ENCOUNTERING SILENCE(S): MITIGATING THE NEGATIVE SOCIAL IMPACTS OF CONSTRUCTION
CAMPS WITH LAKE BABINE NATION

By

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Abstract

Lake Babine Nation is currently in negotiations with the Prince Rupert Gas Transmission Pipeline Project regarding the construction of a 950km liquid natural gas pipeline through their traditional territory. While the project has been approved, Nation members continue to express their concerns regarding construction camps, facilities designed to accommodate up to 1000 temporary workers. Increased rates of sexual violence, sexually transmitted infections, and domestic abuse are some of the impacts they are most concerned about. While the initial goal of my research was to voice the concerns of Babine women, I was frequently confronted by prolonged silences, long pauses, refusals, and hesitations in my research encounters. This thesis reflects my critical engagement with *silence* as it emerged in interviews, negotiations, public discourse, and in the lived experience of Indigenous women in Lake Babine Nation. The questions that motivated this analysis attend to silence as a concept, experience, and method. What follows is the genealogy of the silences encountered: the silences incited by colonialism, the silences mobilized by marginalized people to negotiate institutions that seek to silence them, and the embodied silences of those who live with the embodied consequences of sexual violence.

The purpose of my focus on silence has not been to impose a grand theory of silence on my research participants. Rather, the goal has been to attend to the pauses and gaps as they emerged in the research process, in a non-binary way. By extending silence, Babine women invited me to reflect on my positionality, the structures of domination in which we are implicated, and on their embodied and affective realities. What I find myself left with is silence as invitation—an invitation to learn, to unsettle colonial and racial relationships, to refuse, to resist, and to *listen*. Through a concerted focus on silences that surround sexual violence against Indigenous women, we may begin to see how anti-violence work can contribute to processes of decolonization and self-determination. This research establishes silence as a legitimate focus of investigation in qualitative research that may be approached with the same rigor with which we approach that which is spoken.

Preface

This thesis is an original intellectual product of the author, Hannah Elizabeth Quinn. The fieldwork reported throughout this thesis was covered by UBC Ethics Certificate number H16-00591.

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List of Abbreviations

BC	British Columbia
BCEAO	British Columbia Environmental Assessment Office
LBN	Lake Babine Nation
NYSHN	Native Youth Sexual Health Network
PRGT	Prince Rupert Gas Transmission
SEEMP	Socio-Economic Effects Monitoring Plan
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
UBC	The University of British Columbia
UNBC	University of Northern British Columbia

Acknowledgements

Introduction

> In 1904, fisheries guardians first entered Babine territory to destroy the salmon weirs and to prohibit their use for all time. The promise of nets was not met in 1905, and, in the summer of 1906, a desperate and hungry nation re-erected the barricades and swore to uphold their Aboriginal resource entitlements. Fisheries guardians, officials of the then Ministry of Marine and Fisheries, returned to the barricades and attempted to destroy them. The Babine resisted forcibly. A few women, led, it is said, by Hazelcho, wife of Tszak, intimidated the guardians, who retreated into deeper waters. There the women sat on them, humiliating them until they left, taking with them tales of being attacked by women and men armed with clubs (Jo-Anne Fiske and Betty Patrick 2000:143-144)

This story was shared with me, albeit with differing emphasis and detail, multiple times during my research with Lake Babine Nation. The version cited above is from *Cis Dideen Kat* (2000*),* a book co-authored by Jo-Anne Fiske and Betty Patrick. The story was recounted to me by an elder, a band councilor, two hereditary chiefs, and a number of community members. I share this story to set the tone and pace of this thesis project; to position what follows within a long history of resistance, negotiation, and world-building (Million 2016) by Indigenous women in Lake Babine Nation. This piece of oral history sheds light on a community bent on upholding their traditional rights and territorial responsibilities, propelled by the actions and teachings of strong Indigenous women since colonial contact in the 1820s.

