**Affected by Rape**

by

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submitted in accordance with the requirements for

the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

in the subject of

**PSYCHOLOGY**

at the University of South Africa

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January 2021

**DECLARATION**

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I declare that **Affected by Rape** (title of thesis) is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

SIGNATURE

3 January 2021

DATE

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis has been a work of despair and hope. It would not have been possible without the love, support and participation of so many people in my life.

I would like to acknowledge the 16 womxn who agreed to be interviewed for this research project. The moments we shared, full of pain, anger and laughter have not only made this thesis possible but have continued to give me hope in the darkest moments of this process and beyond. I dedicate this thesis to you, in all your courage and vulnerability.

I wish to thank my supervisors. To Kopano, as I have said before, I would not have been able to embark on this arduous and painful journey without your support. Thank you for keeping me company and providing guidance in difficult places. To Tammy, thank you for your love and encouragement throughout. To Lynn, thank you for your support and guidance while I was in Edinburgh. To Liz, thank you for pushing me to think harder and go further in my work.

I wish to thank my family, for surrounding me with love, particularly in the challenging moments. To my dad, who has supported me in everything I have ever done. To Jamesie, who is always there when I need him. To Tom, whose kindness and thoughtfulness is well beyond his years. To Kate, who has held down the fort in her own quiet way. To my gran, who has taught me to be fierce but has also allowed me to be fragile. To Mim and David, for providing me with a second home. To Mim and Louse, for boundless love, laughter and holding. To Aunty Gwens, for her endless acts of thoughtfulness.

To my wonderful friends – Luce, Josie, Se, Nic, Zoz, Gab, Wolivia, Jen, Suse, Gabriel, Katie, Jest, Sipho, Refiloe, Christine, and Pier. Your companionship, support, love, and listening has meant more than I can say. A special thanks to Josie for her limitless editorial help.

To all my colleagues at the Institute for Social and Health Sciences – your kindness, passion and encouragement has been instrumental to me.

To Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust for many years of support and guidance and, specifically, for their advice and help in recruiting my participants.

To Janine, for always providing a gentle and containing space.

To Leo, for the magic – even in the darkest hours.

And finally, I wish to acknowledge the University of South Africa and the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission for generously funding this work.

## ABSTRACT

As the starting point for this thesis, I take my own experience of rape and how my social position as a 'white', middle class, womxn renders me out of place at a government rape clinic where the vast majority of patients are poor, 'black' womxn. The discomfort produced by being 'out of place' at the clinic prompted me to explore the ways in which sexual violence in South Africa has become normalised and the rapes of some womxn are considered 'ordinary'. I situate my work in a context where sexual violence is hypervisible – reported in the media almost every day. However, I argue that, socially and politically, South African society is 'unaffected' by rape, which is repeatedly dismissed and denied as a serious social and political concern. By employing an interdisciplinary approach informed by critical feminist, decolonial and African-centred perspectives, I locate this unaffectedness in historical and contemporary matrixes of power. I argue that a state of unaffectedness is produced by intersecting raced, gendered and classed understandings of whose lives 'matter'. Alongside an autoethnographic approach, through which I seek to critically situate and analyse my own experience of rape, I draw on in-depth qualitative interviews with 16 other womxn – both 'black' and 'white'– from across South Africa. I develop an affective analysis of participants' narratives, focusing on how women's feelings about their experiences of rape are structured by the broader social context of sexual violence. Working with notions of trauma, shame, rage, and unsettling hopefulness, I examine how the womxn I interviewed and I, both reproduce and contest dominant affective possibilities of rape. By engaging with the ways in which I am affected by doing research on rape, I propose an alternative way of 'knowing about' and writing about rape. This alternative way of knowing pays close attention to the intersecting inequalities that constitute both experiences of rape and research on sexual violence in South Africa. I argued that to engage with the way in which rape *affects*, individually and socially, is deeply uncomfortable, potentially hopeful, and crucial to disrupt the normalisation of sexual violence in South Africa.



**Key terms:** rape; sexual violence; South Africa; autoethnography; feminist; decolonial; affect; trauma; shame; rage; hope

## ISISHWANKATHELO

Indawo endiqale kuyo kwesi sifundo sophando ngamava am okudlwengulwa, kunye ngendlela endibonwa ngayo phakathi koluntu ngenxa yokuba ndingumfazi ‘omhlophe’ okwizinga eliphakathi loluntu. Eli zinga lindikhuphela ngaphandle kwikliniki karhulumente, apho uninzi lwamaxhoba ingabafazi ‘abantsundu’ abahluphekileyo. Ukungonwabi okwenziwa kukuziva ‘ndingangeni ndawo’ ekliniki kundenze ukuba ndiphononononge indlela apho kusuke kwayinto eqhelekileyo ukuphathwa gadalala ngokwesondo eMzantsi Afrika, kwaye ukudlwengulwa kwamanye amabhinqa kwabonakala kuyinto ‘eqhelekileyo’. Uphando lwam ndilubeka kwimeko apho ubundlobongela besondo busematheni – kuthethwa ngabo yonke imihla kumajelo onxibelelwano. Noxa kunjalo, mna ndithi ngokwasentlalweni nangokwepolitiki, uluntu loMzantsi Afrika ‘aluvakalelwa’ kukudlwengula, nokusoloko kungahoywa, kwaye kungathathwa njengento uluntu olunokuzikhathaza ngayo. Ngokusebenzisa indlela yophando equka amasebe ezifundo ahlukeneyo, nephantsi kwefuthe lezifundo eziqwalasela imiba yamanina, nezingenabukoloniyali, nezizikithiswe kwizimvo zobuAfrika, ndikubeka oku kungakhathali kwiimeko zokungalingani kwamagunya mandulo nanamhla oku. Ndibeka uluvo oluthi ukungachukumiseki kudalwa kukucinga apho kujongwa ubuhlanga, isini nezinga lentlalo ukuze kuqondwe ukuba bobobani ubomi ‘obunolutho’. Ekusebenziseni indlela yophando eqala esiqwini somphandi, apho ndiphengulula nzulu awam amava okudlwengulwa, ndifumene ulwazi ngokuqhuba iindliwano ndlebe namanye amabhinqa ali-16 – ‘amhlophe’ kunye ‘nantsundu’ – aseMzantsi Afrika. Ndiphuhlisa uhlalutyo lwamabali abathathi nxaxheba, kwaye ndigxila kwiindlela apho iimvakalelo zamanina ngokudlwengulwa kwawo zakhiwe yimeko ebanzi yezentlalo kubundlobongela besondo. Ngokusebenza ngeengcinga zokuxheleka komphefumlo, iintloni, umsindo nokuphelelwa lithemba, ndiphononononga indlela athi amabhinqa endidlene nawo indlebe avelise kwaye aphikise iingcinga ezigqubayo malunga nodlwengulo. Ngokujongana nezam iingcinga nokuchaphazeleka kwam kukudlwengulwa, ndiphakamisa enye indlela eyahlukileyo ‘yokwazi malunga’ nokubhala ngokudlwengulwa. Le ndlela yahlukileyo yokwazi iqwalasela kabukhali ukwahlula uluntu nokungalingani okuhamba namava okudlwengulwa nokuphanda ngobundlobongela besondo eMzantsi Afrika. Ndibeka uluvo oluthi ukujongana nendlela udlwengulo *oluchaphazela* ngayo umntu okanye uluntu, ngumba odala ukungonwabi kakhulu. Ukwadala ithemba kwaye ubaluleke kakhulu ekuphazamiseni iingcinga ezenza ukuba ubundlobongela besondo bube yinto eqhelekileyo eMzantsi Afrika.

**Amagama aphambili:** udlwengulo; ubundlobongela besondo; uMzantsi Afrika; indlela yophando eqala esiqwini somphandi; izifundo ezingeemeko zamabhinqa; ezisusa ubukoloniyali; ukuchukumiseka, ukuxheleka emphefumlweni; iintloni; umsindo; ithemba

## OPSOMMING

Ek neem, as uitgangspunt vir hierdie tesis, my eie ervaring van verkragting en hoe my sosiale posisionering as 'n 'wit', middelklas, vrou my ontuis maak by ‘n regerings-verkragtingskliniek, waar die oorgrote meerderheid pasiënte arm, 'swart' vroue is. Die ongemak wat veroorsaak is deur ‘ontuis' by die kliniek te voel, het gelei tot my ondersoek na die maniere waarop seksuele geweld in Suid-Afrika genormaliseer word en die verkragtings van sekere vroue as 'gewoon' beskou word. Ek plaas my werk in 'n konteks waarin seksuele geweld baie sigbaar is – waarvan feitlik elke dag in die media berig word. Ek argumenteer egter dat die sosiale en politiese Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing 'onaangeraak' is deur verkragting - met verkragting wat herhaaldelik afgemaak en ontken word as 'n ernstige sosiale en politieke saak. Die gebruik van 'n interdissiplinêre benadering, ingelig deur kritiese feministiese, dekoloniale- en Afrika-gesentreerde perspektiewe, plaas hierdie onaangeraaktheid binne die historiese- en kontemporêre matrikse van gesag. Ek stel voor dat ‘n toestand van ongeraaktheid gevorm word deur oorkruisde ras-, geslag- en klasbegrippe van watter lewens 'saak maak'. Naas 'n outo-etnografiese benadering, waardeur ek poog om my eie ervaring van verkragting krities te situeer en te ontleed, maak ek gebruik van in-diepte kwalitatiewe onderhoude met 16 ander vroue – beide 'swart' en 'wit' – van regoor Suid-Afrika. Ek stel 'n affektiewe analise voor van my deelnemers se narratiewe, met die fokus op hoe vroue se gevoelens oor hul ervarings van verkragting gestruktureer word deur die breër sosiale konteks van seksuele geweld. Deur te werk met begrippe van trauma, vernedering, woede en ontstellende hoopvolheid ondersoek ek hoe ek, en die vroue met wie ek onderhoude gevoer het, dominante affektiewe moontlikhede van verkragting beide reproduseer en bestry. Deur betrokke te raak by die maniere waarop ek geraak word deur navorsing oor verkragting te doen, stel ek 'n alternatiewe manier voor van 'weet van' en skryf oor verkragting. Hierdie alternatiewe manier van weet gee baie aandag aan die oorkruisde ongelykhede wat beide ervarings van en navorsing oor seksuele geweld in Suid-Afrika uitmaak. Ek voer aan dat om betrokke te raak by die manier waarop verkragting individueel en sosiaal *affekteer*, baie ongemaklik, potensieel hoopvol en noodsaaklik is om die normalisering van seksuele geweld in Suid-Afrika te ontwrig.



**Sleutelwoorde:** verkragting; seksuele geweld; Suid-Afrika; outo-etnografie; feminis; dekoloniaal; emosie; trauma,; vernedering; woede; hoop

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# CHAPTER ONE

## The Discomfort of Rape

> I try to calm myself amidst the unease of the waiting room at the Thuthuzela Care Centre[1]. A shelf of teddy bears with staring plastic eyes and smiling mouths watch over me as I curl and uncurl my hands in my lap.
>
> There is a womxn[2] on the couch opposite me. We are separated from each other by the 3m of physical space between us, by our own internal preoccupations with what has happened and what is about to happen, and by the different shades of our skins – mine lighter, hers darker. We make sure not to catch each other's eye.
>
> The nurse approaches me. "Who are you bringing for an appointment?" she asks. Embarrassment and confusion. "Who is the patient?" - in response to my uncomfortable silence. "I am the patient". "Oh", she looks surprised. She goes back to her desk.
>
> The womxn across from me is still looking away. I don't know where to look. I don't know how to sit. Everything feels uncomfortable – my shirt, my pants, my shoes and especially my white skin (Extract from research diary, 3 January 2017).

The experience I describe above is saturated in discomfort. Seeking medical treatment following having been raped in October 2015 was an intensely difficult, painful, and distressing experience as it included an invasive medical exam, a series of HIV tests and a heavy sense of shame for having been raped in the first place. But the strangeness and discomfort were intensified by the nurse's failure to recognise me as a womxn who had been raped[3]. The

[1] Thuthuzela Care Centres (TCCs) are multi service or 'one-stop' facilities for those who have been raped. These centres combine health, policing, prosecutorial services (provided by the state) and counselling services in order to reduce secondary victimisation and to support successful prosecution (Vetten, 2011).

[2] I use the term 'womxn' to refer to people who identify as female, women, femme, or trans and the term 'mxn' to refer to people who identify as male, men, masculine or trans. In this way, I wish to call attention to the fluid and diverse way in which gender is constructed and experienced, as well as the way in which the terms 'woman' and 'man' exclude and silence certain identities and experiences. When discussing other research or extracts from the interviews with my participants, I reproduce the original terminology used.

[3] There has been considerable debate within feminist scholarship about whether to refer to 'victims' or 'survivors' of rape (Boyle, 2019). The term 'rape survivor' has emerged in response to the term 'rape victim', which is used

implication is that she thought I was there in another capacity, perhaps as a social worker or another kind of professional. This was not the only time that this assumption was made at the clinic, which I visited three times to receive follow up treatment.

I begin with this moment of discomfort because, in many ways, this was the starting point for the thinking and feeling journey that has culminated in the writing of this thesis. Although my (and the nurse's) discomfort was palpable in the moment, on subsequent reflection this discomfort seems to have intensified as I have reflected on what this interaction demonstrates about sexual violence in South Africa. I used this story to introduce the research topic to the other womxn I interviewed as part of this research project, in an attempt to situate both my experience of rape and my approach to doing research on rape. In this introductory chapter I want to do something similar. I will use this discomforting moment to locate myself and my work in South Africa, amidst the multiple intersecting inequalities which produce (public) hospital waiting rooms in which it is still unusual to see a well-dressed (signalling 'middle-class') 'white' womxn. In this way, I highlight how my own experience of rape is central to this thesis, as well as the ways in which my experience of rape are thought and felt in relation to the experiences of other womxn[4]. As the moment in the clinic waiting room highlights, I am positioned differently from the womxn sitting on the couch opposite me. In articulating discomfort as a starting point for this thesis, I also want to introduce my theoretical orientation towards the affective. Throughout this chapter I reflect on other moments of discomfort that have comprised this thesis in order to critically locate this work within the intersecting material, theoretical and affective contexts in which it takes place. I draw on a range of literature to outline the contemporary context of sexual violence in South Africa. Rather than merely reviewing this literature, I use research and theory on sexual violence alongside engagements with media representations, prominent instances of rape and social protests to articulate the

by many judicial systems to characterise a person who has been sexually assaulted (Koss, 2006). It has been argued that while the term 'victim' denotes passivity and powerlessness, the term 'survivor' highlights agency and resilience (Alcoff & Gray, 1993). However, although 'survivor' has been taken up within many feminist and advocacy spaces, there continues to exist, what Monica Thompson (2000) calls, a 'Victim-Survivor Paradox'. She argues that "the choice of language used to describe oneself [i.e. either as 'victim' or as 'survivor'] in relation to the rape [results] in different experiences for different women" (M. Thompson, 2000, p. 329). These binary categories of victim/survivor preclude more nuanced and complex understandings of how individuals negotiate their post-rape experiences e.g. as simultaneously 'victims' and 'survivors' or as oscillating between these two categories. I, therefore, employ the term 'womxn who have been raped' in this research. Below I expand on how I am conceptualising 'rape' in this thesis.

[4] I have chosen to focus womxn's experiences of rape for this thesis given the high rates of sexual violence that womxn are subjected to, as supported by a range of local and international scholarship. This choice to focus on womxn's experiences is not to deny that mxn and people of other genders also experience rape and other forms of sexual violence.

affective landscape of sexual violence in South Africa. This is in line with my overall aim to produce a different way of knowing about rape.

In this chapter I conceptualise discomfort not as an unpleasant personal feeling, but rather as a socially constituted and constitutive affect. I am employing the term affect as Sara Ahmed (2004a) has articulated it, as producing relationality, stickiness and movement between bodies. As she notes "[e]motions … involve bodily processes of affecting and being affected" (Ahmed, 2015, p. 208). Therefore, I understand affect and affectivity as related to what bodies can, and do, do in relation to other bodies (Lykke, 2018). Throughout this chapter (and the thesis as a whole) I explore how discomfort creates both connections and separations. In the following chapter I expand on this conceptualisation of affect, as a theoretical framework for this research. As I will articulate throughout this thesis, the nurse's failure to recognise me as the one seeking medical attention after having been raped occurs in a context in which poor, 'black' womxn are repeatedly represented as victims of sexual violence, both in popular media and in academic research (Boonzaier, 2017; Judge, 2015; Shefer, 2016). My experience as a 'stranger', who is recognised as not belonging and out of place, as a 'space invader' (Ahmed, 2017; Puwar, 2004) highlights how certain bodies are excluded from the category of 'raped womxn' or what Pumla Gqola (2015) has called the "possible-to-rape" (p. 31). Below I use the affective experience of discomfort as an opportunity to reflect on the dominant understanding, normative habits and social practices that produce and sustain the boundaries of who 'can' and 'cannot' be raped (Zembylas, 2018). In this way, the discomfort is not only deeply distressing and unpleasant but also productive for developing critical, socially situated, and unsettling knowledge of rape (Murrey, 2019; Shefer, 2019a; Swartz & Marchetti-Mercer, 2018). Here discomfort invites a reconsideration of thinking and feeling about rape and the broader context in which these thoughts and feelings are constituted in the first place (Zaliskwa & Boler, 2019).

My visit to the TCC was the first time I had been to Heideveld, although I worked in a neighbouring community on the Cape Flats[5] a few years before. The three-storey blocks of flats, 'Courts' as they are colloquially known, dispersed patches of grass and dusty bare ground, the clinic surrounded by a high fence with barbed wire are all reminders of continued ruination

[5] The Cape Flats is an area of Cape Town which was developed in the 1960s and 1970s, as result of the Group Areas Act of 1950s, to act as a "dumping ground" for those classified as 'coloured' under apartheid (Jensen, 1999, p. 76). The term 'coloured' was used to denote a separate racial identity under the apartheid system, referring to people of mixed racial heritage.

wrought by apartheid. Communities like Heideveld, established for people who were forcibly removed from other parts of Cape Town under the Group Areas Act (GAA)[6], remain on the periphery of the city, excluded from the comfort of middle-class life afforded to those living in (previously) 'white' neighbourhoods (Boonzaier & de la Rey, 2003). These communities continue to be affected by social problems created by apartheid policies, including high rates of crime, unemployment, poverty, and a violent gang subculture (Pinnock, 2016; Salo, 2018; van Niekerk & Boonzaier, 2019a). There is an almost inconceivable gap between these streets and buildings and those of the area in which I grew up in - a mere 20-minute drive away - inhabited by large, free-standing houses with high walls, well-manicured gardens and swimming pools, grassy public parks and greenbelts. This is an example of how privileged spaces such as private hospitals, leisure spaces and Model C schools[7] continue to be spaces of whiteness, not only inhabited by 'white' South Africans but steeped in cultural practices that support the social, economic and political advantages of 'white' people (M. Steyn, 2005; M. Steyn, 2014 as cited in R. Boswell, 2014). Here whiteness is constituted not merely in relation to skin pigmentation but as a structurally privileged social location upheld by broader systems of power (Taylor, 2004; Shabangu, 2016; Vice, 2010). It is whiteness which allows for comfortable movement of 'white' bodies across various social spaces (Ahlstedt, 2015). This comfort is embodied through being "so at ease with one's environment that it is hard to distinguish where one's body ends and the world begins" (Ahmed, 2007, p. 158). In this way whiteness functions as an unmarked category, which allows 'white' people to experience their privilege as so normalised as to be 'invisible' (M. Steyn, 2005). However, as Sara Ahmed (2004b) has powerfully argued, whiteness only operates as an 'invisible' category for those who are able to inhabit it – for others it is highly visible, seemingly everywhere and deeply uncomfortable.

It is unsurprising in this context that the nurse is surprised to see me sitting in the waiting room of a public clinic on the Cape Flats. In this space my whiteness precedes the multiple other identity categories by which I might be recognised (Swartz, 2012). My 'white' presence causes

[6] Passed in 1950, the GAA imposed control over property occupations and transactions across South Africa. Through the act various neighbourhoods were established as 'group areas', where only certain race groups were allowed to reside. Hundreds of thousands of people were displaced by the GAA leading to the break-up of families and communities (Johnson-Castle, 2014).

[7] The term 'Model C' is widely used to refer to those government schools that were previously reserved for 'white' children under apartheid.

a disruption, and the discomfort this disruption produces both in me and the nurse who fails to recognise me, brings to the surface the institutional habits of whiteness (Ahmed, 2007; Puwar, 2004). My experience at the clinic was also a disruption of my own "ways of knowing, self-understanding, value systems, relationship to space and place […] shaped in ways compatible with living comfortably, and mostly, unreflectively, within the dys-relationality of whiteness" (M. Steyn, 2014, p. 4). To be uncomfortably misrecognised in the clinic waiting room is to be shaken out of the comfort that whiteness, as it intersects with middle-classness, affords me in so many spaces in South Africa.

**The Discomfort of 'Race'**

My discomforting experience in the clinic waiting room has forced me to reflect on other experiences of discomfort related to being 'out of place', whiteness and boundaries of inclusion/exclusion. Perhaps the most poignant (and proximal) example of which has been the recent student protests against the continued whiteness of certain universities in South Africa. It has been widely established by critical scholarship in South Africa that universities, and particularly those previously reserved for 'white' students, continue to be dominated by institutional practices of whiteness (Cornell & Kessi, 2018; Kapp & Bangeni, 2009; Kessi & Boonzaier, 2015; Morreira, 2017; A. Nyamnjoh, 2017). As Saleem Badat (2016) has articulated, 'black' students (and other historically marginalised groups, including women and queer students) have been required to acquiesce and assimilate into these *discomforting* institutional cultures. In response to the discomfort that many 'black' students felt at universities steeped in whiteness, the Rhodes Must Fall (RMF) movement began at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in 2015[8]. Rhodes Must Fall (2015) describes itself as "an independent collective of students, workers and staff who have come together to end institutionalised racism and patriarchy at UCT" (n.p). The movement was ignited by Chumani Maxwele's throwing faeces on the statue of Cecil John Rhodes on 9 March 2015 (Rhodes Must Fall, 2015). Rhodes Must Fall (2015) asserted that:

> the statue has great symbolic power; it glorifies a mass-murderer who exploited black labour and stole land from indigenous people. Its presence erases black history and is

[8] Following the Rhodes Must Fall student protests, Fees Must Fall began in October 2015, as a student movement to protest against annual fee increases. Collectively Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall are referred to as the Fallist student movements.

> an act of violence against black students, workers and staff […] It stands at the centre of what supposedly is the 'greatest university in Africa'. […] The statue is therefore the perfect embodiment of black alienation and disempowerment at the hands of UCT's institutional culture, and was the natural starting point of this movement. The removal of the statue will not be the end of this movement, but rather the beginning of the decolonisation of the university (n.p.).

In the following chapter I return to issues of exclusion and violence produced by public art at the University of Cape Town. The discomfort, alienation and pain of being out of place as a 'black' student sits uncomfortably in relation to my experience of discomfort in the clinic waiting room. They both serve as example of how spaces are oriented to some bodies at the expense of others (Ahmed, 2007). As Francis Nyamnjoh (2016) has argued, white privilege and black pain operate in relation to one another. This makes me think about the womxn sitting across from me in the waiting room, by virtue of her 'black' skin she is seen to 'belong' in the clinic waiting room, whereas I, by virtue of my 'white' skin, am seen not to. My discomfort in the waiting room stands in stark contrast to the comfort I felt as a 'white', middle-class student at the University of Cape Town, where I studied for six years. I am not attempting to equate my experience of discomfort in the clinic with those of 'black' students at UCT and other universities in South Africa, but rather to think and feel with/against/through these moments of discomfort in order to both highlight and challenge issues of power, violence and marginalisation.

The discomfort, pain and anger of 'black' students and the resultant demands for decolonisation at universities across South Africa, and beyond, have created a significant opportunity for me to reflect on my own knowledge-making process. Throughout this thesis I attempt to reflect on how this research project is embedded within broader knowledge-making structures. In particular, I situate my thesis within the discursive and material context of sexual violence in South Africa, which is constituted in significant ways by research and theoretical knowledge about rape. Through my ethical, theoretical methodological and narrative choices, I seek to trouble normative ways of 'knowing about' rape. I return to this at the end of the chapter.

It remains uncomfortable to talk about 'race' in South Africa. This discomfort emerged palpably within the research interviews. By beginning with the story about my experience in the clinic waiting room, I clearly framed my own experience, and the research more broadly,

in relation to issues of race. There were also moments in which my participants spoke explicitly about race. For example, May[9], who identified herself as 'white', discussed how being 'white' shaped her life in significant ways:

> I really do struggle *a lot*... with my own sense of privilege um because... in so many ways being white and living in Cape Town... it's *not* difficult for me to be gay [Rebecca: Ja]. Um I have you know I I I got married. Like that is... like inconceivable to most [Rebecca: ja] queer people in this country (First interview, May's house, Cape Town, 16 January 2019).

May articulates the way in which having 'white' skin continues to denote white privilege and to define daily life, including where you live and protection from certain forms of discrimination. In reflection on the difficulties of "being gay" for most 'black' South Africans, May highlights the ways in which intersecting oppressions of race, class and sexuality produce particular forms of violence. Here she highlights the discrimination and violence that queer 'black' people, living in low-income communities, are subjected to (Msibi, 2012; Müller, 2019; Reddy et al., 2018).

In another interview, Refiloe, who identifies herself as 'black', made a reference to a recent case of rape perpetrated by a 'white' man:

> I follow a lot on Facebook there's like News24 […] I always read the comments and how you find that, I'm sorry to say this, you find that with some white um… [Rebecca: don't apologise to me (laughs)] [laughs] with some white people that comment there it's like they don't believe that he could do something like that (First interview, hotel, Pretoria, 10 December 2018).

Refiloe's apology and both of our laughter highlights the discomfort of speaking about race – 'across' racial groups. Here Refiloe constructs being 'white' as a homogenous category which I, by virtue of my visible 'white' skin, belong to. The 'obviousness' of race was highlighted by Bianca, when she described herself as: "Ja ok so obvious- um not obviously you can't hear obviously by my voice, I'm a white female" (First interview, Bianca's house, Cape Town, 22 August 2018). Her use of the term 'obvious', to refer to her appearance, highlights how race

[9] I provide full details about each participant in Chapter Three. I use pseudonyms to protect participants' identities.

continues to be constructed as a visible category – in line with apartheid legislation which defined a white person as "a person who in appearance obviously is, or who is generally accepted as a White person, but does not include a person who, although in appearance obviously a White person, is generally accepted as a coloured person" (Union of South Africa 1950, 277)[10]. The 'obviousness' of race demonstrates how these socially constructed categories have become naturalised in the post-apartheid[11] context. Both these examples highlight how race remains a salient "material-psychological state" through which people are recognised in terms of skin colour and the political, cultural and economic order is shaped (Ratele, 2019, p. 10). Despite the dismantling of apartheid, both the material and discursive effects of racialisation continue to define multiple social processes. Within this context, race (and other intersecting categories, including those of gender and class), operates not merely at a structural level but also at the level of embodied lived realities (Hook, 2002; Kiguwa & Segalo, 2019). My experience in the clinic waiting room is another example of this – I am immediately recognised as 'white', and therefore out of place. However, Refiloe simultaneously destabilises the homogeneity of the category of 'white' when she says "some white people". It seems that here she is suggesting I do not belong in the category of white people who do not believe that a white man can commit rape. This is an example of how race is not a fixed category, but rather is negotiated through particular relationalities.

While recognising the social constructed nature of all racial categories, including those used during apartheid, I employ the terms 'black' and 'white' throughout this thesis. This is not in order to naturalise these racial categories and to homogenise people in a problematic manner (Hendricks, Kramer & Ratele, 2019), but rather to pay attention to how racialisation[12] places individuals in particular relations with others, as well as in relation to specific histories and institutions (Stockdale, 2019). This includes paying attention to the ways in which a certain body feels about and relates to another body are constituted by "past histories of contact" (Ahmed, 2004a, p. 7). I attempt to explore what race *does,* within the context of this research

[10] As critical scholarship has demonstrated, in many instances the 'obviousness' of race was disputed, which highlights the socially constructed nature of racial categories such as 'white' (e.g. see Ratele & Laubscher, 2010).
[11] My use of the post-apartheid here "signifies a mode of being which goes beyond, yet remembers, the logic of apartheid. This beyond cannot be a pure beyond [as] apartheid cannot simply be left behind." (Norval, 2003, p. 265). As I explore throughout this thesis, the relations and affects established during apartheid continue to shape the present in significant ways.
[12] By racialisation, I mean the processes through which racial categories "associate[e] some bodies with each other through a linkage of shared bodily attributes that simultaneously mark them as different from other bodies" (Nielsen, 2015, p. 44).

project – that is, the ways in which it both creates and disrupts particular affective possibilities. In the following section I reflect on another discomforting definition – that of 'rape'.

**The Discomfort of Language: Defining Rape**

In November 2018 I received the following email from Camille, in response to the call for research participants I had posted on Facebook: "I'd be interested in talking to you about my own experience for the purpose of your study, two years ago, which was coercive and manipulative, a 'soft' rape". As Camille's message clearly highlights, what 'counts' as rape within a particular context remains contested (Reiten, 2001). In naming her experience as coercive, manipulative and 'soft' Camille reflects on the dominant parameters of rape, as a 'violent' incident, in which explicit force is used. However, simultaneously, the placing of 'soft' in inverted commas suggests a challenging of these narrow parameters. In this section I explore the politics of defining rape. I wish to highlight the complexities and politics of defining rape in a specific way and how both social and legal definitions of rape invariably authenticate certain experiences, while marginalising others (Haugen et al., 2018). In defining rape, I wish to draw on Jeff Hearn's (2014) articulation that "violence is simultaneously material and discursive. It is simultaneously painful, full of pain; and textual, full of text" (p. 9). To write about rape is to write about deeply painful experiences, while embedded within a broader textual framework, which frames this pain in particular ways. As I will explore below, both research and the media produce particular texts about rape in South Africa which create specific affective possibilities for recognising, engaging with and responding to rape and those who experience it. Within this context, to name an experience as 'rape' remains both personally and politically difficult.

Louise du Toit (2009) argues that there does not yet exist a public, political, and shareable language to name the widespread rape and sexual violation of women and girls in South Africa that can carry the weight of rape, public-politically and intersubjectivity. As I will show below, the non-existence of this language is related to the ways in which rape and sexual violence is understood and constructed in the South African context. Within this research project, I articulate rape as first-person experiences (Alcoff, 2018), embedded within and constituted by symbolic, structural and interpersonal contexts, which permeate both 'private' and 'public' spaces (Boonzaier & de la Rey, 2003; van Niekerk & Boonzaier, 2019a). These symbolic, structural and interpersonal contexts include those in which women's bodies are constructed as accessible for control and consumption through "touching, raping, kidnapping, commenting

on, grabbing, twisting, beating, burning, maiming" (Gqola, 2007, p. 120). Within this context rape operates not as a number of isolated, inexplicable horrors but as a systematic violation of women's right to autonomy, safety and freedom (Brownmiller, 1975; Gavey, 2005; Gouws, 2016; Gqola, 2015).

The law is one of the dominant frameworks through which rape is defined (MacKinnon, 2006). In South Africa, whereas rape was previously defined as "intentional and unlawful sexual intercourse with a woman without her consent" (Burchell & Milton, 1997, p. 487), the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act (2007) defines rape as "unlawfully and intentionally commit[ing] an act of sexual penetration with a complainant ('B'), without the consent of B" (p. 20). Consent is defined as "voluntary or uncoerced agreement" (p. 16). Sexual penetration includes:

> any act which causes penetration to any extent whatsoever by— (a) the genital organs of one person into or beyond the genital organs, anus, or mouth of another person; (b) any other part of the body of one person or, any object, including any part of the body of an animal, into or beyond the genital organs or anus of another person; or (c) the genital organs of an animal, into or beyond the mouth of another person (p. 16).

The Amendment thus extends the legal definition of rape beyond a heteronormative comprehension of sexual violation and expands the range of acts which are defined as rape (Smythe, 2015). However, despite this legislative advancement, research suggests that social understandings of rape continue to cohere around narrow definitions of 'real rape' (Estrich, 1987) which construct rape as a crime of violence, perpetrated by strangers (Boonzaier, 2008; Boonzaier & van Schalkwyk, 2011; Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002; Wood et al., 2008). This conceptualisation of 'real rape' precludes an understanding of how coercive acts of sexual violence are central to heteronormative sexual practices in many contexts. For example, Christine Varga and Lindiwe Makubalo (1996) have used the term 'sexual non-negotiation' to describe the limited agency that young women have regarding sexual consent. Within a context in which men are regarded as sexual initiators, while womxn are regarded as passive receivers of sex, 'normative' sexual relations between men and womxn are underpinned by coercive elements (Beare & Boonzaier, 2020; Varga, 2003; Wood et al., 2008). Similar findings have also been reported in other contexts (Bennett & Manderson, 2003; Holland et al., 1990; Jeffrey & Barata, 2017; Plummer & Wight, 2011; Zablotska et al., 2009).

Much research on sexual violence has also documented the difficulties involved in defining rape and the ways in which disparate definitions yield different kinds of data (Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002; Vetten, 2014). Informed by a critical qualitative and feminist approach (which I expand in Chapter Three), I define rape in line the multiple ways that it was constructed by the womxn I interviewed. These constructions are rooted in their (and my) own experiences of rape. This approach allows for an investigation into the ways that meaning is made of rape, enabling womxn to articulate how rape has affected them, and evoking an affective understanding of rape which is absent from much quantitative work on rape (Haugen et al., 2018).

> Rape is a bleeding from the head after falling against a cupboard, not knowing if he spiked my drink. But knowing I didn't want to fucking sleep with him.
>
> Rape is being sexually abused from the age of four to eight by my uncle, who was a really prominent police figure. Rape is being unconscious at a party and him telling everyone how loose I am. Rape is being raped more times than I can remember by my partner.
>
> Rape is lying there quietly on the mud, waiting for it to be over and making him promise he won't kill me.
>
> Rape is being repeatedly sexually assaulted for a number of years as a child, by another child. Rape is being forced to do things I was uncomfortable with by a friend.
>
> Rape is being strangled and raped in a taxi on my way home and then being told how good I was.
>
> Rape is being locked in a room and raped by a boy I liked when I am seventeen. Rape is waking up in the middle of the night with my friend's ex-boyfriend on top of me and him trying to convince me we were having sex. Rape is being offered money for sex from a taxi driver and then afterwards having my consent taken away because he didn't pay me.

Rape is the man I went to for a healing massage putting his penis in me and starting to thrust and me thinking "no this is not part of the massage" and asking him politely to stop.

Rape is a neighbour raping me when I was four when I didn't even know what rape was. I just knew he inserted something and then I was in pain.

Rape is what two English men did to me on a beach in Israel, they used a bottle.

Rape is my boyfriend saying "I want to try something with you" and then tying me to the bed on my face and me not liking what's happening and feeling frozen and thinking maybe if he remembers that he loves me he'll stop.

Rape is being beaten, taken to a strange house and raped without protection at 1 or 2am, again at 3am and again around 6 o'clock by my ex-husband.

Rape is being kissed and thinking it was nice and then him pinning me down on the bed and taking off my clothes. Rape is wanting to scream and then when I do make a sound him putting his hand around my throat. Rape is telling him he was hurting me and him not stopping. Rape is him getting off me and saying I must wash the sheet because it's full of blood.

Rape is waking up from the pain of being penetrated and shouting 'get off me'

Rape is my friends' hand going between my legs and me *physically* taking his hand and removing it and asking him "please can you just hold me?". Rape is him saying "ok" but then a second later his hand is in-between my legs again. So eventually by the fifth time… I don't consent I relent.

Rape is the person very close to the family, who we used to call uncle, preparing the bath water, getting me ready to bath and then forcing himself on me.

Rape is one of the older boys saying "I want to play this game with you. It's called sex". Rape is weird and uncomfortable and I *didn't* like it at all.

Rape is three guys approaching me on the street. They take my jewellery but I find that they want more. Rape is having to block the part of my brain when something

> is h- actually happening to you but you think you are in a movie (compiled from interviews and research diary, 11 October 2020).

In this thesis, I do not understand and articulate rape as merely a singular event, a discreet moment in time, but rather as multiple different moments which fold into each other and one's sense of self (Chemaly, 2018). In order to develop a more complex understanding of the meaning and impact of rape, the ways in which rape *affects*, throughout this thesis I also explore the collective and historic senses that are made of rape in the social context of South Africa, as well as what these meaning-making processes demonstrate about broader understandings of gender, sexualities and violence (du Toit, 2009). Throughout this thesis I expand on how the meanings that my participants and I make of rape are constituted by the socio-political context of sexual violence in South Africa, which I explore below.

**The Discomfort of Writing from (T)here: Constructing the 'Rape Capital of the World'**

I spent a year of my PhD at the University of Edinburgh. A few months after I arrived I was invited to give a presentation about my research:

> As I stand in front of the seminar room, presenting my research on sexual violence in South Africa I begin to be uncomfortably aware of how I am (re)producing the notion of South Africa as one of the most sexually violent places in the world; 'the rape capital of the world' as it is commonly referred to. I think here of the repeated representation of South Africa as a space of unabated grotesque violence, a space of nightmares, monsters and terror (Extract from research diary, 1 August 2018).

In this moment, and in many moments after this, I have been compelled to ask what it means to write (and talk) about rape in South Africa from a prestigious university in the United Kingdom? To talk from the 'centre' about the 'periphery' makes uncomfortably clear the politics of location and the ways in which relations of coloniality continue to construct 'Africa' in violent ways (Hountondji, 1990; Ratele, 2019; Tamale, 2011a). However, as the student protests in South Africa and other parts of the world have shown, the production of a problematic gaze on 'Africa' is not merely constituted through physical location (i.e. being in the Global North) but also through a particular epistemic location of coloniality. I expand on this in the following chapter. As I will show below, it is not only research from the Global

North which demonstrates an "obsession with South Africa as rape capital" (Gqola, 2015, p. 9).

South Africa was first dubbed 'the rape capital of the world' in a report by Human Rights Watch (1995). Since then, this phrase has been frequently repeated in both local and international research and media (Dosekun, 2013; Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002; van Schalkwyk, 2018). The notion of the 'rape crisis' in South Africa has been bolstered by research which demonstrates alarmingly high rates of sexual violence. For example, in a study across three provinces, 27.6 % of men reported having raped a woman (Jewkes et al., 2011). A study in Gauteng found that one in four women had experienced sexual violence (Machisa et al., 2011). A cluster-randomized household survey among women 18-49 years in the Rustenburg municipality found a lifetime sexual violence prevalence of 24.9% (Steele et al., 2019). A third (37.9%) of 17-24-year-old women, surveyed at a university in the Eastern Cape reported having experienced sexual violence (Ajayi & Ezegbel, 2020). In 2019/2020 the police recorded 42 289 rapes, which equates to an average of 116 rapes per day (South African Police Service [SAPS], 2020). However, a number of limitations regarding rape statistics have also been highlighted by researchers. For example, there is a lack of information about particular victim categories and the lack of contextual information provided by police data (including for example, the relationship between 'victim' and perpetrator) (Vetten, 2014). Research has also demonstrated the under-reporting of rape to police. For example, one study in Gauteng showed that only one in 25 women who had been raped reported the incident to the police (Machisa et al., 2011). Another study showed that 90% of women in Rustenburg did not report their experiences of rape to the police (Steele et al., 2019). This work demonstrates that in many instances, rape remains shrouded in silence and shame. These findings also highlight the wide-spread lack of faith in the criminal justice system.

Alarmingly high rates of sexual violence in South Africa can be understood in relation rape culture, which both normalises and trivialises sexual violence (Gouws, 2017; Gqola, 2015; Orth et al., 2021; Palm, 2018). The term 'rape culture', first articulated by Susan Brownmiller (1975) has been widely used to highlight the cultural ideologies and images that enable sexual violence (Fraser, 2015; Gavey, 2005; Rentschler, 2014). These include:

> [a] complex of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women […] A rape culture condones physical and emotional terrorism against women *as the norm*. In a rape culture both men and women assume that sexual violence is a fact of life, inevitable as death or taxes (Buchwald et al., 1993, p. viii).

Central to rape culture are rape myths, which produce narrow and problematic understandings of what 'counts' as rape (Burt, 1980). Dominant myths include the idea that women's behaviours (including dressing 'provocatively', 'flirting' with men, drinking and walking alone at night) 'cause' men to rape them; women can 'avoid' rape if they try; women (secretly) 'enjoy' being raped; women lie about rape to 'punish' men (Abrahams & Jewkes, 2010; Gordon & Riger, 1989; D. Herman, 1984; D. Scully, 1994; Webster & Dunn, 2005). As mentioned above, other widely held rape myths include the idea that rape is perpetrated by strangers; rape only occurs at night (usually in a public space); the 'victim' actively resists the rape in some way, and that the rapist uses or threatens physical violence (Estrich, 1987; du Toit, 2009; Gavey, 2005; Menon, 2012; Posel, 2005; Reddy & Potgeiter, 2006). The dominance of these rape myths means that certain women are more vulnerable to having their violations excluded from the category of rape; not being believed; having the harm of rape denied and being blamed and shamed for the violence that has been perpetrated against them (Burt, 1980; Pateman, 1980).

Rape culture in South Africa is also constituted by a "grammar of horror such as endemic baby rape, corrective lesbian and grand-mother rapes" perpetuated by the South African media (Hirschauer, 2014, p. 84). Media representations of only the most spectacular (meaning grotesquely violent and 'morally horrifying') instances of rape constitute a distorted picture of the practice and meaning of sexual violence. This 'spectacturalisation' serves to detach rape from the context in which it occurs, thus prohibiting deeper engagement with issues of complicity and responsibility (du Toit, 2014; Dutton, 2013; Judge, 2015).

The notion that rape only takes place in certain communities, perpetuated by certain men serves to distort the realities of sexual violence. The media tends to reinscribe racialised constructions of rape, suggesting that it is perpetrated almost exclusively by 'black' men (Dosekun, 2013). These constructions draw on racist colonial and apartheid discourses which constructed 'black' sexualities as deviant and dangerous (I explore this further in the following chapters). As Helen Moffett (2006) has argued, in the post-apartheid period, narratives of rape are continually

reworked as stories about race, rather than gender. These racialised narratives have been widely taken up in South African society (Dosekun, 2013; Moffett, 2006). While 'black' men continue to be constructed as the perpetrators of violence, 'black' women, particularly those who are young and poor, are repeatedly represented as the 'inevitable' victims of rape (Boonzaier, 2017; Judge, 2015; Shefer, 2016). For example, in 2016, the rape and murder of Sinoxolo Mafevuka, a young 'black' woman living in Khayelitsha, only gained widespread media coverage after the rape and muder of another young womxn, Franziska Blochlinger who was from a middle-class family (Mzantsi & Adriaanse, 2016). Similarly, the rape and murder of Anene Booysen in 2013 was quickly eclipsed in media and public discourse by the murder of Reeva Steenkamp, a 'white', middle-class woman, by her paralympian boyfriend, Oscar Pistorius (Watson & Lalu, 2015). Unlike the case of Anene Booysen, the media devoted significant attention to constructing Reeva as a full person, focusing on the life she had led, her relationships with family and friends, and her opinions on various subjects (Boonzaier, 2017; Watson & Lalu, 2015). The lack of media and public attention in response to the rapes of 'black' womxn serves to further normalise this kind of violence and construct them as 'disposable' (Gqola, 2015). The majority of research on rape in South Africa has also tended to focus on 'black' women as 'victims' and/or black man as 'perpetrators' of sexual violence (Butien & Naidoo, 2016). This research serves to locate sexual violence only in particular communities (Boonzaier, 2017; Buiten & Naidoo, 2016). There, thus, exists an ongoing tension in research on sexual violence "between the need to contextualise rape historically, and the need to ensure that intersectional analyses are not appropriated towards racist or xenophobic assumptions about rape" (Buiten & Naidoo, 2016, p. 542).

A variety of critical scholarship has attempted to contextualise the high rates of sexual violence in South Africa. This work has advanced nuanced and complex understandings of why such high rates of sexual, and other forms of gender-based, violence persist in South Africa. The violences of colonialism and apartheid have created a social context in which (physical) violence has become a central and legitimised mechanism for managing conflict and social relations (Vetten & Ratele, 2013). Drawing on these legacies of punitive and violent control, rape comes to operate as a means to maintain patriarchal order and 'correct' women who 'step out of line' (Moffett, 2006). Many scholars have also argued that in the post-apartheid context, patriarchal relations of power have not been meaningfully dismantled. Discourses of 'women's empowerment', through which a limited number of women have been granted access to corporate and government positions, has not gone far enough to challenge male dominance

(Gouws, 2016; Gqola, 2007; Hassim, 2009). Pumla Gqola (2015) has proposed that contemporary South Africa is constituted by "the female fear factory" or "the manufacture of female fear", through which the threat of rape works to "remind women that they are not safe and that their bodies are not entirely theirs" (pp. 78-79). The 'effectiveness' of the female fear factory to produce widespread fear of rape among South African women has been demonstrated in a wide range of research. For example, a study conducted with 16- and 17-year-old girls from a township school in Durban found that a fear of rape was articulated in relation to boyfriends, male teachers, men in the home, and men in the neighbourhood (Bhana, 2012). Another study, conducted with 'black', 'white' and 'coloured' women at the University of Cape Town, found that these women often imagined and feared being raped (Dosekun, 2007).

In the post-apartheid period, both the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Jacob Zuma rape trial have quashed significant opportunities to engage with and reformulate issues of sexual violence (du Toit, 2009; Gqola, 2007; Hassim, 2009). By not including sexual violence as a distinct category of violation, the TRC's failed to address the significance and wide-spread effects of sexual violation during apartheid and side-lined rape as an important political issue in the reconstruction of the South African nation (Durbach, 2016). In late 2005, Jacob Zuma, who was at the time the deputy president of the African National Congress (ANC), was accused of rape by the woman known as Khwezi[13], a close friend of the family. In 2006 Zuma was acquitted of rape. As Pumla Gqola (2015) has argued, what transpired both inside and outside the court during the duration of the trial shone an (unflattering) light on both social and legal responses to rape. The case, and the media and public responses the case evoked, demonstrated how victim blaming, including the notion that women 'ask for rape' by dressing 'provocatively' remains a dominant frame through which rape is understood (Hassim, 2009; Reddy & Potgieter, 2006). The violence Khwezi was subjected to, both inside the courtroom where her sexual history was used to discredit her, and outside where Zuma's supporters chanted "burn the bitch", powerfully exposed the hostility and shame women who experience rape can come to expect if they speak out about their violations (Gqola, 2007; Hassim, 2009; Reddy & Potgeiter, 2006). The Jacob Zuma trial, while spectacular in terms of the media and public attention it garnered, was un-spectacular in the ways in which it perpetuated harmful understandings of rape – including victim-blaming (Gqola, 2007; Swemmer, 2019).

[13] She was given the name Khwezi (meaning 'Star') to protect her identity during the trial.

The Jacob Zuma trial highlighted the continued dominance of notions of the sexual entitlement of men, which has been demonstrated in a range of research on sexual violence. Across different social groups in South Africa, dominant constructions of masculinity centre on control of women and male sexual entitlement (Seedat et al., 2009). In a study with men who admitted having committed rape, a sense of sexual entitlement was the most common reason given as motivation (Jewkes et al., 2011). Research has also demonstrated that the transition to democracy, and in particular the advancement of women's rights in the constitution, has been interpreted as a 'threat' by many men (Ratele, 2016). For example, in a study conducted in two communities in the Western Cape, both male and female participants argued that women have brought about the disempowerment of men (Strebel et al., 2006). Within this context, men's use of violence against women comes to be understood as a means to re-instate their dominance (Boonzaier & de la Rey, 2003; Boonzaier, 2005; Hatcher et al., 2014). This research demonstrates the incomplete transition to more gender-equitable relations in South Africa (Machisa et al., 2011). Relatedly, research has also highlighted how wide-spread economic exclusion of men has resulted in a sense disempowerment and rage, which is often acted out on women (Hunter, 2006; Morrell & Ouzgane, 2005; L. Walker, 2005). As Kopano Ratele (2016) has written, in deeply unequal societies, such as South Africa, where many young 'black' men remain unemployed and socially and economically excluded, violence becomes a central way through which they can be regarded as 'successfully masculine'. Thus, the precariousness and marginalisation of many men operates as a central driver of gendered violence (Ratele, 2020a).

