

**Terrible Silence, Eternal Silence**

**A Consideration of Dinah's Voicelessness in the Text  
and Interpretive Traditions of Genesis 34**

**Caroline Blyth**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**The University of Edinburgh**

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I declare that I, Caroline Blyth, have composed this thesis, that it is entirely my own work, and that it has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Silence can be a plan  
rigorously executed

The blueprint to a life

It is a presence  
it has a history a form

Do not confuse it  
with any kind of absence.

*Adrienne Rich, "Cartographies of Silence"*

In loving memory of my mum and dad

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I could not have written this thesis, nor indeed gained the inspiration behind it, without the testimonies of the many courageous women who have chosen to break the silence about their own experiences of sexual violence. I wholeheartedly wish that their stories had never been written, that they had not had to endure the horror of rape, which they evoke with such painful honesty and integrity. I only hope that, throughout this work, I have done justice to their testimonies, and have affirmed for these women that their words are indeed powerful and that their voices do continue to be heard.

## *Abstract*

In this thesis, the author takes a journey through both biblical and contemporary patriarchal cultures, contemplating the commonality of rape survivors' experiences across space and time, and, in particular, evaluating the insidious and pervasive influences of patriarchy, which have long served to deny these women a voice with which to relate their narrative of suffering. Consideration is given to some of the common contemporary cultural attitudes and misperceptions regarding sexual violence, commonly known as 'rape myths', which appear to be rooted within the deeply entrenched gender stereotypes of patriarchal cultures the world over, and which survivors of sexual violence regard as lying at the very heart of their own voicelessness. The author examines the means by which these rape myths silence victims of sexual violence, then, using these myths as a hermeneutical tool, evaluates whether they are likewise given voice within both the text and interpretive traditions of Genesis 34, a biblical narrative recounting the rape of Jacob's daughter Dinah. When these myths do appear to be represented within this narrative, consideration is then given to the impact that they may likewise have had upon Dinah's own experience of her violation and thus, upon her ability to share her story. Moreover, the author evaluates the representations of Dinah in her interpretive afterlife, assessing the ways in which biblical interpreters may or may not appeal to these same myths in order both to attend to her silence and to make sense of her experience. This thesis therefore has two primary aims. Firstly, there is an attempt to paint a picture of the world in which Dinah experienced her sexual assault, by casting light upon the attitudes and ideologies that she would have faced from others within her own community. In addition, consideration is also given to the narrative world, which Dinah continues to occupy in the minds of those who read her story, by looking at the responses she has received and continues to receive from *this* interpretive community. This thesis therefore attempts to provide a deeper insight into Dinah's own experience of sexual violence, in order that contemporary readers can better comprehend the meaningfulness and complexity of her silence and grant to it a rich and new meaning.

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## INTRODUCTION

*Later I went through the ritual of talking to people. It always seemed as if I were talking through glass or underwater. I could never tell my mother; she couldn't bear the pain. Others, it seemed to me, drew away. I could not bear to be alone, but in company I felt abandoned, estranged. For months, I looked to my husband for comfort he could or would not give. A year later, we began a divorce.<sup>1</sup>*

*I had to keep this a secret ... If I told, everything would fall apart. If I couldn't hold it together, everything would fall apart ... I wasn't about to let the world that I knew fall apart.<sup>2</sup>*

*I had tried to talk to people close to me about [my rape], but I couldn't, because nobody would listen. I didn't even talk to my mother because she had made it very clear that she didn't want to deal with it ... When I tried to talk to other people about it, I felt like I was talking about something I wasn't supposed to be talking about.<sup>3</sup>*

*As soon as I started talking about my [rape], a hush came over the room ... After I finished there was a long silence ... "Well", our hostess said, smoothing out the napkin on her lap and turning to the person on my left. "Shall we get off rape to something ..." She paused, apparently at a loss for words. I feared the next word would be "agreeable". It was.<sup>4</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Deena Metzger, "It Is Always the Woman Who Is Raped", *American Journal of Psychiatry* 133 (1976): 405.

<sup>2</sup> Cited in Kristen J. Leslie, *When Violence is No Stranger: Pastoral Counselling with Survivors of Acquaintance Rape* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 66.

<sup>3</sup> Cited in Diana E.H. Russell, *The Politics of Rape: The Victim's Perspective* (New York: Stein and Day, 1975), 194.

<sup>4</sup> Nancy Venable Raine, *After Silence: Rape and My Journey Back*, 126-27.

Reading the personal testimonies of rape victims<sup>1</sup> really brings home to me just how terrifying and traumatic the experience of sexual violence is for all those who endure it. ‘Seeing’ the event through a survivor’s eyes and hearing, in her own words, the nature of her experience, facilitates a deeper appreciation that *she* is the one who can vocalize the pain, the terror and the wrongfulness of rape because she and she *alone* lived through it, experiencing at a visceral and emotional level every moment of its horror. Bearing this in mind, the narrative of any rape event then surely belongs in the first place to this woman; it is *her* story to tell, *her* voice that ought to be heard.

While such a statement may seem somewhat axiomatic, it would appear to bear repeating when we take stock of the issues raised so clearly by the testimonies I quoted at the start. As is all too obvious, victims of sexual violence may frequently find themselves deprived of a voice with which to tell their story, either because they are too afraid to do so, for fear of social stigma, suspicion, and blame, or, when they do try to speak out, they are silenced, sometimes by those very people who are meant to be a source of support and healing.<sup>2</sup> No one, it seems, wants to hear about this most intimate invasion of the victim’s body; to speak about it is considered both distasteful and unwelcome, the speaker veering dangerously close to those most ancient taboos of forbidden sexuality and interior female body spaces.<sup>3</sup> As writer Nancy Venable Raine notes, ‘Rape has long been considered a crime so unspeakable, so shameful to its victims that they are rendered mute and cloaked in anonymity’.<sup>4</sup> Or, in the words of Deena Metzger, the author of the first testimony, ‘After rape, there is a terrible silence’.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this work, I use the terms ‘victim’ and ‘survivor’ interchangeably to refer to women who have experienced sexual violence. I believe that it is important to identify these women as victims because they *do* suffer as the result of their rape. However, as Liz Kelly notes, the term ‘victim’ ‘makes invisible the other side of women’s victimisation: the active and positive ways in which women resist, cope and survive’. These women should therefore not be identified as passive victims, inherently vulnerable and helpless, but as women who have lived through a terrible and life-threatening wrong being perpetrated against them and *despite* this, have survived. See Liz Kelly, *Surviving Sexual Violence* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 163.

<sup>2</sup> See for example, Ruth Schmidt, “After the Fact: To Speak of Rape”, *Christian Century* 110 (January 6-13, 1993): 14-16; Diana E.H. Russell, 20, 23, 194, 226-27; Daniel C. Silverman, “Sharing the Crisis of Rape: Counselling the Mates and Families of Victims”, in *Sexual Assault and Abuse: A Handbook for Clergy and Religious Professionals*, ed. Mary D. Pellauer, Barbara Chester, and Jane A. Boyajian (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 140-65.

<sup>3</sup> Raine, 6.

<sup>4</sup> Raine, 119, 201.

<sup>5</sup> Metzger, 405.

Thinking about such a contemporary silencing of rape survivors leads me in turn to contemplate Dinah's representation as a rape victim in Genesis 34. This biblical tale is made up of a dizzying succession of scenes, which present the reader with vivid images of sexual violence, sexual desire, and brutal murder on a genocidal scale. The action starts innocently enough, when Dinah, the daughter of Jacob and Leah, goes out to make the acquaintance of the indigenous Hivite women in the city near to where her father has settled his family. Her sojourn is cut dramatically short, however, when Shechem, the local Hivite prince, catches sight of her, abducts her and rapes her. Yet, rather unexpectedly, we are then told that he falls in love with Dinah and is desperate to marry her. Dinah's brothers, furious at the events that have transpired, conspire a bizarre yet fatally effective act of vengeance, which they carry out, with a dramatic zeal, not only against their sister's rapist, but also against the entire Hivite people. At the end of this very bloody drama, all the Hivite males lay slain by the Jacobite sword, their possessions plundered, their women and children carried off as booty. Jacob, meanwhile, vents his fury against his sons for their precipitate act of revenge, while they, in turn, remain *adamant* that their response *was* justified. And Dinah? Well, all we are told about Dinah is that her brothers return her to the safety of the family fold, where she would then appear to vanish without trace.

Despite this rather inauspicious end to Dinah's role in the patriarchal narrative, we would all agree, I am sure, that, within this narrative, the occasion of her rape is of central importance, casting a bitter pall over the entire story, as it triggers and shapes all subsequent events. However, to call Genesis 34 a story about a woman's rape is to say something about the text that the author himself takes measures to exclude from representation. While without the rape event, there would be no story, the tale that is told is not *Dinah's* story; it is her father's story, her brothers' story, even her rapist's story.<sup>6</sup> There is a pervasive narrative silence about this young woman's personal experience of her ordeal and a denial of, or at least a contextual disinterest in, the fact that Shechem's act of sexual assault was a forcible violation of her bodily integrity and that it would have been a source of immense physical, emotional and spiritual distress for her.<sup>7</sup> Dinah is a catalyst in this narrative, not a subject of consciousness; as an object, others act upon her and it is *their* actions that guide the

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<sup>6</sup> Ita Sheres, *Dinah's Rebellion: A Biblical Parable for Our Time* (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 94; Nehama Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window: Biblical Tales of Oppression and Escape* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998), 47.

<sup>7</sup> Meir Sternberg, "Biblical Poetics and Sexual Politics: From Reading to Counterreading", *Journal of Biblical Literature* 111 (1992): 480.

unfolding sequence of events.<sup>8</sup> The reader barely catches a glimpse of her; she is always just outside the field of vision, kept offstage, while the events to which she is so consciously and painfully a participant in revolve around her. Furthermore, the space where her voice ought to have been heard is instead filled with other voices, male voices, while her exclusively female experience as a victim of sexual violence effectively remains little more than a narrative periphrasis.<sup>9</sup> Unnoticed and ignored among the shadows of this story, Dinah's silence thus becomes nothing less than a form of oppression, the mark of her exclusion from honest representation within the text.<sup>10</sup>

With the above discussion in mind, we are then left with the question: is there anything the reader of Genesis 34 can do to redress this androcentric imbalance within the text, in order to grant Dinah an audience and refocalize the rape event through her eyes? In other words, can Dinah's silence at last be broken?

Some biblical scholars, alas, have answered this question with an emphatic 'no'. Thus, for example, Meir Sternberg appears to cast doubt on the veracity of any interpretive approach to Genesis 34, which attempts to read the narrative from a perspective other than that of the narrator himself. While recognising Dinah's silence within this text, he argues that interpretive readings must simply *accept* this silence, even if it comes at the expense of perpetuating patriarchal ideologies, which reduce women to voiceless, passive sexual objects.<sup>11</sup> If interpreters find such an ideology 'unpalatable', argues Sternberg, then they 'nevertheless must swallow it as a sociohistorical premise for the nonce, a reading directive on a par with all others, and take comfort from the progress made since'.<sup>12</sup> If, however, readers are still unwilling to do this, and insist upon searching for Dinah's voice within this text,

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 47; Esther Fuchs, *Sexual Politics in the Biblical Narrative: Reading the Hebrew Bible as a Woman* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 219; Sheres, 109; Leslie, 8; Marie Marshall Fortune, *Sexual Violence: The Unmentionable Sin* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1983), 51; Ulrike Bail, "The Breath after the Comma: Psalm 55 and Violence Against Women", *Journal of Religion and Abuse* 1 (1999): 7; Frank Yamada, "Dealing with Rape (in) Narrative (Genesis 34): Ethics of the Other and a Text in Conflict", in *The Meanings We Choose: Hermeneutical Ethics, Indeterminacy and the Conflict of Interpretation*, ed. Charles H. Cosgrove (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 164; Molly Dragiewicz, "Women's Voices, Women's Words: Reading Acquaintance Rape Discourse", in *Feminist Interpretations of Mary Daly*, ed. Sarah Lucia Hoagland and Marilyn Frye (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania University Press, 2000), 204, 209.

<sup>10</sup> Patricia Laurence, "Women's Silence as a Ritual of Truth: A Study of Literary Expression in Austen, Brönte, and Woolf", in *Listening to Silences: New Essays in Feminist Criticism*, ed. Elaine Hedges and Shelly Fisher Fishkin (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 156.

<sup>11</sup> Sternberg, "Biblical Poetics and Sexual Politics", 480.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

their only option, he suggests, is to abandon biblical interpretation and re-write the text, 'fiction-maker style'.<sup>13</sup> Paul Noble concurs, suggesting that any attempts to fill in the narrative gaps left by Dinah's silence are simply an exercise in 'feminist fictions'.<sup>14</sup> While he has no inherent objection to scholars 'authoring the secret diaries of Dinah', he does not believe that such an exercise ought to be recognised as making any worthwhile contribution to the hermeneutical debate.<sup>15</sup> Sharing a similar, though slightly more sympathetic, perspective as Sternberg and Noble, John Van Seters likewise voices doubts as to whether the reader can break Dinah's silence and thus participate in an interpretive dialogue with her. Although he admits to being 'uncomfortable' with her narrative silencing, he admits, 'I cannot invent a voice for Dinah, which the social history suggests she does not have'.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, according to scholars such as Noble, Sternberg, and Van Seters, it is imprudent, if not anachronistic even to attempt to recover the voices of biblical rape survivors, such as Dinah. Appealing to an empiricist positivist epistemology, which insists upon searching for the historical or 'original' meaning of the text by using a wholly literal and disinterested hermeneutic of interpretation,<sup>17</sup> they maintain that any interpretive approach to Genesis 34 *has* to remain constrained within the limitations of the historical and ideological framework of the narrative itself. It has naught to do with the 'woman-shaped' blanks and silences within that narrative – blanks and silences, which, according to this argument, are of no hermeneutical value and which thereby ought to remain unfilled.

Yet, to quote the 17<sup>th</sup> Century French philosopher Blaise Pascal, 'The eternal silence of these infinite spaces terrifies me'.<sup>18</sup> I am referring, of course, not to the heavens, as Pascal was, but to the 'infinite spaces' within the text and traditions of Genesis 34, where, instead of hearing Dinah's voice, we are confronted by a silence that is absolute. Adhering to the methodological constraints endorsed by Sternberg, Noble,

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 481.

<sup>14</sup> Paul Noble, "A 'Balanced' Reading of the Rape of Dinah: Some Exegetical and Methodological Observations", *Biblical Interpretation* 4 (1996): 199.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 199-203.

<sup>16</sup> John Van Seters, "The Silence of Dinah (Genesis 34)", in *Jacob: Commentaire à plusieurs voix de Gen. 25-36; Mélanges offerts à Albert de Pury*, ed. Jean-Daniel Macchi and Thomas Römer (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2001), 247.

<sup>17</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Rhetoric and Ethic: The Politics of Biblical Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 24, 41-42; Susanne Scholz, "'Back Then It Was Legal': The Epistemological Imbalance in Readings of Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Rape Legislation", *Journal of Religion and Abuse* 7, (2005): 5-29.

<sup>18</sup> 'Le silence éternel de ces espaces infinis m'effraie'. From Blaise Pascal, *Penseés: Edition de Ch.-M des Granges*, section 2, no.206 (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1964), 131.

and Van Seters only serves to ensure that this silence remains unchallenged, simply accepted as an inevitable socio-historical feature of the culture in which this ancient text was written.<sup>19</sup> I strongly believe however that, in spite of their protestations, both the patriarchal discourse of this narrative and its interpretive traditions can and *should* be taken to task for this perpetual silencing of Dinah. I will now explain why I believe that this is so important.

In the first place, and contrary to Sternberg's assertions, there really is nothing to stop a biblical interpreter from 'spitting out', rather than 'swallowing' any 'unpalatable' ideology that they encounter within the biblical material. As literary theorist Wayne Booth argues, no text, however ancient or esteemed, ought to be elevated into, what he terms, 'a purified and hence invulnerable kingdom', which is immune from the rigors of ethical criticism.<sup>20</sup> The literary word is, after all, never merely a static mirror image of the historical, social, political, and religious context in which it was written, nor does it ever leave the reader either untouched or unchanged by the reading process.<sup>21</sup> Rather, all texts speak to their readers through the values and ideologies that shaped them, the author using words as a medium by which to encourage his audience to endorse and perpetuate the rhetoric of his writing within their own cultural milieu.<sup>22</sup> However, there is no imperative on the reader simply to accept such rhetoric, or to use it as the only source of reference from which to uncover meaning. Indeed, according to Booth, there is instead an ethical demand for the responsible reader to criticise and challenge 'unpalatable' texts, revealing their inherent articulation of injustices, and recognising their potential to

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<sup>19</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Feminist Interpretation: A Method of Correlation", in *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Letty M. Russell (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 112-13.

<sup>20</sup> Wayne C. Booth, *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 152-53.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 91, 153; J. Hillis Miller, *The Ethics of Reading: Kant, de Man, Eliot, Trollope, James, and Benjamin* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 8; Catharine Belsey and Jane Moore, introduction to *The Feminist Reader*, ed. Catharine Belsey and Jane Moore (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1997), 2.

<sup>22</sup> J. Hillis Miller, 8; Belsey and Moore, 2; M.H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace, 1999), 88, 90; Pam Morris, *Literature and Feminism: An Introduction*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 28, 114. Similar thoughts are expressed, with particular reference to the biblical texts, by Kathryn Pfisterer Darr, *Far More Precious than Jewels: Perspectives on Biblical Women* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991), 40; Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Wisdom Ways: Introducing Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 4; and "Feminist Hermeneutics", in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 2:785; Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 12-13; Ruether, 114; Gayle Greene and Coppélia Kahn, "Feminist Scholarship and the Social Construction of Woman", in *Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism*, ed. Gayle Greene and Coppélia Kahn (New York: Routledge, 1985), 4-5, 26.

perpetuate these injustices within the reader's own contemporary context.<sup>23</sup> As Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza likewise asserts, 'Stories are never just descriptive but always also prescriptive. Hence they must be analysed not only for what they tell but also for what they presume to pass over in silence ... We must search for the submerged and untold part of the story, its inscribed contradictions, silences, and persuasive strategy'.<sup>24</sup>

Keen to follow Booth's call to read responsibly has therefore led me to adopt a feminist<sup>25</sup> hermeneutical approach to the Genesis 34 narrative. Such a methodology recognises that the biblical narratives are by no means impartial with regards their representation of the sexes; rather, they are the product of patriarchal ideologies and gender stereotypes, which contribute in no small way to the perpetuation of

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<sup>23</sup> Booth, 152-53, 489. Booth cites an anonymous quotation at the end of his book, which sums up this point very well: 'It is almost impossible to think of any narrative, among those that get themselves attended to at all, that do not implicitly raise us up from the dirt and mould us into created creatures of some kind of spirit ... Which is to say that we all dwell in a world in which ethical criticism is not only possible; it is required' (501-2). See also Maggie Humm, "Feminist Literary Theory", in *Contemporary Feminist Theories*, ed. Stevi Jackson and Jackie Jones (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 194; Annette Kolodny, "Dancing in the Minefields: Some Observations on the Theory, Practice, and Politics of a Feminist Literary Criticism", in *Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*, ed. Robyn R. Warhol and Diane Price Herndl (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1993), 184-85.

<sup>24</sup> Fiorenza, *Wisdom Ways*, 157.

<sup>25</sup> The terms 'feminist' and 'feminism' are so diverse that they are incredibly difficult to define in simple or concise terms; as David Rutledge has pointed out, we may be more accurate to talk of 'feminisms', given the multiplicity of meaning that these terms can convey (*Reading Marginally: Feminism, Deconstruction and the Bible* [Leiden: Brill, 1996], 10). However, at the risk of oversimplifying such a complex concept, I tend to adopt the concise definition offered by Tribble, who states that feminism is a 'critique of culture in light of misogyny' (*God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978], 7). That is, it is a personal and political reaction against the cultural prioritisation of patriarchy and the concomitant sexism, inequality, and injustice suffered by women as the result of socially constructed gender differentiation. Furthermore, feminist criticism is not a unified epistemology; it uses multiple methodologies, depending on what questions are being addressed. However, I would adopt Kolodny's definition of feminist criticism as a useful 'umbrella' term for what I believe is the essence of feminist biblical interpretation: 'All the feminist is asserting, then, is her own equivalent right to liberate new (and perhaps different) significances from these same texts; and at the same time, her right to choose which features of a text she takes as relevant because she is, after all, asking new and different questions of it. In the process, she claims neither definitiveness nor structural completeness for her different readings and reading systems, but only their usefulness' (183). For further discussion, see Heather A. McKay, "On the Future of Feminist Biblical Criticism", in *A Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible: Approaches, Methods and Strategies*, ed. Athalya Brenner and Carole Fontaine (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 62; Morris, 1; Fokkeleijn van Dijk-Hemmes, "Reading the Bible 'as a Woman'", in *The Double Voice of Her Desire: Texts by Fokkeleijn van Dijk-Hemmes*, ed. Jonneke Bekkenkamp and Freda Dröes, trans. David E. Orton (Leiden: Deo, 1995), 135; Phyllis A. Bird, "What Makes a Feminist Reading Feminist? A Qualified Answer", in *Escaping Eden: New Feminist Perspectives on the Bible*, ed. Harold C. Washington, Susan Lochrie Graham, and Pamela Thimmes (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 124-31; Pamela Thimmes, "What Makes a Feminist Reading Feminist? Another Perspective", in Washington, Graham, and Thimmes, 132-40. For an excellent overview of some of the methodological approaches to feminist biblical interpretation, see Eryl W. Davies, *The Dissenting Reader: Feminist Approaches to the Hebrew Bible* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), especially 17-54.

women's silencing and marginalisation.<sup>26</sup> Feminist criticism therefore encourages readers not to acquiesce to the authority of the text's unpalatable androcentric and at times misogynist literary representations, but rather makes a moral claim on them to subvert this authority, and to hold up these representations for scrutiny and critical evaluation.<sup>27</sup> As Davies contends:

To accept the value statements of the text in utter passivity, without allowing oneself the freedom to reflect critically upon its claims and to question its assumptions is merely to foster a sense of complacency ... The task of the reader, therefore, is to engage in a vigorous dialogue and debate with the Hebrew Bible, resisting statements that appear to be morally objectionable, and taking a critical stance against what he or she may regard as the excesses of the biblical text.<sup>28</sup>

By approaching the text with such a 'hermeneutics of suspicion',<sup>29</sup> the reader therefore becomes, in the words of Judith Fetterley, a 'resisting reader', who can unpick the strands of androcentric rhetoric and expose its inherent injustices towards

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<sup>26</sup> Humm, 194; Luise Schottroff, Silvia Schroer, and Marie-Theres Wacker, *Feministische Exegese: Forschungserträge zur Bibel aus der Perspektive von Frauen* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995), 49; Davies, 53; Mary Jacobus, "The Difference of View", in Belsey and Moore, 69.

<sup>27</sup> Schottroff, Schroer, and Wacker, 52; Rutledge, 13; Davies, 45, 47, 55; Alice Bach, "Reading Allowed: Feminist Biblical Criticism Approaching the Millennium", *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies* 1 (1993): 196; Judith Fetterley, *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), xx, xxii; Toril Moi, "Feminist, Female, Feminine", in Belsey and Moore, 105; Mary Ann Tolbert, "Defining the Problem: The Bible and Feminist Hermeneutics", *Semeia* 28 (1983): 19-20; Adele Reinhartz, "Feminist Criticism and Biblical Studies on the Verge of the Twenty-First Century", in Brenner and Fontaine, 177-8; van Dijk-Hemmes, "Reading the Bible", 133; Pamela J. Milne, "Towards Feminist Companionship: The Future of Feminist Biblical Studies and Feminism", in Brenner and Fontaine, 58; Ruether, 116; Kolodny, 183; Patrocínio P. Schweickart, "Reading Ourselves: Toward a Feminist Theory of Reading", in Warhol and Herndl, 615-16; Greene and Khan, 27-28.

<sup>28</sup> Davies, 46-47.

<sup>29</sup> Reading with a hermeneutics of suspicion attempts both to uncover the implicit and often impalpable patriarchal agenda of the text and thus to offer a corrective to the androcentric perspective evident within the text, by laying bare its partialities and value systems and thus recovering women's voices from the marginal positions that they inhabit. It therefore deconstructs the 'politics of otherness' that are often ascribed to gender relations within the text in order to provide a fresh reading that refuses to accept the misogynist and phallogocentric value systems, which the author presents as 'normative' or 'universal'. Thus, in the words of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, a hermeneutics of suspicion seeks 'to explore the liberating or oppressive values and visions inscribed in the text by identifying the androcentric-patriarchal character and dynamics of the text and its interpretations'. In *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 57. For further discussion on reading with a hermeneutics of suspicion, see also Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1984), 14, 112; and *Wisdom Ways*, 156, 175; and "Feminist Hermeneutics", 785; Abrams, 127; Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 17; Davies, 52-53, 89; Ruether, 114; Bible and Culture Collective, *The Postmodern Bible* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 248-49; Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 23.



women.<sup>30</sup> For, as Mary Jacobus has pointed out, women's voices within literary traditions are all too often 'located in the gaps, the absences, the unsayable or unrepresentable of discourse and representation'.<sup>31</sup> Feminist biblical criticism therefore attempts to redress this injustice by searching within these 'women-shaped' gaps and absences and reclaiming both women's subjectivity and their narrative space, so that their lost and stifled voices can at last be heard.<sup>32</sup> In the words of Judith Fetterley, 'Feminist criticism represents the discovery/recovery of a voice, a unique and uniquely powerful voice'.<sup>33</sup>

Thus, with regards Genesis 34, the resisting reader treats Dinah as the subject of her own discourse, rather than the object of androcentric interpretive concerns.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, such a reader insists that her objectification and her silencing within the text *demand*s an ethical response, for such silence does not merely signify an *absence* from textual consideration, but is, in its own right, a violating act of female repression.<sup>35</sup> Simply reiterating the patriarchal ideologies of the author, as the

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<sup>30</sup> Fetterley, xxii. Eryl Davies likewise defines such a reader as a 'dissenting reader' (42-45, 52). For further discussion of such a methodology of reading, see J. Cheryl Exum, *Fragmented Women: Feminist (Sub)versions of Biblical Narratives* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 9; and "Feminist Criticism: Whose Interests are Being Served?" in *Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, ed. Gale A. Yee (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 67; Esther Fuchs, "Contemporary Biblical Literary Criticism: The Objective Phallacy", in *Mappings of the Biblical Terrain: The Bible as Text*, ed. Vincent L. Tollers and John Maier (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2000), 136-38; Morris, 29; Darr, 41; Fiorenza, *But She Said*, 33; and *Wisdom Ways*, 175; and "Feminist Hermeneutics", 785; Myra Jehlen, "Archimedes and the Paradox of a Feminist Criticism", in Warhol and Herndl, 191-212; Lilian S. Robinson, "Dwelling in Decencies: Radical Criticism and the Feminist Perspective", in *Feminist Criticism: Essays on Theory, Poetry and Prose*, ed. Cheryl L. Brown and Karen Olson (Metuchen, NY: Scarecrow Press, 1978), 26-28; Abrams, 90; van Dijk-Hemmes, "Reading the Bible", 132; Elaine Showalter, "The Feminist Critical Revolution", in *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature and Theory*, ed. Elaine Showalter (London: Virago, 1986), 3, 5; Sandra M. Gilbert, "What do Feminist Critics Want?" in Showalter, 36; Kolodny, 184; Marie-Theres Wacker, "Feminist Criticism and Related Aspects", in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies*, ed. J.W. Rogerson and Judith M. Lieu (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 637; Greene and Kahn, 1-6.

<sup>31</sup> Mary Jacobus, "Is there a Woman in this Text?" *New Literary History* 14 (1982): 22. In a similar vein, Adrienne Munich has noted that, 'in the background of patriarchal texts are women trying to escape into readability'. See "Notorious Signs, Feminist Criticism and Literary Tradition", in Green and Kahn, 257. Meanwhile, Tillie Olsen asserts that 'literary history and the present are dark with silences'. In *Silences* (New York: Feminist Press, 2003), 6.

<sup>32</sup> J. Cheryl Exum, "Murder They Wrote: Ideology and the Manipulation of Female Presence in Biblical Narrative", in *The Pleasure of Her Text: Feminist Readings of Biblical and Historical Texts*, ed. Alice Bach (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), 133; and *Fragmented Women*, 9; van Dijk-Hemmes, "Reading the Bible", 133; Moi, 104; Milne, 58; Greene and Khan, 13, 21-22; Lynn A. Higgins and Brenda R. Silver, introduction to *Rape and Representation*, ed. Lynn A. Higgins and Brenda R. Silver (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 4; France Beydon, 'Violence sous silence: A propos d'une lecture féministe de Juges 19, par Ph. Trible', *Foi et Vie* 88 (1989): 85.

<sup>33</sup> Fetterley, xxiii.

<sup>34</sup> Schottroff, Schroer, and Wacker, 52.

<sup>35</sup> Yamada, 157; also Susanne Scholz, "Was It Really Rape in Genesis 34? Biblical Scholarship as a Reflection of Cultural Assumptions", in Washington, Graham, and Thimmes, 195-98; Christine

methodology endorsed by Sternberg, Noble, and Van Seters would necessitate, cannot be ethically sustained. For, to read this narrative uncritically is essentially tantamount to capitulating to and thus sanctioning its cultural tolerance of women's marginalisation, and its tacit acquiescence to violence against women.<sup>36</sup> As John Winkler, a literary critic, asserts, 'if our critical faculties are placed solely in the service of elucidating an author's meaning, then we have already committed ourselves to the premises and the protocols of the past ... This above all we will not do'.<sup>37</sup> In other words, unless we begin to *listen* for the woman's story, which is hidden and suppressed within the confines of the biblical narrative, we become nothing less than a voyeur, complicit with the narrator's androcentric response to sexual violence and content to adopt and therefore implicitly *endorse* his stifling of the female voice.<sup>38</sup> As feminist poet Adrienne Rich asserts, 'We need to know the writing of the past, and know it differently than we have ever known it; not to pass on a tradition but to break its hold over us'.<sup>39</sup>

This is not to say however, that attempts to fill in the gaps left by Dinah's silence within this narrative is merely an exercise in 'feminist fiction-making', as Noble and Sternberg would suggest. Nor does such a reading offer a contribution that is of any less value to the hermeneutical debate surrounding this narrative. For centuries, the dominant approach to biblical interpretation has, under the guise of 'studied neutrality',<sup>40</sup> simply served to reiterate and perpetuate the deeply patriarchal ideologies present within the biblical traditions.<sup>41</sup> As a result, women's experiences

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Froula, "The Daughter's Seduction: Sexual Violence and Literary History", *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 11 (1986): 622.

<sup>36</sup> Fuchs, "Objective Phallacy", 134-38; Davies, 43; Schottroff, Schroer, and Wacker, 9.

<sup>37</sup> John J. Winkler, "The Education of Chloe: Erotic Protocols and Prior Violence", in Higgins and Silver, 30.

<sup>38</sup> Greene and Khan, 21-22; Munich, 251-52. Similarly, Esther Fuchs notes, 'By ignoring the ideological problem posed by stories of rape and adultery, by ignoring the patriarchal implications of the way in which the woman in the text is silenced, the modern androcentric critic re-inscribes biblical sexual politics. The poeticist reinscription of patriarchal ideology is made possible by combining on the one hand an aperspectival stance and on the other a submissive stance vis-à-vis the text ... The choral harmony of the authoritative narrators and the "objective" critics reencodes the silence about women's oppression' ("Objective Phallacy", 138).

<sup>39</sup> Adrienne Rich, "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision", in *On Lies, Secrets and Silence: Selected Prose 1966-1978* (London: Virago, 1980), 35.

<sup>40</sup> Davies, 101.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 50-51, 101; Fiorenza, *But She Said*, 53; Fuchs, "Objective Phallacy", 134; van-Dijk-Hemmes, "Reading the Bible", 129, 131; Scholz, "Was It Really Rape", 195; Harold C. Washington, "Violence and the Construction of Gender in the Hebrew Bible: A New Historicist Approach", *Biblical Interpretation* 5 (1997): 359; Morris, 37-38; Fuchs, "Objective Phallacy", 134; Dana Nolan Fewell, "Feminist Reading of the Hebrew Bible: Affirmation, Resistance and Transformation", *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 39 (1987): 77; T. Drorah Setel, "Feminist Insights and the Question of Method", in *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship*, ed. Adela Yarbro Collins (Atlanta, GA:

within the biblical traditions have been consistently overlooked or underrepresented, their voices drowned out by the prioritising of the biblical author's own ideological perspective, which simply regards women's absence and silence as the norm.<sup>42</sup> Such an essentialist and empiricist epistemology, furthermore, has long been accorded greater authority and higher hermeneutical value than any other reading, claiming to offer definitive, authoritative, and disinterested readings of the biblical traditions, which are neither clouded nor distorted by the interpreter's own subjective personal or theological beliefs.<sup>43</sup>

However, within today's postmodern milieu of biblical interpretation, such a monopoly on the 'true meaning' of a text has been increasingly challenged, while the idealisation of interpretive objectivity likewise appears to be ever more illusory. Rather, there is increased recognition that the meaning of a particular text for an individual or community is not only bound up within the words of that text or even within its socio-historical context, but is intricately related to and shaped by the values and ideologies, which fashion the reader's own psychological and cultural worldview. Thus, according to David Rutledge, 'Meaning becomes situated in the contentious realm of conflicting discourses of reading communities, and the *authority* of any reading of any text becomes no more than a function of the persuasive ideological force with which it is held in place by the readers who produce it' [original italics].<sup>44</sup> Or, as Mieke Bal has noted, 'Interpretation is never objective, never reliable, never free of biases and subjectivity'.<sup>45</sup>

Thus, a feminist hermeneutic of interpretation cannot simply be rejected as a subjective, and therefore unworthy, attempt to produce 'fictitious' misreadings of the biblical texts; rather, such a method of reading embraces the contextualised nature of *all* biblical interpretation, while emphasising the central role of the reader in the meaning-making process.<sup>46</sup> It does not distort texts; rather, it offers

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Scholars Press, 1985), 35; Mieke Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry: The Politics of Coherence in the Book of Judges* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 238.

<sup>42</sup> Exum, *Fragmented Women*, 9; Ruether, 112-14, 116; Mieke Bal, *Lethal Love: Feminist Literary Readings of Biblical Love Stories* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987), 2.

<sup>43</sup> Davies, 40-41; Rutledge, 59-63.

<sup>44</sup> Rutledge, 93. Also Schottroff, Schroer, and Wacker, 51.

<sup>45</sup> Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry*, 238; and *Lethal Love*, 131; also van Dijk-Hemmes, "Reading the Bible", 131; Reinhartz, 31; Booth, 92; Davies, 41, 111; Fewell, "Feminist Reading", 77; Setel, "Feminist Insights", 35; Carolyn Osiek, "The Feminist and the Bible: Hermeneutical Alternatives", in Adela Yarbro Collins, 97; Gillian Beer, "Representing Women: Re-presenting the Past", in Belsey and Moore, 80.

<sup>46</sup> As Lilian Robertson argues, 'The application of a feminist perspective will not mean adding ideology to a value-free discipline' (33). See also Scholz, "Back Then It Was Legal", 7; Rutledge, 93; van Dijk-Hemmes, "Reading the Bible", 129; Fiorenza, "Feminist Hermeneutics", 785; Ruether,

innovative ways of looking at these texts, entering them from new critical directions, and thus raising up fresh possibilities of meaning that are no less valuable a contribution to the hermeneutical debate than any other reading.<sup>47</sup> The ancient authors' intentions, their didactic goals, and the ideologies that motivated them to record these remarkable and thought-provoking traditions are, after all, forever lost to us in the proverbial mists of time. As biblical scholars and interested readers, we are left only to conjecture upon the underlying sense of these texts, to read them and to find a significance within them that is meaningful to us. As Bal further notes, 'Texts trigger readings; that is what they are: the occasion of a reaction'.<sup>48</sup> And what triggers a reaction in us can be, not only what is *said* within the text, but what is omitted; silence, after all, is sometimes as voluminous and as evocative as speech, creating within the narrative a subversive subtext, which stands in fascinating tension to the main authorial concerns.<sup>49</sup> Feminist readings of Genesis 34, which attempt to give new value and meaning to *Dinah's* silence, are therefore no more 'fictitious' than those proposed by Sternberg and Noble. Indeed, Sternberg's and Noble's claim that only certain methodological strategies can make a worthy contribution to the hermeneutical debate speaks only of the narrow exclusivism inherent within their argument and, furthermore, belies the androcentric subjectivity of their own discourse.<sup>50</sup> By refusing to address the gaps and silences left by Dinah within the narrative of Genesis 34, and by insisting upon giving a platform *only* to the androcentric attitudes of its ancient author, they are effectively nailing *their* ideological colours to the mast, creating their *own* fictional world, where rape

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31; Kolodny, 183-85; Reinhartz, 34-35; K.K. Ruthven, *Feminist Literary Study: An Introduction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 35; Bible and Culture Collective, 270; Exum, "Murder They Wrote", 46; Ann Loades, "Feminist Interpretation", in *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation*, ed. John Barton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 84; Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, "Old Testament Perspectives: Methodological Issues", *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 22 (1982): 16.

<sup>47</sup> Jehlen, 79; Fiorenza, "Feminist Hermeneutics", 786; Fetterley, xxii; Rich, 35. As Kolodny suggests, 'Whether we locate meaning as inherent in the text, the act of reading, or in some collaboration between reader and text – whatever our predilection, let us not generate from it a straitjacket that limits the scope of possible analysis. Rather, let us generate an ongoing dialogue of competing potential possibilities – among feminists and, as well, between feminist and nonfeminist critics' (185).

<sup>48</sup> Bal, *Lethal Love*, 131. Similar remarks are made by Kolodny, 177.

<sup>49</sup> Greene and Khan, 12; Deborah Silverton Rosenfelt, "Rereading *Tell me a Riddle* in the Age of Deconstruction", in Hedges and Fishkin, 49.

<sup>50</sup> As Exum has rightly noted, 'To suggest that there is one proper way to read the text results in an authoritarianism characteristic of phallogocentric criticism – a position that feminist criticism rejects in its recognition (and celebration) of contradiction and multiplicity' ("Murder They Wrote", 46). For further discussion on the androcentric nature of so-called 'objective' biblical scholarship, see Morris, 37-38; Davies, 50-51; Tolbert, 117; Fuchs, "Objective Phallacy", 134; Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone*, 107; Bal, *Lethal Love*, 131-32.

victims make no ethical demands upon our conscience and where these women's voices are not worthy even of our consideration.<sup>51</sup>

Secondly, in response to Sternberg's claim that biblical interpreters can 'take comfort' from the progress made since the biblical period with regards cultural attitudes towards women, I would contend, however, that there is still far too much progress yet to be made to excuse the level of complacency endorsed by this remark. As amply demonstrated in the testimonies cited at the start of this chapter, the stifling of women's rape experiences and the denial of their suffering are far from 'ancient history'.<sup>52</sup> Dinah has many silent sisters who, in recent history and up to the present day, experience rape but are subsequently denied the opportunity to express their pain, grief, and anger and whose status as casualties of sexual violence is either reinterpreted or suppressed by the dominant patriarchal discourse. These women's testimonies of suffering must therefore place an even greater imperative upon biblical scholars to challenge the interpretive strategies proposed by Sternberg, which would have us disregard the silencing of rape victims within the biblical texts. For, as mentioned above, any literary work, which articulates the unjust treatment of women, has the potential to act as an instrument of female subjugation, by perpetuating, validating, and legitimising patriarchal gender inequality and female oppression within the reader's own contemporary milieu.<sup>53</sup> As Patrocino Schweickart has noted, 'Literature acts on the world by acting on its readers'.<sup>54</sup> The patriarchal myths and attitudes given voice within the biblical scriptures still resonate today within a diversity of contemporary cultures, bearing witness to the pervasive and insidious influence, which such ideologies have had *and continue to have* on cultural values and belief systems within patriarchal societies over time and space.<sup>55</sup> Sternberg's call to objective empiricism therefore ignores the fact that as

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<sup>51</sup> As Tolbert points out, 'The questions one asks of a text determine to a large extent the answer one gets. Thus, all hermeneutical perspectives are advocacy positions' (117). Similar remarks are made by Kolodny, 183; Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry*, 243.

<sup>52</sup> Darr, 41-42.

<sup>53</sup> Booth, 393. Humm, 194; Fiorenza, *Wisdom Ways*, 136; and *Bread Not Stone*, ix; Loades, 85-87; Bal, *Lethal Love*, 1; and *Death and Dissymmetry*, 243; Exum, "Feminist Criticism", 69; Fuchs, "Objective Phallacy", 139, 141; Carol R. Fontaine, "The Abusive Bible: On the Use of Feminist Method in Pastoral Contexts", in Brenner and Fontaine, 94-95; Belsey and Moore, 2.

<sup>54</sup> Schweickart, 615. Similar sentiments are expressed by Greene and Kahn: 'Feminist scholarship both originates and participates in the larger effort of feminism to liberate women from the structures that have marginalised them; and as such it seeks not only to reinterpret, but to change the world' (2). See also Belsey and Moore, 1-2; Moi, 104-5.

<sup>55</sup> Mieke Bal describes the Hebrew Bible as 'one of the most influential mythical and literary documents of our culture' (*Lethal Love*, 1). For similar comments, see also Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry*, 243; Exum, *Fragmented Women*, 12; Fiorenza, *Wisdom Ways*, 136; Milne, 56; Ruether, 116-17; Davies, 47-48; Loades, 85-87.

biblical interpreters, reading and interpreting these ancient traditions in a ‘global rape culture’,<sup>56</sup> we have a moral obligation to highlight and confront such textual injustices, to raise an awareness of the insidious power that these texts may have within whichever community they are read, and to ensure that the narratives of biblical rape survivors, such as Dinah, are recognised and remembered.<sup>57</sup>

How then, does one begin the task of giving Dinah back her voice, of respecting her right to an honest and gynocentric representation? At first glance, such a task may seem well nigh impossible, given the totality of her silencing within this narrative. However, one may perhaps take heart from the tale of Philomena, the young woman raped by her brother-in-law Tereus in Ovid’s poetic work *The Metamorphoses*.<sup>58</sup> Philomena threatens to proclaim to heaven and earth the outrage Tereus has committed against her, but before she can do so, he cuts out her tongue, and imprisons her, silenced and alone, to ensure that no one will ever hear of his crime. Nevertheless, Philomena refuses either to be silent, passive, or forgotten; so, taking up a loom and shuttle, she weaves a tapestry depicting her rape, which eventually, others will see and know exactly what she has suffered. Can we as readers empower Dinah to weave a tapestry for us?

Thankfully, a number of biblical interpreters, including myself, believe that this question can be answered in the affirmative. In order to begin the weaving, however, we have to start focalizing Dinah’s rape through the medium of her own silence, recognising her voicelessness, not as an inevitable rhetorical feature of a patriarchal narrative but as a feature *within* that narrative, which contributes to and *is intrinsic to* her suffering, and which therefore may be a source of insight into her ordeal.<sup>59</sup> Recognising this will allow the reader to grant a deeper significance to Dinah’s narrative elision, understanding it, not simply as a signal for the reader to likewise ignore her, but as an added source of her abuse. As Patricia Laurence, a feminist literary critic, explains:

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<sup>56</sup> Scholz, “Back Then It Was Legal”, 7; also Schweickart, 615-18, 623-24.

<sup>57</sup> Fiorenza, “Ethics of Biblical Interpretation”, 15; Scholz, “Back Then It Was Legal”, 7-9, 15, 28-29; Davies, 9-10; Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 24; Fortune, *Sexual Violence*, 44; Bal, introduction to *Anti-Covenant: Counter-Reading Women’s Lives in the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1989) 13; Susan J. Brison, *Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of a Self* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 6; Darr, 40; Exum, “Feminist Criticism”, 66; Ruether, 116-17. Booth (390, 489, 501-2) and Kolodny (184-85) make this same point, but with reference to all literary criticism, not just biblical criticism, which fails to criticise ethically the unjust representations of women in literature.

<sup>58</sup> Horace Gregory (ed.), *Ovid, The Metamorphoses*, (New York: Signet Classic, 2001), 175-83.

<sup>59</sup> Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 52.

‘If reality is perceived according to the established patriarchal values, then women’s silence, viewed from the outside, is a mark of absence and powerlessness ... If, however, the same silence is viewed from the inside, and women’s experiences and disposition of mind inform the standard of what is real, then women’s silence can be viewed as a presence, and as a text waiting to be read’.<sup>60</sup>

Through the creation of such a rhetoric of silence, we as readers of Gen. 34 can therefore generate a space in which we can, by the power of our own imaginings, stand in solidarity and empathy with Dinah, reflecting upon her fear, pain, and suffering.<sup>61</sup> That is, by appealing to the witnesses and testimonies to the silencing of contemporary rape survivors, we may be granted insight into the significance of Dinah’s own silence and the terrible suffering that lies hidden behind her voicelessness. We may thereby begin to ask and suggest answers to questions that have heretofore so rarely been addressed in the interpretive traditions of this narrative. For example, we might ask, how would Dinah have felt about her imposed silence, about having no opportunity to share her story? How would the fact that her brothers appeared more concerned about family honour than about *her* wellbeing have affected her? What emotions would have enveloped her when, in the aftermath of her brutal assault, her rapist showered her with endearments, insisting that she was to become his wife? By focalising the rape through *Dinah’s* eyes, we enable her to transcend the patriarchal ideologies of the text to become the subject of her own discourse. Her suffering can thus be articulated *despite*, or to be more accurate, precisely *because of* her suppression within the text, as it is her very suppression that speaks out so clearly about the full horror of her experience.<sup>62</sup> As Nehama Aschkenasy so powerfully puts it, ‘Only if we reread Dinah’s wordless absence as a scream can we do her justice’.<sup>63</sup>

In the following chapters, I therefore plan to take a journey through ancient and contemporary patriarchal cultures, contemplating the commonality of rape survivors’ experiences across space and time and, in particular, evaluating the insidious and pervasive influences of patriarchy, which have long served to deny these women a voice with which to be heard. In Chapter 1, I will consider some of the common contemporary cultural attitudes and misperceptions regarding sexual

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<sup>60</sup> Laurence, 157-58.

<sup>61</sup> Bail, 8; Yamada, 165; Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 52.

<sup>62</sup> Patricia Klindienst Joplin, “The Voice of the Shuttle is Ours”, in Higgins and Silver, 39-40; similar sentiments are expressed by Sabine Sielke, in *Reading Rape: The Rhetoric of Sexual Violence in American Literature, 1790-1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 5.

<sup>63</sup> Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 52.

violence, commonly known as ‘rape myths’, which appear to be rooted within the deeply entrenched gender stereotypes of patriarchal cultures the world over, and which survivors of sexual violence regard as lying at the very heart of their own voicelessness. The following four chapters will then focus in turn upon some of these rape myths; I will examine the means by which they silence victims of sexual violence, before evaluating whether they are likewise given voice within both the text and interpretive traditions of Genesis 34. If these myths do appear to be represented within this narrative, I will then consider the impact that they may likewise have had upon Dinah’s own experience of her violation and thus, upon her ability to share her story. Moreover, I will evaluate the representations of Dinah in her ‘interpretive afterlife’,<sup>64</sup> assessing the ways in which biblical interpreters, some contemporary, some ancient, may or may not appeal to these same myths in order both to attend to her silence and make sense of her experience. My intentions thus are twofold: I want to paint a picture of the world in which Dinah lived through her sexual assault, by casting light upon the attitudes and ideologies that she would have faced from others within her own community. In addition, I will also consider the narrative world, which Dinah continues to occupy in the minds of those who read her story, looking at the responses she has received and continues to receive from within this community. By doing so, I hope to develop a deeper insight into Dinah’s *own* experience of her ordeal, in order that we can better comprehend the meaningfulness and complexity of her silence and grant to it a rich and new meaning.

As a final caveat, however, I must emphasise that, while I am attempting to give Dinah a voice through which she can express her emotions and experiences to us, I cannot claim that the emotions and experiences, which I attribute to her, are definitive or authoritative. For, although history bears witness to the fact that women’s experience of coercive sexual aggression is a universal phenomenon within patriarchal cultures spanning both time and space, the ways in which these women define and make sense of their experiences has been and always will be affected and shaped by the particular meaning and significance accorded to rape within their *specific* culture.<sup>65</sup> I am therefore the first to admit that, living in a

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<sup>64</sup> I am paraphrasing J. Cheryl Exum here, in her use of the term ‘cultural afterlives’, which she uses to refer to the representations of biblical women within the arts. In *Plotted, Shot, and Painted: Cultural Representations of Biblical Women* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 8.

<sup>65</sup> Marianne Hester, Liz Kelly, and Jill Radford, introduction to *Women, Violence and Male Power*, ed. Marianne Hester, Liz Kelly, and Jill Radford (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1996), 5; Alice Bach “Re-Reading the Body Politic: Women and Violence in Judges 21”, in *Judges: A Feminist Companion to the Bible (2<sup>nd</sup> series)*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999),



culture so temporally and geographically far removed from that of biblical Israel, my own understanding of Dinah's experiences will by no means capture all of the nuances of meaning surrounding sexual violence, which she may have encountered within her own biblical community.

However, such an admission does not necessarily preclude my proposed discourse regarding the cross-cultural relatedness of women's rape experiences.<sup>66</sup> While both biblical and contemporary conceptualisations of sexual violence are constructs of the historical, political, religious, and social idiosyncrasies dominant within their respective milieus, it is nevertheless true that the differences between these conceptualisations should not be overestimated. As I hope to show in the following chapters, the myths, assumptions, and misperceptions, which are prevalent within so many contemporary patriarchal cultures, and which contribute to the silencing of rape survivors therein, would appear to demonstrate a terrible timelessness and tenacity. Many are given ample voice within the biblical material and it is this *same* voice, which continues to echo strongly in our own societies and communities today. I am therefore confident that, despite utilising such a distinctly contemporary witness to sexual violence as a hermeneutical key, I will nonetheless be able to shed a little light and understanding upon Dinah's rape experience. For, to paraphrase Qoheleth, it would appear that with regard to cultural responses towards sexual violence, there really is nothing very new under the sun (Qoh. 1.9).

Finally, I must also point out that, throughout this work, I have cited, on occasion, the testimonies of contemporary rape survivors as a means of better understanding Dinah's own experiences of sexual violence. Listening to *these women's* accounts of their own silencing and the way that *their* violation becomes redefined and rewritten within the patriarchal discourse of their culture, brings an added clarity and prominence to the fact that women's elision from their own rape narrative does

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146; Sherry B. Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" in *Woman, Culture, and Society*, ed. Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), 67; Nivedita Menon, "Embodying the Self: Feminism, Sexual Violence and the Law", in *Community, Gender and Violence*, ed. Partha Chatterjee and Pradeep Jeganathan (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2000), 66; Andrea Dworkin, *Intercourse* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 155; Hilary Lipka, *Sexual Transgression in the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006), 179; Emily Martin, "What is 'Rape'? Towards a Historical, Ethnographic Approach", in *Evolution, Gender, and Rape*, ed. Cheryl Brown Travis (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 363-81; John J. Pilch, "Family Violence in Cross-Cultural Perspective: An Approach for Feminist Interpreters of the Bible", in Brenner and Fontaine, 319; Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, "'You May Enjoy the Spoil of Your Enemies': Rape as a Biblical Metaphor for War", *Semeia* 61 (1993): 61.

<sup>66</sup> Hester, Kelly and Radford, 9-10; Sandie Gravett, "Reading 'Rape' in the Hebrew Bible: A Consideration of Language", *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 28 (2004): 298.

contribute in no small way to their trauma and pain. By appealing to the courageous witness of these women, I am however sensitive to the fact that words alone are woefully incapable of capturing the full depth of horror that they have endured. As a Caucasian, European woman, who has never experienced the awfulness of sexual violence first-hand, I realise that rape survivors, living within patriarchal cultures the world over, both now and in the past, could bring their own diverse experiences to bear upon Dinah's story, thus enabling her to weave many differing, but equally rich, vibrant, and authentic tapestries, which depict, in *their* eyes, her narrative of suffering. Throughout this work, I have attempted to represent these women's voices with sincerity and integrity; however, I accept that my own interpretation of their terrible discourses of suffering can never adequately express the full significance of their words. *My* reading can therefore only ever be a partial reading, and the voice that *I* give to Dinah represents but one of many possible voices with which she may have spoken. My only wish is that, in my efforts, I will do her justice.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Rape Myths

*'He sat very close to me and said no one would believe me. I'd lose everything. I was now his, no other man would want me. It was impossible to force a girl. I must have wanted it because he had been able to do it'.<sup>1</sup>*

*'I just wanted to block it out. I felt ashamed because it happened. I just felt dirty, violated. I thought it was my fault. It wasn't like he did something to me, it was like I let him do something to me, so I felt very bad about myself ... who would believe me? He was a really great football player. No one would have believed me if I said anything'.<sup>2</sup>*

Under contemporary law, determining whether a sexual deed constitutes the criminal act of rape is based solely upon establishing the woman's lack of consent; the social context and circumstances within which the alleged assault occurred have no legal bearing upon this decision.<sup>3</sup> However, in reality, a number of ubiquitous and pernicious extra-legal factors have, over the centuries, played a dominant role in shaping and informing societies' definition, interpretation, and evaluation of sexual violence.<sup>4</sup> These factors, termed by feminists as 'rape myths', comprise 'prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists',<sup>5</sup> and are

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<sup>1</sup> Sue Lees, *Carnal Knowledge: Rape on Trial* (London: Women's Press, 2002), 12.

<sup>2</sup> Cited in Robin Warshaw, *I Never Called it Rape: The Ms. Report on Recognising, Fighting, and Surviving Date and Acquaintance Rape* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1994), 30.

<sup>3</sup> K. L'Armand and A. Pepitone, "Judgments of Rape: A Study of Victim-Rapist Relationship and Victim Sexual History", *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 8 (1982):134; Rebecca Campbell and Camille R. Johnson, "Police Officers' Perceptions of Rape: Is There a Consistency between State Law and Individual Beliefs?" *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 12 (1997): 259; A. Daniel Yarmey, "Older and Younger Adults' Attributions of Responsibility toward Rape Victims and Rapists", *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science* 17 (1985): 328.

<sup>4</sup> Linda A. Fairstein, *Sexual Violence: Our War Against Rape* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1993), 13; Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (New York: Fawcett Books,1993), 312; Martha R. Burt, "Cultural Myths and Support for Rape", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 38 (1980): 217; Colleen A. Ward, *Attitudes Toward Rape: Feminist and Social Psychological Perspectives* (London: Sage Publications, 1995), 3, 24.

<sup>5</sup> Burt, "Cultural Myths", 217.

internalised by a great many individuals and institutions within patriarchal societies, including law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, medical services, the media, and, not least, the public – in other words, all those who constitute the services and networks intended to support and seek justice for victims of sexual violence.<sup>6</sup>

What, then, are these rape myths? Well, if we look at the two testimonies of rape survivors, quoted above, some of the most common myths, which shape contemporary attitudes towards sexual violence, are illustrated therein. These include the belief that there is no such thing as rape, that rape is little more than normative consensual sexual intercourse, that women are to blame for their rape, that they make up false allegations of rape, and that they are, in their own eyes and in the eyes of others, devalued by their rape experience. With regards the rapist, there is also a common misperception that he will be unknown to the victim and will inevitably present as a social misfit or a mentally-deranged psychopath. ‘Normal’ men, it is maintained, do not commit rape, or at least, not without good reason; any woman who claims that she was sexually assaulted by an otherwise respectable member of the community is therefore either making a false accusation or is understood to have ‘driven’ this man to such an extreme form of sexual behaviour through the excesses of her own capricious promiscuity. These myths therefore make assumptions about the victim’s character, respectability, and worthiness, while refuting both the seriousness of sexual violence and the rapist’s moral culpability for this crime. As Liz Kelly notes,

These ideas combine, interact and lead to stereotypes of which men commit sexual violence, which women/girls it occurs to, at the same time as offering a form of causal explanation. They may deny the violence, normalise it or pathologise the offender and/or the abused woman, resulting in both the deflection of responsibility from men and the denial of women’s experience.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, people who internalise rape myths, who hold them to be an accurate reflection of the realities of sexual violence, will inevitably redefine and re-evaluate rape, the rapist, and the rape victim through the particular lens of these discriminatory,

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*; Hubert S. Feild, “Attitudes Toward Rape: A Comparative Analysis of Police, Rapists, Crisis Counsellors and Citizens”, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 36 (1978): 156, 169, 176; Barbara Krahé, “Victim and Observer Characteristics as Determinants of Responsibility Attributions to Victims of Rape”, *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 18 (1988): 50; Ward, 2, 25-27; Kelly, *Surviving Sexual Violence*, 157; Susan Roth and Leslie Lebowitz, “The Experience of Sexual Trauma”, *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 1 (1988): 85; Julia R. Schwendinger and Herman Schwendinger, “Rape Myths: In Legal, Theoretical, and Everyday Practice”, *Crime and Social Justice* 1 (1974): 18; Joan McGregor, *Is it Rape? Rape and Taking Women’s Consent Seriously* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 35-37.

<sup>7</sup> Kelly, *Surviving Sexual Violence*, 34-6; Carol Smart, *Feminism and the Power of Law* (London: Routledge, 1989), 26.

stereotyped, and essentially false ideologies. As a result, if a sexually aggressive event does not conform to these preconceived notions, they may refuse to interpret it as a criminal act of rape, whilst blaming the victim and exonerating the rapist of any wrongdoing.<sup>8</sup> For example, although far more common than stranger rape, acquaintance rape and intimate partner violence are less likely to be perceived by others as ‘real rape’ than an incident of sexual violence by a stranger, despite the fact that they are equally as traumatic for the victim.<sup>9</sup> This is in no small part due to the erroneous myth that rapists are usually unknown to the victim and because of the (equally erroneous) propensity to contextualise sexual violence between acquaintances strictly within a milieu of consensual and normative heterosexual activity.<sup>10</sup> As Martha Burt notes, ‘Accepting or believing rape myths leads to a more restrictive definition of rape and is thus rape-supportive, because such beliefs deny the reality of many actual rapes’.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, rape myths are far from harmless misconceptions or misunderstandings; they are pernicious, dangerous, and deeply influential beliefs, which undermine the reality of criminal violence against women, and make the community in which women live a far more perilous place.<sup>12</sup> In doing so, they therefore contribute to the subversion of a woman’s right to her bodily integrity, peace of mind, and freedom,

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<sup>8</sup> Ward, 79; Feild, 156; Fairstein, 99, 134; Martha R. Burt, “Rape Myths and Acquaintance Rape”, in *Acquaintance Rape: The Hidden Crime*, ed. Andrea Parrot and Laurie Bechhofer (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1991), 27; Joyce E. Williams, “Secondary Victimisation: Confronting Public Attitudes About Rape”, *Victimology: An International Journal* 9 (1984): 79; Patricia A. Tetreault, “Rape Myth Acceptance: A Case for Providing Educational Expert Testimony in Rape Jury Trials”, *Behavioural Sciences and the Law* 7 (1989): 246-47; Patricia D. Rozee, “Rape Resistance: Successes and Challenges”, in *The Handbook of Women, Psychology, and the Law*, ed. Andrea Barnes (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 267; Nicola Gavey, *Just Sex? The Cultural Scaffolding of Rape* (London: Routledge, 2005), 55; Lynne Henderson, “Rape and Responsibility”, *Law and Philosophy* 11 (1992): 133; Charlene L. Muehlenhard *et al.*, “Definitions of Rape: Scientific and Political Implications”, *Journal of Social Issues* 48, no.1 (1992): 23; Leslie Lebowitz and Susan Roth, “‘I Felt Like a Slut’: The Cultural Context and Women’s Response to Being Raped”, *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 7 (1994): 365; Leslie, 106-8.

<sup>9</sup> Ward, 56-61; McGregor, 65-71; Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, xxxviii; Leslie, 14-15; Fairstein, 129-30; Jeff R. Temple *et al.*, “Differing Effects of Partner and Nonpartner Sexual Assault on Women’s Mental Health”, *Violence against Women* 13 (2007): 285-97; Sarah A. Coller and Patricia A. Resick, “Women’s Attributions of Responsibility for Date Rape: The Influence of Empathy and Sex-Role Stereotyping”, *Violence and Victims* 2 (1987): 123; Mary P. Koss, Thomas E. Dinero, and Cynthia Seibel, “Stranger and Acquaintance Rape: Are There Differences in the Victim’s Experience?”, *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 12 (1998): 1-24. Stranger rape is rape committed by one or more men unknown to the victim. Acquaintance rape can be defined as an act of sexual violence, where the victim and her assailant(s) know each other (for example, are work colleagues, neighbours, friends) but have had no prior sexual or intimate relationship. Intimate partner violence occurs between individuals who are or have been involved in a sexual relationship prior to the rape event (Leslie, 3-4; Fairstein, 131).

<sup>10</sup> Leslie, 14, 106-8; Henderson, 132-33; Fairstein, 137.

<sup>11</sup> Burt, “Rape Myths and Acquaintance Rape”, 27; also McGregor, 135.

<sup>12</sup> Burt, “Cultural Myths”, 229; Ward, 24.

not to mention any adequate recourse to justice and protection from the law.<sup>13</sup> For far too long, they have been allowed to affect women's likelihood of reporting their rape, the processing of their complaints by law enforcement agencies and the criminal justice system, and the support that they are offered (or, in some cases, *not* offered) by both professional and lay groups and organisations within the community.<sup>14</sup> Survivors are far less likely to break their silence about rape or report their assault to the authorities, because they are loath to endure the doubt, stigma, blame, and shame that they fear will be heaped upon them as the result of the ubiquity of rape myths within their community.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, women who *do* report their rape to the authorities have no guarantee that their accusation will be taken seriously or that their rapist will be convicted. What *is* guaranteed however is that they will almost certainly face some degree of hostility, blame, and scepticism during every step of the reporting and trial process, as their testimonies are re-interpreted through the influence of these rape myths.<sup>16</sup> The consequences for these

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<sup>13</sup> Camille E. LeGrand, "Rape and Rape Laws: Sexism in Society and Law", in *Forcible Rape: The Crime, the Victim, and the Offender*, ed. Duncan Chappell, Robley Geis, and Gilbert Geis (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 69.

<sup>14</sup> Feild, 156, Tetreault, 244-46, 248, 254; Vivian Berger, "Man's Trial, Woman's Tribulation: Rape Cases in the Courtroom", *Columbia Law Review* 77 (1977): 1-103; Rebecca Campbell and Sheela Raja, "Secondary Victimization of Rape Victims: Insights from Mental Health Professionals Who Treat Survivors of Violence", *Violence and Victims* 14 (1999): 262; Fairstein, 13, 14, 16; Kelly, *Surviving Sexual Violence*, 34; Ward, 2; Burt, "Rape Myths and Acquaintance Rape", 27; Lee Madigan and Nancy Gamble, *The Second Rape: Society's Continued Betrayal of the Victim* (New York: Lexington Books, 1991), 71-107; Shirley Feldman-Summers and Jeanette Norris, "Differences Between Rape Victims Who Report and Those Who Do Not Report to a Public Agency", *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 14 (1984): 572; Patricia Yancey Martin and R. Marlene Powell, "Accounting for the 'Second Assault': Legal Organisations' Framing of Rape Victims", *Law and Social Inquiry* 19 (1994): 872; Lebowitz and Roth, 365; Sarah E. Ullman, "Do Social Reactions to Sexual Assault Victims Vary by Support Provider?", *Violence and Victims* 11 (1996): 143-57; Carole Goldberg-Ambrose, "Unfinished Business in Rape Law Reform", *Journal of Social Issues* 48 (1992): 173.

<sup>15</sup> It is estimated that between 75-95% of rapes that occur are never reported, suggesting that the official crime statistics for the prevalence of rape are 'only the tip of a statistical iceberg' (Schwendinger and Schwendinger, "Rape Myths", 18). See also Fairstein, 92; Lisa M. Cuklanz, *Rape on Trial: How the Mass Media Construct Legal Reform and Social Change* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 18; Burt, "Rape Myths and Acquaintance Rape", 37; Gavey, 51, 53; Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, xxxviii, 24; Judith Lewis Herman, "Justice From the Victim's Perspective", *Violence against Women* 11 (2005): 573; Feldman-Summers and Norris, 563, 569-71; May M. Buddie and Arthur G. Miller, "Beyond Rape Myths: A More Complex View of Perceptions of Rape Victims", *Sex Roles* 45 (2001): 139-40; Jacquelyn W. White and John A. Humphrey, "Young People's Attitudes toward Acquaintance Rape", in Parrot and Bechhofer, 49; Carol Bohmer, "Acquaintance Rape and the Law", in Parrot and Bechhofer, 324; McGregor, 5.

<sup>16</sup> It is widely recognised that the high rate of attrition within the criminal justice system with regards rape complaints is in no small part due to the fact that rape myths underlie the institutional handling of these cases, not to mention the trial outcome. Within the United Kingdom, the average conviction rate for reported rapes is just over five percent; of those rapes that are reported, between one half to three quarters never progress past a police investigation; of those that do, a number will be dismissed by the prosecution service, or are dropped by the woman herself, unable to cope with the ordeal that she is expected to face. Of the minority of rapes that reach court, over one-half may be acquitted. This of course does not take into account the fact that, as mentioned above, between only 5-25% of

women can be devastating, impeding their recovery and healing, and allowing the effects of the original trauma to be perpetuated or intensified.<sup>17</sup> In effect, and as will be highlighted in the following chapters, rape myths can make victims of sexual violence feel *re-victimised* and *re-violated*; indeed, such is their insidious power within societies that a great number of women describe the social, judicial, and community response that they face after their rape as a ‘second assault’ or ‘second rape’.<sup>18</sup> As Joyce Williams explains, ‘victims are social creations – products not just of criminal action on the part of an offender, or even of the dynamics between offender and victim. Victims are also created, in a secondary process, by the responses which community and society make to their initial experience. Thus, society and community also become offenders’.<sup>19</sup>

If, however, rape myths are not only false but also so very harmful, why then do they remain an intrinsic and dominant feature of cultural interpretations of sexual violence within a considerable number of patriarchal societies? The answer to this question most likely lies in the fact that these myths are intricately connected to the traditional gender expectations and sex role stereotypes, which are deeply entrenched within the cultural consciousness and history of these societies and

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women report their rapes to the police. Thus, by my (conservative) calculations, the likelihood of a rapist being reported, charged, and convicted can be estimated at less than 1%. These are sobering statistics. Little wonder that Martha Burt argues that ‘rape myths allow rapists to rape with near impunity’ (“Rape Myths and Acquaintance Rape”, 37), while journalist Julie Bindel laments, ‘Today, rape might as well be legal’ (“Why is rape so easy to get away with?”, guardian.co.uk, February 2, 2007, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/crime/article/0,,2003229,00.html> [accessed March 28, 2007]). For more information regarding statistics on rape and conviction rates and the high levels of attrition within rape complaints, see Mark Townsend, “Tough laws to end rape trial lottery”, guardian.co.uk, January 28, 2007, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/crime/article/0,,2002459,00.html> (accessed March 24, 2007); Liz Kelly, Jo Lovett, and Linda Regan, *A Gap or a Chasm? Attrition in Reported Rape Cases* (London: Home Office, 2005); Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, xxxix, 95-128; and “Media Reporting of Rape: The 1993 British ‘Date Rape’ Controversy”, in *Crime and the Media: The Post-Modern Spectacle*, ed. David Kidd-Hewitt and Richard Osborne (London: Pluto Press, 1995), 125; Timothy Beneke, *Men on Rape* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1982), 33; Ward, 112; Buddie and Miller, 141; Jan Jordan, “Worlds Apart? Women, Rape and the Police Reporting Process”, *British Journal of Criminology* 41 (2001): 679-706; Jennifer Temkin, “Plus ça change: Reporting Rape in the 1990s”, *British Journal of Criminology* 37 (1997): 507-28; Gavey, 19; Patricia D. Rozee, “Stranger Rape”, in *The Psychology of Sexual Victimization: A Handbook*, ed. Michele Antonette Paludi (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 99.

<sup>17</sup> Heather Littleton and Carmen Radecki Breitkopf, “Coping with the Experience of Rape”, *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 30 (2006): 107, 113.

<sup>18</sup> For a far more detailed discussion of the phenomenon of the ‘second rape’, see Joyce E. Williams and Karen A. Holmes, *The Second Assault: Rape and Public Attitudes* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981); Madigan and Gamble; Martin and Powell, 853-90; Williams, 66-81; Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 25-26, 31, 33-34; Tetreault, 254; Carrie C. Spencer, “Sexual Assault: The Second Victimization”, in *Women, the Courts, and Equality*, ed. Laura L. Crites and Winifred L. Hepperle (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1987), 54-73; Campbell and Raja, 261-75; Cuklanz, 18.

<sup>19</sup> Williams, 79.

which are therefore highly resistant to change.<sup>20</sup> These stereotypes are essentially founded upon an adherence to the ‘expected’ social and behavioural roles attributed to both males and females within a particular society; that is, they dictate which sexual behaviours are deemed appropriate, normative, and acceptable for both sexes to engage in.<sup>21</sup> Gendered sexuality is therefore a cultural construct, the product of socially learned values and attitudes within a particular culture at a particular time in history.<sup>22</sup> In other words, sexual behaviour patterns considered normative for both males and females are defined and given meaning by the culture within which they are located and are dependent on the beliefs and assumptions embedded within that culture’s dominant ideological framework. In this sense, they are socially scripted, rather than determined solely by biological or innate factors.<sup>23</sup> As Kimmel notes, ‘Sexual beings are made, not born’.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Feild, 174; Burt, “Cultural Myths”, 218, 229; and “Rape Myths and Acquaintance Rape”, 33; Tetreault, 249; Ward, 2, 4; Gavey, 217; Jacquelyn W. White and Susan B. Sorensen, “A Sociocultural View of Sexual Assault: From Discrepancy to Diversity”, *Journal of Social Issues* 48 (1992): 193.

<sup>21</sup> Burt, 218; Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (New York: Doubleday, 1970), 31; Lebowitz and Roth, 365.

