Silenced Women: The Representation of Rape Myths and the Disempowerment of Women in the Biblical and Cinematic Worlds

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Dedicated to the silenced ones.

And

To those who sought to silence me

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FOREWORD

The Silenced

"The sheer ubiquity, constant battery, and insidiousness of rape, rape imagery, language, and motifs are sense-numbing."

Brother, Sister, Rape (Stiebert, 2018).

In echoing Johanna Stiebert's words above, there is no escape from the relentlessness of rape culture. It permeates every aspect of western society as women have been tasked with carrying its weight. One woman, Tarana Burke, 2006 created the original #MeToo movement as a space where black women could share their experiences of sexual assault and rape. In 2017, eleven years after Burke originated the term, the #MeToo movement gained global status as it called for change and justice for rape victims who had been silenced. As Johanna Stiebert states, "This movement sought, first, to expose the extent of sexual harassment, assault, and discrimination and, second, to rally solidarity and support for resisting these scourges" (Stiebert, 2019 p.14). Burke states her reaction to #MeToo going viral online: "I thought, God, these people are going to cut and bleed all over the internet, which is the very worst place to be exposed and vulnerable in this moment" (Tarana Burke from NPR, 2021). What ended up happening was a global movement that prompted rape survivors to share their stories and upend the suffocating silence.

Burke's idea inspired billions on the importance that rape and sexual assault victims share their stories. By doing so, this shows that a victim's voice does have power, but they must always be willing to fight for it. The #MeToo movement allowed rape victims to demand their voices be heard and for the world to understand the damage rape causes, and most importantly, how rape culture forces rape victims into a vacuum of space where their

voices are rarely heard. For all its importance the #MeToo movement could not ensure women's safety, as rapists still indiscriminately rape without warning. Women also face potential silent spaces swallowing them whole as masculinist beliefs move to regain their perceived lost footing in society. It is here, in our post #MeToo world, that we need to explore how silence has enveloped us, its origins in religious rhetoric, and its extension into the entertainment industry. If rape and silence were understood in the context of their cultural placements another global union may arise that demands accountability, not only for rapists but lawmakers as well. The potential for another movement could be far more reaching than the #MeToo movement.

The Contents

This thesis focuses on biblical rape narratives and how religious interpretations contributed to the prevalence of rape, rape culture, and rape myths—and their depictions on screen, as we know them in our contemporary world. Specific attention is placed on how silent spaces swallow female rape victims which denies their subjectivity and autonomy. There are three main parts to this thesis. Part, One addresses preceding scholastic thoughts about rape narratives in the Hebrew Bible and the importance of challenging previously held beliefs about rapists and rape victims. Part Two confronts the interpretations of biblical rape narratives and how silence became a weapon wielded by men, used against all women, especially ones that posed a perceived threat to patriarchal values. Part Three is centred around how film and television contribute to rape culture's pervasiveness and its attempts to change long-accepted rape myths.

The first chapter analyses three components: the prevalence of rape today and in the biblical rhetoric; the methodological reasonings for this study by addressing previous scholastic 'failures;' and the thematic elements that run through rape stories. The second

chapter explores how biblical interpretations prompted feminists and film theorists to challenge the age-old accepted thoughts on women and rape. It includes an overview of the definitions of rape and rape myths and looks at the inequities of rape in the Bible. In chapter three the biblical narratives of Dinah and Tamar are explored as ancient cases of acquaintance rape. The chapter also explores how each woman's voice and victimhood are stolen by men who interpret the narratives through the lens of victim blaming. Chapter four examines how the narrative of the Unnamed Woman, and the six hundred women becomes one of the most insidious accounts of rape in the Hebrew Bible. Moreover, the chapter analyses how biblical interpretations not only change the narrative but condone kidnapping, rape, and murder. In chapter five, rape myths, as they appear on screen in film and television, are investigated and the impact they have on how women are silenced. The last chapter, chapter six, studies minority rape narratives which are just beginning to be seen in mainstream film and television. The conclusion sums up what can be gained through understanding the connection between biblical rape narratives and contemporary film and television. Moreover, how the entertainment industry can aid in uncovering the inequities in society and work towards demolishing rape culture. In addition, the conclusion explains where the #MeToo movement fell short and what should come next as we fight not only to regain the lost voices but to preserve our own.

ABSTRACT

Kyla Greenhorn: Women Silenced: The Representation of Rape Myths and the Disempowerment of Women in the Biblical and Cinematic Worlds
(Under the supervision of Dr. Christopher Deacy)

Roxanne Gay states, "The casual way in which we deal with rape may begin and end with television and movies where we are inundated with images of sexual and domestic violence" (Gay, 2014 p.129). This thesis explores biblical narratives and rape myths, examining the pervasive and insidious influences of patriarchal culture and how women are silenced, which all impact how rape culture contributes to silencing victims of rape. Attention is given to cultural attitudes and misunderstandings surrounding rape myths, which are rooted deeply in gender stereotypes of patriarchy, which lie at the root of a victim's silenced voice. This thesis examines how interpretive traditions of Genesis 34, 2 Samuel 13, and Judges 19-21 contribute to the formation of many rape myths, in which victims are pigeonholed today. Moreover, this thesis will explore how 20th and 21st-century film and television have contributed to silencing and disempowering rape victims while simultaneously trying to be forward-thinking. This thesis has two primary aims. Firstly, there is an attempt to paint a picture of the biblical world in which rape victims experienced sexual assault by shedding light on the attitudes and ideologies perpetuated by these narratives. Secondly, attention is given to the entertainment industry and how rape and rape myths have been treated throughout the decades. Through this analysis, it can be ascertained how society looks towards film and television as both its moral compass and a reflection of the dominant culture. Therefore, this thesis attempts to provide deeper insight into the biblical narratives of Dinah, Tamar, and the Unnamed Victims, experiences of sexual violence, and how those narratives influence contemporary depictions of rape so that modern readers can better understand the weight of these silenced victims and the importance of who tells their stories.

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Chapter One

The Hebrew Bible and the Entertainment Industry: Rape, Rape Myths, and Rape Culture

"*After rape, there is a terrible silence.*"
It is Always the Woman Who is Raped (Deena Metzger, 1976 p.405)

The Prevalence of Rape Today

Rape is a global threat to women in the world. Strangers, friends, and family can rape women. Women are raped abroad, in public, at school, and in places, they are supposed to be safe, in their own homes. According to the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network or RAINN, every 68 seconds a person is sexually assaulted in the United States, "and every 9 minutes that victim is a child" (Statistics | RAINN, 2022 para. 1). This means that if it takes you 3 hours or 180 minutes to read this thesis, a little under 180 people will have been sexually violated. Additionally, 1 in 6 women will experience an attempted or completed rape during their lifetime. Male college students, aged 18-24, are five times more likely, than non-student males, to be victims of sexual assault or rape. Out of the cases that were heard in 2009, only 25 of 1,000 rapists were convicted (Statistics | RAINN, 2022 para 3). While in England and Wales, *An Overview of Sexual Offending in England and Wales* in 2020, revealed that 618,000 women and 12,000 men, aged 16-59 experience rape, attempted rape, or sexual assault every year in England and Wales. Nearly 90% of all the rape victims who reported, knew their attacker beforehand. Out of these cases, only 15% are ever reported to the police, and even fewer saw convictions (Rape Crisis Statistics, 2023 sect. 5). These statistics have changed dramatically. In 2017, at the height of the #MeToo movement, the

Crime Survey for England and Wales stated that nearly 20% of women reported experiencing some form of sexual assault in their lives starting at the age of sixteen, meaning 3.4 million women have been victims of sexually based crimes. Almost 4% of men, or 631,000 men, have reported experiencing sexual assault. In 2021, 10,000 women and 138,000 men experienced a form of sexual assault or abuse (Rape Crisis Statistics, 2021 sect 1).

If the statistics above are not alarming enough, no shortage of headlines highlights how pervasive rape is throughout the world, and its impact on how victims are silenced through complicity, non-investigations, and low conviction rates. The following news headlines prove the case:

From the *Independent*: "Record number of raped reported to police in a year, crime figures show" (4 Nov. 2021), "Metropolitan police officer appears in court accused of raping woman at St Alban's hotel" (4 Oct. 2021), "Teenager raped in an alleyway in broad daylight in Bradford" (11 Sept. 2021). A *New York Times* article from 2019 reads: "Teenager accused of rape deserves leniency because he's from a 'good family,' Judge says" (2 July 2019). The *Indian Express*: "(Mumbai) Woman gang-raped by husband, his friend" (28 Nov. 2021), "(Mumbai) Man held for raping homes woman in Sakinaka" (11 Sept. 2021). *Global News*, *Euro News*, and the *New York Post reported*: "Police won't investigate claim Australia cabinet minister raped teen decades ago" (2 Mar. 2021), "Sarah Everard Murder: Police officer Wayne Couzens Pleads guilty to kidnap and rape" (8 June 2021), "French authorities open rape investigation after skating champion accuses ex-coach" (4 Feb. 2020), "Ex-Cop convicted of rape gets home detention pending appeal" (23 Nov. 2021), and "Two men confess to raping 6-year-old girl, which gave her multiple STIs" (15 Nov. 2021). From the headlines listed above there is no denying that women are still abused, molested, raped, and murdered at alarming rates, this "remains unabated in many countries, cultures, and

traditions" (Scholz, 2007 p.76). These headlines from the past three years are only a drop in a vast ocean of rape and sexual assault headlines that permeate every aspect of the world today.

This begs the question: why has rape been a continuous threat to women from every cultural background? Why are so many of the rape narratives perpetuated by males, who seek out not only women but children and other men? In the last half-century, feminists have investigated the rape and its significance in history to answer these questions. Susan Brownmiller, one of the first feminists to address the issue of rape, stated, "When men discovered that they could rape, they proceeded to do it" (Brownmiller, 1974 p.14). Since then, feminist scholarship has only grown as the topic of rape comes to the forefront of mainstream society. Much feminist scholarship attempts to understand why rape has become something so ingrained in the fabric of society. In the field of religion, the link between biblical narratives and biblical interpretation, and the effect these narrative interpretations have in creating rape culture has already been explored. In film and television, feminist scholars have looked at how films are used to help contribute to pushing women into silent spaces, not only as rape victims in the real world but as characters on screen who become victims of an androcentric lens. As Claire Johnston states, "In the media, women have experienced the profound contradictions in their situation, because it is in the media that the grossest imbalance between production and consumption operates" (Johnston, 1975 p.2). Films and television, for decades, projected narratives that suited the causes of those who oversaw production. It is because men have been allowed to dominate certain employment fields that the overall narrative that is seen echoes popular culture as it is seen through an androcentric lens. Sue Thornham echoes the idea of film and culture being connected: "Films, then, reflect social reality, but these mirror images warped by patriarchal ideology, vary in their relationship to reality" (Thornham, 2010 p.14). These distorted images highlight the male fantasies and fears of losing their sexual and economic control not only over women

but themselves and confirm that in most cases the woman will be further victimized when reporting such crimes.

This thesis has two main aims: first, to create a picture of the biblical world, where rape victims experience sexual assault, by shedding light on the attitudes and ideologies perpetuated by these narratives and their subsequent interpretations in Western-Christian history. In doing so, we are given a glimpse into the biblical world through its interpretations that are regarded as proof texts. This is how biblical narratives have become conveyors of ideologies regarding gender and sexuality. The second is exploring film and television, specifically how rape and rape myths have been treated in film throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. The essential thematic questions for the following chapters are: Why are so many victims of rape silenced and disempowered? Why do they disappear from their own stories? How do rape culture and rape myths affect the lives of women, children, and even men? How does the perpetuation of rape myths affect the cinematic and television worlds, and its contribution to silencing and disempowering rape victims? All these questions are asked to provide deeper insight into the biblical narratives of rape, the contemporary depictions of rape, and the topic of rape. I have chosen to limit my examination of the biblical narratives, and interpretations to Genesis 34, 2 Samuel 13, and Judges 19-21 to uncover how some of the most significant rape myths came into existence and how these stories have aided in creating a discourse of silence.

Much consideration went into choosing these three texts to explore as their significance is often usurped and replaced in importance as being a Jacob story, a David story, or an early political narrative. Narrowly, the matter concerning these three texts is that they display some of the most extreme instances of rape and sexual assault in biblical rhetoric and lend themselves to the overall aim of this project in highlighting how women are wholly silenced. Broadly, these narratives provide excellent illustrations of the relationship to

biblical history, biblical interpretations, and the creation of rape myths in Western culture. Phyllis A. Bird maintains that “women are not heard directly in the biblical texts, in their voices; the Old Testament gives no unmediated access to the lives and thoughts of Israelite women” (Bird, 1997 p.52). Religious rhetoric itself has contributed little to eliminating sexual violence against women. Susanne Scholz states, “Although the sacred texts of Christianity and Judaism contain many narratives and poems on the topic” (Scholz, 2007 p.76), rarely are narratives of rape found in lectionaries or discussed in contemporary sermons to the depth that would do them justice. Exploring the possible connections between the rape myths created from biblical narratives and the entertainment industry is imperative in breaking the generational cycles of silenced women and rape victims.

Rape Culture in the Hebrew Bible

Second-wave feminists, in the 1970s, created the term rape culture to conceptualize the extreme expression of sexism in the modern world. It manifested itself in the form of rape. In doing so, feminists were able to show how pervasive rape and rape culture was in the world and how ingrained in every aspect of life it had become. As Susanne Scholz states, “The term ‘rape culture’ expresses that not only 'sick individuals' commit rape, but society as a whole encourages it” (Scholz, 2000 p.4). Rape can be defined as involving the non-consensual use of a person's sexual organs through penetration with objects or body parts, an “act of sexual intercourse with an individual without her [or their] consent, through force or the threat of force” (Barstow, 2020 para. 1). While rape is applied to victims who are women, and rapists who are men; there are many instances where children and men are also victims of rape. While the details of individual attacks of rape and sexual assault are varied, however, all rape is endangering, intimidating, and violent. In contemporary Western culture, there are many issues when defining rape and holding rapists accountable. In the Hebrew Bible rape exists differently. Rape in the biblical accounts refers to the violation of another man’s

property. More specifically, a female whose socio-sexual currency was controlled by the male family members. In her article, "Rape as a Weapon of War," Claudia Card writes:

> I now find that an important aspect of both civilian and marital rape is that it is an instrument of domestication: breaking for house service. It breaks the spirit, humiliates, tames, and produces a docile, deferential, obedient soul. Its immediate message to women and girls is that we will have in our own bodies only the control that we are granted by men and thereby in general only that control in our environments that we are granted by men (Card, 1996 p.6).

The aspect of the patriarchal culture that Card writes of is the intentional design of a structure that only permits women the rights men believe they deserve. It is through this androcentrism that women become domesticated and shaped into the perfect homemakers who are obedient which saves them from the outside world. In this way, a woman becomes housebroken as she inhabits a silent space that only seeks to placate and silence her. Biblical texts illustrate societal norms that reflect patriarchal views, creating images of women's position in the world and their bodily identity that suit the overall male narrative. Women are turned into clumsy objects of male lust, exchanged as property, and denied their autonomy. The violence biblical rhetoric paints encourage rape culture, the perpetuation of rape myths, and the act of rape. Rape culture, designed to further assault rape victims and blame survivors, especially women, for being raped. Cases of rape and female silencing that happen in the Hebrew Bible possess a worldview that is dangerously phallic that prevents in-depth conversations from happening.

The Hebrew Bible contains an onslaught of depictions of rape, threatened rape, and potential rape. The rape of Tamar (2 Samuel 13), the rape of Dinah (Genesis 34), the threatened rape of Sarah (Genesis 20;26), the rape of the Unnamed Woman (Judges 19), the six hundred kidnapped women (Judges 21), the forced surrogacy of Hagar (Genesis 16;21),

the threatened rape of Abishag (1 Kings 1), the possible rape of Bilhah (Genesis 35:22), God's possible threatened rape of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 20:7), the threatened rape of Jerusalem and Samaria (Ezekiel 16;23), the potential rape of Lot's daughters (Genesis 19:8), the rape of Lot (Genesis 19:30-38), and the rape of Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11). In each of these texts, the presence and treatment of rape are addressed differently. For example, in Tamar's narrative, she is given a voice and the wherewithal to fight against being raped by Amnon, her half-brother. Her screams are heard, they burst off the page at the reader before they are unceremoniously silenced as she is raped. Later, Absalom, Tamar's full brother, kills Amnon, his brother, in what is described as justice. However, in Judges 19-21 the Unnamed Woman is not granted even a whisper, she has no personhood and is treated as less than a human by the end of her tale, as her body is cut up and scattered to the twelve tribes. Dinah's story in Genesis 34, Dinah, the victim, has long been interpreted as culpable in being raped. As her brothers Simeon and Levi seek bloody justice in her name, Dinah is never heard from, nor is she allowed to defend herself. Rape is presented in a variety of ways in biblical rhetoric. In the cases discussed above, not a single victim is allowed to tell their story; their voices are either never heard or are cut out, which all but denies their victimhood.

It is essential, before continuing further, to mention that a majority the rape narratives discussed in this thesis are male-on-female rape. However, there is always an exception to the rule. There is no way to accurately analysed every single instance of rape, sexual assault, or use of perverse language that happens in the Bible. The Bible is a vast text, whose authors are unknown, and which has been translated, retranslated, adapted, interpreted, and altered repeatedly throughout its long history. Because of this, the Bible that we have come to know today, cannot be concretely understood as factual or historical. Nonetheless, rape as a violent act can be understood through the Bible’s overall effects on informing Western patriarchal culture. While the core of this work focuses on male-on-female rape, it is essential to mention

that this work also analyses rape narratives that involve minority rape victims or those that are not middle-class white heterosexual women. Significant matters, such as rape, are not solely feminist matters when the rape victim is only a woman, but it is for all rape victims who see themselves silenced and marginalized as both victims and survivors.

Methodological Reasons

The topic of sexual violence in the Hebrew Bible inevitably became an interest for feminist biblical scholars, owing to the numerous accounts of gender-based violence, femicide, rape, rape threats, and sex trafficking. Phyllis Trible is most notably associated with unveiling the horrors and silence behind many of the rape narratives found in the Hebrew Bible. Her influential book, *Texts of Terror,* released in 1984, analyses four stories from the Hebrew Bible of women who were raped and murdered, two of those stories Dinah and the Unnamed Woman will be covered in this work. Trible's book is seminal in feminist biblical studies and has inspired countless scholars to uncover the stories of silenced victims of sexual assault. Towards the latter part of the book, Trible asserts that:

> …misogyny belongs to every age, including our own. Violence and vengeance are not just characteristics of a distant, pre-Christian past; they infect the community of the elect to this day. Woman as object is still captured, betrayed, raped, tortured, murdered, dismembered, and scattered. To take to heart this ancient story, then, is to confess its present reality (Trible, 1984 p. 87).

The passage above identifies the significance of these rape narratives, not only in the world of biblical scholarship but in the world around us. Rape, the violence it causes, and the very real implications of that aggression are firmly present in the world. This is as true now, as it was when Trible first published *Texts of Terror.* The pervasiveness of rape and rape culture is why looking at the connections between the religious interpretation of rape narratives, and what happens in the world around us is essential. This research agrees with Trible, misogyny

and hateful violence against women do not only belong to the ancient world, but it is also happening right now, in real-time, to countless women who find themselves without a voice. For women, violence is not a stranger, it is something that a large majority are forced to accept as an aspect of daily life.

While it is imperative to acknowledge the importance of Trible's work and her influence on feminist scholarship, including this work, *Texts of Terror* was where this research began and the first book that was read, however, it is intentionally not an aspect of this thesis. This research has chosen to focus more on the works of Susanne Scholz and Caroline Blyth, who also took the work of Trible and expanded on it, but whose research is contemporary to the author of this work. The goals and aims stated above are designed to continue expanding on Blyth and Scholz's research and show the links between our modern-day rape culture and early religious biblical interpretations.

Both feminist biblical scholars and biblical scholars have explored rape and sexual assault, each of whom has their ideas on how a victim's silence should be treated. For example, biblical scholar John van Seters, in his book *The Yahwist: A Historian of Israelite Origins,* is one such biblical scholar who is uncomfortable with Dinah's silence; however, as he claims, "I cannot invent a voice for Dinah, which the social history suggests she does not have" (Van Seters, 2014 p.243). Van Seters also states the same about Tamar's voice in his footnotes, "Even Tamar, whose plea is so moving and effective in the narrative, is told by Absalom, her brother, to be quiet. She has no voice in this matter" (Van Seters, 2014 p.243). It is not too much to assume that van Seters would apply this logic to the voice of the Unnamed Woman in Judges. Likewise, Paul Nobel accuses fellow biblical scholars of using their own "feminist fictions" (Noble, 1996 p.199) to fill in the silences found in these rape narratives. One philosopher, writing on rape, Keith Burgess-Jackson in his article "Rape and Persuasive Definition" criticizes what he terms "radical feminists" for their attempts to

expand the definitions of rape into more specific categories such as acquaintance rape and date rape as problematic (Burgess-Jackson, 1995 p.434), and that "the vagueness [of the word rape] makes discussion and disagreement possible" (Burgess-Jackson, 1995 p.453). However, Burgess-Jackson's belief in keeping discussions of rape ambiguous only does so to keep rape a pervasive aspect of society, it prevents experiences from being named by women and other rape victims. Through their failed attempts to navigate biblical narratives and in blaming feminist scholars for using rape in a nuanced way, writers like Nobel Burgess-Jackson, and van Seters continue to negatively influence not only how biblical rape victims are silenced but those in actuality. It is because there is blame assigned to feminist scholars that the movement away from old scriptural ideas does not happen. Inevitably, progress is significantly slowed down as more walls are erected and voices continually disregarded. There is no livelihood without a voice, no movement will happen regarding rape culture. We as biblical scholars, cannot continue to do the same things to rape victims that have been done to them for centuries.

For example, feminist biblical scholar Caroline Blyth has already addressed the views held by Nobel, Burgess-Jackson, and van Seters. As Blyth states, "Both the patriarchal discourse of this narrative and its interpretive traditions can and should be taken to task for this perpetual silencing of Dinah's character" (Blyth, 2010 p.6-7). This thesis agrees with Blyth's view but suggests it should be taken further by criticizing the interpretations of rape narratives and the overall cultural impact on the modern world, and why the rape myths spawned from biblical interpretations have been allowed to become part of mainstream culture.

Likewise, Susanne Scholz, in her book *Sacred Witness: Rape in the Hebrew Bible*, "what is required is a willingness to wrestle with biblical 'rape texts' and the history of their interpretation" (Scholz, 2010 p.1). Scholz's viewpoint that biblical rape narratives should be

read along with contemporary debates on rape is essential in stopping rape and rape culture. While this approach to reading rape narratives is not frequent outside of biblical and religious studies, it is inevitably important in creating change. In agreement, it is this thesis' position that reading rape narratives and their interpretations is essential to understanding the pervasiveness of rape culture and why few changes have taken place. Scholz continues, "The intellectual marginalization of biblical literature is regrettable, because the Hebrew Bible has much to contribute to the historical, sociological, political, and religious understanding of rape" (Scholz, 2010 p. 1). What Scholz means is that ignoring the significance biblical literature plays in everyday aspects of life, whether obvious or not, is important. Through the engagement of these rape narratives, while acknowledging the failures of previous biblical scholarship, there is hope in gaining insight into the massive body of work that is the Hebrew Bible. In doing so, we can gain an understanding of how so little has been done to move the needle regarding the treatment of rape victims and the conviction of rapists—and how inevitably secular Western society is affected by religious interpretation and beliefs.

Furthermore, Leah Rediger Schulte, in her book *The Absence of God in Biblical Rape Narratives,* is critical of rape narratives and shows their use as metaphors for breaking Abraham's covenant. Schulte states, "A reoccurring theme in each rape scene involves the issue of correct relationships within the Israelite community leading to correct marriages and correct sexual relationships with regards as to who inherits the covenant" (Schulte, 2017 p.76). This means that each rape narrative represents a time when the covenant was broken or when people failed to keep God's rules. Through this perceived failure social unrest occurs which leads to state-sanctioned rape, as with the six hundred women from Judges 21, Tamar's rape as a metaphor for David's rape of Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 12-13, and the rape of Dinah, in Genesis 34, as criticisms against Jacob for breaking racial lines when settling in a foreign land. Each rape narrative shows how the resulting failure of men, or the patriarchal

structure happens not only on the bodies of women but to women themselves. This reinforces this work's belief that silence is something that is, more often than not, forced onto women as both objects of male ideologies and rape victims.

Regarding this thesis, it does not matter whether Dinah, Tamar, the Unnamed Woman, or the six hundred women are seen as historical or literary figures by the interpreters. This thesis chooses to approach each narrative's rape victim as both partially literary and partially historical. By approaching each woman's narrative in this way there is an insight into the culture of Ancient Israel, insights into the periods in which interpreters lived, and the impact on contemporary culture. What matters is that their narratives are discussed, and there is a movement away from the old scripts that keep them stuck in the silent spaces where their voices are lost which enables the perpetuation of rape culture. Researching biblical rape narratives should not follow conventions that do not allow free movement to happen, it is not a science-based research approach that uses finite data to rely on analysis. It is not this research's position either, to approach biblical narratives and their interpretations as finite truths but as beliefs and opinions from specific cultural eras in time. As Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza asserts in her book *Wisdom Ways*, the process of biblical interpretation:

> does not mean to use methods or techniques that guarantee [an] outcome. Rather, it means to use methods as dance steps in such a way that the moving powers of biblical texts that have been frozen or fossilized by the regimes of domination are released… (Fiorenza, 2006 p.136).

The essential aspect of biblical interpretation is prescriptive instead of descriptive (Fiorenza, 2006 p.136). What this means is that both the biblical texts and biblical interpretations have been used in tandem to keep the patriarchal status quo. This thesis identifies the elements that aid in the dominant discourse of women's silence. Moreover, how both the interpretation of

biblical texts and the texts themselves are major contributing factors in the ideological construction of rape culture. In short, this research aims to view the narratives as descriptive while being aware of their previous prescriptive uses. Through the identification of the elements that aid in forced silence, voices may begin to be heard again as we encounter cultural changes.

Through learned behaviour, rape, rape myths, and rape culture have become accepted aspects of society and should be understood through their socio-cultural contexts as consequences of the biblical interpretations of rape narratives and the false spreading of rape myths. Moreover, the encompassing aspects of rape, as they appear on film and television, should be analysed as products of untrue rape myths. While thoughts on rape may vary in our contemporary world, depending on country and situation, the fact remains that rape is a genuine and ongoing endemic problem. In thinking about the ongoing crisis, the culture of rape provides, this thesis must convey methodological concerns that contradict principles supported by biblical scholars. As stated previously, this thesis asks questions surrounding two aims concerning how biblical stories have led to a culture of rape that inherently silences women and how cinema has found itself playing an intrinsic part in the way society views rape, also silencing women.

- Why are so many victims of rape silenced and disempowered as they disappear from their own stories?
- How is it that the culture of rape and rape myth has come to affect the lives of women, children, and (even) men?
- How has the dissemination of rape myths affected film and television and its contribution to silencing and disempowering rape victims?

Any methodology that seeks to answer these questions and critiques the foundations on which the culture of rape has been built must concern itself with feminism, explicitly feminist hermeneutics, and feminist film theory—and engage with the impact of silenced rape victims, especially silenced women. This thesis is not about refuting the claims made by biblical scholars of the past or the androcentric interpretations of rape narratives in the Hebrew Bible. Those words and beliefs belong to history, they became cornerstones of society that promoted rape and women's silence. Instead, this thesis is concerned with deconstructing the foundations on which the culture of rape has been founded and its cultural efforts to silence women in anticipation of new narratives that one day may emerge.

The Source Material

The most crucial primary source to use regarding this thesis is the Hebrew Bible because it is the text that forms the biblical narratives. It should be noted that the New Testament has not been used in this thesis. The main figure in the New Testament is Christ and not how daily life was to be lived. This thesis recognizes that there are instances of rape in the New Testament such as the punishment of Jezebel through rape in Revelation 2:22–23 and the metaphorical representation of Rome as The Whore of Babylon in Revelation 17:5. Because the book of Revelation, which focuses mostly on the events leading up to the apocalypse and not the establishment society, is a unique text that would be better analysed on its own. Old Testament biblical interpretations written by religious writers are at the core of understanding their significance in Western society. Within the patristic writers' interpretations, there is little benevolence toward females as their sense of decency does not extend to the lives of women. Through the influence of the early analyses of biblical narratives, rape culture, and rape myths were created. Because of their interpretations and rhetoric, biblical interpreters became responsible for every woman that will be raped in the future. Religious interpreters used in this thesis could not and did not understand their

religiosity without using harmful rhetoric regarding sexuality. Although sex is not a motivating factor of rape, the intentional misuse of this has reduced the violent act of rape as a consequence of sexual desires. Despite many of these writers claiming to be pious, their virginity and their love for all things sexual, even their repulsion towards any form of unnecessary sexual interaction and women in general, is what made women a target. Patristic writers used phallocentric ideas to seek control over women, their bodies, and their access to them; without needing to seek consent. What this does is blame womankind for a man's uncontrollable desire to dominate women through their fear of the Other.

Through patristic writing, how women are silenced is revealed—and how they are silenced is a significant factor in the emergence of rape, rape culture, rape myths, and the subsequent cultural impact of film and television. Religious writers, such as Flavius Josephus (47AD-100AD), a Pharisee changed rape narratives. In his book, *Jewish Antiquities,* Josephus uses erasure. The elements of domestic violence and murder in Judges 19-21, as well as the incestuous rape in 2 Samuel 13, are all upended. What remains of the prominent rape narratives are the facts that only aid in keeping Judaism safe from scrutiny. In a letter to Eustochium, St Jerome (347AD-410AD) counselled the young woman to stay locked in a room or risk being ruined. It was through the Genesis 34 narrative that he justified doing so. St Jerome believed the Dinah narrative was a means to force other young curious women to stay unseen and silent, thus upholding masculinist ideations that forced women to be responsible for their purity. Augustine of Hippo (354AD-430AD) is considered the patristic writer most responsible for everything the Western world associates with sexuality by plucking, from near obscurity, the modest Genesis narrative of Adam and Eve. By this, it seems that St Augustine wants to prove that had Adam and Eve not sinned through sexual impulse, then procreating would have happened differently, and humanity would not be

shamed with sexual desires. In his book, *Against Two Letters of the Pelagians,* Augustine writes:

> …marriage was appointed by God for the sake of the ordinance of the begetting of children, so I say that the propagation of children to be begotten could not have taken place without sexual impulse, and without intercourse of husband and wife, even in Paradise, if children were begotten there. But whether such impulse and intercourse would have existed, as is now the case with shameful lust, if no one had sinned, here is the question concerning which I shall argue hereafter (Homes, Wallis, and Warfield, 1887).

In this passage, Augustine blames the sins of Adam and Eve for how children are now born through shameful lust. The shame that was felt by committing a sexual act through lust is the main reason men now must toil to get food and women will bear pain during childbirth. As St Augustine's theory of original sin, confirmed within him, it was the "Fall in the Garden of Eden" that caused the descent of humanity into the darkness of sexual desires—and Eve was solely responsible. Augustine spent his life denying his sexual desires through confession and writing his carnal desires to God. In doing so, he was attempting to live as Adam before the Fall as "he persuaded himself that it was no mere fable or myth. It was the key to everything" (Greenblatt, 2017 para.21). As a result of Augustine's interpretation of the Fall, beliefs in sex, and sexuality ruined the Western perspective (Burrus, Jordan, MacKendrick, 2010 p.2), therefore, his views and opinions deserve to be questioned. Because Augustine wrote extensively on sexual desires the effects of such are still prominent, so much so that "four in ten Americans today profess to believe in its (the Fall) literal truth" (Greenblatt, 2017 para. 21).

Furthermore, Augustine's book, *The* City *of God,* shows his narrow understanding of rape as something the victim deserves, a form of prophylactic punishment. Chastity was

necessary, especially in the male-centric world in which he believed; women were governed and punished based on their predilection to sin. Augustine's writings show how little value was given to women's experiences, the consideration for their status as rape victims is entirely erased and exchanged as women become martyrs for God's cause, the more important purpose. In the Middle Ages, Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) believed rape was also a way to humble women. His book, *The Twelve Degrees of Humility and Pride*, rebukes women for letting their eyes wander in curiosity, affirming there should be only two reasons when they are allowed to let their eyes wander. First, when a person seeks help, as written in Psalms 120:1, "In my distress I cry to the Lord, that he may answer me: 'Deliver me, O Lord, from lying lips, from a deceitful tongue'" (Psalms 120:1;2, 2007). The second is when offering help to others as described in John 6:5 when Jesus feeds the five thousand, "when he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, 'where are we to buy bread for these people to eat" (John 5:6, 2007). At any other time, women were meant to live their lives in seclusion, quietness, and far away from prying eyes. Martin Luther (1583-1546), the man responsible for the Reformation and the cause of considerable change within the church, offered nothing supporting female rape victims in his *Genesis Works*. For Luther, there was no such thing as a female rape victim, rather the victim was the male member of the woman's family. This means the rape victim becomes the family member responsible for the woman and the one who had personhood in the eyes of the law. Luther used his interpretations to capitalize on familial sympathy, directed towards fathers, brothers, and husbands, by maintaining that the woman is to blame for being raped. The impractical and insensitive manner in which women were treated is dangerous, causing a significant impact on how rape myths and rape culture would come to exist today.

Women, as Rosemary Radford Ruether states, "[to] the Church Fathers. . . are defined as analogous to the body in relation to the ruling mind. . . either obediently

subjugated body (the wife) or sensual boldness in revolt against the governance of reason (the harlot)" (Ruether, 1983 p.17). Women are, in this way, pigeonholed into two categories that negate their victimhood, and because they are not able to reason correctly, therefore justifiably rape-able. The biblical interpretations behind the rape narratives are misogynistic toward women through the denigration of their worth (Bal, 1987 p.30). Targeting women in this way objectifies them as they lose their identities as humans and become chattel, controlled by patriarchal culture without being consulted. Women, both then and now, often face impossible situations, where they are purposefully silenced in the most extreme ways. Moreover, women are also told to appreciate the control men have over them that keeps them safe. If a woman's appreciation of the safety a man can provide is not sufficient, then a woman could be raped. The woman, then, will be responsible for being raped because she did not appreciate the safety that a man could provide for her. Women continually encounter violence in their everyday lives and are forced to internalize their fears, desires, and stories. The struggle between following the rules designed to keep women safe only ends up controlling them more.

The primary sources used in the second half of this thesis involve various film and television narratives from the 20th and 21st centuries that have an element of rape or sexual assault. There are numerous and obvious depictions of rape and sexual assault in film and television, however, this thesis has chosen to focus on ones that depict aspects of known rape myths. In addition, the rape narratives have been selected based on their cultural impact and ability to start conversations. For example, *The Accused* was the first film to exclusively discuss rape. As Tonya Horeck states, *The Accused* "is a film that confronts and fights back against sexual violence" (Horeck, 2004 p.96). While the film was applauded for its important narrative about rape, it was also criticized for its racial discrimination and inclusivity of only white victims. The film started conversations about the inconsistencies, treatment, and

exclusion of women of colour as recognized rape victims. The narratives that have been chosen potentially both reflect and construct ideologies, depending on the time in which they were made. For example, *A Streetcar Named Desire* reflected the time in which it was created by removing the rape scene from the film to comply with Production Code rules. The film also created a segue into idolizing hyper-masculinity through Stanley Kowalski's behaviour.

Film and television shows are important cultural reflectors and creators, especially in America and Britain, because of this it can also be asserted that much of what society understands about rape and rape myths are disseminated through film and television. The approach to each rape myth discussed as they are depicted in film or television shows is done in a manner that both criticizes the initial critiques and looks beyond the narrative. British feminist film theorists such as Claire Johnston rejected the sociological approach to cinema, which was only a marginal exploration of a film's meaning. Instead, Johnston advocated for a more in-depth look at films, "for example, how lighting, editing, and camera movement work together with or separately from the stories and characters to create a hidden structure or subtexts of meaning" (Chaudhuri, 2006 p.8). In her own words, Claire Johnston asserts:

> Any evolutionary strategy must challenge the depiction of reality; it is not enough to discuss the oppression of women within the text of the film; the language of the cinema/the depiction of reality must also be interrogated so that a break between ideology and text is affected (Johnston, 1975 p.28).