A range of intersecting factors, including those related to race, gender and class have produced a complex matrix of domination and inequality in South Africa, which have created a particularly fertile ground for the perpetration of sexual and other forms of gendered violence (Boonzaier & de la Rey, 2003; Vetten & Ratele, 2013). These intersecting inequalities have produced a rape culture in South Africa, through which rape and other forms of sexual violence have become normalised and there is wide-spread acceptance of rape as ever-present (Gouws, 2018; Gqola, 2015). This rape culture, constituted by continuously repeated myths and stereotypes about rape, produces ambivalence about the seriousness and impact of rape and constructs rape as a 'risk-free' or 'safe' crime and often not even a crime at all (Hirschauer, 2014; Jewkes et al., 2005; Moffett, 2006; Thomas et al., 2013). South Africa has, thus, become a society that is *unaffected* by rape. By this I do not mean that rape does not produce wide-

spread and long-term harm, but rather that this harm is not recognised or adequality attended to.

**'Measuring' the Impact of Rape**

Much of the research on the effects of rape has been developed from a public health perspective, focusing on negative health consequences for individual women who experience rape. This research, both globally and in South Africa, has demonstrated that rape can result in physical injuries, reproductive health complications, psychological distress in the forms of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety and substance use (Abrahams & Jewkes, 2010; Chaudhury et al., 2017; Koss, 1993; Machisa et al., 2011; Ogunwale & Oshiname, 2017; Ward et al., 2018; World Health Organisation [WHO], 2013). Within the South African context, the risks of developing HIV have also been highlighted (Speizer et al., 2009; Decker et al., 2014).

Studies have also demonstrated the ways in which social responses to incidences of rape, including responses from law enforcement, medical practitioners, as well as friends and family, serve to either mitigate or exacerbate the negative impact of rape (Campbell et al., 1999; Campbell & Raja, 1999; Wasco, 2003). Negative responses from police, the criminal justice system and medical services have been termed the 'second rape' (Madigan & Gamble, 1991), 'second assault' (Martin & Powell, 1994) or 'secondary victimisation' (J. Williams, 1984). These negative responses, including the denial of services, as well as insensitive or poor care, may occur as a result of rape myths – for example the notion that women are 'lying' about rape, that they are to 'blame' or that rape is not really that 'serious' (R. Campbell, 2008; Campbell & Raja, 1999; Krahé, 2016; Munala et al., 2018). Quantitative research in the United States has demonstrated that women who receive negative responses from law enforcement and medical practitioners exhibit more severe symptoms of PTSD (Campbell & Raja, 2005; Ullman & Filipas, 2001; Ullman & Peter-Hagene, 2016).

A limited number of quantitative studies in South Africa have demonstrated the psychological impact of rape through the assessment of PTSD and depression. For example, a study with women who had been raped in Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and the Western Cape found that 87% of women experience PTSD and 51% experienced moderate to severe depression (Mgoqi-Mbalo et al., 2017). This study also reported that unmarried women and women living

in KZN had significantly higher levels of depression and PTSD and unemployed women had higher levels of depression. A study with adult and adolescent women recruited from two rape clinics in Cape Town found that rates of PTSD were 43.9% for adolescents and 19.3% for adults (van der Walt et al., 2014). Another study exploring depression four to six weeks following rape with women in the Eastern and Western Cape found that 84.3% of women experience depression (Abrahams et al., 2013). This study found a lesser likelihood of depression was associated with having been raped under circumstances in which women were less likely to be blamed, including being raped by a stranger, being raped by multiple perpetrators and the use of more severe levels of violence during the rape. In contrast, 'coloured', unemployed women and those with higher levels of education experienced a greater likelihood of depression (Abrahams et al., 2013).

A small body of qualitative work in South Africa has also explored the impact of rape. One study with women from an urban and rural site in the Western Cape found that post-rape women experience emotional difficulties, anxiety, blame, stigmatisation, anger and frustration (Abrahams & Gevers, 2017). Another study found that rape stigma impacted on women's adherence to post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) in both the Eastern and Western Cape (Abrahams & Jewkes, 2010). A study conducted with women who had been raped, within 72 hours of the incident, in in low-income community in Cape Town found that dominant socio-cultural understandings of rape, which blamed women, degraded and alienated them, negatively impacted on women's recovery post-rape (Womersley & Maw, 2009). A study investigating women's experience with medical and criminal justice services post-rape in Cape Town and Durban found that women experienced secondary victimisation, including stigmatisation, victim-blaming and the dismissal of harm (Lechlech, 2020).

Collectively, this research has tended to focus on short-term consequences of rape and has been dominated by medical understandings of harm (Abrahams et al., 2017). Therefore, there is a dearth of more in-depth work which examines the nuanced, complex and long-term ways in which instances of rape affect women, as well as the ways in which these affects are imbedded within a broader socio-cultural structure which both discursively and materially enable sexual violence (Womersley & Maw, 2009). A focus on individualised health outcomes, such as symptomology of depression and PTSD, is insufficient to gauge of the ways in which rape *affects*.

Most of the research which has explored the impact of rape on women has recruited participants from health facilities (e.g. Abrahams & Jewkes, 2010; Abrahams et al., 2013; Mgoqi-Mbalo et al., 2017; Womersley & Maw, 2009; van der Walt et al., 2014). As research, both in South Africa and other contexts, has demonstrated, only a very small proportion of women who have been raped access medical or police services (Machisa et al., 2011; Murray, 2012; Nemathaga et al., 2015; Steele et al., 2019; Weiss, 2010). Therefore, a dominant research focus on women who have accessed medical services is likely to overrepresent certain kinds of experiences of rape, for example those that involve more severe forms of physical violence and are perpetrated by strangers (Mgoqi-Mbalo et al., 2017).

**Expanding the Costs of Rape**

In the face of continued violation of womxn's bodily autonomy and the failure of various institutions, including the state and the police, to take this violence seriously, activist and performative interventions have been staged with increasing frequency to call attention to and challenge the ongoing onslaught of violence against womxn in South Africa (Shefer, 2019b) and beyond. Below I reflect on some of the key interventions which have taken places in the past five years, focusing specifically on those related to issues of rape and sexual violence: #RememberKhwezi[14], #RUReferenceList[15] and #TotalShutDown[16]/ #AmINext[17].

On the 6th of August 2016, during the Independent Electoral Commission's (IEC) ceremony announcing the results of the election, Simamkele Dlakavu, Tinyiko Shikwambane, Naled Chirwa and Amanda Mavuso stoop up as Jacob Zuma was addressing the nation. With their backs to Zuma, facing the crowd and the cameras, they held up placards that read "I am 1 in 3"[18] "10 yrs later" "Remember Khwezi" and "Khanga"[19] (Wazar, 2016). The protest was a disruption of the narrative of democratic progress in South Africa, demanding that the nation reflect on how womxn are continually failed within the new South Africa (Gqola, 2017). The

[14] https://twitter.com/hashtag/RememberKhwezi?src=hashtag_click
[15] https://twitter.com/hashtag/rureferencelist?lang=en
[16] https://twitter.com/hashtag/TotalShutdown?src=hashtag_click
[17] https://twitter.com/VinylAngel/status/1168515790280318978
[18] This is a reference to the widely circulated statistic that 1 in 3 womxn in South Africa experiences rape in her life.
[19] 'Khanga' refers to the draped cloth that Fezekile was wearing on the night that she was raped by Zuma. During the trial Zuma testified that her wearing of the khanga was an invitation for him to have sex with her (Maluleke & Moyer, 2020).

reference to "10 yrs later" was a prompt to reflect on the fact that it had been 10 years since Jacob Zuma was acquitted of raping Fezekile Ntsukela Kuzwayo.

On the 17th of April 2016 a list of eleven men's names and "et al" (denoting "and others") was published on the RU Queer Confessions and Crushes Facebook page – entitled "Reference List" (Seddon, 2016). The list was posted as a response to the university management removing posters protesting against sexual violence. One of the posters stated: "You are more likely to be excluded for plagiarism than you are for rape" (Haith, 2016, n.p.). Following the publishing of the RU Reference List, womxn and queer students disrupted university classes and marched topless to protest against the university management' repeated failure to respond to rape on campus (Gouws, 2018). The protest quickly spread to other South African universities, including UCT, the University of the Western Cape (UWC), the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN), and the University of Witwatersrand (WITS) (Shewarega Hussen, 2018).

Both the Remember Khwezi protest and the RU Reference list occurred within the context of the Fallist student movements and calls to decolonise institutions of higher education in South Africa. Within the Fallist student movements there were multiple instances of violence against female and queer activists by their male comrades. For example, Chumani Maxwele strangled Thenjiwe Mswane during a protest at WITS (Lujabe, 2016). At least one female student was raped by a male student whilst occupying Azania House at UCT (Ndlovu, 2017). Female students also reported experiencing threats of sexual violence, including one male student who shouted "maybe your vagina should be occupied" at a female student at Azania House (Ratele, 2018). Through Remember Khwezi and the RU Reference list, feminist and queer students (re)asserted gendered and sexual forms of violence as central to the establishment of more inclusive and non-violent spaces of learning, as well as challenged the violent patriarchy of both the university and militarised masculine activism (Booysen, 2016; Malebye, 2020; Ndlovu, 2017; Xaba, 2017).

In August 2019, which is celebrated as 'Women's month' in South Africa to commemorate the 1956 Women's march to the Union Buildings, at least 30 women from a range of different backgrounds, in different parts of the country, were killed, many of them by their partners (Davis & Kubheka, 2019). Widely publicised cases included those of Uyinene Mrwetyana, Leighandre 'Baby Lee' Jegels, Janika Mallo, Jesse Hess, Meghan Cremer and Lynette Volschenk (BBC, 2019; Merten, 2019). August 2019 represented just one moment in the relentless assault, both embodied and symbolic, on the bodies and senses of womxn in South

Africa (Gqola, 2017). In particular the rape and murder of Uyinene Mrwetyana by a post-office worker when she went to collect a parcel, provoked wide-spread outrage and horror (Levitt, 2019). Uyinene's murder sparked hashtags such as #AmINext and #SAShutDown (Levitt, 2019; Lyster, 2019). Protests, led by womxn and queer people, were staged in both Johannesburg and Cape Town in response to what many called "the war on womxn's bodies" (Hoosain Khan, 2019, n.p; Isaacs & Persens, 2019; Mogoatlhe & Letsoalo, 2019).

Globally, too, there has also been a recent upsurge in protests against sexual violence. In 2017, the viral movement #MeToo was ignited by American actress Alyssa Milano's post on Twitter which read "If all the women who have been sexually harassed or assaulted wrote 'Me too' as a status, we might give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem" (Milano, 2017, n.p.). Within 24 hours, the hashtag had been used 12 million times on Facebook (Lawton, 2017). Alyssa Milano's tweet was in response to a number of women in the United States coming forward to share their experiences of being sexually assaulted by movie producer Harvey Weinstein (Boyle, 2019). The social media campaign was taken up across the globe, with local variations such as #BalanceTonPorc ("name your pig") in France; #RiceBunny (which is pronounced as "mi tu") in China; #YoTambién ("me too") across the Spanish-speaking world; and #QuellaVoltaChe ("that time when…") in Italy (Di Caro, 2017; Zeng, 2018). The way in which #MeToo was taken up across the globe publicly asserted just how widespread sexual violation is, as well as the way in which these experiences have become 'routine' and 'normalised' (Fileborn & Loney-Howes, 2019). The MeToo movement was originally founded by Tarana Burke in 2006 (Jerkins, 2019). The fact that the movement only went viral once a famous 'white' actress posted about it on social media highlights the ways in which only certain women are able to speak out about sexual violence and how only the violations of certain women are regarded as deserving of wide-spread public outrage. For example, the experiences of LGBTIQ+ people, women of colour, women from impoverished communities, and women in the Global South have been marginalized within the movement (Garibotti & Hopp, 2019; Ison, 2019; Kagal, Cowan & Jawad, 2019; Ryan, 2019). The focus on the stories of particular women has served "to reinforce assumptions about 'real' rape victims who are young, white, heterosexual, able-bodied and not engaged in 'risky' sexual behavio[u]rs that might make them 'responsible' for their sexual victimization" (Fileborn & Loney-Howes, 2019, p. 9). These issues highlight not only how sexual violence is a widespread global issue, affecting womxn (and others) throughout the world, but also how in all contexts, sexual violence is intertwined with other structures of power which create erasures and exclusions.

Despite the limitations of the MeToo movement (Shefer & Shewarega Hussen, 2020), I argue that collectively the Remember Khwezi, RU Reference List, TotalShutDown/ AmINext and Me Too protests affectively disrupt the normalisation of sexual violence. Through articulating a range of affective responses, including outrage, fear, grief, and frustration, protestors demand a different social response to rape. These protests invite a different conceptualisation of the effects of rape and what it means to live in a rape culture – not only in South Africa, but across the globe. They demand a re-examination of the costs of rape.

In response to the gaps in research approaches to and understandings of the impact of sexual violence, articulated above, and the increasing social-political demand for an alternative engagement with the costs of rape, this thesis explores how a group of South African womxn who have been raped are *affected* by this form of violence. I explore how womxn make sense of their experience of rape within the context of South Africa as 'the rape capital of the world', in which sexual violence is hypervisible – reported in the news media almost every day – and yet not positioned as a social and political concern. I ask how living in a rape culture constitutes trauma, shame, rage and hope. This critical, situated approach involves recognising the unacceptably high rates of sexual violence in South Africa, while simultaneously challenging racist, colonial and othering discourses with decontextualise this violence. While this work is African-centred and situated, it also attempts to speak to sexual violence as a global issue, which is always embedded within and constituted by both global and local matrixes of power.

My approach draws on a range of critical feminist scholarship on sexual violence in the South African context, much of which I have outlined in this chapter (e.g. Boonzaier, 2017; du Toit, 2009; Moffett, 2006; Gqola, 2015; Posel, 2005). While this scholarship has undoubtedly advanced important and nuanced understandings of sexual violence in South Africa, it has often focused on more 'spectacular' instances of rape, including those that have received extensive media coverage (e.g. 'baby rapes', the Jacob Zuma rape trial, the case of Anene Booysen, etc.). By engaging with the experiences of 'ordinary' South African womxn and 'ordinary' instances of sexual violation, I explore the profound way in which rape *affects*, beyond a narrow focus on individualised, medicalised trauma. Relatedly, by drawing on the experiences of both 'black' and 'white' womxn from a range of different communities in South Africa, this thesis disrupts the notion that rape only happens in certain communities, perpetrated by certain kinds of men against certain kinds of womxn. In this way, I attempt to advance a critical and situated understanding of the "huge, devastating cost that comes with rape – an invisible wound that

remains long after the physical scars (where they exist) have healed … [the]cost [of having] so many of our people walking wounded" (Gqola, 2015, p. 19).

**Outline of Thesis**

As is perhaps indicated by this initial chapter, the structure of this thesis diverges from and attempts to disrupt, to some extent, that of a 'traditional' thesis in Psychology. From the outset, my own experience of rape has been entangled with that of others – the womxn sitting across from me in the waiting room, friends and acquaintances who have also been raped, womxn whose experiences of sexual violence are reported in the media, and womxn who I worked with when I was a volunteer counsellor at Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust (RCCTT). Throughout the thesis I explore the connections and gaps between my experience and those of the womxn I interviewed, as well as how these connections and gaps are negotiated within the context of the interviews. In all the chapters I include some form of analysis, rather than having separate analysis chapters – although Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven carry the bulk of my analytic work. Relatedly, I do not have a separate literature review chapter but include various pieces of literature in all the chapters to reflect on how my work, at all stages of the thesis, has been framed in particular ways by existing research and theory. For example, I discuss literature relevant to the construction of African womxn's bodies in Chapter Two, literature relevant to ethics in Chapter Three, literature relevant to trauma in Chapter Four, literature relevant to shame in Chapter Five, literature relevant to rage in Chapter Six, and literature relevant to hope in Chapter Seven.

The structure of the thesis is also an attempt to highlight the relationship between form and content. That is, the way in which *what* is written and *how* it is written are both significant in the knowledge-making process. Throughout this thesis I attempt to write in a way that is both critical and evocative in order to unsettle the 'unaffectedness' of rape. As is evident in this chapter, I employ an intertextual approach "which both acknowledges and plays the blurred boundaries between form and content, text and context" (Hamilton, Harris, & Reid, 2002, p. 14). I draw on different kinds of texts (distinguished by different fonts), including meditations on my own experience of rape, extracts from interviews with participants, reflections on the interactions between my participants and I, theory and research on sexual violence and related topics, and extracts from media and other public sources. This approach is an attempt to, in some way, make material the various, often conflicting fragments that constitute the affective

landscape of rape. The thesis is divided into seven chapters, inclusive of this one. Below I outline the contents of each chapter.

In Chapter Two, *Re-membering Bodies of Knowledge: A Decolonial, Feminist, Affective Approach*, I reflect on the sculpture of Sara Baartman, which until 2018 stood in the library at UCT, as a way to highlight the continued power of the colonial archive. I explore the way in which coloniality has constituted notions of who counts as humxn and the implications of this for sexual violence in the African context. I draw on the story of Sara Baartman and the ways in which she was dismembered by colonial scientific practices, as well as how her dismemberment is challenge by queer and feminist protestors at UCT. In contrast to an 'objective', 'scientific' way of knowing, I propose the notion of affective re-membering as a theoretical approach to sexual violence. I outline the ways in which this approach is informed by decolonial, feminist and intersectional theory, as well as work on affect.

In Chapter Three, *Affective Entanglements as Methodology*, I outline and critically reflect on my methodological approach. Central to this chapter are notions of ethics and doing care(ful) research. Here I introduce the 16 womxn whose experiences constitute the bulk of this thesis. I present my approach to autoethnography, in-depth interviewing and my analytic approach. I highlight how together these entangled elements produce what I am calling 'affective writing'. I use the notion of 'affective entanglements' to explore the affective connections between my participants and I, as well as to situate these affective entanglements within the broader affective context in which the research takes place.

In Chapter Four, *The Trauma of Rape in 'the Rape Capital of the World'*, I explore how rape is hypervisible in South Africa – constituted both through spectacular and statistical representations. I argue that the continued representation of rape as an extreme act of physical violence serves to disguise and dismiss the multiple harms that rape produces. Drawing on my own and participants' narratives, I expand a relational, and socially-situated understanding of the traumas of rape. While acknowledging 'common' trauma across different experiences of rape, I also seek to unsettle notions of 'shared' trauma by exploring how womxn are differently affected by rape.

In Chapter Five, *The Stickiness of Shame*, I explore the ways in which shame attaches firmly to womxn who experience rape. Drawing on notions of 'respectability' and 'responsibilisation'

I explore the effects of this shame for how womxn understand their experiences of violation. I also explore how this shame is constituted by racist discourses perpetuated by both colonial and apartheid anxieties about 'miscegenation' and 'inter-racial' sex. While attempting to acknowledge the heavy weight of shame for both myself and the womxn I interviewed, I also explore the ways in which we resist this shame within the context of the interviews.

In Chapter Six, *The Possibilities of Rage*, I explore how female rage has been pathologised and how this constrains the ways in which womxn are able to understand and respond to their experiences of rape. I analyse participants' and my own struggles to enact rage in the face of our experiences of rape, as well as the insensitive and inadequate responses from others around us. I argue that our enactments of rage, which emerge during the interviews, operate as powerful refusals of notions of female respectability and passivity. Through enacting rage my participants and I re-asset the validity of our pain and the significance of our violations.

In Chapter Seven, *Concluding with Unsettling Hopefulness*, I attempt to draw together some of the key affective threads that have developed throughout the thesis. I propose the notion of 'unsettling hopefulness' as a way of holding together both the enormous pain of rape and the possibilities for something beyond this in the future. I argue that for both myself and my participants the interviews operate as spaces of re-membering, through which we are able to mourn for what we have lost. I propose that this thesis establishes a different kind of archive – an archive of feeling – in an attempt to record the costs of rape. Finally, I return to feelings of discomfort to propose that it is necessary to hold onto 'bad feelings' in order to disrupt the unaffected conditions in which rape is able to flourish.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Re-membering Bodies of Knowledge: A Decolonial, Feminist, Affective Approach

I have come to wretch you away –
away from the poking eyes
of the man-made monster
who lives in the dark
with his clutches of imperialism
who dissects your body bit by bit
who likens your soul to that of Satan
and declares himself the ultimate god!
(Ferrus, 1998[20])

In early 2018 the sculpture of Sara Baartman, was 'de-robed' by the librarian, William Daniels, in the UCT library– the university where I studied for six years. The sculpture, created by artist Willie Bester, had previously been robed on two occasions by queer and feminist activists, once in 2015 and again in 2016 (Makhubu, 2020). Sara[21] was a young Khoikhoi[22] womxn from South Africa who was taken to Europe to be exhibited in the early 1800s as an 'exotic specimen' (Crais & Scully, 2009). Sara was labelled the 'Hottentot Venus' to highlight her status as 'alien' and 'deviant' (Buikema, 2009; Gqola, 2010; Yancy, 2008). Following her death, she was examined, dissected, preserved and displayed at the Musée de L' Homme in Paris until 1976 (Abrahams, 1996). Her remains were finally returned and ceremonially buried in the Eastern Cape in 2002 (Samuelson, 2007). Many critical and decolonial feminist scholars have highlighted how Sara Baartman's body has been subsumed by colonial practices of scientific racism, which are constituted by, as well as of, slavery and colonialism (Abrahams, 1997, Boonzaier, 2017; Crais & Scully, 2009; Gilman, 1985; Gqola, 2010). In this chapter I focus on the sculpture of Sara Baartman and, in particular, the robing and de-robing in order to situate this thesis within the politics of sexual violence, which remain entangled with historical and ongoing processes of racialisation, sexualisation, gendering, and violation of bodies and

[20] This extract comes from the poem 'A tribute to Sara Baartman' which was written in 1998, four years before Sara's remains where eventually returned to South Africa (Gqola, 2010).
[21] Sara is also referred to as Sarah or Saartjie.
[22] Yvette Abrahams (2003) defines the Khoikhoi as "First Nations people who are the indigenous inhabitants of South Africa" (p. 13). They are also referred to as the Khoisan.

subjectivities, both in South Africa and globally. I highlight the way in which the re-robing of the sculpture works as an affective disruption of the colonial archive, through which Sara has been dismembered. This affective disruption has informed my theoretical orientation in this thesis, which I am calling a decolonial, feminist, affective approach. I propose that this approach enables a re-membering in the face of rape.

In this chapter and beyond, I use the term re-membering to articulate a kind of reparation in the face of dismemberment produced by various, intersecting forms of violence. Colonial contact in Africa has been characterised as dismemberment; both material and psychic, a dismembering of continent, bodies, selves, social relations and memory (Jacqui Alexander, 2005; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015a; Tyali, 2018; wa Thiong'o, 2009). Relatedly, I understand Sara Baartman to have been dismembered by colonial practices of science. Not only was her body dissected and parts of her displayed in a French museum, but her personhood was similarly dismembered by colonial understandings of 'the human', which rendered her as a non-being (Abrahams, 1997; Crais & Scully, 2009; Gqola, 2010; R. Holmes, 2008). It is this representation of her which is at the heart of the contestations around the sculpture in the library of UCT. Finally, I understand rape as an act of dismemberment; an act which attempts to destroy a sense of bodily autonomy, of safety, of self and of so much more. The effects (and affects) of this dismemberment are explored and analysed in the following chapters. Of course, 're-member' also alludes to the past. Here I am interested in how histories remain alive and shape present worlds and lives (Ahmed, 2004c).

I begin by reflecting on the sculpture itself. I then turn to the cultural archive, as a means of situating the sculpture, as well as the interactions with it, in relation to the violence of coloniality. In the second half of the chapter, I articulate a decolonial, feminist, affective approach as a framework for re-membering differently. Perhaps it seems strange that I draw on the re-robing of the sculpture of Sara Baartman to theoretically situate my research. This is a deliberate choice to demonstrate the ways in which this research project is connected to and affected by a particular history and a specific present. As I will expand below, this is a history of colonial violence, and a present of decolonial African feminist activism that speaks back to this violence. I remember attending a presentation by Shose Kessi in February 2019, where she reflected on the re-robing of the sculpture of Sara. Her presentation and analysis affected me profoundly and spoke to many of the complexities I have grappled with in this thesis. For me, the re-robing of the sculpture in many ways embodies the complex relationship between

violence, violation, dehumanisation, denial of dignity and resistance to these violences. This speaks to the ways in which the womxn, whose experiences of sexual violence form the basis of this thesis, are both violated and resisting this violation. They, and I, are both crushed by the weight of the violence that has been enacted on our bodies and subjectivities, and resisting this crushing.

I wish to I acknowledge the complexities of writing about Sara Baartman, given that she has been repeated represented by others, serving as "a 'body' of evidence" for multiple narratives of suffering and exploitation (Gordon-Chipembere, 2011; Gqola, 2010; Ndlovu, 2011, p. 17; Samuelson, 2007). In focusing on the sculpture of Sara, rather than Sara herself, I hope to avoid representing her in an objectivising way. Sara is of course not merely a symbol of the violence of coloniality and colonial science. She was also a person who cannot be understood solely through her experiences of violation. This issue of nonviolent representation is central to this thesis. I expand on this further in the following chapter. However, it is significant that more than two hundred years after her life and death, she continues to produce palpable affect. It is these affects that I try to attend to in this chapter.

**The Sculpture of Sara Baartman**

(Picture by Alan Cordle Villegas, 2007)

> As I walk up the library stairs the sculpture comes slowly into view – dense, dark, mechanical. I see breasts first, protruding sharply. The face looks away from me, gazing at something I cannot see. I see bits and pieces of broken, bent metal. I do not see her. I look away as I walk past and carry on up the next flight of stairs (Extract from research diary, 21 February 2019).

As a student at UCT for six years, I walked past the sculpture innumerable times, perhaps as often as once a week as I made my way from the ground floor of the library to the second floor where most of the humanities material is stored. Willie Bester has indicated that the sculpture was intended to highlight the dehumanisation that Sara Baartman was subjected to (Buikema, 2009). He argues that the sculpture was an attempt to understand both his own and the suffering of others: "I heard about the experience of Sarah Baartman and I found some parallels with her story" (Pertsovsky, 2017, n.p.). The sculpture, made of different scraps of metal, serves as a reconstruction of her, a re-membering, in the wake of her literal and figurative dismemberment (McKittrick, 2010). Or, as Rosemarie Buikema (2009) has articulated, the sculpture is not merely another violent image of Sara but rather an attempt to problematises the violent ways in which she has previously been represented:

> The welds in Sarah's face give a sense of her being sown together from different body parts, just like Frankenstein's monster. This patchwork can be taken as a significant sign, by means of which the specific image of Sarah Baartman simultaneously represents many different bodies and histories. The stories are recast as an icon of imperialism and exploitation. The recycled matter that shapes Sarah's feminine body calls to mind the many contexts in which her body was circulated… The most important connotation of all this recycled scrap iron is that there is absolutely nothing natural about this woman's body… The sculpture crafted by Bester is very much a sculpture that foregrounds its own functioning *as* representation (pp. 81-82).

From its installation in the Science and Engineering section of the library in 2000, the sculpture generated controversy. In 2001, members of the African Gender Institute, the Centre for African Studies' Womyn's Movement and historian Yvette Abrahams critiqued the lack of contextualisation provided in the exhibiting of the sculpture, as well as the way in which the lack of art by other indigenous artists on campus reproduced the sculpture's exceptionality in

problematic ways (Gqola, 2010). In 2015 and 2016 a collective of queer and feminist students robed the sculpture, which many have argued portrays Sara as naked[23]. These robing ceremonies occurred as part of the RMF movement and were intended to restore Sara's dignity and to enable the healing of colonial wounds (Black Academic Caucus, 2018a; Kessi, 2019; Makhubu, 2020). One student reflected on the sculpture as follows:

> There are particular ways in which Saartjie Baartman's spirit and legacy can be contextualised and respected. Thus in our climatic end, we draped her and covered her, hoping to show that these violences inflicted on the black body and psychology still continue, and we will not stop until we decolonise the black body and mind (Mohajane, 2017, n.p.).

("RMF womxn and non-binary people have decided to clothe Saartjie Baartman" Rhodes Must Fall, 2016, n.p.)

The Black Academic Caucus[24] (2018a) described the sculpture as "an assemblage of debris, evoking a critique of the paradigms of scientific racism, but one that instrumentalises Sara's body" (n.p.). These alterative readings of the sculpture, as problematising or reproducing a colonial gaze on Sara, highlight how, despite Bester's attempt to reconfigure or re-member

[23] In contrast to this view, Rosemarie Buikema (2009) has suggested, given the reconstruction of Sara from bits and pieces of metal, the sculpture should not be regarded as naked.
[24] The Black Academic Caucus is a collective of black academics based at UCT, who are committed to transforming higher education in South Africa (Black Academic Caucus, 2018b).

Sara, representations of her remain entangled with and constrained by the colonial archive (Ndolvu, 2011). It is this colonial archive which makes it possible for me to walk past the sculpture which such ease, to be *unaffected* by it and the ways in which it recalls Sara. Below I reflect on how colonial mechanisms of 'science' have dismembered Sara, as well the ways in which this dismemberment extends beyond the bounds of her body, her life, and the sculpture of her. Specifically, I explore how Sara's dismemberment and the violent conditions which produce this dismemberment continue to contribute to the normalisation of the sexual violation of 'black' womxn's bodies in contemporary South Africa.

## The Colonial Archive

Edward Said (1993) has proposed that the cultural archive serves as a repository of "a particular knowledge and structures of attitude and reference… [and] in Raymond Williams' seminal phrase, 'structures of feeling'[25]" (p. 52). Similarly, Michel Foucault (2006/1969) has argued that the archive functions as "an underlying structure governing thought systems and values of any given society, in relation to its own people and others" (p. 28). In this way, the archive establishes what comes to be regarded as 'truth'; that which can and cannot be said (Foucault 1972; Hamilton, 2020; Hamilton et al., 2002). This archive is located in the ways we think, how we act and see the world, in how rational and affective economies are organised and entwined (Wekker, 2016). The cultural, social, political and economic dominance of the Western archive has attribute 'truth' only to Western ways of knowing (Mbembe, 2015a). Thus, the archive operates as a monument to specific relations of power and exclusion (Hamilton et al., 2002), configured by colonialism, colonisation and coloniality.

### *Colonialism, Colonisation and Coloniality*

Colonialism and colonisation have been articulated as processes of (re)organisation and (re)arrangement, which produce various kinds of dismemberment (Boddy, 2011; Chikowero, 2015; Mamdani, 1996; Mbembe, 2001; Mudimbe, 1988). For example, Valentin-Yves Mudimbe (1988) has argued that both through settling regions (colonialism) and dominating local populations (colonisation), non-European areas were organised and transformed in line with European ways of being, doing and thinking. Colonial (re)organisation was constituted through "the domination of physical space, the reformation of natives' minds, and the

[25] I expand on this in the second half of the chapter.

integration of local economic histories into the Western perspective" (Mudimbe, 1988, p. 15). Mudimbe refers to this as 'the colonising structure' which encompassed the material, human and psychic aspects of colonisation.

As many postcolonial[26] and decolonial[27] scholars have argued, colonial structures of domination continue to define political, cultural, economic and social relations across the globe, despite the dismantling of direct colonial control (Grosfoguel, 2007; Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Quijano, 2007). While colonialism denotes economic and political relation of power, in which the sovereignty of a people or nation is defined by another nation, the term coloniality has been used to denote the enduring power dynamics colonialism constituted and was constituted by (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). Or as Aníbal Quijano (2002) has posited:

> Coloniality is one of the specific and constitutive elements of [the] global model of capitalist power. It is based on the imposition of a racial/ethnic classification of the global population as the cornerstone of that model of power, and it operates on every level, in every arena and dimension (both material and subjective) of everyday social existence, and does so on a societal scale (p. 342).

Coloniality operates as an invisible matrix of power, sustaining global inequalities and a Euro-(North)American-centric epistemology as 'truthful', 'scientific' and 'universal' (Ndolvu-Gatsheni, 2015b). Aníbal Quijano (2007) explains that colonialism operated through the systematic repression of ideas, images, beliefs, and symbol of knowledge that did not support colonial domination, while simultaneously imposing colonial modes of knowing onto 'colonised' subjects. This process not only served to impede the production of alternative, local knowledges, but also functioned as an effective form of cultural and social control when more direct repression was no longer as systematic and constant (Quijano, 2007). In the 'post-independence' period, in which many previously colonised countries have achieved political independence from colonial governance, coloniality is sustained "not only in relations of exploitation (between capital and labor) and relations of domination (between metropolitan and

[26]'Postcolonial' is an unstable term, which gathers together a range of theoretical understandings under a singular rubric (Macleod et al., 2017). Here I use the term broadly, with the 'post' referring to " both the material effects of coloni[s]ation and the huge diversity of everyday and sometimes hidden responses to it throughout the world… represent[ing] the continual process of imperial suppression and exchanges throughout this diverse range of societies, in their institutions and their discursive practices" (Ashcroft et al., 1995, p. 3).

[27] In the second half of the chapter I expand on my understanding of 'decolonial'.

peripheral states), but in the production of subjectivities and knowledge" (Grosfoguel, 2007, p. 221). The control and management of knowledge continues to enable the controlling and management of people, including the establishment of a division between 'subjects' and 'objects', which has been conceptualised as the colonial difference (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018).

### *Colonial Difference*

Coloniality operates as a formal order of difference, through which lived experience, subjectivity and the imaginary are constituted (Hudson, 2019; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015b). The dichotomy between the human and the non-human is the central division of colonial modernity, imposed on colonised people in service of Western man (Lugones, 2010). This dichotomy was accompanied by the distinction between 'men' and 'women' (Lugones, 2010). These gendered and racialised dichotomies came to define who was 'human' and 'civilized' and were utilised as mechanism through which to damn colonised people (Lugones, 2010). Colonised people were not men or women but merely males and females; "[m]ales became not-human-as-not-men, and coloni[s]ed females became not-human-as-not-women" (Lugones, 2010, p. 744). Similarly, Oyèrónké Oyěwùmí (1997) argues that European colonisation of Africa involved the inseparable process of racialised and gendered inferiorisation.

Intertwined with racialised and gendered dichotomies, notions of rationality were also central to establishing the divide between those who were human and those who were not (Maldonando-Torres, 2017; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). Ramón Grosfoguel (2007) has argued that the Cartesian *ego cogito* ("I think therefore I am") formed the foundation for colonial structures of power, knowledge and being. The Cartesian division between mind and body, theorised by French philosopher Réne Descartes (1596-1650), established the human as composed of two distinct elements: a corporeal body and a non-corporeal mind (Chandler & Munday, 2016). The dualism between mind and body (and between mind and nature) facilitated the claim of universal, non-situated, God-eyed view knowledge (Grosfoguel, 2007). The relations of power between colonised and coloniser provided a new model through which to understand the relationship between the soul/mind and the body and simultaneously, the mind/body split was used to create the colonised/coloniser relation (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). However, critical scholarship, including critical feminist and decolonial work, has challenged the dichotomy between the mind and the body (Bargetz, 2015; Lutz, 1998). I return to this in the second half of the chapter.

The Cartesian dualism established the European subject as the only being capable of rational knowledge (Quijano, 2000). Or as Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015c) has argued, the Cartesian subject "monopolised complete being and sovereign subjectivity for itself and consigned others to a perpetual state of becoming" (p. 213). The Cartesian dualism thus serves as the philosophical justification for the notion that others do not have being or 'are not' (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). The boundary between 'reason' and 'unreason' was extended a border between civilisation and barbarism; the Europeans were 'civilised' and Africans were 'barbarians' (Ramose, 2003). By virtue of their civilised status Europeans became 'subjects', while the rest, by virtue of their barbarism, could only be 'objects' of knowledge (Quijano, 2007). The Cartesian dualism not only established a dichotomy between subject and object but also between reason and emotion; true and false; male and female; fact and fiction; self and other; human and animal; and private and public (Chandler & Manday, 2016). The Cartesian dualism therefore functions as a key element of the hierarchised, Christian-centric, patriarchal, capitalist, heteronormative, colonial order (Ndlovu-Gathseni, 2015b).

Africa, perhaps more than any other part of the world, has come to symbolise "the West's obsession and circular discourse about, the facts of 'absence', 'lack' and 'non-being', of identity and difference, of negativeness – in short of nothingness" (Mbembe, 2001, p. 4). The West has constituted Africa as a flattened geographic location, characterised by deficiency and lack – an exemplar of the 'zone of non-being' devoid of subjects, reason and knowledge (Braun & Hammonds, 2008; Fanon, 1968; Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Mbembe, 2001). Africa was 'invented' (Mudimbe, 1988) through the processes of colonisation and conquest (Ndlovu-Gathsheni, 2015c). This invented Africa was not imagined in isolation but occurred in relation to the distinction between those who were 'worthy' of being called human (Europeans) and those who were 'barbarous' (non-Europeans) (Young, 2015). Africa was, thus, constructed as an idea, a cartographic reality, as well as a dependent and deficient subjectivity (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015a). As Chinua Achebe (1977) has written, Africa has been constructed as "'the other world,' the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilisation" (p. 2). As I will expand below, these constructions continue into the present.

### *Colonial 'Science' of African Bodies*

The invention of 'new' worlds, including Africa, were enacted through technologies of observing, documenting and packaging of 'knowledge' (Young, 2015). In light of the understanding of the European (man) as a rational subject, the function and success of 'science', particularly social sciences and the science of the mind, depended on their capacity to elucidate and concretise fundamental differences, including differences of nature and being, between humans who could 'legitimately' occupy positions as subjects and others who were regarded as closer to nature and therefore condemned to be objects of investigation (Maldonado-Torres, 2017). Colonial science[28] was, therefore, a mechanism through which a singular narrative of African people as 'backwards', 'inferior' and 'primitive' was both established and legitimated as 'truth' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015c). Pseudo-biological categories of race were utilised to justify colonial conquest, subjugation and slavery (Coetzee & du Toit, 2018). Through these scientific practices African people were constructed on the page as objects of curiosity (Young, 2015). As Paul Ricoeur (1965) has argued, encounters with 'Others' were produced by Occidental sciences, which were themselves invented by Europe in their specific scientific forms. For example, social scientific disciplines such as Anthropology and Ethnology have always produced subject-object relations between the West and the rest, with 'others' as the objects of study (Quijano, 2007). Similarly, Psychology has both drawn on and bolstered the hierarchical racial categorisation of different cultural groups (Foster, 1991; Nicholas & Cooper, 1990; Kessi & Boonzaier, 2018).

'Science' in colonial contexts often focused primarily on the 'bizarre' and the 'barbaric' in order to demonstrate that colonial intervention was necessary in order to disrupt the savagery of indigenous peoples (Radhakrishna, 2006; Tamale, 2011a). The sexualities of Africans people were a key site in which notions of 'scientific' difference were developed. For example, Sander Gilman (1985) has argued that the central icon for sexual difference was 'found' in the physical appearance of the 'Hottentot'. The sexualities of African people were read directly into their physical appearance, rendering them as primarily physical bodies (Tamale, 2011b). The construction of African people as exotic, primitive, lustful, bestial, immoral and lascivious

[28] I use the term 'colonial science' here not merely to refer to science practices that occurred in the colonies, but rather as kind of knowledge that is specifically colonial, "both in the way it was crafted and in that it represented a discourse that conceptuali[s]ed European domination and shaped subjectivity of colonised people" (Bonneuil, 2001, p. 260).

served to establish them as uncivilised, closer to nature, and less human than Europeans (Epprecht, 2009; Tamale, 2011b). As Maria Lugones (2007) has articulated:

> Only white bourgeois women have consistently counted as women so described in the West. Females excluded from that description were not just their subordinates. They were also understood to be animals in a sense that went further than the identification of white women with nature, infants, and small animals. They were understood as animals in the deep sense of 'without gender', sexually marked as female, but without the characteristics of femininity (pp. 202-203).

The story of Sara Baartman powerfully and painfully illustrates the way in which colonial knowledge production established racialised and sexualised relations of power, through which the violation of certain bodies was facilitated and certain subjectivities were excluded from the realm of 'the humxn'. Sara Baartman's sexual parts were of particular interest in live displays, during the examination of her corpse, as well as the post-mortem display of her anatomy (Abrahams, 1996; Henderson, 2014; Qureshi, 2004). Visual and textual representations of Sara Baartman's genitals served as 'scientific proof' that 'black' women were naturally 'lewd', 'inferior' and 'primordial' (McKittrick, 2010). Thus, the bodies and sexualities of African women were used to bolster the colonial project (Tamale, 2011b).

While African women were constructed by the colonial archive as 'promiscuous', 'over-sexed' and 'shameless', African men were constructed as 'over-sexed' and, thus, 'dangerous' and 'predatory' (Flint & Hewitt, 2015; Posel, 2005). African male sexuality was positioned as particularly dangerous in relation to 'white' women (Stoler, 1989). The fear of 'black' male rape of 'white' women – the 'Black Peril' was used to justify a range of colonial (and apartheid) brutality against 'black' men (Epprecht, 2009; Shefer & Ratele, 2011; P. Scully, 1995; Thornberry, 2016). The 'Black Peril' served simultaneously to disguise the violence perpetrated by 'white' men against both 'white' and 'black' womxn (Helman, 2018a). As Pamela Scully (1995) has articulated, colonial discourses have focused on elusive myths of the rapes of 'white' women by 'black' men, rather than on the conditions created by colonialism through which the wide-spread rape of 'black' women by 'white' men has been authorised. Colonial 'scientists' therefore contributed to a discursive context in which the killing, enslavement and raping of 'black' women by 'white' men was 'permissible' (Abrahams, 1997).

The production of African women as "excessively sexual and impossible to satiate" has both justified and authorised their rape (Gqola, 2015, p. 43). By virtue of their 'over sexualisation' black women are positioned as undeserving of the protection afforded to middle-class white women, including protection from physical and sexual violence (Lugones, 2007).

Colonial misrepresentations of African women persist in the contemporary context. In relation to Anene Booysen, a young 'black' womxn who was raped and murdered in a small South African town in 2013, Floretta Boonzaier (2017) writes: "while the lived and imagined life of Anene Booysen is absent, we are confronted – pornographically and repeatedly – with the gruesome details about how she died and the horror of her injuries" (p. 477). In the same way as Sara Baartman, Anene Booysen enters public discourse through her dead body (Boonzaier, 2017). While Sara Baartman is constituted through her displayed body and the notes of her autopsy, Anene Booysen is constituted through the description of her injuries and the state of her broken body (Abrahams, 1997; Boonzaier, 2017). Both women's subjectivities are erased by the colonial gaze on their bodies and through this gaze they are both rendered as less worthy victims of the violence perpetrated against them. This is an example of how the association between 'black' womxn and corporeality works to 'de-subjectify' them, emphasising their bodies at the expense of their subjectivity (Bakare-Yusuf, 1999).

The racist stereotypes established by colonial scientific constructions of African sexualities are evident in a range of scholarship that has been produced by both African and Western scholars (Shefer, 2016). Concerns related to population growth, HIV/AIDS and sexual violence have ensured that African sexualities have remained under scrutiny from the West (Tamale, 2011b). Led by demographers from the global North, panic about 'population explosion' in the 1960s and 1970s, was focused particularly on developing countries, including those in Africa (Tamale, 2011b). Similarly, research on HIV/AIDS in Africa has reinscribed paternalistic, moralistic and racist thinking about African sexualities (Shefer, 2018; Tamale, 2011b). In particular, the focus on the sexual practices of poor 'black' people has served to export or outsource HIV/AIDS, as well as gender-based and sexual violence, as 'problems' of the global South (Grewal, 2013; Shefer, 2018). As I have articulated in the previous chapter, research on sexual violence continually represents young, poor 'black' women as inevitable victims; 'always already raped' (Judge, 2015; Shefer, 2018). In contrast, 'black' men continue to be represented as 'always already' perpetrators of sexual violence, inevitably violent and violating

(Ratele, 2008; Shefer, 2018; van Niekerk & Boonzaier, 2019b). Therefore, rather than promoting critical gender justice, much research on sexualities has reproduced global and local, raced, gendered and classed othering discourses about Africa and African people (Shefer, 2018). Collectively this scholarship contributes to "ideas about barbarity, perpetual female victimhood and the refusal of enlightenment and modernity" in Africa (Kaler, 2009, pp. 178-179). As Sylvia Tamale (2011a) notes, much of this research presents dangerously decontextualised knowledge of sexualities (and sexual violence) across the African continent.

A coloniality of knowledge therefore continues to contribute to the normalisation of the violence that is perpetrated against African people, who continue to be constructed as less than humxn. In 2019 a study entitled, Age- and education-related effects on cognitive functioning in Colored South African women, published by *Aging, Neuropsychology, and Cognition: A Journal of Normal and Dysfunctional Development*, argued that "Colored women in South Africa have an increased risk for low cognitive functioning, as they present with low education levels and unhealthy lifestyle behaviors" (Nieuwoudt et al., 2019, n.p.). The article was retracted following an outcry about its flawed methodology, racist underpinnings and harmful reproduction of colonial stereotypes (B. Boswell, 2019). This is but one example of how the discursive world, created by racist colonial science, which enabled 'white' men to believe that the men, women and children they killed and enslaved were less than human is still very much alive (Abrahams, 1997).

As Gail Mason (2006) argues, "violence is more than a practice that acts upon the bodies of individual subjects to inflict harm and injury. It is, metaphorically speaking, also a way of looking at these subjects" (p. 174). Thus, bodies are violated by the words through which they are reproduced in 'scientific' texts (Henderson, 2014). By looking at others through what have been proposed as 'objective', 'neutral', 'scientific' lenses, the violence of the gaze is obscured. Writing about the display of Sara Baartman at Musée de L' Homme, Sadiah Qureshi (2004) reflects on how 'scientific objectivity' functions in the display:

> [H]er skeleton and body cast stood side by side and faced away from the viewer. Above her head rested images of black people. The display exemplified her perceived values as a scientific specimen. The painted tones of the body cast

> simulated skin whilst the knowledge it was moulded directly from her corpse and the presence of her skeleton contributed to the illusion of objectivity (p. 245).

Thus, it is not only 'what' is known about Sara within the colonial archive, but the way in which she is known that produces her violation. This is an example of how the symbols produced through practices of colonial science continue to disfigure colonised subjects, stripping them of selfhood and consigning them to zones of non-being (Dlamini et al., 2018). Here, the product cannot be disconnected from the method of knowing through which it is produced (Richardson, 2000). It is within this context of the continued violence of the colonial archive that the robing of the sculpture of Sara Baartman must be understood. Below I argue that the robing of the sculpture serves as an affective disruption of the colonial archive.

**Affective Re-membering**

The RMF student movement has powerfully articulated how the experience of "being *affected*, stricken with affect" (Bennett, 2005, p. 29) by the daily interactions with art that celebrates colonial figures and devalues and violates African bodies is central to demands for higher education institutions to transform (Kessi, 2019; Mahapa, 2014). This is an example of how contemporary lives continue to be shaped by the histories which violated Sara Baartman (Gqola, 2010). Within this context, the robing of Sara is an affective act of collective resistance; a disruption of the affective infrastructure of the university (Kessi, 2019). It must be noted that the queer, feminist engagement with the sculpture in 2016 provoked a reconsideration of the sculpture's position in the library. In 2018 the exhibit *Sarah 'Saartjie' Baartman, A Call to Respond* was held on UCT's Hiddingh Campus. The exhibition featured the sculpture, which has been removed from the library, displayed alongside images of the robed sculpture, a text authored by the Black Academic Caucus and an audio clip of Diana Ferrus's poem 'A tribute to Sara Baartman' (Cloete, 2018). In December 2018 it was also announced that the Memorial Hall at UCT will be renamed Sarah Baartman Hall[29] (Pityana & Phakeng, 2018).

[29] The Memorial Hall was previously named Jameson Hall, after Sir Leander Starr Jameson, who is widely regarded as a violent colonial figure as "a former prime minister of the Cape Colony who initiated an unlawful raid that brought war to South Africa" (Pityana & Phakeng, 2018, n.p.).

