Introduction

The popular portrayal of male children who have been sexually abused depicts them as inevitably growing to be abusers themselves, and this may have more to do with maintaining the cultural taboos both against male victimization and against males having sex with males than with elucidating the experiences of the children. More significantly, the circular narrative, which Montreal therapist Michel Dorais calls the myth of “the bite of the vampire,” is so thoroughly naturalized that it has become the de facto official discourse and, as such, even appears in the reactions of some therapists (59). Not only do therapists such as Dorais feel the need to address the myth, but it is also so widespread in popular discourse that the American Medical Association devotes a portion of its manual on the topic to dispelling prevailing myths about male victims of sexual abuse because the mythic story often repeats in responses from professional therapists and social workers (26, 28). The circular narrative reflects the primacy of what prominent Australian sociologist Robert Connell calls “hegemonic masculinity,” which is the preferred gender formation in a given cultural site and which assures (some) men power over women, and over homosexuals and other minorities (131). Ultimately, the dominant popular discourse is not so much for males who have been sexually abused as it is about them. As leading British cultural theorist Stuart Hall explains, “every discourse constructs positions from which alone it makes sense. . . . Anyone deploying a discourse must position themselves as if they were the subject of the discourse” (author’s emphasis; “The West” 202). It is little surprise, then, that the abuse that former NHL star Sheldon Kennedy and other, unnamed, hockey players suffered morphed into stories centred on their coach, Graham James, and on the resultant impact on hockey (Kylie; Fusco and Kirby). As well, Brandon Nesler’s abuse becomes a
mechanism to tell *The Ellie Nesler Story*, which details Ellie’s revenge killing of her son’s abuser and positions her as the star, the source of identifications. In short, she is the subject of the story rather than Brandon. Thus, the stories that are told have little to do with the individual in question—call him a “victim,” a “survivor,” etc.—and everything to do with the rest of the audience; the stories serve to dissociate audiences from those who have been abused.

These dissociative discourses, which reassure the audience that it is outside of the story loop, most resemble the discourse of death, the elegy: they voice a rationalization of a subject unfathomable for those who have not experienced it; they speak in terms of the loss and the grief of those close to the victim; they seek to console those who were not lost. What becomes apparent, as well, is that the circular narrative contrasts with what French literary critic and theorist Roland Barthes describes as the typical operation of the classic narrative. According to Barthes, the narrative process does not just lead to, but also relies upon, the achievement of the end of the story for one of its central motivations. The purpose of this arrangement, Barthes writes, is to “articulate in various ways a question, its response, and the variety of chance events which can either formulate the question or delay its answer; or even, constitute an enigma and lead to its solution” (17). Regardless of the generic location of the stories considered in the course of this paper, the problem being solved is not that of the child who has been abused. In fact, as I will show, the most frequent solution offered for the child who has been abused is death. In this way, the cycle has an elegiac function that provides a means of understanding the narrative, but this suggests that death is the only way to break the cycle. This is the solution offered in a docu-drama like *The Boys of St. Vincent*; in a dramatic whodunit like the Academy-Award winning *Mystic River*; in episodes of TV cop shows *Law and Order*—a plot-based show—and *NYPD: Blue*—a character-based show; and also in the so-called “Maple Leaf Gardens Scandal,” which occurred in the 1960s and 1970s, but which only came to light during a series of trials in Toronto, Ontario in the early 1990s. While the bulk of this paper will consider the pervasiveness of the portrayals of male victims of childhood sexual abuse and will evaluate the accuracy of those portrayals, I will also offer one example, the ongoing story of Sheldon Kennedy, as a possibility for a way of breaking the cycle without the victim’s death as a prerequisite. Finally, I hope to show areas of potential coalition between (pro)feminist activism and males who have been sexually abused. Such men are still expected to grow up according to the code of hegemonic masculinity and might, therefore, understand the effects of compulsory compliance to a gender order based on hegemonic masculinity. They might also understand the silencing of difference, for speaking out about having been...
abused means admitting that one is a potential abuser or, in the words of a therapist to whom I refer later, “a time bomb.” It is my hope that men who have been abused can be powerful allies to the feminist cause.

**You Can’t Understand Because You’re a Man: Story Elements Specific to Male Victims**

As a start in the process of breaking the cyclical narrative, determining how these tales apply to boys reveals significant differences in terms of gender. At the very least, male children (are supposed to) become men based on a hegemonic masculine structure. As Mike Lew recognizes, “there is a particular focus of the problem faced only by men. It arises from our culture providing no room for a man as victim” (40). Examining men as being anything but in control and thinking of masculinities as meaning, or deriving, from something other than control is a radical shift. It is also hard to conceive for men themselves. The mythologies surrounding “what it means to be a man” are various and many, but sociologist Michael Kimmel offers an excellent summary of the discursive construction of hegemonic masculinity in North America:

(1) No Sissy stuff: Men can never do anything that even remotely suggests femininity. Manhood is a relentless repudiation of the feminine; (2) Be a Big Wheel: manhood is measured by power, wealth and success. Whoever has the most toys when he dies, wins; (3) Be a Sturdy Oak: manhood depends on emotional reserve. Dependability in a crisis requires that men not reveal their feelings; and (4) Give ‘em Hell: exude an aura of manly daring and aggression. Go for it. Take risks. (9–10)
Following his study of the history of masculinity, Robert Connell concludes that masculinities are not only shaped by the processes of the dominant culture; “they are active in that process and help to shape it. Popular culture tells us this without prompting” (185). Nine-year-old “Paul,” one of the respondents to a Toronto Star call for youth opinions on cloning, wants a big brother cloned from WWE wrestler Rob Van Dam so that he can “learn all the moves” to defend himself from bullies. This is one anecdote, but the United States government’s National Institute on Drug Addiction (NIDA) survey reported in 2001 that “25 percent” of male weightlifters who used steroids “reported memories of childhood physical or sexual abuse, compared with none who did not abuse steroids” (3). In other words, young men who have suffered abuse—over-represented, according to clinical psychologist Jim Hopper’s statistics, among weightlifters—feel the need to compensate for their perceived loss of masculinity through the performance of a muscle-bound hypermasculinity.

