

## Rape and Race in the Canadian Press: Reproducing the Moral Order

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### Abstract

This paper traces the interlocking and intersecting frames of race and gender as they appear in stories about sexual assault that were published in *The Globe and Mail*, a major Canadian daily over a two-year period (2007-2008). I contextualize these frames within the overall patterns of reporting about sex crimes, paying particular attention to the economy of representations within which race and gender are naturalized in specific ways. I argue that the various striations that lie between the two sides of the binary of virgin and vamp are constituted by the intersecting influences of racism, sexism and classism. These layers are premised on taken-for-granted tropes, stereotypes and discursive moves reproducing sexist, racist discourses that re-entrench notions of worthy and unworthy victims. Sexual assault, which has usually been represented in pedestrian ways, acquires an aura of significance as a signal crime only when rendered intelligible through discursive constructions of racialized masculinities.

**Keywords:** Race; Racialized discourses; AIDS; Canadian press; Sexual assault; Rape myths; Victims; Black; Representations; Masculinities

### Introduction

In his analysis of the ideological effects of the mass media, Stuart Hall [1] argues, “[y]ou cannot learn, through common sense, how things are: you can only discover where they fit into the existing scheme of things” (p. 315, emphasis in the original). The “existing scheme of things”, necessarily includes a reflection of the nation. As a white settler colony, Canadian society is marked by a distinct hierarchy that is raced, gendered and class-based. This, in turn, influences the hierarchy of newsworthiness that prevails within media organizations in terms of determining the stories that are told and those that are either muted or silenced; bodies that are considered worthy of coverage and those that are deemed disposable, or as precarious non-lives. In reproducing social stratifications, the media play a central role in legitimizing the status quo and in fostering an illusion of consensus, seducing audiences into believing in shared common values and dominant structures of morality [2].

This paper examines the ways that these dominant structures are mobilized and reflected through reporting on rape in one of Canada’s major daily national newspapers. I examine the ways that interlocking discourses around race, gender and class serve to designate certain victims as worthy or unworthy, and emphasize or downplay the role of race and nationality in stories about violence. In doing this, I seek to draw attention to the ways that racial hierarchies and proper performances of whiteness, femininity and masculinity are produced and reified.

In the following section, I explore the literature dealing with the dominant media’s coverage of rape. My purpose in surveying this literature is to demonstrate that shifts in media and popular discourses pertaining to rape are reflective of other underlying ideological motivations that have little to do with its violence and more to do with

reinforcing hegemonic values about morality, race, and gender. Further, aside from a few exceptions, noted below, there are few studies that address rape in Canadian media. Given the influence of news stories in shaping public agendas and state policies, the coverage of rapes not only provide a window by which to assess common understandings of the phenomenon but, also shed light on the logics that inform state responses.

### Mediating Rape

Crime stories are ritualistic encounters, communicating moral messages and prescriptive behaviours [3,4]. They are especially powerful indicators in tracing the contours of society’s moral order. Ericson et al. [5] observe that “a single criminal act provides the occasion not simply for a primary factual account of what happened, but for a morality play of how what happened fits into the order of things” (p. 74). Such stories, Katz [4] reasons, permit the audience to think through moral issues. Studies focusing on news and ideology suggest that the very frame of crime summons values that tend to reinforce the hegemonic order [6-8]. According to Meyers [9], “[n]ews coverage of violent crimes reveals society’s biases and prejudices... It tells us who is valued and who is not; whose life has meaning and whose is insignificant; who has power and who does not” (p. 99). These notions of value and power are heavily raced and gendered.

The fear of the stranger rapist/murderer is an implicit if not explicit message in crime coverage concerning violence against women [10-13]. Not only are rapists depicted as monsters unlike other men and, hence, to be carefully avoided, but the focus on “stranger-danger” also occludes the reality that most intimate and gendered violence takes place with familiar and familial others [14,15]. Benedict [16] has documented the extensive and pervasive use of rape myths in US news accounts. She notes that these myths, which range from blaming women for provoking rape to attributing the proclivity to rape to working class men and men of colour, serve to reinforce the patriarchal moral order. Innocence is emblemized through the elevation of a victim to the status of virgin (for abiding by norms of

femininity), or her debasement to the position of vamp (essentializing her deviance from these same norms).