Today, Lake Babine Nation remains entangled in negotiations and confrontations with both federal and provincial governments, as well as industry regarding their land, their livelihoods, and their people's well-being. Betty Patrick, a hereditary chief and former band council chief, leads many of these negotiations. Betty currently holds the Natural Resource portfolio for Lake Babine Nation and works closely with her friend and colleague Verna Power. As the council representative for Old Fort, Verna has taken on the role as Natural Resource Liaison to the band council. As mothers, grandmothers, knowledge holders, politicians, and charismatic Indigenous women, they have dedicated their physical, intellectual, and emotional labour to the health and prosperity of their Nation. What follows in this thesis is a reflection on the work that they have done to fight for the safety of women and children in their communities.

Betty and Verna have been enmeshed in dialogue and negotiation with Prince Rupert Gas Transmission Pipeline Project (PRGT) since 2012. I was invited in to these proceedings by Betty and Verna via their research consultant, Ginger Gibson. At the time of our first meeting, Lake Babine Nation was in the process of reviewing PRGTs Socio-Economic Effects Monitoring Plan (SEEMP) required by the British Columbia Environmental Assessment Office (BCEAO) as a condition of their environmental

assessment certificate. The SEEMP is a plan to communicate and report how PRGT will manage and monitor project-related socio-economic impacts and opportunities associated with the Project including the impacts of ancillary sites such as construction camps,[1] on nearby communities. In this case, the communities are Fort Babine and Tachet, two remotely located communities of Lake Babine Nation, 5km from the proposed 1000-person construction camp. Construction, which was scheduled to begin in early 2016, will see an influx of 200 to 1000 workers, mostly men, in to the region that Betty and Verna call home, and the traditional territory of Lake Babine Nation.

While the benefit agreements have been signed, and permits have been granted, consultations are ongoing, as are concerns regarding the potential impacts of the construction camps, specifically the negative social impacts, such as increased incidence of gender-based sexual violence, pregnancy, domestic abuse, sexually transmitted infections, and sexual exploitation. In October 2015, Betty and Verna were expected to comment on the SEEMP and provide feedback to the PRGT staff. In the sections that follow, I explore the ways that Betty and Verna have navigated the challenging topic of gendered sexual violence in community and the steps that they have taken to produce the *Indigenous Communities and Industrial Camps: Promoting Healthy Communities in Settings of Industrial Change* (2017) report. This report, drafted by Gibson et. al. (including myself), and in collaboration with Lake Babine Nation and Nak'azdli Whut'en First Nation, outlines key strategies and programs designed to mitigate the negative social impacts of industrial development and construction camps on remote Indigenous communities. In the report, we directly address sexual violence as a consequence of construction camps and population influx by outlining key community concerns, highlighting existing data and statistics, and offering recommendations and mitigations proposed by community members, industry professionals, front-line workers, and government representatives.

The goal of the report was to provide solutions and to bring Indigenous women's voices in to the conversation. However, from the very beginning of this project, those voices coexisted alongside

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[1] Any temporary lodgings established by a company to house used by companies to house an increasingly mobile and transient workforce for their short-term operations in relation to a forestry, mining or oil and gas operations. See the Northern Health's Background Paper entitled "Understanding the State of Industrial Camps in Northern BC" (2012).

prolonged silences, awkward stoppages, silent refusals, and hesitant pauses. As social scientists, we are compelled to valorize speech, "the voices heard and recorded" in our research encounters (Mazzei 2007:1), yet my research encounters, notes, and experiences were replete with silences, dead air. In their article *Reading Between the Lines*, Poland and Pederson acknowledge that "silence is frequently overlooked in qualitative research" (1998:293). However, voice, as the analytical focus of researchers, is suspended in and demarcated by silences, and thus implicated in silence. In my early encounters with silence, I assumed a binary relationship between silence and voice, moreover; a hierarchical binary relationship, with 'speaking out' and 'bringing voice to' positioned as the theoretical imperative of the feminist researcher. In uncoupling this binary, I have come to understand silence as meaningful in and of itself. The silences that first seemed to haunt this research became the primary focus of this thesis, as I engaged in the silence specters "that have much to say in the 'not said'… in layers of whispering, breathing, pausing [and] absenting" (Mazzei 2007:7).

