

## “Do you think I haven’t paid for what I did?”: Rape in the Mills & Boon Romantic Novels of Penny Jordan

Valerie Grace Derbyshire

Published online: November 2023

<http://www.jprstudies.org>

**Abstract:** Rape is almost an obsession in the works of Penny Jordan (1946-2011) written for Mills & Boon and published during the 1980s. Arguably, rape is not at all romantic and has no place whatsoever within a romantic novel. However, Jordan uses rape as a trope within her novels repeatedly, particularly during the mid-1980s. This raises the following questions: why does Jordan use rape as a trope particularly during the mid-1980s? Furthermore, why was the first half of the 1980s so important for Jordan’s primarily female readers that she felt her novels focused on this subject would immediately engage their interests at this point in time? The answer lies in analysing debates surrounding rape taking place in the media at the time. This article explores the social context in which Jordan’s romance novels were produced, in order to better understand both the novels and the society from which they emerged and to which they respond. This paper will show how Jordan’s works for Mills & Boon use the ongoing contemporaneous debate surrounding rape myths and the treatment of rape by the Police and the judiciary system within her novels, to explore challenging areas such as the nature of consent. It will go on to argue how her novels expose rape and gender-based violence as damaging to both women and men in society.

**About the Author:** Dr Val Derbyshire’s current research project focuses on Mills & Boon romantic novels and a number of long-standing authors for the company including Penny Jordan (1946-2011), Sara Craven (1938-2017) and Roberta Leigh (1926-2014). Her work charts social history as recorded through popular romantic literature and focuses upon feminist readings of these texts. Val completed her doctoral research covering the works of British Romanticism author Charlotte Turner Smith (1749-1806) as an AHRC-competition student at the University of Sheffield in 2018. Val is a winner of the 2018 McLean Eltham Essay Prize for her essay entitled ““The Horror of the Abyss”: The Feminine Sublime in the Portraiture of George Romney and The Young Philosopher (1798) by Charlotte Smith. She also won the Stephen Copley Research Award in 2018. Her latest publications include *The Picturesque, The Sublime, The Beautiful: Visual Artistry in the Works of Charlotte Smith (1749-1806)*, published by Vernon Press in 2019 and the forthcoming scholarly edition of *The*

*Foresters* by Elizabeth Gunning (1769-1823), to be published by the University of Wales Press.

**Keywords:** Mills & Boon, popular culture, rape, romance

This article will explore the works of Penny Jordan (1946-2011) with a specific focus on her use of rape as a trope within her romantic novels written for Mills & Boon. Jordan had an incredibly prolific writing career for Mills & Boon. She wrote 187 novels for the company, mainly in the Modern Romance line. Her career writing for Mills & Boon commenced in 1981 with the publication of *Falcon's Prey*. From 1981 onwards, Jordan penned multiple romances every year. In 1982 alone, Mills & Boon published nine of her novels, and she continued to write for the company until her death in 2011. Within her daily writing routine, Jordan spent at least an hour a day reading popular contemporary women's magazines and used the issues raised within these for inspiration. Jordan's editors would later say posthumously of her, that she was "loved for her distinctive voice" and that "her success was in part because she continually [...] evolved her writing to keep up with readers' changing tastes" ("About the Author" *A Secret Disgrace* 1). She was a firm readers' favourite, ultimately selling over a hundred million books around the world and leaving, as her editor wrote of her at the time of her death in December 2011, "an outstanding legacy" in romantic fiction ("About the Author" *A Secret Disgrace* 1). *Publishers Weekly* wrote of Jordan, "[w]omen everywhere will find pieces of themselves in Jordan's characters" and it is Jordan's ability to create relatable characters and place them within situations that women everywhere understood and encountered in their own lives, which is perhaps the reason for Jordan's enduring appeal ("About the Author" *A Secret Disgrace* 1). By 1989, when the Berlin Wall fell, Jordan was Mills & Boon's most popular author and to celebrate East Germany's new freedom, staff from the West German office handed out 750,000 free copies of Jordan's *A Reason for Being* to the newly-liberated readers of East Germany.

However, Jordan's works represent so much more than just escapism and happy ever afters. As Loraine Fletcher argues of the work of eighteenth-century romantic novelist Charlotte Smith (1749-1806), Jordan's "art is highly ambitious, analysing England's economic and political ills in the sugar-coating of romantic fiction" (Fletcher 44). Within this paper, I will discuss how Jordan's work engages intimately with contemporaneous events and changing perceptions surrounding rape in society, keeping pace, as argued by representatives of Mills & Boon themselves, "with changing social attitudes and values [that] reflect the realities of life for women today" (O'Neil et al. 2). This essay by no means represents the first such analysis of how romance can offer insights into and reflect changing aspects of society. For example, Joseph McAleer in 2011 analysed "Love, Romance and the National Health Service" and changing attitudes towards the NHS in Britain. Similarly, Agnes Arnold Forster has also analysed how Mills & Boon romances helped "make the NHS more appealing to an ambivalent public" (Forster 1). Writing as both a literary analyst and a former editor for the company, Jay Dixon argues that every author who writes for Mills & Boon should "speak to your concerns" and represent texts that reflect women's issues of the time (Dixon 11). This essay explores the social context in which Jordan's novels taking rape as their key concern were produced. During the first half of the 1980s from which many of Jordan's novels emerged, there was considerable debate surrounding how society treated

rape victims. This essay will show how Jordan's novels respond to these debates. Throughout her discussion of rape, Jordan disseminates a persuasive argument critical of discrimination against women in society and shows how men and society as a whole are damaged by engaging in sexual violence.

