Discourses of Denial

Yasmin Jiwani

Discourses of Denial
Mediations of Race, Gender,
and Violence

In memory of

my grandfather, Sultanaly Contractor
my great aunt, Gulbanu Rattansi
my colleagues, Amanda Ocran and Bob Everton
my student, Nawaf al Rufaie

Contents

Acknowledgments

Presenting a paper on imperial feminisms at a recent conference panel on mediating inclusions and exclusions, I was struck by a comment from one of the few attendees at the session, a well-established White scholar. His question centred on why we, the panellists, had decided to talk about race as if it were a "real" category. His language was somewhat more sophisticated, but his basic argument was that in making race real, we were dangerously close to essentializing a category that is fluid and socially constructed. This is an argument often articulated against those who talk and teach race. My response to that comment was and is that race is real to me. It marks me just as gender does, but the confluence of race and gender interlocks in ways that shape every facet of my life, determining the choices I make, the paths I travel, and the roads I am prohibited from travelling.

   Later that day, my co-panellist, also a White man, commented on the nature of the question we were asked on the panel. Having just observed questions that were directed at me in a consecutive panel, he noted that doing any kind of work on race seemed like a constant battle, that I was always being challenged and my views contested. Speaking of the earlier panel in which he had participated, he commented that the man asking the question was White like himself. Whereupon he remarked that such a question was possible because the questioner, like himself, could always opt in and out of the struggle. I cannot opt in and out of the struggle. In fact, the struggle is an ongoing challenge in which the task is one of explaining race, showing its intricacies, and suffering its consequences. Nevertheless, as Sherene Razack cautions us, none of us is innocent in the story of race. Rather, we all have privileges and penalties that accrue from our particular positioning in the raced and gendered hierarchies that contain and define us. This book, then, is part of that constant challenge in talking race, but it also reflects the privilege in being able to tell this story, for not everyone has the opportunity to do so.

The strength of this work comes from the voices and experiences of the girls and women who shared their lives and realities. I thank and acknowledge them for sharing their truth. This book is dedicated to their efforts, survival and success in this land we have come to call "home."

As always, any shortcomings are entirely due to me.

Introduction

Denials of racism are the stock in trade of racist discourse.

> – Teun van Dijk, *Race and Ethnic Relations*

Canada suffers from historical amnesia. Its citizens and
institutions function in a state of collective denial. Canadians
have obliterated from their collective memory the racist laws,
policies, and practices that have shaped their major social,
cultural, political, and economic institutions for 300 years.

> – Frances Henry et al., *The Colour of Democracy:
> Racism in Canadian Society*

Race, gender, and violence continue to be topical issues in contemporary
Canadian society. From public perceptions of increasing girl gang violence
to the supposed importation of terrorism, the "imagined" Canadian nation
has had to not only grapple with a changing "complexion" but also face the
pervasive and deeply entrenched nature of violence interwoven in its his-
tory and informing contemporary social concerns – from intimate, domes-
tic violence to international state-supported violence. This book deals with
these issues, but does so from a critical anti-racist and feminist framework.

   As reflected by my titling of the book – *Discourses of Denial: Mediations of
Race, Gender, and Violence* – my intent is to demonstrate how the various
issues of racism and sexism constitute forms of violence. Their separation
in daily thought and talk serve strategic purposes – namely, in obfuscating
links that could facilitate analysis and, more importantly, coalition build-
ing. Sexist violence and racist violence share the common denominator of
being structured in a larger culture of power – a culture mediated by institu-
tions structured in dominance. In focusing on discourses of denial, then,
my aim is to explicate the links between different forms of structural violence

as well as demonstrate how discursive fields – the parameters defining a particular subject matter in terms of how it is thought of and talked about – operate in different realms of social life. These are the mediations I refer to in the book's title, for it is in their communicative expression, their continual reinforcement of a particular common-sense view of the world, that separations between structural and more interpersonal forms of violence are maintained. It is these discursive strategies and moves by which one kind of violence gets recognized and another erased, trivialized, or contained within categories that evacuate the violation of violence that I attend to in this book.

My focus is on the intersecting and interlocking influences of race, gender, and violence as they contour and texture the Canadian public imagination and, more specifically, as they inform the lives of immigrant girls and women of colour. Drawing from academic and activist work, these chapters map the terrain of race, gender, and violence in different spheres of social life: from mediated representations that advance a particular definition of racism and racialized groups in the language of culture, to the intertwining, layered, and complex relations between racism, sexism, and violence in everyday life. I trace the ways in which the violence of racism and sexism is framed, communicated, and experienced – in their encounters with the health care system, in the school system, and in representational discourses offered by the dominant media.

The notion of mapping evokes associations with geographers and mapmakers who chart the contours of particular terrains, identifying the rifts and valleys, the sites of excavation and danger. Sherene Razack (2002) draws attention to this task of mapping as being central to the process of colonization and so positions her work as an "unmapping" of the spatialization of gendered racial violence. In her unmapping, Razack seeks to strip the colonial mantle and organizational structure that has constituted this spatialization. My task here is slightly different. My aim is to map the discursive fields that govern the discourses of raced and gendered violence, not so much in a spatial sense but in terms of highlighting the inundated and uneven landscape of these multiple and interweaving structures of domination. In this sense, my mapping is situated from a vantage point outside these dominant discourses insofar as it is grounded in the subjugated knowledges that I share with those who are in the interstices of converging oppressions. But it is also situated within this very terrain of multiple, competing, and hierarchized discourses. Thus, my focus is on the tips of the icebergs, so to speak, that emerge from the subterranean deposits of accumulated knowledge, knowledge grounded in a legacy of colonialism. Those tips that I look at represent the institutionalized structures and systems that embody in explicit and tangible forms some of the valuations and rules encoded in these subterranean archives of knowledge.

Consequently, in mapping these terrains, I pay specific attention to two sensational cases that were widely reported in the media in order to illustrate the ways in which the discourses of race and racism are translated in the language of dominance. I juxtapose these mediations with empirical studies that examine the realities of girls of colour and recount the myriad ways in which they struggle to negotiate a sense of identity and belonging. I extend this analysis to the domain of health care, detailing the findings of a qualitative study highlighting the voices of immigrant women of colour who have experienced violence and recount their interactions with health care professionals in settings such as hospitals and emergency rooms. From the rather private context of the health care encounter, I return to the mediated nature of our stock of common-sense knowledge, directing the focus this time to an exploration of the gendered nature of terror – how the media represented the events of 9/11, with specific attention to the racialized discourse of that coverage.

In deconstructing the discourses of power that form and inform social life, I am keenly aware of the constantly shifting and somewhat tenuous nature of legitimization as a process by which dominant institutions obtain consent from those they govern. In other words, while I focus on structures of power and the discursive devices used to maintain them, I also direct my attention to the sites of intervention where such power can be challenged, transformed, or diverted in the interests of privileging subjugated knowledge(s) (Foucault 1980a, 82), even if these ruptures are only momentary. Consequently, I end certain chapters in this book with possibilities and suggestions for interventions within the existing matrix of institutional and informal power bases – the matrix of domination (Collins 1990). As Foucault (1980b, 95) has noted, where there is power, there is resistance.

In examining the ways in which race, gender, and violence are mediated through everyday talk and text, I argue that three ideal types (using Max Weber's [1958] conceptual category) emerge: the reasonable person, the preferred immigrant/conditional Canadian, and the preferred patient. These ideal types implicitly describe and prescribe the ideal typical Canadian. As a reasonable person, especially within the context of law, the ideal typical Canadian is the law-abiding, rational, White, middle-class person who speaks the dominant language and embodies national mythologies that are then performed accordingly. Much has been written about the reasonable person test in law, particularly from a feminist standpoint (Bhandar 1997; Devlin 1995).[1] The notion of a reasonable person, especially as derived from the national mythology of Canada as a peaceful kingdom, rests on the assumption that such a person makes few demands, pays her/his taxes, and lives out her/his life in a linear trajectory that begins from humble origins and rises to the pinnacle of economic and social success. Such a person cares about her/his society, contributes to its well-being, and participates in the

active maintenance of the social order through citizenship. This hypo-
thetical person does not complain about injustices, does not play the race
or gender "card," and does not make unceasing demands on the state or on
others. Instead, benevolence marks her/his attitude toward others who are
less fortunate. Ultimately, however, the reasonable person perceives every-
one as equal and enjoying the right to make what they will of their lives.
This is the ideal Canadian. For the purpose of clarity and generality, I do
not draw the gendered distinctions here, though they undoubtedly bear on
who constitutes the ideal Canadian woman or man. Rather, what I wish to
underscore are the hegemonic notions of masculinity and femininity that
are raced, classed, sexualized, and able-bodied.

  The preferred immigrant fits the mould of the reasonable person. But,
unlike the reasonable person, who is most likely to be born in the country
and who is White, the preferred immigrant tends to be a person of colour.
This person does not bring conflicts over from her/his ancestral lands of
origin. In other words, such a person shows patriotic loyalty to Canada, a
land that has provided many opportunities and for which s/he is grateful.
At the same time, the preferred immigrant also believes in the system, ad-
hering to the same liberal beliefs as those of the reasonable person. S/he too
believes that all can succeed if they just try hard enough. Success is seen in
economic terms. The preferred immigrant, also law-abiding and polite, as-
similates into the dominant society. The preferred immigrant leaves her/his
culture behind or retains only those aspects of it that are not problematic or
that can be periodically celebrated outside the closet of family and commu-
nity (Mahtani 2001) or kept within it (Peter 1981). S/he is the model minor-
ity. Within the context of an encounter with the health system, s/he becomes
the preferred patient, neither demanding nor complaining but simply abid-
ing by the rules and the normative standards of the institution. These ideal
types are not mutually exclusive; rather, they shade into one another and
are invoked in different contexts. Primarily, they are implicit standards
against which Others are evaluated. However, though shrouded in the lay-
ered veils of the collective common-sense stock of knowledge, these ideal
types, I suggest, are consistently circulated through media portrayals of Oth-
ers who do not "fit" and who transgress these normative rules. They be-
come the less preferred. In the privileging of a hierarchy of preferred persons,
the violence of dominant structures of power is erased.

  This book, then, maps out an important but often neglected labyrinth of
social relations, providing a historical background to present-day inequali-
ties and shedding light on how their institutionalization impacts on the
current context in which we live.

