

Rape Culture, Religion and the Bible

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Rape Myths, the Bible, and #MeToo

Johanna Stiebert

1 The Bible and #MeToo

#MeToo (or the Me Too movement)¹

#MeToo is associated first and foremost with a social media driven digital feminist activist movement² that spread suddenly and remarkably quickly starting in late 2017. 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. Its primary and distinctive tactic has been to trigger a deluge of revelations about sexual abuse, ranging from microaggressions to rape,³ so that victims and survivors could find strength in numbers and collectively challenge perpetrators and rape-supportive social mechanisms.⁴

Both feminist activists and victims of sexual harassment and assault have been speaking loudly and publicly about the magnitude of the problem for years, even decades.⁵ But none the less it remained 'obscured by both social stigma and the inadequacy of the criminal justice system' with only the occasional high-profile case (such as that of Roman Polanski or Dominique Strauss-Kahn) hitting the headlines (Popova 2019: 5). The movement's primary catalysts were the publication in the *New York Times* (Kantor and Twolhey 2017) and *The New Yorker* (Farrow 2017) in October 2017 of articles reporting dozens of accusations by women of sexual misconduct, including rape, perpetrated by US mogul film producer Harvey Weinstein. The movement rapidly went viral, particularly when US actor Alyssa Milano used Twitter to rally victims of sexual harassment to add their voice declaring 'me too'. This grew rapidly into a swelling tide of resistance that demonstrated and testified to the magnitude of the problem. The problem itself – namely, widespread, even endemic and systemic, sexual harassment, abuse, and violence – was far from new. Accusations against Weinstein alone reached back three decades. Also, by 2017 a considerable number of other scandals had already hinted ominously at the range

and depth and spread of sexual abuse. Be it in Catholic congregations across the globe, in Protestant churches, in Mormon and Mennonite and Hasidic communities,⁶ in sports clubs, children's homes, exclusive boarding schools, in the military, on campuses and in hospitals, in institutions of government and in the commercial sector, sexual exploitation was in evidence and sometimes rife. Very many revelations disclosed abuses of power and exploitation of the vulnerable, who were, disproportionately, women and girls.⁷

The Me Too movement may have risen to wide public consciousness in 2017, but it had already been founded back in 2006 by African-American civil rights activist Tarna Burke.⁸ Struck by her own inability to help a teenage girl who confided in her about sexual abuse, Burke initiated 'Me Too', the campaign motto of which is 'empowerment through empathy', with the purpose that the most vulnerable in her own community, namely, young girls of colour, would not be isolated or alone but could find support, community, and a means to empowerment and healing.

Burke has since expressed the view that #MeToo has become 'unrecognisable' to her (Wakefield 2018). Others, too, have made the case that Burke's movement was co-opted, often with little or no mention of its roots in Black activism. Zahara Hill, to give one example of many, was quick to point out, already on 18 October 2017, that 'Black women were left out of the dialogue that spurred the movement [and] ... quickly isolated' (Hill 2017).⁹ And yet, Hill continues, Black women 'weren't excluded for lack of relation to conversation around sexual assault and misogyny's impact', given that 'Black women regularly experience sexual assault as well and are often coerced into silence' (Hill 2017). Moreover, she points out, 'the outrage simply wasn't there for the Black women [such as Jemele Hill and Leslie Jones] who were put in vulnerable positions by rich white men' (Hill 2017) – whereas it was for the predominantly white Hollywood female actors prominent in the early stages of #MeToo.¹⁰ Others have seen the response to the TV documentary series *Surviving R. Kelly*, wherein young Black women detail the abuse, paedophilia, and predatory behaviour of R&B singer Robert 'R' Kelly (which he denies) as the moment when the movement finally returned to Black girls – albeit rather late: the series, based on allegations dating back decades, only aired in January 2019 (Tillet and Tillet 2019).

Another notable precursor to #MeToo is #YesAllWomen. This campaign responded directly to the Isla Vista massacre on 23 May 2014. Elliott Rodger killed six people and injured 14 more before shooting himself. Prior to his murder spree, Rodger disseminated his 'manifesto'

and disclosed via a video on YouTube that he was motivated by hatred both for the men whose sexual prowess he envied and for the women who had rejected him sexually.¹¹ The hashtag was partly created in response to #NoAllMen, which aimed to demonstrate that not all men are like Rodger, or even sexist. The response hashtag retaliates with the counter that while not all men may be sexist, all women are confronted with sexism, and it encouraged women to share examples or stories of misogyny and violence. Within four days #YesAllWomen had been tweeted 1.2 million times.

A second hashtag phenomenon of 2014 was #BeenRapedNeverReported. This hashtag began to trend shortly after the emergence of allegations of sexual violence by Canadian radio host Jian Ghomeshi. The hashtag was created by two journalists in response to suggestions that Ghomeshi's accusers were lying, because, if they were telling the truth, they would have reported his acts of violence more promptly. Countering the myths around how victims of sexual violence 'should' respond, the hashtag documents why victims often do *not* report sexual violence *at all* (or why, if they do, reports are frequently delayed). Over several weeks, the hashtag became an archive of in the range of eight million tweets.

In 2016¹² there followed #NoOK, initiated by author and social media personality Kelly Oxford in response to a recording in 2005 in which Donald Trump boasted of kissing, groping, and aggressively pursuing sex with women. The recording was leaked during Trump's presidential campaign¹³ and the then nominee brushed it aside as 'locker room banter'. Oxford led the social media revolt to resist the notion that any such conduct is acceptable or excusable. Sharing her own story of first assault, being grabbed by the crotch as a 12-year-old while travelling on a city bus, Oxford asked others to join her. In the first 24 hours, 9.7 million women shared their stories.¹⁴

But 2017 marked a turning point. This was the year not only of feminist digital activism but of women's protests on the streets. The Women's March on 21 January 2017, the day following the inauguration of President Donald Trump, constituted the largest single-day protest in modern US history, with estimates ranging from 3.3 to 5.6 million marchers. Many more marched in solidarity in countries beyond the USA. And then, later that year, overtaking #YesAllWomen, 4.7 million people in 12 million posts on Facebook alone responded within 24 hours to Alyssa Milano's #MeToo rallying cry of 15 October. The movement gathered momentum extraordinarily quickly and led to the deposition of a number of public figures. Weinstein was promptly, roundly, and publicly condemned and has mostly withdrawn from the

public domain, although he has mounted a legal challenge and is denying all allegations of non-consensual sexual contact. Others followed: among them, in the USA, the actor Kevin Spacey, television journalist Charlie Rose and news anchor Matt Lauer; and, in the UK, Defence Secretary Michael Fallon, to cite a few very prominent examples.¹⁵

Two years after its inception, the movement still continues to demonstrate efficacy, direct impact, and consequences – including well beyond the USA from which it first emanated. This is demonstrated, for example, by Minister M. J. Akbar's resignation from the Indian parliament (Suri 2018) and by Pakistani celebrity actor and musician Ali Zafar's emotional denial of harassment allegations (Hemery and Singh 2019) that followed a deluge of declarations of sexual impropriety in the wake of South Asia's #MeToo gaining momentum.¹⁶ Other responses include the Japanese government's requirement for senior civil servants to undertake anti-sexual harassment training prior to being considered for promotion, Jamaica's new sexual harassment bill, a New Zealand doctors' union's launch of an investigation into sexual harassment in the medical profession, India's Telugu film industry's announcement of a sexual harassment redressal forum, and Australia's national inquiry on sexual harassment (see Sen 2018).

Milena Popova has called #MeToo 'the most visible expression ... to date' of the endeavour to peel back the layers of rape culture and to dismantle the power structures in which it is enmeshed (Popova 2019: xii). Its resonance and success is perhaps indicated most memorably by the featuring of The Silence Breakers as *Time* magazine 'Person of the Year 2017'. The Silence Breakers is a diverse group of predominantly women which has spoken out against sexual exploitation; the group comprises not only celebrities (such as Ashley Judd and Taylor Swift), but also lobbyist Adama Iwu, software engineer Susan Fowler, activist Tarana Burke, and an anonymous hospital worker, among others. Another indication is the presence of #MeToo in advertising, notably in the Gillette campaign entitled 'We Believe: The Best Men Can Be', featuring news clips reporting on #MeToo alongside images showing sexism in films and elsewhere. The ad immediately went viral, with more than four million views on YouTube in 48 hours. Advertising is an industry that depends on instant recognition (in this case, recognition of #MeToo) and from an advertiser's perspective the campaign was stunningly successful.¹⁷

#MeToo has also spawned another movement called 'Time's Up', which acknowledges that class and colour in particular have considerable impact on vulnerability to sexual harassment and abuse. Founded

by Hollywood celebrities on 1 January 2018, Time's Up raises money for its legal defence fund in order to provide for victims of sexual violence, particularly those who encounter it in the workplace. The fund is aimed at and being accessed by those most vulnerable to sexual assault who are least likely to be able to afford adequate legal representation, notably women on low incomes.

#MeToo has been criticised (like #YesAllWomen before it) for a number of reasons and from different angles. As well as Hill's (2017) critique, mentioned above, others have noted the movement's lack of inclusiveness and its propensity to give a greater platform to those who are more privileged than to those most vulnerable to sexual violence. Other criticisms focus on the conflation of microaggressions with violent physical assault, of succumbing to political correctness,¹⁸ 'witch-hunting' of persons who have not committed any sexual offence¹⁹ or 'only' an offence that is arguably insufficiently serious to merit public criticism, and on not doing enough to tackle sexual violence.