This thesis reflects my critical engagement with silence as it emerged in interviews, negotiations, public discourse, and in the lived experience of Indigenous women in Lake Babine Nation. The questions that motivated my analysis attend to silence as a concept, experience, and method: Does silence always exist in a binary relationship with voice? How can we hear silence? When is silence mobilized for particular purposes and to what end? What is the structure of silence? How might we understand silence as integral to the research process and to the process of relationship building? How is silence embodied? What follows is the genealogy of the silences encountered: the silences encouraged by a history of colonialism, the silences mobilized by marginalized people to negotiate institutions that seek to silence them, and the embodied silences of those who live with the affective consequences of sexual violence.

I have separated this thesis in to three sections, each dealing with a distinct moment within the research project. Each section provides a unique context or case study for the theorization and analysis of silence among different actors and at different scales. In section I, I problematize the silence/voice dichotomy that situates silence as the natural state of the oppressed, with voice as the state of the liberated. In asking *who is silent and why,* I come to understand silence as relational, and as a functional tool mobilized by differently located actors across power lines. Section II explores the historical relationship between silence and trauma. Through an analysis of the limitations of pathological trauma

and victimhood frameworks, I explore the structural nature of silence and the institutions that incite silence on the part of Indigenous women in a variety of forms. Consequently, we see how silence is partial and negotiated, extended strategically by these women to counter the structures that seek to silence them. Moreover, I explore how silence is negotiated to foster 'intimate publics' (Berlant 2008) by Indigenous women. Finally, in Section III, I engage with a praxis of silence available to researchers and a pedagogy of listening based on my fieldwork experiences in Lake Babine Nation. By *going silent* and learning to listen, researchers can attend to the silences, gaps, and pauses in interviews and interactions with the same rigor with which they approach that which is spoken. In addition, it is through a praxis of silence that we can begin to ascertain the felt knowledges (Million 2009) and affective silences embodied by Indigenous women as they survive, thrive, and construct new futures, despite the burden of resistance in the face of ongoing sexual violence. This thesis is an exploration in silence(s) as shared, negotiated, partial, situated, and felt throughout my experience working closely with members of Lake Babine Nation. Through a concerted focus on silences that surround sexual violence against Indigenous women, we may begin to see how anti-violence work can contribute to processes of decolonization and self-determination.

Before proceeding, I wish to clarify the social and political location from which I write this thesis. As a white-settler with Irish and French-Canadian ancestry, born in to a middle-income family in Montréal, Québec, I write from a place of relative privilege and overall comfort. I have been influenced by the strength and passions of the strong women in my life: my mother, sister, grandmothers, and aunts. My commitment to social justice has been learned through these women, my focus on sexual violence is of personal necessity. My current role as a master's student at the University of British Columbia, on the ancestral and unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) people, has positioned me as a researcher. I bring an intersectional feminist approach to this role as researcher, grounded in both my academic and applied experiences working with marginalized youth, girl's groups, and human rights practitioners. It has been under the direction of women like Betty and Verna, as well as Indigenous scholars such as Sarah Hunt, Natalie Clark, Dian Million, Leanne Simpson, among others, that I have learned about and attempted to practice responsible and accountable allyship. Following Kim Tallbear, I approach the research process as a relationship-building process, "as an opportunity for conversation and sharing of knowledge, not simply data gathering" (2014:n.p). I was invited by Betty, Verna, and

Ginger to participate in their negotiation process and to develop a thesis project in collaboration with them. This thesis is one of the many products of our research collaboration. Through their generosity and support, I have had the opportunity to attend and participate in government and industry meetings, to learn from anti-violence workers from all over the province, and bear witness to the creative and politically-charged resistance efforts of two inspiring Indigenous women. It is to these women that I am accountable, as well as the members of Lake Babine Nation who generously shared their stories with me, the *needo-from-nowhere.*[2]

