Fuzzy, Messy, Icky

The Edges of Consent in Hebrew Bible Rape Narratives and Rape Culture

Rhiannon Graybill, Rhodes College

Abstract

Feminist readings of rape in the Hebrew Bible often employ an analytic framework of consent, connecting biblical texts to contemporary conversations about sexual violence and rape culture. However, the appeal to consent is not without difficulty, especially when challenges from feminist, queer, and postcolonial theory are taken seriously. This essay offers both a critique of consent-based readings of biblical texts and an alternative approach, which takes as a starting point the concepts of *fuzzy, messy*, and *icky*. Three biblical rape stories receive special attention: Dinah (Genesis 34), Tamar (2 Samuel 13), and Lot's daughters (Genesis 19). Taking seriously the hermeneutic value of *fuzziness, messiness,* and *ickiness* in encountering these and other rape texts, I argue for a practice of reading that refuses innocence, rejects paranoia, embraces stickiness, and leaves room for compromised pleasures. The work of feminist and queer theorists Donna Haraway, Eve Kosofosky Sedgwick, Sara Ahmed, and Meredith Minister provides further support for this new approach.

Key Words

Rape; sexual violence; consent; Genesis 34; 2 Samuel 13; Genesis 19; feminist

We live in a moment dominated by the notion of *consent*. Consent has become the primary framework for talking about sexual violence, rape, and rape culture. It has likewise become a rallying point in feminist activism against sexual violence, especially on college and university campuses. "Consent is sexy," stickers and t-shirts proclaim.[1] Sex educators, YouTube sexperts, college activists, and Title IX offices[2] have rolled out programmes of consent education, emphasizing "affirmative consent" as a precursor to sexual activity. Consent must be "freely given" and "given at every stage"; the best consent is "enthusiastic." According to a popular YouTube video, consent is much like tea.[3]

[1] The phrase is common. See e.g. "This Tumblr Post Perfectly Demonstrates Why Consent Is Sexy" (DiDomizio 2015); "The Phrase 'Consent Is Sexy' Is Dangerously Flawed" (Peak 2017).
[2] I write from the context of higher education in the United States. In the US, Title IX offices typically oversee sexual violence education and adjudication on college and university campuses. Title IX guarantees equal access to education regardless of sex. Originally used mostly in the context of sports, it has been more recently interpreted as applicable to sexual violence. See also Scholz (2018).
[3] Thus, consent is always specific and limited; giving consent once does not imply blanket consent, just like having a cup of tea once does not indicate an eternal and insatiable desire for tea. See Blue Seat Studios (2015).

Consent discourses also dominate discussions of rape in the Hebrew Bible. The text is filled with narratives of sexual violence and rape, and a common feminist strategy of response to these stories begins by foregrounding the issue of consent. The failure of consent signals the presence of sexual violence and rape. Naming rape, in turn, becomes a way of forcing readers to attend to the violated, suffering female bodies in the text,[4] while foreclosing the possibility of subsuming rape into the larger framework of "family tragedy" (as in the rape of Tamar in 2 Samuel 13), "seduction gone awry" (as with Dinah and Shechem in Genesis 34), or "national suffering" (as in the rape of Daughter Zion in Lamentations).

I agree that these biblical stories present narratives of sexual violence, and that a feminist reading practice compels us to recognize them as such. I find troubling, however, the ways that discourses of consent are used to construct and sustain this argument.[5] Often, consent discourses suggest a clear line: *consent = no rape; no consent = rape;* no other options exist. But what consent discourses fail to acknowledge are what I will call the *fuzzy, messy,* and *icky*. *Fuzzy, messy*, and *icky* are non-technical terms, which are familiar from everyday speech. This is intentional: I am interested in the ways that sexual violence, including rape, is talked about and experienced in ordinary life.

There are many situations in which consent, or its lack, is clear, even straightforward. But situations also arise which are *fuzzy*. Sometimes, "what happened" is *fuzzy,* whether because of trauma, memory, or other factors. In other instances, the *fuzziness* concerns whether or not what occurred should be categorized as sexual violence. In spite of efforts to draw clear lines between sex and rape, *fuzziness* often remains; this manifests as a disjoint between experience and the language that purports to name it. In *Blurred Lines: Rethinking Sex, Power, and Consent on Campus,* Vanessa Grigoriadis writes of US college students, "About half of the women who click a box for behavior that meets the definition of rape or sexual assault will say no when they're asked point blank if they've experienced rape or sexual assault" (2017, 114).[6] This is *fuzzy* in action.

There are other meanings of *fuzzy* that are pertinent as well. I use the term to refer to the ambivalence that surrounds many situations of sexual violence, an ambivalence that extends to the complex feelings of survivors.[7] *Fuzzy* alludes to memories under the influence of alcohol, which is common in sexual assault but often declared off-limits to discuss by those with authority to regulate such

---

[4] Biblical rape victims are overwhelmingly female, as I discuss in the following section.
[5] I have also written about these topics in Graybill (2017; 2019).
[6] Grigoriadis describes *Blurred Lines* as an attempt to name the complexities that attend feminist conversations about sexual violence. "Blurred Lines" is also the name of a 2013 Robin Thicke song, widely criticized for promoting rape culture. Of course, *blurry* is closely related to *fuzzy.*
[7] The complexity of response is also analysed by Grigoriadis (2017, 20-38).

questions.[8] And finally, *fuzzy* may also describe institutional responses, especially the vagueness that often attends reporting and official documentation.[9]

The descriptor *messy* identifies the aftermath of sexual violence, and the ways that it defies a tidy resolution, or the ways that survivors' stories cannot fit into a tidy, pre-ordained narrative of suffering and recovery. Often "things get *messy*"—a grammatical construction without an actor that neatly reveals how the situation grows beyond a single person, or even a single story.[10] *Messy* is a consequence of *fuzzy*, as attempts to clarify the *fuzziness* often collapse into *messiness*. It is the job of institutional Title IX offices, social workers, counsellors, and sassy best friends to either clean up this *messiness* or shove it under the proverbial rug.

Finally, all of this *fuzziness* and *messiness* creates something *icky. Icky* is a near-synonym to *creepy*, a common descriptor applied to people and situations when we don't want to rise to the level of official language. *Icky* is the domain of "creeps," "sketchiness," and "weird things" that happen at parties,[11] whether or not these are clearly identified as rape. *Icky* names bad sex, uncomfortable sex, regrettable sex, sexual encounters like the one described in Kristen Roupenian's short story "Cat Person," which became an internet flashpoint for discussing sex, consent, and #MeToo when it was published by the New Yorker in 2017.[12] Like the sex in Roupenian's story, which puts pressure on a neat distinction between consent and non-consent, thinking about sexual violence beyond a narrow framework of consent is *icky* because it forces us to see blurriness in place of the supposedly clear lines between consensual sex and rape.

I also use the term *icky* because it suggests affect. Like affect, that which is *icky* is often sticky. Sara Ahmed (2010) describes the stickiness of affect and explores how it can be spread between objects, even without the intent to do so. Sexual violence is sticky, both in the sense of a "sticky"—that is, difficult to solve—problem and in the way that it clings to (sticks?) and spreads between certain bodies, communities, and identities. Even the notions of *fuzzy*, *messy*, and *icky* are sticky, clinging to and mixing with each other.

It has become common to describe consent as an idea as simple as a stoplight: green ("yes!") means go, red ("no!") means stop, yellow means proceed with caution.[13] But sex is not a traffic pattern, and neither is rape. The *fuzzy*, the *messy*,

---

[8] Grigoriadis notes "the federal government has an express rule not to provide a majority of grants to sexual-assault programs that focus primarily on alcohol" (2017, 47). See also Office on Violence Against Women (2017). In addition, many institutions downplay the extent and severity of drinking on campus, including by underage students. For an analysis of the narratives institutions tell in response to rape on campus, see Minister (2018, 52-62).

[9] Often, as Grigoriadis comments, "the details behind the milquetoast descriptions of what [perpetrators] have done wrong are *fuzzy*," especially in official reports (2017, 291; emphasis added). Grigoriadis also discusses the potential fuzziness of institutional memory on p. 260.

[10] Jennifer Doyle provides a lucid description of this in *Campus Sex, Campus Security* (2015)*,* which chronicles the "psychic life" of the institution in relation to sexual violence and sexual harassment complaints.

[11] And, of course, work environments of all kinds, including academic departments and conferences.

[12] The story appears in Roupenian's collection *You Know You Want This: "Cat Person" and Other Stories* (2019).

[13] This image of consent as being like a traffic signal is increasingly common. See, for example, http://greenlightgo.squarespace.com/. Red-Light, Green-Light consent games have been organized

and the *icky* haunt sexual violence in both the biblical text and the world; we ignore this at our peril. Thus, instead of relying on a theory of traffic signals, this essay takes on the *fuzzy*, the *messy*, and the *icky* to complexify our readings of biblical rape and rape culture. The first half of the article considers the difficulties with consent, beginning with arguments *within* biblical studies, then shifting to more sweeping critiques of consent discourses from *beyond* biblical studies (with specific reference to feminist and queer theory). Three biblical rape stories receive special attention: Dinah (Genesis 34), Tamar (2 Samuel 13), and Lot's daughters (Genesis 19). In discussing these stories, I will direct attention to the elements that render each narrative *fuzzy, messy,* and *icky.* The second half of the article constructs a *fuzzy/messy/icky* hermeneutic for reading texts of sexual violence. I argue for a practice of reading that refuses innocence, rejects paranoia, embraces stickiness, and leaves room for compromised pleasures, drawing on the work of Donna Haraway, Eve Kosofosky Sedgwick, Sara Ahmed, and Meredith Minister, respectively.

