

# Contemporary Feminisms, Neoliberalism, and Femicides



Denisa Krásná, [den.krasna@mail.muni.cz](mailto:den.krasna@mail.muni.cz)

# (Some) Contemporary Feminisms

A lush green forest with tall trees and dense foliage. Two deer are visible in the foreground, one on the left and one on the right, both looking towards the left. The forest floor is covered in ferns and other green plants. The background is filled with more trees and hanging moss.

Black feminism

Ecofeminism

Indigenous feminism

Chicana feminism

Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory

“Feminism, Czech Style”



# Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Gender Violence in Canada



Mgr. Denisa Krásná, Masaryk University



# Femicide

- the killing of a woman or girl, in particular by a man and on account of her gender (“Femicide”)
- often condoned by, if not sponsored, by the state and/or by religious institutions (Jill Radford & Diana H. Russel, qtd. in Gaspar and Guzmán 1)
- femicide victims in Canada show signs of rape and abuse
- Indigenous women keep being targeted at disproportionate rates



# General Facts and Statistics

- No official number that would indicate how many Aboriginal women have disappeared in Canada in the last thirty years (Amnesty International 21)
- Operation Thunderbird: **939** cases (1975 - March, 2014)
- The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC): **582** cases
- Rates of violence against Aboriginal women are **3.5** times higher than for non-Aboriginal women and young Aboriginal girls are **five** times more likely to be murdered (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls)
- Women in urban areas are at greater risk of going missing, **Western Provinces**, especially **BC**, are most affected (NWAC)
- Young girls, recent mothers and pregnant women are among those most vulnerable (NWAC)

# Patriarchal Legacy

- **Pre-colonization:** matrilineal and egalitarian tribe organization
- **Colonization:** imposition of patriarchal values => oppression of women
- **Indian Act:** 1876, established “patrilineality as the criterion for determining Indian status” (Barker 259), Aboriginal women married outside of their tribe lost their status => forced to start a new life elsewhere
  - => the government increased “their vulnerability to male and state violence” (Razack ii)
  - => the epidemic of gender violence within Indigenous communities

# Residential Schools

- Had a lifelong impact on the attendees who were often physically and sexually abused
- Common for children “to mimic the abuse they were experiencing” (Smith 43)
- No positive parenting role models
- Attendees often came out as perpetrators => intergenerational cycle of violence (Goudreau and Wabie 22)
- Intergenerational trauma



[http://media.zuza.com/7/1/7184dfd9-e322-40b1-8ba4-4147a807927f/B821981959Z.1\\_20150602085158\\_000\\_GSD1G816G.3\\_Gallery.jpg](http://media.zuza.com/7/1/7184dfd9-e322-40b1-8ba4-4147a807927f/B821981959Z.1_20150602085158_000_GSD1G816G.3_Gallery.jpg)

# Socio-economic Conditions

- Unemployment, lower income, homelessness, poor housing conditions, shortage of support services, lack of protection, segregation, alcohol and drug abuse, lack of educational opportunities, ...
- Socially disadvantaged groups suffer higher rates of going missing (Kiepal et al. 137)
- Intersections of identities





# Stereotypical Depictions of Aboriginal Women

- Stereotypes and assumption contribute to the perpetuation of violence against Indigenous women
- Common misconception: most victims were sex workers

*“Aboriginal identity is an even greater risk factor than are at-risk occupations themselves”* (Labrecque 7)



**Native princess**

X

**“squaw”**

= over-sexualized by popular media

=> misconceptions about Aboriginal women’s sexual availability

# Femicide Hotspots in Canada: Highway of Tears, Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and Winnipeg's North End



Lorelei Williams, Vancouver, (Photo: Mychaylo Prystupa/Vancouver Observer)

# Highway of Tears

- Highway 16 in Northern BC, 724 km, Prince George => Prince Rupert
- A poverty-ridden region, 23 First Nations live along the highway (Sabo)
- Most victims found along the Highway were young Aboriginal women from the area, many hitchhike on a daily basis due to the region's lack of public transportation (Labrecque 5)



- More than 30 women have disappeared along the Highway since 1989 (most murders remain unsolved), Mounted Police are investigating murders of 18 women (Sabo)

# Highway of Tears

- 2007: billboards installed = of little practical use
- The authorities suggest that “‘choosing’ a bad mode of mobility” is why these women go missing (Morton 299)



- the authorities choose to ignore the poor socioeconomic conditions of these women that compel them to hitchhike and instead use the “blaming-the-victim rhetoric”

# Vancouver's Downtown Eastside

- the poorest neighbourhood in Vancouver, by the city centre, around the streets Main and Hastings, locally referred to as “Pain and Wastings” with high concentration of Aboriginal people (Culhane 594)



# Vancouver's Downtown Eastside

- visible homelessness, prostitution and drug abuse, extremely high HIV infection rates: women are more infected than men, Aboriginal people are the most affected group (Culhane 596)
- young Aboriginal mothers constitute 70% of sex workers labouring in the most risky parts of the neighbourhood (Culhane 597)
- 60 women and 1 transgender person have gone missing from the Downtown Eastside in the last decade (Amnesty International 14)
- Police inactivity: the city cannot run a “location service for prostitutes” (Owen, qtd. in Culhane 598)



# The Pickton Farm

- In 2002 “33 bodies of women, 13 of which were of Aboriginal women, were found on a farm in the province” (Labrecque 5)
- Robert William Pickton, the farm owner, picked his victims in the Downtown Eastside, charged with the murder of 27 women



<https://s.newsweek.com/sites/www.newsweek.com/files/styles/lg/public/2016/02/23/robert-pickton-memoir-amazon0223.jpg>

