

Discourse Analysis of Indigenous Women's Sexuality in News Media

by

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Abstract

Indigenous women's deaths are routinely underreported by mainstream media. "Discourse Analysis of Indigenous Women's Sexuality in News Media" finds that *The Globe and Mail*, *Edmonton Journal*, *Vancouver Sun*, *Winnipeg Free Press*, and *Toronto Star* rely on stereotypes steeped in settler colonialism to report on the deaths of Helen Betty Osborne, Pamela George, Cindy Gladue, and Tina Fontaine. "Discourse Analysis of Indigenous Women's Sexuality in News Media" also finds that mainstream media does not contextualise violence against Indigenous women within colonialism in Canada, ignores the voices of the victims' families, and engages settler moves to innocence when reporting on the perpetrators who have been accused or convicted of murdering Helen Betty Osborne, Pamela George, Cindy Gladue, and Tina Fontaine. Finally, "Discourse Analysis of Indigenous Women's Sexuality in News Media" proposes that Indigenous journalists are best equipped to report on Indigenous sexuality because of their more nuanced understanding of Indigenous women and sexuality. Furthermore, Indigenous people authoring stories about Indigenous sexuality is to reclaim a suppressed way of being. It also counters the singular narrative of Indigenous women as hypersexual people who are victims of sex-murder and redefines Indigenous women as fulsome people who experience the world's pleasures including gender expression, the pleasures of sex, and sexual expression. This thesis uses Indigenous feminism and intersectionality as theoretical concepts and critical discourse analysis as a methodology, following the ethic of suspending damage.

Dedication

Dedicated to the people who raised me, Marie Laboucan, Florence Becker, and Freddie Becker.

And to my twin sister, Alyssa Laboucan.

Acknowledgements

Doing this degree was not an easy task! In fact, I felt completing this thesis was incredibly difficult most of the time. I am a first-generation post-secondary student and so a graduate degree was unfamiliar terrain for both me and my family, and honestly some of my friends too. It goes without saying that doing this degree would have not been possible without the help and support of my family, friends, supervisor, and committee. I would like to use this space as an opportunity to acknowledge the people who supported me during this journey! I have so much love and gratitude for the people who I will name in a moment. At times, my love and gratitude for their support has been overwhelming. I would like to acknowledge the following people: Alyssa Laboucan (sister 🗣️), Marie Laboucan (mother 🧡), Munatsi Mavhima (😊), Florence and Freddie Becker (Nana and Papa), Melinda Bige, Brandon Gabriel, Jonas Bige, Jamie, and Isadore. I would also like to acknowledge other people who have been supportive of me during this time Joseph Thorpe, Ivy Edad, Len Pierre, the folks at Skookum Surrey and Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee, as well as the people at *IndigiNews*. I would also like to acknowledge the folks I met through the Faculty of Native Studies who were great to me and helped me get to the end: Keith King, Kris Cromwell, Keara Long, Devonn Drossel, Wyatt Schiefelbein, Leah Hrycun, and Molly Swain. I would also like to acknowledge my supervisor Kim TallBear and my committee Nykkie Lugosi-Schimpf who both guided my work to be successfully and appropriately completed. I would also like to acknowledge all of the people who have supported me financially and the awarding organisations who believed in me and my work, SSRCH-CGSM, Indispire, NIB Trust Fund, and UAlberta AGES (Indigenous), as well as the generous people who supported my GoFundMe.

Table of contents

Abstract	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of contents	v
Introduction	1
The Problem	1
Research Questions	4
Thesis Organisation	4
Positionality	5
Literature Review	8
Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report	8
MMIWG Contextualized	12
Popular & Stereotypical Indigenous Dichotomy	12
Good Woman vs. Bad Woman	13
Grievability	15
Canadian News Media, Contextualized	16
Theoretical Framework	18
Indigenous Feminism	18
Intersectionality	25
Body Sovereignty	29
Indigenous Resurgence	33
Indigenous self-determination	36
Methodology	38
Critical Discourse Analysis	38
The West and the “Rest”	44
Methods	46
Findings and Discussion	47
Introduction	47
Helen Betty Osborne	48

Pamela George	59
Cindy Gladue	66
Tina Fontaine	72
Summary	79
Critical Analysis	81
Toward Solutions Focused News...	81
Alternative Media	83
Suppression	86
Sovereignty Through Journalism	89
Conclusion	92
Research Questions Answered	92
A Quick Recap	95
Other Considerations	96
Recommendations	97
References	100
Newspaper Articles	100
Counter Narrative	136
Works Cited	140

Introduction

My thesis analyses mainstream legacy media discourses about missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, specifically Helen Betty Osborne, Pamela George, Cindy Gladue and Tina Fontaine. Mainstream legacy media are publications in Canada that have a long-standing publication history and are deemed reliable and credible. The research shows that mainstream media, including publications such as *The Globe and Mail* and *Toronto Star*, portray Indigenous women as hypersexualized, but also as victims of gendered violence. Furthermore, mainstream media frames Indigenous women who are victims of sex-related murder as culpable in their own violent deaths. As a counterpoint to mainstream discourse, I also focus on Indigenous women reclaiming representations of their sexuality. My research examines how Indigenous women use their own media outputs (blogs, news stories, performances, podcasts, videos, etc.) to exercise discursive autonomy and agency related to their sexualities. The theoretical approaches I utilise in this thesis include intersectionality, Indigenous feminisms, and Indigenous positionality as part of my desire-based methodology. A desire-based methodology includes acknowledging all aspects of the complex lives of people who are over-researched and marginalised instead of only highlighting the deficits to prove social change needs to happen.

The Problem

Indigenous people in Canada and the US were dispossessed of their lands, isolated from settler societies, and forced to assimilate into western society and culture. Scholars note that prior to colonisation Indigenous people lived with full sovereignty over themselves (e.g., Monchalin 2016; Barker 2017; A. Simpson 2016). Prior to colonisation, sex and sexuality were not considered something to be ashamed of (L. Simpson 2017). As Leanne Betasamosake

Simpson writes, “Nishnaabeg people have self-determination over their bodies and sexuality... All genders and ages hold political power and influence” (L. Simpson 2017, 87). Canada is a sovereign nation-state that uses legal documents (e.g., Doctrine of Discovery, Indian Act) as a means to justify its domination and undermining of Indigenous sovereignty (Monchalin 2016). Indigenous sovereignty can be understood as Indigenous people being immersed in their specific Nation’s politics, cultures, and practices as well as their lands without interference from oppressive nation-states (Monchalin 2016; Leanne Betasamosake Simpson 2017). For example, there are accounts showing that women were highly respected people within Indigenous nations’ worldviews and resulting social systems, individuals who made important decisions within their communities (Monchalin 2016; Green 2017; A. Simpson 2016). Lisa Monchalin author of *The Colonial Problem* (2016) suggests that the Onondaga Nation never violated women. Furthermore, written records show that traditional Mi’kmaq men threatened the French by saying they would kill the French if the French were to assault Mi’kmaqi women (Monchalin 2016, 177). Similarly, Audra Simpson explains that while Indigenous men were chiefs in Iroquois communities, it was women who chose the chiefs, held them accountable, and could also strip them of their title (2016). However, during colonial expansion early colonists and settlers used various methods of sexual violence to undermine the authority and respect for Indigenous women; to this day, Indigenous women still experience high rates of physical and sexual violence as a result (Monchalin 2016). The documentary *TAKEN* explains that “Indigenous women are 12 times more likely to be murdered or missing than any other woman in Canada,” (*Reclaiming Power and Place* 2019, 55).

Because of colonisation, Indigenous people face greater systemic barriers than non-Indigenous people (Green 2017). In addition, Indigenous women have had to deal with greater violence and gendered violence than non-Indigenous women (Green 2017; Monchalin 2016; A. Simpson 2016; Razack 2000). The over-sexualization of Indigenous women has led to them being considered ‘rapeable’ by mainstream settler society (Green 2017; Monchalin 2016; Jiwani

& Young 2006). Indigenous women being rapeable is a continued legacy starting during early colonisers' expeditions. For example, during Christopher Columbus' second expedition to the Americas, he gave Miguel Cuneo a Carib woman as a slave and severely abused her both physically and sexually, especially when the woman tried to resist Cuneo's unwanted advances (Monchalin 2016, 177). Similarly, the Northwest Mounted Police would coerce Indigenous women into sexual contracts for basic necessities (Razack 2000, Jiwani 2014). The over-sexualization of Indigenous women is so common and ubiquitous as to appear in media made for children such as the characters of Tiger Lily in Disney's *Peter Pan* and Disney's *Pocahontas*. Common hypersexualized representations of Indigenous women also include Halloween costumes such as "sexy Indian maiden," or celebrities inappropriately wearing Indigenous-inspired outfits (Monchalin 2016, 179-182).

The over-sexualization of Indigenous women does not only appear in popular media but is also a long-standing occurrence in legacy media in Canada (Razack 2000, Jiwani 2014, Harding 2006, Cripps 2021, Gilchrist 2010, Jiwani & Young 2006). Indigenous women have routinely been reported in newspaper media as helpless victims or as degenerate bodies which further legitimises Canada's quest to conquer Turtle Island (Harding 2006). Furthermore, Indigenous women have also been repeatedly referred to as prostitutes by journalists who portray Indigenous women as people without families, who do not belong to communities or are not human beings with complex and diverse experiences in newspaper media, while legacy media simultaneously removes Indigenous women from the historical context, thus rendering Indigenous women blameworthy in their own victimisation (Jiwani 2014, Razack 2000, Cripps 2021, Gilchrist 2010, Razack 2000). Likewise, white men, who are most often the perpetrators of violence against Indigenous women, are also removed from the historical Canadian context which erases the systemic violence that Indigenous women are historically and contemporarily subject to by white men who enact the colonial status quo (Razack 2000, A. Simpson 2016). My research calls into question legacy media's ability to accurately report on missing and murdered

Indigenous women and girls, and I argue that first-person accounts written by Indigenous women present more factual and structurally sophisticated analyses of sex, sexuality, and violence against Indigenous women than legacy media and that, as such, the voices of Indigenous women should be privileged in media concerning settler colonial sexualized violence. Following are my research questions in more detail.

Research Questions

I use archival newspaper material to research negative media discourse around Indigenous women's sexuality. I engage Indigenous feminist theory in order to ask the following three questions: First, how has the dominant narrative of hyper-sexualization of Indigenous women negatively impacted their relationships to sexuality? Second, how does mainstream legacy newspaper media (*Vancouver Sun*, *the Globe and Mail*, *Winnipeg Free Press*, *Toronto Star*, and *Edmonton Journal*) continue, disrupt, or change discourses of Indigenous women's hyper sexualization? Finally, how do Indigenous women challenge harmful mainstream media outputs to reclaim representations of their sexuality? I will examine alternative media pieces written by Indigenous women that counter mainstream media discourses and which were published in sources that include *Unreserved*, *Guts*, and *Briarpatch*.

Thesis Organisation

First, I present the literature review that explains different concepts within media discourses about Indigenous women such as popular binary stereotypes and how Indigenous people have been routinely framed by legacy media. I then move on to my theoretical framework that explains different concepts including Indigenous feminism, intersectionality, body sovereignty, Indigenous resurgence, and Indigenous self-determination. These concepts are used to critique stereotypical dominant narratives used against Indigenous women who are the

victims of sexual assault and murder. I then proceed to my methodology wherein critical discourse analysis (CDA) is used to analyse micro- and macro-discourses produced by dominant settler organisations (Van Dijk 2015). In this case, dominant organisations include the *Globe and Mail*, *Toronto Star*, *Winnipeg Free Press*, *Edmonton Journal*, and *Vancouver Sun*. CDA helps illuminate the macro common themes and patterns found in legacy media. Next, I present my findings including the continued systemic problem in legacy news media of stereotypical and victim-blaming coverage of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, as well as decontextualization of colonialism and settlers' move to innocence. I then suggest that alternative media produced by Indigenous women is better equipped to discuss sexual violence, sex, and sexuality under the dominating forces of colonialism. Finally, I conclude my research with a summary, other considerations, and recommendations for reporting on Indigenous women who are victims of sexual assault and murder. But first, I will explain my positionality in relation to this research.

Positionality

Locating myself within my research follows a pattern of Indigenous research. The reason for self-locating is to mitigate power balance and harm within my research, but to also be self-aware about how my experiences are going to inform my interpretations. Furthermore, positionality gives me a reason to figure out why I am doing this research. Researchers need to locate themselves within the research to identify power imbalance (researcher and researcher or interviewer and interviewee) (Kovach 2021, T. Smith 2021). Self-locating can also include cultural belonging that requires self-awareness to why the research is being done. Self-locating allows for acknowledging specific Indigenous cultural protocols to inform the research being undertaken which allows for intentionality that guides the purpose of the research (Kovach 2021). Furthermore, positionality acknowledges how I can only interpret or understand the world around me based on my individual experiences (Kovach 2021, Absolon & Willett 2005).

My positionality includes how I come to this research, and my positionality is in turn shaped by the research presented here that informs my thinking and journalistic practice. While my experience is not the experience of Helen Betty Osborne, Pamela George, Cindy Gladue, and Tina Fontaine, it is through these cases that I grow in understanding of the dynamics studied, and change my behaviour which then alters my positionality. Self-locating highlights the objectivity or subjectivity of research and makes space for subjective knowledge (Kovach 2021, T. Smith 2021). Furthermore, positionality allows us as researchers (and me as a journalist) to be critical of the work we do so as to not replicate harm considering there is already a status quo to doing research (or journalism) (Kovach 2021, T. Smith 2021). Self-locating is not just about naming; it “is about relationships to land, language, spiritual, cosmological, political, economical, environmental, and social elements in one’s life” (Absolon & Willett 2005, 98). In academia and journalism there is an implied (sometimes explicit) organizational hierarchy, whereas Absolon & Willet are engaging a relational way of being. We are all in relation to one another, even if that relation is negative. For example, a theme within Indigenous feminisms literature says that Indigenous women are routinely exploited in concert with the exploitation of Indigenous land. Furthermore, in this research, I engage the concept of “grievability” that in turn engages ideas of geographical and societal relatedness in order to give witness to societal harm in order to create change for Indigenous women.

I am a Cree and Métis woman and a freelance journalist living on the unceded territories of the Kwantlen, q̓íc̓áy̓, Qayqayt, k̓w̓ik̓w̓ə́ł̓əm, sc̓əwaθən məsteyəx̓w̓, and Semiahmoo Peoples. I went to journalism school at Kwantlen Polytechnic University where I received a Bachelor of Journalism degree. KPU is located on the same territories. While I was in the program all of the journalism instructors were white people, except for two instructors who taught courses as sessionals. One of the instructors was a mixed Indigenous woman (Ts'msyen and German) who taught journalism from an Indigenous perspective. The permanent instructors are former journalists with professional experience at legacy media outlets including the *Vancouver Sun*. I

credit the program for teaching me the skills I need to go out into the world and do journalism. However, there was a lack of critical engagement with the status quo of journalism, and it is here in this critical engagement with journalism that I must locate myself. I need to locate myself here because this is where the danger lies to replicate harm as a freelance journalist.

In the Bachelor of Journalism program, there was some discussion about the foundation of journalism as a fourth estate—media that holds the government (and its entities) accountable for the people. However, within my program, there was not a lot of attention paid to being critical of white supremacy. This stems from the overwhelming whiteness within journalism in Canada. While everyone in the program is able to understand that journalism is an “old white boys club”, in my experience, there is no understanding of how this affects the framing of stories, who is considered credible, and how to engage people of colour, particularly Indigenous people. As a result, students who go through the program are not exposed to being critical or to question whiteness as the status quo in journalism. Anecdotal examples include the repeated tokenization of Indigenous students by j-school journalists in the school newspaper, *The Runner*. Similarly, when non-Indigenous j-school students disrespect the title of Land Defender or Water Protector and refer to Indigenous people engaging traditional spiritual roles as “environmental activists”. Furthermore, “objectivity” conflated with neutrality is a strong pillar of journalism, which is counter to Indigenous studies’ focus on positionality, on locating oneself. For a story to be credible, the journalist is expected to be “objective” and not incorporate their own personal “bias.” Unfortunately, this has resulted in journalism relying on whiteness as the basic unstated starting point. Journalism therefore implicitly renders whiteness as unbiased and renders every other positionality as biased. In my case, I am considered inherently biased because I am a Black, Cree and Métis woman. Anecdotally, during a 45-minute interview after I graduated from j-school I was repeatedly questioned about my ability to be a fair and objective journalist considering that I am a racialized woman. Relying on whiteness as the basic starting point in journalism results in interviewing only white people as credible, knowledgeable sources,

and referring to people of colour as actors of violence, as activists, or in this thesis as passive victims of racist gender-based violence.

I came to this research because I was tired of seeing Indigenous women only being represented as victims of racist gender-based violence in mainstream news media. As an Indigenous woman, I began to question Indigenous women and sexuality in the news media and wondered whether Indigenous women being represented as solely victims of sexualized violence is an honest and true representation of us. I considered this question because I enjoy sex and am curious about sex and sexuality and assumed other Indigenous women had to be experiencing similar questions. During this self-questioning period, I came to learn about Virago Nation—an all-Indigenous burlesque group located on x^wməθk^wəyəm, Skwxwú7mesh and səlilwətał. Virago Nation engages in critical discussions (or representations) of queer Indigenous women's sexuality. It was their performance at KPU that led me to the research being presented here. Due to my questions about sex/uality and education in journalism, I needed to further understand Indigenous women's representations, but also how we can engage these topics in news media.

Literature Review

Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report

Indigenous women and girls have gone missing at a disproportionately higher rate than other demographics in Canada. In order to better understand and respond to this reality, many activists, scholars, organisations, and institutions had to pressure the Canadian Federal Government to act. Indeed, it took concerted activism and research by Indigenous women across Canada to spur the Government into creating a national inquiry into the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) in the first place (Monchalin 2016; Anderson, Campbell & Belcourt, 2018).

This research and activism was taken on by the Sisters in Spirit, a research initiative by Native Women's Association of Canada who, "estimated that 582 Indigenous women in Canada had gone missing or had been murdered over the past 30 years" (Monchalin 2016, 184). Though Stephen Harper's Conservative government pledged \$10 million to support the work of Sisters in Spirit, the money was ultimately diverted and the Sisters in Spirit's research into the number of missing or murdered Indigenous women continued unsupported by the Canadian Federal Government (Monchalin, 2016). In 2013, a Ph.D. student Maryanne Pearce created a database with the details of 824 Indigenous women who were missing or murdered (Monchalin, 2016) and in 2014, "the RCMP [had] documented 1,181 cases of missing or murdered Indigenous women. 1,017 had been murdered, and 164 were missing" (Monchalin 2016, 184). Despite the growing body of evidence of the MMIWG crisis, the Conservative Government continued to ignore the calls to action of Indigenous women activists, various organisations, Amnesty International, Humans Rights Watch, and even the United Nations (Monchalin 2016). In 2015, a majority Liberal Federal Government was elected in Canada, led by Justin Trudeau, who promised \$40 million to undertake the national inquiry into MMIWG (Monchalin 2016).

Sisters in Spirit, while eventually defunded by the Harper Conservative government, was an important point in illuminating the prevalent mistreatment of Indigenous women in Canada. Sisters in Spirit, in partnership, with Amnesty International, released a report in 2004 titled "Stolen Sisters: A Human Rights Response to Discrimination and Violence Against Indigenous women in Canada", this report detailed the work of Sisters in Spirit and said Canada is not doing enough to protect Indigenous women. Sisters in Spirit released many reports on the mistreatment of Indigenous women. The work of Sisters in Spirit created grassroots initiatives and contributed to the growing pressure to address missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada.

The Liberal Federal Government of Canada commissioned a national inquiry into MMIWG in 2016. The final report of the commission in charge of the inquiry, *Reclaiming Power*

and Place, was released to the public on June 03, 2019. On the website for the report, *Reclaiming Power and Place*, it states, “persistent, and deliberate human and Indigenous rights violations and abuses are the root cause behind Canada’s staggering rates of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people” (Reclaiming Power 2019). This finding was staggering, yet not entirely surprising given the disregard for Indigenous women’s and girls’ lives. The Final Report found that there is a genocide occurring in Canada that “has been empowered by colonial structures evidenced most notably by the *Indian Act*, the Sixties Scoop, residential “schools” and breaches of human and Indigenous rights” (Reclaiming Power 2019, 50). *Reclaiming Power and Place* found that the media does not do an adequate job of reporting on Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA people (*Reclaiming Power and Place* 2019). *Reclaiming Power and Place* explains that very often media portrayals of Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA are sexist, misogynistic, transphobic, homophobic and continue the idea that Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA are inherently disposable (*Reclaiming Power and Place* 2019). *Reclaiming Power and Place* has 231 Calls for Justice, some of which are directly related to media and social influencers (*Reclaiming Power and Place* 2019). One such Call for Justice, 6.1, calls,

upon all media, news corporations and outlets, and, in particular, government funded corporations and outlets; media unions, associations, and guilds; academic institutions teaching journalism or media courses; governments that fund such corporations, outlets, and academic institutions; and journalists, reporters, bloggers, film producers, writers, musicians, music producers, and, more generally, people working in the entertainment industry to take decolonizing approaches to their work and publications in order to educate all Canadians about Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. More specifically, this includes the following:

- i. Ensure authentic and appropriate representation of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, inclusive of diverse Indigenous cultural backgrounds, in order to address negative and discriminatory stereotypes.
- ii. Support Indigenous people sharing their stories, from their perspectives, free of bias, discrimination, and false assumptions, and in a trauma-informed and culturally sensitive way.
- iii. Increase the number of Indigenous people in broadcasting, television, and radio, and in journalist, reporter, producer, and executive positions in the entertainment industry, including, and not limited to, by:

- providing educational and training opportunities aimed at Indigenous inclusion; and
 - providing scholarships and grants aimed at Indigenous inclusion in media, film, and music industry-related fields of study.
- iv. Take proactive steps to break down the stereotypes that hypersexualize and demean Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, and to end practices that perpetuate myths that Indigenous women are more sexually available and “less worthy” than non-Indigenous women because of their race or background.”