Insofar as our analyses of sexual violence are predicated on the notion of consent, they are both *insufficient* and *insufficiently feminist*. This is again true of both sexual violence in general and sexual violence in the Bible in particular. By centring the *fuzzy,* the *messy,* and the *icky,* this essay charts another path.

Rape and Consent in the Hebrew Bible

The Bible is full of rape stories.[14] Overwhelmingly, these are stories of the rapes of women: daughters such as Dinah (Genesis 34), sisters like Tamar (2 Samuel 13), enslaved women such as Hagar, Bilhah, and Zilpah (Genesis 16, 29-30), women captured in warfare (Zech. 14:2), women travelling or forced by others to travel (Judges 19), groups of women (Judges 21), women who exist only in the realm of metaphor, such as Daughter Zion (e.g. Lam. 1:9-11). When Israel is represented as a woman, she is threatened with rape or sexual violence (e.g. Lam. 1:9-11, Hos. 2:12-13 [2:10-11 Eng.]). There are occasional examples of sexual violence against men, often linked to the humiliation of prisoners of war.[15] But while sexual violence against men is relatively rare in the Hebrew Bible—and, when it seems to occur, it is contested and/or condemned—sexual and sexualized violence against female bodies is commonplace. In addition to actual rape, the texts contain significant sexualized violence, including the murder of Cozbi (stabbed to death through her womb in Num. 25:7-8) and the violence of the Sotah ritual, which punishes adultery with a prolapsed uterus (Num. 5:11-31; recall that adultery and rape are not clearly distinguished in biblical law; cf. Deut.22:21-25). There are also many accounts of sexual punishment and humiliation, as in the texts of the prophetic marriage metaphor, including the treatment of the feminized Israel in Hosea 2, and Jerusalem, Oholah, and Oholibah in Ezekiel 16 and 23.

The sexual and sexualized violence of the biblical text is undeniable. Still, a remarkable number of critics have resisted identifying rape in biblical stories, even in narratives such as the stories of Dinah or Tamar. One problem concerns

at universities such as George Washington University, the University of Calgary, and Washington State University. Vanessa Grigoriadis (2017, 118, 139) provides a description and analysis.

[14] For a comprehensive account, see Scholz (2010).

[15] Characters such as Jeremiah (Jer. 20:7), Noah (Genesis 9), and Lot (Gen. 19:30-38) have been offered as examples of male victims of sexual violence, though each of these readings has also been challenged.

terminology: as is often noted, there is no unambiguous term for rape in the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Gravett 2004; Stone 2007). Instead, the text presents a range of terms, including *ʿinnâ* (to overpower or to rape) and the noun *nĕbalâ* (outrage, often with a sexual sense). However, each term also has a range of meanings that extend beyond sexual violence, at least as it is narrowly understood. Thus, while sexual violence clearly occurs, the very terms that are used to describe sexual violence in the Hebrew Bible are themselves both *fuzzy* and *messy*.

A second difficulty concerns a larger methodological question: is it possible to speak of rape in the case of persons who are not treated as subjects? Robert Kawashima, for example, addresses the question "Could a Woman Say 'No' in Biblical Israel?" by reconstructing ancient legal epistemology.[16] Kawashima's answer to the question his title asks is *no*. He insists that it is illegitimate to use the word "rape" in reference to forced sexual acts in ancient Israel:

> If I am correct, this verb [*ʿinnâ*] should never be translated as "rape," as it often is. Inasmuch as biblical legal thought recognized the basic personhood of all people, neither women nor girls could ever be reduced to pure objects. But neither did it recognize them as full subjects, and so they could never constitute victims of a legally prosecutable crime. (Kawashima 2011, 2-3, n.4)

In other words, because women in the Bible are not agents capable of consent, what happens to them cannot properly be called rape.

From a legal historical perspective, Kawashima may well be right. It is clear from the biblical text that women and girls are not considered fully empowered subjects; they cannot always—perhaps cannot ever—"consent" in a modern sense. However, I am unwilling to follow Kawashima in his argument that the absence of possibility of consent implies the absence (or meaninglessness) of "rape" as a category.[17] Instead, I agree with Sandie Gravett that:

> Although Hebrew lacks a legal or technical term for rape, biblical writers nonetheless make the necessary accommodations by impressing a wide range of words and phrases to describe violent, non-consensual sex … even though the cultures which wrote and passed down the Hebrew Bible conceived of sexual assault differently from our own, "rape" remains the primary term we use in English for such violence. (2004, 280, 298)

Kawashima rejects the term "rape" on technical legal grounds; Gravett argues for it on the basis of "primary" usage. Here, I am inclined to follow Gravett, while also noting that English has its own complex vocabulary of sexual violence, including ambiguous poetic terms like "ravish," technical legal terms, and a robust vocabulary of slang. What I find most compelling in the call for translating *ʿinnâ* as "rape" and not, for example, social sexual shaming (as does Joseph 2016), is the way this translational choice aligns with recent feminist notions of "rape culture," which

[16] For a critique of this approach (though not specifically Kawashima's article), see Scholz (2005).
[17] Though this is not to say that no wrong is done: the sexual culture has a system of adjudicating a sexual wrong with the woman as a central object and her male protector as the offended party. I am grateful to Steed Davidson for this point.

push back strongly against attempts to define the parameters of "real rape" or to suggest that some acts of sexual violence are more real than others.[18]

While I disagree with Kawashima (2011, 4) that it is "mistaken" to speak of rape in the Hebrew Bible, I find interesting the way his argument puts pressure on consent discourses. Kawashima asks, "What is the modern legal subject and how does it differ from the entity found in biblical tradition?" (5). Many of these historical differences hinge on consent, when it may be given, and by whom. Similarly, when he writes, "we must conclude that Tamar had no power of consent and that her violation did not constitute a forcible rape" (21), we can read this statement in at least two ways. First, that Tamar was not really raped (a reading I find troubling, for reasons I will set forth below), and second—and more usefully—that even a biblical rape story as seemingly clear-cut as the rape of Tamar is typically, and problematically, read through assumptions of consent.

Furthermore, Kawashima's legal reconstruction, even as it denies the strict historical existence of the category of "rape," converges with what I have been calling the *fuzzy/messy/icky* problem of reading rape and consent in the Hebrew Bible in other ways. There is an epistemological *fuzziness* in attempting to reconstruct clear legal principles based on the patchiness of biblical evidence. The reconstruction that Kawashima provides is also *messy*: while women are supposed to be under the control of patriarchal familial authority, in practice this depends upon the power of various male figures. And, of course, the end effect is *icky*, particularly in the suggestion that there are at least some women, in the Bible's pages (and thus perhaps outside of them as well), who cannot say "no."

Arguing for the impossibility of consent and the categorical nonexistence of rape also runs into another difficulty: it compresses the Bible as literary text into a transparent reflection of its historical contexts. Stories of rape in the Bible certainly stand in relation to the time in which they are set, as well as when they were written; at the same time, the text is a literary creation. Thus, biblical characters do not necessarily act in accordance with ancient Israelite law. Thus, Israelite laws and legal norms cannot be taken as the *ne plus ultra* for adjudicating biblical stories of sexual violence. All this introduces another degree of *fuzziness* to the attempt to reconstruct who can and cannot say "no."[19]

Problems with Consent

While disagreeing with Kawashima (2011) that it is illegitimate to speak of biblical rape, I am interested in the ways in which this critique—which I read as opening onto, if not necessarily offering, a critique of consent—aligns with work *within* feminist and queer theory. Having set forth the biblical arguments, I turn now to the contemporary. I will briefly summarize each position before turning to the biblical texts to trace their resonances. My focus is not specific moments of consent or non-consent, but rather the way we talk about and use the idea of consent more broadly; I will thus refer to "consent discourses" as a way of describing this larger constellation of ideas, practices, and ideology.

[18] On rape culture, see Minister (2018, 1-4).

[19] To this end, Kawashima (2011) titles his article "Could a Woman Say 'No' in Biblical Israel?" not "Could a Woman Say 'No' in the Hebrew Bible?" though he comments on the latter question as well.

1. Consent discourses assume a liberal Enlightenment subject; this assumption prevents a complex analysis of rape culture

A fundamental issue with consent concerns the type of subject that discourses of consent assume. The consenting subject is the liberal Enlightenment subject, the subject we encounter in Kant and Locke and so on. As we know from a lengthy tradition of feminist critique, this subject, while putatively universal, is often coded: as male, as white, as adult, as owning property, as cis-abled, and so forth. Therefore, there is at the very least an irony in predicating a feminist theory of how to end sexual violence on the very figure feminist theory has so vigorously critiqued. Here, it is worth quoting Jordana Greenblatt and Keja Valens at length:

> Consent relies on the idea of the coherent subject—the self who is one self and is of one mind, a mind that it can and does know. The subject is expected to remain consistent through time in order to engage in consent interactions: it must continue to be the same self that wants the same things, or at least know when its desires have changed. It must remain the same self who once agreed to a contract or waiver for contracts and waivers to have any validity. Yet this very idea of the subject contradicts poststructuralist models of subjectivity and biopolitical understandings of bodies (politic), not to mention the strands within queer theory (i.e., Leo Bersani) and French feminist and/or poststructuralist theory (i.e., Roland Barthes, Hélène Cixous) that present the subject as shattered by sexuality, eros, bliss, jouissance, the sublime, or other transcendent experiences. (2018, 3)

The idea of consent assumes a particular kind of subject: self-contained, knowable, and self-aware. When I am asked to consent, there is the assumption that I understand what I am being asked, and believe myself able of answering. This means knowing what I want, and knowing myself. This notion of the self may seem familiar, even banal. However, this notion of the subject is constructed on assumptions antithetical to poststructuralism and postmodernism—in Nietzsche's famous words, put to much use in poststructuralist and postmodern theory, we are "strangers to ourselves" (55). Furthermore, the kind of self-contained subject that consent assumes is unable to accommodate the shattered subject of sublimity, trauma, or religious experience (see MacKendrick 2018).

