Case Study: Nova Scotia Burning

Exploring Racial Discourse in Nova Scotia Media

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my wonderful husband, Lenn Roberts. We only just met when I began

this journey five years ago and we are soon ready to start another one together. You have stuck

by me through my greatest points of success and my lowest moments of disappointment. I am

forever grateful for your support and understanding. Thank you for holding my hand and pushing

me to always do my best. To our little "Fury": I can't wait to meet you!

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Abstract

This case study examined *The Chronicle Herald's* "Nova Scotia Burning" feature series, produced in 2011 in response to a cross-burning incident that occurred in Hants County, Nova Scotia in 2010. The study used postcolonial theory to examine the discursive practices in the text to understand how issues of race, representation, and racism pertaining to Black Nova Scotians were treated. The analysis illuminated a very complex process whereby the media itself attempted to destabilize some of the dominant discourses surrounding race and racism in Nova Scotia, and yet, in the end, reproduced them through their use of language, imagery and meaning making. This study contributes to our understanding of how issues of race and racism are treated in Nova Scotia media.

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Chapter One: Introduction

In February 2010 two brothers, Nathan and Justin Rehberg, burned a cross in front of the home of Shayne Howe and Michelle Lyon in Hants County, Nova Scotia. The act of burning a cross, the criminal charges and subsequent trial and sentencing sparked local, provincial, and national media coverage. The brothers, who are White, were convicted of inciting racial hatred and criminal harassment late in 2010 for their actions against Shayne, who is Black, and Michelle, who is White. The brothers received their sentencing for the crime in January 2011. A month following the sentencing *The Chronicle Herald*, Nova Scotia's provincial newspaper, published a feature series examining the cross burning entitled "nova scotia BURNING,"[1] which explored what happened, the motivations for the crime, the perpetrators' lives and future implications.

This case study examines the media texts comprising the "Nova Scotia Burning" feature series to understand how issues of race, representation, and racism are treated. Events such as the demolishing of a Black community in Halifax (Africville Genealogy Society [AGS], 2010; Nelson, 2001, 2011), the systematic isolation of Black perspectives (Nelson, 2001, 2011; Pachai, 2007; Walker, 1999), the loss of Black Loyalist history in Nova Scotia due to arson ("Black Loyalist History Goes Up In Flames," 2006), and racial disputes at Halifax high schools (Nicoll, 1999) are illustrative of a province with a history of racial tensions and discrimination. However, there has been little empirical research (See Nelson, 2001, 2011; Titus-Roberts, 2012) that has examined how Nova Scotia media treat matters involving race and racism in Nova Scotia. This is despite a strong theoretical link between media and discourse contributing to identity and meaning making in society (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000; van Dijk, 1993, 2006, 2009b).

The purpose of this case study research is to contribute to the body of knowledge about media discourse, race, and racism in Nova Scotia by critically examining the discursive practices that are present within this particular case. Cultural theorist Stuart Hall (1996b, 1997b) aptly points out that texts are interconnected and meanings and discourses can be shared and presented across a multitude of formal and informal texts. The presence of such discourse across various spectrums reinforces each other (Said, 1978). As with other researchers (Fairclough, 1992; Phillips & Hardy, 2002; van Dijk, 1993; Wodak & Meyer, 2009), my starting assumption is that discourses produce social meaning, and discourses--and their sources--privilege some ideas, people, and experiences, at the expense of others. Likewise, examining the discursive practices evident in this particular series, while confined to this particular case, will also provide insights and considerations to explore about race, racism, and representation in Nova Scotia media, which, as detailed in Chapter Five, remain largely unexamined. In this case,

> studying discursive practices involves paying attention not only to
>
> the production of meanings by participants … but it also requires
>
> attention to how employment of such resources reflects and creates
>
> the processes and meanings of the community in which the local
>
> action occurs. ("What is Discursive Practice?" 2008, p.2)

My examination of the media coverage comprising the "Nova Scotia Burning" series considers the historical treatment of Black Nova Scotians in the province, the role of media in producing, reproducing, and challenging dominant social discourses, and the usefulness of a postcolonial lens to examine the media coverage. As discussed in the literature review (Chapter One), the idea of a social institution or organization such as media producing or reproducing a discourse considers the role of discourse in enacting social reality (Phillips & Hardy, 2002) and

prescribing social action (Jäger & Maier, 2009) and the "…opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language" (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 10). Likewise, as discussed in Chapter Three, postcolonial theory provides a framework from which to consider text and social practices when issues of race and power are under analysis. It presupposes that (a) language is power and discourse produces meanings and ideas that shape our understanding and knowledge of ideas in society (Fairclough, 1992; Phillips & Hardy, 2002; van Dijk, 1993, 2006, 2009b), and (b) the impact of colonisation--and the privileging of Europeans or White interests, values, etc., over other cultures--is so pervasive that such principles are deeply embedded in society (Prasad, P., 2005; Said, 1978; Young, 2001). Such taken for granted assumptions affect social and institutional systems of knowledge (Hall, 1997b; Nayar, 2010; Phillips & Hardy, 2002; Said, 1978).

I believe the "Nova Scotia Burning" series provides a present-day, timely example from which to begin to assess discursive practices about how Black Nova Scotians, and issues affecting them, are reflected and represented in media--an important step to understanding larger social discourses present in society. My interest in this topic is threefold. First, I observed the presence of racial power inequalities in this particular series through a critical discourse analysis of the media text (Titus-Roberts, 2012), and I was interested in examining the series to more thoroughly understand the meanings and discursive practices present within the text.

Second, as examined in the literature review in Chapter Two, there is limited research to date that has examined systematically media's treatment of racial topics in Nova Scotia, even though there is a substantial body of literature that exists already documenting the role of media in contributing to racialized discourses and the dichotomization of groups based on race, colour, and class (Crawford, 1998; Fleras & Lock Kunz, 2001; Hall, 1996b, 1997b; Henry & Tator,

2002, 2003, 2006, 2009; McCoombs, 1994; Miller, 1994, 2005/2006; Tator & Henry, 2000; van

Dijk, 1991).

Third, I am interested in creating a space to support individuals and groups to share their

own experiences beyond those produced by the dominant power relations and exchanges

between groups and systems in society. According to sociologist Dorothy Smith (1990),

> The ruling apparatuses are those institutions of administration,
>
> management and professional authority, and of intellectual and
>
> cultural discourses, which regulate, lead and direct, contemporary
>
> capitalist societies. The power relations which come thus into view
>
> from the standpoint of an experience situated in the everyday
>
> world are abstracted from local and particular settings and
>
> relationships … distinctly mediated by texts. (p. 2)

Using the texts produced through media--an important professional authority in society-- I am

interested in examining the extent to which multiple voices and perspectives are present--and to

whom they belong--when developing and sharing what is known about individual and collective

experiences.

In qualitative research, researchers make an interpretation of what they examine, and

"their interpretations cannot be separated from their own backgrounds, history, contexts, and

prior understanding" (Creswell, 2009, p. 176). It is with this in mind that I summarize my

personal interest in this topic and experiences that have shaped and informed my present-day

understandings. I grew up in a small rural community in Nova Scotia; other than tourists and

visitors, there was no racial diversity in the community. A few years ago, my boyfriend (now

husband) accompanied me home to learn more about where I grew up. I recall upon my return a

few weeks later, friends of mine from the community asking me about my "Black boyfriend." I did not introduce him as my Black boyfriend, but I found it intriguing that his racial background was the singularly important qualifier for his introduction. Fast forward four and a half years and I am much more conscious of, and interested in, understanding such distinctions, likely due in part to my personal relationship and, equally important, to my academic interest in discourse, power, and society. This heightened awareness also led to further question, reflection, and critique, so that when the "Nova Scotia Burning" series first appeared--a case dealing with a biracial couple and a race-related crime in Nova Scotia--it sparked my attention. I wanted to understand how the issue was covered, what language and meaning emerged, and what that may begin to tell us about such discourses in Nova Scotia society.

This case study research is organized as follows. In Chapter Two, the literature review, I summarize the relationship between media, society, and discourse, as well as existing research examining how Canadian news media coverage has treated racial groups, notably those of African or Caribbean descent. The concept and evolution of race and racism is also summarized to situate the present day case. Finally, Chapter Two also highlights the experiences of Black Nova Scotians, the province's largest minority group, representing 2% of the population (19,230 people) (Statistics Canada, 2006). The majority of the population reside in Kings, Annapolis, Digby, Yarmouth, Queens and Lunenburg Counties (Coastal Communities Network [CCN], Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre [AHPRC], Dalhousie Univerisity [DAL], 2003), communities first settled by Black migrants (Pachai, 2007), leaving the province's other communities with little to no Black population.

Chapter Three overviews the theoretical lens I used to examine the media texts selected for this case study, and Chapter Four introduces the research methodology underpinning the case

study approach, including discourse as a method and unit of analysis. Following the seminal

work of Clifford Geertz (1975), Chapter Five provides a "thick description" of the cross-burning

incident that occurred in Hants County as well as the approach taken by *The Chronicle Herald* in

constructing the in-depth feature series. According to Geertz (1975), "The ethnographer

'inscribes' social discourse; *he writes it down*. In so doing, he turns it from a passing event,

which exists only in its own moment of occurrence, into an account, which exists in its

inscriptions and can be reconsulted" (p. 19) (emphasis in original).

The findings from the case study, presented in detail in Chapter Six, examine

postcolonial and emergent themes from the text. As detailed in this section, the analysis of the

media articles comprising the "Nova Scotia Burning" series illuminates a very complex process

whereby the media itself attempts to destabilize dominant discourses surrounding race and

racism, and yet, in the end, reproduces them within the text. Competing narratives emerge and

four themes help explain the overall finding of discursive practices that sustain racial power

inequalities: (1) ethnocentricity and racialized Other, (2) repositioning blame, (3) struggle for

identity and belonging, and (4) denial. Conversely, supporting the finding that the series also

strove to address such discourses was an emergent theme of transcending through (1)

confronting racism, (2) grappling and making sense of racism, and (3) searching for shared

understanding and ongoing discussion. The analysis and discussion of the findings, presented in

Chapter Seven, is informed by the tenets of postcolonial theory and considers how the

intersections between postcolonial theory and this case can inform our understanding of both

phenomena. Chapter Eight offers conclusions and future implications based on this case study

research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This case study research examines media coverage in Nova Scotia about a race-related crime that occurred in 2010. The relationship between media, discourse, and society, the theoretical debate and evolution of race and racism, and the historical context for the lived experiences of Black Nova Scotians, all need to be understood in order to situate this research and its intended contribution.

Media and Discourse

Cultural theorist Stuart Hall has contributed greatly to our understanding of race, representation, and media. He (1997a) convincingly writes,

> Language is the privileged medium in which we "make sense" of things, in which meaning is produced and exchanged. Meanings can only be shared through our common access to language. So language is critical to meaning and culture and has always been regarded as the key repository of cultural values and meanings. (p. 1)

Through language, discourse is enacted. Discourse--the meanings we come to know through text and talk--is socially constituted and conditioned (Blommaert & Bulcean, 2000); it constructs how we think about and experience social phenomena (Phillips & Hardy, 2002; Jäger & Maier, 2009; Kellner, 1995), and, through language, provides a representation system with certain conventions in order to ascribe meanings to people, events, and things (Charmaz, 2006; Hall, 1997b; van Dijk, 2009b).

Discourse can be studied at a micro or macro level of social inquiry: "the study of the social text (talk and written text in its social action contexts) and the study of social reality as

discursively constructed and maintained (the shaping of social reality through language)"
(Alvesson & Karreman, 2000, p. 1126). Thus, when considering the purpose of their research,
researchers must make decisions about what level of detail they will focus on related to the text
and context and the degree to which broader issues of power or social construction will be
examined (Phillips & Hardy, 2002).

The power of discourse is that it affects other types of discourse, and it shapes the way in
which society interprets and further reproduces discursive practices (Phillips & Hardy, 2002;
Jäger & Maier, 2009). Thus, when examining discourse from a critical perspective, one is
particularly concerned with the relationships between discourse and power and the structures that
constrain or enact social understandings and actions (van Dijk, 1993). Discourse

> …may, for example, signal a set of representations *and* ways of
>
> structuring reality that put strong imprints on cognition and
>
> attitudes. Sometimes cognition and attitudes or a general way of
>
> relating to something may become incorporated by the concept of
>
> discourse. (Alevesson & Karreman, 2000, p.1129) (emphasis in
>
> original)

Teun van Dijk, a recognized critical discourse scholar who has examined issues of racism
and the press (See van Dijk, 1991), and written about discourse as a method and unit of analysis
(See van Dijk, 1993, 2006, 2009a, 2009b), argues that "power and dominance are usually
organized and *institutionalized"*(van Dijk, 1993, p. 255) (emphasis in original); that is, discourse
is informed by the very structures that have the ability to produce, reproduce, maintain, or
challenge it (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000; van Dijk, 1993), and critical discourse analysts are
interested in the discursive structures, strategies, and elements of text and talk, in conjunction

with context, and how they strengthen, represent, or influence knowledge, understanding, and actions in society (van Dijk, 1993). Given this context, in this study, I am interested in examining the ways in which a discourse of racism may produce, reproduce, maintain, or challenge existing social and political structures.

Through critical discourse analysis, one can examine how discourse privileges some in society at the expense of others and how power relations are enacted, reproduced, and challenged through discourse (Phillips & Hardy, 2002; van Dijk, 1993). "Privilege is the relative benefit that a group enjoys as a result of the discrimination or oppression of other groups" ("Privilege in the Media - Overview," n.d., ¶ 1). Unlike other forms of racism and discrimination, the privileging of perspectives, ideas, or particular groups may be taken for granted or unquestioned ("Privilege in the Media - Overview," n.d). The normalcy of actions, the requirement of reflexivity in order to confront privilege, denial of its presence, and its systematic and invasive nature are reasons privilege can remain unaddressed ("Privilege in the Media - Overview," n.d.).

As a system of power in society, news media help produce and reproduce ideology and discourse in society (Hall, 1996a, 1997a; van Dijk, 1991). Media have a responsibility to share and examine critically the political, societal, and economic decisions that influence our lived experiences (Cotter, 2010). Media also have signifying power; that is, their use of signs, sounds, gestures, and text help construct meaning (Hall, 1997a), and, due in part to media's reach, they have the ability to share and reproduce these meanings for public consumption.

Tenets of media theory such as agenda setting (concerned with media's emphasis and attention to a particular topic) (McCoombs, 1994; Weaver, 2007) and media framing (concerned with the way in which a topic is covered/positioned) offer important theoretical approaches to help us understand and assess how media contribute to meaning making in society (Scheufele,

1999; Weaver, 2007). Yet, Hall (1996b) aptly reminds us that, "…it would be wrong and misleading to see the media as uniformly and conspiratorially harnessed to a single, racist conception of the world" (p. 273). The exact degree and effect of biases in media is questionable, even while media scholars (Hall, 1996a, 1997a; Kellner, 1995) recognize the important role of media (its production and theoretical tenets of study), in contributing to, and reinforcing, discourses in society.

The idea that media frame certain issues is well established in the literature (Crawford, 1998; Fleras & Lock Kunz, 2001; Hall, 1996b; Henry & Tator, 2002, 2003, 2006; McCoombs, 1994; Miller, 1994, 2005/2006; Tator & Henry, 2000; van Dijk, 1991), and media have been found to represent events--and their importance--in particular ways (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000; Fleras & Lock Kunz, 2011; Henry & Tator, 2002; van Dijk, 1991). Van Dijk (1991, 2006) contends the media contribute to systems of ideology and power effects at micro and macro levels of text and discourse, by organizing socially shared representations, and by providing a link between social structures, discourses, and social practices. Moreover, media's use of language helps produce discourses through which "people construct their sense of class, of ethnicity, and race, of nationality, of sexuality, of 'us' and 'them'" (Kellner, 1995, p. 1).

In examining the relationship between media and race in society, cultural theorist Stuart Hall (1996b) argues, "…the media construct for us a definition of what *race* is, what meaning the imagery of race carries, and what the 'problem of race' is understood to be" (p. 273) (emphasis in original). As I discuss in more detail in this chapter, the concept of "race" itself is a point of contention among social researchers (Miles & Brown, 2003). Nonetheless, media help inform our understanding and use of racial discourse through the production or reproduction of ideological frameworks used to make sense of cultural experiences, events, and relations (Hall,

1996b; Henry & Tator, 2002, 2003; van Dijk, 1991).

Racialized discourse can be advanced in news media through its use of language, photos, and videos, as well as through what stories are selected, and from what perspective the stories are told (Hall, 1996b; McCoombs, 1994; Miller, 1994, 2005/2006; van Dijk, 1993). Such actions have identifiable words, practices, and strategies (Henry & Tator, 2009; Tator & Henry, 2000) that privilege one group--typically those holding the dominant social perspective--at the expense of others through discursive practices of categorization and differentiation (Hall, 1997b; Prasad, P., 2005; Said, 1993; Tator & Henry, 2000; van Dijk, 1993). Hall (1997b) contends that western ideas about race have been shaped by slavery, European colonization, and post-war migration of inhabitants to European and North American countries.

An examination of literature regarding media's treatment of ethnic minority groups in Canada, in particular African Canadians, found themes of underrepresentation, stereotyping, and omission (Titus-Roberts, 2012). First, African-Canadians have had their perspectives underrepresented in media, and often do not experience accurate representations of themselves in media stories (Crawford, 1998; Henry & Tator, 2002; Mahtani, Henry, & Tator, 2008; Miller, 1994, 2005/2006). While visible minorities are underrepresented, misrepresented, or stereotyped in the news, they have been overrepresented in news stories related to crime (Adeyanju & Oriola, 2010; Henry & Tator, 2002, 2009; Miller, 1994). Likewise, studies examining the media treatment of racial minorities such as African Canadians in Toronto (Henry & Tator, 2003) and Aboriginals in Canada (Fontaine, 1998) have found them to be situated within discourses of crime, cultural differences, poverty, unemployment, and tension.

Second, embedded within a colonial discourse (Hall 1997b; Said, 1978), a racialized *Other* is produced when using stereotypes to report of--and about--minority groups (Hall, 1997b;

Tator & Henry, 2000). Otherness is a rhetorical strategy that attempts to control and isolate

individuals and communities to the advantage of the dominant social perspective (Crawford,

1998; Hall, 1997b; Tator & Henry, 2000). According to Hall (1997b), "…people who are in any

way significantly different from the majority--'them' rather than 'us'--are frequently exposed to

this *binary* form of representation" (p. 229) (emphasis in original). For example, scholars (Henry

& Tator, 2003; Tator & Henry, 2000) studying racial representation in Canadian media (news

coverage and television shows) found a discourse in which the Caucasian viewpoint was most

often reflected and visually represented, whereas minority groups faced a skewed representation

based on biases and stereotypes.

 Adding to the concerns regarding media coverage of minority groups is the lack of

representation of different racial and cultural perspectives within Canadian news production

(Crawford, 1998; Miller, 1994, 2005/2006). In one of the only studies examining representation

in Canadian newsrooms, John Miller (1994; 2005/2006) found that racial minorities are more

than five times underrepresented in daily newsrooms compared to the White perspectives

involved in the production of news. He also found that the commitment to diversity in hiring

practices declined from 1994 to 2004 (Miller, 2005/2006).

 Finally, scholars argue (Hall, 1996b; Fleras & Lock Kunz, 2001; Fontaine, 1998; Henry

& Tator, 2003; Tator & Henry, 2000; van Dijk, 1991) discourses focussing on difference have

replaced openly racist, or overt, forms of racism. Such perspectives, which are invisible and

taken for granted, have become entrenched in everyday social, political, and cultural systems

(Hall, 1996b; van Dijk, 1991), and these taken for granted meaning systems help explain and

justify societal attitudes (Phillips & Hardy, 2002).

My review of the literature identified a gap in empirical research examining racial

discourse and Nova Scotia media. Largely homogenous in population, and with historically

discriminatory roots (Frosty, 2007; Pachai, 2007), Nova Scotia is an important site for examining

racial discourse. The government's interest in supporting diversity in the workforce in Nova

Scotia ("Diversity," 2009; Nova Scotia Public Service Commission [NSPSC], 2011) as well as

the provincial government's interest in encouraging immigration to provide population growth

(Akbari, Lynch, McDonald, & Rankaduwa, 2007; "Diversity," 2009; NCPSC, 2011) underscore

the need to also understand the social, political, and cultural structures in Nova Scotia that

support or hinder such goals. By extension, the role of discourse, such as through media, in

producing and reproducing power structures also becomes an important consideration for the

very future of this province.

A review of the philosophical tenets, and challenges, underpinning race and racism, and

the historical treatment of Black Nova Scotians, helps underline the need for research that

examines Nova Scotia media's coverage about Black Nova Scotians.

Race and Racism

The Oxford Dictionary defines racism as "the belief that all members of each race

possess characteristics, abilities, or qualities specific to that race, especially as to distinguish it as

inferior or superior to another race or races" ("Racism," 2010). Racism and race are complex

social constructs, informed by ideology and history (Miles & Brown, 2003). Forms of racism

include stereotypes, images, and explanations that are constructed consciously and unconsciously

in everyday life (Miles & Brown, 2003; Solomos & Beck, 2000). A brief summary of the

evolution of the concepts of race and racism is provided in this section to situate their complexity

within society. While acknowledging the nuances and historical progression of such ideas, the

scope and purpose of this research is not to debate the varying philosophies underpinning the concept of racism.

Race has been used for centuries to identify and group people based on distinct physical characteristics, similar cultures, histories, and languages ("Race," 2010). From as early as the eighteenth century, distinguishing individuals and groups of people by race has been a way to relate to, and separate from, others and to define abilities (Banton, 2000); it has also been used as a social construct for establishing and cultivating a national identity (Banton, 2000). According to Miles and Brown (2003), "by attributing a population with certain characteristics in order to categorize and differentiate it as an Other, those doing so establish criteria by which they themselves are represented" (p. 50).

Historically, race has served as a marker for human intelligence. Scientific research suggested that brain size depended on race, and an intellectual hierarchy was formed with Caucasians at the top (Banton, 2000). This type of thinking was the foundation for advancing biological determinism, and ideas of racial superiority were particularly prevalent during colonisation ("Race," 2012; Said, 1978). Such ideologies also justified social and political polices that enabled exploitation, slavery, and wiping out of less superior races ("Race," 2012). With no valid evidence to support intellectual differences based on race, this notion was subsequently dismissed in the scientific community (Banton, 2000; "Race," 2012; Todorov, 2000), however, culturally the concept had already been embedded into many social practices, which persist today (Miles & Brown, 2003).

The concept of race is socially constructed, but there remains limited consensus about racism and its tenets (Back & Solomos, 2000; Miles & Brown, 2003). Broad definitions have been critiqued for exaggerating the presence of racism, by focusing too much on the hierarchy of

race and its function as human nature, and for branding as "racist" the motivation of all beliefs, actions, and processes that oppress Black people (Miles & Brown, 2003, pp. 57-72). Conversely, sociologists Robert Miles and Malcolm Brown (2003) challenge narrower definitions of racism for: (a) reducing it to something White people inflict on Black people, (b) perpetuating the concept of race, a fallacy discursively shared through science, and (c) reducing racism to instances of a negatively evaluated Other while ignoring instances of a positive representation of the self (pp. 73-86).

Todorov (2000) argues racism can be both actions and beliefs. It refers to specific behaviours, motivated by hate for one particular group, and it is also ideological in nature, offering a way of thinking about human beings and interactions. He argues it is premised on five propositions: (1) the existence of races separated by visible characteristics, (2) the assumption that physical and moral characteristics are interconnected, (3) the notion that one's individual actions are connected to a larger social group to which he/she belongs, (4) advancement of superiority among races, and (5) the production of a discourse to align the first four premises. Similarly, Miles and Brown (2003) define racism within three tenets: as ideological, as manifested in many forms, and as phenomena requiring the concurrent examination of self and Other. Broadly speaking, this case study will also adopt a similar definition: Racism refers to beliefs, actions, policies, attitudes, and ideologies that privilege one group or individual over another on the basis of race.

Black Nova Scotia

In addition to considering the relationship between media and discourse, and Canadian media's treatment of issues involving African Canadians, the historical and present-day treatment of the Black population in Nova Scotia is also important for the context of this case

study. This is premised on the notion that texts become meaningful through their

interconnections with other texts and the historical and social discourses on which they draw

(Phillips & Hardy, 2002). In the following section, I summarize the origins, social, cultural, and

political experiences of the Black population living in Nova Scotia. While this is not a full

historical account, the summary provides key insights, with a particular focus on how the media

has reported on the experiences of this community in Nova Scotia.

The terms African Nova Scotian (See Government of Nova Scotia, 2008), African

Canadian (See Walker, 1999), and Black Nova Scotians (See Statistics Canada, 2006; "Nova

Scotia Burning" series) are used interchangeably in various texts to describe people of

African/Caribbean decent living or born in Nova Scotia. Within this literature review, and case

study, African Nova Scotian and Black Nova Scotian are used interchangeably. In doing so,

however, I also acknowledge that (a) within such a broad term there are multiple origins and

identities, and (b) that individuals with this geographical origin may not conceptualize

themselves by the use of such labels.

The first Black communities settled in Nova Scotia (and in Canada) during the eighteenth

century at the close of the American Revolution ("Black Migration," 2012). Many arrived with

the assumption they would be granted freedom from slavery after fighting for Britain during the

American Revolution, however, they were denied equal status, and forced to work in public

labour ("Black Migration," 2012; Walker, 1999).