These Calls to Justice are addressed in this thesis by Indigenous women’s own words as I cite and highlight their stories regarding their sexuality and body sovereignty. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Shattered Mirror reports are also relevant to my research topic, however, *Reclaiming Power and Place* is specifically related to my research topic. The TRC was established in 2008 and the final report of the TRC and its 94 Calls to Action was released in 2015. The TRC targets Canadian media in Calls to Action 84-86 (TRC 2015), which addresses the need for Canadian media to more aptly cover the reconciliation process, residential “schools”, and the history of Indigenous people. In Call to Action 41, the TRC does mention the specific violence to which Indigenous women are subjected, but overall, the TRC does not link Canadian media discourses or representations of Indigenous women and girls to the specific racialized and gendered violence of which they are victims. The TRC also does not address the specificity of violence against Indigenous women and the Canadian media representations of this violence. Because the TRC does not deal with the specific concerns of gendered violence, my research relies more heavily on *Reclaiming Power and Place*.

Similarly, the Shattered Mirror report addresses Indigenous people but does not examine gendered violence to the extent that *Reclaiming Power and Place* does. *The Shattered Mirror*, released in 2017, is a report that concerns the state of journalism in Canada and its implications for Canadian democracy. The government of Canada commissioned the Public Policy Forum in 2016 to analyse the state of journalism and provide recommendations for its improvement (*Shattered Mirror* 2017). Of these recommendations, recommendation eight points to the importance of establishing Indigenous journalism initiatives while also bolstering

support for the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) (*Shattered Mirror* 2017). The report explains that Canadian media needs more Indigenous journalists covering Indigenous communities and governments because as of yet Indigenous issues and topics are considered low priority in mainstream media (*Shattered Mirror* 2017). Both the TRC and Shattered Mirror are relevant to the state of journalism and its reporting of Indigenous people but are not specific in addressing violence against Indigenous women and the relationship with media discourses.

MMIWG Contextualized

There is a crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada (MMIWG). In 2015 Justin Trudeau announced the Liberal's intention to start an inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls launched on September 1, 2016 (Pickering, Cote-Meek, & Pegoraro 2018). The final report, [*Reclaiming Power and Place*](#), illuminates a genocide in Canada that uniquely targets Indigenous women, girls and 2sLGBTQQA people (*Reclaiming Power and Place* 2019). *Reclaiming Power and Place* states that media representation contributes to the genocide of MMIWG. According to witness testimony, media representations of Indigenous women and loved ones lost are very regularly “unfair, inaccurate, or distorted” (*Reclaiming Power and Place* 2019). The research shows that news reports on Indigenous women who are victims of gender-based violence blame victims and frame them through a “good” vs. “bad” model that usually finds Indigenous women as “bad” and deserving of the crimes committed against them (Pickering, Cote-Meek, & Pegoraro 2018; Cripps, 2021; Gilchrist 2010; Jiwani and Young 2006).

Popular & Stereotypical Indigenous Dichotomy

Popular media representations of Indigenous women are hypersexualized and are framed in a dichotomy of Indian Princess or sq*aw (Monchalin,2016; Cripps 2021; Gilchrist

2010). This dichotomy suggests that Indigenous women are sexually available. The Indian Princess is young, beautiful according to normative white standards, and sexually available to her husband, whereas the sq*aw is both sexually available and disposable (Monchalin 2016). These popular media representations render Indigenous women as hypersexualized beings and inherently disposable (Monchalin 2016; Cripps 2021; Gilchrist 2010). While these popular stereotypes can be seen in Disney's *Peter Pan* and *Pocahontas* or as offensive Halloween costumes, they can also be seen in news media that frame "good" vs. "bad" women in coverage of sex-murder cases. Canadian media has a repeated history of associating Indigenous women who are the victims of sex-murder crimes as drug-addicted sex workers without contextualising addiction within white supremacist colonial violence and intergenerational trauma (Pickering, Cote-Meek, & Pegoraro 2018; Cripps 2021; Gilchrist 2010; Jiwani and Young 2006).

Good Woman vs. Bad Woman

Media concerning Indigenous women in sex-murder cases tends to perform a comparative analysis with similar cases involving white women who were the victims (Pickering, Cote-Meek, & Pegoraro 2018; Cripps 2021; Gilchrist 2010; Jiwani and Young 2006). In so doing, Canadian media often frames women who are victims of deadly crimes through a "good" vs. "bad" model, as women who are either deserving of being saved and protected or as women who are blameworthy in their victimisation (Pickering, Cote-Meek, & Pegoraro 2018; Cripps 2021; Gilchrist 2010; Jiwani and Young 2006). As Cripps (2021) notes, "news media plays a powerful role in reinforcing dominant hegemonies and in producing and legitimising frames of the interpretation of social issues and problems." (Cripps 2021, 303) A "good" woman is someone who represents the values of colonially dominant culture and society (Gilchrist 2010). A "good" woman is a daughter, mother, or sister (Pickering, Cote-Meek, & Pegoraro 2018; Cripps 2021; Gilchrist 2010; Jiwani and Young 2006) and is often white. White women who have been victims of violent crimes are positioned as highly newsworthy and are placed at the

top of the hierarchy of victims society is supposed to care about, suggesting they are to be saved or protected (Gilchrist 2010; Cripps 2021). They are positioned as pure, vulnerable, innocent of sexuality, and either forbidden or unavailable (Gilchrist 2010). Gilchrist explains this isn't about the woman but rather a construction of ideology that creates meaning around juxtaposing white women against racialized women, the latter who are framed as "bad" even despite "good" behaviour (Gilchrist 2010). News media isn't objective. It is constructed based on socially and culturally constructed criteria about who and what is produced as (not) valuable through the lenses of western, white, hetero, middle-class men (Gilchrist 2010). Racialized women are othered by traditional news media because they do not fit the hegemonic idea of a "good" woman (Cripps 2021; Gilchrist 2010). The "good" vs. "bad" dichotomy is further legitimised when the media covers cases where a woman exchanges sex for money (Gilchrist 2010; Jiwani & Young 2006). Women who are both sex workers and racialized are victim-blamed for the crimes committed against them, media portrays this violence as violence they brought upon themselves (Pickering, Cote-Meek, & Pegoraro 2018; Cripps 2021; Gilchrist 2010; Jiwani and Young 2006). For example, media coverage of missing Indigenous women on the downtown east side of Vancouver, BC, regularly frame these victims of violence as blameworthy and the crime as victimless because of the Indigenous women's involvement in sex work, any possible addictions, and their race (Gilchrist 2010). This was the case of Indigenous women who were victims of the mass murderer, Robert Pickton—the women were blamed for their own murders. Gilchrist (2010) notes that had a non-Indigenous woman been a victim of these murders, the Pickton trials, the news media would suggest she did not belong there, describing her in favourable terms like "pretty" and "educated" (Gilchrist 2010, 381). However, only white women are considered newsworthy if they die (Pickering, Cote-Meek, & Pegoraro 2018; Cripps 2021; Gilchrist 2010; Jiwani and Young 2006). The hierarchy of newsworthiness goes down if a woman is the victim of domestic abuse but goes up in the hierarchy if they're a white victim of homicide by someone they don't know (Gilchrist 2010; Cripps 2021). An important point to note

is that newsworthiness goes up for racialized women if they are murdered by a stranger of the same race, a decision which functions to suggest that racialized women need to be saved from their brute men of the same race (Gilchrist 2010). Dominant narratives of women promise protection for women who are victims of gender-based violence, but only if the woman fits within a “good” woman model heavily read through the lens of whiteness (Cripps 2021). This model falls short when it comes to Indigenous women because of their racialization; they inherently do not fit into the “good” model of womanhood, and thus are often rendered blameworthy for their own victimisation (Pickering, Cote-Meek, & Pegoraro 2018; Cripps 2021; Gilchrist 2010; Jiwani and Young 2006). The “good” vs. “bad” model of womanhood creates a binary, and for one to exist the other one must also exist. The interdependence of these binary poles reaffirms assumptions about race, gender, class, and oppression through differential media portrayals of women according to their race (Gilchrist 2010). The models, binaries, and hierarchies used to produce news and create what is newsworthy also tells the reader who is worthy of protection and grievability through the lens of whiteness and racism.

Grievability

Tal Morse uses an analytical framework called “grievability” to study deaths as they are reported in the media. Morse’s (2018) analytical framework is based on Judith Butler’s theorization of grievability as a political phenomenon such that, “media fulfil[s] the function of performing death-related rituals that require spectators to morally assess their ethical ties with faraway others” (Morse 2018, 243). Media plays the role of what Morse (2018) calls mediatization, whereby “the media transcend[s] their function as a technology of transmission and become providers of information and moral orientation” (Morse, 2018). Morse argues that while it is human nature to care about other humans in our global community, and that showing care is enough to encourage solidarity and belonging, it is the act of bearing witness which media enables that produces the phenomenon of grievability — where bearing witness causes an

individual to be burdened into action or burdened by guilt for their inaction to human suffering (Morse, 2016). Thus, when a violent death occurs it signals to society that we have failed to intervene in someone's or in a group's unnecessary and extreme suffering (Morse, 2018). However, because some lives do not fit into hegemonic ideas (i.e., "bad" women), they are not considered grievable in the first place, and so bearing witness to their death, however violent, does not garner the same kind of moral self-reflection (Morse 2018). In particular, Indigenous women are not considered grievable because they are considered active participants in their own victimisation (Jiwani & Young 2006).

Canadian News Media, Contextualized

In Canadian News media, Indigenous women are often both victim-blamed for the crimes committed against them—based on their specific gender, class, race, and occupational intersectionality's—while also silenced when it comes to their concerns for their safety (Jiwani & Young 2006). In privileging certain voices over others, Canadian news media misses "essential details and voices" (Cripps 2021, 303) in their reporting on events, a reality that requires counter-framing in Canadian media so as to bring the marginalised voice of the Other into the narrative and gain a more holistic account of each event (Cripps 2021).

In the history of Canadian news media, scholars have noted clearly demarcated periods defined by approaches to representing the Other. According to Robert Harding (2006), issues around the privileging of voices is not new in Canada, as Canadian news media's approach to covering stories regarding Indigenous people remained much from 1860 until 1990 (Harding 2006). For those 130 years Canadian news media regularly presented Indigenous people negatively, referring to them as a societal threat from which Canadians need to be protected (Harding 2006; Pickering, Cote-Meek, & Pegoraro 2018). During the relatively short period from the 1960s to the 1970s there was some change in this discourse, the result of concerted political pushback, such that by the 1990s Canadian news media started to treat all populations

in Canada the same in terms of representation (Harding 2006). Treating all populations in Canada the same was not the equitable response which it at first seems as it required the decontextualization of the livelihoods of Indigenous people living within a colonial country (Harding 2006). Indigenous women especially have been continuously represented as deserving of the crimes committed against them either because of their “in/active” involvement in behaviours deemed inappropriate to Canadian society. Furthermore, Canada is perceived as a benevolent state and when Indigenous women who are victims of sex murders Canadians do not place blame on Canada or Canadian society which continues to blame the victim (Jiwani & Young 2006).

Jiwani & Young (2006) note that Canadian news media consistently frames Indigenous people as being over-emotional, over-demanding, and unreasonable for not accepting Canada as a legitimate sovereign entity and readily assimilating into Canadian society, this framing also associates Indigenous people with criminality to discredit our causes and issues with the colonial state of Canada (Jiwani & Young 2006). Gilchrist (2010) also notes a lack of depth when Canadian news media report on the disadvantages of Indigenous people caused by colonialism. Such a dearth of nuance encourages the public to believe or continue to understand Indigenous lives as inferior to non-Indigenous lives as it frames our issues within Canada as Indigenous incapability with modernity rather than as the result of continued colonial oppression and resistance (Gilchrist 2010). Canadian news media further benefit from stories about Indigenous people by creating a spectacle out of our disadvantages, such as missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, which does not address the problems at the heart of our disadvantage that stem from colonialism (Ryan 2016). While there are Indigenous women who are struggling with addiction and are engaging in sex work or are facing other issues (health, family violence, poverty, etc.), ignoring the multifaceted (good and bad) lives of Indigenous people belittles the complexity of our lives and does not inspire change in the systems which harm us (Ryan 2016).

Theoretical Framework

A significant body of scholarly work exists on the mistreatment of Indigenous women within the critical Indigenous studies canon (e.g.: Green 2017; Monchalin 2016; Barker 2017; Arvin, Tuck and Morrill 2013; Simpson 2016). Indigenous feminist scholars argue that the degradation of Indigenous women's status and perception within the community is the result of lasting colonial intervention in Indigenous culture and politics (Green 2017; Monchalin 2016; Barker 2017; Arvin, Tuck and Morrill, 2013; Simpson 2016). Media is in no small part implicated in this process, as Indigenous scholars have noted the complicity of legacy media in furthering discourses of Indigenous women's deficiency and incivility (Monchalin 2016; Keene 2011, 2014, 2016; Metcalfe 2012). Indigenous feminist theory facilitates the interrogation of how mainstream media negatively impacts Indigenous women. There is also a body of work within Indigenous studies that speaks to the mistreatment of Indigenous women and also the reclamation of sexuality and sexual identity (Finely 2011; Wilson 2015; Burns 2020). Reclaiming sexuality is important because it is redefining Indigenous relationships with sexuality that goes against cis-heteropatriarchal norms that dominate Indigenous people and our way of being. Furthermore, Indigenous women reclaiming sexuality and sexual identity changes the singular media narrative that only depicts Indigenous women as hypersexualized victims of sexual assault.

Indigenous Feminism

Indigenous feminist theories inform this research. Indigenous feminism is a growing area of academic scholarship (Snyder 2018). Joyce Green observes that the scope of Indigenous feminist scholarship has substantially increased since the 2007 edition of *Making Space* (Green 2017). Indigenous feminist approaches show concern for the lives of Indigenous women

(Mihesuah, 2003; Green 2017; Snyder 2018). Indigenous feminist frameworks want to know about Indigenous “women’s feelings, emotions, relationships, and observations of non-Indigenous people” (Mihesuah, 2003). Asking the question, “What do women think?” (Mihesuah, 2003). Like other researchers using Indigenous feminist theory, Snyder (2018) articulates the importance of the varied lives of Indigenous women and suggests the use of (the often-cited) Indigenous feminisms (see also; Arvin, Tuck, Morill, 2013). The plural use of “feminisms” in these works acknowledges the various experiences of people who engage in Indigenous feminisms (Snyder 2018; Arvin, Tuck, Morill, 2013). Indigenous women are a complex group of people who want different things depending on their unique experiences, using “feminisms” to denote the theories which arise from Indigenous women’s experience and thought acknowledges this diversity (Mihesuah, 2003; Green 2017; Arvin, Tuck, Morill, 2013). Indigenous women’s experiences include rural, urban, or reservation geographies, connected or disconnected relations to their Nation (or Tribe), traditional or modern lifestyles, activist or scholar involvement, and everything in between (Mihesuah, 2003).

Devon Abbott Mihesuah (2003) writes in *Indigenous American Women:*

Decolonization, Empowerment, Activism,

“traditional Native women—those women who adhere to their tribal traditions as possible and often are not formally educated—have been more concerned about tribal or community survival than either gender oppression or individual advancement in economic status, academia, or in other facets of society...Some Native females with little or no knowledge of their tribal past feel the effects of racial and gender oppression and believe that white feminist theory might offer them advice and encouragement.” (Mihesuah 2003, 160).

By acknowledging the complexities and diversity of Indigenous women’s lives, Indigenous feminist scholars and activists are better situated to account for the whole of Indigenous women’s experiences than other forms of scholarship that do not account for this diversity (Mihesuah, 2003; Green 2017; Snyder 2018). A common thread throughout Indigenous feminisms is the recognition that racial and gendered oppressions of Indigenous women under

colonialism are a common experience that all Indigenous women share as a result of cis-hetero-patriarchal colonial discourses and powers (Snyder 2018; Green 2017).

Indigenous feminist ideas are not widely accepted by all Indigenous women scholars, however, and many Indigenous scholars still reject feminism as an identity marker. As an ideological position, feminism has been argued by some Indigenous scholars to be only relevant to white women for whom patriarchy is part of their culture (Tohe 2000); in Indigenous communities and culture, these scholars also criticise feminism as exacerbating division within Indigenous communities and further entrenching colonial gender roles (Snyder 2018; Green 2017; Barker 2017; Mihesuah 2003).

One of the biggest criticisms laid against feminism by some Indigenous studies scholars is that feminism is unhelpful to Indigenous women's liberation struggles because many Indigenous cultures and societies were matrilineal or egalitarian before contact with Europeans; as such, decolonization will produce a utopia of gender equality because Indigenous women's oppression is an outside force imposed by colonial powers (Green 2017). Decolonization is a process of land back to the specific Indigenous people of a specific territory. Decolonization is also the process of dismantling colonial institutions and confronting the violence of colonial separation to the land and culture (McFarlane & Schabus 2017).

However, it is precisely because Indigenous societies in the present are informed by settler-patriarchy that feminism is important to engage for Indigenous women's liberation (Snyder 2018; Napoleon 2002; Green 2017). Qwo-Li Driskill in *Sovereign Erotics* writes, "[i]nstead of seeing decolonization as a fixed finite goal, decolonize activism and scholarship ask to radically reimagine our futures" (Driskill 2010,70). Rather than seeing decolonization simply as a return to a purer past, decolonization should be informed through an Indigenous feminist lens as part of an effort of "continuously trying to preserve and take back [our] cultures while constantly changing, . . . incorporate both old and new elements [of our traditions] and transform[ing] them into new ways of being Indigenous" (Dankertsen 2020, 63). Further,

decolonizing research and scholarship must take on queer politics, reflecting on its axioms by providing a critical analysis of heteronormativity within the Land Back and resurgence movements as well as anti-imperial/colonial struggles (Hunt & Holmes 2015). A gendered and feminist approach to decolonization research and action can illuminate the passions, desires, and fun within Indigenous ways of being (Barker 2017). Decolonization must be informed by a feminist lens that can address the nuances of sexual/gendered violence as part of our collective marginalisation in settler colonial countries permeated by cis-hetero-patriarchy (Barker 2017).

While Indigenous feminisms are often concerned with decolonization and self-determination, decolonization efforts without gender analyses cannot provide a solution all on their own (Snyder 2018; Green 2017). Colonialism's heteropatriarchy is a substantial part of settler society and takes many forms. Mihesuah (2003), for example, notes that Indigenous feminism is often concerned with the misrepresentation of Indigenous women and our issues in media, academia, and the lack of Indigenous women leaders in activist spaces or Indigenous media representatives. Indigenous feminism is also concerned with the forced and coerced sterilisation of Indigenous women, land concerns (fishing, hunting, water, land, treaty rights), bridging gaps between men and women, and also bridging gaps between Indigenous women as well (Mihesuah 2003; Green 2017). Indigenous feminism is also concerned with teaching Indigenous men to respect Indigenous women, to understand the value of Indigenous women's place within our Indigenous communities and learning about the traditional roles of Indigenous women in our societies, as well as seeing Indigenous women as valuable and deserving of equal leadership roles (Mihesuah 2003; Green 2017).

Feminist literature recognizes that scholars and activists must account for the central role of gender in decolonization (Snyder 2018; Napoleon 2002; Green 2017). A gendered approach to decolonization involves interrogating the gendered logics inherent in our efforts for decolonization as we undertake them in the present and not waiting until after decolonization is

achieved to then turn our attention towards gender inequality and gendered/sexual violence (Green 2017).

Though it may be true that many Indigenous nations were/are traditionally matrilineal or egalitarian as Tohe (2000) argues, the works which dismiss Indigenous feminisms do so based on the misconception that feminism cannot account for the racialized (and gendered) impacts of colonialism experienced by Indigenous women presently (Miheisah 2003; Green 2017; Snyder 2018). In addition to the utility of feminist theory to account for colonial violence, women of colour and Indigenous women have made vast contributions to feminist theory which such disregard of feminism ignores by focusing only on the contributions of white women (Snyder 2018; Ramirez 2008). This is not to say that acknowledging women of colour's contributions to feminist theory ignores the predominance of white feminism and the erasure of women of colour's specific and individualised concerns, but it is to say that feminism is more than just white (Ramirez 2008).

Indigenous feminist literature is not perfect. It often relies on a gender binary and upholds cis-heteronormativity by centring cis-het Indigenous women over Two-Spirit folks (Snyder 2018; Pyle 2019). Joanne Barker (2017) argues that using gender binaries, specifically that of male-female, as interchangeably demarcating gender and sexuality functions so that Indigenous feminisms often obscures the phenomena and power it seeks to understand. Male-female binaries erase the lived experiences of Indigenous people in between and outside of the male-female binary (Barker 2017; Pyle 2019). For example, Kai Pyle (2019) writes of Kellie Little, a trans Indigenous woman who, while appropriately included in an account about missing and murdered women in the DTES, had their trans identity erased in research regarding missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (Pyle 2019). In their article, "*Women and 2Spirits*": *On the Marginalization of Transgender Indigenous People in Activist Rhetoric*, Pyle (2019) acknowledges how Sarah Hunt "a long-time advocate" (Pyle 2019, 90) and scholar of violence against trans-Indigenous women fails to recognize Kellie Little was a trans Indigenous woman

when Hunt did their research about missing and murdered women in the DTES. Strict gender binaries, even in critical Indigenous feminist research, continues to marginalise those who are not cis-gendered such that their experiences of colonialism remain hidden in data and (binary) feminist discourse (Pyle 2019).

By conforming to these gender/sex binaries Indigenous feminist theory ignores Indigenous histories about gender and sexuality (Barker 2017; Napoleon, 2002; Pyle 2019) and also functions to conceal “the historical and social reality of patriarchy, sexism and homophobia within Indigenous communities” (Barker 2017; Pyle 2019). Pyle argues for an *intentional* inclusion of Two-Spirit and trans women in Indigenous feminist theory to better account for the various power dynamics at play in colonialism; this includes the necessity that Indigenous feminist theories must not simply include 2-Spirit, trans women, and gender diverse people as an identity marker for marginalisation and as an afterthought (Pyle 2019). Pyle also suggests thinking critically about the inclusion, or lack of inclusion, of Indigenous people who are trans, queer or Two-Spirit in larger activist spaces or “anti-state agitation” (92). Because, as Pyle notes, trans and 2S activism is often made marginal due to continued exclusion in larger scale movements (Pyle 2019). Two-Spirit and trans Indigenous activism typically happens within their own specific community or on a one-on-one basis because of exclusion in mainstream activist spaces that are tackling the, ostensibly, common struggle which routinely ignores gender and sexual oppression as it intersects with Indigeneity (Pyle 2019).

