Art, Activism and the Creation of Awareness of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG); Walking With Our Sisters, REDress Project

by

Gail Gallagher

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Faculty of Native Studies
University of Alberta

ABSTRACT

Artistic expression can be used as a tool to promote activism, to educate and to provide healing opportunities for the families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG). Indigenous activism has played a significant role in raising awareness of the MMIWG issue in Canada, through the uniting of various Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. The role that the Walking With Our Sisters (WWOS) initiative and the REDress project plays in bringing these communities together, to reduce the sexual exploitation and marginalization of Indigenous women, will be examined. These two commemorative projects bring an awareness of how Indigenous peoples interact with space in political and cultural ways, and which mainstream society erases. This thesis will demonstrate that through the process to bring people together, there has been education of the MMIWG issue, with more awareness developed with regards to other Indigenous issues within non-Indigenous communities. Furthermore, this paper will show that in communities which have united in their experience with grief and injustice, healing has begun for the Indigenous individuals, families and communities affected.

DEDICATION

ka-kiskisiyahk iskwêwak êkwa iskwêsisak kâ-kî-wanihâyahkik.

ᑲᑭᐢᑭᓯᔨᐦᑲ ᐃᓐᐧᐣ᙮ ᐊᐟ ᕽ ᐁᑲ᙮ ᐃᓐᐧᐣ᙮ ᔨᓴᐦ ᑲᑭᐊᐟ ᓂᐟᐦᐃᔨᐦᑲᑭ ᐢᑭ

We remember the women and girls we have lost.[1]

[1] Cree Literacy Network. Translator Solomon Ratt. *Thinking – in Cree – of our Murdered and Missing Women and Girls (y-dialect, audio)*. Accessed October 6th, 2019, https://creeliteracy.org/2016/10/02/thinking-in-cree-of-our-murdered-and-missing-women-and-girls/

"My people will sleep for one hundred years, but when they awake, it will be the artists who give them their spirit back" Louis Riel[2]

[2] Manitoba Metis Federation. Louis, Riel July 4, 1885. Accessed January 2, 2020, http://www.mmf.mb.ca/louis_riel_quotes.php

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is dedicated to my late parents, Arthur and Flora, to whom I owe my solid upbringing and for their immense love and support over the years. First, I want to thank my thesis supervisor Tanya Harnett for her unwavering support, as well as Tracy Bear and Isabel Altamirano-Jimenez, who worked with me in my early phases of research. Tanya, you helped me immensely in order to ensure that this writing was a success; and I cannot thank you enough for your thoughtful feedback, your excellent guidance and encouragement.

In addition, I dedicate the inspiration of my research to my second thesis supervisor James Daschuk. I was inspired to write a thesis after reading his book*, 'Clearing the Plains; Disease, Politics of Starvation and the Loss of Aboriginal Life'* and learning of the sexual exploitation that occurred with young Indigenous women in the 1880s[3]. James, I cannot thank you enough for all you did, to move the writing process along. Thank you both James and Tanya for believing in me. *Ay-hiy*

I would also like to thank Frog Lake First Nation education for my post-secondary funding and support.

Finally, I want to thank my family and close friends Darlene, and Danielle Aubrey. I cannot forget my large extended Cree family including my adopted siblings, David, Jason, Leroy, Tammy; grandnieces Asia Gail, Leah, Lexie, grandnephew Brucie, my nieces Danielle and Nicole, nephew Bruce; my brother Larry and my sisters Darlene and Judy who have always loved and supported me. Thanks Bruce for teaching me a love for yoga and to encourage me to reach my goals. A big ay-hiy to Kris my newly adopted brother in our Cree tradition, who has taught me the meaning of family. *Ekosi.*

[3] James Daschuk. *"Clearing the Plains Disease, Politics of Starvation and the Loss of Aboriginal Life"*. (2013). (University of Regina Press. University of Saskatchewan. Regina, Saskatchewan), 153.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: INDIGENOUS ART AND ACTIVISM; RAISING AWARENESS OF MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS (MMIWG)[4]

Introduction

In the Cree tradition when starting anything new, I was taught it must begin in a spiritual and meaningful way, and should be blessed by an Elder or medicine man. My belief is that there exists an unseen world beside our physical world. In completing this research, I sought the spiritual guidance of a medicine man from Saskatchewan, Francis Corrigal, to bless the writing of this thesis. In the beginning of my work, I ran into many roadblocks, mental and otherwise, until a friend mentioned that I was writing my thesis on the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG), which is a very sensitive and tough research topic.

My identity is Cree First Nations woman (iskwew), combined with Irish and German ancestry; I have always strongly identified with my First Nations family background. My late mother was Cree from Frog Lake First Nation, Alberta, and she was an Indian day school survivor. In my own nuclear family, we have never had the unfortunate experience of losing a loved one due to violence; but reflecting back, my mother could have easily become a victim due to her high-risk lifestyle.

In my involvement as an activist, I have attended many events commemorating missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. However, both the WWOS art installment and the REDress Project enabled me to experience first-hand the powerful impact that these types of events can have. In March 2012, I attended a REDress event; during the candlelight vigil, the audience walked through the University of Alberta campus and passed by the REDress dresses hanging from trees. It was an eerie feeling to see over a hundred red dresses blowing in the cold

[4] A note about language: The terms “Indigenous”, “Native”, “First Nations” and “Aboriginal” will be used interchangeably throughout this paper. Various authors that were referenced used different terminology. *See Glossary

March evening wind and to realize that some were worn by actual victims, their dresses shared by the families. I experienced the same powerful emotional impact again, when I attended a WWOS 2015 Ottawa event on the Carleton University campus. I was shocked by the sheer number of moccasin "vamps"[5] on display, each representing the unfinished life of a missing or murdered Indigenous women, girl or child.[6] As an Indigenous woman, who is knowledgeable of the MMIWG issue and knows what it represents, I was still moved by its' impact. The topic of MMIWG matters deeply to me, and when I hear the stories of the families, it touches me deeply. When I attend rallies, I feel angry when I think about how society and the government appears not to value my Indigenous sisters, just because of our race. At times, I feel I am in danger. When I go out in public, I worry that something bad could happen to me or my loved ones, just because we are Indigenous women. As an academic, I do not speak for the family members of MMIWG and do not presume to do so, as I cannot ever fully know the deep pain of their personal loss.

Indigenous Resistance

I was in my early twenties when I first read of the violence towards Indigenous women, and more specifically stories of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG). Racism, neglect and indifference surrounded the case of Helen Betty Osborne, a 19 year-old student from The Pas, Manitoba who was brutally beaten, raped and killed in 1971. Betty was abducted from the street while walking home by a group of four young white men; Dwayne Archie Johnston, James Robert Paul Houghton, Lee Scott Colgan and Norman Bernard Manger. Justice was very slow for Betty as her killers were not brought to trial nor charged until 16 years later, when only one individual Johnston was charged, despite the fact that most of the town

[5] Walking With Our Sisters. "Moccasin Vamps" Website. Accessed December 31, 2019. http://walkingwithoursisters.ca/artwork/moccasin-vamps/

[6] Kim Anderson, Maria Campbell and Christi Belcourt, Editors. *Keetsahanak Our Missing and Murdered Indigenous Sisters.* (Edmonton, Alberta: The University of Alberta Press. 2018), xxii.

knew the identity of the perpetrators.[7] The Manitoba Justice Inquiry said of the murder of Helen Betty Osborne:

> She fell victim to vicious stereotypes born of ignorance and aggression when she was picked up by four drunken men looking for sex. Her attackers seemed to be operating on the assumption that Aboriginal women were promiscuous and open to enticement through alcohol or violence. It is evident that the men who abducted Osborne believed that young Aboriginal women were objects with no human value beyond sexual gratification.[8]

This thesis is a contribution to research on art and activism, the Walking With Our Sisters (WWOS) art installment, the REDress Project, and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG).

For many years, the issue of MMIWG has concerned me deeply; my motivation and inspiration to do this research is to honor my Indigenous sisters. Author Margaret Kovach says, "It is these preparations that count should an Elder ask: Why are you doing this research and why are you doing it this way?"[9] Answering those questions could only be found in my personal story, growing up as an intergenerational survivor of a Cree mother who attended the Indian day schools in northern Alberta. As a First Nations Cree woman, these issues affecting Indigenous women matter to me personally. I have cousins, nieces and grand-nieces and care for their safety and well-being, as well as for other Indigenous women. Walking With Our Sisters (WWOS) initiative and the REDress Project play an important role in the uniting of Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities with a goal to reduce the sexual exploitation and marginalization of Indigenous women.

This research is to determine how and to what extent Indigenous activism raises awareness of the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), which is vital to our Indigenous communities. This thesis will focus on the Walking With Our Sisters

---

[7] Manitoba Justice Inquiry Report. Accessed June 7, 2019, http://www.ajic.mb.ca/volumell/chapter5.html, Chapter 1 -Introduction.
[8] Idem, 32.
[9] Margaret Kovach. *Indigenous Methodologies Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts.* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press Incorporated. 2009), 109.

(WWOS) art installation created by Métis artist and activist Christi Belcourt. Her art has galvanized both non-Indigenous and Indigenous communities and has also created new groups, such as new beading circles. Christi Belcourt's commemorative art installment "Walking With Our Sisters" (WWOS) is comprised of over 2,000 beaded moccasin vamps, and were created to represent the missing and murdered Indigenous women, children and Two-Spirit people. As an artistic example of social activism, the WWOS exhibit educates Canadian society about an issue they may know nothing about, of MMIWG and violence against Indigenous women.

The second illustration of Indigenous art activism chosen is the REDress project by Métis artist Jaime Black. Jaime Black created the REDress Project to draw attention to the ongoing gendered and racialized nature of violent crimes against Indigenous women in Canada, which the MMIWG National Inquiry (NI) described as "genocide".[10]

Indigenous women are targeted by colonialist policies and are vulnerable because of it. Pam Palmater raises the important point, "in order for an act to be considered genocide, it does not require that all components in the definition be present, nor does it require that the entire group be eliminated."[11]

Stories of violence against Indigenous women came to the forefront in 2002, when the stories of the violence on the Robert Pickton farm was published in the news. Between 1997 and 2001, more than forty-nine missing women, many of them Indigenous from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside were murdered on Robert Pickton's farm in Coquitlam.[12] Pickton targeted the most vulnerable women—many sex workers— who had little or no contact with family, so they were not reported missing immediately. Police gave low priority to the investigation into the disappearances of these women, which was compounded by police societal biases against

[10] National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. (June 2019). *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Volume 1a., 6.*

[11] Pam Palmater. (2015) Indigenous Nationhood. Fernwood Publishing. Halifax and Winnipeg, 118.

[12] Mark Cronlund Anderson, and Carmen L. Robertson. *Seeing Red A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers*. University of Manitoba Press. 2011, 200.

Indigenous people and prostitutes.[13]

In 2012, Idle No More was founded by four Saskatchewan women, in response to the impending parliamentary Omnibus Bills that would erode Indigenous sovereignty and environmental protections. The founders — Jessica Gordon, Sheelah McLean, Sylvia McAdam and Nina Wilson — were concerned with the impacts of the bill, which would erode Indigenous rights.[14] Bill C-45, better known as the second Omnibus budget bill, was an act that would change the legislation contained in 64 acts or regulations. Idle No More was concerned mainly with the following bills: Indian Act, Navigation Protection Act (former Navigable Waters Protection Act) and the Environmental Assessment Act.[15] There were concerns of a lack of consultation with the impacts that these bills would have on Indigenous people in Canada.

A National Day of Action was held on December 10th, 2012, on Parliament Hill, inspiring thousands to action.[16] Prior to the National Day of Action, a Regina Indigenous group collaborated with Michelle Rae-McRay a Regina activist to organize two rally buses to travel from Regina, Saskatchewan to Ottawa, Ontario to attend this monumental event. I assisted her with setting up billeting for the bus passengers in Ottawa. People came from many surrounding areas, with many arriving by bus; however, I believe our bus travelled the longest distance — 2,723 kilometers and 55 hours in total. It was a powerful, moving experience to attend this historic Idle No More event.

On the same day as the National Day of Action, Chief Theresa Spence of the Attawapiskat reserve announced her hunger strike to protest the living conditions of her community and the housing crisis.

---

[13] Brian Hutchinson. *Police foresaw Pickton inquiry, noted bungled investigation, almost two years before serial killer's arrest*. (January 20, 2012). Accessed February 10, 2020. https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/police-foresaw-pickton-inquiry-noted-bungled-investigation-almost-two-years-before-serial-killers-arrest

[14] CBC News. *9 questions about Idle No More.* (January 5, 2013). Accessed June 8, 2019, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/9-questions-about-idle-no-more-1.1301843

[15] Ibid.

[16] Idle No More The Story. Accessed June 7, 2019, http://www.idlenomore.ca/story

The issue of MMIWG continued to grow, yet Prime Minister Stephen Harper refused activists' demands for a National Inquiry. Tension mounted as the government resisted the ongoing calls of justice from the MMIWG families. A struggle continued to recognize the issue of MMIWG was not new.

In 2005, the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), through the Sisters in Spirit campaign and their database established a number of 582 missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada.[17]

The RCMP had compiled their own data by cross-referencing with data collected from police records, the NWAC database and Dr. Pearce's research.[18] Dr. Pearce wrote her thesis titled, An Awkward Silence: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and the Canadian Justice System, which created a database showing 824 MMIWG.[19] By 2014, an RCMP report (2014) found 1,181 police-recorded incidents of Indigenous female homicides between 1980 and 2012, and missing Indigenous females dating back to 1951. Of these, there were 164 missing and 1,017 homicide victims, making Indigenous women and girls over-represented among missing and murdered women in Canada.[20]

Demands for an establishment of the National Inquiry began years ago, while Prime Minister Stephen Harper was still in power. As calls for a National Inquiry grew, I was the Senior Manager of the Violence Prevention department at the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), my staff and I were still collecting signatures in 2014 for a petition, asking the Canadian government to establish the National Inquiry. Prime Minister Harper asserted that the

[17] Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC). *What Their Stories Tell Us: Research Findings from the Sisters in Spirit Initiative*. (2009). Ottawa: Native Women's Association of Canada. Print.
[18] Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). *Working Together to End Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls National Scan of RCMP Initiatives May 2017*. Canada. Introduction, 7.
[19] Maryanne Pearce. An Awkward Silence: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and the Canadian Justice System. University of Ottawa (2013). Accessed February 10, 2020. https://ruor.uottawa.ca/handle/10393/26299
[20] Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). *Working Together,* Introduction, 3.

violence was a criminal matter rather than a "sociological phenomenon"[21] which angered many MMIWG families and activists. His government's stance was that there was no need for further study or a National Inquiry. In a CBC National television interview, Peter Mansbridge asked Prime Minister Harper about the issue of MMIWG; Prime Minister Harper confirmed that it was not high on the government's radar and stated that it rather was a criminal justice issue.[22]

In March 2014, I attended the Truth and Reconciliation event held in Edmonton, Alberta. As a participant of the sharing circle, I recounted my late mother's story in the Indian day schools on the Frog Lake reserve. Indigenous story telling is a method used to begin the process to heal an individual's grief and pain due to personal loss. My experience in sharing my mother's story supports this idea. Due to my mother's suicide, she could not be present and I wanted to share how the Indian day schools contributed to her death and how it negatively impacted our nuclear family. In addition, this research aspect of storytelling was so important for MMIWG family members to have the opportunity to share their stories of loss, and to begin the process of healing. Author Judy Iseke asserts that,

> storytelling is a tried and true pedagogic practice that reflects epistemologies of Indigenous communities. The power of storytelling as pedagogy, witnessing, and supports for spirit suggest that a type of mindfulness develops through storytelling.[23]

Finally on August 3, 2016, the Liberal government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, established the National Inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, after eleven years of lobbying, petitions and demonstrations on the part of feminists, grassroots, Indigenous organizations and supporting international groups.

---

[21] CBC News. Harper rebuffs renewed calls for murdered, missing women inquiry: (August 21, 2014). Accessed June 7, 2019, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/harper-rebuffs-renewed-calls-for-murdered-missing-women-inquiry-1.2742845

[22] CBC News. CBC Interview Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Stephen Harper's comments on missing, murdered aboriginal women show 'lack of respect. (December 19, 2014). Accessed June 7, 2019, https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/stephen-harper-s-comments-on-missing-murdered-aboriginal-women-show-lack-of-respect-1.2879154

[23] Judy Iseke. Indigenous Storytelling as Research. *(*Winter 2013). *International Review of Qualitative Research. Vol. 6,* (no.4), 574.

On June 3, 2019, I attended the release of the Final Report of the National Inquiry MMIWG event in Gatineau, *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*. The final report contains 231 recommendations, of which 18 are "calls to justice".[24] The final event was attended by family members of the MMIWG, community members, academia, and government officials, including Prime Minister Trudeau. National Inquiry Commissioner Marion Buller highlighted findings of genocide in the final report *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls,* which caused a backlash from the public[25]. In a press release dated June 3, 2019, Chief of the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador, Ghislain Picard, asserts that we should focus on the families in grief, and not get caught up in the debate about the use of the term of genocide. Picard states,

> The Crown must honour its constitutional and fiduciary obligations, and take all necessary and urgent measures to ensure full and complete compensation for the harm inflicted on all First Nations. The debate around the term genocide must not take us away from this priority issue, which lies at the heart of the solution.[26]

Chief Picard's statement reminds us that it is too easy for the public to get side-tracked and in a debate over the use of the term, even as the cases of MMIWG victims continue to increase. In fact, the frequency of cases of MMIWG still continued at the same rate, during the National Inquiry.[27]

Polish-Jewish legal scholar Raphael Lemkin's original definition

---

[24] National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. (2019).
1 a https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final_Report_Vol_1a.pdf
1 b https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final_Report_Vol_1b.pdf

[25] Rob Breakenridge. Global News. *Use of the word 'genocide' undermines the MMIWG report*. (June 8, 2019). Accessed February 10, 2020, https://globalnews.ca/news/5366507/mmiwg-genocide-debate/

[26] Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador. (June 3, 2019). "*Report on the National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Genocide and Human Rights Violations of Indigenous Peoples in Canada*." Accessed June 11, 2019, https://apnql.com/en/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/PRESS-RELEASE-MMIW-Report-Final.pdf

[27] Jorge Barrera. CBC News. *MMIWG cases continued at same rate even after national inquiry began, data shows*. (June 5, 2019). Accessed June 11, 2019, https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/mmiwg-inquiry-new-cases-statistics-databases-1.5162482

> of genocide was first used during the Second World War: Generally speaking, genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when accomplished by mass killings of all members of a nation. It is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves.[28]

Instead of becoming upset by the use of the term 'genocide', members of the public should be outraged by the ongoing injustice and dangerous experiences that Indigenous women and girls live with every day in Canada. The term genocide is very controversial. Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares, Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel states that,

> Genocide does not happen by accident; it is deliberate, with warning signs and precursors. Often it is the culmination of years of exclusion, denial of human rights and other wrongs. Since genocide can take place in times of war and in times of peace, we must be ever-vigilant.[29]

Soares de Serpa's definition of genocide[30] describes the reality of Indigenous women and girls who have faced years of exclusion due to discriminatory practices implemented by the Canadian government with legislation such as the Indian Act. The issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls can be viewed as a component of a larger pattern of genocide. For example, Indigenous people and especially Indigenous women are usually portrayed as a victim, or a convenient object to ridicule or avenge by mainstream society.[31]

In the article Critical Indigenous Studies in the Classroom: Exploring 'the Local', using Primary Evidence, author Chris Andersen, demonstrates how an emphasis on local Indigenous/settler

---

[28] National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. (2019). 51.

[29] Miguel de Serpa Soares. (December 8, 2017). *OPENING REMARKS AT COMMEMORATION OF THE 69TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION AND PUNISHMENT OF THE CRIME OF GENOCIDE AND THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF COMMEMORATION AND DIGNITY OF THE VICTIMS OF THE CRIME OF GENOCIDE AND OF THE PREVENTION OF THIS CRIME*. UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF LEGAL AFFAIRS. Accessed June 7, 2019, http://legal.un.org/ola/media/info_from_lc/mss/speeches/SG_Opening_Remarks_fo_%2069th_Anniversary_of_%20Genocide_Convention_2017.pdf

[30] OFFICE OF THE UN SPECIAL ADVISER ON THE PREVENTION OF GENOCIDE (OSAPG). ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK. Legal definition of genocide. (no date). Accessed June 7, 2019, https://www.un.org/ar/preventgenocide/adviser/pdf/osapg_analysis_framework.pdf

[31] Tarrell A. Agahe Portman and Roger Herring, Debunking the Pocahontas Paradox: The Need for Humanistic Perspective, "Journal of Humanistic Counselling, Education, and Development 40 (2001): 185-99.

relationships denaturalizes the structures of racism anchoring the white privilege characterizing power relations in colonial states like Canada.[32] In other words, Andersen highlighted how often his students had difficulty in identifying embedded racism in the classroom and society, and seemed to only be able to identify visible racism. Andersen's argument is that we need to understand the historical context of these relationships and their position within it, in order to gain a better understanding of the dynamics of colonialism and racism.[33]

Author Scott Lauria Morgensen examines the theories of gender, feminism and masculinity as it relates to Indigenous life and settler colonialism. He states, "the insight that colonialism is produced, extended, and illuminated by gendered and sexual power is a hallmark of colonial studies."[34] In other words, heteropatriarchy impacts the lives of Indigenous women, and views Indigenous lands and people as inferior and violable, in order that Indigenous family ties can be attacked, all with a goal of assimilating Indigenous peoples.[35]

Morgensen stresses that making gender, sexuality, race and nation unnatural, is important in the work of antiracist and anticolonial movements.[36] He suggests in order to deepen our understanding and analysis, we need to understand that "gendered and sexual power condition, or generate the power relations we call "settler colonialism".[37] In order to better understand settler colonialism, we need to consider sexuality and gender as central to the colonization of Indigenous people.[38] The driving force behind settler colonialism is based on the need to want to erase the Indigenous presence in order that the settlers access the land. Another tool of colonialism, in its subjugation of Indigenous societies, is its power control over gender

[32] Chris Andersen. (2010). Critical Indigenous Studies in the Classroom: Exploring 'the Local' using Primary Evidence. International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies, 5 (1). 67.
[33] Idem, 76.
[34] Scott Lauria Morgensen. (2012). Theorizing Gender, Sexuality and Settler Colonialism: An Introduction. Settler Colonial Studies, 2 (2), Special Issue: Karangatia: Calling out Gender and Sexuality in Settler Studies. 3.
[35] Idem, 6.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Morgensen, 15.
[38] Idem,3.

and especially sexuality of Indigenous women; consequently, there is a real threat to Indigenous women's safety from settler colonialism.[39]

Further impacts of colonialism on Indigenous life are explained by Brendan Hokowhitu. He states that "elite Indigenous tribal masculinity is a particular form of masculinity that has developed since colonization, in part that it mimics dominant forms of invader/settler masculinity."[40] Hokowhitu's argument is that this masculinity has since allocated disciplinary and authoritative power through notions of tradition and authenticity. In addition, "elite Indigenous masculinity have habitually served to exclude alternative forms of Indigenous masculinity and Indigenous women from leadership roles."[41] This is an important point, as it relates to the First Nations experience of the band council style of membership, established by the Indian Act. It is patriarchal and led mainly by First Nation men who sit on Band council and Chief positions. This mode of governance has typically excluded First Nation women and leads to a form of elitism, where Chief and Council are very powerful and have the ability to make decisions that can impact the individual life of a First Nations female. This elitism, that is a product of band council, often leads to the exclusion of Indigenous women too. Hokowhitu indicates that Indigenous masculinity can be enabled as a model for looking at postcolonial power in the colonized/colonizer and man/woman relationship.[42] Indigenous male masculinity has embedded privilege, protected by elite Indigenous male leadership to the detriment of the inclusion of the Indigenous women's voices. Hokowhitu says Indigenous masculinity mimics colonialism heteropatriarchy, while at the same time is also resistant to it.[43] Aspects of patriarchy can often become embedded into Indigenous communities.