Historically, individuals of African or Caribbean descent living in Nova Scotia and in

Canada were not given the same rights, access to services, and treatment as their White

counterparts, including access to land, educational opportunities, and independence (Pachai,

2007; Walker, 1999). For example, it was not until 1953 that Nova Scotia's Education Act was

changed to omit any reference to separate education based on race, and it was 1981 before the

Canadian census was changed to allow this group the option to self-identify (Walker, 1999).

Today, Nova Scotia has the third-largest Black population in Canada (Statistics Canada,

2006). With approximately 48 African-Nova Scotian communities (CCN, AHPRC, & DAL,

2003), this group represents the largest minority group in Nova Scotia, or about 2% of the

population (Statistics Canada, 2006). The largest Black visible minority groups are located in

Southwestern Nova Scotia, in communities such as Annapolis, Digby, Yarmouth, and Shelburne

(CCN, AHPRC, & DAL, 2003). Since the first settlements, and as part of Black migration to

Canada following the American Revolution and Civil War (Walker, 1999), the demography of

the Black population in Nova Scotia has remained relatively stable. Based on the 2006 census

data, the number of people who identified as Black declined only marginally between 2001 and

2006, and did not increase (Nova Scotia Finance, Economics and Statistics, 2008).

Within history, formative events reported in dominant spaces such as public documents,

websites, and government and media reports have helped shape how we come to know and think

about the Black Nova Scotian experience. A summary of the formative events is described in this

section. One of the most significant events that has shaped--and continues to shape--Black Nova

Scotian heritage and the treatment of this community relates to the displacement of residents of

Africville by the City of Halifax originating in the 1960s, and continuing today--when Black

Nova Scotians were forced to leave their community so the city could demolish it and use it for

redevelopment (Clairmont, 2010; Oliver, 2007). Sociologist Don Clairmont (2010), who has

written extensively about issues of race and deviance, contends, "…Africville has become

central in the new black consciousness in Nova Scotia. It has become something to appreciate

and identify with. Africville has become a symbol of why black organizations and solidarity are necessary to fight racism" (p. 74).

The events and decisions before, during, and after residents were forced from their community have been criticized on grounds of human rights and racial discrimination (AGS, 2010; MacKenzie, 1991; Nelson 2001, 2011). Despite these critiques, it was not until 2010 that Black Nova Scotians living in Halifax finally received a public apology from the city, as well as financial compensation for the city's racial discrimination and mistreatment of its Black community ("Halifax Mayor Apologizes," 2010).

In addition, the 1990s was marked by media coverage of racially-motivated riots in downtown Halifax (Nicoll, 1991), as well as school altercations involving discrimination and racism at Cole Harbour High School in Halifax (Pachai, 2007). These events culminated in a special report calling for more racial sensitivity in Nova Scotia media coverage of minority groups and issues (Nicoll, 1991). Such events were reported to have played a role in subsequent revisions to how the Nova Scotia school system approached racial topics as well as revisions to the process for filing grievances within the school system (Pachai, 2007). In fact, in response to the inequality in treatment and access that this minority group has historically faced in Nova Scotia, the Government of Nova Scotia created the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs, dedicated to "assist[ing], support[ing], and enhanc[ing] the provincial government's delivery of services to African Nova Scotians" ("Who We Are," 2008, ¶ 9).

Even more recently, archival material from the Black Loyalist Heritage Society was destroyed in 2006 when the building was set on fire. The Society recently announced in February 2012, six years later, that it finally secured the necessary funds to build a new interpretive centre,

totalling $4.3 million ("Black Loyalist Museum Rising," 2012). However, the person(s)

responsible for the arson have still not been found ("Black Loyalist Museum Rising," 2012).

Counter to dominant texts defining the history and experiences of Black Nova Scotians is

an emerging body of knowledge and artistic reflection (Beckford, 2009; Hamilton, 1992)

examining the lived experiences of Black Nova Scotians told from their viewpoints (See Pachai,

2007). The systemic barriers and segregation created by racism encouraged the Black

community to draw together, strengthening the growth of Black communities, institutions, and

cultural identities (Walker, 1999). The last 20 years have (a) celebrated the contributions of

individuals such as Sylvia Paris, Florence Bauld, and Sylvia Hamilton in extending our

understanding of the experiences of Black Nova Scotians; (b) marked the appointment of Black

Nova Scotians to political positions of power such as the first Black Lieutenant Governor of

Nova Scotia; and (c) observed the strengthening of a number of groups and centres dedicated to

advancing the issues and achievements of Black Nova Scotians (Pachai, 2007). In addition,

documentaries and books on Africville (See AGS, 2010, Mackenzie, 1991) pay homage to the

vibrant and passionate community, though these discourses were often ignored in mainstream

reports and documents during the relocation of its residents (Nelson, 2001, 2011). In addition,

Nova Scotian scholar and filmaker Sylvia Hamilton has examined issues of segregation and

identity as part of her goal to provide a space for Black Nova Scotians to have a voice (Hamilton,

1992; Beckford, 2009).

Despite such counter strategies to subvert the dominant representation process (Hall,

1997b), the ways in which dominant structures speak, treat, and write of and about Black Nova

Scotians play a large part in the enactment of broader racial discourses in society. For example,

Racism in Canada (McKague, 1991) and *Race, Racialization, and Antiracism in Canada and*

Beyond (Johnson & Enomto, 2007) are filled with examples of how racism is entrenched in

Canadian institutions, and scholars argue (Beckford, 2009; Frosty, 2007) that the history of

Black Canadians has been deliberately ignored or destroyed by dominant perspectives.

Within the province of Nova Scotia, scholars cite the expulsion of Africville residents in

the 1960s (Beckford, 2009; Nelson, 2001, 2011), the omission of Black Nova Scotians'

contributions to the development of hockey in Canada (Frosty, 2007), as well as the burning of

archival material in 2006 ("Black Loyalist History," 2006), as key examples of how the history

and identity of Black people living in Nova Scotia have been excluded or erased from

mainstream history (Beckford, 2009). Nelson (2011) argues dominant institutions silenced the

voices of Black Nova Scotians during the deconstruction of Africville: "…it was principally

White journalists, academics, social workers, urban planners, and City officials who were able to

voice what could be known about Africville in the broader White community" (p. 122).

Given the history of racial discrimination in Nova Scotia, and the limited studies

examining media coverage of racial issues in Nova Scotia, I am interested in contributing to the

body of knowledge related to racism, media and discourse in the province.

Gaps in the Literature

In this literature review, I have (a) examined the theoretical link between media and

discourse contributing to identity and meaning making in society (Blommaert, & Bulcaen, 2000;

Hall, 1997a; van Dijk, 1993, 2006, 2009), (b) reviewed an established body of literature

examining racialized discourse produced in Canadian media (Crawford, 1998; Fleras & Lock

Kunz, 2001; Henry & Tator, 2002, 2003, 2006; Miller, 1994, 2005/2006; Tator & Henry, 2000),

and (c) explored the history of racial discrimination in Nova Scotia.

Yet, the literature review found little scholarly examination of how Nova Scotia media treat and produce racial representation and issues involving racism and the experiences of Black Nova Scotians. For example, while the burning of Black Loyalist historical artifacts in 2006 has implications for history, culture, and identity, a preliminary review of media coverage of the arson attack revealed relatively little sustained coverage of the incident. Likewise, as part of another study (Titus-Roberts, 2012), I completed an exploratory review of articles related to "African," "Black," and "Racism" published in *The Chronicle Herald* from April-August 2012; the search returned just over 1,200 articles--about 57 of them related to the topic of Black minority issues.

As part of this literature review, I could not find any research examining how Nova Scotia media have (or have not) covered issues affecting Black Nova Scotians, and what those discursive practices include. Even Nelson's (2011) findings that media coverage was one of several dominant texts that contributed to a discourse of racial inequality in the 1960s were only published in 2011. Finally, studies (Miller, 1994; 2005/2006; Tator & Henry, 2000) that have explored racial discourse in Canadian media have been set in large metropolitan areas and have not examined the treatment of race in rural communities or communities that are largely homogenous in nature.

There is a gap in the literature exploring media coverage of issues involving race and racism in Nova Scotia, and this case study research will be the first to examine this topic in detail. Through an in-depth examination of the feature series, "Nova Scotia Burning," this research will explore the language, text, and context within the media coverage to help understand the discursive practices related to issues of representation, and, more specifically, the treatment of Black Nova Scotians. As outlined in Chapter Three, a postcolonial theoretical

framework is used to anchor this case study. As referenced previously in the introduction, the

postcolonial tradition is a powerful theoretical lens for examining issues of language, racism, and

power, which are of particular concern in issues of media production and treatment of racial

issues, as they are with this case.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework

Postcolonial theory provides a lens to understand discourses, meanings, and shared perspectives in society related to power and dichotomies (Prasad, P., 2005; Young, 2003). Postcolonial research falls within a postmodern, critical approach to examining social contexts, and the theory is particularly concerned with issues of power and knowledge and disassembling taken for granted truths (Prasad, P., 2005; Young, 2003). Postcolonial theory, its tenets, and discourse are discussed here to theoretically position and group the methodology used for this case study research.

Found within a critical, postmodern tradition, postcolonial theory draws on a number of methods and epistemologies and involves the close examination of history, writing, political, social, and cultural practices (Lynes, 2010; Prasad, P., 2005; Young, 2001). It is not a theory in the strict sense of the term, but rather involves a set of conceptual resources from which to examine society (Young, 2001). Traditions of the postcolonial mindset are concerned with critiquing and challenging modern western thinking, taking issue with viewpoints of enlightenment, modernity, and modernism (Prasad, P., 2005). The prefix, *post*, while signifying a period in time *after* modernism or colonialism, represents a departure from past traditions and movement to new opportunities and ways of understanding and knowing (Prasad, P., 2005). At the most basic level, the postcolonial signifies a shift after colonialism, with a recognition that colonial and imperial practices still exist within society (Prasad, P., 2005; Said, 1993; Young, 2001). "Postcolonial studies can therefore also include those places in which the *cultural* and *institutional memory* of colonialism is still a felt presence, even though the former colonial power is no longer officially responsible for the governance of the country" (Prasad, P., 2005, pp. 217-218) (emphasis in original). Postcolonial, post-colonial, postcoloniality and

postcolonialism are among the nuanced terms used to describe postcolonial critiques (Young, 2001), and the purpose of this research is not to theoretically debate the merits of each.

Postcolonialism, or a postcolonial critique, is particularly concerned with issues of identity and power struggles, the impact of colonialism on cultural and institutional functions, and the ongoing attempt to control groups based on race and geography (Lynes, 2010; Moss, 2003; Prasad, P., 2005; Young, 2001). Its starting position is "an analytical-critical approach that treats colonial writing, arts, legal systems, science and other socio-cultural practices as racialized and unequal where the colonial does the representation and the native is represented" (Nayar, 2010, p. 25). Of particular relevance to this case study is the theory's focus on examining power structures for issues of domination (Young, 2001), and its focus on exposing the perspectives of those outside the dominant perspective, or the *West* (Young, 2001).

Influential thinkers who have informed our understanding of postcolonial theory include Frantz Fanon and Edward Said. Frantz Fanon (2008), a psychologist from Martinique, critiqued the impact of colonisation on indigenous peoples. He wrote of the struggle for Black identity in a White world, arguing that the ultimate impact of racial inequalities and treatment of Black people was violence, brought on by mental illness or a psychotic break (Fanon, 2008). Edward Said's book *Orientalism* (1978) is one of the groundbreaking works in the postcolonial tradition. Said (1978) argued that the understanding of oriental culture was produced through a western mindset that was influenced by colonial practices and reinforced through cultural, academic, and political structures. His examination of text produced by government, scholars, and explorers demonstrated Orientalism was a way to characterize Europe and the Orient through binary terms of self and Other and to exert authority by classifying what is known about something (Said,

1978). His book examines how the Oriental has been "…*contained* and *represented* by

dominating frameworks" (Said, 1978, p. 40) (emphasis in original).

A priori in a postcolonial critique is that colonial actions fundamentally influenced both

groups involved, in implicit and overt ways that have lasted long after decolonization (Lynes,

2010; Prasad, P., 2005; Said, 1978, 1993; Young, 2001). Such actions included exploitation,

discrimination, enslavement, and genocide of indigenous peoples to acquire land, cultural

practices, and social or political control (Lynes, 2010). These practices are still embedded deep

within existing cultures and structures, and they are reinforced through the very structures that

legitimized their practices in the first place (Lynes, 2010; Prasad, P., 2005):

> These ideologies transcend what are known more prosaically as
>
> racist and discriminatory attitudes on the part of particular
>
> individuals in that they are embedded within the very fabric of a
>
> society's economics, political structures, cultures, and religions.
>
> Much of postcolonialism undertakes to deconstruct these
>
> ideologies as a means of diminishing both their pervasiveness and
>
> their influence. (Lynes, 2010, p. 689)

A postcolonial critique involves challenging western ethnocentricity and repositioning

marginalized peoples' histories and cultures to be at the center of the discussion (Young, 2001).

Equally important, it also involves examining how individuals or groups of people are

(mis)represented to illuminate relationships of stereotypes, representation, power, and inequality

(Said, 1978). Said (1978) argued that the Orient was influenced by what was, and was not,

written by those in a position to produce what was known about it, and these texts were

produced, made real, and reinforced, through multiple sources. "While every traveler/individual

White Man assumed that his view of the Orient came from a personal/individual encounter with

the Orient, it actually proceeded from a larger and more general field" (Nayar, 2010, p. 19).

A postcolonial framework has been used as a lens to examine several topics and issues,

including within organizational studies (Long & Mills, 2008; Prasad, A., 1997; Rao &

Wasserman, 2007; Rostis, 2011); to assess issues of identity (Loftsdottir, 2011); and to challenge

the western world's treatment of African and South Asian individuals and groups (Echtner, C.

M., & Prasad, P., 2003; Said, 1978). In addition, a postcolonial lens has also been used to

reexamine literary works and destablize inherent western perspectives of the Other (Moss, 2003;

Said, 1993).

Tenets of Postcolonial Theory

Historically, the colonial period involved a civilizing mission that imposed law, Christian

charity, European morality, and moral reform on natives to control and exert power (Nayar,

2010). Postcolonial theory seeks to make those influences visible and to break them down. It

includes an examination of eurocentricity, embedded colonial discourse, hybridity, and identity.

First, a postcolonial critique is focused on challenging the belief that European or western ideas

are the foundation for all actions and perspectives (Prasad, A., 1997; Prasad, P., 2005; Young,

2001). Whereas the West is traditionally used as the focal point from which all perspectives are

told, postcolonial practices engage in destabilizing those structures and discourses to consider

other perspectives often silenced or misrepresented (Prasad, A., 1997; Prasad, P., 2005; Young,

2001).

Second, Pushkala Prasad (2005) argues colonial discourse examines the way in which

formerly colonized and colonizer societies are seen, discussed, and written about. A postcolonial

critique examines the colonizer/colonized relationship (Prasad, A., 1997; Prasad, P., 2005;

Young, 2001) and other binary representations that exist within, and across, economic, political, and cultural institutions to produce and sustain a *reality* of the Other (Prasad, P., 2005; Said, 1978, 1993). For example, this has included narratives of the Other that promote Africans as primitive or unrestrained (Prasad, P., 2005), Orientals as mysterious, uneducated, sensual, and barbaric (Said, 1978), and those from tropical cultures as earthy or alluring (Echtner, C. M., & Prasad, P., 2003). Hall (1997b) argues these structures of difference between colonizer and colonized produce oppositional and hierarchal positions characterized as "…good/bad, civilized/primitive, ugly/excessively attractive, repelling-because-different/compelling-because-strange-and-exotic" (p. 229).

The third focus within postcolonial theory, hybridity, explores the intersection and implications of the colonizer/colonizing relationship and embedded social practices, as well as cultural impacts that emerge through this intersection (Prasad, P., 2005). Homi Bhabha (1994), influenced by the work of postcolonial theorists such as Fanon (2008) and Said (1978), has written extensively of the concept of hybridity. He convincingly writes,

> The language of critique is effective … to the extent to which it
> overcomes the given grounds of opposition and opens up a space
> of translation: a place of hybridity, figuratively speaking, where
> the construction of a political object that is new, *neither the one*
> *nor the other,* properly alienates our political expectations, and
> changes, as it must, the very forms of our recognition of the
> movement of politics. (p. 37) (emphasis in original)

Bhabha (1994) argues a third space is created through the coming together of the colonizer and colonized experience. In some cases this enables the colonized to reclaim power by destabilizing

and transcending differences by *taking back* their identity (Nayar, 2010). Hybridity provides a

theoretical lens to examine the impact of assimilation or the subversive mimicry, whereby those

in a subordinate position copy the cultural actions of those in power to transcend the experience

and make it their own (Prasad, P., 2005).

Finally, concepts of identity, diaspora, and belonging can also be explored when studying

social phenomenon from a postcolonial lens (Nayar, 2010). For example, diaspora, or the

displacement of indigenous people from their place of origin, is a consequence of colonization

due in part to slavery and migration (Nayar, 2010). In a postcolonial context, reconciling identity

and making sense of one's self are important concepts to explore in the search for belonging to

both a physical place and to a nation or culture (Nayar, 2010).

> Spaces therefore are spaces not only of geographical mapping but
>
> of *cultural, emotional belonging,* which has to be politically,
>
> socially, judicially legitimized. This legitimization and debates
>
> over 'who belongs' has been a theme in postcolonial literary and
>
> cultural debates. (Nayar, 2010, p. 146) (emphasis in original)

Challenges

Despite its ability to critically examine discourse and historically contextualize social

phenomenon in order to advance new perspectives, research informed by postcolonial theory is

not without its challenges. First, postcolonial theory has been critiqued for placing too much

emphasis on the impact of colonialism on societies that were or are colonized (Young, 2001).

This point is important when considering various individuals and contexts as such frameworks

may not apply in the same way to all colonized spaces such as when comparing the Canadian

experience in colonization to that of the Caribbean experience (Leggatt, 2003: Moss, 2003).

Second, some critiques of postcolonial theory take issue with the prefix post, as it implies that colonialism is over and no longer present in our everyday lives (Leggatt, 2003; Prasad, P., 2005). Similarly, Said's arguments in *Orientalism* have been critiqued for ignoring the self-representations of the colonized and for focusing on a static binary relationship between East and West (Bhabha, 2004, pp. 100-106). Rather, "we cannot appreciate the specific nature of diverse hybridities if we do not attend to the nuances of each of the cultures that come together or clash during the colonial encounter" (Loomba, 2005, p. 151).

A third limitation of postcolonial theory is in its ability to define the role of agency in producing the discourse and acting on one's own accord. For example, while Said (1978) convincingly argues that writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries produced discourses that have come to shape how we know and speak of the East-West divide and the Orient, he privileges the role of larger social discourses that played a role in shaping what writers thought and wrote: "Fields of learning … are constrained and acted upon by society, cultural traditions, by worldly circumstance, and by stabilizing influences like schools, libraries, and governments" (Said, 1978, p. 201). While individual perspectives are the product of a discourse or discourses within society (Fairclough, 1992; Hall, 1996b; Phillips & Hardy, 2002), there is a sociological perspective that also considers the relationship between agency and structure, and the individual's position and constraints, to act beyond their defining discourses and circumstance (Giddens, 1984):

> To be able to "act otherwise" means being able to intervene in the
>
> world, or to refrain from such intervention, with the effect of
>
> influencing a specific process or state of affairs. This presumes that
>
> to be an agent is to be able to deploy … a range of causal powers,

including that of influencing those deployed by others. Action

depends upon the capability of those individuals to "make a

difference" to a pre-existing state of affairs or courses of events.

(p. 14)

Depending on the purpose and scope of the study, the role of social discourse and agency

provide important insight when examining context and the discourses that give them meaning

(Phillips & Hardy, 2002).

However, as this study proposes to examine the intersection of discourse, context, and

text in order to make sense of discourse produced in Nova Scotia media about race and racism

and to make a difference in how we approach such ideas, the theory discussed above provides

the most appropriate foundation to allow for a richer understanding of the topic. Nova Scotia has

a history of racial tensions and discrimination (AGS, 2010, Beckford, 2009; Frosty, 2007;

Hamilton, 1992; Nelson, 2001, 2011; Nicoll, 1991; Pachai, 2007), and, within the scope of this

proposed research, postcolonial theory will open up the text to better understand various

viewpoints and factors that have contributed to the discourse present in the text.

Why Postcolonial Theory

There are several reasons why postcolonial theory is an appropriate theoretical lens for

approaching this case study. First, historically, Nova Scotia has a history of subjugating Black

Nova Scotians (AGS, 2010; Devine, 2007; Pachai, 2007), and racially motivated actions are

central to the crime in this case study--the individuals involved are Black and White Nova

Scotians and the events include the conviction of inciting racial hatred by burning a cross.

Following a postcolonial framework, the colonial experiences of the past have fundamentally

influenced present-day interactions, processes, and practices (Said, 1978, 1993), and, aligned

with qualitative research, "to the extent possible, we need to situate texts in their context …

Where do the data come from? Who participated in shaping them? What did the authors intend?"

(Charmaz, 2006, p. 39). Consequently, postcolonial theory provides an appropriate lens from

which to explore cultural and racial dynamics such as the tensions and struggles within *The

Chronicle Herald*'s treatment of this act of racial hatred.

Second, the perspective from which the story is told is also important. While the four-part

series examined in this case study highlights the events, the motives of the crime, the

perpetrators, and the implications of the crime, the White *cross-burners* are used as the central

figures in the series. Thus, a Eurocentric perspective becomes the foundation for the paper in

examining the racial crime even though the incident involved a biracial couple and Black Nova

Scotians have struggled to be heard in Nova Scotia throughout their history (AGS, 2010; Frosty,

2007; Nelson, 2011). Of concern is the fact that "…indigenous knowledge is lost" (Long &

Mills, 2008, p. 394) through the production and reproduction of western views of the Other

(Long & Mills, 2008), and a postcolonial framework will provide a lens to examine what

perspectives are privileged in the presentation of the text and meaning.

Finally, postcolonial theory's focus on relationships of power and inequality between

dominant and marginalized groups in society solidifies it as the most appropriate lens for this

case study research. Among other benefits, postcolonial theory draws attention to the fact that

communication is not neutral (Long & Mills, 2008). Rather, a postcolonial framework forces one

to consider the individual, social, and historical contexts influencing the development of a story.

News production occurs within a complex system including interaction between journalists,

editors, editorial executives, media owners, advertisers, and media viewers (Bensen & Neveu,

2005). These interactions have nuanced processes and factors, such as limited time and space,

access to sources and information, and individual and professional values, which can influence

how a story is told (Chimombo & Roseberry, 1998). Postcolonial research can help examine

such influences within the text.

Chapter Four: Case Study Method

Case study research, and its focus on specific sites and details, provides a unique opportunity from which to examine an existing situation and challenge its position for new understandings (Lynes, 2010). In this chapter, I provide an overview of the elements of case study methodology, including its challenges. I also outline the texts I used for the case study context and data analysis in this research. I conclude with a detailed description of the coding process I used in this case study research.

Scholars argue case study research is appropriate for research focused on examining ideas from new viewpoints (Lynes, 2010). It is "…an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 2009, p. 18). When selecting a case study methodology, the researcher is making a conscious choice to study a particular object (Stake, 2008). A researcher may select a case study approach for intrinsic reasons, such as personal interest in a particular subject, to provide insight into an issue, or to better understand a particular phenomenon by studying multiple cases at once (Stake, 2008).

Case study research involves careful consideration of data selection and strategies for data inquiry. First, selecting a research site and data involves consideration of the theoretical framework, research question, and practical concerns of access and timing (Charmaz, 2006; Phillips & Hardy, 2002). When undertaking case study research, an important question to ask is what can be learned from the case (Stake, 2008). The type of data selected in case study research varies depending on the scope and research question (Yin, 2009), and data is pivotal to the quality and credibility of one's study (Charmaz, 2006). Criteria to consider when assessing the richness of proposed data for case study research include the ability of data to provide sufficient

background (e.g., persons, process, and places involved), the ability for the data to assess what is below the surface, the consideration of multiple viewpoints, and the depth of data to support the development of analytical categories (Charmaz, 2006).

Second, the development of an analysis strategy that aligns with the chosen methodology is a critical step in case study research methodology (Yin, 2009). Informed by postcolonial theory, my analysis strategy included the use of critical discourse analysis techniques (van Dijk, 1991; Phillips & Hardy, 2002; Fairclough, 1992) and emerging and iterative coding practices consistent with qualitative research (Charmaz, 2006).

Critical discourse analysis examines how discourse privileges some in society at the expense of others and how power relations (Smith, 1990) are enacted, reproduced, and challenged through discourse (Phillips & Hardy, 2002; van Dijk, 1993). In this type of research, structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power, and social inequality are of concern to better understand the relationship between language and society (Blommaert & Bulcean, 2000; Mahtani et al., 2008; Phillips & Hardy, 2002; van Dijk, 1993, 2009b). The process examines (a) the discourse as text, considering the linguistic and organizational features; (b) the discourse as something produced or consumed, focusing on speech acts and links between text and content; and (c) the discourse as a social practice, considering the ideological effects of the discourse (Fairclough, 1992).