In her analysis of four British national newspapers, Naylor [17] found that non-fatal sexual assaults were predominantly reported in small, brief articles, whereas sex-murders tended to be covered substantially. Further, to be reported at all, the non-fatal sexual assaults “required an element of outrage beyond the mere fact of being a sexual assault” (p. 180). Sexual assaults, she argues, are constructed as ‘pedestrian’ occurrences [18]. These findings have been corroborated in other studies. Mason and Monckton-Smith [19] found that sexual assaults that were deemed to be extremely violent, resulting in murder, merited more attention and coverage compared to those that did not involve murder. They further observe that murders of women, which did not involve sexual assaults, were nevertheless sexualized.

In a comparative analysis of press representations of male and female perpetrators of violence, Wykes [20] found that women were inevitably held responsible for both the violence they committed, as well as the violence that male perpetrators enacted. Their culpability lay in their deviation from traditional norms of femininity. This coverage, Wykes maintains, serves to “promote marriage, monogamy, maternity and moderation” (p. 161) as the normative routes to safety from violence. Berns’ [21] analysis of the coverage of domestic violence in women’s magazines from 1970 to 1997 concludes with similar findings, emphasizing that it was only women who left such relationships who were featured as “survivors” with stories worth telling. In a more recent study of ten leading men and women’s magazines, Nettleton [22] found equivalent patterns that exonerated men while holding women victims culpable. Recent studies underscore the increase of news stories emphasizing the innocence of male victims. In her study of six Canadian newspapers, Sampert [23] suggests that “[a] corollary of the innocent man myth is the myth that women lie about sexual assault” (p. 310).

It appears that women’s experiences of violence are unworthy of coverage until they are killed, and most particularly, if they are murdered by strangers or in circumstances that are unusual, abnormal or simply titillating. Meyers [9] refers to this as the hierarchy of crime reporting wherein dead bodies merit more attention than those who live through the ordeal. Nonetheless, even in these circumstances, it depends which women are the victims. In Canada, Goulding [24] has shown that despite heavy coverage of other sex crimes and murders, notably the Paul Bernardo and Karla Homolka case that involved the murders of several young white women, the murders of four Aboriginal women garnered scant attention. Other researchers have suggested that the differential amounts of coverage mediate ideas about the worthiness of victims, reflecting and reinscribing notions of who is considered deserving of rescue, outrage and sympathy, and conversely, whose lives simply don’t matter [25-28].

In her analysis of the rape coverage concerning the Freaknik spring celebration in Atlanta, Meyers [29] points out that black women victims were often portrayed as Jezebels or naïfs -- women who were either “asking for it” because of their presumed hyper-sexuality or women who happened to be in the wrong place and at the wrong time. The potency of such media constructions derives from a historical reservoir of stereotypes about black women [30,31]. As Donovan [32] has remarked, “the Jezebel stereotype suggest[s] that black date rape survivors are especially vulnerable to being perceived as contributing to their victimization” (p. 723).

Where intimate violence involving black people does receive coverage, it is often an interracial aspect of the incident that captures media attention. This is especially so if the resulting narrative invokes stereotypical scripts about deviant others [33]. Stable’s [34] extensive historical analysis of the US press reveals that when the victims were white and the perpetrators were black, media coverage was intense. Conversely, black female victims rarely merited the same degree of attention. Similarly, Wortley’s [35] research of two Canadian papers found that black victims are rarely accorded the same space or given the same attention as white victims of interracial homicide and rape. Dixon and Linz’s [36] analysis of US papers, have reported similar findings. On the other hand, where perpetrators are men of colour, the coverage is framed in a manner that communicates their inferiority and savagery vis-à-vis white males. Sampert [23] proposes that in the Canadian context, the figure of the violent, patriarchal Muslim man is replacing the stereotype of the black male rapist. This is also evident in Jiwani’s [37] analysis of gendered representations in the Canadian press in the immediate aftermath of the events of September 11.

Prevailing conceptions of women based on their race and social status thus influence how their victimization will be perceived and treated not only by the press but also, by policing authorities [33,38]. Simultaneously, other factors also determine the kind of coverage that women receive. Chesney-Lind and Eliason [39] have shown that an aggressive and heightened focus on female perpetrators of crime reflects the media’s backlash against feminism [40,41]. This suggests that over-reporting and under-reporting of violence against certain groups of women serves a particular ideological function, depending on which groups are identified as ‘out groups’ in the particular locales being examined; the types of crimes associated with specific communities, and the particular hegemonic values that are perceived as being threatened. Women whose cultural backgrounds easily excite stereotypes of repressive cultural traditions that are always-already considered deviant will likely receive more coverage than cases of gendered violence that are considered not so exotic [42,43].