Indigenous feminisms, like all theories, have limitations. However, despite their limitations, Indigenous feminist theories do work as frameworks to address the concerns of cis-hetero patriarchy. Indigenous feminism analyses and insights are sometimes used to inform policy and strategy (Green 2017). Glen Coulthard advocates for ending the discrimination against Indigenous women regarding Indian status in the Indian Act (Green 2017). In some cases, it is even considered inappropriate and theoretically incomplete to ignore the experiences of Indigenous women in academic research on (de)colonization (Green 2017). Green quotes

Coulthard as writing, “the crucial interventions of Indigenous feminist scholarship and activism over the years have made it *impossible* for any credible scholar . . . to ignore the impact that colonial patriarchy continues to have on our liberation efforts” (Green 2017, 2, emphasis in original). There has been an increase in Indigenous feminist frameworks being taken up in Indigenous research in comparison to 2007 when the first edition of *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism* was first published when this influential work criticised the lack of attention Indigenous scholarship paid to the experiences and knowledge of Indigenous women. An Indigenous feminist framework analysis that recognizes the perversity and importance of gender in decolonization and other liberatory efforts for not only Indigenous women but all Indigenous people (Green 2017).

While it is important to account for the experiences and knowledge of Indigenous women, Indigenous feminist research is mindful that Indigenous women are an over-researched demographic; as a result, it asks the question, who does this research serve and who does it benefit? (Mihesuah, 2003). According to Mihesuah, being mindful of the over-burden of research on Indigenous women is important because non-Indigenous researchers often exploit Indigenous people, particularly women, through research participation in order to jump-start their academic careers while the Indigenous people who are subjects of the research receive little to no material gains (2003).

It is also important to consider the fact that research on Indigenous people is often damage-centred (Tuck 2009). Eve Tuck argues it is time to move away from a damage-centre framework for conducting research (2009). Research involving Indigenous people and communities repeatedly paints Indigenous people as damaged, exacerbating stereotypes of Indigenous people/communities as deficient and doing nothing to quell settler’s negative view of indigeneity (Tuck 2009). Rather than focusing on the damage and hardships faced by Indigenous people and communities, Tuck argues for a desire-based approach to research with Indigenous people (2009). Desire-based research is informed by depathologizing studies that

work to expose ongoing structural inequities causing hardship in Indigenous communities while uplifting Indigenous peoples strength and resilience (Tuck 2009). Tuck describes desire-based research as frameworks that, “are concerned with understanding complexity, contradiction, and the self-determination of lived lives” (Tuck 2009, 416). Working from a desire-based framework takes much more than hardship into perspective and challenges research framings that would paint Indigenous communities as broken and conquered (Tuck 2009). Tuck goes on to explain that, “even when communities are broken and conquered, they are so much more than that—so much more that this incomplete story is an act of aggression,” (Tuck 2009, 416). Ultimately conducting research with a desire-based framework is a means to make clear the messy lived experiences of Indigenous people and communities who are living under colonisation.

A desire-based framework in the present research lends itself well to illuminating the nuanced experiences of Indigenous women as not simply colonised beings, but as agentic and resilient—as more than their struggles. This research presents findings of Indigenous women who are victims of systemic violence but provides a counter-narrative that illuminates the complicated relationship between sexual violence and Indigenous sexuality.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a theoretical concept that derives from Black feminist theories and which informs this research. Intersectionality interrogates the multiplicity of power structures that oppress marginalised persons in multiple ways simultaneously (Collins & Bilge, 2020). The concept of intersectionality informs various types of work such as academic research, legal interpretations, policymaking, and activism (Collins & Bilge, 2020). Intersectionality addresses multiple issues at once, recognizing their combined effects are more than the sum of their parts, rather than the slow process of addressing issues one at a time (Collins & Bilge, 2020). Collins and Bilge discuss feminist, civil rights, and union rights movements in the 1960s and 1970s that often focused on one particular issue (such as class, gender, or race), leaving Black women who

were also workers erased in their experiences of gendered/classed marginality (Collins & Bilge, 2020). This particular examination of Black women's labour and marginality is explored in the pivotal work of Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*. Crenshaw explores intersectionality through Black women plaintiffs in three different cases (Crenshaw 1989). In one of the cases Crenshaw explores, *DeGraffenried v General Motors*, five Black women argued that they were wrongfully terminated during seniority-based lay-offs (Crenshaw 1989). They said that General Motors did not hire Black women before 1964, and most who were hired after 1970 lost their jobs (Crenshaw 1989). However, the courts didn't acknowledge their multi-oppressed experience as Black women, noting that women were hired by the company before 1964, even though it was exclusively white women who were hired at this time and thus benefited from the seniority-based lay-offs. The plaintiffs were recommended by the court that they join a race-based discrimination case against General Motors because, according to the courts, there was no sex discrimination in the seniority-based lay-offs (Crenshaw 1989). The General Motors case highlights how Black women's discrimination was erased by the courts as it did not exclusively align with race discrimination or sex discrimination, the experience of these Black women in the General Motors case was such that they experienced both raced and gendered discrimination (Crenshaw 1989). Conveniently, if the discrimination could be argued as one kind of discrimination exclusively, the responsibility would instead be passed onto Black women to prove either gender discrimination or racial discrimination as a way to avoid accountability and resolution from the employer who is discriminating based on the intersectionality of Black women's race and gender.

Intersectionality was popularised by Kimberlé Crenshaw in her 1989 article, but it is not the first instance of a concept like intersectionality (e.g.: Collins & Bilge 2020; Nash 2019). Collins and Bilge provide an example of intersectionality being used in practice through Savitribai Phule's critiques of India's caste system and women's rights (2020). An idea like

intersectionality has also shown up in work before Crenshaw's 1989 article (Nash 2019). Intersectionality is not just a set of citational genealogy or what intersectionality is but, instead what intersectionality can do (Collins & Bilge 2020). Collins and Bilge are suggesting that intersectionality gets caught up in the beginning stages of addressing who popularised intersectionality and what it can do rather than applying intersectionality to analyse or interrogate systemic oppression (2020). Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality, and the term "intersectionality" is now the popular way to engage interlocking systems of oppression, but it is not the first time a concept like "intersectionality" has been talked about or written about. In my research, I engage citational politics by citing Kimberlé Crenshaw for coining and popularizing the idea of "intersectionality" that is known and used widely today, but I also engage intersectionality as more than citational genealogies.

Collins and Bilge also point out the assumption that intersectionality is a finished framework institutionalised by universities as equity, diversity, and inclusion work rather than a critical framework to evoke change (Collins & Bilge 2020). Collins and Bilge say that using "intersectionality as an analytical tool: (1) an approach to understanding human life and behaviour rooted in the experiences and struggles of disenfranchised people; and (2) an important tool linking theory with practice that can aid in the empowerment of communities and individuals." (Collins and Bilge 2020, 42). Intersectionality can work as critical inquiry and critical praxis; it doesn't have to be separate; the example they use is research and activism (Collins and Bilge 2020). In an Indigenous feminist context, intersectionality would interrogate race, gender, sexuality, homophobia, transphobia, ability, patriarchy, resource extraction, environmental racism, poverty, etc. and colonialism as the bounding connection between all areas of oppression.

Intersectionality is interested in addressing Black women's as well as gender-diverse people's entanglements and experiences with sexist racialization. Intersectionality can be applied to many different groups of people who experience various forms of marginalisation.

This includes Indigenous women and Indigenous gender-diverse people who are experiencing various and simultaneous forms of domination. Natalie Clark (2016), an associate professor at Thompson Rivers University and a social worker, offers a theory of red intersectionality as an approach to addressing gendered violence experienced by Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit people. Clark explains that,

“Indigenous ontology is inherently intersectional and complex in its challenging of the notions of time, age, space and relationship This complexity or holism inherent in Indigenous communities was and continues to be the focus of colonial violence through policies inflicted on the land and on the body; colonial processes were not only gendered, they also attacked the other intersectional ways of being within Indigenous communities, including the complementary roles of women and also the sacredness of Two-Spirit Indigenous peoples” (2016, 49).

Indigenous intersectionality “foregrounds resistance, sovereignty,” and decolonization to “theorise not only the past but the current forces of colonialism” (Clark 2016, 51). Assessing violence against Indigenous women, Emily Snyder, Val Napoleon and John Borrows explain how colonial law focuses on a singular axis for legal justice (Snyder, Napoleon & Borrows, 2015). These authors suggest that legal systems in Canada have one type of person in mind, white cis het, able-bodied males, which leaves Indigenous women slipping through the cracks (Snyder, Napoleon & Borrows, 2015). They propose that Canadian law needs an intersectional approach to better account for Indigenous women’s experiences and the injustices done to them, an approach which accounts both for gender on top of being informed by traditional Indigenous law (Snyder Napoleon & Borrows, 2015; Clark, 2016). Clark further examines this intersection of Indigenous tradition and gender in a case study about a 14-year-old girl who was sexually assaulted in her foster home (Clark, 2016). Before speaking to officials about her sexual abuse, the young victim (who remains anonymous) was enabled to attend an Indigenous girls’ group that empowered her through engaging her gender and indigeneity to stick up for herself in the legal system (Clark, 2016). However, when she finally brought her case to the justice system, standing up for herself, the youth was met with accusations of lying by both the Ministry of Family and Child Development (MCFD) and the police. MCFD and the police argued that the

victim was making up lies so that she could be removed from the foster home. By taking an intersectional approach to research, Clark (2016) was able to demonstrate how the MCFD and the police worked actively to undermine a young victim of sexual assault's credibility due to allegations of her sexuality and alleged use of drugs (Clark 2016). Clark presents questions to the reader about how different institutions of power (criminal justice system, health care, and child welfare) worked together to oppress a young girl through her various subjectivities (age, geography, class, gender, etc.) (Clark 2016).

Thus, in the present research, I use intersectional and Indigenous feminist approaches of research to inform my critique of colonialism and gendered violence. I use these approaches to interrogate the dominant patriarchal power structures established within traditional news media that fail to recognize the multiple ways settler society harms Indigenous women. Intersectionality and Indigenous feminism are the more significant theoretical concepts underpinning the work presented here. In addition, I put them into conversation with other theoretical concepts within Indigenous studies such as resurgence, self-determination, decolonization, sovereignty, and body sovereignty (which are explained later in this chapter) in order to more fully grasp the research topic.

Body Sovereignty

Colonisation in Canada involves the harsh subjugation of Indigenous women, 2-Spirit, trans, and queer Indigenous people (L. Simpson 2017; Wilson 2015, Driskill, Finley, Gilley, and Morgensen 2011). This subjugation was achieved through colonial policies and institutions such as residential “schools”, missionaries, and Indian agents, among others (L. Simpson 2017; Wilson 2015, Driskill, Finley, Gilley, and Morgensen 2011). For instance, Simpson examines how early prostitution laws in Canada disproportionately targeted Indigenous women for state intervention based on their sexuality (L. Simpson 2017). Leanne Betasamosake Simpson argues that Indigenous people were seen as hypersexual and sexual deviants and that this stereotyping

of Indigenous people in relation to sexual deviancy/proclivity was often the cited reason of Indian agents when searching ‘disorderly’ homes—an older common phrase for a bawdy house—that reinforced the stereotypes of ‘deviant’ lifestyles of sexual promiscuity in Indigenous women (L. Simpson 2017).

Likewise, Indigeneity was associated with deviance in relation to the heteronormativity of western societies. Wilson (2015) notes that early colonisers disapproved of gender variance and non-heterosexual lifestyles, and because Indigenous peoples did not likewise practise what we today classify and name as cis-heteronormativity, these normative logics often lead to the execution of Indigenous people; particularly during the 1500s for the crime of sodomy (Wilson 2015; Sigal 2011; Goldberg 1993; Tortorici 2007). Whether Indigenous women’s expression of their sexuality or the non-cis-heteronormativity of Indigenous peoples, Indigenous ways of being concerning gender and sexuality were violently attacked because they were a direct threat to colonial expansion and domination through normative logics and morality (L. Simpson 2017; Wilson 2015).

Before colonisation and during early days of Indigenous-European contact, settlers observed that within Indigenous societies there was what we might today call gender fluidity in both expression and in gender roles. Gender did not rely on a strict binary, and patriarchal sex-based roles were less often observed in Indigenous societies at this time (L. Simpson 2017; Wilson 2015). In Nishnaabeg societies, for example, Indigenous women were skilled at hunting, fishing, and trapping, whereas, in Mohawk societies, Indigenous women were political leaders and warriors (L. Simpson 2017). However, through the influence of violent colonial domination, Indigenous women were exiled to the home and trans and queer Indigenous people were made to disappear or go into hiding (L. Simpson 2017; Wilson 2015). Simpson argues that through violent enforcement of colonial policies and institutions, colonisers imposed heterosexist patriarchy; settler gender logics became embedded into Indigenous societies through force (L. Simpson, 2017).

Wilson and Simpson note that, presently, there are Indigenous ceremonies where 2S, queer, and trans-gender Indigenous persons are excluded for not wearing the appropriate clothing (jeans, for example) for their perceived gender dictated by cis-hetero-patriarchal standards (Simpson 2017; Wilson 2015). Wilson (2015) shares an example of an elder threatening to verify queer Indigenous youth were wearing the appropriate clothing for their perceived gender, by personally examining their genitals, while trying to access a ceremony during pride week. Wilson explains that such an act by the elder was a violation of the youth's body sovereignty.

It is important to note that this kind of discrimination is not just the work of men, who occupy a place of privilege within these colonial gendered power structures; Simpson, for example, shares her experiences where her mother taught Simpson (2017) and her sister about the importance of respectability, how to be a lady. Simpson notes that these lessons were inspired by her mother's fear of settler harm should they not conform to settler ideals about women's sexuality, especially Indigenous women's presumed hypersexuality, but notes that this framing also further legitimises the idea that Indigenous women are inherently hypersexual (L. Simpson 2017).

Both Simpson and Wilson argue it is the responsibility of Elders and community leaders to accept and provide teachings to younger Indigenous people so they can carry the knowledge to understand the world around them and their experiences instead of enforcing colonial ideas of gender and sexuality in order to access Indigenous teachings (L. Simpson 2017; Wilson 2015). Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2017) cites Alex Wilson's guidance that queerness and Two-Spirit identity in Indigenous communities needs to be accepted through normalising queer identities and self-expression. Wilson (1996, 2015) argues that a reclaiming of queer identity or "coming in" is an act of returning to our pre-colonial Indigenous identity, spirituality, and cultures, and that in so doing we work to rebuild our communities from colonial gendered/sexed violence.

Colonial interference with gender and sexuality is often dismissed as not a priority within mainstream Indigenous politics (which is largely dominated by cis-heterosexual-men) (L. Simpson, 2017). Simpson argues that within Indigenous politics, ‘righteous work’ is defined as the work Indigenous men do, particularly land-based or rights-based political actions that do not involve gender analyses (blockades, treaty etc.). In contrast, other issues (gender, sexuality, gender equality, gender-based violence) are considered secondary concerns, coming after the decolonization efforts of men (L. Simpson, 2017). Simpson (2017) explains that this way of thinking further marginalises Indigenous women, trans, queer and 2s people from decolonizing movements and efforts. For decolonization to be fully realised, it needs to centre feminist critique and queer theory as gender discrimination is an integral part of colonialism (Simpson, 2017; Driskill, Finley, Gilley, and Morgensen, 2011), and body sovereignty is itself an integral part of this effort to decolonize (Simpson 2017; Wilson 2015). Decolonization is a process of Land Back and dismantling colonial institutions to free Indigenous people of the violent colonial domination. Grounding decolonization through a gendered and feminist lens makes sure no one is left behind in the common struggle for decolonial liberation. It allows women, children and gender-diverse folks to be actively involved in decision-making processes which also impact them, making sure not to replicate colonial cis-heteropatriarchy in the decolonial efforts of our communities.

Wilson (2015) stresses that, according to traditional Cree teachings, we are all in a relationship with all living things, and we must express that connection with love and be responsible to the land to keep/restore balance to the world; for Leanne Simpson (2017), this expression of care for our relations includes giving ourselves room to grow in how we relate and express ourselves. Simpson’s (2017) ancestors and the spiritual world know that tradition can change with people’s needs because she has been to ceremonies where all people have been accepted regardless of skirt attire or gender identity. Simpson expresses how “when she see[s] women wearing pants at ceremonies, [she] believe[s] they are wearing teachings of diversity,

consent, and respect for body sovereignty. When [she] see[s] queer, transgender, gender nonconforming, Nishnaabeg at ceremony, [she is] reminded of 2SQ political orders and brilliance” (Simpson 2017, 140). For Wilson “coming in” does not centre on the declaration of independence that characterises “coming out” in mainstream depictions of the lives of LGBTQI people. Rather, coming in is an act of returning, fully present in ourselves, to resume our place as a valued part of our families, cultures, communities, and lands, in connection with all our relations” (Wilson 2015, 3). Both Wilson and Simpson argue that body sovereignty and accepting the way Indigenous people choose to express gender and sexuality are not only done in isolation but are an important part of our community, including in ceremony, and grassroots organising (e.g., Idle No More, Native Youth Sexual Health Network) (Simpson, 2017; Wilson, 2015).

Indigenous Resurgence

Indigenous resurgence is a theory dedicated to the refusal of colonisation and the re-uptake of traditional Indigenous cultures and values (Morgan 2018; Starblanket 2017; Simpson 2016). Indigenous resurgent analyses are often focused on activities of specific Indigenous Nations; resurgence is the action of becoming reacquainted with your specific Indigenous communities’ culture. These activities can take place as sharing stories, learning the language, participating in your Nation’s government, and being on your community’s land. Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2017) writes about being on the land with Nishaabeg Elders and acting relationally with the land by centring Indigenous thought, through Indigenous practice (30). Gina Starblanket (2017) also writes that resurgence includes “mobilizations grounded in the revitalization of our traditional ways . . . and strategies of cultural renewal based on the interplay of pre-colonial pasts and decolonial futures” (Starblanket 2017, 25).

According to Starblanket (2017), Indigenous resurgence started as activism geared towards having Indigenous people’s rights recognized by colonial states. A limitation of

Indigenous resurgence theory is the fact that much of the literature is dominated by Indigenous scholars who grew up away from their communities and who may not have intimate knowledge of their cultures as practised in community. Jas M. Morgan (2018) notes that they learned about their culture by growing up in a city among other urban Indigenous youth, while Leanne Betasamosake Simpson learned more about their Indigeneity by attending university (Morgan 2018, L. Simpson 2017).

Early theorising of resurgence and rights-based activism ignored the experiences of women and gender-oppressed Indigenous people (Morgan 2018; Starblanket 2017). Jas M. Morgan (2018) further argues that Indigenous resurgence, popularised in the 1990s by masculinist academics, also ignores the lived realities of trans and queer Indigenous people in the prairies (Morgan 2018). They say that Indigenous resurgence flattens Indigenous struggle as one common experience instead of comprising varied experiences also differentially informed within Indigenous communities by colour(ism), gender, sexuality, location, and poverty (Morgan 2018). Morgan (2018) and Starblanket (2017) utilise an intersectional approach to critique resurgence scholarship as an at times exclusionary framework even while it attempts to further Indigenous rights and sovereignty. By critiquing masculinist resurgent scholarship and activism, Morgan (2018) and Starblanket (2017) are working to bring into the conversation the lived experiences of Indigenous Two-Spirit people, Indigenous women, and Indigenous queer and trans people who live at multiple intersections of the Indigenous experience under colonialism. Critiquing the “status quo”, Morgan and Starblanket highlight the multiple ways Indigenous gender-diverse people and Indigenous women experience domination and oppression by the colonising state through an intersectional lens that will change, for the better, the conversation around resurgence and rights-based activism so as to be more inclusive of Indigenous experiences.

Early resurgent rights-based activism ignored Indigenous experiences that were oppressed by systems other than race because of the thought that it could distract from the issue

of colonialism (Starblanket 2017). However, queer Indigenous people in the prairies have always worked to subvert colonial oppression and address multi-oppressed experiences; for example, TJ Cuthand's "Lessons in Baby Dyke Theory" (1995) which incisively comments on poverty, homophobia, loneliness, and being on the prairies, a lived experience of and Indigenous queer person (Morgan 2018).

Indigenous feminist resurgence theory critiques the common concept in early resurgence works of "cultural memory," the concept of "common understanding or collective view" and which simultaneously prioritises malestream goals (Starblanket 2017, 25–28). Starblanket (2017) argues that a feminist critique of Indigenous resurgence prevents and mitigates the re-emergence of colonial power structures from forming within decolonial activism and academia (Starblanket 2017). According to Starblanket, cultural memory is a widely agreed on set of "traditional values and knowledges" (Starblanket 2017, 26) that, because of their claims to authenticity and traditionalism, go un-critiqued. Starblanket writes that popular or recognized cultural memory is malestream as it prioritises cis-men's experiences and perspectives. Starblanket further notes that it doesn't matter what the historical accuracy of the contents of claims to collective cultural memory might be as the very concept often functions to continue marginalising those already multiply oppressed in Indigenous communities (Starblanket 2017). For example, resurgent land-based practices have been noted to assume rigid gender binaries and further deny women and LGBTQ2S Indigenous people the freedom to choose how to express themselves in these spaces (Starblanket 2017). Yet, Starblanket cautions against empty symbolic and spiritual labelling of Indigenous 2-Spirit and LGBTQ people as ceremonially special because it often leads to a lack of recognition as to the political nature of these issues. Tacking the labels "2-Spirit" and "LGBTQ" Indigenous people to conversations already dominated by experiences other than their own, as an afterthought or in a pan-Indigenous empty way (e.g., "all 2S people are inherently spiritual and hold both feminine and masculine energies") is a reductionist approach to the inclusion of queer Indigenous perspectives in

resurgence activism and scholarship (Pyle 2019). For example, after Saylesh Wesley became estranged from their grandmother, they eventually grew closer to their grandmother through practising and learning cultural activities from her (Wesley 2014). This growth was nurtured through Stó:lō basket weaving and ultimately allowed Wesley to ask for a Trans 2S title in Halq'eméylem—*Sts'iyoye Smetíyexw Swí:qe* (Twin-Spirited Woman) (Wesley 2014).

Resurgence “work[s] alongside ancestors and those yet to be born to continually give birth to an Indigenous present that generates Indigenous freedoms” (L. Simpson 2017, p25). When resurgence is informed by feminist critique, it can become a powerful and even lifesaving framework for activism (Wesley 2014; Starblanket 2017). Within the context of my research, Indigenous resurgence is a useful theory because it helps situate Indigenous sexuality as separate from colonial domination while also making space for femininity and queerness in the re-uptake of Indigenous traditional values.