But by any measure, the scale and impact of the viral and global #MeToo campaign has been immense. While it is sometimes referred to as the 'MeToo moment', the movement's influence has been and continues to be sustained. Alongside its persistent presence in popular media, evidence for this also comes in the form of multiple book-length publications.²⁰ Again, like the movement itself, these publications, first, are often centred on feminism and, second, incorporate self-disclosure. They are not, however, of one voice. Two examples illustrating this are Roxane Gay's *Not That Bad: Dispatches from Rape Culture* (2018) and Germaine Greer's *On Rape* (2018).

Gay opens her book with an account of her rape and its grave consequences:

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: ix)

What follows is an anthology of accounts testifying over and over again to the long-term harm and damage caused not only by rape but also by sexual harassment and even microaggressions. The purpose is to harness

Gay's hope that due to #MeToo 'something in this deeply fractured culture is ... changing' and to make a vocal contribution to the movement (Gay 2018: xii).

Rather differently, Germaine Greer, not long before the publication of her book, claimed in an interview at the 2018 Hay Festival that most rapes are 'lazy, careless and insensitive ... bad sex' and 'don't involve any injury whatsoever'.²¹ Greer also recalled her own physically violent experience of rape at the age of 18 and stated that women are not destroyed by rape but rather 'bloody annoyed' (Brown 2018). She characterized #MeToo as 'whingeing' (Flood 2018; Kaplan 2018).

Greer's book goes on in a similar vein to say that fear of rape is largely 'irrational', because '[a]n elbow, a thumb even, can do you more harm than a penis', hence, '[i]t is a nonsense for our daughters to be more frightened of penises than our sons are of knives or guns' (Greer 2018: 53). Greer's comments are very much at odds with the bulk of first-hand rape testimony, as well as with clinical research findings regarding rape victims, and are likely to be calculatedly provocative and polemical. She can indeed speak for herself – however unusual her rape response may be – because there is no single or uniform response to rape. Speaking for 'women' or 'raped persons' as a collective is, however, problematic and for all her assertions, I do not see how Greer can claim special authority.

These two publications attest to the poly-vocality of feminism²² and to the impact of and strong responses to #MeToo. Nearly two years after its inception, #MeToo is still very much around and, as I will go on to discuss, its resonance and reach are extensive and can be brought also to a nuanced and critical reading of texts of sexual violence in the Bible.

Gender-based and sexual violence in the Bible²³

Having demonstrated the influence of #MeToo and the spotlight it has cast on the extent of sexual violence in the present, let me turn next to the Bible. The Hebrew Bible is a text marked by violence of many kinds. And, as I argued in the Introduction, it includes depictions of and references to sexual threat, harassment, abuse, and assault. A comprehensive examination of violence vocabulary by David Clines makes this very clear. Adopting 'a largely physical definition of violence, ... typically injury done especially to the body' (Clines 2018: 6–7), he establishes that there are around 500 Hebrew terms for violence and that 'occurrences of violence total some 10,033', or, put differently, 'on average, there are more than six instances of violence on every page of

the Hebrew Bible' (Clines 2018: 3). Concerning language pertaining to sex, Clines writes,

This may be a contentious issue, but I would argue that all the language about sex describes acts of violence to the body of another. I found no case where the language of sex referred to an act of mutual desire. In every case sex is the action of a male: a male 'knows (*y'd*)', 'comes into (*bu*)' a woman (or another man); in the four cases where a woman is the grammatical subject of *y'd* 'used sexually, the verb is always negated (the woman 'had not known' a man). It is not relevant to ask whether in some examples there is consent, for ... an action may be violent even if the person acted upon has given consent. The terms 'to take (*lqch*) a woman' and 'to give (*tnn*) a woman' (still astonishingly used in our own culture) mean no more than the transfer of a woman from the authority of her father to that of her husband (with the additional imposition of sexual services). To call this 'marriage' can only be a euphemism. I do not deny that in ancient Israel there was mutual desire and mutual sexual activity. I am just registering the fact that there is no language expressing mutuality.

(Clines 2018: 17–18)

Clines' points here will be important as I go on to examine texts of sexual harassment and violence in the Bible. These will not be confined only to depictions of bodily injury and physical violence, as in Clines' semantic analysis, but will also include verbal and implied threats.

There is no analysis comparable to Clines' concerning violence in the New Testament. The supersessionist notion, however, that the Old Testament (that is, the Hebrew Bible) is violent while the New Testament is somehow all about 'things being better now' can be roundly challenged. Shelly Matthews (2017: 33) explains this notion as a form of Christian Marcionism.²⁴ But in the New Testament, too, there is plenty of violence committed by both humans and God: 'this collection of scriptures is not innocent of the ideologies that both inspire ... violence and sanction that violence as God-ordained' (Matthews 2017: 34). First of all, crucifixion is a gruesome and exceedingly violent form of torture (Hengel 1977) and some scholars have proposed that even prior to being nailed to the cross Jesus was brutalized, including sexually humiliated, as is hinted at in repeated mention of his being stripped and exposed (Tombs 1999). Violence is also present elsewhere and extends from name-calling (Matthew 23:15; Titus 1:12), which includes examples of anti-Jewish rhetoric (John 8:44), to the casual mention of

slavery²⁵ and threats of beating (Luke 12:45–47), incultating women to be silent and submissive on account of primordial transgression (1 Timothy 2:11–14), gory punishment (2 Thessalonians 1:6–9) and vitriol about immorality deserving death (Romans 1:32), to the gruesome images of battles, plagues, and bloodshed in Revelation (e.g. Revelation 19:17–21).²⁶ Sexualized violence also receives mention in Revelation, and will be discussed below.

Some commentators of the New Testament, notably Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, also point out that the

Christian proclamation of the kyriarchal politics of submission and its attendant virtues of self-sacrifice, docility, subservience, obedience, suffering, unconditional forgiveness, male authority and unquestioning surrender to G*d's will [e.g. 1 Peter 2:18–3:1; 2 Timothy 2:8–12] *covertly* advocate in the name of G*d patriarchal practices of victimization.

(Schüssler Fiorenza 2011: 110)²⁷

Like Phyllis Trible in the area of feminist Hebrew Bible studies (see below), Schüssler Fiorenza has had enormous and comparable impact in the area of the study of women, including of violence against women, but in New Testament studies.²⁸

Matthews (2017) uses Schüssler Fiorenza's ideas to make a case for the violence of 1 Corinthians 11:2–16, arguing that there is violence both *in the text* and in the workings *of the text* in Christian communities. Matthews points out that the passage from 1 Corinthians fulfils an important part in 'the household codes that directly exhort the submission of wives, slaves, and children to their husband, master, or father (Eph[esians] 5:21–6:9; Col[ossians] 3:18–4:1; 1 Pet[er] 2:18–3:7)' (Matthews 2017: 35).²⁹ She is aware of alternative ways of reading verse 3 – of the man (or husband) being the head of his woman (or wife) – but notes that the dominant interpretation pertains to the establishment of a hierarchy privileging males over females. Matthews also notes that the odd inculcation that a woman ought to cover her head 'because of the angels' (1 Corinthians 11:10) has been read in terms of a threat of sexual violence. Just as the sons of God saw beautiful women and raped them (Genesis 6:2–4), so, because a woman's hair is enticing or because 'a woman's head functions metonymically as her genitals ... the argument proceeds, [that] through uncovering their heads and exposing their sexuality, ... women are making themselves vulnerable to rape by the angels ... who harbor uncontrollable lust' (Matthews 2017: 39).³⁰ Matthews is careful to point out that texts such as 1 Corinthians 11 'are

not overtly advocating sexual abuse, rape, or femicide' but also, that 'such subordinationist rhetoric is still violent rhetoric, inscribing women as a diminished form of humanity, second to man and farther from God than man in the established hierarchy' and that such 'diminishment paves the way for more extreme acts of exploitation and victimization' (Matthews 2017: 38).

Notwithstanding evidence of gender fluidity and gender ambiguity in the Bible,³¹ sexual violence is most often cast in binary (that is, male-on-female) terms and is thereby gendered. Assumptions incline towards heteronormativity – that is, the notion that males are, hierarchically, above females; males are heterosexual (that is, attracted to and sexually active with females); and males take sexual initiative. Moreover, this is depicted as 'natural' or 'normative'.³²

Sexual violence in the Bible is not only gendered but also spectral, ranging from hints and implications, lewd comment (Judges 5:30),³³ threats of male rape (e.g. Genesis 19:5) and implied permission to rape girl children (Numbers 31:18) or one's daughter (Genesis 19:8), to depictions of rape, including incestuous rape (2 Samuel 13), gang rape (Judges 19:25), and mass abduction for the purpose of rape 'marriage' (Judges 21:21).³⁴

Before focusing on the dominant manifestation of male-on-female sexual violence in the Bible, it is important to mention that there are exceptions. The Bible, after all, is a diverse concatenation of texts, composed, edited, and collected together over centuries. It is a product of many times and contexts; its authors are unknown and the selection criteria for inclusion of texts in what is now called 'the Bible' can only be guessed at. It is not surprising, consequently, that what the Bible contains is internally diverse and variegated and sometimes contradictory. There are patterns and also departures from patterns. So, while the bulk of depictions show sexual violence perpetrated by men against women, which will go on to become the primary focus of this volume,³⁵ other gendered dynamics exist.