Dowler et al. [44] note that women victims are often more heavily represented in the news, but that “this newsworthiness is contingent on their social status: victims must be judged innocent, virtuous and honorable” (p. 841). These observations resonate with earlier work by Benedict [16]. Benedict articulates this paradox in terms of the dichotomy of the vamp and virgin. The vamp, she argues, is the woman who “by her looks, behavior or generally loose morality, drove the man to such extremes of lust that he was compelled to commit the crime.” The virgin, by contrast, is the victim par excellence: “[t]he man, a depraved and perverted monster sullied the innocent victim, who is now a martyr to the flaws of society” (p. 23).

In her analysis of discourses of prostitution in the media, McLaughlin [45] offers a more nuanced analysis, suggesting that the paradox of virgin/vamp is also contingent on which women are considered worth saving or can be rescued, versus women whose deviance exceeds the limits of the “rescue-able.” Thus, the presumption is that if a woman is salvageable, i.e., if she can be morally reclaimed, she will more likely be rescued. However, women who choose not to be saved, and/or who are perceived as inviting danger, will not invoke any sympathetic coverage. Sex workers fall into the category of women who are perceived as being beyond rescue. Examining 425 articles in a local Canadian paper over a twenty-four year time period, Hallgrimsdottir et al. [46] identify culpability as a major narrative convention used to tell stories about sex workers. They

argue that “culpability narratives tell stories of women who cannot be ‘rescued.’ Families are depicted as expending considerable effort to locate and reform their ‘fallen women’, to little avail” (p. 272). As “fallen” women who cannot be saved, the identities, lives and realities of sex trade workers are often excluded in press coverage, resulting in their “symbolic annihilation” [47].

In these narratives, race influences which women are regarded as being culpable. For many white women, culpability is attributed to their fall from middle class norms of femininity, which translates into an inadequate performance of whiteness [48]. They are déclassé in terms of falling in rank from middle class virtuosity to lower class promiscuity. In this regard, they are racialized [38]. Similarly, veiled Muslim women are represented as suspect victims participating in their gender oppression and hence unworthy of societal sympathy [49]. Their culpability lies in their adherence to a cultural tradition that is regarded with suspicion and distaste. In their analysis of the missing and murdered Aboriginal women, Jiwani and Young [50] found that Aboriginal women are often held to be responsible for the violence they suffer because of their perceived and presumed inability to assimilate into dominant norms of femininity. How women victims are framed, within these discourses of culpability and worthiness, signals the different ways in which race, gender and class are interwoven to make rape stories intelligible to the wider audience.

In the following section, I detail the findings of the rape stories that were published in *The Globe and Mail*, one of Canada’s national dailies, over a two-year period. I focus particularly on the ways in which race, class and gender interlock and intersect in the racialized discourses that inhere within these narratives.

### Covering Rape in *The Globe and Mail*

*The Globe and Mail* is widely regarded as a newspaper of record, underscoring its status as the national daily and its political weight. Hence, how an issue is covered, the responses it garners and its framing are all important in influencing policy decisions regarding the allocation of funds and the kinds of interventions that are to be implemented.

A Dow Jones FACTIVA database search of all articles using the key words ‘rape’ and ‘sexual assault’ in *The Globe and Mail* generated 98 stories spanning a two-year period, from January 2007 to December 2008. These stories are broadly clustered around the following themes (Table 1):

Number	Themes
17	Male pedophiles and accounts of sexual assault of boys
3	Male pedophiles with the gender of the victims unknown
22	Women as victims of sexual assault (some in passing)
31	Sexual assault of teenage girls
3	Sexual assault of female babies and young girls
3	Sexual assaults of elderly women
7	Women suffering from HIV transmission as a result of having unprotected sex with a man who did not disclose
10	Acquittals or wrongful convictions of men accused of sexual assault

4	Accounts involving women as assailants (one for elder abuse of women; one for inappropriate sexual relations with a teenage boy; one for transmitting AIDS, and one described as a ‘gender bender’ where a woman posed as a male teen)
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Table 1: Thematic Breakdown of Rape Stories in *The Globe and Mail* (2007-2008).

