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Female Canadian Murderers: The Public Trials of Karla Homolka and Terri-Lynne McClintic through Documentary Representation

Submitted to the Cultural Analysis and Social Theory Program in partial fulfillment of the requirements for:

Master of Arts in Cultural Analysis and Social Theory

Wilfrid Laurier University

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Abstract

This paper critically examines the production of violent female offenders by analyzing their visual representations in two Canadian television investigative documentaries created fifteen years apart. Karla Homolka (offending in 1990-1992) and Terri-Lynne McClintic (transgressing in 2009) were both responsible for committing horrific and unpardonable crimes resulting in significant media coverage throughout Canada. Despite some similarities and consistencies in both documentaries, anomalies and disparities in coverage serve as the center of my analysis. Against features of both substance and style, a comparative analysis of the documentaries with features closely associated with the production of reality television, I contend that both documentaries are embedded with narratives that emphasize differences in social class and stereotypes that align with traditional gender roles in patriarchal society. The paper's argument works to contribute to larger discussions about the production of reality television programming, especially the genre of crime-based shows, and particularly the sub-genre of documentaries.

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Introduction: The “Reality” of Crime Consumption

“Murder is unique in that it abolishes the party it injures, so that society must take the place of the victim and on his behalf demand atonement or grant forgiveness.”

W.H. Auden

Reactions of retaliation and punishment percolated beneath feelings of heartbreak and sorrow as the crimes of Karla Homolka and Terri-Lynne McClintic were broadcast throughout Canada. In separate cases occurring several years apart, the criminal justice system and media were confronted with the task of seeking justice and accurate representation for three young females and a child. The innocence, purity and lives of these victims were eradicated through acts of torture committed by two inherent female killers. My analysis within this paper is produced with great sensitivity to these victims and their families.

I first heard the above quote spoken aloud during a binge watching session of the popular show “Criminal Minds”. As a viewer, I was entertained every episode with a high intensity pursuit where members of the FBI’s Behavioral Analysis Unit would hunt for an unknown, fleeing offender and almost always solve the case. The ability to witness officers conferring elements of each case and plan a method for capture has provided me with ‘behind the scenes’ access to the world of law and order. I have developed into a loyal viewer of crime-based television.

The Canadian public continues to actively consume television produced with narratives of crime and justice. BBM Canada, an organization that provides broadcast data including audience viewership, reports for the week of May 19- May 25, 2014 that twelve of

the thirty highest viewing programs for this time period are crime dramas (Top Programs-Total Canada by BBM Canada, May 2014). Ranging from 2.065 million viewers to 830,000 audience consumers per series, the data collected displays high consumption levels for crime-based programming for one week (Top Programs-Total Canada by BBM Canada, May 2014). These numbers reflect a deep hunger for narratives of violence and accountability by Canadian audiences.

Storylines involving a law-breaking suspect and the search for justice are cyclically represented in both the production of popular television drama series and other broadcast programming. The creation of court television programs, daily news coverage stations, films and network documentaries have served to provide audiences with an in-depth analysis and commentary about specific criminal acts and violence. For this paper, I have chosen to critically analyze two investigative documentaries produced for Canadian audiences. Each film separately outlines the upbringing, lifestyle and horrific crimes of Karla Homolka and Terri-Lynne McClintic. My research is devoted to examining the production and representations of these two murderers.

Karla Homolka and her husband Paul Bernardo, known as the ‘Scarborough Rapist’, have become iconic figures of deception, manipulation and incest throughout Canada. The pair worked together to brutally torture, rape and murder several young females, including Tammy Homolka, Karla’s sister (“The Fifth Estate”, 1997). Eventually turning on her husband after accepting a plea bargain, Homolka was simultaneously depicted as the helpless housewife and deranged murderer within the press (“The Fifth Estate”, 1997). The Canadian Broadcast Corporation’s (CBC) program “The Fifth Estate”, adopting the above representations, dedicated an hour of broadcast time to displaying testimony and video

footage of Homolka to the viewer (“The Fifth Estate”, 1997). Homolka is presented as a ‘character’ within the documentary, as techniques of imitation are embedded within the production. The various documented interviews with professionals, exhibited within the film, work to center Homolka at the median between a killer and victim.

Terri-Lynne McClintic was eighteen years old when she conspired with friend Michael Rafferty in the abduction, rape and murder of eight-year old Victoria Stafford. This case was controversial as Victoria’s mother, Tara MacDonald, faced public scrutiny for her lifestyle and previous association with McClintic (“16x9”, 2012). The documentary “Road to Murder: How Terri-Lynne McClintic Became a Murderer” was produced and released by Global TV’s current affairs program “16x9” in October 2012 (“16x9”, 2012). Primarily narrated by Stafford’s mother, the documentary outlines the upbringing and lifestyle of McClintic as a member of the lower class who challenges traditional gender roles as an aggressor and deviant (“16x9”, 2012).

Representations of Homolka and McClintic were selected for this comparative analysis as there are many similarities between the crimes committed: both are white females, both committed heinous criminal acts with a male partner, these crimes occurred in smaller Ontario towns, the crimes involved the murder and rape of three young women and a female child, both females played an instrumental role in the direct killings and the bodies of all victims were disposed of in comparable manners. I include this comparison within my introduction to provide context and justification for my analysis of these two figures.

W. H. Auden’s quote is incorporated into this section as a means of initiating and adding to two important conversations about media and crime. Firstly, this phrase identifies two distinct societal reactions to a homicide that encourage either retribution or mercy for

the offender(s). My examination into the selected documentaries will reveal that responsibility and blame are not solely placed on the offender. Although Homolka and McClintic are portrayed as inherently responsible for their crimes, both documentaries also introduce other mediating factors that lead to the abduction and permanent disappearance of the victims. By identifying elements of gender and class within this analysis it is argued that the two selected documentaries encourage multiple reactions from society.

Television programming has become inundated with the production of various reality series that work to sensationalize beauty, wealth, power and violence for the viewer. In addition to the creation of television programs such as “Criminal Minds”, the two documentaries analyzed within this paper contribute to the development of crime dramas as a genre within reality television. As these documentaries outline details surrounding each tragedy, the narratives within both texts also serve to ‘celebratize’ Homolka and McClintic. Through a profiling description of the making of a serial killer, both female offenders are depicted as an anomaly separated from patriarchal society within these documentaries. Thus, the above quote serves to draw connections between the production of documentary films focused on murder and reality television programming.

In determining the role that investigative documentaries play in contributing to the consumption of crime as a form of reality television, I have chosen to conduct a comparative analysis of the two selected films. The incorporation of elements used in the creation of reality television programming provides an overarching structure to this paper. Referencing the concept of critical visual methodology, an analytical framework explore by Dr. Gillian Rose, serves a tool when examining the sites of production and image affiliated with both representations (Rose, 2001). By focusing on elements of gender and class, a narrative of

accountability is dissected within selected scenes. Thus, this paper is dedicated to assessing and discussing the *media* representations of violent females in Canada and does not serve to evaluate the gravity of the crimes committed. The recounting of all offences serves to provide context to the narratives depicted within both documentaries.

It is observed throughout this paper that the production of crime-based television has developed into a cyclical performance within Canada. A blending of crime narratives and elements of ‘reality’ television quenches the thirsts of audiences for mystery and access to the deviant underbelly of society. After all, evil is forever breeding within our communities.

“Evil is unspectacular, and always human, and shares our bed and eats at our table.”

W. H. Auden

Section One: The New Faces of Reality Television- Documenting the Offender

Crime, as a source of entertainment for viewers, has developed into a staple for producers of television programs. The popularity of this genre of programming has encouraged scholarly investigation into the relationship between the construction of crime and media. As various forms of media are analyzed with emphasis on their formation and chosen narratives, it becomes increasingly apparent that any 'reality' present within these representations is socially constructed.

This section examines the function of crime as a form of reality television within popular culture. The production of various media representations that display storylines of violence and retribution is proof of the popularity for the genre of crime dramas. This paper will focus specifically on the production and use of traditional narratives and stereotypes in documentaries. I will contribute to the scholarly discussions of crime as 'info' and entertainment with reference to the work of leading criminologists within Canada.

1.1 Goals of the Media

Noting the work of communication scholars, Matthew B. Robinson (2011) dissects the goals of the media and the role of citizens in consuming certain representations. Robinson (2011) asserts that these goals are subject to change based on interpretation from the audience or political perspective: "The goals of the media are complex; some are beneficial for citizens and others are profit driven and result in social conditioning and control (Ben Bagdikian)" (Robinson, 2011). This paper does not examine the particular motivations behind the production of both documentaries; however, the dissection of selected scenes will demonstrate a reliance on patriarchal storylines emphasizing social class

and gender roles. It is argued that these narratives resonate strongly and serve as a takeaway for the audience.

Scholars have actively asserted that the productions of media representations are controlled by the ruling class and they work to reinforce this perspective. Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky (1988) suggest that one interpretation of media coverage involves the garnering of support for the special interests of the elite few: “The media serve, and propagandize on behalf of, the powerful societal interests that control and finance them” (Herman & Chomsky, 1988, p. xi). Academics have argued this perspective as being a leading goal for the media.

In “Mediatizing Rituals: Beyond Manufacturing Consent”, Simon Cottle (2006) presents multiple theoretical approaches adopted within media communications research. I introduce the approaches of moral panics, celebrated media events, media disasters and media scandals within this section of my paper as a tool of analysis to identifying specific goals of the media (Cottle, 2006). These elements will be related to the two selected documentaries under review.

Stanley Cohen’s (1972) concept of ‘moral panic’ is continuously referenced in the work of many criminologists. Yvonne Jewkes (2011) describes this term as referring to: “public and political reactions to minority or marginalized individuals and groups who appear to be some kind of threat to consensual values and interests” (p. 74). Thus, the actions and behaviours of individuals and groups are magnified to align with the ideologies and values projected by the dominant class. Jewkes (2011) outlines the Deviancy Amplification Spiral as a cyclical framework that produces panic within society (p. 79). The formulaic

display of this cycle is alarming as the predictions of behaviour and the responses of societal actors can be detailed so precisely.