There are quite a number of indications of male–male sexual violence. I am using the designation male–male rape (or abuse or sexual violence), not 'homosexual rape' (*pace* Stone 1996: 79) because the distinction is important. In contemporary language usage 'homosexuality' is understood as a sexual orientation – that is, the tendency of a male or female to be sexually attracted to and fulfilled by a member of the same rather than a different sex (i.e. heterosexuality), or to both males and females (bisexuality). Sexual acts with a member of the same sex can result from homosexual attraction – but are not constitutive of homosexual orientation. Naming male–male rape 'homosexual', however,

suggests that rape is a matter of attraction. But instead, rape is above all a matter of power and humiliation – not sexual desire.³⁶

Male–male rape is threatened in two places in the Hebrew Bible: by the men of Sodom (Genesis 19:5)³⁷ and by the men of Gibeah (Judges 19:22). In both cases, a counter offer is made by a host protecting the male visitor/s being threatened. In Sodom, Lot offers his two virgin daughters (Genesis 19:8) and the old man at Gibeah offers the visiting Levite's wife and his own virgin daughter (Judges 19:24). Such offers would make no sense if the thugs of Sodom or Gibeah were indeed homosexual. More likely is that these men's intention is to humiliate another man by raping him. As Ken Stone explains, such an act may have been understood, heteronormatively, as feminizing a man (i.e. by placing him in a role where he is sexually penetrated, a position 'properly' associated with females) and thereby moving him socially downward (Stone 1996: 79).

The case has been made that the odd story fragment of Genesis 9:18–29 also conceals or hints at male–male sexual abusiveness. Here, when Noah awakes from a drunken sleep, he knows 'what his younger son [Ham] had done to him' (Genesis 9:24) and the expression that Ham sees 'the nakedness of his father' (Genesis 9:22) hints darkly at incest.³⁸ It has been proposed that Ham has raped Noah.³⁹ If so, this could again best be understood as an attempt to gain or to assert dominance – in this case by sexually humiliating a social superior: Noah, Ham's father.⁴⁰

Concerning male–male sexual abuse in the New Testament,⁴¹ Christopher Zeichmann (2018) discusses the story of the centurion and his servant (Matthew 8:5–13; Luke 7:1–10). This story has been explored by a number of biblical scholars in terms of its homoerotic potentialities. This is based first, on what is known of Roman pederasty and second, on the possible meaning of certain key terms in Koine, the Greek of the New Testament. In the Roman context, pederasty, or the sexual pursuit of male youths by older Roman men, appears to have been permissible. Just as in classical Greece, however, pederasty was circumscribed by laws and conventions.⁴² In Rome, penetration of free-born youths was illegal. The only boys a man could sexually penetrate legally were either slaves or his own former slaves, known as 'freedmen'. Slaves had no protection under the law against rape.⁴³ The vocabulary of the similar stories in Matthew and Luke, meanwhile, makes clear that the relationship is between a freeborn and dominant person (the centurion) and a person who is subordinate and a slave (*doulos*, Luke 7:2, 4, 10).⁴⁴ The centurion also calls his slave *pais* (another word for 'servant', Matthew 8:6, 8; Luke 7:7) and describes him as *eniminos*

(‘dear’, Luke 7:2) both of which have been said to hint at pederastic attraction.⁴⁵ For Zeichmann, eroticizing, let alone romanticizing, the relationship is, however, profoundly problematic given that the slave cannot exercise free will and is, consequently, unlikely to be a consenting participant in any (hypothetical) sexual activity.⁴⁶

Alongside mention and intimation of male–male sexual violence there is also reference in the Bible of female–male sexual harassment – notably, the story of Potiphar’s wife (Genesis 39).⁴⁷ In this story Joseph is a servant, or slave (Hebrew *‘eved*), in the household of his Egyptian master Potiphar, a high-ranking official. Potiphar’s wife becomes attracted to Joseph (Genesis 39:7) and, after he refuses her demand for sex, harasses him day after day (Genesis 39:10). Eventually, she propositions him again and – after Joseph escapes – accuses him, wrongfully, of attempted rape (Genesis 39:12–18).⁴⁸

Another text to mention is the disturbing story of Lot’s daughters (Genesis 19:30–38).⁴⁹ According to a face–value reading of the text, on consecutive nights the two daughters each get their father Lot so drunk that he, without knowing or remembering what he is doing, impregnates them. Given that the daughters connive to have sex with someone who is unable to give consent, this is an instance of female–male rape.⁵⁰

Female–female interactions receive considerably less attention in the Bible than male–male or male–female interactions.⁵¹ Any suggestion of sexualized violence between females is also rare. An example might be the harsh treatment Sarai inflicts on her slave Hagar. After Sarai has handed Hagar to Abram,⁵² because she wants Hagar to bear a child on her behalf (Genesis 16:2), she becomes angry with Hagar who, following conception, despises Sarai (Genesis 16:4).⁵³ In this context of interpersonal tension between women and in a text overshadowed by rape (because Hagar’s consent is implausible and certainly unmentioned), Sarai is said to have ‘dealt harshly with [Hagar]’ (New Revised Standard Version [NRSV] – using the verb of the root *‘nh*, which, as discussed, can have sexually aggressive, including rape-denotative meanings.

Thus, male–on–male and female–on–male sexual harassment, abuse, or violence are there in the Bible. Female–on–female sexualized violence is harder to identify. By far the most recurrent is male–on–female sexual violence. The Bible, in particular the Hebrew Bible, is punctuated with male–on–female violence and rape – which is why I will go on to argue (see Chapter 2) that the Bible reflects a rape culture.

Even if one does not accept Clines’ assertion, cited above, that ‘all the language about sex [in the Bible] describes acts of violence to the body of another’ (Clines 2018: 17), there is plenty to point to that is either suggestive, or unambiguously descriptive, of forced penetrative

sex of an unwilling victim. In other words, there is a lot about rape in the Bible. What follows is not exhaustive but should make this claim indisputable.

Genesis 34 is among the biblical passages most often identified as a rape text. This is the story, already alluded to above (p. 5), where Shechem, a Hivite prince, rapes Dinah, the daughter of Jacob and Leah.⁵⁴ The narrative begins with Dinah going out ‘to see the daughters of the land’ (Genesis 34:1). Todd Penner and Lilian Cates refer to this as a ‘momentary glimpse of agency’ before Dinah comes to exist only in terms of ‘the male gaze’ (Penner and Cates 2007: 37.4). Both the fact that Dinah is identified first as the daughter of Leah, rather than Jacob, and that she actively goes out to visit non-Hebrew women,⁵⁵ has made her suspect since antiquity. Leah, the rabbi recalled, also exercised sexual forwardness: in exchange for some mandrakes collected by her eldest son, she received conjugal rights to her husband from Rachel, her sister and Jacob’s favoured co-wife. Going to meet Jacob, Leah tells him that she has hired him (for sex) (Genesis 30:16). Is Dinah, like her mother, sexually forward, even sexually wayward? This was the question.⁵⁶ In the second verse, however, Shechem sees Dinah, takes her, has sex with her: he rapes her (Genesis 34:2). The first of the three verbs that convey Shechem’s actions (‘to take’) refers to moving Dinah from one place to another; the second is a standard word for sexual intercourse; the third is from *‘nh* and both qualifies and clarifies the preceding verb. This is the verb already mentioned, which frequently designates rape and the humiliation effected by rape.

Some commentators have challenged the view that Genesis 34:2 describes a rape. Both Lyn Bechtel (1994) and Ellen Van Wolde (2002a, 2002b), for example, argue that on the basis of Genesis 34 the conclusion that Shechem rapes Dinah cannot be substantiated. As already discussed, Van Wolde (2002a) argues that *‘nh* nowhere pertains to a sexual act but to being denigrated and, moreover, that Dinah’s consent receives no mention and probably does not matter. While, for Van Wolde (2002b), consent can neither be assumed nor denied, Dinah is, however, deemed to be defiled on account of sex with a foreign man. Bechtel (1994), too, maintains that none of the three verbs describing the sex act in Genesis 34:2 unequivocally means ‘rape’ and that *‘nh* pertains to the lowering of Dinah’s status, not to the forced nature of the sex act. She also contends that Shechem’s ‘love’ (Hebrew *‘ahv*) for Dinah and his speaking to her heart (Genesis 34:3) and determining to marry her are atypical of a rapist’s response following rape.⁵⁷

I align myself with the many modern English translations (see p. 5) and with the majority of commentators⁵⁸ who point out that the most

straightforward reading here is one of rape.⁵⁹ Here a man with high social standing and, quite possibly, a considerable sense of entitlement (cf. Genesis 34:4), simply takes the woman he wants – because he can. Dinah's voice and perspective do not receive mention. In all likelihood, her consent was irrelevant to her rapist. Consent, however, is unlikely and force and sexual penetration are indicated with little scope for ambiguity (Genesis 34:2). This is a rape text.

In addition to Genesis 34, three of the four focus texts in Phyllis Trible's (1984) seminal *Texts of Terror*⁶⁰ are rape texts. Two of these, Judges 19 and 2 Samuel 13, are possibly the most 'obvious' rape texts in the Bible. Both purport to depict events in Israel's history. Judges 19, aptly described by J. Cheryl Exum (2015 [1993]: 136) as among the 'most gruesome and violent [narratives] in the Bible', is set in pre-monarchal Israel (Judges 19:1) and tells the story of an unnamed Levite and his also unnamed wife. In the story the wife 'plays the harlot'⁶¹ or becomes angry⁶² (Judges 19:2), leaves her husband and returns to her father's house. After some months the Levite goes after her and eventually proceeds to return with her to his home in Ephraim. On the way, seeking to avoid lodgings among foreigners, the Levite accepts an invitation to stay overnight in the home of an old Ephraimite man in Gibeah. During the night, the old man's house is surrounded by thugs⁶³ (Judges 19:22) who demand 'to know' the visitor. The old man attempts to negotiate with the thugs, which involves the offer of his own virgin daughter and the visitor's wife as rape substitutes.⁶⁴ He tells the men to rape ('*nh*) *them* instead and to do with *them* whatever is 'good in their eyes' but not to commit an outrage against the man (Judges 19:24).⁶⁵ The men do not relent, at which point the Levite brings out to them his wife and they rape and abuse her all night (Judges 19:25).⁶⁶ Violence and a sense of menace are all too clear: the men are designated thugs and the verbs indicate sex and brutality. This is rape. Brutal gang rape. Brutality leads to the wife's death. The detail of her falling at the door, her hands on the threshold, is affecting (Judges 19:27). For a character who had no voice in a story in which she played a significant part, this dying gesture is acutely articulate, performative of unspeakable atrocity and injustice.⁶⁷