<sup>22</sup> I am adhering here to the social constructionist theory of human sexuality, which argues that the sexual ideologies and their concomitant behaviour patterns, which define normative and taboo forms of sexuality within a given culture, are the products of social discourse, rather than of universal or biologically determined constants (as suggested by essentialist theories of sexuality). Social constructionists therefore hold that cultural influences and values, regarding acceptable and unacceptable sexual behaviour, shape and establish the boundaries and limits of conventional gendered sexuality. While they may concede that biological factors will, to an extent, determine or at least delimit the possible forms of human sexual behaviour and sexuality to be found within a particular culture, it is the social laws, customs, values, and expectations of that culture, instilled in its members from the day they are born, which are the principle influences of the sexual phenomena found therein. As Pepper Schwartz and Virginia Rutter explain, ‘A complex mix of anatomy, hormones, and the brain provides the basic outline for the range of acts and desires possible, but biology is neither where sexuality begins nor where it ends. Social and biological contexts link to define human sexual possibilities’. In *The Gender of Sexuality* (Thousand Oaks: Fine Forge Press, 1998), 22 (also see 1-34). For more information on social constructionist theory, see Michael S. Kimmel, “Clarence, William, Iron Mike, Tailhook, Senator Packwood, Spur Posse, Magic ... and Us”, in *Confronting Rape and Sexual Assault*, ed. Mary E. Odem and Jody Clay-Warner (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1998), 264-65; Stevi Jackson, “The Social Construction of Female Sexuality”, in *Feminism and Sexuality: A Reader*, ed. Stevi Jackson and Sue Scott (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 62-73; Ellen Ross and Rayna Rapp, “Sex and Society: A Research Note from Social History and Anthropology”, in *The Gender/Sexuality Reader: Culture, History, Political Economy*, ed. Roger N. Lancaster and Micaela di Leonardo (New York: Routledge, 1997), 153-67; Lipka, 1-3; Chris Beasley, *Gender and Sexuality: Critical Theories, Critical Thinkers* (London: SAGE Publications, 2005), 136; Ann Oakley, “Sexuality”, in Jackson and Scott, 35-39; Alice H. Eagley and Wendy Wood, “The Origins of Sex Differences in Human Behaviour: Evolved Dispositions versus Social Roles”, in Travis, 265-304; Peggy Reeves Sanday, “Rape-Free versus Rape-Prone: How Culture Makes a Difference”, in Travis, 337-61; Ortnor, 67-87.

<sup>23</sup> Lipka, 2; Sanday, “Rape-Free versus Rape-Prone”, 339.

<sup>24</sup> Kimmel, 264.



Thus, for example, these stereotypes and gender expectations endorse the belief that, 'by nature', females ought to be both sexually submissive and chaste.<sup>25</sup> As the valuable sexual property of the males under whose authority they exist, women carry the weight of responsibility for guarding their sexual integrity and sexual worth, and must therefore avoid any risk of their sexuality being exploited and 'devalued' by another more sexually aggressive and dominant male.<sup>26</sup> The ideal feminine sexuality is therefore both passive and resisting; it is considered inappropriate and unacceptable for a woman to initiate a sexual encounter or to take an active role in selecting a sexual partner of her choice.<sup>27</sup> Women who eschew these feminine norms and opt instead to exercise the strictly male prerogative of sexual freedom will face social opprobrium from within the patriarchal culture to which they belong, not to mention their moral and sexual reputation suffering often irreparable damage. For, only chaste women are of social 'value', according to these gender expectations and sex role stereotypes, whereas women who have had multiple male partners or who have freely engaged in sexual relationships outwith matrimony are relegated to the status of 'loose women', 'sluts', or 'whores'.<sup>28</sup>

This cultural imperative towards feminine sexual passivity, submissiveness, and chastity does not however apply likewise to normative ideations about masculine sexual behaviour. On the contrary, patriarchal gender stereotypes conceptualise male sexuality as innately dominant, aggressive, proactive, and controlling; there is no imperative towards male chastity, indeed, men are expected to 'sow their wild

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<sup>25</sup> Brownmiller, 17; Millett, 31; Ward, 28; Lebowitz and Roth, 374; Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 147; Krahe, 51; Burt, "Rape Myths and Acquaintance Rape", 31-32; and "Rape Myths", in Odem and Clay-Warner, 135; Susan Griffin, "Rape: The All-American Crime", in Chappell, Geis, and Geis, 66; Bohmer, "Rape and the Law", in Odem and Clay-Warner, 250.

<sup>26</sup> Gavey, 19-20; Brownmiller, 376; Diana Scully and Joseph Marolla, "Rape and Vocabularies of Motive: Alternative Perspectives", in *Rape and Sexual Assault: A Research Handbook*, ed. Ann Wolbert Burgess (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985), 307; Judith S. Bridges, "Perceptions of Date and Stranger Rape: A Difference in Sex Role Expectations and Rape-Supportive Beliefs", *Sex Roles* 24 (1991): 305; Dianne Herman, "The Rape Culture", in *Women: A Feminist Perspective*, ed. Jo Freeman (Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1979), 43; A. Nicholas Groth, *Men Who Rape: The Psychology of the Offender* (New York: Plenum Press, 1979), 2; Henderson, 131; Smart, 29-30; Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 147, 211; Bohmer, "Acquaintance Rape and the Law", 318; Cuklanz, 17; LeGrand, 69; Griffin, "Rape: The All-American Crime", 58. Millett, 44; Ann J. Cahill, *Rethinking Rape* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 168.

<sup>27</sup> Gavey, 69; Ward, 26; Henderson, 156; Marie M. Fortune, "Pastoral Responses to Sexual Assault and Abuse: Laying a Foundation", in *Journal of Religion and Abuse* 3, no.3/4 (2001): 95; Diana E.H. Russell, 257.

<sup>28</sup> Gavey, 106-7; Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 132-33, 147; and "The Policing of Girls in Everyday Life: Sexual Reputation, Morality and the Social Control of Girls", in *Ruling Passions, Sexual Violence, Reputation and the Law* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1997), 17-37; Susan Griffin, *Rape: The Politics of Consciousness* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), 14; Lebowitz and Roth, 374.

oats' liberally and without fear of recrimination.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, sex role stereotypes suggest that males have innate and biologically driven sexual needs, which cannot be controlled and which ought not to be suppressed; the concomitant expectation that females will display a reluctance to meet these needs thereby functions as a natural validation of a distinctly coercive and aggressive masculine sexuality.<sup>30</sup>

How, then, are these traditional expectations about gender and sexuality related to rape myths? Well, it is now widely accepted that people who adopt these dominant cultural expectations about male and female sexuality *also* have a propensity to subscribe to rape myths.<sup>31</sup> In effect, these traditional values and perceptions about gendered sexual behaviour, which are pervasive within the legal, religious, social, and political institutions of patriarchal cultures, endorse and validate rape myths, and together, they facilitate both the perpetuation of a rape-supportive culture and the concomitant subversion of a woman's right to her social, moral, and sexual autonomy.<sup>32</sup> Within a rape culture, the inherent violence of gender relatedness, that is, the acceptance of coercion and physical aggression within a sexual context, is regarded as neither immoral nor criminal but is instead tolerated as an acceptable form of normative heterosexuality; rape, in effect, becomes equated with sex.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Burt, "Rape Myths and Acquaintance Rape", 36; Kimmel, 265; Scully and Marolla, "Rape and Vocabularies of Motive", 306-7; Diana E.H. Russell, 265; Maria Bevacqua, *Rape on the Public Agenda: Feminism and the Politics of Sexual Assault* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2000), 60; Dianne Herman, 42.

<sup>30</sup> Scully and Marolla, "Rape and Vocabularies of Motive", 307; Mary John Manazan, "Feminine Socialisation: Women as Victims and Collaborators", in *Violence Against Women*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and M. Shawn Copeland (London: SCM Press, 1994), 47-9; Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 210-11; Millet, 31; Dianne Herman, 42; Burt, "Rape Myths and Acquaintance Rape", 33; White and Humphrey, 43-44; McGregor, 7-8.

<sup>31</sup> Scully and Marolla, "Rape and Vocabularies of Motive", 307; Tetreault, 249; Goldberg-Ambrose, 180; Ward, 64; Henderson, 133; Bridges, 291-307; Niwako Yamawaki, Ryan Darby, and Adriane Queiroz, "The Moderating Role of Ambivalent Sexism: The Influence of Power Status on Perception of Rape Victim and Rapist", *Journal of Social Psychology* 147, no.1 (2007): 41-56; David Lisak, "Sexual Aggression, Masculinity, and Fathers", *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 16 (1991): 242.

<sup>32</sup> As Patricia D. Rozee and Mary P. Koss note, 'The sociocultural supports for rape are structurally integrated at all levels of society ... Almost every society in the world has social institutions that legitimise, obscure, and deny the existence of gendered abuse'. In "Rape: A Century of Resistance", *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 25 (2001): 296. Likewise, both Scully and Plummer describe rape as a cultural entity, which is derived from socially constructed gender roles and expectations. See Diana Scully, *Understanding Sexual Violence: A Study of Convicted Rapists* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 162; Kenneth Plummer, "The Social Uses of Sexuality: Symbolic Interaction, Power and Rape", in *Perspectives on Rape and Sexual Assault*, ed. June Hopkins (London: Harper & Row, 1984), 39-40. See also Scully and Marolla, "Rape and Vocabularies of Motive", 306-7; Diana E.H. Russell, 268; LeGrand, 68; Lebowitz and Roth, 364; Eileen J. Stenzel, "Maria Goretti: Rape and the Politics of Sainthood", in *Violence against Women*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and M. Shawn Copeland (London: SCM Press and Orbis Books, 1994), 93.

<sup>33</sup> Stenzel, 92; Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 210-11; White and Humphrey, 45, 49; Bridges, 304-5; Burt, "Rape Myths and Acquaintance Rape", 36; Megan J. Jenkins and Faye H. Dambrot, "The Attribution of Date Rape: Observers' Attitudes and Sexual Experiences and the Dating Situation", *Journal of*

Female vulnerability and male sexual aggression are thereby represented as universal and natural gender ideals, rather than the cultural constructs of a misogynist and sexist society. That is, women become the ‘natural’ target for rapists and men the ‘natural’ rapists.<sup>34</sup> Women therefore cannot escape this culturally allotted role, for to be feminine *is* to be submissive and to be submissive is to defer to masculine strength and sexual aggression.<sup>35</sup> As Carolyn Schaffer explains, ‘In a culture that touts violent, aggressive acts as manly and views weak, submissive behaviour as womanly, sexual assault is a logical extension of normal male-female relationships’.<sup>36</sup>

Furthermore, the traditional conviction that it is a woman’s responsibility to protect her sexual chastity, coupled with the concomitant belief in the naturally aggressive and uncontrollable temperament of masculine sexuality, provide the essential underpinnings to the myth that a rape victim is often culpable for her assault.<sup>37</sup> Any woman who is deemed not to have adequately protected her sexuality or rendered herself vulnerable to unwanted male sexual attention is liable to be held responsible for her own victimisation and blamed by her community. She may be accused of precipitating the rape by behaving in a provocative manner that did not conform to the expected role of female sexual passivity and chastity, her errant promiscuity thereby inflaming the natural and uncontrollable sexual lust of her attacker.<sup>38</sup> Alternatively, she may be attributed culpability because she acted in a manner

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*Applied Social Psychology* 17 (1987): 877; Mary P. Koss *et al.*, “Nonstranger Sexual Aggression: A Discriminant Analysis of the Psychological Characteristics of Undetected Offenders”, *Sex Roles* 12 (1985): 981-92; Gillian Youngs, “Private Pain/Public Peace: Women’s Rights as Human Rights and Amnesty International’s Report on Violence Against Women”, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28 (2003): 1215; Susan Griffin, “Rape: The All-American Crime”, 52; Laura Shapiro, “Violence: The Most Obscene Fantasy”, in Freeman, 472; McGregor, 12, 61.

<sup>34</sup> As Christine Helliwell points out, culture, not nature, gives men the power to rape and the penis the power to hurt. See “‘It’s Only a Penis’: Rape, Feminism, and Difference”, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 25 (2000): 812; also Youngs, 1215; Ward, 24-25; Henderson, 132-34; Burt, “Rape Myths and Acquaintance Rape”, 36; Diana Scully and Joseph Marolla, “‘Riding the Bull at Gilley’s’: Convicted Rapists Describe the Rewards of Rape”, in Odem and Clay-Warner, 112; Rozee, “Stranger Rape”, 98.

<sup>35</sup> Griffin, “Rape: The All-American Crime”, 59; Stenzel, 92; Teresa de Lauretis, “The Violence of Rhetoric: On Representation and Gender”, in Lancaster and di Leonardo, 269.

<sup>36</sup> Carolyn R. Schaffer, “Spiritual Techniques for Re-Powering Survivors of Sexual Assault”, in *The Politics of Women’s Spirituality: Essays on the Rise of Spiritual Power Within the Feminist Movement*, ed. Charlene Spretnak (New York: Doubleday, 1982), 463. In a similar vein, Martha Burt notes that, ‘Patriarchy’s ideology of sex roles encourages average expressions of violence and sexual behaviour for males and tolerates extreme expressions. It also encourages suitably passive, complementary behaviour for females’ (“Rape Myths and Acquaintance Rape”, 36). See also Burt, “Cultural Myths”, 229; Bevacqua, 9, 60; Gavey, 217.

<sup>37</sup> Burt, “Rape Myths and Acquaintance Rape”, 37; Stenzel, 92.

<sup>38</sup> Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 210-13; Diana E.H. Russell, 242; Bridges, 304-5; Kimmel, 265; Ward, 34; Karen S. Calhoun and Ruth M. Townsley, “Attributions of Responsibility for Acquaintance Rape”, in Parrot and Bechhofer, 64-65; Scully and Marolla, “‘Riding the Bull at Gilley’s’”, 5.

deemed inappropriate and dangerous for a woman, because it rendered her vulnerable to unwanted male sexual attention.<sup>39</sup> In essence, any female behaviour, which can be construed as either sexually provocative or socially irresponsible, may be regarded, within the internal logic of patriarchal gender conceptualisation, as the ultimate cause of a woman's rape. As a result, women existing within a rape culture are expected to ensure their own safety and security by dramatically curtailing their freedom to act, dress, move, and speak with the same liberty afforded to men, and, ironically enough, by relying on the protection of men, those very individuals who *create* the threat of sexual violence in the first place.<sup>40</sup> Their rapists meanwhile are granted a licence to eschew their responsibility for this act of criminal aggression by appealing to the naturally uncontrollable and voracious appetite of their masculine sexuality.

Finally, the origins of the particularly pernicious myth that raped women are 'damaged goods' may likewise be traced back to the patriarchal sex role stereotypes that measure a woman's value by her sexual chastity and regards women as male sexual property.<sup>41</sup> An unchaste woman, who loses her virginity outwith marriage or who has had multiple extra-marital sexual partners, is deemed intrinsically less valuable than a woman whose sexuality remains under the absolute authority and ownership of one male, be it her father or husband/partner.<sup>42</sup> It therefore follows that a woman who has been raped is considered to have been 'misused', 'blemished', or 'devalued' by her rapist, in that he has subverted her chastity and undermined the exclusivity of male proprietary rights.<sup>43</sup> That the woman's 'participation' in this sexually debasing act was totally coerced and achieved through violence is a moot point; her chastity has been irreparably damaged and her sexual 'value' radically undermined.

Thus, to summarise, within rape-supportive cultures, sexual violence is commonly conceptualised, evaluated, *and* experienced within the profoundly androcentric definitional framework of gender stereotypes and rape myths, which, as discussed above, undermine the seriousness of this crime, shift the burden of blame from the

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<sup>39</sup> Rozee, "Rape Resistance", 267.

<sup>40</sup> Ward, 24-5, 88-89; Griffin, "Rape: The All-American Crime", 59, 64; Winifred Woodhull, "Sexuality, Power, and the Question of Rape", in *Feminism and Foucault: Reflections on Resistance*, ed. Irene Diamond and Lee Quinby (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), 173; Youngs, 1215; Schaffer, 463; Muehlenhard *et al.*, "Definitions of Rape", 40.

<sup>41</sup> Ward, 112; Lebowitz and Roth, 372; Brownmiller, 17, 376; Millett, 44; LeGrand, 69; Cahill, 168.

<sup>42</sup> Bohmer, "Acquaintance Rape and the Law", 318; Cuklanz, 17; Brownmiller, 376.

<sup>43</sup> Bohmer, "Acquaintance Rape and the Law", 318; Cuklanz, 17.

rapist onto the victim, and critically undermine women's social and sexual freedom.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, these sex role stereotypes and the concomitant rape myths that they perpetuate and validate, drastically decrease the likelihood that rape will be either reported or adequately punished. In essence, the presence of these deeply held beliefs within society fundamentally excludes women from naming or defining their own experiences of sexual violence.<sup>45</sup> Instead, their voices and their ability to give meaning to their ordeal are silenced and suppressed by the male prerogative to identify and delineate women's experiences from the strictly androcentric perspective of public discourse, or, as Carol Smart succinctly puts it, 'a woman is not allowed to tell her own story of rape'.<sup>46</sup> Even when a woman *is* enabled to speak of her rape, her words are all too often heard and translated through the distorting miasma of myths and cultural assumptions about sexual violence and sexuality.<sup>47</sup>

Furthermore, such stifling of an intrinsically *gynocentric* conceptualisation of rape through the pervasive and pernicious influence of rape myths has a profound impact upon both the community's response to sexual violence *and* the victim's experience of it.<sup>48</sup> Such is the power and ubiquity of these rape-supportive cultural constructions that survivors of sexual violence may likewise access them to make sense of their own stories, adopting the concomitant attitudes of self-blame, decreased self-worth, and a denial of their own right to sexual autonomy and justice.<sup>49</sup> As Laura Hengehold notes, 'By identifying herself as a victim of a crime that provokes intense and often defensive reactions in community members, whether they support her or mistrust her, a woman puts herself in the midst of confused and conflicting discourses that can overshadow or undermine her own understanding of the sexual events that she tries to master through the evaluation of "rape"'.<sup>50</sup> Living in a rape culture that tolerates and promotes a rape-supportive construction of gender can therefore make it very difficult for survivors to cope, to

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<sup>44</sup> Burt, "Cultural Myths and Support for Rape", 229; White and Sorenson, 192; Ward, 88-89; Muehlenhard *et al.*, "Definitions of Rape", 40; LeGrand, 67.

<sup>45</sup> Stenzel, 92.

<sup>46</sup> Smart, 33. See also Kelly, *Surviving Sexual Violence*, 138; Henderson, 133; Muehlenhard, *et al.*, "Definitions of Rape", 23; Susan McKay, *Without Fear: 25 Years of the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre* (Dublin: New Island, 2005), 19; McGregor, 45.

<sup>47</sup> Smart, 48.

<sup>48</sup> Dragiewicz, 195.

<sup>49</sup> Kelly, *Surviving Sexual Violence*, 148; Gavey, 53; Brownmiller, 312; Roth and Lebowitz, 79-107; Burt, "Rape Myths and Acquaintance Rape", 36; Lebowitz and Roth, 365-69, 372, 382-85.

<sup>50</sup> Laura Hengehold, "Remapping the Event: Institutional Discourses and the Trauma of Rape", *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 26 (2000): 189-90. Similarly, Barry R. Burkhart argues that, 'if a woman yields to the pressure of the malevolent rape myths, then the cost is her autonomy. She is no longer free to determine her worth or her way; instead she becomes entangled in the web of social expectations and beliefs'. See "Conceptual and Practical Analysis of Therapy for Acquaintance Rape Victims", in Parrot and Bechhofer, 299.

start to feel safe again, to begin to recover autonomy and self-worth, and to heal.<sup>51</sup> A woman's relationship with the world will be deeply damaged after her rape; she will see it as a hostile place, which is suffused with beliefs and attitudes that denigrate and devalue her, blame her for her own victimisation, and threaten her autonomy, liberty, and self-worth.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, her inability to engage in an honest discourse about her rape experience within her own community, because of these beliefs and attitudes, will further contribute to her suffering and will impede her on the path towards recovery.<sup>53</sup> As Adrienne Rich has written:

Where language and naming are  
power, silence is oppression, is  
violence.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Beneke, 62-5.

<sup>52</sup> As Andrea Rehtin notes, 'What rape does is destroy for a woman her concept of what the world is – everything is turned upside down and demands reexamination before she can go on with her life' (cited in Beneke, 162). See also Lebowitz and Roth, 385.

<sup>53</sup> Thus, according to Susan J. Brison, the act of bearing witness to her rape facilitates the survivor shifting from being the despised object of her rapist's actions to being a subject in her own right, 'not only by transforming traumatic memory into a narrative that can then be worked into the survivor's sense of self and view of the world, but also by reintegrating the survivor into a community, re-establishing connections essential to selfhood'. In *Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of a Self* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 68. See also Linda Alcoff and Laura Gray, "Survivor Discourse: Transgression or Recuperation?" *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 18 (1993), 262; Ruth Schmidt, 14; C. Richard Tsesgay-Spates, "The Mental Health Needs of Victims", in Burgess, 41.

<sup>54</sup> Quoted in Carol J Adams, "'I Just Raped My Wife! What Are You Going To Do About It Pastor?' The Church and Sexual Violence", in *Transforming a Rape Culture*, ed. Emilie Buchwald, Pamela R. Fletcher, and Martha Roth (Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 1993), 59.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Rape or Seduction? Shechem's Sexual Encounter with Dinah in Gen. 34.2

#### **Distinguishing Between Sex and Sexual Violence**

*It's been 21,900 hours, 912 days, 130 Saturday nights, 30 months, 3 years since October 16, 1988 when I was stunned awake, straddled by a man I did not know ... Before I was raped, I'd prided myself on waking up an alert (sic) that didn't need the caffeine props of coffee and tea. Afterwards, it's a daily struggle to come into consciousness and realise AGAIN that I didn't nightmare (sic) being raped. Now, as it did when I was actually being raped, my mind scrabbles for a safe place and, finding none, tries to shut off, but the strategy is no more effective than it was that gruesome night. No idea how I'll get out of bed, much less take the ten steps from the bedroom I was raped in to the bathroom I've become afraid to shower in. Grope for eyeglasses. Turn off the bedroom lamp rape has made a nighttime necessity. Step over the telephone wire the newly installed burglar alarm is hooked up to. Peer blinking as I did the rape night, into the living room. Tense, heart racing, afraid.<sup>1</sup>*

*'I didn't tell anyone. In fact, I wouldn't even admit to myself until about four months later when the guilt and fear that had been eating at me became too much to hide and I came very close to a complete breakdown ... There's no way to describe what was going on inside of me. I was losing control and I'd never been so terrified and helpless in my life. I felt as if my whole world had been kicked out from under me and I had been left to drift all alone in the darkness. I had a horrible nightmare in which I relived the rape and others which were even worse. I was terrified of being with people and terrified of being alone. I couldn't concentrate on anything and began falling asleep in classes. Deciding what to*

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<sup>1</sup> Andrea Benton Rushing, "Surviving Rape: A Morning/Mourning Ritual", in Odem and Clay-Warner, 6, 14.

*wear in the morning was enough to make me panic and cry uncontrollably. I was convinced I was going crazy, and I'm still convinced I almost did'.<sup>2</sup>*

As we discussed in the previous chapter, dominant attitudes, stereotypes, and ideologies governing the construction of gender within patriarchal societies all too often serve to preclude any clear-cut distinction between mutually desired, consensual sexual intercourse and the criminal act of sexual violence.<sup>3</sup> As Carol Smart has remarked, within many contemporary cultures, pressing a woman until she submits to having a sexual relationship has come to be regarded as 'a natural, pleasurable phallogentric pastime'.<sup>4</sup> Attitudes such as these, however, are also the very characteristics, which, in their extreme manifestation, promote sexual assault and abuse, as rape comes to be perceived as little more than the result of conformity or overconformity to the values and prerogatives, which define the normatively insistent and forceful male sex role.<sup>5</sup> In cultures where men are taught that a woman's 'no' means 'yes', women are understood as never *really* saying 'no'; men internalise this conviction so strongly, they are able to block out a woman's protests, in the belief that, underneath her token resistance, she is as keen as he is.<sup>6</sup> Thus, one woman who was raped by her boyfriend reported that when she tried to stop him having sexual intercourse with her, 'he acted as if this were a challenge and continued to do what he had been doing ... When it was over, I was crying and hurting. His only reply was, "You know you liked it"'.<sup>7</sup> It is as though, amidst the incessant clamour of such aggressive masculine sexuality, the woman's voice inevitably becomes lost, as her words and actions are re-contextualised and

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<sup>2</sup> Cited in Warshaw, 67-68.

<sup>3</sup> Woodhull, 172; Katharine K. Baker, "Asking What Before We Ask Why: Taxonomy, Etiology, and Rape", *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 989 (2003): 288-99; Bridges, 292, 305; Fortune, "Pastoral Responses", 95 Shapiro, 470; Scully and Marolla, "'Riding the Bull at Gilley's'", 112; Beneke, 8-9.

<sup>4</sup> Smart, 41; also Dianne Herman, 43; Ward, 26; Henderson, 156; Diana E.H. Russell, 257.

<sup>5</sup> Scully and Marolla, "'Riding the Bull at Gilley's'", 112. Likewise, David Lisak asserts that rape is 'a concrete acting out of culturally normative beliefs and images' (147). See also Fortune, "Pastoral Responses", 96; Smart, 27; Ward, 26; Henderson, 156; Diana E.H. Russell, 258; Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 211; Metzger, 405, 406; Bohmer, "Acquaintance Rape and the Law", 321; Kimmel, 274; Baker, 288-99; Scully, 82-83.

<sup>6</sup> Bohmer, "Acquaintance Rape and the Law", 321; Gavey, 19; Brownmiller, 385; Henderson, 141-2; Diana E.H. Russell, 258; Burt, "Rape Myths and Acquaintance Rape", 30; Dianne Herman, 43; Griffin, "Rape: The All-American Crime", 50; Laurie Bechhofer and Andrea Parrot, "What is Acquaintance Rape?", in Parrot and Bechhofer, 21; Martha R. Burt and Rochelle Semmel Albin, "Rape Myths, Rape Definitions, and Probability of Conviction", *Journal of Applied Psychology* 11 (1981): 213; McGregor, 202-18; Scully, 103-5.

<sup>7</sup> Vernon Weihe and Ann Richards, *Intimate Betrayal: Understanding and Responding to the Trauma of Acquaintance Rape* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1995), 1.



reinterpreted according to the gendered sexual stereotypes that are dominant within her community.<sup>8</sup> As Winifred Woodhull suggests, the sexual autonomy and sexual agency of women living within patriarchal societies are devalued to the extent that ‘men speak their desires for them’.<sup>9</sup>

Obviously, this cultural confusion of sexuality and sexual violence will, in turn, have a considerable influence upon how societies respond to and make sense of women’s narratives about their rape experience.<sup>10</sup> All too often, the brutality and destructiveness inherent to rape and the injustice underlying its subversion of women’s sexual and bodily integrity are overlooked by the institutions and individuals, who constitute the victim’s community.<sup>11</sup> The police and judiciary,<sup>12</sup> the media,<sup>13</sup> the medical professions,<sup>14</sup> not to mention lay members of the community,<sup>15</sup> habitually contextualise rape within the bounds of accepted sexuality, thereby failing to recognise that coercive acts of sexual aggression are occasions of unlawful assault, which brutalise women on a physical, emotional, and spiritual

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<sup>8</sup> Kimmel, 266; Smart, 31; Diana E.H. Russell, 258, 261; Shapiro, 470; Burt, “Rape Myths and Acquaintance Rape”, 30-31.

<sup>9</sup> Woodhull, 173.

<sup>10</sup> Henderson, 133.

<sup>11</sup> Cahill, 20. Colleen Ward has noted that this is particularly true in cases of intimate partner violence or date rape; in a situation where a man and woman have previously enjoyed consensual sexual relations, the woman’s rape is often seen less as a crime of violence than just another occasion of acceptable sexual intimacy (91; also 67, 74). Similar sentiments are expressed by Bridges, 305; Kevin D. McCaul *et al.*, “Understanding Attributions of Victim Blame for Rape: Sex, Violence, and Foreseeability”, *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 20 (1990): 4; Henderson, 132; Lebowitz and Roth, 370-71; Shapiro, 470; Catharine A. Mackinnon, “Sex and Violence”, in *Feminism Unmodified: Discourse on Life and Law* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 88.

<sup>12</sup> Sue Lees mentions a British judge who advised the jury in a rape trial, ‘As the gentlemen of the jury will understand, when a woman says “No” she doesn’t always mean “No”’. In “Judicial Rape”, *Women’s Studies International Forum* 16, no.1 (1993): 20. Similarly, Nicola Gavey quotes a New Zealand judge, who said during his summing up that ‘if every man stopped the first time a woman said “No”, the world would be a much less exciting place to live’, after which the jury took only 45 minutes to acquit the defendant of rape charges (23). See also Brownmiller, 365-74; Fairstein, 99; Madigan and Gamble, 71-81, 91-107; Smart, 36-37, 39; Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 95-209; Mary P. Koss, “Blame, Shame, and Community: Justice Responses to Violence Against Women”, *American Psychologist* 55 (2000): 1335; Helena Kennedy, *Eve Was Framed: Women and British Justice* (London: Vintage, 1993), 111-13.

<sup>13</sup> Nicola Gavey cites one newspaper columnist, who argued that ‘to talk about rape as a woman being forced to have sex against her will was a feminist confusion and an attempt to undermine seduction’ (64-5). As Sue Lees notes, within the media reporting of rape, ‘the woman’s voice, her standpoint and her story are only allowed within very defined boundaries. Her description of the experience of rape, her pain and her anguish are rarely considered relevant, are immaterial’ (“Media Reporting of Rape”, 121). See also Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 66-94; Brownmiller, 336-46; Alina Korn and Sivan Efrat, “The Coverage of Rape in the Israeli Popular Press”, *Violence Against Women* 10 (2004): 1056-75.

<sup>14</sup> Madigan and Gamble, 82-90; Ward, 57.

<sup>15</sup> Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 74-94; Brownmiller, 336-46; Katie Koestner, “The Perfect Rape Victim”, in *Just Sex: Students Rewrite the Rules on Sex, Violence, Activism, and Equality*, ed. Jodi Gold and Susan Villari (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), 30-38.

level.<sup>16</sup> As Campbell and Johnson note, within cultures where the boundary between sexuality and sexual aggression is so indistinct, ‘violence becomes sexy, and sexiness is not criminal’.<sup>17</sup> It is little wonder then that rape is one of the most underreported crimes; if women are going to be faced with the response from their community that rape is little more than a normative expression of sexual desire, who is going to take their testimony of suffering seriously?<sup>18</sup>

In reality, however, rape has no currency within the realm of acceptable sexuality; it is an act of hatred and violence, the crucial objective of which is to subdue and subordinate the victim, terrorising her, dominating her, and humiliating her.<sup>19</sup> As Madigan and Gamble note, rape drastically subverts the expression of sexuality, until it is ‘no longer a sacred sharing but hate and power expressed by violence and brutality’.<sup>20</sup> The personal testimonies of rape survivors, such as those cited at the beginning of the chapter, show all too clearly that sexual violence is anything but sexy and is a world apart from consensual and mutually desired sexual intercourse. Rather, it assaults women to the very core of their physical, psychological, and spiritual being, throwing into confusion both their relationship with the world around them and their very own sense of self.<sup>21</sup> They confront the threat of death directly and concretely; they experience raw terror in the realisation of their own powerlessness and vulnerability.<sup>22</sup> To deny the sheer horror and brutality implicit within the act of rape is to undermine radically the victim’s ordeal, minimise and silence the reality of her suffering, and deny her status as the wounded casualty of a truly terrible atrocity.<sup>23</sup>

Nevertheless, to call rape simply an act of brutality or aggression does not fully capture the full nature and horror of this crime. Nor does such a radical separation of violence and sexuality challenge or confront the power of the cultural

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<sup>16</sup> Henderson, 151; Brownmiller, 384; Griffin, “Rape: The All-American Crime”, 50.

<sup>17</sup> Campbell and Johnson, 257; also Jenkins and Dambrot, 875, 877, 890-91; McGregor, 12, 61-62.

<sup>18</sup> Diana E.H. Russell, 259.

<sup>19</sup> Judith Lewis Herman, 572; Fairstein, 13; Burt, “Rape Myths and Acquaintance Rape”, 29; Schwendinger and Schwendinger, “Rape Myths”, 20; Beneke, 162, 164; Groth, 2; McGregor, 132-34, 221-22, 225.

<sup>20</sup> Madigan and Gamble, 3.

<sup>21</sup> Fortune, “Pastoral Responses”, 99.

<sup>22</sup> Mary D. Pellauer, “A Theological Perspective on Sexual Assault”, in Pellauer, Chester, and Boyajian, 85.

<sup>23</sup> Ullman, 153; Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 93; Smart, 36. As Brownmiller asks, ‘Do women want to be raped? Do we crave humiliation, degradation and violation of our bodily integrity? Do we psychologically need to be seized, taken, ravished and ravaged?’ (313). Similar remarks are made by Carol V. Horos in *Rape* (New Canaan, CT: Tobey Publishing, 1974), 12.

construction of masculinity, which consistently normalises male sexual aggression.<sup>24</sup> To be sure, rape cannot simply be equated with consensual sexual behaviour. Yet, unlike any other form of violent offence, rape has an intrinsically sexualised basis, in that it is realized through specifically *sexual* acts.<sup>25</sup> Simply put, *sexual* violence is a *sexual* crime, which differentiates it from other forms of non-sexualised aggression. However, although rape as an embodied experience involves the sexuality of both the perpetrator and victim, unlike normative, consensual sexual intercourse it is not a *mutually entered upon* sexual act.<sup>26</sup> Thus, a victim of rape will not focalize the rape as an act of sexual intercourse in which she *participated*, but as a sexually located act, which has been *imposed* upon her, in order to commit an assault upon her sexual and bodily integrity.<sup>27</sup> Rape is therefore intrinsically different from consensual sexual intercourse in that its main *raison d'être* is not sexual gratification but a desire to harm; it is first and foremost an indisputable act of aggression and hatred, in which a man uses his penis as a weapon.<sup>28</sup> As Pamela Cooper-White explains, rape is 'an act of aggression and intimidation accomplished by sexual means ... the sexual expression of aggression, rather than as the aggressive expression of sexuality'.<sup>29</sup>

To summarise then, rape should always be recognised as a brutalising act of male violence; it *cannot* be confused with any form of tolerable sexual behaviour. Yet, such confusion *does* appear to predominate within contemporary patriarchal culture, where the undermining of women's sexual and bodily autonomy is all too often regarded as an acceptable and inevitable feature of gendered sexuality and gender relations. If we fail to challenge attitudes such as these and refuse to acknowledge the distinction between consensual sexuality and sexual violence, we effectively re-interpret the ordeal that rape survivors have had to endure, undermining and ignoring the violence, terror, and trauma intrinsic to these women's experience of

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<sup>24</sup> Henderson, 131.

<sup>25</sup> As Cahill explains, 'Rape, as a particularly sexual violation, is a bodily assault that particularly and blatantly invokes the sexuality of both the assailant and the victim' (197). See also Fairstein, 13-14; Woodhull, 171-72; Brison, 93.

<sup>26</sup> Cahill, 120, 199.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 139; Fairstein, 13-14; Baker, 298, n.25.

<sup>28</sup> Fortune, "Pastoral Responses", 99; also Cahill, 16, 27, 199; Smart, 44; Pellauer, "Theological Perspective", 91; Baker, 292; Scully and Marolla, "Rape and Vocabularies of Motive", 298; Woodhull, 171.

<sup>29</sup> Pamela Cooper-White, *The Cry of Tamar: Violence Against Women and the Church's Response* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 84. Likewise, Audre Lorde states that 'rape is not aggressive sexuality, it is sexualised aggression', in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Trumansburg, NY: Crossing, 1984), 120. See also Scully and Marolla, "Riding the Bull at Gilley's", 118; Groth, 13, 60; Leslie, 4.

rape, and thus effectively denying them a voice with which to relate the reality of their ordeal and the true extent of their suffering.<sup>30</sup>

### Sex or Sexual Violence? Denying Dinah's Rape in Genesis 34

Within the above discussion, we have highlighted the all too common proclivity, within contemporary patriarchal culture, to perceive coercive sexual intercourse, less as a brutal crime committed against a woman's bodily and sexual autonomy than as a normative outplaying of the sex role stereotypes that govern masculine and feminine sexuality. The question that we now ought therefore to ask is whether such a conceptualisation of rape is likewise reflected within the Genesis 34 narrative. That is, does the ancient author focalize Dinah's encounter with Shechem as a predominantly sexual event, or, does he indeed grant recognition to the violence and brutality inherent within this act committed against Dinah by the Hivite prince?

Well, when we turn to consider the representation of Dinah's rape in Gen. 34.2, it is striking to note that the narrator by no means wasted any words furnishing his readers with a detailed or comprehensive depiction of this episode. Taking up but one succinct verse, the event is portrayed in a terse, laconic style: Shechem, son of Hamor, the local ruler of the land, saw Dinah, seized her, had sexual intercourse with her, and thus violated her. There are no details provided pertaining either to events preceding this sexual assault or to the assault itself; indeed, in the Hebrew text, there are as many words spent clarifying Shechem's lineage (five) as there are devoted to the depiction of his sexual response on first encountering Dinah.<sup>31</sup> We are granted no access to this young prince's underlying motives for his actions here, nor is *any* time spent elucidating Dinah's reaction to being the object of such an apparently precipitous sexual attack.<sup>32</sup>

Nevertheless, over the centuries, the dominant exegetical traditions surrounding this verse have tended, in the main, to acknowledge that the sexual event, which took place when Shechem encountered Dinah in Gen. 34.2, was both violent and

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<sup>30</sup> Dragiewicz, 209; Smart, 44; Scully and Marolla, "Riding the Bull at Gilley's", 118.

<sup>31</sup> וירא אתה שכם בןחמור החוי נשיא הארץ ויקח אתה וישכב אתה ויענה

<sup>32</sup> Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible* (New York: Schocken Books, 2002), 181-82; Yael Shemesh, "Rape is Rape Is Rape: The Story of Dinah and Shechem (Genesis 34)", *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 119 (2007): 2-3.

coercive.<sup>33</sup> However, there are a number of scholars whose responses have been rather more ambivalent with regards their interpretation of the events depicted

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<sup>33</sup> Scholars who do read Gen. 34.2 as a depiction of Dinah's rape include Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 446; and "Biblical Poetics and Sexual Politics", 463-88; Susanne Scholz, *Rape Plots: A Feminist Cultural Study of Genesis 34* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002); and "Through Whose Eyes? A 'Right' Reading of Genesis 34", in *Genesis*, vol.1 of *A Feminist Companion to the Bible (2<sup>nd</sup> Series)*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 150-71; and "Was It Really Rape", 182-98; Noble, 173-203; Robin Parry, "Feminist Hermeneutics and Evangelical Concerns: The Rape of Dinah as a Case Study", *Tynedale Bulletin* 53 (2002): 1-28; and *Old Testament Story and Christian Ethics: The Rape of Dinah as a Case Study* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2004); Susan Niditch, "Genesis", in *The Women's Bible Commentary*, ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (London: SPCK, 1992), 23-24; Martin Kessler and Karel Deurloo, *A Commentary on Genesis: The Book of Beginnings* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2004), 175; Thistlethwaite, 69-70; F.C. Fensham, "Gen. XXIV and Mari", *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 4 (1975): 88; Carolyn S. Leeb, *Away from the Father's House: The Social Location of na'ar and na'arah in Ancient Israel* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 137; *Luther's Works: Lectures on Genesis*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), 6:193-94; James L. Kugel, *Traditions in the Bible: A Guide to the Bible As It Was at the Start of the Common Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 406; Alice A. Keefe, "Rapes of Women/ Wars of Men", *Semeia* 61 (1993):79-97; Sharon P. Jeanson, *The Women of Genesis: From Sarah to Potiphar's Wife* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 91-92, 138, n.14; J. Gerald Janzen, *Abraham and All the Families of the Earth: A Commentary on the Book of Genesis 12-50* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 136; Leon R. Kass, *The Beginning of Wisdom: Reading Genesis* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 480-82; and "Regarding Daughters and Sisters: The Rape of Dinah", *Commentary* 93, no.4 (1992): 29-38; John E. Hartley, *Genesis* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2000), 291; Jon L. Berquist, *Reclaiming Her Story: The Witness of Women in the Old Testament* (St Louis: Chalice Press, 1992), 61; Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis*, trans. Mark E. Biddle (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), 358; Gravett, 282-84; Naomi Graetz, "Dinah the Daughter", in *A Feminist Companion to Genesis*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 306-17; Dana Nolan Fewell and David M. Gunn, "Tipping the Balance: Sternberg's Reader and the Rape of Dinah", *Journal of Biblical Literature* 110 (1991): 193-211; and *Gender, Power, and Promise: The Subject of the Bible's First Story* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 81; Davies, 55-60; Yamada, 149-65; Robert Alter, *Genesis: Translation and Commentary* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996), 189; Stephen A. Geller, "The Sack of Shechem: The Use of Typology in Biblical Covenant Religion", *Prooftexts* 10 (1990): 1; John C.L. Gibson, *Genesis* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1982), 2:211; Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12-36: A Commentary*, trans. J.J. Scullion (London: SPCK, 1986), 538; Gila Ramras-Rauch, "Fathers and Daughters: Two Biblical Narratives", in Tollers and Maier, 161; Athalya Brenner, *The Intercourse of Knowledge: On Gendering Desire and Sexuality in the Hebrew Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 96, n.14; Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16-50* (Dallas: Word Books, 1994), 311; and *Story as Torah: Reading the Old Testament Ethically* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 110-19; Nahum M. Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 234; J.K. Salkin, "Dinah, The Torah's Forgotten Woman", *Judaism* 35 (1986): 284-89; Karen Armstrong, *In the Beginning: A New Reading of the Book of Genesis* (London: Harper Collins, 1997), 93; Laurence A. Turner, *Genesis* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 149; Sheres; Eugene F. Roop, *Genesis* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1987), 217; Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1972), 329, 331; Mishael Maswari Caspi, "The Story of the Rape of Dinah: The Narrator and the Reader", *Hebrew Studies* 26 (1985): 25-45; Leila Leah Bronner, *From Eve to Esther: Rabbinic Reconstructions of Biblical Women* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 118-21; Nehama Aschkenasy, *Eve's Journey: Feminine Images in Hebraic Literary Tradition* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1986), 125; and *Woman at the Window*, 45-59; D.W. Cotter, *Genesis* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003), 254, n.56; E.A. Speiser, *Genesis: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (New York: Doubleday, 1964), 264; Ilona N. Rashkow, *Taboo or not Taboo: Sexuality and Family in the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 146; and "Daughters and Fathers in Genesis ... Or, What is Wrong With This Picture?", in *A Feminist Companion to Exodus to Deuteronomy*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 27; and "Hebrew Bible Translation and the Fear of Judaization", *Sixteenth Century Journal* 21 (1990): 217-33; F. Rachel Magdalene, "Ancient Near Eastern Treaty-Curses and the Ultimate Texts of Terror: A Study

within this verse. Thus, some have described Shechem's encounter with Dinah as a 'seduction'<sup>34</sup> a 'liaison',<sup>35</sup> or an act of 'passion'<sup>36</sup>, thereby managing to imply that it ought to be focalised less as a brutal assault than a typical and normative display of sexual desire.<sup>37</sup> Thus, for example, John Gibson proposes, with regards Shechem's behaviour in v.2, that, 'like the squire's son in many a modern novel he *had his pleasure of [Dinah]*' [italics added].<sup>38</sup> In a similar vein, Michael Maher refers to the rape event as 'the unfortunate consequences of a young man's *amorous folly*' [italics added],<sup>39</sup> while Everett Fox talks about 'Shechem's *desire and love*', concluding that '*love once again leads to an unfortunate end*' [italics added].<sup>40</sup> Alternatively, using some rather impressive circumlocution, several interpreters simply refer to the event as an 'act',<sup>41</sup> an 'affair',<sup>42</sup> or even, rather confusingly, as both a 'rape' *and* a 'seduction'.<sup>43</sup> While some of these scholars do admit that Dinah's participation in this sexual act was indeed coerced, their interpretive readings of this text nevertheless seem particularly ambivalent with regards their acknowledgment of any clear distinction between sexual violence and acceptable sexuality. Indeed, by contextualising Shechem's treatment of Dinah within a specifically sexualised, if not romantic, framework, rather than as a criminal act of brutality, they would appear to be reflecting the myths described above, which regard sexual violence as little more than a natural and inevitable manifestation of

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of the Language of Divine Sexual Abuse in the Prophetic Corpus", in *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1995), 336, n.1; Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 200-224; Joy A. Schroeder, "The Rape of Dinah: Luther's Interpretation of a Biblical Narrative", *Sixteenth Century Journal* 28 (1997): 775-91; Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18-50* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 354; David Noel Freedman, "Dinah and Shechem Tamar and Amnon", *Austin Seminary Bulletin* 105 (1990): 51-63.

<sup>34</sup> Mary Douglas, *In the Wilderness: The Doctrine of Defilement in the Book of Numbers* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 177, 205; Calum M. Carmichael, *Women, Law and the Genesis Tradition* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1979), 46; and *Law and Narrative in the Bible: The Evidence of the Deuteronomic Laws and the Decalogue* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 219; Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 274.

<sup>35</sup> Brueggemann, 275.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 276; Carmichael, *Women, Law and the Genesis Tradition*, 36.

<sup>37</sup> Mary Anna Bader, *Sexual Violation in the Hebrew Bible: A Multi-Methodological Study of Genesis 34 and 2 Samuel 13* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 10.

<sup>38</sup> Gibson, 213-14.

<sup>39</sup> Michael Maher, *Genesis* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1982), 196.

<sup>40</sup> Everett Fox, *In the Beginning: A New English Rendition of the Book of Genesis* (New York: Schocken Books, 1983), 139.

<sup>41</sup> Brueggemann, 276.

<sup>42</sup> Helena Zlotnik, *Dinah's Daughters: Gender and Judaism from the Hebrew Bible to Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 38.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 35-40. Fretheim, rather perplexingly, describes Shechem as Dinah's 'rapist and lover', seemingly having no qualms about juxtaposing two such diametrically opposed concepts. See "The Book of Genesis: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections", in *The New Interpreter's Bible: General Articles and Introduction, Commentary, and Reflection for Each Book of the Bible, including the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 1:578.

the masculine search for sexual gratification or desire. That is, while they may not *deny* the aggressive nature of Shechem's sexual behaviour, these scholarly interpretations of this behaviour appear, nevertheless, to go some way towards either excusing it, minimising its inherent wrongfulness, or simply reinterpreting it, thereby undermining the misogyny, violence, and contempt underlying any act of rape, including the one depicted within this biblical text.

However, in addition to these readings, the reality of Dinah's rape has faced, more recently, a far more radical challenge within biblical interpretation by scholars who have questioned the very notion that Dinah *was* in fact the victim of a sexual assault. By appealing to the textual evidence, they propose that, from the brief description afforded us by this ancient author in v.2, the sexual intercourse that occurred between Shechem and Dinah was most likely both consensual and mutually desired.<sup>44</sup> That is, Shechem did not violently seize Dinah and rape her; he captivated her and made love to her. Thus, a tale of violence and violation becomes transformed into one of sexuality and seduction, as boy meets girl and, in a flurry of desire, they fall into each other's arms.

Such an interpretation of Gen. 34.2 certainly warrants further investigation, not least because my discussion to date and throughout this work is strongly grounded upon the presumption that Shechem *did indeed* rape Dinah. Furthermore, I am concerned that such a reading may only serve to perpetuate the all-too common contemporary denial of the violence and brutality underlying acts of coercive sexual intercourse, which I considered at the beginning of this chapter. If we read this event as simply a

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<sup>44</sup> As Nicolas Wyatt suggests, 'there is no justification as far as the vocabulary is concerned for the conclusion that the encounter is a violent one'. In "The Story of Dinah and Shechem", *Ugarit-Forschungen* 22 (1990): 436. Other scholars who question whether Dinah was indeed raped by Shechem in Gen. 34.2 include Lyn M. Bechtel, "What If Dinah Is Not Raped? (Genesis 34)", *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 64 (1994): 19-36; and "Dinah", in *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in The Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament*, ed. Carol Meyers (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 69-70; Lipka, 185-89; Ellen van Wolde, "Does 'innâ Denote Rape? A Semantic Analysis of a Controversial Word", *Vetus Testamentum* 52 (2002): 543-44; and "Love and Hatred in Multiracial Society: The Dinah and Shechem Story in Genesis 34 in the Context of Genesis 28-35", in *Reading from Right to Left: Essays on the Hebrew Bible in Honour of David J.A. Clines*, ed. J. Cheryl Exum and H.G.M. Williamson (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 435-49; Joseph Fleishman, "Why Did Simeon and Levi Rebuke Their Father in Genesis 34.31?" *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 26 (2000): 102-4; Alice Ogden Bellis, *Helpmates, Harlots, Heroes: Women's Stories in the Hebrew Bible* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1994), 89-90; Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 181-83; and "Law and Philosophy: The Case of Sex in the Bible", *Semeia* 45 (1989): 95; and "Virginity in the Bible", in *Gender and Law in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, ed. Victor H. Matthews, Bernard M. Levinson, and Tikva Frymer-Kensky (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 87; and *In the Wake of the Goddesses: Women, Culture, and the Biblical Transformation of Pagan Myth* (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1992), 194; Bader, 28; Van Seters, 242-43.

consensual affair between two lovers, we run the risk of failing to acknowledge the inherent violence, misogyny, and abusiveness of Dinah's experience, thereby becoming complicit in her narrative silencing as a victim of sexual assault. In order to explore this matter further then, let us pause to consider in more detail the depiction of the sexual encounter in Gen. 34.2. In particular, I will attempt to determine whether the linguistic choices made by the narrator in this particularly succinct passage specifically reflect the coercive and aggressive nature of this encounter, or whether he did indeed treat the event as more of a romantic tryst than a violent assault. My primary aim here is therefore to ensure that, if an act of sexual violence *did* occur within this narrative, it is recognised as such; by this means, I am seeking to make certain that the cruelty, misogyny, and sheer horror of Dinah's experience is neither silenced nor denied.

### ***Sexual Assault or Seduction? Taking a Closer Look at v.2***

As mentioned above, Dinah's sexual encounter with Shechem is depicted by the narrator in a decidedly succinct fashion, using only three verbs arranged in a tripartite *waw* consecutive chain (ויקח אֶתָּהּ וישָׁכַב אֶתָּהּ ויעֲנֶה). It is primarily the semantic significance of the three verbs לָקַח, שָׁכַב, and עָנָה, upon which scholars have based their claims that Dinah was not the victim of a sexual assault. In the following section, I will therefore test the veracity of these assertions, by taking a closer look at the possible meanings that each of these verbal forms may convey, focusing in particular on their potential connotations within contexts of both consensual and coercive sexual behaviour. With regards the syntactic and stylistic presentation of this sexual act, I will also consider the significance of both the narrator's utilisation of a tripartite consecutive verbal chain to depict the sexual encounter, and Dinah's precipitate shift from being an independently acting subject in v.1 to her utter passivity in v.2. I hope that by taking a more in-depth look at these linguistic and stylistic features, I will be able to determine more accurately whether the author's concise remarks here in v.2 were intended to denote an act of sexual violence *or* an amorous and mutually desired sexual tryst.



## *The Semantic Significance of שָׁכַב in Biblical Hebrew*

In Gen. 34.2, the act of sexual intercourse that occurred between Dinah and Shechem is represented by the verb שָׁכַב. In its most basic sense, this verb means ‘to lie down’, either to rest or sleep,<sup>45</sup> or, when used metaphorically, to lie down in death.<sup>46</sup> However, one of its more frequent idiomatic uses is to denote sexual behaviour, where it tends to be translated ‘to lie with’ or ‘to sleep with’.<sup>47</sup> In particular, it appears to be employed primarily to describe acts of sexual intercourse that are in some sense illicit.<sup>48</sup> Thus, שָׁכַב is the verb of choice for biblical descriptions of incestuous sexual relationships,<sup>49</sup> adultery,<sup>50</sup> bestiality,<sup>51</sup> homosexuality,<sup>52</sup> sexual intercourse with a menstruant,<sup>53</sup> sexual intercourse with a prostitute,<sup>54</sup> and premarital sexual relations between a man and an unmarried, or unbetrothed, woman.<sup>55</sup> Of particular interest here however, is whether שָׁכַב may be utilised within biblical Hebrew to connote an *explicitly* aggressive and coercive sexual act. More specifically, I wish to establish whether the occurrence of this verb within the particular contextual environment of Gen. 34.2 enables the reader to determine that Shechem did indeed commit an act of sexual violence against Dinah.

Within the biblical material, שָׁכַב is certainly used on several occasions to depict sexual intercourse that is unequivocally non-consensual and that ought therefore to

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<sup>45</sup> For example, Gen. 19.4; Lev. 14.47; 2 Sam. 13.5; Ps. 3.5; Ruth 3.7, 8, 14, etc.

<sup>46</sup> For example, 1 Kgs 11.21, 43; 14.20; 22.40, etc.

<sup>47</sup> For example, Gen. 19.32, 33, 34, 35; 30.15, 16; Exod. 22.16; Lev. 15.18, 24; 1 Sam. 2.22; 2 Sam. 12.11; Ezek. 23.6, etc. Indeed, שָׁכַב is used within the Hebrew Bible to denote sexual intercourse in just over one quarter (54 out of 207) of its occurrences. See W.C. Williams, “שָׁכַב”, in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997), 4:101; L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner, and J.J. Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, trans. M.E.J. Richardson (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 4:1487; Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, With an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993), 1011-12.

<sup>48</sup> This verb is used fifty-four times in the Hebrew biblical texts to denote sexual intercourse. Of these fifty-four occurrences, only four refer to a sexual relationship that is not prohibited within the priestly and Deuteronomic legal codes. Thus, in Gen. 30.15, 16, 2 Sam. 11.11, and 12.24, שָׁכַב is used to denote legitimate sexual intercourse between a husband and wife. In Lev. 15.18, which is part of the priestly purity legislation dealing with the ritual impurity of genital emissions, שָׁכַב appears to be utilised to denote sexual intercourse in general, which, according to the priestly writers of this purity legislation, always causes a temporary ritual defilement for both the man and woman.

<sup>49</sup> Gen. 19.32, 33, 34, 35; 35.22; Lev. 20.11, 12, 20; Deut. 27.20, 22, 23.

<sup>50</sup> Gen. 26.10; 39.7, 10, 12, 14; Lev. 19.20; Num. 5.13, 19; Deut. 22.22-23; 28.30; 2 Sam. 11.4; 12.11; Jer. 3.2; Ezek. 23.8.

<sup>51</sup> Exod. 22.18; Deut. 27.21.

<sup>52</sup> Lev. 18.22; 20.13.

<sup>53</sup> Lev. 20.18; c.f. 18.19.

<sup>54</sup> 1 Sam. 2.22.

<sup>55</sup> Exod. 22.15; Lev. 19.20; 2 Sam. 13.11.

be classified as an act of rape.<sup>56</sup> Thus for example, the law of Deut. 22.25-7 describes the hypothetical case of a man who comes upon a betrothed woman<sup>57</sup> in the countryside, seizes her (והחזיק-בה), and ‘lies with’ her (ושכב עמה). The aggressive and coercive nature of this sexual encounter is made plain both from the inclusion of a verb of seizure (חזק) in v.25 and in light of the events depicted in vv.26-7. Here we are told that, after being forcefully restrained, the woman would have cried out for help, but, being in the rural setting of the open countryside, no one could hear her. Clearly then, there is no doubt in the minds of the lawmakers that the woman’s participation in this act of sexual intercourse was utterly coerced. Likewise, vv.28-9 of this law code cites the case of a man who comes upon an unbetrothed virgin, seizes her (ותפש), and ‘lies with’ her (ושכב עמה). Similar to the inclusion of חזק in v.25, the verb תפש (‘to capture, seize, lay hold of’) strongly suggests that the sexual intercourse between the pair was forcible and non-consensual, the verb of seizure informing the reader that the woman did not enter into this sexual partnership willingly.<sup>58</sup> Outwith the legal material, שכב is also utilised within 2 Sam. 13.11, 14 to denote a sexual act that is unequivocally violent. In v.11, we read that Amnon, son of David seizes his sister Tamar, whom he has sickened himself lusting after, and demands that she ‘lie with’ him (שכבי עמי). Tamar refuses, and, despite her lengthy protestations in vv.12-13,<sup>59</sup> is then overpowered by Amnon (ויחזק ממנה), who ‘forces her down’ (ויענה) and ‘lies with

<sup>56</sup> The verb שכב also appears in four other texts (Deut. 28.30; Isa. 13.16; Jer. 3.2; Zech. 14.2), all of which denote acts of unlawful or aggressive sexual impropriety, but in these cases, it is the *Qere* tradition, which stands alongside the *Ketib* reading of שגל (‘to sleep with, ravish, rape, violate’). This verbal form is generally understood to be a rather shocking and coarse expression, guaranteed to catch the attention of the reader; Gravett suggests that the contemporary vernacular word “fuck” would be a suitable translation, connoting as it does a sense of both aggressive and illicit sexuality (289-90). It is likely that the *Qere* tradition was a result of the Masoretic editors finding שגל too obscene; however, it is interesting that they chose שכב on each occasion to ‘replace’ it. See Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 993; Koehler, Baumgartner, and Stamm, (1999), 4:1415; William C. Williams, “שגל”, in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997), 4:45; Edward Ullendorff, *The Bawdy Bible*, (Oxford: Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies, 1978), 444; Gravett, 289-90.

<sup>57</sup> A betrothed woman (מאורשה) was essentially a married virgin; her husband had paid a bride price to her father, thus rendering the woman as his wife under the law, but the marriage had not yet been consummated. Though she would probably still be living in the home of her father, she was legally recognised as the sexual property of her husband; sexual intercourse with a betrothed woman was therefore, under the Deuteronomic laws of Deut. 22.13-29, treated as adultery. See Robin Wakely, “אורש”, in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997), 1:526-27; Lipka, 80.

<sup>58</sup> Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 1074. For further discussion of the meaning of תפש, with regards its function as a verb of seizure, see below.

<sup>59</sup> ‘But [Tamar] said to [Amnon], “No, my brother, do not abuse me! For such a thing is not done in Israel! Do not commit this serious folly! And as for me, where will I carry my shame? And as for you, you will be as one of the fools of Israel. And now, please speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from you”’.

her' (וַיִּשְׁכַּב אִתָּהּ). Again, given both Tamar's unambiguous refusal to accede to Amnon's sexual demands and his subsequent use of force in order to satiate his desire, it is very clear that, within this text, שָׁכַב once again represents an act of *coercive* sexual intercourse.<sup>60</sup>

Despite these examples, however, a quick survey of other biblical texts where שָׁכַב is employed within a sexual context will leave us in no doubt that the verb שָׁכַב does *not* exclusively carry an inherent sense of sexual aggression. As mentioned earlier, it occurs extensively throughout the biblical corpus to connote sexual intercourse, the vast majority of which is not depicted, either explicitly or implicitly, as being forcible or coercive.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, in Deut. 22.23-4, שָׁכַב is employed to describe a sexual event that is unambiguously consensual. This law stresses that, if a man comes upon a betrothed woman in the city and 'lies with her' (וַיִּשְׁכַּב עִמָּהּ), the woman is assumed to have been fully complicit in an unlawful and adulterous sexual union, and is thereby liable to face the death penalty, along with her sexual 'partner'. Had she been raped, the lawmakers reason, she would have cried for help and someone would have heard her in such a busy, well-populated urban environment;

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<sup>60</sup> Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (London: SCM Press, 1984), 46; Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1989), 265; J.P. Fokkelmann, *King David*, vol.1 of *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1981), 106; Charles Conroy, *Absalom Absalom! Narrative and Language in 2 Sam. 13-20* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978), 33.

<sup>61</sup> There is one other text in the Hebrew Bible, which utilise שָׁכַב to depict an act of sexual intercourse that, although not explicitly violent in nature, may, according to modern definition, be deemed as coercive, and therefore can be read as rape. In 2 Sam. 11.4, we read that David 'lies with' Bathsheba, after summoning her to the royal palace. As is now recognised, an act of rape may still be said to occur in such circumstances where, although force or violence is not used, the woman is unable to withhold her consent freely, owing to the marked disparity in social status or power between herself and her rapist. In the words of F. Rachel Magdalene, 'the fact of consent is often a false assertion when the power differential between the two sexes is great' (337, n.1). David may not have used physical force to subdue Bathsheba; however, it is unlikely that any woman outwith the royal household, who was called before the king of Israel to provide a sexual service would have felt able to reject his advances without fear of recrimination. Therefore, because Bathsheba's ability to withhold her consent was compromised, it is appropriate to read this depiction of a royal affair as a case of rape. Nevertheless, I have not included this text in my discussion because I wish to focus here only on texts where שָׁכַב is utilised by the biblical writer to depict episodes of sexual intercourse that he recognised as being *unambiguously* coercive, so that I may evaluate the possibility that in Gen. 34.2, this verb likewise denotes an act of sexual intercourse that is non-consensual. For further discussion of Bathsheba's characterisation as a victim of sexual violence, see Exum, *Fragmented Women*, 172-6; Bellis, 149; Fokkelmann, *King David*, 52-3; Gale Yee, "Fraught With Background: Literary Ambiguity in II Samuel 11", *Interpretation* 42 (1988): 240-53. Ellen Rooney provides an enlightening discussion regarding the recognition of rape in cases where there is a marked differential between the social status of rapist and victim, focussing on Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, in "'A Little More than Persuading': Tess and the Subject of Sexual Violence", in Higgins and Silver, 87-114.

as no one *did* hear her, she clearly could not have cried out in the first place and therefore had not in fact been raped.<sup>62</sup>

Nevertheless, a number of scholars still propose that within Gen. 34.2, the verb שָׁכַב may indeed be understood to convey a specifically non-consensual and aggressive act of sexual intercourse. In essence, two main arguments are proposed to support this theory: the relevance of the direct object marker אֶת־הָ, which directly follows שָׁכַב, and the semantic significance of the verb לָקַח, which immediately precedes this phrase. The implications of these will now be discussed in detail below.

a) The significance of וַיִּשְׁכַּב אֶת־הָ in Gen. 34.2

In the Masoretic Text of Gen. 34.2, שָׁכַב appears, at first glance, to be treated as a transitive verbal form, in that it is followed by the direct object אֶת־הָ, which, according to the pointing, represents the object marker אֶת with the 3f.s. pronominal suffix. This is somewhat unusual, in that this verb is normally intransitive when used to denote sexual intercourse, and therefore tends to be followed by the prepositions עִם or אִתָּהּ ('with'), which immediately precede its indirect object.<sup>63</sup> With the Masoretic vocalisation in Gen.34.2 however, Dinah appears to be introduced as the *direct* object of the sexual act, the phrase וַיִּשְׁכַּב אֶת־הָ therefore suggesting a literal translation, 'and he laid her'. This has led a number of biblical interpreters to propose that this atypical syntactical presentation is a conscious attempt by the narrator to convey the particularly violent and coercive nature of the sexual intercourse denoted by the verb שָׁכַב. Thus, according to Scholz, the phrase emphasises that 'Shechem acted without regard for Dinah. He is the subject of the

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<sup>62</sup> The flawed logic of making a woman's cries the definitive criterion for delineating between consensual and coercive sexual behaviour ought to be obvious: just because a woman does not call for help during her rape does not mean that her assault never took place. There are many practical and psychological reasons why a woman may remain silent during her violation – the threat or use of force by the rapist, terror, shock, and disbelief, to name but few (see Brownmiller, 358-59). Women who are forced to confront the horror of rape simply want to survive what they rightly perceive to be a potentially life-threatening event; as one survivor noted, 'The choice between dying and being f\*\*\*\*d is no choice' (Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 15). It is therefore possible that the biblical women who claimed to have been raped in the city and who were subsequently stoned to death for their adulterous 'crime' may *well* have been the victims of a sexual violation. However, because they failed to conform to the lawmakers' erroneous assumptions about sexual violence, they had to pay for this patriarchal ignorance with their lives. While Lipka is correct to suggest that the law in vv.25-27 (discussed above) 'gives the woman the benefit of the doubt' with regard her innocence (91), it is interesting that she makes no comment about the injustice inherent in vv.23-24, where the woman is accorded no such benefit, but is simply disbelieved on principle. For further comments on this verse, see Shemesh, 5-6.

<sup>63</sup> Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 1012.

verb, and she is the object. Dinah does not consent. No doubt, “Shechem laid her”<sup>64</sup>. In a similar vein, Paul Noble also suggests that *וַיִּשְׁכַּב אִתָּהּ* may have been used deliberately by the author of Gen. 34.2 to convey the brutal nature of the sexual encounter: ‘Translating this phrase by “and he raped her,” with “rape” carrying significant overtones of disapproval, would probably give the right sense’.<sup>65</sup> Cotter, meanwhile, describes this particular grammatical construction as ‘a sort of coarse and vulgar Hebrew used for instances of improper or brutal sexual encounter’.<sup>66</sup>

Such a reading is furthermore lent weight by the fact that this same construction, *וַיִּשְׁכַּב אִתָּהּ*, occurs in 2 Sam. 13.14, to depict an act of sexual intercourse, which, as discussed above, is unequivocally forceful and coercive. Thus, Rashkow proposes that ‘since Tamar refuses to be lain *with*, she is *laid*’ [original italics],<sup>67</sup> while Fokkelman suggests that *וַיִּשְׁכַּב אִתָּהּ* portrays Tamar as the ‘objectivised, depersonalised victim’; she is no longer a person in Amnon’s eyes, but an object with which he can gratify his transitory and uncontrolled lust.<sup>68</sup> Similarly, Tribble suggests that the apparently transitive nature of the verb *שָׁכַב* is deliberately chosen by the narrator here ‘to stress [Amnon’s] brutality ... the direct object *her* underscores cruelty beyond the expected’.<sup>69</sup>

Other biblical interpreters are, however, more reticent about accepting the veracity of these readings, not least of all because they are based solely upon the system of Masoretic pointing, which occurred at a date much later than when this text was originally composed. Thus, for example, Lyn Bechtel and Nick Wyatt both question whether the ancient author actually intended the word *אִתָּהּ* to represent the accusative marker with the 3f.s. pronominal suffix (*אִתָּהּ*), or whether he wished instead to connote *אִתָּהּ* (preposition *אִתָּהּ* + 3f.s. suffix), giving the perhaps less

<sup>64</sup> Scholz, “Through Whose Eyes”, 166; and *Rape Plots*, 136-37. Similar sentiments are expressed by Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 446; Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 306, 311; and *Story as Torah*, 112, n.8; Alter, 189; Caspi, 32; Hamilton, 354.

<sup>65</sup> Noble, 178.

<sup>66</sup> Cotter, 254. Marvin H. Pope has likewise suggested that when *שָׁכַב* appears to be used as a transitive verb with a direct object, in texts such as Gen. 34.2 and 2 Sam. 13.14, it may convey the same meaning as the naturally transitive verb *שָׁגַל*, which, as noted above, is a rather obscene Hebrew term for unlawful and aggressive sexual intercourse. See “Bible, Euphemism and Dysphemism”, in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:722.

<sup>67</sup> Rashkow, *Taboo*, 145.

<sup>68</sup> Fokkelman, *King David*, 105.

<sup>69</sup> Tribble, *Texts of Terror*, 46. Other scholars to consider this vocalisation a deliberate grammatical construction representing forcible, illegitimate intercourse include Bar-Efrat, 265; Pamela Tamarkin Reis, “Cupidity and Stupidity: Woman’s Agency and the ‘Rape’ of Tamar”, in *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 25 (1997): 52; Conroy, 32; Rashkow, “Hebrew Bible Translation”, 226; Lipka, 184; Fokkelman, *King David*, 105, n.20;

pejorative reading, ‘he lay *with* her’.<sup>70</sup> They therefore suggest that the vocalisation of וישכב אִתָּהּ as a transitive verbal form to denote sexual assault in both Gen. 34.2 and 2 Sam. 13.14 is in all likelihood the product of later interpretative traditions surrounding these biblical texts, rather than a deliberate grammatical construction used by the author to depict an act of sexual violence.<sup>71</sup> While the verb שכב may, within texts, such as Deut. 22.25-7, 28-9, and 2 Sam. 13.14, undoubtedly denote sexual behaviour of a specifically forceful and coercive nature, this particular nuance of meaning is, they argue, made explicit only by other contextual considerations, such as the use of a verb of seizure to clarify that the woman was not a consenting partner. In the case of Gen. 34.2, such a context is, according to Wyatt, markedly absent.<sup>72</sup>

These objections certainly ought to be taken seriously, not least because the reading, ‘he lay *with* her (וְיִשְׁכַּב אִתָּהּ)’ is represented within all the ancient versions of Gen. 34.2, with the exception of Targum Onqelos.<sup>73</sup> Such text-critical evidence strongly suggests that, in Gen. 34.2, וישכב אִתָּהּ was originally read as וְיִשְׁכַּב אִתָּהּ, a phrase which does not *inherently* connote any sense of violent or non-consensual sexual activity. Furthermore, the theory that the syntactic construction שכב אִתָּהּ is utilised specifically to denote coercive sexual behaviour is completely subverted when one considers the other biblical passages that employ it. Num. 5.11-31, for example, deals with the case of a man who seeks to determine whether his wife is guilty of adultery. In vv.13, 19, the particle אִתָּהּ, which follows שכב, is pointed as the suffixed

<sup>70</sup> Bechtel, “Dinah”, 70; and “What If Dinah Is Not Raped”, 23; Wyatt, 435.

<sup>71</sup> Wyatt, 435; Bechtel, “What If Dinah Is Not Raped”, 23; also see L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner, and J.J. Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, trans. M.E.J. Richardson (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 4:1487; S.R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Samuel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), 230.

<sup>72</sup> Wyatt, 435. Likewise, Fleishman reads וישכב אִתָּהּ here as denoting Shechem’s consummation of his marriage to Dinah; in his opinion, there is nothing intrinsically aggressive about the sexual act (103).

<sup>73</sup> The Aramaic Targum Onqelos translates אִתָּהּ in Gen. 34.2 in keeping with the Masoretic Text as the accusative marker plus suffix (וְיִשְׁכַּב אִתָּהּ), ‘he laid her’. However, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan renders all forms of the verb שכב + suffixed אִתָּהּ as שכב עם, thereby suggesting that the verb was read as an intransitive form. Furthermore, the Septuagint converts וישכב אִתָּהּ in both Gen. 34.2 and 2 Sam 13.14 into ἐκοιμήθη μετ’ αὐτῆς – ‘he lay *with* her’ – the latter signifying that, even in contexts, which unquestionably depict scenes of a sexually violent nature, the use of שכב as a transitive verb to convey such a meaning was not generally acknowledged at the time the Greek translator was working on these texts. Likewise, the *Biblia Sacra Vulgata* translates וישכב אִתָּהּ as *et dormivit cum illa*, which can also be rendered ‘he lay *with* her’. Westermann therefore suggests pointing וישכב אִתָּהּ in Gen. 34.2 as וְיִשְׁכַּב אִתָּהּ, in line with the Septuagint (*Genesis 12-36*, 534). See also Alexander Sperber, *The Pentateuch According to Targum Onkelos*, vol.1 of *The Bible in Aramaic Based on Old Manuscripts and Printed Texts* (Leiden: Brill, 1959), 56; John William Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Genesis* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 558; Harry M. Orlinsky, “The Hebrew Root ŠKB”, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 63 (1944): 26-31.

object marker (אָהָה in v.13; אָהָה in v.19), despite the fact that the woman's consent to this illicit sexual encounter is assumed throughout the passage. Similarly, in Lev. 15.18, 24 and Ezek. 23.8, שָׁכַב + suffixed object marker is likewise used to denote sexual relationships that are neither aggressive nor coercive.<sup>74</sup> Lev. 15.24 describes the ritually and morally defiling act of consensual sexual intercourse with a menstruating woman (יִשְׁכַּב אִישׁ אִתָּהּ), while in Ezek 23.8, we read about the adulterous, though consensual fornications of YHWH's metaphorical wife Oholah with her Egyptian lovers (אִתָּהּ שָׁכַבוּ). Finally, in Lev. 15.18, the construction אִתָּהּ יִשְׁכַּב אִישׁ appears to connote the act of sexual intercourse in general, therefore it obviously cannot convey any limited sense of coercive or forcible sexual assault. These texts therefore confirm that, even when employed as an apparently transitive verbal form, שָׁכַב does not necessarily denote an act of sexual violence.