An understanding of rape defined against consent and predicated upon the idea of a subject who is self-contained, self-known, and able to choose whether to give or withhold consent has unintended consequences. One such consequence is the perpetuation of ableist discourses, as Meredith Minister (2018, 78-82) has shown. Another is the potential to erase rape as a category when we are talking about non-modern and/or non-western contexts (Scholz 2005). This is a vulgar version of Kawashima's thesis, but a frequent line of reasoning around rape stories in the Bible: because women were not empowered as subjects to consent, it is meaningless to talk about consent, and without the language of consent, it is meaningless to speak about rape. While this argument can be critiqued on many grounds, I suggest that by relying on a model of rape that itself assumes a liberal understanding of the subject, we undercut our own efforts to name and understand *both* sexual violence in the Hebrew Bible *and* the phenomenon of rape culture more broadly—a term coined, in fact, to speak to the *fuzziness* and *messiness* of sexual violence.

2. Consent discourses ignore more subtle techniques of power, such as discomfort

The model of all subjects as equally empowered to give consent ignores the weight of our personal histories, as well as the contingencies that attend any given sexual interaction. The assumption that subjects can simply give or withhold consent also neglects the influence of more subtle forms of pressure, as well as discomfort.

This is a point that feminist and queer theorist Sara Ahmed has analysed incisively in *Willful Subjects*. As the title suggests, *Willful Subjects* explores the theme of willfulness, including how the accusation of acting "willfully" is used to control resistant subjects, especially women and children. Taking up the *fuzzy/messy/icky* problem of "how women willingly agree to situations in which their safety and well-being are compromised" and "the cases in which yes involves force but is not experienced as force," Ahmed (2014, 55) draws out the power of *discomfort*: discomfort constitutes "a polite strategy or technique of power (the capacity to carry out will without resistance, or with the will of others)."[20] The significance of discomfort, and its role in leading victims/survivors to compromise their own wishes or will, is a point made again and again in contemporary analyses of rape culture, both first person accounts (such as those in Gay 2018) and in reportage (such as Grigoriadis 2017 and Krakauer 2015).

3. Consent discourses neglect intersectional analysis (especially concerning race, sexuality, and disability)

The right to say "no" has been historically denied to many categories of people. This persists today; research on bystander intervention shows, for example, that bystanders are more likely to intervene to help a white woman than a woman of colour, and a seemingly straight, heteronormative woman rather than a queer person (Gaertner, Dovidio, and Johnson 1982; Gidycz, Orchowski, and Berkowitz 2011; Bennett, Banyard, and Garnhart 2013). In this situation, "intervention" is a public recognition of "hearing" the "no" (whether or not this "no" has been uttered). In addition to race and sexuality, this raises serious questions around the issue of ability and disability (Minister, 2019).

Consent discourses are also informed by troubling racialized assumptions surrounding sexual violence. In the contemporary United States, as well as Canada, Europe, and Australia and New Zealand, the victim of sexual assault is typically imagined as a white woman; rape is figured as a threat not just to women, but to whiteness. In this way, representations of rape offer another iteration of cultural narratives protecting (and policing) white womanhood, such as panic over "white slavery" and sex trafficking of white women (e.g. Bevacqua 2000; Feimster 2009; McGuire 2011). Furthermore, the imagined whiteness of the ideal rape victim is bound up with the implied blackness or brownness of the imagined rapist. Protecting (white) women from rape means protecting them from (black) men.[21] Consent discourses and consent education initiatives often perpetuate these racist assumptions without challenging them. In particular, the appeal to consent often

[20] Ahmed also specifically describes this situation as *messy*: "Tangles are messy, and accounts of the social will thus need to be messy in turn" (2014, 56).

[21] Already in the nineteenth century, Ida B. Wells described the ways in which the fear of rape of white women was used to justify the lynching of black men. See Wells-Barnett and Royster (2016), especially "Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases," pp. 46-68.

ignores the ways in which consent runs up against race, sexuality, and other vectors of identity. In the context of the biblical stories, ethnicity is a key concern, especially given the biblical text's repeated association of ethnic difference with sexual transgressions and general lasciviousness.

4. Consent is a legitimized form of subordination

Another serious concern with consent discourses is the way in which they inscribe and reify relations of subordination.[22] This is especially the case with respect to gender: the framing of consent assumes that sex or rape is something done by one person to another; these positions, moreover, are typically gendered. In *States of Injury*, Wendy Brown makes this point clearly:

> If, in rape law, men are seen to do sex while women consent to it, if the measure of rape is not whether a woman sought or desired sex but whether she acceded to it or refused it when it was pressed upon her, then consent operates both as a site of subordination and a means of its legitimation. Consent is thus a response to power—it adds or withdraws legitimacy—but is not a mode of enacting or sharing in power. (1995, 163)

As Brown draws out, discourses of consent assume power relations: consent is something that the more powerful (typically male) partner seeks from the weaker (typically female). While recent public campaigns around consent have fought to challenge gendered assumptions—consider the significant increase in consent posters, videos, and training modules featuring same-sex couples, as well as female aggressors and male victims—this does not address the larger question of relations of power and structures, implicit or explicit, of domination. Consent does not share power so much as it reiterates relations of power and domination.

5. Consent risks becoming colonialist

The power relations that Brown describes in consent discourses play out, as well, in questions of colonialism and power. Consent is often used as part of a hermeneutic practice of "saving women" or "recovering women" (see Graybill, 2019). This is especially clear in the literature on Dinah and Tamar, which is almost obsessive in its desire to remember, recover, and re-voice. However, this desire to recover women, while grounded in feminist commitments, is uncomfortably close to the desire to "save" women that postcolonial feminist theory has so soundly critiqued. If colonialism is "white men saving brown women from brown men," as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988, 297) has remarked, then this saving certainly involves saving from rape.[23]

This desire to save women and girls from sexual violence may be well intentioned; it also risks slipping into colonialist sentiments—indeed, this is a common critique raised against neoliberal and imperialist forms of feminism. Saving women is big business for neoliberalism and imperialism. The "plight" of women—and, more recently, of LGBT people—is a frequent point of appeal used to justify intervention abroad (Spivak 1988; Puar 2017, 98-99). That this intervention also

---

[22] Virtue ethics offers another possible way of responding to this critique, suggesting that consent is necessary for virtuous sex, or sex that enables us to flourish. I am grateful to Caroline Blyth for this point.

[23] I have explored the risks of "saving" biblical women in Graybill (2015) and of discourses of saving women from rape in Graybill (2019).

serves the imperialist and financial motives of the governments advocating for it passes largely without comment. Women's rights provide a convenient cover for other forms of global intervention (not to mention the generation of capital). Consent, far from reducing exploitation, can increase it, especially when we fail to attend to (post)colonial contexts and colonializing assumptions about who knows what's best.

6. Consent is a low bar. [24]

Finally, consent discourses are insufficient to the task of addressing the full complexity of sex and rape, beginning with, but not limited to, the *fuzzy/messy/icky*. When the framework of consent is the only framework we have to assess sexual culture, other questions and problems and possibilities become impossible to address. In particular, consent discourses risk evacuating the question of sexual pleasure from sex. As Kelly Oliver (2015, 7) writes, "Affirmative consent should not be conflated with desire. Just because a woman submits to sex, does not mean that she wants it, especially in a culture where women feel pressured to please men."

The limitations that consent places on sexual culture are not limited to specific sexual encounters; the question concerns not simply individual sexual pleasures—though those too, I would insist, should matter to a feminist theory of sexual violence—but also broader social and intellectual horizons. Thus Jordana Greenblatt (2018, 49) writes, "Failing to actively think through negotiations of consent—sexual, textual, and social—ultimately serves to restrict our possible pleasures and the degree to which we engage creatively and enthusiastically consensually with others."

Or even more clearly, as a college student activist told feminist writer Rebecca Traister (2015), "Seriously, God help us if the best we can say about the sex we have is that it was consensual."

To this, I will only add that we might say the same about sex in the Bible.

In sum: Consent discourses fail to accommodate complexity.

The framework of consent, while sometimes useful in describing and diagnosing sexual violence in contemporary culture, is insufficient and indeed inadequate in addressing sexual violence, in all its *fuzziness*, *messiness*, and *ickiness*. It also suggests a limited horizon of creativity and critical engagement—which is a key feature of feminist and queer critique. And consent is likewise insufficient to analyse biblical rape stories. I turn to three examples to illustrate this point.

Fuzzy: The Rape of Dinah

Perhaps the most famous rape story in the Bible is also its *fuzziest*: the rape of Dinah, found in Genesis 34. The story begins with Dinah going forth to visit "the daughters of the land" (Gen. 34:1).[25] Her visit, however, is quickly curtailed by violence: "When Shechem son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the region, saw her, he seized her and lay with her by force. And his soul was drawn to Dinah daughter of Jacob; he loved the girl, and spoke tenderly to her" (vv.2-3).

[24] I also use this phrase to critique consent in "Critiquing the Discourse of Consent" (Graybill (2017, 176). The analysis offered here expands upon that piece.

[25] All biblical citations are from the NRSV.