The robing of Sara enacts a call for remembering, contextualising and connecting with her (Gqola, 2010). Simultaneously, it is a refusal to forget the violences that she was subjected to, which continue into the present. Drawing on Toni Morrison's (1987) notion of rememory, the rerobing can be considered as a "journey to the site to see what remains are left behind and to the world that these remains imply [in order] to yield up a [different] kind of truth" (p. 112). This is an affective truth, which demonstrates the ways in which the violences produced by the colonial archive continue to *affect*. It is a memorialisation of Sara that grapples with the violences that continue to be encountered by womxn in the present (Samuelson, 2007). As I have argued above, the normalisation of the sexual violation of 'black' womxn is one of these violences. In demonstrating the violences that colonial ways of knowing have inflicted, I argue that a re-membering demands different ways of knowing. I am proposing a decolonial, feminist affective approach as one possible way of knowing differently.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, I am using affect in line with Sara Ahmed's (2015) focus on processes of affecting and being affected. There has been considerable debate about the distinctions between 'emotion' and 'affect' with some scholars arguing that 'emotions' refer to social categories of feeling, while 'affects' refer to bodily intensities (Greyser, 2012). However, as Sara Ahmed (2004c; 2020) has articulated, it is difficult to maintain a separation between these fluid conceptual boundaries. In light of this, I use the terms 'emotion' and 'affect' interchangeably, to refer to the ways in which desires, intensities, longings, curiosities, repulsions, and fatigues move between and around bodies, across space and time (Nash, 2013). Here I understand emotions/affects as relational, political, visceral and embodied elements of everyday life, which are constituted by structures of power and operate as possibilities for resistance (Suffla et al., 2020). Sara Ahmed (2004c) has argued that emotions do not exist as individual psychological dispositions but rather as mediations between the psychic and the social and between the collective and the individual. In this way, emotions circulate, never wholly owned by or contained within an individual (Ahmed, 2004c; Wetherell, 2012). Through this theoretical approach, I also pay attention to "how the feeling feels in the first place may be tied to a past history of readings, in the sense that the process of recognition (of this feeling or that feeling) is bound up with what we already know" (Ahmed, 2004a, p. 30). Thus, I understand affective responses as contoured and constrained by previous knowledges and experiences, which *affect* the contemporary context (Barker & Macleod, 2018). For example, as I have shown, my response to the sculpture of Sara Baartman is constituted by the continued violation and violent representation of 'black' womxn.

This understanding of affect draws on Raymond Williams (1977) phrase 'structures of feeling'. He argued that in a particular place and time there existed "a specific structure of particular images, particular linkages, particular emphases and suppressions" (R. Williams, 1977, p. 134). His analysis was concerned with how feelings operated as social formations; specific ways of doing things through which particular affective subjects are repeatedly manifested (Wetherell, 2012). In this sense, affect operates as a significant circuit through which power is mediated, negotiated, contested and felt (Pedwell & Whitehead, 2012). A focus on the structure of feelings enables an exploration of how affects operate as both formative and forming processes (McElhinny, 2010). Karen Engle and Yoke-Sum Wong (2018) refer to 'feelings of structure', as a means of highlighting how structures of power produce particular feelings. They argue that this approach allows for an examination of how what is felt has the potential to break down, reinforce, build up and bring into focus the multiple frames through which life is structured (Engle & Wong, 2018). In this way affects operate as means of subjectification and it is necessary to pay attention to what feeling *structures* (Richard & Rudnyckyi, 2009).

For example, Ann Stoler (2005), drawing on Dutch colonial operations in Indonesia, has demonstrated how both 'private feelings' and 'public moods' were structured by political rationalities. She argues that colonial policies, from marriage laws to educational reform, were designed to produce affective states which confirmed the division between ruler and ruled. In this way, the state culturally standardises the organisations of feelings (Jenkins, 1991). In South Africa, Kopano Ratele (2009a) has written extensively on how the Immorality Act (1927/1950)[30] stipulated what it meant to be a (sexually) 'moral' person and respectable member of the South African nation. These stipulations were deeply affective, constituted by an intertwined fear and fetishisation of 'black' bodies (Ratele, 2004). The Act was intended to produce a belief among the 'white' public that sexual relations across racial lines were dangerous and harmful (Martens, 2007). This is an example of how the state shapes "appropriate and reasoned affect, by rejecting affective judgements, by serving some affective bonds and establishing others" (Stoler, 2005, p. 9). It is through this powerful affective grip that social actors come to be invested in and reproduce inequitable relations of power

[30] The Immorality Act was passed in 1927 to outlaw "illicit carnal intercourse between Europeans and natives" (Martens, 2007, p. 223). The Act was amended in 1950 and formed a key part of the legislative infrastructure of apartheid. The amendment extended the prohibition to sexual relations between white South Africans and all other racial groups, including those who were classified under the racial categories 'coloured' and 'Asian' (Dugard, 1978).

(Crossley, 2001). It is in this way that affect plays a central role in the "work of the normative" and in creating investments in and attachments to conditions of subordination (Ahmed, 2004c; Berlant, 2008, p. 4).

I draw on Margaret Wetherell (2012) notion of 'affective practices', which unfold, are organised and expand in particular rhythms. Through these rhythms particular emotional subjects are produced and sense-making, bodily possibilities, narratives and social relations are established (Wetherell, 2012). A focus on affective practices therefore involves an exploration of emotions as they are constituted in social life, as "shifting, flexible and often over-determined figurations rather than simple lines of causation, character types and neat emotion categories" (Wetherell, 2012, p. 4). Affective practices are also about what subjects *do* as emotions operate as changes through which the power of action is either elevated or reduced (Spinoza, 1959). For example, in Chapters Five and Six I explore how the affects of shame and rage present different possibilities for responding to rape. A focus on affective practices enables a conceptualisation of social actions as constantly moving, while simultaneously acknowledging that the past affectively constrains both the present and the future (Canham, 2018).

As the disparity between my interaction and that of the 'black' queer and feminist students with the sculpture of Sara Baartman highlights, affective practices are not evenly distributed (Bargetz, 2015). Affective economies are constituted by particular relations of power which establish attachments to normative ways of being (Ahmed, 2004c; Hemmings, 2015). Within this context it becomes necessary to explore how power operates to regulate, distribute and assign value to affect (Wetherell, 2012). For example, feminist, queer and post- and decolonial scholars have demonstrated the ways in which racialised, gendered and classed mechanisms of power have shaped the affective capacities of certain groups; that is the differing capacities that subjects have to affect and to be affective (Sharp, 2009). Not only can feelings get 'stuck' to certain bodies, but certain bodies can get 'stuck' by virtue of the feelings that they are associated with (Ahmed, 2010). The projection of emotions onto particular bodies serves to exclude them from the domain of thought and rationality (Ahmed, 2004c; Jaggar, 1989). As highlighted above, womxn have historically been silenced and their concerns dismissed through accusations of 'too much feeling' (Chamberlain, 2017). The association of women with emotions has served to reinforce and strengthen the construction of both of these categories as 'irrational' (Calhoun, 1989). Similarly, 'black' people have been constructed as

'crazy', 'illogical', 'inhuman', 'scary' and 'deranged' (Aho et al., 2017). I return to these issues in Chapters Four and Six. Thus, intersecting relations of power have important implications for the affectivity of sexual violence, and in particular whose experiences of rape are regarded as *affecting*.

While affective practices, shaped by intersecting matrixes of power, fix certain bodies as affectively 'difficult', these practices also demonstrate the possibilities for feeling beyond or outside of the contemporary cultural archive (Pedwell & Whitehead, 2012). For example, feminism, as a social and political movement, has been "borne of a multitude of negative affects created by the feelings that arise from living under patriarchy" (Chamberlain, 2017, p. 88). Similarly, decolonial movements have been precipitated by the recognition of the crushing objecthood of coloniality (Fanon, 1967). As I have articulated above, the queer and feminist activists who clothed Sara Baartman enact a refusal to let go of suffering, thereby modelling an alternative affective imagining (Ahmed, 2004c).

**A Decolonial, Feminist Approach**

Below I locate my affective framework as a decolonial, feminist approach to research on rape. I use the term decolonial to articulate a perspective which is radically conscious of the ways in which forces of colonialism, slavery and coloniality have reconfigured the world (Ratele, 2020b). This is a perspective that recognises that Africa's past and future are entangled with Europe and, in a globalised context, other parts of the world too (Ratele, 2019). Here, decolonising is construed as "a verb, and as a subject of study, a methodological and epistemic orientation, and theory and practice (praxis) of research" (Kessi et al., 2020, p. 271). This articulation of 'decolonising' involves a political and ethical 'undoing', unlearning and dismantling of inequitable assumptions, practices and institutions and simultaneously, continuous action to construct alternative ways of knowing, networks, and spaces which transcend the colonial archive (Kessi et al., 2020). This decolonising perspective is thus a way of thinking, knowing, doing and feeling (differently) (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015b).

I use the term 'feminist' to refer to a perspective which is "attuned to and works to document and bring an end to (African) womxn's experiences of imperial/geopolitical, raced, economic and gendered oppressions (among others)" (Mavuso et al., 2019, p.15). This feminist perspective is embedded within an understanding of feminism as an affective inheritance and

broader collective movement of being *moved* to take up a feminist position (Ahmed, 2017). As the reference to 'African' womxn indicates, this is a feminist perspective with centres Africa – as both place and people (Ratele, 2019). Through this perspective, I understand myself and the womxn I have interviewed, as deeply *affected* by being situated in Africa (Ratele, 2019).

I argue that an affective orientation aligns with and extends a decolonial, feminist approach to researching rape. In line with decolonial and feminist critiques of Euro-and-North-American-centric practices of knowledge-making, an affective approach disrupts the notion of the 'dispassionate' investigator, rooted in racist, classist and masculinist relations of power (Bargetz, 2015; Jaggar, 1989; Shefer, 2021). A focus on affect enables a reconfiguration of the place of the personal (and the person of the researcher) in scholarship (Greyser, 2012). As I will expand further in the following chapter, an affective approach facilitates an examination of how we, as researchers, are emotionally entangled with the subject we study and how we come to be defined by these subjects as we come to define them (Hemmings, 2010; Greyser, 2012; Weigman, 1995). This approach centres the ways in which researchers are affectively and bodily connected to their research, including to the subjects with whom we conduct research (Brewster, 2014).

Simultaneously, a decolonial, feminist, affective approach refutes the Cartesian dualism of mind/body (Liljeström & Paasonen, 2020; Shefer, 2021). Feminist scholarship has long challenged the divide between mind and body, emotions and thoughts. For example, Michelle Rosaldo (1984) has conceptualised emotions as "embodied thoughts" (p.143). Thus, emotions or affects have been positioned as an important mechanism for thinking about various social issues, particularly those related to inequality (Jaggar, 1989). In the following chapter I return to this and explore how affect can operate as a way of thinking and knowing about rape. The assertion of an affective way of knowing is a disruption of the (post)colonial, neoliberal university, through which embodiment and affect have been erased and othered (Kessi et al., 2020; Shefer, 2021). In many ways, the Fallist student movements have been about re-asserting the affective experiences of bodies within the university – including articulations of embodied pain, alienation and rage. Similarly, through naked protests staged across university campuses against sexual violence, womxn and queer people use the materiality of their bodies to call attention to their experiences of violation.

My affective approach builds on the work of both feminist and decolonial scholars who have demonstrated the ways in which oppression is enacted at an affective level (e.g. Ahmed, 2004; Lorde, 1984; Fanon, 1967). As Sara Ahmed (2010) has argued, it is through affects, that "structures get under our skin" (p. 216). Thus, a focus on the affective can enable a key inquiry into lived experiences of various structures of power, including sexism, racism and poverty (Burman, 2016). This approach pays attention to "how power circulates though feelings and how politically salient ways of being and knowing are produced through affective relations" (Pedwell & Whitehead, 2012, p. 116).

The decolonial, feminist affective approach I am employing also demands that I attend to how I am affected by my particular location with the academy. As I have highlighted in the previous chapter, this includes critically reflecting on the ways in which I reproduce a violent and disaffecting gaze on 'others'. In fact, an earlier draft of this chapter originally focused much more on Sara Baartman and work which has focused on affective reproductions of her, until one of my supervisors pointed out that while this work may attempt to 'liberate' Sara from a particular colonial gaze, it continues to objectify her, albeit in a different way. This is one example of the difficulty of escaping the archive, which continues to allure and beckon with its particular version of 'truth' (Ndlovu, 2011). In the following chapter I expand on my use of critical reflexivity as a central tool to my affective approach. As is perhaps clear by this stage, in attempting to produce a decolonial, feminist and African-centred account of rape, I have made very specific choices on which scholarship I draw on throughout this thesis. As Sara Ahmed (2017) has asserted, "[f]eminism is at stake in how we generate knowledge; in how we write, in who we cite" (p. 14). Similarly, decolonial scholars have argued that there is a need to de-centre Euro-and-North-American-centric work within the South African context, as in many instances this work does not speak to local experiences and instead speaks over local understandings (Boonzaier & van Niekerk, 2019b; Kessi & Boonzaier, 2018; Ratele, 2019). This work tends to reproduce individualist, objectivist and empirical ways of knowing, which fail to acknowledge the subjective and micro-political dimensions of human subjectivities, hampering the development of socially just interventions (Kiguwa & Segalo, 2019). Through this thesis I attempt to produce a contextually relevant understanding of rape, not only through my analysis of my own and other womxn's experiences of rape, but also through drawing on feminist, decolonial and global Southern theory, research and writing.

In this chapter I have articulated my theoretical approach to this research project as entangled with the histories and present of coloniality, 'science', and decolonial African feminist affective disruptions to the colonial archive. I have proposed that a decolonial, feminist affective approach to researching rape enables an alternative way of 'knowing'. In the following chapter I outline my methodological approach (which I am calling affective entanglement), informed by a decolonial, feminist, affective theoretical orientation, focusing specifically on how an affective way of knowing engenders relationality and care in the context of sexual violence research.

# CHAPTER THREE

## Affective Entanglements as Methodology

> Tanya[31] sits in the armchair in the corner of the kitchen. I am sitting at the kitchen table, my chair faced towards her. She tells me about herself, about her family, about her work, about the long process she has undertaken to integrate the rape into her life. Despite the fact that we are talking about rape, the atmosphere feels relaxed and comfortable. But when she begins to recount what happened to her nearly thirty years ago, something ruptures. She does not look at me as she talks. Her eyes fill with tears. I do not know where to look. I feel the weight of what has happened to her pressing down on me, seeping into my pores, mingling with my own pain and fear and shame (Extract from research diary, 7 January 2019).

> I am on the way to conduct a follow-up interview with Tanya at a shopping centre in Johannesburg. It is four months since she was sitting in my kitchen. I am alone in the lift. Just as the doors are about to close a mxn enters. His 'black' skin produces instant panic. I rush out of the lift, a constricted feeling in my throat, just as if I am being strangled as I was on the day he dragged me towards the reeds (Extract from research diary, 5 May 2019).

I begin with these two reflections as an entry point into how I am conceptualising affect as a methodological approach to rape. Building on the framework of affective re-membering I articulated in the previous chapter, these two extracts highlight some of the key issues I will attempt to work through in this chapter. In this chapter I both demonstrate and outline my methodological approach. I explore how this research is produced through a variety of affective entanglements. These include autoethnographic entanglements, entangled interviews and affective reflexivity, which collectively produce an affective writing of rape. My entangled affective approach is strongly informed by a feminist ethics of care. Drawing on a range of critical scholarship, I seek to demonstrate how I have conceptualised ethics beyond an item to

[31] Tanya is a 'white', Afrikaans womxn in her 50s. I provide a more detailed description of her and the other participants below.

be ticked off in order to satisfy the institutional requirements. Rather, I reflect on the way in which a relational ethics of care has informed my entire methodological approach. I believe this ethical approach is necessary in light of the implication of research in practices of violent representation, as highlighted in the previous chapter.

**Affective Entanglements**

> Entanglement is a condition of being twisted together or entwined, involved with; it speaks of an intimacy gained, even if it was resisted, or ignored or uninvited. It is a term which may gesture towards a relationship or set of social relationships that is complicated, ensnaring, in a tangle, but which also implies a human foldedness. It works with difference and sameness but also with their limits, their predicaments, their moments of complication (Nuttall, 2009, p. 1).

As I have highlighted in the introductory chapter, my understandings of my own experience of rape, have from the outset been entangled with the experiences of many others. Through the process of interviewing 16 other womxn, my experience has become ever more entangled. Here I use entanglement to refer to the social relations that are constituted through encounters across various differences (Heer, 2019). I pay particular attention to the affective nature of these entanglements (Bright et al., 2013). I use the term 'affective entanglements' not only to highlight the affective connections between my participants and I, but also to reflect on the way in which these affective entanglement are embedded within broader landscapes of power (Laliberté & Schurr, 2016). This includes the continued power of race as a category of difference to create separations between experiences. A focus on affective entanglements allows for an exploration of the ways in which identities and histories come together and the complex intertwining of past, present and future (Nuttall, 2009), - including collective histories of colonialism and apartheid, as well as individual histories of violence in the form of rape. However, focusing only on the binaries (for example those of 'black' and 'white' established through racialised histories) may result in a blindness to what occurs within sites of encounter where what has been constructed as separate "comes together, intersects and becomes altered by the other" (Heer, 2019, p. 11). A focus on interactions in which identities spill out of the boundaries of fixed categories allows for a more nuanced and complex understanding of the interrelated nature of experience (Houghton, 2013; Nuttall, 2009). Throughout this chapter, and in the chapters that follow, I explore the ways in which the encounters between my

participants and I produce a multiplicity of affective entanglements, including reaffirmation, transgression or even dissolution of boundaries (Heer, 2019). In this way, I highlight the ways in which an entangled 'we' is enabled (Ramadanovic, 1998), while simultaneously troubling the coherence of this 'we'. In South Africa, which remains a deeply unequal society, understandings of mutual dependence and reciprocal responsibilities to one another are of particular importance to advancing more just social relations (Gouws & van Zyl, 2015). As Karen Barad (2007) has argued a "yearning for justice… is necessarily about our connections and responsibilities to one another – that is, entanglements" (p. xi). Below I expand on an ethics of entanglement (Cho, 2008), of which care is a central component.

### *An Entangled Ethics of Care*

In social science research ethics have been conceptualised as researchers' moral deliberations throughout the research process (Edwards & Mauthner, 2002). Within a positivist paradigm ethics have tended to focus on how participants are treated during the research process, for example in relation to abstract conceptions of 'consent', 'harm' and 'beneficence'. However, regulatory forms of ethics are limited in their engagement with contextual issues (Matutu, 2019). In opposition to these narrow conceptualisations of ethics, feminist scholarship has called for broadening of ethics to include interrogations of the ethics of knowledge *itself*, including "who claims to know, and how, and the power relations produced by this" (Gillies & Alldred, 2002, p. 34). As I have articulated in the previous chapter, scientific stories are never innocent and knowledge can produce painful and destructive consequences (Haraway, 1991; Preissle & Han, 2012). Therefore, in order to disrupt violent and colonial research practices it is necessary to broaden a focus on ethics beyond transferable moral principles to a more complex and messy engagement with the hierarchies of power, politics of difference and conflicting concerns in which research is embedded (Posel & Ross, 2014; Tilley, 2017). This kind of ethical engagement is inherently unruly, ambiguous, resistant to neat and simple assurances, and recognises "the inescapable entanglement of matters of being, knowing, and doing, of ontology, epistemology, and ethics" (Barad, 2007, p. 3; Posel & Ross, 2014). This ethical approach is consistent with calls to decolonise research through focusing on the research enterprise itself and the ways in which research systems and pedagogies reproduce exclusions, silences and the devaluation of certain knowledges (Barnes, 2018).

A key shift in thinking about research ethics was precipitated by the introduction of the notion of an 'ethics of care' (Gilligan, 1982). Feminist approaches to ethics have centred connection,

context and particularity (Browning Cole & Coultrap-McQuin, 1988). These approaches have challenged ethical understandings rooted in rationality and decontextualised principles of morality and, instead, have centred on the development of engaged and reciprocal relationships with participants (Dutt & Kohfeldt, 2018). Thus, ethical decisions come to be understood as occurring within the context of human relationships, which are themselves shaped by broader social dynamics of power (Preissle & Han, 2012). As Tula Brannelly and Amohia Boulton (2017) have argued, an ethics of care "recognises the complex and messy world in which research is situated, so it enables that complexity to be represented not ignored" (p. 347).

Simultaneously, notions of care have enabled acknowledgments of the ethico-political and affective elements of knowledge-making practices (Puig de la Bellascasa, 2017; see also Despret, 2004; Perez-Bustos, 2014, Rose, 1983, 1994). Here I draw on María Puig de la Bellacasa's (2017) articulation of care as "a concrete work of maintenance, with ethical and affective implications, and as a vital politics of interdependent worlds [which denotes] a strong sense of attachment and commitment to something" (pp. 5-42). In this context care affects the way in which knowledge is produced. For example, Patricia Hill Collins (2000) has proposed an ethics of caring, though which "personal expressiveness, emotions and empathy are central to the knowledge validation process" (p. 264). An ethics of care disrupts the notion of the researcher as a detached observer and articulates research as a relational encounter (Barker & Macleod, 2018; Mauthner & Douchet, 2003; Shefer et al., 2006; Stanley & Wise, 1993).

The notions of relationality and care are central to the Afrocentric philosophy of *ubuntu* or *botho* (Gouws & van Zyl, 2014; Gouws & van Zyl, 2015; Segalo & Molobela, 2019). The notion of ubuntu is captured through the phrases "Motho ke motho ka batho babang" (in Sotho and Tswana) and "Umunto ngumuntu ngabantu" in Xhosa, Zulu and Ndebele, which can be translated as "A person is a person through other persons" or "I am because we are" (Metz & Gaie, 2010, p. 275). Thus, one's humanity is enabled by entering ever deeper into relations with others (Shutte, 2001). Alongside an ethics of care, ubuntu allows for an understanding of how as interrelated beings, we are "diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as less than who they are" (Tutu, 1999, p. 31). Below I explore how a focus on relationality and care has been central to this research project and the ways in which the knowledge that I produce arises out of being-with my participants (La Jevic & Springgay, 2008). This focus on relationality and care involves paying close attention to the complexity of doing research within a context marked by inequality, difference and violence.

### *Careful Research*

Doing research on rape is undoubtedly ethically complex. I asked my participants to share details of an extremely intimate and distressing nature. This disclosure occurs within a context characterised by both silence/secrecy and spectacle, as I have touched on in the introductory chapter. Despite the frequency with which womxn experience sexual violence, rape and other forms of abuse are shrouded in varying degrees of silence and secrecy (Posel, 2005; Strauss, 2009). All sixteen of the womxn I interviewed talked about the difficulties they faced in relation to talking about being raped:

> Lara[32]: I think it's because I struggle to talk about. Um... you know I have only given people very... basic details, even my partner [Rebecca: Mhmm] doesn't know much. I even struggle with my psychologist... (First interview, Lara's house, Cape Town, 3 January 2019).

> Buhle[33]: Um I think the more people are informed and the more we own up to the stories and tell people, the more we give courage to others to come out and say it's ok you know. Because I find most of the time that people don't talk about it because it's like a shameful thing [Rebecca: Mhmm] (First interview, phone, 16 January 2019).

The trauma of rape is intimately intertwined with the secrecy which surrounds it, which I explore more fully in Chapter Five. Amidst a 'culture of silence' (Clark, 2017) talking about rape can operate as a personal act of liberation. Much feminist and trauma studies work has reflected on the importance of 'testimony' as a counter narrative to dominant and dehumanising constructions of those deemed 'Others' and as a way to work through and refigure experiences of trauma (Behar, 1996; Craps, 2013; Gobodo-Madikizela, 2012; Lindermann Nelson, 2001; Tullis Owen et al., 2009). Thus, the ability to talk about rape may operate as a way for womxn to 'unsilence' themselves (Alcoff, 2018). Simultaneously however, there is a need to recognise how asking womxn to articulate experience of rape may create an opportunity for voyeurism and an uncompassionate indulgence of perverse curiosity about 'damaged' selves (Ellis &

[32] Lara is a 'white', English-speaking, heterosexual woman in her late 20s who lives in Cape Town. I provide a more comprehensive description of her below.
[33] Buhle is a 'black', Xhosa-speaking, mother of two in her late 20s who lives in the North West province. I provide a more comprehensive description of her below.

Bochner, 2000). The repetition of images of violence has the potential to produce uncompassionate consumption of others' pain (Landwehr, 2011).

> When I was fourteen *I read I have life: Raped, Stabbed and Left for Dead*[34] – the personal testimony of Alison which detailed her rape and recovery. I remember being deeply horrified as I read the specific details of how she was harmed. But I was also oddly transfixed by the explicit nature of the violence through which I could get so close to the forbidden horror of rape. Many years later, what I remember most clearly are the gory details of Alison's story. Her mutilated body looms larger in my memory than the other details about her and her life (Extract from research diary, 11 February 2019).

Perhaps this reading had such an effect on me because it was the first time I came close (but not too close) to an experience of rape. As Susan Sontag (2003) has argued, I could engage in a voyeuristic lure, as it was not happening to *me*. I could spectate from a distance (Boler, 1999). Perhaps, it was the fact that at that time Alison's story seemed exceptional (it became a kind of national sensation and sold millions of copies). In many ways it was an unusual case, as she was attacked by two strangers and sustained extreme injuries. For me, Alison's story operated as a spectacle, detached from the everyday conditions that produce such high rates of sexual violence (Judge, 2015). It was also spectacular in that it was one of the few accounts I have read which denotes in such explicit detail, the gratuitous violence inflicted on a 'white' womxn in South Africa[35].

As highlighted in the previous chapter, the desire to consume the pain of others is produced by intersecting inequalities. Trajectories of dehumanisation, for example those produced by coloniality and patriarchy, make it possible to consume the pain of certain others (Hartman, 1997; Razack, 2007). In a context in which 'black' womxn are repeatedly represented as the 'inevitable' victims of sexual violence (Boonzaier, 2017; Judge, 2015; Shefer, 2016), it is necessary to acknowledge the ethical politics of inviting them to expose their violations. Within this context, recounting experiences of pain do not necessarily operate as opportunities for

[34] *I have life* was the autobiographical story of Alison (as told to journalist Marianne Thamm), published in 1998, about her experience of being raped and severely injured by two men in Port Elizabeth in 1994. In 2018 it was made into a film called *Alison*.

[35] I think it is important to note here that Alison control over this representation of her story, unlike many 'black' womxn whose violations are represented in the South African media.

healing (Ahmed, 2004c). Thus, in the remaining chapters of the thesis, I reflect on the potential for *hearing* these stories of pain, as well as the conditions that make this hearing difficult. I attempt to tell stories about rape with care. This involves treading a precarious middle-ground between exploitation and exposure, avoiding both the reproduction of trauma porn and the further silencing and invisibilising of certain experiences (Reilly, 2020). Simultaneously, telling these stories carefully incorporates avoiding the "danger of a single story" (Adichie, 2009, n.p.). In particular, I am concerned about reproducing notions of womxn who experience rape as 'passive victims'. Ethical and research frameworks which position womxn who have experiences sexual violence as 'vulnerable' may take agency away from participants and construct them in disempowering ways (Barker & Macleod, 2018; Molobela, 2017). Thus, I continuously struggle to hold together notions of violation and agency, power and powerlessness.

Given that I draw on my own experiences, through which I implicate my family, friends, partner and colleagues, an ethics of care also extends to how I represent those close to me (Ngunjiriet al., 2010). I was in discussions with family members, friends and colleagues prior to my decision to focus on my own experience of rape as a key component of my PhD. I began writing about my rape in November 2015, a few days after it occurred and much of this writing has been shared on public platforms (including in newspapers, on my personal blog, as well as other online platforms). Through this process of writing and sharing my writing I have engaged with those close to me about the implications that this process has for them. One person has made it clear that they do not want to be represented in any form of my writing, including my PhD, and I have honoured this request.

I have also tried to take care of myself during the arduous process of this research project. Throughout the research process I have drawn on support from my supervisors, therapist, family members, friends and my partner in order to enact self-care. Engaging with my own experience of rape, as well as hearing the experiences of others (which I expand on below), has been distressing and at sometimes overwhelming. However, as I will explore below, the effects of this work have important implications for knowing about rape.

## Affective Writing as an Entangled Analysis

In this section I outline my analytic approach to writing about rape, which I am calling affective writing. This affective writing is produced through an entanglement of autoethnographic, in-depth interviewing and reflexive data.

### *Autoethnographic Entanglements*

As I have highlighted in the first chapter, my own experience of being raped in 2015 formed the starting point for this research project. This was not only because the experience provided a personal perspective on rape, but also because the ways in which others responded to my experience illuminated various discomforting aspects of sexual violence in the South African context. I have, thus, employed an autoethnographic approach, through which I turn an ethnographic gaze on to my own experience of rape, while maintain an outward gaze on the context wherein this experience occurs (Denzin, 1997). Through drawing on my own experiences, I seek to critically explore "the cultural space[s] that constrai[n] the meanings available for understanding" my own experience of rape (Banks & Banks, 2000, pp. 234-235). Thus, my analysis extends beyond my own personal experience of rape, towards understandings of the culture of sexual violence in South Africa (Butz & Besio, 2009; Chang, 2008). Through my use of 'I', I reflexively write myself into and through the text (Denzin, 2014). Using the first-person voice, I analyse the ways in which my experiences are *affected* by the historical and relational contexts in which they are situated (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

As I reflect on my own experiences, I am simultaneously aware of the ways in which these experiences are entangled with those of others (Spry, 2016).

> As dragged me towards a clump of bushes, I thought of all the womxn I had sat across from in the counselling room at Rape Crisis. It was as if he was dragging me across an invisible line – across to the other side of the room, into the chair where my clients sat. The fragments of rape – composed by the stories of womxn I knew, womxn I had counselled, research studies I had read, newspaper headlines I had seen – were there with me, swirling around me as I became another fragment (Extract from research diary, 20 August 2018).

My autoethnographic reflections have been generated through the research diary I have kept throughout the research process, as well as personal writing which I began in November 2015, after having been raped and before starting this research project. This writing has taken various forms, including those of a more creative, poetic and experimental nature. Many of them have been re-worked in the writing of the thesis, as they became entangled with the narratives of the other womxn I spoke to.

***Entangled Interviews***

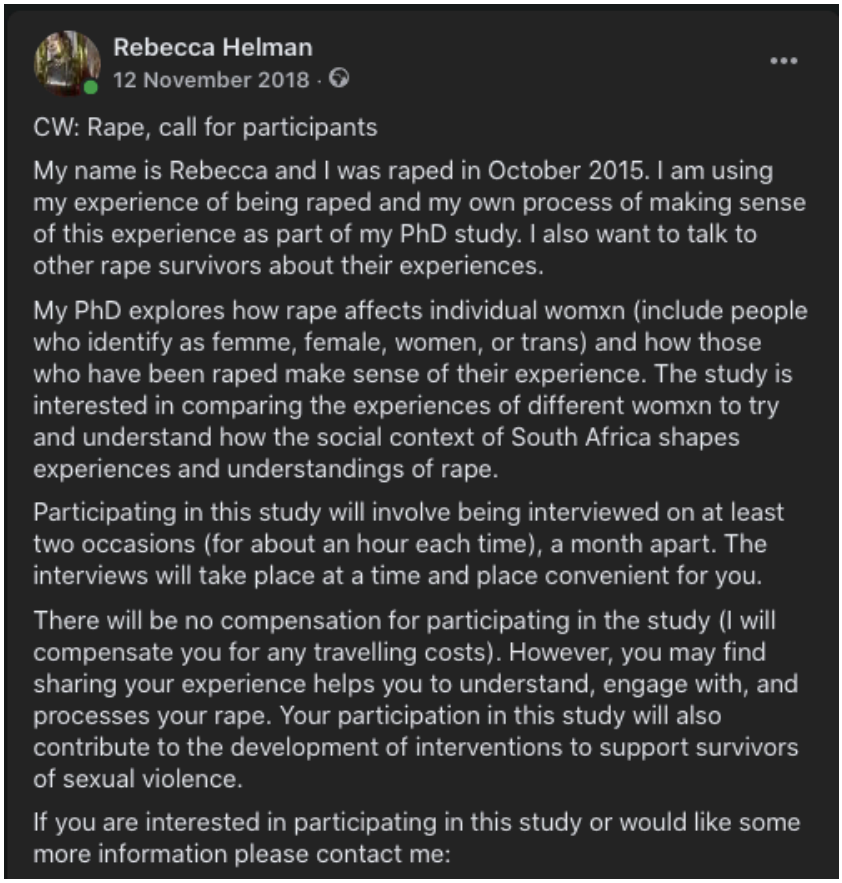
> During one session of supervision one of my supervisors asked why I don't just focus on my own experience. She suggests that this is one way to deal with the complexities around representation – a way to avoid imposing an analysis on the experiences of others, a way to avoid a colonial gaze on the 'Other'. I am compelled by this argument but I also compelled by a desire to complicate and destabilise my own positionalities; as researcher and as a womxn who has been raped. To do this I need the stories of others (Extract from research diary, 15 August 2018).

In the context of researching sexual violence in South Africa I argue that the cost of representing others needs to be weighed against the cost of silence (Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 1996). Rosalind Edwards (1990), reflecting on whether 'white' middle-class academics should research and write about the experienced of 'black', working class women, has argued "[f]or me, the question has always been the other way around: can I possibly be justified in leaving them out?" (p. 83). The choice between remaining 'respectfully silent' in order not to appropriate others' experiences or speak on their behalf should be regarded as a situated political decision, rather than merely an abstract theoretical and ethical quandary (Gillies & Alldred, 2002). In centring my own experience of rape, I am acutely aware of reinscribing my own privilege. This is related not only to my social position as a 'white', middle-class womxn, but also to the specific nature of my rape as a 'real rape' (Estrich, 1987) which is recognised and denounced by others. In choosing to include the stories of other womxn I aim to engage with the multiple forms that rape takes, as well as the ways in which dominant understandings of 'real rape' disguise and silence alternative forms of harm. My representations of both 'black' and other 'white' womxn's voices is intended to challenge hegemonic and damaging racialised and classed narratives of rape. As I have already articulated, the representations of 'black' womxn as merely sexually violated bodies (Boonzaier, 2017) serves to further dehumanise

them. By representing ‘black’ womxn’s experiences of rape as they are produced within the context of in-depth interviews, I hope to offer an alternative representation. Simultaneously, the spectacle of ‘black’ male rape of ‘white’ womxn serves to obscure the violence that is perpetrated against white womxn by ‘white’ men (Helman, 2018a; Helman, 2018b; P. Scully, 1995). The inclusion of the stories of other ‘white’ womxn is intended to disrupt this narrow and racialised understanding of rape.

Informed by an ethics of care, I spent a significant amount of time thinking about the best way to recruit participants. I wanted to reach and include womxn from a range of different backgrounds, but I was also concerned about the intimate nature of the research. By asking womxn about their experiences of being raped I was entering their life world, which could be experienced as invasive and traumatic (Band-Winterstein et al., 2014). I had planned to recruit participants via the counselling services of RCCTT, which provide counselling to individuals who have been raped in three diverse communities in Cape Town. I wanted to work in collaboration with RCCTT in order to ensure that those who were selected to participate in the study had received counselling, in order to minimise the traumatic effects of participating in the study. However, in consultation with Rape Crisis it was decided that it would be better to recruit via the RCCTT Facebook page, as the counsellors (who would have been responsible for recruiting participants) were already overburdened. I felt that recruiting via the RCCTT Facebook page would still provide some level of containment for participants, as my invitation to participate would not come completely out of the blue and those who saw the invitation would be aware of the support that RCCTT offers.

I posted the following message on my personal profile, which was then shared to the RCCTT Facebook page:




My post ended up being shared on several other Facebook pages (including womxn's groups and individual's personal profiles). I had originally planned to do all my interviews in Cape Town but when responses came from all over the country I decided to travel to Johannesburg and Pretoria to do interviews as well. I interviewed ten womxn in Cape Town, two in Johannesburg, and one in Pretoria. One of the participants was initially interviewed in Cape Town, with the follow up interview occurring in Johannesburg. I conducted two interviews over the phone as I was not able to travel to the North West and other parts of Gauteng. Despite the less personal nature of a phone interview (Shuy, 2002), I felt it was more important to include the experiences of womxn who live outside of the main national metropoles in order to diversify the perspectives offered by my research.

Below I provide a brief description of each of the womxn I spoke to. Because I am interested in exploring how the uneven social context of South Africa shapes womxn's experiences of rape I asked participants to self-identify with the identity categories of race, class, gender, sexuality and language[36]. However, I also include participants responses to my question asking

[36] As I have discussed in Chapter One, these categories are both problematic and useful.

them to tell me about themselves more generally, in order to avoid reducing them to fixed categories of identity. As mentioned in Chapter One, I am using pseudonyms for all my participants to protect their privacy. Given the sensitive and deeply personal nature of disclosing experiences of rape, ensuring confidentiality was one of the key ethical concerns within this research (Rosoff, 2018; Shirmohammadi et al., 2018).

I have included a fictional sketch of each of the participants alongside the description of them. These fictional sketches are intended to construct participants in more humanising ways. By presenting a drawing which corresponds with some of each participant's identity categories, I present a more detailed 'picture' of them, whilst maintaining confidentiality. The fictional sketches are also intended to highlight how what is presented in this thesis is my textual representation of participants and their narratives.

Bianca: I'm doing my internship for to register with the [Health Professions Council of South Africa] as a research psychologist… I used to model and sometimes I miss that a lot. Um mainly because of the money [laughs][…] I'm a white female. I come from a er middle-class family. Um, English but I was raised in a fairly um conservative Afrikaans area […] So ja it sort of like that was that was very interesting growing up s- um identifying as a feminist.

Antoinette: I am Afrikaans um… and I… er well that's my first language and I'm from Limpopo province. I grew up in a very small town […] a mining town […] I studied journalism […] obviously I have a very strong… there's a strong pull for me to be involved in female empowerment […] I well I identify as white, white South African. Um I would identify as Afrikaans-speaking not hundred percent sure I would identify as Afrikaaner […] Um… I consider myself queer um I'm in a relationship with a woman. I would identify as middle-class, even though I grew up… I grew up poor in a mining community but I think in South Africa it's like… because of the inequality, you can't really [laughs] you can't really be white and not be [Rebecca: Mhmm] middle-class to some extent.

Hannah: So um I… I'm 22 […] I went to Rhodes [University]. In the last year I've been working as a tutor and… an au pair […] White, English-speaking… middle upper class, queer. I'm wanting to do my own research on this one day.

Aphiwe: I stay in Nyanga […] about myself, actually er I just like people you know. I like spending time with friends and family. I like to communicate. I like to meet new people. Um… [inhales] I like watching movies and stuff. I like going out with friends […] I could say I'm a proudly lesbian […] And um at at home we actually like most of the time we speak X-Xhosa ja but when I'm with my friends we speak English.

Nomvula: Ok um well I'm 24, going on 25. Um I'm doing a Masters […] Um… I'm South African but I was born and raised in Zimbabwe […] Um I would identify as black or African. Um… I identify as a woman. Um… I'm bi-sexual […] I would say for… I don't know between low and middle class.

Valerie: I'm just about to say oo I'm the mom. I am... and I'm I'm not defined by being a mom […] Um so who am I? I am a woman... and I had a dream and I am working towards this dream. I am also a mother. I'm a sister. I'm a daughter, I'm a friend, I'm a confidant, I'm a counsellor, at the moment I'm a receptionist to pay my bills, I'm a student um I am many things. [..] I'm of mixed heritage, I don't like the word. No-one uses coloured pencils on me. I'm of mixed heritage. I am English Afrikaans speaking... I'm female... What else? […] Heterosexual.

Jamie: I… er am a counsellor […] I am a white queer person. Um I th- don't like woman but I have no other alternative word at this point [inhales] um coz I'm not non-binary I'm just not a woman. Um… so… middle-class upbringing, Joburg all the way. Um… er a mixture of private and public schooling throughout primary and high school.

Refiloe: Oh ok um I'm the oldest child, which means I'm also the oldest um granddaughter. [Inhales] Er I was brought up by my grandparents in a very very very small village. But then er coz my parents has me when they were very young [laughs] […] I'm currently doing my PhD in criminology […] I identify as what a black female […] I think middle-class ja. Middle-class ja […] I date guys.

Skye: Um so I was born and raised in Joburg. Um I studied at Rhodes well UCKAR[37] and um then ah I've been around [laughs]. So I've done my honours at UJ and now I'm doing my Masters at WITS in clinical psychology […] Ja so I was raised by a single mom […] Um I identify as cis-gender queer […] Um so I'm white. Um Afrikaans and English background and definitely middle-class.

Faith: Ummm…. Well I'm thirty years old. I'm mother of two. My first girl is th- turning thirteen now and the other one is turning seven. But I live by myself i- here in Cape Town, my kids live with my mom in Zimbabwe. So um I work for a company that we… um they got contracts o-of new houses and they ma- let them out […] and part-time I also do I'm a nanny […] I'm well I'm a black girl, woman. Um… I'm from Zimbabwe. I speak Shona and… I go to church, part of the time I go to church but I'm I'm a Christian.

Tanya: I've had a vary varied career. So I worked in… in IT and I've worked I've now recently started e- I've started my er being a lawyer… White, Afrikaans-speaking, I am financially comfortable. I'm extremely determined...I never stay down...I'm *extremely* resilient… I'm...I-or-I think...I'm the type of person that people like to take to war with them. Um...I'm dependable… but I'm also adventurous. I'm a pioneer...um...I *love*...breaking moulds I love enabling people...I *love* people. Um...I like helping people. Um...I'm a *strong* personality.

[37] Following the Fallist student movements Rhodes University has been referred to as 'the University currently known as Rhodes', in order to highlight the university's failure to to change its name despite its colonial roots.

Lara: Er I am a PhD student, which always comes first [both laugh] Um… I'm just turned 28… What kind of person am I? Mmm [laughs] Ambitious […] So race, I'm white. Um class is difficult to answer because my parents I would, seeing as they struggle to get by, I would put them as working class but I'd put *myself* as middle-class because I received scholarships […] um I'm a heterosexual er female […] Language English… English.

Camille: Um I'm four percent South East Asian, according to 23andme, and like two percent African. So I'm like super white. And my family is like half Afrikaans, half English. I grew up speaking English, just [inhales] all the privilege, middle-class, private schools. Um… always just had… like a really [exhales]… I guess protected life but also like lots of opportunities, never doubted myself, never doubted my ability to do what I want. Um… very sexual and sexually active. I've slept with like 40 partners and sex is something that I really enjoy and you know have a good time with […] I'm so straight [both laugh].

Buhle: I'm a 27 year old. I am married. I've got two kids. I'm a stay at home mom. Um but I do have a qualification that I did at UJ. Um I love my kids. I love my life. Um ja there are still things that I you know have to work through as a survivor but generally I'm a happy person […] I'm black… um straight [my home language is] Xhosa.

May: I think I'm thirty? [both laugh] […] Um I am… e-… I'm white. I was born in England, my parents were both born in Zimbabwe. I… [inhales] er was born in the UK, I lived in Uganda until I was ten and then we moved here… Um I lived in Grahamstown until I matriculated and then I moved to Cape Town and studied theatre […] I am um… sort of up- well middle-class white. Um… from a pretty privileged background um… ja I was you know I'm I'm very well educated, got a university degree […] I like to say I identify as a woman because I haven't bothered to change the factory settings […] Um… pretty much exclusively homosexual since I figured out that at the age of seventeen [laughs] and now I'm married to a lady.

Nosipho: I live in Everton. I live in one room… er I've hired one room after my… divorce after we j- broke up and I got a son and we share room which er we share it as a… kitchen as a bedroom at the same time. I'm an

> activist. I became an activist after I've been gang raped. I just started my non-profit organisation which… I'm not funded for […] I'm black.

I interviewed each womxn on two different occasions. This approach was intended to build trust between my participants and I, as well as to make them feel more comfortable sharing their experiences of rape (Ellis, 2017; Laslett & Rapoport, 1975). Before the initial interview began, I provided participants with an information sheet, outlining the details of the study [see Appendix A]. Participants were also required to sign a consent form [see Appendix B] before the interview began. Participants who were interviewed over the phone were asked to give verbal consent. I provided each participant with a list of counselling resources [see Appendix C] they could access in the case that they experienced the interview as distressing. As I will expand in the following chapters, despite the sensitive nature of the topic, it appears that the womxn that I spoke to experienced the opportunity to share their experiences as predominantly cathartic, constructive and affirming. Given my experience as a Rape Crisis counsellor, I tried as far as possible to provide a safe and non-judgemental space for womxn to share their experiences. This included holding space for painful recollections and tears.

The interviews were scheduled between three and four months apart. This was in order to give myself time to transcribe the first interviews and to look for commonalities and differences across the interview transcripts. I sent participants the transcripts of their first interview prior to the second interview so that they could reflect on what we had discussed and make sure that they were happy with how I had transcribed the interviews. None of the participants raised any concerns with the transcriptions. Most initial interviews lasted between 45 minutes and two hours. The longest interview was two and a half hours. The follow up interviews tended to be shorter, between 30 and 90 minutes. Both interviews were semi-structured in nature. The interview questions [see Appendix D] were intended as a broad framework which invited participants to reflect on their experiences in relation to the broader social context of sexual violence in South Africa. The framework provided by the interview questions shaped and constrained what participants were able to say and how they were able to make sense of their experiences in the interview context (Billo & Hiemstra, 2013). I used follow-up and open-ended questions throughout the interviews in order to encourage participants to talk more freely about the particularity of their experiences and perspectives (French, 2003). However, all the interviews were different and, in some instances, womxn began by sharing their experiences

of rape, unprompted. I transcribed all the initial interviews, in order to familiarise myself with the data. I generated the questions for the follow up interviews by reading each individual transcript, as well as by reading the transcripts together as a set. Due to time constraints, the follow up interviews were transcribed by a friend of mine, who has experience working on issues of sexual violence.

Participants were asked to select where they wanted to be interviewed. Given the nature of the interview I wanted to ensure participants felt as comfortable as possible (Kim-Yoo, 2016). I offered my home in instances where participants did not want to be interviewed in their own homes or in a public place. Five of the first interviews were conducted at my house, five at participants' homes, one in a coffee shop selected by the participant, one in a park selected by a participant, one in my hotel room in Pretoria and one at the participant's office. Although I did cover participants' transport costs to and from the interviews, I decided not to compensate participants for sharing their experiences with me. This was because I did not want to coerce womxn into disclosing painful experiences (Colvin, 2014). However, in recognition of the significance of their participation in my research I did engage in various acts of (asymmetrical) reciprocity (Tillman-Healy, 2003). I raised a small amount of money for the non-profit organisation which one of my participants had started. I sent some counselling materials to one of my participants who wanted to start a support group for other womxn who had experienced sexual violence. I also facilitated a place at a safe house for one of my participants who was worried for her safety after the man who raped her was released on bail. I shared my thesis with all my participants in order to ensure that they were comfortable with the ways in which I had represented them and their experiences. None of the participants raised any concern with the thesis and some of them acknowledged the significance of being able to read the thesis. For example, Hannah sent me the following email in response to Chapter Four of the thesis:

> Thank you for sending. I read it last night- wow. Thank you for respecting each different experience and giving them equal weight and dignity. I found your analysis of my experience to be very validating (3 May 2020).

Similarly, Nosipho mentioned in our follow-up interview how receiving a copy of the transcript of the interview was very affirming for her:

> So it's it's it's actually giving me um, it's like you just put a crown on a woman that never had a crown [Rebecca: Mhmm] since she was small to say you are a little princess [Rebecca: Mhmm]. You know that when you sent that it just, it was overwhelming to say she doesn't know what she just done. It's like I never had this crown, every little girl had the crown [Rebecca: Mhmm], you own something. And that's it the transcript actually of my interview and how many interview we have done. I've done interviews, I've done this incident and everything, I've never seen such [Rebecca: Mhmm]. I don't know what was I talking about even in those interviews. It's more of you do the interview, it's on national TV, it's done, we don't care what happened in future [Rebecca: Mhmm], we don't want to know what, are you moving on or what's happening? [Rebecca: Mhmm] They don't even know where I am by now [Rebecca: Mhmm] (Second interview, phone, 15 May 2019).

As is clear from my call to participants, I made my own experience of sexual violence explicit from the start. In exposing myself in this way I hoped to create a more reciprocal space for my participants to share their experiences of rape (Oakley, 1981; Stanley & Wise, 1983). I began each interview by sharing my experience of being misrecognised in the waiting room of the Heideveld TCC and how this had ignited the research project. The interviews were thus framed less in terms of a 'traditional' interview where the researcher asks questions and the participants answers, but more as a conversation between me and the participants (Ellis, 2004). I argue that the sharing of my own experience was particularly important in light of the sensitivity of sexual violence, as it, at least partially, disrupted an invasive dynamic where participants are required to share intimate details of their lives while the researcher merely asks questions from a safe distance. Other researchers have demonstrated how this kind of exposure and sharing creates rapport and trust within the context of research on LGBT issues (Hayfield & Huxley, 2015) and HIV (Mulqueeny & Taylor, 2019). Thus, sharing, reciprocity and disclosure served to enable a different type of relationality between my participants and I (L. Ross, 2017). In the follow up interview, Hannah reflected on how she experienced the first interview as different from other interviews she had participated in:

> It was a lot more like [inhales] empowering and affirming than I had been expecting and it was just, [inhales] ja it didn't feel awkward or uncomfortable or anything and having someone who's gone through similar things and it was just, ja quite comforting […] I think maybe that I've only, I've had a lot of uncomfortable interviews with journalists [inhales] that won't chip in or won't say anything, that

> they just kind of like throw big questions [Rebecca: Mhmm] and stare at you (Second interview, my house, Cape Town, 7 May 2019).