Furthermore, if the syntactical form שָׁכַב + object marker was indeed the standard means of describing non-consensual sexual intercourse within biblical Hebrew, it seems incongruous that it was not utilised in Deut. 22.25, 28, where there is an undeniable suggestion of sexual violence.<sup>75</sup> Instead, the suffixed preposition עִם follows שָׁכַב (וּשְׁכַב עִמָּה), indicating once again that there can be no definite correlation between the presentation of שָׁכַב as a transitive verb and its denotation of sexual aggression.<sup>76</sup> Biblical evidence would therefore appear to suggest that the particle used to designate the object of שָׁכַב is grammatically irrelevant, with regards any attempt to determine the consensual/coercive nature of the sexual act in question.<sup>77</sup> Moreover, Orlinsky has proposed that the presence of an object marker alongside שָׁכַב does not even necessarily render it a transitive verbal form; as he notes, the use of the particle אִתָּהּ pointed as the object marker to represent the meaning 'with' is attested elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>78</sup> Thus, the phrase אִתָּהּ יִשְׁכַּב

<sup>74</sup> Lipka, 187.

<sup>75</sup> Bechtel, "What If Dinah Is Not Raped", 23, n.8.

<sup>76</sup> Williams, "שָׁכַב", 102; Parry, *Old Testament Story*, 139, n.60; Lipka, 187; Orlinsky, 20-21.

<sup>77</sup> Orlinsky, 24; Parry, *Old Testament Story*, 139; Bader, 20. Orlinsky suggests that the pattern of usage for אִתָּהּ שָׁכַב and עִם שָׁכַב is perhaps influenced, less by the licit/illicit or consensual/coercive nature of the sexual intercourse denoted by these terms, than by the biblical text in which they are found. Thus, the priestly material shows a preference for אִתָּהּ שָׁכַב (i.e. Leviticus, Numbers, Ezekiel), while the Deuteronomist favours עִם שָׁכַב (21-22). With regards Genesis, Exodus and the books of Samuel, Orlinsky confesses that the multi-stranded interweaving of sources within these texts do not permit him to theorize as to the pattern of usage of these two grammatical constructions (22).

<sup>78</sup> Orlinsky, 26, n.14, 28; also Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 85; Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 931; P. Kyle McCarter, *II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1984), 317. The pointing of the particle אִתָּהּ as an object marker, but with the meaning 'with' can be seen, for example, in Josh. 10.25; 14.12; 2 Sam. 24.24, and repeatedly (though not exclusively) throughout the texts of 1 Kgs 20-2 Kgs 8, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah.

אָתָהּ in Gen. 34.2 and 2 Sam. 13.14 may not even be a Masoretic tradition but rather a more ancient grammatical construction, which retains the intransitive nature of the verb שָׁכַב and which, furthermore, carries no inherent connotations of sexual violence or coercion.<sup>79</sup>

Thus, to conclude, it would appear that the particular use of the phrase וַיִּשְׁכַּב אִתָּהּ in Gen. 34.2 sheds little or no light upon the precise nature of Shechem and Dinah's sexual experience. While this syntactic construction is likewise utilised in 2 Sam. 13.14 to connote unequivocal acts of sexual violence, it is just as likely to occur in contexts where the *consensual* nature of the sexual intercourse in question is left in no doubt by the text's author. We can therefore only deduce that the presence of וַיִּשְׁכַּב אִתָּהּ in Gen. 34.2 is, in itself, insufficient to either confirm or deny the reality of Dinah's rape.

#### b) The significance of the verb לָקַח in Gen. 34.2

The conclusions reached above regarding שָׁכַב אִתָּהּ inevitably leave us with the question; is there anything else to suggest that Gen. 34.2 presents a contextual environment, in which the verb שָׁכַב may be read as an act of rape? As mentioned earlier, several scholars have demurred, claiming that there is nothing intrinsic to the language of this verse, which could justify such an interpretation.<sup>80</sup>

However, an important feature to bear in mind, as regards the usage of שָׁכַב in this verse, is that it is directly preceded by the verb לָקַח. From the discussion above, it was noted that, when שָׁכַב is utilised in a context that denotes coercive and aggressive sexual intercourse (Deut. 22.25, 28; 2 Sam. 13.14), the woman who is the object of this action is said to be seized or forcibly grasped prior to the sexual act occurring. Thus it would appear that, by preceding שָׁכַב with a verb of seizure, such as חָזַק or תָּפַשׁ, the ancient writers conveyed the coercive and aggressive nature of an act of sexual intercourse, signalling to the reader that the woman was not entering into this sexual encounter willingly. Rather, she was taken hold of by her assailant, controlled by his physical strength, and compelled through forceful means to be the object of his sexual attention.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Orlinsky, 23-25, 28.

<sup>80</sup> Wyatt, 435; Bechtel, "What If Dinah Is Not Raped", 28; Lipka, 187-88.

<sup>81</sup> In Jdg. 19.25, the sexual assault of the Levite's concubine is also initiated by her forceful seizure, only in this case, it is her own husband who 'seizes' her (ויחזק האישה בפילגשו) and sends her out to face



This stylistic commonality amongst biblical texts depicting sexual violence has led several scholars to thus surmise that in Gen. 34.2, the verb לקח, which immediately precedes שכב, may likewise carry nuances of forceful seizure, thereby confirming that Dinah's sexual experience was indeed coerced. Thus, according to Gravett, the use of לקח here in v.2 'conveys violence on the part of Shechem'.<sup>82</sup> Similarly, Gerhard von Rad likewise translates this phrase as 'he seized her',<sup>83</sup> while Gunkel translates ויקח אהה as 'he kidnapped, abducted her'.<sup>84</sup> In order to test the veracity of these readings put forward by Gravett, von Rad, and Gunkel, among others, it will be helpful then to review the semantic range of the verbal root לקח within the Hebrew biblical corpus; hopefully, this will enable us to determine whether, in Gen. 34.2, it is employed as a verb of seizure.

The verb לקח is typically used within biblical Hebrew to convey the meaning, 'to take', 'to appropriate (something)' for oneself or another, 'to take possession of', 'to carry off', 'to choose', or 'to receive'.<sup>85</sup> In this general usage, it therefore does not necessarily convey any inherent sense of force or violence. It can represent the legitimate taking or acquiring of something or someone that is at one's disposal, without any implication that aggressive means were utilised.<sup>86</sup> Within this contextual locale of non-aggressive acquisition, one very common treatment of the verb לקח is its denotation of the act of 'taking' a wife in marriage. Indeed, this specific use of לקח accounts for around a quarter of the verb's occurrences in the book of Genesis.<sup>87</sup> Outwith Genesis, לקח likewise conveys the sense of 'to take as a

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the mob of Benjaminites, who then rape and abuse her the night long. Nevertheless, the use of physical control to override this woman's own wishes leaves in no doubt the coercive and abusive nature of this horrific act of sexual violence.

<sup>82</sup> Gravett, 282.

<sup>83</sup> von Rad, *Genesis*, 329.

<sup>84</sup> Gunkel, 358. It is pertinent to note that the Latin translator responsible for the *Biblia Sacra Vulgata* appears to have read לקח as connoting forceful seizure here in v.2. He represents the Hebrew ויקח אהה with the Latin *et rapuit*, from the verb *rapere*, which conveys a sense of 'to seize, capture forcibly, take away by force, steal, carry off and violate'. See *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. P.G.W. Glare (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 2:1573.

<sup>85</sup> Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 542-43; Koehler, Baumgartner, and Stamm, (1995), 2:543; H.H. Schmid, "לקח", in *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, ed. Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, trans. Mark E. Biddle (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 2:649-50; H. Seebass, "לקח", in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. Douglas W. Stott (Grand Rapids : Eerdmans, 1997), 8:17; P.J.J.S. Els, "לקח", in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997), 2:812-15.

<sup>86</sup> This general nuance of non-violent 'taking' is prevalent through the entire Hebrew biblical canon. For just a few of these many occasions, see for example Gen. 21.14; Exod. 16.16; Lev. 8.15; Num. 19.2; Deut. 26.2; Jdg. 15.15; 1 Sam. 25.18; 2 Sam. 13.19; 1 Kgs. 14.3; 2 Kgs 5.15; Isa. 8.1; Jer. 36.2; Ezek. 43.20; Zech. 14.21; Zeph. 3.2; Prov. 7.20; Job 42.8, etc.

<sup>87</sup> It is used in this sense in 33 out of the 142 occurrences within the book of Genesis. See, for example, Gen. 4.19; 6.2; 11.29; 12.19; 19.4; 21.21; 25.1, 20; 28.1, 2, 6, 9; 31.50; 36.2, etc.

wife' in the legal material,<sup>88</sup> the former prophets,<sup>89</sup> the latter prophets,<sup>90</sup> and the writings.<sup>91</sup>

However, there are a significant number of passages, both in Genesis and elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, where  $\text{קָח}$  does appear to connote the violent or compulsory arrest of a person or persons, for a purpose that is intended to subdue or exert control over them.<sup>92</sup> Thus, it is commonly employed to convey the capture and detainment of prisoners during a time of military conflict,<sup>93</sup> or the seizure of an individual within any other context of hostility and aggression.<sup>94</sup> In these latter cases, a person is taken against their will and held in a situation that both compromises their autonomy and is of considerable detriment to their welfare and security. This then begs the question, is there anything within the contextual milieu of Gen. 34.2 to support the proposal that one ought to read  $\text{קָח}$  here in a similar sense? That is, did the narrator of this text utilise this verb specifically to convey the idea that Shechem took hold of Dinah with the explicit purpose of overpowering and raping her?

In response to this question, several biblical scholars have answered firmly in the negative, arguing that within the context of Gen. 34.2,  $\text{קָח}$  carries no explicit or implicit inferences of hostility or aggression on Shechem's part. Instead, they propose that the verb simply denotes the meaning, mentioned above, 'to take as a wife'. That is, Shechem did not seize Dinah forcefully in order to overpower and sexually violate her; rather, as Nicolas Wyatt suggests, by having consensual sexual relations with her, he 'took' her in a matrimonial sense, the sexual act itself symbolising his desire to claim to her as a wife.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> For example, Exod. 21.10; 34.16; Lev. 18.18; 20.14; 21.14; Num. 12.1; Deut. 7.3; 20.7; 24.4-5, etc.

<sup>89</sup> For example Jdg. 14.2-3, 8; 1 Sam. 25.39, 43; 2 Sam 12.10; 1 Kgs. 3.1; 16.31 etc.

<sup>90</sup> For example, Jer. 16.2; 29.6; Ezek. 44.22; Hos. 1.2-3.

<sup>91</sup> For example, Ruth 4.13; 1 Chron. 2.19, 21; 7.15; 2 Chron. 11.18, 20; Ezra 2.61; Neh. 5.15; 6.18; 7.63, etc.

<sup>92</sup> As well as denoting the violent seizure of people,  $\text{קָח}$  is also commonly utilised to convey the unlawful or unjust acquisition of some object that does not rightly belong to the taker, be it material property (1 Sam. 2.16; Josh. 6.18; 7.11; Jdg. 17.2), or some more ethereal possession, such as a blessing or birthright (Gen. 27.35, 36; Mic. 2.9). Continuing this sense of aggressive acquisition, the verb is utilised frequently within an explicitly military context to signify the capture and subjugation of foreign territory (e.g. Josh. 11.16, 23; 1 Sam. 7.14; 2 Sam. 8.1; 1 Kgs 20.34; 2 Kgs 13.25; Hos. 10.6; 1 Chr. 18.1, etc), and the subsequent acquirement of war booty (e.g. Gen. 31.34; Jdg. 5.19; 1 Sam. 14.32; 2 Sam. 7.8; 1 Kgs. 14.26; Isa. 49.24; Joel 4.5; Job 1.15, 17; 1 Chr. 7.21; 2 Chr. 12.9, etc).

<sup>93</sup> For example, Gen. 14.12; Josh. 8.12; 11.19; 2 Sam. 10.4; 21.8; 2 Kgs. 10.7; 23.34; 24.12; 25.18; Isa. 52.5; Jer. 39.5; 48.46; 52.24, 26; Ezek. 23.10, 25; 2 Chron. 36.4; Job 1.15, etc.

<sup>94</sup> For example, Gen 37.24; 39.20; 42.24, 36; 43.18; 44.29; 2 Sam. 18.17; Jer. 38.6, etc.

<sup>95</sup> Wyatt, 435.

Wyatt's proposed reading of לקח here in v.2 is likewise echoed by a number of other scholars, who all argue that there is nothing within the context of this verse to substantiate the claim that לקח denotes violent seizure.<sup>96</sup> As Bader insists, 'The use of the verb לקח does not imply that a man had taken the woman without first asking [her] permission to do so'.<sup>97</sup> Instead, like Wyatt, these scholars suggest that the narrator has used this verb in v.2 in the same sense as in vv.4, 9, 16, and 21: to denote a man's (non-aggressive) acquisition of a woman in marriage.<sup>98</sup> Fleishman substantiates this interpretation of לקח by appealing to cognate evidence, noting that the cognate Akkadian term for the Hebrew form לקח is *ahāzu*, which, he proposes, bears the meaning 'to take hold of for the purpose of marriage'.<sup>99</sup> Indeed, he would appear to suggest that throughout this entire narrative, לקח, which occurs eight times (vv.2, 4, 9, 16, 21, 25, 26, 28), *never* connotes a sense of physical constraint or violent coercion, but rather, always 'refers to marriage'.<sup>100</sup> Bechtel likewise makes a similar statement, proposing that, 'elsewhere in the story *lqh* has no inherent connotation of physical force'.<sup>101</sup>

However, while it is certainly true that, within the text of Genesis 34, לקח is indeed used to denote the sense of 'to take in marriage' (vv.4, 9, 16, 21), the suggestion that this verb carries these connubial nuances here in v.2 may be called into question for two principal reasons; namely, the semantic diversity of לקח in Genesis 34 and the veracity of Fleishman's cognate evidence. Let us now consider each briefly in turn.

Firstly, Fleishman and Bechtel's suggestion that, elsewhere in Gen. 34, לקח is used primarily to denote the non-violent and mutual 'taking' of wives, proves, on closer consideration of the text, to be rather misleading. In fact, this verb is employed within the narrative to convey a wider range of semantic nuances than merely 'to take in marriage'. As Bechtel herself admits,<sup>102</sup> it appears in the explicitly violent context of v.25 to denote Simeon and Levi's 'taking up' their swords to slay the

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<sup>96</sup> Bechtel, "What If Dinah Is Not Raped", 28; and "Dinah", 70; Fleishman, 103; Lipka, 188, n.75; Bader, 26; Van Seters, 243; van Wolde, "Love and Hatred", 436. Indeed, Lipka suggests here that, when לקח is utilised as a verb of seizure, 'the object is always inanimate, usually a town or city and/or its booty ... never a person'. However, footnotes 93 and 94 above list a number of examples within the biblical texts that challenge her statement here.

<sup>97</sup> Bader, 26.

<sup>98</sup> Bechtel, "What If Dinah Is Not Raped", 28; Fleishman, 103, n.5; Lipka, 188, n.75; Bader, 26; Van Seters, 243.

<sup>99</sup> Fleishman, 103, n.5.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> Bechtel, "What If Dinah Is Not Raped", 28.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

Hivite males.<sup>103</sup> Furthermore, Bechtel fails to mention that later, in vv.28-9, the verb is again utilised within a context of aggression and hostility to connote Dinah's brothers' barbarous and comprehensive capture and pillaging of the city of Shechem and its inhabitants.<sup>104</sup> All the wealth and possessions of the slain Hivite men, including their wives and children, are depicted within these two verses as being seized (לקח) and looted (בזז) as war booty.

Furthermore, and of particular importance to this argument, לקח is employed in v.26, when, after slaying the young prince and his father Hamor, Dinah's brothers 'take' her out of Shechem's house, where she has been residing since her encounter with the young prince.<sup>105</sup> The replication of this verb here, resonating with the memories of Dinah's initial experience of being 'taken' by Shechem in v.2, is surely significant. It is possible that the narrator deliberately repeated this lexical form in v.26 to evoke memories of Shechem's crime, thereby reminding the reader that, just as Dinah is 'taken' back by her brothers within a context seething with swift aggression, so too was she originally 'taken' by Shechem in circumstances that were likewise shocking in their precipitate brutality.<sup>106</sup> Shechem is therefore perhaps reaping what he has sown here, as his initially aggressive actions are reciprocated, through the ferocious force of Jacobite vengeance. The brothers 'take up' their swords to slay the Hivite males, 'take' Dinah back, and finally, they compound their bloody revenge by 'taking' for themselves everything of value, including women and children, within Hivite territory. As Sternberg suggests, 'It is as if one brutal "taking" led to the rest, and what followed Shechem's sexual "taking" was not the legal "taking" for which he came to yearn but "takings" more analogous to that with which he launched the chain of violence'.<sup>107</sup>

Given the above discussion, I would therefore suggest that it is inadequate to assert, as Fleishman does, that within Genesis 34, the verb לקח 'refers to marriage'.<sup>108</sup> Nor can we concur with Bechtel, who proposed that within this narrative, לקח carries no

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<sup>103</sup> v.25b : ויקחו שני־בני־יעקב שמעון ולוי אחי דינה איש חרבו

<sup>104</sup> v.28 : את־צאנם ואת־בקרם ואת־חמריהם ואת־אשר־בעיר ואת־אשר בשדה לקחו

<sup>105</sup> v.26b : ויקחו את־דינה מבית שכם ויצאו

<sup>106</sup> This is not to say that Dinah's brothers were aggressive towards her when they 'took' her from Shechem's house in v.26. The point I am trying to make here is that the particularly violent context in which לקח occurs within this verse may echo the aggression implicit in this same verbal action in v.2. In other words, just as Dinah's being 'taken' by her brothers occurs in circumstances of extreme violence and bloodshed, so too was the original act of her being 'taken' by Shechem executed within a context replete with the physical brutality and horror of rape. The distinction is that in v.2, this aggression is perpetrated against *her*; in v.26, it is directed in an avenging spirit against her tormentor.

<sup>107</sup> Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 469.

<sup>108</sup> Fleishman, 103, n.5.

explicit connotations of physical force.<sup>109</sup> It is clear that this Hebrew verb conveys a wider range of semantic nuances in this text than simply ‘to take as a wife’; rather, as we saw above, the narrator’s repetition of the verb in vv.25, 26, and 28 may suggest that its significance in v.2 speaks less of Shechem’s supposedly peaceful acquisition of a spouse than of his brutal seizure and assault of a young woman. As Parry concludes, it may well be that ‘it was not marriage in which Dinah was taken’.<sup>110</sup>

Turning now to Fleishman’s appeal to Akkadian cognate evidence, an important point to note at the outset is that, contrary to his claims, the Akkadian verb *aḥāzu* does have other semantic nuances apart from ‘to take in marriage’. It can also simply mean ‘to take (something or someone)’, thereby carrying the same basic semantic connotations as its Hebrew counterpart לקח.<sup>111</sup> In other words, this term does not necessarily always refer to ‘taking’ a woman as a wife, as Fleishman would appear to presume. Furthermore, *aḥāzu* is not the only cognate of לקח occurring within Akkadian. The Akkadian verb *leqû* is another cognate term, which, like its biblical Hebrew equivalent, can mean ‘to take hold of’, ‘to receive’, ‘to carry off (i.e. booty, captives)’, and ‘to take away’.<sup>112</sup> While *leqû* is utilised idiomatically within Akkadian to convey the sense ‘to take as a wife’, its semantic range is likewise more diverse than this single special application. In other words, cognate equivalents, such as *leqû* and *aḥāzu*, share more than one particular meaning of the Hebrew verb לקח; they carry a sense of ‘taking’, which is much broader than simply ‘to take in marriage’. Indeed, as Els has noted, all of the cognates for לקח occurring within the Semitic languages of the ancient Near East express ‘basically the same central concept of receiving/taking’ within both peaceful *and* aggressive contexts.<sup>113</sup>

Thus, Fleishman’s appeal to cognate evidence to confirm his theory that the verb לקח only denotes ‘to take as a wife’ in Gen. 34.2 is not necessarily correct. A similar argument could be made for Akkadian cognate equivalents attesting to this verb conveying the sense ‘to take hold of’, or ‘to carry off’, both of which are within the semantic range of these Akkadian terms. Such a meaning would suggest a more forceful and aggressive seizure of Dinah by Shechem, rather than merely inferring

<sup>109</sup> Bechtel, “What If Dinah Is Not Raped”, 28.

<sup>110</sup> Parry, *Old Testament Story*, 137.

<sup>111</sup> J. Black, A. George and N. Postgate (eds.), *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2000), 7; W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1965), 1:18-19.

<sup>112</sup> Seebass, 16; Schmid, 648; Els, “לקח”, 812; von Soden, 544-45; Black, George, and Postgate, 180.

<sup>113</sup> Els, “לקח”, 812; also Seebass, 16; Schmid, 648; Koehler, Baumgartner, and Stamm, (1995), 2:534.

connubial intentions on his part. We simply cannot assume that the Hebrew verb connotes one particular nuance here, based on cognate equivalents, when the cognate evidence itself leaves the matter much wider open to debate than Fleishman would admit. There is simply not enough evidence within the context of Gen. 34.2 itself, which would point conclusively to לקח carrying the particular idiomatic sense of the Akkadian cognates *leqû* and *ahāzu*, ‘to take in marriage’, as opposed to one of their other meanings.

Thus, given the above discussion, it is simply inadequate to claim, as Fleishman, Wyatt, and Bechtel do, that the function of לקח in v.2 is necessarily the same as its meaning in vv.4, 9, 16 and 21 – ‘to take in marriage’. Instead, it is very possible that the author of Gen. 34.2 sought to convey a sense of the aggressive and coercive nature of Shechem’s sexual intercourse with Dinah by preceding שכב with the verb לקח. As in the other biblical texts where women are depicted as the victims of sexual violence, Dinah is first taken hold of by Shechem and overpowered by his superior strength, thereby precluding her ability to reject his sexual advances.<sup>114</sup> Thus, as Gravett concludes, ‘The verb לקח, as translated, conveys violence on the part of Shechem, and not simply the unlawful seizure of Dinah to be his wife’.<sup>115</sup>

### *Shame or Sexual Violence? The Semantic Significance of ענה*

The verb ענה has probably caused the greatest amount of debate within biblical scholarship regarding the extent of violence used by Shechem during his sexual encounter with Dinah in Gen. 34.2. As Ellen van Wolde has stated with regards this verb, ‘if ever words can change one’s view of a text, this word can’.<sup>116</sup> Translations of the 3m.s. Piel form עָנָה in v.2 vary considerably; scholars have represented it with readings such as, ‘he debased her’,<sup>117</sup> ‘shamed her’,<sup>118</sup> ‘raped her’,<sup>119</sup> ‘humiliated her’,<sup>120</sup> ‘ravished her’,<sup>121</sup> ‘abused her’,<sup>122</sup> and ‘tortured’ her.<sup>123</sup> The

<sup>114</sup> Gravett, 281.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 282.

<sup>116</sup> van Wolde, “Does ‘innâ Denote Rape”, 530.

<sup>117</sup> Alter, 189.

<sup>118</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 305.

<sup>119</sup> Fewell and Gunn, *Gender, Power and Promise*, 81; Scholz, “Through Whose Eyes”, 165; Gravett, 282; Zlotnik, 37.

<sup>120</sup> Bechtel, “What If Dinah Is Not Raped”, 24.

<sup>121</sup> H.C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis* (London: Evangelical Press, 1942), 897.

<sup>122</sup> Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 446.

<sup>123</sup> Aschkenasy, *Eve’s Journey*, 125. Brenner also contends that עָנָה denotes ‘to torture’ (*Intercourse of Knowledge*, 96, n.14).

primary point of contention here however is whether this verbal form is utilised by the ancient author to confirm that Dinah was the victim of an unequivocal act of sexual assault.

In order to address this issue, we should perhaps begin by looking at the range of meanings that this verbal form can convey within the biblical material. On reviewing the evidence, it quickly becomes apparent that it would be wrong to presume that the primary function of עָנָה was to act as a technical term for ‘rape’.<sup>124</sup> The Piel stem can convey a wide range of meanings, including ‘to oppress, afflict, subjugate’ (e.g. Exod. 1.11-12; 22.21-22; Num. 24.24; 2 Sam. 7.10; Isa. 60.14), ‘to humble, humiliate, dishonour’ (e.g. 1 Sam. 11.39; Isa. 58.3, 5; Ps. 89.22), and ‘to abuse, mistreat, overpower, do violence to’ (e.g. Gen. 16.6; 31.50; Jdg. 16.5, 6, 19).<sup>125</sup> The common denominator of all these definitions is, according to Gerstenberger, the fact that ‘physical or psychic force is used to alter the status of someone for the worse’.<sup>126</sup> In other words, the subject of this verb uses his or her power (either physical strength or superior authority) to treat a person or persons in a way that disregards their social status and causes their humiliation, subjugation, or physical or emotional oppression.<sup>127</sup> There is moreover often an accompanying sense that the behaviour depicted by עָנָה goes against the demands of justice, in that it is to the detriment and against the wishes of the verbal object. Thus in effect, an element of disapproval appears to be implicit in the use of this verbal form to connote one person’s treatment of another; to behave towards a fellow human in such a way is considered, within the worldview of biblical Israel, to be abusive, oppressive and essentially unjust.<sup>128</sup>

When utilised within texts denoting acts of *consensual* sexual intercourse, עָנָה is usually understood as expressing a particular sense of social humiliation and debasement, wrought upon a woman as a result of her participation in a sexual

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<sup>124</sup> Ullendorff, 436; Frymer-Kensky, “Virginity in the Bible”, 87; Harold C. Washington, “‘Lest He Die and Another Man Take Her’: Violence and the Construction of Gender in the Laws of Deuteronomy 20-22”, in Matthews, Levinson, and Frymer-Kensky, 208; Cyril S. Rodd, *Glimpses of a Strange Land: Studies in Old Testament Ethics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001), 265.

<sup>125</sup> Koehler, Baumgartner, and Stamm (1995), 2:853; Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 776; E. Gerstenberger, “עָנָה”, in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 11:237; P. Wegner, “עָנָה”, in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997), 3:449.

<sup>126</sup> Gerstenberger, “עָנָה”, 237. Similarly, Lipka suggests that עָנָה represents ‘the maltreatment of someone in a way that degrades or disgraces him or her’ (87).

<sup>127</sup> Gerstenberger, “עָנָה”, 237; also Frymer-Kensky, “Virginity in the Bible”, 87; van Wolde, “Does ‘innā Denote Rape?”, 531; Lipka, 87.

<sup>128</sup> Keefe, 89, n.8; van Wolde, “Does ‘innā Denote Rape?”, 542-43.

relationship, which is either deemed unlawful and morally defiling, or is, in some sense, a source of violation and imposition upon the woman.<sup>129</sup> Thus, for example, Ezek. 22.10 refers to the men of Jerusalem who ‘debase’ (עִנּוּ) a menstruating woman by having sexual intercourse with her, while in v.11, the offender ‘humbles’ (עֲנֶה) his paternal sister when he engages her participation in this incestuous sexual relationship. These sexual events are evaluated as serious socio-religious infractions, according to the Levitical legislation in Lev. 18.9, 19 and 20.17, 18, and are therefore recognised as the source of the woman’s dishonour.<sup>130</sup>

Similarly, in Deut. 22.24, עֲנָה likewise appears to denote the socially debasing effects upon a woman because of her apparently consensual participation in an adulterous act of pre-marital sexual intercourse.<sup>131</sup> As we will discuss in more detail in the following chapter, female chastity was highly valued in biblical Israel and a betrothed woman was expected to preserve her virginity for her intended husband; any betrothed woman who was deflowered outwith the matrimonial covenant therefore suffered a serious blow to her social status, not to mention having to face the capital punishment meted out against perpetrators of adultery.<sup>132</sup> Meanwhile, in Deut. 21.14, עֲנָה appears to convey some sense of violation imposed upon a woman who has become the captive war bride of an Israelite soldier. Although the man has legally married her (vv.10-13), the words of v.14 suggest that, by doing so, he has in some sense caused her dishonour or social humiliation. For, while he is free to divorce his captive bride if he ceases to desire her, he cannot however sell her into slavery, because, we are told, he has debased her (תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר עֲנִיתָהּ). The source of this debasement is not made explicit within the text; the couple’s sexual relationship is legally sanctioned<sup>133</sup> and, unlike the sexual acts denoted in Deut. 22.23-24 and

<sup>129</sup> Frymer-Kensky, “Law and Philosophy”, 93; and *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 183; Bechtel, “What If Dinah Is Not Raped”, 24-25; Lipka, 88-89; van Wolde, “Does ‘innâ Denote Rape’”, 541-42; Van Seters, 242.

<sup>130</sup> Bader, 34-35; Washington, “Lest He Die”, 208; Gerstenberger, “עֲנָה”, 237; Frymer-Kensky, “Law and Philosophy”, 93, 100, n.9; and *Goddesses*, 192-94, 274, n.34; Lipka, 88.

<sup>131</sup> While I argued above that the reasoning behind the denial of the sexual violence implicit within this law was hopelessly flawed (see footnote 62), it is patent nevertheless from the context that the sexual act depicted therein is by no means intended to be read as an act of sexual violence. I have therefore not included this text within my discussion, as I wish to focus only upon these texts, which utilise עֲנָה within a context explicitly recognised by the *biblical author* as depicting an act of sexual aggression.

<sup>132</sup> Phyllis Trible, “Women in the Old Testament”, in *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible: An Illustrated Encyclopaedia*, ed. Kenneth Crim (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976), Supplementary Volume, 964. Biblical ideologies pertaining to female sexuality will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

<sup>133</sup> Of course, by modern definition, this woman is clearly a victim of sexual violence; regardless of the ‘legitimacy’ of her marriage and the elaborate month-long rituals of which she must partake before her relationship with her captor is consummated, there is no denying that the woman’s right to



Ezek. 22.10-11, can in no sense be understood as either unlawful or morally defiling. Perhaps, as Pressler has suggested, the lawmakers regarded marriage by cohabitation, rather than by the usual contractual arrangement with the woman's father, as being a less 'valid' form of matrimony.<sup>134</sup> Alternatively, the very act of taking this woman captive and of taking her away from her own home and installing her within an Israelite household may be regarded as inherently lowering her social status.<sup>135</sup> Washington, meanwhile, suggests that the act of divorcing this woman or refusing to go through with the marriage in the first place may also be a source of her dishonour.<sup>136</sup> Whatever the source of her defilement, the law therefore attempts to protect the woman from even further degradation than she has already suffered; as van Wolde asserts, 'However low her social status may be, she is not to be degraded'.<sup>137</sup>

Nevertheless, there are eight occasions (excluding Gen. 34.2) when *נָפְעַ* appears within contexts, which depict sexual behaviour that is not only unlawful, but is unequivocally aggressive and non-consensual (Deut. 22.29; Jdg. 19.24; 20.5; 2 Sam. 13.12, 14, 22, 32; Lam. 5.11). Now, as noted above, this verbal form may on occasion be employed within *non*-sexual scenarios to denote a person's physical subjugation and mistreatment. Thus, in Gen. 16.6, *נָפְעַ* appears to denote the

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consent to sexual intercourse is utterly subverted. While overt physical violence *may* not have been used against the woman, her status as captive ensured that she was clearly in no position to withhold her consent. As Harold Washington notes, 'To assume the consent of the woman is to erase her personhood. Only in the most masculinist of readings does the month-long waiting period give a satisfactory veneer of peaceful domesticity to a sequence of defeat, bereavement, and rape' ("Lest He Die", 205; also Gravett, 287). This legislation therefore fails to acknowledge the unequivocally coercive nature of the sexual behaviour depicted therein, suggesting instead that such a means of gaining sexual access to a woman was both normative and acceptable. Thus, although the sexual scenario depicted therein is, to my mind, unequivocally rape, it is not intended to be read as such within the context of this Deuteronomic legislation. I have therefore chosen to discuss this text as an example of the use of the verb *נָפְעַ* within an implied context of *consensual* sexuality, where it denotes some sense of the humiliation and diminished social value accorded the woman, in her status as a captive war bride. For further discussion on this text, see Pamela Gordon and Harold C. Washington, "Rape as a Military Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible", in Brenner, *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*, 313; Susan Niditch, "War, Women, and Defilement in Numbers 31", *Semeia* 61 (1993): 50; Washington, "Lest He Die", 202-7; Jeffrey H. Tigay, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Deuteronomy* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 194-95; A.D.H. Mayes, *Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 303; Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 21.10-34.12* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2002), 472-75; Patrick D. Miller, *Deuteronomy* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), 159; Cheryl B. Anderson, *Women, Ideology, and Violence: Critical Theory and the Construction of Gender in the Book of the Covenant and the Deuteronomic Law* (London and New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 47.

<sup>134</sup> Carolyn Pressler, *The View of Women Found in the Deuteronomic Family Laws* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1993), 14; Frymer-Kensky, "Law and Philosophy", 100, n.9; Brenner, *Intercourse of Knowledge*, 534.

<sup>135</sup> van Wolde, "Does 'innâ Denote Rape", 535; also Pressler, *View of Women*, 14.

<sup>136</sup> Washington, "Lest He Die", 207

<sup>137</sup> van Wolde, "Does 'innâ Denote Rape", 535; also Brenner, *Intercourse of Knowledge*, 534.

physical and psychological abuse of Hagar at the hands of Sarah. The harshness of this treatment is such that the woman prefers to take her chances of survival in the wilderness with her baby son, rather than endure the cruelty she is receiving at home.<sup>138</sup> Furthermore, in Gen. 31.50, הִנָּח likewise connotes a sense degrading and abusive mistreatment, which may be perpetrated against a woman by her husband, while in Jdg. 16.5, 6, 19, it represents the act of rendering a person powerless and incapacitated by the employment of physical restraint. Is it possible then that, when utilised within biblical portrayals of sexual violence, this verbal form may likewise convey such a sense of physically abusive behaviour, thereby accentuating and confirming the brutal and coercive nature of the sexual events depicted therein?

In response to this question, a number of scholars have again answered unequivocally in the negative, proposing instead that, within texts denoting acts of sexual violence, הִנָּח continues to convey the same essential meaning as when it is employed within a context of *consensual* sexual impropriety.<sup>139</sup> Thus, the hypothetical raped virgin in Deut. 22.28-29, Tamar's incestuous and pre-marital sexual violation at the hands of her brother Amnon (2 Sam. 13), the threat and realisation of gang rape for the Levite's concubine (Jdg. 19-20), and the wartime rapes of the women of Zion and Judah (Lam. 5.11) – in all of these texts, הִנָּח is believed to function, not as an explicit representation of the sexual and physical brutality experienced by these women, but rather, as a measure of the social shame and humiliation which has been wrought upon them by their, albeit unwilling, association with some form of *illicit* sexual activity.<sup>140</sup> According to Frymer-Kensky therefore, הִנָּח does not always refer to rape when used within a sexual context, but rather to 'illicit sex, sex with someone with whom one has no right to have sex'.<sup>141</sup> Similarly, Bader argues that, whether or not הִנָּח is used in a context

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<sup>138</sup> Lipka, 88.

<sup>139</sup> Pressler, *Views of Women*, 14; van Wolde, "Does 'innâ Denote Rape", 538-41, 543-44; and "Love and Hatred", 437; Frymer-Kensky, "Virginity in the Bible", 87-89; and "Law and Philosophy", 93; Lipka, 87-88, 188, 208, n.38; Bechtel, "What If Dinah Is Not Raped", 24-27; Bader, 11, 16, 20, 35-36; Gerstenberger, "עִנָּה", 237.

<sup>140</sup> Bechtel, "What If Dinah Is Not Raped", 25-27; Lipka, 88-90, 188, 208, n.39, 253; van Wolde, "Does 'innâ Denote Rape", 537-40; J. Alberto Soggin, *Judges: A Commentary*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), 288; Ken Stone, *Sex, Honour, and Power in the Deuteronomistic History* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 113.

<sup>141</sup> Frymer-Kensky, "Law and Philosophy", 93. Frymer-Kensky does however admit in a footnote that, in some instances (such as Jdg. 19-20, 2 Sam. 13.12-13, and Lam. 5.11), הִנָּח may indeed denote an act of rape ("Law and Philosophy", 100, n.9). In the case of Deut. 22.28-29 and Gen. 34.2, however, she believes that the verb represents not the violence of the sexual event but rather its illicit nature.

denoting sexual violence, ‘the verb has to do with honor/shame’.<sup>142</sup> Bechtel, likewise, concurs with these readings, suggesting that עָנָה is but one means of denoting ‘the sense of inadequacy that an individual should feel for violation of the societal ideals and customs, which should produce an emotional response of shame’.<sup>143</sup> While these scholars acknowledge that, within non-sexual scenarios, the verb may denote the physically abusive or aggressive maltreatment of one person by another, they nevertheless propose that such a meaning is never represented within texts depicting sexual violence.<sup>144</sup>

Meanwhile, in a similar vein, Moshe Weinfeld proposes that, when employed within texts such as Deut. 22.28-29, 2 Sam. 13, and Jdg. 19, עָנָה does not in fact confirm the coercive or aggressive nature of the sexual events depicted therein. However, unlike the scholars cited above, he does not suggest that this verb necessarily signifies the woman’s social humiliation or debasement; rather, it simply represents an act of sexual intercourse, which is neither non-consensual nor violent.<sup>145</sup> Thus, according to Weinfeld, these texts do not depict acts of sexual violence *per se*, but instead ‘may be interpreted more satisfactorily if we assume that they refer not strictly to rape ... but to other instances of sexual intercourse, which are innocent but which involve an element of imposition upon the woman ... [עָנָה] might then still refer to seduction’.<sup>146</sup>

Given these interpretations of עָנָה outlined above, we are then left pondering their implications with regards our understanding of Dinah’s sexual encounter with Shechem in Gen. 34.2. For, such readings of this verbal form would appear to suggest that the biblical narrator did not necessarily intend to portray this event as a violent attack upon Dinah’s bodily and sexual integrity, but rather as the occasion of her social debasement or, alternatively, as simply her seduction at the hands of the Hivite prince. However, as I concluded in the previous discussion of the verbs שָׁכַב and לָקַח, the language employed by the narrator within this verse does strongly suggest that the sexual event described here *was* an act of rape. Furthermore, I

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<sup>142</sup> Bader, 36. Similarly, Gerstenberger notes that, when עָנָה conveys a sense of sexual ‘violation’, as in Gen. 34.2, 2 Sam. 13.11ff., Deut. 21.14, 22.24, 29, Jdg. 19.24; 20.5, and Lam. 5.11, ‘the central idea is not the use of brute force but rather civil defamation and its concomitant loss of status’ (‘עָנָה’, 237). See also Mayes, 313.

<sup>143</sup> Bechtel, “What If Dinah Is Not Raped?”, 27.

<sup>144</sup> Lipka, 87-88; Frymer-Kensky, “Law and Philosophy, 302, n.9.

<sup>145</sup> Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomist School* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 286; also Anthony Phillips, *Essays on Biblical Law* (London and New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 85.

<sup>146</sup> Weinfeld, 286, n.5.

would contend that, far from compromising this interpretive conclusion, the use of the verb עָנָה here in Gen. 34.2 may actually serve to confirm it. For, if we take a closer look at other rape texts, such as Deut. 22.28-9, Jdg. 19-20, 2 Sam. 13, and Lam. 5, where עָנָה is likewise used within a context of sexual coercion and brutality, it would appear that this verb carries powerful nuances of the *physicality* of the abuse perpetrated against a woman during her sexual violation. Let us therefore now turn to each of these texts, so that we might illuminate their particular employment of this verbal form.

a) Deuteronomy 22.28-9

Deut. 22.13-29 comprises a series of laws, which identify and categorise, with chilling efficiency, different forms of illicit sexual intercourse and the repercussions faced by those accused of such sexual impropriety. In particular, they appear to clarify what does and does not constitute the capital offence of adultery, delineating under what circumstances both the man and woman involved may be held accountable for this sexual felony and thus face the death penalty.

Vv.28-9, however, would appear to describe a ‘lesser’ (though still serious) misdemeanour, in which an unmarried and unbetrothed virgin is seized (הִכָּזֵב) by a man and raped. In this case, neither party faces the death penalty, but instead, the rapist must pay the woman’s father fifty shekels as compensation<sup>147</sup> and, furthermore, has to marry the woman without later recourse to divorce. The lawmaker explains this ‘punishment’ in v.29 with the explanatory clause, תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר עָנָה. A number of scholars have contended that the rationale underlying this legal requirement is based upon the woman being socially dishonoured after her loss of virginity outwith marriage. As mentioned above, women were expected to remain

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<sup>147</sup> Most commentators assume that the fifty shekels is paid to the woman’s father as compensation for the fact that, given his daughter is no longer a virgin, he will be unable to collect a lucrative bride price for her. Perhaps the fixed sum of fifty shekels was the customary bride price at the time this law was composed, and by stipulating it, the lawmakers ensured that the woman’s father would not suffer financially by being in a weakened position to negotiate for himself a decent sum. Alternatively, as Tigay and Washington propose, the fifty shekels may have incorporated both a bride price and punitive damages. As Tigay points out, according to Lev. 27.4-5, the ‘price’ for a woman is ten to thirty shekels, depending on her age, and it would be likely, as rape is a more grave offence than a seduction, that the perpetrator would have to pay some punitive damages as well as the standard bride price (Tigay, 208; Washington, “Lest He Die”, 211). For further discussion of this issue, see also Pressler, *View of Women*, 40; Lipka, 176-77; Phillips, *Essays*, 84-85; and *Ancient Israel’s Criminal Law: A New Approach to the Decalogue* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970), 115; Robert J.V. Hiebert, “Deuteronomy 22.28-29: Its Premishnaic Interpretations”, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 56 (1994): 208.

virgins until they were married; therefore such an act of pre-marital deflowerment would have led to a loss of the woman's social status and would have seriously compromised her father's chances of arranging a decent and lucrative marriage for her.<sup>148</sup> With this in mind, these scholars therefore appear to suggest that the phrase תחת אשר ענה be translated 'because he shamed her'.<sup>149</sup>

Furthermore, several biblical interpreters have suggested that this law is not in fact dealing with a case of rape, but rather with an act of consensual, though illicit, pre-marital seduction. Thus, both Phillips and Weinfeld propose that the root תפש in Deut. 22.28 does not convey the forceful seizure of a young woman by her rapist; rather, it denotes a sense of 'to hold' or 'to embrace' within the context of a non-aggressive sexual encounter.<sup>150</sup> Likewise, Bechtel translates תפש as 'to touch the heart', thereby implying that the man wooed the young woman, rather than seizing her aggressively,<sup>151</sup> while Frymer-Kensky suggests that, rather than denoting violent capture and rape, תפש alludes to the man's illicit, though consensual, 'seizure' of a woman's sexuality, without respecting the ownership rights of her male guardian and first seeking his approval.<sup>152</sup>

However, on reviewing the linguistic evidence presented within vv.28-9, I would contend that both of these above readings of תחת אשר ענה may be challenged. In the first place, and contrary to Weinfeld, Phillips, Frymer-Kensky, and Bechtel, the use of תפש as a verb of seizure in v.28 clearly indicates that the sexual event depicted within this legislation was undoubtedly coercive and aggressive. As Carolyn Pressler has rightly pointed out, when used to connote the actions of one person towards another, this verbal form never depicts a mutually desired or sensual embrace; rather, it generally conveys the harmful and aggressive arrest or seizure of someone against their wishes, which threatens the recipient's bodily integrity, their

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<sup>148</sup> Pressler, *View of Women*, 40; and "Sexual Violence and Deuteronomic Law", in Brenner, *A Feminist Companion to Exodus to Deuteronomy*, 104-5; Lipka, 177-78; Phillips, *Essays*, 84-85; Tigay, 208-9; Frymer-Kensky, "Law and Philosophy", 92-93; and "Virginitly in the Bible", 79; and *Goddesses*, 191-92; Christensen, 514, 522; Koala Jones-Warsaw, "Toward a Womanist Hermeneutic: A Reading of Judges 19-21", in *A Feminist Companion to Judges*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 173.

<sup>149</sup> Pressler, *View of Women*, 37-38, n.48; Mayes, 313; Lipka, 253.

<sup>150</sup> Weinfeld, 286; Phillips, *Essays*, 85; and "Another Look at Adultery", *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 20 (1981), 13; also Mayes, 313.

<sup>151</sup> Bechtel, "What If Dinah Is Not Raped", 25.

<sup>152</sup> Frymer-Kensky, "Virginitly in the Bible", 89. According to Frymer-Kensky, the man had 'grabbed what he wanted without showing respect for the family's honour and the protocols of propriety' ("Virginitly in the Bible", 92).

safety, and at times, their life.<sup>153</sup> While Weinfeld and Phillips are both correct to note that this verb can at times denote a sense of *non*-aggressive ‘holding’, such a meaning tends to occur primarily when the accusative is an inanimate object, such as a musical instrument (Gen. 4.21), a shield or sword (Jer. 46.9; Ezek. 21.11; 30.21), or the oars of a ship (Ezek. 27.29).

Furthermore, Frymer-Kensky’s assertion that, in Deut. 22.28, the man ‘seizes’ the woman’s sexuality, rather than the woman herself belies the fact that the text plainly states that it is the woman, not her virginity or sexuality, which the man seizes and misuses. Similarly, while it is true that **הִפֵּשׂ** is employed in Ezek. 14.5 to denote God’s ‘capturing’ the heart of his sinful people, Bechtel’s suggestion that the verb is likewise used in Deut. 22.28 in a metaphorical sense to denote an emotional connection between the man and woman again ignores the fact that the text does *not* tell us that the man seizes this woman’s *heart*; it plainly states that he seizes *her*. Within the context of Deut. 22.28-29, **הִפֵּשׂ** can therefore by no means be read as the prelude to an act of seduction. Rather, as with **הִזַּק** in v.25, it confirms the physical brutality used by the rapist to achieve his violent goal; the woman here was captured and controlled for a purpose that was explicitly and physically violent.<sup>154</sup>

Moreover, the utilisation of the verbal form **הִפֵּשׂ** here may also suggest that the crime in question is focalised, not only as a source of social shame or dishonour for the woman but also as an aggressive act, that is, her forcible compulsion to participate in an unlawful act of sexual intercourse. As Lipka notes, there is a strong similarity in the language of vv.25 and 28; in both cases, a man ‘comes upon’ a woman, seizes her, and proceeds to have sexual intercourse with her.<sup>155</sup> Such linguistic resonance between these two verses suggests that, not only is the sexual

<sup>153</sup> Pressler, “Sexual Violence”, 104, n.5; and *View of Women*, 37-38. Pressler notes that **הִפֵּשׂ** takes a human object 32 times in the Hebrew Bible; only in Ezek. 29.7, is the verb utilised to denote a sense of supportively holding on to someone. In all other cases, it refers to actions such as entrapment, seizure, or forcible arrest (*View of Women*, 38, n.49). The verb occurs frequently within the context of warfare to depict the capture of prisoners of war (e.g. Josh. 8.23; 1 Sam. 15.8; 23.26; 1 Kgs 20.18; 2 Kgs. 7.12; 10.14; 14.13; 25.6; Jer. 34.3; Ezek. 12.13; 17.20; 19.4, 8; 2 Chron. 25.23, etc.), or in other situations where people are seized by hostile forces, to the detriment of their freedom and autonomy (e.g. Deut. 21.19; 1 Sam. 23.26; 1 Kgs 13.4; 18.40; 2 Kgs 10.14; Ps. 71.11; Jer. 26.8; 37.13, 14; 38.23; 50.24; 52.9; Ezek. 29.7, etc.).

<sup>154</sup> Pressler, “Sexual Violence”, 104, n.5; and *View of Women*, 37-38; Anderson, 86-87; Judith Hauptman, “Rabbinic Interpretation of Scripture”, in Brenner and Fontaine, 537; A.H. Konkel, “**הִפֵּשׂ**”, in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997), 4:326; Eckhart Otto, “False Weights in the Scales of Biblical Justice? Different Views of Women from Patriarchal Hierarchy to Religious Equality in the Book of Deuteronomy”, in Matthews, Levinson, and Frymer-Kensky, 133; Bader, 17-19.

<sup>155</sup> Lipka, 176, n.28.

act in v.28 an unequivocal case of rape, but also that the coercive nature of this act is an important point of consideration for the authors of this legislation. These lawmakers are fully cognisant of the fact that, by so forcing her, the woman's rapist has irreparably compromised her marriageability and 'value' in the bridal market; he must therefore face the consequences of his actions and right the wrong he has done her, by marrying her in perpetuity.

Thus, I would suggest that a recognition of the *coercion* utilised by the rapist is fundamental to this law; it is *because* the rapist forced this woman to participate in an unlawful sexual act that she will suffer the indignity of being an unmarried virgin, and it is this very act of coercion, which therefore seals his responsibility for her future wellbeing.<sup>156</sup> The words *תחת אשר ענה* in v.29 may then be understood to convey this sense of forcible violation, which is intrinsic to the sexual act that was described in the previous verse, and so justify the reading 'because he forced her', rather than 'because he shamed her' or, as Weinfeld appears to suggest, 'because he seduced her'. While it is true that *ענה* is utilised within v.24 apparently to denote the shame and social debasement suffered by a woman caught in an act of consensual adultery, I nevertheless believe that, in v.29, this verbal form conveys instead a sense of sexual and physical violation, occurring as it does within a context of explicitly *forceful and coercive* sexual behaviour.

#### b) Judges 19-20

The book of Judges relates a turbulent period in Israel's history when, prior to the institution of the monarchy, the tribal amphictyony was led by a series of judges, who guided the people through their oft-repeated cycles of sin and repentance. Within this tradition, the events that are depicted in Jdg. 19-20 are surely some of the most terrible.<sup>157</sup> The story relates that a Levite and his concubine are making their long journey home from Bethlehem to Ephraim, when they are compelled to stop for the night in the Benjaminite town of Gibeah (19.11-14). They are offered hospitality by an elderly resident of this town; however, no sooner have they settled

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<sup>156</sup> The ethical implications of a law, which insists a rape victim marry her rapist, will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

<sup>157</sup> Terrible too are the events of Chapter 21, which relates the horrendous outcome of civil war, and which culminates in the mass abduction and rape of countless women at Jabesh-Gilead and Shiloh. Unfortunately, pressure of space does not permit me to discuss this text here, particularly as it has no direct bearing on the semantic significance of the verb *ענה*, but I will return to it, albeit briefly, in the following chapter.

in for a night of companionable revelry, when a violent mob of local townsmen surround the house, threatening to gang rape the Levite (v.22).<sup>158</sup> In v.23, the elderly host pleads with the mob not to commit such an outrage against his male guest, and, in v.24, attempts to distract them and thus further protect his guest by offering to bring out to them in his place both his own virgin daughter and the Levite's concubine, offering them the opportunity to *ועשו להם הטוב* *בְּעֵינֵיכֶם*. A number of interpreters have suggested that this proposal was, first and foremost, a desperate attempt by the host to uphold his duty of hospitality towards the Levite, by shielding him from the grave *dishonour* that such a sexual assault would have caused him, both as a man and as a Levitical priest.<sup>159</sup> In other words,

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<sup>158</sup> Daniel Block refers to the actions of the Benjaminite mob as a homosexual expression of 'unrestrained animal lust' (542), describing these men as 'uncontrollably aroused' (539). Similarly, Stuart Lasine also appears to view the violence in a (homo)sexualised light, speaking of 'the perverted sexual desires of the mob' and describing the Levite as 'the object of such *desires*' (57, n.38) [italics added]. However, it is important to clarify that the action threatened by the men of Gibeah was less the consummation of homosexual lust than the violating act of male gang rape. Their actions were not fuelled by sexual arousal and desire; rather, as Block himself admits, they were threatening the Levite with an unequivocal act of violence, the goal of which was to treat him as an object of contempt, domination, and physical abuse (539, n.259). Thus, according to Deryn Guest, 'This narrative has very little, if anything to do with homosexuality' (183). As with sexual violence directed against women, male rape should never be treated primarily as a sexual act, but rather as a misanthropic, violent, and hate-fuelled assault, the goal of which is to cause physical and emotional harm to the victim. See Daniel I. Block, *Judges Ruth* (Nashville: Broadman, and Holman, 1999), 539; Stuart Lasine, "Guest and Host in Judges 19: Lot's Hospitality in an Inverted World", *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 29 (1984): 57, n.38; Deryn Guest, "Judges", in *The Queer Bible Commentary*, ed. Deryn Guest *et al.*, (London ACM Press, 2006), 182-85. For further discussion on the theme of homosexual violence in Jdg. 19, see Stone, *Sex, Honour, and Power*, 79-82; Ilse Müllner, "Lethal Differences: Sexual Violence Against Others in Judges 19", in *Judges: A Feminist Companion to the Bible (2<sup>nd</sup> Series)*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 140; John L. Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs: Women of the Old Testament among Biblical Commentators from Philo through the Reformation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 183; Mieke Bal, "The Rape of Narrative and the Narrative of Rape: Speech Acts and Body Language in Judges", in *Literature and the Body: Essays on Populations and Persons*, ed. Elaine Scarry (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1988), 20; and *Death and Dissymmetry*, 157-59; Anne Michele Tapp, "An Ideology of Expendability: Virgin Daughter Sacrifice in Genesis 19.1-11, Judges 11.30-39 and 19.22-26", in Bal, *Anti-Covenant*, 162; Gale A. Yee, "Ideological Criticism: Judges 17-21 and the Dismembered Body", in Yee, *Judges and Method*, 164; Simon B. Parker, "The Hebrew Bible and Homosexuality", *Quarterly Review* 11, no.3 (1991): 4-19; Brenner, *Intercourse of Knowledge*, 142; Exum, *Fragmented Women*, 182; Susan Niditch, "The 'Sodomite' Theme in Judges 19-20: Family, Community, and Social Disintegration", *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 44 (1982): 367-69.

<sup>159</sup> Block, 537-38; Tapp, 164; Soggin, 288; Lasine, 39-40; Victor H. Matthews, *Judges and Ruth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 185-87; and "Hospitality and Hostility in Genesis 19 and Judges 19", *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 22 (1992), 3-11; Niditch, "'Sodomite' Theme", 367-69; Guest, 183-84; Stone, *Sex, Honour, and Power*, 79-82; and "Gender and Homosexuality in Judges 19: Subject-Honour, Object-Shame?", *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 67 (1995): 99-101. As a priest who had been elected for divine service, the Levite was expected to remain holy before the Lord (Lev. 21.8); however, had he been the victim of the sexual violence intended for him by the Benjaminites, he would have been forced to commit an unlawful and defiling sexual act (Lev. 18.22; 20.13). Furthermore, according to Stone, he would also have suffered the shame of being forced into the position of sexual object by the Gibeite mob; he would thus have been 'demasculinised' or 'feminised', by being treated like a woman, that is, a person not entitled to the masculine prerogative



they are suggesting that the phrase וַעֲנוּ אִוְתָם essentially constitutes an invitation to the mob to *shame* and *dishonour* these two women *rather than* the Levite. Weinfeld, meanwhile, proposes that the elderly host is instead intent on protecting his guest by inviting the men of Gibeah simply to *seduce* these women in his place.<sup>160</sup>

It is my contention, however, that the elderly host would have no doubt been acutely aware that, given their ugly mood and their insatiable intent upon gang rape, the threat that these hostile Benjaminites posed both to the Levite and to these women was also truly corporeal. As Stone has noted, such a threat incorporated ‘both violence against and power over the object of the rape’.<sup>161</sup> The men who had surrounded the house were clearly intent on utilising sex as a weapon, their fervour for intercourse being driven less by a harmless lust than a lethal desire to dominate, denigrate, and do violence to the object of their attentions.<sup>162</sup> The host was therefore desperate to uphold his obligation of hospitality to his male guest by protecting not only this man’s honour but also his physical wellbeing and bodily integrity.<sup>163</sup> To do so, he proffered to the crowd the two women as *replacement* objects of sexual abuse, or as Bal puts it, he presented them with ‘rapeable’ women.<sup>164</sup> This offer (וַעֲנוּ אִוְתָם) was therefore by no means simply an invitation for these men to ‘seduce’ the two unfortunate women, nor did it refer only to the social shame that they would both face through their participation in an illicit orgy of extra-marital sexual intercourse. Rather, the host’s use of the verb עָנָה here denotes the tendering of a shockingly heartless licence to overpower, abuse, and physically violate them *in*

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to sexual subjectivity. As Stone explains, ‘Because the man who allows himself to be acted upon sexually shows himself to be the object of another man, he is “feminised” ... If the sexual role allocated by convention to a woman is forced upon a man by another male, as is the case in homosexual rape, then the effect is both a challenge to the object’s masculinity and a challenge to his honour’ (“Gender and Homosexuality”, 96-97). Similar observations are made by Brenner, *Intercourse of Knowledge*, 138; also, Yee, “Ideological Criticism”, 164.

<sup>160</sup> Weinfeld, 286.

<sup>161</sup> Stone, “Gender and Homosexuality”, 92; also Bal, “Rape of Narrative”, 20. Likewise, Exum notes that, while the theme of hospitality is central to this story, biblical interpreters may give scant attention to questions of the relationship between gendered violence and sexuality (*Fragmented Women*, 182-83).

<sup>162</sup> Müllner, 133-34. Likewise, Gale Yee notes that, within this narrative, ‘the phallus serves as a weapon of aggression that establishes a relation of dominance and submission’ (“Ideological Criticism”, 164). See also Karla G. Bohmbach, “Conventions/Contraventions: The Meaning of Public and Private for the Judges 19 Concubine”, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 83 (1999): 87; Victor H. Matthews, *Judges and Ruth*, 186-87.

<sup>163</sup> Block, 537; Victor H. Matthews, *Judges and Ruth*, 186.

<sup>164</sup> Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry*, 93. As Block notes, such is the seriousness by which the host takes his role as provider of hospitality that the concubine ‘has significance only as a potential sacrifice in defence of his own reputation’ (538).

*place of the Levite.*<sup>165</sup> These men were to do to the women whatever was ‘good’ in their eyes (that is, gang rape), but, as the host stressed, ‘to this *man*, do not do this dreadful thing’.<sup>166</sup> The emphatic construction of the Hebrew here at the end of v.24 thus serves to confirm that, while the *Levite* must be spared the outrageous violence of gang rape, the women, on the other hand, will be obliged to face this terrible horror in his place.<sup>167</sup> Such a proposition should cause us to catch our breath at the sheer cruelty and misogyny of the old man’s words, for he appeared to be all too aware of the dreadful fate that would await these women outside the house were the crowd to accept his offer. Nevertheless, in his (misguided) loyalty towards his male guest, the host appeared to be willing to tolerate this potential outrage, believing perhaps that it was the lesser of the two evils, which were destined to cast a shadow over them all that night.

This sense of *physical* violation implicit within the use of עָנָה in Jdg. 19.24 is furthermore replicated in Jdg. 20.5, where the Levite describes the events that unfolded at Gibeah to his Israelite brethren, after they had gathered together in Mizpah at his instigation. In his speech to the assembled tribes, he presents a scenario that is unmistakable in its depiction of deadly violence. The Benjaminite mob, he testifies, rose up against him and intended to kill him; thus, in his eyes at least, it was not his honour that was at stake, but his *life*. The Levite’s recognition of the lethally violent nature of the abuse threatened by these men is further confirmed by his report that, after making an attempt on *his* life, they then turned their murderous aggression against his concubine with tragic results: as he tells his countrymen, וְאֵת פִּילְגָשִׁי עָנּוּ וְתָמָה. The Levite’s suggestion that the Benjaminite’s treatment of the woman, represented by עָנָה, was the ultimate cause of her death can leave us in no doubt that the verb is being utilised here to convey an act of deadly brutality.<sup>168</sup> The concubine’s broken and dismembered body, which he subsequently

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<sup>165</sup> Block, 536; Tribble, *Texts of Terror*, 74. However, van Wolde refutes such a reading, suggesting instead that within this context, עָנָה denotes the women’s debasement, bringing them ‘into the lowest position possible: handed over as an object in another man’s hand’ (“Does ‘*innâ* Denote Rape?”, 538). However, given that women within biblical Israel were regarded as the sole property of their male guardian, the very *basis* of their existence was structured around being treated as such an object, to be handed over from father to husband at the time of their marriage like a piece of chattel. There does not appear to have been any biblical conception that woman as ‘object’ was in itself a particularly negative conceptualisation. It is therefore unlikely that van Wolde’s proposal is an accurate reflection of the significance of this verb here.

<sup>166</sup> וְלֹא יֵשׁ הַזֶּה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ דְבַר הַנְּבִלָה הַזֶּה

<sup>167</sup> Block, 537, n.247.

<sup>168</sup> The precise cause of death of the Levite’s concubine is left rather ambiguous by the narrator of Jdg. 19.28; was she dead when her husband found her outside on the threshold, or did she in fact die at his hands, as the result of her dismemberment (v.29)? The Levite’s words in 20.5, ‘And they committed violence against my concubine, and she died’, offer the reader a less specific

scattered throughout Israel (19.29), serves as a potent symbol of the terrible violence acted out upon this woman by the men of Gibeah.<sup>169</sup> As Bal notes, such symbolisation conveys ‘the most truthful language’ about the concubine’s ordeal, representing ‘the body-language of rape, a language that bespeaks her death’.<sup>170</sup> The suggestion made by scholars such as van Wolde, that this woman was simply ‘*debased* until annihilation’ [italics added] by her gang rape,<sup>171</sup> utterly ignores the physicality of the violence intrinsic to this event, denying its fatal degree of corporeal aggression and abuse, whilst at the same time silencing the emotional *and* physical suffering she endured at the hands of her rapists.<sup>172</sup> As the Levite himself insists, loss of social status did not kill her, violence did.

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pronouncement of causality than were he to have said, ‘and they killed her’. The Septuagint clarifies this matter for the reader, by adding the explanatory clause ‘for she was dead’ in 19.28 (ὅλλ’ ἐτεθνήκει), after stating that the woman did not answer her husband. Robert G. Boling has suggested that this Greek addition preserves an original Hebrew clause כִּי מָתָה, which was lost from the Masoretic Text as a result of haplography or homoioteleuton (*Judges* [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975], 276). The important point to remember here, however, is that in 20.5-6, the reader hears the Levite’s *own* account of events, an account, which, it must be admitted, is not in strict accordance with the circumstances depicted in 19.22-5; as Bader notes, the Levite puts his own ‘spin’ on the events at Gibeah, probably in a self-serving attempt to ensure that his deplorable act of throwing his concubine out to the baying mob is not made public knowledge (21). In a similar vein, Victor H. Matthews suggests that the Levite’s story ‘is shaded to disguise his own cowardly act’ (*Judges, Ruth*, 193), while Lilian R. Klein describes it as ‘sham, egotistical and mendacious’ (*The Triumph of Irony in the Book of Judges* [Sheffield: Almond Press, 1989], 170). Certainly, his speech to the assembled tribe would appear rather egocentric, as he presents *himself*, rather than his concubine, as the one wronged by the men of Gibeah (Stone “Gender and Homosexuality”, 93). Nevertheless, his words do make explicit the fact that, in his mind at least, the concubine’s death is equated with an event depicted by מָתָה; he therefore clearly utilises this verbal form to denote some sense of violent, indeed lethal, behaviour. Perhaps he did focalize the sexual threat made against him by the Benjaminites primarily in terms of its lethal violence, rather than perceiving it primarily as a threat to his honour or status; if so, then he is not necessarily being deliberately economical with the truth when he claims these men tried to kill him (20.5). For further discussion of the Levite’s speech to the gathered tribes of Israel, see also Tammi J. Schneider, *Judges* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), 266-68; Susan Ackerman, *Warrior, Dancer, Seductress, Queen: Women in Judges and Biblical Israel* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 238-39; Soggin, 288; Block, 541; Tribble, *Texts of Terror*, 82; Exum, *Fragmented Women*, 180; Klein, 170; Robert Polzin, *Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges*, vol.1 of *Moses and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History* (New York: Seabury, 1980), 201; Thompson, 184; Lasine, 48-50; Bal, “The Rape of Narrative”, 20.

<sup>169</sup> I therefore disagree strongly with Lasine, who suggests that the reader ‘is forced to view’ the scene of the concubine’s broken body lying at the door of the house with ‘detachment’, rather than horror or pity (45). Lasine appears keen to read this whole narrative as a black comedy, which is ‘pathetic and ludicrous’, and laced with ‘irony and absurd humour’ (38, 45); yet, I would dispute the fact that a woman’s brutal and nightlong rape and her subsequent dismemberment contains any moments of humour, however bleak. Sexual violence is no laughing matter, whenever and wherever it occurs within the history of humanity, and I furthermore do not believe that the author of this narrative intended it to be read as anything but a horrific and shocking depiction of the depravity and complete subversion of justice and morality, which had gripped Israel during this period of its history.

<sup>170</sup> Bal, “A Body of Writing: Judges 19”, in Brenner, *A Feminist Companion to Judges*, 223-24; and *Death and Dissymmetry*, 124.

<sup>171</sup> van Wolde, “Does ‘innâ Denote Rape’”, 539.

<sup>172</sup> As Tribble notes, the story recounts with graphic honesty ‘the horror of male power, brutality, and triumphalism; of female helplessness, abuse, and annihilation’ (*Texts of Terror*, 65). See also Bal, “A Body of Writing”, 223; Exum, *Fragmented Women*, 196; Bohmbach, 97; Yani Yoo, “Han-Laden

c) 2 Samuel 13

As mentioned earlier, 2 Samuel 13 relates a sordid tale of serious family dysfunction within the royal Davidic household, in which David's son Amnon, who has sickened himself lusting after his sister Tamar, nefariously conspires to get her alone in his company before seizing her in v.11 and commanding her to 'lie with' him (אֶחָדִי אֶל־תֵּעַנֵּנִי (שִׁכְבִּי עִמִּי). Caught utterly unawares, Tamar responds in v.12 with the truly shocking words אֶל־אָחִי אֶל־תֵּעַנֵּנִי. Given the context within which these words are spoken, it surely makes sense to translate this phrase, 'No, my brother, do not *force* me', for is that indeed not what Amnon, through his words and actions, is threatening to do?<sup>173</sup> He is physically restraining Tamar and demanding to have sexual intercourse with her; the violent and coercive nature of his words and actions would have left her in no doubt that her brother intended to use his superior physical strength to overpower and rape her, were she to resist his demands. As Bar-Efrat notes, the narrator's use of עָנָה therefore emphasises the inherent aggression in Amnon's behaviour:

Amnon will have to use force to achieve his end [but] Tamar intends to resist him ... Tamar realises that her refusal in not in itself sufficient to prevent the deed (for in addition to making a verbal request, Amnon has also seized hold of her), and therefore does everything that she can by pleas, arguments and an alternative proposal, to dissuade him from fulfilling his intentions'.<sup>174</sup>

Thus, through Tamar's words here in v.12, the reader receives forewarning of the terrible violence that is to come; as Gray notes, her plea, 'No, my brother, do not force me' suggests that she is trying to 'talk herself to safety', as she suddenly grasps the full extent of the 'unmitigated brutality' that her brother intends to inflict upon her.<sup>175</sup> Contrary to van Wolde's reading of this verse,<sup>176</sup> Tamar's immediate fear is not *only* the threat of social shame and humiliation that would befall her were she to submit to her brother's demands; rather, she is also responding to the very real and imminent danger of sexual violence, which Amnon's behaviour has left her in no doubt.<sup>177</sup> Nor is she simply demurring to her brother's attempts at seduction, as

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Women: Korean 'Comfort Women' and Women in Judges 19-21", *Semeia* 78 (1997): 40; Victor H. Matthews, *Judges and Ruth*, 189; Keefe, 86; Ackerman, 256.

<sup>173</sup> McCarter, 314; Robert Polzin, *Second Samuel*, vol.3 of *David and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 138; Bar-Efrat, 259-62; Fokkelein van Dijk-Hemmes, "Tamar and the Limits of Patriarchy: Between Rape and Seduction (2 Samuel 13 and Genesis 38)", in Bal, *Anti-Covenant*, 142; Bader, 145.

<sup>174</sup> Bar-Efrat, 261-62.

<sup>175</sup> Mark Gray, "Amnon: A Chip Off the Old Block? Rhetorical Strategy in 2 Samuel 13.7-15: The Rape of Tamar and the Humiliation of the Poor", *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 77 (1998): 48-49.

<sup>176</sup> van Wolde, "Does 'innâ Denote Rape", 539; also Lipka, 208.

<sup>177</sup> This is not to say that Tamar is not aware of the socially shameful effects such a sexual act would have on her honour. As she says to her brother in v.13, 'where would I carry my shame?' I am

Weinfeld's reading of this verse would suggest. For, Amnon is clearly not intending to woo his sister here; rather, his attempt to physically overpower her speaks all too clearly of his sexually abusive intent. Within this context then, the verb עָנָה would appear to encapsulate the abusive violence and horror of rape, which now confronts Tamar with terrifying imminence.

Similarly, in v.14, עָנָה again appears to confirm the physicality of the violence implicit in Amnon's sexual behaviour, rather than simply evaluating this act as either a seduction or the source of Tamar's dishonour. Refusing to heed her attempts to dissuade him from his aggressive intentions, Amnon once more aggressively seizes his sister before sexually assaulting her: וַיִּחַזַק מִמֶּנָּה וַיַּעֲנֶה וַיִּשְׁכַּב אִתָּהּ. The repetition of חָזַק, שָׁכַב, and עָנָה in both vv.11-12 and v.14 may be a deliberate strategy by the narrator here to emphasise the continuity of meaning conveyed by these verbal forms, from their initial intimation of Amnon's sexually abusive ambitions to their final execution.<sup>178</sup> Thus, Amnon confronts Tamar with the *threat* of sexual violence in v.11 and then, in v.14, after ignoring her pleas, proceeds to enact this threat, overpowering her, forcing her down, and raping her, thereby *inflicting* upon her the very trauma that, in v.12, she had beseeched him to refrain from.<sup>179</sup> Such a confirmation of the brutal physicality of Amnon's actions within this scene surely emphasises to the reader that the young prince did not simply seduce or shame Tamar here; he perverted her right to her bodily integrity, terrorised her, and, using brute force, subjected her to a vicious sexual attack.<sup>180</sup> Within such an explicit context of raw physical, sexual, and emotional aggression, עָנָה is therefore best understood as conveying, both in vv.11 and 14, a sense of the very real and corporeal violence perpetrated against this woman by her brother.<sup>181</sup>

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however arguing here that her immediate response is to try to prevent the *physical act* of brutality that would cause such shame and it is this physical violation that is represented by the verb עָנָה. By Amnon's very act of seizing her, Tamar is aware of the force he is willing to use and therefore realises that he is going to penetrate her whether she consents or not. Her words אֶל-אָחִי אֶל-הַתַּעֲנִי therefore clearly signify her attempts to dissuade him from *raping* her.