Finally, this methodology also draws on techniques of grounded theory adopted from a qualitative framework. Grounded theory methodology allows the researcher to develop an abstract theory of understanding, process, or action based on participants' experiences (Creswell, 2009); its strength rests in its interpretive function and examining closely the text using rigour, reflexivity, and constant comparison to have theory emerge inductively (Charmaz, 2006). In this

research, I use emergent coding practices as found within grounded theory to help examine the

text from its perspective: "[such grounded theory] methods can complement other approaches to

qualitative data analysis, rather than stand in opposition to them" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 9).

Method Challenges

The greatest strengths of case study research are also its greatest weaknesses: meaning

and context. Key criticisms of case study research are its lack of rigour, lack of systematic

procedures, and potential for research bias to influence findings (Yin, 2009). In addition, case

study research, similar to many positivist views on qualitative research, is critiqued for its limited

ability to generalize (Stake, 2008; Yin, 2009). However, such labels for examination are

inappropriate in postmodern approaches to research (Yue, 2010). While case studies have been

critiqued for their limited ability to generalize, "…many scholars argue that the rich

contextualization offered in qualitative case studies contributes to a greater ecological validity

while at the same time not claiming to be statistically generalizable" (Yue, 2010, p. 962).

Rather, key considerations for validating case study research include assessing the

reliability of the research approach to be replicated and examining the plausibility of the research

findings based on existing knowledge (Yin, 2009; Yue, 2010). Steps to strengthen case study

findings involving textual analysis include documenting the research steps and process through

memos and stressing the intertextuality of sources--that is, examining multiple sources and

looking for commonalities and contradictions within the data and the codes (Charmaz, 2006;

Silverman & Marvasti, 2008; Yin, 2009). According to Stake (2008), case study researchers

share some meanings at the expense of others and are challenged to "…seek ways to protect and

substantiate the transfer of knowledge" (p.136).

Considering intertextuality is especially relevant in news discourse whereby elements of

news items on the same topic can appear in a number of media at the same time (Chimombo &

Roseberry, 1998), For example, one photo does not carry meaning on its own, argues Hall

(1997b); rather, meanings build on each other and interact with one another across various texts

and media. While a case study is a focused examination of texts at one point in time,

> …at the broader level of how 'difference' and 'otherness' is being
>
> represented in a particular culture at any one moment, we can see
>
> similar representational practices and figures being repeated, with
>
> variations, from one text or site of representation to another. (Hall,
>
> 1997b, p. 232)

A second criticism of case studies using discourse analysis is the risk of discourse being

removed from its context in order to be analyzed, and, subsequently, remaining separated from

its context (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000; Charmaz, 2006; Rogers, 2004). One of the

fundamental aspects of analyzing discourse involves situating the discourse within its context to

understand its meaning (Fairclough, 1992), however, as discourse can have multiple meanings, it

can be hard to define its scope and significance (Alvesson & Karrenman, 2000).

Finally, critical discourse analysis, and qualitative research by extension, includes

grappling with the issue of bias. By its nature, critical discourse analysis is concerned with issues

of power and how it is enacted or furthered through text, context, and social systems (Blommaert

& Bulcaen, 2000; Fairclough, 1992). As a result, those using it as a lens for examining social

issues must include the context, and they must continuously reflect on their insights to ensure the

findings are truly examples of power struggles and not what one wants to find in the data

(Rogers, 2004).

Case Study Data

Case study methodology involves the accruement of primary and secondary research and information to inform the context for the case study as well as collecting and defining the scope of the data to analyze (Yin, 2009). According to Stake (2008), case study requires the researcher "…to encapsulate complex meanings into a finite report but to describe the case in sufficient descriptive narrative so that readers can experience these happenings vicariously and draw their own conclusions" (p. 129). The texts I used as context and as data for this research are described below.

Context. First, the scope of information collected to inform the case study includes (a) the body of literature described in Chapter Two; (b) the media coverage of the events surrounding, and following, the cross-burning incident and trial, highlights of which are discussed in Chapter Five; and (c) personal interviews with the two key members of the editorial team involved in the development of the series. Over 160 articles[2] were captured about the event, the trial and the sentencing using the Canadian Newsstand Major Dailies database, Canadian Newsstand Atlantic, and the database with full text of major newspapers in Nova Scotia. In some cases, the articles reported similar information as syndicated articles ran in provincial and national papers. Likewise, an interview published on the Poynter website[3] with *Chronicle Herald* journalists about the development of "Nova Scotia Burning" (Irby, 2011) was also considered to help inform the context for the case and to make sense of the findings of the case study research. Finally, I also completed separate interviews with the Director of News Content, Dan Leger, and the Assistant Director of News Content, Andrew Waugh, who were instrumental in the oversight for the series.[4] These secondary texts were not coded as data but, considered together with the

findings, play a critical role in contextualizing the findings for this case study research (Yin, 2009).

Data. Within case study research, decisions must be made regarding the parameters of text to analyze as data (Charmaz, 2006; Yin, 2009). This is especially true in this situation as the burning of the cross in Hants County, Nova Scotia in 2010 incited a number of print and broadcast stories. The data for this case study was purposefully confined to *The Chronicle Herald* series for the following reasons. First, the texts are unique in that they examine in depth, from a local perspective, a crime that garnered provincial and national media attention. Consistent with recommendations for selecting a research site (Phillips & Hardy, 2002), the site is of particular interest given the unprecedented space and attention the newspaper provided to the feature series (Titus-Roberts, 2012). Unlike a traditional *hard news* story, which details the current events and issues of the day in a short, matter-of-fact format (Cotter, 2010; Young People's Press [YPP], 2010), a feature story, typically around 1,500 words in length, is a more in-depth exploration of an issue (YPP, 2010). A feature story examines issues that affect individuals and communities, "…and explores [them] by interviewing the people involved and drawing conclusions from that information" (YPP, 2010, ¶ 9). Thus, the materials produced as part of the feature provide a more in-depth examination of the issue, and, by extension, more text for a richer analysis. Finally, I also confined the examination of texts to the series itself due to the large volume of data within the series while ensuring the qualitative analysis and richness of the data were not negatively affected by such a decision (Charmaz, 2006).

The text analyzed as data for this case study included all of the materials produced by *The Chronicle Herald* for the feature series published in 2011: four videos and 12 newspaper articles, which included the four primary stories for the series, an overview article of the paper's

methodology, two featured editorials, comments from an online discussion forum, and five other

articles providing additional contextual information related to the subject under examination. The

four feature stories, respectively titled, "Nova Scotia Burning Part 1" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011a),

"Why Did They Do It?" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011c), "The 'Cross-Burners'" (Brooks Arenburg,

2011d), and "Mississippi of the North: Is this Label Deserved?" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011e) were

each approximately 1,250 words in length. The four-part series was segmented into the following

topics: what happened, why they did it, about the brothers, and where to from here.

The other articles within the series used as data included: "Methodology: How We

Produced this Series" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011b); "Not the First Cross-Burning Case in Canada"

(Brooks Arenburg, 2011f); "Nova Scotia Burning - Discussion" ("Nova Scotia Burning," 2011);

"Reader Comments," ("Reader Comments," 2011); "Rehberg Brothers Apologize to Victims"

("Rehberg Brothers," 2011); editorial, "Why this Difficult Story Had to be Told," (Leger, 2011);

"Cross-Burning: Timeline" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011g); and editorial, "Cross-Burning Close-Up;

Poking for Lessons in the Ashes" ("Cross-Burning Close-Up," 2011). Between the print and

online components of the series, 31 photographs were also featured in the series, and they, along

with their respective captions, were included as data.

Four videos, corresponding to the four feature articles, were also produced for the series

and made available online. Each video that corresponded to the print feature article was

approximately five to six minutes in length and shared similar content to that of its print

counterpart. The videos included interviews with Justin and Nathan Rehberg, the individuals

convicted of inciting hatred by burning a cross, their mother, uncle, stepfather, the brothers'

girlfriends, and a friend of Justin's. Michelle Lyon and Shayne Howe, the individuals victimized

by the crime, were also interviewed. Ashley Rehberg, Michelle and Shayne's daughter, declined

to be interviewed as part of the "Nova Scotia Burning" series (Brooks Arenburg, 2011a),

however, she was featured in the video footage along with her siblings. The fourth video in the

series, entitled, "Mississippi of the North: Is This Label Deserved?" (Brooks Arenburg, Wynne,

& Taylor, 2011a) featured Dr. Wanda Thomas Bernard, a professor at Dalhousie University, who

has studied race relations, and commentary from Michael Paris, a concerned community member

from the neighbouring town of Windsor. All four videos also included b-roll (video footage

commonly used in video production to help tell the story visually) of the respective families in

their home environments, reading, walking, and spending time together.

In addition, the series culminated in an interactive online discussion between *The*

Chronicle Herald and interested readers/online participants ("Nova Scotia Burning," 2011). The

discussion was moderated by web editor Rick Conrad and included as special guests Patricia

Brooks Arenburg, the primary journalist on the series; Dr. Wanda Thomas Bernard, professor at

Dalhousie University who was interviewed about racism in Nova Scotia as part of the series; and

Kenny Irby, a senior faculty member of visual journalism and diversity at the Poynter Institute in

Florida. The online discussion, "Nova Scotia Burning - Discussion" ("Nova Scotia Burning,"

2011) was an hour in length and took place February 7, 2011, the Monday following the

completion of the series on Saturday. The online discussion was hosted on *The Chronicle Herald*

website and open to the online public; participants were not required to disclose their identity.

This form of interactive discussion, while more common in 2012, was not a common offering for

media outlets at the time this series was produced. The online discussion among participants

(e.g., readers of the series), leading authority figures on the topic of racism in Nova Scotia, and

Chronicle Herald staff, provided the opportunity for a real-time, two-way discussion about

racism. Over 250 comments were shared over the one-hour discussion. These comments were

also included as data.

Approach to Coding

Coding is an important link between data collection and emergent theory (Charmaz,

2006). "Coding means naming segments of data with a label that simultaneously categorizes,

summarizes and accounts for each piece of data" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 43). The iterative process of

coding and analysis includes moving between theoretical ideas and text, and examining the text

for similarities and contradictions (Charmaz, 2006; Glazer, 1978; Huberman & Miles, 1994; Yin,

2009). The coding process requires a close reading of text and developing analytical ideas to

focus the review, while remaining open to all ideas within the data and literature throughout the

process (Charmaz, 2006). Categorization, groups, and clustering data are also part of the coding

process (Janesick, 1994).

I used computer assisted qualitative software, MAXQDA10, to support my analysis of

data. The volume of data involved in this analysis as well as the ability for software to support

data management and administrative coding informed this decision. Computer qualitative

analysis software is useful when working with large amounts of text as it can assist with labour-

intensive administrative tasks (Phillips & Hardy, 2002); it is also helpful when dealing with

sources that are multi-faceted (e.g., text, image) (Phillips & Hardy, 2002), and it can assist the

researcher in organizing multiple data sources, attaching codes to similar pieces of text, and

categorizing and organizing data with similarly coded text (Humble, 2010; Phillips & Hardy,

2002).

The articles from the media series discussed previously in this chapter were imported into

MAXQDA10. To allow for a consistent unit of analysis, the audio from the videos were

transcribed and the corresponding images in the video were described. Consistent with

qualitative analysis (Charmaz, 2006; Glazer, 1978; Janesick, 1994), the coding process for my

research followed an iterative process of examining the text for existing themes from the

literature and emergent themes from the text. The steps, while described linearly in the next

section, happened congruently.

I first read the entire series of articles and watched the videos to reorient myself with the

story and to make note of any ideas or initial impressions I had from the review. Consistent with

Charmaz (2006), my first phase of coding was sentence by sentence to develop initial codes and

meanings. I read each article and grouped broad ideas deductively, based on themes established

in the media literature, which included media coverage focusing on stereotypes of crime,

Otherness, and misrepresentation (Hall, 1996b; Henry & Tator, 2002, 2003, 2006; Miller, 1994,

2005/2006; Tator & Henry, 2000; van Dijk, 1991), and postcolonial theory, which included

ethnocentricity, colonial stereotypes such as primitive or unrestrained (Prasad, P., 2005),

mysterious, uneducated, sensual, barbaric (Said, 1978), earthy, or alluring (Echtner, C. M., &

Prasad, P., 2003). Sections of text that matched such ideas were coded accordingly and stored in

my codebook (Appendix A).

Each time a code name was created, I re-read previous articles to see if there were

additional meanings in the text that applied to the new code. After reading and coding the text for

initial ideas, I paused to re-examine my codes to see if any codes were similar (and could be

combined) or if there were any codes that were accumulating a lot of text within the grouping

that required further refinement. For example, early on in the coding process, I had separate

codes capturing the feeling of denial, sensationalism, and challenging the Herald for its

production of the series. As coding progressed, I renamed the code "challenging dominant

coalition" to read "challenging dc/dislike CH articles"; I moved articles from "sensationalism" to this new code and deleted the sensationalism code. As the coding process evolved these ideas were eventually grouped under a heading expressing discontent for the series. Likewise, I had a code named "colonial influence" to capture meanings in the text related to historically embedded notions of racism, and I also had a code for "expressing history of racism"; similar data was appearing in both codes, so they were combined and "colonial influence" was deleted.

As more text was coded, I would review each code label, and the sections of text grouped within it, to ensure that I applied the meaning of the code consistently. In some cases, this resulted in codes being renamed to reflect the grouping, as referenced above, the removal of similar categories after amalgamation, or the creation of a new code to reflect the groupings of data. In my codebook, examples of system failings contributing to racism were all coded under one broad code initially, however, subsequent review and reflection on the text resulted in them being separated into distinct codes (e.g., "feeling the brothers' upbringing contributed to actions"; "feeling educational access to blame"). In situations where the name ascribed to the code could have multiple meanings, I included a working definition in my codebook. In addition, throughout this process I asked questions such as whether the explanation of the code aligned with the meaning in the text (Janesick, 1994), and I examined the actions, processes, words, and conditions under which particular meanings were attributed (Charamz, 2006). For example, when examining the text and the codes describing the experiences of the Rehberg brothers before and after the cross burning, I quickly noted that the same level of detail was not provided about Shayne Howe or Michelle Lyon. I went back through the data and colour coded sections of text, assigning colour codes to represent information about the sets of characters to further examine this insight and to understand what information was included, and, equally important for

analysis, what information was left out.

In addition to coding the data based on existing literature, I also coded the text for emergent ideas or themes. In this case, I read the text and coded ideas emerging from the text; if similar ideas seemed to emerge around the code, I marked it as a potential emergent code and revisited subsequent texts to see if there was additional data that fit within it. This is how the codes "struggling for identity and belonging" and "defining racist act/brothers not racist" emerged. Likewise, "search for shared understanding" and "ongoing discussion" were emergent codes (and ultimately themes) that materialized from a close read of the text.

Memos, a running logbook, and categories were also critical to my coding process and reflect recommended practices in qualitative research (Charmaz, 2006; Humble, 2010). As I read the text and coded analytically, I also approached the text reflexively; I created memos to capture my ideas about the codes I was creating, my response to the text, and potential ideas or linkages to explore between coded segments. According to Charmaz (2006), "memos provide ways to compare data, to explore ideas about codes, and to direct further data-gathering" (p. 12). I also used the notes feature within MAXQDA10 to record running ideas and thoughts I had as I read the text, and I also kept a journal to make handwritten notes as I reviewed the codes and the literature together. For instance, after reading a phrase from one of the editorials that referred to the Rehbergs' actions as "a racism of opportunity," I created a memo asking what it means to be racist. As I read the text, I included examples from the data that answered this question in the code memo. What emerged from this was a narrative supporting a struggle to conceptualize racism--there was a marked distinction in the text between intention and consequence.

I also used the logbook in MAXQDA10 to record what I completed during each session in the program; this included administrative details from the times of day I reviewed information

to more detailed information about decisions to rename codes or to collapse or expand a code.

Third, tentative categories were reviewed and revised throughout the coding process. Each time I opened the program to code, I began with a review of the codes as well as my logbook to situate the coding process. This process helped manage the volume of codes, however, further along in the coding process, the development of tentative category codes also helped me visually organize the codes into similar ideas; this also supported the movement from codes to concrete categories and more developed themes. For example, the meanings ascribed in the text to the burning cross were grouped under a category of representation, and codes expressing change, understanding, and empathy were grouped under a tentative category of emancipation. As Creswell (2009) outlines, categories, patterns, and themes are built inductively, "by organizing the data into increasingly more abstract units of information. This inductive process illustrates working back and forth between the themes and the data until … a comprehensive set of themes [is established]" (p. 175).

In addition to reading, and re-reading the text, and reviewing and organizing codes, I also continued to review relevant literature throughout the coding process. For example, when the category and subsequent codes related to racism (e.g., defining racism as visible acts. defining racism as systematic, questioning whether White people experience racism, denying racism exists) were created, I consulted readings on race and racism to better inform my review of the material. This iterative process is consistent with qualitative research approaches (Charmaz, 2006; Glazer, 1978): "through studying data, comparing them, and writing memos, we define ideas that best fit and interpret the data as tentative categories" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 3).

I subsequently reviewed the video text, photographs, and imagery from the videos once I coded all of the articles to see if any text from the videos fit within the existing codes, or if new

ideas emerged. Following the practice of comparing and contrasting (Glazer, 1978), I was

particularly conscious of identifying any differences between the texts. If new ideas emerged, I

re-read the previous texts for these new ideas.

Once all the data had been reviewed and coded, I printed out my codebook, memos, and

logbook to critically examine the ideas concurrently based on existing tentative categories, my

code definitions, and my reflections throughout the process (Charmaz, 2006). Through this

process I assessed the codes and considered what best reflected what was happening in the data

in order to move to conceptual categories and an analytical framework for assessment

(Charamaz, 2006). From this larger list of tentative categories, I created a two-page table with

themed headings to help group the ideas and reduce the number of codes to begin to form broad

themes (Appendix B). The headings inscribed in the document were based on the clusters of

ideas surrounding the categories in the codebook, and categories (and the subsequent coded text)

were placed under these headings. This information, along with my original codebook, was

shared with my thesis supervisor to discuss my coding progress to date and to help inform next

steps.

Finally, focused coding is another important step in the coding process (Charmaz, 2006).

Once initial themes or categories were identified and I discussed the preliminary findings with

my professor, I re-examined the text in a more focused way, refining my existing codes and

focusing on select codes to review the data once again. This required decisions about which

initial codes to pursue and refine (Charmaz, 2006), and the cluster of the tentative categories

provides the lens for the final refinement. For example, codes were refined and grouped into the

following broad categories to inform the organization of my findings section: grappling with

belonging, understanding 'why' the brothers did it, responses to the series, representation of the

cross, and racism in Nova Scotia. Within these broad categories were sub-categories and codes that illustrated elements of the category to be explored (Appendix A). It was through this further refinement that the emergent code "emancipation" evolved to a theme of "transcending racism" with narratives of understanding, uncertainty, and ongoing discussion supporting the broad theme.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Within this case study research, I faced several challenges when examining the data. First, I was initially challenged in approaching the text from the online discussion. Unlike the print articles and web videos produced by staff at *The Chronicle Herald* with a defined goal and plan, the online discussion was produced through dialogue between journalists and participants. While it was moderated by the paper's web editor, which meant that the posts were reviewed and approved before appearing in the discussion, it was also organic in that paper did not have sole attribution of the content. However, unlike the articles, the hour-long chat produced pages of text, which were not linear and contained multiple ideas and positions.

The coding of this text was more tedious due to the volume of text as well as the fact that the tonality was more informal than the previous texts reviewed within the case study data. Following emergent coding techniques, the desire for discussion and understanding, as well as uncertainty about racism were prominent themes that emerged through a close read of the discussion. The narratives from the online discussion were important for the case study because the online discussion offered insight into the perspectives of readers and viewers that the articles alone did not provide. Yet, this also presented a challenge during the code review process as the emerging themes in the online discussion could not always be triangulated against the other texts in the series. In this case, the themes were considered within the discussion itself, and the codes

were reviewed, compared, and analyzed to ensure the final categories reflected the meanings within the online discussion.

A second challenge I encountered during the coding process was working through how much detail to provide in field notes and the logbook about the process I undertook as part of the research. Coding is systematic and rigorous, and explaining the process is critical for strengthening the validity of results (Yin, 2009). However, as coding, analyzing, reflecting, refinement, and further coding can happen concurrently, I struggled at times to isolate the systematic steps applied to show the evolution of the coding journey from start to finish. I attempted to address this issue throughout the coding process by examining my notes and logbook each time I entered the field to review data. This was helpful to reorient myself, and it also prompted me to ask further questions based on my initial entries.

Third, while the value of using postcolonial theory for this research was established, as the theory is historically-based and includes abstract notions, I initially found it difficult to move beyond the theoretical notions of postcolonial theory to use it as a practical lens for examining my findings. When moving from the findings to the discussion, I went back to the existing literature about postcolonial theory, and, in particular, examined how studies using postcolonial theory approached its application to help ground the organization of my discussion. As detailed in Chapter Seven, I broadly followed the approach used by Said (1978) in *Orientalism* to help structure my discussion and consider the findings and case context together.

Finally, as case study research and a postcolonial framework stress the importance of context, I faced challenges with approaching what information to include as context and how far back in history to go to collect information as part of the research. For example, while this paper is not an historic account of the experiences of Black Nova Scotians, the experiences of Black

Nova Scotians are inherently critical to informing the case and the findings about how this population is treated and represented within the text. This is an issue that Said (1978) also identified when defining the parameters for his examination of texts involving the Orient:

> The idea of beginning, indeed the act of beginning, necessarily
>
> involves an act of delimitation by which something is cut out of a
>
> great mass of material, separated from the mass, and made to stand
>
> for, as well as be, a starting point, a beginning. (p. 16)

He noted that one has to start somewhere, and that is, ultimately, what I did. In particular, I approached this issue by focusing the literature review on any existing research examining media treatment of Black Nova Scotians. Likewise, following qualitative research methods, as ideas emerged in my research, my literature review also evolved and expanded. This included adding a section on race and racism and further refining the demography of the Black population in Nova Scotia.

In addition to challenges I faced with the data as a researcher, I also learned several lessons through the coding process and this case study research. First, I learned that case study research, and discourse analysis in particular, is challenging and mentally fatiguing. While I did not physically go into a *field*, I faced issues related to critically reflecting on the text. As my data was managed through an online computer software program, I often spent several hours at a time in front of the computer reviewing the data and making notes and connections. As the coding process proved mentally taxing at times, the importance of keeping detailed field notes about the thought and evolution of the codes and meanings proved even more critical. I mixed the reflection process between writing notes in MAXQDA10 and writing and visually mapping with tables and clusters of data in my physical journal. I found the shift to physically writing ideas

helped me focus and examine the ideas, however, the multiple places for storage of ideas

sometimes made it difficult to report on the thought process.

      Second, seeking the perspectives from journalists involved in the production of the series

was very valuable for situating the findings and the context, and this was an important lesson

learned for the case research. When first developing the research proposal for this case study,

seeking interviews with the journalists involved was not originally part of the intended approach.

However, during discussions with members of my committee, this idea was explored and

conceptualized. Phillips and Hardy (2002) argue that while naturally occurring texts provide a

better source of data, interviews help situate the social context, and the inclusion of interviews as

part of this case study brought richer insight to the findings.

Chapter Five: Description of the Case

Shortly before midnight on February 21, 2010, brothers Justin and Nathan Rehberg, who are White, burned a cross on the lawn of a Black man and White woman living in their community in Hants County, Nova Scotia. Liquor, drugs, rumours, and a party atmosphere were reported to have contributed to their actions (Brooks Arenburg, 2011c). In the days following the cross burning, police sought to find the perpetrators, the community rallied to show support for the Howe-Lyon family, and media reported on the issue as it unfolded. The cross-burning incident that transpired received local, provincial, and national media attention, and the coverage continued for months after the initial event; over 160 media stories were published for television, radio, and print over the course of a year on the incident, aftermath, and sentencing.[5] Nova Scotia media, including *The Chronicle Herald*, *CTV, CBC,* and the local community paper in Hants County covered the issue to varying degrees. The following section provides a summary of the timeline and main events covered by Nova Scotia media surrounding the cross burning in Hants County and concludes with *The Chronicle Herald*'s approach to the development of the "Nova Scotia Burning" series.

On February 24, 2010, three days after the incident occurred, Nathan and Justin Rehberg were charged with inciting hatred, uttering threats, and mischief (Brooks Arenburg, 2011g). In media coverage, the Howe-Lyon family reported feeling terrified, and uncertain about whether the act was isolated or ongoing ("A Burning Cross, A Shaken Family," 2010). One week after the cross burning, on February 28, 2010, about 200 community residents in Windsor held a rally in support of the Howe-Lyon family (Brooks Arenburg, 2011g). In addition, Michelle and Shayne reported receiving community support through phone calls, email messages, cards, and

personal visits (Macdonald, 2010). A Facebook page was also created called "We Support

Shayne Howe" (Macdonald, 2010).

In March 2010, the charges against the brothers were amended to include criminal

harassment (Eagles-Harvie, 2010). The brothers were released on bail into the custody of their

aunt and uncle, Marianne and Darrell Boutilier (Brooks Arenburg, 2011g). On April 17, 2010,

Michelle Lyon's car was set on fire (Brooks Arenburg, 2011g), and to date no charges have been

laid in that incident.

In April and May 2010, Justin and Nathan appeared in separate court appearances for

their arraignments. Justin Rehberg pled not guilty to all charges, and students from his high

school attended to show him support (Eagles-Harvie, 2010). Nathan, who elected for a trial by

Supreme Court and jury, failed to appear for his scheduled court appearance and later turned

himself in ("Accused in Cross Burning Surrenders," 2010). Nathan's grandparents later revoked

surety and Nathan was placed in custody ("Accused in Cross Burning Surrenders," 2010). On

August 9, 2010, after his bail hearing, Nathan was released into the custody of his mother and

stepfather until his trial in November (Brooks Arenburg, 2011g).

