
A Response to the LSE Event “Is Rape Different?”

LSE Law’s Inaugural Event in its ‘Debating Law’ series was held on Wednesday 30th October. It was entitled “Is Rape Different?”. The event has provoked an explosion of responses on social media, particularly Twitter, and has led to the publication of a number of articles in the press that publicise the arguments made by two of the four panellists, namely Helen Reece and Barbara Hewson. Professor Jennifer Temkin and Chief Crown Prosecutor for CPS North West England, Nazir Afzal, were also on the panel, but their views received significantly less media attention.

The arguments advanced by both Helen Reece and Barbara Hewson are deeply problematic for two reasons: they appeal to existing rape myths in society and they fail to root their claims in evidence. This [storify piece](#) sets out how the responses to the event developed on Twitter. As feminist academics we wish to condemn the decision of the LSE Law Department to hold this event and to continue to defend it.

The advertisement for the event presented deeply problematic questions about rape as legitimate questions:

Rape is a heinous crime but does it demand special treatment? Do rule of law and fairness pay a price? Helen Reece leads a debate on whether rape is, in some sense, different.

The event was widely publicised via email, Twitter and the LSE website. A dedicated webpage detailed the arguments put forward by Reece in advance of the event:
<http://www.lse.ac.uk/newsAndMedia/commentAndOpinion/2013/10/Rape.aspx>

Reece’s key point was that comparisons are very rarely made between rape and other crimes and that this is problematic. As part of her argument she contended that rape myths are not as prevalent as is commonly assumed. She made reference to her recent article, “Rape myths: is elite opinion right and popular opinion wrong?” in the *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, where she has argued that “the regressiveness of current public attitudes about rape has been overstated.” Reece stressed the importance of questioning what she called the “strong consensus” that rape is different to other crimes. By implication, Reece seemed to be arguing that rape is not different to other crimes, and should be compared with other crimes. She argued that surveys are not done on public attitudes to victims’ behaviour relating to crimes of burglary or assaults, for example. Thus, she seemed to be questioning the need for research into public attitudes regarding victims’ behaviour in rape cases on the basis that the same is not done in respect of other types of crime. This point was somewhat in tension with her argument, as it emerged during the questions following the debate, that it is important to talk about victims’ behaviour in terms of increased risk of rape. She

claimed that it is possible to think that certain behaviour increases the risk of rape without blaming the victim.

Barbara Hewson, a barrister in Hardwicke Chambers, who stated at the outset that her background is not in criminal law, echoed Reece's comments, but took a different approach. She argued that we need to turn the clock back on rape and to think differently about the discourse surrounding victims of rape. She referred to Joel Best's notion of "an ideology of sexual victimization" that she said was reductionist and absolutist. Hewson took Reece's point about increased risk and went further, arguing that rape victims may have a moral responsibility for being raped. In response to a question about the importance of consent, Hewson said the feminist idea of active or enthusiastic consent turns consent into a failure to take care, and therefore makes rape more about negligence than criminal law. In questions, Hewson stated that she would like to see rape treated the same as other offences.

The points advanced by Reece and Hewson were challenged by Temkin and Afzal. Temkin explained that Reece's argument was not based in evidence and set out the arguments for treating rape as a 'special' crime. She highlighted that the conviction rate for rape as compared with other offences is low and we should be concerned about it. She referred to the British Crime Survey's finding that the overwhelming majority of victims still do not report rape. In relation to the question of the possible relevance of the victim's behavior, she re-iterated the fundamental point that it is only ever the perpetrator who is responsible for the rape, never the victim. The actions of the victim are irrelevant to criminal liability. In relation to the argument that the public may blame all victims of crime, Temkin stressed that there is no research that shows that other victims are as consistently blamed in the way that rape victims are. There is no research which shows that there is a body of mythology surrounding other victims in the way that there is in relation to victims of rape. She argued that the onus is now on Reece to show that people are equally blaming of other victims and that this may colour their attitude when asked to assess criminal liability. This point was crucial, because when it comes to rape, those blaming attitudes can influence members of the jury when it comes to assessing criminal liability. She gave the example of the parents of Madeleine McCann; while some people may perhaps blame them for leaving their child alone, they would never on that basis refuse to convict her abductor. Temkin said it beggars belief that we should even be talking about making the criminal process even more difficult for rape victims.