In both documentaries, the police response along with testimony is displayed consistently to the viewer (“The Fifth Estate”, 1997)(“16x9”, 2012). Jewkes (2011) describes the role of the police within the Deviancy Amplification Spiral: “*Police* respond to the political demands in their enforcement of law and order, e.g. through policies of ‘zero tolerance’” (p. 79). In the documentary, “16x9 Road to Murder: How Terri-Lynne McClintic became a Killer” (2012), the Chief of Police for Woodstock, Ontario, Rodney Freeman is interviewed about his involvement with the investigation in the Victoria Stafford case. Images of police surveillance and their search for the young victim, suspect interview footage, detainment of the then accused parties and courtroom drawings were integrated throughout this documentary that work to display law enforcement’s response to this horrific crime (“16x9”, 2012). As moral panics are used as a barometer to measure and ensure societal values, it is argued that these images of police response work to reinforce a narrative of law and order. This discussion of moral panics serves to identify different goals of the media in relaying selected narratives to audiences.

The transmitted events produced under the “celebrated media event” are monopolistic, they interrupt broadcasting routines and work to renew viewer loyalty (Cottle, 2006, p. 418) Conquests, contests and coronations are described as the three types of ceremonial events that fall under this celebrated category (Cottle, 2006, p. 418). Cottle (2006) asserts that these mediatized specials should be: “fundamentally taken as serving to reconcile, rather than challenge or transform, the political status quo and thereby buttress hegemonic interests and *the establishment*” (p. 418). It is contended that the chosen

documentaries under analysis adhere to ceremonial standards as they reinforce dominant ideas and perspectives. Both documentaries provide a detailed account of the crimes, outline the upbringing and mental health of Homolka and McClintic and attempt to contextualize and explain motivations behind the horrific acts under traditional narratives that dabble within the confines of victimhood (“The Fifth Estate”, 1997)(“16x9”, 2012). The production of these documentaries only for ‘popular’ female murderers is in itself a ceremony within the media.

In accordance with Cottle’s (2006) description within this mediatized ritual section, the images and narratives within these documentaries are: “pre-planned and presented with reverence” and serve to “electrify very large audiences” (p. 418). As these documentaries are assembled following the violent crimes of female offenders, it is evident that there are elements of planning and ritual in their production.

The term ‘media disasters’ is defined as acts that are: “signaled by different media as major, often traumatic and, on occasion, historically momentous happenings...” and receive overwhelming media coverage (Cottle, 2006, p. 421). Cottle (2006) contends that representations of these disasters produce opportunity for political and institutional dissent rooted in corrupted allegations and dis-concernment (p. 422). The work of Tamar Liebes (1998) is included in the explanation of this mediatized ritual where she states: “A disaster marathon constitutes a communal public forum where tragedy is the emotional motor which sizzles with conflict, emphasizing anxiety, argument and disagreement” (p. 75-76).

The production of these selected investigative films aligns closely with elements associated with the ritual of media disasters. The narratives within both documentaries encourage public discussions and provide a forum for acceptable societal behaviour to be

negotiated and contested. The media representations documenting the crimes committed by Karla Homolka also display dissent towards the criminal justice system and political institutions. An interview conducted with Vince Bevan, a police officer with the Niagara Regional Police Service, and the CBC news reporter displays contention with the sentencing deal Homolka received in this case in relation to her involvement in the murder of Tammy Homolka (“The Fifth Estate”, 1997). As Homolka directly asphyxiated her sister through the use of Halcion and Halothane, she should have received a much stricter punishment (“The Fifth Estate”, 1997). Bevan is firmly questioned within the documentary about his role and his inaction within this legal process (“The Fifth Estate”, 1997).

Media scandals often involve prominent individuals who exist in the public eye, celebrities and ordinary people who engage in horrific acts (Cottle, 2006, p. 422-423). These stories attract significant media attention and work to reinstate the moral boundaries of society through ritualistic news production. James Lull and Stephen Hinerman (1997) state a media scandal: “*occurs when private acts that disgrace or offend the idealized, dominant morality of a social community are made public and narrativized by the media, producing a range of effects...*”(3, emphasis in original).

The production of documentaries based on the lives of female murderers in Canada has become a mediatized pattern that works to re-emphasizes the reprehensible actions of the offenders and the collective behavioral norms within society. Similar to the production of television shows based on abnormal habits and obsessions, these documentaries rely on the curiosity of the audience in learning about the breeding of a murderer in order to attract viewership. In addition, these investigative documentaries blend the celebrity of the offenders with the audience’s anxieties in order to create a narrative of the civilized citizen

versus the 'other'. Rothenbuhler (1998) describes the similarities of myths in relation to ritual: "It is a form of expressing, thereby sharing, and thereby creating the conditions for the resolution of socially originating but personally experienced anxieties" (p. 92).

Media scandals can also function to 'celebratize' individuals whose actions are not deserving of societal attention. Although these crimes can serve as a warning tool for parents, I argue that the continuous attention devoted to these two violent female offenders only further glorifies their position as 'humans' within society. In "Tabloid Justice: Criminal Justice in an Age of Media Frenzy", Richard L. Fox, Robert W. Van Sickel and Thomas L. Steiger (2007) describe the increase coverage of legal shows as displaying a transition in news production. Focus is now on status, personality, score keeping, sex/violence titillation within the media (Fox, Sickel & Steiger, 2007). A prioritization is created towards the crimes of Karla Homolka and Terri-Lynne McClintic, as the media has predominantly focused on these cases. The two chosen documentaries are examples of mediatized events that work to contribute to the celebrity of both offenders and build upon audience panic and unrest.

With reference to Simon Cottle's various theoretical approaches used when conducting media research, this section details multiple goals and strategies adopted by the media. I have made links to examples within both documentaries as a means of further justifying all four approaches.

1.2 The Popularity of Crime within Late Modernity

Ray Surette (2007) identifies two possible scenarios about the future relationship between crime and reality television programming: the spectacle and surveillance (p. 209-213). Although these elements are argued as plausible outcomes for our society, I suggest

within this paper that our communities are currently reliant on the exhibition of crime and notions of security. In many ways, both the spectacle and surveillance function within a cycle of dependency within late modernity. The glamorization of crimes produced within media representations serves to heighten responses of monitoring and access found within various televised texts. Viewers of this media attempt to satisfy their hunger for criminality by habitually consuming narratives of crime and violence.

I assert that the two documentaries analyzed within this paper function as a participatory media trial for the viewer. The examination of selected scenes will display embedded narratives and stereotypes relied upon within both films that work to attract viewers to consume representations of crime. It will become apparent that these investigative documentaries are being routinely produced to align with narratives of crime functioning as forms of reality television. Within a world of spectacle: “The list of possible infotainment shows based on the entertainmentized stories of persons caught up in crime and justice is endless” (Surette, 2007, p. 210).

The element of the spectacle, described by Surette (2007), challenges the limits of taste and decency in media productions (p. 209). Often the boundaries between ‘reality’ and fiction are bent in order to lure audiences into ‘sexy’ and stylized narratives of crime and revenge. Ken Dowler, Thomas Fleming and Stephen L. Muzzatti (2006) discuss the exposure Canadian audiences have to American reality television programming and popular culture in the “Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice”. Through various formats, the viewers in the global north are presented with stories of crime through ‘infotainment’ productions (Dowler, Fleming & Muzzatti, 2006). It is contended that these

two documentary representations are highly edited and formatted to appeal as entertainment, often embellishing elements of the criminal justice system.

1.3 Production of Documentaries as Public Trial

Paula Hannaford-Agor (2008) asserts that the term “notorious trial” is applied when describing high profile and popular cases that gain regional or national media attention. The documentary representations of Homolka and McClintic contribute to the ongoing categorization of both trials as high profile cases, both spotlighting the horrific actions of these violent female offenders (“The Fifth Estate”, 1997)(“16x9”, 2012). Throughout this paper, I contend that the representations under analysis function as the media’s public trial of these criminals and works to highlight the production of female killers in Canada.

Promoted as “Canada’s Premier Investigative Program”, “The Fifth Estate” has reported and produced various provocative news stories for decades (“The Fifth Estate”, 1997). The horrific crimes of Karla Homolka and Paul Bernardo were an obvious choice for examination within this program, as both offenders became popular figures within the crime reporting media. In November 1997, an entire episode was dedicated to dissecting the relationship between Karla and Paul and her involvement in the multiple murders committed (“The Fifth Estate”, 1997). Attracting two million viewers the night the episode aired, it became apparent to the broadcasting community that an investigative documentary profiling dangerous female murderers was appealing to Canadian audiences (“The Fifth Estate”, 1997). The production of this episode contributed to the program earning recognition within the journalism community as a finalist in the Canadian Association of Journalists Awards for Investigative Reporting in 1998 (“The Fifth Estate”, 1997).

The Global TV news program “16x9” produced an episode highlighting the upbringing and violent behaviour of Terri-Lynne McClintic fifteen years after the Homolka investigative documentary was released (16x9”, 2012). Originally broadcasting in the fall 2012, this episode was re-aired on August 2, 2013 increasing viewership of McClintic’s story (16x9”, 2012). My analysis into the production of this representation will illustrate a dependency on narratives of social class, as McClintic is depicted as not solely responsible for the murder of Victoria Stafford. Note, the “16x9” program was nominated for the Gemini Award for Best News Information Series in 2009 (“16x9”, 2012).

I argue that the two documentaries serve as a form of public trial for the offenders and adhere to cemented media standards to reinforce dominant ideas and perspectives held within society. Surette’s (2007) description of the ‘spectacle’, as a result of society’s compulsive need for consuming crime and media, speaks of an imminent community where televised representations work to manipulate boundaries of taste and decency: “In such an environment, a host of crime-and-justice programs are possible. Live executions would be a natural, with the modern version of the gallows speech again prominent” (Surette, 2007, p. 209-210). The production elements depicted within both documentaries work to expose the mental health of the offenders through an exploration of their home environments. Further analysis into specific scenes within both documentaries will uncover a heightened reliance on narratives of class and gender as a means of illustrating the development of a serial killer within Canada.