The passage above points out the important and often overlooked critical analysis that would be a better focus when discussing film and television. It would be more conducive if each piece of media were examined in such a manner as to leave more questions than answers. Given the nature of this thesis and the real-life implications behind the depictions of rape narratives, this leaves the reader with an uncomfortable feeling about on-screen representations of rape. It is the careful deconstruction and analysis of each rape narrative

depicted in a show or film that will help contribute to understanding how imposed silence affects rape culture overall. Moreover, it is important to understand why production codes were created and used to aid in androcentric narratives—"filmic representations can also, however, exert a powerful influence on the lives of real women" (Thornham, 2010 p. 14). Through mass-produced images, women are objectified, as much of what is seen is disseminated through a masculine lens and the male gaze.

The secondary sources for this thesis consist of feminist interpretations from both biblical scholars and various film and television show critics. In addition, film and television reviews and interviews will be used to aid in showing the impact of silence. Feminist biblical and film scholars who criticize culture enable others to question age-old principles by asking new questions and becoming the ones capable of bringing change. Therefore, the feminist writers, whose ideas this thesis proposes to build upon, all implore others to break away from thoughts that no longer serve women or the world and upset the foundations with which they exist. Johanna Stiebert, a professor of the Hebrew Bible, has advocated for the recognition that the term rape culture has origins in both the biblical world and our present society (Stiebert, 2018 p.33) (Stiebert, 2019 p.1), which can be portrayed in various cultural contexts. The customs and visions that have consistently been used were carried throughout time into the 21st century as we see distinct religious, political, and social interests are still used to impose silence on women.

Susanne Scholz, a professor in Old Testament studies, has written various works on the significance of rape in biblical narratives and the subsequent impact they have on women's lives. In her book *Introducing Women to the Hebrew Bible,* she writes:

> The biblical record deliberately distorts how Israelite women and men lived because the Hebrew Bible was created by elite men with distinct religious, political, and social interests who tried to advance their vision about life, customs, and order in Ancient Israel (Scholz, 2007 p.63).

In the passage, Scholz asserts that religious interpreters are responsible for the treatment of women due to their numerous interests in various aspects of society. All of this is made possible through the deliberate exclusion of vital information. Stiebert also echoes these sentiments:

> A second reason for identifying and naming rape in biblical texts is because interpretive strategies that assert objectivity and thereby erase or neutralize a topic such as sexual violence detract from the urgency of confronting, resisting, and eliminating sexual violence (Stiebert, 2019 p.8).

Moreover, it is because criticism of sexual violence and "sympathy for victim-survivors seldom made it into commentaries and textbooks written for students of theology who train for the ministry, teaching positions, or counselling responsibilities" (Scholz, 2007 p.76). As a result, helping rape victims was not a priority, which causes more women and rape victims to fall into the silent spaces, with little likelihood of making it out. The most crucial thing humanity can do, both inside and outside of academia, is to question the existing culture. If we do not begin to question the ambiguity of biblical literature, then rape narratives will continue to be turned into love stories as with early church interpretations. Early church interpretations will be addressed in an upcoming chapter.

Caroline Blyth, a religious studies scholar, has written extensively about the silence Dinah experiences in the Genesis 34 narrative. As shown above, Blyth uses her writing to implore biblical scholars to ask tough questions and resist further silencing women. If we, scholars, and society alike, do not begin to listen to women's stories, then we become unconscious observers of violence. Blyth asserts to those who confront these rape narratives, "There is nothing wrong with 'spitting out' rather than 'swallowing' any 'unpalatable' ideology that they encounter within the biblical material" (Blyth, 2008 p.6). This means the accepted androcentric ideas that do not intend to represent women do not need to be considered. The masculinist voices have never and will never represent the true voice of

women men do not and cannot know what it is like to be a silenced woman. Rape as an act of aggression has rarely been recognized by religious interpreters, as Stiebert states, "…the cavalier taking of women for sex is rarely depicted with outrage in either the biblical texts or their interpretation, nor is it called what it is rape" (Stiebert, 2018 p.33), which needs to be challenged. As an act mostly aimed at women "…rape should always be recognised as a brutalising act of male violence; it cannot be confused with any form of tolerable sexual behaviour" (Blyth, 2008 p.35). Attempts to make a rape narrative into a love story or an account of pre-marital sex do so to deny the violence rape causes. It is through imploring people to speak up and recognize rape as an assault on a woman's body, the foundations of rape culture will continue to crack. Instead of facilitating a deeper sense of oppression for rape victims and women, the dark silent spaces they exist within will have a light shone on them.

By considering the impact that film and television have on how a woman is perceived in society feminist film scholars began to question the accepted image of women in the cinema by breaking down how it aids in silencing women. The use of silence on women can be used to hinder their autonomy and compromise their personhood. The cross between androcentrism and feminism is where cultures are questioned. As Sue Thornham states of feminist film theory, "the beginning of feminist film theory, then, forms part of what Laura Mulvey has called the 'wider explosive meeting between feminism and patriarchal culture'…" (Laura Mulvey quoted in Thornham, 2005 p.2). Women have always been forced to live within the confines of patriarchal culture, but it has only been through feminist theories and now film theories that women have begun to understand how their voices and their lives became trapped. Sharon Marcus states, "…society has yet to exist that sees women as full human beings who matter as much as men do" because women have been continuously Othered without any respect for their personhood (Marcus, 2019 p.425). As

Claire Johnston states of deconstructing the images of women on the screen, "It requires a revolutionary strategy which can only be based on an analysis of how film operates as a medium within a specific cultural system" (Johnston, 1975 p.5). The inequity of power both on screen and in production was used to ensure women were kept where they 'needed' to be, silently behind men and as the other. Johnston further states, "…the fact that there is a far greater differentiation of men's roles than of women's roles in the history of cinema related to sexist ideology itself, and the basic opposition which places man inside history, and women as ahistoric and eternal" (Johnston, 1975 p24). This means a woman's subjectivity is never permanent, nor is her body, her power, or her voice. It is because of this impermanence, using rape myths within rape-driven narratives, that women are forced into silence and the cultural implications can affect a woman's livelihood.

How women are perceived as the Other in film and television is further emphasized using rape narratives that, as Sarah Projansky states, "…form a complex of cultural discourses central to the very structure of stories people tell about themselves and others" (Projansky, 2001 p.12). It is through the depictions of rape and rape myths that the violent act is normalized, which "…reflect and underscore rape cultures" (Stiebert, 2018 p.45). These depictions of rape reduce women to nothing more than bodies used to reinforce androcentric power dynamics. This also tells women that the only influence they have is within their socio-sexual currency and will lose that power if they are raped. In this regard, some representations in film and television, especially early on, do so to preserve the insidious biblical narratives that in many ways condoned rape. An instance like this can be seen in *Cagney and Lacey* (1981), when Christine Cagney a detective, is raped. Before she is raped Cagney is admired by her fellow male officers, however, after she is subjected to stares and whispers that move to question her ability as a detective. As Helena Michie, in her book, *The*

Flesh Made Word: Female Figures and Women's Bodies asserts about the transformation of women's power into abridged language:

> Women's power under patriarchy comes only at a great physical and psychic cost; its transformation into language, as the halting lines and gaps between words indicate, is equally painful—the gaps themselves are scars and ruptures in the text (Michie, 1990 p.138).

The passage points out how women's voices are silenced, it is through the transformation of female power into language that silent spaces emerge, trapping them inside. What this means is through examining how images of women were established and how they disappear within themselves. Then we can start to question the underpinning aspects of rape culture, "…if women's bodies are seen to appear and to disappear at particular moments in the text and history, this liberation, based on the energy of movement and subversion, will become a possibility" (Michie, 1990 p.8). This means what is required, regarding film and television, is the same as what Blyth and Johnston have suggested about interpreting women. Not only does the language of film and television require discussion but the depictions of women and rape victims need to be challenged. If this does not happen, patriarchal beliefs will continue to dominate the media and inform negatively about women's lives that continue to see them exist as the Silent Other.

The Thematic Elements of Rape Narratives

In dealing with the effects of rape culture, rape, and rape myth on victims, the how is the most important aspect to consider. Such themes as silence, usurping female voices, stealing women's identity, female disempowerment, the annihilation of women's bodies and minds, and the disappearance of women from within their narratives should be considered. How did rape culture come to exist and what elements of it are caused by interpretations of biblical narratives are central to breaking down the foundations of cultures that are designed to not only keep

women as second-class citizens but allow for their rape and murder, while also forcing them into a silent space.

As Deena Metzger asserts, "after rape, there is a terrible silence" (Metzger, 1976 p.405); silence is an all-encompassing form of stillness that prevents anything further from happening. There is no justice for rape victims, no autonomy, and no recognition that something was taken from them. The silenced female voice not only refers to the ardent lack of a woman's physical voice, metaphorical voice, and autonomy but also to how women are not allowed any control over their lives. What is left is a dark, silent space where women and victims exist, incomplete and alone. It is essential to understand how women's physical voices are silenced and how they are unable to be participants in their own lives. Women continue to be treated like domesticated animals. Historically, women were not permitted any power in their lives, especially not over their sexuality. Women's voices were usurped and replaced with the voices of men that reinforced patriarchal ideologies. As a result, women's lives and their voices were controlled by the family unit which gave it the most power over her and her sexuality. This idea can be substantiated below with the quote by Mary Jacobus who writes about the lack of female voice in literary works:

> One might speculate that the function of the female 'victim'. . . is to provide the mute sacrifice on which theory itself may be founded; the woman is silenced so that the theorist can make the truth come out of her mouth (Jacobus, 1982 p.118).

As addressed in the quote female victims function as mouthpieces to the wider masculinist voices. This means that the victim's truth is overtaken by more rational male voices. This concept transfers to the silence that is understood in the cinematic world as well as television. In some cases, the very idea of rape was cause for absolute silence, in films like *A Streetcar Named Desire* where rape was only alluded to as a violent act. For decades in the film and television worlds, rape narratives were rarely seen in media, it was all but banned or censored

and only used for narrative progression purposes, along with the voices and lives of rape victims themselves.

Men take women for granted by disempowering them through purposefully silencing and appropriating their voices. As Liz Kelly and Jill Radford assert,

> There are numerous ways in which women's experiential knowledge is denied, invalidated, and forced underground. . . Men, who as the [predominant] perpetrators of sexual violence have a vested interest in women's silence… [additionally androcentric culture] operates by the strategy of inclusion and exclusion, including what men define as violating/abusive and excluding much of what women experience as violating and abusive (Kelly and Radford, 1996 p.20).

This means that men are in control over the narratives presented to the world. Moreover, male control over female autonomy, knowledge, validation, and their socio-sexual currency is at the root of what women experience in their everyday lives. On-screen, this element comes down to the controlling production companies and censorship committees which have lasted for decades. Religious and personal beliefs about the appropriate depiction of life by the studio head and censors were applied to film production codes had complete control over the woman's narrative that involved little to no female input. This was because the Production Code, a set of censorship guidelines released in the 1930s, was designed, in part, by a panel of clergymen which became the best way to appease the church (Leff and Simmons, 2001 p.54). As the panel consisted of clergymen the views of women were not included in the creation of censorship rules. However, women were used to spread the word on which films to boycott; a task given to them by the very same clergymen who sought censorship (Leff and Simmons, 2001 p.53). Patriarchal culture creates a system in many places where women struggle for the right to have basic human dignity. This is evident in America's gender-based pay systems that still see women making thirty cents to every dollar a man makes. As well, women still do not officially

hold equal rights to men even though the Equal Rights Amendment was passed, it has yet to be ratified into law. This is a systemic failure that even though women have fought to gain equal rights, the male majority can still keep women in lower positions. It affirms that women did not and do not exist without comments from men; this is what helps make rape and the culture of rape possible.

Rape happens to the bodies of its victims, often causing irreversible damage and pain, both mentally and physically. There are some cases, like in the narrative of Judges 19-21, where the rape victim's body is destroyed, completely in Judges 19: 29,30, or like Selena from *Dolores Claiborne* (1995) who suffers from a psychotic break. Selena's mother is left helpless, wanting answers as to who hurt her daughter and to understand the pain that Selena endured. Understanding the bodily damage and the mental destruction of the rape victims is essential in understanding how rape culture and rape myths have contributed to preventing rape victims from telling their stories, to the most horrific and extreme degrees. In her book, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*, Elaine Scarry comments that:

> [Pain] happens, of course, not several miles below our feet or many miles above our heads but within the bodies of persons who inhabit the world. . . Physical pain does not simply resist language but actively destroys it, bringing about an immediate reversion to a state anterior to language, to the sounds and cries a human being makes before language is learned (Scarry, 1988 p.4).

The passage above affirms that when a victim endures torment, of any kind, language cannot happen as pain takes a person's power away. Fundamentally, as power is related to the opposition, those who cannot use language have no power to resist This means that while rape often happens right in front of our eyes, we often miss it because we simply do not wish to see it. Moreover, the silence that comes from rape victims does not always allow advocacy for change to happen. Through years of burying the metaphorical and literal bodies of rape

victims, rape has been permitted to continue, and so too are the silent voices of the victims that survive. When a rape victim's body is destroyed it forces the anguish they endured to be buried deep below our feet. Society is not allowed and refuses to look at its ugly reflection of the culture it has helped create. The ongoing theme throughout many rape narratives involves a destroyed female body or mind that is left to exist in a silent space. Instances of these narratives occur frequently in film and television, especially in rape-driven narratives. Some of the most prominent examples of the discarded rape victim plot device can be found in *Law and Order, Special Victims Unit* (1999). The show often begins with a discarded rape victim's body, or a violently distorted image of a woman covered in blood and bruises. The pain we witness is clear but far too often the public turns away because confronting the pain is far more difficult than ignoring it. When this happens, society disregards the fact that these bodies were once living souls.

The all-encompassing result of silencing women and disempowering them is the disappearance of women as subjects from their narratives altogether. Women become objects; designed by rape culture to be denied ownership as primary characters and subjects. Sue Lees states, "rape is the ultimate denial of female subjectivity in a culture where a whole range of sexual practices operates in male interests" (Lees, 1997 p.xiii). The denial of women's subjectivity expands beyond being silenced rape victims to being seen as human beings who deserve basic human rights. As a result, women are Othered, and the way they are permitted to move as autonomous beings is affected by the overall androcentric culture. Aspects of this can be seen in the biblical narratives, which have some of the strongest examples of how women are othered and removed from ancient stories. This is true for not only rape narratives but a wide range of texts. For example, in the Genesis Creation story, Eve is mentioned last, after the creation of Adam and all the animals. She is introduced as Adam's helper and is given no other identity until after the Fall. Women, in biblical narratives, are perfunctory,

they are minor characters, involved in a plot that centres around a male protagonist (Davies, 2003 p.4). Once women serve their purpose in the texts, they are not useful anymore, which means they are no longer needed to help the plot.

In addition, in film and television, even in films marketed as feminist movies, the narrative is often exchanged or changed for the bigger picture. In the entertainment industry, this can be seen in films like *The Prince of Tides* (1991) where a female rape victim is used as the means for a male rape victim to find his voice, which forces the female character to fade into the background. Women's stories become thinly disguised plot devices, where no surmountable justice is served. This leads to a continual process behind the culture of rape that sees women repeatedly raped by rapists, writers, and filmmakers.

In considering the overall methodological reasoning and the thematic elements being investigated throughout this thesis, it is best to assume any conclusions will lead to more questions than answers. As Sarah Harding (as quoted in Mary Hawkesworth's article "Knowers, Knowing, Known: Feminist Theory and Claims of Truth") states, "We need to learn how to see our goal for the present moment as a kind of illuminating 'rifling' between and over the beats of various patriarchal theories and our transformations of them. . ." (Hawkesworth, 1989 p.537). The idea of a firm and nicely wrapped up understanding of how women are silenced does not suit the overall cause for progress. For those who encounter this thesis, it is meant to be as troublesome and unsettling as the rape narratives themselves. Progress is made through the uncomfortable and the taboo being brought out in the open. The next chapter looks at feminist scholarship since the 1970s to see how modern society has arrived at its current understanding of rape, rape culture, and rape myth. Moreover, the chapter addresses how the establishment of Production Codes, censorship, and androcentric narratives have dramatically impacted the ability of women's voices to be heard. These are the initial aspects behind rape that we must examine if we are to unsettle the foundations of rape culture.

Chapter Two

Defining Rape: Feminist Scholarship Since the 1970s

"So much of our culture caters to giving men what they want."

Bad Feminist Essays (Gay, 2014 p.150)

What is Feminism: The First-Wave to the Fourth-Wave

Before continuing onto the section below, which gives a brief description of feminist scholarship on rape, it is important to address the polyvocality of feminism and how this thesis defines it. The feminist beliefs someone has depends on factors such as era, generation, country, race, orientation, and individual experiences. Feminist movements are described as *waves* from the first wave, beginning in the late 19th century, to the most recent, the fourth wave. It is important to note that the different waves of feminism did not have exact beginning and end dates, they work more like intersecting parts of cultural movements. First-wave feminism was characterized by the suffragette movement that sought to win voting rights for women. However, the suffragette movement did not include women of colour due to the chances of racial lines hindering the movement's cause. Out of the suffragette movement, second-wave feminism is rooted in the 1960s equal rights movement. Second-wave feminism was more concerned with equal pay, personal and social rights, sexual liberation, and breaking gender stereotypes. It was during this time the Equal Rights Amendment was passed in the United States, which legally guaranteed the protection of all Americans regardless of gender. Third-wave feminism is the feminist movement that was born out of a need for the inclusivity of queer and people of colour that the previous movements left behind. In her article "Third-Wave Feminism and the Defense of Choice," Claire Snyder-Hall asserts that this feminist movement, "begins with the assumption that

women do not share common gender identity, a set of experiences and that they often interpret similar experiences differently" (Snyder-Hall p.259). The passage shows how third-wave feminism can be considered the movement that began to show feminist ambiguity. Just as the world changes so too does feminism and the idea that not everyone needs to believe in the same feminist causes. With the rise of the #MeToo movement, a new form of feminist thought was needed that could utilize technology, empower others, and seek intersectionality. This wave sought to include LGBTQ persons, and men, advocate for victims of sexual assault, and for victims to tell their stories. However, like the other waves of feminism, the current fourth wave is not without its faults as it moves to be less of a heterosexual white women's cause and more inclusive. It remains to be seen what will continue to emerge out of current feminist efforts.

At its core, feminist thought is designed to allow women (and minorities) full development of their potential, recognizing women's needs as a human right, advocating for full equality of the LGBTQ community, and participating in the freedom of choice. As stated above, there are still many roads to travel and barriers to break. One major fault of the feminist movement is the idea that feminism is one singular set of ideologies and that all feminists think alike, we do not. The standard that we hold feminism should be reasonable, it cannot be everything we want it to be, and it does not always make the best decisions about advocating for equal rights.

Overall, in terms of this thesis' perspective on how feminism is defined and its relation to rape, it agrees that "a feminist perspective, with its emphasis on context, sees rape as a logical manifestation of prevailing social and cultural values" (Aleman and Lavitt, 1996 p.17). Rape and the images of such are one of the resulting aspects of rape culture that desperately need to be addressed. As a society, we are continuously bombarded with images of women portrayed as potential victims of sexual assault who are doomed objects. The

analysis and ideas to follow are comprised of both third and fourth-wave feminist ideas, which note that the feminist movement needs to do better on its part of representation and advocacy. Moreover, this thesis agrees with Roxanne Gay that "feminism is flawed, but it offers, at its best, a way to navigate the shifting cultural climate" (Gay, 2014 p.7). Throughout the following sections aspects of different feminist cultural movements about rape are highlighted and how they have both helped silence women and given them their voices back. These issues have long been ignored.

Defining Rape: Feminist Scholarship on Rape, Rape Culture, and the Rape Myth

Since the 1970s, when rape began to be openly examined, feminist theorists and scholars have spent considerable time discussing and debating rape, and its place in Western society, which centred around white heterosexual upper-middle-class women. While "feminist analysis is inseparable from the anti-rape movement as a whole, [it is] not coterminous with it" (Rose, 1977 p.75), and this is where aspects of the early feminist movements contradicted each other. From before the 1960s and clear through into the 1970s, rape victims were constantly met with suspicion and contempt. Moreover, police departments often worked hard at scrutinizing female rape victims. For example, a Chicago police training manual from 1973 "instructed officers that the first thing [who reports rape] is lying" (quoted in Rose, 1977 p.77). This is because the male-dominated criminal justice system reinforced the systemic suspicions of female rape victims, which continued throughout the legal process. Film theorists also joined the discussion through the analysis of rape in film and television. Whether a theorist agrees or disagrees about the pervasiveness of rape in society, there is no doubt that great lengths have gone into questioning biases, breaking stereotypes, and creating a new space in which to discuss rape, rape myth, and rape culture. This chapter presents a

very brief overview of some feminist definitions of rape, as well as the contribution film and television have made in silencing women. While this chapter highlights discussions about rape, it is not designed to be an extensive treatment of the definition of rape. Due to its prevalence, rape is not easily defined because it is so violent and damaging. Part of the problem with rape and rape culture is the tendency to generalize cases of rape and rape victims. Rape needs to be addressed with a trauma and survivor-based analysis on a case-by-case basis. Moreover, the impact rape may have on the lives of rape victims and survivors needs to be considered.

Susan Brownmiller called the first "rape celebrity" (Cohen, 2015 para. 1), wrote *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape* in 1975, which brought discussions about rape into mainstream society. Brownmiller's work may have been considered groundbreaking, but her work only provided a marginal step forward in understanding rape and rape culture. In her book, she states:

> had it not been for the accident of biology, an accommodation regarding the locking together of two separate parts, penis into vagina, there would be neither copulation nor rape as we know it. [Moreover] man's structural capacity to rape and women's corresponding structural vulnerability are as basic to the physiology of both our sexes as the primal act of sex itself (Brownmiller, 1975 p.13-14).

What the passage above essentially states are that rape is an inherent biological disposition, that men are born with it simply because the penis can enter the vagina and other bodily orifices. It is due to the woman's vulnerability, which allows for her to be raped; simply put, it is an unavoidable act of biology which made women more rape-able an assertion that is not shared by this thesis. Brownmiller further asserts that rape is a conscious means that men use to force women to live in fear (Brownmiller, 1975 p.15). It is because of this ideology it became necessary for men to protect their female family members. As men began assuming

the position of lords and protectors of women any crime against her body or chastity became a crime against her male relatives. A contemporary of Brownmiller, Catherine MacKinnon, also had decisive ideas about rape and societal power dynamics. MacKinnon believed that feminism was the theory behind the eroticization of dominance and submission (MacKinnon, 1987 p.50) which is what created sex/gender difference in society. MacKinnon's ideas were less based on biology and more on rape as a manifestation of power in its gendered form. Society is designed in androcentric terms women do not share in the balance of power, which is why it swings favourably for men.

Catherine MacKinnon's book, *Feminism Unmodified: Discourses on Life and Law*, is based on her presentations and speeches. Concepts such as rape, feminism, and power are all central to heterosexuality, more specifically, a power structure that holds men in a higher position than women. MacKinnon specifies it is "sexualized objectification" (MacKinnon, 1987 p.50) that allows women to be seen as sexualized bodies, which forces women lower on the power structure as they become beings used by men. MacKinnon also asserts that "women know the world is out there because it hits us in the face. Literally. We are raped, battered, pornographed, defined by force, by a world that begins, at least, entirely outside us" (MacKinnon, 1987 p.57). As everything is designed in an androcentric image, women have no choice but to be seen as the other. While both Brownmiller and MacKinnon's ideas are commendable, they are based solely on the patriarchal heteronormative structure. Beliefs such as rape being biological in nature as well as a patriarchal power dynamic are what helps perpetuate the ideas of rape culture. Both biology and societal constructs condone the rape of women because of their perceived vulnerability and their lowly positions within the patriarchal hierarchy. However, one aspect of MacKinnon's work that is agreeable pertains to women's silence. She states:

> women have been silenced as women: we have been told we are stupid because we are women, told that our thoughts are trivial because we are women, told that our experiences as women are unspeakable, told that women can't speak the language of significance, had our ideas appropriated by men, only to find those ideas have suddenly become worthy, even creative (MacKinnon, 1987 p.56-57).

The passage above is where the root of this thesis exists: women's silence, the violation of their bodies and power. Well into the 21st century, women still find their voices used and abused by men. Women's issues, which should be at the forefront of equity, are trivialized, this has become obvious in the United States with the repeal of Roe v. Wade, which had made abortion federally protected, and is now becoming illegal in a growing number of states. Women are being charged with murder in states where laws permit it such as Texas which has made all forms of abortion illegal. After our grandmothers and mothers fought so hard to protect us from unsafe abortions, women today find themselves once again living with fewer rights than men. Silencing rape victims and abortion are not entirely separate points, which makes flagging their connection important. Not only is the stance of this thesis that all women deserve the ability to decide if an abortion is right for them or not, but rape victims need to have that right. Rape victims should not be forced to carry the child of their rapist and subsequently be forced to raise it. However, it has become much more difficult to silence women, as they continually move to pull themselves out of these silent spaces. It is the ideas of feminism, presented in the preceding paragraphs, which created a foundation for scholars to build upon, which helped create the platform on which women can stand in the fight against misogyny and rape culture.

Two main categories of rape will be addressed in the following chapters: stranger rape and acquaintance rape, two umbrella terms that have several smaller categories underneath them. Before the 1980s rape was thought to consist of mostly stranger rape or real

rape, instances where the victim does not know their attacker beforehand. The American feminist scholar Deena Metzger thought stranger rape occurred when women were secluded from a group by a male stranger. In her article "It is Always the Woman who is Raped", Metzger states, "Rape is socially seen as a response (to female seclusion) rather than a provocation—it is the desperate male response to a powerlessness that is confirmed for him by the spectre of female identity" (Metzger, 1976 p.407). This means that Metzger thought stranger rape was more likely to happen when women were caught alone and the only logical response a man had was to rape her. Metzger's thought echoes a similar idea to that of Brownmiller who believed society was designed in such a way that men had personal and political power over women. Men used not only their gender but their penises as a weapon to yield power over women. Men had their free will, and women had their fear (Brownmiller, 1975 p.15). Furthermore, rape is not simply an act of violence towards women but a societal expression by men of learned behaviour. Metzger affirms:

> rape is an aggressive act against women as woman. The rapist is educated to his behaviour by his society, and rape is the extreme manifestation of approved activities in which one segment of society dominates another. Rape is a ritual of power (Metzger, 1976 p.405).

What this concept means is that women function as non-persons in the larger world around them and during a rape, it depersonalizes the female existence; othering them. Women turn into objects, acted upon, by chance, and at the will of men. Society functions in a way that men respond to female powerlessness using rape, regardless of the situation.

In the 1980s, it became clear that acquaintance rape or simple rape was more common than stranger rape. Acquaintance rape also involves the violation of a person's physical body, however, in this instance, the victim knows their attacker in some capacity. In her book, *Sacred Witness*, Susanne Scholz writes that "many women continue to be silent about such an

experience because acquaintance rape is often not recognized as a sexually violent act" (Scholz, 2010 p.29). Because the victim and attacker are associated with each other in some way it might be suspected that the victim is making a false claim or that the physical interaction was consensual. Acquaintance rape challenges the preconceived idea that a stranger is exclusively responsible for all rape victims. More so, it disputed ideas that rapists were crazy, violent men, but ordinary everyday men. Kristen J. Leslie expresses the impact of acquaintance rape on the previously understood ways women could avoid being raped. She states, "I was taught that as long as women locked their doors, moved in mass, had well-lighted sidewalks, and dressed appropriately, the dangers were minimal" (Leslie, 2003 p.1). The threats are much closer than they appear versus the idea of potential stranger dangers, no number of locked doors or brightly lit sidewalks ensure women's safety. When violence and rape no longer just happened outside but within as Leslie continues, "a woman can be raped by someone she knows, trusts, and loves" (Leslie, 2003 p.155), this reduces safe spaces for women to zero. In naming acquaintance rape as a major contributing factor to rape culture, empowers us to name the pain and the violence that oppresses, shames, and silences women and rape victims alike. Sue Lees states that "it is argued that a woman could have avoided rape if she had not laid herself open to attack…or she asked for it and secretly enjoyed it" (Lees, 1997 p.xiii). Regardless of whether a woman is raped by a stranger or an acquaintance, her consent is stolen, meaning her subjectivity as a human being is not considered, and is denied.

Discussions around preventing rape were never about holding men accountable for their actions, instead, women were held responsible for not defending themselves. Women were educated using tools that were not proven to keep them safe. Marcus states, about teaching women to fight, "a self-defense manual based on no evidence…advised women to

be passive and avoid engaging in any kind of resistance" (Marcus, 2019 p.417). This mindset restricted women's daily movements: do not leave too early, do not come home too late, be careful around strangers, travel in groups, learn to fight, and never trust anyone as most are raped by someone they know. The idea that rape is something that can be avoided if a woman did not open herself to an attack or fought harder is at the core of victim blaming and one of the most prominent aspects of rape culture. Lees continues, "On the one hand, rape is often seen as easy to get over, or as an experience which women should 'lie back and enjoy;' and on the other hand, it is also seen as a very serious crime" (Lees, 1997 p.xiii). This passage gets at the root of a major problem behind rape culture, the overpowering inconsistencies that women are forced to face as both rape victims and survivors. The belief that rape should both be enjoyed and taken as a serious offence ensures that women are silenced. It assumes that women not only ask to be raped but that they should take the time to enjoy the experience, being careful not to relish it too much. This perception denies that instances of rape occur and attempts to negate that it is a violent experience. The fact remains that "rape is real, feminist politics must understand rape as real, and a clear fact of women's lives" (Marcus, 1992 p.385), but not a certainty. Also, anything that takes away from the brutal act needs to be challenged and questioned, as ruthlessly as those who deny rape's existence.

As decades passed, innovative ideas and new waves of feminism emerged. More so with social media, news, film, and television constantly at our fingertips, people's conversations about rape have grown and shifted. Rape has progressed from being an inevitable fact in women's lives, due to their perceived biological passivity to being understood with the insight that "…imagine[s] women as neither already raped nor inherently rape-able" (Marcus, 1992 p.387). This idea does not seem to be shared by Linda Nicholson who states, "Feminists have long come to see how claims about the biological causes of

personality and behaviour falsely generalize human societies" (Nicholson, 1994 p.82). Still, the silent space rape victims reside within has depended on the cultural makeup of society, in the religious, political, and social context. Sharon Marcus remarks that "many current theories of rape present rape as an inevitable material fact of life and assume that a rapist's ability to physically overcome his target is the foundation of rape" (Marcus, 1992 p.387). Feminist theorists still understood men as being predisposed to raping because of their superior strength and accused women of not fighting hard enough to escape, which certainly aligns with masculinist theories. It is because of long-held ideologies that rape is regarded as "tantamount to death…[insinuating] that rape can be only feared or legally repaired, not fought" (Marcus, 1992 p.397) which contributes to the imposed silence of women. As Kelly and Radford state of masculinist understanding, "[it] operates by the strategy of inclusion and exclusion: including what men define as violating/abusive and excluding much of what women experience as violating/abusive" (Kelly and Radford, 1996 p.19). Through the act of forcible silencing, women are reduced to otherness, living as rivals to man's fully inhabited sameness.

Currently, in post #MeToo society, conversations around rape are changing again as rape victims and survivors begin to publicly speak about their experiences and by demanding justice. Viewpoints from the past are numerous, and often contradict each other, which at the time may have hindered the progress that was needed to incite change. It is apparent, that there is no one way to understand rape, rape culture, or a rape myth, there are as many theories as there are people in the world. Rape, as Johanna Stiebert states, "is an act that has multiple meanings, depending on the cultural and historical contexts in which it occurs" (Stiebert, 2019 p.3). Through understanding rape in the context of its occurrences, the belief develops that no one event can explain the other. With hope, dialogues that begin with this knowledge are poised to create more thought-provoking conversations and do more to

overcome the foundations of rape culture. Stiebert's definition of rape permits movement away from old scripts, it is here this thesis moves to begin. Both the biblical, film, and television narratives must be analysed through a lens that looks at each account individually—and through a particular cultural lens that looks at how the dominant narratives came to be. In doing so, a picture will be revealed as to how aspects of rape, rape culture, and rape myth have built upon each other. The biblical rape narratives and the interpretations all link how women, throughout time, have been treated not only in society but within the culture of film and television. To understand how to break the foundations of rape culture apart, trends must be explored, questioned, and deconstructed. Once the foundations of rape culture, as we know it today, can be broken down into their contexts, we can begin to move beyond the foundations that men of the past created.

Approaching Rape in the Hebrew Bible

There are aspects of religion that are the exception regarding rape. Within certain contexts, sexual assault is condoned as women are encouraged to enjoy the experience and the resulting lessons. The Hebrew Bible is where the initial basis for this thesis begins, without the rape narratives from the Ancient Israelites, there would be nothing for patristic writers, biblical scholars, feminists, and the like to analyse. Several biblical passages allude to or mention rape and sexual assault. At no point in the biblical narratives do women's voices make it out unscathed. This is because the Hebrew Bible is where the silent spaces that women inhabit, women's voices are rarely if ever heard. Amy Oden, in her book, *In Her Words,* asks the important questions, "Where were the women? [and] what did they have to say?" (Oden, 1995 p.11) to which the response is only silence. The fact is, "there were no records by women" (Oden, 1995 p.11), at least none that provide the true nature of her experience, especially in a rape narrative. Women in the Hebrew Bible encountered many

dangerous and violent situations, and the outcome of those situations exists in the context the interpreters chose to frame them.

Through our contemporary understanding of violation, defining biblical rape is impossible. However, this does not mean there are no cases where women's bodies are violated, and their personhood denied. As Jessica Keady states:

> Although there are no biblical Hebrew words for 'rape' or 'rape culture'—as we understand these terms today—this does not mean that sexual violence is absent from the biblical text…many of the features contemporary commentators identify as central to rape culture—including discourses around female sexuality, male dominance, defilement, and purity do appear in the Hebrew Bible (Keady, 2017 para. 1).

The passage above affirms that while there may not be any overt use of our modern understanding of rape, all the components exist. It is because women were considered the property of men that the idea of naming something rape was beyond the purview of the Ancient Israelites. Nevertheless, sexual assault and rape were common occurrences, a "permissible act of manhood" (Bach, 1993 p.393) to exert power over an enemy. Since women were not considered people with rights, they became Othered and were deemed the enemy of the patriarchal system. The proof of manhood is measured in man's ability to utilize his power to conquer an enemy; men's aggression is etched into the bodies of women as badges of honour.

Women, being viewed as the Other and therefore they have no power, must rely on men to keep them safe in both times of war and peace. Deuteronomy outlines the laws of God, or rather the laws created through androcentrism, concerning various aspects of life, including the correct places and ways to worship, which foods are clean and unclean, who

has property rights, and procedures during war. Throughout the Deuteronomic text, considerable attention is given to the appropriate way of life, which engenders a disproportionate number of laws concerning gender. During certain periods of war, a man is allowed to appropriate non-Jewish women they find desirable. What this means is that within biblical rhetoric, the nation of Israelites condones the kidnapping and rape of women based on the man's lust for his prospective captive. This biblical passage occurs in Deuteronomy 21 and reads as follows:

> When you go out to war against your enemies and the Lord your God hands them over to you and you take them captive, suppose you see among the captives a beautiful woman whom you desire and want to marry, and so you bring her home to your house: she shall shave her head, pare her nails, discard her captive's garb, and remain in your house a full month mourning for her father and mother; after that, you may go into her and be her husband, and she shall be your wife. But if you are not satisfied with her, you shall let her go free and certainly not sell her for money. You must not treat her as a slave, since you have dishonored her.

The passage above lays out the rituals the man must allow his newly kidnapped bride to perform before he can have sex with (rape) her. During the first month of the woman's new life in the soldier's home, she is permitted to mourn for her family and the loss of her homeland. Moreover, she is required to shave her head and cut or grow her nails, destroying her beauty. She is also required to remove the garments she wore when captured, which all help ensure her new husband is not overcome with lust at her beauty. This was included in the text as Pearl Elman states, "If [the woman's] sexual appeal could be lessened by the observance of very strict rituals for at least a month, the initial attraction the warrior had

might disappear" (Elman, 1997 p.10). If the man is not repulsed by the woman's haggard appearance, then he is allowed to have intercourse with her body.