The second text of terror is the account of the rape of David's only named daughter, Tamar (2 Samuel 13). This rape text in the Bible is unusual in that the narrator makes an attempt to depict the damaging and devastating effect of rape on the victim.⁶⁸ Elsewhere no attempt is made to capture the rape victim's perspective. In this story, Tamar's brother Amnon, the royal firstborn, becomes obsessed with his sister. He desires her but is aware he should not act on his desire because

Tamar is a virgin (2 Samuel 13:2). After being advised by a crafty relative, Amnon contrives a situation where he and Tamar are alone. He orders her to 'lie with' him (2 Samuel 13:11). Tamar refuses, urging him not to force her (the word is from '*nh* and, again, clearly pertains to force and denigration – that is, to rape)⁶⁹ and not to commit a terrible deed (the Hebrew word is *nebalu*; cf. Genesis 34:7, also in reference to rape). In this story, more clearly than in any other in the Bible, unwillingness and absence of consent are explicit. Tamar reiterates her refusal, telling Amnon that rape would lead to shame for her and make him unworthy. Appealing to the only person of higher status and authority, she urges Amnon to speak to the king – presumably to arrange a formal union (2 Samuel 13:13). But, being stronger than Tamar, Amnon rapes her (2 Samuel 13:14).⁷⁰ Not only is this story unusual in that absence of consent is made clear, but also in describing the aftermath of the rape. Amnon's reaction after the rape is one of abhorrence and rejection towards Tamar (2 Samuel 13:15). Tamar identifies what was done to her as an evil (2 Samuel 13:16). After she is evicted, she tears her robe (which had signified her status as a virgin royal daughter) and performs other mourning actions. Like the Levite's wife's gesture of reaching wordlessly for the threshold, Tamar performs the great wrong that was done to her.⁷¹ She does not speak again but remains desolate (2 Samuel 13:20).⁷² As in Judges, following the rape of a woman, revenge is brutal and enacted by men.

The third rape text in *Texts of Terror* is the story of Hagar and Sarai. In the earlier part of this story, Sarai, the primary wife of Abram, is unable to conceive. She determines to use Hagar, her slave, as her surrogate and gives her to Abram to bear a child that will subsequently be hers (Genesis 16:1–4).⁷³ While I classify Genesis 16 as a rape story – given that Hagar's consent to being handed to Abram for sex and surrogacy is neither recorded nor likely – Trible's (1984) emphasis in her chapter is not on rape but on how this text demonstrates Sarai's brutal treatment of Hagar.⁷⁴ Trible's choice not to highlight Hagar's status as rape victim and sex slave is striking. Perhaps it constitutes a failure to recognize Hagar as such. Both rape of slaves and rape in warfare are not always or even often foregrounded and named as rape in the Bible.

As with the centurion's slave, discussed above, there is no mention in the biblical text of enslaved women having any significant legal protection, nor is there indication of any attempt to seek their consent to sex. Hagar is simply handed to Abram by Sarai and, in similar fashion, Rachel hands over Bilhah to Jacob (Genesis 30:3–7) and Leah hands over Zilpah, also to Jacob (Genesis 30:9–12). Reuben also lies with Bilhah – which is depicted as an affront to Jacob, not Bilhah (Genesis 35:22; 49:3–4).

The law of Leviticus also suggests slave women's susceptibility to rape and that such rape was accorded comparatively little seriousness. Here, it says that if a man has sex with a slave woman who has been designated for another man but has not been redeemed or granted her freedom, then the death penalty does not apply. Instead, the man must provide a guilt offering, upon which he is forgiven (Leviticus 19:20–22). This is not considered a case either of adultery (cf. Deuteronomy 22:22–24) or rape of a betrothed woman (cf. Deuteronomy 22:25), in both of which cases the death penalty applies. The likeliest reason is that even less than with 'freed' women, slave women had no legal protection and no ability to consent. They are depicted as rapable.⁷⁵ Then again, being a sole or primary wife, as opposed to a secondary wife or a slave, does not seem to make women entirely 'freed' given that Abram still puts Sarai at risk of sexual exploitation to protect himself from more powerful men – Pharaoh (Genesis 12)⁷⁶ and Abimelech (Genesis 20).⁷⁷

Legal texts, moreover, permit that a captive woman, the spoils of war, can be handed over, following a preparatory ritual, for sex – that is, rape (Deuteronomy 21:11–14).⁷⁸ Deuteronomy 21 does say that if the man who 'takes' (v.11) the captive woman no longer wants her, he must not sell her – presumably, into slavery. The reason given for this is that the man has committed *ni* against her (v.14). This verb, as already mentioned, can mean '(he) humiliated, or dishonoured, or humbled (her)', but it can also mean, '(he) raped (her)'. The law permits use of the captive woman for sex but the rape and degradation committed against her are also acknowledged – albeit, not to the extent that the man's actions are prohibited.

There is plenty in the Bible to suggest that rape was part of war (as it remains to this day) (e.g. Lamentations 5:11; Zechariah 14:2; cf. Judges 16:4; see Thistlewaite 1993; Washington 1998). Women raped in war are depicted, essentially, as collateral damage and war spoils in conflicts between warring groups (see Keefe 1993). Revenge for Dinah's rape, too, transpires in seizing Hivite women and girls as part of the booty (Genesis 34:29), maybe for the purpose of revenge rape. Elsewhere, female captives in war were used for sex – that is, raped (e.g. Judges 21:11–14) – and were possibly sometimes very young (Numbers 31:17–18). While descriptions of rape in war are sometimes a device to arouse pathos (Lamentations 1:8–10),⁷⁹ rape is also 'part of the furniture' of war, and mentioned in passing in song to account for the delay of victorious armies (Judges 5:30). Rape in war is also depicted as permissible, advantageous, and as divinely mandated.

Rape in the Bible is often an expression of power – and not only of victorious armies, as in the examples above, but also of sons of God

(Genesis 6:2) and high-status men. As with Shechem and Dinah, when King David 'takes' and 'lies with' Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11:4), Bathsheba's consent is unstated.⁸⁰ David, as the story unfolds, is rebuked by Nathan, his prophet, for adultery and for engineering the murder of Bathsheba's husband (2 Samuel 12:9), but he is not rebuked for the rape he has committed. David's taking of Bathsheba expresses and asserts his power.⁸¹ Just as David's son Amnon used his power to take and rape Tamar, the woman he desired, so David and other powerful men rape: it is an act which expresses and performs masculine power. Hence, when Absalom, another of David's sons, stages an uprising against his father, the king, he, apparently strategically, following the advice of a highly regarded counsellor (2 Samuel 16:23), publicly rapes David's wives who had been left behind when the king escaped his son's onslaught (2 Samuel 16:22). Absalom's rape of his father's wives is intended to perform and display his assertion of superior power.⁸²

Rape in the Bible is almost⁸³ always understood as occurring outside of marriage⁸⁴ – though rape can be a catalyst for marriage (Genesis 34:2–4; Judges 21:23), or marriage a 'solution' to 'make the best of rape' (Deuteronomy 22:29; 2 Samuel 13:13, 16). Rape is portrayed as polluting, denigrating, and humiliating. Even if a woman was virtuous and resisted rape, like Tamar, and even if generous amends and marriage are offered following a rape, as in the case of Dinah, rape is defiling. Lack of fault or attempts at restitution do not alter this. Rape renders Tamar desolate (2 Samuel 13:20) and Dinah defiled (Genesis 34:13, 27).⁸⁵ While other types of sex – such as adulterous sex (cf. Leviticus 18:20) – are also depicted as shocking and defiling, the association between rape and profound humiliation for the rape victim is very pronounced.

Because rape is clearly so damaging to the victim, rape is present also in descriptions of punishment – particularly in the writings of the Prophets. The punishment of Babylon, personified in the book of Isaiah as a woman ('virgin daughter of Babylon', Isaiah 47:1), is humiliation on account of her lack of mercy, her arrogance and wickedness (Isaiah 47:6–7, 10). The sexual overtones of this punishment are clear. Hence, there is a reference to Babylon 'grinding', alongside images of 'her' being stripped, uncovered, and shamed (Isaiah 47:2–3). All of these are suggestive of rape.⁸⁶ In Jeremiah, very similar imagery – the lifting up of skirts, suffering of violence, and shame (Jeremiah 13:22, 26) – are descriptive of punishment for abominations, adulteries, bestial neighing, and lewd harlotries (Jeremiah 13:27). Robert Carroll (2006 [1986]: 304) interprets the image as a referred metaphor, reflecting actual wartime practice, and draws attention to the full force of the brutality of this 'poetic justice for sins committed':

Jerusalem has become a violated woman, a typical victim of invading warriors. The images used are graphic and violent. They are metaphors of the city's humiliation and defeat, but they are drawn from the real world of horrendous aggression directed against women in time of war and invasion. In such brutal times the women are led off to the invaders [Jeremiah] (38:23), stripped naked and savagely raped – their genitals suffer violence and their shameful humiliation is made a public spectacle. Metaphors and reality combine to portray a sickening picture of battered sexuality and torn flesh, an image of a culture invaded, raped and devastated. (Carroll 2006 [1986]: 304)

