

A SOUTH AFRICAN
NIGHTMARE

RAPE

P U M L A D I N E O G Q O L A

"The clarity of Gqola's writing is astounding."

— GENNA GARDINI

I believe that in South Africa as in any other place in the world, an honest discussion about sexual assault, women's oppression and women's safety needs to begin with how we raise men. I'd like to move beyond the developed world's approach to teaching women to empower themselves because – as I once announced to a room full of appalled first-world feminists – telling women to end rape is like telling black people to end racism. It seems counter-productive to me. When your child comes home from school after being bullied it's best to address the bully's behaviour instead of wondering what your child can do to stop it. There are basic behaviour patterns that need to be completely altered. Much of what we need to do, I think, lies in what boys learn – from both men and women – as they grow up.

– KAGISO LESEGO MOLOPE, NOVELIST

Physical pain aside, the enduring trauma of rape is that, like slavery, it makes of a person a thing. It denies human subjectivity. Despite every effort, it is impossible not to replay the memory of this over and over again in one's mind. In the absence of therapeutic alternatives, the only way to resolve this vicious cycle and restore her status as a subject is to de-objectify the rapist to argue 'it was all a mistake' or even 'I didn't really mind'. Thus denial on the part of a rape victim can occur as a result of both the rape and the repeated trauma of remembering her rape.

– YVETTE ABRAHAMS,

WOMEN AND GENDER STUDIES DEPARTMENT, UWC

To what extent is it even possible to resist and transform the social languages into which we are born? More to the point, how does one challenge the gendered norms that lead to the formation and sanctioning of patriarchal and violent masculinities?

– HELENE STRAUSS, UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

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CHAPTER 1

A recurring nightmare

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Rape is not a South African invention. Nor is it distasteful sex. It is sexualised violence, a global phenomenon that exists across vast periods in human history. Rape has survived as long as it has because it works to keep patriarchy intact. It communicates clearly who matters and who is disposable. Those who matter are not afraid of being raped because they have not been taught to fear sexual assault. They have been taught safety. Rape is the communication of patriarchal power, reigning in, enforcing submission and punishing defiance. It is an extreme act of aggression and of power, always gendered and enacted against the feminine. The feminine may not always be embodied in a woman's body; it may be enacted against a child of any gender, a man who is considered inappropriately masculine and any gender non-conforming people. Rape has also been central to the spread of white supremacy, and to the way race and racism have organised the world over the last four hundred years.

Rape is something we have come to expect from areas of conflict, a threat we are adept at deciphering and a nightmare regularly reported on in our media. It appears everywhere: in a

political speech about decolonisation as the legitimate response against the rape of the continent/land, repeatedly as something that happens to women who are out of control but need to be checked, as constitutive of *swaartgevaar*, as one of the constitutive elements of societies structured on slavery (slavocratic societies), as something that can be easily denied, as conspiracy, on the placard of an orange overall-clad Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (POPCRU) leader and South African Prisoners Organisation for Human Rights (SAPOHR) president Golden Miles Bhudu declaring the accused in a rape case as 'raped', in a Zapiro cartoon where 'lady justice' lies prone as the tri-partite alliance get ready to rape her, and as one of the reasons why a Minister with a record of gender progressive activism storms out of an exhibition by ten Black women artists.

This book is called *Rape: a South African nightmare* because although rape is part of our contemporary gender talk, our constant preoccupation with it plays itself out as a series of miscommunications and missed opportunities. In other words, although we talk about it all the time, read about, and fight against it, we cannot make it go away. It is an enigma in post-apartheid South Africa since very few admit to being rapists, yet millions are raped each year. As our newspapers cover more and more instances of rape, we respond to them as individual acts of brutality, as we must in order to be empathetic to the violated, but, having done that, we then stop short of reading rape as more than a moment, a singular event. Every time we read a rape as an isolated, enigmatic event, we move further away from curbing the alarming statistics, interrupting the patterns and transforming gender power. And so the nightmare recurs with largely similar responses replayed.