The conditions laid out are done in such a manner that the enslaved woman is forced to go home with her captor as she would not likely have anywhere else to go, furthermore, she is not permitted any autonomy, except being given both a short break and an agonizing wait for the inevitable rape. These imprisoned women not only witness the possible murder of their entire family but are now damned to live as their captor's wife, making them little more than sex slaves—the ancient version of sex trafficking that capitalizes on a woman's assumed sexuality by using it against her. The captive women were "heathens and by definition sexually desirable" (Elman, 1997 p.13) making their sexual power a threat to a man's piousness. Within this text women are othered because of their sexual prowess, resulting in them being perceived as enemies who require taming. Through kidnap, bodily mutilation, near-permanent captivity, and rape, the Other no longer poses a threat to men. At no point is the woman allowed bodily autonomy, furthermore, her body is sacrificed further as she is required to cut her nails and shave her head. Both aspects can symbolize her status as a slave even if officially she is not considered one. Keep in mind that it was also not her choice to marry the captor.

Furthermore, laws regarding sexual relations, including rape, which was used interchangeably with adultery, were designed in the interests of men while women were subjected to scrutiny. Perversely, women endured virginity tests to prove their purity before marriage, another way men could control a female's sexuality and body. A man was allowed to marry a sexually pure woman, however, if he grows to hate her, he can (falsely) accuse her of lying about her virgin status before their marriage. To prove the woman's innocence, her mother and father must submit evidence of her prior chastity to the elders at the city gate. The

bloodstained marital cloth acts as evidence of the woman's initial virgin status and is sufficient to prove her virtue. This being before it was medically known that not every woman still has an intact hymen when they marry due to it naturally ripping. If the woman was telling the truth, her husband pays her parents double the bride price, is beaten, and must remain married to her for the rest of his life. However, if the woman is found guilty, she is publicly stoned in front of her father's house by the men of the city. The difference in punishment between the man and woman shows the inequity of what was perceived as the more severe offence. On the one hand, the man's false accusations shame the woman and mark her as a whore, which is only punishable by a fine and a beating. On the other hand, a woman who is found guilty is murdered for bringing shame to her husband's name, moreover, her family too is shamed.

All of this simply reinforces the principle that virginity was highly valued in Israel, however, not as much as preserving a man's good name and his sexual virility. Furthermore, this reinforces the accepted discourse that "violence and the threat of violence [that is] used by men to control women—either to enforce their will or punish women for perceived transgressions" (Kelly and Radford, 1996 p.29) is acceptable. Because of the constant threat of hostility towards women, for any number of offences, it is within the masculinist culture to take victimized women and turn them into aggressors. The continuous cycle of deception breeds more silent spaces for women. To survive, she must rely on the man who both invaded and silenced her. The inequity between crime and punishment for males and females is how men have remained in control of the narrative. In either scenario, whether guilty or innocent, a woman is penalized for her position as inferior to her husband's or any man's superiority.

A woman's chastity is turned sacred to the point that it becomes so central to the female existence; it is profane, where it is treated like an object that one can physically grasp. Moreover, the violation of a woman's body is so profane that it becomes sacred, like a relic

put on display in a museum. Both situations deny a woman's autonomy. Her malleable body marks the beginning and end of her lived experience as the other. In Deuteronomy 22: 23-27 the judicial outcome of certain rape cases depended on a woman's use or non-use of her voice. This decided her guilt or innocence. The circumstances for guilt or innocence are as follows:

> If there is a young woman, a virgin already engaged to be married, and a man meets her in the town and lies with her, you shall bring both of them to the gate of that town and stone them to death, the young woman because she did not cry for help in the town and the man because he violated his neighbor's wife...But if the man meets the engaged woman in the open country and the man seizes her and lies with her, only the man who lies with her shall die. You shall do nothing to the young woman; the young woman has not committed an offense punishable by death. . . Since he found her in the open country, the engaged woman may have cried for help, but there was no one to rescue her.

The biblical passage above explains the determining factors in situations that involve rape and sexual assault, although, it is never referred to as such. In the first scenario, both the man and the woman are considered guilty. The man is sentenced to death for violating another man's wife but not for invading her body, whereas the woman meets the same fate because she refuses to cry for help. Women are fundamentally guilty because of their presumed responsibility, for not fighting hard enough, because this alone implies that she was a willing participant. Conversely, if it is assumed that the woman's cries were not heard due to the location, then her basic responsibility is fulfilled, and only the man is sentenced to death. The assumed adultery is considered far more unacceptable than raping a woman. This is another illustration where a woman is turned into the culprit by becoming the enemy. Lawless explains this well:

> …male lust and loathing is associated with defilement and transferred onto and signified by the female body… since 'he' cannot control his desire, he can feel cleansed if he can attack the signifier: 'he' can feel cleansed if he beats her, berates her…and defers her semiotic 'reality' from woman to evil woman (Lawless, 2003 p.245).

Since male lust is transferred to the woman's body, her victimhood is once again taken, and her voice silenced as she now embodies forced shame. Men often bore no responsibility for attacking a woman because male desires cannot be controlled, and the woman's body must tame his thirst. The only time a man yields any sense of accountability happens when another man loses out on the socio-sexual currency if the woman who is compromised belongs to another. Even then, it has less to do with a woman's body being invaded and more to do with her body being a symbol of her stolen sexuality, which can no longer quench his desires. The biblical passage in Deuteronomy 22:28;29 continues:

> If a man meets a virgin who is not engaged, and seizes her and lies with her, and they are caught in the act the man who lay with her shall give fifty shekels of silver to the young woman's father, and she shall become his wife. Because he violated her, he shall not be permitted to divorce her as long as he lives.

The punishment for violating or raping an engaged woman was much more severe only because this woman's sexuality belonged to another man. Since the woman was not engaged and was not the sole property of another man as a wife, her victimhood is less valuable. While the innocent unengaged woman is allowed to continue living, this begs the question as to the type of life she would get to experience. She becomes the property of her rapist and is forced to remain with him for the rest of her life. This would no doubt cause a sense of "…humiliation and deprivation of privacy and autonomy" (Lees, 1997 p.xiii) for the woman who now must cope with the unknown. Rape narratives such as ones that end in marriage not

only cover up a heinous crime but breed potential for the account to be misinterpreted as pre-marital sex. Fundamentally, women were sentenced to death, living or other, raped or not, because they are perceived as the enemy. The situation they faced was impossible and always at the expense of her body and voice.

The Deuteronomic laws are not interested in women but in how their status as mother, wife, and daughter affects the familial relationship. Not only is a woman's status affected by her relation to men, but it also plays a considerable role in the just outcome of a rape accusation. This means that "legally, the woman's status is determined by her relationship (or non-relationship) to a man" (Pressler, 1993 p.43). It is in this way that Ancient Israelite society engendered laws that used silent spaces to both capture and prosecute women for their silence. Women are not silent because they want to be, they are silent because the act of speaking out is far more horrifying and heightened by their status as the Other. As Davies states, "It is clear from the above résumé that the laws in Israel presupposed a social system in which women were disadvantaged and in which they did not generally possess rights commensurate with those of their male counterparts" (Davies, 2003 p.3). It is because of this that rape was and remains a crucial part of society in keeping women's voices locked inside themselves.

At the very least, the Deuteronomic law and rape narratives explored in the upcoming chapters, illustrate the thought-provoking questions that women in the 21st century still battle with, both internally and externally. The voices of women are caught between speaking their truth or staying silent, both come at a cost. At the most, the androcentric accounts incite within women a powerful sense of anger and the urgency to rise, refusing to let one more generation of women be reduced to nothing more than cannon fodder for the patriarchal agenda. It is here, with the Hebrew Bible, that conversations should begin, but they are rarely heard outside of religious institutions and scholarship. Biblical narratives have informed,

created, and condoned rape culture. As Scholz states, “intellectual marginalization of biblical literature is regrettable because the Hebrew Bible has so much to contribute to the historical, sociological, political, and religious understanding of rape” (Scholz, 2010 p.1). Moreover, it gives a foundation of how society has permitted these biblical rape narratives to inflict so much damage and pain on the bodies of women. It comes with critiquing ancient stories repeatedly until all the power is taken out of their words. If the conversations, debates, and movements fail, women become complicit in their powerlessness. Not speaking out about sexual assault and rape is the unconscious silencing of other women, who all look to each other for comfort, guidance, and permission to retake their power.

Approaching Rape in Film and Television

In the same fashion that biblical narratives helped shape predominant ideas about rape, rape culture, and rape myths, so too has film and television. The encompassing aspects of rape are endemic precisely because they have been allowed to entangle themselves into every aspect of our social and cultural structures—down to the gendered rules we are taught to follow growing up. Media, especially film and television, contributes to perceived gender and social norms. Like religion, film and television mediate reality through artifice that projects an image that has been created for specific purposes. In other words, the image seen on screen was carefully crafted through their voice, their clothes, their manners, the lighting, the setting, and other effects, which aid in a particular message being heard. As with the mimicking of religious beliefs seen in interpretations, people, too, imitate and idealize images they see depicted on the screen. Sometimes this is a detriment to others, especially to those who are Othered. With regards to how women are created in media, Shohini Chaudhuri states, “Hollywood cinema uses iconography—visual and stylistic motifs making up a system

of signs based on genre conventions—to build its mythical female stereotypes" (Chaudhuri, 2006 p.27). This too can be applied to images seen on the small screen. This begs the question as to why women's silence was exploited in film and television, and how did rape narratives contribute to this silence? The answer, "The Big Lie", as Molly Haskell calls it in her book *From Reverence to Rape*, " [is] the idea of women's inferiority, a lie so deeply ingrained in our social behaviour that merely to recognize it is to risk unravelling the entire fabric of civilization" (Haskell and Dargis, 2016 p.30).

As representations of rape penetrate popular culture and media, so too, does it consume our everyday lives. In our contemporary world, we are never far removed from rape, rape culture, and rape myths as social media, cell phones, and constant access to the internet ensure a steady stream of information. Regarding the entertainment industry, Sarah Projansky states in her book, *Watching Rape*:

> More often than not Hollywood films represent rape. Stories about rape are also commonplace in first-run and rerun television dramas, talk shows, soap operas, "reality" shows, news programs, and even sometimes situation comedies (Projansky, 2001 p.2).

This means the pervasiveness of rape is a compulsory citation seen in both society and culture. Scenes depicting rape in a film have been used as far back as the 1910s, although descriptions were varied. Nevertheless, they have been a persistent part of narrative entertainment. Due to the ubiquitous and often contradictory ways rape has been represented, it is at the core of our complex cultural discourses that make up the foundation of the narratives we not only tell ourselves but others (Projansky, 2001 p.3). While our contemporary culture may sometimes be hyper-aware of the pervasiveness of rape, this was not always the case. During the 1920s and 1930s, the Production Code was created, which

moved to sanitize the entertainment industry's use of soul-stealing images through religious-based censorship.

The Production Code: Censorship and Control

The first half of the 20th century was full of life-changing events such as the Suffragette movement, World War I, World War II, the Great Depression, the beginning of the Women's Liberation Movement, and the birth control movement, which saw the first birth control clinic opened by Marie Stopes and her husband Humphrey Verdon Roe in Great Britain. This clinic offered services and information to all married women about birth control methods and overall reproductive health. All of these milestones dramatically affected the previously accepted socio-cultural structure. Moreover, the installation of the Production Code in the film industry was a reactionary creation to the women's movement and the controversies surrounding Hollywood exploits of the twenties. Aubrey Malone, in her book, *Censoring Hollywood*, states this about the film industry during the 1920s and women's position within it:

> Women-owned the twenties. Prohibition was introduced at the beginning of the decade, but they still managed to make their spirits soar… Women smoked, danced, cut themselves loose from the shackles of convention. They also became sexually free (Malone, 2012 p.11).

This passage illustrates that women were able to inhabit aspects of their lived selves by breaking away from the predominant image of women from the past. However, not everyone was pleased with women breaking social conventions and participating in sinful behaviour such as cutting themselves loose. William Hays, a postmaster general, ex-Republican national chairman, and devout Presbyterian wanted to right the moral wrong he believed Hollywood

and cinema brought to mainstream society. Controversies, such as the rape and murder of Virginia Rappe, were a part of how sinful Hollywood had publicly become and the now possible impact it could have on everyday men and women. The newspaper headline from 1921 read: “Actress dies at Drunken Party. Famous Comedian Charged with Murder.” Roscoe “Fatty” Arbuckle was accused of manslaughter and rape when model and actress Virginia Rappe died after a party in a hotel room with the comedian. The controversy, “with kinky sex as the main attraction. The rape and murder trial of Fatty Arbuckle drove Hollywood…to the front page” (Leff and Simmons, 2001 p.3). Hollywood was no longer hidden deep in the entertainment section of the newspapers; it was now on the front page, fully capable of influencing the values and morals of regular everyday citizens.

Hays saw an opportunity to create a censorship blueprint for production companies to follow that would allow only the correct type of films to be released. When Hays was appointed President of the Motion Pictures Producers and Distributors of America (APPDA), he “assured the National Council of Catholic Women, the Boy Scouts of America, and others that with their support he could purify the movies” (Leff and Simmons, 2001 p.5). The censorship rules William Hays wanted to install would dramatically sanitize many of the artistic freedoms’ directors, actors, and producers previously used in self-regulating their films. One actor, who was against this Presbyterian kind of censorship, was Charlie Chaplin (Leff and Simmons, 2001 p.5) who spent considerable time criticizing society and exploring the human condition. Individual states, at this time, also sought to introduce censorship bills into local legislation. By 1921 thirty-seven states had changed their censorship laws, making editing messy to meet each state’s rules. Like Will Hays, conservative states wanted Hollywood to become more mature, value goodwill, and advocate for middle-class values (Leff and Simmons, 2001 p.5). The outcome was mutilated films and adverse publicity aimed

at Hollywood. Films were unable to have storylines that came full circle as the code did not allow for sophisticated narratives. Even if films were able to pass the censorship standards, they would have been so distorted that the narrative would be unrecognizable.

Before the Production Code, Hays appointed Jason Joy as conversant to the censorship rules, to advise producers of potential problems with their movie scripts. In 1927 Joy developed the "Don'ts and Be Carefuls", which banned from media, things such as profanity, nudity, white slavery, miscegenation, sex hygiene, ridicule of clergy, and offences against a creed or race. However, the "Don'ts and Be Carefuls" was not popular as much as 80% of production companies sent in their film scripts to be approved. Film producers still preferred self-regulation to the over-the-top sanitization of their creativity. The "Don'ts and Be Carefuls" only lasted two years, it was scrapped in 1929 and replaced with the Production Code. The new censorship code was designed by Martin Quigley and Father Daniel Lord, who based the rules on the Ten Commandments from Exodus 20, as passed on to Moses at Mount Sinai. Films radically changed (Malone, 2012 p.15) with the Production Code utilizing three basic moral rules that every film needed to follow. First, films should not lower the ethical standards of their audience. Second, law, natural or divine, must not be belittled or ridiculed, and third, life should not be misrepresented to the youth. The principles behind the Production Code ensured aspects of lived experience were removed from films. For example, the intimate aspects of married life were left out of films, including shared beds, because it violated the rule to never misrepresent life when the censors only sought to portray it as a sterile and boring version of life. This was applied to films that had violence and rape in them as well.

After the Production Code was established, which Hays took sole credit for creating, cinema radically changed. Films that depicted rape were rare, as the Production Code believed that rape "should never be more than suggested and only when essential for the plot, and even then, never shown by explicit method" (Projansky, 2001 p.39). Rape-driven narratives are problematic for the entertainment industry as it makes rape a necessity to aid in the bigger narrative. Rape was also never explicitly mentioned and always occurred offscreen, making the audience rely on other aspects of the film to understand the severity of rape. The Production Code worked similarly to how the Hebrew Bible approached rape, as rape was never overtly mentioned and was used as a plot device. There are two narratives in early rape films that cause women to be raped, as Projansky states, "those that depict women's vulnerability as leading to rape" (Projansky, 2001 p.39), as seen in *The Story of Esther Costello* (1957), and those that depict the "rape of an independent woman as making her vulnerable", as in *Johnny Belinda* (1948) (Projansky, 2001 p.39). In either narrative, the ending is always the same, either the rape victim is brought back into some type of heterosexual family structure, or she is saved by a single male suitor or a male family member.

The creation of the Production Code was initially difficult to enforce. When Joseph Breen was appointed as the Assistant to the President in December 1933, he was put in charge of operations for the entire West Coast Breen understood that "handling the Hays office public relations was much like janitorial work: better to control the moguls than clean up after them" (Leff and Simmons, 2001 p.35). This made Breen the gatekeeper between the Production Code and potential films—and anything or one that challenged him undermined censorship. Breen also got the Catholic Church involved in the campaign to boycott films that he thought were against the Code, women's pictures because those meant sex pictures. On

May 12, 1934, Breen announced that the superintendent of Catholic Schools in Southern California wanted women to boycott films that were "immoral" and "unwholesome" (Leff and Simmons, 2001 p.51). Religion, as a result, was an intricate part of Hollywood for a long time, and it still is in some sense, which ensures that acceptable images of women (and men) were being seen. Breen fought to balance immorality and the accepted societal norms within films. This meant that any unjust actions such as rape, murder, or blasphemy would need to be met with something as equally high-minded to counter and condemn the immoral actions. These changes reaffirmed the necessity for women to be shielded from the evils of men by other men. Moreover, rape-driven plots and the treatment of women in general were "…dedicated for the most part to reinforcing the lie" (Haskell and Dargis, 2016 p.30).

The Other: Women in Film

After the Production Code was enacted, the image of women was extensively filtered through the eyes of men who sought to create an idealized concept of the feminine. Women lost free expression of their sexuality, their subjectivity, and their voices. Before the Code's inception, films such as *Black Paradise* (1926) allowed Marge Bellamy to bare her legs and much of her nude body. Likewise, *The Merry Widow* (1925) showed a man dying on top of his wife while in the throes of passion on their honeymoon. After the Code, captivating scenes with nudity and sex were prohibited. Haskell states of the Production Code's effect, "Under threat from the Hays Office, women were no longer able to languish in satin on a chaise lounge and subsist on passion; they were forced to do something, and a whole generation of working women came into being" (Haskell and Dargis, 2016 p.50). This means on the one hand women's sexuality was censored and their lived experiences were reduced, and on the other hand, a renewed sense of rebellion was created. Furthermore, depictions of

adultery, women working outside the home, childbirth, and the sounds of labour pains all ended up either not being filmed or left on the cutting room floor (Malone, 2012 p.17), and representation of rape was exclusively forbidden. Films became glamorized versions of life, where nothing that could be considered inappropriate was seen on screen. In hiding away aspects of everyday human existence damage was done to the film industry, and a perverse culture was created. Moreover, by having topics such as rape, abuse, and female autonomy cancelled or watered down, women were not provided with a platform that could radically change their lives.

Film and television depict situations made through artifice, which is controlled by the speakers who reign over the ones who have speech put upon them. As a result, speech is used to silence some characters, particularly when that character has their life interpreted through the dialogue of another person. For example, in movies such as *The Color Purple* (1985), *Fried Green Tomatoes* (1991), *and Enough* (2002), abusive men speak up for their wives when the woman is questioned about her living situation. In this way, men create the speech for their victims to ensure the silence of their captors, enabling the ability for the abuse to continue. The meaning of these depictions seen on film can be summed up well by Chaudhuri, who states that a woman loses her decision-making power, "at the deeper, structural level, therefore, [woman] functions as an object exchanged between men, existing within their discourse: in these terms, she is 'spoken', she does not speak" (Chaudhuri, 2006 p.29). Because women represent the Other, and they were starting to find footing in society as independent autonomous beings, the masculinist society called for action to be taken. Haskell addresses the topic of women's power in film, "as women represented real threats to male economic supremacy, movie heroines had to be brought down to fictional size, domesticated

or defanged" (Haskell and Dargis, 2016 p.35). Filmic representations of women mirror biblical rape narratives as domesticated and submissive objects.

Chapter Three

A Retrospective Examination of Eternal Silence: The Acquaintance Rape of Dinah in Genesis 34 and Tamar in 2 Samuel 13

"Dinah never got as far; this is healing. She just disappeared, much like David's daughter Tamar just disappeared; there's no completion. So, we're left still trying to resolve it. It's like a legacy handed down. Not such a good one, but it's one that we need to complete."

When Violence is No Stranger (Debra's Story in Leslie, 2003 p.72)

Endangered Sisters: Introducing Tamar and Dinah's Narratives

When Debra, forty-six at the time her story was published in *When Violence is No Stranger*, spoke of being raped by her boyfriend twice at sixteen and seventeen, she had to remain silent. Debra stated, "I couldn't afford to have anybody know. . . If I told everything would fall apart. If I couldn't hold it together everything would fall apart" (Leslie, 2003 p.65). Debra took all the pain, the grief, and she buried it; silence was better than the alternative. Years later, as Debra began confronting the effects of being raped, she talked of finding comfort in Dinah and Tamar's stories, believing that she could help complete their legacy (Leslie, 2003 p.72). Kristen J. Leslie the author of *When Violence is No Stranger*, stated, "They [Dinah and Tamar] never had the chance to tell their own stories and demonstrate that they survived and thrived beyond their rapes. Debra wants to finish the work of Dinah and Tamar by surviving and telling her story" (Leslie, 2003 p.72). It is evident from Debra's story that rape victims are allowed to grieve through naming, speaking, and restoring their lost voices.

Acquaintance rape, the rape both Dinah and Tamar experience, is one of the most prevalent forms of rape globally. Acquaintance rape ensures that women's safe spaces virtually disappear. There may be no specific term for acquaintance rape in the Hebrew Bible; it is new in English; however, it is essential to apply a modern word to such an ancient narrative. This chapter aims to examine the eternal silence of Dinah from Genesis 34 and Tamar from 2 Samuel 13, both of whom are swept up in other narratives. One disappears into the void of her father Jacob's story and the other into the silent spaces of her father David's narrative, both men are regarded as pinnacles of Western Christian culture. Dinah and Tamar are unceremoniously set aside without being granted their victimhood, voices, or even their status as survivors of violent rape. The silencing of Dinah and Tamar can help highlight a prominent issue modern women face because of being raped by someone they know: a forced silence always follows. There may be some objection to this thesis treating the Dinah narrative in Genesis 34 as acquaintance rape, however and in agreement with Susanne Scholz, the account will be held up as such. Susanne Scholz uses what she calls, "a third rhetorical strategy" that turns Dinah's narrative into a case of acquaintance rape (Scholz, 2010 p.38). There are two main reasons that Scholz uses to establish the designation of acquaintance rape. One is that Dinah and Shechem would have met during early meetings when Jacob first came to the area—and the second is Shechem's actions following Dinah's rape.

First, Scholz argues that Dinah may have met Shechem when her father Jacob first moved to the region. Since Hamor was the king, their families would have met upon Jacob seeking permission to establish his home next to the city. She states that "Shechem can be viewed as such a 'sexual gratification rapist' who considered Dinah an 'opportunity' when he sees her walking by" (Scholz, 2010 p.38). Second, the immediate actions of Shechem after he rapes Dinah show that he attempts to appear normal and pretends that "nothing really bad

happened" (Scholz, 2010 p.38). Acquaintance rapists are less likely to murder or physically beat their victims because there is a possibility they may attempt contact later. An acquaintance rapist would put themselves in a position that would continue allowing them access to their victims. This thesis agrees with Scholz's position that it is likely that Shechem and Dinah knew each other, even in passing, and that his attempts to downplay the rape both designate this narrative as one of acquaintance rape. To reiterate what Scholz states about acquaintance rape, "many women continue to be silent about such an experience because acquaintance rape is often not recognized as a sexually violent act" (Scholz, 2010 p.29) due to the woman knowing her attacker. Moreover, this too is why many accounts of acquaintance rape can be contested including Dinah's narrative.

In building a bridge between the past and the present, it may be possible to better understand how the pervasiveness of rape obtained its footing and how it has been allowed to continue. As Jessica Keady states in her news article, "Rape Culture Discourse and Female Impurity," "biblical rape texts like Genesis 34… can serve as a lens through which we can examine and critique ancient ideations of gender violence and purity" (Keady, 2017 para. 2). She further mentions the importance of biblical stories and how they shape the modern world: "They allow us to trace the ways these ideations continue to shape and inform contemporary understandings of rape" (Keady, 2017 para. 2). More importantly, the lasting effects of Dinah and Tamar's eternal silence have contributed to the modern world's understanding of rape myths.

As stated in chapter one, biblical interpreters have used Dinah and Tamar to seek control over the lives of women and their bodies. Commentators, such as St Jerome, St Augustine of Hippo, Bernard of Clairvaux, John Calvin, and Martin Luther all use rape stories as warnings to young women to not let their curiosity lure them away from the safety of home and to resist protesting too loudly when being raped. It is expected, "because people

look to clergy and religious professionals as important sources of comfort and support, that these representatives of faith communities are in a crucial position to help those who suffer from trauma, such as acquaintance rape" (Leslie, 2003 p.2) yet what the clergy throughout time has done is the opposite, forcing victims to suffer dire consequences. The rape stories through biblical interpretations are turned into political and religious moralistic motifs about women's lives that do not involve a female point of view. Women like Dinah and Tamar were used as battlefields, bloodied, and bruised. The trend of silencing women has continued into the 20th and 21st centuries, with biblical scholars such as John van Seters and Paul Nobel, who do not believe Dinah and Tamar's voices should be restored because history has never afforded them free use. In fact, in trying to do so, a scholar might be considered too radical or accused of, as Nobel states, "filling in the text's blanks with their feminist fictions" (Noble, 1996 p.199). This would entail diverting from the course of other biblical scholars. Ideas such as Nobel's help keep rape victims in silent spaces through the continuation of discourses that do not see the value in sharing victim stories. In 2009, Caroline Blyth challenged Nobel and Van Seters' idea of voice restoration. She asserted, "The narrative of any rape event belongs in the first place to [the] woman; it is her story to tell, her voice that ought to be heard" (Blyth, 2009 p.484). When a woman's voice is not heard, this facilitates a more profound sense of oppression and pain. Blyth goes on to say, "Recognising the silencing of rape survivors, refusing to let it continue unchallenged is a task that is as imperative within contemporary culture as it is within Biblical Studies" (Blyth, 2009 p.508).

Tamar, who is the only rape victim in the Hebrew Bible to speak, uses her voice in an attempt to escape being raped by her half-brother Amnon. Tamar is overpowered by Amnon and is later told by her biological brother Absalom to be silent. On the other hand, Dinah is not allowed to speak and only emerges as a literary subject once in her entire narrative. Inherently, these biblical narratives depict female silence through acquaintance rape

narratives. It is through not recognizing the rightful victims' voices, by not naming their pain, that rape culture is allowed to persist, and women remain objectified. As it stands, both Dinah and Tamar disappear between the lines in the Old Testament, like the voices of rape victims for centuries to come; their screams go unheard and ignored.

Rape or Pre-Marital Sex: The Context of Genesis 34

One of the earliest accounts of rape, Genesis 34, takes particular interest in female sexuality and questions a woman's improper behaviour. Dinah's story was written by the Redactors, who modified parts of the Hebrew Bible to reflect their ideologies. Ita Sheres attests, "The story is bloody and explosive; the narratives and redactors of Genesis used violence as part of a plan to reduce women to stereotypes of frailty and sexuality" (Sheres, 1990 p.80). Dinah's account was written so that her voice was silenced, and the narrative distorted. As Sheres states, "[Dinah] is credited with waywardness and transgression not only in the religious sense but in the familial as well" (Sheres, 1990 p.10). Dinah is less of a traumatized victim and more of someone who intentionally went out and got raped, which jeopardized her family name. The Genesis 34 rape narrative is short, with only one verse dedicated to the rape itself: "When Shechem, son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the region, saw her, he seized her and lay with her by force". Nehama Aschkenasy writes, "If she screamed for help, cried in shame, or in any other vocal way articulated her feelings at being so brutally attacked, the storyteller, does not bother to record it" (Aschkenasy, 1998 p.47), the reader, then must assume the Redactors intentionally left out an aspect of the narrative. It is important to note the word rape is not explicitly used; however, force would imply that Dinah did not consent. Therefore, she was an unwilling participant in the events. The fact that Dinah was reluctant may have meant nothing, given the patriarchal structure of the ancient Israelite world. Caroline Blyth states, "In societies where men are taught that a woman's 'no' means

‘yes,’ women are understood as never really saying ‘no;’ men. . . can block out a woman’s protests. . .” (Blyth, 2010 p.39) and claim consent. It is because of masculinist ideologies that women are the Other, it is why the line between consensual sex and rape blurred, which tells women that there is little difference between acting on sexual desires and rape. Women, then, are not taken seriously as rape victims and survivors, which objectifies them and silences their voices.

In Genesis 34:1, “Dinah went out to see the women” (Genesis 34:1), is the only time Dinah is the subject of a sentence in the entire rape narrative. The harmless verse begins a narrative full of shocking circumstances that “triggers and shapes all subsequent events” (Blyth, 2009 p.485). Genesis 34 “shows the cost of it, paid in rape, treachery and massacre, a chain of evil that proceeded logically. . .” (Kidner, 2008 p.172) it personifies a marriage problem, a public issue instead of a very private matter. Dinah’s rape narrative as it is presented is anything but a rape story; the story's focal point is given to her father, Jacob, and her brothers, Simeon and Levi. The fact remains there is extensive narrative silence regarding Dinah’s voice and her experiences following the rape, including ending up in her rapist’s home as a bride. At some point, the men, the silencers, need to be challenged for doing a disservice to Dinah. At the very least, there should be an acknowledgement of the violation of her body. Moreover, what were the emotions she may have felt, and the overall distress of what rape has done to her. While there is no way we as modern biblical scholars can go back and undo what has been written by scholars of the past, however, we can challenge “. . . the ideas, beliefs, and metaphors which emerge from our cultural productions and institutions, form a recognizable and coherent ideology, and which is relevant for a particular event [rape]” (Lebowitz and Roth, 1994 p.364). We can upset the foundations of rape culture that Dinah’s story helped build.

Biblical Commentary and scholarship on the events of Genesis 34 have often been interpreted through androcentric voices, ones that personify male aggression and misogyny. Throughout biblical scholastic history, Dinah has been seen as a wretched woman who misbehaved by engaging in pre-marital sex (Frymer-Kensky, 2002 p.182); the cause of her rape, like St Jerome writes in his letters to young easily influenced women (Blyth, 2009 p.485). In this thesis, Dinah was and is, a victim of rape who had her livelihood forcibly taken from her not only by Shechem but also by the subsequent interpretations that moved to silence her voice. Since the narrative involves acquaintance rape, a rapist who knows the victim in some capacity, Shechem's behaviour following the events fits with those dynamics. Instead of acting harshly, he requests to marry her and "speaks to her heart" (Genesis 34). It is possible that Shechem knew Dinah as she would have grown up near the village. It is likely that Shechem could have watched her, but he seized this opportunity to gratify his sexual desires through force. The reader is not granted access to Shechem's underlying intentions towards Dinah, except his plans to capture and violate her. The reader is also not permitted to know any of Dinah's thoughts or feelings toward her situation; through "not speaking, Dinah is present only in silence and submission" (Scholz, 2010 p.38). The only thing that the reader can interpret is the silent spaces, which is where the problem occurs. Those reticent spaces become filled with interpretations by biblical scholars and interpreters that twist and mould rape culture into what it has become today. Moreover, this helped build the foundations for future rape myths such as women asking for rape by flirting, dressing provocatively, consuming alcohol, or behaving promiscuously—or the belief that only certain kinds of women are raped.

Responding to the Rape of Dinah

Biblical scholarship and the predominantly male commentators have misappropriated this rape text, intentionally, as Frances Klopper affirms, "Interpreters commenting on Genesis 34 chose to belittle the rape by offering various arguments and interpretations that either obfuscate, deny, or avoid the rape, or they turn to the age-old method of blaming the victim" (Klopper, 2010 p.653). In doing so, the church fathers can blame women such as Dinah by manipulating cultural standards of masculine authoritarianism. Margaret Miles wrote, in the introduction of her book *Carnal Knowing: Female Nakedness and Religious Meaning in the Christian West,* that "representations do not merely reflect social practices and attitudes. . . they also re-present, reinforce, perpetuate, and reproduce them" (Miles, 2006 p.11). Patristic writers were obsessed with the domestication and socio-sexual currency of female sexuality for no other reason than to exert control over the female body and voice. Often the only literate writers of their time, their impact on culture was so powerful it echoes in the world today as ". . .literary violence against women works to privilege the cultural father's voice and story over those of women, the cultural daughters and indeed to silence women's voices" (Froula, 1986 p.633). The interpretations of writers such as St Jerome, Augustine of Hippo, Martin Luther, and Bernard of Clairvaux have contributed to women being silenced and the creation of our modern-day rape culture. Although "a male-centered literary reading remarks on the aesthetic value of the woman's silence, [it] ultimately abandons the wordless Dinah…" (Aschkenasy, 1998 p.52). The sin was not that Dinah was raped but that she allowed herself to be raped by being seen, compromising her purity highlighting that female chastity was (and is) highly valued. Women are expected to protect their virginity at whatever cost; a woman sets the limits during sexual courtship; she is responsible for upholding the restrictions, not her male partner (Scholz, 2010 p.29). There is hesitation in understanding the

victim's situation in Jewish and Christian faiths, which have difficulty naming the violence against women. Their sexuality is often seen as offensive, but the violation against her is not (Parsons, 2002 p.123). The focus on Dinah's act of going out is evidence of the lack of understanding by interpreters of this rape story. An intentional misinterpretation on the part of Church Fathers, who used Dinah as an example for the rest of womankind to forever be prudent and stay hidden away. By changing aspects of her story, Dinah, as a woman, becomes a metaphor for the unknowable and her body a figure of figuration (Michie, 1990 p.7).

St Jerome writes to Eustochium about Dinah's Transgression

Tikva Frymer-Kensky states that "girls are carefully guarded, and infractions seriously punished, and the chastity of the girl becomes an indicator of the social worth of the family and the men in it" (Frymer-Kensky, 2002 p.185). Dinah's compromised chastity was scrutinized by St Jerome (347AD- 410AD) in a letter to Eustochium, a woman who would later become a saint, entitled "The Virgin's Profession". St Jerome wrote of Dinah's rape and the importance of preserving not only Eustochium's virginity but ensuring she behaved correctly. As one of the biblical commentators on Dinah's rape, St Jerome can twist and shape Eustochium in whatever way he wishes by teaching her a lesson. St Jerome urges the young woman to allow the walls surrounding her to keep her safe and to stay put. He states, "Go not from home nor visit the daughters of a strange land, though you have patriarchs for brothers and rejoice in Israel as your father. Dinah went out and was seduced" (Hieronymus and Wright, 1975 p.109). St Jerome, in his warning, uses scare tactics to guarantee Eustochium does what he wishes. Through this, "violence, men use the threat of violence to control women to enforce their ideas or to punish women for perceived transgressions" (Kelly and Radford, 1996 p24). Missing from St Jerome's letter is any mention of the

responsibility of Shechem as a rapist, by doing so, he lessens the impact of the rape narrative, further objectifying Dinah. There is a possibility that Dinah going out was not the cause of her being raped. However, St Jerome wants the female reader of his letter to believe otherwise. Dinah's silence and submission in this matter suit him and his needs to keep women sequestered from the world and under patriarchal control.

Eventually, an entire book is written to help women like Eustochium, who are meant to dedicate their lives to living as anchoresses. *Ancrene Wisse,* or the "Guide for Anchoresses," written by an Augustinian in the early Middle Ages, frequently refers to the idea that windows are dangerous and should be severely feared and shunned. Seeing the window as the thinnest part between sin and the sacred life of the Anchoress, women were instructed to keep evil out by staying away from the window, as the writer urges the Anchoress in the following passage:

> "But dear sir," says someone, "is it in fact so exceedingly evil to peep out? "Yes, it is, dear sister, for because of the evil that comes of it. It is evil and exceedingly evil to every Anchoress, especially to the young... Now take note what evil has come of peeping: not one evil or two, but all the misery that now is and ever yet was and ever shall be-all come of sight" (White, 1993 p.83-84).

