

Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women in Canadian Crime Films

by

Katelyn Mackenzie

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of

The University of Manitoba

in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Sociology and Criminology

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg

Copyright © 2018 by Katelyn Mackenzie

ABSTRACT

The issue of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women (MMIW) in Canada has been prevalent for several decades. It has recently gained, and continues to gain, public awareness, and media have played an important role. A number of recent Canadian crime films have focused on MMIW and it is important to look at cinematic representations because they offer unique frames for viewing and interpreting the issue of MMIW. The research questioned how MMIW are represented as victims in four Canadian crime documentary films about MMIW. Employing a visual and narrative analysis, informed by the language of film, the research was conducted using a step-by-step viewing process, repeatedly watching the films, while watching for new details in each viewing. The films revealed themes that presented MMIW in complex and contradictory ways, and as victims of broader social injustices, rather than as victims of a particular crime.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank several people for their support and guidance during my thesis research. My thesis supervisor Dr. Sonia Bookman who inspired this research. Dr. Bookman provided feedback on ideas and drafts of my thesis for nearly a year, and was always available to brainstorm. Her guidance, expertise and encouragement have been invaluable. I would also like to thank Dr. Raymond Currie for volunteering his free time to review my thesis proposal and several chapters of my final thesis, and for providing valuable feedback. Additionally, thanks to my thesis committee members, Dr. Andrew Woolford and Dr. Brenda Austin-Smith, who provided feedback and helpful suggestions of additional literature, which strengthened my final analysis. Thanks to my friends and family for their patience and understanding while I disappeared into my research analysis for months on end! Finally, special thanks to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for the funding to complete this research.

Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgments	ii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Purpose of this research.....	4
Significance and Implications.....	4
Researcher position.....	5
Chapters.....	5
Chapter 2: Literature review.....	9
Representation.....	9
Film and Documentary film.....	11
Crime Film.....	16
Canadian film industry.....	18
Indigenous peoples in Canadian film.....	19
MMIW in media.....	21
Indigenous women as criminal.....	22
Indigenous women as blameworthy	22
Visible/invisible.....	24
Nameless victims in the serial killer discourse.....	26
Theoretical Approach.....	28
Cultural criminology.....	28
Feminist theory.....	30
Settler colonialism and Indigenous feminist theories.....	32
Concluding remarks.....	36

Chapter 3: Methods	38
Methodology	38
Data Selection.....	40
The Data: The Films.....	41
Analysis Process.....	45
Initial viewing and the language of film.....	45
Summarizing and connecting the themes.....	48
Coding themes and stepping back	49
Being Reflexive in this Research.....	50
Concluding Remarks.....	51
Chapter 4: Representing Indigenous Women in Canadian MMIW Documentary Film: Complex, Contradictory images	52
How is Indigenous Identity Represented?	52
Affirming Identity.....	53
Invisible	55
Complexity and Contradictions: Individualizing the numbers, stereotypes, survivors, and agency	57
Getting to know the women: Individualizing the numbers	57
“Humanizing” the women?	61
Challenging and reinforcing stereotypes	63
Survivors: Divergent Narratives	64
Confronting the Serial Killer Discourse	66
Agency: Passive victims, victim blaming, or active agents?	68
Advocacy and Hope	73
Advocacy.....	73
Traditions and culture.....	77
Hope.....	78
Concluding Remarks.....	79

Chapter 5: The Causes of Crime in Canadian MMIW Documentary Film:

Social Injustices	81
Colonialism: Institutions, Processes, Legacies.....	82
Land: Traditional Land, Loss of Land, Displaced Communities, and Migration.....	86
Socioeconomic Influences: Poverty, Addictions, Sex Trade Work.....	87
Gendered Violence: Violence against women	91
Environments: Places, space, mobility	92
The Justice System: Policing Practices, Distrust, and Systemic Racism.....	95
Disinterested police and systemic racism.....	96
Distrust of the justice system.....	100
The Media: Stereotypes and Silence	106
Critiques of media representations and stereotypes.....	107
Music.....	108
Mainstream media and news.....	109
The Serial Killer Discourse	110
Concluding Remarks	112
Chapter 6: Conclusion	114
Research Findings	114
Conclusions from the Findings.....	117
Canadian films – more critical?	119
Limitations and Future Research	120
References	122

Chapter 1: Introduction

Violence against Indigenous women in Canada is a widespread problem; it is estimated that there are over 1000 Indigenous women who have either gone missing or who were murdered between 1980 and 2012 (RCMP, 2014, p.7). While Indigenous women in Canada constitute 4.3 percent of the overall population, Indigenous women self-report violent victimization at rates nearly three times higher than non-Indigenous women (Brennen, 2011; RCMP, 2014). Further, Indigenous women and girls in Canada suffer heightened rates of poverty, incarceration, homelessness, and victimization, and they are much more likely to die as a result of violence (Kuokkanen, 2015; Monchalin, 2016). This violence has been called a human rights issue by Amnesty International, as it is violence based on both gender and race, and compromises the dignity and worth of Indigenous women (Amnesty International, 2004).

The issue of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women (MMIW) in Canada has been prevalent for several decades; however it has recently gained, and continues to gain, public awareness. There have been significant shifts in the discourses that surround the issue of MMIW, in part due to the increased visibility of the issue in the media. Calls to action from Amnesty International's *Stolen Sisters* report in 2004, and the initiatives of the Native Women's Association of Canada in 2005, have contributed to the perception of the issue of MMIW as an epidemic (Comack, 2012, p.198). The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada published 94 Calls to Action, and Call to Action #41 under the subheading "Justice" is the need for a public inquiry into missing and murdered "Aboriginal" women and girls (2015a, p. 4). Public calls for inquiries into MMIW were initially not well received by political leaders: in a 2014 interview, former prime minister Stephen Harper stated that the issue of MMIW was not high on the government's radar (Maloney, 2015; Razack, 2016). MMIW became a prominent

concern during the most recent Canadian federal election, and Justin Trudeau stated that if he were elected prime minister he would support a national inquiry into MMIW. Following his win, in 2016, a national inquiry into MMIW began; an important acknowledgement of the issue as a political and societal issue rather than an individual problem. Therefore, current political interest in the issue of MMIW reflects a recent attitudinal shift; “[t]he severity and scope of these events are now well known but their current prominence is deceptive (Hugill, 2010, p.11).

Media have played an important role in creating awareness of, and informing Canadians about, MMIW. A great deal of the existing research on MMIW has examined news media coverage, yet it is important to explore how other forms of media represent the issue of MMIW in Canada. A number of recent Canadian crime films have focused on MMIW, and it is important to look at cinematic representations because they offer unique frames for viewing and interpreting the issue of MMIW. Media discourses hold a significant amount of symbolic power (Hugill, 2010, p. 19); they guide and form public opinions about what is important and what is unimportant. Many people learn about social issues such as crime through the media; indeed, the media is a primary source of knowledge about crime for some (Chan and Chunn, 2014; Kohm et al., 2012). Cultural criminology tells us that we need to pay attention to visual representations of crime because meaning resides in representation and “image frames identity” (Ferrell, 1999, p. 403). Representations construct meaning about the social world; through representations audiences see reflections of themselves and society. Common representations of Indigenous women in popular discourses in media such as news media, television, and film, have, historically stereotyped Indigenous women in negative ways. These negative stereotypes range from generally deviant to the derogatorily referenced ‘squaw’ (Gittings, 2002), and usually denote that Indigenous women are at fault for their own victimization. Media images of MMIW

have the potential to shape how Canadians perceive Indigenous women and the issue of MMIW; as either a complex social issue, for example, or an individual problem affecting only ‘criminal’ Indigenous women.

Recent Canadian documentary films about MMIW are the focus of this thesis, which aims to contribute to a growing body of research on media representations of MMIW. Films have the potential to reinforce and reproduce, or alternatively, challenge stereotypes about Indigenous women as deviant and blameworthy victims. In this research, the question that drives the analysis is: how are Canadian crime films representing the issue of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women, specifically in terms of the women as victims of the crime. This thesis will focus on questions of representation and explore the how Canadian crime films have presented the issue through a Canadian lens. The research does not seek to critique the films, but rather to examine the films in the context of the broader social implications of representation, and how they reflect or rework existing dominant media discourses about MMIW.

Some of the abbreviations used throughout this research include murdered and missing Indigenous women (MMIW) and the Downtown Eastside Vancouver (DTES). MMIW was chosen because many of the articles that were used in the literature review refer to the issue as MMIW. Additionally, the hashtag #MMIW was popular on Twitter and was created by Grand Chief Sheila North Wilson in Winnipeg. The research uses the term Indigenous to refer to women who may include First Nations, Metis, Inuit, and Native, “in an attempt to encompass the complexity of a multiplicity of identities” (Morton, 2016, p.303). In the films, narrators and individuals interviewed refer to themselves and the missing and murdered women using a variety of identifiers including Native, First Nations, or Aboriginal; however, in the analysis these are presented in quotation marks to indicate that the terms are their own words. The films also use

the terms “prostitutes” and “hookers” to refer to victims. Instead of these derogatory terms, this research refers to the women working as sex workers or women who work in the sex trade, while the prior terms are put in quotation marks.

Purpose of this Research

The purpose of this research is to examine how MMIW are represented in media, specifically Canadian crime films. The research intends to examine how Indigenous women are represented as victims of crime, using other media analyses as a jumping off point. The research will examine whether recent Canadian films represent Indigenous women and the issue of MMIW in the same stereotypical ways as news media, for instance, or if recent Canadian crime films challenge dominant images and reflect changes as the issue becomes more commonly known, talked about, and represented in mainstream media.

Significance and Implications

The significance and implications of this research also lie in raising awareness about the issue of MMIW. The research seeks to address and critique some of the existing dominant representations of MMIW, while also tying in contexts of settler colonialism to provide a more complete analysis of the issue. This research is significant because it considers how Canadian documentary crime films represent the issue of MMIW. The research itself raises awareness about MMIW and representations, which may encourage future viewing of the films. The significance of this research also lies in the power of representations. As will be argued in the literature review, representations hold a lot of symbolic power, encoding images with meaning. The analysis will demonstrate that the Indigenous women interviewed in the documentary films express the feeling that they continue to be victimized through negative representations in

varying forms of media. Therefore, it is significant to examine Canadian films, which may reflect and play a role in shaping how Canadians view the issue of MMIW.

Researcher Position

The researcher's position in this research is important to identify as an ally, and the role of an ally is to critique and address uncomfortable realities of colonialism; "[o]ne component of this challenge will be for allies who are settlers to become more familiar and proactive in their critiques of settler colonialism" (Arvin, Tuck, Morrill, 2013, p.19). Critiquing settler colonialism in this research involves becoming familiar with some of the historical contexts of colonialism, and engaging in a critical approach in the analysis of the films' representations. As the researcher, I will not be attempting to create knowledge about Indigenous peoples, but instead, I critically address the power of dominant, hegemonic colonial structures. A significant aspect to allyship is recognizing and actively critiquing dominant colonial discourses associated with MMIW. The research about MMIW is also an important issue in Winnipeg, which is home to the largest Indigenous population of any major Canadian city (CBC, 2017; Statistics Canada, 2017). Further, it is important to acknowledge that the research is conducted on Treaty 1 land. The research attempts to contribute to decolonizing discourses, critiquing social injustice, and hoping for a better future.

Chapters

The research project is a combination of a literature review and media analysis. The next chapter offers a literature review which examines the importance of film and representation, focusing on representations of Indigenous peoples in Canadian cinema. Another focus of the literature review is the significance of Canadian crime films and how they uniquely represent Canadian society, crime, and justice. The combination of representations of Indigenous peoples

and Canadian films come together in this research to examine the ways in which MMIW are represented in select Canadian crime films. MMIW have been represented in a multiplicity of media, and the final section of the literature review examines the dominant discourses that exist and have been critically addressed in previous research. Existing research on MMIW has focused mainly on news media representations of MMIW, and has found that Indigenous women and MMIW are typically represented as criminal and blameworthy, through a visible/invisible paradox, and are overshadowed by an emphasis on serial killers who have targeted Indigenous women.

Chapter 3 provides the research methodology and outlines the analysis process that guided the film analysis. The methodology of this research involves a narrative and visual analysis of representations of Indigenous women and MMIW in film. The methodology includes a reflection on the researcher's position as an ally seeking to examine and critique dominant discourses which often reproduce stereotypes. Also in this chapter is a description of the four documentary films analyzed in the research, including a brief summary of each film and the production companies that produced the films.

The analysis is presented in two chapters. Chapter 4 considers how the women in Canadian documentary films about MMIW are represented in complex, contradictory ways. This chapter includes reflections on the way that Indigeneity is represented (or absent) in the films and methods the films use to reframe and represent MMIW in stories that 'humanize' or individualize the women; representing Indigenous women as they were before they were victims and as more than a crime statistic. The films purposefully name the women and describe them through their families. Many of the narratives make a great effort to personalize the women's stories. They also attempt to reframe the images of the MMIW as young girls who are innocent

and undeserving of their victimization. However, the films also present Indigenous women's criminality through mugshots and describe them as sex workers with addictions. The films present stories of women who have survived trauma and violence, who speak to the intergenerational effects of colonization, and embody the human face behind the stories that are often omitted. Serial killer discourses are also present in each film; some films try to minimize their influence over the story while others conform to dominant discourses and focus solely on this narrative. This chapter questions whether the women are represented as active agents or passive victims, and the implications of these two conflicting representations.

Chapter 5 focuses on the causes of crime and the way that Indigenous women are represented as victims of broader social injustices. The overarching frame of social injustice encompasses a wide range of critical themes relating to settler colonialism, including residential schools and land displacement. The films address the intergenerational effects of the residential school era, touching on the various socioeconomic issues, lack of resources, addictions, and gendered violence affecting Indigenous women. A prominent theme in each of the films is the critical discourse about the justice system, which includes critiques of police inaction and dismissing families who sought help, also fear of police officials. Another significant theme of social injustice regards the critical discourse about media, specifically, the way that mainstream media reproduces negative stereotypes about Indigenous women, reflecting social discrimination against them. Finally, the analysis notes that the serial killer discourse is present in each film, linking back to the overarching frame of social injustice, as Indigenous women are perceived as 'easy prey'. Social injustice is a prominent issue reiterated throughout the films, and provides the critical foundation of the films. It highlights the broader systemic roots of the issue of MMIW, and emphasizes that MMIW are victims of social injustice, rather than of individual crimes.

The concluding chapter reiterates that the research examines common themes in four Canadian crime documentary films which explore the issue of MMIW. The ways that MMIW are represented were the main focus during the analysis, but representations in films encompass both visual and narrative components, which together create meanings about MMIW and the causes of crime. The research will demonstrate that representations are impactful and the films present representations of MMIW that are complex. This chapter will summarize the findings and other suggestions for further research on the topic.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This research is comprised of both a media analysis and a literature review of the existing research that has examined MMIW. First, the literature review will outline the importance of media representations, specifically how they present and re-present crime and society, and carry out ideological and discursive work. The research will also emphasize the importance of film as an art form, and will specifically consider documentary film. Next, there will be a discussion about crime films and how they work as a gaze through a prism into crime and justice in society, followed by a review of the Canadian film industry and the way that Indigenous peoples have been represented and involved in Canadian films. Finally, an examination of how MMIW has been represented in media, and existing research on representations of MMIW in media will be discussed. The latter part of the chapter offers a review of the theoretical framework that informs the research, which includes a cultural criminology orientation, feminist theory, and Indigenous feminist theory. This framework has guided the analysis and ideas presented in the thesis.

Representation

Media involves a connection of ideas between people, and it is through representation in media that we receive information to understand the social world around us (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2006, p.34). Yet, media is not unbiased; certain representations of issues and identities are privileged over others, and thus media carries out ideological work through exclusion, rendering some issues and people invisible (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2006, p.34, p.178). Media represents and constructs reality using impressions from the real world (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2006, p.73). Representation is selective and audiences only see what they are shown, often getting a partial view of a story they see on TV, in the news, or in films. The politics of representation means that through consuming media we learn how to see ourselves, and learn our

racialized, gendered identities through media (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2006, p. 35). When an issue or population of people is rendered invisible in media, the lack of representation reinforces dominant ideologies by silencing issues and people deemed unimportant (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2006, p.176). If visibility in media has the power to teach us what we are and how to see ourselves, in turn, it acts to show us who and what we are not (Rafter, 2006, p.10). Discourse is a social process of constructing meaning and organising and transmitting social control; it offers ways of understanding in which ideologies are communicated (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2006, p.150). There are sets of dominant discourses in society, which become the "contemporary discourse that is shared by the majority of people" (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2006, p.458). An example of media doing discursive work and reflecting on society is with the genre of crime films, which reflects changing social institutions and provides a critique of the justice system, constituting popular discourses about crime and crime control (Leitch, 2002).

The audience's reception of images and representations of Indigenous women is important because it shapes the ways in which Indigenous women are viewed, and, in turn, may be treated in society. Reception of images in media may influence how people feel about other people, or their feelings of fear towards crime, and, in turn, these feelings can affect the creation of policies. The repetition of visual images and representations resonates with viewers; images become visually coded messages that can become naturalized (Hall, 1980, p. 121). Naturalized messages can shape how viewers understand and make meaning out of representation. Viewers, nevertheless, have agency and are active participants in film reception through which they may accept, negotiate, or even reject the messages presented to them (Hall, 1980). Audiences are not passive; they are active, and the meaning of a media text resides in both the text and the reader;

“in other words, whatever happens in the process of mediated communication, it is rarely, if ever, as simple as ‘message sent equals message received’” (Magder, 1993, p.249). Audience members bring their individual experiences, set of meanings, interpretations, and values to viewing a film, “[t]hus, both cinematic conventions and individual experiences play significant roles in shaping the “reality” depicted by films” (Barsam, 2007, p.29). Negotiated readings allow audience members to resist and reinterpret the intended messages.

Film and Documentary Film

Films are a distinct form of media, which are unique in their production and presentation. They are greatly influential, and are a popular art form today (Barsam, 2007, p.2). Films are important to study because they are an expression of social life and encourage reflection on society; “[a]s a cultural medium, films both reflect dominant values in society and also play an essential role in shaping our perspectives” (Gacek and Kohm, 2016, p. 5). They are a unique art form because film combines a number of visual stimuli; “film is in a unique position to create identity and desire through the opposition of activity and passivity, subjects or agents and objects, with the use of moving images” (Oliver, 2017, p.451). Films not only communicate rational information, but convey meaning through various expressions that extend to individual values, feelings, attitudes, etc. Filmmakers create “viewing experiences that can be understood and appreciated by audiences” (Barsam, 2007, p.29).

News media has been given priority in criminological research and studied for its ‘factual’ representations (Yar, 2010, p. 69). However, films are an important form of media for criminological research to reflect on in terms of representations of crime and justice in society. The lines between factual reporting and fictional representation are blurred and mirror each other, so news reporting and films can mirror and influence each other (Yar, 2010, p. 70). Films

offer a reflection and re-presentation of society and social life; “[w]e see our society through film and we see film through the prism of our social norms, values, and institutions” (Sutherland and Felty, 2010, p. 8). Going to the movies and watching films is a popular form of entertainment for many people in Canadian society. Viewing crime films is an inherently social experience, which allow us to reflect on the major institutions in society and the ways that individuals interact with them (Higginbotham, 2010). Sociological inquiry can approach films as social texts to explore the ways in which they reflect on aspects of identity, interaction, inequality, and institutions (Sutherland and Felty, 2010). These aspects of social life lead us to explore crime and its contexts, since “[f]ilm narratives shape our attitude toward crime and its contexts” (Rafter, 2006, p.78).

The type of crime film this research will examine is documentary film. Documentary films are made “to record or document reality... Documentaries are often a kind of warning or advice about important issues in the world” (O’Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2006, p.273). There is no one definition of what distinguishes a documentary film from other types of films; however, John Grierson’s definition is commonly used to understand documentaries as “the creative treatment of actuality” (Moscovitch, 1993, p.2). Grierson is largely credited for bringing the documentary film movement to Canada and he secured a stable space for documentary film production in Canada (Nichols, 2010, p.124). Grierson had the goal to create an art form that would reflect Canadian society, foster a sense of national identity, and reinforce a sense of social purpose (Nichols, 2010, p.220; see also Moscovitch, 1993, p. xiv; Lovell and Hillier, 1972). Documentaries are viewed as films which documents reality; this type of film is focused on real-life situations and features real social actors, and they tell stories about what happens in the real world rather than an imagined world created in fiction films (Nichols 2010; O’Shaughnessy and

Stadler, 2006). As Nichols states, “A standard way of explaining the rise of documentary involves the story of the cinema’s love for the surface of things, its uncanny ability to capture life as it is, an ability that served as a hallmark for early cinema and its immense catalog of people, places, and things culled from around the world.” (Nichols, 2010, p. 121).

As a lens into ‘reality’, which aims to present real life situations and people, documentaries give us the sense that the film is addressing us directly and is speaking about a common world and problem (Nichols, 2010, p.69). Documentary films are often imbued with realism and hold a unique relationship with reality (England, 2004, p. 297). Filming techniques are also specific in terms of control over the environment and the people in the film (i.e. the focus on real social actors in documentary is compared to hired actors in fiction films, who are prepared to repeat actions and phrases until they have perfected the shot) (Moscovitch, 1993, p. 62). A distinction between fiction films and documentary films is their point of view; “[f]iction films often give the impression that we look in on a private or unusual world from outside, from our vantage point in the historical world, whereas documentary images often give the impression that we look out from our corner of the world onto some other part of the same world” (Nichols, 2010, 121-122). In a fiction film, the camera is typically invisible and actors do not acknowledge its presence. This is contrasted with documentary film style, where the fourth wall is often broken as social actors look into at the camera and speak to the camera/audience. Bill Nichols (2010) describes six modes of documentary filmmaking: poetic, expository, observational, participatory, reflexive, and performative (p. 32). Documentary films often have one main mode, but sometimes they can be combined and used together (Nichols, 2010, p.32). The expository mode is most often associated with documentary filmmaking, as it “emphasizes verbal commentary and an argumentative logic” (Nichols, 2010, p. 31). Two very different modes of

documentary filmmaking are the observational mode, which can be thought of as the ‘fly-the-wall’ style, an inconspicuous camera presence in the lives of the subjects, whereas a participatory mode emphasizes the interactions that the filmmaker and the people in the film have through interviews and direct conversations (Nichols, 2010, p.31). A reflexive mode “increases our awareness of the constructedness of the film’s representation of reality”, whereas a performative mode “rejects notions of objectivity in favor of evocation and affect” (Nichols, 2010, p.31). An example provided for the performative mode is the television show *Cops*. These modes all present a different feel for the type of reality the filmmaker is seeking to present, by acknowledging, ignoring, or including the camera’s presence in the story. Some effects which set documentary films apart from other genres and make them identifiable include:

Jerky hand-held camera, low resolution or poorly lit images, interviews where ‘ordinary’ people speak directly to the camera, interviews which hide the identity of the speaker, subtitles used over poor quality sound recording, surveillance cameras, voice-over commentators giving matter-of-fact observations, use of archival footage, re-enactments, and so on. (O’Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2006, p.277)

Although many documentaries focus on realistic representations through cinematography and sound techniques, filmmakers always interpret events, and this is reflected in what and how they are filmed; “there is always a process of construction” (O’Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2006, p.274). It is important to be mindful and reflect on the question of “whose voice/story is it?” — is it the story of the people in the film who are being represented or is it the story told through re-enactments imagined by the filmmaker (Nichols, 2010, p.13)? This is an ethical consideration in documentary filmmaking because exploitation is an important reflection when working with real people/social actors who are the subject of the film, and are allowing cameras to capture real and possibly vulnerable moments of their lives (O’Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2006, p.273). A documentary is often organized by a rhetoric in a controlled perspective, made under conditions

of decisions made by the filmmaker in combination with their ideology and resources and money available (Nichols, 2010, p.23; see also Moscovitch, 1993, p.114). Practices of staging and questions of truthfulness surround documentaries: how much of the film is a truthful representation of events compared to a carefully constructed image by the filmmaker? There is always a degree of construction, because the filmmaker makes choices about what and who they focus their attention on, which shots or scenes are excluded, and it is noted that the presence of a camera often affects how social actors behave (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2006). Documentaries often voice an argument about an issue: people, places, and things in the film may come and go in order to give evidence to the film, which contrasts a fiction film where we may follow one character's journey; "[i]n this sense documentaries do not simply stand for others, representing them in ways they could not do for themselves, but rather they more actively make a case or propose an interpretation to win consent or influence opinion." (Nichols, 2010, p.44). Therefore, documentaries are made with the intent to persuade or provide an opinion about a particular social issue, and this issue is interpreted through the filmmaker's values and perspectives.