<sup>178</sup> Bar-Efrat, 265; Bader, 147; Fokkelmann, *King David*, 106-7.

<sup>179</sup> Gray, 50; Tribble, *Texts of Terror*, 46; Fokkelmann, *King David*, 107.

<sup>180</sup> Stone, *Sex, Honour, and Power*, 115; Bar-Efrat, 265.

<sup>181</sup> As Fokkelmann asserts, the use of עָנָה following the verb שָׁכַב 'defines and qualifies the essence of this "repose" as a pure rape' (*King David*, 106-7).

#### d) Lamentations 5

The heartrending community lament found in the book of Lamentations depicts, with harrowing detail, the physical and emotional abuses that have become part of daily life for the people of Zion, in the wake of the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem. Through the medium of Israel's enemies, YHWH appeared to be punishing his people for their iniquities, allowing these enemies free rein to indulge in acts of graphic cruelty and brutality.<sup>182</sup> Within these laments, the author appears at pains to convey the horror of the Israelite's experiences; the destruction of their temple and city (2.1-9; 16-17), the slaughter of both the young and old (2.21; 4.9), the torment of disease, hunger, and imprisonment (3.1-15; 4.4-14), and the ceaseless agony of being hounded and abused by their Babylonian overlords (3.52-3).<sup>183</sup> Such pain and horror endured by Jerusalem at this time is, we are told, 'as vast as the sea' (2.13); it is an 'unremitting torture' that is boundless, immeasurable, and insurmountable.<sup>184</sup>

Within this context of life-destroying violence, Lamentations 5 appears to make one final cry of lament and despair, listing with a shocking candour the atrocities faced by the people of Zion.<sup>185</sup> Of particular relevance to this discussion is the *physicality* of these atrocities. Continuing this same emphasis from the other chapters, the author appears to be at pains within Chapter 5 to reflect the *reality* and *literality* of the people's suffering; they have been made homeless (vv.2-3), forced into hard labour (vv.5, 13), treated harshly by their overlords (v.8), deprived of basic sustenance (v.6), surrounded by the threat and execution of pervasive torture and violence (vv.9, 12), and inflicted with both hunger and disease (vv.9-10). Within this context of unremitting oppression, subjugation, and physical abuse, it surely makes sense to read the phrase נְשִׁים בְּצִיּוֹן עָנּוּ in v.11 as likewise stressing the corporeality of the sexual violence endured by women at the hands of the enemy troops, rather than simply reflecting their social dishonour.<sup>186</sup> These women suffer

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<sup>182</sup> Robert Davidson, *Jeremiah with Lamentations* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1985), 2:210; Norman K. Gottwald, *Studies in the Book of Lamentations* (London: SCM Press, 1962), 88; Michael L. Brown, "Lamentations: Theology of", in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997), 4:887-90.

<sup>183</sup> Alan Mintz, "The Rhetoric of Lamentations and the Representation of Catastrophe", *Prooftexts* 2 (1982): 6.

<sup>184</sup> Mintz, 6, 10.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 6, 13; Davidson, 210; Jannie Hunter, *Faces of a Lamenting City: The Development and Coherence of the Book of Lamentations* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996), 142.

<sup>186</sup> I therefore disagree with Iain W. Provan, who suggests that here, עָנָה denotes a woman's humiliation and social shame as a result of being raped. See *Lamentations* (Grand Rapids: William B.

far more than a sense of shame or humiliation here; like their fellow inhabitants of Zion, they endure a violence that was both emotionally *and* physically destructive. Thus, these joint contextual themes of sexual violation and physical oppression evident within Lamentations 5 would strongly suggest that we translate **בְּצִיּוֹן עָנּוּ נְשִׁים** as ‘women are raped in Zion’.<sup>187</sup>

Thus to summarise the above discussion, the use of **עָנָה** in the texts of Deut. 22.28-9, Jdg. 19-20, 2 Sam. 13, and Lam. 5, would suggest that, within contexts of explicit sexual aggression, this verbal form is consistently employed to represent the abusive and at times life-threatening acts of corporeal violence perpetrated against women, which are intrinsic to their experience of sexual assault.<sup>188</sup> I would therefore suggest that, within such contexts, this verb may be translated as ‘to commit violence against’, ‘to force’, or simply, ‘to rape’. As Alice Keefe has stated with regards this verb form, ‘the violence implicit or explicit in the narrative justifies the translation of rape’.<sup>189</sup> Scholars who refute such a reading of **עָנָה** have, I believe, failed to recognise the *physicality* of the abusiveness implicit within these women’s rape experiences. Instead, they have focalized the assault primarily as a *sexual* act, regarding it from a socio-religious and judicial perspective as an occasion of unlawful and socially shaming *sexual* behaviour, as opposed to a brutalising assault upon a woman’s body.<sup>190</sup> By doing so, they, albeit unwittingly, serve only to perpetuate the contemporary denial of the physical cruelty of rape, and the concomitant contextualisation of sexual violence as little more than an expression of sexual desire. To be sure, rape can cause women to be subjected to an inordinate sense of shame and social debasement, whether they are living in biblical Israel or in a contemporary patriarchal culture. However, primarily, these women experience

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Eerdmans, 1991), 131. Nor, by any stretch of the imagination, could this verb form allude to the ‘seduction’ of these women, as Weinfeld’s reading of **הָנָה** would suggest.

<sup>187</sup> Bader, 24; Delbert R. Hillers, *Lamentations: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (New York: Doubleday, 1972), 95; Claus Westermann, *Lamentations: Issues and Interpretation*, trans. Charles Muenchow (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 209; Frymer-Kensky, “Law and Philosophy”, 100, n.9; Magdalene, 336, n.1.

<sup>188</sup> Gordon and Washington, 313. Similar sentiments are expressed by Magdalene, 336, n.1; Shemesh, 5-6. Furthermore, Gesenius translates **הָנָה** as ‘to weaken a woman, through rape’ (‘ein Weib schwächen, durch Notzucht’); see Wilhelm Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*, ed. Heinrich Zimmern, Wilhelm Max Müller, and Otto Weber (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1949), 604.

<sup>189</sup> Keefe, 81. Likewise, Gravett contends that such an interpretation of **עָנָה** makes sense ‘in these cases when power and sexual aggression come together’ (285; also 288-89). See also Magdalene, 336, n.1; Scholz, *Rape Plots*, 137-38; Shemesh, 5-6; Gordon and Washington, 314.

<sup>190</sup> Gordon and Washington, 314.

this crime as a corporeal and life threatening act of aggression, a dehumanising assault upon their bodily integrity, and a source of seemingly endless pain, terror, and trauma.<sup>191</sup>

Furthermore, Weinfeld's suggestion that *הִנָּע* refers to a woman's 'seduction' appears to go even further in denying both the reality of the rape event within these texts and the violating aggression intrinsic to the sexual acts depicted therein. Indeed, his assertion that episodes of sexual behaviour 'which are innocent but which involve an element of imposition upon the woman' are 'not strictly' rape<sup>192</sup> is nothing short of reprehensible. *Any* sexual act, which imposes upon or compromises a woman's right to consent *is* 'strictly' rape and therefore cannot be considered either 'innocent' or merely a 'seduction' by any stretch of the imagination.<sup>193</sup> To suggest otherwise is a sad reflection of the influence of contemporary societal values, which would appear to pay scant regard to a woman's right to determine her sexual boundaries whilst confusing sexual violence with consensual heterosexual behaviour. The texts of Deut. 22.28-29, Jdg. 19-20, 2 Sam. 13, and Lam. 5 have informed us all too clearly that the verbal action represented by the form *הִנָּע* cannot be read merely as an evaluation of a rape victim's social dishonour or as a report of her seduction. Instead, it should be recognised as one means by which the biblical authors conveyed the abusive and overtly aggressive violent treatment suffered by women at the hands of their rapists.<sup>194</sup> Tamar, the unnamed concubine, and the countless women of Zion and Judah – these women were not simply shamed or seduced; they were overpowered, brutalised, and violated by the men who raped them and it is *this* experience that I believe is clearly represented within these texts by the verbal form *הִנָּע*.

Taking the above conclusions into account, what then is the likely semantic significance of *הִנָּע* as it is utilised within the contextual environment of Gen. 34.2? Does it convey the same meaning as in Deut. 22.28-9, 2 Sam. 13, Jdg. 19-20, and Lam. 5, thus informing the reader of the intrinsic violence suffered by Dinah during

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<sup>191</sup> Fortune, *Sexual Violence*, 24-25; Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 9-30. This was also confirmed to me by Kristen Leslie, a pastoral theologian and rape victim advocate, in a personal communication.

<sup>192</sup> Weinfeld, 286, n.5.

<sup>193</sup> William B. Sanders, *Rape and Women's Identity* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1980), 26, 158.

<sup>194</sup> This is, of course, not to claim that *הִנָּע* is the only means by which the act of rape was represented within biblical Hebrew, as its absence from Deut. 22.25-27, which describes an unequivocal scenario of violent, coercive sexual intercourse, amply demonstrates. However, it may be regarded as one of several means used by the biblical authors to convey such abusive and harmful acts of sexual violation; in other situations, the use of a verb of seizure or the evidence of a woman's cry for help appear likewise to highlight the reader to the fact that the sexual event was indeed aggressive and non-consensual (Gravett, 285).



her sexual assault? Alternatively, does this verb simply describe the sexual act of seduction, or perhaps allude to Dinah's social-judicial humiliation following her participation in a consensual, though illicit, sexual encounter? In other words, should **וַיַּעַנְהוּ** be translated here as 'he seduced her', 'he shamed her', or 'he committed violence against her'?

In response to this question, scholarly opinion remains much divided. For example, some biblical interpreters have argued that within the context of Gen. 34.2, **עָנָה** refers to Dinah's shame, after she fails to live up to the societal ideals expected of unmarried virgins within the culture of biblical Israel.<sup>195</sup> They therefore argue that this verb does not convey a sense of the physical brutality of Shechem's sexual assault upon Dinah; rather it denotes her dishonour and loss of social status, following her involvement in an unlawful act of consensual sexual intercourse.<sup>196</sup> Thus, according to van Wolde, 'the verb 'innâ in Gen. xxxiv 2 does not describe Shechem's rape or sexual abuse of Dinah, but evaluates Shechem's previously described actions ("take" and "sleep with") as a debasement of Dinah from a social-judicial point of view'.<sup>197</sup> Weinfeld, meanwhile, contends that, within this particular verse, **וַיַּעַנְהוּ** simply informs the reader that Shechem had sexual intercourse with Dinah.<sup>198</sup>

Nevertheless, taking into account the utilisation of **עָנָה** within the texts discussed above, I would again contend that scholars who argue that, within Gen. 34.2, **וַיַּעַנְהוּ** denotes either Dinah's sexual shame or her seduction may have failed to recognise fully the violent nuances that this verb may convey, whenever it is employed within a context of explicit sexual aggression.<sup>199</sup> For, it is highly likely that, within this particular text, the verb **וַיַּעַנְהוּ** does emphasise the particularly abusive and forceful

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<sup>195</sup> Bechtel, "Dinah", 70; van Wolde, "Does 'innâ Denote Rape", 543-44; Lipka, 188; Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 183; Fleishman, 103. Lipka substantiates her argument by noting that the two verbal forms (**וַיַּעַנְהוּ** and **וַיִּשְׁכַּב**) are utilised in Deut. 22.23-24, where the sexual intercourse depicted is unequivocally consensual (188). However, two points ought to be noted here. Firstly, Lipka fails to consider that both of these verbs also appear in two other texts that undeniably portray coercive sexual intercourse (Deut. 22.28-29; 2 Sam. 13.11-14); therefore, her supposition that they cannot describe sexual violence in Gen. 34.2 is not necessarily correct. Furthermore, with regards Deut. 22.23-24, the author is at pains within this law to emphasise the consensual nature of the sexual act; such an emphasis is entirely lacking in Gen. 34.2. Indeed, quite the opposite is true, as the narrator precedes both verbs with **לִקְחָהּ**, which, as discussed above, is likely to denote a sense of aggressive seizure or capture here, thus indicating to the audience that both **וַיַּעַנְהוּ** and **וַיִּשְׁכַּב** describe an act of sexual intercourse that is *not* consensual.

<sup>196</sup> The precise reasons why the sexual intercourse between Dinah and Shechem was considered illicit will be discussed in the next chapter.

<sup>197</sup> van Wolde, "Does 'innâ Denote Rape" 543-44; also Bader, 25.

<sup>198</sup> Weinfeld, 286.

<sup>199</sup> Yamada, 151, n.9; Scholz, *Rape Plots*, 137-38.

nature of Shechem's sexual interaction with Dinah rather than simply alluding to either Dinah's seduction or her dishonour.<sup>200</sup> Shechem, we are told, took hold of Dinah before proceeding to sexually penetrate her; thus, just as Amnon seized Tamar (ויחזק ממנה) prior to having aggressive sexual intercourse with her (ויענה וישכב אתה), so too did this Hivite prince likewise use force to restrain Dinah (ויקח אתה) before violating her (ויענה וישכב אתה). The fact that both שכב and ענה occur in 2 Sam. 13.14 to denote an unequivocal act of sexual violence strongly suggests to me that these same two verbs are employed in Gen. 34.2 to convey likewise the aggressive and coercive nature of Shechem's sexual response to Dinah.<sup>201</sup> Moreover, as a number of scholars have pointed out, the related themes of coercion and sexuality denoted by the phrase ויקח אתה וישכב אתה do provide adequate contextual support for reading ויענה as 'he raped her' or 'he committed violence against her'.<sup>202</sup> Thus, Karen Armstrong notes, 'we are told that Shechem "lay with her by force" (34.2) rather than the usual phrase "lay with her"'.<sup>203</sup> Similarly, Westermann likewise contends that Gen. 34.2 'is not narrating a seduction but a forceful violation, as the word ויענה underscores'.<sup>204</sup> The aggression implicit within Shechem's treatment of Dinah *prior* to her rape is thus perpetuated by his use of violence towards her *during* this event. Through his choice of the verb ענה within

<sup>200</sup> Jeansonne, 91. While acknowledging that ענה may also carry the meaning 'to humble' within other contexts, Jeansonne nevertheless concludes that, within *this* verse, such a translation 'does not fully capture the meaning of the cruel act'.

<sup>201</sup> I therefore disagree with Frymer-Kensky's supposition that the different order in which the verbs ענה and שכב are employed in 2 Sam. 13.14 and Gen. 34.2 is significant. She suggests that the use of ענה *after* שכב in Gen. 34.2, as compared to its placement *before* שכב in 2 Sam. 13.14, implies that here, ענה denotes only a sense of Dinah's debasement as a result of her consensual participation in an act of illicit premarital sexual intercourse: 'In rape, abuse starts the moment the rapist begins to use force, long before penetration. In other illicit sexual encounters, the act of intercourse may not be abusive. The sex may be sweet and romantic. But the *fact* that the man has intercourse with her degrades her, and so the word 'innah comes after the words "lay with"' [original italics]. In other words, Frymer-Kensky is proposing that it would not make sense to say that Shechem abused Dinah *after* we have been told that he sexually penetrated her, as the abusiveness of rape begins prior to the act of penetration. I personally fail to see the significance of the different word order within these two texts. While Frymer-Kensky is correct to point out that a woman's violation at the hands of her rapist does indeed begin *before* the act of coerced sexual intercourse occurs, such violation and abuse does nevertheless continue *throughout* the entire rape event. Shechem seized Dinah, sexually penetrated her, and abused or violated her; coming at the end of the description of this event, the verb ענה may very well evaluate Shechem's aggressive treatment of Dinah, both in terms of his taking hold of her and his coercive act of sexual assault. In my mind, therefore, to say that Shechem 'lay with' Dinah and 'abused' her makes just as much sense as to say that he 'abused' her and 'lay with' her.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*; Gravett, 283, 285; Keefe, 81; Westermann, *Genesis*, 538; Scholz, "Through Whose Eyes", 166-67; Davies, 56; Ullendorff, 436.

<sup>203</sup> Armstrong, 95. See also Scholz, "Through Whose Eyes", 165, 167; Gravett, 282; Speiser, 262, 264.

<sup>204</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 538. Likewise, Gravett suggests that Shechem did not make love to Dinah here, he 'grabbed her and forcefully lay with her' (282), while Speiser similarly proposes the reading, 'he seized her, and slept with her by force' (262, 264).

such a context of coerced and aggressive sexuality, the narrator thereby confirms to the reader that this was no act of consensual seduction but a shocking display of sexualised brutality.

*The narrator's syntactical strategies in v.2: do they confirm a reading of rape?*

Thus far, I have argued that, when read together, the three verbal forms employed by the narrator in v.2 to depict the sexual act that occurred between Dinah and Shechem do strongly suggest that this act was indeed a violent and coercive act of sexual assault. To substantiate this reading, a number of scholars have proposed that the ancient author's organisation of these three verbs into an unbroken sequence of consecutive verb forms (ויקח אתה וישכב אתה ויענה) would further suggest that he did indeed intend to depict here a scene of rapidly executed and increasingly violent sexual assault. Thus, for example, Sternberg posits that by utilising three verbs rather than one to convey Shechem's response to seeing Dinah, the narrator effectively impels the reader to dwell upon this increasingly explicit and condemnatory depiction of the young prince's behaviour.<sup>205</sup> The apparent redundancy and 'rhetorical overkill' of the threefold repetition emphasises the abusive and non-consensual nature of the sexual encounter and thus 'quashes the idea of seduction', whilst projecting a 'sharp judgement' on Shechem, categorising him less as an amorous or love-struck youth than as a violent rapist.<sup>206</sup>

Likewise, Cotter argues that this chain of verbs in v.2 is utilised by the narrator to denote a potent image of Shechem's escalating aggression.<sup>207</sup> These consecutive forms, he suggests, occurring in rapid succession, only serve to heighten the reader's awareness of both the celerity and the brutality of his assault upon Dinah.<sup>208</sup> He thus concludes, 'To call this something other than rape, as some commentaries do, seems incomprehensible to me'.<sup>209</sup> In a similar vein, Rashkow asserts that the three 'verbs of force' chosen by the narrator here 'negate any possibility of seduction or mutual consent, and imprints the act of violence on the reader's mind'.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 446.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*; also "Biblical Poetics and Sexual Politics" 475.

<sup>207</sup> Cotter, 254.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, n.56.

<sup>210</sup> Rashkow, "Hebrew Bible Translation", 226. Other scholars to understand the significance of this verbal chain in a similar manner include Yamada, 151; Scholz, *Rape Plots*, 136, 138; and "Through

Taking into account the above discussion, these scholars certainly do appear to be making a valid point. This ‘overloading’ of the text with lexical forms connoting the nature of this sexual encounter suggests that the narrator did intend to convey to the reader something of the speed and escalating violence with which Shechem initiated and executed his assault upon Dinah. By preceding two verbal forms, which together are utilised elsewhere to depict explicitly violent sexual intercourse, with a verb that can denote aggressive seizure, the ancient author managed to portray this sexual experience as an essentially forceful and coercive one. While these three verbs, when utilised on their own, may not inherently convey explicitly aggressive or sexually abusive behaviour, they do however appear to convey a strong image of violent sexual assault when employed together in this consecutive verbal chain. Shechem ‘takes’ Dinah aggressively and has sex with her employing physical brutality and abuse. It would therefore seem to me that ויקח אֶתָּהּ וישָׁכַב אִתָּהּ ויעֲנֶהָ may indeed be translated ‘and he seized her, and lay with her, and abused her’.

#### *Dinah’s passivity*

In the Introduction, I highlighted that one of the central concerns with regards Dinah’s representation within Genesis 34 is her apparent passivity during both her rape and throughout the events that revolve around her in its aftermath. Considering Gen. 34.2 in particular, such passivity on Dinah’s part is made acutely apparent by the fact that, within the previous verse, she is presented for the first and only time as an autonomous actor within this narrative; she ‘goes out’, we are told, to make the acquaintance of the local indigenous women of Shechem (v.1). In stark contrast, v.2 highlights instead her precipitate loss of self-determination and her abrupt consignment to the role of one more acted upon than acting.<sup>211</sup> As a number of scholars have suggested, this unexpected and shocking relegation of Dinah from the status of active subject to that of passive object within this verse may in fact function as *confirmation* that the sexual intercourse depicted in this verse was violent and non-consensual.<sup>212</sup> Without either explanation or warning, she is no longer a woman going out on her own volition to seek *female* company, but is instead the object of a

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Whose Eyes”, 165; Sarna, 234; Keefe, 81, n.2; Jeansonne, 91; Alter, 189; Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 538; Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 311; Gravett, 285; Shemesh, 4.

<sup>211</sup> Gravett, 283; Scholz, “Through Whose Eyes”, 165; Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 46; Leeb, 137; Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 447.

<sup>212</sup> Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 46; Scholz, *Rape Plots*, 135; Rashkow, “Hebrew Bible Translation”, 226; Gravett, 283; Shemesh, 18.

series of increasingly aggressive verbal actions, all carried out by a man who appears to have neither sought her consent nor given much thought to her wishes or welfare.<sup>213</sup> There is no record of their meeting, no amorous preamble, no verbal foreplay. Given that her motives for going out were so clearly *non*-sexual, coupled with this apparent absence of *any* interaction between herself and Shechem to suggest that the sexual event was mutually desired, it would be reasonable to infer that the young prince's apparently immediate sexual response on seeing Dinah's was, in her mind, both unforeseen and unwelcome. As Shemesh notes, Dinah's syntactic status of passivity in v.2 'accurately reflects her personal status and experience as a rape victim'.<sup>214</sup>

Furthermore, Dinah is not even referred to by name in this verse, but is instead merely represented by a series of pronominal suffixes, which depersonalise and objectify her to the point that, as Aschkenasy suggests, the reader has no choice but to view her 'in her diminished status as a sedentary, immobile object of rape'.<sup>215</sup> In Shechem's eyes, she was not a subject of consciousness, but an object to be (ab)used, solely in order to gratify his need to dominate, control, and sexually possess. Thus, according to Gravett, 'Shechem's actions objectify Dinah as he assumes the position of primary actor and she never again re-establishes her status as a subject in the text. This abrupt change in power, when seen alongside words that can be read as violent, create contextual support for a reading of rape'.<sup>216</sup> Dinah may be utterly silent and passive here in v.2, but such silence and passivity nevertheless speak volubly about the coercive and aggressive nature of her sexual ordeal; without a word of warning, she is seized and violated, her initial objective of seeing the women of the land totally forgotten. Thus, like so many victims of rape, her subjectivity is denied her, her autonomy is utterly subverted, and her cries of protest go unheeded.

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<sup>213</sup> Parry, *Old Testament Story*, 146; Scholz, *Rape Plots*, 135. Both Bader and Zlotnik argue that because we do not hear Dinah say 'no', we do not know if she consented, therefore we cannot conclude that she was raped (Bader, 11, 28; Zlotnik, 38). I would argue, however, that the lack of any courtship narrative would imply instead that the sex was both precipitous and coercive.

<sup>214</sup> Shemesh, 18.

<sup>215</sup> Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 46. Similar sentiments are expressed by Rashkow: 'From Shechem's perspective, Dinah is an object' ("Hebrew Bible Translation", 226). Likewise, Shemesh notes that 'it is as if she [Dinah] is an object to be moved from place to place and handled as he [Shechem] wishes' (18).

<sup>216</sup> Gravett, 283.

## Conclusion

At the start of this chapter, we discussed the fact that cultural concepts of normative heterosexual behaviour consistently lead to a denial of the misogynistic brutality implicit within the rape event, because sexualised aggression is contextualised, first and foremost, as a *sexual* (and therefore mutually pleasurable and mutually desired) act.<sup>217</sup> As a result, there is a propensity, within contemporary patriarchal cultures, to ignore or refute women's experience of rape as a violent, damaging, and life-destroying act of male cruelty, which threatens their physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing, and subverts their right to bodily and sexual integrity. Rape, however, is sexual only in the sense that it uses the sexualities of both the victim and the perpetrator as a *means* to commit violence; it has no currency with consensual and mutually desired sexual intimacy. As Anne Cahill notes, 'To say that [rape] is sexual is only to recognise the experiential relevance of the means of the violence committed and not to undermine in any way the recognition of the crime as a horrifically violent one'.<sup>218</sup>

Turning to Genesis 34, I then raised the possibility that interpretations of this narrative, which appear to undermine or cast doubt upon the violent and coercive nature of Dinah's sexual encounter with Shechem, may, albeit unwittingly, serve only to perpetuate this cultural normalisation of sexual violence and the concomitant confusion between abusive and acceptable sexuality. In other words, such interpretations would appear to focalize Shechem's treatment of Dinah primarily as a *sexual* event, thereby failing to recognize the violence inherent within this terrible crime. Through a close analysis of the language and syntax employed by the narrator to depict this event, it becomes evident, however, that a reading of rape, rather than seduction, is more likely. The ancient author's apparent overloading of the text with a tripartite chain of consecutive verbal forms, which together, denote aggressive sexuality, allowed him to depict with great clarity Shechem's violent, abusive, and unjust behaviour. Furthermore, Dinah's shocking and precipitate relegation to passive recipient of these brutal actions only serves to underscore the cruel and coercive nature of her sexual experience at Shechem's hands.

Thus, biblical interpreters, who insist upon reading this verse as a depiction of a seduction, rather than a rape, may have failed to acknowledge the sense of brutality

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<sup>217</sup> Smart, 44.

<sup>218</sup> Cahill, 120.

expressed within the linguistic and stylistic choices employed by this author to denote the sexual event that occurred between Dinah and Shechem. Their interpretation of Gen. 34.2 therefore ought to be challenged, not only because the textual evidence does not rule out an alternative reading of rape, but moreover because such an interpretation serves only to perpetuate Dinah's narrative silencing. By denying her status as the victim of sexual violence, these scholars thereby undermine the viciousness of this woman's violation and the pain and terror that she would have endured at the hands of her rapist. Rape is a life-subverting abuse of a woman's right to her sexual and physical autonomy, an assault upon her body, her emotions, and her sense of safety. In the words of Deena Metzger, herself a rape survivor, rape is a means by which 'woman is brutally stripped of her humanity and confronted with her definition as a nonperson, a function ... [rape] asserts only combat, brutalising the communal aspect of sexuality, destroying meaning, relationship, and person, creating a universe of ontological terror'.<sup>219</sup> By recognising this, and thus by endorsing an honest and gynocentric representation of sexual violence, we thus commit ourselves to providing an environment in which Dinah is enabled to enter into the narrative discourse and speak freely to us about the physical and emotional pain, the dread, and the spiritual torment intrinsic to her rape experience. As Andrea Rehtin, a rape victim advocate, notes, 'As long as we view rape as seduction, and at worst unwanted sex, we will never understand rape. If we push ourselves to see the violence in rape for what it is, perhaps then we can begin to understand the degradation of rape victims.'<sup>220</sup>

Nevertheless, before ending this chapter, a final caveat should perhaps be added. By accepting that the author of Genesis 34 *does* acknowledge the violence intrinsic to the sexual encounter between Dinah and Shechem, we should not be too hasty to conclude that he necessarily lends a voice to Dinah's suffering, focalising the rape through *her* eyes, or dwelling upon the horror that she faced during her ordeal. For, no sooner does he report this aggressive event (briefly) in v.2 than it appears to be forgotten, lost among the other pressing narrative concerns – male concerns – of family honour, the threat of assimilation, and intertribal conflict. Following v.2, Shechem's act of rape is never again referred to as an abusive ordeal for Dinah *per se*, but, as we will see in the following chapters, it is instead reinterpreted and given

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<sup>219</sup> Metzger, 405; also Scully and Marolla, "Rape and Vocabularies of Motive", 298; Griffin, *Rape: The Politics of Consciousness*, 66; Joanna Carlson Brown, "Because of the Angels: Sexual Violence and Abuse", in Fiorenza and Copeland, 5; Lebowitz and Roth, 366; Roth and Lebowitz, 103.

<sup>220</sup> Andrea Rehtin, quoted in Beneke, 168.

new meaning by the narrative's multiple male characters.<sup>221</sup> They and they alone are depicted by the author as the ones affected in one sense or another by this assault; it is *their* voices we hear, not Dinah's. Let us therefore turn to consider the reaction of these male characters to the rape event, contemplating how their focalisation of Dinah's violation would have affected her experience of sexual violence and how their own re-construal of this crime continued to ensure her narrative silencing.

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<sup>221</sup> Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 219; Davies, 56; Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 53-58.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **The Marginality of Dinah's Suffering: Exactly Who Is the 'Real' Victim in Genesis 34?**

#### **The Rape Victim as 'Damaged Goods': Masculinist Concerns Regarding Victims of Sexual Violence**

*'I wanted to die. I could not stop crying. I thought everybody was looking at me and could see what I was feeling inside. I felt dirty, bathing all the time as I needed to be clean ... I could smell [the rapist] all the time. I kept scratching myself to get him out of my body. I smashed all the mirrors in my bedroom and cut up the clothes I had been wearing'.<sup>1</sup>*

*'[The rape] destroyed our marriage because of [my husband's] inability to accept it. He has always seen me as his possession, not as a person. And you don't take his possessions and do anything to them. You don't hurt his car. You don't do anything to his wife'.<sup>2</sup>*

*'On returning to their communities the women experienced shame and humiliation; some were taunted by men who said they were "used products that have lost their taste".<sup>3</sup>*

In the previous chapter, we discussed the attitude commonly held within contemporary patriarchal cultures, which regards rape as an essentially *sexual* event, and which denies, or at least ignores, the violence and brutality inflicted upon the victim during the act of rape. In this chapter, I will move onto another pervasive and particularly insidious myth, which appears to have its origins within this same equation of rape and sexuality: that is, the myth that rape survivors are 'damaged goods'.

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<sup>1</sup> Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 19.

<sup>2</sup> Diana E.H. Russell, 226.

<sup>3</sup> Meredith Turshen, speaking of rape victims from Uganda, in "The Political Economy of Violence Against Women During Armed Conflict in Uganda", *Social Research* 67 (2000): 815.

One of the most damaging and destructive effects of rape experienced by the victim is that this crime may often leave her with an overwhelming sense of having been ‘defiled’ or ‘dirtied’. Many survivors report feelings of humiliation and degradation, which overwhelm them after their assault; it is as though the rapist’s abusive attentions have left a dirty and indelible mark upon their body and mind, rendering them devalued and sullied.<sup>4</sup> As one victim noted, this sense of defilement and debasement was something she believed would forever be ‘stamped’ on her forehead for all to see, rendering her terrifyingly exposed to social ostracism and instilling in her a sense of personal self-worthlessness.<sup>5</sup>

Why does sexual violence have the power to inflict such a destructive and damaging sense of degradation upon the victim? I would suggest that the answer to this question ultimately lies within the very ontological nature of this crime and the implicit message that it imparts to its survivors. As Lebowitz and Roth observe, rape is ‘a powerful interpersonal communication’, which speaks volubly to the victim about her own insignificance; she is treated by the rapist, not as an equal moral agent worthy of respect, but merely as an object of contempt, upon which he can pour out his scorn and disdain.<sup>6</sup> Through this most intimate act of personal violation, the woman internalises the rapist’s own attitude that she is not deserving of care, consideration, or respect; she is merely a ‘thing’ or commodity to be damaged, mistreated, and then discarded as worthless.<sup>7</sup> Thus, according Dr Muradif Kulenović, a psychiatrist and expert on post-traumatic stress disorder:

Victims never experience rape only as a physical aggression, physical force or an attack on physical integrity. For a victim it is the aggression against her emotions and her mental system. It is the attack on her person, her own dignity, her intimate self. Rape is aggression against her own identity. A victim knows that her (or his) person has been reduced to an object or thing used by the rapist to vent his anger, rage, and hatred. And this is the reason why the majority of victims feel worthless, “dirty”, and “infected”.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ward, 28; Pellauer, “A Theological Perspective on Sexual Assault”, 84; Kelly, *Surviving Sexual Violence*, 171; Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 18-19; Dianne Herman, 58.

<sup>5</sup> Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 19.

<sup>6</sup> Lebowitz and Roth, 366; also McGregor, 108-9, 227.

<sup>7</sup> Leslie, 111-16; Metzger, 407; Griffin, “Rape: The All American Crime”, 59; Pellauer, “A Theological Perspective on Sexual Assault”, 87-88; Lebowitz and Roth, 370, 372; Judith Lewis Herman, 571; Diana E.H. Russell, 168; Fairstein, 173.

<sup>8</sup> Cited in Seada Vranić, *Breaking the Wall of Silence: The Voices of Raped Bosnia* (Zagreb: Izdanja Antibarbarus, 1996), 191.

Or, in the words of one rape survivor, ‘To feel that you have no other function other than as an object to be used and thrown away completely destroys your confidence and makes you feel powerless, worthless, ashamed and guilty’.<sup>9</sup>

However, while the act of rape may perpetuate the victim’s belief in her own worthlessness and devaluation, the response she is shown by *others* may likewise confirm her own negative self-appraisal.<sup>10</sup> Within contemporary patriarchal culture, there is a pervasive and insidious preponderance for the rape victim’s community, and even, at times, her family, to regard her as in some sense ‘damaged’, defiled, and devalued by her rape experience.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, although this cultural response to rape may echo in many ways the feelings experienced by the rape survivor herself, the rationales underlying both of these responses would appear to be dependant upon very different presuppositions. While the victim’s sense of self-worthlessness is informed by *her own* experience of violation, objectification, and bodily intrusion, social attitudes tend instead to conceptualise her degradation in terms of the effect that the rape has had upon her ‘value’ or status within the community. In other words, the social response, which regards a rape victim as ‘damaged goods’, is not shaped by an empathetic understanding of the woman’s personal experience of physical and psychic degradation, but rather evaluates the rape event in terms of its repercussions for the woman’s ‘value’ according to patriarchal social value systems. In effect, such systems are founded upon two distinct but related ideologies, both of which are millennia-old, yet which continue to shape contemporary social and judicial attitudes pertaining to sexual violence.<sup>12</sup> Let us consider these now in more detail.

In the first place, it has been a common historical feature within patriarchal cultures dating at least as far back as the biblical period for women to be regarded as the exclusive ‘sexual property’ of the men under whose social protection and authority they existed, typically first their father, then their husband.<sup>13</sup> A woman’s father traditionally had authority to control his unmarried daughter’s sexuality, while a husband was understood to enjoy sole sexual access to his wife. In essence, then,

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<sup>9</sup> Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 22 (see also 18-19).

<sup>10</sup> Lebowitz and Roth, 366.

<sup>11</sup> Diana E.H. Russell, 62; Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 1, 4; Gerdi Weidner and William Griffitt, “Rape: A Sexual Stigma?” *Journal of Personality* 51 (1983): 151-66.

<sup>12</sup> Brownmiller, 376; Ward, 28; Dianne Herman, 45; Metzger, 406; Bohmer, “Acquaintance Rape and the Law”, 318; Williams and Holmes, 24; Manazan, 46-47.

<sup>13</sup> Cahill, 168; Brownmiller, 16-30, 376; McGregor, 3, 29.

women's bodies have traditionally been identified, not as active, autonomous subjects but as objects of appropriation.

Furthermore, this male prerogative to female sexual ownership has influenced cultural conceptions of sexual violence, with the result that rape has often been treated, and continues to be treated, not as a personal attack against a woman and an assault upon her bodily integrity, but rather as a violation by one man of another man's proprietary rights.<sup>14</sup> Survivors of sexual violence continue to report that their families, especially their father or male partner, react to their rape as though *they* are the 'real' victims of this crime, because their right to control the sexual boundaries of their wife, partner, or daughter and their claims to exclusive ownership of this woman's sexuality have been seriously compromised by the rapist's actions.<sup>15</sup> Thus, for example, one woman reported that her husband was angry with *her* when he heard about her rape because she had had sexual intercourse with another man.<sup>16</sup> The fact that the sexual encounter had been non-consensual appeared to be a moot point for him; his right to sole sexual access to his wife had been violated and, as a result, she was no longer the 'valued property' that she had once been.<sup>17</sup> Another man whose wife had been raped stated, 'I wanted to kill that bastard [the rapist]. I wanted to destroy him for what he'd done to *me*' [italics added].<sup>18</sup> Inevitably, such a 'hijacking' of the rape experience by the victim's partner or family only leads to the woman's own interpretation and experience of the rape event being invalidated and suppressed.

However, this stifling of women's rape experiences also derives from a second, concomitant ideology, which shapes patriarchal value systems and which likewise influences cultural conceptions of sexual violence; that is, the belief that a woman's status within her community and the 'value' that she has to her male 'owner' ought to be measured according to her sexual status, in particular, her chastity. If a woman's sexuality is laid claim to by any man other than its rightful 'owner', then the woman's social worth and status suffer as a result; her chastity had been irredeemably

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<sup>14</sup> Cahill, 168; Brownmiller, 376; Magdalene, 338; McGregor, 3, 29.

<sup>15</sup> Silverman, 142, 145; Madigan and Gamble, 6; Dianne Herman, 45; Lebowitz and Roth, 375; Diana E.H. Russell, 67, 194.

<sup>16</sup> Diana E.H. Russell, 226

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* This woman's husband had actually insisted upon reasserting his sexual ownership over her as soon as she returned home from hospital. When she refused, being traumatised and in pain, he raped her, telling her 'as long as you're my wife, it's my conjugal right. So don't fight me' (227).

<sup>18</sup> Horos, 93; also Metzger, 406.

compromised and she is effectively considered devalued or degraded.<sup>19</sup> Thus, a virgin or a monogamous wife is granted a much higher social value than a woman who has had multiple sexual partners, or for that matter, *any* sexual partners outwith marriage. Female sexuality appears to be dichotomised into chaste/unchaste, valuable/worthless, clean/unclean, and worthy/unworthy of protection; once a woman crosses over from one category to the other, her community may often regard her as sullied, devalued, and defiled.<sup>20</sup>

These negative attitudes towards female sexuality are, furthermore, often expressed even when the woman is the non-consenting participant in a coercive sexual assault. The effects of sexual violence upon the victim are all too often evaluated primarily in terms of the injury done to her sexual *status* not to her *self*. It is as though her intimate encounter with forbidden sexuality leads others to regard her as ‘damaged’ or ‘used’ goods, polluted with the immorality of promiscuity, and, furthermore, as someone who can ‘dirty’ or defile those she comes into contact with.<sup>21</sup> Thus, for example, the mother of a ten-year-old rape survivor recalled that some of her own family members spurned her daughter after the rape incident: ‘Instead of understanding, they treated her as if she was a criminal, whose very presence could only taint them’.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, another rape survivor reported that her mother told her, “Now this has happened to you and you are going to have it the rest of your life” ... I was soiled ... [and] now that I’m soiled I’m going to start living a loose life. I’m going to start whoring around ... I really think that she thinks I am whoring around. That I really am a no-good person ... that I really am unclean’.<sup>23</sup>

In a very real way then, the rape survivor is objectified and degraded, not only by her rapist but also by those around her. Her own sense of humiliation and defilement in the wake of her sexual assault is effectively confirmed and thus reinforced by the responses she receives from her family and community, responses that render her a marginalised, ostracised source of distaste or even contempt. It is little wonder then that rape is one of the most unreported crimes. Women’s fear of being wrapped in a miasma of defilement and dishonour is another major factor in

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<sup>19</sup> Bohmer, “Acquaintance Rape and the Law”, 318; Cuklanz, 17; Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 132-33, 147; and *Ruling Passions*, 17-37; LeGrand, 69; Griffin, “Rape: The All-American Crime”, 58; Brownmiller, 376, 385-86; Ward, 28; Millett, 44; Cahill, 168; Leslie, 114-15.

<sup>20</sup> Lebowitz and Roth, 374; Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 147; and *Ruling Passions*, 18-19.

<sup>21</sup> Lebowitz and Roth, 372.

<sup>22</sup> Ward, 3. Ward also cites a rape survivor who reported that her husband ‘doesn’t want me around his family. He told his mother on Sunday and said he was ashamed of me’ (3).

<sup>23</sup> Lebowitz and Roth, 374.

their reluctance to report rape; they simply do not want to face the ‘theatre of shame’ that they know they will encounter from others within their own family and community,<sup>24</sup> not to mention from within the institutions that constitute the judicial system.<sup>25</sup> For many women, the act of telling their story, of breaking silence about their abuse, is simply to be reminded, time and again, of their marginalised and socially dishonoured status. Hence, they remain hidden behind ‘the silent shield of guilt and embarrassment’, which social stigma and humiliation ensures will be their legacy.<sup>26</sup>

The insidious and damaging influence of this myth of the ‘defiled’ rape victim is, furthermore, demonstrated nowhere more devastatingly than in the horror of mass sexual violence, which, for millennia, has all too often been endemic during times of military conflict and remains equally as common in more recent history. One need only think of the sexual abuse of hundreds of thousands of Asian Pacific women and girls by Japanese troops during the 1930s and 40s,<sup>27</sup> the women of Russia, Poland

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<sup>24</sup> For some women, the incentive to remain silent about their rape could not be greater, for their very lives depend upon it. In some Mediterranean and Arab Muslim states, such as Kurdistan, Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, and Jordan, the murder, usually by family members, of women who are suspected of having been sexually unchaste is either sanctioned under state law or, at the very least, is dealt with leniently by the courts. Underlying these murders, or ‘honour killings’, appears to be the deeply-held belief that every woman embodies the honour (*namūs*) of her father, husband, and patrilineal group. Thus, an unchaste woman destroys not only her own reputation but also the name and honour of both her family and community; the only way to cleanse this honour is through the woman’s death. Even in cases of rape, where the sexual experience was coerced and violent, the woman’s kin may still feel duty bound to murder her in order to ‘cleanse’ the family’s honour and restore their status within the community. Other rape survivors may be encouraged to commit suicide to expiate the shame wrought upon the family by their behaviour. See Suzanne Ruggi, “Commodifying Honour in Female Sexuality: Honour Killings in Palestine”, in *Women and Islam: Critical Concepts in Sociology*, ed. Haideh Moghissi (London: Routledge, 2005), 2:125-30; Åsa Eldén, “‘The Killing Seemed to be Necessary’: Arab Cultural Affiliation as an Extenuating Circumstance in a Swedish Verdict”, in Moghissi, 2:131-41; Karen Thomas, ‘Jordan’s women fight to repeal law’, guardian.co.uk, September 7, 1999, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,,271103,00.html> (accessed January 2, 2008); Shahrzad Mojab, “No ‘Safe Haven’: Violence Against Women in Iraqi Kurdistan”, in *Sites of Violence: Gender and Conflict Zones*, ed. Wenona Giles and Jennifer Hyndman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 108-33; Fadia Faqir, “Intrafamily Femicide in Defence of Honour: The Case of Jordan”, in Moghissi, 2:104-24; Beena Sarwar, “... On Suspicion of Illicit Relations”, in *Women and Violence: Realities and Responses World Wide*, ed. Miranda Davies (London: Zed Books, 2004), 220-22;.

<sup>25</sup> Judith Lewis Herman, 573; Williams and Holmes, 3; Mary P. Koss and Sarah L. Cook, “Facing the Facts: Date and Acquaintance Rape Are Significant Problems for Women”, in *Issues in Intimate Violence*, ed. Raquel Kennedy Bergen (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998), 149; Schwendinger and Schwendinger, “Rape Myths”, 18; Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 129-55.

<sup>26</sup> Williams and Holmes, 3; also Judith Lewis Herman, 574; Fairstein, 92; Diana E.H. Russell, 62, 91.

<sup>27</sup> Japanese troops entered Nanking in December 1937; what followed can only be described as a ‘rampage’ of sexual violence, sexual torture, and murderous atrocity against countless Chinese women and girls, some younger than ten years of age. During the period of 1937-45, the years spanning the war in Manchuria, the Sino-Japanese War, and World War II, the Japanese government, in conjunction with the Japanese Imperial Army, ran ‘comfort stations’ for use by its combatants and military personnel. Over 200,000 women from Korea, China, the Philippines, Thailand, Sumatra, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Netherlands were ‘recruited’ for sexual service to these stations, by use

and Germany, who were the victims of sexual brutality throughout the horror of World War II and its aftermath,<sup>28</sup> the countless women and girls (predominantly Tutsi), raped during the bloody civil war in Rwanda,<sup>29</sup> and those women and girls in former Yugoslavia (primarily, though not exclusively Bosnian Muslims), who were systematically raped during the Balkan war as part of a deliberate Serbian military strategy of ethnic cleansing and genocide.<sup>30</sup> This list is, of course, by no means

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of deceit, threat, or force. Commonly known as ‘comfort women’ (*jugun ianfu*), these females were repeatedly raped by Japanese troops on a daily basis; moreover, they lived from day to day under the threat of torture, murder, physical abuse, disease, and unwanted pregnancy. Most were between the ages of fifteen and nineteen years old and the majority of them died either during their time of ‘service’ in the ‘comfort station’ or shortly after the war, as a result of the physical and psychological abuse, injury and disease that they had sustained through their repeated rapes. A significant number of these women took their own lives after their release. For further information on the scandal of the ‘comfort women’, see Yukin Tanaka, *Japan’s Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery and Prostitution during World War II and the United States Occupation* (London: Routledge, 2002); Norma Field, “War and Apology: Japan, Asia, the Fiftieth, and After”, *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 5 (1997): 1-49; Hyunah Yang, “Revisiting the Issue of Korean ‘Military Comfort Women’: The Question of Truth and Positionality”, *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 5 (1997): 51-71; Hyun Sook Kim, “History and Memory: The ‘Comfort Women’ Controversy”, *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 5 (1997): 73-106; Yuki Terazawa, “The Transnational Campaign for Redress for Wartime Rape by the Japanese Military: Cases for Survivors in Shanxi Province”, *NWSA Journal* 18, no.3 (2006): 133-45; Iris Chang, *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1997); Elisabeth Vikman, “Modern Combat: Sexual Violence in Warfare, Part II”, *Anthropology and Medicine* 12 (2005): 33-36; Helen Durham and Bebe Loff, “Japan’s ‘Comfort Women’”, *The Lancet* 357 (2001): 302; Brownmiller, 56-63; Nelia Sancho, “The ‘Comfort Women’ System during World War II: Asian Women as Targets of Mass Rape and Sexual Slavery by Japan”, in *Gender and Catastrophe*, ed. Ronit Lentin (London: Zed Books, 1997), 144-54;

<sup>28</sup> James W. Messerschmidt, “The Forgotten Victims of World War II: Masculinities and Rape in Berlin, 1945”, *Violence Against Women* 12 (2006): 706-12; Brownmiller, 48-56, 65-78; Anita Grossmann, “A Question of Silence: The Rape of German Women by Soviet Occupation Soldiers”, in *Women and War in the Twentieth Century: Enlisted With or Without Consent*, ed. Nicole Ann Dombrowski (New York: Garland Publishing, 1999), 162-83; Akbar S. Ahmed, “‘Ethnic Cleansing’: A Metaphor for Our Time?”, in *Genocide: An Anthropological Reader*, ed. Alexander Laban Hinton (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 211-30; Joan Ringelheim, “Genocide and Gender: A Split Memory”, in Lentin, 18-33.

<sup>29</sup> During the Rwandan civil war of 1994, it is estimated that as many as half a million Tutsi women were raped by the Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR) and Hutu militia (the *Interahamwe*), tens of thousands of whom subsequently contracted the HIV virus. It is generally believed that both the rapes and the spread of the virus were deliberately deployed as weapons of war ploys by the Hutus in order to destroy Tutsi communities. Tutsi women suffered multiple rapes, gang rapes, torture, and physical abuse. Many survivors were left with horrific and at times fatal physical injuries, psychological trauma, and disease, the effects of which were often exacerbated by the ordeal of losing their homes and families to the conflict. See Mardge H. Cohen, Anne-Christine d’Adesky, and Kathryn Anastos, “Women in Rwanda: Another World is Possible”, *Journal of the American Medical Association* 294 (2005): 613-15; African Rights, *Rwanda: Broken Bodies, Torn Spirits; Living with Genocide, Rape and HIV/AIDS* (Kigali, Rwanda: African Rights, 2004); and *Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance* (London: African Rights, 1995), 748-97; Paula Donovan, “Rape and HIV/ AIDS in Rwanda”, *The Lancet Supplement* 360 (2002): 17-18; Paul B. Spiegel *et al.*, “Prevalence of HIV Infection in Conflict-Affected and Displaced People in Seven Sub-Saharan African Countries: A Systematic Review”, *The Lancet* 369 (2007): 2187-95; Human Rights Watch, *Shattered Lives: Sexual Violence During the Rwandan Genocide and Its Aftermath* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1996); Catharine Newbury and Hannah Baldwin, “Profile: Rwanda”, in *Women and Civil War: Impact, Organisations, and Action*, ed. Krishna Kumar (London: Lynne Rienner, 2001), 27-38.

<sup>30</sup> At least 120,000 women and girls (primarily Bosnian Muslims), some as young as seven years old, were the victim of multiple rapes and gang rapes by Serbian troops and civilians during the Bosnian

exhaustive;<sup>31</sup> furthermore, even as I write, countless women and girls are enduring unimaginable sexual brutality in the interethnic civil conflict which remains

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war in former Yugoslavia (1992-95). Within this civil conflict, rape was employed systematically as a means of ethnic cleansing and genocide by Serbian troops; their aim was to destroy families and communities, and to terrorise the 'enemy' into abandoning their homes and their land. Furthermore, many Bosnian Muslim women were detained in camps and repeatedly raped until they became pregnant by their Serbian captors, who sought to strike a blow to their enemy by impregnating 'their' women with the seed of the enemy and forcing them to bear what they perceived would be pure Serbian children. See Euan Hague, "Rape, Power and Masculinity: The Construction of Gender and National Identities in the War in Bosnia-Herzegovina", in Lentin, 50-63; Vesna Kesić, "Establishing Rape as a War Crime", in Buchwald, Fletcher, and Roth, 269-89; Cindy S. Snyder *et al.*, "On the Battleground of Women's Bodies: Mass Rape in Bosnia-Herzegovina", *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work* 21, no.2 (2006), 184-95; Vesna Nicolić-Ristanović, "War and Post-War Victimization of Women", *European Journal of Crime, Criminal Law and Criminal Justice* 10, no.2-3 (2002): 138-45; and "Living Without Democracy and Peace: Violence Against Women in the Former Yugoslavia", *Violence Against Women* 5 (1999): 63-80; Tom Post and Alexandra Stiglmayer, "A Pattern of Rape", *Newsweek* (January 4, 1993), 32-37; Patricia Albanese, "Nationalism, War, and Archaization of Gender Relations in the Balkans", *Violence Against Women* 7 (2001): 999-1023; Slavenka Draculić, "Women Hide Behind a Wall of Silence", in *Why Bosnia? Writings on the Balkan War*, ed. Rabia Ali and Lawrence Lifschultz (Stony Creek, CT: The Pamphleteer's Press, 1993), 116-21; Beverly Allen, *Rape Warfare: The Hidden Genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Vranić, *Breaking the Wall of Silence*; Rada Borić and Mica Mladineo Desnica, "Croatia: Three Years After", in *Women in a Violent World: Feminist Analyses and Resistance Across 'Europe'*, ed. Chris Corrin (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 133-50.

<sup>31</sup> Limitations of space do not allow me to mention every incidence of sexual violence carried out during wartime, even those occurring in recent history. However, the horror and brutality of those instances wartime rape, which I have not mentioned, ought not to be diminished by their omission. For further details regarding wartime rape, both past and current, in countries including Uganda, Sierra Leone, Kashmir, Kurdistan, Chechnya, Mozambique, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Cambodia, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burma, Liberia, Peru, Chile, and Argentina, see Brownmiller, 41-8, 78-113; Turshen, 803-24; Helen Clarkson, "War Crimes", *New Internationalist* 367 (2004): 17; Michelle Hynes and Barbara Lopes Cardozo, "Sexual Violence Against Refugee Women", *Journal of Women's Health and Gender-Based Medicine* 9 (2000): 819-23; Shana Swiss and Joan E. Giller, "Rape as a Crime of War: A Medical Perspective", *Journal of the American Medical Association* 270 (1993): 612-15; L. Shanks *et al.*, "Responding to Rape", *The Lancet* 357 (2001): 304; Peggy J. Jennings and Shana Swiss, "Supporting Local Efforts to Document Human-Rights Violations in Armed Conflict", *The Lancet* 357 (2001): 302-3; Rhonda Copelon, "Gendered War Crimes: Reconceptualizing Rape in Time of War", in *Women's Rights Human Rights: International Feminist Perspectives*, ed. Julie Peters and Andrea Wolper (New York: Routledge, 1995), 197-214; Andrea Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2005); Urvashi Butali, "A Question of Silence: Partition, Women and the State", in Lentin, 92-109; Tom Parfitt, "Russian soldiers blamed for civilian rape in Chechnya", *The Lancet* 363 (2004): 1291; Spiegel *et al.*, 2187-95; Shana Swiss *et al.*, "Violence Against Women During the Liberian Civil Conflict", *Journal of the American Medical Association* 279 (1998): 625-29; Rachel Jewkes, "Comprehensive response to rape needed in conflict situations", *The Lancet* 369 (2007): 2140-1; Veena Das, "Language and Body: Transactions in the Construction of Pain", in *Violence in War and Peace*, ed. Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Phillipe Bourgois (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 327-33; Fowzia Musse, "War Crimes Against Women and Girls", in *Somalia – The Untold Story: The War Through the Eyes of Somali Women*, ed. Judith Gardner and Judy El-Bushra (London: Pluto Press, 2004), 69-96; Ahmed, 211-30; Jeanne Vickers, *Women and War* (London: Zed Books, 1993), 22-23; Lynn L. Amowitz *et al.*, "Prevalence of War-Related Sexual Violence and Other Human Rights Abuses Among Internally Displaced Persons in Sierra Leone", *Journal of the American Medical Association* 287 (2002): 513-21; Valerie Preston and Madeleine Wong, "Geographies of Violence: Women and Conflict in Ghana", in Giles and Hyndman, 152-69; Santo Rozario, "Disasters' and Bangladeshi Women", in Lentin, 255-68; Judy El-Bushra, "Transforming Conflict: Some Thoughts on a Gendered Understanding of Conflict Processes", in



unabated in Darfur,<sup>32</sup> while reports of sexual atrocities being carried out by Allied troops in Iraq continue to appear in the media.<sup>33</sup> It would appear then that wartime rape is far more than ‘the ignoble act of the occasional soldier’, as some military historians and political commentators have previously suggested.<sup>34</sup> As Paula Donovan notes, ‘Rape is not incidental to armed conflict; it is a distinct and insupportable war crime’.<sup>35</sup>

Why, then, is rape during armed conflict such a pervasive event? From whence does it attain its potency as an apparently effective weapon of war? I would suggest that we can find some degree of understanding if we refer back to the two interrelated ideologies, which, as discussed above, give meaning to the myth that a raped woman is ‘damaged goods’: that is, women’s designation as male sexual property and their valuation according to their chastity. These cultural gender ideologies and assumptions, already prevalent during peacetime, are reinforced and exacerbated in times of war until they are transformed into a vehicle by which sexual atrocities become a viable and effectual war strategy.<sup>36</sup> As Turshen notes, ‘Behind the cultural significance of raping ‘enemy’ women lies the institutionalisation of attitudes and practices that regard and treat women as property’.<sup>37</sup> Wartime rapists recognise the deeply damaging effects that rape can have, not only upon the woman against whom the violation is perpetrated but also upon her family and her ethnic or religious

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*States of Conflict: Gender, Violence, and Resistance*, ed. Susie Jacobs, Ruth Jacobson, and Jennifer Marchbank, (London: Zed Books, 2000), 76-86.

<sup>32</sup> Since the start of the civil war in Darfur in early 2003, the mass rape of black African women has been used as a deliberate tactic by the Sudanese government and the pro-government Arab militia, commonly known as the *Janjaweed* to torture and terrorise the black African population, to subvert the cohesion of their communities, and drive them from their homes. Women are raped both in their own homes and in refugee camps, to which they have been forced to flee, often when out performing essential tasks, such as collecting firewood or water. Others (some as young as eight years old) are abducted and sold into sexual slavery by the *Janjaweed*. Many of these women and girls have contracted HIV from their rapists. See Glenys Kinnock, “The victims of mass rape need our help”, *New Statesman* (January 30, 2006), 14; Tracy Hampton, “Agencies speak out on rape in Darfur”, *Journal of the American Medical Association* 294 (2005): 542-44; Peter Moszynski, “Women and girls are still victims of violence in Darfur”, *British Medical Journal* 331 (2005): 654; and “Rape victims in Sudan face life of stigma, says report”, *British Medical Journal* 329 (2004): 251; and “Meeting hears of health consequences of rape and violence in war zones”, *British Medical Journal* 333 (2006): 14.

<sup>33</sup> See, for example, Luke Harding’s article “The other prisoners”, in which he reports the rape and torture by US guards of female Iraqi prisoners in Abu Ghraib, in [guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk/g2/story/0,1220509,00.html), May 20, 2004, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/g2/story/0,1220509,00.html> (accessed 12 January, 2008).

<sup>34</sup> Anna T. Höglund, “Justice for Women in War? Feminist Ethics and Human Rights for Women”, *Feminist Theology* 11 (2003): 355; also Field, 23; Yang, 52.

<sup>35</sup> Donovan, 18.

<sup>36</sup> Hague, 50; Liz Kelly, “Wars against Women: Sexual Violence, Sexual Politics and the Militarised State”, in Jacobs, Jacobson, and Marchbank, 45, 53; Höglund, 355; Yang, 63; Jeanne Ward and Beth Vann, “Gender-Based Violence in Refugee Situations”, *The Lancet Supplement* 360 (2002): 13-14.

<sup>37</sup> Turshen, 810; also Höglund, 353; Albanese, 1003.

community.<sup>38</sup> Women are regarded, not as persons valued or worthy in their own right, or as persons possessing their own right to bodily and sexual autonomy, but rather as objects belonging to men, which can be misappropriated by the enemy to become ‘receptacles for intergroup hatred’, in order to advance the enemy’s military cause.<sup>39</sup> Thus, according to Nicolíć-Ristanović, ‘For the rapist, rape of a woman in war may be as much an act against her husband, father, or brother, as it is an act against a woman’s body’.<sup>40</sup> By ‘invading’ and abusing the bodies of women who ‘belong’ to the enemy, the conquerors terrorise and humiliate the conquered, exposing them as weak, inferior, and hopelessly incapable of protecting both the bodies and chastity of ‘their’ women.<sup>41</sup> It is as though, in the words of Patricia Albanese, ‘one man’s sexual potency became proof of another’s impotence ... [the woman’s] rape signifies her ethnic group’s ability to protect her, a sign of her nation’s and her men’s impotence against their rivals’.<sup>42</sup> Or, as Höglund asserts, ‘The rape becomes a symbolic expression of humiliation of the male opponents, telling them they have failed to protect ‘their’ women. They are thereby emasculated, wounded in their masculinity and marked as incompetent males’.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Yang, 63.

<sup>39</sup> Diana Milillo, “Rape as a Tactic of War: Social and Psychological Perspectives”, *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work* 21, no.2 (2006): 196; also Yang, 64-65; Brownmiller, 35; Nicolíć-Ristanović, “Living without Democracy”, 64; Copelon, 200; Peel, 12.

<sup>40</sup> Nicolíć-Ristanović, “Living without Democracy”, 71; also Vikman, 40; Yougindra Khusalini, *Dignity and Honour of Women as Basic and Fundamental Human Rights* (Boston: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), 39-76; Brownmiller, 40.

<sup>41</sup> This is substantiated by the fact that rapes of women during conflict situations are often carried out openly, in front of the victim’s family or community, thereby reiterating the message that this woman’s supposed ‘protectors’ within her own family and group are utterly incapable of protecting her. See Kelly, “Wars Against Women”, 53, 61; Joshua S. Goldstein, *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 362-63; Kim, 100-101; Milillio, 199; Susan McKay, 189; Inger Skjelsbæk, “Sexual Violence in Times of War: A New Challenge of Peace Operations?”, *International Peacekeeping* 8, no.2 (2001): 69-84; Albanese, 1011-13; Höglund, 354; Hague, 54-56; Ann Tierney Goldstein, introduction to Astrid Aafjes, *Gender Violence: The Hidden War Crime* (Washington, DC: Women, Law and Development International, 1998), 7; Irene Matthews, “Torture as Text”, in *The Woman and War Reader*, ed. Lois Ann Lorentzen and Jennifer Turpin (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 184-89; Moszynski, “Women and Girls”, 654; Messerschmidt, 709; Nicolíć-Ristanović, “Living without Democracy”, 70; Vranić, 16, 18, 89, 211, 315; Brownmiller, 38-49; Baker, 293; Amowitz *et al.*, 520; Ward and Vann, 13; Snyder *et al.*, 190-91; Swiss and Giller, 612-15; Draculić, 119; Copelon, 204; Julian Pitt-Rivers, *The Fate of Shechem, or the Politics of Sex: Essays in the Anthropology of the Mediterranean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 166; Sancho, 153.

<sup>42</sup> Albanese, 1013.

<sup>43</sup> Höglund, 354. Speaking in particular with regards Korean former ‘comfort women’, Kim notes that these women ‘are living symbols that remind the nation of its patriarchal weakness and paternal failure, namely, the inability of Korean men to protect the lives and bodies of their own wives, daughters, and sisters ... More damaging to the collective psyche of postwar Korea than the bodies of the women survivors themselves is, therefore, what those bodies continue to represent: the symbolic emasculation of Korean national, state, and patriarchal elites’ (94).

Furthermore, in patriarchal cultures where female purity and chastity are central to family honour, women who are raped and sexually exploited during military conflict are consequently regarded, both by their rapists *and* by their family and group members, as defiled, tainted with immorality, and a great source of communal shame.<sup>44</sup> Thus, for example, in Uganda, the cultural insistence on female chastity has led many wartime rape survivors being treated as little more than prostitutes, rejected by their families because they are deemed dirty, diseased, and a source of immense shame.<sup>45</sup> Similarly, within the Confucian patriarchal culture of postcolonial South Korea, where a woman's value is likewise measured in terms of her chastity and purity, former 'comfort women' who were raped by Japanese troops were deemed by their own communities as 'damaged, disgraceful, and unchaste female bodies that lack the "feminine essence"'.<sup>46</sup> By thus debasing and degrading a woman's body, the wartime rapist devastates the stability of her community, symbolically dishonouring *all* of its members and reinforcing their sense of humiliation and subordination.<sup>47</sup> And thus is the deadly efficiency of wartime rape; as a piece of male chattel, whose chastity determines the honour and authority of her family and community, a woman's degradation and objectification becomes a powerful communicator of one group's contempt for and superiority over their enemy. Wars are fought by men, but women are all too often the casualties, their bodies used to inscribe a potent and wordless message of inter-group hatred and ethnic intolerance.<sup>48</sup>

Thus, to summarise the discussion so far within this chapter, it would appear that socio-cultural conceptualisations of sexual violence often fail to recognise that rape

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<sup>44</sup> Snyder *et al.*, 190; Milillio, 199; Kim, 92-93; Copelon, 201; Vikman, 41; Musse, 75, 80; Turshen, 815-16; Clarkson, 17.

<sup>45</sup> Turshen, 815-16.

<sup>46</sup> Kim, 93; also Yang, 64; Terazawa, 133-36.

<sup>47</sup> Kelly, "Wars Against Women", 53; Aafjes, 19; Milillio, 200; Snyder *et al.*, 190-91; Ann Tierney Goldstein, 1-4; Amowitz *et al.*, 520; Rozario, 264-65.

<sup>48</sup> I am not denying, of course, that men may likewise be the victims of sexual violence during times of war, nor that women themselves may be capable of perpetrating unspeakable acts of sexual torture and degradation against men within a conflict situation. In 2004, for example, two female members of the US military, Lynndie England and Sabrina Harman, were both found guilty of the mistreatment and abuse of Iraqi detainees in Abu Ghraib prison; the pictures, which appeared in the international press, of England standing grinning in front of a group of naked male prisoners who had been forced to form a human 'pyramid' on the floor, serve to remind us all too well that both men *and* women can be the victims *and* the perpetrators of sexual abuse and sexual torture during times of warfare. The point I am making above, however, is that *more often than not*, wars are started and fought by men, and, within these times of conflict, sexual violence is all too often utilised as an effective weapon of war *primarily* against civilian women and girls, in order to subvert and destroy the honour and authority of the group or community to which these women and girls belong, and, in particular, the honour and authority of its male members.

is a violent display of contempt and deeply felt misogyny directed against the female victim. Rather, this crime is reinvented and re-contextualised within a framework of patriarchal and androcentric concerns of male honour, male property rights, and the valuation of a woman according to her chastity.<sup>49</sup> As a result, rape survivors' victimhood and suffering are all too frequently ignored or eclipsed, while the 'real' victim is instead identified as the survivors' male kin or even her entire community. Furthermore, women's own sense of defilement and degradation, which they suffer as the result of their violation, may often be confirmed and exacerbated by the responses that they receive from others. Many rape survivors face an insurmountable wall of stigma, hostility, and rejection by both members of their family and their community, who believe that their rape has effectively rendered them damaged, defiled, and sullied by their encounter. We should not be surprised then that so many of these women never report their rapes; with the choice of stigma or silence, they often prefer to suffer within such a silence, rather than endure the contempt or hostility they may face from those who should be the source of their support and healing.

### **Who Was the 'Real' Victim in Genesis 34?**

So far within this chapter, we have been considering in some depth the pervasive and potentially dangerous myth that regards rape victims as 'damaged goods', which appears to be founded upon the two age-old ideologies that a woman is the sexual property of her male kin and that her social value is determined by her sexual chastity. The question that I wish to address now is whether such ideologies are likewise given voice by the narrator of Genesis 34. As I noted in the Introduction, one of the most striking features of the narrative is, for me, Dinah's silence. This woman's experience as a victim of sexual violence is in essence an empty space within the narrative, while the occasion of her rape is given meaning solely through the androcentric voices of the narrator and his multiple male characters.<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, how do these male characters conceptualise Dinah's rape? Do they perhaps speak on her behalf, providing an empathic voice for her anguish or a platform from which the reader can better grasp the horror of her experience? Are

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<sup>49</sup> Kesić, 282.

<sup>50</sup> Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 47; also Davies, 57.

they concerned about the terrible effects that such a brutal and life-altering assault would have had upon *her*? Or, do they instead focalise the rape event as a violation of *their* property rights, regarding Dinah less as a victim of a brutal assault than as a woman sullied, soiled, and damaged as a result of the premature and premarital loss of her virginity? In order to answer these questions, let us look a little closer at the ways in which Dinah's father and brothers responded to her rape, so that we might gain some insight into their own understandings of this terrible event.

### *The Significance of Jacob's (In)action in Genesis 34*

Throughout the majority of the Genesis 34 narrative, Dinah's father Jacob is, for the most part, a silent and impassive figure. He is granted no words with which to express his grief and shock after first hearing about Dinah's rape (v.5), nor does the reader hear his voice either during his family's negotiations with Hamor and Shechem (vv.8-17), which, as head of the household, are addressed to him, or during the subsequent violent events that take place in the city of Shechem (vv.25-29).<sup>51</sup> Indeed, it is only in the penultimate verse of this text that we learn his response to the events that have played out around him. Moreover, Jacob appears, to all intents and purposes, essentially inactive for the majority of this narrative. On first getting word about Dinah's ordeal in v.5, we are told that he did nothing, but rather 'held his peace' (החריש) until his sons arrived back from their duties in the field. However, even after their return, Jacob continues to appear reluctant to take a proactive stance. In stark contrast to his sons, whose emotional reaction to the shocking news is intense and immediate (v.7) and who, without delay, adopt their role as chief protagonists for all subsequent action (vv.13ff.), Jacob instead appears to melt away into the narrative background, a passive bystander who lets the events instigated by his sons spiral towards an explosively violent conclusion.<sup>52</sup>

How then do we make sense of Jacob's apparent reluctance either to react to or voice an opinion about his daughter's rape and abduction? Well, one possibility is to suggest that the patriarch viewed Shechem's act of sexual abuse, not as a serious assault perpetrated against his daughter, but rather as a violation, committed against *him*, which, most importantly, had landed him in some politically treacherous

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<sup>51</sup> Fleishman, 106; von Rad, 332-33.

<sup>52</sup> Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 449; Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 220; Armstrong, 94; Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 54.

territory. For, as mentioned earlier, during the biblical period, a woman's sexuality was deemed to be under the exclusive control and ownership of her male guardian, while she herself had little if any authority to determine her own sexual boundaries.<sup>53</sup> Thus, issues such as whom she married and, by implication, with whom she could have sexual intercourse, were decided solely by her male kin, usually her father; the woman herself had no legally cognisable right of consent.<sup>54</sup> Any woman who lost her virginity outwith the marriage covenant subsequently caused her father grave dishonour, because she had disrupted his right to control her sexuality and, moreover, had seriously subverted community expectations of daughterly chastity.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, her premature deflowerment caused her family to incur a significant financial loss, as her virginity was regarded as a prerequisite for her father's ability both to arrange a politically propitious marriage for her and to receive from her husband a decent bride price.<sup>56</sup> As Brownmiller notes,

What a father sold to a prospective bridegroom or his family was title to his daughter's unruptured hymen, a piece of property he wholly owned and controlled. With a clearly marked price tag attached to her hymen, a daughter of Israel was kept under watch to

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<sup>53</sup> See, for example, Num. 5.11-31; Deut. 22.13-29; 24.1-4; Jdg. 19.24-25; 21.20-24; 2 Sam. 13.13. As Phyllis Trible states, 'From childhood to old age, the Hebrew woman belonged to the men of her family ... their bodies were not their own' ("Women in the Old Testament", 964). For further discussion regarding male ownership of female sexuality in the Hebrew Bible, see Frymer-Kensky, *Goddesses*, 119-20; and 'Sex and Sexuality', in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 5:1145; Thistlethwaite, 62; Pressler, *View of Women*, 43, 90-92; Davies, 2-3; Aschkenasy, *Eve's Journey*, 109, 123-24; David M. Carr, *The Erotic Word: Sexuality, Spirituality, and the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003) 51; Phyllis A. Bird, "'To Play the Harlot': An Enquiry into an Old Testament Metaphor", in *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel*, ed. Peggy L. Day (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 77; and *Missing Persons and Mistaken Identities: Women and Gender in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press), 222; and "Women (Old Testament)", in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6:955-56; Rashkow, "Daughters and Fathers", 27; Grace I. Emmerson, "Women in Ancient Israel", in *The World of Ancient Israel: Sociological, Anthropological and Political Perspectives*, ed. R.E. Clements (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 380-85; Victor H. Matthews, "Honour and Shame in Gender-Related Legal Situations in the Hebrew Bible", in Matthews, Levinson, and Frymer-Kensky, 104; Helena Zlotnik Sivan, "The Rape of Cozbi (Numbers XXV)", *Vetus Testamentum* 51 (2001): 74; Bader, 75-79; Anderson, 67, 69; Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 168-69; Brenner, *Intercourse of Knowledge*, 123; Brownmiller, 18-19; T. Drorah Setel, "Prophets and Pornography: Female Sexual Imagery in Hosea", in Letty M. Russell, 87.

