

Pipelines, Prostitution and Indigenous Women

A Critical Analysis of Contemporary Discourse

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L'auteure emploie une analyse critique et écoféministe pour examiner le discours contemporain présent dans la prostitution et la construction des oléoducs. Elle démontre que ce qui apparaît comme un discours éthique basé sur les droits de la personne, c'est en fait une stratégie cachée qui perpétue la domination sur les autochtones et sur leurs terres.

Rauna Kuokkanen suggests that sexual and physical violence, which she characterizes as the most severe manifestations of oppression for women, must be examined as part of a “larger framework and ideologies of domination” so that they may be fully understood (238). Eco-feminist scholarship has carried out this exercise, exposing the ideologies necessary to initiate and perpetuate violence against women, and through this process have directly linked violence against women to resource development (e.g. Frith; Shiva; Smith, A.).

It has now been almost three decades since Vandana Shiva argued that a major shift had occurred to support western patriarchy, as the sanctity of life was substituted for the sanctity of science and development (xii). Through this shift, which was largely

facilitated by the scientific revolution and predicated by philosophers such as Descartes, nature became understood as a source of raw material. As such, the land was no longer eligible for ethical consideration and thus subject to violation and exploitation.

Since then, other scholars have demonstrated the persistence of these ideologies. For example, Katherine Toland Frith, through her examination of popular advertising, demonstrates the link between the oppression of nature, the oppression of women, and claims of technological superiority (195). She too explains that nature, which was once considered sacred, became characterized as nothing more than a machine. Once desecrated, nature was cast as something that was dangerous and polluted. This allowed for the sanctioning of patriarchal ideologies and dominance over women, animals, and lands. As evidence, she points to truck advertisements boasting about men's ability to tame any terrain and ads that equate women to nature, in the form of playboy bunnies and foxes, among other things (Frith).

Through an examination of oil and pipeline development and prostitu-

tion we are able to see how this strategy of domination plays out. While there is no consensus by academics and the public that oil and pipeline development and prostitution are in fact forms of violence, applying Andrea Smith's understanding of violence, which is structured around power relations, including the power to control someone's life (120), we can see how they can be characterized as such.

Land and Women Are Characterized as Object

Oil and pipeline development, as well as prostitution commoditize land and women. In relation to prostitution, Kathleen Barry points out that commodification is a severe form of objectification that disassociates women from their bodies, ultimately rendering the body as a “thing” (cited in Sutherland 141). In oil extraction and pipeline development, oil is disassociated from the land allowing it to be extracted at an alarming rate. According to the Alberta Energy Regulator, in 2014 production (mined and in situ) reached about 2.3 million barrels per day (Government of Alberta).

As Objects, Land and Women Are Denied Ethical Consideration

Because land is characterized as a “thing,” instead of an interconnected living system, discourse surrounding environmental responsibility is curtailed. Examples include an interview with a pipeline executive who attributes the higher levels of cancer in Fort Chipewyan to the fact that “everyone there smokes and drinks, [the] high radon gas exposure from the surrounding uranium mines, and the number of elderly residents” (Wyatt 64); and, the ongoing debate among regulators, government, and companies about the appropriateness of factoring climate change in pipeline approval processes (e.g. Bakx).

For women involved in prostitution, their extreme treatment as a “thing” can be seen through under policing and disproportionate rates of violence. When crimes have been committed against women involved in prostitution they are more likely to be unpursued and to go unpunished (Phoenix; Sherman et al.). Between 1991-2014, 34 percent of homicides of women in the sex trade remained unsolved in comparison to 20 percent of homicides of women who were not involved in the sex trade (Rotenberg). Moreover, being Aboriginal compounds under policing (e.g. HRW) and the risk of violence. A study of 105 Aboriginal women involved in the sex trade found that they were subject to extreme and frequent acts of violence (Farley et al.), whereas, between 1997 to 2014, Aboriginal women were over represented among homicides of women involved in the sex trade, comprising over one third of homicide victims (Rotenberg).