The instruction continues with further guidelines using Dinah's story from Genesis 34:

> A maiden, called Dinah, Jacob's daughter," as it tells in Genesis, "went out to look at the foreign women." It does not even say that she looked at men. And what came of that looking, do you think? She lost her virginity and was made a whore. Afterwards, because of it, promises were broken by high patriarchs and a great city burnt down, and the king and his son and citizens killed the women-led away, her father and brothers, though they were such noble princes, made outlaws. All this the Holy Ghost had written down to warn women about their foolish eyes. And take note

> of this, that this evil of Dinah's did not come from her seeing Shechem, Hamor's son, whom she sinned with, but from her letting him lay eyes on her; for what he did to her was at the beginning was very much against her will (White, 1993 p.68).

The preceding quotes take Dinah's curiosity and turn it into a stoic, fear-inducing response. The most crucial aspect to note above is that Dinah is not being raped, only that she sinned because she let herself be raped. Dinah was the one who allowed Shechem to look at her and who permitted him to lay with her. St Jerome and *Ancrene Wisse* confuse the biblical passage. More than the woman's voice is attacked in the book, eyes too, are the topic of scrutiny. Dinah's story was written to warn against a woman's foolish eyes. By doing this, the authors of *Ancrene Wisse* choose to use the Genesis 34 narrative not as a rape story but as one of pre-marital or promiscuous sex. This aspect of Dinah's life was transformed into a standardized response that meant 'order' would be returned once Dinah returned home and presumably safe.

St Augustine's Use of Prophylactic Punishment

Augustine of Hippo (354AD-430AD) believed in shame and the need for those who sinned to feel guilt (Pellauer, 1995 p.208). More specifically, women who let their carnal desires rule over them, the passions that got in the way of their purity. While it seems, Augustine made no mention of Dinah in his book the *City of God*, where many of his passages on rape were written, we can use the text to analyse why he argued for keeping female chastity intact, despite being victims of prophylactic punishment. Augustine used cases of rape to steer ignorant women back on the path of righteousness through the guise of prophylactic punishment, which meant rape was used as a form of intentional corrective means for women who have sinned or who might sin one day. Augustine uses his ideologies to transform rape into a religious problem; he sacralises it and makes it public. In doing so, his rhetoric can be used to control women's lives, their thoughts, and their sexual autonomy.

Through his male-centred model, human sexuality is based on; women being hard-pressed to find their place within it. His work affords no room for women to find their image in his writings, nor are their lives reflected in his model of God's ideal pious follower. Augustine's use of a male-focused framework causes the reader to have an ambivalent approach to his work (Burrus, Jordan, and MacKendrick, 2010 p.4) and toward rape victims.

Augustine assumes that purity is more critical than physical safety (Pellauer, 1995 p.219); this means that while a woman's body can be violated through an act of rape, she can remain pure in her mind and soul. Augustine does not allow room for women's autonomy in his male-based system. Nonetheless, he finds ways to fit women in by using them as examples of haplessness and sinfulness. Regarding rape, Augustine uses himself as an example, not as a rape victim, but as to why God might choose to see that a woman is raped. Augustine remarks that "when God exposes me to adversity, God is either testing my merits or chastising my sins" (Augustine, MacCracken, and Green, 2007 p.125), and the eventual eternal reward. If we use Augustine's beliefs regarding disciplining in Dinah's rape narrative, then Dinah was raped intentionally to force her repentance for leaving home without a male chaperone. Augustine may assume that God condones rape as a tactic to redirect women, however, God makes no appearance in this narrative.

Augustine's use of rape as 'corrective' has made its way into the 21st century as it is seen played out on NBC's *Law and Order SVU* when a young woman is raped through corrective means to prevent her from falling into lesbianism. In the Dinah narrative, there is no indication of God's position; God exists as a silent witness to the events. Bernard of Clairvaux, writing several hundred years later in the Middle Ages, focuses on how female curiosity and Dinah's haphazard behaviour contributed to her being raped.

Bernard of Clairvaux use of Humility to Chastise Dinah

Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) used Dinah in his book *The Twelve Degrees of Humility and Pride* as an Eve character who falls into sin through temptation, causing subsequent tragedy and chaos (Clairvaux and Mills, 1929 p.124). Like Eve, who carelessly dismisses her duty to create life with Adam by eating from the Tree of Knowledge, Dinah too abandons her duty as a daughter by going out alone. Clairvaux compares Dinah and Eve, as the ultimate mark of shame for the women he was preaching to in his works. He believes that there are only two reasons a person, women, should allow their eyes to wander which would have restricted a woman's autonomy. Clairvaux's ideology is that a person should only be curious when asking for help, as mentioned in Psalms 120:1, and when giving support, as seen in John 6:5. Moreover, he goes further to make a case for keeping women physically away from doors and windows by using Dinah's rape narrative:

> O, Dinah, you wanted to see the foreign women! Was it necessary? Or did you do it solely out of curiosity? Even if you went idly to see, you were not idly seen. You looked curiously, but you were looked upon more than curiously. Who would believe that idle curiosity or curious idleness of yours would not be idle in the future, but so terrible in its consequences for you and your family and your enemies too? (Clairvaux and Mills, 1929 p.124).

This passage reveals Clairvaux's assumptions about rape and how he uses fear and shame to keep women chastised. Clairvaux designed this writing to ensure that the women who read it would live in fear, and the men would use it to keep women domesticated. Clairvaux set in stone that Dinah caused her rape. As Joy Schroeder states, "The attack was provoked by the victim [Dinah] and her curiosity, making her the cause of the sin" (Schroeder, 1997 p.780), reinforcing to all future rape victims that they are responsible for being raped. This concept

has helped form aspects of rape culture and the rape myths we experience in the 21st century. Women who behave in a certain way are still considered more rape-able and responsible for being raped. Society still behaves in a victim-blaming manner rather than blaming the rapists. Through Clairvaux's interpretation of Dinah's narrative, it is her emotions, thoughts, voice, and screams that go unheard. As Schroeder continues, "In Medieval tradition the story of Dinah was used as a warning and example to demonstrate what happens when a person, especially a woman, sins through pride, foolishness, or curiosity" (Schroeder, 1997 p.775) that rape will be their punishment for their transgressions. Dinah's silence is exploited and used against her and other women, who are forced to live in silence, seclusion, and darkness. Several hundred years later, Martin Luther, the father of the Reformation, wrote on Dinah's narrative. His commentary, however, provides minimal insight into improving the lives of female rape victims.

Martin Luther's Interpretation of Dinah's Carelessness

Martin Luther (1483-1546), a man noted for his ninety-five theses and his opposition to the Catholic Church, wrote *Luther's Works on Genesis* about the Dinah rape narrative in his commentary. In his essay about Genesis 34, he uses this narrative to get two very distinct points across about Dinah's rape and how women should behave in general. One was to remind the readers that Dinah was a child when she was raped. Martin Luther was more concerned about the conscious effort involved in figuring out her specific age when she was raped. Two, while Luther is concerned for Dinah as a child rape victim, he still believes it was dangerous for her to be seen alone in public. Both of Luther's points tie in with the overall theme that it was Jacob and not Dinah who was the narrative's central character.

Regarding the belief that Dinah was a child when she was raped, Luther supposes that the writer of Genesis, Moses, refers to Dinah as a "yaldah or infant" (Schroeder, 1997 p.781), which made her close to marrying age. Although Dinah's age is never discussed in biblical

rhetoric, Luther hypothesizes that “civil laws assign 14 years of age to men but 12 to women for the maturity of marriage” (Luther, 1519 p.188), but she was not old enough to conceive a child, though this did not absolve her of her crime in being raped as she still went out alone. Martin Luther, as Schroeder asserts, is concerned about Dinah’s childlike carefree attitude, “While the rape itself horrified Luther, it was Dinah’s age that evoked particular horror. Dinah was a carefree child, who ventured out, unaware of the threat of rape” (Schroeder, 1997 p.782). While astute and influential, Luther's focus is on the wrong aspect of the narrative. Even though Dinah was a carefree child, the stigma that even young girls need to be cautious against men is precisely the problem with patristic interpretation. As a solution for the issue of going out, Luther also suggests that women should stay away from doors and windows because they are potential threats to female virtue. Not so much the innocuous objects themselves but the probable circumstances that could happen once they are opened. Luther further makes it a point to assign rules to how women should act around these objects, “They should not form the habit of strolling about and looking out the windows and lounging around the door but should learn to stay at home and never to go anywhere without permission of their parents or companion” (Luther, 1519 p.193). For Luther, the only way to keep a woman safe is for her to stay hidden deep inside the walls of the family home. Like those who came before him, Luther’s beliefs mean that evil is unavoidable outside the home's safety. Unfortunately for women worldwide, this idea has been shattered as acquaintance rape surges as one of the most prevalent forms of sexual assault, where a woman’s home may no longer keep her safe.

The second aspect that Martin Luther focused on is the imagined grief of Jacob but not Dinah’s, her grief is denied as Luther includes how everyone else feels about the situation (Parsons, 2002 p.129). Luther gives the bare minimum of sympathy towards Dinah, which is evident in his belief in her carefree childlike behaviour that sympathy extends no further than

an initial thought. He still accuses Dinah of sinfulness and being raped is a punishment handed out by God. John Calvin, Luther's contemporary, wrote about Dinah, remarking that she was ravished for leaving her father's house. It is women, like Dinah, who wander freely from their homes that deserve punishment for the crime of curiosity and autonomous thoughts. Luther's empathy extends further towards Jacob, who believed these events occurred so, "we may learn patience in adversity" (Luther, 1513 p.187). In a bid to console the fathers of future rape victims, Luther's commentary also affirms the necessity to silence women when a father's perceived power is threatened (Froula, 1986 p.623). Rape is not a simple act of behaviour correction because women get curious. There is nothing to learn through rape except for the effects of the culture created by the biblical interpretation that is toxic and at the root of the problem. One may wonder if Luther would have educated his daughters in a similar regard by alerting them on the dangers of straying too far from home while encouraging his sons to take advantage of women. The toxic masculinity and misogynistic aspects of culture in these biblical interpretations helped create the foundations we see in the 21st century that forced women to question whether safe spaces truly exist.

Changing the Narrative: Anita Diamant's *The Red Tent*

Now that we have explored some of the more well-known interpretations of Dinah's rape narrative that breed toxic masculinity, it is essential to explore a less apparent toxic interpretation, *The Red Tent*. Anita Diamant's book *The Red Tent* retells Dinah's life based on the Genesis 34 narrative. Diamant's book is one example where feminist rewritings and scholarship erase rape stories and turn them into a tale of young love. Feminist fiction books such as *The Red Tent* may rewrite biblical stories to help give flat characters, like Dinah, more depth. However, in doing so, "[writers] risk perpetuating the harmful rhetoric that underpins man rape and purity cultures throughout the world today" (Keady, 2017 para. 1), Diamant does this by having Dinah and Shechem fall in love. The problem then becomes

about pre-marital sex and improper marriage pursuit. Dinah's dishonour is that she has pre-marital sex with an uncircumcised man, not that she was raped. This rewriting is one aspect that contributes to the current rape culture climate. As Caroline Blyth states:

> If we read this literary event as simply a 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 (Blyth, 2010 p.47).

Diamant's attempt at a feminist rewriting of the Genesis 34 narrative does exactly what Blyth's quote states, it denies the violence done to Dinah and her experience as a rape victim. *The Red Tent* declines any recognition that Dinah is a rape survivor, which might have served more purpose in giving her autonomy than a love story. The narrative highlighted in *The Red Tent* has some similarities to a film called *The Last Duel* (Scott, 2021) which tells about the real-life rape of Margaret de Carrouges during the 14th century. *The Last Duel* embodies how acquaintance rape can be turned into a love story based on retelling the sequence of events. There will be a more in-depth discussion on *The Last Duel* in a later chapter, but it is essential to highlight that when a rape victim's story gets mired in alternative facts, silence follows more profoundly than ever. While *The Red Tent* is a work of fiction that gives Dinah more of a fulfilled life, as a fan of the book, it is important to recognize that it lacks the essential acknowledgement of sexual violence. Aside from the liberties taken in the book, the silence imposed on Dinah through her narrative's biblical interpretations, the silence her brothers force on her is the most significant to the bloody violence that occurs.

Eternal Silence: Simeon and Levi Steal Dinah's Victimhood

Genesis 34 may begin as a narrative about Dinah, but it quickly becomes seized by her biological brothers, Simeon and Levi. Although the brothers take control of Dinah's victimhood, the story "finishes as a tale of male disputes and seizures, of men taking her [Dinah] in and leaving her out" (Yamada M, 2004 p.156). It is not just through Dinah's physical lack of voice that silence is felt but, in her inability to freely possess her status as victim and survivor. Dinah is never allowed to seek justice for what was done to her. The appropriation of Dinah's voice and her victimhood is the foundation of all the other aspects of how she was silenced. Dinah becomes Simeon and Levi's pawn, "in political and economic negotiations with their neighbors, a symbol of the family honor and strength, but as a breathing, the living individual she has no relevance in their lives" (Aschkenasy, 1998 p.52). This means that none of Simeon and Levi's actions are motivated to help Dinah's cause. Instead, their focus is the excessive violence they use to conduct their vengeance; their actions and motivation are based on aggression (Yamada M, 2004 p.156). Simeon and Levi's actions within the patriarchal system can mar the truth of a female story to seek out a perceived sense of justice. As Schroeder states, "thus the culture has transformed what should have been a woman's story into a drama about a male struggle for dominance" (Schroeder, 1997 p56). Genesis 34 allows the patriarchal system to inform women's lives and make decisions without their consent. Women, in turn, must endure their victimhood through stolen voices and in silence.

The interpretations of Genesis 34 transform Dinah into an aggressor, to blame for being raped, rather than a victim. By turning this narrative into a warning to women about the dangers of women leaving home, Simeon and Levi are absolved of any crimes they committed through their selfishness. Again, Simeon and Levi are not concerned about Dinah's well-being but the loss of her socio-sexual status, which renders their perceived

sexual prowess worthless. The brothers' response is to “restore their own honour, upon which their virility depends” (Frymer-Kensky, 2002 p.192). In other words, Dinah’s loss of virginity ‘affected’ Simeon and Levi not only in her bride price but also in their ability to be sexual beings. Dinah’s brothers continue to assault her acting as if they were the ones raped and not their sister. As Stiebert states, “Dinah’s defilement, instead, is regarded by the men of her family as a slight to their honor—so much so that Jacob’s sons seek blood vengeance” (Stiebert, 2019 p.152). Simeon and Levi’s narcissism changes what should be a straightforward rape narrative into a twisted and bloody tale.

Instead of going to Shechem’s house to retrieve Dinah sooner, her brothers plotted to murder as many men as they could. This begs the question, if the brothers intended to seek justice for Dinah, why did they not act sooner to bring her home? Simeon and Levi’s vengeful aggression involved trickery and malicious intent, which meant Shechem’s debt would need to be paid through his flesh. Without any consultation or recognition that Dinah was a rape victim because “after the attack, the woman is forgotten, obliterated from the tale” (Aschkenasy, 1998 p.46), the brothers put their plan into action. Simeon and Levi demand that all the city men must be circumcised if Shechem marries Dinah. While the men suffered in their beds, Simeon and Levi sacked the city in the days following, killing all the men.

Moreover, the remaining women and children were kidnapped. In doing so, this means, “the same men who were enraged at the rape of a woman from their own clan might be the brutal victimizers of the women of another clan” (Aschkenasy, 1998 p.57). Simeon and Levi’s morality, if it can be called that, did not seem to extend to the Shechemite women. Dinah’s brothers participated in a more extreme version of aggression and oppression of women when they sought justice. Ideas about revenge and morality are left upended in the final verse of the Genesis 34 narrative is spoken, “should our sister be treated like a whore”

(Genesis 34:31, 2007)? The reader is left to assume the outcome of the events, still, Dinah's voice is never heard—and with that, the narrative ends.

In a surprising turn of events, Judith, another biblical character, and a woman, prays to God, asking for help just as he helped Simeon and Levi when they were given a sword to avenge their sister. Judith's prayer is as follows:

> O Lord God of my ancestor Simeon, to whom you gave a sword to take revenge on those strangers who had torn off a virgin's clothing to defile her, and exposed her thighs to put her to shame, and polluted her womb to disgrace her; for you said, 'It shall not be done'—yet they did it; so you gave up their rulers to be killed, and their bed, which was ashamed of the deceit they had practiced, was stained with blood, and you struck down slaves along with princes, and princes on their thrones. You gave up their wives for booty and their daughters to captivity and all their booty to be divided among your beloved children who burned with zeal for you and abhorred the pollution of their blood and called on you for help. O God, my God, hear me also, a widow (Judith 9:2, 2007).

In her prayer, Judith strips, prostrates, and puts ashes on her head to have God grant her the strength to crush the Assyrians. Judith uses the same deceitful tactics that Simeon and Levi used to get revenge for their sister because Judith is a woman, it emphasizes how violent means are made excusable to seek revenge. It seems surprising that Judith would hold Simeon and Levi in such high regard, given the bloodshed the men caused; this is a tell-tale sign that the Patriarchal culture ensures that even murderers and rapists are highly regarded. At the very least, their actions are considered excusable in the name of God and justice.

This story uncovers the hypocrisy of a patriarchal culture that seeks to silence rape victims for the more acceptable male voice and male narrative. While there is no indication in the biblical rhetoric of how much Dinah's brothers did to help her, it should be assumed it was the bare minimum, "…the brothers' response to the rape only serves the brothers' interest and

does nothing to rescue the women from their social deaths" (Schulte, 2017 p.113). Their motivations were not based on retrieving their sister or helping her through her ordeal but on taking away her victimhood as well as her voice. Dinah is not alone in having stolen victimhood. Tamar, the daughter of King David, also has her voice clipped by Absalom, her biological brother.

Amnon's Uncontrollable Lust: The Incestuous Rape of Tamar in 2 Samuel 13

Unlike Dinah in the Genesis 34 narrative, Tamar is a dynamic character, "her voice and emotions are recorded" (Stiebert, 2013 p.59). The account in 2 Samuel 13 is an obvious rape story where the victim actively fights back against her rapist. Tamar is given a voice as her pain is recorded, "[she] is possibly the only rape victim in scripture to have a voice, and yet all power to act or even speak is taken away from her" (Cooper-White, 1995 p.1) when the narrative turns into men's business. Moreover, 2 Samuel 13 is also an example of acquaintance rape as well as incestuous rape when Tamar is raped by her half-brother Amnon. This narrative breaks the foundation patristic writers established because Tamar was raped inside the family home, "Tamar stayed at home until she was summoned by the King, her father, and then went even more inward into the heart of her own family" (Frymer-Kensky, 2002 p.160). What this should prove is that rape is not location-based, Dinah went out, but Tamar stayed in and was still sexually assaulted. Tamar should have been able to feel safe in the family home, however, Amnon had a selfish desire and acted on it despite Tamar's obvious protests (Scholz, 2010 p.42). The most important aspect of this narrative is noting that Tamar is not silent, she is silenced, which means through denying her victimhood the continuation of the crime against her is intentional.

Tamar's initial narrative is twenty-two verses long and mostly involves Amnon's love sickness towards Tamar. Amnon becomes lovesick with the desire to have sex with Tamar, Jonadab and Amnon create a plan to get Tamar closer to him. 2 Samuel 13 opens as Jonadab

states, “lay down on your bed and pretend to be ill; and when your father comes to see you, say to him ‘let my sister Tamar come and give me something to eat’. . . So, Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill….” King David, after raping Bathsheba and killing Uriah, sends Tamar into the lion’s den to bake cakes for Amnon. An unsuspecting Tamar, “like many girls who assume that they are safe in the house of a close relative, Tamar does not suspect anything as Amnon kicks everyone out and then invites her into his bedroom. The trap is ready to be sprung” (Frymer-Kensky, 2002 p.59). Amnon also does not take the time to compliment Tamar or invite her into participating in mutual affection (De-Whyte P., 2019 p.232). As Amnon seizes Tamar, he pleads, “come lie with me, my sister” to which Tamar's response is loud and forceful. Tamar shouts, “No, my brother, do not force me; for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do anything so vile” (2 Samuel 13:11-12, 2007)! Tamar’s knowledge of Israelite law is important because she knows it could bring revenge from God, it is Amnon who refuses to see this (Schulte, 2017 p.58). Tamar fights not only for her physical safety but for the values of Israel, as she loudly condemns Amnon’s actions. Despite her protests and attempts to escape Amnon’s grasp, Tamar is overpowered, “[Amnon] forced her and lay with her” (2 Samuel 13:14,2007). Moreover, his actions reveal that he regards Tamar as nothing more than an object of his immediate lust. In the immediate aftermath, Amnon’s lustful desires turn into hatred as he brazenly throws Tamar out of his house. The extension of Amnon’s beastly rape goes further in cementing Tamar’s social death as the doors to his house close behind her, thus making her dismissal worse than the act of rape (Rudman, 1998 p. 332).

The most crucial aspect of Tamar’s rape story is the fact she speaks and uses her voice to save herself from being raped, “[she] speaks in her interests, using her voice to avoid victimization” (Higgins, 2020 p.30). Tamar’s voice is meant to persuade Amnon not to rape her as she demands, “don’t debase me.” Nevertheless, Tamar’s voice does not prove a source of agency as her speech is ignored. Amnon eventually overpowers Tamar and rapes her without

hesitation. In Tamar's narrative, she is "given the voice to pass this eternal judgment on Amnon's demand" (Frymer-Kensky, 2002 p.161) and the outrageousness done to her. Tamar is much like the Unnamed Woman from Judges, who is a victim of a society that values male physical safety over female protection, as both women are put into harm's way (Schulte, 2017 p.65). Tamar's life is left in ruins as she suffers a living death, and her victimhood is used by Absalom in political retaliation against Amnon. Absalom's silencing of Tamar reflects the actions of a parent coddling their young child, warning her not to speak ill of her brother Amnon. Absalom swiftly silences Tamar's voice, as her pain is used by both her brothers to satiate their sexual and political needs.

Biblical Interpretations: Responding to the Rape of Tamar

As stated above, biblical interpreters, for centuries, were mostly men who projected their beliefs on rape narratives. Also true, is that rape stories demand a satisfactory response which has yet to be delivered. Much like Dinah's narrative, the interpretations regarding Tamar are turned into commentaries about her father, King David, and Tamar's attempt to defend herself. In this situation, Tamar is used to teach David a lesson; "Tamar is raped to punish David for sins that have been buried and, by implication, forgotten" (Parsons, 2002 p. 134). David permits his daughter to be raped by letting her go to Amnon's house. Tamar's rape narrative represents more than the desolation of the young woman's life, but "…the once mighty King David is marked as a monarch in sharp decline and his apparent weakness excited the ambitions of his other sons" (Kirsch, 1998 p. 20). Perhaps, given King David's obtuse decision-making, he should not be positioned so high on the biblical pedestal he seems to find himself on. David has been far too busy stealing the wives of his soldiers, raping them, and his idleness to see what is happening right in front of him. To uncover, how Tamar, who fought so hard to defend herself, was silenced looking at the changed narratives is essential. Josephus, for example, sets out to change biblical rhetoric to fit into the image of Judaism that suits his

needs. Later, John Calvin and Martin Luther would use the violent narrative that belongs to Tamar and rip the proverbial rug from under her feet, sacralising it into a story about King David. Also, a modern biblical scholar, Pamela Tamarkin Reis, perverts the narrative into an illicit affair between Tamar and Amnon, thus making Tamar responsible and complicit for her situation.

Rewriting 2 Samuel 13: Josephus on Tamar's Rape Narrative

Flavius Josephus (37AD-100AD), a soldier and a Pharisee, wrote about Tamar's narrative in his *Jewish Antiquities*. Josephus begins the narrative with a simple description of Tamar as King David's virgin daughter. He writes, "[Tamar] was of such striking beauty that she surpassed all of the fairest women…" (Josephus and Marcus, 1998 p.93). Unlike in the biblical version, Tamar is established to be the daughter of King David and not the sister to Amnon and Absalom. Josephus' distancing Tamar from Amnon may have been done to paint the cruelty as less dark by not establishing their familial relationship. Josephus, who also changed the Judges 19 rape narrative, does so in the 2 Samuel 13 narrative to ensure his narrative ideologies are the ones to establish precedent. In the Tamar narrative, Josephus concludes that Amnon fell ill by falling in love with Tamar but could not obtain her as she was a virgin and "closely guarded" (Josephus and Marcus, 1998 p.91-93). By changing the minute details from the biblical rhetoric, Josephus' interpretation ensures Tamar's story will continue to be misunderstood, her victimhood denied, and her voice completely unheard.

While Josephus acknowledges that Tamar has a voice within her narrative, he does not go into detail about how she uses her voice to try and outsmart Amnon. Josephus states, "thus she spoke to escape for the moment from the violence of his lust. He, however, did not listen to her, but burning with desire. . .violated his sister" (Josephus and Marcus, 1998 p.95). In Josephus' version, Tamar's voice is stripped, and her words are choked from her mouth. Tamar is not allowed to show that she understands Israelite law, nor is she seen as trying to fight

against an unwanted assault with all her might. Josephus creates an image of Tamar that is meek and sorrowful at what was done to her, "[she] poured ashes on her head and went away through the mist of the city, crying aloud and bewailing the violence she had suffered" (Josephus and Marcus, 1998 p.97). Josephus alludes to his distaste for Tamar's grief as he remarks that Absalom must take her home and silence her sorrowful cries. Josephus writes, "[Absalom] exhorted her to be quiet and to take it calmly. . . So, she obeyed him and ceased crying and publishing the violation abroad and remained desolate in the house of her brother Absalom" (Josephus and Marcus, 1998 p.97). In this narrative, Absalom, and Josephus through his writing, both want Tamar silenced. It may seem odd that Josephus wants Tamar's cries to be silenced and kept private as many rape narratives from the Hebrew Bible get pushed into the public sphere. This is a case of convenience-that Josephus and the men of the story want to keep private, using it when the hidden crime of rape can be made useful in the public forum.

Pity for King David: John Calvin and Martin Luther Interpret Tamar's Rape Narrative

John Calvin (1509-1564) who wrote during the Reformation publicizes his views on the Tamar narrative, however, he does not blame Tamar for being cruelly raped by Amnon, Calvin sees Amnon as being possessed by Satan. This offers no absolution for him; however, this does not mean Calvin blames Amnon for his actions. The only responsible person left to blame is King David, but this does not avoid the fact that not one person steps up and takes responsibility for their actions, nor does a single person move to help her; except to silence her. In his sermon, "The Rape of Tamar," Calvin's initial remarks are on how the violence of 2 Samuel 13 affects King David. Calvin states, "a tragic heartbreak for a king to see his daughter raped" (translated by Kelly, 1992 p.614). Nonetheless, this is not what Calvin has trouble with his two major issues with the narrative are Tamar's loud objections and the incestual

intercourse. Calvin characterises incest as the worst sin, more so than rape. The perception Calvin suggests becomes about a matter of incest, rather than the crueller aspect of rape. When incest was included in the narrative, rape became the lesser of two evils even with Tamar's life destroyed and bloodshed that followed. Calvin's distaste for incest is coupled with his annoyance at Tamar objecting to Amnon's advances, once again a woman's actions are being scrutinized instead of a violent rape.

Unsurprisingly, John Calvin thought Tamar should not have taken her 'radical' approach to Amnon's violent attack, as her self-centeredness about her reputation was more sinful. Calvin asserts, "Tamar who was horrified at having been raped by her brother. . . tried to use marriage as a false cover-up, thus making the offence which had been committed twice as bad" (translated in Kelly, 2002 p.631). Calvin finds Tamar's over-sensitive rebuttal more troubling because she is more concerned with her shame of allowing herself to be raped than the bigger picture of how he expects a woman to react. It is essential to note that there is no biblical evidence to suggest that Tamar wanted to use marriage to cover up being raped. Her objections are used to try and save herself from rape, she uses the idea of marriage in hopes that Amnon will grow a conscience. These two things are completely different. Martin Luther, too, takes time to address the topic of marriage in 2 Samuel 13. In his work *The Estate of Marriage,* Luther assures his readers that the restrictions against marrying stepsisters were not strict, citing Tamar as an example, "we also find in Scripture that concerning various stepsisters, there were not such strict prohibitions. For Tamar, Absalom's sister, although she could have married her stepbrother, Amnon" (quoted in Parsons, 2002 p.136). In this regard, Luther is looking at a way for Tamar to improve her life following the rape by allowing her to be forcibly tied to her rapist through marriage. Her desolation would not be so pronounced, however, forcing a woman to marry her rapist is at the heart of how women are continually viewed as objects and not human beings. For centuries women have had the whole idea of

shame and bodily protection penetrated deep into their psyche. This begs the question: at what point will women be allowed the space to live without the constant fear of invasion by men?

Calvin reinforces the androcentric idea that Tamar was responsible for being raped when she puts ashes on her head. Her acts indicate that Tamar is aware that she sinned and acknowledges her need to be punished by God. Calvin's belief reflects Augustine's idea that prophylactic punishment should be used against women who sin or would sin. It is difficult to imagine how Tamar deserved to be raped by her brother for straying off a righteous path, given she did everything she was asked as a daughter in an Israelite family. John Calvin misses the point of Tamar's story exchanging his pious ideologies for biblical rhetoric. Calvin sacrifices Tamar's suffering to discuss her faults and therefore obscuring and eliminating her victimhood. Pamela Tamarkin Reis too finds an issue with Tamar's objections using the 2 Samuel 13 narrative to condemn the actions of the young woman.

Tamar's Foolishness: Pamela Tamarkin Reis on 2 Samuel 13

In her article, "Cupidity and Stupidity: Woman's Agency and the Rape of Tamar" Pamela Tamarkin Reis condemns Tamar for inciting her rape. Reis decides that it was Tamar's flirtatious nature that led to a consensual act between Amnon and Tamar, therefore denying rape altogether. Reis remarks that one indication of Tamar's willingness in the sexual encounter is due to her venturing beyond the bounds of King David's request by going into Amnon's inner bedroom chamber (Reis Tamarkin, 1997 p.48). This means that had Tamar not been willing to go to bed with Amnon she would not have crossed a line and gone into Amnon's bedroom. Additionally, Tamar's loud objections and insistence on Amnon marrying her in lawfulness, affirms to Reis that Tamar was at least a little willing to have sex with Amnon. However, Israelite laws did not allow for incestuous marriage, Reis uses this concept to point out Tamar's misconceptions and foolishness. Reis states, "in her ignorance, her foolishness, or her ambition, she believes, she and Amnon can marry in propriety, and with David's blessing"

(Reis Tamarkin, 1997 p. 50). Reis not only reaffirms patriarchal and androcentric views about Tamar, but she does so as a female biblical scholar, which only reinforces rape culture. As Suzanne Scholz asserts of the 2 Samuel 13 narrative's commentary, "an obvious rape story turns into a story about consensual sex, and the woman's agency is turned against her as she is accused of misleading the man" (Scholz, 2010 p.41). Much like the commentaries that have come before Reis ignores important aspects of Tamar's narrative and exchanges them with her ideologies about rape and sex. The fact remains, that Tamar should not have had to worry about her safety in her family home, nor should she be held responsible for keeping a safe distance from her male relatives. Tamar's willingness to do what she thought was right and good as a daughter in the house of David does not mean consent to her rape is automatic and Amnon being her brother does not excuse his behaviour either. Biblical scholars who choose to turn the 2 Samuel 13 narrative into an affair help perpetuate the rape myth that accuses women, who regret sexual encounters, of crying rape.

Eternal Silence: Absalom Steals Tamar's Voice

The 2 Samuel 13 narrative depicts how men are allowed to rape at will and the dire consequences for the female rape victim. Women's bodies are continuously acted upon by outside forces that only reinforce patriarchal views, when this happens not only do women find themselves losing their victimhood but their voices as well. Following Tamar's rape, the reader is allowed to hear her screams as she wails in the streets of the city, we can feel her emotions along with her. The reader is supposed to be shocked as "[Tamar] draws attention to her devastation by openly revealing her plight" (Frymer-Kensky, 2002 p.165). Tamar does not attempt to hide her feelings of shame and violation as she laments what was forcibly taken from her. Absalom, her full brother steps into the scene disguised as a hero to save the day. He gaslights the young woman and steals her voice while belittlingly chastising her, as if she were a misbehaving child, and banishes her into a lifelong time-out. Tamar's experience

becomes invalidated when Absalom refers to her attacker as “her brother” making Absalom’s primary concern eliminating Tamar’s voice (Higgins, 2020 p.33). The biblical account may not explain why Absalom chooses to silence his sister, but the subsequent events suggest that it is so he can kill Amnon and usurp the throne from King David. Absalom waits two years before taking revenge on Amnon for raping Tamar meaning that the rape was not urgent enough to warrant immediate action.

Much like in the Genesis 34 narrative with Simeon and Levi who use male aggression to feign revenge on Shechem, so too does Absalom seek revenge against his father by raping King David’s concubines. Absalom seeks the advice of Ahithophel, another wise man from this story, who tells him to sexually violate his father’s concubines on the palace roof, in full view of the kingdom (De-Whyte P., 2019 p.238). The event on the roof further asserts that male competition is fought on the bodies of women who serve not only as battlefields but as armour and chess pieces. (Scholz 2009 p.41). This story, is not dissimilar from any other rape story, as Susanne Scholz says, “[it] depicts quite vividly the dire consequences of male domination: androcentrism crushes these enslaved women's bodies and spirits persistently and relentlessly” (Scholz 2010 p.80). Even though this story should be about the rape of Tamar and the other female victims, it ends up being turned into a male narrative, where women are used and abused at will. Increasingly, as these stories get told, it is evident that silence has been reinforced by neglecting an accurate depiction of the events, which “continues throughout society when and wherever victims are not permitted to tell their stories and name their pain” (Casey, 2010 p.169). Rape narratives such as Tamar’s and the concubines still occur today, when rape is used as a means of revenge by a man against a woman, who is raped for rejecting male advances.

There is nothing these women could have done in any scenario to warrant them being raped by Absalom. However, he chooses to use their bodies to embarrass and chastise King

David. Female bodies, especially those of enslaved women, are treated as symbols of male power; their bodies are acted upon and used to punish males. As Tamar's story unfolds, there is an ominous feeling and a noticeable loss of her voice; her brother Absalom takes away the last shred of it. Much like Dinah's brothers, Simeon, and Levi, who usurp her voice. Absalom does so by turning this female story into men's business. Tamar is trapped between her two brothers; as one brother rapes her, the other silences her, and her agency is taken away and replaced leaving her fate in their hands (Schulte 2017 p.56). We do not know why Absalom hushes Tamar's cries in the name of justice, but her grief is shut away as if it is an embarrassment to be heard (Rudman, 1998 p.338). While technically Tamar may not have had any legal recourse in Ancient Israel for what Amnon did to her, nevertheless Absalom silencing her voice was a condemnable function as it worked within rape culture. Tamar is another female victim who functions to explain violence between men. The seizure of Tamar's voice looms heavily over this narrative, the consequences of which are bloody. Not only does Absalom leave a trail of destruction in his plot to seek revenge on Amnon, but Tamar's life is destroyed as she remains stuck between girlhood and womanhood.

Silenced: Conclusions on Dinah and Tamar's Narratives

Throughout the narrative and interpretations regarding Dinah's silence, it is continuously misinterpreted, intentionally, as consent, while in Tamar's narrative, her voice was used to condemn her for complicity and disruption. Neither of the women emerges as victors in their narratives. The Genesis 34 and 2 Samuel 13 narratives show how aspects of acquaintance rape existed in the ancient world, even if there was no quantifying term. Moreover, the narratives show how the authors and interpreters of biblical rhetoric chose to see women as objects in a much larger, and more important story. As Scholz states of the underlying issue of women being objects, "the problem of acquaintance rapists is that they

view women as objects with whom they can do as they please" (Scholz, 2010 p.38) women as subjects are lost because the bigger picture takes over. Namely, the political familial aspects of the narrative. Additionally, the narratives can do more than function as artefacts of the past, "they also allow us to trace the ways these ideations continue to shape and inform contemporary understandings of rape" (Keady, 2017 para. 2) and become more than passive participants in the ancient interpretations of rape. Because the interpretations of the Genesis 34 and 2 Samuel 13 narratives by patristic writers like Luther and Clairvaux are told without essential information from the biblical account, they are not harmless ideologies. Each time Dinah and Tamar's stories are told, without essential information included, they are raped all over again by the pen and by androcentrism.