<http://felicitydon.com/images/19.jpg>





# Winnipeg's North End



© John Paskievich: The North End Revisited

- poor historic neighbourhood, in the inner city, inhabited by marginalized groups, the largest Ab. population of all Can. cities, Ab. people 9x more likely to be murdered than non-Ab. (Marcoux)

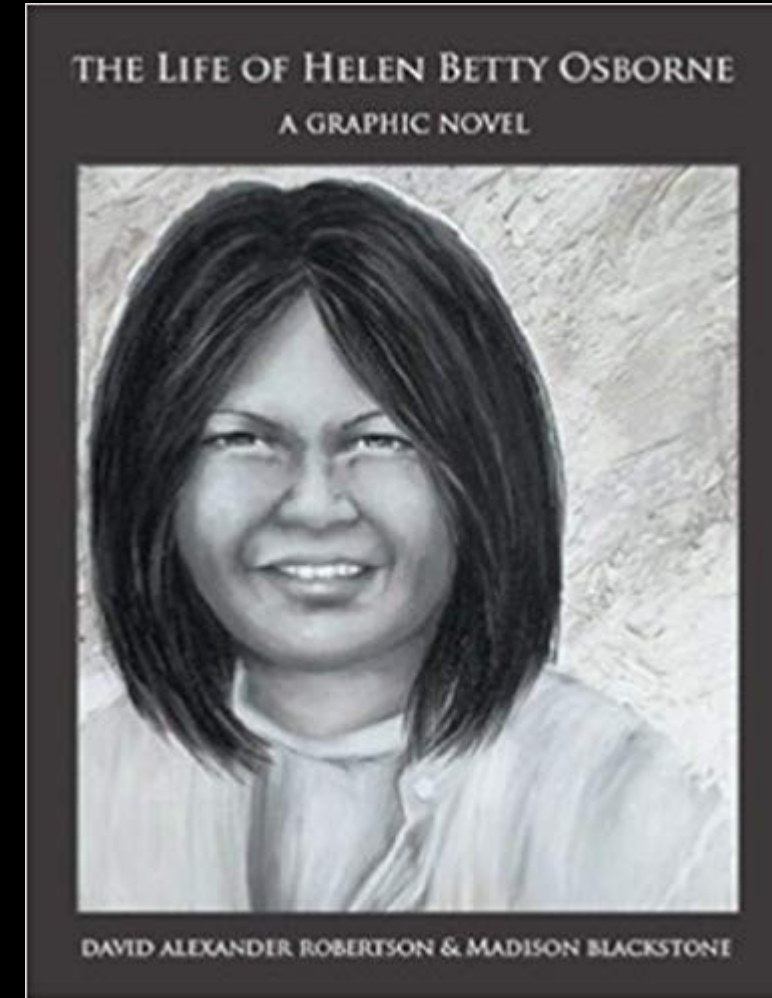
- Inadequate housing, discrimination, unemployment => illicit activities in the streets, often the only way how to economically support families (Brown 81)



© John Paskievich: The North End Revisited

# Helen Betty Osborne

- Murdered in 1971
- years before the police started investigating the crime - “sloppy and racially biased ...investigation” (Amnesty International 2)
- four Caucasian men charged with the murder
- provoked an official apology from the Manitoba’s regional government (Jolly)
- 29 cases officially investigated in Manitoba now (Jolly)



[https://images-na.ssl-images-amazon.com/images/I/41B9nKbuxCL.\\_SX382\\_BO1,204,203,200\\_.jpg](https://images-na.ssl-images-amazon.com/images/I/41B9nKbuxCL._SX382_BO1,204,203,200_.jpg)

# The Red River

- [VICE: "Drag the Red" ground searchers](#)
- Many bodies found in the Winnipeg's Red River
- “Drag the Red”: a project started in 2008 by Bernadette Smith whose sister went missing
- a group of volunteers who dredge the river in search for the dead bodies (Razack i)



[https://media.winnipegfreepress.com/images/140917-SEARCH9\\_17911113.JPG](https://media.winnipegfreepress.com/images/140917-SEARCH9_17911113.JPG)



# Indigenous people and the Police

- Aboriginal people are underprotected and are not receiving enough attention from the authorities (Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch)
- Blaming the victim attitude
- Perpetrators prey on sex workers as their crime is likely to get no official response (Amnesty International 16)
- Need for more protection for sex workers
- Physical and psychological police abuse of Aboriginal women by the police (Human Rights Watch 7-8)
- Lack of police accountability for their harassment deepens tensions between the First Nations and the law enforcement authorities



# National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

- 2015, Justin Trudeau's government responded to calls for action
- 5 commissioners started to work on the Inquiry on Sep 1, 2016
- Final report released in June 2019: “persistent and deliberate human and Indigenous rights violations and abuses are the root cause” (MMIWG)



<http://www.mediaindigena.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/NationalInquiryPhoto32.jpg>

