

Debasing Dissent: The Role of The News Media in the Devaluation of Black Canadian Activism

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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Abstract

My dissertation examines the way that the Canadian news media delegitimizes anti-racist activism to contribute to the harmful national narratives of racial equality disseminated by the white Anglophone majority. I examine the discourse used to frame three instances of Black Canadian uprising, the 1969 Sir George Williams Affair, the Yonge Street Uprising of 1992, and the 2016 Black Lives Matter sit-in at the Toronto Pride parade, in the *Toronto Star*, the *Montreal Gazette*, the *Globe and Mail*, and the *National Post*. Using critical discourse analysis as a methodology and critical race theory as a theoretical lens, I argue that these newspapers utilize racist discourses by attributing the presence of activism to Black cultural and biological deficiencies.

The journalists covering the Sir George Williams Affair use xenophobic discourse and raise moral alarm in order to blame the uprising on West Indian students as well as international communist organizations and the Black Panthers. These discourses situate activism as a foreign import in order to disavow the existence of racism on Canadian soil. The coverage of the Yonge Street Uprising utilizes the discourse of the minimization of racism and the discourse of dichotomies to deny the existence of racism by blaming activism on the supposed Black predisposition toward criminality. Those covering the Black Lives Matter sit-in at the Toronto Pride parade utilize devolutionary discourse, the discourse of irrationality, and the discourse of immorality to devalue activist endeavours. These discourses portray Black activists as evolutionarily inferior, unintelligent, and immoral.

I historicize, conceptualize, and analyze the discourses listed above arguing that Canadian journalists recycle racist ideology that once justified and sustained the transatlantic slave trade. Exposing these ideologies will force a necessary revision of the harmful national narratives that perpetuate the oppression of Black Canadians by disavowing the existence of racism.

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Dedication

For Christine

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Chapter 1 Introduction: The Ol' College Try

1.1 INTRODUCING THE INTRODUCTION

We are all, in essence, narrative constructions. Both individually and collectively, we are made up of stories that we tell about ourselves and stories that others tell about us. These stories are often in conflict. The strongest and most widely circulated story becomes the master narrative, the narrative that structures our lived experience. The mainstream (read white) news media plays a significant role in the construction of these master narratives that ensure the endurance of the status quo. My project seeks to interrogate such master narratives by analyzing the role that the news media plays in the construction of race. More specifically, I analyze the way that the Canadian news media uses racist discourse to devalue Black Canadian activism in order to reproduce national narratives surrounding race. These stories of race and racism in Canada, as it has been propagated by our news media, constructs Blackness as a deviant and disruptive aberration in an otherwise peaceful and pure nation populated by benevolent and well-meaning whites. I, as a white Canadian woman, am one of the beneficiaries of the systematic application of these racial constructions. Although I am unable to fully break free of the racial discourses that form me, I will try my best to confront and revise the stories that we, whites, tell about ourselves and others: stories that seek to reproduce and perpetuate our supremacy.

I want to dwell on the word “try” for a moment longer. When used as a verb, the word essay means “to try,” and because this project is an attempt at best, perhaps it should be regarded as an essay, and with any attempt comes the possibility of failure.

Scholars such as Minnie Bruce Pratt, Marilyn Frye, and Frankie Condon refer to the racial discourse that propagates my privilege, structures my experience, and impacts my epistemology as “whiteness” defined as “learned ways of knowing and doing characterized by a racialized (white) sense of oneself as best equipped to judge, and to preach, and to suffer” (Condon 34). Whiteness may mean well, but as Frye puts it, their “staggering faith in their own righteousness and goodness and that of other whiteness” gets in the way of them becoming effective allies in the fight against racism (qtd. in Condon 34). I have, time and time again, demonstrated my own whiteness, and I feel that it’s necessary to preface this project with one of my own stories of coming face to face with the way in which my whiteness has induced a kind of snow blindness.

On January 25, 2017, I attended a panel at the “Getting Organized: Tools for Resisting Racism and White Supremacy” conference entitled “Challenging Racism in Higher Ed.” My friend Shama, a young Black Muslim woman who dedicated her studies to finding ways to improve health care for marginalized communities, was tasked with chairing the event. She was facilitating a talk featuring four members of the Black Association for Student Expression (BASE), a club for Black undergraduates. Four young Black women, Lang, Fiqir, Elisa, and Victoria stood in front of an audience of UW students and faculty detailing their daily experiences of being Black on campus. They spoke of the overwhelming presence of campus police at their social events and of only receiving calls from potential employers when BASE did not appear on their resumes. One spoke of seeing a confederate flag in the window of a dormitory, one spoke of hearing a professor say jokingly that she wouldn’t mind owning slaves, and another spoke of being told by an Equity Director at UW

that she would have to collect data on the entire student population if she wanted the Equity Department to provide more services for racialized students. Scanning the audience, I perceived Students of Colour emphatically responding to the calls of those testifying by shouting affirmatives while whites (including myself) stared open-mouthed in disbelief. While reflecting on the atrocities experienced by my Colleagues of Colour on my drive home, I became overwhelmed with emotion. I had always been aware of racial inequality on campus, but only in the abstract. The panel forced me to better understand the real, material effects that institutional racism has on People of Colour. I pulled into a McDonald's parking lot to dry my white tears and sent panicked texts to my friends stating that "we have to do something."

Shama suggested that we pay a visit to Lang who was the President of BASE, to ask, what, if anything, we could do. After a brief introduction, I quickly spat out, in a pure whitely manner, "[w]e have to protest! We will rally outside of the UW President's office and demand change!" Lang looked me dead in the eyes and said calmly and almost mechanically, as if she has had to say these same words to many whitely whites in the past, "[p]rotests paint targets on our backs. We can't afford to acquire anymore targets. We need letters of support from faculty." This is one of the many moments that I came face to face with my whitely whiteness. It is as if Lang held up a mirror and what was reflected back to me was a shiny white shield protecting my organs, making me impervious to attack. There I was, thinking I had all the answers. Me, a PhD student studying Black Canadian activism, thought that I could solve the problem of racism on campus with one simple act of resistance. Not only did I recognize that Black anti-racist activism is an incredibly dangerous endeavor,

it became apparent to me, that I did not understand racism as thoroughly as I thought I did. I didn't realize that the ability to stand in front of the President's office armed with a placard and fierce chant was an example of my white privilege. It was in that moment that I realized that my whiteness stood in the way of my hopes of being an effective ally. I had failed to ask questions in favour of positing an uniformed answer: the very definition of whiteness. I am destined to fail again. I share this story, not as a desperate attempt to excuse my own whiteness and therefore exonerate myself from complicity with the structures that perpetuate white supremacy; I share this story in order to explain to my readers why I am doing the thing that I'm doing in the way that I'm doing it.¹

This very impactful moment in my life lead me to realize that, at the time of drafting the first three chapters of this dissertation, I was not ready to produce this project in the way that I'd originally intended. It was my intent to juxtapose newspaper discourse with an analysis of the counter-discourse utilized by the Black activists who engaged in these risky acts of resistance. I entertained the possibility of this intention until I realized that I was not ready to frame Black stories according to my own understanding. However, I had not yet learned what racism is on the most basic level. I realized that I, a white Canadian woman, could not be an effective accomplice until I interrogate my own participation in anti-Blackness on campus, within my white community, and in global anti-Black racism. I could not do so until I learned what racism is at its most fundamental level.

¹ This act of storytelling is inspired by Frankie Condon and Vershawn Ashanti Young both of whom often preface their work with a personal narrative related to the subject matter.

I want this project to be performative, in a sense. I want my white readers to see the process that I went through in order to feel confident that I could speak with and not for Black voices. I hope to show my white readers that if they want to effectively resist anti-Black racism, they should learn how it operates in everyday talk and text. They should start by learning how to detect and decipher the language of whiteness, to understand how this language informs our white lives and shapes our subjectivities. In learning how whitely language functions in public discourse, and more specifically in the media, we can become more conscious of the way that we, whites, wield this language to position ourselves at the centre of the universe or at the top of the food chain. It is my hope that learning this language will help us whites unlearn it before attempting to replace it with the language of anti-racism necessary to undo racist structures. I hope to demonstrate the practice and importance of listening, of *really listening*, to the voices of People of Colour before attempting to speak with them. This process of listening is fundamental to those whites who wish to ally themselves with People of Colour in the fight against racism on our campuses and in our diverse Canadian communities.

Anthony Stewart, a Black Canadian tenured professor who left a Canadian university to escape his experience and subsequent national denial of anti-Black racism for the United States only to go through the tenured process again, details his experience of being a perpetual outsider in Canada in his text *Visitor*. Stewart argues that there are three necessary steps involved in moving away from the disavowal of the existence of racism and towards a racially just environment. He likens these steps to the acquisition of a new language:

First, we learn basic vocabulary and grammar rules. Then, we start to put thoughts together, although at first we think in our native language, haltingly translating our thoughts into the new language. The third stage-fluency-is only reached when we can think in that new language, almost as though it was our first, without that intervening step of translation. That is the stage when we can acquire idiom, are able to tell jokes, and engage in wordplay. Right now, on these important issues of race and racism, Canada is at the stage of basic vocabulary and grammar rules, at best. (“Visitor” 18)

Like most white Canadians, I am not fluent. At the present time of writing this introduction, I am unprepared to move on to stage 2, so I stick with stage 1, the basic vocabulary and grammar lesson. It is my hope that the grammar and vocabulary lesson will join the other scholars in making Canadian discourse concerning race available to critique (see literature review for complete list) by providing new insights into the ways that we can intervene in, disrupt, and dismantle the discourse that bolsters white supremacy.

My original contribution to this field will be to focus on white news media discourse concerning Black Canadian activism, in particular, and by paying attention to the ways in which Black Canadian activists resist this discourse by positing counter-narratives. Echoing Victor Villanueva, Frankie Condon argues for the importance of attending to the personal narratives of People of Colour. Traditional academic discourse, which excludes and/or devalues such narratives, cannot account for the experiences of People of Colour. Condon writes,

[w]e [educators] need to learn to read, to engage with one another’s stories, not as voyeurs, but as players in the dynamic sense, within them and as actors who may be changed not only by the telling of our own stories, but also by the practices of listening, attending, and acknowledging and honoring the stories of our students and our colleagues of colour. (32)

This essay is pointless, purposeless unless there is space made for counter-narratives. I cannot hope to ever advance a reasonable account of race relations in Canada, to attain fluency, and to assume the role of a teacher unless I am willing to learn and listen. Condon continues,

[t]hose of us who are academics and who hope to join in the work of anti-racism will need to stop minimizing the complexity and significance of narrative, stop depoliticizing the personal, and start studying the rich epistemological and rhetorical traditions that inform the narratives of people of color. Further, those of us who are white may need to admit that we have not yet begun, really, to craft epistemological and rhetorical practices or a performative antiracist narrative tradition that might enable us to join meaningfully and productively with multi-racial coalitions in doing the work of anti-racism. (33)

In this essay, which takes the form of a grammar and vocabulary lesson on anti-Black racism in Canada, I must acknowledge that this white language is not the only language. Here is where my essay runs into difficulty. I am only equipped, at this point in time, to analyze the white discourse that frames Black lives, and yet, I have an ethical responsibility to acknowledge that actual Black lives resist and ultimately shatter these frames with their own narratives. I take a small step towards fluency with the act of listening. I listen by including quotations, stories, and accounts of Black activists throughout this work. I position these counter-narratives, not aside, but apart from and against the narratives told by the new media to serve as disruptions of the white versions of history. At the present time, I do not attempt to analyze and interpret these stories in order to preserve them from the adulteration that would inevitably occur if they were filtered through my white consciousness. I hope that, by the time I reach the conclusion of this essay, I will be able to return to them and engage in a

productive dialogue with these voices that have been largely left out of the Canadian discursive, rhetorical, present and historical record.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

Whereas the stories told by the Black activists will stand alone for the time being, the stories told by the white media will be subject to scrutiny. I will interrogate the *Globe and Mail*, the *Montreal Gazette*, the *Toronto Star* and the *National Post*'s use of language, or discourse rather, disguised as factual, objective, as unassailably true, and expose how their discourse seeks to purport racist ideologies in order to defame Black Canadian activists. Before delving into the specifics of my primary methodology, critical discourse analysis, I must lay the foundation with a few definitions. Discourse and language differ in the sense that discourse is, put simply, bigger. Whereas language refers to the system and signs utilized for means of communication, discourse is a system of knowledge consisting of ideas, images, words, and practices that dictate what we think and know about a particular subject (Henry and Tator 26). Like speech act theorists J.L. Austin and John R. Searle who view language as an active force in the world capable of producing material reality, I see discourse not as being a static collection of knowledge but being capable of real-world intervention.

It is the applicability of ideology that mobilizes discourse. For Margaret Wetherell and Jonathon Potter, ideology is “forceful and effective” (28). It is the lens through which we see the world; it encompasses our beliefs, values, assumptions, and expectations. For Robert Miles, racist ideology is not informed by truth and continually misattributes social phenomena to physical characteristics such as skin colour (18). This is where ideology

becomes potentially dangerous as it “obscures, and mystifies, conceals and covers over real states of affairs” (18). Racist ideology may not be rooted in reality, but it does have very real material consequences. It informs the treatment of People of Colour in Canada.

According to Louis Althusser, ideology also produces material reality as it constitutes subjectivities and secures individuals within particular hierarchies through the process of “interpellation” (Althusser 163). To explain how interpellation works, Althusser provides an example of a police officer shouting, “Hey you, there” (163). Once an individual is hailed and heeds to the call by turning around, “he becomes a subject” in the dual sense of having a subjectivity and being subjected to domination (163). Understanding Althusser’s theory of interpellation is helpful for understanding the ways in which racist and nationalist ideologies impact the lived experiences of People of Colour in Canada. In part this material impact is operationalized through the interpellation of white readers by a whitely media.

With the necessary groundwork in place, I may now introduce the specifics of my methodology. Critical discourse analysis refers to “research that mainly studies how social power, dominance, and inequality, are produced, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political arenas of society” (Henry and Tator 72). The goal of this type of research is to demonstrate the ways in which the various sociological, historical, political, and cultural contexts of language impact meaning (72). By considering the various contexts of the discourse used in Canadian news media sources, I intend to examine the racist ideologies deployed in news media discourse that attempt to devalue Black Canadian activism.

To provide a preview of how this methodology works in practice, here is an example taken from an editorial from the *Globe and Mail* whose staff, according to Anthony Stewart, “looks like the result of an embargo on non-white columnists” (qtd. in Valpy). The headline of an editorial on the Black Lives Matter Toronto’s (BLMTO) sit-in at Pride, reads “Toronto Pride parade marches backward.” The editorial writer continues,

Pride Toronto has officially banned Toronto Police Services from putting a float in the parade, or having stands along the route. LGBT people who are police officers can march on their own, but not as an identifiable group. It is a horribly misguided decision. (A10)

The headline and text of the editorial reveals an underlying assumption held by the Canadian status quo; police presence at Pride is a symbol of national progress and equality for all peoples. The headline and editorial writers view the Black Lives Matter Toronto protest as a threat to the idea of the nation as a progressive proponent of equality. Pride’s decision to honour Black Lives Matter’s demand to remove uniformed police from Pride is positioned as an act of regression. The accusation made by the headline and the editorial writers extends to the members of BLMTO and suggests that if Black activists have their way, they will undo all the progress achieved by civil society. Here Blackness is aligned with regression. Another subtle nuance may be seen in the editorial writer’s last line that states listening to BLMTO was “a horribly misguided decision” (A10). This criticism again is extended to the activists, positioning the group as “misguided” (A10). This example shows how discourse is involved in the process of identity construction. The discourse in the *Globe* positions Canada and progressive and Black activists as backward and misguided, thus creating a hierarchy that

legitimizes racist power structures. In other words, Blackness must be contained in order for Canada's national narratives to prevail.

Although critical discourse analysis has long been used as an effective tool for analyzing how racism works in the press, there are a few limitations to relying upon this methodology alone. Frances Henry and Carol Tator's *Discourses of Domination: Racial Bias in the English-Language Press* and Mark Cronlund-Anderson and Carmen L. Robertson's *Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers* are extremely influential texts in the study of discourse analysis in Canada, and although these texts have much to advance my understanding, two significant gaps exist in these works. *Discourse of Domination* analyzes news stories involving refugees, immigration, and People of Colour, and the authors astutely recognize that discourse constructs material reality. However, Tator and Henry treat discourse almost as if it is ahistorical, as if it is unconnected to larger histories of inequalities in Canada. Unlike Henry and Tator, Cronlund-Anderson and Robertson recognize that the racist representations of First Nations in news stories regarding treaties, laws, crime, and protest are evidence of the ongoing presence of colonial violence in Canada. However, although these authors recognize that First Nations resist these representations in various ways, the authors leave little room for counter-narratives. There is no opportunity for Indigenous People to speak back to these representations. By combining this methodology with a theoretical lens afforded by critical race theory, I am able to fill these gaps left by these discourse analysts.

1.3 THEORETICAL LENS

I use critical race theory to interpret modern racism or, as Hartman calls it, “the afterlife of slavery” in Canada (Hartman 6). In *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*, Saidiya Hartman sees the “skewed life chances, limited access to health and education, premature death, incarceration, and impoverishment” impacting Black lives as evidence that slavery persists in the present day (6). Black studies scholars observe the presence of the afterlife of slavery as having a tremendous impact on Black Canadian lives in the present. Drawing upon Hartman, David Austin argues that the treatment of Black people in Canada as second-rate citizens attests to the fact that “[s]lavery is a part of the continuum whose effects live in the present” (161). For thinkers such as Rinaldo Walcott and Christina Sharpe, the limitations on Black Canadian freedom in the present suggest that the legacy of slavery continues. Walcott argues, “[f]rom plantation to ghetto to prison is the trajectory of poor and working-class blacks...Such a trajectory cannot be divorced from the history of transatlantic slavery and what can only be described as its lingering techniques” (qtd. in D. Austin 160). Also observing the “lingering techniques” (qtd. in D. Austin 160) of slavery, Christina Sharpe writes,

[i]n the wake [of anti-Black racism], the semiotics of the slave ship continue: from the forced movements of the migrant and the refugee, to the regulation of black people in North American streets and neighbourhoods, to the ongoing crossings of and drownings in the Mediterranean Sea, to the brutal colonial reimaginations of the slave ship and the ark; to the reappearances of the slave ships in everyday life in the form of the prison, the camp, and the school. (Sharpe 21)

Inspired by the work of Hartman, Austin, Walcott, and Sharpe, my dissertation focusses on a specific technique of the ongoing reverberations of a slave past.

In my examination of the persistence of the ideologies that once justified and sustained slavery, I am indebted to Cornel West and Robin Maynard for their observations concerning the origins of modern-day racist discourse and ideologies. In “A Genealogy of Modern Racism,” West argues that the discourse that shapes modern conceptions of Blackness has its roots in Enlightenment scientific and philosophic thought used to solidify white supremacy in the 18th century. In *Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present*, Robin Maynard analyzes the modern material ramifications of slave master ideologies conceptualizing Black people. She writes,

[t]he attributes that have been attached to Blackness—subservience, criminality, lack of intelligence and dangerousness—set a roadmap for treatment of Black life throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Despite the end of formal bondage, Black people’s lives would continue to be devalued and their movements subject to surveillance and containment. (Maynard 31)

For Maynard, the historical ideologies framing Black lives continue to translate into legal punishments. My work is made possible by the brilliant minds of the aforementioned authors.

The reasons why this particular theoretical lens is helpful for filling the gap left behind by Henry and Tator is that, unlike these authors, critical race scholars often take a historical approach to discussing racist discourse and recognize discourse continues legacies of inequality. More specifically, with the help of critical race theorists, I am able to trace the discourse used in the mainstream white media, back to its roots in anti-abolitionist discourse.

I am able to see how this discourse circulates in the present as a continued attempt to represent Black people in Canada which is evidence of the persistence of the discursive afterlife of slavery. Additionally, relying upon critical race theory enables me to infer the importance of attending to the voices of Black Canadians in fighting racism. The continued silencing and containment of Black voices also contributes to the endurance of the afterlife of slavery in Canada and denies the efforts of Black Canadians as they resist, disrupt, and dismantle racist representations.

1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

There are a few examples of research that approximate the type of scholarship that I wish to undertake for the Debasing Dissent project. The following works are examples of Canadian studies on the news media's representation of People of Colour. Roosevelt William's chapter in *Let the Niggers Burn!* (1971) entitled "Réactions: The Myth of White Backlash" contains eight pages of discussion regarding media coverage of the Sir George Williams Affair.

Williams analyzes student and local newspapers and concludes that journalists purposely highlighted violence and criminal activity to demonize the activists involved. In 1977, S. Rosenfeld and M. Spina's *All the News That's Fit to Print: A Study of the Toronto Press Coverage of Immigration, Ethnic Communities, and Racism* examined representations of immigration and ethnic communities in the *Toronto Sun*. The authors uncovered the frequent use of prejudiced and discriminatory rhetoric. Doreen Indra analyzes British Columbia's response to immigration in her article entitled "South Asian Stereotypes in the Vancouver Press" (1979). Indra concludes that the *Vancouver Press* portrays immigrants from Western

Europe positively whereas immigrants from South and Eastern Europe, East Indians, Chinese, Japanese, and Latin Americans are portrayed in a negative light. In *Power and Responsibility: The Press We Don't Deserve* (1985) Effie Ginzberg conducts a content analysis of the *Toronto Sun* demonstrating that the newspaper perpetuates stereotypes of People of Colour and First Nations individuals and frequently distorted the facts when covering issues pertaining to these communities. In 1986, Michelle Ducharme conducted a study of immigration coverage entitled "The Coverage of Canadian Immigration Policy in the *Globe in Mail*" finding examples of racial bias and that the newspaper used negative language to refer to immigrants. John Miller and K. Prince's 1994 study entitled *The Imperfect Mirror: Analysis of Minority Pictures and News in Six Canadian Newspapers* examined the types of stories that featured People of Colour in the *Vancouver Sun*, the *Calgary Herald*, the *Winnipeg Free Press*, the *Toronto Sun*, and the *Montreal Gazette*. They found almost half of the stories that featured People of Colour were negative. In 1995, Lorna Roth, Beverly Nelson, and Mary David Kasennshaw examined media coverage of the Oka Crisis of 1990 involving a land dispute between the Mohawk peoples and Oka, Quebec. They found that this coverage mobilized stereotypical and discriminatory portraits of First Nations peoples. Augie Fleras and Jean Lock Kunz's *Media and Minorities* (2001) examines the discourse surrounding ethnicity, race, and Indigeneity arguing that these discourses shape public opinion regarding multiculturalism and diversity.

The following is a very short list of highly influential texts that have inspired my research. In *Racism in the Press* (1991), Teun A. van Dijk employs critical discourse analysis to analyze European newspaper articles covering events concerning ethnic peoples.

In his study of headlines, quotations, sources, layout, editorial writing, and copy editing, van Dijk argues that newspapers depict the values, beliefs, and prejudices of white elites.

Margaret Wetherell and Jonathon Potter's *Mapping the Language of Racism: Discourse of the Legitimation of Exploitation* employs discourse analysis to examine how white New Zealanders perceive Maori peoples. They examine how racist stereotypes are deployed while discussing instances of Maori protest. Despite the wealth of scholarship that examines depictions of People of Colour in the press, there is a direct need for a complete study of the news media discourse that frames instances of Black Canadian activism.

1.5 WHY THIS PROJECT MATTERS

This project matters for a whopping total of two (YES TWO!) reasons. First, media matter. Benedict Anderson argues that newspapers played a fundamental role in the construction and dissemination of national narratives. The invention of the printing press paired with the increase in print literacy increased access to similar stories that provided the foundation for collective national imaginations and consciousnesses (Coleman 35). For Wilbur L. Schramm and William Earl Porter mainstream media sources have a powerful impact on society and are capable of conveying the status of an individual, an organization, or a particular issue. If something/someone is important, media cover it/them (Henry and Tator 33). This ability to convey importance is known as agenda-setting. Merely by deciding what issues to cover, media are able to instruct readers on what is worth discussing. As Arthur Miller and Susan Dente Ross point out, “news producers transform bits of news information into socially meaningful and powerful narratives that contribute to the construction of race and identity”

(qtd. in Cronlund Anderson and Robertson 13). Additionally, media are partially responsible for the imposition of norms and values onto society. For Francis Henry and Carol Tator,

[t]he media are one of the most powerful institutions in a democratic society because they help transmit its central cultural images, ideas, as well as a nation's narratives and myths. Media discourse plays a large part in reproducing the collective belief system of the dominant society and core values of society. (4)

Tator and Henry describe how media are involved in a dialectic relationship with the reader. The media both inform and are informed by society. More specifically, media informs and is informed by a *section* of society. News media sources reproduce and disseminate hegemonic ideas that function as a “mirror in which society can see itself reflected” (5). Mainstream media do not reflect back a true image of society, but the image of society that reinforces the status quo.

As Augie Fleras and Jean Lock Kunz argue “[m]ainstream media have proven complicit in fortifying the cultural hierarchy of and moral authority at the heart of an existing social order” (VII). For Teun A. van Dijk, those who occupy the upper echelons of society have the most access to news production, so their values and beliefs are most likely to be reflected in the media (“Racism and the Press” 51). As whites are the most dominant group in Canada, the newspapers often frame events according to the white understanding providing a “discursive sketch of Canadian society that silences, erases, and marginalizes a significant proportion of this country’s population” (Henry and Tator 226). Studies have also shown that most whites have very little meaningful contact with People of Colour so many of their attitudes, perceptions, and expectations of marginalized peoples come from the news media (34). Despite the amount of criticism lobbied at the media for problematic portrayals

of marginalized peoples, newspapers play a prominent role in shaping and reflecting hegemonic attitudes, values, and beliefs.

The news media also seeks to stabilize the “unstable equilibrium” of the racial state (84). For Michael Omi and Howard Winant, all states are racial states insofar as racial politics provide a foundation for state unification. Because this unification is always under siege by oppositional racial “Others” whose needs are not met by the state, the state relies upon various stabilizing mechanisms, such as the media, to restore order. Here, we see how it is that the news media function as ideological state apparatuses (ISA) defined by Louis Althusser as “a certain number of realities which present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialized institutions” (143). Ideological state apparatuses covertly disseminate the attitudes, values, and beliefs propagated and promoted by the state. In their status as ISAs, news media provides us with the framework we require to be good, subservient, and productive citizens that serve national and international interests. For this purpose, newspapers are the perfect venue for studying Canadian anti-Black racism.

The newspapers I select, the *Globe and Mail*, *National Post*², the *Toronto Star*, and the *Montreal Gazette*, are chosen strategically. First, the *Globe* and the *Post* are national papers and will enable me to get a Canadian perspective on instances of Black anti-racist activism. The *Star* and the *Gazette* are local papers out of Toronto and Montréal and are the best places to get local perspectives on incidents that have happened in these respective cities. Second, I choose these newspapers due to the breadth of their circulation. According

² It is important to note that I only use the *Post* as a primary source in my third and final chapter as this paper did not exist at the time of The Sir George Williams Affair and the Yonge Street Uprising.

to *News Media Canada*, *The Globe and Mail* is the nation's most widely read newspaper with its average daily circulation reaching about 346,543 on the average weekday. The *National Post's* is 183,111 on an average weekday making it the fourth-most circulated paper in Canada. The *Toronto Star* is the second-most popular newspaper averaging about 332,800 copies daily. Though the *Montreal Gazette* only circulates 88,654 copies, is the most popular of the province's two English-language daily newspapers (*News Media Canada*).

The second reason why this project is important is because as Augie Fleras and Jean Lock Kunz observe, "Canada is a paradox" (VII). Elaborating on this sentiment, Anthony Stewart argues that "Canada has produced two versions of itself, one which is public and well-known (at least to Canadians), and then a smaller, less-well-known version of itself which is subsumed and ignored by the larger version" (57). In the well-known version, Canada is a democratic nation, free from racial discrimination that holds fast to the belief in its own superiority often positioning itself above the morally sullied United States. Canada is revered for its commitment to progress and egalitarianism abolishing slavery more than thirty years before its southern counterpart and offering asylum to escaped slaves via the Underground Railroad. Canada is applauded for its policies concerning multiculturalism, and the country shakes its head in disapproval at Americans for their overt expressions of racism. Canada has a former Prime Minister who can enthusiastically state that our country "has no history of colonialism," and our headlines proclaim that "Black Lives Matter." This version holds that racism is un-Canadian.

The lesser known version includes a violent history of colonialism, genocide, slavery, internment and a long and rich history of anti-racist protest. This essay asks how it is that

this lesser version becomes written out of the national consciousness. Before braving an answer, I detail the paradoxes at the heart of Canadian myth making. The mainstream media outlets hold on, so dearly, to myths of plurality. However, these myths are rife with contradictions. These myths of plurality originate with a narrative of Canadian innocence made possible by the positioning of itself as a perpetual victim. For Eva Mackey, the Canadian softness, “locates oppressors safely outside of the body politic of the nation” enabling Canada to masquerade as the good guy (25). Due to Canada’s colonial history and its founding (read conquering) of two nations, the French and the British, the country has never been able to posit a homogenous identity and has instead fashioned an identity that is premised upon plurality (27). It goes without saying that this plural identity did not include those of the First Nations Peoples who occupied this land long before it was stolen by European invaders, and that the French minority would never be regarded as equals with the English majority. This identity based on plurality ensured that the racial, cultural, and linguistic hierarchy was rendered invisible.

Due to the heterogenous nature of the Canadian identity, one way to distinguish the nation was through negative definition. Canadian was defined by what it is not, and what it was not was, put simply - American. Because America was hard, aggressive, and inhospitable, Canada had to portray itself as soft, defensive, and accommodating. Mackey points out that early Canadian writers were fond of praising our benevolent colonizers for their fair and just treatment of Indigenous peoples while distinguishing their actions from the brutal aggressivity of those that landed in America. These same writers also thanked God for blessing the soon to be called Canada with diseases and intertribal war for decreasing the

Indigenous population in Ontario and Quebec (38). Whereas the latter half of the story told by early writers has largely been forgotten, the former has endured till the present day in order to propagate Canada's semblance of benevolence. Early historians also boasted of their progressive views concerning Indigenous peoples and demonstrated belief that, despite possessing barbaric qualities, Indigenous peoples did possess souls and could attain the status of civilized if they were subjected to training.

Following Confederation in 1867, there was an effort to settle North-Western Canada which resulted in the need for Indigenous peoples to be cleared off of the land. Treaties were hastily negotiated resulting in First Nations peoples being forced to occupy undesirable land. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police were formed in 1873 to oversee law and order in the North-West and impose and enforce the civilization of the First Nations inhabitants. The Mounties quickly became symbols of Canadian justice and civility and were praised for the ability to transform a barbaric people into a law-abiding community without the use of force. Mackey contends that the mythology of the benevolent Mounties worked to solidify in the Canadian national consciousness an image of

an unarmed officer confronting a band of armed and angry "braves."
The officer, apparently not noticing the rifles aimed at his head,
would coolly dismount and walk up to the leader of the gang. In the
story the Aboriginal people would be completely disarmed by the
Mountie's reckless courage and self-confidence and would do
meekly as they were told. (48)

This image was used in service of distinguishing Canadian justice from American barbarism. Kind and gentle Mounties differed greatly from the genocidal maniacs who settled the United States. Images of the submissive "friendly and meek 'Indian,'" thankful for police

intervention, enabled Canadians to justify their colonial endeavours and to further their image as a benevolent and peace-keeping people (49). What is left out of these stories of moral benevolence is the brutal nature of the civilizing machine and the horrific abuses of the residential school system and legislations like the Indian Act of 1876 that sought to outlaw the First Nations way of life by forbidding cultural traditions and enforcing the adoption of agricultural practices and Christian principles (38).

During the early days of the Confederation other methods were undertaken to situate Canada as a nation of many races. The citizens of the newly constituted Dominion of Canada felt as if the national identity was threatened by the Liberal government's commitment to free trade with the United States. They felt as if Canada would be subsumed by its neighbour to the south. The Canada First Movement was an attempt to remedy the precarious nature of the Canadian identity. Eva Mackey asserts that this movement sought to position Canada as a "'Britain of the North' a 'northern kingdom' whose unique and distinctive character derived from its northern location, its ferociously cold winters, and its heritage of 'northern races'" (43). In addition to fashioning a Canadian identity built upon the notion of plurality in order to distinguish itself from the United States, the construction of the superiority of the "'northern races'" supposed a southern inferiority (43). This movement aligned the north with concepts such as freedom and liberty positioning the south as constraining and tyrannical. The philosophy driving the Canada First Movement was Montesquieu's environmental relativism that held that environment played a role in the formulation of character. This theory enabled Canadians to assert that their northern geography provided them with noble and civilized qualities and to attribute barbaric and

degenerate qualities to Americans. It was believed that the degeneracy of the United States gave way to its “‘Negro Problem,’” a problem that Canadian superiority would never have to contend with (43).³ Eva Mackey finds it curious that First Nations individuals did not qualify as belonging to a northern race (44). It is here that Canada’s embracing of plurality reveals its seedy underbelly. Its celebration of itself as a conglomerate of northern races solidifies it as a white nation uncontaminated by inferior southern races.

First Nations peoples were not the only lives utilized in service of purporting myths of plurality. The institution of the *Act to Limit Slavery* in 1793 held that escaped slaves would be considered free once they’ve successfully set foot in Upper Canada. After the passage of the *Fugitive Slave Act* in 1850 that made it permissible for slave masters to travel to the northern states to recapture escaped slaves, many freedom seekers sought refuge via the Underground Railroad (Maynard 29). Robin Maynard notes that the “Underground Railroad is perhaps the most well-known and widely celebrated part of Canada’s history of race relations, seeming to set Canadians apart from the brutal and damning anti-Blackness of their American neighbours” (30). As Jason Silverman observes “[w]hite Canadians were willing to tolerate Black refugees in order to prove their eminence over American civil liberties, and they self-righteously chided the United States for perpetuating the institution of slavery” (qtd. in Maynard 30). The existence of the Underground Railroad enabled Canada to stand out as a North Star, a beacon guiding those who longed to escape the tyranny of the United States to freedom.

³ This same logic was used to refuse entry to Black and Asian migrants in the early 20th century. These races were considered to be unsuited to withstand the cold Canadian climate.

The Myth of the North Star masks the fact that upon arrival to this land called Upper Canada, the freedom seekers experienced similar conditions as they did in the United States. Robin Winks writes of a mob of whites attempting to force a Black couple from their land shortly after their settlement in Chatham, Ontario (Maynard 30). Emancipated slaves also experienced widespread de facto segregation finding themselves barred from certain neighbourhoods, public spaces, and businesses. The Canadian myth of the North Star aided by the symbol of the Underground Railroad also works to induce what Maynard refers to as a “[s]ocial amnesia” regarding the 200-year long history of slavery in this country (19). Africans and Indigenous peoples were subjected to grueling physical and psychological torment in pre-confederation Canada. Yet historians who do acknowledge the existence of slavery often somehow conclude that “enslavement in this country was relatively benign” due to the fact that it did not take the form of large-scale plantation slavery as it did in the United States (20). Due to the prevalence of the theory that it “just wasn’t that bad here,” I insist that the smaller scale did not, in any way, spare the enslaved from suffering. The enslaved in Canada were subjected to beatings and sexual violence and many perished before the age of twenty (21).

One final example of the paradoxical nature of Canadian plurality is official Multiculturalism which was implemented as a response to an increase of civil unrest as racial, ethnic, and cultural minorities began to demand social and economic equality with the White-Anglo majority. Lester B. Pearson’s Bilingualism and Bicultural Commission attempted to manage disputes between the French and the English that had arisen as a result of Québec’s separatist movement. The recommendation mandated that Canada must work

towards an “equal partnership between the two founding races [while] taking into account the contributions made by other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada” (qtd. in Mackey 76). For Robert F. Harney, the recommendation meant that “the French-British dualism that had in the past been seen as a tale of mutual antagonism, of exploitation and inequality, as an impediment to the emergence of the Canadian nation, would now be refurbished as a national virtue” (qtd. in Mackey 76). Eva Mackey interprets state-sanctioned bilingualism and biculturalism as an attempt to further distinguish Canada from the U.S (76).

Following some backlash by Ukrainian Canadians who regarded the inclusion of “other ethnic groups” in the recommendation as an afterthought, the Government of Canada decided to take a more multicultural approach (76). Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau transformed the recommendations into an official policy called Multiculturalism within a Bilingual Framework on October 8, 1971. The policy, with its goal to “help minority groups preserve and share their language and culture, and to remove the cultural barriers they face,” asserted that all ethnic groups are considered equal (qtd. Mackey 77). It also outlined a number of cultural and ethnic groups that could apply for funding that would enable them to maintain their distinct cultures, languages, and identities while encouraging the acquisition of English or French (77). The Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) recognized multiculturalism in section 27 that guaranteed “equal rights that respect the multicultural heritage of Canadians” (qtd. in Mackey 80). Finally, the Multicultural Policy evolved into the *Multiculturalism Act* in 1988 asserting that multiculturalism is “a fundamental characteristic of the Canadian heritage and identity” (qtd. in Mackey 80). The Act also

“promote[s] the full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in the continuing evolution and shaping of all aspects of Canadian society and assist[s] them in the elimination of any barrier to such participation” (qtd. in Mackey 80).

Many Canadian thinkers such as M. NourbeSe Philip, Augie Fleras, Jean Locke Kunz, Rinaldo Walcott, Himani Bannerji, and Anthony Stewart argue that the happy promises of the Multicultural Policy and the subsequent act remain unfulfilled. These authors hold that the policy and act are political tools that seek to contain and manage difference without upsetting the pre-existing distribution of power. In “Why Multiculturalism Can’t End Racism,” NourbeSe Philip criticizes the efficacy of Official Multiculturalism stating that it “has no answers for the problems of racism, or white supremacy - unless it is combined with a clearly articulated policy of anti-racism, directed at rooting out the effects of racist and white supremacist thinking” (qtd. in Coleman 7). For Fleras and Kunz, official Multiculturalism “represents a form of state legitimacy rather than a vehicle for radical social change. Its focus is on drawing people into the framework of Canada rather than on protecting social and cultural rights of minority women and men” (19). What this achieves is a de-politicization of difference. Fleras and Kuntz conclude that Multiculturalism is assimilation by another name in the sense that it attempts to create social cohesion and consensus by inviting minorities into the mainstream.

Rinaldo Walcott agrees that state Multiculturalism is an attempt to depoliticize difference and consolidate power. He argues that official Multiculturalism was the state’s attempt to contain “‘uprisings’ through policies centred on identity and culture while retaining the power to authorize and legitimize the late-capitalist material relations of the

nation-state” (“Disgraceful” 79-80). The act and policy grant the state the ability to “manage difference that might potentially prove troubling in a hegemonic state’s bid to retain its exclusive authorizing powers: (84-85). In sum, Canadian Multiculturalism is a manifestation of “[w]hite anxieties” over the possibility of losing control of the nation due to political action by marginalized groups rather than any real attempt to reduce barriers that perpetuate racial, ethnic, and cultural discrimination (97).

One of the results of official Multiculturalism is the implementation of the societal structure known as the cultural mosaic. Anthony Stewart argues that this structure helps to create two distinct races in Canada, the member and the visitor. The member is the person who gets to dictate the terms of Multiculturalism, who gets to decide what is tolerable and what isn’t. The member is the person who is always already granted participation in Canada’s social life without having to clamour and fight their way in. The member belongs and their “membership necessarily implies another’s exclusion” (“Visitor” 20). The member is, surprise, surprise, a white Canadian. The visitor, by contrast is merely tolerated, but only for a time. A visitor may participate, but only to an extent. A visitor has a “temporariness imprinted upon them from the beginning” (20). The visitor is... Need I say it? ...Not white. Anthony Stewart delineates the cultural mosaic and the melting pot in the following manner:

while the mosaic is a static, finite, and therefore predictable model, the melting pot is dynamic, roiling, and as a result, unpredictable. This difference matters, because the mosaic implies a clearer sense of hierarchy and, more importantly, of limitation. It installs some in the secondary role of the visitor, while leaving the perception and priority of the mosaic’s overall design for members to determine, to see, and to benefit from. Members have the advantage of being able to evaluate the overall design and the privilege not to acknowledge the advantages that necessarily accrue to those who get to do this evaluating. Put as simply as I can, the mosaic works best when

everyone knows their place. When put that way, I doubt most Canadians would take pride in the model. In the mosaic, each piece is cemented into place. Once in place, it cannot be moved, at the risk of compromising the integrity of the overall design. (“Visitor” 51-52)

Stewart argues that the mosaic provides fixity in terms of social station. The order is set in stone, in glass or in tile. Despite all the colours being present, visible, and close in proximity, they are all bordered by a white grout that oversees, maintains, and ensures the structural integrity of the racial order.