Both Tamar and Dinah's brothers seek revenge on each rapist, yet there is no evidence to suggest they do so for any other reason than to regain their perceived lost sexual virility. As Scholz states, "…the brothers' response to the rapes only serves the brothers' interests and does nothing to rescue the women from their social deaths" (Schulte, 2017 p.113). Their malicious justice is what continues to allow Dinah and Tamar to be thrust into their silent spaces, perched between childhood and womanhood. As De-Whyte states, "Dinah and Tamar are rendered socially barren because, as sexually violated women their marriage opportunity is diminished and they are rendered childless" (De-Whyte P., 2019 p.211). Through the actions of each brother both Dinah and Tamar suffer more as rape victims because of the foolish, bloody revenge Simeon, Levi, and Absalom seek. As the brothers, in both narratives, struggle with how their fathers "…fail to act in the way his son or sons see fit" (Stiebert, 2013 p.50) the tragic events get out of hand.

More than the violence that takes place in each narrative is the silence that lurks around every word. Through the interpretations of these rape narratives, a few of which have been investigated above, a foundation of rape culture and rape myths has been laid. This

foundation is where rape culture in the 21st century plants itself, as it continues to permeate every aspect of society. The silent spaces women live in still exist today in each part of the world. Through movements such as the #MeToo Movement and the possibility of a new wave of feminism, this silence will be replaced with louder voices. Still, there are more narratives to explore in biblical rhetoric as Dinah and Tamar are not the only victims of rape to be silenced; the Unnamed Woman from Judges 19 also shares the burden of being brutalized through rape. This time, though, the Unnamed Woman is gang-raped by a mob, and then her body is destroyed, leading to one of the most extreme examples of brutalization found in the Old Testament.

Chapter Four

A Retrospective Examination of Gang Rape: The Death of the Unnamed Woman in Judges 19 and the Abduction of the Six-Hundred Women in Judges 21

"It is a gross and extreme form of social regulation by which woman is brutally stripped of her humanity and confronted with her definition as a non-person, a function."

It is Always the Woman Who is Raped (Metzger, 1976 p.405)

Animalistic Cruelty: Introducing the Unnamed Woman's Story

The Unnamed Woman from Judges 19 is silenced like her counterparts Dinah and Tamar. In the Unnamed Woman's narrative, however, she is brutalized to death as she is gang raped and her body cut into twelve pieces. The Judges 19-21 narrative may be one of the most gruesome instances of rape and violence, on a mass scale, written in the Hebrew Bible. The book of Judges depicts accounts of what happens when Yahweh is disobeyed. The Unnamed Woman's narrative is one example where, "there is no catharsis or redemption here, only a mind-numbing senselessness in the wake of bestial savagery" (Thompson, 2001 p.1). The narrative in Judges 19 shows the power structure defines a man's place as superior to a woman's, especially his voice and body. This safety structure guarantees that men have a voice and women do not. As J.H. Coetzee writes in "The 'outcry' of the dissected woman in Judges 19-21: embodiment of a society":

> [going] hand in hand with body symbolism, usually as an instrument of power...[by] permitting a character in a story to speak is usually taken as empowering that character. On the other hand, to impose silence on a character may be a way of disempowerment (Coetzee, 2002 p.54).

The narrative from Judges is one example of how characters are permitted a voice with which to speak if they are considered empowered, and how the female character is not given the agency to speak. She exists only as a tertiary character and as disposable waste, silent and hardly seen. The Unnamed Woman's story then becomes a public, male-centred, political account that is put on display for the world to see. The concluding section of Judges, as Gale A. Yee affirms, "culminates in the most atrocious events in the book. A wife is betrayed, gang raped, and disembodied. . . [a further] six-hundred women are seized and raped to restock [the Benjaminite] tribe" (Yee, 2007 p.3).

The ideologies that control what takes place in both the literal and metaphorical sense reinforce patriarchal hierarchy. Women continue to live their lives full of brutality, the threat of kidnapping, and murder, all in silence. Women and their bodies belong to the male members of the community. The one person her body does not belong to is herself, additionally, in the Judges 19-21 narrative women do not exist outside the space where they can be used as cannon fodder to move the story forward. What this does is weaponizes women's silence by taking away their victimhood, as it becomes a means to seek revenge with more killing and more rape. Women's stories are used to not only silence them but to perpetuate a cycle of harm. As quickly as all of these raped and kidnapped women appear, they disappear in the interest of the "more significant cause. Their disappearances are made admirable because they helped preserve the male lineage" (Gunn, 2005 p.249).

Patristic writers who are responsible for the dominant discourse on Judges 19-21 and in silencing the Unnamed Woman by ignoring her status as a victim do so in the interest of preserving the Levite's honour. Biblical commentators capitalize on the belief that unnatural intercourse or any intercourse not designed for procreation, might damage a man's safety, as well as his place in the hierarchal structure. Moreover, commentators claim that the violence happened because there was a lack of a king. This claim is hard to substantiate, considering

the rape of Tamar happened under the eyes of King David; one of Israel's great kings. In considering how patristic writers have reacted to the Unnamed Woman's plight, it is important to follow the narrative through the uncomfortable parts, right to the heart of the story. Both episodes in Judges highlight the "topsy-turvy way in which problems are 'solved' when divine aid is noticeably absent" (Lasine, 1984 p.40). The vicious behaviour that is excused by the lack of a king does not begin to explain how "the episode at the base is one of hatred of 'the other', and each man acts out his part in the situation of hatred with a sort of careless violence. . . (Hackett, 2004 p.361). The careless violence addresses unspeakable mutilation and devastation that aims to destroy women and sets in motion the creation of a rape culture that sees women continually sacrificed for the greater cause. The Unnamed Woman of Judges 19, like many other rape victims, becomes a violated body without a voice at the bottom of a heap of victims that would follow.

Using Female Bodies to Save Male Bodies: Judges19 and Genesis 19

Before broaching the subject of same-sex rape in this section, it is important to point out that homosexuality, as we know it today, describes a person's orientation: male-male/female-female, etc. Nevertheless, some of the analyses that have been used refer to same-sex rape as homosexual rape but the term that has been applied from this point of view is same-sex rape. Same-sex rape describes a violent act of rape that occurs between people of the same identified gender. This specifically refers to male-male rape instances. Moreover, it is essential to establish the dependence of Judges 19 and Genesis 19 on each other, as it demonstrates "how evil the residents of Gibeah were in the eyes of the authors of Judges 19", (Brettler, 1989 p.412) and shows there was a sense of cultural awareness and ancient traditions by the authors. The parallels between the Genesis 19 narrative and the Judges 19 narrative are few, ending abruptly when the Levite acts through his own hands. In both

accounts, the guests are offered a place to stay from the square of the town. A group of drunken men surrounds the house where the guests are staying. The virgin daughters of both houses (and the Woman) are offered as alternatives to the guests. The parallels end there; the harshest difference in what happens next both deal with the pulling and pushing of the houseguests. In the Genesis story, the angels save Lot from the angry mob by pulling him back into the walls of his house to safety. The text reads, "But the men inside reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them and shut the door" (Genesis 19, 2007). Further, the angels blinded the angry mob to prevent them from seeing the door. Lot is kept safe; he maintains his safe space and is given refuge to escape the city of Sodom and Gomorrah before it is destroyed. Unlike the angels who save Lot, the Levite, who one may think would be the first to save his wife after he went to speak to her heart, unceremoniously pushes the Unnamed Woman out of the house into the arms of the gang. The Judges 19 account reads, "So the man seized his [woman], and put her out to them", this is the only interaction the Levite has with the Unnamed Woman during the entire account apart from when he speaks to her as her body lies in front of the door. The Unnamed Woman, who sought a safe space, finds herself thrown out to a slew of greedy men, consequently, the virgin daughter of the homeowner is also not allowed a place of comfort. This means that familial lines do not even guarantee a woman's safety, as those bonds can be broken and betrayed at any moment. In the unbalanced world of Ancient Israel, we suddenly find there is no such thing as a safe space for women. The attitude toward male safety reflects a culture that was designed by a patriarchal structure. An attack of same-sex rape was an attack on a man's perceived honour, a severe attack that would bring not only shame to a male, but change his place in divine order (Stone, 2009 para. 7). While none of the writers addressed in this thesis had the desire to address the real reasons behind their perceived distaste for male-male rape and same-sex acts, their intention to keep women lower in the place of divine order

is clear. Women were objects, subject to their masters' demands who were always male family members.

Besides Judges 19, Genesis 19 is the most quoted narrative condemning same-sex interactions regarding rape in the Hebrew Bible. Both narratives are representations of a male-dominated society. As stated above there was no such thing as homosexual rape but the brutal invasion of another person's body. As Frymer-Kensky states, "There is really no homosexuality or any other kind of sexuality either in the Sodom story or here [Judges 19]" (Frymer-Kensky, 2013 p.124). All there is violence and self-serving male characters who do nothing other than put women in harm's way to save themselves or the bodies of other men. Below the surface, there is more evidence that what is going on, in this and other rape narrative interpretations, is that significant socio-cultural tensions are created through the early church fathers' gendered expressions of biblical accounts that still affect women in the 21st century. The hostility created in rape narratives by classifying male bodies as deserving more protection over female bodies implies the fragile framework these men felt they lived within. The structure patristic writers created led to their demise as forefront thinkers. It was, "…a structure of patriarchal compulsory heterosexuality based on misogyny, phallocentric, and homosexual panic leading to sexual violence" (Carden, 1999 p.50). Even within the patriarchal structure these patristic writers created, with their interests in mind, their sense of uneasiness still required significant attention. To reconcile their uneasiness, they forced female bodies to function as stand-ins for their bodies and the rest of mankind.

Again, rape is not a sexual act, but an act of violence and intimidation. Rape is not only used as a tool to dominate, abuse, and annihilate women, "but the rape of women is also a means by which men struggle for power over each other. Women can be fields where men plant their seed, but women can also be bloodied fields of male contest" (Carden, 1999 p.53) as with the case of the six-hundred women who were kidnapped to restock the barren

Benjaminite tribe. Female bodies become land to be disputed, free for the taking; this is none more evident than in the stories of Genesis 19 and Judges 19-21. What comes next in the narrative of the Unnamed Woman is one of the most significant acts of barbarism seen in biblical rhetoric, as her body is dismembered and sent throughout the land.

Patristic Writers: The Argument Against Same-Sex Rape

Unlike Dinah and Tamar's narratives, the Judges 19-21 account reveals how far into the depth of depravity humanity can fall when the body of the Unnamed Woman replaces the Levite's to protect him from the threat of same-sex rape. The implications of the ancient world's predominant view that justifies women's rape to save men are crucial to explore how it helped shape rape culture today. The account from Judges prompted mixed responses from early interpreters due to the depiction of rape and the actions of the men (Gunn, 2005 p.243). However, patristic writers understood a power dynamic as well as the sexual structure that made women take a passive role and men a dominant role. This would then imply that same-sex rape involves a man taking on a passive role to another dominant man, therefore upsetting the structure. It is important to reiterate that "rape is not a sexual act. It is an act of hostility and aggression, not sexual interest" (Frymer-Kensky, 2013 p.145). Moreover, "the initial threat of homosexual rape proves that the issue was not sex or lust, but rather a lust for violence or a desire to humiliate or dominate the outsider" (Thompson, 2001 p.4). The same men who decided the order of importance for humanity are the same men who chose to manipulate it through their pervasive actions. Both women and men had their positions in the patriarchal structure and when that dynamic was compromised, it needed to be fixed, whether it was intentional or not. In the narrative of Judges 19, the correction of the hierarchy is done when the Levite knowingly pushes the Unnamed Woman out the door into the hands of a voracious mob. This moment is how the Hebrew Bible demonstrates that "what is right in men's eyes is women's rape and torture at the hands of a predatory mob. . ." (Yee, 2007

p.148). In doing so, this justifies, for generations to come, that a man will allow the rape of a woman to protect a male body when it is in jeopardy. Much like female rape victims today who are ignored, kidnapped, and murdered, the story from Judges 19 was also largely ignored by those who could affect real change.

Based on the narrative from Judges 19-21, the amount of damage and cruelty that the Unnamed Woman and the six-hundred women were forced to face daily was extreme. The way patristic writers interpreted rape narratives, such as Judges 19, is no less than a slap in the face of the lives of the victims. Moreover, it showed future generations that it is acceptable to debase the bodies of women. As David M. Gunn states, "[in] this episode readers have been troubled with the fact that the initial object of rape is a man. . ." (Gunn, 2005 p.254) and deem it right for women's objectification. Two of the patristic writers that chose to erase the gang's violent intentions to rape the Levite were Josephus and Ambrose Bishop of Milan (Carden, 1999 p.51). Instead, they wrote of the gang's overwhelming lust for the Unnamed Woman, deliberately erasing important aspects of the narrative and further silencing the rape victim. What Josephus and Ambrose do is use an androcentric and heteronormative narrative to manipulate their followers, in turn helping to establish the rape culture. St Augustine, too, addresses the importance of using a woman's body to protect a man from defilement, because a man's body is not designed to be passive.

Those who did choose to address the sensitive topic of same-sex rape made it clear that it was unnatural for a man's body to be used perversely. Some patristic writers, such as Nicholas of Lyra, were angered at the idea of fornication and sodomy (Gunn, 2005 p.243). This stance offers insight as to how patristic writers were aware of how damaging rape was for a victim and that rape was not motivated by sexual pleasure. These early church writers truly understood that rape was overall a damaging experience but intentionally forgot to apply that logic to the rape narratives they interpreted (Thompson, 2001 p.4). It is important

to acknowledge the fact patristic writers knew the difference between sex and rape, their concern for the correct rape victim is misplaced, it should be on the Unnamed Woman and not the Levite. Their deliberate misinterpretations rippled throughout history causing rape myths to be born, and in turn, perpetuating the idea that same-sex rape is not possible and silencing not only female rape victims but male victims as well.

Erasing the Rape Narrative: Josephus on Judges 19

Josephus writes on the Judges 19-21 narrative in his book *Jewish Antiquities*, but this time he changes all the mentions of same-sex rape into a tragic love story. Since Josephus was a Pharisee, it may be likely that he did this to reinforce a positive image of Judaism. The narrative begins by highlighting the rivalry between the priests and the Levites (Feldman, 2000 p.268) by pointing out that the Levite were of a lower social status. Josephus states, "A Levite of the lower ranks, of the province. The Levite of Ephraim and the outrage on his wife of Ephraim and residing therein, married a woman of Bethlehem, a place belonging to the tribe of Judah." The placement of the Levite's social status could indicate that this aspect of the narrative was understood to be what Josephus believed was most important to point out, as well. If not, there is no reason, he should have made any indication as to the status of the Levite. Moreover, Josephus reorders the events from the biblical account to romanticize the narrative to better suit the perpetuation of his ideals. Josephus creates this elaborate lovers' spat between the Levite and the Unnamed Woman:

> . . . quarrels were continually arising between them…left her husband and in the fourth month re-joined her parents. But her husband, in sore affliction through love of her, visited her parents, redressed her grievances, and was reconciled to her (Josephus and Marcus, 1998 p.225).

What the passage above does is upend the reasons for the Unnamed Woman returning to her father's home. Instead of her leaving due to anger and the Levite waiting four months to see

her, the Unnamed Woman leaves in the fourth month of their marriage due to constant quarrelling. The Levite, then, goes to address her grievances because of the love he felt toward her. In the biblical account there is no clue as to how the Levite felt about the Unnamed Woman, merely that he went to "speak tenderly" (Judges 19-21, 2007) to her and to fetch her back. Josephus' rewording of the events not only does a disservice to his readers, but it sets the foundation for the erasure of the Unnamed Woman as a victim of the Levite's actions. The narrative manoeuvred by Josephus, a male author, ensures this story is less of an emotional account of rape than it is about politics.

The most centrally important aspect of Josephus' version of the Judges narrative is the deletion of attempted same-sex rape because it erases the Levite's actions towards the Unnamed Woman's death. Instead, Josephus uses the Unnamed Woman's beauty as the reason for why the unruly mob pursued her:

> some of the young men of Gaba, who had seen the woman in the market-place and admired her comeliness…they required him [the elderly man] to hand over his woman guest if he wished to avoid trouble. . . they seized the woman and, yielding still more to the force of their lust, carried her off to their homes and then, after sating their lewdness all night long, let her go towards the break of day (Josephus and Marcus, 1998 p.227).

There is no mention of the Levite forcing the Unnamed Woman out the door, which ensures that the Levite will also be viewed as a victim of the gang's action. In doing so, the Unnamed Woman's voice and life disappear into eternal silent space. This commentary exposes the androcentric idea that the physical wounds of a rape victim do not outweigh the perceived societal wounds that are felt by men. The Unnamed Woman returns to the elderly man's house to seek refuge from the place where her safety was stolen. Upon her release, the Unnamed Woman drags herself back towards the house, ultimately "giving up the ghost"

(Josephus and Marcus, 1998 p.229) due to her mounting woes at the shame of what happened and not wanting to face her husband. Here the woman dies, not due to excessive injury from being gang raped through the night, but in shame, making her death admirable. The redemptive quality the Unnamed Woman provides in the narrative is to die, so that a war could be waged. Unfortunately, this does not increase her victimhood but exchanges it for more violence and rape of the most brutal kind, which takes over as she disappears. Moreover, the narrative projected here creates a culture that forces some rape victims to return to the place where their safety was compromised because they are powerless to do anything else. For example, women raped by their husbands may be forced to return or even stay with them because their power has been given up to an external force. A comparable situation happened recently in England when a Canterbury tattoo artist, Ramona, was murdered by her husband, Catalin who subsequently killed himself. In February 2022, months before her murder, Ramona had accused Catalin of sexual assault, including "…a series of historic allegations of rape against her husband going back 16 years in the relationship and the last few years. There were five separate allegations, all of which took place at the family home" (Kindred, 2022 para 11). Catalin was allowed to continue working at their co-owned tattoo studio in Canterbury's city centre and was also able to maintain living within the family home. The only condition: he could not "pester" or "harass" her (Kindred, 2022 para. 13). However, in March 2022, he was arrested for violating this order. On April 11, 2022, just days before his bail was due to be revoked, Catalin stabbed Ramona in the neck before stabbing himself in the stomach. While the police are currently investigating the circumstances that led to Ramona's death, it is apparent that at some point, a heinous mistake was made when Catalin was allowed to maintain contact with Ramona. It is because Catalin was given bail and allowed to be near Ramona again that he was allowed to kill her, had the police not permitted an alleged rapist bail, Ramona would still be alive, and

her son would still have his mother. Situations such as the ones that allow accused rapists within the proximity of their accusers are a failure of the justice system to see victims as human, especially women. Through deadly miscalculations about the severity of rape, victims are moved into a silent space, and the opportunity to seek justice is stolen by both the justice system and the suspect. Within the context of the Unnamed Woman's narrative, emotions and circumstances are invented by Josephus that attest to the abusive qualities of the Levite. Josephus expresses this by creating emotions for the Levite to feel upon encountering the Unnamed Woman's lifeless body. Josephus writes:

> supposing his wife to be buried in deep sleep. . . tried to arouse her, with intent to console her recalling how she had not voluntarily surrendered herself to her abusers... But when he found that she was dead. . . he laid the dead woman upon his beast, bore her to his home… (Josephus and Marcus, 1998 p.229).

Like the biblical account, Josephus prevents his readers from sympathizing with the Unnamed Woman; instead, the Levite is awarded that sympathy. Josephus' narrative interpretation continues to skew societal ideas that could directly affect the way women are forced to encounter violence. The Unnamed Woman's body is used to save the Levite's body, a point Josephus ignores, to ensure that religion and the hierarchy of power are preserved.

Augustine's *De Mendacio*: The Male Body Must Not be Defiled

As stated in Chapter One, St Augustine is one of the most influential people on western society's perception of sexuality and the champion of prophylactic punishment for female sinners. He argues his beliefs in the *De Mendacio* (*On Lying*) where he addresses a scenario that mirrors the events found in Judges 19. Augustine decrees there is one situation where lying can help save a man's life and body:

> But if he have filth poured all over him, or poured into his mouth, or crammed into him, or if he be carnally used like a woman; then almost all men regard him with a feeling of horror, and they call him defiled and unclean (Augustine, n.d. p.394).

What Augustine is saying in this passage is that the male body is not designed to be used in the same manner as a woman's body, through the invasion of a penis. If this were to happen to a man it would cause shock and horror, thus causing him to be perceived as unclean. Augustine's ideas do speak plainly, he does not deny that men can and potentially have been raped. However, he is actively advocating for the rape of women and for them to enjoy the experience. In androcentric terms, women, through their passivity and submissiveness, are designed to be penetrated by dominant men who are equipped to penetrate. This idea dismisses any autonomy or personhood that a woman has in her life. Augustine would rather give men free rein to do what they want to women than face the possibility of men being seen as passive.

Further in *De Mendacio,* Augustine continues his reasoning for why the penetration of a male body should be avoided at all costs:

> One must conclude then that the sins of others, be they what they may, those always excepted which defile him on whom they are committed, a man must not seek to avoid by the sin of his own, either for himself or for any other, but rather he must put up with them, and suffer bravely; and if by no sins of his own he ought to avoid them, therefore not by a lie: but those which by being committed upon a man do make him unclean, these we are bound to avoid even by sinning ourselves; and for this reason, those things are not to be called sins, which are done for the purpose of avoiding that uncleanness (Augustine, n.d. p.394.).

The above passage is urging men to be brave and to avoid defilement, even if they must sin to do so. For Augustine, it was of the utmost importance to prevent uncleanliness and that the sins committed to deter being made unclean were necessary and therefore excusable. If we

accept Augustine's concept of necessary male protection over that of females, then it would not be too much to assume that the actions of the Levite from Judges would be excusable, as it prevented his body from being defiled and made unclean. What is clear in Augustine's reasoning is that the issue was not about same-sex rape but the uncomfortable idea of men being perceived as passive bodies, especially in a world ruled and created by them. The Unnamed Woman's story is about how uneasy the early church was about male passiveness and, therefore, breaking the rules of the patriarchal order. (Carden, 1999, p.48). These narratives and interpretations promote violence and justify the use of force against women, throughout time and well into the 21st century.

Chastity Must be Protected: Ambrose of Milan's Letter to Syagrius

Ambrose Bishop of Milan, in 380AD, wrote a letter to Syagrius Bishop of Verona chastising him for imprisoning a virgin woman, Indicia, who was accused by her brother-in-law, Maximus, of compromising her bodily chastity, without proof of her wrongdoing. Indicia was subjected to an examination by a midwife and forced to endure the slandering of her name, Maximus then retracted his statement of her crime. Ambrose's two letters use the Judges 19 narrative as a lesson to Syagrius for why the shameless act of both Maximus and Syagrius was unacceptable. Ambrose states:

> The case is going badly when the body has to be consulted for stronger proof than the mind. I prefer virginity made manifest by works of character rather than the body's enclosure…It becomes a serious crime for a maiden to be within the secrecy of her own home, to be shut in her own chamber! Such a maiden assumes the task of modesty, not of anxiety (Beyenka, 1967 p.159).

The passage reveals Ambrose's belief that it was not necessary to subject Indicia to the horrors of an examination to prove her chastity. Indicia's strong character would warrant the confirmation of her virginity, moreover, the fact maidens lived their lives at home and away

from the possibility of violation. Ambrose, who sees himself as morally right, urges Syagrius to right the wrongs committed to Indicia, however, this does not happen. In the second letter to Syagrius, Ambrose chastises the bishop for continuing to perpetuate the issue by not fixing what was done to Indicia through his silence. Ambrose chooses to use the Judges 19 narrative to prove his point that God fiercely protects chastity. He begins his long retelling of the Judges 19 narrative, where there is an abundance of misrepresentations of themes and events that completely change the impact of the account. The overall theme of female rape is not explicitly stated, however, through the liberties taken in this account, the changes are intentional and meant to project a different narrative.

Ambrose copies Josephus' account of Judges 19-21, and also, denies any chance that the Levite is responsible for the Unnamed Woman's death. (Beyenka, 1967 p.167). The woman, having been noticed by a gang of men, "was seized, and all that night was subjected to violence" (Beyenka, 1967 p.167) intentionally ignoring the important aspect that it was the Levite who forced her out the door. The Unnamed Woman's life ends as Ambrose believes to prevent the Levite from bearing the shame or disgrace of having a raped wife (Beyenka, 1967 p.167). It is essential to point out that Ambrose goes beyond to ensure the Levite is seen as being comforting to the Unnamed Woman's corpse before cutting it into twelve pieces. This adds a dynamic to the Levite's humanity that is not seen in the biblical account, which is misleading at best and deadly at worst. Moreover, Ambrose's letter emphasizes the importance of public versus private crimes, stating that "a public crime [is] more tolerable than a private disgrace" (Beyenka, 1967 p.167). Excusing his actions as it was "with great sorrow since he was her parent, but with less damage to the favor he owed his guest" (Beyenka, 1967 p.167). What this means is it would be more detrimental for the host to lose face than protect his daughter from a night of gang rape. Being a good host is more important than his daughter's livelihood or her safety. Contrary to the biblical narrative, Ambrose never

mentions that the Levite's body is in harm's way, readers of this letter must assume the old man wants to use his daughter to save the Levite and by association the Unnamed Woman. Ambrose takes profound liberties to ensure the letter to Syagrius understands that chastity is essential and that God will do anything to protect it.

The system of compulsory chastity benefits a man's decision-making abilities in whether a rape is considered rape, adultery, disobeying God's will, or dismissible as necessary in a patriarchal culture. In scenarios where women, like the Unnamed Woman, are silenced, there are no morals, and each of the male characters is responsible for degrading female humanity. What Ambrose does is excuse harmful acts against women by not retelling an accurate version of the Judges 19 narrative. It is difficult to grasp the connection Ambrose is making between Indicia's case and the Judges 19 narrative, as he states, "our ancestors did not think chastity so to be despised; rather, they showed it such reverence that they would wage war on violators of modesty" (Beyenka, 1967 p.167). Ambrose's belief suits the narrative, illustrating that he was trying to perpetuate a tragic love story. Had he stayed true to the biblical rhetoric, it would be clear that chastity was not revered but was pawned when it suited the needs of a man. The Levite is not a tragic character in a love story but how women were forcibly silenced to the most extreme end. What is more, brutal rape and murder can occur in a culture that is designed by men who will do anything in their power to avoid being treated the way they treat women.

Annihilating the Female Body: Dismembering the Unnamed Woman

Once the Levite forces the Unnamed Woman out the door, she is left to endure a night of repeated gang rape and violence. After she is let go, she crawls back to the stoop of the elderly man's house where she collapses. Unlike the narrative that Josephus and Ambrose write, the Levite, without a single caring thought for the Unnamed Woman tells her to, "get up, we are going," upon seeing her lifeless body (Judges 19:28, 2007). There is no indication

in the text as to how the Levite's night went while the Unnamed Woman was being raped, but from the brusque statement to her body, he likely had a restful night's sleep, undisturbed by her absence. From the reader's perspective, the Levite's actions are unfeeling, he does not stop to assess her injuries, nor does he bother to see if she is still alive. Instead, he hoists her motionless body onto the donkey, the same woman that only days ago he went to "speak tenderly to" and to bring back into his house (Judges 19:3, 2007). The behaviour of the Levite towards the Unnamed Woman does not allow the reader to engage in the tragic events of the story, instead, they are moved on quickly to the next aspect of the narrative, "preventing the reader from indulging in tragic pity for the plight of the woman" (Lasine, 1984 p.45). One may question if there was any concern at all for the Unnamed Woman, who was forced to endure horrific bodily invasion. The Judges 19 narrative is like *The Accused* (1988) a film that depicts a young woman who was gang raped and subsequently treated coldly by the judicial system and silenced. While it is not made clear from the biblical rhetoric, it is important to note that the Levite may not believe the Unnamed Woman is dead as he speaks to her. On one hand, the *Septuagint* or the *LXX* affirms that the woman is dead, citing this as the reason she does not answer him. On the other hand, the New Revised Standard Version is much more ambiguous on this, it states simply, "But there was no answer" (Judges 19:28, 2007). What is evident is the silent space in which the Unnamed Woman exists is deadly and permanent. As Aschkenasy asserts, "the woman's voice, whether spoken or internal, never finds expression in this tale, thus adding to her status as a non-person" (Aschkenasy, 1998 p.75). The silent space is used to strip the Unnamed Woman of not only her voice but her agency as well, showing her value as a character is zero. In doing so, the reader is forced to rely on the Levite's reactions to the events, creating an even greater space for the Unnamed Woman's silence and her stolen victimhood.

When the writer of Judges 19 had the Levite cut the Unnamed Woman into twelve pieces, the total obliteration of rape victims was set into history. In doing so this could encourage future rapists that after they rape a woman it is justifiable to destroy her body, perpetuating the idea that women have no personhood. As stated above, whether the woman was dead or alive on the doorstep makes trivial difference to the narrative, however, what is clear is the Unnamed Woman is worth more to the Levite dead than she is alive. A woman's sociosexual currency, after being raped, is zero, but now that she is dead and has been martyred, she can regain some of her worth for the Levite. The Levite's perverse nature in cutting the Unnamed Woman's body is further revealed when he meets with the twelve tribes. The reader is made aware of the differences in how the Levite retells the story and the biblical events, revealing the truly gruesome nature of the man (Aschkenasy, 1998 p.72). The version of events the Levite tells erases his guilt in the Unnamed Woman's death, as he claims the gang threatened to kill him and raped the woman. The Levite states, "They intended to kill me, and they raped my concubine until she died" (Judges 20:5, 2007). This is contrary to what is written in the Hebrew Bible, which indicates that the Levite is the one who forced the Unnamed Woman out to the gang and her death. These differences may prove to be the Levite's demise had the truth been revealed. Moreover, the writer of Judges is aware of the missing information but makes no effort to condemn the Levite. What is exposed is the fury towards the Unnamed Woman he once spoke tenderly to. Whatever the Levite's reasons behind his actions and "whether rights the Levite may have had over his wife as chattel, he had no right to force her into another man's grasp" (Thompson, 2001 p.21) and to her death. The carelessness with which the Unnamed woman's body, life, and story are treated allows for the foundation of rape culture to be established.

In a patriarchal society when a woman asserts her sexual and personal agency she is guilty of misconduct therefore is deserving of punishment. Consequently, women exchanged

their autonomy for safety, and women who give up that safety have committed a crime. This means that the Unnamed woman, having left her husband, qualifies as a criminal, resulting in the justified punishment of being raped. As Cheryl Exum asserts, of the Unnamed Woman, "It is not enough that the woman who has offended, by acting as if she and not the man owned her body, is abused sexually, by having her body possessed by many men" (Exum, 1993 p.144). Exum's point reiterates the idea Augustine presented that a woman who has sinned deserved prophylactic punishment. This idea means that the Unnamed woman 'should have' accepted her life instead of trying to change her circumstances, it ended with her death. As JoAnn Hackett affirms:

> whether she was killed by her own master or by the men of Gibeah…she was certainly the victim of men who were not living in peace…from the host who first offered her to the mob, through her master who eventually pushed her out to them, to the men of Gibeah who raped and possibly killed her (Hackett, 2004 p. 361).

The recklessness of the men from Judges 19 causes a chain reaction of events that justifies the control of women through the brutal rape and silence of women without shame. In many ways, the most challenging aspect of this narrative is confronting the Levite's remorselessness at his actions, his selfishness, and the dismembering of a woman. One might think that he is proud of his prowess and influence over others, as Yee states, "the Levite manipulates the real outrage against his wife [which he caused] to exact retribution for the attempted outrage against himself" (Yee, 2007 p.156). A massive battle ensues against the Benjaminite tribe by the other Israelite tribes, no one is off limits for the men who sought revenge on behalf of the Levite. In the end, over 65,000 men, women, and children are murdered in the bloody battle the Levite instigated. The twelve tribes grew a conscience and decided to leave the remaining six hundred men, who hid during the fight, alone. The tribes banded together to find the remaining Benjaminite men's wives to allow the rebuilding of

their tribe, resulting in more women being forced to marry the men that raped and kidnapped them.

Mass Rape: The Six-Hundred Women from Judges 21

What is left at the end of the bloody battle, caused by the Levite's false victimhood, is a great divide among the tribes of Israel. The events that began in Gibeah spiralled a "long course of bloodshed and rapacity that extends to the entire nation and destroys well over sixty-five thousand lives (Thompson, 2001 p.2). All that is left when the battle ends are six hundred Benjaminite men who were lucky enough to hide during the fighting; no one else was spared, not even women and children. The Israelite leaders begin to regret the near extermination of the Benjaminite lineage and set out to fix the situation. Thus, it was decided that the women from Jabesh Gilead, a tribe who did not fight during the war, and the women of Shiloh would be suitable as replacement wives. How the tribes propose to do this is as bloody and violent as the war itself. The tribes sent twelve thousand fighting men to Jabesh Gilead to murder all of the men and any woman who was no longer a virgin. All that remained were four hundred women who were given to the Benjaminites (Judges 21: 10-13). Concerned for the remaining two hundred Benjaminite men, the men were permitted to kidnap the women of Shiloh as they danced, freely, during a festival. The solution to the problem of six hundred men needing wives, Kirsch states, "…is bloodthirsty, so bizarre, that the mind simply boggles at the very notion that it is described in the pages of Holy Writ" (Kirsch, 1998 p.247). The preceding acts of both the Israelite leaders and the Benjaminites are not far removed from the actions taken by the drunken mob in Judges 19, the event that began the mass destruction and rape of so many people. While the men who kidnapped and forced into marriage six hundred women did not see their actions as brutish, they did however, view it as a mark of unity restored to Israel (Kirsch, 1998 p.248). The underlying patriarchal system sees, in the six hundred women's bodies, a substitute for Israel as a unified

country (Hackett, 2004 p. 364). Missing throughout the latter part of the Judges 19-21 narrative, are the voices of all the women, who are not permitted to speak or exist as individual characters. As each woman is kidnapped, raped, murdered, and forced to marry, their voices are ignored as their existence is exiled to the silent spaces of the Hebrew Bible.

The events from the latter part of Judges are a clear indication of what happens when male authoritarianism and triumphalism take over society. The victims of this rape narrative seem to have been given as little thought as was the consent to marriage by the six hundred women. They do not simply need to do so because there was no sense of morality regarding the lives of the women. Each man was allowed to decide his morals, therefore, their actions for the greater good outweighed any acknowledgement of any of the six hundred female voices they captured. This treatment of women tracks throughout the entire account, "the Levite treated his concubine as his to dispose of, the men of Israel regarded the virgins of Jabesh-Gilead as booty to be captured, and now the men of Israel equally disregard the personhood of Israelite girls: they are to be captured in the practice of war" (Frymer-Kensky, 2013 p.137). The sentiment is also shared by Josephus and Ambrose Bishop of Milan who both write on the final events of Judges. In this narrative, Flavius Josephus condones the actions of all the men left alive after the battle. The men, obviously remorseful, should be allowed to marry and have children as they were "saved through the sagacity of the Israelites, and instantly flourished and made rapid advance…" (Josephus and Marcus, 1998 p.241). Ambrose Bishop of Milan, the proponent for women's rights, believed that the Benjaminite men deserved the punishment for marrying raped and kidnapped women because of what was done to the Unnamed Woman. Ambrose states of the women of Shiloh:

> [A] fitting punishment for the violation, since [the Benjaminite men] were only allowed to enter in a union by a rape, and not through sacrament of marriage. And

> indeed, it was right that they who had broken another's intercourse should themselves lose their marriage rite (quoted in Gunn, 2005 p. 248).

What this passage means is that it was appropriate for the Benjaminite men to rape the women of Shiloh. Marital enslavement is condoned by Ambrose, though he says nothing about the women, the inconvenience of being kidnapped, and the forced silence they endure. The Benjaminite men are given their 'manhood' back as they are granted the right to control a woman. As Frymer-Kensky states, "Controlling women is a mark of manhood in patriarchal societies; failure to protect others from violating her emasculates the man" (Frymer-Kensky, 2013 p.124). The six hundred men have now been entrusted not to let another man emasculate them such as happened to the Levite. Frymer-Kensky further affirms that "these daughters are not culpable even of associating with the other side: they are subjected to a brutalizing experience solely to further the relationship between two groups of men" (Frymer-Kensky, 2013 p.137). At no point in this narrative is a woman's autonomy allowed to escape the effects of war. Whether their physical bodies were destroyed, or their voices were, women upon women were heaped on each other as carnage. It is on that pile of bodies women exist and find their autonomy in the eyes of men: as lifeless and silent corpses.