Similarly, Israel's disobedience is likened to the unfaithfulness of the prophet Hosea's wife, Gomer. The punishment advocated here too – to strip and expose and to make 'her' (i.e. Gomer/Israel) a dried up wasteland (Hosea 2:3 [Hebrew 2:5]) – again recalls rape.⁸⁷ While the word is not the same as that denoting Tamar's desolation after her rape, the idea conveyed here, that rape is followed by a state of emptiness and destruction, is very similar. Most extensive, violent, and abhorrent is the woman metaphor of Ezekiel (Chs 16 and 23), which is cited as a quintessential example of the 'pornographic'.⁸⁸ Here, after a catalogue of transgressions,⁸⁹ the punishment inflicted on Jerusalem is to strip her before a mob of her lovers (Ezekiel 16:37; 23:22) who will leave her naked and bare, stone her, stab her and burn her possessions (Ezekiel 16:39–41), fight her with an army, remove her nose and ears – and strip her and leave her exposed (Ezekiel 23:24–29). The rape imagery is particularly vicious and the metaphor acutely disturbing – all the more because it is God who legitimates and metes out the punishment.⁹⁰

Similar images of rape as punishment occur also in the New Testament. The book of Revelation mentions a false prophetess, 'that woman Jezebel' (alluding to the proverbially abhorrent Phoenician queen of Israel, consort of King Ahab),⁹¹ who will be 'cast into a bed ... of tribulation', which has ominous overtones of sexual violence (Revelation 2:22). As with the Ezekiel example above, the prophecy is identified as divine pronouncement ('the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him ...', Revelation 1:1), which again makes the sexualized and violence particularly disturbing due to its being divinely legitimated and initiated. Revelation also contains an example of a prophetic woman metaphor, reminiscent of the examples from Isaiah, Hosea, and Ezekiel, with a sinful city in need of punishment again depicted as a woman on whom sexualized violence is poured out. Hence, in Revelation 17 a woman called a harlot, or whore, will be made 'desolate and naked';

Moreover, her flesh will be eaten and burned with fire (Revelation 17:15–18). Again, God is executor of this sexualized violence.⁹²

Nevertheless, despite numerous texts depicting episodes of sexual violence that go unpunished (or that are even divinely mandated), there are biblical laws inculcating punishment for rape. These laws stress, above all, the importance of betrothal, which signifies to whom a woman belongs. An unbetrothed woman is the property of her father; a betrothed woman is the property of the man to whom she is betrothed. If a man has sex with a woman betrothed to another man both are to be killed – no room is made for the possibility that the woman may have been raped (Deuteronomy 22:22).⁹³ An elaboration specifies that if a man has sex with a betrothed virgin in a town, both are to be killed: the man, because he raped (from *'nli*) the virgin woman, and the woman 'because she did not cry out' (Deuteronomy 22:24). While there could be all sorts of reasons why a woman might not scream, her complicity in rape appears to be assumed if she does not cry out in a place where she might be heard. If a man overpowers a betrothed virgin in the open country, however, then only the man is to be executed, not the woman, who may have cried out but not been heard (Deuteronomy 22:25–27). If a virgin woman is not betrothed and a man seizes her and lies with her and they are found out, then the law specifies that the man pays the woman's father a sum of money (presumably as compensation for her lowered economic value; cf. Exodus 22:16–17). Only now is it elaborated upon that this is because the man has raped the woman (from the verb *'nli*). Moreover, in such cases the man and woman must marry with no possibility of divorce (Deuteronomy 22:28–29). In one sense, this is something of an invitation to marriage by rape (cf. Judges 21:20–23).⁹⁴ In these laws, women are depicted as the property of men; their virginity is a valuable asset; consent is assumed if a woman does not scream and marriage to a rapist is regarded as a 'solution' to 'the problem' of a defiled and devalued woman. The laws paint a bleak picture.

As demonstrated, there is a lot of sexual violence in the Bible and the majority of depictions describe male perpetrators and female victims. Depressingly, even biblical books widely praised for affirming women, namely, Song of Songs and the two books named after women, Ruth and Esther, are overshadowed by more sinister indications of sexual violence. Song of Songs has a prominent speaker who is presumed to be female. She yearns for her male lover (who describes her body and erotic appeal at length). She is the little sister of her protective brothers who seek to restrain her – by force if need be (Song 5:9) – and there are watchmen who beat her and take away her veil when they find her in the city streets in search of her beloved (Song 5:7).⁹⁵

The book of Ruth, is often characterized as a pastoral idyll and a women's book but it, too, makes reference – rather casually – to the dangers of working alongside men in the fields. Boaz, a wealthy landowner, instructs Ruth to stay near the women while working in his fields – something Ruth's mother-in-law Naomi impresses on Ruth, too (Ruth 2:22). Boaz also assures her that he has instructed the men not to touch her (Ruth 2:8–9).⁶ This suggests dangerous working conditions – certainly for women. While Boaz seems to acknowledge the existence of menace and harassment, he later praises Ruth for not going after the men (Ruth 3:10) – as if, had she been molested, it might have been her fault after all.

Finally, although much is made of the book of Esther's comic elements and of it being a book celebrating a clever and beautiful Jewish queen, Esther also speaks of women who are groomed and marketed for sex. Hence, the text refers to beautiful young virgins brought to Ahasuerus of Persia from all over his kingdom (Esther 2:3). Each girl, following a regimen of beautification, is brought to the king for one night to delight him (Esther 2:12–17), which is strongly reminiscent of trafficking and sex work (see Dunbar 2018).

All of this demonstrates that sexualized and gendered violence is widely in evidence in much of the Bible. Neither texts that apparently foreground and celebrate women (such as the books of Ruth and Esther) nor the New Testament (sometimes characterized as being a tonic to the violence of the Hebrew Bible) are exempt from this generalization. #MeToo confirms the ubiquity of sexual violence right up to the present. In both the revelations of this movement and in biblical texts such violence is perpetrated most commonly by men against women and girls, although other gendered dynamics are also represented by both. Next, we will bring the two together and examine them in the light of rape myths and rape culture.

Notes

- 1 Technically, '#MeToo' is the hashtag, or metadata tag, used on the social network service Twitter as the mechanism for finding messages relating specifically to the Me Too movement – individuals publicly disclosing sexual harassment and abuse with a view to inciting solidarity, empowerment, and resistance. The hashtag has, however, become a shorthand designation for the movement itself and this is how '#MeToo' is widely used in this book.
- 2 The topic of 'popular misogyny' in twenty-first century media culture (e.g. endemic sexist trolling and the manosphere) is regarded by some as the male counterpart and by others as the opposition to digital feminism. A discussion of this important topic is beyond the scope of this volume; see Sarah Banet-Weiser (2015) for a brief summary. The important research of

Kathryn Barber (2018) focuses especially on religious ideologies and gender-based violence of the manosphere.

- 3 Sexual abuse is widely recognized as spectral. It ranges from microaggressions – that is, brief and often non-remarkable, day-to-day indignities of a verbal or behavioural (such as gestural) nature, which communicate hostile, discriminatory, or degrading slights and derogatory attitudes or implicit bias – to physical violence and torture aimed at either individuals, groups, or whole masses of people. Sexual abuse is not confined to physical violence (typically understood as injury done to the body) but extends to threats and humiliations and causes psychological and emotional damage and deprivation. Rape, meanwhile, is variously defined in different jurisdictions (see p. 2).
- 4 Rape-supportive manifestations point to rape culture (see Chapter 2).
- 5 Alongside Brownmiller and other second-wave feminists, prominent here are, in the US context, conversations and cases centred on Title IX and its stipulation that sexual harassment and assault constitute a form of discrimination on the basis of sex. Many of these focused on campus settings (see Minister 2018; Scholz 2018). On rape on US campuses see also the film *The Hunting Ground*.
- 6 See Filipovic (2013). There are numerous large-scale and brutal examples from non-European and non-North American contexts, such as the mass abductions and sexual enslavement by Boko Haram in Nigeria and the atrocities and sex slavery inflicted on Yazidi women by ISIS (the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, also known by the names ISIL and Daesh). While the scourge of sexual and gender-based violence is global and #MeToo has had resonance worldwide, with India's Bollywood, for instance, reporting widespread abuse and harassment (see Surt 2018), my focus will be principally on one main hub of its influence, which lies in the Christian-dominant and Anglophone democracies of North America and Europe, as well as Australia and New Zealand.
- 7 For a range of examples, most from Anglophone democracies, including accusations of sexual assault by US President Donald Trump, the Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2012–17), and the New Zealand 'Roast Busters' scandal, see Peters and Besley (2019: 459–462).
- 8 There have been other mass feminist movements aimed at publicizing and resisting violence against women. One notable example is the movement founded by Eve Ensler and her play *The Vagina Monologues*, written and first performed in 1996. The play has been translated into dozens of languages and performed all over the world. In 1998 Ensler launched V-Day, a global activist movement raising consciousness and funds through productions of the play in order to stop violence against women and girls.
- 9 See also Phipps (forthcoming): '#MeToo could largely be interpreted as a conversation between white people.'
- 10 For an excellent examination of #MeToo and the backlash against the movement, with particular focus on the notions of victim feminism and white woundedness, see Phipps (forthcoming).
- 11 Rodger has since become an 'incel' (involuntarily celibate) hero, see BBC News (2018).
- 12 Reports of mass sexual harassment on New Year's Eve 2015–16 in Cologne were another significant factor in propelling public outrage and mobilizing

change in the form of adapting Germany's legal definition of rape to a consent-centric one. As has been pointed out, the same event appears religiously to have been exploited also to fan simmering Islamophobic and anti-migrant attitudes (Popova 2019: 175; Sanyal 2019: 90–95).

13 See Chapter 2 and Chapter 2, Note 66.

14 I have mentioned only the best-known antecedents of #MeToo. There are very many more and diverse examples of digital feminist activism. Alongside the numerous individuals posting regularly on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and in blogs on the topic of sexual violence, these include the website 'Hollaback!', which shares stories of street harassment alongside maps of locations using GPS technology, and 'Everyday Sexism', which was founded by Laura Bates and collects public posts of personal accounts of sexism, as well as the Tumblr site 'Who Needs Feminism?', which collates pictures of handcrafted signs explaining the importance of feminism. For a fuller discussion of these and other examples, as well as of the centrality of personal testimonials in feminist activism, see Mendes *et al.* (2019).

