

After-Rape Among Three Populations in the Southwest

A Time of Mourning, a Time for Recovery

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Narrative analysis of open-ended interviews with 62 female survivors of rape from three populations in the Southwest (Native American, Mexican American, Anglo) uncovered commonalities and dissimilarities in women's description of their experience of after-rape (rape survival). Although all three groups reported experiences that confirm aspects of prior analyses of reactions to rape, the narrative analysis highlights variations in reactions to rape across the three groups. These variations, and more established commonalities, provide baseline material for strengthening primary and secondary interventions for women who have experienced sexual violence.

Keywords: *Anglo American women; female rape survivors; Mexican American women; Native American women; narratives of trauma and recovery*

Sexual violence is among the most frequent forms of lived trauma in the contemporary world (Websdale, 1998). The literature on rape, sexual assault, and harassment has increased during the past decade, generally focusing on the impact of these traumas on women's lives and those of persons close to them. Most discussion centers on similarities across women, while describing differences in the forms of sexual violence they experience, rather than on differences in the women's background that may lead to variations in styles and forms of telling the story of their experience. Writing

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against the paradigm, a number of feminists have noted a tendency in women's studies to universalize an incident that is devalued and debilitating, such as rape, in a manner that assumes that such an event is experienced the same by all women. Research rarely considers the complexities of women's experience as members of a particular population or racial-ethnic community as influencing the manner by which they may express themselves differently in matters of similar magnitude, such as sexual harassment or rape. In this article, we show how the trauma of rape among three populations of women in the southwestern United States is described through narrative structures that reveal commonalities of experience and dissimilarity in narrative conventions and linguistic devices used by these women.

Narrative analysis is a valuable framework to ascertain variations in the way people differentially express what may appear, on the surface, to be the same experience. Robinson's (1981) observation that women's narratives were "deviant" was challenged in the early years of narrative analysis, as feminist scholars countered the then-dominant model of male as norm in narrative production. One of the strongest challenges came from Tannen's (1982, 1994) work on ways that men and women vary in negotiation of communication and comprehension of what a person of the opposite sex is saying. Robinson's second observation was that women told tales of oppression and victimization. In retrospect, it is interesting that he identified an area that later would sustain a range of research endeavors beyond his original proclamation. At that point in time, he was contrasting narratives produced by men with those produced by women. As an additional complexity in the novel directions taken by narrative analysts, women's analyses of accounts of violence against women began to diverge from those formulated by men. Despite a growing interest by feminist scholars in various forms of sexual violence (popularized early on, e.g., by Brownmiller, 1975, and studied experimentally, e.g., by Burt, 1980), there have been few studies, until recently, of women's narratives of rape survival.

Minimal attention has been paid in rape accounts to the influence of variation in social or cultural background, such as racial-ethnic differences. Some studies (e.g., Sorenson, 1996; Wyatt, 1992) describe the likelihood of reporting rape by women of non-White background, and others explore how attitudes vary, based on a woman's ethnicity, of what constitutes *rape* (for Hispanic and/or Anglo, see Fischer, 1987; for Black and/or White, see Foley, Evancic, Karnik, King, & Parks, 1995). Using focus groups and focusing on a single community, Ramos Lira, Koss, and Russo (1999) asked 17 Mexican American women general questions on sexual violence, noting certain aspects in their reporting that differed from reporting by White women. Although not asked about personal experiences of sexual violence, some women in the focus groups eventually discussed their experience of coercive sex, generally within their marriages, and a few redefined their experiences in relation to disclosures by other focus group members. Of the few studies that have been published, many focus on sexual politics between Black-White communities that influence conceptualizations of sexual violence before and after the Civil Rights movement (e.g., Collins, 2004). Discussions of Latina and Native American experiences with sexual violence are broad and generalized, and full investigations have yet to appear. The material that we

present in this article begins to fill this gap and focuses on recovery and mourning as part of our efforts to delineate narrative constructions and linguistic devices for talking about rape by women of different sociocultural backgrounds (for an analysis of narrative constructions for describing events that constitute rape, see Bletzer & Koss, 2004).¹

Research that takes a linguistic perspective may be based on experimental investigation and an extension of the narrative analysis approach, which views narrative production as an elaboration of stories of events and people that form an important part of the speaker's life (Linde, 1993). Approaches that focus on the narrative analysis of rape survival materials (open-ended interviews, preferably audiotaped), and those that combine narrative and linguistic analysis (review of archival records, such as court proceedings; responses to scenarios, such as video vignettes), vary considerably in framework and focus. Most research on rape survival that takes a narrative analysis perspective is based on circumscribed samples of typically White women. Focus group and one-on-one interviews have been used. Wood and Rennie (1994), for example, examined eight interviews (conducted by Rennie) of university-recruited White women in Canada. Their focus was how women construct a self-identity as *victims* and construct the identity of their rapist as *villain*. Kitzinger and Frith (1999) examined ways in which young women (58 college and high school students, all assumed to be White) negotiate a refusal to have sex. In contrast, Neville and Pugh (1997) analyzed 29 interviews with Black women (27 college recruited), focusing on action taken after the rape (e.g., sought counseling, disclosed to a significant other), but provided no discussion of how these actions may compare to women of other communities. In sum, most research that considers narrative data is based on university-recruited women of middle-class background and depends on small samples for one-on-one interviews (usually less than the 40 to 45 recommended for conducting narrative analysis).

Studies based on what Bohner (2001) called "experimental methods" include approaches that use a scripted scenario, describing some kind of sexual violence or potential for violence, or a video presentation (e.g., Foley et al., 1995), to which respondents answer semistructured questions. The language used in their responses is then analyzed, using linguistic techniques. This research has found that women who survive rape seek to minimize a rape experience by devices such as distancing through passive voice (Bohner, 2001), extreme case formulations, shifts from person (perpetrator) to event, and negation of the rapist's identity (Wood & Rennie, 1994). Other research describes how semantic expectations are altered in court and tribunal proceedings, focusing on linguistic strategies such as action-oriented constructions (Ehrlich, 1999, 2001) and contrastive structures in question-answer sequences (Matoesian, 2001) that minimize blame of the rapist, while accentuating that of the woman raped, thus discrediting the validity of her account. Although the focus throughout this literature typically is on women who have survived rape, at times the rapist is of interest. Stevens (1999), for example, trained inmate-interviewers, who collaborated on a study of incarcerated men who had engaged in forcible rape on multiple occasions (61 reliable accounts of 85 elicited incidents). His findings confirm

some common views for the basis of sexual violence (e.g., women who are raped “were asking for it”) and suggest that not all rapes are motivated as an expression of power and dominance over women (see also Lea & Auburn, 2001).