<sup>54</sup> Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 183; and "Virginity in the Bible", 91; Anderson, 42-43; Pressler, *View of Women*, 31; Anthony Phillips, *Deuteronomy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 152; Magdalene, 338.

<sup>55</sup> Frymer-Kensky, "Virginity in the Bible", 94; Graetz, 306; Anderson, 42-43; Pressler, *View of Women*, 30-31; Bader, 76-77. See, for example, Deut. 22.13-21, a law dealing with the case of the woman accused by her husband of not being a virgin when she married him.

<sup>56</sup> Lerner, 170; Lipka, 100, 122; Frymer-Kensky, "Virginity in the Bible", 79; and "Law and Philosophy", 92; and *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 186; Brownmiller, 19-20; Victor H. Matthews, "Honour and Shame", 108; Pressler, "Sexual Violence", 105.

make sure she remained in a pristine state, for a piece of damaged goods could hardly command an advantageous match.<sup>57</sup>

Consequently, when a man sexually assaulted an unmarried woman, this crime was likewise regarded, first and foremost, as a property violation against her father, the rapist having effectively ‘stolen’ the woman’s potentially valuable virginity from its rightful owner (Deut. 22.28-9; 2 Sam. 13.13).<sup>58</sup> Thus, according to the law of Deut. 22.28-9, a rapist had to pay the woman’s father a sum of fifty shekels, possibly the average bride price a father would expect to receive for a virgin daughter.<sup>59</sup> In effect then, the rape victim’s virginity was treated as though it were an ‘exchangeable commodity’, or ‘fungible object’, which belonged to her male kin, and which could be replaced by some form of restitution, financial or otherwise, in the event of its ‘theft’ or ‘damage’ as a result of her violation.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, the rape event was likewise regarded as a source of great dishonour to the women’s male kin, for it undermined their authority and masculinity, by exposing them as inadequately prepared to protect and control the women under their charge.<sup>61</sup> The fact that rape was a serious violation of the woman’s bodily and sexual integrity therefore appears to have been of little concern within the worldview of biblical Israel; women, after all, had no legal claim to sexual self-determination and consequently no right to consent or withhold consent to sexual intercourse.<sup>62</sup> Instead, the biblical rape victim

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<sup>57</sup> Brownmiller, 20-21. Similarly, Alice Bach comments that, ‘under the dictates of a phallic economy the father or husband can demand reparation for the damaging of the woman’s body. Female sexuality uncontained deflates the phallic economy in which all gains accrue to the master’. In ‘Good to the Last Drop: Viewing the Sotah (Numbers 5.11-31) as the Glass Half Empty and Wondering How to View It as Half Full’, in *Women in the Hebrew Bible: A Reader*, ed. Alice Bach (New York: Routledge, 1999), 506.

<sup>58</sup> Frymer-Kensky, ‘Virginity in the Bible’, 91; and *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 183; Lipka, 173-84; Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 204; Elaine Adler Goodfriend, ‘Adultery’, in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:83; Pressler, *View of Women*, 91; Van Seters, 243; Brownmiller, 18; Tigay, 208; Phillips, *Essays*, 84; William H. Propp, ‘Kinship in 2 Samuel 13’, *Catholic Bible Quarterly* 55 (1993): 41; Washington, ‘Lest He Die’, 210; Thistlethwaite, 63-64; Magdalene, 338; Cooper-White, 82; Manazan, 44-52; Bach, ‘Re-Reading the Body Politic’, 151; Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 214; Davies, 56; Ilona N. Rashkow, *The Phallacy of Genesis: A Feminist Psychoanalytic Approach* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), 70.

<sup>59</sup> Phillips, *Essays*, 84-5; Graetz, ‘Dinah the Daughter’, 308; Washington, ‘Violence’, 354; and ‘Lest He Die’, 210-11; Thistlethwaite, 64; Pressler, ‘Sexual Violence’, 104; Magdalene, 338; Rashkow, *Phallacy*, 70; van Dijk-Hemmes, ‘Reading the Bible’, 132; Carr, 51. See Chapter 2, n.147 above for a more detailed discussion of the significance of the fifty shekels.

<sup>60</sup> Washington, ‘Lest He Die’, 211; also Brenner, *Intercourse of Knowledge*, 137.

<sup>61</sup> Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 183-84; and ‘Virginity in the Bible’, 84; Graetz, ‘Dinah the Daughter’, 308; Pressler, ‘Sexual Violence’, 105; and *View of Women*, 42; Brenner, *Intercourse of Knowledge*, 138; Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 214.

<sup>62</sup> While, as we discovered in the previous chapter, biblical authors do appear to have recognised that rape involved a *physical* assault against a woman’s body, such recognition was granted little significance in the overall conceptualisation of this crime. Instead, they appear to have identified rape as, first and foremost, a dishonourable act of larceny committed against the woman’s male guardian, which necessitated his being recompensed for the loss of his stolen and damaged ‘property’. For

was objectified, her violation treated as an event carried out against her but *experienced* primarily by the men who were the sanctioned owners of her sexuality. As Anderson suggests, according to the biblical worldview, ‘even if intercourse is forced upon the female, the sexual assault, for all intents and purposes, is against the man whose rights have been violated rather than the female’.<sup>63</sup>

Thus, it is likely that, by sleeping with Dinah without seeking her family’s consent, Shechem had, in Jacob’s mind, effectively ‘stolen’ his daughter’s virginity from its rightful owner and, in the process, had damaged and devalued Dinah by deflowering her outwith the formal covenant of marriage.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, Jacob would have felt seriously dishonoured by the rape event, as Shechem had effectively demonstrated his apparent inability to safeguard the sexuality of the women under his authority. The patriarch was therefore entitled to some form of restitution from Shechem, in order both to recompense him for his economic losses and as a way of restoring his honour.

However, and crucial to our understanding of Jacob’s inaction here, we must bear in mind that Dinah’s sexual encounter with Shechem would furthermore have constituted something of a diplomatic nightmare for him.<sup>65</sup> His daughter had been raped and abducted by the son of Hamor, the local Hivite leader, upon whose land he had settled peacefully some years back (Gen. 33.18-20). However, were he to retaliate against Shechem’s crime, such a move may well have soured his as yet peaceable relationship with the surrounding people, thereby endangering the welfare and future survival of his family in this region. This was no minor matter, for, as Gila Ramras-Rauch notes, Jacob had already made a vow before YHWH to return to Bethel and settle there (Gen. 28.11-22), and would therefore have been extremely

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further discussion, see Anderson, 81, 88; Kass, *Beginning of Wisdom*, 481-85; Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 182-83; and “Virginity in the Bible”, 87; Rashkow, *Phallacy of Genesis*, 70; and “Daughters and Fathers”, 27; Washington, “Violence”, 353-54 and “Lest He Die”, 208, 210-12; Rodd, 28-30, 263, 268-69; Magdalene, 338-40; Carr, 53; Brenner, *Intercourse of Knowledge*, 137-38; Lipka, 28, 30, 177, 180-81; Propp, 41; Gravett, 280; Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 214; Thistlethwaite, 62-64; Davies, 2; McGregor, 3; Brownmiller, 18-20, 376; Ullendorff, 435; Pressler, “Sexual Violence”, 111-12; and *View of Women*, 37, n.46; Phillips, *Essays*, 85; and *Deuteronomy*, 152.

<sup>63</sup> Anderson, 88; also Rodd, 263; Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 214; Stone, “Gender and Homosexuality”, 100-101; Guest, 184; Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry*, 121; Victor H. Matthews, *Judges and Ruth*, 187; Katharina von Kellenbach, “Am I a Murderer? Judges 19-21 as a Parable of Meaningless Suffering”, in *Strange Fire: Reading the Bible after the Holocaust*, ed. Tod Linafeld (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 181-82.

<sup>64</sup> Pressler, “Sexual Violence”, 111.

<sup>65</sup> Zlotnik, 40. Also Speiser, 268; Bruce Vawter, *On Genesis: A New Reading* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1977), 538-39; Ramras-Rauch, 163-64; Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 189; Parry, *Old Testament Story*, 155.



unwilling to do anything that might compromise this plan.<sup>66</sup> His eschewal of a more aggressive approach to the situation may thus have arisen from pragmatism and caution, rather than indecision, as he strove to ensure that his family could remain safely within this land.<sup>67</sup>

But how, then, did Jacob plan to resolve the crisis faced by his daughter Dinah, who, lest we forget, had been abducted and raped by Shechem? Well, it would appear that Jacob's strategy regarding this matter involved the tacit approval of his sons' conditional acceptance of the offer made by Hamor during the negotiation process, which involved not only Shechem's marriage to Dinah, but also the total assimilation of the Jacobite and Hivite groups through a programme of intermarriage and peaceful co-existence (vv.8-12).<sup>68</sup> This reading makes sense particularly if we accept that Jacob had focalized his daughter's rape, not as a brutal assault upon *her* body or a violation of *her* sexual integrity, but rather as a property violation against *himself*. Hamor's *seemingly* respectful proposition, along with Shechem's generous offer of an unlimited bride price, would have appealed to Jacob as an ideal solution to his predicament, compensating him for the theft of his daughter's virginity and thus restoring his honour without resorting to enmity or violence.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, Shechem's marriage to Dinah would have resolved Jacob's additional problem of having to support a daughter rendered virtually unmarriageable by her premarital

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<sup>66</sup> Ramras-Rauch, 163-64.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 163. Also Fleishman, 108; Jeansonne, 96; Vawter, 360; Fewell and Gunn, "Tipping the Balance", 198, 208; Bechtel, "What If Dinah Is Not Raped", 35; Parry, *Old Testament Story*, 174; Carmichael, *Women, Law, and the Genesis Tradition*, 33, 35; Brueggemann, 278-79; Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 195-96.

<sup>68</sup> Quite why the patriarch allowed his sons to take over a role legally ascribed to a woman's father, that is, the arrangement of her marriage (e.g. Exod. 22.15-16; Deut. 22.15-16; 2 Sam. 13.13b), is likewise left unclear by the author. As Westermann (*Genesis 12-36*, 538), Bader (99), and Leupold (899) have suggested, it may have been the case that the delegation of this task by a father to his sons was accepted practice within biblical Israel. Such a suggestion would appear to be confirmed by Jdg. 21.22, which certainly seems to suggest that a brother could act as guardians of his sister's sexuality, in the event that it had been abused or misappropriated (Bader, 78-79). Furthermore, Gen. 24.29-53 depicts Rebekah's brother Laban's central involvement in her marriage negotiations with Abraham's servant, despite the fact that her father was present (v.50). Thus, perhaps Jacob had likewise delegated the duty of representing the family interests to his sons; he was, after all, present during these negotiations and appeared to make no objection at the time to their involvement.

<sup>69</sup> Fleishman, 108; Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 191. While Bechtel has claimed that Hamor is depicted as an 'honourable' man within this text ("What If Dinah Is Not Raped", 29), it nevertheless appears that his negotiations, both with the Jacobites (vv.8-10) and later with his own people (vv.20-23), were laced with deception. In v.10, Hamor offers the Jacobites the chance to acquire property in the land, a fact that he omits to mention during the negotiations with the Hivites in vv.21-3. Even more sinister, however, are his words to the Hivites in v.23 when he is expounding the benefits of his proposed inter-group assimilation: 'Will not [the Jacobite's] cattle, their property, and all their beasts be ours?' This acquisition of Jacobite property was not part of the offer made to Jacob and his sons in vv.8-10! It is left unclear by the narrator which party Hamor is being less than truthful with here; what is important to note is that he appears to be a man prepared to utilise duplicity in order to seal this potentially lucrative business deal (Gravett, 282, n.9).

deflowerment.<sup>70</sup> Although the narrator does not explicitly state that Jacob's silence during the negotiations indicated his implicit endorsement of this strategy of co-operation between the Hivite and Jacobite groups, such a reading does appear probable, given that there is nothing in the text to suggest that Jacob believed his sons' conditional acceptance of Hamor's proposal to be anything but sincere.<sup>71</sup> He offered no objection to it during the negotiation proceedings *at which he was present* and indeed, reacted furiously when he realised that his sons' seemingly collaborative approach towards the Hivites was nothing but a deceitful sham (v.30).<sup>72</sup> Indeed, in the eyes of the patriarch, their reneging on this agreement was a deeply foolish and reprehensible act, which had seriously damaged his honour and reputation in the region and, furthermore, had ruined his diplomatic efforts to resolve this political dilemma without compromising both the safety of his family and the preservation of their settlement on this land.<sup>73</sup>

What are we to make of Jacob's inaction here? How ought we to evaluate this apparently conciliatory approach to his daughter's sexual assault? Well, according to some scholars, such a tactic by the patriarch to the rape event *could* be regarded as diplomatically strategic, given that it would have prevented hostilities between his family and the Hivites, who were a much larger and stronger group. Indeed, a number of these scholars positively laud the patriarch for the apparent sagacity and diplomatic acumen he displays throughout this narrative.<sup>74</sup> Thus according to Fewell and Gunn, Jacob's unwillingness to engage combatively with the Hivites and his apparent willingness to allow Shechem to marry Dinah shows 'wisdom in the face of a potentially explosive situation for his family as a whole'.<sup>75</sup> His sons' impetuous behaviour had left both him and his family to face a potentially treacherous confrontation with the surrounding peoples, whereas Jacob's apparently pacifying strategy was at least intended to avert such hostilities and ensure the continued safety of his family in the region.<sup>76</sup> Sharing these views, Calum

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<sup>70</sup> Pressler, "Sexual Violence", 105; and *View of Women*, 41.

<sup>71</sup> Fleishman, 107-8; Carmichael, *Women, Law, and the Genesis Tradition*, 33; Niditch, "Genesis", 23; Brueggemann, 279; Kass, "Regarding Daughters and Sisters", 36.

<sup>72</sup> Yamada, 155; Fewell and Gunn, "Tipping the Balance", 198.

<sup>73</sup> Zlotnik, 40; Carmichael, *Women, Law, and the Genesis Tradition*, 33; Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 195; Fleishman, 110; Fewell and Gunn, "Tipping the Balance", 208.

<sup>74</sup> Zlotnik, 40; Fretheim, 577, 580; Carmichael, *Women, Law, and the Genesis Tradition*, 33; Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 195; Speiser, 268; Sandra Hack Polaski, *Inside the Red Tent* (St Louis: Chalice Press, 2006), 14; Vawter, 357; Fleishman, 110; Fewell and Gunn, "Tipping the Balance", 208; Luther, 196; Bechtel, "What If Dinah Is Not Raped", 35; Parry, *Old Testament Story*, 174.

<sup>75</sup> Fewell and Gunn, "Tipping the Balance", 198, 208.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 208; also Vawter, 360; Brueggemann, 279.

Carmichael likewise suggests that Jacob demonstrates a cool-headed and expedient restraint within this narrative, as he responded to a difficult political crisis ‘in light of the total situation’.<sup>77</sup>

Yet, amidst all of these political concerns and diplomatic dilemmas, which appear to have preoccupied Jacob throughout this narrative, and amidst these laudatory commendations of his sagacity heaped upon him by those commentators above, we are left asking, where is Dinah? How much space does *she* inhabit within her father’s troubled thoughts? Well, going by our recent discussion, probably very little. At no point throughout this narrative does Jacob express any compassion, anxiety, or concern for her welfare, neither acknowledging to himself the terrible ordeal that she has just endured, nor even attempting to talk to her after her return home.<sup>78</sup> Instead, he maintains both a silence and an emotional distance between himself and his daughter that is absolute.<sup>79</sup> In the words of Ita Sheres, the entire relationship between father and daughter is presented within this narrative as one of ‘alienation and noncommunication’.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, his biting rebuke directed against his sons in v.30 make no mention of his concern for Dinah; instead, this rather egocentric speech, which contains no less than eight uses of the first person personal pronoun and pronominal suffix, would suggest that his relationship with the neighbouring Hivite people was a far more pressing concern than the safety of his sexually abused and abducted daughter.<sup>81</sup> It is as though Jacob has completely failed to conceptualise Dinah’s rape as an assault upon her bodily integrity and a

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<sup>77</sup> Carmichael, *Women, Law, and the Genesis Tradition*, 33, 35. Carmichael believes that Jacob is showing traditional wisdom, such as that described in Prov.11.12, being slow to anger and sensibly overlooking an offence against him (33). Similarly, Brueggemann states that, ‘In this narrative, Jacob is the seasoned voice of maturity’ and a ‘sensible, fearful man’, who reacts to the situation with an impressively ‘clear-headed pragmatism’ (278-79).

<sup>78</sup> Bader, 115; Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 54; and *Eve’s Journey*, 126-27; Kass, “Regarding Daughters and Sisters”, 36; Yamada, 155.

<sup>79</sup> I therefore disagree with those scholars who propose that Jacob’s silence ought to be understood as masking a deep grief over his daughter’s fate (Leupold, 899; Brueggemann, 278-79; Vawter, 357; Kass, “Regarding Daughters and Sisters”, 32). As we have discussed above, Jacob’s words in v.30 suggest that his emotional energies are entirely bound up with his own political concerns, and not with any empathic appreciation of *Dinah’s* suffering as a victim of rape. Furthermore, Jacob is not a man who usually shows any reticence about expressing his emotions; rather, as a number of scholars have noted, this unfeeling response to the fate of one of his children stands in complete contrast to his strong emotional reaction in Gen. 37.34-35, when he saw the (fabricated) evidence that suggested his cherished son Joseph was dead. If Dinah was one of Jacob’s daughters mentioned in 37.35, who tried to console their father, I wonder how she felt, given the contrast between his inconsolable grief over the apparent loss of his son and his unfeeling reaction during her own time of suffering. For further discussion, see Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 449; Armstrong, 93; Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 54; and *Eve’s Journey*, 126-27; Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 308; Parry *Old Testament Story*, 155; Rosenblatt and Horowitz, 312.

<sup>80</sup> Sheres, 67-68; also Bader, 144.

<sup>81</sup> Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 474; Noble, 184; Scholz, *Rape Plots*, 165; Bader, 108.

source of her personal pain and suffering, but rather, has viewed this event from his *own* perspective, as a potential threat to *his* diplomatic relations with the surrounding peoples and the future existence of *his* family within this land.<sup>82</sup> As Frank Yamada notes, throughout this narrative, Jacob consistently appears as ‘a father who neglects the fact that his daughter has been raped, while obsessing over his own reputation’.<sup>83</sup>

Moreover, the patriarch’s apparent willingness to see his daughter married off to her rapist and abductor only serves to draw attention to his obvious indifference to the pain and terror that Dinah must have endured during her sexual assault. Like Abraham, Lot, and Isaac before him, Jacob appeared all too willing to use a woman under his authority as a bargaining chip in order to protect his *own* interests in a diplomatically precarious situation, regardless of the harm and pain that such a move may cause to that woman.<sup>84</sup> Thus, just as Abraham and Isaac passed off their wives as their sisters to secure their own safety when living in a foreign land,<sup>85</sup> and just as Lot offered his virgin daughters up to the Sodomite mob, so that he might prevent the gang rape of his distinguished male guests,<sup>86</sup> so too does Jacob appear prepared to use his daughter as a means of ensuring that his relationship with the Hivites would not be compromised.<sup>87</sup> In other words, Jacob treats Dinah as little more than a piece of chattel, which he can exchange for material gain and political security. By sanctioning this marriage, he effectively silences his daughter’s suffering, denies her experience of personal violation, and thus essentially perpetuates her objectification and denigration, which had already been initiated with such terrible effectiveness by her rapist. As Sheres notes, ‘Jacob’s indifference to Dinah’s fate and his concern for his own reputation are examples of women’s dehumanisation by

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<sup>82</sup> Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 54; and *Eve’s Journey*, 125-26; Sheres, 72; Naomi H. Rosenblatt and Joshua Horwitz, *Wrestling With Angels: What the First Family of Genesis Teaches Us about Our Spiritual Identity, Sexuality, and Personal Relationships* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1995), 310; Frymer-Kensky, “Virginitiy in the Bible”, 90-91; Armstrong, 94-97; Bader, 108; Parry, *Old Testament Story*, 173.

<sup>83</sup> Yamada, 157. Similarly, Bader notes, ‘Jacob is the centre of his own attention’ (165; also 108-9). See also Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 311, 316; Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 54; and *Eve’s Journey*, 127; Armstrong, 94-95, 97; Noble, 184; Rosenblatt and Horowitz, 310; Gibson, 215.

<sup>84</sup> A man’s right to expose a woman under his authority to the threat of sexual abuse or violence when necessity demanded appears to have been a masculine prerogative in biblical Israel, to which women were expected to submit without any legal recourse to justice or appeal. See for example Gen. 12.10-20; 19.8; 20; 26.6-11; Jdg. 11.29-40; 19.22-30. As Tapp has suggested, it would appear that biblical women ‘are simply available objects that allow men one way or another, to resolve their conflicts’ (170). Similar sentiments are expressed by Frymer-Kensky, “Law and Philosophy”, 92-93; and *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 309; Tribble, “Women in the OT”, 964; and *Texts of Terror*, 74; Lerner, 173-75; Anderson, 91; Washington, “Violence”, 331; Niditch, “Sodomite Theme”, 370; Cotter, 256.

<sup>85</sup> Gen. 12.10-20; 20; 26.6-11.

<sup>86</sup> Gen. 19.8.

<sup>87</sup> See Wenham, *Genesis 12-50*, 318-19.

men who are heavily concerned with their own egos, status and possessions'.<sup>88</sup> It is as though Jacob would rather lose a daughter than lose his reputation and his foothold in this land.

Thus, remarks by scholars such as Zlotnik, Ramras-Rauch, and Carmichael, among others, who laud Jacob's diplomatic sagacity and sympathise with his anguish, would appear to ignore the fact that such 'sagacity' illustrates instead the patriarch's utter disregard for his daughter Dinah's welfare. They fail to note that this woman's suffering and trauma is consistently eclipsed and ignored by her father amidst the more urgent clamour of political concerns and intergroup tensions. Indeed, Carmichael's comment, that Jacob's behaviour reflects his careful handling of events 'in light of the total situation' exposes his failure to appreciate that part of this 'situation' was surely the rape and abduction of a young woman. While Jacob's concerns for the safety of his family may be understandable, is not Dinah likewise part of the family, deserving also of consideration?<sup>89</sup> It would appear not, for Jacob's response to his daughter's plight suggests instead that her sexual assault is, for him, nothing but a thorny diplomatic crisis, which required some tactical manoeuvring around the issues in order to avoid stepping on any Hivite toes, including the toes of the rapist himself. As Jacob's words in v.30 demonstrate, *his* reputation in particular, as well the safety of his family within the region, are paramount to him, while, in comparison, the interests and safety of his daughter appear low on his list of priorities, commanding, in his mind perhaps, too high a price to be granted any serious consideration.<sup>90</sup> Commentators who laud Jacob's inaction therefore only reiterate a deeply patriarchal ideology, which insists upon treating women as male chattel and which denies a voice to women's experience of rape. While we can admit that Jacob *was* placed in a difficult situation within this narrative, this should in no way blind us to the fact that he displays a terrible and ethically reprehensible lack of concern for his daughter. Furthermore, *his* silence about his daughter's rape only serves to silence *her* experience of suffering, terror, and pain, and for this, we *have* to take him to task.

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<sup>88</sup> Sheres, 73.

<sup>89</sup> Athalya Brenner, *I Am ... Biblical Women Tell Their Own Stories* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 36-37.

<sup>90</sup> Yamada, 156.

Anger and Outrage: The Response of Dinah's Brothers to her Rape

In the discussion above, we noted that Jacob appears to conceptualise Dinah's rape, not as a serious assault upon his daughter's physical and sexual integrity, but rather as an event, which had serious political repercussions for *him*. However, Jacob is not the only character within this narrative who seems to focalize Dinah's sexual assault from a perspective other than her own. Unlike their father, however, Dinah's brothers appear to be deeply moved when they hear the news of her violation – they are 'grieved and deeply angry',<sup>91</sup> we are told in v.7, and, as demonstrated by their subsequent bloody act of vengeance carried out against the Hivites, clearly view the rape event as a serious offence deserving of the most extreme retribution. What, however, was the source of this powerful emotional reaction? Were they deeply moved by the fact that their sister has been subjected to such a violent and life-threatening assault? Were they perhaps overcome by anxiety for her safety and wellbeing?

Well, probably not, given that, in v.7, we are told that Dinah's brothers are grieved and angry because Shechem 'had committed a heinous outrage in Israel by lying with the daughter of Jacob, and such a thing ought not to be done'.<sup>92</sup> There is no explicit mention made of Dinah's *rape* here; as discussed in the previous chapter, the Hebrew verb שכב does not convey any intrinsic sense of aggressive or coercive sexual behaviour.<sup>93</sup> Rather, this verb is used most frequently to describe acts of sexual intercourse, either consensual or coercive, which are generally regarded as unlawful and illicit within the biblical traditions. Furthermore, the verbal form עָנָה, which, as discussed in Chapter Two, conveys the physically abusive nature of the sexual event that occurred between Shechem and Dinah, is not used here, suggesting again that the brothers' emotionally intense reaction here in v.7 was not in response to Dinah's physical violation *per se*.<sup>94</sup> As Fewell and Gunn suggest, 'The fact that [Dinah] had been forced seems immaterial'.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> ויִתְעַצְבוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים וַיִּחַר לָהֶם מְאֹד. The verb עָצַב appears in the Hithpael stem only here and in Gen. 6.6, to describe God's lamenting over his creation. It seems to convey a deep inner sense of grief and sadness, rather than cold anger; to use an old Scottish expression, the subject of the verb is 'heart sore'. The other verb חָרָה carries a sense of 'to burn with anger' and may be used at times to describe the anger felt by a person in response to injustice or immoral behaviour. For further discussion, see Terence E. Fretheim, "עָצַב", in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997), 3:482-83; Scholz, *Rape Plots*, 147-48; Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 538; Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 354, 780; Jeansonne, 93.

<sup>92</sup> כִּי־נִבְלָה עֲשָׂה בְיִשְׂרָאֵל לְשֹׁכֵב אֶת־בִּתְדִיעָקֵב וּכְן לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה

<sup>93</sup> Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 1012.

<sup>94</sup> Frymer-Kensky, "Law and Philosophy", 92.

<sup>95</sup> Fewell and Gunn, *Gender, Power, and Promise*, 82.

What, then, was the source of the brothers' great grief and anger? If they were not incensed by the fact that their sister had been the victim of an aggressive sexual assault, what *did* inspire them to carry out such a bloody act of genocidal vengeance against both Shechem and his people? In response to this question, a number of commentators have suggested that at the heart of the brothers' indignation lay their utter eschewal of intermarriage and interethnic sexual intercourse.<sup>96</sup> Thus, for example, Lyn Bechtel proposes that the brothers' response to Dinah's sexual encounter with the Hivite prince reflects their strongly held separatist convictions and their desire to preserve the ethnic boundaries of the Jacobite group by avoiding any exposure to the polluting influence of 'outside stuff'.<sup>97</sup> For the 'group-oriented' brothers, Dinah's potential marriage to an uncircumcised Hivite would have breached these boundaries, so essential for group cohesion and individual members' identity, and would therefore have posed a serious threat to the ethnic purity and continued existence of their community.<sup>98</sup>

In a similar vein, Sternberg argues that both the biblical laws of Deut. 7.1-4 and Exod. 34.11-16, which explicitly forbid exogamy, and the generally negative appraisal of interethnic marriage found elsewhere in the patriarchal narratives of Genesis (Gen. 24.1-9; 26.35; 27.46; 28.1-2), strongly suggest that Dinah's brothers were indeed reacting to the serious threat that an exogamous union between Dinah and Shechem would pose to the group.<sup>99</sup> Like Bechtel, Sternberg believes that the brothers' insistence that a Jacobite woman's marriage to an uncircumcised man would be a 'disgrace' (חַרְפָּה) to them (v.14) is a genuine feature of their religio-cultural belief system.<sup>100</sup> While their speech here in vv.14-17 is, we are told by the narrator, laced with deceit (v.13),<sup>101</sup> such dishonesty, Sternberg asserts, was not

<sup>96</sup> Carmichael, *Law and Narrative*, 220; and *Women, Law, and the Genesis Tradition*, 47; Wenham, *Genesis 12-50*, 319; Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 459; and "Biblical Poetics and Sexual Politics", 483-87; Bader, 39, 47; Bechtel, "What If Dinah Is Not Raped", 32-34; Brueggemann, 275; Geller, 2-3; Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 544-45; Keefe, 83-84; Van Seters, 245-46; van Wolde, "Love and Hatred", 446-49.

<sup>97</sup> Bechtel, "What If Dinah Is Not Raped", 32. Bechtel actually believes that the narrative is intended to be read as a polemic *against* such an insular and intolerant attitude to relationships between Israel and the surrounding people, arguing that the brothers' vengeance, 'although it is generated by the group-oriented motive of preserving group integrity, actually jeopardises its well-being and existence' (34). This stands in marked contrast to Sternberg, among others, who, as discussed below, contend that the rhetorical intention of the narrator was in fact to promote an *intolerance* of exogamy.

<sup>98</sup> Bechtel, "What If Dinah Is Not Raped", 21-22.

<sup>99</sup> Sternberg, "Biblical Poetics and Sexual Politics", 482-87. Similar sentiments are expressed by Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 319; Schroeder, 230; Jeansonne, 94; Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 544-45; Geller, 3.

<sup>100</sup> Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 458-59; Bechtel, "What If Dinah Is Not Raped", 33; also Geller, 10; Jeansonne, 94; Parry, *Old Testament Story*, 161.

<sup>101</sup> 'And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and his father with deceit (בְּמַרְמָה)'.

attached to this credo eschewing uncircumcised marriages, but only referred to the ‘specific proposal’ of mass circumcision offered up by the brothers as a condition for intermarriage and assimilation with the Jacobites.<sup>102</sup> He therefore insists that the ‘horror of neighbourly exogamy’ never loses its power within the Genesis traditions, but remains forever focused on the subsequent biblical laws, which stamped such an eschewal of intermarriage with the seal of divine authority.<sup>103</sup> The brothers, avers Sternberg, would never have entertained Hamor’s proposed programme of Jacobite-Hivite assimilation, ‘for assimilation would amount to national suicide on earth, quite apart from supplying a proof of unworthiness in the eyes of heaven’.<sup>104</sup>

Thus, according to scholars, such as Bechtel and Sternberg, among others, the brothers’ vehement and murderous anger in response to Dinah’s deflowerment stems from their utter rejection of intermarriage and interethnic sexual relations. However, their argument may run into some difficulty, especially when we consider the attitudes towards such relations encountered elsewhere within the book of Genesis. For, while it is true that Israelite-Canaanite exogamy is prohibited on pain of death in the law codes of Deuteronomy and the Book of the Covenant, such a divinely ordained distaste for interethnic sexual unions is not consistently given voice within the patriarchal traditions of the book of Genesis. To be sure, as Sternberg has noted, Abraham took pains to arrange an endogamous marriage for his son Isaac (Gen. 24.1-9), while Isaac subsequently charged his son Jacob not to take a Canaanite woman for a wife (Gen. 28.1-2). However, these patriarchs’ apparent antithesis towards exogamy did not appear to be shared by other members of the family. Esau, Jacob’s brother, married endogamously, taking Ishmael’s daughter Mahalath as a wife (Gen. 28.8), but he also married two Hittite women, Judith and Adah (Gen. 26.34), and Oholibamah, a Hivite woman (Gen. 36.2), both of these ethnic groups being among the seven peoples mentioned in the divine ban on intermarriage in Exod. 34.11 and Deut. 7.3. While his marriages were not viewed propitiously by either his father or mother (Gen. 26.35; 27.46), as a result of Esau’s foreign wives making his parents’ lives ‘bitter’ (26.35),<sup>105</sup> these unions were not deemed a sufficiently serious problem to inspire any murderous inclination within his family to end them. Certainly, a desire to avoid further exacerbation of the problems

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<sup>102</sup> Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 458-59. Also Parry, *Old Testament Story*, 162-63.

<sup>103</sup> Sternberg, “Biblical Poetics and Sexual Politics”, 484.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> The phrase מרת רוח in Gen. 26.35 literally means ‘bitterness of spirit’; it is not used elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, but probably connotes a sense of mental anguish or ‘grief of mind’. See Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 205; Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 601.



evoked by Esau's marriages may have driven Isaac to demand that his other son Jacob did not likewise marry a 'woman of the land' (27.46-28.2). However, it is impossible to gain a sense from these accounts of familial tensions that marriage between a member of the patriarchal family and a person of Canaanite origin was an event that would arouse intense passions or religious zeal, let alone be regarded as 'a matter of life and death', as Sternberg suggests.<sup>106</sup>

Furthermore, this seeming ambivalence with regards the treatment of exogamy within the patriarchal traditions is likewise suggested by the fact that, within the same generation as the events at Shechem, Dinah's brothers Judah (Gen. 38.1-2) and Simeon (Gen. 46.10) themselves marry Canaanite women. Such an occurrence would be very strange indeed if, such a short time beforehand, Judah and Simeon had conspired with their brothers to commit an act of genocide against the Hivite people in response to Shechem's own exogamous designs. While Sternberg argues that Judah's life following his marriage 'lands him in a vicious circle of transgression and catastrophe', suggesting that Dinah's brother is the recipient of divine retribution as a result of his interethnic union,<sup>107</sup> he ignores the fact that Judah must at least have *believed* that an Israelite-Canaanite marriage was an acceptable step for him to take.<sup>108</sup> Moreover, it is near inconceivable that Simeon, chief protagonist of the Hivite massacre along with his brother Levi, would bear a child by a Canaanite woman if, such a short time previously, he had been impelled to commit ethnic genocide because of a hatred of interethnic sexual unions. It surely makes little sense, therefore, to suggest, as Sternberg does, that the brothers' murderous revenge against the Hivite people was fuelled primarily by their ethical and religious abhorrence of exogamy. For some of them at least, interethnic sexual intercourse was not an issue that raised either strong religious or social objections.

Finally, and most significantly, any understanding of the brothers' vengeance as a response to the interethnic nature of Shechem's sexual encounter with Dinah must surely be challenged in light of their subsequent actions in v.29, where they capture all the Hivite women as war booty, presumably to take as sexual slaves or wives.<sup>109</sup> Were the eschewal of intermarriage a significant religio-cultural concern within the Jacobite community, the detainment of these women would make no sense at all.

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<sup>106</sup> Sternberg, "Biblical Poetics and Sexual Politics", 485.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 485-87 (citation, 485).

<sup>108</sup> Noble, 183, n.26.

<sup>109</sup> Van Seters, 244. The abhorrent practice of capturing enemy women as sexual 'booty' during military conquests appears to have been accepted practice in the Hebrew Bible. See, for example, Num. 31.9; Deut. 20.10-14; 21.10-14; Jdg. 5.30; 1 Sam. 30.1-5, etc.

While, in Gen. 34.14, the brothers claim that the eschewal of interethnic sexual congress was a significant religio-cultural creed within the Jacobite community, it is more likely that this claim was simply an intrinsic part of their deceitful speech, used to lure the Hivites into agreeing to be circumcised. As Van Seters has rightly pointed out, the narrator gives the reader no clues as to which parts of the speech are true and which are deceitful; we simply cannot assume, as Sternberg does, that the brothers' distaste for interethnic sexual unions *was* sincere.<sup>110</sup> Indeed, it could well be that *everything* these men say here to Hamor and Shechem is disingenuous, including their profession of a religio-cultural intolerance of exogamy.<sup>111</sup> This seems all the more likely when it becomes apparent that their insistence on mass Hivite circumcision is in fact the centre point of a deliberate ruse used to incapacitate the Hivite males during the Jacobites' subsequent assault upon the city (vv.25-9).<sup>112</sup> As Noble asserts, 'because [the brothers'] statement is motivated by political expedience, *nothing* can be inferred about their true beliefs' [original italics].<sup>113</sup>

Thus, contrary to scholars such as Sternberg and Bechtel, the attitudes held by the brothers towards exogamy within the traditions of Genesis 34 are not necessarily as unequivocal in their condemnation of interethnic sexual unions as those expressed within the biblical law codes of Exod. 34.11-16 and Deut. 7.1-4. It therefore makes little sense to suggest that the catalyst fuelling these men's act of murderous vengeance against the Hivite people was rooted within a deep sensitivity on their part to the divine imperative against Canaanite-Israelite exogamy, given voice within the law codes of the Torah.

This is not to say, however, that in order to understand fully the driving force behind the brothers' deadly reaction to Dinah's rape, we should *completely* ignore the significance of Shechem's ethnicity. Rather, I suggest that the import of his ethnic 'otherness' to the Jacobites is not necessarily rooted in any passionate eschewal on their part of exogamy *per se*, but instead, may perhaps be contextualised better within a broader dynamic of interethnic relations, in particular, the relations between the Jacobite people and their Canaanite neighbours. The *real* significance of Shechem's ethnicity for Dinah's brothers, I would propose, lies in their focalization

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<sup>110</sup> Van Seters, 244; also Noble, 182-83; Fewell and Gunn, *Gender, Power, and Promise*, 83; and "Tipping the Balance", 202.

<sup>111</sup> Fewell and Gunn, "Tipping the Balance", 202; Yamada, 153.

<sup>112</sup> Bader, 100, n.44.

<sup>113</sup> Noble, 183, n.24.

of his behaviour as an aggressive Hivite assault, perpetrated, not simply against Dinah, but against the entire Jacobite group. That is, Shechem's forceful abduction and rape of Jacob's daughter was conceptualised by her brothers as a pre-emptive, combative attack directed by the Hivite prince against their community, which was intended to intimidate and oppress them, while demonstrating to them the superiority of their much larger, more powerful Hivite neighbours. In other words, Dinah's brothers perceived her rape as nothing less than an act of war.

In order to substantiate this reading, it will be helpful to revisit our earlier discussion of the ideologies underlying the utilisation of rape as a military strategy during warfare. For, I believe that it is within the context of these ideologies, which grant to wartime rape its insidious power, that we can best understand the reactions of Dinah's brothers to her sexual assault. As I discussed above, the potency of rape during times of military combat would appear to arise from the conceptualisation of sexual violence, not primarily as an act of aggression against the female victim, but as an attack upon the honour and authority of her community, in particular its male members. The rape of an enemy woman by invading armies is a powerful communicator of the deeply humiliating incapacity and impotence of this woman's male kin and community members to protect her; their valued sexual property has been seized aggressively from them, thereby displaying their utter vulnerability to the superior strength of the opposition. Moreover, wartime rape, like rape during times of peace, denigrates and objectifies women, sending out a potent message to their community that they are objects worthy only of abuse and contempt. Such a message has a deeply destabilising and damaging effect upon communities affected by wartime rape, especially within those where, according to their own cultural value systems, women's social worth is measured according to their sexual status.

With this in mind, let us now consider in more detail the reactions of Dinah's brothers to her rape, looking at their focalisation of this event in light of these ideologies discussed above, which would appear to grant meaning and power to the conceptualisation of rape as a weapon of war.

#### *Dinah's rape as an offence against the Jacobite community*

In Gen. 34.7, when the brothers first hear of Dinah's rape and abduction, the narrator tells us that they were 'deeply grieved and burning with rage' because Shechem had

lain with ‘the daughter of Jacob’. What is of particular interest to us here is the fact that, elsewhere within the narrative, Dinah is similarly referred to by the narrator in terms of her specific kinship and ethnic ties; she is always ‘their sister’, ‘our sister’, ‘our daughter’, and ‘Jacob’s daughter’ – she is never simply ‘Dinah’.<sup>114</sup>

What does this apparent emphasis on Dinah’s familial and ethnic identification tell us about her brothers’ conceptualisation of the rape event? Well, we could perhaps suggest that, by laying such stress upon Dinah’s kinship ties, the brothers, like their father, viewed their sister’s rape primarily as a violation of her *family’s* proprietary rights, that is, *their* exclusive ownership of her virginity and *their* right to control her sexuality.<sup>115</sup> Before laying claim to Dinah’s virginity, this Hivite prince had sought neither her father’s or brothers’ permission, thereby seriously subverting the family’s political standing within the region, by demonstrating their inability to safeguard their domestic interests and control sexual access to ‘their’ women.<sup>116</sup>

Furthermore, the emphasis on Dinah’s ethnicity, through her designation as the ‘daughter of *Jacob*’ in v.7 may also encourage us to focalize her rape through the significance of Shechem’s ethnic otherness. Dinah’s virginity had not only been misappropriated, it had been misappropriated by a member of a neighbouring group, a group who, moreover, were much greater in number and strength than the Jacobites, and who could therefore pose a potentially serious threat to their safety and survival in the region. As we noted above, men’s successful defence of the women within their own group has long been perceived as the hallmark of group honour and authority; the rape of ‘their women’ by the ethnic ‘Other’ is therefore regarded as nothing less than a demonstration of their own vulnerability and impotence to outside attack.<sup>117</sup> As Brownmiller notes, ‘The body of a raped woman becomes a ceremonial battlefield, a parade ground for the victor’s trooping of the colours. The act that is played out upon her is a message passed between men – vivid proof of victory for one and loss and defeat for the other’.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> See vv.5, 13, 14, 17, 31. It is unclear why Dinah’s brothers refer to her in v.17 as ‘our daughter’, rather than ‘our sister’. Perhaps, they are claiming to speak on their father’s behalf; certainly, he was present, but silent, during these negotiations. Alternatively, as Westermann suggests, it is simply used here to correspond to Hamor’s use of the term ‘your daughter’ in v.8 (*Genesis 12-36*, 541).

<sup>115</sup> Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 213; Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 312; Fewell and Gunn, “Tipping the Balance”, 199.

<sup>116</sup> Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 180-81, 188-92; Leeb, 138; Rashkow, “Daughters and Fathers”, 27; Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 214; Thistlethwaite, 70; Aschkenasy, *Eve’s Journey*, 128; Pressler, “Sexual Violence”, 111.

<sup>117</sup> Brownmiller, 38.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.* Similar remarks are made by Messerschmidt, 708.

This use of sexual violence as a means of demonstrating the superiority of one group over another during warfare appears likewise to be given voice within the Hebrew Bible.<sup>119</sup> Certainly, the rape and abduction of women as war spoil by the victors after a successful military conquest is well attested in texts such as Num. 31.9-17, Jdg. 5.30; 21.8-12, and Lam. 5.11, and is even legislated for in the law codes of Deut. 20.10-17 and 21.10-14. It is therefore very possible that by emphasising Dinah's ethnicity in relation to Shechem's offence (v.7), the narrator may be suggesting that her brothers evaluated her rape, less as a personal attack against *her*, than as a deliberate and combative attack perpetrated by Shechem against their *group*, which demonstrated the inferiority of their strength and authority *vis-à-vis* their Hivite neighbours and which caused them maximum humiliation and dishonour.<sup>120</sup> As Aschkenasy suggests, Dinah's brothers 'are not motivated by compassion for her but by their concern for the tribal honour, as well as for their geopolitical survival and the preservation of their own seed on the land'.<sup>121</sup>

This reading of the brothers' focalisation of Dinah's rape as an offence against her family likewise appears to be confirmed when we turn to v.31, where Simeon and Levi defend to their father their act of vengeance, by arguing that Shechem had treated their sister 'like a harlot' (בזונה). Within the biblical traditions, a prostitute or harlot was essentially regarded as a woman whose sexuality was *not* under the authority or control of her male kin.<sup>122</sup> Men who had sexual relations with such a woman therefore did not firstly seek permission from the woman's guardian, but simply claimed access to her sexuality after negotiations with the woman herself. Comparing their sexually abused sister to a prostitute does not suggest to me that Dinah's brothers were regarding her here compassionately as the victim of a violent assault. Rather, they utterly ignore the fact that Shechem had violated *Dinah's* right to determine her sexual boundaries and instead, focus only on his violation of *their* right to control these boundaries. In other words, according to the brothers, Shechem had treated Dinah like a prostitute because he had acted as though she was

<sup>119</sup> Magdalene, 338-39; Thistlethwaite, 64-65; Gordon and Washington, 310-12; Judith E. Sanderson, "Nahum", in Newsom and Ringe, 219.

<sup>120</sup> Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 57-58; Magdalene, 339-40; Bechtel, "What If Dinah Is Not Raped", 33.

<sup>121</sup> Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 58 and *Eve's Journey*, 129; Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 201.

<sup>122</sup> Bird, "To Play the Harlot", 77; and *Missing Persons and Mistaken Identities*, 222; Bechtel, "What If Dinah Is Not Raped", 31; Fleishman, 110; G.H. Hall, "זונה", in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren, (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997), 1:1123; S. Erlandsson, "זונה", in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 4:101; Carmichael, *Women, Law, and the Genesis Traditions*, 37-38; Sanderson, 219.

a woman whose family had no command or authority over her sexuality.<sup>123</sup> By doing so, however, the Hivite prince had seriously dishonoured the Jacobites, demonstrating their incapacity to protect and defend ‘their women’, and thereby destroying any notions they may have entertained about their authority and power *vis-à-vis* their Hivite neighbours. While Shechem did subsequently seek the consent of Dinah’s family to marry her, it would appear that her brothers’ deep anger prevented them from seeing past his original violating act.<sup>124</sup> By sleeping with her without first seeking the consent of her family, he *had* treated their sister like a prostitute, and nothing he did subsequently could repair the serious dishonour that his earlier crime had caused the Jacobite group.

Finally, the brothers’ focalisation of Dinah’s rape as a dishonourable and hostile violation committed by Shechem against the entire Jacobite community is likewise emphasised in v.7, where we are told that the brothers are burning with grief and anger because Shechem had committed a ‘heinous outrage’ (נבלה) by his lying with the daughter of Jacob. The use of the abstract noun נבלה (*nebalah*)<sup>125</sup> here highlights the fact that the brothers regarded Shechem’s sexual violation as a crime, which adversely affected neither Dinah alone nor even themselves as individuals, but the entire community to which they belonged. For, the term *nebalah* is never used with reference to the wrongful behaviour of one individual against another;

<sup>123</sup> Frymer-Kensky, “Virginity in the Bible”, 89; and *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 187, 196; Fewell and Gunn, “Tipping the Balance”, 207; Carmichael, *Women, Law, and the Genesis Tradition*, 37-38; Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 474; Parry, *Old Testament Story*, 176-77.

<sup>124</sup> Parry, *Old Testament Story*, 177; Scholz, *Rape Plots*, 167.

<sup>125</sup> The abstract noun נבלה occurs thirteen times in the Hebrew Bible (Gen. 34.7; Deut. 22.21; Josh. 7.15; 1 Sam. 25.25; Jdg. 19.23, 24; 20.6, 10; 2 Sam. 13.12; Isa. 9.17; 32.6; Jer.29.23; Job 42.8 ). It is derived from the root נבל, which, in the Qal stem, connotes a sense of ‘to be foolish or senseless’ or ‘to act inappropriately or unwisely’. However, the overall semantic range of נבלה appears to convey more than just simple-minded foolishness, which is instead denoted in biblical Hebrew by verbal forms such as אָוִל, בָּסַל, and פָּתָה. Rather, it conveys a very serious and sinful breach of proper conduct, which is never treated lightly; such an act can incur divine wrath and judgement (Isa. 9.16; Job 42.8), while the perpetrator may often face capital punishment (Deut. 22.21; Josh.7.15; Jdg. 20.8ff; Jer. 29.20-23). Within the biblical texts, נבלה is used to denote illicit sexual behaviour (Deut. 22.21; Jdg. 19.23-24; 20.6, 10; Jer. 29.23; 2 Sam. 13.12), speaking falsely in YHWH’s name (Isa. 9.16; 32.6; Jer. 29.23; Job 42.8), the unethical treatment of others (1 Sam. 25.25; Isa. 32.6) and ungodly acts which disobey a divine command (Josh. 7.15). See Koehler, Baumgartner and Stamm, (1994), 2:663-64; Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 614-15; M. Sæbø, “נבל”, in *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, ed. Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 2:711; Chou-Wee Pan, “נבל”, in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997), 3:11-13; J. Marböck, “נבל”, in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. John T. Willis (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 9:168, 171; Anthony Phillips, “NEBALAH – A Term for Serious Disorderly and Unruly Conduct”, *Vetus Testamentum* 25 (1975): 237-42; Wolfgang M.W. Roth, “NBL”, *Vetus Testamentum* 10 (1960): 394-409; Gillis Gerleman, “Der Nicht-Mensch. Erwägungen zur Hebräischen Wurzel NBL”, *Vetus Testamentum* 24 (1974): 147-58.

rather, it connotes a dangerously disruptive act, which struck at the heart of Israelite community stability, violated its socio-ethical codes and value systems, and was therefore capable of bringing chaos and unruliness to the established bonds of social relationships.<sup>126</sup> As Keefe notes, within the worldview of biblical Israel, any behaviour, which was evaluated as a *nebalah* was understood to be ‘inherently generative of disorder, chaos, and the disintegration of shalom within a community’.<sup>127</sup>

This semantic definition of the term *nebalah* is further emphasised by the fact that on seven<sup>128</sup> out of its thirteen occurrences, including Gen. 34.7, the event to which it refers is specifically said to have occurred ‘in Israel’, as though this setting in which the offence occurred was of especial significance, perhaps adding to its heinous and objectionable nature. To commit such a deed ‘in Israel’ was to act *against* Israel, because by doing so, the perpetrator was understood to be bringing ‘evil’ into the midst of the people (e.g. Deut. 22.21; Jdg. 20.13), thereby threatening their social and ethical value systems, which held together the order and right relations understood to be essential for community survival.<sup>129</sup> Thus, according to Marböck, the common element of all acts designated as a *nebalah* ‘consists not just in the transgression of fundamental social or religious principles but in the consequent violation of the Israelite community’.<sup>130</sup> Or, as Lipka explains, ‘An act that was considered an outrage [*nebalah*] poses a threat to the community because the repercussions of such behaviour go beyond the immediate actors to reverberate within the entire community, ultimately threatening to tear apart the fabric of society’.<sup>131</sup>

Moreover, and of particular relevance to this inquiry, the formula ‘to commit a *nebalah* in Israel’ is used, in slightly varied forms, to evaluate the rape of a woman, not only in Gen. 34.7, but also in Jdg. 20.6, 10 and 2 Sam. 13.12. In Jdg. 20.6, the Levite describes to the assembled tribes of Israel both the threat against his life by the Benjaminite mob and their gang rape of his concubine as a *nebalah*.<sup>132</sup> It is

<sup>126</sup> Sæbø, 712-13; Marböck, 167, 171; Rodd, 44-46; McCarter, 322-23, 328; Lipka, 98-99; Brueggemann, 276; Thistlethwaite, 63; Phillips, “NEBALAH”, 237-38, 241; Roth, 403-9.

<sup>127</sup> Keefe, 82. Similarly, according to Lipka, an act of *nebalah* ‘introduces chaos and disorder by breaking up an existing relationship, whether between tribes, or within the family, in a marriage or with God, that is necessary to maintain communal and/or cosmic order’ (99).

<sup>128</sup> Gen. 34.7; Deut. 22.21; Josh. 7.15; Jdg. 20.6, 10; 2 Sam. 13.12; Jer. 29.23.

<sup>129</sup> Tigay, 206; Roth, 405; Marböck, 167; Pressler, *View of Women*, 30.

<sup>130</sup> Marböck, 167.

<sup>131</sup> Lipka, 192.

<sup>132</sup> In Jdg. 19.23-24, the term נבלה (without the added formula ‘in Israel’) is also twice utilised by the elderly host at Gibeah to describe the threatened gang rape of his Levite guest. Again, this suggests

patently clear, within this context, that the Levite did not focalize the events at Gibeah simply as an offence against his concubine, or even as an act that he alone was affected by. Instead, his very act of assembling all the Israelites from Dan to Beer-sheba (20.1) and insisting on their participation in responding to this heinous Benjaminite offence strongly suggests that at stake was not simply a desire to avenge the honour of one man or his wife, but rather a resolve to avenge a violation that struck at the very heart of the tribal confederacy.<sup>133</sup> In the eyes of the Levite, these Benjaminites had committed a multilayered crime, their behaviour seriously disrupting communal codes of conduct, which were deemed essential for Israelite community stability and survival. For, not only had they threatened him with rape and enacted horrendous violence against his concubine, they had also seriously subverted the strict societal protocols governing both traditional hospitality and male sexual ownership, the latter of which held as sacrosanct a man's right to sole sexual access to his wife. The dangerous threat that such an act of *nebalah* was deemed to pose for the community of Israel is likewise emphasised by the response of the tribes gathered at Mizpah (20.10).<sup>134</sup> Immediately after hearing the Levite's account, they agree to gather against Gibeah of Benjamin as a united force, to ensure that the men who committed this *nebalah* are put to death, so that the evil, which they represent, can be 'purged' from the midst of Israel (20.13).

Meanwhile, the text of 2 Samuel 13 likewise appears to emphasise the enormously deleterious repercussions that a violating act of *nebalah* was believed to have upon the community of Israel. In v.13, Tamar pleads with Amnon, 'No, my brother, do not force me, for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not commit this *nebalah*'. She further warns him that were he to do so, he would be reckoned as 'one of the fools in Israel (כֹּאֲחֵד הַנְּבָלִים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל)' and would, moreover, cause *her* to suffer serious humiliation (v.13).<sup>135</sup> Yet, Amnon's threatened assault upon his sister will be, as Tamar's words in the remainder of v.13 suggest, not only a source of her own shame and her brother's dishonour, but will also constitute a violation of the highly regarded sexual etiquette upheld within the community of Israel, which defended her

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that a *nebalah* could be used to describe a serious infraction, which seriously subverted the social boundaries and ethical codes governing the sexual dynamics permitted within the community. As discussed in the previous chapter, by threatening to rape the Levite, the Benjaminites were effectively treating him as a submissive sexual object, rather than a sexual subject, thereby essentially 'feminising' him and subverting gender role definitions held as sacrosanct within the community (Stone, *Sex, Honour, and Power*, 75-79; see Chapter 2, n.159).

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>134</sup> Bader, 43-44.

<sup>135</sup> 'And as for me, where would I carry my shame? And as for you, you would be like one of the fools of Israel' (2 Sam. 13.13a).



father's exclusive prerogative to determine to whom her virginity should be given.<sup>136</sup> In order to prevent this crisis, she therefore insists that her brother seek their father's permission before satisfying his violent sexual hunger.<sup>137</sup> However, Amnon fails to heed her words and, as becomes apparent further on in this narrative, his act of *nebalah* has serious repercussions, which spread far beyond either himself or Tamar. By having sexual intercourse with his sister without first seeking their father's consent, he appears effectively to destroy the stability and order of their entire family, and subsequently, the community of Israel.<sup>138</sup> At the end of this narrative, brother is pitched against brother, and eventually son against father, until the Davidic household and indeed the Davidic kingdom lie in turmoil, irrevocably damaged by family disloyalty, betrayal, and revenge (2 Sam. 13-20).

Thus, it would appear that the utilisation of *nebalah* to describe an act of sexual violence strongly suggests that, within the biblical traditions, rape was not perceived primarily as a crime that had a deleterious and damaging effect upon the female victim. Rather, it was evaluated as an event, which caused terrible and lasting effects upon her family or community, subverting the principles of accepted social and sexual relations, and threatening the very foundations of community stability.<sup>139</sup> As Keefe suggests, the application of the term *nebalah* to rape 'points to an understanding in which the gravity of the crime is measured not primarily in terms

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<sup>136</sup> Marböck, 168; Brenner, *Intercourse of Knowledge*, 99; Gravett, 283; Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 217; Bader, 45.

<sup>137</sup> 'So I beg you, speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from you' (2 Sam. 13.13b).

<sup>138</sup> The interrelationship between Tamar's rape and the subsequent dissolution of harmony within the Davidic household is emphasised by Jonadab in 13.32, where he tells David that Absalom's decision to kill Amnon was decided on the day that Amnon raped Tamar. Thus, according to André Caquot and Phillipe de Robert, 'Le chapitre 13 est inséparable du chapitre 14 et constitue avec lui le début de cette histoire d'Absalom qui, avec le récit de ses conséquences, se poursuit jusqu'au chapitre 20. L'historien s'est plu à faire venir les choses de loin et suggère qu'un événement d'apparence insignifiante a suffi à mettre en peril le trône de David. L'aventure toute individuelle d'Amnon déclenche la catastrophe: son amour pour Tamar est à l'origine de la haine d'Absalom pour le suborneur; la haine pousse Absalom au meurtre, ce qui altère ses rapports avec David son père et semble mettre en son esprit les germes de la révolte après une réconciliation illusoire'. In *Les Livres de Samuel* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1994), 495; see also Phillips, "NEBALAH", 239; George Ridout, "The Rape of Tamar: A Rhetorical Analysis of 2 Samuel 13.1-22", in *Rhetorical Criticism: Essays in Honour of James Muilenburg*, ed. Jared J. Jackson and Martin Kessler (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1974), 77-78; Burke O. Long, "Wounded Beginnings: David and Two Sons", in *Images of Man and God: Old Testament Short Stories in Literary Focus*, ed. Burke O. Long (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1981), 33-34; Bader, 23-24, 45.

<sup>139</sup> Brenner, *Intercourse of Knowledge*, 128; also 151-52; Pressler, *View of Women*, 30-31, 42; Lipka, 23, 82-83, 122; Frymer-Kensky, "Law and Philosophy", 98; and *Goddesses*, 189-94; Rashkow, *Taboo*, 33; van Wolde, "Does 'innâ Denote Rape", 541; Goodfriend, 82; Doug C. Mohrmann, "Making Sense of Sex: A Study of Leviticus 18", *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 29 (2004): 71; Kass, *Beginning of Wisdom*, 485; Keefe, 89; Niditch, "'Sodomite' Theme", 368.

of the consequences for the individuals involved, either victim or rapist, but as an (*sic*) disruption of and a violation against the order of community life'.<sup>140</sup>

Turning now to Genesis 34, we could propose that by designating Shechem's sexual violation of Dinah as a *נבלה בִּישְׂרָאֵל*, the narrator may be again suggesting that, for the brothers, this event was not a personal assault against *Dinah* or even a personal affront to them; rather, it was a violating act of outrage committed against their entire community, that is, the house of Jacob.<sup>141</sup> While the term 'Israel' here may appear anachronistic, given that there was no identifiable nation or community of Israel at this point, the significance of its usage within this patriarchal context may nevertheless emphasise the relevance of Shechem's crime, *both* for the Jacobite family and for the later community of Israel. As a number of scholars have proposed, the term *בִּישְׂרָאֵל* may well connote a dual meaning here.<sup>142</sup> In the first instance, it could refer to Jacob, who, in Gen. 33.27-8, was renamed Israel by the angel with whom he had wrestled the nightlong. Thus, the term *בִּישְׂרָאֵל* could be translated 'against Israel' or 'upon Israel', the brothers perceiving Shechem's act of lying with Dinah as an affront against Jacob and his family.<sup>143</sup> It may also, however, convey a second, mutually inclusive meaning, which could be translated 'in Israel' or 'against Israel', if we assume that the narrator is also encouraging later audiences, who are reading the text at a time when the community of Israel was extant, to consider the effects that Shechem's actions would have had upon this wider community.<sup>144</sup>

In other words, through this duality of meaning, the narrator emphasises that Shechem's behaviour was viewed with great seriousness both within the patriarchal context of the Jacobite community and subsequently, within the wider context of national life.<sup>145</sup> That is, whatever meaning we ascribe to *בִּישְׂרָאֵל*, it is clear that Dinah's rape was perceived in terms of its effects upon her *community*, be it the Jacobite community or the later community of Israel, not upon herself. As Esther Fuchs has suggested, 'The dignity of the family and of the Israelite nation are here at

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<sup>140</sup> Keefe, 82; also Bechtel "What If Dinah Is Not Raped", 32.

<sup>141</sup> Keefe, 83; Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 220; Thistlethwaite, 70; Caspi, 30; Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 55; Fewell and Gunn, *Gender, Power, and Promise*, 84; Zlotnik, 44; Cotter, 255.

<sup>142</sup> Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 454-55; Gerald J. Janzen, 137; Alter, 190; Leupold, 901.

<sup>143</sup> Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 454-55. Also Alter, 190; Cotter, 255; Ramras-Rauch, 161; Wevers, 560; Fleishman, 106. The preposition *ב* may be used, particularly with words denoting hostility, to represent the sense of 'against' or 'upon' (Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 89).

<sup>144</sup> Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 182; Parry, *Old Testament Story*, 199; Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 312; Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 538; Fleishman, 106; Roth, 405-6; Bader, 118; van Wolde, "Love and Hatred", 441, 443; Brueggemann, 276; Bar-Efrat, 262; Lipka, 192-93.

<sup>145</sup> Fleishman, 106; Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 452.

stake, not the physical and emotional aggression suffered by the girl herself.<sup>146</sup> By sleeping with the daughter of Jacob and thus committing a נבלה בישראל, the Hivite prince had subverted the ethical and social mores lying at the very heart of Jacobite community identity, which treated as sacrosanct the rights of a woman's male kin to have exclusive control over her sexuality, and, in so doing, had threatened to destroy the fabric of societal order.<sup>147</sup> Moreover, as a Hivite, Shechem's defiant disavowal of Jacobite social and sexual values may have emphasised to the brothers the *particular* threat that his actions posed to their group. By aggressively seizing one of their women and laying sexual claim to her, he had in effect demonstrated their weakness and vulnerability to outside hostility, thereby seriously undermining their political standing within the region.<sup>148</sup>

Thus, it would appear that, like their father, Dinah's brothers did not focalize her rape as a terrible and traumatising event for *her*; rather, they re-conceptualised and re-interpreted the rape event as an act that had serious political consequences for the entire ethnic entity that was the Jacobite community. However, unlike their father, the brothers also believed that such a dishonouring violation of community order was not something that could be resolved by Hamor and Shechem's seemingly generous offer of economic and political recompense.<sup>149</sup> In the brothers' eyes, Shechem's ethnic identity as a member of their larger, more powerful neighbours may have intensified the sinister significance of his actions, essentially serving to accentuate the Jacobites' vulnerability to being subjugated and absorbed by other peoples.<sup>150</sup> By abducting a young Jacobite woman and having sexual intercourse with her without first seeking her family's consent, the Hivite prince would have sent a potent message of hostility and disrespect to her community. Whether or not this was his intention will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter; however, it is sufficient to say now that his actions appear to have at least been *interpreted* by Dinah's brothers as a deliberate challenge to Jacobite authority, honour, and social status in relation to their Hivite neighbours, which effectively struck a blow to their political strength and prominence, if not their very survival, in this region. Jacob's inaction and his ostensibly conciliatory approach towards the Hivites must therefore have seriously perplexed his sons, impelling them to take it

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<sup>146</sup> Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 214.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 213-14; Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 453; Bader, 37-38, n.96; Frymer-Kensky, "Virginity in the Bible", 94; Marböck, 167; Roth, 406; Lipka, 190.

<sup>148</sup> Keefe, 84; Sheres, 110.

<sup>149</sup> Jeansonne, 94.

<sup>150</sup> Keefe, 84; Geller, 3.

upon themselves to avenge the family's dishonour and the damage done to their authority.<sup>151</sup> Furthermore, their abduction of the Hivite women (v.29) may likewise have been driven by their desire to demonstrate to the surrounding peoples that the Jacobites were indeed as strong, if not stronger, than their aggressors and that they too were able to seize with impunity the women belonging to their enemy.<sup>152</sup> By reacting to Dinah's rape and abduction with such a murderous act of vengeance, the brothers are therefore making a political statement to the neighbouring tribes, demonstrating to them that they are more than capable of retaliating against any form of external threat to their community.<sup>153</sup>

### *Dinah's defilement*

Earlier in this chapter, I discussed the fact that women who are raped, both in times of war and peace, are all too often regarded by their family and members of their community as degraded, devalued, and damaged by their encounter with sexual violence. Such a response to rape victims arises from the ideology, often pervasive in patriarchal cultures, which insists that a woman's social worth and value, particularly to her male kin, ought to be measured according to her sexual status, in particular, her chastity. Furthermore, this ideology plays an intrinsic role in the potency of rape as a weapon of war. As discussed above, the denigration, devaluation, and objectification of women through rape by conquering troops sends a powerful message to these women's communities that, as a people, they are worthless, contemptible, and not deserving of the basic human right to bodily and sexual self-determination. Thus, the victim's own personal experience of abuse, denigration, and contempt at the hands of her rapist is once again eclipsed and ignored, reinterpreted and recontextualised in terms of the patriarchal concerns and gender expectations of her community and culture.

Turning now to Genesis 34, it is therefore of interest to note that the narrator tells us that both Dinah's father and brothers likewise regarded her as having been 'defiled' (אָנָּוָּ) by her sexual encounter with Shechem (vv.5, 13, 27). The verbal form, used

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<sup>151</sup> Bader, 99; Fleishman, 111; Armstrong, 96; Ramras-Rauch, 164; Caspi, 30; Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 317; Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 474-75; Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 544; Yamada, 155.

<sup>152</sup> Keefe, 84; Fewell and Gunn, *Gender, Power, and Promise*, 83-84.

<sup>153</sup> Aschkenasy, *Eve's Journey*, 128. Similarly, Frymer-Kensky notes that the brothers' murder and looting of Hivite territory 'teaches the Shechemites (and others) that they cannot violate Israel's boundaries' (*Reading the Women of the Bible*, 195).

here in the *Piel* stem, usually occurs within the biblical priestly material, often in a ritual or cultic context, to denote the ritual defilement, which temporarily affects people as the result of their direct or indirect contact with a number of naturally occurring substances, which are regarded as unclean.<sup>154</sup> It is also used by the priestly writers to refer to the permanent *moral* defilement of a person as a result of their participation in sinful acts, such as idolatry,<sup>155</sup> murder,<sup>156</sup> and sexual sins, including adultery, homosexuality, bestiality, and incest.<sup>157</sup> Furthermore, and of central importance to the overall rationale of this priestly purity system, these sources of impurity were understood to pose a serious threat to the people's continued relationship with YHWH and their very existence on this land.<sup>158</sup> For, as

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<sup>154</sup> Lev. 11-15. Jonathan Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 22-26.

<sup>155</sup> For example, Lev. 18.21; Jer. 7.30; 32.34; Ezek. 20.7, 18, 31; 22.3-4; 36.18; 37.23.

<sup>156</sup> For example, Num. 35.33-34.

<sup>157</sup> For example, Lev. 18.6-23; Ezek. 18.6, 11, 15; 22.11; 23.13, 17; 33.26. For a discussion of moral impurity, see Klawans, *Impurity and Sin*, 26-31; and "Idolatry, Incest, and Impurity: Moral Defilement in Ancient Judaism", *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 29 (1998): 391-415; and "The Impurity of Immorality in Ancient Judaism", *Journal of Jewish Studies* 48 (1997): 1-16.

<sup>158</sup> For example, Lev. 18.24-28; Num. 35.34; Deut. 21.23; Jer. 2.7; 7.30; 32.34; Ezek. 5.11; 36.17-18; Ps. 79.1; 2 Chron. 36.14. The concepts of purity and impurity within the Hebrew Bible are hugely complex and the subject of much debate within biblical studies; therefore, given the space allotted to me, an in depth analysis of this topic is, regrettably, beyond the remit of this work. My definitions of both ritual and moral defilement are only intended to provide the most basic understanding of these extremely important biblical ideations. However, for more detailed discussion about the priestly purity system and the biblical conceptualisation of defilement, I would recommend in particular Klawans, *Impurity and Sin*, 3-60; Christine E. Hayes, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities: Intermarriage and Conversion from the Bible to the Talmud* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 19-67; Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "Pollution, Purification, and Purgation in Biblical Israel", in *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honour of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of his Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. Carol L. Meyers and M. O'Conner (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 399-414; Richard E. Averbeck, "טָמֵא", in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997), 2:364-76; P. André and H. Ringgren, "טָמֵא", in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1986), 5:330-42; Lester L. Grabbe, *Leviticus* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993); F. Maass, "טָמֵא", in *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, ed. Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, trans. Mark E. Biddle (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 2:495-97; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*; and *Leviticus 17-22: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2000); and *Leviticus: A Book of Ritual and Ethics* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004); and "Israel's Sanctuary: The Priestly 'Picture of Dorian Gray'", *Revue Biblique* 83 (1976): 390-99; and "Rationale for Cultic Law: The Case of Impurity", *Semeia* 45 (1989): 103-9; Mary Douglas, *In the Wilderness; and Purity and Danger*, (London: Routledge, 2004); and *Reading Leviticus: A Conversation with Mary Douglas*, ed. J.F.A. Sawyer (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); Jan Joosten, *People and Land in the Holiness Code: An Exegetical Study of the Ideational Framework of the Law in Leviticus 17-26* (Leiden: Brill, 1996); I. Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995); Hyam Maccoby, *Ritual and Morality: The Ritual Purity System and its Place in Judaism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); David P. Wright, "The Spectrum of Priestly Impurity", in *Priesthood and Cult in Ancient Israel*, ed. G.A. Anderson and S.M. Olyan (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 150-81; and "Unclean and Clean: Old Testament", in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992),

the priestly material makes clear, the people of Israel were expected to live their lives in a state of purity and holiness; because YHWH their God was holy, then the people too had to be holy (Exod. 19.6; Lev. 19.2; 20.7-8, 26; Num. 15.40; 16.3).<sup>159</sup> However, impurity, like sin, damaged this sought-after state of holiness, thereby rendering the people unfit for such a close affiliation with their God.<sup>160</sup> Moreover, the people's impurity was believed to defile both the sanctuary and the land of Israel's inheritance, the spaces in which YHWH was understood to dwell (Lev. 15.31; 18.24-30; Num. 35.34; Ezek. 5.11; 43.7-9).<sup>161</sup> By bringing impurity into the midst of YHWH's dwelling place was to profane YHWH, causing the deity to turn away from the covenant community and thus depriving them of their God's saving presence (Ezek. 5.11; 39.24; Lev. 15.31; 20.3).<sup>162</sup>

However, within the patriarchal context of Genesis 34, where there was no official cult or priesthood and no land or sanctuary to be guarded against ritual or moral defilement, I would suggest that the verb נָטַם conveys somewhat different nuances of meaning to those it bears when employed within a specifically cultic or priestly milieu.<sup>163</sup> Rather, this term may carry a similar sense of defilement as is used within contemporary cultures to describe the apparent effects of rape upon its female victims. Thus, it may be that, for her father and brothers, Dinah's (albeit unwilling) involvement in an act of premarital sexual intercourse, which destroyed her chastity and subverted *their* exclusive right to control her sexuality, had effectively caused her to suffer a serious and permanent degradation of her social worth and status.<sup>164</sup> In other words, in the eyes of her family, Shechem had defiled Dinah because by deflowering her, he had wrested her sexuality out of her family's control and, in the process, had irreparably damaged her sexual purity.<sup>165</sup> As an unmarried non-virgin

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6:729-41; L.E. Toombs, "Clean and Unclean", in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: An Illustrated Encyclopaedia*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 1:641-48.