Situating This Work
Although various chapters in this book were conceptualized and some writ-

ten at different times and delivered to diverse audiences, they nonetheless cohere around the central theme of denial – how denial is expressed and how discourses of denial contribute to the erasure, containment, trivialization, or dismissal of racism as a form of violence. In bringing these pieces together, and reflecting on the common themes underpinning the analyses presented, my intent is to demonstrate the discursive violence through which this denial is accomplished. Throughout this body of work, I constantly reiterate the extent to which Canada, as a nation, practises denial when it comes to issues of sexism, classism, and especially racism; how this tendency to cover up – to conveniently turn a blind eye – manifests itself at the macro and micro levels of social reality. In the first part of the book, I trace these manifestations through general mappings of the key concepts of race, gender, violence, and the role of the media. In Parts 2, 3, and 4, the ways that such denial – be it personal, institutional, or governmental – plays itself out in very real terms at the micro level are illustrated by focusing on a number of case studies and research projects in which I have been directly involved. As notions such as common sense, the reasonable person, and normative values are repeatedly picked apart and revealed for what they are – arbitrary standards set by the dominant culture to reinforce that culture's sense of superiority and position of power in society – my hope is that the reader will confront her/his *own* common-sense values and practices, and reconsider Canada's official rhetoric on these and other issues through more critical lenses.

An equally strong thread throughout this book is the issue of the media's complicity in institutional racism and sexism. Be it in their reporting of the violence experienced by immigrant girls and women (Parts 2 and 3) or the spectre of terrorism post-9/11 (Part 4), I demonstrate how the media act as crucial agents in the promotion and safeguarding of the dominant culture's values, biases, and expectations. I also show how contemporary media coverage of people of colour is rooted in, and conveyed to us through, colonially inscribed filters.

In bringing together a discursive analysis of such seemingly diverse issues as media representations, encounters with the health care system, and the experiences of racialized girls and women of colour, my purpose is to raise awareness of the everyday violence resulting from such structured inequalities that is occurring in Canada today, and to highlight its tragic consequences. These daily enactments of violence, I maintain, are all the more insidious because they are kept in the dark – carefully concealed beneath our much lauded and highly celebrated official policies on multiculturalism, gender equality, and human rights. When these violations on occasion surface – are brought, via the sensation-seeking media, into the cold light of day – they send shock waves into our normally complacent public consciousness but fail to provoke useful reflection upon the root causes underpinning

such tragedies. In locating these individual instances of violence within a larger framework, my aim is to bridge the gap between theory and practice – between conceptual frameworks and their influence and expression in everyday reality.

This desire to bridge the gap between theory and practice is rooted in my own experience as an immigrant woman of colour, officially a Canadian citizen but unofficially an Other, an identity that, as a Muslim, has gained increasing salience since 11 September 2001. It also comes from my own experiences as an activist, a cultural worker, and now an academic and draws from my confrontations and negotiations with, as well as resistance to, the dominant inscribed standards, values, and attitudes that contour the lives of people of colour.

Much of the work I draw on in these chapters is grounded in my experiences and the opportunities I have had in collaborating on participatory research projects with grassroots community organizations and advocacy groups over the last decade. As the principal researcher and coordinator at the FREDA Centre, one of the five Canadian centres dedicated to researching violence against women and children, I was able to bring an anti-racist perspective to issues of gendered violence. This allowed me to engage in and conduct participatory action research on gender-based violence with marginalized groups and communities. In these instances, the role of research was critical not only in legitimizing the experiential reality of all those who endure racist and sexist violence but also in attempting to bridge the gap between the expertise and experience of community and academic knowledge. It is the viability and continued existence of this bridge that motivates me to undertake this work. Activism and academia can sustain each other, both as an attempt to articulate, legitimize, and make sense of the experiential realities of oppression, and as enabling strategic interventions by which to draw attention to and dismantle the structures of domination. As I outline in the chapters that follow, the legitimizing power of academic writing, access, and institutional resources can be harnessed in the interests of social change even though such attempts are amenable to cooptation by those in power. Nonetheless, as potential sites of intervention, such structures of legitimation as the academy are a useful and resourceful site for those committed to social change, especially in terms of challenging or contesting national mythologies that seek to advance images of Canada as a harmonious, progressive, and liberated state.

My work at the FREDA Centre also foregrounded, both experientially and academically, the interconnections between racism and sexism. As a Brown woman in the feminist anti-violence movement, and as an academic among front-line workers, my presence signalled the tension between the political need to advance a universal construction of woman as victim of sexist violence and the specificity of racialized sexism as manifested in the situation

of women of colour advocates, service providers, and survivors of violence, a difference I discuss in this book. This tension was exacerbated by the legitimate suspicion that academic expertise did nothing other than hijack, through appropriation, the lived experiences and grounded expertise of frontline workers, many of whom had either experienced or witnessed gendered violence first-hand. Yet, as I demonstrate, racialized and gendered violence are interconnected and interlocking. When one is privileged as an explanatory framework, it is often at the expense of the other, and vice versa. Further, these interlocking structures of domination certify that the ensuing violence is framed, understood, and responded to differently, all in the interests of retaining the basic structure of power and privilege of White dominance.

The overall strength of this body of work – and hence its critical importance to scholars, activists, service providers, and the general public – lies in its mapping of the invariably complex and often troubling social, political, and economic terrains in which Canada's subtle yet highly toxic forms of racism are evident. I anticipate that these mappings will prove insightful and informative, that they will fill in many gaps, and that they will provoke thought and incite action. I seek both to explain why things are the way they are and to suggest ways that we can fight for and effect social change. Through the frequent invoking of the voices of those who endure these realities daily, I strive to make explicit the experiential impact of racism, sexism, and classism in people's lives, as well as foster an awareness of how these forces intersect and operate at a number of levels.

By disturbing these complacencies – the taken-for-granted and normative prescriptions that texture a sense of normalcy and routinize the violence of racism, sexism, and classism – my hope is to uncover and lay bare the conditions by which a truly organic solidarity can be forged – a solidarity that validates the experiences and feelings of those who are subordinated and that embraces and promotes their agency in transforming a system structured in dominance.

Defining the Audience

When writing this work, I was confronted with the question of defining my ideal audience. In reflecting upon this question and dwelling on the terrain I intended to chart, I quickly came to the conclusion that this book is not meant for experts. In fact, those who are well versed in high theory will undoubtedly be left unsatisfied. On the other hand, for those who travel along multiple and interdisciplinary boundaries, this book might afford them a better insight into the ways in which systems of dominance are interconnected and how the resulting confluence shapes social reality. Primarily, though, this book is intended for those who are attempting to make sense of the violence of racism. They include the young women of colour whose voices inform the various chapters, the immigrant women whose experiences

form the basis of the investigations outlined here, and the front-line workers and advocates in the feminist anti-violence movement, the anti-racism movement, and other social movements aimed at ending poverty, criminalization, and inequality in all its multiple forms. As well, my hope is that this book will serve to inform students, teachers, and policy makers who are invested in making progressive social change.

A Note on Terminology

Although much of the writing on race has underlined its constructed nature by placing quotation marks around the word, I have decided not to do so for the simple reason that the reality of race in shaping the lives of people of colour cannot be disputed. As George Dei (1999) argues, we do not place quotation marks around the words gender, age, class, sexuality, or ability, even though each of these categories is socially constructed. Yet, we tend to construct race as if it were a dubious category. Here, I am not proposing a genetically deterministic notion of race, an interpretation that has increasingly surfaced on the part of pharmaceutical companies to profit by producing tailor-made, race-specific drugs. Rather, it is the socially constructed nature of race that I wish to underscore. For my part, the terms race, raced, and racialized refer to the social construct of race and the processes of racialization by which the construct is imbued with negative valuations, valuations that are designed to Other, inferiorize, and marginalize groups and individuals who are different from the ideal type or norm. At the same time, I do not wish to advance an essentialist notion of race as constituting some fixed and essential attribute. Instead, my argument is that, in contemporary society, the salience of race as a category for regulating power and access and for maintaining a hierarchy cannot be contested. Thus, rather than denying it, the critical aspect is to examine conditions that contribute to the ways in which race is strategically used to define, implicitly and explicitly, the hierarchies of preference that underpin and reinforce structures of domination.

I use the term racialized women of colour throughout this book, bearing in mind that this terminology is rather context specific. In Britain, women of colour are commonly referred to, in academic writing at least, as Black women. The designation of Black has different meanings in the United States and Canada. In speaking about racialized women of colour, I am cognizant that Aboriginal women and White women are also racialized. However, Aboriginal women have a different history, as indigenous peoples of this land. My position as an immigrant and an Other makes me painfully aware of how immigration itself was structured in the interests of forging the Canadian nation and grounded in the displacement and genocide of Aboriginal peoples.

In using terms such as Black and White, I have deliberately chosen to mark these words by capitalizing them. My intent is to draw attention to their constructed nature: the technique of capitalization ruptures the normativity associated with these words.

Organization

I have divided this book into four parts, each of which deals with a specific facet of the overall themes of race, gender, and violence. I locate the confluence of these themes in different domains, paying particular attention to the discourses of denial operating within each of the contexts being examined. An organizing principle underlying the chapters is the implicit contrast between the mediated representations of violence as these are communicated in the mass media, notably print media, and the experiential realities of those directly affected by the violence of racism. Thus, while the first two chapters lay out the theoretical scaffold on which the rest of the work hangs, the subsequent chapters juxtapose this contrast between mediated representations and experiential realities. In the last chapter, I return to the mediated representations, this time drawing out their material implications for those most affected by the coverage. Implicit in the organization is the link between public and private aspects of violence. In other words, what appear as public texts in the mass mediated world are indelibly linked to the occurrences that texture the private realm of experience. However, these private experiences are not simply reflected but refracted in the mediated accounts.

Part 1: Laying the Terrain

In the introductory chapter, "Reframing Violence," I lay out the conceptual framework for the book and make an argument for examining various domains of inquiry through a raced and gendered perspective. Key terms are defined and elaborated. I draw particular attention to the hierarchical nature of Canadian society, pointing out its history as a colony and a colonizing nation. I situate the interlocking influences of race, gender, and class, highlighting the ways in which the dominant culture of power maintains its hegemonic control. I link the hierarchical nature of Canadian society to the dimensions and realities of structural violence, emphasizing the particular factors that shape and contribute to the marginalization of racialized women of colour. The resulting vulnerabilities, I argue, are anchored in structures of dominance, which define the standards by which racialized people are assessed and treated in ways that influence their lived realities and autonomy.

In the second mapping of this part – Chapter 2, "Mapping Race in the Media" – I elaborate on concepts introduced at the beginning of this book –

concepts such as culture, racism, and sexism – and insert the media into the picture, suggesting not only how the media play a major role in shaping public opinion but how the strategic use of the media is one of the primary ways that those in positions of power justify, legitimize, and gain support for the actions they take. The media, as Stuart Hall (1980a) has argued, are structured in dominance. They make up a powerful institution populated and controlled by the elite, who then liaise with other elites to maintain the status quo (van Dijk 1993). The media, as institutions, are among the wealthiest organizations in this society. They constitute a monopoly of knowledge, and through their practices of selection, editing, and production determine the kinds of information we receive about our culture, nation, and the rest of the world. How race is represented in the dominant media is indicative of the place accorded to racialized groups in the symbolic landscape of the nation, and further, of how they are perceived in terms of belonging to the imagined community reflected by the media.