Indigenous self-determination

My next analytical framework is taken from literature on Indigenous self-determination. Indigenous self-determination is often defined as the political autonomy of Indigenous nations/governments from settler states (Corntassel 2012; Kuokkanen 2019). Self-determination, as granted to nation-states, has been a part of international law since the end of World War 1 and has been

“codified in two human rights treaties in 1966, the International Covenant on Civic and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights . . . [these] two treatises affirm: ‘All peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development’” (Kuokkanen 2019, 25).

However, to Indigenous rights advocates, the use of “all peoples” in these treaties was not seen as a fair statement as some peoples, particularly Indigenous peoples, are oppressed groups *within* sovereign nation-states—so pursuing economic, social and cultural development wasn’t

attainable for Indigenous people, or if they were able to pursue those things, it was part of assimilation processes (Murphy 2014; Kuokkanen 2019). However, several decades later with the passing of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), Indigenous peoples rights to self-determination have been recognized within international law, too (Kuokkanen 2019). While arguably a step in the right direction, self-determination is often about legal or political recognition of a peoples sovereignty. This state recognition of rights is not sustainable as it relies on colonial framings of legal order and governance, and it often does not address Indigenous women's issues within colonial states (Corntassel 2012; Kuokkanen 2019).

Indigenous self-determination is a relational process that Indigenous activists, scholars and advocates have further developed beyond the framings of UNDRIP as a right (Corntassel 2012; Kuokkanen 2019). Self-determination, from Indigenous perspectives, is based in relationalities to people, places, and cultures (Corntassel 2012; Kuokkanen 2019). Jeff Corntassel (2012) argues that self-determination is often reduced to a more limited notion of self-government within sovereign colonial states when it should be about

“evolving Indigenous livelihoods, food security, community governance, relationships to homelands and the natural world, and ceremonial life can be practised today locally and regionally, thus enabling the transmission of these traditions and practices to future generations” (Corntassel 2008, 119).

Ultimately self-determination is a specific community-based practice that must be asserted rather than asked for or negotiated through rights-based legal frameworks (Corntassel 2012). However, self-determination is often argued as a collective Indigenous struggle that has been used to invalidate the struggles of individuals or sub-groups within Indigenous nations, such as women (Kuokkanen 2012, 2019). Indigenous self-determination is often concerned with the larger Indigenous struggle under Canadian oppression and colonialism. When Indigenous women started bringing women's issues into conversations about rights-based recognition, they were often met with hostility by Indigenous men for ostensibly detracting from the larger issue,

colonialism (Kuokkanen 2012). The National Indian Brotherhood, in particular, was bothered when Sharon McIvor noted a lack of attention to the gender issues within the Indian Act that prevented Indigenous women in Canada from passing Indian Status onto their children in the same way that men could (Kuokkanen, 2012). Kuokkanen (2012) argues that current rights-based frameworks for understanding self-determination, i.e., UNDRIP, fail to realise Indigenous women as being affected differently than the assumed common experience of Indigenous men, stating that “out of forty-six articles, UNDRIP only mentions Indigenous women only in three” (Articles 22.1, 21.2, and 22.2). Article 44 articulates that the Declaration applies “equally to male and female Indigenous individuals” (Kuokkanen 2019, 29). Rauna Kukkanen sees the language within UNDRIP as not specific enough because it does not address how Indigenous women are differently impacted by colonialism. To address the impacts of colonialism on Indigenous women there would need to be specific language and consideration of the differentially gendered impacts of colonialism. However, in UNDRIP there is no nuanced consideration of such specific impacts for women.

To achieve true self-determination as a decolonizing practice, Indigenous activists and scholars need to operate with the understanding that Indigenous women aren't only struggling under colonial rule but that we are struggling under colonial *patriarchal* rule. Self-determination is Indigenous survival, and for a people to survive there needs to be adequate attention paid to gender-based violence and exclusions (Corntassel 2012; Kuokkanen 2019).

Methodology

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is compatible with my research goals and theoretical framework. CDA involves analysing words or discourses in order to “[study] the way social-

power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take an explicit position and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately challenge social inequality. This is also why CDA may be characterised as a social movement of politically committed discourse analysts” (Van Dijk 2015, 466). Discourse analysis focuses on specific word choices in the semantic context of a work so as to reveal latent ideologies and thought patterns that themselves reflect dominating forces and inequitable structures in society. As such, discourse analysis focuses primarily on social problems and political issues rather than the mere study of discourse structures outside social and political contexts (Van Dijk 2015).

Though there are many fields that use CDA as a methodology, for the purposes of my work I will be focusing on macro and micro levels of analysis and power as control in society. The micro level of social order and analysis focuses on language use, discourse, and communication. On this level, CDA allows me to show patterns over time about how print and legacy media (*The Globe and Mail, Vancouver Sun, Winnipeg Free Press, Toronto Star, Edmonton Journal*) in Canada continues to rely on colonial frameworks to discuss Indigenous women and violence. On the macro level, CDA is a tool that examines power relations, dominance, and inequality between social groups (Van Dijk 2015) by making those relations clearer in the present and in history. I use macro CDA analysis to challenge structures that facilitate disproportionate sexual violence against Indigenous women in the hope that I can initiate change. While I rely on both micro and macro levels of analysis, I emphasise macro levels of analysis to highlight the inequality of Indigenous women in society through the analyses of mainstream legacy media.

Mainstream journalism in Canada, as a dominant structure, is legacy media that has a long history in Canada and is also deemed credible. Legacy media is upheld by white supremacy and mirrors other institutions in Canada such as governments, universities, and multinational corporations. If we label institutions such as governments, universities, and multinational

corporations as the “powerful institutions” in western society then, in the general population, it is the people whom these institutions target — through academic research, policy, law and media representation — that experience the brunt of the discursive and material consequences of colonial power. Powerful speakers (academics, politicians or journalists) use mainstream media through op-eds or editorials to control common narratives and ideas about different groups and their relation to each other (Van Dijk 2015). When “powerful speakers” repeatedly generalise similar events or actions “they may condition the generalisation and abstraction of specific mental models to more general structures of knowledge and ideology, for instance about immigration, terrorism, or economic crises” (Van Dijk 2015, 473). Asserting dominance in the form of general cognitive influence may be in the interests of the powerful speakers and against the best interests of the recipients (Van Dijk 2015). Recipients tend to believe the opinions of people and institutions are defined as authoritative (unless they are inconsistent with their personal beliefs and experiences) (Van Dijk 2015).

Newspaper reporting and the creation and perpetuation of negative stereotypes of Indigenous women is a form of the use of power as control. The notions of discourse access and control are very general, and it is one of the tasks of CDA to spell out these forms of power and especially their abuses and techniques of domination (Van Dijk p 2015). Members of more powerful social groups, especially leaders within those groups, have exclusive access to and control over more – and more influential – genres of discourse (Van Dijk 2015). Speakers of powerful groups may want to control not only specific knowledge and opinions but also generic knowledge. Leaders in society and industries control collective knowledge by dominating the shared generic social representations such as socio-cultural knowledge as well as group attitudes and ideologies (Van Dijk 2015).

Despite their intentions, neither the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) nor the Final report (*Reclaiming Power and Place*), has made a significant shift in how the legacy media reports the stories of Indigenous women who die by sexually motivated murder. The recurrent

and persistent pattern in legacy media of biased reporting on the issue of sexual violence against Indigenous women belies the reality that these institutions are permeated by colonial intent; Indigenous people are better equipped to report on cases involving Indigenous sex and sexuality because of our understanding of colonial legacies that continue to impact Indigenous people, especially women. My thesis research moves away from understanding Indigenous women as simply helpless victims of violence that are also culpable in their own victimisation. In this research, I demonstrate that Indigenous women are autonomous people diligently navigating long-standing colonial forces that work against them. Because of their deeper understanding of how colonial thought shapes violence against Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit people, Indigenous women are more able to situate violence against individuals within structurally violent and anti-Indigenous discourse and institutions.

Using CDA, I show that legacy journalism is an integral aspect of colonialism by closely examining legacy reporting on four cases of sex-murder of Indigenous women (Helen Betty Osborne, Pamela George, Cindy Gladue and Tina Fontaine). My analysis illuminates victim-blaming patterns that saturate legacy media reporting on cases of Indigenous women's murders, and how these patterns rely on colonial frameworks of Indigenous women's sexuality and place in society. Subsequently, I use CDA to argue that Indigenous people are better equipped to report factually on the deaths of Indigenous women as we are better able to, and motivated to, account for the structural conditions, including dominant discourses, that enable sexual violence and colonial society's understanding of that violence.

Having Indigenous people reporting on Indigenous issues also helps overturn dominant discourses that help sustain such violence. Legacy media is still one of the most powerful structures used to cement cultural stereotypes and enforce the so-called truths about a given society and its members. Beginning in the early 1960s, journalists for Vancouver's three daily newspapers (*The Province*, *the Vancouver Sun*, and *the Vancouver Times*) began to report regularly on the deaths of women in the Downtown Eastside (DTES) and on some of the

problems the women living there experienced. Bringing the issue into the public spotlight, journalists drew upon pre-existing stereotypes, presenting a fatalistic life story characterised by helplessness, loneliness, poverty, addiction, prostitution, and death in the “asphalt jungle.” (Longstaffe 2017).

Such racialized, sexualized, and classed narratives of Indigenous women are ingrained in the structural forces that control journalism and buttress anti-Indigenous and misogynist stereotypes and tropes against Indigenous women. These patterns are clearly visible when legacy media publishes articles about the Vancouver Downtown Eastside (DTES). Legacy media reporting on the deaths of Indigenous women in the DTES regularly blame Indigenous women for their own deaths and rather than focusing on the impacts of colonialism on these cases instead focus on the victims involvement in sex work, possible addictions, and poverty. Media matters because published works do have a real-life impact on people’s lives.

Nicole Lugosi’s (2011) analysis of the case of Neil Stonechild shows how the misconduct of the provincial police force was inaccurately framed as an administrative issue rather than a racism issue (Lugosi 2011). Stonechild was, an Indigenous youth who was taken to the outskirts of the city by Saskatchewan Police Service (SPS) and left to walk home while he was intoxicated. in this case. When the judge removed race as a factor in their inquiry into the SPS officers, they helped to sustain the false narrative that Canada is a racially equitable society without an anti-Indigenous racism problem (Lugosi 2011). Records show Indigenous women and Indigenous men have died from the intersecting effects of poverty, poor health, addictions, and violence as a result of colonialism in Canada (Longstaffe 2017).

Indigenous women are particularly vulnerable to the efforts of colonialism because of the repeated assaults to bodies and personhood that are enacted through and rely on patriarchy (Green 2017; Monchalin 2016; A. Simpson 2016; Razack 2000). However, when legacy media reports on cases of Indigenous people’s murders it often frames the case as one of the individual and their personal conditions which lead to their death rather than on a systemic analysis of

how this death was created. Legacy media individualises these cases by focusing on the impact of an Indigenous person's death on their family and community (Longstaffe 2017). By privileging the voices of Indigenous family and communities as stand-alone authorities, on the death as a single event impacting a narrow group, legacy media contributes to the banalification of each death it reports on as Indigenous people's voices do not hold respect in wider Canadian society; the accounts of Indigenous families and communities are generally considered less 'valid' in general Canadian society because there is far less power behind it (Longstaffe 2017). The individualization of Indigenous women and the shallow reporting of the context of their death is a choice made actively by legacy media and journalists which contributes to colonial framing of Indigenous women's lives as disposable.

The cases I discuss also demonstrate the apathy municipal police departments exhibit concerning the deaths of Indigenous women as their murders often remain uninvestigated. The Canadian justice system is particularly uninterested in the racialized murders of Indigenous people, especially women. Though these municipal police departments blatantly ignore the homicides of Indigenous women they maintain that the reason is administrative. For this reason, Constance Backhouse (1999, as cited in Lugosi 2011) notes that, "the ideology of racelessness, a hallmark of the Canadian historical tradition, is very much in keeping with our national mythology that Canada is not a racist country" (Lugosi 2011, 300). According to Lugosi, Sunera Thobani (2007) refers to this simultaneously racist and raceless ideology as the "master narrative" of Canada which allows Canadians to pride themselves on maintaining the values of multiculturalism and respect for diversity while maintaining colonial power over Indigenous people as a race (Lugosi 2011, 300). The work of journalism in creating this 'nice' Canadian image cannot be underestimated as it works to justify and convolute the racialized violence enacted in and by Canadians. Even when reporters understand that poverty and discrimination affect these women's lives in enormous ways, and position themselves as advocates for social reform, reporters' language often justifies the very systems of racism and sexism they write and

speak against (Longstaffe 2017). Journalists must continue to try and address these issues of racialized and sexualized violence in Canada, but by relying upon stereotypical tropes of Indigenous women's sexuality and poverty even sympathetic reports reinforce colonial, racist, and misogynist structures that lead to such cases (Longstaffe 2017).

Reporters for legacy media reinforce harmful colonial discourses that promote violence against Indigenous people, especially women, and this function overshadows whatever social critiques they try to offer. In her 1963 newspaper article in the *Vancouver Sun*, Simma Holt portrayed the deaths of Indigenous women as inevitable, scripting their urban lives with a predetermined, inevitable violent ending even as she ostensibly aimed to highlight and challenge systemic issues facing Indigenous women (Longstaffe 2017).

Journalists often paint the precarity of Indigenous women's lives as inevitable rather than an occurrence that happens under the domination of colonial forces. In particular, by relying on narratives from family members in their journalism, legacy media appropriates family narratives to the effect that the violence faced by Indigenous women is framed as inherent by Indigenous women as a member of a racialized group — the result of individual family dysfunction. Framing violence as the inherited problem of Indigenous women as Indigenous women functions to erase the culpability of the very perpetrators of violence and the racialized structural inequalities which enabled this violence within a colonial state. (Strega et al. 2014).

The West and the “Rest”

Colonialism in Canada is at the heart of the continued murder of Indigenous women. Stuart Hall (1992) explains how the so-called uniqueness of “the West” was in part a purposeful discourse produced by European intellectual's contact with and their comparison to other societies in other parts of the world (which Hall refers to as “the Rest”) (Hall 1992). European travel and “discovery” of other parts of the world such as Asia, Africa, and the Americas

provided the bases for Europeans (British, Portuguese, French, Dutch, Spain) to situate themselves as the advanced “west” while simultaneously labelling “the rest” as inferior (Hall 1992, 280-289). “Discourse,” in Hall’s (1992) use, refers to a particular way of representing and communicating ideas about ‘the West’, ‘the Rest,’ and the relations between them (Hall 1992, 291). Discourse enables just as it limits communication about particular concepts according to particular frameworks adopted by that discourse (291). Discourses concerning Indigenous peoples have often relied on the supposed incivility of Indigenous cultures and traditional practices, making this lack of civility real insofar as it was generally accepted in the west as part of the constitution of itself in relation to civility. Lack of civility has been at the centre of the Westerner’s idea of the “other” (Hall 1992) since the time of first contact with Indigenous peoples and European settlement of the Americas. From the beginning, some people described the Natives of the New World as ‘lacking both the power of reason and the knowledge of God’; as ‘beasts in human form’ (Hall 1992, 214). Historically, Indigenous people have not been able to challenge the discourse of being uncivilised and being othered by the West because it is colonial power, rather than a concern for reality, that makes claims and statements functionally true within the realm of the discursive (Hall 1992, 293).

Using CDA allows me to analyse and be critical of European influence on discourse by giving us an incisive tool to analyse the texts—both written and visual—that Westerners create to represent other countries, people, and communities. Hall notes that one of the ways in which the West defined itself in contradistinction to the Rest by early colonisers was through the use of explicit sexual language. The very language of exploration, conquest, and domination was strongly marked by gender distinctions and drew much of its subconscious force from sexual imagery (Hall 1992). In particular, dominating forces and actions were presented as masculine in nature, while those they sought to dominate, often explicitly sexually, were presented as feminine.

The continuing legacy of discursively framing colonialism as a gendered, sexed exercise remains in the present; by referring to Indigenous women as synonymous with sex work or as sexual objects mainstream news media perpetuates these discourses, making them relevant for general framings of Indigenous women in the present, enabling and justifying the continued violence and juridical indifference which Indigenous women disproportionately face in the Canadian present.

Methods

I used the ProQuest database, Canadian Newsstream, to search for articles about Helen Betty Osborne, Pamela George, Cindy Gladue, and Tina Fontaine. I chose these four women, who were victims of sexualized violence because they are representative examples of mainstream newspaper media (in the *Toronto Star*, *Globe and Mail*, *the Vancouver Sun*, *Edmonton Journal*, and *Winnipeg Free Press*) continuing to frame Indigenous women negatively over a 50-year period and with a reporting history of 34 years. Repeatedly, journalists reported on these four women using stereotypes and they also repeatedly decontextualized the murders of Helen Betty Osborne, Pamela George, Cindy Gladue, and Tina Fontaine. For all of the women, I typed their first names into the search bar in quotations with the filter “anywhere”. I continued to filter the search by source type which was “newspaper”, and document type which was “news”, and I further filtered the search to English only results. To get a chronological order of the results for Helen Betty Osborne, Pamela George, Cindy Gladue, and Tina Fontaine, I sorted the results by “oldest first”. I then filtered the results to the publications used in this research, the *Toronto Star*, *The Globe and Mail*, *Vancouver Sun*, *Edmonton Journal*, and the *Winnipeg Free Press*.

After filtering my search, I was left with articles that I further filtered by removing repeat stories, anonymous stories, and stories less than 300 words. Furthermore, I removed stories about Helen Betty Osborne from 2003-2022 because they were not relevant stories to her

specific case. The stories about Helen Betty Osborne between 2003-2022 were about new cases regarding missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Similarly, I removed stories about the child welfare system that used Tina Fontaine's name in one sentence. I also removed stories about Tina Fontaine's cousin, Jeanenne Fontaine, who was also murdered in 2014 because Jeanenne Fontaine's circumstances falls outside the scope of this research. The final results for newspaper articles from the Newsstream database regarding Helen Betty Osborne are comprised of 75 articles, 17 regarding Pamela George, 91 regarding Cindy Gladue, and 100 articles regarding Tina Fontaine. In these articles I examine how Helen Betty Osborne, Pamela George, Cindy Gladue, and Tina Fontaine are framed, how the perpetrators are framed, whose voices are present, and whose voices are absent. Furthermore, I examine how colonialism and gender-based violence appear or do not appear within the articles regarding Helen Betty Osborne, Pamela George, Cindy Gladue, and Tina Fontaine. Once these findings become clear, I will inform my critiques with my theoretical framework.

Findings and Discussion

Introduction

For this research, I examined 283 news media articles relating to the killings of Indigenous women: Helen Betty Osborne, Pamela George, Cindy Gladue, and Tina Fontaine. My findings show that there are similar themes in reporting and framing across all articles and cases. First, almost all of the articles were written by non-Indigenous journalists. Second, in these articles, journalists often report on how substance use is prevalent in these cases by Indigenous women, but do not often address the use of substances by perpetrators. For example, journalists report on how the judges in the cases instructed jurors to be aware of the perpetrator's state of mind due to substance use. However, in these same cases, the Indigenous

women victims are framed as blameworthy for the lethal violence they faced because they, too, were under the influence of various substance use. For perpetrators, their substance use was seen as grounds to dismiss charges laid against them while for the Indigenous women victims, it framed them as culpable in their own deaths. Substance use by the accused is seen as an impairment to their state of mind and must be taken into consideration regarding their conviction by jurors. Third, where the accused were also framed as career criminals whose murder of Indigenous women was not reflective of systemic racism in Canadian society but only of their immoral character (ex. Dwayne Archie Johnston and Raymond Cormier). Fourth, the articles lack any representation of the voices of the victim's family (with one exception in the case of Cindy Gladue's case in the 2010s).

The articles I examined for the present research frame the cases and discuss the perpetrators through a general motivation to enact settler moves to innocence: Reporting frames settlers and settler society as absolved of systemic wrongdoing toward Indigenous women. This is seen through the reporting on the inquiry into the handling of Helen Betty Osborne, the retrial for the man who murdered Cindy Gladue, and the inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. My findings are broken into four sections ordered according to reporting on each victim, and within each victim-specific section, chronologically.

Helen Betty Osborne

Helen Betty Osborne was an 18-year-old Indigenous woman who was the victim of lethal anti-Indigenous gendered violence. Helen Betty Osborne was from Norway House Cree Nation in northern Manitoba and was living in a boarding home in The Pas, Manitoba, with a non-Indigenous family while she attended high school in the town. Helen Betty Osborne attended high school in The Pas because there wasn't a high school near her home community. On November 13, 1971, Helen Betty Osborne was murdered by four men who were cruising the streets of The Pas. After a night out with friends, Helen Betty Osborne was walking home alone

when four men James Houghton, Lee Scott Colgan, Norman Manger and Dwayne Archie Johnston abducted her. The four men abducted Helen Betty Osborne, sexually assaulted her, beat her and left her for dead on the outskirts of town. Helen Betty Osborne was found the next morning by a taxi driver who alerted the RCMP. The identity of who killed Helen Betty Osborne was a widely known secret among the people in The Pas, however, no one told the RCMP. Helen Betty Osborne's case went cold for 16 years until 1986 when three out of the four men were charged with the murder of Helen Betty Osborne.

For sixteen years the police did not investigate Helen Betty Osborne's murder. Eventually an inquiry into her death began in 1988 as part of an inquiry into the case of JJ Harper, a respected Indigenous leader in Manitoba who was gunned down. News media reports on the inquiry of Helen Betty Osborne's murder were framed as giving justice to Helen Betty Osborne, and it was during the inquiry that most of the reporting of her murder took place. Houghton, Colgan, and Johnston were all charged with the murder of Helen Betty Osborne. Manger was never charged with the crime because he was determined to be severely intoxicated at the time. Only Johnston served time in prison for Osborne's murder—a total of 6.5 years. I was only able to find two articles that concerned the trial of Johnston, the rest of the articles focused on Helen Betty Osborne's murder were about the inquiry and Johnston's early release from prison.