# Conclusions

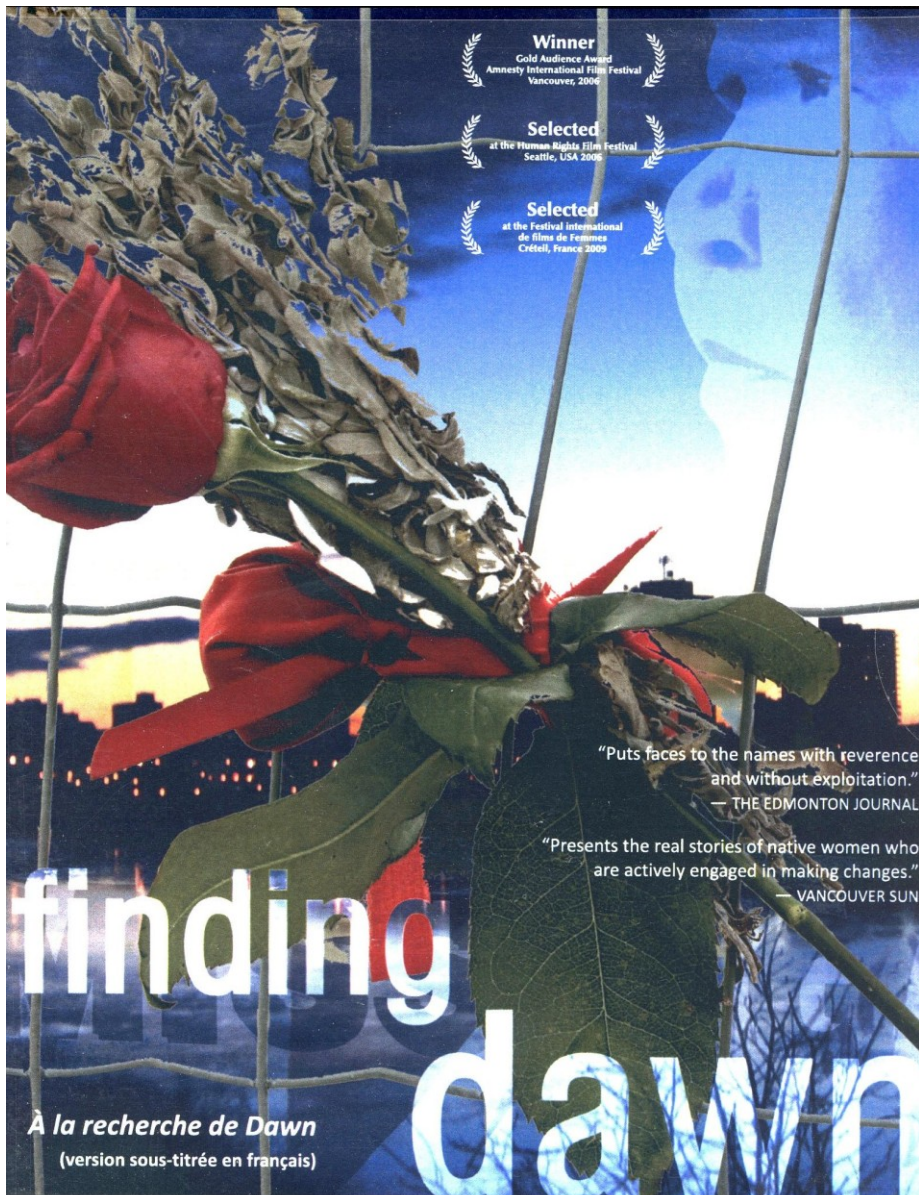
- Colonial policies and ideologies gave rise to the epidemic of gender violence within Indigenous communities
- Marginalization, racism, and misogyny contribute to the perpetuation of violence against Aboriginal women
- Stereotypes and assumptions are another contributing factor
- “Aboriginal identity is an even greater risk factor than are at-risk occupations themselves” (Labreque 7)
- Social and economic marginalization of Aboriginal people needs to be addressed in order to reduce gender violence (Daoud et al. 282)



© Joey Montoya

# Christine Welsh: *Finding Dawn* (2006)

Acclaimed Métis filmmaker Christine Welsh brings us a compelling documentary that puts a human face on a national tragedy – the epidemic of missing or murdered Indigenous women in Canada. The film takes a journey into the heart of Indigenous women's experience, from Vancouver's skid row, down the Highway of Tears in northern BC, and on to Saskatoon, where the murders and disappearances of these women remain unsolved (NFB)



Winner  
Gold Audience Award  
Amnesty International Film Festival  
Vancouver, 2006

Selected  
at the Human Rights Film Festival  
Seattle, USA 2006

Selected  
at the Festival International  
de films de Femmes  
Créteil, France 2009

"Puts faces to the names with reverence  
and without exploitation."  
— THE EDMONTON JOURNAL

"Presents the real stories of native women who  
are actively engaged in making changes."  
— VANCOUVER SUN



A NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA PRODUCTION  
UNE PRODUCTION DE L'OFFICE NATIONAL DU FILM DU CANADA

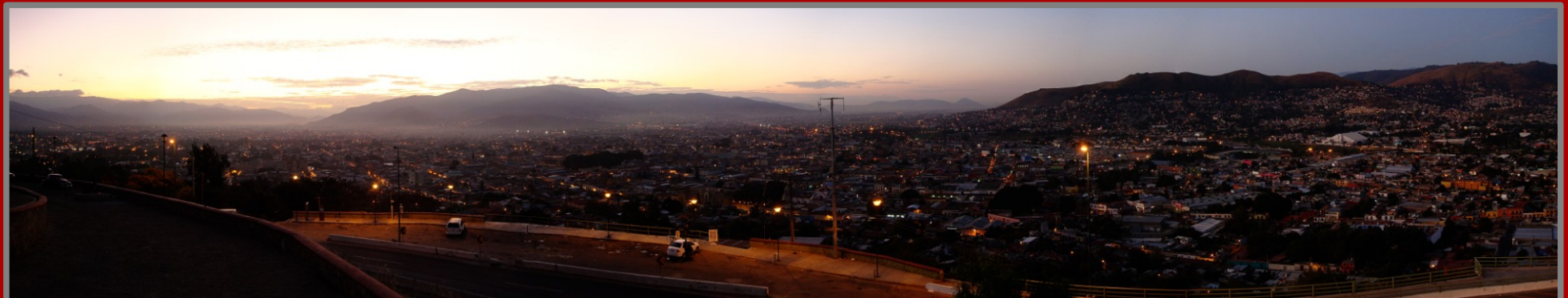


**In/visible  
Gender  
Violence on the  
U.S.-Mexican  
Border**





# Ciudad Juárez



# Femicides in Ciudad Juárez

- “murder city”, “the world’s murder capital”, “the city where women disappear”, “the capital of murdered women”
- Average number of dead bodies per day: 4.4 (2008); 7.5 (2009); 9.9 (2010)
- Femicide epidemic since the signing of NAFTA in 1993; 500 to 3000 femicides recorded
- Victim profile: a young, poor, dark-skinned woman who migrated to the city from the south to work in a *maquiladora*
- *Maquiladoras*: US-owned, big assembly plants owned by wealthy transnational corporations that employ cheap foreign labour to assemble their products from imported materials only to be later exported back to the country of origin and sold for greater profit