<sup>159</sup> Waldemar Janzen, *Old Testament Ethics: A Paradigmatic Approach* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 106; Toombs, 647.

<sup>160</sup> Ilana Be'er, "Blood Discharge: On Female Im/Purity in the Priestly Code and in Biblical Literature", in Brenner, *A Feminist Companion to Exodus to Deuteronomy*, 157; André and Ringgren, 331; Toombs, 647.

<sup>161</sup> André and Ringgren, 339; Toombs, 647.

<sup>162</sup> Toombs, 647.

<sup>163</sup> Hayes, 74. Gen. 34.5, 13, and 27 are the only three occasions in which the root נָטַם appears in the book of Genesis, further suggesting that notions of purity and impurity, as elucidated within the priestly writings, were not of significant concern within these patriarchal traditions.

<sup>164</sup> As Christine Hayes suggests, 'The use of the root t.m.' in Gen. 34.13 is, of course, non-ritual and connotes the degradation in status that attaches to a female who is partner – willingly or unwillingly – to a sexual offence (in this case rape)' (74). See also Hayes, 24, 232, n.50; Klawans, *Impurity and Sin*, 29.

<sup>165</sup> Fewell and Gunn, "Tipping the Balance", 207.

living within a culture where a woman's virginity was a highly prized sexual asset and most likely a prerequisite to finding a desirable husband, Dinah would have been deemed virtually unmarriageable, for very few if any potential suitors would wish to marry a woman whose hymen was no longer intact.<sup>166</sup> That the offending sexual event was aggressive and utterly coerced may therefore have had little or no bearing on the family's evaluation of its wrongfulness.<sup>167</sup> Rather, their primary concern appears to have been that Dinah's social status and social value had been seriously tarnished, rendering her sullied, spoiled, and defiled within her own community, whilst at the same time, visiting great dishonour upon them.<sup>168</sup> For, as I have already noted, within the worldview of biblical Israel, the preservation of a woman's sexual purity was a potent symbol of a man's capability and authority to protect and control the women under his charge.

This conceptualisation of Dinah's rape as the source of her defilement and social degradation appears likewise to be echoed nowhere more painfully than in 2 Samuel 13. While the verb נָחַשׁ is not used within this narrative, the author nevertheless manages to express this same sense of debasement and social devaluation experienced by Dinah in the aftermath of her rape. In v.13, prior to her assault, Tamar attempts to reason with her would-be rapist, reminding him of the terrible shame that she would have to suffer, were he to violate her. Her words here take on near-prophetic significance when we learn of her fate in the aftermath of her sexual assault. There is to be no prestigious royal wedding for Tamar, no experience of motherhood, no 'happily-ever-after' ending to her story. Instead, we learn in v.20 that this former virgin princess spends the remainder of her days living in her brother Absalom's house, a desolate and broken woman.<sup>169</sup> Her royal robes, symbols of her sexual purity and esteemed social status, lie in tatters, rent by her own hand whilst mourning her lost virginity and subsequent social devaluation (v.19).<sup>170</sup> It is one of the bitter ironies of the story that this woman of many words

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<sup>166</sup> Anderson, 67.

<sup>167</sup> L.E. Goodman, "The Biblical Laws of Diet and Sex", in *Jewish Law Association Studies II*, ed. B.S. Jackson (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 38.

<sup>168</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 534; Pitt-Rivers, 165; Fuchs *Sexual Politics*, 214-15; Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 183-84; and "Virginity in the Bible", 84, 94; Brenner, *Intercourse of Knowledge*, 138; Graetz, "Dinah's Daughters", 306; Anderson, 42-43; Pressler, "Sexual Violence", 105; and *View of Women*, 30-31, 42; Bader, 76-77; Goodman, 38.

<sup>169</sup> The verb נָחַשׁ means 'to be desolate' or 'deserted', and often describes towns laid low by war and conquest (e.g. Isa.49.8; Ezek. 33.28; 35.12, 16; 36.4; Lam. 1.13; 3.11). Furthermore, and with particular significance to 2 Sam. 13.19, it is used in Isaiah to refer to the desolation that was the lot of the unmarried or barren women (Isa. 54.1; 62.1). See Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 1030-31.

<sup>170</sup> Bar-Efrat, 269-71. As Lipka likewise remarks, with regards this portrayal of Tamar, 'On the symbolic level, the narrator has set things up so that the audience sees the tearing of her garment as

has no voice with which to express the terror, pain, and sheer horror of her rape experience. Instead, her voice is permitted to speak of the assault only in terms of its detrimental effects upon her chastity, honour, and social worth.<sup>171</sup> Like Dinah, she is presented less as a woman traumatised by the effects of a life-shattering and life-threatening physical violation of her body, than one who faces a social ‘death’, irreparably damaged and sullied by her (albeit unwilling) encounter with forbidden sexuality.<sup>172</sup> Like Dinah too, despite the fact that a terrible wrong had been committed against *her*, it is nevertheless she, not her rapist, who carries the burden of shame and desolation, wrought upon her by her assault.<sup>173</sup>

Such an evaluation of Dinah’s defilement as both a potent symbol of her social devaluation and the source of deep dishonour for her family likewise makes sense when we come to consider the very different responses of Jacob and his sons to her rape. For Jacob, this event had not only landed him in a very tricky political and diplomatic quagmire, it would also have had deleterious economic repercussions for him. Dinah’s premarital deflowerment at the hands of Shechem had seriously compromised her social value, for Jacob was unlikely to receive a decent bride price for a daughter whose valuable virginity had already been laid claim to by another man. Thus, by agreeing to Shechem’s proposal of marriage and his generous offer of an unlimited bride price, Jacob must have thought that both his financial and political troubles would be resolved. He could keep relations with his host Hamor on a positive footing, by letting his son have what he so desperately desired, and in the process, would ensure that he was more than adequately recompensed by Shechem for the loss of his daughter’s valuable virginity.

However, in the eyes of Jacob’s sons, Dinah’s defilement was far more than a financial or political inconvenience, which could be resolved by acquiescing to

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representative of the loss of her virginity, her special status as a Judean royal princess, and of any sort of positive future for her. The tearing of this special gown associated with her high status and her maidenhood symbolises all that Tamar has lost that can never be regained’ (216-17). See also Gray, 43-4, 50; Tribble, *Texts of Terror*, 49-50; Conroy, 34; Fokkelmann, *King David*, 110.

<sup>171</sup> As Fuchs has noted, by presenting the patriarchal interest as the victim’s, the text ‘reflects the way in which a raped woman ought to react to her rape’ (*Sexual Politics*, 216). Furthermore, as the perfect daughter and sister who voices her belief that her rapist’s refusal to marry her is a worse wrong than his raping her (v.16), Tamar exemplifies the biblical focalisation of sexual violence only in terms of its detrimental effects upon a woman’s chastity and social worth; according to Fuchs, she therefore epitomises ‘the perfect rape victim’ (*ibid.*). Also Fokkelmann, *King David*, 108; Ridout, 76; Lipka, 215.

<sup>172</sup> Karla G. Shargent, ‘Living on the Edge: The Liminality of Daughters in Genesis to 2 Samuel’, in *A Feminist Companion to Samuel and Kings*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 35.

<sup>173</sup> Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 214-15.



Hivite demands; rather, the social degradation and devaluation of their sister represented for them nothing less than a hostile display of animosity and aggression against the entire Jacobite group that they simply could not ignore. As discussed above, the denigration, defilement, and objectification of women through rape by the enemy during conflict situations is often perceived, not as a personal crime against the woman *per se*, but as means by which the rapist can demonstrate his superior strength over the enemy, uncovering their inadequacies, and, moreover, by which he can communicate his contempt both for his victim *and* for the group to which she belongs, particularly its male members. The sexual violation of a woman sends a powerful message to her community that, as a people or ethnic group, they are worthless, contemptible, and not deserving of the basic human rights to bodily and sexual self-determination. It may well be that *this* is the message, which Dinah's brothers heard when they learnt of her rape; the Hivite prince had laid claim to their sister's sexuality without first seeking their consent and, in so doing, had rendered their sister 'damaged goods'. In their minds, he had therefore struck at the very heart of Jacobite self-worth, authority, and honour.<sup>174</sup>

This particular evaluation of Dinah's defilement by her brothers is further lent weight by the fact that they did not seem to regard Shechem's actions as simply a personal attack perpetrated by this one man against Dinah and her family. Instead, while acknowledging that he was the individual who carried out the atrocity that defiled their sister, they nevertheless appear to have focalized his behaviour, through the medium of his ethnic otherness, as representative of a much wider and more dangerous threat of Hivite aggression directed against their community.<sup>175</sup> This comes to light particularly in v.27, where the brothers appear to allocate the blame for Dinah's defilement to *all* the Hivite males.<sup>176</sup> Just as victims of wartime rape today are often regarded as having been raped and defiled by 'the enemy', rather than by an individual who happens to belong to the enemy side,<sup>177</sup> so too does this sense of collective responsibility appear to influence the perceptions of Dinah's brothers to the rape event. It is almost as though both Shechem and Dinah become living symbols of the ethnic groups to which they each belong, while the rape event itself is seen as representative, not of one woman's violation, but as the violation, or

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<sup>174</sup> Yamada, 157.

<sup>175</sup> Freedman, 291; Zlotnik, 43; Keefe, 80.

<sup>176</sup> בני יעקב באו על-החללים ויבזו העיר אשר טמאו אחותם ('And the other sons of Jacob came upon the slain and plundered the city, because *they* had defiled their sister').

<sup>177</sup> Turshen, 804-5.

*nebalah*, perpetrated by one of these groups against the other.<sup>178</sup> The fact that Shechem, as an individual, had hurt their sister, had subjected her to a terrifying assault, and had caused her untold suffering appears to have escaped their notice. Rather, they conceptualise her most personal experience of sexual violence as a Hivite attack against her family and community, as a threat to their security and authority, and as a violation of their honour. Amidst these very masculine concerns of inter-group animosity, political status, and family honour, Dinah's voice is therefore inevitably lost and, as readers, we are never invited, by either the narrator or his male characters, to seek it out.

### Listening for Dinah's Voice

Throughout this chapter, we have looked at the various conceptualisations of Dinah's rape that are given voice within the Genesis 34 narrative. On reviewing the evidence, it would appear that scant attention is paid to the fact that Shechem's act of sexual assault was a forcible violation of Dinah's bodily integrity and that it would have been a source of immense physical, emotional, and spiritual distress for her. Instead, through the voices and actions of his male characters, the narrator focalizes this woman's rape in such a manner that it is transformed discursively into another quite different event.<sup>179</sup> For Jacob, Dinah's rape constituted something of a diplomatic nightmare, while for her brothers, her abusive sexual violation and subsequent defilement were nothing less than a hostile display of Hivite aggression and superiority perpetrated against their community.<sup>180</sup> Dinah's violent and abusive treatment at the hands of her rapist is thus consistently overshadowed and her victimhood eclipsed by both her brothers' and her father's concerns over male ownership rights, damaged honour, and inter-ethnic tensions.<sup>181</sup> She is little more than a pawn – a silent pawn – fought over by men in a competition that is violently

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<sup>178</sup> Keefe, 88. Snyder *et al.* likewise suggest that the bodies of women raped during warfare are the symbolic representation of the ethnic group to which they belong; by dishonouring a woman's body, which symbolises her group, the rapist symbolically violates and dishonours her entire group (190).

<sup>179</sup> Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 55; and *Eve's Journey*, 123.

<sup>180</sup> Cotter, 256; Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 57; Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 206; Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 194.

<sup>181</sup> Cooper-White, 82; Manazan, 44-52; Bach, "Re-Reading the Body Politic", 151; Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 204, 214; Davies, 56; Brenner, *Intercourse of Knowledge*, 133, 138; Anderson, 42, 67; Hauptman, 474; Phillips, *Essays*, 84; and *Deuteronomy*, 152; and *Criminal Law*, 113, n.18; Washington, "Lest He Die", 210; Shargent, 35; Yamada, 152, 164-65; Fewell and Gunn, *Gender, Power, and Promise*, 84; Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 194.

played out upon the woman's body.<sup>182</sup> In the words of Aschkenasy, 'Dinah's verbal absence may be best understood as a cultural comment, a message to women that rape will not be considered as a woman's ordeal, but as an event significant to men, and that its repercussions are economic and political rather than emotional'.<sup>183</sup>

Furthermore, the reader is encouraged to regard Dinah, less as the victim of a violent crime than a woman sullied and stained by an encounter with illicit sexuality.<sup>184</sup> Her tainted body becomes a symbol of outsiders' aggression towards the Jacobite community and serves only as a reminder to her family of the terrible wrong perpetrated against *them*. As Yamada notes, 'The reader stands appalled at this narratively constructed world, where the rape of one of Israel's daughters is turned into excessive violence, family dissention and, in the final account, the woman's desolation and isolation. The world becomes a strange place when a woman's defilement turns into the wars of men'.<sup>185</sup>

Thus, amidst the clamour of these wholly masculine concerns of property violation, intertribal conflict and family dishonour, Dinah's voice is subsequently lost; like the many victims of sexual violence today, her story is silenced by a dominant and at times deafening androcentric discourse, which all too often grants no audience to the woman's testimony of suffering.<sup>186</sup> As a literary rape victim, she is refused the right to participate in her own discourse, but is rather relegated to status of a 'voiceless creation', left standing within the shadows of the narrative tradition, the object, never the subject, of androcentric words, thoughts, and actions.<sup>187</sup> We hear nothing of the pain and terror Dinah must have endured during her rape, we learn nothing about her own sense of shame or degradation, which, as mentioned at the start of this chapter, many rape survivors experience in the aftermath of their assault. All of the other emotions one would expect her to feel after her rape, such as a strong sense of grief, anger, and a desire for justice, are denied her and are instead ascribed to her brothers.<sup>188</sup> Moreover, she has no part to play in punishing her rapist, nor is she granted any say in what form this punishment ought to take. As Aschkenasy further

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<sup>182</sup> Brenner, *I Am*, 41.

<sup>183</sup> Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 53. Likewise, Sheres describes her rape, 'not as a horrible experience that cried out for sympathy and comfort but as a violation of property rights that cried out for compensation by force' (111). See also Yamada, 157.

<sup>184</sup> Yamada, 157; Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 223.

<sup>185</sup> Yamada, 164-65.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 152, 156, 164-65; Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 56; Van Seters, 243.

<sup>187</sup> Coppélia Kahn, "Lucrece: The Sexual Politics of Subjectivity", in Higgins and Silver, 142. Similar remarks regarding the objectivity and silencing of literary rape victims are made by Brenda R. Silver, "Periphrasis, Power, and Rape in *A Passage to India*", in Higgins and Silver, 129-30.

<sup>188</sup> Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 219; Davies, 56.

notes, it is as though ‘within the patriarchal trajectory there is no female perspective to rape; only men should handle rape in all its aspects, dealing with the rapist as well as with the victim. Women should not be involved since they have nothing to offer’.<sup>189</sup> Even in the patriarchal traditions, which follow Genesis 34, we are told next to nothing about Dinah’s fate, her resettlement into the community, or her process of healing.<sup>190</sup> Instead, all we are confronted with is absolute silence – Dinah’s silence.

It is not, however, only the narrator of this biblical text who may be called to account for the systematic erasure of Dinah’s voice and the silencing of her suffering. Within the interpretive traditions surrounding Gen. 34, there is a common proclivity among some biblical scholars to ignore, or pass over in a silence of their own, the circumscription of Dinah’s personal rape experience. These scholars appear to overlook the fact that Dinah is denied the role of focalizer for her own rape; certainly, many make no mention of the fact that her encounter with sexual violence is perceived through all eyes except her own. Instead, they choose to focus, as the narrator does, on the reactions of the *male* characters to this rape event, while suppressing any consideration of Dinah’s personal experience of her assault.

Thus, as we have already noted above, a number of scholars, including Carmichael and Fewell and Gunn, appear to view Dinah’s rape, less as a terrible violation of *her* bodily integrity than as a difficult political dilemma for her *father*. Sharing this propensity to focalize the rape event from the perspective of Dinah’s male kin, Gerhard von Rad makes note of ‘the burning shame *done to the brothers* in the rape of Dinah’ [italics added],<sup>191</sup> while Robin Parry describes the ‘Dinah episode’ as ‘a sin’ committed by Shechem ‘against the *family*’ [italics added].<sup>192</sup>

Meanwhile, showing a similar disinterest in the effects that Dinah’s rape may have had upon *her*, Helena Zlotnik defines the repercussions of the rape event solely in terms of the effect that it had upon the socio-political dynamics of the geopolitical

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<sup>189</sup> Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 57. Similar sentiments are expressed by Yamada, 154; Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 202; Davies, 57.

<sup>190</sup> The only other time Dinah is mentioned in Genesis is when we are told that she is among Jacob’s children who accompany their father to Egypt (Gen. 46.15).

<sup>191</sup> von Rad, 334. Similarly, William D. Reyburn and Euan McG. Fry note that Dinah’s brothers were angry and upset, not only because their sister had been assaulted, but because ‘*their* honour had been violated’ [italics added]; see *A Handbook on Genesis* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1997), 790. Robert Davidson likewise suggests that the brothers reacted with such fury because ‘the family honour was at stake. It had to be avenged’; *Genesis 12-50* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 197.

<sup>192</sup> Parry, *Old Testament Story*, 174.

region. Shechem's violation of the young Jacobite woman had, she claims, 'undermined not only patriarchal strategies of prearranged marriages but, *more seriously*, he also caused a disruption of the delicate set of male relationships that supported a socioeconomic structure carefully calculated to retain a balance of power between nomads and sedentary populations' [italics added].<sup>193</sup> Some scholars even endow *Dinah* with these same distinctly androcentric attitudes towards her own rape; Bruce Vawter, for example, shows a rather disturbing degree of insensitivity to Dinah's personal rape experience when he suggests that she would have been 'expecting her family to sustain her honour by naming a respectable [bride] price' from Shechem.<sup>194</sup> It is as though he simply assumes that she would have evaluated her rape, like her father and brothers, as a dishonourable property violation, which reduced her social 'worth' and thus caused *them* to incur damage both to their finances and their honour. The possibility that she would have identified herself, above all, as the victim of a brutal and life-threatening assault is not even considered.

Interpretive traditions of Gen. 34, such as those mentioned above, however, ought to be taken to task, for they only serve to perpetuate Dinah's suppression within the narrative discourse, by re-inscribing the tradition of her silence, and reinforcing the author's androcentric portrayal of rape as nothing more than the occasion of a male reaction.<sup>195</sup> By insisting that Dinah's rape is an offence against her father, her brothers, and her community, biblical scholars surely draw our attention away from any adequate conception of the very real pain and terror that Dinah would have experienced. Furthermore, they ensure that this woman remains forever excluded from interpretive consideration, unnoticed or ignored among the dark corners of this narrative. As a result, her silence becomes nothing less than a form of oppression, the mark of her exclusion from honest representation within the text.<sup>196</sup>

Given such a silence, it therefore falls to us, the readers, to consider for ourselves some of the emotions and thoughts that Dinah may have experienced following her ordeal and thus to give her, in some sense, a voice with which to tell her story. For, if we fail to do so, choosing instead to focalize Dinah's rape only through the eyes of the narrator and his male characters, we surely then become complicit in her

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<sup>193</sup> Zlotnik, 40.

<sup>194</sup> Vawter, 359.

<sup>195</sup> Fuchs, "Objective Phallacy", 138; Scholz, *Rape Plots*, 169; Bach, "Re-Reading the Body Politic", 157; Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 52.

<sup>196</sup> Laurence, 156.

narrative silencing, abandoning *her* experience in favour of masculine concerns and patriarchal priorities.<sup>197</sup> Thus, in order to imagine, as sensitively and as honestly as possible, what she might say to us, we can look nowhere else but to the testimonies of rape survivors who have found the strength and courage to share their experiences with us. We can let their voices guide us, asking them to speak on Dinah's behalf, so that they may grant us a new awareness of the terrible and painful space, which Dinah, as a rape survivor, may have inhabited.

Through these women's witness, we can suggest, for example, that, like so many rape survivors, Dinah may have felt sullied and defiled by her sexual assault. Perhaps, like the rape survivor quoted at the start of this chapter, she experienced a sense of feeling 'dirty' with the smell of Shechem upon her skin, and may have longed to wash away the stain of sexual violation, which permeated her entire body.<sup>198</sup> She may also have suffered feelings of self-worthlessness and degradation, having been objectified by her rapist and treated as a person not worthy of respect or consideration. It is conceivable that her thoughts would have been much like those expressed within the following testimony: '[When] it really hit me what had happened then I felt very, very dirty. I remember taking a bath but it was like you were internally dirty. You couldn't get clean no matter how you tried ... and after that I didn't care what happened to my body ... Like what did it matter any more ... At that point, you know, it's like you've been violated so so so bad that it didn't matter'.<sup>199</sup> These powerful and terrible words can only remind us of the insidious power of rape to damage a woman's sense of self-worth within her own community; we therefore cannot ignore the fact that Dinah too may have experienced such a crippling sense of internal defilement. Like the rape survivor who reported a perpetual feeling of 'carrying some kind of visible stamp, of being dirty, physically dirty, and guilty',<sup>200</sup> Dinah may likewise have internalised this powerful message of insignificance and contempt, conveyed to her by her rapist through his abuse, until it soaked into her very soul and became, for her, a reality.<sup>201</sup>

Such feelings of worthlessness and personal defilement would also have been reinforced for Dinah by the seemingly unfeeling response of her family in the wake of the rape event. On returning to the family home, it would appear from the text

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<sup>197</sup> Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 52; Fewell and Gunn, *Gender, Power, and Promise*, 11.

<sup>198</sup> Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 19.

<sup>199</sup> Lebowitz and Roth, 374.

<sup>200</sup> Draculić, 119.

<sup>201</sup> Freedman, 129.

that neither her father nor her brothers even attempted to speak to her, either to reassure her, voice concern for her wellbeing, or simply ask her to relate *her* account of the terrifying and traumatic events that she had endured. In their eyes, she was less a casualty of a violent crime than a misappropriated piece of their property and a woman tainted and defiled by illicit sexual intercourse. Facing attitudes such as these must have been devastating for Dinah, reminding her of her objectification at the hands of her rapist and reinforcing her own sense of self-worthlessness and social degradation. Like the woman cited above, whose mother believed that she was permanently ‘soiled’ after her rape and would subsequently start ‘whoring around’,<sup>202</sup> Dinah too may have felt that such a response from her family only served to confirm what she already believed; that, as an unmarried virgin, she was devalued, despoiled, and morally sullied. Perhaps, like the victims of wartime rape in Uganda, who are taunted by their communities because they are ‘used products that have lost their taste’,<sup>203</sup> Dinah may have experienced terrible social stigma, shame, and humiliation, being treated as a piece of damaged property, which had been misused and devalued. Perhaps, like the woman whose husband treated her rape as a property violation perpetrated against *him*,<sup>204</sup> Dinah simply felt that, for her family, *her* suffering and *her* pain were less important than *their* own sense of violation and victimhood. Indeed, if she were able to recount to us her experiences, she may speak with the same terrible knowledge as the Rwandan rape survivor, who commented that ‘after rape, you don’t have value in the community’.<sup>205</sup>

Finally, when contemplating the effects that Dinah’s rape may have had upon her, we must not forget that an intrinsic part of her ordeal would have been the very act of silencing that was imposed upon her by the narrator and his multiple male characters.<sup>206</sup> Dinah was given no opportunity to share her story, her feelings, or her fears. Instead, her voice was stifled and her very victimhood laid claim to by her father and brothers, who appeared to show little or no concern for her own wellbeing or welfare, but rather, were concerned only with masculinist concerns of property violation, political threat, and family dishonour.<sup>207</sup> Yet, such a silencing of the rape survivor only serves to deepen and prolong her wounds, extending the physical and psychological trauma inflicted upon her by her rapist, and delaying her beginning

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<sup>202</sup> Lebowitz and Roth, 374.

<sup>203</sup> Turshen, 815.

<sup>204</sup> Diana E.H. Russell, 226-7 (see nn.2 and 17 above).

<sup>205</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Shattered Lives*, 25.

<sup>206</sup> Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 52; and *Eve’s Journey*, 128.

<sup>207</sup> Aschkenasy, *Eve’s Journey*, 126; Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 206.

the journey along the long path towards healing.<sup>208</sup> For, as many rape survivors note, the space and safety to speak about their ordeal, which is offered to them by their community, is an essential element of their recovery.<sup>209</sup> Women who are not granted this space within which to tell their stories, but who instead are stigmatised, degraded, and silenced by those they live with, bear living testament to the continued suffering, loneliness, and pain of their existence as a rape survivor. As Deena Metzger explains, ‘My experience [of rape] and that of the women I know tells me there is no treatment for rape other than community ... The social community is the appropriate centre for the restoration of spirit, but the rape victim is usually shamed into silence and or self-imposed isolation’.<sup>210</sup> Dinah, we must admit, is one of these victims of sexual violence who has, for millennia, been ‘shamed into silence’ by both the author of the Genesis 34 narrative and by all those who read this narrative and likewise ignore her presence within it. By being denied the opportunity to share her experiences with her family and community, by being faced only with social disgrace, devaluation, and shame, Dinah suffers perpetually the fate of the silenced rape victim, isolated, stigmatised, and deprived of a supportive audience, who could at least begin her upon the path to healing and restoration. We should therefore read the painful and honest words, spoken by Ruth Schmidt, with Dinah in mind, for, to me, they embody with an all too painful clarity, the experience of rape survivors who, like Dinah, have been left by her community to suffer in silence: ‘It is difficult for many to imagine how one’s life changes after living through an experience of terror ... even while clothed I am naked, even in a family I am alone, even speaking I am silenced and even living I am dying’.<sup>211</sup>

## Conclusions

In conclusion then, the patriarchal ideologies, which reduce rape to a male property violation and which insist upon measuring a woman’s social worth according to her chastity appear to be given ample voice within the narrative of Genesis 34. Moreover, these ideologies still resonate today within a diversity of contemporary cultures, bearing witness to the pervasive and insidious influence, which they have had *and continue to have* on cultural values and belief systems within patriarchal

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<sup>208</sup> Yang, 66; also Amowitz, 520; Williams and Holmes, 18, 87.

<sup>209</sup> Judith Lewis Herman, 585; Williams and Holmes, 88.

<sup>210</sup> Metzger, 406.

<sup>211</sup> Ruth Schmidt, 14, 16.



societies over time and space.<sup>212</sup> Dinah has many silent sisters who, in recent history and up to the present day, experience rape but are subsequently denied the opportunity to express their pain, grief, and anger and whose status as casualties of sexual violence is either reinterpreted or suppressed by the dominant patriarchal discourse. Within today's global community, where rape occurs on a pandemic scale in countries both active within and desisting from military conflict, where the sexual violation of female refugees in Darfur and political detainees in Iraq continues both unabated and ignored within the international political arena, and where we continue to read about the decades-old unrelenting saga of resistance, denial, and resentful silence faced by former 'comfort women' in their search for justice, the imperative to end these women's suffering must surely make its moral demand upon us all. Such a demand may seem near nigh insurmountable, yet it can only begin when we start to challenge and demythologise these attitudes and ideologies, so pervasive within both the biblical texts and patriarchal societies the world over, which continue to regard women as male property, and which measure a woman's worth primarily in terms of her chastity.<sup>213</sup> For it is only by achieving such a deconstructive act upon these lethally dangerous ideologies, which grant to rape its insidious power, that we can even begin to destroy their deadly potential to denigrate, devalue, and dehumanise victims of sexual violence. Only then will the twisted, masculinist 'logic' underlying the use of rape as a weapon, both in peacetime and during conflict, cease to have either power or meaning, and only then, will the voices of women like Dinah cease to be lost within the more dominant androcentric discourses of male honour, male property rights, and female defilement.

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<sup>212</sup> Bal, *Lethal Love*, 1; and *Death and Dissymmetry*, 243; Exum, *Fragmented Women*, 12; Fiorenza, *Wisdom Ways*, 136; Milne, 56; Ruether, 116-17; Davies, 47-8; Loades, 85-87.

<sup>213</sup> Albanese, 1018; Alcoff and Gray, 266.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Redeemed by His Love? The Characterisation of Shechem in Genesis 34**

#### **‘Not Your Typical Rapist’: Myths about Men Who Rape**

*‘As soon as he had ejaculated he got off me, put himself straight, told me not to phone the police, because I wouldn’t be believed, and he also asked if he could phone me and take me out the next day’.*<sup>1</sup>

*‘He said he had chosen me as a victim because he could control me with violence’.*<sup>2</sup>

*‘I mean we’re men. We’re wired to see a woman, smash her on the head with a bone, drag her unconscious body back to our apartment by the hair and f\*\*\* her. I think you all should give us a break and, in fact, a little credit’.*<sup>3</sup>

In the previous two chapters, we have discussed two rape myths, which are both pervasive within contemporary patriarchal cultures the world over: the myth that rape is primarily a sexual act and the myth that the rape victim is ‘damaged goods’. In this chapter, I wish to discuss some other, equally common and equally insidious beliefs, which likewise ultimately serve to silence the voices of rape victims whilst undermining the seriousness of sexual violence. These myths and misperceptions, upon which I will now elaborate, are centred on men who rape.

In essence, there are two interrelated beliefs, which, when taken together, influence people’s perceptions about rapists and make it far more likely that men accused of committing acts of sexual violence will receive public sympathy, rather than censure. In the first place, there is a common misperception that ‘typical’ rapists are

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<sup>1</sup> Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 233.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>3</sup> Eric Schaeffer, ‘leading light’ in the We Hate Women scene in the United States; cited by Marianne Macdonald, “Girl Wanted”, guardian.co.uk, September 9, 2007.

<http://lifeandhealth.guardian.co.uk/relationships/story/0,,2162923,00.html> (accessed January 15, 2008).

psychopathic deviants or socially inept and mentally unstable individuals, unknown to their victims, who lurk in dark alleyways and leap out at unsuspecting women.<sup>4</sup> When a man who is accused of rape does *not* fit this profile – for example, if he is regarded as a respectable, well-adjusted male, who is perhaps in a long-term relationship, or has a steady job, or is a devoted ‘family man’ – it is far less likely that such an accusation will be taken seriously, either by members of his community or within a judicial context.<sup>5</sup> Research has shown that both jurors and the judiciary are often swayed by the lifestyle and appearance of the defendant; when he fails to fit the stereotyped ‘portrait’ of a rapist, he is far more likely to be acquitted, in the event that his case ever goes to trial in the first place.<sup>6</sup> As Linda Fairstein, assistant district attorney and director of the Manhattan Sex Crimes Prosecution Unit, recalls, ‘My colleagues and I have now heard hundreds of times – especially when middle-class, professional defendants stand up in the courtroom – the murmurs of prospective jurors or public onlookers saying, “I can’t believe it – he doesn’t look like a rapist” or “He doesn’t look like he’d have to force someone to have sex with him”’.<sup>7</sup>

However, although this stereotyped profile of the ‘typical rapist’ is extremely common within many contemporary cultures, it is nonetheless not only erroneous, but also a very dangerous and highly influential misperception. In the first place, this insistence upon sourcing the cause of sexual violence within the psychopathology of the rapist utterly ignores the cultural and social factors, discussed in Chapter 2, which many feminists believe may contribute to men’s propensity to rape. By attributing blame to some psychological peculiarity buried within the offender, the urgent need to investigate or address the attitudes and gender stereotypes within a society, which may precipitate male sexually aggressive behaviour, are thus overlooked. As Diana Scully has noted, ‘The consequence of defining responsibility this way is that men never have to confront rape as their problem ... [it] is a prime example of reductionist thinking in which androcentric blinders diminish a complex social problem to a singular simplistic cause’.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Diana E.H. Russell, 260; Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 213; Williams and Holmes, 117-18; Groth, 2; Burt, “Rape Myths and Acquaintance Rape”, 32.

<sup>5</sup> Fairstein, 135, 155, 213; Burt, “Rape Myths and Acquaintance Rape”, 32; McGregor, 63.

<sup>6</sup> See for example, Peggy Reeves Sanday, *A Woman Scorned: Acquaintance Rape on Trial* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 28-49; Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 178.

<sup>7</sup> Fairstein, 135; also Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 213-14.

<sup>8</sup> Scully, 46.

Moreover, research into sexual offenders has shown repeatedly that the majority of rapists are *not* psychologically deranged, sexually deviant, or socially inept. They come from all strata of society, from every ethnic, religious, and economic group, and live a variety of lifestyles, some even ensconced within conventional, stable, and non-abusive heterosexual relationships.<sup>9</sup> The ‘normality’ of the rapist is sometimes even confirmed by his victim; survivors of sexual violence may report that the men who treated them with such brutality and contempt during the rape event appeared to be pleasant, friendly, and socially adept in their behaviour and approach prior to the assault.<sup>10</sup> Yet such signs of the rapist’s mental and social adjustment may, all too often, be used as ‘evidence’ of his innocence, both during his court appearance and within the community in which the rape occurred.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, the myth of the sexually and socially deviant rapist can have a deeply damaging and insidious effect upon the communities in which it operates, leading to fewer rapists being convicted and more rape survivors facing attitudes of disbelief, cynicism, and even outright hostility both from their communities and from within the judicial system.<sup>12</sup> As Sue Lees argues, ‘If women are to be protected from dangerous rapists, society and the law must recognise that most of the men who commit these horrifically violent crimes do not jump out from behind bushes or break into women’s homes. While the present myths and stereotypes about rapists are perpetuated, the vast majority of men who rape will continue to go free to rape again and again’.<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, even in cases where there is incontrovertible evidence that a rape did indeed occur, if the man involved does not fit the stereotyped profile of the ‘typical’ rapist, a second concomitant misperception rises up to ensure, once again, that victims of sexual assault will receive neither justice nor support. For, in such cases, rape is simply explained away as the result of a man’s inability to ‘control’ his sexual ardour, once it has been inflamed by a seductive and sexually provocative female.<sup>14</sup> A man, it is argued, ‘just can’t help himself’ when he is confronted by a

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 34-35, 50-53, 71-72; Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 213-23; Scully and Marolla, “‘Riding the Bull at Gilley’s’”, 110, 124; Griffin, “Rape: The All-American Crime”, 49; Joanna Carlson Brown, 4; Andrea Medea and Kathleen Thompson, *Against Rape* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1974), 16; Leslie, 18; Fairstein, 135-36; Dianne Herman, 45.

<sup>10</sup> Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 224.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 228.

<sup>12</sup> David J. Giacopassi and R. Thomas Dull, “Gender and Racial Difference in the Acceptance of Rape Myths within a College Population”, *Sex Roles* 15 (1986): 64.

<sup>13</sup> Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 35-36.

<sup>14</sup> Medea and Thompson, 31.

woman whose behaviour or appearance seems designed to arouse his ardour and yet who remains unwilling to grant him access to her sexuality. His 'natural' biological need for sexual gratification renders him incapable of controlling his actions, compelling him to satisfy this physical urge by aggressive means if necessary.<sup>15</sup> As Henderson states, social gender expectations insist that 'men are entitled to act on their sexual passions, which are viewed as difficult and sometimes impossible to control'.<sup>16</sup> In turn, these erroneous social expectations of male physiology and sexuality alter people's perceptions of sexual violence, with the result that rape ceases to be regarded as an abhorrent act of violence and is instead perceived as little more than the necessary gratification of a man's natural sexual response to a woman's capricious promiscuity.<sup>17</sup>

This belief in a man's incapacity to control his sexual drives when provoked by feminine desirability is not only a social presupposition commonly held by lay members of a cultural group, it is also often reflected within responses to rape voiced by members of the legal system, who, ironically, are responsible for ensuring that rapists and their victims receive adequate recourse to justice. All too often, the defendant in a rape trial is presented as an unwilling victim of his own innate sexual drive, which has been provoked by a woman's promiscuous or provocative behaviour. Thus, for example, Sue Lees cites one defence counsel, who, in his summing up, asked the jury, 'Did [the complainant] lead [the defendant] on, prostitute herself, or consent and then change her mind at the last minute when the man was unable to control himself?'<sup>18</sup> Similarly, in 1986, members of the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre were outraged when a defence counsel appealed to the judge for leniency in sentencing a convicted rapist by arguing that his client had 'given way to a human sexual urge' and if he were a practising Catholic 'it would mean 23 minutes in confession to wipe the slate clean'.<sup>19</sup> Within many rape trials, it is as though male sexuality, with its concomitant motifs of aggressive acquisition, natural predation, and the uncontrollable need for gratification, is not so much condemned as defended

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<sup>15</sup> LeGrand, 75; Tetreault, 249; Judith S. Bridges and Christine A. McGrail, "Attributions of Responsibility for Date and Stranger Rape", *Sex Roles* 21 (1989): 284-5; Henderson, 139; Scully and Marolla, "Riding the Bull at Gilley's", 112; and "Rape and Vocabularies of Motive", 306-7; Groth, 2; Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 213; Diana E.H. Russell, 258; Burt, "Rape Myths and Acquaintance Rape", 32; Schwendinger and Schwendinger, "Rape Myths", 21; Scully, 70.

<sup>16</sup> Henderson, 2; also Scully and Marolla, "Rape and Vocabularies of Motive", 306.

<sup>17</sup> Tetreault, 249; Henderson, 130-31; Angela Freetly, J. Hatterly, and Emily W. Kane, "Men's and Women's Perceptions of Non-Consensual Sexual Intercourse", *Sex Roles* 33 (1995): 785-803; Weidner and Griffitt, 151-66.

<sup>18</sup> Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 127.

<sup>19</sup> Susan McKay, 111.

and prioritised.<sup>20</sup> Male sexuality in effect becomes a more than adequate justification for rape, giving men ‘an unauthorised permission’ to violate women, while women in turn are attributed with full responsibility for such a violation.<sup>21</sup> As a result, jurors and the judiciary are reluctant to either convict or punish men for simply doing what they believe is natural for a man to do.<sup>22</sup> In the words of Carol Smart, ‘the rape trial may not celebrate random rape, but it does celebrate the deep-seated notions of natural male sexual need and female sexual capriciousness’.<sup>23</sup>

Thus, it would appear that the social insistence on regarding the rapist as simply a man held captive by a natural biological response appears to reflect the common misperception, discussed in Chapter 2, which insists upon evaluating rape as a primarily sexual event, rather than a violent and abusive display of power, contempt, and domination.<sup>24</sup> Men grow up learning the social expectations, which inform them of their biological need for sexual gratification and their inability to control their sexuality when faced with female sexual stimuli. In addition, as we noted earlier in Chapter Two, men are likewise taught that male sexuality is naturally aggressive; social gender expectations require that they take a proactive and controlling role in their sexual relationships, while women, in turn, are expected to be passive objects of male sexual attention, who may put up a token resistance but who nonetheless are always willing participants.<sup>25</sup> Taken together, these cultural values, which are upheld as ‘natural’ or biological facts, create a social milieu in which the forceful acquisition of a woman’s body is regarded as little more than an accepted, if not laudable, outplaying of normative masculine sexuality.<sup>26</sup> Rape, however, has little if anything to do with physical sexual desire; the rapist is not satisfying a need for sexual gratification, but is instead fulfilling *other* needs, such as the desire to terrorise, dominate, or express hatred and contempt for the object of his abuse.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, and as we will discuss in more detail in the following chapter, a

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<sup>20</sup> Smart, 41; Tetreault, 249; Susan Estrich, *Real Rape* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 71.

<sup>21</sup> Smart, 43; Henderson, 144; Metzger, 407.

<sup>22</sup> Smart, 45.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 35; similar sentiments are expressed by Henderson, 151-54.

<sup>24</sup> Weidner and Griffitt, 163.

<sup>25</sup> Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 211-12; Dianne Herman, 43; Shapiro, 470; Laurie Bechhofer and Andrea Parrot, “What is Acquaintance Rape?” in Parrot and Bechhofer, 21; White and Humphrey, 44-45; Bohmer, “Acquaintance Rape and the Law”, 321; Scully and Marolla, ““Riding the Bull at Gilley’s””, 112; Kimmell, 264-67; McGregor, 7-8.

<sup>26</sup> Kimmel, 274; Lisak, 247; Diana E.H. Russell, 260; Groth, 28; Scully and Marolla, “Rape and Vocabularies of Motive”, 306-7; and ““Riding the Bull at Gilley’s””, 124; White and Humphrey, 43-56; Griffin, “Rape: The All-American Crime”, 50; Lebowitz and Roth, 377; Beneke, 8-9.

<sup>27</sup> Fairstein, 136, 173; Ward, 29; Beneke, 9, 11; Scully and Marolla, “Rape and Vocabularies of Motive”, 298; Groth, 2, 5, 12-15, 25-28; Dianne Herman, 45.

woman is not raped because her provocative appearance or desirability somehow incited a man to uncontrollable sexual ardour; rather, rape is a form of gender-based violence, which is directed against women *because they are women*.<sup>28</sup> As Diana Russell notes, rape is ‘the ultimate sexist act. It is an act of physical and psychic oppression. It is an act in which a woman is used against her will sometimes because she is seen as just another piece of ass, and sometimes because the act of dominating her provides a sense of power’.<sup>29</sup>

This is not to say, however, that all rapists will acknowledge these deep-seated feelings of hatred and derision, which underlie and motivate their act of sexual assault.<sup>30</sup> Instead, some may rationalise and justify their behaviour by appealing to the same cultural attitudes, discussed above, which misidentify rape with normative masculine heterosexuality and which refuse to acknowledge the violence and misogyny inherent within this crime. Indeed, some rapists may show affection to their victim after the assault, offering to walk her home, asking her out for a further date, or attempting to see her again.<sup>31</sup> Victims of acquaintance rape or intimate partner violence often report that the rapist acted as though nothing had happened, and sought to continue the relationship on the same terms as those prior to the rape.<sup>32</sup> Whether this is a genuine misperception of events by the rapist or a deliberate strategy on his part to downplay the seriousness of his crime, we do not know. What we *do* know, however, is that it is an added source of great distress for his victim. Nevertheless, such behaviour by the rapist may often be regarded by others as a praiseworthy gesture on his part, demonstrating, in their minds, that he is not a violent criminal but a man who was simply acting in response to natural sexual desire and whose previously abusive behaviour towards the woman can therefore all too easily be overlooked.<sup>33</sup> Yet for women there is no affection or desire intrinsic to the act of rape; for how could ardour or mutual gratification ever be borne from such an intrinsically brutal, misogynistic, and dehumanising act? Whether a rapist admits

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<sup>28</sup> James Luginbuhl and Courtney Mullin, “Rape and Responsibility: How and How Much is the Victim Blamed?” *Sex Roles* 7 (1981): 557; Bevacqua, 60-61; Stenzel, 91; Cahill, 123-24; Medea and Thompson, 31, 45.

<sup>29</sup> Diana E.H. Russell, 265.

<sup>30</sup> Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 213; Bechhofer and Parrot, 11; D. Grubin and J. Gunn, *The Imprisoned Rapist and Rape* (London: Home Office Research Unit, 1990).

<sup>31</sup> Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 232-34; Griffin, “Rape: The All-American Crime”, 50; Bechhofer and Parrot, 11; Groth, 30.

<sup>32</sup> Griffin, “Rape: The All-American Crime”, 50; McGregor, 7; Luoluo Hong, “Breaking the Silence: Making Laughter: Testimony of an Asian-American Sister”, in Gold and Villari, 59-73.

<sup>33</sup> Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 72; Koestner, 32; bell hooks, *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black* (Boston: South End Press, 1989), 72.

it, *all* rape is fuelled by a deep-seated contempt for women and a total dismissal of their rights to bodily integrity and sexual autonomy.

In the midst of these myths concerning rapists, which deny the culpability of these men for such a terrible crime, the voices of victims of sexual violence are thus once again consistently silenced. If a man accused of rape does not fit the stereotyped profile of a socially deviant, sexual psychopath, the woman whom he raped is far less likely to have her story believed either by her community or by members of the judiciary. Furthermore, even when there is acknowledgement that a rape did occur, the woman's experience is again re-interpreted and re-contextualised within a framework of cultural gender expectations, until it ceases to be regarded as a violent assault against her bodily and sexual integrity, and is instead viewed as little more than a normative outplaying of aggressive masculine sexuality, for which the woman must shoulder some, if not all, of the blame.<sup>34</sup> Women's voices are therefore denied permission to enter into the patriarchal discourse concerning their own rape experience; instead, they must stand in silence, while the individuals and institutions that constitute their community pay scant regard to their experience of suffering and violation.

### **Valorised or Vilified? The Narrator's Representation of Shechem**

So far, within this chapter, we have discussed some of the cultural myths regarding men who commit acts of sexual violence. These myths, as we have noted, often serve to justify the rapist's behaviour, by contextualising rape within a framework of normative masculine sexuality. Furthermore, they encourage the ideation that rapists are not responsible for their actions, but are instead at the mercy of both their own biological drives and the power of capricious feminine sexuality. However, such beliefs only serve to minimise the sheer horror of sexual violence for its victims, by downplaying the aggression implicit within this crime and re-evaluating the rapist as little more than a man overcome with natural, and thus harmless, sexual desire.

Turning now to Genesis 34, it would appear, on first reading, that the narrator of this text has similarly allowed these ideologies to colour his portrayal of Dinah's rapist,

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<sup>34</sup> This propensity to blame victims for their own sexual assault will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.



Shechem. For, as many commentators have noted, the Hivite prince's exposé seems to consist of a bewildering juxtaposition of hero and villain. Following his depiction as a brutal perpetrator of sexual violence in v.2, there is a seemingly precipitate transformation in his representation during the remainder of the narrative, when he appears to be described, somewhat perplexingly, in a positively laudatory manner. From v.3 onwards, his initially aggressive response to Dinah is replaced with apparent feelings of love and affection; he cleaves to her, we are told (v.3), and will do anything that is asked of him in order to make her his wife (vv.4, 8, 11-12, 19). It is as though the ancient author is at pains to convince his readers that this man is not the violent and despicable criminal we may have first thought he was, but rather, is a man overcome by passion, whose impetuous behaviour was motivated less by anger, hatred, or contempt than by genuine and heartfelt sexual desire.

Given this ostensibly confounding shift in narrative opinion towards Shechem, the majority of biblical scholars have tended to conclude that the aim of the ancient author of Gen. 34 was essentially to rehabilitate the character and reputation of the Hivite prince, that is, to present him in a more positive, less ethically reprehensible light. That a rapist would in any sense be redeemed or validated within this biblical text is very disturbing, given that it would serve only to undermine and essentially dismiss the horror and brutality of his crime. More disturbing, therefore, is the fact that some scholars also appear to consider Shechem's supposed rehabilitation as perfectly *justifiable*, in light of the circumstances presented in the text. Their interpretations contain no outright condemnation of this man who had sexually abused Dinah, but rather provide a validation of the narrator's apparent call for leniency and understanding, with intolerance being vetoed in favour of tolerance and mitigation replacing denunciation. Shechem may be a rapist, it is averred, but his subsequent love for Dinah and his willingness to 'do the right thing' by marrying her surely redeems his somewhat tarnished character. In the eyes of these interpreters, the young prince is thus transformed from rapist to hero, and rightly so.

In the remainder of this chapter, I therefore seek to address two distinct but related issues. In the first place, I will review the narrator's portrayal of Shechem, in order to ascertain whether he does indeed give voice to these myths, discussed above, which confuse sexual violence with sexual desire, undermine the violence inherent in a rapist's behaviour, and thus excuse him all too easily of any wrongdoing. That is, I wish to determine if he sought to redeem the character of Dinah's rapist, by presenting him less as a violent sexual predator than as a man overcome by natural

sexual desire. Furthermore, and intrinsic to this inquiry, I will consider the scholarly evaluations of Shechem's behaviour in light of those ideologies discussed at the beginning of the chapter; in particular, I wish to evaluate and critique the suppositions and assumptions used by those scholars who confirm and justify the narrator's supposedly redemptive portrayal of the Hivite prince. Are they simply reiterating the androcentric and sexist ideologies, presented by the narrator himself, or have they perhaps allowed their interpretations of this narrative to be shaped and coloured by the myths and attitudes concerning sexual violence, which are prevalent within their own cultural milieu? In either case, do these biblical scholars present a responsible and ethical reading of this text or does their show of sympathy for the rapist only serve (whether intentionally or unintentionally) to undermine Dinah's terrible experience of sexual violence and thus silence her narrative of suffering?

#### Genesis 34.3: The Beginning of Shechem's Redemption?

Within the interpretative traditions surrounding Gen. 34.3, there is a propensity among scholars to read this verse as the narrator's initial attempt to rehabilitate Shechem's character, following his very negative depiction as a brutal rapist in v.2. The words *והדבק נפשו בדינה בת יעקב ויאהב את הנער וידבר על לב הנער* are thus read as evidence of the strong and sincere emotional attachment, which Shechem has formed towards Dinah. The Hivite prince, it is argued, is making a genuine attempt to right the wrong he has done to the woman he has violated; he therefore expresses his heartfelt attempts to make amends, by seeking to establish her future security and wellbeing as his wife (v.4). Thus, according to Wenham, Shechem is portrayed as 'doing the right thing' by Dinah, and for this, he deserves a compassionate response from the reader:

So, having unequivocally condemned Shechem for assaulting Dinah, the narrator now reveals other facets of his behaviour that evoke much more sympathy for him [...] Shechem was not your callous, anonymous rapist, so dreaded in modern society, but an affectionate young man, who "loved the girl and spoke reassuringly to her".<sup>35</sup>

Wenham is far from alone in his reading of v.3. A number of other biblical interpreters likewise argue that this passage reflects the narrator's attempt to redeem Shechem and to elicit a heightened degree of sympathy for him from the reader. Through his choice of language, they contend, the ancient author provides a

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<sup>35</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 317. Similar sentiments are expressed by Carmichael, *Women, Law, and the Genesis Tradition*, 36, 45; Fretheim, *Genesis*, 577.

penetrating insight into Shechem's inner emotional world. What is revealed in the process is a man who has replaced aggressive brutality with powerful feelings of 'wild consuming love' for the object of his initially abusive attentions.<sup>36</sup> The protracted and repetitive syntactical style of this verse, which echoes the tripartite structure of v.2, is understood to be an invitation for the reader to linger upon Shechem's deep seated sentiments towards Dinah.<sup>37</sup> Thus, according to Fewell and Gunn, the three consecutive verbal forms used by the ancient author 'form a powerful sequence in language that is strongly affective and with almost uniformly positive overtones. All of the verbal expressions in this verse are terms of affection at home in contexts where a commitment to another person is being made'.<sup>38</sup> In their minds, this glimpse into Shechem's psychological worldview ought to soften our negative appraisal of his character following v.2, as we come to realise that he is a man with profound and genuine emotions of affection and compassion for the object of his desire, who not only regrets his past crime, but also wants to make real restitution for it.<sup>39</sup> They therefore conclude that the reader must surely warm to the young Hivite prince, given the depths of his blossoming love for Dinah: 'If sympathy is being accumulated', they contend, 'it seems to be sympathy for Shechem'.<sup>40</sup>

Thus, in the eyes of these biblical scholars, the representation of Shechem in Gen. 34.3 ought to be read as a deliberate attempt by the narrator to portray the Hivite prince, less as a violent and impulsive sexual predator than a Romeo-type figure, who, upon finding his 'Juliet', seeks to offer her 'the *amende honorable*' after his less than chivalrous conduct on their first encounter.<sup>41</sup> In order to consider these

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<sup>36</sup> Caspi, 33; also Salkin, 287; Bechtel, "What If Dinah Is Not Raped", 28; and "Dinah", 70; Alter, 190; Ullendorff, 436; Rashkow, "Hebrew Bible Translation", 226-27; Fleishman, 103.

<sup>37</sup> Fleishman, 103; Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 447; Salkin, 287; Bechtel, "What If Dinah Is Not Raped", 28; Alter, 190.

<sup>38</sup> Fewell and Gunn, "Tipping the Balance", 196. Similarly, Fretheim, describes the language of v.3 as 'love language', which creates sympathy from the reader for this young prince (*Genesis*, 577). See also Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 538; Caspi, 33; Alter, 190; Frymer-Kensky, *Goddesses*, 194; and "Virginity in the Bible", 89.

<sup>39</sup> Fewell and Gunn, "Tipping the Balance", 196-97; and *Gender, Power, and Promise*, 81; Likewise, Jeansonne believes that 'Shechem truly loved Dinah after the assault' (97), while Cana Werman describes his portrayal here as 'masterful' and 'impassioned'. In "Jubilees 30: Building a Paradigm for the Ban on Inter-marriage", *Harvard Theological Review* 90 (1997), 6, 16. Meanwhile, Zlotnik describes Dinah as 'an object of desire' for Shechem (36). See also Westermann, 534; Gunkel, 363; Cotter, 354; Leupold, 898; Fretheim, 574-81; Freedman, 57.

<sup>40</sup> Fewell and Gunn, "Tipping the Balance", 197. Similarly, David Noel Freedman suggests that 'the author portrays Shechem as repentant and redeemed, newly chastened and in the end admirable, a victim of a horrible revenge', for whom the reader must 'feel sympathy and sorrow' (57). See also Parry, *Old Testament Story*, 160.

<sup>41</sup> Vawter, 358.

readings further, let us now take a closer look at Gen. 34.3, so that we attempt to ascertain the narrator's intentions *vis-à-vis* his depiction of Shechem. We will stop to consider in turn each of the three phrases within this verse, in the hope that we can shed a little more light on the semantic nuances that each one appears to convey within the particular context of this narrative.

### 1. והדבק נפשו בדינה

This initial phrase within the tripartite structure of Gen. 34.3 tends to be translated, 'and his very being clung to Dinah' (literally, 'and his soul clung to Dinah').<sup>42</sup> In its general usage, the verb דבק carries the meaning 'to cling, cleave, keep close', and may refer to the close physical proximity of two or more separate objects or entities.<sup>43</sup> However, it is also commonly employed in a figurative sense to express the notion of loyalty, affection, and intimacy between individuals, with the implication of physical closeness being retained at times too.<sup>44</sup> These positive emotions may be erotic in nature, signifying sexual intimacy (e.g. Gen. 2.24; 1 Kgs 11.2), or may refer to a close, yet platonic friendship between two members of the same sex (e.g. Ruth 1.14; Prov. 18.24).

When we come to consider Gen. 34.3, דבק is generally understood by most scholars to carry this figurative usage, thereby denoting the emotional closeness and affection felt by Shechem towards Dinah.<sup>45</sup> That is, Shechem is not simply near to Dinah in a spatial sense; he has become attached to her on an emotional level too, his feelings of fondness and desire having been awoken following their violent sexual encounter. Thus, according to Frymer-Kensky, 'Shechem is not fickle and his love is not transitory'; rather, in her mind, והדבק נפשו בדינה connotes a sense of his permanent and heartfelt commitment towards Dinah.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, both she and a number of other scholars specifically equate the semantic nuance of the verb דבק here in Gen. 34.3 with its particular connotations in Gen. 2.24, where it would appear to convey

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<sup>42</sup> This translation assumes that in both this verse and again in v.8, נפש is used as an intensifying synonym of the personal pronoun. See Alter, 190; Brown, Driver and Briggs, 660.

<sup>43</sup> For example, see Jer. 13.11; 42.16; Ezek. 3.26; 29.4; Ps. 119.25; Job 19.20; 29.10.

<sup>44</sup> Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 179; G.J. Brooke, "דבק", in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997), 1:911;

<sup>45</sup> Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 179; G. Wallis, "דבק", in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. John T. Willis, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and David E. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 3:81.

<sup>46</sup> Frymer-Kensky, "Virginitly in the Bible", 89; also van Wolde, "Love and Hatred", 437-38.

the perfect encapsulation of marital love and fidelity as intended by God: ‘Therefore, a man leaves his father and mother and cleaves (וּדְבַק) to his wife, that they become one flesh’.<sup>47</sup> Thus, according to Wenham, the narrator’s use of the phrase וּדְבַק בְּדִינָה נִפְשׁוֹ emphasizes that the emotional interaction between Dinah and Shechem ought to be understood as ‘precisely the right bond between a married couple’.<sup>48</sup>

However, Suzanne Scholz has countered this reading, by suggesting that the phrase וּדְבַק בְּדִינָה נִפְשׁוֹ need not necessarily represent the *emotional* closeness and affection felt by Shechem for Dinah here; rather, it may simply refer to their *spatial* proximity, and as such, may express the ‘sexually objectifying dimension’ of the young Hivite’s behaviour towards his rape victim.<sup>49</sup> In other words, Shechem is intent on remaining physically near to the object of his lustful aggression, reluctant perhaps, to let her out of his sight.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, according to Scholz, the young prince is not forming a loving and intimate bond with Dinah here but is essentially keeping her captive, until such a time that he can gain permanent control over her sexuality through the covenant of marriage.

Scholz’s interpretation of this phrase in Gen. 34.3 certainly offers an interesting alternative reading. As she rightly points out, the verb דָּבַק can be utilised within biblical Hebrew to connote a literal sense of physical proximity between people, which in no way indicates any sense of affection, emotional attachment or involvement between the verbal subject and object.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, intertextual comparisons between Gen. 34.3 and the two other passages where דָּבַק is used to describe the relationship between a man and a woman would suggest that Scholz’s reading of this phrase might not be entirely appropriate. In both Gen. 2.24 and 1 Kgs 11.2, דָּבַק unequivocally denotes an emotional rather than physical closeness between sexual partners, signifying as it does the erotic love and loyalty that bonds a man to a woman.<sup>52</sup> As mentioned above, Gen. 2.24 relates the etiological myth regarding the origin of a man’s drive to form a passionate and permanent union with

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<sup>47</sup> Frymer-Kensky, “Virginity in the Bible”, 89; Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 311; Fewell and Gunn, “Tipping the Balance”, 196; Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 538; Rashkow, “Hebrew Bible Translation”, 227, n.30.

<sup>48</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 311.

<sup>49</sup> Scholz, “Through Whose Eyes”, 169; and *Rape Plots*, 140.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> For example, Ruth 2.8, 21, 23. See Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 179.

<sup>52</sup> Wallis, “דָּבַק”, 81.

a woman, through the divinely ordained institution of marriage.<sup>53</sup> Likewise, 1 Kgs 11.2 shows the realisation of this connubial relationship in its description of the strong erotic and emotional bond that existed between Solomon and his many foreign wives. Given the similarities in context between these two passages and Gen. 34.3 – that is, the particularly sexual nature of the relationship between a man and a woman – it would therefore appear probable that, here in Genesis 34, the phrase *והדבק נפשו בדינה* gives voice to Shechem's passionate love and desire for the woman he seeks to marry, rather than simply his physical proximity to her.<sup>54</sup>

Does such a reading then suggest, as several scholars themselves believe, that the narrator of Gen. 34.3 sought to portray Shechem in a more positive light, by depicting his relationship with Dinah as that of the perfect encapsulation of marital love and fidelity? Well, as mentioned above, *דבק* is used in Gen. 2.24 to denote the natural and divinely ordained relationship between a man and a woman united by the covenant of marriage. Within the particular context of this etiological myth, such a bond of erotic love is regarded positively, originating as it did from YHWH's initial works of cosmic creativity.

However, this very favourable sense of *דבק*, captured in Gen. 2.24, is not necessarily inherent to the verb form itself, when it depicts the emotive connection between sexual partners. Other contextual considerations, primarily the aptness or legitimacy of the union, do appear to play a vital part in determining whether such emotional commitment is viewed auspiciously within the biblical material. Thus, in 1 Kgs 11.2, Solomon's passionate attachment to his foreign wives (*בהם דבק שלמה לזרה*) is ultimately understood to be the cause of both his apostasy and the resultant division of the united kingdom of Israel immediately after his death (vv.3-13). While the King's love and fidelity towards these women was genuine enough, the reader was therefore by no means expected to applaud him for this depth of commitment.

Turning now to Gen. 34.3, if one compares Shechem's connubial desire for Dinah with the scenario depicted in Gen. 2.24, there is one striking difference, which may suggest that, as in 1 Kgs 11.2, the verb *דבק* does not carry the same positive connotations as Wenham and Frymer-Kensky would appear to suggest. For, in the

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<sup>53</sup> Gunkel, 13; Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 71; Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, trans. I. Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1961), 1:137; von Rad, *Genesis*, 85.

<sup>54</sup> Wallis, "דבק", 81; Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 71.

aetiological tradition of Gen. 2.24, a man ‘cleaves’ to his wife within the divinely mandated covenant of matrimony; the sexual intimacy and fidelity denoted by דָּבַק is therefore approved as part of the right relationship between husband and wife, inside the *specific bounds* of legitimate wedlock.

However, in Gen. 34.3, Shechem’s desire for Dinah occurs *outwith* these bounds; it is a direct consequence of his coercive and aggressive extramarital sexual encounter with Jacob’s virgin daughter. His emotional response was therefore both inappropriate and unlawful, for, as we discussed in the previous chapter, within the worldview of biblical Israel, female sexuality was considered the rightful and exclusive possession of the man under whose authority a woman existed. By having sexual intercourse with Dinah without consulting her male kin, Shechem was thus acting without regard for the highly valued socio-religious protocol of biblical Israel, which demanded that he seek their consent before engaging in a sexual relationship with her.

Thus, while the phrase וַתִּדְבַק נַפְשׁוֹ בְּדִינָה may very well witness to Shechem’s genuine depth of feeling for Jacob’s daughter, it may not necessarily have been intended as a narratorial exhortation of high praise for the young prince. That is, even though the author has depicted Shechem as a man deeply committed to the object of his affections, he may not have intended the reader to view such depth of commitment with any sense of approval. After all, Shechem’s desire for Dinah was utterly illegitimate, having sprung from the illicit and aggressive sexual acquisition of a woman outwith wedlock. It therefore in no sense epitomised ‘precisely the right bond between a married couple’, as Wenham has suggested.<sup>55</sup> Rather, such a heartfelt attachment on Shechem’s part was instead a distortion of the proper marriage covenant and therefore, in all likelihood, would have been looked upon by the narrator with great disapproval.

## 2. וְאַהֲבָה אֶת הַנְּעָרָה

Within biblical scholarship, the verb אָהַב is usually translated in Gen. 34.3 to give the positive sense of ‘to love’, thereby alluding to the genuine depth of Shechem’s feelings for the young woman that he had just raped.<sup>56</sup> Thus, for example, Alter

<sup>55</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 311.

<sup>56</sup> For example, Frymer-Kensky, “Law and Philosophy”, 95; Alter, 190.

asserts that the narrator paints a scenario in v.3, where ‘the fulfilment of the impulse of unrestrained desire is followed by love, which complicates the moral balance of the story’.<sup>57</sup> Likewise, Westermann understands the function of this clause as one of intensifying the semantic nuances implicit in the previous expression; in other words, the narrator seeks to stress that Shechem is not only drawn emotionally to Dinah, he also ‘comes to love’ her.<sup>58</sup> Meanwhile, Frymer-Kensky speaks of the Hivite prince’s ‘free exercise of erotic love’ towards Dinah, as though love were a natural outcome of the violent sexual assault, which had just occurred in v.2.<sup>59</sup>

These readings of **וַאֲהַב אֶת הַנְּעָר** are certainly compatible with the usage of the verb **אָהַב** elsewhere in Genesis and in the other texts the Hebrew Bible, where it conveys the love felt between a man and a woman, often a husband and wife.<sup>60</sup> However, it is also worth noting that, within particular scenarios, it may likewise denote a more pejorative sense of uncontrolled passion or illicit erotic desire, which transgresses biblical Israel’s strict laws regarding marital fidelity and sexual integrity.<sup>61</sup> Thus, for example, in Prov. 7.18, it occurs in its nominal form to describe the clandestine sexual partners of immoral women, who lure men onto the path of ruin with their sweet words and amorous promises: ‘Let us drink our fill of love until morning; let us delight in lovers (**אֹהֲבִים**)’. Similarly, in Hos. 8.9, the noun **אֹהֲבִים** represents Ephraim’s figurative illicit ‘amours’ courted among the foreign nations. In both these texts, the root **אָהַב** does not convey a positive sense of laudable love or commitment; rather, it carries unequivocally pejorative connotations of lawless or excessive eroticism, ‘the intention of which is not active mutual affection but self-gratification’ and which inevitably causes chaotic and lawless behaviour that is utterly rejected by Israelite socio-religious standards.<sup>62</sup>

Moreover, and of particular significance to this enquiry is the fact that **אָהַב** is utilised in 2 Samuel 13 in a similarly pejorative sense to depict the rapist’s ephemeral and uncontrolled desire for his victim prior to her assault.<sup>63</sup> Amnon’s

<sup>57</sup> Alter, 190.

<sup>58</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 538. Similar readings of the verb **אָהַב** are offered by Bechtel, “What If Dinah Is Not Raped”, 28; Gunkel, 13; Fleishman, 104; van Wolde, “Love and Hatred”, 438.

<sup>59</sup> Frymer-Kensky, “Law and Philosophy”, 95.

<sup>60</sup> For example, Gen. 24.67; 29.20, 30, 32; Deut. 21.15-16; Jdg. 14.16; 1 Sam. 1.5; Hos. 3.1; Eccl. 9.9; Est. 2.17; 2 Chron. 11.21, etc. See Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 12.

<sup>61</sup> P.J.J.S. Els, “**אָהַב**”, in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997), 1:291-93; Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 12-13; G. Wallis, “**אָהַב**”, in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. John T. Willis, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 1:108.

<sup>62</sup> Els, “**אָהַב**”, 293.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*



‘love’ for his sister Tamar (v.1)<sup>64</sup> actualises itself in an unlawful act of sexual brutality, which not only devastated his sister, but also seriously disrupted the highly valued sexual protocol of biblical Israel, occurring as it did outwith the formal covenant of marriage and without the express permission of Tamar’s father. Thus, within such a context of illicit and aggressive sexuality, אהב does not appear to express any positive semantic nuances of acceptable or praiseworthy loving affection for a sexual partner. Instead, this verb describes a sense of erotic excess, which, when left unchecked, leads only to lawless sexual behaviour that was utterly condemned within the ancient milieu of biblical Israel.

Turning now to Gen. 34.3, it may make more sense to conclude that, given the shared contextual theme of unlawful premarital sexual aggression, the verb אהב signifies here this same derogatory sense of uncontrolled and illicit desire for sexual gratification.<sup>65</sup> For, while it is true that Amnon’s passion for Tamar grew cold after he had raped her, while Shechem’s only transpired for Dinah *following* the sexual assault, this difference in time scale does not detract from the fact that the emotional involvement of the rapist for his victim is, in both cases, expressed by אהב.<sup>66</sup> Such ‘love’ is far from laudable, in that it neither bears any ethical concerns for the object of affection nor stops to consider its consequences; instead, it ‘strives only to enjoy life without any self-restraint’.<sup>67</sup> I would therefore suggest that, through his use of this verb within such a context of illegitimate and unrestrained sexual activity, the narrator of Genesis 34 is by no means seeking to rehabilitate Shechem here. Rather, he is reminding the reader once more, as in v.2, that this is a man who allows his passions to run awry, causing destructive and lawless violence in the process, as he endeavours to take possession of that which he has no right to claim as his own.

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<sup>64</sup> ויהי אהרן-יבן ולאבשלום בן-דוד אחות יפה ושמה תמר ויהבה אמנון בן-דוד (‘Now, Absalom, David’s son, had a beautiful sister whose name was Tamar, and Amnon, David’s son, was in love with her’).

<sup>65</sup> Scholz, “Through Whose Eyes”, 169.

<sup>66</sup> I therefore disagree with Sternberg, whose comments would appear to suggest that a rapist who loves his victim before he rapes her is in some sense more commendable than one whose love only develops after the violation (*Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 447). Nor can I concur with these scholars, whose opinion, contra Sternberg, is that we view Shechem in a more positive light than Amnon because the Hivite prince at least loved Dinah *after* he had raped her (see, for example, Wenham, *Genesis 12-50*, 311; Parry, *Old Testament Story*, 151; Fewell and Gunn, “Tipping the Balance”, 197). Love may breed aggression, or aggression may beget lust; the fact remains that both of these men had committed a serious act of physical brutality against a woman and their feelings towards her, both before and after the assault, can in no way be equated with any sense of commendable or atoning love.

<sup>67</sup> Wallis, “אהב”, 108; also Scholz, “Through Whose Eyes” 169.

### 3. וידבר על לב הנער

The Hebrew idiom **דבר אל לב** (literally, ‘to speak to the heart’) occurs nine times in the biblical corpus and is generally used to convey a sense of speaking words of benevolence, consolation or reassurance, in order to inspire the ‘heart’ of the addressee.<sup>68</sup> Within the context of Gen. 34.3, most commentators believe that this idiom is another attempt by the narrator to redeem Shechem; the Hivite prince is understood to be treating Dinah with compassionate tenderness and comforting affection here, as he strives to quell her fears and reassure her that his loyalty and love for her are genuine and heartfelt.<sup>69</sup> Indeed, Fewell and Gunn even suggest that this phrase is a perlocutionary expression, that is, one that describes a speech act that succeeds in producing the speaker’s desired effect upon his or her audience.<sup>70</sup> They thus conclude that **וידבר על לב הנער** ‘indicates both Shechem’s action and Dinah’s positive response’.<sup>71</sup>

However, in contrast to this particularly positive reading of **וידבר על לב הנער**, Scholz has argued instead that this phrase does not in fact depict Shechem’s honourable and compassionate attempt to reassure Dinah and win her affections. Rather, she suggests, it is best read as little more than an egotistical and self-serving attempt by this rapist to placate and mollify the woman who has been a casualty of his violent sexual assault; as she suggests, ‘He has to calm her down because she did not consent’.<sup>72</sup> That is, for Scholz, Shechem is not so much ‘comforting’ or ‘speaking tenderly’ to Dinah out of any regard for *her* welfare, as simply trying to appease her and perhaps, out of a sense of self-preservation and self-interest, present his aggressive behaviour towards her in a far less serious and threatening light.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Gen. 34.3; 50.21; Jdg. 19.3; Ruth 2.13; 2 Sam. 19.8; 2 Chron. 30.22; 32.6; Isa. 40.2; Hos. 2.16. See Sternberg, “Biblical Poetics and Sexual Politics”, 474, 477; Heinz-Josef Fabry, “לב”, in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 7:417.

<sup>69</sup> See, for example, Tribble, *Texts of Terror*, 67; Jeansonne, 138, n.7; Davies, 57; Ullendorff, 2:436; Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 311; Fewell and Gunn, *Gender, Power, and Promise*, 81; and “Tipping the Balance”, 196; Leupold, 898; Frymer-Kensky, “Virginity in the Bible”, 90; Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 534; Cotter, 254; Rashkow, “Hebrew Bible Translation”, 227, n.31.

<sup>70</sup> Fewell and Gunn, “Tipping the Balance”, 196. Other examples of perlocutionary expressions include, for example, ‘compel’, ‘persuade’, and ‘convince’. Fretheim likewise suggests that Shechem’s words here may have initiated a positive response from her (“Genesis”, 577).

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> Scholz, “Through Whose Eyes”, 170. Similar sentiments are expressed by Kass, *Beginning of Wisdom*, 482; and “Regarding Daughters and Sisters”, 32.

<sup>73</sup> In a similar vein, Speiser comments that Shechem’s words to Dinah here were ‘not so much to comfort her as to persuade her’ (264, n.3).