While the majority of news media coverage of Helen Betty Osborne's killing was performed during this inquiry, most of their attention was on the accused men and other officials. Readers hear Colgan's and Houghton's voices most prominently. Colgan wasn't charged, and Houghton was acquitted of Helen Betty Osborne's murder. News media focused a lot of attention on Colgan because his testimony is why Johnston went to prison and why Houghton was acquitted. News reports on the murder trials framed Colgan as telling the truth due to his perceived candour during the inquiry into the murder of Helen Betty Osborne. Due to Colgan's testimony, which he altered in favour of Houghton (York 1989), and the fact that

Colgan had made an agreement with investigators to provide details of the murder to avoid jail time, neither Colgan nor Houghton were tried or convicted for their role in the murder.

The articles I examined depict Houghton negatively, he is quoted as not feeling remorse because he claimed he did not commit the murder. Houghton is also regularly depicted as smirking and chewing gum during his testimony in the articles, he was also noted as being scolded by the presiding judge for lying. While the press noted Houghton's negative behaviour, the articles I examined did not discuss why his behaviour was bad beyond discussing the murder as bad. For example, it was reported by *The Globe and Mail* on June 27 and June 28, 1989, that during the inquiry Colgan and the other three men (Johnston, Houghton, and Manger) were looking for an Indigenous woman because of the racist stereotype that Indigenous women are more easily available for sex. However, reporting doesn't actually acknowledge Indigenous women as "easy for sex" as a stereotype engendered by the lasting legacy of colonialism, one that continues to undermine the safety of Indigenous women. The articles examined the case as a one-off rather than examining the role that anti-Indigenous racism and gendered violence had to play as part of a systemic enabling of Helen Betty Osborne's murder.

Articles from the late 1980s and early 1990s show a general lack of depth when reporting on gender violence, targeted racialized violence, and the specific racialized violence to which Indigenous women are subject. These articles briefly mention racial tensions but do not divulge deeper into what that means for the reader. The articles also briefly mention the unjust prison sentence of Johnston and how Indigenous people who commit the same crime face longer sentences. Due to the influence of the inquiry into her death, journalists did give a platform for Helen Betty Osborne's friends. However, the audience rarely sees quotes from the family of Helen Betty Osborne. Ultimately, the reporting that engages the death of Helen Betty Osborne lacks humanising depth and as such continues to perpetuate harmful stereotypes and discourses of Indigenous people, especially women, in the prairies.

Violence against Indigenous women in Canada is embedded into the fabric of Canadian society. Indigenous scholars, including Sherene Razack, Pamela Palmater, Audra Simpson, Leanne Betasamosake, and Lisa Monchalin, have written at length about how gender-based violence against Indigenous women helps continue settler efforts of expansion and resource extraction (Razack 2016; Palmater 2016; A. Simpson 2016; L. Simpson 2017; Monchalin 2016). As with Canada's consistent extraction of natural resources, settler societies see women as the land, as entities from which they can continually extract resources. In other words, settler society sees Indigenous women as rapeable (A. Simpson, 2016). As such, Indigenous women are routinely and disproportionately victims of sexualized violence and other violence that cause their deaths (A. Simpson 2016; Green 2017). The racist/sexist stereotype that Indigenous women are "easy" is a colonial legacy that has a long history with implications felt at the individual level, such as the murder of Helen Betty Osborne. By not addressing the racist gendered stereotype of Indigenous women being "easy," focusing on the individual court cases of her murderers, and neglecting the testimonies of Osborne's family and friends, Canadian news media and the reporters who published on her murder dehumanised Helen Betty Osborne, for being an Indigenous woman.

The articles rarely cover Helen Betty Osborne's family and the impact her death had on her community. Within Canadian news media, Indigenous people serve as a spectacle for a non-Indigenous audience. Indigenous people, including the communities of murdered Indigenous women, are not part of the public audience to whom Canadian news media targets. It was not until the early 2000s that the (non-Indigenous) leaders of the Canadian Government apologised for the handling of Helen Betty Osborne's death. One article I examined which focused on this apology does, in fact, quote one of Osbourne's sisters. Yet, the voices of Helen Betty Osborne's friends and family are mostly missing from the news media coverage of the inquiry and the early release of Johnston. The missing voices of Helen Betty Osborne's family and friends is a direct

product of the privileging of dominant voices (white, cis-straight men) in Canadian news media for a dominant (white, cis-straight) audience (Jiwani 2009; Gilchrist 2010).

In the 1980s and during the years of the inquiry, 1988-1989, Canadian news media rarely gave a platform for Helen Betty Osborne's mother or other family members. This is a stark difference from the approach of the media three decades later in the reporting around Cindy Gladue and Tina Fontaine's deaths. In the reporting around Cindy Gladue, readers are eventually introduced to Cindy Gladue's grieving mother and then later to Cindy Gladue's grieving children. Right from the beginning, in 2014, readers are introduced to Tina Fontaine's friends, family, and caregivers. The lack of engagement with Helen Betty Osborne's mother could be explained by the fact that the few times Helen Betty Osborne's mother is quoted it is because she is speaking Cree and is making use of an interpreter who translates her words into English. While the language barrier can explain the reason why Helen Betty Osborne's mother is rarely quoted, the lack of family voices overall is notable as it functions to dehumanise Helen Betty Osborne. Further, by not giving room for Osborne's mother in their reporting, Canadian news media maintained the erasure of Indigenous people and languages from the public view. Silencing the voices and first languages of Indigenous people sustains dominant settler voices and continues the Canadian newspaper legacy of othering or dehumanising Indigenous women. Silencing Indigenous voices also furthers the settler "common sense" idea that Indigenous people need the help of the Canadian state because they are unable to speak on their own behalf; they are childlike and/or deviant and in need of Canadian intervention (Jiwani 2009; Gilchrist 2010; Harding 2006).

While we rarely hear from Helen Betty Osborne's family in the overall reporting about her murder, the audience eventually hears her school friends speak during the inquiry into her murder. However, the framing of Helen Betty Osborne's friends' voices focuses on their testimony during the inquiry and is overtly framed by stereotypes of Indigenous women common in the media. While this inquiry-related reporting that gave voice to Helen Betty

Osborne's friends helps to humanise her, acknowledging the day-to-day experiences of racism she and her friends faced, the reporters continue to rely on tropes in an effort to humanise Helen Betty Osborne while ignoring the racism to which she was the victim. Canadian news media did not account for the racism faced by Helen Betty Osborne because it falls outside of the binary stereotypes of Indigenous women and would require painting a more complicated picture of Helen Betty Osborne and her circumstances. For example, Helen Betty Osborne's best friend describes how Johnston regularly harassed them as Indigenous teenage girls. Helen Betty Osborne's friend also notes that Helen Betty Osborne had left her remote northern reserve to attend high school in the nearest urban centre in order to achieve her dreams of going to college and becoming a teacher. Reporting on the testimony of Helen Betty Osborne's friend relied on this later testimony and focused on painting Helen Betty Osborne with the "good woman" narrative, that she was undeserving of being murdered, not because she was a human being, but because she could be cast as "good" in settler eyes (see Kolopenuk 2020).

While the "good woman" narrative is usually reserved for white women who are mothers and wives (Jiwani & Young 2006, Cripps 2021, Gilchrist 2010), in the case of Helen Betty Osborne the "good woman" narrative built on the "benevolent" nature of Helen Betty Osborne's ambitions but furthered settler colonial moves to innocence in so doing. The news media reports on Helen Betty Osborne's benevolence must be understood as part of a more general framing by Canadian newspaper media that paints Canada as a progressive state that can help Indigenous people (Harding 2006). As a result of Helen Betty Osborne's ambition and perceived assimilation into Canadian culture, her being framed as accepting Canada and its legitimacy, she is reported as being a "good" woman and therefore as deserving of sympathy and life itself. Again, this "good vs. bad woman" framing in Canadian news media reporting of the inquiry relies on othering racialized groups as usually bad and the settler state as good in order to avoid addressing the deeper violence of Canadian colonialism that is the backdrop of murders such as that of Helen Betty Osborne.

In addition to framing Indigenous women as usually bad — unless they can be easily framed as assimilated — reporters often focus more simplistically on “bad” settler individuals rather than discuss the complex dynamics and violence of Canada as a racist settler state. This was the case in Canadian news reporting on Johnston. Canadian news media framed Helen Betty Osborne (and her friends) as helpless victims of recurring harassment at the hands of Johnston, who was eventually convicted of Helen Betty Osborne’s murder. By focusing on Johnston and his badness Canadian news media continues a dominant narrative that Indigenous people require benevolent Canadian intervention when at the hands of a few murderous individuals (Jiwani & Young 2006, Harding 2006, Gilchrist 2010). This narrative ignores the foundational violence that underlined the violence enacted against Osborne and her friends, Canada’s ongoing colonialism.

An excellent example of the Canadian news media’s dismissal of systemic issues can be seen in the way reporters wrote about the police investigation into Osborne’s case. In particular, news media highlighted how the investigation was incompetent; Helen Betty Osborne’s friends testify that police interrogated them the morning after Helen Betty Osborne’s death rather than interviewing the four men who killed her. Reporting, therefore, acknowledged individual police bias and racism in this investigation but failed to examine the role of individual and systemic racism in the police response and in the violence, noting only that there was racial tension. By reporting vaguely that there are racial tensions in the area but while focusing predominantly on individuals and their actions, Canadian news reporting again failed to locate the roots of racial violence and the failure of the Canadian “justice” system as it applies to Indigenous people. Reporters consistently return to a narrative of a “few bad racist apples” and let Canadian colonialism off the hook.

The articles that look to the communities of Helen Betty Osborne and her family repeatedly refer to The Pas as a northern Manitoban community with “racial tensions,” however, the articles don’t explain why there are racial tensions between Indigenous people and the white

people of The Pas. This lack of contextualization suggests that this is just the way for northern towns, that it is natural. The articles don't address the forceful relocation of Indigenous people to remote reservations for Canadian expansion and resource extraction. Colonisation has dispossessed Indigenous people from the land in a violent manner and is continuously carried out in the present by white non-Indigenous people (Razack 2000). The idea that Indigenous people need to be saved from their uncivilised behaviour was the justification for colonising the land in the first place and banishing Indigenous people to the reserve (Razack 2000). Banishing First Nations peoples to reserves kept them out of sight and out of mind to Canadian society and also served to portray Indigenous people as backwards, as people who refused to accept Canada as a progressive state while clinging to their incivility (Razack 2000, Harding 2006). Segregating Indigenous peoples to reserves also entailed infrastructure, laws, and policies that ensured the segregation of Indigenous people from urban centres and fed into the enforced narrative of Indigenous incivility. With the removal of these barriers, Indigenous peoples moved to urban centres and many white people left to live in suburbs (Razack 2000). The suburbs were organised around large plots of land and large houses to reflect the settler privileges that wealthier, white people became accustomed to while inner cities became places where racialized and poor people could be contained (Razack 2000). To ensure the separation of the racialized poor from the wealthy whites and to ensure ongoing colonial expansion, laws such as the Indian Act and nuisance laws were enacted (Razack 2000).

Reporters covering Osborne's trial notes in newspaper articles that segregation was widely practised in The Pas during the 70s in such places as movie theatres, restaurants, and bars. Reporters also note that there was a turn in attitudes after a mall was built and run by a local First Nation and talk about racism as an issue that is currently resolved. But this framing of racial tensions as being only part of the past does little to explain how Helen Betty Osborne ended up murdered in the present, the indifference of police officers investigating her disappearance and murder, and why her case went unsolved for sixteen years.

When race is addressed as an issue in the present by reports it is only in quotes from Indigenous people who were interviewed. Addressing the racism within The Pas during the 1970s and onwards only through quotes by Indigenous people suggests that racism is only an Indigenous problem rather than a problem that needs to be addressed by everyone, including non-Indigenous people. Indeed, racism is even more the problem of white settlers and the Canadian state in so far as it is these groups who perpetrate it and through which they organise themselves. By ignoring racism as a pervasive problem, especially amongst the white Canadian public, typical media framings of Osborne's case did little to explain why the four men assumed Helen Betty Osborne would easily consent to sexual activity with them. The deeper systemic context was never addressed in reporting—that agents of colonisation, including not only the police and other powerful white men, but also common white men—have specifically targeted and viewed Indigenous women as ripe and available for sexual exploitation (Razack 2000, Monchalin 2016). Settlers a deeply held belief that they are inherently entitled to Indigenous women's bodies because of their own white settler superiority over Indigenous people, a belief that reflects their sense of entitlement to Indigenous land, too (Razack 2000).

With the analytically biased reporting in Canadian news media that ignored systemic racism, it was left to Indigenous leaders to argue that the lack of investigation in Helen Betty Osborne's case was due to her being an Indigenous woman. Settler moves to innocence are acts in which settlers rush toward any sense of relief from the overwhelming guilt of anti-Indigenous racism (Tuck & Yang 2012). By relieving themselves of the responsibility to address colonialism and its violence, settlers simultaneously contribute to perpetuating anti-Indigenous racism and further ensure "settler futurity" (Tuck & Yang 2012). Decolonial education scholars Tuck and Yang build on Janet Mawhinney's work that analyses how white people sustain and create white privilege in anti-racist organisations (Mawhinney 1998, in Tuck & Yang 2012). Mawhinney's work in turn builds on the work of Mary Louise Fellows and Sherene Razack's "race to innocence" where individual women believe their "subordination is the most urgent" issue that

needs to be addressed while at the same time oppressing others (Fellows and Razack 1996, in Tuck & Yang 2012). To return to the Helen Betty Osborne case, reporters framed the government inquiry into the inappropriate handling of the case as a benevolent act of the judges who looked into Helen Betty Osborne's case. This suggests to readers that the Canadian government and legal structure cared about an Indigenous woman's murder. However, it took a whole year after the minimal, lacklustre response of the justice system to Osborn's killers before the inquiry was initiated. The white male murders were mostly let off the hook for an Indigenous woman's murder like white patriarchal Canadian society is mostly let off the hook for its massive violence against Indigenous peoples.

The inquiry ultimately held no one accountable for Osborne's murder. Johnston, while required to speak at the inquiry, did not speak. And while it was reported that he could be held in contempt of the court and receive more time on his prison sentence if he didn't cooperate, it was ultimately deemed futile by legal experts to require him to speak. Because Johnston was already serving time in person, legal experts argued that adding more time to his sentence was an ineffective consequence. When he was offered early release, Johnston did eventually speak about the murder of Helen Betty Osborne and offered an apology for his violent actions. Houghton, Colgan and Manger could have faced charges for other crimes than murder, including abduction and aggravated sexual assault, but again it was considered futile by legal experts to pursue such charges as adding new charges for the other three men would be difficult since the murder took place years ago. Reporters demonstrated similar hesitance to talk about these men as criminals, Johnston, for instance, was regularly described as a model prisoner when it became public knowledge that he had been on day parole and was about to be granted early release from prison.

Settler moves to innocence are also witnessed in reporting on the inquiry when townspeople of The Pas are portrayed as being remorseful for not informing the police of the town's secret. Their performances of confessions during the inquiry are widely reported.

Moreover, reporting frames Colgan after his testimony during the inquiry as someone who was never the same after that murderous night and whose life was ruined as he became steeped in alcoholism. Framing the white town folk as remorseful ironically further humanises white people who all-around performed violence directly or through acts of omission against Indigenous women. This humanisation of a community that hid murder occurs all while continuing to do little to humanise the victim, Helen Betty Osborne. The inquiry did little to help create material change in the lives of Indigenous people affected by white sexual violence. Scholars have shown how confessional situations such as occurred during the inquiry are also common settler moves to innocence even in anti-racist settings. Mawhinney's academic work on settler moves to innocence is constructed through the patterns that emerge in anti-racist settings such as non-profit organisations attempting to address structural racism (1998). The patterns that emerge are confessionals to apologise for wrongdoing, for example when an all-white board of directors repeatedly ignore Black workers regarding racism (1998). A confessional of sorts, in this case, testimony during an inquiry, provides a release of guilt and also situates acts of racism in the past while simultaneously absolving persons of any wrongdoing (Mawhinney 1998). For a confession to take place, in this manner, the confessor needs to be confessing in a setting where they feel safe, where a white majority is the dominating presence during the confessional (Mawhinney 1998). However, the racialized person (or people) needs to be present as well for the confessional to have a perceived effect of actually conveying the apology (Mawhinney 1998). While I do not know the demographic makeup of viewers for the inquiry into Helen Betty Osborne's murder, we do know that the inquiry was to answer why her murder went unsolved for sixteen years. The inquiry provided the perfect backdrop for the non-Indigenous townspeople of The Pas to engage settler moves to innocence while non-Indigenous journalists reporting on the inquiry did little to recognize or name the racism within the town. Rather, they too enacted a settler move to innocence by reporting the inquiry and confessionals as benevolent acts to a broad, predominantly white-settler audience.

The inquiry did acknowledge several systemic failures that negatively impact Indigenous people, but nothing was done with the information collected from the inquiry. Judicial and governmental leaders said trying the three remaining men (Manger, Houghton, Colgan) for other crimes (such as abduction and sexual assault) was pointless, as was holding Johnston in contempt for not testifying at the inquiry. Legal experts explain that too much time had passed and evidence to support another criminal trial would be hard to obtain. The lack of action by people working in the government and judicial system suggests that the inquiry and Johnston's 6.5 years in prison are viewed as a sufficient consequence for Helen Betty Osborne's life, her worth, and thus enough to absolve any settler wrongdoing in her death.

Pamela George

Pamela George was a 28-year-old Indigenous woman who was the victim of sexualized violence (Cordon, 1997; Henton, 1997; Wright, 2020; Mallick, 2020). A citizen of the Sakimay First Nation in Regina, Saskatchewan, Pamela George was a single mother of two children who were 5 and 10 years old at the time, in 1997 (Cordon, 1996; Wright, 2020, *Edmonton Journal*, 1997). Pamela George occasionally worked in the sex trade. On April 17, 1995, she was tricked into getting into a car with a young white man (Cordon 1996). Earlier in the evening the young white man, Steven Kummerfield, and his friend Alex Ternowetsky, were trying to pick up a sex worker (Cordon 1996). However, the woman they tried to pick up did not want to get into the car when they realised there were two men in the vehicle. Eventually, the men decided one would hide in the back of the trunk while the other drove around and picked up a sex worker (Cordon, 1996; Wright 2020; *The Globe and Mail*, 1996). The men eventually came into contact with Pamela George, and she got into the vehicle assuming that there was only one man in the vehicle (Cordon, 1996; Wright 2020). According to newspaper reports, Kummerfield and Ternowetsky forced Pamela George to perform oral sex on them and when she tried to escape and scream for help, they brutally beat Pamela George causing her murder (Cordon, 1996).

Pamela George was found the next morning by a commuter lying face down in the mud in a ditch on the outskirts of town (Cordon, 1997; Henton, 1997; Wright, 2020; Mallick, 2020). Although the recommendation for manslaughter is generally ten years, Kummerfield and Ternowetsky both received 6.5 years for manslaughter (Cordon, 1997; Henton, 1997; *Edmonton Journal*, 1997). The jury convicted Kummerfield and Ternowetsky of manslaughter because of the judge's instructions to remember that Pamela George was a sex worker and that Kummerfield and Ternowetsky were drunk, thus following an established pattern of devaluing her humanity while supporting a generous definition of white male humanity. The judge validated sentencing the murderers for only 6.5 years because of the 18 months Kummerfield and Ternowetsky had already spent in jail after being arrested (Henton, 1997; *Edmonton Journal*, 1997; Wright, 2020; Mallick, 2020). Both men were released after three years in prison (Mallick, 2020).

While reading the small number of articles reporting on this case, some similar themes emerged as had emerged with Helen Betty Osborne's case: Journalists generously framed these men as university athletes from middle-class families who made a mistake while out drinking. As with reporting on Helen Betty Osborne's case, in their coverage media sources did not consult Pamela George's family. A common theme throughout the articles was that reporters often depicted Kummerfield and Ternowetsky specifically as university athletes while also failing to cover Pamela George's family's response to her murder. Reporters also failed to report on the numerous Indigenous organisations' condemnations of the Canadian justice system in response to the lesser convictions and short sentences of the accused. Indigenous organisations were also vocal about the lacklustre critique of the judge who was presiding over the case when the judge directed the jurors to sentence Kummerfield and Ternowetsky to manslaughter because Pamela George was a sex worker. Most notably, however, there was also a lack of context surrounding violence against Indigenous women in Canadian news media reports on George's murder.

My search for newspaper articles about Pamela George turned up only 17 results, way fewer than those for Helen Betty Osborne, Cindy Gladue, and Tina Fontaine. There were originally 247 articles that pertain to the search term "Pamela George " in the database, Canadian Newsstream. I filtered my search to those in English-language news articles published in newspapers and were from the specific publications for this thesis — *The Globe and Mail*, *The Vancouver Sun*, *Edmonton Journal*, *The Toronto Star*, and *The Winnipeg Free Press* — and got 38 results. After further filtering for articles that reached a minimum of 300 words and were actually about Pamela George, the results reached a total of seventeen.

A significant factor which decreased the number of search results was my exclusion of *The Star Phoenix* as a source in this research. *The Star Phoenix* is a newspaper in Saskatchewan, Pamela George's home province. The proximity of the murder of Pamela George could likely explain the significance of this story in *The Star Phoenix* reporting given her murder did not have a large mainstream news media presence. Newsworthiness is often constructed by the dominant demographic in society, white men, and what is considered newsworthy includes violent sex crimes that occur in close proximity to the region of the publication disseminating the news (Gekoski, M. Gray, R. Adler 2012; Gruenewald et al 2013; Gilchrist 2010). However, for violent sex crimes to be considered newsworthy not only locally, but nationally, the victim needs to represent the dominant majority, white people, or the event is considered less newsworthy (Gekoski, M. Gray, R. Adler 2012; Gruenewald et al 2013; Gilchrist 2010, Jiwani & Young 2006).

There are also differences between the national contexts of Helen Betty Osborne's, Cindy Gladue's, and Tina Fontaine's cases and Pamela George that could explain the fewer articles which covered Pamela George's story. What stands out about Pamela George is her temporal distance from similar incidents as well as a national shift in consciousness about injustices against Indigenous peoples. Unlike Helen Betty Osborne, whose murder occurred before Pamela George, there was an inquiry into Helen Betty Osborne's death that was considered newsworthy.