Rape is almost an obsession in the works of Penny Jordan written for Mills & Boon. This is particularly the case within her novels published during the 1980s, where the use of the trope becomes more frequent, reaching a pinnacle in 1985. For example, 1982's *Northern Sunset* has the hero tell the heroine that she was asking for it when he subjects her to his unwanted advances. 1983's *Savage Atonement* depicts a heroine who has been traumatised as a young girl when her stepfather attempts to rape her. In 1983's *Rescue Operation*, heroine Chelsea is just starting out at drama school when Darren, the school's Director, attempts to rape her during rehearsals, effectively ending her acting career. Published in 1985, *Time Fuse* features barrister Piers, and some of the action takes place in the courtroom dealing with a rape case of a vulnerable teenage girl. 1985's *The Only One* features a hero who threatens the heroine with rape, and *The Hard Man* explores complex issues surrounding rape and consent. These issues are explored further in 1985 in *What You Made Me*, where hero Scott clearly has a problem understanding what constitutes rape. *The Friendship Barrier*, again from 1985, details victim and witness responses to rape, and the trauma for both, when the heroine Stephanie is nearly gang-raped by a group of youths. Jordan's 1985 *Injured Innocent* shows the heroine facing a humiliating police physical examination if she seeks recourse in the law after her experiences of sexual abuse. In 1986, *Loving* sees subsidiary character, Heather, threatened by rape. *Rival Attractions* from 1989 features the estate agent heroine being threatened with a Suzy Lamplugh-style attack whilst showing a client around a property.[1]

There are many more novels throughout Jordan's career which deal with the issue of rape, but never so many as this glut centred around the topic dating from the first half to the mid-point of the 1980s, which raises the question, why then? Why was this period in the 1980s so focused on this theme, at this precise point in time? The answer lies in what was taking place in society at the time. It was around 1977 when second-wave feminism was in full flow, the initial Reclaim the Night March was being staged in Leeds, and for the first time the myths that persist around rape and male violence against women were being interrogated in a public forum. The Dublin Rape Crisis Centre listed these myths in a feminist publication of the time as follows: "[a]ll women want to be raped"; "[n]o woman can be raped against her will"; "[s]he was asking for it"; "[i]f you are going to be raped, you might as well relax and enjoy it"; "women make false accusations of rape"; "[o]nly bad women get raped"; "[s]he led him on" (Dublin Rape Crisis Centre 206-7). The public forum was BBC2 on Saturday 22 January 1977, when a television play entitled *Act of Rape* authored by Fay Weldon, followed by a panel discussion led by one of Britain's first female television presenters, Jacky Gillott, was aired. The programme was watched by 2.5 million viewers. As Joanna Bourke observes:

Weldon's play was based on actual court cases of the 1970s. In the play, a young woman [...] talks and dances with a man in a club. There are two different versions of what happened next: in one, the woman rebuffs the man's sexual advances and only submits when threatened with a butcher's knife; in the other, she is a coy but willing participant. The woman reports the rape to the police, who act insensitively. (Bourke 711)

What follows for the young woman seems a typical response to many rape cases, after extensive consideration of survivor accounts and criminological literature describing rape cases.[2] The victim is roughly examined by a police surgeon in an improvised area in an interrogation cell. When the woman's case reaches trial, the judge himself cautions the jurors to exercise care because women cry rape, he says. As a result, the jurors determine that this is what the victim has done, "eventually decid[ing] not to convict, on the grounds that they don't want to destroy the man's life" (Bourke 712). This programme was followed by a documentary in 1983 which showed a rape victim being interrogated by police as if she was the criminal. The resulting backlash to the airing of these two films sparked public outrage (J. Jordan 680).

This public outcry caused legislation to be altered, according to Jennifer Temkin, who reports that "growing criticism [...] of police behaviour towards women who reported rape [...] led to a radical reappraisal of police methods of dealing with rape cases" (Temkin, "Plus ça Change" 507):

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, it became clear that, save in those cases involving brutal and violent rape by a stranger, a not infrequent police response to a report of rape was to treat the complainant with the utmost suspicion and hostility. Women could expect to be interrogated as if they themselves were the perpetrators rather than the victims of crime. (Temkin, "Plus ça Change" 508)

Indeed, as the literature dating from the late 1970s to the present day shows, in no other crime is the onus placed so firmly upon the victim to prove that the crime actually took place. Rape is a crime where the body of evidence consists literally of a woman's living body. As Germaine Greer observes, the "woman who chooses to report her rape to the police becomes evidence" herself, transformed into a crime scene (Greer 43). Within trials of the cases, courtroom discourse becomes obsessed with he said/she said. At the time of Jordan's writing, and even today, the victim of rape expects to be disbelieved by the very people tasked with protecting her in society. As literature from the time shows, during the 1970s-90s, many victims interviewed by police felt that the officers displayed "a disbelieving or insensitive attitude [that] tended to reveal these officers were rather sceptical about rape complaints in general. Indeed, half the officers interviewed considered that one quarter of all rapes reported to the police were false" (Temkin 516). However, research over the decades has found that false complaints of rape are rare (Blair). As the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre observed during the early 1980s, there was very little incentive for any woman to raise a false accusation of rape, particularly bearing in mind what she would have faced as a consequence of her accusation:

If a woman reports rape she will have to go through a lengthy police interrogation, an internal medical examination, an appearance at court, and a possible nine-month wait before attending the trial where she will have to face the distress and humiliation of intimate cross-examination on the details of what happened during the rape, and about her previous sexual history. All that makes it unlikely that a woman would make a false allegation of rape just to

revenge a scorning lover or to explain away an unwanted pregnancy. (Dublin Rape Crisis Centre 208)

Even today, as Bowdler argues, episodes of false reporting are currently estimated to be between only two to eight per cent and indeed, “the vast majority of rapes go unreported”, largely because of the perceptions of women surrounding how they will be treated by the police and judicial system if they do make a complaint have remained unchanged since the late 1970s (Bowdler 261).

The outcry caused by the television programmes in 1977 and 1982 followed some attempts to amend the process and ameliorate the situation for rape victims. Criticism in the House of Lords in the case of *DPP v. Morgan* resulted in the setting up by the government of the Advisory Committee on the Law of Rape (Temkin, “Prosecuting and Defending Rape” 220). This led to the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act of 1976 being passed which, as Temkin argues, “among other things, attempted to place some curbs on the use of evidence about the complainant’s sexual past” (Temkin, “Prosecuting and Defending Rape” 220). However, Temkin found “that sexual history evidence remained a strong feature of rape trials” (Temkin, “Prosecuting and Defending Rape” 221). Trials further revealed “blatant mistreatment of victims by defence counsel and an acquiescent attitude on the part of prosecutors and judges” (Temkin, “Prosecuting and Defending Rape” 221). This is the atmosphere of reignited concern over how rape victims were being treated by police, barristers, judges and popular misconceptions about rape that concerns Jordan within her work. It is the injustice involved in all of this for women that Jordan’s romances focus upon. Bearing in mind the blatant injustices of the treatment surrounding rape and victims of sexual violence being considered in a public forum at this time, it is little wonder that Jordan felt that the rehearsal of this territory in her books, and the creation of a forum of social commentary upon these issues, would be of interest to her primarily female readership.