Audiences also shape their experience of viewing a documentary as they go into viewing with a set of expectations and assumptions that differ from a narrative film; "[t]he sense that a film is a documentary lies in the mind of the beholder as much as it lies in the film's context or structure" (Nichols, 2010, p.33). Audiences bring preconceptions into viewing a documentary that are different from a narrative film; they are about reality, real people, stories about the real world, and real events in our social world (Nichols, 2010, p. 33). These are assumptions audiences bring to viewing, and they influence how an audience views the documentary and perceives its messages. In contrast to fiction films, "[a]udiences, then, encounter documentaries with an expectation that their desire to know more about the world will find gratification during

the course of the film” (Nichols, 2010, p. 38). Audiences may go into viewing a documentary with the expectation that they will learn something, and that they will walk out with a better understanding of the issue shown in the documentary; “audience expectations that range from ‘show me the truth’ to ‘entertain me’ all co-exist” (Nichols, 2010, p.142). As an audience, we feel as if we have learned something from watching a documentary, as though they have answers to questions about social issues; “documentaries stimulate a desire to know in their audiences” (Nichols, 2010, p.40).

Crime film

Crime films are a consistently popular type of film, encompassing many genres such as thrillers, prison movies, and gangster films, among others (Rafter, 2006, p.6). Why do people love crime films? They offer audiences an escape and an intimate look into the world of crime and criminals, transgression, and a forbidden world without being in any real danger (Rafter, 2006; Thompson, 2007, p.5). Crime films shape attitudes and inform audiences about crime while also conveying moral lessons, “[e]very crime in every crime film represents a larger critique of the social or institutional order” (Leitch, 2002, p. 14). Crime films are also indicative of shifting beliefs about the causes of crime, which include biological, environmental, and aspirational influences (Rafter, 2006; Thompson, 2007). A sociological reading of crime films means keeping in mind the economic, political, and social factors at the time that a film is produced when analyzing its representations of crime (Sutherland and Feltey, 2010, p.6). Real life influences films, and especially crime films; societal shifts include political changes and widespread anxieties about crime. For instance, many crime films made in the 1990s reflected societal insecurities and fears relating to drugs and moral messages tied to ‘tough on crime agendas’, which led to higher prison populations (Leitch, 2002, p.44). For this reason, crime

films can be seen as cultural resources which relay messages about the causes and consequences of crime and the nature of criminality, “[b]ecause crime films are so clearly linked to social norms, values, rules, and everyday practices, they mirror and reflect back on society in constant motion” (Rafter, 2006, p.58). Still, crime films do not straightforwardly reproduce dominant ideologies and discourses about crime, since “[c]rime films reinforce or challenge ideologies about the conditions that give rise to crime” (Kohm, Bookman and Greenhill, 2016, p. 1). Crime films present crime and society in specific ways, which reflect and shape current understandings of crime and justice, such as whether we should be afraid of serial killers or gangsters or corrupt police.

It is important to look at Canadian crime films because they give us a culturally informed sense of what crime and justice look like in Canada (Kohm, Bookman, Greenhill, 2017). Moreover, “independent Canadian films often explore visions of justice alternative to those found in typical Hollywood blockbusters” (Kohm, Bookman and Greenhill, 2017, p.2). Therefore, it is vital to consider the ways that Canadian crime films have represented the issue of MMIW as a prominent Canadian issue centred on crimes of violence against women.

Crime documentary films are another specific category of film that this research seeks to explore. As documentaries present a lens into ‘reality’, crime documentary films can leave audiences with the impression of looking realistically at crime. Crime documentary films can provide a unique insight into the issues of crime and justice, with the added sense of reality. Whereas narrative crime films present fictional storylines and characters, crime documentaries present real-life social actors and situations/issues, which can leave an audience feeling that they know more about crime and justice.

Canadian film industry

The Canadian film industry is distinctive compared to the more popular Hollywood film industry because it seeks, in part to inform Canadians about Canadian culture rather than create blockbusters and critically acclaimed hits. The National Film Board of Canada (NFB) is an important institution in Canadian culture; it was founded in 1939 by John Grierson, and today focuses on interpreting “Canada to Canadians and the world” (White 2006, p.4). Grierson’s vision for the Canadian film industry was that film could be a medium of information about politics and to promote democracy, which could help educate busy citizens to make informed political decisions (Elder, 2006). Grierson believed that citizens were uninformed when making democratic decisions, such as voting, and he distinguished between films made to entertain and films made to educate, and intended Canadian films to educate (Magder, 1993, p.239). “In its own slow manner the Canadian state had also come to recognize that the cultural industries had become, for better or worse, the most important source of daily cultural expression and consumption” (Magder, 1993, p.111). A full-scale brief presented by the Director’s Guild of Canada in 1964 stressed the importance of films that promote national identity, and in 1967, the Canadian Film Development Corporation was established with the mandate to support a Canadian, semi-commercial feature film industry:

At about this time the government instituted a Capital Cost Allowance Programme, which provided tax shelters for film production in Canada. The relatively fluid definition of a Canadian film meant that the primary beneficiaries of this policy were Hollywood productions looking for an easy way to save some cash. (White, 2006, p.6; see also Clandfield 1987; Kohm, Bookman and Greenhill 2017)

Despite these programs hopeful to nurture Canada’s film industry, audiences are not likely to find a Canadian film playing in a local theatre, instead, these often independent films are found

in other venues, such as film festivals or on television; “Canadian films are, to a great extent, foreign films in their own country” (White 2006, p.6).

There is substantial foundation of research on crime film, which generally focuses on popular American-made Hollywood blockbuster films (Rafter 2006; Leitch 2002; Thompson 2007; White 2006). Many well-known landmark crime films, such as *Shawshank Redemption* (1994) or *Psycho* (1960), are American-made crime films and will be found in Canadian movie theatres or broadcast on Canadian television. However, Canada’s film industry has a lot to offer in terms of crime films, “It is most common to find texts referring to American made crime films and society, but Canadian crime films present exceptional opportunity for a culturally informed analysis of Canadian society and crime” (Kohm, Bookman, and Greenhill 2017, p.3).

Indigenous peoples in Canadian Film

Indigenous peoples have long been central to the Canadian film industry. One of the first dramatic motion pictures filmed in Canada was *‘Hiawatha’ The Messiah of the Ojibway* (1903), which starred an Ojibway cast. As Clandfield explains, “[t]o help Canadians know each other better there were films on regional and ethnic minorities and native peoples. Unfortunately, such films had a tendency to patronize and stereotype” (Clandfield, 1987, p.21). Indeed, early Canadian films engaged in the projection of white fantasies of Aboriginality to represent Indigenous life in Canada (Gittings, 2002, p.200). Several myths about Indigenous peoples and racialized stereotypes were depicted in these early Canadian films, which illustrate the ideological work of representation (Gittings, 2002, p.198). These racialized stereotypes included the vanishing race stereotype, the violent savage, the intellectually challenged savage, the noble savage, villains, criminals, the cowboy vs Indian trope, and the trickster (which was a mischievous yet violent caricature) (Gittings, 2002, p. 209). Early Canadian films commonly

represented Indigenous populations as disappearing or needing to be saved; a myth to support colonization (Gittings, 2002, p.11). Thus, dominant representations of Indigenous people in early Canadian films have ranged from that of a disappearing population, and Indigenous peoples as uncivilized savages who need saving from their primitive lifestyles, to solemn and dignified primitive peoples who just need to be taught the ways of the colonizers (Gittings, 2002; O'Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2006).

Indigenous women in film are the specific focus of this research. For nearly a century, Indigenous women have been depicted as disposable, overly sexualized, and subordinate in film. For example, in the Canadian film, *Back to God's Country*, made in 1919, the female Inuit characters are represented as dirty, subordinate, ignorant, and as “whores” (Gittings, 2002, p.26). Similarly, in the film, *Saving the Sagas* (1928), Indigenous women are referred to as Squaws, a derogatory term that demonizes Indigenous women and stereotypes them as sexual conveniences or commodities; this stereotype justifies violence enacted against Indigenous women and relegates them to reserves (Gittings, 2002, p.51; Razack, 2000). Canadian films made well into the 1990s continued to represent Indigenous women as sexually available for the taking (Gittings, 2002, p.224). Another problem which acts to marginalize Indigenous women in film, however, is the lack of representation and visibility. Films that cast non-Indigenous actors in Indigenous roles are a prevalent issue. For example, the film *Map of the Human Heart* (1992) chose to cast non-Indigenous actors to represent Indigenous characters in a film invested in representing Indigenous alterities (Gittings, 2002, p. 211). The lack of representation demonstrates a lack of respect towards Indigenous people and cultures.

MMIW in media

So far, much of the research concerning the issue of MMIW in the media has focused on the dominant discourses presented in news media. The way that Indigenous women are represented in print news media has been examined extensively (Culhane, 2003; Gilchrist, 2010; Hugill, 2010; Jiwani and Young, 2006; Jiwani, 2011). This scholarship illustrates how Indigenous women are being overrepresented in news media as sex trade workers, drug addicts, and homeless women who are at fault for their own victimization (Craig, 2014; Jiwani and Young, 2006; Jiwani, 2009, 2011; Razack, 2016). These central images have been repeated in news media for over a decade, and have created a typology of interconnected dominant discourses, which characterize media coverage of MMIW. I will be building on these themes and using these discourses as a starting point for my analysis of MMIW in films. These dominant discourses of MMIW depict women as victims of crime through several key themes: as the blameworthy victim or the deviant other/criminal; through the invisible/visible paradox; as a nameless victim in the serial killer story; and as unworthy of being reported/noticed. Most of these themes depict Indigenous women in terms of their involvement in criminal activity and as criminals. I will outline these themes in detail here, since the ways in which MMIW have been represented in news media may inform other representations, as they comprise dominant, or at least popular criminological discourses. News images and the messages they convey become dominant discourses because they are repeated and reproduced, and thus dominate the way that the issue is viewed, talked about, and treated. Furthermore, as I have mentioned in this chapter, narratives and discourses in news reporting and films can mirror and influence each other, even though film is a distinct art form and type of media (Yar, 2010, p. 70). These themes will inform

my analysis of documentary films on MMIW because they have dominated the discourses surrounding MMIW in mainstream media.

Indigenous Women as Criminal. Linking Indigenous women to criminality has been a common stereotype in news media. One way the media supports the criminal stereotype is through the use of missing persons posters and photographs. News media have been notorious for using mugshots of Indigenous women when they are reported as missing or murdered (England, 2004; Jiwani and Young, 2006; Ferris, 2007, p. 20). Jennifer England's (2004) research states that Indigenous women's mug shots on their missing persons posters are used as a "proof of deviancy" (England, 2004, p. 301). When a mugshot is used to represent a missing woman, it carries the connotation of deviance: when you see a mug shot you are supposed to think of that individual as criminal (England, 2004; Pratt, 2005). This reproduces and reinforces negative connotations and reflects the way that society treats Indigenous women as criminal; "[i]n another sense, however, these profiles also operate to powerfully consolidate the victims as members of a deviant class. Themes of addiction, disease, survival sex and violence are central to these ostensibly sympathetic profiles" (Hugill, 2010, p. 59). Under the guise of reporting the women as missing, various news media outlets are at the same time criminalizing and blaming the women for their victimization.

Indigenous Women as Blameworthy. Indigenous women who are described as drug users and sex trade workers, who were killed in the process of working or using drugs, are regularly categorized as blameworthy victims because they were engaged in dangerous or risky behavior at the time of their victimization (Jiwani, 2011; Gruenwald, Chermak, & Pizzarro, 2013). Yasmin Jiwani explains that this type of representation shows a culpable victim who deserves the violence against her (2011, p. 15). An example of how this is played out is through

the creation of billboards designed to address women who hitchhike along the Highway of Tears in British Columbia (Highway 16), since “[h]itchhiking frames Indigenous women as wrongdoers, and in doing so conflates their morality with their mobility” (Morton, 2016, p. 304). The billboards—a form of advertisement—were found to be worded in a manner that frames women who hitchhike as “willing victims” (Culhane, 2003; Gilchrist, 2010; Pratt, 2005; Morton, 2016). These are examples that fail to mention systemic problems such as lack of transportation to and from remote communities, and poverty, which leads to hitchhiking in the first place (Morton, 2016). Beyond transportation, certain occupations and locations are also considered high risk. Sex trade workers working on the stroll are especially vilified in media and in society for ‘choosing’ a dangerous job (Jiwani, 2011; Razack, 2000).

The words *high risk* and *lifestyles* shapes an image of blame on the women who are being victimized because they ‘should’ simply know better. Historically, “[n]ewspaper records of the 19th century indicate that there was a near universal conflation of Aboriginal woman and prostitute and an accompanying belief that when they encountered violence, Aboriginal women simply got what they deserved” (Razack, 2000, p. 99). These ideas continue to inform news media images today. In cases where women were victimized while they were engaged in drinking, drug use, dressing provocatively, and/or working in the sex trade, the victim was then held responsible for her victimization in the media (Craig, 2014; Gilchrist, 2010; Jiwani and Young, 2006; Razack, 2016). It is common to see negative representations of sex trade workers who are associated with danger in both television and film, which normalizes the real-life outcomes of violence against women who work in the sex trade. Furthermore, various accounts discuss how race is a significant factor in the way that victimized women are presented and

represented in media, since “[r]acialized crime victims are often depicted in the news as more blameworthy” (Gilchrist, 2010, p. 376).

Depictions of Indigenous women as partaking in activity that is high risk are reflected in justice system’s reactions to the issue of MMIW. A prevalent critique of the way the issue of MMIW has been addressed is the lack of action taken by police and justice officials (Amnesty International, 2004). A criticism of the police is that they knowingly ignored pleas from families for help to search for the women and that the women have been ignored because they were sex workers, addicts, and Indigenous (Cameron, 2011; Culhane, 2003, p. 603). Justice officials justified their delayed investigations by classifying these women as high risk, with transient lifestyles, and therefore police are not surprised when they disappear (Cameron, 2011; Culhane, 2003; de Vries, 2003; Pratt, 2005; Razack, 2000, 2016). Families of murdered and missing Indigenous women have expressed frustration that their reports and concerns for missing family members were not taken seriously because they were classified as choosing a high-risk lifestyle (de Vries, 2003; Cameron, 2011).

Visible/invisible. Research has revealed a paradox of visibility/invisibility in representations of Indigenous women in media, within both print media (newspapers) and film (England, 2004; Jiwani and Young, 2006). Indigenous women experience visibility by being overly represented in media as deviants. This deviance is shown by representing Indigenous women as exotic and associated with spectacular images of drug use, sex and violence, and crime (Culhane, 2003, p.595). A sense of visibility is reflected in real life and experienced by women who state they have been targeted by police as sex trade workers, for simply standing on the street (England, 2004). A hyper-visibility is experienced as a result of the drug-addicted sex

worker stereotype, for example, and women are subject to random stop and searches as a result (England, 2004).

On the other hand, Indigenous women experience a sense of invisibility when it involves ongoing high rates of victimization, unreliable police reactions, and the lack of news reporting on their victimization (Culhane, 2003; Jiwani, 2011, p. 17; Gilchrist, 2010, p. 385; Razack, 2016). The issue of underrepresentation in popular culture also contributes to Indigenous women's invisibility. Jennifer England (2004) examined a film that focused on drug addiction in the Vancouver Downtown Eastside, also known as Canada's poorest postal code. The neighborhood is home to many Indigenous women and many women have gone missing from the area. However, the film in England's (2004) research chose to focus on narratives of primarily Caucasian women; "[d]espite the high percentage of aboriginal people living in the Downtown Eastside community, only one aboriginal subject was represented in the film" (England, 2004, p.300). Such lack of representation exemplifies the invisibility of Indigenous people in media; who are often not given a voice to speak on behalf of issues which affect them most. A similar example is drawn from Dara Culhane (2003), whose research describes an episode of *America's Most Wanted* (1999), where a dramatic re-enactment of a sex worker being picked up by a possible serial killer in the Downtown Eastside Vancouver shows the sex worker as a blond Caucasian woman (p. 598). The representation of the woman is noteworthy because over half of the women who have been victimized or have gone missing from the Downtown Eastside Vancouver are Indigenous women (Culhane, 2003, p. 598). In terms of representation, an individual's race, gender, and class are significant influences on visibility and invisibility (England, 2004, p. 307). The lack of representation renders Indigenous women and their victimization invisible and thus insignificant.

Nameless victims in the serial killer story. News media prioritizes and focuses attention on sensational stories. A large portion of articles in news media about MMIW include the keyword Pickton, which is in reference to the infamous Canadian serial killer, Robert Pickton (Craig, 2014; Jiwani and Young, 2006; Jiwani, 2011). “The Robert Pickton case is the highest profile case of a prolific serial killer who targeted female sex trade workers and homeless women, the majority of whom were Indigenous” (Morton, 2016, note 1, p. 311). It is rare to read an academic article or news article that does not mention the Pickton farm, where a large number of missing women’s remains, DNA, and personal items were discovered (Craig, 2014). The Robert Pickton case grabbed the attention of law enforcement and government officials, and drew public attention to the issue of MMIW. A number of the families of missing and murdered Indigenous women were able to point to the Pickton case as an outcome of social and legal problems (Craig, 2014). Specifically, where law enforcement failed by ignoring their pleas for help, this resulted in Robert Pickton being able to prey on and victimize nearly 50 women, many of them Indigenous. Serial killer stories that make headlines, such as the Robert Pickton story, however, tend to “deflect attention from the endemic nature of violence against women. These predators are men who sexually exploit and assault young girls and women in society [which] devalues [them] and, further, that such predators feel they can commit violence with impunity in specific areas is never interrogated” (Jiwani and Young, 2006, p. 908). Predators like Pickton were able to victimize marginalized women because they were often rendered invisible, yet the media does not explain this element of the crimes because these women are represented as disposable (Cameron, 2011; Craig, 2014; Jiwani, 2011). Elements of shock, horror and sensationalism are effective deflections from the social justice issues at hand (Jiwani and Young, 2006, p. 909). The news media coverage of Robert Pickton (as of February 2002) was largely

focused on the spectacle of the serial killer and the horror of the grungy pig farm (Cameron, 2011; Jiwani and Young, 2006). The spectacle of the gruesome crimes was the subject of many news articles and even feature length films. Serial killer stories attract audiences; “[t]he increased production of serial killer movies reflects the expanding coverage of serial crimes in the media. Their popularity suggests that such films have become a medium for working through widespread fears of and fascination with unpredictable violence” (Rafter, 2006, p.50). The large number of women’s remains found on Robert Pickton’s farm attracted international media attention to the issue of MMIW, since many of his victims were Indigenous (Culhane, 2003, p. 598; England, 2004, p. 317; Gilchrist, 2010, p. 383; Jiwani & Young, 2006; Jiwani 2011).

While the farmer’s name became headline news, names of his victims were significantly less often heard, and the victims were often unnamed, such as Sereena Abbottsway, Marnie Frey, Andrea Joesbury, among many others. This issue extends to the Highway of Tears, where numerous women have gone missing and have been victimized, and the only action taken was to put up billboards warning people to avoid hitchhiking because there is a serial killer picking up hitchhikers. Morton (2016) explains,

The placement of the elements and the language indicates “killer on the loose” is targeting women on the basis of whether they hitchhike and to hitchhike would therefore make “girls” likely targets. The reference to a singular “killer” is also interesting in the billboard in that it potentially obscures how there is a systemic issue of violence against Indigenous women, not a singular unknown assailant. (p.311)

The narrow attention on the serial killer discourse and failure to name the victims has resulted in classifying all victims in the same, deviant stereotypes by removing their individual stories.

Theoretical Approach

This research uses three interrelated theoretical approaches: cultural criminology, feminist theory, and Indigenous feminist theory, which together address the intersectionality involved in film representations of violence against Indigenous women in Canada. Both feminist theories and cultural criminology involve critical approaches which look at power relations; critical approaches are concerned with examining oppression, inequality and conflict through the lens of crime and law (Chamberlain 2015, p.120). Using this theoretical framework, this research critically analyzes representations of Indigenous women as victims in film.

Cultural criminology

Cultural criminology is an emerging field in criminology, which intersects criminology with cultural studies. It emphasizes the importance of media and representation in understanding crime and justice in society. It states that we can look at images as texts of crime and crime control, and that research can be done through a scholarly reading “of the various mediated texts that circulate images of crime and crime control” (Ferrell, 1999, p. 400). Films depict crime, violence, and criminal justice are among these texts. This orientation is also concerned with power and social control, and the way that media works to represent specific types of crime over others. Cultural criminology as a theoretical orientation may raise questions such as how is crime being represented in texts/images/films? How is criminal activity explained in terms of causes and consequences? And how are power relations and social control being represented in the media?

Ferrell’s definition of cultural criminology emphasizes culture as a way to understand crime in society: “Cultural criminology is a theoretical orientation founded on the claim that crime and crime control cannot be understood apart from the domain of culture—that is, the

domain of shared symbolism, collective meaning, and mediated communication” (Ferrell, 2010, p. 2). Crime and deviance have always been topics that figure centrally in film; since the inception of cinema, films have presented central themes of crime, law, order, conflict, deviance, and punishment (Yar, 2010, p.69). A cultural criminology theoretical orientation “approaches crime as a resource, one that generates media images of crime causation and control” (Rafter, 2006, p.5). Cultural criminology emphasizes “the complex cultural processes by which the measurable reality of crime is constructed and made meaningful” (Ferrell, 2010, p. 6).

Representation is a key concept in this theoretical orientation, and it is important throughout the research. This research highlights the role of images and representation in creating meaning, since “[c]ultural criminology operates from the postmodern proposition that form is content, that style is substance, that meaning thus resides in presentation and re-presentation” (Ferrell, 1999, p. 397). It also questions the role of dominant discourses and how they are shaped through culture. Repetition of images in film is one of the ways that images make an impact on dominant discourses;

Watching film and engaging with the content is part of the interpretive process in which repetitive images take on meaning and become ‘real,’ often turning into ‘common sense knowledge.’ Mediated images and messages become part of the material that supports or contradicts our notions of what is ‘real’ in the social world. (Sutherland and Felty, 2010, p.11)

Cultural criminology further emphasizes and draws attention to aspects of power relations and social control, which intersect with crime; “[c]ultural criminologists turn their attention to the ways in which representations of crime and criminals are socially constructed by the mass media and reproduced in the form of textual images and sound bites” (Chamberlain, 2015, p.138). This

theoretical orientation questions how and what the media chooses to present, for example, focusing on street crime rather than white collar crime, which shapes perceptions of street crime as more common. In addition, “[a]t their most basic and practical, [these] theories offer specific worldviews that make expansive claims to explain the place of works of art within a larger context, and they offer critical lenses into the implicit and ideological meanings within those works of art” (Barsam, 2007, p.320). For this research project, it will be noteworthy how Indigenous women are represented as victims or perpetrators of crime, or both at the same time, and how this is represented and conveyed in film.

Finally, cultural criminology acknowledges the important role of the individual (social actor) as the audience who will be viewing the films. It recognizes that individuals in an audience have agency and watch films with their own biases and preconceptions about how crime and justice work in society. Audiences both give and create meaning of images they view; “[t]he audiences for media constructions of crime are diverse in both their composition and their readings of these constructions; they recontextualize, remake and even reverse mass media meanings as they incorporate them into their daily lives and interactions” (Ferrell, 1999, p. 409). Thus, films can challenge, reinforce, question, and meet the expectations of audience perceptions of crime and crime control.

Feminist Theory. Feminist theory and feminist criminology are also important theoretical orientations for this research. These theories help to understand the social, cultural and legal factors related to violence against women, and how such violence is represented in film. Feminist theories share common concerns with the marginalisation of women and repercussions of patriarchy (Chamberlain 2015, p.124). A central concern for feminist criminology is the gendered nature of crime, and specifically, violence against women

(Chamberlain, 2015, p.124). Victimology and victim's rights movements have roots in feminist criminology because some of the pioneers of this field sought to change the ways that victims were treated, and the lack of attention to the victims of violence against women (Waller, 2012, p.223). In victimology, the rights of victims of crime are the focus and research has sought to develop a range of services to help victims. This research will focus on representations of Indigenous women as victims, and will question how culture plays a role in the construction of myths and stereotypes about violence against women and women as victims, perpetuating the longstanding concept that the victims were 'asking for it' (Comack, 2012, p.192). This is an example of a focus within feminist criminology: a move towards challenging the male-centric criminology which has rendered women and their voices invisible (Comack, 2012, p.195).

The male gaze is a significant problem in feminist theory: male-centric perspectives on all aspects of social life have been presumed as the norm. In many disciplines, knowledge is male-centred, developed by males for males, while women are invisible in the creation of knowledge (Comack, 2012). This male-centric gaze can also be seen in film, as women are often objects of a male character's affection and kept in the passive role of object, leaving women in audiences to identify with either the passive female character or the male lead role (Oliver, 2017, p. 451; see also Mulvey, 1975). These are considerations to keep in mind while watching films: whose story is it, and who is telling the story?