In addition, Pamela George was murdered in 1995, sixteen years before the cases involving Cindy Gladue in 2011 and nineteen years before Tina Fontaine in 2014. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was launched in 2008, and the 94 Calls to Action were released in 2015, thus helping build greater national consciousness around colonial violence committed against Indigenous people that would make the Cindy Gladue and Tina Fontaine stories more newsworthy. Indeed, the Cindy Gladue and Tina Fontaine cases together caused a national uproar and led to more awareness about missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. The TRC and the 94 Calls to Action, the mounting pressure that led to the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and the inquiry into the death of murdered Indigenous women have now become news events that create national newsworthiness because they involve the nation and federal Canadian government (TRC and MMIW inquiry), none of which were the case at the time of Pamela George's murder.

Of the final 17 articles related to the Pamela George case, the majority of the articles barely reach 500 words and only two articles are over 1,000 words. "The Hurting" by Randy Turner is one article that stands out; published in the *Winnipeg Free Press* in 2012, "The Hurting" is 4,596 words. The other article that exceeded 1,000 words was written by David Roberts and published in *The Globe and Mail* in 1997 after Kummerfield and Ternowetsky were sentenced to 6.5 years in prison. Although the article by Turner is primarily about the broader topic of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, Turner does briefly discuss the trial of Kummerfield and Ternowetsky. Turner writes that the murder of Pamela George is attributed to alcohol consumption instead of racism against Indigenous women because the judge in 1996 instructed the jury that if they found Kummerfield and Ternowetsky too drunk to understand their actions that beating Pamela George would cause her death, then the men should be convicted of manslaughter (Turner 2012). That position, of course, fails to recognize the anti-Indigenous gendered violence of which Pamela George was the victim of (*Edmonton Journal*, 1996; *The Vancouver Sun*, 1996).

In the articles about the trials of Kummerfield and Ternowetsky there is a distinct lack of responses from both the victim and perpetrators' families. Reportedly, the families of Pamela George, Kummerfield, and Ternowetsky did not want to speak with reporters who were covering the trial (Cordon, 1996). Unlike in the articles involving other victims in the research, there is only one mention of Pamela George's family in the dataset; Henton writes, "Pamela George's weeping relatives fled the courtroom Thursday after a judge sentenced the aboriginal woman's two white killers to 61/2 years in prison" (Henton 1997).

Pamela George, herself, is described in the media based on what is said during the trial and by Indigenous organisations. The portrayal of Pamela George includes descriptions of her profession as a sex worker and harmful perceptions of Indigenous women. The lack of Pamela George's family's presence in the reporting on the trials for Kummerfield and Ternowetsky continues to privilege certain voices that perpetuate dominant ideas (Jiwani 2014, Cripps 2021). For example, the judge presiding over the case told the jury to keep in mind that Pamela George worked in the sex trade (*Toronto Star* 1996, 1996; *The Globe and Mail*, 1996; Cordon, 1997; Henton, 1997). Referring to Indigenous women as sex workers is a common trope in news about Indigenous women who are victims of violent crime (Razack 2000, Jiwani & Young 2006). This instruction to the jury functions to suggest that Pamela George would have consented to sexual activity and assumed the risk of harm because of her profession in the sex trade (*Toronto Star* 1996; *The Globe and Mail* 1996; *Edmonton Journal* 1996; *The Vancouver Sun* 1996). As with Helen Betty Osborne, the use of the good vs. bad woman framing creates a blameworthy victim and considers them deserving of the crime they are the victim of because of their degenerate ways of being (Jiwani 2014, Jiwani & Young 2006, Cripps 2021, Razack 2000). The "bad" woman is usually someone racialized and who is often seen to engage in "deviant" behaviour, such as sex work. This framing alienates them from the parts of their person that could have been salvaged (i.e...being a mother) in order to legitimise dominant narratives of societal morality (Razack 2000, Cripps 2021, Jiwani & Young 2006). Journalists reporting the judge's instructions to the

jury, without contextualization of systemic colonial violence against Indigenous women, contributes to the real-life victimisation of Indigenous women and ignores the systemic and inter-generational reasons that lead many Indigenous women to work in the sex trade. The lack of consideration of colonialism's ongoing violence continues to legitimise Indigenous people as inferior to dominant society and in need of Canada's help (Harding 2006). Indigenous women have had to resort to sex work to provide for families after colonization because of a lack of access to resources (Jiwani 2014). For example, during the pass system, Indigenous women would exchange sex for food rations from Indian agents who would intentionally withhold resources from them and their family/community (Jiwani 2014, Razack 2000). However, if the women refused to have sex with the agent, they would be retaliated against by being called prostitutes (Jiwani 2014). This just reinscribes Indigenous women as both blameworthy and as helpless victims while contributing to a long history of Indigenous women being labelled as sex workers without addressing the structural violence that creates and sustains the violence (Jiwani 2014).

Similarly, the articles regarding the trials of Kummerfield and Ternowetsky for the murder of Pamela George use quotes taken from Indigenous organisations and leaders, and women's groups—words originally meant to advocate on Pamela George's behalf. But as those organisations are quoted in articles, their words are ultimately used in the media in ways that cause harm as journalists do not provide the necessary context of colonialism about violence against Indigenous women. For example, the advocates for Indigenous women are quoted to critique the words of the presiding judge in the case. However, without any context about systemic violence against Indigenous women, the quotes uphold a stereotype that Indigenous people are hopeless and prone to unfortunate circumstances. Kripa Sekhar of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women is quoted as saying, "Pamela George was a poor, aboriginal woman. What chance did she have?" (*The Globe and Mail* 1996; *Edmonton Journal* 1996; Cordon 1996). Sekhar is also quoted as saying, "we saw two (accused) white men, a white

jury . . . the cards were stacked against her.” These quotes are meant to show that there has been a lack of justice for Pamela George. However, without the context of systemic racism and continued oppression of Indigenous people and women these quotes do little to address the ongoing problems within Canada and they ultimately perpetuate the idea that Indigenous people are destined for doom.

According to some of the articles, journalists suggest that Pamela George was judged more harshly for her race, gender, and line of work than Kummerfield and Ternowetsky: Pamela George was judged more harshly precisely because of her race, gender, and line of work while Kummerfield and Ternowetsky were acting in accordance with their identities as white men from dominant society who have immense access to privilege (Razack 2000). Kummerfield and Ternowetsky partied the entire Easter weekend (together and separately) at private properties while also buying flights to other provinces, buying gas, and alcohol (Razack 2000). According to one article, Kummerfield's grandfather was once a cabinet minister and Ternowetsky's father worked in a university (Roberts 1997). In at least one article Kummerfield and Ternowetsky are described as “clean-cut, thin, and pale,” (Cordon 1996). Within the court case the judge, Ted Malone, said the following, “If the jury found Kummerfield and Ternowetsky were so intoxicated they did not understand the beating would kill Pamela George, then the verdict should be manslaughter,” (*The Vancouver Sun* 1996; *Toronto Star* 1996; *Edmonton Journal* 1996).

However, scholars have shown that men who are athletes can enact violence and engage in heavy drinking because it is a rite of passage to sustain the status quo of homo-social relationships between men in sports (Razack 2000). Furthermore, Kummerfield and Ternowetsky were behaving in accordance with their racial histories by acting as the coloniser through the purchase of sex which gives them control and where the contract of sex supposedly cancels the violence (Razack 2000). As such, Ted Malone's recommendation upheld white supremacy and settler futurity by weighing the men's drunken state as something to consider more than the murder of Pamela George — who Malone said should have assumed the risk as a

sex worker (Turner 2012) because the men were from the dominant society with futures ahead of them. The comments made by the judge and quoted within the articles continue to perpetuate the idea that it is okay to murder an Indigenous woman while drunk if one is a university athlete from a middle-class family. The reporter's inability to counter-frame the dominant narrative of Kummerfield and Ternowetsky's murder of Pamela George as a rite of passage gone wrong, and their inability to counter-frame the dominant narrative that contracts for sex cancel violence, propels settler moves to innocence in the favour of Kummerfield and Ternowetsky.

The settler move to innocence is something we see with the men accused of killing Helen Betty Osborne and the 'simplicity' of the man who killed Cindy Gladue. The lack of counter-framing regarding what judge Malone said at the end of the trial assures that the men are absolved of their crimes because they are facing (lacklustre) consequences for the murder of Pamela George. Again, the court system and the mainstream media are providing the context for white people to perform guilt in front of other white people to create the illusion of being sorry (Mawhinney 1998). However, in this instance, it is not Kummerfield or Ternowetsky that are performing. It is rather the judge who speaks on the men's behalf and who instructs the jury to be mindful of the men's alcohol consumption who is performing the settler move to innocence. Furthermore, the journalist's inability to report the structural violence of colonialism situates both the perpetrators and the victim outside of history as simply individual actors who made poor or impaired choices but in a situation in which the victim of violence was not possibly sufficiently good or innocent. This framing in turn legitimises the dominant narratives of blaming the Indigenous sex worker victim (Razack 2000, Jiwani 2014).

Cindy Gladue

Cindy Gladue was a 36-year-old single mother of three daughters and who was found dead inside the Yellowhead Inn bathroom covered in her own blood on June 22, 2011 (R v Barton, 2021 ABQB 603; R. v. Barton, 2011 ABQB 492; Razack, 2016; Blaze Carlson, 2015).

Cindy Gladue was an Indigenous woman who worked in the sex trade while living a transient lifestyle in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada (R v Barton, 2021 ABQB 603; Razack 2016; Blaze Carlson 2015). Cindy Gladue entered into an agreement with Bradley Barton to exchange sex for money, a 43-year-old (in 2011) long-haul truck driver from Ontario, Canada. Cindy Gladue and Barton made the same agreement two nights in a row (R v Barton, 2021 ABQB 603; R. v. Barton, 2011 ABQB 492; Razack 2016). On the morning after the second night, Cindy Gladue was found dead. According to Crown counsel during the trial, Cindy Gladue died because of blood loss from a large cut inside her vagina (R v Barton, 2021 ABQB 603; Razack 2016). Barton was acquitted the first time he went to trial in 2015 for first-degree murder (Keller 2021; Zoratti 2015; Blaze Carlson 2015). There was an appeal in 2017 ordering Barton to be tried for the lesser offence of manslaughter in 2019 where he was sentenced to 12 ½ years in prison in 2021, ten years after Cindy Gladue was found dead (Wakefield 2021; *Toronto Star* 2021; Baig 2021; Wakefield & Boothby 2021; Keller 2021).

Before 2015, there was no specific media coverage of Cindy Gladue's murder except in an article that gives general details about murders in the Edmonton area. In 2011, Cindy Gladue's murder was reported alongside other victims of murder in Edmonton, Alberta (Colville 2011). The details of the article are just the facts: name, age, location, and suspect (Colville 2011). In 2015, after Cindy Gladue's preserved vagina was shown in court, there was an increase in reporting on the murder of Cindy Gladue. However, the reporting dropped off again until February 2015, during the trial of Barton for the murder of Cindy Gladue (Gordon 2015). Articles also increased because of the acquittal of Barton in 2015 (Cormier, 2015; Kay, 2015; Blaze Carlson, 2015; Razack 2016). Procedural reporting is a pattern within crime beat coverage. Instead of reporting the humanity of the victim or their family, or even systemic racism, reporters will cover the events related to the crime. (e.g., appealing the acquittal (2015), overturning the acquittal (2017), the new trial (2019), and Barton being found guilty in 2021). For example, when there was a lapse in procedural updates in the trial for Robert Pickton

reporters resorted to counter narrative reporting (engaging families and activists) (Jiwani & Young 2006).

The reporting of Cindy Gladue's murder and Barton's trial covers two different time periods in Canada. The first coverage occurs during the Harper era and after the TRC and Harper apology, and the second is during the Trudeau era and after the Finale Report into the MMIWG inquiry. During the first trial for first-degree murder, there was much less conversation in traditional media related to consent, racism, sexism, and violence against Indigenous women. However, there was at the time an awareness of the colonization of Indigenous people because of the Harper apology and the TRC. By the time the second trial for manslaughter was underway in 2019, there was significant social awareness because Canadians and journalists had witnessed the final report for the TRC and the 94 Calls to Action as well as the final report for the inquiry into MMIWG, *Reclaiming Power and Place*. Yet that social awareness due to the TRC and the MMIWG final report is not reflected in the news reporting of the murder of Cindy Gladue.

A few patterns emerged when reading the articles about the murder of Cindy Gladue. Cindy Gladue's family is not mentioned in articles discussing the case, and journalists do not place these issues within the structural contexts of colonialism and violence against Indigenous women. There is, however, a significant amount of reporting on what Barton and his lawyer, Dino Bottos, have to say, and considerable reportage that documents their settler moves to innocence and therefore reaffirms such moves. For example, reporting prioritises the words of professionals involved in the investigation as well as the words of the perpetrator over the perspectives of Cindy Gladue's family by excluding the voices of Cindy Gladue's children. Overwhelmingly, there is no reporting on the family victimised by the murder of Cindy Gladue. Before the victim impact statements in 2021, journalists did not report on what the family of Cindy Gladue had to say or how they felt (Colville 2011; Gordon 2015; Cormier 2015). There are articles that address who Cindy Gladue was before the widespread media attention on her murder and Barton's trial (Renzetti 2015; Blaze Carlson 2015). Typically, when sex-murder

occurs the focus is on the event rather than the victim who lost their life (Jiwani 2009). Similarly, journalists reporting on sex-murder report on the events that are related to the crime; for example, police investigations rather than human interest stories that detail the lives of the victims (Jiwani & Young 2006). In this particular instance, the reporting on Cindy Gladue's story was primarily concerned with the trial of Barton. Unfortunately, because of Cindy Gladue's murder, her story is absent from the reporting and reporting is about legal and medical professionals arguing over what killed her (Cormier 2015; Baig 2021; Junker 2021; Wakefield 2021). Journalists reporting on the events of the crime rather than the families' words or systemic violence continue to perpetuate stereotypes of Indigenous women who are the victims of raced and gendered violence (Jiwani & Young 2006).

Not including Cindy Gladue's children in earlier coverage might reasonably be attributed to the fact that Cindy Gladue's children were minors in 2011. However, in 2021 Cindy Gladue's daughters are adults and they are still being silenced. In at least one instance, instead of quoting the family affected by the death of Cindy Gladue, the journalist opts to paraphrase the words of Cindy Gladue's daughters (Keller 2021) further dehumanising Cindy Gladue. The journalist chooses to paraphrase Cindy Gladue's daughter's victim impact statements rather than directly quoting them further silences Indigenous women impacted by racialized gendered sexual violence. When the families voices are used in reporting on sexualized violence, they are supposed to enact sympathy from the public, but when the voices of families are at the end of reporting, as is the case for Cindy Gladue's daughters, it signifies subordination (Jiwani & Young 2006). In contrast, the articles that make up the research show Barton and his lawyer's words are widely reported on often without addressing larger systemic racism or pushback from other people who are fighting for Cindy Gladue (Gordon 2015; Cormier 2015) which places greater emphasis on his words than that of Cindy Gladue's family. There are, however, a few articles about women's and Indigenous women's rights groups that acknowledge the racial gender

violence Cindy Gladue faced (Cormier 2015), as well as articles written by women who address the gendered violence (Busby 2015; Kerr & Sigurdson 2015; Kaye 2105)

Right from the start of reporting regarding the murder of Cindy Gladue and the trial for Barton there is a significant lack of context around the violence against Indigenous women in Canada. Decontextualizing systemic racism continues the pattern in mainstream media that represents Indigenous women as culpable in their own victimisation (Jiwani & Young 2006, Harding 2006). Eventually, reporters addressed the systemic violence against Indigenous women after the acquittal of Barton by quoting protesters at rallies who are calling for justice for Cindy Gladue. Activist voices work as a counter-narrative, in the same way, adding the voices of the victims family when systemic violence is contextualised (Jiwani & Young 2006, Gilchrist 2010, Cripps 2021). Activists and protestors say it is common for Indigenous women to be failed by the criminal justice system in Canada (Renzetti 2015; Blaze Carlson 2015; Cormier 2015). A few articles report on the specific type of violence Indigenous women face when Cindy Gladue's preserved vagina was shown in court to the jurors to make a point about what caused the severe loss of blood (Zoratti 2015, 2105; Blaze Carlson 2015).

There are a few articles before 2021 by Indigenous women who are columnists rather than reporters that acknowledge systemic racism. For example, Jean Teillet and Tanya Talaga, two Indigenous women, acknowledge the deep systemic racism in Canada toward Indigenous women and Emma Cunliffe, a non-Indigenous professor of law at UBC also acknowledges the systemic racism in Canada before *Reclaiming Power and Place* is released (Teillet 2019; Talaga 2019; Cunliffe 2108). However, in one instance, Rosie DiManno acknowledges that the unprecedented move of using Cindy Gladue's preserved private parts in court to prove injury did happen again in 2017, to a Black woman, Rigat Ghirmay (DiMannon 2018). DiaManno's article articulates the invasiveness and demeaning manner of using 'intimate body parts' as specific to the normalised bias that Indigenous and Black women are inferior. She makes the point by saying this would never happen to a white woman, and certainly no man (DiMannon 2018). The

media circus about Cindy Gladue's preserved private parts being shown in court continues the mainstream media pattern of reporting on events rather than the victims' humanity (Jiwani & Young 2009), which DiMannon attempts to do in her column. Furthermore, it is a continued colonial legacy of gender violence to further dehumanise Cindy Gladue by showing her preserved private parts and reporting on them. Indigenous women have routinely been depicted as stereotypically available for consumption (Monchalin 2016, Green 2017, Barker 2017, A. Simpson 2016, L. Simpson 2016).

Throughout the reporting about Barton's trial, more articles quote Barton than any other actor because he was on the stand testifying, and there are articles that also heavily quote Barton's lawyer, Dino Bottos. While the attention on Barton's testimony is par for the course because it is considered newsworthy, there are also articles that position Barton as someone who should not be vilified in the way that outraged citizens have positioned him (Jiwani & Young 2006, Cripps 2021, Gilchrist 2010). For instance, a 2015 article addresses the public outrage and acknowledges the public outcry as understandable but still ends with, "but the Crown and the courts cannot be hostage to community outrage. Any future appeal of the Barton verdict cannot be based on public anger or political pressure. It can only be based on the law" (Simmons 2015). Ending the article by not bending to public outrage or political pressure creates an understanding for the reader that a retrial would be unjust or, similarly, unfair to Barton. The same pattern of shifting to a position of unjust or unfair retrial is seen again in 2021. Furthermore, Bottos blames the inhumane treatment of Cindy Gladue, during the trial, as a reason for the retrial of Barton in the murder of Gladue (Wakefield 2021), shifting blame from Barton to the public and also the prosecution. By the end of the retrial and the sentencing of Barton, we see a move to settler innocence as Barton's lawyer is quoted as saying, "no one in his family has said a bad word about him", "this was Barton's first offence" and that "he is just a simple man" (Wakefield 2021).

Bottos attempted to reframe Barton outside of colonial domination by saying Barton should not be held responsible for all other killings of Indigenous women, which falls with Mawhinney's explanation of settler moves to innocence (1998). Similarly, Bottos tried to reframe Barton as someone who experienced personal exclusion by conflating Barton's re-trial with systemic violence against Indigenous women (Mawhinney 1998). The article ends with a quote by Bottos saying Barton should not be incarcerated because he is not a threat to the general public (Wakefield 2021). Ending on this note, by emphasising Barton as a simple family man, the writer implies that, despite the egregious killing of Cindy Gladue, incarceration is unnecessary because the one-off killing of an Indigenous woman (and potentially other Indigenous women in the future) is not a serious event. It implies that Cindy Gladue's murder is not produced by and with dominant, racist and colonial views of Indigenous women and that anti-Indigenous sex-related murder is not a threat to the public. In this sense Cindy Gladue's murder is not a one-off situation, but rather such murders of Indigenous women are expected events in such a society.

Tina Fontaine

Tina Fontaine was a 15-year-old Indigenous girl who was murdered in 2014. Tina Fontaine's body was found wrapped in a blanket in a garbage bag with rocks tied to her body and dumped in the river. Tina Fontaine's body was found by accident by people who were looking for a homeless man who had fallen in the same river the night before (Sachgau 2014; Blaze Carlson 2014; Mallick 2014; May 2018). Tina Fontaine was a part of the child welfare system. She had spent time in and out of foster care placements and youth shelters in Canada before moving in with her great-aunt, Thelma Favel. Her mother was unable to care for her, and her father, who was suffering from cancer, was beaten to death in 2011. Although journalists do not address the exact reasons for her mother's inability to care for her, a quick search reveals that both her parents were themselves victims of trauma. Both of them suffered trauma because

of the colonial legacy of child apprehensions (residential “schools” and the child welfare system), and her mother was a teen mom who was also the victim of gendered colonial violence. The media’s lack of attention to the systemic nature of intergenerational trauma highlights a lack of understanding among Canadian journalists about the psychological baggage of colonialism and childhood trauma. Tina Fontaine was also carrying the baggage of intergenerational trauma. In the two years before Tina Fontaine was murdered, she was dealing with the death of her father while developing a relationship with her biological mother, Valentina Duck who lived in Winnipeg, Manitoba. During this time, she ran away from several placements and was seen with transient people including Raymond Cormier, who was charged with her murder in 2015 and then acquitted in February 2018 after a two-week trial. Crown prosecutors did not seek an appeal and there was no inquiry into the death of Tina Fontaine.

Of the case studies looked at in this thesis, the murder of Tina Fontaine is the only one that does not result in a conviction of (any of) the accused. The articles surrounding the circumstances of Tina Fontaine’s murder acknowledge the legacy of colonialism, however, the articles fall into similar patterns as do previous articles about victims in this research. For example, Tina Fontaine’s death took place around the time the RCMP released a list of over 1,000 Indigenous women who have gone missing or who have been murdered. This was also a time when mounting pressure for an inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls was taking place. The death of Tina Fontaine and the trial for Cormier also took place after the TRC. These circumstances have resulted in a more in-depth look into the disappearance and murder of Tina Fontaine. For example, there is an in-depth look into the child welfare system of which Tina Fontaine was a part. Media reporting on Tina Fontaine demonstrated deeper commentary around violence against Indigenous women, systemic racism, and intergenerational trauma than did the coverage of the other cases examined. However, despite the deeper contextualization around violence against Indigenous women and systemic racism, reporters continue to blame the victim similarly to reporting about the deaths of Helen Betty

Osborne, Pamela George and Cindy Gladue, and also rely on settler moves to innocence in removing blame from the accused. In the case of Tina Fontaine, news reporters focused on her badness being a teen runaway and having drugs in her system at the time of her murder. While acknowledging systemic racism, the articles refer to Cormier as a career criminal rather than someone who understands the Canadian context of it being acceptable to harm Indigenous women and get away with it, which he ultimately did.