What all these investigations share in common is the assumption that women construct their tales of rape survival based on their gendered roles in society. As Lea and Auburn (2001) commented, “Rape is constructed through discourse, [as] women and men become positioned in relation to the practical ideologies” (p. 13) that they internalize from the surrounding environment. They define *practical ideologies* as popular beliefs that provide cultural endorsement for rape. These discussions, however, assume that cultural supports are based on gender alone. Given that the sampled women in these studies are typically White women from mainstream society, little attention has been paid to variations in cultural background. Research has yet to compare sociocultural variations across racial-ethnic groups (for an exception, see Bletzer & Koss, 2004), or social categories, except sexual orientation (e.g., Girshick, 2002), that might likewise generate variations in the ways that narrative accounts of rape are produced.²

Given the basic principle of feminist theory that “all voices must be valued” (Worell & Johnson, 1997, p. 8), it is surprising that oppression based on categories representing one’s social or cultural background have not been given greater weight in designs for research that explore narrative conventions and linguistic devices within rape survival accounts. Discussion from the National Conference on Education and Training in Feminist Practice, for example, described the initial tension among participants of considering diversity as part of the recommendations for feminist practice (Brabeck & Brown, 1997; Worell & Johnson, 1997). A number of those in attendance had difficulty formulating a framework for the multiplicity of social oppressions that went beyond implications of women as a gendered position in society. This was noteworthy in relation to women of color at the conference who shared experiences with sexism as well as racism (see Greene & Sanchez-Hucles, 1997). Whatever their cultural background, women of color have long had the experience of being a “minority twice over” (Melville, 1980). Despite formal laws and institutional policies against racial discrimination and prejudicial behavior in society, and incorporation of social categories from feminist teaching and practice that go beyond that of women within the field of psychology (Kinsler & Rosenberg Zalk, 1996; Kmiec, Crosby, & Worell, 1996), inclusion of cultural background has not yet been a primary consideration in study designs that emphasize the narrative analysis of women’s tales of rape survival.

Narratives of rape survival analyzed in this article provide an opportunity to explore ways that women of different cultural backgrounds structure descriptions of recovery in rape survival. For this article, we examine commonalities and dissimilarities in women’s structuring of rape survival narratives. Data we analyzed included women of three populations representative of the southwestern United States: Native American, Mexican American, and Anglo. Their experience with rape covers the full range of sexual assault from stranger rape (perpetrator unknown at the moment of contact) to rape by a moderate acquaintance (first dates or classmates) to rape by long-term acquaintances (e.g., cousin, coworker or boss, neighbor, abusive partner).

Women's accounts of sexual assault provide illustrations that balance our understanding of how gender mediates the experience and expression of trauma of a particular kind, as well as its aftermath. As one variant of trauma, namely, that of rape survival, narrative structures shape the ways that a sample of 62 women who were low income discuss the lived experience of recovery. Our materials from women of three populations of the Southwest expand on a growing literature that generalizes from a base of mostly mainstream (usually college recruited), White women who were English speaking. These efforts at "telling" of rape (Brison, 2002) are crucial in providing data to develop and strengthen recovery interventions for women of different cultural backgrounds, and prevention campaigns to reformulate social attitudes on sexual assault and rape.

Our analysis is based on a set of taped interviews from a study of how women position an experience of sexual violence within the larger narrative of their life story. The basis of the study was the theoretical observation that rape, as a traumatic event that is accompanied by a durable aftermath, reconfigures self-perception of the survivor. Life experience has been viewed as a so-called narrative in progress of selected life events that explain the teller's preoccupations (Brison, 2002). Life stories resonate with cultural nuances when they describe everyday events (Finnegan, 1998). An event that falls outside an everyday occurrence, such as rape, requires strategies to defuse and externalize the aftermath to that trauma within a life story narrative, as one "cycles through" (Koss & Harvey, 1991) or "works through" (Brison, 2002) the experience and the aftermath of sexual violence.

Language that women use to describe what we call *after-rape* generally acknowledges an inalterable shift in the survivor's self-identity that pervades the life of a woman who has been raped. Winkler (2002), for example, referred to this immutability as an "emotional tattoo" that will forever remain a part of remembrance, by which she means that recall of the incident is close to consciousness (as a tattoo is fixed just beneath the surface of the skin). The period of time over which healing takes place is thought to be a year for full recovery, at least at the present time, as changes in social attitudes have shortened the period of recovery (Koss & Harvey, 1991). Others suggest that recovery may continue for several years (e.g., Herman, 1992). Brison (2002), for example, wrote that it took 2 years after her brutal rape to regain her composure to where she could speak about it in a "philosophical forum" (p. 20). For a year after the assault (besides rape, she was strangled and beaten), she had difficulty in speaking (p. 114), as she searched for ways to find "meaning in a life of caring for and being sustained by others" (p. 66). She defined full recovery as the will to incorporate the experience of rape into all aspects of one's life, which includes the capacity to externalize the trauma and defuse it by telling the experience to others. Similar to accounts of other survivors of rape, she pointed out she will never be "the same person" she was before the rape (pp. 21, 44). Rushing (1998) told a tale of long-term healing around her desire to recover, describing herself as "trained to strong-Black-wonder-woman roles" (p. 7). Noting within herself nothing unusual immediately after rape in her home, she identified symptoms of exhaustion, disorientation, anxiety, and amnesia that "became almost constant companions, [as] shock's soft shawl slipped from [her]

shoulders” (p. 12). She was dismayed when told by her caregiver that short-term recovery takes a year; however, full recovery may take as long as 5 years. As we reviewed interview materials provided by women in the current study, it became evident that subtle traces of after-rape lingered in some of the women’s narrative telling. At times, there were indications of recovery (e.g., instructing female kin such as daughters from their experience). At other times, there were incident residues (e.g., tears of discomfort, theme shifts with rapid speech and interrupted words).

Method

A total of 62 women who were low income in the southwestern United States participated in the Women’s Life Experience Study. Anglo women ($n = 24$) and Mexican American women ($n = 13$) were interviewed in an urban area of one state, and Native American (Cheyenne) women ($n = 25$) were interviewed in a rural area of another. The mean age across all the groups was similar. For Anglo, it was 34 years (median 33, range 21 to 65 years); for Native American, it was 35 years (median 35, range 24 to 54 years); and for Mexican American, it was 36 years (median 33, range 18 to 61 years).

Data Collection

There were 58 life stories and 78 incident accounts from the 62 women: 25 life stories and 27 incident accounts by 25 Cheyenne women, 9 life stories and 13 incident accounts by 13 Mexican American women, and 24 life stories and 38 incident accounts from 24 Anglo women (9 Anglo women told of two or more assaults, usually during the Life Story; Table 1). All of the women were recruited by a self-report survey, as they waited for appointments in health clinics that served their respective community. Interviews of Native American women took place in the clinic where they were recruited within their state, and interviews of the other women took place in a private research office located near campus (converted house, no visible identifiers) that was easily accessible by public transportation (cab vouchers defrayed costs incurred by the interviewees). Preliminary screening language mentioned “an unwanted sexual experience” that involved force. There was no mention of *rape* in the self-report survey. Women who fit the screening criteria received an explanation of the study in a private room at the clinic and were invited to participate. This approach to sampling embodied feminine-centered contact (all interviews were conducted by women) and avoided selective bias of respondent-driven sampling.³ The main limitation was selection of women who sought services, rather than a range of women who experienced sexual violence but were not seeking services. This limitation was partially countered by a study design that controlled for class, as all the sampled women from each group were low income; many were receiving or had received public assistance and occasional charitable donations.