On October 18, 2010, the trial for Justin Rehberg was held in provincial court based on

agreed statements of fact between the defence and the Crown (Brooks Arenburg, 2011g).

Charges of uttering threats and mischief were dropped, and Justin pled guilty to charges of

criminal harassment and not guilty to inciting hatred (Brooks Arenburg, 2011g). Less than a

month later, on November 5, Judge Claudine MacDonald found Justin Rehberg guilty of

criminal harassment and inciting hatred (Brooks Arenburg, 2011g), and on November 9, 2010,

Nathan Rehberg's trial started.

The guilt or innocence of the brothers, the definition of inciting hatred, and evidence for the crime were points of contention reported in mainstream media during Nathan's trial. First, both Justin and Nathan argued that their actions were not racially motivated. During Nathan's trial, Justin testified that they acted out of revenge for rumours spread by the individuals victimized by the crime, while not knowing the full consequences of their actions (Delaney, 2010a). "We heard that Michelle and Shayne had been spreading rumours about the family … It was payback I guess" [said Justin Rehberg] (Delaney, 2010a, ¶ 8-9).

Second, during the trial, Nathan's defence lawyer Luke Craggs argued that the case was not an example of inciting hatred as the crime did not provoke anyone to act (Canadian Press, 2010). Craggs argued, "…Rehberg's decision to build and burn the cross may have inspired fear, but not hatred" (Canadian Press, 2010, ¶ 31). However, crown attorney Darrell Carmichael argued that the act of burning the cross was itself an example of inciting hatred due to its symbolism and the action's alignment with the definition of inciting hatred: the cross burning had the potential to incite or encourage hatred, the act was committed in a public place, and the act was likely to lead to a breach of the public peace (Delaney, 2010b).

Finally, a third point of contention identified through the trial was whether or not a noose also accompanied the burning cross. In most of the media coverage of the cross burning, a noose and racial slurs were reported to have accompanied the burning cross, however, in testimony Justin indicated there was no noose or no racial slurs uttered. While photos remain of the cross, police disposed of the physical evidence of the cross in the garbage before the trial (Macdonald, 2010).

Four days after his brother's conviction, Nathan Rehberg was also found guilty of inciting hatred and criminal harassment.

> In convicting [Nathan] Rehberg, Nova Scotia Supreme Court
>
> Justice John Murphy said there was little doubt that racism was
>
> behind Rehberg's decision to burn a cross in front of the home of
>
> Howe, who is Black, and Lyon, who is White ("N.S. Cross-
>
> Burning Sentencing Delayed," 2010, ¶ 7)

The judge also commented in court that the reasons for burning the cross do not justify the action ("N.S. Cross-Burning Sentencing Delayed," 2010).

The verdicts against both Rehberg brothers set a precedent in provincial and supreme courts (Delaney, 2010c). The verdicts were believed to mark the first time anyone in Canada was convicted of a hate crime for burning a cross (Brooks Arenburg, 2011f; Delaney, 2010c; "Landmark Conviction," 2010). There were two other hate charges in Nova Scotia in the last 10 years (one case was dismissed and the other accused was not found criminally responsible) ("Landmark Conviction," 2010) and a hate-crime conviction for a cross-burning incident in 2011 in New Brunswick (Brooks Arenburg, 2011f).

A preliminary review of media coverage surrounding the trial indicated mixed reactions from community members in response to the burning cross and the trials. A number of letters to the editor and commentary articles appeared in various Nova Scotia print papers and expressed dissatisfaction and concern over what happened (See Voice of the People, 2010). For instance, *The Chronicle Herald* reported some community members felt that while the brothers' actions were wrong, others felt the case was overblown and that the Rehbergs should not have been convicted of a hate crime (Delaney, 2010d). Conversely, the Canadian Jewish Congress praised the sentencing; Chief Executive Bernie Farber noted, "Today's conviction sends a strong

message that hate crimes will not be tolerated in our country" ("Landmark Conviction, 2010, ¶ 20).

Nathan and Justin Rehberg received their sentencing January 10 and 11, 2011, respectively. Nathan received four months plus one day for inciting hatred and six months for criminal harassment, served concurrently (Brooks Arenburg, 2011g). He also received 30 months' probation and 50 hours of community service. Justin received two months for inciting hatred and two months for criminal harassment, served concurrently (Brooks Arenburg, 2011g).

Starting February 2, 2011, approximately one month following the sentencing, and a year since the actual crime occurred, *The Chronicle Herald* ran an in-depth feature series on the issue. "Nova Scotia Burning" included print articles, web videos, photos, event timelines, special editorials, and an online discussion forum between journalists and readers. The elements of the series are described fully in Chapter Four.

Developing the Nova Scotia Burning Series

To better understand the context for the case under study, I interviewed the news director and assistant news director involved in the development of the series.[6] In order to request interviews I first received ethics approval from Mount Saint Vincent University following its ethics approval process (Appendix C), and before each interview the participant reviewed and signed a consent form (Appendix D). Interview questions were developed (Appendix E) using the qualitative research technique (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) of in-depth interviews (McCracken, 1988); the questions were semi-structured and used a combination of 'grand tour' and 'mini tour' (Spradley, 1979) questions and prompts. The purpose of the discussion was to gather perspectives and experiences from individuals involved in the development of *The Chronicle Herald*'s feature series "Nova Scotia Burning." Interview participants were asked questions about their

involvement in the feature series and for their perspective on media's treatment of issues affecting Black Nova Scotians, as well as questions about how the series developed.

Several interests and goals informed the development of the "Nova Scotia Burning" series for *The Chronicle Herald* (D. Leger, personal communication, June 15, 2012; A. Waugh, personal communication, July 6, 2012). In separate interviews, both Leger and Waugh expressed a larger commitment to tackling racism in Nova Scotia informing their interest in pursuing the series:

> …For years I had wanted to do one [journalistic enterprise] that
>
> tackled racism in Nova Scotia head on. And … really would strip
>
> away the sort of gentle veneer [that] we have here and recognize it
>
> for what it is. … At the same time I'm always the one who said
>
> give me stories, not topics. … And we had been missing that
>
> narrative [about racism] …When this thing happened [the cross-
>
> burning incident] … in my mind it was like, ok now we've got
>
> [sic] a narrative story. We can tell that story and then broaden it
>
> out to tackle … wider issues in our society that need to be
>
> addressed (D. Leger, personal communication, June 15, 2012).

According to Leger (personal communication, June 15, 2012), the project had several overall goals: (a) to tell the story of the cross burning and "get behind the surface reporting of a court case," (b) to send a "wake-up call" that racism is "alive and well in Nova Scotia," and (b) to demonstrate the multimedia capabilities of the paper. Equally important, in pursuing the series, the paper wanted to know why the brothers did it (A. Waugh, personal communication, July 6, 2012). The "why" question is the most important question in journalism, and *The Chronicle*

Herald did not believe it had been adequately addressed in previous coverage (A. Waugh, personal communication, July 6, 2012). According to Waugh (personal communication, July 6, 2012), the recent addition of a multimedia journalist to the team also helped them secure the platform for the paper to explore the issue in depth.

Both Leger and Waugh noted in separate interviews that the paper's intention was not to complete a social commentary on racism in Nova Scotia; however, an exploration of the issue led them to a deeper story that was about more than racism: "…We understood right from the get-go that we were about to potentially shine a light on a part of Nova Scotian life or the underbelly of Nova Scotian life that a lot of people would not want us to do" (A. Waugh, personal communication, July 6, 2012).

> We weren't really setting out to make a social comment … but at
> the same time we felt there was a social message in what had
> happened to these people. …We found out in the process of doing
> the journalism on this that it wasn't just racism … there was
> ignorance, lack of education, there were family issues, there were
> jealousies. (D. Leger, personal communication, June 15, 2012)

The success of the piece, according to Leger (personal communication, June 15, 2012), rested on the access the team was able to gain to the individuals involved. After deliberating how to tackle the interview requests (A. Waugh, personal communication, July 6, 2012; D. Leger, personal communication, June 15, 2012), the field team, comprised of journalist Patricia Brooks Arenburg, photojournalist Eric Wynne, and multimedia specialist Jayson Taylor, arrived unannounced at the Rehbergs' home on December 1, 2011, a month before the brothers were to receive sentencing for the crimes of which they were recently found guilty (Brooks Arenburg,

2011b). Instead of getting angry when the team members explained who they were and their

purpose, recounts Waugh, who was not actually part of the field team, the family welcomed them

in (A. Waugh, personal communication, July 6, 2012). In the methodology section that

accompanied the feature series, Brooks Arenburg (2011b) wrote,

> No one asked who we were or what we wanted. And they didn't
>
> throw us out when we told them. Instead, we talked and talked.
>
> They let us into their lives, often for hours at a time, because they
>
> had a story they wanted to tell. (¶ 3)

The series took approximately five to six weeks to complete (A. Waugh, personal

communication, July 6, 2012). The field work itself took approximately three weeks and

included visits to the Annapolis Valley as well as Truro in order to complete interviews (A.

Waugh, personal communication, July 6, 2012):

> [We realized] we needed other voices to provide context, to say,
>
> okay, what does this really mean? So, we went and sought out
>
> prominent African Nova Scotians to offer their perspective and
>
> offer their insights into the way forward and how do we avoid
>
> something like this happening again. And that, again, was a
>
> challenge because there were some prominent members of the
>
> African Nova Scotian community who had no interest in being a
>
> part of this … but we were fortunate enough to get a couple of very
>
> intelligent, prominent figures to step forward and offer their take
>
> on it. (A. Waugh, personal communication, July 6, 2012)

Once field work was complete, the team expanded to include copy editor Randy Jones, a former crime reporter, to help direct the narrative, and designer Nadine Fownes, to help ensure the video and print pieces had a "consistent look and feel" (A. Waugh, personal communication, July 6, 2012). According to Waugh, one of the initial challenges in pulling the series together was deciding how the multimedia and print pieces would work together. In tackling this, the team established a clear vision for four different parts after collecting the footage: background, why they did it, about the brothers, and future implications, "because without that clear methodology, a series, any serious journalistic project, will just wander around without an identity and you won't get where you need to go" (A. Waugh, personal communication, July 6, 2012).

The team made a conscious decision to focus the series on the brothers and to learn more about their experiences: "we had to get inside the minds of the people who did it. And, in order to do that, we had to look at what led to this moment" (A. Waugh, personal communication, July 6, 2012). During the editing process, there was constant discussion among team members about the design and quotes for the series and what the final product would be like (A. Waugh, personal communication, July 6, 2012). "If we didn't tell this story just right, we, ourselves, risked becoming the story. This was walking a journalistic tightrope for us because it did become emotional for the team involved," explained Waugh (personal communication, July 6, 2012), who also noted that sympathy developed for both sides.

The Chronicle Herald released the "Nova Scotia Burning" series in February 2012, during National African Heritage Month. Unique to the series was the use of video and online discussion. According to Waugh (personal communication, July 6, 2012), the online discussion was an important element of the series in order to ensure the readers had the opportunity to be

part of the discussion about this important topic. Likewise, Jayson Taylor, the multimedia editor

for the series, indicated that the video also provided a permanent place on the website for people

to visit, and it provided the paper with the opportunity to catalogue all of the elements related to

the story (Irby, 2011). In an interview with the Poynter Institute,[7] Taylor noted,

>It brings an added richness to the story to hear the victims and the
>
>perpetrators explain their sides of the event in their own words,
>
>instead of through a reporter's voice. This extra layer of
>
>information will hopefully encourage greater understanding of the
>
>crime and its impact on the victims and the community (Irby,
>
>2011, ¶ 9).

The reaction--for and against the series--was strong, and the extent of the reaction was

not anticipated (A. Waugh, personal communication, July 6, 2012; D. Leger, personal

communication, June 15, 2012). During the first day of the series the paper received

approximately 300 phone calls and hundreds of emails, compared to the typical 10 to 20 emails

and 50 to 100 phone calls they would receive when they produced something the readership did

not like (A. Waugh, personal communication, July 6, 2012). Comments ranged from criticism for

running the story prior to the Canada Games starting in Halifax (A. Waugh, personal

communication, July 6, 2012) to congratulating the paper for examining the issue, to "…you are

making a mountain out of a mole hill and a lot worse" (D. Leger, personal communication, July

6, 2012). In addition, some phone calls and online comments expressed concern that the burning

cross image was part of the visual for the series and featured on the front page (A. Waugh,

personal communication, July 6, 2012). Some people threatened to, and did, cancel their

subscriptions as a result of the series (A. Waugh, personal communication, July 6, 2012).

In reflecting on the series, both Waugh and Leger noted some regrets. First, in retrospect, Waugh notes they should have run the methodology/editorial on the first day to situate why they were telling the story and explain the rationale to their readership: "We thought it would be self-evident but to some people it was not" (A. Waugh, personal communication, July 6, 2012). Second, both Waugh and Leger expressed regret that the story did not focus as much on Shayne Howe's experiences:

> There is a legitimate criticism of our journalism that we did not
>
> clearly … point out that Shayne himself is a very aggressive
>
> individual. He's got a criminal, a troubled criminal background.
>
> And I think we would have been better in the long run to have been
>
> a little more upfront about that. (D. Leger, personal
>
> communication, June 15, 2012)

In addition to feedback from readers, *The Chronicle Herald* received formal recognition for its production of "Nova Scotia Burning." The paper was a finalist for an EPPY Award in November 2011, which recognizes the best journalism websites around the world, for the series (Ross, 2011), and Eric Wynne, the photographer who worked on the series, won first place in the multimedia category at the 2011 National Pictures of the Year Awards for his work on "Nova Scotia Burning" ("Herald Photographer Wins," 2012).

Chapter Six: Findings

The analysis of the media articles comprising the "Nova Scotia Burning" series developed by *The Chronicle Herald* illuminates a very complex process whereby the media itself attempts to destabilize some of the dominant discourses surrounding race and racism in Nova Scotia, and yet, in the end, reproduces them through their use of language, imagery, and meaning making. As discussed in the literature review in Chapter Two, a priori in considering the role or ability of media to produce or reproduce a discourse is the theoretical perspective "…that discourse works as a structuring, constituting force, directly implying or tightly framing subjectivity, practice and meaning" (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000, p. 1145). In this case, the idea of reproducing a discourse acknowledges the theoretical structures that underpin the concept: discourses enact meaning (Phillips & Hardy, 2002; Wodak & Meyer, 2009) and the repetition of ideas across a variety of texts can shape, or subordinate social reality and individual/collective actions (to varying degrees) through the relationship of power and knowledge established in discourse (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000, p. 1127).

As identified in the presentation of the case in Chapter Five, and reflected in some of the texts used as part of the case study analysis, *The Chronicle Herald* set out to examine the cross burning in Hants County to understand why the brothers did what they did. This was done, in part, to help provide understanding of the issue of racism in Nova Scotia, which editors of the paper argue has not been adequately addressed in society, or in media coverage (D. Leger, personal communication, June 15, 2012; A. Waugh, personal communication, July 6, 2012). However, as I discuss in this chapter, themes emerged in the series that privilege the disparity between groups based on race, through discursive practices that emphasize difference, Otherness, and separation; refocus blame; illustrate a struggle of belonging; and deny the presence of

racism. Yet, I also uncovered within the text a theme suggesting a desire to transcend racialized

practices, illuminated through acknowledging the presence of racism, grappling with the

definition of racism, and expressing a desire for ongoing discussion. The themes presented in this

chapter emerged through an examination of the text (a) considering elements of postcolonial

theory and the treatment of race in media, as well as examining word choice, imagery, and

sentence structure for meaning; and (b) actively engaging in inductive coding to allow ideas to

emerge directly from the text.

Postcolonial theory predicts that themes of eurocentricity, colonial discourse, hybridity,

and identity are important to examine when attempting to re-read a text to consider the

perspectives of other groups or individuals (Prasad, P., 2005; Said, 1978). As detailed in Chapter

Two, colonial discourse, including language and imagery, constructs an image of the Other using

narratives that emphasize difference and inequality, often depicting those of African descent as

primitive, immoral, criminal, and vulnerable (Prasad, P., 2005). Left unchallenged, this

"discourse becomes, in other words, the mode of perceiving, judging and acting upon the non-

European" (Nayar, 2010, p. 2). Such themes of ethnocentricity and Otherness emerged in a close

examination of the "Nova Scotia Burning" series, and the following section outlines how they

were represented in the case.

Ethnocentricity and Racialized Other

Miles and Brown (2003) argue a key element of racism involves the dialectic relationship

between self and Other. An ethnocentric perspective views other groups or cultures from the

perspective of one's own (Ethnocentrism, 2009) and provides a means of defining, in binary

terms, concepts of self and Other (Miles & Brown, 2003). Consistent with other scholarly

findings exploring how minority groups in Canada are portrayed in media coverage (Henry &

Tator, 2003; Miller, 2005/2006; Tator & Henry, 2000), the assumption of a Caucasian

experience emerged as the starting point for the "Nova Scotia Burning" series and its

presentation of characters, events, and commentary. While establishing racial difference is

important for a series examining a crime of racial hatred, what is noteworthy, and presented in

detail below, is that this series privileges a Eurocentric perspective and experience over all others

in the series.

First, when introducing individuals in the series, a racial qualifier is used to introduce

only those individuals who are not Caucasian: "*Two drunken brothers* [italics added] burned a

cross at the home of a *biracial family* [italics added] in Hants County Nova Scotia" (Brooks

Arenburg et al., 2011b); "'Rumours are no reason to burn a cross on someone's lawn, especially

a *Black man's lawn'*" [italics added] [said Wanda Lynn Macumber] (Brooks Arenburg et al.,

2011c); "But at the time of the cross-burning, he [Nathan Rehberg] was angry at his lot in life.

He had recently returned from Halifax to live at his mother and stepfather's house with Mason,

who is part *Hispanic*" [italics added] (Brooks Arenburg, 2011d, ¶ 35); "'Being a *biracial couple*

[italics added], it was good,' said [Shayne] Howe, who is *Black* [italics added]. 'We never had no

[sic] problems with it until now'" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011a, ¶ 11); "Nathan Rehberg, 21, has a

Grade 8 education and few prospects. He has two children, *one is biracial* [italics added]"

(Brooks Arenburg et al., 2011d); "'This day and age, we're *mixed* [italics added] we're

everywheres [sic]. We're all with either *Whites* [italics added], or with our *own kind* [italics

added] or a *mixed relationship* [italics added]' [said Shayne Howe]" (Brooks Arenburg et al.,

2011a).

That the perspective is Eurocentric is demonstrated by the absence of a racial qualifier to

identify those interviewed in the series who are Caucasian (e.g., Rehberg family; Justin's

girlfriend, Alisha Caldwell; and Justin's friend, Brandon Cromwell) and the presence of racial

qualifiers, examples of which are shared above, to distinguish those who are different from the

established racial "norm." By stating that Nathan has two children, one biracial, this perspective

leaves us to assume one child is not biracial, or rather, White. This is consistent with Richard

Dyer's (2000) argument, who has studied entertainment and representation about gay and lesbian

culture, that "the sense of whites as non-raced is most evident in the absence of the reference to

whiteness in the habitual speech and writing of white people in the West" (p. 540). Instead,

Caucasian individuals are often represented by class, hair colour, and other characteristics, rather

than by race (Dyer, 2000). Within the series, Shayne Howe, a Black Nova Scotian, refers to his

relationship as a "mixed" relationship and compares it to those that are "with their own kind,"

using White as a litmus for defining everything else. These distinctions are made on the basis of

skin colour and incorrectly assume that there are only two categories of individuals (White and

non-White), which does not account for the experiences of individuals (Miles & Brown, 2003).

Yet this analytic examination also uncovered instances, contrary to the above, where a

racial qualifier is not used to identify those who are Black within the series. First, Wanda

Thomas Bernard, director of the school of social work at Dalhousie University in Halifax, is not

introduced in the series with a racial qualifier. Instead, Thomas Bernard is introduced based on

educational qualifications and expertise: "…a member of the Order of Canada who has

researched and written extensively about race, oppression and empowerment" (Brooks Arenburg,

2011e, ¶ 27). We only learn of her racial background by watching the complimentary web

videos. Similarly, Angus Riley, a friend of Michael Paris' is interviewed, and while Paris' racial

background is identified, "…a Black man who lives in nearby Windsor" (Brooks Arenburg

2011e, 2011, ¶ 9), Riley's is not. Instead, we learn Riley is a former welfare officer from Three

Mile Plains. As Riley is not featured in the complimentary video, "Mississippi of the North: Is This Label Deserved?" (Brooks Arenburg et al., 2011a), it is not clear whether the omission of Riley's racial background is another example in the series of omitting the racial background of Black Nova Scotians when educational credentials are available or a Eurocentric perspective which takes Caucasian as the norm. What is clear in either instance, however, is that people are represented differently in the series depending on the colour of their skin.

The only time a racial qualifier is used to introduce Caucasian individuals within the series is to establish shared support against the symbol of a burning cross: "The week after the cross-burning, about 200 people — Black and White — marched in Windsor to support the couple and their children. It strengthened their [the Howe-Lyon family] resolve to stay in the community" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011c, ¶ 34). In reporting a shared sense of unity, a division is established by distinguishing the group of supporters by their physical characteristics alone. The involvement of "Blacks and Whites" in the march is emphasized in the text by the use of an em dash. Such a distinction draws attention to the collective concern in the community by both *Blacks and Whites* for an act of racial hatred. However, from a postcolonial perspective, qualifying the involvement of a White racial background in this instance but at no other time when a White person is introduced also has the effect of adding credibility to the issue of racial discrimination against the Black population--an issue that would otherwise affect only a small portion of the population in Nova Scotia.

A class hierarchy emerges by the selective use of racial identifiers, which discursively positions Black Nova Scotians with less formal education in a lesser social position relative to their White peers, which is consistent with historic representations of this group. Moreover, selectively identifying race is a discursive strategy often used to further power and racial

inequality in order to distinguish those who are different from the dominant perspective (van Dijk, 1993).

In addition to racial qualifiers, the images and captions used to discuss the respective characters within the series also reinforce difference and separation based on race. The images and captions used to describe the characters of the Rehberg brothers include positive qualifiers (Titus-Roberts, 2012, p. 63): Photo Caption: "Nathan Rehberg *plays with his dog* [italics added], Dre…" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011b, p. A2); Photo Caption: "Justin Rehberg *enjoys a joke* [italics added] over dinner with his girlfriend, Alisha Caldwell, and aunt and uncle, Marianne and Darrell Boutiller" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011b, p. A2); Photo Caption: "Justin Rehberg *comforts his girlfriend* [italics added]…" (Brooks Arenbug, 2011h p. A4); Photo Caption: "Wanda Lynn Macumber, the mother of Justin and Nathan Rehberg, *weeps for her boys* [italics added], now in jail for inciting racial hatred by burning a cross: They '*had a rough go* [italics added] growing up'" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011i, p. A1); Photo Caption: "Justin Rehberg *volunteered* [italics added] on a neighbourhood dairy farm, doing odd jobs to keep busy while he awaited sentencing for his role in the Hants County cross-burning" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011i, p.A4); Photo Caption: "Justin and Nathan Rehberg *pose for a Christmas photo* [italics added] with their cousin" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011i, p. A4); Photo Caption: "Nathan and Justin Rehberg *embrace* [italics added] during a recess at their court proceedings" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011i, p. A4). Consistent with Dyer's (2000) assertion that White people are not defined by race but rather by class, attributes, and other characteristics, the Rehberg brothers are described by their actions and interests in this series.

Conversely, Shayne Howe and Michelle Lyon, the target of the cross burning, are treated differently. They are not described with the same positive descriptions. Through photos and

captions Howe and Lyon are known for their "blended" relationship, defined as "victims of the crime" and represented for their role in seeding the rumours--and the brothers' actions (Titus-Roberts, 2012): Photo Caption: "Shayne Howe, *victim of racial hatred* [italics added]" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011j, p. A1); Photo Caption: "Michelle Lyon *reflects on the ... gossip* [italics added] [that] prompted [the brothers] to burn a cross on her lawn" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011h, p. A4); Photo Caption: "Shayne Howe and Michelle Lyon pose with their children in their *blended* [italics added] family home" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011k, p. A6-7); Photo Caption: "In this four-part documentary series, our multimedia team takes you into the story behind the cross-burning at the home of a *biracial couple* [italics added] in Hants county last Feb. 21" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011j, p. A2); Lead: "The rumour mill was churning. The Rehberg brothers had had enough of the gossip. So they got drunk, dragged a wooden cross down the road to their neighbours' yard — *a black man and a white woman* [italics added] — and lit it ablaze" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011c, ¶ 1).

The captions used to describe the Howe-Lyon family define their experience almost entirely by race and as a consequence of the cross-burning experience. While the Rehberg family "shares laughs," "eats together," or "weeps" for concern, the Howe-Lyon family is "distressed," "isolated," and "blended." Shayne and Michelle are defined in the series based largely on what happened to them. Describing them only as distressed or isolated--feelings reported in response to the cross being burned on their lawn--limits what is known about them individually and as a couple, and, in many ways, defines their identity relative to the incident only. While acknowledging their racial background is relevant for establishing the race-related crime, it is unnecessary to reinforce their racial background as the primary means of identification and description of the couple. Such use of language and meaning privileges the power of the burning

cross, and the actions of White individuals, over Howe's and Lyon's experience as members of the community.