"Recognizing the severity of mass rape in times of war, scholars argue that war rapes are the result of androcentric gender roles in times of peace" (Scholz, 2014 p.137) which means domination of women by men is universal. Men in this narrative navigate the world they live in based on how much they can and cannot control the women around them. Men seek to take away what women wish to have control over, their bodies. As Card states of rape as a cross-cultural language, "… [it removes] control over what enters or impinges our bodies" (Card, 1996 p.7) further still "an aim of civilian rape is female heterosexual dependency and service" (Card, 1996 p.7). Mass rape and forced marital enslavement, "is another example of what happens in this 'inverted world' when people act on their own to

gain revenge and engage in holy warfare…" (Lasine, 1984 p.50). The idea of men engaging in revenge and holy warfare too is not isolated as an ancient concept either as women throughout history have been subjected to bear the responsibility of revenge rape. This example is seen in *The Last Duel* (2021), as a woman is raped by her husband's former friend so that he can have what he wishes to have and seek revenge. Rape culture continuously seeks to diminish female personhood and blame them for being raped. The series of marital enslavements and the rape that the six hundred women experience, was not only enough to terrorize and change their lives forever, but it echoes far into the future as women in the 21st century continue to see their voices silenced and controlled by androcentrism. The narrative in Judges influences the world today, as Scholz states, "[it] is a reminder of the pervasive and persisting problem in androcentric societies: misogyny and rape are connected problems within a long tradition that stretches back to the stories in the book of Judges" (Scholz, 2014 p.155). Only through understanding and unpacking narratives such as the one from Judges can the truth of what androcentrism does to the lives of women be revealed. This task is not simply the responsibility of a random student at a university in England. The responsibility to look at the pervasiveness of rape throughout history belongs to those who would deny a woman's voice has ever been in jeopardy.

Martyred Women: Conclusions on the Unnamed Woman's Narrative

Unlike the Dinah and Tamar narratives the story of the Unnamed Woman goes down a trail of immorality that "revolves precisely around the kinds of violence women suffer during times of war (Hackett, 2004 p.363**)** and at the hands of uncontrolled toxic masculinity. Amongst the pile of bloodied victims are the murdered women and children, the six hundred women, the sixty thousand soldiers, and at the bottom lies the Unnamed Woman. Whatever autonomy the Unnamed Woman exerted at the beginning of the narrative by leaving her husband is all but stripped away by the time she encounters the angry mob. The Unnamed

Woman, "…as a woman subject to her husband's control and as answerable to his directive" (Ackerman, 1998 p.236) was not able to hold onto a sense of freedom. It was her husband who could give and take away her life, no matter if it was morally acceptable or not.

The behaviour of the Levite is incongruous and violent as he goes to retrieve the woman, he was separated from for four months, but does not so much as bat an eye to saving her when the mob is at the door ready to pounce. Neither does his behaviour suit his previous action when he went to leave the next morning, he acts as if nothing happened the previous night as he haphazardly throws the Unnamed Woman onto his donkey. As Lasine explains:

> First, the fact that he threw her out to the mob and then seems oblivious to her death contradicts his desire for her, as evidenced by the fact he went to 'speak to her heart' and bring her home after a four-month separation. Secondly, his behaviour is in violent disagreement with what we must assume most readers would consider to be the appropriate response to such a situation if they were in his position (Lasine, 1984 p.46-47).

The passage underscores the hypocritical decisions that the Levite made throughout the Judges 19 narrative. Most importantly, the Unnamed Woman's death shows the disregard for human life, specifically the lives of women, which is at the core of the narrative. The leaders of the twelve tribes of Israel met violence with violence, disregarding their morality because war implies that morality be sacrificed in the name of something greater. This is what allowed thousands of people to be murdered and six hundred women to be enslaved. Although the men who condoned such actions did not see the malice in their actions, it can only be surmised that "this ambushing of women goes back to the model of the heroic rape, where the desire for women and violence of women go hand in hand" (Bach, 1993 p.394). What is right and moral in men's eyes is to ensure the progression of male lineage, through

any means necessary. The Judges' account implores its readers to never accept things at face value and to ask thought-provoking questions.

In the end, the narrative is "provocatively silent" (Thompson, 2001 p.5) regarding the women whose lives are lost and enslaved. What is left is an enormous silent space where readers are left to assume all the bloody and tragic possibilities. Offensively, to her life and her dead body, the Unnamed Woman becomes the message for men on who to rape, this message becomes a rationale for oppression, violation, and exploitation (Bach, 1993 p.389). Through the exploitation, rape, kidnapping, and murder of women from the Hebrew Bible—and the subsequent interpretations the foundations for rape culture were laid. Once the foundations were laid society was allowed to take the thematic elements from narratives such as Judges and create rape myths. Those rape myths have become major aspects of society that are played out in various forms of media, which continue to drive women into silent spaces.

Chapter Five

Silenced Rape Victims: Rape Myths in the Cinematic World

"Rape is the common cold of society…we have assimilated rape into our everyday culture much as we have the cold."
Rape Culture: It's All Around Us (Pearson, 2000 p.12)

Introduction: Rape in Film and Television

Now that the imposed silence of women has been explored in both the Hebrew Bible, their subsequent interpretations, and the impact it has had on women's lives, it is important to explore an avenue in which silence was further forced upon them in the modern world. We live in a world where the response to rape and rape culture as endemic is silence (Pearson, 2000 p.12). Even in light of the #MeToo movement, the silence is still unmistakable. Brinson states, "Evidence suggests that the nature of rape myths is, in part, interwoven with cultural stereotypes of 'ideal' behaviour for women and men" (Brinson, 1992 p.361) because they are grounded in patriarchal values. As a result, rape myths contribute to the accepted inferiority of women. The patriarchal value of women's silence and diminished status as humans are "deeply buried in society's and the individual's psyche" (Brinson, 1992 p.359-360). It is at this point that the battle for a space where women's voices can be heard begins.

Rape myths are the grounds for which society and individuals alike rationalize why rape is endemic; they try to make sense of the senseless. Martha Burt defines rape myths as the "prejudicial, stereotypical, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists" (Burt, 1980 p.217). The prevalence of rape myths is directly woven into the fabric of society, "with cultural stereotypes of ideal behaviour for women and men" (Brinson, 1992 p.361). We as a society, find it so easy to blame the victim and scapegoat them for being raped, which illustrates the dire situation we have today in which the world refuses to willingly change. Rape, rape culture, and rape myths have not only become a naturalized part of society but

also a popular recitation; they have become the ultimate way to devalue women. One only needs to open any magazine or watch any television advertisement and see that women are "at the mercy of the male gaze" (Pearson, 2000 p.12). The prevalence of the male gaze and the treatment of rape victims is never more apparent than in its depictions in film and television. Claire Johnston states, "The myths on which the cinema is based relate to the complex and often contradictory mythology of women which operates in society as a whole" (Johnston, 1975 p.3). Men are allowed to attack and humiliate women in films and television shows as long as the image of personified patriarchal values is maintained. This means that "women are the victims of sexualized violence, which means they're seen as innately vulnerable and unheroic. Violence is done to them…" (Berlastsky, 2016 para 9), an example of this occurs in *Apocalypse Now* (1979) when the Playboy models are helicoptered in to do a show for the troops. The hyper-sexualized concert quickly dissolves into chaos as troops storm toward the stage and attack the women. Another instance of extreme violence that is both a reflection of and condoned by society happens when a group of soldiers attack a small pontoon boat with Vietnamese citizens on it. Following a stream of bullets, a young Vietnamese woman is injured. Chief, one of the soldiers, insists on getting her medical attention, however, Willard, the group's captain, shoots her to prevent his mission from being delayed.

The film industry was (and is) run by men. Some of the earlier studio heads were Jack Warner, Barney Balaban, Howard Hughes, and Louis B. Mayer who were all rich white men. As a result, women had little input in a film's production or the depiction of their characters. Haskell states, "Directing—giving orders, mastering not only people but machinery—is a typically masculine, even militaristic, activity. The existence of such a dominant authority figure…would seem to present an inherently sexist situation" (Haskell and Dargis, 2016 p.52). The more women were absent from the decision-making process, the more they were

exploited by the entertainment industry. As Sue Thornham states, “women’s absence from cultural production, in inverse proportion to the exploitation of female images in the subject matter of art and popular culture” (Thornham, 2010 p.2) shows that women were not consulted regarding culture, rather they were exploited. One of the most obvious examples of this was the creation of the Production Code, which sought to censor films to ensure the audience was not privy to too much that could impede their souls. Because of the Production Code, a thwarted concept of the feminine, the female image, became a projection of male values, scapegoats, and a vehicle for male fantasies (Thornham, 2010 p.15). This exploited an ideal product, a way of life that others should strive to achieve and meaning to the imagined, perfect woman; “what the camera in fact grasps is the ‘material’ world of the dominant ideology” (Johnston, 1975 p.28).

The films and television shows that are presented in the following chapter deal with some of the more well-known rape myths that exist in society, and how the narratives manage the silent space women live within. From rape myths about women deserving rape to women falsely accusing men of rape, these narratives “reflect social changes, but also [helped shape] cultural attitudes” (Thornham, 2005 p.9) about rape culture and rape myths. Through the analysis of each film, juxtaposed with biblical narratives and real-life events, a link will be formed that shows the connection between the ancient world and film and television. More specifically, it will examine how the narratives from the Old Testament helped contribute, in part, to women’s silence in films—and the continuous fight for women to be heard not only as victims of rape but also as survivors.

Asking for it: Rape in A Streetcar Named Desire

The film adaptation of Tennessee William's famous play, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Elia Kazan, 1951), gives the audience a glimpse of how the rape myth, that women ask to be raped through their actions, words, dress, or state of mind, occurs in the world. A woman asking to be raped is a rape myth that existed long before the Genesis 34 narrative told its readers that Dinah deserved to be raped. Susan L. Brinson states, concerning the rape myth, that "women who have 'an attitude' (independence) are 'asking' to be raped–to be controlled and to be 'put in her place'" (Brinson, 1992 p.362), which creates a constant push/pull within the power structure. Amidst the power struggle, a woman is pressured to conform to cultural expectations; when she does not, she becomes beyond saving and therefore punished through rape. *A Streetcar Named Desire*, starring Marlon Brando, Vivian Leigh, and Kim Hunter, directed by Elia Kazan, reveals what happens when toxic hypermasculinity, brutality, and androcentrism run unchecked. Moreover, it is through the male gaze that female audience members learn to participate in their victimization, as they are forced into a silent space as witnesses to Blanche being raped (Hanks, 1986 p.4) without bearing witness to the rape itself. This was due to the film being highly censored, having aspects of the play removed to green light the movie's production. As a result, *A Streetcar Named Desire* caused Joseph Breen, from the Production Code office, substantial aggravation. Breen set out to clean up the film's more controversial scenes; it was up to him to protect the "immortal souls of the public" (Malone, 2012 p.82). Joseph Breen had three issues with the script: the sexual perversion of Blanche's first husband's homosexuality, the nymphomania, and most of all, Stanley Kowalski's rape of Blanche in the production's most pivotal moment (Leff and Simmons, 2001 p.179). Subjectively, for the church-going censors, homosexuality and suicide were significant topics that were hotly avoided at the time. In our contemporary world,

homosexuality or same-sex relationships have once again become a topic of scrutiny. The Supreme Court of the United States has begun to consider overturning the court cases that allowed same-sex relationships and same-sex marriage. If any of the court rulings are reversed same-sex couples would lose the federal recognition of their basic human rights. Each state would again be in power to decide whether to criminalize same-sex relationships and ban same-sex marriage or allow it. The next few months and years may decide whether the rights of same-sex couples belong to themselves, the government, or God. The current climate relates to the Production Code because it moves to erase the existence of an entire group of people.

To bring *A Streetcar Named Desire*, the film, up to the Production Code's standards, Elia Kazan was given three alternatives to choose from for the rape scene: Stanley denies raping Blanche, the rape is part of Blanche's bad dream, or Stanley contemplating raping Blanche but deciding against it (Leff and Simmons, 2001 p.179). Each of the three alternatives offered ways to avoid showing a woman being brutalized, however, none of the scenarios would do the film or the narrative justice. What Elia Kazan does, in his clever attempts to keep Breen's hands off the film, was to "…[practice] discrete avoidance. He ignored Breen's demands for script changes and acted as though no problem existed" (Leff and Simmons, 2001 p.181). Kazan was forced to delete the rape scene and Stanley's famous line, "We've had this date together from the beginning" (Williams, 2004 scene 10), revealing to the audience Stanley's intentions. Instead, what the audience witnesses is Blanche's horrified face reflected in the cracks of a mirror. The viewer is left guessing the events that follow, they do not know if Blanche is raped or beaten, and the only evidence presented is in Blanche's behaviour at the end of the film. The lack of focus on Stanley's brutish, animalistic masculinity allows the audience to misinterpret him and his actions, and admire him as a strong man. Stanley then turns into a man that others could begin to imitate and admire,

thinking this is what women want. This is evident in a review from the film's release in 1951 as it praised "Stanley's 'liberating' rape of Blanche. . . [which is] coyly elided while we watch a hose washing away garbage with portentous symbolism. . ." (Jenkins, 2008 para. 2). The cruel masculinity that should have been criticized is praised as if it is a lesson to all women: Let this be an example to any woman who speaks out, this is what will happen to you. The review reaffirms androcentric and patriarchal concepts that want women to be seen and not heard.

One aspect of the patriarchal world that *A Streetcar Named Desire* exposes is how society victimizes women while blaming them for whatever happened to them, and the overall scarcity of women's agency (Townson, 2021 para. 7). Blanche, as a woman with a voice, is in direct opposition to Stanley's absolute authority (Feng, 2008 p.103), prompting us to believe that therefore she is raped. The theme of voiceful women is also seen in 2 Samuel 13 when Tamar is raped by Amnon; she finds herself a victim, stripped of the only authority she has as a woman, her voice. Blanche's effective communication is one of the trademark aspects of her character, loud enough to go head-to-head with Stanley a few times; verbally winning and outsmarting him. This is most evident when Stanley and Blanche argue over the loss of Belle Reeve, the DuBois family home. Blanche, "…as a woman who has to be subordinated to men, Blanche is brave enough to fight against fetters and challenges men's authority to alter her miserable situation" (Feng, 2008 p.106). The most upsetting aspect of the narrative is the idea there is a line that Blanche crosses in Stanley's eyes, and he cannot risk compromising his manhood. Ultimately, Blanche is doomed to fail, no matter how loud she speaks, the toxic patriarchal world will swallow her voice whole and villainize her, "because rape is about power, it can never be separated from other social categories that organize the unequal distribution of power..." (Marcus, 2022 p.418). This means that it would be impossible to avoid a situation that leads to rape, which in the context of the film may be

true. A *New York Times Review*, published on the 25th anniversary of the play's release, referred to Blanche as "a stubborn opponent, a challenge to Stanley's domination of his wife Stella, Blanche is a menacing intruder who must be expelled" (Mrscr, 1973 para. 5). Even years later, Blanche's arguments with Stanley and her voice leave a bitterness in the mouths of her critics. At the very least, these critics see her as someone who subverts the accepted male-female dichotomy of the time, even well into the 1970s, Blanche is a problem that needs to be silenced. If Blanche is allowed to go unchecked, she could destroy Stanley's power over his wife Stella upsetting the entire power structure that will always force women at the bottom to accept what meagre scraps they are allowed.

The silence that is forced on Blanche does not only come from Stanley but from her sister, Stella, who decides to have her committed, an extreme statement of how women also silence each other. In the final moments of *A Streetcar Named Desire,* we see Stella secretly preparing to send Blanche off to an asylum. A blessed relief, not because Stella does not believe her sister, but because she has no choice but to stay silent and silence her sister. As Stella quietly whispers to Eunice, "I couldn't believe her story and go on living with Stanley," to which Eunice responds, "Don't ever believe it. Life has got to go on. No matter what happens, you've got to keep on going" (Williams, 2004 scene 11). This highlights the strongest argument against reporting and believing a rape victim, the fear of retaliation from the aggressor (Aleman and Lavitt, 1996 p.16). The toxically masculine world Stella lives in does not allow her a voice to speak out against her husband without the risk of facing the same plight as Blanche. The intentional denial of Blanche's rape proves that it is not the victim's story and pain that is addressed, but blaming the victim is better than looking at the crime itself. Sara Aleman and Melissa Lavitt assert, "quite after, the victim's assertion that she has been raped is called into question. Furthermore, the proof is often affected by characteristics of the victim rather than aspects relative to the commission of the crime"

(Aleman and Lavitt, 1996 p.5). The solitary sign of justice that is provided is in Stella leaving Stanley in the final moments of the film, which was added to return some sense of morality into a film that is derelict of it (Leff and Simmons, 2001 p.180), a deviation from the stage version, where Stella stays with Stanley to guarantee her status as a wife and an empowered woman. Blanche's silent voice is doubly imposed on her by her rapist and her sister, another woman, who should be fighting for her, not against her. The audience is left with a stone-cold look at the patriarchal system which causes women to turn against each other to save themselves.

Overall, the narrative in *A Streetcar Named Desire* is about taking a woman who has a voice, and intentionally stealing it by forcing it back into her throat, and into a silent space. Blanche is destroyed and her life taken away as she is forced to live the rest of her life in an asylum, discarded, for a crime she did not commit. Her silence is overwhelming to witness, as her screams are lost in the cracks of the mirror and her broken mind. Tamar, too, was pushed aside and forced to live in exile. The most important and tragic aspect of these two characters is how they both devolved from these voiceful women who expressed themselves, to women who were rendered mute. These events suggest that violence and erratic behaviour reveal a truth that we, as an audience, already suspect, "there's no safe space for Blanche" (Bradford, 2021 para.11), and there is no safe place for Tamar or any woman for that matter. There are no winners in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, merely victims and aggressors of a society that requires women to suffer ceaseless violence.

Victim Blaming: *Cagney* & *Lacey* and *Shetland*

Victim blaming: the idea that women should avoid rape by fighting off a rapist and the obligation to do so has existed since Ancient Greece. This myth also describes situations where women want to be raped because they fail to fight back. An example of the rape myth comes from Herodotus, known as the father of history, in the 5th Century:

> Abducting young women is not, indeed a lawful act; but it is stupid after the event to make a fuss about it. The only sensible thing is to take no notice; for it is obvious that no young woman allows herself to be [raped] if she does not want to be. (Herodotus quoted in Pellauer p.765).

In *Ars Amatoria* (The Art of Love), Ovid writes that one should not let anything get in the way of getting a lover:

> Call it violence, if you like; such violence is pleasing to the fair; they often wish, through compulsion, to grant what they are delighted to grant. Whatever fair one has been despoiled by the sudden violence of passion, she is delighted at it; and the chief is as good as a godsend (Ovid and Riley, 2014 from Project Gutenberg Book 1 Line 805).

The first passage by Herodotus assumes that while abducting a woman to have sex with her is not lawful, it is not, however, so much of a problem to warrant discussing. It is because the woman allowed herself to be taken that she must have been willing. Ovid's passage reads as a guide for men to forcibly pursue a woman even if she resists. The woman's desires will take over and she will find herself enjoying the experience. Androcentric beliefs, such as the ones listed above, are what contribute to a rape victim's silence. Furthermore, it questions a victim's credibility and anything that might devalue their victimhood. Rape myths and guides to raping women in the ancient world continue to be deeply ingrained today.

In the 20th and 21st Centuries, a woman's position in society adds to her credibility as a victim and the value of her victimhood. Women who are in positions to fight back, such as police detectives, are expected to do so to avoid being raped and subsequently be viewed as victims. Two of the narratives from the 20th and 21st centuries that depict victim blaming are the rape of Christine Cagney in *Cagney and Lacey* (CBS, 1982) and the rape of Detective

Sergeant Alison McIntosh in *Shetland* (BBC, 2013). *Cagney and Lacey*, a feminist-inspired television show that featured two female police detectives as the main characters, starred Tyne Daly, and Sharon Gless. The show's producer, Barney Rosenzweig, was inspired by Molly Haskell's book, *From Reverence to Rape*. During the show's seventh season, an episode aired entitled, *Do I Know You,* in which Christine Cagney is date raped. Shetland, starring Douglas Henshall and Alison O'Donnell, is based on the books by Anne Cleeves. The show centres around Detective Inspector (DI) Jimmy Perez and his squad, in which Police Detective Alison McIntosh (Tosh) plays a key role. During series three, Tosh is kidnapped and raped as a warning to DI Perez: she is the one victim and a message he cannot ignore. The shows, airing thirty years apart, were about more than a woman's responsibility to fight off their rapists. Even though both shows strive to reveal what it means when a female detective is raped, each show manages the victimhood of the characters differently.

The episode *Do I Know You,* from *Cagney and Lacy,* is a narrative interpretation of the male response when they are confronted with a female rape victim, more so a woman with whom they are close. Since the show aired in the 1980s, and thus a narrative for how rape was perceived during that time, there is an unreasonable number of men that interject their opinions and feelings about Cagney being date raped. These opinions and judgments range from disbelief to relief at how Cagney, a detective could allow herself to be raped. The male physician who performs the rape kit on Cagney is the first to share his opinion. The physician stoically states, "it looks like you're going to be just fine. I'm sorry this had to happen" (*Cagney and Lacy*, 1982). The doctor's use of had implies that Cagney's experience was unavoidable and therefore expected. The doctor does not know what to say to comfort Cagney, so he does not attempt to, instead, he medically clears her and then makes a value-based judgment on what should be expected of a woman. The scene only adds to silencing Cagney and stripping her of her victimhood. The man who rapes Cagney, who will remain

nameless in this analysis, accuses her of being drunk and out of control, the one who attacked him. This accusation is apparent when the sex crimes detectives question Cagney about her sexual advances during her date. They accuse her of leading him on by kissing him, which was a careless mistake on her part as it permitted him to act. In other words, Cagney invited the rape by sharing an innocent kiss with the man at the end of their date: a kiss equals consent in this narrative. This idea goes with what Ovid believed, that women often give men unwillingly what they want to give freely.

As the other detective reaches out to pat Cagney's shoulder, without asking Cagney's permission to touch her, she retreats, suggesting that the detective does not acknowledge her victimhood right away. His gesture is not done with care and a sense of the victim's feeling of violation. Neither of the detectives responds to their rape victim in an adequate manner, which only serves to reinforce the idea "that she [Cagney] was somehow responsible for the rape is incredulity and anger" (Brinson, 1989 p.30). The initial responses of the male characters do nothing except contribute to Cagney's voice being silenced. A *New York Times* article written during the airing of the episode stated, "at work, her well-meaning colleagues are unintentionally insensitive, especially when it comes to the issue of her [submitting]" (O'Connor, 1988 para. 5) and allowing herself to be victimized. Lieutenant Samuels, Cagney's boss, chastises her stating, "I guess you couldn't get your gun" (*Cagney and Lacy*, 1982). His best attempt at sympathy towards her is to reprimand her for not defending herself. A former boyfriend stated, "Thank God you weren't hurt," to which she responds, "I was raped. I am hurt" (*Cagney and Lacy*, 1982). Cagney is forced to continually reiterate her victimhood to every single man she encounters. The only person who shows Cagney the empathy she deserves is her partner Mary Beth Lacey; she is the only one to affirm that Cagney is "the victim of a brutal crime, as someone who deserves compassion and attention, not blame" (Brinson, 1989 p.30).

In part, *Shetland* is also about how men respond when a female co-worker is raped. Tosh's narrative is a woman's story that included consultations with rape crisis counsellors when the script was being developed (Graham, 2016 para. 2), to ensure the most accurate representations were depicted. The writing during this episode is not lazy, nor is Tosh a character who is exploited with a gratuitous storyline. There is consideration given to Tosh as a rape victim and as a police sergeant. The narrative is "dealt with brilliantly" (Graham, 2016 para. 2), as a *Radio Times* article stated. Unlike the women in the biblical rape narratives and Cagney's narrative, there are no rumours regarding Tosh's victimhood. Moreover, DI Perez is the only person who knows that Tosh was raped and stays with her throughout the rape kit examination. Tosh is permitted to keep her privacy instead of her rape being forced into public spaces for others to pass judgement. What is meant to be private is allowed to stay that way. DI Perez sits on the other side of the curtain at SARC (Sexual Assault Referral Centre), he faces the situation with her, as much as he can; his response to her ordeal is supportive. The audience also sees DI Perez wrestle with "a certain level of [guilt] and with the underlying mentality of men that allows them to commit such acts" (Harrington, 2017 para. 7). This was not addressed in Cagney's story thirty years earlier. DI Perez does not victim-blame Tosh for not having the ability to fight off the rapist, even when Tosh insists, she is to blame. DI Perez states, "This isn't about anything you did or didn't do… Tosh he did this, not you" (*Shetland*, 2013).

One of the most important aspects of Tosh's narratives comes when she reveals the events of the rape to Billy, her male squad member, a courtesy that was not afforded to Cagney, who is obligated to defend herself against whispers and stares. Tosh is granted the ability to maintain her victimhood and choice of who knows, which allows her to retake control of her life and her body. The conversation is as follows:

> Tosh: It wasn't just the car and the hood over my head in Glasgow. There was more, ye know? You know. Could you please tell Sandy for me? I want him to know.
>
> Billy: I'd like to give ye a hug if you will allow me.
>
> Tosh: Sorry
>
> Billy: Hey lady, you call the shots around here (*Shetland*, 2013).

The audience is allowed to look not only at Tosh as a rape victim but as a human, deserving of empathy. This aspect is decidedly missing in the Judges 19-21 narrative, when the Unnamed Woman was not addressed as a living being, before or after her death. Instead, her life and her story were moved past quickly, denying readers the right to her emotions. The normalization of empathy and compassion extends from all the male members of the squad, who do not question Tosh as to why she did not fight back, but meet her where she is, as a victim of a vicious crime. The simplistic extension of compassion from DI Perez does not occur during Cagney's narrative from Lt. Samuels.

In *Cagney and Lacey*, Cagney is forced to confront her entire squad, publicly, as she becomes tired and belligerent of the insensitive way the men surrounding her manage her victimhood:

> For those of you who haven't caught the rumor yet, I did submit because I wanted to stay alive—and I thought he'd kill me. And I'll be damned if I'm going to apologize to you or anybody else for that. So, if there's any problems or if you think I can't handle it on the streets, I want you to say it right now to my face (*Cagney and Lacy*, 1982).

Cagney is exhausted from the continuous confrontation with the "indignities of the investigation, the reluctance of.... society to accept 'date rape'. . . and the insensitivity of just about everybody in her life, especially the men in her squad" (Unger, 1988 para. 4). Instead of being an episode that shows society how a rape victim should be treated, like in Shetland, Cagney *and Lacey* is very much a reflection of the toxic androcentric ideas about female rape victims that attempt to be at the forefront of women's rights issues. When women are silenced, the spaces become filled with male voices that become a form of oppression (Blyth, 2009 p.3) for rape victims. The continuous projection of androcentric thoughts is why looking at rape narratives, rape victims, and subsequent events is difficult. As a society, both thirty years ago and now, we struggle to look at rape for what it is: a systemic problem. There is no amount of victim blaming that can be done to prevent rape from happening, nor should society resort to such tactics. Rape then and now will always be the responsibility of the rapist; this is where society needs realization. In the end, it has taken centuries for a female rape victim to be treated empathetically, as an autonomous human being. Still, victims find themselves persecuted and shamed for letting themselves be victimized.

Certain Women Deserve to be Raped: *The Accused*

Roxane Gay was twelve years old when she was raped, subsequently causing her years of misconceptions about the severity of her experience. Gay's book, *Not That Bad: Dispatches from Rape Culture,* opens with a short retelling of the young Roxane's rape:

> When I was twelve years old, I was gang-raped in the woods behind my neighborhood by a group of boys with the dangerous intentions of bad men. It was a terrible, life-changing experience. Before that, I had been naive, sheltered. I believed people were inherently good and that the meek should inherit. I was faithful and believed in God. And then I didn't. I was broken. I was changed. I will never know who I would have been had I not become

the girl in the woods (Gay, 2018 p.8).

Gay's quote highlights that anyone can be raped, the faithful and the faithless, it does not discriminate, and it does change a person's life forever—and often in negative ways. To understand how women and young girls who are victims of rape learn to blame their lifestyles, it is vital to look at the rape myth behind the idea. Rape myths that accuse women of deserving to be raped blame the victim for what they are wearing, the places they go, and their lifestyle. The public mind assigns women who have certain reputations or images and are assumed to have given consent more readily (Burt and Albin, 1981 p.214). Moreover, some rape victims, like Roxane Gay, grow to be thankful their experience was not as bad as others. The consequences of this rape myth ensure that every aspect of a victim's life is analysed right down to whether they have ever had a one-night stand or what they do in their free time. The sexist and androcentric cultural standards behind this rape myth affect rape victims' ability to speak out regarding crimes committed against their personhood by diminishing their victimhood and creating unreasonably new personal standards. Quite literally, the silence space a rape victim is forced into is condoned by and created through systemic means of guilt. More than silencing a rape victim in life and their stories, victims are forced to manage their basic human interactions to avoid being raped again and to avoid the scrutiny of society. Furthermore, the cycle of rape myths creates a continuous loop where victims never escape judgement because their voices are swallowed and extorted by the judicial system.

One depiction of this rape myth happens in *The Accused* (Jonathan Kaplan, 1988), starring Jodie Foster as Sarah Tobias, the rape victim, and Kelly McGillis as Kathryn Murphy, the district attorney. The film, directed by Johnathan Kaplan, was loosely based on a 1983 gang rape of a 21-year-old woman, Cheryl Araujo, at Big Dan's Bar in New Bedford,

Massachusetts (Kamide, 2021 para. 2). Cheryl was persecuted by the media for her lifestyle choices. The four men who raped her were convicted, but the two bystanders were acquitted. Cheryl later had to move to avoid being mistreated by the media and townspeople. Cheryl subsequently died in 1986 in a car accident. What *The Accused* did, albeit not successfully, was attempt to right the wrongs of the real-life New Bedford case from 1983. Promoted "as a feminist cultural intervention" (Serisier, 2017 p.53), the film exposed the dangerously toxic system rape victims encounter and the importance of who gets to tell the victim's story. The storyteller becomes the most critical voice when deciding what rape is and who the victim is; without the victim's voice, there is only space, where no one can hear their pleas.

Much like the Unnamed Woman from the Judges 19-21 narrative, Sarah Tobias is a victim of gang-rape, however, their endings are vastly different. Sarah finds herself forced to shut her mouth about the rape before she manages to take her voice back. The Unnamed Woman, though, is silenced permanently through her death. Sarah is moved, quickly, through the process of rape crisis care and the legalities of her case, the professionals she meets are "courteous and efficient, but not overly sympathetic" (Ebert, 1988 para. 4) to what has just happened to her. Sarah is treated as "used goods" because she has been raped, therefore she is "morally defiled" (Keady, 2017 para. 7), not only because she is a rape victim but because she was raped at a bar; this is what rape culture and purity culture teaches women about being a victim of rape. During Sarah's exam, she is hit with an onslaught of statements and questions, so much so that she only manages to utter a few words. Each time the doctor asks Sarah a question, the nurse follows quickly directing Sarah to pose or lift her gown for photographic evidence. There is one moment where the female doctor extends a small amount of sympathy Sarah's way while telling her to "relax" and to "hold on" during the physical examination, but even then, it all feels and looks procedural (*The Accused,* 1988).

None of the four or five professional women in the room attempt to show Sarah more than the bare minimum amount of compassion.

The first time the audience sees Sarah try to speak about being raped is when she calls her mother, who meets her with suspicion and condemnation. Her mother asks, “you lost your job?,” “are you calling for some money?”, and “are you in some kind of trouble?" Sarah is never given the chance to properly answer before the next question is asked, all she manages to get out is “No, ma” (*The Accuses,* 1988). Sarah’s mother is more concerned with what is happening in her own life, and at no point is Sarah granted permission to speak her truth; the rape is pushed further down her throat as she visibly swallows hard the events that have happened to her. *The Accused* is a narrative about the consequences of assumptions made about rape victims, based on their behaviour, dress, and their environment. Therefore, Sarah is not given the chance to share her story at the initial court hearing, Kathryn Murphey, the prosecutor, has already made her assumptions about Sarah. The scope through which Kathryn sees Sarah is that she is drunk and high at a bar, consequently making her an unreliable victim. Further, Kathryn assumes that Sarah’s lifestyle will harm the winnability of the case, something Kathryn does not want to chance. Sarah, “is too loud, complex, she smokes dope, drinks, hangs out with a biker, waits tables, and likes to ‘fool around’” (Beattie, 1987 para. 3). Sarah is both marginalized and silenced by society and a justice system (Beattie, 1987 para. 4) that was designed by the concepts of rape myths and rape culture, which will always scrutinize the victim. Instead of letting Sarah testify, Kathryn makes a deal that pleads the charge of rape down to reckless endangerment to avoid a trial and having to use Sarah as a witness. What Kathryn does is spot on with how the biblical accounts approach a rape victim, she silences them when they do not fit an ideal image. The victims, both here and in the Hebrew Bible, are silenced because they are not worth listening to, nor is their humanity acknowledged.

The Accused underlines a much bigger issue in society, one that extends well into the 21st century, the unconscious and conscious bias women have toward one another as rape victims. Society's biases and rape culture create unspoken rules about rape victims. For example, an upper-middle-class white woman is believed to be a more trustworthy victim than a Black lower-class woman. Somehow, a woman's skin colour and how much money she has makes her a more credible victim, one less deserving of being raped. As Cheryl Exum writes:

> By insinuating that women, by the way they behave, are responsible for male aggression, the narrator relies on one of the patriarchy's principal strategies for erasing social control over women. Using women's fear of male violence as a woman's way of regulating female behaviour is one of patriarchy's most powerful weapons. And it remains effective (Exum, 2012 p.125).

Exum summarizes the main issue behind victim blaming, the responsibility of rape on the actions of the women. Using fear of violence from male members of society, patriarchal culture can regulate a woman's life, body, autonomy, and voice. Given the narratives explored in previous chapters, it is accepted that men silence women. The fact that women also silence each other creates another way female rape victims are forced to exist in a silent space. Like Stella in *A Streetcar Named Desire,* who silenced Blanche out of obligation and desperation to keep herself safe, Kathryn also chooses to silence Sarah because it does not suit a narrative that would win the case.

What Sarah can do is fight back against the imposed silence, something that Blanche and the biblical women were unable to do and so Sarah confronts Kathryn:

> Sarah: Is this what you did? I'm too fragile. My past is too questionable. I'm a drunk. I'm a pothead, drug addict. I'm some slut who got bounced around a little bit in a bar, right? So, I didn't get raped, huh? I never got raped?

> Kathryn: Of course, you were raped.
>
> Sarah: How come it doesn't say that? I ain't good enough to be a witness? …I don't know what you got for selling me out, but I sure as shit hope it's worth it (*The Accuses*, 1988).

The conversation is bold emphasizing a crucial aspect of why so few rape cases ever see conviction: the victim's behaviour. Kathryn robbed Sarah of her victimhood and decided what was best for her without acknowledging what had happened or asking her permission. The only thing that finally forces Kathryn's hand is seeing Sarah in the hospital after a bystander who was present at the rape attempts to assault her again. This scenario represents the cultural biases that women inflict on each other; like Stella intentionally not believing Blanche, Kathryn also harms Sarah by not believing in her victim status.

In discussing rape culture, rape myths, and victims there is a lack of accountability for the bystanders who witness a person being raped. Imperatively, prosecuting a rapist must happen, but what about a person who witnesses a rape, and not only does nothing but cheers the rapist? As Tanya Horeck explains in her book *Public Rape: Representing Violation in Fiction and Film*, "*The Accused* reassures its audience that 'looking' can be bound to the law…. with the spectators [of the rape] being tried and convicted" (Horeck, 2004 p.96). The film challenges the audience to question whether looking is as much of a crime as committing rape. Feminist writing has forced rape into mainstream media, and this "shift helped to grant increasing authority to anti-rape feminism, and open space for survivor voices" (Serisier, 2017 p.59). Because *The Accused* was a feminist film, despite its faults, it was able to bring victim blaming and judicial problems to the forefront. Moreover, it addressed the unspoken societal rule that encouraged men to do nothing to prevent rape. Rape stigma, such as the kind Sarah encountered is only going to get worse until more survivors come forward (Serisier, 2017 p.52).