In contrast to hegemonic masculinity, the concept of male victimization receives little (critical) attention, and the scant attention usually involves using victimization as an excuse to attack feminism. This was the pattern Pulitzer Prize-winning author and feminist Susan Faludi expected when she began work on Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man. Thus, she was surprised by the reactions of the victimized males whom she met. She encountered a silence comparable to the well-documented silence of women:

To understand why men are so reluctant to break with the codes of manhood sanctioned in their childhood, perhaps we need to understand how strong the social constraints on them are. It’s not just women who are bombarded by cultural messages about appropriate gender behavior. . . . The level of mockery, suspicion, and animosity directed at men who step out of line is profound, and men respond profoundly—with acquiescence. (41)

Dr. Fred Matthews of Toronto Youth Services admits, “We refuse to acknowledge males can be victims because we think of males as perpetrators but it’s an everyday event” (qtd. in Gadd). Kim Madden, a colleague of Matthews, in addressing the social prejudice surrounding this issue, laments, “Twenty years ago if a woman was raped, she asked for it; that was mainstream thinking . . . but for men it still is the mainstream thinking” (qtd. in Gadd). Some recent findings indicate, however, that males are victims as frequently as females. On his website, Jim Hopper, a clinical psychologist and Research Fellow at Harvard, cites several such studies. In one conducted in Calgary, “Bagley and his colleagues found a prevalence rate of 15.5%, and that 6.9% of their subjects had experienced multiple episodes of sexual
abuse. Interestingly, this rate for multiple episodes was identical to that found for women in a previous study that employed the same methodology” (Hopper).

Even so, research and documentation of male children who were sexually abused continues to lag behind similar data for girls and for women. In 1997, Guy Holmes, Liz Offen, and Glenn Waller wrote in Clinical Psychology Review that research is “at an embryonic stage” (69). A more recent study of psychological data by Pamela Tice and her colleagues cautions, “The absence of males from maltreatment research . . . results in a lack of critical information concerning them” (170). Writing in 2001, Tice et al. elaborate: “even when males are included in samples . . . there is insufficient representation of males to conduct analyses [so that] our current knowledge of gender differences is sketchy at best” (170–71). As recently as 2004, the American Medical Association casebook for treatment referred to males who have been sexually abused as “special populations” because “Research about and treatment . . . for males [in this regard] exist but continue to be rare.” This is the most recent version of the document and is the one currently in use at the time of writing. Mike Lew’s second edition of Victims No Longer (2005) simply says, “In the case of male children, we have only the sketchiest data on the frequency of sexual abuse” (18). In the absence of an abundance of data, a significant portion of the critical void is being filled by the cycle-of-abuse narrative. Moreover, Holmes, Offen, and Waller connect the tautology of the cycle of abuse with the continued silencing of actual victims: “It appears one of the few messages that has got across to male victims of childhood sexual abuse is the inaccurate one that they are highly likely to re-enact their abuse. Such men are unlikely to disclose their abuse to professionals, especially if they are adult males with children of their own” (79). Thus, despite the efforts of some, the stereotypical story prevails, even when disclosures might otherwise occur.

The idea of males as the victims of sexual abuse runs into several cultural prohibitions that, as Hall explained earlier, serve those deploying the discourse. In terms of masculinity, two of these are of paramount significance: 1) men having sex with men; 2) men being overpowered, or victimized. Cultural Studies professor Antony Easthope further clarifies the situation: “The Masculine Myth argues that at present masculinity is defined mainly in the way an individual deals with his femininity and his desire for other men. . . . From the versions of masculinity examined here it seems that men are really more concerned about other men than about women at all” (6). Sociologist Tim Beneke also sees homophobia as deriving from men’s understanding of the rules of masculinity. In his view, “the fear of being raped by other men is an objective danger implicit in the very existence of gays. . . . Arguably [sic] we should distinguish homophobia in straight
men that focuses on the fear of being raped by strong macho gays. . . . Straight men realize how hostile their own lust for women can be and fear being on the receiving end of that lust from men” (146). I think that this is an oversimplification in theoretical terms, but Beneke intends to offer a general explanation for a person’s understanding or expression of his own homophobia. English professor Kevin Ohi argues that the popular conflation of pedophilia with homosexuality “sustains a model of transparent representation that allows heterosexuality and the heterosexual family to define themselves against both child abuse and homosexuality” (200). Regarding what he calls the Darwinist, Freudian approach to gender and sexuality, anthropologist Jeffrey Weeks explains that: “sexuality was essentially male, with the woman just a hallowed receptacle. . . . A more respectable view was that sexuality represented the ‘instinct of reproduction.’ . . . But it scarcely explained sexual variations, except as a failure of heterosexuality” (83). Weeks primarily means homosexuals when he refers to “variations” in masculinity. Indeed, this is the most prevalent topic for considerations of alternative masculinities. Whether they are defined as having been feminized or homoeroticized—as “receptacles” in either case—males who have been sexually abused are not simply heterosexual failures. In a gender economy centred on the primacy of hegemonic masculinity, they are assumed to have failed at masculinity entirely.

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Forgive Me Your Sins: The Scapegoat

The Sheldon Kennedy Story, a made-for-TV drama, tries to depict this famous case in just two hours. In doing so, it dramatizes some of the events included in a one-hour-long news and information program, Sheldon: A Story of Human Courage, which aired two days before the movie’s premiere. Thus, the two should be taken as
parts of an intertextual telling of the same tale. In the film, Graham James repeatedly uses the cultural prohibition on homosexuality as a threat to maintain Kennedy’s continued silence. The coach taunts, “You’re afraid. You’re afraid people would think you’re gay.” In his autobiography, Kennedy now recognizes that to “equate pedophilia and homosexuality is insulting to gay people everywhere but that’s what Graham continued to do,” but, as a boy, the threat of stigmatization was sufficient for silence (203). Finally, the homophobic locker-room joking becomes too much for Kennedy to bear and results in his revelation. As Michael Scarce, formerly Coordinator of The Ohio State University’s Rape Education and Prevention Program, explains, the senses of vulnerability and of homophobia caused by male rape often “are allayed with humour that attempts to dismiss or deny the existence of sexual violence against men. The result, however, is a further shaming of men who have been raped. Survivors who are already stigmatized and silenced are further humiliated in becoming the punchline to the ever-popular ‘don’t drop the soap’ jokes” (118–19). Telling and enduring such jokes seems to be an inherent part of hegemonic masculinity, or at least the appearance of it. When considering homophobic humour, Robert Connell focuses only on feminization. He writes: “Popular homophobia, so far as I have been able to trace its themes, says nothing about God but is graphic about sex. Anal sexuality is a focus of disgust, and receptive anal sex is a mark of feminization. Homophobic humour among straight men still revolves around the limp wrist, the mincing walk, and innuendo about castration” (219). This view overlooks implications around age, class, race, and ethnicity that also contribute to the contexts in which masculinities develop. While I will not repeat them here, as a Catholic and as a former altar boy, I have heard dozens of homophobic jokes that attack Catholicism and particular ethnicities as much as they do feminine men. In terms of sport, sociologist Dayna Daniels writes that “the only thing worse than feminizing insults is homophobic taunting (36). Regardless, the point is to ex-nominate—that is, to avoid naming the distinguishing sign of dominance—a particular version of hegemonic masculinity based on power and aggression so that this version appears ordinary and all others appear deviant.