The work that follows is based on fieldwork and participatory engagement between October 2015 and February 2017. I visited the community twice over the summer of 2016 for a total of one month, and met with Betty and Verna multiple times in Vancouver, Prince George, Smithers, and Fort Babine, British Columbia. My methodological and theoretical approach has been to avoid 'damaged-centered' and 'deficit-model' research that centralizes pain and suffering to establish "harm or injury in order to achieve reparations" (Tuck 2009:413). In *Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities,* Eve Tuck explores how researchers frame Indigenous communities as broken and defeated, such that "oppression singularly defines a community" (2009:413). Such damaged-centered approaches tend to present Indigenous women as at-risk and as inherently vulnerable due to historical and ongoing colonial processes. Alternatively, I have sought to bear witness to the ways in which Betty and Verna, and the members of Lake Babine Nation, are building the world they want for their children on their own terms. While the lived experience of sexual violence was central to this research project, no explicit accounts of sexual assault or statistics of violence against Babine women have been included. I focus instead on the theme of silence that presented itself throughout the length of this project to understand Betty and Verna's efforts to prevent and manage sexual violence in the context of resource extraction. Following Natalie Clark (2016c), I have attempted to be a "good guest," to "decolonize my witnessing practice," and honour the stories and visions of the future as presented by Betty, Verna, and the women of Lake Babine Nation.

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[2] Nickname given to me by the kids in Fort Babine. *Needo* is a common term for a white person.

Context and Background

- **Lake Babine Nation**

Lake Babine Nation (LBN) is one of the largest Indigenous groups in what is now called British Columbia (BC), comprised of nearly 2400 members and whose territory radiates out from the shores of Lake Babine. Running along the largest natural lake in BC, LBN's traditional territory is located in northwestern BC in the Bulkley-Nechako Regional District, and the Skeena Watershed. Present day Lake Babine Nation was formed through the amalgamation of Old Fort and Fort Babine in 1957 by the Department of Indian Affairs, who joined the two bands together for administrative purposes. The amalgamation was made without consulting the members of either band. Consisting of twenty-seven reserves, LBN is divided in to five distinct communities: Woyenne, Donald's Landing, Tachet, Old Fort, and Fort Babine. Fort Babine and Tachet are the most isolated communities located within traditional Babine territory, at 150km from the nearest town. Woyenne, the largest community by population, is located outside of LBN traditional territory, near Burns Lake in Ts'il Kaz Koh First Nation territory. The land was purchased in 1965 by the Department of Indian Affairs to relocate members to bring them closer to government provided social services (Patrick 2009). While the Babine people once lived primarily along the Babine Lake, the largest sockeye producing system in Canada, members are now spread across both rural and urban communities.

Known as the four-clan nation, the Nadut'en speaking Babine people are born in to the Bear, Caribou, Frog, and Beaver clans. Indigenous governance arises from the authority of the hereditary chiefs of the four matrilineal clans with government-recognized political authority arising from the Chief and Council electoral system and the Indian Act (Fiske, Newell & George 2001). Currently, the four LBN clans have over 120 hereditary chiefs who continue to play an important role in LBN political and cultural affairs (Firelight 2014). According to Fiske, Newell & George, hereditary chiefs exercise their power through feasting ceremonies known as the potlatch by outsiders, or as the *Bahl'at* by members (2001:72). Customary law is rooted in the *Bahl'at* system, which were originally held to end warfare, manage the lands, waters and fish, and foster social continuity and harmony (Patrick 2009). With the outlawing of the potlatch by the Canadian government in 1885, LBN began to experience a loss of social control and

cultural continuity inherent in the *Bahl'at* system (Fiske and Patrick 2000). The loss of continuity was further exacerbated by the Canadian residential school system. Between 1930 and 1976, Babine children and youth were forcibly removed from their families and taken to the Lejac Indian residential school where many were starved, abused, and sexually violated (Firelight 2014).

Members cite the legal subjugation of the *Bahl'at* and residential schools as transitional moments that effected the Nation's ability to manage colonial oppression and dispossession through resource extraction (Fiske and Patrick 2000). Consequently, LBN's history has been marked by shifting dependence on resource-based economies and projects including fur trading, logging, mining and most recently, liquid natural gas (LNG) extraction. At present, men and women rely on semi and non-skilled seasonal work provided by mining and LNG proponents (Firelight 2014). Community members have had to suffer the consequences of boom-and-bust industry cycles. The LBN Natural Resource Department is currently responsible for overseeing and managing the positive and negative impacts related to mining, forestry, LNG, and so on.

