

Quinlan, Andrea, *The Technoscientific Witness of Rape: Contentious Histories of Law, Feminism and Forensic Science*, (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 2017). ISBN 978-1-4875-2060-1 (paperback), pp. 272, \$ 24.95.

How has Ontario's Sexual Assault Evidence Kit (SAEK) developed over the past thirty years, what purpose does it serve and whom does it benefit? These questions are at the heart of Andrea Quinlan's highly nuanced analysis, *The Technoscientific Witness of Rape*. In six clearly written and compellingly argued chapters, Quinlan contextualises the SAEK, exposing the tensions, contradictions and controversies surrounding its development and use, and demonstrates that it has failed to deliver to victims of sexual violence the justice it promises.

Quinlan introduces the central theoretical, methodological and conceptual resources that inform the book in Chapter One, 'Introduction: Diffracting the Technoscientific Witness.' First, as an actor-network theorist, Quinlan considers the SAEK itself as one of the many actors operating in a medicolegal network which responds to sexual assault, and she argues that the kit serves as a 'boundary object' that not only coordinates the action of participants in the network, but also reflects the tensions and contradictions between medical, legal, scientific and advocacy practices. Second, situating her analysis squarely in feminist technoscience studies, Quinlan utilises Haraway's diffraction metaphor. Emphasising the multiple narratives operative in the SAEK and its history, Quinlan writes, 'Uncertainties, tensions, and debates in law, feminism, and forensic science become visible through this diffracted visioning of the kit, which lays the necessary ground for imagining more ethical and alternative ways of organising medicolegal practice around sexual assault' (21).

Asking who designed it, why and how, Quinlan traces the origins of the SAEK in Chapter Two, 'Inscriptions of Doubt: Law, Anti-Rape Activism, and the Early SAEK.' She argues that early feminist critiques of how victims of sexual assault were treated by medical and legal institutions set the stage for the development of the kit. In addition to charges of pervasive sexism and misogyny in medical and legal practices, anti-rape activists criticised the lack of protocols for evidence collection and the lack of training for physicians and nurses. However, while the move to standardised evidence collection promised the elimination of bias against victims, it came at the cost of marginalising rape crisis centers and the expertise that feminist activists had developed regarding victim advocacy. It also reinforced popular distrust of women's reports of rape and demands for corroborative evidence.

In Chapter Three, 'Stabilizing the SAEK: Controversies in Practice, Advocacy, and Expertise,' Quinlan describes how the SAEK was positioned as a credible tool in medical and legal practice through efforts to coordinate sexual assault response and professionalise the roles of responders. Replacing the feminist understanding of sexual violence as a social and political problem, the SAEK defines sexual violence as an individual, medical problem requiring management by medical and legal professionals. Quinlan's compelling analysis of the contents and protocols of the SAEK reveals the assumptions operative: Victims' bodies are viewed as crime scenes, medical and legal professionals are viewed as rape trauma experts and evidence of injuries serves as the witness to the crime. Although rape crisis centers became increasingly marginalised, they were also implicated in this network by emphasising the need for victims to preserve evidence for collection during the reporting process.

In the next chapter, 'Assembling the Genetic Technoscientific Witness: Visions of Justice, Safety, and the Stranger Rapist,' Quinlan explicates the impact of the SAEK's increased authority due to the introduction of DNA typing. The ability to identify perpetrators through genetic evidence inspired greater trust in the SAEK's credibility and transformed medical care of victims into a forensic process. At the same time, it reified the view that 'real rape' is a violent act committed by a stranger. Further, it allowed defense attorneys to introduce a victim's sexual history into the legal case despite rape shield laws because the technology can identify multiple DNA profiles on a victim's clothing, including traces from years earlier.

Quinlan investigates the multiple roles the SAEK fulfills in contemporary medical and legal practices in Chapter Five, 'Instability Within: The Technoscientific Witness in Contemporary Practice.' Although it is touted as a valuable and empowering tool for identifying perpetrators and preventing future harm, in practice the SAEK is rarely used to secure convictions. Through interviews of sixty-two individuals – advocates, police, medical care providers, forensic scientists and criminal lawyers – Quinlan reveals how the SAEK is used to exclude, coerce and interrogate victims. Financial and geographical barriers prevent many victims from accessing the SAEK, while other victims are frequently pressured to 'consent' to the exam. Moreover, the SAEK is used to test the veracity of victims' reports, not only by defense attorneys but also by police investigators.

In the concluding chapter, 'Reassembling Technoscience: Troubled Pasts and Imagined Futures,' Quinlan considers how the SAEK could be otherwise. Some of the proposed reforms she discusses

include moving the SAEK from medical centers to rape crisis centers, creating kit shield laws and conducting SAEKs on the accused. While strategies such as these will affect change, she cautions that reforms are unlikely to satisfactorily transform the cultural systems that support sexual violence. Ultimately, she concludes, the solutions to the problem of sexual violence cannot be found in the law, science, or technologies, but are more likely to be found in ‘counter-networks’ that aim for social change.

*The Technoscientific Witness of Rape* presents a profound and thought-provoking contribution to feminist science studies and research on sexual violence. Although she does not put it in these terms, I see this work as offering readers a kind of Foucauldian genealogy of the Sexual Assault Evidence Kit that exposes the operations of power within the kit’s network. Quinlan’s detailed analysis uncovers how disciplinary power shapes the work of the police, doctors, nurses, lawyers, forensic scientists and advocates who respond to sexual violence, and constructs the victim of sexual violence as a docile body. I highly recommend this book.

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Walcott, Rinaldo, *Queer Returns: Essays on Multiculturalism, Diaspora, and Black Studies*, (Insomniac Press: Toronto, 2016). ISBN 978-1-5548-3174-6 (paperback), pp. 288. \$ 19.95.

The nation-state continues to exemplify the entanglements of the violence(s) of late capitalism and how the state comes to bear on belonging. As Rinaldo Walcott notes in *Queer Returns: Essays on Multiculturalism, Diaspora, and Black Studies*:

Our ‘new’ global intimacy requires increasing forms of violence to hold such intimacy at bay, all the while celebrating an anemic global traffic of capital and its elite defenders. Revolution means to topple this and is on its way to doing so. (125)

This call to revolution fully recognises the intimacies of transatlantic slavery, colonialism and indigenous genocide and near genocide, which Walcott uses to think through strategies of relation and non-relation, moving towards the possibility of a different humanism. Walcott’s text is in good company among texts of Black and Feminist praxis such as