Like Stewart, Himani Bannerji sees official Multiculturalism, or “multiculturalism from above” as she calls it, as purely ideological (6). It functions as an ideological state apparatus that orders, delineates, and contains those who do not fully belong. She argues that multiculturalism is an ideological weapon of the state that serves as a “device for constructing and ascribing legitimate and full citizens and others who are peripheral to this in many senses” (6). In addition, the language that accompanies official Multiculturalism is actively engaged in the process of subject constitution. Terms like diversity, plurality, and visible minority interpellate subjects as “other” creating a category of not-so-Canadian Canadians (30). Its construction of the not-so-Canadian Canadian, a “core community” is formed and is,

synthesized into a national ‘we,’ and it decides on the terms of multiculturalism and the degree to which others should be tolerated or accommodated. This “we” is an essentialized version of colonial European turned into Canadian and the subject or agent of Canadian nationalism. (42)

In this schema, Anglo-Canadian culture continues to function as dominant, whereas all other cultures function merely as “‘multiculture’” (78). Whites get to determine how and when

“ethnics” get to be seen and heard and in what capacity. The multicultural others are usually asked to play stereotypical roles fashioned by the white elites if and when these roles coincide with market tastes (96).

There are two versions of Canada, but the version that paints Canada as plural, as inclusive, as distinct from the United States is the master narrative. The prevalence of anti-racist activism in this country should completely shatter Canada’s self-purported image of itself as a paragon of virtue insofar as this brand of political engagement attests to the existence of a race problem, and yet this image, this insidious mythology of racial harmony, endures (D. Austin 167). I argue that this durability owes its thanks, in part, to the media’s constant depoliticizing, debasing, and devaluing of anti-racist activism. Because one of the mainstream media’s primary tasks are to perpetuate national myths, it must assume the responsibility of attributing the presence of activism to something other than the persistent and ongoing presence of anti-racist activism. Each chapter in this essay attempts to uncover the “something else.” These “something else” are, in themselves, racist discourses that create dehumanizing portraits of Black Canadians. These “something else” attest to the afterlife of slavery in Canada.

I hope that uncovering the traces of slavery’s past and present will enable myself and other whites to recognize injustices that we’ve previously just dismissed as normal. I hope to encourage white people to take responsibility for the ways they’ve disseminated discourse that perpetuates white supremacy. I hope to have a critical eye and to question the harmful national narratives that disavow the existence of racism in Canada. I hope that my essay will also resonate with Audiences of Colour who will not be shocked by the observations that I make throughout this

work. It is my hope that I can provide Audiences of Colour and their allies with a taxonomy for identifying patterns in white supremacist discourse, for naming, and classifying various tropes and logics, and for rooting these discursive tactics in the larger history of oppression in Canada. I hope that work will provide readers of all races with the tools they need to call out the everyday racism that happens around the family dinner table, the water cooler, and beyond. I hope that all readers will be encouraged to seek out alternative stories of activism, stories that regard political action as a legitimate response to racism and contradict the racist portrayals of Black Canadians in the media. Attuning to these alternative stories will force a necessary revision of the narratives that contribute to the perpetuation of white supremacy in this country.

1.6 CHAPTER BREAKDOWN

In my examination of the discourse used in the Canadian news media used to frame instances of Black Canadian activism, I focus my attention upon three of the most significant Black uprisings to occur on Canadian soil. The 1969 Sir George Williams Affair, the Yonge Street Riot of 1992, and the 2016 Black Lives Matter sit-in at the Toronto Pride drew public attention to the ongoing legacy of chattel slavery in North America. Each event responded to manifestations of white supremacy, and therefore tore gaping holes in the shroud of racial benevolence that masks Canada's racist underbelly. Each case study will demonstrate how the Canadian news media responded by attempting to patch these holes with stories of Black people behaving badly. In each chapter, I will demonstrate how the Canadian news media, albeit paradoxically and counterintuitively, recycles racist ideological constructions of Black

people to disavow the existence of racism. This disavowal enables the maintenance of Canadian national narratives.

In Chapter 2, “They Came from Abroad: The Sir George Williams Affair and the Externalization of Black Activism,” I demonstrate the role that the disavowal of racism plays in the perpetuation of racist ideology. I rely upon discourse analysts Francis Henry, Carol Tator, Teun A. van Dijk, Robert Entman, and Andrew Rojecki to examine the discourse surrounding the affair that occurred in Montréal, Quebec in 1969. The affair saw 200 students occupy a 9th floor computer lab at Sir George Williams University (now Concordia University) on January 29, 1969 in response to the administration’s failure to adequately handle a charge of anti-Black racism lobbied against biology professor Perry Anderson. In May of the following year, six West Indian students issued a complaint against Anderson for assigning lower grades to Black students. The decision to occupy the computer lab came after the administration exonerated Anderson of any wrongdoing. The sit-in remained peaceful until riot police broke through the barricades on February 11. Amidst the chaos, a fire broke out resulting in \$2 million dollars’ worth of property damage. The sit-in is the largest student occupation to have occurred in Canadian history.

In this chapter, I argue that two discourses are deployed in order to disavow the necessity of anti-racist activism on Canadian soil. *Montreal Gazette*, *Globe and Mail*, and *Toronto Star* journalists utilized xenophobic discourse in order to blame the Sir George Williams Affair on West Indian students who were positioned as individuals prone to troublemaking. The journalists also attempt to raise moral alarm by blaming the affair on international radical communist organizations as well as the Black Panthers. I argue that

Xenophobic discourse and the discourse of moral alarm situate Black activism beyond the Canadian borders in order to disavow the existence of racism on its own soil. Looking to Eva Mackey, David Austin, Katherine McKittrick, Rinaldo Walcott, and Dionne Brand, I conclude by discussing how the externalization of activism and racism is necessary to the maintenance of Canadian national narratives of plurality.

In Chapter 3, “Rampage on Yonge: The Yonge Street Uprising and the Myth of Black Criminality,” I focus on the coverage concerning the Yonge Street Uprising of 1992 and argue that the repression of Canada’s racist past discussed in Chapter 1 results in the manifestation of symptoms that are indicative of the afterlife of slavery. The uprising occurred on May 4 as a response to the acquittal of the four white police officers responsible for beating Rodney King in Los Angeles and the police killing of a Black Torontonian Raymond Lawrence. Following a peaceful demonstration orchestrated by members of the Black Action Defence Committee cited as “OGS and ancestors” of Black Lives Matter-Toronto, a number of uprising participants engaged in riotous activities that included looting and vandalism (Hudson and Diverlus 10). The Yonge Street Uprising proved to be an eye-opening event for many Torontonians as it prompted an investigation by the NDP government into race relations in the province of Ontario. In his report on the issue, Stephen Lewis concluded that anti-Black racism was a major problem impacting the lives of Black Ontarians. The report led to an expansion of the Anti-Racist Secretariat and the implementation of several community programs supporting Black youth.

In this chapter, I draw upon the expertise of Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Teun A. van Dijk, Louis Althusser, Pierre Bourdieu, Norman Fairclough, Jane H. Hill, Francis Henry and Carol

Tator, Karen E. Fields and Barbara J. Fields to analyze two discourses used in the coverage of the Yonge Street Uprising. I refer to the first discourse as the minimization of racism. This discourse minimizes racism by creating a problematic rendering of cause and effect that locates the origin of the uprisings in sources other than the existence of anti-Black racism. The second, discourse of dichotomies, distinguishes between activity and passivity in order to position the protestors as actors perpetrating violence, whereas the city, police, and shopkeepers are designated as the passive recipients of violence. This discourse of dichotomies perpetuates the myth of Black criminality that served as a justification for slavery during the time that abolitionist sentiment was gaining traction in the United States. I am indebted to the theories and historical accounts provided by David Austin, Saidiya Hartman, Robyn Maynard, Rinaldo Walcott, Christina Sharpe and Barrington Walker for their work on the reverberations of slavery in the present day, Michael Omi and Howard Winant for their insights into racial code words, to Judith Butler for her theories of subjectivity, and Julian B. Carter for his insights concerning whiteness.

In Chapter 4 “Rebel Revelers: Toronto Pride and the Myth of Black Inferiority,” I examine the mainstream media coverage of the Black Lives Matter sit-in at the Toronto Pride Parade and continue the discussion started in Chapter 2 by demonstrating the way that the discourse used in the news media provides evidence of the afterlife of slavery in Canada. On July 3, 2016, honoured guests Black Lives Matter Toronto staged a sit-in during Toronto’s beloved parade, halting its progress for 30 minutes until Pride organizers signed off on a number of demands. The demands included improvements to accessibility, more funding for Pride events celebrating Queers of Colour, and the removal of police floats and booths. The

sit-in garnered an immense amount of opposition resulting in a massive media storm where the members of Black Lives Matter Toronto were accused of sticking their noses where they didn't belong and of highjacking an event in order to push their own police-hating agenda.

In this chapter, I examine three types of discourse. First, I examine devolutionary discourse that accused Black Lives Matter of standing in the way of progress. Second, I analyze the discourse of irrationality that accused the Black Lives Matter members of being illogical in their willingness for uniformed police to be excluded from Pride. Finally, I analyze the discourse of immorality which positioned Black Lives Matter as opponents of inclusivity. I conclude this chapter by discussing the separation of Black and queer politics and the disruption of what is regarded as acceptable expressions of queerness by relying upon the work of Desmond Cole. I turn to the expertise of discourse analysts Roger Fowler, Teun A. van Dijk, Francis Henry, and Carol Tator to analyze the discourse used in the *National Post*, the *Globe and Mail*, and the *Toronto Star*. I use historical accounts articulated by Winthrop D. Jordan and Andrew S. Curran to argue that devolutionary discourses, and the discourses of irrationality and immorality once justified and sustained slavery.

Chapter 2 They Came from Aboard: The Sir George Williams Affair and the Externalization of Black Activism

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In “The End of Antiracism,” Paul Gilroy observed a “new racism” emerging in Britain throughout the 1980s that replaced old school discourses about biological racial inferiority with discourses of nation, culture, and identity. New racism is deployed through the use of colourblind code words that “enable people to speak about race without mentioning the word” (254). These code words work to conflate race and national belonging thus creating the semblance of a cohesive nation that is “homogenous in its whiteness yet precarious and perpetually vulnerable to attack from enemies from within and without” (254). For Eva Mackey, new racism is inapplicable in the analysis of the Canadian racial landscape insofar as Canadian mythology has been predicated upon plurality dating back to its imagined beginnings of a nation with “Two Founding Peoples,” the French and the English (14). The myth of the Two Solitudes holds that Canada was founded by two nations, Britain and France and the myth of the North Star positions Canada as a safe haven for enslaved Africans longing to escape servitude in America. These narratives of plurality exist alongside the social reality of exclusion and oppression as well as a conception of the nation that forecloses participation from People of Colour. Whereas I agree with Mackey that the Canadian imaginary embraces plurality, I argue that racial code words are very much deployed in service of demarcating those that are not included in the idea of the national “we.”

The journalists covering the 1969 Sir George Williams Affair (SGWA) use racial code words while furthering Canadian myths of plurality, and both strategies contribute to the ongoing oppression of Black people in Canada. In “Réactions: The Myth of the ‘White Backlash,’” Roosevelt Williams argues that the news media covering the Sir George Williams Affair, “deliberately distorted the facts, twisted the truth and used its power to the absolute detriment of the students both by what it said and what it failed to say” (114). Pulling select quotations from student and local newspapers, Williams concludes that media placed “emphasis on ‘violence,’ ‘damage,’ and a minority of ‘extremists’, most of whom were ‘foreign’ (black) students” (119). Williams did not, however, provide an analysis of the way in which the coverage of the Sir George Williams Affair furthers national mythmaking.

The coverage of the affair in the anglophone newspapers the *Globe and Mail*, the *Toronto Star*, and the *Montreal Gazette* employed two main types of discourse used to frame the SGWA, xenophobia and moral alarm.⁴ Both discourses situate Black activism, and by extension racism, beyond the Canadian borders by blaming events on “foreign” radicals from the Caribbean and the United States. Examining these discourses enables a recognition of the extent to which Blackness is both marginalized and feared in Canada. The suppression of Black activism enables white Canada to disavow the existence of Canadian racism. White Canada’s insistence that racism is a phenomenon belonging to someplace else delegitimizes

⁴ Note that the discourses used in Francophone newspapers may be very different than the ones present in Anglophone ones. I focus on Anglophone newspapers as my knowledge of the French language is not sophisticated enough to provide a thorough analysis.

the antiracist activism of Black Canadians whose lived experience contradicts national narratives of racial harmony. This delegitimizing includes recycling racist ideologies that once justified and sustained transatlantic slavery. The suppression of racism paired with the simultaneous dissemination of racist ideology in the Canadian news media contributes to slavery's persistent afterlife.

2.2 THE EVENTS

On April 28, 1968, six West Indian
 Sir George Williams University
 (SGWU) students, Kennedy
 Frederick, Allan Brown, Wendell K.
 Goodin, Douglas Mossop, Terrence
 Ballantyne, and Rodney John,

Anderson never, ever supervised us in the labs. But the times he did come there, he would continually address us as Mr. Ballantyne or Mr. Mossop, whereas he would address the white students as John, Mary, and so-forth. About eight or nine Black students were being failed regularly, and we couldn't understand what was the motivation for it. (qtd. in Ninth Floor)

-Terrence Ballantyne on the Anderson Affair

accused Biology professor, Perry Anderson, of discrimination for assigning grades no higher than a C to Black students and refusing to call them by their first names (“Sir George Williams University bows to sit-in students” 26). The Dean of Students met with the plaintiffs in May, and a memorandum was released in June exonerating Anderson of all charges; the students were not notified of the verdict. When the students returned to classes in the fall semester, they were surprised to find that Anderson not only still had a job at SGWU, but that he'd been promoted to Assistant Professor (Stewart and Geller 7). On December 5th, the students occupied the Biology department office demanding that Anderson be fired. The occupation ended when the university decided to formulate a committee to

investigate the charge. The investigation committee was comprised solely of white men despite the students' request to include two Black faculty members (9). The university warned Anderson that his safety might be in jeopardy; his suspension was lifted once the "threat of violence no longer existed" ("Controversial suspension lifted" 1).

Following the administration's dismissal of the charge of discrimination on January 29, 1969, 200 impassioned students occupied a 9th floor computer lab located in the Henry F. Hall Building on campus after an impromptu demonstration in which speakers encouraged students to take a stand (Martell 97). The occupiers made demands such as the formulation of a new committee to investigate the allegations, a meeting with Anderson, academic accommodations granted to students who spent valuable study time fighting the case, and the charges dropped against all students involved in the occupation of the Vice President's office that occurred five days before the sit-in ("Sir George Williams University bows to sit-in students" 26). The students chose the computer lab for the site of their demonstration for various reasons. Some sought out the space to denounce technology, others selected it because it was close to administration offices, and as one woman proclaims; "[i]t was felt that the computers would protect us" in the event that riot police were called to intervene ("Computers seized to hold off police, girl tells jury trial" 4). On the day of the occupation, the RCMP released a very panicked memo stating that the presence of Black Panthers in Montréal,

constitute an extreme threat to national security and their influence in the educational institutions is presently being felt with strong consequences. If able to break down the educational area of our society within the following generation the Nation's Government could be destroyed...It is anticipated that in 1969, the organizations

noted in this report will gain movement and power, increasing their areas of concentration. The present situation at Sir George Williams University as reported on file...is a valid indication of progress within the Black Power movement. Similar radical incidents are expected in the future. (qtd. in D. Austin 166)

This memo encapsulates the paranoia surrounding Black activism on Canadian soil. The Panthers were regarded as an invasive force that, if unchecked, would spread like wildfire throughout the country.

Eight days after the initial occupation, several white students took over the Faculty Club in a demonstration of solidarity (Martel 97). Students of all races rallied outside of the Henry F. Hall Building

As the door flew open, their angry faces and hate-filled eyes were indication enough as to what was in store for the occupiers, the clubs in their hands eliminated all remaining doubt [...] they knew that to resist would subject themselves to an unmerciful beating, perhaps even death [...] (qtd. in Butcher 96-97)

-Anonymous on the police ambush

holding placards comparing U.S. and Canadian racism bearing slogans such as “Montreal, Alabama” (D. Austin 26). The occupation of the computer lab remained relatively peaceful until riot police arrived on the scene on February 11 turning the demonstration into a riot (Martel 101). Students destroyed windows, doors, and chairs with fire axes, the computer was severely damaged, and debris was thrown out of windows showering the streets below (“Rioters at SGWU jailed” 1). After receiving clearance from the university, riot police forced themselves inside by dismantling a barricade that was constructed out of furniture and office equipment.

The police handled the students violently and at least four were beaten with clubs (Butcher 97). Cora Lee Hutchinson was hit in the head by a police baton.

Roosevelt Douglas had a gun put to his head by the chief cop and was told “if you make one wrong mover, nigger, I’ll blow your fuckin’ head off. (qtd. in Butcher 98)

-Anonymous on the police ambush

After being the recipient of police violence, she began suffering from terrible headaches and later lost her life due to a brain tumour (137). According to Rosie Douglas, the police were responsible for Hutchinson’s untimely death. One officer shouted an order at a Black activist: “[p]ut your hands down you scum. I don’t want to dirty my hands on you” (“End of wild student outburst” 9). At some point during the chaos, a fire broke out in a wastepaper basket causing about \$2,000,000 in damage (D. Austin 137). As the fire blazed, counter-protestors located outside the Henry F. Hall Building chanted “[g]o cops, go,” some gave the fascist salute (“Rioters at SGWU jailed” 1), while others shouted, “[I]et the niggers burn!” (D. Austin 134). Those who supported the occupation and those who opposed it threw punches at one another (“Guard at SGWU” 1).

To those of you in the streets, who shouted fantastic cries such as “Burn, niggers burn,” and “Go, cops, go”, we dedicate the following crimes. To those of you at work and at home who said they deserve everything they get, we dedicate the same - -drool on. (qtd. in Butcher 97)

-Anonymous on the police ambush

There is much speculation regarding the cause of the fire. The police and the media pointed fingers at the students, but according to LeRoi Butcher, the police had the biggest motive as they locked students inside the centre by tying a rope around the door of the rear exit (Butcher 98). In total, 97 people were arrested on charges of conspiracy to commit arson and to destroy property. Black and white prisoners were held in separate cells. Bail was initially denied for those arrested, and when it was finally granted, it was posted for amounts ranging from \$1,000 to \$14,000 (Williams 124). Bails for local Montréalers ranged from \$1,000 to \$2,500 whereas non-Canadians had their bails posted for between \$3,000 and \$14,000. Trinidadian-born Kelvin Robinson's sum of \$14,000 was the highest bail ever posted by Montréal Municipal Court at the time (124). The unconventionally high amounts for West Indians was, according to Roosevelt Williams, evidence that "bail was used as an extension of the hysteria and an expression of deep-seated racism, as it became punitive and at the same time was designed to deny the individual his rights" (124).

Other special punishments were reserved specifically for international students. The *Montreal Gazette* article "Those on bail must conform to conditions" reads, "[a]ll foreigners must surrender their visas or passports to the city clerk's office, and all must refrain from participating in public demonstration" (3). As Bernard Mergler, Counsel to the West Indians, argued in court, the confiscation of passports along with their suspensions from school and their inability to work rendered the students immobile ("Student passports returned" 42). *Gazette* reporter Arthur Blakely stated that non-Canadians "who participated in the gross vandalism" risked losing their financial aid and any training awards they might have received while studying at Sir George Williams ("Foreign students could lose on aid" 2). The students

were also denied the basic human right to engage in protest which prohibited grievances from being heard and legislated silence.

Ten Trinidadian students were forced to stand trial and eight were charged with conspiracy to interfere with the lawful use of SGWU and were fined sums ranging from \$1,000 to \$15,000 (“Trinidad will pay fines for 8 guilty in Computer Riot” 2). Joseph Cheddi Jagan Jr., son of a Guyanese Opposition Leader, was one of the several West Indians charged, and he noted the lasting impact of being penalized for the events stating that he was unable to continue his education or to secure employment (“Jagan Junior claims SGWU rioters being ‘black-balled’” 8). He tells the *Montreal Gazette* that “[w]e [the West Indian students] are black-balled-not only me, but most of us” (8). Rosie Douglas and Anne Cools incurred prison sentences; Douglas served eight months, and Cools served four (D. Austin 136). Douglas was eventually deported in 1975 after being deemed a national threat for his political activism (136).

News of the treatment of the Trinidadian students hit the West Indies amidst heightened awareness of the impacts of North American imperialism in the Caribbean. This awareness paired with outrage against North American anti-Black racism led to an eruption of demonstrations of solidarity in the West Indies for the SGWU students facing trial for their roles in the sit-in. February 26, 1969, Canada’s Governor General, Roland Michener visited Port of Spain, Trinidad and was escorted away from the University of West Indies due to the presence of protesting students (“Trinidadian students block Michener in Sir George Protest” 3). Mass demonstrations broke out in Trinidad over the next year with protestors venting frustration over the trial of the ten students. Many engaged in the destruction of

properties that contained Canadian banks in order to demonstrate resistance against Canadian racism and imperialism. Protesters in Georgetown, Guyana also took to the streets to picket the Canadian High Commission, and students in Kingston, Jamaica observed a solidarity day (“Caribbean blacks protest student trial” 3).

Before delving into analysis, it is necessary to convey the details of the events that preceded and succeeded the demonstration at Sir George Williams University (SGWU). An in-depth explication of the events will enable readers to see the way in which racism impacted Black student lives in the late 1960s. In the years following World War II, there was an increase in the number of West Indians coming to Canada to study. There were 150 West Indian students enrolled in Canadian universities in 1955, and by 1965, this number grew to 3,000 (Winks 441). As sensationalist news stories about the Cold War and the Civil Rights Movement saturated the North American press, Canada of the 1960s was dominated by an intense fear of communism and Black political activism. At the height of these fears, the RCMP spied upon groups that did not meet societal norms in terms of gender, sexuality, race, and political affiliations (D. Austin 163). In particular, during this decade, the RCMP surveilled Black and Red Power groups fearing inter-racial coalition between the two. The RCMP feared that a coalition might spawn a fully-fledged anti-oppression movement involving all marginalized peoples (163). As Britain began restricting immigration, many West Indians came to Canada and, more specifically, to Montréal to work or study and the city became, as David Austin argues, a “Mecca” for Black Caribbean students (31). In the 1960s, Montréal was an industrial powerhouse and had much to offer by way of culture as bars and jazz clubs lined the downtown streets (31). The city was also a space characterized

by political activity and would soon become a hub of Black Power activism. “The Québec Problem” shook the Anglo-majority, giving rise to leftist politics as French Canadians fought for rights to their language and culture. As a result of being oppressed by the English Canadian majority, the Québécois viewed themselves as a racial minority in Canada and some were motivated to co-opt the Black identity referring to themselves as “nègre.” Front de liberation du Québec (FLQ) leader, Pierre Vallières’ 1968 manifesto *Nègres blanc d’Amerique* (White Niggers of America) articulated this view considering Québec as a part of the Third World. In this text, Vallières explained his involvement with the FLQ as being motivated by the fact that he could no longer “bear to be a nigger” in Canadian society (qtd. in Makropoulos 248). His use of the racial slur was intended to denounce the unequal treatment of the French in Canada. Vallières was not the first author to evoke the concept of the “White Nigger” in Canada. A century before, Thomas Haliburton used the racial terminology to describe poor white Nova Scotians (Makropoulos 249).

Black Nationalism and Caribbean leftist politics also thrived in this politically charged landscape giving rise to various organizations centred around independence, anti-colonialism, and anti-racism (D. Austin 32). A memo issued by the RCMP on August 15, 1968, entitled “General Conditions and Subversive Activism Amongst Negroes-Province of Quebec” demonstrates the concern regarding Black political activism in the city of Montréal:

[w]e should be particularly interested in any future Black Liberation Action Committee functions and in learning the identities of all the members and individuals involved in this committee. Likewise, any additional advance intelligence relative to the Congress of Black Writers mentioned in paragraph 5 of your report and the identities of the representatives to that Congress would be of interest. Should such a congress convene in Montreal efforts should be made to

ensure that all proceedings are given as thorough a coverage as possible. In view of developments in the Canadian Negro community and the increasing liaison between Negroes in Canada and Negro Black Nationalists in the United States and abroad. (qtd. in D. Austin 162)

For the sake of tomorrow's victories, it is imperative that we take another look at the events of yesterday, in the Congress, black people will begin to rediscover themselves as the active creators, rather than the passive sufferers of history's events...It is only when we have discovered this lost perspective on ourselves that we can truly begin to speak of emancipation; it is only when we have returned to our authentic past that we can truly begin to dream about the future. (qtd. in Austin 94)

-Elder Thébauld and Rosie Douglas, Congress of Black Writers Program

On October 11, 1968, the RCMP's concerns came to fruition as the Montréal Congress of Black Writers, organized by students of McGill and Sir George Williams Universities, held a four-day conference at McGill to discuss global anti-Black racism. Presentations covered topics including inequalities pertaining to housing, employment, and mobility as well as slavery and revolt, cultural alienation, colonialism and Third World liberations, capitalism, and perhaps most concerning to the state, Black Power (Forsythe 58). The conference featured several speakers from various parts of the globe including C.L.R. James, Stokely Carmichael, Richard B. Moore, James Foreman, Harry Edwards, Walter Rodney, and Canada's own Rocky Jones, and was attended by hundreds of young activists.

Dennis Forsythe identifies the main goal of the conference as attaining Black independence through its focus on “notions of self-direction, self-support, and economic self-sufficiency” (61). Many regard the Congress of Black Writers as one of the catalysts for the Sir George Williams Affair that occurred in January of 1969 (68).

It was such a large assembly of politically progressive Black people from all over the world. It was just exhilarating. In some ways it was like going to a rock concert. For me, it was an eye-opener. It was political, but then there were a lot of artists – painters, musicians; poetry was definitely the word of the day, and everybody became a poet – reading and writing liberation poetry. It was very exciting, exhilarating. It was a party, it was a learning experience, it was fun. (qtd. in Austin 157)

-Yvonne Greer on the Congress of Black Writers

2.3 XENOPHOBIA

The *Globe and Mail*, the *Toronto Star*, and the *Montreal Gazette* journalists covering the SGWA employed xenophobic discourse to situate Blackness and Black activism beyond the Canadian borders. Various xenophobic discursive strategies focussed readerly attention upon the West Indian students involved in the affair. The first strategy employed makes use of what is referred to as *the numbers game* by discourse analysts Frances Henry and Carol Tator. *The numbers game* was intended to impress readers with the number of international students who contributed to the destruction of the computer lab. The second strategy draws

attention to *otherness* by identifying the offending students by country/region of origin. The third strategy singles out two West Indian students out of hundreds of protestors transforming them into scapegoats or what I am referring to as *usual suspects*. The fourth and final strategy belonging to the category of Xenophobia draws distinctions between *us and them* making use of West Indian stereotypes to degrade the student activists.

2.3.1 The Numbers Game

For discourse analysts Frances Henry and Carol Tator, “[t]he point of the numbers game is to alarm readers with impressive figures” (182). The *Globe and Mail*, the *Toronto Star*, and the *Montreal Gazette* made it a point to tally how many of those arrested following the Sir George Williams Affair were citizens of countries outside of Canada. The journalists covering the affair blamed international students for the events that unfolded between January 29 and February 11, 1969. Four *Montreal Gazette* journalists engaged in *the numbers game*. In “All elect trial by judge, jury,” Derek Hill writes, “[o]f the 97 [arrested], 48 were of a nationality other than Canadian” (9). Brian Stewart’s “SGWU starts mop-up in wake of rampage” makes a similar claim: “[o]f the 90 adults charged, at least 38 were not Sir George students and 48 were from outside Canada” (2). “Student defence readied” reads, “[o]f the arrested, 42 are black including one of the seven juveniles. Thirty of the adults are women and 4 are described by police as non-Canadians. At least 24 come from countries in the Caribbean area” (11).

The *Toronto Star* ran three articles that made use of *the numbers game*. “Montreal ejects Harlem rights leader” reads, “about 24 of the accused come from Caribbean countries.

Forty two of the accused, including one of the seven juveniles, are black” (4). “57 of 89 on bail after campus rampage at Sir George Williams” reiterates, “of the 89 adults accused, 41 are Negroes. Twenty-four come from Caribbean-area countries” (3). “Students destroy college computer” states, “[a]bout half of the 97 arrested were Negroes, police said. All were to appear in Court today. Ten of the students were foreigners—from Haiti, Jamaica, and the United States” (4). Finally, a piece in the *Globe and Mail* reads, “Eight out of ten Trinidadians were convicted on charges in connection with the incident. They were fined and ordered to leave the country” (“Lalonde visit two days after Trinidad request” 1).

Journalists often rely upon numbers and statistics in order to further the illusion of objectivity. Readers rarely think to challenge statistics printed in newspaper articles due to the perception that “numbers don’t lie.” Statistics are almost always taken as fact and are not often thought of as having ideological significance. However, the decision to include numbers in any given article is a rhetorical choice that reveals much about a journalist’s intentions. The fact that the number of foreign students was specifically counted means that journalists interpreted these particular figures as newsworthy, as having importance in themselves. The numbers are hardly staggering, but readers may have interpreted them to be so as these numbers were the only statistics given. The majority of the students involved in the sit-in at Sir George Williams University were white, but whiteness isn’t news. Enumerating the Black students alone attests to how whites are able to function as the core Canadian community, the one that needs no mention. Eva Mackey refers to this community as the “unmarked” or “Canadian-Canadian” specifying that whites are regarded as real or natural Canadians whereas People of Colour are resigned to the category of *otherness* (33).

2.3.2 The “Others”

The *Toronto Star*, the *Globe and Mail*, and the *Montreal Gazette* emphasized the *otherness* of the student participants by focussing solely on the West Indians involved. Through the use of selective overreporting, international students became the targets of blame. Journalists often referred to the West Indian students by name and place of origin and neglected to mention the names of students who are Canadian citizens. This strategy shifts attention away from the Canadian racial landscape towards the West Indies. An article in the *Toronto Star* entitled “57 of 89 free on bail after campus rampage at Sir George Williams” reads,

[b]ail was refused to Douglas Mossop, 23, of Jamaica, who graduated from Sir George last spring. Mossop, one of the six West Indian students who accused a biology professor of racism, came to Montreal Feb. 4 to testify in the professor’s hearing. Robert Williams, 27, of Trinidad, was granted \$5,000 bail in superior court yesterday, saw the decision reversed after a prosecution witness testified that a check of fingerprints showed Williams had been deported from Canada for illegal entry. (3)

This journalist communicates the ways that the law doles out punishments according to a hierarchy of belonging. Mossop who is attending SGWU on a visa is granted bail whereas Williams, who has a prior history of entering Canada illegally is subjected to a harsher punishment by being denied bail. The journalist also focuses on “Joseph Cheddi Jagan, son of Cheddi Jagan, Opposition leader in Guyana [who] was one of those to have his bail application heard today” (3). Not only is the student’s country of origin identified, but his notoriety is also alluded to. Mentioning that Jagan’s father is a politician in Guyana shifts attention away from Canada and towards the small West Indian country. Utilizing the word

“[o]pposition” to refer to the older Jagan subtly hints that the younger Jagan too opposes the leadership of those in power. Like father, like son.

Illegality is also highlighted in a *Montreal Gazette* article entitled “Charges dropped for two students.” Eddie Collister writes,

Coral Lee Hutchinson, 18, of the Antilles, and Edmund Michael, 23, of Trinidad had their hearings set for May 22 when it was brought to the court’s attention that the other date would interfere with their exams at McGill University [...] Two of the 78 accused were granted bail but unable to meet the requirements were also ordered to appear on March 5. They were Leroy Butcher and Hilary Darcheville, both of Trinidad [...] Robert Williams, 27, of 3541 Jean Mance St., a native of Trinidad was taken into custody in the courtroom shortly before noon. Williams who has been released on \$5,000 bail, was handed over to RCMP officers who has secured a warrant for his arrest on the charge of illegal entry to Canada. The West Indian will be arraigned on the charge today or tomorrow. (3)

Collister’s listing of the foreignness of the students was emphasized by pointing out the regions and countries of origin. The inclusion of Williams’ Montréal address implied that he belongs in the city, but this was immediately undermined when it was noted that he is a “native of Trinidad” (3). He was further designated as an outsider when Collister referenced Williams’ illicit means of entry into the country.

Collister emphasized the *otherness* of the students involved while reporting on the initial bail hearing in “Nine SGWU students refused liberty.” He writes, “University lawyers prosecuting the case made strong representations against letting certain individuals out because of the lack of roots in this country, or because they were considered more militant than others” (3). Collister identifies international students as having “a lack of roots” (3). The invocation of “roots” calls to mind a speech made by Harriet Tubman opposing an attempt to send Black people back to Africa in the 19th century. Tubman proclaims “we’re

rooted here and they can't pull us up" (qtd. in Bristow 9). With this quotation, Tubman contradicts a commonly held belief that Black diasporic migrants cannot establish roots in their new nation by articulating a view that Black roots are rhizomatic, in nature; Black people are transnational subjects able to establish roots across the globe. Collister goes on to name the students who are refused bail due to their nationality: "Ian Belgrave, 23, and Jose Amorosa, 26, both of Trinidad," "Roosevelt (Rosie) Douglas, a native of the West Indian island of Dominica," "Errol Thomas, 26, native of St. Vincent Island," "Robert Williams, 27, of Trinidad," "Kelvin Robinson, 26, of Trinidad," "Kennedy J. Fredricks (sic)," and "Thomas Bates, 21 of Beverly, Mass" (3). The journalist uses "a native of the West Indian island of Dominica" to describe Rosie Douglas and "of" x to describe the others (3). Collister implies that Douglas has a different immigration status than the others, but that he is nonetheless considered an outsider because he was not born in Canada. Of the nine students mentioned by name in the newspapers, only two were from Canada, "Martin Metcafe, 23, of Montreal" and "a 19-year-old resident of Sudbury, Ont. Marcel Pleau [...] suspected of having set the blaze at Sir George" (3). A good majority of those refused bail were West Indian which reveals that, for the most part, these students served as the scapegoats for the affair even though a native Ontarian was suspected of actually lighting the fire that caused severe damage to the computer lab.

The *Gazette's* "Black student summoned" made use of varying *degrees of completeness*. At times, the journalist overreported and included information that was not crucial to understanding the story, and at other times, the journalist underreported, leaving out relevant details. The racial identification in the headline was a rather interesting choice.

In *Discourses of Domination: Racial Bias in the Canadian English-Language Press*, Frances Henry and Carol Tator observe that headlines are the first part of new stories that are read, and oftentimes, readers do not read beyond them (51). The purpose of a headline is to summarize what the paper deems as the most important information the reader needs to understand the story. The race of the student who had been summoned to court must have been seen as a valuable piece of information, even more valuable than the reason why the student has been summoned in the first place. This headline makes use of the strategy of *incompleteness* to frame the story as one of vague Black criminality. The body of the article reads,

[a] black Sir George student has been ordered to appear in court Friday on charges stemming from last week's occupation of Vice Principal J.W. O'Brien's office, it was learned last night. The summons was served to Errol Thomas who was in a sociology class at the university, according to Pat Pajonas, a lecturer [...] Mr. Thomas is president of the Sir George Caribbean Society. (1)

The journalist does not explicitly state Thomas' country or region of origin but subtly hinted at it by mentioning his affiliation with the Caribbean society. This particular piece of information adds absolutely nothing to the story and is included for no other reason than to expose Thomas as West Indian. Here, *overcompleteness* is used to emphasize the students' *otherness*.

2.3.3 The Usual Suspects

Eventually you have the intervention of some of the Black professors and some of the people in the community, but by that time some of the mindset in the community has already been formalized that these students have wrecked the computer, started a fire, and it seems like it was a total intent to destroy everything in the university, anarchy, and it wasn't that at all. It's really interesting how the Black students got vilified [...] The press and public opinion were determined to leave Black students in jail. It took a lot of work for a lot of people. The judges didn't want to let them out, the community, everybody blamed the Black students, that's the bottom line, which really bothered me because I knew a different story. (Jones 140)

-Rocky Jones on the punishment of Black students

The articles printed in the *Toronto Star*, the *Globe and Mail*, and the *Montreal Gazette*, single out a couple of West Indian men as particularly criminal. Kennedy J. Frederick and Roosevelt (Rosie) Douglas were frequently named in connection with the Sir George Williams Affair. Frederick emerged as one of the media's primary scapegoats by having his name mentioned in "57 of 89 free on bail after campus rampage at Sir George Williams" from the *Star*. The article reads, "[t]he hearing of bail applications today came as a surprise when Municipal Court Judge Emmet H. McManamy postponed until today the preliminary hearing of one of the accused Kennedy J. Fredericks (sic), 29, of Grenada, West Indies" (3). Frederick was identified again in *The Globe and Mail's* "Chemist almost certain arson caused computer fire." The journalist writes,

Constable Yvan Lanciault of police judicial identification squad picked out a photograph yesterday of Kennedy J. Frederick from a batch of 11 pictures. Frederick, 30, of Grenada is being sought on a

bench warrant since he failed to appear for the opening of his trial Jan. 19 on charges in connection to the Sir George incident. (47)

This article, primarily about an expert's findings regarding the cause of the fire, takes time to call out Frederick in a naming practice that deviates significantly from the topic introduced in the headline.

Eddie Collister of the *Montreal Gazette* was particularly fond of singling out Frederick in his articles. In "Guard at SGWU recalls sabotage on day of riot" Collister writes, "a 50-year-old security guard testified yesterday that Kennedy J. Frederick sabotaged communications by cutting a police telephone line in the Henry F. Hall Building early on Feb. 11" (1). Collister's choice of the word "sabotaged" makes Frederick out to be a militant vandal who looked to incapacitate his enemies, the police. In "SGWU outbreak nearly proved fatal," Collister states that,

[a] high-ranking Montreal Police officer testified yesterday that the fire in the computer centre at Sir George Williams University's Hall building Feb. 11 nearly claimed the lives of two police constables. Insp. Jacques Saukiner was testifying at the preliminary hearing of Kennedy J. Frederick, 29, of Grenada, one of the 87 charged with conspiracy in the \$2,000,000 burning and smashing spree. (3)

Mentioning Frederick's name alongside a "burning and smashing spree" implies that the West Indian was particularly implicated in a mindless act of violence and destruction (3). The use of "spree" makes it seem as if the destruction in the computer lab was the result of a lack of self-restraint or an exercise in purposeless criminal indulgence (3). We see a West Indian male described as engaging in a hedonistic pursuit of pleasure. Collister continues the hedonistic rhetoric in "Noisy accused angers judge" stating "[t]he judge presiding at the preliminary hearing of Kennedy J. Frederick, 29, of Grenada, first threatened contempt of

court charges if the accused in court continued to whisper remarks at a witness” (1).

Frederick, in his inability to keep his mouth shut, is positioned as someone with little or no self-control.

The *Gazette* journalist also portrays Frederick as a violent man. In “‘Sir George will be burned’ university security man told” Collister reports,

[a] Sir George Williams University official testified yesterday that Kennedy J. Frederick told him “the university will be burned” if student demands were not met. Henry G. Worrel, 50, the university’s controller and security head, said the threat was made by Frederick shortly after students took control of the computer centre Jan. 29. Frederick is one of the 96 persons charged as a result of the rampage of burning and destruction at Sir George Feb. 11. (3)

In this passage, Collister paints Frederick as a violent and threatening man who posed a great harm to the university, but it also seems to make Frederick appear as if he is guilty of acting on his words by setting the computer centre ablaze. This appearance is achieved through the use of parallelism. The journalist introduces the alleged threat that the “university will be burned” and then names Frederick as one of those charged as “a result of the rampage of burning” (3).