Included in this corpus are several accounts where sexual assault was not mentioned except in passing and in very general terms. Eight of these focus on explicitly international accounts in the sense that they refer to events or personalities elsewhere in the world. Four other stories are categorized as international but involved Canadians. The rest of the news accounts relate to events occurring in Canada.

Although there is a tendency not to report on the racial background of victims or perpetrators, existing news accounts offer cues as to the racial identities of those involved. Sometimes, this is through the inclusion of a name, a photograph or an attribution to a particular geographic location where the crime occurred. At other times, the reports reference the country of origin of either the assailant or the victim, thereby alluding to their immigrant origins or foreign culture [51]. Discursively, then, particular groups are marked in ways that imply their racial identity.

The largest category of reportage dealing with sexual assaults involved teenage girls. Three major cases dominate these news accounts, with each case generating numerous stories: the Middleton case concerning the 1996 rape and murder of 17-year-old Rebecca Middleton, an Ontario girl, in Bermuda; the rape of a 12-year-old Aboriginal girl in Tisdale, Saskatchewan; and the rape and murder of Nina Courtepatte, a 14-year-old Aboriginal girl in Edmonton. The Middleton case elicited considerable coverage primarily because it was an international case and involved high profile human rights activist, Cherie Booth, who was identified as “the wife of British Prime Minister Tony Blair” [52]. The case is also interesting insofar as it casts Bermuda as having a “culture of impunity when it comes to sexual assault.” No such observation is made about Canada.

The two cases involving the murders of Aboriginal girls make little mention of their Aboriginal status, except that in the Tisdale rape, where the young woman survived, the case is described as creating tensions between Aboriginal and white communities. As Kallio [53] reveals in her insightful analysis of the coverage of this case in the *Star Phoenix*, the local paper, the news accounts invoked a central rape myth – that the Aboriginal girl had “asked for it” by making herself available and vulnerable (the theme of culpability as discussed above). In *The Globe and Mail* articles captured in the corpus discussed here, the only context provided in these accounts relies on what was reported in court and that, in itself, is a constrained and specialized discourse. Benedict [16] reasons that reporters’ reliance on court discourse is problematic since it reproduces a hegemonic view of the case. Both the Tisdale and the Courtepatte cases involved more than one individual, and both involved white males as perpetrators. Yet, in both instances, the representations of the rape and murder are intricately linked to unruly groups of youth. The reportage in both these cases continually emphasized the age of the victims, suggesting that the issue was more significant because the victims were young women rather than communicating a generalized condemnation of the gendered and sexual violence they experienced.

## General Patterns

In their analysis of news coverage, Bird and Dardenne [54] critique the familiar distinctions between soft and hard news. While soft news usually designates human-interest stories, hard news tends to encapsulate the more factual reporting of events and occurrences. Bird and Dardenne argue that this split has in fact obscured the complex narrative devices that underpin the mythic structure of news. As they put it, "news is a particular kind of mythological narrative with its own symbolic codes that are recognized by its audience" (p. 71-72) [55]. As mythology, news is constituted by stories and chronicles. Stories draw on a common stock of knowledge and culturally specific templates [56]. They are embellished accounts that reiterate particular ways of communicating information. They derive from and reinscribe cultural formulae, emphasizing the prescriptive and descriptive elements of the cultural stock of knowledge. In contrast, chronicles represent a recording of the occurrences in a more terse fashion – they resemble the classic pyramid structure of the news stories that emphasizes the most newsworthy points in condensed form at the outset of the reportage. In other words, chronicles form a backdrop of routinized coverage against which the humanistic, personalized narratives of stories engage readers. The lure of such stories lies in the commodification of information such that news becomes, within the constraints of twenty-four hour reporting, "infotainment." [57].

In applying this distinction to the coverage of rape cases in the news, it becomes clear that the chronicles – those terse and short bits and pieces of the larger rape narrative – form the routinized background. The longer, more detailed and embellished columns constitute the personalized stories that draw the reader in and communicate the normative values (prescriptive and descriptive), as well as the interpretive frameworks by which these stories are to be read. In the following sections, I discuss the particular stories that merited considerable attention from columnists and that were also covered in the newspaper's editorials. These stories provide an insight into the prevailing racialized order of common sense meanings.