---

[39] Morgensen, 3.
[40] Brendan Hokowhitu. (2010). Producing Elite Indigenous Masculinities. Settler Colonial Studies 2 (2), Special Issue: Karangatia: Calling Out Gender and Sexuality in Settler Societies, 26.
[41] Idem, 24.
[42] Hokowhitu, 29.
[43] Ibid.

Colonized Indigenous masculinity mimics the power relationship of heteropatriarchy towards Indigenous women. A potential weakness in Hokowhitu's paper is that it does not provide solutions to the role that Indigenous men could play to step away from this elite Indigenous tribal masculinity and move toward decolonization. These would be questions that should be examined, in order to revisit traditional roles that Indigenous women and men played before the influence of patriarchy. Evidently, Indigenous women have been forced to assume the activist role to fight for equality within their own communities. What can now be done and how can Indigenous women's voices be strengthened, in order to bring more balance in the discussion of important Indigenous issues? In order to effect change, it is necessary to engage Indigenous people who resist settler rule.

Hypothesis

Indigenous art activism has played a significant role in raising awareness of the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girl's (MMIWG) in Canada, by uniting various Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. This thesis will demonstrate how the uniting of Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities has created a greater awareness and education of the MMIWG issue, as well as developing an understanding of other serious issues facing Indigenous communities. This study will also show how the art projects have positively impacted healing for Indigenous individuals, families and communities affected by the issue of MMIWG. The impact of visual art is far reaching, in that they can become a tool that can combat stereotypes. Author Jasmeen Siddiqui says:

> Art can and should be used as a form of activism—whether as literature, film, visual art, music, etc.—because it has so many tools to help facilitate the digestion of loaded social, political, and cultural messages.[44]

Using Indigenous feminist theories, this thesis will examine the WWOS initiative and the

[44] Jasmeen Siddiqui. (2017). *Necessary Affairs: Exploring the Relationship Between Indigenous Art and Activism*. Western University. Accessed February 10, 2020, https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1026&context=undergradawards_2017

REDress Project which have brought attention to missing and murdered Indigenous women's issues. Their intent was to unite people and bring attention to communities who have experienced trauma and injustice through the loss or disappearance of their loved one. This thesis will examine the role that the WWOS initiative plays in the uniting of Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in order to reduce the sexual exploitation and marginalization of Indigenous women. It will use individual interviews with Indigenous people and various organizations whose main mandate is activism or advocacy.

Justification

Activism through creative art has existed for a long time in the Indigenous community through a number of ways, for example, paintings, sculptures, storytelling and pictures. Through various mediums, attention has been brought to focus on specific issues. Through activism, individuals have successfully raised awareness of the issue of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Authors Patricia Monture and Patricia McGuire critique activism as a very narrow construction, which views Aboriginal women as the victims of oppression.[45] Monture and McGuire describe Aboriginal women as having a voice, and are subjects that should not be viewed as objects of oppression. Activism is shown in many ways and involves multiple forms of discrimination, a key aspect Monture and McGuire highlight. Author Linda Tuhiwai Smith says that activism:

> Begins at home, locally, with the multitude of issues that beset indigenous communities. Most of these issues turn out to be international issues, as activists discover for themselves when they start talking to others and mobilizing support. Locally grown activism and activism that is supported or 'mandated' by local communities (however they may define themselves) is seen as a badge of legitimacy and evidence of flax root credibility. Communities have expectations that activists know their needs because they have experienced

[45] Patricia A. Monture, and Patricia McGuire. (Eds). (2009). First Voices: an aboriginal women's reader. Toronto, Ontario. Inanna Publications and Education Inc., 3.

> those needs at a very personal level.[46]

There are many activists from a wide variety of Indigenous communities that include individuals from all walks of life. Tuhiwai Smith stresses that:

> activism takes different forms and one of those forms is the kind of activism that is deeply knowledgeable about the struggle, where it has come from, what is at stake, and what tactics are required now.[47]

Some Indigenous activists, who have lived with unclean water in their communities for years, choose to become water protectors to bring safe and clean drinking water to their families. With respect to MMIWG, many of the family members have turned their personal pain, from losing a loved one to murder or disappearance, into activism. An example of this occurred after the death of Loretta Saunders, an Inuk student; her sister Deliah became a vocal advocate in building awareness of the MMWIG issue. Similarly, Holly Jarret from the Inuk community who, after her cousin's death, started the #AMINEXT campaign. 'Am I Next' became a viral hashtag in social media, after Jarrett's cousin Loretta Saunders was killed. In 2014 Bernadette Smith led activists in the "Drag the Red" project, a direct response to the death of fifteen-year-old Tina Fontaine.[48] A small group of Winnipeg volunteers took action to search the Red River for bodies, and search for clues that might answer some of the questions surrounding the disappearances. The family members also wanted to shame the Winnipeg police, whom they felt were not doing enough to solve the murders.[49]

Objectives

Walking With Our Sisters (WWOS) and the REDress Project, as artistic forms of activism, have

---

[46] Linda Tuhiwai Smith. Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples. Zed Books Ltd. United Kingdom and the United States of America. 1999. 222.
[47] Ibid.
[48] CBC News. *2nd year of Drag the Red effort gets underway in Winnipeg*. (May 14, 2015). https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/2nd-year-of-drag-the-red-effort-gets-underway-in-winnipeg-1.3079963
[49] Joanna Joly. Red River Women. BBC News (April 18, 2015). Accessed December 31, 2019 https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-dc75304f-e77c-4125-aacf-83e7714a5840

played significant roles in raising awareness of the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG) issue through the uniting of various Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

The deep historical and systemic roots of racism felt by Indigenous women and girls needs to be examined in this research. There is a link of racism and discrimination that needs to be understood, as it relates to the issue of MMIWG. In order to gain a better understanding of why gendered violence is occurring towards Indigenous women and girls in Canada, the root causes of violence need to be examined.

Indigenous activism is used as a form of resistance in society, to address issues affecting Indigenous people. This research will discuss the connection between the marginalization of Indigenous women and the relationship between the history of Indigenous women and their current realities.

Early history of sexual exploitation of Indigenous women in western Canada was explained by author James Daschuk, "persistent allegations of sexual predation against both DIA employees at Frog Lake indicate that it was not a solitary occurrence."[50] Archbishop Taché stated that the dominion's wards were "left a prey to the seductions of men revoltingly immoral"[51] This was in the aftermath of the Frog Lake massacre that occurred on April 2, 1885 when the Cree turned on their oppressors and killed nine settlers. Part of their reason for the uprising, was the Cree's unhappiness with the Indian Agent Thomas Quinn and the Canadian government's lack of commitment to their treaty.[52] This history lays the foundation of the story of the continued marginalization of Indigenous women and girls.

A report by the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA), Pamela Palmater and Canada Without Poverty (CWP) states:

colonial governments, through racism and sexism, have created

[50] Daschuk, 153.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Daschuk, 152-153.

> a system, or infrastructure of inequality, which makes Indigenous women and girls targets for violence. This infrastructure has its roots in colonial practices, some historical and some continuing, including: The dispossession of lands and resources, forced relocations, and disassociation from traditional cultures, languages, and decision-making practices, all of which have had a profoundly negative impact on the status and roles of Indigenous women in their communities.[53]

Research Method/Procedures

This research will use Indigenous methodology, in that the results will be shared back with the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. All of these issues are based on feedback, respect and reciprocity which are crucial philosophy for Indigenous methodologies. Tuhiwai Smith describes this as sharing knowledge and reporting back to the communities where the research has taken place.[54] Further, because this research involves Indigenous people, author Jelena Porsanger outlines Tuhiwai Smith's following eight questions:

1. whose research is this;
2. who owns it;
3. whose interests does it serve;
4. who will benefit from it;
5. who has designed its questions and framed its scope;
6. who will carry it out; and
7. who will write it up and
8. how will the results be disseminated.[55]

As a researcher, I kept a research journal to record any problems encountered, any reflections as well as data collection methods used. This assisted me in my research and in my note taking while studying this issue.

In addition, I incorporated individual interviews, asking a series of questions (16) of the leader's observations, thoughts and processing of the experience after attending a WWOS or REDress art display installment. Research Ethics board at the University of Alberta approved

[53] The Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA); Pamela Palmater and Canada Without Poverty (CWP). *A National Action Plan to End Violence against Indigenous Women and Girls: The Time is Now.*

[54] Tuhiwai Smith, 65.

[55] Jelena Porsanger. *An Essay about Indigenous Methodology*. 1910-7167-1-PB Indigenous Methodology.PDF, 9.

both my research and these interview questions. I interviewed the founder of the WWOS art instalment, Christi Belcourt, at the final WWOS event at Batoche, Saskatchewan.

A qualitative approach will be utilized in this research as the interviews of participants will be interpreted by the researcher. Kovach says,

> the stories of both the researcher and the research participants are reflected in the meanings being made. It is likely at this point that qualitative research diverges most clearly from traditional positivist quantitative approaches.[56]

The stories shared in the individual interviews will assist me to learn the participants' reflections, thoughts and experiences at either event. These stories gathered will guide the thesis research.

Plan for Data Analysis

The initial stage of data analysis, will examine interviews and observational data for 'recurring' issues or themes. In examining the interview results, I searching for commonalities, themes and any other unique research results that came forth. Kovach describes a research teaching story, as "an allegory for a Plains Cree conceptual framework for research - preparation for the research, preparation of the researcher, recognition of protocol (cultural and ethical), respectfulness, and sharing the knowledge (reciprocity)."[57] Based on this research approach, the results will develop some substantive conclusions. Data from various sources was gathered, reviewed, and then analyzed to form conclusions. In this case, there was an individual interview with Christi Belcourt. Tobacco was offered prior to the interview beginning, as the Cree custom. Kovach describes the practices, "in carrying out her research, Roxanne Struthers (2001) honored spiritual knowledge by offering a traditional gift of tobacco to her participants, as well as a daily offering of tobacco to the Creator."[58] In this case, the questionnaires were available as hard copy

[56] Kovach, 26.
[57] Kovach, 65.
[58] Idem, 58.

or email, so it was not possible to offer tobacco to every participant. However, an effort was made to offer tobacco whenever the opportunity presented itself, if the questionnaire participant is in person and provided a paper copy of the questionnaire.

This research used a gendered perspective and intersectionality lens, looking at ensuring the Indigenous women and girls voices are heard.[59]

To incorporate Indigenous tribal epistemology, as Kovach highlights, "being kind, being inclusive, being community minded in combination with ceremonies, protocols and ways is the power of Cree culture".[60] I was able to model this behavior as I worked as a volunteer at the final WWOS event, and assisted with smudging participants, before they entered the exhibit.

This research will be used an action/cultural framework, which examines events of both the past and the present in order to understand how Indigenous activism is able to highlight awareness of MMWG.[61] Authors Gary Bouma, Rod Ling and Lori Wilkinson describe the action/cultural framework as it:

> makes reference to cultural and social facts in understanding social actions. It often requires extra data about the culture of the people in the research situation. If you look more closely at the culture, social norms and history of Canada, you will find that racism and discrimination do exist in Canada and are affected by events of both the past and the present.[62]

In the case of Indigenous women, they have been affected by restrictive Canadian government legislation such as the Indian Act, which still affects their lives and families today.

This research will honor Indigenous inquiry described by Kovach as, "a relational methodology: its methods are dependent upon deep respect for those (or that) which it will involve, and those (or that) which will feel its consequence."[63] The researcher will honor First

---

[59] Stephanie Shields. (2008). Gender: An Intersectionality Perspective. Sex Roles. 59. 301-311. 10.1007/s11199-008-9501-8.
[60] Kovach, 73.
[61] Gary Bouma, Rod Ling and Lori Wilkinson. *The Research Process*. (Oxford University Press: Canada, 2012), 237.
[62] Bouma, Ling and Wilkinson, 237.
[63] Kovach. Conclusion, 174.

Nation protocol as well as traditional cultural protocols. This included participation in the final WWOS event in Batoche, Saskatchewan, as a volunteer: daily smudging, following the event's protocols like wearing a ribbon skirt, no use of alcohol or drugs, and taking off shoes before entering the WWOS art installment. As an Indigenous researcher, this entails being respectful of all individuals present, non-Indigenous and Indigenous, including Elders and their knowledge. Author Tuhiwai Smith says,

> the activist struggle is to defend, protect, enable and facilitate the self-determination of Indigenous people over themselves in states and in the global arena where they have little power. Activists in this area of international work have to develop arguments that will be heard in a political environment where Indigenous people don't matter, are plain irritating, or are viewed as downright dangerous.[64]

White non-Indigenous people have stereotypes that persist about Indigenous peoples. The WWOS and REDress Project challenge them. Many non-Indigenous peoples in the audience have left strongly moved by the experience. I have personally witnessed the emotion and learning that occurs at these events. The final Batoche ceremony was well attended. Family members who attended were supported by others present who were also attending the WWOS event.

Kovach asks, "why are you doing this research and why are you doing it this way?"[65] Answering those questions could only be found in my personal story. Kovach references Eber Hampton statement that knowing personal motives behind the research matters.[66] It is important to know why an individual wants to do research in a particular area or community. As an Indigenous researcher, this is an important concept to explore, as our research cannot be driven by ulterior motives such as fame or financial gain. Indigenous methodology gives back to the community; respect and courtesy requires that the results of the research be shared with the Indigenous communities or individuals.

---

[64] Tuhiwai Smith, 221.
[65] Kovach, 109.
[66] Idem, 114.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This research aims to contribute to support work in Indigenous communities and their experiences, by drawing attention to Indigenous art, activism and the important issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG).

Literature

The sources consulted for this review were found through multiple database searches, primarily those of the University of Alberta library database and Google Scholar. The word searches performed in both databases consisted of the following: “Indigenous activism”, “Indigenous art” and “Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls”. These search parameters produced the more relevant sources. A total of fourteen (14) publications were consulted and retained as pertinent and valuable information for this review. Most of the publications used in this literature review consist of books, articles and reports produced by academic databases and non-profit organizations.

Findings

The literature review has allowed for various topics on Indigenous art, activism and MMIWG to be identified. These topics are common to most publications and identify trends, and points of view in regards to these topics. MMIWG is a subject matter that recently has received heightened attention, and has been well documented and published. Similarly, the topics of Indigenous art and activism have been well documented and heavily published. The topics, summarized below, were identified during the literature review. Three main areas are as follows: Indigenous women and MMIWG; activism and Indigenous art.

Indigenous Women and MMIWG

Historically, and beginning in the settler colonial era, Indigenous women have been treated as "less than", or even subhuman, compared with their counter-parts of non-Aboriginal women. Author Denise Lajimodiere highlights, "although all Native Americans suffer from stereotypes, Native American women were and are especially romanticized and abused".[67] Colonialism has had a significant negative impact on the lives of Indigenous peoples, however its effects have been much more significant for Indigenous women due to their gender.

Author Morgensen argues:

> that gendered and sexual power condition, or even generate the power relations we call, 'settler colonialism'. Gender and sexuality are intrinsic to the colonization of indigenous peoples and the promotion of European modernity by settlers.[68]

In other words, just another tool of colonialism in its subjugation of indigenous societies, is its power control over gender and especially sexuality of indigenous women.

Since its beginnings, colonialism has implemented a patriarchal system in Canadian society that has negatively impacted Indigenous peoples and their families through the establishment of policy and legislation; most significantly the Indian Act. Due to the influences of colonialism, Indigenous women have been subjugated and marginalized sexually which still continues today, in contemporary society. In Canada's history of settler colonization, author James Daschuk highlights that sexual exploitation of Indigenous women was occurring as early as 1880, where sexual exploitation was occurring with young Indigenous girls as young as 13 years of age.[69]

Authors Mark Cronlund Anderson and Carmen L. Robertson discuss the stereotypical term of Indian princess/Indian squaw, in that these images remain ongoing in popular culture.[70]

---

[67] Denise K. Lajimodiere. 2011. "Ogimah Ikwe: Native Women and Their Path to Leadership". *Wicazo Sa Review* 26, no. 2., 60.
[68] Morgensen. 3.
[69] Daschuk, 153.
[70] Cronlund Anderson and Robertson, 205.

Anderson and Robertson state in Canada, the media has "policed the borders of a colonial imagination where Native females are reduced to two unpalatable creatures, Indian princess or squaw"[71].

This literature review shows the position of Indigenous women as being undermined by the dominant society, which tends to look down on Indigenous people, but especially Indigenous women. Indigenous women are thought of as inferior and are oppressed first because they are women and second because they are Indigenous by the dominant society. As a result of patriarchy, Indigenous women were dehumanized and sexualized by the first European settlers, which included non-Indigenous women. Author Sylvia Van Kirk describes British women treating the native wives with disdain as they feared their competition for white husbands.[72] This background of Canadian history is very important to understand, as society's influence on who it decides is important and significant, based on race. Violence against Indigenous women has become normalized and MMIWG victims face prejudice from main stream society that believes they lead high risk lifestyles. Authors D. Memee Lavell-Harvard and Jennifer Brant state that:[73]

> …the link between colonization and intergenerational trauma is apparent in many forms of traumatic experiences that occurred at residential schools has been related to the loss of cultural identity. These issues are related to the racialized and sexualized violence experienced by Indigenous women at the hands of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous men. Moreover, it has contributed to Indigenous women's vulnerability to violence.

Author Lynn Gehl offers a unique perspective of being "othered" by Canadian legislation and also by her own First Nation band, Pikwàkanagàn.[74] As a feminist and activist, Gehl argues this exclusion is built on past injustices displayed towards Indigenous women.

---

[71] Ibid.
[72] Sylvia Van Kirk. *Many Tender Ties*. (The Canada Council for the Arts. 1999), 174.
[73] D. Memee Lavell-Harvard and Jennifer Brant. Forever Loved: Exposing the Hidden Crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada. Demeter Press. Bradford, Ontario. 2016, 40.
[74] Lynn Gehl. *The Rebuilding of a Nation: A Grassroots Analysis of the Aboriginal Nation-Building Process in Canada*. Peterborough, Ontario: The Canadian Journal of Native Studies XXIII, 1 (2003): 57-82. Accessed online December 1, 2013. http://www.lynngehl.com/uploads/5/0/0/4/5004954/55.pdf,60.

In 1971, one case that drew national attention to violence facing Indigenous women in Canada, was the sexualized, racialized murder of Betty Osborne in The Pas, Manitoba. This is just one example of the severe marginalization facing Indigenous women, in part because of the legacy of the Indian Act.[75]

The Native Women's Association of Canada, with assistance from Amnesty International published a document, "Stolen Sisters", which told the stories of the MMIWG victims, as told by the family members. This report was one of the main reasons why the federal government funded NWAC's "Sisters in Spirit" initiative. Indigenous women are still facing gendered violence and often are targeted due to situations in which they are forced to live in poverty and unsafe situations.[76]

Indigenous Art and Activism

Author Marlene Brant Castellano describes that craft instruction, production and marketing provides a venue for Indigenous women to come together, reinforce their cultural identity, create employment and develop traditional skills.[77] Walking With Our Sisters (WWOS) is a commemorative art installation for the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in the United States and Canada. Lavell-Harvard and Brant describe it as "an installation of moccasin vamps that represent the unfinished lives of murdered and missing Indigenous women exhibited on a pathway to represent their path or journey that was ended prematurely".[78] Vamps describes the top half of a moccasin, which are typically beaded.

---

[75] Anita Olsen Harper, editors: Valaskakis Guthrie, Gail, Madeleine Dion Stout and Eric Guimond. Restoring the Balance: First Nations Women, Community, and Culture. (University of Manitoba Press: Winnipeg, Manitoba. 2009), 184.

[76] Amnesty International. *No More Stolen Sisters: The Need for a Comprehensive Response to Discrimination and Violence against Indigenous Women*. Toronto: Amnesty International Canada, 2009. Print., 2.

[77] Marlene Brant Castellano, editors: Valaskakis Guthrie, Gail, Madeleine Dion Stout and Eric Guimond. Restoring the Balance: First Nations Women, Community, and Culture. (University of Manitoba Press: Winnipeg, Manitoba, 2009), 184.

[78] Lavell-Harvard and Brant, 281.

Editors Cheryl Suzack, Shari M. Huhndorf and Jeanne Perrault and Jean Barman, examine the historical role of Indigenous women through the lens of activism.[79] Their book examines three areas affecting Indigenous women and includes: politics, activism and culture. These are main areas in which Indigenous women have been disempowered by main stream society and their own communities are examined with an Indigenous feminism approach.

Author Nicola Thomas focuses on art making and culture in the settler society of contemporary Australia and New Zealand, using resistance, and the use of those same elements by Indigenous peoples to assert presence and claim to sovereignty.[80]

Authors Jarrett Martineau and Eric Ritskes' article shows a clear link between Indigenous art and activism, and labels the former inherently political.[81] Indigenous art occupies space within settler colonial structures and can be viewed as a form of Indigenous resurgence and resistance. Indigenous art is integral to Indigenous survival, because it has the power to disrupt current status quo.

Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's key message is that concepts of Indigenous resurgence are vast, through the volume of sacred stories, Elders' teachings and personal narratives.[82] Indigenous art has many forms and methods. One example, that Simpson highlights in her book, is the art exhibition called *Mapping Resistance* by Nishnaabe curator Wanda Nanibush. This exhibit is based on Indigenous ideas of resistance and art and draws attention to how Indigenous peoples interact with space in political and cultural ways, which mainstream society constantly erases.

---

[79] Indigenous Women and Feminism Politics, Activism, Culture edited by Cheryl Suzack, Shari M. Huhndorf, and Jeanne Perrault and Jean Barman: Vancouver Press, 2010.
[80] Nicola Thomas. Possessions: indigenous art / colonial culture. Thames and Hudson, New York. United States.1999. (Abstract)
[81] Jarrett Martineau and Eric Ritskes. Fugitive indigeneity: Reclaiming the terrain of decolonial struggle through Indigenous art. Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society Vol. 3, No 1, 2014, 1-12.
[82] Leanne Betasamosake Simpson. *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishaabeg Re-Creation Resurgence and a New Emergence*. ARP Books (Arbeiter Ring Publishing: Winnipeg, Manitoba. 2011), 148.