This is a fascinating reading of the phrase *על לב הנער* and certainly challenges the belief that rapists can feel anything approaching genuine affection and concern for their victims. However, Scholz's interpretation does nevertheless run into difficulty when one considers the other eight uses of this idiom in the Hebrew Bible. For it would appear at first glance that the phrase does *not* carry any inherently negative connotations about the speaker. Instead, it seems to denote a sense that the subject is indeed offering his audience positive reassurance, comfort, or gentle persuasion, by attempting to allay their fears or placate their insecurities.

On saying that, however, the phrase *לב אל לב* is used within Judges 19, another narrative depicting sexual violence, where, it may be argued, the subject's need to 'speak to the heart' of a woman *is* motivated by primarily self-seeking considerations and is aimed as much at benefiting the speaker as reassuring the woman whom he addresses. In Jdg. 19.2, we are told that the Levite, who is living in the hill country of Ephraim, makes the journey to Bethlehem in pursuit of his concubine who, having 'played the harlot' against him,<sup>74</sup> has left him and returned to her father's house. The reader is informed that the Levite's intention is to 'speak to the heart' of his concubine (*לדבר על-לבה*) and thereby persuade her to return home with him (v.3). While this opening context does initially appear to suggest that this phrase is once again used in a very positive manner, indicating as it does the Levite's willingness to comfort and reassure his 'errant' concubine, shadows of doubt are cast upon this reading as the story progresses. For, once he arrives in Bethlehem, the Levite makes no explicit attempt to speak any placatory words to the woman who had left him; indeed, for the duration of his visit, he all but ignores her, preferring instead to enjoy the companionship and hospitality offered to him by his host, the concubine's father (Jdg. 19.4-9).<sup>75</sup> His first explicit (yet still wordless) acknowledgement of this

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<sup>74</sup> *והזונה עליו פילגשו*. It is not clear from the text what the nature of the concubine's 'harlotry' has been. If she had committed adultery or had been behaving like a prostitute, it seems very strange that her husband would make such a long journey in order to win back her affections. Phyllis Tribble and J. Cheryl Exum, among others, have suggested that the text makes more sense if we understand the woman's sexual offence as simply that of leaving her husband. As Tribble notes, divorce was strictly a male prerogative in biblical Israel; it was unheard of for a woman to initiate a separation between herself and her spouse (*Texts of Terror*, 67). Similarly, Exum suggests that, 'a woman who asserts her sexual autonomy by leaving her husband – and whether or not she remains with him is a sexual issue – is guilty of sexual misconduct' (*Fragmented Women*, 178-79). Some interpreters, for example Boling and Soggin, prefer the reading in LXX<sub>A</sub> to that of the Masoretic Text, which renders *והזונה עליו* with the Greek *ὡργισθη αὐτῷ* – 'she became angry with him'. See Boling, 273-74; Soggin, 284; also Schneider, 250-51; Hans-Winfried Jüngling, *Richter 19: Ein Plädoyer für das Königtum* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981), 187-90; Block, 522-23; Klein, 163.

<sup>75</sup> Tribble, *Texts of Terror*, 68, 73. The Levite's apparent failure to speak with his concubine continues after the couple leave Bethlehem to make their way home. Thus, in Jdg. 19.11-14, the decision to spend the night in Gibeah is made by the Levite after consultation with his servant; once again, he

woman is, in fact, in v.25, where, in a scandalous act of self-preservation, he seizes her and casts her out of the house in Gibeah, to be gang raped by the mob of Benjaminite townsmen. This is surely not the action of a man who sought genuine reconciliation with his unconventional wife, or who wished to convey his loyalty and love to her by ‘speaking to her heart’. One is therefore left wondering if, within this particular context, the phrase *דבר על לב* represents rather a sense of egocentric self-interest and expediency on behalf of the speaker. The Levite did not wish to persuade his concubine to come back to Ephraim with him because he had deep feelings of love and affection for her; the facts of the matter are that she was ‘useful’ to him, as a source of sexual service perhaps, or provider of domestic comfort. Unfortunately, for the concubine, her usefulness took on new meaning when her husband’s own sexual integrity was threatened in Gibeah, and he was quick to traffic her sexuality in an act rendered all the more shocking by the extent of its deplorable cowardice. As Susan Ackerman notes, the concubine is little more than ‘a pawn in the hands of men, and, like a pawn on a chess board, she is valuable only up to a point. If it becomes necessary, the man in control of her movements is willing to sacrifice her in the interest of protecting his more important pieces, in this case, himself’.<sup>76</sup>

Turning back to Gen. 34.3, it could therefore be argued that, like the Levite’s intentions to ‘speak to the heart’ of his concubine, Shechem’s act of speaking tenderly to Dinah may have been motivated more by a sense of self-interest than by any feelings of genuine compassion or concern on his part towards the young woman he had just raped. Both men had laid claim to a ‘sexual asset’, which they were unwilling to relinquish; furthermore, in both narratives, the object of their attentions was a woman, who, given the circumstances, would have been less than enthusiastic to receive this male attention. The Levite’s concubine, after all, had taken the unprecedented move of leaving the marital home to make the long and dangerous journey back to her father, where she had remained for four months, apparently content to be away from her husband. Can we really suppose that she would have been pleased to see him turn up in Bethlehem, intent on having her return with him? Similarly, we can surely presume that, having just been raped, Dinah would have been terrified of her attacker’s presence, seeking only to escape from him and return to the safety of her family; it is therefore unlikely that she would have been receptive

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does not address his concubine, despite this being the apparently primary motivation underlying his journey to Bethlehem.

<sup>76</sup> Ackerman, 238.

to his attempts to win her affections and keep her near to him. As Scholz has suggested, Shechem's speech need not necessarily therefore be looked upon auspiciously, occurring as it does immediately in the wake of his act of sexual assault.<sup>77</sup> Perhaps, like rapists today who appear to conceptualise their violent behaviour as little more than an act inspired by natural male desire,<sup>78</sup> or who try to win over the affections of their victims with compliments and promises of future commitment, Shechem too may have been attempting to re-contextualise his assault (consciously or unconsciously) within a 'romantic' framework, in order to convince Dinah (and her family) that he had, in essence, done nothing wrong.

Finally, the suggestion made by Fewell and Gunn, that *על לב הנער וידבר* ought to be read as a perlocutionary phrase indicating Dinah's positive response to Shechem's words ought to be challenged. For, as Sternberg has rightly pointed out, this idiom refers only to the speaking of words *designed* to move the heart of the listener; within the biblical texts where it occurs, there are no obvious assumptions that such a speech will achieve its desired goal.<sup>79</sup> We therefore cannot know from the narrator's utilisation of this phrase how successful Shechem was in his attempts to calm Dinah, for the narrator's focus is entirely upon Shechem's behaviour, rather than Dinah's response; as Parry notes, 'The term only describes what Shechem *tried* to achieve (to soothe her) but it tells us nothing about what he *actually* achieved' [original italics].<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, Fewell and Gunn's proposition that a woman would gain any sense of comfort from words spoken by the man who had just subjected her to such a brutal and coercive violation would suggest that they have seriously underestimated both the horror of rape and the terrible message of contempt and hatred that it imparts to its victims.

To summarise then, the above discussion of Gen. 34.3 certainly opens up the possibility that, contrary to the opinion of many scholars, the narrator's portrayal of Shechem in this verse may not have been intended to 'rehabilitate' his tarnished character. Instead, the language utilised by the author allows us to look upon the Hivite prince as essentially a man who has formed an intense emotional attachment

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<sup>77</sup> Scholz, "Through Whose Eyes", 170.

<sup>78</sup> Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 232-34; Griffin, "Rape: The All-American Crime", 50; Bechhofer and Parrot, 11; Groth, 30.

<sup>79</sup> Sternberg, "Biblical Poetics and Sexual Politics", 476-78. Sternberg's conclusions are likewise echoed by Noble, 179; Parry, *Old Testament Story*, 151-52.

<sup>80</sup> Parry, *Old Testament Story*, 152.

to Dinah, which, though genuine enough, is nonetheless self-seeking, uncontrolled and utterly at odds with the sexual protocol upheld within biblical Israel.<sup>81</sup> We are not necessarily therefore expected to applaud the young prince for his emotional response here; rather, this glimpse into Shechem's emotional inner world may have been intended to make us stand appalled at his selfish and self-interested attempts to retain possession of a woman who had so recently been the object of his aggression.

However, this less than positive portrayal of Shechem does not necessarily mean that the narrator likewise acknowledged the misogyny, contempt, and hatred, which lay at the very heart of this act of sexual violence. By lingering on the young prince's emotional attachment to Dinah in the wake of the rape event, he offers the impression that the actions of this man were not driven by hatred or derision, but were rather the result of unrestrained sexual desire. Thus, while the ancient author may not have approved of such desire, he nevertheless appears to focalize the rape event through a specifically sexual, rather than an aggressive and misogynistic, locus of meaning, thereby endorsing the common misperceptions, discussed earlier in this chapter, which suggest rapists are essentially motivated by their exclusively *erotic* needs. This is reiterated, in not only the tripartite structure of v.3, but also in vv.8 and 19, where, once again, the narrator contextualises Shechem's relationship with Dinah within a framework of *sexual* yearning, rather than one of violence. In v.8, Hamor begins his negotiations with Dinah's family by emphasising that his son 'longs for' their daughter, and therefore seeks their permission to marry her.<sup>82</sup> Later, in v.19, the narrator reports that Shechem did not delay in accepting circumcision as a condition of his marriage to Dinah, because he had 'set his passion towards' her.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.

<sup>82</sup> וידבר חמור אתם לאמר שכם בני חשקה נפשו בבחצם תנו נא אתה לי לאשה. The verb חשק is a relatively rare form in biblical Hebrew, occurring only 11 times within the scriptural corpus (Gen. 34.8; Exod. 27.17; 38.17; 38.28; Deut. 7.7; 10.15; 21.11; 1 Kgs 9.19; Isa. 38.17; Ps.91.14; 2 Chron. 8.6). Its basic meaning appears to designate a sense of 'to adhere to, be joined, united', but it is most commonly utilised in a metaphorical sense to suggest an emotional bond or unconditional desire for passionate involvement with someone or something, thereby carrying similar nuances of meaning as the verb דבק. On two occasions, (Gen. 34.8; Deut. 21.11), it conveys the close bond of affection and desire felt by a man for a woman. See D. Talley, "חשק", in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997), 2:318-19; G. Wallis, "חשק", in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 5:261-62.

<sup>83</sup> ולא יאחר הנער לעשות הדבר כי חפץ בבת־יעקב. The verb חפץ occurs 73 times in the Hebrew Bible, always in the Qal stem. Its semantic value is very similar to that of חשק when used within a sexual context, expressing the sense of 'delight' that a man may take in a woman with whom he seeks to enter into a sexual, connubial relationship (Est. 2.14; Deut. 21.14, 25.7-8). This likewise appears to be the meaning given voice in Gen. 34.19; Shechem has set his heart towards marrying Dinah and, such is his ardour, he 'does not delay' in accepting even the most painful condition of circumcision, insisted upon by her brothers. See D. Talley, "חפץ", in *New International Dictionary of Old*

Focalised through Shechem's eyes, we are therefore invited to view the rape not as a coercive and aggressive event but as a *sexual* event, with the result that Dinah's violation becomes a little more than an illicit seduction, a natural actualisation of male sexuality, while *her* experience of the violence inherent within Shechem's behaviour is again eclipsed and ignored.<sup>84</sup>

Nevertheless, it is not only the biblical narrator that we should call to account for his apparent endorsement of the still-prevalent rape myths that contextualise rape within a framework of normative masculine sexuality. As I illustrated above, a number of biblical critics, such as Wenham, Frymer-Kensky, and Fewell and Gunn, among others, likewise give voice to these myths within their interpretations of Gen. 34.3. Indeed, I would suggest that by insisting upon reading this verse as a *laudably* redemptive portrayal of Shechem, they go even further than the narrator does. For, not only do they reiterate the narrator's own patriarchal attitudes about rape, they also appear to attempt to validate other myths, contemporary to their own cultural milieu, which justify and excuse the behaviour of men who rape.<sup>85</sup> While the ancient author of Gen. 34.3 may have disapproved of Shechem's sexual impetuosity, these biblical scholars appear instead to rationalize it, thereby endorsing Shechem's own focalisation of the rape event as little more than a romantic interlude. By doing so, however, they only serve to encourage the ideation that rapists are simply acting out their natural, and thus harmless, sexual desire, thereby minimising the aggression implicit within his crime, seriously downplaying his culpability, and completely disregarding the terrible effects that the rape event would have had upon Dinah.

Thus, for example, Wenham's declaration that Shechem 'was not your callous, anonymous rapist, so dreaded in modern society, but an affectionate young man',<sup>86</sup> seems only to ignore the fact that, in the previous verse, the Hivite prince *had* committed an act of sexual violence and therefore *would* have been, in Dinah's eyes, a 'callous, anonymous rapist', who had subjected her to the most terrible and terrifying ordeal. It would appear that, for Wenham, the brutality of the rape event may be all too easily forgotten, eclipsed by the subsequent awakening of Shechem's ardour and commitment. Perhaps he is relying on the myth that 'real' rapists are

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*Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997), 2:231; G. Johannes Botterweck, "גַּזְזָה", in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 5:93.

<sup>84</sup> Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 57.

<sup>85</sup> Scholz, "Was It Really Rape", 195; Washington, "Violence", 359.

<sup>86</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 317.

socially deviant, mentally disturbed psychopaths, whose behaviour is utterly unlike that of a 'normal' heterosexual male. Perhaps, as a result, he simply views Shechem as a man overcome by unbridled desire and longing at the sight of this young Jacobite maiden. However, in so doing, Wenham ignores the fact that the majority of men who commit rape are not mentally unstable sociopaths; they have simply grown up in a culture where the aggressive acquisition of women is regarded as a normative feature of masculine sexuality. He therefore fails to consider that the 'affectionate young man' in Genesis 34 is nevertheless a violent sexual predator who hurt, violated, and terrified the woman whom he now so desperately desires.<sup>87</sup>

Furthermore, commentators, such as Vawter, who insist upon viewing Shechem simply as a man overcome by passion, or even a Romeo to Dinah's Juliet,<sup>88</sup> likewise appear to be relying upon these myths and misperceptions, which reduce the act of rape to little more than an act of seduction. In doing so, however, they utterly fail to grant recognition to the fact that sexual violence is, first and foremost, a serious and life-altering violation of a woman's bodily and sexual integrity, which strikes at the very core of her sense of self and inalterably damages her relationship with the world. It therefore has naught to do with seduction or romance; it cannot be confused with mutual love, lust, or desire. They similarly forget that rapists are driven, not by sexual desire, but by contempt, hatred, and a need to dominate the object of their abuse. Even rapists who, as I mentioned above, endeavour to form a relationship with the woman whom they have raped, are by no means attempting to create with her a bond based on mutual love and respect. Rather, like Shechem, these men do not recognise that sexual violence is the very antithesis of sexual desire but is instead an outpouring of misogyny and detestation, the aim of which is to denigrate, dominate, and objectify its victim. Their treatment of women can therefore never be confused with an act that inspires love or desire, for it is nothing less than a terrible act of violation and abuse.

Thus, contrary to scholars discussed above, Shechem's apparent feelings of desire and attachment for Dinah are by no means laudable, nor should they elicit our sympathy for him. If anything, they should heighten our sense of disdain and loathing for this man, who despite subjecting a woman to the most terrible of ordeals, appears to have little or no insight into the wrongfulness of his actions. He

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<sup>87</sup> As Yamada notes, 'The reader must ponder the appropriateness of Shechem's affection, especially since the relationship between Dinah and Shechem began with sexual violation' (151-52).

<sup>88</sup> See, for example, Vawter, 358; van Wolde, "Love and Hatred", 438; Zlotnik, 47; Ramras-Rauch, 162.



may believe that he loves this woman, but his behaviour only serves to show us that he has no real concern for her wellbeing; rather, his priorities lie in satisfying his *own* sexual and emotional ‘needs’, while Dinah’s needs – safety, sexual and bodily integrity, physical wellbeing – appear to be of secondary concern to him. We should therefore not be lulled into falling into a trap, laid by the pervasive rape myths within our own culture, which would have us extol a rapist for his apparent emotional commitment to his victim. For, such commitment is merely a smokescreen, which attempts to hide from our view the hatred and misogyny that truly occupies each rapist’s heart and mind.

*Was marriage to Shechem the best option for Dinah?*

In the previous section of this chapter, we discussed the ideologies and attitudes pertaining to sexual violence, which appear to have influenced interpretive traditions surrounding the narrator’s portrayal of Shechem in Gen. 34.3. I wish to continue this discussion by looking at another passage within this narrative that is likewise often cited as further ‘evidence’ of Shechem’s admirable character. In Gen. 34.11-12, the Hivite prince gives voice to his apparently heartfelt longing to wed Dinah, by promising her family that he is willing to pay whatever price they ask of him, in return for her hand in marriage. Such a generous and seemingly genuine offer has led a number of scholars to propose that the narrator appears at pains to emphasise both Shechem’s desire to make recompense for his wrongdoing *and* his heartwarming willingness to go to any lengths to secure the hand of the woman he loves.<sup>89</sup> Thus, Fewell and Gunn assert that, in wishing to marry Dinah, Shechem is ‘seeking to make restitution for the wrong he has done her’; the reader therefore ought to feel reassured about Dinah’s future, safe as it is in the hands of a man who is offering her genuine love and commitment on a permanent basis.<sup>90</sup> While they concede that marriage to a rapist was by no means an ideal solution for any victim of sexual violence, Fewell and Gunn nonetheless believe that there were simply no

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<sup>89</sup> Fewell and Gunn, “Tipping the Balance”, 197. Meanwhile, Gunkel states, ‘The narrator wants to represent Shechem’s love in his many words’ (364). See also Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 540; Ramras-Rauch, 162-3; Fretheim, *Genesis*, 577.

<sup>90</sup> Fewell and Gunn, “Tipping the Balance”, 197. As they suggest, ‘Our concern for Dinah is lessened as we view Shechem’s resolve to take care of her’. Sharing a similar attitude with regards the marriage of a rapist to his victim, Zlotnik likewise suggests with reference to 2 Samuel 13 that such a union would resolve the problems caused to the victim by her rape; as she notes, ‘Even the tale of Amnon and Tamar could have ended happily but for Amnon’s change of heart from love to hatred’ (41). See also Kessler and Deurloo, 177.

‘liberating alternatives’ in the androcentric culture to which Shechem and Dinah belonged.<sup>91</sup> As an unmarried woman, the victim of (albeit forceful) pre-marital sexual intercourse, her opportunities for achieving security and social acceptance through a decent marriage had been severely compromised. Shechem was therefore surely ‘making the best out of a flawed world’ when, in vv.11-12, he shows genuine commitment to ‘do the right thing’ by marrying the woman he had violated and thereby saving her from a life of social isolation and humiliation.<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, according to Zlotnik and Aschkenasy, it is not unreasonable to suppose that Dinah herself may well have approved of such a marriage proposal; as the daughter of her father’s unloved wife, the prospect of a ‘potentially loving spouse’ may have appealed to her, for at least it ‘carried a promise of peace’.<sup>93</sup>

However, I would contend that such a reading of Gen. 34.11-12 ought to be challenged for a number of significant reasons. Firstly, if one sought evidence that Shechem’s ‘generous’ offer to Dinah’s family in vv.11-12 does *nothing* to redeem him, one only need consider his words here in light of the events that preceded them. The Hivite prince approaches Jacob, directly after raping and abducting his daughter. Yet, despite this, he offers no apology, no explanation, and no outright admission of his violent and immoral actions.<sup>94</sup> Several scholars have attempted to soften this condemnatory ‘omission’ of Shechem’s here in vv.11-12, by reading into his words an implicitly remorseful and apologetic tone. Thus, Westermann argues that ‘Shechem’s plea [...] is completely coloured by the deed that has preceded; consequently he is ready to pay any price the brothers of Dinah demand of him so as to atone for his crime’.<sup>95</sup> Likewise, Fewell and Gunn claim that, in vv.11-12, ‘We see the son, acutely aware of his offence and desperately anxious not to alienate further Dinah’s brothers’.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, Fewell and Gunn even go so far as to laud

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<sup>91</sup> Fewell and Gunn, “Tipping the Balance”, 211.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*; and *Gender, Power, and Promise*, 84-85. Sharing this view, Ramras-Rauch suggests that, as an unmarried non-virgin, Dinah would have been ‘doomed to a life of disgrace if she is returned home unmarried, while as the wife of the converted Shechem she would have some status’ (162). See also Frymer-Kensky, *Goddesses*, 194; Parry, *Old Testament Story*, 152; Fretheim, 577; Shemesh, 11, n.46.

<sup>93</sup> Zlotnik, 38; Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 61; and *Eve’s Journey*, 129. Likewise, with reference to Tamar’s apparent insistence that Amnon marry her after he had raped her, Stone suggests that ‘where marriage is the primary avenue through which female prestige can be secured, and the loss of one’s sexual purity can become an obstacle to marriage, it is not inconceivable that a woman would prefer to take advantage of the androcentric rationale which expresses itself in the Deuteronomic law [of Deut. 22.28-29] and choose marriage over non-marriage’ (*Sex, Honour, and Power*, 115-16).

<sup>94</sup> Sarna, 235; Kass, *Beginning of Wisdom*, 487; Cotter, 255; Parry, *Old Testament Story*, 160; Noble, 192.

<sup>95</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 540.

<sup>96</sup> Fewell and Gunn, “Tipping the Balance”, 201, n.13.

Shechem for the seemingly ‘conciliatory’ and ‘diplomatic’ nature of his proposal to Dinah’s family, contending that any ‘open declaration’ of guilt to Dinah’s family on his part would have proved ‘diplomatically inept’, leading inevitably to confrontation and ruining all hope of peaceful intercession between the two groups. Far better, they posit, that he kept quiet about his crime, thereby allowing the emphasis of his negotiations to fall upon ‘restitution rather than recrimination’.<sup>97</sup>

Such a reading is, however, not without its difficulties. For, while Shechem’s words in vv.11-12 may be courteous and respectful, and his financial generosity impressive, there is really nothing to suggest from the language used in these verses to support the supposition that he shows *any* regret for his previous assault on Dinah.<sup>98</sup> To be sure, the young prince’s largesse speaks volubly of his *desire* for Dinah. To propose, however, that this is in itself an indicator of his remorse for this violent crime is surely to read into these words a meaning that simply was not there in the first place.

Furthermore, Fewell and Gunn’s contention that the reader ought to applaud Shechem’s skills of ‘diplomacy’ and his ‘prudent’ avoidance of the truth is surely a perverse way to evaluate an acceptable response to *any* crime. In effect, they would appear to be arguing that economy with the truth is justifiable if it avoids further conflict between the wrongdoer and the wronged, even when such economy would seem to preclude justice itself. Ultimately, their reading of this text, using an ‘ethic of responsibility’,<sup>99</sup> does nothing less than instil this example of unequivocal dishonesty with a flavour of moral relativism, which is in effect neither judicious nor ethical. It is clear that the young Hivite’s *own* needs are paramount here; he wants Dinah as his wife and will go to any lengths to attain this goal. That she was previously the victim of his sexual assault appears to be of little or no importance to him. By omitting any words of contrition or sorrow for Shechem’s prior misdeeds, the narrator may be couching this young man’s speech to Dinah’s family with pejorative overtones, which should appal the reader with their seemingly unfeeling and impenitent tenor.

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<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

<sup>98</sup> Jeansonne, 93; Fleishman, 104; Leupold, 902; Cotter, 255; Luther, 198; Noble, 181. Cotter even suggests that Shechem’s generous offer may indeed have been nothing more than ‘a crass offer to buy silence’ (255).

<sup>99</sup> An ‘ethic of responsibility’ addresses moral problems in terms of ‘conflicting responsibilities’ and sensitivity to the contextual reality of a given situation. In comparison, an ‘ethic of rights’ is more concerned to seek justice and uphold individual rights, regardless of the context. See Fewell and Gunn, “Tipping the Balance”, 209.

Lastly, the suggestion made by Fewell and Gunn, among others, that the reader ought to consider Shechem's offer of marriage to Dinah as an optimal solution to her future wellbeing surely raises difficult questions with regard to the fate of any rape victim. As Sternberg rightly points out, such an evaluation of this marriage proposal 'consults nothing but the logic of patriarchy',<sup>100</sup> by conveying the message that 'one may rape and rape and rape with impunity, then cling and cling and cling to the victim amidst cheers'.<sup>101</sup> Like Wenham, who suggested that the perfect connubial 'bond' can arise out of such a hostile and dehumanising act as rape,<sup>102</sup> Fewell and Gunn appear oblivious to the fact that such a union would sentence Dinah to a lifelong nightmare of having to share her life, and her bed, with her abuser.<sup>103</sup> To suggest, as they and a number of other scholars do, that marriage to Shechem would relieve our concerns for Dinah is therefore an incredible statement, one that seriously downplays the long-term physical and psychological damage wrought by sexual violence.<sup>104</sup> Likewise, remarks made by Zlotnik and Aschkenasy, which suggest that Dinah herself would have been content to marry Shechem, simply fail to acknowledge the fact that *no* victim of sexual violence would ever wish to enter into any form of long-term sexual relationship with the man who had abused her, hurt her, and violated her.<sup>105</sup> While it is doubtlessly true that there were a distinct lack of

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<sup>100</sup> Sternberg, "Biblical Poetics and Sexual Politics", 482.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 474.

<sup>102</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 311.

<sup>103</sup> Sternberg, "Biblical Poetics and Sexual Politics", 479.

<sup>104</sup> I likewise disagree with those scholars who argue that the biblical insistence on the marriage of a woman to her rapist in Deut. 22.28-29 would have constituted a significant *improvement* in the treatment of victims of sexual violence by ensuring that they would be able to achieve a decent marriage even in their deflowered status (Pressler, "Sexual Violence", 105; Otto, 133; Tigay, 208). Their readings of this law utterly ignore the terrible trauma that the woman would undoubtedly suffer by having to spend the rest of her life in a connubial relationship with the man who had abused her. Furthermore, such a positive evaluation of Deut. 22.28-29 fails to note that its primary beneficiary would not be the woman, but her father, who is more than amply recompensed for the 'loss' of his daughter's virginity and who is able to resolve the problem of having to support indefinitely a virtually unmarriageable daughter. This law is based on a distinctly patriarchal view of rape, which prefers to view the woman in terms of her deflowered status and her loss of marriageability, rather than as the victim of a horrific act of physical brutality. It would therefore not improve life for a rape victim; rather, it would be more likely to make her life an unbearable and endless torture.

<sup>105</sup> While Aschkenasy rightly notes that Tamar beseeched her rapist Amnon to let her remain with him, her remarks that 'in biblical society a woman would prefer to stay with her hated violator, rather than return home to a life of isolation as a "tainted" woman' (*Woman at the Window*, 164, n.20) ignores the fact that the tradition of 2 Samuel 13 presents a distinctly gendered focalization of sexual violence. As Fuchs points out, Tamar's words are authored by men and, as such, represent less the genuine feelings of a rape victim than the feelings that a rape victim was *expected* to have, given that she lived within a culture where her loss of chastity and subsequent loss of social worth as the result of her sexual assault were deemed far greater problems than her sense of physical and psychic violation (*Sexual Politics*, 216). I am therefore not so certain that *any* woman within the society of biblical Israel would necessarily have wanted to stay with her rapist; rather, texts such as 2 Samuel 13 present only *androcentric* attitudes about rape, which fail to grant recognition to the *female*

‘liberating alternatives’ for unmarried rape survivors in biblical Israel, their proposals nonetheless appear to me an unacceptable compromise, serving only to reiterate and validate those biblical ideologies, which appear oblivious to the needs and welfare of victims of sexual violence.<sup>106</sup> Furthermore, they appear content to carry out their evaluation of Dinah’s ‘best options’ *solely* within the patriarchal confines of the biblical world; by doing so, however, they eschew the opportunity to critique these very confines and to challenge the horrendous injustice that would insist upon a rape survivor marrying her abuser.<sup>107</sup>

### Conclusions

In the previous chapter, we considered the ways in which Dinah’s voice is silenced by her family’s re-contextualisation of her rape as an event, which violated *their* property rights and caused *them* serious dishonour. Within this chapter, I have been considering the way in which Dinah’s narrative of suffering is likewise stifled by the

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experience of sexual violence. Scholars who voice similar opinions as Aschkenasy with regards Tamar include Parry, *Old Testament Story*, 152; Stone, *Sex, Honour, and Power*, 115-16; Shemesh, 11, n.46.

<sup>106</sup> What perplexes me in particular about Fewell and Gunn’s suggestions here is the fact that they admit themselves that a reader’s interpretation of a text will inevitably be coloured by their own ideologies. Indeed, they actively encourage ‘more self-consciously ideological readings of biblical narrative ... [which] can help to block the monopolization of biblical meaning and to facilitate the life of the text in contemporary society’ (“Tipping the Balance”, 194). However, their own insistence on reading Dinah’s prospective marriage to Shechem as a positive experience for her is little more than a reiteration of the deeply patriarchal attitudes regarding sexual violence found within biblical texts, such as 2 Samuel 13 and Deut. 22.28-29, suggesting that they themselves allow their interpretation to be monopolised by the biblical evaluation of this woman’s rape. I would therefore suggest that their critique of Sternberg’s reading of Genesis 34 as being ‘in significant respects a reflex of values that many would characterise as androcentric’ (*ibid.*, 195) could equally apply to *their* reading of this same text. If they were sincere about facilitating the life of this narrative within a contemporary context, they may have been better served contemplating Dinah’s predicament in light of current feminist thought, which treats with revulsion *any* notion of rapist-victim marriage regardless of the circumstances, rather than simply reiterating the androcentric and sexist values of the biblical world.

<sup>107</sup> I therefore take to task the comments made by Shemesh (11, n.46) and Rodd (270), which caution us against evaluating biblical practices, such as rapist-victim marriage, in light of contemporary ethical values. While I agree that ‘the Israelite culture differed massively from ours in respect of hierarchy, patriarchy, and the way women were perceived and valued’ (Rodd, 270), this ought not prevent us from a comparative critique of these differences, in light of our own contemporary ethical values. Their proposal, that such objectionable ideologies and practices, such as rapist-victim marriage, ought to remain beyond our criticism, is, to my mind, unnecessary; no culture, however far removed from our own by time or space, need be immune from the rigours of ethical criticism (Booth, 413). Such an appeal to cultural relativism only serves to ignore or obscure the fact that real injustices and ethically abhorrent practices occurred within these groups, and furthermore, it undermines, and thereby implicitly grants approval of the oppression and marginalisation of women within these distant social settings. As Martha C. Nussbaum has rightly contended, what is so laudable about respecting ideologies and attitudes that would have caused real pain to real people? In *Sex and Social Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 35-37.

narrator's characterisation of her rapist. Though closer than any other male character within this narrative to the actual violating event, Shechem, more than anyone, re-encodes its meaning in the most *radical* manner. From the moment it occurred, the rape no longer constituted in *his* eyes Dinah's unlawful or aggressive violation. Instead, through the haze of his own desire, he focalized it simply as the source of his love.<sup>108</sup> In the course of the narrator's portrayal of this Hivite prince, the reader is therefore guided towards the inevitable conclusion that sexual violence is primarily a sexual act, driven by desire, which can culminate in the rapist's emotional commitment to his victim. While this ancient author may not have fully approved of Shechem's newly awakened attachment to Dinah, he nevertheless appears comfortable with the notion that this young man's powerful longing for the Jacobite maiden could result from such a violent and hate-filled act as rape.

Yet, in the midst of all this talk of love and desire, Dinah is again granted no words with which to express how *she* felt about either her rape or her rapist. We can only imagine the dread and revulsion she would have experienced in the presence of this man who had so brutally violated her. For a rapist inspires only an all-encompassing terror in his victim; she is confronted by his ferocious hatred and rage, she experiences the immanence and intensity of his contempt. Victims of sexual violence repeatedly report that their central and most pressing concern immediately after their assault is to *escape* their attacker; the propensity of some rapists to insist on remaining with the woman for a period of time after their assault only adds to her sense of terror and trauma. As one rape survivor noted, 'My heart was racing. My brain was spinning. I felt I must escape ... I talked continually to him about anything ... anything to get a chance to escape'.<sup>109</sup> Even if the rapist behaved in a 'friendly' or 'affectionate' manner after the assault, even at times apologising to the woman or asking to see her again, such a precipitate change in his behaviour grants his victim no sense of comfort. In the words of another rape survivor, 'I was petrified. It was the way he kept changing. He'd be so nice. Then all of a sudden he'd be totally different'.<sup>110</sup> It is as though the rapist's attempts to normalise this dreadful situation serves only to terrorise and traumatise the victim further, for the very presence of this man only keeps alive her principal fear that he could hurt her again.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Bader, 92.

<sup>109</sup> Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 176.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 230.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 232-35.

Bearing this in mind, we can perhaps suggest that Dinah likewise received no sense of comfort either from Shechem's continued presence in her life or his apparent emotional attachment towards her. Rather, she would have been utterly confused by his behaviour, unable to comprehend that this man could behave with such anger and contempt towards her and yet claim to have such strong feelings of desire and affection for her. Like the rape survivor cited above, she too may have attempted to talk to Shechem, to persuade him to let her go; alternatively, she may have been too terrified and traumatized by events to utter even a word. The shock of the attack, this unexpected and most intimate violation, would have left her feeling little more than a receptacle upon which Shechem had poured out his predatory aggression and scorn. She would therefore have been aghast by his endearments and his promises of commitment in the wake of her assault, seeking only to distance herself from him and escape back to the safety of her family. The space that Dinah occupied during the rape and in its aftermath would therefore not have been rendered more bearable by Shechem's words of devotion and reassurance; if anything, she would have perceived this space as even more awful, more unbearable, and more terrifying by the continued presence of the man who had subjected her to such a horrific ordeal.

Furthermore, were Dinah to hear biblical interpreters' evaluations of Shechem as a man fuelled more by lust and desire than by predatory aggression and anger, she would surely be left bewildered by such a misconception of her rape experience. These scholars' reinterpretation of her assault within a specifically sexualised framework and their apparent indifference to the terrible violence and the trauma that she had endured, would, in her mind, serve only to deny her experience of sexual assault and further silence her narrative of suffering. For, sexual violence is a crime that has no currency with mutual and consensual sexual desire, but is rather a violent and degrading act of brutality, inspired by misogyny, anger and the need to control and intimidate. Scholars, who propose that Dinah may have welcomed Shechem's endearments or who laud the young man for the apparent depth of his love and commitment to Dinah, must surely therefore be called to account for their terrible failure to recognise both the horror and brutality of rape and the terror that victims endure when they live through such a violation. Any man who violates a woman's right to her sexual integrity can thus never be regarded merely as this woman's 'Romeo'; no, he is her rapist, the source of her suffering and torment, the face within her nightmares, the very reason that her life now lies in pieces.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### “She Asked For It”: Attributing Blame to Victims of Rape in Genesis 34 and its Interpretive Traditions

#### **The Myth of Victim Precipitation**

*‘I think that the problem with most women, including myself, is that we feel it is our fault that this has happened. Because I had nobody to talk to about it, I continued to blame myself. It also did a lot of damage to my self-esteem, as I already had a low opinion of myself. I think that things have to change drastically so that women no longer feel they are to blame and men start feeling responsible for what they have done’.*<sup>1</sup>

*‘Right from the very beginning I think [the police] thought I was a little slut – I even told them “I’m not a little slut”, because I was a virgin ... But I always thought they thought I was a young stupid girl who had got drunk and had sex’.*<sup>2</sup>

*‘It is the height of imprudence for any girl to hitch-hike at night. That is plain. It isn’t really worth stating. She is in the true sense asking for it’.*<sup>3</sup>

In this final chapter, we will be considering a rape myth that is *extremely* pervasive within patriarchal cultures and that has a particularly pernicious influence on the treatment of rape victims. Consider, if you will, the following statements:

‘Are you sure you didn’t lead him on?’

‘You were out drinking – could you not put it down to experience?’

‘Why could you not fight them [two rapists] off? You’re a big girl.’

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<sup>1</sup> Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 22.

<sup>2</sup> Jordan, 695

<sup>3</sup> Spoken by a judge during a rape trial; cited in P. Patullo, *Judging Women* (London: NCCL, 1983), 21.



Surprising as it may seem, these questions were some of the responses given recently by police officers to rape victims, after they had come forward to report their assault.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, perhaps it is not so surprising, if one bears in mind that in 2006, a senior police officer in a Scottish constabulary stated publicly that ‘a lot’ of rapes could be avoided by women ‘not allowing themselves to be in a vulnerable position’.<sup>5</sup> Implicit in this remark is the assumption that the responsibility for avoiding sexual violence, and thus by implication, the responsibility for *falling prey* to sexual violence, rests in the main upon the *victims*, rather than the perpetrators, of this crime. Often referred to as ‘victim precipitation’, this propensity to hold a woman responsible for her rape is based on the erroneous, yet commonly held, supposition that, through her behaviour or appearance, she in some sense ‘encouraged’ or provoked her rapist to sexually assault her.<sup>6</sup> Rape is therefore unique, being the only violent felony in which a victim is often attributed in this way with some, if not all, culpability for her ‘participation’ in a criminal act committed by forcible compulsion.<sup>7</sup>

However, the idea that a woman might provoke her own rape may, to some readers, appear perverse; what would a woman have to do to unleash the propensity within a man to perpetrate such a brutal and hate-filled crime? Well, as discussed in Chapter One, the concept of victim precipitation appears to be heavily dependant upon an adherence to the traditional gender stereotypes, which dictate how women ‘ought’ to act within their particular patriarchal culture. Women who do *not* conform to these stereotypes are regarded as essentially ‘asking for trouble’, as such behaviour is repeatedly contextualised, at worst, in a sexually provocative light and at best, as reckless and irresponsible.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, for example, if a woman is judged to have acted, prior to her rape, in an aggressively sexual or promiscuous manner (wearing provocative or revealing

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<sup>4</sup> These responses were reported to Rape Crisis Scotland, whom the women had contacted for support. See Kate Foster, “True extent of unreported rapes revealed”, *scotsman.com*, November 26, 2006, <http://news.scotsman.com/topics.cfm?tid=53&id=1752272006> (accessed March 18, 2007).

<sup>5</sup> Kate Foster, “Women told ‘drink less’ to avoid rape”, in *scotsman.com*, June 11, 2006, <http://news.scotsman.com/topics.cfm?tid=53&id=860222006> (accessed March 18, 2007).

<sup>6</sup> Menachim Amir, *Patterns in Forcible Rape* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 259; Steve Nelson and Menachim Amir, “The Hitchhike Victim of Rape: A Research Report”, in Chappell, Geis, and Geis, 272-90.

<sup>7</sup> Fairstein, 13; Rozee, “Rape Resistance”, 267; Tetreaut, 246; White and Sorensen, 187; Brownmiller, 383-84; Henderson, 146; LeGrand, 81; Bohmer, “Acquaintance Rape and the Law”, 320; and “Rape and the Law”, 251; Yarmey, 327; Coller and Resick, 115; Burt, “Rape Myths and Acquaintance Rape”, 32.

<sup>8</sup> Krahé, 51; Burt, “Rape Myths and Acquaintance Rape”, 31-32; and “Rape Myths”, 135; also, Griffin, “Rape: The All-American Crime”, 66; Bohmer, “Rape and the Law”, 250.

clothing, or acting ‘flirtatiously’), or if she has a sexual history or reputation that is deemed ‘unacceptable’ according to cultural gender expectations (having had multiple sexual partners, sexual relationships outwith marriage, or working in the sex industry), she may stand accused of having encouraged or precipitated the sexual advances of her attacker.<sup>9</sup> Such behaviours are considered a blatant breach of patriarchal social protocol, which demands female chastity and sexual passivity; by ‘breaking the rules’, women therefore risk having their behaviour misconstrued as sexually motivated and their bodies regarded as sexually available.<sup>10</sup>

In addition, women who are deemed to have eschewed their culturally-imposed responsibility to safeguard their sexual integrity, by going out alone late at night, walking in an insalubrious part of town, or simply forgetting to lock the door of their car or home, may likewise be blamed for their rape, having exposed themselves to the danger of encountering or attracting unsolicited male sexual attention.<sup>11</sup> A woman’s *vulnerability* to sexual violence within such a situation is thus reinterpreted as *culpability*;<sup>12</sup> as a result, she is regarded less an innocent casualty of a brutal

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<sup>9</sup> There is a significant body of work discussing public attitudes towards rape victim precipitation. See, for example, LeGrand, 67-86; Krahe, 56-57; Jenkins and Dambrot, 875-95; Calhoun and Townsley, 57-69; Brownmiller, 385-86; Henderson, 151; D.J. West, “The Victim’s Contribution to Sexual Offences”, in Hopkins, 1-14; Tetreault, 247-48, 254; Bevacqua, 60-61, 157-60; Yarmey, 327-38; Williams and Holmes, 125-45; Suresh Kanekar and Laura Vaz, “Attribution of Causal and Moral Responsibility to a Victim of Rape”, *Applied Psychology: An International Review* 37 (1988): 35-49; Alan C. Acock and Nancy K. Ireland, “Attribution of Blame in Rape Cases: The Impact of Norm Violation, Gender, and Sex-Role Attitude”, *Sex Roles* 9 (1983): 179-93; Koss, 1335; Ward, 33-34, 75-77; Georgina S. Hammock and Deborah R. Richardson, “Perceptions of Rape: The Influence of Closeness of Relationship, Intoxication and Sex of Participant”, *Violence and Victims* 12 (1997): 237-46; Bridges and McGrail, 273-86; Bohmer, “Rape and the Law”, 250-52; and “Acquaintance Rape and the Law”, 320, 324; Weidner and Griffit, 151-66; Andrew Karmen, *Crime Victims: An Introduction to Victimology* (Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole, 1990), 131-41; Cahill, 175; Spencer, 57; Burt, “Rape Myths”, 129-44; and “Rape Myths and Acquaintance Rape”, 30-31; Collier and Resick, 115-25; Sarah L. Cook, “Acceptance and Expectation of Sexual Aggression in College Students”, *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 19 (1995): 188; Rozee, “Stranger Rape”, 98-99; Calhoun and Townsley, 62-65; Scully and Marolla, “Riding the Bull at Gilley’s”, 118; Diana E.H. Russell, 242; Deborah G. Schult and Lawrence J. Schneider, “The Role of Sexual Provocativeness, Rape History, and Observer Gender in Perceptions of Blame in Sexual Assault”, *Journal of International Violence* 6 (1991): 94-101; McCaul *et al.*, 1-26.

<sup>10</sup> As Susan Brownmiller states, it is a common cultural myth that ‘a virtuous woman either cannot get raped or does not get into situations that leave her open to assault’ (386). The behaviour of a woman who *is* raped is therefore consistently contextualised from a sexualised perspective, her every action reinterpreted as an indication of her sexual receptivity. Similar remarks are noted by L’Armand and Pepitone, 134, 136; Martha R. Burt and Rochelle Semmel Albin, “Rape Myths, Rape Definitions, and Probability of Conviction”, *Journal of Applied Psychology* 11 (1981): 214; Scully and Marolla, “Rape and Vocabularies of Motive”, 305; Giacobassi, and Dull, 64.

<sup>11</sup> Rozee, “Rape Resistance”, 267; Shirley Petchel Damrosch, “How Perceived Carelessness and Time of Attack Affect Nursing Students’ Attributions About Rape Victims”, *Psychological Reports* 56 (1985): 531-36; Beneke, 111-12; Burt, “Rape Myths and Acquaintance Rape”, 32.

<sup>12</sup> The difference between responsibility and vulnerability is not always appreciated by adherents to the myth of victim precipitation. If, for example, I do not lock my car doors when I am out driving alone, I admittedly leave myself vulnerable to being car-jacked. Nevertheless, if I am car-jacked, I do

violation than an individual who, to some degree at least, ought to be held legally and morally accountable for the assault perpetrated against her.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, by shunning societal regulations concerning appropriate female behaviour, women stand accused of acting in ways, which encourage men to regard them as either sexually promiscuous or sexually irresponsible and therefore ‘deserving’ of their rape.<sup>14</sup> In other words, women who claim the same independence and autonomy as men, who enter freely into the public sphere without male protection, and who take control of their own bodies, behaviour, and sexuality, are considered legitimate sexual prey, because their behaviour is contextualised solely from a sexualised perspective. As Helen Benedict asserts, ‘rape is sex, rape is attraction, rape is the woman’s fault’.<sup>15</sup>

However, this concept of victim precipitation is far more than a harmless or inconsequential misapprehension; it is a dangerous falsehood, which, unfortunately, has a pervasive and malignant influence upon cultural perceptions of sexual violence, essentially serving to rationalise and justify rape, while shifting the perpetrator’s *own* culpability for the crime onto his victim.<sup>16</sup> Such an influence can be detected within a wide range of social groups, including those organisations and

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not incur any responsibility or blame for this crime, nor is there any doubt that a crime has occurred or that the car-jacker is the responsible agent for committing it. No one will ask me suspiciously, ‘But why did you not lock your car doors? Were you encouraging the car-jacker? Did you *want* to be car-jacked?’ Applying the theory of victim precipitation to this scenario would however lead to the conclusions that *I* was to blame for the car-jacking, that no actual crime had occurred, and that the car-jacker ought to be acquitted of any charges because, by not locking my car doors, I had been ‘asking’ to be car-jacked. These suppositions are, of course, ludicrous; why then should rape be treated any differently to other crimes in this respect? I thank Professor Kristen Leslie for clarifying this to me in a personal conversation.

<sup>13</sup> Recent surveys carried out by both Amnesty International and the Scottish Executive found that between one fifth to one quarter of people who took part believed that a woman was to some extent responsible for her rape if she was wearing sexy or revealing clothes, had been ‘flirtatious’ prior to her rape, had been walking alone in a dangerous or deserted area, or if she had had multiple sexual partners prior to the assault. See Amnesty International, Sexual Assault Research Summary Report, amnesty.org.uk, [http://amnesty.org.uk/news\\_details.asp?NewsID=16618](http://amnesty.org.uk/news_details.asp?NewsID=16618) (accessed March 15, 2007); The Scottish Executive, Domestic Abuse 2006/7: Post Campaign Evaluation, scotland.gov.uk, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/194212/0052140.pdf> (accessed August 8, 2007).

<sup>14</sup> Woodhull, 172; Lebowitz and Roth, 383; Krahe, 51; Bohmer, “Rape and the Law”, 250-55; Burt, “Rape Myths and Acquaintance Rape”, 30-32; Ward, 75-77; Dianne Herman, 41-42; Schwendinger and Schwendinger, “Rape Myths”, 21-24; and *Rape and Inequality* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1983), 66; Tetreault, 247-48, 254; Calhoun and Townsley, 62-63; Griffin, “Rape: The All-American Crime”, 66; Joyce E. Williams, 76; Linda Brookover Bourque, *Defining Rape* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), 16; Sharon Lamb, *The Trouble With Blame: Victims, Perpetrators, and Responsibility* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 96

<sup>15</sup> Helen Benedict, “The Language of Rape”, in Buchwald, Fletcher, and Roth, 125.

<sup>16</sup> Scully and Marolla, “Rape and the Vocabularies of Motive”, 305; Bohmer, “Acquaintance Rape and the Law”, 324; Kimberly A. Lonsway and Louise F. Fitzgerald, “Rape Myths in Review”, *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 18 (1994): 136-37; Schwendinger and Schwendinger, “Rape Myths”, 22; Bevacqua, 61.

institutions that are responsible both for the support of the rape victim and for the dispensation of justice against the perpetrator on her behalf. Members of law enforcement agencies and the criminal justice system, including the police, the judiciary, and members of the public who serve as jurors,<sup>17</sup> as well as the media,<sup>18</sup> the medical professions,<sup>19</sup> not to mention the victim's own family and friends,<sup>20</sup> may all endorse the belief that a woman who behaves in a certain manner prior to her rape ought to shoulder a significant part, if not all, of the blame for her own victimisation.

It should come as little surprise then to learn that many survivors of sexual violence tell no one about their assault. Victim precipitation thus becomes yet another dominant patriarchal ideology, which all but ensures the silencing of women who

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<sup>17</sup> Hubert S. Feild's research into rape myths led to the troubling conclusion that the police officers in his study shared similar conceptions and attitudes about victim precipitation as those held by convicted rapists (156-79), while Patricia Tetreault discovered in the course of her research that jurors who accept the concept of victim precipitation are more likely to acquit an accused rapist or, if found guilty, recommend a more lenient sentence, than a juror who does not hold a rape victim in any way responsible for her assault (248). There is a plethora of research and discussion investigating the acceptance of the victim precipitation myth among the police, judiciary, and jurors; see, for example, Liz Kelly, Jo Lovett, and Linda Regan, *A Gap or a Chasm? Attrition in Reported Rape Cases* (London: Home Office, 2005); Rozee, "Stranger Rape", 98-99; Ward, 33-34, 56, 75-77; Brownmiller, 364-74; Shirley Feldman-Summers and Clark D. Ashworth, "Factors Related to Intentions to Report a Rape", *Journal of Social Issues* 37, no.4 (1981): 53-70; Ullman, 143-57; Campbell and Johnson, 255-74; Eugene Borgida and Nancy Brekke, "Psychological Research on Rape Trials", in Burgess, 321; Madigan and Gamble, 71-81, 91-107; Julie Bindel, "Why is rape so easy to get away with?" [guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk/crime/article/0,,2003229,00.html), February 1, 2007, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/crime/article/0,,2003229,00.html> (accessed 28 March, 2007); Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 129-58; Henderson, 145-53; Luginbuhl and Mullin, 554, 556-57; Carol Bohmer, "Judicial Attitudes Towards Rape Victims", in Chappell, Geis, and Geis, 161-69; and "Acquaintance Rape and the Law", 320, 324; Diana E.H. Russell, 112, 224-25; LeGrand, 72-73, 77-79; Estrich, 8-79; Barbara Toner, "Inside a rape trial", [guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk/columnists/column/0,,1803084,00.html), June 22, 2006, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/columnists/column/0,,1803084,00.html> (accessed 28 March, 2007); Nancy E. Snow, "Evaluating Rape Shield Laws: Why the Law Continues to Fail Rape Victims", in *A Most Detestable Crime: New Philosophical Essays on Rape*, ed. Keith Burgess-Jackson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 245-66; Emine Saner, "Taking a beating", [guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk/crime/article/0,,2029923,00.html), March 9, 2007, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/crime/article/0,,2029923,00.html> (accessed 28 March, 2007); L'Armand and Pepitone, 134-39; Fairstein, 132, 122-24, 258, 272-73; Goldberg-Ambrose, 173-85; Shirley Feldman-Summers and K. Lindner, "Perceptions of Victims and Defendants in Criminal Assault Cases", *Criminal Justice and Behaviour* 3 (1976): 135-50; Griffin, *Rape: The Politics of Consciousness*, 122-24; Feldman-Summers and Norris, 570-71; Jody Clay-Warner and Callie Harbin Burt, "Rape Reporting After Reforms: Have Times Really Changed?" *Violence Against Women* 11 (2005): 154, 172; Lonsway and Fitzgerald, 154; Kennedy, 106-139.

<sup>18</sup> Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 75, 80-81, 85-88; and "Media Reporting", 111-14; Korn and Efrat, 1056-75.

<sup>19</sup> Madigan and Gamble, 82-90; Campbell and Raja, 261-75; Rebecca Campbell and D. Bybee, "Emergency Medical Services for Rape Victims: Detecting the Cracks in Service Delivery", *Women's Health: Research on Gender, Behaviour and Policy* 3 (1997): 75-101; Diana E.H. Russell, 225.

<sup>20</sup> Silverman, 141; Schwendinger and Schwendinger, "Rape Myths", 22; Diana E.H. Russell, 226; Julie Campbell-Ruggard and Jami Van Ryswick, "Rape on Campus: Numbers Tell Less than Half the Story", in *Sex without Consent: Rape and Sexual Coercion in America*, ed. Merrill D. Smith (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 291; Griffin, *Rape: The Politics of Consciousness*, 97-98; Hong, 61.

have endured, *through no fault of their own*, the horror of rape.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, women who *do* speak out may quickly learn that breaking their silence about sexual violence comes at an enormous cost. All too often, they risk facing the emotionally crippling and life-altering effects of social stigma, suspicion, and recrimination that may be heaped upon them by members of their community,<sup>22</sup> not to mention the psychological trauma of self-blame,<sup>23</sup> while their status as the victim of a violent criminal assault is all but overlooked. Survivors' narratives of suffering, their pain, terror, and humiliation endured both during the assault and in its aftermath, are therefore suppressed and denied an audience, both when these women attempt to share their rape experience *and* by virtue of their own fear of such sharing.

The myth of victim precipitation and its concomitant subversion of women's liberty are therefore nothing less than a scandalous reality, deeply engrained within patriarchal societies, which effectively silences the voices of rape survivors, subverts their status as victims of a horrifyingly brutal and life-destroying crime, and seriously compromises their access to any tangible form of justice. In essence, it undermines the belief that women ought to have the same guaranteed self-determination and freedom of expression that men enjoy within these societies, by essentially insisting on the curtailment of female behaviour within a set of seriously debilitating limitations and boundaries.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> As Susan Estrich notes, victim precipitation is 'precisely the sort of judgment that leads [rape victims] to remain silent' (21).

<sup>22</sup> Diana E.H. Russell, 187; Burt, "Rape Myths", 135; and "Rape Myths and Acquaintance Rape", 37; Scully and Marolla, "Rape and Vocabularies of Motive", 305. It is estimated that between 75-95% of women who have been raped never report their assault to the police, and one of the primary reasons for them not doing so is that they fear being held culpable for their assault by the criminal justice agencies (Kelly, Lovett, and Regan, 30-32).

<sup>23</sup> Thus, one survivor noted, 'For years afterward I felt it was my fault. I tried to figure out what had made him follow me. Was it the clothes I was wearing or was it my walk? It *had* to be my fault, you see?' [original italics] (Brownmiller, 361-2). As Andrea Medea and Kathleen Thompson assert, 'To be raped is to be guilty, in one's own eyes as well as in everyone else's' (25). Similar sentiments are expressed by Lebowitz and Roth, 365-66, 375-76, 385-86; also Calhoun and Townsley, 66; Ward, 126-27; Koss, 1335; Diana E.H. Russell, 184, 273; Bevacqua, 61; Schwendinger and Schwendinger, "Rape Myths", 32; Leslie, 108-9; Cahill, 121; Burt, "Rape Myths and Acquaintance Rape", 37; Williams and Holmes, 3; hooks, 89; Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 94; Madigan and Gamble, 107; Susan McKay, 108. Research shows that a woman's degree of self-blame for her rape is consistently associated with poor post-rape recovery, greater risk of depression, and lowered self-esteem. See for example, C. Buf Meyer and Shelley E. Taylor, "Adjustment to Rape", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 50 (1986): 1226-34; Ellen Dye and Susan Roth, "Psychotherapist's Knowledge About and Attitudes toward Sexual Assault Victim Clients", *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 14 (1990):193.

<sup>24</sup> As Brownmiller stresses, 'to accept a special burden of self-protection is to reinforce the concept that women must live and move about in fear and can never expect to achieve the personal freedom, independence and self-assurance of men' (400). See also Woodhull, 172; Rozee, "Rape Resistance", 268; Beatrix Schiele, "Violence and Justice", in Fiorenza and Copeland, 31; Cahill, 121, 125; Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 113-14; Griffin, "Rape: The All-American Crime", 55; Calhoun and Townsley,

Furthermore, this myth enables members of the rape victim's community, such as the police officer quoted at the start of this chapter, to stigmatise and blame her for hostilities that she could neither have prevented nor foreseen, while allowing her rapist to retreat into the shadows, unscathed by recrimination or culpability and seldom having to bear the full weight of justice for his crime.<sup>25</sup> Rather than suggesting that some rapes may be avoidable if women did not place themselves in a 'vulnerable position', it surely makes more sense to suggest that *all* rapes could be prevented if *men* did not prey on these vulnerable women in the first place. In other words, we have to begin challenging this myth of victim precipitation and stressing that it is *men*, rather than women, who ought to be made to face up to their responsibility to prevent sexual violence. As Beneke stresses, 'It is men who rape and men who collectively have the power to end rape ... This will only begin to happen when men cease blaming women for rape'.<sup>26</sup> Or, in the words of Nell McCafferty, a feminist campaigner, 'Women are raped, not because they walk on certain streets at certain times, but because men walk on those streets'.<sup>27</sup>

### **Victim Precipitation in Genesis 34: Exactly Who Blames Dinah for her Rape?**

Thus far, in this chapter, we have been discussing the insidious myth of victim precipitation, which insists upon holding victims of sexual violence, to some degree at least, culpable for their own assault. When we turn now to consider Genesis 34, it would appear that this myth has had, and continues to have, a profound and enveloping influence upon the interpretive traditions surrounding the text. Over the centuries, a great deal of exegetical ink has been spilled discussing 'the peculiar initiative of Dinah sallying forth into foreign terrain' at the very outset of the narrative.<sup>28</sup> From the early exegetical elucidations of the rabbinic midrashim and the Christian Church fathers, right down to the present day, there are countless readings of Gen. 34.1, which appear to regard this opening statement as a deliberate

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57-58; Manazan, 47; Emilie Buchwald, "Raising Girls in the Twenty-First Century", in Buchwald, Fletcher, and Roth, 219-20.

<sup>25</sup> Carine M. Mardrossian, "Toward a New Feminist Theory of Rape", *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 27 (2002): 758; Naomi Wolf, "Take the shame out of rape", guardian.co.uk, November 25, 2005, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/crime/article/0,,1650583.html> (accessed 28 March 2007); Calhoun and Townsley, 67; Rozee, "Stranger Rape", 98; Bohmer, "Rape and the Law", 251, 255; Gavey, 22; Lees, *Carnal Knowledge*, 199-200.

<sup>26</sup> Beneke, 169-70.

<sup>27</sup> Susan McKay, 5. Similar sentiments are expressed by Spencer, 58; Mardrossian, 758.

<sup>28</sup> Carmichael, *Women, Law and the Genesis Traditions*, 36.

disclosure by the narrator that, in ‘going out’ (סָצָה) to look upon the indigenous women of Shechem, Dinah became the ‘architect of her own misfortune’.<sup>29</sup> Time and again, her solo excursion has been overlaid with pejorative overtones of sexual and social impropriety, while Dinah herself stands accused of playing a precipitating role in Shechem’s act of sexual violence.

In light of this dominant reading of Dinah’s behaviour in Gen. 34.1, a number of feminist biblical scholars have understandably wasted no time in taking the biblical narrator to task for his apparent endorsement of this patriarchal myth of victim precipitation.<sup>30</sup> I would however contend that there are a number of features of this opening verse, which cause me to hesitate before joining in such a chorus of disapproval directed towards its ancient author. As several interpreters have indeed noted, Dinah’s desire to seek female company among the Canaanite women does, on first reading, seem to be somewhat innocuous and free from authorial censure; any *explicitly* condemnatory narratorial judgments of her behaviour are decidedly absent from the text.<sup>31</sup> Her actions are not described as rebellious or improper, nor do the other characters in the story rebuke her or even pass comment upon the appropriateness of her outing. If anything, her departure, the first and last autonomous action she takes within this narrative, has the appearance of a distinctly harmless act, devoid of any pejorative content (sexual or otherwise), and is furthermore contextualised within the strictly gendered space of *female* companionship. The daughter of Leah and Jacob, it is stressed, went out to make the acquaintance of the *daughters* of the land (לְרִאיוֹת בְּבָנוֹת הָאֶרֶץ). Why then do the dominant interpretive traditions of this opening verse repeatedly read this statement as a deliberate declaration by the narrator that this young woman’s behaviour was the precipitating factor underlying her sexual assault?

In order to answer this question, it will be helpful to take a closer look at the interpretive traditions surrounding Genesis 34, which insist upon attributing to Dinah at least some of the responsibility for the rape event. These interpretations will then be tested against the textual evidence of both the Genesis 34 narrative and,

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<sup>29</sup> Davies, 56. Joy Schroeder provides an in-depth historical review of early interpretation of Gen. 34.1, from the writings of Josephus and the church fathers through to Martin Luther and John Calvin (775-91).

<sup>30</sup> Brenner, *Intercourse of Knowledge*, 170; Davies, 56-57; Fuchs, *Sexual Politics*, 207, 210; Rashkow, “Daughters and Fathers”, 23; Thistlethwaite, 70; Graetz, “Dinah the Daughter”, 312.

<sup>31</sup> Thus, for example, H.C. Leupold states, ‘It is useless to speculate whether mere idle curiosity prompted [Dinah], or whether she went out without consulting her parents, or whether she even went forth contrary to their wishes. We are unable to determine to what extent she was at fault, *if at all*’ [emphasis added] (897-98). Similar sentiments are expressed by Cotter, 254.

where appropriate, the wider context of the Hebrew biblical canon. I am keen to find out where this dominant convention of blaming Dinah for her rape is rooted; is it from within the narrative itself, is it perhaps based upon other textual considerations outwith Genesis, *or* does it originate solely from within some other extra-biblical source, a source that is generally unacknowledged or unrecognised by these interpreters? More specifically, are biblical exegetes, who insist upon contextualising this verse within a framework of victim precipitation, perhaps influenced less by the textual evidence than by the sexual stereotypes and rape myths prevalent within their own culture? Have they perhaps read an implicit authorial criticism of Dinah in Gen. 34.1, not because the author himself alluded to this in his writing, but because they have allowed, wittingly or unwittingly, contemporary rhetoric regarding rape, which pervades *their* socio-cultural milieus and cognitive schemata, to colour their perceptions of the text?

*'She Asked For It': Interpretations of Dinah's Behaviour in Gen. 34.1*

When we first cast our eye over the interpretive traditions surrounding Gen. 34.1, it becomes apparent that biblical interpreters who read the opening verse of this narrative as a deliberate imputation of blame upon Dinah for her rape tend to rationalise both the source and the extent of this woman's accountability in two subtly different ways, both of which reflect a rationale rooted in the myth of victim precipitation. While some contend that she was raped because she behaved in a manner that was overtly promiscuous, others argue instead that she ought to bear responsibility for her sexual assault by virtue of her eschewal of social protocol and reckless lack of judgement. Both of these singularly unfavourable evaluations of Dinah's character and behaviour will now be discussed in more detail.

*'The lady is a tramp': was Dinah behaving promiscuously?*

For many biblical interpreters, ancient and contemporary, Dinah's presentation within the text of Genesis 34 is that of a woman who has contravened the traditional cultural expectations of female chastity and sexual passivity, by acting in an explicitly wanton and sexually provocative manner. She 'went out', they argue, less to meet her female Canaanite peers than with the express purpose of seeking a



sexual encounter with a local male. These interpreters therefore propose that Dinah's rape is intended to be read as a fitting and inevitable conclusion to her promiscuous and sexually motivated actions. Just as women within contemporary patriarchal societies are commonly judged by others to have 'deserved' their rape if, prior to the attack, they are deemed to have behaved in a promiscuous manner, so too is Dinah's behaviour contextualised as overtly wanton in its orientation, thereby inevitably provoking Shechem's aggressively sexual reaction. Such a reading does not necessarily preclude the belief that Dinah was raped; however, it does infer that she 'led him on', by acting in a manner, which would have sent Shechem an unambiguous signal that she was receptive to his sexual advances, even if she had no intention of *submitting* to her sexual desires at that particular moment in time.<sup>32</sup>

This interpretation of Dinah's behaviour, for example, is voiced uncompromisingly throughout the c. 4<sup>th</sup> Century CE rabbinical text *Genesis Rabbah* 80. This midrash on Genesis 34 holds Dinah culpable, not simply of an unconventional and imprudent need to venture out alone, but of wanton promiscuity and a desire to be seen, less by the 'daughters of the land' than by the local Hivite men. Thus, *Genesis Rabbah* 80.1 reads:

Behold everyone that useth proverbs shall use this proverb against thee, saying: *As the mother, so her daughter* (Ezek. XVI.44) ... a cow does not gore unless her calf kicks; a woman is not immoral unless her daughter is immoral ... because it says, '*And Leah went out to meet him*' (Gen. XXX.16), which means that she went out to meet him adorned like a harlot; therefore and Dinah the daughter of Leah went out [original italics].<sup>33</sup>

Clearly, the implication within these midrashic traditions is that, like Leah, who went out (לָצֵאת) to meet Jacob for the express purpose of having sexual intercourse with him (Gen. 30.16), so too does Dinah follow her mother's footsteps by going out (לָצֵאת), not to visit the local indigenous women, but rather to initiate contact with a potential sexual partner.<sup>34</sup> This is likewise emphasised elsewhere in *Genesis Rabbah*, where Dinah is repeatedly referred to as a 'gadabout' (גַּדְבוּבִי), who compromised her sexual integrity by provocatively exposing herself to the dangers lurking in the outside world and who should therefore be held culpable for her own

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<sup>32</sup> To use common parlance, the undeniable inference from this line of reasoning is that Dinah was behaving in the manner of a 'prick-tease'.

<sup>33</sup> All translations of *Genesis Rabbah* are from H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis II* (London; Soncino Press, 1939), 735-36.

<sup>34</sup> Bronner, *From Eve to Esther*, 120.

rape.<sup>35</sup> The message here is obvious; a woman who defied the traditional regime of modesty expected of her within her culture by ‘going out’ alone and displaying herself before sexually rapacious young men clearly ‘got what she asked for’.<sup>36</sup> Dinah’s sexual assault at Shechem’s hands is thus considered less a crime against *her*, than a punishment for her promiscuous and inappropriate behaviour.<sup>37</sup>

In a similar vein, *Midrash Tanhuma*, the collection of Pentateuchal halakhot and haggadot, believed to predate *Genesis Rabbah*, equates Dinah’s excursion into foreign territory with her explicit desire to have a clandestine sexual adventure; she did not go out so much ‘to see’ the women of the land than ‘to be seen’ by the young male Hivites:

If [a woman] walks about a lot and goes out into the market place, she finally comes to a state of corruption, to a state of harlotry. And so you find in the case of Jacob’s daughter Dinah. All the time that she was sitting at home, she was not corrupted by transgression, but, as soon as she went out into the market place, she caused herself to come to the point of corruption ... in every place the female child is accompanied by males, but here she is accompanied by her mother. Thus the corruption began with her mother ... ‘To see’ [implies] ‘to be seen’. To what is this matter comparable? To one who was walking in the market place with a piece [of meat] in his hand. A dog, having seen it, went after it, and snatched it from him. Thus did Dinah go out ‘to see’ when Shechem saw her and seized her’.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> *Genesis Rabbah* 18.2; 45.5; 80.5. Furthermore, in 80.12, the accusation of Dinah’s brothers, that Shechem treated their sister like a harlot (Gen. 34.31), is again attributed to her ‘going out’. See Bronner, *From Eve to Esther*, 119-20, 138, n.28.

<sup>36</sup> Bronner, *From Eve to Esther*, 119-20, 138, n.28; Salkin, 285; Jacob Neusner, *Genesis Rabbah. The Judaic Commentary to the Book of Genesis: A New American Translation* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 2:146.

<sup>37</sup> These particularly condemnatory remarks made against Dinah in *Genesis Rabbah* 80.1, interestingly enough, are tempered somewhat elsewhere in the rabbinic midrashim. For example, in *Genesis Rabbah* 79.8, 80.4, and *Leviticus Rabbah* 37.1, the rabbinic authors ascribe some of the blame for Dinah’s rape to Jacob, suggesting that it was, at least in part, the indirect result of various wrongdoings of his own. Elsewhere in the midrashim, rabbinic opinion of Jacob’s daughter similarly appears to soften, as various destinies for her are suggested, to compensate, perhaps, for her precipitate disappearance from the Genesis narrative after chapter 34. Thus, in *Genesis Rabbah* 80.4, it is suggested that she married Job; in 80.11, it is her brother Simeon who weds his defiled, unmarried sister. Furthermore, she is attributed with bearing children – fourteen sons and six daughters by Job, according to *Targum Job* (2.9) and, in *Genesis Rabbah*, a son Saul, by her brother Simeon (*Genesis Rabbah* 57.4; 80.11). However, none of these midrashic additions to the text detracts from the fact that, within these traditions, Dinah’s journey out into Hivite territory is repeatedly cited as the cause of her sexual assault. As Leila Leah Bronner notes, ‘despite some aggadic efforts to sweeten her life, Dinah bears most of the midrashic blame for her violation. Very often when her name came up, it would elicit a sneering “because Dinah went out”’ (*From Eve to Esther*, 121). See also Cotter, 253.

<sup>38</sup> Translation by John T. Townsend, *Genesis*, vol.1 of *Midrash Tanhuma: Translation into English with Introduction, Indices, and Brief Notes (S. Buber Recension)* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav Publishing House, 1989), 216-19. Similar sentiments are expressed in *Genesis Rabbah* 80.5: ‘And Dinah the daughter of Leah went out ... This may be compared to one who was holding a pound of meat in his hand, and as soon as he exposed it a bird swooped down and snatched it away. Similarly, and Dinah the daughter of Leah went out, and forthwith, and Shechem the son of Hamor saw her’.

Thus again, as in *Genesis Rabbah*, Dinah's actions are construed as having been driven by her desire to meet local men; her subsequent rape is thereby regarded as the 'inevitable' result of her 'displaying' herself in a sexually provocative manner. Just as someone who is carrying a piece of meat in his hand cannot be surprised if a passing dog sees it and snatches it from him, so Dinah, and likewise the reader, should not have been taken aback when her promiscuous flaunting led her into an aggressive sexual situation. This censorious attitude towards Dinah's behaviour is similarly echoed in *Ecclesiastes Rabbah* 10.8: '*And whoso breaketh through a fence, a serpent shall bite him*: i.e. Dinah. While her father and brothers were sitting in the House of Study, *She went out to see the daughters of the land* (Gen. XXXIV, 1). She brought upon herself the violation by Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite' [original italics].<sup>39</sup> Like the person with the proverbial piece of meat in his hand, a woman who acts in a manner that eschews the traditional expectations for female sexuality can expect to get 'bitten' by some unpleasant consequences.

However, these early Jewish midrashim are by no means a lone voice within biblical scholarship, as regards this particular reading of Gen. 34.1. Continuing the tradition of attributing liability to Dinah for her own rape, some contemporary scholars have likewise joined in this centuries-old chorus of disapproval against Jacob's daughter. Thus, Nehama Aschkenasy echoes the sentiments put forward in *Genesis Rabbah*, suggesting that, like her mother Leah, Dinah's act of 'going out' betrayed her predilection towards predatory sexual behaviour and promiscuity.<sup>40</sup> Leah 'went out', after taking the unusual step for an Israelite woman of initiating a night of sexual intercourse with her husband; the reader, argues Ashkenasy, ought therefore take it for granted that her daughter Dinah likewise ventured forth 'with the sexual intention of luring a man'.<sup>41</sup> While conceding that the biblical text offers no clues as to Dinah's actual motives for going out, she concludes that 'if we apply the simple laws of nature and, in this particular case, the genetic factors as well, then we may safely propose that natural sexual curiosity did play a role in Dinah's action'.<sup>42</sup>

In a similar vein to Aschkenasy, Ita Sheres likewise imbues Dinah's behaviour with a distinctly sexual flavour, suggesting that her sojourn was motivated primarily by

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<sup>39</sup> Translation from H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, eds. *Midrash Rabbah: Ecclesiastes* (London: Soncino Press, 1939), 268-69.