# NAFTA

- North American Free Trade Agreement
- neoliberal agreement, rapidly and drastically reshaped Mexican economy => a fundamental transformation of Mexican society
- established tariff-free zones between US, Mexico, and Canada
- abolished *ejido* system:
  - => migration north
  - => Zapatista rebellion
- women workers
- Mexico as a neoliberal colony



# Conclusions

“Exploitation - NAFTA - *maquiladoras* - workers - victims - Border Patrol?”

- Non-productive/Reproductive Surplus Labor = “Latina Threat” (Chavez)
- Anti-immigration propaganda
- Corruption
- Profit-driven neoliberalism
- Misogyny + exploitation
- Who is allowing these crimes to happen?

“[t]he US.-Mexican border es *una herida abierta* where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds” (Anzaldúa 3)



# Paradoxes

Juárez: attractive X to-be-avoided-at-all-costs

North: salvation X death-trap

Women workers: desired X condemned

=> objectification

=> dehumanization

=> violence

=> femicide



# Environmental Gendered Violence

- resource extractive industries are responsible for and perpetuate sexual violence and exploitation of Indigenous women and girls
- Environmental racism: impacts on the overall health and reproductive freedoms of Indigenous communities
- “Man camps”: temporary workers, sex offenders, close to reservations, remote
- women reported being kidnapped, drugged for days, and repeatedly raped by several workers
- reports of sexually abused young boys as well as little girls as young as four years old.



**Violence From Fracking  
Is Violence On Our Bodies**  
*#EnvironmentalViolence*

# Book and Film Recommendations

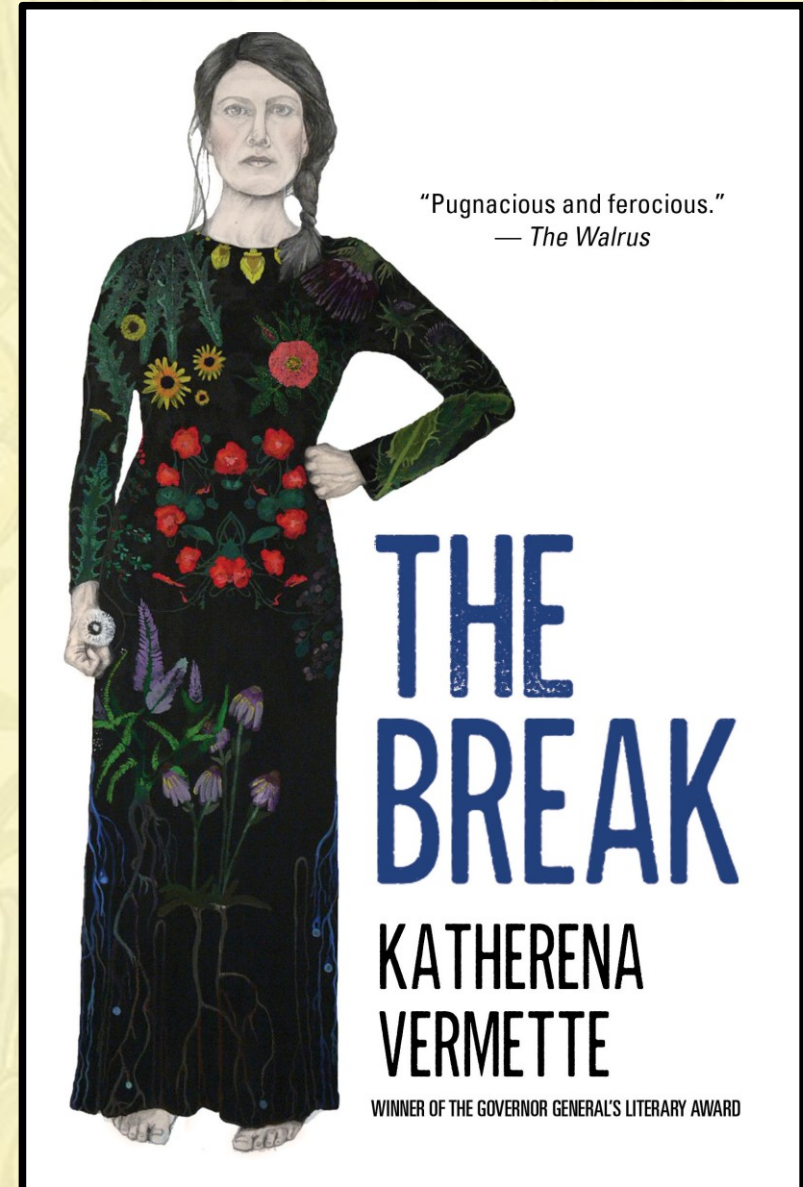
Katherena Vermette: *The Break* (2016)

Tracey Lindberg: *Birdie* (2015)

Christine Welsh: *Finding Dawn* (2006)

Alicia Gaspar de Alba: *Desert Blood:  
The Juárez Murders* (2005)

Taylor Sheridan: *Wind River* (2017)



# Speciesism: (Gender) Violence Against Animals

Speciesism: the practice of treating members of one species as morally more important than members of other species

Carnism: Melonie Joy, the invisible belief system that conditions people to eat certain animals.