As outlined above, the individuals in this case who are not White are discursively separated based on visible characteristics. Postcolonial theory identifies that defining, and treating, groups by race is a practice passed on from colonisation, and the presence and omission of racial qualifiers within this text demonstrates how treatment of individuals by race is embedded in the text. The language used in the series privileges a Eurocentric perspective and creates a racialized Other.

Blame

The point of view and dramatic structure of a story help establish the perspective from which it will be told and how the elements within the story will be organized. Presenting a particular point of view will emphasize some aspects at the expense of others. In media coverage, dramatic structure is achieved through the presence of conflict, typically demonstrated through the sharing of two opposing viewpoints (Golding & Elliott, 1979). Within this case, the *opposing viewpoints* involve a victim of racial hatred and a perpetrator of a race-related crime, however, as discussed below, the structure of the series, headlines, and imagery blur the distinction between the roles of perpetrator and victim and the attribution of blame.

In reflecting on the development of the series, Andrew Waugh, assistant news editor at the time of the series' development,[8] said *The Chronicle Herald* pursued the series to understand why the brothers burned the cross:

> [The brothers] were interested in telling their story because they
>
> felt their side of the story hadn't come out. And, in fairness to the
>
> Rehbergs', it hadn't. Because no journalist had asked the question,

'why did you do this?' Now, that may have been asked inside a

court room, but it wasn't answered certainly to our satisfaction.

And that's our job. Is to be curious, is to find out what the

motivation was. We knew there was alcohol involved, we knew

there were drugs involved, but we could not directly make that

connection between why a cross, did you understand what you

were doing and the implications of it, and why that house, and why

that guy. …. And that's what our team set out to do. Is to answer

those questions and tell everybody's story. The Rehbergs' story,

Michelle Lyon's story, Shayne Howe's story, and their children's

story. And when I say the Rehbergs' I mean the broader family.

(A. Waugh, personal communication, July 6, 2012)

In the four-part series, Nathan and Justin Rehberg, the perpetrators of the crime, are central

figures in the story, while, as outlined below, Shayne Howe and Michelle Lyon, the target of the

cross-burning incident, play supporting roles in unravelling what happened.

First, within the series, prominence--defined by location within the story, space, and

attribution-- is given to the role that rumours, and Michelle and Shayne's actions, played in

motivating the brothers' actions. A relationship of cause and effect is established for the rumours

and the cross burning within the series: "*This small-town tragedy started with rumours* [italics

added] that the brothers had herpes. By the Rehberg brothers' own admission, what followed was

an act of drunken, drug-induced stupidity" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011a, ¶ 17); "The two young

men [Nathan and Justin Rehberg] say *[the cross burning] started with small town rumours*

[italics added] that they had herpes, but the response ignited a firestorm and led some to call

Nova Scotia the Mississippi of the North" (Brooks Arenburg et al., 2011b); "*At its roots, the cross-burning is a cautionary tale about how rumours can swirl out of control* [italics added] especially in a small town. The rumours that *led* [italics added] to the cross-burning created real victims whose lives were changed. Forever" (Brooks Arenburg et al., 2011c); "The two-metre cross was still there when the conversation at the party took a seriously ugly turn and he [Nathan Rehberg] *decided to put a stop to the rumours* [italics added]" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011a, ¶ 26); "I just wanted you to stop talking about me, man. Like, I tried to get you to stop, but you just wouldn't" [said Nathan Rehberg] (Brooks Arenburg et al., 2011c).

As the above examples illustrate, the rumours--started by Michelle and Shayne-- are centrally positioned as the reason the brothers took action against them ("This small-town tragedy started with rumours that the brothers had herpes"; "At its roots the cross burning is a cautionary tale about how rumours can swirl out of control"). In other words, the brothers burned a cross because of the rumours that were started about them.

In addition to establishing the motive for the crime, the structure of the series also focuses on the impact the gossip had on the brothers' lives. Early on in the series, in the first and second articles, "Nova Scotia Burning - Part I" and "Why Did They Do It?" we learn about how the rumours ostracized the brothers in school and affected their feeling of belonging in the community because the rumours "followed" them wherever they went: "But the gossip had taken on a life of its own and somehow had been twisted to include Nathan's fiancee [sic], Maria Mason, and the couple's baby" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011a, ¶ 22). The rumours followed them,

> At school. At parties. Socializing with friends. Even when visitors
> came to their home. "He couldn't take it," said Alisha Caldwell,
> 17, Justin's girlfriend of almost six years … "He couldn't go to

school. He was walking around with me and people were pointing

and laughing, calling him names, saying he has different stuff and

… it hurt us." (Brooks Arenburg, 2011c, ¶ 11-13).

The brothers were teased, isolated and laughed at because of the rumours. The title of the second

article rhetorically asks, "Why Did They Do It?" suggesting there is an explanation for the

brothers' actions that will be identified in the body of the article. The article itself examines the

impact of the gossip on the brother's lives (¶ 9-13; 20-28). In contrast, we do not learn about the

impact of the cross burning (e.g., the brothers' actions) on the victims of the crime until the end

of the article, despite its centrality in connecting everyone within the story (¶ 32-33; 38-43). This

is after the impact of the rumours on the lives of Nathan and Justin Rehberg has been firmly

established. In fact, the first time we hear from Michelle Lyon in the series, it is in reaction to her

role in gossiping about the brothers. In establishing the impact of the rumours on the brothers'

lives, the experience of the Howe-Lyon family, first defined by a cross being burned on their

lawn, is once again defined by someone else. As identified in postcolonial theory, the

experiences of those who are different are often defined by someone else (Prasad, P., 2005; Said,

1978; Young, 2001).

The negative consequences of gossip are further positioned in the text by comparing the

act of gossiping to that of burning a cross and inciting racial hatred:

For another vicious monster remains on the loose. It's called

gossip. This is what lit the fuse for the Rehbergs' rage. Rightly or

wrongly, they blamed Ms. Lyon for passing on a rumour. ….

Nonetheless, the slander spread like wildfire because countless

others thoughtlessly or maliciously fed the flames and found sport

in teasing the brothers. There is nothing more pernicious than the

human tongue untethered. It is a weapon for bullies and

busybodies and the cause of terrible injury every day. Nor is the

propensity to gossip something anybody can blame on a lack of

education or on a certain social class. It transcends all walks of life

and all kinds of communities. Like racism, it is a monster you can

no longer control the moment you let it out [editorial]. ("Cross-

Burning Close-Up," 2011, ¶ 15-16)

The closing editorial for the series compares gossip to racism as though they might be equally

problematic. Gossip is compared to a weapon, causing "terrible injury everyday" and the "fuse"

that caused the cross-burning, and, by extension, the act of racism to occur. Within the passage,

gossip is positioned as pervasive ("spreading like wildfire") and something that thrives only as a

result of people actively engaging in it. Within this text, the editorial negatively judges those

who participate in gossip by calling them names (e.g., thoughtless, bullies, busybodies),

however, no judgement is made about the brothers' motivations to commit a racial crime

("rightly or wrongly, the brothers blamed Michelle"). As elaborated in this chapter, while racism

is attributed to upbringing, education, and ignorance, gossip on the other hand, is not "something

anybody can blame on a lack of education or on a certain social class." While racism affects a

portion of the population, gossip is something that affects everybody ("it transcends all walks of

life and all kinds of communities"). The comparison is strengthened by the repeated and

obviously conscious choice to describe gossip in the dramatic language of fire: the rumours "lit

the fuse" and "spread like wildfire" while others "fed the flames."

When analyzing a text critically for discursive practices, a recurring idea in a set of texts can be a signpost for sustained effects and a particular knowledge or assumption (Jäger and Maier, 2009). By extension, the omission of statements also serves as a signpost. Taken together, the newspaper's dual actions of establishing a line of argument that discursively positions the rumours as having a causal effect on the action of the cross burning, while, at the same time emphasizing the impact of the rumours on its target and society, positions those victimized by the crime as though they are to blame for what happened to them. Likewise, such an emphasis on the rumours privileges the brothers' role over the impact of the burning cross on those affected by it. The limited discussion of the impact of the cross-burning action on the individuals or the community, or any critical commentary on the brothers' decision to act out of revenge for rumours, also has the effect of weighting the action of gossiping as though it has similar--or greater--consequence to that of an action deemed a crime of racial hatred. Just as racism has been denied or minimized by reducing it to issues of class (Miles & Brown, 2003), the significance of racism and its prevalence in society is reduced by comparing it to gossip and privileging adjectives to describe gossip that suggest it is of equal or greater consequence to racism in the community.

A final way that blame is attributed to the victims of the crime is through the composition and placement of the photos. The information contained within headlines, "leads," photos, and captions helps shape what readers think of the subject under discussion, and they are among the first--and sometimes only--pieces of information read (McCoombs, 1994; van Dijk, 1991). Thus, if the average reader is only using photos, captions, and headlines to gather the main points of the story, the impression is based on these elements alone, so understanding their meanings are important when considering what messages are put forward. In the case of the first article, "Nova

Scotia Burning" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011j), a photo[9] of Shayne Howe is featured on the front

page of the provincial paper; he is alone in the photo outside his house, and the colour of the

photo is gray and de-saturated creating a feeling of isolation. Next to his photo reads the title,

"Nova Scotia Burning." In contrast, the second article (Brooks Arenburg, 2011h) features a

photo of the Rehberg brothers inside a building with their family with concerned looks on their

faces[10] with the headline "Why Did They Do It?" Similarly, the third article, "The 'Cross-

Burners'," includes a front-page photo of the mother of the perpetrators, Wanda Lynn

Macumber, inside her home[11] (Brooks Arenburg, 2011i). She is sitting alone, hunched slightly

forward, with her hand pressed against her face--an action suggesting she is hiding her face or

wiping something away from it. Unlike the first photo of Shayne, which depicts him outside

alone, in the cold, the photos of the perpetrators and their families included with the second and

third articles , feature them inside with warmer colour hues (i.e., yellows) establishing a more

empathetic feeling for the subjects in the photos (Titus-Roberts, 2012).

 If the average reader were examining the headlines and photos alone to assess the series,

a reasonable conclusion to be drawn is that Howe, a Black Nova Scotian, isolated and alone

outside with a solemn look on his face, is responsible for the "burning" in Nova Scotia, the title

of the first article (Titus-Roberts, 2012). This treatment is consistent with research that finds that

minorities are often featured in ways that reinforce negative stereotypes (Crawford, 1998; Fleras

& Lock Kunz, 2001; Henry & Tator, 2002; Tator & Henry, 2000).

 In contrast to this, the front-page photo accompanying the second article (Brooks

Arenburg, 2011h) features Nathan holding hands with a female (the caption establishes her as his

girlfriend) and, along with Justin and his stepfather, are looking off to the right, giving the

impression they are waiting for something or looking at something outside of the camera frame.

Similarly, his mother is featured in the centre of the photo, with her arms and legs crossed--a position that suggests she is upset or impatient about something. Their disposition in the photo, combined with the headline "Why Did They Do It?" suggest the individuals are waiting to find out why they did it (who "they" are is not clear by the photo or headline). While what "they" did is not clear from the title or photo alone, considering it alongside the photo and headline from the first article of the series has the cumulative effect of suggesting the Rehberg family may be waiting in reference to find out about *Nova Scotia Burning,* which the person in the first photo (Shayne) could be involved in.

Finally, the photo of the Rehberg brothers' mother, featured crying and upset, is set against the headline, "The 'Cross-Burners'" as part of the third article (Brooks Arenburg, 2011i) The title "Nova Scotia Burning Part III" establishes a connection to the previous two articles and photos. The combination of words and imagery suggests this middle-age Caucasian female, in a fetal-like position, has been the victim of something, which will be discussed in the article (Titus-Roberts, 2012). While the representations in the photos do not reflect the facts of the case, their presence, which embodies traditional racial stereotypes of a Black man who is responsible for something that a group of White people are waiting to hear about, construct an image for readers to consider against the story they read. These images, coupled with the positioning of the rumours discussed above, reinforce the idea that Shayne and Michelle are partially culpable for the situation in question.

Just as a narrative of blame is established for the individuals victimized by the crime, the series also discursively shifts the onus of responsibility--or individual agency--for the brothers' actions from internal motivations to other external factors. This emerges in three ways. First, within the series, the *motivations* for, and *consequences* of, the brothers' actions are discursively

separated, creating a binary position between *racist action* and *non-racist intention*: the brothers'

actions were "…a racism of opportunity, for lack of a better description – the sort of monster that

you pull out when you're in a rage and you want to hit someone where it really hurts" [editorial]

("Cross-Burning Close-Up," 2011, ¶ 9); "…Like I know a lot of people from around here, so I

kinda knew it wasn't something that was really racist. I knew it was something that at least had

to have something behind it" [said Brandon Cromwell, Justin's friend] (Brooks Arenburg et al.,

2011c); "[The brothers] intented [sic] to get even with Mr. Howe … the [sic] fact that they used

this racist act was misguided and wrong. The Rehbergs are not a threat to Black people"

(Burning_up, 2011a); "…they manifested their hatred in an uneducated way resulting in a racial

hate crime" (Mel, 2011);

> Is it possible to commit an appallingly racist act without being a
>
> committed racist? Judging by the Rehbergs' example, yes it is – in
>
> the same way people can say or do sacrilegious things for effect
>
> without a full appreciation of the terrible offence they give. Our
>
> interviews suggest the Rehberg brothers, who were justifiably
>
> convicted of a hate crime, are not nearly as prejudiced as their
>
> actions suggest [editorial]. ("Cross-Burning Close-Up," 2011, ¶ 8)

Discursively, the brothers are positioned within the series as not being racist, while committing a

racist act of burning a cross. In positioning their motivations as separate from the consequences

of the action, the text reinforces the brothers' ignorance of the significance of their actions ("I

knew it wasn't something that was really racist"; "they manifested their hatred in an uneducated

way resulting in a racial hate crime"; the brothers "are not nearly as prejudiced as their actions

suggest"). The focus on their non-racist intention within the series occurs despite the fact that

Nathan Rehberg knew a burning cross was something associated with the KKK and that it would invoke fear in a Black person: "I would not only burn a cross for revenge, I'd do it because of their skin colour" [said Nathan Rehberg] ("If I Was Racist," 2011, ¶ 1);

> I knew Shayne was African American and I wanted to scare him.
>
> …. I just thought it was you know they were going to have this
>
> KKK thingy around your house or something. I don't know, I just
>
> seen it in movies [said Nathan Rehberg]. (Brooks Arenburg et al.,
>
> 2011b)

Moreover, the brothers' innocence of racist intention is established in the text through the friends they have, the music they listen to, and who they are attracted to: "'If I was racist, I would have no Black friends'" [said Nathan Rehberg] ("If I Was Racist," 2011, ¶ 1); "Those who knew the brothers insisted they weren't filled with racial hatred. Nathan Rehberg has a biracial daughter and both have Black friends. The brothers themselves were adamant they were not racist" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011a, ¶ 14); "'Why ain't I a racist? Well, to be truthfully honest … I'm more attracted to African-Americans or Chinese or anything that isn't Caucasian. ….The music I listen to … the way I dance, the way I dress, it's just everything about me'" [said Justin Rehberg] ("Why Ain't I a Racist?" 2011, ¶ 1).

Second, within the series, parenting and upbringing are positioned as contributing factors for the brothers' motivation to act: "Doug Keyes, principal at Avon View High School in Windsor [said] …'Justin's *upbringing had placed him in survival mode* [italics added]'" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011d, ¶ 25); "Keyes said in the presentence report that if Justin Rehberg 'had the *right direction or support in his life* [italics added], he probably could have competed professionally in the area of wrestling'" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011d, ¶ 31);

Justin and Nathan *mostly had to fend for themselves is what they mostly done* [italics added]. Their father was quadriplegic when they were young. And their mother--*she let them do whatever they wanted to do whenever they wanted to do it* [italics added]. Don't get me wrong, I think they should be punished for what they done. I'm not saying they shouldn't be. *But I think the ones that should be punished the most is* [sic] *the parents. They didn't do what they were supposed to do* [italics added] [said Darrell Boutiller]. (Brooks Arenburg et al., 2011d)

Trouble started for Nathan and Justin Rehberg long before their convictions for inciting racial hatred. *Their childhood was punctuated by poverty and a broken home* [italics added]. Problems at school and addictions to drugs and alcohol followed. What will become of these brothers? (Brooks Arenburg, 2011d, ¶ 1)

…After watching the series, how could [the brothers] have known [better]? *Sure school is an excellent platform for education … history class especially [sic] but these kids did not appear to spend much time in class* [italics added]. …. The boys' mother knew they built a cross … how would these kids have known any better? (Hants County lady, 2011).

Both Darrell Boutiller, Nathan and Justin's uncle, and Doug Keyes, the principal of the local high school, argue that the brothers' upbringing as children contributed to their characters and

actions as adults: While Darrell feels that Justin and Nathan's parents did not provide them with proper parental stability, discipline, or guidance ("[their parents] let them do what they wanted to do" having to "fend for themselves"), Doug reports that the brothers' childhood placed them in "survival mode" and "lacked the proper direction" to help them excel. Likewise, "Hants County lady" asks in the online discussion how the brothers could have known better when they did not regularly attend school and "their upbringing was less than ideal." Brooks Arenburg establishes that addictions to drugs and alcohol *followed*--or were fallout from--a childhood inflicted with poverty and a broken home. Taken together, the emphasis on the brothers' childhood and role of alcohol in their actions also discursively positions the brothers as separate from "Other" Nova Scotians who are *better educated* and *know better*, which also marginalizes the brothers' from society just as the use of racial qualifiers separates those who are in the dominant perspective from those who are "different."

Third, the series identifies the importance of education and community engagement in addressing racism in society: "As I said education is necessary. It starts with parents and in school where understanding of different colours and cultures are accepted" (Bob (from Florida), 2011a); "That message [accepting and coexisting] must reach far beyond the classroom and into the homes of all Nova Scotians, but the only way to do that 'is through education and dialogue,' [Angus] Riley said" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011e, ¶ 33); "Education is the key. But what have we been told about the History of Blacks in our country? The history often [sic] written by White authors" (Angel55, 2011); "Justin Rehberg … said he didn't understand the significance of burning a cross while growing up because it wasn't taught in school" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011e, ¶ 24).

These examples from the text establish the role of education in contributing to, or helping to address, racism. On the one hand, education is established as supporting dialogue, understanding and acceptance, and, on the other hand, it is identified as teaching only a Eurocentric perspective and leaving out the experiences of Black Nova Scotians. Likewise, Justin Rehberg indicates he did not understand the significance of his actions as he was not taught it in school. In other words, *if* the brothers had had a better upbringing and better education, and they had learned more about Black Nova Scotians growing up, *they would not* have done what they did. The positioning of larger social systems also helps reinforce the fact that the brothers too were victims of educational failings just as they were of parental failings.

Taken together, the above examples demonstrate the privileging of social reasons to explain the brothers' actions (e.g., troubled childhood, impact of gossip, role of education), and the examples also showcase how the brothers did not understand the significance of their actions. In doing so, such examples reduce the role and ability of the individual to act with one's own free will outside of social systems that shape our understanding and actions. While in an editorial *The Chronicle Herald* argues these factors do not excuse "the malice of burning a cross on a bi-racial couple's lawn in rural Hants County" ("Cross-Burning Close-Up," 2011 ¶ 11), the emphasis placed on exploring these ideas in the series discursively positions the brothers as victims themselves and as an Other among White Nova Scotians due in part to poor education and a troubled childhood. While these factors are important for making sense of the brothers' actions, their narrative within the series also serves to shift some of the onus of responsibility from the brothers to larger social failings.

Identity and Belonging

The struggle for identity and belonging emerged as a theme in the case study data from coding. As established in detail in Chapter Four, I approached coding inductively and from prior established themes. I revisited postcolonial theory to further explore the notion of identity and belonging once it emerged within the text.

Within the text, a struggle for belonging emerged for individuals on both sides of the cross-burning incident. First, Shayne Howe and Michelle Lyon both reported feelings of isolation from their community as a result of the cross being burned on their lawn: "For Howe and Lyon, the cross-burning meant that they and their children, ages two to 17, were the targets of hate. And someone wanted them out of their community" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011a, ¶ 15); "But in the months after the rally, things began to change, the couple [Shayne and Michelle] said. People stopped waving as they drove past and the family felt uncomfortable again in their community" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011c, ¶ 38); "The couple [Shayne and Michelle] said they pulled one of their daughters from school because she was being teased and harassed. And [Michelle] Lyon said she stopped shopping at a Windsor grocery store because she was worried and fearful" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011c, ¶ 43);

> Yeah, I still want to leave here. I don't want to be here anymore. I
> can't look out my front window because that's just a memory. You
> know, when I drive down or visit my family members where my
> car burnt, that's just a memory for me. It's just too much. It's too
> much, and I don't want to live in fear for the rest of my life [said
> Michelle Lyon]. (Brooks Arenburg et al., 2011c)

For Shayne and Michelle, the cross burning left them feeling like "someone wanted them out of the community" and, as a result of this feeling, they no longer want to be part of it ("I want to leave here; I don't want to live in fear for the rest of my life"). Their sense of safety was negatively affected by the cross burning (they reporting being harassed and feeling worried and fearful), and they changed their regular routine as a result, including where they purchased groceries and where their daughter went to school. Shayne also felt separated from the community because of his skin colour: "I don't know why this happened to me in particular …We discuss it all the time. Why did it happen to us? Is it because I'm the only Black guy in this community, on this loop? I don't know" [said Shayne Howe] (Brooks Arenburg, 2011c, ¶ 4-5); "I marked this community by being Black and moving here. And being in a mixed relationship, I marked it. And that's what I think everyone's pissed off about" [said Shayne Howe] (Brooks Arenburg et al., 2011b).

     While the cross-burning incident contributed to a struggle for community belonging for Shayne Howe and Michelle Lyon, it represented a second chance at life for the Rehberg brothers: "Justin Rehberg said the support he had there [at his uncle's place] made him 'feel like I'm not the piece of crap that everyone's trying to point me out to be, that these people know the true me'" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011d, ¶ 45);

> I bet (you) if I never went up and burned that cross, I'd probably
>
> still be a drug-addicted alcohol abuser, just non-stop crime and
>
> neglect to my family… I just feel like a better person … like my
>
> head's on straight this time [said Nathan Rehberg]. (Brooks
>
> Arenburg, 2011d, ¶ 34)

Once Justin Rehberg gets out of jail, he said he plans to move in

with his girlfriend and her mother. "I want to have a nice, clean

environment around. I just don't want to live in some small,

cracked-out house. I just want to actually break the chain of the

family and I want to actually be something [said Justin Rehberg]"

(Brooks Arenburg, 2011d, ¶ 49-50).

The phonts[12] selected for the series to depict the two sets of characters involved also

support the theme of searching for identity and belonging. On the one hand, the images selected

to depict the brothers illustrate the Rehbergs' upbringing and childhood, and they feature them in

action shots interacting with their family over meals, firmly rooting them--regardless of their

troubled past--as members of a family and a community participating in common social rituals.

For example, photos feature Nathan and Justin as children in family pictures (Brooks Arenburg,

2011i), as well as learning to ride a bike (Brooks Arenburg, 2011i) and at Christmas (Brooks

Arenburg, 2011i). As adults, the brothers are featured interacting with family and laughing over

a meal together (Brooks Arenburg, 2011j), playing with their dog (Brooks Arenburg, 2011j),

playing video games with others (Brooks Arenburg, 2011i), and working (Brooks Arenburg,

2011i).

However, the photos of the Howe-Lyon family focus on the present day and do not

feature them as children. While the Rehberg brothers are rarely featured alone in the photos, in

all but one photo, the Howe-Lyon couple/family is featured alone, creating the feeling of a

physical separation among them. In addition, Shayne and Michelle's sense of belonging in their

community is defined by the cross-burning experience (e.g., they report not feeling wanted in the

community as a result of the cross burning), and the photos feature the family in the context of

the cross-burning event itself. For example, the photos of the Howe-Lyon family feature Shayne in the front yard where the cross burning occurred (Brooks Arenburg, 2011j), capture Michelle looking out the window at the front yard (Brooks Arenburg, 2011h), and feature the family sitting on a sofa together in a centre-spread image as part of the article reflecting on moving forward from the crime (Brooks Arenburg, 2011k).

There are a number of reasons beyond the scope of this research that could explain the difference in quality and quantity of photos published of the perpetrators and the victims (21 photos of the Rehberg family and five photos of the Howe-Lyon family), including access, availability, and content choice. However, the presence of photos depicting the brothers as children and adults, and as actively engaged members in their family, contrasted against the limited photos involving Howe-Lyon and their family, contributes to an overall theme of belonging and not belonging within the text. The photos of the brothers (as children, with their families, working, and playing), and their expressions of future aspirations position their sense of belonging as something that exists outside of the crime alone. Yet, for the Howe-Lyon family, they believe life after the cross burning means more struggle as they report (a) having difficulty getting a mortgage to move, (b) removing their daughter from school, and (c) breaking up for a brief period of time (Brooks Arenburg, 2011, ¶ 43, 46). For this family, the cross burning represents uncertainty for the future.

Denial

A final theme that emerged within the text included denial of racism. A critical assumption in colonial times is the idea that the presence of disparity between individuals or groups based on race, including the development of policies, laws, and social norms, were justified based on class, education level, and the *right* to conquer others (Nayar, 2010).