*Time Fuse* (1985) particularly focuses upon some of the injustices faced by victims of rape in the courtroom. In this novel, heroine Selina is the illegitimate daughter of a well-to-do Queen’s Counsel (QC), Sir Gerald, and his mistress of the time. Selina’s mother (the mistress) is abandoned by Sir Gerald once he learns of her pregnancy. After her mother’s death when Selina is eleven, Selina is left to grow up in the care system. Selina gains a job as Sir Gerald’s PA, to get to know her father better, even though he is completely unaware of the fact that she is his biological daughter. Sir Gerald’s nephew Piers, who is also a barrister, is suspicious of Selina from the outset. Selina, in turn, is nervous in Piers’ presence and dislikes him on sight—and, as Jordan impresses upon the reader, initially there is a lot to dislike. Selina is only one week into her job when Piers commences sexually harassing her in the workplace, forcing a kiss on her that causes her body to tense “in mingled shock and rejection” (Jordan, *Time Fuse* 9). Resolving to avoid him as much as possible, she still finds it hard to both complete her job and fend off Piers’ unwanted advances.

In the novel, the one case that Selina sees Piers defending in his role as a barrister, is a rape case, “and a particularly unpleasant one at that” (Jordan, *Time Fuse* 64):

The girl, an eighteen-year old, was pregnant and was claiming that she had been raped by a friend of the family. The man in question, dressed formally in a business suit, well-groomed but pale, was Piers’ client. He spoke in a low

voice and displayed a surprising firmness when it came to resisting the verbal thrusts of the prosecution.

The girl, on the other hand, looked frail and heartrendingly defenceless. Her swollen stomach was almost grotesque against the acute thinness of the rest of her body. She broke down twice during the questioning of her own counsel. (Jordan, *Time Fuse* 64)

As Selina witnesses the frailty of the alleged rape victim, Piers is quick to take advantage of the victim's apparent weakness as the barrister for the defence. As the girl first appears, she is literally "defenceless" as Piers sets about ruthlessly manipulating all of the stereotypes that surround rape to defend his client (Jordan, *Time Fuse* 64). The resulting scene is "a nightmare that seemed to go on without end, punctuated by the sobs of the girl in the witness box" (Jordan, *Time Fuse* 64). What Jordan shows here, as Temkin has argued of rape cases, is that for rape victims, there is "the feeling of being on trial themselves" (Temkin, "Prosecuting and Defending Rape" 220). As Jordan exposes within this text, "women were still being systematically humiliated in court and [that] victims were continuing to find the experience extremely distressing" just as Jordan's alleged rape victim does (Temkin "Prosecuting and Defending Rape" 220-1).

For Jordan's alleged victim, Piers "question[s] her ruthlessly", employing several tactics that are understood to be well-rehearsed amongst barristers defending rape cases (Jordan, *Time Fuse* 65). Firstly, in spite of the fact that prior sexual activity has nothing whatsoever to do with whether a woman has been raped or not, and it also being well understood that "[c]ross-examination based on maligning the complainant's behaviour, clothing or sexual past does not promote the accurate resolution of any relevant issue in the case", many barristers still use evidence of past sexual activity or promiscuity in order to argue that rape has not taken place (Temkin, "Prosecuting and Defending Rape" 245). Within Temkin's study of this area, she found that many barristers "invariably" introduced this evidence "because, [...] if the complainant could be portrayed as a 'slut', this was highly likely to secure an acquittal" (Temkin, "Prosecuting and Defending Rape" 234). Indeed, Piers follows this tactic, "naming several youths who had claimed to be her lovers. Her innocence, her character, were ruthlessly torn to shreds" (Jordan, *Time Fuse* 65). As expected, this strategy pays dividends for Piers, and "Selina was not at all surprised when the jury found for the defence" (Jordan, *Time Fuse* 65). Whilst Piers receives the rapturous congratulations of all around him, Selina is "hardly able to contain her feelings" about the lack of justice she has just witnessed (Jordan, *Time Fuse* 65).

Selina is unable to congratulate Piers, not just due to the injustice she has just borne witness to, but because Piers has behaved unethically in the courtroom. The legislation which rules that past sexual behaviour is irrelevant in rape cases "was intended to prevent the introduction of evidence that would lead the jury to believe that the victim was promiscuous and readily consented or that her evidence was less likely to be sound" (Temkin, "Prosecuting and Defending Rape" 235). However, in introducing the girl's sexual past, the jury (as could be anticipated) judge her claims to be unsound and her attacker escapes justice, whilst she is judged to be a liar. Selina immediately exposes the flaws in Piers' argument: that it is not impossible that she was raped "because she had had other lovers" (Jordan, *Time Fuse*. 65). This then opens the way for Piers to reveal his true feelings about

the complainant: “she was having sex with anyone, and [...] she made up a cock-and-bull story about my client, when she realised she was not going to be able to hide her pregnancy for much longer” (Jordan, *Time Fuse* 65). This statement from Piers, too, demonstrates the popular rape myth that it is used to “explain away an unwanted pregnancy” (Dublin Rape Crisis Centre 208). It also highlights yet another injustice surrounding the treatment of rape in court in that, as Temkin’s research finds, “[c]omplainants were viewed by some barristers in an uncomplimentary and negative light” (Temkin, “Prosecuting and Defending Rape” 204). As Temkin continues (and as Jordan illustrates in her rape case):

Although they [barristers] claimed not to practice harassment in the sense of overt bullying and intimidation of the claimant, it was clear that every tactic would be deployed if necessary and that their approach to defending was robust to the point of ruthlessness. As [one barrister] put it: “When I’m defending it’s no holds barred in that anything that properly I can use to help secure my client’s acquittal I will.” (Temkin, “Prosecuting and Defending Rape” 230)

Within the text, the girl has been bullied and harassed by Piers, to the point where Selina “longed to stand up and demand that the torment was stopped” (Jordan, *Time Fuse* 64). This behaviour is unethical and overtly sexist on Piers’ part. It represents “dirty tricks in cases where the crime ‘has had real victims’” (Temkin, “Prosecuting and Defending Rape” 246). Such tricks, it is argued, “deserve moral censure” (Temkin, “Prosecuting and Defending Rape” 246). “They are also sexist because they rely on a world view which excludes and disqualifies women’s sexuality and women’s interests and suggests that women who behave or dress in certain ways should be beyond the scope of the law’s protection” (Temkin, “Prosecuting and Defending Rape” 246). Although the forum we are situated within is the fantasy world of a romantic novel, Jordan places her romance against a background of stark social reality, exposing the injustices faced by many victims of sexual violence in attempts at recourse to justice. This adds an additional dimension to her romance. Here, we are firmly in the territory of analysing social ills through that “sugar-coating of romantic fiction” (Fletcher 44).