Part 2: Sensationalized Cases

Chapters 3 and 4, in Part 2, examine the murders of Reena Virk in Victoria, and members of the Gakhal and Saran families in Vernon, British Columbia. Both these cases were widely reported in the provincial and national media. Through these case studies, I illustrate the ways in which specific definitions of culture are used and in some instances evacuated from the kinds of explanatory frameworks offered by officials such as court judges and the media. As with official government discourse, the media tend to identify culture as that which is visible and different from the norm. The norm remains invisible in the background but nevertheless is a benchmark by which to assess and evaluate the differences of those whose cultures are considered to be Other. In the case of the Vernon tragedy, the cultural signifiers used throughout the reportage clearly position the murders as arising from a cultural practice of arranged marriages and women's supposedly subordinate status within the Sikh religious tradition. The analysis of the murder of Reena Virk, however, points out how a cultural explanation is explicitly avoided in order to divert attention from issues of racism and the consequences of racialized difference, and to privilege a definition of the situation as emerging from girl violence and bullying. In the last instance, the emphasis on girl violence and bullying serves to legitimize the dominant frame of girl-on-girl violence. This, I argue, fuels an ongoing backlash against feminism.

By juxtaposing these two cases, I show how race is conveniently erased when it suits the public imagination and the media's agenda, and conversely, invoked in a culturalized form (to the exclusion of almost all else) when deemed necessary. Hence, the killing of Reena Virk is framed as a generic

girl gang violence phenomenon, while the Vernon murders are attributed to a culturally specific ethnic phenomenon.

Part 3: Voicing the Violence

As I suggest above, there has been increasing media focus and public attention devoted to the issue of violence against girls, especially in cases where that violence is perpetrated by other girls. Within Canada, this attention has often been couched in the media as an emblematic sign of gendered equality – namely, that girls have become *just like* boys, in other words, *as violent* as boys. Using this debatable proposition as a jumping-off point to interrogate what is really going on out there in the world of girls and young women, I examine in Chapter 5, "Racialized Girls and Everyday Negotiations," the particular susceptibilities to violence experienced by young women of colour. Drawing on research data gathered using a participatory action research framework, I focus on the heightened risks faced by these young women as a result of their social location in a hierarchically raced and gendered society, and highlight the particular ways in which systemic and intimate forms of violence intersect and interlock in their lives. I also outline some of the methodological issues involved in conducting research with communities that are marginalized because of their immigrant and racialized status.

By combining my voice with those of the girls in this study who courageously spoke out about their lives, I emphasize the subtlety with which racism is communicated and naturalized, and how it intersects and interlocks with sexism to influence the lived realities of racialized girls and young women of colour. The particular and often conflicting dynamics at play for girls who find themselves dealing with a confluence of patriarchal powers within and outside their communities are also examined.

Chapter 6, "Gendered Racism, Sexist Violence, and the Health Care System," examines the issue of immigrant women of colour and their experience of violence, and their subsequent encounters with and access to the formal health care system. By "health care system" I am referring to physicians' private practices, walk-in clinics, and hospitals where women are likely to seek services for violence-related health issues. After reviewing some of the current literature in the area and identifying key variables that contribute to immigrant women's vulnerability to violence and lack of access to health care, I introduce the voices of immigrant women of colour and service providers who participated in research conducted in British Columbia. Bringing these voices into concert with those studies cited in the first part of the chapter, I conclude by arguing for a socio-ecological model of health care that recognizes the power inequalities and imbalances imbricated in the medical encounter between immigrant women of colour and the medical professionals who serve them.

Part 4: Mediations of Terror

Although the medical encounter constitutes one site in which gendered racism and sexist violence are understood and reproduced in a specifically hegemonic sense, the circulation of mediated images that feed into and retrench stereotypes of racialized Others is the base from which, I argue, preconceptions about preferred patients and immigrants actually emerge. Thus, in the final chapter, "Gendering Terror Post-9/11," I return to the media's representation of these very issues, this time focusing on race, gender, and violence as symbolically communicated through representations of the Orientalized body. In this final chapter, I interrogate the notion of terror and its gendering in the press coverage following the events of 11 September 2001. I begin by outlining the discursive structures of Orientalism as defined by Edward Said (1979) and go on to examine their resonance and continuity in stories covered by the *Montreal Gazette*. This newspaper's peculiar location and status as the major English daily in Montreal, a Québécois landscape that contains a sizeable Muslim population, makes it a valuable object of inquiry. An analysis of the *Gazette*'s coverage demonstrates the ways in which the media rework and refract dominant discourses of racism and sexism. The consequences of being constructed as threatening Others are then explored from a gendered and raced perspective.

Conclusion

In the Conclusion, I draw together the threads that have been woven throughout the parts. I ground this approach in a strategy that seeks to rupture dominant frames of meaning by strategically inserting alternative viewpoints and presenting alternative explanations. For it is in disturbing the complacencies that we get a glimpse of the alternatives – alternatives which, when applied, might serve the task of dismantling structures of domination and creating a more egalitarian society.

This book is written from an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary perspective. As an intellectual bricoleur, I traverse various terrains seeking out different insights in order to name and make sense of the structures of domination that contain, constrain, and erase the lives of those on the margins. I do not profess expertise in all these realms of knowledge, each of which is accompanied by its own specialized stock of knowledge. Instead, in the tradition of bricolage, I seek to assemble and link those insights that can help make sense of our existing realities and that can rupture the seemingly smooth surface of our collective common-sense stock of knowledge. In drawing attention to the fissures and ridges in this stock of knowledge, I am reminded once again of my own standpoint, both as a woman of colour and as an activist-scholar. But rather than relativize the insights offered here as merely stemming from one standpoint among many, I prefer to

situate them within the larger tradition of critical anti-racist and feminist work, acknowledging the debt I owe to those who have initiated and who continue this struggle in diverse ways and on multiple fronts. My hope is that this work will fulfill what Sherene Razack (1998a, 16) has so eloquently articulated, in that, "if we can name the organizing frames, the conceptual formulas, the rhetorical devices that disguise and sustain elites, we can begin to develop responses that bring us closer to social justice." This work is offered as one small contribution toward that end.

Part 1
Laying the Terrain

1
Reframing Violence

Viewing the very definition of violence as lying *outside* hierarchical power relations of race and gender ignores how the power to define what counts as violence is constitutive of these same power relations.

> – Patricia Hill Collins, "The Tie That Binds:
> Race, Gender and US Violence"

Our societal definition of violence must include the direct results of poor medical care, economic inferiority, oppressive legislation, and cultural invisibility. By broadening our definition of violence, we combat the minimalization of our experiences as women of colour by the dominant culture. We must name the violence, or we will not be able to address it.

> – Chezia G. Carraway, "Violence against Women
> of Colour"

The two epigraphs above underline the necessity to broaden existing definitions of violence so they encapsulate the complex dynamics of interlocking forms of oppression. Many of these forms are structurally rooted and it is this quality of embeddedness that needs to be deconstructed if we are to unmask the discourses of denial operative in Canadian society. In this chapter, I focus on the ways in which violence is commonly understood and how its common-sense definitions occlude structural factors. In pursuing this line of inquiry, my intent is to underline the ways in which violence is structured in dominance. I begin by defining the structures of power that underpin, inform, and regulate social relations, including those around gender and race. I argue that the society in which we live is deeply anchored in a history of violence and in that respect replicates a pattern of dominance

derived from and inscribed within a colonial legacy. Drawing from critical anti-racist feminist frameworks, I discuss intersecting and interlocking hierarchies of power that maintain inequalities structured on the basis of race and gender. The invisibility of these structures of power and the attendant discursive economy of violence are communicated through institutions of legitimation, including the mass media, a topic I explore in the following chapter. However, this discursive economy of violence is also rendered legitimate through the very definitions employed to define and describe violence. I trace these definitions, highlighting the role of common sense, as grounded in structures of White dominance, and the resulting explanatory frameworks that are deployed to explain violence as experienced by racialized women of colour. My point of departure necessarily begins with a contextualization of race and its relationship to White structures of dominance.

Contextualizing Race within the Power of Whiteness

Scholars have repeatedly pointed to the history of Canada both as a colonizing and colonized country (see Bannerji 2000; Thobani 2002a; Razack 1998a, 1998b, 2002). This dual and somewhat contradictory historical formation has undoubtedly shaped the way in which the state continues to stratify groups in the interests of maintaining a hierarchical structure of power and privilege. Violence is one effective way by which particular groups are kept in their place. But rather than espouse a limited definition of violence that tends to be ingrained in our common-sense stock of knowledge, the definition of violence I adhere to in this chapter encompasses the spectrum of coercive, physical, and institutional power – in other words, it subsumes the very character, instruments, and goals of domination.

A crucial way in which power is naturalized and communicated is through structures of dominance. These structures are grounded in predominant "ways of seeing," to borrow a phrase from John Berger (1972). The latter derive from and reinforce the dominant common-sense stock of knowledge – that which is taken for granted, assumed, and reproduced over time. Stuart Hall (1990a) argues that a society's common-sense stock of knowledge is never homogeneous or monolithic. Rather, it is filled with contradictory bits and pieces of knowledge that are acquired, transformed, and reproduced over time. Drawing from Gramsci, Hall (1979, 325-26) reasons, "It is precisely its 'spontaneous' quality, its transparency, its 'naturalness,' its refusal to be made to examine the premises on which it is founded, its resistance to change or to correction, its effect of instant recognition, and the closed circle in which one moves which makes common sense, at one and the same time, 'spontaneous,' ideological and unconscious. You cannot learn, through common sense, *how things are:* you can only discover *where they fit* into the existing scheme of things." It is the commonalities inherent in the shared language of power, through which consent is obtained, that become

the crux of any inquiry that seeks to decode how power is discursively pro-
duced and reproduced. In other words, the focus is one of deciphering the
types of discursive devices and strategies and the ways in which they are
used to explain violence in the mass media, in the courts, in hospitals, and
in the everyday lives of racialized girls and women of colour. What do these
strategies have in common? And how do they shape the lives of racialized
girls and young women of colour? How are they naturalized and made rec-
ognizable? In other words, what makes them pass as common sense such
that one simply takes them for granted?

In *Whitewash*, John Gabriel (1998, 13) argues: "The power of whiteness
lies in a set of discursive techniques, including *exnomination*, that is the
power not to be named; *naturalization*, through which whiteness establishes
itself as the norm by defining 'others' and not itself; and *universalization*,
where whiteness alone can make sense of a problem and its understanding
becomes *the* understanding." Exnomination, naturalization, and universal-
ization become the tools by which racialized groups are differentiated from
the dominant White elites, with the basis of that difference being natural-
ized in the language of common sense. While elite power remains unnamed,
the profile of racialized groups is heightened in contrast, and while the
dominant power remains invisibilized, the stigmatization and Othering of
racialized groups is rendered more visible and necessitated on the grounds
of perceived and assumed difference; similarly, through universalization,
racialized groups are wittingly and unwittingly compared with those who
are considered normal, where normalcy is defined according to dominant
criteria of the good, law-abiding citizen or the reasonable person.