Following this encounter, Shechem seeks to marry Dinah; her father Jacob agrees but Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, object ("because he had defiled their sister Dinah"; v.13). They insist that Shechem and his men be circumcised; as the men are recovering, the brothers execute a massacre against the Hivite men. When Jacob protests, they reply "Should our sister be treated like a whore?" (v.31). Dinah herself is never heard from in the text; her fate is unknown, even as her silence becomes the subject of much reflection in feminist responses to the text. The narrative is *fuzzy* on several levels: the linguistic (how to translate *ʿinnâ*, which is also a way of asking what "really happened" to Dinah), the narrative (what Dinah wanted or how Dinah felt; her silence leaves only questions), and the literary (whether it is in fact possible to clarify the questions of meaning and narrative, or whether the text makes intentional use of ambiguity, as is sometimes suggested.) An additional level of *fuzziness*, which I will not consider here, concerns the textual; text critics suggest that the Dinah story in Genesis reflects multiple strata of text redacted together (Joseph, forthcoming).

The Dinah story touches on several of the difficulties with consent that I have introduced above. First is the question of whether a woman, including Dinah, would be able to consent; insofar as consent assumes a liberal Enlightenment subject, this possibility seems foreclosed (this correlates with Kawashima's argument). Other scholars attempt to answer the question of "Was Dinah raped?"—a version of "Could a woman be raped?" (or its flipside "Could a woman consent?") —through linguistic analysis of the text of Genesis 34. The key portion of the verse comes in 34:2: *wayyiqqaḥ ʾōttāh wayyiškab ʾōttāh wayĕʿannehā*, which could be translated, *pace* Kawashima, "he seized her and lay with her and raped her." However, the translation of *wayĕʿannehā*, from the verb *ʿinnâ,* as "and he raped her" is not universally accepted. Ellen Van Wolde (2002, 543) tracks a number of definitions of the verb, including "rape," "make love," "have sexual intercourse with," "abuse," and "have illicit sex with," and concludes that it is "not acceptable" to translate the verb as "rape" or "sexual abuse." Alison Joseph argues for "forced sex" and "social shaming" over and against "rape" (2016, 664). Other critics disagree; Yael Shemesh (2007) titles her article on Dinah "Rape is Rape is Rape," showing her argument at the outset. I do not intend to offer a definitive statement on the meaning of *ʿinnâ* here, though I incline, like Shemesh and Gravett (quoted above), to read rape in the text. Instead, I want to highlight how the question of whether the text describes what Whoopi Goldberg infamously called "rape-rape" is at once unsolvable and distracting.[26] The *fuzziness* is built into the semantic fields of the language itself.

The definitional *fuzziness*s surrounding *ʿinnâ* is linked to a larger *narrative fuzziness* in the Dinah story. Because the Hebrew Bible does not differentiate between willing premarital sex and premarital rape—both are punished with a fine and a marriage (Deut. 22:28-29)—it is possible to argue, based on the information presented by the text, that Dinah is a willing partner. This is what makes possible a reading such as *The Red Tent* (Diamant 2007), which retells the narrative as a love

[26] Goldberg's comments concerned director Roman Polanski. In 1977, Polanski was charged with drugging and raping a thirteen-year-old. He pled to "unlawful sexual intercourse with a minor" but fled the United States before serving his sentence. In 2009, he was arrested in Switzerland to be deported. Commenting on the news of his arrest, Goldberg suggested that Polanski was not guilty of "rape-rape." Her comments were widely covered in the media; for example Kennedy (2009).

story. The openness of the text to such readings gains further support from Dinah's silence. *We do not know what Dinah wants, or would have wanted.* Todd Penner and Lilian Cates (2007) offer a helpful analysis of the silence in the Dinah story:

> It has been tempting, particularly in feminist scholarship, to focus on this "silencing of women" as providing grounds for "recovering" the lost female voice behind the text and hence, in many respects, also history. The problem, however, is that, aside from the momentary glimpse of agency opened up in the first verse ("Dinah went out"), Dinah does not actually exist in this text apart from the male gaze—even female experience becomes difficult to conceptualize let alone talk about given the parameters of the narrative. (2007, 37.4)

I share the assessment of ambiguity in the text. I would suggest, however, that the ambiguity in the representation of Dinah is not wholly reducible to male authorship and the male gaze. Instead, it accurately represents the ambiguity and *fuzziness* that attends many reports of sexual violence, ancient and modern alike. Such *fuzziness* is, as the contemporary expression has it, "a feature, not a bug" of the account of the Dinah story, even if it is ill-accommodated by consent discourses, which seek clarity and clear distinctions.

The Dinah story also raises troubling questions concerning intersectionality. While Genesis 34 is frequently read as a narrative of inter-ethnic encounter, the specific *colonial* context of the encounter is often downplayed or glossed over. This is taken up by Musa Dube (2017, 51) in her recent study "Dinah (Genesis 34) at the Contact Zone," where she foregrounds the imperializing move that the promise of the "promised land" makes. As Dube analyses, Shechem occupies the place of the colonized man who targets the body of the female colonizer. That Shechem represents the colonized subject does not mean that he is not a rapist. But it does mean that we need to accommodate a more complex analysis that also accounts for ethnicity and coloniality. One of Dube's key insights is that the construction of colonizer/colonized relationships, even with the gender script flipped, as it is here, "serve the interest of the colonizer." In this case, this happens after the rape, when Shechem is represented as "good native" (Dube 2018, 50) who wants to do right by Dinah after the rape. His desire, Jacob's response, and Simeon and Levi's violent actions all converge around the same point: telling a story that serves the interests of the colonizer. Though their specific actions oppose each other, they are all in the service of the same ideology.

The ethnic dynamics of the Dinah story are also interesting because they push back against the normative biblical move of constructing a binary between good and bad women, where "good" is also "Israelite" and "sexually pure," while "bad" is collocated with both "foreign" and "sexually loose" (Exum 1993). Across the Hebrew Bible, there is a tendency to associate promiscuous sexuality with foreignness, and foreign women in particular, as in representations of Moabite and Midianite women (e.g. Numbers 25; see also Deut. 7:3-4; Josh. 23:12). The flipped script, as in the Dinah story (Dinah is "a woman from the colonizer's camp," who goes out to visit "the native women of the land"; Dube 2017, 51), seems to promise an alternative narrative. However, it instead resolves in favour of the colonizers/Israelites. The colonizer always wins; sometimes consent discourses are used to cover over or distract from this truth.

Messy: The Rape of Tamar

Almost as famous as the rape of Dinah is the rape of Tamar at the hands of her brother Amnon. Amnon is obsessed with his sister Tamar; on the advice of his friend Jonadab, he pretends to be sick so that Tamar will come to care for him. David commands her to bring food to her brother. Amnon ensures that the two are alone, then tells her to bring her cakes closer to him, then rapes her: "he would not listen to her; and being stronger than she, he forced her and lay with her" (2 Sam. 13:14).

More than any other biblical rape story, the narrative of Tamar offers a clear lack of consent. When Amnon solicits sex with "Come, lie with me, my sister," Tamar verbally refuses him: "She answered him, 'No, my brother, do not force me; for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do anything so vile! As for me, where could I carry my shame? And as for you, you would be as one of the scoundrels in Israel. Now therefore, I beg you, speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from you'" (2 Sam. 13:11-12). Nevertheless, Amnon rapes her.

As both feminist and non-feminist critics have pointed out, the story of Tamar's rape is narrated in a way that makes it fundamentally a story about men. Tamar is secondary, even in the account of her own rape (Keefe 1993). And for these men, the aftermath of the rape is *messy*. Indeed, the rape itself is at once central to the narrative and secondary to it; it is not Tamar, the raped daughter, but Absalom, the wronged brother and beloved son, who is the emotional focus of the passage. As a common feminist slogan about sexual violence has it, "Women have a past, men have a future"—and so it is the futures of Amnon, Absalom, and the Davidic monarchy, not the future of the daughter herself, that receive attention from the text (it is Absalom, not Tamar, who receives a monument pillar; 2 Sam. 18:18). William Propp even goes so far as to suggest that the rape itself is a distraction from the larger questions in the story:

> Because our society is too familiar with sexual abuse and violent crime, we are liable to miss a deeper meaning of the passage. The story is not just about atrocities supposedly committed within the royal family; more broadly, it probes the ambiguities in the network of obligation and taboo that defines Israelite kinship—not as a theoretical exercise, but to make a theological point. (1993, 39)

But it is precisely the "atrocities supposedly committed within the royal family" that I wish to stay focused on here, in relation to my critique of discourses of consent.

For now, consider another *messy* detail of the story: Tamar's desire to marry her rapist. Prior to the rape, she begs Amnon, "I beg you, speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from you" (2 Sam.13:13); after the rape, she describes Amnon's expulsion of her from his house (and thus his refusal to marry her) as a greater harm than the rape itself: "this wrong in sending me away is greater than the other that you did to me" (v.16). In expressing this desire, Tamar fails to act as victim of sexual violence "ought" to act. She does not display proper self-actualization, or a Tarantino-esque desire for vengeance. Her failure to conform to expectations is not only a modern perception; Absalom urges her not to fuss (or to marry Amnon): "Be quiet for now, my sister; he is your brother; do not take this to heart" (v.20). Tamar, however, is acted upon, or nudged to act as she does, by the force of discomfort that Ahmed describes.

While the specific advice Absalom gives Tamar is different from what a modern reader might desire—silence instead of vengeance or self-actualization—it expresses a similar sense that Tamar should not marry her rapist. And yet, there is a sort of gaslighting here, via the suggestion—first articulated by Absalom, but echoed by contemporary interpreters—that Tamar cannot possibly know what she wants, or what is in her best interest (neglecting, as well, that Tamar is a literary character). My interest is not in what Tamar "should" do, but rather in how Tamar's deviation from what she ought to want to do leads to her criticism (both in the narrative and by interpreters) and eventual narrative death. It is a *messy* feature in an already *messy* family narrative. It does not fit with what the characters in the world of the story want, any more than it fits with what we as contemporary feminist readers want. Of course, what survivors of sexual violence want is also not always what we want them to want.