The movie depicts Sheldon Kennedy’s excessive drinking and womanizing, but also his playing NHL hockey. All of this should connote his advanced standing in the realm of masculinity. But Kennedy rejects his wife at several points in his efforts to pursue his own independence and gain control—the skate across Canada is a classic example. Finally, he rejects everything outright, going so far as to say that he hates his own skin. This moment is dramatized and features Kennedy slicing his skin with a razor blade. It serves a dual purpose in the movie’s diegesis. First, his skin has
felt both the pain and the pleasure of sex. Indeed, the
two are conflated. Second, the skin’s maleness reminds
him that he shares the body of his tormentor. He
looks in the mirror and sees the body of a professional
athlete—an ideal masculine form in this culture. In
the economy, his body has been both his asset and
his liability. As a hockey player, his body—and his
ability to master it and use it to advantage—was the
ticket out of an abusive home, and later away from
Graham James. His body was also, however, the ticket
to James’s abuse, because hockey brought him to
Swift Current. Upon discovering her husband with the
razor blade, Jana Kennedy takes Sheldon to the police
station to file a complaint. After nearly one hour and
forty minutes, Kennedy finally states, “I was raped by
my coach” for the first and only time. Interestingly,
Jana becomes the hero in the movie. She stays with
Kennedy, supports him despite his erratic behaviours,
and leads him to the police. Furthermore, the portrayal
of Jana as the “sturdy oak” has the implicit effect of
showing that Sheldon cannot be one himself.

There is no set of easy answers, as some would
offer, for the injury is complete: body, mind,
and sexuality. The third term binds the first two
together. It solves the paradox of the asset being a
liability. Kennedy’s autobiography includes several
references to his own frustration with trying to “make
visible something invisible” (177). Kennedy’s story
subsequently became attached to a sex-abuse scandal
that took place at Toronto’s Maple Leaf Gardens.
When Kennedy, perhaps North America’s most famous
victim, embarked on his skate across Canada, The
Sudbury Star’s Roger Dennie tells of “a voyage of
self-discovery, retribution and closure . . . triumph
over the demons that haunt and terrorize all victims of
childhood sexual abuse.” Dennie speaks of “closure,”
a Gestalt concept that has lost all meaning through
habitual overuse, while invoking images of “demons”
and “haunting.” He offers a simple tale with which
he and his readers are familiar. Retribution, a popular
theme in sports broadcasting, is thrown in for good
measure. To create a happy ending where there clearly
is not one, Dennie brings up Martin Kruze, the first of
Gordon Stuckless’s victims to come forward in “the
story of abuse at [Maple Leaf] Gardens [that] shocked
as much as Kennedy’s did.” As I cited earlier, the shock
was to hockey, as a national institution of hegemonic
masculinity, and not to Kruze and not to Kennedy.
Dennie wants the Toronto Maple Leafs to sign Kennedy
because he believes “Martin Kruze would approve.
And so would the other unfortunate Stuckless victims.”
In his autobiography, Kennedy describes this type
of imposition of a narrative as a constant source of
additional stress. On one occasion, Kennedy recounts
an episode of Oprah, in which he and Kruze appeared
together (155–56). Kennedy concludes that “too often
the media turned my life story into a kind of fairy tale.
The hero Sheldon Kennedy survives abuse, puts his
abused in jail, cries on TV a few times, and feels better, then skates across Canada to raise money for other victims. It wasn’t like that. I wasn’t a hero” (200). Kennedy reaches the conclusion that some are more concerned about the status of hockey—and its masculine code—in Canada (153). This is in keeping with Hall’s earlier-cited contention that those deploying the discourse position themselves as the subject. As one of the pre-eminent masculine institutions in the nation, hockey becomes the subject and victims such as Kennedy and Kruze become displaced. The effect is a dissociation that serves to stigmatize the victim.

The scapegoating tendency also appears in tales of clergy abusing children. For example, in “‘Bless Me Father For I Have Sinned’: The Catholic Church in Crisis,” its report on the current abuse scandal involving the Catholic Church in America, ABC News ignores the children and instead uses the opportunity to launch attacks on the church’s stance on homosexuality and (especially) on celibacy. Reporter Forrest Sawyer concludes that the church’s doctrine provides a “safe haven [sic]” for pedophiles who see the church’s structure as a way of trying to impose control on their desires. Two movies offer similar takes on the church and child abuse. In Primal Fear and The Boys of St. Vincent, a Hollywood film and a CBC docudrama, respectively, priests use children to bear their sins. Primal Fear depicts a bishop who directs two boys and a girl in pornographic videos in order to purge his desires. In fact, he provides a concurrent narration explaining the purgation while the children act out the various sexual sins. To purge his own rage, one of the boys subsequently murders the other children and the bishop. The majority of the movie depicts the murder trial. Ultimately, the boy is acquitted by reason of insanity after an angry, violent dissociative episode in the courtroom. The insanity
is an act, however, as the boy later informs his lawyer, that the jurors are quite willing to accept. Insanity would have been understandable, but the boy is really sick. Whether the insanity is an act or not, the outcome only confirms that the children are really to blame. The murders were still committed.

*The Boys of St. Vincent*, loosely based on the Mt. Cashel Orphanage case in Newfoundland, features a headmaster who abuses children for the same reason: to act out his (forbidden) sexual impulses. There are really two parts to the TV movie: the abuse and the resultant trial of the priests. Between the two halves of story, though not depicted, the accused headmaster, Fr. Lavin, leaves his religious order, marries, and fathers two boys. During his trial, the former priest turns his frustration into lust, which he projects onto his wife in a scene that parallels an earlier scene of abuse. He roughly gropes his wife in the same way he did his “favourite” boy at the orphanage. He utters the same words and phrases proclaiming his sins. In his mind, the sins do not include sexually abusing children; he merely loves too strongly. The wife does not seem to mind strong love at all. While the Catholic Church’s cover-up of abuse is really the object under attack by the filmmakers, as a high-court ruling in Canada concurs, the boys bear the sins (Ohi 195). Moreover, through its relationship with a real story, the fiction and the fact blend into a single narrative. In his academic assessment of popular responses to the film, Kevin Ohi, for example, finds it impossible for popular commentators “to stop conflating fiction with fact” when referring to *The Boys of St. Vincent* (215). He also expresses some frustration at TV and newspaper reviewers in the US and in Canada “sliding between ‘fiction’ and ‘reality,’ ‘fact’ and ‘text’” (221). Such conflations depend on the imposition of the cycle-of-abuse narrative. News and fiction become blurred because the story’s conclusions are also its assumptions; the beginning is always the end, whether the story occurs in news or in fiction. Further, as occurs in the Kennedy and Kruze cases, the abuse story becomes an opportunity to focus on another issue, rather than becoming the focus itself, and the primary story supports a society of compulsory heterosexuality that is built on protecting hegemonic masculinity. James Kincaid suggests that viewers “are instructed by our cultural heritage to crave that which is forbidden, a crisis we face by not facing it, by writing self-righteous doublespeak that demands both lavish public spectacle and constant guilt-denying projections onto scapegoats” (20–21). There must be something peculiar about these children to cause such a reaction in otherwise trustworthy adults, or so the stories go. This “defect” leads not to another story, but the next chapter of the story: the so-called “cycle of abuse.”