In his illuminating work on fantasies of White supremacy, Ghassan Hage
posits that such fantasies are foundational to nationalism in White settler
societies. As such, they derive from and feed into a field of Whiteness. He
suggests (2000, 58) that

> "Whiteness" is an everchanging, composite cultural historical construct. It
> has its roots in the history of European colonisation which universalised a
> cultural form of White identity as a position of cultural power at the same
> time as the colonised were in the process of being racialised. Whiteness in
> opposition to Blackness and Brownness, was born the same time as the
> binary oppositions colonizer/colonized, being developed/being underde-
> veloped, and later First World/Third World was emerging. In this sense,
> White has become the ideal of being the bearer of "Western" civilization.
> As such, no one can be fully White, but people yearn to be so. It is in this
> sense, that Whiteness is itself a fantasy position and a field of accumulating
> Whiteness. It is by being qualified to yearn for such a position that people
> can become identified as White. At the same time, to be White does not
> mean to yearn to be European in a geographical sense.

In referring to the simultaneous construction of Whiteness and the racialization of people of colour, Hage draws attention to the legacies imparted by colonialism. In its simplest term, racialization refers to the process whereby groups are marked on the basis of some kind of real or putative difference – whether this is skin colour, culture, religion, language, or nationality (Miles 1989, 74). Although such a broad definition captures the relations of power inherent in racialization, it fails to inflect the violence of racialization – a violence poignantly captured in Franz Fanon's (1967) work. For Fanon, the violence of racialization was directly linked to colonization and manifested in the corporeality of the body. Skin colour assumes a heightened significance in this regard, as it becomes the site and repository of discourses of difference – discourses highly damaging to the psyche and development of the racialized Other (see Barot and Bird 2001). For the Black body to be constructed as different and inferior means that the White body retains its pristine, innocent, and valorized status. Thus, racialization is a dialectic process. It rests on the centrality of Whiteness – its normativity and invisibility.

The hierarchical nature of contemporary Canadian society is part of our taken-for-granted, common-sense stock of knowledge. It remains invisible (in terms of its dominance) yet transparent in the economic and cultural privileging of certain groups over Others. It also communicates the positioning of different groups. Hence, how groups and individuals are seen becomes crucial in terms of where they are placed in the social order. And how they are perceived is itself contingent on the historical stock of knowledge underpinning the contemporary social order. Further, how they are regarded, and how they in turn perceive themselves, influences the kinds of actions that are directed against them, as well as the actions they themselves undertake (S. Hall 1992).

As with the positioning and perception of different groups in society, the shared language of power as it is discursively communicated by dominant institutions (such as the media, the medical system, the justice system, and the education system) influences the categories by which the world is defined. Hence, certain definitions of violence are normatively enshrined – they are taken for granted and influence the ways in which violence is understood in everyday thought and talk. In other words, they shape the cognitive and social "maps of meaning" (Morley 1980) that make categories such as violence intelligible and, in the process, define those aspects of violence that are sanctioned and those that need to be defused or punished.

Violence and Hierarchies of Power

It has been suggested that we live in a violent society and that the violence which takes place within the intimate context of the family mirrors the violence that surrounds us (Lynn and O'Neill 1995). Although this view has

some legitimacy, particularly if one observes the ways in which violence is accepted, glorified, and normalized in certain contexts, it fails to address the complexity of social relations and institutions that tolerate and sustain violence and those that prohibit the use of violence. Nor does such a view take into consideration the factors that contribute to the increased vulnerability of some groups of people to violence and that promote the differential valuations attached to specific forms of violence such that some forms of violence are invisibilized and others rendered more apparent. Moreover, this approach invites the question of how certain forms of violence benefit some people at the expense of others, and further, how they inform society's attitudes toward particular forms of violence.

Dictionary definitions of violence embrace its physical, psychological, and discursive dimensions and underline the use of force and the abuse of power inherent in all forms of violence. What they fail to capture are the levels at which violence occurs and the differential treatment of various kinds of violence. Violence occurs within intimate relationships, between peers, at the societal level, within institutions, and within and between states. Some forms of violence are sanctioned, others more indirectly endorsed, and some are just not tolerated. Until recently, for instance, violence in ice hockey was considered part of the game. That view has been contested and there is increasing opposition to open displays of violence on the ice. Nonetheless, sports such as wrestling depend on violence or stylized violence for their appeal. Video games, television shows, and popular sports all embody forms of violence that are celebrated as testaments of strength, endurance, and power. State-imposed violence is yet another example of the use and abuse of power. Slavery, indentured labour, the internment of particular groups of people during specific historical periods, and the ongoing genocide and containment of Aboriginal peoples on reserves are just a few examples of state-imposed violence. More recent examples include the detention of immigrants and refugees, and the imposition of welfare laws that exercise punitive measures on specific groups of people. As Collins (1998, 922) maintains, "Definitions of violence lie not in acts themselves but in how groups controlling positions of authority conceptualize such acts."

In contextualizing contemporary violence, it is imperative to recall the violence inherent in the very process of nation building, the creation of the Canadian state through colonization. As Thobani (2000a, 283) asserts: "The nation that was 'imagined' by British, and later by Canadian, ruling elites was a White one, and what we have come to know today as the Canadian nation was founded through the colonization of Aboriginal peoples, the subordination of their sovereignties, the appropriation of their resources, and the settlement of Europeans on Aboriginal lands." The subsequent hierarchies of power that were installed to create and solidify the boundaries

of the Canadian state were themselves embodiments of violent struggles waged in the interests of gaining control. As Thobani notes, there were more than five hundred Aboriginal cultures residing on Turtle Island, the name that Aboriginal nations use to call what is now known as Canada. Their containment on reserves, and assimilation through measures such as the residential school system, displacement, and genocide, contributed and continues to contribute to the formation of Canada as a nation-state. This hierarchical structure of power is not monolithic or homogeneous. Often, torn apart by internal tensions, competing interests, and diverging loyalties, its tenuous hold is maintained through economic, cultural, and political dominance (see also Huttenback 1976).

The reality of colonization is evident in its enduring legacy. As Edward Said (1979, 41) observes, by 1914, the European powers had colonized 85 percent of the world. In effect, colonization entailed the destruction of indigenous economies, the indigenous knowledge base (composed of spiritual beliefs, social and normative values, and juridical and political governance structures), and modes of knowledge transmission (L. Smith 1999). Colonization, in other words, transformed the world as it existed (Wynn Davies, Nandy, and Sardar 1993). It privileged a hierarchy whereby White, able-bodied, heterosexual (by and large) males remained at the helm of colonial enterprises. As Anne McClintock (1995, 6) suggests, "The vast, fissured architecture of imperialism was gendered throughout by the fact that it was white men who made and enforced laws and policies in their own interests."

In the interests of colonizing, the reigning elites in Canada, as in other colonies, selectively chose particular groups by which to accomplish the task of nation building. Through preferential structures, specific groups were privileged over others. Some were brought in as cheap, indentured labour to be used and then returned to their countries of origin, others were encouraged to settle the land, and others still were confined to pieces of lands they once possessed. The end result was a vertical mosaic, a mosaic in which the pieces were kept apart and arranged in a manner that secured the power and privilege of the ruling elite.[1]

The notion of Canada as a vertical mosaic was subsequently fleshed out by John Porter (1965), and although the specificities of his model have been critiqued, its relevance lies in making visible the hierarchical nature of Canadian society (Bolaria and Li 1988; Calliste and Dei 2000; P. Li 2003). Today, this hierarchy is regulated economically by a preference for "Canadian experience" and Canadian credentials, and undergirded by symbolic preference structures regarding who constitutes a real Canadian (see Folson 2004). Roberta Hamilton (1996) has extended this concept to include the gendered dimension of Canadian society, emphasizing the exclusion of women's con-

cerns and the differential allocation of societal rewards, as well as the exercise of punitive measures on different groups of women (see also Razack 2002).

Clearly, any hierarchical system sustains itself through the deployment of categories whereby groups can be defined and ranked in terms of their access to varying degrees of power and privilege. This is where the concepts of racism, sexism, ableism, ageism, classism, and homophobia become articulated with other concomitant social institutions to advance and legitimize criteria of inclusion and exclusion. As instruments of power, these structures of domination define the social order, producing and reproducing social inequalities through articulating and prescribing differential values to these differences. But these structures are themselves deeply rooted in the violent exercise of power – whether such power is communicated through coercion or explicit brutality. Their power resides in the discursive formations that have evolved in conjunction with the need to maintain and legitimize the power and privilege of elites.

A discursive formation, as David Goldberg (1990, 297) argues, "consists of a totality of ordered relations and correlations – of subjects to each other and to objects; of economic production and reproduction, cultural symbolism and signification; of laws and moral rules; of social, political, economic, or legal inclusion and exclusion. The sociodiscursive formation consists of a range of rules: 'is's' and 'oughts,' 'do's' and 'don'ts,' 'cans' and 'cannots,' 'thou shalts' and 'thou shalt nots.'" Such formations are circulated through what Foucault (1980a) refers to as "regimes of truth." As Foucault (1980a, 131) notes, the effectiveness of these discourses is apparent in their "organizing and regulating relations of power," such that that power becomes normalized. Hence, how violence is understood, experienced, and responded to is indicative of a discursive formation that defines and regulates its meaning such that this meaning is consonant and articulated with the needs and ideologies advanced within different social domains, but which can yet be harnessed by the dominant powers.

It is the normalization of violence that renders it invisible, or visible only under certain conditions and within prescribed definitions. Hence, the violence of colonialism, of nation building, are made invisible. Similarly, the violence of racism, sexism, ableism, and other structures of domination are veiled from view, leaving only the most explicit traces of victimization, which are subsequently subsumed and marginalized in the subjugated discourses of the communities so affected. Himani Bannerji (2000, 47) eloquently summarizes the situation when she states: "This story of neo-colonialism, of exploitation, racism, discrimination and hierarchical citizenship never gains much credibility or publicity with the Canadian state, the public or the media."