This is one example of the way in which the 'shared' experience of having being rape created specific affective connections between my participants and I, which I expand further in the following chapters. Many of the womxn that I interviewed reflected on how my disclosure influenced their decision to participate in the study. For example, when I asked her why she wanted to participate in the study, Nomvula said:

> Like when I saw your pos- well the post um when it was mentioned that you were raped as well, I was like I really want to... you know [Rebecca: Mhmm] participate in this because... she has experienced this and I'd like to help someone who's [Rebecca: Mhmm]... gone through the same thing coz I know how difficult it is [Rebecca: Mhmm. Mhmm]. And even if it's a study for you, I know it's also a bit deeper than that (First interview, park, Cape Town, 23 November 2018).

Nomvula's reflection highlights the way in which my status as a (partial) 'insider' facilitated access to the rape narratives of the womxn I interviewed (Haarlammert et al., 2017). These responses from participants demonstrate the importance of an ethics of care in conducting research, and the ways in which this care can create respectful, dignified and more reciprocal relations between participants and researchers. However, as Nosipho and Hannah's above comments about validation imply, I remain in a position of power as the researcher, though which I control the representations of the womxn who I interviewed (Harrison & Lyon, 1993; Sikes, 2010). Below, I reflect on a moment in my interview with Nomvula to highlight the contradictions in my position as an 'insider'. In this particular moment, Nomvula was describing her most recent experience of rape when I interjected based on my own assumptions about how the rape had unfolded:

> Nomvula: And then this year um... I was... I'd just come out from a night of drinking with my friends [Rebecca: Mhmm] and um... I dropped off my friend and then um I was meant to go to um Stones in Obs… so I'm there... and the person who I'm meant to meet is not responding so I decide that I'm gonna go home. So I get into... I don't know if it was an uber or a tax- just someone was like 'do you need a ride?' [Rebecca: Mhmm]. So I assumed [Rebecca: Mhmm] that it was someone who drives you know [Rebecca: Mhmm] people home and stuff [Rebecca: Mhmm]. So [sighs] to be honest I don't remember how I got into the car... um...

> if... I don't know [Rebecca: Mhmm] how I got into the car but I did and then um... he was saying stuff to me [inhales] 'you're so beautiful. You're so pretty can I just have one night with you?'. Then I was like... 'no. I just wanna go home' [Rebecca: ja]. Then he was like um 'I'll pay you if you want? I'll give you x amount
>
> Rebecca: Oh because [Nomvula laughs] that'll make it ok.
>
> Nomvula: [laughing] and I was like 'ja. O- x amount whatever'. Then I was like... 'ok I can do that. If you're gonna pay me I don't mind because I'm very broke right now [Rebecca: Ja] and I could use the extra cash and I was like this is consensual. This is what I want [Rebecca: Ja]. I'm gonna get my money [Rebecca: Ja]. It's one night and then I go home tomorrow'. So... we go... we do what we do and then he refuses to pay me [Rebecca: Mhmm]. So for me... I don't know... you know the logistics of rape or whatever but... for me I felt like I was raped [Rebecca: Mhmm] because I would have never ever...touched that man [Rebecca: Mhmm] if... he was not gonna offer me money. [Rebecca: Mhmm] And the fact that he... didn't pay me at the end took away my consent (First interview, park, Cape Town, 23 November 2018).

I immediately realised that I had made a deeply insensitive and damaging comment, rooted in my own experience and privilege, which renders the need to provide sex for money almost unimaginable. My problematic assumptions about Nomvula's rape highlight the complexity and limitations of being a 'cultural insider', particularly in a context marked by various intersecting inequalities[38]. Here my positioning as a womxn who has been raped is not sufficient to relate to Nomvula's experience (see Riessman, 1987; Matutu, 2019 for similar examples). As Anne Phoenix (1994) has noted, a focus on shared gender positioning may ignore the differences that exist in women's experiences, as a result of intersecting positions of race, class, sexual orientation, age, politics, status, and so forth. A focus only on what is shared or similar in womxn's experiences of rape risks glossing over the uneven social context in which rape occurs. Thus, I employ an intersectional lens (which I outline below) in order to analyse both my own and my participants' narratives. Simultaneously, I analyse the multiple

[38] However, my assumption about the story that Nomvula was going to tell me was not only rooted in my own privilege. It is also rooted in dominant narratives of what rape looks like. Despite the knowledge that sexual violence assumes multiple forms, I was still expecting to hear a story about some kind of physical force. I anticipated that Nomvula was going to say that when she refused the taxi driver's advances, he became angry and resorted to violence. The exchange between Nomvula and I is, therefore, not only about how my own positionality limits my ability to hear my participants but also about the power of hegemonic rape narratives to silence alternative experiences.

selves that are produced through the entangled research process. In line with post-structural and feminist perspectives, I wish to complicate the binaries between insider/outsider, participant/observer, self/other, victim/agent (Carrington, 2008; Geleta, 2014; Macleod et al., 2017; Reed-Danahay, 1997), recognising these as permeable and shifting social positionings rather than fixed identities (Naples, 1996).

### *Intersectional Entanglements*

Julia Roth (2013) has articulated intersectionality as "simultaneous entanglements of inequalities" (p. 2). Intersectionality was originally used by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) to explain the intersecting oppression that 'black' women experience. Here I employ it as both a theoretical and methodological approach which enables an analysis of how discursive, institutional and structural arrangements of power constitute categories of gender, race, sexuality, class, age, nationality, dis/ability, among others, which interact to produce different social inequalities (Lykke, 2010). An intersectional approach recognises these social categories as mutually constitute, intersecting to form particular *systems* of oppression (Hill Collins, 2000; Kessi & Boonzaier, 2017; Schippers, 2007; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Throughout my analysis I pay attention to the intersections in womxn's experiences of rape, including how these intersections produce both similarities and differences between experiences, in order to provide a more nuanced account of the ways in which situated relations of power constitute complex interpersonal relations and subjectivities (Macleod et al., 2020).

### *Affective Reflexivity: Being Affected and Producing an Affective Analysis of Rape*

As Tanya articulates her experience of rape in my kitchen (which I introduced at the beginning of the chapter) both her and I are deeply affected. Shame, fear and pain are palpable, heavy. Their weight presses upon us. Is it her shame or mine? I don't know where to look, how to reach across the gaping hole that has opened up between us. The hole full of unspeakable things. The enormity of the hole does not go away. I teeter on the edge of it. The more interviews I do, the more I read, the more I think the more the hole expands. The hole is full of my vulnerability, the hole comes closer and closer to my surface. I have to get out of the lift.

Multiple voices "press up against each other in ways that are simultaneously familiar and strange" (Alexander, Moreira, & Kumar, 2012, p. 121). These are meanings assembled from a multiplicity of positions and voices (Boyce Davies, 1994). This is a layered account of rape which enacts an entanglement of multiple voices (Ronai, 1995).

As Clare Hemmings (2012), has argued, "in order to know differently we have to feel differently" (p. 150). I use this feeling differently to write differently, creating different possibilities for engaging with rape. The content and the form cannot be separated (Richardson, 2000). In paying attention to the way in which I am affected by doing research on rape, I explore what rape *feels* like, resisting positivist conceptualisations of rape written in distant, cold and professional language which present a more sanitised, neater and less distressing image of rape (R. Campbell, 2002). In this way, I resist the violence of abstraction, through which the significant and multiple effects of sexual violence are rendered unaffecting. The absence of researcher's emotional involvement, which is critically missing from much academic writing, involves a process of actively unknowing, through which certain experiences or knowledges are suppressed (Geissler, 2013). My reflection on how I was affected by my interview with Tanya is an attempt to engage with my own sense of powerlessness and vulnerability. This kind of vulnerable engagement is particularly critical when working on issues related to social injustice as this vulnerability and discomfort may allow us, as researchers, to get closer to the positions and experiences of our participants (Law, 2016). In this way, a sense of vulnerability may disrupt the epistemological blindness produced by the researcher's own cultural, historical, social, economic and institutional background, which renders certain elements of participants' experiences invisible (de Sousa Santos, 2014; Law, 2016). In refusing a detachment from the affects that rape produces, I refuse the conditions that render rape as unaffecting.

In producing an entangled text, I embody an affective reflexivity through which I explore not only the way in which I affect the research, but how the research affects me (Allan & Arber, 2018; Newmahr, 2008; Womersley et al., 2011). Here I draw on reflexivity as "a turning back on oneself, a process of self-reference" which enables an engagement with the power dynamics which constitute the research context, as well as the knowledge-making process more broadly (Burr, 1995; Davies, 1999, p. 4). In the context of feminist, decolonial scholarship, reflexivity emphasises the importance of continuously interrogating the various ways in which researchers are entangled with intersecting relations of power (Kessi & Boonzaier, 2018; Kiguwa & Segalo, 2019). Through an affective reflexivity, I reflect on the ways in which I *feel* my way through the research (Laliberté & Schurr, 2016) and how these feelings are produced through various entangled encounters. This is an uncomfortable form of reflexivity (Pillow, 2003), which entangles the personal and the 'expert', feelings and analysis (Namatende-Sakwa, 2018;

Stoller, 2019). This is a messy, intertextual text (Marcus, 1998), which demonstrates the ways in which thinking, writing and theorising happen simultaneously (Childers, 2014). To write about rape is deeply uncomfortable (Barley, 2020; Qambela, 2016). This text is intended to jar, to unsettle, and to reflect on what is missing from much research and public discourse on rape. In this way, I hope to produce alternative social facts about rape that are uncomfortable, visceral and affecting (Lennon, 2017; Stodulka, 2014, as cited in Della Rocco, 2019).

My analysis was developed through multiple close readings of interview transcripts and extracts from my research diary. My analytical approach was guided by the following (entangled) questions: what are participants' affective responses to their experiences of rape? How are these affective responses entangled with the socio-political context of rape in South Africa? How am I affected by what participants tell me? What does my affective response indicate about the broader affective context of rape? How do the affective entanglements of my participants and I produce certain narratives about rape? Coding of the interview transcripts and research diary extracts was conducted by identifying affective responses to rape. Through repeated engagement with each individual transcript, as well as reading the transcripts as a 'whole', I identified the most dominant affective responses to rape. I then analysed these affective responses using a decolonial, feminist affective approach, as outlined in Chapter Two. Additionally, I developed my affective analysis by reflecting on my own affective responses as I read, analysed, and wrote about the affective responses of my participants.

In this chapter, I have both articulated and embodied my methodological approach of affective entanglement, focusing on issues of care, relationality and ethics. I have outlined how I have woven together autoethnographic and interview data, as well as critical reflections on these, to produce an affective writing of rape, which draws on and brings together decolonial, feminist, and affective approaches. In the following three chapters, I present this affective writing, through focusing on trauma, shame and rage, as affective responses to rape.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### The Trauma of Rape in 'the Rape Capital of the World'

> Buhle: I remember that one... night. The other nights I don't quite remember now [Rebecca: Mhmm] because it was i-it used to happen often but that one night it was behind the door and I remember my uncle […] he was coming to visit there at the village […] he when he came saw that the yard was very dark and he was calling out to me, calling out to my... grandmother. But nobody was answering and he, this guy, um was behind the door and he closed literally um closed my mouth and tel- told me [inhales] not to answer because if I I had answered at that time I would be embarrassing myself because as much as nobody was talking about the experience, everybody knew what was happening because it was what was expected of every girl. [Inhales] It even the other girls my age, as much as they were not talking about what was happening, it was what was happening in every home [Rebecca: Mhmm]. Um so so if I were to call out and answer to my uncle I'd been embarrassing him and I'd get in trouble because of that. Because [inhales] I would be breaking basically what is custom [Rebecca: Mhmm] that every girl goes through this but nobody talks about it[39] (First interview, phone, 16 January 2019).

This recollection of Buhle's is particularly poignant in the 'rape capital of the world', where it has been estimated that as many as one in three womxn experiences rape[40] (Moffett, 2006; van Schalkwyk, 2018). Thus, in South Africa, rape is something that all womxn are aware could happen to them. As Lara said in our initial interview "rape happens *so* frequently that it's… it's now something that you must warn your daughters against. As opposed to […] this travesty that happens". In this chapter I argue that rape is hypervisible – that everybody knows it is happening. Yet, despite the repeated visibility of statistics, headlines and stories of rape, as a society we continue to avert our gaze (Gqola, 2015). As Buhle says, "every girl goes through this but nobody talks about it". As I have argued in the first chapter, the notion of South Africa as 'the rape capital of the world' is a discomforting one, which decontextualises

[39] I was amazed when Faith recounted an almost identical experience to Buhle's. She explained that she was raped by her mother's boyfriend when she was seven. She described how he told her not to tell anyone, using exactly the same explanation as the man who had raped Buhle, "Because it's something th-that I must not say [Rebecca: Ja] because um it's something that must be done to kids [Rebecca: Mhmm]. But w-we should not report it [Rebecca: Mhmm]. Y- we must not tell... our mothers because every child goes through that [Rebecca: Mhmm] and you must not tell your mothers" (First interview, coffee shop, Cape Town, 17 December 2018).

[40] However, as I have highlighted in the first chapter, it is difficult to accurately estimate the rates of rape in South Africa, due to a range of issues related to reporting and data collection.

sexual violence in problematic ways. Below I explore the ways in which the notion of 'the rape capital', constituted through both spectacular and statistical representations, construct rape as 'normal' and 'ordinary'. This normalisation produces a particular affective context in which it is difficult to articulate the multiple harms that rape inflicts.

**Rape as Trauma**

Twelve out of the sixteen womxn I interviewed spoke about their experiences of rape as a kind of 'trauma'. Thus, the notion of 'trauma' appeared as a central way in which participants understood their experiences of rape:

> Nomvula: I also had nightmares [Rebecca: Mhmm] from... um... just the trauma (First interview, park, Cape Town, 23 November 2018).

> Valerie: I think it just traumatises you [inhales]... forever […] because that trauma carries through to so many other things in your life (First interview, my house, Cape Town, 27 November 2018).

> Refiloe: And then when I went through the trauma of the smash and grab and everything it brought back [inhales]... like I I always tell my there's this friend that I'm able to talk to about [Rebecca: Mhmm] it, that [inhales] I can tell now *exactly* where it happened [Rebecca: Mhmm]. I can tell... what I was wearing [Rebecca: Mhmm]. [Inhales] I can wear the col- I even tell the colour of the undies I can tell [Rebecca: Mhmm] *everything* about my surroundings (First interview, hotel, Pretoria, 10 December 2018).

> Skye: a lot of that stuff I've I will forget and I I don't know if you have it too but they call it, in like trauma work, like that flashbelt memory [Rebecca: Mhmm] where you remember like [inhales] things *very* distinctly and then there's like [Rebecca: Mhmm] grey or black [Rebecca: Ja] and then there's *very* distinct [Rebecca: Ja] and then it's gone again (First interview, Skye's house, Johannesburg, 11 December 2018).

> Tanya: Um what is also interesting I think is if you look at the relation- w- the experience of each person but also not only see it as rape but as a form of trauma and look at the typical characteristics of trauma [Rebecca: Mhmm] and and and also evaluate it in that sense. [Inhales] I... it is really interesting but when I think

> back of what happened to me there are my senses [Rebecca: Mhmm] and what I experienced on a sensory level [Rebecca: Mhmm] is very acute (First interview, my house, Cape Town, 31 December 2018).

Participants seemed to be employing the notion of trauma to account for the impact that the rape had had on them, for example, as Valerie notes the way in which the effects of the rape "carr[y] through to so many other things in your life". As can be seen above, participants described specific traumatic symptoms: "nightmares" memories of the rape being "brought back", "flashbelt memory", and re-experiencing the rape "on a sensory level". Here participants draw on an understanding of trauma as a psychological 'wound', which produces various ruptures (Freud, 1955; J. Herman, 1992; Lombardi & Gordon, 2014). Four of the participants referred specifically to rape as a 'wound', during their interviews. Buhle provided the following vivid and visceral description:

> It was like almost you know when you have a sore [Rebecca: Mhmm] it's a wound and then you just put a finger in it [Rebecca: yes] and then you just keep putting pressure and it would *bleed* and it hurts [Rebecca: Yes] that's how that's how it basically felt [Rebecca: ja] when I recognised it, started dealing and and and seeing the pain [Rebecca: ja]. [Inhales] It was it was now not being the survivor but it was... I don't know how to put it but that's how it felt [Rebecca: Mhmm] […] It *really really* hurts Rebecca when [inhales] when you open that pain and when you you almost like putting pressure and it on that wound […] (First interview, phone, 16 January 2019).

Buhle powerfully narrates the searing pain that rape produces, long after the event. She speaks of the struggle to make sense of this pain and the ongoing pain that comes with engaging with the wounds that rape produces. Here, the notion of the traumatic (psychic) wound operates as a sensitising metaphor, in an attempt to convey the overwhelming sense of the experience of rape (Burstow, 2003). The notion of the wound also connotates a form of violence, which pierces/ruptures/damages/breaks (Burstow, 2003; Visser, 2015). In what follows, I argue that trauma operates as a powerful trope in communicating the harm that rape produces. However, simultaneously, it is imbued with particular assumptions and epistemological dynamics which constrain its usefulness (Wale et al., 2020). The fact that so many of the participants drew on the notion of (psychological) trauma in articulating their experiences of rape, highlights the dominance of a Western, individualist and events-based understanding of trauma, similar to

that represented by the clinical category of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Andermahr, 2015; Craps, 2013). In the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-5), PTSD is defined as:

> exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence [resulting in] intrusion symptoms associated with the traumatic event(s)[,] persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the traumatic events[,] negative alterations in cognitions and mood associated with the traumatic event [and] marked alternations in arousal and reactivity associated with the traumatic events (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013, pp. 271-272).

Psychiatric and psychological understandings of trauma have played a significant role in legitimising and drawing attention to particular kinds of human suffering (Kaminer & Eagle, 2010; Tseris, 2017). However, simultaneously these understandings have contributed to the pathologisation of this suffering (Kennedy & Whitlock, 2011). Through constructing trauma as an individualised and medicalised response, traumatic events are severed from the social, political and economic contexts in which they occur (Burstow, 2003; Kaminer & Eagle, 2010; Mengel & Borzaga, 2012; Summerfield, 2001). In a context in which thousands of womxn are raped every day, it is insufficient to construct rape, and the trauma it produces, as a pathological individual response (Burstow, 2003; Kaminer et al., 2018).

Although many of the participants drew on this notion of trauma[41], in describing their experiences of rape and the 'wounds' these experiences had produced, in many instances their narratives exceeded the bounds of an individualist, events-based conceptualisation of trauma. For example, in articulating rape as a wound, Buhle reflects not on the event of rape itself but rather the process of coming to terms with the pain that this event produced. Thus, as I will expand below, participants articulated a relational and social account of the effects of rape (Wale et al., 2020), constituted by the broader social context of sexual violence in South Africa. Instead of producing a list of psychological/psychiatric symptoms, I am interested in the ways

[41] The prevalence of this notion of trauma may reflect the fact that the majority of the participants had received some forms of counselling or therapy following their experiences of rape. It may be that the notion of psychological trauma was introduced within these contexts. For example, at Rape Crisis, the initial counselling session includes an overview of Rape Trauma Syndrome (Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust, 2019) and its accompanying symptoms. However, it can also be argued that notions of psychological trauma and PTSD circulate widely beyond clinical and therapeutic spaces.

in which the traumas of rape are socially and politically constituted (LaCapra, 2014). My analysis is framed by Ann Cvetkovich's (2003) definition of trauma as "a name for the experience of socially situated political violence… [that] forges overt connections between politics and emotion" (p. 3). Below I explore the emotional responses that are made possible by the notion of rape as trauma.

### *The Spectacle of Trauma/the Trauma of Spectacle*

As highlighted in the introductory chapter, August 2019, was a particularly (visibly) violent month for womxn in South Africa. During this month the media reported on a number of cases including the murders of Uyinene Mrewetyana, who was raped and killed after collecting a parcel at the post office; Leighandre 'Baby Lee' Jegels, who was murdered by her boyfriend; Janika Mallo, who was raped and murdered by two young men she knew; Jesse Hess, who was raped and killed in her home (her grandfather was also killed during the attack); Lynettte Volschenk, who was murdered by her neighbour; and Meghan Cremer[42], who was murdered by a man who worked on the farm where she lived. In a discussion about the spate of killings between my step-mother and I, she remarked that the daily news reports reminded her of the following passage from Roberto Bolaño's (2004) novel, *2666*:

> The girl's body turned up in a vacant lot in Colonia Las Flores. She was dressed in a white long-sleeved T-shirt and a yellow knee-length skirt, a size too big. Some children playing in the lot found her and told their parents […] This happened in 1993. January 1993. From then on, the killings of women began to be counted. But it's likely there had been other deaths before […] Five days later, before the end of January, Luisa Celina Vazquez was strangled. She was sixteen years old, sturdily built, fair-skinned, and five months pregnant. […] Midway through February, in an alley in the center of the city, some garbagemen found another dead woman. She was about thirty and dressed in a black skirt and low-cut white blouse. She had been stabbed to death, although contusions from multiple blows were visible about her face and abdomen […] The woman's name was Isabel Cansino, though she went by Elizabeth, and she was a prostitute (pp. 353 -357).

[42] For me, Meghan's death was particularly painful and piercing as she was a friend of mine. The farm where she lived (which is suspected to be the place where she was murdered) is the same farm where I was raped in 2015.

This passage serves as an impassive repetition of spectacular and horrifying violence (Barberán Reinares, 2010). The use of forensic language produces an 'objective' and 'unemotional' engagement with the violation and murder of the womxn. Through these non-affective, 'objective' descriptions, the womxn are dissected and reified as objects (of observation) (Peláez, 2014). This recalls in powerful ways not only the representation of murdered and mutilated womxn in the South African news, but also the violently 'objective' objectification of Sara Baartman. For me, this passage powerfully captures the way in which the repetition of 'spectacular' violence produces normalisation, disengagement and a state of unaffectedness in relation to rape and other forms of gendered violence.

> As I drive down the street (it could be any main street in Cape Town) I see endless newspaper headlines tied to telephone poles. They proclaim things like 'HALF-NUDE TEEN FOUND DEAD IN TOILET' and 'RAPED BY FIVE MEN IN ONE DAY'. The radio station I listen to provides news stories of the latest incidences of violent crime from across the country. My Facebook feed is full of stories providing more details and critical analysis of these events. On some days these headlines catch me like a punch in the stomach. On other days I experience a faint nausea as I read the horrifying descriptions. Some days I just feel tired. Some days the stories provoke no feeling at all (Extract from research diary, 13 March 2019).

One particularly grotesque example of violence was the case of Anene Booysen. As highlighted in Chapter Two, Anene became a spectacle through the repeated representation of the spectacular violence enacted on her body. The majority of media reports focused on the graphic details of the physical violence she was subjected to, producing sensationalist, explicit, and shocking representations of her (Boonzaier, 2017; van Niekerk, 2014; Watson & Lalu, 2015). Newspaper headlines included:


(Bezuidenhout, 2013)


(Maregele, 2013)[43].

Anene's case was one example of the ways in which mystical statistics about rape and gender-based violence become 'spectacular reality' (Hames, 2011). This spectacularisation (and other spectacular representations of rape) must be understood in relation to various other spectacles, including the spectacle of violence and crime in South Africa, as well as the spectacle of the 'black' female body. It has been argued that apartheid operated as a spectacular form of violence (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2016; Ndebele, 1991). The torture, murder and disappearance of anti-apartheid activists by the state, police opening fire on children, as well as the necklacing of those believed to be state spies are just some spectacularly grotesque examples. Relatedly, the TRC, through focusing on particular examples of spectacular individual suffering rather than everyday forms of structural violence produced by apartheid, reduced the meaning and impact of apartheid's violation to physical forms of violence (Colvin, 2006). In the post-1994 period, there has been significant focus on 'increases' in violent crime[44] as evidence of the instability of the democratic project (Super, 2010). The newspapers constantly depict images of extreme forms of violence, from gruesome 'farm murders' to 'violent' service delivery protests. Within this context, it is increasingly only extreme acts of physical violence that make the news, including in relation to sexual and gendered violence (Isaacs, 2016). Thus, South Africa can be understood as a society that has become "habituated to representing and understanding violence spectacularly" (Jolly, 2010, p. 10).

More broadly, representations of spectacular violence, and sexual and gendered violence in particular, construct the Global South as a spectacle (Lisle, 2004). Globally, images and texts of violated women from the Global South – including 'burned' women in India, kidnapped women in Nigeria, raped women in South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Africa (Narayan, 1997; Philipose, 2009; Zalewski & Sisson Runyan, 2015). The sexual violation of Global Southern women (by Global Southern men) operates as a spectacle to be consumed by the Global North (Zalewski & Sisson Runyan, 2015). These spectacles are

[43] I have chosen not to reproduce some of the more graphic headlines.
[44] The discourse of 'rising crime' reflects an increase in crime rates in previously 'white only' areas in the post-1994 period (Super, 2010).

intertwined with colonial practices of othering, as discussed in Chapter Two. Collectively, these spectacular representations establish an archive of broken ('brown' and 'black') bodies. These spectacles of violence do not confer humanity upon those that they depict, but rather serves to normalise the violation of certain groups (Hartman, 1997; Sharpe, 2010). In this way, these spectacular representations contribute to what Jesse Jackson called "an amazing tolerance for black pain" (CBS, 2005, n.p.).

Both globally and locally, spectacularly violent representations of Anene Booysen are horrifyingly instructive for understanding the social tolerance of violence and the trauma this violence produces. Unfortunately, both the violence that was done to Anene Booysen and the ways in which it was reported are not unusual but merely a particularly palpable example of public fascination with ('black') womxn's torn open bodies. In this case, visibility constitutes part of the violence that Anene is subjected to (Sedgwick, 1997).

***Rape as Physical Injury***

The spectacularisation of rape appeared to haunt participants' narratives of their own experiences of violence:

> Bianca: other than my head […] bleeding, […] knocking my head […] I don't know how my head got knocked but other than that […] I wasn't *beaten up* […] I wasn't bruised all over… I mean it was… it was so obvious that I was in a lot of pain but… it wasn't… there was nothing… on me […] It like it wasn't an NCIS rape […] It wasn't an Anene Booysen rape… (First interview, Bianca's house, Cape Town, 22 August 2018).

Bianca's reference to the case of Anene Booysen and the comparison that she makes between her own rape and the rape of Anene, suggest that in a context characterised by "appalling violence and acts of unimaginable savagery" (Magona, 2012, p. 94) the importance of being able to 'show' that one has been 'sufficiently damaged' by the violence one has experiences is intensified. As Tarryn van Niekerk (2014) has shown in her research on gender-based violence, the case of Anene Booysen has become a kind of benchmark against which other instances of violence are compared. The repeated representation of particularly physically violent instances of rape, including those that result in murder, seemed to reinforce a dominant understanding of

rape as an act that involves an intense level of physical violence. Almost all the womxn I spoke to reflected on how they had come to understand rape in this way:

> Nomvula: whenever I thought of rape I always thought it was something violent […] you know just violent… (First interview, park, Cape Town, 23 November 2018).

> Nosipho: I had this imaginary it will be very violent. A person will be hurt because I will hear stories (First interview, phone, 18 January 2019).

These conceptualisations of rape are produced in relation to the idea that a violation of consent can only be achieved through extreme physical force and that in order for it to be rape there must be evidence that the womxn attempted to 'resist' and was 'overpowered' (D. Scully, 1994; Spohn & Horner, 1992). Despite changes in rape legislation, both in South Africa and beyond, 'proof' of resistance continues to feature prominently in both legal and social understandings of sexual violence. As Bianca notes above, even though her head was bleeding, she "wasn't bruised all over". Here, notions of trauma come to be closely related to signs of 'serious' physical injury. The idea that the impact of rape should be visible to others, in the form of some kind of physical wound to the body serves to limit womxn's claims of having been harmed by rape which is not explicitly physically violent. Therefore, the trauma of rape is read explicitly through the visible trauma to the body. Bianca's reference to NCIS (Naval Crime Scene Investigation), the American TV show in which forensic evidence is central to the solving crimes, highlights the way in which physical evidence is required as 'proof' that a rape has occurred. Similarly, in our initial interview Antoinette discussed how difficult it was to talk to her family about her relationship with her ex-partner who had emotionally, physically and sexually abused her.

> Antoinette: I still don't know really how to talk to them about it because I feel like when I *do* mention it, […] they seem like they don't believe me [inhales]. Like they almost think "oh well if it was *so* bad like why didn't we know?" (First interview, Antoinette's house, Cape Town, 19 November 2018).

Here the lack of visible signs of the abuse, for example in the form of physical wounds, serves to invalidate Antoinette's claims that she was being abused. Thus, in order to be 'believed' womxn who experience rape (and other forms of abuse) need to be able to demonstrate how

their bodies were physically violated. This serves to reinforce the idea that the use of physical force (which creates physical injuries to the body) is a central characteristic of a 'legitimate' rape. In my interview with Refiloe she interpreted the fact that my arm had been in a sling as indicating that it had been broken during the rape:

> Refiloe: you had a broken arm and [...] bruises (First interview, hotel, Pretoria, 10 December 2018).

When re-reading the transcript of our interview I felt a deep discomfort about the fact that my arm had not been broken, it had been in a sling for a few days as a result of muscular pain from having it bent behind my back by the rapist. My discomfort was rooted in the fact that I felt I had mislead Refiloe into thinking that my (physical) injuries were worse than they had actually been and therefore that the experience of the rape was 'less terrible', In a context in which womxn's bodies are extremely badly physically injured by acts of sexual (and other forms of gendered) violence, only the most extreme injuries serve as evidence that the violence was sufficiently severe. The broken bodies womxn whose lives are ended by gender-based violence, serve as the ultimate 'proof' that the violence they suffered was terrible *enough* (Gqola, 2015). As Hannah remarked sarcastically in our first interview, if you are murdered "then no one can argue with you [...] but if you survive it, obviously it wasn't that bad" (my house, Cape Town, 20 November 2018).

The construction of specific traumas as 'terrible enough', creates a hierarchy of trauma in which other types of trauma do not 'measure up'. For example, in many instances the recognition of the horror of the Holocaust has eclipsed the seriousness of other genocides across the globe (Power, 2003; Sharpe, 2010). In instances where womxn did not experience 'severe physical injuries', they were less able to articulate their experiences as rape, instead naming them as "weird" (Skye), "bad sex" (Camille), "someone else had sex with me" (Jamie), "being taken advantage of" (May, Antoinnette), "not really rape" (Jamie, Nomvula). However the construction of some rapes as 'less terrible' or not 'terrible enough' creates damaging parameters for the toleration of certain kinds of violence. As Roxanne Gay (2018) contends, the notion that some rapes are 'not that bad' fosters wildly limited expectations of what kinds of experiences produce suffering and the capacity to recognise and respond to the trauma of both the self and others becomes 'calloused' (Gay, 2018). Similarly, Pumla Gqola (2015) argues that the notion that some rapes are 'mild' and other rapes are 'brutal' creates a context in which some rapes are 'understandable' and even 'acceptable'. Simultaneously, the

fixation on physical 'evidence' of the violence rape, serves to disguise the other ways in which rape wounds. I return to this below.

***Becoming a Statistic***

Alongside representations of spectacular violence, statistics form a key way in which sexual violence is constructed in South Africa. As I have highlighted previously, a range of quantitative studies have produced statistics to support the notions that South Africa is 'the rape capital of the world'. These statistics have come to circulate beyond the realm of the academy and establish a statistical imagination (Nuttall, 2009) of the magnitude of rape (Dosekun, 2013). Many of the womxn I spoke to reflected on how this statistical imagination shaped their experiences of rape:

> Bianca: Every it's everyone. It's always rape, rape, rape, rape. We live in a rape capital of the world […] So it's like… 'ok so I was raped. I was one of how many other women who was raped' (First interview, Bianca's house, Cape Town, 22 August 2018).

> Refiloe: maybe I'm still dealing with it or coming to terms with it. [Inhales] Because I think what I I always think about is 'oh my goodness I'm actually a statistic' you know. I'm part of the many people that ha- could say that I was raped [Rebecca: Mhmm]. [Inhales] You know when they read the statistics that so and so women are raped each and every single [Rebecca: Mhmm] day [inhales] you know (First interview, hotel, Pretoria, 10 December 2018).

> Skye: ok now I'm I'm part of the statistic everyone tells me about (First interview, Skye's house, Johannesburg, 11 December 2018).

> Jamie: And it took a while to... [Rebecca: Mhmm] And then I was like like 'Ah [exhales], do I want this label? Don't- Am I a statistic now?' (Second interview, Jamie's house, Johannesburg, 5 May 2019).

For Bianca, Refiloe, Skye and Jamie, being raped meant becoming part of the statistics about sexual violence. The notion of statistics evokes a clinical and unemotional quantification of rape, or what Steven Robins (2014) calls 'cold facts'. The notion of becoming a statistic as captured by the phrases "I'm actually a statistic", "I'm part of the statistics now", "Am I a

statistic now?", evokes a loss of complexity, texture and embodied harm that rape produces. While implying a certain horror, in many instances the magnitude of statistics serves as a shield from the individual experiences of violation that they represent (Bass, 1983). Here, as Bianca, Refiloe, Skye and Jamie articulate, their individual experiences are subsumed by the statistical frame. Counting, thus, becomes a way of inscribing an abstraction to these violations, erasing their singularity (Peláez, 2014).

> In reading numerous academic articles about rape in South Africa, which proclaim '41,583 rapes reported to police in 2018/2019… an average of 114 rapes […] each day' the womxn these articles are describing are transformed into neat numerical figures, neat rows of violation (Extract from research diary, 6 March 2019).

Following the rape and murder of Uyinene Mrewetyana, Momokgethi Phakeng, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town, where Uyinene was a student, proclaimed: "We don't want her death to be just another statistic" (Raborife, 2019, n.p.). This highlights the way in which statistics of sexual and gendered violence contribute to the normalisation of this violence. As Bianca expresses, the prevalence of rape in South Africa, "a rape capital of the world", creates a desensitisation to the impact of rape. Her repetitive "rape rape rape rape" suggests a loss of meaning of the word and its related effects. Similarly, Refiloe's description of "women [being] raped each and every single day" suggests that this is the normal state of things. It appears that the continuous repetition of extremely high rates of sexual violence, as captured in the widely proclaimed statistic of '1 in 3 women will be raped in their lifetime' has lost the power to affect. In this way, the violence of rape is no longer a shock, but rather a shock that we, as a society, are used to (A. Davis, 2014; Peláez, 2014). Within this context, rape is both spectacularly grotesque and unspectacularly 'normal'. In the following section I will explore the ways in which womxn articulated the trauma of rape beyond notions of spectacular violence and statistical normalisation, while simultaneously recognising that these articulations are entangled with both the spectacular and the statistical.

**The Violence of Rape**

All the womxn I interviewed described the experience of being raped as a deep violation. As Judith Herman (1992) has noted "violation is a synonymy for rape" (p. 54).

> Aphiwe: Someone trying to change you, change who you are (First interview, my house, Cape Town, 23 November 2018).

> Tanya: It's not just something that happens to your body… it's actually something that happens to your *being* […] it's a form of annihilation… making you nothing (First interview, my house, Cape Town, 31 December 2019).

> Hannah: Feeling… disjointed with your body… feeling disjointed with your own sense of agency… never quite trusting it (First interview, my house, Cape Town, 20 November 2018).

> Refiloe: More of an emotional act than it is physical… when someone takes your power away… it takes away your voice (First interview, hotel, Pretoria, 10 December 2018).

> Nosipho: It strips you… it strips your power… When you walk you feel *naked* (First interview, phone, 18 January 2019).

All 16 of the participants asserted that rape was an act of power, which attempts to attack their agency, autonomy and connection to themselves and others (Brownmiller, 1975; Gqola, 2015; Mayer, 2018; Mui, 2005). While the womxn discussed the way in which rape acted on their bodies, they attributed the violation and trauma of rape to the ruptures in their sense of self. Aphiwe's articulation that rape tries to change "you" and "who you are" illustrates the depth of the violation. Similarly, Tanya describes rape as a form of "annihilation of you *being*". The use of annihilation highlights the intensity of the violation – the violent rendering of the self as nothing; a kind of erasure. This annihilation of the sense of self occurs in relation to being "reified into an object-for-the-other" or reduced merely to a body of flesh (Mui, 2005, p. 157). In this process, your own sense of safety, desire, ownership of your body is made irrelevant, producing a sense of being, as Hannah put it, "disjointed", both from your body and from your own sense of agency (Salem, 2018). Thus, rape operates as an attack on the conditions of subjecthood, facilitating a kind of social death (du Toit, 2009). As Hannah notes, this sense of disconnection from the self persists long after the physical act of being raped.

In categorising rape as an act of power, Refiloe refers to the way in which rape "takes away your voice". For many womxn a key part of the trauma of rape was the struggle to talk about what had happened to them. As much feminist scholarship has argued, rape is deeply intertwined with processes of silencing (Alcoff, 2018; J. Herman, 1992; Kilby, 2007). Louise du Toit (2009) has argued, in the act of rape womxn are often silenced through threats, suffocation, gagging or shock. This loss of voice extends beyond the act of rape to situations in which the womxn who experiences rape is unable to disclose to anyone what has happened to her – for fear or shame. As I will expand below, in instances where womxn do share their experiences they are often not listened to, or, as I have demonstrated above, their experiences of pain and violation become a kind of pornography that further strips womxn of the capacity to assert their voices (du Toit, 2009). Nosipho's account that rape strips one's power producing a feeling of nakedness, highlights how rape operates as an extreme act of exposure. The idea of walking around naked evokes a sense of intense vulnerability and shame. It is this feeling of utter exposure of being stripped bare, not only to one's skin but the tearing open of one's self, which constitutes the trauma of rape. I return to this in the following chapter.

Simultaneously, almost all the participants spoke about the power of rape to define their identities. Part of the trauma of rape is thus being 'fixed' to the traumatic experience, unable to escape from it:

> Hannah: Feeling like it's too much part of who you are… always having to disclose it (First interview, my house, Cape Town, 20 November 2018).

> Skye: A void was opening up in front of me… Like who am I then? (First interview, Skye's house, Johannesburg, 11 December 2018).

> Refiloe: It's a heavy thing to carry because you don't want them to see you differently… I'm like what? A rape survivor?... I feel like my identity had to change (First interview, hotel, Pretoria, 10 December 2018).

As these extracts demonstrate rape is etched onto bodies and selves. As Hannah notes, it looms too large, taking up too much space. The terribleness of rape, the utter horror and helplessness is captured by Skye's reflection that recognising and naming what happened to her as rape caused "a void" to open up in front of her. The power of rape to alter and define a sense of self

is reflected by both Skye and Refiloe's questioning of their 'post-rape identities'. The defining force of rape operates partly through the need to disclose, to confess to having been damaged in this way and to claim, as Refiloe says the identity of "rape survivor". This need has perhaps been intensified since the #MeToo movement, in which so many womxn (and others) came forward to disclose the harm that rape produces (Gallagher et al., 2019). I return to this paradox in the following chapter. However, as I will expand below, by disclosing womxn often become objects of scrutiny and their claims about the wounds they have sustained are picked apart.

> Throughout the process of doing this research I have had the sensation that I am stitching myself too tightly to the rape. I am stitching it into the skin, on my neck, my chest cavity, my thoughts, my memories, my dreams. I revisit the wound over and over. The wound is everywhere. I am the wound. What is left over? (Extract from research diary, 20 August 2019).

In the process of conducting this research over the past four years I have been required to constantly revisit my experience of rape, whether through writing about it or explaining to others what my PhD is about. Thus, sense that the rape is a defining experience in my life has been intensified. On many occasions I have wondered whether it was a mistake to make this my topic and how much additional trauma I have exposed myself to in process. For me, being so closely attached to the experience of rape, has powerfully embodied the power of rape not only to wound and traumatise, but also to define, to fix, to objectify, to deny subjectivity. It was intensely painful to listen to womxn's experiences of how rape had wounded them. In many moments in the interviews, their pain (and my own) was palpable, heavy, difficult to contain. Yet, many of them described how their pain was met with dismissal and denial from others, including those closest to them. The trauma of rape was thus socially and relationally constituted, in multiple moments following the event of the rape.

### *Denying Trauma, Dismissing Wounds*

In line with medicalised understandings of trauma, is the expectation that womxn who were 'really traumatised' demonstrate their trauma through various 'symptoms'. The lack of such behaviour is taken as proof that they had not been that badly damaged by rape:

> Refiloe: And the people don't understand because people will tell you 'but you you you've survived' [Rebecca: Mhmm]. 'You're ok'. 'You've got a nice job' [Rebecca: Mhmm]. [Inhales] 'You've got your own place'. [Inhales] 'You're pretty'. 'You're tall'. [Inhales] And I'm like 'what does that have to do with my experience?' (First interview, hotel, Pretoria, 10 December 2018).

> Antoinette: my brother [laughs] […] he told me like um 'oh you know it could have been so much *worse*. Like you could have turned out like [inhales] like really badly. Like you couldn't have been such a success' (First interview, Antoinette's house, Cape Town, 19 November 2018).

As indicated in both Refiloe and Antoinette's discussions, the fact that they were able to carry on with their lives following having been raped, and to achieve certain markers of 'success', served as evidence for others that the impact of the rape had not been that serious or far-reaching. This highlights the way in which understandings of trauma impose narrow expectations on how womxn who have been raped should behave. Again, as in the case of physical wounds, womxn who have experience rape are required to demonstrate that their psychological and emotional wounds comply with social understandings of kind of damage that rape produces.

Jamie noted in our first interview: "unless you are an absolute emotional mess… you almost don't get to have this… the label of it being acknowledged" (Jamie's house, Johannesburg, 10 December 2018). However, paradoxically, in instances in which womxn experienced long-term emotional and psychological consequences as a result of having been raped, they were often classified as 'over-reacting':

> Hannah: People will judge you for… for wallowing, for not moving on (First interview, my house, Cape Town, 20 November 2018).

> Nosipho: And it affects you in a way that you are sometimes not ok and they think you're too… a crying baby […] You get so upset when you hear men saying 'but this thing of rape women… are taking it out of proportion' (First interview, phone, 18 January 2019).

The descriptions of womxn's emotional responses to their experiences of rape as "wallowing" or behaving like "crying bab[ies]" constructs these responses as 'excessive' and 'unnecessary'. The notion that womxn who expressing their distress are 'wallowing' or being 'crying babies' is produced by a patriarchal trope of womxn as 'over-emotional' or 'hysterical' (M. Holmes 2004; Mohanty, 1988; Tseris, 2017). In Western patriarchal capitalist contexts emotionality is imbued with negative associations (Fischer et al., 2013). As Sara Ahmed (2004c) notes, "[t]o be emotional is to have one's judgement affected: it is to be reactive rather than active, dependent rather that autonomous" (p. 3). Therefore, claims that womxn are 'emotional' and 'hysterical' are used to discredit the validity of their distress (Jaggar, 1989; Chamberlain, 2017). Nosipho's reference to the male claim that "*women* are taking [rape] out of proportion" evidences that it is not only individual womxn whose emotional responses are mistrusted but rather how the category of womxn is imbued with mistrust. Womxn's distress is thus attributed to their 'hysterical' and 'unstable' nature, rather than their experiences of violence and trauma (Griffiths, 2018; J. Herman, 1992). In this context, womxn's traumatic responses are constructed as illegitimate 'over-reactions' and they are positioned as overly sensitive 'crying babies' or as enjoying 'wallowing' in their own distress. Thus, there is very little space for womxn to express their distress, both publicly and privately:

> Refiloe: I get *angry* for being sad [Rebecca: Yes]. You know I get [Rebecca: Ja] angry at myself for being hurt. I get... upset that why am I letting this get to me when this happened a long time ago (First interview, hotel, Pretoria, 10 December 2018).

> Faith: Sometimes li- e-even if most if not all the times I talk about it, I feel like crying [Rebecca: Mhmm]. It never goes away and then I had I I I keep on... um... I keep on pulling myself together 'no no no you're not going to cry' (First interview, coffee shop, Cape Town, 17 December 2018).

> Valerie: It might sound a bit dramatic… but I think that's how I feel… even though I wasn't murdered and I survived (First interview, my house, Cape Town, 27 November 2018).

> Lara: Am I being dramatic? (First interview, Lara's house, Cape Town, 3 January 2019).

Almost all the womxn I interviewed expressed some kind of conflict around whether they were responding 'appropriately' to their experiences of rape. These conflicts occurred in relation to dominant constructions of womxn as 'hysterical', 'wallowing', and 'crying'. Refiloe's question about why she is letting the rape get to her 'when this happened a long time ago' implies that she should not be experiencing long-term distress as a result of having been raped. While Faith acknowledges the ongoing trauma of the rape ('it never goes away'), she describes how she resists expressing this trauma by stopping herself from crying. This could be interpreted in relation to the trope of womxn as 'crying easily' and unnecessarily (Fischer et al., 2013). Both Valerie and Lara refer to the notion of being "dramatic" implying that they 'overly perform' their traumatic responses. This is an example of how womxn are constructed as "hysterical bodies" (Williams & Bendelow, 1998, p. 131). In Valerie's case it is evident how she constructs her own trauma as not terrible enough to warrant such a 'dramatic' response, when she says "*even though* I wasn't murdered and I survived".

As I have demonstrated above, some participants referred to specific experiences in which their traumatic responses were directly dismissed or denied. However, even in the absence of these direct dismissals womxn experience the trauma of rape in a social context in which "women's pain is negotiable" (Gqola, 2015, p. 3). Therefore, womxn must constantly fight, both with others and themselves, to claim that their trauma is *terrible enough* to warrant recognition and a serious social and political response. This is an additional kind of emotional labour that womxn are required to do in order for their pain and trauma to be taken seriously. As Camille articulated in our second interview: "women having to like you know kind of like rip themselves open [Rebecca: Mhmm] and like be like here are my guts [Rebecca: Ja. Ja.] he- now do you believe me?" (coffee shop, Cape Town, 21 May 2019). Here, Camille articulates an emotional ripping open that womxn are required to do when narrating their experiences of rape, within a context in which womxn's bodies are repeatedly depicted as physically ripped open.

The construction of womxn as simultaneously 'irreparably damaged' and 'not damaged enough' by rape creates a context in which the harm of rape is de-escalated and de-politicised. These notions of damage are constituted by both the spectacularly grotesque physical violence of rape and the unspectacular (statistical) normalisation of sexual violence. Thus, the harmful effects of rape are not socially recognised, contributing to further harm (du Toit, 2009). It is

in the face of this (un)spectacularisation, the womxn I interviewed were trying to make visible and palpable their own trauma and wounds. As I have argued, this is a fraught process which involves an emotional battle, both with the self and with others. I remember a particularly powerful moment in my first interview with Buhle where I was describing how I felt a great sense of empathy for the man who had raped me, because I assumed that he had been forced to do it because he was a member of a gang. In response she said:

> So when when you're talking about you know you're feeling sorry for him more than you [inhales] it doesn't make it right that what he did to you [Rebecca: Mhmm]. He's still wrong h- o- e-regardless of the choices that he had, it's still wrong (Phone, 16 January 2019).

In this moment Buhle affirmed for me that I had been deeply wounded and that despite the conditions under which I had been raped, that I could claim that this wounding was unacceptable – it was terrible *enough*. Within the course of the interviews other participants also asserted that their trauma was terrible *enough* and should be taken seriously:

> Tanya: he would listen and he be like 'oh well you know it could have been so much worse [Rebecca: Mhmm]. It could have been a black guy you know. And at least you weren't hurt terrible'. [Inhales] *That* I mean what what do you want? Do you want my body to be torn apart [Rebecca: ja] before it's ok for me to be… […] that just means people *really really* do not understand what it feel like or what it is like to be raped […] somebody just takes away all your power (First interview, my house, Cape Town, 31 December 2019).

> Camille: it does feel weird to like be able to say to to to use the words [Rebecca: Ja.]. To say like I was raped when it's not you know [R: Yes.] it's not classic TM [Rebecca: Yes yes. Ja ja.]. Ja. Um and it wasn't brutal and it wasn't you know [Rebecca: Ja.] […] but the emotional brutality was like horrendous (First interview, Camille's office, Cape Town, 15 January 2019).

Here Tanya describes how she was told that her rape could have been "so much worse". Her rape was perceived as 'less terrible' because she was not badly physically injured and because the perpetrator was 'white'. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the idea that being raped by a 'white' man is 'less terrible' than being raped by a 'black' man is rooted in racist construction of 'black' men as 'inherently sexually aggressive', as well as moral panic about

'miscegenation' (P. Scully, 1995; Shefer & Ratele, 2011). However, Tanya strongly resists this conceptualisation. She challenges the idea that rape is only terrible enough when the womxn's body is "torn apart". Simultaneously she asserts that the harm of rape is not produced by the physical violence involved in the assault, but rather the deeply personal and invasive nature of the violation. Similarly, Camille challenges the idea that the brutality of rape is produced by intense physical violence. She recognises that what happened to her was not "classic TM rape" and articulates the difficulty in claiming the experience as 'rape' in light of this. However, she articulates that although her rape was not 'physically brutal', it was brutal nonetheless. She conceptualises this brutality in relation to the emotional violation of being raped by a close friend. Her use of the term "horrendous" asserts the severity of the violation.