Communities have been encouraged to participate in the condemnation of offenders for centuries. A brief review of the history of public trials will outline practices of determining justice that rely on public outrage and emotion. In Volume 35, Issue 2 of the

Indiana Law Journal, affiliated with the Maurer School of Law at Indiana University, details of the origins of public trials as customary in English law are described (1960). At this early point in England, communal laws were used to assess the guilt of offenders and were traditionally conducted in front of large communities where no formal representation was provided for the guilty party (Indiana Law Journal, 1960): “Whenever a person committed a wrong against another member of the community he was considered as having had committed a wrong against the entire community” (Indiana Law Journal, 1960, p. 251-252).

The motivations behind holding a public court have adapted over time in order to ensure that individuals receive a fair trial. It is no longer customary that offenders are publicly punished for their crimes. Offenders are now either imprisoned or extradited to their country of origin. It is argued that investigative reporting has ritualistically developed into an arena for community shamming.

I reference elements associated with the production of reality television in this paper as a tool to critically dissect and understand the development of investigative representations that broadcast on national networks. Through investigating different types of media and their coverage of narratives of crime and justice, the overarching theme of “entertainment” appears to be the goal of most productions. Programs must attract and keep audience numbers high in order to continue to succeed within television markets. Matthew B. Robinson (2011) references the term “infotainment” when examining how entertainment media, such as CourtTV, depict crime. Robinson (2011) asserts that news coverage of trials is not centered on relaying facts to viewers. Segments are produced as investigative clues to a pre-arranged game of “Whodunnit”, with audiences participating from the comfort of their own homes: “As such portrayals of courts in these media tend to be brief, time-limited,

dramatic, and focused on elements such as random violence, sex, and cases involving celebrities” (Robinson, 2011, p. 300).

I argue that the function of these documentaries is also to entertain audiences, to attract viewership and to obtain public acclamation for the program. The viewer is reminded through negotiated narratives of acceptable parenting and moral upbringing the consequences of iniquitous behaviour—you become a murderer.

The narratives within both documentaries encourage public discussions and provide a forum for acceptable societal behaviour to be negotiated and contested. The audience is granted a role within the media’s spectacle of crime, once they consume these representations. When describing the popularity of trials and the media, Robert Hariman (1993) writes: “First of all, trials are forums explicitly constructed for persuasive advocacy leading to judgments” (p. 3). It is through the production of these documentaries that the state of mental health and crimes of both Homolka and McClintic are broadcast and gain attention within society.

Court television programs provide viewers with a ‘backstage’ view of the proceedings within a criminal case. Hours of reporting are dedicated to profiling jury members, dissecting presented evidence and evaluating both counsels’ arguments. Throughout the duration of a trial, the offender receives extreme exposure through continuous media coverage. O.J. Simpson, Casey Anthony and Jodi Arias are a few names of persons who have obtained fame through media representations about their lives and crimes committed. I argue that the two documentaries analyzed within this paper also work to introduce and expose Canadian offenders to the growing world of crime reporting. Instead of producing a program specifically focused on the lives and families of the victims of these

horrific crimes, both representations have submitted to a narrative fixated on the development of women into murderers. I acknowledge that the discussion within this paper about both female offenders also contributes to further perpetuating their images.

1.4 Tabloidization of Media and Crime

The process of tabloidization, the creation of visual narratives displayed in newspapers, also adds to the development of ‘celebrity’ and the depiction of female killers in the media. In this section, similarities between the production of newspaper stories and documentaries will be analyzed, where it is asserted that acceptable societal values are reinforced through both mediums.

Chris Greer and Eugene McLaughlin (2012) introduce the term ‘media sacralization’ into a discussion about the media and public trials in relation to the Madeleine McCann child abduction case. The authors emphasize the commercial need to create newsworthy stories that are easily marketable (Greer & McLaughlin, 2012, p. 399). It is argued that the process of media sacralization is embedded into the broader process of media rituals and strives to reinstate an acceptable family structure and upbringing in society. Visually charged representations coupled with media sacralization work to label certain cases, victims and perpetrators as iconic (Greer & McLaughlin, 2012, p. 399).

According to Nils Christie (1986), a ‘trial by media’ spotlights suitable enemies for the public through the news media coverage of trials (Christie, 1986, p. 27). There is a detailed selection process involved with production of this news. Chris Green and Eugene McLaughlin (2012) present different motivations for including visual narratives in the media: “Different forms of ‘attack journalism’ aimed at publicly shaming or embarrassing, removing from office or otherwise undermining the reputation or standing of public

individuals and/or institutions” (p. 412). Throughout my analysis of both documentaries it becomes increasingly apparent the dualistic processes of glamorization and public shaming involved with broadcasting crime narratives.

1.5 Societal Myths

It can be argued that the fascination in producing investigative documentaries about violent female offenders stems from the desire to challenge societal myths about the profile of serial killers and child murderers. Matthew B. Robinson (2011) details major myths of serial killers where it is largely believed that these types of offenders are white, dysfunctional males who are only motivated by sex and the desire to be caught by authorities. The selection of Homolka and McClintic as subjects for the two documentaries challenges these alleged myths, as elements of the gender and class of both offenders are interwoven within the representations. Secondly, the production of both documentaries several years apart works to identify a developmental pattern within Canada—the progression of the violent, female murderer.

The tabloidization of female perpetrators fosters the construction of varying narratives that works to challenge elements of patriarchal society and the accepted behaviour of the ‘woman’. The focus of these two non-fiction documentaries is on the female partner, with little reference made to their male counterparts (“16x9”, 2013) (“The Fifth Estate”, 1997). Jones and Wardle write (2008): “The portrayals of female criminals through the ages has become entrenched with women constructed as ‘mad’ rather than inherently ‘bad’, using mental illness as the only way to explain a woman challenging her ‘naturally’ passive and compliant characteristics” (p. 57). The differences and similarities of narrative construction observed within both documentaries can be dissected with focus on various production

elements. With reference to Les Kuleshov, it is concluded that the image has two inherent signifying values: “That which it possesses itself, and that which it acquires when placed in relation to others” (Jones & Wardle, 2008, p. 59).

The concept of the myth is multi-dimensional when applied to this analysis, where it is argued that these fabricated perceptions serve to influence chosen narratives and stereotypes expressed within the media. Thus, through the continual display of a serial killer as a white male, dysfunctional, sex-craved killer, society becomes engrained with a limiting profiled view of the characteristics of a murderer. This analysis works to evaluate the relations between myths and stereotypes with reference to newspaper reporting within Toronto.

In his examination of popular Canadian newspapers and their coverage of the Toronto area referred to as Jane-Finch in 2007, Chris Richardson (2008) uses a theoretical approach based on myth as a tool to explaining his findings. I contend that the media relies on myths as a means to create explicit narratives. Specifically, Richardson (2008) details the myths of the savage foreigner, broken family and the American inner-city gang through examples of media construction. Richardson’s (2008) analysis of the use of language is significant when surveying various newspaper articles and stems from the work of a French literary theorist.

The semiotic work and model of mythology produced by Roland Barthes, a Marxist thinker, is often used when examining the function of language within society. Barthes relied on the linguistic work of Ferdinand de Saussure when exploring the root of meaning and language (Richardson, 2008, p. 30). As Gilly Smith states in reference to Barthes’ (1957) writing: “Saussure suggested that meaning is structured by the interplay between signified

(the concept), the signifier- ‘the acoustic image’ and the sign or the word” (4). Barthes adds the second sign system of “metalanguage” as a means of relating meaning systems to the connotations of words and images over denotations (Richardson, 2008, p. 30). Richardson (2008) specifically defines the term ‘myth’ as not referring to a concept, image or object (p. 31). Rather it is asserted that a myth is the function of relating signs to their objects, known as the “mode of signification” (Richardson, 2008, p. 31).

In “Mythologies”, Barthes uses the above system as the foundation of his work on myths and meaning (Smith, p. 4). With reference to his application of the second-order of myth to wrestling, wine, stripteases and Einstein’s brain, Richardson (2008) writes: “Barthes de-naturalises these cultural artefacts and forces one to accept the unsettling conclusion that all meanings are social constructed” (p. 32). I contend that these meanings are rarely challenged and that dominant ideologies within society continue to be perpetuated through the two selected investigative documentaries. The narrative of the ‘unfit parent’ in relation the Victoria Stafford’s murder case will be further examined within this paper.

Scholars have adopted Barthes’ mythological analysis when examining newspaper articles and the production of narratives (Richardson, 2008, p. 32). The focus on image, accompanying texts and political or social motivations seen in the analysis of print journalism can be applied to scenes displayed in documentary films. As Smith (2012) describes: “Decoding a message was an essential part of understanding its meaning, taking into account all that contributed to it, from its historical context to its intended audience” (p. 4).

The media’s ongoing obsession with displaying images of crime in popular culture texts is clearly motivated by a strong public demand for continuous consumption of these

stories. Dowler, Fleming and Muzzatti (2006) describe the audience's intrigue with the "underside" of society, with reference to elements of violence and gender, as a mounting fascination with the deviant. I argue that the repetition of narratives involving law and order, justice, retribution and victimization only serve to concretize boundaries between right and wrong. These depictions of crime and civility work to impact audiences in multiple ways, as access to these representations has increased through the expansion of media technology. Surette (2007) states: "Compounding these influences, the technological ability of media to gather, recycle, and disseminate information has never been faster or broader, and mass media has never been more diverse" (p. 2).