Legacies of colonialism and Orientalism (Said 1979) form a backdrop against which contemporary policies and practices are articulated and which informs and underpins the construction of racialized peoples and communities. Regulatory practices such as immigration admission criteria, legislation concerning crime and deviance, social practices, and stereotypical judgments about peoples of colour are some of the ways in which particular groups are racialized and constructed in the Canadian landscape. They constitute the grid through which racialized peoples are perceived and subjected to differential treatment through strategies and tactics of exclusion, annulment, stigmatization based on disavowal, and conditional acceptance based on exoticization, assimilation, and the ideology of democratic liberalism.[2]

In Canada's history, it is evident that racialized women were used to consolidate the nation as a White settler society (Abu-Laban 1998; Bannerji 2000; Thobani 1999a). Regarded as moral and social threats, women of colour were feared as transmitters of sexually communicated diseases and for their presumed fecundity. Early suffragists argued that women of colour should be denied entry so that their offspring could not in any way pollute the purity of the nation and, by corollary, diminish the value and stature of White women. Early laws, as Backhouse (1999) demonstrates, were formulated to impede the migration of people of colour, especially women, and prohibit any engagement between men of colour and White women (see also Walker 1997). These men were not allowed to employ or engage in relations with White women (see also Park 2004). Unable to bring their wives and children with them, many formed bachelor communities in ghettoized neighbourhoods (Chan 1981; Wu 2003).

It can be argued that the continuity between first generation and subsequent generations of people of colour in White settler colonies lies in the existence of colonial traces that contain and define their representations and mediate their daily realities. In this regard, the bodies of women of colour were and continue to be regarded as requiring control and containment. Although their sexuality was once viewed as a boon to service the men of Empire, now women of colour are most likely to be constructed as able-bodied subjects, whose labour, sexual or otherwise, can be exploited for the benefit of the nation. These representations are most evident in the racialized hierarchies of preference and privilege structuring contemporary Western societies.

Racially based internal hierarchies of power and privilege are, then, a structural feature of White settler societies such as Canada. Within such a framework, diverse groups occupy correspondingly different positions in the hierarchy, their positionality secured through complicity and compliance. The social practices of such a vertical mosaic translate into daily occurrences through which racialized groups not only are relegated to the bottom of the hierarchy (through differential degrees of exclusion and

inferiorization) but also, through internalization, enact those very practices within their own peer groups.

Multiculturalizing Race

A broader discussion of these race-based hierarchies needs to be grounded in the context of contemporary multiculturalism, given that it remains a dominant ideology, organizing relations of power between groups in society. Critical analyses of Canadian multiculturalism suggest that it was a policy founded on the myth of two charter groups – the English and the French – and designed to appeal to both while simultaneously appeasing the needs of the "third force" – the German and Ukrainian population situated on the Prairies and the west coast of the country (Moodley 1983; Peter 1981). Legislated into law in 1988, the policy has since evolved from one of political containment, especially aimed at neutralizing Québécois nationalism, to a celebration of culture and heritage and, more recently, to a policy designed to gain equity for groups that have and continue to be excluded from the dominant spheres of society. Fleras and Kunz (2001) offer a useful breakdown of the policy, demonstrating its evolution from its inception to its current application. They argue that in the 1970s, when the policy was first formulated, it basically focused on ethnicity. More recently, the focus has shifted to a civic multiculturalism in which the emphasis on "constructive engagement" with the aim of facilitating inclusion and belonging (16) are defined as the predominant goals. However, as Das Gupta (1999) points out, the rhetoric of inclusion and belonging does not have a material, economic basis, given the cuts in funding to organizations that mobilize around the provision of anti-racist services and advocacy.

In practice, however, the initial emphasis on culture continues to confound and conflate with issues of race. First, the policy as it has been articulated basically translates the historical violation of colonization into one of cultural coexistence. In other words, how the Canadian state was formed is mythologized as an outcome of two "founding" nations. Aboriginal peoples and the violence of colonization are carefully erased from this cultural conceptualization (Thobani 1998). Second, the policy is riddled with contradictions that on the one hand acknowledge individual and group rights, especially with regard to representation and participation, but on the other translate these rights into the language of culture. Thus, representation becomes an act of cultural representation in the cultural arenas of production, and participation is defined in cultural terms – that is, the particular collective's right to participate in the cultural spheres of society. The recent emphasis of the policy on issues of inclusion of visible minorities throws into relief the central contradictions inherent when culture and race are conflated. For one, the policy in practice tends to equalize all cultural groups so that distinctions between more established cultural communities that

are no longer racialized in the same way as communities of colour are col-
lapsed. Thus, second-, third-, and fourth-generation Irish are regarded in the
same way as more recent racialized communities – the Somali-Canadian
community, for example. The net effect is one of erasing the degree and
type of racism directed at the Somali community but also of discounting
the lack of cultural capital and resources within this community as com-
pared with the Irish community. I do not mean to suggest that the Irish
have not been racialized and did not suffer historically from exclusion and
stigmatization. Instead, as the historical context in the United States dem-
onstrates, there was a "Whitening of the Irish" resulting from the political
alliances they forged with the Southern planters (Bhattacharyya, Gabriel,
and Small 2002). What I wish to underscore here is the relevance of race as
a salient marker of identification in particular contexts and at given histori-
cal moments. As well, where the Irish are positioned vis-à-vis the Somalis in
a hierarchy of preferred immigrants is extremely relevant. Further, skin colour
as the basis of identification also suggests the degree to which one can pass
or is unable to pass into dominance. Thus, while the Irish were Whitened at
that particular historical juncture in the history of the South, can the Soma-
lis be so Whitened today? I would argue no, and here I base my rejection on
the history of colonialism, the corporeality of race as a marker of identifica-
tion that is visible and, through its visibility, used strategically and tacti-
cally to maintain White dominance. However, and undoubtedly, the
penalties associated with race can be and often are mitigated by class privi-
lege. Nonetheless, the connotations of race ensure that, even with class
privilege, one is likely to encounter certain barriers rooted in systemic struc-
tures of domination.

I suggest that when race and ethnicity come together, ethnic identifica-
tion becomes more potent as a political basis of identity and as a signifier of
power relations than in those situations where such identity simply reflects
affective ties or a symbolic recuperation based on nostalgia (Gans 1979). As
Rumbaut (1994, 754) observes, "Ethnicity may for some groups become op-
tional and recede into the social twilight, as it did for the descendants of the
white Europeans or it may become for others a resilient resource or an en-
gulfing master status." He further suggests that discrimination and dispar-
agement are factors that contribute to a heightened attachment to ethnic
identity. Contextual factors are, then, critical in determining how White-
ness is defined and, by corollary, how the status of Otherness is defined. But
ultimately, these contextual factors point to the persistence of a hierarchical
system of preferences that inflects and deflects differences in the interests of
power.

That aside, the translation of equity and access into the language of culture
ensures that the production and consolidation of group and community-
based identities are defined on the basis of an adherence to and practice of

particular cultural traditions. Funding adjudicated on the basis of belonging to defined and cohesive cultural groups facilitated the conversion of loose cultural affinities into bounded and discrete cultural entities irrespective of the reality that cultures are not frozen in time nor homogeneous in interpretation. Supplementing this externally imposed condition were internal forces which cohered groups into a defensive retreat against the hostility and exclusion they experienced from the dominant society. As Himani Bannerji argues:

> Things are different with us, that is, non-white immigrants – even if we are conversant in English or French, which people from South Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean generally are. With them the process is reversed, since they come as individual migrants and slowly harden into the institutional form of the community. The reason for this, I am afraid, is not what is inside of them, but rather in their skin. Their skin is written upon with colonial discourse – which is orientalist and racist. Thus memories, experiences, customs, languages, and religions of such people become interpreted into reificatory and often negative cultural types or identities. The political process of minoritization accompanies this interpretive exercise, and together they lead to the formation of communities. When we speak of "diversity" it is this set of reified and politicized differences that we are invoking, and they provide the basis for ethnocultural identity and politics of representation. (2000, 160)

Communities, then, become a focal point of the policies, despite the reality that these communities are, as Bannerji (2000) reminds us, not natural constructions but social constructions mediated out of a necessity to respond to particular state policies. In turn, these communities are harnessed by these policies to better serve the status quo and thereby utilized to maintain a hierarchical racialized structure of power. Such communities are reified as embodiments of particular cultural formations even though what they may be representing is a graft of a culture, specific social classes within that cultural formation, and particular interpretations of cultural traditions. Patriarchal and economic elites maintain the boundaries of these so-called cultural communities, ensuring compliance and cohesion. However, as Bannerji remarks, this is not only a top-down imposition but also a bottom-up response, based on the racism, exclusion, and hostility from the dominant society faced by these groups. Within the context of these communities, power is naturalized and rendered normal through the recuperation and reification of tradition.

Bannerji calls our attention to a key element of multiculturalism, namely, the connection between race and culture. Racialized communities are minoritized and interpreted as primordial cultural entities rather than as

entities formed through state measures. Further, these cultural labels are not neutral but carry Orientalist and racially inscribed connotations of inferiority, positioned as they are in opposition to a construction of Western society that represents itself as progressive, emancipatory, and democratic. Racial differences become encoded as cultural differences, and race itself is culturalized (Razack 1998a). A corollary to this is that Whiteness has no culture, but culture becomes the signifying badge of difference for people of colour. Drawing from Essed (1990), Amita Handa (1997) argues that the emphasis on culture evacuates concepts of race and racism, so that cultural tolerance comes to replace the need for racial tolerance (see also Bannerji 2000).

To tolerate, as Mirchandani and Tastsoglou (2000) remark, is to "put up with" and not necessarily to embrace difference. Indeed, Hage (2000) suggests that the call for tolerance can be exercised only upon those who are intolerant. In other words, those who need to be tolerant are simply those who are capable of being intolerant. Referring to multiculturalism in the context of Australia, Hage observes that "multicultural tolerance, like all other tolerance, is not, then, a good policy that happens to be limited in its scope. It is a strategy aimed at reproducing and disguising relationships of power in society, or being reproduced through that disguise. It is a form of symbolic violence in which a mode of domination is presented as a form of egalitarianism" (87).

The violence of racism is shrouded by discourses of denial, discourses predicated on the categorization of racism as something other than what it is; on the tactics of individualization; and the conversion of racial difference into categories that demonize, trivialize, compartmentalize, exoticize, erase, or contain that difference in ways that suit the interests of a dominant, hegemonic power. In part, this is achieved through a systemic blanketing or "whitewashing" of racist sexism as well as through the use of coded language to refer to racialized differences. Bannerji (2000, 47) summarizes it succinctly when she says, "There is not even a language within the state's redress apparatus to capture or describe the racist sexism towards third world or non-white women or men." What language does exist is that which utilizes coded signifiers such as "culture," "diversity," "tolerance," "difference," thereby bracketing any notion of systemic and symbolic violence of race and racism (see also Karim 1993a, 1993b; Mirchandani and Tastsoglou 2000). Concomitantly, most discourses on race utilize coded words such as "immigrant," "refugee," "alien," "terrorist," and the like to refer to people of colour. Such words cover up and obfuscate the central defining and regulating relations of power and reify these categories as authentic absolutes against which the normative Canadian is implicitly defined as the White, law-abiding, citizen of the nation.