Further, my analysis requires a more specific and inclusive framework because Indigenous women have different experiences and opportunities than other racialized groups of women. Thus, the intersecting issues of race and gender in society and how they are represented in media requires an additional framework of intersectional feminist theory. Intersectional theories have developed out of feminist frameworks to provide a more nuanced understanding of

the way multiple identities come together and shape individual experiences; “[i]n short, the intersectionality framework addressed combinations of characteristics that had unique consequences for individuals and that had been largely under-represented in mainstream research” (Wilkinson, 2009, p.77). An intersectional framework is necessary for examining the issue of violence against Indigenous women because non-white women are located at the intersection of overlapping systems of subordination (Crenshaw 1991, p. 1265). Feminist theory and ethnic theories alone cannot fully explain the complexities of violence against Indigenous women. The intersectionality involved in violence against Indigenous women is important to acknowledge as “[n]ative feminist theories bring together critiques of settler colonialism with critiques of heteropatriarchy” (Tuck and Recollet, 2016, p. 17). Theoretical concepts which focus on racism, for example, may not fully explain the experiences of women of color and any non-white women, and overlook the influences of patriarchy (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1252). Indigenous feminist theories further help bridge the gap between feminist theory and race theories by addressing the violence against Indigenous women as intergenerational and an ongoing issue due to the intersections of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy. I will elaborate on these two concepts further for a better understanding of how they interconnect.

Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Feminist Theory. A long history of violence against Indigenous women in Canada began with colonization. As European settlers traveled to Canada to colonize the land, Indigenous peoples were perceived as either an inconvenience, in the way of and blocking progress, or in need of educating. Settler colonialism is not immigration; it is a distinctive colonialism where settlers have the intention of making a new home on the land, which relies on settler domination over this new territory: “[w]ithin settler colonialism, the most important concern is land/water/air/subterranean earth (land, for shorthand, in this article.)

Land is what is most valuable, contested, required” (Tuck and Yang, 2012, p.5). A common misconception is that settler colonialism is an event that happened in the past and it is over. However, Wolfe (1999) suggests we think of colonization not as something that is in the past, but rather as ongoing and a significant structure that continues to impact the lives of Indigenous people in Canada; “[t]he colonizers come to stay—invasion is a structure not an event” (Wolfe, 1999, p.2). The act of settlers taking Indigenous land was justified through several narratives, such as the disappearing race myth (Tuck and Yang, 2012). The disappearing race myth suggests that Indigenous peoples were struggling for survival and were slowly disappearing from the land, and therefore, the land needed to be colonized and taken over in order for them to survive. This is one of the prevailing myths about Canada: Indigenous peoples and their land required settlers to save them in order to survive. This is also a dangerous ongoing myth because it risks justifying the suffering and genocide that Indigenous peoples have experienced.

Several detrimental outcomes ensued settler colonialism, including the Indian Act and residential schools, which laid the foundations for violence, loss of land and culture, and reinforced patriarchal values and gender divisions (Culhane, 2003, p. 600; Woolford, 2015, p.168). Colonial displacement relegated Indigenous people to reserves and forced the separation of Indigenous people from non-Indigenous people (Culhane 2003). As Woolford notes, “In Indigenous boarding schools, the ordinary violence of settler colonialism, experienced in warfare and dispossession, was recalibrated as physical, sexual, cultural, and symbolic violence” (Woolford, 2015, p.177). Survivors of residential schools in Canada note the lasting memories of the physical, sexual, and cultural violence they suffered (Woolford, 2015, p.184). In these schools, physical and sexual violence became normalized, and impacted the relationships of survivors as adults long after leaving the schools (Woolford, 2015, p.190-191). “Discipline was

harsh and unregulated; abuse was rife and unreported. It was, at best, institutionalized child neglect” (Circles for Reconciliation, 2016). Cultural violence involved disregard for names, clothing, language, and all other cultural markers of Indigeneity which tied Indigenous children to their families and culture, assimilating them to European culture (Woolford, 2015, p.191). Prohibiting Indigenous cultural practices by law, such as the potlatch ceremony and Sundance, are further examples of cultural violence. Paternalistic surveillance and monitoring of Indigenous peoples was enforced through the pass system, which removed Indigenous peoples’ autonomy and made them visitors on their own land. The pass system was a system whereby Indigenous peoples required a signed, authorized pass to be given permission to leave their reservation, whether it was to sell food at a market or to visit their children at residential schools, and it was in effect until 1951 (Circles for Reconciliation, 2016).

Another consequence derived from settler colonialism was the imposition of European gender roles that have subsequently impacted Indigenous women, since “[a] key aspect of settler colonialism is the naturalisation of heteropatriarchy” (Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill, 2013, p.14). European gender roles were enacted early in colonial settlement, where “[w]estern concepts of race intersect in complex ways with concepts of gender” (Smith, 1999, p.45). Men and women’s roles in society were altered to favour men’s participation and women’s subordination, for example, “treaties and trade could be negotiated with Indigenous men. Indigenous women were excluded from such encounters” (Smith, 1999, p.8). For Indigenous communities, excluding women from decision making was a significant shift, and it undermined women’s ability to speak for themselves. The assault on matricentric family relations in some communities changed women’s roles and responsibilities in society (Woolford, 2015, p.168).

Another legacy of colonization is disenfranchisement: the gendered provisions in the Indian Act have contributed to the ongoing issue of violence against Indigenous women. Indigenous women were the subject of a bill within The Indian Act which revoked Indian status based on marrying outside their community. Therefore, when an Indigenous woman married a non-status man she would lose her status (Coulthard, 2014; Kuokkanen, 2015, p. 275). This had negative consequences for Indigenous women who had lost status through marriage to non-Indigenous men and then later divorced, because women were not ensured reinstatement of status. This was further problematic because it displaced Indigenous women and placed them in a space where they could not stay in the non-Indigenous world, but they also could not return to their reserve communities; “when she returned to the reserve with her children after her divorce the band was unwilling to provide her with access to housing” (Coulthard, 2014, p. 87). Without family or community supports, some women resorted to working in the sex trade in order to provide for their children and survive (Jiwani 2009). This placed Indigenous women in a unique situation where they were not accepted in the mainstream society, but they were also not accepted in their home communities due to loss of status. It is these structures in society that have created barriers and problems for Indigenous women, and which have led to their ongoing marginalization. As Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill argue, “[f]or Native feminist theories, men are not the root cause of native women’s problems, rather it is the ongoing colonial and heteropatriarchal structures imposed on their societies which are the cause of the problems” (Arvin, Tuck, Morrill, 2013, p.18). Therefore, the structure of patriarchy is inseparable from settler colonialism.

Indigenous feminist theories will provide a framework through which to address the ways that patriarchy, heteropatriarchy, and heteropaternalism enact violence against Indigenous women, and support systems and structures which perpetuate this violence. Whereas a critique of

patriarchy may begin to explain the violence against women and marginalization of women, described in feminist theory as “a system of male domination that includes both a structure and an ideology that privileges men over women” (Comack, 2012, p.191), it overlooks the problem that specifically Indigenous women are victimized at much higher rates than non-Indigenous women. Violence against women is a prevalent social issue, but Indigenous feminist theory will take the analysis one step further to question why Indigenous women are five times more likely to die from violence (Amnesty International, 2004, p. 23). Further, it argues that settler colonialism is directly tied to, and is inseparable from systems of marginalization that victimize Indigenous women more frequently than non-Indigenous women. For instance, the inaction of police in the DTES where large numbers of Indigenous women were reported as missing can be related to the systemic influences of both settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy.

The three theoretical approaches to this research all involve an examination of power and control, and representation. Cultural criminology will contribute to this research by pointing to the importance of culture and representations in understanding crime and crime control. This theory will guide the analysis of visual texts and their significance. A feminist theoretical framework will guide the analysis to analyze issues of violence against Indigenous women. It will also guide the research to question how the films have been created, whose story is told, and from which gaze the film is created, with Indigenous women at the centre. The intersections of settler colonialism and patriarchy will be addressed throughout using Indigenous feminist theory to consider the issue of MMIW.

Concluding remarks

The literature review has examined the significance of representation and film, crime film, Canadian film, and Indigenous peoples in Canadian film. Additionally, dominant

discourses about MMIW in other types of media were examined and presented as a starting point for research on representations of MMIW in Canadian crime film. The research is informed by a cultural criminology orientation, feminist theory, and Indigenous feminist theory to explore critically how Indigenous women are represented as victims of crime in MMIW films.

Chapter 3: Methods

This chapter outlines the methodology and step-by-step analysis process which guided the research for this thesis. In this chapter, I also reflect on my position in the research, noting the importance of reflexivity in research that attempts to critique some of the dominant and colonizing discourses about Indigenous women. Finally, this chapter presents the data sources that have been selected for analysis and details the process of selection.

Methodology

A combination of visual and narrative analysis comprised the methodology for this research. Narratives are stories, which are ways of making sense of our experiences (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2006, p.230). Stories are a way for people to create meaning in their lives, while documentary film enables people to tell their stories. A narrative analysis of film will guide this research to ask what kind of stories the films are telling and what happens to the characters (Rose, 2001, p.52). An important part of the narrative analysis (what is really going on, what the story says) involves analysis of discourses. Discourse analysis examines how power and knowledge are communicated through a film's stories (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2006, p.458). Discourse analysis is especially important while looking at social problems involving issues of marginalization, "[s]ince discourses are seen as socially produced rather than created by individuals... discourse analysis explores how those specific views or accounts are constructed as real or truthful or natural through particular regimes of truth" (Rose 2001, p.140).

The research method of narrative analysis focuses on the stories being told in a film and is conducted by watching the film repeatedly, looking for different aspects of the narrative. It is a method that considers the way the story is told through both verbal dialogue and the visual aspects in the film. A first step using this method is to watch the film and examine how the story

is told – does it have a beginning, middle, and end structure? What is the storyline? Where does it take place? Who is in the film? Another important aspect is who is speaking and what are they speaking about in the film? Narrative analysis is a flexible methodology that recognizes how the details of the material (films) guide the research; as new codes appear the research adjusts accordingly (Rose, 2001, p.154). The way that the story is told is the focus of this method. In narrative analysis, it is important to consider the hierarchy of discourses, which shape the dominant discourses. The hierarchy of discourses and dominant discourses are a way of understanding what the overall film is presenting (O’Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2006, p.245). The hierarchy of discourses is determined by examining multiple aspects in the film, including: what is happening in the story; who is speaking or making things happen; from whose point of view is the story told from; and how are men and women positioned in the story (O’Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2006)? Yet, the language of film, as outlined by Michael O’Shaughnessy and Jane Stadler (2006), also influences the way dominant discourses are presented and produced in film. The language of film includes the *mise-en-scène* (the people in the film, lighting, sets, clothing, objects), cinematography, editing, and sound. For example, the language of film contributes to the narrative analysis and constructs meaning by presenting some people in dimly-lit scenes or certain neighbourhoods at night with sounds of sirens in the background to invoke a sense of fear and serve as a reminder of crime. These aspects will be described in fuller detail in the following sections of this chapter.

A visual analysis is used to observe images, or the language of film. It examines the way that artistic components of the film are combined to tell the story. Watching for visual cues in the films involves analysis of the way things are presented, such as the lighting, the settings, the people, the colours, and objects in the scene. It also comprises a symbolic component, for example, a red rose may be presented in the film to symbolize remembrance. Visual analysis is

combined with narrative analysis because the research will look at the way that the story is presented through narratives and the visual aspects of film.

These methodologies allow me to explore how storytelling in film contributes to or challenges dominant discourses, such as Indigenous women's victimization and dehumanization. Do the narratives blame the victims for their victimization or do they challenge this dominant discourse? Do they focus on stories of the victim or the justice system? Visual and narrative methodologies stress the importance of culture and images in shaping the way that crime is presented in Canadian society. The purpose of the methodology is to examine the ways that both narrative and visual symbols shape a story in film.

Data selection

The research examines how Indigenous women are represented as victims in Canadian documentary films about MMIW. In order to address this question, I analyzed four documentary films, which were chosen through a highly selective process using specific criteria. To begin the selection process, I searched online for films about MMIW, and from that starting point, I narrowed down the results. Fiction films are often grouped together based on their subject matter, for instance as crime or action films (Leitch 2002); however, documentary films are commonly classified together simply as documentaries. Therefore, film selection involved reading the film summaries in order to select the appropriate films. The films were chosen based on a set of predetermined criteria, including: Canadian films made in Canada and about Canada; films about the issue of MMIW; documentary films; films made since 2006; and only feature length films longer than 40 minutes. Short films and animated films were excluded from the data collection. The outcome was a list of four feature length Canadian documentary films: *Finding Dawn*; *The Pig Farm*; *Missing: The Documentary*; and *Highway of Tears*. The selected films

were accessed through different online resources, including Youtube, Netflix and the National Film Board website. It is also important to note that there is one more documentary film about MMIW that could not be included in the analysis, because at the time of this research the film was not yet complete: *1200+* (2018). The film *1200+* is a documentary film made in Winnipeg about the MMIW crisis. I emailed the film's producer, Grand Chief Sheila North Wilson, and inquired whether the film was available to access; however, she responded that the film was not quite complete. Grand Chief Sheila North Wilson is also credited with having started the #MMIW hashtag, now a popular acronym for murdered and missing Indigenous women (CBC news, 2018).

The Data: The Films

The research analyzed four documentary films made in Canada about MMIW. Two of the films begin with narrators and directors who identify themselves as Indigenous. Three of the films explicitly state at the outset of the film that they are going to focus on the issue of MMIW. There are several common themes found in all four films, including critical discourses about poverty and addictions, the justice system, and the mention of a serial killer discourse. The following section is a brief summary of each film that has been analyzed for this research.

The film *Finding Dawn* is a 2006 National Film Board of Canada production narrated and directed by Métis filmmaker Christine Welsh, who sets out on a journey of storytelling and remembrance. The film begins with a shot of Welsh looking at the piles of dirt left on the farm, asking what is the significance of numbers, what do they tell us? Welsh speaks to the families of several MMIW, including Dawn Crey, Ramona Wilson, Daleen Bosse, along with interviews with Janice Acoose and Faye Blayney, who have experienced first-hand the effects of settler colonialism and express that they easily could have been MMIW. Through Welsh's method of

storytelling, each individual's story becomes an act of resistance and reclamation of culture, land, and traditions (Hargreaves, 2015). This film challenges some of the dominant discourses about the murdered and missing Indigenous women in Canada, as Welsh states she is putting a human face to the issue of MMIW.

The film *The Pig Farm* is a Canadian Television Network (CTV) production, directed by Malcom Clarke and narrated by Maggie Huculak. This Canadian crime film was made in 2011 and it presents the story of the largest serial killer investigation in Canada: the Robert Pickton case in British Columbia. The film presents a timeline of Pickton's criminal activities involving missing and murdered women from the Downtown Eastside Vancouver (DTES), starting in approximately 1997 until his arrest in 2002. The film engages in interviews with law enforcement officers who were involved in the investigation, and Pickton's friends and former employees who share their insights and behind-the-scenes knowledge. The film is a mixture of interviews, voice-over narration, voice-over recording from Robert Pickton's audio diary, re-enactments, and news footage. Some of the main themes in this film include Robert Pickton himself, missing women, law enforcement, crime and justice, and the DTES. CTV advertises itself as Canada's most-watched television network and features a range of news, information, and entertainment programming, which summarizes this film's content pretty well (CTV, 2018).

The film *Missing: The Documentary* is a Animikii Films production made in 2014, directed and narrated by Young Jibwe from Winnipeg, Manitoba. Young Jibwe introduces himself and his goal to create this film in order to understand the issue of MMIW in Canada by talking to people who have either been affected by the issue or have a vested interest in the issue. This documentary film, made in 2014, is an interview style film featuring family members and media personalities who provide their perspectives on the issue of MMIW. Some of the main

themes expressed through dialogue include problematic police responses to violence against Indigenous women, negative stereotypes of Indigenous women, and the social structures of colonialism. The filmmaker is not visible during the interviews and the film focuses solely on the person sitting in front of the camera telling their story. The simple filming style gives the appearance of a camcorder set up in a room, minimizing any special visual effects, and focusing on the individual speaking. The film follows a storytelling narrative and declares its intention to look at the issue of MMIW by stating “these are their stories.”

The film *Highway of Tears* is a Finesse Films production made in 2015, directed by Matthew Smiley and narrated by Nathan Fillion. The film is a Canadian documentary about the ‘Highway of Tears’, a nickname given to Highway 16 in British Columbia. This highway is the focus of the film, because, since 1969 a significant number of women and girls were last seen or found murdered along this highway. The film begins with an introduction to the issue of MMIW with written text on the screen that reads “in 2013, Human Rights Watch released a report stating that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Northern British Columbia failed to protect Aboriginal Women”, “582 Aboriginal women have been reported missing and murdered across Canada”, “Over 40 women have been reported missing or murdered along the highway 16 corridor, known as ‘the highway of tears’”, “A majority of those women were Aboriginal”, and “We set out to find the root causes of these disappearances and murders”. The film shows a number of missing and murdered women with their photos and names, and markings on maps of the places where they were found. Some of the themes covered in this film include racism, poverty, intergenerational trauma, and transportation issues resulting in hitchhiking. The film presents the narrative through interviews, animations, voice-over narration, photos, and newspaper clips.

Each of these films are made by different production companies: The National Film Board of Canada (NFB), CTV television productions, Animikii Films, and Finesse Films. The majority of these production companies advertise their objective to produce socially conscious programs, including the NFB, Finesse Films, and Animikii Films. The films in this research made by these production companies emphasize social injustice, social action, advocacy and hope. They also critically examine MMIW as a societal problem rather than individual problem. The NFB has worked with Indigenous communities to promote an Indigenous film community. In 1996 the NFB established the Aboriginal Filmmaking Program which endeavoured to provide opportunities to Indigenous filmmakers and create culturally informed films (Gittings 2002, p.215). The film *Finding Dawn* is an NFB production and conforms to these goals: made by Metis filmmaker Christine Welsh, the film demonstrates Indigenous cultures through traditions of storytelling. Animikii films' website advertises that they produce "original and captivating programming that reflects Aboriginal peoples of Canada" (Animiki See, Digital Production, 2018). The film *Missing: The Documentary* conforms to these principles: made by Indigenous filmmaker Young Jibwe who makes the film to honour MMIW, featuring his own unique music. Similarly, the film *Highway of Tears* made by Finesse Films, states on their website that their production company's goals are to produce socially conscious film content (Finesse Films, 2006). One film is produced by CTV, and it is the most sensational storyline as well as the only film which omits any mention of Indigenous identity. The film *The Pig Farm* aired on CTV television network and was made to present an insider's perspective of the Pickton case, featuring a look into his personal life and relationships (CTV, 2010). The entertainment value of this film is more prominent than in the other films; it is the only film which presents re-enactments and graphically describes violent encounters.

Analysis Process

Theo Van Leeuwen and Carey Jewitt (2004) suggest a method of film analysis beginning first with an open viewing of the films. The initial viewing of the films familiarizes the researcher with the film and prepares the researcher to understand the sequence of events; “the images, be they photographs, films or video, should be viewed repeatedly, grouped initially in an order that approximates the temporal, spatial, and other contextual relationships of the subject-matter they reflect” (Van Leeuwen and Jewitt, 2004, p. 40). While watching the films, the researcher continues to reflect and ask questions, and new questions may arise in different viewings. Next, grouping ideas together and the use of a codebook is important to the data analysis. Van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2004) suggest keeping careful records of themes, findings, and questions as they emerge. The third viewing stage is a closed analysis, involving a more in-depth viewing of the films in order to organize and begin to conceptualize the content. A closed analysis can include the researcher counting the occurrence of specific representations or phenomena, such as the number of times illicit drugs were referenced or explicitly shown in the film (Van Leeuwen and Jewitt, 2004, p. 43). A final suggested stage in the analysis is to take a step back and re-examine all the images and texts: the analysis should be “supported but not obscured by detail” (Van Leeuwen and Jewitt, 2004, p. 44). An important aspect of studying visual records such as film is the ability to re-examine, and repeated viewing, since there is always more to see (Van Leeuwen and Jewitt, 2004, p.50).

Initial viewing and the language of film. Following this approach, the initial viewing stage was an open viewing of the film, gaining a sense of the storyline and taking broad notes about the film. The following viewings were intended to watch for specific details and to take detailed notes. For instance, in the first round of viewings, I began looking for elements in the

film related to the *mise-en-scène*. *Mise-en-scène* literally considers what has been filmed, including settings, objects in the sets, colours and clothing, the people, and the way these are visually arranged and lit (Barsam, 2007; O'Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2006, p.219; Villarejo, 2013). The first time I watched the films for *mise-en-scène*, specific attention was paid to the people in the film, noting which people were speaking, being interviewed, or talked about. I noted peoples' names (which were sometimes shown in labels next to the person as they spoke, and other times their names were introduced by the narrator) in order to help organize the hierarchy of discourses. I also noted the subject matter of the individual's dialogue (media, residential schools, etc.) and the person's role or job, for instance, whether they were a family member of a missing woman or a police officer. It was helpful to begin by simply noting each person who appeared in the film, listing their names and roles, to organize the storyline and associate a name to a face, and to consider why they were featured in the film. Focusing on the people in the film also allowed me to address whose voices dominated the story.

After I had a sense of all the social actors in the film, in the next viewing I paid attention to the settings. I recorded where the film was set, in what area of the city or what building, and where interviews took place, such as in a home or at a bar. The next viewing looked at objects, such as sage and roses. Another helpful detail was noting any objects in the setting during interviews when people were seated and speaking towards the camera. *Mise-en-scène* analysis also develops an analysis of exclusion by noting what has not been filmed and focused on in the scene. These elements helped to address questions of representation, such as how the film represents Indigenous people, whether it is through the narrative or their clothing or drumming.

The next focus was on the cinematography, which involves everything to do with the camera (Villarejo, 2013). This includes the angles and positioning of the camera, camera focus,

framing, camera movements, and special camera effects such as slow motion (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2006, p.219). For example, shots from inside a car, fast motion, looking out the window and driving on a highway, or in the neighborhood of the DTES were common in the several of the films. I noted each time there was an aerial view/bird's eye view and why it was used, for example, when showing the farm. While looking at each scene, I also noted the lighting in the scenes. Often the films used available light (sun light, outdoor shots) which is common to documentary style; many of the scenes were outside or set in neutral background interview settings. The lighting was most noteworthy when the films were depicting the DTES or interviews with "deviants".

The next stage of watching the films involved a focus on the editing, which is the "splicing together separate pieces of film" (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2006, p.220). The editing aspect of the films was less the focus of the analysis, although there were a few transition edits which added to the story. In addition, I recorded the sounds in the film. Sound in film includes "[t]he recorded combination of human voices, sound effects and music" (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2006, p.220). Three types of sound were noted in this analysis, including dialogue, music, and sound effects (Villarejo, 2013). The dialogue is the conversation between characters/people in the film (Sikov, 2010). I made note of characters speaking, how often, and to whom. Most often the people who were speaking in the film were speaking directly to the camera in an interview style, appearing as though they were speaking directly to the audience. There were both diegetic and non-diegetic sounds in the films, which I determined by questioning whether the people in the scene could hear the sound (Sikov, 2010, p.80). Non-diegetic sound includes the voice-over narration and the music outside the story world—the characters cannot hear it (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2006, p.221). Non-diegetic sound includes

the soundtrack, which can set the tone for the film. For instance, a deep, low toned soundtrack can set the tone for a dark and ominous film or scene. The voice-over sound was present in each film, and often conveyed a sense of distance from the story, like an all-knowing observer. This voice-over sets the tone, provides background information, and introduces new people to the story. Sound was an important factor in the films, and sometimes indicated the racialized components of the story. Each of these films focus on or involve Indigenous peoples, and include traditional drumming and singing to alert the audience to the cultural significance and focus of the film: “[f]ilm music ... can be hugely important in creating atmosphere and in highlighting, complementing, and developing the drama and the narrative” (O’Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2006, p.222). The sound in the films was also able to convey a range of feelings, including a sense of danger, urgency, sympathy, and hope.