**Do Unto Others: The Cycle of Abuse**

“Jonesboro Schoolyard Ambush,” an episode of the
A&E television program *American Justice* stands out as a model of how the cycle-of-abuse story is imposed and repeated. The intent of the documentary-style program in question is to investigate the massacre of seven students and one teacher at an elementary school in Jonesboro, Arkansas. According to Bill Kurtis, the host of *American Justice*, thirteen-year-old Mitchell Johnson, the older of the two perpetrators, “claimed to have been a victim of sexual abuse, a trait he shared with many others who have committed violent crimes.” Kurtis’s words are followed by those of expert-commentator Dorothy Otnow Lewis. She adds, “The children that you see, who very young [sic] do extraordinarily violent things, have been seething for years and years. . . . They have been . . . victimized in different ways, but particularly extraordinary physical abuse and sexual abuse, because . . . without question, children who are subjected to this and who keep this a secret are like time bombs in a way.” Earlier in the program, however, both Kurtis and Otnow Lewis demonstrate one of the reasons why children do keep past sexual abuse a secret. Kurtis explains, in his polished, professional, authoritative TV-host manner, that, as opposed to Mitchell Johnson’s claims, the “[e]xperts believe that children sexually abuse other children if they themselves experience the same trauma.” This statement is followed by Otnow Lewis, who asserts that “[i]t’s devastating to a young child to be repeatedly sexually abused or raped. It . . . engenders rage, it engenders helplessness. The worst thing, I think, that it does is that it tends to predispose the child to doing unto others what was done to him.”

Here, both Otnow Lewis and Kurtis reinscribe the popular construction of the victim as a future abuser and, in so doing, conflate and confuse the stereotype with the common-sense narrative.

This is surprising given Otnow Lewis’s position as Professor of Psychiatry at New York University’s School of Medicine and as Clinical Professor at Yale University’s Child Study Center. This is typical, however, of news reports on the subject. Peter Jennings, host of ABC’s “‘Bless Me Father, For I Have Sinned’: The Catholic Church in Crisis,” indignantly tells of the Catholic Church’s defenders who claim sexual abuse is “equal among [similar] organizations.” He hastens to add, “but there is no way to prove—either way.” With his pause and the missing object adding dramatic effect, Jennings’s pronouncement and presence obviate the need for proof. Moreover, the title of the program shows its investigative focus: the Catholic Church’s alleged cover-up of the abuse, and not the victims of that abuse. The church’s evil is compounded by the assumed logic that the victims will become abusers themselves. With regard to the Jonesboro boys, Kurtis cites as evidence of the cycle of abuse a lawsuit that alleges that the boys were “clearly predisposed to violent acts.” William Nack and Don Yaeger admit that there have been “no
formal studies to determine how many child molesters coach youth teams” (43). In contrast, Dr. Fred Matthews’s research indicates that “about one-third of abused boys go on to act out violently, with only 7 per cent becoming abusers themselves” (Gadd). In this episode of television programming, however, A&E’s Kurtis and Otnow Lewis are the only ones heard, and thus theirs are the only empowered voices and the voices to be believed. Although some viewers might make the essentialist assumption that, as a female and as a therapist/academic, Otnow Lewis will be empathetic, her behaviour is in keeping with the ideal of a masculine objectivity in the documentary format and is intended to contrast with the boys’ behaviour. The effect of the narrative is to emasculate Mitchell Johnson. He has been victimized sexually, he has spoken of this fact, and he has been shown to be hysterical. Moreover, the very language that Kurtis and Otnow Lewis use immediately puts males who have been sexually abused into a further position of victimization by trapping them in the infamous “Catch-22” situation. The language is clear: if they do not speak out about their abuse, they are “time bombs.”

If they did speak out about their abuse, however, they would merely be revealing the fact that they are time bombs. Such a revelation would be tantamount to an admission of guilt rather than the plea for help that it ideally should be, for, in the mythic paradigm perpetuated by Kurtis and Otnow Lewis, males who have been sexually abused are, or are going to be, abusers themselves. In spite of evidence to the contrary, the myth is that molestation is on the increase of its own accord. If each molested child grows up to molest four others, “and so on,” as the old commercial goes, the numbers might reach epidemic proportions. Indeed, if the Jonesboro boys are the exemplar of this behavioural model, then abused children will be
even more horrific abusers. Whereas Kurtis uses the gender-neutral term, “children,” Otnow Lewis changes from the gender-neutral “the child” to the gender-specific “him” in the same sentence in referring to the phenomenon of abused children becoming abusers themselves. Thus, the tenuous position of males who have been sexually abused becomes more salient: they either have no language or what language they have is subordinate, secondary, or inferior to the language of the dominant culture. That Otnow Lewis uses a parallel structure in her sentence—“engenders rage,” “engenders helplessness”—reflecting the basic phraseology for emphasis, reflects the (linguistic) double bind of boys in this situation. It is neither ironic nor coincidental that Otnow Lewis’s own words put boys who have been sexually abused in this position. It is by design and it is this point that she emphasizes. Finally, Otnow Lewis recasts the proverbial “golden rule,” “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,” as “do unto others what was done to you.” Thus, one of the available intertexts resituates Otnow Lewis’s statement from tautology to undisputed truth as a new golden rule.