- **The Prince Rupert Gas Transmission Pipeline Project (PRGT)**

PRGT, a subsidiary of TransCanada Pipelines Ltd., has proposed the construction and operation of a 900-kilometre LNG pipeline from the district of Hudson's Hope in northeastern BC to Port Edward on the Pacific coast (PRGT 2013:1). Valued at $5 billion dollars, the project is estimated to generate 8,250 person-years of direct employment and, during the forty years of operations, twenty-three full-time jobs. The Project was officially announced in January 2013, with the project description submitted to the BCEAO in May 2013 (PRGT 2013:1). The Project requires the construction of temporary infrastructure, such as access roads, stockpile sites and construction camps (PRGT 2013:13). Operations are set to begin in 2018, with the construction of ancillary infrastructure commencing in early 2015, to mid 2017 (PRGT 2013:14). In the Project description, PRGT outlines their commitment to engagement with the 20 affected Indigenous groups, including Lake Babine Nation.

While the project will impact multiple First Nation communities, 140km of the proposed pipeline runs through LBN traditional territory. Furthermore, PRGT has identified the need to construct thirty-two ancillary sites, five of which will be within LBN territory. The site that is most relevant to this research and a significant concern to the LBN community is construction camp 119. The camp, expected to house

temporary workforce of nearly one thousand people, is to be located approximately 2km north of Fort Babine, an isolated community of approximately one-hundred people. According to the socioeconomic impact study conducted by Ginger Gibson, the Firelight Group and LBN, "without careful mitigation, the proposed location of Camp 119, and its short-term nature, is considered likely to result in social impacts on Fort Babine families including increased crime, prostitution, addictions, disparity, and other social challenges" (2014:38). Though PRGT is committed to continued consultation, Firelight has suggested that consultation cannot replace reliable and effective mitigations (2014:64). The main security concerns expressed by LBN members include the increased risk of sexual assault against Indigenous women, an increased incidence of pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, domestic violence, and sexual exploitation.[3]

Negotiations between LBN and PRGT began in late 2013 when LBN created their LNG Working Group to manage the responsibilities associated with negotiating project approval and assessment processes. To begin the environmental assessment process, LBN signed a letter of agreement with PRGT and were provided with funding to hire experts to assist with data collection, traditional use studies, and socio-economic studies (Patrick 2015:13). On behalf of LBN, The Firelight Group collected relevant traditional use data through interviews, focus groups and land-use mapping. As Betty Patrick describes in her overview of the PRGT negotiation process, "the environmental assessment process took a major part of the summer when the Provincial Working Group for the EAO met for three consecutive weeks in Prince George and Prince Rupert, where LBN and their experts had to go through the application and address issues" (LBN 2015a:14).

The EAO completed their assessment in late October 2014 and gave their certification in mid-November 2014. PRGT received the certification, along with 45 conditions, particularly pertinent was the condition to "develop and implement a social and economic effects management plan to ensure strong engagement with local governments to minimize effects on community infrastructure and services" (BCEAO Factsheet 2014). By early 2015, the Babine LNG working group had successfully negotiated a pipeline benefit agreement with the province of BC. A news release by the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations

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[3] The negative social impacts of construction camps and temporary workforce populations have been outlined in detail in Gibson et. al. (2017), Amnesty International's *Out of Sight, Out of Mind* report (2016), *Ten Steps Ahead* by Shandro et. al. (2014) and the National Aboriginal Health Organization report (2008).

and Reconciliation in May 2015, outlined the financial details of the agreement, which also includes commitments to local environmental stewardship program funding, training initiatives, and economic development (LBN AGM 2015:54). LBN Chief Wilf Adam stated that "this project meets Lake Babine Nation's conditions for consent: it can be built in a way that is safe for our territory and resources; it has been developed and will be built with our meaningful involvement" (Hill 2015). Despite the approvals and agreements, the Firelight Socio-Economic study revealed that LBN members' primary concerns related to the construction camps, "including in-migration of primarily young, male, itinerant workers and increased pressures on already scarce social and health care resources" (2014:36) had not been adequately addressed.