Summarizing and connecting the themes. After the language of film was examined and recorded, I took a step back and recorded the main, overarching themes. Writing summaries of each of the films helped to conceptualize a film plot, and often the filmmakers stated their intentions in creating the film at the beginning of the film. I re-watched each film to understand the narrative structure, reflecting on how the story was told and how it was presented structurally. The documentaries did not always portray a beginning, middle, and end narrative structure, or a conflict and resolution structure, where a situation is resolved at the end of the film. Therefore, I had to watch the film and try to connect the stories and themes that reappeared throughout the film in order to tie everything together. Drawing on narrative analysis, I analyzed whose voice was the most dominant, whose point of view the film presented, and the hierarchy of discourses (O’Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2006, 243). I noted how Indigenous women were represented in the films through both dialogue and images. For example, often the women were

described by a family member while a photo was shown on the screen, and at other times the narrator or police described them. I also noted the dominant discourses associated with Indigenous women in each film, which ties back to my original research question: how are MMIW represented as victims? This involved a reflection on elements such as light, music, and how the person speaking about the women affected the way that they were represented. In addition, I considered the question of the women as victims of what? How are the crimes against Indigenous women portrayed?

Coding themes and stepping back. In the final stage of analysis, each of the elements of the film—the *mise-en-scène*, cinematography, editing and sound, and the dominant themes—were organized by coding. The coding process was carried out by identifying key themes from recurring words or images, creating lists of these themes, applying codes to each theme, and thus developing connections (Rose, 2001, p.150). For instance, one theme which reappeared in each film was the justice system, which covered several critical discourses and sometimes contradictory perspectives. Creating a detailed codebook was an important strategy for this research. I created a chart for each film, organizing similar codes together into columns, which developed several overarching themes for each film, including settler colonialism, police, hope, family, and advocacy. With the list of codes, I compared each of the four films and assessed whether there were overlapping themes by comparing codes that appeared in multiple films. Then, stepping back after these elements were examined, recorded, and coded, I considered the common codes and plot summaries of each film. The research analysis revealed the list of codes that were categorized into several main themes, and organized into two chapters on the complex representations of MMIW, as well as social injustice.

Being Reflexive in this Research

Since film is art and art is subjective, there is a need to be reflexive and state that the analysis has been developed based on one personal research perspective; one researcher's reading of the films. As the researcher, I cannot know what the filmmakers intended or meant in their creation of the film, and I am not a film critic. The purpose of this analysis was to examine and reflect on the ways that MMIW as victims are represented in four specific Canadian crime films. The research questions whether dominant discourses of MMIW are present in the films, or whether the films present alternative representations of MMIW, or how they do both. The research undertakes an approach to film that seeks to understand a film's various meanings and to consider a film from particular theoretical perspectives which may involve looking at "the film text's connection to culture and history", whereas "film criticism is generally focused on evaluating a film's artistic merit and appeal to the public" (Barsam 2007, p. 317).

Education, research, and academia have been contentious subjects for Indigenous peoples; research has historically been enacted without Indigenous people's input or permission, and in turn, their voices were silenced (Smith, 1999). Knowledge creation is a form of power (Smith, 1999, p.34). For this reason, it is important to acknowledge my position in the research and emphasize my role as a non-Indigenous researcher and recognize some of the impacts of this research. As a female, non-Indigenous researcher looking at the issue of MMIW, this research could be perceived as another act of external representation. It seeks to describe how Indigenous women are characterized and presented in films, which is itself a form of re-presentation because the research will be making a number of assumptions about representation and possibly creating new categories of representation.

Concluding remarks

The methodology for this research involved a narrative and visual analysis, which, together with the language of film, uncovered dominant themes and discourses in each of the films and across the films as a whole. The analysis process was conducted in stages of viewing, which involved noting specific details of the language of film, and keeping a detailed codebook. The common codes found in the films developed the overarching themes and guided the analysis to determine two main analysis chapters, focusing on complex representations of Indigenous women and the social injustices at the root of the crimes.

Chapter 4: Representing Indigenous Women in Canadian MMIW Documentary Film: Complex, Contradictory Images

A significant finding of this research is that representations of MMIW in Canadian documentary films are complex and sometimes contradictory. Each of the films present critical narratives of mainstream media representations and existing stereotypes of Indigenous women. The critical narratives in each film challenge dominant, primarily negative discourses associated with MMIW. However, the films also present a number of contradictions. First, the significance of Indigenous identity of the victims is highlighted in most of the films, but in one film it is omitted. Second, representations in the films that attempt to “humanize” MMIW are contrasted with stereotypical narratives about the women as drug addicted sex trade workers, and the prominence of the serial killer discourse in each film. Third, discourses about women’s agency are very contradictory. On the one hand, MMIW’s victimization is presented as caused by broader systems of social injustice over which they have no control. On the other hand, women are represented as taking action and working towards a better future. Most of the films emphasize action and optimism and show how women and communities are taking action. The themes of hope and advocacy challenge the passive victim representation of the women, and reframe the narrative to show resistance and reclaiming cultures. These complex representations indicate that there is not a simplistic representation of MMIW.

How is Indigenous Identity Represented?

The racial identity of the MMIW is a central focus of this research. Indigenous women in particular experience violence at rates approximately three times higher than non-Indigenous women (RCMP, 2014, p.7). Indigenous women are also more likely to die as a result of their injuries, and experience more severe forms of violence (Highway of Tears, 2015; Monchalin, 2016). High rates of victimization indicate that MMIW is an issue of social injustice—where one

group of people is more vulnerable to victimization than others. Indigenous identity is also important to examine because it has been omitted during high profile cases, for instance, during the infamous Robert Pickton case (Craig, 2014). Therefore, this analysis will examine the ways that Indigenous identity is represented in the films. Some of the films are expressly concerned with the issue of MMIW and focus on the way that Indigenous women have been victimized, yet in other films it is expressed through technical or more nuanced elements. Sometimes it is not explicitly stated, but Indigenous identity and MMIW are still an element to the story.

Affirming Identity. Many of the women in the films are identified as Indigenous through the narrator's introduction or through family members' stories. Indigenous identity is represented through both dialogue and non-verbal signals such as clothing or music, and sometimes by referring to their traditional land. For instance, in the film *Finding Dawn*, director and narrator Christine Welsh positions the film's story in relation to herself as a "Native woman", who seeks to explore what has happened to the over 500 missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada (Finding Dawn, 2006). Welsh's introductory monologue sets the precedent for the film as an Indigenous-centred filmmaking journey that intends to find the stories of the MMIW, specifically the untold stories of Indigenous women. The first visual symbol of Indigenous identity is the sage and rose Welsh places in the fence at the Pickton farm. The sage is symbolically related to Indigenous people, often used in ceremony, and the rose is often a symbol of memorial. Another example in the film, *Finding Dawn*, of visual symbols indicating Indigenous cultures important to the storyline is the Annual Women's Memorial March on the DTES. The exterior shot of a building shows a sign hanging with the words "Women's Memorial March", and symbols such as a circle with the four directions' colours. The film also features shots of the march in progress, people in the crowd singing, and drumming on hand drums.

People speaking at the march make acknowledgements of traditional territory—extending gratitude for being welcomed to the Coast Salish territory. After the memorial walk, the film introduces the ‘Highway of Tears’, described in terms of “the realities and the dangers faced by native women in the North” (Finding Dawn, 2006). The highway is presented as a source of vulnerability and danger for Indigenous women. An example of this danger is told through the story of Ramona Wilson, who is represented as Indigenous in photos of her wearing traditional regalia, holding feathers, and wearing headdresses. Later in the film, another missing woman, Daleen Bosse, is portrayed as Indigenous through a clip of her missing persons poster, which first states that she is Aboriginal.

Another film that expressly states its focus on Indigenous women and the crisis of MMIW is *Highway of Tears*. The film’s introduction includes text that appears on the screen in a typewriter style/aesthetic, which states that “582 Aboriginal women have been reported missing and murdered across Canada”, “Over 40 women have been reported missing or murdered along the highway 16 corridor, known as ‘the highway of tears’”, and “A majority of those women were Aboriginal” (Highway of Tears, 2015). The introduction contextualizes that the focus of this film is going to be about the Indigenous women and issues surrounding their victimization on the ‘Highway of Tears’, and issues that Indigenous peoples experience in Northern communities. The film displays a number of visual symbols that indicate Indigenous culture. Multiple people throughout the film can be seen drumming on hand drums and singing traditional songs and the film features Indigenous Chiefs. The film also mentions several non-Indigenous women, whose stories are told in order to compare the attention their stories received.

The film *Missing: The Documentary* begins by framing the story as an attempt to understand and share the stories of victims and family members of victims, to critically engage

with the issue of MMIW and how it has been presented in media. This film is minimalist; there are very few visual cues of Indigeneity. Instead, the film's focus on MMIW and Indigenous women is communicated through narratives and storytelling.

It is also noteworthy that the music in the films indicates a focus on Indigenous issues. Two of the films feature traditional drumming and singing, and one film features this music during the final credits. The film *Missing: The Documentary* is made by Young Jibwe, who identifies as a hip hop artist and music producer, and the final song that plays while the credits are shown is a hip hop song he created, titled "Highway of Tears".

Invisible. Notably, Indigenous women are not mentioned in the film *The Pig Farm*. Indigenous identity is not part of the films' narrative, and none of the victims are identified as Indigenous. MMIW is not mentioned, and the film seems to cluster the women under one category as murdered and missing women. Although not all of the women murdered by the farmer were Indigenous, most of the victims were Indigenous (Craig, 2014).

While the film never states that many of the missing women were Indigenous, a scene featuring the Annual Missing Women's Memorial March shows a crowd of people walking and drumming, providing a visual indicator that this was a significant issue for Indigenous people in the community. This sequence includes brief footage of people marching and drumming, and holding a sign that reads "Downtown Eastside Women's Centre" with the letter O filled in with the colours associated with the four directions. These are some of the visual clues to the issue of MMIW, but the victims are never described as Indigenous or non-Indigenous, and the people speaking themselves never identify as such. The symbols found in the memorial march match the latent representations in some newspaper stories about the Pickton case: "In another story, signs of Aboriginality were conveyed though the use of such signifiers as 'healing ceremonies' and

‘smudging rituals’” (Jiwani and Young, 2006, p.910). Some of the women mentioned by name in the film are Indigenous women, such as Sereena Abotsway, but this is never explicitly stated, and it is not critically addressed as a factor in her victimization. Instead, she is described as a sex worker and a drug user. She is also remembered through her foster parents, who are described as “Dutch immigrants”. It is noteworthy that Sereena’s Indigenous identity is absent from the story, but her parents’ Dutch heritage is relevant; “Serena Abbotsway was an Aboriginal woman, but the circumstances influencing her life, the reasons behind her adoption, were never explored in a way that linked them to the devastating legacy of colonialism and residential schools” (Jiwani and Young, 2006, p.906). Omitting any reference to Indigenous identity omits the broader issues underpinning victimization of MMIW.

The Pickton case highlighted the injustices and vulnerability of Indigenous women. As Ernie Crey points out in the film *Finding Dawn*, almost half of the victims were Indigenous. However, the lack of representation of the issue of MMIW in *The Pig Farm* can reflect the crimes being treated as individual and specific to lifestyle choices. Thus, it is implied that the women were victimized because they were drug addicted sex workers rather than victims of historical processes of colonization and colonial violence.

Indeed, the film’s narrative conforms to the way the Pickton trial represented the victims: the women were narrowly described in terms of their sex work and addictions. The film closely mirrors the Robert Pickton trial where race was obscured and underemphasized, “In seventy-five of the seventy-six judicial rulings produced over the course of the Pickton trial and appeals, there was no reference to the Aboriginality of these women” (Craig, 2014, p.12). *The Pig Farm* thus reinforces a “racelessness” (Razack, 2000) by omitting any mention of race and how this was a relevant factor in the women’s victimization; the white predator victimizing numerous

Indigenous women and undetected for so long. Racelessness removes histories of marginalization from the narrative and suggests that the women would have been victims no matter their race. Denying the racialized component of MMIW crimes leaves Indigenous women vulnerable to ongoing victimization because the root of the problem has not been addressed.

Complexity and Contradictions: Individualizing, stereotypes, survivors, and agency

There are a number of complex representations of MMIW in each of the films. It is not possible to say that each film represents the women as good or bad, innocent or guilty of crimes. These complexities include representing the women both in terms of their families and hobbies, as well as sex workers. The films (including, to a lesser extent, *The Pig Farm*) often individualize the women by naming and putting a face to the victims who are so often just another number in the list of victims.

Getting to know the women: Individualizing the numbers. The MMIW in the films are presented in ways that seem to highlight their personalities and lives beyond their victimization. This can be understood as individualizing the victims in the films. Although the films use language that suggests they are ‘humanizing’ the women’s stories, they are in fact individualizing the women by personalizing their stories. Individualizing the women involves telling the women’s stories as individuals, which is part of the narrative strategy employed in these documentary films, intended, in part to evoke sympathy on the part of the audience. The films put a face to the issue of MMIW, and underscore that each of the women started elsewhere, often shown through family stories and photos. Elaine Craig (2014) contends that some of the MMIW were rendered subhuman long before they were murdered (p.6). These films often challenge this stereotype and reclaim their human face.

The film *Finding Dawn* begins by positioning the missing and murdered Indigenous women as human. As Christine Welsh states in her introductory monologue, she wants to put a face to the increasing numbers of MMIW: “She is much more than a number. She has a name” and “I need to put a human face to what’s happened to so many of my sisters” (Finding Dawn, 2006). Christine Welsh emphasizes the importance of numbers, repeating the same phrase several times in the film: “What is it about numbers?” (Finding Dawn, 2006). Numbers reveal a lot about an issue; they demonstrate that MMIW is at epidemic proportions. As more Indigenous women go missing, the numbers grow, but numbers do not explain where this issue comes from or why it continues. The quantifying of MMIW is impactful because it demonstrates indisputably that Indigenous women are going missing at much higher rates than non-Indigenous women. Quantifying the problem is important, but it is only a partial view of the story and it tends to cluster victims’ stories together into one category of murdered or missing women, “[f]or instance, the numbers alone cannot impart how a history (and present) of colonial displacement could make possible such unfathomable violence, how the terms on which we seek and make knowledge of this history impact how we conceive of its transformation” (Hargreaves, 2015, p.94). The film *Finding Dawn* challenges the dominant hegemonic Western research practices of quantifying a social problem and counters with an Indigenous methodology which values story-telling and respect for the people telling them (Hargreaves, 2015). In other words, this film imparts an Indigenous story-telling methodology, which communicates that although an Indigenous woman or girl was one of the 500 plus victims, she was important, and her family continues to remember her as a person rather than a number. One detail in each of the films is they all name and present photos of the women, while speaking about them through family members who remember the women positively.

One method each film uses to individualize and put a face to MMIW's victimization consists of interviews with family members who contextualize the women as their daughters, sisters, nieces, friends, and mothers. Mothers and fathers speak about how their daughters' lives were important, and the way their disappearance significantly changed their family's life. The film *Finding Dawn* begins with Dawn Crey's family speaking about her ancestry from the Sto:lo Nation and telling stories about her as a child, some lighthearted stories of a young girl with a big smile. Dawn's sister Lorraine Crey reflects on the idea of her sister being just another number: "Somebody has to be held responsible for her, not just 'oh well, she's just another dead Indian woman, another woman that's passed us by unnoticed', it's like 'who cares, I don't care'. I care! I loved Dawn. It's up to me and my family to stand by her and [not let it] be forgotten" (*Finding Dawn*, 2006). The films in this way highlight the impact of MMIW on families left behind. The film *Finding Dawn* also includes interviews with Ramona Wilson's mother and sister, who talk about how much joy and laughter Ramona brought to their home. Their memories of Ramona are all positive; rather than reiterating the story of her victimization, Ramona's mother Matilda Wilson speaks about her daughter's memory being kept alive and her family's tenacity to carry on. Throughout the films, the missing women are discussed in a way that connects them and their stories to their traditional land and ancestry. The film *Highway of Tears* also interviews family members of Ramona Wilson, including her cousins, mother, and sister. In this film, multiple family members explain the impact and grief that Ramona's murder had on the family. Hargreaves notes how, "[i]n the BC context, the stories of Dawn Crey and Ramona Wilson are meant in *Finding Dawn* to reframe common public perceptions about the prominent missing women cases of Vancouver and the on 'Highway of Tears', respectively, while foregrounding the survivance work of family members and activists in each site"

(Hargreaves, 2015, p.98). Indigenous feminist theories inform this analysis and support the finding that issues which affect Indigenous women affect everyone in the community, because it is an indication that there is something wrong in the community (Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill, 2013, p. 18).

In each of the films, family members tell stories that personalize the women and girls and describe the women as multidimensional people with many hobbies and interests, goals, and aspirations. One way of phrasing this method of representation is “humanizing”, which presumes a degree of dehumanization, the MMIW by focusing on their positive attributes rather than their deviance. For instance, in the film *Finding Dawn*, Daleen Bosse’s parents remember their daughter as a great singer and she is described as a university student who was studying to be a teacher (Finding Dawn, 2006). In the film *The Pig Farm*, Marnie Frey’s stepmother remembers her as a good “average” kid who enjoyed horseback riding and swimming. In the film *Missing: The Documentary*, Gladys Radek, an advocate for MMIW, remembers her niece who is described as a young mother. In this same film, there is an interview with a person named Robbie, who remembers his friend Ramona (who was murdered in Montreal) as a kind woman who always complimented Robbie on looking nice. The film *Highway of Tears* especially highlights the positive characteristics of the MMIW. In this film, many people remember their family members by describing activities they enjoyed in their lives: Natasha Montgomery’s mother remembers her daughter as a great baseball player and figure skater; Loren Leslie’s father remembers her loving to swim and dive; Theresa Umphrey’s sister remembers her fondly as her best friend who did everything with her—simple things like pouring her morning coffee. These stories are all significant because as they remember the women and girls as they were in life, rather than as a crime statistic, they challenge dominant stereotypes and reframe them as

sympathetic victims of crime. Family photos are also an important aspect of these films, serving as a visual reminder that the women were multidimensional family members. The photos of the women whose stories are told by family members depict them as young children, enjoying activities and sports, wearing baseball uniforms and skating leotards, and in many school portrait photos. Flattering photos of each woman and girl are shown by families, relating the women back to their families through photos. The film *Highway of Tears* presents a series of photos of young girls and women who are either missing or were murdered along the 'Highway of Tears' dating back to 1969, and many photos look like they could be school photos. Their photos are shown as polaroids on the map with writing and an X symbolizing where they went missing or were found murdered. The map imagery suggests the investigation of serial murders; it is suggestive of a detective movie where the investigators examine a map on the wall and attempt to make connections in the evidence. Throughout the film, photos appear on the screen in a polaroid style, animated with a clicking and developing sound reminiscent of a crime scene photographer taking photos at the scene of a crime. The end of this film reiterates the importance of showing the faces of the murdered and missing women and girls. The last montage is emotional and intense; urgent music plays while each girl and woman's photo is displayed with her age, name, and date of her murder or disappearance. This film highlights the importance of the victims in the story by starting the film and ending with photos of the victims on the screen.

“Humanizing” the women? A critical perspective on the idea of humanizing the women proposes that they don't need to be humanized. Allison Hargreaves (2015) argues that the idea of humanizing the women is problematic because it implies that the women are not fully human to begin with. Stereotypes of Indigenous peoples as less than human or less evolved seem to be latent suggestions in the idea that humanizing the victims will make them appear more

sympathetic, as ideal victims. Humanizing the women places the audience in a position to verify Indigenous women's humanity, whereby the women become objects of discovery (Hargreaves, 2015, p.97). Additionally, Yasmin Jiwani and Mary-Lynn Young (2006) are critical of discourses that claim Indigenous women's stories need to be humanized by erasing the narratives of sex work and drug addictions. They argue that humanizing Indigenous women in this way serves a twofold function: to make the women more like us, more relatable, normal, but "[o]n the other hand, it conforms to the dominant hegemonic values, in that the only women who can be rescued or are worth saving are mothers, daughters, and sisters – women like us" (Jiwani and Young, 2006, p.904).

In the film *Highway of Tears*, Mary Teegee, a cousin of Ramona Wilson and executive director of child and family services, Carrier Sekani Family Services, expresses a similar concern by mentioning that many of the women in media were represented as sex workers and drug addicts, but critically and rhetorically states, "as if that made their life any less worthy" (*Highway of Tears*, 2015). Her critical reflection on whose victimization is more worthy of recognition and sympathy points to the problematic dichotomy of the good and bad victim. Acknowledging that the women were sex workers and had addictions can be reframed as recognizing their vulnerability as victims rather than blaming them as deviants. For example, in the film *Finding Dawn*, Dawn Crey's brother, Ernie Crey, refers to the women on the DTES as vulnerable, and discusses how working in the sex trade was something that many of the missing women did in order to manage their habituation to street narcotics (*Finding Dawn*, 2006). The victim discourse is evidenced in narratives about women working in the sex trade in order to survive, and when it is referred to as the "survival sex trade." It is complex and difficult to balance representations of Indigenous women as both victims and yet as real and sympathetic

people whose families miss them and remember them. There are deeply ingrained moral values that direct audience's perceptions of women who work in the sex trade or were addicted to drugs as deviant, and an attempt to represent them as victims to broader social issues requires a shift in perspective. Some of the films, such as *Finding Dawn* and *Highway of Tears*, attempt to shift perceptions of the women as victims of the sex trade and addictions to illicit drugs. Additionally, survivors' stories lend a voice of credibility to these complex representations because they are a testament to the systemic influences on their lifestyle choices, but also represent the change that is possible.

Challenging and Reinforcing Stereotypes. Some of the narratives and images in the films contest negative stereotypes of Indigenous women as drug addicts and sex workers, as well as discourses that link these stereotypes to their victimization. Many of the narratives in the film *Highway of Tears* confront such stereotypical, negative representations by focusing on stories of young women and girls who were victimized. For instance, Ramona Wilson's family address the negative stereotypes by stating that she was not a street person; she was a young student, and she was not expendable (*Highway of Tears*, 2015). Some family stories emphasize the fact that their loved one was just a child, a young innocent girl, challenging the dominant discourses that MMIW were all criminals in some capacity.

Although the films make a concerted effort to focus on the women's positive qualities and show family photos, almost every film also depicts stereotypical images of MMIW. For instance, women's mugshots are present in each film, even in a brief clip. A mugshot is a photo taken when someone is arrested, and carries a connotation of criminality. Jennifer England (2004) speculates that when mugshot photos are used on missing persons posters, they often reflect 'wanted' posters. It may be the case that mugshots are the only photos available, that the

filmmaker could find, but nevertheless, they remind viewers that some of the victims were also criminals. Images of women in the film *The Pig Farm*, in particular, seem to conform to stereotypical images found in other forms of media: women on the streets at night in short skirts and tall boots. Reinforcing stereotypes in the way women are dressed and presented as sex workers, and through the use of mugshots, this film creates significant tension around the idea of the women as victims of Robert Pickton versus the women as blameworthy for choosing to get into his car and go to his property. An example of the blameworthy victim narrative in this film, that elicits less sympathy, is the story of Sarah de Vries who is remembered by a former 'John'. His narrative suggests that she was a friend, that she wrote stories and poetry, but nevertheless he is a former John who solicited sex from Sarah and is provided a platform to speak. He is a reminder of her victimization, her exploitation, and her work in the sex trade, framing her story as a sex worker.

Sex trade work is an ongoing theme related to the issue of MMIW, and it is a narrative that is present in all the films. There are some contradictions in the way women who worked in the sex trade are represented. Most of the representations are sympathetic; however, representations like the ones found in *The Pig Farm* tend to show more common stereotypes of Indigenous women as deviant sex workers. This film does not let us forget that the women were sex workers with addictions, indeed, it becomes their key identity marker. Sex trade work was a prevalent aspect to their victimization because the farmer lured women to his property by offering money and drugs in exchange for sexual services.

Survivors: Divergent narratives. Survivor's narratives offer a way to put a human face and voice to the issue of MMIW. The issue of MMIW is inseparable from the larger issue of violence against Indigenous women and girls, and the inclusion of cases of women who were

victimized but survived are significant elements to the films. Indigenous women who have survived the turbulent conditions of their upbringing lend a voice of experience and legitimacy to the narratives of social injustice. The women included in this subsection called ‘survivors’ speak from personal experience about the way that residential schools, foster care systems, poverty, sexual abuse, and other aspects of colonization have impacted their lives, and led them to situations that could have resulted in them being one of the MMIW. These women speak about experiences that empathize with the murdered and missing women because they relate to their vulnerability and reflect that they were living a dangerous lifestyle. Survivors also lend a voice of credibility to the stories of the missing women, as they describe their struggles and how they ended up in positions of danger.