Postcolonial theory, however, confronts this denial and illuminates the presence of its thinking, and, where possible, identifies its impact. I followed this postcolonial perspective when examining the data for themes of denial, and I found examples illustrating denial in three forms: charges that the series sensationalized the issue, the segregation of racism to a particular community, and assertions that racism does not exist in the province.

First, sentiments that the series was sensationalized--or that it did not actually uncover or prove the existence of racism in Nova Scotia--were expressed among participants involved in the online discussion. Sensationalism occurs when the subject matter, language, or style used is designed to produce a strong reaction, for-or-against an issue (Sensationalism, n.d.), and opponents of the series who submitted feedback felt this occurred with the paper's treatment of the issue: "I find it disturbing that the [*Chronicle Herald*] has to sensationalize a stupid prank to try to sell newspapers. …It was a stupid thing to do, but it wasn't a KKK moment" ("Reader Comments," 2011); "This is exploitation of the weak and ignorant. Shame on you, Chronicle Herald. What you are doing by running this 4-part piece of trash is worse than anything done in this case. Disgusting, sensationalist journalism" ("Reader Comments," 2011); "The dirty deed was done, move on. Most people in our province saw how stupid and wrong it was. What is happening now is fuelling the fire. Coverage of this should stop NOW" ("Reader Comments," 2011) (emphasis in original); "I get so frustrated with reporters that take a slant on a story just for self interest [sic] promotion. Trying to make that big break shouldn't be on the back of us citizens and our culture" (Henry, 2011).

Within the online discussion and in published comments from readers as part of the series, concern was expressed over the paper's treatment of the cross-burning incident. As illustrated in the above quotes, the cross burning is dismissed as "boys being boys," "a dirty

deed," and "a stupid prank." Instead, the critique is focused on *The Chronicle Herald* for

sensationalising the issue ("taking a slant on the story"; "exploiting the weak and ignorant").

In particular, readers expressed discontent with the series comparing Nova Scotia to

Mississippi, which has a significant and prominent history of racism: "The story was totally

slanted! How dare you compare the atrocity's [sic] that happened in Mississippi to this incident.

It was not a random. Howe was targeted for slandering them" (Lisa, 2011); "I asked those

interviewed what they thought of the label [Mississippi of the North], and received differing

views on that. Some said it was sensationalist trash, while others said the cross burning made

them think otherwise" (Patricia Brooks Arenburg, 2011a); "Mississippi has it's [sic] own history

and the comparison to this recent event in NS maybe not [sic] a fair one" (Irbyman, 2011);

> The province is has [sic] a label it does not deserve and being a
>
> resident of this province I say shame on *The Chronicle Herald* for
>
> believing that promoting it [sic]. I don't think enough study was
>
> done to determine the damaging effects this will have on the
>
> province. (Thevalleyman, 2011)

By drawing a comparison to the Mississippi of the North, the paper implies a correlation

exists between the racism of the south and the acts experienced in Nova Scotia ("the North").

The rhetorical question asking how *The Chronicle Herald* "dared" to draw the comparison

suggested indignation at the thought of such a comparison. Others agreed it unfairly labeled the

province in an undeserving way. Yet, denial of racism is a dominant discourse engrained in

society (Fontaine, 1998; Henry et al., 2009; Tator & Henry, 2000): "The assumption here is that

because Canada is a society that upholds the ideals of a liberal democracy, it could not possibly

be racist. When racism is shown to exist, it tends to be identified as an isolated phenomenon"

(Henry et al., 2009, p. 116). This is the case with the cross-burning incident as some comments expressed a feeling that that the act was isolated to this particular event only. During the online discussion, "Thevalleyman" expressed concern, not at the impact of the cross burning, but at the "damaging" effects of the series and the title of the series on the reputation of the community for suggesting Nova Scotia was comparable in its treatment of Black people to southern Mississippi.

Second, the theme of denial emerged through the text by segregating the effects of racism to a particular community (Titus-Roberts, 2012). Within the series, the idea of racism and the feelings of fear and oppression fueled by the cross are positioned to be of concern to the Black community in Nova Scotia: "The reckless crime struck fear in the *hearts of many who have reason to feel vulnerable* [italics added] and it stirred the embers of our collective memory" [editorial] ("Cross-Burning Close-Up," 2011, ¶ 13); "Nova Scotia, a province where racial tensions had often boiled over, was labelled the Mississippi of the North. For many *Black Nova Scotians* [italics added], it was no surprise" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011a, ¶ 8); "But many *White Nova Scotians* [italics added] probably didn't see a connection between their province and that painful chapter in U.S. history (Brooks Arenburg, 2011a, ¶ 4); "In interviews with *The Chronicle Herald* in December, the Rehberg brothers apologized to the victims, Shayne Howe, Michelle Lyon and their five children, as well as the *Black community* [italics added]" ("Rehberg Brothers Apologize," 2011, ¶ 1).

Miles and Brown (2003) argue that one of the greatest fallacies in defining racism is the argument that it is experienced, or felt, by specific races only:

> It follows that 'white' people lack the capacity to understand,
>
> analyse and explain racism, and that 'white' involvement in
>
> exposing and resisting racism is only further evidence of a racist

and colonizing mentality because it implies that victims are unable

to act as autonomous beings on their own account. (p. 74)

Limiting racism within the series as something Black people experience at the hands of White

people ignores the possibility of class relations among both groups and the varying degrees of

power within the population depending on social position (Miles & Brown, 2003). Within the

case, racism is not confronted as an issue for all Nova Scotians, instead it positions racism as

something that "White Nova Scotians would not recognize" and something only experienced by

"Black Nova Scotians." This suggests a social phenomenon that affects only a portion of the

community. Elsewhere I have argued (Titus-Roberts, 2012) that the stylistic treatment of the

series title "nova scotia BURNING" also reinforces this separation. In lowercasing nova scotia, it

is not the province proper that is burning or affected by racial hatred but rather a subset of the

province (Titus-Roberts, 2012).

Third, the idea that racism does not exist in Nova Scotia also supports the theme of

denial. In producing the series, *The Chronicle Herald* reported that "Some felt [coverage of the

cross-burning incident] was too much, that there's no problem with racism in Nova Scotia, that it

was just two drunken louts on a spree" (Leger, 2011, ¶ 3). Likewise, the online comments

suggested that racism was something that happened elsewhere: "[T]he way I see it is that most

Nova Scotians that read those articles think that you are talking about someone else. . . someone

that would burn a cross on a lawn, or some other similar outwardly racist act" (p you, 2011a);

We Nova Scotians are a long way from Mississippi in more ways

than one. This incident was nothing more than a couple of drunken

boys trying to play like big men. There was no inciting of hatred

because Nova Scotia is not a racist province, of course there are

some racists here, just as there are some racists everywhere.

("Reader Comments," 2011)

Within the series, those expressing that Nova Scotia is not a racist province felt the cross burning was *a stupid prank* with *drunken boys* and not a reflection of a province that is racist. The criticism that the paper sensationalized the issue, the concern over the direct comparison of Nova Scotia to Mississippi, the feeling that racism is not present in Nova Scotia, and the reduction of racism to something experienced by a few, all support the finding of a theme of denial within the series and the conversations it spawned.

Desire to Transcend Racism

At the same time that discursive practices in the text sustain racialized practices through eurocentricity, a racialized Other, blame, community isolation, and denial, an overall theme emerged that challenges or subverts the discursive practices elaborated on above. The theme of transcending racism in Nova Scotia emerged from inductive coding of the data, including within it (a) acknowledgement of the presence of racism, (b) a struggle to define racism, and (c) narratives of the cross burning as a conduit for ongoing discussion and shared understanding.

Acknowledging racism. First, the acknowledgement of racism in Nova Scotia was present within the series through historicizing it and positioning the burning cross as a central image in the visual presentation of the series. Within the series, historic examples of racial discrimination in the province position the idea of racism as a cultural underpinning of the province: "[In Nova Scotia] where Black people have been marginalized throughout history and excluded from positions of power and often still live in segregated communities, generations after their families first settled here" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011e, ¶ 3);

> If [there's no problem with racism in Nova Scotia], then how did a
>
> Black cultural centre get torched? Why was boxer Kirk Johnson
>
> repeatedly pulled over and questioned by police? How do we
>
> explain racist graffiti, or cops accused of baiting Black kids in
>
> Digby? There is a problem and we can't ignore it just because we
>
> fear stirring up old resentments. (Leger, 2011, ¶ 4-5)
>
> The program [for Windsor's 2008 Sam Slick Days] featured a
>
> 1950s sketch of Sam Slick … kneeling in front of Slick was a
>
> Black man with his shirt not tucked in and his mouth open. The
>
> man's arms were wrapped around the leg of Slick, who was shown
>
> leaning back in surprise. (Brooks Arenburg, 2011e, ¶ 18-19)

Examples of the mistreatment of Black Nova Scotians, while not fully explained, help establish a history of racial discrimination in Nova Scotia ("black people have been marginalized throughout history"; In 2008 a festival program in Nova Scotia featured disparity of power between Blacks and Whites). By positioning examples of inequality that have occurred involving Black Nova Scotians as questions, in his editorial, Leger (2011) discursively groups these events together as proof of a problem that cannot continue to be ignored. Providing examples of Sam Slick, the burning of the cultural centre, and racist fights in Digby also strengthens the weight of statements made within the series that Black Nova Scotians have been "marginalized throughout history" or that many "still live in segregated communities." Finally, citing these examples within the series about a cross-burning incident also serves to position the event as further *evidence* of a pattern of racial discrimination within Nova Scotia.

The symbol of the burning cross, and the racism it represents against the Black population, was also reinforced visually throughout the series. *The Chronicle Herald* selected a red cross for use in its header for the series. This image appeared daily within the articles and videos, and it served as an ongoing reminder that a burning cross was central to the plot in this series even when it was not explicitly mentioned. Likewise, the notion of tensions between racial groups was also reinforced through images used within the video. B-Roll is an editing technique adapted and used in news and documentary to break up the monotony of one-on-one interviews ("What Does 'B-Roll' Mean?" 2011); it typically includes a selection of generic footage to help illustrate the story visually. At the beginning of the second video, "Why Did They Do It," two horses are shown next to each other against the voiceover, "At its roots, the cross-burning in Hants County, Nova Scotia is a cautionary tale about how rumours can swirl out of control especially in a small town" (Brooks Arenburg et al., 2011c). The horses are framed by tree branches and the ground, which is snow covered. On the surface, the horses do not have anything to do with the voiceover of the series (e.g., the characters do not own horses or tend them). However, the relevancy of the horses pertains to their colours: one is White and the other is Black. The Black horse is set slightly ahead of the White horse in the shot, and the Black horse is centred in the frame and the White horse is behind and slightly to the left. Shown visually with introductory audio establishing that the video is about a cross-burning incident, the colours of the horses reinforce the idea that the story is about conflict between two racial groups.

Second, while some feedback denied the presence of racism as part of the cross burning, other feedback reinforced the notion of the cross as a symbol of fear and racism. In addition to the cross being compared to "images of lynchings, beatings and Klansmen in white sheets during the struggle for black civil rights in America" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011a, ¶ 3), "real racism"

(Miriam Laskey, 2011a), and an indication of inequality between Blacks and Whites (Brooks Arenburg, 2011e, ¶ 7-8), it was also represented in the text as a symbol of fear and terror: "'I see my house getting burned down,' [Shayne] Howe said, recalling his fears that night. 'I see my family getting hurt. I see me getting killed. That's what I see when I see a burning cross'" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011a, ¶9); "[The Rehberg brothers] may not be a threat to Black people per se, but that image is [the burning cross]. …They burned a cross, a racist act, terrifying the family and having a wide affect [sic] on the whole region" (Colin, 2011a).

The presence of the burning cross is central to this series; it is the reason the brothers were found guilty of inciting racial hatred. As highlighted in Chapter Five, the judge that convicted Nathan Rehberg indicated in his sentencing statements that it was clear that racism was behind the action of burning a cross (Canadian Press, 2010; "N.S. Cross-Burning Sentencing Delayed," 2011, ¶ 7). Similarly, for the series' authors and many readers, the cross inarguably symbolizes a racist act, fear and oppression, and the feeling that there is inequality between groups based on race.

The burning cross also reminded many readers of other examples of racism in the province. Participants of the online discussion brought up the presence of invisible forms of racism that persist in Nova Scotia, citing specific examples: "We have serious racism that occurs against minorities by very intelligent and educated Whites. That to me is the bigger issue and crime" (Charlie, 2011);

> The Herald needs to get serious about the type of coverage they
> give to story [sic] they do, whether it be about two Black youth in
> Digby being targeted by off duty cops from out of town, to HRP
> [Halifax Regional Police] cops profiling Blacks, or the

questionable practices of the fire department, to the inequity in

education. (burning_up, 2011b)

"It's not just that symbolic cross-burning that makes us the

Mississippi of the North," said Wanda Thomas Bernard, director of

the school of social work at Dalhousie University in Halifax. "It's

also that insidious, invisible, everyday racism. It's that invisible

systemic racism that affects all of us." (Brooks Arenburg, 2011e, ¶

4-5)

Within the online discussion and in the printed articles, the presence of systematic racism in

Nova Scotia is presented by readers and *The Chronicle Herald* itself. While police profiling,

mistreatment in the workplace, and inequality in education are cited as specific examples, the

comments also reflect a feeling of the presence of insidious racism in Nova Scotia that cannot

always be seen or heard but that affects the ways in which people are treated in society.

Positioning the cross-burning incident as one of several examples of racial discrimination

in Nova Scotia, providing a visual reminder of the burning cross within each part of the series,

and expression by participants, readers, and the paper itself that people experience racism in

Nova Scotia, all help reinforce and acknowledge the presence of racism in Nova Scotia. Mahtani

et al. (2008) contend that developing effective strategies to address racial concerns in Canadian

society requires a better understanding of how cultural images, ideas, and symbols are produced

and reproduced. A first step on this road requires acknowledgement of its presence in society,

which the above examples demonstrate is done within the series.

Making sense of racism. Second, while acknowledging the presence of racism,

emerging from the online discussion was also a narrative of struggle to define what racism is.

Calling for a definition of racism and debating whether White people experienced racism were among the topics discussed:

> What is racism? The issue cannot be properly addressed if we don't
>
> identify the problem and the extent of the problem. A definition of
>
> racism is a fear or dislike of a race other than one's own and the
>
> doctrine that some races are inferior to others. Think for a moment:
>
> we are talking about acts of racism against Blacks by Whites but is
>
> [sic] there as much racism acts against other races by Whites?
>
> (Bob (from Florida), 2011b).
>
> In response to … 'Can White people be victims of racism?' If we
>
> think of racism as prejudice plus power (meaning institutional
>
> power, not just personal power), then white people cannot be
>
> victims of racism. They can be victims of prejudice and
>
> discrimination. (WTB, 2011a)

As part of defining racism, participants of the online discussion also debated the idea of "real racism" and whether or not the cross-burning passed this litmus test. For some, real racism was conceptualized by the power to exert oppression and fear over others, and visible forms of racism. Those adhering to this definition felt the cross burning was an example of oppression and real racism, as it "strik[es] fear in the hearts of men" (Miriam Laskey, 2011b), is "…an act of terror" (WTB, 2011b), "…has racist connotations" (Colin, 2011b), has the power to "put fear in the lives of an entire family" (Colin, 2011c), and has the ability "…to harass, scare and stop someone from talking about you" (Patricia Brooks Arenburg, 2011b). Yet others argued the

cross burning was not real racism because it was motivated by ignorance, family feuds, and

because it does not accurately reflect "everyday" racism that occurs in the province:

> There is definetly [sic] Racism [sic] in Nova Scotia that happens
>
> every day but I am not sure it helps to draw comparisons with the
>
> Rehbergs - who mostly acted out of ignorance – with the bulk of
>
> racism instances [sic] that occur here. (Charlie, 2011)
>
> I feel that the [*Chronicle Herald*] has overblown this story.
>
> Alhough [sic] I am grateful for the oppurtunity [sic] it provided to
>
> discuss the issue of racisim [sic] in NS, in reality this act was
>
> hardly a result of racial hatred. (Mel, 2011)
>
> The problem with this series as I see it is that it isn't really
>
> addressing everyday racism in NS. African Nova Scotians, Asian
>
> Nova Scotians, First Nation Nova Scotians, and other minority
>
> groups - including visitors to our province and country are treated
>
> poorly everyday [sic]. That doesn't mean they have a cross burning
>
> on their lawn and it doesn't mean that they are getting called
>
> derogatory and racist names to their faces. There is an embedded
>
> racism that exists in our society that stems from people's
>
> ignorance. (p you, 2011b)

Within the series, including the videos, articles, editorials, and online discussion, no

common definition for racism was offered, yet participants of the online discussion expressed a

desire to understand what racism meant, through defining terms or stating what it is or is not.

Online participants did not agree on a definition during the online discussion. While the presence

of racism in Nova Scotia was established in the text, participants also expressed confusion about

the difference between power and oppression when defining racism, whether racism was only

experienced by Black Nova Scotians, and whether the burning cross had the power to oppress

those victimized by the crime. Ideas of hate, oppression, fear, superiority, learned behaviour,

prejudice, and power were all used to help illustrate racism. Sociologists Robert Miles and

Malcolm Brown (2003), who study race and racism within society, argue, "… the simplistic

definition of ('white') racism as 'prejudice + power'… ignores class and other divisions within

the 'white' population, and hence the differential access to power among the population" (p.75).

In the examples shared above, the perception of racism by those involved is that it exists

within binary terms: real, not real, power, no power to oppress, fear, no fear. What emerged

through discussion, with no one clear answer, was an uncertainty about the definition of racism

but a desire to understand it.

Ongoing discussion. Finally, emerging from the online discussion was a clear desire for

further discussion to learn about, and confront, racism in Nova Scotia in order to move past it:

"This is how racism and discrimination in all its forms is allowed to flourish. If nobody talks

about it, how can we ever fight it and beat it?" (Rick Conrad, web editor, 2011); "One positive

that has come from this series and public reaction is the apparent desire for further dialogue"

(Bob (from Florida), 2011c);

> This story will not likely make international news, but it sends a
>
> message that we are engaging in dialogue about racism in this
>
> province, and perhaps that we take some ownership and
>
> responsibility for doing something to address it. The [*Chronicle*
>
> *Herald*] is taking some leadership to bring the issues to the

mainstream. (WTB, 2011c)

I believe that we have an opportunity here as a community to do

some good. The people interviewed for this project were willing to

open up about their feelings and their reality. Most of them want

better for themselves and their families. And they are willing to do

something about it. Are you? (Patricia Brooks Arenburg, 2011c).

Through the act of the burning cross, a dialogue occurred among members of the editorial team

and readers of the paper that stressed the desire for more discussion on the topic to better learn

and understand the experiences of others. These ideas were expressed as critical for confronting

and addressing racism in Nova Scotia ("the cross burning is an opportunity as a community to do

some good"; "if nobody discusses racism how can we address it?"). Acknowledgement is a key

part of the healing process to move beyond the (re)production of racialized practices.

More than expressing a general desire for more discussion about racism, online

participants also felt that media have a role to play in facilitating this discussion. In particular,

participants of the online discussion felt *The Chronicle Herald* should continue to produce a

series on racism that involves "…people of all races" (Bob (from Florida), 2011c), that keeps the

issue in the "minds of the public [by] publish[ing] unbiased stories" (Abbe, 2011), and that

examines "…institutionalized and systemic racism … to educate the general public" (WTB,

2011d). Likewise, "WTB" (2011e) also asked, "Will there be any possibiilty [sic] of public

forums or sessions to open dialogue on cultural diversity? …. Would the Herald host such a

forum …The need for dialogue is certainly evident." The role of media institutions such as *The

Chronicle Herald* was identified as being an important part of facilitating the discussion about

racism and helping to address it in Nova Scotia ("You create something meaningful by keeping it

in the minds of the public" (Abbe, 2011); "I'm glad to see the Herald going ahead with a project

like this" (Colin, 2011d); "[The Herald] … should now be proactive and develop an ongoing

series of racism…" (Bob (from Florida), 2011c). By asking whether the paper would host a

series, "WTB" suggests there is a role for the paper in supporting dialogue about racism.

Similarly, "Abbe" expressed that additional media stories about racism is one way to "create

something meaningful" out of the issue.

      Yet, this sentiment is in contrast to the video and articles within the series. While the role

of the paper in addressing issues of racism was articulated in editorial produced as part of the

series, and as part of interviews with members of the journalistic team, this sentiment was not

included as part of the feature's exploration of how to address racism in Nova Scotia presented in

the last article and video. From a critical discourse perspective, language constitutes power and

what is *not* present in the text is equally as important as what *is* present (Blommaert & Bulcaen,

2000). This is noteworthy as members of the Herald's readership clearly identify the role of the

paper in carrying on this conversation whereas the paper does not espouse the same commitment

as part of the feature articles themselves.

      Taken together, the acknowledgement of racism, the struggle to define racism, and the

desire for ongoing discussion and shared understanding suggest a desire within the series to

identify and confront racism in Nova Scotia.

      In Chapter Six, I presented themes found within the "Nova Scotia Burning" series that

show competing discursive practices about racism. The analysis involved the examination of the

text from a postcolonial perspective and a close read for emergent themes. I found that the series

contained discursive practices that privilege ethnocentricity, a radicalized Other, blame, and

dichotomy of belonging--ideas consistent with colonisation (Prasad, P., 2005; Said, 1978). Yet,

within the series there emerged a theme supporting the desire to move beyond racism by

acknowledging it, defining it, and discussing it further; this aligns with the paper's stated goals

of examining the cross-burning incident to address racism in Nova Scotia. In the next section I

will discuss the implications of these findings for postcolonial theory and for media study.

Chapter Seven: Discussion

In this analysis I have examined discursive practices present in the "Nova Scotia Burning" series to understand how it reflects race, racism, and representation of Black Nova Scotians. As defined in Chapter Two, "a discourse is the language used in representing a given social practice from a particular point of view" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 310), and discursive practices refer to production of meanings visible in the text through an examination of the language, particular words, headlines, images, etc. My central question asked, "What discursive practices are present in the case of "Nova Scotia Burning" and how can a postcolonial understanding of them inform our insights of media coverage and racial discourse in Nova Scotia?"

In my description of the context in which this case study occurs, I have described how *The Chronicle Herald* came into the project with the best of intentions. As indicated by both Andrew Waugh, assistant news editor at the time of the series, and Dan Leger, director of news content at the time of the series,[13] the editors and journalists involved felt strongly that racism was an injustice that had to be uncovered and explored. Both felt that *The Chronicle Herald*, as a media outlet, had a role to play in that process, and that the cross-burning incident was an opportunity for the paper to begin to address racism in a more meaningful way than the subject had been treated in the past by Nova Scotia media (D. Leger, personal communication, June 15, 2012; A. Waugh, personal communication, July 6, 2012). Nevertheless, despite these noble intentions, the findings presented in this study indicate that the paper still managed to produce or reproduce elements of a discourse they had hoped to change.

Through a close examination of the text, I found discursive practices that suggest a sustainment of power inequalities based on race and Otherness in the series through the presence

of ethnocentricity, a racialized Other, repositioning blame, a struggle for belonging, and denial. Conversely, what also emerged in the text was a desire to confront racism and to be free from it through acknowledgement, searching for understanding, and a desire for ongoing discussion. My research is concerned with understanding how these competing outcomes occur in the text. In this chapter, I explore closely the findings in Chapter Six, within the broader context of the series, including findings of the literature review, the case description, and insights from the interviews I completed, to articulate what postcolonial theory tells us about the case, and, finally, what can be learned about postcolonial theory from this particular case.

Postcolonial theory provides a lens to understand how discourses influence the ways in which society, institutions, and individuals conceptualize race, power, and class (Nayar, 2010; Prasad, P., 2005; Said, 1978; Young, 2001). As discussed in detail in the theoretical framework chapter (Chapter Three), its utility rests in its ability to investigate well-meaning intentions and reposition marginalized peoples' histories and cultures to be at the foci of discussion (Young, 2001). Destabilization of discourse is a common tenet in postcolonial studies; it involves identifying, and analytically undermining, the principles of the discourse by considering them from different perspectives, with the goal of reconfiguring them to create new approaches to understanding and knowing. Said's (1978) groundbreaking work included these elements as part of his analysis of various texts, and I will consider these as a broad framework for this discussion in order to: (a) shed light on the discourse, (b) engage in critical reflexivity as an ongoing process, and (c) based on the first two, work analytically towards broader societal understandings of race, racism, class, and power.

Illuminating Discourse

Postcolonial theory informs our understanding of the discourse within the "Nova Scotia Burning" series by providing a way to approach the presentation of the text from a new perspective and viewpoint. Despite the fact that the trial presented testimony from Nathan and Justin Rehberg indicating they acted out of revenge (Delaney, 2010a), *The Chronicle Herald* felt that the question was not satisfactorily answered (A. Waugh, personal communication, July 6, 2012). However, examining the text from a postcolonial perspective found that while answering the "why" question, the series did not succeed in confronting racialized notions due to the privileging of the brothers' experiences, the limited voice provided to the Howe-Lyon family, and the limited role of history and context in the series.

