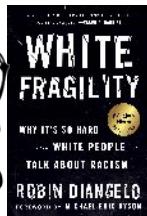
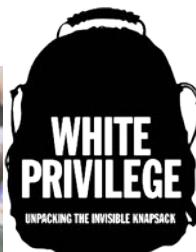
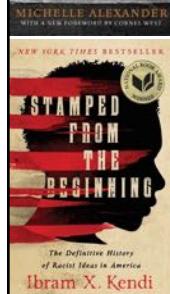
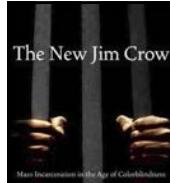


Missing Nuance

How dehumanizing perpetrators causes more harm than good





★ JUSTICE
IN AMERICA



Overview

What's the dominant narrative around gender-based violence (GBV)?

The problems with dehumanizing perpetrators

The intersection of anti-racism and feminism

How might we increase nuance in GBV work?

The dominant narrative

Rape is a horrific, brutal crime committed by evil men who deserve to be severely punished

- Gender-based violence has been endemic in societies around the world throughout recorded history
- Starting around the 1970s, women organized to challenge the acceptance of this violence as normal
- The state was forced to acknowledge GBV as a crime and responded through the criminal justice system

 “[T]he co-optation of the antiviolence movement can be traced in part to the moment when the movement chose to argue that domestic [and sexual] violence was a ‘crime.’ The state, rather than recognized for its complicity in gender violence, became the institution promising to protect women from domestic and sexual violence.” (Smith, 2010, p.255-257)

GBV discourse on campus

Lisak & Miller (2002)

- Highlights men whose self-reported acts met legal definitions of rape but were never prosecuted (undetected)
- 63.3% reported committing repeat rapes (against the same or another victim)

“Frank” video

- Largely frames behavior as sociopathic
- Presented as representative of the undetected serial rapists he interviewed

Remedies focus on eradicating “serial rapists” from campus

- Essentially dehumanizes all men who engage in any form of sexual violence and exempts everyone else (society at large) from responsibility

“Research by Mr. Lisak indicates that about 3 percent of college men account for 90 to 95 percent of rapes. What Ms. Gelaye likes about bystander intervention is that it asks the other 97 percent of men to come into the room and help with the problem.”

—The New York Times, Feb. 7, 2014

This work can be useful, but it's overly applied. It informs many campus prevention and response programs as well as policies and guidelines for numerous organizations including:

- United States Commission on Civil Rights
- Fraternity Sexual Assault Prevention Peer Education
- National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence
- American Association of University Professors
- White House Task Force on Women and Girls

The problem with dehumanizing perpetrators

Harms survivors



Deciding whether to report



Trying to elicit support from friends and family
• Himpathy



Making meaning of what happened

Undermines the reality that GBV is a consequence of a patriarchal society

- Encourages prevention strategies that do nothing to change the patriarchal systems or truly upend rape culture
 - E.g. bystander intervention initiatives that aren't focused on culture change
- “Creating a hated and feared scapegoat exempts everyone else from responsibility” (Armatta, 2018, p.8)
 - If we believe that it's just a few bad apples and not a systemic problem, then no one is inspired to feel like the onus of change is on them

*“In rape, the woman is not a sexual being but a vulnerable piece of public property; the man does not violate society’s norms so much as take them to their logical conclusion”
(Schechter, 1982, p.15)*

Obstructs avenues to change

- Does nothing to facilitate transformation, reconciliation, or accountability
- Encourages removal (i.e., expulsion, incarceration) without thought about where they will go, what they will do there
 - Fuels anger, discourage responsibility-taking, promote more violence

“The hyper-focus on ‘the monsters’ does a disservice all of us- it severely limits our collective ability to accurately perceive warning signs of abuse. It immobilizes people who abuse from taking responsibility for their action out of a fear of being rejected and ostracized as monsters.” (Generation 5, 2017, p. 15)

“Reliance on the criminal justice system would make sense if the threat were just a few crazed men” (Schechter, p.257- quoting Cherokee activist Andrea Smith)

Lacks an intersectional lens

Does not account for the blatantly racist backdrop that defines who is a rapist and who is rapable

Systemic and institutionalized racism make it so that Black men and MoC are more likely to be viewed as predatory and threatening (fit societal stock image of rapist)

And therefore, they are more likely to face the dehumanization that comes with being seen as a monsters, including being more likely to face punishment through school processes and/or criminal justice system

Puts an added burden on Black women and WoC survivors who are expected to stay silent for the benefit of the wider community

The intersection of anti-racism and feminism

"Rape accusations historically have provided justification for white terrorism against the black community... The well-developed fear of black sexuality served primarily to increase white tolerance for racial terrorism as a prophylactic measure to keep Blacks under control" (Crenshaw, 1993)

Intersectionality

The complex cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups

Historical Backdrop

““The failure of feminism to interrogate race means that the resistance strategies of feminism will often replicate and reinforce the subordination of people of color, and the failure of antiracism to interrogate patriarchy means that antiracism will frequently reproduce subordination of women.” (Crenshaw, 1993)



Where's the nuance?

I love you! and **I HATE YOU!**
all at the SAME time

DIALECTICS

What is a dialectic?



What does dialectical mean?

What we learn from DBT

Be the change

“As rape is given more publicity, more money and energy is spent prosecuting and convicting rapists. How is this after-the-fact action helping us as women?... Incarceration does not change the societal attitudes which promote rape. In a society that deals with symptoms rather than causes of problems, prisons make perfect sense. Confronting the causes of rape would threaten the basic structure of society.”

(MacMillan and Klein 1974)

“Sexual violence is a community problem.

The community needs to be part of the solution. Sexual violence is more than an individual’s actions; it is influenced by our cultural beliefs, practices, and structures.

Together, our communities can change those influences”

<http://oaasisoregon.org/take-action-change-the-culture-around-sexual-violence>

Alternatives forms of accountability

Restorative Justice

- “Restorative justive (RJ) emphasizes repairing harms rather than punishing crimes, giving victims and offenders the opportunity to engage in dialogue around harm, assessing the impact on the victim, and outlining the steps necessary to ensure offender accountability and meet the victim’s needs.” (Frederick & Lizdas, 2010, p.41-45)
- Does not focus on the systems of oppression and the effect these symptoms have on harm caused between individuals (Armatta, 2018)

Transformative Justice

- “[T]he core philosophy of transformative justice (TJ):
 - TJ is against violence and punishment, institutionalization and imprisonment.
 - Crime is a form of community-based conflict, where society and the government are also possible offenders.
 - TJ brings issues of identity back into the realm of justice by addressing socio-political injustices toward Women, People of Color, GLBT, Poor, Immigrants, People with Disabilities, and other marginalized groups.
 - TJ believes in the value of meditation, negotiation, and community circles to transform conflicts.” (Nocella, 2011, p.6)

INCITE!

A network of radical feminists of color organizing to end state violence and violence in our homes and communities.

Formed to continue efforts of the "The Color of Violence: Violence Against Women of Color" conference (April 2000)

Selected guidelines for community accountability outlined in INCITE!'s anthology (INCITE!, 2006, p.250-256):

- Recognize the humanity of everyone involved
- Prioritize self-determination of the survivor
- Identify simultaneous plan for safety and support for the survivors as well as others in the community
- Be clear and specific about what your group wants from the aggressor in terms of accountability
- Consider help from the aggressor's community. They have more credibility with him
- Prepare to be engaged in the process for the long haul

Discussion