15 The number of high-profile men coerced or forced to resign following Weinstein's fall stood at 42 by mid-December 2017. More followed. Decades of accusations of sexual violence made by more than 60 women against actor Bill Cosby transpired in a conviction for three counts of aggravated indecent assault in September 2018. By far the most disclosures of #MeToo concern sexual assaults on younger women by heterosexual men (Peters and Besley 2019) but there are some exceptions. Kevin Spacey stands accused of sexual predation on males, including a male minor. There have also been allegations of women molesting male minors (e.g. the accusation that actor Asia Argento assaulted former co-star Jimmy Bennett when he was 17).

16 There are hashtags centred outside of the Anglophone world, such as #YoTambien (Spain and Latin America), #RiceBunny (China), and #Bal-ancetopore (France), as well as reports of the growing momentum of #MeToo in Egypt (Afify 2019), and Thailand (Ellis-Petersen 2019). Meanwhile, in New York, #MeToo was cited as one reason rape reports increased by 22 per cent in 2018 (Morales 2019), while France has launched #NeRienLaisserPasser, the first online portal of its kind in the world – a 24-hour police-run chatline for reporting or talking about sexual assault or sexist discrimination (Willscher 2019).

17 The ad generated both praise and angry criticism (Topping *et al.* 2019).
18 Mention of #MeToo occurred a number of times in the Munk Debate 'Political correctness gone mad?', moderated by Rudyard Griffiths and featuring Stephen Fry, Jordan Peterson, Michael Eric Dyson, and Michelle Goldberg. Fry likened what he characterized as the mood in the wake of #MeToo of not being able to speak freely of sexual romantic feeling to 'it's like the Stasi listening: you'd better be careful' (Griffiths 2018: 82). But Goldberg argued that 'the idea that it's become this all-encompassing Stalinist inquisition' or that persons were ruined on the back of 'a McCarthyist rumour' was 'a bit of an exaggeration'. She pointed out that Bill Cosby had two trials and that there were 'any number of women telling similar stories of the most brutal sorts of rape', and that Weinstein lost his career 'only after being accused credibly and repeatedly with hard evidence of payouts by many, many women' (Griffiths 2018: 17).

19 Broadcaster Paul Gambaccini and singer Cliff Richard – both cleared of allegations of historical sexual assault – have recently backed a pressure group campaigning for the anonymity of those accused of sexual offences (*Telegraph* 2019).

20 A number of these have been consulted for the present volume, among them Popova (2019) and Sanyal (2019).

21 In her book, Greer refers to 'banal rape' (2018: 70) and states (oddly) that '[i]f we are talking physical injuries, these are usually the consequence of the assault, not of the rape per se' (Greer 2018: 57). Given that Greer (2018: 1) defines rape as 'penetration of the vagina of an unwilling human female by the penis of a human male' it seems odd to distinguish firmly between rape (or forced sex) and assault. The two often go together.

22 See also Chapter 2, Note 36.

23 For the purposes of this volume 'the Bible' refers to the Hebrew Bible (or Old Testament) and the New Testament (or Greek Bible). There are also narratives of and allusions to sexual harassment and violence in other ancient Jewish and early Christian writings. A study of sexual violence and the Apocrypha, or deuterocanonical writings of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches, would, however, certainly be possible. Notable here is the book of Susanna (sometimes included in the book of Daniel). The kernel of the story concerns the beautiful and virtuous Susanna who is observed bathing by two lecherous elders. When they try to blackmail her into having sex with them, she refuses. Susanna is about to be put to death for promiscuity when the young Daniel interrupts and proves her innocence. For a study of the book of Susanna and its early interpretation see Schroeder (2007: 206–20).

24 Marcion was an important figure during the early formative period of Christianity. While the Church Fathers excommunicated Marcion, his theology rejecting the deity of the Hebrew Bible in favour of the Father of Christ remained influential.

25 On violence, including sexual violence, as inherent in the institution of slavery in the New Testament era, see Marchal (2011).

26 For a succinct summary with examples, see Matthews (2017) and her 'Violence in the New Testament' (No date).

27 Other commentators argue that such a reading can be inverted by stressing that divine love is revealed not 'in the suffering of crucifixion itself – which would be akin to reliving and glorifying such suffering' but in divine 'solidarity with those who suffer, and ... [in] vindicating and [the] healing restoration of such persons' (Matthews 2017: 51; cf. the practical application of this in Tamar Campaign 2007).

28 Schüssler Fiorenza expresses much of her analysis of violence against women in the terminology she creates. The term 'kyriarchal' in the quotation on p. 21 is coined by her and in feminist theory is used to refer to systemic oppression. Her use of 'G*d' and 'the*logy' seeks to draw attention to and challenge androcentric terminology. Another neologism of hers is 'wo/men', which intends to signal

that not all women are the same but differ according to class, ethnicity, race, sexuality, religion, nation, and experience. The slash also reminds that there are marginalized men in the world, and were throughout

history, who face oppressions and who are also categorized as not 'real' men.

(Matthews 2017: 34, n.9)

29 The codes stress submission and discipline (e.g. Ephesians 5:22, 6:4–5), as well as toleration of harsh treatment (1 Peter 2:18–3:1) but also proscribe harsh treatment (Colossians 3:19) and advise just treatment (Colossians 4:1). They might be characterized as ranging from passive-aggressive to very aggressive.

30 There is certainly some preoccupation with women who adorn themselves and are not suitably modest. This is evident both in the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Isaiah 3:16; Hosea 2:13) and in the New Testament (1 Peter 3:3, 1 Timothy 2:9; Revelation 17:4).

31 See especially the contributions in Hornsby and Stone (2011). As Stone (2011: 95) points out, the Bible 'prove[s] to be less secure, less "straight"-forward ... than those who make ... appeals [to it] imagine'.

32 For a fuller discussion see Hornsby 2014. Hornsby (2014: 326) also contends here, however, that '[h]eteronormativity is not in the text, waiting to be discovered; the interpreter, or reader, brings the assumption of heteronormativity to the text to justify heteronormativity'.

33 In this verse, from the victory song of Deborah and Barak, the female advisors to General Sisera's mother account for the soldiers' delay in returning from battle by saying that each man is enjoying a *racham rachamāyīm*, literally, 'a womb or two' (not, as NRSV translates more coyly, 'a girl or two for every man'). Guest (2011: 35) proposes here the more crass and colloquial 'a cunt or two for every dick'. This translation captures the intentionally lewd force well, I think. Male dominance is asserted using a violent sexual image of post-conquest rape.

34 I am in agreement with Clines (see p. 20) that the use of the word 'marriage' in the context of the Hebrew Bible is mostly euphemistic. In this particular passage from Judges, relating the seizure of the young women, or girls, of Shiloh, the term is particularly blatantly objectionable – hence, the inverted commas.

35 Not least, because a comparable pattern is evident also in the #MeToo disclosures, with male-on-female violence outnumbering other binary combinations. There are some indications that male-male sexual abuse is also high. This is demonstrated in the acutely distressing findings of the Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Of the 6,875 survivors of abuse whose experiences are analysed therein, the majority are male and suffered abuse as minors. The majority of perpetrators are male Catholic priests (Peters and Besley 2019: 459).

36 I discuss these matters more fully elsewhere (Stiebert 2016: 82, n.97, 93, n.12, and 95).

37 Some interpreters do argue differently that 'know' pertains not to carnal knowledge but to 'investigating' the visitors to Sodom. For a persuasive argument along these lines, see Bailey (2010). On 'know' pertaining to sexual intercourse see Gravett (2004: 284, n.16).

38 It does so unequivocally in the inculcations of Leviticus 18 and 20 (e.g. Leviticus 18:7–8; Leviticus 20:11).

39 For a full discussion see Stiebert (2016: 100–09). As explained here, one less often made counter-case is that Noah may have abused Ham.

40 More hints of sexually aggressive male-on-male behaviour have been identified in Ishmael's mocking of Isaac (Genesis 21:9) and the Philistines' demeaning humiliation of Samson – both times using verbs of the root *ts-dh-q* (Judges 16:25). This word designates sexual insult at Genesis 39:14 and 39:17. The Samson story also incorporates the verb *ʾyḥ* (Judges 16:5, 6, 19; cf. Gravett 2004: 295). For a fuller discussion see Stiebert (2019: 95–96, n.46). Others have also suggested Job 30:11 (Gravett 2004: 287–88), Jeremiah 20:7–8 (Crenshaw 1984: 39; Stone 2007) and Lamentations 3 (Nagoue 2018).

41 On sexualized abuse of Jesus see Tombs (1999) and on the New Testament affirmation of the ubiquitous and unexceptional abuse of slaves – including for sexual abuse – with particular reference to The Letter of Paul to Philemon, see Marchal (2011). As stated above, in the New Testament links between sexual violence and Christian theology are for the most part covert, as opposed to overt.

42 For a comprehensive discussion see Williams (1999). Williams argues that the main binary in Roman sexuality is conceived of not so much in terms of heterosexual/homosexual but of free/slave and dominant/subordinate.

43 This is reflected also of female slaves in the Hebrew Bible (see p. 27). As with boys in pederastic sex there is no indication with female slaves either of such notions as age of consent or statutory rape.

44 Like Hebrew words, Koine words are transliterated here. The word *doulos* is also used in the centurion's words that demonstrate his authority (Matthew 8:9; Luke 7:8).

45 For an example, see Jennings' chapter 'The Centurion's Lad' (2003: 131–44). For a revised and more nuanced version, see Jennings and Lew (2004).