The reporter's acknowledgment of systemic racism and colonialism surrounding Tina Fontaine's death sets the coverage apart from Helen Betty Osborne, Pamela George, and Cindy Gladue. In contrast, the articles that surround the deaths of Helen Betty Osborne, Pamela George, and Cindy Gladue do not, in detail, address colonialism or systemic racism. The articles about the murder of Tina Fontaine address issues stemming from colonialism such as intergenerational trauma, policing, child services, and gendered racism that targets Indigenous women and girls.

While the articles acknowledge that Tina Fontaine was young and vulnerable at the time of her death, they still frame her as blameworthy because of her actions. Tina Fontaine is labelled as a repeat runaway, someone who skipped school and had drugs and alcohol in her system at the time of her death. Even though Tina Fontaine is a vulnerable youth dealing with the fallout of colonialism via intergenerational trauma, she is still initially framed through a good vs. bad woman narrative. The Good vs. bad woman is a dichotomy that defines which women victims of violence are worth grieving (or culpable in their own victimisation) (Cripps 2021, Gilchrist 2010, Jiwani 2014, Jiwani & Young 2006). A good woman is typically a white woman who holds a respectable position within society, such as a wife and mother (Cripps 2021, Gilchrist 2010, Jiwani 2014, Jiwani & Young 2006). However, racialized women and women who are experiencing the weight of systemic violence are typically framed as bad women (Jiwani & Young 2006). As such, Tina Fontaine is framed through a bad woman narrative because of her substance use, Indigeneity and vulnerability as a repeat runaway. Eventually, Tina Fontaine is

considered a vulnerable youth who had been exploited in recent days leading up to her death. For example, in early articles, Sargent O'Donovan said the following at a news conference, "At 15, I'm sure she did not realise the danger she was putting herself in," (Chinta & Lambert 2014) when talking about the discovery of Tina Fontaine's body in the Red River.

However, referring to Tina Fontaine as a repeat runaway relies on framing her as an Indigenous person who cannot accept the generous help (read interference) of the colonial state, in this case the child welfare system. Framing Indigenous people as unwilling to accept the help of the colonial state reaffirms the dominant narrative that stereotypes Indigenous people are backwards (Harding 2006). Furthermore, framing Indigenous people as unwilling to accept help legitimises the harm when they become victims of (Harding 2006). Framing Tina Fontaine as a bad woman (or girl in this case) places blame on her and indicates to audiences reading the articles that she was culpable in her own death because of her behaviour rather than as a teenager dealing with the fallout from colonialism and grief from the death of her father. Victims of violence become blameworthy when they are framed as a bad person because they do not fit the standard for what is considered a good victim (Pickering, Cote-Meek, & Pegoraro 2018; Cripps 2021; Gilchrist 2010; Jiwani and Young 2006). For example, articles discuss the use of alcohol before her death, namely an incident when Tina Fontaine was found passed out intoxicated (McIntyre 2015; Talaga 2105). Tina Fontaine went to the hospital, was with a social worker, and was dropped off at a hotel that she eventually left (Macdonald 2018). The articles refer to Tina Fontaine's behaviour and circumstances leading up to her death as "high-risk," which also frames her as responsible for her own death. Tina Fontaine was not responsible for her death regardless of alcohol and drug use and running away from her placements.

The reporters detail that drugs and alcohol are to blame for both the victim's death and the perpetrator's actions, a move to innocence that simultaneously blames Tina Fontaine and absolves Cormier. For example, during the instructions to the jury by Chief Justice Glenn Joyal on how to assess the confession tape recording of Cormier by the police, Joyal instructed the

jurors to remember Cormier was on drugs during that time. “[J]urors must pay attention to evidence about the condition Cormier was in when he made those statements. An undercover police officer testified that during the six-month police investigation known as Project Styx, Cormier was using drugs” (May 2018). Placing blame on the victim is routine when the victim is framed as a bad, for example, someone who is not white or in this case an Indigenous teenager who is a runaway (Pickering, Cote-Meek, & Pegoraro, 2018; Cripps, 2021; Gilchrist, 2010; Jiwani and Young, 2006). Telling the jurors to be mindful of substance use is similar to the trial of Kummerfield and Ternowetsky for the murder of Pamela George. The judge instructed jurors that if they felt Kummerfield and Ternowetsky were too intoxicated to understand their actions then the jury should convict them of the lesser charge for the manslaughter of Pamela George. The weight of substance use also appears in who was tried for the murder of Helen Betty Osborne. Manger was not tried for the murder of Helen Betty Osborne because he was considered too intoxicated to have known what was going on. The double edge sword of ‘right state of mind’ suggests that the accused shouldn’t be held accountable for their actions while intoxicated while also blaming the victim for their victimisation because of their substance use. Without the context of Tina Fontaine’s circumstances under colonialism and grief from the death of her father, the reporting reinforces stereotypes that Indigenous people struggle with substance abuse. The articles do not do a good job of linking substance use to the legacy of colonialism however, there are improvements in reporting on violence against Indigenous women and the legacy of residential “schools”. The journalists begin to do a better job of reporting on the lasting legacy of colonialism by including the family and friends of Tina Fontaine and how her death impacted them.

Reporters quote Tina Fontaine’s family from the beginning. Articles from 2014 to 2019 regularly quote Tina Fontaine’s aunt, Thelma Favel, who was taking care of her. There are also quotes from Tina Fontaine’s biological mother, Valentina Duck, her cousins, and friends. For example, in an early article, they talk to someone who is reported as being Tina Fontaine’s best

friend, Tarya Pakoo. Pakoo, 12, is quoted as remembering Tina Fontaine as someone who liked to make people laugh and who was struck with sadness and anger when Pakoo found out that Tina Fontaine had died (Sachgau 2014). Similarly, in another early article, Tina Fontaine's uncle, Oswald Turtle, reminisces about Tina Fontaine as a baby (Blaze Carlson & Mahoney 2014). Referring to Tina Fontaine in relation to family and friends humanises Tina Fontaine in a way that is unseen by the previous victims of murder in the research. Incorporating the voices of family and friends into the reporting of Indigenous women who have been the victims of sex-murder is a counter-narrative to create sympathy for the victim and their family, when typically, there would be little sympathy because of the victims circumstances (Jiwani & Young 2006, Cripps 2021, Gilchrist 2010). In 2018 when it was announced in court that Cormier had been acquitted, Thelma Favel and Valentina Duck were both reported as being emotionally struck by the juror's decision to acquit Cormier for second-degree murder. Tina Fontaine's friends and family are not the only people who speak up regarding the murder of Tina Fontaine. There are women's organisations and Indigenous organisations that also speak out about the specific sexualized cruelty Indigenous women face due to the legacy of colonialism. Humanising Tina Fontaine as a victim of deadly cruelty allows readers to empathise with the family and victims which may potentially create change in the lives of Indigenous women. When journalists signal to the public through the framing of grieving family members there is an act of bearing witness that takes place: Either the public is moved to action or is struck by grief because of inaction (Morse 2018). In the reporting of Tina Fontaine, it would follow that there was a process of empathy and public grieving because of the action that took place in the aftermath of Tina Fontaine's death.

Unlike the previous Indigenous women in this research, the articles surrounding Tina Fontaine acknowledge the continued legacy of colonialism and systemic racism from the outset. Typically, violence against Indigenous women, especially when concerned with those who are perceived to live a high-risk lifestyle, are framed as people who need sympathy. Unfortunately,

sympathy falls flat because of the lack of context around the factors that lead to systemic violence (Jiwani & Young 2006). In the case of Tina Fontaine however, sympathy is wide reaching. For example, the reporting surrounding Tina Fontaine discusses the child welfare system as the continued legacy of residential “schools”. The articles also mention the use of hotels for youth in care as inappropriate resulting in provinces across Canada ending their use of hotels because of their lack of safety. The articles also address the pressures put on Stephen Harper by Indigenous organisations and advocates to establish an inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. However, the inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls was initiated and completed under Justin Trudeau’s leadership after not being a priority to Stephen Harper’s government. Furthermore, journalists reporting on the death of Tina Fontaine are also reporting on the increasing push for an inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. The reporters acknowledged the 2014 report by the RCMP listing over 1,000 missing women since 1980 as well as other reports released by Indigenous organisations and advocates, such as Amnesty International’s report *No More Stolen Sisters*. The articles also addressed the inadequacy of the police in the case. For example, the Manitoba police saw Tina Fontaine with a man much older than Tina Fontaine before her death and there was an alert for Tina Fontaine as a missing person. Instead of helping her she was later found passed out in the back of an alley where she may have been sexually assaulted. The reporting of the inadequacy of the police officers in letting Tina Fontaine go resulted in the police officer being suspended and later leaving the police department. The reporting surrounding Tina Fontaine’s murder finally contextualises the systemic violence she was the victim of.

There are a lot of barriers that Indigenous people face because of colonialism. Through my research process, it became clear that journalists were not discussing the effects of colonialism, the systemic and targeted racism and violence geared toward Indigenous women. The reporters covering the death of Helen Betty Osborne would acknowledge “racial tensions” in

The Pas but would not be specific about the root cause of those racial tensions. Similarly, throughout the articles, there are comments about “if this were a white woman” suggesting that there is a difference in the treatment between white women and Indigenous women in Canada but do not specify why different treatment occurs. Reporters begin to acknowledge the child welfare system when reporting on Tina Fontaine, but there is no reporting connecting the legacy of colonial education and child apprehension in previous articles which would be relevant to the reporting about Helen Betty Osborne. Furthermore, there is a lack of contextualization about the violence Indigenous women and girls experience because of Canada’s colonial legacy.

Summary

Helen Betty Osborne, Pamela George, Cindy Gladue, and Tina Fontaine are representative examples of mainstream newspaper media (in the *Toronto Star*, *Globe and Mail*, *the Vancouver Sun*, *Edmonton Journal*, and *Winnipeg Free Press*) continuing to frame Indigenous women negatively as well as continuing the decontextualization of colonialism and the specific ways colonialism harms Indigenous women. The reporting and framing of the four victims and the accused do little to change the lives of Indigenous people, especially women. The articles analysed in this research cover instances of sexualized violence over a 50-year period with a reporting history of 34 years. During that time the most significant change happened in the 2010s after the death of Tina Fontaine with changes to housing youth in care, the inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, as well as a contextualization of the lasting impacts of colonialism.

Similarly, we see an increase in reporting because of advocacy from Indigenous organizations, specifically Sisters in Spirit, as well as an increase in grassroots organizing on social media. During the early 2000s Sisters in Spirit released reports and information about the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls bringing much-needed awareness to a crisis that had been mostly unrecognized by mainstream Canada. In the 2010s there is an

increase in social media use, specifically Native Twitter (Indigenous users on Twitter) by using hashtags to draw attention to ongoing issues such as #IdleNoMore, #NoDAPL, and #MMIWG.

Despite the change seen with the reporting after 34 years, the framing of Indigenous women victims still places blame on the victim and does not consider the multiple barriers that affect Indigenous people's lives. There is a lack of discussion around shame and sex in Indigenous communities, and about the interference from the state into the lives of Indigenous children that causes intergenerational trauma and fractured familial relationships. The reporting on these cases is also not occurring with a solutions-focused lens. Instead, the reporting leans into tropes of Indigenous peoples' lives as detrimental to change. Some change has happened, but there is a lack of focus on Indigenous people who are in fact addressing shame around sex in Indigenous communities as well as sexual liberation and body sovereignty. Body sovereignty combating shame around sex, and sexual liberation are not going to be found within mainstream news reporting. These stories are usually first-person accounts in non-traditional reader-funded magazines and digital publications or performances. These stories take place in alternative media and consider all the multi-layered and complex issues around sexualized violence into account while also creating change in their own communities.

Throughout these cases, there was pushback from Indigenous family members, Indigenous leaders, and Indigenous advocates arguing that the violence and injustice inflicted toward Helen Betty Osborne, Pamela George, Cindy Gladue, and Tina Fontaine would not have happened if they were in fact, white women and girls. The findings and discussion argue that there is a lack of contextualization about racism in Canada toward Indigenous women. When Indigenous family members, leaders, and advocates are saying this would not happen to a white woman, they are acknowledging the phenomenon known as missing white woman syndrome. Missing white woman syndrome is the action of when a white woman or girl goes missing and the media picks the story up and reports heavily on the white missing person by a play-by-play coverage (Slakoff & Fradella 2019, Stillman 2007, Rosener 2021). This reaction to white missing

women and girls is in stark contrast to when Indigenous (and Black) women go missing (Slakoff & Fradella 2019, Stillman 2007, Rosener 2021). Missing white woman syndrome, falls in line with a “good” vs. “bad” dichotomy which establishes, affirms and re-affirms white woman as newsworthy, grievable and worth saving, and everyone else, including Indigenous women as not newsworthy, less grievable, and not worth saving which mainstream media heavily relies on.

Critical Analysis

Toward Solutions Focused News...

We need to humanise Indigenous women and depict the crimes committed against us as just that, crime (Cripps 2021). Sensationalized and unserious reporting by journals and news media on the deaths of Indigenous women does not serve Indigenous women who are victims of gender-based violence. It does not help the public, or Indigenous women, when Canadian news media uses the good vs. bad women dichotomy to indicate which Indigenous woman deserves sympathy or justice for their murders. All of these responses to the victim-blaming of Indigenous women, particularly those involved in sex work or who are otherwise considered ‘bad,’ ignores the larger systemic issues at the root of colonialism and does not fundamentally address the problem of the dehumanisation of Indigenous women in Canada. Society should care about murdered Indigenous women because they are human, period. (Jiwani & Young 2006). As Jiwani and Young (2006) observe,

It appears that the war against women will continue until the dominant, hegemonic values change to recognize women first and foremost as human beings whose material conditions are determined by interlocking legacies of colonialism and a racialized and sexualized economy of representations that privilege some women over others (911).

To address colonialism in news media, journalists and editors need to ensure they are not reinforcing gender and racialized stereotypes in their reporting. There is no reason crime

reporting, concerning Indigenous women in Canada, needs to continue dehumanising Indigenous women as it has always done. There are numerous resources for media professionals to appropriately address violence against Indigenous women that ends in their death (Cripps 2021). Indigenous women have led change in the background and margins with “responsibility and integrity towards making conditions better and simply getting things done” (Ryan 2016, 26). For example, the report [Reclaiming Power and Place](#) (the Report) offers one such Indigenous women-lead resource for journalists and editors to better cover stories concerning missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. The Report’s *Calls for Justice* stress the importance of Indigenous women being represented accurately in news media. The Report also notes the importance of increasing the number of Indigenous reporters in media, sharing Indigenous stories, and breaking down the hyper-sexualization and stereotypes in media portrayals of Indigenous women (*Reclaiming Power and Place* 2019). Another example is [Kci-niwesq](#), an online magazine published by the Native Women’s Association of Canada which shares stories of Indigenous women, gender-diverse, and 2SLGBTQIA+ Indigenous people.

News media is changing the primary medium through which it is disseminated, from the traditional print newspapers to online periodicals and blogs, etc. (Ryan 2016). With the possibilities afforded by social media and with greater access to technology and the internet, Indigenous people can more directly intervene in media portrayals of indigeneity and engage in self-determination by sharing their narratives with the public through online media and thereby work to better counter negative stereotypes in news media (Pickering, Cote-Meek, & Pegoraro 2018). Alternative media outlets have allowed Indigenous people to (re)create the narratives on indigeneity in the face of white, male, cis-heteronormative-controlled news media. For example, both [Luke Pearson](#)’s (Gamilaraay, Australia) [Indigenous X](#) and Celeste Liddle’s (Arrernte, Australia) blog, *Rantings of Aboriginal Feminist*, share Indigenous narratives of the complexity of Indigenous life and the ongoing threat of colonialism with the wider public who may not

otherwise be exposed to such nuance (Ryan 2016). (E.g., #IdleNoMore, #NoDAPL, #SistersInSpirit, #MMIW) (Pickering, Cote-Meek, & Pegoraro 2018).

According to Pickering, Cote-Meek, & Pegoraro (2018), Indigenous social media (e.g. Native Twitter) has been used for “social movement” and is being used to “assert self-determination” (Pickering, Cote-Meek, & Pegoraro 2018, 58). For example, “the #nodapl data from August 2016 to 18 June 2017 had a reach of 13.3 billion and 23.5 billion impressions by 4.5 million users” (Pickering, Cote-Meek, & Pegoraro 2018, 58). Furthermore, #MMIW is a main communication component of the topics of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls keeping the conversation relevant to traditional media (Pickering, Cote-Meek, & Pegoraro 2018). In the following section, I draw on three alternative media sources, *Unreserved*, *Guts*, and *Briarpatch*. I use articles from these publications that discuss Indigenous women and Indigenous queer people in relation to sexuality. These articles, along with a wider alternative media scan, help inform my critical analysis about what good journalism looks like when reporting or discussing sexuality and Indigenous people.

Alternative Media

[*Unreserved*](#) is a CBC Radio show that airs on Saturdays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays in Canada and is also platformed as a podcast on CBC Listen and other streaming services (CBC 2017). *Unreserved* is hosted by Rosanna Deerchild, a Cree woman from O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation (CBC 2017). According to the CBC website, “*Unreserved* is the radio space for Indigenous voices — our cousins, our aunties, our elders, our heroes,” (CBC 2017). The CBC website goes on to say, “Rosana Deerchild guides us on the path to better understand our shared story. Together, we learn and unlearn, laugh and become gentler in all our relations,” (CBC 2017). In a 2018 episode titled, “[Let’s talk about sex, neechi: From art and erotic poetry, to](#)

[sexual health and Tinder profiles](#)¹ Deerchild interviews [Tenille Campbell](#) about her poetry collection *#IndianLovePoems*, [Carrie Bourassa](#)² about Indigenous sexual health and the impacts of colonialism, and [Brit Ellis](#) about beaded vulvas, as well as Jason Mercredi about a condom campaign promoting safer sex, and [Dayna Danger](#) about Indigenous sex and sensuality (*Unreserved* 2018). The stories talk about the negative impacts of rigid settler sexuality on Indigenous people and communities and how the interviewees have gone about changing the narrative in their own ways (*Unreserved* 2018).

Guts is a Canadian online magazine that was launched in 2013 and became defunct in 2020. In 2022 [Guts](#) was re-launched by an editorial board made up of entirely Indigenous women, Indigenous trans women and femmes (*Guts* n.d.). *Guts* is an online publication that centres feminist conversations by people who are typically underrepresented in mainstream media. *Guts* is volunteer-run and according to its website, at one point relied on Patreon financially (*Guts* n.d.). Quill Christie-Peters is an Anishinaabe woman, mother and visual artist. Christie-Peters writes an article titled, "[Kwe becomes the moon, touches herself so she can feel full again](#)" in *Guts*. The article appears in issue nine in 2018. Christie-Peters writes about colonialism, the dispossession of Indigenous people from their lands, and environmental racism (Christie-Peters 2018). Christie-Peters links settler colonial violence through her Anishinaabe relationship with water. The example that Christie-Peters gives is the settler state dispossessing Indigenous people from their ancestral lands to urban centres and keeping Indigenous people in their urban centres, like Toronto, by poisoning the waters in Christie-Peters' traditional territories (Christie-Peters 2018). Christie-Peters also discusses sexualized violence, gendered violence, shame around sexuality, and how the process of masturbation brings Christie-Peters closer to land, ancestors and Indigeneity. They also address missing and murdered Indigenous

¹ I could not find "Let's talk about sex, neechi: From art and erotic poetry, to sexual health and Tinder profiles" as a podcast but it is accessible via web articles which are cited under "Counter Narratives" in my references.

² Carrie Bourassa was recently outed as non-Indigenous after claiming Indigenous ancestry most of their career as an Indigenous health expert.

women who are often found in bodies of water, as well as how water brings herself back to her body (Christie-Peters 2018). Christie-Peters goes on to describe the process of masturbation and the difference between immediate gratification and the type of masturbation that brings her closer to her culture. She suggests that the masturbation that brings her closer to her family is intentionally about loving herself (Christie-Peters 2018).

Unlike *Guts*, [*Briarpatch Magazine*](#) is a traditional magazine that publishes physical copies. *Briarpatch*, similar to *Guts*, has a grassroots beginning (*Briarpatch* n.d.). The magazine started in 1971 as a leaflet, according to their website, and rebranded in 1973 to a simpler version of what the magazine is today (*Briarpatch* n.d.). *Briarpatch* is funded through subscribers after numerous financial fall-outs with federal and provincial governments. *Briarpatch* focuses on politically charged commentary on Canadian society, the bases of its founding (*Briarpatch* n.d.). In the 2020 Fall magazine, *Briarpatch* published an issue titled “The Land Back Issue”. In this issue, Adrienne Huard and Jacqueline Pelland co-author an article titled, “[Sexual sovereignty](#)”. Huard is a Two-Spirit Anishinaabekwe, student, writer, and pole dancer (Huard and Pelland 2020). Pelland is a Two-Spirit Métis woman, law student, multi-disciplinary artist, and “semi-retired stripper” (Huard and Pelland 2020). In the article, Huard and Pelland explain the embodied relationship between Indigenous bodies and their land, a relationship that connects Indigenous people to their culture (language, ceremony) (Huard and Pelland 2020). They also explain how the safety of the land is also safety for Indigenous people (Huard and Pelland 2020). Eventually, the article becomes a question and answer where Huard and Pelland answer five questions on topics about safety, sexuality, sex work, sovereignty, and Land Back. Huard and Pelland talk about safety during ceremonies and the imbalance of responsibilities for Indigenous women, Indigenous trans people and femmes (Huard and Pelland 2020). They also discuss Land Back as a return to the freedoms Indigenous people had before colonial and settler religious interference. Before colonial interference, Indigenous people could express their sexuality and gender-free of judgement and ostracization (Huard and Pelland 2020).