The critique of consent discourses speaks to this difficulty by drawing attention to more subtle techniques of power, such as discomfort. This story presents at least two modes of coercion, one explicit, one subtler. To quote again from Ahmed (2014, 55):

> There is a history whereby men give themselves permission to hear no as yes, to assume women are willing, whatever women say … as if by dressing this way, or by doing something that way, she is enacting a yes, even when she herself says no. We certainly need to hear the violence that converts no into yes. My additional suggestion is modest: we also need to hear the cases in which yes involves force but is not experienced as force, when for instance a woman says yes to something as the consequences of saying no would be too much … If being willing does not mean the absence of force, then we need to account for the social and political situations in which yes and no are given.

If the first episode of the Tamar story is "the violence that converts no into yes," then what follows—when Tamar expresses her desire to marry Amnon, even as she mourns the rape—offers an instance of "say[ing] yes to something as the consequences of saying no would be too much." Thus, the Tamar story is one case study in why "women willingly agree to situations in which their safety and well-being are compromised"—a situation that consent discourses, in their rigid and positivistic formulations, are unable to accommodate. Perhaps this is why so much feminist reflection on Tamar focuses on the rape itself or on mourning with/for Tamar, and not on the question of why Tamar might marry her rapist. The *fuzzy/messy/icky* possibility that Tamar might be acting willingly, or in her own best interest—or that her own best interest is not accommodated in a rigid form of will—is rarely taken up here, a silencing that consent discourses, in their rigidity, can inadvertently encourage. As with the *fuzziness* in the Dinah story, the *messiness* in the Tamar story is not secondary, but essential to the narrative.

Icky: Rape and Lot's Daughters

The third and final rape story I will consider concerns Lot and his two daughters. After the divine destruction of Sodom, the three take refuge in a cave in the hills. In a bid to ensure their survival,[27] the daughters take drastic action:

> And the firstborn said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to come in to us after the manner of all the world. Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, so that we may preserve offspring through our father." So they made their father drink wine that night; and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; he did not know when she lay down or when she rose. On the next day, the firstborn said to the younger, "Look, I lay last night with my father; let us make him drink wine tonight also; then you go in and lie with him, so that we may preserve offspring through our father." So they made their father drink wine that night also; and the younger rose, and lay with him; and he did not know when she lay down or when she rose. Thus, both the daughters of Lot became pregnant by their father. (Gen. 19:31-36)

This is clearly a story of sexual transgression, though of what sort is not immediately clear.[28] One obvious reading is that the daughters rape their father in order to produce children—or, perhaps, as revenge for his earlier offering them to the would-be rapists in Sodom (Gen. 19:8). This reading gains intertextual support from its parallels to Gen. 9:20-27, where Ham sees his father Noah's nakedness and perhaps sexually abuses him. Another possible reading suggests that the daughters are in fact victims of their father. One articulation of this position comes from Ilona Rashkow (2000), who argues that the text presents the incestuous desire of the father, and then covers up this desire by making the daughters into responsible agents. Cheryl Exum (2000) offers a similar reading, arguing that the text, as the product of male authors, cannot but display male fantasies, extending to the fantasy of incestuous rape. Still other readers propose other readings such as, for example, that the characters act in a courageous way to increase human survival, or that the point is not the daughters at all, but rather the "incestuous bastards" to whom they give birth (who happen to be the neighbours of the Israelites; see Bailey 1995).

What is undeniably clear about this story is its *ickiness* (let the reader who doubts me teach this story to a room full of eighteen-year olds and then report back). The story draws much of its *icky* power from the violation of the incest taboo. It also has an *icky* setting, in a cave; nothing good happens in a cave in the Hebrew Bible but many morbid, perverse, or disgusting things do, involving dead bodies, excrement, dangerous animals, and of course incest (Graybill and Sabo 2018). The story becomes even ickier through the presence of excessive drinking (suggesting uncomfortable parallels to sexual violence on college and university campuses), as well as its repetition of sex acts, which happen not once but twice. In the Lot story, intoxication is entangled with knowledge; in Hebrew, the verb *yadaʿ*, "to know," frequently carries heavy sexual implications. The story is also connected, intertextually, to a number of other *icky* moments, from Ham and Noah (Gen. 9:18-

[27] It is curious that the daughters express their belief that "there is not a man on earth to come in to us after the manner of all the world," as they have just come from the small city of Zoar.
[28] For a detailed analysis, see Sabo (2017).

25) to Jephthah and his daughter (Judg. 11:29-40). That the daughters are nameless and semi-interchangeable is a final *icky* touch. *Ickiness* indeed!

The story of Lot and his daughters also resonates with the critique of consent discourses in a number of ways. The "low bar" of consent is obvious here—whether or not the daughters consented, or Lot consented, hardly matters to the *ickiness* of the story.[29] The story also foregrounds a difficulty that appears with uncomfortable regularity in contemporary discussions over consent: how to judge the situation (for example, when two very drunk college students are involved), in which *no one* is legally or philosophically able to consent.[30]

I would also suggest that attempts to apply the principle of consent to narratives such as Genesis 19 also risk becoming colonialist—both because they involve the ethnic other (Lot and his daughters being the ancestors of the Moabites and the Ammonites), and because they assume a posture of "knowing what's best." This is the position that Matthias Rudolf (2018) critiques in his reading of Pfizer and consent in the Nigerian drug trials.[31] Rudolf writes:

> To ask, as consent theorists are wont to do, about who can consent to what and under what circumstances and what counts as consent is merely to refine the lines of demarcation that separate the permissible from the forbidden and prescribe *who* can consent to *what* under which circumstances. It is also to push a particular "universal" model of subjectivity and personhood—one uniquely qualified to quantify the relative value of wrongs insofar as they can be articulated in terms of the body—on communities that have good reasons, economic and otherwise, to reject the model of rational self-interest and human dignity it advocates. (2018, 212)

As with Pfizer's test subjects, so too with Lot's daughters. Believing themselves (and Lot) the sole survivors of unthinkable apocalypse, hidden away in a cave with a father who previously offered them up to be raped, they may well have their own "good reasons … to reject the model of rational self-interest and human dignity" that consent discourses advocate or simply assume.

Toward a *Fuzzy/messy/icky* reading of biblical rape stories

Even a brief consideration of the rape narratives of Dinah, Tamar, and Lot's daughters makes clear that consent is not just a problematic framework, but one insufficient to addressing the complexity of actual biblical rape stories. The rape of Dinah is *fuzzy* in the ambiguity that surrounds the story. The rape of Tamar is *messy*, both in its consequences for the family and in the *messiness* of what Tamar herself wants. The sex/rape encounter between Lot and his daughters is *icky* in its incest, as well as the difficulty of determining the "true" victim (Lot? The daughters? The

[29] Incest is often excluded from modern definitions of consensual sexual activity.

[30] One of the most common questions posed to affirmative consent policies concerns the case where both parties are intoxicated and thus unable to consent. Consider also the question of sex and mental disability.

[31] Pfizer were sued in the US federal court for administering an experimental antibiotic drug to Nigerian children during a meningitis outbreak without the informed consent of the children or their parents. For further information, see the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/pfizer-lawsuit-re-nigeria.

sons born to the daughters? Everyone? No one?). Of course, each of the terms applies to the other stories as well.

I want now to offer some preliminary thoughts on what a *fuzzy/messy/icky* theorization of rape in the Hebrew Bible might look like.[32] I have drawn on the work of four feminist thinkers: Donna Haraway, Eve Sedgwick, Sara Ahmed, and Meredith Minister.

Donna Haraway: Refusing Innocence

First, it is essential that a feminist response to sexual violence abandons the claim to an innocent critical position. As I have already suggested, one of the great weaknesses of consent discourses, and ways in which they break with feminist thought, is their assumption of a self-contained, self-controlled subject. Feminist critique has long decried this idea as at once naive and exclusionary, insisting, instead on what Donna Haraway (1990, 188) calls "situated knowledges." Crucial to the idea of situated knowledges is the insight that there is no master vantage point or innocent subject position from which the world can be judged. Interpreters and situations are never innocent; we are always implicated in situations, texts, and spaces of interpretation. There is no abstract vantage point from which all knowledge can be taken in; there is likewise no subject position that is wholly innocent or guilty.

This move beyond the pose of innocence requires new models and myths for thinking and being. Haraway's work contains a surplus of these; in her most recent work (2016), we find "SF" (alternately "science fiction," "string figures," and "speculative fiction," among others), the Cthulhucene, the microorganism *Mixotricha paradoxa,* and dogs. But most famous of Haraway's "critters" for thinking beyond innocence is the cyborg. In her "Manifesto for Cyborgs," included in her volume of essays *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women* (1990), Haraway proposes that the cyborg offers an "ironic political myth," a new myth for the new world order of the 1980s. Central to this representation is the cyborg as non-innocent being. She writes in a famous passage:

> Unlike the hopes of Frankenstein's monster, the cyborg does not expect its father to save it through a restoration of the garden; that is, through the fabrication of a heterosexual mate, through its completion in a finished whole, a city and cosmos. The cyborg does not dream of a community on the model of the organic family, this time without the oedipal project. The cyborg would not recognize the Garden of Eden; it is not made of mud and cannot dream of returning to dust … the main trouble with cyborgs, of course, is that they are the illegitimate offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism, not to mention state socialism. But illegitimate offspring are often exceedingly unfaithful to their origins. Their fathers, after all, are inessential. (1990, 151)

As described here, the cyborg is a manifestly non-innocent being. In Haraway's more recent work, this critique of innocence continues: "Acquiring knowledge is never innocent," she writes in *When Species Meet* (2008, 70). Elsewhere, I have

[32] I develop these ideas further in a forthcoming monograph, entitled *Texts after Terror: Rape, Sexual Violence, and the Hebrew Bible.*

argued that a hermeneutic of flourishing vis-à-vis the biblical text requires us to abandon claims to the position of innocence (Graybill 2018). Now I want to suggest that this is especially essential in the case of interpreting texts about sexual violence.