Gendered Racism and Sexist Violence

Within scholarship on gender-based violence, the feminist movement in Canada has been particularly successful in highlighting the power of sexism as a systemic form of violence underpinning and influencing the lives of women and girls (Duffy and Momirov 1997; H. Johnson 1996; McKenna and Larkin 2002). It has in fact succeeded in bringing a subjugated knowledge (women's experiential realities of violence) to the centre and, through institutionalized power, legitimizing both this experiential knowledge and the advocacy it has generated (see Faith 1993; Taylor, Barnsley, and Goldsmith 1996; Timmins 1995).

Hence, the argument that gender-based violence is made possible by the ideology of sexism in which women are perceived and treated as less worthy than men is more readily and overtly acknowledged within certain domains (see also Richie 1996). Sexism is recognized as a system of beliefs and attitudes based on the alleged inferiority of women, inferiority that translates into attitudes that women cannot be believed, that women are incapable, and that women are inherently subordinate to men (Browne 1997; Duffy 1995). Within an institutional framework, sexism translates into policies and practices that deter women's advancement, justify inequality in wages, and make women vulnerable to violence such as sexual harassment, rape, and murder (DeKeseredy and Kelly 1995; Ferraro 1997; L. Kelly 1987; Lakeman 2000). In the context of the criminal justice system, sexism is evident and documented in the ways in which women are disbelieved, have their concerns trivialized or dismissed, and are revictimized (Bonnycastle and Rigakos 1998; Martin and Mosher 1995). As Walter DeKeseredy and Linda MacLeod (1997) have argued, gender-based violence is sexist violence.[3]

For racialized women of colour, the exposure to patriarchal structures is refracted through their positioning in subordinate roles within the larger society, as well as within their particular communities. This is not simply a situation of a double dose of patriarchy. Rather, how the dominant society constructs racialized communities has implications for the gendered dynamics within communities. Black feminists such as Angela Davis (1983), Patricia Hill Collins (1998, 2000), and bell hooks (1982, 1990), to mention only a few, have drawn attention to the complex intersecting and interlocking influences that have shaped Black women's lives in the United States. Patricia Hill Collins (1998, 919) suggests that "while violence certainly seems central to maintaining *separate* oppressions – those of race, gender, social class, nationality/citizenship status, sexual orientation and age – violence may be equally important in structuring *intersections* among these hierarchies. Rather than viewing violence primarily as part of distinct social hierarchies of race and gender, violence may serve as the conceptual glue that

binds them together." If violence is the glue that binds them together, then how is violence against racialized women of colour framed and understood?

Intersecting and Interlocking Violence(s)

In contrast to the heightened awareness of sexism as violence, the intersectionality of racism and sexism, or what Bannerji (2000) has termed "racist sexism," has only begun to be uncovered in the same way and with the same institutional force as has mediated mainstream feminist scholarship (see Razack 2002, 2004). Intersectionality is a key concept navigating this maze of crosscutting, intertwining, and intermeshing conduits of domination. As Kimberle Crenshaw (2000, 8) elucidates, intersectionality "addresses the manner in which racism, patriarchy, class oppression and other discriminatory systems create background inequalities that structure the relative positions of women, races, ethnicities, classes and the like" (see also Crenshaw 1994). However, critical anti-racist feminists have argued that these social forces – far from remaining as background features – interlock so that the construction of identity is itself contingent on the particular nexus of interlocking factors operative in a given context. Sherene Razack (1998a, 13) defines it most clearly when she states: "Interlocking systems need one another, and in tracing the complex ways in which they help to secure one another, we learn how women are produced into positions that exist symbiotically but hierarchically."

In part, the difference between the mainstream feminist agenda and the critical anti-racist perspective on violence has to do with a discourse of denial surrounding the acknowledgment of explicit and pervasive racism against women of colour within the academy, the women's movement, and the wider society. This is achieved through the promotion of a universalized category of woman that collapses differences between women.[4] In speaking to this issue, Linda Carty (1991, 31) comments, "As Black women we experience our femaleness and Blackness together, always at the same time, and we challenge whether it is possible for white women to be white or female because we see them as white *and* female."

Spelman (1988) has similarly argued against an essentialist construction of gender. In a hierarchical society, the power and privilege attached to one level is predicated on the lack of power and privilege of those belonging to a lower level (Razack 1998a). For instance, in the plantocracies of the southern United States, the status, power, and privilege accorded to the White woman placed her apart from and at a higher level than the Black slave woman. The chastity, femininity, and purity of the White slave owner's wife contrasted with dominant conceptions of the slave woman as a Jezebel or an Aunt Jemima (Davis 1983; Jewell 1993). The one set of norms raised the status of the White woman, while the other inferiorized the slave, a

violent process in and of itself, as well as making her vulnerable to other kinds of violence and violations. However, the moral regulation of White women's bodies was also confining in the sense of limiting their agency and power, rigidly subordinating them to White patriarchal domination. In contemporary times, the interlocking structures of power and privilege are evident in the differential use of women of colour as labourers and domestics that makes it possible for White women to be employed outside the home (see Arat-Koc 1995; Mohanty 1991b; Ng 1993a). The exploitation of one group of women makes the liberation of another group of women possible (Bhattacharyya, Gabriel, and Small 2002). Yet, in the universalizing language of dominance, all women are seen as being liberated, as all can participate in paid work outside their own homes.

Pointing to Catherine McKinnon's argument about the traumatic impact of rape on all women, Angela Harris (1997) demonstrates how, historically, rape against Black women was not even considered rape by the dominant society. There were no laws against the rape of Black women, even though the rape or alleged rape of White women often resulted in the lynching of Black men. Her analysis demonstrates the unequal application of laws, the differential construction of women, and the ways in which the rape and lynching were interrelated. In analyzing these interlocking systems, Harris offers an insightful critique of what she describes as the dominance theory, a theory that coheres around the notion of a universal woman. She posits: "First, in the pursuit of the essential feminine, Woman leached of all color and irrelevant social circumstance, issues of race are bracketed as belonging to a separate and distinct discourse – a process that leaves black women's selves fragmented beyond recognition. Second, feminist essentialists find that in removing issues of 'race' they have actually only managed to remove black women – meaning that white women now stand as the epitome of Woman" (13). She further contends that in ameliorating the essentialist framework, feminists often try to use a "nuanced approach." In the latter, diverse women's experiences are recognized, albeit in "footnotes" supplemental to the main text, and then attributed to a matter of context. The more problematic aspect of a nuanced approach is that it leaves undisturbed the central yardstick by which all women's experiences are measured, namely, the normativity of White women's experiences.

These critiques are still relevant to much of the work that has been undertaken on issues of violence against women in Canada. The landmark Canadian Panel on Violence against Women (Marshall and Vaillancourt 1993, 7) put forth the following categories to define the kinds of violence that women and girls experience: physical, sexual, psychological, financial, and spiritual. While the panel members were cognizant of the realities of women of colour – a reality forcefully brought to their attention by the advocacy of

women of colour to have representation within the panel – the actual recognition of racism as a form of violence, and of the alliances between patriarchal powers within communities of colour and the dominant society, remains a mute observation, confined to those pages of the panel's report that specifically address women of colour (see Chapter 11 of the panel's report, "Women of Colour," in Marshall and Vaillancourt 1993). Ostensibly, the panel's focus was on foregrounding sexist violence so that so-called background inequalities such as racism are not privileged in the same way. Nevertheless, relegating these systemic inequalities to the backstage only reinforces dominant definitions of violence that strategically deflect attention away from how and why such forms of violence are extant in the first place, or the forces that sustain their continued power. In other words, by focusing on some kinds of violence rather than others, the tendency is one of evacuating an analysis of the power hierarchies that lie at the foundations of a racist, sexist society. It conforms to what Harris (1997, 14) describes as the "nuance theory" of gender oppression.

The invisibility of structures of domination is reinforced by announcements pertaining to the declining levels of violent crime, spousal murders, and homicide in general. But the mapping of the terror that results in ongoing harassment, racial profiling, deportations, and other structural and coercive forms of violence designed to keep certain groups and individuals in "their place" receives scant attention in the official documentation of the state and is, by and large, unreported in the dominant media. If it is at all made manifest through a few unroutinized interruptions, it is referred to in the language of power – in the dominant discourse – as pertaining to an exception or more likely to the actions of undeserving, overly demanding, hypersensitive, over-reacting, transgressive minorities or their barbaric cultures (Razack 2004) that need to be excised from the social body. Instead, the tendency of this dominant discourse is to celebrate conformity by valorizing individual will or the innate "cultural" traits of a particular group to transcend barriers by successfully negotiating, surviving, and thriving against all odds. The latter representation works to neutralize any charge of systemic violence or terror and focuses instead on the model minority, as evidenced in cases of individual success, such as the appointment of a governor general, a member of parliament, a business magnate, and so forth, all of whom have "foreign" origins but who have nonetheless transcended their cultural inheritances and climbed up the ladder of power and privilege.

Embracing an intersectional and interlocking framework involves a further examination of the ways in which different systems work in concert with each other to engender particular forms and expressions of violence. In shifting the focus away from a universalized construction of sexist violence, I do not mean to suggest that racialized women of colour do not experience gendered violence. Rather, the particular instantiation of such

violence is contextual and relational – it depends on the forces operating in a given historical moment, as well as whether such violence is recognized as violence, and whether it is privileged as a kind of violence deserving of societal intervention and resolution. This, of course, raises the question as to what kinds of interventions are deemed necessary and by whom.

In delineating the particular vulnerabilities and susceptibilities of different groups of women to violence, what stands out are the systemic forms of violence at each site where they interconnect and interlock with intimate and interpersonal forms of violence. Factors such as isolation, dependency, marginalization, and stigmatization that are part and parcel of making an individual or group susceptible to violence are occluded, negated, or erased in accounts of violence against specific groups of people. Thus, when the group or individual constitutes a historically excluded minority, a minority whose realities are deeply shaped by structural forces mediated through everyday exclusion, marginalization, ghettoization, and coercive assimilation, the violence of these actions is absented from descriptive accounts, which tend to focus on the cultural peculiarities of these groups, their presumed proclivity to violence, or their "risk" to violence. Such accounts fail to take into consideration factors that put these groups at risk in the first place and at risk particularly from discursive and material violence exercised by the dominant society. How are specific groups of women isolated, impoverished, made dependent, and excluded through racism and sexism?

Situating Women of Colour

In speaking of racialized women of colour, the tendency is often to conflate their status with immigrant status. Indeed, in the Canadian popular imagination, most women of colour are defined as immigrants, and as immigrants, they occupy a particular range of representations. This conflation derives in part from the erasure of women of colour in the official histories of the nation, and in part from the barriers imposed to prevent women of colour from immigrating to the nation (Agnew 1996; Dua 1999). However, since the liberalization of immigration laws in 1976, the number of women of colour who have immigrated has increased. Das Gupta (1999, 191) observes that "over half the immigrants who arrived in Canada since the 1970s and three-quarters of those who came in the 1990s are visible minority members"; these numbers indicate that traditional and preferred source countries of immigrants have dried up.