Suppression

In what is now known as Canada and the U.S., there was an attack (and there still is) on Indigenous ways of being, which includes gender and sexuality (as discussed earlier in the literature review and theoretical framework). Settlers attacked gender and sexuality because they considered Indigenous people to be inferior to their way of life. One of the methods for terrorising Indigenous ways of being was to force children of Indigenous families to attend residential “schools,” which stripped the children of their language and ways of being (Pyle 2021, Rifkin 2011, Driskill 2004). Residential “schools” and religious interference in Indigenous communities also broke the normalised gender diversity and sexuality (Pyle 2021, Rifkin 2011, Grant 2019, Akiwenzie-Damm 2000). Before settler sexuality took off in many Indigenous communities, roles and responsibilities were based on how people presented themselves or by the gender they associated with, not by whether someone was male or female (Anderson 2016). Similarly, it was not a spectacle (e.g., coming out of the closet) for Indigenous people to be 2SLGBTQIA+ (Wilson 2015). Queer Indigenous people were normalised and respected people within the community (Wilson 2015, L. Simpson 2017). For example, in their Ph.D. dissertation, Kia Pyle (Metis and Sault Ste. Marie Nishnaabe) acknowledges that two-spirit people have been a part of Indigenous communities despite suppression/oppression of gender diversity (2021). Pyle details the lives of Ozaawindib, Wzawshek, and Cora Anderson/Ralph Kerwineo who were two-spirit people living between the 1830s to the 1910s who “consistently found ways to express their gender and sexuality beyond Eurocentric binary heterosexual cisgender male and female” (Pyle 2021, 61). Pyle goes on to theorise that trans and queer Indigenous people must have been common-place enough for white-settler missionaries, who wrote a Cree-English dictionary, to include “*ayākwāo* as a noun meaning “castrated animal, a hermaphrodite”” (Pyle 2018, 580 emphasizes in original). Pyle clarifies that the dictionary meaning is not the only meaning of *ayākwāo* and could also mean people who were gender diverse (Pyle 2018). Furthermore, Pyle

articulates that English is a poor substitute for Indigenous words that can loosely be translated to explain gender diversity and queerness in Indigenous communities (Pyle 2018). Placing non-useful English labels on Indigenous queerness and gender diversity, as well as forceful assimilation to settler society are a couple of ways in which settler sexuality has become the dominant understanding of sexuality, however, there are other methods of assimilation. Settlers also undermined the family structure in Indigenous communities suggesting that the nuclear family is the family structure Indigenous people should aspire to (TallBear 2022).

Residential “schools” and the church are institutions in Canada that have contributed to the oppression of Indigenous people. Church-run residential “schools”, as mandated by the Canadian government, caused detrimental harm to Indigenous people across Canada in many ways, including the gender and sexuality of Indigenous people. The “schools” along with settler colonialism also fractured Indigenous family structures by enforcing the single-family unit (Rifkin 2011). Fracturing Indigenous family structures was to facilitate the growth of white families and the growth of Canada (and the U.S.) while oppressing people of colour (TallBear 2022). Fracturing Indigenous families and instilling the idea that the nuclear family is the most aspirational, is/was to dispossess Indigenous people of the land for settler theft and colonial expansion (TallBear 2022, Anderson 2016, Rifkin 2011). As such, cis-heterosexual monogamous marriages have become an institution in Canada and the U.S. that is supported through the law, society, and the church (TallBear 2022, Rifkin 2011). The nuclear family structure becoming a cornerstone of Canadian society undermined and diminished the multiple ways families existed before settler-colonial interruption (TallBear 2022, Rifkin 2011). It was not uncommon for plural marriages to exist between men and multiple women and between women and multiple men (TallBear 2022, Rifkin 2011). Furthermore, settlers did not have the words or understood Indigenous people's vast, complex, and diverse kinship networks (Cannon 1998). Indigenous people's shame-free sexuality and empowered women threatened settlers who forced heteronormative and patriarchal sexual practices on Indigenous people (Anderson 2016). As a

result, settlers labelled Indigenous people's relationships, in their language, with negative connotations to categorise Indigenous relationships that were non-normative to settler cis-het relationality (Cannon 1998).

The categorising and labelling of Indigenous people and their sexuality by colonisers has caused shame among Indigenous people and their communities. Shaming among Indigenous people has been extreme because of Christianity which violently restricted Indigenous people from speaking and engaging in the "so-called sexual relations of our ancestors" (TallBear 2022, 23). Additionally, Indigenous Two-Spirit and Queer people have been holding shame and hate for our bodies and sexualities because of the dominant cultural concepts of the erotic (Driskill 2004). As a result, shame due to colonial violence such as rape, confinement and suicide has contributed to trauma that has been inherited through many Indigenous generations (TallBear 2022). For example, Huard and Pelland explain in their article, "Sexual Sovereignty" for the "The Land Back Issue" of Briarpatch, that guilt was introduced in Indigenous communities because of "Christianity and Victorian mentalities...to weaken the strength of sexual autonomy" (Huard & Pelland 2020). To strengthen our sexual autonomy would be to reclaim our sexuality. Challenging heteropatriarchy is keeping with decolonization by looking to the past as expressed in traditional and Indigenous knowledge theories and practices (Anderson 2016). Moreover, healing sexualities as Indigenous people is braided with the legacy of historical trauma and the ongoing process of decolonization (Driskill 2004). According to Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm (2000), erotic writing by Indigenous people is few and far between and writing the Indigenous erotic is the process of decolonization (Akiwenzie-Damm 2000). Additionally, Driskill (2004) encourages speaking the truth about who is causing the problems of sexual oppression (Driskill 2004).

Sovereignty Through Journalism

Savage Bear (formally known as Tracy Bear) (Cree) writes in her Ph.D. dissertation that the Indigenous erotic has the potential to redefine who we are as Indigenous Peoples (Bear 2016). Similarly, Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm (2000) writes in “Without Reservation: Erotica, Indigenous Style” the erotic needs to be reclaimed, expressed and celebrated (Akiwenzie-Damm 2000). Furthermore, in the chapter, “The Erotics of Sovereignty” in *Queer Indigenous Studies*, Mark Rifkin states that decolonization is changing the understanding of sexuality as a means of exiling people from inclusion (Rifkin 2011, 174). The previous scholars are writing about literature and the erotic, and we can look to their writings about literature to critique journalism and the (lack of) erotic in mainstream media. Unfortunately, mainstream journalism is only good at the singular narrative of Indigenous women being hypersexualized victims of gender-based violence, which is explored in my Findings and Discussion. This singular narrative is steeped in settler colonialism and patriarchal domination.

There is more nuance in the alternative media examined for this critical analysis that engages the relationship between Indigenous people and sexuality. Indigenous authors are not shy or afraid of naming colonialism in their writings about sexuality. For example, in “Kwe becomes the moon, touches herself so she can feel full again” and “Sexual sovereignty” the authors, Christie-Peters and Huard and Pelland, name colonialism as an attack on Indigenous people for land theft and colonial expansion which upholds cis-heteronormativity and is the reason for gender-based violence against Indigenous women, and two-spirit people (Christie-Peters 2018, Huard and Pelland 2020). Similarly, the *Unreserved* podcast on CBC hosted by Rosanna Deerchild also engages Indigenous sexuality that acknowledges colonialism in the stories shared by the guests on the episode, “Let’s talk about sex, neechi: From art and erotic poetry, to sexual health and Tinder profiles”. Because of colonial interference, speaking or

writing freely about sexuality has been suppressed and the reclamation of sexuality is an act of decolonization (Akiwenzie-Damm 2000, Bear 2016, Grant 2019).

Indigenous people regularly wrote about the erotic in songs and stories, according to Akiwenzie-Damm (2000), who asked people to submit Indigenous erotic stories when they realised these types of Indigenous stories were hard to come by. Expressing the Indigenous erotic is inherently political (Akiwenzie-Damm 2000). The erotic can be stimulating, beautiful, pleasurable, inspiring, and illicit feelings of love and include the complexities and difficulties discussed earlier (Akiwenzie-Damm 2000). Excluding and shaming the erotic within Indigenous cultures is to deny humanity to Indigenous people (Akiwenzie-Damm 2000, Bear 2016, Grant 2019). As such, we have seen Indigenous women and 2slgbtqia+ experience the detrimental effects of being denied sovereignty over their sexuality and gender expression (Akiwenzie-Damm 2000, Grant 2019). Rigid settler sexuality denies the Indigenous erotic to render our more expansive forms of relating dead, which furthers colonization and genocide (Grant 2019). “To be ‘in the erotic,’ so to speak, is to be alive. Yes, eroticism presents political problems, cultural difficulties, religious problems because the dominant culture can’t function with a society of alive people.” (Akiwenzie-Damm 2000, 990). “The Indigenous erotic is the entire scope of our embodied and emotional, sensual, and sexual experiences of our lives and identities” (Bear 2016, 239). Furthermore, Indigenous decolonial sexuality challenges the monolithic singular narrative of Indigenous women and argues for new Indigenous sexualities free of violence (Grant 2019, Bear 2016). Deanne Linn Grant (2019) in their Ph.D. dissertation “Indigenous Women at the Heart: An Imagining of Indigenous Decolonial Sexualities” asserts that Indigenous people must re-define sexuality on their cultural terms and one way of doing this is by creating Indigenous erotic art (Grant 2019). I believe the same can be true about journalism. Indigenous journalists can redefine or adjust the way Indigenous sexuality is reported. For example, in the episode, “Let’s talk about sex, neechi: From art and erotic poetry, to sexual health and Tinder profiles”, on the *Unreserved* podcast the conversations include

sexual safety and healthy relationships (Unreserved 2018), discussions that could be considered taboo because of the shame that is associated with sex/uality and gender in Indigenous communities because of dominant and rigid settler sexuality (Akiwenzie-Damm 2000). Similarly, Huard and Pelland discuss how normalizing sex work, sexuality, and gender diversity creates safety for Indigenous people (Huard and Pelland 2020). Furthermore, they discuss how normalising diverse sexuality is a way to Land Back, asserting, “[t]he safety of our land also means the safety of our bodies” (Huard and Pelland 2020, 34). In my scan of articles about Indigenous sexuality, Indigenous authors and journalists, report on how speaking about gender or sexuality creates the opportunity for younger generations to feel happy and not shameful. These articles also paint a picture of reclamation and cultural re-connection to gender and sexuality outside of rigid settler sexuality.

The Indigenous erotic from an Indigenous perspective can turn the “corrupted or distorted views of sexualities and genders into a new dialogue of nation-building” (Bear 2016). Indigenous erotic is our ideas, thoughts, and beliefs about our erotic selves (Bear 2016). The erotic is embedded in the fabric of our lives; denying or suppressing our erotic selves leaves us open to being defined (Bear 2016). In her dissertation (2016), Savage Bear wrote, “[t]he influence of Indigenous erotica should not be limited to or seen as counter-narratives, channels for healing outlets, or postcolonial work. Rather, Indigenous erotica should be approached as a centralised mechanism for rematerializing the Indigenous body within a reimagined world” (Bear 2016, 245). To decolonize sexuality, Indigenous women and 2slgbtqia+ must be allowed to share their voices, exposing harsh experiences of sexual assault, but also their sexual imaginaries (Grant 2019). Redefining Indigenous sexualities has the potential to positively influence children’s understanding of sexuality in healthy ways (Grant 2019). “We need to see these images to create healthy images “we need to see images of ourselves as healthy, whole people. People who love each other and who love ourselves. People who fall in love out of love, who have lovers, who make love, who have sex. We need to create a healthy legacy for our

peoples” (Akiwenzie-Damm 2000, 101). Our own stories are the antidote to combat the poison of denying our eroticism that continues to dehumanise us (Akiwenzie-Damm 2000). Indigenous journalists reporting on Indigenous sexuality will create healthy and diverse narratives of Indigenous women and 2slgbtqia+ people, “[a]n Indigenous decolonial sexuality should encourage all sexualities based on consent and respect, including those who practise non-normative sex” (Grant 2019, 59). Akiwenzie-Damm does not define the erotic but proposes, that the Indigenous erotic is “[t]o give voice to the erotic, the loving, the sexual, the repressed, the oppressed, the “dirty,” the outrageous, intimacies of womanhood and sexuality” (102).

Conclusion

Research Questions Answered

Newspaper articles in mainstream media are not an adequate representation of the complexities of Indigenous women’s sexuality because journalists do not include Indigenous women’s viewpoints on the subject. The research shows that mainstream media routinely ignores the experiences of Indigenous women until there is a judicial need for it such as in an inquiry or trial. In contrast, alternative media provides perspective about the complex relationship Indigenous women have with sexuality because of their focus on first-person accounts which allows the authors to highlight the voices of Indigenous women and thereby address complex occurrences in their lives. Alternative media is also able to acknowledge Indigenous women’s bodily autonomy including when the authors discuss Indigenous women being subject to gendered violence. The authors consider the ways in which intergenerational trauma impacts them at individual and community levels. The main reason that alternative media is able to capture the nuances of Indigenous women’s sexuality is because unlike

mainstream media, they choose to privilege the voices of Indigenous women when writing about them.

Acknowledging that sex-related murder is objectively bad, by mainstream media, does little to disrupt or change discourses around the hyper-sexualization of Indigenous women because it does not consider the specific context in which Indigenous women are victims of colonialism. In the case of Pamela George and Cindy Gladue, two Indigenous women who worked in the sex trade, the media did little to contextualise how Indigenous women's circumstances are impacted by colonialism. Although Pamela George and Cindy Gladue's murders were sixteen years apart, there is little difference in the way the trials are reported. In both cases, the judge assumes that consent to sex work translates to consent to all kinds of sex, even that which results in death. In both cases, journalists rarely address violence against Indigenous women and how it stems from colonialism. In the case of Gladue, there is little change, in that Indigenous women's activists are quoted in articles that pertain to Gladue's family seeking justice for Cindy Gladue's death. By the time mainstream media covers the murder of Tina Fontaine, whose murder occurred four years after Cindy Gladue and also twenty years after Pamela George, the tone of these articles starts to change. In fact, the reporting about Tina Fontaine addresses intergenerational trauma such as the legacy of residential "schools", including the inappropriate use of placing youth in care in hotel rooms which led to a policy change nixing the use of hotel rooms for teenage-youth-in care.

Mainstream legacy newspaper media provides little contextualisation about the intersectional ways Indigenous women are affected by colonialism, which reflects and supports a lack of public understanding about colonialism in Canada and the specific way it affects Indigenous women. This widespread lack of understanding is especially apparent during the second round of reporting about Cindy Gladue when Barton receives prison time for her murder. The same dynamic can be seen in the reporting around the death of Tina Fontaine. There is still no in-depth reporting on the intergenerational impacts of child apprehension,

intergenerational poverty, addiction, or geographical circumstances such as rural vs. urban living. These are dynamics which deeply informed the life circumstances and choices or lack of choices of Helen Betty Osborne, Pamela George, Cindy Gladue, and Tina Fontaine. For example, in the case of Tina Fontaine, there is a discussion about child welfare, but there was no discussion about intergenerational child apprehension which affected her family. Similarly, there was no discussion about why Helen Betty Osborne had to travel to a different community to attend school. Helen Betty Osborne's case engages the intersectionality of child apprehension and geographical relocation, considering she had to relocate from her remote Nation to attend school in The Pas. A set of intersectional considerations that are specific to Indigenous women and girls in Canada structured the lives, choices, and lack of choices for Helen Betty Osborne, Pamela George, Cindy Gladue, and Tina Fontaine, as well as other Indigenous people and women, that mainstream media does not seem equipped to handle the complexities.

Indigenous women reclaiming their sexuality is an act that undermines the mainstream narrative about Indigenous women being perpetually victimised and considered blameworthy in racist gendered violence that targets Indigenous women. Indigenous women are challenging harmful mainstream media outputs to reclaim representations of their sexuality by creating their own narratives of sexuality. For example, Christie-Peters, an Indigenous woman, demonstrates through carefully considered words the act of masturbation as a way to connect to her ancestors and land to show sovereignty over her body despite colonial efforts to encourage shame around sexuality and discourage Indigenous women's relationship to their territories.

As we saw, in the Land Back issues of *Briarpatch*, Huard and Pelland are working on a community level to address sexuality as not shameful because they understand that openness, honesty, and acceptance will create safety in their communities. Similarly, we see the same disruption with Virago Nation and their burlesque performances. As they counter mainstream stereotypes of Indigenous women being inherently disposable by taking a firm stance on their sexiness and queer sexuality. The same can be said of TJ Cuthlands's "Lessons in Baby Dyke

Theory” video from the 1990s addresses the complexities of queer identity in rural prairie geographies. Such as loneliness and the desire to have community. Quill Christie-Peters also discusses the complexities of sex and sexuality among Indigenous people in the online magazine, GUTS. Ultimately, Indigenous women and Indigenous people who identify as queer can address the complexities of sex and sexuality among Indigenous people. We can also address how colonialism has impacted our relationship with sex and sexuality. In short, Indigenous women and Indigenous queer people are reclaiming representations of sex and sexuality by creating new narratives of autonomy.

A Quick Recap

I use an Indigenous feminist framework to engage the research presented in this thesis. Indigenous feminism helps provide the context on why Indigenous women are victims of gender-based violence in Canada. I also use a framework of intersectionality which allows for multiple truths that acknowledge the interlocking ways Indigenous women experience colonialism because of white supremacy, the patriarchy, and misogyny. This thesis also engages Indigenous self-determination, resurgence, and body sovereignty. These theoretical concepts acknowledge Indigenous people's right to self-determination and sovereignty, while also acknowledging that Indigenous people can redefine (or remember) Indigenous sexuality outside of the dominant rigid settler sexuality. The research follows a critical discourse analysis (CDA) methodology which gives the tools to be critical of mainstream media on a macro and micro level. A micro-level analysis focuses on language, discourse, and communication, whereas a macro-level of analysis focuses on power, dominance, and inequality between social groups (Van Dijk 2015). CDA illuminates the themes within my findings. For example, CDA highlights whose voices are more prominent, whose voices are missing, and the framing of the victims and perpetrators. Addressing these themes, patterns begin to emerge. For example, the perpetrator

and their lawyers are heavily present in the reporting and the victim's families are routinely missing from the coverage. Furthermore, reporting relies on stereotypes of Indigenous women and settler moves to innocence for the perpetrators, among other patterns including hypocrisy about substance use among the victim and perpetrators. The research shows that mainstream media is not capable of reporting on the violence against Indigenous women. Similarly, the counter-narrative shows that Indigenous people reporting on sexuality engage the complexities of Indigenous sexuality due to colonialism, while also providing diverse narratives about the Indigenous erotic that include kinship, relationality, safety, pleasure, and multiple lovers, as well as the joy found in the Indigenous erotic.

Other Considerations

Observations that came through the research are that Indigenous women are not the only people who are dying in Canada because of colonial violence. Indigenous men are also dying, as well as Black women. Another observation is multiple deaths in one family related to colonial violence. JJ Harper and Colten Boushie are two Indigenous men who were murdered in Canada that appear throughout this research. JJ Harper and Helen Betty Osborne were both subjects of the same inquiry. While this research was able to consider reporting regarding the death of Helen Betty Osborne, JJ Harper's death fell outside the research scope. Colten Boushie also appeared while researching the deaths of Cindy Gladue and Tina Fontaine but fell outside the research scope. Indigenous men, according to *Indigenous Men and Masculinities* edited by Robert Alexander Innes and Kim Anderson, go missing and are murdered at even greater rates than Indigenous women. I would not suggest an "oppression Olympics" research angle, however, it stands that Indigenous men are in fact being murdered in Canada. Research on that topic is also important, but it is not within the scope of this project. My research also came across one instance in which a Black woman, Rigat Ghirmay, was also disrespected (in the same way Cindy Gladue was) during a trial which was reported on in Canadian media, however,

Ghrimay's injustice also fell outside the scope of my research. Lastly, there are multiple deaths in the families of people who are victims of colonial violence. Helen Betty Osborne's brother was murdered, as well as Tina Fontaine's cousin and father, again, these deaths fall outside the scope of this research. While these deaths fall outside of the research scope, it is important to highlight them because their deaths indicate how structures of colonialism continue to result in the violent deaths of people(s) deemed killable by colonization and their humanity is seen as less worthy of consideration.

Recommendations

My research support Calls for Justice 6.1 *Reclaiming Power and Place* and the need for more local journalism. However, there are still questions about implementing Calls for Justice 6.1 and local journalism. Questions still remain about how to properly train already practicing journalists, up-and-coming journalists still in j-school, and what incentives exist to create in-depth solutions focused journalism that breakdowns stereotypes and myths. Furthermore, questions remain regarding how negative stereotypes affect Indigenous journalists.

The research supports the recommendations and Calls for Justice in the final report, *Reclaiming Power and Place*, of the inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Call for Justice, 6.1, calls for the media (including organisations, publications and journalists) to accurately represent Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQA to address negative stereotypes, support Indigenous people sharing their own stories (safely), and increase the number of Indigenous journalists as well as, taking the steps, proactively, to break down stereotypes and myths that suggest Indigenous women are hypersexual, available and less worthy. The research also supports local journalism. The research clearly shows that the deaths of Indigenous women are under-reported nationally. Similarly, if the person who is a victim of sex murder is not from the region of the publication, then the death is also under-reported. Local journalism also supports Calls for Justice 6.1, specifically, that related to being inclusive of

diverse Indigenous cultural backgrounds, instead of focusing on pan-Indigenous representation of Indigenous people. Another recommendation is having Indigenous people tell their own stories or tell stories about Indigenous sexuality because they are able to engage the histories and complexities of Indigenous sexuality whereas non-Indigenous journalists cannot seem to name colonialism specifically in stories regarding gender-based violence against Indigenous women. Furthermore, the research also supports solutions-focused journalism. Through the research for the counter-narrative, it becomes clear that Indigenous people are looking for ways to engage in sexual expression and sexual health and safety all for the purpose of Indigenous futures.

While I do believe in the recommendations mentioned, I am still left with concerns about how to implement these recommendations. Firstly, what would be the motivation for mainstream publications to engage in nuanced, in-depth, solutions focused journalism when stereotypical sensationalized journalism has worked and continues to work for them? Similarly, these recommendations give a way to disrupt journalism as we know it, but how? How does including more Indigenous journalists and coverage impact the white hierarchy of journalism? How do we ensure that the Indigenous journalists promoted beyond middle management are enacting sovereignty and self-determination rather than assimilating to the status quo? Furthermore, where does the training begin and end? As my positionality notes, stereotyping of Indigenous journalists and indigeneity began in my very first job interview for a mainstream publication. Furthermore, I was witness to and met with status quo hostility from my peers in j-school who could not grasp Indigenous spiritual titles as different from eco-activists. In terms of local journalism, where does the money come from? How can local publications become sustainable and have longevity? Supporting the Calls for Justice 6.1 and local journalism is a good first step, but my research is just the beginning, and while my research points to a systemic problem within journalism and ways to disrupt the systemic anti-indigeneity in reporting and coverage, there are still big questions that complicate my recommendations.

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