradition of family distinction and service that was inherited. Although the strata of the Roman social and political hierarchy were not castes (that is, they were not defined exclusively by birth), and movement from one to another was possible, marriage alliances, by cementing family relationships within ranks, had traditionally served more often to consolidate the integrity of the separate ranks, especially the senatorial rank, than to bridge them.[58]

56. It is in this context that we may understand Watson's observation: "The *lex [Julia* of Augustus] shows that the idea persisted—right from the time of the kings—that a woman's adultery was even more of an insult to her blood relatives, especially her father, than to her husband" (p. 37).

57. Pomeroy, pp. 215–27, provides a good discussion of this well-known aspect of Roman social relations.

58. Treggiari, *Roman Marriage,* surveys several criteria for choosing a marriage partner (birth, rank, wealth, personal qualities, character, *pudicitia, affinitas,* affection) and concludes that the calculations involved in selecting a marriage partner were intricate (pp. 83–124), but asserts, nonetheless, that "disparity of birth in husband or wife was something to be avoided by all classes" (p. 83); in addition, see her remarks on p. 107. See also Suzanne Dixon, "The Marriage Alliance in the Roman Elite," *Journal of Family History* 10 (1985): 353–78; Gardner, p. 35, indicates that reliance on marriage alliances to consolidate the highest ranks of Rome's sociopolitical hierarchy may in fact have been increasing during the late Republic: "In classical Rome, however, there is by the second century B.C. an observable tendency to endogamy within or between certain aristocratic *gentes,* and by the first century B.C. marriage between first cousins was permitted."

Under the influence of broad social and political changes brought about by Rome's acquisition of an empire and more directly by the violent political disorders of the late Republic, the traditional role and character of Roman marriage experienced a variety of strains. Rapidly shifting political alliances during the civil wars led to a high incidence of divorce and remarriage, which perhaps in turn accounts for the apparently large number of extramarital liaisons that characterize aristocratic society of the late Republic. At the same time, Roman wives were attaining an unprecedented degree of legal and economic independence, and there is good evidence to suggest that the legal dominance of men in the control of marriages had been compromised in practice, now, if not before, by mothers who played an active and often leading role in both arranging and dissolving their daughters' marriages.[59] In addition, the lines dividing the separate ranks in the Roman social hierarchy became somewhat blurred and more permeable than before: the range of possible marriage alliances became broader and more flexible. This new flexibility had special relevance for Rome's senatorial aristocracy, the *nobiles,* whose ranks had been thinned by the civil wars of the late Republic. "The outbreak of the war between Caesar and Pompey [49 B.C.E.] ended the dominance of the nobility."[60] Amid these developments—each of which in one way or another must have complicated the traditional function of marriage as a vehicle for creating family alliances—it appears that the ideal of sentimental attachment between husband and wife gained currency at Rome.[61]

Under the emperor Augustus, changing attitudes toward the role and nature of Roman marriage provoked an official reaction. Augustus ruled according to the fiction that he had not created a monarchy but rather had restored Republican government, that the traditional social and political

59. Treggiari, "Matrimonial Advances"; id., *Roman Marriage,* pp. 125–38, 445–46, 460–61; Phillips, "Roman Mothers," pp. 69–80. Study of other cultures indicates that it should not be surprising to find women taking an active role in arranging marriages even within societies that give formal control of such matters to men. Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice,* trans. Richard Nice, Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology 16 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 52–68, observes a distinction that may be applicable to ancient Rome between "ordinary marriages, generally set up by the women, within their own network of relationships" and "marriages within the close kin or extraordinary marriages (arranged by men, outside the usual area, for purposes of alliance)."

60. P. A. Brunt, "*Nobilitas* and *Novitas,*" *Journal of Roman Studies* 72 (1982): 6.

61. See Dixon, "The Marriage Alliance," pp. 353–78. The argument presented there is further developed in the same author's *Roman Mothers* (London: Croom Helm, 1988); Treggiari, *Roman Marriage,* p. 120, suggests that an apparent change in attitude may reflect rather a greater abundance of sources for this period of Roman history.

hierarchy of Rome was intact, and that the state was ruled by the same aristocracy that had ruled it for centuries. A central goal of his political program was to reassert clear divisions between the principal ranks or "orders" of Roman society.[62] In part Augustus pursued this policy by exhortation and example. He berated senators, for example, who wore informal dress rather than the traditional Roman toga on public occasions.[63] But, above all, he was responsible for new laws that sought to stabilize marriage, especially among the political aristocracy.[64] He made it illegal for a husband to ignore adultery on the part of his wife. He passed other laws aimed at discouraging the marriage of senatorial men to women outside of their political order, and still others that provided political incentives for the production of legitimate children by members of the aristocracy. While the nature of Augustus' domination discouraged overt opposition to such legislation, the laws were not widely popular and were often circumvented.[65]