The cycle-of-abuse story is overwhelmingly entrenched in our culture. It even figures in the treatment that actual victims receive, which maintains the momentum of the story. For example, Eric, one of the men whom Jane Gadd interviewed for a 1997 Globe and Mail report on the Maple Leaf Gardens scandal, relates that the psychiatrist he consulted as an adult “told him he was to blame for sexual assaults he suffered from the ages of 9 to 15.” Gadd found that, after disclosure, some victims were sent immediately to the John Howard Society for treatment as perpetrators. This was done under the premise that “since all men convicted of sexual assault say they were abused, therefore all men who have been assaulted must be perpetrators too” (“Eric,” qtd. in Gadd). The dangerous reverse of the cycle of abuse is the “abuse-excuse” story, in which previous abuse absolves the abuser of any responsibility. Predictably, the abuse excuse has its detractors. As mentioned above, the ending of Primal Fear hinges on the boy who murdered the abusive priest revealing that he faked his insanity. In Sleepers, a movie that claims to be based on a true story, four boys are sent to reform school only to be repeatedly raped by the guards. Predictably, two of the four boys become gangsters and repeat offenders. The plot then revolves around their trial for murdering one of the men who abused them, with another of the boys leading the prosecution in order to lose the case. The fourth boy acts as a liaison between the two sides. The docu-drama Judgment Day: The Ellie Nesler Story illustrates a mother’s attempt to use the abuse excuse vicariously. As is depicted in the movie, the real Ellie Nesler shot Dan Driver in a courtroom to prevent her son, Brandon, from having to testify. Nesler had invited Driver to become a father figure
for her son after Brandon’s father left, but Driver allegedly molested Brandon. The irony was that the boy did have to testify about having been abused, at his mother’s trial. Interestingly, the entire Nesler family is portrayed as being dysfunctional, drug-abusing, uneducated, fundamentalist Christians; that is, different from the majority of the audience. At the end of the movie, as if to confirm any suspicions, the producers flash a message telling viewers that Brandon Nesler has already spent two years in prison. The abuse was never proven in court, but Brandon’s eventual criminal conduct—for a crime that, conveniently, cannot be named because it was committed while Brandon was a minor—serves as proof enough that Brandon Nesler’s life follows the script of the familiar narrative through which the victimized boy becomes a victimizer.

As Good as Dead: Breaking the Cycle

Yet, the statistics and Otnow Lewis’s own research do not bear out either the cycle of abuse or the abuse excuse. In a sample of 595 men, David Lisak, Jim Hopper, and Pat Song found that thirty-eight per cent of sexually abused males became perpetrators themselves (721). Peter Dimock, a social worker, echoes this finding: “About 35% of perpetrators report being victimized as children. It is not known how many male victims turn into perpetrators, but we are learning that many more men have been sexually abused than previously thought and these men are not necessarily abusers.” While the figures cited above indicate that abused men are three times more likely to become abusers than males who have not been victims, it still leaves nearly two-thirds who do not repeat the crime that they themselves endured. Michel Dorais puts it simply: “That a certain number of male adolescents or adults who have suffered sexual abuse as children may in turn adopt similar behaviours should not lead to the generalized and erroneous belief that those who have been abused will inevitably become abusers themselves” (141). Psychologists Guy Holmes, Liz Offen, and Glenn Waller find that the “risks of cyclical victimization may have been overstated” (79). Here, it is also well worth recalling Holmes, Offen, and Waller’s earlier-mentioned conclusion that the cycle-of-abuse story seems to be one of the few messages received by male victims of childhood sexual abuse.

Regardless of the validity of the cycle-of-abuse and abuse-excuse stories circulated in North American popular culture, their power is such that the popular media have concluded that the only way out is death. Stevie, the “favourite” target of the headmaster in The Boys of St. Vincent, subsequently recruits new victims for the priest, first to keep the priest occupied, but later to abuse the boys himself. Stevie graduates to become an alcoholic and drug-addicted drifter and it is implied that he is a homosexual prostitute. Following this revelation during testimony at the priest’s trial, Stevie commits suicide. His family is relieved. The
two episodes of *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit* that feature cases of sexual abuse make the same suggestion. In “Uncivilized,” the victim found as the show opens was killed by his attackers; in “Guilt,” Matt Cavanaugh attempts suicide rather than testify following revelations that he was a recruiter. His mother tells the prosecutor that she should have shot Matt. In her opinion, he would be better off dead than having to testify. She did not want him to testify in the first place. The original *Law and Order* features a similar story in “Bad Faith.” Billy Marino, a victim-turned-recruiter, kills himself rather than telling police or testifying. Marino did, however, collect enough evidence to convict the priest who abused him. At the very least, Kevin Ohi concludes, “[a] character’s proximity to heterosexual normativity becomes an index of how successfully he has transcended the experience of abuse” (222). More directly, though, in popular cultural portrayals, death appears to be the only development that breaks whichever cycle is being portrayed. Of this cultural preference, Kincaid expresses contempt for the discourse and reminds us of who is served by it:

the cry that child molesting is worse than murder has been heard so often it has become a tired slogan, self-evident and vapid. Certainly it is better to take the child’s life than its virtue, we feel, and we needn’t waste time saying it. . . . But if we teach ourselves to regard the loss of innocence as more calamitous than the loss of life, whose needs are we seeing to? Who is it wants the innocence and who the life? . . . Do we feel that a defiled child is of no use to us and might as well be dead? (16)

Unfortunately, the reading, viewing, and listening public does not share Kincaid’s view. Even the non-fictional stories mirror their fictional and dramatized counterparts in suggesting that death is preferable to having been a victim. In such a scenario, the logic is clear. Death could at least prevent the inevitable outcome of the abused becoming the abuser.

While it does seem extreme to suggest that there is a wide-ranging belief that a child is better off dead following his victimization, media portrayals bear out my summation. One of the mothers cited on *American Justice* tells the camera, “My son’s ruined for the rest of his life.” A parent in Nack and Yaeger’s article tells the man who abused her son, “You’re worse than a thief. You’re worse than a murderer. A thief steals what can be replaced. A murderer kills his victims one time . . . and unfortunately history says that a fair portion of your victims are going to start victimizing others as you have done” (43). Even though she was not one of the victims, the declaration was made as a “victim impact statement.” No one questions which “history” says this, or where. It is accepted as fact that the child is better off dead because either he will become an
abuser or he will endure a lifetime of torment. In this latter regard, Bill Hall, a sports reporter, attempts to speak for Martin Kruze and for all victims: “The sexual abuse of children goes far beyond physical trauma. Kruze’s chaotic post-assault life was a virtual blizzard of drugs, alcohol and confusion. Like most sexual-assault victims, he was haunted by an unreasonable, yet undeniable feeling of guilt. Perhaps Kruze believed if he stopped hiding his story, the pain would go away. Instead his despair intensified.” The logic here suggests that revelations, testimony, and even convictions do not produce the “closure” our society has come to expect. Sadly, three days after Gordon Stuckless was convicted of assaulting him, Kruze jumped to his death from the Bloor Street Viaduct in Toronto. Closure is not really important, either, as long as the discourse dissociates those who have not been abused so that they can be assured of two things: first, that they could never be abusers; second, that they could never be abused. Through the stereotypical paradigms, those outside of the circle are not implicated. Moreover, the dissociation portrays the stories as completely natural, or taken for granted, and not as cultural constructs. The sense of breaking the cycle does not work because, first, the victims are in the general population, and second, the actual narrative is never as simple as good vs. evil, beginning and end, or “be abused, grow up, abuse others, repeat.” The discourse, not the abuse, becomes self-sustaining and self-fulfilling.