Interviewers were selected based on experience with each respective population. They received an interviewer’s manual and interview training from the principal investigator, using video-assisted role-playing techniques, and instruction in precau-

Table 1
Characteristics of 62 Rape Survivors Interviewed
in the Southwestern United States

	Native American (<i>n</i> = 25)		Anglo (<i>n</i> = 24)		Mexican American (<i>n</i> = 13)		Total Sample (<i>N</i> = 62)
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>N</i>
Life stories <i>n</i> =	25		24		9		58
Incidents told <i>n</i> =	27		38		13		78
Mean age	35		34		36		35
Household income							
US\$7,500 to \$15,000	23	92	16	67	11	85	50
Physical force	21	84	20	83	13	100	54
Verbal threat	10	40	17	71	10	77	37
Use of weapons	4	16	5	21	5	38	14
Injuries to woman	11	44	16	67	10	77	37
Treated by doctor	4	16	5	21	2	15	11
Hospitalized	1	4	1	4	0	0	2
Victim other than incident narrator	3	12	1	4	2	15	6
Drugs and/or alcohol							
Narrator had used	11	44	5	21	2	15	18
Perpetrator used	19	76	16	67	8	62	43
Child(ren) witnessed	0	0	4	17	3	23	7
Reported to police	NA	NA	NA	NA	3	23	3
Talked with mental health worker	NA	NA	NA	NA	3	23	3
Perpetrator was same ethnicity as woman	17	68	13	54	12	92	42

tions and how to handle counter responses when sensitive issues were uncovered. For Native American women, a social worker from a local clinic (member of a neighboring tribe) conducted the interviews, given her sensitivity to issues of domestic abuse. A graduate student in anthropology with experience in women's issues conducted interviews with the Anglo women, and native speakers of Spanish conducted interviews with the women born in Mexico (one for the first two interviews; a second interviewer for the remaining interviews).

A comfortable setting was used for a three-component interview: (a) Life Story (a summative narrative of each woman's life), (b) Incident Accounts (incident of unwanted sex), and (c) Life Line (chronology of important events in a woman's life). Interview components were open ended with minimal probing and were completed sequentially with breaks for food and rest. Each woman was permitted to tell her own story. If a woman had difficulty, she was allowed the time she needed to compose herself, before the interview was reconvened. The Life Stories were collected prior to a woman's account of unwanted sex (Incident Account); these two were completed

before she was asked questions on the Life Line through a closed-ended, standardized questionnaire (e.g., use of force or weapon, how well the victim knew her perpetrator, general demographic data). Women were asked to complete the Life Line prior to their interview, before arriving on site, or at the time they arrived. Thus, there was some guidance in identifying the major events each woman might wish to talk about. All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed (Life Story, Incident Account, Life Line). Each transcription was checked against the taped interview.

Sample

Cheyenne women were born on Indian Lands. As members of a displaced tribe, most spent childhood and adult years within a circumscribed three-county area.⁴ Most Anglo women had experience in the West, where they were born or had grown up, or other states west of the Mississippi River, before they came to their current residence. All the Mexican American women were born and raised in Mexico (at least through a portion of adolescence). Several had experienced internal migration from one state to another within Mexico before they came to the United States. Most came as young adults or as older adolescents. All communicated primarily in Spanish at home and used English outside the home only when necessary. Hence, interviews with Mexican American women were conducted in Spanish, as the language of emotion in which these women expressed most of their daily experiences, even after settling in the States, and the language in which these women had their first sexual experience.

Analysis

The first step in analysis was reviewing narrative conventions (Finnegan, 1998; Linde, 1993; Riessman, 1993) in the Life Stories for all the women, before reviewing Incident Accounts and the Life Line materials. Conducted in this order, the review permitted comparison across all groups. A text analysis and/or data management program (ATLAS.ti 4.1) was used to code and analyze transcribed materials in English for Anglo and Native American women. Because of fewer interviews in Spanish, analysis for these women was conducted with coded transcripts.⁵ In the material that follows, we highlight two conventions of narrative performance: (a) structuring devices that provide a preface to set the stage for the narrative, and (b) the *dramatis personae* that figure as the principal actors in the narrative.

Structuring devices. Presentation style for the women generally fit the criteria of coherence and structure in narrative construction (Linde, 1993). Most women described, or at least mentioned, formative years and adolescence in a family of orientation and their experience in school. If a woman was married with children, she described her current circumstances. For a few women there were remarriages or separations and divorces, and for several there were grown children.

All 62 women had experienced moving during childhood and adolescence. Where they differed was in extent of travel and the way that place influenced their sense of

self. The Anglo women experienced frequent moves over longer distances (from city to city, state to state) than Mexican American women (typically within one city in one state, after emigrating from Mexico) and Cheyenne women (mostly town to town within one area of one state). Cheyenne women centered their lives in terms of place, and Mexican American women used residence to mark personal and social boundaries. Anglo women, in contrast, were sometimes ambivalent about place, often preferring one locale above another. Although very few women described their future plans, Anglo women talked about future plans more often than women from the other groups (4 Cheyenne and 2 Mexican American, but 9 Anglo).

It was in telling the Life Story, more than its content, that the women differed. Extensive Life Stories were narrated by most of the 24 Anglo women, some of the 13 Mexican American women, and a few of the 25 Indian women. Native American and Mexican American women followed restricted narrative conventions. A few Anglo women provided snippets of the Life Story of other persons, whom they introduced in the course of narration (usually partners, siblings, and mothers). Anglo women included more nested stories than Mexican Americans, and both groups included more nested stories than Cheyenne. Langellier and Peterson (1992) described "nesting" as *spinstorying*, wherein a woman generates a series of thematic stories, rather than a single-account narrative. More than other women, borders of the Anglo Life Story were porous. Sometimes elements of one story merged seamlessly with those of another. Unlike Cheyenne or Mexican American women, a few Anglo women incorporated parallel time, that is, simultaneous action, and they oscillated backward and forward in time more often than the other women.

All the women told their life stories in some form of chronological order. Life Stories of Native American and Mexican American women emphasized a life cycle more than those of the Anglo women. Whereas Mexican American women told their Life Story as a series of episodes of "social containment" (García, 1994), based on residential moves, Cheyenne emphasized life cycle phases for childhood, youth, and adulthood. By the way in which they placed the life cycle in relation to locale, Cheyenne and Mexican American women were drawing on cultural capital of their respective society. Anglo and Mexican American women often began the Life Story in adolescence and mixed third person with first person to explain events (e.g., "I lost my father when I was nine years old. He was injured at work. He injured his spine, and they told him he had to leave. We moved, 'cause he'd never survive the cold winters. . . . My grandfather was a carpenter"). Most Cheyenne women typically relied on a discursive *I* (Strauss, 1982, 1989); that is, they began at birth and emphasized first person in Life Stories (e.g., "I had a pretty good childhood; I thought it was. I grew up with grandparents, and mom and sisters, cousins, seven of them. . . . We always had our grandparents to depend on") and in Incident Accounts (e.g., "I was hitchhiking. This man picked me up. I said I was going to town"). All the groups utilized the ending device of *That's all* in one form or another, while drawing on other forms of closure. Cheyenne women generally signaled narrative closure by the same exit technique with minimal elaboration (e.g., "That's it" or "That's all," or occasionally, "I just live my life being a mother and a wife"), more than Mexican American (usually *He terminado* "I've finished," or

Esto es todo lo que recuerdo “That’s all I remember”) or Anglo women, who were prone to include evaluative comments (e.g., “That’s it, I don’t know what time it is,” or “That’s where I’m at, I left a lotta things out,” or “That’s about it, as far as trying to give you a baseline”).