Afzal argued that rape is about control and power rather than sex. He emphatically rejected any notion of holding victims of rape 'responsible'. Furthermore he stated that in almost all of the cases with which he has been involved the crime was hidden in plain sight. People knew it was happening but no-one seemed to do anything about it and victims were too ashamed to report. He cast this as a failure of the criminal justice system. He highlighted the differential treatment by the police of victims of rape when compared to victims of other kinds of crime. He talked about the Rochdale case and the initial

disbelief that hampered the initial investigation. He decided to turn that around and to prosecute the men involved.

Afzal stated that rape is different for a number of other reasons, including: very often the court experience re-traumatises the victim (although he stressed that things are changing in that regard); he could not think of any other crime so beset by myths and stereotypes; and there are few criminal offences that have such a serious, prolonged, psychological impact.

In relation to the historical ill-treatment of rape victims by the criminal justice system, Afzal stressed that given that we are thankfully now in a situation where victims feel they can report, there is a duty on prosecutors to act upon complainants, even if they are old. He stressed that it is not a 100% policy, and that many cases referred by the police - approximately half - are not prosecuted.

We deplore LSE Law's decision to give a platform to Reece and Hewson's dangerous and unsupported views and its failure to engage responsibly with the public on such an important and sensitive issue as rape.

According to the LSE website:

(<http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/LSEServices/ERD/conferenceAndEventsOffice/information/plpapplication.aspx>)

The Public Lecture Programme is a key part of the 'public face' of LSE. The purpose is to position LSE at the centre of debate in all areas of the social sciences. LSE research is relevant to the real world, rather than an "ivory tower" and these lectures aim to enhance the School's reputation for intellectual, challenging ideas and discussion with a broader public audience.

The notion, advanced by Reece and Hewson, that rape victims may somehow be responsible for their fate is perhaps the most problematic of their claims. Regrettably, it was this argument that gained significant traction in the press. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/10418682/Rape-victims-should-have-moral-responsibility.html>. The etymological difference between 'responsibility' and 'blame', which Reece attempts to use, was either disingenuous or ill-thought through in this public forum. Hewson's attempt to say that she was solely concerned with moral responsibility and not about legal responsibility is similarly duplicitous, speaking in her role as a barrister and at one of the world's most prominent Law Departments. Stating that there is a distinction between blame and responsibility cynically elides the appeal to rape myths embedded in the argument itself.

Whatever the intention of LSELaw, the reality is that the consequence of the way in which LSELaw marketed and then defended this event, is that Reece and Hewson's views about rape victims have been widely publicised in the mainstream media and thereby legitimated. Unfortunately the media has failed to highlight the responses of Prof Temkin and Mr Afzal, along with the critiques

of Reece's *OJLS* paper (such as Barbara Krahe's excellent piece- see here: http://www.uni-potsdam.de/fileadmin/projects/sozialpsychologie/assets/Comment_Reece_Paper.pdf)

A key objective of the LSE Public Lecture Programme is to disseminate ideas as widely as possible. As stated on the LSE website:

The PLP attracts thousands of people to LSE every term and in 2011-12 over 70,000 people attended over 300 events. Many of our lectures are now available for download as podcasts and videos, attracting audiences from across the world

With such a wide audience, we believe there is an onus on the LSE Law Department to ensure that the ideas that are being disseminated do not feed dangerous stereotypes about women being responsible for the sexual violence perpetuated against them.

We invite readers to add their names in support of this statement, using the 'Add Comment' function at the end of the article.

The Editors.

Postscript

The 'Add Comment' function remained open for three weeks following the publication of this Editorial. All of the comments received in that time are reproduced in full below: 88 in support and 10 opposed.

Reader Comments

In support of the statement
"MarinaS" (2013-11-14)

I strongly support this statement. It is very unfortunate that LSE has chosen to provide a convenient platform for opinions that are as hackneyed as they are baseless. That is not the standard of forward thinking rigour one would expect from such an august institution.