This literature review identifies the most prominent literature which deals specifically with Indigenous art, activism and the issue of MMIWG in order to identify major themes and to present information from various sources that have already been published on these subject matters.

* * *

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Originally, Indigenous tribes were gynocentric, comprised of ritual-based social systems in which Indigenous women were the head of the household and made all of the political decisions for the family.[83] This was the total opposite of the early European settler culture which was based on patriarchy and strict gender roles. Due to the imposition of patriarchy, through enforced religious conversion, other means of control and restrictive Canadian government policy like the Indian Act, the way of life for Indigenous peoples changed. Traditional gender roles were greatly affected.[84] Colonial violence came with the establishment of the settler state, which laid the framework for the present socio-political realities facing Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people, including the tragedy of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Targeted violence was used as a means of colonial land acquisition which destroyed Indigenous people's connection to their land, their language and which attacked Indigenous women. This gendered violence can be explained as targeted towards Indigenous women and girls, one of the most vulnerable populations in Canada. The story of the settler colony is founded on disappearing peoples, from 'terra nullius' to missing and murdered Indigenous women. [85]

Until recently, the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls has been largely ignored by society, the Canadian government and officials in positions of power. Some have wondered if the race of missing and murdered Indigenous women were different, would the government have taken more prompt action? The Manitoba Justice Inquiry said of the killing of Helen Betty Osborne: "There is one fundamental fact: her murder was a racist and a

[83] Paula Gunn Allen. The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions. 1992. Beacon Press. Boston, 195.
[84] Jay Nelson. *A Strange Revolution in the Manners of the Country: Aboriginal-Settler Intermarriage in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia. Accessed December 1, 2019,* https://www.ubcpress.ca/asset/12458/1/9780774808866.pdf , 41.
[85] Rachel Flowers. 2015. Refusal to Forgive: Indigenous Women's Love and Rage. Decolonization. Indigeneity, Education and Society 4 (2): 32-49.

sexist one. Betty Osborne would be alive today, had she not been an Aboriginal woman."[86] In a colonial society, Indigenous women are viewed as disposable and not important.

Author Leela Gandhi describes 'post colonialism' as a difficult term to define but its manifesto calls for the need to diversify its mode of address and then learn to speak more adequately to the world.[87] In other words, oppressed or colonized voices are often minimized or muted due to the effects of colonialism, and it is important that those voices be included. Some examples of their voices being heard is through Indigenous activism in the form of rallies, hunger strikes, Nason says:

> Specifically women in the #IdleNoMore movement seek to protect the waters, the environment and the land from the threat of further destruction. Indeed, they seek protection not only for themselves but those values, practices and traditions that are at the core of Indigenous women's power and sovereignty – concepts that have been, and remain under attack, and which strike at the core of settler-colonial misogyny that refuses to acknowledge the ways it targets Indigenous women for destruction.[88]

Sadly, structural racism is embedded in our society and is basically everywhere due to the effects of colonialism.

Anne Taylor, Executive Director of the Haven Society articulated that societies lack concern for the voiceless:

> If this was 1,017 affluential white men in our culture, would we be responding in the same way? Another important aspect is our concern regarding victim blaming, and the way that women in general are held responsible for violence that is not their responsibility. I think the whole issue of Aboriginal missing and murdered women and girls is one

[86] Manitoba Justice Inquiry Report., 32.
[87] Leela Gandhi. (1998). Chapter 1: After Colonialism and Chapter 2: Thinking Otherwise, A Brief Intellectual History. In Postcolonial Theory: Critical Introduction. St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1.
[88] Dory Nason. We Hold Our Hands Up: On Indigenous Women's Love and Resistance. Decolonization Indigeneity, Education and Society. (February 12, 2013). Accessed February 9, 2020. https://decolonization.wordpress.com/2013/02/12/we-hold-our-hands-up-on-indigenous-womens-love-and-resistance/

> of the highlight examples of the ways, we in our culture blame the victims for the violence they are victimized by.[89]

In 2012, the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) initiated a project entitled Faceless Dolls, through the Sisters in Spirit Campaign, which travelled across Canada, holding workshops to create faceless felt dolls, representing the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. They were intentionally faceless to symbolize the lack of attention paid to Indigenous women and girls in society, and how the issue of MMIWG was ignored for years.[90] Many of these faceless dolls were created by the families of the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. As a former NWAC Senior Manager, I facilitated Faceless Dolls workshops, where I worked to dispel stereotypes that existed of Indigenous women. The first stereotype I confronted was that somehow all MMIWG women were leading high risk lifestyles and engaging in behaviors that contributed to their disappearances or deaths. I educated members of the public that MMIWG cases often involved Indigenous women that were in town for a medical appointment or were a student attending school, and through no fault of their own, something happened to them. Another stereotype I refuted was the belief that Indigenous women took too many risks, like hitch-hiking or going to parties or attending drinking establishments. I educated people by saying these were not the types of questions asked when a non-Indigenous woman goes missing, so why are these questions asked when an Indigenous woman or girl goes missing? In one case, two young girls, Maisy Ojdick and Shannon Alexander, of Kitigan Zibi were dismissed as runaways[91]. Similar experiences have been reported by other MMIWG family members with their initial RCMP contact. The RCMP told family members that

---

[89] Shaw TV Nanaimo. *The Red Dress Project*. (October 15, 2015). Accessed June 7, 2019 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSnC8H5gRSA

[90] Native Women's Association of Canada. Building on the Legacy of NWAC Faceless Doll Project Create your own Faceless Dolls. Accessed June 2, 2019. https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/2012_Building_on_the_Legacy_of_NWAC_Faceless_Doll_Project.pdf

[91] CBC News. (October 7, 2016). *Missing & Murdered: The Unsolved Cases of Indigenous Women and Girls*. Accessed February 10, 2020. https://www.cbc.ca/missingandmurdered/mmiw/profiles/shannon-mary-dale-alexander

their loved one was probably just out partying and would be home in a couple of days. This discrimination and callous disregard were often encountered from the RCMP upon Indigenous families initial reporting of their missing family member.

Anisa White, representative of the Coordination Committee for Domestic Violence, refers to the Truth and Reconciliation Final Report, saying, "there is a connection between Indigenous women, residential school and the complex interplay of poverty and domestic violence".[92] This highlights the fact that there are many factors involved in the disappearance of Indigenous women and girls. Conference speaker Guy Freedman summarizes the effect of colonization for Indigenous peoples in Canada:

> Land is seized, and populations are forcibly transferred and their movement is restricted. Languages are banned. Spiritual leaders are persecuted, spiritual practices are forbidden, and objects of spiritual value are confiscated and destroyed. And, most significantly to the issue at hand, families are disrupted to prevent transmission of cultural values and identity from one generation to the next. In its dealings with Indigenous people, Canada did all these things.[93]

An example that educates the public about MMIWG is Christi Belcourt's WWOS art installment. Christi Belcourt was moved to action after experiencing a vision which then became this commemoration. The vision was about creating space to honor the lives of people in our communities who have gone missing or who have been murdered. With guidance from the lead ceremonial Elder for WWOS, Maria Campbell, a call was put out on Facebook asking for people to submit moccasin vamps. Christi received over 1200 pairs, and in 2013 Walking With Our Sisters began its incredible journey traveling to communities across Canada.[94]

---

[92] Shaw TV Nanaimo. *The Red Dress Project*. (October 15, 2015). Accessed June 7, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSnC8H5gRSA

[93] Guy Freedman, and Watts, Bob. Speakers, First Peoples Group. (June 25, 2019.) Cultural Awareness: Valuing Indigenous and Minority Populations in Professional Regulation. Vancouver Clear Regional Symposium.

[94] Anderson, Campbell and Belcourt, xii.

Other Indigenous artists who were well known included Haida artist Bill Reid. Editors Karen Duffek and Charlotte Townsend-Gault says,

> although Bill Reid, like many of his fellow aboriginal artists, initially understood his project to be the reopening of the abandoned mine shaft of Haida tradition (to borrow another of Kubler's images), he came to understand and actively exploit the political implications of these acts of artistic recovery.[95]

Through his art, Bill Reid made a political statement and promoted the cause of the Haida people.

Carrying on "Irregardless": Humour in Contemporary Northwest Coast Art exhibited works that used humor, irony, parody and satire to challenge stereotypes and raise unexpected questions. Most of the 60 pieces in the exhibition included a rich and provocative range of works – paintings, sculptures, drawings, masks, photographs, textiles, jewelry and video installations. Along with the exhibition, the Bill Reid Gallery presented *Laughing "Irregardless": Multimedia Aboriginal Humour*, a celebration of humor's power to heal and unify, curated and moderated by Aboriginal filmmaker, Loretta Todd.[96] Through the use of art, the exhibit has the ability to heal. Used with cultural ceremonies, it can have a powerful impact on participants. Belcourt says:

> art has served as an outlet for indigenous women to carry on their traditional crafts and stories for centuries. They've continued to create even while contending with legacies of unimaginable oppression, like the residential and boarding schools many were forced into throughout the 19th century in the United States, in which colonizers attempted to wipe out their culture and assimilate them into a white, Christian way of life.[97]

---

[95] Karen Duffek and Charlotte Townsend-Gault, Editors. Bill Reid and Beyond. (2004). Douglas and McIntyre. Vancouver/Toronto. 6.

[96] Bill Reid Gallery. Carrying on "Irregardless": Humour in Contemporary Northwest Coast Art. Accessed June 25, 2019, https://www.billreidgallery.ca/blogs/exhibitions-page/carrying-on-irregardless-humour-in-contemporary-northwest-coast-art

[97] Christian Allaire. Vogue. *In "Hearts of Our People," Indigenous Women Reclaim Space Through Art*. (June 3, 2019). Accessed June 7, 2019, https://www.vogue.com/article/hearts-of-our-people-native-women-artists-art exhibit?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=onsite-share&utm_brand=vogue&utm_social-type=earned&fbclid=IwAR0Hqvdt7SDABh7_ZJ4IN1-wERDyj5lrtuRA5_A1wE9dw3GShblokztNOSw&verso=true

Art has provided hope to Indigenous peoples, as they faced many barriers in society. Belcourt's first major showcase at the Minneapolis Institute of Art (MIA), "*Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists*", provides visibility to Indigenous women, both in Canada and the United States, making visible women who have been repeatedly ignored in mainstream art world. The art show will feature 117 different objects, including paintings, sculptures, garments, and more, all made by native artists ranging in tribes and locations.[98] An irony noted by Belcourt is that while Indigenous female artists are generally ignored, they frequently are the victims of cultural appropriation by the art and fashion world.

Author Frantz Fanon was Born in 1925 in the French colony of Martinique, Africa, who wrote *Black Skin, White Masks* in 1952 at the age of 27. He was influenced by Marxist Jean-Paul Sartre, a French philosopher and Hegel.[99] In *Wretched of the Earth*, Jean-Paul Sartre begins with a story of how in their colonies, the European elite undertook to create a new local native elite to assist in their management.[100] This is important to the issue of MMIWG as activists and family members require allies to assist them to gain awareness and garner support for this cause. The author was a leader in 1961 in developing concepts such as decolonization and was the first writer to advance this idea. Like the author, the oppressed often understand when they are being colonized and will rebel against this. Even in the face of a mainstream society that has demeaned my culture, I have been able to develop a strong core pride in my Cree culture and tradition. Sartre discusses violence in the context of colonialism, a violence that is internalized by the colonized native, and which sometimes causes an individual native to turn violent towards other natives and inwards as well.[101] This is known as lateral violence, a phenomenon that is rampant in our Indigenous communities and is one example of hatred that is turned towards our own

[98] Allaire. Vogue.
[99] Ziauddin Sardar. "Foreword to the 2008 Edition." In *Black Skin, White Masks*, by Frantz Fanon, vi-xx. Northhampton: Pluto Press, 2008.
[100] Jean-Paul Sartre. (1963). *In Fanon, Frantz, The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, 7.
[101] Idem, 18.

people and culture. In addition, this hatred can also be turned inwards, resulting in self-hatred, and can encourage higher rates of depression, suicide and substance abuse. Sartre adds,

> "first, the only violence is the settler's; but soon they will make it
> their own; that is to say, violence is thrown back on us as when
> our reflection comes forward to meet us when we go toward a mirror."[102]

This is all due to the powerful influence of colonialism, which views Indigenous people as a subservient group in their society. We as Indigenous people are often told by the dominant society that we are not good enough, and after a certain amount of time, we start to believe these negative messages. An unfortunate effect is that the self-loathing is passed down from parents to children and can create harmful intergenerational effects. My own Cree mother attended Indian day schools; the nuns and priests who taught at these schools drilled the concept into my mother that Indians were no good and 'savages'. My mother was not allowed to speak her native Cree language. As a child, I remember begging my mother to teach me Cree, but she always refused. The Indian day school experience would never be spoken of by my mother, and I never heard her mention experiences that she had while attending these schools. My mother taught us to be ashamed of our heritage as well. My mother learned from her colonizers, who operated under the guise of religion and learning, and who also provided substandard education to Indian children. At the same time, the religious order also played an important role in colonizing the Indian children; instilling Christian beliefs, the order turned them into civilized Canadians, as dictated by the Canadian government. As I got older, I had to turn against this belief, and I sought out First Nation elders and traditional teachings to learn more about my culture. As a result, I became very proud of my identity. It was at this time that I became an Indigenous activist, and fighting for First Nations rights became a big part of my identity.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

From a methodological point of view, the projects are influenced by both Indigenous methodologies

[102] Sartre, 17.

and qualitative research. As a researcher, I utilized a semi-structured interview style where I asked open-ended questions, along with a list of specific questions. As well, I believe I occupy "insider" space within a research context, while I am completing interviews and gathering data.[103] Kovach says, "as Indigenous people, we understand each other because we share a worldview that holds common, enduring beliefs about the world".[104] As an Indigenous person who is knowledgeable of culture and ceremonial protocols, I possess a tribal-centered approach to research.[105] Furthermore I have centered my research on the use of Indigenous methodology, such as using tobacco as an offer of thanks to the participants and to the land where the research took place in Batoche, Saskatchewan.

The research methodology focuses on social interaction between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people within a cultural and healing setting of art installations, which brings attention to the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

Research methodology utilizes mixed methods which included personal, one-on-one interviews with the founders of WWOS and individuals who attended the WWOS and the REDress Project. Themes were analyzed from the interview and incorporated into the research summary.

Proper First Nation protocol usually requires a letter asking for permission to enter their community, and to advise this group if I am interviewing any individuals. Christi Belcourt expressed verbal and written support for this research project. I attended the final WWOS moccasin vamp installment at the Batoche Historical Site in Saskatchewan. Christi Belcourt is familiar with First Nation protocol, and as founder of WWOS would have already received permission to enter this First Nations territory. In this case, a letter would not be required by the researcher. The researcher had also written a letter to Parks Canada in order to secure their permission to

[103] Kovach, 88.
[104] Idem, 37.
[105] Idem, 38.

participate at the final WWOS Batoche closing ceremonies to be held at the Batoche National Historic Site.

I asked the WWOS main organizers for volunteers to participate as interviewees; I also needed verbal consent from the WWOS organizers of their specific community event to interview some volunteers and community members. I wrote a letter requesting permission to Christi Belcourt, WWOS founder and WWOS organizers, and Jaime Black, founder of the REDress Project. A letter was also sent to Jaime Black asking for names and contact information for participants wishing to complete an interview either in-person or over the phone. Recruitment was also completed by email. Letters requesting permission to use crisis/support phone numbers on the survey were also sent to the following: Talk4Healing; Hope for Wellness - Crisis Line and the MMIWG After-Care phone number.

Social media like Facebook was also utilized as a form of recruitment. A participant poster advertised the individual interviews taking place in the community, before a local WWOS art display or REDress event. The lead WWOS community organizer was contacted by the researcher to request their permission to contact volunteers or community members who planned to attend. As of June 23, 2019, I received Christi Belcourt's permission for this research to occur. Individual interviews were completed in communities where the Walking With Our Sisters (WWOS) closing exhibit was held on August 2019, and also included the Batoche, Saskatchewan participants, from August 11 - 19, 2019.

Christi Belcourt, Métis artist and founder of Walking With Our Sisters commemorative art installment, held exhibits at the following locations:

WWOS Exhibits Touring Calendar: (27 Total) [106]

2013 - Edmonton, Alberta - Telus Atrium (October 2- 13); Regina Saskatchewan, University Gallery (November 21 - December 3)

2014 - Parry Sound, ON, G'zaagin Art Gallery (March 21 - April 12); Winnipeg, Manitoba, Urban Shaman Gallery (March 21 - April 12); Sault Ste Marie, Ontario, Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre, Algoma University (May 5 -18); Flin Flon, Manitoba, Elks Hall (June 23 - July 5); Thunder Bay, Ontario, Thunder Bay Art Gallery (September 19 - October 12); Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Wanuskewin Heritage Park (October 31 - November 21)

2015 - Yellowknife, Prince of Wales Heritage Centre (January 9 - 24); Whitehorse, Yukon, Kwalin Dun Cultural Centre (April 11 - 25); Red Deer Alberta, Red Deer Museum and Art Gallery (June 1 - 21); Comox, B.C. K'omoks Band Hall (July 31 - August 15);

Ottawa, Ontario, Carleton University (September 25 - October 16); Akwesasne First Nation, ON, Kawehnoke Recreation Centre (November 6 - 27)

2016 - North Battleford, Saskatchewan, Chapel Gallery (January 15 - February 7); Brandon, Manitoba, Brandon University (February 22 - March 6); Mount Pleasant, MI, Centre of Anishinabe Culture & Lifeways (April 23 - May 7)

2017 - Halifax, Nova Scotia, Mount Saint Vincent University Gallery (January 14 - February 1); Kahnawà:ke, Quebec, Kateri School (July 5 - 12); Tkaronto (Toronto) Aboriginal Education Centre (October 14 - 29); Six Nations, Ontario, The Gathering Place by the Grand (November 17 - 30)

2018 - Sudbury, Ontario, Laurentian University (January 7 -17); Kenora, Ontario, Super 8 Motel (February 4 - 18); Calgary, Alberta, Riddell Library & Reading Centre (April 29 - May 13); Grande Prairie, Alberta, Art Gallery of Grande Prairie (June 8 - 14); Fort St. John, B.C. (September 10 - 16)

2019 - Batoche, Saskatchewan (August 15 -18)

The WWOS project was national in scope because of the extensive travel of the exhibition. Recruitment activities was done through word of mouth, posters, email and use of social media i.e. Twitter, Facebook. Recruitment activities was advertised by poster and email.

I asked for volunteers' or community members' participation, who have attended the WWOS display to complete an interview. I recruited interview participants through social media and asked if they attended the university where one of the WWOS displays was held, such as Carleton University from September 25 to October 16, 2015. A total of ten interviews were completed; four female non-Indigenous participants and six Indigenous participants agreed to be interviewed (five

[106] Walking With Our Sisters. Exhibition Touring Calendar. Accessed December 31, 2019, http://walkingwithoursisters.ca/events/

women and one Indigenous male).

Various organizations were also invited to participate in this research by email or phone, and included: Native Women's Association of Canada, Assembly of First Nations, Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN), the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Carleton University, Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA) and Amnesty International.

A second focus of this thesis is the REDress project by Métis multidisciplinary artist Jaime Black. Jaime created the REDress Project to draw attention to the gendered and racialized nature of violent crimes against Indigenous women that is happening in Canada. I also invited individuals that have attended these displays as well, to complete an interview. Jaime Black, held exhibits in the following locations, which were on a national scope as well:

Previous REDress Solo Exhibitions [107]

2019 - National Museum of the American Indian, Spring

2017 – Canadian Museum for Human Rights, Winnipeg, June

2012 - University of Alberta, March

2011 - University of Manitoba, November; Thompson Rivers University, October; University of Ottawa, July; The Manitoba Legislature, May; The University of Winnipeg, March

Description of individual interviews, surveys and collection methods

The methodology for data collection used consists of a small sample of individual interviews. These interviews are used as a qualitative research technique in this study. There were two main

[107] The REDress Project. Exhibitions. Website. Accessed July 12, 2019, http://www.theredressproject.org/

individual interviews in order to explore in depth their perspectives on their art installments. As individuals who are closely connected to the art exhibits, Christi Belcourt and Vicky Laforge, former Health Support Coordinator for MMIWG, will add another layer of rich knowledge to information/data gathered through the interviews.

Primary data collection was accomplished through semi-structured interviews, to get a good understanding of the artists' thoughts on their own project. The semi-structured interview utilizes descriptive questions in order to get a narrative from each artist. These interviews provide artist perspective which may provide insights that the researcher might not have considered. In keeping with Indigenous cultural protocol, tobacco was offered at the beginning of each in-person interview. The interviews were recorded, in addition to the researcher taking notes. Interview notes would begin with descriptive information: the date and location of the interview; the participants, including the interview team; and information about the participant's organization. Data analysis as a vital part of qualitative research was then organized and analyzed to draw conclusions on the themes of the research.

Individual interviews (2) occurred with participants in order to follow up and further investigate their responses. I attended the WWOS Batoche Historic site location, in order to gather contact information, complete interviews and begin my relationship building with the Indigenous community. As author Margaret Kovach states, "it means creating a relationship throughout the entirety of the research".[108] As an Indigenous researcher, there was expected participation as a volunteer in the WWOS event to follow cultural protocol. As a Plains Cree woman, I would have roles as both "insider" and "outsider" researcher because of my heritage, and I am also casually acquainted with Christi Belcourt and Jaime Black, having met both before. As an insider role, I was accepted by this Métis community and area. Kovach explains,

from my perspective, Indigenous methodologies and qualitative

[108] Kovach, 149.

> research at best form an insider/outsider relationship…..The tension of the insider/outsider dynamic will persist until Indigenous research frameworks have methodological space within academic research dialogue, policy and practice.[109]

For myself as an Indigenous research student, I also locate my identity within the Plains Cree culture and as a Cree iskwew (woman). Kovach brings up the concept of 'self-location' in relation to being an Indigenous researcher. She says:

> sharing from my story is a conscious way to illustrate "self in relation'. I wish to show the holistic, personal journey, not solely its cognitive component, and how it resonated with all parts of my being.[110]

As an Indigenous researcher, this is an important point as it relates to our holistic view we have of the world.

* * *

[109] Kovach. 31.
[110] Idem. 15-16.