By looking at different aspects of rape and rape talk in South Africa, across epochs, I make the assertion that rape is not a moment but a language, and in the pages that follow I untangle and decipher the knots and codes of this language, to surface its structure, underline its histories, understand its rules, pore over its syntax, page through its dictionaries, vocabularies and what it communicates. I am indebted to a substantial body of writing on

rape as I do so, revisiting some of these arguments made about rape, asking questions about why rape often works in ways that seem counterintuitive. I am not interested in writing a bible on rape, nor in merely distilling here what the patterns are in rape research. I limit the public discussions I analyse to South African ones, not because I think there is nothing to be learnt from elsewhere, or because South Africa is exceptional, but to probe specific relationships to rape, specific histories of rape, surface our blindspots and to better reflect on possible ways out of the quagmire.

This is a political project. I am invested in trying to figure out how we can change collective approaches to rape from different spaces and how to broaden transformative praxis beyond the small radical healing and generative spaces of organisations opposed to gendered violence. The personal and political motivation for this book comes from the same place as the sense of unfairness my friends and I felt when we were young and when girls were humiliated, sexually harassed, slut-shamed and molested, the same place that motivated my training and volunteer work as a Rape Crisis counsellor two decades ago, and the same place that prompted my membership of the One in Nine Campaign, an organisation that takes a multi-layered approach to feminist anti-rape work.

When I did the bulk of my work at Rape Crisis Observatory and Khayelitsha, I was also writing a Master's thesis on the first five years of *Staffrider* magazine. I had been ill-prepared for the space that raped fictional Black women characters occupied in those short stories, and had I known I may have chosen an entirely different research project. I've written in that thesis and elsewhere about how to make sense of the fact that almost a third of the stories published in this literary magazine contained a Black woman character raped by a white man character. I tried to understand the relationship between, on the one hand, the fact that rape was clearly violence that these women characters could not escape in the hands of brutal white men characters, and the fact that it was only those Black women characters who defied their societies' prescriptions on appropriate feminine behaviour that were raped in these stories, on the other hand. It was clear that rape was

being written as punishment for bad behaviour, and it was also clear that the rape of Black women by white men was a constant preoccupation for these writers. For two years, I pored over, and tried to make sense of this preoccupation with rape in the magazine. It was intellectual work but it was also emotionally distressing reading and analysis. I wrote mostly in the early mornings and late at night. During the day I went to my paid and volunteer work: in the morning I mostly went to my part-time tutoring jobs in the English Department and Academic Development Programme at UCT as well as Academic Development Unit in what was then Cape Technikon, all work that brought me enormous joy. For a few hours a week, I counselled rape survivor clients at Rape Crisis. Very difficult work, I nonetheless found counselling enormously rewarding and healing because sometimes a girl or woman moved through trauma to hope, and also because many of the women who were similarly volunteering were the most remarkable people I have ever met. Their courage, dedication and support was another affirmation of feminist community, not my first, but one that changed me nonetheless.

At the same time, there was not much I was able to do when a friend of mine was abducted and gang raped, when she reported the crime, refused any kind of counselling, and had the successfully collected evidence of her rapists used against her in court. We were starting to be very aware of HIV, and when she realised they were going to rape her, she had pleaded with them to use a condom. In the end, although her body bore the kind of evidence of physical and sexual attack that our society expects to see in typical rape cases, she led the police officers to the site of her rape where the condoms were collected in evidence, and she had provided enough information to get the rapists arrested, various legal justice officials pointed out to her that the fact that the men had used condoms on her prompting meant she had consented. Her boyfriend begged me every day to convince her to go for counselling, and my then boyfriend tried hard to understand what I meant when I said it was not right to pressure her into anything. I recognised their frustration, but knew that she needed to feel strong, not weak;

I believed her when she said to me that she did not need help. In *Teaching my mother how to give birth*, Kenyan-born Somali poet Warsan Shire reminds us that “sometimes the wound is by the healer” even with the best of intentions, and the Rape Crisis training had affirmed a principle I had learnt quite early on in my feminism: that each woman’s process is different and forcing solutions is not empowering.