Within the novel, Piers claims that he knows his client to be innocent, although Selina questions how he can know this for certain. Even in the case that Piers was completely convinced of his client’s innocence, his behaviour and treatment of the rape case in the courtroom is shown by Jordan to be unprincipled (whilst simultaneously highlighting the bleak facts that these are the scenarios being enacted in rape cases up and down the country, at the time of Jordan’s writing). Jordan, with her novel featuring this difficult scene attempts to overturn these established and sexist views surrounding rape and their treatment in the court room. As Bowdler argues, in cases of rape, it is easier for the average person/the juror “to take the side of the perpetrator” (Bowdler 85). In this case, the “well-groomed” man “in a business suit” (Jordan, *Time Fuse* 64). On the witness stand there is the never married, young, single mother – a figure who is generally vilified by society (Haire and McGeorge 26). In contrast, the outwardly respectable man is much easier to empathise with for the jurors:

All the perpetrator asks is that the bystander do nothing. He appeals to the universal desire to see, hear and speak no evil. The victim, on the contrary,

asks the bystander to share the burden of pain. The victim demands action, engagement and remembering. (Bowdler 85)

Selina, of course, correctly engages with the victim, taking the more difficult stance of sharing the burden of her pain, whilst the jurors, the judge and Piers follow the less challenging path of siding with the alleged perpetrator and doing nothing. Jordan demonstrates just how flawed Piers is in his reasoning further just a few pages later in the novel. Here, Piers attempts to force himself upon Selina, clearly demonstrating that the issue of consent is not something that is overly important to him:

She didn't want to; she wanted to resist the force of his contemptuous anger and withstand it, but his strength was the greater, his threat to pick her up and carry her forcing her to accede to his demand.

When he eventually stopped outside the room she knew to be his she panicked, fighting against him with all her strength, gasping with pain as he shouldered open the door and pulled her inside with little regard for the bruises he was inflicting on her tender skin. (Jordan, *Time Fuse* 121)

This opens up a forum for discussion and exploration around the difficult area of consent. Has Selina consented, just because she does not immediately leave Piers' room? The answer, of course, is no. As the Sexual Offences Act states: "consent is given only when a person has the freedom and the capacity to make that choice" (Sexual Offences Act, n.d., section 74). Piers does not give Selina that choice, threatening to overpower her with his superior strength. Piers, within this novel, continues to make egregious errors in his handling of both Selina and the romance, until the inevitable denouement of a Mills & Boon romance; Piers admits the error of his ways and "shocked by the pallor of his skin", and Selina forgives him on the condition that their relationship can only continue on terms of mutual love and equality (Jordan, *Time Fuse* 184). Piers admits that he loves her "so much that not another damn thing in the world matters" and he is "furious" with himself about the way he has behaved (Jordan, *Time Fuse* 185). Although he "can't make it up to" Selina for "all [she has] suffered", his grovelling and "lines of tiredness drawn in deep grooves" convince Selina of Piers' wretchedness without her. Piers shows the lessons he has learned about the nature of consent by his frank acknowledgement that "there was no need for [Selina] to carry any burden of guilt for what happened" and that she, like the rape victim was "innocent... a victim if you like" (Jordan, *Time Fuse* 183-86). Within the context of the romance, it is essential for Piers to admit his errors and show that he has suffered as a result of these in order to successfully win the heroine's heart. As Laura Vivanco argues, not only can these romances "be interpreted as depictions of society in microcosm" but "the heroine's final triumph represent[s] a victory against patriarchal oppression of women (Vivanco 1068). For Jordan's reader, the satisfaction of the traditional Happy Ever After ending is reinforced by a newly imagined world in which justice can be achieved for female victims because Piers has been forced to admit the error of his ways. As Vivanco argues, "the hero has been forced to acknowledge his own sexism and has resolved to change his behaviour" (Vivanco 1068). Here, Jordan presents a possibility of a fairer, more equitable world for women.



The complex and challenging issues surrounding consent arise in many of Jordan's novels dating from the 1980s. For example, in 1985's *What You Made Me*, the hero Scott makes a fundamental misjudgement in this area when he tells the heroine as he attempts to force himself upon her, "it won't be rape. We were lovers once, Philippa? Remember?" (Jordan, *What You Made Me* 65). This leads the heroine to astutely point out, "You aren't the man you were eleven years ago" and confirm to him "this is rape, Scott" (Jordan, *What You Made Me* 65). Here, Scott confuses Philippa's consent to their past relationship, with Philippa giving her consent to reigniting their relationship, which as Philippa explicitly states, she has not done. Conversely, in Jordan's novel from 1983, *Rescue Operation*, the hero Slade shows that he understands the realities of how rape is treated by the judicial system all too well. He tells the heroine as he attempts to force her into bed with him, "don't bother starting to cry rape. There's not a court in the land that would uphold such an accusation after the way you've been putting yourself about tonight—in front of witnesses too!" (Jordan, *Rescue Operation* 46). Slade shows his clear comprehension that all he has to do is discredit the heroine Chelsea, by citing her past sexual behaviour and clothing she chose to wear at a party, to make the jury rule in his favour. Here, Slade accesses rape myths in order to excuse himself in his own eyes and the eyes of others. As Bowdler argues: "In order to escape accountability for his crimes, [...] the perpetrator attacks the credibility of his victim. If he cannot silence her absolutely, he tries to make sure no one listens" (Bowdler 86).