Women and Land Are Cast as Dangerous and in Need of Domination

Evidence of this can be found in the over-policing of women involved in prostitution as the perpetrators

of crime (Phoenix), while men who solicit women are considered to be engaged in “high-risk” sex acts on the presumption that women in the sex trade are drug users and/or are engaged in unprotected sex. Akin to the trend of under policing, Aboriginal women are also more likely to be over policed exacerbating this issue. For example, 34 percent of incarcerated women in Canada are Aboriginal, and in the last decade the increase in Aboriginal women serving federal sentences has almost doubled in comparison to a less than 30 percent increase for men during the same time period (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women 28).

In the case of land, particularly in the north, landscapes are cast as “active, wild, untamed, and often harsh and even penetrative,” in need of conquering by male tourists (Pritchard and Morgan 897). More covert examples include public education materials on bear safety or safe fish consumption which largely negate the structural and human-based reasons (e.g. pollution, deforestation, environmental policies) for the safety risk.

While the above connections I have made between prostitution, oil and pipeline development, and domination are not new, they provide a framework for understanding how both prostitution and oil and pipeline development (re)assert domination over Indigenous women and land through their dehumanization, objectification, secularization and othering, and thus are acts of violence.

Oil and Pipeline Development, Prostitution, Indigenous Women, and Land

Indigenous women and land are disproportionately impacted by both pipeline development and prostitution. On or near the previously proposed Energy East pipeline route that would have carried bitumen

from the Alberta oil sands to the Maritimes, there are 52 First Nations communities and 75 towns (Council of Canadians), with First Nations being approximately eight times more likely than other communities to be on or near the proposed pipeline route (Ray “Pipeline Development”). The disproportionate impact of oil and pipeline development on Indigenous communities, as Andrea Smith notes, is just one instance of the widely documented vulnerability of marginalized communities to environmental destruction. The Church of Christ’s Toxic Wastes and Race 1987 report, as cited in Smith, found race as the most statistically significant variable when locating commercial hazardous waste facilities (55).

A similar trend in regards to overrepresentation exists for prostitution as it is estimated that in Western Canada the majority of women in the sex trade are Aboriginal (Totten and NWAC 14). Additionally, Aboriginal youth in Canada are thought to be overrepresented in prostitution at rates of 14 percent to 60 percent (Assistant Deputy Ministers’ Committee, 2001, cited in Sethi) and 2006 Census data shows that despite comprising 3 percent of the adult population, 50-70 percent of street prostitution is engaged in by Aboriginal peoples in some cities (CEDAW). In the context of oil resource development, this overrepresentation of violence may be even more severe, as one study found that in areas of Alberta where oil and mining flourish, there is a higher density of Aboriginal girls being trafficked (Sethi).

Andrea Smith illuminates this overrepresentation and the potential correlation between oil and pipeline development and sexual exploitation of Indigenous women through unpacking the relationship between sexual violence and colonialism. She shows that sexual violence elicits a dominant response that is necessary

to colonize people and lands, and extract resources. In this worldview, Indigenous women and the land are both seen as “inherently rapable” (10). This stance is shared by Robyn Bourgeois who posits that sexual exploitation and violence against Indigenous women is necessary for the continuation of settler colonialism in which Canada has a vested interest.

women face and Mother Earth being continually subject to intrusive and violent large-scale extractive activities. We are prime targets in the pursuit of domination:

Indigenous women commonly experience human rights violations at the crossroads of their individual and collective

oral communication present in social and political environments enact and reproduce dominance, inequality, and power abuse (Dijk 352). The use of CDA within an Indigenous context is particularly valuable. Critical Discourse Analysis asserts that recipients of discourse tend to accept the information provided to them. This is especially true if it is

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In addition, a study conducted by Melissa Farley and colleagues found that 62 percent of participants (who were Aboriginal women involved in the sex trade), saw a connection between prostitution and colonization, and felt that the devaluation of women in prostitution and the devaluation of Aboriginal peoples were one in the same.