The next Collister piece entitled “Writer urged political action of racism” demonstrates a complete lack of attention to detail as well as a lack of respect paid to Frederick by both the reporting and editorial staff. Collister writes,

Vaughn Dowie, of Montreal, a first-year student was called as a witness in the preliminary hearing of Kennedy J. Fredericks (sic), 29, of Grenada, one of the 89 adults charged with conspiracy in the \$2,000,000 fire at the downtown institution Feb. 11. The start of Fredericks’ (sic) preliminary hearing was delayed an hour early yesterday while he and a second West Indian, Errol Thomas, 26 appeared in another courtroom on charges of extortion and holding

Mr. O'Brien against his will. Shortly after Fredericks' (sic) hearing opened before Municipal Court Judge Emmet J. McManamy, the prosecution called a handwriting expert who had gone over documents in a briefcase bearing the initials K.J.F. which was alleged to have been found on the university's 9th floor late Feb. 11. The expert, Dr. Rosario Fontaine, of the Provincial Medico-Legal Institute, who said he has been doing handwriting analysis for 45 years, said the documents given to him had been written by Fredericks (sic), and at least two other persons. He read the first line of the document penned by Fredericks (sic) to the court: "my name is Kennedy J. Fredericks (sic) otherwise known as Omawale by Black People." At this point Fredericks (sic) spoke up from the prisoner's dock, adding that the accent was on the "e." Lt. Allan Forest, who led a 30-man group of Montreal 's recently formed Mobile Squad to the computer area that day to "arrest" the student occupiers, said he saw Fredericks (sic) through a hole in the barricade. "He was looking right at me," the Lieutenant said. "He must have been standing on a table...there was burned paper floating near the ceiling. I remember saying there was a fire," the witness added. ("Writer Urges" 3)

I quote this article at length in order to draw attention to the numerous misspellings of Frederick's name. Just like Dr. Fontaine's mispronunciation of Omawale, Collister adds an "s" to Frederick each time the last name was evoked. Whether intentional or resulting from lack of care, the misspellings greatly disrespect Frederick for whom names are very important.

Roosevelt (Rosie) Douglas was demonized in the press, and this was achieved by naming him several times in connection with the Sir George Williams Affair. An article in the *Montreal Gazette* entitled "Rosie Douglas refused bail" reads, "Douglas, a 29-year-old of Dominica, a West Indian island, faces four charges of conspiracy in the fire and sabotaging of computer centres at Sir George Williams University Feb. 11" (3). The article goes on to introduce the university's lawyer, Claude Armand Sheppard who argues that Douglas should not be released on bail because, "he played an active role in the occupation and damage," and

that “youngsters of 17, 18 and 19 years old were misled by the leaders. He added that the accused “in addition to his qualities of leadership, had crude and dangerous qualities as well. “Mr. Sheppard said the crown “most strongly opposed bail” because “we consider there’s a risk he (Douglas) might commit further offences against the university.” (3)

The first item of interest here is the headline in its use of Rosie Douglas’ name as opposed to a general means of identification such as “student.” The headline suggests that Douglas has enough notoriety to be known by name. Second, Douglas is positioned as someone interested in corrupting youth. The modern-day Socrates is described as someone who manipulates teenagers into doing his dirty work. The last item of interest is the inclusion of Sheppard’s damning remarks at the conclusion of the article. The prosecutor states that Douglas is a very violent man who poses a great risk to the university. The journalist does give voice to Douglas’ lawyer who mentions his clients’ relationship with John Diefenbaker, his political affiliations with the PC party, and his involvement in many peaceful protests in the past, but these appeals are quickly rebutted by Sheppard who is given the last word. No comment is provided regarding whether or not evidence was given to prove that Douglas is indeed a dangerous man.

An unnamed journalist repeats a similar sentiment as the one above with its emphasis on Douglas’ less than flattering qualities. “Nine SGWU students refused liberty” says,

[t]he first to see his liberty denied before Judge McManamy yesterday was Roosevelt (Rosie) Douglas, a native of the West Indian island of Dominica. University lawyer, Claude Armand Sheppard described Douglas as an “extremely dangerous individual” who forecasted what would happen in the computer centre to the press. “We feel that if it was not for Mr. Douglas we would not be here now,” the university lawyer added. In addition, Sheppard said

Douglas urged an official from the Dominica government, who visited him in cells Wednesday evening, to ‘set committees of agitation in connection with the case.’ (3)

Sheppard’s words appear to have been taken slightly out of context. Readers cannot be certain about what, if any, evidence motivated Sheppard’s unflattering remarks, and are therefore not given any opportunity to make up their own minds regarding Douglas’ character. Sheppard also perpetuates the long-standing stereotype of Black criminality by claiming that Douglas is an “extremely dangerous individual” (3). David Austin argues that the Black pursuit of freedom has been criminalized since the days of slavery stating that,

[t]he idea that a black person would attempt to be free was unthinkable, and the criminalization of attempts to exercise freedom, to simply act ‘normal [...] was punishable by death [...] Under slavery simple assertions of freedom, everyday human existence, and the exercise of human intelligence were criminalized. (10)

For the Black students at SGWU, the attempt to bring Professor Perry Anderson to justice was a critical aspect of their attempt to attain the freedom to pursue an education without being unfairly penalized due to the racial biases of their professors. The criminalization of the Black pursuit of freedom is one of the main goals of the news media coverage on anti-racist activism and is a theme that will be seen throughout this essay. Playing *the numbers game*, repeatedly mentioning countries of origins, and affiliating activists with criminal activity demonstrates that attempting to challenge white supremacy in this country is a crime. Not only did Sheppard demonize Douglas, but he implies that the Dominican government is corrupt in its willingness to assemble a team of agitators to interfere in the just workings of the Canadian state. In a *Gazette* article entitled “Rosie Douglas court record corrected” printed just a day after the one mentioned above, Sheppard recanted part of his statement.

The article reads, “[i]n correcting the remarks yesterday Mr. Sheppard said Douglas had requested that ‘committees of financial support,’ be established, that the word “agitation” was his interpretation” (3). Although Sheppard does back-pedal a bit, he and the writer of this article allow the statement that Douglas is “extremely dangerous” to stand (qtd. in ‘Nine SGWU students refused liberty’ 3).

The writer of the *Globe and Mail’s* “Two sent to jail for leadership in role in Sir George Riot” singles out Douglas stating,

Roosevelt Douglas, 29, of Dominica, one of the accused, shouted “Long live black power,’ on hearing his sentence. A voice in the courtroom answered: “Death to fascism.” Douglas was sentenced to two years less than a day and fined over \$5,000, or an additional 6 months on the charge of willfully obstructing the use of the Sir George Williams University computer centre. (1)

The inclusion of Rosie Douglas’ exclamation aligns him with a movement that was viewed as a dangerous import from the U.S. by the press and, by extension, the Canadian public. Douglas’ words position him as a revolutionary bent on disrupting the national peace of Canada. Prior to Douglas’ conviction, newspapers bore headlines that sought to raise alarm and printed articles that demonized the Black Panthers. “Black Panther leader urges war on racism” quotes Stokely Carmichael addressing a crowd at the Congress of Black Writers stating that a revolution won’t occur “until you pick up that gun and are prepared to kill for your people” (qtd. in 26). “In the Panther’s Wake” discusses “[r]umours of invasion” (A23) while profiling “Canada’s own Stokely Carmichael,” Rocky Jones. The journalist makes sure to note that he “saw two rifles, a shotgun, and a revolver during [his] stay” at the Jones’ home (A23). “Black Panthers active here, FBI says” proclaims that African Americans are

here to “spread their doctrine of revolution in Canada” (3). Each of these examples show how, just by quoting Douglas’ exclamation of “[l]ong live black power,” the article is able to position him as a dangerous individual (“Two sent to jail for leadership in role in Sir George Riot” 1).

2.3.4 Us vs Them

When I came to Canada, I did not view myself as an immigrant. I thought as myself as moving from one part of the British Empire to another. I came to Canada with little race consciousness because Barbados was a small island, never changed hands, always British with a homogenous population. So, when I think about it now, it’s a little bit amusing and didn’t at all prepare me for what I was to find. (qtd. in Ninth Floor)

-Anne Cools on the Canadian racial landscape

Journalists writing for the *Star*, the *Globe*, and the *Gazette* draw various distinctions between Canadian and international students by utilizing racial code words and the traditional xenophobic rhetoric of *us versus them*. The *Globe and Mail’s* “Two sent to jail for leadership role in Sir George riot” shows how West Indian students were treated differently than the Canadian students. The article reads,

Anne Cools, 27, of Barbados, found guilty of the [...] charge [of willful obstruction of the computer centre], was sentenced to six months in jail and fined \$1,000. Failure to pay the fine will result in an additional six months in jail. Brenda Dickonson-Dash (sic), of Montreal, convicted with [Rosie] Douglas and Miss Cools, was fined \$2,000 or six months in jail. She is given three months to pay the fine [...]. The judge told Miss Dickonson-Dash (sic) she had no right to be in the centre. She had let herself be egged on by foreign

agitators who had no more interest in black people than anyone else.
(1)

Anne Cools and Brenda Dickonson Dash received nearly identical sentences, but there is a clear distinction in how the students' crimes were regarded by the judge. The judge implies that Dickonson Dash, a Black Canadian, was manipulated by "foreign agitators" into causing trouble in the computer centre (1). Canadian-born women have no reason to participate in dissent because conditions in Canada are not nearly as reproachable as those abroad.

Anthony Stewart argues that to expose Canadian racism "is to risk one's acceptance, one's membership as a Canadian" ("Penn and Teller" 37). Brenda Dickonson Dash's participation in the occupation constituted a betrayal insofar as all Canadians are expected to keep up the façade that Canada does not have a problem with racism. The judge's dismissal of the group's "interest in black people" suggests that the international students never intended to seek out racial justice ("Two sent to jail for leadership roles in Sir George" 1). For the mind of the judge, the occupation of the computer centre was motivated by an inclination towards agitation.

Gazette writer Eddie Collister creates a dichotomy between Canadian and West Indian students by perpetuating a stereotype of the latter group. In "Noisy accused angers judge" he writes,

Judge McManamy ordered all the accused, who had been subpoenaed to court yesterday, to remain in the room. He added that those who had to leave the room could do so but must be kept under guard. However, he revoked this when the majority of the occupants rushed to the door, talking loudly and laughing [...] Judge McManamy lashed out angrily, saying the accused were "turning it (the order) into a joke" and that they appeared to be treating the whole affair with "levity." The judge added, "you don't seem to understand the serious penalties involved if you are committed to

trial and found guilty” [...] “I suggest your lawyers accept responsibility and explain the seriousness of the charges to you. The judge verbally reprimanded the group a third time before the end of yesterday’s session when the noise coming from the corridor interfered with testimony being given by a Montreal policeman. The group was ushered back into the courtroom where the judge told them “your conduct in the corridor was so disturbing it was impossible to carry on with the hearing. He promised “prompt action if this occurs again” and added: “It’s apparent what I told you this morning didn’t carry any weight. Your attitude in this case doesn’t impress the court.” (1-2)

News media personnel make very strategic decisions about what constitutes news, and because reporters aren’t able to include every detail in a given article, they reproduce what they see as the most important elements in a story (Henry and Tator 186). For Francis Henry and Carol Tator, “[t]his makes neutrality impossible” (186). It is interesting that Collister considered these events newsworthy. People talking loudly outside a courtroom does not exactly seem to warrant an article containing over 600 words, but according to agenda-setting theory, the simple act of reporting an event is what gives an event a semblance of importance. The coverage of the supposed bad behaviour of the West Indians present in court serves to perpetuate ideologies that enable a distinction between us and them. In this article, Collister rehearses various West Indian stereotypes. Judge McManamy scolds the mischievous West Indians as if they were childlike, pleasure seeking individuals who lack self-control. The coverage of this seemingly mundane event creates a stereotypical construction of race that might provide readers with the evidence they need to determine that the West Indians standing trial are guilty and deserving of punishment.

We are creating something, we are talking to each other. For years, Black people haven't talked to other Black people, they've talked to whites and say, "Look, here I am. This is what I am [...]." That is out. We are talking to each other. (qtd. in D. Austin 112)

-Walter Rodney on the Congress of Black Writers

The *Toronto Star's* headline "Montreal judge ejects Harlem rights leader" distances us from them by using the language of expulsion. The "Harlem rights leader" was exiled from a Canadian court implying that this figure does not belong in our space. The article states, "Rev. A. Kendall Smith of New York City was handing out pamphlets calling for the 'immediate release of the students' who are being illegally held without bail" (4). Judge Emmett J. McManamy presiding over the court reprimanded Rev. Smith saying, "it's amazing that a man of the cloth has no more respect for the laws of this country [...] especially when this country is not his own" (qtd. in "Montreal ejects Harlem rights leader" 4). This article reveals the criminalization of Black protest pointing out where it does not belong. The pamphlets advocating for a "'war' against racism" does not belong in the court of law (4). The judge emphasized *otherness* pointing out that "this country is not his own" articulating a common belief that guests of this country have a special responsibility to respect and uphold the laws (4). McManamy's statement may provide insight into the reason why the international students received harsher punishments than the Canadian-born students.

Arthur Blakely's "Student aliens checked" in the *Montreal Gazette* stresses the *otherness* of several of the students involved in the SGWA, distinguishing them from Canadians. The headline draws special attention to international students with the use of the

code word “aliens” and how they warrant the most surveillance. The body of the article continues to draw distinctions, and for that reason, it is worth quoting at length:

Manpower Minister MacEachen said in the Commons yesterday that immigration officials are checking the status of all non-Canadian students arrested following the vandalism at Sir George Williams University. He was replying to Warren Allmand (L-NDG) who said he understood “it has been determined that 45 out of the 96 accused...were non-Canadians or foreigners.” Mr. MacEachen said it was possible in certain circumstances to cancel student visas and Prime Minister Trudeau joined in the applause from Liberal MPs when the manpower minister went on to add: “But I do not think it would be desirable at this point for the immigration department to take action until the facts are clear, the identity of the responsible persons known and their culpability established.” He was asked by Marcel Prud’homme (L-Saint-Denis) if the Montreal police department had been in touch with him about the incident at Sir George Williams and if it was possible to issue a deportation order covering individuals involved in the damage to the building and equipment. Mr. MacEachen declined to answer the first question. On the second, he said: “...I assure the House that the provisions of the (immigration) regulations are broad enough to cover any possible contingency.” It was evident yesterday that the Federal Government is under heavy pressure from opposition critics to take immediate counter measures including a tightening up of procedures by which foreign students are admitted to Canada, a careful examination of the immigration regulations themselves by a parliamentary committee, or the deportation of non-Canadian students guilty of taking part in or causing disorders at Canadian universities. Conservative justice critic Eldon Wooliams (Calgary North) called for a full probe of the immigration department itself, to establish “why we permit a large percentage of foreigners to come into Canada -particularly from the United States -and cause trouble in our universities costing the taxpayers of Canada large sums of money.” Mr. Wooliams said that the costs ran into the “millions” of dollars and charged that a full inquiry was needed to deal with the “crisis” at Canadian universities. Outside the Commons, Mr. Wooliams said that he had no intention of singling out foreign students for punishment. Canadian students, he pointed out, were not covered by immigration regulations. And in any event, Mr. Wooliams said, he was impressed by the numbers of foreign students, especially those who had earlier caused disorders in American universities who had come to Canada to do the same thing here. (“Student aliens checked 1”)

Blakely makes clear use of the discourse of *us versus them*. The journalist emphasizes the students' status as *Other* by utilizing racial codes words synonymous with "outsider." "Non-Canadian," and "foreigner" appear twice, "foreign" three times, and "non-Canadians," appears once (1). These code words are used in conjunction with others connoting criminal activities and offence as well as terms and phrases expressing general inconvenience such as "vandalism," "arrested," "culpability," "responsible persons," "individuals involved," "damage," "accused," "incident," "cause trouble," "guilty," "caused" and "causing disorders," "costing the tax payers large sums of money," "'millions' of dollars," and "'crisis'" (1). Several other terms and phrases suggest surveillance, policing and punishment from various Ideological and Repressive State Apparatuses such as 'Manpower Minister (x2)," "Commons" (x2), "immigration officials," "checking the status," "cancel student visas," "immigration department" (x2), "House," "take action," "Montreal police department," "deportation order," "regulations," "Federal Government," "take immediate counter measures," "tightening up of procedures," "careful examination," "immigration regulations" (x3), "parliamentary committee," "deportation," "full probe," "full inquiry," and "punishment" (1). The othering terms and phrases used in conjunction with language denoting criminality that warrants action stand in contradistinction to the "us" rhetoric. Terms and phrases such as "Canada" (x), "Canadian universities (x2), "we," "our universities," "taxpayers of Canada," and "Canadian students" all imply a sense of belonging and seek to *other* the students accused of involvement in the Sir George Williams Affair. Also, of interest in this passage is Mr. Wooliams' use of the affair as an excuse to purport an anti-immigration stance. He sees the offending students as an adequate sample size to derive

evidence regarding the characters of international students (read African American and West Indian) as a whole and argues that Canada should close its borders to all.

The *Toronto Star* printed a story that complained of international students draining valuable Canadian resources. “Judge Mackay: His trademark is unwavering integrity” reports that the judge, remarking on his decision not to sentence any students to prison, says: “[y]ou have already cost the Canadian taxpayers enough. I will not burden them with the cost of having to support you in Canadian prisons” (A3). This comment echoes the sentiment of Mr. Wooliams. Mackay states that the West Indian students have been costing Canadian taxpayers far too much money. He also makes use of the discourse of *us versus them* using the accusatory “you” to identify the students, juxtaposing it with the “I” who is protecting the “we” of the “Canadian taxpayers” (A3). Mackay’s comments are prefaced with several flattering quotations directed at the judge himself. A former law partner, Joseph Porteous says, “[h]e [Mackay] is a man of absolute integrity” and Henry Steinberg, another former partner, describes Mackay as “a man with a finely honed sense of justice and a great guy” (A3). The journalist’s decision to profile the judge in such a positive light reveals a political bias. The headline paired with the quotations from the former law partners bolsters Mackay’s ethos making his position on taxes far more persuasive. If a man of “unwavering integrity” says that West Indians are costing Canadians far too much money, he must be telling the truth (A3).

Letters to the editor also made use of the discourse of *us versus them*. For Henry and Tator, the media reflect a particular vision of reality that supports its own interests and

ideologies. It tends to purport a reality that supports the beliefs and values of its readers (7).

Gazette reader Dr. G. Morf writes,

[L]et me ask a few questions: were the occupants of the computer centre not admitted to Canada as guests for the purpose of studying? Why did they not keep their most basic obligation while still insisting on their rights – and their tuition? The takeover was just one more example of a widespread attempt to break up legality. For a law which is not applied becomes null and void. Nobody can still believe that this had anything to do with the charge of racism – it is racism the other way round. (8)

Dr. Morf's questions are not genuine inquiries. They are declarative sentences insofar as they presuppose confirmation or agreement from readers. The questions imply that Canada is a hospitable nation, welcoming in foreign students who take advantage of her goodwill. The militant students, responsible for the "takeover," came here with the intent of violating the sanctity of law, unleashing anarchy on the benevolent nation. Robert Entman and Andrew Rojecki argue that racism in the media often manifests itself as resistance to accepting or acknowledging the political demands of Black people. The media often portray these demands as greediness or as the belief that Black people are demanding special treatment (Henry and Tator 166). Dr. Morf is certainly guilty of demonstrating this line of thinking in his denial of the existence of racism, the subscription to the belief in reverse racism, and to the goodness of the Canadian nation state.

The writer of "SGWU grads from Toronto raise cash" quotes a former student who purports *us versus them* ideology by highlighting West Indians' supposed inability to assimilate into Canadian society. The journalist writes, "Mr. Reidblatt, who estimated that 500 Sir George Williams graduates residing in Toronto, said the West Indian students at the

Montreal university stuck together because they were poor and not familiar with Canadian life, not because of racism against them” (3). Reidblatt is interested in protecting the reputation of Sir George Williams University. In order to do so, he attributed West Indian shortcomings to cultural deficiencies including financial issues and unassimilable attitudes. His disavowal of the existence of racism makes use of a type of ideological colourblindness known as cultural racism. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva defines cultural racism as “a frame that relies on culturally based arguments [...] to explain the standing of minorities in society” (28). Reidblatt’s argument exonerated the university of any wrongdoing by placing blame on apparent cultural inadequacies.

The arrest of the West Indian students involved in the Sir George Williams Affair served as a catalyst for protests aboard. The newspapers took this opportunity to draw attention to the lawlessness of the West Indies distinguishing these countries from Canadian stability in terms of law and order. The writer of *Globe and Mail’s* “Lalonde said visit was urgent” states, “[t]here has been demonstrations in Trinidad protesting the trial in Canada of the 10 [Trinidadians charged in connection with the affair]. Branches of three Canadian banks—the Royal Bank of Canada, the Canadian Imperial Bank of Canada, and the Bank of Nova Scotia—had been damaged” (1). Here, the journalist emphasizes the havoc that broke out on the streets of Trinidad, and symbols of the Canadian nation were attacked. Canada is positioned as the helpless victim of Trinidadian anger. Rae Corelli’s “Trinidad blacks shout ‘Power!’ in 30-mile march” printed in the *Toronto Star* reads,

[t]en thousand Black Power marchers invaded nearby sugarfields yesterday under red and black revolutionary banners and a tropical sun [...] The march came at the end of the second week of Anti-

Canadian, anti-government fire-bombings and demonstrations
touched off by Montreal conspiracy trials of the West Indians. (5)

Corelli begins by rendering a cinematic scene of dramatic militant might. Although the marchers occupy sugarfields, the journalist makes it seem as if Canada was the real target of West Indian Black Power aggression. This journalist along with the other writers who utilized xenophobic discourse all contribute to national mythmaking by presenting Canada as an innocent and helpless victim under threat from dangerous foreign influences. This victimization makes Canada seem as if it is incapable of committing racist atrocities.

2.3.5 Historicizing, Contextualizing, and Analyzing Xenophobic Discourse

The *Toronto Star*, the *Globe and Mail*, and the *Montreal Gazette* coverage blamed international students for the Sir George Williams Affair. Emphasizing the *otherness* of those involved situated Black activism as originating beyond Canadian borders. Political action was regarded as being imported from the outside. If activism belongs to someplace else, racism too, must belong elsewhere. The externalization of racism is integral to maintaining two Canadian national narratives, the Myth of the Two Solitudes and the Myth of the North Star.

Many have posited that the Canadian national identity has been structured around the two solitudes, the English and the French. Canada first encountered the phrase “two solitudes” in a 1945 Hugh MacLennan novel bearing the same title. The novel depicts the strained relationship between the Anglophone and Francophone peoples of Canada, and the phrase continues to describe the relative autonomy between the two groups today. The

embracing of the two solitudes seems to present Canada as a nation founded upon of plurality of cultures, but many Canadian authors refer to this façade of inclusion as an organizational structure that prevents other cultures from calling this country home. Martin Allor claims that Canada's origin story starring "two founding peoples" has led to an erasure of the First Nations to which this land rightfully belongs (Mackey 14). For Eva Mackey, the myth presents Canada as a vacant space, a "terra nullius" ripe for the taking (14). For Dionne Brand, all who reside in Canada are "asked to coalesce around the English and the French identities rather than any true tracings of the make-up of inhabitants of this country" (141). Similarly, George Elliott Clarke argues that, "[t]he 'original two solitudes' of Canadian nationalism – Anglo and Québécois – have never had a vision of Canada as anything other than a white man's country" (qtd. in Waters 40). Embracing the two solitudes has only meant an embracing of white European identities.

Canada has attempted to preserve its whiteness through a variety of tactics including racially exclusive immigration policies. The superintendent of immigration from 1903-1924, William D. Scott demonstrated his will to "avoid the 'negro problem'" by seconding Abraham Lincoln's desire to ship Black people back to Africa (qtd. in D. Austin 161). The Imperial Order Daughters of Empire showed opposition to the presence of Black people stating,

[w]e do not wish that the fair fame of Western Canada should be sullied with the shadow of Lynch Law but have no guarantee that our women will be safer in their scattered homesteads than white women in other countries with a Negro population. (qtd. in D. Austin 162)

Wilfrid Laurier also barred Black people from entering Canada insisting that they could not adapt to the cold climate (162). Even after Canada did open its doors to Black immigrants to, as Austin puts it, “work in jobs that White Canadians largely refused to do,” the country continued to erase Black life from its landscape (163). Katherine McKittrick cites the following examples: the razing of Durham Road Cemetery in the 1930s, Africville in 1967, Hogan’s Alley in 1970, and the renaming of Negro Creek Road to Moggie Road in the 1990s, the renaming of Caribana, and the ongoing debate over the name of Nigger Rock (McKittrick 96). In *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*, Katherine McKittrick writes,

[i]n terms of black Canada, the displacement of black subjects and histories is achieved by attaching categories such as race, ethnicity, nation, and home to the United States and the Caribbean. To belong in Black Canada is to belong elsewhere. This process of naming Canadian blackness as Caribbean or U.S. unhinges black people from Canada while, also reducing black specificities to an all-encompassing elsewhere (simply non-Canadian). (99)

The effect of the systemic erasure of Blackness from Canada, the relegating of Black people to a place external to Canada results in Black lives inhabiting a perpetual state of “absented presence” or “inbetweenness” (“Black Like Who? 36).

For McKittrick, the erasure of Black presence is tied to a desire to prohibit Black subjects from contributing to the production of space. She argues that the presence of Black Canadian protest has the ability to force a re-evaluation of space insofar as it is capable of evoking both surprise and wonder. McKittrick writes,

surprise is contained in the material, political, and social landscape that presumes-and fundamentally requires-that subaltern populations

have no relationship to the production of space. Surprise takes place when [...] these populations are recognized as viable geographic subjects who live and negotiate the world around them in complex ways [...] the element of surprise, then, holds black Canada in tension with the nation's ceaseless outlawing of blackness: blackness is surprising because it should not be here, was not here before, was always here, is only momentarily here, was always over there (beyond Canada for example). (92-93)

There is no doubt that the occupation of the Sir George Williams University computer centre surprised complacent Canadians and the complacent state. The Black students involved in the sit-in refused to be contained thus demonstrating an “ongoing [...] refusal of a passive relationship with race and space” (93). Surprise is often succeeded by revolutionary potential sparked by feelings of wonder that are “inevitably attached to new sensations, new ideas that were previously unavailable” (93). The recognition of Black Canadian presence brought about by the presence of Black Canadian protest forces a re-evaluation of Canada as a white nation that forbids marginalized subjects from contributing to the production of space. If this re-evaluation is successful, it will severally undermine the Myth of the Two Solitudes. For this reason, the media, tasked with upholding national myths, must necessarily attribute the activism on display at SGWU to troublemakers from abroad. The Canadian news media goes to extreme lengths to portray racism, and by extension anti-racist activism, as undesirable imports. Without this particular media tactic, the national narratives will come crashing down under the weight of the foot soldiers engaged in opposing the racism imbedded in Canadian institutions.

Paradoxically, the narrative of white Canada built around English and French identities exists alongside a narrative of racial inclusion that originated long before the adoption of the Multicultural Policy in 1971. Canada enjoyed an international reputation for

serving as a “north star” leading escaped slaves to freedom. The power of the Myth of the North Star is best articulated in Martin Luther King Jr.’s 1967 Massey Lecture. He states,

Canada is not merely a neighbour to Negroes. Deep in our history of struggle for freedom, Canada was a North Star. The Negro slave, denied education, dehumanized and imprisoned on cruel plantations knew that far to the north a land existed where a fugitive slave, if he survived the horrors of the journey, could find freedom [...] We sang of the hope that his escape on the Underground Railroad would carry him there. And so, standing today in Canada, I am linked with the history of my people and its unity with your past. The Underground Railroad could not bring freedom to many Negroes, yet it did something far greater. It symbolized a possible hope when freedom was almost an impossible dream. Our spirit never died.

Canada’s promise of freedom nourished the downtrodden souls of the enslaved. For King and many others, Canada was regarded as a beacon of hope welcoming the enslaved out of subjection into a land of freedom. The presence of Black Canadian political activism, more specifically, anti-racism activism, contests the Myth of the North Star. The newspapers must make racism appear as if it belongs elsewhere in order to bolster the nation’s self-purported international image.

2.4 MORAL ALARM

It was definitely a great atmosphere. There was a sense of comradeship, and when the occupation took place, we went in order to make sure it didn’t go bad. Obviously, we wanted the matter settled, and that was the intention; that was the aim. (qtd. in Ninth Floor)

-Valerie Belgrave on the occupation

White Canada views Black activism as an enemy of the state and as a source of moral alarm. Moral alarm is an exaggerated public response to an entity or circumstance that is perceived to be threat to the social order. It is often raised by politicians during political campaigns and journalists who provide sensationalized media coverage. The *Montreal Gazette*, the *Toronto Star*, and the *Globe and Mail* utilized alarmist discourse surrounding Black activism and its supposed link to communism. This discourse was used to portray anti-racist resistance as a threatening presence. “Campus disturbances linked to agitators in the U.S., RCMP says” printed in the *Globe and Mail* reads,

[d]isturbances on Canadian university campuses were linked by the RCMP yesterday to visits by militant agitators from the United States. [...] Disturbances at Sir George Williams and McGill Universities in Montreal followed visits by people from the United States. (1)

The unnamed journalist of this article accuses American Black Power advocates of bringing their brand of violent politics to the peaceful Canadian nation. The journalist uses alarmist rhetoric in order to alert readers to the threat that Black Power poses to Canada writing that Commissioner Kelly of the RCMP “warned that different militant organizations are seeking to consolidate their leadership. He also warns of a danger of a link between what he called red and black power” (1). The repetition of the word “warned” suggests that Canadians have something to fear regarding interracial coalitions between anti-racist groups. Alarm bells continue to ring on page 2:

[a]nswering Lincoln Alexander (PC, Hamilton West), he [Kelly] said the Black Panther movement in the United States has direct contact

with “certain people here in Canada.” The Black Panthers took over the Montreal hemispheric conference for a time. Then they travelled to Halifax and other Canadian cities, he said, and either created trouble or laid the basis for future trouble. Commissioner Kelly said there is no doubt in his mind that this type of activity will increase. (2)

The fear of Black Power involvement and takeover in Canada articulated in these articles is actually a fear of anti-racist political organization. By linking anti-racist activities to troublemakers from the U.S., Canada is exonerated from all charges of racism. If the Sir George Williams Affair was brought about by external troublemakers, then racism must too be external.

The writer of the *Gazette*'s “Ravaged building reopens” articulated the paranoia surrounding security at Sir George Williams following the occupation of the computer lab.

The journalist writes,

[t]he building is under heavy security and all the students, faculty and staff have been warned they will not be admitted unless they can produce identification cards [...] Students who cannot find their ID cards will have to get new ones. A force of seven security men were at the front door yesterday and even accredited reporters had their briefcases searched. (3)

The school appeared to be on lock-down as security insisted on identifying all who wished to pass through the doors of the Hall Building. Everyone became a potential suspect. By employing the word “even,” the journalist only demonstrates shock that reporters were searched (3). Students and faculty who work and study at the school have more right to access the building than “accredited journalists,” but this writer suggests that the heavy security was warranted for these groups as no expression of surprise is mentioned in relation to them (3).

In a letter to the *Gazette* editor, Dr. G. Morf made use of hyperbole to draw comparisons between Black activism and fascism. He writes,

[t]he forces behind these attempts [of protest] call themselves “socialist.” Those amongst us who witnessed the rise of Hitler can testify that the methods employed by black power, the new left etc. are those of Hitler: the number of ever growing and ever graver illegal acts, defiance of authority, blackmail by accomplished facts—all with the goal of destroying legality. Hitler too called himself a socialist, he exploited the softness and confusion of those in power, he too tried out from month to month how far he could go without sanction, he too made his own law until he could make the laws for most of Europe. Our militant socialist students (many of them no students at all) have publicly declared that they were using “labor tactics.” This means they claim the right to form unions, go on strike, occupy the premises of their “employer” etc. (I hope this will force our labor unions to do some hard thinking). The same students have also declared that they will use “revolutionary tactics.” They obviously believe in class war: the “students” being cast in the role of the underdog. A new form of dictatorship of the proletariat (and of the mob) is being tried out before our very eyes. The raised fist symbolizes their will to smash anyone who opposes them. (8)

Gazette reader, Dr. G. Morf makes use of a faulty comparison. The equating of Black political tactics with those of Hitler is completely ridiculous. The damage to the computer at SGWU did not equal the millions of lives lost as a result of Hitler’s genocidal campaign. In his use of such an extreme comparison, Dr. Morf employs the logic of reverse racism, suggesting that Black socialists are inflicting terror upon whites. The logic employed in Morf’s comparison is shockingly similar to contemporary alt-right rhetoric that equates Hitler’s democratic socialism with contemporary socialism, which in turn paints anti-racist activities as anti-democratic. Morf’s anti-unionist rhetoric suggests a desire to maintain the current class structure ensuring that he, as a presumably wealthy doctor, will maintain his position at the top. Finally, Morf misinterprets the “raised fist” (actually symbolizing

solidarity and resistance) assuming that it is a sign of violent intentions. This misinterpretation reveals the extent to which powerful white Canadians are threatened by the presence of, and, not to mention, completely out of touch with Black activism (8).

Arthur Blakely's "SGWU debacle may alter future for Peking issue" linked the events to communism. Blakley writes,

[t]he violence and vandalism at Sir George Williams University may affect negotiations for an exchange of diplomatic recognition by Canada and Communist China. Conservation and Credite party spokesman bombarded the Trudeau government yesterday with demands that federal authorities take prompt action to check the activities of Maoist oriented student radicals who, they claimed were responsible for much of the unrest at Sir George Williams and other Canadian universities. Gilbert Rondeau (Cred.-Shepporf) demanded an insurance that the federal government and the RCMP would investigate the activities and the involvement of the Maoist radicals with "the same vigor, the same tenacity" that had uncovered the operations of the FLQ and other separatist organizations in connection with Quebec bombings a few years ago [...] former Socred leader Robert Thompson, now Conservative member for Red Deer said he was disturbed by reports "that a sizable number of students who were involved in the sabotage and destruction at Sir George Williams University at the time of their arrest carrying and quoting from copies of Mao Tse-tung's little red book." This fact, he said, must be considered in the light of recent policy statements by Red Chinese leaders that Maoists Communists must encourage upheavals in all countries. ("SGWU" 1)

Here Blakley deploys hyperbolic rhetoric and demonstrates moral panic in his report that the SGWA is having international ramifications and is destroying diplomatic relations between Canada and communist China. The request for "prompt action" to be taken against Maoist students demonstrates that communists are regarded as terrorists by equating them with the FLQ (1). Finally, Thompson pulls the "foreign agitators' card" by saying that the students

involved in the occupation are, in fact, Maoists. These points, taken together, position the activists as communist terrorists who seek to destroy the free world. The article continues:

[f]ormer Prime Minister Diefenbaker said he had been pressing the federal government since last November to exclude from Canada “well recognized revolutionaries who are coming here disturbing peace in various universities and colleges.” He urged those coming here advocating violence and the overthrow of government by force to be deported [...] Mr. Trudeau reminded him that the immigration department was already investigating the immigration status of non-Canadians arrested in Montreal as a result of the anarchy at Sir George [...] Mr. Diefenbaker insisted that the government had been wrong in allowing [Jerry] Rubin and Stokely Carmichael” to enter Canada “to carry on their illegal if not criminal activities with impunity. (2)

Diefenbaker clearly makes use of *us versus them* rhetoric in his assertion that Canada’s peaceful environment is disrupted by outsiders. Diefenbaker also suggests that what Black activists really want is not to usher in equality but to overthrow the government. If the quotation above did not fully make the connection between terrorism and activism clear, Blakely definitely seals the deal in this passage through the use of a single word. Paraphrasing Diefenbaker, Blakely expresses that the international students intend to “overthrow the government” (2). He then selects the word “anarchy” to describe the events at Sir George thus seconding Diefenbaker’s opinion that the aim of the students was to “overthrow the government” (2). The students have already successfully unleashed anarchy on a micro scale and pose a direct threat to the macro. The entire country is in jeopardy due to the presence of left leaning international students. The article then goes on to blame Rubin and Carmichael for the resistant activities in Montréal, suggesting that barring the two activists would have prevented the events. Activism is also demonized as the two are

accused of committing “illegal if not criminal acts” (2). What exactly is criminal about activism is not mentioned.

2.4.1 Historicizing, Contextualizing, and Analyzing Moral Alarm

The *Star*, the *Post*, and the *Gazette* attempted to create what Stanley Cohen theorized as moral panic in 1972. In *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of Mods and Rockers*, Cohen identifies the media’s role in constructing reality (Henry and Tator 139). Moral panic, as defined by Tator and Henry, “refers to the tendency for a large part of society to consolidate in response to a threat, which can be real or imagined” (140). Moral panic is a response to the fear of the breakdown of moral order that places all of society in jeopardy and some sort of action must occur to minimize or abolish the threat through the tightening of control. Cohen writes,

[s]ocieties appear to be subject, every now and then, to periods of moral panic. A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media... Sometimes the subject of the panic is quite novel and at other times it is something which has been in existence long enough but suddenly appears in the limelight. Sometimes the panic passes over and is forgotten...at other times it has more serious and long-lasting repercussions and might produce such changes as those in legal and social policy or even in the way society conceives itself. (qtd. in Henry and Tator 140)

For Cohen, moral panics are a response to a folk devil, a recognizable symbol or embodiment of evil with no positive qualities. Henry and Tator add that “the nucleus of any moral panic is not the object of its symbolic resonances-not the folk devil itself. Rather the folk devil

serves as the ideological embodiment of the moral panic” (140). Folk devils often appear in the media as stock characters bent on destroying the entire social order.

Black political activists have been deemed a great threat to the Canadian nation whose racism has been masked by the Myth of the North Star. The international students were assigned political affiliations with Maoists Communists and the Black Panthers. Whether or not these affiliations were accurate or not, the mention of these organizations discredited the activists and singled them out for special forms of punishment. The West Indian and American activists do not appear to readers as fully formed human beings with fully formed consciousnesses. They instead appear only as a sum of their bad qualities, evildoers bent on destroying the social order; they are loud, irrational, irresponsible, and violent. Their representations in the press make it easy to forget that they are Black students attempting to earn university degrees in an institution that discounts their experiences, histories, and epistemologies all while penalizing them for the colour of their skin.

Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda add to Stanley Cohen’s formulations of moral panic articulating three different types. The first type is based on an interest group where the panic is the outcome of what Henry and Tator refer to as “a moral crusade” initiated by a particular group such as law enforcement or the media (140). The media are particularly invested in creating and sustaining anxiety over violence, drugs, immigration etc. as it benefits from keeping sensational stories in the news (163). The second type is an elite-engineered type defined as “the conscious and deliberate outcome of a manufactured campaign designed to divert attention from a real social crisis” (140). Finally, the grassroots variety is created by the general public and manifests itself in the media. This type “provides

a cathartic release for more fundamental, deep-seated reservoirs of social insecurity” (141). All three types collide to produce the moral panic demonstrated in the *Toronto Star*, the *Globe and Mail*, and the *Montreal Gazette*. Law enforcement and the media reflecting the ideologies of the general public joined forces to divert attention away from a harmful issue impacting the nation.

Newspapers and their readers are bound in a dialectical relationship. Agenda-setting theory, defined by Mark Cronlund Anderson and Carmen L. Roberts, holds that the media demonstrate to the general public what is important simply by making decisions regarding what constitutes news (8). However, the media also function as a mirror that reflects back to readers what they already believe to be true (15). Finally, to reiterate one of this essay’s primary tenets, it is in the nation’s best interest to preserve its semblance of innocence and in its role as an ideological state apparatus, the press acts in favour of national interests by diverting attention away from the real crisis that plagues the Canadian nation, namely racism. Black anti-racist activism has been regarded as one of the biggest threats to this nation state insofar as it possesses the ability to shatter Canada’s international image of a safe haven for the oppressed. It only makes sense that in times of racial turmoil, the nation would attempt to exonerate itself from an act of racism by blaming activism on a group of troublemakers who have brought their problems with them from their home countries.