First, the findings identify that the focus on the motivations for the crime and the family background of the brothers were the primary means of illuminating and unraveling what happened in Hants County. Yet, in choosing to tell the story from the brothers' perspectives, little attention was paid to the background and experiences of the Howe-Lyon family beyond their role as victims of the cross burning, which limits what is known about them as individuals and their past. As detailed in Chapter Five in "Description of the Case," both editors, Andrew Waugh and Dan Leger, report a fair criticism of the series is that it does not portray as accurate a picture of the background of Shayne and Michelle as it does for the Rehberg brothers: "…I look back on how we briefly mentioned his [Shayne's] criminal record and …. I worry that we didn't reflect his past perhaps as well as we could have" (A. Waugh, personal communication, July 6, 2012); "Lyon … she had more of a role in this than I think emerged in the piece. …She wanted to hurt them in some way. … And Shayne Howe is also [a] very kind of aggressive and in your face kind of guy" (D. Leger, personal communication, June 15, 2012). Subsequent media

coverage about Shayne Howe indicates he has had 15 prior convictions for various crimes such as robbery, assault, break and entering, and property damage, and recent charges of sexual assault (Bruce, 2012a).

Postcolonial theory allows us to examine what is present, but equally important, what is absent when examining the treatment of race and power. Focusing on the brothers' story to understand the cross burning may have contributed to the oversight in including background information about the Howe-Lyon family such as omitting Howe's criminal past. However, presenting information about Howe's past could have altered the taken for granted assumption that the Howe-Lyon family are victims of this crime, despite that fact that discursively the series has positioned them as partially to blame for what happened to them. As I was not able to speak directly with the field journalist who wrote the series, I do not know if the information about Shayne's past was an omission or unknown at the time of the series, and, if it was purposefully omitted, the reasons for the decision:

> …Patty Brooks will have to answer that [whether Shayne's past
> came out in the investigation]. … I think she probably knew more
> about that than she put in the story at the time. So, as an editor, I
> have an issue with that. … I wish that we had been a little bit more
> thorough in that aspect of the coverage. (D. Leger, personal
> communication, June 15, 2012)

Yet, in keeping with the line of reasoning presented in the series, that understanding the background of the brothers was critical to understanding their present-day actions, the criminal actions of Shayne Howe should not be considered without equal consideration of his upbringing. What is problematic is the motivation suggested by Waugh and Leger for wanting to include

background information about Shayne: it is not to learn more about how his past has affected

him, but to ensure people are aware of his criminal background so the series is more "balanced"

(A. Waugh, personal communication, July 6, 2012). Yet, what this *balance* could also

demonstrate is that the Howe-Lyon family are not innocent characters in this series to bolster the

rationale for acting out against them.

Second, a postcolonial framework helps inform our understanding of the case by

challenging the Eurocentric viewpoint used in the telling of the story and the subsequent

positioning of a racialized Other that follows from this starting point. I found through analysis of

the text that traditional concepts that privilege a Eurocentric perspective and undermine the

experiences of those in the minority are reproduced in the series through the use (and non-use) of

racial qualifiers, the use of photos, and the way in which the series is structured. On the surface,

the series can be said to allow those victimized by the crime to speak about what happened to

them, which supports the healing process. However, as presented in the findings, Shayne and

Michelle's experiences are confined to their role as victims of the crime. They are not known

outside this experience in the text; their experience is inscribed in a one-way exchange that

privileges the Eurocentric perspective in this story. The experiences of those victimized by the

cross-burning incident are first defined by what happened to them and then reinforced through

the questions asked of them and the supporting role they played as the series elected to examine

the issue from the experiences of the perpetrators of the crime.

Following Said's (1978) examination of how the experiences of the indigenous became

known through the writing of the Europeans, [what occurred was] "…a one-way exchange: as

they spoke and behaved, *he* [sic] [Orientalist] – observed and wrote down. His [sic] power was to

have existed amongst them as a native speaker, as it were, and also as secret writer" (p.160). In

this case, *The Chronicle Herald*, through its journalists working in the field, had the power to

construct the experiences of the Howe-Lyon family based on the information provided to them

(and what they asked of the family). The authority to speak is not given to the victims to share

their own thoughts beyond that of the rumours and the cross burning. As discussed in detail in

the literature review in Chapter Two, the history and identity of Black Nova Scotians have been

excluded or erased from mainstream history (Beckford, 2009; Oliver, 2007). The assumption of

the Eurocentric perspective in the series quieted the voice of the Other, however, the postcolonial

lens considered in the examination of the series identified a voice to be recovered: that of the

Howe-Lyon family.

Third, postcolonial theory helps illuminate the narratives and meanings in the series by

examining the presence--or absence--of history and context. A fundamental element of

postcolonial critiques is a (re)consideration of history:

> [The postcolonial] is concerned with colonial history only to the
>
> extent that history has determined the configurations and power
>
> structures of the present, to the extent that much of the world still
>
> lives in the violent disruptions of its wake, and to the extent that
>
> the anti-colonial liberations movements remain the source and
>
> inspiration of its politics (Young, 2001, p. 4).

As identified by Young, examining history provides critical insight to the present, which exists in

the "wake" of its past. Following this premise, postcolonial theory shows us that one of the ways

the series ends up reproducing, through discursive practices, the discourse it aims to address is its

lack of historization. The series references examples of racial discrimination in Nova Scotia,

such as the racial power inequality present in the Sam Slick Days program (Brooks Arenburg,

2011e), the reference to the burning of the black cultural centre, and the presence of racial

graffiti in Nova Scotia (Leger, 2011); however, these examples are not fully explained,

elaborated on, or analytically examined. The text does not reflect critically on these as a lens

from which to consider the present-day cross burning. Instead, the reader is left to interpret his or

her own representations of these examples or to accept the conclusions that are drawn in the

series without any contextual information to the referenced acts of racism.

As identified in the literature review, the history of racial discrimination and the

experiences of Black Nova Scotians, told from their perspective, have not been well documented

or examined, nor reflected in social practices or in media coverage. Yet, by alluding to examples

of racism, the series discursively concludes a pattern of racism in Nova Scotia while, at the same

time, continuing to advance the absence of the documentation scholars such as Nelson (2011),

Oliver (2007), and Hamilton (1992) have argued is required to develop a more holistic

understanding of the Black experience in Canada and Nova Scotia: the perspectives of Black

Nova Scotians as a priori in representing what is known, understood, or experienced by this

group. Postcolonial theorist Robert Young convincingly writes, "postcolonial cultural critique

involves the reconsideration of this history, particularly from the perspectives of those who

suffered its impact, together with the defining of its contemporary and cultural impact" (p. 4).

While examples of racism in Nova Scotia are provided, they are not considered from the

perspective of those affected by it. Rather, as explored in the findings, the "Nova Scotia

Burning" series, in examining racism through the focused example of the cross-burning incident,

discursively produced racialized practices: ethnocentricity, racialized Other, blame, and denial.

Reflexivity

In addition to providing new perspectives, postcolonial theory also identifies the critical role of reflexivity for challenging taken for granted discourses and positions of power. Said (1978) convincingly argues,

> For if it is true that no production of knowledge in the human
>
> sciences can ever ignore or disclaim its author's involvement as a
>
> human subject in his [sic] own circumstances, then it must also be
>
> true that for a European or American studying the Orient there can
>
> be no disclaiming the main circumstances of *his* [sic] actuality: that
>
> he [sic] comes up against the Orient as a European or American
>
> first, as an individual second. (p. 11)

For Said, one cannot discount his or her cultural, political, and personal experiences when examining an issue, and one cannot begin to critically understand and decipher meanings without also considering how one's own experiences have shaped the starting point for examination. However, in the case of "Nova Scotia Burning," the series is produced within the reporters' own context without being reflexively examined as such. There is an illusion of journalistic neutrality in reporting the news (Hall, 1996b, 1997a; Kellner, 1995), however, the postmodern tradition is clear on the need for this process of reflexive analysis if power positions and discourse are to be challenged (Prasad, P., 2005).

Dan Leger, in his interview discussing the development of the series, identifies the important role of reflexivity in journalism as well as diversity in teaching:

> In my opinion, there isn't enough diversity of points of view in the
>
> media. …The ethnic and cultural backgrounds are different but

mostly everybody is liberal arts educated … so that tends to breed

a certain uniformity of outlook among the people who are involved

in daily journalism. If you are a small 'l' middle class liberal you

think that's fine. But there is a vast spectrum of points of view and

contextual frameworks that conventional journalism doesn't cover.

(D. Leger, personal communication, June 15, 2012).

This comment is consistent with Miller's findings (1994; 2005/2006) that there is limited

diversity of racial representations in the newsroom, which influences how and what topics are

covered. Postcolonial theory requires that the role of reflexivity be considered in examining

"Nova Scotia Burning," and here again the series and associated texts fall short.

For example, Leger indicated that examining racism in Nova Scotia was on his agenda

for some time, and the cross-burning incident in Hants County provided a present-day

opportunity from which to pursue this goal (D. Leger, personal communication, June 15, 2012).

However, this goal is not articulated in the text produced for the series despite his editorial

contribution and a methodology article outlining the paper's approach to developing the series.

Likewise, as a lead reporter on the series, Patricia Brooks Arenburg (2011b) wrote in the

methodology article, and echoed in the online discussion, her admiration for the openness and

candor of the individuals implicated by the cross burning to help Nova Scotians learn from the

incident: "…The [victims of the hate crime] still showed us that healing, however slow or

incomplete, has to start with a willingness to forgive. We hope everyone can learn from the

lessons they showed us" (Brooks Arenburg, 2011b, ¶ 21). Yet, despite this tacit

acknowledgement of how important reflection is, the field team does not provide their own

critical reflections on how their experiences have informed their approach to the series' research and production.

Of note is the fact that within the series the pronoun "We" is used by *The Chronicle Herald* to discuss elements of the series, and this could be an attempt at reflexivity by considering the collective perspectives of what the paper found. For example, *The Chronicle Herald* notes in the final editorial about the series, "even as we conclude a four-part series on the cross-burning that set off a media firestorm last February, it is difficult to come to any hard and fast conclusions. Except, perhaps, that this story is about a whole lot more than racism" (Cross-Burning Close-Up," 2011, ¶ 2). And, Leger (2011) reflects in his editorial, "Why did we do it? Why did we devote so much time, effort and front-page space to a story many Nova Scotians considered over and done with?" (¶ 1). However, what is not clear, and requires further examination beyond the scope of this research, is whether the "We" is a reflexive attempt or an attempt to use the pronoun "We," and the presence of agreement among more than one person, to establish authority for the statements made by the paper. For example, the final editorial concludes: "[Shayne Howe] had no way of knowing what we know now – that the perpetrators weren't hate incarnate" ("Cross-Burning Close-Up," 2011, ¶ 13). In this instance, the paper is privileging the conclusions it has drawn about the cross-burning incident over the perspectives of the victim of the crime.

A postcolonial perspective identifies the need for reflexivity, and the above examples suggest that reflexivity is absent, or not explicit in this particular case by the journalists involved. Rather, in the present case, the assumptions and stereotypes presented are not deconstructed or even identified as privileged over other possible narratives, and the experiences of the journalists are not declared in order to understand how they have influenced their approach to the series.

Towards Broader Understandings

A third criterion for destabilising text and taken for granted discourses is to offer an understanding of what happened and what future actions may change it. In doing so, a discrepancy emerged between the narrative of the four feature articles and videos, produced solely by *The Chronicle Herald*, and the online discussion, an interactive production of text between the paper and its readership. As discussed in the findings within the theme of transcending racism, the online discussion revealed a strong desire for future dialogue in which media plays an important role. But, as examined in detail within the theme of blame, the feature articles and the videos identify the role of education, institutions, government, and family as playing key roles in confronting racism (Brooks Arenburg et al., 2011a), and Dan Leger (2011) notes that the role of media is to tackle tough issues. However, while the articles and the online discussion identify the limitations of these social systems, the articles do not discuss the failed role of media in addressing this issue in society (whereas this is discussed in the online discussion).

Both Andrew Waugh and Dan Leger were forthcoming about the role of media as an important system in addressing racism in Nova Scotia, while acknowledging it requires support from all areas of society:

> I think we [media] are the most important bastions of [raising
>
> issues of concern to Black Nova Scotians]. …. It's our obligation
>
> to uncover these issues, to investigate these issues. … It's
>
> incumbent on us to look at issues like this and put them in context
>
> for people. To spark debate, to spark discussion. If we're not doing
>
> that and going to the decision makers and questioning them on

whether they're doing a good enough job to educate people, to

move forward from instances like this. (A. Waugh, personal

communications, July 6, 2012)

Yet, as I outlined in my findings of this case, the way in which the series "uncovered" and

"investigated" the cross-burning incident ultimately advanced inequalities based on race and

privileged a Eurocentric perspective as the focal point in order to "be bastions" of this issue.

Postcolonial theory identifies this perspective as fundamentally flawed if attempting to uncover

and examine the experiences of different perspectives in a meaningful way (Nayar, 2010; Prasad,

P, 2005; Said, 1978), in order to subvert racialized practices. Through a postcolonial

consideration of the text, the findings suggest that, within the series, the media's point of view

and the factors influencing this perspective should be examined as part of the development of

this and future series in order to confront racialized stereotypes and racialized discursive

practices.

Both Andrew Waugh and Dan Leger commented on the limitations of media in reporting

on such complex issues: "But I also think we are constrained. We are constrained by resources

and we're constrained by time" (A. Waugh, personal communication, July 6, 2012); "…the 24-

hour news cycle that's currently dominant just makes that so much harder [to gain further

perspective and introspection]. I mean there's Twitter and Facebook, and constant nonstop

deadlines and it just makes it harder to be introspective…" (D. Leger, personal communication,

June 15, 2012). The news cycle in its current form has a limited ability to treat a topic in-depth.

From a postcolonial perspective, the close examination of the case suggests that such

issues involving race and racism are too complex for media to cover in its existing format, or

even with its existing paradigm, unless reflexivity and diversity of perspectives are fundamental

to the process. Even after the Herald dedicated significant resources and time--four consecutive

days' worth of coverage and an online discussion forum--the findings suggest the historical

context of racism was addressed only on a surface level, and the series privileged the context and

experiences of the perpetrators over that of the victims, leaving out information about the

victims. Yet, while acknowledging the systematic issues in place within journalism, the

individuals involved in the series still made individual decisions over the course of the series'

development that produced racialized discursive practices and this point cannot be discounted.

Based on the findings, I advance the argument that there is a need to find a balance between the

demands of the news production and the need for critical examination in order to appropriately

consider the historical context and reflexivity required to challenge situations in a meaningful

way. Likewise, as identified below, the role of individual agency must also be examined within

the context of decision making.

        A reciprocity exists between the findings in the case and the lens of postcolonial theory:

just as postcolonial theory provides a framework to inform our understanding of the case, the

case, inclusive of the interviews, media coverage of the trial, and the media coverage under

analysis, helps inform our understanding of postcolonial theory as a framework to examine

media coverage involving race. The limitations of postcolonial theory in helping us understand

the effects of the discourse and the role of agency are discussed below.

Limitations of Postcolonial Theory

        First, the case identifies the limitations of the theory's application. While this case study

provides an analysis of discursive practices present in the case, the discursive *effects* of the case

as well as the perceptions readers had of the series remain unknown. Thus, while postcolonial

theory can identify the presence of discourse, the effects of this discourse, or its participation

beyond that of the confined case, are beyond the scope of the present research and postcolonial theory itself.

Second, the case identifies the conflict between institutional power and individual agency that is pervasive in postcolonial theory. Said (1978) argues that individuals reproduce dominant discourses but he also acknowledges the role of authors who have advanced non-traditional notions of discourse, challenging the dominant perspective. Similarly, *The Chronicle Herald* challenges the norm of media coverage in the "Nova Scotia Burning" series by examining the issue of racism in depth, and, as a traditional print newspaper, by adopting a new medium (video) to tell the story. However, the case identifies that postcolonial theory does not go far enough to allow us to examine agency--of the reporters, editors, etc., in the news production process--to understand individual perceptions, actions, and knowledge that led to the development of this series.

In addition, the strength of postcolonial theory is that it proposes a re-examination of histories in order to consider different perspectives (Prassad, P., Said, 1978; Young, 2001). However, the limitations of the theory, and the scope of this particular research question, exclude the direct examination of individual perspectives and ability of those involved to act, beyond that of analyzing the discourse produced in the text about them. This is despite the fact that, in a case study methodology, the nuances of an individual perspective are very important to understand and dissect.

Finally, while postcolonial theory illuminates the importance of history and context in examining issues involving race and racism, the practical application of this approach within a mass-media paradigm is lacking. For example, the undertaking of the case study research of the coverage took several months to research and produce; this time commitment does not transfer

adequately to the media environment and the need to report daily on news as it emerges.

Despite these limitations, postcolonial theory has been an insightful lens from which to examine this case to uncover the presence of a gap between espoused good intentions and the racialized discursive practices and meanings embedded within the text. Even with its limitations, such a historical framework presents a new way to examine media, power, and society that has previously gone unexplored. This non-traditional approach to examining media provides a powerful lens from which to view the meanings and knowledge created of, and about, race, racism, and representations of this social phenomenon within "Nova Scotia Burning." The next chapter reflects on the case and offers conclusions and future implications for work in the area of media studies, issues of race and racism, and postcolonial theory.

Conclusions and Future Implications

To quote from the final editorial about the series, as I reflect on the case, the context, the findings, and discussion, I'm left pondering, "What shall we make of it all?" ("Cross-Burning Close-Up," 2011, ¶ 1). Racism and its presence in society is inherently complex (Banton, 2000; Miles & Brown, 2003; Todorov, 2000). As *The Chronicle Herald* discovered firsthand when it set out to explore the cross-burning incident in Hants County, the extent of racism in the community, and the understandings, actions, and responses from individuals all offer equal complexity. In producing the series, *The Chronicle Herald* set out to shed light on a subject "…alive and well in Nova Scotia, [not something] in the past" (D. Leger, personal communication, June 15, 2012). However, this case study research identified the presence of competing themes that attempt to defy representation and racism but end up producing discursive practices within the text that support these discourses. In this section I offer conclusions about the strengths and limitations of the series. I conclude by discussing the implications of the case findings for future research.

Strengths

The series presents several positive steps by media to address the complex issue of racism in society that require acknowledgement including its use of new media and the dedication of resources to this particular topic. Unique to the series at the time it was produced, *The Chronicle Herald* organized a moderated online discussion to allow readers to engage with the issue in a more meaningful way. The themes that emerged from the discussion suggest participants want to know more about racism, confront it, and understand it better, and, as examined in the Discussion chapter, they presented some different ideas than those covered in the Herald's print and video series alone. While the perceptions about the series among series' participants

compared with the larger population of Nova Scotia is unknown, the online discussion provides

at least a crude barometer to begin to assess some of the feelings and sentiments around racism

in Nova Scotia, and, in particular, the participants' reactions to this series.

Access to the World Wide Web and the asynchronous and synchronous ability of social

media sites and commenting features on websites continue to change the way society

communicates, and the inclusion of an online discussion as part of this series is an example of

this. However, the use of online commenting is not without criticism. Online discussion groups

and the ability to comment on websites have also been critiqued because people can move easily

from one site to another, hide their identity, and select groups that reinforce like-minded views

(Norris, 2004). But while the anonymous nature of online environments have allowed people to

misrepresent their identity and use inflammatory messages uncommon in-person or over the

phone (Sproull & Kiesler, 1991), research has also found that people feel more comfortable

sharing their opinions and feelings online than in a face-to-face environment (Walther & Parks,

2002). At the very least, the use of the online discussion feature, in addition to providing *The

Chronicle Herald* with an opportunity to develop multimedia skills,[14] provided insights into what

some readers of the series were thinking at the time the series was produced. This information

would have remained unexplored if the series did not include non-traditional approaches to

journalism in the production of this series.

Second, the "Nova Scotia Burning" series offered unprecedented coverage to an issue

that has traditionally been unexplored in Nova Scotia media and this is noteworthy. If nothing

else, this issue was top of mind to readers of *The Chronicle Herald* for five days. Likewise, on an

individual level, the benefit of the series' coverage on this issue--the first series of its kind in

Nova Scotia--is that it provided an opportunity for me, as a curious graduate student, to examine

this issue in depth to provide deeper insights about how issues of race, representation, and racism were addressed. Such dialogue would not have been possible without the conscious decision of the paper to produce this series.

Media Follow-Up: Lessons Learned

My second set of conclusions relates to the shortcomings of the case, notably the limited sustained effect of the series beyond the week-long coverage. Dan Leger (personal communication, June 15, 2012) argues the series was envisioned as a catalyst for ongoing examination of racism by Nova Scotians, and in this it can be argued to have succeeded:

> Is there a lot more to write about, a lot more to talk about, of
>
> course there is. And, did it take us all the way to where we raise
>
> the overall collective consciousness of Nova Scotians? Probably
>
> not. But did it strike a blow for something that it is right to fight
>
> for? Yes it did … Each one of those blows adds up to something
>
> … (personal communication, June 15, 2012).

To focus only on the strengths of what the series provides when the analysis of the series identifies racialized discursive practices--the very sort of issue the series attempted to address-- would, in many ways, be as harmful for the "social consciousness" of the province as saying nothing at all and allowing such taken for granted assumptions of race and privilege to continue. If the series is left unchallenged, the notion of addressing racism is at least introduced, but, as I have demonstrated in this research, is not appropriately or adequately addressed. This is particularly important because a preliminary review I completed of subsequent media coverage involving individuals from the cross-burning incident suggests the discussion has not evolved past that of a binary explanation of racism in Nova Scotia. This is despite the goals of the series,

the conclusions it drew, and the hoped-for benefits in terms of broadening our understanding of

the issue and challenging current ideas.

Since *The Chronicle Herald* produced the "Nova Scotia Burning" series in February

2011, Justin and Nathan Rehberg and Shayne Howe have had run-ins with the law. While

unrelated to the cross-burning incident, these legal encounters have been covered by Nova Scotia

media, including *The Chronicle Herald*, and their association with the 2010 cross-burning

incident is referenced. I observed two important shortcomings of the follow-up media coverage

by *The Chronicle Herald* involving Shayne Howe and the Rehberg brothers: a lack of sustained

deeper analysis to transcend racism and a lack of reference to the series itself.

In the feature series, *The Chronicle Herald* concluded that they discovered more than

narratives of racism in the cross-burning incident. Despite this, follow-up reporting on the

Rehberg brothers continues to position them merely as *racists* and *cross-burners* in titles and

headlines ["Convicted Racist Rehberg Guilty of Breaching Probation, Convicted Racist Pleads

Guilty to Breach of Probation" (Delaney, 2012); "Cross-Burner Charged in Theft of All-Terrain

Vehicle" (Delaney, 2011); "Cross-Burning Victim Faces Drug Trial, Howe Charged With

Resisting Arrest, Possession of Marijuana and Ecstasy" (Bruce, 2012b); "Hate Victim Denies

Sexual Assault; Cross Was Burned at Man's Hants County Home" (Bruce, 2011)], suggesting

that the series did not dispel these labels and did not elevate the discussion about racism beyond

the week-long coverage.

Equally relevant, subsequent articles referring to the 2010 cross burning do not make any

reference to the in-depth series produced by *The Chronicle Herald* despite the fact that the series

(a) set precedent for future structures of the paper's features, (b) involved significant investment

of time and resources, (c) resulted in recognition among journalistic peers, and (d) explicitly

aimed to inform all future discussion of the issue. The subsequent omission of any reference to

the in-depth series, as well as the default response to label individuals in the case as racist or as

cross-burners, ignores the paper's larger goal to have the coverage "lea[d] to real changes"

(Brooks Areneburg, 2011b, ¶ 25). I believe that the lack of message continuity between the series

and the subsequent coverage of the individuals involved, negates the point made by Leger that

each "blow" adds up to something. Within the parameters of this case, I conclude that the goal of

creating a new common dialogue and to affect how this or similar issues are reported on, failed

beyond the week-long articles produced over a year ago.

Finally, subsequent media coverage of issues related to those involved in the 2010 cross-

burning incident is reported on by different journalists. This is common in news production as

stories are often assigned based on interest, availability, or topic speciality. However, this normal

journalistic process also signifies a limitation of this approach: the discontinuity of the meanings

and messages previously reported on. Each reporter brings his or her own experiences and

knowledge to an issue that influence their worldview, and the findings in this case study identify

that even in an in-depth series, reflexivity can be crucially missing. Yet, assigning different

reporters to cover complex issues such as racism may limit the ability for journalists to engage

reflexively and apply personal learnings for future reporting on the topic, which is a factor the

case study identified as critical to supporting in-depth, holistic coverage.

Considered together, the observations discussed above support what is discussed in

Chapter Seven: racism may be too complex a subject for media to address in the current

environment of 24-hour news reporting, with limited resources and time. Within this case, the

examples above demonstrate that the intentions of *The Chronicle Herald* in producing the series,

and the outcomes, are not congruent, nor do they carry forward in subsequent articles related to

the same topic. I do not want to misrepresent the impact of this point: the perception of racism by

Nova Scotians as a result of this case is unknown, just as the broader metanarratives in Nova

Scotia media coverage related to race, representation, and racism are also unknown. However,

this case study provides us with critical insights to consider in future research.

My third conclusion for consideration relates to the strengths and limitations of

postcolonial theory and its role in identifying accountability and illuminating the need to shift the

way in which stories are approached and told. While postcolonial theory provided a new lens

from which to examine media coverage and identified new ways of conceiving the text, the

conclusions made through the use of the theory are not easy to implement. In the Discussion

chapter, I identified the need for media to examine history and context when reporting on issues

and the fact that such recommendations do not lend themselves in a practical way to news

reporting. Yet, within this case study, postcolonial theory illuminates the importance of shifting

one's point of view, which is manageable: the series privileges a Eurocentric perspective, which

contributes, to some degree, to representations of the racialised Other in the series. In "Nova

Scotia Burning," a greater appreciation of individual reflection as well as shifting the lens for

examination away from a Eurocentric perspective are important first steps I conclude would help

destabilise traditional approaches to treating race and racism. Likewise, the role of individual

actions and decisions must also be examined. Change is only possible by accepting

accountability for such privileges at individual and social levels and making a conscious decision

to examine issues differently.