Dramatis personae. All the women emphasized the importance of relationships to family and friends. All three groups described multigenerational families; however, these were more common among the Indian women and Mexican American women, especially those raised by grandparents for a portion of their childhood. Whereas Native American women and Mexican American women emphasized extended families, Anglo women emphasized a singularity of kin with a focus on parents. For Anglo women, father was the most frequent and first-mentioned person in a woman’s life story, and *he* was used to explain, for example, why the family lived where they did, or why they left one locale to move to another town. For the Native American and Mexican American women, horizontal kin relations implied social obligations, whereas vertical relations implied respect, authority, and a potential for learning. For Anglo women, adults were part of a learning process that emphasized independence in thought and action. Regardless of whether their extended kin formed a single household, most of the Indian women, some of the Mexican American women, and a few Anglo women took time to identify these persons by relationship.

Styles of personal naming varied. Cheyenne rarely used names for men in Life Stories, or, most important, only once in the Incident Accounts. Mexican American women identified significant relationships by a name; however, a troubled relationship was identified by social link to the person with whom there were difficulties. Unlike Mexican American or Indian women, Anglo women used names for intimate and troublesome relationships. Similar to several of the Mexican American women and all the Indian women, a few Anglo women preferred to identify the relationship of a person to herself (such as “classmate”) rather than provide a personal name.

Narratives of Unwanted Sex

Similar to findings from a national survey (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998), most of the women were assaulted by men whom they knew. Most men were long-term acquaintances such as a classmate and boyfriend (all three groups); next-door neighbor, maternal cousin and mother’s lover (Mexicana); step-cousin, spouse’s uncle and brother’s friend (Anglo); cousins (maternal, paternal), brother’s friends and woman’s uncle (Native American). Short-term acquaintances included a man or men met while hitchhiking (Native American), drinking in a tavern (Anglo, Native American), cleaning a beauty salon or an apartment (Anglo), attending an indoor (Anglo) or outdoor (Native American) party, returning from a festival in a passenger van (Mexicana), or stopped by a policeman in an isolated area (Mexican American). Stranger rapes appeared in no more than three accounts: two men in a park (Mexicana), and three men, respectively, outside a theater (Anglo) and at a bus stop (Anglo). Dates who

raped were first dates (one-on-one or double dating for Anglo and Native American), and those who were steady dating (Mexicana and/or Mexican American and Anglo) or who had a long relationship (Anglo and Native American).

Rape is known to have long-lasting medical, social, and psychological impacts, yet few persons who survive rape seek formal services.⁶ Survivors more often talk to significant others than seek counseling. In the current study, 10 of the 62 women (15%) were “treated by a doctor soon after the incident,” and two women were hospitalized. Few women (less than 15%) reported receiving mental health services; none included an account in their Incident Accounts of therapy they received, except in responses to questions at the end of two interviews. Similar to prior research (e.g., Campbell et al., 1999; Neville & Pugh, 1997), several women had never told anyone. First disclosure was their interview. Some had told a friend (female or male) rather than a family member within a few hours of the incident. A number of women had waited more than a year (for some, after adolescence) to tell one or more family members, or (for others) to find someone other than family to whom they could tell their experience.

Women in the current study varied less in immediate than long-term response to rape. Several from all three groups sought to hide the rape from their family, particularly if they were teens and still living at home. Some were ingenious in hiding soiled clothes or washing them on returning home, participating in routine activities of family life (such as watching television), or making an excuse to stay in their room. They described parental reactions on arriving home, particularly mothers, whom they avoided. This was difficult when they came home disheveled, bruised, and bleeding. One Anglo woman described how her mother had taken her to the family physician to have her daughter’s rape confirmed, and one Mexicana explained how her mother consulted a traditional healer (*curandera*), who discovered her daughter was pregnant, having been raped several weeks earlier.

Similar to previous research on long-term effects of rape trauma (Crowell & Burgess, 1996), several women carried the burden of the assault with them to the interview. A few mentioned how they used the time between preinterview instructions and the interview to think through events of their past, which varied from several years for most, compared to many years for a few older women who had been assaulted as adolescents. At the time of the interview, several women were raising or had raised children. For 6 women, these children were the result of pregnancy from the rape. Several women in all three groups described efforts they were taking in child rearing, especially with daughters, to use their experience as an instructional device.

After-Rape: Initial Reactions

The initial phase of the after-rape was a difficult period that filled a woman’s waking life as intrusive memory that decreased over time. Herman (1992) identified intrusion, hyper-arousal, and constriction as the three main consequences of rape, after the immediate symptoms of pain, nausea, insomnia and nightmares, and anger or depression. To depict the immediacy of their rape, women from all three groups described

shame, embarrassment, anger, and how they felt defiled, degraded, and humiliated. Similar to studies with historic depth where women reported they felt *soiled* after rape (Sommerville, 2001), *dirty* was a metaphor used consistently by women of all three groups. Many felt a sense of helplessness and confusion over what they had experienced, and a feeling of nausea was common to describe their inner state, even for Mexican American women who spoke little of their symptoms. Of all the symptoms, anger and fear were ones that brought in the perpetrator as the object of focus. When asked what they felt at the time of “unwanted sex,” for example, many women indicated they felt fear and anger, generally toward the perpetrator; however, after the event passed, they felt anger toward themselves. As an indication of gendered expectations for emotions appropriate to women (Simmons, 2002), these thoughts of anger and revenge were thus altered, “automatically,” over time to other directions, onto self, rather than against others. That women should be permitted aggressive reactions in situations appropriate to self-preservation (see Lamb, 2002) was articulated in reports of several women who expressed sentiments of their dissatisfaction (on subsequent self-assessment) with their efforts to resist their attacker. Overall, however, most of the women’s feelings were focused on altering their inner sense of gendered identity:

“Angry, scared, degraded. Felt like I was worthless.” (Anglo)
 “Then when I got pregnant out of it, it just made me feel dirty.” (Anglo)
 “I just felt dirty and degraded. I wanted to hide so nobody could see me.” (Anglo)
 “I felt low, I felt raunchy.” (Cheyenne)
 “I felt sick, dirty. I wanted to kill myself.” (Cheyenne)
 “It made me feel like I was dirty, nasty. . . . Made me feel real dirty.” (Cheyenne)
 “Anguish, very strong. Desperation, and sadness, painful sadness.” (*Angustía, muy grande. Una desesperación, y tristeza, dolorosa.*) (Mexicana)

Thus, the array of symptoms that rape survivors may experience and subsequently report draw from the unusual nature of sexual assault, which, despite its common occurrence within society, “overwhelms ordinary human adaptation to life” (Herman, 1992, p. 33).