This finding is mainly related to the film *Finding Dawn*, where two survivors’ stories are the focal point of the narrative; Janice Acoose and Faye Blayney both talk about their family’s struggles, sexual assault committed against their mothers, displacement of land, and the effects of poverty. But they also discuss how they turned these situations around and went to school, earned degrees, and now strive to make a difference in their communities. For example, Faye Blayney, a survivor of violence and advocate for Indigenous women, reflects on her struggles during her youth, living on the streets, getting into fights, using drugs, and admits that she was really vulnerable in those days, and that she could have been on the missing women’s list. A different kind of survivor’s narrative is presented in the film *The Pig Farm*, which introduces a woman named Stitch who speaks about her personal victimization at the hands of Robert Pickton. She describes her violent encounter with Pickton, as actors re-enact her story of being attacked and stabbed by Pickton. However, Stitch’s narrative tends to reinforce the criminal stereotypes associated with Pickton’s victims. Stitch is introduced by the narrator as a 31-year-

old prostitute and mother of two, who struggles with addiction, and while she speaks, her face is blurred while she is seated in a dimly lit room reminiscent of a hotel room, suggesting her work as a sex worker. Overall, however, these living testimonials support the background stories of MMIW and provide some context for the high-risk choices many of the women make.

Confronting the Serial Killer Discourse. The serial killer discourse is a dominant discourse that is both reinforced and challenged in the films. In *The Pig Farm*, it is noteworthy that the scope of this film was to explore the Robert Pickton case, and as a result, the stories of the missing women became sidelined. The film focused on the farmer and his personal life, his relationships, and his work; “[i]t is Robert Pickton who became a person of interest” (Craig, 2014, p.8). The film conformed to the court trial by representing Pickton through his personal relationships. The court documents note Pickton’s family relationships and construct him as a “whole person” (Craig, 2014, p.13). In the film, Pickton’s voice can be heard as a voice-over, as a recording of his audio-diary plays. Another parallel between the film and the court case was that the victims’ names are only stated in a very small fraction of court texts (Craig, 2014, p.18). The court proceedings of the Pickton case effectively unnamed the victims; their names appear in very few documents, for example Sereena Abotsway’s name appears in 11 out of 76 rulings, and 17 of the women’s names are not found in any court texts (Craig, 2014, p.18). Omitting the victims’ names takes away their identity and clusters them into a faceless group of victims, and they become just one of nearly fifty victims. The film does challenge this faceless and nameless problem by naming and showing some known victims. The film names the six victims for whom Pickton was convicted guilty of second-degree murder, including Sereena Abotsway, Mona Wilson, Andrea Joesbury, Brenda Ann Wolfe, Georgina Papin, and Marnie Frey (Craig, 2014).

Overall, however, *The Pig Farm* reinforces the importance of Robert Pickton, and stereotypes of the victims as sex-trade workers with drug addictions.

Alternatively, the film *Finding Dawn* attempts to remove this dominant discourse from the stories of MMIW. Hargreaves (2015) observes that this film is a counter frame to the dominant discourses which focus on the farmer, by un naming Robert Pickton and the farm and instead naming the women (p.83). Un naming the farmer is accomplished by referring to the Pickton farm as simply ‘the farm’ and omitting photos of the farmer himself. The film begins with establishing shots of the farm itself, the mud and dirt dug up around the property, and an introductory monologue by Christine Welsh. The reason the farm is shown at all is because there are a number of victims whose remains were found at the farm, but not enough of their DNA was recovered to lay criminal charges against the farmer, leaving families feeling as though their loved ones may never have justice. Dawn Crey was one of these cases, and her story begins Christine Welsh’s journey to explore the women’s stories. *Finding Dawn* shows women’s stories,

Beyond their relation to the often individualized and pathologizing accounts of mental illness, poverty, sex work, and addiction associated with Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside (DTES) and are instead rendered relative to the intergenerational impacts of residential schooling and assimilative child welfare policy, to the state-sponsored invasion and expropriation of Indigenous lands, and to an ongoing history of gendered racism and sexual violence against Indigenous women. (Hargreaves, 2015, p.83)

Finding Dawn redirects the focus of the film to the women and leaves the serial killer discourse in the background.

Another way in which the serial killer discourse is confronted can be seen in the film *Highway of Tears*. The film begins by projecting a voice that asks, why does B.C. have so many serial killers? Then shortly after the narrator states that MMIW is not just the work of serial killers, but rather an outcome of a long line of injustices experienced by Indigenous people in

Canada. Throughout the film, several serial killers are mentioned by both naming them and showing their photos. Yet, naming multiple serial killers here undercuts the widespread social issues which are at the root of the issue of MMIW.

Agency: Passive victims, victim blaming, or active agents? Another contradiction in terms of representations of MMIW in these films relates to the question of whether the focus on the systemic roots of social injustice at the centre of the issue of MMIW represents the women as passive victims. Stating that the women are victims of social injustice raises the question of whether or not the women are being represented as passive victims, vulnerable to systems beyond their control, and whether or not there can be any change or hope for the future? Describing Indigenous women's vulnerability as an "ever present danger" (Finding Dawn, 2006) may seem to remove any sense of women's agency, because it implies that any Indigenous woman anywhere is vulnerable.

Agency is the individual ability to make choices and "our ability to change our social conditions" (Chamberlain 2015, p.105). The films present a tension between agency and structure, and question to what extent Indigenous women have individual choice and the power to take action in a society where overlapping structures of domination along the lines of race, gender and class lead to their increased vulnerability. The films each present this tension by highlighting Indigenous women's vulnerability to broader structures of domination, which can also be seen at work in social institutions such as the police, and systems such as the education system or the economy. Yet, the films also depict women in terms of their agency through collective organizing work, taking decisions, and negotiating their life circumstances. On the one hand, Indigenous women are shown possessing agency, while on the other hand, they are also represented as vulnerable to broader social injustice stemming from colonialism. The films

do not resolve this tension between structure and agency. However, intersectional feminist theory can be drawn on to think about the ways in which some individuals may be more vulnerable as a result of their position with overlapping structures of domination and that interconnections of gender, race, and class contribute to social conditions beyond women's own choosing (Comack, 2012). However, this does not necessarily preclude agency; feminist theory also argues that individuals, even though they may be vulnerable, still have agency, which may be expressed in less noticeable ways in society, including working in the sex trade and in everyday life.

When the victims are shown to have agency, it is more often in the context of the negative choices they made, which led to their victimization (Culhane, 2003, p.596; Craig, 2014, p.20). A common narrative found in the stories of MMIW is that they were working as sex workers, or addicted, or engaging in other high-risk activity at the time of their victimization. This narrative reproduces a notion that the women are blameworthy victims. As Hargreaves indicates, "it remains a most pernicious and pervasive colonial fantasy that Indigenous women have a kind of ill-fated agency in this—that they are in part authors of their own demise" (Hargreaves, 2015, p.99). When women are described as having willingly gone to Pickton's property, it implies that they are responsible for their own murder. For example, in a re-enactment scene in *The Pig Farm*, Pickton and his friend/employee Lynn Ellingsen pick up a sex worker in the DTES, and show the woman as willingly getting in the car, and then drinking and using drugs at the Pickton farm before being murdered. She is represented as willingly going along with Pickton and engaging in habits that subdue and make her more vulnerable. The DTES is shown to be a place of crime and suffering, chosen by the people who live and work in the neighborhood, yet, "[u]nder this representation, the precarity of life in the Downtown Eastside

becomes a consequence of individual choice” (Craig, 2014, p.20). *The Pig Farm* represents women as victims because they lived in a particular neighbourhood, were addicted to drugs, and were working as sex workers.

Another example of victim-blaming in this film is footage from a recorded interview with Sereena Abotsway prior to her murder. In this footage, the interview takes place outdoors on a sidewalk, where a police officer standing next to Sereena asks if she is worried that someone is out there hurting all the missing women. Her response is very nonchalant, dismissing any concern by saying that she follows her sixth sense; if she doesn't like a guy then she doesn't go with him (*The Pig Farm*, 2011). Sereena's interview is not a flattering scene: she appears to be subdued by drugs or alcohol, with dirty fingernails, smoking, and stating that she is not scared of whoever is responsible for the missing women. This scene, followed by the revelation that Sereena's remains were found on the farm, implies blame for her dismissive attitude and disregard for the warnings about missing women. Craig (2014) surmises that these are neo-liberal accounts of the women's victimization, which focus on their individual choices leading to their murders, rather than addressing race, poverty, and other factors that led to the delayed reactions for justice officials. The emphasis on individual choice can lead to discourses of blameworthy victims – individuals who chose their paths.

Alternatively, some of the films present narratives that connect the complex social issues with the women's choices and victimization. Some women's stories explain that they may have made a choice, but it was essentially a choice made out of desperation. For instance, in the film *Finding Dawn*, Lorraine Crey explains that Dawn began working in the sex trade because she was alone and poor. Her brother Ernie Crey also echoes this narrative, that the women in the DTES are working in the survival sex trade to support addictions, but also emphasizes that they

are not powerful people. Framing women's work in the DTES as a strategy for survival constructs women as actively taking charge of their circumstances, but their survival strategy is still constructed as deviance (Horton, 2017, p.126). This discourse of the survival sex trade is reiterated in *The Pig Farm*, by Elaine Allan, who is presented as a sympathetic advocate of the missing women. The term, survival sex trade, suggests that women engage in this work in order to survive.

The film *Highway of Tears* sometimes represents the women as making choices to hitchhike, but agency is more so afforded to the Caucasian victims. For instance, Nicole Hoar's disappearance is described in terms of her choosing to hitchhike, and if the family had known that it wasn't safe they might have warned her. Her father can be heard in a voice-over recording stating that Nicole chose to hitchhike that day she went missing, and that she made a bad choice. In contrast, Ramona Wilson's family states that they don't know who hurt Ramona, a young student who was also hitchhiking, but this description paints a picture of a young girl who was hurt rather than making the active, conscious poor choice to hitchhike.

Many of the films' representations of MMIW are complex. It is difficult to represent MMIW as innocent and blameless victims without discounting women's agency. It's an alarming thought to state that the women are completely passive and unable to control any aspect of their lives or prevent any victimization. Most of the films represent Indigenous women as victims of social injustice. They highlight the impact that government institutions have had on Indigenous people, their communities and families, but also the ongoing and lasting effects, which ties into the issue of MMIW. The 'Highway of Tears' is conceptualized this way, described as the "nucleus of a much larger problem on how the Indigenous population has been treated since colonialism" (The Highway of Tears, 2015). Settler colonialism is a recurring theme in three of

the films, interwoven with the issues that have continued to affect Indigenous peoples. Framing the issue of MMIW as affecting all Indigenous women anywhere, no matter what they are doing, however, imparts a sentiment that the issue is beyond control. For example, in the film *Finding Dawn*, radio host Lynn Terbasket states that the search along the ‘Highway of Tears’ helped get the message out to the public that “hey—its not safe, be careful, look after yourself, things happen”, followed by Christine Welsh’s narration: “Things do happen to native women in this country, no matter where we live, our circumstances, or our lifestyles, and when they do, authorities are often slow to act. Whether it’s in Vancouver, on the highway, or in Saskatoon...” (Finding Dawn, 2006). In this narration, the sentiment of absolute vulnerability seems to take away victim’s agency and states that just the fact that the women are Indigenous and no matter what they are doing, they are victims who are in “ever-present danger” (Finding Dawn, 2006). Complete vulnerability presents Indigenous women in a way that is reminiscent of early Canadian film depictions of Indigenous people as people who needed to be saved (Gittings, 2002, p.11). Constant vulnerability implies that Indigenous women have little or no choice when it comes to their life course, and that they should be prepared to be victims anywhere they go. These narratives represent Indigenous women’s vulnerability as a widespread social problem. The ever-present danger is highlighted in the film *Highway of Tears* through the stories of very young Indigenous girls who had been victimized, innocent victims who weren’t working in the sex trade or drug addicted. These broader social systems and historic injustices present a challenge when we question agency, because the larger social systems and intergenerational trauma are not in the hands of the individual victims, but have been imparted on them.

The passive victims narrative is challenged by the counternarrative of the advocacy work spearheaded by community members and women who survived violence. Each film examined

here features a form of activism on behalf of the MMIW and shows individuals striving to change their circumstances. The active advocate narrative is also highlighted by featuring both men and women who survived abuse, addictions and sex work, and chose to take actions to improve their communities or help families of MMIW.

Advocacy and Hope

Each of the films has a strong theme of advocacy and hope for the future. Various people interviewed in the films express a sense of urgency and the need to advocate to improve Indigenous women's safety and security. First, the films demonstrate advocacy through memorial walks and symposiums, community searches, and support. Second, individuals in the films advocate for the need to reclaim Indigenous traditions and culture, which will begin the healing process and end the cycle of violence. Finally, the theme of hope is emphasized at the end of several films, reinforcing a feeling of optimism for a better future.

Advocacy. A dominant theme that is present in each of the films is social activism and advocacy for MMIW. Each film features individuals who are advocates for the issue of MMIW and who seek to raise awareness. Many people talk about their personal involvement in advocacy work due to loss of a loved one, which inspired their action. Advocacy work is represented in the films as individuals spearheading campaigns, symposiums, community support, and community searches. Some of the films themselves can be deemed as advocacy work. Hargreaves (2015) describes the film *Finding Dawn* as a teaching text and awareness-raising tool (p.84). These descriptors can also be applied to the films *Missing: The Documentary* and *Highway of Tears*, which raise awareness about MMIW and provide a platform for victims and families to speak about the issue. The films all provide historical context about the social injustices of

colonization, which inform and teach audiences about the broader social forces affecting the issue.

Memorial walks are one form of advocacy highlighted in each of the films. Communities are shown banding together for memorial walks, including walks on the DTES and on the 'Highway of Tears'. Hargreaves (2015) states that the power of the memorial walks is a connection to the land as well as a memorial and a form of protest, "[a]t its roots, the memorial walk enacts just this sort of connection, re-memorizing women to their territories and in relation to one another" (Hargreaves, 2015, p.105). Memorial walks are a prominent factor in the film *Finding Dawn*, where each case of missing women is shown associated with a form of activism inspired by their victimization (Hargreaves, 2015). An example in this film is the memorial walk for Daleen Bosse in Saskatchewan. Daleen Bosse's parents organized a walk to raise awareness about Daleen and all MMIW. They express that their story is important to help other people who are missing a family member. Daleen's mother states that although the walk may be in honour of their daughter, there is a bigger picture, and it is to remember all the missing Indigenous women. These walks literally take the issue of MMIW to the street and raise awareness of the missing women. Another example of a memorial walk in the film *Finding Dawn* is the Annual Women's Memorial March held on February 14th in the DTES. The memorial march is presented as primarily an Indigenous memorial gathering, represented through scenes of people drumming and singing, accompanied by symbols like the four directions, people dressed in traditional Indigenous clothing, and Indigenous activists like Ernie Crey speaking about the importance of the walk to remembering their missing loved ones. These annual memorial walks are described as "a day to remember all the women in this community, whose lives and deaths were largely ignored, because of who they were, where they lived and what they did to survive" (*Finding*

Dawn, 2006). The Annual Women's Memorial March is also featured in one brief scene in the film *The Pig Farm*, a scene showing a crowd of people walking holding protest signs, some holding hand drums and singing, followed by a clip of people holding a banner that reads "Downtown Eastside Women's Centre". In this film, the memorial march is only briefly mentioned as a day to remember the women who had disappeared.

In the film *Missing: The Documentary*, Gladys Radek describes the inspiring advocacy work organized along the Highway of Tears through initiatives such as Walk for Justice that took place in 2008, which was inspired by the Highway of Tears symposium in 2006. The film does not show any footage of memorial walks, but Radek's description expresses the importance of memorial walks for family members. Radek states that the symposium was the best she had attended because "they enabled the voices of our families who have actual missing and murdered loved ones, and it was the families that actually drew up the conclusions in the Highway of Tears Symposium recommendations that were made, how can we stop this violence against our women? How can we, uh, start working towards stopping the disappearances?" (*Missing: The Documentary*, 2014). Each of the films show activists, family members, community members, students, chiefs, and RCMP officers who join the memorial walks and share moments of silence together, showing their solidarity in the face of adversity. Another example of perseverance and activism is the Ramona Wilson memorial walk organized by Matilda Wilson, Ramona Wilson's mother, each year on June 11th, the date of her daughter's murder. The walk for Ramona takes place on the Highway of Tears and traces the last known steps that Ramona Wilson took, from the spot she was last seen to the spot where her body was found. Ramona's family state that the walk is a way to feel connected to her, and they are standing their ground, staying visible and will continue to survive, "[i]t is this assertion of Indigenous survivance that is at the root of the

film's work" (Hargreaves, 2015, p.98). Matilda Wilson speaks about her ongoing efforts to raise awareness and demonstrate her family's perseverance; "we are showing people that we are not afraid. We will never be afraid. That we are here. We'll always be here. ... I'm fighting. I'm fighting for the loved ones. I'm fighting for the unsolved murders. I'm fighting for everything that I have, I never back down, I will always be here" (Finding Dawn, 2006). Ramona Wilson's memorial walk is featured in both the film *Finding Dawn* and in the film *Highway of Tears*. These two films were made nearly ten years apart, which demonstrates the tenacity and determination of the people involved. The end of the film *Highway of Tears* displays written text providing updates on some of the cases explored throughout the film, and it states that the search for Ramona Wilson's murderer has been disbanded, "After 20 years of searching for answers, the RCMP has told the Wilson family that they have stopped investigating Ramona Wilson's case due to lack of leads" (Highway of Tears, 2015).

Several of the films also show communities joining together to help families search for their missing loved ones and demonstrating community support. Community support is shown through search parties, groups of volunteers searching fields, highways, and rough terrain. In *Finding Dawn*, community members are shown banding together to form a search party for Daleen Bosse in a grassy field for any sign of her. A member of the community attending the search party, Yvonne House, says that it is encouraging to see the community come together for the search, and points out that there are older men involved in the search who are probably trappers, "so they know what they're doing out here, eh" (Finding Dawn, 2006). The group is shown debriefing after the search and sharing words of encouragement, that even though they might not have found anything, they need to keep searching. Community searches are an effort to find some clues that could help explain what has happened to missing women, whether it is a

piece of clothing or otherwise. The films convey that when women disappear without any trace, it leaves families in a state of limbo, unsure if their loved ones are missing or murdered, or what happened to them. In this same film, radio host Lynn Terbasket describes coordinating a search along the Highway of Tears, which involved searching the terrain for any clues of missing women. She explains that the territory is just so huge it is impossible to search every inch of the terrain, but she is encouraged by the community's willingness to try, "it was an amazing effort, it was not successful but we tried, and I think that helped to get the message out there that 'hey, it's not safe, be careful, look after yourself, things happen'" (Finding Dawn, 2006). Therefore, the search is not a wasted effort, it is an awareness raising endeavour. She expresses her amazement that people came out and helped search; the community really pulled together. Yvonne House states, "it is our people out there searching" (Finding Dawn, 2006). The film *Highway of Tears* presents footage of a search for missing woman Madison Scott, showing people in the community searching by foot, on horses, on dirt-bikes, and wearing t-shirts that read "all in for Maddy" (Highway of Tears, 2015). People in this film express the great support of their community who came together to search for Madison Scott. The searches in the films show both men and women in the community searching. Men are shown to be proactive members of searches, they are banding together as a community to search for the missing women.

Traditions and Cultures. The films also explore the importance of reclaiming Indigenous traditions and culture, including traditional customs which respect women. A significant theme in several films is expressed in interviews with various people who articulate that they feel there is a need to reclaim Indigenous traditions and ways to heal themselves. In the film *Missing: The Documentary*, Melissa Spence, a radio DJ from Winnipeg, articulates this sentiment: "It has to come from us as Indigenous people, our own self healing. Rebuilding of the

family structure and everything that is going to lead to our successes.” For example, in the film *Finding Dawn*, Faye Blayney talks about the issue of gang rape within her community and is shown taking action by forming a Women’s Action Committee to address the issue of violence on the reserve. She states that reclaiming traditional values is a whole project of attitudinal shift and unlearning the colonizing practices of violence, “that’s a whole revolution right there” (Finding Dawn, 2006). Colonial stereotypes of Indigenous women as disposable need to be erased from their narrative and replaced with collective action. Rather than relying on police to help or RCMP to intervene, a concept that repeats in several films is that the community needs to heal themselves and this requires action from the whole community. In the film *Highway of Tears*, Barb Ward-Burkett, the executive director of the Prince George Native Friendship Centre, provides an example of the grassroots Moose Hide Campaign, which seeks to heal and empower men to reclaim their roles in society (Highway of Tears, 2015). The film *Finding Dawn* presents strategies of resistance and knowledge creation—the memorial walks represent moving forward—while also remembering and honouring the land and community that the women belonged to, reconnecting them and their stories to their community, history, and ancestry (Hargreaves, 2015). These methods of activism and reclaiming culture provide a sense of hope to people who are seeking a better future for themselves and the next generation.

Hope. The outlook of possibilities that arise from reclaiming traditional cultures includes sentiments of hope for the future. Two films are particularly vested in representing a sense of hope: *Finding Dawn* and *Highway of Tears*. These two films present a range of advocacy work aiming to change and improve lives of Indigenous women and whole communities. People express their hope for the future, and underscore their persistence to strive for a better future for women and girls in Canada. The film *Highway of Tears* highlights the importance of hope at the

end of the film. Several women stress the importance of retaining hope and leaving this dark chapter of MMIW behind them; “I have to believe there is hope ... there is always hope...[the whole issue of violence against women] it’s a real changing of mindsets, but not only changing of mindsets but changing of heart” (Highway of Tears, 2015). The film symbolizes hope in the ending shot of the film, where the camera looks out a side view mirror in a car, with the highway behind them, driving away, leaving the past of suffering behind and moving forward. The film *Finding Dawn* also ends with an outlook of hope, with soft piano music in combination with Christine Welsh’s voice-over monologue that inspires audiences to feel as though change is going to be possible:

What is it about numbers? We may never know what happened to Dawn or so many other women we’ve lost, but I do know that right across this country there are people who will not give up hope. Will continue to honour the dead, and learn to take better care of the living. We will search for the missing and call them home. What is it about numbers?” (Finding Dawn, 2006)

The final monologue by Christine Welsh is a voice-over while a combination of clips of people walking in memorial marches and people searching in fields for signs of missing women are presented. The final shot is a close-up of a young girl smiling, which expands to a shot of a group of people surrounding Ramona Wilson’s family, holding her photo. The final scene is an emotional reminder that the future needs to have hope for young Indigenous girls growing up in Canada.

Concluding Remarks

In my analysis of the films, I have found that there many complex, often competing representations of Indigenous women and MMIW. First, Indigenous identity was the focus of the analysis because Indigenous women and MMIW are the concern of this research. Three of the four films explicitly focused on these issues, often expressing critical perspectives on

representation and emphasizing the importance of exploring the issue of MMIW in relation to Indigenous identity. However, I found that one of the films omits the racial component of the crimes against the missing and murdered women in the DTES. The discussion of the complex representations includes a range of dominant themes found in the films, including an emphasis on humanizing MMIW, contrasted with the reflection that Indigenous women do not need to be humanized. Next, the analysis focused on stereotypical representations in the films, finding that some of the films challenged stereotypes – often through humanizing efforts – but also conformed in some ways to existing stereotypical representations. Third, the analysis found that most survivors’ narratives individualized and validated stories of MMIW, however some survivors’ narratives reinforced stereotypes of criminality. Fourth, the serial killer narrative is identified in each of the films, yet some films present the discourse more extensively than others; *The Pig Farm* focuses fully on the serial killer, while the others minimize the focus on serial killers. The final complexity explored in this chapter is the question of victims’ agency – whether the films present the women as passive victims of broad and unchangeable social systems, or whether agency in their stories implies that MMIW somehow choose to be victims. Each of these themes present complex representations of MMIW with contradictory arguments. Each film also presents forms of advocacy for MMIW, including memorial walks and symposiums, and the films themselves raise awareness about the issue of MMIW. A dominant theme and optimistic aspect in three of the films is hope for a better future. Two of the films end with monologues about hope, with inspiring visuals and music, ending the films with the message that, with some work, circumstances can and will change for Indigenous women in Canada.

Chapter 5: The Causes of Crime in Canadian MMIW Documentary Film: Social injustices

The issue of MMIW did not begin recently and it did not emerge out of individual victims' choices. This is one of the overarching themes found in the films. In the films, the issue of MMIW is conceptualized as intertwined and inseparable from issues of inequality and injustice in Canadian society; it is seen as “a symptom of a really corrupt and terrible system that was forced upon the Indigenous people of Canada decades ago and it has trickled down through generations, not only that issue, but there are so many things that are wrong and have not been addressed...” (Missing: The Documentary, 2014).