The strength of this case study is that it provides insight into an issue previously

unexplored: how the media treat issues of race and racism in Nova Scotia. This research has

identified inconsistencies between the paper's espoused goals and the discursive practices

present in the text. However, the meaning or significance of a text cannot be evaluated in isolation of the interaction that shapes the context (Phillips & Hardy, 2002).

Future Implications

While the scope of the findings is confined to the discourse constituted in the "Nova Scotia Burning" series, this research also points to broader contextual issues that warrant further investigation such as subsequent media coverage, media's application of new media, and the perspectives of readers and Nova Scotians in response to what is produced by media. First, a more thorough examination of *The Chronicle Herald*'s treatment of racial issues in Nova Scotia over the years--beyond this one event--is warranted to better understand what discursive practices are present in the paper's treatment of these issues. Even as I complete this research in October 2012, *The Chronicle Herald* has started to investigate another issue that affected the lives of many Black Nova Scotians as children: The Nova Scotia Home for Coloured Children is currently the centre of a class action law suit over allegations of abuse and neglect. As *The Chronicle Herald* expressed its intention to examine other issues affecting Black Nova Scotians at the conclusion of the "Nova Scotia Burning" series, this series may be an appropriate site for a future case study to further examine whether the discursive practices in the "Nova Scotia Burning" series are present in other texts the paper produces about race and racism in Nova Scotia.

Second, examining how media outlets, such as *The Chronicle Herald* make use of new media--a space that gives people a voice to share ideas that may have traditionally been silent--and what perspectives and commentary emerge from such discussion, are important areas of research that require further examination. The perspectives and comments from readers, viewers, and listeners need to be examined to understand the commonalities and differences between the

intended message and what is decoded by the receiver. This understanding is critical to more

fully understand the complex issues of race and representation and what perceptions, discourses,

and practices are present in Nova Scotia society and institutions. Closely related to this

understanding is the need to consider the role of agency within the production of such social

discourses. As I argued elsewhere (Titus-Roberts, 2012), another area requiring further

investigation is understanding how news production (i.e., the decisions of the editors and the

perspectives of the journalists) shapes racial discourse in Nova Scotia.

Finally, while beyond the scope of this research, the narratives that emerged through this

case study need to be explored on a larger scale to assess to what extent they are present across

other media institutions in Nova Scotia beyond that of the provincial paper and this particular

case alone.

This case study research contributes to our understanding of how racism and Black Nova

Scotians are represented within this one case, and it also identifies additional research required to

make sense of the findings across other spectrums. My goal in conducting this research was to

identify and provoke discussion regarding assumptions about the way in which we (should)

discuss race and racism in media coverage in Nova Scotia. In doing so, I have presented

findings that demonstrate competing discourses about racism that (a) privilege a Eurocentric

perspective and support a discourse sustaining a separation based on race while, (b) trying to

challenge and move beyond such colonial-influenced notions.

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Appendix A: Excerpt from Codebook

Category	Heading	Subheading
Competing discourses		
Labeling the brothers as cross burners		
	Media interest in "cross burners"	
	Cross-burners/burned a cross	
Description of actions		
	Description of brothers' lives	
	Brothers ambivalent about actions	
	Description of cross being built	
Parental advice		
Describing Hants County peaceful, quiet, country life		
YELLOW	Brothers' backgrounds	
RED	Couple's background	
BLUE	History of racism/symbol of the cross	
GREEN	Experiences of victims	
MAGENTA	Motivation of brothers	
Grappling with belonging		
	Blacks as minority in community	
	Community against burning cross	
Reasons for series		
	Feeling intention important to understanding	
	Exploration of new journalism approaches	
	To understand the story behind the cross burning	
	Feeling proud of work	
	Feeling role of media to report on impt issues	
	Feeling paper role to disclose approach/reasons	
Education level - issue with English language		
Understanding "why" the brothers did it		

Category	Heading	Subheading
	Feeling brothers chose wrong way to respond	
	Feeling brothers expressed oppression	
	Feeling brothers do not have power to oppress	
	Victims making sense of actions (because black? why did it happen?)	
	Expressing disbelief at actions	
	Feeling the brothers knew actions were wrong	
	Feeling brothers didn't understand significance	
	Wanting couple to stop talking about them	
	Racist act/not racist	
	Feeling disbelief at turning to a cross for revenge	
	Gossip catalyst for cross burning	
		Stigmatizing herpes
		Isolating individuals from community (conseq. of rumours)
		Right to repeat rumours
	Feeling the brothers' upbringing contributed to their present action	
		Feeling parenting to blame
		Brothers' motivated by drugs/alcohol
		Feeling poor education partially cause of brothers' actions
Response to the series		
	Feeling SR (systematic racism) goes unaddressed	
	Questions asked during discussion	
		Expressing the discussion moderated

Category	Heading	Subheading
	Expressing contentment for series	
		Feeling the series was balanced
		Feeling series provided understanding of issue
		Feeling the Herald did a good job on the series
	Criticising the paper for the series	
		Feeling criticism is normal
		Feeling skeptical the Herald will address issue in future
		Feeling the series contradicts itself
		Feeling CH *(Chronicle Herald)* not equipped to address racism
		Feeling the story isn't balanced
		Feeling the series created sympathy for the brothers
		Feeling the series sensationalized the issue
		Feeling the series doesn't address racism
	Feeling the cross burning an isolated issue	
	Feeling series about more than racism	
	Feeling sorry for what has happened to the families	
	Feeling the brothers were adequately punished	
	Feeling black history/experiences omitted in NS	
Emancipation		
	Cross/series conduit for change/discussion of racism	

Category	Heading	Subheading
	Brothers expressing remorse for actions	
	Wanting to know the brothers learned a lesson	
	Providing important resource to community (by discussing racism)	
	Changes to policy (to address racism)	
	Feeling empathy for the brothers' situation	
	Feeling of searching for understanding across races	
	Feeling that more education needed/changes required	
	Desiring ongoing discussion	
		CH *(Chronicle Herald)* indicating they will address racism in future
		Feeling SR needs to be addressed in NS
		Asking Herald to explore racism
	Demonstrating community support for others	
	Persevering beyond current situation	
Family dynamics		
	Describing everyday actions of individuals	
	Description of relationship b/n brothers/Lyon	
	Victims as perpetrators	
	Nathan as perpetrator	
	Justin as "good brother"	
		Description of Howe-Lyon family life
Representation of the cross		
	Representing crime	
	Damaging the reputation of the community	
		Shame for the community (Hants

Category	Heading	Subheading
		County)
	Teaching a lesson	
	Representing drunken, drug induced stupidity	
	Representing small town tragedy	
	Feeling cross burning represents racism	
	Cross represents lynchings, beatings, Klansmen	
	Funny	
	Cross burning as revenge	
	Form of vandalism	
	Representing symbol of hate/hatred/race crime	
	Burning cross not racially motivated	
	Representing fear	
Racism in Nova Scotia		
	Asking what non racialized means	
	Feeling all types of racism should be addressed	
		Feeling if visible allowed, condone invisible acts
	Wondering whether cross burning isolated racism	
	Feeling racism is far from over	
	Being unaware of racism (ignorance)	
	Expressing shock at idea of racism in NS	
	Denying racism exists in NS	
	Understanding what the label racist means	
	Defining racism	
		Defining racism based on action + race

Category	Heading	Subheading
		Feeling there is a "real" racism
		Attraction to Black people, liking black music + clothing= not racist
		Racism=white supremacy, skin colour, revenge
		Feeling SR most damaging racism
		Black friends=not a racist person
		Defining racism as oppression
		Defining racism as power to oppress
		Racism learned behaviour
		Defining racism as ignorance
		Questioning whether white people experience racism
		Defining racism as hatred
		Defining racism as fear
	Expressing NS has a history of racism	
		Feeling racism a part of past
	Feeling there are different degrees of racism	
		Examples of SR in NS
	Reflecting on experiences of	

Category	Heading	Subheading
	racism	
	Feeling racism has / is covered up	
	Racism affects everyone	
	Racism a black issue	
Voice of authority		
Representation of race		
	Racial qualifier for white	
	Label of biracial couple	
	Skin colour means nothing	
	Racial identifier for non-white	
	Racial slurs	

Appendix B: Preliminary Findings July 2012

Acceptability/underst anding of racism	Education (PC tenant)	Space/Identity/Belonging (PC tenant)	Colonial Discourse (PC tenant)	Other thoughts	Emancipation
• Racist act/not racist • Systematic vs. overt racism • Shame for community • Discussion – are white people victims of racism? • Act of burning a cross vs. being convicted of inciting hatred/being racist • Is this a demonstration of hybridity? Intersection of history of racism with new generation, product of what happens when racism exists in small communities and people are unaware of the practices? • Representation – race/class; of brothers/of Howe/Lyon family; of the concept of racism, inciting hatred, of the burning cross	• Education failed Rehberg brothers; education critical to ensure this doesn't happen again • Education needed to understand Black Nova Scotians (colonial discourse = implying different/can't understand Black Nova Scotians without education) • Civilizing mission – CH see it as its role to address racism • CH maintains itself as a voice of authority on the issue. Labeled the brothers cross-burners, identified what people had questions about, role of paper to tell stories, address tough issues. • Impact of gossip – can excuse racism because of a lack of education, but no excuse for gossip. • No shared understanding of NS black history.	• Struggle for Howe/Lyon to feel like they belong/consider leaving community • Shame for community – cross burning cast community/NS in a "negative light" shed light on racism in the province • Photos – family photos of Rehbergs'. . . limited family photos of Howe/Lyon • Rehbergs' struggle with family /upbringing/poverty • No third-party context for Howe-Lyon family, but for Rehbergs; instead, validation that cross-burning not isolated. . . history of racism	• Us vs. Them • Racism as black issue • Series told from Eurocentric perspective (Rehbergs' centre of story/different ethnic backgrounds identified in text) • Class hierarchy – white, black with education, black • Brothers as victims (poverty, drugs, educational failings) • Howe/Lyon as co-creators of the crime (role of gossip can't be discounted – emphasized in text) • Victim experience defined relative to the villain • Concept of the unrestrained, but in this case it's the brothers who are unrestrained because they are overtaken with	• Reduce racism to issues of class (in literature); in the case it's clear that education is an issue for all parties (except the "experts") (use of English language – attribute to small town mentality). Allows you to pass it off as educational failings not examples of racism. • Contradiction – piece focuses on backdrop of poverty, education, etc., as underbelly of racism in province, yet contrasts this against image of burning cross (to sensationalize) in all of the videos/articles • Whose interests does this serve? May have lost subscribers, took heat, however, they won awards. . . catalyst for social media/digital news media, can "check" racism in NS off the list • Cross burning as a platform to address systematic racism (where	• Search for shared understandin g key to change. • Desire expressed to continue the dialogue on this issue • Sense of hospitality and candor

Acceptability/underst anding of racism	Education (PC tenant)	Space/Identity/Belonging (PC tenant)	Colonial Discourse (PC tenant)	Other thoughts	Emancipation
			drugs/liquor • The fact that unless stated, everyone is white. Conceptually, the Herald assumes it is writing for a white audience. . . this is the only perspective that matters. There is a need to ask why race matters (this relates to representation, self, identity, and belonging); the symbol of the cross is also critical in this context – it's the cross+black person that incites the reaction). Would a cross burning on its own with no stated black person being involved (or actually involved) have the same effect? And what is that impact. . .. this is what I want to destabilize.	to from here, but what has actually changed?) • CH challenging dominant text – Provincial and supreme courts ruled this was an act of racism; stated it was clear the cross burning was inciting hatred, judge said that motivations (gossip) were no excuse for what happened, yet CH series focuses on gossip and systematic barriers (parenting, education, class) to help make sense of the racist act that wasn't motivated by racism (they conclude this) • On the one hand, brothers say they didn't know the full extent of actions, yet Nathan knew that a cross would get a reaction out of Howe, would have had an idea it was wrong when mother told him to get rid of it • Thoughts on Globalization? Capitalism? • Theme of challenging CH	

Acceptability/understanding of racism	Education (PC tenant)	Space/Identity/Belonging (PC tenant)	Colonial Discourse (PC tenant)	Other thoughts	Emancipation
				– a number of comments are critical of the Herald, indicating the series sensationalized the issue, doesn't address "real" racism, and created unwarranted sympathy for the brothers. Is this an example of being upset at the Herald for attempting to challenge the status quo? Other people posted comments that were supportive of the series. • Comments that the series is a springboard to discuss racism. . . they discussed it, but now what? • Theme: desire for more dialogue on the issue. • Characters of brothers distinguished in series – Justin "good," Nathan "bad" • The presence of a visible sign of racism but a denial of racist motivation is similar to the denial of racism when it is embedded in systematic practices. (Like publishing an article that	

Acceptability/underst anding of racism	Education (PC tenant)	Space/Identity/Belonging (PC tenant)	Colonial Discourse (PC tenant)	Other thoughts	Emancipation
				denounces a cross burning as a racially motivated act by the perpetrators) • Representation – how would it have changed things if Howe wasn't black and it was a cross, or if it wasn't a cross, or if a black person had burned the cross. . .encoding/decoding. . . what it means in our collective minds. . .. • Cross burning invoked a lot of emotion – for and against – throughout the year before the series. . . Herald saw an opportunity to address topic, but also be part of discussing the conflict?	

Overall thoughts:
- Brothers/Cross-burning product of social discourse that denies racism in Nova Scotia (what about all those who have a rough upbringing but still know better?)
- Destabilization of racism in Nova Scotia – micro site for contradiction between visible and invisible forms of racism.
- Desire for change from paper and participants, but goals have fell on false hope
- Struggling for sense of self/belonging
- Still a racial divide

Appendix C: Confirmation of Ethics Approval for Interviews

Excellence · Innovation · Discovery

University Research Ethics Board

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD

Certificate of Research Ethics Clearance

Title of project: *Case Study: Nova Scotia Burning: Exploring Racial Discourse in Nova Scotia Media*

Researcher(s):   **Jolene Titus-Roberts**
Supervisor (if applicable):   **Amy thurlow**
Co-Investigators: n/a

File #: 2011-098

The University Research Ethics Board (UREB) has reviewed the above named proposal and confirms that it respects the *Tri-Council Policy Statement* as outlined in the *MSVU Policies and Procedures: Ethics Review of Research Involving Humans* regarding the ethics of research involving human participants.

This certificate of ethics clearance is valid one year from the date of issue. Renewals are available for up to four years in addition to the initial year and are contingent upon an annual submission to the UREB of a written request for renewal accompanied by a satisfactory annual ethics report thirty days prior to the expiry date as listed below. A final report is required within 30 days of expiry. Researchers are reminded that any changes to approved protocol must be reviewed and approved by the UREB prior to their implementation.

May 28, 2012
Effective Date

Dr. Michelle Eskritt, Chair
University Research Ethics Board (UREB)

[Expires: May 27, 2013]

Appendix D: Consent Form for Interviews

Informed consent form to participate in research:
Case Study: Nova Scotia Burning
Exploring racial discourse in Nova Scotia media

You are asked to participate in interviews conducted by graduate student Jolene Titus-Roberts from Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU) as part of her dissertation research for her Masters of Arts (Communications) degree**.** This consent form outlines the purpose of the case study research and your involvement, including risks, benefits and your rights as a participant. Before agreeing to take part in an interview, it is important that you review the information in this form carefully in order to decide if you wish to take part. Your participation is voluntary. If you have any questions, please ask the researcher, the researcher's supervisor or the MSVU's Ethics Board using the contact details provided below.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:
Researcher: jolene.titus@msvu.ca / 488.4009
Research supervisor: Dr. Amy Thurlow, 457.5533, amy.thurlow@msvu.ca

If you have questions about how this study is being conducted and wish to speak with someone not involved in the study, you may contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Board (UREB) c/o MSVU Research Office, at 457.6350 or via e-mail at research@msvu.ca.

About the research
The purpose of the research is to undertake a case study of the discourse concerning race and representation within The Chronicle Herald's "Nova Scotia Burning" feature series. This is one of the very few examples of racial issues being covered in Nova Scotia mass media. The research will contribute to our understanding of the intersection of media and issues of race in Nova Scotia. Through an in-depth examination of the feature series, using a post-colonial theoretical framework, this case study research will explore the language, text and context within the media coverage to help understand the discursive practices related to issues of representation, and, more specifically, the treatment of Black Nova Scotians. Interviews are being requested with individuals involved in the development of the feature articles and videos in order to better understand the context for the series. This research will fulfill the thesis requirements for the researcher's Master of Arts (Communications) degree at Mount Saint Vincent University. The research has been approved by the researcher's thesis committee for implementation, and ethics approval has been received by the University in order to contact potential participants for an interview.

Interviews

Interview participants are recruited based on their involvement with the feature series under study. Interview participants will be asked to answer questions about their involvement in the "Nova Scotia Burning" feature series, media coverage about issues of race, as well as questions about how the series developed. The unstructured interview will be approximately 60 minutes in length and it will take place in person, at a location agreeable to both the researcher and the participant. The researcher will use a voice recorder for the interviews and field notes as back-up in case the recording fails. The information from the interview will be used to inform the context for the study and provide background information. The interviews themselves will not be studied or analyzed as data in this research.

Potential risks and benefits

The subject under discussion in interviews relates to media articles that examine issues of racial hatred in Nova Scotia. Issues of race, discrimination and racism can be sensitive topics, and there may be a potential risk of personal discomfort to participants in discussing this subject matter. In addition, the case study research will analyze media coverage and it is possible that the research findings may be critical of The Chronicle Herald's treatment of this particular issue. While the purpose of the research is not to examine the individual journalist's approach to news events involving issues of racial representation and racism, there may be professional risks to the interview participants as they were involved in the development of the series. A list of the staff members involved in the development of the series is publically available, so anonymity is likely not possible if you participate.

There is a minimum time commitment asked of participants, and participants may not receive direct benefits from participating in interviews. However, the results from this study may further our overall understanding of how issues of race are represented and discussed in Nova Scotia media, and participants would play an important role in contributing to this understanding.

Conditions of participation

Participation is voluntary. The research participant is free to withdraw his/her consent and discontinue participation at any time during, or following the interview, without negative consequences. Participants may choose to answer some questions and not others without negative repercussions. Participants can also request not to be tape-recorded or to have some or all of the comments unattributed. Interviews are being held with those directly involved in the development of the feature series under study. The researcher will protect the identity of participants as outlined and requested by the participant, however, as the identity of participants is known to each other, and the individuals involved in the series have been identified publically, anonymity may not be possible.

If a participant withdraws from the research any data previously collected from the participant will be destroyed: notes will be shredded and the audio file will be deleted. There are no negative repercussions to participants should they choose to withdraw from the research.

The results of the thesis will be shared through a thesis defence at Mount Saint Vincent University, and it is possible that data/findings from the case study research will be published. Participants will be sent (via email) a brief summary of the study upon completion. They may also request a copy of the complete dissertation if desired.

Protection of information

Processes are in place to protect all information shared between participant and researcher. The interview will be transcribed by the researcher and the electronic file will be password protected and stored on the researcher's personal computer. Physical versions of data will be stored in a locked cabinet at Mount Saint Vincent University, Seton Annex 5. The data will be retained for a period of five years. Throughout the course of the research, it is possible that electronic data may be shared between the researcher and the thesis supervisor. In such instances, the file and folder will be password protected. Any data sent electronically will be sent using the MSVU email account system.

Publication of results

All or some of the information from the interviews may be included in the thesis. The results of this research will be shared with the academic community at Mount Saint Vincent University through the completion of a thesis defence. The thesis will be printed and held in the library, and the researcher will also explore conference proceedings or publication as potential methods for sharing the results.

Agreement

"The purpose of the research and the interviews has been explained to me, and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have been informed of my rights to withdraw at any time or to choose not to answer some or all of the questions, without negative consequences. I understand that my identity will not be kept private as part of these interviews, but I may, at any time, request that responses be non-attributable or I can refrain from answering. The potential risks and benefits of participating in this research study have been explained to me. I understand that the results of the research may be published. I have carefully reviewed the information above and understand this agreement. I freely consent and voluntarily agree to participate in interviews as part of this case study."

Name (print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please note: A summary of the results will be sent to you via email upon the completion of the study.

Appendix E: Interview Questions

Case Study: Nova Scotia Burning
Exploring racial discourse in Nova Scotia media
Interview Questions

Date:
Place:
Time:
Interviewer's name:
Interviewee's name:
Sex (observation):

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. I am interested in learning about your experience and role in the development of the "Nova Scotia Burning" series. Over the next hour I will ask you questions that will provide the opportunity for reflection on your experiences with the series and about media coverage of, and about, Black Nova Scotians. There are no right or wrong answers. At any time you can refrain from answering a question or withdraw your response or participation. You can also request to not to be tape recorded or to have certain comments not attributed directly to you; unless you specify, all comments will be attributed.

Is it okay for me to tape-record? I will also be taking notes as well. Do you have any questions before we get started?

Introductory Questions
Tell me a bit about yourself:
Where are you from and where did you grow up?
How long have you been a resident of Nova Scotia?
How long have you been a reporter with The Chronicle Herald?
Do you think being here a short (or long time) is an advantage or a disadvantage in the "Nova Scotia Burning" series?

Grand and Mini -Tour Questions

Nova Scotia Burning was a feature series that ran last year. It examined in-depth the cross burning incident that occurred between two Caucasian brothers and a bi-racial couple in Hants County, Nova Scotia. The series included four in-depth feature articles and online videos as well as complementary articles about the topic. Please provide an overview of the series, and your role in its development, from the time it was conceived as an idea to its publication.

Prompts:

    a.   This is one of the first times video was used as part of a series produced by The Chronicle Herald. What was this process like and why was it important?

      b.   Tell me about the goals for the project. Did you get what you hoped to achieve from the series? Why/Why not?

1.   Describe the process for selecting people to interview for the series.

Probes:

      a.   How did you gain the trust of those involved?
      b.   Was there anyone you weren't able to speak with?

2.   What has been the public reaction to the series, both immediately following the series last year and now, a year later?

My final questions relate to understanding your views on the topic of the cross-burning incident itself and the role of media in covering such issues in Nova Scotia. How has the cross-burning, and the paper's approach to the incident, affected you and the staff?

3.   How would you describe the media's role – broadly speaking – in reporting and covering issues affecting and involving Black Nova Scotians?

Prompts:

      a.   What other ways have issues affecting Black Nova Scotians been explored by the paper?

What makes you most proud of the series? Any regrets?

(If interview Dan Leger) In your editorial on this series, "why this difficult story had to be told" you commented that part of the role of the paper is to tackle issues of importance to Nova Scotia. What was it about this particular issue that made it compelling to tell?

Footnotes

1. *The Chronicle Herald* entitled the four-day series on the story behind the crime "nova scotia (lowercase) BURNING (uppercase)" and featured the words in bright red contrasted against a dark cross. In this case study, I refer to the series as "Nova Scotia Burning" however, the stylistic treatment of the series title is examined as part of the text and overall discourse produced.

2. This includes full articles, abstracts of television coverage, and photo captions.

3. The Poynter Institute is a school in the United States that supports the professional development of journalists and encourages public access to excellence in journalism.

4. I approached five of the journalists/editors who comprised the team for this special feature. I was advised to speak with Andrew Waugh, the current director of news content, about the series; he was the only person *The Chronicle Herald* would allow me to speak with about the series for this research. At the time of the series in 2011, Waugh was the assistant director of news content. He worked alongside Dan Leger, then director of news content, who retired in January 2012. In January 2012, Waugh became the director of news content.

5. This includes full articles, abstracts of television coverage, and photo captions.

6. I approached five of the journalists/editors who comprised the team for this special feature. I was advised to speak with Andrew Waugh, the current director of news content, about the series; he was the only person *The Chronicle Herald* would allow me to speak with about the series for this research. At the time of the series in 2011, Waugh was the assistant director of news content. He worked alongside Dan Leger, then director of news content, who retired in January 2012. In January 2012, Waugh became the director of news content.

7. The Poynter Institute is a school in the United States that supports the professional development of journalists and encourages public access to excellence in journalism. Jayson Taylor approached Kenneth Irby from the Poynter Institute to discuss the paper's approach to the multi-media videos for this series.

8. Andrew Waugh became the director of news content at *The Chronicle Herald* in January 2012.

9. Photos are not included as part of the thesis due to *The Chronicle Herald's* copyright policy. Some of the photos can be viewed on *The Chronicle Herald's* website within the "Nova Scotia Burning" feature: http://www.thechronicleherald.ca/novascotiaburning

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Andrew Waugh became the director of news content at *The Chronicle Herald* in January 2012.

14. Since the "nova scotia BURNING" series, *The Chronicle Herald* has continued to produce in-depth feature series involving print and video elements. Examples include their coverage of disparities in rural Nova Scotia "Crossroads" (http://thechronicleherald.ca/crossroads) and their interactive features covering the 100th anniversary of the Titanic (http://thechronicleherald.ca/titanic). In fact, *The Chronicle Herald* now offers a daily "News Minute" to website visitors, which is a video summarizing the headlines of the day's news.