- analogous to racism, sexism, and other forms of irrational discrimination and prejudice



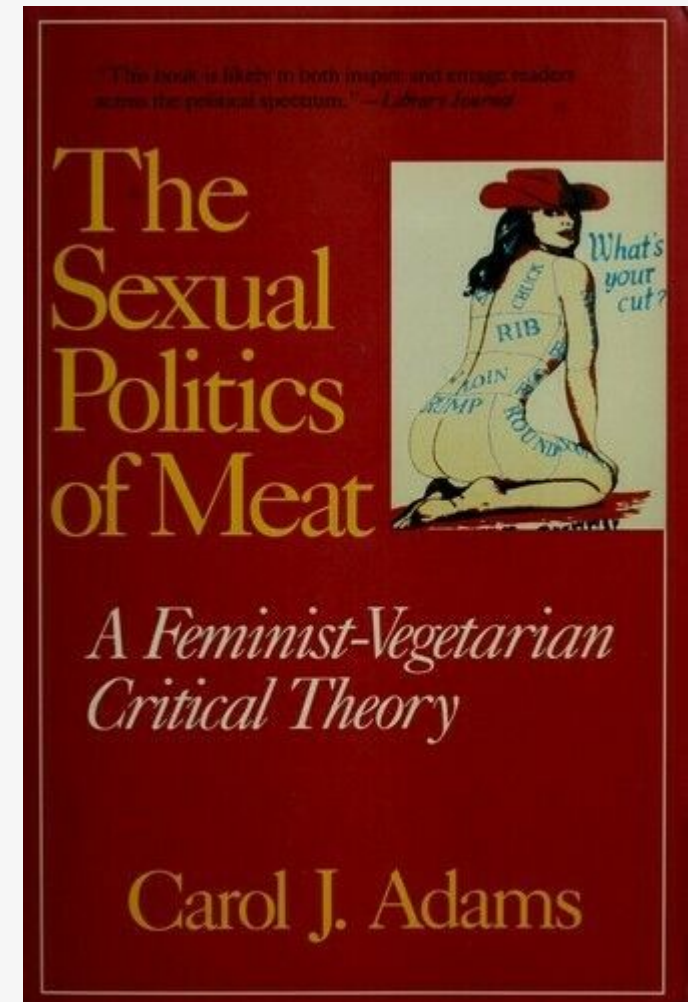


# Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory

- oppression of women and other-than-human animals interconnected
- parallels between patriarchy and the consumption of meat and animal protein
- meat as an essential aspect of masculinity in Western culture
- Jacques Derrida: “carno-phallogocentrism”

Myth: male strength and virility comes from meat eating + male dominance in the house

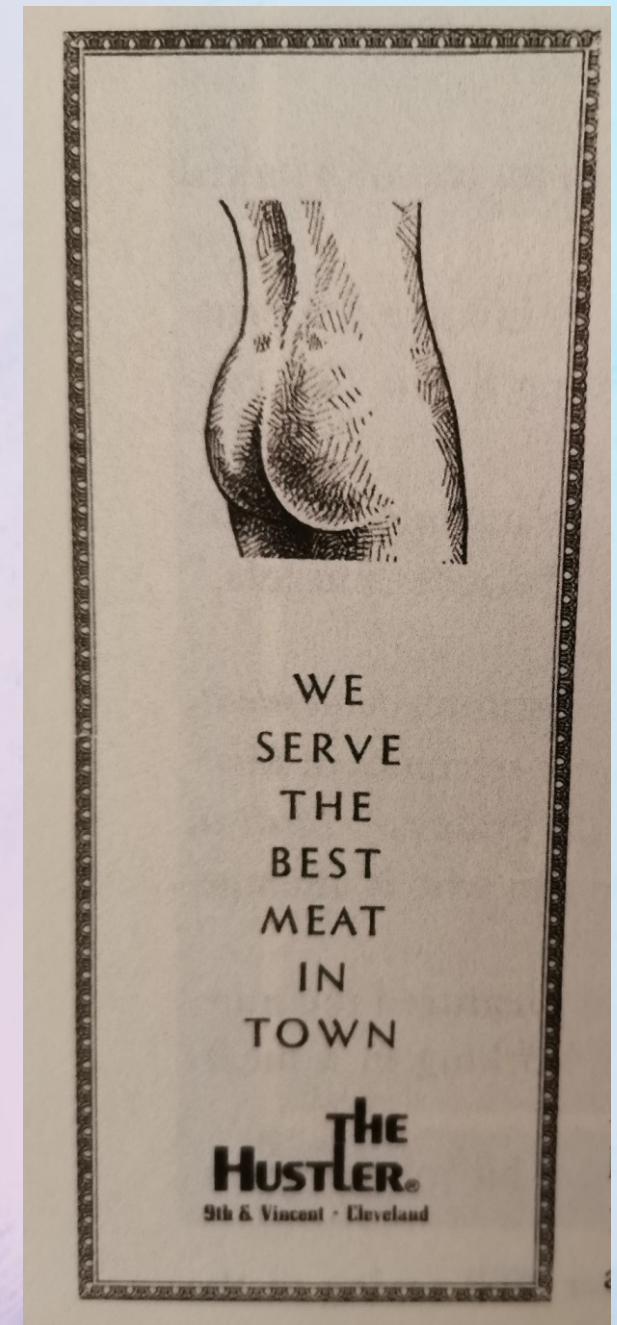
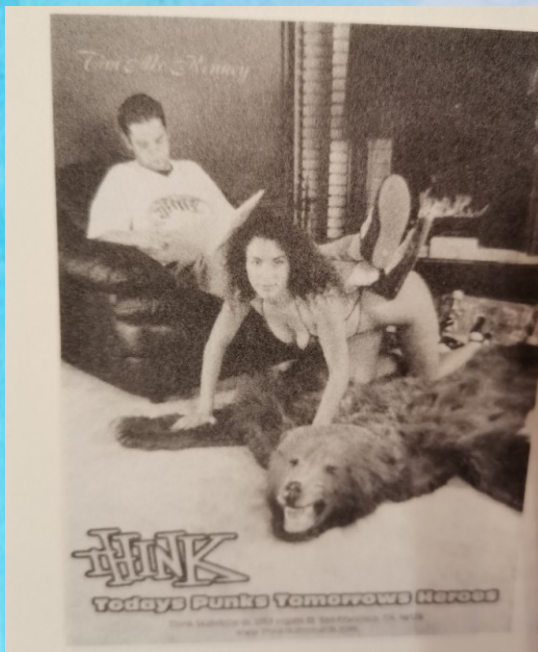
- Feminist vegetarian restaurants => veganism as a form of protest against patriarchy
- Objectifying