Female Silencers: Silenced Victims in *Dolores Claiborne* and *The Prince of Tides*

"There are crimes and then there are crimes and then there are atrocities" (Gay, 2014 p.128), what makes up the difference to each is relative to the situation. In this case, the atrocity occurs when the aggressor or silencer comes from within the family unit. Whether or not the imposed silence is accidental or intentional, the consequences echo far into the future and can be deadly. Two films that centre around forced silence are *Dolores Claiborne* (Hackford, 1995) and *The Prince of Tides* (Streisand, 1991). *Dolores Claiborne* was adapted from the Stephen King novel, directed by Taylor Hackford, and stars Kathy Bates and Jennifer Jason Leigh. The film ends and begins with a murder, or what is supposed to look like a violent crime. However, the audience is shown that there is more than meets the eye as it explores "domestic violence, incest, and sexual abuse and how these traumas lead to repressed secrets and murder" (Thompson, 2007 p.83). *The Prince of Tides*, directed by and starring Barbara Streisand and Nick Nolte, was adapted from the novel of the same name by Pat Conroy; it explores how a matriarchal figure can force their children into silence. Both films dive deep into what happens when young rape victims are silenced when they are taught to bury their pain. There is little attention given to a child's experience of rape and assault. This, however, does not make what they went through any less important to investigate. Children who are raped grow up to be adults who may or may not struggle with the most basic of necessities, trapped in the never-ending cycle of rape culture.

In *Dolores Claiborne*, Dolores learns her daughter Selena is being molested by the family's patriarch, Joe St George. Instead of going to the police, Dolores kills Joe to save her daughter. Dolores is suspected of murder, but the detective cannot prove she killed her husband. The investigation into the father's death leads Selena to have a psychotic break, and she represses her traumatic childhood by burying it deep inside her mind. It will take decades and her mother's unyielding determination to free Selena's memories. Conversely, in *The*

Prince of Tides, Lila Wingo does not go to any lengths to protect her children's minds. Lila and her two youngest children, Tom and Savannah, are raped one night by escapees from Callenwolde, the local prison. The three are saved by Luke, the eldest child, who kills the rapists. Lila, to preserve the family's image, orders all three children to absolute secrecy; she silences her children and never attempts to help them move past the rape. What both films do is illustrate how trauma, specifically childhood trauma, alters one's sense of identity, reality, and agency. Each child, Selena, Tom, Savannah, as well as Luke, is unable to address the traumatic events they experienced. Selena grows up to become an alcoholic like her father and hates her mother. Savannah repeatedly attempts suicide. Selena and Savannah both become accomplished writers in their careers while Tom, now married, is unable to express his emotions. However, the trauma they experience becomes a silent space where they exist unable to confront what is hurting them. Luke, on the other hand, becomes an activist but is killed before the latter events in the film. Each film emphasizes what can happen when a mother is a part of both a child's healing and their torment. There is an apparent juxtaposition of two approaches to rape in these films. On the one hand, Dolores frees her daughter from her internal struggles and works to undo the accidental silence she inflicted on Selena. On the other hand, Lila cares less for her children's wellbeing and more about maintaining the image she projects onto the world. It may be that Lila chooses to silence both herself and her children to hide the feeling of shame. However, children who are unable to express how a traumatic event affected them grow up with shame even if the world is unaware, the shame always looms overhead. Determined to keep her carefully designed image and conceal her shame, Lila continues to enforce an ominous silence over her children, leaving Tom to restore his sister's mind.

1970s Maine had a patriarchal structure that did not allow for women like Dolores to fight back against abusive husbands. Dolores can handle the sexist, fatphobic, and physical

abuses hurled at her, but when she finds out Joe is molesting their teenage daughter Selena, she nearly crumbles. The aggressive way in which Joe chooses to treat not only his wife but his daughter, is a violent "expression of men's power" (Aleman and Lavitt, 1996 p.4) and their perceived need to regain control over the women in their lives. This may also be another reason for Selena's growing anger and why she eventually silences herself. It is "this silencing [that] ensures the cultural daughter remains a daughter, her power suppressed and muted; while the father, his power protected, makes culture and history in his own image" (Froula, 1986 p.623), which remains true for much of the film. Even though Joe St George is dead, his image has been preserved for those who do not know the truth or do not wish to see it. The familial dynamics of the St George home echo a scenario in which women do not have a safe space. Much like the Judges 19-21 narrative, women, even daughters, are not safe from the potentialities of rape. To make matters worse, the monsters are not a gang of drunkards located somewhere outside the home; they are within it. Dolores and Selena's situation is inescapable; "patriarchal society rules out women and uses or abuses them at will", (Coetzee, 2002 p.55), leaving them isolated. The one ally Dolores has is Vera Donovan, her wealthy socialite boss, who reiterates that this is a "depressively masculine world" (Dolores Claiborne, 1995). Encouraging Dolores to kill her husband, Vera insists that "an accident Dolores, can be an unhappy woman's best friend" (Dolores Claiborne, 1995). Within the context of this film, the only option Dolores has is to kill her husband and find some sense of a voice and control where none had existed before.

One of the most significant aspects of the film is when past truths are revealed, and Selena can finally begin to mend the rip in her mind. Dolores and Selena are remorseless as they confront each other during the film's climax. The bitter and "bitchy" (Errigo, 1995 para. 2) women share "no false sentimentality" (Ebert, 1995 para. 5) in their relationship as the bitter memories linger in the air like the stench of Joe St George's alcoholism. As Dolores

questions Selena, “You don’t seem to remember much of anything, do you?” (*Dolores Claiborne*, 1995), Selena continues to silence the young woman inside of her mind, fearing what might happen if her mind were to remember. Instead, Selena chooses to idealize her father (Thompson, 2007 p.91) and blame her mother for the past. Selena gets lost in alcohol, cigarettes, prescription pills, and toxic sexual relationships. What is most interesting about Selena and Dolores’s situation is the overwhelming silence that looms in the air. Not only has Dolores unwittingly silenced a young Selena, but she has silenced herself fearing her words might break Selena more. Silence, once it is established, can grow, and grow until victims, like Selena and Dolores, are choked by any mention of the truth. They have existed for the better part of twenty years suspended between truth and memory: a silent space. Dolores knows that the only way to free both her and her daughter from the silence is to reveal all the unspeakable truths of the past. This film compels its audience to look at domestic abuse, molestation, drug addiction, and relationships in a straightforward manner. There are no reservations when it comes to what each family member thinks of the other, both past and present, as well as the violent effects of toxic masculinity. Joe St George may have been a man who admired his on-screen counterpart, Stanley Kowalski, as both used their brute force to shatter the minds of women who they perceive are out of line. A small portion of Dolores and Selena’s relationship is mended as words finally begin to flow and the two women ascend from their silence. While Dolores went to great lengths, she not only needed to protect Selena but also help her. However, Lila Wingo, as a mother, chose to do the opposite, she continually silenced her daughter, nearly committing her to that silent space forever.

While Dolores is not the mother of the year in terms of her relationship with her daughter, Lila Wingo is the antithesis of what a mother should do when their child suffers a psychotic break after a rape. Lila does not extend to any of her children the love or empathy they deserve, instead, she silences them by forcing them to pretend nothing happened to

preserve the perfect and happy family image. *The Prince of Tides* is a film full of domestic abuse, rape, adultery, pain, and silence that never really gets to the heart of the issue. Narrated by Tom Wingo, he is the person the audience must rely on about the circumstances that led to his sister's silent and dark existence. From the beginning of the film, it is evident that the Wingo family is not a happy one, Henry Wingo, a brutal and abusive father ensures that the family remains under constant pressure. Lila, the children's mother, is manipulative and societally driven and manages to keep peace in the home by having sex with Henry. The children learn quickly that silence is a safe place for them to exist, even if it only temporarily saves them from their parents' issues. Luke, Tom, and Savannah hide, frequently under water, when their parents fight. It is in this space they learn that everything will be all right. This kind of escapism that the children learn during their early years can play a key role in how they learn to deal with the aftereffects of rape as they grow into adulthood. Not being allowed to talk about it, they retreat to the silent space where they feel safe. Unfortunately, this silent space does not protect them, but continuously hurts them until they die or are forced to confront the past.

The life of these characters coincides with the overall theme of the film: pushing the painful things aside. Tom Wingo outrightly states, about his family's Southern Ways, "When things get too painful, we either avoid them, or we laugh" (*The Prince of Tides*, 1991), intentionally reinforcing silence, which the children use to deny their victimhood and bury their pain. The pain remains buried until Savannah ends up in a hospital mental ward after trying to commit suicide again. Lila, instead of going to the hospital to help her daughter, sends Tom to try and mend his sister's fractured psyche. Tom encounters Savannah's psychiatrist, Susan Lowenstein, who implores Tom to help his sister heal by recalling their childhood to find the point when Savannah's psychotic break occurred. The relationship between Dr. Lowenstein and Tom is one of the most interesting aspects of the film as it

partially resembles the Oedipus Complex. Tom cowers in her arms, like a mother and child, eventually having sex with her. In some ways, Tom's relationship with Dr. Lowenstein heals him. She gives him the love he always wanted from his mother. He has made Dr. Lowenstein his surrogate mother. Dr. Lowenstein participates by going as far as telling him to "stop being such a petulant child" (*The Prince of Tides,* 1991) in response to his outburst, a temper tantrum when he accuses her of keeping secrets about his sister's life.

The meeting of Tom and Dr. Lowenstein, in *The Prince of Tides,* is interesting. Tom wanting to be the alpha male, attempts to strong-arm the doctor with his witty jokes and southern charm. Tom does not expect Dr. Lowenstein to be as much of an alpha as he is and certainly not more so. It becomes evident that Tom negatively regards women; he goes as far as to say that "women are more devious than men" (*The Prince of Tides,* 1991). Throughout the scenes between Tom and Dr. Lowenstein, there is a constant push and pull of power, even after they have sex. The relationship between Dr. Lowenstein and Tom makes it difficult to discern exactly who is the victim, or survivor, the audience is supposed to be focused on. Both Tom and Savannah were raped by prisoners from Callenwolde, and each has a right to tell their stories, however, Savannah's story is filtered through Tom's perspective. While this way of storytelling may not have any malicious intent it contributes to the silencing of Savannah. She cannot remember her childhood, and the audience is forced to interpret her emotions as they are filtered through Tom's perspective, which is certainly different from his sister's.

Though the film begins with helping Savannah, it does not consistently stay on that track throughout, meaning the point of the film is to help Tom and not Savannah. The film is called *The Prince of Tides*. The film is an interesting narrative that displays the lengths to which a mother can neglect her children. This aspect is certainly not seen in *Dolores Claiborne*. Lila Wingo ignores her children's suffering, going as far as to threaten the

children that if they ever breathe a word of it, she will disown them. This threat causes Tom to lament, "I think the silence was worse than the rapes" (*The Prince of Tides,* 1991). The film too, ignores Savannah's pain, questioning the depiction of rape victims on film. The audience does not hear much from Savannah, we are left to assume she is on her way toward healing as she writes another book and is seen smiling with Tom. What is lacking though is words, actual words from Savannah's mouth that go beyond her saying "I'm still here" (*The Prince of Tides,* 1991) and praising Tom for helping her. While it is deserved, it leaves an empty feeling, a hole. Tom, on the other hand, finds his gentleness again and his way back to his family. The things that were painful no longer hurt him as they did before.

The Prince of Tides tries to be a poignant narrative about silence and the healing of childhood trauma, yet it fails to achieve that goal. Roger Ebert sums up the film's biggest pitfall: "These are complicated people who have lived difficult lives, and a quick romance of some feel-good therapy is not going to heal their wounds" (Ebert, 1991 para. 7). The film only attempts to scratch the surface of the characters' lives. And, in truth, this is not how life happens. The film does not add to rape myth awareness or upset the foundation of rape culture. *The Prince of* Tides does not get at the heart of the familial problems in the same way as *Dolores Claiborne*. The familial secrets may have been spoken aloud, but there is no resolution for the wider issue that Lila, being both the best and worst mother to her children, perpetually contributed to her children's suffering. Patricia Romito says of paternal rape and of children who are raped, "Not all abused children come up against a wall of indifference and complicity, but the fact that this can still happen today, in various contexts and countries, tells us that the heart of the problem does not lie in the silence of the victims" (Romito, 2008 p.3). In the end, this aspect is true, to a degree. It is not necessarily due to Selena, Savannah, Tom, and Luke's voluntary silence, but the silence that affected them by external forces.

Each of these characters had their victimhood stripped and buried for decades, which led to their forced silence.

It is impossible to Rape a Wife and Women Falsely Accuse Men of Rape: Rape in *Law-and-Order Special Victims Unit* and *The Last Duel*

These two rape myths are two of the most hotly debated rape myths that rape culture has created. In the court case, Director of Public Prosecution vs. Morgan, it was decided that "a man's honest belief that a woman had consented was enough to negate his liability of rape" (Edwards et al., 2011 p.765), which reinforced the rape myth that a man cannot rape his wife. While the court's decision was repealed in 2003, the rape myth still penetrates aspects of society and has done so since ancient times. Parts of 1 Corinthians also move to reinforce this thought process, depending on how the scripture is read. 1 Corinthians 7 is dedicated to matters concerning marriage:

> For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; likewise, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but his wife does. Do not deprive one another except perhaps by agreement for a set time, to devote yourself to prayer, and then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control (1 Cor. 7, 2007).

This passage states that neither the wife nor the husband has power over their bodies, but they have power over the other. Given that society was and is patriarchal, it would not be too much to assume that the division of power was not equal nor in the wife's best interests. In the United States, women were no longer considered the property of their husbands,' making rape a recognized crime in the law. Additionally, the rape myth that asserts women falsely accuse men of rape ensures that women are forced to silently deal with marital rape and disbelief from society. Both the myth that women falsely accuse men of rape and the myth that denies a husband's liability for marital rape helps to solidify rape culture and the forced

silencing of women. These specific representations of this come from the media, from a television show that has been on the air for nearly twenty-four years and a movie released just last year.

Marital Rape in *Law and Order SVU*

Officially marital rape is recognized as an illegal act in the United States, while the rape myth, that men cannot rape their wives, still exists. It is essential in understanding how rape culture continues to invade society. The legal drama, *Law and Order SVU* (NBC, 1999), focuses on crimes that have a sexual component to them. The show, first airing in 1999, has become a significant part of narrative television that works towards forcing society to look at itself. As of 2022 the show has aired its 500th episode and is heading into its twenty-fourth season. Throughout the years, *Law and Order SVU* (NBC, 1999), has changed as society has changed, and rape has become more of a mainstream topic, the show has adapted itself sufficiently. During the show's second season, in 2000, an episode entitled *Asunder* aired, in which a wife, Patricia Andrews, accuses Lloyd, her police detective husband, of rape. The word asunder implies that a split or division occurs. In Christian terms, this refers to the idea that when a man and woman are joined in marriage it is forever; they were joined in a holy union. In the Bible, Matthew states: "So they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate" (Matthew 19:6, 2007). *Asunder* foreshadows the end of the episode before the audience is even aware that marital rape is the show's focus. The wife, Patricia, finds her allegations are initially doubted by some of the detectives in the unit, who question whether a police officer can rape someone or if a husband can rape his wife. We are meant to believe that the police are supposed to protect citizens, however, recent real-life events also show police officers are not only capable of rape but of murder as well.

Within the last two years, police-related rape and murder have been a topic of significant discussion in the UK, in the wake of 33-year-old Sarah Everard's death. On March

3, 2021, Sarah was kidnapped by 48-year-old Wayne Couzens, a police officer in Kent, England, who subsequently raped and murdered her. Sarah's mother read a statement to Couzens during his sentencing hearing which asserted that "burning her body was the final insult. It meant we could never again see her sweet face and never say goodbye" (Morton, 2021). While Couzens will spend the rest of his life in prison, a feeling of apprehension remains for women who interact with on-duty police offers, who wonder if they too will be kidnapped, raped, and burned. Patriarchal systems, rape culture, and rape myths have enabled men, like Couzens, to have unmitigated access to women's bodies. It is because of the blurred lines between good and evil that a victim's story can easily be dismissed when accusing a police officer of rape. While Sarah's rape and murder were not related to marital rape, it does shed considerable light on something society has been consistently blind towards. What Sarah Everard's case does is spotlight inequities in the judicial system, which aids in silencing women's voices and the voices of others. Members of police departments have been held above reproach while victims have been rebuked and silenced. The events from Kent relate to *Law and Order SVU* because it shows how police officers are inherently trusted as the good guys but can be rapists, abusers, and criminals disguised as civil servants.

In the context of *Law and Order SVU,* the initial doubt about Patricia's accusation sparks debate amongst the other detectives and Internal Affairs. One Internal Affairs detective comments:

> We marry them just to have it [sex] available. So, tell me how do you rape a wife (*Law and Order SVU*, 1999 2:7)?

Although his comment is vulgar and alarming, it is an accurate representation of androcentric ideas behind why men and women get married. The implications would be that men marry women to guarantee them free access to sex whenever and wherever they want, without needing to ask for the consent that was secured by the marriage certificate. Before the

audience is allowed to hear Patricia's side of the story, her accusations are doubted because of her position as a wife and Lloyd's status as a husband and civil servant. It is because of this that Patricia's voice continuously changes from one extreme to the next. Her voice at the beginning of the episode is different from it becomes filtered as she goes from loudly wanting her Lloyd arrested for rape, to dropping the charges, to wishing to have her loving husband back. The case spurs a debate amongst the detective unit containing four men and one woman, as to the possibility of marital rape. One Detective, John Munch, states:

> Have you ever heard of contractual abandonment? The only reason to forsake all others is so you don't have to hear "no" (*Law and Order SVU*, 1999 2:7).

Detective Munch echoes the sentiments that have been explored in the biblical stories of previous chapters where female rape victims were denied their right to speak about their stories or to say no. Moreover, the conversation highlights an important topic, both in the late 1990s and now, that previously held property laws reflected, that sexual intercourse was a right of the spouse. It was state-mandated rape. In 1984, New York's highest court ruled that women were no longer deemed the property of their husbands and that men could not rape their wives without legal consequences. At the time, New York was one of eighteen states that had created marital rape laws (Margolick, 1984 para. 2). As of 2022, marital rape (or intimate partner violence) is illegal in all fifty states, however, it does still happen and is an aspect of domestic violence. If we take the year this episode was filmed into consideration, in the late nineties and early two-thousands, androcentrism was alive and well. While the execution of this rape narrative had its flaws, *Asunder* points out the problems with assuming that spousal abuse or marital rape does not exist. In some way, it helps to continue women's silence by echoing masculinist sentiments: no matter how many times a woman attempts to break free from the abuse she will always end up returning to her husband.

It is revealed that both Patricia and Lloyd are spousal abusers, which makes her victimhood even more suspicious to the detectives. However, while domestic violence on either side is not acceptable, it does not mean that a man has the right to rape his wife or that her abusive behaviour excuses the crime of rape. Lloyd apologizes to Patricia and promises to never hurt her again, which is piggybacked by the revelation that she is pregnant. Assistant District Attorney (ADA) Alex Cabot is brought in to sort out the entangled violence between the husband and wife. Cabot manages to take the case to trial by threatening Patricia Lloyd is found not guilty, and the couple kiss. At the end of the episode, makes clear that nothing changed for either the couple or the detectives. Patricia is even more trapped in her marriage than before, showing that women should not break the long-standing social and familial traditions (Aschkenasy, 1998 p.57) because inevitably they will fail. The marital rape precedent has not been set as to what could be done if a spouse accuses the other of rape. The waters are still muddied by apologies and promises to do and be better, but what remains is the fact that because women are still seen as the Other, cases of intimate partner violence are a pervasive aspect of rape culture and society continues to rise.

Trial By Combat: Rape in *The Last Duel*

While the world continues to battle against marital rape, so too does it struggle to believe women who speak up and seek justice against their rapists. This rape myth excuses men for raping women by blaming women—and alleging that rape either never occurred or it was consensual sex. This rape myth is at the core of *The Last Duel* (Scott, 2021), directed by Ridley Scott, with stars Matt Damon, Ben Affleck, Jodie Cromer, and Adam Driver. The film adaptation of the last occurrence of trial by combat in 1386 in France is adapted from Eric Jager's book of the same name, in which God is the definitive judge in deciding who is guilty and who is innocent. While *The Last Duel* is set in 14th-century Europe, the thematic elements of women's forced silence, men's toxic triumphalism, disbelief in a victim's truth,

and the role of the media, are no doubt examples of the world's current response to rape victims. However, the film struggles to do so due to it being recorded in *Rashomon* (Kurosawa, 1950) style or from different perspectives. The Rashomon Effect as it was known, was utilized by Akira Kurosawa who was the first to use this technique in film. Films that use stylized storytelling reveal the differences between actual events and what unreliable witnesses misremember, intentionally or not. Since *Rashomon* other films have also used this technique, including *Vantage Point* (2008), *The Usual Suspects* (1995), and *Gone Girl* (2014), which all show the importance of the perspective of the witness describing events, as the truth is often lost. Due to the use of the Rashomon Effect, the film's important narrative of female silence gets lost in a myriad of confusingly androcentric storytelling that leaves the woman's narrative last. By the time the film reaches the woman's perspective, exasperation sets in at how the film reads like "a lavishly convoluted and, at times, rather interesting medieval soap opera" (Gleiberman, 2021 para. 1). The movie's end, through the feminist ideas they set out to prove and support, it is increasingly hard to pick out those ideas from the overwhelming masculine voices.

Amongst the muddy and misty backdrop of medieval France, the film opens at its end, with a duel, where Marguerite de Carrouges is dressed in black and shackled as she awaits the verdict of her rape trial. The high collar Marguerite wears almost covers her mouth, which indicates, in a physical manner, her silenced voice. Even though she spoke her truth and worked to regain her autonomy, it meant nothing to the men in the film. Moreover, her black dress could double as her funerary clothes used both to mourn or to be burned within. Without a word of dialogue, it is clear we are observing a world "in which only men have power that is to the fore presaging a showdown as absurd as it is brutal, leaving Marguerite in danger of being burned alive for the crime of daring to speak out" (Kermode, 2021 para. 3). As the audience is moved through the three perspectives of the film, they witness Jean de

Carrouges' wife, Marguerite, being brutally raped by Jacques Le Gris, her husband's former friend. While Jacques Le Gris is found innocent by the local judiciary by admitting to adultery and denying the rape of Marguerite, Jean de Carrouges, outraged, at this, demands King Charles VI grant a request for trial by combat. Jacques' acquittal easily illustrates how rape narratives get turned into love stories when a man's words are more believable than a woman's voice. The woman's body, victimhood, voice, and truth are all denied and buried.

It is not overly important to focus on analysing all three parts and the varying opinions that led up to Marguerite being raped, instead, this thesis chooses to focus on the repeated attempts to force her into silence. What is significant to mention of the first two viewpoints, from Jean, and Jacques, is that the men are both narcissistic by nature. Both view themselves as sexually virile men, one repeatedly rapes women, while the other convulses for a few moments inside his wife, and then dares to ask her if she enjoyed her orgasm. The question shows the scope of how androcentric culture does not consider a woman's emotions or the way she feels pleasure. This is how "…sexual violence is perpetuated by a patriarchal system where men hold higher status and have greater power than women" (Edwards et al., 2011 p.762), where obvious cases of rape are assumed to be consensual—and are the heart of why it is presumed that women lie about being raped. In contrast, Marguerite exposes Jean to be truculent, accusing her of being leading towards Jacques when she tells him of the rape. Jean's response is to rape Marguerite as well; he states, "I will not have another man be that last to know you" (*The Last Duel*, 2021), which highlights the current debate about whether marital rape exists. For Marguerite the continuous invasion of her body is violent and horrifying. It is through the relentless stream of androcentric opinions that Marguerite is repeatedly silenced as her victimhood is questioned. Not only was Marguerite raped by Jacques and her husband, but the church who fail to help her in this regard: "…[Marguerite], the victim faces further violence, deserted by her faith community and, from her perspective,

by her God as well" (Adams, 1993 p. 78). There are no knights in shining armour—the world for Marguerite is soaked in a cruel cold silence.

After watching the three different perspectives, the Duel finally takes place. The audience is now aware that both Jean and Jacques have few, if any, redeeming character qualities. The clerics, upon seeing that Marguerite is pregnant, accuse her of not only inviting the rape but enjoying it, because a woman would not be able to conceive a child had she not experienced immense sexual pleasure. It is further evident that none of the men from this world are honourable as they are marred by their narcissism, petty squabbling, and obsessive piety. As Lebowitz and Roth state, "There is a sufficiently coherent set of cultural constructions about women and sexuality that are directly pertinent to sexual violence" (Lebowitz and Roth, 1994 p.366). It is through these cultural standards that it is believed, a woman enjoys being raped and that a peck on the lips is a sexual invitation. So too, blaming a woman for being curious, as clerics did to Dinah, only reinforced accepted ideas advocating for control. The degrading language that is used to describe why women are raped and to the degree with which she enjoyed it is how a woman's worthlessness as the Other is communicated, echoing far into the future. Moreover, Jean de Carrouges, while he pretends not to be, is equally as violent and toxic as Jacques Le Gris because he is willing to risk Marguerite to save his pride, with the guarantee that "God will not punish those who tell the truth" (*The Last Duel*, 2021). Jean, using Marguerite as a sacrificial lamb, shows how male pride is at the forefront of androcentric society's concern. Simeon and Levi were willing to risk the lives of others by murdering all the Hivites to regain their sexual prowess, feigning it as revenge for Dinah.

There is one especially poignant part of the film that was particularly attention-grabbing if you were willing to see it. While Marguerite is telling her story and being subjected to questions from a panel of men, all of whom hold contempt for the young woman,

the screen shows Isabeau of Bavaria, King Charles VI's wife. What is important in this is her facial expression, she is unmistakably unnerved, devastated, and concerned; Isabeau is absolutely a rape victim, but like the others, she is silenced. At this moment, the audience is allowed to see what Marguerite speaking out means to the queen. It is the only time there is an inkling of understanding shown towards Marguerite as "historically the physical rape was followed by a social and judicial rape in which the victim becomes the target of blame" (Brinson, 1989 p.23). Marguerite, who is subjected to criticisms from friends, becomes increasingly isolated the more she speaks her truth. While it is obvious the film is a narrative for our contemporary society set in the Medieval era, that one moment shows again why 'speaking' is vital. Not only does Marguerite refuse, purposefully or not, to be silenced, but sharing her story permits another woman to feel seen while still being forced into silence. For a brief second in the film, Isabeau's silent space saw a glimmer of light. While *The Last Duel* is not the best example of how to portray a rape narrative on screen, it attempted to utilize an "ahistorical use of the word rape solely to ensure the modern-day parallels remain undeniable" (Loughrey, 2021 para. 2) and within mainstream society's sight.

The frustration and anger Marguerite feels throughout her whole ordeal echo far into the 21st century as women today still struggle with sexual harassment, rape, domestic violence, and all manner of atrocities against their personhood. Culture, whether it is in the ancient world, the Middle Ages, or 2022, creates a space where scripts become increasingly hard to change and allows women to continuously be subjected to rape culture. This is because, as Marcus states, "a rapist follows a social script and enacts conventional gendered structures of feeling and action which seek to draw the rape target into a dialogue which is skewed altogether" (Marcus, 2019 p.390). The relentlessness of rape myth conventions such as false accusations is there to ensure a rape victim is not seen as a person, nor allow for important emotions to be felt by both the survivor and those around them.

Conclusion: The Absence of Women's Voices

Film and television play a pivotal part in how society interprets the encompassing aspects of rape culture and rape myths that have emerged from the ancient world. The dark silent spaces female rape victims exist within is a formidable foe that not only has the power to steal her voice but assault her mind. Women in both biblical narratives and onscreen face forced silence, and criticism from male voices, and have their victimhood stolen. As Molly Haskell states:

> The women of these films, torn between the negative and positive of the feminist consciousness—rage at the old order, hope for the new—have arrived, anesthetized, at an emotional and cultural 'stasis,' a death. But it is out of this death, out of the ashes of her sacrifice, that the new woman will be born (Haskell and Dargis, 2016 p.57).

This passage can be applied to rape, rape culture, and the entertainment industry as they are entwined with each other. Production scripts are difficult to adapt because accepted rhetoric is easier to manage than admitting fault and revising accepted norms, society looks for meaning in a myriad of narratives that rarely shift. Onscreen women face objecting against the accepted patriarchal narrative while trying to fit within themselves as characters. Parts of women, old scripts, and accepted cultural values deserve to die if we not only want to be treated better as humans but stand on our own two feet.

On-screen interpretations of rape myths are positioned to impact socio-cultural structures which prompt people to question their preconceived ideas about rape. Many narratives are flawed and should be made more self-aware to prevent hindering progress by creating stereotypes that reinforce androcentric ideations. The absence of the female voice in rape narratives such as *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *The Accused,* as seen through both Blanche and Sarah, who are considered unusual women due to their lifestyles, prompts other

characters to silence them. Blanche never regains her voice after Stanley rapes her; she, too, is banished like Tamar. However, Sarah, who initially has no voice, finds it because no one is willing to speak up for her, not even the female prosecutor. *Cagney & Lacey* and *Shetland* reveal that although silence may be a means for self-preservation, there comes a point when a rape victim's voice needs to be heard. If this does not happen, they risk falling into the silent space—which happens in *Law and Order SVU* when a wife withdraws allegations made against her husband. She may end up being brought further into the heterosexual family fold, trapped by pregnancy, and maintaining her silence. It is also evident that silencers can be parents, and mothers, who are meant to protect their children but end up hurting them more. As seen in *Dolores Claiborne* and *The Prince of Tides,* child rape victims' risk having psychotic breaks due to unhealed trauma. These films illustrate how comforting and yet damaging safe places can become. It may not seem apparent, even to contemporary feminists, the risk women face when bringing rape allegations against a male rapist. As seen in *The Last Duel*, Marguerite endures being raped twice, by men who are more concerned about their pride than her safety. Further, Marguerite faces a potential death sentence if Jean loses during the trial by combat, a result of her speaking up instead of remaining silent, which compromises her husband's virility. In this way, Marguerite is much like the Unnamed Woman from Judges who finds her safety and life in the hands of the Levite who condemns her to death. The significance of these films is in their illustrations of women enduring some of the most horrific pain imaginable. But this is where change happens, in the severely uncomfortable space where we witness the terror rape causes. As Chaudhuri states, "the healing of narrative can only happen after the wound has been inflicted; and the more wounded we are, the more desperate we become for meaning and narrative" (Chaudhuri, 2006 p.63). All these depictions of rape (and more) can be used to understand rape culture, in

a much larger sense, as the accepted rape narratives are challenged and pulled apart until the silent spaces are exposed and victims are freed.

Society cannot continue the way it has because nothing has prompted conversations to shift, a new generation of women will have to incite change and demand that justice be given for whatever crime is committed against women, even today when rape is involved, the cultural expectations are blurred. “Singers like Robin Thick know ‘we want it!’ Rappers like Jay Z use the word ‘bitch’ like punctuation. Movies…tell the stories of men as if men’s stories are the only stories that matter” (Gay, 2014 p.6). Like the lines of a bad R&B song, our “cultural notions of female and male sexuality and gender role expectations encourage us to blame the victim rather than the attacker” (Brinson, 1989 p.23). Roxanne Gay sums up the current culture climate women face today:

> The cultural climate is shifting, particularly for women as we contend with the retreatment of reproductive freedom, the persistence of rape culture, and the flawed, if not changing, representations of women we’re consuming in music, movies, and literature (Gay, 2014 p.6).

Gay’s quote clearly states the problem women face as they navigate the world. With Christianity contributing to a major part of how Western society treats women, the old scripts are hard to change. The belief systems of the ancient world seemed to have long passed as women are finding another fight is on the horizon, one that an entire nation of women has not faced in fifty years. Women once again arm themselves to fight for equity and bodily rights. The wars that have been launched in the name of women’s rights must include minority rape victims and the LGBTQ community. If we do not include their voices, we do not deserve to stand on the shoulders of those who came before.

Chapter Six

The Forgotten Ones: Minority Rape Victims in Film and Television

"The women of color, trans women, queer people—our stories get pushed aside and our pain is never prioritized. We don't talk about indigenous women. Their stories go untold"

Time 100 Summit (Burke, 2019 para. 3)

Introduction: The Lost Voices of the Unknown

One of the significant issues with the #MeToo movement is its failure to acknowledge the voices of marginalized rape victims who are racial, sexual, and gender minorities, overweight women, disabled persons, and children. This is more because Tarana Burke's original #MeToo phrase aimed to allow women of colour a safe place to be heard. In many ways, because of its internet success, the #MeToo movement was hijacked by heterosexual white women. Heterosexual white women's stories need to be heard; however, this should not be to the detriment of minority rape victims. The truth is, there is more than enough space in this world for all rape victims, and survivors, to be seen and heard. Unfortunately, Western society's focus has been on heterosexual white women making representations of minority rape victims seriously lacking in social justice movements, film, and television. Intentionally leaving out minority rape narratives from mainstream entertainment helps contribute to rape myth acceptance. Moreover, it tells an entire subset of human beings that their victim and survivor stories and voices do not matter as much as the white straight woman's voice.

This chapter attempts to create a starting point regarding minority rape as depicted through film and television. As with the rape narratives discussed in the previous chapter, it is important to address marginalized rape victims through films as it is likely how the majority

will encounter the topic for the first time. However, this work does not do an in-depth analysis of how minority rape is depicted on screen or the larger societal implications of denying these victims and survivors their identity. The idea behind doing so is the hope that someone will also pick up the torch and do a more comprehensive investigation into marginalized rape victims. Therefore, this chapter's goal is to present ideas that will see cracks in rape culture's foundation that require people to expand their awareness of rape. If women are the enemy of men, the Other, marginalized people become the Unknown, opponents to the socio-culturally accepted voices. The Unknown continue to exist in the silent spaces that not only their narratives have assigned them to but that the majority helped create.

Conversion Rape in *Law and Order SVU*: Correcting Homosexuality through Rape

In 1986 the Supreme Court heard the Bowers v. Hardwick case from Georgia to consider whether people had the right to engage in homosexual intercourse in private. The court upheld the decision which ensured that each state could decide whether to criminalize the private sexual activity of same-sex couples (Bowers v. Hardwick, n.d.). In 2003 the Supreme Court ruled in favour of Lawrence v. Texas, thus overturning the 1986 outcome of Bowers v. Hardwick. The ruling decriminalized sodomy laws, protecting sexual intercourse between same-sex couples (Lawrence v. Texas, n.d.). While neither case pertained to the broader aspects of the LGBT community but gay-male relationships, the law's wording meant that both rulings could apply to all same-sex couples. As it stands, no state has the right to criminalize consensual activity done between couples in the privacy of their own homes, which begs the question of why states ever the right had to do so beforehand. In 2022 with the overturning of Roe v. Wade, one Supreme Court Justice, Clarence Thomas, suggested that more court cases should be revisited (Stolberg, 2022 para. 3). One such case is Lawrence v. Texas, which would once again move to take away basic human rights. This is the first

time the United States Supreme Court has taken away federal protections given through court cases. It remains to be seen if Roe v. Wade is just an anomaly or if it is the beginning that sees millions of people criminally liable for loving someone of the same gender. Even though same-sex relationships are currently legal in the United States, a considerable effort by religious communities has gone into the conversion therapy movement. As of 2022 only twenty states and a hundred municipalities have banned conversion therapy (Movement Advancement Project | Conversion "Therapy" Laws, n.d.) which has not been recognized at the federal level.