Although women of all three groups mentioned similar reactions immediately after the rape, Native American women framed responses with a time depth more than the Anglo women, providing evaluative comments in relation to overall lifetime impact. Mexican American women also provided evaluative comments on overall impact; however, they were typically silent on symptoms that accompanied the rape; when describing them, they usually repeated symptoms mentioned by Anglo and Cheyenne women:

“It made me feel helpless. I don’t ever want to feel helpless again.” (Cheyenne)
 “I just can’t imagine why I had to go through something like that.” (Cheyenne)
 “Disgusting sensations that I felt. Nausea, I felt such an ugly sensation.” (*Las sensaciones feas que sentí. Sentí una sensación muy fea, de asco.*) (Mexicana)

“So much fear, so much nausea. My grades began to drop at school.” (*Tanto miedo, tanto asco. Mis calificaciones bajando en la escuela.*) (Mexicana)

“I found out how much it bothered me the next night.” (Anglo)

Occasionally, a woman described amnesia or late onset of shock at what had happened to her, similar to the experience described by Rushing (1998), wherein shock occurred later during her recovery process.

“It happened so fast. I couldn’t really get into my feelings at that time.” (Anglo)

“I don’t remember all that much of [what happened that time]” (*No recuerdo mucho [esa vez de lo que pasó]*). (Mexican American)

More than Mexican American and Native American women, Anglo women sometimes spoke of how their anger might have pushed them to have hurt or killed their perpetrator. These women, it is interesting to note, visualized using a knife (rather than a gun) that would have symbolically replicated the act of penetration and violation they themselves had experienced. As one Anglo woman said about two men who raped her, after mentioning her anger and confusion: “I would have cut them from ear to ear, eyes to thighs, nose to toes, and lips to hips. . . . I wanted to slice ’em up and feed ’em to the dogs.” Another Anglo woman had her hand in her purse, where she kept a knife, as her assailant drove her from an isolated area; however, she could not bring herself to use it on him. In contrast, one Mexican American woman spoke of how she felt no sadness the day that her assailant (cousin) died. Although he had a wife and many were crying at his funeral, she recalled, “Others cried. I couldn’t cry. I felt as if something very strong was taken from me, something very heavy was removed from atop me” (*Los demás lloraban. Yo no pude llorar. Al contrario, sentía como si me hubiera quitado algo muy fuerte, algo muy pesado de encima [de mi]*). It is interesting to note, she used the metaphor of *atop* (*de encima*), not unlike the event that she was continuing to reexperience as intrusive memory, even as an adult. None of the Cheyenne women, on the other hand, described thoughts of revenge on their assailant, and none mentioned that they heard news of their assailant’s passing away. Native American women more often used strong language to describe struggle with their rapist. More than hitting, a few mentioned kicking; one woman used a stick, and another said she bit her assailant’s lip.

After-Rape: Long-Term Consequences

Several common features appeared in the long-term process of rape recovery that were disclosed and described in response to interviewer questions. One common appraisal of the after-rape by women from all three groups was a desire to “forget” the incident. Women varied in how they explained this strategy of recovery. Called cycling through—implying phases in healing during after-rape, rather than a one-stop catharsis—few theorists explore implications of this process in its universalistic dimensions or

suggest ways it may vary cross-culturally. Women in the current study described how they sought to “gain control” (Anglo), “block it out” (Cheyenne), and “try to not remember this past which pursues me” (Mexicana). Whereas Anglo women spoke of mastering memory of the experience (“gain control”) or leaving the incident “behind them” (e.g., “turn my back”), most Cheyenne women described efforts to insulate memory of the incident from their waking life.

“Just somethin’ to be forgotten and I don’t want to remember it.” (Cheyenne)
“I just blocked it out for a long time. It happened like 3 years ago.” (Cheyenne)
“I got me another job, where he wasn’t. Turned my back on the entire thing.” (Anglo)
“It happened, it’s over with. It affects me, but I just don’t deal with it.” (Anglo)

Mexican American women, on the other hand, who were having the greater difficulty in recovery spoke of the persistence of memories of the incident and rarely described efforts on their part of seeking to gain control over intrusive thoughts, or put behind them remembrance of the event, as part of the past.

“The problem continues. It stays, remaining inside, and one doesn’t know what to do.” (*El problema sigue. Se queda adentro, y no sabe una que hacer.*) (Mexicana)
“It’s very sad to remember the past.” (*Es muy triste recordar el pasado.*) (Mexicana)
“I still feel his hands, doing me great harm.” (*Todavía sentía las manos de él haciéndome daño.*) (Mexicana)

A few Mexican American women commented on their not recalling anything about the rape, by which they meant that not having experienced instances of intrusive thoughts indicated to them that there was no need to discuss the matter in public or disclose the incident.

Long after the event, several women described changes in their behavior and responses when interacting with other people. These women more often mentioned lowered self-esteem, difficulty in returning to a normative sex life and not feeling comfortable in social relationships, and, especially among Mexican American women, a long-term impact of colossal proportions.

“I felt mad and disappointed. I didn’t want to be around him or his girlfriend.” (Cheyenne)
“That guilt affected me most of my life. I didn’t have no respect for myself.” (Cheyenne)
“I didn’t want to open up to nobody. Like I was a nobody to everybody.” (Cheyenne)
“Still have problems . . . like when, even playfully, a man tries to hold me down.” (Anglo)
“Like now, my mind wanders off during sex. It annoys my boyfriend.” (Anglo)
“Sometimes my girlfriend walks out. I refuse to stop putting myself down.” (Anglo)
“I still feel that was what marked me the most.” (*Yo la siento que fue la que más me marcó.*) (Mexicana)
“For me, it was one of the most horrendous experiences I ever had.” (*Para mi, fue una experiencia de lo más horrenda que nunca.*) (Mexicana)
“For me, it’s a sad history, it’s a past that cannot be erased.” (*Para mi es una historia bien dolorosa, es un pasado que no se borra.*) (Mexicana)

For some Cheyenne women and a few Anglo women who experienced acquaintance rape, but for none of the Mexican American women, confusion during the after-rape was reinforced by later contacts that were characterized by having the perpetrator deny the incident. Similarly, Wood and Rennie (1994) described confusion and despair a woman may feel in having the perpetrator avoid clarifying for her what had happened during the incident she experienced.

“After the rape, I went through a lot. ‘Cause he denied it, I would doubt myself.” (Anglo)
 “I’ll see him today but when I see him, he just looks away.” (Cheyenne)

Several women in all three groups described how they were fearful around men after the rape, even with male friends or men whom they were dating. Women who were English speaking described a greater distrust of men; for example, “Men are out for only one thing, and they’ll do anything they can to get it” (Anglo). Some mentioned they had difficulty in resuming sexual relations; for example, “When I first started dating again, I didn’t want men touching me” (Native American). Only one woman reported engaging in successive sex partners to prove that the rape had not affected her in a way that she associated with her sexual capacity “to be a woman” (see Francisco, 1999). Describing this period of her life a year after the rape as “a little crazy . . . you’ve already ripped your life,” this particular woman was dating airmen at the local air base until an incident of attempted gang rape, which resulted in military police calling her mother. She stopped at this point, eventually getting married and raising two children.