It was at this point that I met with Betty, Verna, and Ginger for the first time in Vancouver, BC. With a signed Impact and Benefit Agreement,[4] Betty and Verna entered in to the next phase of negotiation. As Betty said to me at our first meeting, "now, it's a waiting game, it will all depend on the economy, and what we choose to do with the time we have." Cognizant of the fact that negotiations do not only happen around the negotiation table, but take place on the land and in the community as well, Betty and Verna began to zero-in on their core concerns – the safety and well-being of their daughters and granddaughters. While land title and governance are a key concern to LBN and central to their ability to exercise their rights, negotiate with developers, and claims to self-determination, Patrick argues that Babine women are also concerned with and "troubled by the ramifications of family tension, domestic violence and sexual abuse" (2000:45) in their communities.

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[4] An Impact and Benefit Agreement is a contract made between a community and a company that provides Aboriginal consent or support for a project to proceed. For more information see Gibson and O'Faircheallaigh 2015

Section I: Silence in the Boardroom

I first met Betty and Verna on October 1st, 2015 when I was invited to be a note-taker at a negotiation meeting between the Natural Resource Development office of Lake Babine Nation and PRGT staff. I was attending the meeting with Dr. Ginger Gibson, Director at the Firelight Group.[5] Having worked with Ginger at the Firelight Group, I expressed my interest in learning more about the social impacts of resource projects on Indigenous women and children. Ginger knew that I was about to start my masters in anthropology at UBC, and invited me to meet with Betty and Verna to discuss the possibility of a research project in cooperation with them.

When I walked into the Firelight office, Ginger was set-up in a small room, papers sprawled across the table. She explained to me that she had conveyed to Betty and Verna my interest in learning more about community-based research processes, and how the social and economic impacts of resource extraction on Indigenous communities are determined and mitigated. Having agreed to let me attend and take notes, I made tea and awaited their arrival as Ginger prepped her meeting notes. Betty and Verna arrived soon after, and we were quickly knee-deep in meeting preparations. I followed the conversation as best I could, as the world of socio-economic negotiations was new to me. They created a draft agenda, wrote their key messages for the day in bullet points, and determined how best to lay out their concerns to the PRGT staff. As we discussed the possibility of sketching diagrams on to flip chart paper, Verna presented a plan. She had a story that she wanted to share with us, and again later with the negotiation team. She cleared her throat, wrung her hands, and began.

Verna explained that this story was not only hers, but her daughters, her daughters' friends', and their community's. She had been given permission to share this story; it was important so that people could understand what is at stake, and to understand with whose safety we are gambling when considering resource development and ancillary facilities like construction camps and temporary worker populations within Indigenous traditional territories. Verna navigated the details of the story, walking us

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[5] Ginger serves as a Director to the Firelight research firm and provides services to Indigenous groups across Canada, often related to traditional knowledge, and environmental, socio-economic and cultural issues. I met Ginger while I was a research assistant at the Firelight Group. My work consisted of transcribing and coding community-based interviews for the research projects in which the Firelight Group was engaged. Through this work, I became familiar with the social and cultural impacts of various resource development projects on Indigenous communities.

through the scenes, the pain that followed, and its overall warning of the story: "this is not what we want for our children." As Verna explained, this story is not particularly unique or surprising to Indigenous communities. It is a story about sexual assault and vulnerability, about men who are outsiders, and of the resilience of a girl and her family. Verna said, "while this story makes us mad, it is not uncommon—I have many more stories like these, but this is the one I want to share today" (Field Notes, October 2015). We sat quietly for a moment. The research and statistics I had read regarding the increased risk of sexual assault, abuse, and domestic violence as a consequence of construction camps and temporary worker populations had been made flesh, given a name. She was a girl, a girl younger than me, the same age as Verna's daughter. This was the power of Verna's story. Verna and the team decided that she would open the meeting with PRGT with the story.

Before the meeting, the team and I shared lunch. During the hour that we spent eating our soups and salads, Betty described her community to me and some of the challenges facing the remote communities of Fort Babine and Tachet. She talked about the death of Elders and, consequently, of traditions and ceremonies. She talked about the loss of coming-of-age and puberty rites, and the correlated loss of self-worth and power experienced by people of all genders in her Nation. She explained that there are several rituals and rules that young women used to follow when they began menstruating, when they became pregnant, when they gave birth, and so on. She explained that these rituals and ceremonies were often about teaching a young woman about her power and strength, her body, and her role in the community. Without these rituals and ceremonies, much of this knowledge was no longer being transmitted inter-generationally. For Betty, a key concern was the fact that Elders are dying, taking many of their stories with them, and that the communities are suffering for it. Betty said, "I want our community to be strong, long before these camps come in. We need to be ready for them, and we're not." For her, the negotiation process with PRGT is an opportunity to secure resources and funds that can be mobilized to revitalize traditions and build community-cohesion, on their own terms. Verna's story was central to this cause, as it concretized the social impacts that they fear most – sexual violence, specifically rape. Verna's story remained with us through this lunchtime banter, finding voice again in the conference room later that day.