2.5 CONCLUSION

The work of Dionne Brand explains why the myths of the Two Solitudes and the North Star must be sustained at all costs to maintain national narratives and why the presence of Black

Canadians and their activism is feared and disavowed, and what the impacts of this disavowal are. In *Bread out of Stone: Recollections on Sex, Recognitions, Race, Dreaming, and Politics*, Brand observes that there is a tendency for Canada to masquerade as a “historyless place, at least not a place charged with a [...] hostile history” (138). Official Canadian history begins with the English and the French. At the heart of Canada lies a gaping void, “an absence striking its centre—namely the people who predate the English and the French” (139), the First Nations peoples who are “treated as an uncomfortable and unwelcomed intrusion in the present” (140). Also, obliterated from our national memory are the 200 years of enslavement of Black and Indigenous peoples (Maynard 21). A recognition of a Black and Indigenous past necessarily means the acknowledgement of a brutal history of colonialism, genocide, and slavery. For this reason, First Nations peoples are ignored and forgotten while Black people are seen as perpetual outsiders, foreigners on Canadian soil. The maintenance of the myths of the Two Solitudes and the North Star enable this forgetting of the past as both narratives ensure that Blackness will never truly belong and will function only as planted “evidence” of Canadian benevolence. Like all things repressed, these buried histories are doomed to return again and again in the form of symptoms. The residual effects of slavery will be explored in the chapters to come.

Chapter 3 Rampage on Yonge: The Yonge Street Uprising and the Myth of Black Criminality

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the “Myth of Black Criminality,” Paul Gilroy observes that the left and right have reached a consensus regarding race and crime. Both sides of the political spectrum see Blackness and criminality as intrinsically bound, and this supposed bond provides evidence that Black people are “incompatible with the standards of decency and civilization which the [British] nation requires of its citizenry” (122). Crimes committed by Black people are regarded as an attack on the nation and thus are positioned as enemies of the state. Certain crimes even come to be regarded as “expressive of those who commit them” (123). Citing an example found in a Socialist publication *What’s to be Done with Law and Order?*, Gilroy observes a tendency for leftist thinkers to view the presence of Black crime as attributable to the fact that Black people organize themselves politically in ways that are “so incongruent with Britishness that they are incapable of sustaining life!” (123). In this sense, Black crime and politics are bound becoming “aspects of the same fundamental problem—a dissident black population” thus “[s]treet crime and street protests are elided into a single phenomenon: ‘street crime’” (123).

The journalists covering the Sir George Williams Affair of 1969 went to great lengths to equate activism and crime. The discourse of criminalization was mobilized more than two decades later to frame an instance of Black activism that occurred on the streets of Toronto on May 4, 1992. In this chapter, I will take a closer look at the way this discourse delegitimizes anti-racist protest. I examine how journalists from the *Toronto Star*, the *Globe*

and Mail, and the *Montreal Gazette* covering the Yonge Street Uprising criminalized Black political organization in order to propagate the Canadian national myth of racial inclusivity. In order for this myth to endure, white Canada disregarded protest as a legitimate response to the existence of racism on Canadian soil. These journalists interpreted the presence of protest as evidence of the Black predisposition to criminal behaviour.

The Yonge Street Uprising was a deliberate attempt to demonstrate that the racial landscape in Canada is not so different from that of the United States. Due to the activism of the Black Action Defence Committee on May 4, 1992, white Canadians who shook their heads in shame regarding the excessive force used by American police officers in the beating of Rodney King were forced to confront the police killings of Black males taking place in their own backyards. Journalists covering the uprising desperately attempted to reconcile the events of May 4th with the city's reputation as "Toronto The Good" in order to protect the country's international reputation of being, to use David Austin's words, "a paragon of virtue and a keeper of the democratic spirit" (163). Two major discourses were deployed in service of this reconciliation. The first was the discourse of the minimization of racism. Minimizing racism was accomplished through the problematic rendering of cause and effect that identified the origin of the uprising in locations other than persistent and ongoing anti-Black racism. The second discourse, the discourse of dichotomies, flipped the roles of activity and passivity: using dichotomy and antithesis, journalists situated protestors as actors driving the violence, whereas the city, shopkeepers, and police were designated as the passive recipients of violence. In this chapter, I will pick up where I left off in Chapter 1, exploring how the

repression of racism causes the manifestation of discursive symptoms that provide evidence of the afterlife of slavery in Canada.

3.2 THE EVENTS

We are justice loving people, and as justice loving people living in this country, we recognize that racism is here. We will take action. (Toronto Street Riot 1992)

-Akua Benjamin at the Black Action Defence Committee demonstration

The 1990s are described by Rinaldo Walcott and Idil Abdilliahi as “Black Canada’s ‘arrival’ (12). Political art produced by Black Canadians burst into the mainstream making Black presence harder to disavow than it had been in previous decades (12). This revolution meant that Blackness could not be externalized like it had been in the days of the Sir George Williams Affair. Walcott and Abdillahi describe Black life in Toronto in the following manner:

Back then, we danced to Maestro Fresh Wes letting our backbone slide; hear Liberty Silver croon in jazz and supper clubs; the Dream Warriors exploded in Europe with their cool, inflected jazzy hip hop, Devon called on us to “keep up the pressure” in his song and video “Mr. Metro” about anti-Black police violence; Acid Jazz Wednesdays at the Cameron House were lit; the late Austin Clarke returned to the literary scene, Dionne Brand emerged as one of our most important poets; Djanet Sears owned the theatre stages; dub poetry and its practitioners howled Black resistance-This was the Black 1990s and it seemed, then, that it would continue in perpetuity. (14)

Black presence and resistance was on full display on May 4, 1992. This day was a day that municipal, provincial, and national politicians, law makers and enforcers would rather forget. It was a day that the world turned a critical gaze toward a country previously regarded as a peaceful nation and began to question its status as a racially inclusive safe haven for oppressed peoples. May 4, 1992 was the day that “Toronto the Good” descended into chaos. On April 29, 1992 four Los Angeles officers were acquitted for the brutal beating of a Black motorist, Rodney King. Two days later an allegedly knife-wielding 22-year-old Black Torontonionian by the name of Raymond Lawrence was shot twice in the chest and killed by undercover police officer, Robert Rice. No fingerprints were found on the knife (Maynard 104).

Violence toward the Black community perpetrated by police was hardly a unique occurrence in Toronto. In 1988, a 17-year-old

You can never control a people who have been brutalized (qtd. in Kuitenbrouwer)

-Dudley Laws on police brutality

Black teen, Michael Wade Lawson, accused of riding in a stolen vehicle, was shot in the back of the head and killed. The other boy who survived the arrest reported being called a “jigaboo” and a “nigger” by police while being apprehended (qtd. in Webb Proctor A14). The two officers involved, Anthony Lelaragni and Darren Longpre, were acquitted of all wrongdoing on April 7, 1992. Lawson had been killed amidst, what may be aptly termed, a shooting spree by the Toronto police. Four months prior to Lawson’s death, a mentally ill 44-year-old Black man suffering from schizophrenia, Lester Donaldson was shot dead in his home after police received reports that hostages were being held (Maynard 104). No hostages

were found at the scene. The officer responsible, David Deviney, was acquitted despite being previously investigated for an assault just a few years prior on another Black man who he had mistaken for someone else (Nunes A11). Deviney later received a slap on the wrist for using the terms “’apes” and “’niggers” to describe Black people (Maynard 103). In October of 1989 Sophia Cook, a mother of a 2-year-old boy, was temporarily paralyzed by a police bullet that struck her in the chest and exited through her back. Cook was allegedly “shot accidentally” after she caught a ride from someone driving a stolen vehicle (Macleod A17). Officer Cameron Durham was acquitted in 1994 (104).

In May of 1990, Marlon Neal, an unarmed 16-year-old Black teen survived two gunshot wounds to the back after attempting to flee a radar trap (Lalonde A9). In that case, Officer Brian Rapson was found not guilty of criminal negligence causing bodily harm, attempted murder, and aggravated assault in 1991 (Toronto Media Co-op). A year later, 21-year-old Royan Bagnaut was shot and seriously injured by Sergeant Douglas Lines who was originally charged with criminal negligence causing bodily harm before being acquitted in 1993.

Ongoing excessive violence perpetrated by police prompted the formation of the activist group, the Black Action Defence Committee (BADC). The BADC formed by Dudley Laws, Charles Roach, Sherona Hall, and Lennox Farrell after the shooting of Donaldson sprung to action to protest Lawrence’s death. On May 4th, the group lead a peaceful demonstration that began on University Avenue at the U.S. Embassy before heading toward the intersections of Yonge and Bloor (Black). Here, a peaceful sit-in was maintained for 45 minutes where chants of “’[n]o justice, no peace!” filled the downtown streets (qtd. in

Black). The protestors moved on to City Hall where speeches were made before the official end of the demonstration was announced. Many, dissatisfied with the decision to end the protest, remained on the streets. This is when the so-called “riot” began. The crowd hurled rocks, bottles, and molotovs through plate glass windows and at police, overturned garbage cans, and looted stores. Police were mobilized an hour and a half after the riot broke out. By this time, much of the crowd had dispersed, but the remaining protestors were charged by police brandishing billy clubs.

In response to the uprising, the NDP government commissioned Stephen Lewis, former leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party, to write a report on race relations in the province of Ontario (Black). In his report, Lewis observes that anti-black racism was to blame for a disproportionate number of Black people being shot and for disadvantages in terms of housing, employment, and education (2). Lewis writes, “[j]ust as the soothing balm of ‘multiculturalism’ cannot mask racism, no ‘racism’ can mask its primary target” (2). From his meetings with People of Colour, Lewis observes the “anger, anxiety, frustration and impatience” that marginalized peoples experience while waiting for the implementation of beneficial race relations policies (2). Lewis also notes that fear is common among members of the Black community, particularly mothers who fear their children will fall victim to trigger-happy police (2). Based on his findings, Stephen Lewis called for several recommendations which then prompted the NDP government to introduce anti-racist policies, reforms pertaining to education, and an increased funding for programs for Black youth (Black).

The events of May 4th, 1992 sparked a media frenzy. Journalists referred to the event as a riot in order to insulate the white racial state from being compelled to change. Black scholars and allies prefer to use the term uprising to refer to the event. As Shree Paradkar mentions in her retrospective *Toronto Star* article, “The Yonge St. Riot of 1992...or was it an uprising?,” discourse matters. Paradkar quotes Simon Black, co-producer of a documentary film commemorating the 25th anniversary of the event stating, “[w]hen it’s black people involved, the media labels it a riot. [...]. This has to do with long-standing tropes around black criminality” (qtd. in Paradkar). Paradkar adds “[t]he word ‘riot’ connotes violence emanating from an immature, unruly mob. It condemns protesters without condemning the conditions that led to their protest.” It is unfortunate that it took 25 years for the media to present a progressive view of the uprising.

3.3 MINIMIZATION OF RACISM

The journalists of the *Toronto Star*, the *Globe and Mail*, and the *Montreal Gazette* employed the tactic of minimizing racism by establishing problematic links between cause and effect. The first few authors refuse to name a cause for the Yonge Street Uprising but insist that whatever initiated the riot definitely couldn’t have been racism. For this reason, I am referring to these examples as the “Anything but Racism” frame. In refusing to name an origin, these authors inferred the senselessness of anti-racist protest. The second way that journalists minimized racism was by utilizing anti-activist discourse that attributes the cause of the riot to the occurrence of the protest and neglecting to cite the police killing of Raymond Lawrence. Journalists who wrote articles of this sort refused to acknowledge that anti-Black racism motivated the events of May 4th. The third set of articles used the discourse of irresponsible

reporting, placing the onus on the media's treatment of Lawrence's death, which according to writers, incited black rage. The final set of articles used the discourse of criminality, and in turn, depoliticized the uprising by refusing to acknowledge it as an act of resistance.

3.3.1 "Anything but racism"

Journalists covering the Yonge Street Uprising expressed surprise that a racially motivated event could happen in a place like Canada, and thus employed denial as an expression of nationalism that precludes criticism and excludes protest by Black Canadians. A headline and subheading that appeared in the May 6th edition of the *Toronto Star* communicated surprise and thus disavowed that racism is a part of the Canadian landscape. The main headline "Fun street becomes fear street" and the subheading "Toronto's honky-tonk heart goes heavy metal in riot wake" both emphasize a light-heartedness that once dominated the city, but this easy-going nature has been replaced with something far more serious (Tenszen A6). It is important to note that Toronto is only "fun" to those privileged enough to experience its "honky-tonk heart" (Tenszen A6). Toronto's white citizens who once enjoyed the city's open windows and doors are now faced with barricaded iron bars. The subscription to a belief in a former state of bliss expressed by Tenszen erases a history of racial discrimination experienced by People of Colour and Indigenous folk.

An unnamed journalist of a *Montreal Gazette* article conveyed the reactions to the uprising from the most powerful Canadian politician. "Politicians, leaders saddened by riot" reads,

In Ottawa, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney said Canadians must work hard to solve the problems that prompted Monday night's riot, but—in comments apparently directed at Rae—said racism is not a

major problem in Canada. “I think that Canadians ought to refrain from the suggestion that suddenly Canada’s engulfed with very, very grave overriding problems of racism,” Mulroney said. (B1)

You have two things happening here. You have a police force that is like a stone. You can't get blood from stone. That is the first violence. The first violence is here the lack of equitable response by the politician (1992 Toronto Riot).

-Dari Mead on lack of intervention concerning racism and police brutality

Teun A. van Dijk would have classified Brian Mulroney’s discursive strategy as an act of mitigation, a direct attempt to tone down the accusation of racism (“Denying Racism: Elite Discourse and Racism” 315). Mulroney enables a concession granting that there are problems that need solving, but those problems are not matters of racism. The Prime Minister refuses to name the “problems that prompted Monday night’s riot,” and his vague reaction suggests that “anything but racism” precipitated the event. Mulroney also sets up a straw man in order to justify his claims. His hyperbolic paraphrasing of his opponents, present in the statement “Canada is suddenly engulfed in very, very grave overriding problems of racism,” is intended to be easily refutable (“Politicians, leaders saddened by riot B1).

Other journalists made use of the anything but racism frame by drawing distinctions between the racial landscape of Canada and that of the United States. In “Mob smashes windows and loots stores,” Andrew Duffy, Joseph Hall, and Bruce DeMara quote a 21-year-old Black man named Andrew Laing reacting to the riot; “I said to myself, ‘This won’t happen in Canada because we think differently’” (A6). The journalists, very strategically, select a Black man to transmit the myth of racial inclusivity as he insists upon the difference between the mentalities of Canada and the United States in order to protect national interests. Rob Tonus, author of “Opportunists found excuse for looting,” employed a similar strategy of comparing the United States and Canada. He laments the sad state of the city he loves writing,

We say that Canada and Toronto are not America and Los Angeles. We say, and have been saying, until May 4th, that it cannot happen here (Clarke 14).

-Austin Clarke on the Yonge Street Uprising

On my way to work Tuesday, I walked along Yonge Street to see the destruction caused by Monday’s looting and vandalism. It was terrible- not because there were burned out buildings or other similarities to the Los Angeles riots (there weren’t), but because things like this are not supposed to happen in Toronto! (A28)

Like Laing, Tonus subscribes to the belief that race riots only occur in places where racism exists and that these types of events are superfluous in Canada because her people occupy a space characterized by racial harmony. Tonus and Laing are both engaged in acts of norm creation and myth making that, according to Henry and Tator, are two of the primary purposes of mainstream media (4). By designating race riots as un-Canadian, they position the Yonge Street Uprising as an expression of deviant, anti-nationalist behaviour. They, like

all of the writers discussed so far, perpetuate Canadian national myths of racial harmony by attributing the cause of the Yonge St. Uprising to “anything but racism.”

3.3.2 Anti-Activist Discourse

We are not about to destroy our homes because this is our home. We pay our taxes. We contribute to this society. We are not about to destroy our home nor to propagate ideas in the community about destruction (qtd. in Toronto Street Riot).

-Akua Benjamin on the Black Action Defence Committee

Even the journalists that do identify a specific cause of the event failed to recognize racism as a motivating factor as recognizing the existence of racism in Canada would throw the national narratives of racial harmony into question. Journalists blamed activists for the event through the establishment of causal links between the anti-racist demonstration and the subsequent riot. What is left out of this equation is the role that anti-Black racism played in sparking the incident. The Black Action Defence Committee was no stranger to bad press before the occurrence of the Yonge Street Uprising as they openly denounced the racist activities of the Metro Toronto Police. The members were demonized by the press and were often accused of extreme, irrational, as well as selfish and criminal behaviour.

Following their pursuit of justice for Michael Wade Lawson, police commission member Roy Williams is quoted in a *Globe and Mail* article calling for the BADC to “cut the

hysteria and allow some rationality” inferring that their reaction to the death was inappropriate (qtd. in Downey A1). Art Lymer, president of the Police Union, is paraphrased in the *Globe and Mail’s* “Police at loggerheads with black activist organization” accusing the group of extremism, of bullying, and of acting contrary to the best interests of Toronto’s Black community (A12). Lymer is quoted in the *Toronto Star* stating, “I think that they [the committee] have been trying to drive a wedge between the members of the police force and the rest of the responsible members of the black community” (qtd. in Pron, Maloney, and Wilkes A1). In “Leaders of black community facing difficult internal problems,” Sean Fine paraphrases Metro Chairmen Alan Tonks’ statement that the members of the BADC “are cowards who are leaving centre stage to radicals for fear of being called Uncle Toms” (A11). Here, Tonks goes after Black masculinities by calling its members “cowards” (A11). He essentially calls bullshit on Black masculine performances implying that its members merely act tough to disassociate themselves from submissive Black men who conform to white norms of respectability. Fine also quotes Toronto Police Chief, William McCormack stating that leaders of the Black community “fail to come out and express sanity, for want of a better word” (A11). The *Toronto Star* also insinuates that the BADC is not acting in the best interests of the Black community when one of its journalists reports of an apparent feud with Lester Donaldson’s widow, Myrtle, who was apparently pressured by the committee to dismiss the officers assigned to drive her around (“Police probe mental history of man police killed” A6). Members of the BADC deny that a feud ever occurred (“Commissioner seeks ‘justice’ over death of Donaldson” A6).

Members of the Black Action Defence Committee were often depicted as demonstrating criminal behaviour. In October of 1991, Dudley Laws was demonized in the press after being charged with involvement in an illegal migration operation between Canada and the U.S (“Activist charged in immigrant scheme” A5). Following the acquittal of Michael Wade Lawson’s killer, the *Globe and Mail* accused supporters of the BADC of verbally and physically assaulting members of the media stating that “[a] reporter was hit on the nose and a photographer was pushed” before police intervened (Sarick A13). The writer of the *Globe and Mail*’s article entitled “Black activist held for night, freed on bail” reports that Rico John of the Black Action Defence Committee was arrested on an outstanding warrant for a marijuana charge (Downey A12). From these examples, it is clear that the media would have no trouble pinning the events of May 4th on activists.

Like journalists, copy editors are very much involved in the framing of new stories insofar as they are often credited for crafting headlines. For Teun A. van Dijk, headlines serve a very important ideological function as they “summarize the events that the white newspaper, reporter, or editor finds most relevant – for the white readers” and frame events according to white understanding (“Racism and the Press” 51). Headlines are the most common location where the problematic links between cause and effect are created. The headline on the front page of the May 5th edition of the *Toronto Star* reads, “Hundreds riot downtown *after* anti-racist protest” (my emphasis) establishing a direct link between the riot and the anti-racist protest thus positioning the former as the cause of the latter (A1). Headlines also “activate relevant knowledge in memory that the reader needs to understand the newsreport. Thus as soon as the word *riot* is used, the reader will activate relevant general

information about riots, as is a so-called ‘riot script’” (“Racism and the Press” 51). The riot script, according to the white understanding in 1992, likely contained an affiliation of Black people with looting and vandalism, as it does today. Media covering riots in cities like L.A., Nevada, Atlanta, and Seattle established such a link, and by triggering this script, newspapers were able to avoid directly pointing to Black activists as instigators.

Gay Abbate, Jane Coutts, Jock Ferguson, Sean O’Malley and James Macgowan’s piece in the *Globe and Mail* entitled “Yonge St. trashed as justice protest *turns* into a rampage” (my emphasis) also used the headline to frame the story that follows in terms of cause and effect (A1). The language of transformation creates a continuity from the “protest” to the “rampage” placing direct blame on activists for the events (A1). Causal links continue in the body of the article with the statement, “[a] peaceful demonstration in front of the U.S. consulate on University Ave. *quickly escalated* into a riot after 6:30 pm outside the Eaton Centre” (my emphasis) (A1). This quick escalation adds an element of unpredictability to the anti-racist protest and protestors that have the potential to unleash violence at any moment. Whereas Abbate *et al* used the language of escalation, the writer of the editorial in May 6th edition of the *Toronto Star* “A mindless melee on Yonge Street” used the language of descent. The editorial reads, “[t]he shards of glass that littered sidewalks along Yonge St. yesterday were easily swept away. Not so the feelings of rage and fear that linger in the city after a peaceful street demonstration against racism sank into a lawless rampage Monday night” (A26). “Sank” implies a decline in morality and distinguishes what is acceptable from unacceptable behaviour (A26). Abbate, Coutts, Ferguson, O’Malley and Macgowan employs

terms to connect the riot to the protest, thus failing to acknowledge that anti-Black racism was the real cause of the events.

Quotations, like headlines, serve as vessels for the deployment of ideology. Moira Welsh's "Authorities were expecting a 'peaceful demonstration'" created causal links through the use of select quotations from acting police chief Peter Scott. When asked to comment on why the police could not stop the mob from destroying property Scott says, "I don't know how any police force could be prepared for 1,000 people and contained in that a group of 200-300 prepared to vandalize and loot" (A1). Scott attributes the destruction to a handful of demonstrators who had a premediated plan to engage in criminal activity. As if Scott was not clear enough in his accusations, he goes on to say, "I'm blaming a group of activists leading these people. There is a group of activists encouraging this type of behaviour" (A1). Scott is also quoted in the *Globe and Mail* denouncing "'how [the organizers] preach the type of disorderly conduct we see today" (qtd. in Abbate et al). The acting police chief is shamelessly accusing the Black Action Defence Committee for inciting the criminal behaviour despite the fact that "Dudley Laws, leader of the black defence committee, said his organization did not accept any responsibility for the destruction" (A4).

According to Francis Henry and Carol Tator, quotations are important sources of evidentiality capable of lending credibility to an article, but also enable the insertion of subjective opinions while simultaneously maintaining the semblance of objectivity (76). Readers are likely to believe the acting police chief, Peter Scott, who claimed that the Black Action Defence Committee was at fault for the damage because he is in a position of authority. By quoting Scott directly, Welsh defers to his authority while marginalizing that

of Laws' whose response is confined to a mere paraphrase with the lines "Dudley Laws, leader of the black defence committee, said his organization did not accept any responsibility for the destruction" (A4). Welsh's paraphrasing implies, not that Laws is asserting his innocence, but that he is refusing to admit his guilt. The placement of the reported speech and paraphrase also contribute to the hierarchy of reliability as Scott's testimony comes first and is present on the newspaper's frontispiece while Laws' paraphrased rebuttal is resigned to the continuation of the story in section A page 4. If readers do not continue to read past the front page, they will only be exposed to Scott's point of view.

3.3.3 The Discourse of Irresponsible Reporting

Some journalists and interview subjects created links between the headline "Black man shot by undercover officer" that ran on the front page of the *Sunday Star* on May 3, 1992 and the uprising on the subsequent day. This sentiment is overtly apparent in Michael Tenszen's article, "Toronto's honky-tonk heart goes heavy metal in riot wake" where interview subject Marilyn Baker says, "[w]hen I saw the 'black man shot' headline in the newspaper I knew we were going to get it" to which the journalist adds "and 'get it' she did" (A6). Baker continues; "[t]he media egged [rioters] on" followed by Tenszen's rejoinder, "[h]ad the race of slain Raymond Lawrence not been emphasized by the media after Saturday's police shooting, merchants might not have been replacing glass yesterday" (A6). Baker draws a clear distinction between us and them by using the plural pronoun "we." Because there is no possible way that Baker could have known that the death of Lawrence would have repercussions for shopkeepers, it is fair to infer that by "we" she means whites. Through this use of racial coding, Baker demonstrates the way that racist ideology reveals itself as

common-sense. Theories of ideology from figures such as Louis Althusser, Pierre Bourdieu, and Norman Fairclough understand that ideology often masquerades as common sense insofar as ideology is a power that hides itself. The common-sense element extends to racial ideologies as well. Michael Omi and Howard Winant hold that

[e]verybody learns some combination, some version, of the rules of racial classification, and of their own racial identity, often without obvious teaching or conscious inculcation. Thus we are inserted in a comprehensively racialized social structure. Race becomes "common sense" - a way of comprehending, explaining, and acting in the world. (127)

Marilyn Baker demonstrates the common-sensical aspect of racial ideology when she says that she “knew” Black people would punish the white community through use of force (A6). In the *Star*'s “Fun street becomes fear street,” Michael Tenzsen shows support for Baker's assertions by contributing his own voice to the discussion through the use of parallelism. Repetition of the word “it” affirms Baker was right to assume that whites would be the punished (A6). Both parties then advocate for a colourblind reporting because it would prevent the inevitability of Black retaliation.

Readers of the *Toronto Star* were the most prominent group that espoused this idea of blaming the headline, and this is evident in the letters to the editor contained in the May 6th edition of the newspaper. Janet Armstrong writes, “[y]our headline in the May 3, Sunday *Star*, *Black man shot dead by undercover police officer*, was irresponsible [...] Your newspaper appears to be interested in creating news, rather than reporting it” (A26).

Armstrong is clearly advocating for the colourblind approach to news reporting because it is, in her opinion, the responsible thing to do. Armstrong's second point doesn't appear to be making much sense because Raymond Lawrence is, in fact, a Black man; this detail is far from fabricated which completely discredits her accusation regarding news creation. Her letter continues to provide, what she considers to be hard evidence that the shooting was motivated by a headline and not by racism. She writes,

I am a high school teacher and the mother of five. For my own children, and for most of my students who represent all races and cultures, race is not an issue. Young people in our multicultural society have grown up with, played on teams with, roomed with and dated other young people of all backgrounds. They are more interested in the quality of the person than in race or nationality.
(A26)

Using her classroom as a microcosm of the nation, Armstrong holds fast the national narrative of racial equality. Canada's multicultural society has ensured that white children have grown up with the presence of diversity which forecloses the possibility of the occurrence of racism. Race is a non-issue within the confines of her classroom, so the shooting death of Raymond Lawrence could not have been motivated by it. If it wasn't racism, it must have been the irresponsible headline.

Addressing the *Toronto Star* editor, Paul W. Ormrod's comments, "I was flabbergasted and disgusted with your use of a headline that was intentionally worded to inflame and enrage" (A26). Ormrod suggests that the acknowledgement of race is both confounding and revolting because it adds fuel to the fire that is Black rage. Finally, Anthony Ponikvar writes,

I feel that a responsible, reputable newspaper should report this thug [Lawrence] as a drug dealer; his color should only be in the fine

print, if at all. This just increases racial tension and provides great ammunition to black activist groups who do not need your help.
(A26)

To Ponikvar, Black rage paired with irresponsible news reporting emphasizing the race of a victim of a police shooting is as dangerous as a loaded gun. Black activists, violent in nature, do not require the media's assistance in acquiring bullets. Each of these readers demonstrate how racial ideologies operate as common sense. To them, everyone knows that Black people are angry, so the media should never contribute to this rage by drawing attention to matters of race. They all feel that emphasis on Lawrence's Blackness constitutes overreporting because the only important fact that matters is that he was a drug dealer and is therefore deserving of a police bullet. Colourblind reporting protects whites from Black wrath because any potential acknowledgement of the existence of racism is just plain dangerous.

These readers replicated and disseminated discursive strategies similar to those used in the *Toronto Star*. The writers and readers made use of colourblind rhetoric in its attempts to pin the blame for the uprising on sources other than anti-Black racism. This similarity in strategy reveals the interactive nature of the newspaper-reader relationship. For Henry and Tator, "[t]he media hold up a mirror in which society can see itself reflected" (5). Readers tend to engage with media that reproduce their beliefs, values, and ideologies. Although readers were critical of the *Toronto Star*, what they were really dissatisfied about was the newspaper's temporary failure to perpetuate colourblind racism. The acknowledgment that it was a Black man who was shot by police undermines its usual commitment to minimizing race. As seen in the articles that succeed the coverage of Raymond Lawrence's death, the

Toronto Star reverted back to its colourblind roots when attempting to uncover the origins of the uprising.

3.3.4 The Discourse of Criminality

What happened yesterday was the frustration, the hunger of people coming out. We have waited for the justice system to deal justly with our community and they have failed (1992 Toronto Riot).

-Dudley Laws on the Yonge Street Uprising

Some reporters refused to attribute the cause of the uprising to activists and preferred to point an accusatory finger at criminals who were motivated by a desire to loot stores and destroy property. Identifying crime as the catalyst depoliticized the events by disconnecting the riot from the anti-racist demonstration. In “Thugs blamed in riot violence,” Paul Moloney and Derek Ferguson reiterate the opinions of law enforcement stating that the “[l]ooting and vandalism in downtown Toronto last night was caused by ‘criminally motivated thugs,’ Metro police Chief William McCormack said today” (A1). The headline, in its use of the word “[t]hugs,” (A1) makes use of what Michael Omi and Howard Winant would refer to as a “code word” that is able to “race-bait” without specifically identifying a specific group of people (218). By evoking a stereotypical troupe of Black criminality, Moloney and Ferguson were able to covertly pin the events on Black youth (A1). The article continues,

Premier Bob Rae also said hooliganism – not racism – was at the root of the rioting on Yonge St. that followed a demonstration against racism. Any attempt to justify last night’s riots by equating conditions here with those south-of-the-border is not credible, Rae said. ‘We have problems, but this is not Los Angeles; this is not the United States,’ he said (A1).

Rae makes use of the very popular Canadian rhetorical strategy of diverting the nation’s gaze, in times of local racial turmoil, towards the United States where racism runs rampant. Though Canada might have “problems,” racism is not one of them (A1). Also evident in this passage is an attempt to discredit activists who identify racism as the cause of the uprising. For Rae, Dudley Law’s assertion that “the injustices that have been meted out to the black community is why people are out there breaking windows,” is completely untenable (qtd. in “Mob Smash” A4).

Jack Lakey also tried to depoliticize the events in his article “Raging mob of ‘hooligans’ riot, loot and battle police.” He writes,

[w]hile the excuse was rage over a black who was shot to death Saturday by Metro police in a drug raid, and the acquittal of four Los Angeles police officers in the videotaped beating of a black man, only a few people seemed genuinely angry. The rest seemed to be taking advantage of what had started as a legitimate protest to go on a ruinous rampage of smashing, stealing and pelting police with rocks and bottles. (A3)

For this reporter, there are a group of people who lay waiting for an excuse to commit acts of violence. Canadians have no reason to resist racism. The journalist turns to a truck driver by the name of Michael Belleville to support his claims, “[t]his wasn’t racial. It was hooligans, just punk kids going up the street getting away with murder” (A3). Belleville suggests that kids are necessarily incapable of political consciousness and are just motivated by the will to cause trouble.

Susan Walker of the *Toronto Star* interviewed a Grade 10 student who supports the hooliganism thesis. She is quoted saying, “[t]here are a few younger kids in our school and they totally don’t believe in the cause. A couple of them just went downtown to loot all the stores. I heard about them. It was stupid” (A2). This young student is reporting hearsay and, for this reason, should be considered an unreliable source. However, by the mere act of interviewing the student, Walker relies upon her to give an authoritative statement on the cause of the riot. The student blames young apolitical Black youth with a propensity for criminal behaviour for causing the riot. Walker also commits a fallacy of composition inferring that what may be true of a part is true of the whole. The motivations of a few do not extend to all.

Several letters to the editor in May 6th edition of the *Toronto Star* insisted that racism had nothing to do with the police shooting of Raymond Lawrence. Walter A. Blunt writes, “leaders of the black community [...] hurl the word ‘racism’ to label our police force something that it is not. Crime is color-blind like the men and women who are the thin blue line that protects us all from the forces of anarchy and those who promote it” (A26). For Blunt, “the word ‘racism’” is akin to a grenade in the hands of the Black community. At any point, the community could decide to pull the pin and throw it at unsuspecting whites who do not deserve it. Police are merely doing their jobs, in Blunt’s opinion, by stopping a cold-hearted criminal capable of ushering in a world of complete and utter lawlessness. For Blunt, police work in service of all people who benefit from a safe and secure city. Neil Nguyen couldn’t agree more with Blunt writing, “the officer did not shoot the man because he was black, but because police said he was a drug dealer who attacked them” (A26). For Nguyen,

Lawrence's status as suspect justifies his death, and racism needs to be left out of the equation.

Blunt and Nguyen's sentiments were seconded and solidified by Carsten Stroud, a celebrated Canadian journalist and crime novelist. In his editorial entitled "Handcuffing the police," he expresses disgust at the fact that the Metro Toronto police are accused of racism:

And then it got even zanier, as Premier Bob Rae appointed Stephen Lewis to head up an inquiry into-excuse me?-excessive police violence? And who do they put on the panel but some of the same people whose implicit approval of the street riots had infuriated the cops in the first place, among them Dudley Laws and the Black Action Defence Committee (BADC)? [...] the rest of us outside of this White Cop-Black Youth confrontation are paralyzed by one powerful and thought-terminating epithet: racist. Conditioned by our 60s rhetoric, and having lived through the racial agonies of that era, many of the ordinary citizens in Canada walk in terrible fear of being seen as a racist. Recognizing this fear, some members of the ethnic communities in this town have seized on the word as a kind of social karate blow which paralyzes any kind of reasoned opposition to their demands. So when the cops argue-sometimes not very effectively-that mugging innocent citizens or trashing a store doesn't strike them as quite the right thing to do, professional activists leap up on the ramparts and bellow racist [...] What we do not need are hate-driven extremists whose only goal is the crippling of the police force for selfish purposes having more to do with their own lusts, deals and ambitions than the welfare of the community. The main reason why militants like Laws and the BADC are getting away with this sort of intervention is because the rest of our ruling elites are more afraid of the word racist than they are of the idea of another dead cop. (C1)

Stroud suggests that interrogating the shooting of Raymond Lawrence is quite ridiculous, and that Dudley Laws, due to his affiliation with BADC, is unfit to assist Lewis. Laws will inevitably be biased in his interrogation because he is one of the "hate-driven extremists" crying racism for his own selfish purposes rather than having the Black community's best interest in mind (C1). Stroud equates the fear of being called a racist with the fear of being attacked by a mugger. He suggests that the Black community is getting way with heinous

crimes because any sort of intervention will be seen as racially motivated. Stroud then disqualifies the actions of the BADC by using the rhetoric of terrorism which depicts their members as excessively radical and exceedingly violent. Activist endeavours are seen equally threatening to the state as acts of terrorism. Teun A. van Dijk would consider the discourse used in Stroud's piece as an example of a counterattack. Stroud becomes the "folk [hero]" in his defense of innocent whites who are under the attack from the evil antiracists ("Denying Racism" 313).

3.3.5 Historicizing, Contextualizing, and Analyzing the Minimization of Racism

Journalists for the *Toronto Star*, the *Globe and Mail*, and the *Montreal Gazette* minimized racism by creating a fundamental error in the rendering of cause and effect. Karen E. Fields and Barbara J. Fields argue that racism occurs precisely through errors of this kind. They argue that racism is transformed from "something the aggressor *does*, into race, something that a target is in a sleight of hand that is easy to miss" (17). Providing an example, the authors ask readers to

[c]onsider the statement, "black Southerners were segregated because of their skin colour" –a perfectly natural sentence to the ears of most Americans, who tend to overlook its weird causality. But in that sentence, segregation disappears as the doing of segregationists, and then, in a puff of smoke-*paff*-reappears as a trait of only one part of the segregated whole. (17)

Journalists performed this magic trick by misattributing the cause of the uprising to anything other than racism. Whether the authors blamed the activists themselves, the media who ignited Black rage or the hooliganism of Black youth, they failed to acknowledge racism as the real cause of the uprising. This strategy enables racists to walk free without ever having

to account for their behaviour. Racism is perpetuated through the very act of refusing to recognize its existence.

The failure to recognize racism as the cause of the events of May 4th constitutes ideological colourblindness which is contemporary Canada's preferred brand of racism. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva defines colourblind racism by comparing it to the racism that functioned under Jim Crow in the United States. He writes,

Whereas Jim Crow racism explained blacks' social understanding as the result of their biological and moral inferiority, colorblind racism avoids such facile arguments. Instead whites rationalize minorities' contemporary status as the product of market dynamics, naturally occurring phenomena, and blacks' imputed cultural limitations. (2)

Colourblindness essentially allows whites to blame the victims for their misfortunes. Whites tell themselves that Black people choose to live in poor neighbourhoods so that they can “stick with their own kind” and that “they don't value education like we do” in order to disavow the systemic racism that structures western society. This ideology enables whites to see racism as something that has impacted marginalized peoples in the past and that the present is characterized by racial harmony. Colourblindness is such a powerful ideological tool because it enables whites to feel as if they are engaged in anti-racist activism, what Omi and Winant refer to as “anti-racism lite” (258). They argue that, “[f]rom a colorblind standpoint, any hints of race consciousness are tainted by racism. Thus it is suggested that the most effective anti-racist gesture, policy or practice is to ignore race” (257). Appearing to perform “anti-racism lite” is very important to white Canada as it creates a semblance of racial harmony without ever having to create change or sacrifice privilege by addressing the racism that structures the nation state.

The Canadian version of colourblindness, according to Barrington Walker, has been affecting minority life chances since the 1960s and it only manifests itself when it is seen as a convenient tool for hiding racism (30). Rinaldo Walcott points to a tension between the visibility and invisibility of Blackness in his text, *Black Like Who?* He observes that, at times, Canada attempts to erase blackness from its landscape, and this is evident in the razing of Africville, a Black community in Nova Scotia and in changing the name of Negro Creek Road to Moggie Road in Ontario (36). At other times, Canada chooses to illuminate Blackness making Black people “hyper-visible” (37). The hyper-visibility of Blackness is most prevalent in crime stories and Walcott cites an incident involving Somali youth as an example. He writes,

In 1993 the eruption of what was characterized as a “mini-riot” at a condominium complex on Dixon Road in Etobicoke, involving the Somali community, crystalized the issues of race and space in this nation. Accusations against Somali youths attempted to place their cultural practices firmly outside of the nation, even when the accusations are ridiculous. A consequence of the “troubles” was that a move was made to criminalize Somali youth through the use of stringent enforcement of trespass laws. Somalis were made hyper-visible, in an effort to mark and to confine their movements and bodies in space and to a particular place. (“Black Like Who” 37)

Canada strategically vacillates between deploying the visibility and the invisibility of race in order to conceal its own racism. Sometimes appealing to colourblindness is the best strategy for disavowal. At other times, it is best to illuminate race. The latter is true for those who identify criminal tendencies as the cause of the uprising. People don’t take to the streets to protest racism; they take to the streets to engage in criminal activity.

3.4 DISCOURSE OF DICHOTOMIES

Journalists of the *Toronto Star*, the *Globe and Mail*, and the *Montreal Gazette* play into the hypervisibility of Black people by portraying them as violent aggressors wreaking havoc on the innocent as often as they engage in colourblindness that renders Blackness invisible.

Journalists assign agency and victimhood in politically and ideologically invested ways by creating dichotomies of active versus passive. Those covering the Yonge Street Uprising demonstrated a fondness for situating the uprising participants as the agents acting upon the city, police, shopkeepers, bystanders, and media representatives in order to make various distinctions. The participants were portrayed as mindless criminals who intended to destroy the city making victims out of all who stand in their way. The victims, on the other hand, were portrayed as precarious and helpless beings. The journalists also employed the dichotomy of aggressivity versus restraint reserving the negative characteristic for activists and the positive characteristic for police. These rhetorical strategies were intended to shape the affective response of readers who were trained to feel hostility towards participants and sympathy toward all others involved. These strategies are evidence of agenda-setting, the process by which the media shapes public opinion.