As an Anishinaabe woman, the link between violence, Indigenous women and resource development comes as no surprise to me. From an Anishinaabe worldview, the earth is our mother, and we, as women, share much in common with her. What I have been taught is that akin to Mother Earth, we have responsibilities as life-givers, caretakers, and teachers within our own communities and nations. With these responsibilities, Indigenous women and Mother Earth are integral to the governance and wellness of Indigenous communities. Historically Indigenous women held power related to the distribution of resources like Mother Earth, however, both are increasingly challenged in their role to govern as evidenced in the disproportionately high rates of violence and poverty Indigenous

identities. Environmental pollution and the destruction of ecosystems are good examples of such violations, as they undermine indigenous peoples’ control of and access to their lands and resources and often compromise women’s ability to take care of their children and families due to health problems, contamination, displacement, and increased violence. (Kuokkanen 231-2)

Having shown that prostitution and oil and pipeline development reproduce power relations that are essential to dominate women and land, respectively, I will use critical discourse analysis to identify and expose covert themes of domination which attempt to situate prostitution and oil and pipeline development as an antithesis to domination and violence, in turn necessitating further violence and settler colonialism

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis was formed to provide a mechanism to study the ways in which written and

from a source deemed trustworthy, if people are unaware of the larger context of the issues, and if it does not contradict personal beliefs and experiences (Nesler et al. cited in Dijk 357).

For many Canadians, there is still a lack of awareness about the structural and historical oppressions that have occurred within the country, and as a result lack context surrounding the tensions that exist between Indigenous-settler relations (See Godlewski, Moore, and Badnasek; Sloan Morgan and Castleden). Monique Woroniak and David Camfield note that this tends to be true even in struggles against capitalism, which all too often lose sight of struggles against colonialism. Further to this, encompassed in the term “white fragility,” many Canadians possess an expectation of racial comfort alongside a low tolerance for racial stress (DiAngelo) and take for granted a certain set of ideologies and worldview which are privileged within our society. Indigenous scholars such as Linda Tuhiwai Smith have pointed at the academy’s euro-centricity and urged the Indigenousization of the academy.

While as an approach, CDA re-

mains relatively flexible, a fundamental requirement of Critical Discourse Analysis is the recognition that underlying assumptions and structures must be exposed and become explicit. Thus, critical discourse analysts acknowledge that nothing, including scholarly discourse, is without value. Instead of ignoring inherent structures, analysts make their role explicit and seek to understand, expose, and resist social inequality (Dijk 352).

This approach is consistent with an Anishinaabe relational worldview in which it is customary to share your social location when engaged in knowledge production and dissemination so that others can situate what you have shared within a web of relationships (Ray and Cormier). I have approached this analysis as an Anishinaabe woman whose Traditional territory encompasses lands on and surrounding Lake Superior. Opwaaganasiniing has been subject to numerous current and proposed development projects, including the previously proposed Energy East pipeline. This pipeline would have run directly through my Traditional territory, infringing upon my Indigenous rights. I have experienced multiple expressions of violence and have observed multiple expressions of violence through my work with an Indigenous women's organization. I have also had access to privileged information about the violence experienced by Indigenous women who are involved in the sex trade.

For these reasons, I have found the theoretical underpinnings of eco-feminism, which identify women as synonymous with land, resonant and have used it in my analysis. As I have shown elsewhere (Ray *I Am Turtle Woman*), in the Anishinaabe worldview, the role of life-giver, both biologically and metaphorically, is a sacred and spiritual responsibility. Only when this is understood outside of a relational worldview is it in danger

of the objectification and essentialism that critics of eco-feminism have warned about (Carlassare). Vanessa Watts expands on this argument in her discussion about Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe creation stories which ingrain within a worldview the concept of land as feminine:

However, essentializing categories of Indigenous cosmologies should not be measured against the products of EuroWestern mistakes. Nor should Indigenous peoples be the inheritors of these mistakes. Rather, to decolonize or access the pre-colonial mind, our histories (not our lore) should be understood as they were intended in order for us to be truly agent beings. To disengage with essentialism means we run the risk of disengaging from the land. (31-32)

A Critical Analysis of Contemporary Discourse

Through a critical analysis of discourse related to prostitution and oil and pipeline development, I have identified the following three themes: 1) The domestic nature of Indigenous women's bodies and lands makes their use ethical; 2) The use of Indigenous women's bodies and lands supports self-determination; and, 3) Pipelines and prostitution enrich the lives of Indigenous women. I demonstrate that these themes, while covert, presented through an ethical and rights-based framework, perpetuate the domination of Indigenous women and lands.