In another novel dating from 1985, Jordan explores the complex issue of consent further. *The Hard Man* is one of Jordan's more disturbing romances and tells the story of heroine Vicky Moreton, who as a young woman leaves home for the first time to attend university. Like many students, she attends a drunken party, where what she initially assumes is non-alcoholic fruit punch, she finds to be spiked with copious amounts of alcohol, leading her to lose her inhibitions. Flirting with a much older man at the party, the man then rapes her. Incapacitated with alcohol, Vicky is in no fit state to offer consent and by the end of the evening Vicky is pregnant with twins. This results in Vicky leaving university. She has absolutely no recollection of the identity of the man who perpetrated the crime. After this horrific event, Vicky retires to a rural backwater. For a period of nearly ten years, Vicky struggles to make a living for herself, and her twin son and daughter. Like so many rape victims, as Bowdler argues, Vicky's story reveals the "impact [occurring] over years [and that can be measured] in terms of job loss, displacement, post-traumatic stress, interrupted education pursuits, and more" (Bowdler 9). When Jay Brentford arrives needing long-term lodgings over the summer, initially she is delighted to have secured an additional form of reliable income. However, it does not take long before both Jay and Vicky start to notice that Jay bears an uncanny resemblance to the twins, and it soon becomes devastatingly clear that it was Jay who had raped her at the party all those years ago. This opens the way for all of those rape myths to be aired within the forum of Jordan's novel. This includes myths pertaining to how the crime is treated, including issues of victim blaming and the repercussions that women have to live with post-rape. Here, Jordan also highlights many of the flaws in the judicial system including the fact that until only very recently, the father of children that result from a rape had more rights than the mother in terms of visiting and access. This continues to the present day in the United States where "[t]wenty-seven of fifty states require a criminal conviction to terminate the parental rights of a rapist" and "if a rape results in pregnancy and a woman chooses to carry that pregnancy to term, she may be subjected to fight her rapist in court over the parental rights of a child" (O'Dea 585).

Therefore, when Vicky is convinced to marry Jay in the text, this is not Jordan presenting her readers with a romantic traditional conclusion but rather her providing a further window into the many social injustices suffered by rape victims. For Vicky, it is a moment of realisation that she has lost all of her rights to her children and any recourse to the law over the past rape.

The novel opens with Vicky's persistent shame at the events of her past and with Jordan presenting the reasons she has not reported her rape. As Ruth Hall writing in 1981 records in "Women Against Rape", negative perceptions surrounding women who go out and drink too much led juries to reach the conclusion "why wasn't she safe at home?" and that those who are raped whilst out socialising "were asking for it" (Hall 217). Many victims record this response of shame to having experienced rape. In October 1976, for example, after being raped, one woman stated: "if it happened again I wouldn't even tell the police. I felt as if I'd been on trial... They made me sound as if I had led the boys on" (Hall 217). Vicky is desperately ashamed of what has happened and blames herself for being clueless, getting drunk, rendering herself vulnerable, flirting and being perceived to make herself available to the man. She also does not believe that the police will find her story credible. She had, after all, "been too drunk to remember what her ravisher looked like" she acknowledges "with shaming agony" (Jordan, *The Hard Man* 150). Vicky's viewpoint coalesces with the reality of how rape was treated by police officers and the judicial system at the time as shown in my earlier discussion of the literature. Within Temkin's investigation of rape cases, she found that barristers were typically dismissive and contemptuous of women who were "prepared to be picked up by a stranger" (Temkin, "Prosecuting and Defending Rape" 225). One barrister stated "what does she expect? If a woman does that can she really be surprised that a jury will say that she may have consented to sex?" (Temkin, "Prosecuting and Defending Rape" 225). A different barrister explained "I think that juries are very prejudiced and if a woman puts herself in a compromising position, I don't think juries are ready to convict" (Temkin, "Prosecuting and Defending Rape" 226). Bourke's study concurs: "Alcohol undermined belief in a woman's accusation." (Bourke 722). Being as Vicky is both under the influence of alcohol and has placed herself in a compromising situation by agreeing to be alone with Jay, it is very unlikely that Vicky would have successfully been able to claim any judicial restitution. It is little wonder, then, that Jordan has her heroine rather remove herself from the scene, just "relieved to discover that none of her university friends had realised what had happened" and wanting to forget the entire ordeal (Jordan, *The Hard Man* 23).

Of course, Vicky is unable to put the entire ordeal behind her because of her pregnancy, but also because her rapist arrives on the scene some ten years later. The arrival of Jay opens up the opportunity for Jordan to have a rapist and victim debate some of the persistent myths surrounding rape in the text, including victim blaming and the tricky issue of consent. As we have seen, in the eyes of the judicial process, Vicky, by being incapacitated by alcohol and going willingly with Jay to a quiet place where he was able to rape her, has effectively consented to have sex with him in the popular view (even if the reader can clearly see that she has not). The complex issue of consent is opened from the very beginning of the novel when the as-yet-unrecognised rapist, Jay, and Vicky discuss how they should address each other. Vicky wishes to keep things very much on a formal footing, to ensure there is no mistaking the relationship and insists on calling him "Mr Brentford". This provokes the following exchange:

“Jay, please...”

It was more of a command than a request and stubbornly Vicky fought against it, not wanting to allow him to breach the barrier of formality she had erected between them, but knowing that to refuse to use his forename now would seem both childish and suspect, and knowing also that in accepting his permission to use his first name she had given him tacit authority to use her own. (Jordan, *The Hard Man* 30)

This exchange demonstrates the problematic dynamics of consent that Vicky is already all-too conversant with. By being drunk and leaving a party with him, she has given “tacit authority” in the popular view, for Jay to use her body for sex (Jordan, *The Hard Man* 30). It is little wonder that Vicky is ultra-cautious around the giving out of “tacit authority” to strange men at this stage in her life (Jordan, *The Hard Man* 30). This exchange further provides a clue as to what is to come in the novel, once Vicky (and the reader) have recognised Jay as her rapist. Once the fact of the rape is out in the open, the rape myths proceed to filter into the novel, including Jay blaming Vicky for her own rape and subsequent pregnancy. Initially, he accuses her of “‘coming on pretty strong to me, you can’t deny that...” (Jordan, *The Hard Man* 164-5). Jay then follows this by insultingly regurgitating all of the myths that women face whilst seeking legal restitution for their attack:

“It would have taken a man of stone to resist the lure you were handing out that night,” he told her brutally. “Dear God, the way you were dancing with me was the nearest thing to making love without actually doing so that I’ve ever experienced.”