It was at about this time, as I wrote about rape for my thesis, counselled my clients and battled with how to support my most recent rape survivor friend, that I was discovering and falling in love with Miriam Tlali. I thought I was drawn to her because she was a Black feminist who had written consistently throughout the 1980s: a column, essays, interviews with other women writers trying to make sense of the relationships between Black women and writing, novels and short stories. I loved that when she wrote about rape she did so differently from her peers, with gentleness and empathy for her women characters, told from their perspectives. As a reader, I was delighted by the dialogue she wrote into her characters’ mouths.

In the story “Devil at a dead end” from her 1989 collection of short stories, *Footprints in the Quag*, Miriam Tlali’s unnamed girl narrator escapes rape by outsmarting the lecherous white clerk who sneaks into her carriage when she is alone and asleep, by telling him she is “afflicted with a venereal sickness”, using the word “*makoala*”. Tlali’s narrator notices:

The impact of that word was quick, merciless, shocking and immediately disarming. Like when in a dark alley you suddenly grope into a dead end. She stood still listening to the sound of receding breath. She reached below the bunk above and lowered the dim switch. She watched the recoiling devilish figure and drew a sigh of relief.

Unable to physically resist her assailant, this young woman outsmarts him by doing with her mind what her body has failed to do. In another story that appears earlier in the collection,

"Fud-u-u-a!", women unsuccessfully try to escape groping and rape in congested train conditions, and build a community as one of the ways to defend themselves.

Unlike the stories I was writing about in my thesis, Tlali's girls and women understand, analyse and develop ways to deal with the threats, fear and experience of rape, collectively and individually; they believe, help and protect one another. They are not just bodies and metaphors, not just faces and vaginas, their bodies are not battlegrounds. Instead, she repeatedly made different choices for her characters whether they feared, escaped or survived rape. They were never deviant outsiders written as though they deserved what had happened to them because of their foolishness or transgressions. They belong to a community of women who protect and fight alongside one another.

Each reading of Tlali offers the possibility that something might be illuminated differently, a reminder that some solutions require taking the imagination seriously. Writing and imagining is doing – it is action and politically consequential, not retreat. Tanzanian literary scholar Susan Andrade insists that we should think about African feminist work in terms of what is generated by *rioting women* and *writing women*, not as oppositional but complementary. For Andrade, rioting/writing women are political, practical, imaginative, and both are the birthplaces of intellectual abstraction. Following Andrade, I like to think that sometimes writing women *are* rioting women.

A few years ago, when I first encountered this essay, it aptly captured the substantial thinking, strategising and analysis that I had encountered in activist spaces and significantly challenged the dominant academic frames that pretended that abstraction happened among those located in institutional spaces designated intellectual, whereas activist spaces exhibited only practice. I think many of us who came to feminism before we entered university research careers know this: that some of the most transformative, thought-provoking abstraction is taught in activist communities not in classrooms. In the One in Nine Campaign, for example, the textures of thinking, reflection, debate and discussion that go into

every campaign of direct action remind me of this constantly.

This is the context of writing this book for me. From this context, I want to ask questions about the society I am part of and its relationships to rape. Writing is also thinking and rethinking some of these questions. It exists alongside conversations with other feminists in community and individually.

If South Africans generally are opposed to rape, then why does it continue to be such a huge part of everyday life, with so few interventions? Why is rape so often met with disbelief, second-guessing and invitations to keep it under wraps? Why are some rapes perceived as more shocking and devastating than others? What does it mean to invite survivors to break the silence, report and lay charges against rapists when successful prosecution rates are so low?