The Domestic Nature of Indigenous Women's Bodies and Lands Makes Their Use Ethical

A strategy used to support oil and pipeline development in Canada is to position Alberta oils sands in juxtaposition to foreign oil. The former

Premier of New Brunswick, Frank McKenna had said that the then proposed Energy East pipeline route to transport bitumen "helps Eastern Canada rid itself of its dependency on foreign supplies of oil that often come from countries with considerable instability and values that are not ours" (Np). In this juxtaposition, Canadian oil sands operations are characterized as "just, legal, and fairly monitored" (Wyatt 45).

Fraser, Mannani, and Stefanick identify a similar argument in a 2011 Fraser Institute report. The report positions Canadian oil as a more ethical choice, based on a number of indicators including rights and freedoms, claiming that Canadian women are "free," unlike Iranian women (175). The authors argue that this is presumptuous and does not mean that oil production has a differential impact on the equality of women around the globe. They point to similar performances by Iran and Canada on various equality indicators such as levels of education, health service delivery, and labour opportunities as well as reported accounts of male-dominated organizational cultures in the pipeline industry, and documented gender inequality related to wages and flexibility for childcare.

Characterizing this androcentric culture as "frontier masculinity," Sara Dorow explains that gendered practices and normative kinship are paramount to the business of oil extraction, and that oil companies may be well aware of such (276). The Big Spirit Campaign, for instance, links family and community prosperity to oil to counter the "negative reputation Fort McMurray had gained as a barely liveable boomtown of raucous single men" (276).

The corollary that domestic is ethical can also be found in the sex trade as Aboriginal women's experiences in prostitution are often approached through a choice-based lens as a means

to forward a rights-based agenda:

While we might understand the historic factors, including policies, stereotypes, and the dehumanization of Indigenous people, as conditioning the overrepresentation of Indigenous women in sex work, we cannot see these things as pre-

cluding Canada's absence of measures to alleviate poverty and address the socio-economic status of Indigenous women which "significantly contributes to the perpetuation of their vulnerability to prostitution and its negative effects" (CEDAW 30-31). A choice/rights based discourse paradoxically also attempts to propose a solution within the structure of the

meeting was entirely focused on international sex trafficking, and when I began to speak about Indigenous women I was told that it was outside of the confines of our discussion despite the fact that most sex trafficking cases in Canada are domestic.

Whether it be oil and pipeline development or prostitution in Canada, the common discourse put forward is

Indigenous women's experiences become conflated with all experiences in the sex industry despite the fact that Indigenous women are over represented in extreme forms such as street prostitution, are more likely to experience violence or be murdered while in the sex trade, and are subject to severe forms of systemic oppression which greatly limit choice.

determining or overdetermining Indigenous women's fates such that they become stripped of their agency. (Hunt 35)

I contend that this choice/rights based approach situates Indigenous women's experiences in the sex trade as ethical. In doing so, Indigenous women's experiences become conflated with all experiences in the sex industry despite the fact that Indigenous women are over represented in extreme forms such as street prostitution, are more likely to experience violence or be murdered while in the sex trade, and are subject to severe forms of systemic oppression which greatly limit choice.

Anette Sikka explains that the overrepresentation of Aboriginal women in the sex trade is viewed as a "natural consequence of her life story" when in reality it is directly related to the systemic oppression Indigenous peoples have faced, including colonization, residential schools, and community breakdown (1-2). In addition to denying the structural role that Canada has played in the domination of Indigenous women, this discourse makes the continued complacency of the state invisible, in-

liberal democracy (Trauger), which gains its legitimization through settler colonialism and the domination of women and lands.