The following chapter outlines the research finding that the films portray MMIW as victims of social inequality and injustice. The films represent the women as victims of a variety of social injustices, including colonization and government institutions, such as the residential schools, which precede the enduring effects of community displacement and loss of traditional land. Related to their displacement, several locations are highlighted as places where Indigenous women are especially vulnerable to victimization, such as the Highway of Tears and the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver (DTES). In addition, some of these social injustices are shown in the films as related to socioeconomic issues, addictions, and sex trade work. Next, common to all the films in this research is the critical discourse about the justice system, including themes of fear, distrust, and systemic racism. The films also present very critical perspectives on representations of Indigenous women and MMIW in mainstream media, from newspapers to music to films. The films also address the issue of gender inequality, noting that male violence against women and misogyny are systemic issues, which result in outcomes like MMIW. Finally, each film features a serial killer discourse, which highlights the widespread nature of the issue.

Overall, the films present the larger context of social injustice underpinning the MMIW issue, involving many aspects that are interconnected, intergenerational, and ongoing.

The research findings in this chapter challenge some of the dominant discourses in media representations of MMIW. The literature review outlined how representations of MMIW in various media, but especially in news media, present stereotyped, negative discourses that tend to blame the women for their victimization. The films I analyzed are often very critical of these mainstream media representations of Indigenous women, and conform more with the arguments expressed by researchers of media representations. It was encouraging find that Canadian made films are challenging negative representations by drawing in discussions of social justice and critiquing colonial discourses. This may suggest that more recent media productions reflect changing narratives about MMIW. These films emphasize that cases of MMIW are not isolated events that happen to individuals making poor choices, but rather the issue of MMIW is presented as a systemic issue with social and historical foundations.

Colonialism: Institutions, Processes, Legacies

In each of the films, Indigenous women are represented as victims of social systems that are deeply embedded in Canadian history. Most often, the women in the films are represented as victims of circumstances, and this is tied back to the effects of ongoing colonization. Wolfe's (1999) inference that colonization is a structure that continues to impact the lives of Indigenous people in Canada is reflected in this chapter. The ongoing effects of colonization have contributed to the issue of MMIW in Canada, and as Christine Welsh states, "stopping the violence isn't easy, and we can't do it alone. This country's history is steeped in violence against native people. Violence with long-term effects. Native women have been living with these effects for generations. But there are signs that things are starting to change" (Finding Dawn,

2006). The films primarily represent the women as victims of broader social injustices, which trickle down into numerous aspects of their lives, and influence their experiences with victimization.

A central theme in the films consists in the consequences that have come from settler colonialism in Canada. Colonization has intergenerational and ongoing effects, as Morton states, “Colonization is the historical frame through which all contemporary violence against Indigenous peoples must be analyzed” (Morton, 2016, p.303). The films feature people who describe the negative outcomes that boarding schools have on their family structure, and the narrators provide some context and historical background to explain how these schools functioned in Canada. The narrators explain that the schools removed children from their homes, effectively fracturing the transference of culture and traditions, but also neglected the children in their care. The films illustrate the impact of residential schools on traditional cultures by showing black and white photos of Indigenous children, photos of mothers holding their children, and photos of groups of children in uniforms standing outside what appear to be churches with nuns and priests, with softer music and voice-over narration describing the schools. The voice-over narration in the films uses a matter-of-fact tone to describe the cultural assimilative purposes of the schools and the dates they were in operation, in comparison to individual anecdotes of the schools, which are more emotional. In the film *Finding Dawn*, Professor Janice Acoose, who was a native affairs columnist, speaks about the residential school (or mission school as she calls it) stating, “that place is like an indoctrination camp, you know, it basically tried to make us into something that we weren’t, and at great price, at a *great price*, you know” [emphasis added] (Finding Dawn, 2006). The *Highway of Tears* narrator states that the residential schools sought to assimilate Indigenous children into dominant Canadian culture, also described as an

“obliteration of cultures”. This narration is underscored with a still photo of an Indigenous man holding a sign that reads: “we were part of the Canadian Holocaust” (Highway of Tears, 2015). This film also visually demonstrates the way that Indigenous children were transformed, through a fade transition between two photos: one photo of an Indigenous child in traditional regalia with long hair fades into an Indigenous child dressed in European uniform-style clothing with short hair.

As the residential school system was phased out, a high number of Indigenous children were being placed in foster care, which continued to reinforce fractured family ties, loss of community and their sense of identity (Amnesty International, 2004). In *Finding Dawn*, Dawn Crey’s brother, Ernie Crey, describes the lasting effects of the foster homes, and states that Dawn still talked about her experiences when she was a woman in her 20’s and 30’s. Hargreaves (2015) reflects how “Dawn and her siblings were themselves taken from their mother and placed in foster homes throughout the Fraser Valley, and the telling of this detail serves to make Dawn’s own story resonate within the broader colonial history of forced dislocation that has brought so many women to the DTES” (p.102). Ernie’s tearful narrative suggests that his sister had experienced some forms of abuse in her foster home, and that the trauma stayed with Dawn throughout her life. Still, while the film *Finding Dawn* considers the foster care system and its effects on Indigenous peoples, another film, *The Pig Farm*, ignores the connection altogether. In *The Pig Farm*, Sereena Abotsway’s foster mother reminisces about the day Sereena was found as a young child, when she and her siblings were brought to their foster parents after being found in filth and neglect (The Pig Farm, 2011). In this film, this is the extent of background information that we learn about Sereena; her Indigeneity is never mentioned in connection with her being placed in foster care. Amnesty International notes that not all Indigenous children in foster

homes were abused; however, the loss of their sense of culture and belonging still contributes to self-destructive behaviour and vulnerability (2004, p.11).

Overall, the films highlight the effects of intergenerational trauma affecting Indigenous people today. In the film *Missing: The Documentary*, Melissa Spence, a radio DJ from Winnipeg, Manitoba, provides her personal insight into the issue of MMIW. In the film, an audio recording of Melissa speaking is paired with a still photo of her on the screen. She describes some of the common misconceptions about Indigenous people, such as questioning why some people are suffering from addictions even though they did not experience the residential schools;

People don't realize that everything that is going on, especially the MMIW issue, is really a symptom of a really corrupt and terrible system that was forced upon the Indigenous people of Canada decades ago, and it has trickled down through generations... and the symptomatic effects of things like the Indian residential schools and the 60's scoop still hover around us today. (*Missing: The Documentary*, 2014)

Intergenerational trauma is a prominent factor in social issues such as addictions, and she describes how a cycle of harm is passed on through generations. Her perspective on MMIW as a symptom of larger systemic issues emphasizes the intergenerational aspect of ongoing colonization as a structure. Melissa Spence's observation that trauma trickles down through generations is important because although it may not directly impact a given individual, this person may still feel the effects. For instance, parents who had been in the residential school system were removed from their own family, culture, and traditions, subjected to abuse and then returned to their family years later without the socialization and sense of belonging in their community (Amnesty International, 2004). These effects continue to impact generations of Indigenous people, and in the film *Highway of Tears*, it is speculated that the effects will continue for a couple of more generations.

Land: Traditional land, loss of land, displaced communities, and migration

A distinct characteristic of settler colonialism is the acquisition of land (Tuck and Yang, 2012). The significance of traditional land, loss of land, and the displacement of communities is especially highlighted in the film *Finding Dawn*. Additionally, the theme of migration from reserves to cities is a prominent theme discussed in the films. Multiple social issues have resulted from the loss of traditional land, including a severe lack of resources in Northern communities, immense socioeconomic issues, and poverty.

The narrator of *Finding Dawn*, Christine Welsh, purposefully identifies the MMIW's family and land, tying the women's stories back to their traditional territories (Hargreaves, 2015). The importance of land is shown by identifying MMIW's traditional communities and also through stories of Indigenous women returning to their family's traditional communities. An example in this film is the narrative of Faye Blaynay, a survivor of violence and advocate for Indigenous women, who takes Christine Welsh to her family's community, Church House. When Christine and Faye arrive at Church House, the abandoned community is represented by desolate docks, a worn-down church, paint-stripped doors, and complete silence surrounded by forest. Faye explains how the community was driven out by a federal policy which required fishermen to catch a mandatory quantity of fish to keep their fishing licences. Christine narrates that when this limit was not met, they lost their licences, which led to a loss of income and traditional economy. The community became displaced due to these factors, and with no access to the ocean, the community is now experiencing repercussions of being "landlocked": extreme social problems, including sexual assault, gang rapes, and feeling a "huge collective grief" (*Finding Dawn*, 2006). The displaced community is represented in the film with a shot taken from inside a driving car, looking at a street with townhouses and cluttered yards with broken fences, which

convey the poverty and socioeconomic issues. Faye talks about the abuse in her family home as a child, when she explains that her mother fled the community because men in the village would break into her home and sexually assault her mother (Finding Dawn, 2006).

The film's narrative reflects the historical processes of migration; a lot of migration from reserves into cities took place in the late 20th century across Canada, and much of the migrating population were Indigenous women "relocating to the city for a variety of reasons including a loss of tribal status, violence, lack of housing and employment" (Razack, 2000, p. 101). In this film, Professor Janice Acoose describes her family's move from the reserve to Regina to seek more opportunities in the city. She states, "the city was a place of hope for a lot of Indian people" (Finding Dawn, 2006). She explains that her father was unable to find work and her mother ended up cleaning homes for "rich white people" (Finding Dawn, 2006). Moving to Canadian cities may have seemed like a good choice, due to lack of resources and opportunities on reserves, however the cities did not welcome them with open arms. Families were instead "facing dramatically lower incomes and a shortage of culturally appropriate support services in a government structure that has still not fully adjusted to the growing urban Indigenous population" (Amnesty International, 2004, p.12). The lack of supports in cities presented socioeconomic difficulties for Indigenous peoples, including poverty, and sex trade work.

Socioeconomic Influences: Poverty, addictions, sex trade work

People who live in Northern communities and reserves encounter various socioeconomic issues, which contribute to violence and the issue of MMIW. Many of the socioeconomic influences on MMIW are related to the previous issues of settler colonialism, loss of traditional land and migration patterns. The film *Highway of Tears* emphasizes further factors such as a lack of resources, including medical facilities and schools, and an unemployment rate of up to 92

percent in some First Nations reservations (Highway of Tears, 2015). The film depicts this poverty with views from a car driving through a community in Northern British Columbia, showing desolate and cluttered yards with items like washing machines sitting out on the lawn, cars that look like they are run-down or ripped apart, windows covered with Canadian flags, broken fences, and properties covered in weeds. These visual cues are accompanied by the narrator's commentary about poverty in these communities. This film also emphasizes the lack of essential services and limited public transportation, which leads women to look for a ride with a stranger. Leonard Ward, the son of Barb Ward-Burkett, who is the executive director of the Prince George Native Friendship Centre, states, "I've had to hitchhike myself, and it was because I had no money, right, you wouldn't put yourself in a position of danger if you had money" (Highway of Tears, 2015). Many Indigenous people are unable to access services where they live, which leads them to travel or move to the city (Amnesty International, 2004). The film *Highway of Tears* presents poverty as the preliminary issue that leads women to hitchhike into the city to access services, opportunities, and resources that are unavailable in their communities. For example, if a person living in these communities needs to go to a doctor's appointment in the city, they would need access to a vehicle or public transportation. Rather than address the issue of victimization, poverty, or public transportation, however, the province of British Columbia posted billboards on the 'Highway of Tears' warning women not to hitchhike (Morton, 2016). Yet, this initiative overlooks the socioeconomic factors that lead to dangerous conditions such as hitchhiking along the 'Highway of Tears'.

Sex trade work. Addictions and sex trade work are ongoing symptoms of colonization and the socioeconomic influences of poverty and racism, for example. Addictions and sex work are mentioned in the films in relation to some of the missing women's cases, mostly when they

are described as living and working in the DTES. In one film, *The Pig Farm*, these factors are used to define the women. However, the overall impression from the films is that they acknowledge the problem of addiction and sex work as a symptom of colonization, often resulting from trauma. In *Highway of Tears*, Ramona Wilson's cousin Mary Teegee points out that addiction and sex work does not make someone's life less worthy. The films discuss negative stereotypes of addictions and sex work in critical terms, stating such that stereotypes continue to exist and are problematic. *Finding Dawn* challenges the victim-blaming discourses about the women in the DTES, by stating that the women did what they had to do to survive, as Hargreaves notes, "[b]y opening her segment on Dawn Crey in the way that she does, Welsh draws attention to (and critiques) this victim-blaming rhetoric implicitly" (Hargreaves, 2015, p.100). Women in the films describe leaving their communities to go to the city for more opportunities but found themselves without work or support and thus working in the sex trade; "Forced to migrate to the cities in search of work and housing, urban Aboriginal peoples in cities like Regina quickly find themselves limited to places like the stroll" (Razack, 2000, p. 95). Lorraine Crey, Dawn's sister, explains that when she and Dawn moved to Vancouver, Dawn became "lonely and penniless" (Finding Dawn, 2006) and this led to her involvement in the sex trade, followed by an addiction.

Women's stories about the circumstances which led them to living and working on the streets and suffering with addictions often tie back to their experiences with trauma. Faye Blaynay explains that she left a violent home, and fled to the city at thirteen years old. She states that when she fled to the city, she ended up living on the streets in Vancouver where she got into physical fights, began drinking and used drugs. In reflection, she acknowledges that she was very vulnerable and could have been a missing Indigenous woman. Faye's reflections on her choices

are significant because she survived to tell her story. Her choice to leave her violent home and move to the city contributed to her experiences with drugs and danger in the city, but the alternative was not much better. Her narrative is significant to this story because these stories are often told about women who did not survive and whose stories are left to be told on their behalf. Janice Acoose echoes this belief that the places where people end up is influenced by so much more than just that one person's choices: "I think the places that we grew up in and the institutions that we were a part of and the city that we lived in, I think a lot of that is responsible, you know, the social kind of environment that we lived in, I think a lot of that is responsible for sending the people to places like skid rows" (Finding Dawn, 2006).

Addictions. Tying into the themes of poverty, community displacement, and lack of resources, is the narrative of addictions. These films do not suggest that addictions are choiceless and that people have no choice but to use drugs; rather the films offer a sympathetic narrative that seeks to explore some of the reasons why individuals struggle with addictions. Dominant media discourses about sex workers frame them as criminal and blameworthy; however, the films in this analysis tend to frame the women as vulnerable or working in the sex trade to survive. Elaine Allan, a Women's Information Safe House employee in the DTES, describes women in the DTES as working in the survival sex trade:

Downtown Eastside, women tend to be women who are in the survival sex trade, their addictions are so out of control, they're either high when they're making the decisions about whose car they're getting into, or they're so desperate to get high that they're going through acute withdrawal which makes them physically really ill that they're making bad judgment calls about whose vehicles they're getting into to turn tricks. (The Pig Farm, 2011)

The phrase survival sex trade reframes the issue as a matter of survival rather than a willing choice.

With the exception of Elaine Allan's description of women in the survival sex trade, the film *The Pig Farm* presents a generally less sympathetic representation of addictions and sex work. For example, Marnie Frey's background story describes her as an average girl who began using drugs as a teenager, which led to her addiction. Addictions are often used to explain the MMIW's victimization in this film, and Marnie Frey's addiction is the only factor that seems to explain her victimization. Nearly every story revolving around the Pickton case mentions that the women had addictions and, in some cases, they are described as using drugs in Pickton's trailer. Addiction is also the reason that attempted murder charges against Pickton in 1997 were dropped, because the victim, a woman named Stitch, was an addict and therefore deemed not credible enough to press charges (The Pig Farm, 2011).

Gendered violence: Violence against women

These films further represent the issue of murdered and missing women as a result of men victimizing women. Gendered violence is a prominent theme in these films; the types of crimes were specific to women and perpetrated by men. Gendered violence is described as a human rights issue, according to Amnesty International (2004). The narratives of gendered violence draw on the related stereotypes that Indigenous women are sexually available, easy, and disposable. These are stereotypes specific to Indigenous women and that stem from the patriarchal values of European settlement, as Monchalin argues, "Indeed, the displacement of Indigenous women from the positions of leadership and influence they had enjoyed within some First Nations began during the early days of contact with Europeans" (Monchalin, 2016, p.178). The films present the crimes as gender specific, and the fact that many of the women are described as sex workers implies that they were victims of male violence. The serial killer discourses also emphasize the gendered nature of the crime, since the serial killers are all males.

In the film *Highway of Tears*, the issue of male violence is reframed to conceptualize that men are also experiencing ongoing effects of colonization, which need to be addressed. Patriarchy affects both men and women; historical and ongoing colonization and heteropatriarchal structures have formed the gendered nature of violence (Arvin, Tuck, Morrill, 2013, p.18). Heteropatriarchal norms have shifted gender roles; traditionally in Indigenous communities violence against women was not solely a woman's issue because it affected the whole community (Arvin, Tuck, Morrill, 2013, p.18). Mary Teegee states that when we think about the issue of violence against women it is an issue that involves men, and asserts that 'we' need to uphold men and "not forget our men" (*Highway of Tears*, 2015). In the film *Missing: The Documentary*, Melissa Spence questions why misogyny exists in our society and states that the MMIW issue is evidence that misogyny exists; "violence against women is a significant society issue" and it is an epidemic (RCMP, 2014, p.6). Most homicides of women are committed by men (89%) (RCMP, 2014, p.3 and p.13), and the films reinforce that women are victims of men's violence.

Environments: Places, space, mobility

There are a few recurring locations that are in each of the films about MMIW. The neighborhood of the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver (DTES) and the 'Highway of Tears' are both well-known places where MMIW have been frequently victimized. Both of these places also happen to be in British Columbia, where "over a quarter of the missing and murdered Indigenous women disappeared (Razack, 2015: 54)" (cited in Morton, 2016, p.302). Places hold a significant amount of symbolic power. Sherene Razack, for instance, describes that places of prostitution are marked as degenerate space (2002, p.6). Zones of degeneracy function to contain deviance, like sex work, while also creating the zones of respectability to reaffirm social

hierarchies of gender, class, and race (Jiwani and Young, 2006, p.899). There are zones in cities that are racialized and gendered, and Indigenous people disproportionately reside in the poorest neighborhoods in cities (Culhane, 2003). They cast a line between the good and the bad, for example “Police describe[d] the Stroll as a world of drugs and prostitution, and most of all, as a space of Aboriginality” (Razack, 2000, p.113). The films present evidence of these zones when describing the DTES and places like the Stroll in Regina.

The Highway of Tears is a nickname for Highway 16, which connects Prince George (the gateway to the north) to Prince Rupert over a total distance of 724km (Highway of Tears, 2015). This stretch of highway is covered in immeasurable natural resources and there are many unpaved roads off the main road, which create obstacles during searches for missing people (Morton, 2016). “This remote and underserviced highway is a critical case of violence against Indigenous women, with the relationship between mobility, space, gender and race being embodied in the acts of violence perpetrated against Indigenous women” (Morton, 2016, p.300). In the film *Highway of Tears*, Constable Lesley Smith with the RCMP comments that the vast geographic area with lots of hidden spaces, and the high presence of hitchhikers can contribute to the crimes being “crimes of opportunity” (Highway of Tears, 2015). Hitchhiking is conceptualized by the police as the root of the problem, and is a way to blame women who do it; “Hitchhiking frames Indigenous women as wrong-doers, and in doing so conflates their morality with their mobility” (Morton, 2016, p. 304). The issue of hitchhiking on this highway, is however, the outcome of many socioeconomic issues related to colonization. In the film *Highway of Tears*, it is described by the voice-over narration as the “Nucleus of a much larger problem on how the Indigenous population has been treated since colonialism” (Highway of

Tears, 2015). Women leave their Northern communities for a variety reasons but without the resources to leave with a vehicle, they are vulnerable to victimization.

The DTES is another place that is highlighted in several of the films. It is infamously known as the poorest postal code in Canada and the hunting ground for predators: people are victimized and not even noticed when they go missing (The Pig Farm, 2011; also see England 2004, and Horton, 2017). Exact victimization rates are unknown, but there have been 67 women documented as missing from the DTES (Jiwani and Young, 2006, p.896). In 1997 alone more than a dozen women went missing from the DTES (The Pig Farm, 2011). In the films, this neighborhood is portrayed as a place where people are living in poverty, with addictions, and working in the sex trade. The films describe the DTES as a bad place to be; “in this part of Vancouver, misery has a lot of company” (The Pig Farm, 2011). Crime has become synonymous with the DTES and the films depict this deviance using dimly lit, blurred shots, establishing shots of Vancouver at night, driving sequences shot as though they were driving at night, and very often with sirens heard in the background to indicate police and crisis. Familiar scenes of the DTES in these shots include neon lights of motels, streets with graffiti, crowded streets with people huddled together, and women standing on the street corners in thigh high boots and short skirts. Horton maintains that “[n]eighbourhoods characterized by socio-economic disadvantage and disorder—and their residents—often come to be associated with crime, deviance, danger and degeneracy” (Horton, 2017, p.116).

The DTES is also well-known as the place where the farmer solicited women. The film *The Pig Farm* is centred on this story about the missing women from this neighbourhood, and includes the narration, “the DTES over the years have been basically a hunting ground for every predator or pervert in Canada and sometimes out of Canada” (The Pig Farm, 2011). Hargreaves

states that the DTES has been the media's favourite location for stories about MMIW because it conveys a sense of danger and victim blaming, which characterizes women as choosing a risky lifestyle (2015, p.99). This common conceptualization of the DTES is contrasted by scenes in *Finding Dawn* showing the DTES in daylight and featuring a missing women's march, in combination with Welsh's narrative that challenges the dominant discourses, "for the women who vanished from this community, life here was a daily struggle, and they did what they had to do to survive" (Finding Dawn, 2006; see also Hargreaves, 2015, p.100). The survival narrative challenges the dominant discourse of blaming the women and labelling them criminals, by acknowledging that they are working to survive and support themselves. The narrative also empathizes with the women's circumstances by acknowledging that life in this neighborhood is difficult. It also shows a sense of support among the women in the DTES.

The Justice System: Policing practices, distrust, and systemic racism

The one theme heard loud and clear in each of the films consists in a critique of the justice system. Most of the discourses surrounding the justice system are very critical in the films. There are three main critiques about the police conveyed by the films: First, there is a sense of disinterested and dismissive police, who are more interested in cases of victims who are non-Indigenous; second, there is a distrust of police; and finally, there is a fear of police and police brutality. Each film notes that the families of the MMIW felt as though their concerns were dismissed and not taken seriously, and that the police reacted slowly, were disinterested, and showed little concern for the missing women's disappearance. This disinterest is explained in terms of systemic racism; some people in the films question whether the police would have been more responsive if the missing women had been from wealthy neighborhoods and were non-Indigenous. The second critique, a general distrust of police, is voiced by people who state

that there are long held beliefs that the police are not going to help them—in fact they have historically been the “truant officers” who took Indigenous children away from their families (Highway of Tears, 2015). The third and very powerful critique is the fear of police and RCMP, which includes the issue of police brutality and violence enacted by people in positions of power. The perspective of police officers are represented sometimes through interviews, but mostly the subject is discussed through interviews with individuals directly affected by the issue of MMIW. The interviews with individuals who speak about personal experiences with the justice system provide an emotional voice—offering an insight that is often highly valued, especially in a storytelling format, such as in *Finding Dawn*.

Disinterested police and systemic racism. It is perhaps not a surprising finding that the dismissive and slow response of the police and justice system are highly criticized in these films. The films show that Indigenous women’s disappearances across Canada are treated as unexceptional and not cause for alarm. For example, the film *Finding Dawn* presents the missing person’s case of Daleen Bosse, which took a year to be investigated. The investigator shown in the film states that the police believed she was alive and did not want to be found, a response that implies they had stereotyped Daleen as a transient woman who had wanted to disappear. The film describes Daleen as a young mother and university student who was studying to be a teacher. This description of the missing woman challenges dominant representations of missing Indigenous women as drug users and sex workers, and reframes the issue of MMIW as something that can happen to Indigenous women anywhere. In the film *Missing: The Documentary*, Gladys Radek, an advocate and family member of a missing Indigenous woman, found there was a similar response when her niece went missing on the ‘Highway of Tears’; there was an assumption that she had just run away and did not want to be found. Some of the

language used in the films to describe the failure of the police and justice system include: indifferent, disinterested, flawed investigations, and dismissive attitude. While there were numerous missing women from the DTES, for example, police are shown adamantly dismissing the crimes in the film *The Pig Farm*, when two Vancouver police officers state in a press conference: “in the case of these missing women, we don’t have a suspect, in fact, we don’t have a crime” and “we have no evidence whatsoever of any crime being committed” (*The Pig Farm*, 2011). This scene both supports the police perspective that there was no evidence of a crime while also demonstrating their adamant denial of family reports of missing loved ones. The slow and delayed attention to the cases of missing women is a significant concern because the inaction demonstrates a lack of urgency and gives an impression that the police did not take the cases seriously (Monchalin, 2016).