In support of the statement
"Mel Evans" (2013-11-14)

In support
"J Gaj" (2013-11-15)

In support of this statement
"Lou Dear" (2013-11-14)

Thank you for this.
"Emily Grabham" (2013-11-14)

I support this statement
"Sylvia Brand" (2013-11-14)

PhD Student
"Rachel O'Neill" (2013-11-14)

In support of this statement
"Hannah McMahon" (2013-11-14)

I write to support the Feminists@Law statement, Silvia Posocco
"Silvia Posocco" (2013-11-14)

I support this statement
"Yvette Russell" (2013-11-15)

Dr
"Elena Loizidou" (2013-11-15)

Rape, reporting, prosecutions and convictions have been low. The voices of Temkin and Afzal describe accurately the limits of social and legal justice that complainants of rape face. The myths are not so much myths but a reality for the complainants of rape. I am not sure whose voice the debate wanted to give public recognition, nor I am sure who is the public that it is addressing. All offences are different from each other, the differences in sentences is an expression of this. At a time when resources are drying up a debate that questions the validity for treating rape the same as property offences- where for example the question of consent is not considered an intergral part of the offence provides no theoretical or legal reasoning.

I agree with asking the LSE law school to account for the public good that they were delivering in this debate.

In support of this statement
"Farhan M. Idris" (2013-11-15)

I support this
"Vicky Conway" (2013-11-15)

Adding my name in support for this statement.
"Terese Jonsson" (2013-11-15)

Thank you for writing this.

In support of this statement as an LSE Law alumni
"Emily Jones" (2013-11-15)

I support this statement
"Annamarie Browning" (2013-11-15)

I support this statement
"Nayeli Urquiza" (2013-11-15)

I support this statement
"Gwyneth Lonergan" (2013-11-15)

I sign in support of this statement.
"Alex Dymock" (2013-11-15)

I support this statement.
"Elliot Evans" (2013-11-15)

Support

"Dr. Zoe Brigley Thompson" (2013-11-15)

I support this statement

In support

"Kathryn McNeilly" (2013-11-15)

I support this statement

"Nikki Godden" (2013-11-15)

I support this statement

"Jane Aaron" (2013-11-15)

I support this.

"Aleksandra Stankova" (2013-11-15)

In support of the statement

Anonymous User (2013-11-15)

Juuso Sallinen

I support this commendable response.

"Stephen Samuel" (2013-11-15)

Professor

"Patrick Hanafin" (2013-11-15)

I support this statement

I support this statement

"Professor Maggie Humm" (2013-11-15)

Signed in support

"Gilbert Leung" (2013-11-15)

support

"Eoin Daly" (2013-11-15)

Eoin Daly

Ms

"Joanna Allan" (2013-11-15)

I support this statement

Feminist Fightback support this statement

Anonymous User (2013-11-15)

I am in support of this

"Zowie Davy" (2013-11-15)

I support this statement

"Carole Wright" (2013-11-15)

I support this statement

"Professor Carrie Paechter" (2013-11-15)

I support this statement.

"Isabel" (2013-11-15)

I support this statement

"Dr Carole Jones" (2013-11-15)

In support of this statement

"Flora Renz" (2013-11-15)

Dr.

"Jenny Roth" (2013-11-15)

I support the position of feminists@law and condemn LSELaw's ill-conceived 'debate' about women's responsibility for rape.

Dr

"Katy Pilcher" (2013-11-15)

I support this statement

Dr

"Annette Lawson" (2013-11-15)

I support this statement

I support this statement as an LSE Alumni in Gender

"Cynthia Dehesa" (2013-11-15)

I support this statement

"Ananya Rao-Middleton" (2013-11-15)

I support this statement - rape-apology and victim-blaming is not acceptable, and should not be advocated by anyone.

In support of statement

"Lisa Kalayji" (2013-11-15)

LSE has demonstrated both social and academic irresponsibility in allowing this empirically unfounded and highly inflammatory discourse to be proliferated with the implied legitimacy that attends such a distinguished institution. The university owes apologies to the public, the academic community, and the sexual assault survivors who continue to be harmed by pervasive and uncritically accepted victim-blaming paradigms.

I support this statement

"Sarah Moffat, Women's Officer at Edinburgh University" (2013-11-15)

I fully support this statement.

"Dr. Maria do Mar Pereira" (2013-11-15)

I fully support this statement.

I support this statement

"Emma Cunliffe" (2013-11-15)

Ethical principles for academic debate require that our expressed opinions be predicated on research and analysis rather than mere assertion. Newsworthiness is no excuse for academic institutions positioning the views of less-well informed commentators as if they had equal weight and substance as the carefully researched conclusions of those who have performed a lifetime of work in the field.

I agree with this statement

"Ruth Coustick" (2013-11-15)

I support this statement.