Consequentially, transformative change is unforeseeable and the thought of domestic trafficking becomes inconceivable. Despite the fact that Aboriginal women are at a greater risk of being sex trafficked, they are often not viewed within this lens (Sikka 1-2). In Farley et al.'s study of Aboriginal women in the sex trade, half of the women who participated were found to meet the legal definition of sex trafficking. Moreover, Canada has been critiqued internationally for insufficiently addressing the issue of trafficking of Indigenous women in their National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking (e.g. CEDAW) while as of 2016, Ontario was still without a provincial trafficking strategy despite having high rates of violence against Indigenous women and the highest number of trafficking offences in the country (ONWA). My own observation also corroborates this understanding. On one occasion, I attended a provincial-level meeting on sex trafficking and was the only Indigenous person in the room. The

that both are ethical because they occur in a context (Canada) that respects individual rights and agency. This in turn provides justification for the occupation of Indigenous lands and women in ways that are increasingly violent. When we put this rhetoric within a larger socio-political context we see how in fact the opposite is true and that freedom and agency are severely constrained, perpetuating a cycle of domination.

The Use of Indigenous Women's Bodies and Lands Support Self-determination

As an intensification of the above, this theme presents the option to see the use of Indigenous lands and women as an expression of "self-determination" and "nation-building." Claims of prostitution as self-determination can be found in Aboriginal sex worker and outreach program that operate under a sex workers' rights framework that claims a place in the broader struggle for Indigenous rights, self-determination and sovereignty (Muelen, Lee, and Durisin cited in Hunt 91). For example, the Native Youth Sexual Health Network notes that "self-determination exists

in the everyday work of reclaiming our bodies,” whereas the organization POWER and Maggie’s state that sex work can “restore a sense of autonomy to those who have experienced certain forms of oppression” (3). In an extension of this discourse, the agenda of nationhood is sometimes tied to cultural identity, enacted in the sex trade by the display of cultural traits such as autonomy and openness.

As demonstrated above, social and political structures have placed constraints on Indigenous women that make choice difficult, let alone self-determination. Melissa Farley (“Human Trafficking”) explains that the conditions required for genuine consent include physical safety, equal power, and viable alternatives that are rarely present. Aboriginal women are particularly impacted as they are more likely to experience extreme poverty and are disproportionately represented in street prostitution, at times comprising more than 70 percent of the population. In reality, the false “choice” paradigm is oppressive to Indigenous women and detracts from the larger social and political structures that re-create power relations (Smith, A. 100).

Instead of promoting self-determination, the sex trade has been a site where the ongoing legacy of colonization continues. The over representation of Indigenous women in the sex trade supports a hierarchy (Barry). In this hierarchy of race, Indigenous becomes the consumed and non-Indigenous the consumer. Such an arrangement is a necessity of settler colonialism and is one that has been central to the ongoing occupation of Indigenous lands by the Canadian State (Bourgeois). Through this discourse of self-determination, this hierarchy of power becomes normalized and Indigenous women are positioned as complicit in the settler colonial project.

Furthermore, claims that prosti-

tution enact traditional Indigenous beliefs about sex such as openness and autonomy, and in the process re-assert a traditional identity work to naturalize the embedded hierarchy of power. Not only does this discourse neglect the drastic changes in gender relations and Indigenous-settler relations shaped by patriarchal colonization and insinuate culture as the reason for the over representation of Indigenous women in the sex trade it also distorts Indigenous concepts of sexuality with western patriarchal values. This negatively impacts cultural sovereignty—an arguable precursor and necessity for self-determination (Gross).

Joe Dion, a member of Frog Lake First Nation and oil producer puts forth a nation-building argument in relation to oil and pipeline development: “We’ve got to have this access so we can build this country, and this is a time for First Nations to take lead. And we will” (Canada’s pro-pipeline). In a similar vein, Frank McKenna has proclaimed that the Energy East project is the new Canadian railway, and “nation building at its very best.” McKenna’s reference to the railway is telling because of its historical role in “nation building” through dominance over a particular group or land. In 2006, the then Prime Minister, Stephen Harper issued an apology to the families of Chinese workers for practices that were racist and exclusionary. During the construction of the railway, Chinese workers were brought to Canada and faced low wages and unsafe working conditions, which injured and killed hundreds. Once the railway was complete, and there was no longer the same need for immigrant labour, a head tax was imposed on Chinese people to restrict immigration (Oh). The railway also facilitated expansion and was a key stimulus for the treaty-making process. The agreements made with

First Nations in those treaties historically were never fully honoured and remain unhonoured today.