The particular character of Augustus' legislation concerning marriage makes patently clear that what was perceived as at stake in the issues surrounding Roman marriage was not simply the welfare of the individual or of the family or even of the clan; it was nothing less than the sociopolitical organization of the Roman state. The narratives of the theft of the Sabine women, though not directly addressing the issue of class and rank, nonetheless acknowledge the political relevance of their subject in more general terms: the theft/marriage is explicitly presented in each narrative as essential to the welfare of the state, to the perpetuation of Rome's greatness. These

62. See S. Demougin, "Uterque ordo: Les rapports entre l'ordre sénatorial et l'ordre équestre sous les Julio-Claudiens," in *Epigrafia e ordine senatorio,* Atti del Colloquio internazionale AIEGL su epigrafia e ordine senatorio, Roma, 14–20 maggio 1981, vol. 4 (Rome: Edizione de storia e letteratura, 1982); Claude Nicolet, "Augustus, Government, and the Propertied Classes," in *Caesar Augustus,* ed. Fergus Millar and Erich Segal (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 90–96.

63. Suet. *Aug.* 40.

64. Augustan marriage legislation is clearly summarized by Treggiari, *Roman Marriage,* pp. 60–80; see also p. 61 nn. 93, 94, for a survey of modern views about its motivation. In addition, see Gardner, esp. pp. 32–33, 77–78, 127–33, and passim; Pál Csillag, *The Augustan Laws on Family Relations* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1976); and Leo Ferrero Raditsa, "Augustus' Legislation Concerning Marriage, Procreation, Love Affairs, and Adultery," *ANRW* 2.13 (1980), pp. 278–339. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "Family and Inheritance in the Augustan Marriage Laws," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 27 (1981): 58–80, sees these laws, or at least some of them, as designed more specifically to "stabilize the transmission of property and consequently of status" within the Roman aristocracy, p. 59.

65. See, for example, Suet. *Aug.* 34.1; Prop. 2.7; Tac. *Ann.* 3.25, 54.2; Dio 56.1.2; Gordon Williams, "Poetry in the Moral Climate of Augustan Rome," *Journal of Roman Studies* 52 (1962): 28–46.

narratives also make it clear that Roman marriage and therefore the sociopolitical edifice that it supports depend in turn on roles for men and women that were constructed both by social practice and by legend. The traditional use of Roman marriages to consolidate alliances among male-headed households was based upon and perpetuated distinct notions about the respective natures of men and of women. Roman men, as we have seen, were perceived as ambitious, energetic, resourceful, aggressive, and successful. In claiming their brides they demonstrate their manhood and give evidence of their ability to maintain a secure and prosperous household in the future. Women, on the other hand, were represented as weak, passive bearers of children whose active allegiance is evoked principally through their children, by appeal to the passions (*cupiditas* and *amor*), and by their own awareness of their helpless dependence on men.[66] One of the particular interests of the story of the theft of the Sabine women is that it reveals so clearly how the entire organization of the Roman state rests upon specific perceived differences between, and the inequality of, men and women.

All the narratives that we have been considering operate within the prevailing ideology of their time. That is, they accept traditional ideas about the nature and function of marriage and about the respective natures of men and women—they could hardly do otherwise.[67] But we have also seen that these same narratives express quite different attitudes toward the

66. For a cautious assessment of the different meanings of Roman assertions about the weakness of women, see S. Dixon, "*Infirmitas Sexus:* Womanly Weakness in Roman Law," *Tijdschrift voor Rechtsgeschiedenis* 52 (1984): 343–71. In particular, she distinguishes between a retrospective and artificial notion of women as incapable, too "weak" to engage in business (a notion perhaps imported from Hellenistic philosophers), and an indigenous Roman association of "feminine infirmity" with "emotional areas" (see esp. pp. 369–71). But even as regards the emotional weakness of women, Roman views might be fluid and not altogether consistent. Contrast, for example, Sen. *Consolationes ad Marciam* 1.1 and 11.1 with 16.1. On unchastity and the love of riches as typical female vices, see, for example, Sen. *Consolationes ad Helviam* 16.3.