The negotiation meeting began at 2:00pm and was chaired by a young white man in thick-rimmed glasses. He was one of five other men present, and I was one of four women present. The teams sat on opposite sides of a round table, a conference phone in the middle that hosted up to three more male voices from far-away places. Verna and Betty are seasoned politicians and veteran negotiators. They know these men well; they know these rooms, and these proceedings. In a blue and white conference room, surrounded by men in blue and white suits, I listened as the team of women presented their points and discussed their needs – the needs of their communities. One-by-one, following the pre-drafted and carefully structured agenda, the men in blue suits and white shirts listened, dragging their pens across sheets of paper, watching the women speak over the tops of their glasses. Once the business arising had been addressed, we moved on to new business. Verna shifted in her chair, gestured with her hand, and said, "I'd like to share a story that I feel is important." The story to be shared was not a numbered bullet point on the agenda, yet it would mark a distinct change to the negotiation.

Verna's voice trembled, flickering like a loose light bulb. We all sat still. She recounted the story of a young girl, a friend of her daughter, brutalized at the hands of a construction camp worker. She described the mundane nature of the day, the typical story of young girls playing at a park. The story mirrored so many like it, reported on the 6 o'clock news in disaffected tones: a native girl goes missing, it is likely that she will not be found. As the story goes, she was found, left to die but alive; raped, but alive. The story was one of horrific sexual violence, of intense pain and of ongoing familial and community suffering. "This is not what we want for our daughters," she said, "we need to work together at this table to make sure that this does not happen to anyone in our communities. We need to be aware of these things and prepare… [long pause] I have to ask you all here today, how many rapes is too many?" The question lingered, hanging in the air like ripe fruit ready to drop. A few of the men sat back in their chairs, as if creating space between them and the story. Complete silence.

Verna's face was damp with tears, and we waited. We waited for two minutes of crushing quiet. Then, the young man spoke, his voicing cut open the silence that had ballooned and enveloped the room. "We understand and we'd be happy to look in to these concerns, but for the most part, this kind of impact is indirect, and indirect impacts are beyond the scope of the Project" (Field Notes, October 2015). A long

pause followed. Betty and Verna gazed across the table, silent. The sound of swallowing was audible over the silence. Another man's voice: "This is important to us, none of us here want to see that happen."

The meeting continued for another fifteen or twenty minutes, each utterance easing the tension and mending the strange atmosphere that the silence had created. The play of silence and voice, speech and quiet, stayed with me over the coming weeks and months. I had both bared witness to and participated in the long silence. I noticed this same dynamic emerge and repeat itself throughout my fieldwork. I go back to this first instance to begin unpacking the binary relationship between silence and voice, to uncouple these terms and concepts to understand what happened in that conference room, and to analyze what an exploration of silence in the context of my own research might reveal.

My initial reaction to this awkward pause, the long silence, was to rationalize it. I assumed that I had witnessed a group of white men uncomfortably navigating words like *rape* and *assault*. I saw middle and upper income men digesting a story of gendered sexual violence against Indigenous women, and the violent disruption of a young girl's life. I saw six white men encounter a story about racial violence in the safety of a board room. In the silence, I heard the negotiation gears turning, the consideration of 'politically correct' phrases, casually sympathetic yet business oriented and professional responses. But silence. In my preliminary reflections as recorded in field notes, I saw Verna as an empowered Indigenous woman who had broken the silence about the sexual violence that is characteristic of the clash between construction camp culture and Indigenous women's lives (Eckford and Wagg 2014; Northern Health 2012; Shandro et al. 2014). In *breaking the silence*, she created tension. The meeting provided her with a platform to voice her knowledge and effect change at the level of industry negotiation. She had voice, and thus agency. She breached the silence; the long pause at the table only emphasized the need to speak-out. Representatives from industry felt uncomfortable about these issues, but they were forced to listen to the realities of communities they are mandated to work with. Such rationalization was based on assumptions and my own initial biases, rather than through engaged research with the men at the table. Later I learned that some of the men present felt deeply implicated in and moved by Verna's plight. As such, I sought to critically reflect on the assumptions and categories that led me to such an analysis.