<sup>40</sup> Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 51.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

her desire to find a mate.<sup>43</sup> According to Sheres, Dinah, who ought to have consulted her male kin before making her journey, went out ‘explicitly or implicitly, in order to be seduced’.<sup>44</sup> To substantiate her argument, she compares Dinah with Rebekah and Rachel, whose own marriages were arranged after they had been seen outside the family home while performing a domestic duty, in Rachel’s case, by her prospective husband Jacob (Gen. 29), and in Rebekah’s case, by Abraham’s servant, who was scouting for a wife for Isaac (Gen. 24).<sup>45</sup> Referring to Gen. 24, 29, and 34 as ‘courtship narratives’, Sheres thus surmises that Dinah could conceivably have been inspired by the, albeit unintentional, connubial success that her female relatives had enjoyed and had thus gone out herself ‘in search of a future husband’.<sup>46</sup> However, in comparison to Rebekah and Rachel, Dinah’s journey would have inevitably been frowned upon by the narrator, for unlike her two relatives, Dinah did not go out initially to perform a household task or duty, but rather, she left the family home with a specifically sexual agenda, thereby flouting the strict social protocol that demanded an unmarried woman safeguard her virginity until she was wed.<sup>47</sup>

Thus, according to Sheres, Dinah’s behaviour in this narrative is, from the outset, tainted with the suggestion of sexual impropriety and moral wrongdoing. Furthermore, she argues that the author’s apparent ‘reticence’ in v.1 about Dinah’s actual motivations for going out likewise implies that they ought to be understood as wrong and shameful in their inception, and therefore only serving to accentuate her guilt. She thus concludes, ‘the very fact that vague phrases with almost cryptic significance are used leads to suspicion and a speculation that the very activity the woman was involved in was probably wrong’.<sup>48</sup> In effect then, Dinah is, in Sheres’ eyes, presented by the narrator as a woman whose sinful rebellion against the patriarchal authority of her father’s household is swiftly and brutally punished through the medium of sexual violence.<sup>49</sup> Her sexually flavoured motives for venturing out mark her as a ‘worthless woman’ within this text, and furthermore, according to Sheres, as a woman who is essentially ‘looking to be raped’.<sup>50</sup> Sheres’

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<sup>43</sup> Sheres, 50, 83. Similar sentiments are expressed by Wenham, who suggests that the author’s use of **וַיֵּצֵא** within this particular context ‘may suggest Dinah’s imprudence, if not impropriety’; he thus concludes that, even if her actions *appeared* innocuous, ‘her motives may have been suspect’ (*Genesis 16-50*, 310).

<sup>44</sup> Sheres, 50.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

conclusions are likewise echoed by G.C. Aalders, who writes, 'It was disturbing that Dinah would so flippantly expose herself to the men of this pagan city ...[she] was far more at fault for what happened than anyone else in the city of Shechem'.<sup>51</sup> In other words, by going out, Dinah was deliberately defying cultural expectations of female chastity by soliciting male sexual attention and thus, when she received this attention, albeit in a particularly brutal form, she effectively got what she deserved.

*'She ought to have known better': was Dinah's poor judgement her downfall?*

In comparison to the readings of Gen. 34.1 proposed above, not all interpreters are as completely convinced that Dinah's solo journey *was* sexually motivated. Instead, they are willing to concede that her reasons for going out *may* have been fuelled less by an explicit desire to search for a sexual companion than simply a need to make friends, seek out female company, or satisfy her curiosity about the Canaanite women living nearby. Nevertheless, this is not to say that these scholars exonerate Dinah of all sense of blame or responsibility for her sexual assault. Rather, they propose that, while Dinah's excursion was not motivated by sexual desire, her behaviour was nevertheless inappropriate and imprudent because it contravened another cultural sex-role stereotype, which, they aver, governed appropriate female behaviour in the patriarchal culture of biblical Israel. As a young unmarried woman, Dinah would not have been expected to go out by herself, particularly without a specific domestic duty to perform, because the 'outside world' was replete with sexual dangers for women, and to venture into this world would inevitably render them hopelessly exposed to the unwanted attentions of the local male population.<sup>52</sup> By travelling forth alone, even for a purpose that was entirely innocent and chaste in its inception, Dinah was therefore acting with undue caution, endangering her sexual integrity by exposing herself, albeit unwittingly, to the threat of sexual assault. Thus, any sympathy the reader may feel inclined to bestow upon Dinah becomes quickly tempered by the realisation and recognition of her own blameworthiness. Just as women within contemporary cultures are almost certain to face accusations of irresponsibility and carelessness if they are raped after walking home late at night by themselves, or after venturing into an unsavoury part of town, so too is Dinah

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<sup>51</sup> G.C. Aalders, *Genesis*, trans. J. Vriend (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 2:154, 159.

<sup>52</sup> Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 46-48; Rashkow, "Daughters and Fathers", 23-24; Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 310; Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 181; Victor H. Matthews, *Judges and Ruth*, 71; Pitt-Rivers, 156.

charged with showing an inappropriate and untraditional carelessness towards her own sexual safety. To put it bluntly, these interpreters claim that she ought to have known better.

Thus, appearing to appeal to the logic of this argument, Nehama Aschkenasy reads Gen. 34.1 as an implicit indictment of Dinah's unconventional actions. For it is these actions, she posits, which almost inevitably led to her sexual assault, not to mention the subsequent disastrous repercussions that this event had for the entire Jacobite group:

[I]f a woman leaves the protection of the patriarchal roof, she can expect to be molested. Therefore, venturing out of the family protection is tantamount to "asking for it"; the woman should not be surprised at the violent consequences of her irresponsibility ... If she dares expose herself to danger she will bring disaster not only on herself and her violator, but also on the entire community.<sup>53</sup>

Continuing this line of thought, a number of scholars have likewise suggested that Dinah's unexpected outing was, within the patriarchal cultural milieu of biblical Israel, both inappropriate and unconventional. Thus, according to Naomi Graetz, 'One can read into Dinah's behaviour a desire for freedom or self-fulfilment that is alien to the time and threatening to the patriarchal structure of biblical society'.<sup>54</sup> Acting on her own initiative, Jacob's daughter appears to have been reaching out to beyond the confines of her family, eschewing a secluded existence within her own community and attempting to exert her autonomy and self-will.<sup>55</sup> Such a naïve desire for freedom, however, had dangerous implications; as Leon Kass notes, Dinah, wandering alone into the city – 'never – not even today – a safe place for an innocent, attractive, unprotected, and vulnerable young woman'<sup>56</sup> – was bound to be

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<sup>53</sup> Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 57. As mentioned above, Aschkenasy also attributes a more deliberate sense of promiscuity to Dinah's behaviour, suggesting that, like her mother, Dinah went out looking for a specifically sexual adventure (*ibid.*, 51). However, she also raises the point here that Dinah's very act of leaving the family home was, regardless of her intentions, both unorthodox and imprudent by virtue of the fact that it rendered her vulnerable to sexual assault. Thus, however one might construe Dinah's actual motivations for 'going out', Aschkenasy appears to advocate laying a significant degree of culpability for the rape event firmly upon her shoulders.

<sup>54</sup> Graetz, "Dinah the Daughter", 312. In a similar fashion, Ilona Rashkow proposes that Genesis 34 is a narrative detailing 'a daughter's transgression against and departure from the closure of her father's house. The text in effect becomes a code for what is subliminally the father's story of the sins of the daughter' ("Daughters and Fathers", 23-24).

<sup>55</sup> Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 180; Graetz, "Dinah the Daughter", 312. In a similar light, Gerhard von Rad notes that by going out, Dinah 'stepped outside the small circle allotted to the life of the ancient Israelite woman', and in so doing, 'she thus loosened the stone which became a landslide' (*Genesis*, 331).

<sup>56</sup> Kass appears here to be relying on the popular cultural myth that only young, sexually attractive women are victims of rape. Such a belief, however, rests on the misidentification of rape as a natural outcome of sexual desire, rather than an act fuelled by anger, misogyny and contempt. Rapists do not

the recipient of unwanted sexual dangers lurking in the outside world.<sup>57</sup> For these scholars therefore, Dinah may not have deliberately set out in search of a clandestine sexual encounter, nor was she necessarily *aware* of the nature of the risk that she was taking. Nonetheless, her naïve eschewal of social protocol led her into a very dangerous and foolhardy venture, for which she paid dearly.<sup>58</sup> As Parry notes, ‘The only action for which she is responsible is her own ‘going out’ and the only blame is any that may attach to her lack of wisdom’.<sup>59</sup> In other words, while Dinah’s actions are regarded as in no way sexually motivated, there is, however, still the suggestion that the cause of the rape event is sourced within a particular aspect of this young woman’s own character and behaviour. Such a conceptualisation of Dinah’s behaviour therefore remains, alas, firmly rooted within the myth of victim precipitation.

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only target young, sexually attractive women; females of any age, from infants to nonagenarians, alas, can become victims of sexual violence. It is the victim’s *gender*, not her physical appearance, which renders her especially vulnerable to this crime. See Rozee, “Rape Resistance”, 267; Dianne Herman, 45, 51; Diana E.H. Russell, 265; Fairstein, 136, 173; Ward, 29; Beneke, 9, 11; Scully and Marolla, “Rape and Vocabularies of Motive”, 298; Groth, 12-15, 25-28; Luginbuhl and Mullin, 557; Bevacqua, 60-61; Stenzel, 91; Cahill, 123-24; Medea and Thompson, 31, 45.

<sup>57</sup> Kass, *Beginning of Wisdom*, 479; Parry, *Old Testament Story*, 231-32; Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 180; Graetz, “Dinah the Daughter”, 306-12. In a similar vein, Nahum Sarna suggests that the narrator of Gen. 34 ‘casts a critical eye upon Dinah’s unconventional behaviour’, because ‘girls of a marriageable age would not normally leave a rural encampment to go unchaperoned into an alien city’ (233). This contemporary approach to Dinah’s outing is likewise reflected in the works of earlier interpreters. Thus, for example, John Calvin notes that ‘Dinah is ravished, because, having left her father’s house, she wandered about more freely than was proper’. For Calvin, Dinah’s rape is therefore nothing less than a punishment for her eschewal of societal protocol, which expected her to maintain her virtue by remaining ‘under her mother’s eyes in the tent’. In *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, trans. John King (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 2:218. Similar sentiments are also expressed in the writings of some 19<sup>th</sup> Century female biblical scholars. Thus, for example, Sarah Trimmer (1741-1810) wrote, “The shocking thing related in this chapter shows that it is dangerous for young women to go about by themselves, and make acquaintances with strangers’, while Mary Cornwallis (1758-1836) noted that ‘[Dinah’s] misfortune is not without instruction, and teaches young women the necessity of circumspection in the choice of companion, as well as the danger of giving way to indiscreet curiosity’. See Sarah Trimmer, *A Help to the Unlearned in the Study of the Holy Scriptures* (London: F.C. & J. Rivington, 1805), 35; Mary Cornwallis, *Observations, Critical, Explanatory, and Practical on the Canonical Scriptures* (London: Baldwin, Craddock and Joy, 1820), 80-81. Both texts are cited in *Let Her Speak for Herself: Nineteenth-Century Women Writing on the Women of Genesis*, ed. Marion Ann Taylor and Heather E. Weir (Waco, TA: Baylor University Press, 2006), 425-26.

<sup>58</sup> Kass claims not to blame Dinah for her assault, yet, at the same time, he likens Dinah to Eve, another woman who ‘is curious and who finds “outside” matters attractive’ (*Beginning of Wisdom*, 478). Given that Eve’s curiosity led to a fateful act of disobedience against YHWH, I find this comparison suggestive that Kass’s insistence on Dinah’s innocence is perhaps more double-edged or ambiguous than he would care to admit.

<sup>59</sup> Parry, *Old Testament Story*, 231-32.

*The sexual significance of נצ׳׳: cognate evidence*

One feature that appears central to *all* of the above readings of Gen. 34.1, which impute some degree of blame upon Dinah for her sexual violation, is the supposition that the verb נצ׳׳ used here to depict Dinah’s journeying forth, may carry implicit connotations of sexual impropriety in biblical Hebrew when it takes a feminine subject.<sup>60</sup> Thus, many interpreters believe that, by deliberately choosing this verb to denote Dinah’s movements, the narrator is indeed inferring that she acted, either wittingly or unwittingly, in an inappropriate manner.<sup>61</sup> Whether they accuse her of intentionally seductive behaviour or simply imprudent incaution, these interpreters consider that her act of going out presented her, in Shechem’s eyes at least, as a woman who was sexually available. To substantiate this claim, a number of scholars have appealed to Akkadian and Aramaic cognate evidence, which they argue demonstrates that the specific use of נצ׳׳ with a feminine subject may at times imbue the woman’s actions with a strong sense of social or sexual impropriety.

Thus, for example, both Wenham and Frymer-Kensky note that the term *wāšiat* (‘gadabout’) from the cognate Akkadian verb *wašū*, a cognate of the Hebrew נצ׳׳, is used in the legal text, the Laws of Hammurabi 141, to describe a wife who behaves inappropriately towards her husband.<sup>62</sup> When a woman goes to a local court seeking a divorce from her husband, if the court decides that she has been a chaste and loyal wife to a good-for-nothing husband, they will grant her a divorce and order her husband to give her back her dowry. On the other hand, if it is discovered that she has been a *wāšiat*, or ‘gadabout’, she is denied her divorce and is instead thrown in the river.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, Frymer-Kensky points out that the Akkadian noun *wāšitum* (literally, ‘one who goes out’), which is also derived from the root *wašū*, is used in an Old Babylonian word list to designate a *ḥarimtu*, a ‘wayward woman’ or prostitute.<sup>64</sup>

Continuing his appeal to cognate evidence, Wenham also turns to the equivalent forms of נצ׳׳ in Aramaic, citing the Targums, which at times translate the Hebrew for ‘prostitute’ (זונה) using the root נצ׳׳ to give the literal sense of ‘one who goes

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<sup>60</sup> Davies, 78, n.2.

<sup>61</sup> Graetz, “Dinah the Daughter”, 312; Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 310; Davies, 78, n.2; Frymer-Kensky, “Virginity in the Bible”, 86; Aschkenasy, *Eve’s Journey*, 125.

<sup>62</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 310; Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 181.

<sup>63</sup> Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 181.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*; and “Virginity in the Bible”, 86; also see Black, George, and Postgate, 435; Sarna, 233.



outside' (נפקת ברה or simply נפקא).<sup>65</sup> Indeed, in Gen. 34.31, when Dinah's brothers ask, 'Should he treat our sister like a prostitute?' the Targums represent the Hebrew term זונה with נפקת ברה. Interestingly, in v.1, the same verbal root, נפק, is used to translate נצא; Dinah 'went out' (ונפקת), only to be later likened to 'one who goes out' (נפקת ברה), in a strictly pejorative sense, by her brothers.<sup>66</sup> According to Nahum Sarna, this particular meaning attributed to the Aramaic cognate of נצא, as well as its Akkadian equivalent, certainly appears to suggest that the Hebrew verb was fraught with sexual innuendo, denoting 'coquettish or promiscuous conduct'.<sup>67</sup> He thus concludes, 'The text casts a critical eye upon Dinah's unconventional behaviour through the use of the verbal stem y-ts-', "to go out".<sup>68</sup> Indeed, as discussed above, the rabbinic tradition of *Genesis Rabbah* 80 explicitly attributes the same nuances of 'whorish' behaviour to the Hebrew נצא as these cognate terms, by referring to Dinah as a גוצאניתה or 'gadabout', which, according to Frymer-Kensky, is the Hebrew equivalent not only of נפקת ברה but also of the Akkadian *wāšitum*.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, she notes that the Yiddish word *napqah*, derived from the root נפק, the Aramaic cognate of נצא, is a common contemporary expression for 'prostitute', bearing the same meaning as the English term 'streetwalker'.<sup>70</sup> This in turn leads her to infer that, within the biblical traditions, a woman's presence outwith the household for no explicit domestic purpose was indicative of her sexual availability and receptivity, whether or not this was intentional on the part of the woman.<sup>71</sup> As she notes, 'one who left the house without a specific chore was viewed with suspicion and condemnation'.<sup>72</sup>

Taken together, this linguistic evidence is enough for Wenham, Sarna and Frymer-Kensky to conclude that, like its cognate equivalents, the verb נצא carries pejorative

<sup>65</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 310. This translation of זונה is found in the Aramaic Targums in Gen. 34.31 (Targums Onqelos, Pseudo-Jonathan, Neofiti), Gen. 38.35 (Targum Onqelos), Deut. 23.18 (Targum Pseudo-Jonathan), and 1 Kgs. 14.24 (Targums Onqelos, Pseudo-Jonathan, Neofiti). See M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (New York: Pardes Publishing House, 1950), 1:188; 2:926.

<sup>66</sup> Bernard Grossfeld has likewise pointed out that the Mishnaic Hebrew term for 'prostitute' is גוצאניתה (lit. 'one who goes out'), and that נפקת ברה is probably the Aramaic equivalent of this phrase. See B. Grossfeld, *The Targum Onqelos to Genesis: Translated, With a Critical Introduction, Apparatus, and Notes* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 121, n.14.

<sup>67</sup> Sarna, 233.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Genesis Rabbah* 80.5. Likewise, Rashi, the medieval biblical exegete, also refers to Dinah as a 'gadabout' (גוצאניתה) in his interpretation of Gen. 34.1. See M. Rosenbaum and A. M. Silberman, *Pentateuch with Rashi's Commentary*, (London: Shapiro, Valentine and Co., 1929), 164.

<sup>70</sup> Frymer-Kensky, "Virginitly in the Bible", 86; and *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 181.

<sup>71</sup> Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 181.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

nuances of sexual impropriety when it is utilised by the narrator of Gen. 34 to depict Dinah's behaviour. At best, she is considered to have behaved unconventionally and incautiously, at worst, her actions take on an undeniably seductive nuance. Within the cultural context that this verse is situated, "Dinah went out" is therefore not believed to be an innocuous statement. As Frymer-Kensky concludes, it 'carries a warning that something is going to happen. And what happens is a father's nightmare: Dinah, who went out to see the girls, is seen by a boy'.<sup>73</sup>

Thus, to recap the discussion so far, it would appear that a significant number of biblical scholars have, over the centuries, read the statement וַתֵּצֵא דִינָה בַת לֵאָה אֲשֶׁר לְיַעֲקֹב לִרְאוֹת בְּבָנוֹת הָאֶרֶץ in Gen. 34.1 as a deliberate admission by the narrator that Dinah's behaviour was a contributory factor in her own rape. On the one hand, some scholars have validated her culpability by virtue of what they perceive to be her sexually provocative behaviour; others, however, have attributed to her less a sense of promiscuity than one of naïveté and imprudence. While these two readings of Dinah's behaviour may have their differences, they do nevertheless share a common denominator: both ascribe to the contemporary cultural myth of victim precipitation. *Whatever* her reasons for going out, be it her youthful inexperience, curiosity, or sexual impiety, these biblical interpreters consistently hold Dinah culpable for her sexual assault. Neither she, nor the reader, should therefore be surprised by Shechem's aggressive sexual response because, to put it bluntly, she was 'asking for it'.

### In Defence of Dinah: Reviewing the Evidence

At the start of this chapter, I noted the seemingly innocuous and innocent nature of Dinah's excursion represented in Gen. 34.1; Dinah went out to visit some local Canaanite women – what *is* all the fuss about? Furthermore, why is she treated in the dominant exegetical traditions, discussed above, as though she was either a wanton gadabout or a naïve and irresponsible fool?

To answer these questions, let us now turn our attention to the textual evidence. In particular, I wish to focus upon three issues: firstly, I will take a closer look at the

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*; and "Virginity in the Bible", 87.

semantic significance of **צָא**, carrying out a comparative reading of other biblical texts, in order to assess whether this verbal form does indeed carry nuances of deliberate sexual impropriety and promiscuity when it occurs with a feminine subject. Following this, I will consider the cognate evidence, put forward by Wenham, Sarna, and Frymer-Kensky, by which they proposed that, within certain contexts, **צָא** may connote sexually and socially inappropriate female behaviour. Finally, I will review the implications conveyed by women's presence in the public sphere or 'outside world' of biblical Israel, both in Genesis and within the biblical canon, in order to ascertain whether such a presence *was* considered dangerous or foolhardy for women, and whether cultural gender stereotypes did indeed insist that Israelite women were expected to stay at home. These three analyses will I hope shed a little illumination on the particular semantic nuances implicit in the narrator's assertion that Dinah 'went out' prior to her rape. Does this statement really convey pejorative overtones of her recklessness, imprudence, or even promiscuity, as so many biblical interpreters over the centuries have averred?

*Women who 'go out': the semantic range of **צָא** in the Hebrew Bible*

Throughout the Hebrew biblical canon, the primary function of the verb **צָא** appears to be a very literal one, denoting the physical movement of a person from or to a specified location.<sup>74</sup> Focussing particularly on its occurrences with a feminine subject, this verb continues predominantly to represent a dislocative meaning, thereby suggesting that a woman's act of 'going out' does not necessarily carry any explicit nuances of sexual impropriety. On the contrary, women go out for a variety of utterly non-sexual purposes: to travel or move around (2 Kgs 4.21, 37; 8.3; Ruth 1.7), to work (Ruth 2.22; Song 1.8), to draw water at the well (Gen. 24.11, 13, 15, 43, 45; 1 Sam. 9.11), to worship or celebrate (Exod. 15.20; Jdg. 21.21; 1 Sam. 18.6; Song 3.11), and to meet someone (Jdg. 4.18, 22; 11.34; 2 Sam. 6.20). While these last three texts do describe a woman 'going out' to meet a man, the context in each

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<sup>74</sup> Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 422-23; H.D. Preuss, "צָא", in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 6:227-8; Ernst Jenni, "צָא", in *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, ed. Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, trans. Mark E. Biddle (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 2:562; E.H. Merrill, "צָא", in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997), 2:498. It may also be used more specifically to represent the release or emancipation of female slaves (e.g. Exod. 21.3, 7, 11), and the 'release' of a woman from marriage by her husband's divorcing her (Deut. 24.2).

demands that this is not a sexually motivated manoeuvre. Thus, in Jdg. 4.18, Jael, a Kenite woman, ‘goes out’ (וַהֲצִיֵא) of her tent to meet Sisera, an army commander of Israel’s enemy King Jabin of Hazor, who had fled to her dwelling from the battle where his troops had been defeated by the Israelite army (vv.12-16). The invitation she extends to him to enter her tent is, however, motivated less by her sexual desire than by her intention of luring this man to his death.<sup>75</sup> In v.22, meanwhile, she again ‘goes out’ of her tent to meet Barak, a commander of the Israelite army, but again her intentions are far from sexual; she merely wishes to impart to him the good news about Sisera’s demise.<sup>76</sup> Likewise, in Jdg. 11.34, Jephthah’s daughter comes out of the house to meet her father, so there are clearly no sexual connotations intended here, while 2 Sam. 6.20 speaks of Michal ‘going out’ to meet her husband David, but only in order to berate him for what was, in her eyes at least, his shameless dancing and vulgarity during the procession of the Ark of the Covenant into the City of David. There is no suggestion whatsoever that she seeks a sexual encounter with this man whom she now despises (v.16).

There are, however, a number of texts, in which a woman’s journey from her dwelling to the outside world has on occasion been interpreted as either implicating the woman in a sexually provocative act or, when read inter-textually with Gen.

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<sup>75</sup> Jael’s actions have however raised some exegetical eyebrows, regarding the sexual propriety of a married woman going out with the explicit objective of inviting another man into her tent. A number of Talmudic sources infer that Jael and Sisera had sexual intercourse prior to his murder, thereby suggesting that Jael’s initial act of going out of her tent could be interpreted as a deliberate sexual invitation to the army commander (*Bavli Horayot* 10b; *Bavli Nazir* 23b; *Bavli Yebamot* 103a-b). Nevertheless, this charge of sexual impropriety does not appear to have any basis in the biblical text. As a number of scholars have noted, Jael’s actions here seem to speak more of her hospitality or maternal compassion than her sexual desire. She treats Sisera with what appears to be a respectful deference from the moment that she encounters him, addressing him as ‘my lord’ (v.18), reassuring him in an attempt to assuage his fears (v.18), and providing him with bedding and a milky drink (vv.18-19). Moreover, Sisera, seems to play the part more of an exhausted soldier in dire need of sanctuary, rest and refreshment than a man tempted towards sexual adventure by the sudden appearance of this woman (vv.19-20). Indeed, Jael’s depiction within this narrative is entirely positive, if not heroic; she acts with great daring and courage, using her wiles to bring down one of Israel’s greatest enemies. Moreover, had she acted in a sexually immoral manner at all within this tale, it is unlikely that she would have been lauded by Deborah as ‘most blessed of women’ (Jdg. 5.24). See Leila Leah Bronner, “Valorised or Vilified? The Women of Judges in Midrashic Sources”, in Brenner, *A Feminist Companion to Judges*, 87-89; Athalya Brenner, “A Triangle and a Rhombus in Narrative Structure: A Proposed Integrative Reading of Judges 4 and 5”, in Brenner, *A Feminist Companion to Judges*, 103; Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry*, 212-13; Ackerman, 90, 118; Block, 206; Yahira Amit, *The Book of Judges: The Art of Editing*, trans. Jonathan Chapman (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 212-13; Victor H. Matthews, *Judges, Ruth*, 72; C.F. Burnley, *The Book of Judges* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1970), 92; Schneider, 75-81.

<sup>76</sup> It is worth noting that the phraseology used in v.22 is very similar to that in v.18; in both verses Jael goes out (וַהֲצִיֵא) to greet (לִקְרֹא) a man, yet here in v.22, there is obviously *no* indication of sexual impropriety on Jael’s part – she is simply going out to intercept Barak to whom she has to impart some good news. Thus, one might conclude from these linguistic similarities that on *neither* occasion is the reader intended to infer any sense of this woman’s sexual impropriety.

34.1, does suggest to some scholars that Dinah's behaviour may indeed have been sexually motivated. Let us now consider each of these texts in turn, assessing whether they do in fact imbue a woman's act of 'going out' with a sense of sexual impropriety and therefore cast a seductive light upon Dinah's journey.

1. Gen. 24 – is Rebekah's trip to the well a 'courtship' narrative?

As mentioned above, Ita Sheres has suggested that, like her grandmother Rebekah, whose marriage to Isaac was initiated when she 'went out' (צָאָה) from her home, so too Dinah's story might be read as a 'courtship' narrative, in which the young woman 'goes out' with the specific intent of seeking a prospective husband.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, argues Sheres, by leaving the house to do something other than a household chore, Dinah 'stepped out of the family line' and was thus punished for her rebellion by being raped.<sup>78</sup>

While Sheres' inter-textual reading of Gen. 24 and 34 is both original and creative, a number of points ought to be raised, which may cast some doubts on the veracity of her interpretive conclusions. Firstly, Sheres substantiates her argument by stating that Dinah's motives for going out are left deliberately obtuse by the narrator, thereby depicting her excursion in a specifically clandestine and pejorative light.<sup>79</sup> This however, does not stand up under scrutiny. The narrator states quite clearly why Dinah went out; she journeyed into Hivite territory to 'make the acquaintance of the daughters of the land' (לְרִאיוֹת בְּבָנוֹת הָאָרֶץ). According to Brown, Driver and Briggs, the בְּ preposition prefixing the object of the infinitive לְרִאיוֹת gives a literal translation 'to look into', which in this context, can be rendered 'to look at (i.e. with interest)', or 'to look so as to become acquainted with'.<sup>80</sup> Thus, Dinah went out, in all likelihood, to seek the companionship of other women, not an unreasonable or unexpected step for her to take, given that she was living in a predominantly male household.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Sheres, 59. As discussed above, Sheres also describes Gen. 29 as a 'courtship narrative', where Rachel, who is out tending her father's flock, likewise meets her future husband. I have not included a discussion of this passage here as the verb צָאָה is not utilised within it to describe Rachel's sojourn. However, all subsequent discussion of Sheres' reading of Gen. 24 may equally apply to Gen. 29.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>79</sup> Sheres, 72.

<sup>80</sup> Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 908; Alter, 189.

<sup>81</sup> Van Seters, 242; Kass, *Beginning of Wisdom*, 478. According to Carol Meyers, the phrase 'daughters of the land' (בְּבָנוֹת הָאָרֶץ) probably refers to young Hivite women, who, like Dinah, are also

In addition, and contrary to the assertions made by both Sheres and Frymer-Kensky, the fact that Dinah did not go out to perform a specifically domestic chore does not necessarily mean that her behaviour was in any sense suspect. As noted above, women go out for a variety of reasons, not all of them involving collecting water from the well, and they appear to do so without censure or disapproval.<sup>82</sup> There is therefore nothing to suggest from this rather innocuous remark in v.1, that Dinah was acting in an inappropriate manner or, in particular, that her reasons for going out were sexually motivated.

Furthermore, if one wished to read Gen. 24 and 34 inter-textually in order to evaluate the semantic nuances of Dinah's act of 'going out', one could equally argue, contra Sheres, that Dinah's behaviour here in v.1, like Rebekah's in Ch.24, was entirely innocent and platonic in its inception. Just as Rebekah went out to gather water, so too did Dinah venture forth for an equally *non-sexual* purpose. Moreover, like her grandmother before her, Dinah may have quite *inadvertently* found herself the object of male attention. There appears to be no explicit or implicit suggestion in either text that these women's motives for leaving the house were to look for a suitable mate; both Rebekah and Dinah were seen quite by chance, and the nature of their outing only *then* took on a sexual significance. Had Dinah really gone out with the specific intent of finding herself a Canaanite partner, why did the author simply not state this, rather than couching the underlying rationale of her behaviour in such a decidedly platonic and inoffensive light? Surely, it is more likely that Dinah's decision to leave the family home and venture into Hivite territory was motivated simply by her desire to search out female companionship among the local indigenous women.

## 2. Genesis 30.16: like mother, like daughter?

In Gen. 30.16, Leah 'goes out' to meet her husband Jacob for the express purpose of having sexual intercourse with him that night, in the hope that she may bear him another son (v.17). As mentioned above, this is the verse on which both Nehama

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unmarried and living in their father's household ("Gen 34.1, 9, 16, 21, 29: Daughters/Women of the Region; Daughters of the Jacob Group", in Meyers, 182).

<sup>82</sup> See for example the traditions that depict women 'going out' to meet someone (Jdg. 4.18, 24; 11.34; 2 Sam. 6.20), to take part in religious celebrations (Exod. 15.20; Jdg. 21.21), or for no other reason than to laud their monarch after a successful military campaign (1 Sam. 18.6) or on a commemorative occasion (Song 3.11).

Aschkenasy and the rabbinical authors of *Genesis Rabbah* based their allegations regarding Dinah's promiscuity, claiming that, 'like mother like daughter,' Dinah too had gone out intentionally to orchestrate a sexual encounter.<sup>83</sup>

However, on closer scrutiny, one could contend that the contextual milieus of Gen. 31.16 and 34.1 are fundamentally distinct, and thus the use of the verb נָצְאָה in 30.16 ought not to be read to infer a sense of sexual impropriety regarding Dinah's act of 'going out' in 34.1. Dinah went out, as the narrator makes clear, specifically to make the acquaintance of the indigenous *women* of Shechem; unlike her mother, there is no suggestion at all within this statement that she was travelling forth for an explicitly sexual purpose.<sup>84</sup> As discussed above, the verb נָצְאָה is utilised elsewhere within the biblical corpus with a feminine subject to denote women's journeying outside in a number of utterly non-sexual scenarios. It would therefore appear to be the context alone that determines whether a woman's behaviour carries nuances of a sexual nature, rather than any etymological feature inherent to the verb form itself.<sup>85</sup> With regards Gen. 34.1, there is simply nothing in the text to suggest that Dinah's outing was *in any way* sexually motivated.

Furthermore, the rabbinical assumption of both the rabbinic authors of *Genesis Rabbah* 80.1 and scholars, such as Nehama Aschkenasy, that Leah was behaving in a sexually provocative or inappropriate manner in Gen. 30.16, is likewise questionable.<sup>86</sup> Leah appears to have gone out in order to meet her husband, with whom she could legitimately have sexual relations; she was not seeking a clandestine encounter or hoping to flaunt herself before lustful local men.<sup>87</sup> As the rabbinical authors of *Genesis Rabbah* 72.5 themselves admit, Leah's *sole* motivation for seeking sexual relations with her husband was to perpetuate the next generation of God's chosen people (Gen. 30.17). In other words, her desire was driven by a

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<sup>83</sup> *Genesis Rabbah* 80.1; Aschkenasy, *Woman at the Window*, 51.

<sup>84</sup> Parry makes a similar observation in *Old Testament Story*, 230.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*; and "Feminist Hermeneutics", 13.

<sup>86</sup> *Genesis Rabbah* 80.1 states that Leah went out to meet Jacob 'all made up ... just like a whore'. In a similar vein, Aschkenasy offers confirmation of Leah's 'sexual aggression', by noting, not only her trading of mandrakes with Rachel for an 'extra night' with Jacob, but also for her 'initial pursuit and entrapment' of him, referring, it appears, to their duplicitous marriage, which was arranged by her father Laban in Gen. 29.1-30 (*Woman at the Window*, 51). However, the biblical text yields no evidence of any such motives on Leah's part, with regards her connubial aspirations. There is no suggestion that she had any part to play in the deceitful plan that saw her married off to Jacob, nor does the narrator of this passage make any mention of her desire to wed this man, who was so in love with her beautiful sister Rachel. Aschkenasy's suppositions, regarding Leah's extroverted sexuality cannot therefore be substantiated by the textual evidence.

<sup>87</sup> Parry, *Old Testament Story*, 230.

yearning to give Jacob another heir, not by her own need for sexual satisfaction.<sup>88</sup> The rabbinic assertion that she went out ‘all made up ... just like a whore’ in *Genesis Rabbah* 80.1 likewise has no textual basis at all. Rather, it would appear that the verb נָצַח here in v.16 is most likely used, as it is in Gen. 34.1, in its dislocative sense, simply as a prerequisite to Leah meeting Jacob and making her sexual proposal to him.<sup>89</sup> Consequently, the negative associations between mother and daughter suggested within these midrashic interpretive traditions, as well as the conclusions reached by Aschkenasy, appear to be utterly unfounded and ought not to be read as lending support to the supposition that the use of נָצַח in Gen. 34.1 conveys any sense of sexual impropriety on Dinah’s part.<sup>90</sup> It may well be that rabbinical midrashists of Gen. 34.1, driven by their propensity to explain biblical traditions through the medium of inter-textual interpretation,<sup>91</sup> may have (wittingly or unwittingly) used the linguistic similarities in Gen. 30.16 as a vehicle for expressing their own cultural prejudices with regards women’s culpability for sexual violence.

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<sup>88</sup> Bronner, *From Eve to Esther*, 121. The rationale underlying this hypercritical rabbinic judgment of Leah’s behaviour is not entirely clear. It is highly unusual within the biblical material to find wives taking the initiative to instigate a sexual union with their husband. It may be therefore that the authors of *Genesis Rabbah* were uncomfortable with the fact that the two women, Rachel and Leah, were ‘bartering’ for Jacob’s sexual services, behaving as though the sexuality of the esteemed patriarch, the progenitor of YHWH’s covenant people, were an exchangeable commodity. Certainly, in the midrash on Gen. 30.15-16, the rabbinic authors take offence at Rachel’s apparent slight on Jacob’s sexuality, by her suggestion that sexual intercourse with him was worth only some mandrakes (*Genesis Rabbah* 72.3). Strangely enough, however, despite the rather unflattering depiction of Leah’s actions in *Genesis Rabbah* 80.1, the midrash of Gen. 30.16 in *Genesis Rabbah* 72.5 is far more sympathetic to her behaviour. In other words, for these rabbinic interpreters, the end justified the means, though why their opinion of Leah then became so acerbic in 80.1 is left unexplained. For further comments on *Genesis Rabbah* 72.2-3 see also Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, 2:663, 665.

<sup>89</sup> Parry, *Old Testament Story*, 230.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> As Renée Bloch explains, ‘The principle method by which the rabbis clarify the sacred text and probe its depths is by recourse to parallel passages. The Bible forms a unit; it comes from God in all of its parts and it therefore offers a broad context to which one should always return. Since they knew the Scriptures by heart they were constantly explaining the Bible by the Bible ... The recourse to scripture took on various forms: the author could refer to isolated passages taken from different places, but he usually used a motif, Ordinarily only a few sources were used, and one senses among the midrashists a tendency to be selective’. See ‘Midrash’, in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism*, ed. William Scott Green (Missoula Scholars Press, 1978), 1:32. For further discussion of the role of inner-biblical exegesis in the midrashic traditions, see also Timothy H. Lim, ‘Origins and Emergence of Midrash in Relation to the Hebrew Bible’, in *Encyclopaedia of Midrash: Biblical Interpretation in Formative Judaism*, ed. Jacob Neusner and Alan J. Avery-Peck (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 2:595-612.



### 3. Proverbs 7.15 – the ‘lady of the night’

Proverbs 7 appears to be one occasion that the verb צִיָּא is utilised within a context that is, it must be admitted, unequivocally steeped in illicit and promiscuous female sexuality. This text reads as a warning to senseless young men to steer clear of the wayward woman who, dressed as a harlot, goes out (צִיָּאֲהִי) to meet them on street corners (v.15) and lures them with seductive speech into committing adulterous sexual acts that will undoubtedly lead to their downfall (vv.6ff). Her feet, we are told, do not ‘stay at home’ (v.11), suggesting that she has perhaps rejected the traditional role of a wife, living at home under the authority of her husband, and instead, prefers to prowl the streets in search of sexual prey.<sup>92</sup> Clearly then, within this context, צִיָּא connotes a woman’s behaviour, which is motivated by a very explicit sense of licentiousness and sexual immorality.

What is perhaps interesting to note about this particular use of צִיָּא is the fact that Prov. 7.15 bears some linguistic similarities to Gen. 34; in both texts, the woman who ‘goes out’ is likened to a prostitute (זוֹנָה). In Prov. 7.10, the woman who departs her house looking for an adulterous sexual adventure is described as wearing ‘the garment of a harlot’ (שִׂיטַת זוֹנָה).<sup>93</sup> Meanwhile, in Gen. 34.31, Dinah’s brothers answer their father’s furious criticism of their bloody revenge on Shechem by asking the rhetorical question, ‘Will he (that is, Shechem) treat our sister as a harlot?’ (יַעֲשֶׂה אֶת־אֲחֹתֵנוּ הַכּוֹזֵנָה). Is it possible that Simeon and Levi have assumed that Shechem mistook Dinah for a professional prostitute because she too ‘went out’ alone? Is the narrator thus subtly laying some of the blame for her attack on her shoulders because she had behaved like a woman in search of an illicit sexual encounter?

In order to challenge this suggestion, however, one need only reiterate the point made earlier, regarding women ‘going out’ elsewhere in the Hebrew biblical corpus.

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<sup>92</sup> Gale A. Yee, *Poor Banished Children of Eve: Women as Evil in the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 155.

<sup>93</sup> The noun שִׂיטַת is only found here and in Ps. 73.6, where again, it appears to refer to some sort of garment. It is unclear exactly what form such a garment would have taken, or if prostitutes wore an identifiable style of dress. Both Michael Fox and Bruce Waltke suggest that the שִׂיטַת זוֹנָה worn by the woman in Proverbs 7 may have been a veil, like Tamar’s in Gen. 38.14, which would have been both seductive and would have hidden her real identity, as the wife of a local merchant. In Jer. 4.30, prostitutes appear to be identified with a particular style of dress, including the wearing of crimson, adornment with gold jewellery and kohl eye make-up. See Bruce Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1-15* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2004), 373-74; Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 1-9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 243.

As demonstrated in a number of texts, women appear to venture out, sometimes alone, for a number of non-sexual purposes, entirely without reproof or any apparent risk that they too may be likened to the wayward woman of Prov. 7. There is absolutely no suggestion made elsewhere that a woman's departure from the house conveys an inherent sense of sexual immodesty or licentious intent.<sup>94</sup> Prov. 7.15 states plainly that this woman, who was dressed like a harlot, goes out *with the sole intention* of luring unsuspecting men into an unlawful sexual liaison; it is her *reason* for 'going out' that makes her behaviour morally suspect and therefore reprehensible. Where Dinah is concerned, however, the narrator appears to be at pains to stress the utterly chaste nature of her outing; she ventures forth 'to become acquainted with the daughters of the land'.<sup>95</sup> Perhaps, through his choice of words in v.1, the biblical writer was even encouraging the reader to avoid the misapprehension that Dinah behaved in any way other than innocently.<sup>96</sup>

Furthermore, if Shechem *had* mistaken Dinah for a professional prostitute because she was out alone, this still does not explain why he sexually assaulted her. Rape and prostitution were two very distinct and unrelated sexual phenomena in the worldview of biblical Israel; there is nothing within the texts of the Hebrew Bible to suggest that harlots could be raped with impunity or indeed that sexual violence was in keeping with the code of behaviour that normally governed sexual interactions between an Israelite man and a prostitute.<sup>97</sup> Compare Shechem's aggressive sexual response to that of Judah, for example, when he approached his daughter-in-law Tamar, presuming her to be a woman offering a sexual service (Genesis 38). Judah first seeks Tamar's permission to have sexual intercourse (v.16) and then, before proceeding to do so, arranges with her the financial terms of their arrangement (vv.16-18). In contrast, Shechem does neither of these things; he simply seizes Dinah and forcefully violates her (Gen. 34.2).

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<sup>94</sup> Parry, *Old Testament Story*, 229.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*; Cotter, 253.

<sup>96</sup> Cotter, 253; Kugel, 415.

<sup>97</sup> This is not to say however that a prostitute cannot be a victim of sexual violence, as Bechtel suggests ('harlots are not raped', "What If Dinah Is Not Raped", 31). Human history bears unfortunate witness to the fact that prostitution and sexual violence have never been strangers to each other, either now or in the past. The notion that prostitutes cannot be victims of rape stems from the belief, mentioned earlier in this chapter, that women whose sexuality and sexual history does not accord with the traditional sex-role stereotypes found in patriarchal society are assumed to have been complicit in their sexual assault. Thus, when a woman has given her consent to sexual intercourse in the past, it is as though her consent for all future sexual encounters is simply assumed. Thus, women in the sex industry are regarded as unrapable, because their consent is *always* taken for granted (Tetreault, 248).

To be sure, one could suppose that Shechem did mistake Dinah for a professional prostitute, but decided to sexually assault rather than pay her. Yet, this would seem unlikely, given his behaviour following the rape. For, if he truly believed that she was a prostitute, why did he and his father go to such extreme lengths to secure her family's permission before marrying her? As we discussed in Chapter 3, within the biblical traditions, a prostitute was regarded as a woman who was sexually autonomous; her sexuality was not under the control of any man, be it her father or husband.<sup>98</sup> Had Shechem really believed that he had fallen in love with such a woman, he would therefore not have felt it necessary to seek the consent of her male kin before marrying her, but would simply have taken her home with him and established her, without further ado, within his household. The elaborate proposition offered by Shechem and his father to Dinah's family in vv.8-12, including the young prince's offer of a bride price and bridal gift in keeping with normative marriage protocol (vv.11-12), as well as his eagerness to undergo the painful procedure of circumcision (v.19), strongly suggest that Shechem was fully aware that the woman whom he sought to wed was still regarded as the sexual property of her father and was thus by no means a prostitute.

Returning to Proverbs 7, it would therefore appear that, while the woman in question does indeed 'go out' for an illicit sexual purpose, the pejorative nuances implicit in her behaviour are not conveyed primarily by the verb **צָאָה** itself, but rather, are suggested by her appearance, her words, and her actions, which make *explicit* her reasons for going out. In other words, this woman's very negative depiction does not in itself stem from her act of leaving the house *per se*; rather, it is her motivations for going out, that is, her adulterous sexual appetite, which marks her as a sexually wanton woman. It stands to reason then that the use of **צָאָה** within this text has no bearing on our evaluation of Dinah's own behaviour in Gen. 34.1, as she 'went out' simply to meet 'the daughters of the land'.

Given the discussion thus far, it would appear that the verb **צָאָה**, when used with a female subject within the biblical texts, conveys no inherent sense of sexual impropriety, or indeed any form of sexually motivated behaviour, illicit or otherwise. Indeed, the semantic connotations conveyed by a woman's act of 'going

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<sup>98</sup> Bird, "To Play the Harlot", 222; Bechtel, "What If Dinah Is Not Raped", 31; Fleishman, 110; Hall, 1123; Erlandsson, 101.

out' seem to be dependent solely on the context in which this verb is used, rather than on any etymological considerations intrinsic to the verb form itself. In other words, a woman's departure from the house *may* intimate her sexual promiscuity, as is the case in Prov. 7.15, but only when such a departure is motivated by her desire for illicit sexual adventure. As Robin Parry states, the narrator's judgement of women who go out, 'all depends on what the women "go out" to do'.<sup>99</sup> In Dinah's case, any contextual evidence of sexual immodesty is entirely lacking within Gen. 34.1. On the contrary, her outing is presented by the narrator as unquestionably innocent and free from sexual motivation; she goes looking for female company, *not* a sexual encounter.

#### *Evidence from the cognate forms of נצ׳*

As discussed above, Sarna, Wenham and Frymer-Kensky are among those scholars who have appealed to cognate evidence from Akkadian and Aramaic to argue that the narrator's use of נצ׳ in Gen.34.1 suggests a deliberate allusion to sexual impropriety on Dinah's part. However, the semantic range of cognate equivalents from other languages related to biblical Hebrew should not be considered in themselves sufficient evidence that the Hebrew verb form in question necessarily encompassed this same diversity of meaning. Although cognate terms in Akkadian (*wāšitum* and *wāšiat*) and Aramaic (נפקת ברה and נפקא) may have been used to convey pejorative sexual overtones, there is nothing to suggest from the biblical evidence discussed above that such semantic nuances were regularly ascribed to נצ׳ at the time the Genesis 34 narrative was written.<sup>100</sup> To be sure, the authors of *Genesis Rabbah* and medieval exegete Rashi understood the narrator's choice of נצ׳ in v.1 as an implicit assertion by this ancient writer that Dinah was a יוצאתיה ('gadabout').<sup>101</sup> However, the above survey of the *biblical* usage of נצ׳ strongly suggests that this root did not inherently denote sexual impropriety or inappropriate behaviour during the biblical period.<sup>102</sup> The term יוצאתיה does not appear in the

<sup>99</sup> Parry, *Old Testament Story*, 230.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

<sup>101</sup> *Genesis Rabbah* 80.5; Rosenbaum and Silberman, 164.

<sup>102</sup> This proposition is indeed substantiated by the *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, edited by David Clines. This dictionary does not rely on diachronic cognate evidence to ascertain the meaning of classical Hebrew vocabulary, but instead, focuses on the synchronic function of words within the language as an operating system. In other words, Clines relies heavily on syntagmic analysis of word forms; that is, the meaning of a word as it is used within its contextual environment. Under "נצ׳", there is no reference to this verb conveying any sense of sexual impropriety when it is used with a feminine subject, suggesting therefore that such a semantic nuance was not commonly attributed to

Hebrew biblical corpus; in fact, there are no alternative forms of the root נצנ that convey the sense of ‘awhoring’ or ‘gadabout’.<sup>103</sup> Thus, it would appear probable that such pejorative nuances became attributed more regularly to נצנ only at a later, post-biblical date, that is, after the composition of the Genesis 34 narrative.<sup>104</sup>

Furthermore, as Parry notes, even if a certain verb carries negative connotations within a particular context, it does not necessarily follow that these connotations are present *whenever* the verb is utilised.<sup>105</sup> One can therefore propose that its function within this text was not to alert the reader to any dubious motives underlying Dinah’s behaviour, but more likely, to state simply that she was away from her home when subsequent events overtook her. Interpreters who insist on reading v.1 as some form of implicit criticism of Dinah’s behaviour by the narrator may well be relying on a particular semantic value of the verb נצנ that is anachronistic to the time in which this narrative was originally composed. In Parry’s words, ‘the idea that Dinah went out to get “picked up” by some dishy young bloke traces its roots way back into the history of interpretation’, rather than back to the Hebrew text itself.<sup>106</sup>

*The ‘outside world’ in biblical Israel: was it a dangerous place for women to be?*

As discussed above, a number of scholars have suggested that, within biblical Israel, the act of ‘going out’ was, for women, an intrinsically dangerous occupation and not in keeping with the traditional gender expectations of appropriate female behaviour. Thus, while not explicitly sexual in its motivations, Dinah’s journey was, they argue, nevertheless naïve and irresponsible; she courted disaster by flouting societal protocol, thereby recklessly rendering herself susceptible to unwanted male sexual attention. Like so many of her contemporary sisters who are survivors of sexual violence, Dinah, it is contended, must therefore shoulder at least some of the responsibility for her own violation.

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this verb form during the time that these texts were written. See *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, ed. David J.A. Clines (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 4:255-61. For further information regarding the underlying rationale of this dictionary, see David J.A. Clines, “The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew”, *Zeitschrift für Althebraistik* 3 (1990): 73-80.

<sup>103</sup> Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 425-26.

<sup>104</sup> Parry, “Feminist Hermeneutics”, 13.

<sup>105</sup> Parry, *Old Testament Story*, 229.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 230; and “Feminist Hermeneutics”, 15.

Is this an accurate reading of the biblical traditions? Was the outside world really conceptualised within the texts as both an unsuitable and sexually perilous place for women to venture? Well, on surveying the biblical traditions where women ‘go out’ (צָאָה) into the public sphere, it is certainly true that there are a number of occasions where their departure from the house appears to render them susceptible to sexual danger. Thus, in Jdg. 21.19-24, the daughters of Shiloh, who go out (צָאָה) to dance at the festival of the Lord, are, like Dinah, abducted and raped, in their case by Benjaminite tribesmen, in order to provide these men with sufficient wives to perpetuate their depleted numbers following a bloody Israelite civil war.

Moreover, earlier in Judges, the theme of the outside being a dangerous place for a woman is nowhere more shockingly reiterated than in the story of the Levite’s unnamed concubine (Judges 19), whose husband seizes her and ‘forces her outside’ of the house in Gibeah where they are residing (וַיֵּצֵא אֶל־יְהוָה הַחוּץ) to be gang raped by a lawless mob of Benjaminites (19.25). While this woman does not go out on her own volition, her unwilling journey from the house renders her fatally vulnerable to a brutal sexual attack; as Bal notes, the story would appear to infer that once a woman stepped over the threshold away from the safety of the house, she essentially became male ‘public property’, to be sexually used and abused by any man she then encountered.<sup>107</sup>

Outwith Judges, a number of scholars have likewise noted that in Ruth 2.8-9 and 2.22, Boaz’s and Naomi’s respective words of caution to Ruth appear to read as implicit reminders that a woman who ventures outside into unknown territory leaves herself susceptible to the dangers of sexual impropriety or violence. Thus, in 2.8-9, Boaz advises Ruth to stick close to his female reapers when she is gleaning in his fields, while reassuring her that he has warned the young harvesters not to ‘touch’ or ‘harm’ her (לֹבֵלְתִי נִגְעַךְ).<sup>108</sup> This advisory warning appears to be an indication that, left to her own devices, Ruth the Moabitess may have become the object of unwanted harassment or abuse by Boaz’s Israelite male harvesters.<sup>109</sup> Similarly,

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<sup>107</sup> Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry*, 216.

<sup>108</sup> ‘Boaz said to Ruth, “Listen my daughter, do not go to glean in another field. Do not go elsewhere but stay here close to my young women. Keep your eyes on the field that they are reaping and follow them. I have ordered the young men not to touch you”’. For a fuller discussion of the verbal root נגע and its use to indicate aggressive behaviour, see Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 619; Koehler, Baumgartner, and Stamm, 2:668; L. Schweinhorst, “נגע”, in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, eds. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 9:205-6.

<sup>109</sup> Tod Linafeld, *Ruth*, in Tod Linafeld and Timothy K. Beal, *Ruth and Esther* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1995), 34, 35, 44.

Naomi's advice to Ruth in 2.22 echoes Boaz's words of caution, when she tells her, "It is better, my daughter, that you go out [to glean] with [Boaz's] girls, so they do not trouble you (וְלֹא פִגְעוּ בְךָ) in some other field". Ruth's mother-in-law appears to be suggesting here that Ruth, as a woman 'going out' (צָיָה) to work away from the safety of the family home, may be in a potentially dangerous space, at risk of sexual attention or even sexual assault.<sup>110</sup>

Before conceding, however, that the biblical traditions do indeed confirm that the outside world was a dangerous space for women to venture into, some further points ought to be noted. Firstly, while it is true that, on certain occasions, biblical texts may suggest that women's presence outwith the household did increase their vulnerability to sexual danger, such danger is by no means presented within these texts as an *inevitable* reality within biblical Israelite society. If one were to cast an eye over all the passages listed earlier, which depict women 'going out' (צָיָה), it becomes apparent that it is far more common for women to venture forth into the public realm without any suggestion of endangerment than it is for them to face any sexual threat when they are out. Furthermore, these women neither appear to be rebuked for doing so, nor are they *regularly* warned of the dangers that they may encounter on their travels.

Similarly, other texts, which do not utilise the verb צָיָה, but which depict women present and active within the public sphere, likewise offer no suggestion that such behaviour was either inappropriate, imprudent or naïve on the part of the woman concerned. Thus, for example, Rachel goes out alone to tend her father's flock in Gen. 29.2-12, while Abigail sets off without her husband's consent to seek out David (1 Sam. 25), in order to attempt to prevent an escalation of the hostilities that existed between the two men. Neither woman is castigated for their sojourn; indeed, Abigail is presented in a positively laudatory light, as a woman with both the brains and beauty to outwit her churlish husband and temper David's hot-headed impetuosity (vv.3, 23-35). Furthermore, in Num. 27.2, the daughters of Zelophehad meet with Moses at the entrance of the Tent of the Meeting in order to request a landholding among their kin. As Karla Shargent has noted, this meeting place was in all likelihood analogous to the city gate of Israel's settled existence, where important

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<sup>110</sup> Linafeld, 35; Edward F. Campbell, *Ruth: A New Translation With Introduction, Notes, and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1975), 108; Koehler, Baumgartner and Stamm, 3:910; P. Mailberger, "פִּגְעַת", in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2001), 11:473.

social, economic, or judicial matters were addressed – in other words, a very public place within the community.<sup>111</sup> Yet, these women are not castigated for being there, nor was their personal safety or sexual integrity threatened in any way by their public appearance within such a male domain. Indeed, their presence goes unquestioned, while Moses treats their petition with the utmost seriousness.<sup>112</sup>

Moreover, as Shargent again points out, the idea that the outside world was specifically designated as a dangerous space for women within the biblical traditions does not necessarily stand up to close scrutiny, when one considers that women were not always safe from the threat of sexual assault when they remained *within* the private sphere of the household.<sup>113</sup> One need only think for example of Tamar in 2 Samuel 13, who is raped by her brother Amnon in the ultimately private space of his bedchamber, after she had been sent to him at the behest of her father (vv.7, 14). In addition, while the Levite's concubine in Judges 19 was sexually assaulted outside the house where she and her husband had been residing, one could argue that her fate was sealed *inside* that house, as both the elderly host and her husband conspired to safeguard the latter's sexual integrity by denying the woman the right to any protection of *hers* (vv.23-5). As Bal notes, she is given up by these two men 'in an ultimate act of power and violence'.<sup>114</sup> Do not forget, at the start of the narrative, this woman had apparently travelled the long journey by herself, in apparent safety, to her father's house in Bethlehem (19.2). It is only after she is *inside* again, back in the company of her husband, who was supposed to be responsible for her protection and security, that she faces a lethal threat to her bodily and sexual integrity. Furthermore, the violence done to this unnamed woman does not end after her rape; once the Levite is back in the house that he shared with his concubine in Ephraim, he continues her abuse by dismembering her already broken body into twelve pieces to send out to all the tribes of Israel. The brutality of this act is not only implicit in the physical act of dismemberment, but may also be read as a symbolic re-enactment of her rape; by sharing her body among many men throughout Israel, the Levite repeats this woman's gang rape experience on an even greater scale than before and, most significantly, within the house where she ought to have been safeguarded from

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<sup>111</sup> Shargent, 37.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 38-39.

<sup>114</sup> Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry*, 122.



harm.<sup>115</sup> For this woman, neither the patriarchal home nor the outside world was a safe space; she faced a lethal violence in both.

Indeed, such a threat was also confronted, though not realised, by the virgin daughter of the Levite's Gibeite host, when, in v.24, her father also offered her to the Benjaminite mob as sexual fodder. While this woman was spared the fate of the concubine, it is clear that the being inside the family home did not guarantee her shelter from the risk of sexual abuse. A very similar situation also arises in the parallel text of Genesis 19, when Lot offers his two virgin daughters to the men of Sodom who had surrounded his house, demanding sexual access to his male guests (v.8). While these women also avoided having to endure the same ordeal as the Levite's concubine in Judges 19, it is nevertheless true that, *within the apparently safe space of the family household*, Lot's daughters were made to confront a very real threat to their sexual integrity. Thus, just as women today can by no means guarantee their sexual safety when *inside* their home,<sup>116</sup> biblical women could likewise face the danger of sexual violence even when they remained within the private sphere of the household.

Finally, when considering biblical attitudes to women's presence in the public sphere, it is important to note that in the legislation of Deut. 22.25-7, which refers to an unequivocal case of sexual violence, the woman who is raped when she is out in an isolated part of the countryside is accorded no part in the precipitation of her assault.<sup>117</sup> While rape victims today often face recriminations for having been by themselves in secluded locations prior to their assault, this piece of biblical legislation actually emphasises quite the opposite. Indeed, while her rapist must face the death penalty, the lawmakers emphasise this woman's innocence at length: 'But to the girl you will do nothing; she has committed no sin deserving of death. For, just as the man rises against his neighbour and murders him, it is the same in this case. For the man found her in the country; while the betrothed girl screamed, there was no one to rescue her' (vv.26-7). There is absolutely no suggestion within this piece of legislation that by going out alone, the woman had provoked her rape, or that she was in any sense behaving irresponsibly or injudiciously. On the

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<sup>115</sup> As Bal notes, 'Using the knife against her is participating in the torture that befell her the previous night' (*Death and Dissymmetry*, 126). Also, Yee, "Ideological Criticism", 166; Exum, *Fragmented Women*, 181.

<sup>116</sup> It is far from uncommon for women to be raped by intruders breaking into their home or, indeed, by their own partners or acquaintances (Leslie, 14-15).

<sup>117</sup> Brownmiller, 19.

contrary, she is regarded – like the murder victim – as the unwilling casualty of an unsolicited violation and was thus completely blameless of all wrongdoing.

Thus, the above discussion has raised the possibility that, within the cultural milieu of biblical Israel, the outside world was not necessarily always regarded as a place where women would encounter the inevitable risk of sexual assault. The biblical traditions yield no evidence of an unequivocal correlation between the private/public dichotomy and women's sexual safety; in other words, there appears to be no explicitly and unreservedly safe or unsafe space designated for women, with regards their sexual integrity. Women who did 'go out' were therefore not deemed inevitably at risk of sexual assault, nor were women who remained under the protection and supervision of their family by any means guaranteed protection from such a risk. Furthermore, there does not appear to have been any pervasive demand on women *not* to go out, nor were those who did go out and who were subsequently raped necessarily held accountable for their violation. While texts such as Ruth 2.8-9 and 2.22 may suggest that women venturing forth into unknown territory *may* find themselves facing the threat of male sexual aggression, such a threat did not appear to deter these women from going out. Ruth, for example, still went to work in Boaz's field, after simply following some basic precautions to ensure that, while she was there, any risk to her personal safety was minimised.

Indeed, one could also argue that Dinah had at least attempted to take similar precautions as those followed by Ruth in the wake of the advice given to her by both Boaz and Naomi. Contrary to scholars who, as discussed above, judge Dinah's act of venturing into alien territory as an act of irresponsible and injudicious naïveté, it could be contended however, that Dinah was *indeed* taking responsibility for her own safety, in that her behaviour consciously followed the logic of Boaz and Naomi's precautionary counsel. After all, she makes no effort to seek out the company of any local men who may have taken advantage of a foreign woman travelling alone; indeed Dinah seems to be attempting to minimise the risk that such an encounter would take place; like Ruth, she specifically intends to go out to a place where she will be relatively safe: within the company of other women. In other words, Dinah is taking no chances here; it is simply her misfortune, *not* her fault, that before she can reach her goal, she is seen and subsequently raped by Shechem.

## Concluding Remarks

At the start of this chapter, I noted that within biblical scholarship, there has been an overwhelming tendency for exegetes to judge Dinah's behaviour in Gen. 34.1 unfavourably. This tradition of interpretation credits the narrator with deliberately using the verb נָצְאָה both to criticise Dinah's intentions for going out to visit the city of Shechem and, by implication, to place the onus of responsibility for her rape squarely upon her shoulders.

However, on reviewing the linguistic and contextual evidence of Gen 34.1, it becomes apparent that this reading simply cannot be substantiated. Instead, the textual considerations discussed in this chapter would seem to support a reading of v.1, which refuses to accept that the ancient author deliberately sought to condemn Dinah for wandering out to visit the Hivite women. Instead, her characterisation here appears to be that of the victim, rather than protagonist, of a violent sexual encounter, with her outing depicted as entirely innocent in both its inception and its motivations. Dinah was not being deliberately promiscuous here, nor did she appear to be flouting any societal expectations regarding appropriate female behaviour; she therefore does not deserve to be burdened with accusations of culpability for her rape simply because she 'went out'.

Furthermore, I would suggest that the cultural myth of victim precipitation does *not* appear to have been an integral part of the biblical conceptualisation of sexual violence. Contrary to the belief held by so many biblical interpreters, Israelite women who left the private domestic sphere of the household and ventured forth into the outside world were neither routinely judged as acting in a promiscuous or injudicious manner nor were they blamed for any act of sexual violence that befell them.

Nevertheless, we are still left with the question of why these exegetical traditions, which attribute blame to Dinah for her rape, predominate biblical scholarship on the text of Gen. 34.1. As suggested earlier in this chapter, I would contend that such traditions might have been influenced less by textual considerations than by the interpreters' reliance on the insidious myth of victim precipitation, which has been deeply entrenched within their own particular cultural ideation of sexual violence. In other words, the representation of Dinah as a 'gadabout', a *femme fatale*, or even a thoughtless and irresponsible daughter may well be the result of biblical interpreters reading Gen. 34.1 within the ideological context of this myth, thereby

imposing it, wittingly or unwittingly, onto this text. However, by doing so, they only serve to perpetuate the insidious influence of this myth by drawing up ‘evidence’ in an attempt to substantiate its universal validity, by ignoring, or at least leaving unspoken, the injustice of the patriarchal imperative that insists upon preserving women’s safety at the expense of their freedom, and by consistently failing to condemn the rapist’s misogynist aggression. Interpreters, such as Ita Sheres, who claims that Dinah went out ‘looking to be raped’,<sup>118</sup> thereby consistently fail to take into account the brutality of rape and the lasting traumatic effects that it has upon the victim. No woman would *ever* go out ‘looking to be raped’, no woman deserves to be raped, and no woman is ever responsible for her rape; culpability for sexual violence rests solely and utterly with the men who commit this dreadful offence.

Furthermore, these dominant exegetical traditions of Gen.34.1, which blame Dinah to some extent for her own rape, have critically undermined the narrator’s *own* attestation that Dinah was the victim of an unprovoked and brutal act of male violence; by doing so, however, they effectively deny her a just representation. In effect, this young woman’s pain, not to mention her status as the casualty of a terrible crime, has thus been denied a voice by centuries of interpretive blame, which insists on perpetuating a rape myth that, ironically, appears to have no representation within the biblical text. How would Dinah feel, if she could hear the recrimination and censure within the voices of those who have repeatedly judged her so unfairly within their readings of this narrative? Perhaps, like the rape survivor quoted at the very start of this chapter, she would begin to believe in her own blameworthiness, thereby suffering a crippling sense of guilt and self-loathing. Perhaps she would feel utterly bewildered that, as the *victim* of such a brutal assault, she was not being shown sympathy or compassion but was rather confronted by such an outpouring of blame and hostile recrimination. She may therefore have believed that, given such a response, her experience of violation and humiliation would become an inescapable and continuing presence in her life.<sup>119</sup> Alternatively, like the rape survivor who said that people treated her like ‘the offender, not the victim’,<sup>120</sup> she may simply ask these interpreters, ‘Why are you blaming me, the victim, not Shechem, my rapist?’ Such a propensity to hold the victim responsible for her rape is, I believe, as deeply

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<sup>118</sup> Sheres, 87.

<sup>119</sup> Rebecca Campbell *et al.*, “Community Services for Rape Survivors: Enhancing Psychological Well-Being or Increasing Trauma?” *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 67 (1999): 855.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 847.

flawed and ethically reprehensible within the interpretive traditions of Genesis 34 as it is within contemporary patriarchal cultures. It would therefore be a valuable exercise for *all* of us, sitting down to read and interpret this narrative, to firstly read and remember the following words:

Rape, we must remember, is a crime; women are the victims of it. Rape is not the just desert of any woman who dresses casually, goes out at night, or lives alone. And women do not cause rape by their growing freedom. If we want to place the blame anywhere other than on the criminal himself, we must look at the society that creates him. Rape victims have been treated as the guilty ones, the outcasts, for too long.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Medea and Thompson, 5-6.

## CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this work, we have witnessed the fact that, within contemporary patriarchal cultures, rape survivors are consistently and repeatedly denied access to a means by which to make their voices heard. All too often, their experiences of sexual violence have been and continue to be eclipsed and stifled by androcentric, sexist, and at times misogynistic rape myths and ideologies, which are so pervasive and so deeply entrenched within patriarchal cultures the world over. As a result, these women are frequently denied empathy, dignity, and the vital support from their community that is acknowledged by survivors to be a fundamental source of their healing. As Deena Metzger admits, ‘The social community is the appropriate centre for the restoration of the spirit, but the rape victim is usually shamed into silence’.<sup>122</sup>

Similarly, through our exploration of Genesis 34, we have learnt that Dinah too is denied the ability to enter into her own discourse of suffering. She is granted no words by which to express herself, while the occasion of her rape is transformed discursively into another quite different event, focalized and given meaning solely within the framework of these same patriarchal rape myths, which silence victims of sexual violence today. In effect, through his conceptualisation of her rape, the author of this tradition essentially perpetuates Dinah’s suffering, by denying her subjectivity and autonomy, devaluing her worth, and relegating her to the margins of what should have been *her* narrative. As Ulrike Bail notes, the voices of women such as Dinah become ‘locked into texts from which no sound escapes ... [they] beat against the walls of the texts and are beaten back; they are overwhelmed by the voices of those who order silence’.<sup>123</sup>

It is not, however, only the narrator of this biblical text who may be called to account for the systematic erasure of Dinah’s voice and the silencing of her suffering. Within the interpretive traditions surrounding Genesis 34, we have discovered that there is a common proclivity among some biblical scholars to ignore, or pass over in a silence of their own, the circumscription of Dinah’s personal rape experience. These scholars appear to overlook the fact that Dinah is denied the role

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<sup>122</sup> Metzger, 406.

<sup>123</sup> Bail, 7.

of focalizer for her own rape; certainly, many make no mention of the fact that her encounter with sexual violence is perceived through all eyes except her own. Instead, they choose to focus, as the narrator does, on the reactions of the *male* characters to this rape event, while suppressing any consideration of Dinah's personal experience of her assault. Furthermore, many of them appear to have, wittingly or unwittingly, allowing their readings to be coloured and influenced by the myths, attitudes and values, pertaining to sexual violence, which may not be given explicit voice within this biblical tradition, but which, nevertheless, are an insidious influence within their *own* cultural milieu. As a result, Dinah's silencing and marginalisation within this tradition is further reinforced and validated, thereby leaving her bereft of a just and honest representation.

However, as Toni Morrison has suggested, 'All of us, readers and writers, are bereft when criticism remains too polite or too fearful to notice a disrupting darkness before its eyes'.<sup>124</sup> As readers and interpreters of this biblical narrative, reading and interpreting within a global rape culture, we surely have an ethical obligation to challenge Dinah's silencing, both by the author and within the text's interpretive traditions. For, as I have noted throughout this work, biblical texts, such as Genesis 34, which express insidious and misogynist myths pertaining to sexual violence, only serve to validate and perpetuate these myths within the reader's own community. Given the pervasiveness of rape within patriarchal cultures across both space and time, the task of recognising rape survivors' silencing and refusing to let it go unchallenged is therefore surely as imperative within biblical studies as it is within contemporary culture. Therefore, it is with this in mind that I have endeavoured throughout this work to highlight Dinah's silence and to read into it a significance that enables us to comprehend more fully the extent of her suffering.

Nevertheless, we should not forget that inhabiting a space in which one may lend one's imagination to the experience of rape survivors is far from easy; as Kristen Leslie, a pastoral theologian and rape victim advocate, notes, to do so, one must 'stand in the midst of suffering and evil'.<sup>125</sup> Such a task is nevertheless necessary if these women are to be accorded the support and the justice that is theirs to demand. Dinah has been denied the chance to tell her story to *her* community; it is now up to the community of those who read and hear this story then to give her space to speak, to listen to her pain, and, hopefully, to let her heal. For, as philosopher Susan

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<sup>124</sup> Toni Morrison, 'disturbing nurses and the kindness of sharks', in Belsey and Moore, 51.

<sup>125</sup> Leslie, 7.

Brison, herself a victim of sexual violence, testifies, ‘It is only by remembering and narrating the past – telling our stories and listening to others’ – that we can participate in an ongoing, active construction of a narrative of liberation, not one that confines us to a limiting past, but one that forms a background from which a freely imagined – and desired – future can emerge’.<sup>126</sup>

I will end this work as I began it, with the testimony of a rape survivor, who I believe sums up with real clarity the reason that searching for the hidden voices of rape victims, both within the biblical literature and within contemporary culture, and letting their voices speak to us is so important. It is written by Nancy Venable Raine, who only began to speak and write about her rape after seven years had passed – seven years in which she had remained silent, both because of her own sense of trauma and shame and also because of the perpetual refusal of those around her to listen to her story:

‘Silence has the rusty taste of shame. The words shut up are the most terrible words I know. I cannot hear them without feeling cold to the bone. The man who raped me spat these words out over and over during the hours of my attack ... It seemed to me that for seven years – until at last I spoke – these words had sunk into my soul and become prophecy. And it seems to me now that these words, the brutish message of tyrants, preserve the darkness that still covers this pervasive crime. The *real* shame, as I have learned, is to consent to them’.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Brison, 98-99.

<sup>127</sup> Raine, 6 [original italics].



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