Ray Surette (2007) identifies entertainment values and visual images as dominating forces within our new digital age. These forces work to lure audiences to continuously and dependently watch crime shows. Audiences are exposed to narratives of crime through multiple formats throughout their day: magazines, news coverage, radio broadcasts, newspapers, popular movies and television series are a few examples. This accessibility helps to foster a dependency for the audience on stories regarding violence and the law. My discussion of the loyal viewership of prime-time drama series such as "Criminal Minds" in the Introduction supports this argument of addiction for crime consumption. Katz (1987) refers to a 'daily ritual moral workout' in reference to the audience's moral interpretation and consumption of crime news. Viewers are endlessly guided towards adhering and supporting acceptable societal values of justice and are encouraged to be law-abiding citizens.

The function of the newspaper as a medium for the projection of popular societal opinion and expectations is merely a tool in the hands of dominant agencies. In an analysis

of the visual constructions of Maxine Carr, Phil J. Jones and Claire Wardle (2008) pose the question: “How can it be the newspaper’s fault if a particular opinion was gleaned from a particular picture, even when cropped, juxtaposed with others, juxtaposed with text, denied context and repeated relentlessly?” (Jones & Wardle, 2008, p. 67). I contest this question, as my analysis into the production of both selected documentaries will identify sections of manipulation, exaggeration and controlled narration exercised by both broadcasting companies. Although public opinions cannot be directly invented by media representations, programs produced for transmission are able to both manage and relay appropriate reactions for viewers. As Surette (2007) states: “The reason for increased concern is that media snapshots of reality present a specific, narrow slice of the world that has been chosen, reshaped, and marketed to the public” (p. 4). The focus on image, accompanying texts and political or social motivation seen in the analysis of print journalism can be applied to the scenes displayed in documentary films.

Roger Silverstone (1988) contends that technology provides a magical temporal environment for the viewer as a means of asserting the presence of myth and ritual in television programming (p. 91). Arguably, this technological space provides an escape for the viewer. Rothenbuhler (1998) writes: “The point is that watching television draws viewers into another experience, one that is not wholly here and now, one that is not wholly fact or fiction, reality or fantasy” (p. 91). Rooted in discussions of reality television in relation to crime, the two documentaries both provide an escaping experience for the viewer and a level of macabre pleasure.

1.6 The “Carnival of Crime”

Keith Hayward (2010), a cultural criminologist, stresses the importance of the image within crime analysis: “It is increasingly important that *all* criminologists are familiar with the various ways in which crime and ‘the story of crime’ is imaged, constructed, and ‘framed’ within modern society” (Hayward, 2010, p. 9). Although the perceptions of the audience viewing both documentaries requires additional research and resources to complete, I argue the importance in examining elements of transgression and pleasure that are disseminated from these representations. Within a cultural criminology perspective, it is contended that images and the media hold tremendous powers within late modernity (Hayward, 2010). The production of certain representations limits the ‘type’ of crime seen by society. In addition, the construction of certain narratives works to glamourize and make pleasurable specific criminal acts.

Cultural criminology examines the process of cultural forms and expressions, found within a consumerist society, and how they become criminalized through the media (Hayward, 2010). It is contested that crime consciously exists through the arrangement of power between agencies and the media where certain elements of culture become criminalized and are disapproved. Investigative documentaries allow for the viewer to participate in a transgressive festivity known as the carnival of crime. In “Cultural Criminology and the Carnival of Crime”, Mike Presdee (2000) describes two ongoing components of the consumption process within our modern society: “First, crime is created and presented as a commodity to the communications market” (Presdee, 2000, p. 27). Within this section the notions of reality television, celebrity and myths were discussed in relation to the production of media representations. I argue that the constant development of crime in

popular culture texts is motivated by these above notions and the desire to enthrall audiences with 'real' access to sections of the criminal justice system.

Secondly, Presdee (2000) states that this consumption process is: "all-inclusive as consumption will always hold within it the potential for transgression. Transgression and crime thereby become a cultural necessity, if not a given, of everyday modern life" (p. 27). This concept of transgression refers to a brief outward rejection of the social controls found within society. Within cultural criminology, media representations are a created indulgence for the viewer allowing them to transgress into a separate world full of pleasure, referred to as the "carnival" or as the "Second Life" (Presdee, 2000). The spectator is encouraged to escape from the stresses of living within late modernity through a repetitious cycle of the consumption of crime. As Presdee (2000) states: "The relationships between the production and commodification process, and the distribution and consumption process, takes on a supreme significance in late modernity" (p. 57). I include this element of Presdee's perspective of violence and media as a means to contextualize the function and production of crime television. In addition to providing a recluse, I argue that this genre of programming serves as an emotional catharsis for the audience fostering an escape from the monotony of everyday life. We experience no immediate consequences for consuming media violence.

Presdee (2000) asserts that the media is projected into the role of a "safe third party". The audience's desire for consumption of violence and crime cannot be condemned, as the television does not have any relationship to the viewer. The reliance on stereotypical narratives found in media representations serves as a familiar hook for the viewer and encourages re-viewership.

In this section, I have presented links between elements associated with reality television, popular media and programming with the production of both documentaries selected for analysis. This paper does not focus on discovering the motivations behind the production of both investigative representations. I have introduced various goals of the media to serve as a starting point to understanding and analyzing themes of gender and class found in both films. With reference to the popularity of crime narratives within late modernity, this section focuses on media productions as forms of public trial and retribution. Discussions of tabloidization and ‘media sacrilization’ concretize the necessity of audiences to transgress and seek pleasure through the consumption of crime. My arguments within this section work to prepare you, the reader, for my next segment—analyzing the representations of these female offenders.

Section Two – Analysis of the Documentaries

Reality television programming embodies several different forms as stories of transformation and exposition are often produced into a salaciously dramatic event. When first viewing the two selected investigative documentaries under analysis, it became explicitly clear to me the similarities of the narratives displayed with storylines observed in reality television series. Similarly, both documentaries function as forms of entertainment for the viewer. A desire to learn more about the creation and development of female murderers in Canada is evidently a popular and engaging topic with the repetitious development of these investigative films. Within this section, I will examine both representations by drawing comparisons with narratives found in popular entertainment programs.

2.1 Methodological Guideline for the Paper

I have chosen to include the methodological work of Gillian Rose (2001) as a tool when examining and dissecting various production elements associated with both documentaries. Rose (2001) provides a framework for a critical visual methodology to use when interpreting both photographic and filmic materials. Within this approach there is a consideration for the social effects of the material under study. According to Rose (2001), these effects occur at three sites: the site of production, site of the image and the site of ‘audiencing’. For this paper, I focus on the production elements and the visual images displayed while conducting a comparative analysis of both documentaries. As Rose (2001) writes: “An image may have its own effects, but these are always mediated by the many various use to which it is put. An image will depend for its effects on a certain way of seeing” (p. 14). My arguments for the selected narratives and storylines within the representations are supported with reference to particular scenes and multiple production

elements. Note, my analysis does not argue for the motivations behind each documentary, rather it works to unpack interpretations of the visual images produced.

2.2 Gender and Class Elements

When conducting a close analysis of both documentaries, I have chosen to examine how the themes of class and gender are infused and extrapolated within highly produced narratives. A detailed evaluation of selected scenes within the representations will illustrate a strong reliance on class levels as a means to explaining certain elements found within both cases. The reproduction of investigative documentaries that focus on the lives of female murderers and their upbringing speaks to a level of fascination in terms of gender and crime.

There are a multitude of criminological and sociological theories for why crime continues to exist within society. Charles Murray's theory of the "underclass" subculture has received much criticism from scholars such as Steve Hall, as it is argued to be a highly insulting intellectual error (Hall, 2012, p. 119). Presented in 1994, Murray's theory served to label people within the lower class as "deplorable" because of their less than desirable upbringing and poor attitudes towards life (Murray, 1999, p. 27). Labeled as an "underserving" subclass, Murray (1999) emphasizes the high levels of unemployment and production of illegitimate children within the lower class to support his claims of unproductivity. Murray (1999) contends that a poor genetic upbringing derives members of the lower class to find work, which is the ultimate reason for their progression into criminal activity as a means of obtaining employment. Two significant issues that I hold with Murray's perspective are the segregation of social classes and the identification of desirable eugenics.

Contributing to Adorno's notion of cultural hegemony, Murray's (1999) arguments work to further disconnect social positions between the less privileged and the elite. Labeling members of the lower classes as "deplorable" works to assign an emphasis of power onto the "productive" members of society—the privileged. The further segregation of both class groups enforces beliefs that the elite are more deserving and have advantages when making social and political decisions within our community, as they apparently stem from better breeding. Ironically, the notion that 'proper' breeding is found within the upper class is strongly challenged as Karla Homolka, raised in a middle-class family, grew up to be a serial murderer.

The narrative within the Terri-Lynne McClintic documentary focuses on the upbringing of both Victoria Stafford (the victim) and McClintic in addition to the parenting style of Tara McDonald (Victoria's biological mother) and works to show the result of undesirable eugenics ("16x9", 2012). Murray's (1999) perspective on child rearing emphasizes the illegitimacy of children, where they are born outside of marriage and are raised by a single mother, as more than likely to turn to crime because of lack of paternal influence. Essentially, Murray contends that single mothers are unable to raise their children to make positive contributions to society. I find this perspective to be highly generalizable as other family structures, such as divorce, or socializing agents are negated from having influence on the behavior of lower class children. Within my analysis of the McClintic documentary, parallels with Murray's problematic arguments will be uncovered as a similar narrative was used in the production of this film.

As Murray (1999) classifies citizens of the lower class with a list of characteristics such as being lazy, selfish, stupid, hedonistic, immoral and usually drunk, negative

stereotypes of poor people continue to be perpetuated where they do not participate in the “ideal” social culture. Note, Murray (1996) is of a “higher” breed where he was raised in an upper class Republican family and neglects to identify and expose white-collar crimes within his work. I include Murray’s work into this paper as a means of identifying a polarizing perspective on class of the successful elite versus the criminally poor. This perspective transcends into the production of investigative documentaries.