One consequence of this link with immigration has been the continual identification of women of colour as perpetual outsiders to the nation. Das Gupta notes that

in everyday discourse, the phrase ["immigrant women"] is used interchangeably with the phrase "women of colour" by most Canadians, whether they

are "of colour" or "White." This particular usage is underlaid with a notion of who a "Canadian" is or what a "Canadian looks like." The implication is that a Canadian is White, middle or upper class and Anglo or Francophone. Anybody who deviates from this stereotype – someone who is a person of colour, has a non-dominant accent, wears a "different" dress or headgear, coupled with a working class occupation – would be referred to as "immigrant" or non-Canadian, even though they may be holding Canadian citizenship. (1999, 190)

I deal with the implications and entrenched nature of this association in Chapter 5. Here, I wish to underline this association given its slippage into research dealing with race, gender, and violence. Existing Canadian studies focusing on racialized women of colour and their experiences of violence have tended to focus on them as immigrant women. This stems from the fact that many high-profile cases have involved immigrant women and that community-based advocacy and service organizations have mobilized around the issue of immigrant status in order to address the lack of available services for women of colour who have experienced violence (Agnew 1996, 1998; Dosanjh, Deo, and Sidhu 1994; Razack 1998a). This focus on immigrant origins is particularly evident in studies concentrating on specific and cultural forms of violence exhibited by women from racialized immigrant communities.

Thus, in contrast to the universal construction of gendered violence, which erases all differences between women or confines them to a footnote, this second and related perspective heightens differences between women, locating these differences in the realm of culture. In both cases, however, the accentuation and levelling of difference functions strategically to underscore White superiority and power (see, for instance, Lorde 1983). Uma Narayan provides a succinct analysis of this latter cultural approach when she states:

In thinking about issues of "violence against Third-World women" that "cross borders" into Western national contexts, it strikes me that phenomena that seem "Different," "Alien," and "Other" cross these borders with considerably more frequency than problems that seem "similar" to those that affect mainstream Western women. Thus, clitorodectomy and infibulation have become virtually an "icon" of "African women's problems" in Western contexts, while a host of other "more familiar" problems that different groups of African women face are held up at the border. In a similar vein, the abandonment and infanticide of female infants appears to be the one gender issue pertaining to China that receives coverage. These issues then become "common topics" for academics and feminists, and also cross over to a larger public audience that becomes "familiar" with these issues. It

is difficult not to conclude that there is a premium on "Third-World differ-
ence" that results in greater interest being accorded to those issues that
seem strikingly "different" from those affecting mainstream Western women.
(1997, 100)

The iconic representation of specific forms of violence is, then, just as prob-
lematic as an approach that erases all differences. But here, in particulariz-
ing these kinds of violence as endemic of Other cultures, the implicit
assumption is that the gendered violence of "our" culture (read North Ameri-
can culture) is more legitimate because it is normalized and less apparent.
However, in the enhanced recognition of difference, acts of violence are
construed as signs of the peculiarities of Other cultural traditions, peculiari-
ties that reflect the traditional, barbaric, and inferior constructions of the
cultures of Others.

Bordering the Nation, Bordering Communities

> When the terrain is sexual violence, racism and sexism interlock
> in particularly nasty ways. These two systems operate through
> each other so that sexual violence, as well as women's narratives
> of resistance to sexual violence, cannot be understood outside of
> colonialism and today's ongoing racism and genocide. When
> women from marginalized communities speak out about sexual
> violence, we are naming something infinitely broader than what
> men do to women within our communities, an interlocking
> analysis that has most often been articulated by Aboriginal
> women.
>
> – Sherene Razack, *Looking White People in the Eye*

As I have maintained elsewhere (Jiwani 2005c), part of the problem of speak-
ing about violence against women of colour is the racialization of these
communities as deviant, traditional, backward, and inherently oppressive
(see Chapter 6). Thus, to speak about violence is, as Flynn and Crawford
(1998) have argued, to commit "race treason"; it is to betray "racial loyalty"
(Richie 1996). Indeed, the fallout of stereotypes of immigrant communities
as violence-prone has been one of silencing women from within these com-
munities (Bannerji 2000). In a call to break the silence, Angela Davis (2000,
2) has consistently argued that "we must also learn how to oppose the racist
fixation on people of colour as the primary perpetrators of violence, includ-
ing domestic and sexual violence, and at the same time to fiercely challenge
the real violence that men of colour inflict on women." This is a difficult
task, particularly given the social climate, in which calling attention to abuse

can result in the deportation of the sponsoring "head of household" and children, putting the family in further jeopardy; or it can lead to the imprisonment of the sole person who is the breadwinner; or alternatively, it can result in the stigmatization and marginalization from a community with which one otherwise identifies. In other words, breaking the silence has a cost, yet it is a cost that untold numbers of racialized women of colour have borne and continue to bear on a daily basis.

Although the history of immigrant women of colour is an important one and one that is continually being recovered by critical anti-racist feminists, my intent here is to demonstrate the ways in which particular explanations of violence against women of colour are privileged. In doing this, I situate my point of departure in Anthias and Yuval-Davis' (1992) analysis of gender and nationalism, an analysis also embraced by McClintock (1995) in her extensive study of race, gender, and imperialism. For Anthias and Yuval-Davis, women's bodies constitute the site on which the discourse of nationalism is inscribed. At the same time, women are, as McClintock (1995) argues, implicated in the process of nationalism. As reproducers of the nation, both biologically and socially, and as "transmitters of culture," women's bodies are used "as signifiers of ethnic or national differences, as a focus and symbol in ideological discourses used in the construction, reproduction and transformation of ethnic or national categories" (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992, 115). However, this use of women's bodies is, as Himani Bannerji (2000) notes, a form of dehumanization. It objectifies women as no more than "handmaidens of god, priest, and husband" (169).

Within the context of the Canadian nation-state and its historic and contemporaneous racialization of difference, women's bodies are similarly marked. "Good" women are those who represent and conform to a hegemonic construction of femininity that is itself bound to notions of nationness, or the identity and reputation of the community. "Bad" women deviate from such an ideal. However, there are degrees of goodness and badness, as exemplified in what happens to women who deviate and the extent to which they depart from the normative constructions of femininity (see Faith and Jiwani 2002). As well, notions of goodness and badness are context based. In other words, it depends on who is defining the boundaries and the power they possess to enforce such definitions. As suggested by Whitehead, Bannerji, and Mojab (2001, 4), "Notions of propriety and respectability, are in turn, linked to the nationalist construction of ideal gender identities."

These hegemonic notions of femininity seal particular definitions of the imagined community (B. Anderson 1983) that is the nation. They symbolize how the nation views itself and how the women within it view their role as reproducers of the nation. Thus, honour, morality, sexual purity, and religiosity are standards by which women are often judged as signifiers of

the nation. However, much depends on which groups of women are considered worthy of bearing this burden of signifying the nation. Some deviations are tolerated – if not encouraged – in the interest of maintaining a hierarchy of those who best fit the national imaginary and those who do not. Some kinds of deviations were and are normalized at given historical moments. Historical examples indicate how First Nations and Metis women were often positioned as so-called country wives, used to service White male colonizers until the arrival of marriageable White women (see also Leacock 1980). Similarly, as Razack (1998b) reminds us, bodies of Third World women were and are often used as sexual commodities to service the needs of White male tourists frequenting parts of Asia. As well, racialized women from different areas of the world were and continue to be trafficked in as prostitutes and mail-order brides (Perez 2003; Narayan 1995). As deviant bodies, racialized women of colour occupy a "zone of degeneracy" in contrast to those who fit the national imaginary of hegemonic femininity (Razack 1998b). The latter group of women occupy the zone of "morality."

Occupying a zone of degeneracy, as Razack (2002) notes, makes the bodies of women of colour all the more susceptible to certain forms of violence – violence imposed on them by the dominant society and articulated through White patriarchal power. Such violence is predicated on discourses of exotica, innocence, and the premise that masculinities may be experimented and exercised upon the bodies of these Others (Said 1979). Nevertheless, women of colour are also subjects of violence from within. And it is the convergence of these internal and external patriarchies that demands scrutiny.

Gender-based violence is an issue common to all women and girls.[5] However, its framing and expression have much to do with the historical and contemporary context in which women live. For racialized women of colour in Canada, gender-based violence has been and continues to be a relevant and topical issue, but its articulation from within and outside the community frames it in particular ways. It is this definition that I am particularly interested in exploring, especially since definitions and categories are most often articulated in the interests of hegemonic powers and with the intent of reinvigorating, through resonance, sedimented stocks of common-sense knowledge.

Situating Culture Talk
It has been argued that within racialized minority communities, moral prescriptions are transmitted in the language of culture. American studies of racialized women of colour and their experiences of violence include those pertaining to South Asian women (Dasgupta and Warrier 1996), Korean families (Choi 1997; Rhee 1977), Chinese out-of-town brides (Chin 1994), Mexican-Americans (Champion 1996), Asian-American communities

(Huisman 1996), and Latino women (Aldarondo, Kaufman, and Jasinksi 2002; Perilla, Bakeman, and Norris 1994). All of these underscore the salience of cultural traditions in prescribing and describing women's and girls' positions in these communities (see also Raj and Silverman 2002). These studies further contend that the cultural scripts encoded within these communities account for the type and incidence of gendered violence. For example, Perilla, Bakeman, and Norris (1994, 325) argue that "emotional and physical abuse of Latinas by their male partners is deeply woven into the tapestry of Latino culture in the United States." They elaborate: "Cultural scripts such as these ('machismo'/'marianismo,' dominance/submission) support an imbalance of power in traditional Latino families and provide an environment ripe for the occurrence of domestic violence" (326). What makes these particular scripts salient at given historical moments is left unstated, though the authors, as in the previously mentioned studies, do make note of structural considerations such as immigration status, under- and unemployment, isolation, lack of English-language fluency, and marginalization through racism. However, the resulting impression one gets is that racialized women of colour are particularly prone to what Uma Narayan (1997) has termed "death by culture." This cultural gaze also reinforces the notion that racialized communities of colour are tradition-bound and frozen in time, not to mention inherently violent. Such "culture talk," as Razack (1998a) defines it, is strategic – it serves a useful end, both in the sense of deflecting attention away from commonalities and, more to the point, of defining which groups are acceptable and unacceptable – which fit the criteria of preference of the imagined Canadian nation. Razack offers a succinct and eloquent summary of the dangers involved in using culture as an explanatory vehicle for defining violence against racialized (and immigrant) women of colour. As she puts it (1998a, 58-59):

> Both within our communities and outside of them, the risks Aboriginal women and women of colour encounter when we talk about culture in the context of sexual violence are manifested on several levels. First, many cultural communities understand culture and community in ways that reflect and leave unchallenged male privilege. Indeed, the notion of culture that has perhaps the widest currency among both dominant and subordinate groups is one whereby culture is taken to mean values, beliefs, knowledge, and customs that exist in a timeless and unchangeable vacuum outside of patriarchy, racism, imperialism, and colonialism ... Second, when we bring sexual violence to the attention of white society we always risk exacerbating the racism directed at both the men and the women in our communities. In this way, we risk being viewed by our own communities as traitors and by white society as women who have abandoned our communities because they are so patriarchal. Third, as communities of colour, we need to

understand sexual violence as the outcome of both white supremacy and patriarchy; culture talk fragments sexual violence as what men do to women and takes the emphasis away from white complicity.