Abandoning the posture of innocence takes multiple forms. It begins by rejecting reductive historicizing oversimplifications, such as the suggestion that if women are not legal subjects with the ability to consent, then "unwanted sex" is not rape. Dropping the posture of innocence means being wary of sloganeering applied to the past, even when such slogans speak a feminist truth to the present moment. In place of simplicity or stridency, a non-innocent reading practice pursues complexity—a process Haraway terms, elsewhere, "staying with the trouble" (2016, 3). When we stay with the trouble, we allow for the possibility of multiple, contradictory truths, in texts and in interpretations. Haraway (1997) also invites us to adopt a position of "modest witness."

It is tempting to demand that Dinah, and Tamar, and the many other sexually victimized and violated women of the Bible add their voices to the #MeToo movement. And such efforts can be powerful, for survivors and religious communities alike. However, refusing a position of innocence means insisting, as well, that the messy contours of these stories exceed scripted soundbites. There is a complexity here. "Staying with the trouble" means reading these stories as stories of sexual violence, without erasing their ambiguities and complexities, without assuming that we know what Dinah wanted, or that the dynamics of victim and victimizer are both clearly marked and unchanging (an assumption that the Lot story, for example, puts pressure on). Refusing innocence means holding open a space for ambivalence, even ambivalence in and toward our own desires. As Sarah Schuman (2016, 49) writes, "people do not always know what they feel, nor do they acknowledge what they really know." Sometimes our motives, desires, or experiences are obscure even to ourselves; it is disingenuous at best to assume our self-experience is always transparent and unambivalent. Similarly, the evaluative mechanisms used for sexual violence are not innocent. Moving beyond an insistence on innocent subject positions and the purity of categories is a necessary step.

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick: Avoiding Paranoid Reading Positions

Related to the refusal of innocence is the effort to avoid paranoid reading positions. The notion of "paranoid reading" comes from Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, in an essay entitled "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, Or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay is About You" (2003). Drawing on a thick diagnostic description of paranoia, Sedgwick argues that the "hermeneutic of suspicion," that cornerstone of so much feminist and queer work, shares the structure of the paranoid subject position. She traces out five key parallels:

> Paranoia is *anticipatory*.
>
> Paranoia is *reflexive and mimetic.*
>
> Paranoia is *a strong theory*.
>
> Paranoia is *a theory of negative affects.*
>
> Paranoia *places its faith in exposure* (2003, 130).

As with paranoia, so, too, with paranoid reading. As an "anticipatory" form, such readings are constantly "looking forward to and preparing for bad news" (2003, 130) (*Everyone knows the Bible is terrible for women, why would this text be any different?*). Paranoid readings offer strong theories (*Everything in the Bible can be explained by misogyny*). Paranoid readings are organized around negative affects—that is, they are invested in "forestalling pain," at the expense of "seeking of pleasure" (*I won't let the Bible hurt me anymore*). And paranoid reading practices believe that exposing X will somehow lead to it being changed (*If only we realized the Bible was misogynistic, everything would be different!*).

Much feminist work on the Hebrew Bible, and a good deal of LGBT (and queer) scholarship as well, has as its starting point a paranoid reading position.[33] Sedgwick's reading, which is grounded in queer but also feminist commitments, invites us to open up texts, even texts of sexual violence, to other ways of thinking. She challenges the seeming monopoly that paranoid reading holds, and calls for it to be joined by "reparative reading" open to contingency, pleasure, and play. Especially useful is her reminder that "to be other than paranoid" is not to deny injustice or oppression. Thus:

> For someone to have an unmystified view of systematic oppressions does not intrinsically or necessarily enjoin that person to any specific train of epistemological or narrative consequences. To be other than paranoid … to practice other than paranoid forms of knowing does not, in itself, entail a denial of the reality or gravity or enmity or oppression. (2003, 128)

Sedgwick's comment is generative in reading biblical texts about sexual or sexualized violence. In the case of sexual violence and the Hebrew Bible, we can do more than simply compile lists of rapes, or lists of scholars who do not sufficiently acknowledge, or properly respond to, these rapes or murders. A non-paranoid reading of sexual violence is a reading that's open to *fuzziness*. Paranoid readings, like paranoia, demand strong theories and eschew ambiguities of all sorts. Perhaps we cannot ever adjudicate what *ʿinnâ* means, or what Dinah (would have) wanted. A non-paranoid reading holds open the ambiguity that attends *ʿinnâ* and perhaps even "rape" as a category, without using this ambiguity to write off the category entirely. Susanne Scholz (2005, 2) critiques such rape-erasure as an "empiricist-scientific epistemology … [that] accepts androcentric meaning as historically accurate and rejects connections between interpretations and readers" and ultimately contributes to "continu[ing] obfuscating the prevalence of rape even today."

A non-paranoid reading also leaves space to attend to the differences between, and within, various stories of sexual violence and rape in the text. It does not impose a single master theory; instead, it lets us encounter each rape narrative on its own terms. Without "entail[ing] a denial of the reality or gravity or enmity or oppression," a nonparanoid reading position also opens space for feminist reading, including feminist readings of rape stories, to do something other than grieve. As feminist criticism seeks to avoid repeating the same small repertoire of interpretive moves that have largely defined the discipline since the 1980s, this is vital indeed.

[33] For a reflection on Sedgwick's essay and paranoid reading in biblical studies, see Knust (2014).

Ahmed: Considering affect and contagion

In thinking about non-innocent, non-paranoid responses to sexual violence in and beyond biblical texts, it is also helpful to consider affect and affective contagion. In *The Promise of Happiness* (2010), Sara Ahmed describes how objects become affectively charged as good or bad objects; she further suggests that the "stickiness" of affect means that this goodness or badness can be transmitted *between* objects. Elsewhere, I have written about how institutional responses to sexual violence often inadvertently treat survivors as unhappy objects, because they serve as reminders that violence prevention campaigns have failed (Graybill, Minister, and Lawrence 2017, 74).[34] Survivors can also become unhappy objects when their stories fail to conform to certain preordained narrative trajectories. Just as the woman who "overreacted" to sexual violence was once scorned, in the present moment there is a criticism of survivors who fail to narrate their experiences properly (even as this demand is itself grounded in the imperative to "tell your story"). The invitation to share stories can also become an imperative, and/or a compulsion.[35]

Centring affect, with attention to its stickiness, *ickiness*, and *messiness*, helps open up stories of sexual violence in multiple ways. Sticky affect and the stickiness of sexual violence explain why the sexual transgression or rape that immediately precedes the birth of Lot's (grand)sons Mo-ab and Ben-Ammi contaminates the Moabites and the Ammonites more broadly. It helps to name the fear and loathing of the rape victim's body that we find, for example, in the "unclean skirts" of the raped woman in Lamentations, or in the unclean female body in the marriage metaphor in Ezekiel. It also helps explain the particular affective experience of reading and teaching biblical rape texts, especially when we consider that we are often (always?) teaching survivors and perpetrators.[36]

Another clear example of sticky affect, and its usefulness in thinking about sexual violence, is the rape of Tamar. Tamar is an unhappy object in multiple ways. This is immediately clear in Amnon's reaction to her; after the rape, he is filled with loathing toward her. Tamar is also an unhappy object, though differently, to her brother Absalom; he rejects her desire to marry Amnon and by extension her narrative of the events, urging her instead to be silent and calm. Here Ahmed's work on queer trajectories, set forth in *Queer Phenomenology* (2006), is useful as well. Affective contagion also offers another model for thinking about the way that Tamar's rape spreads bad feelings and trauma throughout David's family, without reducing the story to a simplified "argument between men over a woman." This is a move that both non-feminist and some feminist critics make, but that has the effect of hedging in the text and foreclosing other feminist and queer ways of thinking, while constraining Tamar to the exclusive position of victim. Of course, it's *messy*, and a bit *icky*, to think about Tamar beyond the moment of rape and yet it's also necessary, if we are to find other feminist ways of being with these texts.

[34] Minister (2018, 43-4) also describes attempts to "purify" the category of survivor.
[35] I explore this point in greater detail in Graybill, Minister, and Lawrence (2017, 72-73).
[36] On this point, see Graybill, Minister, and Lawrence (2017) and Graybill, Minister, and Lawrence (2019).

Minister: Allowing for Compromised Pleasures

A feminist and queer theorization of sexual violence in the Hebrew Bible also needs to leave space for compromised pleasures. This is an idea I adapt from Meredith Minister and her (2019) work on "sex and alien encounter." Drawing on the work of feminist science fiction pioneer Octavia Butler, Minister closely reads Butler's descriptions of sexual encounters between aliens and non-alien beings. These include Butler's novelette *Bloodchild*, in which benevolent aliens can reproduce only by gestating their eggs in humans (either women or men) and the *Xenogenesis* trilogy, in which another species of aliens engages in sex—not always fully consensually—with humans and eventually creates a new hybrid species with them. Minister uses these stories to put pressure on received ideas of consent, autonomy, and "the bounds of the self," offering a theory of "compromised pleasure" that challenges us to "engage questions around language and communication, the bounds of the self and individual autonomy, and the nature of pleasure" (2019, 171). This touches on both communication and consent.

First, while consent discourses typically emphasize the verbal,[37] Minister notes the challenges that Butler's fictions pose to this norm. The aliens in *Xenogenesis* communicate primarily through touch; in another of Butler's works, "Amnesty," communication occurs through light. Minister uses this to explore a crip response to sexual violence that doesn't depend upon ability.