## Findings

As the literature predicts, most articles involving sexual assault were short in length and only covered the bare details of the crime. Those that involved the murder of a victim were accorded more space and length. The "pedestrian" [18] nature of sexual assault reportage can be evidenced in the kind of coverage excerpted below, which was sprinkled throughout this corpus:

A Brampton man accused of breaking into a 36-year-old woman's ground-floor apartment on the weekend, sexually assaulting her and beating her to death appeared briefly in court yesterday charged with first-degree murder.

[...] [Christopher Peter Hurd ] is accused of killing Loretta Lavalley, who lived alone in a Brampton high-rise on Church Street East [58].

In this brief article, there is no sense of who Loretta Lavalley is as a person, of her life or her vulnerabilities. Nor is there a sense of where this crime fits within a larger pattern. Consistent with the literature, this account reveals an episodic bias [59]. It does not refer to a systemic pattern. The episode is disinterred from its structural mooring. This account also supports the stranger-danger myth in that there is no information provided about any previous relationship between the assailant and the victim. That Ms. Lavalley 'lived alone' in

a high-rise is irrelevant but suggestive insofar as it implies that living alone makes one vulnerable to rape and murder [60].

Several other accounts replicate this pattern of episodic coverage. In many of the stories, the women are only mentioned in terms of their age, or where they lived. If the women worked as sex workers, they are referred to as "strippers" [61] or prostitutes [62], labels that imply more derogatory connotations of sex work. Women victims in these accounts were often killed by angry and pathological men [63,64] (or men who didn't think that the rape constituted an act of violence, or who perceived the victim as consenting [65]. A disembodied discourse characterizes this kind of coverage – there are no persons, only culpable bodies, and the bodies are marked by age and location, and sometimes named.

News accounts that were longer, in terms of word count, usually involved aberrant or deviant behaviour. A good example of the latter is an account of a judgment rendered in court concerning a sexual crime that involved "kinky" sadomasochistic sexual acts and in another case, where the man was allegedly afflicted with "sexomania." He was subsequently acquitted of the rape charge [66]. Other accounts, which were longer, tended to be written by columnists and/or covered existing trials. Trial reporting is usually more detailed, though focused largely on crown prosecutors' arguments (in Canada). Sometimes, a legal judgment also elicits greater coverage. This is in keeping with Benedict's [16] findings that the press relies excessively statements issued by defence counsel and judges, rather than focusing on the victim or her story. As Ericson, Baranek and Chan [5] have argued, the emphasis on elite sources is an inherent part of the routine of newsgathering.

## AIDS – The Black Menace?

The columns that dominated this corpus of coverage dealt with the transmission of AIDS resulting from unprotected sex by men who did not disclose their status. There was only one account of a woman who was HIV-positive and had had sexual contact without disclosing her status. In contrast, of the seven accounts concerning the transmission of AIDS by men, all refer to black men as perpetrators. Three columns discussed the case of Johnson Aziga; two others focused on ex-NHL player Trevis Smith; and another two accounts focused on Adrien Sylvester Nduwayo who had infected a Kenyan woman living in Canada, along with seven other Canadian women. This focus on black males as perpetrators of crime and as rapists is well documented in the literature in the U.S. and in Canada [67-69].

These accounts portray these men as irresponsible and as engaged in criminal behaviour. Here, sexual intercourse, without disclosure, is defined as a crime (aggravated sexual assault). Indeed, the moral condemnation is so explicit that it contrasts sharply with the kind of muted reporting that seems to permeate all the other chronicled accounts involving the rape and murder of women. The victims in these accounts are, by and large, represented rather favourably. Regular *Globe and Mail* columnist Christie Blatchford's characterization of Johnson Aziga's victims is a case in point. In her columns, Aziga is quickly identified as a Ugandan immigrant, who is now a Canadian citizen, and who has had sexual contact with 20 different women in Ontario. The reportage and columns focus on his trial where, he was charged with nine counts of aggravated sexual assault and two counts of first-degree murder (as a result of the victims dying of the disease). Blatchford penned the following description of one of the victims:

*"Although terribly thin and weak, unable to raise her head from the striped pillows behind her, she nonetheless smiled her crooked smile often, and several times her silvery laughter filled the room. It was almost as though she was trying to put at ease the hale young detectives in the room, and her own cousins [70]."*

This victim had only had two sexual partners, one of them being Aziga. By demonstrating her as a naïve, trusting individual, the columnist paints her as undeserving of her fate, and Aziga as a manipulative African male who has taken advantage of helpless white women. The tone of the reporting is sympathetic and underscores the woman's vulnerability and relative innocence (she only had two partners and hence was not a promiscuous woman). In contrast, the following extract of a court examination of another victim highlights her fall from respectability. Headlined "Woman tells of sex with CFL linebacker", the account focuses on one of the women who had been infected with AIDS by Trevis Smith, the ex-CFL Roughrider:

She told the court she had sex without condoms both vaginal and oral on three occasions with Mr. Smith. She said she trusted him, believed him.