3.4.1 Black Activists vs the City

Gay Abbate, Jane Coutts, Jock Ferguson, Sean O'Malley, and James Macgowan of the *Globe and Mail's* "Yonge St. trashed as justice protest turns into a rampage" provide a description of the wreckage explaining that "[h]undreds of windows were smashed, vendor's wagons were overturned, their food spilling on to sidewalks; newspaper boxes and garbage cans were toppled" (A1). Here, the city takes a beating at the hands of merciless participants who tear

through the streets destroying property. In “Mob smashes windows and loots stores,” Andrew Duffy, Joseph Hall, and Bruce Demara describe an assault on one of the city’s most recognizable landmarks, city hall, explaining how its “massive windows were cracked or left with gaping holes” (“Mob smashes” A4). Toronto’s greatest symbol of law and order was ruthlessly attacked attesting to the participants disregard for the justice system. This article is accompanied by a photograph taken by Mike Slaughter featuring a crowd of people headed north, leaving piles of debris in their wake. Documents are scattered all over the street, a newspaper stand lays on its side, baskets containing shopkeepers’ wares lay vulnerably on the sidewalk (A4). This photograph was intended to evoke an emotional response from readers who mourn the fate of Toronto’s most recognizable street.

The dichotomy of active participants/passive city employed by Duffy, Hall, and Demara is established through the use of natural metaphors. These journalists prove to be quite fond of this strategy in “Metro police, mob clash.” The lead reads, “[d]owntown Toronto was engulfed by a mob of young marauders who stormed along Yonge Street last night in an orgy of looting, vandalism and violence” (“Metro police” A1). The city is utterly dominated by criminal plunderers engaged in excessive and sinful indulgence. The use of natural metaphors such as “engulphed” and “stormed” conjure up images of uncontrollable activity occurring independently and beyond human will (A1). Duffy, Hall, and Demara report that the “mob swarmed toward Yorkville” as if it were populated by perturbed wasps ready to sting (“Mob smashes A4). The city is in peril as “[a] group of about 30 people stormed old city hall courthouse, slashing glass doors” (A4). Fire metaphors pervade as the authors identify “the first spark of violence” following a speech by the Black Action Defence

Committee, Dari Meade, but “the first spark [...] did not ignite the crowd” (A4). In addition to fire, water imagery is used to describe the way that “chunks of concrete, rocks, cans, and horse manure rained down upon” the police officers (A4). Abbate *et al* note that “[b]y the time police had dispersed [the protestors], Yonge Street looked as it had been hit by a tornado” (“Metro police” A1). The hyperbolic rhetoric of natural disaster creates images of mass destruction inflicted upon the heart of Toronto. This rhetorical strategy of mobilizing natural metaphors also implies that riots are the natural result of Black political gathering. Black gatherings always lead to trouble.

3.4.2 Black Activists vs the Citizens

The journalists covering the uprising also represented the innocent citizens as victimized at the hands of the participants. In “Authorities were expecting a peaceful demonstration” printed in the *Toronto Star*, Moira Welsh reports that, “[s]tore owners watched in muted horror as the mob gathered force” and “hotdog vendors watched helplessly as youths tipped over their carts and scattered their wares” (A4). “Horror” and helplessness emphasize the extent of the violent victimization and how it works to evoke sympathy for the victims. In the *Star*’s “Fun Street becomes Fear Street,” Michael Tenszen quotes a shopkeeper, identified only by the first name Marlon saying, “I was more scared for myself and my staff when they [looters] started kicking down my windows. When they began, we did nothing. I’d rather not provoke them” (A6). Here, paralysis is the only means of survival for Marlon as any attempt to defend himself will further agitate the criminal intruders. Even the parking lot attendants aren’t safe as one, “‘fearing for his safety,’ fled after a brick was thrown through the window of his booth and he was threatened with a knife” (Stanchu and O’Neill A1). The hardworking

people of Toronto are rendered powerless in the face of destruction as their livelihoods are destroyed by the vicious criminals.

Mike Slaughter's photograph on the front page of the May 5th edition of the *Toronto Star* appearing under the headline of "Hundreds riot downtown after anti-racist protest" depicts the victimization of the shopkeepers at the hands of criminals. The representation of criminal activity is highly racialized in this photo as three young Black men are positioned in front of a broken window of what appears to be an electronic store. Their arms are outstretched as they reach for the goods on display. Boxes litter the ground at their feet. Two young white males occupy the left of the frame. One is in the sprinting position, and his hands are empty. The other stands still bearing, what appears to be, an electronic device. Although it may be inferred that all four boys are involved in the looting, the Black boys are seen directly engaging in theft. Henry and Tator find that nearly one-third of the crime-related articles printed in the *Toronto Star*, the *Toronto Sun*, and the *Globe and Mail* are accompanied by photographs featuring People of Colour. The study showed that "Blacks were overrepresented" as they make up less than 7 per cent of the Canadian population but were depicted in 44 percent of all the photographs of People of Colour used in the three papers during the course of the study (168). By selecting a photograph that emphasizes Blackness, the media actively pinned the riot on Black youth.

Media representatives also fell victim to the violence of May 4th, 1992. In "The media and the message; Will journalists learn anything from recent riots?," Geoffrey Stevens of the *Montreal Gazette* reflects on how the media were once a great ally to activists stating that in the 1960s "protesters regarded the news media as protectors," but adds that

unfortunately those days are long gone (B2). Stevens writes that during the Yonge Street Uprising,

[n]ewsmen became targets of violence. Cameramen were roughed up. A TV reporter was knocked unconscious. A newspaper reporter was beaten. A radio reporter was denounced as a ‘white racist bitch’ by angry youths who ripped her cellular phone out of her purse. (B2)

These incidents all emphasize the activity of the protestors whose propensity for violence can make enemies of former friends.

Journalists suggested that bystanders who found themselves in the middle of the events were victimized as well. Duffy *et al* report that a good Samaritan is brutally attacked while attempting to prohibit a “white man from throwing a rock through the window of clothier Holt Renfrew” (“Mob smashes” A4). When asked how he is repaid for his service, the Good Samaritan reports being kicked in the ribs and groin by four Black teens (A4). One of the most interesting rhetorical moves in the Duffy *et al* article is contained in the statement, “[a] group of demonstrators attacked six self-described white supremacists who held up a sign saying, ‘We denounce the racist murder of whites. Police dragged the small group of whites to safety inside a building’” (A4). Although the group of white supremacists were clearly antagonizing the demonstrators with signs proclaiming their preposterous beliefs in both reverse racism and Black criminality, the journalists selected verbs that situated the racists as the victims. The demonstrators “attacked” the whites for merely “holding” a sign (A4). Police are portrayed as heroes for rescuing the whites by pulling them out of danger. Here is a great example of how Ideological State Apparatuses like the media and Repressive

State Apparatuses like the police protect state interests. Canadian police officers and members of the Canadian mainstream media protect whiteness at all costs.

3.4.3 Black Activists vs the Police

The police are the last group that were positioned by journalists as the recipients of participant violence. In the anonymous *Toronto Star* editorial entitled “A mindless melee on Yonge Street,” police are identified as “a target for black anger over Saturday’s shooting” (A26). Due to prevalence of racial profiling and oversurveillance, Black people have been known to be targets for the police, but this comment flips the script arguing that police are the arbitrary targets of an innately criminal rage harboured by Black people. In “10 teens charged in street clashes,” Henry Stanchu and Dottie O’Neill mention that “[o]ne of the Police Officers had his fingers broken” in the violent affair (A1). In “Metro Police, Mob Clash on Yonge St.,” Duffy *et al* conveyed several scenes that portray the police as victims. The writers articulate a harrowing scene: an officer “among six others [was] surrounded in a doorway of a Harvey’s restaurant near Dundas by a crowd of young blacks, screaming and taunting them” (A4). This line emphasizes the precarity of the police force who are completely at the mercy of dangerous “young blacks” bent on terrorizing the innocent (A4).

The remainder of journalists that render the police passive chose racially neutral terminology to identify Black people as the perpetrators of violence. Jane H. Hill argues that racist discourse does not always manifest materially and can, in fact, operate covertly through absence. She states that racism can operate through “suggestive gaps that can trigger inferences and connections among the stretches of explicit utterance” (32). The journalist’ activation of “the riot script,” will likely cause the white audience of the *Toronto Star* to read

the participants as Black (*Racism and the Press* 51). In “Metro police, mob Clash on Yonge St.,” the journalists portray the police as victims stating, “[o]ne officer was hit by glass from a fire bomb on Yonge” and that another officer was “hit with a raw egg” (“Metro police” A1). Moira Welsh’s article emphasizes that “[s]everal officers were injured slightly by rock throwing vandals” (A1). In each of the previous examples, the participants act upon the police with violent aggression. Although these journalists do not disclose the race of the “rock throwing vandals,” their activation of the riot script will likely cause readers to infer that these “vandals” are Black (A1). Absence also functions to deliberately hide information. The journalists do not mention the police treatment of the demonstrators, their violent retaliations, and details of aggressive arrests that more than likely occurred in response to the uprising. The precarity of the police is best demonstrated in the acting police chief’s, Peter Scott’s reaction to the event: “[t]his is the saddest day in my 35 years of policing in Metro Toronto” (A1). This emotional display attempts to garner readers’ sympathy for the sad police officers who fell victim to the angry and violent activists.

3.4.4 Black Aggression vs White Restraint

The journalists also articulated the discourse of dichotomy through diction denoting aggression and restraint. Some of the terms used to describe the event include “fracas” (Lakey A3), “maniacal” (A3), “rampage” (“Metro police” A1), “ordeal” (A1), “madness” (A1), “drama” (A1), “onslaught,” (“Mob smashes” A4), “senseless” (A4), “chaotic” (A4), “flare-up” (Stanchu and Duffy A1), “melee” (A1), “bedlam” (A1), “mindless” (“A mindless melee in Yonge Street” A26), and “lawless” (A26). Participants are described as “hooligans” (A26), “young thugs,” (A26) “frenzied,” (“Mob smashes” A4), a “pack of jackals,” (Stroud

C1), “adrenalized voidiods” (C1) “hate-driven extremists” (C1), “militants,” (C1), and “punk kids” (Lakey A3). Each term used to describe the events of May 4, 1992 and the participants involved emphasize psychosis, violence, and chaotic confusion. Through the use of these terms, journalists sought to discredit activism and political protest by portraying activists as impulsive and without purpose and direction.

The event was a political catharsis [...] A logjam broke – a logjam of denial by the authority, a logjam of delusion by the political establishment (qtd. in Black).

-Lennox Farrell on the Yonge Street Uprising

The journalists represented the police in a very different manner. Police are celebrated by journalists for their restraint in the face of calamity. In “Criminal element cited,” Henry Stanchu and Andrew Duffy point out that whereas the activists destroyed the city and subjected its citizens and social servants to random acts of violence, “[o]fficers repeatedly pleaded on a loud hailer to disperse and go home” (A5). Whereas the participants employed rash and irresponsible tactics, the police utilized more subdued methods and plead for peace. Welsh notes that “[p]olice chief] McCormack, police board chairperson Susan Eng, and Metro chairman Alan Tonks heaped praise on officers for their restraint in the face of Monday’s rock throwing mob” (A1). Welsh quotes Eng saying, “[w]e cannot turn this place into an armed camp – and so we are very satisfied with the kind of deliberate restraint they [the police] exercised” (A1). Here the police are positioned as peacekeepers who do not

wish to fight violence with violence. In a *Toronto Star* article entitled “Hooligans to blame, not racism Rae says” Matt Maychak writes, “[Premier] Rae lauded the Metro police for their handling of the riot, saying they “behaved under very difficult circumstances with great restraint” (A7). The editorial writer of “A mindless melee on Yonge Street” also articulates this distinction between aggression and restraint;

rage among blacks gave way to hooliganism among *all* colours, Metro police showed professionalism and admirable restraint in containing the damage. While police have been criticized for failing to stop the looting sooner, their measured response may well have prevented serious injury or death in the seven-hour drama. (A26)

Here “hooligans” are demonized and are incited by Black rage and the police are professional and “admirable” heroes who are trying to save innocent lives (A26). These rhetorical strategies create distinctions between crazed and violent criminals and logical police capable of exercising self-control in the face of chaos.

3.4.5 Historicizing, Contextualizing, and Analyzing the Discourse of Dichotomies

Reportage on the uprising by Canada’s premier newspapers ascribed characteristics to the activists that are antithetical to those attributed to the city, the police, the workers, and the bystanders. The activists were characterized by activity, aggression, and disorder; the others were described as passive, precarious, and restrained. In order to determine what precisely is at play in this discursive strategy of dichotomies, I turn to the theories of Judith Butler and Christina Sharpe. In *Frames of War*, Judith Butler identifies precarity as a universal and necessary condition of human life. Because we are all in this condition of precariousness, we are at the mercy of one another, vulnerable to the attacks of the other. Butler writes, “[i]t is to the stranger that we are bound, the one or ones we never knew and never chose” (xxvi). This

condition of precariousness comes with an obligation; we ought to work to protect life “or secure the conditions for its persistence and flourishing” (2). Although this obligation exists, it isn’t always upheld as epistemological frames guide our ability to apprehend certain lives as lives worth living.

The ability to be counted as a life within these frames depends upon one’s ability to reproduce norms mandated by society. In order to “purify the norm,” certain unruly bodies are expelled from the frame through a process of abjection (12). For Butler, “[i]f certain lives do not qualify as lives from the start, not conceivable as lives within certain epistemological frames, then these lives are never lived nor lost in the full sense” (1). In other words, these lives are perceived as “ungrievable” and may be destroyed without eliciting an affective response from the public (xix). Racism is often predicated on the distinction between grievable and ungrievable lives (24). Those deemed ungrievable become construed as threats to life insofar as the precarity of their bodies is disavowed (42). In her text *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*, Christina Sharpe argues that Black lives have historically been and still remain “abjected from the realm of the human” (14). In their status as abject, Black lives are continually being perceived as threats to white life and are

living in and with terror in that in much of what passes for public discourse *about* terror we, Black people become the *carriers* of terror, terror’s embodiment, and not the primary objects of terror’s multiple enactments; the ground of terror’s possibility globally. (16)

In their failure to reproduce norms mandated by white society, Black lives become discounted as lives according to epistemological frames that govern grievability. The disavowal of Black subjectivity and the framing of Black lives as threats to life are used to justify the terror heaped upon them by white precarious subjects.

Darren Wilson, the officer responsible for killing Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri on August 9, 2014, perfectly articulates the way bodies are distinguished according to precarity versus threat. I quote Wilson's testimony before the grand jury at length in order to show how life is hierarchized along racial lines. Wilson says,

When I grabbed him [Michael Brown the 19-year-old unarmed young black man], the only way I can describe it is I felt like a five-year-old holding on to Hulk Hogan. When he looked at me, he made like a grunting, like aggravated sound and he starts, he turns and he's coming back towards me, [...]. His first step is coming towards me, he does a kind of stutter step to start running. When he does that, his left hand goes in a fist and goes to his side, his right one goes under his shirt in his waistband and he starts running at me. He was almost bulking up to run through the shots, like it's making him mad that I'm shooting him [...]. And the face that he had was looking straight through me, like I wasn't even there. (qtd. in Sharpe 82)

Wilson describes the teen as if he were a demon with superhuman strength. Wilson is as precarious as a child in Brown's grasp. Brown grunts and runs at the officer like an infuriated animal who is, at first, seemingly impervious to bullets. Because of Wilson's dehumanization and subsequent weaponization of Brown's body, the teen's death is "justified" insofar as he is not merely discounted as a life but poses a direct threat to a life that is apparently worth more.

It is quite apparent that journalists covering the uprising treat the city, the shopkeepers, the bystanders, and the police as precarious and regard the activists as aggressors, as threats to life. This is a great example of how the media guide our affective response to certain events. In the case of the Yonge Street Uprising, readers were trained to pity the supposed victims who are pelted with rocks, bottles and eggs, kicked and beaten, and were trained to loath the supposed perpetrators who mercilessly attacked, injured, and

destroyed everything in their path. The activists were reduced to lives unworthy of grief and the public would not bemoan their fates if they ended up imprisoned or even dead. Raymond Lawrence, a drug dealer, a knife-wielding threat to life, is one of those lives that was never meant to be mourned. The Yonge Street Uprising may be read as a radical attempt to mourn someone who had been discounted as a life by white society and as an attempt to defend Black life against police violence. Christina Sharpe may even consider the uprising an example of aspiration which she defines as “the word I’ve arrived at for [...] keeping and putting breath back in the black body” (113). Protesting the unjust fate of Raymond Lawrence as well as the beating of Rodney King effectively called the frame into question by forcing a recognition that the lives of these two men mattered to some and that their lives were/are lives worth living.

3.5 CONCLUSION

The journalists from the *Toronto Star*, the *Globe and Mail*, and the *Montreal Gazette* managed to construct Blackness in direct or indirect ways. Whether or not these journalists named or avoided naming Blackness, these constructions were achieved by utilizing race-evasive code words. The construction of Blackness achieved by the journalists made use of the ideologies that once justified and sustained slavery. Several prolific scholars such as Saidiya Hartman, David Austin, Christina Sharpe and Robin Maynard demonstrate how slavery can hardly be regarded as a thing of the past. Traces of slavery manifest in everyday occurrences of anti-black racism; this is what Hartman refers to as “the afterlife of slavery” which translates into “skewed life chances, limited access to health and education, premature death, incarceration, and impoverishment” (6). David Austin, also detecting the

reverberations of a buried past, writes, "[s]lavery is a part of the continuum whose effects live in the present" (161). The minimization of Black life to less than life, the rendering of black lives as criminal and as threats to life has had a long history originating on the slave ships that crossed the Atlantic, the plantations in the southern US, and the homesteads of slave owners right here in Canada.

The reduction of Black lives to less than lives is a testament to the ongoing reverberations of slavery in this country. Racialist, racist, white supremacist, and white nationalist ideologies that were historical by-products of slavery and its justifications persist and continue to shape public discourse around race, racism, and the racialized subject. Slavery depended on the ability to disavow the humanity of the slaves. Christina Sharpe traces the perpetual state of what Franz Fanon might refer to as "thinghood" (193) to an incident that occurred aboard a slave ship called the *Zong* that set sail from the coast of West Africa in 1791. The ship, sailing to Jamaica, overshot its destination, and the crew, fearing that they would run out of supplies, began tossing the enslaved overboard in order to ensure that the limited food and water would last for the duration of the trip (Sharpe 35). The ship's underwriters were summoned to court, but not to defend themselves against murder charges. The ship's owner was suing for the insurance value of over 100 murdered Africans (35). The transcript from the court case reports that "a portion of our fellow creatures may become property. This, therefore, was a throwing overboard of goods, and of parts to save the residue" (qtd. in Sharpe 45). This event shows the devaluation of Black lives disregarded as lives-worth-living. Black lives were and continue to be viewed as disposable. The discourse used by Canadian journalists to frame Black activists as threats to life objectify and

dehumanize Black people just as the author of the transcript does. When Black bodies are seen hindering valuable white lives, they are considered expendable.

The ideology present in the incident aboard the *Zong* is also detectable in the legal rhetoric surrounding the regulation of slavery in pre-confederation Canada. In 1790, the British Government passed a law allowing “Negroes, household furniture, utensils of husbandry, or cloathing [sic]” to be imported to British North America (qtd. in Walker 4). For Barrington Walker,

[t]hese 8 simple words tell a powerful story - a tale about Black people and their bodies, and how they were imagined in the British imperial system and the laws of its empire. Blacks were neither subjects nor citizens; rather, they were commodities, goods, machines for producing wealth and sexual pleasure. (4)

The state of thinghood was writ into British law and, based on the evidence extracted from the discourse used in contemporary news articles, the humanity of Black people continues to be disavowed.

The notion of Black criminality-constructed by journalists in the articles that blame Black people for the uprising and in those that position Black lives as threats to life-also has its roots in slavery. Robin Maynard writes,

[f]ew who do not study Black Canadian history are aware that dominant narratives linking crime and blackness date back at least to the era of transatlantic slave trade, and that Black persons were disproportionately subject to arrest for violence, drugs, and prostitution-related offences throughout Canada as early as the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. (7)

The myth of Black criminality was also constructed and reflected in wanted posters for runaway slaves (Maynard 40). The wanted posters would include descriptions such as

weight, height, dress, and sometimes even a few words addressing character such as “cunning and idle” (qtd. in 40).

The ideology of Black threat was also invented and sustained on the properties of slave masters, and it was often mobilized in order to deter abolition. The myth holds that if Black folk were free, they would prey on white women. The rhetoric of slavery situated Blacks as “vile, viral, and evil” whereas white women were viewed as symbols of purity and innocence (D. Austin 169). Canada’s beloved first Prime Minister John A. McDonald best demonstrates the belief in the Black threat when he states,

[w]e have maintained the punishment of death for rape... We have thought it well...to continue it on account of the frequency of rape committed by negroes, of whom we have too many in Upper Canada. They are very prone to felonious assaults on white women; If the sentence and imprisonment were not very severe, there would be great dread of people taking the law into their own hands. (qtd. in D. Austin 171)

For John A. MacDonal, the death penalty was the only thing that stood in the way of white people lynching Black people. Capital punishment was sustained to contain the Black threat. For David Austin, “[b]lacks continue to be perceived as a biological threat, a contaminate in society” and this is reflected in the articles that deem Black lives as threats to white lives (169). The articles that blame activists for inciting violence, those that presuppose the existence of Black rage, the ones that accuse Black youth of violently attacking innocent whites and position them as threats to life demonstrate that the ideologies that negatively impacted Black life in the 17th century still reverberate and proliferate in present day discourse.

In addition to constructing Blackness, the discourse used by journalists of the *Toronto Star*, the *Globe and Mail*, and the *National Post* constructed whiteness as well. These journalists created the illusion of a weak white body which also served an ideological function. The construction of “whiteness as weakness” made its appearance in North America with the discovery of neurasthenia first diagnosed by George Beard in the 1880s (Carter 42). According to Beard, the nerve disorder only affected "the civilized, re-fined, and educated, rather than the barbarous and low-born and un-trained" in their attempts to adapt to the new conditions of modern life (qtd. in Carter 47). Through the use of racial code words, Beard inferred that the disorder only afflicted whites, and for Julian B. Carter, the discourse surrounding neurasthenia presupposed an innate belief in white superiority helping to “naturalize and justify white supremacy after Emancipation destroyed one of its chief institutional supports” (43). One of the main symptoms of neurasthenia was a deterioration in the ability to perform sexually which jeopardized the ability to reproduce white dominance. However,

[n]eurasthenia theory also reflected an optimistic sense of identity between bourgeois whites and modern civilization. According to Beard, these people tended towards nervousness precisely because they embodied modern civilization. Neurasthenics therefore had the potential to express modernity’s full re/productive capacity and its loftiest ideals. Fulfilling that potential required a careful and consistent sexual self-discipline that helped to define what it meant to be modern at the same time that it helped to define what it meant to be white. (43-44)

This writer expresses the dual nature of the construction of whiteness. Whiteness is prone to weakness paradoxically because of its capacity for dominance. Whites are solely responsible for the perpetuation of modern civil society and the responsibility is nerve-

wracking. In addition to expressing dominance, whiteness as weakness achieves yet another impressive aim; “[t]he emphasis on individual sensitivity, personal weakness and the importance of self-control in neurasthenia discourse reflects the consolidation of a racial position that could not imagine itself as violently inhumane to ‘inferior’ others” (71). In other words, as long as whiteness is construed as weakness it can conceal its own monstrous capacity for oppression.

Eva Mackey claims that one of the narratives that structures the Canadian identity is that of perpetual victimhood (25). In the Canadian newspapers’ presentation of the white body as precious in its fragility and vulnerability to attack, the discourse used demonstrates the white body’s exemplary Canadianess. The white body, like the nation, is characterized by a delicacy that translates into worth like a piece of fine china that ought to be handled with care. The vulnerability of white Canadians and their supposed propensity for self-restraint positions them as far superior to Black outsiders predisposed to recklessness and violence. The *Toronto Star*, the *Globe and Mail*, and the *Montreal Gazette* portrayed white Canadians and celebrated their remarkable self-restraint in the face of the onslaught perpetrated by members of the Black race. White Canadian victimhood masks a legacy of genocide, slavery, and police brutality. Black outsiders were devalued for their apparent lack of precarity and for their inability to cultivate self-control. The discourse used to render their humanity invisible presupposes that their lives are not worthy of the care afforded to white life. These are just a few examples of how the Canadian news media participate in the protection of white dominance by spreading racist ideologies. The next chapter transports us to the 21st

century where we see that, although the methods of justifying and sustaining the afterlife of slavery have changed slightly, the intentions to devalue Black activism remain the same.

Chapter 4 Rebel Revelers: Toronto Pride and the Myth of Black Inferiority

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Many theorists, such as Michel Foucault, Zygmunt Bauman, and Cornel West attribute the onset of racism to the advent of modernity. In the “Society Must be Defended” lectures delivered at the Collège de France in 1975-1976, Foucault traces the origin of modern racism back to the 19th Century. For Foucault, modern racism was used to counter the revolutionary discourse of race struggle, a discourse that questioned the legitimacy of royal power (58). In response to this revolutionary discourse, the State utilized racist discourse in order to convince the citizenry that the real threat lay beyond its borders. Racist discourse enabled the State to seem heroic in its efforts to protect the racial purity of its territory (105).

Bauman observes that the rise of modernity led to the collapse of long established and maintained boundaries. The onset of this new era meant that “[a]ge-long distinctions were ignored, safe distances shrank, strangers emerged from their reserves and moved next door, secure identities lost durability and conviction” (40). The Western Christian world chose “the conceptual Jew,” seen as in opposition to modern rationality and defiant of class structures, as its enemy in order to define itself against and reinforce boundaries (40). Following Edward Said and Sylvia Winter, Rinaldo Walcott and Idil Abdillahi argue that Enlightenment thought was dominated by an obsession with “ordering, cataloguing, and naming of people and things” (23). More specifically, the Enlightenment thinkers were preoccupied with delineating the boundaries of the “European man-human” (24) and the production of “the human as a category always already gendered as man, raced as white and sexualized as

heterosexual, never black” (25). The bodies excluded from conceptions of the “man-human” were treated as inferior and inhuman.

Most relevant to my essay is West’s take on the link between modernity and racism found in “A Genealogy of Modern Racism” (1982). West writes that the humanity of Black people is a “relatively new discovery in the modern West,” and he argues that despite this discovery, the humanity of Black people is continually disavowed (90). For West, the concept of modernity is founded upon white supremacy, and its institutions represent the interests of the slave holding class. He argues that the discourse shaping science, rationality, and objectivity presuppose white superiority and produces “conceptions of truth and knowledge, beauty and character, so that certain ideas are rendered incomprehensible and unintelligible” (91). The aim of this discourse is to foreclose the possibility of achieving equality for Black beings (91). The descriptions, representations, and classifications of natural historians gave rise to white supremacy creating what West refers to as a “normative gaze” used to scrutinize bodies (98). This gaze informed scientific and philosophic thought throughout the Enlightenment and its affiliated discourses “continue to haunt the modern West” (91). West concludes his argument by stating that,

[t]he idea of white supremacy is a major bowel unleashed by the structure of modern discourse, a significant secretion generated from the creative fusion of scientific investigation, Cartesian philosophy, and classical aesthetic and cultural norms. Needless to say the odor of this bowel and the fumes of this secretion continue to pollute the air of our post-modern times. (109)

Analyzing the discourse used in the *Toronto Star*, the *Globe and Mail*, and the *National Post* to frame the Black Lives Matter Toronto (BLMTO) sit-in at the 2016 Toronto Pride parade is

akin to wading through shit and enduring odor, in order to detect the noxious fumes of white supremacy. Nearly 25 years after the Yonge Street Uprising, Canada's most trusted journalists continue to use racist discourse to demonize Black activists. In this case, journalists attack BLMTO for demanding that Pride ban the presence of uniformed police, and police floats and booths from future parades. The newspapers employed three types of discourse to criticize the activists. The first type is devolutionary discourse which was utilized to accuse the activists of standing in the way of progress. Second, the discourse of irrationality was used to brand the Black Lives Matter protest tactics as illogical thus accusing its members of intellectual inferiority. Finally, the newspapers employed moral discourse that framed the police ban as wrong and unjust thus positioning BLMTO as morally inferior. Discourses of devolution, irrationality, and moral inferiority were once used in order to justify and sustain trans-Atlantic slavery in Europe.

4.2 THE EVENTS

On the night of February 5th, 1981, Metropolitan Toronto Police officers commenced a raid on four gay bathhouses known as Operation Soap. This raid caused immense suffering in the queer community. More than 300 queer men were arrested. Many lost their jobs, their wives, children, and extended families. Reputations were lost as those involved were turned into social pariahs after having their names and pictures printed in national newspapers. Some faced with the destruction of their lives and their public humiliation committed suicide (Watt A17). The night after the raid, thousands of queer Torontonians took to the streets to protest the rampant homophobia that had been impacting their lives for decades. This is the

origin of Toronto Pride, an annual big budget event celebrating the city's LGBTQIP2SAA (LGBTQ+) community. Thirty-five years after the bathhouse raids, Toronto Pride would experience the second biggest event in its short history. On Sunday July 3rd, 2016, the hot sun beat down upon the streets of Toronto lined with excited spectators enthusiastically waving their rainbow flags at Pride's honoured guests. A group of young people dressed all in black marched with raised fists behind a pink banner bearing the words "BLACK LIVES MATTER TORONTO." A large black float adorned with gold balloons, white streamers, and drawings of murdered Black LGBTQ+ persons followed closely behind. Liberal white spectators clapped and cheered on the marchers, but more so for themselves as it made them feel good to stand on the side of justice and offer provisional support for the group as long as they were on their best behaviour.

Black Lives Matter Toronto, or simply BLMTO, formed the year prior inspired by chapters in the United States that originated following the unjust acquittal of George Zimmerman who fatally shot 17-year-old Trayvon Martin in Florida in 2013. This verdict, reminiscent of the acquittals of the officers involved in the cases of Rodney King and Raymond Lawrence, prompted American activist Alicia Garza to pen an open letter to Black people stating, "Black people. I love you. I love us. Our lives matter, Black Lives Matter" (Diverlus and Hudson 5). These final words evolved into the viral hashtag, #BlackLivesMatter, before becoming an international movement protesting worldwide anti-Blackness. In the fall of 2014, Black Torontonians were reeling over the death of Jermaine Carby, a Black man shot and killed by Peel Regional Police during a traffic stop, when it was announced that the officer responsible for the death of unarmed 17-year-old Black teen,

Michael Brown, in Ferguson, Missouri was acquitted of all charges. In Toronto, Sandy Hudson began to organize a vigil for Brown and Carby on social media employing the now famous #BlackLivesMatter hashtag; 3,000 people turned out to mourn and to protest. This was the origin of Black Lives Matter-Toronto (5). The group made headlines in 2015 for speaking out against the practice of carding by Toronto Police and for shutting down a portion of Allen Rd. to protest the police killings of Carby and Andrew Loku, a Black mentally ill 45-year-old father of five. They garnered media attention in 2016 for camping out outside of Toronto Police Headquarters to protest the SIU's decision not to press charges against the officer responsible for Loku's death as well as the scaling back of Afrofest to a single day (Battersby n.p.).

Black Lives Matter Toronto would find themselves in the limelight once again at Toronto Pride 2016, drawing criticism from thousands of opponents. At the intersection of Yonge and Carlton, roughly two thirds of the way along the Pride parade route, the group suddenly halted and began to chant, "Shut it down! Shut it down"; its members sat down cross-legged on the hot pavement. The activists refused to budge holding space for half an hour demanding that Pride answer for its legacy of anti-Blackness. The sit-in ended when Pride's executive director, Mathieu Chantelois, signed a list of the following nine demands:

- Space for stage and tents
- Funding and support for Black Queer Youth
- Self-determination for community spaces
- Community groups given complete control over aspects such as hiring, content, and stage structure

- Adequate funding and support for community stages
- \$13,000 funding for Blockorama, a showcase for Black performers
- Reinstatement of the South Asian stage
- Prioritize the hiring of Black transwomen, Indigenous people, and others from marginalized communities
- Removal of police floats and booths from marches and parades
- A townhall where Pride will present an action plan to institute BLMTO's demands (blacklivesmatter.ca)

The whitely queer response to Black Lives Matter's demands were quite hostile, but this is hardly surprising given the "whitewash[ing]" of queer history in Toronto (Haritaworn, Moussa, Ware 2). Jin Haritaworn, Ghaida Moussa, and Syrus Marcus Ware point out in their introduction to *Marvellous Grounds: Queer of Colour Histories of Toronto* that "queer archives celebrate white queer subjects as the only historical subjects and erase queer and trans Black, Indigenous, people of colour (QTBIPOC), thereby treating us as perennial newcomers with little historical agency and oversight of our own" (2). The authors elaborate on this externalization stating that Queers of Colour are only incorporated into the white queer historical record as "check-mark diversity objects of white queers' benevolence" (3).

The white queer archive in Toronto very much mirrors Canada's national narrative of enacting social justice and its simultaneous history of racial exclusion and oppression. The externalization of Black participation in the queer struggle mirrors Canadian attempts to situate Blackness beyond its borders in the 1960s. The white queer archive memorializes moments that give the semblance of progress such as gaining the right to marry, the right to

legal protection, and the right to be included in the workforce (3). These momentous achievements in queer history are accredited to white cisgender men and these rights are unequally enjoyed by the same population.

Given this paradoxical history, it is no wonder that the white queer community staunchly opposed Black Lives Matter's demands to exclude uniformed police from the Pride parade. This demand was seen as undermining the progress of the WHITE queer community and attested to the fact the biggest symbol of WHITE queer achievements was immensely flawed. Black Lives Matter had exposed Pride's enactment of racial violence. It is also unsurprising that the white Canadian news media shared this perspective in order to uphold Canadian national narratives of racial equality. For the first time in Canadian history, we see the white press and white queer population on the same side of a debate. The media and the elite whitely queer community of Toronto worked together to disseminate racist discourses in order to mock Black Lives Matter and devalue its members efforts to create a more inclusive

Anything that is going to assist Black people, I guarantee you, will assist everybody else in the community. (Sandy Hudson on the Black Lives Matter Pride Parade Demonstration CP24's the LeDrew Show)

-Sandy Hudson on Pride demands

Pride. Both deployed discourses of devolution, irrationality, and immorality to dismiss and discredit the Pride 2016 actions of Black Lives Matter.

4.3 DEVOLUTIONARY DISCOURSE

The *Toronto Star*, the *Globe and Mail*, and the *National Post* used the discourse of progress and regression in their coverage of the Black Lives Matter Toronto Pride protest. Coverage of the protest by all three newspapers represented the current historical moment as a momentous achievement in civil rights and therefore, regarded the protest by BLM at the Pride parade as an aberration. For the journalists and readers quoted below, police involvement in the Toronto Pride parade was a symbol of progress. Police floats and vendors were signs of the great relationship that exists between law enforcement officials and members of the LGBTQ+ community. By citing this progress as positive, these writers built ethos by positioning themselves as allies of the queer community. Their support for the white queer community were taken as signs of good will and allowed them to masquerade as champions of civil rights. From this position of self-congratulatory goodness, journalists and readers launched an attack on another marginalized group, the Black activists that collectively constitute Black Lives Matter Toronto. The writers responded with outrage to BLMTO's demand that police should not be able to participate as an identifiable group insofar as it seeks to undo the progress that has been achieved. Black activists were portrayed as the villains of progress who threaten to drag Toronto back into the dark ages by outlawing and opposing positive change.

Several journalists discussed the BLMTO sit-in as an impediment to progress both literally, preventing the parade from moving forward up the street, and figuratively, impeding social evolution. *Toronto Star* columnist, Rosie DiManno, for example, writes in her piece "A Black Lives Matter misstep," "Black Lives, of course, disrupted the 2016 parade,

temporarily blocking its progress at Yonge and Carlton Streets until their anti-police demands were met” (A2). Here, BLMTO is described as a disturbance that interrupts and halts progress. DiManno simplifies and reduces BLMTO’s demands stating only that its members are “anti-police” (A2). This over-simplification further positioned the group as oppositional, standing against progress as well as the police. DiManno continues stating, “[p]utting my pain and rage first is marginalizing, counterproductive, and vilifying” (A2). DiManno’s decision to use the personal pronoun “my” instead of “theirs” is indicative of hedging, a strategy designed to lessen the impact of what is being uttered (Fowler 177). Instead of directly accusing BLMTO of marginalization, counterproductivity and vilification, she opts to use “my” in order to indirectly insinuate the same (DiManno A2). Also, the use of the term “counterproductive” further positions Black Lives Matter as a hinderance to progress and productivity (A2). DiManno concludes her piece by stating,

[a]s a straight white female, I can’t tell Pride what to do. But I can implore them to retreat from a backward march that stratifies grievances in a city with a good and generous and all-encompassing heart. Gays led that humanizing evolution in the days of the plague. Don’t regress into a splintered past now! (A2)

In another move of negative politeness, DiManno initially attempts to minimize the imposition of making a demand of Pride. She “implore[s]” before abandoning politeness in favour of the demand “[d]on’t regress into a splintered past now!” (A2). She asserts that excluding police is a “backward march” (A2). Here, she identifies BLMTO as an antagonist of both of the “good and generous and all-encompassing city” and of the “gays” that “led that humanizing evolution” (A2). DiManno’s placement of blame onto the activists is yet another example of misidentifying the cause of an effect. The oppressive presence of uniformed

police in the Pride parade is what prompted intervention from BLMTO, and it is this presence that is the real antagonist.

The headline of an editorial printed in the *Globe and Mail*, “Toronto Pride parade marches backward” implies that restricting police is a regressive move. The body of the article elaborates in the following manner:

[y]es, we know, Toronto’s Pride Parade began in 1981 in part as a reaction to police harassment of the city’s community. The history is real. But it’s also history [...] BLM thinks it’s taking Pride Toronto back to its protest roots. After all, the police weren’t invited to take part in the first gay pride rally in 1981. And now Pride Toronto, in deference to a group that claims to speak for all black Torontonians, has agreed to go back in time. But surely Pride Toronto would agree that the willingness of groups to work with police to end harassment has been a key part of the social progress that has made Toronto one of the world’s most diverse and tolerant cities. The Pride weekend is a hugely popular annual event and a major symbol of Toronto’s inclusivity. Or it used to be anyway. (A10)

The *Globe and Mail*, in its use of a facetious register, pokes fun at BLMTO and Pride for the supposed regressive move. Beginning with “[y]es, we know...” reveals the way in which ideology can function as common sense (A10). It suggests that “we”, whomever “we” may be, knows two things 1) that Pride began as a protest and 2) that Pride is no longer a protest (A10). Certainly, BLMTO and its allies feel that Pride is political, so they necessarily remain distinct from the “we” employed in this piece (A10). This distinction positions Black Lives Matter as the antagonists of progress trying to drag Pride and, by extension, the city of Toronto back into the dark ages. It is worth mentioning that police repression of Black Trans folks and other Trans Folks of Colour is not an issue that belongs to the past but impacts lives in the present. This writer is practicing revisionist history as well as denying the material and lived experience of Queers of Colour in the present.

According to Francis Henry and Carol Tator, editorials have immense power (75). The authors argue that “editorials have important discursive properties in transmitting ideological messages. They perform important social, political, and sociocultural functions” (216). The opinions and ideologies purported by editorials are highly influential as they help readers formulate opinions on controversial topics (216). They have been known to influence policy, and this is certainly true in the case of the now infamous Just Desserts shooting. On April 5, 1994, four Jamaican citizens committed a fatal armed robbery in a popular Toronto café. Editorials published in Toronto linking Caribbean immigration and crime helped persuade Cabinet Ministers and MPs in making decisions regarding Bill C-44 which would enforce stricter immigration laws (75). The “Toronto Pride parade marches backward” editorial most likely swayed *Globe and Mail* readers to agree with its position that BLMTO is against progress.

A headline printed in the *Toronto Star*, “Taking a step back,” acknowledges devolution right off the bat. The writer continues the use of this discourse in the body of the article:

[t]here is no getting around the fact that Pride Toronto has taken a big backward step by effectively telling the police that they aren’t welcome anymore as official participants in the LGBTQ community’s biggest annual celebration. It has taken many years of hard work for the police to move from a position of confrontation and even persecution of LGBTQ people to a much more positive relationship. Seeing the chief and uniformed officers marching in the Pride Parade was a highly visible symbol of welcome progress.
(A16)

The language of devolution and hindrance permeates this statement with phrases and terms like “big backward step,” “many years of hard work,” “move,” and finally “progress” (A16).