After one of my op-eds on the Jacob Zuma rape trial had been published by a national paper in 2006, an old friend called me to express concern that I might be read as “not just as feminist but also a rape survivor”. For my friend, although the former was perfectly acceptable since it was a deliberate political stance, the latter was worrisome because, as he argued, it might delegitimise and stigmatise me. As I pointed out to him, there is something wrong with a society that stigmatises survivors, and dissuades others from supporting them publicly and privately rather than shaming the perpetrators. It was equally perverse that survivors could be dissuaded from speaking in support of one another, and against rape culture. I did not understand then what it meant to be a feminist who bit her tongue on rape. I still do not.

The question that has replayed on a loop since I received that phone call, however, is: how could being a survivor disqualify a person from speaking against rape?

This suggestion seemed as counterintuitive to me as my friend’s stated concern. This friend was the kind of man who actively worked for greater women’s representation on various leadership structures in his movement, someone who had often been the sole man repeatedly arguing for the recognition of sexual harassment as violence in his organisation, and that unfashionable person who

not only intervened when a man beat his girlfriend at a party, but also once broke a neighbour's door down in order to assist the woman screaming in pain inside. He was the kind of man women consider an ally.

He has never asked me whether I was in fact a rape survivor. He readily assumed that if I was, he would have known. I asked him how a non-survivor feminist's opposition to rape retained legitimacy when a feminist who was also a rape survivor would be disqualified. My ambivalence about this conversation notwithstanding, it illustrates something about many people's responses to rape.

When I asked my friend whether he believed Khwezi, he responded without hesitation that he did. When I asked him whether he thought she deserved support, he responded similarly. What struck me as counterintuitive about my friend's concern was how those with experience were least qualified to speak against rape. In most other contexts, intimate familiarity with a subject and an experience raises you above those with less direct contact. We live in a global culture that reminds us that experience is the best teacher, where having gone through something not only makes you worth listening to, but also builds careers. Bestseller lists are brimming with books penned by authors who have bounced back from bankruptcy to attain affluence, offering advice on how to also acquire wealth. We listen attentively to experts who have studied phenomena as they explain to us how things work, and help us make sense of what is in front of us. Everywhere I looked, people who knew what they were talking about were celebrated. We think of first-hand accounts as more reliable than second-hand ones, make witnesses indispensable to fact-finding missions and court processes alike.

But none of this applies to the testimony of those who have survived rape.

My friend was right. The dominant script on rape inverts the usual expectations. When a rape survivor speaks of her own rape, she is only generally believable under very narrow circumstances. When she speaks about rape inflicted on another, she is assumed

unreliable because she is too emotionally invested, 'biased' – too quick to believe rape is widespread. It is not empathy, recognition or knowledge that is assumed. It is a form of paranoia. If the rape survivor's own rape was disbelieved, speaking in solidarity with another is also dismissed.

Jane Bennett's research shows how the believability of a rape survivor depends on how closely her rape resembles her society's idea of what a rape looks like, who rapes, who can be raped, when and how. In other words, every time a woman says she has been raped, whether we believe her or not depends on what we believe about what rape looks like. The closer her story is to our preconceived ideas about what rape looks like, the more likely we are to believe she is telling the truth.

When feminists insist, as we must, that rape is violence and not sex, this information is filtered through lenses that cast violence in physical ways. Commonsensical understandings of violence often assume it will leave a 'physical' imprint on the body: a bruise, blood, a broken bone. A visibly injured or broken body provides a form of 'proof' of coercion, allowing the listener to turn away from the story told by the survivor to the body of the survivor. The story told by a woman needs a body of evidence. It is not an interest in the pain of the rape, but a burden of proof placed on the survivor or victim of the rape. Jane Bennett speaks about what it means to live "within and across the failures of language" because rape is not only violence enacted on and against the body with an external weapon that leaves the kind of proof often expected. Sometimes rape leaves bruises on skin, cuts, tears. Sometimes it leaves invisible scars only. The body that seems whole, then, can work against the experience of violation narrated by the violated woman.