I had no reason not to. I had no reason not to, she said. . . I didn't think he would do anything to hurt me.

Would you have consented to having sexual intercourse with Trevis Smith if you knew he was infected with HIV? asked Crown prosecutor Bill Burge.

No, the woman replied, then bowed her head and dabbed her eyes [71].

Here, the headline works as a cognitive organizer [72] and primes the reader to make sense of the story as involving a CFL groupie. The victim's status is thus rendered *déclassé* – she is demoted from the position of respectability to one of 'white trash' as defined by white patriarchal society [48].

In her account of three stories of gang rapes in Australia, Barbara Baird [73] contrasts the treatment accorded by the press to the Lebanese and Pakistani men who were charged with gang rape to depictions of a member of one of Australia's high profile football teams, who was similarly charged with gang rape. She notes that the press made no reference to the racial identity of the footballer, even though he was an indigenous man. She adds, "[f]ootballers who are not apparently white can secure the race-privileged position that professional football in Australia delivers as long as they comport themselves publicly as athletes and not, for example, as radical spokespersons for their race" (p. 377). In the case of Trevis Smith, the coverage did not mention his race, his citizenship or his place of birth.

There is an implicit distinction between the 'good' woman and the 'bad' woman in these accounts of AIDS-infected victims. The 'good' woman is a woman who had kept herself chaste, and unfortunately trusted the wrong man. The 'bad' woman, by contrast, is one who deliberately neglected all warnings and succumbed to her base desires.

The *Globe's* editorial supported the legal definition of HIV transmission through unprotected sex with a partner who did not disclose his status, as an aggravated sexual assault. Ryan [74] observes that "[e]ditorial writers reflect the official views of their newspapers, and newspapers certainly are free to voice whatever opinions they choose" (p. 378). This latitude in expressing an opinion is further weighted by the power the press represents, especially in terms of talking to other elites [72].

*The Globe and Mail's* editorial [75] pertaining to the case involving a Kenyan woman who had been infected by Adrien Sylver Nduwayo opines that "when an immigrant woman, a non-citizen, is infected by one of these men, she is a victim, a rape victim, in law and should be treated with compassion." The conflation here with immigrant and non-citizen status is particularly revealing. However, there is a marked departure here from the anti-immigrant narrative characteristic of *The Globe and Mail's* usual discourse [76-79]. In this particular instance, the *Globe's* editorial goes on to elaborate that:

In fact, she tried to avoid becoming infected by remaining a virgin while she was in Africa. After arriving in Canada in 1996, she took up nursing studies, and became self-supporting. Until she met Canadian citizen Adrien Sylver Nduwayo in 2001 and became sexually involved with him, she appeared to be an immigrant success story [75].

This is the "good" woman – the chaste woman who was a success story until she met this refugee, now turned citizen, and became infected. In quantitative terms, her story constituted the longest single article with a word count of 2,260 [80]. In a sense, the benevolent gesture expressed by the paper towards this Kenyan 'non-citizen' is reflective of the national imaginary, of Canada as a compassionate middle-power [81]. Razack [82] makes the argument that women from the Third World are only rescued if they can narrate stories that resonate with preconceived stereotypes about their violent men. In this particular instance, Nduwayo activates the stereotype of rapacious black men whose sexuality is uncontrollable and unruly.

Comparing the length and number of stories that are devoted to black males (whether they were from Africa, or African-Canadian) to the single account about the HIV-positive woman who infected other men by having unprotected sex with them, the racialized status of the men becomes even more evident. It would seem that no HIV-positive white man has ever been caught in the act or has engaged in unprotected sex. In her analysis of rape cases in broadcast news, Sujata Moorti [33] observes that black masculinity is repeatedly represented as unruly and undisciplined, an observation that echoes the coverage in this corpus. This characterization of black masculinity obtains its power and potency from its contrast with the taken for granted, normative and universalized hegemonic masculinity [83].