A tremendous focus has been placed on examining and determining the motivations for ‘male’ acts of violence within academia. The topic of masculinity is commonly debated as being ambiguous or generalizing in relation to gender performance. Furthermore, previous research conducted on female offenders has overtly focused on the crimes committed by poor and racialized women. By selecting to do a critical analysis of the representations of violent female offenders with Canada, I deliberately want to highlight crimes committed by white women situated within differing social classes.

Anya Loomba (2005) writes of the colonial representations of white women as being morally superior and inherently pure. Contrastingly, depictions of racialized women have commonly referenced animalistic comparisons—I am reminded of the horrific exposition of Sara Baartman as a public attraction in the nineteenth century (Abraham, 1998). These opposing illustrations and gender stereotypes continue to manifest both within reality television programming and in investigative films. The theme of gender is controversially interwoven within the selected documentaries where narratives serve to challenge positions of superiority directed towards white females within society. Both Homolka and McClintic are forever identified as “white female killers”. However, the two offenders are also portrayed as victims of circumstance within these representations. This perspective appears

to be included within the films to help semi-excuse the women of their crimes. Further exploration into the multi-layered discussion of gender will be provided throughout my analysis of each documentary.

2.3 Production of Non-Fiction Documentaries

With emphasis on the performance, confession and narrative, as visible elements displayed in fictional films, Keith Beattie (2004) references the origins of documentaries to cinematic productions. As this paper is rooted within a larger discourse of investigative documentaries serving as a new form of reality television, my analysis will center on various production components that contribute to the creation of a dramatic text. I am reminded of Beattie's (2004) perspective: "Popular factual entertainment commonly replaces the exposition of formal questioning contained in the interview procedure with seemingly spontaneous or structured moments of testimony and confession" (p.198).

The term "popular factual entertainment" has been adopted when analyzing the goal of production elements of a documentary (Beattie, 2004). My analysis will display a shift from the documentary serving primarily as a form of public education towards a means of pleasure. I address the consumption of crime narratives as a means of transgressing order and obtaining pleasure within Section One of this paper. Although the documentaries under review are produced within the Canadian context, I have chosen to compare these representations to the American reality television market as there are more series produced within this arena. As Peter Steven (1993) ascertains, with reference to the CBC, the documentary has been designed to align with the programming on U.S. networks in order to be considered a mainstream producer of the dominant image (1993, p.54). In this instance,

the dominant images of violence and gender are manipulatively packaged to appease salacious desires to consume crime held by viewers.

With reference to theatre and performance, it is argued that both investigative documentaries serve as a stage for the transmission of selected narratives. Relying on specific stereotypes when producing a storyline, these documentaries are effective in perpetuating common labels through generalized comparisons of the 'deviant' with the 'morally sound' citizen. I have identified selected narratives and genres used in the production and contend an overemphasis on elements of gender and class within both documentaries.

My exploration of the Karla Homolka documentary will uncover a romantic narrative that can be allocated within the genre of love-stories. Descriptions of Bernardo and Homolka's courtship, wedding and marriage are all included within this representation, produced through a fantasy-type lens ("The Fifth Estate", 1997). The inclusion of home videos, photographs and love letters serve to display a charming and whimsical relationship between the young lovers ("The Fifth Estate", 1997). I make a comparison of this romantic narrative to storylines of love and lust found within reality television. This portrayal of Homolka and Bernardo's love affair receives tremendous focus throughout the duration of the film, which further leads to discussions of violence and victimhood within the relationship ("The Fifth Estate", 1997).

The notion of 'acceptable' family values is a significant theme broadcast in the "16x9" (2012) documentary profiling the life of Terri-Lynne McClintic. The documentary works to display incomplete families and unfit parents and position this narrative as reasoning behind the development of female murderers in Canada. The depiction of Victoria

Stafford's mother, Tara McDonald, and the upbringing of Victoria's killer, Terri-Lynne McClintic, will be explored within this section with reference to scenes in the documentary.

2.4 Unpacking the Narrative

Peter Steven (1993) describes a shift in documentary film making since the 1980's within Canada. He asserts that 'new' documentaries: "fuse forms, contents, and contexts in a new way" while simultaneously encouraging education and the transmission of facts (Steven, 1993). There are multiple narratives at play within both selected documentaries that require critical attention within this paper. The most obvious narrative, clearly articulated to the viewer at the beginning of both representations, is one focused on exposing the upbringing and "road to murder" of both Homolka and McClintic ("The Fifth Estate", 1997)("16x9", 2012). A limited interpretation would conclude that this above narrative is the sole plotline and purpose of both investigative documentaries. My analysis will uncover multiple layers of storylines challenging beliefs that these films are produced for the single purpose of educating audiences about violent female criminals within Canada.

The narrative element within any representation plays the critical role of guiding the audience through an intended storyline. Inserted with specific purpose, the relators within both investigative documentaries appear in different forms. In Terri-Lynne McClintic's film, an interview conducted with the victim's mother, Tara McDonald, is threaded throughout the representation serving as the narrative force (16x9", 2012). As the journalist conducts face-to-face interview segments with McDonald, the theme of appropriate and acceptable parenting becomes glaringly apparent to the viewer. In comparison, a dramatic reenactment of Homolka in her jail cell, reciting letters she had written to various friends and family, is one of the chosen narration styles within this 1997 documentary ("The Fifth Estate: Karla

Homolka”, 1997). In conjunction with journalist testimony and professional interviews this reenactment allows Homolka to have a voice throughout her representation (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997).

The variances in narrative style within both films *does* follow a specific stylistic formula in creating a detailed story for the viewer. Both films detail the crimes committed, provide a historical background on each offender, show interview footage conducted with medical and legal professionals and include interrogative footage of the criminals (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997)(“16x9”, 2012). In “Television Culture”, John Fiske (1994) analyzes the importance of narratives in storytelling where he writes: “Narrative structure demonstrates that people and places are not anarchic and random, but *sensible*, and then combines the paradigmatic sense of places and people with the syntagmatic sense of events and time into a grand signifying pattern (Chatman, 1978)” (Fiske, 1994, p. 129). I argue that terms ‘*sensible*’ and ‘pattern’ are critical to the production and my analysis of these two investigative films.

My motivation for conducting a close analysis of both selected documentaries stems from a desire to expose elements of selectivity involved in the production of creating representations that are consumed by the public. I do not agree that the intention of either film is to solely expose the “road to murder” for each offender. Images, dialogue and interviews are carefully inserted into scenes to help establish a specific story. In the McClintic video it is glaringly obvious that each image displayed is shown at the moment a corresponding dialogue is recited. As the journalist speaks of the presence of law enforcement, the camera pans to an image of a police car driving (“16x9”, 2012). A discussion of Woodstock being a safe community is matched with serene images of a

downtown street or park (“16x9”, 2012). This coupling pattern works to cement a deliberate storyline for the viewer. I argue that the strong reliance on legal and medical testimony in the Homolka documentary also contributes to the formation of a specific pre-determined narrative (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997).

Through my analysis of the narratives displayed within both documentaries, I am reminded of the folkloric work of Vladimir Propp. Providing an in-depth structural analysis of hundreds of Russian folk tales, Propp’s work identifies the continued reliance on specific narrative formations within written texts (Fiske, 1987). Labeled as “functions”, the structures that he identified are examined based on their contribution of advancing the narrative within a piece (Fiske, 1987). Divided into six sections: preparation, complication, transference, struggle, return and recognition, Propp asserts that these categories encompass specific storylines that are recycled within folk tales (Fiske, 1987). My investigation into the production of both documentaries shows that each representation relies on traditional storylines, centered on class and gender, as each piece contributes to growing narratives displayed in popular culture. Thus, there is a broader social and political context that guides the formation of the two documentaries.

My analysis of the films will also consider how people are manufactured into being victims. I contend that the production of these victims is an additional narrative within both representations that rivals the storylines of violence and crimes committed. My analysis will provide examples of when both female offenders are portrayed as victims of their own circumstances. Robinson (2011) states: “Indirect tactics include describing the perpetrator using sympathetic language, emphasizing problems suffered by the perpetrator...and characterizing domestic violence as a problem of two people in a relationship rather than

one” (p. 121). Similar strategies are adopted in the filmic representations of McClintic and Homolka.

2.5 First Representation: The Tales of “Barbie and Ken”

2.5.1 Love and Reality Television

Every year dozens of reality television series are produced based on a premise of individuals finding love. Whether contestants travel to exotic lands or participate in arranged dating, there is evidently a strong demand for shows that help unite people into ‘long-lasting and perfect’ relationships. I am reminded of the dramatic television series “The Bachelor/The Bachelorette”, “Average Joe”, “Married by America” and “Who Wants to Marry a Multi-Millionaire?” where participants are famously swept into a fantasy world, often producing a façade for viewers of finding ‘true’ love. Richard M. Huff (2006) writes of these programs: “When the dating genre got underway, viewers and the media latched onto the notion that couples, because all of what unfolded on was air was supposed to be real, would end up either married or in serious relationships” (p. 118). Elements of reality become blurred as producers broadcast these fairytale narratives.

The genre of the ‘love story’ is also visible in the production of the Karla Homolka documentary, where the narrative displaying Homolka and Bernardo’s romance mimics elements found within reality shows about love. Portrayed as the Canadian “Barbie and Ken”, this blonde hair and blue-eyed couple appeared to be in a healthy, loving relationship. Nicknamed after the famous collectable dolls, both murderers were originally perceived to be wholesome and incapable of committing such heinous acts. Within the documentary, the love story narrative functions to reestablish traditional gender roles, where Homolka is depicted as the pleasing and obedient wife. Matthew B. Robinson (2011) asserts: “Generally

speaking, women are less likely to be victimized by crime, less likely to commit it, less likely to be arrested, less likely to be convicted, less likely to be sentenced to prison or jail, and generally are sentenced to less time than men” (p. 119). Garnering fame for being a female offender in Canada, Homolka’s crime and later conviction serves as the overarching narrative within the documentary and is critically inter-twined with storylines of affection and victimhood.