Bennett explains that women's stories of rape are believed or doubted based on the relationship between plausibility and credibility. This is true inside and outside court.

When a rape closely resembles what the hearer expects a rape to look like, then the survivor's tale is plausible. Plausibility is about, and dependent on, the hearer and what that hearer deems possible; it is not about the specific person speaking. Bennett writes:

[t]he plausibility of a story in itself is a function of its hearer's readiness to make sense of its organisation at multiple levels: the plausibility of narrative relies on the symbiotic relation of text organization (schemas) and cultural assumptions about the way the world works.

In other words, plausibility depends on a range of things all of which are dependent on the audience of the narrated events. The listener/reader has to: firstly, be open to believing and understanding what is presented; secondly, find that the different events and aspects of what is being told individually make sense; thirdly, be convinced of the connections between said events/aspects of the narrated rape; and finally, everything together has to be possible in how the listener/reader thinks the world works. A rape story is plausible when all four requirements are consistent.

Let me illustrate.

When a teacher listens to a crying student narrate her rape, the latter's story's plausibility depends on the teacher believing that the torn skirt, dirty shirt, and unruly soiled hair and cut lip of the student in front of her are valid signs of the student's struggle and violation. The student's body looks like she has been attacked. The teacher has to believe each of the events are logical, that their sequence makes sense and that the student's way of telling them is logical. The correlation between what the teacher sees and hears is seamless. The teacher also has to believe that in the world, girls are sometimes pulled into the bushes by boys, that boys from a competing school are thugs, and that when girls are in pain, they cry. The student's story is coherent in itself, her body backs up what she says, and what she tells her teacher is **possible** in the world.

This plausibility is disrupted if any of these **elements** are missing. Bennett reminds us that when survivors present a story that meets expectations of the audience, such plausibility often increases the likelihood of a guilty verdict in court cases.

* In other words, what Bennett is saying here is that inside and outside courts across different countries, what is accepted as plausible is that which confirms preconceived ideas about what rape

is, who rapes, when, who gets raped, when and how. Therefore, when we live in societies that hold onto the view that those likely to rape look and sound a certain way, which is clearly defined as very different from how those who can be raped look, we may find specific narration of rape plausible. Plausibility relies on the construction of rapist-potential, what Bennett calls "a strongly about-to-be-rapist" and the consistency of the combined picture of who says she was raped and her narrative, or "momentary steadiness".

In addition to plausibility, credibility is required. Plausibility is about the listener, whereas credibility is about the person telling the story of the rape. Credibility depends on how believable the speaker is. To be believable, the speaker has to fall into a category that is seen as possible-to-rape; it has to be someone who can be raped. Not all people are seen as possible-to-rape. Sex workers, wives, slave women and men are all categories of people that have at different stages been placed in the category of 'impossible-to-rape'. This does not mean that nobody raped them. It means that when they were sexually violated, it was not recognised as such, legally and socially. People who are placed in the category 'impossible-to-rape' are routinely disbelieved when they report rape.

Because societal attitudes to rape continue to frame it as a kind of inappropriate sex, sex workers/prostitutes have a harder time convincing people they have been raped. Sex workers belong to a group marked as 'impossible-to-rape'. This is because of what they do for a living and patriarchal attitudes to women who have sex. In other words, many people assume that sex workers/prostitutes need to have insatiable appetites for sexual intercourse in order to work daily, and because women's sexual appetites are already always policed, this perceived desire/capacity for abundant sex is seen as deviant. The argument often then follows that if sexually deviant, they are always ready to have sex, and therefore cannot say no. They are impossible to rape in this argument because they are always willing to have sex.