> Bianca: [in response to being asked what allowed her to recognise what happened to her as rape] Um... because of how much it fucked me up completely (First interview, Bianca's house, Cape Town, 22 August 2018).

> Antoinette: But then if […] my rape is not that bad and then it's like but why do I feel this way? If it really wasn't that bad why do I feel [Rebecca: Mhmm] so [inhales] like anxious [Rebecca: Mhmm] and scared and [Rebecca: Mhmm] and... like hurt? (First interview, Antoinette's house, Cape Town, 19 November 2018).

Both Bianca and Antoinette, despite struggling to articulate their experiences as 'terrible enough' at other points during the interviews, asserted the severity of their experiences, in light of the long-term wounding that they had sustained. In explicitly naming the pain that they had experienced they construct their rapes as deep violations which produced multiple ruptures. In this way they give gravity to their own subjective experiences of the damage that rape produces – being "fucked up completely" and feeling "anxious and scared and hurt"– and resist social definitions which attempt to deny and dismiss the trauma of rape.

As I have discussed above, all the womxn I spoke to articulated theirs experience of rape as a violation that occurred in opposition to their consent. Despite repeated social responses which tried to convince womxn that what happened to them was not 'terrible enough' or 'not really rape', they continued to assert their own bodily autonomy.

> Nomvula: What I hold to be my bodily autonomy… what I *feel* is valid… When I have that… confidence, the days that I do and that strength… this is not

> something you wanted and you have a *right*… this is your body… don't invalidate your experience (Second interview, coffee shop, Cape Town, 8 May 2019).

In speaking about what allowed her to name her experience as rape in our second interview, Nomvula reflected on her right to her bodily autonomy and her right to claim that what had happened to her was a violation of this right. She highlights the struggle to hold on to this understanding amidst a context with continually invalidates womxn's experience of rape. As I will explore further in the following chapters, the interviews functioned as an alternative space in which womxn could validate their experiences of rape and challenge narrow and problematic social understandings of rape.

**Unsettling 'Shared' Trauma**

As I have argued so far in this chapter, there are a lot of overlaps in the experiences of rape of the womxn that I spoke to. In this way the trauma of rape is, to some extent, 'shared' or as Refiloe put it, in our initial interview: "there is a common thread". I would argue that the notion of some kind of shared experience is significant in a context in which there is so much hostility and dismissal of rape. This shared experience allows womxn a sense of validation and connection in the face of the isolation and alienation that rape produces. Many of the womxn I spoke to expressed a sense of comfort and relief at being able to talk to someone who had 'been through the same experience' and, as I have shown in the previous chapter, this was one of the reasons why they agreed to participate in the study.

My own desire to create connections between my experience and that of my participants was clear when I re-read the transcripts. For example:

> [In my first interview with Aphiwe] Mhmm. I can identify with… [inhales] um you know with with a lot of what you're saying […] and that was like almost like the worst [Aphiwe: Ja] part to see your parent so [inhales] and I think for [my dad] you know, the same as your mom, it's like […] one of the worst things that can happen to your child (My house, Cape Town, 23 November 2018).

> [In my first interview with Valerie] Ja. Ja. I can ja I mean I can totally relate to that, at the time [inhales] of my rape it's almost like I sort of floated above my… you know body and was just kind of waiting for it to be over (My house, Cape Town, 27 November 2018).

Of course, I did share and identify with the experiences of many of my participants, as I have shown above. Simultaneously, I felt a strong desire to normalise and validate the experiences of the womxn I interviewed. This is partly related to my training and experience working as a Rape Crisis counsellor. But it is also produced by my desire to recognise and acknowledge the suffering of womxn who experience rape that is so often and so easily socially disregarded. However, I am aware that this approach risks glossing over and even erasing important differences in womxns' experiences of rape (Craps, 2013). In this section, therefore, I seek to challenge the use of trauma as a universalising category which erases the particularities and differences in how womxn experience rape (Clark, 2015). As I have highlighted earlier, one of the key starting points of this research project was the realisation that because of the particularities of my experience of rape - being raped by a stranger who was a 'black' man yielding a weapon and employing an intense level of physical force – and because of my identity as a 'white' womxn I was treated differently from many other womxn who have been raped.

As I have discussed above, social understandings of rape create a hierarchy in which some rapes are considered more 'terrible' and more deserving of a response than others. This hierarchy is deeply damaging, particularly for womxn whose experiences lie outside of the narrow boundaries of what is considered 'terrible enough' or 'real rape'. While remaining cognisant of the impact of a hierarchical organisation of trauma and resisting the idea that some rapes are worse than others, I propose that there are important differences in the experiences of rape of the womxn I interviewed. Drawing on the work of Dominick LaCapra (2014) I am proposing an empathetic engagement with the trauma of others that does not seek to fuse experiences through identification, but rather to establish "an affective relation, rapport, or bond with the other recognised and respected as other" (pp. 212-213). Below I explore some of the key differences that emerged as womxn described their experiences of rape. These differences are important in attempting to disrupt the dominance of a narrow narrative about rape and how it affects womxn's lives. However, the examples I explore here are by no means exhaustive of the diverse and complex ways in which womxn experience the trauma of rape.

As is evident in the opening extract of this chapter, Buhle was told by the man who raped her, who was a very close friend of the family, that what he was doing to her was 'normal' – something that every girl experiences.

> Buhle: he was the one who sort of started to who... planned it and... [Rebecca: Yes. Ja]. Ja. [Rebecca: Ja] So that's why I think that that that there was that feeling of betrayal [R: Ja] because he he was much more closer and he understood the whole dynamics of the whole family […] when I started learning what rape was I felt like I could have called out that night [Rebecca: Mhmm]. If I only I had called out maybe it wouldn't have happened [inhales] and continued for so long […] So I think that was one of the reasons that I became so angry at myself [Rebecca: Ja] and blaming myself for the whole thing was that [inhales] […] one night I did not use because I had believed what he had told me (First interview, phone, 16 January 2019).

As Buhle articulates here, the manipulation that the perpetrator employed constituted part of the trauma of the rape. In particular, she speaks to how she was implicated in this process of manipulation and how through believing what he told her, she comes to feel responsible for the continuation of the abuse. As Yvette Abrahams (1996) has argued, a key part of the trauma of rape lies in the way in which rape victims are convinced that they are somehow to blame for what has happened to them. As I will explore in the following chapter, shame operates as a powerful mechanism to blame womxn for being raped. Although Buhle was able to subsequently recognise that as a child she had not been in a position to resist the manipulation of the man who raped her, she articulated that this sense 'allowing' herself to be manipulated had produced a deep wound and required her to do significant emotional work to be able to vindicate herself from the sense of responsibility. The manipulation and betrayal of trust therefore represented a significant mechanism of wounding for Buhle, which produced a specific kind of trauma.

> Antoinette: I'm scared of… an old white man coming into the house […] All I see is this scary old man or […] this like rugby player with like big muscles and stuff […] it also makes it difficult because then sometimes I feel like people don't take seriously when I'm explaining it [Rebecca: Mhmm] to them […] like I told my brother once like 'I'm scared of your father-in-law. Like I don't want to be alone with him in a room' and he was just like 'you're fucking crazy' […] but if I told him about maybe their gardener or something he would be like 'ok no worries' (First interview, Antoinette's house, Cape Town, 19 November 2018).

In her interview Antoinette described how her fear of 'white' men, which was rooted in the fact that all of her three experiences of rape had been perpetrated by 'white' men, was not

recognised by others. As I have discussed above, the notion that 'real rapists' are 'black' men, unknown to the womxn they attack, remains dominant in the South African context. Deployed as a political strategy to distract from the violence and harm perpetrated by 'white' men during apartheid, it continues to protect 'white' men from being recognised as rapists and abusers. The cases of the Dros rapists[45] and Oscar Pistorius are two recent examples of this (Helman, 2018b; Langa et al., 2018). As Antoinette alludes to with her comment that her brother would recognise her fear of the gardener[46], the fear of 'black' men remains socially acceptable, particularly for 'white' womxn. The dominance of this racists discourse serves to produce a social misrecognition of rapes that are perpetrated by 'white' men, rendering this trauma largely 'unspeakable'. For womxn like Antoinette who are afraid of 'white' men, this misrecognition may intensify the notion that they are 'highly sensitive', 'hysterical', and 'over-reacting', as is evidenced in her brother's comment that she is "fucking crazy". As I have demonstrated above, the construction of womxn as 'crazy' works to dismiss the seriousness of the trauma that they have experienced.

> Hannah: you know I was sexually assaulted by a girl when I was a child. She was a little bit older than me like… where's my femininity? Like where's the masculinity? What were the power dynamics? Like where do I fit in? Like why aren't you…speaking about you know what I've experienced? (First interview, my house, Cape Town, 20 November 2018).

In her initial interview Hannah described going to a talk about rape culture in South Africa. She described the experience as deeply alienating as the construction of rape as a gendered type of violence, perpetrated by men against women, did not recognise her experience of being violated by a female perpetrator. Despite the re-conceptualisation of rape legislation in South Africa in 2007, which recognises female perpetration and male victimhood, the perpetration of sexual violence by womxn remains largely 'unfathomable' (Kramer, 2017). Therefore, the possibility of articulating such an experience of sexual violence is constrained and Hannah's trauma is made invisible.

[45] In September 2018, Nicholas Ninow, a twenty-year-old, white man, raped a seven-year-old girl in the bathroom of a Dros restaurant in Pretoria. Ninow was convicted of rape and sentenced to life imprisonment in October 2019 (eNCA, 2019).
[46] Given the historical impact of apartheid, low-paid work such as gardening is carried out almost exclusively by 'black' mxn in contemporary South Africa.

> Nosipho: You are from a poor community [Rebecca: Mhmm] and you have experienced the same *crime* [Rebecca: Ja], it wouldn't be in the media [Rebecca: Ja]. And if that similar case happens to a a a child or a woman in the suburbs […] I'm not only talking about… er a race issue, it's a class issue too [Rebecca: Yes] […] where I'm from, where rape happens every day it becomes a norm [Rebecca: Mhmm], where we're dealing with three nine year olds who were raped and it's like it's normal […] If it's happening in the poor communities you don't see total shutdown […] but when it happens to certain… um er er high class women it's where you see the total shut down people [Rebecca: Mhmm] come (First interview, phone, 18 January 2019).

As I have highlighted, the context of South Africa is one where rape is everywhere – it is in the news headlines almost every day and there is increasing mobilisation and protest about the lack of adequate social and political responses. Therefore, to a great extent rape has become normalised. However, as I have highlighted, there are some 'exceptional' cases that still break through the haze of normalisation. These cases tend to be those that involve extreme levels of physical violence – as in the case of Anene Booysen – or those that involve victims that are supposed to be 'safe' from this kind of violence– as in the case of Hannah Cornelius[47]. In light of the spatial legacy of apartheid, middle and upper-class suburbs remain safer spaces than working class townships (SAPS, 2020). Therefore, as Nosipho argues, it is only when a rape happens in a 'safe' suburb that there is horror and outrage. In contrast, the violence that happens in poor, predominantly 'black', townships tend to be constructed as 'normal' and therefore to some extent 'acceptable'. The construction of these communities as 'hopeless' spaces, in which rape is a frequent 'normal' occurrence, is rooted in colonial notions of Africa and African people as inherently 'evil', 'anti-human' and 'barbaric' (Boonzaier, 2017). Simultaneously, the notion of 'black' uninjurability, through which 'black' people are constructed as insensate and feeling less pain that 'white' people, serves to normalise, dismiss and deny the violence that 'black' people are subjected to (Makhubu, 2020; Morris, 1991; Ratele, 2020b). The normalisation of the violence that is perpetrated against 'black' bodies, and in the case of rape predominantly against the bodies of 'black' womxn, sends a very powerful message to 'black' womxn that their pain and their lives do not matter. In this context, 'black' womxn have to

[47] Hannah Cornelius was a 'white' womxn, who was attacked, raped and murdered by four men in Stellenbosch, where she was a student, in 2017.

work particularly hard to convince themselves and others that the violence that is perpetrated against them is terrible *enough* to warrant condemnation.

**Facing the Trauma of Rape**

The entangled conditions of sexual violence in South Africa create a context in which it is difficult to articulate the many harms that rape produces. Both spectacular and statistical representations conceal the ways in which rape wounds and traumatises. In the statistical representations the bodies are invisible, and in the spectacular ones they are blindingly hypervisible (Judge, 2018). However, in both instances the bodies and the selves of those who are violated are positioned at emotional and spatial distance, making it possible to look away or to look past those who are violated (Jansen, 2016; Judge, 2018). Through this research process I have been forced to engage with the effects of rape beyond the sensational and the statistical. I have sat across from real, flesh and blood womxn who have been raped. As Bianca so poignantly articulated in our first interview, in relation to her own experience of counselling womxn who have been raped, "until you sit with in front of you and they tell you their story [Rebecca: Mhmm] and it's sort of like this is a human being who was raped. This is not just a number" (Bianca's house, Cape Town, 22 August 2018). I have been deeply affected by the stories I have heard from the womxn I have interviewed. As I highlighted in the previous chapter, hearing these stories has opened up a gaping hole, which on numerous occasions has threatened to swallow me up. Repeatedly hearing-reading-thinking-feeling-and-writing about rape has meant I cannot escape the enormity of the violation, the lingering ruptures, the damage to bodies, selves, and relationships. Although deeply painful, distressing, frightening, overwhelming and rage-inducing, I argue that this kind of engagement with rape is necessary in the face of normalisation, numbness, dismissal and denial of the harms that rape causes. To have to (repeatedly) feel afraid, disjointed, unsettled, wounded, is to come closer to the trauma of rape. To be affected in this way, is to refuse spatial and emotional disengagement which contributes to rape's normalisation.

In this chapter I have articulated the ways in which the trauma of rape is constituted by spectacular and statistical representations of sexual violence. In 'the rape capital of the world', the spectacular and statistical order of things produce complacency, indifference, and unaffectedness in the face of rape. Within this context, an individualised, medical and events-based understanding of the trauma of rape is unable to account for the social and relational

ways in which rape wounds. A social and relational account of the trauma of rape demands structural rather than merely individualised, psychological and medicalised responses, including the disruption of widespread complacency, indifference and unaffectedness. In the following chapter I explore the ways in which shame – which attaches to womxn who have been raped - contributes to a social context which is unable to acknowledge the severity of rape, as a deep and, often, ongoing violation of womxn's sense of self.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## The Stickiness of Shame

> Lara: I mean I'm still just it's just a mix of shame and... disgust [whispers] I think.... Ja. It's like a dirty memory (First interview, Lara's house, Cape Town, 3 January 2019).

> Jamie: I think part of the 'that's the worst thing that can happen to you' is because there's an assumption that you're you did this to yourself [Rebecca: Mhmm] and that's what makes it the worst thing that can happen to you [Rebecca: Mhmm]. In addition to the virginity [Rebecca: Mhmm] and the being deflowered [Rebecca: Mhmm] and all that nonsense, there's an element of...
>
> Rebecca: Ja you didn't work hard enough to keep yourself safe.
>
> Jamie: Ja [Rebecca: Ja]. Like you must feel terrible that you let this happen... (Second interview, Jamie's house, Johannesburg, 5 May 2019).

In this chapter, I explore how rape is constructed as deeply shameful; an act that 'contaminates' the womxn who experience it. As Lara notes, rape produces "shame", "disgust" and a sense of "dirtiness". As I will argue, this sense of shame is intensified by the notion that womxn are somehow responsible for their own violation – that they 'allowed' or 'invited' 'the worst thing' to happen to them, as highlighted in Jamie and my discussion. Therefore, shame operates as a central affective mechanism through which womxn are made responsible for having been raped. Building on the previous chapter, I will argue that one of the central ways in which rape wounds is through producing an economy of shame (Ahmed, 2015), which sticks to the bodies (and selves) of womxn who have been raped. This economy of shame is simultaneously constituted by intersections of racism, sexism, classism and homophobia, through which certain subjects are constructed as 'always already' shameful. In this chapter, I will elaborate the multiple ways in which rape produces shame - by the intimacy of being violated sexually, in relation to womxn's own responsibility for 'allowing herself to be raped', and with regard to normative understandings of what it means to be a 'good rape survivor'.

Shame has been alluded to in previous chapters – the shame attached to Sara Baartman and so many other 'black' womxn as a result of the practices of racialised sexualisation/sexualised racialisation explored in Chapter Two; the shame I felt when witnessing Tanya's shame as she recounted her experience of having been raped discussed in Chapter Three; how, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the man who raped Buhle used the threat of shame to stop her from telling anyone that he was raping her. Perhaps it is fitting that shame has only been touched upon up until now because this is how shame works – it makes those who witness it want to turn away, it's catching, it burns the skin, it forces the one who experiences it to look down, unable to meet others' eyes (Ahmed, 2015; Probyn, 2005). As I mentioned in Chapter Three, I am cognisant that talking about experiences of rape is made particularly arduous by the intensity of shame. As Lara's whispering above highlights, it is difficult to talk about experiences which are positioned as deeply shameful, even when attempting to resist this shame. Simultaneously, as I write this chapter I am conscious of Elspeth Probyn's (2010) argument that "shame is a painful thing to write about. It gets into your body. It gets to you" (p. 72). In paying attention to how it feels to talk and write about shame, both my own and that of other womxn, I reflect on how shame operates to disrupt social connections – to silence, to isolate and to force others to turn away (Shefer et al., 2017).

All of the womxn I interviewed spoke about shame as a central effect and affect of rape. They all spoke about how the shame stuck to their bodies, burrowing deep inside, weighing them down. However, they simultaneously resisted the stickiness of shame – they repeatedly sought to wrest themselves from its grip. I regard the agreement to participate in the study in the first place as an act of resisting shame. As I will expand upon below, rape and talk about rape remain shrouded in shame. By volunteering to talk frankly, honestly and openly about what has happened to them, the womxn I interviewed were refusing to be shamed, while simultaneously recognising the power that shame held to render them as 'unrespectable', responsible for their own violations and as 'bad' survivors. Throughout this chapter I reflect on womxn's agency in resisting shame within a context in which shame is a dominant affective response to rape, thereby attempting to present a complex and nuanced reflection of both power and powerlessness (Arnfred, 2015).

**Shameful Sex(ualities)**

In 2018, in response to a viral video of then-Home Affairs minister Malusi Gigaba masturbating, Kopano Ratele and I wrote an article in the newspaper about the prevalent shame (and shaming) that is attached to sexualities in South Africa. In this article we reflected on the relationship between shame associated with consensual sex (and masturbation) and the shame associated with sexual violence: "as a society, we tend to be more horrified by explicit non-harmful sexuality than by acts of sexual violence" (Helman & Ratele, 2018, n.p.). I remember a comment that was posted on Facebook in response to our article expressing outrage at the connection we had made between rape and sex. It said something along the lines of: "RAPE IS *NOT* SEX". Perhaps this comment was an attempt to shame Kopano and I, by suggesting that we hold problematic and patriarchal views about rape as a kind of sex, rather than as a form of domination. Instead, the point we were trying to make, which is related to my argument in this chapter, is that rape (and its affects) are intimately intertwined with the meanings of sex. The violence of rape is, therefore, precisely in its sexual nature. It is *sexualised* violence (Gqola, 2015). This is reflected in Jamie's comment, where she refers to how the terribleness of rape is intertwined with the 'terribleness' of being "deflowered". As Nivedita Menon (2012) has so compellingly written:

> 'Sexual' violence has the potency that is greater than the actual violence of the act or physical damage inflicted. People recover even from murderous assaults, but once identified as 'sexual', the significance [of the] attack is radically transformed; the shame; the terror and the pain of the victim are that much more magnified. Sexual assault has been so constructed that it is the most feared, most terrifying and most humiliating form of attack (p. 140).

I share the example of our newspaper article and the response to it on social media to indicate how talking or writing about sex has to contend with the shame that imbues sex and sexuality. As Valerie noted in our initial interview: "the way my mother had spoken to me about sex before was […].'It's not something that we talk about [inhales]. It's not something that we do'" (First interview, my house, Cape Town, 27 November 2018). The shameful nature of sex and sexualities is constituted through the establishment of sexuality as a privileged site of the production of 'modern' subjects (Foucault, 1979). That is, sexuality has come to constitute a key site "in which the truth of ourselves is to be found" (Weeks, 1981, p. 6). The regulation

and social control of sexualities has been central to the production of modern states and the conditions of citizenship within these states, both in the West and in European colonies (Foucault, 1979; Stoler, 1995). As I have highlighted in Chapter Two, a focus on the hyper-sexuality of African people, and African womxn in particular, was used to advance racist constructions of Africans as 'less humxn' than Europeans. Thus, sexuality is always political, enmeshed with relations of power, including those related to intersections of class, race and gender (Posel, 2005). In light of the centrality of sexualities to the constitution of both individual and national subjects, it is a site readily disposed to the production of shame (Probyn, 2005). One of the ways in which shame is produced in relation to sexualities is through the establishment of *normalised* sexualities, through which individuals come to understand their desires, their bodies and themselves, as well as the desires, bodies and selves of others (Kramer, 2017). Within this framework, any deviation from *normalised* sexualities results in shame (and shaming). For example, as Antoinette noted in relation to her queer identity:

> Um of course in Afrikaans you don't use the word... um queer would be um.... skeef[48] [laughs]. [Rebecca: Mhmmm] And that is a very loaded word [Rebecca: Mhmm] that still has like a horrible [Rebecca: Mhmm] derogatory.... er er.... er association. [Rebecca: Mhmm] So my Afrikaans friends when I tell ja I consider myself queer they're like 'so you wanna be skeef?' (First interview, Antoinette's house, Cape Town, 19 November 2018).

Here Antoinette reflects on the way in which heterosexuality continues to be positioned as the (only) 'normal' form of sexuality. Through making heterosexuality the only visible and viable form of sexuality, it is rendered as 'natural', 'moral', 'normal' and 'desirable' (Butler, 1993; Rich, 1983) and alternative sexualities are coded as 'deviant' and shameful, as indicated by the use of the term 'skeef'. The shame associated with rape is intertwined with 'sex' – as both a physical act of 'sexual intercourse' and as the categorisation of different kinds of 'sexuality' (for example 'homosexuality' and 'heterosexuality') (M. Kelly, 2014). These meanings of sex and sexualities are simultaneously intertwined with the affective politics of the South African national project.

[48] 'Skeef' is a derogatory term which directly translated means 'skew'.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic intensified the imbrication of sex and sexualities with notions of 'danger' and 'contamination' as well as racist and colonial othering of African people (Shefer & Ratele, 2011; Tamale, 2011b). As previously mentioned, the construction of 'African AIDS' (Patton, 1990) has both drawn on and bolstered discourses of the sexualities of African people as 'hyper-sexual' and 'uncontrolled'. Simultaneously, moralising discourses about HIV/AIDS reinforced the binary between 'good' and 'bad' sexualities and sexual practices (van Schalkwyk, 2018). The pandemic resulted in an increased focus on and policing of womxn's sexualities in particular, given the high rates of HIV among young 'black' womxn across the continent (Bhana, 2016; Shefer, 2018). It is within this broad context that I situate my analysis of the shame produced by rape.

**Catching Shame**

A key affective mechanism of shame is its capacity to transfer from body to body. As Gail Womersley, Anastasia Maw and Sally Swartz (2011) have argued, "[s]hame is pervasive and contagious. Shame is ashamed of itself. Shame activates shame" (p. 876). In Chapter Three, I presented a reflection on my experience of interviewing Tanya. I return to this reflection here to explore the affective nature of shame:

> As Tanya describes what happened on that night more than thirty years ago, her cheeks redden and she casts her eyes down to the floor. I feel myself start to burn and squirm. I cannot bear to look at her. The intensity of her shame, transformed into my shame, forces me to look away (Extract from research diary, 15 January 2019).

I 'catch' Tanya's shame as she re-tells her experience of violation (Probyn, 2005). Hearing (and feeling) her shame becomes a shaming experience for me (Tantam, 1998). To avoid this sense of shame I turn away from her. In this way, shame precipitates the de-forming and re-forming of social spaces, as individuals turn away from those who are shamed and those who are shamed turn away from others, in an attempt to hide their shame (Ahmed, 2015). Here, proximity mediates the effects of shame. In my encounter with Tanya, both our physical and emotional proximity contributes to me catching her shame. In contrast, as I have highlighted in the previous chapters, in many instances, physical and emotional distance create a voyeuristic engagement with the spectacle of rape. These physical and emotional distances buffer the effects of shame. One of the ways of creating a sense of separation and distance from

rape is through attributing its cause to the individual behaviour of the womxn who has been raped, as reflected in rape myths that womxn 'invite' rape by dressing inappropriately, walking where they shouldn't, and 'leading men on' (D. Herman, 1984; Gavey, 2005; Gordon & Riger, 1989; D. Scully, 1994). By shaming womxn for 'allowing' themselves to be raped, others are able to separate themselves from the possibility that they could have a similar experience by avoiding particular behaviours.

> I realise what is about to happen. He is dragging me towards a clump of bushes. (But I was always *so* careful. I kept myself safe. I did not walk at night, I covered up). It is not yet dark, I am not in a dangerous, deserted alley. I am wearing long pants. (I thought I was safe). I am not (Extract from research diary, 5 February 2017).

The dominance and public circulation of specific (shameful) scripts about rape facilitate the catching and spreading of shame (Probyn, 2005). The belief that rape 'should not happen to womxn like me', it itself a deeply shameful realisation, produced by notions of 'respectability' and 'responsibility', constituted by raced and classed, as well as gendered, axes of power. By exposing my own shameful imbrication with victim-blaming and shaming discourses, I hope to highlight how rape composes an economy of shame, which assigns shame to womxn who have been raped (Ahmed, 2015). The attachment of shame to womxn's bodies, and the bodies of some womxn in particular, is over-determined (Seu, 2006). Below I will explore how this over-determination is constituted, in part, by cultural histories, including those of colonialism, apartheid, and the establishment of the democratic South Africa.

**Shame as Exposure**

The word shame has its roots in the Goth word 'Scham', which referred to the covering of the face (Probyn, 2010). Shame has been theorised as a relational affect, that is, the desire to cover one's face or hide is produced in relation to being 'seen' by someone else (Ahmed, 2015; Probyn, 2010). Therefore, as Sara Ahmed (2015) has argued, shame is as much about "cover and concealment, as it is [about] exposure, vulnerability and wounding" (p. 104). Shame occurs in response to how one appears to another, even if this appearance is only imagined. For example, Aphiwe described her desire to conceal herself from the gaze of others following having been raped:

> Aphiwe: I wanted to hide. I w- like I didn't want people to see me you know. (First interview, my house, Cape Town, 23 November 2018).

Similarly, Lara reflected on how she withheld details of the rape from her family and friends in order to preserve some kind of privacy or a sense of herself that is separate from the rape:

> Lara: Ja. And I feel like if I ever had to tell them it would almost be like every time they *saw* me it would be something that they saw. (First interview, Lara's house, Cape Town, 3 January 2019)

Here Lara very clearly articulates how shame is related to the experience of being looked at or 'seen' by others in a particular way. Simultaneously, refusing to disclose details of what happened during the rape is also an attempt to resist shame, to not allow oneself to be (re)shamed. I return to this below.

> On many occasions I have shared many of the details of what happened to me on the evening I was raped *(supposedly, I am not ashamed)*. I have described in intense detail, step by step, what happened; how the attack began and how it ended. But I have always missed out the bits in-between, the rape bits. I cannot even tell my therapist of ten years what happened in those moments. I cannot fully relinquish that what happened is shameful and that the shame is nested in the deepest parts of myself, the parts that he forced himself into (Extract from research diary, 12 February 2018).

The inability to conceal oneself in the face of others, and from oneself, produces an intense sense of exposure. In relation to rape, this sense of exposure reinforces the sense of intense vulnerability and violation that rape inflicts. In shame "we feel ourselves naked, pinned down […] unable to escape" (O'Donnell, 2017, p. 4) just as in the violation of rape. Telling others what happened, or even thinking it to oneself, ignites shame, burning and burned onto the skin. The shame of rape thus lies in being exposed as the 'object' of such violation – 'damaged' in such a personal way (Womersley, et al., 2011). As Nosipho mentioned, the shame attached to rape feels like walking around naked, completely exposed in front of others. Relatedly, Nomvula reflected on how disclosing that she had been raped produced feelings of exposure and vulnerability:

> Nomvula: That's...one of the reasons why I don't...want to...*say...*that I've been raped [Rebecca: Yes] to some people. Some people don't wanna be seen as *weak* or [Rebecca: Yes]...[inhales] *expose* yourself to [Rebecca: Yes] vulnerability (Second interview, coffee shop, Cape Town, 8 May 2019).

The reference here to being "weak" may be an allusion to the common assumption that womxn who are raped are 'irreparably damaged'. Nomvula may also be referring to the idea that it is only 'weak' womxn who 'allow' themselves to be raped. Shame thus extends beyond the act of rape itself and is constantly re-enacted in the exposure of (re)telling the rape.

**Shame as a Condition of Self**

Philosophically and psychologically, shame has been distinguished from other negative emotions or affects, for example, guilt, by the way it attaches itself not to an action (or in the case of rape being 'acted upon') but to a sense of self. The 'badness' of the shameful action is transferred to the self and the self becomes 'bad' (Lynd, 1958). It is this transformation of the self into something bad that produces the intense weight of shame – as it is not a simple matter of detaching an isolated act from the self (Ahmed, 2015). As I have articulated in the previous chapter, the trauma of rape is related to its defining nature, its capacity to fix womxn as 'raped'. Many of the womxn I interviewed spoke about how being raped produced a 'spoiled identity' (Goffman, 1986), which was difficult to shift:

> Bianca: It means that you're tarnished and... that you're that's what I thought it meant. […] That you're dirty [R: Mhmm]. That's how I felt […] And how do other people see you? (First interview, Bianca's house, Cape Town, 22 August 2018).

> Buhle: I never thought I could be a parent because I never thought I was d-deserving [Rebecca: Mhmm] of to be a mother because of that experience [Rebecca: Mhmm]. Because I felt destroyed and and and damaged. I felt for a long time I saw myself as damaged goods, that I would never be good for *anyone* [Rebecca: Mhmm]. And I still look at my husband and I say even question him '*why* out of all the women in the world, d-did you choose me?' […] you see yourself as being damaged goods. [Rebecca: Mhmm]. So y-y-you look at yourself from that perspective too [Rebecca: Ja]. That one doesn't go away (First interview, phone, 16 January 2019).

Having been raped was associated with being "dirty", "tarnished", "damaged" and "ruined". All these words allude to deep and permanent sense of contamination, intimately intertwined with the sense of self. As Bianca reflects, feeling "tarnished" and "dirty" was produced both in relation to how she felt about herself and to how she might be perceived by others. Her reference to "*you're* tarnished" and "*you're* dirty" highlights how the shame attaches to the self and not merely to the experience of having been raped. Similarly, in her use of the words "destroyed" and "damaged" Buhle suggests that being raped made her flawed on an intimate level. As I have highlighted in the previous chapter, a central element of the trauma of rape is its capacity to define those who have experienced it as 'raped womxn', as 'victims', who are infinitely fixed to their experiences of rape. Shame is at work here, defining womxn as and constantly reminding them that they are 'irreparably damaged'. Buhle's reflection that this sense of being damaged "doesn't go away", highlights the struggle to overcome a sense of shame, through which the self is positioned as 'bad' or 'not good enough'. As Sara Ahmed (2015) notes, the power of normative social values makes it difficult to move beyond shame. Therefore, shame may also produce a sense of paralysis, powerlessness and helplessness, as womxn become trapped as shameful subjects, unable to conceal themselves and unable to alter the part of themselves that is shameful (Gottzén, 2019; Murray, 2012; Womersley et al., 2011). In a context in which female sexuality is imbued with shame, the shame of womxn who have been raped is particularly heavy and hard to shift. For example, Valerie discussed how her status as a womxn who had been raped was in opposition to normative constructions of 'respectable' feminine sexuality:

> Valerie: You must be pure and [inhales] and sacred and holy [Rebecca: Mhmm] [inhales] and here I am violated (First interview, my house, Cape Town, 27 November 2018).

As Valerie highlights here, in contrast to 'respectable' femininity, which is "pure", "sacred" and "holy", the violation of rape produces womxn as 'other'. This is one example of how rape is seen to 'transform' womxn into abject subjects (Mulla, 2014). In the following section, I expand on how the shame attached to rape is constituted by broader shame and shaming practices produced by normative and rigid constructions of female sexuality, which are simultaneously bound up with notions of racial and class respectability.

**Being Made 'Respectable'**

Despite coming from a range of different backgrounds, the womxn I interviewed described how they have been exposed to remarkably similar social expectations regarding 'respectable' female sexuality. As Beverly Skeggs (2002) has articulated, to be respectable is to hold some form of moral authority, while to be unrespectable is to have no or little social legitimacy and value. Unrespectability is, therefore, deeply endowed with shame. The womxn that I interviewed spoke about how womxn's respectability was contingent on sexual passivity, a lack of sexual desire and preservation of her virginity. The threat of shame was a central way in which respectability was policed.

> Antoinette: in Afrikaner culture at least, we we get taught that you're not allowed to say that you wanna have sex because you then you're being slutty [Rebecca: Mhmm] or whatever. So you always you just keep quiet until it happens or you just you just um... you know th- it'll be like a- unfemale basically [Rebecca: Mhmm] to to say like 'let's do this' or whatever (First interview, Antoinette's house, Cape Town, 19 November 2019).

> Jamie: There's people in in my spouse's social circle where... the women e- not matter how mu-much they want sex, they have to wait for their partner to initiate sex [Rebecca: Mhmm]. Otherwise they're sluts. I'm like 'you guys have been together forever... do you not have needs [Rebecca: Mhmm] that are not directly linked to his?' (First interview, Jamie's house, Johannesburg, 10 December 2019).

> Refiloe: It is. I mean I think about my upbringing, or especially black people's upbringing, sex is a taboo [Rebecca: Mhmm]. You don't talk about sex at all [Rebecca: Mhmm]. You never bring it up [Rebecca: Mhmm]. So it's like… when you say that some women didn't even know that they were raped it's because you know sometimes the way in which we've been brought up and told about sex you know, where they'll even tell you that it's okay for a man to demand sex [Rebecca: Mhmm]. You're not told that sex can be a beautiful thing between two people […] it's about just pleasing the man [Rebecca: Ja] whereas you forget that you're also a sexual being [Rebecca: Ja. Ja.] that you also need to get pleased (Second interview, coffee shop, Pretoria, 6 May 2019).

As Antoinette, Jamie and Refiloe demonstrate, respectable female sexuality is constructed in relation to the passive reception of male sexual desire. To be respectable, womxn should allow

themselves to be *had* during sex, rather than *having* sex (Ratele, 2005). This construction of female sexuality exemplifies the sexual double standard, through which male sexual desire is celebrated, while female sexual desire is punished (Hollway, 2001; Jewkes & Morrell, 2010; Kruger et al., 2015; Wood et al., 2008). As Antoinette indicates, it is considered "unfemale" for a womxn to initiate sex or even openly indicate her sexual interest. Therefore, the expression of sexual desire is not merely a sexual impropriety, but it undermines the gendered category of 'female' (Butler, 1990). Similarly, Jamie highlights the dominant expectation that womxn should suppress their sexual desires and wait for men to initiate sex, no matter 'how much they want sex'. This expectation exemplifies how womxn come to see (and feel) their sexualities, and their bodies more broadly, as in need of control (Skeggs, 2002). As Refiloe argues, dominant constructions of heterosexuality are centred around male desire and female response to this desire with womxn expected to respond to "a man's demand for sex". She articulates how this produces (normalised) sexually violent relations where it is difficult for womxn to refuse male demands. Similarly, a large body of critical scholarship on sexuality within the South African context has highlighted how gendered discourses constrain women's abilities to articulate their sexual desires and consent to sex (see for example Bhana & Anderson, 2013a; Jewkes & Morrell, 2010; Shefer et al., 2000; Wood et al, 2008).

Despite the dominant intertwining of female sexuality and shame, both Jamie and Refiloe articulate a space for female sexual pleasure. Jamie incredulously tries to articulate to other womxn that they are independent sexual beings, who should not be constrained by male expectations and forms of sexual pleasure. Refiloe similarly articulates an alternative version of female sexuality, through which womxn are positioned as sexual beings deserving of pleasure. This is an example of how womxn resist notions of respectable femininity that deny female sexual agency, thereby articulating positive and normalised female pleasure (Bhana & Anderson, 2013b; Spronk, 2014). Through this process "the supremacy of male desire, power and control is called into question" (Bakare-Yusuf, 2013, p. 35) and Jamie and Refiloe assert womxn's ownership of their own bodies and sexualities. Simultaneously, Jamie and Refiloe refuse the reduction of female sexuality to the dichotomy of 'virgin'/'whore'. Instead, they articulate the possibility of celebrating, expressing, flaunting and enjoying their sexuality, while refusing the approbation of 'whore' (Vincent, 2008). However, even in challenging the notion that female sexual pleasure is shameful, the womxn I interviewed were aware of the 'costs' that come with articulating and embodying such a sexuality.

The cost of failing to adhere to the sexually passive version of respectable femininity is clearly indicated in the label of 'slut'. The labelling of womxn as 'sluts' is perhaps the quintessential accusation of 'unrespectability'; like the label of 'raped womxn' a position of abjection (Butler, 1990). Thus, the threat of being called out as a 'slut' works as a sexual spectre to police female sexual respectability (S. Miller, 2016). The imbrication of shame with the label of 'slut' is evidenced in the colloquially referred to practice of 'slut shaming', through which womxn's sexual behaviour is publicly exposed and shamed (Larson, 2018; Stephenson, 2018, Webb, 2015). Although this practice can be traced back to antiquity, it is taking on new forms as a result of the proliferation of the Internet and accompanying social media platforms (S. Miller, 2016; Webb, 2015). I am reminded her of Aphiwe recounting in our initial interview how the man who raped her invoked the label of 'slut':

> Aphiwe: he strangled me again, then he chocked me up until like I passed out [inhales] like and then he woke me like after thirty minutes. I was full of blood and stuff [inhales] and then he said 'hey wake up you bitch' [voice shaking] […] then he said 'get off my car, you slut' (First interview, my house, Cape Town, 23 November 2018).

The rapists use of the term "slut" (and "bitch", another gendered label of abjection) works to render Aphiwe as the object of shame. The construction of her as a 'slut' and a 'bitch' serves to construct her as deserving of the violence that is inflicted on her (Boonzaier & de la Rey, 2003; van Niekerk, 2014). Similarly, during the Jacob Zuma rape trial, Zuma's supporters shamed Khwezi by shouting "burn the bitch" and setting images of her alight (Evans & Wolmarans, 2006). Thus, rendering womxn who are raped as 'unrespectable', through labelling them as 'sluts' and 'bitches', serves not only to diminish the harm that rape causes, but to make womxn responsible for the violence that is enacted on them. The abject position of 'slut' is constructed as the opposite to respectable female sexuality, perhaps most powerfully embodied in the image of the 'virgin'. Wendy Hollway (2001) has articulated this as the Madonna/whore dichotomy. Below I explore the ways in which respectability produces a boundary between 'pure' and 'impure' female bodies.

> Tanya: Um for me it was very *hard* because I was 16 when it happened to me and I was still a virgin. So I didn't I mean it i-it was something I was sort of proud of […] I realised I was still very naive [Rebecca: Mhmm] at the time but I

thought I should only have sex when I get married one day (First interview, my house, Cape Town, 31 December 2018).

Aphiwe: I like he t- yes he took my virginity, my pride [inhales] but then [inhales] he never took my who am I you know (First interview, my house, Cape Town, 23 November 2018).

Valerie: Because we come from a very religious background [Rebecca: Mhmm] [inhales] […] we don't have sex until we get married … [inhales]. So that impacts on you because now you think you're committing the world's biggest sin [Rebecca: Mhmm] […] so *that* and then plus being raped (First interview, my house, Cape Town, 27 November 2018).

Lara: I was raised very like... in a very very conservative Christian household [Rebecca: Mhmm]. And so this whole idea of like a woman's vagina is like [inhales] deemed to be this scared space [Rebecca: Mhmm] that can be penetrated by only *one* person. [Inhales] And *one* person only and […] if you have you know lots of sexual partners you're like *soiled* [Rebecca: Mhmm] And if you know low and behold a black male comes and rapes you, you're now [inhales] *even more soiled* (First interview, Lara's house, Cape Town, 3 January 2019).

As demonstrated by Tanya, Aphiwe, Valerie, and Lara above, female virginity is constructed as a source of pride (and respectability). In this way, womxn's social worth and position is tied to their sexual 'purity' and their ability to 'protect' their virginal status. The pride that womxn feel as a result of their virginity is an example of the 'positive power' of sexual respectability (Foucault, 1977). That is, womxn experience pleasure as a result of adhering to 'appropriate' social norms (Skeggs, 2002; Thornberry, 2016). However, the pleasure can be enjoyed only in relation to the existence of the un-pleasurable position of the shameful non-virgin.

As Tanya, Lara and Valeria note, 'appropriate' female sexuality is enacted only within the confines of (heterosexual) marriage. This reflects the ways in which the heterosexual nuclear family has been positioned as the only 'appropriate' place for female sexual desire, closely related to womxn's roles as wives and mothers rather than independent sexual subjects (Ngabaza & Shefer, 2019). This is one example of how norms of feminine sexuality are intertwined with and constituted by classist notions of respectability. The positioning of

womxn as wives and mothers is rooted in middle-class constructions of the nuclear family (Skeggs, 2002). Lara's reference to sex as 'penetration' demonstrates how heteropatriarchal sex, in which a women's vagina is penetrated by a male penis, is positioned as the only form of 'unblushing sex' (Ratele, 2005). The use of the term "soiled" once again highlights how a failure to achieve or preserve respectable female sexuality produces shame. As both Lara and Valerie suggest, the shame associated with female sexuality, and sex more broadly, is intertwined with Christian notions of morality and sin. Particularly within Judaeo-Christian religious traditions, the female body has been constructed as the origin of sin, as exemplified in the story of Eve (Bakare-Yusuf, 2011; Entwistle, 2000). As Valerie notes, sex before marriage is "the world's biggest sin". When she says "so *that* and then plus being raped" she highlights how the shame of rape is intertwined with the shame of sex. The imposition of Victorian Christian moral and religious values in colonial South Africa has, and continues to, imbue those sexual identities and practices which lie outside of binary, heterosexual and nuclear norms, with shame (Delius & Glaser, 2005; Tamale, 2011b; Thornberry, 2016; P. Scully, 1995).

Tanya, Aphiwe, Valerie and Lara, as well as Refiloe, Antoinette and May, all referred, at some point in their interviews, to growing up in Christian families or communities and reflected on ways in which this informed their understandings of appropriate female sexuality, including the importance of virginity, passivity and the suppression of sexual desire. However, other participants, who had not had Christian upbringings spoke about remarkably similar expectations for ensuring sexual and gendered respectability. This may be as a result of the influence of Christian moralistic notions of sex and sexuality on sex education in South African schools (Bhana et al., 2019; Macleod, 2009a; Saville Young et al., 2019). Thus, enduring shame and 'moral panic' in relation to sex and sexuality in South Africa has been produced by Christianity, as well as through processes of racialisation.

**Racialised Shame**

Within the colonial project, sexuality (and sexual shame) are not merely matters of individual identity and respectability, but rather constitute the boundaries of citizenship and nationhood in significant ways (L. Graham, 2012; Stoler, 1989). This is evident in Lara's articulation above of the threat of being raped by a 'black' man. As she notes, while having sex with multiple (here read as 'white') male partners produces one as "soiled", the most intense shame is

produced by being raped by a 'black' man. This assertion recalls Tanya's reflection in the previous chapter, of being told that her rape 'could have been so much worse. It could have been a black guy'. Both Tanya and Lara's narratives conjure the discourse of 'Black Peril', as discussed in Chapter Two, which constructed the rape of white womxn by 'dangerous' and 'predatory' 'black' man as a widespread and deeply damaging occurrence (P. Scully, 1995; Stoler, 1989). The power of the 'Black Peril', prevalent both in colonial and apartheid South Africa, and the subsequent shame associated with being raped by a 'black' man, exemplify the fear of racial 'contamination'. The politicisation of sexual practices during apartheid is perhaps embodied most powerfully in the Immorality Act (1927/1950), prohibiting sexual relations between 'white' South Africans and people of other races. As highlighted in Chapter Two, the Act stipulated what it meant to be a respectable sexual person and 'Self' within the nation (Ratele, 2009b). In particular, the act defined being 'white' as repudiating the sexual desire for 'others'. As Kerry Bystrom and Sarah Nuttall (2013) note, the trials and prosecutions of those who violated the Immorality Act operated as a spectacular exposure, through which individuals were publicly shamed. Thus, shame was a central mechanism through which the state constituted and controlled 'private feelings' (Stoler, 1995).

However, within this socio-political-legal framework not everyone was equally at risk of shame. Given their centrality to ensuring the continuation of the 'white race', 'white' womxn were made responsible for keeping the race 'white' by sexually avoiding men of other races (Hungwe, 2006; Ratele, 2009a). 'White' female respectability was therefore destabilised by sexual contact with 'black' men. Linked to this, the sexual violation of 'white' womxn by 'black' men was not only conceived of as an act of individual violence, but a political threat to the supremacy of 'white' men (Shefer & Ratele, 2011). Within this context, the notion of 'white' womxn as 'soiled' by interracial rape is produced by the power of notions of racial 'purity' and fear of 'miscegenation', 'darkening', 'defilement' and 'invasion'. 'Blackness' is imbued with shame and this shame is seen to be transferred to 'white' womxn through the act of interracial rape and even consensual sex. The panic produced by racial mixing extends beyond sexual acts and is interlinked with broader conceptualisations of 'the nation'. As Sara Ahmed (2004a) has argued, within a global context of coloniality, interracial couples and immigration come to be read "as (like) forms of rape or molestation: an invasion of the body of the nation" (p. 26).

In the transition to democracy in South Africa, interracial rape took on a specific political significance within the national imaginary, particularly in relation to the possibilities and challenges of 'healing' and 'uniting' the nation (L. Graham, 2012). Similarly, Deborah Posel (2005) has analysed the moral panic about 'baby rape' in this period and the ways in which sexual violence was constructed as a sign of the fragility of the national democratic project. Within the post-apartheid context, I argue that fear, anxiety and moral outrage about the rapes of 'white' womxn by 'black' men continue to be intertwined with ideas about the 'success' of democracy and particularly issues of 'safety' and 'belonging' of 'white' South Africans. The construction of 'white' South Africans as 'under attack' from 'black criminals', as evidenced in the discourse of 'white genocide'[49] (Pogue, 2019; A. Steyn, 2019) reiterates 'Black Peril' discourses through which 'black' men are rendered as 'dangerous', 'violent' and 'uncontrollable'. As other research has shown, women in South Africa continue to imagine rapists as 'black' or 'coloured' men (Dosekun, 2013). Simultaneously, the construction of 'soiled' white femininity continues to shame ('white') womxn who are raped by constructing them as objects of fear and disgust.

> I am telling a friend of mine about my rape some years after it had happened. I have gotten more accustomed to being able to resist the urge to look down when I tell the story. I try to make eye contact in order to demonstrate that I should not have to be ashamed of what happened to me, what was done to me. As I reconstruct the experience she gasps in horror and says 'that is my worst nightmare'. I am immediately transformed into the object of her horror and fear. I become disgusting, polluted, damaged, the embodiment of the 'worst thing' that can happen (Extract from research diary, 18 January 2019).

My position as a 'white' womxn who was raped by a 'black' man enables me to occupy the position of a 'real rape' victim (Estrich, 1987). "Simply because my body is white, I [am] positioned as more respectable […] to society […] than I would have been had I been a black woman" (Huysamen, 2018, p. 198). To a great extent, therefore, I am exempt from the kinds of shaming and blaming that the other womxn I interviewed experienced, which I articulate

[49] The idea that 'white' farmers in South Africa are under 'murderous attack' by 'black masses' has been perpetuated predominantly by conservative 'white' Afrikaans South Africans to argue that 'white' people are being persecuted in post-apartheid South Africa.

further below. However, simultaneously, as indicated in my reflection above, my experience of rape embodies 'the worst thing' that can happen to a middle-class 'white' womxn in South Africa. As Pamela Scully (1995) has shown, social recognition of the degree of injury produced by rape is constituted by notions of respectability. In line with expectations about 'purity' and 'innocence', 'more respectable' 'white' and middle-class womxn are seen as being 'more damaged' by rape perpetrated by 'black' men as these rapes damage womxn's social status by producing 'degradation' and 'dishonour'. Therefore, my 'respectability', constituted in relation to my whiteness, middle-classness and the fact that I was not engaging in any of the activities that are constructed as 'causing' womxn to be raped (including drinking, dressing 'provocatively' and walking around at night) produce an expectation that I should be ashamed of having been raped by a 'black' man – as is indicated in the response from my friend described above. I read her reaction as constituted by both disgust and fear. As she hears what has happened to me, she immediately pulls away, and I become the source of her disgust and fear (Ahmed, 2015). I am the embodiment of 'the worst thing that can happen' to womxn 'like us'. The fear and disgust are intensified by my proximity to her, the fact that rape could happen to me means it could happen to her too (Kristeva, 1982). If I am not safe from rape, in spite of my whiteness, my middle-classness and my 'respectability', then neither is she. Once again, this exemplified how the shame that others feel as a result of hearing about experiences of rape makes them want to turn away. In this way, rape works to contaminate social relations, rather than inviting empathy (Ngai, 2005; Gqola, 2015). Therefore, shame negates a connection with others, eroding a sense of belonging (Shefer et al., 2017).