Ultimately, these are stories of mourning and loss that have little to do with the victims, actual or fictional. For example, the various episodes of Law and Order, as dictated by the show’s rigid format, are about the police detectives and the prosecutors. As mentioned earlier, the Sheldon Kennedy and Martin Kruze stories—to the victims’ dismay—morphed into national concern for the state of hockey in
Canada. Similarly, the corruption of the Catholic Church in the US and in Canada, instead of the victims of that corruption, is the focus of news reports and docu-dramas. Ellie Nesler hijacks her son’s tale. Although the movie of the Nesler case portrays Ellie as a narcissistic amphetamine user who appropriates attention, the plot still revolves around her. In one of the opening scenes of the Academy Award-winning film *Mystic River*, Dave Boyle—and not his two friends, Sean and Jimmy—is the victim of a random abduction by two men who keep the boy for days and sexually abuse him. The interruption in Dave’s life is symbolized by the etching of the three boys’ names in concrete: Dave’s name is only half-complete while the other boys’ complete names are above his. Although the boys separated as adults, they are brought together by the murder of Jimmy’s teenaged daughter. As a police detective, Sean investigates the homicide and all early suspicions turn toward Dave. The latter is suspect largely because he was the victim when the three friends were boys. He has been stigmatized within his community since his abduction. The others act as though there is something about Dave that led to his abduction. Eventually, Jimmy murders Dave at the river’s edge so that a figurative baptism instead can become a funereal rite. At movie’s end, we learn that Dave had indeed murdered someone: a man he suspected of abusing children. Even as a version of an avenging angel, Dave does become a murderer.

Worse, while that murder is solved, Jimmy does not pay for murdering Dave. Instead, viewers are left with the possibility that Dave finally has peace. No matter which version is told, the story is about those outside of the circular narrative and about how to proceed in a world that contains both molesters and the molested.

Kincaid, a specialist in Victorian Literature, equates the scapegoating stories with the Gothic tales of his chosen era. While child victims figure in many Victorian novels—the tales of the Brontës, Dickens, Gaskell, and the Pre-Raphaelites come to mind—I see another, more profound analogue. Given the pronounced tendency to equate victimization with death, sexual abuse narratives have significant affinities for another favourite form of the Victorian era: the elegy. The subject of an elegy is a mournful event, usually the death of an acquaintance, regret for the past, or pessimistic fears for the future. The language of these poems of lament and sombre mediation is formal and highly stylized. Elegies begin with an initial statement of loss and then progress from this loss to some state of consolation. The first part of the recovery process is apotheosis, in which the lost country, object, or person is transformed into an idealized type or divine object. Apotheosis is followed by anagnorisis, which literally means an un-ignorancing. Anagnorisis is the recognition or discovery of some new order in which the loss can be rationalized. Apotheosis is generally sudden; anagnorisis is a gradual learning.
method with many false starts and dead ends. Peter Sacks lists several conventions of the elegiac form, including “the use of pastoral contextualization, the myth of the vegetation deity (particularly the sexual elements of such myths, and their relation to the sexuality of the mourner), the use of repetition and refrains, the reiterated questions, the outbreak of vengeful anger or cursing, the procession of mourners, the movement from grief to consolation, and the traditional images of resurrection” (2). With the possible exception of pastoral elements, the stories of childhood sexual abuse tend to follow this format extensively. The initial loss is always the child’s (sudden, premature, and violent) loss of innocence, which causes a state of chaos for those around the child. The cycle of life that resurrection recalls takes the form of the cycle of abuse.

As in the elegy, the focus of child-abuse stories quickly shifts from the victim to those left behind. Their struggle to find a satisfactory resolution takes precedence. As well, the so-called “cycle-of-abuse” and “abuse-excuse” formulas represent recursion of the events leading up to the loss, or of the loss itself. They allow those not actually involved to become involved in—to be a part of and apart from—the actual situation. Peter Sacks explains that elegists “accept their loss and can retain their identities by what we may call a healthy work of mourning, a work that, as Freud points out, requires a withdrawal of affection from the lost object and a subsequent reattachment of affection to some substitute for that object” (6). What is common to elegiac forms is the sense of the inadequacy of language to describe the situation. Near the beginning of In Memoriam A. H. H., Tennyson’s speaker expresses such a sentiment:

I sometimes hold it half a sin
To put in words the grief I feel;  
For words, like Nature, half reveal  
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,  
A use in measured language lies;  
The sad mechanic exercise,  
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I’ll wrap me o’er,  
Like coarsest clothes against the cold;  
But that large grief which these enfold  
Is given in outline and no more. (5.1–12)

The subject of the verses is the unnameable, the unfathomable. Poetry is really of no use in finding a resolution, at least to Tennyson’s speaker. Nevertheless, he must find a way. In a poem that runs nearly three thousand lines beyond those cited above, the poet went so far as to create a new type of verse to emphasize the theme that the prior models no longer worked for him. Clearly, the process is not easy.

It is understandable for adults, and especially parents, to feel a sense of grief and even loss if a child is molested. Even so, this loss should not take precedence over the experience of the child. There is an amount of truth to the belief that there is a loss of innocence, naïveté, and childhood. The turn to elegiac modes of expression, then, is also understandable.

Among the most important reasons for mourning—death and molestation—is the need to make sense of the justice that allows death and molestation to occur. This is most evident in cultures dominated by Christian beliefs. The Christian god is supposed to be a loving god. Jesus is supposed to have a greater love for children. How can they let this happen? Indeed, Mystic River plays on this relationship through its First Communion scene, in which the innocence of childhood contrasts with the murder of Jimmy’s daughter and simultaneously recalls the innocence lost when Dave was taken while he played with Sean and Jimmy. Christian imagery plays a part in The Ellie Nesler Story as well. The abuse allegedly takes place during a retreat at a Christian summer camp. Clearly, any depiction of any case involving Catholic priests automatically juxtaposes Christianity and the abuse.