Police are credited for their efforts to mend the fraught relationship between themselves and the queer community, and BLMTO is working to undo such efforts. It is also worth noting that this particular journalist acknowledges the importance of symbols without recognizing that the interpretation of symbols varies. Whereas some may view police presence as a “symbol of welcome progress,” others view it as a symbol of terror (A16). Communities of Colour, and Indigenous persons, regardless of sexual orientation, as well as Trans persons continue to be terrorized by police. Lest we forget the practice of carding that unfairly targeted People of Colour and enabled the collection of data on “suspect” persons, that Canadian prisons are chock-full of Black and Indigenous individuals and that these peoples are often shot and killed by police, and finally, that police see the deaths of Trans persons and Queers of Colour as unworthy of investigation.

Although Dakshana Ascaramurt and Eric Andrew-Gee’s *Globe and Mail* article “You can sit with us; (except you)” does a great job of presenting both sides of the police exclusion debate, its phrasing of the question that precludes the presentation of differing opinions does presuppose that one side is more regressive than the other. The journalists ask, “[s]hould Pride Toronto return to its roots as a protest movement or move forward as a celebration that promotes inclusion, even of former foes? A step back or a step forward?” (M1). By presenting both sides of the argument, the journalists allow the readers to make their own decision on whether or not the exclusion of police is a good idea. However, the framing of the question makes progress the focus of the debate, and the language of backwards and forwards is value laden. Readers may choose either a progressive or a regressive stance with the former option associated with “celebration” and “inclusion” (M1). The affiliation of

positivity with the pro-police side makes it quite a bit more appealing than Black Lives Matter's argument. In "A police Pride float compromise," Emma Teitel of the *Toronto Star* argues that the police presence at Pride should be minimized as opposed to eradicated. She says that there should be at least some presence because whereas "Pride is political [...] it is also a celebration of gains won. And everyone has a right to celebrate those gains, as they see fit, wearing whatever they like, or nothing at all" (A6). Although, Teitel acknowledges that BLMTO has legitimate reasons to oppose the presence of police floats and uniformed officers, she sees the relationship between the police and LGBTQ+ persons as one of "gains" (A6). She implies that things are on the mend, and that an all-out ban would constitute a loss.

Several *Toronto Star*, *Globe and Mail*, and *National Post* journalists included quotations that make use of devolutionary discourse in order to insert subjective opinions into seemingly objective pieces. The *Toronto Star*'s "Pride grant to face challenge; Funding should be suspended if police can't march in uniform," includes the following quotation: "Pride is "good fun," said Norm Kelly, a veteran councillor, but the Pride request is "perceived as a step backwards" in relations between police, the public, and Pride" (GT2). Kelly reduces the political significance of Pride by merely referring to it as "good fun" (GT2). He also employs the discursive tactic of depersonalization in order to lessen the severity of his statement; instead of saying that he feels that the exclusion of police is a "step backwards," he attributes these feelings to the "police, the public, and to Pride" (GT2). Peter Edwards of the same paper writes an article entitled "Mayor John Tory 'disappointed and frustrated' after police say they won't participate in Pride parade" stating that the mayor

referred to police chief Mark Saunders' announcement that Toronto Police will not march in the parade as a "'temporary setback'" (qtd. in Edwards n.p.). Mayor John Tory seems slightly more optimistic than Norm Kelly as he expresses hope that the "setback" is only "temporary" and that the relationship between the police and the LGBTQ+ community will be repaired (qtd. in Edwards n.p.). Tory is also quoted in the *Globe and Mail's* "Black Lives digs in heels on police floats; Activists who brought Sunday's Pride Parade to a halt denounce event organizers and mayor, while refusing to budge on demands." The article reads, "Mr. Tory reiterated on Thursday the 'positive evolution' between Toronto police and the city's LGBTQ community" (n.p.). Tory expresses his belief that progress has been made in terms of the relationship, implying that he views the ban as a devolution. Andrew-Gee and Ascaramurt paraphrase Uros Karadzic, "a gay man who has attended Pride for two decades" saying that the decision to exclude police "has sent the cause on a regressive course" (qtd. in Ascaramurt and Andrew-Gee M1). Providing a direct quotation, the journalists write, "[i]n their mind" he said of those who support the police float and booth ban, "'this is the purest thing to do. And I don't care if we go back to handwritten placards and 200 people marching and shouting down the street. To me that would be a step back'" (M1). This speaker opposes the political roots of Pride, privileging instead the celebratory aspects aided by corporate sponsorships. If Pride is to return to these political roots, it would be guilty of regression.

Several police affiliates utilized devolutionary discourse to oppose the exclusion of police. Wendy Gillis of the *Star* includes a quotation in her piece "Gay officer objects to BLM's call for ban." Quoting Jean Turner, an RCMP civilian member and a director of Serving with Pride, an organization that supports LGBTQ+ persons who work in law

enforcement, the article reads, “[i]f police are not allowed to participate in LGBTQ events such as Pride, ‘it will feel like we are taking a step backwards,’ Turner said” (“Gay officer” A3). Mike McCormick, president of the Toronto Police Association, is one of the most vocal opponents of the police float, booth, and uniformed officers ban. “You can sit with us; (except you)” publishes his point of view stating that McCormick,

acknowledged the fraught history between his officers and the city’s LGBT community, but said times have changed since the 1981 bathhouse raids. ‘Okay, 35 years ago – but the world was a different place,’ he said. “They talk about the bathhouse raids and the relationship in the past, which our chief has stepped up and apologized for” (M1).

McCormack seems to think that the past is the past and that the past in no way effects the present. The world has changed and so have officers. He ends his statement by suggesting that Mark Saunders’ apology has closed the chapter on the turbulent relationship between the police and members of the queer community. McCormick completely fails to acknowledge the importance of intersectionality in his assertion that all queers are liberated by the same half-assed apology. Again, Black Queer and Trans youth continue to be targeted and victimized by police.

The letters to the editor printed in the *Toronto Star* demonstrate how readers often share the opinions of the newspapers they choose to read. It is no wonder that several of the *Star’s* readers write in and deploy devolutionary discourse to show their opposition to BLM. The following letter to the editor appears under the heading “Police ban from Pride is a big blow to equality.” Responding to one of the few columnists who supports the ban, Shree

Paradkar and her piece, “Toronto police should step away from Pride Parade,” Rita Maio writes,

Paradkar states that it took almost two decades for uniformed police officers to walk in the parade. Why does she think it’s now a good idea to undo the progress? [...] Fueling the fire of discrimination does no one any good and might have the unexpected consequence of putting the fight for equality for all groups centuries backward. (IN11)

According to Maio, Paradkar’s siding with BLMTO is a siding with regression and she uses two discursive tactics to articulate her point. First, she uses a rhetorical question asking why Paradkar is against progress. By utilizing this strategy, Maio presupposes that her fellow readers will agree with her position. Second, she uses a veiled threat in her warning of an “unexpected consequence” (IN11). Maio seems to imply that if Pride does comply with BLMTO’s demands, many marginalized groups will lose allies which may result in the return of the widespread discrimination that belonged to centuries past. She, like many other readers and writers, misidentifies Black Lives Matter Toronto as the source of discriminatory and exclusionary practices at Pride.

Toronto Star reader Tony D’Andrea’s letter engaged with Desmond Cole, an anti-racist activist and supporter of Black Lives Matter and his piece “Toronto’s white, straight politicians have no business defining Pride.” D’Andrea writes,

[t]he event displayed symbolically that antagonists could come together and march in unison – thereby demonstrating that tolerance for each other is the best way forward [...] Historically, the moral superiority of victims to forgive has been a powerful catalyst of progress. Cole and other serious people recognize that no one previously abused by the police is fooled by parading in symbolic union with them. Their conflicts over social injustice haven’t been resolved by their short walk. But society wants its illusions, and

visionaries of progress know how to align themselves with the moral arc bending towards the greatest good for all. Symbols matter. Pride should not exclude but include. The future depends on it. (“Symbolism of a united Pride matters”)

D’Andrea’s argument is not fully developed. He does recognize that police inclusion in the parade is nothing but an illusory symbol of “tolerance,” but he expresses that this symbol is a necessary one. The investment in providing a semblance of a healthy relationship between police and the queer community constitutes “progress.” D’Andrea does not qualify how lies are beneficial to society and how they contribute to the “greatest good for all.” Another problematic argument is articulated in this short letter. D’Andrea argues that it is up to “victims” to forgive “antagonists” in order to usher in change. Police must not be held accountable for homophobia, transphobia, and racism; instead, victims are expected to let go of grudges. For Queers of Colour that symbol is an act of symbolic violence that magnifies the material violence of ongoing police repression.

Tom Sutherland places blame on Mathieu Chantelois’ successor Olivia Nuamah for her support of Black Lives Matter stating “[y]es, Ms. Nuamah, the Pride parade was born out of protest and resistance to the police, but those days are over. Now, Pride is a hot mess and past its prime” (A16). Addressing Nuamah as “Ms.” does not read as a pleasantry; instead it reads as downright condescending (A16). Sutherland believes that Pride has peaked, and its descent was sparked by the decision to exclude police. Shirley Bush, engaging with journalist Shawn Micallef’s article, uses military metaphors to articulate her discontent stating,

I believe that Black Lives Matter Toronto attempting to ban police, whether in uniform or not, from future Pride parades was a truly

regressive move. As Shawn pointed out, there has been a long, hard-won battle to make the parade totally inclusive, and I believe that it has helped ameliorate the negative views many people once held [...] There is no question that progress has been made in many ways and we must keep up the momentum. (n.p.)

Bush believes that Pride has already achieved its aim of being “totally inclusive” (n.p). This is an interesting perspective because BLM’s demands attest to the fact that People of Colour and Indigenous folks don’t feel included. The “views” of certain people matter much more to Bush than others, and to Black Lives Matter, the inclusion of police signifies a violence as opposed to a forward “momentum” (n.p.).

Another way that journalists and readers employed devolutionary discourse was by attempting to brand BLMTO as intolerant in their attempts to scale back the gains that Pride has made in terms of inclusivity. Jackie Hong and Peter Edwards made use of select quotations to portray Black Lives Matter Toronto as an organization that is against inclusion in “Black Lives Matter doesn’t

decide what’s in the parade.”

Mathieu Chantelois states, “[o]f

course I want police to be part of

Pride in many ways [...] for me,

Pride’s for everybody and that

includes our police force” (qtd. in Hong and Edwards A1). The rhetoric of inclusion when

used in this context helps to position Black Lives Matter as against human rights. “Toronto

Pride parade marches backward” states that Pride has voted against inclusivity in its decision

to honour BLMTO’s demands. In this reversal, inclusion of Queers of Colour is viewed as

So, in our view, if he’s not committed to making Pride an accessible space for black queer and trans people, then let’s make space for somebody who is. Mm-bye! (Rodney Diverlus Interview)

-Rodney Diverlus on Mathieu Chantelois’ leadership

an act of exclusion. The editorial states, “Pride Toronto, the non-profit organization that holds Toronto’s annual Pride Parade lists “inclusivity” as one of its main values. ‘We welcome everyone and want everyone to be welcomed,’ reads the group’s website. They should rewrite that” (A10). Pride’s decision to exclude police in order to include more Queers of Colour means that they are not willing to welcome all who wish to participate.

*When you go to the Pride parade as a Black, queer, or trans person who has been persecuted by the Toronto Police, treated unfairly, it doesn't feel inclusive for us.
(Sandy Hudson on the Black Lives Matter Parade Demonstration CP24's the LeDrew Show)*

-Sandy Hudson on Pride Inclusion

Several white, ostensibly straight politicians utilized the language of equality and inclusion to critique BLMTO. Etobicoke city councillor, John Campbell, one of the most vocal critics of BLMTO expressed that the city of Toronto should cease its financial support of Pride after the organization decided to exclude the police. In “Cancel grant to Pride Toronto, LGBT police group urges” Wendy Gillis quotes Campbell stating, “[i]t doesn’t sit right with me and other councillors that we issue this grant in the view of the position that [Pride’s] taken with respect to the police force [...] We need a certain level of equity and inclusivity attached for the issuance of grants for organizations” (A1). Campbell also tells David Rider Hall of the *Toronto Star* in the article “Toronto to fund Pride despite ban on police participation” that he opposes financial support because Pride failed to “live up to its

core value of inclusivity” (n.p.). Here, the councillor accuses Pride of unethical behaviour. For Campbell, the move to exclude police results in a complete loss of integrity because it can no longer position itself as an inclusive organization.

The unnamed writer of the *Star*'s editorial entitled “Stay Inclusive” strongly advocated for the inclusion of police in the Pride parade. It states,

Toronto's LGBTQ community has not always had a warm and fuzzy relationship with police, to say the least. That's why it's so important that police have been participating for more than a decade now in Pride Toronto's annual parade with floats and frolickers – not to mention keeping the revelers safe. It's vital that the relationship continue and that Pride Toronto make clear police are welcome to continue being part of the parade. It is designed to be inclusive and excluding such an important group would send the opposite message [...] However, Pride Toronto's newly elected board has yet to weigh in on the issue. And co-chair Aaron Glyn-Williams says the group is still considering what to do. However long it takes them to decide, it would be a mistake for Pride Toronto to ban police from participating in the parade. The bottom line for Pride Toronto has always been that its events should be inclusive. And that means police officers should be allowed to march alongside the LGBTQ community, which, by the way, includes officers [...] Police participation is important for the LGBTQ community, and indeed for people of colour who are part of it. As the *Star* argued after BLM Toronto made its demands known last summer, surely it is good that police, both as individuals and as an institution, publicly endorse inclusion and tolerance and develop positive relationships with the communities they are meant to serve. Pride Toronto should keep this in mind as it grapples with the issue. And it should make sure that police remain welcome at the parade, both as protectors and full participants. (A18)

Editorials represent the opinions of the newspaper. This is evident in the editorial's inclusion of the phrase, “As the *Star* argued...” (A18). *The Star*, as a whole, believes that including police is the right thing to do as Pride has always positioned itself as “inclusive” (A18). The first line of the editorial reflects the strategy of minimization by characterizing a history of violence and intimidation as indicative of a “not always warm and fuzzy” relationship (A18).

This line also seems to suggest that the paper feels as if including police in the parade will usher in a “warm and fuzzy relationship” (A18). What concerns me about this argument is that the *Star* implies that the LGBTQ+ community is solely responsible for improving relations. The police are not told to work harder in order to show the queer community that they intend to act on their supposed commitment to inclusion nor are they told to provide LGBTQ+ persons with the same amount of protection afforded to straight citizens. Also alarming in this suggestion is that the *Star* is positioned as an organization that has the right to speak for the queer community that includes People of Colour. Teun A. van Dijk has pointed out that newspapers always speak to and for the hegemony, and privileged groups with their dominant ideologies around identity and belonging have no right to tell marginalized communities what to do.

The *Star*'s unnamed writer of “Taking a step back” also stated that including police in the parade will improve relationships. The writer mentions that police chief Mark Saunders has agreed to keep his officers from marching in the parade before stating, “[i]t would have been far better [...] for this necessary work [of building relationships] to go on while allowing police to continue their participation in the Pride parade. It’s easier to build on a positive relationship, rather than one of suspicion” (A16). This article’s use of positive and negative places moral judgment on the issue of police participation. Police participation is positive, whereas exclusion is negative (A16). I believe that the journalist really misses the point here. Marching in the parade must be the outcome of a mended relationship between LGBTQ+ persons and the police. BLMTO sees that the police have done little to earn the

right to march because police continue to terrorize People of Colour who should be able to participate in the parade without being reminded of this tumultuous present.

Star reader Troy J. Young suggested that Pride has undermined its values by ceding to Black Lives Matter's demands. He writes,

Pride's policy toward LGBTQ police, which requires them to hide themselves and their profession and to not express their entire pride during the day exclusively set aside for them to do so, is a massive failure of the original spirit of Toronto Pride. Pride means to stand up for whom and what you are and in any way you choose. To be restricted in celebrating this is to ultimately to declare that Pride no longer maintains a policy of inclusivity. (IN11)

Young's criticisms of Pride are extended to Black Lives Matter as the latter initiated the former's decision to exclude uniformed police. The writer seems misguided about what the original spirit of Pride was; as mentioned time and time again, Pride began as a protest against police. The original spirit was one of revolution. Police are welcome to express their queer identities or their identities as allies which is completely in line with the spirit of Toronto Pride. They are just asked to abstain from representing an organization that has oppressed and continues to oppress marginalized communities. Pride's commitment to inclusivity can only be upheld if such symbols of oppression are omitted.

In "A Black Lives Matter misstep," Rosie DiManno pointed out the intolerant nature of Black Lives Matter's demand to exclude police floats and booths as well as uniformed officers by highlighting Pride's commitment to inclusion. She writes, "the gay community [...] has historically chosen inclusion over exclusion. Although the parade began as protest (thus intrinsically political) theirs is an extraordinarily large tent pegged by generosity and absolution" (A2). DiManno selects religious diction as demonstrated in the term

“absolution” to highlight the progress of the LGBTQ+ community, a forward-thinking community that forgives wrongdoings (A2). She also argues that the sit-in, evidence of BLMTO’s privileging of its own pain, was a “posture that fractures alliances and goodwill” (A2). Black Lives Matter are portrayed as a threat to the “tent” and are therefore positioned as the opponents of progress (A2). In this statement, Black Lives Matter is figured as working against the queer community’s humanitarian mission and threatens to dismantle its “tent” (A2).

4.3.1 Historicizing, Conceptualizing, and Analyzing Devolutionary Discourse

If the *Toronto Star*, the *Globe and Mail*, and the *National Post* all employed devolutionary discourse to devalue the BLMTO 2016 Pride Protest, all three papers appear to support claims from within and beyond the elite and whitely queer community that BLMTO is the enemy of progress. These rhetorical moves are not new, nor are they unique to the 2016 press coverage and push-back against BLMTO. According to Daniel Coleman, there is a temporal aspect combined with ideas of self-restraint that are central to English Canadian notions of civility. He writes “liberal Canadians of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries believed that all people had the potential to be civil, but some societies were farther ahead on the single timeline of civilization, while others were 'backward' or delayed” (12).

The temporal aspect of civility, or what I am calling devolutionary discourse, can be traced back to Enlightenment-era Europeans and this discourse was often deployed in the service of justifying and sustaining slavery. These racist ideologies of the past become recycled and are recirculated by whites and whitely people each and every time their

supremacy is perceived as being under threat. The devolutionary discourse that circulated in the days of slavery bears a striking resemblance to those whites who staunchly opposed Black Lives Matter.

French travelers, scientists, journalists, and geographers frequently reported that Africans' supposed inability to envision the future was evidence of their brutish nature. Jesuit Missionary Pierre-François de Charlevoix, author of *Histoire de l'isle Espagnole ou de Saint-Domingue* (1731) observes that Africans “think of nothing of their own accord; their past is as little known to them as their future. They are machines that must be rewound whenever one wants to make them move” (qtd. Curran 119). Abbé Demanet, a priest engaged in the slave trade, also demonstrated a belief that the African was a “futureless human” that “seems to be a machine that is wound up and released by springs; [he is] similar to soft wax, with which one can form whatever shape one desires” (qtd. in Curran 119). The supposed mechanistic nature of the African mind meant simply that Africans would have to be reset daily in order to have any trajectory what-so-ever. In the 1754 text *Voyage d'un philosophe*, Pierre Poivre observed apparent agricultural inefficiency and took this as evidence of African inability to conceptualize the future. He writes, “[t]hese stupid men [are content] to live from day to day in an environment where there are few real needs. They cultivate only as much as they must to avoid dying of hunger” (qtd. in Curran 119). Similarly, author of *Anecdotes africaines* (1775), Jean-Gaspard Dubois Fontanelle's writes, “[t]he Africans live, for the most part, from day to day. They dream neither of the past nor of the future. Much like their ancestors who were not inclined to leave historic accounts, they too have no interest to providing such chronicles for future generations” (qtd. in Curran

120). According to the French, a lack of memory and foresight paired with a supposed malleability made Africans perfect candidates for slave labour.

American slave owners even proclaimed that slavery was indeed the path to progress. William Harper's 1837 "Memoir on Slavery" delivered as an oration at the South Carolina Society for the Advancement of Learning and printed in pamphlet form a year later praises slavery for advancing civilization. Harper states,

[t]he institution of domestic slavery exists over far the greater portion of the inhabited earth – at least in all the portions which have made advances towards civilization [...] Without [slavery] there can be no accumulation of property, no providence for the future, no tastes for comforts or elegancies, which are the characteristics and essentials of civilization. He who has obtained the command of another's labour, first begins to accumulate and provide for the future, and the foundations for the civilization are laid [...] Since the existence of man, with no exception whatever, either in ancient or modern times, every society which has attained civilization, has advanced to it through this process. (80-81)

Harper argues that civilization has been achieved only because of the institution of slavery. Subjecting others to forced labour has enabled societies to progress into the modern era. For Harper, abolition will inevitably stunt this progress impeding further advancement.

The discourse of uncivilized Africans incapable of conceptualizing the idea of progress is shockingly similar to the way that the Canadian news media characterize Black activists.

The *Toronto Star*, the *Globe and Mail*, and the *National Post* made use of modern-day manifestations of devolutionary discourse asserting that the members of Black Lives Matter Toronto stood in the way of progress. The journalists and readers suggested that if left to their own devices, the Black activists would make decisions without speculating upon the repercussions as if, they too, are "futureless human[s]" (qtd. in Currant 119).

Unrestrained, they succeed in undoing the progress the City of Toronto has made in terms of inclusivity. In the white imagination, Black activists appear to be stunted, stuck in a past, and intolerant. The newspapers and its readers see police inclusion in the Toronto Pride parade as a symbol of progress, of how far “we” have come in terms of acceptance and view Black Lives Matter’s sit-in and subsequent demands as a successful attempt at halting progress. According to these newspapers, Black activism keeps us in the dark ages, and ongoing oppression and containment of Black subjects enables progression. Present-day devolutionary discourse attests to the afterlife of slavery in Canada.

4.4 IRRATIONALITY DISCOURSE

The *Toronto Star*, the *Globe and Mail*, and the *National Post* journalists covering the 2016 demonstration suggested that Black Lives Matter Toronto’s demand for Pride to exclude police floats, booths, and uniformed officers was completely irrational. Hidden within this discourse is the assumption that this particular group of activists lack the intelligence to discern an enemy worthy of opposition. Like devolutionary discourse, irrationality discourse implies that Black people are inferior to whites. The headline of Rosie DiManno’s column, “A Black Lives Matter misstep,” implies that BLMTO is to blame for an error of judgment. DiManno drew a comparison in order to express just how misguided the activists are, and she began her piece by narrating an incident involving the Toronto Police tasing a restrained

man. An officer threatened to seize the phone of a bystander who was filming the action while another said there was a risk of contracting AIDS from the suspect's spit (A2). DiManno

When our people are being killed by police, and they're not making any steps to change the relationship [...] you have to take a stance [...] and you have to say, "Look you are accountable to us, and if you're not doing anything about this, we can't endorse you." (Sandy Hudson on the Black Lives Pride Parade Demonstration CP24's the LeDrew Show)

-Sandy Hudson on police ban

claims that the Black Lives Matter

sit-in is as "wrong and misguided as the cop asserting nonsense about contracting HIV from spit" (A2). This comparison seeks to brand BLMTO as misinformed, ignorant, and downright idiotic. The word "nonsense" conveys a belief that Black Lives Matter is making irrational demands of Toronto Pride (A2). DiManno also identifies what she sees as a contradiction: "Presumably [Mark] Saunders, who marched in last year's parade would not be permitted to do so, which is weird given that flamboyant costumes (including faux cop getups) have been a signature of the lively spectacle" (A2). Here, DiManno suggests that because police costumes are permissible, uniforms should be too. However, uniforms and costumes represent quite different things. Police uniforms connote power and police costumes connote a subversion of power because they adorn an unlikely body. Whereas uniforms signify authority, costumes signify play. In her attempt to poke holes in BLMTO's logic, she commits a "misstep" herself (A2).

Many articles suggested that Black Lives Matter was overstepping its bounds by making demands of Pride. The "Stay Inclusive" writer criticizes the demand stating, "[r]egardless of BLM's worthy goals of drawing attention to racism, it is way off course in

demanding that Pride Toronto not allow police floats and officers to be a part of the parade” (n.p.). The editorial writer states that Pride Toronto is not within the jurisdiction of BLM expressing a complete lack of awareness regarding the intersectionality of oppression. Within this assertion is the presupposition that Pride is not plagued with racism. Many writers neglect to mention the other eight demands made by Black Lives Matter with the majority of them advocating for equal representation for Black, Indigenous, and South Asian communities. This neglectfulness seems to suggest that the majority of individuals opposing Black Lives Matter are more concerned about the inclusion of privileged persons in positions of authority than those who inhabit society’s margins. In the *Globe and Mail’s* “Pride says no decision yet on police floats,” Mahnoor Yawar quotes Mike McCormack calling the attempt to exclude police “stupid” (qtd. in Yawar A5). McCormack goes on to say,

[t]his is about the Pride Parade, this is not about Black Lives Matter’ [...] We have been supporting Pride for years, long before politicians and other people. To suggest that police should be removed and not have a float or booths or be allowed in the community space – that’s complete and utter nonsense. (qtd. in Yawar A5)

McCormack’s disregard of Black Lives Matter’s investment in the issue of police at Pride suggests that the input of its members does not matter. By turning his attention to Pride, McCormack privileges the rights of police over the rights of marginalized peoples to feel safe during the event. Like DiManno, he labels the exclusion “nonsense” and seeks commendations for police support of the LGBTQ+ community (qtd. in Yawar A5).

Some writers attempted to expose the illogicality of Black Lives Matter by deploying the discourse of madness. The headline “Marching Madness” that ran in the *National Post* on February 11, 2017 is the perfect example pointing out how the demand is indicative of

insanity. In the body of the article, BLM is accused of displaying a brand of activism that disdains feel-good marches and engages in “‘hey hey, ho ho’ protests that tweedy Annex revolutionaries enjoy before a nice dinner out” (A18). The writer of this article follows up the statement with, “[i]nconveniently for Pride, this brand of activist uses a very academic vocabulary that to many outsiders sounds like lunacy” (A18). BLMTO’s activism is thought to originate on the campuses of Toronto’s ivy league universities and in the city’s wealthy neighbourhoods, and for this particular journalist, this brand has no real and practical value. It is sheer “lunacy” spewed from the mouths of the privileged whose activism is incapable of ushering in any real change (A18).

In “Unsavoury Tactics” in the *Post*, Barbara Kay goes to very interesting lengths to tear down Black Lives Matter Toronto. Kay provides what she sees as evidence of BLM’s irrationality:

It’s true that African Americans face many unique hardships and there are lots of statistics to prove it, but listening to BLM rhetoric, one would think that all blacks are disadvantaged and fear universally racist police. Yet, according to the latest Pew poll on views of race and inequality, “roughly half (51 per cent) (of black Americans) say their race hasn’t made a difference in their overall success,” while eight per cent say being black has “made things easier.” A post-Ferguson New York Times survey found that, when asked how race relations were in the U.S., only 44 per cent said “generally good.” Moreover, the same survey found that only 13 per cent of African Americans see the police as their enemies [...] That’s not perfection, but it is proof that racial disparities in social outcomes cannot be attributed to racism alone. Yet black militants prefer the rigid and paranoid Marxist oppressed-oppressor narrative that sanctions a general condemnation of whites. Denying police officers their rightful place in the Pride parade and refusing to sell Tshirts to white people will not end racism, but it will erode the credibility of BLM supporters. (A9)

Kay derives her evidence that BLMTO is making grave mistakes from American sources. It should not come as a surprise that one of her two sources of evidentially is the Pew Research Centre, an institute that is no stranger to the dissemination of harmful ideologies. The Pew Research Centre had much to do with furthering the myth of the model minority. In a 2012 report entitled “The Rise of Asian Americans,” Pew relied upon and thus reproduced Asian stereotypes, painting the largely diverse group as a homogenous entity that values tradition, hard work, education, family values, and financial success (Pewsocialtrends.org). This portrayal of privilege is often used in order to further the myth of a post racial society making it harder to combat issues of racism that plague Asian American communities. Kay also employs a “numbers game” intended to sway readers into thinking her position is correct (Henry and Tator 182). With just figures displayed, readers can’t be certain how the statistics are collected and which communities these stats are collected from. These statistics are solely employed to demonstrate how Black Lives Matter is wrong to accuse Pride Toronto of racism as racism is no longer a problem impacting the Black community. If Black Lives Matter is merely crying racism where none exists, then they must be irrational to the extent of being “paranoiac,” as well as being racist in the reverse, punishing whites and the police force without good reason (A9). Also worthy of mention is the complete misrepresentation and oversimplification of BLMTO’s aims. Kay sets up a strawman by stating that the members of BLMTO are attempting to solve racism by “[d]enying police officers their rightful place in the Pride parade and refusing to sell Tshirts to white people” (A9). This argument would be easily refutable by hypothetical opponents.

Two letters to the *Toronto Star* editor used the discourse of madness to express frustration. Marty Fruchtman writes, “no uniformed or police presence for future parades (and gatherings)? In these times and conditions that certainly sounds just a little crazy” (IN11). Using a hedging technique of minimization, Fruchtman tries to soften the blow of his accusation. Andrew van Velzen’s letter reads,

[h]as Pride Toronto become totally unglued? To succumb to a nutty fringe group like Black Lives Matter is disgraceful. Of course the police and their floats should be included in the parade. As the Star notes in its editorial, Pride is about inclusivity. Their slogan in last year’s festival was ‘You can sit with us.’ This says it all. [...] The Pride festival has gone way beyond the LGBT+ community. It also represents what Canada is trying to be: a country that is not perfect but compared to the rest of the world, is diverse, inclusive and relatively tolerant. (IN11)

This writer uses a colloquial tone to express his frustrations, and this is evident in his use of phrases “totally unglued” and “nutty fringe group” (IN11). He employs this language in order to make fun of Black Lives Matter and Pride for the ridiculous decision to exclude police. Andrew van Velzen tries to dismiss the political convictions of Black Lives Matter because they are just crazy troublemakers who have no right trying to influence organizations like Pride. If Pride represents Canada and Canada is striving to be “relatively tolerant,” Pride is only responsible for a margin of tolerance (IN11). The letter writer is advocating for a tolerance that isn’t too tolerant and seems to be satisfied with Pride continuing its legacy of excluding Communities of Colour.

Some crafty journalists and interview subjects employed subtle tactics to criticize Black Lives Matter. The *Globe and Mail* editorial writer of “Toronto Pride parade marches

backward” claimed there was a mistake inherent in the police ban. The journalist announced that,

Pride Toronto has officially banned Toronto Police Services from putting a float in the parade, or having stands along the route. LGBT people who are police officers can march on their own, but not as an identifiable group. It is a horribly misguided decision. (A10)

This critique of Pride is a thinly veiled attack on Black Lives Matter. If Pride has made a “misguided decision” by following the advice of Black Lives Matter, Black Lives Matter must necessarily be misguided (A10). If having police march in the parade is a symbol of progress as opposed to oppression, then Black Lives Matter must also be unable to interpret symbols accordingly (A10). Andrew-Gee and Ascaramurt quote Mike McCormack commenting on the improvement police have made since the bathhouse raids. The article reads, “[s]ince [the raids] the police union has worked hard to build relations with the LGBT community, Mr. McCormack said. “And now you say, ‘You can’t be part of that because you wear a uniform and represent oppression?’ Come on”” (qtd. in Ascaramurt and Andrew-Gee M1). When used in this context, “[c]ome on” is intended to point out the absurdity of Black Lives Matter’s demand (M1). For McCormack, there are no issues between the police and the queer community, therefore the exclusion is utterly ridiculous. Two articles by Dakshana Ascaramurt printed in the *Globe*, “Pride Toronto hires first black female head” and “New Pride boss, Olivia Nuamah actively ‘wears’ her race” employed the term “dramatic” to describe the sit-in and the demand to exclude police floats, booths, and uniformed officers (A14 and M1). This term seems to imply that the sit-in was overblown and histrionic.

Several writers of letters to the *Toronto Star* editor pointed out the irrationality of Black Lives Matter's demand as well as Pride's decision to meet that demand. Each letter writer assumed the authority to determine what is and what is not acceptable behaviour at Toronto Pride thus exercising implicit power over the event. The similarity between the ideas purported by letter writers and those of the mainstream journalists reveals the biconditional relationship that exists between newspapers and readers. Readers seek out information that legitimizes their worldview and newspapers aim to reflect the worldview shared by their readership. The impact of this is the creation of an echo chamber where conformity is uncritically championed.

Speaking directly to Pride, reader Joseph D. Hagger utters the following threat: "[t]here will be very serious repercussions from your unwise decision" (n.p.). Hagger does not elaborate on this claim, leaving his statement to stand as an ominous threat. Don Graves shows his disapproval for the BLM tactic by stating that "[t]here is a time for pride, parades and for protest. But timing is everything" (IN11). This sentiment is reiterated by Marty Fruchtman who states that "[t]here is a time and place for everything but certainly not here" (IN11). Both writers assume that the BLM protest was ill-timed and out of place. An unnamed writer of the *Globe and Mail's* "Pride parade takes a political turn" also quoted a spectator who relies on time to contest BLMT0's sit-in. The article reads, "'[t]here is a time and a place for this,' said Derek Milroy, one of the many-parade watchers who grew frustrated with the display. 'It's not about them. It's gay pride, not black pride'" (n.p.). Milroy expresses that demonstrations concerning the Black community are out of time and

out of place at queer events presupposing that Black and queer communities do not have many members in common.

Warren Dalton's response to the Black Lives Matter sit-in is far from flattering. In his letter, he points out that the tactic is ineffective:

BLM has some worthy goals for the black community, but disrupting this event has only alienated many people. It's true that there have been some police shootings of blacks that were somewhat suspect, but the same police are protecting ordinary citizens who wish to enjoy these events so that there isn't a repeat of the Orlando tragedy. Relations between police and the black community are already strained. Actions such as this only exacerbate the situation. (IN11)

Dalton's letter is another great example of how writers attempt to establish ethos by situating themselves as allies before withdrawing their support. This rhetorical strategy is intended to give legitimacy to his claim that Black Lives Matter has gone too far. Dalton begins with an acknowledgment of Black Lives Matter's "worthy goals" before undermining his statement with his use of syntax (IN11). Employing the preposition "but" demonstrates that the limits of his support for BLMTO have been pushed and he has no choice but turn his back on the organization (IN11). Here, Dalton attempts to save face by making excuses. He comments on the supposed negative impacts of the sit-in, namely alienation and exacerbation, thus implying that BLM's actions were ineffective. The letter writer then attempts to minimize the tragic impact that the police have had on the Black community by utilizing hedging techniques evident in the terms "some" and "somewhat" (IN11). Dalton then states that the violence incurred by the Black community is tolerable because of the police effectively protect "ordinary citizens" (IN11). Here, Dalton divorces Blackness from citizenship suggesting that members of the Black community have different rights to police protection

than others. By evoking the Orlando tragedy, Dalton attempts to present BLMTO's complaints as trivial.

The next letter writers take aim at a *Toronto Star* journalist who dares to challenge the hive mind. These writers critique Desmond Cole's opinion piece, "Pride has divorced blackness from queerness," that argues that "Toronto scorns blacks for raining on the parade, when in reality black people are claiming a piece of Pride they have historically been denied" (A15). To this statement, R.H. Brillinger asks,

[w]hat Pride parade did Desmond Cole attend? Certainly not the one I saw on July 3, at Yonge and Bloor. Nor previous Pride parades in Toronto, in which thousands of people of colour proudly and happily marched, danced or rode on floats throughout the parade. They weren't "denied" anything, despite the claims of the few in BLM.
(n.p.)

Brillinger insists that Cole and BLMTO are wrong and misguided for believing that Black people have been excluded from Pride based on his own empirical evidence. He has, with his own eyes, seen People of Colour having a great time at Pride. Brillinger doesn't consider the thousands that didn't show up because they felt like they had no place in the celebration. Dave Keeley also undermines Cole by writing, "[n]o, Desmond. BLM halted the parade to protest the presence of the police in the festivities. It wasn't to demand inclusion for black LGBTQ. Stop spinning the incident" (n.p.). Addressing Cole by his first name, in this context, is a great sign of disrespect. Including both an exclamatory sentence ("no, Desmond") and an imperative sentence ("Stop spinning the incident"), Keeley positions himself as Cole's opponent (n.p.). Both Brillinger and Keeley forget that the exclusion of police was only one of the nine demands made by Black Lives Matter.

The following letter writers go to strange lengths to critique the logic of BLMTO by employing faulty comparisons. Omar Sharif writes, “[o]ur taxes pay for policing. If we ban police floats, perhaps no taxpayers should be allowed to attend future Pride parades either since they are the ones financing and enabling the police force” (IN11). Sharif’s argument presupposes that the banning of police floats is comparable to the banning of taxpayers, but floats and persons are not comparable. Whereas police floats are viewed as celebration of a repressive state apparatus that has a legacy of oppressing marginalized peoples, the general taxpaying public does not have such a legacy. Also, there is no way for taxpayers to opt out of financing police unless they want to risk being persecuted under the law. Steve Solomon also engages in a fallacious argument stating,

[p]olice officers who are also members of the LGBT community are evidently being told their presence will be tolerated if they are out of uniform – in other words, only if they are willing to pretend they are not police officers. How long has it been true that members of the LGBT community have been told their presence would only be tolerated if they pretended not to be gay? (IN11)

Solomon’s argument is premised upon a logical fallacy. He posits a red herring by insisting that BLMTO is asking that police hide their professions when what they’ve asked is that police avoid wearing uniforms. Even if Black Lives Matter did demand that police hide their professions, Solomon’s statement would constitute a faulty comparison. He presupposes that there is a similarity between hiding a profession in order to go to a parade and hiding an identity to maintain a job, to avoid prison, assault, and potentially even death. Police often hide their professions in order to be successful in them, going undercover to ensnare unsuspecting perpetrators or drive unmarked cars to catch people committing traffic

violations. Members of the LGBTQ+ community often remain closeted as a means of survival. The circumstances and the stakes are very different in each scenario.

John Osmond also expressed a belief in the necessity of police. He writes,

[a]s a white male, I have no frame of reference for the type of oppression at the core of this situation. However, as a gay man I know about intolerance. I disagree with the notion that the police should be excluded from the Pride parade. After the bathhouse raids of 1981, gay men felt angry and persecuted. It took a lot of time and effort, and many community meetings, but eventually the two sides opened a productive dialogue, which led to the relationship we have today. Is it perfect? Absolutely not. But I am a firm believer in working together to solve problems. The police are necessary to keep order in any community. While the people involved in BLM no doubt have legitimate grievances, keeping police from participating in Pride will serve no purpose but to widen the divide. (IN11)

Osmond begins with a statement regarding his positionality “as a white male” (IN11). This statement acts almost as apology as he attempts to excuse himself and his privilege. He then moves on to mention that he knows a thing or two about oppression. His confessions work to position himself at the centre of the issue, and this is evident in the frequent use of the pronoun “I” (“I have no frame of reference,” “I know about intolerance,” “I disagree,” “I am a firm believer”) (IN11). After the serial use of “I”, Osmond proposes his solution to work together. It is interesting that he chooses to acknowledge the bathhouse raids which were succeeded by a mass protest (IN11). It seems, that based on this history, BLM is indeed taking cue from the LGBTQ+ community of old and beginning a conversation with protest. Perhaps this initial widening “of the divide” is necessary to eventually closing the gap (IN11).