46 Zeichmann is non-committal about whether the centurion and the slave have sex. As he points out, this is not made explicit in either telling of the Gospel story. His point is that a Roman slave cannot make free decisions, including concerning participation in sex acts with his master. The same appears to be the case with female slaves in certain Hebrew Bible passages (see p. 27).

47 Jael's murder of Sisera (Judges 4:18–21; 5:26–27) is also sometimes argued to constitute an aggressive quasi-sexual act, or reversed rape (see Stiebert 2016: 121–22 and 122, n.81). Another woman behaving in a sexually forward way towards a man and with destructive intent is the adulteress of Proverbs 7 (vv.21–23). See Note 40 above on the possibility that Delilah, alongside the Philistines, humiliates Samson sexually.

48 I have discussed this story and its implications fully elsewhere (Stiebert 2019).

49 The story is sparsely told and variously interpreted, with some commentators arguing that the narrative subverts events and projects Lot's desire on to his daughters. Others contend that the story is above all about trickery and overturning social norms, possibly for comic effect. Others again, see the story as celebrating female initiative. There is considerable disagreement as to whether the story, implicitly or otherwise, critiques Lot, the daughters, both, or neither. I have discussed these matters fully elsewhere (Stiebert 2016: 156–65).

50 Scholz (2010: 169) agrees: 'the male character is an unambiguous rape victim.'

51 I discuss the lack of and possible hints at female-female sexualization in the Hebrew Bible fully elsewhere (Stiebert 2016: 114–32).

52 Sarai and Abram are better known by their post-covenant names – Sarah and Abraham.

53 Hagar's disdain for Sarai is widely accounted for as deriving from Hagar's feeling of superiority – because she has conceived, whereas Sarai had not. As such, Sarai may be angered at what she considers Hagar's insubordination (see Stiebert 2019: 75, n.5). As Katie Edwards (private correspondence) points out, however, such a reason is not spelled out and Hagar might also – quite justifiably and understandably! – feel disdain on account of how inhumanely she has been treated. After all, Hagar is handed to Abram and is raped for the purpose of bearing a child that will not be hers (Genesis 16:1–2).

54 I have discussed this narrative more fully elsewhere (Stiebert 2013: 50–59). The trope of the dangerous and sexually provocative foreign woman is well established in the Bible (see Stiebert 2019: 85–88 and Chapter 2 below).

55 Blyth (2010: 159) discusses the many interpretations that project onto Dinah's solo excursion 'pejorative overtones of sexual and social impropriety' but finds the biblical text itself free from such overtones, concluding that '[Dinah's] departure ... has the appearance of a distinctly harmless act, devoid of any pejorative content ... and ... contextualized within the strictly gendered space of *femile* companionship'. For analysis of numerous interpretations of the Dinah story, mostly from the early Church through to the Reformation and often demonstrating such overtones, see Schroeder (2007: 11–51).

57 Bechtel (1994: 29), instead, considers Amnon's feelings of hatred and loathing of his rape victim (2 Samuel 13:15, see p. 27) to be a more plausible and typical post-rape response. Keady, meanwhile, points out that persons who profess to love do rape. She cites a recent example of a man who abducted a woman, raped her and coerced her into marriage (Keady 2018: 69–70, 76).

58 See, for instance, Davies (2003: 56–57), Shemesh (2007: 2–21), Scholz (2010) – who specifies that this is an example of acquaintance rape (Scholz 2010: 32–38) – Klopfer (2010), and, most fully, Blyth (2010). I also recommend Dube (2017) who reads Shechem as a rapist but as a rapist who, being cast as 'a native with uncontrolled sexual passions', 'does the unimaginable' (2017: 52) – namely, he is one of the colonized who rapes and then wants to marry a daughter of the colonizer. Dube's subtle reading is much informed by damaging discourses and experiences of conquest from her own southern African setting. Penner and Cates (2007: 37.2) also explore the colonizing interpretations of Genesis 34 and point out the silencing of the colonized Shechemites. Their interpretation, however, highlights above all the 'obscure and ambiguity' of the narrative (Penner and Cates 2007: 37.5).

59 The allusion to the event in the apocryphal book of Judith also describes what looks like rape (Judith 9.2). The rape in turn leads on to revenge rape (Judith 9.4).

60 This short book remains a classic of feminist biblical interpretation. Scholz (2018: 185–86) rightly calls this a 'pioneering book ... the first feminist-scholarly book ever published on sexual violence in the Bible'. The sole focus text that is not a rape text is Judges 11, the story of Jephthah's sacrifice

of his daughter. I disagree with Bal (1988: 64–65 and 68) that Jephthah's carrying out of the sacrifice of his daughter and shedding her blood inevitably conjures up a groom laying his virgin bride on the marriage bed before having sexual intercourse with her.

61 The Hebrew verb is of the root *znh* from which is derived the noun *zōnā*, meaning sex-worker but rendered in most translations as 'prostitute' (NRSV), 'harlot' (New American Standard), or 'whore' (King James Version [KJV]). The verb can refer to unfaithfulness or disobedience in matters other than those pertaining to sexual continence. The verb is accompanied by a preposition with pronominal suffix meaning 'against him'. Some translations have '[she] deserted (him)' (see Sefaria), which is legitimate, while others have 'she was unfaithful to him' (e.g. New International Version [NIV]). The Hebrew text is ambiguous as to whether the Levite's wife committed any sexual impropriety. This is also maintained in some English translations, such as the Douay-Rheims Bible, which has 'she left him'. Other English translations, however, are judgement-laden. This is most blatant with the Jubilee Bible, which translates '[she] committed adultery against him'. See Bible Hub.

62 This interpretation is reflected in the New Living and Good News translations and goes back to the Greek of the Septuagint, which has *orgisithē auto*, 'she was angry with him'.

63 While the story is in many ways very sparsely told and avoids any personal names, there is here a clear shorthand to point out who the 'baddies' of the story are. The story also contains notable detail in terms of places or affiliations with place. Hence, there is mention of suspicion of 'foreigners' (Judges 19:12) and of being from Ephraim (Judges 19:1, 16, 18), or Bethlehem in Judah (Judges 19:1–2), or Gibeath (Judges 19:14, 16) and of being of the children of Israel (Judges 19:12). One reason for this may be that the rape ultimately leads to war among the tribes of Israel (Judges 20) – and then to more rape (Judges 21).

64 The similarity with Lot's offer to the thugs of Sodom to rape his two virgin daughters (Genesis 19:8) is clear and widely noted by commentators.

65 In her close reading of this text Triple (1984) discusses in detail how gynostatic (that is, cruel and abhorrent about and for women) this story is.

66 Mercifully, this part of the story is not told with much elaboration. Two verbs describe the thugs' action: the first is from *yād* ('they knew'), a verb sometimes used of carnal knowledge, or sexual intercourse, and used together with the signifier of the definite object – i.e. '(they knew/sexually abused) her'; the second is from *'il* with the preposition *'in* and a pronominal suffix ('they thrust into her' or 'they severely abused her'). For more in-depth information on this verb, see Gravett (2004: 284). Later, when the Levite recounts events (Judges 20:5), he uses a verb from the root *'wh* applied to the men of Gibeath. Here '(my wife) they raped' (e.g. NIV) is an apt translation. Added to this is 'and she died', which is appropriately translated consequentially: 'so that she died' (e.g. New King James Version [NKJV]) or 'until she was dead' (New Living Translation). The International Standard Version captures the horror with 'they tortured ... to death'. While detail is sparse, and no attempt is made to give insight into the wife's perspective, the account is of a woman who is brutally raped to death.

67 Trible's (1984) reading in her chapter entitled 'An Unnamed Woman: The Extravagance of Violence' makes the multiple levels on which the wife is violated particularly clear.

68 I have discussed 2 Samuel 13 more fully elsewhere (Stiebert 2013: 59–64, 2016: 182–93).

69 Verbs of the root *'nh* refer twice more to Amnon's rape of Tamar in later reflections (2 Samuel 13:22, 32).

70 This is clearly rape. Amnon refuses to listen to Tamar's protest. He overpowers her (Hebrew *yechezeq minemeh*, literally 'he was stronger than her'), he rapes her (from *'nh*), and he 'lies with her' or, given that the verb 'to lie' has a direct object, the colloquial 'he laid her' is apt.

71 The vast majority of modern commentators, including Trible (1984), read 2 Samuel 13 as an affecting story of the violent rape of an obedient young woman. I have discussed Tamar as ideal rape victim elsewhere (Stiebert 2013: 61–64, 98). One glaring exception is Reis (1998) who interprets Tamar as a manipulative schemer seeking to marry the heir to the throne. I reject her interpretation and consider it toxic and victim-blaming (see Scholz 2010: 41; Stiebert 2016: 188–91). Schroeder points out that in early Church and medieval interpretation the story is often cast as a cautionary tale about predatory men who appear honourable on the surface. Moreover, Tamar is also sometimes reproached in interpretations from this earlier time, including for destroying her brothers (Schroeder 2007: 153–90).

72 As in contemporary times (see Introduction, Note 37) there is a suggestion in the Hebrew Bible of more and of less 'deserving' victims of rape. Hence, the narrator makes every effort to construct Amnon as a sly and nefarious villain who planned his violent deed, deceiving his father and the sister he ought to have protected and thereby abusing both his physical advantage and his social status, while Tamar is cast as an entirely innocent victim of evil connivance who could not have foreseen or resisted what befalls her. Tamar is 'a tragic heroine, beautiful, royal, virginal, obedient, courageous, and wise in the face of threat and violence; forces beyond her control conspire against her through no fault of her own, and she comes to harm' (Stiebert 2013: 64). Tamar is thereby portrayed in very sympathetic terms as an entirely respectable and innocent victim of rape, whereas other portrayals (such as those of the rapes of the Levite's wife and Dinah) leave some scope for questioning: after all, the Levite's wife 'played the harlot' (i.e. may have been unfaithful) and left her husband, and Dinah went to see the women of the land. Certainly some commentators have picked up on such elements to impute or allocate some suspicion and blame. Such narrative elements and such interpretations are indicative of rape culture (see Chapter 2).