Historically, constructions of 'white', middle-class female respectability operated not only to keep 'white' womxn away from 'black' men within the colonies, but also to bolster racist doctrines of 'white' Europeans as inherently more 'civilised' than 'black' Africans. As I have previously articulated, African people have repeatedly been represented as 'primitive', 'exotic', 'bestial', 'lustful', 'lascivious' and 'immoral' (Tamale, 2011b). In contrast to 'white' womxn, African womxn have been positioned as outside of the boundaries of respectable femininity: "sexually marked as female, but without the characteristics of femininity" (Lugones, 2007, p. 203). 'Black' female sexuality, therefore, came to operate as the 'deviant other' against which 'white' respectable femininity was defined (Gilman, 1992). While the 'black' female body was 'sexually hyperdeveloped', 'excessive', and 'immoral', the (respectable) 'white' female body was 'sexually passive', 'contained', and 'morally superior' (Lewis, 2005; Skeggs, 2002).

Within this context, 'black' womxn are positioned as 'shameless', with their supposed lack of shame taken to be indicative of their lack of morality (Flint & Hewitt, 2015). Feminine respectability thus comes to establish the boundaries between vice/virtue, animality/civilisation, and filth/cleanliness (Skeggs, 2002). Through colonial interventions into religious, educational, legal and other social frameworks of African life, notions of ('white') female respectability, informed by antisexual, Victorian moralities were imposed onto the bodies of African womxn and enforced through shame (Tamale, 2011b). Perhaps this is why most of the womxn I spoke to presented a remarkably similar notion of 'respectable' femininity. Deviations from dominant, Western sexual norms produce embodied sexualised and racialised shame for 'black' womxn (Coetzee & du Toit, 2018).

The 'danger' associated with the 'uncontained' sexuality of 'black' womxn continues to reverberate in 'post'-colonial contexts. Across the African continent, the bodies of young 'black' womxn, in particular, have become repositories for a range of existential and social anxieties (Bakare-Yusuf, 2011). These social anxieties manifest in the form of neo-imperial projections of 'sexual excess', through which 'black' female bodies are constructed as a threat to the 'healthy' nation (Lewis, 2011). In the late 1960s and 1970s, when many African countries were establishing newly independent nations, a key political task was creating a break with Western ways of being (B. Boswell, 2015). In countries such as Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania, one of the ways in which this break was articulated was in relation to 'unAfrican'[50] ways of dressing including bans or attempts to ban miniskirts which were seen as 'corrupting' and promoting 'moral degeneracy' (B. Boswell, 2015). For many African leaders, the miniskirt became "emblematic of both the continued intrusion of colonial ideas despite formal liberation and of the moral degeneration, particularly of urban black youth, as a result of this intrusion" (Vincent, 2008, p. 12). In the 21st century, there has been an upsurge in both state and individual attempts to control African women's bodies (Bakare-Yusuf, 2011; B. Boswell, 2015). For example, in February 2008 four women were assaulted at a Johannesburg taxi rank for wearing miniskirts, with one woman being doused in alcohol, stripped and sexually assaulted (Vincent, 2008). Louise Vincent (2008) has argued that these attacks can be read in relation to the contestation of gendered relations of power, central to the democratic national project in South Africa.

[50] Similar arguments have been levelled against homosexuality across the African continent (Lewis, 2008).

Within this context, men who violently enforce ‘respectable’ versions of femininity are able to present themselves as ‘protecting’ their families, communities and the nation more broadly from ‘indecent’, ‘dangerous’ and ‘deviant’ women (Vincent, 2008). Thus ‘unrespectable’ womxn are ‘put in their place’ by ‘respectable’ men. Shame, constituted through sex-related ridicule, reprimand and direct physical violence is one of the ways in which men deliberately deface ‘inappropriate’ women (Mashiri, 2000). In many instances, rape and other forms of physical violence, enacted upon womxn’s bodies are intended as (public) acts of shame (Gqola, 2015; van Schalkwyk, 2018).

Aphiwe articulated how ‘black’ femininity continues to be bound up with shame. She told me about how she had to wait many hours at the TCC before the doctor arrived the carry out her medical examination. She described what happened as follows:

> You know when you are black when you are a black person like everything like takes time [Rebecca: Mhmm] you know takes time. [Inhales] that's why like I felt like as if like they were kind of racism just because [inhales] [Rebecca: Mhmm] like I had to wait. [Rebecca: Mhmm] I felt like if it was maybe like a white person [Rebecca: Mhmm] they were going to [clicks fingers] hurry and do things like [inhales] now now and then like I had to wait for almost two hours and then when... when the guy got it there... he was he he he was busy telling me how tired he is. He even took his time [Rebecca: Mhmm] [inhales] like he took his time busy like um... turning like his chairs and stuff. I was like 'no. You were called to come and help [Rebecca: Mhmm] me' (First interview, my house, Cape Town, 23 November 2018).

I am struck here by the difference between Aphiwe and my experience at the TCC. As I have highlighted in the first chapter, my presence within the TCC was surprising, within that space I was read as a health professional and not as a womxn who had been raped. In contrast, Aphiwe’s presence at the TCC is met with a lack of urgency, as an ‘ordinary’, ‘unspectacular’ event. As she reflects, had she been ‘white’, like me, things might have been different. I propose that the ‘ordinariness’ of Aphiwe’s violation is evidence of how ‘black’ female bodies continued to be imbued with shame, constructed as ‘belonging’ at the TCC somehow deserving of violation and thus less deserving of attention and care. Like Sara Baartman, like Anene Booysen, Aphiwe is seen as ‘just another’ violated and broken ‘black’ womxn (Boonzaier, 2017). By virtue of her position as a young ‘black’ womxn from an urban township, she comes

to represent the 'moral degeneration', 'sexually perversity' and 'deviance' of 'un-African' youth. Thus, she is constructed as 'deserving' of the violence that is perpetrated against her. However, Aphiwe challenges this attempt to relegate her to a zone of shame, by virtue of her race and gender, and demands that her violation is taken seriously. She asserts her right to access to humanising care: "You were called to come and help me".

**Responsibilising Female Sexualities**

Entangled with notions of 'respectable' female sexuality are expectations about womxn 'taking responsibility' for their sexualities. Much feminist research has documented how womxn in South Africa are positioned as bearing the majority of responsibility for the consequences of having sex, including getting pregnant, taking care of children, and avoiding sexually transmitted infections (STIs) (Bhana et al., 2010; Macleod et al., 2015; Ngabaza & Shefer, 2019). These consequences are constructed in relation to danger, damage and disease, thereby closely entangling female sexuality with shame and fear. Catriona Macleod and colleagues (2015) have termed this the responsibilisation of female sexuality, which operates as "a key (neo)liberal project [of] individualised management of the self" (p. 103). As Nomvula articulated sarcastically in our initial interview, in a discussion about accessing contraception, "Coz I'm the woman anyways [Rebecca: Ja]. I'm the one who's gonna carry the baby [Rebecca: Ja] if it happens". Her sarcastic tone indicates that while she is critical of this inequitable distribution of responsibility, she recognises its normative power. Her reflection is consistent with critical feminist work in South Africa which has demonstrated how young womxn's sexualities are responsibilised (Macleod, 2009b; Ngabaza et al., 2016; Waetjen & Maré, 2009).

As I have highlighted above, within the colonial and apartheid context of South Africa, both 'white' and 'black' womxn are made responsible for the national project, albeit in different ways and in different moments. 'Proving' and 'maintaining' female respectability thus involves taking responsibility for controlling 'overt' sexual displays (Skeggs, 2002). The responsibilisation of female sexuality is perhaps most powerfully (and violently) articulated in the notion that womxn 'invite' rape by behaving in 'provocative' and 'inappropriate' ways (Brownmiller, 1975; Gqola, 2015; D. Scully, 1994; Wood et al., 2008). The notion of (perceived) responsibility is central to the production of shame (Gilbert, 1998). That is, if a womxn sees herself as 'responsible' for having been raped, she is more likely to feel a sense

of shame for failing to prevent the rape from happening. All the womxn I spoke to referred to how they have repeatedly been exposed to the idea that womxn are somehow responsible for 'getting raped':

> Behind the curtains at the hospital, "was she drunk?" "Where was she?" (the doctor says to the nurse)
> At school, "girls don't get guys all worked up to the point where they can't stop themselves". (They actually said that in the talk)
> At University orientation, "watch your drinks. Don't leave your drinks unattended" (Be careful be careful be careful)
> "Why were you talking to two [inhales] white men from the UK that you didn't really *know*" (mother, partner, friend, acquaintance – they think it even if they don't say it)
> (Extracts from interviews with Nosipho, Bianca, Skye and Valerie, assembled June 2020).

In their interviews, all 16 participants discussed the way in which this responsibilisation was a dominant way in which they made meaning of having been raped and how this understanding produced intense shame. This is an example of how victim-blaming is internalised as shame. As Yvette Abrahams (1996) has powerfully articulated:

> A woman who has been raped is implicated: it has happened and she has to give it a meaning, any meaning that enables her to make sense of its horror, even the possibility that she herself was somehow to blame [. . .] Thus the dehumanisation of rape does not lie in the act alone, nor in the memory of it, but in the trauma which induces the rape victim to deny her own subjectivity (p. 10)

Because womxn are held responsible for 'avoiding' rape (Gordon & Riger, 1989), the shame of rape sticks to womxn through the assumption that they 'allowed' themselves to be raped, as highlighted in Jamie and my discussion at the beginning of the chapter.

> Aphiwe: Sometimes I feel bad because… sometimes I blame myself. I'm like 'if I didn't go to church that time [Rebecca: Mhmm] maybe that thing wouldn't happen' (First interview, my house, Cape Town, 23 November 2018).

> I run over the events of that day endlessly. The moment when I first saw him (*why was I not more suspicious?*)… the moment when I turned to walk towards my car (*why did I not wonder why he was still there, waiting?)*… the moment when he grabbed me (*I imagine taking my keys and stabbing him, fighting harder to get away from his vice-like grip around my neck*)… when his penis was in my mouth (*why didn't I bite it and then run away*?) I imagine a million ways to escape, to change what happened, to prevent it from happening. I tell myself over and over that it is not my fault. But I continue to imagine how I could have protected myself (Extract from research diary, 9 May 2018).

> Faith: I thought maybe I should have… scream- I I could have screamed or I could have… I kept on thinking of what I sh- what I could have done before. And I thought […] maybe I didn't do my my best not to be in such a position (First interview, coffee shop, Cape Town, 17 December 2018).

> Tanya: It's probably because you were talking to him [inhales] [Rebecca: Mhmm]. Um it's probably because you went into that bedroom and you did get into that bed [inhales] and you kissed him [Rebecca: Mhmm] […] it's like you're in a room with a prosecutor [Rebecca: Mhmm] who relentlessly [R: Ja] cross examines you for *years* to come afterwards (First interview, my house, Cape Town, 31 December 2018).

As Aphiwe articulates, self-blame is a central affective component of the experience of rape. My reflection highlights the way in which self-blame produces a compulsive re-examination of the experience of rape, in a desperate attempt to identify how one could have 'prevented' oneself from being raped. Strategies (actual or imagined) for preventing and escaping from rape converge with dominant notions of physical resistance and 'respectable' female behaviour. That is, screaming is regarded as 'evidence' of the unwanted nature of the rape and 'proof' that womxn resisted (Pateman, 1980; D. Scully, 1994). For example, during the Jacob Zuma rape trial in 2006 the fact that Khwezi did not "scream the house down" was used to suggest that what had happened to her was not actually rape but consensual sex (Suttner, 2009, p. 230). A remarkably similar comment was made by the defence attorney of a rugby player in Northern Ireland in 2018 who was accused of raping a womxn at a house party. The lawyer remarked "Why didn't she scream the house down? A lot of very middle-class girls were downstairs. They were not going to tolerate a rape or anything like that" (S. Graham, 2018,

n.p.). Both these examples highlight how the failure to scream implicates womxn in their rapes, making them responsible for the violence inflicted upon them. As Faith notes, her failure to scream serves as evidence that she did not do her 'best' to stop the rape. The relationship between respectability and screaming is indicated in the lawyer's comment that middle-class girls do not 'tolerate' rape. In this way, respectability is constructed as 'protecting' womxn from rape, implying that womxn who experience rape are 'unrespectable' and therefore deserving of violation.

As much research has shown, the narrow focus on physical resistance ignores the way in which fear and shock operate to paralyse womxn during rape (Bucher & Manasse, 2011; Carlson & Dalenberg, 2000; Jordan, 2008; L. Kelly, 1988). Simultaneously, the coercive nature of many rapes, including rapes perpetrated by know perpetrators, occur within a context in which "politeness and femininity demand that the female gracefully endure, or wiggle away if she can, but a direct confrontation falls outside of the behavio[u]ral norms" (Bronwmiller, 1975, p. 257). As I have touched on above, norms of female respectability dictate passivity and a lack of desire, that make it difficult for womxn to consent to sex and to resist rape in overtly physical ways. Thus, respectability hinders womxn's ability to actively consent to sex. Tanya, repeating the commonly uttered victim-blaming phrases 'why did you go there?', 'why did you do that?' reflects on an enduring process of interrogation that follows the experience of rape. Her reference to an imaginary prosecutor highlights the imperative for womxn to be able to 'prove' that they are not responsible for having been raped. However, given the restrictions imposed by responsibilised and respectable versions of femininity, it is almost impossible for womxn to establish and feel themselves as 'innocent' victims. In relation to the case of Anene Booysen, Pumla Gqola (2015) has demonstrated how, even in instances were womxn avoid 'obvious danger', they continue to be made responsible for their victimisation:

> Booysen went to drink at a tavern that is in the same area she lived for most of her life… Booysen made sure not to leave alone, a decision she knew would put her at risk. She did what girls are told to do; she left with a familiar man with whom she had a relationship, a man who would signal protection to other men in public at night. She tried to protect herself by not making herself vulnerable. She knows women are supposed to be afraid to walk home alone at night […] She was blamed for being in the wrong place at the wrong time, drinking out at night, walking the streets at night, all behaviour that patriarchy says is inappropriate for good girls (pp. 85-86).

Within this affective context, in which womxn are simultaneously made responsible for keeping themselves safe and unable to do so, due to a lack of social power and the dominance of violent enactments of patriarchy (Campbell et al., 2006; Gqola, 2007), the inevitable outcome is the adherence of shame to womxn who experience rape. I propose that notions of individual responsibility are further bolstered by both local and global processes of neoliberalism. For example, in South Africa, the notion of being 'responsible' for your own life has emerged as a dominant personal and political response to the post-apartheid situation, particularly among the middle-class (Burchardt, 2014). Similarly, notions of womxn taking care of themselves by 'avoiding' dangerous situations, operate as disciplinary mechanisms of neoliberal governmentality, which disconnect 'individual' choices and agency from the social contexts in which they are embedded (Brown, 2003; Judge, 2015).

**The Shame of Being a 'Bad' Survivor**

In the interviews, womxn also spoke about how shame was produced in relation to the distinction between womxn's 'respectable' and 'shameful' responses to having been raped. All the womxn I spoke to reflected on how the notion of 'speaking out' about rape was related to being a 'good' survivor. A central component of 'speaking out' was the responsibility for keeping other womxn safe. As I mentioned above, speaking about rape is in itself an act of resisting shame – of daring to talk about that which is 'unspeakable', taboo and uncomfortable. However, womxn reflected on how their desire to speak openly about their rape was at least partly compelled by a sense of responsibility for making sure that the same thing did not happen to other womxn. In this way, womxn who experience rape are not only made responsible for their own violations, but also for preventing the violations of others.

> Faith: They [the police] told me that if you don't report this it's going to happen again (First interview, coffee shop, Cape Town, 17 December 2018).

> Skye: I think for me I was like I we need to tell people because I need other women to be safe [Rebecca: Mhmm]. Um so in my own head I kind of like adopted this kind of I was like 'I'm gonna be the rescuer of everyone' [Rebecca: Mhmm]. Um and I was very worried that somebody else was gonna be hurt by him... and I think now I realise it wasn't my responsibility to try and protect other people but I think

> I *felt* like [Rebecca: Mhmm] it was (First interview, Skye's house, Johannesburg, 11 December 2018).

> Antoinette: he had just abused another girl […] [inhales] and so obviously it took me like forever to deal with the feeling of I could have prevented that somehow [inhales]. Um and that was like for me... almost the one one thing that I thought I would never get over... or not get over but never learn how to deal [Rebecca: Mhmm] because I was just like... I wanted so badly to be the person to stop the cycle and like I told everybody that happened and I did everything I could with... the means that I had [Rebecca: Mhmm] and it just didn't work (First interview, Antoinette's house, Cape Town, 19 November 2018).

In the above extract, Faith reflects on how she was encouraged by the police to lay a charge of rape against her ex-husband. She explains that when the police officer sensed her discomfort and reluctance, she immediately tried to encourage her by saying that if she did not report her ex-husband he might rape another womxn. Similarly, Skye articulates how her desire to tell other people that she had been raped by her boyfriend was motivated by an inclination to protect and "rescue" other womxn. Even though she resists this responsibilisation, she simultaneously recognises how it affectively constituted her experience when she says "I think now I realise it wasn't my responsibility to try and protect other people but I think I *felt* like it was". This is one example of how the construction of care and self-sacrifice as key components of 'good' femininity work to encourage womxn to disregard their own feelings in service of others (Nicki, 2001). I return to this in the following chapter.

As Antoinette notes, the discovery that her uncle, who raped her when she was a child, had raped another girl was a particularly painful part of her experience. She reflects on how she "wanted so badly to be the person to stop the cycle [of violence]" and how she tried as best as she could to make others aware of what had happened. This is an example of how womxn who are raped are made responsible for 'proving' and convincing others that they were 'really raped', as discussed in the previous chapter. In her first interview, Jamie articulated this as "were you a real rape victim? Not was this person a real rapist". By positioning herself as the one responsible for stopping the cycle of violence and making others aware of her uncle's violence, Antoinette reproduces the responsibilisation of womxn who experience rape to keep others safe. However, simultaneously by noting that "it just didn't work" she also highlights the impossibility of taking responsibility in this way.

Many of the womxn I spoke to reflected on how their 'failure' to publicly disclose their experiences of rape produced a sense of shame.

> Lara: I think in some ways I'm like disappointed that that's my response. And so when I speak to people about it I feel like... I have to... they'll ask about that side, I'll have to explain it but it's [Rebecca: Mhmm] something you can't explain until you've... been in the same situation (First interview, Lara's house, Cape Town, 3 January 2019).

> Bianca: they we-were *brave* enough to come to me and tell me that I that they were raped and... with *me* it was... I I d-... sometimes I feel cowardly... (First interview, Bianca's house, Cape Town, 22 August 2018).

Both Lara and Bianca reflected on how they had not publicly disclosed their experiences of rape, except to a few close friends and family members. Lara, in referring to how she did not lay a charge of rape against the perpetrator, articulates a feeling of disappointment. Her disappointment implies that her response is somehow 'lacking' or 'inappropriate', which is intensified in relation to the responses of others who have criticised her 'failure' to denounce the man who raped her. Similarly, Bianca, who worked with other womxn who had been raped, creates a division between these "brave" womxn who disclose their experiences of rape and herself as "cowardly", for not telling anyone about what happened to her. Lara and Bianca's feelings can be understood in relation to the dominance of notions of 'survival', 'empowerment' and 'speaking out'. Hannah reflected on the binary between 'good' and 'bad' survival when she noted, "being a quiet survivor, who doesn't want to talk about and is just dealing like there's also something wrong there". A discourse of 'compulsory survivorship' (Larson, 2018) compels womxn who have been raped to speak (publicly) of their trauma. Simultaneously, the construction of womxn as 'survivors' suggests that they should be able to find some positive value in their experiences of violation and 'over-come' these experiences with 'courage' and 'grace' (Kaminer & Eagle, 2010). While this may indeed be the experience of some womxn who have been raped, the dominance of this notion of 'survival' produces shame, disappointment and a sense of inadequacy for many others. When 'speaking out' is positioned as a necessary mechanism of recovery or the only celebrated response to rape, "it becomes a coercive imperative on survivors to confess, to recount our assaults, to give details, and even to do so publicly. Our refusal to comply might then be read as weakness of will or as

reenacted victimisation" (Alcoff & Gray, 1993, p. 281). For example, the #MeToo movement centred on the importance of (publicly) disclosing and 'calling out' perpetrators of rape and sexual abuse. Although these kinds of social movements can be seen as significant collective acts of resistance to the shame and silence attached to experiences of violation, they can simultaneously produce normative expectations for how womxn should respond to sexual violence.

As I have tried to demonstrate with the examples above, it is problematic to urge womxn who experience rape to come forward and 'speak out' about their experiences, when the social context does not support this process (Alcoff, 2018; Fleming & Kruger, 2013; Parpart, 2010). As Refiloe reflected in our initial interview, "Yes, I could've spoken up, I could've said something but it's like to who? [Rebecca: Ja] And say what?" Her response highlights the absurdity of placing the burden of responsibility on womxn to 'tell' of their experiences of rapes in a context in which their stories are met with disbelief, denial, shaming and other forms of hostility. As Gayatri Spivak (1993) has so clearly articulated, it is not simply the act of speaking that is important within a politics of liberation and resistance, but the possibility of one's speech being *heard*. Below, I will explore how, in a context characterised by 'respectability', 'responsibilisation' and shame – a context in which womxn's experiences of rape are not heard - silence and refusing to talk are some of the ways in which womxn enact agency and resistance (Gasa, 2007; Motsemme, 2004).

**Womxn 'Without Shame'**

Pratiksha Baxi (2011) has argued that women involved in feminist struggles in India attract "the allegation of being *without shame*" (n.p.). Of course, this is intended as a deep insult. As I have demonstrated above, shame operates as a powerful mechanism for producing particular affective subjects, therefore to be 'without shame' is to refuse the imposition of raced, classed and gendered notions of 'respectability' and 'responsibility'. In this section I explore the ways in which the womxn I interviewed articulated a 'pariah' femininity (Schippers, 2007), without shame. In many instances, resisting shame occurred alongside recognising the power that shame has to position womxn in general, and womxn who have been raped in particular, in precarious ways. Resisting shame is therefore embedded within and made possible by the feelings of pain, damage and deep violation that rape and responses to rape produce. Within the context of the interview there were multiple and complex ways in which womxn resisted shame. Here I reflect on the two most common ways, although these are by no means

exhaustive. As I will show, resisting the shame of rape involved rejecting and resisting notions of feminine 'respectability' and 'responsibility', through which womxn are blamed for being raped.

> Skye: Um and it doesn't matter at the end of the day what you *said*, if you said no, if you screamed no, if you didn't saying anything [Rebecca: Ja] um it still shouldn't have happened (First interview, Skye's house, Johannesburg, 11 December 2018).

> Aphiwe: You didn't call for it to happen to you (Second interview, coffee shop, Cape Town, 21 May 2019).

Here Skye and Aphiwe challenge dominant rape myths which make womxn responsible for their rapes. Skye challenges the idea that saying no or screaming can prevent a womxn from being raped. Similarly, Aphiwe rebukes the notion that womxn 'invite' rape when she says "you didn't *call* for it". In our follow up interview, Jamie articulated how naming her experience as rape allowed her to refuse the shame that is attached to the responsibilisation of female sexuality:

> Jamie: by naming it, I no longer had the shame...[Rebecca:Ja] that not naming it...does. And I think we're sold the myth that if you call it that [inhales] you lose something [Rebecca: Mhmm]. [Inhales] And I think I lost way more in those two weeks of not being able to name it [Rebecca:Mhmm]...than I have since I've named it [Rebecca: Mhmm]. I've also relinquished responsibility that I did not have in the first place anyway for his actions [Rebecca: Mhmm]. And when I call it taking advantage of, or a misunderstanding, or someone had sex with me and I didn't really want to... that implies some complicity [Rebecca: Mhmm. Mhmm] and in no way was I complicit (First interview, Jamie's house, Johannesburg, 10 December 2019).

Here Jamie reflects on how the naming of the experience of rape is bound up with socially-imposed shame. When she refers to "the myth that if you call it that you lose something", she highlights the way in which womxn are marked as 'less than' by their experiences of rape. However, she challenges this and instead argues that being able to name her experience of rape allows her to resist the shame that is associated with being to blame for what happened to her. In naming her experience as rape she expels any notion of her responsibility and places this squarely on the man who raped her. While Jamie's positioning of herself as without shame is

powerful disruption of the economy of shame, it is a difficult position to claim given the 'over-determined' nature of womxn's shame (Seu, 2006). However, despite the over-determined nature of shame, many of the womxn I interviewed spoke explicitly about how it was rapists who were responsible for acts of rape and not themselves. Antoinette, Lara, Hannah and Camille all described how they confronted the men who had raped them and explicitly named what they had done as sexual violence. Within the economy of shame that I have articulated above, I read these confrontations as acts of resistance, through which womxn contest the weight of shame which is imposed upon them:

> Antoinette: Um I want you to email everybody in my family and tell them what you did […] he emailed my dad, my mom, my sister, my brother, everybody (First interview, Antoinette's house, Cape Town, 19 November 2018).

> Lara: I sent him a message like in June and I was just like... 'just your friendly reminder that you raped me' basically (First interview, Lara's house, Cape Town, 3 January 2019).

> Hannah: and I […] told him explicitly, I said 'you sexually assaulted me' (First interview, my house, Cape Town, 20 November 2018).

> Camille: I got out of my car and I stood in the rain next to him and I was like 'you know there is a word for it when you betray someone's trust and you violate their boundaries and that word is rape. You raped me. And I never want to see you again and you're not my friend'. And I got in my car and drove away (First interview, Camille's office, Cape Town, 15 January 2019).

As I have articulated both in this chapter and in the previous one, naming and talking about experiences of rape is a fraught, precarious and painful process. When womxn's trauma is denied or dismissed and when they are shamed and made responsible for having brought this trauma upon themselves it is particularly hard for womxn to claim experiences of rape. However, all the womxn I interviewed claimed that they had been raped at some point during their interviews, not only as a way of recognising the significance of the trauma and pain that they had endured but also to acknowledge the injustice of what had been done *to* them. The examples of Antoinette, Hannah, Lara and Camille demonstrate how womxn unashamedly stare their rapists in the face, reminding these men that they are responsible for the violation of rape. I am reminded here of the womxn at UCKAR protesting in April 2016 against the

University's failure to take sexual assault seriously (Gouws, 2018). Similarly, to my participants, they march unashamedly, bare-breasted and in bras, declaring that the shame is not theirs to carry. As I will explore in the following chapter, the confrontations with rapists and the #RUReferenceList protests are also acts of rage. I argue that womxn's confrontations of the men who raped them (as well as collective acts of resistance) are particularly significant within a context in which there is limited 'justice' administered by the official channels. That is, in a country in which rape convictions are below 5% (Vetten et al., 2008), womxn are required to develop alternative processes for engaging with the multiple affective consequences that rape causes (Murray, 2012).

Obviously, the opportunity to confront the rapist was only possible in certain circumstances, both practical and affective. Antoinette, Lara, Hannah and Camille all knew the men who raped them (an uncle, an acquaintance and two friends) and still had some form of contact with these men, although Lara, Hannah and Camille cut off their contact following the confrontations. Affectively, the confrontations required womxn to, at least partially, have renounced their own sense of shame related to the rape. Buhle, who was unable to physically confront the man who raped her, a family friend, reflected on how she had imagined confronting him:

> Going back you know facing her e-e him and not just as an adult now but as the little girl and saying all those things. And one of the reaso- one of the things that became hard was... being able to […] tell him you know even i-it was not physical. But a- you know as part and and being able to say 'you *hurt* me' [Rebecca: Mhmm]. It is was *so* difficult to just say that. To say 'you manipulated me. You hurt me [Rebecca: Mhmm]. You used your power' and I it was just difficult [Rebecca: Mhmm]. Because now I it was almost for me standing up and recognising *me* (First interview, phone, 16 January 2019).

Here Buhle reflects on the difficulty of attributing responsibility to the man who raped her when she was a child. In the interview she articulated how part of this struggle was related to her own sense of shame and blame that she had not been able to stop the ongoing rapes. As I highlighted in the previous chapter, he convinced her not to tell anyone about the rapes because it was something "embarrassing" to talk about. He convinced her that not only would she be shaming herself, but she would also be shaming the rest of her family. This is one example of how rape remains a 'safe' crime for men to commit, given that "any shame attached to the act will adhere to the victim, not themselves" (Moffett, 2006, p. 140). However, in the above

extract Buhle is able to articulate that it was him who was responsible for the rape, and the harm it caused, not herself. She articulates how assigning the responsibility to him allows for a different affective engagement with herself. In contrast to the denial of subjectivity which Yvette Abrahams (1996) has articulated, Buhle is able to recognise and assert a shameless subjectivity. Below I expand on the significance of affective possibilities beyond shame.

As I have highlighted above, articulating positions of shamelessness was precarious and often temporary for the womxn I interviewed. Shame encourages silence, the bowing of one's head and turning away from others rather than inviting womxn to talk about their experiences of rape. Within this context, resistance to shame also occurred in complex and contradictory ways – in many instances womxn upheld silence as a way to avoid exposing themselves to further shame.

> Nomvula: I lied to them the whole time about what *really* happened to me [Rebecca: Mhmm] because... I didn't want to feel judged about [Rebecca: Mhmm]... putting myself in such a position [Rebecca: Mhmm]. Um... I didn't know if I was gonna get help [Rebecca: Mhmm]. I didn't know how... they were gonna react towards me so I just said I met someone and we went home and they forced themself on me [Rebecca: Mhmm]. Um but for me it felt just the exact same way (First interview, park, Cape Town, 23 November 2018).

> Camille: But I do think that there's a power in like sharing and and saying like 'look this also happened to me' and you don't have to get into the details [Rebecca: Yes.] So, ja. And maybe that's what I need to do more is just say I was raped and like let people think that is what it wa- you know whatever whatever they wanna imagine [Rebecca: Mhmm] that's you know their thing (Second interview, coffee shop, Cape Town, 21 May 2019).

> Lara: So when I want to talk about it I don't feel like I have to like... you know... 'but I was drinking' - that whole thing. [Rebecca: Mhmm. Mhmm]. I *don't* feel like getting into it [Rebecca: Mhmm]. Coz you shouldn't have to (First interview, Lara's house, Cape Town, 3 January 2019).

Nomvula described how she lied to hospital staff in order to be able to access medical care following her rape. As she reflects, because she anticipated that people would think she was responsible for having been raped, she altered the story of what happened. In this way, she reinforces the notion that some womxn are 'responsible' for being raped (for example in the

instance where they go home with a man who then "force[s]" himself on them. The use of the word "force" suggests the use of some form of physical violence in order to make the rape 'legitimate', as I have discussed in the previous chapter. However, simultaneously, by presenting a dominant narrative of 'real rape', Nomvula is able to protect herself from further shaming. I argue that Nomvula's experience illustrates a contradictory and precarious affective position which womxn who experience rape occupy within an economy of shame; a kind of unfreedom (Butler, 2004). That is, given the dominance of shame as a way of understanding rape, there are limited ways in which womxn can resist, particularly if their experiences of rape lie outside the narrowly restrictive notion of 'real rape'.

Similarly, to Nomvula, both Camille and Lara reflect on how refusing to disclose the specific details of their rapes operates as a kind of self-protection. At other points in the interviews they reflected on how the specific details of their rapes (being raped by a close friend and being raped while drunk) meant that they were more likely to be shamed, blamed and not believed. In the face of this, refusing to elaborate what happened to them operates as a way of resisting a voyeuristic and unsympathetic engagement with their pain. As I argued in Chapter Three, others may 'consume' womxn's experiences of rape in perverse and uncompassionate ways. Through remaining (partially) silent, they can shield themselves from the (shameful) meanings that others project onto their experiences of rape and to prevent their experiences from becoming 'owned' by others (Bezan, 2012; L. Graham, 2003). However, simultaneously, their silence may mean that they are unable to share their experiences in ways that may be affirming and help to further resist the shame attached to rape. As Camille remarks "there is power in sharing". Nomvula, Camille and Lara's narratives challenge narrow understandings of womxn's silence as evidence of impotence and womxn's lack of power to disrupt shame, instead highlighting the ways in which silence can operate as a productive and shameless space within broader social constraints constituted by multiple layers of shame (Fleming & Kruger, 2013; Murray, 2012). The significance of these acts of resistance and disruption lie in their capacity to facilitate alternative affective possibilities which allow womxn to feel beyond the powerlessness, isolation, and helplessness of shame.

> Valerie: and being sort of triumphant [Rebecca: Mhmm], not triumphant in a big big way but just triumphant in a way where I can say 'but look it had nothing to do with me [Rebecca: Mhmm], I was a vehicle [Rebecca: Mhmm] a vessel' [Rebecca: Mhmm] […] but this had nothing, this was about you [Rebecca: Mhmm], your male

anger, your inability to deal with yourself and I was just there (Second interview, coffee shop, Cape Town, 17 May 2019).

May: If it's something kind of beyond your control then it gives you more more freedom [Rebecca: Yes] to to be kind to yourself [Rebecca: Yes] and to, ja to sort of, ja see it as something that that happened to you rather than something that you might have caused to happen (Second interview, May's house, Cape Town,17 May 2019).

Here Valerie reflects on her struggle to understand her rape beyond notions of individual responsibility and shame. She is able to resist her own implication in the rape by attributing it to the male perpetrators "male anger" and "inability to deal with yourself". She highlights how this understanding of the rape produces a sense of triumph. I would argue that, in light of the stickiness of shame, this represents more than a minor triumph but in fact a deeply political liberation of womxn from the affective power of shame, which fixes them in positions of powerlessness. Similarly, May discusses the freedom of resisting the shame of responsibilisation. By conceptualising rape as "something that happened *to you* rather than something you might have *caused to happen"* a possibility for empathy and self-compassion is produced – as Buhle said, it becomes possible for the womxn who was raped to recognise *herself* beyond the constraints of shame. I find May's reference to being "kind to yourself" particularly powerful here as it is so at odds with the destructive nature of shame that I have examined so far in this chapter. As I will explore more in the following chapters, possibilities of kindness and connection (both with self and others) work against the gendered, racialised, and classed structures within which the violation of rape is embedded.

**Sharing Shame, Resisting Its Power**

Linked to notions of kindness and recognition, in this final section of the chapter I explore how the interview operated as a space in which both my participants and I could talk about the shame we felt as a result of having been raped. I argue that in articulating our shame we were able to grapple with it in more productive and empowering ways. Below I share an extract from my first interview with Hannah as an example of this process:

Hannah: […] and he'd he came in the one day and tried to hug me and I just started like screaming like an animal and just like cal- like I've never been so out of control of myself [inhales] and um....

> Rebecca: Well because you tried t-... you tried [Hannah: laughs] a whole lot of other mechanisms of of of keeping yourself safe. I mean I don't mean like [Hannah: and then and then] keeping yourself safe as in [Hannah: ja] as in that but I mean of of establishing [Hannah: -lishing boundaries] and that just was completely... [Hannah: and he just like] disregarded ja […]
>
> Hannah: Should have been a lot clearer and just [Rebecca: Ja b-] shouldn't have gone that road with him in the first place [Rebecca: Ja but hindsight is] I didn't see all of the manipulative shit that... w- ja.
>
> Rebecca: But I mean that's the whole [inhales] you know […] like constantly be proving that you're in the right and they're in the wrong and the responsibility lies completely on you, you know to convince [your ex-partner], to convince him [the rapist] that what he did was uncomfortable, to convince yourself you know? [Hannah: Ja] And that's the whole you know power dynamic (First interview, my house, Cape Town, 20 November 2018).

In this extract Hannah reflects on some of her own responses following having been raped by a close friend. She struggles with the sense that she should have done more to 'prevent' the rape from happening. Here I try to contextualise her feeling of shame in relation to a broader structure of responsibilisation that is imposed on womxn who have been raped. In this way, I attempt to acknowledge her shame, while simultaneously resisting the notion that it is hers to carry in the first place. This challenging of shame did not occur uni-directionally. In many of the interviews, when I expressed my own sense of shame and responsibility for what had happened to me, the participants disputed this. The interviews, which offered an opportunity to talk about rape were a disruption not only to the over-determined attachment between shame and womxn who had been raped, but also a disruption of the isolation that rape and the shame associated with it produces (Shefer et al., 2017). As I have highlighted above, the stickiness of shame makes it difficult for womxn to talk about their experiences of rape. The way in which shame catches, as indicated in my interactions both with Tanya and the friend of mine whom I told about the rape, demonstrate how shame produces separation, isolation and alienation rather than empathy and connection. In this context, the interviews functioned as an alternative space, in which relational connections were formed, in the face of shame. Central to this connection was the way in which the sharing of experiences challenged an individualised understanding of rape, including notions of individual responsibility and the shame this produced.

> Refiloe: And also as we're doing this interview you know I'm just sitting here thinking about it, as much as you're doing this interview to get like individual experiences and [inhales]... but you made me sort of like... I- I'm able to understand in the broader... social context [Rebecca: Mhm. Mhmm] You know [inhales] you know I-I'm able to sort of like from a moment stop saying 'me me me me me' [Rebecca: Mhmm] that this happened to me me me me [inhales] but also to understand it from a broader social perspective [Rebecca: Mhmm] that as much as this is my experience [inhales] but this is also your experience. This is something that we [inhales] we-we've gone through you know. It might have been at a different place, [Rebecca: Ja] at a different time but it somehow we share common experiences [Rebecca: Ja] and that's liberating [Rebecca: Ja]. For me I'm finding it very very liberating. I know that [inhales] now onwards I don't have to think about it as something that is shameful [Rebecca: Mhmm. Ja]. I don't have to think about it as something that is just an individual experience [Rebecca: Ja, that belongs to you. It doesn't belong to you] That is ja. [Inhales] Ja (First interview, hotel, Pretoria, 10 December 2018).

As Refiloe reflects here, the sharing of experiences within the interview allowed her to disrupt her own sense of individualised responsibilisation and shame for having been raped. The fact of our 'shared experience' enabled her to conceptualise rape as the result of systemic problem rather than 'caused' by the individual 'failings' of womxn to keep themselves safe (Moran, 2017). Therefore, the affective space of the interview served to "disturb normative practices of shaming by disrupting the individualising function of shame" (Shefer & Munt, 2019, p. 196). Many of the other participants shared similar feelings about the interview space.

However, I also wish to acknowledge that I was not always successful in facilitating a space in which shame could be resisted or challenged within the interviews. I have indicated in Chapter Three, with the example of my interview with Nomvula and the way in which I reinforced the shame associated with sex-work, there were instances in which I reinforced participants' shame in destructive ways. Similarly, my own feelings of shame in response to Tanya's reflections may have intensified her sense of shame in the interview. My reifications of shame are evidence of the dominance of shame as an affective response to rape, as well as shame's power to define, fix and other womxn who have been raped.

As I have shown in this chapter, shame is both deeply personal and deeply political (Shefer & Munt, 2019). Shame is felt deeply by me and the womxn I interviewed. Shame paralyses, it

produces powerlessness, helplessness, and abjection. The power of shame is constituted by national shame, which is gendered, raced and classed in particular ways. However, collectively my participants and I resist the imposition of this shame upon our bodies and selves – we are not merely objects of shame. We are both shameful and shameless. Despite the stickiness of shame, we seek to forge alternative affective possibilities for ourselves and other womxn. One of these alternative affective possibilities is rage, which I will explore in the following chapter.

# CHAPTER SIX

## The Possibilities of Rage

> Tanya: Can you rem- imagine how angry a woman like that must be by the time she's twenty... If she was raped or abused at... below ten [Rebecca: Mhmm] and you have to look at this man every day of your life? (First interview, my house, Cape Town, 31 December 2018).

In our first interview, Tanya reflected on a situation in which a young womxn has to live in the same house as the man who raped her for many years and the intense anger that she must feel as a result of this. Here Tanya constructs anger as an inevitable response to rape. She suggests that this anger is produced not only by the violation of the rape but also by the lack of consequences for the rapist; having "to look at this man every day of your life". I take this notion of anger as a starting point for this chapter. I explore rage – as a particular kind of anger – and the affective possibilities that it produces in relation to rape. I argue that the possibilities for feeling rage in response to rape are constrained by the pathologisation and disregard of womxn's (and others') anger. In this sense, rage is not an inevitable response to rape, as Tanya's reflection suggests. I analyse the ways in which I and the womxn I interviewed must struggle to articulate our rage. This struggle is entangled with notions of shame and trauma, as explored in the previous chapters. Through their rage womxn proclaim that the violation of rape is *terrible enough* and resist the stickiness of shame that is imposed on them. In this chapter, I read rage as produced both by the relational context of the interview and the broader social context in which womxn (and other oppressed groups), both globally and locally, are furiously demanding an end to the onslaught of gender-based violence.

### Articulating Rage

Etymologically the word anger refers to 'suffering', 'anguish' or 'distress' and 'strangling' or being 'painfully constricted' (Lyman, 2004; Williamson, 2017). In this chapter, I articulate rage as a particular kind of anger. While anger is an affective response to (perceived) injustice, rage is a reaction to the refusal to attend to this appeal for justice (Lyman, 2004). Rage is, thus, an affective response produced by being unable to take any more suffering, anguish, or distress, unable to remain painfully constructed any longer (Canham, 2018). Below I explore how rage is both a response to the injustice of the violation of rape and a response to the failure to take

this response seriously. Here I build on the argument I made in Chapter Four, that part of the wounding of rape is produced by the dismissal, undermining and overriding of womxn's feelings about their experiences of rape. It is within this context, where womxn's violation and resultant pain is not taken seriously, that anger becomes rage. Here womxn's rage is not only directed at the men who violate them but also towards "a world that reproduces that violence by explaining it away" (Ahmed, 2017, p. 31).

> Aphiwe: the rape issue like... there's no one that has has has stood up for it [Rebecca: Mhmm] you know. [Inhales] like even the police like [Rebecca: Mhmm] to me it's more like no one is like... is believing like in our stories [Rebecca: Mhmm] just because [inhales] like ra- ra- the rape issue has been increasing year by year [inhales] [Rebecca: Mhmm]. So like I feel like like the police are not doing their job. Like... even the government is not doing like their job to make sure like... we are we are protected, we are safe and stuff [Rebecca: Mhmm]. […] There's no one that is feeling like our stories like is [inhales] like feeling our pain you know [inhales] (First interview, my house, Cape Town, 23 November 2018).

> Bianca: I just I feel frustrated that it's that white men get away with this shit all the time. Because I know that they do... and men in power... (First interview, Bianca's house, Cape Town, 22 August 2018).

Here Aphiwe reflects on the inadequacy of social responses to rape. While she makes specific reference to the failure of the police and the government, her articulation that 'there's *no one* believing our stories' constructs this lack of response as a broader affective condition. As I have argued in Chapter Four, the normalisation of violence against womxn in South Africa contributes to a social context in which the rapes of many womxn come to be unaffecting. Aphiwe's argument that "the rape issue has been increasing year by year" highlights the escalating intensity of violence against womxn in South Africa[51]. In September 2019 anti-gender-based-violence proliferated across the country in response to the ongoing onslaught on womxn's bodies and lives. During one of the marches in Cape Town, protestors demanded that President Cyril Ramaphosa address them and the issue of the state's failure to respond to issues

[51] As I have mentioned in Chapter One, it is difficult to ascertain whether rates of sexual violence are increasing, due to the multiple limitations of rape statistics. However, there is undeniable evidence that rates of gender-based violence remain unacceptably high and that this issue is not receiving an adequate political response.

of gender-based violence. On the 5th of September President Ramaphosa addressed the nation. His speech began:

> My Fellow South Africans,
> Our nation is in mourning and pain.
> Over the past few days, our country has been deeply traumatised by acts of extreme violence perpetrated by men against women and children.
> These acts of violence have made us doubt the very foundation of our democratic society, our commitment to human rights and human dignity, to equality, to peace and to justice (Ramaphosa, 2019, n.p.).

Ramaphosa has subsequently proposed the review of sexual offences and domestic violence laws, including the opposing of bail for all cases of sexual offences (Nicolson, 2019). Ramaphosa's response has been hailed as a significant step in addressing issues of gender-based violence on a national scale (Du Plessis, 2020). However, many activists have also been sceptical of the president's promises (Suttner, 2019). As I finalise this chapter, it has been just over a year since Ramaphosa made those promises. It appears that rates of gender-based violence remain dangerously high, compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic (Brown-Luthango, 2020; The Foundation for Aids Research, 2020). On 25 November 2020, which marks the start of the annual 16 days of activism for no violence against women and children in South Africa, the media reported that the ANC in Mpumalanga had reappointed to its provincial executive committee (PEC) a man accused of raping his two daughters (Tandwa, 2020). This incident raises significant questions about the political will to take gender-based violence seriously. Of course, political will is just one of the factors which has the potential to contribute to reductions in rates of gender-based violence. As I have previously articulated, gender-based violence, including sexual violence, is entangled with and constituted by various other forms of violence which persist in the contemporary South African context.

Aphiwe's comments that "no one is feeling like our stories [...] feeling our pain", highlights the continued inadequacy of social and political responses to womxn's experiences of violation. In relation to the racism experienced by African America people in the United States, James Baldwin has powerfully argued: "Part of the rage is this: it isn't only what is happening to you, but it's what's happening all around you all of the time, in the face if the most extraordinary and criminal indifference" (Baldwin et al., 1961, p. 205). For me, this reflection

resonates powerfully with the current state of unaffectedness in response to rape (and other forms of gender-based violence) in South Africa. However, simultaneously I wish to acknowledge ruptures in this state of unaffectedness, for example, as embodied by ongoing protests against the relentless scourge of gender-based violence. As I will expand below, these "feminist moments" (Salo, 2017, p. 66) are significant enactments of outrage, which, at least temporarily, recall local and national attention to the pain that sexual violence wreaks.

In a similar way to Tanya above, Bianca reflects on the lack of negative consequences for particular men who commit rape. Her reference to "all the time" invokes this state of affairs as pervasive and continuous. In noting that it is "white men [who] get away with this shit all the time", Bianca reflects on the continued power of the 'Black Peril' discourse, which protects 'white' men from being held accountable for rape. She also argues that "men in power" are protected from accountability in instances of rape. Perhaps the most powerful example of this in South Africa was the acquittal of Jacob Zuma for rape in 2006. Zuma's status as a hero of the anti-apartheid struggle was utilised, among other things, to construct him as a 'good' or 'great' man who was incapable of rape (Reddy & Potgieter, 2006; Waetjen & Maré, 2009). In the United States, the case of Brock Turner demonstrated how rapes perpetrated by 'white' men are regarded as 'less serious' by the legislative system. Turner, an economically privileged, 'white' male swimmer at a prestigious US university, who raped a womxn who was unconscious in an alley in 2015, received a six-month sentence and only served three months in jail (Mack & McCann, 2019). Camille, Antoinette, Bianca and May all mentioned the example of Brock Turner in their interviews as an example of how privileged men get off lightly. The recent case of the Dros rapist and the case of Oscar Pistorius were also discussed in the interviews. These cases were articulated as examples of how acts of violence committed by 'white' men in South Africa are constructed as individual crimes, caused by individual (often mental health-related) issues, rather than as systematic enactments of 'white' male privilege (Hunt & Jaworska, 2019). For example, Skye remarked in our first interview: "the Dros rapist is [inhales] I think a- the Dros rapist is a great a great one for me because it makes me so personally angry that they're now saying that [inhales] his bi-polar made him do it". This case is another example of how 'white' and other privileged men "get away" with rape. As discussed in Chapter Four, the failure to recognise and hold 'white' men accountable for rape means that womxn (both 'black' and 'white') who are raped by 'white' men are denied a space to articulate their pain, both publicly and privately. As Bianca's reflection indicates, this denial produces a sense of rage.