67. As Jacques Derrida has observed, "We cannot utter a single destructive proposition which has not already slipped into the form, the logic, and the implicit postulations of precisely what it seeks to contest" ("Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in *The Structuralist Controversy,* ed. R. Macksey and E. Donato [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977], p. 250). Jean-Luc Comolli and Jean Narboni argued the same point in a rather different context in their editorial in *Cahiers du cinéma* 216 (1969): 11–15, trans. and repr. in *Movies and Methods,* ed. Bill Nichols (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976–85), vol. 1, pp. 22–30. My choice of categories in which to group the narratives discussed in this essay—(1) Cicero, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Plutarch; (2) Ovid; (3) Livy—has been influenced by the categories defined by Comolli and Narboni to distinguish the different orientations of movies toward the ideology of the society and culture in which they are produced.

construction of sexual identities and roles that was recorded in tradition and implicit in contemporary political policy. These differences of perspective inevitably imply substantially different attitudes toward and relationships to the prevailing ideology under which the understanding of Roman marriage was subsumed. The narratives of Cicero, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Plutarch represent an uncritical acceptance of that ideology—uncritical both in the sense that they find no fault with it and, more important, in the sense that they regard it as completely unproblematic, requiring neither explanation nor justification. These narratives perpetuate a fiction that the official ideology is utopian, that the existing social order is one in which everyone is fulfilled and satisfied—everybody is happily reconciled at the end of the story—and in which unity and reconciliation are achieved without noteworthy cost.

It is perhaps not coincidental that the two most critical and ideologically complex narratives, those of Livy and Ovid, were composed very close to the time when Augustus' controversial marriage legislation brought questions about the nature and function of marriage—and by implication about the nature and roles of men and women—to the surface of Roman consciousness.[68] Ovid's narrative clearly challenges the prevailing ideology. It does not imagine an alternative way of ordering society, nor does it suggest a radically different nature for women from the one implied by the other narratives: women are still conceived of as weak and essentially passive. But it does acknowledge some of the implications of exploiting women's assumed weakness both for the women and for society as a whole. It strips away any

68. On the dating of Livy's first pentad, see above, Chapter 2, note 49. Ovid interrupted work on his *Fasti* in C.E. 8, making only revisions to the incomplete text during his exile thereafter. Major parts of Augustus' legislation on marriage and morals can be dated with certainty to 18 B.C.E. and C.E. 9, but such legislation seems to have occupied Augustus throughout his reign and probably began as early as 28 B.C.E.; see Raditsa, pp. 295–97. The need for such legislation was suggested explicitly at least as early as 46 B.C.E., when Cicero advised Julius Caesar as follows: "You alone, Caius Caesar, must revive all those things that you see lying overwhelmed and prostrate—as was inevitable—due to the shock of war itself: courts must be constituted, good faith restored, license checked, offspring produced; everything that has already dissolved and melted away must be brought under control by strict laws," *omnia sunt excitanda tibi, C. Caesar, uni quae iacere sentis belli ipsius impetu, quod necesse fuit, perculsa atque prostrata: constituenda iudicia, reuocanda fides, comprimendae libidines, propaganda suboles, omnia quae dilapsa iam diffluxerunt seueris legibus uincenda sunt (Marcell.* 23). On the ages of the Second Triumvirate and Augustus as a period of crisis and reform in ideas about Roman marriage, see Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, pp. 211–15. Controversy surrounding Augustus' marriage laws and legislative adjustments to them continued intermittently for generations; see Csillag, pp. 199–211.

pretense that the abduction and rape of the women was anything other than an act of violence, that it could somehow be mitigated by formalities, by promises of shared fortunes, or by the calculated rhetoric of endearment. It gives voice to the women's own desperation in the brief speech attributed to Hersilia, and it suggests the incompleteness of the social union that their violent treatment helps to achieve.[69] Ovid's narrative, then, is subversive in that it suggests a connection between the precariousness of the sociopolitical order and the brutality by which it is sustained at the most fundamental level. His narrative insists that order at Rome is built ultimately on brute force.[70]

Livy's narrative is, as we have seen, in some ways the most complex and interesting of all. Although it endorses the prevailing ideology—it emphasizes reconciliation and the effective fulfillment of social and civic needs accomplished by the theft—it does not take it for granted. Its attempt to rationalize the tradition, however, to explain a process that Cicero, Dionysius, and Plutarch take for granted, leads to the elaboration of assumptions that become problematic when they are integrated into a larger narrative. As perceived inferiors, the Sabine women can never exercise enough influence to outweigh the public concerns by which men in this world define themselves.