2.5.2 The ‘Perfect’ Love Story

Produced and broadcast within weeks of Homolka’s release from prison, the documentary commences with a reenactment of Karla sitting in a prison cell painting her fingernails (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997). As a narration voice begins to recite an alleged letter written by Karla, the audience learns of Homolka’s desire to impress Bernardo when she sees him in court next (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997). The soft sound of piano keys playing in the background contributes to an overproduced and eerie scene (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997). Themes of obsession and self-consumption are displayed as the viewer gets a beginning glimpse into the corrupted marriage of Bernardo and Homolka.

Moments later, police footage of an interview conducted with Homolka displays the murderess speaking of the victimization she experienced while married to Bernardo (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997). Homolka testifies that Paul would aggressively instruct her to commit violent acts, thus she positions herself as a casualty in Bernardo’s reign of terror (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997). As the camera flips back to a studio set where seven televisions of varying sizes are positioned in the background, each displaying the same image of Homolka suffering from two black-eyes, Trish Wood, the designated

reporter for this program, speaks of the multiple personalities of Homolka (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997). As Homolka’s psychiatric assessments were never tested in court, Wood suggests if these reports were publicly scrutinized the public would see a very disturbed individual in Karla (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997). The contradicting narrative of Homolka being both a victim and agitated murderer begins within this scene, where images of an abused Karla never leave the screen.

Allegedly suffering from Battered Spouse Syndrome, Homolka’s victimhood is fiercely defended within this documentary (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997). As the CBC reporter persistently fought for accountability by Homolka for her actions, the general production of the film outlines a distressed and seemingly manipulated woman who was ‘forced’ to be involved with these crimes (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997). An interview conducted with Dr. Andrew Malcolm, who completed a psychiatric report with Homolka, depicts this murderer as a victim under the domination of Paul Bernardo: “She was a naïve, simple, innocent, helpless child who was impressed by what her parents thought of her catch and what her little girlfriends thought of her catch. She was overwhelmed by this fellow” (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997). The decision to incorporate this statement into the film further supports the argument that Homolka fell prey to her husband’s rule. Dr. Malcolm asserts: “She was rendered helpless by him in the course of the first six or seven or so months of their association” (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997). A perspective presented in the video describes Homolka’s position as a victim under Bernardo as a force contributing to her involvement in the multiple rapes and murders of young females (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997).

Similar to the format of reality television series based on love, this documentary shows a progression of the relationship between Homolka and Bernardo from first encounters to their wedding day (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997). Through interviews conducted with the couple’s friends and Homolka’s co-worker, the audience is informed of their first meeting at a pet food show at a suburban hotel (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997). Displaying an image of the pair smiling straight on to a camera, the reporter states that Homolka was seventeen when she first met twenty-three year old Bernardo (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997). Still a child, it is affirmed that the attraction was instant as Bernardo was called Karla’s ‘knight in shining armor’ (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997).

The sex life of the couple is described as ‘kinky’ within a few brief scenes, where reporting suggests that Homolka spoke of abuse to her psychiatrist (consultation footage with the psychiatrist included within the documentary to affirm this statement) (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997). Interview with friends contend that Homolka was a willing participant in these sexual acts with Bernardo (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997). At this point in the representation, it is overtly clear that the narratives of victimhood and vindictive killer are being simultaneously developed. As a viewer, the constant flipping of positions is confusing within a documentary where the truth about Homolka’s life is attempting to be portrayed.

As an image of water flowing off of an embankment, lit in soft blue lighting, Homolka’s romantic engagement to Bernardo at Niagara Falls is shared (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997). Later scenes show video of Homolka and Bernardo on a carriage ride the day of their wedding (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997). The contrast

between the ‘love story’ narrative and themes of deviancy develop as police footage interviewing Homolka interject the sweet romantic storyline (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997). One significant difference between the Homolka and McClintic documentaries is the inclusion of a narrative depicting the relationship between the female murder and their male counterpart (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997)(“16x9”, 2012). The viewer learns nothing about the connection between McClintic and Rafferty in this second representation—focus is solely placed on McClintic’s role in the gruesome murder (“16x9”, 2012).

As the documentary progresses through an account of the crimes committed, elements of devotion and obsession begin to emerge within the relationship between Homolka and Bernardo (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997). Suddenly, a ‘perfect’ romance between two young lovers is challenged as examples of an irrational Homolka emerge. The developing jealousy of Karla towards her younger sister, Tammy Homolka, is described as a result of Bernardo’s intrigue with this young female (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997). Interview footage with Karla’s friends suggests that Tammy was a virginal offering to Bernardo, a wedding gift from Karla (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997). It was for this reason that Karla aided in the victimization of Tammy. It is within this portion of the documentary where the viewer is continuously reminded of the ‘love’ relationship between Homolka and Bernardo, even while the reporter recounts the crimes and deaths of their victims.

2.5.3 Produced Style of the Film

The Homolka documentary follows a prescribed production pattern where the distinguished narratives of the victim, love story and serial murderer are repetitively

reinforced through the incorporation of several visual elements. A narrative describing the entire relationship between Homolka and Bernardo develops over the course of the film with the inclusion of home videos, photos and love letters from the couple (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997). Additional audio and visual interview footage of Homolka with authorities is woven throughout the documentary in an attempt to add her perspective to the story (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997). As eerie piano music is continuously played throughout the majority of scenes, the reporter articulately outlines singular details about the murders of Tammy Homolka, Kristen French and Leslie Mahaffy (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997). Noticeably, the representation focuses narrowly on Homolka’s relationship with Bernardo and does not include family testimony from the victims’ families (“The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka”, 1997). This is another significant difference with the second documentary on Terri-Lynne McClintic. When the storyline begins to fixate on the murder of the young women, the reporter interjects with an account of the state of relationship between Karla and Paul.

2.5.4 Power and Discourse

Gillian Rose’s (2001) discussion of Foucault and the notion of discourse incorporates the notion of power and society. Discourse is powerful in certain ways where human subjects are repeatedly produced through these notions: “Foucault’s account of power is that power is not something imposed from the top of society down on to its oppressed bottom layers. Power is everywhere, since discourse too is everywhere” (Rose, 2001, p. 137). Discourses are contended to be powerful because of their ability to be productive (Rose, 2001, p. 137). Thus, the discourses within this documentary can be deemed as powerful because they function to shape a particular narrative of wife and lover out of Homolka.

Foucault's ideas of power differ from the work of Antonio Gramsci and his concept of cultural hegemony described in Section One. Richard V. Ericson, Patricia M. Baranek and Janet B. L. Chan (1987) summarize Gramsci's position about the news media: "They can act as a powerful force, forging particular versions of community through their communications" (p. 28). The news media works to construct order through the interests of dominant groups within society (Ericson, Baranek, Chan, 1987, p. 28). Exploration into the Homolka documentary uncovers a complicated relationship between power and discourse. For example, police interviews conducted with Homolka are threaded throughout the representation ("The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka", 1997). Homolka is seen recounting details of her marriage along with her interactions with the victims ("The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka", 1997). These scenes continue to project notions of order and retribution towards this murderer, as she is portrayed as a peculiar creature of delinquency.

A differing narrative from the McClintic documentary, the Homolka representation incorporates the concept of the 'ideal', in-love relationship and family. This discourse interplays with the themes of murderer also projected within the film. Elements of panic and fear are infused in these opposing narratives where Homolka is initially depicted as an 'average' Ontario resident later turned murderer. Robinson (2011) further states: "In fact, female behavior typically comes to the attention of the media when it conflicts with the norms of society with regard to appropriate behavior by women" (p. 119-120). It is argued that Homolka is portrayed as a subject with varying character roles, including that of the victim within this documentary.

2.6 Second Representation: The Development of a Murderer

2.6.1 Produced Segments of the Film

The “16x9 Road To Murder: How Terri-Lynne McClintic became a Killer” (2012) documentary is infused with images of police security and surveillance videos as a narrative detailing the crimes of Terri-Lynne McClintic and Michael Rafferty is recited for the audience. There are three main segments found within this representation that serve as building blocks to exposing the dangerousness of McClintic to Canadian viewers, I argue. An overview of McClintic and Rafferty’s crimes is carefully narrated, within the first segment, by a blending of reporting, conducted by Jennifer Tryon, and testimony from the victim’s family (“16x9”, 2012). Displaying panning images of the peaceful scenery within Woodstock, Ontario, helps to support the narration of this town being a safe community (“16x9”, 2012). Surveillance videos and the images of police cars, investigators and courtrooms are incorporated into this section establishing a strong presence of law and justice within this case (“16x9”, 2012).

The second segment of this documentary is focused on providing a detailed synopsis of McClintic’s childhood and abusive upbringing. Anonymous interviews are conducted with members of McClintic’s family and social circle, in addition to the inclusion of several images of her partying (“16x9”, 2012). An interview with an expert is incorporated into the narrative of McClintic’s childhood abuse leading her to commit heinous acts (“16x9”, 2012).

The third segment displays elements of life post-tragedy. The audience witnesses Tara McDonald, the victim’s mother, getting a memorial tattoo and sharing special memories of her late daughter (“16x9”, 2012). The documentary concludes with a summary

of McClintic's continuous violent actions within prison, this element is not depicted in Homolka's representation, where she continues to transgress ("16x9", 2012).

2.6.2 Described Intentions for the Film

At the beginning of the documentary, a reporter indicates that the story of Terri-Lynne McClintic is less well known and requires further investigation ("16x9", 2012). There is an apparent need to expose and dissect the life of McClintic pre-crime, as though it is part of a routine in reporting. Later scenes portray McClintic as a victim of childhood abuse and detail the lack of parenting she received ("16x9", 2012). Further along in the film, it is asserted that the victim's family wants Victoria's life to be remembered with minimal focus on the circumstances of her death ("16x9", 2012). However, the video is strongly centered on exposing the upbringing of McClintic where the memories of the victim appear to be second priority within this representation ("16x9", 2012). Thus, I argue that this documentary is produced to be a 'reference model' of parenting for audiences. A narrative focusing on the 'ideal' patriarchal family structure within this film supports my claim.