As mentioned previously, *Law and Order SVU* depicts narratives that contain an aspect of a sexual crime. In 2016, during the show's eighteenth season, *Conversion* aired, centred around preventative rape, which sought to cure a young lesbian by another conservative church member. In this episode, religion is brought exclusively to the forefront, asking "whether the rape is something that can be objectively determined or whether it is based on the alleged victim's beliefs that he or she was sexually assaulted" (Ori, 2017 para. 3). The focus of this episode is Ann Davenport who is raped in her hotel room while on a trip to New York City with her church group. When the detectives question Ann's friend Lucas Hull, he is confused as to why they would ask about Ann being sexually assaulted. Lucas quickly corrects the detectives' mistakes:

> No, she wasn't raped. I would never rape anyone…It wasn't rape. It was curative intercourse. I was saving her soul (*Law and Order SVU,* 1999).

While Ann is interviewed by the SVU detectives she corroborates Lucas' story:

> "[He did it] to cure me of my attraction to Lydia. Homosexuality is a sin" (*Law and Order SVU,* 1999).

Ann's statement, however, does not deny the fact she said 'No' and tried to fight Lucas off her while he was curing her. Lucas believed he was following God's Commands to cure Ann's attraction to her friend Lydia Banks. This episode and the religious basis behind

Lucas' actions suggest that Ann's crime of same-sex attraction deserves punishment in the form of curative intercourse. Ann and Lucas' Reverend Graham Langham is the one who instructs Lucas to rape Ann because "God condones curative intercourse" (*Law and Order SVU*, 1999). It is because of Ann's predestined inclination towards homosexuality, which is considered a sin, that rape, disguised as prophylactic punishment, which is masked as curative intercourse, is forgiven. The narrative emphasizes it "wasn't about who did it but why they did it" (Easton, 2017 para. 14), further contributing to the aspect of rape culture that seeks to absolve rapists of their crimes if why they did it was deemed reasonable. Further influencing how rape myths silence marginalized victims.

Even though fictionalized on television, this case is similar to St Augustine's idea of prophylactic punishment of rape for women who were predisposed to be sinful, an idea that was applied in an earlier chapter. As stated in Chapter Three, Augustine believed that if God was punishing someone, it was to show them their perfections or correct their imperfections in return for an everlasting reward (Augustine, MacCracken, and Green, 2007 p.125). Either way, whatever God's will be is for that person's good. Augustine's idea meant that rape victims like Ann would accept rape as part of God's government as God is the creator. In other words, it happened therefore, it was God's will. "Rape was a 'discipline,' a schooling" (Pellauer, 1995 p.225) for the eternal good. Not only for the good of Ann's soul but for his own, Lucas disciplined Ann and cured her of her imperfection. Lucas is also a victim of the Reverend's manipulation, as he is told that if he can cure Ann, he can fix his homosexuality. Both Lucas and Ann have their autonomy and voices taken from them in the name of religious values. Nevertheless, Lucas being a victim does not excuse him for raping Ann, he had a choice to make between upholding toxic homophobic ideas or breaking a cycle of religiously mandated rape. Lucas chose the former, violence. Reverend Graham, her church,

and Lucas, all people who should have been trustworthy, chose to take away Ann's right to choose what happens with her body.

Despite all its religious overtones, the episode is not exclusively about religion, it is about a woman's right to say 'No.' The ADA says of the court case, "It's about a woman who says 'No' and a man rapes her anyways" (*Law and Order SVU,* 1999). In Dinah and Tamar's rape narratives, even the slightest glimpse of them being allowed to say 'no' and being heard may have made a world of difference for future rape victims. At the very least, it would have opened a dialogue that may have helped change rape culture. To the credit of *Law and Order SVU,* it did not question Ann's victimhood nor move to steal her voice like in the earlier episode *Asunder*. Instead, Ann had to be reminded that what happened to her was an invasion of her body and that her sexual orientation could not be cured. The audience is graced with Ann slowly beginning to accept that she is perfect and that loving someone of the same sex is not a sin. The most disturbing part of *Conversion* is the damage it could have caused in both the fictional world of *Law and Order SVU* and our real world; it is too much to consider. Had the defence won, based on their religious beliefs, severely violent sexual assaults would be justified under the precedent that curative intercourse or prophylactic punishment were mandates of the church. Given the current climate of the United States and other parts of the world, the likelihood of this happening is not outside the realm of possibility. To echo one of the detective's thoughts: "You can't rape the gay out of somebody" (*Law and Order SVU,* 1999), any toleration of curative intercourse not only debases an individual right to free will but also condemns them to a silent space.

Child Molestation and Self-Harm: Addressing Silence in *Emmerdale*

England and the United Kingdom have had a long history of giving LGBT persons their rights. In 2000 the European Court of Human Rights ruled that it violates privacy laws

by making it illegal for two men to have sexual relations in private (Stonewall, 2016 sect. 6). This ruling overturned the Sexual Offences Act of 1967, which legalized sexual activity between two men who were at least 21 years old. Ten years later, in 2010, it became illegal to discriminate against an LGBT person, and in 2014 same-sex marriage was passed (Stonewall, 2016 sect. 7). While the LGBT community has been given basic human rights that others take for granted, there is still a need for more accurate depictions of queer stories on television that educate audiences. One such narrative is depicted on *Emmerdale* (first airing in 1972), a British soap opera. Soap operas become mainstays on television that have a considerable impact on its viewership and can be the best platforms to introduce topical narratives. In 2016, *Emmerdale* began airing an extensive storyline that would last for more than a year about child rape, self-harm, and homophobia. The narrative centred around the village's Aaron Dingle (Danny Miller), who at the time was one of two gay male characters on the show. Aaron and his eventual husband, Robert Sugden (Ryan Hawley), who is bisexual, were affectionately known as Robron on social media. Because of Aaron's sexual orientation, he has been the focus of several interesting stories, many of which explore his internalized homophobia, self-destructive responses to trauma, and suicide attempts. As was addressed in Chapter Five, unhealed childhood trauma can manifest into harmful and life-altering behaviour. This storyline is important in understanding what silent spaces are like for someone who is a sexual minority, however, sufficient justice for the narrative is not possible at this stage. Instead, this section focuses on two significant aspects of the storyline: Aaron disclosing that his father raped him as a child and his repeated attempts at self-harm.

When Aaron finds out that his father, Gordon, has returned to Yorkshire and has been seeing his mother, Chas, he becomes irate, resulting in a relapse of self-harm which he uses to cover up his shame. Aaron's self-harm gets so serious that he nearly dies from septicaemia but is saved by Robert. Throughout the beginning of the storyline, the audience can see that

Aaron has something to say but keeps swallowing the words, afraid of what it will mean if he finally speaks his truth. Chas is oblivious to the whole situation and claims Aaron is just being difficult and needs to grow up. Unfortunately, Chas' response sees rape victims continue to inhabit their silent spaces out of fear. Robert, the only one who knows that Aaron was raped, does what he can to hint at Chas without betraying Aaron's trust. It is not until Chas and Aaron spend the day together reminiscing about his childhood that he finds the courage to say, "Mum, my dad raped me" (*Emmerdale*, 1972). While Aaron's entire revelation was harrowing and difficult to watch, even years later, one of the most significant things he says is:

> He said he was sorry for what he had to do but I'd been naughty.

All Chas can do is hug Aaron as she declares:

> I promise you I am going to make all of this better.

Chas, in the wake of Aaron not wanting to go to the police, decides to confront Gordon who denies the allegations and proceeds to victim blame his own son:

> Chas I'm straight I like women. I've been married twice. I wouldn't go near any kid, let alone me own. The thought just turns my stomach.

Gordon continuously insists he could never do "that" to their son, instead, he claims that it was Aaron's football coach who molested him.

> I believe my son (*Emmerdale*, 1972).

As Chas refuses to believe Gordon, the internalized shame about Aaron's childhood turns into violence. Astonishingly, Aaron goes to the police to disclose being raped. One of the significant aspects of this scene is how relatable the emotions being portrayed felt. It was as if all of Aaron's shame, sadness, anger, and loneliness could now be shared with the audience, it was no longer his burden to carry alone. The deep breath after Aaron stated, "My name is

Aaron Livesy and I'm here because when I was younger, my dad repeatedly raped me" (*Emmerdale*, 1972), was silence-shattering.

One of the most significant aspects of this narrative is Aaron's self-doubt about his victimhood, voice, and right to justice. He is forced to choose between silence and speaking as Chas feels obligated to help him without realizing she is a major contributing factor to his silence. Robert, the one person who listens to Aaron, provides a steady beacon of support to counter Chas' overbearingness and Gordon's manipulation. In one scene, Gordon attempts to force Aaron to drop the charges: "How's [it] going to look when the coppers, and the lawyers, and the jury see what a conniver and a lowlife my son is. They'll probably start feeling sorry for me" (*Emmerdale*, 1972). This prompts Aaron, who has been unable to look Gordon in the eye, to look directly at him: "You know what everyone who matters to me knows what you did, who you are, [and] what you are…" (*Emmerdale*, 1972). Although Aaron's courage does not last long, he can speak his truth and assert himself, which has always been a rarity for the character.

When Gordon's rape trial finally begins, the support for Aaron is obvious as he finds himself surrounded by family and friends. During the arduous cross-examination by Gordon's barrister, Aaron gives his testimony. Even with a shaky voice, Aaron conveyed exceptionally well what Gordon had done to him as a child, which poignantly ends with "that coward raped me" (*Emmerdale*, 1972). Gordon is found guilty of rape and is sentenced to eighteen years in prison, however, it is revealed soon after that he was found dead in his cell. The Livesy name dies with Gordon along with any chance Aaron may have had to tell his father how he truly felt about him.

On the one hand, because *Emmerdale* killed off Gordon, it shows that he was given one of the worst kinds of punishment. On the other hand, everything that went unsaid will always remain that way, which causes past traumas and self-imposed silence to continue.

Aaron's story is similar to Savannah's from *The Prince of Tides*, who attempts to speak about being raped as a child. It is through authoring a book that Savannah confronts her southern childhood but is unable to use her real name, resulting in the continued silent space consuming her over and over again. The storyline in *Emmerdale* never felt exploitative, and rape was never the core aspect of the plot; it was always about Aaron finding his voice by letting go of shame and accepting help. Moreover, the audience was offered realistic insight into Aaron's lifelong struggle with his sexuality and his motivations for attempting suicide in a previous story arc that involved his coming out. Danny Miller, who plays Aaron Dingle, stated about the impact of his child abuse storyline:

> It's such a negative thing that we're trying to create some sort of positivity out of it and say it is ok to speak out. It's ok to let those demons go from all those years and that was what we aimed to do, and I think we've achieved it (Dodds, 2017 para. 5).

Duncan Lindsay, a Soap Editor for Metro, echoed those sentiments:

> …this was something that needed to be done in the correct way as it is a prominent and extraordinarily sensitive topic which will have affected countless viewers (Lindsay, 2016 para. 11).

In Aaron, viewers can see their friends, family, a stranger, and even themselves; it forces the audience to see him, instead of shying away from the uncomfortable. At the time of its airing (and now), countries target LGBT persons and force transgender persons to use the perceived correct restroom. Court cases to decide same-sex marriage loom as hateful rhetoric from leaders whose sole purpose is to deny marginalized people their fundamental human rights take over. These are not only Western concerns, whether you live in North America, South America, Europe, Asia, or the Middle East, war has been waged against the Unknowns in the world.

Wind River: The Brutal Rape and Death of a Native American Teenager

According to a report from 2010 Native American women are 34% more likely to experience rape in their lifetime compared to 19% of African American women and 18% of white women (Sexual Assault, 2021 sect. 1.). Statistically, “Native women are more than twice as likely to be stalked than other women and Native women are being murdered at a rate ten times the national average” (Redcorn, 2017 para. 9). Not only have Native American women been subjected to Colonization and used as tools, but were also conquered through brutal rape and murder. Much like the Unnamed Woman and the women of Shiloh and Jabesh-Gilead in the Judges 19-21 narrative, Native American women have been used and debased by white men for political gain. This meant the lives and voices of these women have been lost to history because of a judicial system that denies their personhood. *Wind River* (Sheridan, 2017), named after the Native American Reservation in Wyoming, addresses the violence against Indigenous women who face a near-impossible situation. *Wind River* is the directorial debut of Taylor Sheridan who chose this opportunity to explore a subject that non-Native Americans ignore. The film which stars Jeremy Renner, Elizabeth Olsen, Graham Greene, and Kelsey Asbille is a narrative that reveals to its audience the atrocities Native American women face. It shows the cruel reality Native American women face: "rape is considered a rite of passage for girls on the cusp of womanhood” (Tyler Sheridan quoted in Redcorn, 2017 para. 10). The film’s depiction is without any cracked mirrors or rape thinly disguised as cheesy side romances. It is as cold and cruel as the rapists themselves.

Wind River opens with a young woman running as fast and as hard as she can through the snow-covered mountains. The audience feels her desperation to live. The scene abruptly shifts to Cory Lambert (Renner) hunting when he discovers Natalie Hansen’s (Asbille) bloodied and frozen body on the ground. Since Native American Reservations are Federal land, the local tribal police must wait for the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to arrive,

meaning Natalie's body remains exposed to the elements. The rookie FBI Agent Jane Banner (Olsen) arrives, she is clearly out of her depth and undoubtedly represents the audience's perspective. The tension is thick throughout the entire film, not only is the audience extremely aware of the racial divides but also the judicial ones. One poignant part of the film comes when Natalie's father, Martin, learns of her death. The stoic Martin quips back and forth with Agent Banner, whom he regards as an evil outsider. However, when Martin sees Cory standing on his doorstep, he dissolves into a flood of tears as he sinks into Cory's arms. There is no fight left in the father, who already has a son addicted to drugs and now struggles with his daughter's rape and murder. This interaction shows the audience that Cory and Martin are the fathers of two daughters who were best friends and now the fathers of two daughters who are victims of murder. The tearful embrace almost balances out the masculine savagery that follows and reminds the audience that the effects of rape echo far and wide.

Throughout the film, a crushing silence looms in the air; it is as quiet as a snowy winter's night. During the rare scenes with music in the background, it is brief and aids in keeping the audience's attention where it should be. The almost deafening silence reminds the audience that Native American lives are insignificant in the United States. The Reservation reflects a sense of abandonment, it is a silent space where screaming for help gets lost in the nothingness that separates non-Native Americans from Native Americans. Jeremy Bradshaw states, "…a deathly whiteout, in interpreting cold and an oppressive quiet, far from the city's bustle where help in crisis might conceivably be at hand" (Bradshaw, 2017 para. 1). As the film reaches closer to the climax of the second half, there is a song playing in the background, it is barely above a whisper, a male's voice is heard. As Lambert later states, "my family's people were forced here, stuck here for over a century. That snow and silence is the only thing that hasn't been taken from them" (*Wind River*, 2017). The oppressive quiet ends as it is replaced with screams, gunfire, and aggressive male voices.

Preceded by a love scene and a conversation about the future between Natalie and Matt, the film's rape scene last 4 minutes and 26 seconds, over a minute longer than the gang rape scene in *The Accused.* The scene is brutal, unforgiving, and unbearable to watch, and does not leave any unanswered questions. The rape scene "…by means of a single, unselfconsciously clear flashback…lets us understand everything without the accumulation of indirect revelations…" (Bradshaw, 2017 para. 7). When the group of oil-rig contractors barge into the cabin, the audience knows that what is about to happen will be harrowing as no less than five men cause insurmountable chaos. Pete, the man who rapes Natalie, exemplifies toxic masculinity as he drools over her body and repeatedly attempts to dominate her:

> Pete: You've been showing your little ass like a flag around here…All I want is a little peek (*Wind River*, 2017).

Matt does everything he can to protect Natalie from the onslaught of sexual abuse, slander, and violence. Finally, Matt is overpowered as the rape personifies, expertly, that sexual assault is about power as the men all begin attacking each other. Matt's final words to Natalie are "Go" (*Wind River*, 2017) which is barely audible as the other men proceed to beat him to death. With that, Natalie runs out the door, and the audience is brought back to the present, where Agent Banner is attempting to arrest Pete. Pete shoots Banner through the door, inadvertently saving her life, as she falls to the ground. A gun fight ensues between the tribal police, state police, and contractors firing on each other. None of the men survive except Pete, who runs away, and Cory positioned as a sniper in the trees.

After rescuing Agent Banner, Cory catches up to Pete and knocks him out. Based on all the biblical narratives, films, and television shows discussed in this thesis, the revenge in *Wind River* is the only time a woman's rapist sees the sense of justice he deserves. Cory takes Pete to the highest peak on the Wind River Reservation and promises Pete that if he confesses to what happened to Natalie, he has a chance to live. Tearfully Pete confesses:

> You know what it's like out here in this frozen Hell. There ain't noth'in to do. No noth'in, there ain't no women, no fun just snow and the fucking silence.

Cory presses Pete more about what he took until Pete finally admits:

> I raped her. I raped her, yeah (*Wind River*, 2017).

True to his word, Cory gives Pete a chance to live; the "same chance that she got" (*Wind River*, 2017) to run barefoot in the snow to the closest road. Unlike in the real world, where a majority of rapists go free, the film seeks this opportunity to assign justice. Pete manages to run a few hundred feet before he collapses in a whimper and dies. In comparing the importance of this scene to the beginning of the film: Natalie, as we see in the beginning, never stops running for a chance to live, whereas Pete stumbles to the ground and resigns himself to death. Moreover, Pete witnesses a small glimpse into the pain he inflicted on Natalie, a final thought and feeling before his death.

Connected to Pete's death is the most crucial part of the film, which happens in two parts: at the beginning and the end. Natalie is a victim of brutal rape, and the film never moves to deny it as she is treated as much more; she is regarded as unwaveringly powerful. It is during Agent Banner's first encounter with Natalie's body that her power is addressed. When looking for the route Natalie took, Agent Banner doubts how far the young woman would have been able to run barefoot in the snow. Cory responds directly: "I know that girl. She's a fighter. So, no matter how far you think she ran, I can guarantee she ran further" (*Wind River*, 2017). The weight of Cory's words is lost on Agent Banner who attempts to remain impartial to the investigation until she is faced with an equally terrifying situation that requires her to find the strength to survive. In the final few moments of the film, we see Natalie's power referenced again. During the hospital scene, Jane laments to Cory that she survived out of luck. Cory reminds her that she is a tough woman who saved her own life and that there is no luck; there is only the will to live or die. At that moment, Jane understands the

weight of Cory's words from the film's beginning. As she breaks down Jane whispers, "She ran six miles in the snow" (*Wind River*, 2017), seven of the most powerful words in the film, and is a reminder to us all not to only empathize with Natalie but admire her spirit and her absolute will to live.

The closing moment of *Wind River* is where the film reminds the now enlightened audience "that the justice done by the good guys in this film is not nearly sufficient with respect to the larger injustice done to Native Americans" (Kenny, 2017 para. 4). Finally, as the screen fades to black, the audience is left with one final message regarding the severity of violent rape and murder Indigenous women face:

> While missing person statistics are compiled for every other demographic, none exist for Native American Women. No one knows how many are missing (*Wind River*, 2017).

The lives of Native American women (children and men) have been disparaged for far too long. It tells Indigenous people that their culture, voices, stories, and lives are worthless. In this way, these people are Unknown. *Wind River* humanizes their lives by bringing the audience into the silent space where Native American women exist and stresses the injustices they face. This allows Indigenous women to speak out and begin telling their truth through film. The final meaning of the film is that Natalie is a warrior. Native American women are warriors.

Conclusion: What is Next?

The #MeToo movement failed to aid rape victims and survivors who were not white heterosexual women or celebrities. The interpretations of victim stories have been disseminated through voices that do not and cannot understand what it is like to be a marginalized rape victim. The #MeToo movement has hit a wall as a social justice movement because most women do not want to put themselves in a minority person's shoes. While "the

media predictably focused on thin, beautiful, white, straight women whose high-profile careers were adversely affected by encounters with predatory men" (Patrick and Rajiva, 2022 p.2). There was little given to women who did not have the same experiences as women of means and prolific careers. As a Black woman and creator of the original phrase, Tarana Burke is acutely aware of how marginalized voices have been lost. However, she knows that the movement can continue to have an impact, Burke states, "you have millions of people walking around, saying my life has been adversely affected by this. We need culture change" (Burke, 2019 para. 9). To change rape culture and the accepted rhetoric, people need to work together as one unit where there is space for everyone to exist. How loudly a person's voice is heard should not be related to how believable they are as a rape victim or the preferred image victims are expected to resemble.

The films analysed in this brief chapter were chosen because their initial releases were before #MeToo went viral in October 2017. As a show designed to be socially aware, *Law and Order SVU* continually produces narratives that reflect topical subjects in society. The show also presents its audience with the opportunity to challenge preconceived notions about victims of sexual crimes. The show's *Conversion* episode was not the first time *Law and Order SVU* explored the victimhood of marginalized persons, and it certainly will not be the last. Toxic masculinity has contributed to male rape victims disappearing into silent spaces because culture degrades and persecutes them. In the rape narrative from *Emmerdale,* the audience was shown how compassion, support, and speaking out could counter masculinist rhetoric. In this regard, the narrative allowed many viewers to feel seen and heard because the story was well-researched by all involved. *Wind River* allows the audience an unmitigated look at the lost voices of Native American women who are victims of sexual assault. Most importantly, it highlights the atrocities Indigenous women face and society's intentional ignorance. What can no longer happen in academia, society, film, television, and

social media is deliberately ignoring people who do not fit the idealized image of a rape victim and survivor. It has yet to be assessed as to what new research into how minority rape victims fall into the silent spaces could do in creating change. Researchers who deny the voices of the Unknown by focusing solely on the Other reinforce androcentric rhetoric. This tells rape victims that if they do not fit the acceptable image of a rape victim, their voices do not matter. There is no end to the number of silent spaces we could destroy by listening to marginalized rape victims, yet more effort has gone into permanently denying their humanity.

Conclusion

The Battle for Space Continues: The Fight Against Silence

"Silencing is a complex process to overcome it one must…name it and define it".

Nothing Really Happened: The Invalidation of Women's Experiences of Sexual Violence (Kelly and Radford, 1996 p.19)

Where Biblical Rape Meets Film and Television

The Hebrew Bible is a mesmerizing piece of literature with considerable power over faith communities and the wider secular society. Recognizing that rape is prominent within the Hebrew Bible, evident in the narratives of Dinah, Tamar, and the Unnamed Woman. Moreover, literal and metaphorical forced silence is used as a weapon to prevent rape victims and survivors from reclaiming their autonomy. When a victim's story is not told through an accurate lens, biblical narratives can be weaponised. The androcentric ideas behind rape stories and their interpretations move to absolve rapists of their crimes by victim blaming and altering narratives. By not holding rapists accountable with a justice system that values victims' autonomy and acknowledges them as human, accountability will never be found. As Scholz concludes, "biblical texts do not prescribe rape as an unavoidable fact of life. Instead, they are a 'sacred witness' to the ongoing pervasiveness, existence, and harm of rape in the world then and now" (Scholz, 2007 p.209). Those who become sacred witnesses to rape only reinforce rape culture which inadvertently assumes that rape is an unpleasant fact for women. Rape is not a fact. The theme of this thesis has been to begin cracking the foundations of rape, rape culture, and rape myths found in various interpretations of biblical narratives and film and television.

The presentation of information in this thesis has been done so with the hope that one day we are no longer sacred witnesses to instances of rape but active participants in breaking through the silent spaces which have locked away the voices of rape victims. The interpretations of biblical rape narratives did not recognize rape in the way it should be addressed as a violent crime that deserves accountability, nor did they assign women as human beings. The absence of accountability has continued to contribute to rape narratives existing in silent spaces where they go unheard in sermons, lectionaries, and as mainstream discussion topics. This is where feminist scholarship from the 1970s onward started the fight, criticising biblical literature and its influence on the cultural climate in the Western world. Rape myths have become cultural establishments whose foundation can be found in the works of early religious writers.

In Part One of this thesis, we analysed biblical rape narratives such as Dinah and Tamar's, highlighting how acquaintance rape was prevalent during the ancient era despite there being no modern associated name. Moreover, the young women's stolen voices and victimhood by their respective brothers were examined to highlight how bloody revenge is not done in the name of the victims. Instead, Simeon, Levi, and Absalom seek to claim their assumed loss of sexual prowess. In the Unnamed Woman's and Dinah's narratives, we explored how their thoughts, feelings, and voices were never heard. This account also revealed the depths to which beastly male savagery can go when the male body is in jeopardy. The final moments of the narrative exposed how patriarchal culture is centred around keeping the male lineage when six hundred women were forcibly married to their kidnappers and rapists. The women in these narratives were frequently used and abused by men for political gain. In their rape narratives: Dinah, Tamar, the Unnamed Woman, and the six hundred women's voices were stolen, resulting in them being Othered. The patristic interpretations reinforced women's status as the Other by using biblical rape narratives to

ensure women remained hidden behind closed doors that allow for their narratives to be controlled.

In Part Two, the connection between patristic interpretations and rape culture was established, in part, by using rape myths in film and television. The rape myth that women deserve to be raped was explored through the rape of Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Blanche, who uses her aggressively loud voice, crosses an invisible line drawn by androcentric ideas. As a result, Stanley, the idealised embodiment of toxic masculinity, rapes Blanche, removing her voice and forcing it into the cracks of her now-broken mind. In addition, Sarah Tobias' story from *The Accused* was explored. Sarah, a victim of gang rape, is blamed for being raped because of her lifestyle, she has her voice stolen by Kathryn the female prosecutor, her doctors, her mother, the bystanders, and her rapists. Unlike Blanche and Tamar, Sarah recovers her voice. The various narratives show how patriarchal values are reinforced by women silencing each other under the guise of a more significant cause. Through the rape narratives in *Shetland* and *Cagney & Lacey*, this thesis explored the importance of men believing women and responding in kind.

While Alison can maintain her privacy and status as a Detective Sergeant, Cagney has the decision taken away from her. With the androcentric voices surrounding her, Cagney is forced to defend herself, her victimhood, her voice, and her ability to be a Detective. The thirty years between the airing of each show depicts how attitudes have changed towards rape victims— and that there is still much to learn about the effects of rape.

The impact of matriarchal silencers was explored through *Dolores Claiborne* and *The Prince of Tides*, both film adaptations of novels. They show what happens to children who are forced to bury their pain and their voices. While Dolores unintentionally silences Selena's voice, she spends much of the film working to restore it. However, Lila deliberately silences

her three children, Luke, Tom, and Savannah; throughout the film. Lila never relents the importance of her children's silence. The two narratives depict how unhealed childhood trauma affects children when they grow up. This was also seen in Aaron's narrative from *Emmerdale*, who forced himself into a silent space after being repeatedly raped by his father. Each child grows up internalizing their shame, which manifests in destructive behaviours such as alcoholism, self-harm, drugs, anger, and emotional detachment. The cycle of trauma can be broken by allowing young rape victims to grieve and speak about their pain. Exploring cases of childhood rape and its depictions on screen is essential in understanding the pervasiveness of rape culture.

There remains a considerable amount of movement needed toward believing rape victims who come forward, the basis for which the #MeToo movement was founded, as depicted in *Asunder* from *Law and Order SVU* and *The Last Duel.* Marguerite not only endures being raped by two men but must contend with masculinist perversions imposed on her by the Catholic Church. Although Marguerite is a woman in 14th-century France, who has no rights under the law, her voice is unwavering. This is not the same for Patricia, a 21st-century New York woman whose voice begins strong but suddenly falls silent through her husband's manipulation. These films emphasize that society needs to adapt to changing rhetoric, a diversity of victims, and believing the stories of rape victims. The rape narratives from *Asunder* and *The Last Duel* are essential because they remind us that while rape victims have come a long way in gaining autonomy, considerable work still needs to be done. It is assumed that modern-day women are somehow far removed from the old narratives that were controllingly masculinist, Women are not as rape has always been and will always be a violent act. Women still wade through thick androcentric ideas and power structures that attempt to silence them. This is even more true for marginalized rape victims who spend their lives entirely forgotten and Unknown in silent spaces.

This thesis also recognizes its inability to dig deeper into the root causes behind minority rape victims who are lost amongst all the other voices. There are certainly arguments for why Dinah's rape narrative is also one of a minority victim as she was a foreigner to the land where she was raped. Additionally, there are cases where the rape victim is gender nonbinary or transgender, which also calls on people to look at their humanity. However, this is not for lack of trying or the desire to address these critical issues. Simply, this thesis did not have the word space to address more in-depth cases of minority rape victims. This work also found itself working against an alarming number of androcentric voices and an increasingly difficult wall to climb. It is with great hope that this research can continue if not by the writer of this work, then those who choose to continue to research the effects of biblical interpretations. As was stated above, this work is meant to be a beginning point for future research that has the space, and the ability to do a deeper reading into minority rape victims, and how film and television depict their narratives. In the final part of this work, it is important to note that while LGBTQ persons are recognized by law in the United States, the second episode analysed from *Law and Order SVU* shows community members' continuing struggle with religious organizations. As a sexual minority and a young religious woman, Ann's rape narrative in *Conversion* uncovers how religious organizations use rape to cure same-sex attraction. Moreover, it shows the degree to which rape could be condoned and used as a form of therapy should religious organizations continue to be allowed to override laws. Ann's story is a direct message to people who struggle to accept themselves and those who believe same-sex attraction can be cured. The message is that the voices of LGBTQ persons cannot be easily silenced. The accepted image of a rape victim and survivor often underestimates marginalized victims' willpower.

Natalie from *Wind River* is one of the most powerful women to be depicted in the set of films used for this thesis. She is a warrior. Although Natalie is the only rape victim from

this examination who does not survive her narrative, she represents something society has ignored for centuries: the lives of Native American women. Not only does *Wind River* humanise Indigenous women, but it also depicts the cold reality of silence. The film implores the audience to pay attention to the long-ignored voices and lives of Native American women (men and children) who are not recognized as human beings on the land stolen from their ancestors. Through the analysis of the films and television shows above, we can see that "perpetrators of sexual and domestic violence, Native and non-Native, deserve accountability for their actions. Victims deserve justice, legally and culturally. Survivors deserve healing and support" (Redcorn, 2017 para. 12). Ignoring the voices and lives of rape victims is no longer an option. Society must face the harsh reality that they have let rape victims down.

Confronting Rape Culture and Forced Silence

The #MeToo movement in 2017 was to allow women to tell their stories. Unfortunately, it failed in its efforts for women and marginalized groups to be taken seriously as rape victims and survivors. The media created an accepted image of rape victims, as thin, rich, white, heterosexual, and exclusively female. It left little space for anyone who did not fit that image to be heard. The problem this creates is that society does not take the perceived unacceptable rape victims seriously when they speak about their experiences with sexual assault. Society must take these rape victims and survivors more seriously before any meaningful change will happen. When all rape victims are allowed to speak their truth, then rape, rape myths, and rape culture can begin to be conquered.

In our post #MeToo movement world, it is time to take women and all rape survivors seriously when they tell their stories, allowing rape victims complete control over regaining the autonomy that rape temporarily stole. Continuing to play host to toxic and self-destructive androcentric ideologies, movements will only do so much to break down the foundations of rape culture. Culture plays a significant role in how movements evolve. As Gay states:

> The cultural climate is shifting, particularly for women as we contend with the retrenchment of reproductive freedom, the persistence of rape culture, and the flawed, if not changing representations of women we're consuming in music, movies, and literature (Gay, 2014 p.6).

As Gay points out, there is a shift happening where women, particularly young women, face a future where there are fewer reproductive rights than they have ever experienced. In 2022, after 50 years of being constitutionally accepted as law, Roe v. Wade, which allows women the right to an abortion, was overturned. In one move, the repeal of Roe v. Wade has stripped women's rights to body autonomy, as women again have fewer rights than their fathers, brothers, sons, and husbands. The Supreme Court's unprecedented ruling strips women of the right to their bodily rights and silences them. This silence occurs because women, in some states, will be forced to carry a foetus to term even if it is stillborn, they have an ectopic pregnancy, or they are victims of rape. Through the repeal of Roe v. Wade, sexual assault victims will be stripped of their right to choose, as they could be forced to carry their rapist's foetus to term, which poses an increasing threat to women's lives. This all means, for those who have repealed the law, that women's safety is not at the forefront of their minds, only control.

Cases of rape victims being denied access to abortions are increasing, in Ohio, a 10-year-old girl who was raped became pregnant (Benen, 2022 para. 1) and was subsequently denied an abortion. Depending on the state's law, a woman could be charged with murder for having an abortion, seeking advice, or travelling out of state for the procedure. However, which states will enact strict abortion laws remains to be seen. As it was stated in the introduction, silenced women do not only refer to their physical voices but their metaphorical ones, or the right to basic human dignity. It is in this regard that women's voices have been stripped. Even if the shouts of objection are louder than ever, their voices are still being

ignored. The judgment now prompts women to question whether they ever had rights to their bodies. Moreover, the decision does not prevent abortions, but safe ones, which also means more than half of the population of the United States is now at risk of severe injury or death.

Final Statements

If today's society could see these movements as continuations of the hard work established before, there would be more willingness to fight for a cause that may seem beyond reach but is within our grasp. While all of this may seem to be an overwhelming task, it is one I hope will continue with more vigour than ever. The cause is justified and worth confronting. This is especially serious, with court rulings being overturned as unprecedented times lie ahead. Women are again being tasked to stand next to each other and on the shoulders of those who came before. What needs to happen is for women's loud voices to pause and reflect on the impact silence had on the lives of those who have come before. Feminists, activists, women, men, and all people, must be required to climb into the silent spaces of rape narratives that have existed for centuries. As Romito states, "If we listen to the victims, or rather, the survivors, we discover that many broke the silence and sought help in various ways…" (Romito, 2008 p.3). If we take a moment and redirect our attention to those who were ignored, we may learn from society's past mistakes. Through this, the silent screams of rape victims can finally be heard where disempowerment and silence have only ever existed. Nothing can remain powerless if a light is shone on it.

When we sit in the uncomfortable silent spaces of other victims, we may be able to hear what our next steps in the fight should be and learn how to break the endless generational cycles women have been forced to endure.

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AFTERWORD

When I began this journey in September 2017, I imagined I would submit my PhD and continue working in academia. In August 2020, everything changed as I grappled with my original supervisor abruptly leaving his position at the University of Kent. I was guilted into advocating for him to be hired as an external supervisor. Throughout the last half of 2020, I struggled with the uncertainties, the near-crippling fear of being forced to leave England, and my safe space. I was shrouded entirely by silence; my voice which I fought to find as a child, was unceremoniously taken from me. No one could hear me scream; worse, I could not hear my voice anymore. I was one short step away from abandoning this thesis, the silenced victims, and my dreams. Whenever I struggle to find my voice, my Spirit takes over and tells me what to do. Deep down, I could hear this slow, steady whisper telling me: "Get up, Kyla and keep going. You are not done yet. Be bold. I am here. We can do this. You promised you would never quit." I broke down in tears; the decision was made. I contacted my original supervisor, informing him that this was where we would part ways, and wished him the best.

I was now without a supervisor, a thesis that had effectively died, and no faith in the university system. I was marked for 'failure' by circumstances that were out of my hands. Everything changed when I reached out to my current supervisor, who understood I had no confidence in the university. My trust had been shattered. In the meeting with Dr. Chris Deacy, I spoke candidly about the situation I had been forced into and my determination to keep going. Chris asked me to trust that he would do everything in his power to help me resurrect my thesis—and he promised to see it through to its completion. So, we got started; I scrapped nearly all my writing and started over in February 2021 on a thesis my previous supervisor had hijacked. As I began to find my voice again, my thesis changed into what it is today. It is the full embodiment of the frustration, anger, sadness, and forced silence I have felt throughout my time at Kent. Although, in truth, my thesis died in 2020, what exists now are the words that were almost taken from me. The words have been returned to their rightful place. I will never let them, or my voice be silenced again. I have paid dearly for every single one of them, and their meanings are burned into my soul.

As I sit here and write this late at night, I am reminded of the conversation I had with Chris nearly seventeen months ago. Chris kept the promise he made to me, even when bureaucracy got in the way and the graduate director of the division forced me to take an MPhil. This thesis has been allowed to become exposed because Chris believed in this project (or me. or both.). I am not sure, but that side of the story is his to tell. He kept his promise, and for that, I am eternally grateful. My future looks quite different from what I imagined, but it is a future I am eager to experience.

My final thought is summed up beautifully in a quote from *Wind River*: "Out here, you survive, or you surrender; that's determined by your strength and by your spirit." I may have stumbled a few times, but I never wavered when my Spirit told me to keep going.

I survived, I survived.

Always, Kyla