"Debra Parkes" (2013-11-15)

Dr. (Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas, Mexico)

"Catherine Andrews" (2013-11-15)

I support this statement

I firmly support this statement

"Dr J Allen-Collinson" (2013-11-15)

Dr

"Paul Simpson" (2013-11-15)

I strongly support this statement

Policing Academic Freedom

"Paul Hamilton" (2013-11-15)

Apparently, we are now in a neo-Victorian, post-Foucauldian era — in which the uneasy relationship between forms of knowledge and power — are simply dismissed from discussion. What is truly important is preserving the Manichean dualism between "victim" and "sexual predator", innocent and guilty, good and evil. Yet, whose interest does this really serve?

In America, more than 750 out of every 100,000 people are in prison (that is five times more than in Britain). 14 million people are arrested every year. Is it a coincidence that the prison system has expanded, starting in the 1980's, at the same time as the victim's rights movement has burgeoned? Is it a coincidence that victim's rights groups — who promote a polarized view of crime that serves the interest of those in authority — receive a billion dollars a year in government subsidies?

The policing of polarized categories has the consequence of creating institutions that reflect a polarized world view. It advances Britain further down a pathway to possessing a prison system like the one in America.

Hewson offered a historical and rhetorical perspective that was absolutely relevant to the discussion. It is also specifically relevant to your article arguing for the elimination of academic freedom in an issue of public interest.

It is dangerous to exercise academic freedom of speech, but the attempt to police a pure orthodoxy strips away the only power that the individual has against the overwhelming authority of society. If the academy is no longer a place where these issues can be examined, our own freedoms are significantly curtailed.

I support this statement.

"Louise Pennington" (2013-11-15)

I support this statement.

Dr.

"Ann Rossiter" (2013-11-15)

I support this statement

"Dr. Ann Rossiter" (2013-11-15)

I agree with this.

"Janet Veitch" (2013-11-16)

We have very well founded evidence that fewer than 15% of rape victim's report what's happened to the police. Around half those women who seek help from rape crisis do so about crimes that happened more than a year ago. Both these figures point in one direction: that this is one of the small group of crimes that victims cannot talk about. Creating a publicity machine that exacerbates this existing State of affairs is irresponsible in the extreme. It's even more disappointing to think that the LSE which should be shedding light on difficult issues is designing a debate which is actually propagating myths.

Statement

"Elizabeth Pickett" (2013-11-16)

I entirely support this statement.

Student

"Lucy McCarthy" (2013-11-16)

I support this statement.

Here, here

"Dr Gethin Rees - University of Southampton" (2013-11-16)

Positioning some activities and behaviours as more risky necessarily posits that those who take those risks are responsible for the outcome. There is no difference (as far as I see it) between acknowledging risky behaviours and victim-blaming.

risk

"Jan Macvarish" (2013-11-19)

I strongly support this statement.

"Christina Kenny" (2013-11-16)

In support

"Katharine A Gilchrist" (2013-11-17)

I support the statement. Katharine A Gilchrist, BA in Law, Uni of Kent at Canterbury, 1989

I agree

"Nicola Barker" (2013-11-17)

SHEquality Matters Magazine supports this statement

"SHEquality Matters Magazine" (2013-11-17)

I support this statement

"Emily Spiers" (2013-11-17)

I support this statement

"Kheya Bag" (2013-11-18)

Kheya Bag

I support this statement.

"Len Lukowski" (2013-11-18)

I support this statement.

"Caroline Derry" (2013-11-18)

I support this editorial
by **Padmapriya S (2013-11-18)**

Rape is a crime that tends to permanently alter and destabilise the lives of victims. It is important not to let a few publicity-seekers hijack a serious issue and convert it into a media circus. When 'exalted' institutions like LSE start indulging in such cheap PR stunts, it should be doubly condemned.

A Response to the LSE Event "Is Rape Different?"
"**Mukesh Kumar Khatwani**" (2013-11-18)

I do agree and support this statement

I support this statement
"**Stu Marvel**" (2013-11-18)

I support this statement
"**Cathy Norman**" (2013-11-18)

I support the Editorial Comment on Rape
"**Siobhan Hunt**" (2013-11-18)

I support this statement.
"**Katie Hunt**" (2013-11-18)

Ms
"**Maryam Jameela**" (2013-11-18)

In support of the statement

I support this statement.
"**Natalie Jordan**" (2013-11-18)

I support this statement.