Contrary to this discourse, pipeline and oil companies and/or energy regulators have faced numerous legal challenges by First Nations on the grounds of their infringement on Aboriginal, Treaty and/or Title rights (e.g. Tsleil-Waututh Nation; Aroland First Nation; Ginoogaming First Nation) and the freedom for Indigenous peoples to assert agency in relation to oil and pipeline development in their territories is severely constrained. The two examples that follow clearly demonstrate how Indigenous peoples, contrary to claims of self-determination, are forced to negotiate the protection of their Aboriginal, Treaty, and Title rights in the face of oil and pipeline development in a precarious and severely constrained state:

The previous Conservative Government’s Anti-Terrorist Act (Bill C-51), which was supported by the Liberal party, passed under the premise that it would work to protect Canadians and assure their freedom yet it has been repeatedly cited by Indigenous activists as a mechanism to “stifle opposition to oil pipelines” and suppress assertion of Aboriginal and Treaty rights. (“RCMP planning”)

These concerns are warranted as the Bill “criminalizes protests that may be seen as interfering with ‘the economic or financial stability of Canada’” and has already been asserted in relation to First Nation protests over oil development (“RCMP planning”). Precluding the bill, project SITKA became operational in 2014. Under the purview of the RCMP, the project investigated and catalogued 313 Indigenous activists based on a “perceived potential threat that their

expression might pose to the state” (“CJFE condemns project SITKA”). In some instances, profiles which included detailed personal information such as photographs, birthdates, phone numbers, email addresses, vehicles driven, and mobility were created and likely shared among law enforcement and industry partners (“RCMP tracked”).

Underdevelopment references the notion that Indigenous peoples and lands are lacking in some degree. Conceptualized as an individual deficit, this “lack” can be attributed to structural inequities and/or cultural differences that Eurocentric thinking devalues. Corporations want to appropriate Indigenous lands that from their perspective are not properly “de-

skills training programs (Lahey cited in Fraser, Mannani and Stefanick).

In reference to my own community and the previously proposed Energy East pipeline, TransCanada cites its commitment to “community investment, capacity development, and economic opportunities.” Yet the pipeline, if it had moved forward, could have jeopardized our commu-

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In oil and pipeline and prostitution discourses of nation building and self-determination one must pose the critical question of whose nation building and self-determination interests are being served. Such discourses only work to conceal the domination of Indigenous women and lands by the settler state, reproducing the conditions necessary for settler colonialism to persist.

Pipelines and Prostitution Enrich the Lives of Indigenous Women

Common discourse positions oil and pipeline development as an economic stimulus that enriches the lives of Indigenous peoples and communities. I observed this first hand at pipeline development engagement sessions which promised jobs, both direct and indirect, as well as the potential for political leverage and infrastructure dollars to address failings among other industry partners and government. While at face value this discourse appears to advocate for a basic standard of living for Indigenous peoples, clandestinely the narrative reads that Indigenous peoples and lands are underdeveloped.

veloped” or not “properly subdue[d],” (Smith, A. 56) and Indigenous peoples want to ensure that the land remains suitable for hunting, fishing, and other sustenance purposes. We see this in Indigenous peoples’ opposition to pipeline development throughout Canada because of the direct impact it can have on forest and freshwater foods and quality of life.