Narrative Conventions

All three groups replicated aspects of narrative conventions from their Life Stories in narrating the incident of unwanted sex. Elaborated narratives typical of Anglo Life Stories reappeared in producing rape survival narratives; Anglo women also reported more lifetime rapes. The shorter Incident Accounts, similar to their short Life Stories, were true of Cheyenne and Mexican American women. Nested stories were used more by Anglo than Mexican American women, and they were typically absent in Cheyenne Life Stories and Incident Accounts. Similar to phases in the Life Stories, Native American women showed a greater consistency in narrative segments to order phases of Incident Accounts of unwanted sex. An Incident Account for each group follows.

Native American. Case #C31.

SETTING AND STAGING: We were at my cousin’s house. They were havin’ a party, and everybody left. There was about maybe five of us still there. We were all drinkin’. I was getting drunk.

SOCIAL ISOLATION [dyad]: And he [another cousin’s nephew] told me, said, “Let’s go outside and sit and talk.” So, we went out there. I was real drunk.

INCIDENT (indirect reference to perpetrator’s actions): We were sitting on these steps, and I must have passed out, cause when I came to, he was getting up, and I said, “My pants are

unzipped,” and I said, “What did you do?” And he says, “You know what we’ve done,” and all this. I got mad, ’cause I think he had [inaudible]. I just cussed him out and everything. I said, “You’re a Low Life, you’re no kind of a person.” I said, I say, “You coulda asked me, or you coulda, you know, told me you’re too drunk.”

RETURN TO SOCIAL: And I went in there, and I told this girl [cousin] that I was with, and she got real mad and she told her boyfriend. And we left.

The first reference after the preface that introduces this Incident Account moves from a social environment of multiple persons to one in which the man socially isolates the woman. Events that follow isolation are narrated as interactive dialogue and/or actions. As occurred frequently in Native American accounts, the woman does not mention precisely what happened in relation to sexual penetration. After that portion of the incident is suggested, indirectly, she describes the events that indicate a return to the social environment. Noteworthy is her use of couplets that place narrative emphasis on male agency in perpetrating the incident (e.g., Low Life, no kind of a person), in contrast to the use of couplets in a previous section that place narrative emphasis on the impact of the rape on the women (e.g., felt low, felt raunchy; felt mad and disappointed).

Mexican American women focused on the dyad of the male, as perpetrator, and herself, as protagonist, often with the erasure of copresent persons, even after the rape. It is interesting to note, copresent social persons played a key role for Mexican American women in Life Stories, whoever they might be, where they were frequently mentioned.

Mexican American. Case #M68.

SETTING INDETERMINATE AND/OR CONCEPTUAL STAGING: I decided to come to the United States. I began to study, I began to work. After awhile, I met someone, who made me forget that boyfriend (*novio*) [one in Mexico]. Once he promised to take me some place. But he didn’t, he took me some place else.

Decidí venirme a los Estados Unidos. Empecé a estudiar, empecé a trabajar. Con el tiempo, conocí a una persona, que me hizo olvidar a aquel novio que yo tuve [en México]. . . . Pero en una ocasión, me prometió llevarme a un lugar, y no me llevó, me llevó a otro [lugar].

INCIDENT (active voice for perpetrator’s actions): That was when began the worst nightmare of my life, because I liked this person and he made me have sex with him (*me obligó a tener sexo con él*). He took me some place isolated; and what hurt (*dolió*) the most was that I was fond of him (*lo quería*), like we had made plans to get married (*casarnos*).

Fue ahí cuando empezó la pesadilla más fuerte, porque yo quería a esta persona y me obligó a tener sexo con él. Me llevó a un lugar apartado y fue lo que más me dolió que yo lo quería, y pues nos habíamos hechos planes de casarnos.

Contrary to narrative movement in Life Stories that corresponded to geographic relocation and social changes in their lives, Mexican American women merged overall impact with immediate impact of the assault. Similar to the Cheyenne, Mexican Amer-

ican women avoided a description of events immediately prior to, as well as coincident to, the sex act enacted by the perpetrator.

Anglo women emphasized a sequential order of acts within the assault by use of active voice for the perpetrator and, at times, for themselves. They used fewer nested stories in Incident Accounts than Life Stories, and they described the assault as an event that took them by surprise as it moved from the expected to the unexpected. Anglo women used narrative markers to indicate initiation of new segments (use of *So* below) that elaborated transitional steps in the sexual assault as well as provided an evaluative assessment of their relationship to the perpetrator.

White. Case #A15.

SETTING AND/OR STAGING: I met this man. He put an ad in our laundry room, wanting someone to clean his apartment. And it was like on the east part of town [a high income area]. It was like a really nice apartment and all. And he's a white-collar guy.

TRANSITION (including one nested story): So I went cleaning his house, and well the first time I went there, I should have figured something was kind of weird, cause he said that at times he likes to take a shower and then walk around the apartment nude. I said, "That doesn't bother me, I'm a nurse's aid." He didn't seem threatening or anything at the time. I said, "This is your home, but I prefer you not to [do that] while I'm here."

EVALUATIVE ASSESSMENT (including nested stories): So, anyways I went back a couple times, and we had gotten close just like talking. I-I told [name] about my sobriety, and he felt he had a drinking problem.

So, he asked me out to dinner. Everything was still pretty above board. I was honest with him, saying I had a boyfriend in prison, that I was waiting for him to come out, that we were gonna try and make a future together.

So I-I kind of, then he was twenty-questioning me a lot. But more so than, I thought, than just like the average, like he was interested in me or something like that. I wasn't really looking for a relationship at the time. I just wanted to go clean his apartment and all.

INCIDENT (active voice for perpetrator's actions): But, so then the last time, I went over there, all right I-we just we smoked a joint [laughs] together and I guess he had the thing all planned out, because then he got me in his room and he wanted, he wanted me to give him a back rub and vice versa. And before I knew it, he was trying to pull my pants down. And he got 'em down. And then, he did get on top of me and he held me by my hair. And I was flat on my back. And rather than just really fighting, I just went with it. And he just like a total wash up [laughs]. And after that happened, he did get inside me and ejaculated and all that, you know it was, it was scary. I did not like it.

Although generally producing a longer account for each incident (more tales than other women), Anglo women metaphorically referred to the boundaries of self as they itemized inner symptoms more than the case above, as well as the outer signs of the rape (e.g., *held by hair*, *flat on back*, *removed pants*, and *scary*). An itemization by Anglo women of their inner states and somatic experiences, however, was less common for other life events in their Life Stories than for rape in their Incident Accounts.

Several women suggested a change in sense of identity that has been noted in published accounts of rape survivors (e.g., Brison, 2002). Those who recognized this facet

of the rape were the minority women: *Me marcó definitivamente esa persona* “That person definitely marked me” (from Incident Account, Mexican American), and “All I know is that he messed my life up dead” (from Life Story, Native American). Reflecting the so-called can-do attitude common in U.S. culture, Anglo women referred to efforts (struggle) to return to a prior level of inner strength, rather than have the rape remain unalterable or immutable: “To build up my own self, it took a lot of time. . . . I felt completely broken.” For 12 of the 62 women, the process of recovery and efforts to regain a sense of identity were decidedly difficult, as they were virgins at the time of the assault. For 6 women who became pregnant, the child they bore was testimony to the sexual violence they experienced. None of these latter women, however, described repugnance toward the child nor did they talk of minimizing attention in rearing and caring for any of their children.