At least, in the case of death, the mourners have the reassurance that the lost loved one has achieved immortality. In the background is the knowledge that someday they will join the dead, the hope that they, too, will be mourned and will achieve immortality. None of these consolations is available to those who mourn a molested child, much less to the child. But the importance of the ritual of mourning cannot be overestimated. All periods of experience, Northrop Frye posits, “dawn, sunset, the phases of the moon, seed-time and harvest, the equinoxes and the solstices, birth, initiation, marriage and death, get rituals
attached to them. The pull of ritual is toward pure cyclical narrative, which, if there could be such a thing, would be automatic and unconscious repetition” (105). Rituals offer a sense of control over inexplicable phenomena and a sense of doing something, of making a difference. More important, though, are the repetition and unconscious nature of the act. This eliminates the need for introspection while providing a safe, familiar context. There is also built-in ambivalence: “Ritual is not only a recurrent act, but an act expressive of a dialectic of desire and repugnance: desire for fertility or victory, repugnance to drought or to enemies. We have rituals of social integration and we have rituals of expulsion, execution and punishment” (Frye 106). For children who have been abused, the effect is twofold. First, their pain is appropriated as the adults seek empathy. Rituals are meant to be shared. Second, the adults can deny any culpability. There is nothing that could have been done to prevent the abuse and so the discourse dissociates those around the child.

**That’s Just the Way It Is: Conclusions**

Although this paper treats a rather dispiriting topic, I would like to end on a hopeful note. One of the final scenes of The Sheldon Kennedy Story features a requisite “feel-good” moment that parallels both Kennedy’s initial revelation to police and the press conference after the trial in which he agonizes over his disclosure. The scene recounts the moment when Eric Lindros, the captain of the Philadelphia Flyers and the captain of the concurrent Team Canada, skated over to the Boston Bruins’s entrance to shake Kennedy’s hand, in front of the other players, and to praise him for his courage. In this case, Lindros is the physical embodiment of the ultimate hockey player. Though not so powerful, Lindros’s action is analogous to a gesture that Pee Wee Reese of the Brooklyn Dodgers made to then-rookie Jackie Robinson, in 1947. Reese, a Kentucky native, initially had been reluctant to accept his African American teammate and middle-infield partner. Robinson had been viewed simply and completely in terms of the colour of his skin. Aside from his Hall-of-Fame athleticism, Robinson’s stoicism was his most powerful weapon. Throughout his rookie season, Robinson had been the target of unbelievable torment, but, at the request of Dodgers’s management, he never uttered a word of protest. During the Dodgers’s first road trip, Reese, knowing that Robinson would not defend himself if harassed by opposing players and fans, walked over to Robinson and put his arm around the rookie’s shoulders in a gesture of inclusion and solidarity (“Rachel Robinson”). For a southern man, this was tantamount to treason. Sheldon Kennedy writes in his autobiography that he feared torment upon his return, especially since he was a small man by NHL standards. When he was playing in Swift Current, he was “taunted and catcalled. The other coaches would shout, ‘Hey, it’s Graham’s
girlfriend!' The opposing players called me ‘faggot’ and ‘Graham’s little wife’ every chance they got” (89). These kinds of comments occurred before anyone knew of James’s conduct, so Kennedy had reason to be even more fearful of the reaction of players in the NHL since he “was given many signals from every layer of authority that they did not want to know what Graham was doing with me” because of the masculine code of hockey (153). Kennedy lists several teammates who were traded to other teams when they voiced suspicions. One team official was fired so that the team and the league could avoid an investigation (151). Eventually, Kennedy reaches the conclusion that some are more concerned about the status of hockey in Canada. In listing the code of hockey, Kennedy actually lists basic criteria for hegemonic masculinity. That is the ultimate institution being protected in the usual discursive regime.

For a “macho” man to acknowledge a sexually abused man’s worth is tantamount to gender treason. Yet, the responsibility lies with the dominant culture to make similar gestures. In this regard, Reese and Lindros fulfill the role of the “prestige male” outlined by noted sociologist William Goode: “To perform and be ranked at the highest levels . . . demands both talent and dedication which only a few can muster. Such ‘heroes’ are given more prestige or admiration because both the level and type of performance are rare and evaluated within the relevant group. Most admirers recognize that such performances are possible only for a few” (67). In other words, special status, or prestige, is attached to the males who best represent or conform to the “ideal” type. Frequently, males acquire prestige through mastery and conquest. Thus, hegemonic masculinity immediately serves as a basis for social control. Further, it also serves as a basis for self-subjection through the incumbent fear of (being seen) departing from
the hegemonic standards. Admittedly, this is a rather tenuous prospect, since it relies on the maintenance of hegemonic masculinity for its success. Indeed, one might conclude that I am advocating a reinscription of the narrative of the benevolent white patriarch, but this is far from the case. Instead, what I see happening is congruent with Foucault’s conclusion that the prison is not intended to eliminate offences but rather “to distinguish them, to distribute them, to use them” (272). In other words, discourse on abuse neither prevents future occurrences nor provides understanding and tolerance for the victims. Instead, it merely categorizes it, disseminates it, and uses it. In this last regard, it is my sincere fear that the example listed above highlights the differences between Lindros and Kennedy as hegemonic males. Here, it is well worth recalling that, while discourses seemingly define what is accepted, there is a more important inverse function that implicitly defines that which is excluded. As Brock University’s John Lye explains, it is crucial “to recognize the negative activity of the cutting out and rarification of discourse [for] contemporary history has stopped looking for cause and effect.” Rather than being an opportunity to demonstrate a positive outcome for a victim of childhood sexual abuse, it instead becomes a reminder that Kennedy’s masculinity is flawed when compared to the dominant version.

It should also be considered, however, that a significant consequence of self-regulating behaviour is complicity or passing, even if that means passing for a hegemonic, or even prestige, male. Herein lies some significant potential. As Judith Halberstam explains, a dominant culture based on the reproduction of hegemonic masculinity demands that “we all pass or we don’t” (127). One is either a hegemonic male or one is not. Yet, males who have been sexually abused do not occupy either position precisely. They simultaneously pass and yet do not and the potential of this (non)category for subverting the dominant gender order remains largely unexplored. A key corollary is an allegiance with queer and feminist thought. For example, Connell has difficulty accounting for subordinated males. His categories, “protest masculinity” (110), “alternative masculinity” (219), “renunciatory masculinity” (131), and “reformed masculinity,” are as inadequate as hegemonic masculinity. Connell himself admits that, unlike feminisms, this taxonomy—which refers to working-class ethnic minorities, gays, male apologists, and males who convert to the feminist cause, respectively—does not offer either a successful mass politics or a politics of the body, both of which are necessary to encompass both males who have been sexually abused and masculinity in general. This is not to find fault with Connell but to show the lack of critical attention paid to “marginalized” or even “subordinated” masculinities. The pronounced
academic tendency has been to critique hegemonic masculinities thoroughly and with good reason. As Michel Dorais concludes, “the whole socialization of males is to be questioned with a view to preventing domination or aggression behaviours” (162). But critiquing masculinity without providing alternatives provides a catalogue of offences but little else. Indeed, the males for whom “marginalized” aptly applies are at the very bottom of the gender hierarchy because they are considered traitors, failures, or both.