A strategy to address this perceived “underdevelopment” is to cast Indigenous peoples themselves as “underdeveloped” in an attempt to facilitate a paradigm shift that mandates compliance with resource development. This is commonly pitched as the need to build capacity and stimulate job creation for Indigenous peoples. For example, one oil executive characterized Aboriginal peoples as lacking “business skills” and “right-brained,” while another referred to a job creation opportunity as “affirmative action for Aboriginals” (Wyatt 46-7). Like Indigenous peoples, women are also viewed as underdeveloped, with economic opportunities in the oil industry dependent on additional education, childcare, healthcare, transportation, housing, employment equality, and

unities’ ability to participate in tourism and the enviro-tech industry which were identified as high investment opportunity areas in an economic development feasibility study (Millier, Dickinson, Blais Consulting).

Dependency theorists are among the many who have critiqued a modernist approach to community development, and have showcased how neoliberal conceptions of development have dismantled community economic and governance structures and placed communities in a state of dependency. Brenda Parlee explains that Indigenous communities in Alberta suffer ecologically and socio-economically at a disproportionate rate due to resource development and through her use of a capitals framework to examine the impacts of the oil industry on Indigenous communities in North Alberta, concludes that characteristics of the “resource curse,” an inverse relationship between resource abundance and community economic development and growth, are present (433).

Like oil and pipeline development, prostitution is also framed as a way for women to enrich their lives by earning a wage, “sex work can empower

women...by providing them financial security” (POWER and Maggie’s 3). Popularized is the argument that the sex trade allows women to have job flexibility and earn money in a short amount of time. This discourse negates the conversation that society has created a hierarchical system that deems certain segments of the population as “underdeveloped.” Nuclear energy has employed similar messaging, insisting that if not for nuclear energy “life [would be] full of drudgery” for women and “lives would be miserable (or more miserable) for those who are considered less than equals (Nelson 295).

This stance induces Indigenous women’s susceptibility to exploitation and domination. The coupling of social hierarchy with the legitimization of prostitution as a source of income provides a framework for social coercion in which marginalized groups, including Indigenous women, are placed into a category where prostitution becomes their most acceptable and viable option for economic stimulus. For example, in Germany women were concerned that they would lose their welfare benefits if they were unwilling to work in the sex trade (Hall cited in Farley and Lynne).

While in public discourse the word underdeveloped is replaced by buzz words such as “capacity building,” “financial security,” “community infrastructure projects,” “impact benefit agreements,” or “empowerment” the bottom line is that Indigenous women, land, and communities are seen as “deficient” or “underdeveloped,” and as such are not innately deserving of the security and benefits that the majority of Canadians naturally enjoy. This could be in the form of providing companies consent to engage in resource development on traditional lands to gain access to basic infrastructure such as roads or clean water, or it could mean giving

someone access to your body in exchange for food to eat or a place to sleep. In both scenarios violence is conditioned as a predicate of life enrichment, including fulfillment of basic needs.

Conclusion

From an Anishinaabe point of view, women and land hold innate value. Both are considered sacred and we have a responsibility to treat them with the utmost respect. To support and perpetuate this understanding, the Anishinaabek as well as other Indigenous peoples had extensive social structures and traditional economies in place. However, these were disrupted with the onset of colonialism. The capitalist economy today requires the persistence of patriarchal and colonial relations to sustain continuous growth. Continuing the dispossession, poverty exploitation, and degradation of women and land are essential for this project (Shiva 11). The state also has a vested interest, as its legitimacy is predicated on the domination of Indigenous women and lands.

Prostitution and oil and pipeline development function as sites that support the practice of dominance and thus violence. Through discourse analysis, I have shown that a covert process of power reproduction can be masked and facilitated by invocations of “ethics,” “rights,” and “enrichment and capacity.” Thus, such discourse must be understood and examined within a historical and wholistic framework that recognizes social and political power.

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SHIRLEY ADELMAN

A Nightmare

Two in the morning,
I wake from a nightmare,
my heart beating faster,
than a car speeding by.
For a moment, I am
a seven year old,
hearing footsteps,
approaching—
——my room
helpless until,

I turn on the light and,
see myself,
an older woman, alone
at home, where only
she holds the key.

Shirley Adelman is a writer of poetry and creative non-fiction. Her work has been published in academic, literary, feminist, and medical humanities journals in the United States, Canada, Israel, and South Africa. Much of her writing deals with issues of social justice, both historical and present.