Calvin Lawrence also engages in positionality in his letter by introducing himself as a Black man. He states,

The BLM demonstration shows just how out of touch some members of the Black community are in regard to gaining equality in our society. The gay movement came out of a situation of abuse and discrimination by the police to reach a position of respect and equality in the eyes of economic and political bodies [...] We as black people don't have to demonstrate, riot, call people down, trash politicians, complain about abuses etc. All we have to do is minimize the conflict in our communities, respect others, defend ourselves, and turn our effort inward. (IN11)

Lawrence starts out by suggesting that Black Lives Matter are completely out of touch from reality for staging a sit-in. He then positions himself as a Black man who is very much in touch with reality by offering what he sees as a more legitimate solution. He attempts to rally Black folks by evoking the statement, “[w]e as black people” before pointing out how BLM tactics are superfluous (IN11). Lawrence is quite vague about what his proposed solution is. He suggests that the Black community is responsible for its own issues in his recommendation to “minimize conflicts” and “turn [efforts] inward,” but he also acknowledges a right to self-defense (IN11). These vague statements may be interpreted as contradictory, and some may interpret the act of sitting-in as an act of self-defense. John Petersen blames the victim as well by suggesting that Black Lives Matter should shift its focus. He writes,

BLM's action did not help their cause and tarnished the Pride organization by giving into their demands. I thought the idea was to work with police, not to alienate black people from our police force. They are making police out to be the enemy. They might focus their attention on the gun violence and killings in the predominantly black neighbourhoods where black lives matter. (IN11)

Petersen suggests that the BLM sit-in only achieved negative results. It is unclear where Petersen got his “idea” from, but it certainly wasn't from Black Lives Matter, an organization that has no evidence to believe that the police will cooperate with them (IN11). Black Lives

Matter formed as a response to police violence, so it is safe to say that the police force made themselves out to be the enemy. Petersen's closing statement is particularly problematic as it suggests that Blackness and crime are intrinsically linked, and that Black Lives Matter must turn its gaze inward to minimize Black on Black crime. Finally, by failing to include the word "also" between "black lives" and "matter" Petersen implies that "black lives [only] matter" in "predominantly black neighbourhoods" (IN11).

In his letter, Sean Martin accused Shree Paradkar for misunderstanding the relationship between the LGBTQ+ community and the police in her piece entitled "Toronto police should step away from Pride Parade." Martin states,

I'm sorry, but Shree Paradkar's column indicates a serious lack of understanding in how Toronto police and the LGBT community were able to build the bridges necessary for today's working relationship – they sat down and talked it out. Together. In the same room. At the same time. If Black Lives Matter wants a better relationship with police, slamming doors is not the way to do that. That is not how we do things in Canada. If Pride and BLM are serious about wanting better relationships with the police, then it starts with communication. And it has to be a two-way street. Is that going to right the wrongs of the past? No. But it can avert ones in the future. And isn't that the whole point? (IN11)

Martin begins with a strategy of negative politeness in the form of an insincere apology. He insists that discussions have solved issues between the queer community and police in the past but fails to provide specific examples. He believes that Black Lives Matter is behaving irrationally by choosing a sit-in over a discussion. Martin goes on to argue that the type of dissent expressed by BLM is un-Canadian in the sense that it does not take the form of polite conversation that is so indicative of national belonging. He does not consider that holding a conversation with a police chief who supported the practice of carding that targeted the Black

community might not be very fruitful. Martin also makes use of two rhetorical questions: one he answers himself, and one he leaves unanswered. The latter question attempts to demonstrate that BLM is undermining its own mandate by foreclosing the possibility to improve relations with police.

Two other readers made use of rhetorical questions to criticize Black Lives Matter.

Globe reader Jim Tomlinson states,

[a]t their news conference on Thursday, one of the representatives of Black Lives Matter Toronto criticized Mayor John Tory for wading into the issue of police representation at Pride events [...] Apparently Black Lives Matter feels only they can decide this issue, as they showed when they hijacked the Pride parade and issued demands to Pride organizers. Are the Black Lives Matter representatives aware that Pride Toronto received \$160,500 from the City of Toronto this year – that is, from the citizens of this city? I would think that under those circumstances, the mayor, and in fact any city councillor, as an elected representative of Toronto, would have the right and responsibility to offer an opinion on the subject. (F2)

Tomlinson is referring to an incident occurring between Mayor John Tory and Black Lives Matter member Rodney Diverlus. After Tory demonstrated his support for police following the BLMTO sit-in, Diverlus said that the Mayor “has no place in this discussion and needs to stay in his lane [...] This is an issue between the LGBT community, the black community and Pride Toronto and the community at large” (Edwards and Pagliaro GT1). Diverlus is not denying Tory the right to his opinion; he is stating that the issue does not involve the mayor. Tomlinson’s use of rhetorical questioning seeks to mock Black Lives Matter and their supposed lack of knowledge regarding Pride’s sources of funding, but as Desmond Cole argues, funding alone should not give white, straight, and cisgendered male politicians the right to interfere with Pride (A15). J. Brunins also uses rhetorical questioning in response to

the *Star*'s headline "Black Lives Matter protest scores victory": "[h]ow can a victory be ascribed to a group of misguided individuals disrupting a celebratory parade and choosing to bully the celebrants and participants?" (n.p.). This question is intended to embarrass the *Star* for making what Brunins sees as a ridiculous statement. Any paper that proclaims victory for a group of be "misguided" itself (n.p.).

The demands that were bringing forward were actually just the beginning of a conversation (qtd. in Gray).

-Rodney Diverlus on BLM's demands

In a letter to the *Toronto Star* editor, Rita Maio writes,

Black Lives Matter could have done this peacefully and calmly by requesting a sit-down after the parade to discuss how to approach police participation for the next year. They would have definitely garnered more support. All the organization achieved is to make people angry and to fuel the fire for bigots. This group, more than others, should know that exclusion of any group is discrimination. (28)

Maio shows opposition to the Black Lives Matter tactic of holding a sit-in during the Pride parade by offering what she sees as a more peaceful and calmer tactic of holding a discussion. She also implies that Black Lives Matter's tactic was disruptive and upsetting. Maio's proposed alternative would not garner "more support" as it is unlikely that a

discussion would elicit media attention that would spark a national conversation about anti-Blackness (28). Ronald Weir's letter contains a similar sentiment:

[t]he standoff between Black Lives Matter (BLM) and Pride was a sad example of opportunism and capitulations. BLM has some very valid concerns; and I suspect that, had they presented them to Pride in a rational and businesslike manner, Pride would have addressed them appropriately. (IN11)

Weir's use of "standoff" makes it seem as if BLM and Pride have reached an impasse (IN11). However, Pride had already made their decision to meet the BLMT0's demand by this time. The word also implies that BLMT0 is engaged in violent behaviour by opposing Pride. Like Maio, Weir doesn't seem to oppose the ban itself, and instead feels that the issue lies with the tactic. Black Lives Matter could have chosen a less destructive strategy and opted for a more professional one. Rob Graham shares a similar sentiment stating, "BLM pulled quite the stunt [...] The police are welcome to march in my parade. Perhaps BLM's cause would be better served by meaningful dialogue at the table instead of refusing to sit at it" (IN11). The table metaphor suggests that BLM should have sat down and engaged in civilized conversation making use of a socially acceptable platform instead of creating its own. Barbara McCracken also calls for a civilized chat stating, "[i]t is time for all sides to forget the power-play tactics and commence meaningful dialogue to resolve our issues" (A16). Graham and McCracken both fail to outline what meaningful dialogue might look like.

Unlike most of the other readers, Edmond Comrie took the time to acknowledge the other demands made. He writes,

[m]ost of Black Lives Matter's demands to Pride Toronto were reasonable, aside from the demand that Toronto police be banned from future parades. If BLM is having problems with Toronto police, then a more proactive response would be to request assistance from the LGBT+ community in establishing better relations with them. After all, we have more than 3 years of hugely successful experience. Pride Toronto's decision to ban police, many of whom are members of the LGBT+ community, is narrow, counterproductive and exclusionary. If the smiling faces of our diverse officers in uniform are excluded from the 2017 parade, then mine will be too. (IN11)

Once again, a reader claims to have a more effective solution to Black Lives Matter's issue with Pride arguing that conversation is so much more reasonable than an all-out police ban. Comrie simplifies the process of overcoming oppression suggesting that a mere conversation is enough to undo years of abuse. The reader also presupposes that the Black Lives Matter Toronto community is separate from the LGBTQ+ community in his assertion that the former should have consulted the latter regarding relationship building. Comrie does not seem aware of the fact that Black Lives Matter consists of many members from the queer and Trans communities and have real investments in making Pride an inclusive and safe space. He also fails to recognize that the police only smile for some while posing direct threats to others. Comrie's decision to boycott the 2017 Pride event shows his allegiance to police.

National Post reader, Michael Kennedy has some harsh words for Black Lives Matter warning that they,

should take a lesson from Pride and learn that you win more supporters with positivity. Pride could easily disrupt traffic, stage sit-ins and scream that homophobia is prevalent in society. However, its organizers (and indeed its community at large) are smarter than that. The LGBT minority knows that you cannot effect change without the sympathy, and help of the majority. If Black Lives Matter truly wants to effect meaningful change, then hopefully it will eventually learn the same thing. (A7)

Kennedy's recommendation to follow Pride's lead suggests that Black Lives Matter has selected an inappropriate tactic. He then goes on to state that Pride would never utilize Black Lives Matter tactics because the organization is too smart. Kennedy suggests that the tolerable type of activism will pander to the majority instead of opposing it. Kennedy's use of this type of argument shows the circulation and durability of ideology as it insists on the maintenance of the status quo. He also assumes that the majority of the LGBTQ+ community does not engage in activist endeavors; he is forgetting that the parade is prefaced by two days of marching from Trans and lesbian communities. The interesting thing is that Black Lives Matter did, in fact, effect meaningful change with their sit-in. Police have not had floats or booths, nor have they been able to march in uniform since 2016.

4.4.1 Historicizing, Conceptualizing, and Analyzing Irrationality Discourse

Many journalists for the *Star*, the *Globe*, and the *Post* claimed that, in their pursuit of racial justice, the members of Black Lives Matter Toronto are not capable of exercising reason. Their tactic of using the Toronto Pride parade as a platform for attempting to have more POC representation at the celebration was completely irrational according to journalists and letter writers. These groups state that there are more logical ways to get unfounded concerns heard. BLMTO members must be either crazy or stupid to think that racism pervades one of Toronto's most beloved festivals. *The Globe and Mail*, the *Toronto Star*, and the *National Post* writers and readers all utilized the discourse of irrationality and madness in attempt to discredit Black activism and in one way or another implied that the containment and silencing of this activism will lessen the amount of stupidity in the city of Toronto. These

writers and readers spread racist stereotypes that were once used to justify the institution of slavery. In their primitive form, these discourses held that Black people were best suited to enslavement due to their lack of intelligence.

European Enlightenment thinkers, writers, and medical professionals interested in Africa equated Blackness with stupidity. In 1748, Scottish empiricist David Hume defined whiteness in contradistinction to African stupidity:

I am apt to suspect the negroes, and in general all the other species of men... to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was a civilization of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures among them, no arts, no sciences ... In JAMAICA indeed they talk of one negroe as a man of parts and learning; but 'tis likely he is admired for very slender accomplishments, like a parrot who speaks a few words plainly. (qtd. in Jordan 109-110)

Hume subscribes to the belief that Black peoples lack intelligence and takes this supposed lack as evidence of innate inferiority. This unintelligence has led to a supposed inability to cultivate art, science, and industry. Hume closes his ignorant criticism with a joke comparing Black people to beasts; they would be considered a credit to their race if they were able to achieve even the most facile of ends. Jacques-Philibert Rousselot de Surgy agrees with Hume stating that Africans possess a bestial intelligence. In his text *Mélanges intéressans* (1765), he claims that the people of Africa have “no idea, no knowledge that belong to men” (qtd. in Currant 178). Philosopher Joseph-Marie de Gérando described the African mind, in *Des signs et de l'art de penser* (1800), as a “void” incapable of complex thought and feeling (qtd. in Currant 211). He adds that the African only sees in “nature what [is] directly related to the needs of his senses” (qtd. in Currant 211-212). Though generally

opposed to the institution of slavery, French philosopher Montesquieu argued in *De l'esprit des loins*, that Africans are best suited to serve as slaves due to their lack of intelligence. He writes, "the majority of punishments [for Africans] are easier to endure than mental exertion; servitude is also more tolerable than the force of mind necessary for humans" (qtd. in Curran 135). In post-slavery Canada, the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, Sir Adams Archibald, expressed comparable ideologies in 1891 when he said "A negro with plenty to eat and to drink, with clothing and shelter, has little care for anything else. He has no ambition. To him labor is only a last resort... Negroes like an idle and lazy life, and have no aim or ambition for anything beyond mere animal existence" (qtd. in Pittman 13).

Several prolific European authors also perpetuated the stereotype of the idiotic African. Charlevoix writes, "with respect to the mind all the *nègres* of Guinea are extremely limited; many seem idiotic as if stupefied. One sees some that could never count past three, nor could they learn the Lord's Prayer" (qtd. Curran 119). Charlevoix states that Africans are so unintelligent that they seem to be completely incapable of thought or feeling. Some seem to possess intelligence no greater than young children. Similarly, in 1797 J.A. Perreau writes of the "degraded nature" of Black minds "doomed sometimes to stupidity, sometimes to the most extravagant delirium of the imagination" (qtd. in Currant 210-211). Perreau sees Black people as so intellectually stunted that they appear to have little contact with reality.

In the 1750s, European anatomists and naturalists began to take a keen interest in the brains of Black people in attempt to explain the existence of Black skin. Researching out of the Berlin Royal Academy of Sciences, Johann Friedrich Meckel reported that Black brains

were different than white brains in terms of hue. Black brains seemed to him to be darker, almost blue in colour (4). Engaging with Meckel's work, Claude-Nicolas Le Cat posited that a fluid he termed oethiops ran from the brain to the nerves resulting in Black skin. These two supposed scientific discoveries were used to justify prejudices pertaining to limited Black intelligence. In 1794, Samuel Thomas Soemmering announced that an African's stupidity was attributable to "course 'strings' linking his brain to the rest of his body" (Curran 4). The supposed existence of limited Black intelligence supported and purported by learned philosophers, authors, and medical professionals was used to justify the enslavement of Africans. In the words of William Harper, "the negro race, from their temperament and capacity, are particularly suited to the situation which they occupy" (82). The irrationality discourse evident in the backlash that BLMTO received after its members staged a sit-in at Pride demonstrates that Black people are still perceived as unintelligent and need to be contained at all costs.

4.5 MORAL DISCOURSE

Journalists from the *Toronto Star*, the *Globe and Mail*, and the *National Post* employed moral discourse to discuss the sit-in and police float, booth, and uniformed officers ban as an unconscionable act. Journalists and readers purported two different versions of moral discourse. The first described the activists as aggressive, violent, and criminal and the second appealed to pathos, the telling of sob stories that position the members of BLMTO as evildoers.

4.5.1 Aggressivity, Violence and Criminality

Several journalists portrayed BLMTO as an immoral organization that uses aggressive tactics. Journalists and readers alluded to the danger of Black aggression and violence to negate BLMTO's demands. "Black Lives Matter doesn't decide what's in the parade" includes a quotation from the Toronto Police Association president responding to Mathieu Chantelois decision to sign off on Black Lives Matter's demands. The article reads, "[o]n Sunday [McCormack] called the agreement to exclude police from future Pride parades 'a slap in the face' to all police officers. He is calling for an apology from Pride Toronto organizers. 'Our officers feel thrown under the bus, as it were or betrayed by the organizers'" (A1). McCormack uses violent discourse in order to describe the feelings of police. He describes the feeling of exclusion as akin to being physically assaulted by Pride for acquiescing to Black Lives Matter. Here, McCormack represents Black Lives Matter as coercing Pride to inflict violence on police. *The Globe and Mail's* "Black Lives Matter thrust into spotlight" quotes Mike McCormack criticizing the aggressivity of BLM by stating that "[f]rom [the Toronto's Police Association's] perspective, Black Lives Matter [...] drives wedges, they don't build bridges. I would say they are very, very effective at alienating policing and driving wedges in communities" (qtd. in Midgal A5). McCormack is a firm believer that BLMTO is bent on tearing communities apart by violently "driving wedges" (A5). The activist group is not advocating for the betterment of society by drawing attention to systemic racism; they are advocating for its destruction.

The *Toronto Star's* Emma Teitel provides a cinematic recap of the sit-in in "A police pride float compromise." She writes,

[at] Toronto’s LGBT Pride parade Sunday, honoured activist group, Black Lives Matter staged a 30-minute parade-halting protest, marked by enormous plumes of multi-coloured smoke – actually the result of harmless smoke bombs. If you were standing anywhere close to the demonstration, the site (regardless of your take on BLM Toronto) was undeniably beautiful. But if, like a close friend of mine, you were a few hundred yards from the sit-in, anxiously trying to determine what happened, you might not have been impressed – you might have been afraid. You might have thought, as my friend did, with the horror of Orlando LGBT nightclub shooting fresh in his mind, “Why did the parade stop?” Is something wrong? So it transpired that BLM Toronto, a group that advocates fiercely for the institution of “safe spaces,” made at least one queer person in their midst feel momentarily, very unsafe. (A3)

The dramatic introduction provides a visual of the events. Readers are drawn in with the description of the smoke bombs. Teitel further invites readers in by asking them to inhabit the “you” evoked in the second sentence (A3). The “you” is then asked to identify with the “close friend” who had been frightened by the sudden halting of the parade (A3). Through this identification, the readers are asked to feel this fear and if this is successful, it is likely that they will turn against Black Lives Matter as a result. Teitel then attempts to demonstrate how Black Lives Matter undermines its own mandate by creating spaces that feel unsafe.

Barbara Kay of the *National Post* uses a comedic register in order to draw attention to BLMTO’s alleged aggressivity in “Unsavoury Tactics.” She writes,

Don’t you just hate it when you invite the new folks next door to dinner so they can meet the neighbours, and then they arrive an hour late, only to trash your cooking skills and demand better wine? Pride Toronto knows the feeling. Members of the Toronto chapter of Black Lives Matter (BLM), who were “honoured guests” at Sunday’s Pride Parade, staged an unscheduled sit-in, halting the parade for 30 minutes until Pride Toronto’s executive director signed off on their demands [...] The demands that were accompanied by the clenched-fist belligerence we now associate with BLM, and contained the usual identity-politics jargon about “inclusive and safe” spaces “marginalized communities” and the like. (A9)

This piece begins with a lead up that is more likely to be uttered by a stand-up comedian than by a journalist. The use of “you” tries to appeal to a universal audience; although I imagine that the majority of *Post* readers do not “know the feeling” (A9). Kay goes on to make a faulty comparison. The sit-in at Pride carries real political value whereas having rude dinner guests is a rather frivolous issue. Such a faulty comparison implies that BLMTO’s demands are indicative of the members’ sense of entitlement and do not correspond to any sort of meaningful reality. Due to this alleged fact, BLMTO members are rude, aggressive, and disruptive. The writer implies that Black Lives Matter are “new” to the Pride neighbourhood and are outsiders that have been invited in (A9). The members have no real claims or connections to Pride but are temporarily and conditionally allowed to participate. The use of quotations around “‘honoured guests’” implies that BLMTO’s actions prove that they are, indeed, dishonourable guests, unworthy of the invitation to partake in Pride (A9). *The National Post* journalist then goes on to utilize the rhetoric often purported by the alt-right blaming BLMTO for being a kind of social justice warrior organization that vehemently, yet uncritically defends political correctness.

Many chose to label Black Lives Matter Toronto members as bullies who mercilessly attacked Pride in order to bend the festival to their will. Margaret Wentz defended the alleged victims of Black Lives Matter’s wrath in “The bullies of Black lives Matter” printed in the comment section of the *Globe and Mail*. Due to its excessive use of moral discourse, it is worth quoting at length:

Toronto’s legendary Pride Parade is a festival of inclusiveness – a good-natured rainbow coalition that embraces every letter of the LGBTQ alphabet. It’s so inclusive that even straight people get to

march in it. Its message is: Loud, proud, and unbowed. Nobody can bully us anymore. Well, almost nobody. The new bully on the block is Black Lives Matter, a tiny group of noisy activists who borrow their branding and their belligerence from the United States. They've proved they can bully just about anyone, including city hall, the mayor and the provincial Premier. The Pride Parade was a pushover [...] You'd think, just weeks after the slaughter in Orlando, that they might have chosen to cede the spotlight to the dead and wounded who really were under attack. But no. The Black Lives Matter activists are firmly convinced that they are at the very top of the pyramid of oppression. Only after the parade's executives meekly agreed to all of their demands (basically, more money for their projects) did they allow the show to go on. Most of these demands were harmless. But one was not. BLM insists that the Pride Parade has to kick out the police floats, which have been a popular staple for years. This is wrong, and sad, and bad. Police participation in the parade is a welcome symbol of solidarity and inclusion – and also an important message to the public that gay people exist in every walk of life. But BLM activists loathe the police, who, they believe are racist to the core. So they have to go. (Side note, for what it's worth: Toronto's police chief is black). [...] Identity politics trumps everything these days, and the more minority identities you possess, the greater is your claim for recognition, redress and a soapbox. For instance, Black Lives Matter co-founder Janaya Khan described "themselves" as a "Black, queer, gender-nonconforming activist." Which means there's probably no better place to be on Earth than here. Better here, at any rate, than Jamaica, Mexico or Istanbul, where the Pride Parade was broken up by tear gas. The trouble is that when bullies get their way, they just keep on bullying. (A11)

There is a clear narrative of good versus evil constructed in this lengthy quotation. Black Lives Matter Toronto are affiliated with the following terms that make the members appear to be evil-doers: "bully" (x3), "bullies," "bullying" "noisy", "belligerence," "wrong," "sad," "bad," and "loathe" (A11). Pride, on the other hand, is aligned with positivity and victimhood as indicated by the following terms and phrases: "legendary," "good-natured rainbow coalition," "inclusive", "pushover," and "meekly" (A22). Several of Wenté's statements attempt to disavow the existence of racism in Canada in order to portray the sit-in as an unnecessary endeavour. In her invocation of the Pulse nightclub shooting victims who

“*really* were under attack,” (my emphasis) Wenté suggests that Black people are not targets

of racial oppression (A22). Wenté

uses sarcasm to undermine Black

Lives Matter’s charges of anti-

Blackness by stating that the activist

group “thinks they are at the top of

the pyramid of oppression” (A22). Wenté’s “[s]ide note” that mentions that the “police chief

is black” seems to suggest that the Toronto police cannot possibly be capable of racism

(A11). She also attempts to disavow the existence of sexual prosecution in Toronto by

stating that there is no “better place on Earth” for queer persons to express their identities

(A11). The puzzling thing about Wenté’s article is why she cares about what happens to

Pride in the first place. She demonstrates a complete lack of regard for queer politics by

surrounding Janaya Khan’s pronoun with quotation marks. By quoting “‘themselves’” she

shows reluctance to utter the pronoun in her own words, and gently pokes fun at Khan’s

identity as a gender-nonconforming subject (A11). This decision shows that Wenté’s piece is

not motivated by an attempt to defend Pride, but by the will to defame Black Lives Matter.

Writers of letters to the editor also made use of the language of bullying to describe

BLMTO actions. Rita Maio writes, “[t]he point is not whether the police should or should

not participate, but rather the bullying tactics employed by Black Lives Matter” (IN11). John

Campbell is quoted in the *National Post* stating “‘Black Lives matter bullied Pride into

making a decision’” (qtd. in “City councillor says Pride donation should be axed” A7).

Responding to Matthew Chantelois’ decision to sign off on BLMTO’s demand, *Toronto Star*

Being something doesn’t mean that he’s doing something (Sandy Hudson on Black Lives Matter Pride Parade Demonstration CP24’s the LeDrew Show)

-Sandy Hudson on Mark Saunders’ Blackness

reader Rebecca Jubis writes, “I’m appalled at how someone in that position could fall prey to such bullying and could condone such blatant disrespect for the people who serve and protect us” (IN11). By referring to Pride as “prey,” Jubis implies that members of Black Lives Matter are predators out for blood (IN11). They are merciless bullies who pick on the weak. Mike Faye uses a rhetorical question to condemn BLMTO asking, “[w]hy would BLM want to interrupt [the Pride] celebration and bully the organizers to agree to demands like the exclusion of the police float?” (IN11). Faye uses this question to express that no logical answer exists.

Letters to the *Toronto Star* editor also contain language that draws associations

Pride is actually ours [...] Queer and trans people of colour actually started this (qtd. in Ahmed).

-Rodney Diverlus on origins of Pride

between the BLMTO sit-in and terrorist activities. Reader Stephen Bloom writes, “BLM is not a representative and not a part

of the LGBTQ+ community. It has held the Pride organization ransom” (IN11). Bloom demonstrates his ignorance of the Black Lives Matter cohort as he presupposes that its members do not belong to the queer community. He reiterates his point suggesting that the list of demands was a ransom of sorts. This assertion presupposes that BLMTO has no right to make demands of Pride insofar as Pride does not exist for them. Joseph D. Hagger makes a similar move when he writes, “[i]t appears to me that in the name of political correctness, you have allowed yourself to be held hostage by Black Lives Matter and its agenda when the bottom line is ‘all lives matter’” (IN11). Hagger speaks directly to Pride with his use of “you” (IN11). He believes that the parade has been illegally seized by Black Lives Matter

whose members have no right to interfere with Pride. Hagger also uses alt-right rhetoric to shoot down political correctness that has, according to him, gone too far all before attempting to undermine the Black Lives Matter premise by employing the universalizing and simultaneously degrading maxim of “all lives matter” (IN11). John Wright expresses his frustration stating,

[w]e have somehow allowed a small, but vocal, group to hijack an event that has helped pioneer equal rights for members of our LGBTQ community. The sheer audacity [towards] our well-respected police force is totally unacceptable. Our politicians should make it clear to such militant groups that demands such as these regarding publicly funded events will not be tolerated. Where does this type of intimidation end? (IN11)

It is not clear whom Wright is addressing in his use of “we” and “our,” but it is clear that he does not regard BLMTO as a part of that community (IN11). He also uses terms such as “hijack,” “militant,” and “intimidation” to position Black Lives Matter as a disruptive terrorist organization (IN11).

A 2018 column appearing in the *National Post* entitled “Legitimate reasons to skip Pride,” Josh Dehaas described Black Lives Matter’s Pride demonstration as an aggressive action all while employing homophobic rhetoric. Dehaas writes,

One of the first decisions premier-designate Doug Ford will need to make is whether to march in Toronto’s gay Pride parade later this month. If he doesn’t submit to strolling down Yonge Street while getting soaked by leatherclad men armed with water guns, his critics will claim it’s proof that he hates gays. But there are perfectly legitimate reasons to skip the annual bash. I’m gay and I boycotted the parade last year [...] The reason fewer people showed up seems obvious. Pride endorsed hostility and division when it allowed the parade to be hijacked by Black Lives Matter Toronto in 2016, and subsequently gave into their demand that police in uniforms be banned from marching in 2017. The best thing about Pride before

the BLMTO takeover was that everyone was welcome, so the decision to exclude gay-and gay-friendly cops really ruined the fun [...] Some on the left have claimed Ford's description of Pride as an event where "middle-aged men with pot bellies" run down the street "buck naked" was evidence of homophobia. I'd say that was just an accurate description of what goes on. Disturbingly, more and more parents are bringing young children to watch the parade, exposing them to provocative displays of sexuality that no child should witness. If a politician believes in family values, why would he or she want to be associated with such debauchery? (Dehaas A13)

This article blames Black Lives Matter Toronto for highjacking an event and coercing Pride that "endorse[s] hostility and division" (A13). Dehaas does not limit his criticism to Pride's decision. He uses his queer identity as a source of evidentiality when he attacks others for their expressions of homosexuality. Dehaas demonstrates his conservatism in his defense of Doug Ford and his defense of family values that are apparently threatened by the presence of queer expression.

Readers Ronald Weir and Greg Terakita also used the language of criminality to express their opposition to Black Lives Matter's demands. Weir writes,

for BLM to disrupt a parade to which they had been specifically invited was discourteous and shameful. As for Pride's signing a document accepting their demands, it's hard to say no when you have a gun to your head [...] The police do make mistakes, as we all do. But BLM has to realize that if this represents the regard in which they hold police, then they should not be surprised if the police treat them with an equal measure of disrespect. (IN11)

Weir makes use of a common trope seen throughout these articles, the trope of the impolite guest. BLM dishonours Pride with its "discourteous and shameful" behaviour of drawing attention to racism by utilizing a disruptive tactic (IN11). Not only does BLM cause a disturbance, but its members threaten Pride with a metaphorical gun and force its hand to sign off on their demands. Weir concludes his letter with a threat of his own; he implies that

the police will enact revenge which completely disavows the fact that Black Lives Matter's action against police was reactionary in nature. Terakita's letter reads,

[h]olding Pride hostage and extorting concessions are the actions of a criminal body not one seeking just social change [...] For BLM to try to coerce Pride into playing their game is disgusting [...] BLM sees no other path than aggressive confrontation, and is trying to force other groups to follow the same path. Beware. (IN11)

Terakita uses the discourse of criminality to describe BLMTO's actions. Its members are described as if they were members of the mob attempting to expand their network through coercion. Terakita's warning implies that Black Lives Matter Toronto is a threat to society. Black activists are often positioned as criminal in order to delegitimize anti-racist protest, to preserve the semblance of white innocence, and to support the idea that Black people are deserving of containment.

I think it's really important to actually realize that the first Pride was a riot [...] as such, there's such a political connotation to Pride. Twenty years ago, when the Dyke March was created, that was seen as something very divisive. But now, it's one of the main staples of Pride [...] So, for folks that might think this tactic is too divisive or a bit out there, I just challenge them to think of which side of history they'll be on in twenty years. (Co-founder of Black Lives Matter on halting Pride Parade)

-Rodney Diverlus on BLM's tactics

4.5.2 Pathos/The Sob Story

Many journalists conveyed sob stories of those impacted by the police ban. By transmitting these narratives, journalists appealed to pathos, pulling at the heart strings of readers so that

they will side with police and against Black Lives Matter. If readers take the side of the police, they essentially take the side of the nation state, as they put their faith in a Repressive State Apparatus. The tactic of the sob story is one of the many ways that the Canadian news media acts in accordance with the national interests. Alicia Siekierska of the *Star* recorded LGBT liaison officer with the Toronto Police, Danielle Bottineau's reaction to Pride's decision to honour Black Lives Matter's demands at their general meeting held in January of 2017. Bottineau says she was "disheartened and saddened" by the news adding that "[i]t has been an emotional roller coaster" (A3). Here, Black Lives Matter is positioned as an organization that makes police sad. Wendy Gillis' "Cancel grant to Pride Toronto, LGBTQ police group urges," highlights the disappointment of officers stating,

A committee representing gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Toronto police officers is speaking out against an annual grant provided by the city to Pride Toronto saying that it would be "unacceptable" for the government to financially support an event that excludes police. "We, as city employees, would feel completely devalued and unsupported by our employer should they fund this event at this time," reads a letter released Wednesday by the Toronto Police Association, signed by the executive committee of Toronto's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer internal support network. "How can we possibly feel appreciated by our employer while they sponsor an event that its own employees have been disinvited from participating in as full, equal and active participants in their role as city employees," the committee writes. (A1)

Gillis privileges the feelings of the police through the use of its selected quotations. The quotations draw attention to feelings of devaluation, a lack of support, and appreciation. The process of exclusion, initiated by Black Lives Matter, has created an unstable work environment where the police feel betrayed by the city for funding an event that excludes them as participants.

Gillis has another sad story to tell in her “Gay officer objects to BLM’S call for ban; Constable writes an open letter against group’s demand to exclude police from Pride.” Due to its amount of detail, it is worth quoting at length:

[i]t was a day of extreme emotions for Const. Chuck Krangle, a Toronto police officer and a former member of the Canadian Armed Forces. Despite working in the city for eight years, Krangle who is openly gay, had never been to Toronto’s Pride parade. But this year brought his chance to attend when he was assigned to work Sunday’s parade. Krangle was blown away by the spectacle, by the fun and by the number of fellow officers taking part. “I was like ‘woah, what a coming together,’” Krangle, 30, said in an interview. “I had no idea that there were that many cops that march in this, from all different agencies,” he said, adding that one of the highlights was speaking with Toronto police Chief and parade-goer Mark Saunders. But by the time Krangle, who is a community response officer, finished his shift, there had been a change in tone: following a mid-parade protest by members of Black Lives Matter (BLM) Toronto, Pride organizers seemed to agree to make a number of changes to improve the event – including banning police floats and booths. Having just participated in his first Pride, Krangle worried it might be his last. The move prompted the officer to pen an open letter to Pride Toronto, expressing his concerns about keeping officers like him from visibly participating. “I do not speak for the police, and I do not speak for the LGBTQ community. I speak as an individual, one who saw his first PRIDE, only to be excluded from the next,” Krangle wrote in his letter. “Exclusion does not promote inclusion.” Krangle’s message highlights the complexity of excluding officers from participating in Pride events [...] [Janaya] Khan added Black Lives Matter does not want to “police the police” in terms of their overall presence, but is against the institutions that they represent. “That means the elimination of floats and removal of uniforms within the actual march itself,” she said. But that visibility is exactly what’s powerful, says Krangle and members of police services who participated this year. “When I saw all those floats and officers marching, I realized that my employer fully supports this part of me, and so many others like me,” Krangle wrote in his letter. “The support that I have from my peers and supervisors has been unwavering.” (A3)

This article’s introduction deviates from standard news writing; it takes on a much more emotional tone, like that of a novel. The article begins by introducing Chuck Krangle, our

protagonist, a true patriot, and his emotional state. Readers get a heart-warming story of Krangle's first adventure at Pride in his own words. The story takes a sudden turn as Black Lives Matter, the antagonists enter the scene and bring Krangle's joy to a halt. His happiness turns to dread as he realizes he may never return to his happy place. His response is to pen a heart-felt letter expressing his sadness. Gillis does care to include a quote by co-founder of BLMTO, but because her words are framed by that of our protagonist, they become suffocated in Krangle's melodramatic appeal. The tone of this article, paired with the careful insertion of select quotations, make it difficult for readers to view this event with a critical eye. Their affective response is guided by the workings of emotional manipulation.

Heterosexual politicians also told their fair share of sob stories. Toronto mayor John Tory performed sadness in attempt to persuade his audience to side with police. In an interview with Peter Edwards, he says, "[f]or my part, I am just very frustrated and disappointed that what is meant to be, and is in fact all about inclusion, has now somehow become about exclusion" (n.p.). The poor Mayor mourns the loss of an inclusive Pride as he attempts to come to terms with the police ban. John Campbell is quoted in David Rider Hall's *Toronto Star* article "Pride grant to face challenge; Funding should be suspended if police can't march in uniform, councillor says" stating, "[i]t's not about what I feel [...] It's about how the police feel and are we going to allow them to suffer some disrespect?" (GT2). Campbell positions himself as an ally for the police, a caring and sympathetic soul who stands up for what is right. He puts the feelings of others first, and he stands up for human suffering, that is, human suffering of a certain type.

Toronto Star readers Roy Dean and Shelby Mwambu shared heart-warming stories in order to emphasize their disappointment concerning the police ban. Dean writes,

[f]or last year's Pride, I had two young men help me decorate our church's float (MCC Toronto). As we walked up Church St. to Rosedale Valley Rd., we passed several groups of uniformed officers. All were having a great time taking pictures and mixing with the throng. I asked several rainbow-clad officers if my young friends could pose with them. The boys looked surprised when they were gathered up by the group of constables and posed for pictures. One boy is a refugee from Indonesia, where police constantly threatened his life. The other was a refugee from Russia who had faced equal fears. I told them they should send the pics home to their friends still trying to escape, as a sign of hope. The police were so sympathetic, they gave the boys their rainbow flags and lots of hugs. If you think these amazing people won't be offended by having their float and groups ejected from our inclusive Pride, I think you are wrong. I think you are wrong for accepting this. It is also wrong that Black Lives Matter members can't, or won't see this. (IN11)

Roy Dean uses anecdotal evidence of his encounter with warm and compassionate police to refute Black Lives Matter's claim that the presence of police at Pride is negative. His two friends, who have had negative encounters with police in their home countries, were not triggered by the presence of officers at Pride meaning that all those who oppose police must be wrong. Dean's anecdote also positions Canada as a place of acceptance unlike anywhere else in the world. Black Lives Matter's act is seen as a defiance of Canadian civic duty to celebrate inclusivity. Dean calls out naysayers directly by using the pronoun "you" (IN11). The division between us and them is also evident in his use of "our inclusive Pride" (IN11). This division makes it seem as if Pride is not for those who believe that police should not participate. Shelby Mwambu's letter states, "[f]ourteen years old and black, I went to my first Pride Parade in Toronto last year. It was amazing. The police contributed to that experience. Seeing that they support the LGBTQ community is what we need to see" (A16).

Mwambu makes an excellent point that police support is very important to the queer community but seems to believe that police presence in the parade is support enough.

4.5.3 Historicizing, Conceptualizing, and Analyzing Moral Discourse

The discourse of Black immorality is deployed in the *Toronto Star*, the *Globe and Mail*, and the *National Post* in order to discredit Black Lives Matter's demonstration at Pride.

Journalists and readers time and time again argue that the sit-in was morally wrong positioning the activists as criminals and terrorists who only look out for their own interests. The newspapers included several sob stories designed to draw attention to the evils of Black Lives Matter's actions. The explicitness of the airing of Black Lives Matter's grievances is regarded as wicked, vile, aggressive, and villainous.

The racist ideologies that hold that Black people are, by nature, immoral are centuries old. Conceptions of Black immorality developed through English perceptions of African culture. The English observed what they interpreted as religious deficiency akin to heathenism in African peoples. Heathenism is the condition in which English Christians defined themselves against and its presence outside of Christian communities is credited for inspiring an "intensification of religious commitment" (Jordan 11). English travelers often observed Africans as "'a people of beastly living, without a God, lawe, religion, or a commonwealth'" seeing them as complete opposites of Englishmen (qtd.in Jordan 13). According to another English observer of African culture, they "'have no knowledge of god They are greedie eaters, and no lesse drinkers, and very lecherous, and theevish and much addicted to uncleanesse: one man hath so many wives as hee is able to keep and

maintain” (qtd. in Jordan 8). Philosophers of the Enlightenment also held beliefs in the moral inferiority of Africans observing characteristics such as “sloth, barbarism, paganism, and hypersexuality” (Curran 118).

The conception of the African as necessarily heathen or immoral soon became a justification for the existence of slavery. In *Parfait negociant* (1675), Jacques Savory, renowned expert on commerce, argued that,

Christian merchants, in buying and selling nègres from their enemies, take them away from a cruel slavery and allow them to achieve a more gentle servitude on the islands to which they are taken, moreover, [this process provides them] with knowledge of the real God, and a path to salvation [which they obtain] through religious teachings dispensed by priests and religious men who take great care to make them into good Christians. (qtd. in Curran 53)

Savoury feels that slavery saves Africans from themselves. Slavery in the Caribbean is much more compassionate than it is in Africa and being amongst Christians brings these immoral beings closer to god. Men of the cloth held similar beliefs. In 1722, Dominican priest Jean-Baptiste Labat penned a best-seller entitled *Nouveau voyage aux isles de l’Amerique* that describes his perceptions of the slaves working on his sugar plantation in Martinique as well as his thoughts on slavery in general. Labat argues that slavery only became permissible in the French Caribbean after Louis XIII realized that the institution was the only “unfailing way...to inspire the Africans to worship the true God, to save them from idoltry, and to make them embrace and continue in the Christian faith until death” (qtd. in Curran 50). For these men, enslavement is the path to salvation.

The discourse of immorality was mobilized again in post-slavery Canada in an effort to resist the immigration of fugitive slaves from the United States. In opposition to the

Presbyterian Synod's attempt to settle freedom seekers in Southern Ontario in 1849, the people of Sandwich circulated a petition stating that the settlement of Black people was "deleterious to the morals and social conditions of present and future inhabitants of the district, as well as to the prosperity in every other respect" (qtd. in Library and Archives Canada). The discourse of immorality was also present in a petition attempting to prevent William King from erecting a settlement for freedom seekers in Raleigh Township in 1850. The petition reads, "[t]he Negro is a distinct species of the Human Family and, is far inferior to that of the European. Let each link in the great scale of existence have its place. Amalgamation is as disgusting to the eye, as it is immoral in its tendencies and all good men will discountenance it" (qtd. in Prince). The contemporary manifestations of moral discourse also suggest that the restriction and containment of Black people is necessary. The discourses employed by the news media suggest that instances of Black activism are nothing more than demonstrations of moral immaturity.