Moreover, the leap from hegemonic masculinity to marginalized masculinity is more than rhetorical. For those of us—that is, in our role as educators—intent on dismantling rigidly defined gender roles that are based on a binary and oppositional model, the key lies in recognizing the locations and instances of departures from hegemonic masculinity because males who have been sexually abused, like many males belonging to marginalized groups, do not always function as such. In other words, they pass, and in their passing lies not only the potential to eradicate the cycle-of-abuse narrative, but also the more significant potential to manipulate the structures of hegemonic masculinity from within its realm. This might seem like a nod toward the resignation that hegemonic masculinity cannot be reformed; in a sense, it is, because, as my research into hegemonic masculinity here and elsewhere has taught me, patriarchs seem to understand and recognize only patriarchal discourses. At the same time, such a move is not without precedence in feminist thought. Borrowing Michel de Certeau’s concept of “Brownian motion,” Constance Penley describes such actions as “the tactical maneuvers of the relatively powerless when attempting to resist, negotiate, or transform the system and products of the relatively powerful. . . . Tactics are not designed primarily to help users take over the system but to seize every opportunity to turn to their own ends forces that systematically exclude or marginalize them” (139). Mike Lew very rightly states, “I believe that men recovering from boyhood sexual abuse have no greater ally than the feminist movement” (36). At the same time, I would also stress that feminisms have a potential ally, for these are the males who have the most in common with feminist and pro-feminist discourse. In this regard, males who have been sexually abused have both a thorough knowledge of the workings of hegemonic masculinity, since they have felt its effects and been measured against its standard, and an investment in its demise.
For two reasons, I am limiting the current discussion to boys who were victimized by other boys and/or men. First, space does not permit a discussion of female abusers. Second, when it comes to cases of female abusers, some would grind Paul Bunyan’s axe on issues rather than help the victim. Indeed, instead of victims, young boys frequently are portrayed as seducers and predators when they have sex with adult women. Somehow, the contradiction (and the resultant logical leap) created by the infantilization of the women, which turns them into helplessly passive victims at the hands of supposedly irresistibly seductive boys, goes unacknowledged. In this regard, I would point readers to commentaries and portrayals of the Letourneau, Lafave, Schmidt, and Gehring cases as archetypes.

I mean “popular” in the sense employed by Stuart Hall to describe cultural texts consumed by a mass audience (“Notes” 231). According to Hall’s model, popular texts operate “in a continuing tension (relationship, influence and antagonism) to the dominant culture” (235). This is not to say that there are neither spaces nor opportunities for males to give voice to their (actual) experiences. Indeed, this is the sine qua non of so-called “survivor narratives” and group therapy. But mass audiences do not consume group therapy sessions. Moreover, when and if these are consumed by mass audiences, they are always already mediated by the normalizing machinery of popular culture production, as the second part of Hall’s definition explains. That is to say, talk shows, docu-dramas, and even investigative journalism, by habit and by practice, impose a formulaic structure upon the subject matter to familiarize the (new) story to audiences (that, paradoxically, have, and yet have not, seen the story before). Further, labels such as “victim,” “survivor,” and “group therapy” have undeniable cultural purchase. The connotations of these labels supersede the situation that they hope to describe. Thus, as will be shown, popular culture depictions of tales of abuse merely reinscribe the cycle of abuse as a priori. In this context, it would trivialize the actual stories of actual males to place them alongside popular culture productions because this would tend to mobilize what Dick Hebdige calls the “ideological form” of incorporation, in which the other is trivialized and reduced to a form of exotica in order to delegitimize its power (211). Finally, the popular terms, including the recently added “thriver,” invoke and impose the reductive and repetitive quest narrative that forms the basis of popular-culture productions.

By myth, I wish to invoke Roland Barthes’s consideration of myth as part of wider ideological and cultural practices, which “make dominant cultural and historical values, attitudes and beliefs seem natural” (Chandler 145).

Aaron Kylie, former Managing Editor of the Ryerson Review of Journalism, attributes some of the shift in coverage away from Sheldon Kennedy and toward his coach and then toward hockey in general to the fact that the coverage came from hockey reporters who “rarely [do] any real hockey journalism.” Speaking to Kylie, University of Ottawa Communications professor Mark Douglas Lowes explains that to “work a story like Graham James is to do investigative journalism, which few sports reporters are capable of doing, with notable exceptions.” Interestingly, even Lowes refers to the story by its popular name. Additionally, Caroline Fusco and Sandra Kirby attribute the shift in focus to a generalized homophobia both within the sport and within the media covering it. Fusco and Kirby conclude that those who were involved with the game were
more concerned that there might be homosexuals in hockey than with helping the victims.

5 Hopper's research focus is child abuse and, specifically, the sexual abuse of males. His website, <http://www.jimhopper.com>, is an excellent and unique resource and provides links to statistics, research, (additional) resources, and professional services. In the latter categories, Hopper provides bibliographies, lists of hotlines, and a forum in which males can give voice to their own experiences. It should be noted that hotlines and web forums are often viewed with suspicion because there is always the possibility of people acting out bizarre fantasies in the guise of elucidating an abuse experience.

6 Scarce is a medical sociologist and is currently Internet Coordinator at the Stop AIDS Project. His book grew out of his experiences at The Ohio State University. Scarce's collection stands out in two ways. First, it documents critical approaches to understanding the trauma of male-on-male rape and those approaches written by men who have experienced it. Rather than essentializing, these men try to situate their experiences—in this case, predominantly acquaintance rape—within a larger cultural context. For example, most blood donor forms have a question that asks, basically, “if a man, have you had sex with a man, even once?” An affirmative answer, even in the case of sexual assault, automatically excludes the donor. There is no similar exclusion of females. Second, Scarce provides an extensive bibliography and list of resources, including information on which American states still refuse to recognize the rape of males within sex crime legislation—yet another form of dissociation discourse.

7 The release of The Boys of St. Vincent was delayed in Canada because it was feared that it might affect the outcome of legal actions against the Christian Brothers, the Catholic order that ran the Mt. Cashel Orphanage and several others across the country. The Christian Brothers now face bankruptcy and may be disbanded because of the damages courts have ordered them to pay to the dozens of victims. As in the current cases in the United States, an attempted cover-up and the church's policies regarding celibacy and homosexuality draw most of the scrutiny. The New York Times's website lists more than 660 articles between 2002 and 2007. The lawsuits total in the hundreds of millions in the US alone.

**Works Cited**


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