> Antoinette: Because I I don't feel [inhales]... like it could have happened. Like it doesn't feel real because if it really happened like if when somebody gets raped like isn't there like an uproar and an outrage and [inhales]... massive consequences [Rebecca: Mhmm] and... and there just wasn't anything. It was completely quiet [inhales] um... especially with my ex. It was just completely... um... quiet (First interview, Antoinette's house, Cape Town, 19 November 2018).

In this extract Antoinette suggests that rage is the appropriate social response to rape. Like Tanya, she indicates that instances of rape should produce "uproar", "outrage" and "massive consequences". Here I understand 'outrage' as a public expression of rage (for example in the form of public mobilisation and protest demonstrated in movements such as #BlackLivesMatter; #RhodesMustFall; #RUReferenceList; #TheTotalShutdown and A Rapist in Your Path) (Gouws, 2018; Kay & Banet-Weiser, 2019; Shewarega Hussen, 2018; D. Thompson, 2017). However, like Tanya, Antoinette, highlights the lack of consequences or outrage in relation to her own rape: "it was just completely quiet". The rage of Aphiwe, Bianca and Antoinette has been mirrored in recent protests against sexual violence that have taken place both in South Africa and globally. For example, in relation to the 2016 #RememberKhewzi protest, the activists who staged the protest reflected on how the protest was borne out of their frustration of the side-lining of gendered inequality and violence within the student movements calling for the decolonisation of higher education (Maluleke & Moyer, 2020). As Naledi Chirwa stated: "The culture of rape has been the conversation for a long time. We have been saying that this conversation needs another platform because we have been protesting against rape in universities. But people still don't want to listen" (Sifile, 2016, n.p.). The womxn I interviewed are similarly struggling to articulate their rage amidst the affective constraints that exist in the South African context.

**The Pathologisation of Anger**

Anger has a long history of being regarded as a 'negative' sentiment which is psychologically dysfunctional, politically counterproductive, and morally problematic (De Sousa, 1987; hooks, 1995; Kay & Banet-Weiser, 2019). Throughout the tradition of Western philosophy, anger has been constructed as threatening to 'decent' human relations, including by Plato and Socrates, the Roman and Greek Stoics, Adam Smith, Joseph Butler, and numerous contemporary philosophers (Nussbaum, 2016). This philosophical understanding of anger is rooted in the opposition between 'emotions' and 'rationality', as highlighted in Chapter Two. Within this

framework, enactments of anger within the public sphere symbolise a 'loss of control' and an obstruction to 'rational thinking' (D. Thompson, 2017). Meanings of anger are simultaneously entangled with notions of revenge and violence. As Martha Nussbaum (2016) has written: "anger includes, conceptually, not only the idea of a serious wrong done to someone or something of significance, but also the idea that it would be a good thing if the wrongdoer suffered bad consequences somehow" (p. 5). Psychologically anger has been widely constructed as a negative emotional response, associated with revenge, narcissism, instability and a "rage-prone personality" (Canham, 2018, p. 324; Kruger et al., 2014; Sayers & Jones, 2014). The construction of anger as an individual pathology divorces anger from the social context in which it occurs, thus positioning it as a 'rogue' emotion (Canham, 2018). In this way, anger becomes equated with aggression, hostility and the potential for violence (Lyman, 2004). The negative construction of revenge can be seen to be rooted in Judaeo-Christian traditions of confession and forgiveness (Summerfield, 2002). This negative construction serves to pathologise anger, rage and a desire for revenge. However, as critical scholarship has demonstrated, such feelings have the potential to shed light on issues of woundedness, accountability and justice (Summerfield, 2002).

While anger has been widely constructed in negative ways, it is the anger (and rage) of certain social groups that has been mostly strongly pathologised. Raced and gendered inequalities render the anger of 'black' people and womxn, in particular, as illegitimate, 'dangerous' and 'crazy' (Cooper, 2018; M. Holmes, 2004; hooks, 1995). As bell hooks (1995) has famously argued, "[i]t is useful for white supremacist capitalist patriarchy to make all black rage appear pathological rather than identify the structures wherein that rage surfaces" (p. 29). The construction of angry women as 'shrill' and 'hysterical' and the 'black' person as an 'animal' or a 'thug' produces a context in which the anger of these 'Others' cannot be heard as legitimate or appropriate (Srinivasan, 2018). This affective injustice is powerfully visible in the aftermath of the election of Donald Trump, with 'white' masculine anger increasingly constructed as legitimate, and thereby normalised, weaponised and institutionalised (Kay & Banet-Weiser, 2019; Srinivasan, 2016; Srinivasan, 2018; D. Thompson, 2017). In South Africa, this affective injustice manifests clearly in the articulations of ('white') middle-class politicians and publics that poor, 'black' people who protest for basic service delivery are 'violent', 'radical', 'unthinking' 'hooligans' (Buur, 2009; Canham, 2018; Kessi & Boonzaier, 2015; Makhubu, 2020). These labels recall the apartheid government's notion of 'unrest', which was used to refer to and justify the violent repression of anti-apartheid activism (Super, 2010). It is within

this broader context of affective injustice that I explore the possibilities of articulating anger for womxn who have been raped. Perhaps more strongly than anger, 'rage' evokes notions of volatility, danger, and a loss of control. Rage is directly connected to violence through expressions such as 'murderous rage'. But as I will demonstrate, rage also functions as a humanising response to the dehumanisation of rape (hooks, 1995).

> Hannah: He came in the one day and tried to hug me and I just started screaming like an animal and just like cal- like I've never been so out of control of myself [inhales] (First interview, my house, Cape Town, 20 November 2018).

> Lara: Anna and I were walking in the street and at first of all I didn't wanna do it but she wanted to do it. So I was like 'ok cool'. [Inhales] This guy followed us then touched our thighs and carried on walking. [Inhales] And then he followed us again and was getting closer to us and I was like 'Anna. I just wanna like ge- call an uber. Get back' and she wasn't understanding... why I was responding this way, even though I was like 'do I really need to explain this to you?' This was like post-rape. It was this year. And then when he got close to me I started *screaming* like... b- like bloody murder [Rebecca: Mhmm] like at him. And it's a new response. I've just I feel so like when men speak to me and I just assume they're gonna say something about my body or like... [Rebecca: Mhmm]. It's crazy (First interview, Lara's house, Cape Town, 3 January 2019).

I read both Hannah and Lara's screams as articulations of rage. Here rage is intertwined with terror, fear and indignation (Flemke & Allen, 2008; D. Thompson, 2017). This rage is expressed in relation to men who violate, in Hannah's case the man who raped her and then dares to hug her, as if nothing has happened, and in Lara's case the man who dares to touch her in the street. In Lara's case, this rage is also articulated in relation to her friend who does not take her fear and discomfort seriously: "she wasn't understanding". I propose that it is by virtue of this lack of understanding of the impact of rape that rage becomes constructed as an 'inappropriate' response. When rape is not recognised as deeply wounding and *terrible enough* a womxn who screams in the middle of the street or in response to being hugged become "like an animal" or "out of control". Hannah's articulation of her own rage as animal-like and a loss of control demonstrates the power of the social pathologisation of rage. Rather than justifiably enraged because of the violence she has endured, she is rendered (and renders herself) as merely 'hysterical'. As I have argued in Chapter Four, the construction of the 'hysterical' womxn is used to dismiss womxn's emotional responses, particularly in relation to trauma,

constructing them as 'over-reactions'. Within this context, women are expected to mould, temper and contain their rage (Chemaly, 2018; Lugones, 2003).

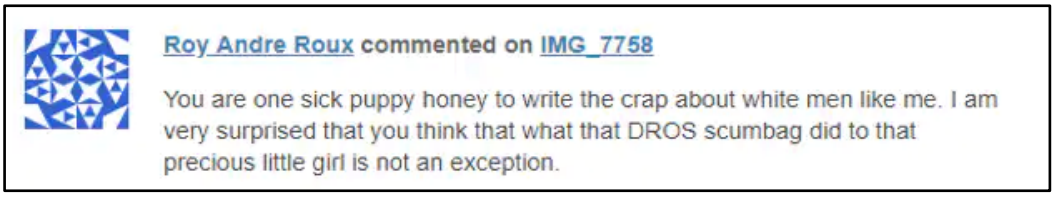
Rather than as pathological, hysterical responses, I argue that Hannah and Lara's screams are necessarily *ugly* (D. Miller, 2016). They are disruptive. They tear through denial and the polite status quo, which normalises and dismisses the harm that rape causes to womxn who experience it. As Sara Ahmed (2017) notes, screaming announces violence, makes it audible and visible. It is in the making of violence audible and visible that the scream, and the rage that calls it forth, come to be regarded as dangerous. As Bianca noted in our second interview: 'it's not pretty to be angry'. Womxn's rage is ugly because it refuses notions of 'good' womxnhood. It is not 'polite', 'respectable', or 'self-sacrificing'. Therefore, in articulating rage, womxn are not only calling attention to and calling out the violence of rape, but also the violence of a social system in which womxn are expected to politely 'grin and bear' this violence. Lara's reference to "crazy" here comes to adhere not to her and her scream, but rather to the social context in which men feel entitled to comment on and touch womxn's bodies.

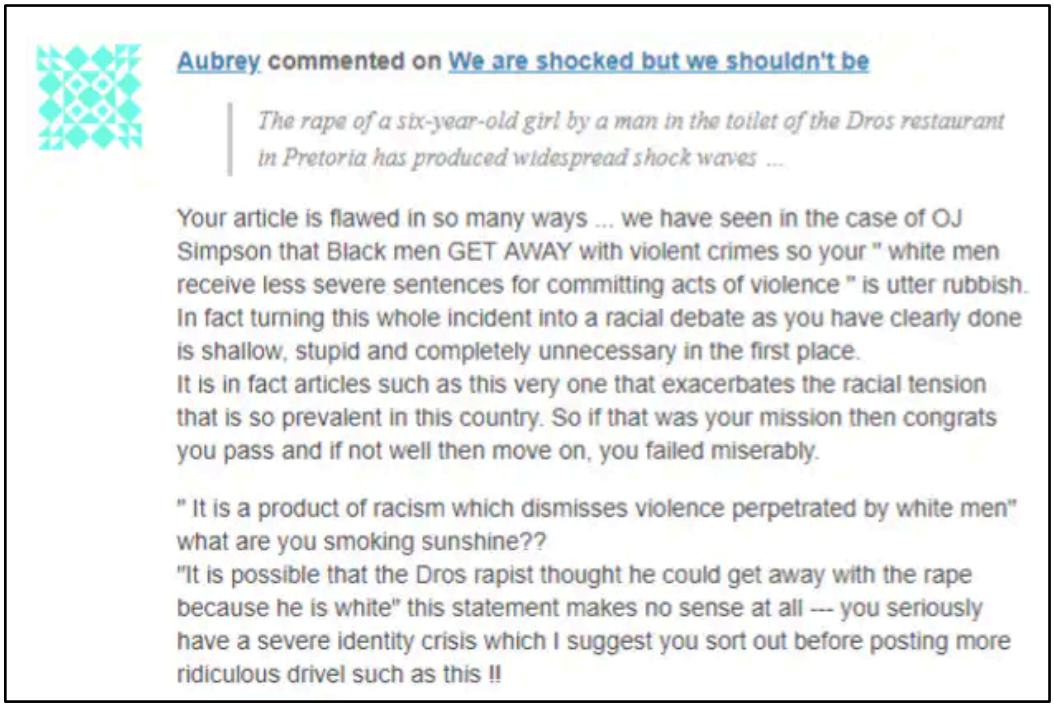
***The Rage of (White Supremacist Capitalist) Patriarchy***

In October 2018 I wrote an article that was published by IOL entitled *Why the #DrosRape shouldn't shock us*. The article was a comment on the social responses to the 'Dros rape'. As part of the article I argued that:

> Part of the shock also seems to be related to the fact that the rapist is white […] The legacy of colonialism and apartheid in our country is the legacy of white men's violence, including the mass rape of black women and murder of black men. By perpetuating the stereotype of the 'black rapist' white men have distracted us from the violence that they commit. While black men are regarded as 'inherently violent', when white men commit violence, it is often seen as an exception (Helman, 2018b, n.p.).

In response to this article, I received the following two comments on my personal blog (which was linked to the article):





**Aubrey commented on We are shocked but we shouldn't be**

> *The rape of a six-year-old girl by a man in the toilet of the Dros restaurant in Pretoria has produced widespread shock waves ...*

Your article is flawed in so many ways ... we have seen in the case of OJ Simpson that Black men GET AWAY with violent crimes so your " white men receive less severe sentences for committing acts of violence " is utter rubbish. In fact turning this whole incident into a racial debate as you have clearly done is shallow, stupid and completely unnecessary in the first place.
It is in fact articles such as this very one that exacerbates the racial tension that is so prevalent in this country. So if that was your mission then congrats you pass and if not well then move on, you failed miserably.

" It is a product of racism which dismisses violence perpetrated by white men" what are you smoking sunshine??
"It is possible that the Dros rapist thought he could get away with the rape because he is white" this statement makes no sense at all --- you seriously have a severe identity crisis which I suggest you sort out before posting more ridiculous drivel such as this !!

I argue that these comments are examples of the way in which anger is mobilised in service of ('white') masculinity. My comments in the article, a product of my rage both at the Dros rape and at the deeply problematic and racist responses that this incident generated, are pathologised by Roy and Aubrey. This pathologisation is levelled not only at my comments but at me as a person: "You are one sick puppy honey", "what are you smoking sunshine" and "you seriously have a severe identity crisis". It seems that Roy and Aubrey's anger is directed specifically at me – a 'white' womxn – who 'dares' to speak out against 'white' men. Their uses of 'honey' and 'sunshine' are aggressively patronising attempts to re-position me as submissive and 'less than'. This is an example of how 'confident' and 'out spoken' womxn are regarded as threatening to the patriarchal social order. Lashing out angrily and even violently is one way in which to undermine womxn's social gains (Meintjes, 2007). As much feminist work has demonstrated, rape operates both as a mechanism and a threat by which men keep womxn and others deemed 'feminine' in their 'proper place' (Abrahams et al., 2006; Brownmiller, 1975; Gqola, 2015). I am reminded here powerfully of the story Pumla Gqola (2015) recounts of the young man who shouts, in a shop full of people, at a young woman who does not respond to his advances "that is why we rape you" (p. 81). Similarly to this young man in the shop, Roy and Aubrey assert their anger and aggression towards me with ease and comfort and without, it seems, worrying that it is 'inappropriate' or 'unfounded'. Roy's use of his whole name

suggests that he is unashamed of publicly calling someone he does not know "one sick puppy honey". This is an example of how ('white') masculine anger "is easily incorporated into political discourse, normali[s]ed as politics as usual" (D. Thompson, 2017, p. 460). Perhaps the starkest example of this is the anger repeatedly expressed by Donald Trump (Kay & Banet-Weiser, 2019). In contrast to 'white' masculine anger, the anger (and rage) of womxn, and certain womxn in particular, is not so easily and comfortably expressed.

> Antoinette: But as women or at least m- maybe as an Afrikaans woman that grew up in a Christian society like I don't get that, I don't get that opportunity. Like I have to be still... fit the norms of society I still have to be like friendly [Rebecca: Mhmm] and I have to still allow men to be, like to be submissive towards men [Rebecca: Mhmm] and I have to still all be, be all those things [inhales] and... you don't really get that pass of like 'um oh she's like being a bitch today' [Rebecca: Mhmm] (Second interview, Antoinette's house, Cape Town, 19 May 2019).

As Antionette narrates here, gendered expectations constituted by a specific cultural context, limit the possibilities for womxn to articulate rage. In particular, the expectation that womxn should be "friendly" and "submissive" towards men construct feminine rage as 'inappropriate' and women who express rage as 'bitches' (Chemaly, 2018). Antoinette highlights the ways in which Afrikaans cultural norms continue to construct respectable ('white') femininity in line with submission to male authority (Stander & Forster, 2019; van der Westhuizen, 2017). It is interesting to note how feminist enactments of rage in recent years, including those as part of the #RhodesMustFall and #RUReferenceList protests, have been predominantly embodied by young 'black' womxn (Gouws, 2018; Xaba, 2017). These enactments of rage can be seen as disruptions of gendered and raced constructions of respectability and docility. However, these disruptions are often met with violent suppression. This is exemplified in relation to Gugu Ncube's protest at the union buildings in Pretoria in March 2019. Ncube, who was protesting against the prevalence of sexual violence in universities while partially clothed, was forcibly removed by a group of police officers who covered her mouth and bundled her into a police van (Matangira, 2019). The force used to remove Ncube, as well as the number of officers involved in arresting her, reveals the severe discomfort produced by a 'black' womxn who dares to enact her rage (Makama & Helman, 2019). Similarly, both universities and the South African police force responded to peaceful student protests, as part of the Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall movements, with extreme acts of violence (predominantly against 'black' students) (Xaba, 2017). These examples demonstrate how expressing anger is risky for those

who are “already stereotyped as rageful, violent, or shrill” (Srinivasan, 2018, p. 136). As I will highlight below, this context contributes to the impossibilities of articulating rage in relation to rape.

**(Im)possibilities of Rage**

> Bianca: I think that's why I didn't share it because it just I could have just I could have just kept it for my-self. It didn't have to hurt other people. [Rebecca: Mhmm]. I *did not* have to hurt my mom or my dad (First interview, Bianca’s house, Cape Town, 22 August 2018).

> May: But I remember... e-... distinctly that... talking to my... parents about it was the most *terrifying* concept. That was something I *did not* wanna do. [Inhales] Um because... I didn't want to expose them to that trauma [Rebecca: Mhmm]. I didn't wanna share it with them [Rebecca: Mhmm] (First interview, May’s house, Cape Town, 16 January 2019).

> Refiloe: So I'm practically my mother's my grandmother's second child [Rebecca: Mhmm]. I was like [inhales] I think it will hurt her. You know that... [Rebecca: Ja]. So I didn't want to sort of like confront her [Rebecca: Ja] or even to talk about it (First interview, hotel room, Pretoria, 10 December 2018).

Many of the womxn I interviewed described how they wanted to protect others from the pain that rape produces. I remember distinctly the day after I was raped, going to the crime scene with the police and my father. Upon seeing the patch of mud where the rape look place, my father burst into tears. I thought I would die from the pain of his pain. I felt a desperate guilt for causing him to weep. I would have done anything in that moment to undo what had happened, for his sake, more than mine. As my, Bianca, May and Refiloe’s responses highlight, womxn who have been raped come to regard themselves as responsible for holding and containing the pain and destruction of rape. This is another way in which responsibilisation, as discussed in the previous chapter, works to fix the burden of rape to the womxn who have experienced it.

As much feminist research has demonstrated, the desire to engage with and contain the pain of others is a deeply gendered affective response (Borgwald, 2012; Kruger et al., 2014; Thomas,

2005). Alongside sexual passivity, in a range of different cultural contexts, feminine respectability is constituted by selflessly caring for others and placing their needs before her own[52] (Borgwald, 2012; Salo, 2018). Perhaps this respectability (and responsibility) is most powerfully embodied in the trope of the 'good mother' (C. Campbell, 1990; Kruger et al., 2014; Ruddick, 1980; Rich, 1995). The construction of the 'good mother' as endlessly selfless, unconditionally loving, and responsible for the growth and happiness of the family continue to inform women's social positionings across a range of societies, including South Africa (Couvrette et al., 2016; Maisela & Ross, 2018; Majombozi, 2019; Narciso et al., 2018). Notions of 'good mothering' are constituted by the different socio-cultural conditions in which motherhood is embedded, for example racial and class inequalities which require 'black' womxn to take responsibility for their children and families financial well-being, alongside their emotional needs (C. Campbell, 1990). However, across a diverse range of social conditions, women are positioned as responsible for attending to and meeting the needs of others, bearing a disproportionate burden of care (C. Campbell, 1990; Majombozi, 2019).

Within South Africa (good) motherhood has historically been constitutive not only of womxn's domestic positioning, but also their political identities across different social-cultural locations (Berger, 2014; Cock, 2007; van der Westhuizen, 2017; C. Walker, 1995). For example, from the beginning of the 20th century onwards, through the notion of the 'volksmoeder' ('mother of the nation') 'white' Afrikaans womxn were designated as "the physical and moral reproducers of the *volk* (the nation) and its boundaries" (van der Westhuizen, 2017, p. 62). During the anti-apartheid struggle, the construction of 'black' womxn as 'mothers of the nation' served as a central political rhetoric (Berger, 2014; Cock, 2007). In response to the imposition of an inferior and separate system of education for 'black' children, Lilian Ngoyi, a prominent anti-apartheid activist and leader of the womxn's movement, declared in a speech: "my womb is shaken when they speak of Bantu education" (Lodge, 1983, p. 151). Within this context, constructions of 'good motherhood', constituted by self-sacrifice and care, continue to constrain womxn's behaviours and emotional responses.

Bianca, May and Refiloe all express a desire to keep the "hurt" and "trauma" of rape away from those close to them. This is rooted in their desire to take care of those that they love. Bianca and May reflect on how their desire to protect their families from their experiences of

[52] I wish to note that here I am referring to Westernised cultures or those that have been influenced by Western cultural understandings of femininity and individualism, of which South Africa is one example.

rape occurred when they were teenagers, highlighting the way in which girls are taught from a young age to take responsibility for caring for others (Salo, 2018). Bianca, May and Refiloe's responses indicate how the desire to take care of or protect their family members produces a self-silencing. In choosing not to talk to their families about their experiences of rape, they deny themselves a space to articulate their own feelings of hurt and trauma, they swallow their pain and rage. Later in our first interview Bianca remarked:

> Shit there was a 17-year-old girl... who went through all of this um... who... who did e- I went through that alone... and... I don't want that for... for other people [inhales]. It's not fair and I shouldn't have had to have gone through it alone.

Here Bianca seems to be trying to create more space for her own pain. In naming the unfairness of her experience, she acknowledges not only the pain of her rape, but also the pain that was produced by not being able to talk about what had happened to her with her family. I read her use of "shit" and "not fair" as an articulation of rage, which positions her pain as justifying a supportive response. Similarly, above Refiloe refers to wanting to "confront" her grandmother. In her interview she described being raped at the age of four by a friend of the family. She remembers that her grandmother found out about the rape after she saw that Refiloe's underwear was dirty. Refiloe noted that once she had told her grandmother what had happened her grandmother had gone to talk to the man who had raped Refiloe (who was a neighbour and close friend of the family). But Refiloe did not know what the outcome of this discussion was. She reflected that her grandmother had never spoken to her again about the rape. Her desire to "confront" her grandmother, about her response to the rape, is thus articulated in a context of silence, in which rape cannot be spoken. Later in our first interview she described a situation that had arisen in her family more recently:

> I remember there was an incident and everyone in the family couldn't understand why I was so angry. [Inhales] My aunt has a daughter who, at the time when it happened like e- the fa- one of our little cousins sort of like inserted something in her vagina [Rebecca: Mhmm]. [Inhales] And I was *livid*. I was like 'this needs to be dealt with. This needs to be sorted' [Rebecca: Mhmm]. [Inhales] And they sort of like didn't understand... why.

Here the intensity of her rage is embodied in her description of herself as "livid". In her rage, Refiloe demands that the issue needs to be dealt with. This demand echoes loudly in the silence that so often surrounds rape. Like Lara, Refiloe highlights how her affective response is not

understood by her family. To them she may appear as merely ‘over-sensitive’, ‘hysterical’ and ‘shrill’ (Ahmed, 2017; Chemaly, 2018). However, despite this misunderstanding or perhaps because of it, Refiloe’s rage allows her to imagine and demand that responses to sexual violence can and should be different. As I will expand below, this is one of the possibilities that rage offers.

Intertwined with womxn’s ‘responsibility’ for the emotional (and practical) needs of others, is the notion that they are responsible for ‘keeping the peace’ (Cock, 2007). That is, womxn are expected to comfort, help, understand, comply, agree, and promote the harmony of relationships (Thomas, 2005). In relation to these social expectations, womxn’s rage comes to be regarded as a threat to social stability, as it threatens to reveal the injustice of the state of ‘peace’.

> Jamie: And I'm thinking of like the emotional labour that so many um majority women do for their families so that their families can continue to be toxic [Rebecca: Mhmm] and never hold responsibility for the emotional abuse that continues to happen [Rebecca: Mhmm] (Second interview, Jamie’s house, Johannesburg, 5 May 2019).

> Lara: As women... I've I'm guilty of making everyone comfortable [Rebecca: Ja]... But ja (First interview, Lara’s house, Cape Town, 3 January 2019).

> Antoinette: when at Christmas when we went to my uncle's house, even *after* I had told her [inhales] I would tell her 'mom I'm not gonna say hi to my uncle' and then she would say like 'no don't be rude. Go kiss him hello'. And it would be like the worst thing in the world for me. Coz I knew that she knew... and now I have to go and kiss this guy hello. It's like... fucking sick [Rebecca: Mhmm] (First interview, Antoinette’s house, Cape Town, 19 November 2018).

Here Jamie, Lara and Antoinette, all reflect on the ways in which they, as womxn (and girls), are expected to ‘keep the peace’ through doing “emotional labour”, making others “comfortable” and being “polite”. Jamie highlights how it is predominantly womxn who are responsible for maintaining the status quo within the family. In our initial interview, Buhle described this as: “I'm just going to be strong for everybody else. [Rebecca: Ja]. I'm just going to be super woman and and and and and” – suggesting that womxn are expected to endure endlessly, for the ‘greater good’ (D. Thompson, 2017). But as Jamie notes, womxn’s

responsibility for the maintenance of destructive relationships blocks the possibility that things could be different (Ahmed, 2017). Similarly, Lara articulates her own desire to make everyone else "comfortable", as a result of her gendered positioning. Her reference to guilt highlights the discomfort and constraint that this desire produces.

Antoinette described how, even after she told her mother that her uncle was sexually abusing her and that she didn't want to greet her uncle, her mother reprimanded her for being 'rude'. In this instance, Antoinette's refusal to be polite to her uncle – an expression of her rage towards him – is dismissed in order to 'keep the peace' within the family. Perhaps Antoinette's mother's request to her daughter not to be rude was her own attempt to 'keep the peace' within the family. Antoinette expresses the deep pain and discomfort that having to go and kiss her uncle hello caused her – "the worst thing in the world for me" and how her mother's disregard for this pain and discomfort, despite the fact that she knew about the abuse, was extra difficult to bear: "Coz I knew that she knew". Her rage at the injustice of this disregard is clearly and powerfully articulated when she describes the situation as "fucking sick". Like Refiloe, in articulating this rage, Antoinette is able to name both the violation of sexual abuse and the failure of her family to acknowledge and respond adequately to this violation as unacceptable. However, within the interview Antoinette also spoke about how she recognised that her mother had not had the resources to deal with the situation and how she did not want other people to be angry with her mother and how she had responded. In our second interview, Camille referred to this emotional response as: "justifying and like over-empathising and trying to explain people's terrible behaviour", exemplifying how through (over) caring and empathising with others, womxn may come to justify or excuse the behaviour of others who hurt them (Jaramillo-Sierra et al., 2017). In this way, patriarchal expectations of selfless caring for others promotes a damaging sacrificing of one's own wellbeing, as womxn are consumed by care for others (Borgwald, 2012; Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017).

I propose that expectations of 'keeping the peace' (and the suppression of rage that these expectations produce) are not only deeply gendered, but also intertwined with the post-1994 national project in South Africa. Reconciliation featured centrally as a strategy for politically and psychologically healing and the establishment of a more just society, embodied through the TRC in 1995 and 1996 (Borzaga, 2012; Gobodo-Madikizela, 2012). The TRC offered a significant space in which the horrendous ills of apartheid could be acknowledged and in which perpetrators of horrendous acts of violence were required to take responsibility for what they

had done (Bystrom & Nuttall, 2013; Gobodo-Madikizela, 2009). However, the focus on forgiveness and reconciliation and the political desire to cultivate a unified new South Africa limited the possibilities for articulations of rage at the injustices of apartheid. Catherine Cole (2007) has argued that expressions of rage during the TRC hearings were supressed and disavowed. She describes the example of the *Gugulethu Seven*[53] case and how, during the viewing of the video of the murders, one of the mothers of the murdered men threw a shoe at the perpetrators. This act was condemned by advocate Dumisa Ntsebeze who remarked:

> it is something we take a very dim view of, we understand emotions of people who come to this proceedings [sic] carrying the sort of trauma that is commensurate with a loss that they obviously have. But […] it must be emphasi[s]ed […]in the strongest terms that the Commission has a task to perform which must be performed in circumstances where it's [sic] integrity and reputation will not be undermined (Cole, 2007, p. 184).

Through constructing the mother's act of anger as potentially undermining the 'integrity' and 'reputation', rage is excluded as a personal and politically 'appropriate' response within the TRC hearings. Given that the TRC was intended as a space in which to heal the nations wounds, Ntsebeze's response raises the question, if it is not possible for those who have been deeply violated by the violence of apartheid to express their rage here, then where can it be expressed? In contrast to Ntsebeze, Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela (2020) has reflected on the scream uttered by Nomonde Calate, whose husband Fort Calata was murdered and then burnt by the apartheid security police, during her testimony at the TRC. She writes:

> There is a moment during [Nomonde's] testimony when she lets out a scream […] giving voice to it to be heard beyond the walls within which the public hearings are taking place. Imagine that, a piercing scream that seems to shatter the magnificent walls

[53] On 3 March 1986, Zabonke John Konile, Godfrey Jabulani Miya, Zanisile Zenith Mjobo, Mandla Simon Mxinwa, Christopher Piet, Zola Alfred Swelani, and Themba Mlifi Zanisile, who were alleged to be members of the ANC's military wing uMkhonoto weSizwe (MK), were led into an ambush at the intersection of NY1 and NY111 in Gugulethu where they were shot and killed by members of the South African security forces (South African History Online, 2013; Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1998).

> of the East London City Hall, a structure built in colonial times to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee […] Using her voice and body in this way can be interpreted as a moment that represents at once an expression of anger and pain, a talking back to the past to confront this history that violently took the life of her husband and to expose those responsible for her irreparable loss. Objectifies in so many ways as the racial and sexual "other" in order to legitimate the colonial and apartheid order, her testimony shifts the gaze from the object of oppression to shine the light on the depravity of the perpetrators (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2020, pp. 125-126).

Nomonde's scream resonates with the 'ugly' screams of so many other womxn, as I have discussed above. However, I argue that womxn remain disproportionately responsible for 'keeping the peace' in post-apartheid South Africa. It is within this context that I have struggled to articulate my own scream of rage:

> During the rape he looks down at me and says "don't cry". Quietly I reply, "do you think that this is nice for me?" Something shifts in this moment, he stops. He appears horrified at what he has done to me. He helps me to my feet. He tells me he is not a bad person. He tells me his name and asks me mine. He touches my face gently. I tell him it is ok. I give him my phone – he says they will kill him if he comes back without it. I think I try to tell him that he has a choice. I think of him often in the intervening years – all of the violence he must have been subjected to, to be able to do that to me. What kind of choice did he have? I am full of images of his violation, there is no space left for rage (Extract from research diary, 18 August 2020).

I excuse his abuse of me, "having glimpsed the great reservoir of pain and rage from which it issues" (Bartky, 1990, p.114). I am trapped by my over-empathising with him, unable to empathise with my own pain and violation, unable to articulate a rage that embodies the injustice that he should seek to hurt me, even as he is hurting. I am implicated in his hurt, unable to escape from my 'white' skin which glares with privilege. It is this which makes it impossible for me to say: "My blood will not wash out your horror" (Baldwin & Lorde, 1984, n.p.). Later, with the help of the womxn I have interviewed, I am able to say it, quietly at first and then louder. Amidst the guilt and empathy for him, I continue to struggle for empathy for myself. This struggle is shared by the womxn I interviewed. For example, Antoinette reflected

on the long process of making sense of her own pain, amidst her empathy for the men who had violated her:

> Antoinette: I think I only got to the... to the empathy... much later. Empathy for myself [inhales]. Um... I think initially I was with him I was like 'well you know he grew up with parents who are divorced. His dad used to beat up his mom. That's the example he had' [Rebecca: Mhmm] and like obviously made all the excuses and with my uncle it was like... 'oh my gosh well he was raped as a child' um so... you know and... and just I just had so much sympathy for him, for some *reason*. I got so stuck in that [Rebecca: Mhmm] and... at the cost of myself. [Rebecca: Ja] […] I was like this is actually not helping me [Rebecca: Mhmm] like I'm getting stuck. [Rebecca: Mhmm] So I just had to get angry and be like well 'I don't care what the fuck happened to you [laughs] you made that decision on that day' and... that is also the truth. [Rebecca: Mhmm] So... [inhales] Um... but I give myself a lot of leeway. Like sometimes I'll just be like 'agh I just fucking like hate them' [laughs]. [Rebecca: Mhmm] (First interview, Antoinette's house, Cape Town, 19 November 2018).

Like me, Antoinette articulates how her empathy for both her uncle and her ex-partner constrain her ability to empathise with herself. Through rage, she is able to see and feel her experiences of rape differently. As she remarks "'I don't care what the fuck happened to you [laughs] you made that decision on that day' and... *that is also the truth*". This other truth is the truth of her violation, of her pain, of her justified rage. In noting that she gives herself a lot of leeway to feel angry, she articulates a kindness to herself – a kindness that is denied by a broader social context that normalises and/or dismisses the harm that rape causes. I am reminded here of Buhle remarking to me, in response to my confession of how I feel about the man who raped me (as discussed in Chapter Four), "[h]e's still wrong […] regardless of the choices that he had, it's still wrong". This is the other truth of my pain, my violation, my rage. Articulation of empathy, kindness (for self) and rage are example of the disruptive potential of refusing to care about those things that we are expected to care about (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017).

**Rage as Refusal**

As I have argued above, womxn's rage threatens their status as 'good' womxn. Thus, in articulating rage womxn come to be labelled as 'dangerous', 'aggressive' and 'vengeful' (Griffin, 2012).

> Nosipho: in the family um now everyone thinks I'm rebellious, everyone thinks I'm... I'm angry towards every male species [...] Um it will be like I'm more e-angry and I want other people not to be happy too (First interview, phone, 18 January 2019).

> Tanya: I, you know I tend to do girl power [Rebecca: Mhmm]... I share those [Rebecca: Mhmm] messages and things like that [Rebecca: Mhmm]...and...so I was tagged as a burn the bra feminist [Rebecca: Mhmm]...who...you know, will crush any man's balls [Rebecca: Mhmm] (Second interview, coffee shop, Johannesburg, 5 May 2019).

> May: And um you know she would say to me like er you know 'it's it's just so frustrating that I have to be the person who does this, who has to to [Rebecca: Ja.] say,' and she said 'you know I feel like I'm this this bitch in the office [Rebecca: Yes.] who's who's you know just become this like droning voice [Rebecca: Ja] that they're gonna stop listening to (Second interview, May's house, Cape Town, 17 May 2019).

The 'dangerous', 'aggressive', 'vengeful', rageful womxn is perhaps best embodied in the image of the 'angry feminist', through which womxn's anger is constructed as inappropriate and excessive (Ahmed, 2017; Tomlinson, 2010). As Tanya notes, her support of gender equality is interpreted as radical and aggressive. The image of feminists who burn bras and crush men's balls are inherently intertwined with notions of violence. This is an example of how the figure of feminist is constructed as inherently 'unreasonable', 'humourless', 'shrill', 'man-hating' and 'angry' (Tomlinson, 2010). As Nosipho notes, the rage of the feminist is seen to be directed at "every male species", thereby positioning it as 'excessive' and 'misplaced'. As Sara Ahmed (2017) argues, speaking from a feminist perspective is repeatedly positioned as purposeful or malicious overreaction and exaggeration. Within this context, feminists cannot be heard, instead they are regarded as "bitch[es]" with "droning" voices, as May notes. A central affective condition of the 'angry feminist' is that of unhappiness – feminists are positioned as 'unhappy' and as wanting to make others unhappy, they kill joy, they are killjoys (Ahmed, 2017). As Nosipho points out, her anger is constructed as intentionally disrupting the

happiness of others. Here her anger is constructed as the problem, rather than the social hostility and indifference to womxn's experiences of rape. Thus, appearing happy (and not full of rage) becomes a form of emotional labour which womxn are expected to perform in order to make others happy (Ahmed, 2017). Womxn are more 'palatable' if they smile rather than shout (Chemaly, 2018). Within this context, in which womxn's rage is demonised and dismissed, articulations of rage are radical acts of refusal.

> Nosipho: But at the same time I feel 'no no no Nosipho you don't need to justify what [Rebecca: Mhmm] they did. It's wrong!' Often you find yourself in a i- going in circles [Rebecca: Mhmm] whether to e- a- it's because of this, it's because of that [R: Mhmm]. No, it was wrong! (First interview, phone, 17 January 2019).

> Lara: I don't know what you can do [laughs] to prevent rape [Rebecca: Mhmm]. I don't know. I can't [inhales] even put myself in someone's shoes that would like if I put myself in Sam's shoes and see my own body lying there I don't know what it is that would make him want to do what he did [Rebecca: Mhmm]. Like I don't understand. So it's very difficult for me to really [Rebecca: Mhmm] understand what would stop that […] And I haven't really invested much time in [Rebecca: Ja] sort of like figuring out the male [Rebecca: Ja. No]. I don't care to do that. [Rebecca: Ja] I should but I don't (First interview, Lara's house, Cape Town, 3 January 2019).

> Camille: I think even worse is the excuses I made for Elizabeth [friend]. [Rebecca: Mhmm] You know where I'm like 'oh but y- she was bro-'. She *fuck that*! She could have moved out, straight away [Rebecca: Mhmm]. She should have believed me. She *knew* what he was like. [Inhales] (First interview, Camille's office, Cape Town, 15 January 2019).

One of the questions that I asked during the interviews was "how do you think rape can be prevented?"[54] All the womxn I interviewed responded by saying that prevention is only possible through challenging a culture of patriarchal violence. In answering this question many of the womxn reflected on how men are positioned by this patriarchal violence, for example how for men violence (including sexual violence) is normalised and even encouraged. In this way womxn recognised that men in general, and the men who had raped them in particular,

[54] I qualified this question by saying that I was not asking about how womxn can 'prevent' themselves from getting raped, but rather how rape as a social problem can be challenged.

were operating within a constraining patriarchal culture. This is reflected in Nosipho's reference to "justify[ing] what they did". Similarly to Antoinette, Nosipho notes that empathising with the perpetrators produces the sensation of "going in circles" – she is trapped in this understanding of rape. She breaks free from the circles by disrupting this over-empathetic narrative. Her emphatic "no, it was wrong!" is full of rage. This rage allows her to better see and feel her oppression, though redefining rape as unjustifiable (Lorde, 1984; Srinivasan, 2018). Lara's narrative above is a direct response to my question about how rape can be prevented. Here, like Nosipho, she refuses to step out of her own frame of reference into that of the man who raped her (Noddings, 1984). In doing so she refutes a 'selfless' expectation of patriarchal caring and empathy which positions womxn's emotional needs as secondary to men's (Borgwald, 2012). Lara reflects the power of this expectation when she indicates that she "*should*" care about this. I read her articulation of not caring, "I don't care to do that", as a rogue act of disrespect to the law and order of patriarchy (Gqola, 2017). Camille too, articulates a refusal to care and over-empathise with her friend Elizabeth, who did not support Camille when their mutual close friend raped her. Here she disrupts her own over-empathising with Elizabeth by articulating how Elizabeth hurt her by not believing and supporting her. Her "*fuck that*" is a clear enunciation of rage. In refusing to over-empathise with others, rage enables clarity, as womxn's words are "clean, true, undiluted by regard for others' feelings or possible reactions" (Lugones, 2003, p. 258).

I understand my participants' articulations of rage as examples of what Sara Ahmed (2017) has called a 'feminist snap'. To snap denotes losing it and lashing out, but it also denotes realisation, finding out (Antonakaki et al., 2018). Nosipho, Lara and Camille's snaps are the unbecoming of the social conditions which pathologise, dismiss and prohibit womxn's rage, they are the realisation of the oppressive nature of these conditions and the attempt to find a way out. These snaps indicate "that one has been bearing a life that one is no longer willing to bare" (Ahmed, 2017, p. 198). As I have demonstrated above, this bearing is constituted in part by bearing the pain of others. Within this context, the snap is a break with the weight of this bearing. It is a refusal to get used to 'keeping the peace' (Ahmed, 2017). In their snapping, womxn construct possibilities for self-care and love.

As bell hooks (1995) has argued, self-love is a "radical political agenda" because it changes how we are able to see (and feel about) ourselves (p. 119). In articulating rage – about their experiences of rape and the way in which others respond to these experiences - womxn are able

to acknowledge that they have been wronged (McWeeny, 2010). As Nosipho declares "No, it was wrong!". This is simultaneously a declaration of self-worth, through which womxn are able to demand dignity and respect (Canham, 2017; Frye, 1983; Jones & Norwood, 2017; Rodriquez & Boahene, 2012). In demanding dignity and respect womxn challenge a social context in which both them and their rage are dismissed and pathologised. In this way, rage is both freeing and cleansing, creating possibilities beyond despair and inferiority (Lesage, 1988). Rage, thus, operates as "a necessary space to inhabit in order to begin to resist" (Canham, 2017, p. 437).

Camille's "*fuck that"* is also a refusal of politeness, a refusal to talk 'politely' about the horror and violation of rape. "Fuck" was repeated often in the interviews – by both my participants and I:

> Valerie: I don't normally swear this much hey? [Rebecca: laughs] But I find that I swear a lot in in when I talk about rape (Second interview, coffee shop, Cape Town, 17 May 2019).
>
> Rebecca: That's so ja that's really I mean that's like what I was thinking now with this womxn on the radio. She's a psychologist and she's coming on and telling talking about all the things that women can do to prevent it from happening to them. Like wearing sneakers
>
> Bianca: like why the fuck? Wearing sneakers?
>
> Rebecca: Ja. So you can run away... But then at the same moment she's also saying it doesn't matter what you wear. She's saying don't dress provocatively but then she's also saying it doesn't matter wh-
>
> Bianca: Aaaaggggg!
>
> Rebecca: what you wear because it's going to happen to you anyway, which is the fucking bottom line!
>
> Bianca: Aaaaaagh! I just get so fucking angry (First interview, Bianca's house, Cape Town, 22 August 2018).

Valerie's reflection that she doesn't normally swear this much highlights how swearing, and especially the word "fuck", continues to hold a taboo power – to upset, shock and offend

(Leung, 2011; Savigny, 2017; Wood, 2019). However, while Valerie attempts to excuse her swearing, she simultaneously suggests that swearing is necessary when talking about rape. This is an example of how 'politically correct', 'decent' and 'polite' language is insufficient in the face of social inequality and violence (Leung, 2011). As Olivia Perlow (2018) has argued, the idea that we are required to be 'nice' within a violent system is absurd. This is reflected in Bianca and my discussion above. In response to the suggestion that womxn should wear sneakers in order to 'avoid getting raped', we swear and shout to vent our rage, to challenge victim-blaming (Methven, 2016; Wood, 2019). Like the mother who threw a shoe at the TRC, "we cho[o]se not to be polite" (Gasa, 2007, p. xiv). Our utterances of "fuck" are examples of 'irreverent rage', which trouble regulatory power of respectability politics through challenging the way in which 'black', working-class, queer and female bodies have been required to defer (politely) to authority and demonstrate a willingness to adhere to expectations of respectability (hooks, 1995; Wood, 2019). We swear about rape to draw attention, to oppose, to transgress, and to reject the status quo in which we are expected to 'remain calm' (Savigny, 2017). Here swearing is about clarity and urgency – the clarity of the unacceptableness of rape and the urgency that is required to disrupt this situation (Wood, 2019).

I am reminded here of the way in which Chumani Maxwele's throwing of human excrement onto the statue in 2015 ignited the #RhodesMustFall movement (Mpemnyama, 2015). Later, graffiti on the statue of Cecil John Rhodes at UCT, read "AFRICA LIVES, Fuck Rhodes" (Foster, 2015, n.p.). I think too of the naked protest at UCKAR in 2016, on the 4th of May 2016 @AfricanGourmet tweeted: "It is time for womxn to stop being politely angry" (Mazibuko, 2018). During the #RUReferenceList protests, womxn not only marched topless but they also carried sjamboks[55], signalling a fighting back against rape culture and the university that refused to take rape seriously (Gouws, 2018; Mazibuko, 2018). These womxn vocalise and embody aggression and a "scream that is not pretty", thereby refusing gendered and racialised notions of respectability (D. Miller, 2016, p. 272; Tomlinson, 2010). This refusal builds on long histories of naked protests by African women (Diabate, 2016; Gouws, 2018; Meintjes, 2007; Shewarega Hussen, 2018). In protesting naked, womxn assert 'naked agency', using their naked bodies to shame others (Diabate, 2016; Meintjes, 2007; Shewarega Hussen, 2018). South African womxn who protest naked are also refusing the shame that adheres to womxn's bodies, and especially the bodies of womxn who have been raped. I argue that it is within this

[55] The sjambok is a heavy leather whip, which was historically used by white 'masters' against their black slaves (Gouws, 2018; Mazibuko, 2018).

context, in which womxn are increasingly collectively raging, both locally and globally, that womxn's rage is becoming more affective, as a disruptive, contagious force.

**Collectives of Rage**

The past few years have seen proliferation of feminist protests, online and in the streets, in relation to sexual and gendered violence (Rodino-Colocino, 2018; Sayers & Jones, 2014; Shewarega Hussen, 2018; Xaba, 2017). These include #RUReferenceList, #RememberKhwezi, #MeToo, #WeAreTired (in Nigeria), and *"Un violador en tu camino"* (A Rapist in Your Path) which began in Chile. These protests are examples of how "feminist rage concretises the relationship between violent masculinity and rape culture" (Mazibuko, 2018, p. 156). Protestors demand recognition, accountability and responsibility, as powerfully illustrated by the words of the *Un violador en tu camino*, originally performed by Lastesis, a feminist art collective in Valparaíso, in November 2019 (Miranda, 2020):

Patriarchy is our judge
That imprisons us at birth
And our punishment
Is the violence you DON'T see

Patriarchy is our judge
That imprisons us at birth
And our punishment
Is the violence you CAN see

It's femicide.
Impunity for my killer.
It's our disappearances.
It's rape!

And it's not my fault, not where I was, not how I dressed.
And it's not my fault, not where I was, not how I dressed.
And it's not my fault, not where I was, not how I dressed.
And it's not my fault, not where I was, not how I dressed.

And the rapist WAS you
And the rapist IS you

It’s the cops,
It’s the judges,
It’s the system,
It’s the President,

This oppressive state is a macho rapist.
This oppressive state is a macho rapist.

And the rapist IS you
And the rapist IS you

Sleep calmly, innocent girl
Without worrying about the bandit,
Over your dreams smiling and sweet,
Watches your loving cop.

And the rapist IS you
And the rapist IS you
And the rapist IS you
And the rapist IS you.
(Serafini, 2020, pp. 291-292).

These rageful lyrics recall Antoinette, Lara, Hannah and Camille’s attributions of responsibility (and shame) to the men who raped them.

Similarly to the rage articulated by feminist protests, within the contexts of the interviews, rage was cultivated and nurtured through solidarity and the creation of connections between losses:

> Hannah: I was gonna send coz I I didn't want to respond. He sent it on Tuesday and I wasn't gonna respond and then yesterday I thought, coz he knows where I live and he's the kind of shit that's going to rock up at my house and be like 'let's talk about it Hannah'.

Rebecca: Let's get a- you a big big water pistol

Hannah: Ja. [laughs]. So I said [reading] 'Alex, I'm not interested in meeting with you now or or ever' and I've never told him explicitly, I said 'you sexually assaulted me. There will always be bad blood. Let this be... formal notice that should you reach out again, come to my house, place of work, or approach me in public I'll have no other choice but to seek legal intervention or file for a restraining order. Don't contact me again or reply' [exhales]. And actually ja it needed to be said coz [Rebecca: Ja] I needed to put up that boundary

Rebecca: How do you feel?

Hannah: The first real boundary. I told him he sexually assaulted me and that's been... kind of empowering. [Rebecca: Mhm. Fantastic!] Ja.

Rebecca: Ja. I think that's ja

Hannah: No grey area.

Rebecca: Ja. No fucking ja no fucking grey area (First interview, my house, Cape Town, 20 November 2018).

As Hannah shares the details of the email that the rapist sent her, my rage swells and bursts out. This is an example of how rage travels, creating networks of solidarity (Canham, 2018). This solidarity stands in contrast to the pathologisation and dismissal of rage that womxn experienced, as discussed above. Given this pathologisation and dismissal, rage can be a lonely experience for women (Chemaly, 2018). Having rage taken seriously and listened to disrupts this loneliness (Scheman, 1993). Solidarity in rage creates alternative affective connections, beyond pain and victimisation, which make resistance possible (Maluleke & Moyer, 2020). We fantasise about water pistols and threaten legal action. What you hear in our voices is "fury not suffering" (Lorde, 1984, p. 130).