2.6.3 "Family Values"

Performing life interventions has become a common programming staple within the realm of reality television. Networks continuously compete to produce compelling and dramatic transformation series that will attract audiences at mass. Successful programs often encourage a dramatic transformation of health, beauty, employment, self-esteem, home decorations etc. Laurie Ouellette and James Hay (2008) describe the intent of social workers or professionals is to offer forms of "right living" to individuals of the lower class. These individuals believe: "positive changes of habit and conduct would improve the quality of life for these groups, and consequently stabilize society as a whole" (Ouellette & Hay, 2008, p. 175).

The idea of providing or instilling “right living” for individuals stems from the dominant perspective of sociability perceived by the elite. There is a preferred routine for individuals to function and live within society. The relationship between power and culture is explored within the concept of cultural hegemony (Richardson, 2008). Richardson describes: “Gramsci expounds the idea of organic intellectualism as a way of combating a social order that privileges the few and subordinate the masses throughout their own consent” (Richardson, 2008, p. 162). Thus, the stereotype of “family values” derives from the motivations of the privileged and the media where images of ideal parenting and family structure are continuously enforced on public viewers.

Chris Richardson (2008) unpacks the myth of ‘family values’ in his exploration of media representations of the Jane-Finch neighbourhood (p. 143-144). The myth of the broken family and hyper-sexuality are narratives continuously depended on by newspapers when detailing the activity within this Toronto community (2008, p.143-144). In Joe Friesen’s (2007, June 16) article “Where Boundary Issues Turn Deadly”, the refusal of a boy named “Ice” to be involved within the drug trade is articulated where it is stated: “unlike most of his friends, Ice lives with both of his parents” (pp. A.16-17). Richardson (2008) further expands upon the implications of this perspective: “In this sentence, Friesen seems to attribute the boy’s higher moral stance to his position within a nuclear family” (p. 144). This example supports the argument that deviant behaviour is synonymous with a fractured family structure.

Within the McClintic documentary, I have identified the stereotype of “family values” as a dominant narrative and suggest the presence of three main pillars in support of this claim. The portrayal of Tara McDonald, the victim’s mother, is riddled with references

to lower economic class and emphasizes her previous troubles with drug abuse (“16x9”, 2012). The documentary also depicts the young victim’s upbringing, Victoria Stafford, referencing the relationship with her father and her daily school routines (“16x9”, 2012). Finally, the investigative film dedicates an entire segment to examining Terri-Lynne McClintic’s childhood as a victim of abuse and a drug addict (“16x9”, 2012). Within each pillar, the stories of the three females are assessed through a depiction of “acceptable” family values. Thus, through this narrative elements of class and gender are highlighted and extrapolated.

Pillar One: “The Perfect Mother”

Tara McDonald, the victim’s mother, is predominantly displayed as a partial narrator within this investigative documentary (“16x9”, 2012). A depiction imbued with images and an underlying storyline of lower class and weak familial structure serve to challenge McDonald as a parent (“16x9”, 2012). Note, my analysis of McDonald is strictly reduced to a refined narrative displayed within this single documentary. I am in no way commenting on the ‘actual’ parenting style of Tara McDonald or Rodney Stafford.

From the beginning of a sit-down interview conducted between McDonald and the reporter, it is clear that the elements of family structure and proper parenting were being journalistically questioned (“16x9”, 2012). McDonald is forced to defend her previous life decisions as her struggles with drug abuse are highlighted throughout the duration of the documentary (“16x9”, 2012). Further discussion in the “*Pillar Two*” section below will address an infused narrative of McDonald’s drug abuse with Victoria Stafford’s school routine depicted in the early scenes of the film.

McDonald's position as a contributing interviewee in this documentary seemingly changes once her previous relations with McClintic at an illustrated drug shack are displayed ("16x9", 2012). A changing narrative works to incriminate McDonald into a storyline about the development of McClintic as a murderer. Reference to prior postulations that the relationship between both women serves as the reasoning behind Victoria's abduction and murder is made during the McDonald's interview ("16x9", 2012).

Pillar Two: "The Perfect Childhood"

As the documentary functions to outline the events of a horrific crime and provide a detailed account of all the individuals involved, the format in which this information is articulated for the viewer must be critically examined. The documentary carefully presents information about the victim's school routine in conjunction with a storyline of how life "was not perfect" for Stafford's family: Victoria's mother was separated from her father and trying to get sober by attending a methadone clinic ("16x9", 2012). As soft piano music, reminiscent of sounds heard in a horror film, is played the camera slowly pans by images of Stafford's school and house ("16x9", 2012). Next, the audience sees McDonald sitting outside in a wooded area with the news reporter as an interview is conducted ("16x9", 2012). A loveable photo of Victoria smiling is shared ("16x9", 2012).

Most noticeably, a description of Woodstock, Ontario as being a safe community for children is articulated while simultaneously the narrative of a 'broken-home', one infused with drug abuse, is emphasized ("16x9", 2012). This is an early example of how a layering of stereotypes and acceptable narratives are incorporated into a larger critique of family values and 'ideal' upbringings.

Although the focus of this investigative drama is on the development of McClintic as a murderer, the narrative within the opening minutes of this documentary continues to emphasize Victoria's daily schedule in conjunction with McDonald's ("16x9", 2012). Speaking candidly to the reporter, both women depicted on screen, McDonald contends that it was not uncommon for Victoria "to play around with her friend in the yard" when they lived closer to school ("16x9", 2012). After McDonald's testimony, the narrator references reports of Tara being: "high on oxy-cotton when Victoria was supposed to be coming home from school that day" ("16x9", 2012). The presentation of McDonald's struggle with drug abuse overlaps with discussions of Victoria's daily routines highlighting for the viewer inconsistencies with traditional family narratives and values ("16x9", 2012). As an audience member, I questioned the inclusion of the storyline surrounding McDonald's previous addictions as it was expressed that the intent of this documentary was to uncover the progression of Terri-Lynne McClintic into a killer. It becomes noticeably clear that a sub-narrative of class and gender is resting on patriarchal notions of traditional family structures.

The relationship between Victoria and her father, Rodney Stafford, is briefly mentioned within the documentary ("16x9", 2012). Although Rodney was often interviewed on the nightly news, the journalist quickly narrates that Stafford did not see his daughter for six months prior to her disappearance, as she lives with her mother and stepfather ("16x9", 2012). The subtle inclusion of these facts serves to contribute to a narrative of weak family ties.

The representation of Victoria's innocence, through the inclusion of photographs and shared stories, does not work to detract from her memory ("16x9", 2012).

Pillar Three: "The Perfect Template for Disaster"

The elements of class and gender are extrapolated within the documentary, featuring the crimes of Terri-Lynne McClintic, where her life-story as a troubled teen from a broken home is highlighted ("16x9", 2012). Rose (1991) describes Michel Foucault's notion of discourse as both a theory and methodology in relation to visual methodologies: "It refers to a group of statements which structure the way a thing is thought, and the way we act on the basis of that thinking" (p. 136). It is emphasized that through discourse a greater understanding of the world and how it is comprehended is achieved (Rose, 2001, p. 136). This element of societal interpretation along with power provides an appropriate approach to examining visual representations found in documentary films.

The Foucauldian term 'discursive formation' refers to the manner in which meanings are connected and formed in a particular discourse (Rose, 2001, p. 137). This notion functions in relation to another object. For example, images of both masculinity and femininity rely upon the other for their characteristics: "Mulvey argues that phallogocentric visuality has a structure in which images of women depend on particular forms of masculine seeing" (Rose, 2001, p. 137). This relative defining of images and objects is clearly observed in the Terri-Lynne McClintic investigative film.

The narrative of the dysfunctional family is depicted in the McClintic documentary as a means of contrasting the nuclear household system ("16x9", 2012). At the halfway point of the film, the narrative turns towards exploring the upbringing of McClintic ("16x9", 2012). It is suggested that there were 'clues' present throughout McClintic's rearing that were indicative of her disastrous behaviour ("16x9", 2012). Raised by a stripper-friend of her biological mother named Carole McClintic, Terri-Lynne was exposed to violence and

had open opportunity to consume drugs from a very early age (“16x9”, 2012). Corroborating interviews are conducted with the biological son and daughter of Carole McClintic, of whom she ultimately lost custody (“16x9”, 2012). These interviewees speak of their mother’s lack of parenting skills and struggle with multiple vices (“16x9”, 2012). Images of a run-down home where the McClintic’s lived, a local Woodstock shack where drugs are commonly purchased, and self-pictures of Terri-Lynne flashing hand symbols and wearing a bandana are displayed to the viewer (“16x9”, 2012). These images and the accompanying narrative function as a foreboding tale of the breeding of a murderer.

Ultimately, the section depicting McClintic’s upbringing holds a narrative that emphasizes her lack of opportunity to develop into a productive member of society. As a viewer, it is easy to associate criminal activities with a childhood infused with drugs and abuse—this selected narrative is correlated through the inclusion of interview footage with McClintic’s family. Relying on traditional ideas that crime is bred within the lower class, reference to Murray’s arguments above, this storyline is highly problematic and generalizing. Noticeably missing from this documentary is both a detailed account of the relationship between McClintic and her criminal partner Michael Rafferty plus the development of the abduction plan (“16x9”, 2012). McClintic mentions a brief conversation between her and Rafferty pre-crime within a police conducted interview, however the news reporter does not delve into the inner-workings and thoughts behind committing the horrendous crimes (“16x9”, 2012). The inclusion of this information would most definitely interrupt a narrative equating murder with lower class breeding and would provide a different dimension to the development of McClintic as a predator.