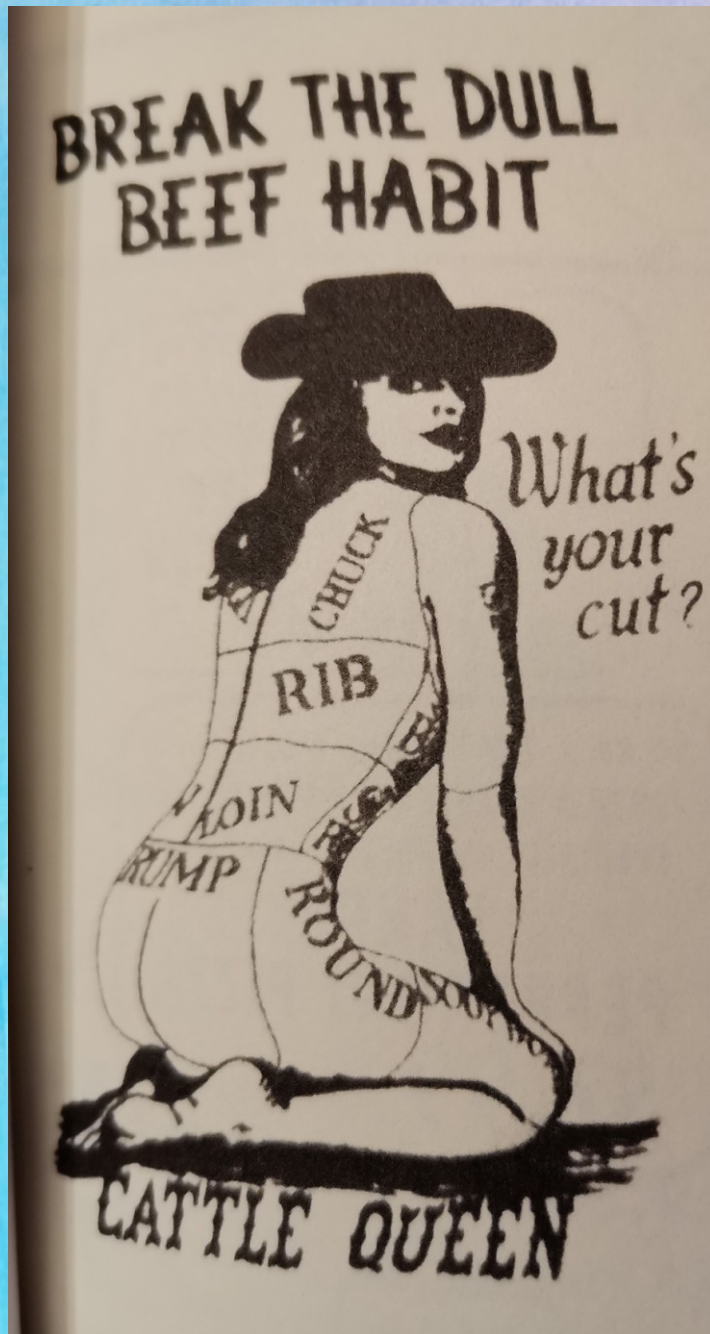
# Cultural Representation of Meat and Women

Examples from Czech Republic:

- *zabijačka*, *Easter*
- Miloš Zeman: “death to abstainers and vegetarians”
- Jan Kraus: “we will abandon sex and will all drink water and feed on organic food”
- Martin Miko: hashtag #Meatoo, “daring campaign that tries to draw attention to people who, in the past, have had their meat eaten by someone else”



# Cultural Representation of Meat and Women



**Do you like Porn?**  
**Do you like Chicken?**

**PORN N' CHICKEN**

Brought to you by:

**COMEDY CENTRAL**

**MAXIM**

**YALE RADIO**

**WYBC 1340 AM**

The Yale Trivia Challenge  
Wednesday Afternoons at 4  
Only on WYBC 1340-AM

Porn N' Chicken, the first made-for-TV movie from your friends at Comedy Central, premieres on October 13th... so the hungry/horny folks at Maxim want you and your friends to get all the Porn N' Chicken you could ever want!

Listen to the Yale Trivia Challenge on WYBC starting Friday, October 4th and test your million dollar Ivy-League educated mind on such important topics as Porn, Chicken, Maxim and of course, the history of Yale University. Answer correctly and you could win the ultimate Maxim and Comedy Central Porn N' Chicken party for you and up to 20 of your nearest and dearest friends!

You'll watch! You'll laugh! You'll eat! You might even start your own Porn N' Chicken club at your local library!

