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Toxic masculinities: Study Questions

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives



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Lucretia

- Read Livy 1.57-58 and Ovid's *Fasti* 2.721-852. Please note that both texts contain references to rape and suicide.
- Context: How does the rape of Lucretia fit into Roman history? What events does it trigger?

The contest

- How does the contest relate to Roman ideals of masculinity? Is it believable? How does Lucretia's behaviour reflect on Collatinus?
- What underlying anxieties does the context draw on? Where else have we seen such anxieties reflected in primary sources?
- Is there a difference between Livy's and Ovid's description of Collatinus and the other young Romans?

Lucretia at home

- Where is Lucretia and what is she doing? (consider both the first and second visit)
- What is her reaction to the return of her husband and companions?
- What do the texts tell us about who would normally be received into a home, and where? Think about how the texts hint at explicit and implicit rules relating to domestic space.
- How is Tarquinius' response to Lucretia described? What role does erotic fantasy play?

The rape of Lucretia

- Why do the texts both emphasise that Tarquinius first attempts to bribe Lucretia?
- What are Tarquinius' arguments to force Lucretia into compliance?
- How can we read Lucretia's sending for her husband and father after the rape?

Lucretia overall

- Are the texts sympathetic to Lucretia?
- Is Lucretia's death described as necessary? Does either text praise it? Are phrases describing it loaded in any way?
- Is she, at the end, an ideal Roman woman?
- What other Roman (historical) women does she remind us of? What women might the Augustan reader have considered? (Or a later Roman reader?)

The Philomela story

- Read Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 6.412-678. Please note that this story contains description of rape, mutilation, and cannibalism.
- Where does this story begin?
- Who is narrating the story?
- What other stories is it linked to? How does Ovid show that?

The wedding

- What is the significance of Tereus' Thracian origins?
- The wedding between Tereus and Procne: does this description remind you of any other literary descriptions?
- Tereus' reaction to Philomela: how does the text signal that his behaviour is wrong?

The rape

- What do you make of Tereus' boasts on the ship?
- What does the location of the rape mean?
- What familial links are most important in the text as a whole, to Tereus, to Procne, and to Philomela?

Philomela's speech

- What matters most to Philomela post-rape?
- What strikes you as ominous here?
- Why does Philomela want to speak of her ordeal?
- What are the effects of the description of the mutilated tongue of Philomela?

Procne's reaction

- The ekphrasis is given relatively little space and the reader's attention is quickly diverted – why?
- Does it matter that Philomela does not initially recognise her sister?
- What does the Bacchic context mean?
- What does the connections of this story to Thebes mean?

The killing of Itys & the metamorphosis

- Are there any overarching themes being underscored in this section of Ovid's story?
 - To what effect?
- Does one wrong cancel out the other?
- What birds do Procne, Philomela, and Tereus transform into? Is the metamorphosis a punishment? Is either of them in a position of power at the end?