Linguistic Devices

Linguistic devices in choice of language were evident across all three groups of women in describing after-rape. As one example, Anglo women used a series of three in constructing evaluative comments (e.g., *angry, scared, degraded*) or varied in the sequencing of expressions, and Native American women commonly used a couplet (e.g., *dirty, nasty*), whereas Mexican American women used couplets as well as a series of three elements. All the women utilized evaluative comments; however, they occurred more frequently in descriptions by Anglo women, who provided more elaborated explanations of strategies for recovery that they utilized. Illustrations from responses to questions in the third interview include the following:

1. For Cheyenne women, references were sometimes truncated (condensed) into couplets, as a linguistic device that increases emphasis on a particular point or dimension of the rape by using a pair of descriptors from a similar linguistic domain (e.g., emotions experienced, sentiments felt). At times, their experience was incorporated into contrastive assessments of the overall impact, or an evaluative comment on their expectations versus their experience, as follows:
 - Couplets: “I was about to panic, I couldn’t breathe” (#26); “I felt low. I felt raunchy” (#31); “I felt hurt. I felt used” (#40).
 - Evaluative assessment (contrastive): “The impression I always got of sex that it was gonna be [sigh] good and everything, but it wasn’t” (#42).
2. For Anglo women, comments ranged from single statements to multiple phrases. Evaluative assessments typically focused on feelings. Separate statements were utilized to describe strategy of recovery the women used for healing, again expressed by variation in phrases, as follows:
 - Variation in enumeration of evaluative assessment: “I was ashamed” (#01); “I was angry with him” (#10); “It was scary” (#15); “I was crushed” (#06); “I felt so dirty and degraded” (#02); and “Angry, scared, degraded” (#02); “I wanted to hurt Sally

[fictive name], I wanted to hurt the guy she was with [double dating], I wanted to kill the guy that had raped me; if I coulda found a knife or a gun, I probably would have killed him” (#01); and “I hated it, I hated him, I hated everything, I hated my life” (#06).

Strategy: “Trying to go through it and just survive, and try to make it numb if I could” (#22).

3. For Mexican American women, most all the responses to questions in the third component of the interview were acquiescent, which indicated narrative minimization of the traumatic event. Mexican American women, on the other hand, voiced greater awareness of the order in which feelings occurred; they conceptually amplified evaluative comments (e.g., “anguish, very strong, sadness, painful sadness” *una angustia, muy grande, y tristeza, dolorosa*); and they provided a time depth, from feeling fear (*me asusté*) at the time of the rape, to feelings of sadness (*tristeza*) and bitterness (*experiencia amarga*) soon after the rape (see also Marín & Gómez, 1997).

Occasionally, Native American women used active voice with language similar to usage of Anglo women that reversed actions narrated in the Incident Account. One Cheyenne woman, for example, described the trauma of the rape with three expressions and her efforts during after-rape with one, as follows: “He kept pushing on me, kept on tugging, started forcing himself on me” (active voice for his actions; Incident Account); and, “I started pushing it behind my head” (active voice for actions in recovery after the rape; Life Story). For another Cheyenne woman, described earlier, her advice replicated her actions, “I just cussed him out [waking to find she had been raped], ‘You’re a Low Life, you’re no kind of a person’” (couplet in active voice for male’s actions; Incident Account), and “Take control of yourself, don’t get carried away” (couplet as an imperative statement; response to questions in the final interview).

At times, evaluative assessments in the Incident Accounts were drawn from the concepts common within the respective culture of each group, particularly for a description of inner states. Among the Cheyenne, for example, one woman said, “I must have been so scared my spirit must have left my body” (#39). Among the Anglo women, one described a process of dissociation as she explained, “It was more like I was watching myself feel feelings that I wasn’t really feeling, and then it was hard for me to believe what was happening” (#03). Another Anglo woman, who had been born in Europe but learned English as a second language, said, “I started to feel like a tornado was going down through my mind” (#16). Two others, the only Anglo women who acknowledged the immutability of their rape, used a metaphor of unremitting damage, thusly, “You’ve already ripped your life” (#01) and “Your whole life is ripped out of you” (#13). In a similar fashion, several Mexican American women poetically referred to the rape as “a wound that never heals” (*una herida que no sana nunca*) or emphasized the social stigma of the rape (using the verb *marcar* “mark”) as having taken from them all control over their virginity and womanhood.

Mourning and Recovery

Fifteen Anglo women, 3 Native American, and 4 Mexican American women told about one or more rapes in their life story. Yet 16 of 24 Anglo women (66.7%), all but one of 25 Native American women (96.0%), and less than one half of the 13 Mexican American women (38.4%) did not place the rape on their Life Line as a significant event. Moreover, 40 of the 62 women (64.5%) chose not to mention the sexual assault in their Life Story, which preceded the interview in which the Incident Account was elicited. If rape is salient in a woman's life, it was expected that so-called telling would form a significant portion of these women's lives and, hence, a description of the event would appear at various points in the process of the three interviews, particularly during the first interview that elicited the Life Story.

Women varied in how they responded to questions probing why they left the rape off the Life Line: "How significant has this incident been in your life?" Women of European origin who were English speaking and women of Native American origin used a language that reversed the acts of control and force they had experienced against them. The Anglo women used a "grammar of agency" (Ehrlich, 2001) and included spatial references to communicate how they sought to forcefully distance themselves from intrusive thoughts. *Push out* was a common expression used by the Anglo women (e.g., "push it out of my life"; "pushing it clear out of my mind"; and "push back in memory, [not] want anybody to know about it unless they specifically ask you"). Cheyenne women, on the other hand, emphasized an act of externalization as a means of control over self and thought (thinking) that would deter intrusive memory of the assault and rape, by referring to remembering and its reversal, forgetting (negation of recall). One Native American woman said, "When I bring it up and think about it, it's something I wish I'd never went through." A second referred to actions she avoided, believing that they would "stir up memories," and a third woman said, "I mean it happened, it's over with, it affects me but I just don't deal with it."

To refer to unexpected recall of the event, women of all three groups used the expression *remember*. Native American and Mexican American women usually referred to remembering when responding to final questions on the significance of the rape (or its lack, for some women), but not for narrating the incident. *I remember* (as narrator), *next thing I knew*, and *all of a sudden* (as protagonist) were expressions used by Anglo women in narrating their tale of rape. Native American women who used *forget* separated the reference that identified the incident from a desire to forget by use of distinct clauses; for example, "It was something I just wanted to forget," "That's one thing I want to forget," and "I can't forget about it, but I just block it out." Thus, forgetting was enacted within a process linked to a dimension of social personhood. For Mexican American women, the act of remembering was of the present moment at the time of the interview, for the narrator as protagonist. Several indicated the impact was with them "always" (*siempre*), that the incident was among the most significant they experienced, for example, "the most horrendous ever" (*de lo más horrenda que nunca*), "worst nightmare of my life" (*la pesadilla más fuerte de mi vida*), and "a sadness that I [will] keep inside me for a long time" (*una tristeza que traigo guardado*

mucho tiempo). Generally, Native American women emphasized an act of memory as part of a process that shifted with no effort on their part between a state of “on” and “off,” rather than an ordinary event for which they, through narrative devices, demonstrated agency in control of the memory (Anglo), or as an event that expectedly and implicitly stayed on, as an intrusive memory that would remain with them always (Mexican American).