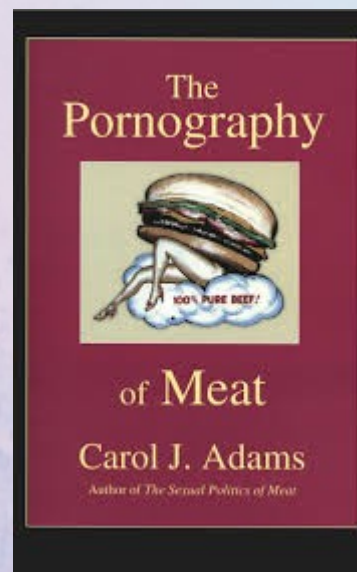
Listen to 1340 AM WYBC for details and watch Comedy Central's Porn N' Chicken on October 13th.

SREN

# Cultural Representation of Meat and Women

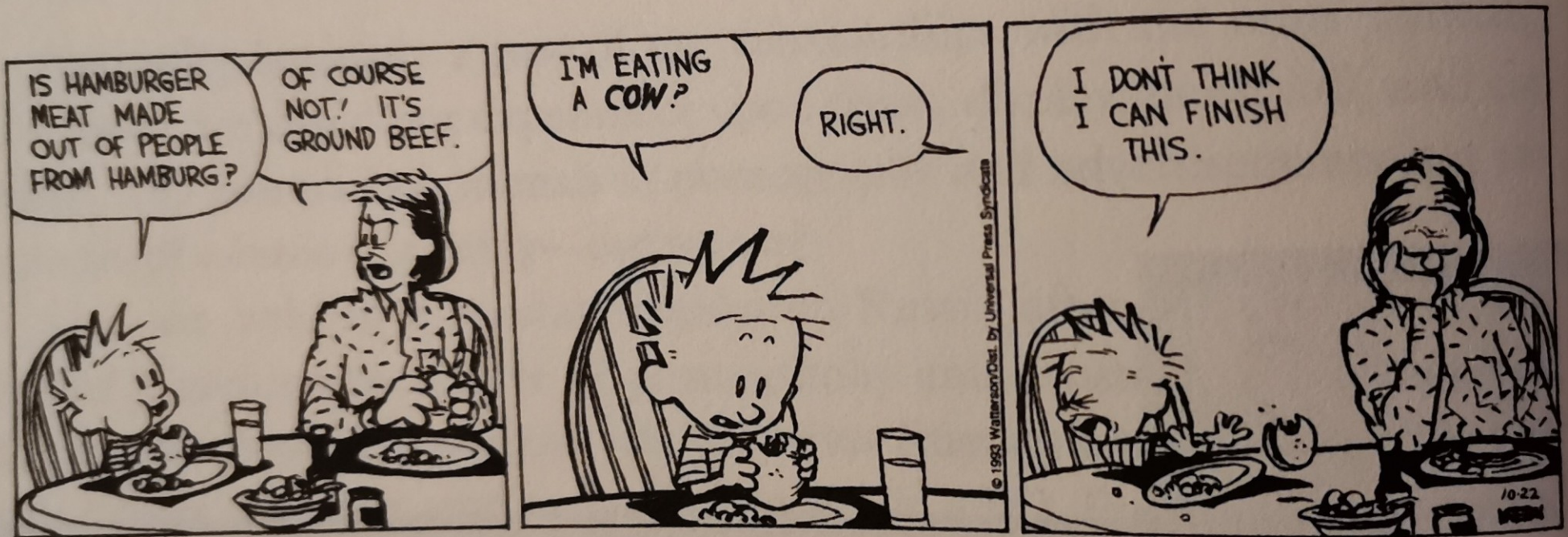


# Cultural Representation of Meat and Women



20

## The Pornography of Meat



# Cultural Representation of Animals; Language Stereotypes



Roger Waters concert: Prague, 21.8.2018

# Indigenous Veganism: Decolonial Animal Ethic

Billy Ray Belcourt (Driftpile Cree Nation)

“Animal Bodies, Colonial Subjects: (Re)Locating Animality in Decolonial Thought”

- settler colonialism, white supremacy and neoliberal capitalism depend on “the simultaneous exploitation and/or erasure of animal and Indigenous bodies” (Belcourt 1)
- connections between settler’s encroachment of Indigenous lands and animal agriculture
- animal agriculture takes up “more land in North America than all remaining reserve land combined – and one third of all land mass globally” (Powell 19)
- return of land to Indigenous populations = return to pre-colonial food practices

# Indigenous Veganism: Decolonial Animal Ethic

Margaret Robinson (Mik'maq)

- in order to participate in the fur trade, fishing industry, and factory farming, Indigenous people had to adjust their practices and start viewing other-than-human animals as “the other”, or an “absent referent” in Adams’ words, i.e. more as *an object* rather than a sibling
- “meat, as a symbol of patriarchy shared with colonizing forces, arguably binds us with white colonial culture to a greater degree than practices such as veganism” (191).





# Indigenous Veganism: Decolonial Animal Ethic

Linda Fisher (Ojibway):

- Carnism is a Euro-Settler concept and Indigenous people in Americas “had a much more varied diet”
- Meat began to be consumed more regularly only after contact with Europeans
- Hollywood stereotypes: “buffalo hunters”, leather
- Killing in the name of tradition goes against the most fundamental Indigenous principles
- Chief Seattle: other-than-human animals “are our brothers, and we kill only to stay alive”
- Hunting and fishing reactionary traditions, cultures are fluid and evolving

“I assure you, even though I avoid hides and furs and choose a vegan diet, my Indianness is critical to who I am.”



# Interconnectedness of Liberation Movements



**Radical Indigenous Vegans**

27 July · 🌐



#IndigenousVeganism

Non-vegan left loves to shit on veganism, saying it is oppressive if it ain't anti-capitalism and anti-colonialism. Instead of practicing as suggested, they go on rejecting veganism. Do they do the same with feminism because the same conditions hold true for all movements? Liberal white feminism and rainbow capitalism aren't valid reasons to reject feminism and queer liberation. Similarly, white veganism is not a valid reason to reject veganism.