CHAPTER IV: HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ISSUE OF MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS (MMIWG)

Colonialism imposed patriarchal attitudes on traditional societies, which disrupted Indigenous cultures that had long honored and respected women. Ontario's Long Term Strategy to End Violence report says "as Canada evolved, colonialism increasingly led to institutional attacks that led to the assimilation of Indigenous people, culminating in the Indian residential school system."[111] Residential schools cut generations of children off from their families, values, cultures, and communities. The lingering impact continues to the present, as intergenerational effects are passed on from generation to generation.[112]

Despite the growth of progressive attitudes fostered by a post-colonial society, Indigenous people are still vulnerable. Post-colonial attitudes continue to foster ongoing racism and indifference to Indigenous communities and their cultures, which makes Indigenous women vulnerable to further violence.[113]

It is important to examine the root causes of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and girls (MMIWG), to understand why this crisis continues with seemingly endless media reports of such violence across Canada. A long history of violence exists towards Indigenous women in Canada. According to Andrea Smith, gender based violence, "is not simply a tool of patriarchal control, but serves as a tool of racism and colonialism. That is, colonial relationships are themselves gendered and sexualized."[114] Missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls can be viewed as ongoing genocide occurring in Canada. The National Inquiry Supplementary Genocide report says:

---

[111] Long-Term Strategy to End Violence Against Indigenous Women, Ontario. Accessed November 15, 2019, https://files.ontario.ca/mi-2006_evaiw_report_for_tagging_final-s.pdf , 10.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Andrea Smith, and J. Khaulani Kauanui. "Native Feminisms Engage American Studies." *American Quarterly* 60, no. 2 (2008): 241-49. Accessed February 12, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/40068531.,247.

> Genocide is a root cause of the violence perpetrated against Indigenous women and girls, not only because of the genocidal acts that were and still are perpetrated against them, but also because of all the societal vulnerabilities it fosters, which leads to deaths and disappearances and which permeates all aspects of Canadian society today.[115]

In a recent Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) Press release, Grand Chief Arlen Dumas called on Winnipeg Police to properly investigate. In response to the Winnipeg Police Department's approach to the suspicious death of 22-year-old Jaeda Vanderwal, he stated, "This is a tragic case that is reminiscent of the death of Tina Fontaine in 2014. It is absolutely reprehensible how First Nations women and girls continue to be mistreated and dismissed."[116] According to the National Inquiry MMIWG final report, Indigenous women are 12 times more likely to be murdered or go missing than any other women in Canada, and 16 times more likely than Caucasian women.[117] Statistics Canada says, "those aged 15 to 24 years were the victims in nearly half (47%) of incidents reported by Aboriginal people, whereas they represented 22% of the Aboriginal population aged 15 and over."[118] The final report also concluded that Canada's past and current policies, actions and inactions toward Indigenous peoples is genocide. This colonial violence is a root cause for the violence experienced by Indigenous women and girls.[119] Indigenous art installations such as Walking With Our Sisters (WWOS) and the REDress Project play an important role in raising awareness of MMIWG; they educate the non-Indigenous communities by giving a voice to those who cannot speak. The Department for Women and Gender Equality (WAGE), former Status of Women website, states:

---

[115] National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. A Legal Analysis of Genocide, Supplementary Report, 8. Accessed June 20, 2019. https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/ , 8.
[116] Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. (January 16, 2019). Media Release. *AMC challenges the approach of the Winnipeg Police Department in suspicious death of Sandy Bay First Nation citizen Jaeda Vanderwal Treaty One*. Accessed June 7, 2019, https://manitobachiefs.com/amc-challenges-the-approach-of-the-winnipeg-police-department-in-suspicious-death-of-sandy-bay-first-nation-citizen-jaeda-vanderwal-treaty-one/?fbclid=IwAR3lBE4gQz355nlCfCGw79kIWVLapYx6YD1A2pP6snf7zsGEyJDQCQRn7xE
[117] National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. *Reclaiming Power*, 2019, 7.
[118] Statistics Canada. *Violent victimization of Aboriginal people in the Canadian provinces, 2009.* (March 11, 2011), 5.
[119] National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. (2019). *Reclaiming Power*, 54.

> Commemoration is a powerful way to honour truths, support healing, create awareness, and advance reconciliation. The Government of Canada recognizes that we cannot fully address the systemic causes of violence against Indigenous women, girls and LGBTQ and Two Spirit people without acknowledging the past.[120]

This is part of reconciliation, in recognizing what was done wrong in addressing ongoing issues in the past, then taking steps to amend them, and providing an opportunity for the families to honor their loved ones.

Possibly one of the earliest documented cases involving MMIWG occurred in Ottawa, Ontario, sometime between 1820 and 1850; it highlights the tale of an Indigenous girl's slaying in early history of Canada. Artist Janet Kaponicin created a painting, titled 'Spirit behind Parliament Hill'. According to the story, a group of Algonquin families were traveling up the Ottawa River and were returning to their traditional hunting grounds north of Maniwaki. One night, a young Indigenous girl aged 15 years old went missing from camp. When her mother went searching for her daughter, she found her dead body impaled on a tree stump. She had been raped and murdered by British soldiers.[121] While not many individuals know of this horrific story from our past, it is part of the oral tradition in the Algonquin community and has been retold from generation to generation.

Historically, Indigenous women have been treated as "less than", when compared to non-Indigenous women counterparts who feared them as competition.[122] Author Denise Lajimodiere highlights, "although all Native Americans suffer from stereotypes, Native American women

---

120 Department for Women and Gender Equality. Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls: initiatives will rally communities across Canada to commemorate, heal and advance reconciliation Press Release. (June 24, 2019). Accessed July 30, 2019, https://www.canada.ca/en/status-women/news/2019/06/missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-and-girls-initiatives-will-rally-communities-across-canada-to-commemorate-heal-and-advance-reconciliation.html

121 Blair Crawford. *Death on the Hill: An Algonquin artist's 30-year struggle to preserve the memory of a Parliament Hill tragedy.* (Ottawa Citizen, May 22, 2018). Accessed June 6, 2019, https://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/death-on-the-hill-an-algonquin-artists-30-year-struggle-to-preserve-the-memory-of-a-parliament-hill-tragedy

122 Nelson. *A Strange Revolution.*

were and are especially romanticized and abused".[123] Colonialism has had a significant negative impact on Indigenous peoples' lives, however its effects have been much more significant for Indigenous women due to their gender.

Beatrice Medicine describes the abuse of Indigenous women as

> due to activities such as pow wows and lectures by native intellectuals and ac-tivists and "medicine men." In these activities, native women must deal with the chauvinism and gender bias of the Native American leadership: men. [124]

Just another tool in its subjugation of Indigenous societies, colonialism uses power to control gender and the sexuality of Indigenous women. An example of this male control is described by Nelson, at a time when dominion legislation worked to penalize Indigenous women for immorality and prostitution.[125] Since its beginnings, colonialism has imposed a patriarchal system that has negatively impacted Indigenous families through policy and legislation. The most significant of the colonial impositions was the Indian Act due to its restrictive policy that affected Indigenous way of life. Nelson says, Protestant and Catholic missionaries, often with the support of Indigenous men, worked to confine Indigenous women to reserves thereby controlling every aspect of their life.[126] Though rooted in the past, the subjugation and sexual exploitation of Indigenous women still continues today. As early as 1880, Indigenous girls as young as thirteen were sexually exploited by newcomers. [127]

The position of Indigenous women has been undermined by the dominant society, which tends to look down on Indigenous people, specifically on Indigenous women who face a double burden, first because they are Indigenous and second because they are women. As a result of patriarchy, Indigenous women were dehumanized and sexualized by the first European settlers.

---

[123] Lajimodiere, 60.
[124] Beatrice Medicine. "Native American (Indian) Women: A Call for Research." *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (1988): 86-92. Accessed February 1, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/3211079.
[125] Nelson, 44.
[126] Idem, 45.
[127] Daschuk, 153.

This background of Canadian history is very important to understand, as the media influences the decision on whom they decide is important enough to report news on is significant, and often based on race. Kristen Gilchrist states that,

> whether investigated in terms of extent, amount, and content of coverage or the nature and quality of the representation presented, the results are unchanged. In the Canadian English-language print-news media, the experiences of missing/murdered White women are privileged over and above the experiences of missing/murdered Aboriginal women.[128]

Considerations

Specifically, this thesis will include a discussion of how colonialism has contributed to the high rates of violence and the large numbers of missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada. In fact, statistics in a RCMP 2014 report found 1,181 police-recorded incidents of Indigenous female homicides between 1980 and 2012 in RCMP controlled districts; of these, there were 164 missing and 1,017 homicide victims.[129] Racialized and sexualized violence against Indigenous women is due to a colonial and patriarchal attitude which has permeated our entire society.[130] Indeed in our current society, it is dangerous or a risk to one's health if an individual is an Indigenous woman, and can be recognized as a health or social determinant. In fact, Lajimodiere states that,

> distorted images of Indian women have been perpetuated by the continuing male bias of mainstream writers. The 'prostitute-princess syndrome' of much anthropological, historical and missionary writing is presently reinforced by the portrayal of Native women in the media.[131]

The ongoing portrayal of Indigenous women, largely negative, has contributed to an environment where cases involving them are treated differently, compared with non-Indigenous

---

[128] Kirsten Gilchrist. (2010). "Newsworthy Victims?", Feminist Media Studies, 10:4, 373-390, DOI 10.1080/14680777.2010.51410

[129] NWAC Voices of Our Sisters in Spirit_2nd Edition. https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/NWAC_Voices-of-Our-Sisters-In-Spirit_2nd-Edition_March-2009.pdf Accessed February 20, 2014, 98.

[130] Jessica Riel-Johns. Editors Lavell-Harvard D. Memee and Jennifer Brant. Forever Loved: Exposing the Hidden Crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada. (Demeter Press: Bradford, Ontario. 2016), 35.

[131] Lajimodiere, 60.

women who are missing or murdered. Two cases reported in the media on missing and murdered Indigenous women are Shelley Tanis Dene and Loretta Saunders, a Saint Mary's University Inuit student.[132] In Shelley Tanis Dene's case, despite her family missing her since November 8, 2014, they felt that initial contact with Edmonton police was not favorable.[133] Had Shelley Tanis Dene been a non-Indigenous woman, would the Edmonton police been out in full force, trying to locate her? In the Loretta Saunders media reports, the media indicated that she was a former addict, which has nothing to do with the case, and adds no relevance to the report. In my personal judgment, the news articles describing these two missing Indigenous women appear scant, do not fully describe who these women are, and what impact their disappearance has had on their family. Kirsten Gilchrist, by comparing the stories of three missing-murdered Indigenous [134] women with three missing-murdered non-Aboriginal women found:

> that articles about the Aboriginal women were considerably shorter, details of an intimate or personal nature were sporadic. Beyond superficial details, readers did not get the same sense of who the Aboriginal women were or what they meant to their loved ones or communities. [135]

Solutions need to be discussed in order to address the problem of the inequity of media exposure to missing and murdered cases of Indigenous women, compared with cases non-Indigenous women.

One of the key points of the National Inquiry Final Report was that Indigenous women and girls are denied a right to safety and security. The report says, "addressing violence must take into account the "long-term, multi-faceted" ways that Indigenous women are denied

---

[132] Global News. *Edmonton police ask for help finding woman not heard from in months.* (December 16, 2013). Accessed February 23, 2014. http://globalnews.ca/news/1033771/edmonton-police-ask-for-help-finding-woman-not-heard-from-in-months/

[133] CBC News. (January 5, 2013). *Missing and Murdered: The Unsolved Cases of Indigenous Women and Girls.*

[134] Note: Kirsten Gilchrist uses the term "Aboriginal" to describe the term Indigenous which is used currently today.

[135] Gilchrist, 382.

security throughout their lives."[136] All areas of their life are affected, from their own home to their community or where they may live, urban or on-reserve.

In reviewing the history of the Indian residential school and day schools, the focus of these schools was to eliminate the families' influence on the Indigenous children, and to deny their culture and language. The roots of violence began in these schools. The Final Report states that:

> forced residential and day school attendance was the starting point for many stories of family violence and stories that demonstrate the repeated denial of security to Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, because it was there where the "dynamics" that lead to violence were first played out and those factors that foster safety and security were undermined.[137]

Over more than a century, 150,000 Indigenous children were removed forcibly from their families and placed in the Indian residential school systems in Canada.[138] The primary objective was a policy of assimilation and to remove the children from the families' cultural influence. The students reported cases of physical, mental, emotional and sexual abuse as well. As the Statement of Apology states,[139]

> while some former students have spoken positively about their experiences at residential schools, these stories are far overshadowed by tragic accounts of the emotional, physical and sexual abuse and neglect of helpless children and their separation from powerless families and communities. The legacy of Indian residential schools has contributed to social problems that continue to exist in many communities today.[140]

When survivors left the schools, and started having their own families, they lacked the parenting skills to properly raise their children. The NI Final Report says, "there was a clear link

---

[136] National Inquiry: *Reclaiming*, 508.
[137] Idem, 517.
[138] Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. Indian Residential Schools Accessed December 24, 2019, https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015576/1100100015577
[139] AANDC. (June 8, 2011). Statement of apology to former students of the Indian residential schools. Accessed June 7, 2019, https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015644/1100100015649
[140] AANDC. (June 8, 2011). Statement of apology.

between the Indian residential school and day schools to the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and girls (MMIWG)."[141] The roots of violence were directly linked to the MMIWG issue. Furthermore an Aboriginal Healing Foundation report says that,

> the legacy of the residential school experience has been well documented and is clearly linked to post traumatic stress disorder as well as to a wide range of social problems, including addiction, physical and sexual abuse.[142]

The families of MMIWG encountered many negative stereotypes that they heard of their loved ones, when they were first reported missing. In addition to missing their loved ones, MMIWG families were forced to listen to and endure negative stereotypes in their quest for answers. The National Inquiry states:

> when in fact, missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls are the result of imposed poverty, legal and individual racism, discrimination and the patriarchy. Violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA peoples violates that understanding that each of us is sacred.[143]

In 2005, NWAC received funding for a five-year study of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada. The Sisters in Spirit initiative highlighted contributing factors for the violence that has been experienced for decades by Indigenous women and girls along with their families and communities due to the intergenerational impact and resulting vulnerabilities of state policies and colonization.[144]

In addition, modern Canadian policies perpetuate colonial legacies and the result is clear patterns of violence and marginalization of Indigenous people. Unlike traditional paradigms of genocide, colonial genocide is slow moving. Violence against Indigenous women is linked to broader discrimination and exclusion that Indigenous women face in all aspects of their lives.

---

[141] National Inquiry: *Reclaiming*, 44.
[142] Bopp, Judie, PhD, Michael Bopp, PhD, and Phile Lane Jr. The Aboriginal Healing Foundation Research Series. Aboriginal Domestic Violence in Canada. (Dollco Printing: 2006), 21.
[143] National Inquiry. (2019) Final Report. Foreword, 44.
[144] NWAC, Sisters in Spirit. 2010. Accessed June 11, 2019. https://www.trentu.ca/education/sites/trentu.ca.education/files/documents/SistersinSpirit_Handout_0.pdf

Honorable Wally Oppal, Commissioner of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry in British Columbia, on September 27, 2010 said,

> each missing and murdered woman had a unique life and story. At the same time, this group of women shares the experience of one or more disadvantaging social and economic factors: violence, poverty, addiction, racism, mental health issues, intergenerational impact of residential schools and so on. While not every woman experienced each of these conditions, most had experienced several of them.[145]

A recent movement occurring in the Indigenous community is an Indigenous led #METOO movement, which highlights the threat to the safety and security of Indigenous women and girls. A couple of young Indigenous women have stepped forward and complained of sexual harassment by high ranking Indigenous male leaders.[146] It takes a lot of courage for a victim to step forward, but when that happens, then as one victim steps forward, others follow suit.

Indigenous women have been denied active participation in the political arena such as band and council, which are dominated by Indigenous men. The Indian Act 1876 imposed a municipal style of governance on reserves by implementing an election style system[147]. Furthermore Indigenous women were not given the right to vote until 1960. In order for Indigenous women to have full political and economic empowerment, they need to have full and meaningful participation in decision making processes, to address underlying causes of violence against women. Indigenous women and girls continue to experience economic and social marginalization as a direct result of colonialism and of sexist and racist governmental policies. The Final Report of the National Inquiry states:

---

[145] Hon. Wally T. Oppal, 2012. Forsaken The Report of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry Executive Summary. Library and Archives. British Columbia.
[146] Kathleen Martens. *Indigenous women's group declares state of emergency over inappropriate communications from male leaders*. APTN National News. (June 26, 2019). Accessed July 30, 2019, https://aptnnews.ca/2019/07/26/indigenous-womens-group-declares-state-of-emergency-over-inappropriate-communications-from-male-leaders/?fbclid=IwAR0olx-8CqiSmsxUtqWsyzLcpgQEkskJtqNMMdu4hWrZxlAoiILy4gVnoNY
[147] Riel-Johns. 38.

> this marginalization and exclusion is the objective of the colonial policies of the Canadian state. Colonial policies violate the social, economic, and political rights of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people, and jeopardize their rights to human security, and in turn, safety. These colonial policies are tools of genocide.[148]

The Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability (CFOJA) was established in response to a call for action from the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner *Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences* for countries to document gender-related killings of women by collecting, analyzing and reviewing data on femicides with the aim of prevention[149]. The Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability report says:

> women and girls also continue to be targeted outside their intimate relationships 'because they are women and girls' due to misogynistic attitudes, male entitlement, and other social structural impacts (e.g. access to, and quality of, education, employment opportunities, services and resources), in part, the result of ongoing gender inequality. In addition, the experiences of Indigenous women and girls in Canada highlights that some groups of women and girls are at greater risk, due in part to gender, but also to other intersecting identities and inequalities that increase their marginalization in society and, in turn, their vulnerability to violent victimization.[150]

Indigenous peoples are the experts of their own realities and histories. Indigenous activists are part of a bigger Indigenous movement across Canada, the Idle No More movement, which began as a grassroots effort. This movement mainly began in opposition to Harper's legislative agenda including a large omnibus Bill C-45. The organizers wanted followers to stand up for their rights and for Canada to respect their sovereignty.[151]

---

[148] National Inquiry: *Reclaiming*, 363.
[149] Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability (CFOJA). Website. Accessed December 1, 2019, https://femicideincanada.ca/welcome
[150] Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability (CFOJA). #CallItFemicide for Justice and Accountability: Understanding gender-related killings and women and girls in Canada 2019, 82.
[151] Palmater, 81.

In order for Indigenous people to heal the root causes of family violence and abuse, the cycle of intergenerational trauma must be broken by stopping the cycle of abuse. In conclusion, the issue of MMIWG has been a long standing one, often ignored by those in power, and through long standing colonial policies by the Canadian government.

* * *

CHAPTER V: ACTIVISM AND THE QUEST FOR JUSTICE FOR MISSING AND MURDERED WOMEN AND GIRLS

Activism has always been a part of Indigenous culture since first contact. Crucial parts of Indigenous activism have included environmental protection and saving the earth but there also has been advocacy for other important issues affecting Indigenous people in Canada. In Canada, Indigenous women have been central to the activist movement. Pam Palmater says, "the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls was made very public by the NWAC several years ago through their dedicated research, community and family engagement, and advocacy efforts."[152] Some have said, to be an Indigenous person, is to be an activist. Lavell-Harvard in a speech at the 2016 Winnipeg National Roundtable on MMIWG says,

> to be born Indigenous and female in a country like Canada means that we are born political. We recognize that Canada has the resources and the infrastructure now to lead the way in ending violence against Indigenous women and girls both domestically and internationally.[153]

Indigenous women have taken on the challenge of improving conditions in their communities, they work on issues as diverse as clean drinking water, good housing and employment opportunities.

Since World War II, there has been growing awareness of political issues among the marginalized, primarily women and later among Indigenous people. Changes were made to the Indian Act, and the Canadian government eliminated some of the more restrictive sections including bans on cultural and political activities.[154]

In 1876, the Canadian state introduced the Indian Act, legislation that shut First Nations women out of political leadership and influence. Traditional systems of governance were

---

[152] Palmater, 76.
[153] D. Memee Lavell-Harvard. (Speech). National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 2016.
[154] First Nations Health Authority (FNHA). (no date) Accessed September 6, 2019, https://www.fnha.ca/wellness/our-history-our-health

replaced with an electoral system that forbade First Nations women from seeking office, voting, or even speaking at public meetings. First Nations women were, therefore, officially politically silenced until the Indian Act changes of 1951, which finally allowed them to vote and run for office.[155] In 1960, First Nations obtained the right to vote in Canada. In 1963, Harry B. Hawthorn was commissioned by the federal government to write a report on the social conditions of the Indigenous people in Canada. "Hawthorn's report, *A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada: Economic, Political, Educational Needs and Policies*, labelled Indigenous peoples "citizens minus" – the most marginalized and disadvantaged population in Canada." [156]

First Nations activism gave rise in response to the federal government's White Paper, introduced in 1969, which proposed to remove any special rights, dissolve the reserve system and formally assimilate Aboriginal people in Canada:

> Following the rise of First Nations political activism, a series of legal cases, social changes and decreasing direct control ensued. Direct missionary control was reduced or eliminated in most communities, and First Nations began to assert more control over governance and education, culminating with the end of the residential school system, an increase in political authority in limited matters, and in 1982 the protection of Aboriginal and Treaty Rights in the Canadian Constitution.[157]

Soon after its election in 1968, the Federal Liberal government led by Pierre Trudeau drafted a new Indian policy. As a response to the Hawthorn report, the document proposed a shift away from oppressive and discriminatory government policies, rooted in equality, or as Trudeau put it, "a just society."[158] Yellowhead Institute Red Paper said:

> these were revolutionary times for many; some demanded inclusion

---

[155] Brant, Castellano, 100.
[156] Naithan, Lagace and Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair. "The White Paper, 1969." The Canadian Encyclopedia, September 24, 2015. Last edited November 12, 2015. Accessed December 9, 2019, https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/the-white-paper-1969
[157] First Nations Health Authority (FNHA).
[158] Land Back: A Yellowhead Institute Red Paper. (no date). Accessed October 6, 2019, https://redpaper.yellowheadinstitute.org/

> in a polity that had marginalized so many for so long, while others formed social movements that questioned the legitimacy of capitalism and the nation state altogether. The struggle meant something different for Indigenous people, they demanded integrity from Canadians: on issues of honoring of treaty rights, restitution, and self-determination. The White Paper, as the new policy became known, betrayed those demands and prescribed political and legal assimilation into Canadian society. In response, First Nation leaders in Alberta drafted Citizens Plus in 1970, known as the Red Paper. The Red Paper was a constructive alternative to Canada's proposed plan. [159]

This was the history of Canada in relation to Indigenous politics, however we move next to an example of modern activism. In 2012, the Idle No More movement, which was founded by four women, three of whom were Indigenous and the fourth a non-Indigenous ally, began by a grassroots protest of Indigenous people, Métis, Inuit, and their non-Indigenous allies against the federal government.[160] The Idle No More movement galvanized mass support and also included non-Indigenous allies who supported the cause.

Indigenous art as a next step towards activism, can also be achieved through the use of space or re-claiming space. This includes taking space back from settler occupation, of Indigenous lands. Artist Adam Sings in the Timber highlights in his art project 'Indigenizing Colonized Spaces' a series of portraits of Native women wearing traditional regalia in metropolitan settings, to illustrate to people in public that they are on Native land.[161] When I looked up this website, one photograph showed a young Indigenous woman in full regalia walking by three non-native young women, who looked uncomfortable and shocked.[162]

Recently I attended an acclaimed Indigenous Arts Festival, Mòshkamo, held at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. It was a landmark event celebrating the inaugural season of Indigenous

---

[159] Land Back: A Yellowhead Institute Red Paper.