“Making love?” Vicky’s voice was bitter. “What you did to me wasn’t making love. It was brutal... hateful.” A sour taste filled her mouth as she was back in the past, remembering her own terrified cries of denial when she finally realised what was happening. (Jordan, *The Hard Man* 152-3)

There is clearly a disconnect between events as Jay remembers them and as they exist in Vicky’s memory. For Jay, the act was one of “making love” (Jordan, *The Hard Man* 153). For Vicky, it was an act of violence, a terrifying ordeal which she remembers as a crime not just perpetrated against herself, but against all women: “He had not been making love to her, he had been punishing her—or rather her whole sex” (Jordan, *The Hard Man* 160). This, it is revealed, is because Jay was angry that evening because his fiancée had left him for another man. Vicky’s entire experience had been one of violence: “he had not been gentle with her. Her body had born the bruises to prove that. She had ached with pain for days afterwards” (Jordan, *The Hard Man* 23). For Vicky, her rape was, as the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre argues in 1981 “an extreme act of violence against women” (Dublin Rape Crisis Centre 206). As Vicky acknowledges, “[i]t had not been her he was possessing with that fierce anger that had made the experience so painful and degrading for her... it had been womankind in general” (Jordan, *The Hard Man* 62-3). Jay’s violent abuse of Vicky is an act of male power asserted over women. Susan Brownmiller argues “that some men rape provides a sufficient threat to keep all women in a constant state of intimidation” and for Jay, his act of rape is all about

power and keeping women in that “constant state of intimidation” (cited in Greer 52). For Vicky, after the rape, she is left with “the shaming knowledge that to him she had never been a real person, simply a body he had been using to expiate some deep resentment against her whole sex” (Jordan, *The Hard Man* 63). The romance in this novel—the Happy Ever After expected by romance readers everywhere—is seriously under threat here. Even at a very late stage in the novel, Vicky cannot stand Jay to be near her. He literally makes her flesh creep: “Jay moved so quietly for such a tall man that if she hadn’t known of his presence from the atavistic prickle at the back of her neck, she would never have known he was there” (Jordan, *The Hard Man* 174). It is hard to see how Jay can redeem himself sufficiently to bring the romance back on course.

However, Jordan does manage to achieve the required Mills & Boon romantic conclusion. She does this by showing in her novel that the act of rape is extremely damaging to both men and women in society and that the only way Jay can be redeemed is if he acknowledges his faults and Vicky agrees to forgive him: “Vicky listen to me. I can’t wipe out the past for you... It makes me sick to even think about it”, Jay acknowledges before also claiming that the trauma of the incident has affected him in an extremely negative manner as well: “Do you think I haven’t paid for what I did?” (Jordan, *The Hard Man* 152-3). This is one of the few Mills & Boon romantic novels where the story is conveyed from the hero’s point of view in lengthy sections. This is very unusual in a Jordan romance, but the device does permit the reader to see first-hand that Jay has become a deeply unhappy man, traumatised by the events of his past, including his rape of Vicky. Within the opening pages, the reader can clearly perceive that this is a man who does not like himself very much at all, aware of the “brusqueness” in his attitude, “but unable to do anything about it” (Jordan, *The Hard Man* 12). He is a man with a desperate need to make amends for what he has done: “If you knew how much time I spent trying to find you,” he pleads with Vicky, after they both learn of their prior encounter (Jordan, *The Hard Man* 152). This novel, and Jay’s suffering within it because of his former errors, shows, as Vivanco argues that “patriarchy not only oppresses women, but also damages men” (Vivanco 1077). It is only when Vicky forgives Jay—after he has admitted his errors—that Jay can be offered redemption and forgiveness for his past actions: “The sickening sense of shame that had possessed her since she realised who he was had gone [...] She felt cleansed, and empty of her previous guilt and self-loathing” (Jordan, *The Hard Man* 185-6).

*The Hard Man* represents an extremely challenging novel for a romance, with upsetting subject matter and a conclusion that is difficult for the reader to stomach. However, what Jordan does achieve with this novel is to show with clarity how damaging rape and its perception and treatment in society is for both women and men. Jordan revisits this subject in another novel from 1985, *The Friendship Barrier*. Within this novel, the heroine Stephanie is the hero Jake’s secretary and close friend. Early in the novel, it is revealed that their very close friendship has been forged out of mutual trauma as whilst on her way home from work, Stephanie had been attacked by a gang of youths who attempted to gang-rape her. She is saved from her ordeal by Jake, who takes care of her in the period immediately following the assault, helping Stephanie recover from the trauma.

The scene of Stephanie’s attack is laid out in harrowing detail for the reader. It is revealed that, “her attackers had been a group of youths who caught the same bus home as her at night. Most evenings, they made comments as they waited for the bus, called out remarks, and generally tormented Stephanie with their presence, which was always faintly

sexually threatening” (Jordan, *The Friendship Barrier* 17). Thus far, all Jordan has presented is what, as she and many other women will know, is the everyday sexism and harassment that women encounter in their daily lives. As the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre points out, “[r]ape is only one end of the spectrum of sexual aggression. There is the endless invasion of privacy in the form of bottom pinching, ‘touching up’ on public transport, the whistling and comments which we are told are compliments” (Dublin Rape Crisis Centre 204). It is when Stephanie works late at the office and finds the youths waiting for her as she leaves that matters take a sinister turn and the youths attempt to rape her. “[R]etreating like a terrified animal” from any contact with men, including Jake who has saved her from the youths, Stephanie is utterly unable to come to terms with her attack (Jordan, *The Friendship Barrier* 17).

Jordan makes two key arguments within this text. Firstly, she explicitly raises the point that in spite of her ordeal, Stephanie has no recourse to the law. As Jake comforts her in the time immediately after the attack and “washe[s] her lacerated skin”, he encourages Stephanie to involve the police in the matter (Jordan, *The Friendship Barrier* 16). Stephanie’s immediate response is: “No... No police,” she had made the plea in abject terror. There had been so much adverse publicity about the police’s handling of rape cases that she felt she couldn’t endure the humiliation she had read of other women’s suffering” (Jordan, *The Friendship Barrier* 19). There are also a number of additional impediments to Stephanie’s complaint, including the fact that Jake has effectively destroyed evidence as he bathes her wounds. As Temkin observes “[d]elay in reporting the offence, which destroyed forensic evidence [...] was regarded as a serious setback” (Temkin, “Prosecuting and Defending Rape” 224). Further, Stephanie’s own actions in leaving the building via the back door (“she had emerged into the alleyway at the back of the office” (Jordan, *The Friendship Barrier* 17)) puts Stephanie’s complaint under further stress, as according to the rape myths, “[a]ny woman who is careless enough to walk through ‘dark alleys’ at night is partly to be blamed if she is raped” (Woodhams et al. 417). Even though these myths are unfair and, as we have seen, do not lead to a fair trial of rape cases, it is little wonder that Stephanie refuses to report her ordeal.