P.S. Not that there are any "valid reasons" to reject these movements.



# Bibliography

- Amnesty International. *Stolen Sisters: A Human Rights Response to Discrimination and Violence against Indigenous Women in Canada*. Montreal: Amnesty International, 2006. Pdf.
- “Background.” *mmiwg-ffada.ca*. National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, n.d. Web. 30 Mar. 2018.
- Barker, Joanne. “Gender, Sovereignty, Rights: Native Women’s Activism against Social Inequality and Violence in Canada.” *American Quarterly* 60.2 (June 2008): 259-266. *JSTOR*. Web. 14 Jan 2018.
- Brown, Jason, et al. “Challenges Faced by Aboriginal Youth in the Inner City.” *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 14.1 (2005): 81–106. *JSTOR*. Web. 28 Feb 2018.
- Culhane, Dara. “Their Spirits Live within Us: Aboriginal Women in Downtown Eastside Vancouver Emerging into Visibility.” *Keeping the Campfires Going: Native Women’s Activism in Urban Communities*. Ed. Susan Applegate Krouse and Heather A. Howard. Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2009. 76–92. *JSTOR*. Web. 14 Nov 2017.
- Daoud, Nihaya et al. “The Contribution of Socio-Economic Position to the Excesses of Violence and Intimate Partner Violence Among Aboriginal Versus Non-Aboriginal Women in Canada.” *Canadian Journal of Public Health* 104.4 (2013): 278–283. *JSTOR*. Web. 31 March 2018.
- “Femicide.” Noun. *Oxford Dictionaries*. Oxford UP, n.d. Web. 28 March 2018.
- Gaspar, de Alba, A., and Georgina Guzman. *Making a Killing: Femicide, Free Trade, and La Frontera*. Austin: University of Texas, 2010.
- Goudreau, Ghislaine, and Joey-Lynn Wabie. *Aboriginal Womens’s Initiative: Literature Review*. Toronto, Ont: YWCA Canada, 2012. Web. 20 January 2018.

# Bibliography

- Human Rights Watch, "Those Who Take Us Away." *Human Rights Watch*. Human Rights Watch, 13 Feb. 2013. Web. 14 Nov 2017.
- Jolly, Joanna. "Red River Women." *BBC*. BBC, 8 April 2015. Web. 2 March 2018.
- Kiepal, Laura, et al. "Missing Persons and Social Exclusion." *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 37.2 (2012): 137-168. *Canadian Journal of Sociology* Web. 14 Nov. 2017.
- Labrecque, Marie F. *From Ciudad Juarez to the Highway of Tears: These Aboriginal Women Murdered With Complete Impunity*. Montreal: DIALOG, 2014. Pdf.
- Marcoux, Jacques. "Manitoba posts highest homicide rate in Canada for 8th consecutive year." *CBC News*. CBC News, 25 Nov 2015. Web. 2 March 2018.
- Morton, Katherine. "Hitchhiking and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Billboards on the Highway of Tears" *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 41.3 (2016): 299-325. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*. Web. 17 Jan 2017.
- NWAC. "Fact Sheet. Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and Girls." Native Women's Association of Canada, 31 March 2010. Web. 5 June 2017.
- Razack, Sherene H. "Sexualized Violence and Colonialism: Reflections on the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women." *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* 28.2 (2016): i-iv. Pdf.
- Sabo, Don. "Highway of Tears." *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Government of Canada, 6 June 2016. Web. 15 Jan 2018.
- Smith, Andrea. *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*. Durham: Duke UP, 2015.

# Bibliography

- Adams, Carol J. *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory*. 20<sup>th</sup> ed., Continuum, 2010.
- Belcourt, Billy-Ray. “Animal Bodies, Colonial Subjects: (Re)Locating Animality in Decolonial Thought.” *Societies* 5 (2015): 1-11.
- Fisher, Linda. “On the the right to Hunt by a Native American Vegan.” *TheScavenger.net*. Scavenger, 13 August 2011. Web. 31 May 2019.
- Joy, Melanie. 2010. *Why We Love Dogs, Eat Pigs, and Wear Cows: An Introduction to Carnism*. SF: Conari.
- LaDuke, Winona. 1994. “An Indigenous Perspective on Feminism, Militarism, and the Environment.” *Peace Now* 4 (4): n.p.
- Powell, Dylan. 2013. “Veganism in the Occupied Territories: Anti-Colonialism and Animal Liberation.” *Resistance Ecology*, no. 1: 16-24.
- Robinson, Margaret. 2013. “Veganism and Mikmaq Legends.” *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* XXXIII(1) : 189-196.
- Smith, Andrea. 2015. *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*. Durham: Duke University Press.

**Thank you for your attention!**



**Justice**

**for Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women**



Art by Angela Sterritt

# Discussion Questions

## 1. Intersectionality

Do you agree that in order to achieve feminist goals it is necessary to acknowledge and undo all of the other axes of oppression, be it speciesism, racism, classism, etc.?

Among others, the connection between gender violence and the violence inflicted on animals was used as an argument for the removal of animal slaughter from the public. Do you see connections between violence against women and violence against other-than-human animals?

## 2. Stereotypes

What role do systems, laws and institutions play in the construction of stereotypes? Do educational institutions participate in the construction of stereotypes? If your answer is yes, try to recall some specific examples.

What is the role of humour in the construction of stereotypes? What is the role of traditions in the construction of stereotypes? Should we abandon traditions that perpetuate harmful stereotypes? What are the criteria?

## 3. Objectifying, Violence

How does *someone* become *something*? How *does* someone come to be viewed as an object, a product, as consumable? How does her use to another as this product, this consumable object, become more important than her own inherent value, her own complete and unique self? In other words, how does someone become a piece of meat?

If we have other means of subsistence, are we obliged to choose plant-based diet?