[160] Veronica Strong-Boag. (October 17, 2016). A Canadian Encyclopedia. *Women's Movements in Canada: 1985–* present. Accessed September 6, 2019. https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/womens-movements-in-canada-1985present

[161] Adam Sings in the Timber. (no date). *Indigenizing Colonized Spaces*. Accessed Oct 6, 2019. https://singsinthetimber.com/native-women

[162] Ibid. *(note: was not able to get a permission to use photo from photographer)

theatre in what has been described as a resurgence of Indigenous artists. Kevin Loring, artistic director of Mòshkamo said,

> Lori [Lori Marchand, Indigenous Theatre, Managing Director] and I shared a vision of celebrating our inaugural season by honoring Algonquin communities and the culturally distinctive traditions of our homelands. It has now come to life……we walk with great purpose and necessary humility towards doing our part in raising the Indigenous arts, our cultures, and our languages to the place of honour that they deserve.[163]

The show helped me understand the power that art has for promoting change and healing in our communities. I understood that in order for Indigenous people to survive in a modern world, they may need to adapt, and incorporate modern forms of art with traditional forms of their Indigenous practices. The performance included a duo of Inuk throat singers called RIIT, who incorporate traditional throat singing with electronic dance music.[164] One of their songs that was dedicated to MMIWG.

Jarita Greyeyes states,

> despite the great disruption of colonization, we have found ways to maintain and regenerate our languages, stories, and teachings. With many public celebrations of this county's art and culture, one you see the beauty of Indigenous dance and songs included. Know that the young people who might choose to share our culture during Canada 150 are the physical embodiment of the prayers of our ancestors, who fought to pass on our culture despite the best efforts of the state to assimilate us.[165]

The loss of culture in the Indigenous communities and negative effects were profound due to forced assimilation through attendance at the Indian residential school and restrictive Indian Act legislation which barred cultural practices. The link to one's Indigenous culture and the creation of safety for Indigenous women and girls was highlighted in the National Inquiry Final Report, "Reclaiming Power and Place". Witness Carol B. spoke about, "the impact of this

---

[163] Moshkana Indigenous Arts Festival pamphlet. 2019. National Arts Centre. September 11 - 29, 2019. Print.

[164] RIIT –QAUMAJUAPIK (Official Audio). YouTube. Accessed January 12, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6wYz1m3HoXo

[165] Sarah Richford. What 9 Indigenous Artists Want You to Know Before Canada 150.(June 21, 2017). Accessed Oct 6, 2019. https://www.flare.com/tv-movies/what-indigenous-activists-want-you-to-know-before-canada-150/

alienation on her sense of self and connection to culture."[166] Witness Carla M. made a connection between loss of culture and contemporary attitudes toward violence against Indigenous women:

> It's because of the shaming that happened through the residential schools – the belief that whoever was murdered deserved it, that they brought it on themselves, that shaming that had lasted for so long.[167]

Often, survivors refuse to talk about their lived experiences as a student, and often never breathe a word of what happened to them in those schools.

The issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women also affects their children who may end up in foster care, after their mother's death or disappearance.[168] The National Inquiry found that all violence, be it due to colonialism, patriarchy, misogyny, and racism, are inseparable from the everyday violence that Indigenous women, girls and 2LSGTQQIA people face[169]. Interdisciplinary health scholar, Dr. Cindy Holmes explains that

> relying simply on the idea of "male violence against Aboriginal women" recolonizes and erases some of the larger currents that sustain the totality of violence that Indigenous women, girls and 2LSGTQQIA people experience. [170]

In examining the issues, the focus should not be only on intimate partner violence when addressing all forms of violence against Indigenous women and girls. It is important to remember the intersection of these issues that affect Indigenous women who are three times more likely to become victims of violent assault. Indigenous women reported being the victim of a violent crime at a rate 2.7 higher than that reported by non-Indigenous women (219 incidents

[166] National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. (2019). *Reclaiming Power, 368.*
[167] Idem, 363.
[168] National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. (2019). *Reclaiming Power,* 271.
[169] Idem, 323
[170] National Inquiry. Vol 1.a. Introduction to Section 2: Encountering Oppression. Chapter 5: Confronting Oppression – Right to Culture, 329.

per 1,000 population vs. 81 incidents per 1,000).[171] In recent years, a number of advances have been made on Indigenous issues, Idle No More (2012-present), the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2008-2015), and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2016- present), to name but a few—have propelled Indigenous issues into the national spotlight. Some Canadians look to history to make sense of the legacies that inform native people's struggles today.[172] An important aspect is respect for one's culture.

The National Inquiry says,

> In 2016, the Human Rights Council of the United Nations unanimously adopted a resolution calling upon all states, to "respect, promote and protect the right of everyone to take part in cultural life, including the ability to access and enjoy cultural heritage, and to take relevant actions to achieve this. For Indigenous Peoples, practicing culture may be predicated/ rely on a range of other rights, including: the right to access lands, territories, and resources; to family; and the ability to participate in decision making processes that affect their communities. The resolution also obliges States to take action to prevent and provide redress for any action that deprives Indigenous peoples of their integrity as distinct peoples and their cultural values or ethnic identities, and that contains any forced assimilation or integration.[173]

The collective violence experienced by Indigenous communities has been defined in the academic literature as "historical trauma".[174] Burnette says,

> historical trauma is a concept that has emerged among the literature on indigenous communities to describe the effect of the collective and chronic traumatic events that are inflicted upon a group of people over generations.[175]

---

[171] Canada, Statistics Canada, "Life Expectancy." Accessed February 10, 2020. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-645-x/2010001/life-expectancy-esperance-vie-eng.htm

[172] Susan Neylan. (June 2018). *Canada's Dark Side: Indigenous Peoples and Canada's 150 Celebration.* Published by the Ohio State University and Miami University. Accessed June 7, 2019, https://origins.osu.edu/article/canada-s-dark-side-indigenous-peoples-and-canada-s-150th-celebration

[173] National Inquiry Final Report. (2019), 330.

[174] Ibid.

[175] Catherine E. Burnette; Sara Sanders; Howard K. Butcher; and Emily Matt Salois, "*Illuminating the Lived Experiences of Research with Indigenous Communities*". Aboriginal Policy Research Consortium International (APRCi). 171. (2011). Accessed June 7, 2019, https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/aprci/171

Despite the many years of violence, Indigenous people have developed resilience and have become involved in activist movements. The Aboriginal Healing Foundation states:

> stories of marginalized individuals and groups, whose intelligence, perseverance and good humor allowed them to achieve success or win a great victory despite all the odds stacked against them, have always fascinated people.[176]

In 2013, Pam Palmater described the Idle No More movement as,

> part of a larger Indigenous movement that has been in the making for several years now. Indigenous activists all over the country have been monitoring the political and legal scene in Canada at both the federal and provincial levels and making a concerted effort to help inform First Nation community members and leaders about the potential threats.[177]

The Idle No More movement caught people by surprise because it caught on so quickly and was so successful in it activism efforts led by Pam Palmater. The protests began with activists opposing the massive omnibus Bill C-45 but later also included the whole suite of legislation.[178] Pam Palmater has also been a vocal advocate for elimination of violence against Indigenous women and has championed the MMIWG cause as well.

Activism

This attack on our bodies is akin to attacks on our land. The health and safety of Indigenous people is directly linked to the health and safety of our land. Our Indigenous people's body sovereignty is entwined with the sovereignty of our First Nations.[179]

There is a direct correlation between increased rates of sexual abuse, trafficking, and domestic violence against women and children in regions where fossil fuel extraction companies

[176] Madeleine Stout Dion, and Gregory Kipling. Aboriginal Healing Foundation. *Aboriginal People, Resilience and the Residential School Legacy*. (Aboriginal Healing Foundation: Ottawa, Ontario, 2003), 5.
[177] Pam Palmater, 76.
[178] Pam Palmater, 77.
[179] Body Sovereignty. Accessed September 30, 2019. https://seedingsovereignty.org/mmiw

set up "man camps" to house workers[180] Christi Belcourt made this connection between attacks on the land and assaults on Indigenous women's bodies:

> Land is very important to Indigenous people and its connection to culture and tradition, as it has been for millions of years. We don't have people hunting and trapping as they have done traditionally, and people no longer live on our lands. As Indigenous peoples, we have to look at that as the underlying cause of everything where we have issues, including youth suicide, including health outcomes, child welfare, including missing and murdered people. Once we understand that the dispossessions from our lands are the root causes of everything, then we realize the solution therefore is to take back our lands.

Indigenous peoples have been systematically dispossessed of their lands, removed from the lands and lands have been stolen. Things have not changed with the underlying issues of child welfare, and children being stolen into the child welfare system. Our ancestors' lands were coveted because the government saw their value and wanted our resources. The settlers were successful in systematically removing Indigenous people from our lands, and our territories. As a result of the free-for-all resource extraction, industries are destroying the land and contributing to global climate change and the destruction of all living species on earth. We know our territories and lands even though we no longer live on them, or have access to them, or have control over them.

A solution is for Indigenous peoples to get out on the land, to reoccupy it, to build camps everywhere. Learning our Indigenous languages is important and teaching them to our children as well as it gives them a legacy of pride in Indigenous culture. In order to combat intergenerational trauma, our children need to be raised with love and care because they are our future. [181] What is striking is the love that Indigenous activists have for their people and for the future of their children. Dory Nason in reference to Idle No More says:

---

[180] Seeding Sovereignty. (no date). Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women – Land and Body Sovereignty. Accessed September 30, 2019 https://seedingsovereignty.org/mmiw
[181] Christi Belcourt. Interview. Batoche Saskatchewan, August 6, 2019.

> The world has witnessed the boundless love that Indigenous women have for their families, their lands, their nations, and themselves as Indigenous people. These profound forms of love motivate Indigenous women everywhere to resist and protest to teach and inspire, and to hold accountable both Indigenous and non-Indigenous allies to their responsibilities to protect the values and traditions that serve as the foundation for the survival of the land and Indigenous peoples.[182]

* * *

CHAPTER VI: INDIGENOUS FEMINISM

This chapter will examine Indigenous feminist theories, and assist to understand the foundations of Indigenous life and philosophy behind Indigenous ways of life.

In examining Indigenous feminist theories, it is important to first understand the foundations of Indigenous life, and the philosophy behind Indigenous ways of living. Paula Gunn Allen says that tribal lifestyles were never patriarchal and are more often gynocratic than

[182] Nason. https://decolonization.wordpress.com/2013/02/12/we-hold-our-hands-up-on-indigenous-womens-love-and-resistance/

not, meaning government by women.[183] This way of life for Indigenous communities changed dramatically, in particular the view towards Indigenous women, with the arrival of the white settler colonialism in Canada. With the progression of colonialism, we can trace the diminishing status of Indigenous women.[184]

Settler colonialism has always been a gendered process, because this country is based upon notions of heteropatriarchy and white supremacy.[185] Indigenous feminist theory is crucial to decolonization and it is a useful tool toward our goals of self-determination and self-governance. Using an Indigenous feminist theory, this thesis examined art as activism, in particular the WWOS and REDress Project which gives communities the opportunity to remember their loved one and through ceremony healing.

Definitions clarify several key terms that are used in this research; namely, "Indigenous feminism", "Western or mainstream feminism", and "heteropatriarchy". Authors Arvin, Tuck and Morrill define "Indigenous feminism", as those theories that make substantial advances in understanding the connections between settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy.[186] The authors stress that many Indigenous scholars do not identify as "feminist", even though they have made valuable contributions to the field. Because of its association with whiteness and the persistent stigma that feminism carries within Indigenous academic circles and Indigenous communities, the label has also been called the "f word".[187] Luana Ross says that the notion of feminism was feminism as grassroots, in-the-trenches, and activist.[188] Indigenous feminism is viewed as a threat to Indigenous sovereignty and the recognition of rights by the collective. Kathleen Jamieson says:

---

[183] Allen, 2.
[184] Castellano, 72.
[185] Maile, Tuck and Morrill. 9.
[186] Idem, 11.
[187] Luana Ross. "From the "F" Word to Indigenous/Feminisms." *Wicazo Sa Review* 24, no. 2 (2009): 39-52. Accessed January 3, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/40587780.
[188] Idem, 40.

> despite the fact that the Indian Act continues to discriminate against them on the fundamental principles of human rights, Indian women who have dared to speak out against it have been seen by many as somehow threatening the "human rights" of Indians as a whole.[189]

Settler colonialism refers to the structure of a society, and is a persistent social and political formation in which newcomers/settlers/colonizers come to a place, claim it as their own, and do whatever it takes to make the Indigenous people disappear. Methods utilized by settler colonizers include: designation of reserve lands, blood quantum laws, genocide, and the construction of laws to enable white settlers to claim Indigeneity.[190] Andrea Smith argues "genocide is less a politics of the extreme or the exception, and instead a foundational logic on which white supremacy is based".[191]

Arvin, Tuck and Morrill assert that:

> within settler colonialism, it is exploitation of land that yields supreme value. In order for settlers to usurp the land and extract its value, Indigenous peoples must be destroyed, removed, and made into ghosts.[192]

The term "heteropatriarchy" is the social system in which patriarchy, male dominance and heterosexuality are perceived as natural and normative. Any deviations are treated as abhorrent and abnormal. Heteropatriarchy refers to expressions of paternalism and patriarchy that rely on very narrow definitions of the male/female binary, in which the female is perceived as weak, naïve and confused and the men are portrayed as wise, capable and strong.[193]

Defining Indigenous Feminism

Authors Arvin, Tuck and Morrill argue there is no one definition of Native feminism and there

---

[189] Kathleen Jamieson. Indian Women and the Law in Canada: Citizens Minus. (Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1978), 3.
[190] Maile, Tuck and Morrill, 12.
[191] Andrea Smith. "The Gendered Logics of Indigenous Genocide." In *Women and Genocide: Survivors, Victims, Perpetrators*, edited by Bemporad Elissa and Warren Joyce W., 17-35. Bloomington, Indiana, US: Indiana University Press, 2018. Accessed February 2, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvgd2jm., 6
[192] Maile, Tuck, and Morrill,8-34.
[193] Maile, Tuck, and Morrill, 13.

are multiple layers and definitions of Native feminist analysis. Native feminists highlight the notion that their dreams and goals overlap, sharing the desire to open up spaces where generations have silenced Native peoples about the status of their women and about the intersections of power and domination that have shaped gender relations and Native nations.[194] Joyce Green describes Aboriginal feminism as,

> it takes gender seriously as a social organizing process and within the context of patriarchal societies, seeks to identify the ways in which women are subordinated to men and how women can be emancipated from this subordination.[195]

Green's definition brings together two critiques, anti-colonialism and feminism, to show how Aboriginal people, and especially Aboriginal women were impacted by patriarchy and colonialism. Aboriginal feminists link race and sex oppression, and as a result are a threat to the Aboriginal male elite.[196] Indeed Indigenous feminists challenge the Indigenous male structure in the community.

Key themes of Indigenous feminist writers

One of the main themes of Indigenous feminist writers perceives the male ideology of rights to be based on selfish individualism, and not in the interest of Indigenous rights. Indigenous feminist writers stress that in the past, male-dominated band councils have protested vehemently against Indigenous feminist and their allies because of their threat to male power within the structures imposed by settler colonial society. In the 1970, for example, an Alberta Indigenous women's group called 'Alberta's Native Homemaker's Clubs' was formed to work for the betterment of issues affecting First Nations women.[197]

---

[194] Ibid.
[195] Joyce Green, *Indigenous Feminism from Symposium to Book. Making Space for Indigenous Feminism* (Blackpoint, Nova Scotia, Canada/UK*:* Fernwood Publishing, 2007), 21.
[196] Green, 23.
[197] Women Suffrage and Beyond. Canadian Native Homemakers Clubs. Accessed December 30, 2019. https://womensuffrage.org/?p=946

Another key theme of Indigenous feminist writers is their fight and opposition to the discriminatory legislative policies of the Canadian government. A significant piece of legislation was the Indian Act, which is described by author Lynn Gehl, "in 1850, Canada introduced a series of legislation, known today as the Indian Act, which governed all aspects of Aboriginal life."[198] The Indian Act (1876) aimed to eradicate First Nations culture in favor of assimilation into Euro-Canadian society.[199] Furthermore, the Indian Act imposed the band and council model on First Nation communities. In fact, "the creation of the Chief and Council model in the Indian Act removed the power of women, since only men could stand for election as council members.[200] As a result, Aboriginal women faced discrimination in their own communities, in addition to being marginalized in mainstream society. Patricia A. Monture and Patricia McGuire say:

> From the introduction of the *Indian Act* into federal law in 1869, Aboriginal women who married non-Indians were stripped of their legal rights, and their Indian status, banished from their communities, and barred from families.[201]

Bill C-31 (1985) tried to make it less sexist. Later, Aboriginal women continued to face discrimination in their own communities due to band-created membership lists, which in some cases left out reinstated Bill C-31 First Nation women and children. A Status of Women Roundtable Report clarifies the issues surrounding the marginalization of women,

> affected First Nations women have been able to regain Indian status following the passage of Bill C-31 in 1985, but they continue to experience discrimination. This stems from Indian Act provisions that effectively deny their grandchildren Indian status if and when their children marry non-Aboriginal partners.[202]

---

[198] Gehl, 57-82.
[199] William B. Henderson, "Indian Act". The Canadian Encyclopedia, February 7, 2006. Last edited October 23, 2018. Accessed December 30, 2019.
[200] James S. Frideres and Rene R. Gadacz, *Aboriginal Peoples in Canada* (Pearson Canada Inc., 2012), 148.
[201] Monture, and McGuire, 1.
[202] *Aboriginal Women's Roundtable on Gender Equity Roundtable Report*. Status of Women. March 2000, 6.

To illustrate the predicament of Indigenous women, author James Frideres discusses two status Indian women, Jeanette Corbierre Lavell and Yvonne Bedard:

> that these two legal cases from the early 1970s involving the sex-discriminatory status regulations in the Indian Act illustrate the complexity of Aboriginal women's sexual equality problem. The cases presented a moral dilemma over which the women's movement and the Indian movement collided; the Indian ideology of special status was perceived as irreconcilable with the equal rights ideology of the women's movement. However, to Indian women the issue had never been as described as above. They had never asked for equal rights with other Canadians, but for equal rights with other Indians.[203]

And according to Joanne Barker:

> This highlights the conflict within communities as Indigenous women attempted to fight for equality to achieve Indian status under the Indian Act. In other words, the entire legal framework of the Indian Act has been based on ideologies of gender invested in establishing and protecting the rights and status of Indian men over Indian women.[204]

The patriarchal system established in the Indian Act has severely limited Indigenous women and families because of its control of every aspect of life from birth to death, including identity. Henderson says Indian Act policy and legislation "has enabled trauma, human rights violations and social and cultural disruption for generations of First Nations peoples."[205] These inequities explain that Indigenous feminism developed in order to address challenges facing Indigenous women and their children.

Differences to mainstream feminism

The history of the "women's right to vote" did not include Indigenous women because they were not represented in that movement and were not sponsored in that law. Indigenous women, forgotten by the Western feminist's suffrage and movement, were not allowed to vote in federal elections until 1960. A critic of mainstream feminism or "Western feminism", Tracey Lindberg

[203] Frideres, 43- 44
[204] Barker, 149
[205] Henderson, "Indian Act".

says these feminisms fail to take into account Indigenous women's roles in education and child rearing.[206] The perception is that while many Indigenous women's roles in many nations have included responsibility for the elders and children, they leave out the supportive role that Indigenous women play to Indigenous men. What role can they play when "traditional women's roles" are examined and interpreted with different-colored eyes, Lindberg asks. [207] In other words, it is this lived experience that mainstream feminisms cannot understand with respect to the lives of Indigenous women. Lindberg asks, "How can I call you sister when you were oppressor first?" [208] In other words, a non-Indigenous woman can never understand the world view or experience that faces an Indigenous woman on a daily basis.

The first point of difference between non-Indigenous and Indigenous feminism is the issue of race or racism. In addition to gender discrimination, Indigenous feminism must also overcome the oppression of racism. Discrimination is different for Aboriginal feminists compared with non-Aboriginal feminists and has the ability to profoundly affect their personal lives, in a way that does not affect non-Aboriginal women. Many First Nations women are all too familiar with band politics on their reserve; for example, do not upset someone in the band council office, or this may negatively affect an individual woman's chances for receiving funding or housing. Joanne Barker makes the important point that, "Indian women's experiences, perspectives and political agendas for reform were perceived as not only irrelevant but dangerous to Indian sovereignty movements." [209] Non-aboriginal feminists do not face these problems and cannot fully relate to the experience of Indigenous women.

Lina Sunseri adds that Indigenous women, along with women of "colour", have felt alienated by the "Western" feminist movement that has either not accurately represented their interests and experiences, or has marginalized them. Sunseri considers herself a feminist

[206] Lindberg, 345.
[207] Idem, 346.
[208] Idem, 347.
[209] Joanne Barker, *Gender, Sovereignty, and the Discourse of Rights in Native Women's Activism.* (Canada: Smith College, Vol. 7, 2006), 127.

because she acknowledges that we need to come to an understanding of feminism as a theory and movement that needs to fight all forms of oppression, including colonialism and racism.[210] Western feminists needs to face the reality that some of their members are part of the colonial power, and that they reap the same benefits their male counterparts receive. Until they do this, Indigenous and other colonized groups will still view them with apprehension. [211]

After years of being involved with Indigenous women politics, Joyce Green noticed that Indigenous women rarely identify as feminists.[212] In my own experience, I also have met Indigenous women leaders who were reluctant to label themselves as "feminists". In the past, I also have been reluctant to identify as a feminist and have a better understanding now of why that is; I came to this realization after spending many academic years reading Indigenous feminist writings.

Author Maria Anna Jaimes Guerrero defines non-Indigenous feminism that does not address land rights, sovereignty, and the state's systematic erasure of the cultural practices of native peoples, or that defines native women's participation in these struggles, as non-feminist, limited in vision and exclusionary in practice." [213] Guerrero goes further to highlight that,

> as traditionally communal peoples, native women organize their liberation struggles against American colonization from the premise of the collective human rights – a practice some of us refer to as "Indigenism". This practice diverges radically from the priorities and sociopolitical agendas of the white, middle-class women's movement, some of which are individualist rather than communal in orientation. [214]

Aboriginal feminism is closely linked to activism as Shirley Green explains, "incidents such as these served to strengthen my feminist beliefs, and I realized that I could not be a feminist

---

[210] Lina Sunseri. *Moving Beyond the Feminism Versus Nationalism Dichotomy*. Canadian Women Studies, Vol. 20, Number 2, 144.
[211] Ibid.
[212] Shirley Green, Looking Back, Looking Forward. Making Space for Indigenous Feminism, Joyce Green. (Fernwood Publishing, 2007), 161.
[213] Marie Anna Jaimes Guerro, *Civil Rights versus Sovereignty: Native American Women in Life and Struggles. Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*. (Routledge 1997), 101.
[214] Guerro, 102.

without also becoming an activist." [215] In other words, Aboriginal feminism differs from non-Aboriginal feminism, in that Aboriginal women are also fighting against racism and for their rights.