I support this statement
"**Gemma Cobb**" (2013-11-18)

I support this statement.
"**Blair Ogden**" (2013-11-18)

I support this statement. 18/11/2013

I DON'T SUPPORT THIS STATEMENT
"**James Heartfield**" (2013-11-18)

Not only is this a call for censorship, you ought to be supporting someone who is insisting that rape is not 'different' but in fact a crime. If you think it is not a crime but a question of social administration, then you should argue against Helen Reece's eminently sensible point - though if you are remotely honest, you will see that you will lose that argument.

I support this statement
"**C. Sweeney**" (2013-11-18)

I support this statement
"**Nora Honkala**" (2013-11-18)

No Discourse is Innocent
"Paul Hamilton" (2013-11-18)

I couldn't agree with you more - though there are two more points I will make. I suspect that the vast majority of people who have signed this list have never watched the debate in its entirety. If they had, they would realize that the paraphrase above is profoundly deficient - misunderstanding and missing central points in the debate.

The other point I would make is that no one would argue that there are not harmful myths surrounding sexual violence. However, 'no' discourse is innocent. Every discourse is complicit with power - and when a discourse is polarized into "good" and "evil", orthodox and blasphemous, "goodie" and "badie", such as this one is - it is very easy for those in authority to exploit it in order to consolidate and expand their own power. The slavish devotion given to the Crown Prosecutor in the article above - without a hint of suspicion as to his own self-interest (and the state's) in his rhetoric - is a perfect example.

The idea espoused by this group, that some discourses should not be held up to historical and rhetorical scrutiny - or analyzed for their uneasy pathways of alliance with 'various' interests both constructive and profoundly destructive - is not only anti-intellectual, but really opposed to any form of productive academic discourse.

A barrister and an academic are more than qualified to take part in the debate that took place. Their analysis was historical, rhetorical, semiotic - and, as a result, exactly relevant.

One theme that was repeated in the debate was the supposed idea that, by debating this difficult issue, we would be going back in time. Well, what this petition makes clear is that these so-called "academics" would like to erase the last forty years of intellectual history - with its careful work analyzing the relationship between discourse and power - so that they can promote a morality play view of an issue, regardless of the consequences.

As I said, 'no' discourse is innocent. Every single one needs to be subject to robust critique and scrutiny. If it is regarded as so sacrosanct as to be "above" scrutiny, then it is even 'more' important to examine it - to examine, specifically, what its origin is and who benefits from it. These are 'basic' questions that every academic should be committed to asking. If they are not, they should be asking themselves why they are not - not condemning those who are.

I was at the debate and strongly oppose your statement
"Jan Macvarish" (2013-11-19)

Dear 'The Editors' of Feminists@Law

I attended the LSE debate and utterly oppose this attempt to shut down debate. You say,

'We deplore LSE Law's decision to give a platform to Reece and Hewson's dangerous and unsupported views and its failure to engage responsibly with the public on such an important and sensitive issue as rape.'

Why on earth would the LSE not 'give a platform' to one of its own academics? If you really believe Helen's work is too 'dangerous' to be discussed in a public forum, then this has very serious implications for the publishing of views with which you disagree in a peer-reviewed journal or with the discussion of views with which you disagree in the lecture theatre or the seminar room. The logic of what you are arguing is that academics with whom you disagree should be silenced by others in the academic community or by their employers. I would hope that this is not what you really think.

Your view that LSE law 'failed to engage responsibly with the public' suggests that you had little faith in the capacity of Jennifer Temkin and Nazir Afzal, who shared the platform on equal footing with Helen Reece and Barbara Hewson, to challenge the views with which they disagreed and to convince the audience of their arguments. Your view also displays a particularly patronising view of 'the public' and its ability to engage with ideas without the interference of self-appointed intellectual chaperones.

Helen Reece does not 'appeal to existing rape myths in society' - this suggests that Helen has some kind of 'agenda' to make it alright to rape women. This is ridiculous and disingenuous. Your failure to engage seriously with the perfectly legitimate questions Reece is raising indicate that you lost perspective on what a commitment to genuinely open academic or political exploration means.

If you disagree with a point of view, your obligation is to destroy it through argument and scholarship, not through a cowardly appeal to authorities such as a person's employer or an institution hosting a public debate to withdraw the opportunity to discuss views other than your own. How do you develop your own scholarship and opinions if not through engagement with the views of others with whom you disagree?

I would strongly urge others who disagree with this censorious enterprise to post here and to demonstrate how debate can be pursued rather than shut down.