There are many problems with this line of argument and all of them require conflation and avoidance to build a seemingly logical

argument. In the minds of many, prostitution is about excessive, deviant sex, not a paid service. Consequently, patriarchal ideas about women who have uncontained sex spill over into readings of women sex workers. This disapproval of women who have 'deviant' sex also occludes the difficult and sometimes coercive routes to prostitution. Failure to see sex work/prostitution as work means that it is denied the basic assumptions we accord to all other paid services: choice over whom to transact with, thereby conflating sex for money/pleasure and rape. Sex workers/prostitutes are deemed impossible to rape because they are constructed as always willing to have sex with anybody. They cannot say no. Furthermore, because they are deviant and criminalised, they are not reliable witnesses.

In many societies in the world, religion and law insist that a man is entitled to sex with his wife, and that even when this is forced sex, it cannot be rape. This entitlement, often called 'conjugal rights' is also loaded with assumptions about women's sexual appetites, control of their own bodies and the proper place for heterosexual sex. Just as women with sexual appetites that do not conform to ideal patriarchal femininity are policed and sometimes stigmatised, women who will not have sex in marriage are faulted. If men are entitled to 'conjugal rights', then women owe their husbands sex. Fortunately, South African law recognises marital rape, but it is not free from the difficulties that haunt all other categories of rape.

Credibility is therefore already in question when a sex worker/prostitute or wife reports rape.

Credibility also relies very heavily on the believability of who she says raped her. The accused has to fall into a category of potential rapist; strangers, poor men, Black men, socially inept men are seen as potential rapists. Powerful, popular, successful men are often excluded from the category of potential rapist.

This is why when women accuse powerful, famous and popular men of rape, so many people find this unbelievable even if they have no personal relationship with either accused rapist or the woman laying the charge. This was certainly the case with the

Jacob Zuma trial, since people who admired Zuma often could not reconcile the idea of the political figure that they had in their heads with what Khwezi was accusing him of. Before this, the same was evident in some public responses to Makhaya Ntini and after this to Zwelinzima Vavi.

When South African cricketer Makhaya Ntini was convicted of raping twenty-two-year-old Nomangezi Matokazi, and later freed on appeal, she was accused of being part of a plot to bring him down. He was powerful and at the top of his cricketing game, a hero, and therefore assumed to have access to any number of women sex partners. She was his opposite: a student who worked as a domestic worker. In a world where various idioms declare that the more affluent the man, the higher his capacity to attract women, her narrative did not make sense. Women 'like her' are supposed to find 'men like him' irresistible.

In "The agony of a hero's victim" – her interview published in *City Press*, where she wanted to be named and photographed, hence my decision to name her here – Ms Matokazi demonstrated keen awareness of what determined whether strangers believed her or not, when she said:

I want those who do not believe me to hear my whole story. My story is that Ntini raped me. Some people think I was sent by Boers to accuse Ntini of rape so he could be left out of the cricket team. That is not true. I don't want any of his money. All I want is for justice to be done and for him to be sent to jail for what he has done to me. I have lost my job and am no longer studying. My mother is on a farm in Idutywa with no one to support her. The way things are going with things getting lost [the investigating officers lost her notebooks], it looks like Ntini will win the case. There is nothing I can do. I don't trust men any longer. One can never tell what their intentions are. I trusted Ntini and look what he did to me. I never thought he would do this.

Contrary to the accusations that she has manufactured a rape tale for money, Matokazi declares her disinterest in his money; she

has not been paid by any others for her testimony. Rather than enrichment, her life has been disrupted. She is interested only in a form of justice as acknowledgement of the harm inflicted on her.

Ntini is an over-achiever, arguably one of South Africa's greatest cricketers ever. He is easy to admire and often appears charming in interviews. In the same interview, Matokazi speaks of how he would often be seen playing with children, had always been nice and so she was not taken aback when he offered to drive her to the shops in the rain. It was an act of kindness that was consistent with her experience of him.

Fast bowler extraordinaire, Ntini is a Black cricketer in the highly racialised South African sports scene, one of the pioneers who exceeded our expectations. He is the young man we were rooting for and who was making us proud, but also a young man we had grown protective of because of the usual racist narrative that trivialises Black achievement.