Finally, Indigenous women have different relationships with their men than non-Indigenous feminists. Indigenous women have large kinship networks, which is in contrast to the Western biological view of family. Seeing all women united through gender, this blanket inclusion of Indigenous women's identities, experiences and understandings, within "Western feminism movement", is exclusionary and offensive. The imposition of colonization has caused internal strife in indigenous communities, disrupting Indigenous institutions and relationships, and the Indigenous men have suffered along with Indigenous women. Lindberg says that to ally only with women and to not include Indigenous men is like removing a layer of tissue in a tree, weakening the rest of the body because a fundamental part of its being is missing.[216] The following quote speaks volumes to the underlying theme of differences between Indigenous feminism and Western feminism. Lindberg states,

> that line between gender and race is not very clear to me, but when I stand on it I can see the non-Indigenous women who are able to own the land we were forced to move away from. [217]

Some of the key theoretical underpinnings that support indigenous feminism are further discussed, and include for example, Indigenous theories, Foucault, Fanon, and Post colonialism. Indigenous feminist theory highlights the issue that ethnic studies have failed to adequately address settler colonialism and in order to decolonize, it is important to remember that issues facing Indigenous women are inseparable from the issues facing Indigenous people as a whole. Some of the important tools utilized by Indigenous feminist theory has been applying

[215] Green, 161.
[216] Tracey Lindberg. *Not my Sister: What Feminists Can Learn about Sisterhood from Indigenous Women*. Canadian Journal of Women and Law, 350.
[217] Lindberg, 1.

Indigenous theories and decolonizing frameworks to contest the misrepresentation of Indigenous people in the media, school curricula and the public mind. [218]

Frantz Fanon is best known for "The Wretched of the Earth", a classic on decolonization. In it, Fanon, analyzes the role of race, class and violence, and national culture in the struggle for national liberation, which is similar to Indigenous feminist theory.[219] In building on Fanon's perspective, Indigenous feminist theory examines how the colonizer racializes or objectifies the colonized body, in this case, the Indigenous women.[220]

Indigenous feminist theory also utilizes a post-colonial theoretical framework, in order to examine ways in which colonialism has had an impact on Indigenous women's lives. Author Leela Gandhi describes post-colonialism:

> post-colonialism as a difficult term to describe. Its manifesto is that post-colonialism needs to diversify its mode of address and then learn to speak more adequately to the world, which it speaks for. [221]

The oppressed or colonized voices are often minimized or muted due to the effects of colonialism and it is important that their voices be included. Some examples of making their voices heard, are through Indigenous activism that includes rallies, demonstrations or use of social media campaigns. Using this lens, Indigenous feminists such as Maile, Tuck and Morrill[222] have looked at power struggles between Indigenous women and settler colonialism. The influence of settler colonialism on Indigenous people has been all encompassing, with no thought for the welfare or good of the colonized Indigenous groups it has affected. Indigenous feminist theory utilizes a post-colonialism view, these include power relations and racist assumptions that made the colonial system possible, as well as the legacy of colonialism for both the colonists and colonized. Indigenous feminist theory asserts that settler colonialism still exists and that we all need to fight against it today.

---

[218] Maile, Tuck and Morrill, 10.
[219] Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. (New York: Grove Press, 1963). 93.
[220] Smith. 9.
[221] Gandhi. 1.
[222] Arvin, Tuck and Morrill, 15.

Post colonialism speaks to the existence of the long history of colonialism consequences on the colonized individuals and groups. The 'decolonize your mind' aspect of Indigenous feminist theory is similar to post colonialism's theory of psychological resistance to colonialism. Michel Foucault attacks the Western worldview asserting that there are other ways of looking at things; similar to Indigenous feminism which says a radical departure from gender and women's studies is needed, in order to have critical engagement of Indigenous feminist theory.

Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* discusses the innumerable ways in which the imposition of the settler's gaze can inflict damage on the Indigenous society at both the individual and collective levels.[223] This is similar to the Indigenous feminism example, of facing racism and experiencing the "settler's gaze".

Settler Colonialism aspects can be viewed in relation to indigenous feminism. Soon after the arrival of European colonization in North America, First Nation's traditional belief systems were attacked and Indigenous people faced increasing social and cultural disruption. European influence disrupted gender relations and imposed alien social structures. First Nations men were also negatively impacted by colonization but the most immediate damage was towards the heart of the family, the women.[224] According to Paula Gunn Allen, imposition of settler patriarchy began with the assumption that males are dominant. The colonizers were threatened by the indigenous women's power, and knew attempts at total conquest would fail, as long as women held this highly regarded status. [225] Frideres says

> Historically, many Indigenous societies were matrilineal (tracing descent through the female line), characterized by the man moving to the woman's family location after marriage. Other Indigenous communities were matriarchal – societies in which women were actively involved in tribal governance. Thus, prior to European settlement, Indigenous women held power, land and property and were influential

[223] Glen Coulthard. Subjects of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and the Politics of Recognition in Canada. Contemporary Political Theory, 2007, 6, (437-460), (Palgrave MacMillan Ltd: 2007), 444.
[224] Cynthia C. Wesley-Esquimaux. *Trauma to Resilience: Notes on Decolonization*. Gail Guthrie Valaskakis, Madeline Stout and Eric Guimond, editors. "Restoring the Balance: First Nations Women, Community and Culture." (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2009), 13.
[225] Allen, 2.

in the organization and functions of their communities. [226]

Lorenzo Verancini theorizes settler colonialism is characterized by a persistent drive to supersede the conditions of its operation, to make itself seem natural, without origin and inevitable. This is why a politics of inclusion is undesirable within Indigenous feminist frameworks. [227] One of the challenges is to problematize and theorize the intersections of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy. Native feminist theories reveal a key theme of settler colonialism as the consistency and then naturalization of heteropatriarchy.

Maile, Tuck and Morrill argue that a cornerstone has been the heteropaternal organization of citizens into nuclear families, each expressing a proper modern sexuality that bolsters and supports the nation-state. As a result, the settler nations strive to disappear indigenous people's complex structures of kinship and governance, and the management of Indigenous peoples' sexuality and gender roles, which was key for remaking Indigenous peoples into settler state citizens. [228]

Hetero-patriarchy

"Heteropatriarchy" is the mechanism that ensures the male right of access to women. Heteropatriarchy is men de-skilling and dominating women in any number of forms, from women devaluing female bonding and outright attack of paternalistic care. It normalizes the dominance of one person and the subordination of another. The logic of heteropatriarchy includes the construction and tolerance of dominant male violence together with intolerance of female violence against abusers, blaming the 'feminine victim' and targeting a group of men as predators against whom dominant men can 'protect' chosen women. [229] This background of theology is the underlying furor in the issue of MMIWG.

---

[226] Frideres, 148.
[227] Lorenzo Veracini, *Introducing Settler Colonial Studies*. Settler Colonial Studies, I(I), 2011, 8.
[228] Maile, Tuck and Morrill, 15.
[229] C. Pateman, *The Sexual Contact*. Stanford (CA: Standford University Press, 1988), 245.

In conclusion, the various theories discussed provide an increased knowledge and comprehension of this research. Fanon's explanation of the ways in which colonial hegemony is maintained is through the objectification of the body of the colonized. This objectification occurs because of the discursive practice of representing the body of the "other". [230] Fanon's theory clarifies the effects of colonialism, sexually exploited and marginalized Indigenous women's bodies. In other words, Aboriginal women's bodies have been "othered", in order to justify colonial exploitation.

This research is informed by three principles; "Indigenous feminism", "Western feminism" and "heteropatriarchy". The differences between Indigenous feminism theory and Western feminism were explored and highlighted, as well as settler colonialism in relation to Indigenous feminism. Examining the links between heteropatriarchy and settler colonialism is important for all individuals living within a settler colonial context, especially with regard to Indigenous people. Indigenous people's tradition, culture and way of life have been significantly impacted by settler colonialism, something explored by Indigenous feminism. Finally, decolonizing feminism is an important step toward writing a different history for Indigenous peoples, and pushing feminism into new revolutionary directions.

* * *

CHAPTER VII: HIGHLIGHT SUMMARY OF INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS RESULTS AND FINDINGS

[230] Carmela Murdocca, *There is Something in That Water: Race, Nationalism, and Legal Violence.* Law & Social Inquiry. Volume 35, Issue 2, 369-402 Spring 2010, 391.

Sharing stories is part of Indigenous culture, and plays a role in Indigenous research and methodology. Kovach explains that, "story and Indigenous inquiry are grounded within a relationship approach to research…for story to surface, there must be trust".[231]

Kevin Loring, Artistic Director of the National Arts Centre said of Indigenous performing arts that,

> our stories are medicine…when we celebrate, when we dance, that's medicine, when we weep that's medicine, and from the Indigenous perspective when we bring these stories forward, they are meant to change the world, incrementally or even profoundly.[232]

That stories can heal and are viewed as medicine is profound. Indigenous people have shared stories in our culture for centuries, as a way of preserving knowledge and teaching others. There are many different ways of sharing stories through art, such as the sharing of legends through a painting. Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg Artist Simon Brascoupe paints the legend of Sky Woman, which tells the story of creation.[233] Similar to the red dresses in the REDress Project and the moccasin vamps in the WWOS commemoration exhibit, Simon's painting also tells a story using an artistic medium.

The Walking With Our Sisters (WWOS) art installation began in ceremony and prayer, and continued in Indigenous spirituality and with the guidance of Elders and Knowledge Keepers from beginning to end. At the WWOS Batoche Saskatchewan closing ceremonies, the Elders said the spirits of the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls were being called home. Batoche and the south Saskatchewan River region is of historical importance to the Métis people, and it is significant that the artist/founder Christi Belcourt chose this location for the WWOS closing ceremonies. Belcourt chose the Batoche location due to its significance to the Métis people. The region was home to Métis buffalo hunters and traders from the mid-

---

[231] Kovach, 98.

[232] CBC Arts. (*The Unnatural and Accidental Women: Why this Indigenous Theatre is launching with a heartbreaking play*. September 26, 2019). Accessed online November 28, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VjOFCdnEOLE

[233] Simon Brascoupe. Artist. Website. Accessed January 1, 2020, https://simonbrascoupe.com/

nineteenth century, and the site of the Battle of Batoche which occurred in the 1885 Resistance. After exhausting the safe and legal means of resistance and advocacy, in 1885, Métis took up arms against the Canadian government to protect their lands, homes and way of life.[234] The WWOS final exhibit was staged along the river bank in the historic Batoche East Village, along the Carlton Trail leading to the South Saskatchewan River. The exhibit was adjacent to the Women's Camp, where Métis women and children sought refuge during the Battle of Batoche, and where the women tended the young, the elderly and the sick. When one stands on the bank of the South Saskatchewan River looking out on the land, it is not hard to imagine the ancestors that used to live on those lands, and the Métis people who fought for a better life for their families and communities. The message from the River Collective who hosted the final Walking With Our Sisters commemorative ceremony in Batoche,

> *we are a community of grassroots women who care about the wellness of our families, our communities, our land and our river. Our ancestors connect and ground us to this place along the South Saskatchewan river.*[235]

It was at this historic location, beside the moccasin vamps at the WWOS installation and Métis homeland, I completed an interview with the project founder, Christi Belcourt. In keeping with Indigenous research protocol, I began my interview with Christi Belcourt, founder of the Walking With Our Sisters art installation, by gifting her with a pouch of tobacco, in recognition of her sharing her knowledge. In our conversation, Christi discussed root causes of violence against Indigenous women and girls in Canada.

An issue in the research of the topic of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls is interview fatigue of participants. Ojibway artist Vicky Laforge was also interviewed, she had completed a REDress Project exhibit titled REDsilent located in Saskatchewan in 2018. In discussions with Vicky, she gave me permission to speak about this project.

---

[234] Walking with Our Sisters, August 15-18, 2019, Batoche, Saskatchewan pamphlet. Print.
[235] Ibid.

Information was gathered from YouTube videos of Jaime Black, creator and visual artist of the REDress project, to understand some of her thinking behind this project. The impetus behind the REDress project, Jaime wanted to take the activism side and the art side and combine them as an artist to further something that was important and happening in the world, and that needed to be addressed. She first thought of the idea after she attended a Canadian Studies academic conference in Germany, when she imagined red dresses in the trees covering Winnipeg, Manitoba.[236] Black says the motivation for creating her art project was to create space for the Indigenous women and girls' stories to be told, in order that people come together to learn that they are facing. She put red dresses, in a variety of styles and sizes, in public spaces as an ongoing reminder to the public of MMIWG. Black says that spirits of the women are called in; their energy and power is with us and her as she speaks out about violence. Black says she creates a platform through her work for voices that are often silenced.[237]

Research Findings:

Participants mostly agreed that Indigenous art can be used as a form of activism to raise awareness of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Entering the analysis phase, the researcher engaged ten one-on-one interviews over the phone and two in-person interviews, where participants were asked the same series of questions through a questionnaire. The questionnaire served as the primary mechanism for engagement, and while it was completed by participants from across Canada, there were however limited responses from BC, Yukon and Nunavut.

---

[236] Jaime Black., THE REDRESS REDRESS PROJECT - MTS TV YouTube. (December 5, 2011). Accessed December 1, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gvHm-gxdKz0

[237] National Museum of the American Indian. *The REDress Project at the National Museum of the American Indian.* (April 8, 2019). YouTube video. Accessed June 25, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lH7FuxzrFvs&t=9s

Demographic Overview

This research engaged ten individuals both Indigenous and non-Indigenous through phone interviews and in person interviews; there were 4 non-Indigenous (all females) and 6 Indigenous, (5 females, 1 male). Majority of participants were female, with 1 male.
The research had strong representation of gender diverse ages, however the Indigenous participants were in a younger age cohort, 75% were between 45-65.

In summary, the following themes arose:

A. Building Awareness

Indigenous

Visual art has a symbolic power that allows people to enter into a conversation without barriers, because visual images impact an individual on the emotional level first. WWOS art exhibit had an emotional impact on participants. One participant described the realization of what the number actually looks like when you see all the vamps placed closely together; there were so many. "You get that gravity, it's pretty hard, when you walk through that, its someone's sister, mother or a friend or relation and to get the impact. You think of the survivor."[238]

Christi Belcourt, artist of Walking With Our Sisters discussed the importance of her work:

> In that first and foremost, it's important to acknowledge and honor the lives of our people who have been murdered and who are missing, and to pray for those who are missing to be returned to their families safely. And it's important to acknowledge the families who have endured decades of just pain and torment. It's a well-known fact that Canada is complacent in genocide.[239]

[238] Interview with an Indigenous WWOS participant. November 28, 2019.
[239] Christi Belcourt, interview August 2019, Batoche Saskatchewan.

The WWOS exhibit was an opportunity to teach and educate because it was eye- opening. The exhibit is needed; people do not get understand the gravity of the situation unless you attend a WWOS.[240]

A Human Rights Watch report says, "the failure of law enforcement authorities to deal effectively with the problem of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada is just one element of the dysfunctional relationship between the Canadian police and Indigenous communities."[241] One triggering moment occurred when some police officers came into one of the installations wearing their uniforms and guns, even though they came to pay their respects. Some visitors to the installation were triggered; a consequence of the stressed relationship with police services. Organizers, police officers and troubled visitors talked the situation through and eventually came to an understanding.[242]

A participant indicated that yes, there were little bumps along the way, with the involvement of thousands of people, across the country. They were few, but some important issues were raised especially around funeral and burial practices, around those things [that] are not well understood among our people or not practiced. There was general agreement that pregnant women or small children should not be part of funerals, as is our tradition. There was occasional disappointment, among visitors that did not follow those same teachings, but we had to stay true to them. Instructions of the Grandmothers were followed all the way through so whatever they told us to do, was followed.[243]

In another case, a participant felt there was a lack of understanding of the significance of the art installations. Some people did not understand the spiritual aspect of the installation and

[240] Interview with an Indigenous WWOS participant. November 28, 2019.
[241] Human Rights Watch. *Those Who Take Us Away Abusive Policing and Failures in Protection of Indigenous Women and Girls in Northern British Columbia, Canada*. (2013). (United States of America), 7.
[242] Interview with an Indigenous WWOS participant. August 19, 2019.
[243] Ibid.

that it is not just an art show.[244] One participant says, "WWOS is empowering and uplifting. There are two extremes happening at once, one is it's a tragedy of why it's happening and also weird because it's a hard event. It's a response to something that is dark and painful."[245]

Another participant expressed concern with the questioning that was directed towards her, asking her if she was a family member of a MMIWG. She was also asked how much of an Indian she was and felt shamed because she wasn't a MMIWG family member.[246]

The quality of the beading was well done. Participants realized the immense work that went into making the moccasin vamps, especially by the experienced 'beaders'. Visitors to the exhibit realized that it takes a lot of patience, and seeing the moccasin tops, appreciated the work that goes into one.[247]

A participant indicated that many skirt protocols were addressed, and sometimes mistakes were made by committees, some were as large as 30 people strong with up to 200 volunteers in one place. Sometimes there is miscommunication about what people should wear or shouldn't wear. Some Elders have different teachings that are not in line with each other, but underlying everything was the willingness to work it out. Occasionally there were some people that got the wrong instructions causing ripples, but it made people work together, to a shared goal of honoring the lives of Indigenous women and girls.[248] Participants indicated a lack of understanding of Indigenous history and culture by non-Indigenous participants. One interviewee said "Canadians on average, of course not all, but on average do not and have never understood Indigenous people."[249] Mainstream doesn't look at this issue, unless it makes big news.

---

[244] Interview with an Indigenous WWOS participant. August 18, 2019.
[245] Ibid.
[246] Interview with an Indigenous WWOS participant. November 28, 2019.
[247] Ibid.
[248] Interview with an Indigenous WWOS participant. August 19, 2019.
[249] Ibid.

An interesting perspective shared by a participant was she preferred a more personal view of the MMIWG, for example how people knew them and their names. Negative stereotypes exist of Indigenous people, that all Indigenous women are sex workers. More negative views are presented instead of the personal side of a MMWG victim for example, she had a beautiful smile; she was loved.[250] A concept exists of MMIWG is that it's an "Indian problem". Old assumptions exist of us, out there partying which dehumanizes us.[251]

Another important issue that was raised by two participants was the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous men and boys (MMIMB). This issue was not raised by the non-Indigenous participants in the interviews.

One participant noted,

> We also recognize there are missing and murdered Indigenous men and boys, there are missing and murdered Indigenous people, including transgender two spirit people. I feel there still needs to be some sort of acknowledgement of the murdered and missing Indigenous men, and as yet there hasn't yet been a wide spread understanding of how broad that issue really is.

There was recognition by the participants of the activism of the WWOS art installment. Even though artists like Christie Belcourt and a visionary like WWOS, it's not as meaningful unless you can engage everyone who isn't artists. A participant said, "I can see what her art is doing. Art gets people on board in an activist way even though they aren't artists. Activism is a big part of it."[252]

Non-Indigenous

Building Awareness

[250] Interview with an Indigenous WWOS participant. October 28, 2019.
[251] Ibid.
[252] Ibid.

One key issue that was raised by interviewees was how WWOS and the REDress Project raised awareness of MMIWG in communities. One participant indicated, "A lot of people did not realize that MMIWG is an issue in their own community and through attendance, it's an eye-opening experience for them, because the vamps are made by local people in their community."[253]

The exhibit led to a deeper understanding of Indigenous women's experiences socially. It also provided an opportunity to reflect on the experiences of Indigenous women and girls in the community.

The event introduced them to Indigenous women in their communities, whom they might not have met otherwise. It enabled them to develop real relationships with Indigenous women, in order to work alongside them. As a result, they became much more involved in the community.[254]

Another participant commented,

> It's important and raising awareness is an important part for non-Indigenous. The trick is to find ways to reach the 96% of Canadians who didn't get taught history. Even though they live beside Indigenous, it's not part of their everyday life and awareness is key. REDress does this.[255]

A participant described it being really different when you go to an event and there are visual representations and you meet indigenous and non-Indigenous and with your interactions, its more impactful. She compared it to reading something in print, and is much more tactile when you attend an event. The participant said, "I taught a class at Algonquin College that talks about Indigenous perspective to what societies call victims. I don't call them victims. You can read about it."[256]

---

[253] Interview with a non-Indigenous WWOS participant. November 28, 2019.
[254] Ibid.
[255] Interview with a non-Indigenous REDress participant. November 22, 2019.
[256] Interview with an non-Indigenous WWOS participant. November 18, 2019.

WWOS was a powerful installation in our community, a lot of folks came through the installation. It raised awareness in the community. Ramification further along, and was recognized by the Mayor. Very powerful, and changed community dynamics.[257] One participant sad, "I noticed some folks were very clearly touched emotionally in terms of the feelings of pain and loss and were overwhelmed by the number of vamps, knowing what they represented."[258] Two parts, in being part of the Red Deer organizing committee, there was a deepening understanding of what Indigenous women experience socially. One participant said,

> It wasn't just the installation, I attended, it was community conversation, it was important in order to understand the situation. Introduced me to Indigenous women in the community. Helped me to develop real relationships to work alongside them. Much more involved in community itself.[259]

Very impactful, the WWOS has formed strong bonds in the community between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples. I learned after the family members of MMIWG spoke at an event that it was very personal and that it wasn't someone who was nameless or faceless, and by looking at the moccasin vamps, it was very impactful. You can touch and speak with the women and children, and you remember how it made you feel. It wasn't just the art installation, it was a community conversation which is important to understand the situation.[260]

The installation provided me with opportunity to reflection, energy that came out of installation was very thought provoking. One of the most powerful things I have done in my life and provided opportunity to be reflective of experiences of Indigenous women and girls in the community.[261]

A participant said, "I know a number of people who participated in WWOS, for whom that experience was a profoundly changing experience."[262]

---

[257] Interview with an non-Indigenous WWOS participant. November 19, 2019.
[258] Interview with an non-Indigenous WWOS participant. November 22, 2019
[259] Interview with an non-Indigenous WWOS participant. November 28, 2019.
[260] Ibid.
[261] Ibid.
[262] Ibid.

There was a fear of the unknown. Some non-Indigenous may have not had a lot of experience in attending cultural art installments and felt uncomfortable. One participant said, "because I have lived experience I was afraid that I was going to get emotional by crying or not actually be able to get though the event."[263]

Most non-Indigenous participants were aware of Indigenous activists and could name them as well, for example child advocate Cindy Blackstock and other activist groups like Idle No More, Sister in Spirit, AIM, and the Standing Rock protest. Participants were able to name older protests as well, like Oka and Six Nations.