Why was an event as significant as that of rape within so few Life Stories among the 62 women interviewed? That answer may be found in attitudes by which women who survive rape are judged through social processes that generate “secondary victimization” (Campbell et al., 1999; Kimerling & Calhoun, 1994). This deters a woman from disclosing her experience as a rape survivor. As shown in their efforts to “forget” and move on (Anglo) or avoid the memory (Native American and Mexican American), women were seeking to construct a meaning in living based on positive experiences of the past rather than on the negative remembrance of rape. All the women, to some extent, were reluctant to comment on experiences of rape during the Life Story, which they constructed as the way that things were with their “real person,” not the person as a survivor who had experienced rape. More than the other women, Mexican American women were reluctant to discuss their experience in the Life Story or Incident Account. All the women in one form or another partitioned that experience within a process of recovery they experienced already or were still experiencing. Most, it is recalled, did not seek professional help. Many delayed in telling, and when they told, they spoke to no more than a few persons. A few never told anyone of their ordeal prior to the interview. The rape was not forgotten in memory; however, it was forgotten in daily life, unless something “stirred up memories,” or talk of assault entered a conversation, or it was time for instruction of daughters on expectations (scripts) for gendered selves as women in society.

Conclusion

Our overall objective was to emphasize similarities and dissimilarities in narrative styles in women’s accounts of rape survival. This is an imperative reminder for those who design rape recovery interventions and for those who conduct research on whose findings interventions of secondary prevention are based. Communication is primary to effective interventions. As Pigg (2001) reminded us, to develop effective strategies, those who plan and develop such interventions must resolve the tension engendered between theoretical explanations and the local knowledge of those who may not understand the language of scientific explanation of what occurs for a given problem that requires resolution (HIV in Nepali for her project, and rape in localized versions of English and Spanish in the current study). Differences in audience background, such as sex and age, as well as culture, are known to affect interpretation and assimilation of recovery interventions and risk reduction prevention messages, whatever they might be, in ways that may either encourage or discourage acceptance by the audience (Piller, 2001). Thus, conventional wisdom on what takes place during sexual violence

requires revision and amplification to include variations in views and understandings that arise from and are filtered through distinctive sociocultural experiences.

Secondary interventions provide an additional strategy. If most women who experience sexual violence refrain from seeking treatment or counseling, but may rely on laypersons such as family or close friends, then a format for the general education of women, as well as men, of different sociocultural backgrounds would prepare them for the task of assisting acquaintances and friends in cycling through, as well as how to recognize the need to recommend treatment for cases beyond the reach of a concerned companion. Overall, this would create a larger, more encompassing network of individuals who have the capacity to assist in “lay triage” and render “lay support” in those moments when it is needed, rather than times when it has been scheduled for resolution “by professional appointment.” As styles of talk are similar within the same speech communities, the means of communication by which these women tell of their rape are in place. Those who may wish to provide lay support will require skills enhancement and a vocabulary for grasping the recovery process for after-rape that will improve understanding of the experience of an acquaintance or a friend, co-worker, neighbor, family member, or loved one.

Although our findings indicate a number of commonalities that correspond to previous discussion in the literature, our examination of after-rape within rape survival accounts shows variations across three Southwest populations for narrative conventions and linguistic devices that women of distinctive backgrounds utilize to talk about their experience. Variability in the incident accounts that these women narrated, and descriptions of their recovery and healing in after-rape, suggest a need to further examine the nuances of narrative production in talking of rape survival in relation to an expectation of a consistent (universal) process of individualized after-rape recovery. It is important to note, variations utilized by women of three populations point to a need to consider differences when planning, designing, and assessing programmatic initiatives that provide counseling for women of different populations, especially the three described here. For women of each group who vary in how they conceive the process of cycling through after-rape (marked by expressions such as *pushing it out*, or models depicting a naturally occurring oscillation between on/off within cognitive processes, or images of permanent mental scarring), and for those whose culture imposes expectations of modesty and chastity (all three groups in unique ways), interventions must be sensitive to differences as well as strengthen the resolve of women in treatment, whether it was sought individually, or decreed by formal institution (i.e., referral), or encouraged by a loved one or significant other. Effective interventions can assist women in the process of cycling through after-rape and improve participation in a world in which men and women share a copresence, and the specific world of intimate relations that may have been curtailed by rape, or where first-time experience was postponed indefinitely. Talk is the means by which one articulates and ventilates an occurrence of sexual violence that has been experienced by the self. At the same time, narrative analysis of that talk shows a need for attention to variability in telling, and the commonalities and silences that may appear, while counseling and supporting women of different cultural backgrounds during after-rape.

Notes

1. Terms (*ethnonyms*) vary when pairing non-minority Americans with a minority population. In comparative research, “White” is used when African American or Native American comprises part of the pair. “Anglo” is used when Latinos/Latinas form part of the pair. “American” is used when Asian Americans and/or Pacific Islanders form part of the pair. In this article, “White” and “Anglo” are used interchangeably. “Mexicana” identifies rapes that occurred outside the United States, before these women became “Mexican American,” by settling in this country. Despite the paucity of cross-cultural analyses of rape, particularly narrative analyses, there have been general studies of rape prevalence among minority women in the United States (see review of studies by Rozée & Koss, 2001).

2. Girshick (2002) indicated that (lesbian) women in her sample rarely mentioned anger in relation to the sexual violence they experienced, whereas anger is among several symptoms reported by women in other studies, including the materials we report in this article. Similar to women in the current study, women in Girshick’s (2002) study reported “numbing out” and “blocking [memory]” (pp. 119-134) as strategies of recovery from woman-to-woman sexual violence.

3. The second author (MPK) served as principal investigator for the current study, and the first author (KVB) brought his experience as a medical anthropologist, field researcher, and translator of Spanish, to analysis of the transcripts.

4. Reservations are lands exchanged by Native Americans with an expectation of a future trust relationship with the U.S. government. Indian Lands remained after a reservation is formally rescinded and/or individual Indian families were allotted parcels of land. Northern and Southern Cheyenne speak a related Algonquian language. The Cheyenne call themselves “hearted” to refer to common links they share (Strauss, 1982). One strong piece of evidence for a common identity is two “sacred bundles” (Sacred Arrows in one state, Sacred Hat in another) held by a designated tribal member in each group (Strauss, 1989).

5. Hard copies of the transcripts were coded with color pens for data text management.

6. Survivors of rape infrequently use mental health services. Given a divergence in sample size and recruitment, wording and question order, mean age and ethnic-racial background of the women, this variability in resource utilization is not unexpected. High and low variations in utilization include, among others: (a) 9.3% of women members of a health plan who responded to a mail survey (2,291 returned of 5,086 mailed; mean age 36.5 years; 25% Black, 72% White, 3% other; Koss, Woodruff, & Koss, 1991) and (b) 39% of women locally recruited by advertising (102 women interviewed from 157 contacted; mean age 34.3 years; 51% Black, 37% White, 6% Latina, 6% other; Campbell et al., 1999).

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