The investigation into MMIW in the DTES was a failure. This is depicted in the film, *The Pig Farm*, in a scene where a newspaper headline scrolls across the screen and a voice-over reads out loud a statement that the Vancouver police investigation was “Flawed, short staffed, and plagued by in-fighting” (*The Pig Farm*, 2011). All of the films express frustration with the inaction of police by showing headlines in newspapers critiquing failed investigations and featuring fellow investigators who reveal that their concerns were dismissed. In the film *Highway of Tears*, for example, a news article headline is shown panning across the screen with the words “blatant failures by police” (*the Highway of Tears*, 2015). The public response to the ongoing dismissive attitudes towards MMIW inspired a movement to put pressure on the government. In the film *Highway of Tears*, one woman tired of being dismissed, Rena Zatorski, a Lheidli t’enneh counsellor, spearheaded the Highway of Tears Symposium in 2006 after a young 14-year-old girl was found murdered (*Highway of Tears*, 2015). She states that the police took

more notice of the missing women and the issue of the ‘Highway of Tears’ after the symposium, “I think that the public really had to put pressure on them and essentially embarrass them to step up to the plate and take the issue seriously and start looking at what was happening, what’s going on” (Highway of Tears, 2015).

The theme of disinterest extends to a narrative of systemic racism, stereotyping, and inadequate attention to cases involving MMIW. The films highlight the sentiment of systemic racism that has led police to be less reactive when Indigenous women are victimized or disappear. In the film *Missing: The Documentary*, John Fox Sr., the father of a murdered Indigenous woman, expresses this police indifference firsthand when his daughter died after falling (or being pushed) out of a 24th floor building. John Fox Sr. speaks about her victimization and notes that he felt that the police dismissed the case and did not take it seriously, which he attributes to the police misclassifying her murder as a suicide because the police alleged she was a sex worker; “the Toronto police service, told me, uh kind of like uh, made it sound like it was her fault, and she... right away they claimed that she was a street worker and it didn’t seem like they would give her the time of day, and completely disrespected the mom altogether when they informed her of my daughter’s death” (*Missing: The Documentary*, 2014). His experience relates to findings in the literature review that Indigenous women and sex workers are often blamed for their own victimization, resulting in insufficient investigations into MMIW, “[f]or example, homicides involving women who were reported to be employed as prostitutes were solved at a significantly lower rate than homicides overall” (RCMP, 2014, p.15). In *The Pig Farm*, Wayne Leng, a friend of Sarah de Vries and a former John, states that the Vancouver police dropped the ball on the missing women issue and treated their disappearances as if “they were transients” (*The Pig Farm*, 2011). He states that he sensed the police were simply not interested in searching

for the missing women. His comment about the women being perceived as transients reflects a statement made by Mayor Philip Owen about MMIW, who crudely stated that they (the city, the police) were not running a location service (de Vries, 2003, p.217; also see Culhane, 2003; Hugill, 2010; and Pratt, 2005). In other words, the missing women were perceived to have ‘just moved on’ and it was not worth the city’s time to go looking for women who may not want to be found; “It is often assumed that aboriginals in cities are merely transient, en route to their legislated ‘camp’, which is the Indian reserve” (Peters 1996:1998 cited in Pratt, 2005, p.1059).

Multiple people interviewed in the films noted a significant difference in institutional responses to victimization between Caucasian and Indigenous women. For example, in *Finding Dawn*, Dawn’s brother Ernie Crey speaks candidly about this difference and expresses that if more of the missing women had been white and from an affluent neighbourhood, their cases would have been investigated much sooner. Although not all the missing and murdered women on the DTES were Indigenous, nearly half of them were Indigenous, Ernie Crey notes the similarities that connect the cases:

They were all poor, living in the poor community in Vancouver, the DTES, um, probably drug dependent, and having to resort to prostitution to deal with their habituation to street narcotics. These are not powerful people in this society, we cannot pretend they are. We cannot pretend the police are equally responsive to different parts of the society. (Finding Dawn, 2006)

When Indigenous women are victimized, their cases are taken less seriously or ignored altogether, they are inadequately protected by the justice system because of their Indigenous identities (Amnesty International, 2004, p.21). Another example brought to light in multiple films is that the ‘Highway of Tears’ was virtually unknown until one white woman went missing: Nicole Hoar. The films featured individuals condemning the systemic racism that is demonstrated by the attention a case receives when “one white girl [goes] missing” (Missing:

The Documentary, 2014). There is even a scene in *Highway of Tears* where this unequal attention is addressed by Nicole Hoar's parents, who note their surprise that families of MMIW were dismissed, because their experience was so drastically different.

Distrust of the justice system. A second critique related to the justice system is an overall distrust of police and the justice system, which is echoed throughout all of the films. Individuals discuss their experiences with police brutality, including violence at the hands of the police or RCMP, and the outcome that they distrust the police to help them when they need help. One of the sources of fear stems from historical injustices enacted by the justice system and particularly by the RCMP (Amnesty International, 2004; Razack, 2000). During the residential school era, the RCMP went to gather the children from their homes. In the film *Highway of Tears*, Mavis Erickson—the former elected Tribal Chief—states that the word they used for the RCMP was “Nilhchuk -un: the people who take us away” (Highway of Tears, 2015). The film *Highway of Tears* stresses that there is a deeply ingrained distrust of the RCMP. In one scene, a snapshot of The Human Rights Watch publication titled “Those who take us away” is displayed, followed by a discussion of the findings of this research, revealing that many women in Northern British Columbia had experienced violence, inappropriate searches, or sexual assault (Highway of Tears, 2015). Multiple voices echo that there is a lack of trust between Indigenous people, especially Indigenous women, and the RCMP. There is broken trust and significant fear that police are more likely to hurt than help them (Amnesty International, 2004, p.18).

Violence at the hands of police and justice officials is a prominent theme in the films. In the film *Missing: The Documentary*, advocate Gladys Radek discloses her own experience with violence enacted by police:

I know for a fact, from my own personal experience, that the police up there are racist. I've been raped by cops myself, I've been beaten by cops myself up there. People say

well why didn't you press charges? Well you know what, that's like me going to my abuser and saying can you help me? (Missing: The Documentary, 2014)

She also notes that this causes problems of accountability because if a woman is victimized by police or RCMP officers, she may feel she cannot report the assault. Gladys Radek bluntly states, "the fact is a fact, we can't trust them" (Missing: the documentary, 2015). This is a good reminder that official statistics of MMIW are not always representative and that distrust of the RCMP contributes to underreporting. The case of Judge David Ramsay is also cited as a source of distrust because his abuse of young Indigenous girls left Indigenous women in a space of insecurity (Monchalin, 2016, p.187). Judge David Ramsay violently assaulted and solicited sex from young Indigenous girls, as young as 12 years old. The film *Highway of Tears* displays an article about the Ramsay case with a quote from Judge Ramsay that reads, "Go ahead. Tell someone. No one will believe you. Once a whore, always a whore." The word *whore* is zoomed in on and presented in bold red letters, highlighting the gendered violence at the hands of this judge (Highway of Tears, 2015). News articles scroll across the screen, describing the judge's crimes while the narrator summarizes the case. The film *Highway of Tears* addresses this case critically and poses the important question at the root of Indigenous women's insecurities with police violence: "who polices the police? Who judges the judges?" (Highway of Tears, 2015). Sentiments of distrust can result in women being victimized or disappearing and going unreported, "[m]any Indigenous people feel they have little reason to trust the police and as a consequence, are reluctant to turn to police for protection" (Amnesty International, 2004, p. 18). Such critical discourses of police are in each film, and criticism of police is very pointed. In the film *The Pig Farm*, for example, Lisa Yelds, a friend and former employee of Robert Pickton, states that she "hates cops" and that they twist information. Her distrust resulted in her

uncooperative behaviour with police about Pickton—she was unforthcoming with important information.

Fear of retaliation from police is another problem implied in the films. The films present points of views of families who fear that if they criticize the police effort, or lack thereof, that they will be punished. In the film *Finding Dawn*, Daleen Bosse's family speaks about the investigation into her disappearance and note that the police did not take the case seriously so it took a long time for the investigation to begin. In an interview setting, Daleen's mother states that she doesn't want to say anything to make anyone look bad, they just want to find their daughter:

I think it's become more of a priority to the police now. And I'm thankful for that. I just wish that we would have had more help from them to begin with. But I don't want to say anything that's going to jeopardize the search that's going on right now, I don't want to, um, you know, make anyone look bad, we just want to find our daughter. (*Finding Dawn*, 2006)

Daleen's mother's hesitancy to speak about her negative experience with the police investigation indicates that she is fearful of retaliation or that the investigation will be compromised. Although she never uses the words fear or retaliation, what she doesn't say out loud is stated through silence. In *Missing: The Documentary*, an interview with a person named Robbie who speaks about his friend's murder and experiences in Montreal shelters, he expresses fear that if he speaks negatively about the police and missing women that he may go missing, also stating that it has happened before (*Missing: The Documentary*, 2014).

The other side of the story, from the police perspective, is shown intermittently. Films like *Finding Dawn* and the *Highway of Tears* show brief interviews with police and RCMP who share their involvement with, and concern for the issue of MMIW. Some police officers express their empathy for the families and the victims in several of the films. For instance, the film

Finding Dawn shows police and RCMP attending memorial walks on the Highway of Tears. In this film, Eric Chrona with the Smithers RCMP, who identifies himself as “Aboriginal”, states that he attends the walks for Ramona to show support for the family, and to promote “Aboriginal people coming together with the RCMP to work towards stopping this type of thing from happening again” (Finding Dawn, 2006). Another example is the brief commentary by Constable Lesley Smith, interviewed in the film *Highway of Tears*, who is concerned about the issue of the missing women. These segments sympathize with police and show them as concerned representatives of the justice system.

The police investigation side of the story is very prominent in the film *The Pig Farm*. The police are established as the authority figures and good characters in this film, which reinforces a binary division between police and the justice system, on the one hand, and the crime and criminalized others, including victims, on the other hand. We see evidence of this through the language of film: the authority figures in the film are all interviewed in well-lit scenes, walking outside during daytime, while their interviews take place with neutral backdrops, seemingly in office spaces, and with commentary that lends to their credibility. They disclose that they were very concerned about the missing women, that they had noticed they were missing and sought them out personally. The film sympathizes with the difficulty that the police encountered while investigating the case because no bodies of victims were found. Interviews with police convey this sympathetic approach by showing police who say they were trying to put the pieces of the puzzle together, and who were genuinely concerned. Constable Dave Dickson is even depicted as a ‘hero’; as someone who tried looking for the women, took initiative, and was personally affected by the missing women. He is introduced as a “beat cop on the DTES, after almost two decades in the neighborhood, he was used to people coming and going, but he was starting to

notice a change in the pattern” (The Pig Farm, 2011). His interview scenes are set in a well-lit room and he is shown walking down the street during the daytime. The discourse surrounding Dave Dickson is positive, empathetic, and concerned. Dickson describes looking for women at shelters, checking if the missing women had picked up their social assistance cheques, compiling a list of 31 names of women, and talks about how he had a bad feeling, so he went to his superior at the Vancouver police department. The narrator emphasizes that he “*was trying*” to find answers (The Pig Farm, 2011).

The police in this film speak about the women as though they are familiar and friendly. In this way, “[t]he officers’ connection with the drug users is derived from the norms and values typical of middle-class families. Through the officers’ commentaries and confessions, they seem to reassure themselves and the audience that ‘it’s OK, they’re just like us.’” (England, 2004, p.304). Dave Dickson, himself, also critiques the reaction of the police department, stating that many colleagues did not take him seriously. Although there are varying perspectives and some voices express frustration with the police reaction to the missing women, the voice-over guides the film back to the narrative about the concerned police searching for the women on their own time. This type of narrative is described by Jennifer England (2004) as neutral commentary, which is a way of humanizing the drug users while also framing the police officer’s narratives as understanding and compassionate. The gaze of authority also functions to create moral distance between the ‘good guys’ and the deviants (England, 2004, p.305). For instance, in one scene Dave Dickson describes the crisis of illicit drug use in the DTES and describes the poverty in the neighbourhood. The moral distance is exemplified by specifying the “illicit” drug use, which puts the morality of the drug user in question by distinguishing between the police, the law, and the illegal. However, there is also a judgemental tone when he points out the paradox that the

DTES, the poorest postal code in Canada, is using about 2 million dollars worth of illicit drugs. In subsequent scenes, Dave Dickson is shown casually walking down the streets of the DTES, appearing to be at ease in this neighbourhood, suggesting he was actively involved in the neighbourhood. The neutral commentary can also be seen in the narrative about Marnie Frey, who is described as “drifting a long way from her roots”, and depicted as an average kid until she started using drugs as a teenager (The Pig Farm, 2011). “Humanizing the drug users is often affirmed by the narratives and constructed performances of the police officers who relate to the drug users’ lives through idealized heterosexual and middle-class family norms” (England, 2004, p.304). Describing her as average, drifting away from the norm, individualizes and evokes sympathy for the victim by framing her story as “it could have been anyone”.

The police and investigator’s authority is juxtaposed with the criminals in the film. In contrast to the bright and neutral backgrounds during the police interview scenes, Pickton’s friends are interviewed in a dark bar, with alcohol bottles and beer taps visible behind them. They are also sitting at a single table under a light that gives the impression of an interrogation room. The distance between the moral police and immoral deviants is reinforced through these lighting and setting differences. They are purposefully positioned in a space that exemplifies criminality and darkness, and many of them, admittedly, were illicit drug users and had involvement in criminal activities. Their integrity is questioned through the police narrative, which states had anyone close to Pickton come forward sooner, it would have completely changed the way that the case was handled. This shows an attempt to shift the blame for the failed police investigations. The police narratives project the blame onto Pickton’s associates, who did not approach police to provide them with information. However, several friends, acquaintances, and victims of Pickton explain that they went to police and provided information

to tip them off about Pickton's crimes. The film shows that throughout the years, investigators determined that due to addictions, several witnesses did not have enough credibility for their statements to be taken seriously; even one victim who survived an attack by Pickton was deemed unreliable. Thus, although the witnesses are blamed for their inaction, the investigator's dismissal of people who did come forward seems to contradict this argument.

The Media: Stereotypes and silence

The films are very critical of media and mainstream representations of Indigenous women. Each film highlights the issue of negative stereotypes of Indigenous women in media. A variety of media is critiqued in these films, including the negative influence of stereotyping in music and news reporting. Some of the most prominent criticisms point to how the media represent Indigenous women as bad women, worthless, easy, and through the stereotype of the squaw. It is also stated that media can be disempowering and destructive because it perpetuates violence against women by using words like "bitches". The people interviewed in the films speak about their perceptions of negative media representations and the effects of these representations on the lived experiences of Indigenous women. Christine Welsh articulates the importance of representations to lived experience, stating that "for professor Janice Acoose, it's words and images like [squaw] that are at the root of so much of the violence against us [Indigenous women]" (Finding Dawn, 2006). The films' critical tone and interviews with people who speak about media representation adds an interesting element to this research. Negative stereotypes of Indigenous women are highly criticized in several of the films, and, based on his voice-over segment at the start of the film, it seems to guide the filmmaker's inspiration to make the film *Missing: The Documentary*. Overall, the films highlight the problems associated with negative media representations.

Critiques of media representations and stereotypes. Stereotypes of Indigenous women as promiscuous and easy reflect racialized discrimination, which perpetuates violence and victimization (Monchalin, 2016, p.178). The stereotype of the squaw is critically addressed in the films and explained as a common description of Indigenous women. Monchalin explains that “Indigenous women in Canada are hypersexualized within Western media and culture, a circumstance stemming from imperialism and the preconceptions of European settlers, which have permeated institutions and become embedded in today’s value systems” (Monchalin, 2016, p.178-9). People interviewed in the films observe how both movies and songs perpetuate stereotypes of Indigenous women as easy, as squaws, as bad women, and “not worth anything” (The Highway of Tears, 2015). In the film *Finding Dawn*, Christine Welsh states that the Indigenous women who were victimized by John Martin Crawford were “also victims of widespread attitudes in our society that native women are easy prey. These attitudes are old and deep and they can be summed up in one word: squaw” (Finding Dawn, 2006). Crawford was found to have preyed on his victims based on four factors: they were women, they were Indigenous, they were young, and they were sex workers (Amnesty International, 2004, p.17). Widespread attitudes and stereotypes that infer Indigenous women are promiscuous and only good for sex are critiqued throughout the films, and these widespread attitudes make Indigenous women more vulnerable targets of victimization (Monchalin, 2016, p.184).

Music. Another form of media that is described as perpetuating negative stereotypes is music. The narrative that media is disempowering and destructive to Indigenous peoples is expressed by Quese Imc, an Indigenous hip-hop performer, during an interview in the film *Missing: The Documentary*. He describes being at a concert where sexist ideals were being reinforced and expressed through performers and reinforced by the audience. He also describes

the Indigenous performer making statements to hype up the audience like, “where’s all my bitches at? Make some noise!” (Missing: The Documentary, 2014). He expresses concern that these values of violence contribute to the problem: “Our people are being led to doom, you know, by a way that has been brainwashed into our people, which is mainstream music and media, that perpetuates destruction, that doesn’t allow us to have rights, doesn’t allow us to have a voice, but yet we push forward that mainstream destructive type of music” (Missing: The Documentary, 2014). The films provide further examples of songs and lyrics that are destructive and disempowering for Indigenous people. An example of a derogatory, yet hit song titled “Squaws Along the Yukon” by Hank Thompson from the 1950’s is highlighted and animated in the film *Highway of Tears*. The song demonstrates how popular and common the use of this term has been in Canada. The animation sequence and words of the song talk about so-called romance with Indigenous women; “squaws along the Yukon are good enough for me” (Highway of Tears, 2015). This lyric implies that Indigenous women are just ‘good enough’, as though they would be lucky to be perceived as good enough for non-Indigenous men, because they are generally seen as inferior.

Mainstream media and news. Another critique emphasizes that mainstream media, and specifically news media, present stories about Indigenous women differently than for non-Indigenous women. In one respect, the films critically address that Indigenous women’s victimization is less visible in media and sometimes completely absent from news reports. The film *Highway of Tears* is very critical about the way news media underreported the disappearances of the women from the DTES. The underreported cases of women in the DTES contributed to their ongoing victimization because it was not a well-known problem to the public, and subsequently, the victimization continued unnoticed for much too long. In the film

Missing: The Documentary, an interview with Robbie highlights the frustration felt when a murder of an Indigenous woman does not appear in the news or missing persons announcements. He explains that when his friend died—an Inuit woman who was found hanging from a metal fence by her bra straps—that he looked for news reports about the story. Robbie expected to find some news articles or mentions of her death on the news reports, but “not a word of it was mentioned in the media... but I was pretty sure that had it been a white girl found hanging from the fence in the middle of China town in Montreal that it probably would have made the news” (*Missing: The Documentary*, 2014). His concern that if it had been a white victim, more attention would have been directed towards the case and police would have taken it seriously, echoes the critiques of systemic racism found in several of the films. Systemic racism and stereotypes contribute to Indigenous women being perceived as criminal and therefore crimes against them less noteworthy and spectacular. The films echo the concern that the media pays more attention to a story when it affects a non-Indigenous victim, exemplified in the films which explain that the ‘Highway of Tears’ was acknowledged by media as a significant social issue after a white woman went missing, “The media they have a lot of power, and they pick and choose the issues that they want to place their focus on” (*Highway of Tears*, 2015).

The films in this research also critique news media coverage about serial killer cases. One of the reasons why the issue of MMIW began to gain more attention was because of media coverage of serial killers who victimized Indigenous women, such as Robert Pickton and John Martin Crawford. The films state that media coverage tends to focus on the serial killer while representing Indigenous women as sex workers and drug users. These representations seem to justify women’s victimization and assure the public that they are not at risk of harm unless they are engaging in sex work or drug use. Janice Acoose was the first columnist to criticize the

sensationalized media coverage of the Crawford case, and she was specifically critical of the way that negative images and stories of Indigenous women were presented. The victims of Crawford were Indigenous women, and Janice states that they were talked about as “garbage, as though they didn’t matter, as though their lives were insignificant” (Finding Dawn, 2006). Janice felt a personal connection to their stories because, as she states, she empathized with and related to the victims.

The Serial Killer Discourse

Serial killer narratives are present in each film. Numerous men are named as serial killers and as suspects in MMIW cases. The films display candid photos, mugshots, and short court footage of serial killers, who are all Caucasian men of varying ages. The murders of Indigenous women by these men were the result of structural violence, an intersection of various social injustices that created a class of vulnerable women (Craig, 2014, p.5). Each film also mentions or refers to Robert Pickton in one capacity or another.

The Robert Pickton case raises a lot of questions about MMIW and how this one man was able to victimize so many women for years. Each film references the Pickton case; one film focuses on Robert Pickton’s background, whereas the other films focus on his victims and their families. In the film *Finding Dawn*, Pickton’s name is never mentioned and the case is simply referred to as “the farm”. The crimes are presented as the context that led to the film’s journey to delve into the background stories about MMIW. *Finding Dawn* alludes to the Pickton case by showing a shot of the farm from a bird’s eye point of view and describing it as “the biggest serial murder investigation in Canadian history, begins on a farm, just outside Vancouver” (Finding Dawn, 2006). The narrator goes on to describe how more than 60 women are missing from the DTES, and states that murder charges were laid against the owner of the farm. These visual and

narrative clues let the viewer know that she is referring to the Pickton case, without ever naming the farmer. Hargreaves (2015) argues that unnamng Pickton and instead naming the murdered and missing women is a way to reconceptualise the women who had been rendered anonymous in mainstream media (p.83). In this film, Welsh does name another serial killer, John Martin Crawford, but his photo is never shown. Most of the films present critical interpretations of the way that the Pickton case was approached by the police and how the victims were ignored, questioning why it took so long for anyone to notice that these women were missing (*Highway of Tears*, 2015).

Still, some of the representations of the Pickton case in these films are more sensationalized. For example, in the film *Highway of Tears*, a photo of the Pickton farm is shown and coupled with sounds of pigs screeching. These sounds remind us that he was a butcher, and also remind us of the human violence experienced on the farm. The film presents the Pickton case briefly through a series of photographs of items of evidence using fast-paced music and transitions that create tension while the photos flash on the screen. The narrator describes the case while one gruesome photo after the other is shown, including everything from one missing woman's asthma inhaler, blood stains, and knives, to a tube of K.Y. jelly lubricant – which again alludes to the sexual nature of the crimes. When photos of Pickton are shown in the films, they are gruesome photos in which he has blood on his hands and is holding a chain. Without stating exactly what he did to the women, he is represented as a murderer through photos. Most of the films avoid extreme, sensationalized details of the crimes. For instance, it is not disclosed in any of the films what Pickton did on the farm and it is not revealed why the bodies of some of the missing women were not found.

Serial killer discourses are problematic because they emphasize the problem of violence at the hands of one person and erase systemic problems (Jiwani, 2011, p.18). The narrow focus on Pickton's story omits discourses of race and marginalization, as Jiwani explains, "[Pickton] is portrayed as a threat to all women, thus occluding the specificity of Aboriginality. In reality, serial killers tend to prey on the most vulnerable members of society, targeting bodies that are considered disposable and unworthy of societal concern" (Jiwani, 2011, p.18). However, the films also mention multiple serial killers, which challenges this idea that there is just one predator that needs to be caught. Noting multiple serial killers and men who have victimized Indigenous women represents the issue as a widespread problem by pointing to the fact that multiple predators felt that they could victimize Indigenous women. Several cases involving serial killers in Canada and the United States are named, including Robert Pickton, Cody Legebokoff, Bobby Jack Fowler, the Green River Killer, Barry Thomas Needermire, Robert Yates. In the film *The Pig Farm*, a database is shown scrolling through names of men who had been charged with violence against women or violence towards sex workers, and one police officer states that there was a whole wall of names. The statement that there was an overwhelmingly long list of men who had been documented for violence against women alludes to this being an endemic issue.

Concluding remarks

The four Canadian crime films in this analysis represented MMIW as victims of social injustice, brought on by the onset of settler colonialism. The films feature interviews with women and families directly affected by the issue of MMIW, which provide intimate insight into the issue. The ongoing effects of colonization, such as land displacement, socioeconomic issues, and gendered violence, negative stereotypes replicated through media, culminate to create a

space of vulnerability that is uniquely occupied by Indigenous women. These issues are primarily framed as historical and social processes that continue to affect Indigenous people and especially Indigenous women in Canada.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This thesis has explored some of the ways that MMIW are represented in Canadian documentary crime films. The research question at the heart of this thesis was: how do Canadian crime films represent the issue of MMIW, specifically in terms of the women as victims of crime? The four films that were analyzed for this thesis were specifically chosen to be feature length, recent Canadian documentary crime films. The analysis revealed that these Canadian films present the issue of MMIW as a complex issue of social injustice, beginning with settler colonialism.