Secondly, in this novel, Jordan also lays out clearly just how damaging rape is to both men and women in society. Although Jordan has done this to some extent in her treatment of Jay’s rape of Vicky discussed earlier in her novel *The Hard Man*, where she has him admit that he has suffered and been made to pay “for what [he] did” (Jordan, *The Hard Man* 152-3), within *The Friendship Barrier*, Jordan stresses the traumatising effect upon Jake as a witness to the violent attack upon Stephanie. Stephanie is unable to report her rape because of the trauma. As Temkin argues, “rape trauma syndrome [...] explain[s] the complainant’s failure to report immediately” (Temkin, “Prosecuting and Defending Rape” 224). However, whilst rape trauma syndrome might be an established fact for victims, as Bourke argues:

Less often remarked upon is the way the bodies and emotions of rape complainants and police surgeons interact. The physiological body, from which police physicians extract “signs” of abuse, is not a natural, pre-social entity. It is historically constituted and reconstituted in relationship to other people and language. This is not to deny its material reality (specifically, fluids, tissue, fat, muscle and bone). It is to observe, however, that the wounded body

that police surgeons are required to observe and assess is nevertheless accessed through language and responded to emotionally. (Bourke 730)

By being exposed to horrific injuries and trauma inflicted by one or many persons upon another, Bourke argues, police surgeons are at risk of trauma themselves and being emotionally affected by the horrors of what they witness. Similarly, Jake is traumatised by his first-hand interactions with Stephanie's wounds and his witness of the violent attack, rendered into a "eunuch" in his own words and unable to engage in his own sex life: "I tried dating other women but all I could see when I touched them was your face... your eyes, looking at me the way they looked the night you were attacked" (Jordan, *The Friendship Barrier* 141). Their shared trauma has "become an obsession with me, Stephanie; an obstacle I can't get round, or under, and until I do, I'm useless as a man" (Jordan, *The Friendship Barrier* 141). This confession leads Stephanie to reflect that "she had never known... never guessed that what had happened to her might have had an equally traumatic effect on him" (Jordan, *The Friendship Barrier* 142). Here, Jordan lays out explicitly just how damaging rape and gender-based violence is not just for women, but for men who either engage in it (as in *The Hard Man*) as well as for the innocent male witness as well. This is a crime which is ultimately damaging to all of society.

Jordan's focus on and use of rape as a theme in her novels during the 1980's is interesting as it speaks directly to contemporaneous events around how rape was being habitually treated by the police and the judiciary systems as well as the various discourses interrogating rape myths that accompanied these events. Through her Mills & Boon works, Jordan continually used surprising and innovative ways to address her primarily female readership. She was able to represent with clarity how the domestic sphere of her heroines' homes and workplace, though ostensibly personal, enacted and iterated the political issues and ills of her historical moment. Furthermore, Jordan's works, in doing so, adhered to a feminist agenda and challenged the status quo.

Within our own contemporary society and this age of #MeToo, Jordan's works still hold significance and are still of interest, I would argue, to contemporary readers. Her romance works still have the power to challenge those accepted norms. As Mary Beard argues, "Power means many things in this world of Me Too. It certainly means empowering women to tell their stories fearlessly" (Beard 109). Bowdler argues:

We should all heed the lessons of those writing about rape culture in the 1970s, then again in the 1990s, and once again in the present day. Naming the systemic misogyny that has allowed rape to be treated like it doesn't matter, isn't real, and doesn't deserve equal treatment, under the law is not enough. We must speak up and call out the neglect. (Bowdler 264)

Jordan's novels not only tell women's stories fearlessly, but they also show that justice should not be based on who is the most powerful. Rather it should be, as Bowdler argues, based "on fair laws that grant equal protection" (Bowdler 264). It is only when the male heroes accept this within the novels, that they are able to progress to their Happy Ever After ending. The popular perception may be that a romantic novel represents a space for escapism, but it also represents a site of political interrogation and the opportunity to create a forum to discuss social ills. Jordan's novels which feature rape within them from this period

show the power of romance to offer insights into and reflect upon social injustice for women. They show how romance can be used to engage in contemporary debates, passing commentary on the harm that sexual violence perpetuates throughout society for both women and men. Reading Jordan's novels from this period permits the reader to better understand both the novels and the society from which they emerged and to which they respond.

---

[1]Susannah Jane ("Suzy") Lamplugh was a British estate agent who was reported missing in July 1986 after attending an appointment with a client who called himself "Mr Kipper" for a house viewing in Shorrolds Road, Fulham. The only suspect is convicted murderer and rapist John Cannan, who is currently serving time for the murder of Shirley Banks in 1987. He had been released from prison a few days before Lamplugh's disappearance and her DNA has been found in his car. Cannan is also known to have arrived uninvited to a viewing at another house for sale in Shorrolds Road in the days before Lamplugh's disappearance, believing that the young female occupant of the house was alone. He is purported to have begun acting strangely until the woman's husband returned home, when he quickly left. However, the Crime Prosecution Service decided that there was insufficient evidence to charge Cannan and the case of Lamplugh's disappearance remains unsolved.

[2]Instances of rape from the 1980s to the early 2000s have been analysed. The main focus has been researchers' and practitioners' discussions of rape cases dating from the time contemporaneous to Jordan's writing. For example, Ruth Hall in an introduction to "Women Against Rape"; Jalna Hanmer's discussion of "Male Violence and the Social Control of Women"; Jan Jordan's discussion of "Women, Rape and the Police Reporting Process"; the first report of the London Rape Crisis Centre from 1977 presenting their activities and experiences of their service users; Nina Philadoff-Puren's exploration of "Contextualising Consent"; descriptions of experiences from women suffering rape and domestic abuse from Stockport Women's Aid from 1981; Jessica Woodham et al's discussion of the behaviour displayed by females during rapes committed by lone and multiple perpetrators; and Jennifer Temkins' extensive exploration of the experiences of women in reporting rape during the 1990s and how barristers traditionally prosecuted and defended rape during the 2000s. Throughout this research as a whole, I have also considered more contemporary source material such as Sohaila Abdulali's experiences recounted in *What We Talk About When We Talk About Rape*; Michelle Bowdler's experiences in *Is Rape a Crime?*; and Manon Celeen's research into "Characteristics and Post-Decision Attitudes of Non-Reporting Sexual Violence Victims?" What this research showed was how little has changed, sadly, for many rape victims from the 1980s to the 2020s. In some instances, where experiences of rape victims have remained unchanged over time, I have included quotations from these sources. For example, I quote Michelle Bowdler's 2018 text to show the difficulties individuals may have in identifying and empathising with the victim of a violent crime.