The single story about the woman who was caught spreading AIDS was as follows:

Toronto police have charged an HIV-positive Hamilton woman with sexual assault after she allegedly failed to disclose her health status to sexual partners.

[...]

Officers say the woman [Robin Lee St. Clair], who was arrested last Sunday, frequented bars in Hamilton, Brantford and Toronto on a regular basis [84].

Once again, we know little about Robin Lee St. Clair except that she is 26 years old and that she 'frequented bars.' A photograph on a related news site reveals that she appears to be white. Not exactly a 'good woman' – rather, a loose woman – but certainly not as monstrous as Trevis Smith, Johnson Aziga and Adrien Sylver Nduwayo. In the three instances involving these men, their backgrounds, intimate encounters with the women they infected, the number of women with whom they had sexual relations, and their family lives were as detailed as were those of the victims. In the case of Robin Lee St. Clair, the account is published as a chronicle: brief, factual and condensed. It references only one man who has been

infected. St. Clair's race is not mentioned nor are there any identifiers to suggest her racial background. In contrast, all the black men in these articles are racialized in the way they are depicted and described.

As noted previously, the criminalization of black men is a repeated feature of coverage in the U.K., U.S. and Canadian press. Within the corpus examined here, there are 13 stories, including the international stories, that referenced black male rapists. While this number does not appear to be very high, its power resides in the nomination and exnomination strategies at work [85]. In other words, these black rapists are explicitly identified as such, or the news story makes it apparent that they are black. In contrast, through exnomination, white men or women perpetrating similar crimes are not identified by race.

Nomination strategies are also used in an inverse manner – by drawing attention to race to the extent of evacuating the violence of rape. For instance, in one account concerning an Inuit man arrested for sexual assault, the Crown stayed the charges because he was deaf and “posed an unusual problem for the Nunavut Court of Justice: an accused man with no known language” [86].

Racialized discourses also appear in other instances to encode particular geographical locations and spaces as ways to distinguish them from normative, white spaces. In an incident involving four girls who were molested on school grounds, the school was described as one where ‘English is a second language for more than 60 per cent of the pupils, 25 per cent of whom have been in Canada for five years or less’ and with ‘the third highest suspension rate: From September, 2005, to February, 2006, there were 79 student suspensions’ [87]. Goldberg [88] and Razack [89] point to the racialization of space through such attributions. The school's immigrant and multiracial student population is construed as a sign of its chaotic, disorderly and unruly character, all of which are seen to predispose its students toward crime.

The intertwined and interlocking discourses of class and race are also evident in another incident covered in a number of stories in the paper – the rape of a Muslim girl at another Toronto high school. While the girl is not named (because of her age and the legality of disclosing her identity), the school is mentioned and described in a similar fashion – as being located in a problem, high immigrant density area [90,91]. Class and race thus come together in this kind of reportage, offering an explanatory framework that seems to suggest the inability of racialized youth to become good citizens and for the propensity of racialized male students to engage in violent sexist behaviours.

## Other Patterns

Aside from these AIDS stories, the thematic clusters of stories that appeared to elicit considerable moral outrage referred to pedophiles and wrongful convictions or acquittals. There were 20 articles that focused on these themes, with the majority being shorter in length than the longer accounts pertaining to those cases where the pedophile's attack had occurred in the local area (the Toronto area). However, none of these mention the racial identity or signifiers of the accused.

Ten articles dealt with wrongful convictions and/or acquittals. The account that dominates this cluster over the two-year period focuses on a Toronto police officer charged with sexual assault and two firearms offences. He is described as “6 foot 9, weighs 350 pounds, and is known as the gentle giant at his judo club” and the victim is

described as a “stripper, a 36-year-old mother of three” [61]. His success is underscored by the mention of the commendations he has received in his eight years of service. She, on the other hand, is portrayed as a gold-digger “lying to bolster a \$250,000 lawsuit filed against the constable and the Toronto Police Service” [92]. As relayed in the story, there was no sexual assault, the connotation being that the victim's work as a stripper disqualified her from making such a claim. She becomes the “fallen” woman, unable to perform white patriarchal morality. In yet another story dealing with a wrongful conviction, the word sexual is omitted from the headline but included in the story, suggesting that this wrongful conviction is like all others, based on allegations rather than a factual violation [93].