Laughter was a key way in which rageful solidarity was enacted within the context of the interviews:

Nomvula: so he tried to convince me that we were having sex but I knew that... [laughs] I would never have sex with someone... who... I didn't even have a conversation with [Rebecca: Mhmm] you know. Um... so I was very angry. I was

very upset. Um... and he told me that he used a condom to begin with and then he removed it... so I knew that I needed to... you know um... at least get a morning after pill [Rebecca: Mhmm]. I didn't know what else to do but that's the only thing I could think of [Rebecca: Mhmm] at the time... So... he offered to help me get one

Rebecca: Oh how generous of him!

Nomvula: I know! [laughs] [Rebecca: ja]. Ja um.... and then so we went... and um... I was [sighs] so devastated and I couldn't believe... what had happened... because that was also my friend's ex-boyfriend [Rebecca: Mhmm]. So... I just didn't know who I was gonna tell [Rebecca: Mhmm. Mhmm]. Or where I was receive any form of... [Rebecca: Mhmm] comfort or anything... So... ja interestingly I was still drunk at the time so we got the morning after pill, we went home. He was like I'll just take you up to your room whatever, make sure you're fine...it was like... I don't know [laughs].

Rebecca: Coz he's such a kind, caring

Nomvula: Coz he's such a kind person. Because... he's done this horrible thing to me [Rebecca: Yeah] but he's so compassionate.

Rebecca: [laughs] He's so compassionate (First interview, park, Cape Town, 23 November 2018).

Nomvula and my sarcasm and laughter emerge in response to the absurdity of a man who has raped a woman calmly escorting her to get a morning after pill. Here our rage is articulated in our shared recognition of the injustice of this situation (Ahmed, 2017). In laughing about this we simultaneously magnify it and reduce its power (Ahmed, 2017). This smirking, giggling and rolling our eyes is an 'ordinary' kind of rage, perhaps less risky than marching or shouting in the street, but nonetheless a refusal of the status quo (Ahmed, 2017; Chemaly, 2018).

**Possibilities of Violent Rage: Revenge or Social Justice?**

The first draft of this chapter did not include a section on womxn's violence against men who commit rape due to my own discomfort and resistance to engaging with this precarious topic. I have continued to struggle over the past five years with the possibility that perhaps the man who raped me will be caught one day and I will somehow be involved in the process of sending him to prison, where he is likely to be subjected to the same kind of violence he subjected me

to. Perhaps my resistance is also rooted in my own association with violence as something that womxn 'should not do'. I have returned to the question about womxn's violence against men who violate them amidst a growing desperation (both my own and more broadly) to imagine strategies for combatting gender-based violence. This desperation is reflected, for example, in recent calls to re-instate the death penalty for men who commit rape or to introduce chemical castration (R. Davis, 2018; De Klerk, 2019).

There were very few instances in which the womxn I interviewed spoke about using violence against men. Of the few instances that were present, the majority of them appeared as jokes. For example, Camille made the following suggestion, in relation to my question about how to prevent rape:

> you gotta fix masculinity at a fundamental [Rebecca: Ja.] level and men need to be able to communicate and [Rebecca: Yes.] or we need to get a you know a a fast-acting prostate cancer virus and wipe them all out [laughs] (Second interview, coffee shop, Cape Town, 21 May 2019).

Bianca made the following comment in our initial interview, about the man who raped her:

> Then I was like... well can he just *fucking die* and I was like no can somebody just *cut* his penis off [inhales] and then I started like um... I started searching him on Facebook one day and I was thinking... like what the fuck... can I do? What can I do... I'm n-[laughing] I'm not pla-plotting his murder. Don't worry [Rebecca: laughs]. Do you have that in your consent form? [both laugh] (First interview, Bianca's house, 22 August 2018).

I suggest that these joking allusions to using violence against men are rooted in rage and a desire for some form of justice, which recognises and acknowledges the harm that rape does to womxn who experience it. In a context in which there is repeated impunity for men who rape the fantasy of inflicting some form of physical violence is perhaps even more enticing. In talking about the use of violence against men, May reflected on a TV show she had recently watched:

> It's this kind of dystopian um situation where a group of um women basically become like a terrorist sect and they start like murdering rapists um and it's it's just a really interesting kind of social experiment I guess about, you know or social

> sort of speculative concept around like how that would alter the culture if there was like a real danger um you know. But because I think now you know especially in the wake of Me Too men got very scared about their reputations being ruined [Rebecca: Yes.] but what if was their lives? [Rebecca: Yes.] What if it was their bodily autonomy [Rebecca: Ja] (Second interview, May's house, Cape Town, 17 May 2019).

Here May reflects on the possibility of creating different consequences for male violence against womxn. She suggests that the threat of physical violence presents a much more substantial cost to committing acts of rape. While all of the womxn I interviewed reflected on the lack of consequences for men who commit rape and the unacceptableness of this status quo, none of them seriously suggested the use of violence against men who perpetrate rape as a potential solution. As I have reflected over, in relation to my own experience, perhaps this is because gendered relations of power make it difficult for womxn to imagine using violence to punish, damage and take revenge on men. Or perhaps they do not propose the use of violence because they know intimately what this kind of violence does, how violence wounds, how violence ruptures social connections, how it damages the possibilities for relating differently with each other.

I have been full of rage at many moments in researching, writing and thinking about this thesis. My rage has felt particularly strong in relation to the experiences of pain that I have heard from the womxn I have interviewed. This rage has been rooted in my love and empathy for them (Rodriguez & Boahene, 2012). And through this love and empathy I have come to love and empathise more with myself. In this way, rage has created connections across space, time and selves (Antonakaki et al., 2018). Like the womxn who are marching, singing, dancing and screaming in the streets across the globe, in this thesis I have tried to make connections between the violations of womxn across South Africa, including the violations of Sara Baartman, Fezekile Ntsukela Kuzwayo, the womxn at UCKAR, as well as all those womxn whose stories never make it onto the news. In this chapter, I have demonstrated the way in which rage allows for a response to the pain of rape, a call for rape to be addressed as a social crisis and the imagining that things could be different in the future (Harris, 2019). In this way, rage is also about hope – which is the affective position from which I will conclude this thesis.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## Concluding with Unsettling Hopefulness

> In March 2020, I receive a call from Buhle. As I see her name come up on my phone, I feel a stab of panic in my lower abdomen. My last call from one of my participants was from Aphiwe, desperately needing somewhere safe to go to escape the man who had raped her. But Buhle is calling for a different kind of help. She wants some resources to support other womxn who have been raped. She has created a space for womxn to come together and share their experiences of sexual violence. We talk a bit on the phone about how important these kinds of spaces are. After I hang up the phone I feel an odd sense of lightness, as if in all the darkness that surrounds this research, there still exists the possibility of something else – could it be hope? (Extract from research diary, 11 August 2020).

During the duration of this research project, I have repeated many times to myself and to others that I do not want to write a thesis that depicts rape as a decontextualised 'opportunity' for growth; a kind of glorified struggle which produces brave and courageous 'survivors'. As I have highlighted in the previous chapters, notions of womxn who experience rape as 'survivors' creates problematic affective conditions which constrain how womxn are able to feel about their experiences of sexual violation. The previous chapters have expanded the ways in which to 'survive' rape is an ongoing fight for both myself and the womxn I have interviewed. This survival is about the constant denial, dismissal and diminishment of the woundedness that rape produces. To 'survive' is to be alienated and isolated both from self and others. In many moments, to 'survive' is to be overcome by hopelessness. It is the overwhelming nature of sexual violence in South Africa that constitutes a kind of unaffectedness, which contributes to the sense that there is nothing to be done to stem this endless tide of violence. As Jamie remarked in our first interview: "there's a lot more of… like hopelessness, I suppose. Like 'ah fuck is this shit ever gonna end?'"

In this concluding chapter, I present the notion of unsettling hopefulness to bring together many of the intertwined threads of this thesis. As with my previous chapters, my concluding remarks are entangled with the narratives of my participants and my reflections on these narratives.

Thus, I articulate unsettling hopefulness in relation to extracts from my interviews, as well as my research diary. This structure reiterates and embodies my earlier argument about the inseparable nature of form and context and the inseparable nature of knowing, being, and doing; an entangled "ethico-onto-epistem-ology" (Barad, 2007, p. 90). I begin by outlining what I mean by unsettled hopefulness and then I reflect on some of the core lessons of this thesis.

**Hopelessness**

For me this research was, at least partly, borne out of a pressing weight of hopelessness. My experience at the TCC in Heideveld, that I describe at the beginning of this thesis, was a moment of despair, as well as discomfort. In that moment, and in many moments since then, I have been overwhelmed by the injustices that constitute sexual violence in South Africa. It is hard not to feel hopeless in the face of so many wounds and the repeated refusal to take these wounds seriously – as I have articulated in the previous chapters. The experiences my participants have recounted in our interviews are painful reminders that womxn in South Africa are "not free" (Bhana, 2012, p. 352). Hearing these experiences of violation has intensified my sense of hopelessness. At one moment, I reflected on this sense of hopelessness in the following way:

> But how can it ever return to normal when normal is so violent?
> Where violence is everywhere, seeping into the pores, the soul, the self
> How to think outside it, against it
> How to break free without breaking apart
> How to weep but not drown
> How to be angry but not lash out
> How to be empty but not paralysed
> How to be myself?
> In this heavy space
> Submerged in violence
> That seeps into the pores, the soul
> My self
> (Extract from research diary, 11 April 2017).

Reading this again, I feel a resurgence of the sense of being crushed. But simultaneously, there is a sense of trying desperately to escape from that which is crushing me. In many moments of intense hopelessness, there has also been a furious desire for something else; for things to be different, less hopeless. At the same time that I felt intensely uncomfortable and angry that the nurse at the TCC asked me who I was bringing for an appointment, I furiously desired a different kind of hospital waiting room – one in which the nurse is horrified and enraged to see any womxn in the waiting room and particularly horrified and enraged at the endless stream of womxn that come to the TCC every day (Helman, 2018c). This desire for something else has been reflected in and magnified by the personal and political protests against sexual and gender-based violence across the globe – as mentioned in the previous chapter. These articulations of rage are also about the possibility that things could be different. They are about hope for a more equitable and just society (D. Thompson, 2017). In concluding, I argue that this desire for 'something else', this different possibility, is hope. Thus, our 'survivals' are also about hope and keeping hope alive (Ahmed, 2017). This is a hope which "survives the general ruin" of rape (Eagleton, 2014, p. 115).

As I offer some concluding reflections, I remain unsettled by the notion of 'hopefulness'. I, thus, propose a hope that is full of pain, rooted in woundedness and committed to mourning what has been lost (Bozalek et al., 2014; Thaler, 2019; Winters, 2016). This hope, which attempts to recognise the hopelessness of the current situation (Nixon, 2019), is a hope that unsettles. This is not a naïve hope which maintains the status quo by serving hegemonic interests (Boler, 2014). Neither is it a kind of blind optimism, which assumes that things will 'get better' by themselves (Cvetkovich, 2012; Kay & Banet-Weiser, 2019; Zembylas, 2014). As Lauren Berlant (2011) has argued, optimism creates attachments to the continuity of the world as it is. Rather, this is a hope that refuses a reconciliation to the present, while simultaneously remembering, registering and contemplating past and present losses, damages and erasures (Moltmann, 1967/1993; Winters, 2016). This is "a type of hope that remains sensitive to the catastrophic failure of the past, and alert to the immense perils of the present, without, however, foreclosing the prospect of a less oppressive, less violent and less unequal future" (Thaler, 2019, p. 3).

**The Pain of Hope**

In her most recent book, Judith Butler (2020) has argued that the current moment requires an ethical obligation and incitement to think beyond what have been constructed as "the realistic limits of the possible" (p. 29). The normalisation of sexual and other forms of violence against womxn constrains the possibilities of constructing a different kind of society. Within this context, an unsettled hopefulness is the assertion that a different society is possible (Boler, 2014; Solnit, 2016).

> Buhle: Society is shaped in a way that healing is not something that supposedly happens naturally, that when you get your, when you you you you, when you get raped […] that society is is is is channelled in a way that um everything that they do in society just drive you to feeling more unworthy [Rebecca: Mhmm], more unnormal [Rebecca: Mhmm] […] I think if society was welcoming of victims er and survivors it would, healing would come easier (Second interview, phone, 23 May 2020).

> Tanya: I really hope that...in a generation or two from now i- people will...have to think hard about what is rape again and... [Rebecca: Mhmm] things like- that would make me happy...if it could be like that, I'll be very happy. And if I can- in my generation get to a point where, when things like this happen to women...they feel free [Rebecca: Mhmm]...to...report it...[Rebecca: Mhmm] to see justice being done [Rebecca: Mhmm]...and to feel that...there's a society around them that will embrace them [Rebecca: Mhmm] (second interview, coffee shop, Johannesburg, 5 May 2019).

Both Buhle and Tanya articulate how the contemporary context creates barriers to "healing" and "justice" for womxn who have been raped. They reflect on how shame is a central affective barrier as womxn are made to feel "unworthy" and "unnormal" and they do not feel "free to report" rape. Here Buhle and Tanya express the pain and the struggle that 'surviving' rape entails. It is in response to this pain and struggle that they imagine a different kind of society – one in which "healing would come easier" and in which womxn who experience rape will be "embrace[d]". Alongside this, Tanya also articulated a hope for a society in which rape is unimaginable. I argue that these are examples of unsettling hopefulness, a hope that is intertwined with despair (Thaler, 2019). It is in recognising and explicating the current situation of survival as untenable that Buhle and Tanya are able to articulate a need for transformation

(Eagleton, 2014). Their notions of "healing", "justice" and being "welcomed" and "embraced" are constituted in relation to the current configurations of pain, shame, silencing, alienation and isolation produced by rape, as I have explored in the previous chapters. In gesturing towards hopefulness Buhle and Tanya do not banish their despair (Macy, 1991; Mayes & Holdsworth, 2020), nor do they embody a hope that escapes from the present (Zaliwska & Boler, 2019). In fact, it is the acknowledgment of past and present pain, despair and horror that comes to circumscribe the possibilities of a different future (Thaler, 2019). While both Buhle and Tanya present (hopeful) imaginings of a different society, they simultaneously construct this alternative society as a distant possibility. Tanya's reference to "in a generation or two from now" suggests that shifting social conditions in relation to rape will be a long process. This comment points to the entrenched and normalised nature of sexual violence in South Africa, as documented throughout this thesis.

I argue that the temporal nature of hope must be understood in relation to the broader (hopeful) democratic project in South Africa. The painfully slow process of societal change has most recently been captured by the Fallist student movements in 2015 and 2016. These protests signal the ending of a politics of patience and hope (Pillay, 2016). The students, who have been 'born free'[56], ragefully disrupt discourses of healing, reconciliation, and 'transformation' that have characterised the post-apartheid context, thus demanding an end to a permanent state of 'waithood' (Honwana, 2013; Khan, 2017; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018; Riaz-Mohamed, 2015). Kim Wale, Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela and Jeffrey Praeger (2020) have referred to this as 'haunted hope', through which students (re)live the inequalities of the past, both within and beyond the university. The protests are disruptions of the 'new South Africa' as a project of hope – the students are no longer prepared to wait hopefully for that which has been promised to them. Describing the new South Africa, Ian Shapiro and Kahreen Tebeau (2011) write:

> How could one overstate the hope and enthusiasm that accompanied its improbably birth? Millions throughout the country and around the world cheered as long lines of first-time voters queued patiently for hours in those three days in late April 1994 to legitimate the peaceful transition from apartheid and to select their first democratic government […] it was a dream that many South Africans […] never believed would come true (p. 1).

[56] The term 'born frees' refers to the generation of South Africans who were born after 1994.

For millions of people, the hope of the new South Africa was the hope of living free from segregation and police harassment, the hope of access to basic amenities including sanitation, water and electricity, the hope of having a house made of bricks, the hope of new possibilities for dignity and respect (F. Ross, 2009). It was the hope of 'a better life for all', as articulated in the ANC's 1994 election campaign. In the past 26 years, this hope has been repeatedly frustrated, as social and economic inequalities continue to haunt South Africa (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018; F. Nyamnjoh, 2016). The Fallist movements embody the effects and affects of a society in which "the violence of poverty and demoralisation hav[e] become the norm" (Mbembe, 2015b, n.p.). As I described in the introductory chapter, this research project is embedded within a landscape of violent inequality, through which I am constantly recalled to remember the wounds that apartheid has wrought. Within this context, 'post-apartheid' is not a new political dispensation or a specific point in time, but rather a name for the ongoing labour of acknowledging and attending to the multiple, entangled damages that characterise the present (van Bever Donker et al., 2017). Within this context, the violence of rape remains entangled with and constituted by many other forms of unresolved violation.

**Performing Hope**

> Before our first interview starts, Camille asks me if I have a good therapist. I tell her I do. Here she acknowledges the heaviness of this kind of research work. Of course, it is hard, heavy, full of pain. But this process has also been shot through with something else, a kind of lightness and freedom to talk about that which is rendered 'unspeakable'. It here that the hope creeps in (Extract from research diary, 20 January 2019).

This lightness and freedom are produced in moments of unsettled hopefulness in the interviews. To come together to talk about rape, to share painfully, in a context of dismissal and denial is to perform hope. In discussing their own experiences of 'surviving' rape, many of the womxn I interviewed highlighted how they hoped for a different world in which other womxn would not experience the kind of pain that they themselves had experienced in relation to rape.

> Faith: Some people are also in my position. It might be a boyfriend or someone else [Rebecca: Mhmm] […] ja so I know that for someone who would listen to my story or read my story they would probably be encouraged that you don't, it

> doesn't, it d- it's it's not about the relations that you have [Rebecca: Mhmm] with someone else. If someone did that kind of thing to you it is still rape [Rebecca: Mhmm] you know? [Rebecca: Mhmm]. It doesn't matter who who who who did that to you [Rebecca: Mhmm] you know? (Second interview, coffee shop Cape Town, 12 May 2019).

> Bianca: shit there was a 17-year-old girl... who went through all of this um... who... who did e- I went through that alone... and... I don't want that for... for other people [inhales] (First interview, Bianca's house, Cape Town, 22 August 2018).

Here both Faith and Bianca articulate the hope for social responses to rape that are different from those that they experienced, in a similar way to Buhle and Tanya above. Since the rapist was her ex-husband, Faith articulates how harmful understandings of rape as perpetrated by strangers limits the support that womxn who experience rape receive. Similarly (as discussed in the previous chapter) Bianca did not tell her family about the rape. Here she reflects on how she hopes that other womxn will not have to experience their rapes alone, as she did. This hope for something different emerges within the context of trauma, shame and rage that have been articulated throughout this thesis. This is a hope which refutes the current context of trauma, shame and rage in which the wounds of rape are not attended to with care. This is a hope which recognises the ongoing difficulties of articulating the traumas of rape within the spectacularisation of violence, as well as the widespread normalisation of high rape statistics. It is a hope which acknowledges the ongoing power of shame to blame and responsibilise womxn for being raped, fixing them in positions of 'unrespectability'. It is a hope which draws on rage which is produced within a context of denial, dismissal and pathologisation of womxn's emotional responses.

However, Faith and Bianca do not merely articulate hope but, rather, they *perform* this unsettled hopefulness. As Terry Eagleton (2014) has argued, "hope is not simply an anticipation of the future but an active force in its constitution" (p. 84). For Bianca, Faith and many of the other womxn I interviewed, a commitment to alternative possibilities is enabled through examining and challenging the conditions that create attachments to shame, isolation, pain, alienation and prohibit articulations of rage. Through troubling, destabilising and undoing dominant assumptions a space is opened up for contestation, revision and reimagination (Winters, 2016). In sharing their painful stories, the womxn I have interviewed hope to give

hope to other womxn; a hope that they are not alone, that the rape is not their fault, a hope that there are places of support, love and rage, in which the pain and shame of rape can be worked through.

As I have articulated in the previous chapters, speaking about rape within the context of the interviews operated as a process of reformation – through which 'individual' experiences of rape were re-conceptualised as fragments of a much broader social and political problem (Alcoff, 2018). In constructing rape as a deep wound, which is *terrible enough*, in resisting the stickiness of shame, and in ragefully demanding 'enough is enough', my participants and I loosen the grip of the present (Eagleton, 2014). Through resisting the normalising power of rape to 'fix', crush, and render us 'worse than dead', we co-construct openings or cracks which resist the world we feel is wrong (Dinerstein, 2012; Horton, 2014). In articulating hopes for a different future, the womxn I interviewed and I, are hoping not alone, but with and for others (Ahmed, 2015). It a hope that despite multiple experiences of dismissal, denial and violation, a different affective encounter is possible, one in which pain can be heard and wounds can be witnessed.

I propose that the interviews operated as sites of witnessing; as intersubjective relational encounters, through which unspoken and unknown experiences were narrated (McCormack, 2014). This is a witnessing which embodies *ubuntu*, through a reciprocal recognition of the personhood of others (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2020). As I have shown, not only do I witness my participants' narrative, but simultaneously they witness mine. This is witnessing which has repeatedly broken my heart (Pillow, 2019), a witnessing that screams with pain and rage, and in some moments even with laughter. Through bearing witness, I am repeatedly undone and forced to face the ways in which I am implicated in processes of exclusion and silencing (Boler, 1999; McCormack, 2014). Thus, this is a witnessing which acknowledges the affective entanglement of my research participants and I (Stein & Mankowski, 2004). Through this witnessing I have attempted to recognise the pains of rape and grant these pains the status of a significant event, as a kind of irreparable harm, while troubling constructions of womxn who experience rape as 'irreparably harmed' (Ahmed, 2004c; Barker & Macleod, 2018). This is a witnessing through which dominant understandings of rape are reworked. A central part of this witnessing is engaging with the trauma, shame and rage that are produced by hearing participants' experiences of rape. By reflecting on moments of trauma, shame and rage that have occurred throughout the research process I present an affective knowledge of rape. This

is an affective knowledge which demonstrates the overwhelming trauma of living in a rape culture where thousands of womxn are raped every day. This is an affective knowledge which demonstrates the power of shame which attaches to rape and womxn who have been raped, even when attempting to work from a decolonial feminist perspective. This is an affective knowledge that demonstrates how rage is produced by a context that fails to take seriously the multiple wounds that rape inflicts.

In writing about unsettling hopefulness, I too perform hopefulness. As Rosi Braidotti (2002) has noted, there is a need for affirmative stories that create new figurations and visions, beyond critique. Simultaneously, my approach is consistent with decolonial demands for the establishment of alternative archives (Kessi et al., 2020). Below I explore the ways in which the interviews operate as rituals of re-membeing and how the thesis establishes an 'archive of feeling' (Cvetkovich, 2003), which facilitates an alternative engagement with the affects of rape. Thus, through this thesis I have attempted to write a "feeling-thinking-desiring visio[n] about something different" (Lykke, 2015, p. 89). Recognising and naming hope is important not only to affirm and honour the struggles of the womxn I have interviewed, but also to resist violent colonising constructions of South Africa as a place 'without hope'. As Floretta Boonzaier (2017) has so astutely contended, poor, 'black' communities with high rates of violent crime in South African are repeatedly represented in the mainstream news media as hopeless spaces. She uses the case of Anene Booysen to demonstrate how Bredasdorp is described as "as a place of hopelessness, with 'social ills', including high levels of alcohol abuse, 'broken families', unemployment, poverty, high school dropout rates, drug abuse, and teenage pregnancies" (Boonzaier, 2017, p. 474). These images of Bredasdorp, and many other communities in South Africa, form part of a broader archive through which African people, and African womxn in particular, are rendered as passive victims of violence (Judge, 2015; Mavuso et al., 2019; Shefer, 2018; Tamale, 2011b). Here I do not wish to deny that womxn are victimised by violence. As this thesis shows, the costs of this victimisation are deeply wounding, both personally and socially. The violence of rape is intertwined with other forms of victimisation, including those related to racism and poverty. To write of unsettled hopefulness is not to deny that there are intersecting structural conditions which produce a heavy sense of hopelessness for many womxn in South Africa, as I have articulated above.

Instead, in writing about unsettling hopefulness, I hope to hold simultaneously the weight of pain and despair and the possibility for resistance. Here I think of Naminata Diabate's phrase

'naked agency', mentioned in the previous chapter, which she uses to describe women's participation in naked protests. She uses this term to describe the space "between nakedness and power and [as] a reading praxis that privileges the dialectical movement between positions of victimhood and power" (Diabate, 2016, p. 64). Similarly, in asserting an unsettled hopefulness I attempt to inhabit this in-between space. Despite the continued dismissal and denial of our pain, my participants and I enact resistance and alternative liberatory possibilities. We insist that our rapes are 'terrible enough' and deserving of a more complex, caring and supportive response. Despite the stickiness of shame, we resist and redefine not only our experiences of rape, but our sexualities more broadly. Despite the pathologisation of our rage, we continue to ragefully demand to be listened to.

**Rituals of Re-membering**

Sara Ahmed (2017) has said that reassembling of selves occurs through the everyday, ordinary and careful work of looking after selves and others. As I have articulated, care has been central to the conceptualisation and enactment of this research project. Within the context of the interviews my participants and I engage in rituals of care, as attempts to maintain, repair and extend our 'worlds' in hopeful ways (Fisher & Tronton, 1990). An approach informed by care has facilitated an "ethics of becoming-with-other" which recognises and attends to the ways in which "the self is made at the point of encounter with an Other [and that] what makes us human is our capacity to share our condition – including our wounds and injuries – with others" (Mbembe, 2015b, n.p.).

> Camille: as like women sharing information and sharing personal experience... [Rebecca: Mhmm] feel like that is you know like it's a really, it's a really important connection and it's a really important way of understanding our- ourselves through other people [Rebecca: Mhmm] and other people's experiences and that is like the essential humanity (Second interview, coffee shop, Cape Town, 22 May 2019).

> Valerie: I um as I was reflecting on the questions that you asked me I was just um it sort of just made me realise how important it is that there are places and space where women can go to be healed from this trauma because some women live with it forever um some women don't even talk about it, they um don't have a space to go to (Second interview, coffee shop, Cape Town, 17 May 2019).

Here Camille reflects on how the sharing of experiences enables alternative humanising understandings of rape. As I have demonstrated, these alternative understandings are those which enable proclamations that rape is terrible enough, understandings that exist beyond shame, and rageful understandings which make demands on the present. Similarly, Valerie articulates how the interview operates as an alternative space – a space of possibilities for talking and healing. As I have demonstrated throughout this thesis, rape operates as an act of dismemberment, which cuts womxn off from their sense of themselves and their relationships with others. Within this context of dehumanisation and silencing, the alternative space of the interview operates as a space of re-membering. It is here that alternative understandings of rape are formed through connections between my participants and I. It is in these connected understandings that rape is (re)configured as an act full of trauma, shame and rage. These are collective acts of "re-membering, practicing hopefulness that… reconfigur[e] possibilities for the future, finding possibilities to endure" (Flint, 2020, p. 59)

> Aphiwe: Like the interview made me to...to kind of like...want more people to come and open up, you know? [Inhales] So um...I kind of thought like...*if* it could be like *me*...like...e-youth, you know? [Inhales] Like me- Someone who's [inhales] ...who's a child and stuff [inhales], they will- they will like...they would...open up, just because they won't be afraid of me [Rebecca: Mhmm] and stuff, you know [Inhales] […] finding places where I could meet youth people- [inhales] young people, you know [Rebecca: Mhmm] [inhales] and kind of like share my story [Rebecca: Mhmm], and then kind of like...like- Kind of like [inhales]...Make a way for them to open up [Rebecca: Mhmm] you know? Ja (second interview, coffee shop, Cape Town, 21 May 2019).

In our second interview Aphiwe reflected on how the interviews made her want to create alternative spaces for others to come forward and talk about their experiences of rape. She highlights the centrality of mutual sharing to create spaces of openness. I take this is as an example of how unsettling hopefulness spreads out from the interview context, igniting other hopeful moments. As I highlighted at the beginning of this chapter, following the interviews Buhle established a space for womxn in her community to come together and share their experiences of rape. In our second interview Tanya told me how, following our first interview, she spoke openly for the first time about her experience of rape in her church in the hope that this would disrupt the silence about rape in this space. These are all examples of how my participants (and I) have been moved by the research process, "such that we are no longer in

the same place" (Ahmed, 2004a, p. 27). Unsettling hopefulness is borne in the sharing of pain, shame and rage in our interviews (Glass, 2014). These affective connections constitute possibilities for (unsettling) connections and solidarities (Zembylas, 2014). These examples of hope highlight the importance of being able to share stories of violation in supportive spaces, as has been demonstrated in other research about sexual violence in South Africa and other contexts (Knettle et al., 2019; Campbell et al., 2010). Sharing stories may provide opportunities for solidarity, which disrupts the alienation and isolation that rape produces (Padmanabhanunni & Edwards, 2016). By creating connections between stories of trauma, shame and rage, these stories are transformed (van Schalkwyk, 2018). As Ann Cvetkovich (2003) has proposed "in being made public, [feelings] are revealed to be part of shared experience of the social" (p. 286).

Not only do my participants and I disrupt the alienation and isolation that the dismemberment of rape produces, but we simultaneously disrupt hierarchies of trauma that position some rapes as 'more terrible' than others. As I have explored in Chapter Four, this does not mean constructing experiences of rape as 'shared' in ways that deny the differences in womxn's experiences. Rather, this means remaining unsettled by the gaps that exist in our experiences of rape. Alongside moments of connection and solidarity, the research has also been characterised by inabilities to create this kind of affective connections. As I have highlighted, I failed to witness Nomvula's experience of being raped by a man who refused to pay her for sex. Similarly, my own experience of shame in relation to Tanya's recounting of her experience of rape made me turn away from her. These failures are embedded within a broader context in which dominant narrative frameworks continue to constrain the possibilities of witnessing experiences of rape (Alcoff, 2018). These moments are about the fragility of the common thread (that Refiloe referred to in Chapter Four) that links experiences together. My reflections on these moments of failure, discomfort and disconnection are themselves intended to unsettle and disrupt my position as researcher and the power which this position affords me in relation to construction of particular 'truths'. By engaging in uncomfortable reflexivity, I attend to these moments of discomfort as a form of knowledge (and feeling) about the social relations, including the politics of knowledge production, within which this research project is embedded (Pillow, 2003; Ward & Wylie, 2014). In these uncomfortable moments I am forced to confront my own privileges, and the ways in which these are implicated in the various impossibilities of this research work and beyond (Huysamen, 2018; Pillow, 2003). In producing a more

"messy text", (Marcus, 1998, p. 392) I attempt to "[stay] with the trouble" (Haraway, 2016, p. 1) of doing research on sexual violence in South Africa. I return to this idea below.

Central to both rituals of re-membering and an unsettled hopefulness are practices of mourning (Cvetkovich, 2003). Through sharing, mourning and raging together, my participants and I enact both a feminist vigilantism, which refuses the violent disconnections that rape produces, and a feminist vigil that marks and mourns our and others' losses (Ahmed, 2017). The enactment of mourning is a refusal of social understandings of our experiences of rape as not that bad and the demand that we 'get over it'.

> Nosipho: I always tell people when they say 'you're strong', I say 'you don't know me. Don't say I'm *strong'* [Rebecca: Mhmm]. I make an example that if you have a vase e-er that's broken [inhales] and you put it glue it together and when you glue it together and you feel that that vase is um... it's won't be the same [Rebecca: Mhmm]. Ja (First interview, phone, 17 January 2019).

Here Nosipho reflects on the way in which rape ruptures – producing a shattering of self. While she articulates that a re-membering, is possible, she insists that it "won't be the same". Similarly, in our second interview, Camille noted, "it doesn't mean you can just go back to the way things were before". These are demands to acknowledge and witness the enduring pains that rape causes. They are insistences on mourning (Lykke, 2015). As Claire Schwartz (2018) has written about her experience of rape: "I don't want to be told that I am brave and strong […] I don't want to be made noble. I want someone willing to watch me thrash and crumple because that, too, is the truth, and it needs a witness" (p. 67). A heightened capacity to witness and be unsettled by the violence and suffering that rape produces is necessary in order to enact a state of affectedness, in which rape cannot be dismissed and denied. I think here of Sara Ahmed (2015) writing about scars and the way in which the scars function as reminders of injustice. She writes:

> the scar is a sign of the injury: a good scar allows healing, it even covers over, *but the covering always exposes the injury, reminding us of how it shapes the body* […] scars are traces of those injuries that persist in the healing or stitching of the present. This kind of good scar reminds us that recovering from injustice cannot be about covering over the injuries, which are effects of that injustice; signs of an unjust contact between

> our bodies and others. So 'just emotions' might be ones that work *with* and *on* rather than *over* the wounds that surface as traces of past injuries in the present (p. 202).

The wounds of rape produce affective scars, which demonstrate both the possibility of healing and the importance of not covering over the injustice which produces these scars in the first place. In this thesis, I have reflected on the wounds that are inflicted by rape, both by the act of rape itself and the social context in which this act is understood. In many instances this social context requires that womxn cover their wounds and do not attend to the scars that rape leaves behind. Nosipho, in reflecting on her own activism, provided a powerful example of bearing the scars of rape:

> You know why I decided to do this [start an non-profit organisation in her community]? It took me years and every time we go to these funerals of a person who have been been raped and murdered, women are dress[ed] up wearing their best makeup, their best wigs and everything […] when they go to funerals they cover their pain in looking beautiful [Rebecca: Mhmm]. And then I said and said but when a man stand in front and preaching, because in all these funerals it will be a man preaching about how God came and take from the family [Rebecca: Mhmm]. But we never tackled the issue of this woman was murdered, he took, the woman was murdered by a man and this has happened, this should stop. And I decided um why don't I come with a concept of awareness in a way, when we go to funerals of victim of this crime, we don't dress up. We tear our clothes, we put blood, we send messages, we go bare feet, every person will do whatever that they feel that they're expressing [Rebecca: Mhmm] their pain […] So I decided us picketing in court and just saying we are marching we want justice but these people don't see what they leave behind or what is the pain that have the perpetrator inflicted to the family (Second interview, phone, 15 May 2019).

Nosipho's protests, like those of some many womxn across the world, are about a call for collective mourning, that attend to the social and personal scars of rape. The public enactment of this mourning – "We tear our clothes, we put blood, we send messages, we go bare feet, every person will do whatever that they feel that they're expressing their pain"– constitutes an affective engagement through which others cannot avert their eyes (Gqola, 2017; Serafini, 2020). This is an affective engagement that disrupts the possibility of separating from rape, remaining unaffected. This is an invitation to recognise a shared vulnerability to rape, as well

as to other forms of loss, injury and death (Butler, 2020). The repeated insistence on the devastation and unacceptableness of rape expressed through global and local anti-gender-based violence protests are also insistences on mourning, calls to attend to shared vulnerability and assertions that the lives, injuries, pain and scars of those who experience rape (and other forms of gender-based violence) matter. Like those enacting *Un violador en tu camino*, those protesting the RUReferenceList, the #TotalShutDown protesters, the queer and feminist activist who clothed the sculpture of Sara Baartman, the four womxn who demanded that we #RememberKhwezi, my participants and I re-member ourselves through remembering both personal and collective experiences of violation that remain unresolved (Mazibuko, 2018). These are acts of mourning entangled with trauma, shame and rage. In bringing together the experiences of 17 different womxn I have attempted to show that our experiences of rape have a cumulative force that transcends their individual meaning (Cvetkovich, 2003). The collective weight of rape is full of both hope and hopelessness. This collective weight demands different conceptualisations of trauma and injury – beyond narrow, medicalised and individualised notions. In this way, the collective weight of rape demands a different kind of archive-making.

**An Archive of Feeling**

It is highly significant that in the past five years there has been a proliferation of social movements at universities both in South Africa and across the globe, including #RhodesMustFall in South African and at Oxford University and #RoyallMustFall at Harvard University. These movements have called for the decolonisation of universities, which remain colonial institutions of knowledge and 'truth' (Boonzaier & van Niekerk, 2019). These protests are reminders of the need to critically reflect on how practices of knowledge-making continue to reproduce exclusion and inequality. These protests have powerfully evoked the affective, highlighting how painful it is to inhabit spaces steeped in racist, sexist, homophobic, among other, violent images and practices (Cornell et al., 2016; Kessi 2019; Mbembe, 2016). These movements are also about establishing counter narratives and disruptions to the public archive (Sawyer & Osei-Kofi, 2020). As I discussed in Chapter Two, the queer, feminist re-robing of the sculpture of Sara Baartman is a disruption of the affective infrastructure of the university and the archive which renders 'black' bodies as merely 'objects' (Kessi, 2019; Mbembe, 2016; A. Nyamnjoh, 2017).

Throughout this research, I have reflected on the dominant archives that constitute research on and social responses to sexual violence in South Africa and beyond. However, as Saidiya Hartman (2008) has argued, it is no longer adequate to merely expose the violence of the archive but also to engage possibilities for generating different descriptions, beyond this archive. This thesis is an attempt to establish "an archive of feeling […] which stand[s] alongside the documents of dominant culture in order to offer alternative modes of knowledge" (Cvetkovich, 2003, pp. 7-8). The affects that I have analysed throughout this thesis hold fragments and layers that are constituted by intersections of personal experience and shifting social contexts (Cook, 2017). This affective archive stands alongside research which produces statistical data on the alarmingly high rates of sexual violence in South Africa, through which individual experiences of violation are transformed into neat rows of numbers. It stands alongside 'objective' colonial 'science' which fails to conceptualise institutionalised forms of violence as rape. It stands alongside the endless sensational newspaper reports of rape (and other forms of gender-based violence), which render womxn as merely broken bodies. This affective archive stands alongside a forensic archive of rape, which records the visible wounds of rape on an official medical document, flattening the particularities and intricacies of each violation into a more normative and legible form (Mulla, 2014). This affective archive demonstrates the socially constitutes nature of the affects of trauma, shame and rage that are produced by intersecting racialised, classed and gendered relations of power. Through transforming womxn's private memories into public ones (Manda, 2015; Matchett & Cloete, 2016), this affective archive provokes a different conceptualisation and engagement with the harms of rape. By conceptualising the affects of rape beyond individual psychological dispositions (Ahmed, 2004c), I highlight the (im)possibilities of healing available in the contemporary South African rape culture.

This research project is an archive that extends rape and its affects beyond the most 'obvious', 'catastrophic' and 'public' instances of sexual violence (Cvetkovich, 2003), to include a multiplicity of violations that extend an understanding of the many ways in which rape wounds. I have tried to work against the processes of selection and discrimination that assigns status only to certain experiences of rape as 'terrible enough' to archive. As Jacques Derrida (1996) has posited, archivisation does not merely 'record' events, but produces these events in specific ways. In utilising an affective writing approach, I have attempted to constitute an affective archive, an archive that refuses hegemonic notions that it is possible to 'know' and write about rape in a disengaged, unaffected way (R. Campbell, 2002; Law, 2016; Sawyer & Osei-Kofi,

2020). I have created records of womxn's experiences of rape which contribute to a decolonial, feminist archive of love, rage and pain (Pillow, 2019). This is an archive which produces not just knowledge, but also feeling (Cvetkovich, 2003).

> Jamie: I think it's...one of those things we don't speak about enough...and when we do it's normally quite detached and... [inhales] and... there's not a lot of conversation that goes into it […] I think I really enjoyed the interview because there's so seldom an opportunity to d- talk about rape in so many layered ways (Second interview, Jamie's house, Johannesburg, 5 May 2019).

In our second interview, Jamie reflected on how, for her, the interviews operated as a space to move beyond talking about rape in a detached way. Instead, it became possible to engage with rape in "so many layered ways". As I have shown through this thesis, these are layers of trauma, shame, rage, and hope. The layered account (Ronai, 1995) I have produced, through drawing on extracts from the interviews, autoethnographic reflections, and reflexive engagements throughout the research process, is an attempt to do (some) justice to some of these layers. As I have demonstrated, this writing is as much about ethics and politics as it is about epistemology and methodology (Lykke et al., 2014). In trying to 'know' differently about rape, I have engaged with feeling differently and I have used these feelings to write differently (Hemmings, 2012). This writing is also about honouring the interconnectedness of different experiences of rape, as well as the ways in which histories of violence remain alive in the present (Ahmed, 2015; Derrida, 1994). As I have demonstrated in this thesis, to be affected by rape is to be touched, stirred, moved, troubled and even overwhelmed. Through paying attention to the ways in which I have been affected by doing this work, I have produced an alternative, affective account of rape, through which rape is (re)defined as full of trauma, shame, rage and even an unsettling hopefulness.

**Returning to Discomfort**

Discomfort is a central affective thread throughout this work, entangled with trauma, shame, rage and hope – both unsettling and productive for thinking about and feeling rape in South Africa. I want to end, as I began, with some of the discomforts that this research project has surfaced. Ending with discomfort is an attempt to stay with the multiple troubles that rape, and research and writing about rape, produces. As Donna Haraway (2016) has noted, "[s]taying with the trouble requires learning to be fully present, not as a vanishing pivot between awful

or edenic pasts and apocalyptic or salvific futures, but as moral critter entwined in myriad unfinished configurations of places, times, matters, meanings" (p. 1).

The archive I have constructed remains unfinished and partial – it tells only fragments of 17 womxn's experiences of rape. As I have demonstrated, the archive of normalised narratives of rape has the power to delineate whose experiences of rape are 'real' and 'affecting'. The choice to focus on womxn's experiences may itself constitute a re-inscription of the binary notion of womxn as 'victims' of rape and men as 'perpetrators'. Sexual and other forms of violence perpetrated against men remain 'unspeakable' in many ways, in light of rigid constructions of masculinity as inviolable (Ratele, 2013a; Kramer, 2017). A commitment to acknowledging shared vulnerability (Butler, 2020) and working with trauma, shame and rage must include a recognition of the ways in which men are made vulnerable as both 'perpetrators' and 'victims' of violence (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2005; Shefer et al., 2015; van Niekerk & Boonzaier, 2019a). There is much affective work to be done here – including working with mxn's fear, shame and rage (see for example, Ratele, 2013b; van Niekerk, 2019). This kind of work is also about acknowledging deep wounds and scars and the interconnection between different forms of violence.

While I have argued that this thesis serves as an archive of feelings, it is an archive constituted by words. Like Richar Nagar (2019), I am discomforted by "that which cannot be heard, seen, sensed, or felt through words alone, especially when those words are written down and caged in a regulari[s]ed structure, in familiar fonts, in a predictable sequence of black and white pages" (p. 8). I have agonised in many moments about how to 'best' write both my own experiences and those of my participants, in ways that allow for some of their powerful affective value to emerge. I remain particularly uncomfortable that this thesis is written in English, which is the second language of many of my participants. The fact that I can only communicate proficiently in English reflects a broader structural inequality, in which English, both globally and locally, remains the dominant language, particularly in academic contexts (Green et al., 2007). I think uncomfortably of some of my participants trying to read what I have written about them – unable to make sense of the complex way in which I have rendered their intimate thoughts and feelings. This discomfort is an important reminder of the limitations of this kind of academic work and the need to develop strategies for different kinds of translations. I hope I can attend to this glaring gap, at least partially, by working careful to transform parts of this research into different forms, including something that can be shared

with Rape Crisis, which has been so fundamental to this research journey. This is a critical part of producing different knowledge and producing knowledge differently (St. Pierre, 1997).

I remain deeply uncomfortable when thinking about the ways in which my participants (and my) hope for a different future remains so constrained. As I have demonstrated in this chapter, in articulating an unsettling hopefulness, we did not imagine a world free from rape[57], instead we discussed a world in which womxn (and others) who experience rape receive more support and more care. The challenge of imagining a world free from rape shows how far there still is to go to 'de-normalise' rape. Perhaps this is one of the many costs of having so many people walking wounded in South Africa (Gqola, 2015) – the collective pain of the wounds makes it so difficult to believe in the possibilities of a less violating society.

I have tried to stay with the discomfort – to hold feelings of grief, fear, and despair – in conceptualising a critical version of hope for these critical times (Mayes & Holdsworth, 2020; Zaliwska & Boler, 2019). It is a hope that makes trouble, that stirs up strong responses to the devastation that rape brings, while trying to settle these troubled waters and (re)assemble quiet places (Haraway, 2016). To end with hope is significant, even as it is uncomfortable and unsettling. To end with hope is to honour the quiet places that have been built between my participants and I. These are quiet places which resonate loudly, reverberate powerfully and throb affectively within the contemporary landscape of sexual violence in South Africa and beyond. These quiet places gesture to the importance of care, ethics, relationality and affectivity not only in producing more sensitive and nuanced research about sexual violence, but also in cultivating a society which engages differently with the affects of rape. As I draw this thesis to a close, I remain simultaneously hopeful and full of despair.

[57] An exception is Tanya saying: "in a generation or two from now i- people will...have to think hard about what is rape again and… things like- that would make me happy..."

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## APPENDIX A

## Participant Information Sheet

**Affected by Rape**

My name is Rebecca and I was raped in October 2015. I want to use my experience of being raped and my own process of making sense of this experience as part of my PhD study.

My PhD study is interested in exploring how rape affects individual womxn[58] and how womxn who have been raped make sense of their experience. The study is interested in comparing the experiences of different womxn to try and understand how the social context of South Africa impacts on experiences and understandings of rape.

Participating in this study will involve being interviewed on at least two occasions (for about an hour each time), a month apart. The interviews will take place at a time and place convenient for you.

It is possible that you may find some parts of the interviews distressing. In order to support you during the research study, counselling and/or debriefing by a Rape Crisis counsellor will be available to you throughout the process.

Participation in this study is voluntary and if you decide to participate you may stop participating at any point. There will be no negative consequences for withdrawing from the study. What you share with me in the interviews will be kept confidential. I will not use your name or any other important identifying information in the write-up of my project.

There will be no compensation for participating in the study. However, you may find sharing your experience helps you to understand, engage with, and processes your rape. Your participation in this study will also contribute to the development of multi-level interventions to support survivors of sexual violence.

[58] This study will include people who identify as femme, female, women, or trans.

The results of the study will be made available for you to comment on at various stages of the research process. Your comments will be incorporated into the final thesis.

You are welcome to contact me at any point during the study to ask questions or to share your concerns.

Cell: 082443465
Work: 0219380907
Email: rebeccahelman90@gmail.com

Thank you for considering being part of my study.

Rebecca Helman

**Chair of Ethics Committee:**

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## APPENDIX B

## Consent Form

### Consent to Participate in Study: Affected by Rape

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated risks of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the in-depth interviews.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname…… (please print)

Participant Signature……..Date……

Researcher's Name & Surname……(please print)

Researcher's signature……..Date……

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## APPENDIX C

## Counselling Resources

- **Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust** (Works to prevent rape, offers healing to survivors, and works towards legal reforms that will ensure perpetrators are brought to justice. Services include counselling, court preparation, support groups, important contact numbers)

  Counselling lines: 021 447-9762 (Observatory)
  021 633 9229 (Athlone)
  021 361 9085 (Khayelitsha)
  Website: www.rapecrisis.org.za

- **People Opposed to Woman Abuse (Powa)** (Gauteng-based organisation offering shelter, counselling and legal support to women in abusive relationships, rape survivors, survivors of incest)

  Helpline: 083 765 1235
  Website: www.powa.co.za

- **TEARS Foundation (**Women led organization help is provided regardless of ethnicity, religion, culture or socio-economic background or location, TEARS Foundation provides assistance nationwide with a 24-hour free SMS service to anyone who has access to a cellphone)

  SMS service: *134*7355#
  Helpline: 010 590 5920
  Email: info@tears.co.za

- **LifeLine Southern Africa** (24-hour crisis intervention service. Free, confidential telephone counselling, rape counselling, trauma counselling, Aids counselling, and a range of other services)

National counselling line: 0861 322 322
Website: www.lifeline.org.za

- **Stop Gender Abuse** (Crisis counselling for women who have been raped or abused, advice and support for people wanting to support women in need of help, legal and other options available for abused women and rape survivors. Run by LifeLine Southern Africa)

Toll-free helpline: 0800 150 150



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## Interview Questions

**Initial Interviews:**

1. Tell me about yourself
2. When did you first learn/hear about rape?
3. Can you tell me, in as much or as little detail as you want, about your experience of rape?
4. Can you remember how you felt and what you did afterwards?
5. Did you tell anyone about the rape?
6. How did people around you respond in the immediate aftermath?
7. How do people respond when you tell them now?
8. Did you experience change the way you think/feel about rape?
9. How does hearing about/reading about other instances of sexual violence impact you?
10. What do you think/feel about media representations/reporting of rape?
11. How do you think the rape has affected you?
12. What does it mean to be raped?
13. Do you think rape in South Africa is different from rape in other parts of the world?
14. How do you think rape can be challenged/prevented stopped?
15. How do you think/feel about your rape now?

**Follow-up Interviews:**

1. What was your experience of doing the first interview?
2. What does it feel like to call what happened to you rape?
3. What made it possible for you to name your experience as rape?