Research findings

After conducting the research, I found that representations of MMIW in Canadian crime films are complex. In terms of the women as victims of crime, first, the films presented a mix of representations which personalize the MMIW's stories, while also conveying the story about the circumstances surrounding their victimization. Second, the women are represented as victims of social injustices connected to settler colonialism. The research began with the assumption that MMIW would be represented as victims of specific crimes, or as either blameworthy or innocent victims. The women are represented as victims of crimes, such as gendered violence and murder, however these crimes are depicted as inseparable from broader social, historical, geographic contexts, which frame the causes of these crimes as issues of social injustice.

To some extent, these representations conform to findings from research on media coverage of MMIW. For example, David Hugill (2010) found in his study that news coverage of police negligence, state complicity, stereotypes of MMIW as sex workers, and the DTES as a place of crime were all dominant themes. Jennifer England (2004) found in her analysis of a Canadian documentary film that women in the DTES were often represented as drug dependent, and that the moral gaze of authority dominated the narrative. Yasmin Jiwani and Mary-Lynn Young (2006) found that news coverage of MMIW in the *Vancouver Sun* was focused on police

inefficiency and the Pickton case. In this research, I found that the four Canadian crime film documentaries reflected many of these themes. Yet, the films I analyzed also departed from the dominant discourses and themes in important ways. Several of the films feature individuals who express their frustration with the negative way that MMIW are represented in mainstream media and the stereotypes that media perpetuate. The films present the social and historical contexts of MMIW, while also focusing on the importance of the individuals as victims and the families of MMIW. The films personalize the MMIW by involving family members who tell stories, share their photos, talk about their hobbies, and overall, present them as people. Opening up the dialogue by representing the issue in film and providing a range of perspectives on the issue of MMIW, the films themselves raise awareness about the complexity of MMIW.

Chapter 1 introduced the issue of MMIW in Canada and outlined the focus of my research. Chapter 2 consisted of a literature review that provided the context for researching representations of MMIW in film, and specifically, Canadian films. The literature review also summarized the dominant discourses found in existing media representations of MMIW, which drove this research to question whether these discourses continue to be present in recent Canadian crime films. Chapter 3 outlined the methodology that guided this research, based on a visual and narrative analysis, informed by the language of film. The analysis followed the step-by-step stages of viewing proposed by Theo Van Leeuwen and Carey Jewitt (2004). This involved repeatedly watching the films, paying attention to different aspects of the narrative and film language, while watching for new details in each viewing. The analysis process relied on coding to identify main themes, which were organized into lists, and used to develop connections between recurring ideas. The analysis was organized into two analysis chapters outlining how the

women are represented as victims of crime and how the crime is portrayed as a matter of social injustice.

Chapter 4 examined the complexities and tensions in the representations of Indigenous women as victims in the four films. It highlighted the importance of intersections of race, gender, and class, and how they shape the way that MMIW are represented. First, the chapter explored how Indigenous women are represented and the ways in which Indigeneity is presented in the films. Most of the films explicitly state at the beginning that they will be focused on the issue of MMIW, however *The Pig Farm* reinforced a racelessness in Pickton's victims by omitting discussion of Indigeneity and colonial violence. Further, this chapter noted the films each convey an individualized image of MMIW through family narratives and stories about their childhood. While many of the representations in these films challenge dominant discourses of blameworthy victims who were active agents in their victimization, some of the films convey images that invoke these stereotypes. In addition, while some of the films emphasize the women's agency, the dominant theme of social injustice tends to convey a sense of rampant crime targeting Indigenous women that is beyond their control. The chapter ends by describing two dominant themes of advocacy and hope, which present Indigenous peoples as resilient and taking action, in contradiction to the discourse of the passive victims of crime beyond their control.

In chapter 5, the dominant theme of social injustice related to the victimization of MMIW is explored, tying together several interconnected issues. This chapter emphasized that Indigenous women are represented as victims of broader social injustices, rather than as victims of one particular crime. The only film that narrowly defines the women as victims of one crime, as murdered by a serial killer, is the film *The Pig Farm*. The other three films describe women's victimization in terms of their historical ties to settler colonialism. This chapter outlined the

foundational injustice of settler colonialism, followed by the subsequent impact of the residential school era. The films connect current high rates of victimization of Indigenous women to the residential schools and the role played by displacement from their traditional land. Each film relates cases of MMIW to historical trauma, as well as the socioeconomic issues affecting the communities that continue to live with consequences of colonization. The films present these issues through the narratives of people interviewed, highlighted with photos, news footage, and shots of newspaper headlines. A noteworthy theme in this chapter is the critical discourses about media representations of Indigenous women. This research sought to examine the way that Indigenous women and MMIW are represented in Canadian crime films, and in turn these films present critical reflections on the way that Indigenous women and MMIW are represented in media. Most of the films, including *Finding Dawn*, *Missing: The Documentary*, and *Highway of Tears*, present critical narratives and provides examples of negative media representations, including in music and news. These films also stress the lived consequences of negative stereotypes of Indigenous women, often reiterating that they are people and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.

Conclusions from the findings

The research revealed that Canadian crime films represent the issue of MMIW critically, and in ways that challenge some of the dominant discourses found in existing media. The research began by questioning how MMIW, specifically, the women as victims of crime, were represented in Canadian crime films, and the findings answer this question in two ways. The films' complex representations of Indigenous women as victims and the emphasis on social injustices in Canada shape critical and sometimes contradictory representations of MMIW.

The films emphasize the importance of “humanizing” and personalizing stories of victims. Humanizing the victims is often framed in ways that highlight the victim’s personal lives and positive attributes, and challenge predominant neoliberal notions of women as blameworthy victims and criminals. In fact, the findings revealed that the films make a great effort to reframe the stories of MMIW as individuals with a focus on the victims and their families. For instance, photos of MMIW put a face to issue, and stories of young girls who were not working in the sex trade challenge the stereotype that the victims are all drug addicted sex workers. The emphasis on the victims’ stories also challenges underrepresentation of Indigenous women in media and depictions of MMIW as faceless victims in the serial killer stories. The films are critical of negative representations of Indigenous women in media, and depart from the common representations. However, the question of how MMIW are represented in the films turned out to be more complex than anticipated. Sometimes the women are represented in ways that both reinforce stereotypes of MMIW as the criminalized other, while also challenging these stereotypes by presenting photos and family stories.

The research also reveals that victimization is often framed in terms of social injustice, encompassing residential schools, poverty, abuse, and domestic violence. Instead of reproducing dominant discourses of MMIW as blameworthy victims, I found that MMIW are presented as sympathetic victims who suffer as a result of broader social injustices. These research findings reframed the research question from looking at women as victims of a specific crime, to women as victims of social injustices that led to crimes. These Canadian films tended to highlight the significance of colonization and its ongoing effects, presenting the historical roots of the issue of violence against Indigenous women rather than blaming the victims for experiencing violence.

Canadian Films—More Critical?

The films all present a critical perspective to some extent; they question why Indigenous women are victimized and why it takes so long to catch the person responsible, or for police to take action. The films relate issues of inequality experienced by Indigenous peoples back to settler colonialism and its ongoing effects. The majority of the films are very critical of the way that the murdered and missing women were blamed for their victimization and are critical of the justice system's (lack of) response. They also explore stereotypes in mainstream media that have been harmful, and the ways that these stereotypes about Indigenous women have contributed to their victimization. Women interviewed in these films express their frustration and concern that Indigenous women are seen as bad women, good for nothing, prostitutes, and squaws. Each film critiques the representations of murdered and missing Indigenous women as transients and disposable women, especially in the DTES. The films delve deeper into the roots of the crimes by connecting them back to the residential school systems, foster care systems, remote northern communities, poverty. These findings lead to the question of whether Canadian films are more critical of racism and gendered violence for example, and are more social justice oriented?

Canadian cinema was made to represent Canada to Canadians and present social issues to a large audience. Canadian films were made with the intent to distribute Canadian stories within Canada to help the different regions familiarize with each other (Clandfield, 1987). For example, people living in the Maritimes could watch stories about the prairies and gain a sense of life in the prairies. When John Grierson arrived in Canada to advise on new directions in film policy, his philosophy of documentary film and state production shaped the Canadian film industry and the development of the NFB and ever since, Canada holds a highly regarded reputation for documentary films (Clandfield, 1987). The films examined for this research seem to fit, in part,

Grierson's vision of Canadian documentary films which educate and reflect national issues. The films' social justice discourses are a critical element to these films and can educate audiences about the social issues that Indigenous peoples face in Canada. These Canadian crime films each highlight issues related to crime and justice in Canada and present critical perspectives of our justice system. Perhaps the films' production by less commercial, smaller production companies can explain the diverse and critical messages in the films (Kohm, Bookman, Greenhill, 2017). The complex representations of Indigenous women as victims of social injustice may be because the films are mostly independent, non-commercial Canadian documentary films and therefore permitted more freedom to be critical of social issues. There is also a large presence of Indigenous filmmakers and social actors in these films, which may be indicative that Canadian films value the significance of a culturally informed Indigenous perspective in film. The documentary genre of the films presents a wide array of perspectives. Interviews in the films permit individuals to share personal experiences and insights into the crisis of MMIW, providing a platform to marginalized people whose voices are often neglected in mainstream media. Canadian crime films often provide a culturally informed image of crime and justice in Canada, and the films in this research exemplify the tensions between crime and justice for Indigenous women in Canada.

Limitations and Future Research

There are limitations to this research project, which may be taken into consideration for future research on films about MMIW. One limitation is the small sample of films selected for analysis; the data selection criteria are very specific to achieve the goals of this research and therefore the results cannot be generalized or stated to represent all Canadian crime films or all Canadian film discourses about MMIW. The specific criteria for the films narrowed the data

selection: the films were limited to films made since 2006 and had to be feature-length films. The research can only state that the findings are relevant to the four films analyzed. In addition, this research did not involve interviews with audiences or the film directors, therefore the results can only be framed as one researcher's results from the viewings. The results cannot be generalized to state the intention of the film or the way that audiences received the films' messages. Future research may seek to remedy some of these limitations by interviewing the filmmakers or audiences who have viewed the films. Future research may also be interested in looking at multiple genres, including short films and narrative, drama films. There are a number of narrative films about MMIW based on true events which would be an interesting focus for future research. Additionally, future research may explore the prominence of MMIW in media by looking at television series such as *Taken* on CBC. A comparison between documentary and narrative films would be an interesting subject to research, as well as broadening the date of production to include films made prior to 2006. The issue of MMIW in Canada is an ongoing issue and research on this subject can will continue to be an important focus.

This research has focused on representations of MMIW, and specifically Indigenous women as victims in Canadian documentary films. The research found that the films present the issue of MMIW in the context of broader social injustices stemming from colonization, while also representing MMIW in ways that individualize and sympathize with the victims. Overall, the research found that the Canadian crime documentary films present the issue of MMIW in critical and complex ways that tend to differ from the dominant, negative representations prevalent in mainstream media. As the issue of MMIW is ongoing, future research on representations of MMIW will continue to be important.

References

- Academy of motion picture arts and sciences. (2018). 91st Academy Awards special rules for the documentary awards. *Oscars.org*. Retrieved from http://www.oscars.org/sites/oscars/files/91aa_doc_features.pdf
- Amnesty International. (2004). *Stolen sisters: A human rights response to discrimination and violence against Indigenous women in Canada*. AI index: AMR 20/003/2004. London, England: Amnesty International Publications.
- Arvin, M., Tuck, E., & Morrill, A. (2013). Decolonizing feminism: Challenging connections between settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy. *Feminist Formations*, 25(1), 8-34.
- Barsam, R. (2007). *Looking at movies: An introduction to film, second edition*. Portland: W.W. Norton & Company Inc.
- Brennan, S. (2011). Violent victimization of Aboriginal women in the Canadian provinces. *Juristat*. Statistics Canada catalogue no. 85-002-X. Retrieved from: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2011001/article/11439-eng.htm>
- Cameron, S. (2011). *On the farm: Robert William Pickton and the tragic story of Vancouver's missing women*. Toronto: Vintage Canada.
- CBC news. (2014, August 21). Harper rebuffs renewed calls for murdered, missing women inquiry: PM says deaths, disappearances are 'crime' not 'sociological phenomenon'. *CBC news*. Retrieved from: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/harper-rebuffs-renewed-calls-for-murdered-missing-women-inquiry-1.2742845>
- CBC News. (2017, October 25). Winnipeg's Indigenous population highest in Canada, but growth rate is slowing. *CBC news*. Retrieved from:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/aboriginal-population-statistics-canada-1.4371222>

CBC News (2018). Sheila North won't seek re-election to MKO, mulling bid for national chief.

CBC news. Retrieved from: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/sheila-north-afn-mko-1.4640391>

Chan, W., & Chunn, D. E. (2014). *Racialization, crime, and criminal justice in Canada*. North York, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Chamberlain, J. M. (2015). *Criminological theory in context*. Southampton University, UK: Sage.

Circles for Reconciliation (2016) Gathering theme: Residential schools. Circles for Reconciliation. Retrieved from: <http://circlesforreconciliation.ca/2016/10/19/gathering-theme-residential-schools/>

Clandfield, D. (1987). *Canadian film*. Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press.

Comack, E. (1999). New possibilities for a feminism 'in' criminology? From dualism to diversity. *Canadian Journal of Criminology*, 41(2), 161-170.

Comack, E. (2012). Feminism and Criminology. In Linden, R. (Ed.), *Criminology: A Canadian perspective, third edition*, (pp. 179-216). Toronto, ON: Nelson Education Ltd.

Coulthard, G. (2014) *Red skin white masks: Rejecting the colonial politics of recognition*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Craig, E. (2014). Person(s) of interest and missing women: legal abandonment in the Downtown Eastside. *McGill Law Journal*, 60(1), 1-42.

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241-1299.

- CTV News. (2010, September 11). Pickton documentary looks at serial killer's inner circle. *CTV News*. Retrieved from <https://www.ctvnews.ca/pickton-documentary-looks-at-serial-killer-s-inner-circle-1.551320>
- CTV News. (2018). About CTV. *CTV News*. Retrieved from <https://www.ctv.ca/Corporate-Information/About-CTV>
- Culhane, D. (2003). Their spirits live within us: Aboriginal women in Downtown Eastside Vancouver emerging into visibility. *The American Indian Quarterly*, 27(3,4), 593-606.
- Delaney, E. J. (2011) The Feature-Length Fallacy. PBS.org. Retrieved from: <http://www.pbs.org/pov/blog/news/2011/09/the-feature-length-fallacy/>
- de Vries, M. (2003). *Missing Sarah: a memoir of loss*. Toronto, ON: Penguin Group Canada Press.
- Elder, R. B. (2006). *Image and identity: Reflections on Canadian film and culture*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- England, J. (2004). Disciplining subjectivity and space: Representation, film and its material effects. *Antipodes*, 36(2), 295-311.
- Erikson, S.E. (Producer), & Welsh, C. (Director). (2006). *Finding Dawn* [motion picture]. Canada: National Film Board of Canada.
- Ferrell, J. (1999). Cultural criminology. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 25, 395-418.
- Ferrell, J. (2010). Cultural criminology. In Francis Cullen and Pamela Wilcox (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of criminological theory* (pp. 250-254). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Inc.
- Ferris, S. (2007). The lone streetwalker: Missing women and sex work-related news in mainstream Canadian media. *West Coast Line*, 41(1), 14-24.

- Finesse Films. (2006). Home page. *Finesse Films*. Retrieved from <http://www.finessefilms.com/>
- Gacek, J. & Kohm, S. (2016). The 'frozen' heart of the continent: Place-myths and Winnipeg in Canadian crime films. *Canadian Graduate Journal of Sociology and Criminology*, 5, 4-17.
- Giannetti, L. & Leach, J. (2011). *Understanding movies: 5th Canadian edition*. Toronto, ON: Pearson Canada.
- Gilchrist, K. (2010). "Newsworthy" victims? *Feminist Media Studies*, 10(4), 373-390.
- Gittings, C. (2002). *Canadian national cinema*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Greer, C. & Jewkes, Y. (2005). Extremes of otherness: Media images of social exclusion. *Social Justice*, 32(1), 20-31.
- Gruenewald, J; Chermak, S.; & Pizarro, J. (2013). Covering victims in the news: What makes minority homicides newsworthy? *Justice Quarterly*, 30(5), 755-783.
- Hall, S. (1980). Encoding & decoding. In Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe & Paul Willis (Eds), *Culture, media, language* (pp. 117-127). Edited by Ebook, Hoboken: Taylor and Francis (2005).
- Hargreaves, A. (2015). Finding Dawn and missing women in Canada: Story-based methods in antiviolence research and remembrance. *Studies in American Indian Literature*, 27(3), 82-111.
- Higginbotham, E. (2010). Foreword. In Sutherland, J.S., and Feltey (Ed.), *Cinematic sociology: Social life in film*. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press.
- Horton, A. (2017). "Contested Communities: Nathaniel Geary' On the Corner and social construction of deviant places." In Kohm, S., Bookman, S. and Greenhill, P. (Eds.),

- Screening justice: Canadian crime films, culture, and society* (pp. 116-130). Halifax & Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing.
- Hugill, D. (2010). *Missing women, missing news: Covering crisis in Vancouver's downtown eastside*. Halifax N.S.: Fernwood.
- Jiwani, Y. and Young, M. L. (2006). Missing and murdered women: Reproducing marginality in news discourse. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 31(4), 895-917.
- Jiwani, Y. (2009). Symbolic and discursive violence in media representation of Aboriginal missing and murdered women. *Understanding violence: contexts and portrayals*, 31(1), 895-917.
- Jiwani, Y. (2011). Hierarchies of worthiness: Women and victimhood in the Canadian media. *Briarpatch*, 40(3), 15-19.
- Kairos Canada. (2017). Murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls: Timeline. *Kairos Canada*. Retrieved from <https://www.kairoscanada.org/missing-murdered-indigenous-women-girls/inquiry-timeline>
- Kirkup, K. (2016). Ottawa launches long-awaited inquiry into missing, murdered indigenous women. *Global News Winnipeg*. Retrieved from <http://globalnews.ca/news/2862129/ottawa-set-to-launch-inquiry-into-missing-murdered-indigenous-women/>
- Kohm, S.; Waid-Lindberg, Courtney A.; Weinrath, Michael; O'Connor Shelley, Tara; Dobbs, Ronda R. (2012). The impact of media on fear of crime among university students: A cross-national comparison. *Canadian journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 54(1), 67-100.

- Kohm, S., Bookman, S., & Greenhill, P. (2017). *Screening justice: Canadian crime films, culture, and society*. Halifax & Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing.
- Kuokkanen, R. (2015). Gendered violence and politics in Indigenous communities. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 17(2), 271-288.
- Lee-Wright, P. (2010). *The documentary handbook*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Leitch, T. (2002). *Crime films*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lovell, A. & Hillier, J. (1972). *Studies in documentary*. New York, NY: The Viking Press.
- Magder, T. (1993). *Canada's Hollywood: The Canadian state and feature films*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Maloney, R. (2015). Harper reportedly denies saying MMIW inquiry wasn't high on 'Radar'. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2015/09/14/harper-missing-murdered-indigenous-women_n_8136604.html. September 30 2017.
- Monchalin, L. (2016). *The colonial problem: An Indigenous perspective on crime and injustice in Canada*. New York, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Morton, K. (2016). Hitchhiking and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Billboards on the Highway of Tears. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 41(3), 299-326.
- Moscovitch, A. (1993). *Constructing reality: Exploring media issues in documentary*. Montreal: National film board of Canada.
- Mulvey, L. (1975). Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema. *Screen*, 16 (3), 6-18.
- Native News Online Staff. (2018). “1200+” – Film on missing & murdered Indigenous women & girls to screen in NYC. *Native News Online*. Retrieved from

<https://nativenewsonline.net/currents/1200-film-missing-murdered-indigenous-women-girls-screen-nyc/>

Nielsen, C. (Producer), & Clarke, M (Director). (2011). *The Pig Farm* [Motion picture]. Canada: Canadian Television.

Nichols, B. (2010). *Introduction to Documentary, Second Edition*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Oliver, K. (2017). The male gaze is more relevant, and more dangerous, than ever. *New Review of Film and Television Studies*, 15(4), 451-455.

O'Shaughnessy, M., and Stadler, J. (2006). *Media and Society: An introduction, third edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Peters, E. J. (1996). 'Urban' and 'aboriginal': An impossible contradiction? In J. Claufield and L. Peake, (Eds), *City lives and city forms: Critical research and Canadian urbanism* (pp. 47-62). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Peters, E. J. (1998). Subversive spaces: First nations women and the city. *Environment and Planning. Society and space*, 16, 665-685.

Pope, C. (Producer) & Smiley, M (Director). (2015). *Highway of Tears* [Motion picture]. Canada: Finesse Films.

Pratt, G. (2005). Abandoned women and spaces of the exception. *Antipode*, 37(5), 1052-1078.

Proquest. (2017, November 14). American Film Institute guidelines. American Film Institute Catalog (AFI): Home. *Proquest*. Retrieved from <http://proquest.libguides.com/aficatalog>

Rafter, N. (2006). *Shots in the mirror: Crime films and society*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Razack, S. (1998). Race, space, and prostitution: The making of the bourgeois subject. *Canadian Journal of Women & The Law*, 10(2), 338-379.
- Razack, S. (2000). Gendered racial violence and spatialized justice: The murder of Pamela George. *The Canadian Journal of Law and Society*, 15(2), 91-130.
- Razack, S. H. (2001). *Looking White People in the Eye: Gender, Race, and Culture in Courtrooms and Classrooms*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division.
- Razack, S. (2002). *Race, space and the law: Unmapping a white settler society*. Toronto, ON: Between the Lines.
- Razack, S. (2015). *Dying from improvement: Inquests and inquiries into Indigenous deaths in custody*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Razack, S. H. (2016). Gendering disposability. *Canadian Journal of Women & The Law*, 28(2), 285-307.
- Rose, G. (2001). *Visual methodologies: An introduction to the interpretation of visual materials*. London; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). (2014). Murdered and missing Aboriginal women: A national operational overview. Catalogue no: PS64-115/2014E-PDF. Retrieved from: <http://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/files/national-operational-overview.pdf>
- Sikov, E. (2010). *Film studies: An introduction*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Smith, L.T. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples*. London: Zed Books.
- Statistics Canada. (2017). Aboriginal peoples in Canada: Key results from the 2016 Census. Statistics Canada catalogue no. 11-001-X. Retrieved from

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/daily-quotidien/171025/dq171025a-eng.pdf?st=Dc60nwx>

Sutherland, J., and Feltey, K. (2010). *Cinematic sociology: Social life in film*. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press.

Thompson, K. M. (2007). *Crime films: Investigating the scene*. London; New York: Wallflower.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015a). Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action. Winnipeg, Manitoba. Retrieved from: http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015b). *A knock on the door*. Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press.

Tuck, E. and Yang K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1), 1-40.

Tuck, E., & McKenzie, M. (2014). *Place in research: Theory, methodology, and methods*. Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>

Tuck, E. & Recollet, K. (2016). Introduction to native feminist texts. *English Journal*, 106(1), 16-22.

Tuck, E. & Recollet, K. (2016). Engaging Indigeneity and avoiding appropriation: An interview with Adrienne Keen. *English Journal*, 106(1), 55-58.

Van Leeuwen, T. & Jewitt, C. (2004). *The handbook of visual analysis*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Villarejo, A. (2013). *Film studies: The basics*, 2nd edition. London: Routledge.

- Waller, I. (2012). Victimology, victim services, and victim rights in Canada. In Linden, R. (Ed.), *Criminology: A Canadian perspective, third edition*, (pp. 217-254), Toronto: Nelson Education Ltd.
- White, J. (2006). *The cinema of Canada*. Great Britain: Wallflower Press.
- Wilkinson, L. (2009). Approaching Intersection: Individual Lives, Multiple Inequalities. In *Racism and Justice: critical dialogue on the politics of identity, inequality, and change*, (eds) Sean P. Hier, Daniel Lett, B. Singh Bolaria. Halifax, N.S.: Fernwood publishing.
- Wolfe, P. (1999). *Settler colonialism*. London: Continuum.
- Woolford, A. (2015). *This benevolent experiment*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Wortley, S. (2008). Misrepresentation or reality? The depiction of race and crime in the Toronto print media. In Brooks, C. & Schissel, B. (Eds.), *Marginality & Condemnation: An introduction to criminology* (pp. 104-134). Black point, N.S.: Fernwood pub.
- Yar, M. (2010). Screening crime: Cultural criminology goes to the movies. In Hayward, K.J. and Presdee, M. (Eds.), *Framing Crime: Cultural Criminology and the Image*. (pp 68-82). London: Routledge.
- Young Jibwe (Director). (2014). *Missing: The Documentary* [Motion picture]. Canada: Animikii Films.