Yet, if we are to locate and understand gendered violence as it is manifested and expressed within racialized communities without resorting to cultural pathologies or "death by culture," we need to situate the discourses through which this violence is made possible. In mapping the ways that gendered violence in racialized communities of colour is framed, exercised, and communicated, I suggest that a central and organizing motive is that of regulation – the regulation of morality and mobility. The regulation of morality suggests boundaries defining the limits of acceptable sexual, social, and representational behaviour, and the regulation of mobility can be defined as the imposition or exercise of limits within which one can physically leave a violent situation or, alternatively, the ways in which one is forced, through persuasion or punishment, to remain within a given situation. Alternatively, mobility can be understood as that which defines a person or group's ability to cross borders and boundaries. For racialized peoples, mobility is severely restricted by the constraints imposed on them by the state through immigration criteria and the like, as well as by constraints imposed on them by economic conditions.

Morality and mobility are not mutually exclusive categories; they shade into and inform one another. In proposing that these categories are anchored in the regulatory practices governing women's lives, I draw from Sherene Razack's (2002) work on race, space, and the law, and from Whitehead, Bannerji, and Mojab's (2001) introduction in *Of Property and Propriety*. While Razack calls our attention to the spatial organization that is part of the legacy of colonization, a spatialization that clearly defines zones of degeneracy where all Others are *contained*, Whitehead, Bannerji, and Mojab underscore the notion of propriety, emphasizing the moral regulation of women's and girls' bodies and the constitution of these bodies as property in the language of patriarchy.

In her insightful and nuanced analysis of the murder of Pamela George, an Aboriginal woman from the Sakimay Reserve of the Saulteaux First Nation in Regina, Razack (2002) demonstrates how racialized gendered violence is rendered permissible because of the *containment* of its subjects in categories of degeneracy and as spatially located outside the boundaries of normative society. Pamela George was assaulted and murdered by two White men. The city of Regina, as Razack describes it, was historically divided. It was a place where relations between the dominant Whites and the subordinate Natives were structured legally and spatially and were underpinned by economic, sexual, and racial violence. Citing the work of Sarah Carter, Razack (2002, 131) points out how, historically, Aboriginal women's mobility was

regulated through the introduction of a pass system and how "government agents sometimes withheld rations to reserve communities unless Aboriginal women were made available to them." The legislative mechanisms imposed on Aboriginal people were also gender specific.[6] Aboriginal women were denied Indian status if they married outside the reserve. Yet, Aboriginal men could retain status even if they married a woman from outside their reserve; their wives would acquire Indian status. This form of regulation constituted a foundation upon which subsequent relations were and continue to be enacted. In linking the murder of Pamela George to this colonial foundation, Razack demonstrates how daily exchanges of violence are tolerated on the basis that they invoke resonances with the representation of Aboriginal women as "sexually licentious and bloodthirsty" (130).

In analyzing the details of the court case involving the two accused White men, she notes that the violence done to Pamela George was normalized and naturalized, reflecting hegemonic notions of White masculinity. Commenting on the impunity of the two accused White men and their trivialization of the violence they had committed, Razack (2002, 136) remarks that "the subject who must cross the lines between respectability and degeneracy and, significantly, return unscathed, is first and foremost a colonial subject seeking to establish that he is indeed in control and lives in a world where a solid line marks the boundary between himself and racial/gendered Others. For this subject, violence establishes the boundary between who he is and who he is not." Violence, then, is an instrument of power and self-definition. However, its exercise depends on what the discursive formations and regimes of truth – to use Foucault's term – define as the zones of degeneracy, and which bodies are perceived to be degenerate and can be subjected to violence with impunity. Thus, Pamela George as an Aboriginal woman and a sex trade worker was, within the construction of White hegemonic masculinity and its institutions of power such as the court, defined and described as occupying the zone of degeneracy. Because hers was perceived as a degenerate body, the violence done to her was trivialized and its impact erased. Here, violence acts as a way of reinforcing White hegemonic masculinity and reinscribing spatial and social relations of power.

Morality and mobility are clearly evidenced in the case of racialized established, immigrant, migrant, and diasporic communities. For here, moral regulation becomes, as Bannerji (2000) suggests, a way of controlling women and girls. Since women's and girls' bodies are emblematic of culture and marked as signifiers of tradition, their containment through strict moral regulations also impedes their mobility into areas that are defined as contrary to "cultural" traditions. I frame "culture" in quotation marks because which aspect of culture is defined as *the* culture and which traditions are invented or inflected very much depends on the power hierarchy extant

within these constructed communities. Regulations governing mobility are introduced and sustained through both state power (as in immigration criteria, deportations, border controls, security certificates, and the like), as well as through social and normative sanctions against those who trespass into given areas. But limitations on mobility also derive from within communities, as these provide girls and women the boundary markers indicating where they can go, and inversely, where they cannot go. Moral prescriptions define who they can interact with, how they can interact, and the rules governing their comportment.

Recent studies employing an intersectional analysis offer more complex insights into the structures of violence, as these are articulated with notions of discourses of femininity and masculinity, and enacted through the regulation of morality and mobility. In her study of Filipino youth in the United States, Espiritu (2001) notes that girls' sexuality and behaviours are highly regulated in response to what is perceived to be a failing of the dominant society. Thus, while girls and young women in the White, dominant society are regarded as being sexually promiscuous, lax in moral behaviours and values, Filipinas are supposed to signify the opposite – the superior morality of the community as reflected in chaste behaviour and restricted sexual expressions. Espiritu (2001, 436) observes that "the immigrant community uses restrictions on women's lives as one form of resistance to racism. This form of cultural resistance, however, severely restricts the lives of women, particularly those of the second generation, and it casts the family as a potential site of intense conflict and oppressive demands in immigrant lives." Racism and sexism, then, structure discourses of femininity, fixing girls and women as signifiers of culture from within and as emblematic symbols of that community to the outside world. Similarly, they restrict girls' and women's mobility in terms of their ease of movement from within to the outside and from outside to the inside – in other words, being able to walk freely between worlds rather than constantly having to negotiate the tight interstices between different cultural arenas and expectations (an issue I explore in greater detail in Chapter 5). In highlighting this interplay of internal and external influences, Abraham (1995, 452) remarks: "Ethnicity becomes the basis for group identification and solidarity in an alien country. At the same time, specific physical features and cultural habits remind the dominant group and the immigrant group of their foreign background – regardless of their previous socioeconomic class – thereby stereotyping, boundary marking, and restricting total acceptance of the immigrant by the mainstream (Ngan-Ling Chow 1993). The social situation is frequently manifested in the dominant group forming the core and the subordinate group being allocated a peripheral position in the social, economic, and political structure of the setting."

Both morality and mobility are regulatory discourses that prescribe and describe the discourses of femininity defining the lives of girls and women from racialized communities of colour, communities often located in the peripheries of the nation. However, the boundaries of these discourses are somewhat permeable in the sense that, although structured in the dominance of race, they are not fixed but, rather, socially constructed. There are "proper" ways of breaking the rules and "improper" ways of doing so. So, for instance, through assimilation, one can break the limits imposed by the moral discourses of a community. Such a move signals liberation from the strictures of a traditional society and an embrace of the supposedly modern, egalitarian ethos of the dominant society. It allows for a greater degree of mobility but it also defines that mobility in terms of where and how young women of colour are allowed in, the degree to which they will be accepted, and the kinds of violence to which they will be subjected. As exotic and assimilated Others, they may gain entry into the dominant society, but their exoticized representation will also categorize them as Others, thus rendering them susceptible to different forms of violence.

Assimilation also offers, especially through class privilege, a greater degree of mobility. On the other hand, the deeply racialized nature of identity, both group and individual based, limits such latitude in the sense that no matter how rich or assimilated a person of colour is, where s/he can go is undoubtedly curtailed by elite structures of power. "Fictions of assimilation" – what Melinda de Jesús (1998) describes as the illusory promises of fitting in and belonging provided one buys into the trappings of so-called normalcy and normative behaviour – are just that – fictions – when they run headlong into the reality of race and racism. For the present, what I wish to underscore is that such fictions exist and as such they exert influence on naming who and how one can exercise power and mobility. Again, all of this needs to be contextualized within the realm of the nation as a vertical mosaic. In a hierarchy structured in dominance, the ideological labour involved is one of keeping each group "in its place." This includes racialized people of colour whose confinement at a particular level of the hierarchy ensures that those above can maintain their power and privilege.

Conclusion

In reviewing how violence against racialized women of colour is understood and articulated, it is apparent that both the discourse of sameness (as in the universal woman) and the discourse of difference (as in "death by culture") fail to encapsulate the complex ways in which race and gender intersect and interlock. Moreover, they evacuate histories and subjectivities by focusing on a single dimension of either culture or the common vulnerabilities ascribed to gender as it is framed and articulated within patriarchal

structures. Nevertheless, as regimes of truth, these paradigms have the power to privilege certain forms of violence, while erasing other forms whose implications are just as violently searing on the individual and collective psyche. The central organizing discourses that govern and regulate bodies of racialized women of colour – morality and mobility – contribute to girls' and women's vulnerabilities to sexist and racist violence. The question remains as to the conditions in which these discourses are invoked and how they play out in the arena of minoritized racialized communities that are attempting to define a sense of identity in the face of a hostile, exclusionary milieu. Further, how do these discourses structure understandings of violence within racialized communities confronted with assimilation as the only avenue by which to gain a sense of acceptance and belonging, even though the latter is continually tenuous and conditional? These are questions I seek to address in the next few chapters, beginning with an analysis of the dominant media's representation of racialized people of colour. As institutions structured in dominance, the dominant media, I argue, play a crucial role in racing the nation by reflecting an imagined community, its hegemonic ideals, and its fictions of assimilation. In erasing the violence of race and racism, the dominant media indelibly engage in discursive violence. Thus, in representing Others as prone to violence, criminality, and as culture-bound, traditional, and fixed entities, the media maintain an image of the nation as a peaceful haven marred only by the importation of deviance by Others.