73 In modern contexts where surrogacy services sometimes facilitate predominantly affluent persons from wealthy countries having children born by less affluent women based in often considerably poorer countries, the story of Sarai and Hagar has new and still distinctly disturbing resonances. IVF Group Surrogacy Services, for instance, which offers surrogacy in the Ukraine, points out the 'flexibility of Ukrainian contract law' and lists 'the human right to be a parent' (i.e. of the couple commissioning the surrogate arrangement) well before both the rights and the obligations of the surrogate mother (see IVF Group Surrogacy Services). The surrogacy market is alive and well in a number of countries, notably the USA, India, Thailand,

Ukraine, and Russia, as well as Mexico, Nepal, Poland, and Georgia. Costs associated with surrogacy range from US\$45,000 to US\$100,000, depending on country (Cheung 2014).

74 Such is brought out even more clearly, particularly regarding intersectional dimensions of abuse, in Weems' womanist reading (1988).

75 The application of the term 'rapable' can be confusing. I am using it here in the sense of 'perceived as available for rape' (cf. Washington 1998). Elsewhere the term is used differently. Hence, when Popova (2019: 34) writes that '[i]n US legal history ... women of color – black and indigenous women in particular – were not regarded as rapable', what she means is that rape of these women was not considered a crime, because they were not accorded autonomy or legal protection. This, as Popova explains, made them particularly vulnerable to sexual violence but exonerated their rapists. She also points out that certain marginalized groups, such as sex workers and women of colour, are still disproportionately vulnerable to sexual violence and less likely to have their cases taken up by either investigators or prosecutors (Popova 2019: 25–26). Ggola (2018 [2015]: 4–5) concurs: 'Making Black women impossible to rape does not mean making them safe against rape. It means quite the opposite: that Black women are safe to rape, that raping them does not count as harm and is therefore permissible.'

76 Whereas in Genesis 20:4 (cf. Genesis 26:10–11) sexual interference is explicitly denied, the text of Genesis 12 is suggestive of sex, or is, at the very least, ambiguous. It says here Sarai 'was taken' (*watunqadh*) to Pharaoh's house (Genesis 12:15) and later Pharaoh says 'I took her for a wife' (Genesis 12:19) (cf. Introduction, Note 25). Some later texts, notably the Genesis Apocryphon, which was found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, are emphatically apologetic and spell out that Sarai was untouched by Pharaoh.

77 Similarly, Isaac puts Rebekah at risk of sexual violation (Genesis 26).

78 Van Wolde (2002a: 535) claims that 'this text does not talk about rape, but about an accepted form of sexual intercourse'. I believe the text is more sinister in that it *does* talk about rape – and makes rape acceptable. As Washington (1998: 205–06) points out, the delaying of rape for one month (Deuteronomy 21:13) should not detract from the sexual violence of this law. For an especially powerful interpretation drawing out the ethnic dimensions in the theology of rape in both this law and in contemporary times, such as is brutally enacted by ISIS against Yazidi women, for instance, see Rey (2016).

79 I have discussed elsewhere that the metaphor of daughter Jerusalem as a woman raped during the fall of the city to Babylonian conquerors, depicts her as someone more sinned against than sinning, with the intention of arousing God's protection and pity (Stiebert 2013: 190–95).

80 While some commentators persist in not exploring this story's violent undercurrent or in reading the story of David and Bathsheba as a romance, Clines (2009 [1995]: 225–26) bluntly and – in my view incisively – states: 'sex [here] is essentially an expression of royal power, and ... much more like rape than love'. I do not agree with Schulte (2017) who (in my view, weirdly) determines that rape in the context of the Bible occurs only when the deity is absent and signals an upset in the covenantal relationship, usually in terms of compromise with 'foreign' values. By this measure Dinah, the Levite's wife, and David's daughter Tamar are raped. But because 'the deity

is present in divine name in the last word of the last verse of 2 Samuel 11⁸¹ (Schulte 2017: 137) Bathsheba is not raped. Instead, (bizarrely) Bathsheba's 'proactive washing' is an act of 'self-sanctifying' (Schulte 2017: 139) demonstrating that, like Ruth, she is a foreigner transitioning to an insider with 'legitimacy as a queen mother for Israel' (Schulte 2017: 138). Schulte (2017: 139) states confidently, 'Bathsheba is not raped but sanctified'. The possible subtexts of such a reading are very disturbing – namely, that foreignness is dirty and unholy, that those who are raped are deserted by God, and that what looks like rape is really a holy exercise.

81 David's action displeases God (2 Samuel 11:27) but David nonetheless goes on to be remembered as a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22; cf. 1 Samuel 13:14). God's displeasure at his own sons taking human women is less clear. The act is accounted for by human women's beauty (Genesis 6:2; cf. the retelling in 1 Enoch 7:1–2). In the verse following the rape is the divine determination to restrict human lifespans to 120 years (Genesis 6:3). While this could be considered a direct consequence and punishment, it is also noted that the offspring, called Nephilim, continue to exist and were heroes, warriors of renown (Genesis 6:4).

82 Scholz (2010: 72, 75) also identifies Reuben's sex with Bilhah (Genesis 35:22; 49:3–4), Rachel's slave, as rape expressive of power and competition. She proposes that Reuben rapes Bilhah either to avenge his mother Leah, who was less loved than Rachel, or to challenge his father, Jacob.

83 A possible exception is suggested in Laban's words to Jacob (Genesis 31:50). Here Laban, having caught up with Jacob, who fled his presence together with his two wives who are also Laban's daughters, makes a pact with his son-in-law in which he calls on God as his witness to ensure that Jacob not 'ill-treat' (Jewish Publication Society translation) his daughters or take other wives besides them. The word translated 'ill-treat' is from *'ah* and could, therefore, pertain particularly to sex that is unwanted or humiliates, that is, in this case, marital rape (*pace* Van Wolde 2002a: 534).

84 Marital rape refers to forced sexual intercourse with one's spouse. Since the latter part of the twentieth century (since 1991 in the case of the UK) it has been enshrined in many legal systems as a form of domestic violence and sexual abuse. Until then, there existed a marital exemption from rape laws. This was, in part, because marriage was widely regarded as constituting an act granting irrevocable consent and also because of coverture: the practice whereby on marriage a woman's legal rights were subsumed under her husband's. Scholz (2010: 91) also proposes that the sexual activity Abimelech observes Isaac inflicting on his wife Rebekah (Genesis 26:8) is malicious and suggestive of rape. The verb is from the root *ts-dh-q* and is used of unwanted sexual activity in Potiphar's wife's accusation of attempted rape (Genesis 39:14, 17).

85 The word used of Tamar is from the root *sh-m-m* and suggests desolation, horror, and ruin. The word used of Dinah is from the root *t-m-m* and suggests pollution.

86 The word 'grind' applies to the suffering of young men at Lamentations 5:13, which could conceivably refer to the sexual humiliation of males also (Gravett 2004: 295).

87 There are additional images of violence. Gomer/Israel is hedged in by thorns (Hosea 2:6[8]) and uncovered (Hosea 2:10[12]). Following punishment, God

does allure her back (Hosea 2:13–14[15–16]), an action that Weems (1995) aptly likens to that of a manipulative domestic abuser.

88 The so-called 'pornographic debate' in biblical studies is centred on whether sexualized and violent woman metaphors reflect stereotypes that cause little or no harm to actual women, or negative biases and misogyny with the potential for harmful impact on real women, past and present. Robert P. Carroll is associated with the former (though see his commentary on Jeremiah 13 cited on p. 30) and Athalya Brenner with the latter position (see Brenner 1996).

89 As van Dijk-Hemmes (1995) points out, it is especially disturbing that the feminized cities are blamed for being sexually abused in their youth: the language – of having their breasts pressed and fondled – is in the passive voice but nevertheless equated with whoredom (Ezekiel 23:3).

90 Similarly, the punishment of Jerusalem is again depicted in rape imagery through the depiction of the lifting up of skirts and violation (Jeremiah 20:22). Again, it is God who is cast as rapist (Jeremiah 20:26; cf. Nahum 3:5–6, of the punishment of Nineveh). It is also God who punishes the daughters of Zion by laying them bare (Isaiah 3:17).

91 Stories of Jezebel are to be found in the Hebrew Bible's Books of Kings. She is described as turning Ahab away from the worship of Israel's God and as promoting instead worship of the deities Baal and Asherah. Jezebel also persecuted the prophets of God (1 Kings 18) and fabricated evidence in a charge of blasphemy against Naboth (1 Kings 21), an innocent landowner, who had not wanted to sell his ancestral land to Ahab.

92 For a full analysis see Marshall (2009) and Glancy and Moore (2011).

93 Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 both prohibit some form of sexual contact between two males, designating it an abomination. Most probably, penetrative sex is at issue. The latter verse again prescribes the death penalty for both parties. Again, the possibility of rape is not cited as an exemption.

94 In Judges 21 the men of Benjamin are instructed to take for themselves wives from among the maidens of Shiloh as they come out for harvest dances in the vineyards. The verb here for seizing, or abducting a woman is *ns'* (Judges 21:21, 23). Because the same verb is used in the book of Ruth when Naomi's sons 'take' Moabite wives (Ruth 1:4), Gafney (2009) has proposed that Orpah and Ruth, too, were abducted in rape marriage.

95 On violence in Song of Songs, see Fischer (2009).

96 The word sometimes translated 'molest' is from *ng'* ('to touch', cf. Genesis 26:29).