Minister also problematizes a binary understanding of consent/non-consent, suggesting it fails to do justice to the complexity of the narrative. Of Butler's fictions, she writes:

> The word consensual cannot describe the human-alien encounters in the *Xenogenesis* series, "Bloodchild," or "Amnesty." Butler, however, does consistently describe these encounters as pleasurable. And the pleasure of these encounters between humans and aliens often exceeds the pleasures of sexual encounters between humans. While the compromised nature of communication and the lack of clearly definable individual boundaries do not excuse the overt forms of violence sometimes exerted by the aliens against the humans, it can help explain why the encounters between the humans and aliens can be described as both coercive and pleasurable. There is, Butler's stories seem to suggest, a crossing between pain and pleasure. (Minister 2019, 170).

Minister further suggests using Butler's work to open up conversations about sexual violence and sexual pleasure that move beyond the liberal model of the subject and the binary formulation of consent/rape.

Applied to the biblical rape texts, Minster's work directs our attention to alterity. We find this in the Dinah story—as postcolonial analysis shows, Dinah and her family are literally aliens in the land. As many feminist critics have pointed out, we do not know how Dinah responded to the rape; at least one midrash speculates that Dinah enjoyed sex with Shechem and had to be dragged from his home (*Genesis Rabbah* 80:11). While most modern readers, including nearly all my students, find

---

[37] For example, yesmeansyes.com defines consent as "Consent is a mutual verbal, physical, and emotional agreement that happens without manipulation, threats, or head games." See https://www.yesmeansyes.com/consent.

this suggestion repulsive, Minister's theorization of sex and alien encounter opens a space to consider it, and the question of pleasure more broadly, without the sort of romanticizing rape erasure that *The Red Tent* undertakes by presenting it as a love story. We might think similarly, if carefully, about Tamar, or about the various "non-rape" arranged marriages in Genesis and the Deuteronomistic history.

Alien encounter and compromised pleasure might even offer a way to think about sexual violence in the prophets. Scholars have long struggled with the sexual violence levied against metaphorical, gynomorphic bodies in the prophets, such as the feminized Jerusalem in Ezekiel 16 and the sisters Oholah and Oholibah in Ezekiel 23. While these are stories of rape, there is also a current of eroticism and erotic play—not *in* the text, but in its reception by and among at least some *readers*, as queer scholarship has pointed out. Minister's Butler-inflected theory of compromised pleasure offers a way to describe and understand complex hermeneutical responses to a text such as Ezekiel 23 without reducing its sexual violence to a joke, as, for example, in Stuart Macwilliam's (2011) illuminating but occasionally discomfiting camp reading, or Roland Boer's (2012) jokey, insistently masculinist readings. These are *messy* readings, even perhaps *icky* ones (Minister herself rejects the use of the word "consensual"; 2019, 190), but it also opens new ways of negotiating (with) texts.[38]

Minister's work also suggests the possibility of thinking about biblical rape stories with and through speculative fiction. Using literature as feminist instrument to "think with" leads not just to the rapes of the Hebrew Bible, but to the speculative afterlives of its victims and survivors. While feminist work often invokes midrash to fill in the lacunae of biblical rape stories, I follow Minister to speculative and science fiction. One possible alternative comes from feminist science fiction writer Joanna Russ and her 1975 novel *The Female Man.* The novel tells the story of four connected women named Janet, Jeannine, Joanna, and Jael. Each woman lives in a different possible iteration of the earth; they are thus variations on each other. Janet is a peace officer from Whileaway, a future earth that has been without men for thirty generations. Jeannine lives in a version of the earth where the Great Depression never ended. Joanna is a version of the author. And Jael comes from another earth's future, where men and women have been engaged in war for forty years. Jael, who convenes the meeting of the four women, has claws, metal teeth, a sex robot named Davy, and a job as an assassin. Like her biblical namesake, she murders a man without pity (like Sisera, he had it coming).[39]

With her four heroines, Russ deconstructs what we expect of a novel, a narrator, and a feminist intervention. The novel is alternately angry, funny, perplexingly time-bending, gleefully lesbian, and ambivalent, all at once. There is a painfully accurate description of tweed-wearing misogynists at an academic cocktail party. One chapter consists entirely of the line, "There are more whooping cranes in the United States of America than there are women in Congress" (Russ 1975, 61).

So too, I suggest, should feminist readings of biblical stories be angry, funny, perplexing, lesbian and/or queer, and ambivalent, all at once. It is this spirit that animates the readings that follow, as I convene my own meeting across women and

[38] Here, one obvious starting point is the pornoprophetics debate. See, to begin, Brenner (1996, 63).
[39] For a discussion of Russ's Jael in relation to the biblical Jael, see Conway (2016).

worlds. Russ's Joanna, Jeannine, Janet, and Jael are brought together by Jael, who seeks permission to build military bases on their worlds, as part of an ongoing war against men. In the novel, the interactions between women are ways of thinking through and around questions of gender, power, misogyny, and more.

I am not alone in thinking with Russ. For Haraway (1997, 76), for example, Russ's novel offers a model for thinking feminism and technoscience in a non-innocent world. As a biblical scholar and not a scientist, it is perhaps inevitable that I am drawn to Jael. Haraway, who is also a biologist, prioritizes the relationship between the "four Js," as well as what it might tell us about "identity and nature" (76). Russ's Jael is many things: a futuristic assassin, a trickster, a partisan, the convener of the other women clones for a meeting about the state of gender. Instead of a polite retelling or a modest reimagining, Russ appropriates the figure of Jael, as well as her deadly strike against Sisera and uses her to imagine a different sort of story entirely.

Russ's novel thus opens onto the *what else*: both *what else* we might do with stories of biblical women and *what else* we might do with patriarchy, both in the text and beyond it. Russ—and with her, Minister—invites us to think beyond the constraints of consent, and to open ourselves to compromised pleasures: there is much to find.[40]

Conclusion: Don't Stop Imagining a World Without Rape

Rape and rape culture remain challenging and sometimes heart-breaking matters, in the biblical texts and even more so, in the world. In pushing back against consent discourses, my aim has been not to reject consent itself, which plays an important and often necessary role in contemporary understandings of sexual encounter and sexual violence, but to summon us as feminists to think beyond the limitations of consent. Consent discourses flatten and erase the *fuzzy*, the *messy*, and the *icky*. They impose anachronistic and, more importantly, anti-feminist notions of the liberal subject onto ancient texts. They ignore discomfort and subtle forms of coercion. They neglect race, ethnicity, and other questions of intersectionality, and risk slipping into a colonialist project of saving women. They legitimize subordination. And they set too low a bar, foreclosing questions of pleasure. And yet we also have alternatives. Haraway, Sedgwick, Ahmed, Minister, and Butler all provide resources for thinking differently about sexual violence, in the text and in the world.

Reference List

Ahmed, Sara. 2006. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Ahmed, Sara. 2010. *The Promise of Happiness*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Ahmed, Sara. 2014. *Willful Subjects.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Bailey, Randall C. 1995. "They're Nothing but Incestuous Bastards: The Polemical Use of Sex and Sexuality in Hebrew Canon Narratives." In *Reading from This*

[40] Russ includes a scene in which Jael has sex with her semi-human robot, Davy, and is judged by the other three (1975, 196-98).

Place. *Vol. 1: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in the United States,* edited by Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert, 121-38. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Bennett, Sidney, Victoria L. Banyard, and Lydia Garnhart. 2013. "To Act or Not to Act, That Is the Question? Barriers and Facilitators of Bystander Intervention." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 29 (3): 476-96.

Bevacqua, Maria. 2000. *Rape on the Public Agenda: Feminism and the Politics of Sexual Assault.* Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Blue Seat Studios. 2015. "Tea Consent." https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQbei5JGiT8.

Boer, Roland. 2012. *The Earthy Nature of the Bible: Fleshly Readings of Sex, Masculinity, and Carnality.* BibleWorld. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Brenner, Athalya. 1996. "Pornoprophetics Revisited: Some Additional Reflections." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 21 (70): 63-86.

Brown, Wendy. 1995. *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity*. Princeton, NJ; Chichester: Princeton University Press.

Conway, Colleen M. 2016. *Sex and Slaughter in the Tent of Jael: A Cultural History of a Biblical Story.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Diamant, Anita. 2007. *The Red Tent.* 20th Anniversary Edition. New York: Picador.

DiDomizio, Nicolas. 2015. "This Tumblr Post Perfectly Demonstrates Why Consent Is Sexy." *Mic*, 16 July. https://mic.com/articles/122424/this-tumblr-post-perfectly-demonstrates-why-consent-is-sexy#.GwQP8HO9y.

Doyle, Jennifer. 2015. *Campus Sex, Campus Security.* Semiotext(e)/Intervention Series 19. South Pasadena, CA: Semiotext(e).

Dube, Musa W. 2017. "Dinah (Genesis 34) at the Contact Zone: Shall Our Sister Be Treated like a Whore?" In *Feminist Frameworks and the Bible: Power, Ambiguity, and Intersectionality,* edited by L. Juliana Claassens and Carolyn J. Sharp, 39-58. Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 630. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark.

Exum, J. Cheryl. 1993. *Fragmented Women: Feminist (Sub)Versions of Biblical Narratives.* JSOT Supp 163. Sheffield: JSOT Press.

Exum, J. Cheryl. 2000. "Desire Distorted and Exhibited: Lot and His Daughters in Psychoanalysis, Painting, and Film." In *"A Wise and Discerning Mind": Essays in Honor of Burke O. Long,* edited by Saul M. Olyan and Robert C. Culley, 83-108. Brown Judaic Studies 325. Providence, RI: Brown University Press.