2.6.4 Creation of a Victim

As the storyline of ‘acceptable’ family values is accentuated through the representation of Carole McClintic and Tara McDonald, an underlying narrative of Terri-Lynne McClintic as the victim is produced (“16x9”, 2012). As “Cosmosspring”, a commentator on the YouTube documentary page, stated in a discussion board: “EVERY adults in her life failed Tori. Just like adults failed Terri-Lynn” (“16x9”, 2012). This statement is indicative of the one contended motivation behind the production of this film—to determine a reason behind McClintic’s crimes. As emphasis is placed on the upbringing of McClintic, in a poor drug and abuse ridden home, it becomes accessible to the viewer to see her as a victim of her childhood.

The inclusion of interviews conducted with the two biological children of Carole McClintic also aids in the production of Terri-Lynne as a victim (“16x9”, 2012). As McClintic’s son states within an anonymous interview about his biological mother as unfit: “You never knew what you would say that would set her off. She drank a lot and she would fly off the handle for little to no reason” (“16x9”, 2012). A female adult, who took over raising Carole McClintic’s son, states in the film: “Terri-Lynne’s life was wrought with mental, physical and sexual abuse and no one stepped in to take the child away” (“16x9”, 2012). The Children’s Aid Society was warned of Terri-Lynne’s danger but nothing was done to remove her from Carole McClintic’s care (“16x9”, 2012). Through these testimonies it is apparent that Terri-Lynne’s innocence was stripped away from her starting at an early age. The documentary emphasizes that Terri-Lynne’s lack of parenting is the root of her deviant behaviour.

Dr. Marshall Corembloom, a child psychiatrist at the Hincks-Dellcrest Centre in Toronto, speaks of the coupling of devious mother and abuse in the creation of a monster within this documentary: “No question that physical and sexual abuse has a very direct physical impact on the brain and, of course, a psychological impact on the mind” (“16x9”, 2012). The choice to include this information and detail the creation of a murderer requires further investigation. Sympathy is generated for McClintic and her circumstance, as the images and narrative within this film place more attention on this offender as a lifelong sufferer of abuse and negligence.

2.6.5 Additional Perspectives

These depictions of McDonald and McClintic function as evidence for how class, through the reference of ‘acceptable’ family structure, is used as reasoning behind the occurrence of certain crimes. In “The New Spectacle of Crime”, Gareth Palmer (1998) describes the function of technology in representing class within documentaries: “Yet they do so by criminalizing those who live on the fringes—the poor, those of ethnic origin, the underclass. This helps marginalize uneconomic strangers” (p. 368). The concept of marginalization applies the depiction of these women as ‘uncivilized’ and ‘abnormal’ members of society. In relation to Foucault’s notion of discursive formation, the othering of these women serves to create a category of ‘normal’ and ‘civilized’ for the viewer.

2.7 Follow-up Thoughts

My analysis of both investigative documentaries is centered on the selection and depiction of several problematic and summarizing narratives. I have previously argued that both investigative films serve as form of public trials for viewers to participate in community shamming through consumption. In addition to receiving pleasure from consuming

storylines focused on the salacious topic of female murderers, audiences are possibly unaware of the manufactured narratives depicted within investigative documentaries. Not solely serving as an educational tool, these selected films are highly produced mediums that are also meant to entertain.

Rose (2001) identifies a compositional modality within her explanation of examining the sight of the image itself, where she argues that there is always an intention and selected arrangement of images within a larger text. Within this section, I have detailed the elements of perceived intention and have specified the genre of the “love story” and the narrative of “family values” within both representations. Discourses are not only deemed powerful based on their locations within certain institutions but also their ability to claim absolute, according to Foucault (Rose, 2001, p. 138). The above two narratives are considered powerful discourses because of the visual and storyline arrangements produced within the site of the image.

Finally, the production and broadcasting of both documentaries work to establish a pattern or ritual within the realm of reporting about female Canadian murderers and crime. In addition to overwhelming press and news coverage, the creation of televised investigative films has now become a staple within the creation of crime narratives. I make links to reality television programming within this section to help further contest that these films should be considered popular entertainment.

Conclusion

“In the city, crime is taken as emblematic of class and race. In the suburbs, though, it’s intimate and psychological – resistant to generalization, a mystery of the individual soul.”

Barbara Ehrenreich

As I work to summarize the main arguments of this paper and add my closing remarks to this topic, I find it only fitting to include a quote about crime taken from reality television. After all, the overarching narrative of this paper works to draw parallels between reality series and the production of investigative documentaries—arguing the presence of these representations as a sub-genre in the ever-expanding world of entertainment television.

Spoken during an episode of “Criminal Minds”, the above quote highlights multiple themes that I have explored within this paper. Narratives of the associations between crime and class are specifically investigated in the McClintic film, where generalizations about the development of criminals is commonly linked to social class and lack of opportunity (“16x9”, 2012). Discussions of the intimacy of crime are depicted within the Homolka documentary with reference to the relationship between her and Paul Bernardo (“The Fifth Estate”, 1997). I argue that this narrative works to submit this representation within the genre of “love stories”. Finally, the psychological states of both murderers are either defended or exposed within both investigative films leading to their portrayal as also victims (“The Fifth Estate”, 1997)(“16x9”, 2012).

Reality television programming offers a transportable space where viewers are able to seek pleasure and transgress into an alternate world: “Experience in the mundane world of practical reality is confined by time, space, and social boundaries...Dreams, fantasies, and various meta-mundane worlds do not respect these limitations” (Katz, 1987, p. 95)

Reference to the work of Mike Presdee (2000) and tenets of cultural criminology details the public's obsession with consuming texts centered around crime within late modernity. The production of both investigative documentaries, several years apart, clearly displays a pattern in audience consumption with the desire to learn about the growth and development of female murderers.

Contrastingly, I argue that these documentaries are repeatedly produced as cautionary tales to the public. Severing to enforce acceptable societal morals and images of 'ideal' citizens, these representations function as a template that details the evolution of female killers in Canada. This template is highly problematic as it generalizes the development of murderers, making links to themes of low social and economic class and gender. Not everyone who is born to a stripper and raised within a drug and abuse infested home will automatically progress into becoming a child murderer. I briefly include the elements of pattern or ritual within this paper as a means of dissecting the similarities in discussions of class and gender in the production of both documentaries.

Referencing Katz's (1987) concept of the 'daily ritual moral workout', two comments about the function of the audience within the production of investigative documentaries can be observed. Firstly, narratives of crime are only growing in popularity for viewers where stories about violence, law and order are now easily accessible through technology. I retrieved copies of both documentaries through the popular video-sharing website "YouTube". Secondly, 'acceptable' societal values are re-established for the viewer as common patriarchal and gender narratives are overtly displayed.

The manufacturing of victimhood within both documentaries is appalling as narratives work to semi-excuse the reprehensible actions of both Homolka and McClintic.

Emphasizing Homolka and Bernardo's unstable relationship and detailing McClintic's troublesome upbringing within the production of the films leaves viewers with conflicting interpretations of these murderers ("The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka")("16x9", 2012). The incorporation of interview footage with various family member and professionals also contributes to a multiplicity of perceptions that can be observed. Norman K. Denzin (2001) writes: "The interview is an active text, a site where meaning is created and performed...But every interview text selectively and unsystematically reconstructs that world, tells and performs a story accordingly to its own version of narrative logic" (p. 26).

Final scenes and reporting serve to summarize selected narratives within both of the documentaries. The image of a smiling Homolka, wearing a dark navy sweatshirt and a pair of blue jeans, is depicted on screen as a portion of her police testimony is played within the final moments of this film ("The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka", 1997). Homolka speaks of her assertions to Bernardo about further participation in his future murders ("The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka", 1997). Speaking about a lease ending on her car and a loan she was anticipating from her parents, Homolka is adamant about not being 'manipulated' into further criminal activity ("The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka", 1997). She states at one point: "I was going to do something before the loan is co-signed and before he made me murder another girl there is no way I was going to go through any of those events" ("The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka", 1997). I am left criticizing the ending of this documentary. The sections stating "he made me murder" and "no way I was going to go through" help to contribute to the narrative of Homolka as a victim ("The Fifth Estate: Karla Homolka", 1997). This scene is the final takeaway message for the viewer.

In comparison, discussions about Terri-Lynne McClintic conclude with the reporter standing outside of the Grand Valley Institution for Women in Kitchener, Ontario (“16x9”, 2012). The audience learns of McClintic’s ongoing violent behaviour within prison: “despite working on finishing her high school education and getting counseling” (“16x9”, 2012). This narrative re-emphasizes notions of violence and class where it is only assumed that she is inherently violent as a result of her troubled upbringing.

Motivations for Paper

The development of this paper’s research originated from my avid consumption of crime-based television series. I am drawn to dissecting the production of Canadian media programs and have focused my analysis specifically on investigative documentaries that are broadcast on national networks. As this paper works to make links between the fields of criminology, communication and cultural studies, I have consciously produced two sections of this paper that work to enforce my primary argument of investigative documentaries functioning as a form of reality television. Section One is dedicated to examining the role of reality television within late modernity and the intersections with themes of crime and justice. Links between the celebrity and criminal are contended with reference to high consumption patterns of crime. In Section Two, a comparative analysis of both documentaries is conducted with reference to multiple selected scenes. Links to elements of reality television, emphasis on storylines centered on “ideal living” and “love stories”, are made in order to establish similarities between investigative documentaries and this popular form of programming. A common narrative voice is incorporated into this paper, as a means of making my arguments accessible to all audiences.

Further Research

As previously noted, my initial work within this paper does *not* directly examine the role of the audience and their consumption of these documentaries. Investigating audience interpretations about both representations would be helpful in contributing to an analysis of the effects that these investigative films have on society. The introduction of police and legal perspectives would also serve to round out this project.

Additional examination focusing on the element of race in relation to the production of narratives within both selected documentaries should be conducted. I suggest that the work of Edward Said (2002) and the concept of Orientalism could be incorporated into this analysis.

Although my motivations for this paper focus specifically on conducting a comparative analysis between two investigative documentaries, further research into the political and social climate surrounding the production of both films would provide greater depth to this project.

“The healthy man does not torture others. Generally, it is the tortured who turn into torturers.”

Carl Jung

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