4.6 CONCLUSION

Whitely Pride organizers, the Toronto media, and whitely writers of letters to the editor have provided more than sufficient evidence of what Cornel West refers to as the odors and secretions of the bowel of white supremacy sustained in modern discourse. The writers employ the discourses of devolution, irrationality, and morality in such a way that renders visible the racist ideologies constructed in scientific and philosophic thought of the Enlightenment period. The racist ideologies of the 18th century reverberate in the present in order to frame Blackness as inferior, thus sustaining white supremacy. These discourses disqualified Black grievances attributing them to deficiencies of evolution, the intellect, and of the soul despite there being considerable evidence to suggest that these grievances are, in fact, rooted in reality.

Desmond Cole argues that there is a significant attempt to divorce Black politics from queer politics, although these struggles are very much intertwined. In response to Operation Soap, the Toronto queer community formulated a committee known as the Citizens' Independent Review of Police Actions (CIRPA) consisting of white, Black, and South Asian individuals who had experienced police brutality as a result of their race, sexuality, and gender ("Pride has divorced blackness" A15). CIRPA was aided and supported by Dudley Laws and Charles Roach of the Black Action Defense Committee that played a fundamental role in the organization of the Yonge Street Uprising discussed at length in the previous chapter (A15). Despite playing a fundamental role in advocating for gay rights in Toronto, Black people have been continually excluded from the queer community enduring harassment from security in gay clubs and having celebrations of Black queer events such as Blockorama underfunded or moved far away from the festival grounds (A15). Black Lives Matter Toronto's attempt to fight for inclusion was met with boos and jeers from parade-goers, harassment by queer and straight communities, and defamation by city officials, and news media representatives (A15). For Rinaldo Walcott, the response to the BLMTO sit-in "tells us how deep the problem of anti-black racism is, in queer communities and beyond" (qtd. in "Pride has divorced blackness" A15).

Cole also rightfully points out in "White, straight, cisgendered politicians have no right defining Pride celebrations" that the opposition to the Black Lives Matter sit-in at the Toronto Pride parade attests to the limits of allyship of the straight white community. Focussing his attention on opposition lobbed from conservative politicians, Cole writes,

Pride is extremely useful to [John] Campbell and other conditionally supportive councillors, so long as it expresses a version a queerness that they find comforting and profitable. When Pride expresses its radical political roots – the rejection of police brutality and challenges to state power – many of the council bros no longer see their stake in it. (n.p.)

Cole's words do not just apply to politicians; they can be extended to summarize the conditional support of the white, straight, cisgendered public as a whole. Journalists and letter writers are okay with expressing solidarity with the queer community if and only if the expressions of queerness are palatable to the majority. Any actions that disturb the status quo are seen as virulent, gluttonous, and inappropriate. The hegemony offers support to the “comfortable and profitable” vision of Pride in order to continue its tradition of white supremacy (n.p.). The fickle nature of white allyship as demonstrated in the limited support for Pride is a microcosmic manifestation of the way that white Canadians support the plurality or multicultural make-up of the Canadian landscape (Mackey 21). White Canadians are willing to tolerate People of Colour so long as they do not pose a challenge to white supremacy. This conditional tolerance propagated by the Canadian myths of plurality will be explored further in the conclusion of this essay.

Chapter 5 Conclusion: Resignifying Black Activism

Up until this point, I have explored the way that white Canada grapples with the existence of Black anti-racism, the way white Canada reconciles, devalues, debases, and depoliticizes Black anti-racism until the only thing that remains is a portrait of Black people behaving badly. I expect that some of my readers have been suspicious of my decision to allow explorations of white racist discourse to dominate my essay while I've neglected to engage with the Black counternarratives I've included throughout this work. I also anticipate that some may argue that this exploration only centres and solidifies whiteness insofar as it privileges white voices. To the first set of readers, I want to remind them that the decision to wait to engage in a dialogue with Black voices up until this point serves a pedagogical purpose. In my years of experience engaging in political activism, I've often found myself and other whites failing to listen to People of Colour before attempting to speak with them on matters of race and racism. The result is a demonstration of whiteness that attempts to *speak for* rather than *speak with*. I argue that whiteness is a learned rhetorical practice and a sign of the degree to which white convenience have in fact been interpellated by a white supremacist media. If whites wish to ally themselves with People of Colour in the fight against racism, we must be willing to listen, learn, and resist interpellation. I have tried, in this essay, to listen as well as to model listening, as listening encourages white-scholar activists to not only educate ourselves, but to take responsibility for, and adequately resist the perpetuation of white supremacy.

In response to my second set of readers who may argue that this work privileges and centres whiteness, I want to invoke the work of Sarah Ahmed in order to demonstrate the

importance of positioning whiteness at the forefront of critique. In “A Phenomenology of Whiteness,” Ahmed defines whiteness as a habit/inhabitation. Whiteness reproduces itself through habits that largely go undetected to those that possess them and to those that have become accustomed to inhabiting the spaces that have taken on their shape through various iterative actions (157). Habits are not just what bodies do, but what bodies can do if they do not encounter any stress, if nothing gets in the way. One major purpose of this essay is to render habitual whiteness visible for those who cannot perceive it, and the other major purpose is to provide activists with some tools to get in the way. Having a taxonomy for identifying patterns in white supremacist discourse, for naming, and classifying various tropes and logics enables to see the point where we can jump in and apply stress.

By way of conclusion, I want to point out one thing that has been in the back of my mind since I very first committed finger to keyboard - that the constant debasing, devaluing, and depoliticizing of Black anti-racist activism by journalists, letter writers, and interview subjects is an example of what Carol Anderson refers to as white rage. Anderson writes,

[w]hite rage is not about visible violence, but rather it works its way through the courts, the legislatures, and a range of government bureaucracies. It wreaks havoc subtly, almost imperceptibly. Too imperceptibly, certainly, for a nation consistently drawn to the spectacular to what it *can* see. It’s not the Klan. White rage doesn’t have to wear sheets, burn crosses or take to the streets. Working the halls of power, it can achieve its ends far more effectively, far more destructively [...] The trigger for white rage, inevitably, is black advancement. It is not the mere presence of black people that is the problem; rather, it is blackness with ambition, with drive, with purpose, with aspirations, and with demands for full and equal citizenship. It is blackness that refuses to accept subjugation, to give up. A formidable array of policy assaults and legal contortions has consistently punished black resilience, black resolve. (3-4)

White rage does the work of an invisible police force that patrols and monitors, stops and frisks, contains, detains, and prosecutes. White rage is a response to the Black struggle for freedom and a fear of the eventual overturning of white supremacy. The mobilization of discourses of xenophobia, moral alarm, criminalization, devolution, irrationality, and morality are manifestations of white rage born out of fear of Black advancement. The fear of Black advancement is what drove journalists, readers, and interview subjects to devalue, debase, and depoliticize the Sir George Williams Affair of 1969, the Yonge Street Uprising of 1992, and the Black Lives Matter sit-in at the 2016 Toronto Pride parade. The vicious backlash, the white rage unleashed upon Black activists in this country reveals something about the nature of Black activism. White rage reveals the extent to which Black activism is feared in this country. In other words, white rage reveals the tremendous power of Black Canadian anti-racist activism.

After studying the discourse used in Canadian newspapers to frame the Sir George Williams Affair, the Yonge Street Uprising, and the sit-in by BLMTO, I've concluded that Black activism is a major threat to white Canada's whitely conception of itself. The journalists covering these events go to extreme lengths to protect Canada's self-purported international image as a racially inclusive safe haven for oppressed peoples. These extreme lengths are evidence that Black activism has the ability to shatter Canada's myths of plurality, originating with the myth of the two solitudes and continuing with official Multiculturalism. For Eva Mackey, these myths of plurality enable Canada to maintain its core white population by shrouding it in a cloak of plurality. These myths function as a buffer, a protective outer layer consolidating Canada's whiteness. Mackey argues that the

myths of plurality are mobilized to “manage diverse populations” (13). The management, or containment rather, of “diverse populations” preserve and protect Canada’s whiteness while all other hyphenated identities, French-Canadian, Black-Canadian, Native-Canadian, Asian-Canadian etc., are regarded as peripheral to that ‘unmarked, yet dominant, Anglo-Canadian core culture’” (15). Eva Mackey refers to this core community, those who do not consider themselves as belonging to the category of “multicultural,” as “*Canadian-Canadians*” or “ordinary Canadians” (21).

In her exploration of ordinary Canadians, Janine Brodie writes,

The ordinary Canadian is disinterested, neither seeking special status nor treatment from the state. He [sic] is neither raced, nor sexed, nor classed: he transcends difference. So who is he? A close reading of the current conception of the ordinary Canadian reveals that he can be only a white, heterosexual, middle-class male because in contrast to him everyone is ‘special’ in some way or another. (qtd. in Mackey 33)

This construction of the normal, undemanding, unremarkable white Canadian body that remains hidden beneath a cloak of liberal and inclusionary discourse is precisely how white Canada maintains its power. From this normative stance, white Canadians are able to define themselves and demarcate difference as they dictate and delineate the terms of tolerance. All identities seen as external to the category of the *Canadian-Canadian*, are treated as *other*, as abject bodies, on the outside looking in. Julia Kristeva’s process of abjection best explains how and why Canada depends upon abject bodies.

The process of abjection involves a bodily refusal of something that is deemed unassimilable. The abject is best defined as that which must be expelled from the body in order to delineate the borders of being (Kristeva 3). The subject depends upon the abject to

define itself against. In the case of Canada, the nation has selected an abject body to constitute itself as a nation that is 1) consolidated in its whiteness and 2) defined by its plurality. In *Post BLM and the Struggle for Freedom*, Rinaldo Walcott and Idil Abdillahi point out how the myths of pluralism situate Black people as abject. The authors argue that the myth of the Two Solitudes places “all those outside of the category of (white) English and French as adjunct to the nation. Multiculturalism later formalizes these adjuncts into communities, allowing for some to enter whiteness against the block of non-white others” (53-54). In both of these myths, Black people in Canada are regarded as “wasted human lives” that have been “excis[ed] from the body politic” (40). The positioning of People of Colour and Indigenous Peoples as “adjunct,” as outside of the imagined two founding peoples, “allows white settlers to claim a natural belonging” to Canada (54). Walcott and Abdillahi point out the obvious displacement of Indigenous Peoples within this narrative and the strange paradox at the heart of this stating, “[i]ndeed, to inhabit a history of arrival and to offer reconciliation at the same time is a masterful political move. In that move a new compact is being created; it is a compact that asks Indigenous peoples to enter Canada” (55). It’s as if Canada had taken possession of someone else’s home and welcomed the rightful homeowners back only to serve them with an eviction notice.

For Kristeva, the abject does not disappear after its eviction. Instead, it looms at the borders of being, threatening “identity, system, [and] order” while disrespecting “borders, position, [and] rules” (4). Those outside of the *Canadian*-Canadian identity are a threat because they know Canada’s secret, that its self-proclaimed commitment to plurality is a

ruse. Those outside of the identity know what's lurking under the cloak of liberal and inclusionary discourse. As Sarah Ahmed observes,

It has become commonplace for whiteness to be represented as invisible, as the unseen or the unmarked, as a non-colour, the absent presence, or hidden referent against which all other colours are measured as forms of deviance. But of course whiteness is only invisible for those who inhabit it. For those who don't, it is hard, it is hard not to see whiteness; it even seems everywhere. Seeing whiteness is about living its effects, as effects that allow white bodies to extend into spaces that have already taken their shape, spaces in which black bodies stand out, stand apart, unless they pass, which means passing through space by passing as white. (qtd. in Condon 14)

The ruse doesn't fool those that are impacted by it. The abject lives know better because they feel the impacts of exclusion. Black lives know that they are more likely to be incarcerated than whites, they know that they are more likely to be shot and killed by police, less likely to find gainful employment, less likely to receive equal access to healthcare, and less likely to attend post-secondary school. Black activism is Canada's greatest fear materialized. Black activism is the result of a refusal to keep the secret, a refusal to stay silent, to stay confined. This threat has been materializing since white invaders set foot on this continent with their slaves in tow. For as long as white supremacy has reigned and has oppressed Black people in this place we now call Canada Black people have risen up in protest. From Marie-Joseph Angélique's 1734 burning of Montréal to Fred Christie, to Hugh Burnett, and Viola Desmond's fights to end segregation in the mid-20th century, to the various actions of Black Lives Matter in the present, Black Canadians have never been complacent. They have never been accepting of their lot nor have they been passive in the face of racial discrimination.

Many scholars discuss activism as a looming threat to the Canadian state. Walcott and Abdillahi argue that “BlackLife in Canada sits permanently in the structure of haunting” (67). The authors collapse “Black” and “Life” in order to show that “living Black makes BlackLife inextricable from the mark of its flesh” (9). Also implied in this bridging together of “Black” and “Life” is that despite being left out of the category of human, Black people have asserted themselves as undeniable human subjects. Activism is one of the ways that Black beings assert themselves as living, breathing, meaningful, and valuable lives. Claiming that BlackLife is “in the structure of haunting” suggests that Blackness is a presence that is disavowed, but none the less persists, and it is its persistence that is particularly threatening to the established order (9). David Austin elaborates on this threat stating, “Black bodies and their voices [represent] a discernible threat to a presumed a priori configured and therefore closed Canadian national identity” (167). Black political engagement is threatening as it draws attention to the imperfect nature of the Canadian racial landscape. Black voices refuse to keep the nation’s secret that things are not what they seem. Black voices contest notions of the nation state by drawing attention to its various failures. Eva Mackey agrees arguing that “when mobilised *politically*, minorities are seen to fragment and threaten the unity and progress of the nation” (153). For Mackey, mobile minorities, or those who refuse to be contained, are seen as threatening because they poke holes and create fissures in the façade of racial unity that is projected with the help of Canada’s myths of plurality. As Michael Omi and Howard Winant point out, activism destabilizes the racial order by exposing and contesting the workings of ideology which informs the construction of racial identities (84).

Anti-racist activism is so dangerous because it calls attention to the various forms of oppression experienced by marginalized peoples. For example, Indigenous activism calls attention to the way that colonialism and genocide have resulted in various forms of violent containment strategies that continue to impact Indigenous lives in the present. Similarly, Black activism calls attention to the oppression experienced by Black Canadians, and Black oppression attests to Canada's participation in, and perpetuation of, the legacy of the Transatlantic slave trade. Walcott and Abdillahi argue that, "[a] Canada that cannot or refuses to conceptualize its relation to transatlantic slavery and its formation, as a part of the post-Columbus slave world is a Canada that will continually have difficulty with Black people" (54). This statement is especially true as the constant disavowal of this country's violent beginnings and its contemporary state that is "imbued with slave logics" enable the persistence of slavery's afterlife (54). Black activism consistently points to the violent past and according to Walcott and Abdillahi,

[t]o account for Black people as constitutive to the earliest formation of the nation would render the normative myth of two founding peoples suspect immediately. To render the narrative of the founding of the nation suspect would be to open up the origins of violence at the very foundation of the founding of the nation. (51)

These authors convey Canada's fear of acknowledging its horrors as these past horrors have the capacity to call into question Canada's national identity. Walcott and Abdillahi also imply the power of narrative by suggesting that the stories of Black Canada threaten the nation as an imagined community which, for Benedict Anderson, is the conception of a space defined by the stories it tells about itself. Revising these stories has the potential to bring about meaningful change.

In I Hope I Join the Band: Narrative, Affiliation, and Antiracist Rhetoric, Frankie

Condon articulates the important role that stories play in antiracist practice. Drawing upon the work of Jim W. Corder, Condon notes that “all of us are always composing our lives, our experience, what we know, and how we come to know, through narrative” (44). For Corder,

[n]one of us lives without a history; each of us is a narrative. We are always standing some place in our lives, and there is always a tale of how we came to stand there, though few of us have marked carefully the dimensions of the place where we are or kept time with the tale of how we came to be there. (qtd. in Condon 45)

Condon adds, that Corder asks us to pay close attention to the moments when our stories differ or are contradicted by the stories of others and where disagreements threaten our understanding of ourselves as these contradictions offer important learning opportunities.

Corder continues,

[w]e must keep learning as speakers/narrators/arguers (and as hearers). We can learn to keep adding pieces of knowledge here, to keep rearranging pieces over yonder, to keep standing back and turning to see how things look elsewhere. We can learn that our narrative/argument doesn't exist except as it is composed and that “the act of composing can never end” as Doctorow has said. (qtd. in Condon 47)

Engaging with contradictory narratives enables an “opening between self and other” (47). At these intersections, we are offered new knowledge as well as the opportunity to revise and redact our own narratives.

James Baldwin also sees revolutionary potential in revision. In “The White Man's Guilt,” he calls for whites to engage with their own history in hopes that their history will cease to shape the present. For Baldwin, individuals are shaped by their histories and reenact them in various ways. On the inability to escape this fact, he writes,

it is with great pain and terror that one begins to realize this. In great pain and terror one begins to assess the history which has placed one where one is, and formed one's points of view. In great pain and terror because, thereafter, one enters into battle with that historical creation, Oneself, and attempts to recreate oneself according to a principle more humane and more liberating: one begins the attempt to achieve a level of personal maturity and freedom which robs history of its tyrannical power, and also changes history. (723)

For Baldwin, critically engaging with one's own history forces self-reflection that will inevitably result in one recognizing one's own complicity and reproduction of that history. This process enables the opportunity to break free from history in order to reinvent another.

Christina Sharpe also stresses the importance of revision in her text *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. She refers to the revision process as Black annotation and redaction which begins with engaging in a history that erases one's own, engaging with a picture that one is left out of. This process involves taking note of, and making notes on, the various erasures, revision and editing to account for what is left out. For Sharpe, Black annotation and redaction is a step "toward reading and seeing otherwise; towards reading and seeing something in excess of what is caught in the frame" (117). Black activism is a work of redaction and annotation as it revises the narratives that whites construct about Black people. Corder and Sharpe demonstrate how active engagement with the stories of others enable opportunities to bring about alternative accounts that have the power to usher in a truer and more just world.

Engaging with the stories of Black activism told by Black Canadian activists provides listeners with an opportunity to annotate, redact, and revise the stories of these same events told by members of the Canadian press. Because the Canadian press tells their stories in

order to corroborate the stories of Canadian benevolence and virtue, annotating, redacting, and revising these news stories will force a necessary revision of the harmful Canadian national narratives that further the oppression of Black Canadians. A revision will enable those residing on this place currently call Canada to get closer to fluency in Anthony Stewart's sense of the term. Black Canadian activism and activists tell a story of how Canada is structured by racist practices and discourse and attending to these stories will bring us one step closer to obtaining fluency, as a nation, in anti-racist practices and discourses.

As I near the end of this essay, I want to return to the activist counter-narratives that were set beside and against the stories told by the mainstream media. I've done the work of learning the "basic vocabulary and grammar rules" of anti-Black racism and that I've given far too much airtime to the media's racist portraits of Black activists (*Visitor* 18). Of the general white backlash against the events that comprise the Sir George Williams Affair, Rocky Jones says,

[i]t's really interesting how the Black students got vilified [...] The press and public opinion were determined to leave Black students in jail [...] The judges didn't want to let them out, the community, everybody blamed the Black students, that's the bottom line, which really bothered me because I knew a different story. (144)

It's time to tell or retell "a different story" now (144). I want to return to and recount the stories of activism told by Black Canadian activists in order gain a more authentic picture of what activism is and does.

The journalists of the *Toronto Star*, the *Globe and Mail*, the *Montreal Gazette*, and the *National Post* assert that Black activism takes place because Black people are criminal, anti-progress, unintelligent, and immoral. Black activists tell a very different story.

According to the Black activists cited throughout this essay, anti-racist activism happens because, in the words of Black Action Defence Committee's Lennox Farrell, the Canadian "political establishment" is a "logjam of delusion" (qtd. in Black). The supposed Canadian commitment to racial equality is effacing the truth that Canada is a nation structured by white supremacy. White supremacy is wielded by every Repressive and Ideological State Apparatus and by the white hegemony, but that power is cloaked in a discourse of plurality. Canada's institutions and public spaces exclude Black subjects while displaying signs that all are welcome. Black activism disrobes and re-signifies, exposing how Canada oppresses Black people.

The activism at Sir George Williams tells a story of how school is a hostile environment for Black people. For Louis Althusser, Ideological State Apparatuses function primarily through ideology and secondly through repression while disseminating the ideology of the ruling class (149). One of the most dominant Ideological State Apparatuses is the educational apparatus, the school. The school teaches students how to act and what to value and engages in mass "eject[ions] 'into production'" at various points throughout the educational process, thus determining a student's class position (155). The counter-narratives of those who participated in the Sir George Williams Affair attest to the fact that Black people are continually victimized by the educational apparatus designed to perpetuate the class structure and warrant political intervention. Terrance Ballantyne, former student of the Biology professor accused of racism at Sir George Williams University, clearly articulates the oppressive nature of the education system stating,

[Perry] Anderson never, ever supervised us in labs. But the times he did come there, he would continually address us as Mr. Ballantyne or Mr. Mossop, whereas he would address the white students as John, Mary, and so-forth. About eight or nine Black students were being failed regularly, and we couldn't understand what was the motivation for it. (qtd. in *Ninth Floor*)

Anderson treats white students as familiars by using their first names. He regards these students as naturally belonging within the walls of the institutions. Black students, on the other hand, are treated as strangers who have less right to study at university. By assigning failing grades, Anderson attempts a “mass eject[ion]” of Black students, demonstrating a willingness to keep them from academic and by extension financial success (Althusser 155). Ballantyne and his West Indian classmates filed a complaint against Anderson, not as an attempt to import trouble from their homelands, but as to exercise a right to pursue education without persecution.

The Black Lives Matter demonstration at the 2016 Pride parade was also an attempt to make a change to an oppressive Canadian ideological state apparatus. Like the education apparatuses, cultural apparatuses also train citizens what to value, and in this case, what to celebrate. Pride conveys Canada's commitment to equal rights for queer persons and stands as a symbol of the country's progress as a nation. But Pride has its limits. Pride celebrates a form of queerness that is marketable and therefore lucrative, a queerness that is palatable and digestible for white heteronormative culture. Forms of acceptable queerness is an ordinary queerness, queerness embodied by the white, cisgendered male. Pride Toronto deems Trans and Queer Peoples of Colour as identities that are unworthy of celebration, and this is what Black Lives Matter was opposing.

Black Lives Matter Toronto's co-founder Sandy Hudson draws attention to the oppressive nature of one of Canada's most revered cultural apparatuses. She says, "[w]hen you go to Pride as a Black queer, or Trans person who has been persecuted by the Toronto Police, treated unfairly, it doesn't feel inclusive for us" ("Sandy Hudson on the Black Lives Matter Pride Demonstration CP24's The LeDrew Show"). Hudson demonstrates the limits of Pride's celebration of equality and inclusion. She suggests that the presence of the most prominent Repressive State Apparatuses, the police, means that only certain identities are safe to participate in the celebration. Pride has demonstrated its values by choosing to include police over those brutalized by police. The sit-in at Pride was not an attempt to push Pride back into the dark ages, to push an anti-police agenda on an undeserving target, or to promote exclusion. Instead, it was an attempt to make space for those who have been excluded, for those identities deemed unworthy of celebration. It was an attempt to make Pride a safe space for Trans people and Queers of Colour.

For co-founder of Black Lives Matter, Rodney Diverlus, the sit-in at the Toronto Pride Parade was about reclamation. Diverlus says, "Pride is actually ours, [...] Queer and trans people of colour actually started this" (qtd. in Ahmed). Diverlus harkens back to the origins of Pride when Queer and Trans People of Colour took to the streets to protest the egregious Toronto Police effort known as Operation Soap to persecute queers in 1981. Since then, Pride has been co-opted by white corporate culture and has been turned into a marketing campaign for seemingly progressive corporations, an election campaign for white politicians willing to offer conditional allyship, and for white heterosexual spectators. Black Lives Matter's sit-in at the Toronto Pride parade was a decolonialization effort, an effort to

reclaim an event stolen from those who started it. The sit-in, however, was not about vengeance; it was about compromise as police were still invited to participate out of uniform. The sit-in was about justice and equality.

The activists involved in the Sir George Williams Affair, the Yonge Street Uprising, and the BLMTO sit-in at the Toronto Pride parade do not provide evidence of the existence of Black criminality; they instead provide evidence of the criminal nature of the legal system. For Althusser, the law is always repressive insofar as it is accompanied by sanctions implemented to punish those who do not abide by the rules (65). Sanctions warrant the existence of Repressive State Apparatuses in order to ensure that the law is followed. Examples of Repressive State Apparatuses include “courts, fines, prisons, and the various detachments [*corps*] of the police” (66). Black Canadian activism is contesting the way in which the law is unequally repressive across, and overtly oppressive for, certain communities. Black activism calls attention to and strives to change the way in which Repressive State Apparatuses unfairly target, arrest, fine, prosecute, imprison, and terminate Black lives.

Dudley Laws and Dari Mead of the Black Action Defence Committee attribute the cause of the Yonge Street Uprising to the criminal justice system’s failure of the Black community. Of the events of May 4th, Laws says, “[w]hat happened yesterday was the frustration, the hunger of the people coming out. We have waited for the justice system to deal justly with our community and they have failed” (*1992 Toronto Riot*). Mead echoes the sentiment: “[y]ou have a police force that is like a stone. You can’t get blood from stone. That is the first violence” (*1992 Toronto Riot*). For Laws and Mead, the Yonge Street

Uprising was a response to the justice system's unwillingness to mend its own issues. Black Torontonians watched police shoot five unarmed members of their community, killing two in less than three years before Raymond Lawrence was gunned down on May 2, 1992. All of the officers involved were acquitted of wrongdoing. These killings and subsequent acquittals provided more than enough evidence that waiting for the justice system to right its wrongs was a lost cause. Change would have to come through community action. The Yonge Street Uprising was not a random act of violence. It was a response to the police violence that plagued the Black community. The activists engaged in this uprising contradict a story told by whites asserting that Black lives are valuable and are worthy of protection.

In 2016, the words of Laws and Mead regarding the failings of the justice system still rang true, and they are still ringing true today. Referring to the Pride sit-in, Sandy Hudson says,

[w]hen our people are being killed by police, and they're [those in power] not making any steps to change the relationship [...] you have to take a stance, and you have to say "Look, you are accountable to us, and if you're not doing anything about this, we can't endorse you. ("Sandy Hudson")

Hudson too, is tired of waiting. The police practice of carding, along with the police killings of Jermaine Carby and Andrew Loku, and the harassment of Queer and Trans Persons of Colour demonstrated that these communities are still regarded as targets by police. The justice system's defense of carding and protection of violent police officers is evidence that the system cannot be trusted. Demanding that uniformed police, their floats and booths be barred from participation at Pride was an attempt to show the police that support must be reciprocal. The Pride sit-in was evidence that the Black Queer community would no longer

tolerate being deterred from participating in the celebration of their identities; they would no longer tolerate being traumatized by the presence of a group who consistently terrorize their communities.

LeRoi Butcher published two anonymous quotations in his chapter, “The Anderson Affair” that demonstrate the excessive force that the riot police used on activists in the Sir George Williams computer lab. The speaker/speakers recount the terror of the police raid on the lab;

[a]s the door flew open, [the officer’s] angry faces and hate-filled eyes were indication enough as to what was in store for the occupiers, the clubs in their hands eliminated all remaining doubt [...] they knew that to resist would subject themselves to an unmerciful beating, perhaps even death. (qtd. in Butcher 97)

The other quote reads, “Roosevelt Douglas had a gun put to his head by the chief cop and was told “if you make one wrong move, nigger, I’ll blow your fucking head off” (98). The speaker/speakers show that the threat of violence and even death is always present when Black people encounter police. This ever-present threat necessitates the need for political intervention.

My reliance on Althusser thus far may suggest to some readers that there is no escape for Black Canadians who are always already interpellated by racist discourse. However, Glen Sean Coulthard’s reading of Fanon’s interpretation of Hegel’s master-slave dialectic leaves room for the emergence of freedom. Echoing Fanon, Coulthard’s writes a colonized subject must,

struggle to work through their alienation/subjection against the objectifying gaze and assimilative lure of colonial recognition. According to Fanon, it is this self-initiated process that ‘triggers a change of fundamental importance in the colonized’s psycho-

affective equilibrium.’ According to this view, the colonized must initiate the process of decolonization by first recognizing *themselves* as free, dignified, and distinct contributors to humanity. [...] Fanon equated this process of self-recognition with the praxis undertaken by the slave in Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit, which Fanon saw as illustrating the necessity on the part of the oppressed to ‘turn away’ from their other-oriented master-dependency and instead struggle for freedom on their own terms and in accordance with their own values. (43)

The counter-narratives of Black activists demonstrate this turning away from the inferior subjectivities constructed for them by white newspaper narratives that suggest that activism is about dwelling in the negative. Engaging with these counter narratives reveals that struggling against various racial injustices that are cemented into Canadian institutions is not an expression of anger, frustration and aggression. Whereas the newspaper narratives rhetorically construct a picture of Blackness that dwells in the negative, Black activists refuse to turn around, to be hailed by interpellation. Black activists struggle against the various master-narratives that whitely journalists construct for them. Black activist endeavours convey negativity, and activism resignifies Blackness insofar as it is an expression of hope, joy, and love.

In “Prisoners of Hope,” Cornel West argues that what sustains Black activism is not rage but hope. He writes,

[o]ur courage rests on a deep democratic vision of a better world that lures us and a blood drenched hope that sustains us. This hope is not the same as optimism. Optimism adopts the role of the spectator who surveys the evidence in order to infer that things are going to get better. Yet we know that the evidence does not look good. The dominant tendencies of our day are unregulated global capitalism, racial balkanization, social breakdown, and individual depression. Hope enacts the stance of the participant who actively struggles

against the evidence in order to change the deadly tides of wealth inequality, group xenophobia, and personal despair. (n.p.)

Whereas Optimism is a passive stance that naively holds that all will be well in time, hope takes work. Like the optimist, the hopeful is aware of the state of the world, but the hopeful refuses to stand idly by. The hopeful rises up, looks despair in the face and engages in struggle in hopes to change the state of the world. In this sense, hope is enabled through activity and is forward looking in time.

Many Black Canadian activists cite the hope that sustains them by defining activism as an act of creation that looks ahead to a future less burdensome than the present. Elder Thébaud and Rosie Douglas' proclamation on the 1968 Congress of Black Writers program demonstrate the hopeful nature of the event. They write,

[f]or the sake of tomorrow's victories, it is imperative that we take another look at the events of yesterday, in the Congress, black people will begin to rediscover themselves as the active creators rather than the passive sufferers of histories events...It is only when we have discovered these lost perspectives on ourselves that we can truly begin to speak of emancipation; it is only when we have returned to our authentic past than we can truly begin to dream about the future. (qtd. in D. Austin 94)

This call authored by Thébaud and Douglas was a call to tap into the activist spirit that enabled Black people to become authors of their own existence. It was a call to take charge and work together to change the course of history. The writers suggest that hope for the future is dependent on struggle in the present, demonstrating West's point that hope and struggle are intrinsically bound. The Congress of Black Writers, an activist endeavour that brought Black leaders from all around the world, to speak on the Black experience in the

modern world, was a demonstration of hope that the lived experience of Black people could be changed if they actively struggled against white supremacy.

Walter Rodney also describes the Congress of Black Writers as an actively creative endeavour that strives for change. He says, “[w]e are creating something, we are talking to each other. For years, Black people haven’t talked to other Black people, they talk to whites and say, “Look, here I am. This is what I am [...]” That is out... We are talking to each other” (qtd. in D. Austin 112). The creation of the Congress of Black Writers and the conversation that it facilitated did much to reanimate the Black activist spirit. The event went on to inspire the Black students of Sir George Williams University to take a stand against the racism of Professor Perry Anderson. The computer centre demonstration was an active engagement with the evidence of the racist composition of the Canadian school system and expression of hope that the future of education would be different for Black students.

Two Black Lives Matter activists cite activity and hope for the future in their statements regarding their activism at the Toronto Pride Parade in 2016. These statements dispel the notion that activism equals regression as activists look forward to an improved future. Rodney Diverlus states, “[t]he demands that we are bringing forward are just the beginning of the conversation” (qtd. in Gray). Like Rodney, Diverlus sees activism as a conversation of sorts, a conversation with implications for the future. By bringing demands to Pride, Black Lives Matter is extending an invitation for Pride to participate in the dialogue. Rinaldo Walcott and Idil Abdillahi describe activism as an offering, as a “gift that shapes reform” (62). The authors also write that “[i]n the era of Black Lives Matter, Black gifts continue unabated” (67). Activism is a gift to the nation insofar as it offers Canada an

opportunity to respond to, engage with, and alter its relationship with Black people. These gifts, these offerings, are expressions of love.

Cornel West demonstrates that the fight for justice is predicated upon love. In an interview on bigthink.com, West defines “the bluesman” or the “blueswoman” as a Black person who opts to respond to catastrophic situations such as slavery, segregation, or other violent enactments of white supremacy with outpourings of love. He says,

Black people had slavery, Jim Crow, Jane Crow, catastrophic. What was the response? It wasn't to create a Black al Qaida. It wasn't counter-terroristic. In the face of slavery, Fredrick Douglas said what? “With a smile and wounds, we want freedom for everybody.” We don't want to enslave others just because we're enslaved. Jim Crow-we have no rights and liberties; we're civilly dead-we want rights and liberties for everybody. We don't want to Jim Crow somebody else. (qtd. in “Cornel West's Catastrophic Love”)

The Black people with “blues sensibility” are not interested in revenge; they are not interested in perpetuating terror. Instead, bluesmen and women are interested in the pursuit of justice, and for West, “unconditional love is always tied to justice. Justice is love on legs, spilling over into the public sphere” (qtd. in “Cornel West's Catastrophic Love”). For West, the pursuit of justice is love mobilized, and as he tells a crowd at St Louis University gathered for the arts festival West Fest, “[t]he historic figures who have been on fire for truth and justice have been love warriors [...] Love is enacted in a life. It's embodied in a way of being in the world, like Frederick Douglas, W.E.B. DuBois, Ida Wells, Ella Baker, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X” (“Political/social activist West speaks, calls for ‘love warriors’”).

The counter-narratives of the activists involved in the Sir George Williams Affair, the Yonge Street Uprising, and the Black Lives Matter Toronto Pride sit-in demonstrate a link

between love and their pursuit of justice. Janaya Khan of Black Lives Matter Toronto provides a rationale for her involvement in the Pride sit-in. They say,

I imagine a future for Pride where People of Colour, Black People, the disabled, women and trans people are equal partners. I imagine a future that is courageous in the face of racism or bigotry, a Pride that may not have as much money but has much more heart. (Khan)

Like many of the activists, Khan's actions are expressions of hope for the future. The activists who reference an improved future contradict the discourse of devolution deployed by journalists of the *Toronto Star*, the *Globe and Mail*, and the *National Post*. Khan's focus on coalition and equality for various identity types demonstrates love in the face of injustice. A Pride that privileges justice over corporate sponsorship will be a more loving Pride.

Sandy Hudson of Black Lives Matter Toronto demonstrates that her involvement in the sit-in was not about attaining rights for any one group. She tells CP24's Steven LeDrew that "Anything that is going to assist Black people, I guarantee you, will assist everyone in the community" ("Sandy Hudson on Black Lives Matter"). Hudson suggests that protest is about the greater good. Her statement is reminiscent of Audre Lorde's words that have become an intersectional feminist mantra, "I am not free while any woman is unfree, even when her shackles are very different from my own. And I am not free as long as one person of Color remains chained. Nor is anyone of you" (Lorde). Hudson recognizes that unfreedom in its various forms limit the potential of humanity as a whole. Racial equality contributes to the overall justice of the community and mustn't be seen as a selfish endeavour. Her words stand in contention with those of the mainstream news reporters who suggest that Black Lives Matter Toronto is only interested in securing rights for

themselves. Instead Black Lives Matter Toronto fights injustice for the love of the larger community.

Valerie Belgrave, an activist involved in the Sir George Williams University Affair dispels the notion that protests are spaces of negativity. Of the Sir George Williams Affair, she says,

[i]t was definitely a great atmosphere. There was a sense of comradery, and when the occupation took place, we went in to make sure it didn't go bad. Obviously, we wanted the matter settled, and that was the intention; that was the aim. (qtd. in the 9th Floor)

Belgrave characterizes the occupied computer lab as a space of love and friendship.

Activists banded together to stick up for one another. The intention was not to cause trouble but to bring about solutions that would result in a peaceful and harmonious campus.

Belgrave's words are tinged with a certain amount of joy. In an interview with Janice McCabe of Dartmouth College, Cornel West says of his involvement of the counter-protest of the alt-right in Charlottesville, Virginia, "[t]here ought to be a certain joy in struggle. There ought to be a certain zest and gusto that one gets from putting oneself on the line" ("Cornel West: There is Joy in Struggle"). Derrick Bell also acknowledges the joy bound up with struggle in his reading of Martin Luther King Jr's *A Testament of Hope*. In response to those who would assume that struggle would leave him "a grim and desperate man," King writes, "[t]hey fail, however, to perceive the sense of affirmation generated by the challenge of embracing struggle and surmounting obstacles" (qtd. in Bell xv). Belgrave's statement that the occupied computer lab was a "great atmosphere" shows the extent to which joy permeated the computer lab (qtd. in *Ninth Floor*). Individuals bound in love and solidarity derive joy from standing for justice.

Akua Benjamin of the Black Action Defence Committee demonstrates a kind of patriotic love in her statements regarding the Yonge Street Uprising. Commenting on the property damage and looting that took place following the anti-racist demonstration, she says,

[w]e are not about to destroy our homes because this is our home. We pay our taxes. We contribute to this society. We are not about to destroy our home or propagate ideas in the community about destruction. (qtd. in *Toronto Street Riot*)

Benjamin's repetition of "home" in this passage demonstrates her love of the city of Toronto. The activist implies that one of her civic duties is to contribute to the betterment of society, and she acts on her duty by attempting to resolve the injustices that plague it. Her intention is not to destroy society, but to repair it. Benjamin dispels myths that situate activists as bent on society's destruction by her expression of love.

Benjamin also beautifully articulates the activist spirit in the following lines. Referring to herself and her fellow activists, she says, "[w]e are justice loving people, and as justice loving people living in this country, we recognize that racism is here. We will take action" (qtd. in *Toronto Street Riot*). Benjamin again characterizes activism as a civic duty born out of love. Activists do not call attention to society's ills in order to defame it. People with a penchant for justice ought to be attuned to society's failures in order to bring about positive change. Activism is not a demonstration of hostility, and protest does not happen because activists harbour hatred and resentment. Anti-racist activism is a demonstration of an unwavering faith in humanity's propensity for change, and this faith is predicated upon unconditional love.

The one thing that I hope readers take away from this essay is that we can use critical discourse analysis and critical race theory to create social change. Critical discourse analysis provides us with a tool to uncover the workings of ideology that is mobilized through discourse. When we expose ideology for what it is, a collection of illusory ideas that legitimizes existing power structures, ideology begins to lose its grip on our lives and minds. As a result, the reins of power will also loosen. When we add critical race theory to our toolbelt, we begin to see the urgency of exposing ideology. Critical race theorists demonstrate that racist ideology isn't just a stagnant set of ideas that informs opinions; it has a long and oppressive history that continues to actively shape the lives of People of Colour in Canada. Critical race theory enables us to recognize that afterlife of slavery endures in this country in spite of and because of Canada's national narratives of racial equality.

When we approach the news armed these tools, we can begin to question its role in the furthering of harmful national narratives. When we are suspicious of motives, we are more likely to resist being interpellated by whitely media. When we are reluctant to take news as unvarnished fact, and we open ourselves up to the possibility of exploring other stories that collectively constitute alternative national narratives. We open ourselves up to narratives that both acknowledge the existence of slavery and actively work against its ongoing reverberations in the present.

Attending to the stories of Black Canadian anti-racist activists reveals that there are handful of "justice loving people" that identify and survey the evidence and actively struggle against it to usher a future free from racial discrimination (qtd. in *Toronto Street Riot*). I'd prefer our national narrative to attest to the existence of hopeful "love warriors" who strive

for change than attest to the existence of complacent Canadians blinded by the various myths of plurality (“Political/social activist West speaks, calls for ‘love warriors’”). If we accept this love story, we are one step closer to disarming an institution that contributes to the continued oppression of Black people; we are one step closer to exorcizing the nation of slavery’s persistent afterlife.

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