Another participant said, she felt the location was not acceptable. The art installation held in Calgary, was tucked away in a remote university section and folks may have stayed away because of this.[264]

B. Promoting Change

Indigenous

Participants viewed both WWOS and the REDress Project as tools for positive change in their community. WWOS became a movement even though it never intended to be, it changed a lot of people's lives and garnered a lot of attention.[265]

A participant said, "We are more than an art exhibit, there has to be more concrete grassroots or community process. If someone knows something, there has to be a better process we can actually call our own."[266]

A male participant indicated that his family completed preparation before attending the WWOS exhibit with his young daughters aged 9 and 13 years of age. He viewed it as a celebration, and recognition of what's going on currently. The father indicated that he wanted to

[263] Interview with an non-Indigenous WWOS participant. November 18, 2019.
[264] Interview with an non-Indigenous WWOS participant. November 28, 2019.
[265] Interview with an Indigenous WWOS participant. August 19, 2019.
[266] Interview with an Indigenous WWOS participant. August 18, 2019

use this as an important teaching opportunity for his daughters, of the dangers that existed out there in the real world.[267] Male participant says,

> I tell them they are unfortunately [to have] to keep their head up, be aware of what goes on around them, to be safe is an added measure of caution of what goes on around. A person who is not native will not come to the same end, as these native women and children have.[268]

Due to the intergenerational effects experienced, participants indicated that healing is needed in the Indigenous communities. Christi Belcourt said,

> We have alot of recovery left to do in our communities. The underlying issues of child welfare, children being stolen into the child welfare system is not different than 100 or 150 or 200 years ago. Indigenous peoples have been systematically removed from our lands and we have been dispossessed, and our lands have been stolen. The whole reason why they wanted our lands was because they wanted our resources. they saw dollar value on the lands of our ancestors. And they have systematically succeeded in removing us from our lands, and our territories and while we know our territories and lands we no longer live on them, or have access to them, or have control over them. Traditions have changed. I encourage everybody to get out on the lands that they can, to reoccupy our lands, to build camps everywhere, and to learn our languages and to love our children and raise our babies with love and care.[269]

Non-Indigenous

Promoting Change

A non-Indigenous participant commented that they felt that there was nothing they could do, however they believed that something could actually be done. Concerns expressed with specific services ending, for example ending the Greyhound service would lead to more MMIWG.[270]

There was a wish for more impactful events that we could take out to the broader community. By having more artistic exhibits, they hit people more in the heart.

One participant stated,

---

[267] Interview with an Indigenous WWOS participant. November 28, 2019.
[268] Ibid.
[269] Interview with Christi Belcourt. August 19, 2019.
[270] Interview with a non-Indigenous WWOS participant. November 28, 2019.

> Similar to the Child welfare issue, in the issue of MMIWG, not a lot has changed, it remains the same. Believe that the young Indigenous students in urban centers need the proper support, in order that they don't become victims and are targeted. Home stays in urban centers need special training, in order to support Indigenous students. [271]

C. Making Connections (Other MMIWG Families & Communities)

Indigenous

The exhibits enabled breaking of isolation, the acknowledgement of other families, seeking comfort from other survivors and seeking comfort from violence. For another attendee, it was about community. She took comfort in knowing that everything that was happening was through the community, and volunteers worked to make it happen. The community wanted the WWOS exhibit there, and were taking responsibility to take care of each other. Families still reach out to families.[272]

Non-indigenous

Making Connections (Other MMIWG Families & Communities)

Some people have clearly been touched emotionally in terms of feeling the pain the loss, overwhelmed by the number of vamps knowing what they represented. They comforted each other, even if they didn't know each other.

Reaching across common humanity, tough conversations were heard and received openly. People have changed in response to that. There was a coming together of folks that didn't know each other, the installation brought them together and kept them together.

A bridge of understanding was created through reaching across humanity, as tough conversations were heard, as the installation brought them together. Strangers comforted each other.

---

[271] Interview with a non-Indigenous WWOS participant. November 28, 2019.
[272] Interview with an Indigenous WWOS participant. August 19, 2019.

D. Ceremonial Aspect

Indigenous

The ceremonial power unleashed by WWOS made some people uncomfortable within Indigenous communities. Indigenous people shared how they could lead our own ways of doing things, and have non-Indigenous peoples be a part of it. Maintaining the integrity for our ceremony at WWOS made participants feel personally validated. Some concerns with regards to the WWOS were that:

> this bundle shone a mirror to the communities and to ourselves. It holds up a mirror to us, and where there was conflict, that was the mirror shining back to us to show us where our conflicts lie. And if we were cognizant of it and willing to work on those areas, it would make our communities stronger. In a lot of cases, two spirited people do not want their bodies to be policed on what they wear.[273]

It's important to acknowledge and honor the lives of our people who have been murdered and who are missing, and to pray for those who are missing to be returned to their families safely.[274]

Walking with Our Sisters was not about raising awareness or it never set out to build relationships between communities, it was never about reconciliation. It was simply to just hold ceremony in the multitude of ways that we know how within our nations, and on our territories and our lands. To honor their lives and to uphold the families and to show the families how much we recognize their pain and grief. It is also important because it was ceremony and our Elders tell us that a lot of the spirits of our sisters were helped here and they came to help as well. On the spiritual level, because it was ceremonial throughout, the utmost respect was shown and all the protocols were followed. It means we did our very best to show the sisters, to show

[273] Interview with an Indigenous WWOS participant. August 19, 2019.
[274] Ibid.

the spirits, and to help them, to show them how much we love and to help them. Ceremony also taught the community what ceremony was about; people learned about traditions.[275]

To summarize, WWOS is first and foremost ceremony led by Grandmothers to honour the lives of MMIWG and two spirit people, and to help the spirits to go home. That was primarily the goal of it. To produce the large number of vamps needed to represent missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, a small army of dedicated people helped. Sixty-five (65) beading groups sprang up in collaboration with the WWOS art installment.[276]

Two Spirited

Indigenous

Two spirit people played a prominent role in our ceremonies, and on our national collective. There were a lot of skirt protocols that were addressed and sometimes mistakes were made in terms of when you are dealing with a committee of 30 people strong and up to 200 volunteers in one place, sometimes there was miscommunication about what people should wear and shouldn't' wear. Some Elders have different teachings and those teachings are not in line with each other but underlying everything was the willingness to work it out, and occasionally there were some people that got the wrong instructions and it caused a little ripple but it made people work together.[277]

Non-Indigenous

Ceremonial Aspect

Participants realized that it was a ceremonial event related to Indigenous custom, and that as a non-Indigenous person, they didn't know that ceremony can be an everyday event which brings

[275] Interview with an Indigenous WWOS participant. August 19, 2019.
[276] Ibid.
[277] Interview with an Indigenous WWOS participant. November 19, 2019.

stability. They learned the significance of culture, and ceremonial items, for instance the eagle feather and the purpose of smudging.[278]

Participants opened their hearts and minds to cultural representations that they may have previously discounted as frivolous. Folks realize it was a ceremonial event and related to Indigenous customs. We spent nine (9) months in preparing, as a white person ceremony is not thought of as an everyday process that brings life and stability. They learned the significance of why people push for smudging or that certain ceremonial items, such as the eagle feather is significant to Indigenous people and communities.

E. Unintended Benefits

Indigenous

Walking With Our Sisters was not originally about raising awareness or to build relationships between communities, and was never about reconciliation. It was simply to just hold ceremony in the multitude of ways according to the traditions of our nations, on our territories and lands. It was intended to honor the lives of the missing and murdered women, and to respect the families and to show the families how much we recognize their pain and grief. It was ceremony and our Elders tell us that the spirits of our sisters were helped here by being called to WWOS. It means we did our very best to show the sisters, the spirits, how much we love them and to help them.[279]

A participant says, "Everything else that happened was extremely positive, almost like icing on the cake so they say, which was that people built communities, women's voices grew stronger."[280]

Many times, organizers of WWOS spoke about how some of the people who worked on the organizing committee, found their own voices as women.[281]

---

[278] Interview with an Indigenous WWOS participant. November 18, 2019.
[279] Interview with a non-Indigenous WWOS participant. August 19, 2019.
[280] Ibid.

A participant said, “Because it was a women led ceremony, and grandmother led ceremony, in many of that places that still suffer patriarchy, it helped them to feel confident and to bring their ceremonies out into the open.”[282]

Individuals expressed how powerful and moving they found the WWOS exhibit, and expressed shock by the vast number of moccasin vamps.

Because Indigenous women led ceremony, and grandmothers led ceremony, it helped them to overcome the forces of patriarchy, increasing confidence by bringing ceremony out in the open, and feeling confident.

We also recognize that there are missing and murdered Indigenous men and boys; there are missing and murdered Indigenous people, including transgender two spirit people. Two spirit people played a prominent role in our ceremonies, and in our national collective. I feel there still needs to be some sort of acknowledgement of the murdered and missing Indigenous men, and as yet there hasn’t yet been a wide spread understanding of how broad that issue really is.

Another unintended benefit was the formation of about 65 new beading groups. Some of those people continued to bead during and after so there was a lot of working together, and who still do work together.[283]

Furthermore, it resulted in a lot of unforeseen community building, and in terms of beading groups, but not just these groups, the organizing committees themselves formed really strong bonds with each another. Some of them have continued on to do work in organizing in their communities since then[284].

WWOS also changed the relationship between institutions and their own physical space. For example, museums and art galleries pretty much had to turn over their spaces to community

---

[281] Ibid.
[282] Ibid.
[283] Interview with a non-Indigenous WWOS participant. August 19, 2019.
[284] Ibid.

and have Indigenous led ceremony by Grandmother, Indigenous ceremony in their spaces. That resulted in some galleries and museums rethinking their engagement processes with community, specifically with Indigenous community. It also really gave them good insight into what we meant by Indigenous led, which is not in partnership, but actually led by. And it also, sometimes changed their policies around smudging and fire code, and things like that, because they hadn't' anticipated what it meant to have an Indigenous led ceremony.[285]

A participant said,

> And then just that we can do these things, with each other and not always have to it be framed as a reconciliation relationship building thing. Indigenous people can and should lead our own ways of doing things, and have non-Indigenous peoples be a part of it, but not insert their way on top of it. That was nice for me, was that we maintained our integrity for our ceremony all the way through.[286]

In opening up spaces, Indigenous people felt safe to practice ceremonies for themselves mainly beyond the "ceremony" of reconciliation.[287]

Non-Indigenous

Unintended Benefits

Some of the unintended benefits of WWOS were that it resulted in unforeseen community building; hosting committees themselves formed really strong bonds with one another. Some of them have continued to do work in organizing in their communities since then, such as the Red Deer group of women who organized a REDress event in 2019. The Affirming and Reconciliation Committee of Gaetz United Church in Red Deer held a REDress exhibit in Red Deer on

[285] Ibid.
[286] Interview with a non-Indigenous WWOS participant. August 19, 2019.
[287] Ibid.

RedDress Day, October 4.[288] It was a successful event and well attended by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members.

A participant says,

> A number of people who participated in WWOS, for whom that experience was a profoundly changing experience. Even though it never intended to be it grew into a movement that changed a lot of people's lives and drew a lot of attention. It was very humbling but also very stimulating, personal change and reflection. It was one of the most powerful things I have done in my life.[289]

F. REDress

REDress is a useful symbol because of the symbolism of red dresses itself. Over time, that symbol is really poignant and draws peoples' attention to a moment that makes them aware and stop and think. That's really useful.[290]

Ojibwe curator and artist Vicky Laforge described how she made connection with the Métis artist Jaime Black. Laforge says,

> I participated in a discussion and presentation with Jaime Black, which was at a school during the National Inquiry. It was part of the National Inquiry and it was at a high school in Thunder Bay. Jaime Black and I presented, she presented about the REDress event and I spoke about my parents and why I was taking part of the National Inquiry.[291]

Curator Vicky Laforge designed her own REDress event titled REDsilent Project, which involved Indigenous youth from Saskatchewan. This project was held three times a week for 12 weeks and was modelled after the REDress project. Laforge taught youth how to do photo shoots, to educate others about MMIWG and the REDress campaign. The project included teaching youth how to do a photo shoot, how to do make up, and they created their own concepts. All of the

[288] 2019 Battle River Lt. Governor of Alberta Arts Award. REDress Day at Gaetz United Church. (Red Deer, Alberta, October 4, 2019). Accessed January 21, 2020, https://www.battleriverarts.ca/calendar/2019/10/4/redress-day-at-gaetz-united-church-red-deer
[289] Interview with a non-Indigenous REDress participant. November 28, 2019.
[290] Ibid.
[291] Interview with Vicky Laforge. October 27, 2019.

youth had been affected by MMIWG and came from Indigenous backgrounds. It was very emotional for them to do this project.[292]

The youth approached individuals to be their model, and executed the project from beginning to end. Funders were approached to pay for their wall photos which were 20 X 30, then a photo exhibit was held, for 3 months. People came from all over the place. Statistics and data were kept on how many people came. It was the first project of Chokecherry Studio, run by Andrea Cessnam, which Laforge did on a volunteer basis. Laforge says, "It was my own healing project, to heal from the National Inquiry and I bought food for the youth and I donated my time for the project."[293]

Everyone was really inspired by these kids, it was moving, people were impressed by the approach to have the youth tell their own stories. The photos were high quality. Some people wanted to buy the photos. It was very powerful. Someone showed up, he had a girlfriend that went missing, she went out for cigarettes and never came back. The family never approached him and her name was on the list in the book. He actually spoke about what happened. Community never had an opportunity talk about it, was very healing.[294]

Community members have not been given the opportunity previously. Family members had the opportunity at this photo exhibit which gave them permission to talk about someone from their community. Laforge says, "We forget that community members are close, and some have been carrying this for 20-30 years. People were really surprised, to have this kind of impact with a photo exhibit." [295] It's not so threatening to come and look at a photo exhibit, it's not in your face, they can come alone or as a group.

Summary of Findings

[292] Interview with Vicky Laforge. October 27, 2019.
[293] Ibid.
[294] Ibid.
[295] Ibid.

The research results showed that there were many unintended positive benefits that resulted from both the WWOS and REDress events in various communities. It brought both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities together and strengthened lasting bonds and positive communication. These exhibits created space for Indigenous people in non-traditional environments like museums and art galleries.

WWOS and the REDress Project played an important role in education of MMIWG and building awareness of this issue. Visual art has a big impact on individuals as an important artistic tool.

Overall more concerns were expressed by Indigenous participants compared to the non-Indigenous group, due to more knowledge and experience with these art installments and the issues facing the Indigenous communities. This does not imply that WWOS is not well received by Indigenous peoples, due to more concerns expressed with WWOS and the REDress Project.

A key point brought forward by the participants was the connection to the land and how through colonization and patriarchy influences Indigenous people who have been displaced. Structuralized violence is often normalized in plain view and Indigenous women's voices are thus silenced. It is important for Indigenous people to decolonize, in order to regenerate their sovereignty, in order for Indigenous women to find their voices. Sharene Razack says, "The idea of a disappearing race is also productive for settler subjectivities. Through it, settlers are able to feel Indigenous disappearance and to imagine their own superiority".[296]

[296] Sherene H. Razack. Race, Space, and the Law. Unmapping a White Settler Society. Gendered Racial Violence and Spatialized Justice. The Murder of Pamela George. (2002). Between the Lines, Toronto. ISBN: 1-896357-59-8, 310.

Two issues raised by Indigenous participants that the non-Indigenous participants did not address, was the issue of Two-Spirit people and concerns of missing and murdered Indigenous men and boys (MMIMB).

There was awareness by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants that lack of resources for Indigenous women and their families were a threat to their safety and could possibly lead to more cases of MMIWG.

* * *

CHAPTER VIII: CONCLUSION

Due to colonialism, there has been a systemic and deliberate pattern of gendered violence against Indigenous women in Canada. Tracing the link between the conquering of Indigenous land by settlers and its relationship with the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls has been the focus of this thesis.

The purpose of this research was to show the link between Indigenous art and activism and the issue of MMWIG. At the beginning of this project, the question was asked whether exhibits such as WWOS and the REDress Project could raise awareness through their activism efforts. Participants confirmed that the role played by WWOS and the REDress Project in the uniting of Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities is an important one. Furthermore, projects such as WWOS and the REDress Project used ceremonies to foster healing within communities and in MMIWG families. The small steps taken towards healing were mirrored on the national scene by the progress made on the MMIWG issue through the National Inquiry, completed on June 3, 2019.

The topic of MMIWG has been very difficult to explore, research, and write. However, the issue of MMIWG has always been of great importance to me, and I will continue my activism work in this area. I gained a new appreciation for the traditional craft of beading, especially after speaking with various WWOS participants and individuals I interviewed. In addition, I learned to appreciate the therapeutic power the craft of beading can have for individuals who participated in WWOS. It was important for family members to remember their loved ones and offered a way to honor them through the act of creation. Witness Gerri Pangman, from the Peguis First Nation explained:

> I began beading when I was 14, self-taught through a book.
> I eventually stopped beading for many years up until the tragedy
> of my sister Jennifer's passing in 2013. I remember that first time

> picking up a needle and thread again with the many beautiful beads in front of me, it brought me some peace as I was mourning my sister's death. I realized how much healing there is through beading, and how soothing it is. It is truly my passion to share this healing therapy that beading brings with other MMIWG family members as it was so healing for me, so for just that brief moment we can just feel a sense of normal and laugh and share together as we get to know each other, to help ground each other and know we are all in it together.[297]

By continuing to bring awareness to the issue MMIWG, and to attempt to reduce violence against Indigenous women, we can develop solutions to address this issue. As a form of activism, both WWOS and the REDress Project are reclaiming space and are a reminder to non-Indigenous people that Indigenous women are loved and matter. In closing, as one Indigenous WWOS participant stated through her work she hopes to make a better life for the children.[298] Indigenous girls deserve love and safety in our society.

* * *

[297] National Inquiry Final Report. 1b., 33.
[298] Interview with an Indigenous WWOS participant. August 19, 2019.

GLOSSARY

Aboriginal Peoples[299]

The collective noun used in the *Constitution Act 1982* and includes the Indian (or First Nations), Inuit and Métis Peoples so legally it will always have a place at the terminology table.

First Nation(s)[300]

First Nation is a term used to identify Indigenous peoples of Canada who are neither Métis nor Inuit. This term came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the term "Indian" and "Indian band" which many find offensive. First Nations people includes both status and non-status Indians so there's a need to careful with its usage, especially if in reference to programs that are specifically for status-Indians.

Indian[301]

"Indian" is the legal identity of an Indigenous person who is registered under the Indian Act.

Indigenous Peoples[302]

A collective noun for First Nations, Inuit Métis and growing in popularity in Canada

Métis Peoples[303]

Métis Peoples are people of mixed Indigenous and European ancestry. The Métis National Council adopted the following definition of "Métis" in 2002: "Métis" means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry and who is accepted by the Métis Nation." *Métis are now covered by the Indian Act.

[299] Indigenous Corporate Training. Website. Accessed February 10, 2020, https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/indigenous-peoples-terminology-guidelines-for-usage
[300] Ibid.
[301] Ibid.
[302] Ibid.
[303] Ibid.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. (AANDC). (Indian Residential Schools). Accessed December 24, 2019. https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015576/1100100015577
(AANDC). Statement of apology to former students of the Indian residential schools. (June 8, 2011). Accessed June 7, 2019. https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015644/1100100015649

Aboriginal Women's Roundtable on Gender Equity Roundtable Report. Status of Women. March 2000.

Allen, Paula Gunn. *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in America Indian Traditions*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Amnesty International. *No More Stolen Sisters: The need for a Comprehensive Response to Discrimination and Violence against Indigenous Women*. Toronto: Amnesty International Canada, 2009. Print
Stolen Sisters: A Human Rights Response to Discrimination and Violence against Indigenous Women. Toronto: Amnesty International Canada, 2004. Print.

Anderson, Brenda, Wendee Kubik, Mary Rucklos Hampton. *Torn From our Mist: Voices of Grief, Healing and Action From The Missing Indigenous Women Conference, 2008*. Canadian Plains Research Centre.

Andersen, Chris. (2010). Critical Indigenous Studies in the Classroom: Exploring 'the Local' using Primary Evidence. International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies, 5 (1). 67.

Anderson, Kim, Maria Campbell & Christ Belcourt, Editors. *Keetsahanak Our Missing and Murdered Indigenous Sisters*. Edmonton, Alberta: The University of Alberta Press. 2018.

Arvin, Maile, Eve Tuck and Angie Morrill. *Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy*. Feminist Formations. Volume 25, Issue 1, Spring 2013, pp. 8-34. The John Hopkins University Press. 2013.
"Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy." *Feminist Formations* 25, no. 1 (2013): 8-34. Accessed February 2, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/43860665.

Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador. (June 3, 2019). *Report on the National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Genocide and Human Rights Violations of Indigenous Peoples in Canada*. Accessed June 11, 2019. https://apnql.com/en/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/PRESS-RELEASE-MMIW-Report-Final.pdf

Barker, Joanne Barker. *Gender, Sovereignty, and the Discourse of Rights in Native Women's Activism*. Canada: Smith College, Vol. 7, 2006.

Betasamosake Simpson, Leanne. *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishaabeg Re-Creation Resurgence and a New Emergence*. ARP Books (Arbeiter Ring Publishing: Winnipeg, Manitoba. 2011).

Bird, Elizabeth, ed. *The Audience in Everyday Life: Living in a Media World*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- "Gendered Construction of the American Indian in Popular Media. "*Journal of Communication* 49, 4 (1999): 61-83

- *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture*. Boulber: Westview, 1996.

Bopp, Judie, PhD, Michael Bopp, PhD, and Phile Lane Jr. The Aboriginal Healing Foundation Research Series. Aboriginal Domestic Violence in Canada. (Dollco Printing: 2006).

Bouma, Gary, Rod Ling and Lori Wilkinson. *The Research Process*. (Oxford University Press: Canada, 2012), 237.

Brant, Castellano, Marlene, editors: Valaskakis Guthrie, Gail, Madeleine Dion Stout and Eric Guimond. *Restoring the Balance: First Nations Women, Community, and Culture*. University of Manitoba Press. Winnipeg, Manitoba. 2009, 184.

Burnette, Catherine E.; Sanders, Sara; Butcher, Howard K.; and Salois, Emily Matt, "Illuminating the Lived Experiences of Research with Indigenous Communities" (2011). Aboriginal Policy Research Consortium International (APRCi). 171. Accessed June 7, 2019 https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/aprci/171

Canada, Statistics Canada, "Life Expectancy." Accessed February 10, 2020. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-645-x/2010001/life-expectancy-esperance-vie-eng.htm

Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability (CFOJA). #CallItFemicide for Justice and Accountability: Understanding gender-related killings and women and girls in Canada 2019. Accessed December 11, 2019 https://femicideincanada.ca/callitfemicide2019.pdf

The Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA); Pamela Palmater and Canada Without Poverty (CWP). *A National Action Plan to End Violence against Indigenous Women and Girls: The Time is Now*.

Castellano, Marlene Brant, editors: Valaskakis Guthrie, Gail, Madeleine Dion Stout and Eric Guimond. *Restoring the Balance: First Nations Women, Community, and Culture*. (2009). University of Manitoba Press: Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Coulthard, Glen. *Subjects of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and the Politics of Recognition in Canada*. Contemporary Political Theory, 2007, 6, (437-460), Palgrave MacMillan Ltd: 2007.

Crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada. Demeter Press. Bradford, Ontario. 2016, 40, 281.

Cronlund, Anderson, Mark and Carmen L. Robertson. Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers. University of Manitoba Press. Winnipeg, Manitoba. 2011.