There was one case of acquittal that involved two men of colour. In this instance, the judge threw the case out, arguing that the witnesses had perjured themselves and that the police had not conducted a thorough investigation. Both men were portrayed sympathetically and as victims of a woman who had used the sexual assault charge to gain material advantages [94]. The reporter noted that “the main complainant was overheard by a friend discussing her fabricated account. She was also a known bigot.” The defence lawyer is quoted saying, “It's amazing to me how they were believed [...] All somebody has to do is walk in a police station, and say: ‘He did something to me’, and they are supported and believed.” This then becomes a way to dismiss all complainants as potential exploiters and opportunists, and invokes a common rape myth. Nonetheless, the case demonstrates an underlying issue – the positioning and vulnerabilities of men of colour in a white society and a white criminal justice system.

Three news accounts focused on appeals based on acquittals that were overturned by higher courts. In one instance, the Supreme Court overturned the decision of the appeal court dismissing an assault charge involving an Aboriginal victim's experience in a residential school, and a charge concerning incest between a father and daughter [95]. In another case, a Manitoba soldier was found not to be criminally responsible for a sexual assault that he had committed because he had suffered from posttraumatic stress disorder. He was subsequently ordered to face a new trial [96], and in the third case, a Quebec soldier was refused honourable discharge because of a rape he had committed prior to joining the army [97]. While each of these accounts suggests a more serious consideration of the violence of rape, that violence is minimized by the inclusion of details painting the accused as a generally “good” person and a “good” soldier.

## The Others ‘Out There’

In terms of international stories featuring women of colour victims, Margaret Wenté's [98] column titled “Welcome to Justice Saudi-style” is a quintessential example of the discourse of othering framed within an orientalist perspective. Wenté describes the situation of a 19-year-old Saudi young woman who had been caught in a car with a man, raped by other men, and punished, initially with 60 lashes, and then subsequently 90 lashes. Wenté emphasizes that the rape was brutal and that the Saudi system of justice is barbaric. She also points out that the punishment meted to the young woman increased as a result of her media activism in publicizing the case and demonstrating the sexist nature of the Saudi system. It is unclear whether Wenté felt compelled to pen the story as a symbolic gesture of a white woman saving Saudi women through an expression of public condemnation and solidarity with the victim, or as a way of demonstrating the liberty of Western women. Both discursive moves are indicative of an imperialist feminism, in which Western women take it upon themselves to save

their oppressed sisters abroad, while downplaying issues of gendered oppression in their own communities [99].

One small item that appeared approximately six months prior to Wente's article, reported that Al-Qaeda had attacked a US convoy in retaliation for the rape and murder of 14-year-old Abeer Qassim al-Janabi, and the slaying of her family [100]. There was no outrage expressed over this in the paper, nor was this piece of news mentioned in the editorial of the same day, which focused on the Kenyan woman victim of HIV infection. This elision suggests that it is easier to talk about the violence "out there" than to confront the violence "here" or committed by people from "here." Rape, race and class are thus intertwined in these mediated discourses.

## Conclusion

Baird [73] argues that "the cultural fantasies that are called upon to narrate the rapist and his victim in interpersonal, courtroom and media stories of rape have, overtly or by implication, a racialized dimension" (p. 379). The analysis presented in this paper highlights this racialized dimension, drawing particular attention to the ways in which race, gender and class intersect and interlock. White women's innocence is established through a framework of black male criminality and deviance. White women who do not conform to the patriarchal norms of morality are rendered *déclassé* – their whiteness/morality called into question. These women may be saved or recuperated if they can demonstrate their worthiness, either through their adherence to societal standards of morality or if they fit within the hegemonic fold of a benevolent embrace. Through regimes of intelligibility, their "fall" is ascribed to their naiveté or foolishness.

Media narratives about sexual assault are not neutral: what stories are told and where the narratives fall silent reflect and reinscribe social hierarchies that privilege certain people while disadvantaging others. The space 'in-between' is filled with narratives and tropes that are activated to serve particular interests and buttress hegemonic values. "Good" women live the patriarchal bargain; "bad" men don't respect that bargain because they do not embrace the protector role that is demanded of them by society. But more than that, "good" women are those whose labour can be used, who can be cultivated (read salvaged or rescued) to serve the social order and be constituted as docile subjects [101]. These stories help forge hegemonic bonds of conformity and complicity. Women are promised protection if they comply with dominant imperatives of what constitutes "goodness." In the end, sexual assault as a serious and injurious form of violence is trivialized and its impact only addressed when it invokes a societal abjection of racialized masculinities.

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