Feimster, Crystal Nicole. 2009. *Southern Horrors: Women and the Politics of Rape and Lynching.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Gaertner, Samuel L., John F. Dovidio, and Gary Johnson. 1982. "Race of Victim, Nonresponsive Bystanders, and Helping Behavior." *The Journal of Social Psychology* 117 (1): 69-77.

Gay, Roxane, ed. 2018. *Not That Bad: Dispatches from Rape Culture.* New York: Harper Perennial.

Gebreyes, Rahel. 2015. "Does UCSC's 'Consent Is Sexy' Campaign Miss the Point?" *Huffington Post*, 16 December.

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/ucsc-consent-is-sexy-campaign_us_5649fdf8e4b08cda3489a799.

Gidycz, Christine A., Lindsay M. Orchowski, and Alan D. Berkowitz. 2011. "Preventing Sexual Aggression among College Men: An Evaluation of a Social Norms and Bystander Intervention Program." *Violence against Women* 17 (6): 720-42.

Graybill, Rhiannon. 2017. "Critiquing the Discourse of Consent." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 33 (1): 175-76.

Graybill, Rhiannon. 2019. "Good Intentions Are Not Enough." In *Rape Culture and Religious Studies: Critical and Pedagogical Engagements*, edited by Rhiannon Graybill, Meredith Minister, and Beatrice Lawrence, 175-94. Feminist Studies and Sacred Texts. Lanham: Lexington Books.

Graybill, Rhiannon. 2015. "No Child Left Behind: Reading Jephthah's Daughter with The Babylon Complex." *The Bible & Critical Theory* 11 (2): 36-50.

Graybill, Rhiannon. 2018. "When Bodies Meet: Fraught Companionship and Entangled Embodiment in Jeremiah 36." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 86 (4): 1046-71.

Graybill, Rhiannon, Meredith Minister, and Beatrice Lawrence. 2017. "Sexual Violence in and around the Classroom." *Teaching Theology & Religion* 20 (1): 70-88.

Graybill, Rhiannon, and Peter Sabo. 2018. "Caves of the Hebrew Bible: A Speleology." *Biblical Interpretation* 26 (1): 1-22.

Greenblatt, Jordana. 2018. "Consensual Sex, Consensual Text: Law, Literature, and the Production of the Consenting Subject." In *Querying Consent: Beyond Permission and Refusal*, edited by Jordana Greenblatt and Keja Valens, 44-62. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Greenblatt, Jordana, and Keja Valens. 2018. "Introduction: The Subject of Consent." In *Querying Consent: Beyond Permission and Refusal,* edited by Jordana Greenblatt and Keja Valens, 1–10. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Grigoriadis, Vanessa. 2017. *Blurred Lines: Rethinking Sex, Power, and Consent on Campus.* Boston: Eamon Dolan/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Halley, Janet. 2016. "The Move to Affirmative Consent." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 42 (1): 257-79.

Haraway, Donna J. 1997. *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan_Meets_OncoMouse: Feminism and Technoscience.* New York: Routledge.

Haraway, Donna J. 1990. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature.* New York: Routledge.

Haraway, Donna J. 2016. *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Haraway, Donna J. 2008. *When Species Meet.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Joseph, Alison. 2016. "Understanding Genesis 34:2: *'Innâ*." *Vetus Testamentum* 66 (4): 663-8.

Joseph, Alison. (Forthcoming). "Redaction as Reception: The Case of Genesis 34." In *Reading Other People's Texts: Social Identity and the Reception of Authoritative Traditions*, edited by Kenneth S. Brown, Brennan Breed, and Alison L. Joseph. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark.

Kawashima, Robert S. 2011. "Could a Woman Say 'No' in Biblical Israel? On the Genealogy of Legal Status in Biblical Law and Literature." *AJS Review* 35 (1): 1-22.

Keefe, Alice A.1993. "Rapes of Women, Wars of Men: Women, War, Society, and Metaphoric Language in the Study of the Hebrew Bible." *Semeia* 61: 79-97.

Kennedy, Maev. 2009. "Polanski Was Not Guilty of 'Rape-Rape', Says Whoopi Goldberg." *The Guardian,* 29 September. http://www.theguardian.com/film/2009/sep/29/roman-polanski-whoopi-goldberg.

Knust, Jennifer. 2014. "Who's Afraid of Canaan's Curse? Genesis 9:18-29 and the Challenge of Reparative Reading." *Biblical Interpretation* 22 (4-5): 388-413.

Krakauer, Jon. 2015. *Missoula: Rape and the Justice System in a College Town.* New York: Doubleday.

MacKendrick, Karmen. 2018. "Consent, Command, Confession." In *Querying Consent: Beyond Permission and Refusal,* edited by Jordana Greenblatt and Keja Valens, 11-26. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Macwilliam, Stuart. 2011. *Queer Theory and the Prophetic Marriage Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible.* BibleWorld. Sheffield: Equinox.

McGuire, Danielle L. 2011. *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance: A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power.* New York: Vintage Books.

Minister, Meredith. *Rape Culture on Campus.* 2018. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018.

Minister, Meredith. 2019. "Sex and Alien Encounter: Rethinking Consent as a Rape Prevention Strategy." In *Rape Culture and Religious Studies: Critical and Pedagogical Engagements*, edited by Rhiannon Graybill, Meredith Minister, and Beatrice Lawrence, 157-74. Feminist Studies and Sacred Texts. Lanham: Lexington Books.

Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilheim. 1989. *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Edited by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books.

Oliver, Kelly. 2015. "Party Rape, Nonconsensual Sex, and Affirmative Consent Policies." *Americana: The Journal of American Popular Culture, 1900 to Present* 14(2).

http://www.americanpopularculture.com/journal/articles/fall_2015/oliver.htm

Office on Violence Against Women. 2017. "Grants to Reduce Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence and Stalking on Campus Program Solicitation." US Department of Justice, 10 January. https://www.justice.gov/ovw/page/file/923431/download.

Peak, Grace. 2017. "The Phrase 'Consent Is Sexy' Is Dangerously Flawed." *Affinity Magazine*, 25 February. http://affinitymagazine.us/2017/02/25/the-phrase-consent-is-sexy-is-dangerously-flawed/.

Penner, Todd, and Lilian Cates. 2007. "Textually Violating Dinah: Literary Readings, Colonizing Interpretations, and the Pleasure of the Text." *The Bible and Critical Theory* 3 (3): 37.1-37.18.

"Project Respect | Yes Means Yes: Violence Prevention Project Respect." N.d. https://www.yesmeansyes.com/.

Propp, William H. 1993. "Kinship in 2 Samuel 13." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 55 (1): 39-53.

Puar, Jasbir. 2017. *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Rashkow, Ilona N. 2000. *Taboo or Not Taboo: Sexuality and Family in the Hebrew Bible.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Roupenian, Kristen. 2019. *You Know You Want This: Cat Person and Other Stories.* New York: Gallery/Scout Press.

Rudolf, Mattias. 2018. "Vulnerabilities: Consent with Pfizer, Marx, and Hobbes." In *Querying Consent: Beyond Permission and Refusal*, edited by Jordana Greenblatt and Keja Valens, 205-21. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Russ, Joanna. 1975. *The Female Man.* Boston: Beacon Press.

Sabo, Peter J. 2018. "The Lot Complex: The Use and Abuse of Daughters in the Hebrew Bible." PhD diss., University of Alberta.

Scholz, Susanne. 2005. "'Back Then It Was Legal' The Epistemological Imbalance in Readings of Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Rape Legislation." *The Bible and Critical Theory,* 1 (4): 36.1–36.22.

Scholz, Susanne. 2018. "Marriage, Love, or Consensual Sex? Feminist Engagements with Biblical Rape Texts in Light of Title IX." In *Rape Culture, Gender Violence, and Religion: Biblical Perspectives*, edited by Caroline Blyth, Emily Colgan, and Katie B. Edwards, 179-200. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Scholz, Susanne. 2010. *Sacred Witness: Rape in the Hebrew Bible.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Schulman, Sarah. 2016. *Conflict Is Not Abuse: Overstating Harm, Community Responsibility, and the Duty of Repair.* Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press.

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. 2003. "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, Or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You." In *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity,* edited by Adam Frank, 123-52. Series Q. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Shemesh, Yael. 2007. "Rape Is Rape Is Rape: The Story of Dinah and Shechem (Genesis 34)." *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 119 (1): 2-21.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 1988. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" In *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, 271-314. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Stinson-Wesley, S. Amelia. 1996. "Daughters of Tamar: Pastoral Care for Survivors of Rape." *Through the Eyes of Women: Insights for Pastoral Care,* edited by Jeanne Stevenson Moessner, 222-39. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Stone, Ken. 2007. "'You Seduced Me, You Overpowered Me, and You Prevailed': Religious Experience and Homoerotic Sadomasochism in Jeremiah." In *Patriarchs, Prophets and Other Villains,* edited by Lisa Isherwood, 101-109. Gender, Theology, and Spirituality. London: Equinox.

Traister, Rebecca. 2015. "Why Sex That's Consensual Can Still Be Bad. And Why We're Not Talking About It." *The Cut*, 20 October. http://www.thecut.com/2015/10/why-consensual-sex-can-still-be-bad.html.

Trible, Phyllis. 1984. *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives.* Overtures to Biblical Theology. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Van Wolde, Ellen. 2002. "Does *'innâ* Denote Rape? A Semantic Analysis of a Controversial Word." *Vetus Testamentum* 52 (4): 528-44.

Wells-Barnett, Ida B. and Jacqueline Jones Royster. 2016. *Southern Horrors and Other Writings: The Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892–1900*, 2nd Ed. The Bedford Series in History and Culture. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0 International License