It was therefore 'easy' for many to immediately jump to his defence, and to accuse Matokazi of being for sale. It was equally easy for racists who wanted Ntini left out of the cricket team because they are opposed to transformation in South African sport to believe Ntini capable of rape. Interestingly, although these two positions seem at odds, they also have something very significant in common: neither one is interested in Matokazi's experience. Her charge simply confirms pre-existing stances. For the pro-Ntini camp, her testimony offers another barrier for him to be supported and one that he has to overcome. For the racists, it confirms pre-existing stereotypes of Black men's bestiality which can be brought out to deligitimise his sporting prowess.

Both these narratives are directly confronted in her interview. Bennett shows that while what makes a story plausible often relies on stereotypes about the accused rapist, stereotypes about the group to which a survivor belongs very often work against her believability (credibility). In the examples above, and because people continue to think about rape as inappropriate sex, rather than as violence, powerful, popular men are not potential rapists because they have a large pool of willing, available, obligation-free

sex. Gender talk is often peppered with assertions that members of this group do not need to rape; they do not need to force anyone to have sex with them when they have so many more options. For racists, the stereotype of the Black man as rapist makes Matokazi's story plausible.

Yet, there is another way to understand the relationships of powerful men to rape. If all men already possess patriarchal power, and can therefore choose to rape, then powerful men assume the position of supermen. Supermen's unfettered access to many anonymous women sexual partners can enhance the sense of entitlement to women's bodies and therefore resorting to violence to forcibly access it. Supermen know that many will come to their defence against any such allegations, and that their supporters will compare the woman's social standing with the man's and, finding her wanting, will ask "if he can have anyone he likes, why would he force you *of all people*?" This is an impossible question to answer.

Nobody wins against a hero.

Indeed, even in cases where various women emerge to accuse the same popular man of rape, many will prefer to pontificate over possible conspiracies than pay attention to the mounting evidence.

Credibility, then, continues to be a difficult issue for rape complainants. Conventional gender talk seeks to either hold a survivor responsible for her own rape or requires that she can tell a story that shows her total innocence. Innocence is almost impossible to prove, especially for adults. To be innocent, she needs to not be an adult woman. Bennett argues a woman narrating her rape has to create her own social credibility in ways that are oxymoronic: presenting a story that harmonises with notions of the 'typical' rape in her society and demonstrating levels of steadiness in her narrative that are almost impossible to attain. Pregs Govender had written in 2006:

In South Africa 2006 ... [a] woman who has sex is a whore, a *hoor*, a prostitute – who like wives, cannot be raped. They are objects owned by men, whose bodies do not belong to them. Khwezi is

31 years old. At 31 very few, except nuns, yogis celibate since childhood or the Virgin Mary, can claim to have no sexual history. The message being conveyed is that if any woman or child decides to lay a charge of rape, this is how she will be crucified.

Govender is not writing about Matokazi here, although what she says is equally relevant. Women's sexual histories and general life experiences render them hard to believe because they are not innocent. At the time that both Matokazi and Khwezi testified, sexual history was permissible as part of the court proceedings. As Govender shows, contrary to popular opinion, reporting rape and going through the criminal justice system channels places women at further risk, rather than promising relief.

Like Bennett, Govender shows the impossibility of the expectations placed on those who report rape. Any sexual history complicates – and at times nullifies – her story of rape. Referring specifically to the legal treatment of women who report rape, Navi Pillay cautions “[i]n the eyes of the law, a woman is both Eve and Eva. As a pure, fragile female she must be specially protected; as a seductive sex object, from whom men must be protected. In both cases women are the victims”, thereby driving home the manner in which the attitudes outlined in this chapter are not merely societal but those that resonate with legal treatment of rape complainants as well.

I believe an end to rape is both possible and worth fighting for. Given the range of ways in which the violation and interpretation of rape work in counterintuitive ways, as various chapters show, I suspect that we need to be especially imaginative to decrease the instances of rape, to change how we think rape works and to make it harder to rape.