Yours,

Dr Jan Macvarish, Research Fellow, CHSS, University of Kent.

Associate Professor, Smith College

"Darcy Buerkle" (2013-11-19)

I support this statement.

"Darcy Buerkle" (2013-11-19)

Dr.

"Cheryl Hudson" (2013-11-19)

This statement is a travesty. I support academic freedom and free speech and I strongly condemn this attempt to close it down.

I support this statement

"Aoife O'Donoghue" (2013-11-19)

I support this statement

"Katie Cruz" (2013-11-19)

I agree

"K Bedford" (2013-11-19)

I strongly disagree with your attempt to close down debate

"Sara Hinchliffe" (2013-11-19)

If feminists believe in their arguments they should be prepared to argue them with passion and logic - not demand that their opponents be silenced.

I support this statement

"Laura Graham" (2013-11-19)

I support this statement

"David Shulman" (2013-11-20)

I support this statement

"Anne-Marie Stewart" (2013-11-20)

Dr

"Mia Liinason" (2013-11-21)

I support this statement

I do NOT support this statement

"Sarah B" (2013-11-21)

I don't support any statement which effectively stifles effective debate or discussion. To censor discourse is to censor progress. To delete these attitudes is to delete the reality that these stereotypes exist. Hiding does not solve anything in the long run. I am female and would actually encourage discourse on these stereotypes precisely because it could help people question them rather than ignore they exist.

Agree totally

"Sarah B" (2013-11-21)

I do not support this statement

"Jenna James" (2013-11-21)

It is a great shame that academics in this country call for censorship of ideas that they do not agree with. We should be setting an example of our faith in reason and rational debate, not resorting to the crude agent of social change - censorship. Shame on you for calling for this - shame on you indeed.

I support this statement

"Camille Stengel" (2013-11-23)

I strongly support this statement. That is not the standard of forward thinking rigour one would expect from such an august institution.

This article is a disgrace, and discredits UKC

"Xiao Chen" (2013-11-23)

Was this article really written by feminist academics (or "academics"), or is it some kind of undergraduate spoof? I must admit to some difficulty believing that anyone who has studied at an advanced level, and is engaged in university teaching and research, could have produced an article that is at once so inaccurate, so confused, and that exhibits as much intellectual dishonesty as this piece.

At the most basic level, this article seriously misrepresents what was said at the debate, as will be clear to anyone who takes the trouble to watch the video. The article notes that Reece's points were rehearsed in a recent journal article, but neglects the abundant evidence for her position that was presented in that article, and fails to mention the rigorous peer-review process to which it had been subjected before publication. The claim that no evidence is available to support her position can only be described, therefore, as a deliberate lie.

In short, whoever wrote this piece really has no business teaching at a university, and by presenting themselves as "feminist academics" they do great disservice to the cause of feminism. Academics are capable of distinguishing fact from opinion; they are skilled at producing accurate summaries of arguments in order to respond to them; they habitually appraise the evidential base for claims, whether these claims are made in support or in opposition to their arguments. The authors of this piece do none of these things. Feminism would be better off without "advocates" who display inaccuracy and intellectual dishonesty to the extent seen in this piece. Equally, placing a piece of writing such as this in the public domain does UKC a very poor service: no reputable university would employ people whose ability to comprehend, report and argue was as limited as this. Ugc5v8

The statement is inadequate and one-sided because...

"Boris Johnson" (2013-11-24)

At no point in the debate has anyone seriously considered the possibility that a man (or even a woman) could be morally responsible for being raped. Yet surely this is the crux of the argument: many commentators believe (despite the absence of evidence, as Reece demonstrates) that large sections of the population are gripped by "rape myths", the most insidious of which is the view that most victims are morally responsible for their ordeal, so there is a need for serious consideration of the circumstances under which such a view could be

appropriate, and a demonstration that such circumstances are (or are not) present in the majority of reported rapes. In this respect the men who are raped resemble cyclists rather than bicycles: the discussion in this linked article is extremely pertinent, and can be transposed to the issue of rape with only minimal revision. The outstanding question, of course, is that of justice for the many men whose lives are blighted by conviction for a rape when at least part of the moral responsibility rests with the survivor. Surely it is not just that such men face humiliation and perhaps even a criminal record when they have merely gratified the unconscious urges of their so-called victims:

http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2013/11/22/cyclists-lord-james_n_4322518.html?utm_hp_ref=uk

Not in my name

"Linda" (2013-12-04)