Daschuk, James. *"Clearing the Plains Disease, Politics of Starvation and the Loss of Aboriginal Life"*. (2013). University of Regina Press. University of Saskatchewan. Regina, Saskatchewan.

Department for Women and Gender Equality. Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls: initiatives will rally communities across Canada to commemorate, heal and advance reconciliation (June 24, 2019). Press Release. Accessed February 1, 2020. https://www.canada.ca/en/status-women/news/2019/06/missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-and-girls-initiatives-will-rally-communities-across-canada-to-commemorate-heal-and-advance-reconciliation.html

de Serpa Soares, Miguel. (December 8, 2017). *OPENING REMARKS AT COMMEMORATION OF THE 69TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION AND PUNISHMENT OF THE CRIME OF GENOCIDEAND THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF*

COMMEMORATION AND DIGNITY OF THE VICTIMS OF THE CRIME OF GENOCIDE AND OF THE PREVENTION OF THIS CRIME. UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF LEGAL AFFAIRS. Accessed June 7, 2019. http://legal.un.org/ola/media/info_from_lc/mss/speeches/SG_Opening_Remarks_fo_%2069th_Anniversary_of_%20Genocide_Convention_2017.pdf

Duffek Karen and Charlotte Townsend-Gault, Editors. Bill Reid and Beyond. (2004). Douglas and McIntyre. Vancouver/Toronto. 6.

Fanon, Frantz. The Wretched of the Earth. New York: Grove Press, 1963.

First Nations Health Authority (FNHA). (no date) Accessed September 6, 2019. https://www.fnha.ca/wellness/our-history-our-health

Flowers, Rachel. (2015). *Refusal to Forgive: Indigenous Women's Love and Rage. Decolonization*. Indigeneity, Education and Society 4 (2): 32-49.

Freedman, Guy and Watts, Bob. Speakers. First Peoples Group. (June 25, 2019.) *Cultural Awareness: Valuing Indigenous and Minority Populations in Professional Regulation*. Vancouver Clear Regional Symposium.

Frideres, James S. and Rene R. Gadacz, Aboriginal Peoples in Canada. Pearson: Canada Inc, 2012.

Gandhi, Leela. "Chapter 1: *After Colonialism*" and Chapter 2: *Thinking Otherwise, A brief Intellectual History. In Postcolonial Theory: Critical Introduction*. (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1998), 1

Gehl, Lynn. *The Rebuilding of a Nation: A Grassroots Analysis of the Aboriginal Nation-Building Process in Canada*. Peterborough, Ontario: The Canadian Journal of Native Studies XXIII, 1 (2003): 57-82. Accessed online December 1, 2013. http://www.lynngehl.com/uploads/5/0/0/4/5004954/55.pdf

Gilchrist, Kirsten. (2010). "Newsworthy Victims?", Feminist Media Studies, 10:4, 373-390, DOI 10.1080/14680777.2010.51410

Graveline, Fyre Jean. "IDLE NO MORE: Enough Is Enough!" *Canadian Social Work Review / Revue Canadienne De Service Social* 29, no. 2 (2012): 293-300. Accessed February 2, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/43486286.

Green, Joyce. *Indigenous Feminism From Symposium to Book. Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*. Blackpoint, Nova Scotia, Canada/UK: Fernwood Publishing, 2007.

Green, Shirley. *Looking Back, Looking Forward. Making Space for Indigenous Feminism,* C. Wesley-Esquimaux. "Trauma to Resilience: Notes on Decolonization." Gail Guthrie Valaskakis, Madeline Stout and Eric Guimond, editors. "Restoring the Balance: First Nations Women, Community and Culture." Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2009.

Guerrero, Marie Anna Jaimes *Civil Rights versus Sovereignty: Native American Women in Life and Struggles. Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*. Routledge: 1997.

Hokowhitu, Brendan. Producing Elite Indigenous Masculinities. Settler Colonial Studies 2 (2), Special Issue: Karangatia: Calling Out Gender and Sexuality in Settler Societies. (2010).

Human Rights Watch. *Those Who Take Us Away Abusive Policing and Failures in Protection of Indigenous Women and Girls in Northern British Columbia, Canada*. (2013). (United States of America), 7.

Indigenous Women and Feminism Politics, Activism, Culture edited by Cheryl Suzack, Shari M. Huhndorf, and Jeanne Perrault and Jean Barman: Vancouver Press, 2010.

Iseke, Judy. Indigenous Storytelling as Research. *(*Winter 2013). *International Review of Qualitative Research. Vol. 6,* (no.4), 574.

Jamieson, Kathleen. Indian Women and the Law in Canada: Citizens Minus. (Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1978), 3.

Kovach, Margaret. *Indigenous Methodologies Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts. (*Toronto: University of Toronto Press Incorporated. 2009), 109.

Lajimodiere, Denise K. 2011. "Ogimah Ikwe: Native Women and Their Path to Leadership". Wicazo Sa Review 26, no. 2., 60. https://doi.org/10.1353/wic.2011.0011.

Lavell-Harvard, D. Memee. (Speech). National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 2016.

Lavell-Harvard, D. Memee and Jennifer Brant. Forever Loved: Exposing the Hidden Crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada. Demeter Press. Bradford, Ontario. 2016, 40.

Lindberg, Tracey, *Not my Sister: What Feminists Can Learn about Sisterhood from Indigenous Women*. Canadian Journal of Women and Law, 1. Accessed on line December 5, 2013 http://www.ualberta.ca/~lgotell/OB_Articles/Lindberg.pdf

Long-Term Strategy to End Violence Against Indigenous Women, Ontario. Accessed November 15, 2019, https://files.ontario.ca/mi-2006_evaiw_report_for_tagging_final-s.pdf , 10.

Lorenzo Veracini, *Introducing Settler Colonial Studies*. Settler Colonial Studies, I(I), 2011.

Manitoba Justice Inquiry Report. The Death of Helen Betty Osborne. Accessed June 7, 2019. http://www.ajic.mb.ca/volumell/chapter5.html p. 32

Manitoba Métis Federation. Louis, Riel (July 4, 1885). Accessed January 2, 2020. http://www.mmf.mb.ca/louis_riel_quotes.php

Martineau, Jarrett and Eric Ritskes. Fugitive indigeneity: Reclaiming the terrain of decolonial struggle through Indigenous art. Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society Vol. 3, No 1, 2014, pp I-XII.

McGlennen, Molly. Creative Alliances: The Transnational Designs of Indigenous Women's Poetry. University of Oklahoma Press. 2014.

Medicine, Beatrice. "Native American (Indian) Women: A Call for Research." *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (1988): 86-92. Accessed February 1, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/3211079.

Monture, Patricia A. and McGuire, Patricia. (Eds). (2009). First Voices: an aboriginal women's reader. Toronto, Ontario. Inanna Publications and Education Inc.

Morgenson, Scott Lauria. Theorizing Gender, Sexuality and Settler Colonialism: An Introduction. Settler Colonial Studies. 2, 2 (2012). Special Issue: Karangatia: Calling Out Gender and Sexuality In Settler Societies.

Murdocca, Carmela. There is Something in That Water: Race, Nationalism, and Legal Violence. Law & Social Inquiry. Volume 35, Issue 2, 369-402 Spring 2010.

Nason, Dory. We Hold Our Hands Up: On Indigenous Women's Love and Resistance. Decolonization Indigeneity, Education and Society. (February 12, 2013). Accessed February 9, 2020. https://decolonization.wordpress.com/2013/02/12/we-hold-our-hands-up-on-indigenous-womens-love-and-resistance/

Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC). Building on the Legacy of NWAC Faceless Doll Project Create your own Faceless Dolls. Accessed June 2, 2019 https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/2012_Building_on_the_Legacy_of_NWAC_Faceless_Doll_Project.pdf.

2016 National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls: Outcomes and Priorities for Action to Prevent and Address Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls. Preamble. Accessed June 7, 2019. https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/3.7-MMIWG-OUTCOMES-AND-PRIORITIES-FOR-ACTION-FINAL.pdf

Voices of Our Sisters in Spirit_2nd Edition. (March 2009). Accessed online February 20, 2014. https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/NWAC_Voices-of-Our-Sisters-In-Spirit_2nd-Edition_March-2009.pdf, 98.

What Their Stories Tell Us: Research Findings from the Sisters in Spirit Initiative. Ottawa: Native Women's Association of Canada. 2009. https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/2010-What-Their-Stories-Tell-Us-Research-Findings-SIS-Initiative.pdf

Sisters in Spirit. Accessed June 11, 2019. https://www.trentu.ca/education/sites/trentu.ca.education/files/documents/SistersinSpirit_Handout_0.pdfNational Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Volume 1a. p. 6. Accessed June 20, 2019. https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/

A Legal Analysis of Genocide, Supplementary Report, 8. Accessed June 20, 2019. https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/

Nelson, Jay. *A Strange Revolution in the Manners of the Country: Aboriginal-Settler Intermarriage in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia*. Accessed December 1, 2019, https://www.ubcpress.ca/asset/12458/1/9780774808866.pdf

OFFICE OF THE UN SPECIAL ADVISER ON THE PREVENTION OF GENOCIDE (OSAPG). ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK. Legal definition of genocide. (no date). Accessed June 7, 2019. https://www.un.org/ar/preventgenocide/adviser/pdf/osapg_analysis_framework.pdf

Olsen Harper, Anita, editors: Valaskakis Guthrie, Gail, Madeleine Dion Stout and Eric Guimond. Restoring the Balance: First Nations Women, Community, and Culture. University of Manitoba Press. Winnipeg, Manitoba. 2009, 84

Oppal, Hon. Wally. 2012. Forsaken The Report of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry Executive Summary. Library and Archives. British Columbia.

Palmater, Pamela. Indigenous Nationhood: Empowering Grassroots Citizens. Halifax; Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, [2015].

Pateman, C. The Sexual Contact. Stanford CA: Standford University Press, 1988.

Pearce, Maryanne. An Awkward Silence: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and the Canadian Justice System. University of Ottawa (2013). Accessed February 10, 2020. https://ruor.uottawa.ca/handle/10393/26299

Porsanger, Jelena. *An Essay about Indigenous Methodology*. 1910-7167-1-PBIndigenous Methdology.PDF

Razack, Sherene H. Race, Space, and the Law. Unmapping a White Settler Society. Gendered Racial Violence and Spatialized Justice. The Murder of Pamela George. (2002). Between the Lines, Toronto. ISBN: 1-896357-59-8, 310.

Riel-Johns, Jessica. Editors Lavell-Harvard D. Memee and Jennifer Brant. Forever Loved: Exposing the Hidden Crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada. (Demeter Press: Bradford, Ontario. 2016), 35.

Ross, Luana. "From the "F" Word to Indigenous/Feminisms." *Wicazo Sa Review* 24, no. 2 (2009): 39-52. Accessed January 3, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/40587780.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women: A National Operational Overview. Canada: RCMP, 2014. Accessed http://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/national-operational-overview.pdf
Working Together to End Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls National Scan of RCMP Initiatives May 2017. Canada. Introduction, 7.

Shields, Stephanie. (2008). Gender: An Intersectionality Perspective. Sex Roles. 59. 301-311. 10.1007/s11199-008-9501-8.

Sadar, Ziauddin. "Foreword to the 2008 Edition." In *Black Skin, White Masks*, by Frantz Fanon, vi-xx. Northhampton: Pluto Press, 2008.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. (1963). *In Fanon, Frantz, The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, 7.

Siddiqui, Jasmeen (2017). *Necessary Affairs: Exploring the Relationship Between Indigenous Art and Activism*. Western University. *Accessed February 10, 2020,* https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1026&context=undergradawards_2017

Smith, Andrea. (2005). Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

Smith, Andrea, and J. K?haulani Kauanui. "Native Feminisms Engage American Studies." *American Quarterly* 60, no. 2 (2008): 241-49. Accessed February 12, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/40068531.,247

Smith, Andrea. "The Gendered Logics of Indigenous Genocide." In *Women and Genocide: Survivors, Victims, Perpetrators*, edited by Bemporad Elissa and Warren Joyce W., 17-35. Bloomington, Indiana, US: Indiana University Press, 2018. Accessed January 2, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvgd2jm.6.

Statistics Canada. *Violent victimization of Aboriginal people in the Canadian provinces, 2009.* (March 11, 2011), 5.

Stout Dion, Madeleine and Gregory Kipling. Aboriginal Healing Foundation. *Aboriginal People, Resilience and the Residential School Legacy*. (Aboriginal Healing Foundation: Ottawa, Ontario, 2003), 5.

Sunseri Lina, Moving Beyond the Feminism Versus Nationalism Dichotomy. Canadian Women Studies, Vol. 20, Number 2, 144.

Suzack Cheryl, Shari M. Huhndorf, Jeanne Perrault and Jean Barman. Indigenous Women and Feminism Politics, Activism, Culture. Vancouver Press, 2010.

Tarrell A. Agahe Portman and Roger Herring, Debunking the Pocahontas Paradox: The Need for Humanistic Perspective, "Journal of Humanistic Counselling, Education, and Development 40 (2001): 185-99.

The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples. Toronto: Co-published by the Glenbow Museum. McClelland & Stewart, 1987.

Thomas, Nicolas. Possessions: indigenous art / colonial culture. Thames and Hudson, New York. United States.1999. (Abstract)

Tuhiwai Smith, Linda. Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples. Zed Books Ltd. United Kingdom and the United States of America. 1999.

Van Kirk, Sylvia. Many Tender Ties. The Canada Council for the Arts. 1999, 74.

Veracini, Lorenzo. *Introducing Settler Colonial Studies*. Settler Colonial Studies, I(I), 2011, 8.

Wesley-Esquimaux, Cynthia C. *Trauma to Resilience: Notes on Decolonization*. Gail Guthrie Valaskakis, Madeline Stout and Eric Guimond, editors. "Restoring the Balance: First Nations Women, Community and Culture." (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2009), 13.

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF MEDIA ARTICLES

Adam Sings in the Timber. (no date). *Indigenizing Colonized Spaces*. Accessed Oct 6, 2019. https://singsinthetimber.com/native-women

Allaire, Christian. Vogue. *In "Hearts of Our People," Indigenous Women Reclaim Space Through Art*. (June 3, 2019). Accessed June 7, 2019. https://www.vogue.com/article/hearts-of-or-people-native-women-artists-art-exhibit?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=onsite-share&utm_brand=vogue&utm_social-type=earned&fbclid=IwAR0Hqvdt7SDABh7_ZJ4IN1-wERDyj5lrtuRA5_A1wE9dw3GShblokztNOSw&verso=true

Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. Media Release. *AMC challenges the approach of the Winnipeg Police Department in suspicious death of Sandy Bay First Nation citizen Jaeda Vanderwal Treaty One*. (January 16, 2019). Accessed June 7, 2019. https://manitobachiefs.com/amc-challenges-the-approach-of-the-winnipeg-police-department-in-suspicious-death-of-sandy-bay-first-nation-citizen-jaeda-vanderwal-treaty-one/?fbclid=IwAR3lBE4gQz355nlCfCGw79kIWVLapYx6YD1A2pP6snf7zsGEyJDQCQRn7xE

Barrera, Jorge. CBC News. *MMIWG cases continued at same rate even after national inquiry began, data shows*. (June 5, 2019). Accessed June 11, 2019. https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/mmiwg-inquiry-new-cases-statistics-databases-1.5162482

Black, Jaime. THE REDRESS REDRESS PROJECT - MTS TV YouTube. (December 5, 2011). Accessed December 1, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gvHm-gxdKz0

Breakenridge, Rob. Global News. *Use of the word 'genocide' undermines the MMIWG report*. (June 8, 2019). Accessed February 10, 2020, https://globalnews.ca/news/5366507/mmiwg-genocide-debate/

2019 Battle River Lt. Governor of Alberta Arts Award. REDress Day at Gaetz United Church, Red Deer, Alberta. (October 4, 2019). Accessed January 21, 2020. https://www.battleriverarts.ca/calendar/2019/10/4/redress-day-at-gaetz-united-church-red-deer

Bill Reid Gallery. Carrying on "Irregardless": Humor in Contemporary Northwest Coast Art. Accessed June 25, 2019. https://www.billreidgallery.ca/blogs/exhibitions-page/carrying-on-irregardless-humour-in-contemporary-northwest-coast-art

Black, Jaime, THE REDRESS REDRESS PROJECT - MTS TV YouTube. (December 5, 2011). Accessed June 11, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gvHm-gxdKz0

Body Sovereignty. Accessed September 30, 2019. https://seedingsovereignty.org/mmiw

Brascoupe, Simon. Artist. Website. Accessed January 1, 2020. https://simonbrascoupe.com/

Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability Website. Accessed December 1, 2019. https://femicideincanada.ca/welcome

CBC Arts. *The Unnatural and Accidental Women: Why this Indigenous Theatre is launching with a heartbreaking play*. (September 26, 2019). Accessed November 28, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VjOFCdnEOLE

CBC News. *2nd year of Drag the Red effort gets underway in Winnipeg*. (May 14, 2015). Accessed June 8, 2019. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/2nd-year-of-drag-the-red-effort-gets-underway-in-winnipeg-1.3079963

9 questions about Idle No More. (January 5, 2013). Accessed June 8, 2019. 9 questions about Idle No More

Harper rebuffs renewed calls for murdered, missing women inquiry: (August 21, 2014). Accessed June 7, 2019, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/harper-rebuffs-renewed-calls-for-murdered-missing-women-inquiry-1.2742845

CBC Interview Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Stephen Harper's comments on missing, murdered aboriginal women show 'lack of respect. (December 19, 2014). Accessed June 7, 2019, https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/stephen-harper-s-comments-on-missing-murdered-aboriginal-women-show-lack-of-respect-1.2879154

Missing and Murdered: The Unsolved Cases of Indigenous Women and Girls. Shelly Tannis Dene. (January 5, 2013). Accessed December 8, 2019 https://www.cbc.ca/missingandmurdered/mmiw/profiles/shelly-tannis-dene

Crawford, Blair. *Death on the Hill: An Algonquin artist's 30-year struggle to preserve the memory of a Parliament Hill tragedy*. Ottawa Citizen. (May 22, 2018). Accessed June 6, 2019. https://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/death-on-the-hill-an-algonquin-artists-30-year-struggle-to-preserve-the-memory-of-a-parliament-hill-tragedy

Cree Literacy Network. Posted by Arden Ogg. Translator Solomon Ratt. Thinking – in Cree – of our Murdered and Missing Women and Girls (y-dialect, audio). (no date). Accessed October 6th, 2019. https://creeliteracy.org/2016/10/02/thinking-in-cree-of-our-murdered-and-missing-women-and-girls/

Global News. Edmonton police ask for help finding woman not heard (December 16, 2013). Accessed February 23, 2014. http://globalnews.ca/news/1033771/edmonton-police-ask-for-help-finding-woman-not-heard-from-in-months/

Henderson, William B., "Indian Act". The Canadian Encyclopedia, February 7, 2006. Last edited October 23, 2018. Accessed December 30, 2019.

Hutchinson, Brian. *Police foresaw Pickton inquiry, noted bungled investigation, almost two years before serial killer's arrest*. (January 20, 2012). Accessed February 10, 2020. https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/police-foresaw-pickton-inquiry-noted-bungled-investigation-almost-two-years-before-serial-killers-arrest

Idle No More The Story. (no date). Accessed June 7, 2019. http://www.idlenomore.ca/story

Joly, Joanna. Red River Women. BBC News (April 18, 2015). Accessed December 31, 2019. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-dc75304f-e77c-4125-aacf-83e7714a5840

Kappo, Tanya. CBC News. CBC Interview Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Stephen Harper's comments on missing, murdered aboriginal women show 'lack of respect. (December 19, 2014). Accessed June 7, 2019. https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/stephen-harper-s-comments-on-missing-murdered-aboriginal-women-show-lack-of-respect-1.2879154

Kennedy, Merrit, *Genocide' Has Been Committed Against Indigenous Women And Girls, Canadian Panel Says*. (June 3, 2019). Accessed June 7, 2019. https://www.npr.org/2019/06/03/729258906/genocide-has-been-committed-against-indigenous-women-and-girls-canadian-panel-sa

Lagace, Naithan, and Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair. “The White Paper, 1969.” The Canadian Encyclopedia, September 24, 2015. Last edited November 12, 2015. Accessed December 9, 2019. https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/the-white-paper-1969

Land Back: A Yellowhead Institute Red Paper. (no date). Accessed October 6, 2019. https://redpaper.yellowheadinstitute.org/

Martens, Kathleen. *Indigenous women’s group declares state of emergency over inappropriate communications from male leaders*. APTN National News. (June 26, 2019). Accessed July 30, 2019. https://aptnnews.ca/2019/07/26/indigenous-womens-group-declares-state-of-emergency-over-inappropriate-communications-from-male-leaders/?fbclid=IwAR0olx8CqiSmsxUtqWsyzLcpgQEkskJtqNMMdu4hWrZxlA0iILy4gVnoNY

Moshkana Indigenous Arts Festival pamphlet. 2019. National Arts Centre. September 11 - 29, 2019. Print.

National Museum of the American Indian. *The REDress Project at the National Museum of the American Indian*. YouTube video. (April 8, 2019). Accessed June 25, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lH7FuxzrFvs

Neylan, Susan. *Canada’s Dark Side: Indigenous Peoples and Canada’s 150 Celebration*. Published by the Ohio State University and Miami University. (June 2018). Accessed June 7, 2019. https://origins.osu.edu/article/canada-s-dark-side-indigenous-peoples-and-canada-s-150th-celebration

Richford, Sarah. What 9 Indigenous Artists Want You to Know Before Canada 150. (June 21, 2017). Accessed October 6, 2019. https://www.flare.com/tv-movies/what-indigenous-activists-want-you-to-know-before-canada-150/

Riit - Qaumajuapik (Official Audio). YouTube. Accessed January 12, 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6wYz1m3HoXo

Seeding Sovereignty. Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women – Land and Body Sovereignty. (no date). Accessed September 30, 2019. https://seedingsovereignty.org/mmiw

Shaw TV Nanaimo. *The Red Dress Project*. (October 15, 2015). Accessed June 7, 2019.

Sings in the Timber, Adam. (no date). *Indigenizing Colonized Spaces*. Accessed Oct 6, 2019. https://singsinthetimber.com/native-women

Strong-Boag, Veronica. A Canadian Encyclopedia. *Women's Movements in Canada: 1985–* present. (October 17, 2016). Accessed September 6, 2019. https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/womens-movements-in-canada-1985present

The REDress Project. Exhibitions. Website. Accessed July 12, 2019. http://www.theredressproject.org/

Walking With Our Sisters, August 15-18, 2019, Batoche, Saskatchewan pamphlet. Print Exhibition Touring Calendar. Website. Accessed December 31, 2019. http://walkingwithoursisters.ca/events/

“Moccasin Vamps” Website. Accessed December 31, 2019. http://walkingwithoursisters.ca/artwork/moccasin-vamps/

Women Suffrage and Beyond. Canadian Native Homemakers Clubs. Accessed December 30, 2019. https://womensuffrage.org/?p=946