## Works Cited

- Abdulali, Sohaila. *What We Talk About When We Talk About Rape*. Myriad Editions, 2018.
- Beard, Mary. *Women & Power: A Manifesto*. Profile, 2018.
- Blair, Ian. *Investigating Rape—A New Approach for Police*. Croom Helm, 1985.
- Bourke, Joanna. "Police Surgeons and Victims of Rape: Cultures of Harm and Care." *Social History of Medicine*, vol. 31, no. 4, 2018, pp. 711-731.
- Bowdler, Michelle. *Is Rape a Crime? A Memoir, an Investigation, and a Manifesto*. Flatiron Books, 2020.
- Celeen, Manon et al. "Characteristics and Post-Decision Attitudes of Non-Reporting Sexual Violence Victims." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, vol. 34, no. 9, 2019, pp. 1961-1977.
- Courtney, Caroline. *Duchess in Disguise*. Arlington Books, 1979.
- Dixon, Jay. *The Romance Fiction of Mills & Boon 1909-1990s*. UCL Books Limited, 1999.
- Dublin Rape Crisis Centre. "Dublin Rape Crisis Centre." *No Turning Back: Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement 1975-80*, edited by Feminist Anthology Collective, The Women's Press, 1981, pp. 204-209.
- Fletcher, Loraine. "Introduction." *Celestina by Charlotte Smith*. Broadview Press, 2004, pp. 9-44.
- Forster, Agnes Arnold. "The Doctor is in." *History Today*, no. 71, 11 November 2021. <https://www.historytoday.com/archive/history-matters/doctor>.
- Greer, Germaine. *On Rape*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018.
- Haire, Amanda & McGeorge, Christy. "Negative Perceptions of Never-Married Custodial Single Mothers and Fathers: Applications of a Gender Analysis for Family Therapists." *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2012, pp. 24-51.
- Hall, Ruth. "Introduction, Women Against Rape." *No Turning Back: Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement 1975-80*, edited by Feminist Anthology Collective, The Women's Press, 1981, pp. 216-217.
- Hanmer, Jalna. "Male Violence and the Social Control of Women." *No Turning Back: Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement 1975-80*, edited by Feminist Anthology Collective, The Women's Press, 1981, pp. 190-195.
- Jordan, Jan. "Worlds Apart? Women, Rape and the Police Reporting Process." *The British Journal of Criminology*, vol. 41, no. 4, 2001, pp. 679-706.
- Jordan, Penny. *Falcon's Prey*. Mills & Boon Limited, 1981.
- Jordan, Penny. *Northern Sunset*. Mills & Boon Limited, 1982.
- Jordan, Penny. *Rescue Operation*. Mills & Boon Limited, 1983.
- Jordan, Penny. *Savage Atonement*. Mills & Boon Limited, 1983.
- Jordan, Penny. *The Friendship Barrier*. Mills & Boon Limited, 1985.
- Jordan, Penny. *The Hard Man*. Mills & Boon Limited, 1985.
- Jordan, Penny. *Injured Innocent*. Mills & Boon Limited, 1985.
- Jordan, Penny. *The Only One*. Mills & Boon Limited, 1985.
- Jordan, Penny. *Time Fuse*. Mills & Boon Limited, 1985.
- Jordan, Penny. *What You Made Me*. Mills & Boon Limited, 1985.
- Jordan, Penny. *Loving*. Mills & Boon Limited, 1986.
- Jordan, Penny. *A Reason for Being*. Mills & Boon Limited, 1989.



- Jordan, Penny. *Rival Attractions*. Mills & Boon Limited, 1989.
- Jordan, Penny. *Passionate Relationship*. Mills & Boon Limited, 2011.
- Jordan, Penny. *A Secret Disgrace*. Mills & Boon Limited, 2012.
- London Rape Crisis Centre. "London Rape Crisis Centre, From the First Report, March 1977." *No Turning Back: Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement 1975-80*, edited by Feminist Anthology Collective, The Women's Press, 1981, pp. 210-215.
- Manne, Kate. *Entitled: How Male Privilege Hurts Women*. Penguin Random House, 2020.
- McAleer, Joseph. "Love, Romance, and the National Health Service." *Classes, Cultures, & Politics: Essays on British History for Ross McKibbin*, edited by Clare V. J. Griffiths, James J. Nott and William Jr. Whyte, Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 173-191.
- Moody, Nickianne. "Mills and Boons *Temptations*: Sex and the Single Couple in the 1990s." *Rescripting Romance in Contemporary Literature and Film*, edited by Lynn Pearce and Gina Wisker, Pluto Press, 1998, pp. 141-156.
- O'Dea, Christina. "You Are Not the Father: The Need to Terminate the Parental Rights of Rapists to Protect Victims and Children." *Family Court Review*, vol. 59, no. 3, 2022, pp. 585-598.
- O'Neil, Annie et al. *The Mills & Boon Rules of Romance*. Mills & Boon, 2018.
- Philadoff-Puren, Nina. "Contextualising Consent: The Problem of Rape and Romance." *Australian Feminist Studies*, vol. 20, no. 46, 2005, pp. 31-42.
- Sexual Offences Act. *Section 74: Consent*. (n.d.), <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/section/74>.
- Stockport Women's Aid. "Stockport Women's Aid." *No Turning Back: Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement 1975-80*, Feminist Anthology Collective, The Women's Press, 1981, pp. 200-203.
- Temkin, Jennifer. "Plus Ça Change: Reporting Rape in the 1990s." *The British Journal of Criminology*, vol. 37, no. 4, 1997, pp. 507-528.
- Temkin, Jennifer. "Prosecuting and Defending Rape: Perspectives from the Bar." *Journal of Law and Society*, vol. 27, no. 2, 2000, pp. 219-248.
- Vivanco, Laura. "Feminism and Early Twenty-First Century Harlequin Mills and Boon Romances." *The Journal of Popular Culture*, vol. 45, no. 5, 2012, pp. 1060-1084.
- Woodhams, Jessica et al. "Behavior Displayed by Female Victims during Rapes Committed by Lone and Multiple Perpetrators." *Psychology, Public Policy and Law*, vol.18, no. 3, 2012, pp. 415-452.