69. Sympathic representation of the victims of rape may be a general characteristic of Ovid's narratives. According to Leo C. Curran, "Rape and Rape Victims in the *Metamorphoses*," *Arethusa* 11 (1978): 232, "Perhaps the most impressive element of Ovid's treatment of rape is his understanding of the sheer horror of the experience for the woman and his ability to empathize with her and thereby to portray her terror with compelling authenticity." For a survey of different interpretations of Ovid's attitudes toward women, see Phyllis Culham, "Decentering the Text: The Case of Ovid," *Helios* n.s. 17 (1990): 161–70, esp. p. 163 and the notes there; and, more recently, Amy Richlin, "Reading Ovid's Rapes," in *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome*, ed. Amy Richlin (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 158–79.

70. For an interpretation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* that emphasizes the narrative as exposing the reality of force underlying the facade of Augustan constitutionality, I am indebted to the unpublished manuscript of Mary-Kay Gamel entitled "Ovid Imitating Vergil: *Aeneid* I and *Metamorphoses* I." Leslie Cahoon, "The Bed as Battlefield," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 118 (1988) notes a parallel with "the *libido dominandi* deplored by Sallust (*In Catilinam* 2.2)" which "becomes in the *Amores* a kind of internal moral rot pervading the lives and loves of individuals," p. 307. For a more general discussion of Ovid as "out of tune with the harmony that Augustus wanted to hear from Rome's cultured classes," see Culham, p. 163 n. 28. According to Hemker's assessment of Ovid's narrative of the Sabine women in the *Ars amatoria*, "Ovid exposes the tragedy inherent in any philosophy which espouses domination as a means of gratifying one's own desires" (p. 46). See, however, Richlin's rather different assessment of this passage, which emphasizes its essentially male-centered orientation (pp. 158–79). Richlin does not discuss the version of the Sabines' story that Ovid presents in the *Fasti*.

Even though affection for the Sabine women and for the offspring they produce enables them to interrupt hostilities between men, in time latent rivalries between groups of men reassert themselves, and hostilities break out anew. Similarly, women's perceived susceptibility to *cupiditas* and *amor* means that they must remain always a potential threat to domestic order. Tarpeia (whether guilty of treachery or innocent) embodies possibilities that are inherent in the nature ascribed to women. But we have also seen that the ascription of this nature to women raises further questions about the nature and integrity of Roman men as well. Thus even as it constructs images of men and women to fit the conventional character and function of Roman marriage, Livy's narrative exposes limitations inherent in the Roman practice of trying to base ideal social and political unions on a relationship of inequality between men and women.

Taken together and in their historical context, the foregoing narratives about the theft of the Sabine women demonstrate how ideas about the nature and function of marriage necessarily imply ideas about the nature and roles of men and women, and how conceptions both of marriage and of the sexes are integrally bound up with the larger organization of society and its supporting ideology. More particularly, these narratives demonstrate a suggestive parallelism between the social and political inequality imbedded in political institutions and inequality within the institution of marriage: they raise the question of whether it is possible to have equality on one level if there is inequality on the other.[71] They demonstrate how stories that we tell about marriage may contain their own critiques, both of marriage and of the broader ideologies within which the institution of marriage is subsumed, and how they may do this not just in the overt criticism of an Ovid but also in the rationalizations of a Livy and even in the silences of a Cicero, a Dionysius, or a Plutarch.

The narratives of those last three authors reveal, further, how silences, while they cannot resolve ideological contradictions, may function to obscure them. They also suggest, by contrast, how striking and original are those authors such as Livy and Ovid, who recognize and confront the assumptions that underlie contemporary ideologies. Finally, they suggest,

71. As argued by Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women," in *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. Rayna R. Reiter (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), p. 207: "Kinship and marriage are always parts of total social systems, and are always tied into economic and political arrangements." My argument may be read in part as a modest response to Rubin's exhortation that a search be "undertaken for data which might demonstrate how marriage systems intersect with large-scale political processes like state-making" (p. 209). See also Edmund Leach, *Rethinking Anthropology* (New York: Humanities Press, 1971), p. 90.

perhaps paradoxically, how efforts such as Livy's to rationalize ideological assumptions may in the end expose contradictions implicit in them more fully than more radical, but ultimately less reflective critiques such as Ovid's: Ovid's narrative calls attention dramatically to the forcible exploitation of women by men in Roman society; Livy's narrative, while seeking to minimize the role of force, reveals contradictions inherent in the tacit assumptions by which such exploitation was justified.

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1995

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