Verna's speech act was no doubt powerful and brave. But, my interpretation of her act of *speaking out*—of *bringing voice to* the issue of sexual violence against Indigenous women—is rooted in a binary that has been mobilized in numerous disciplines, including feminist theory and anthropology. Arguably, the concept of *voice* lies at the heart of many anthropological endeavors. Arjun Appadurai states, "much fieldwork is organized talk, and the ethnographic text is the more or less creative imposition of order on the many conversations that lie at the heart of fieldwork" (1988:16). As a series of interviews, conversations, and shared stories, the ethnographic process is largely predicated upon the presumption that speech acts express one's subjectivity (Jackson 2012:1000). Jackson argues that talk "is the way in which interests are defined, defended and demanded," such that speech and voice are adopted as universal standards for expressing and measuring agency (Jackson 2012:1001).

For Amanda Weidman (2014:38), "voice is a crucial site where the realms of the cultural and sociopolitical link to the level of the individual, a site where shared discourses and values, affect, and aesthetics are made manifest in and contested through embodied practice." Thus, through ethnographic encounters and talk, voice may be uncovered, recorded, and presented in the ethnographic text. Eurocentric assumptions, regularly adhered to by anthropologists, suggest that voice "expresses self and identity, thus relating voicing and speaking out to a kind of authentic self-representation and authorship" (ibid:39). The relationship between voice and agency that is so prevalent in Euro-Western academic traditions takes for granted an inherent linkage between voice and self-identity. Voice—activated and expressed through speech acts and talk—becomes the vehicle through which subjects activate and express the 'truths' of an interiorized and rational self (ibid). For anthropologists working in colonial contexts, ethnography and other 'tools of anthropology' were mobilized to capture the voice of the colonized in order 'to speak of and speak for' the colonial subjects in a disciplinary, possessive manner" (Simpson 2007:67).

Academics engaged in criticisms of Anthropology and the 'crisis of representation' in the 1980s and 1990s were wary of the ethnographic project as a process of scientific representation and its ability to accurately represent and 'speak for' the populations being studied. Scholars such as Clifford (1986) and Marcus and Fischer (1989), linked the process of ethnography to power, especially colonialism, and other forms of dominance. Their work built on earlier scholarship that exposed the discipline's entanglement

with imperialism (Asad 1973). In the 1980s, scholars from outside of the discipline such as Gayatri Spivak (1988) and Edward Said (1989) launched important critiques of representation as a form of dominance at the core of anthropological practice. As Weidman discusses, anthropological interest shifted from a preoccupation with documenting "the wholeness and coherence of cultural systems toward issues of power and representation" (2014:43).

The crisis of representation revealed not only the entrenched assumptions about voice but the importance of exploring who is speaking for whom, to whom, and how voice is mobilized within specific arenas. In good part influenced by feminist critiques, anthropologists theorized the effects of power and the possibilities for research participants—through the ethnographic encounter and text—to 'speak back' to those structures of power. With the turn to relations of power and domination came attention to silence, framed as the absence of voice. As Carol Kidron argues, ethnography and the documentation of voices has taken on a moral and political mission, as anthropologists seek to "liberate trauma victims from the 'shadow of silence'" (Waterston and Rylko-Bauer in Kidron 2009:8) and "talk back to power" (Russo 2013:35). The binary linking of voice/silence with agency/oppression suggests that for a marginalized population who is silenced to gain power, they must leverage and activate voice "to resist and transform the conditions of their oppression" (Rowe and Malhorta 2013:1). To 'break the silence' on women's issues has been touted as a practical and theoretical imperative among many feminist scholars (ibid.). An important development within anthropology was the introduction of oral history as a means for documenting women's representations of their own realities, and telling their stories on their own terms (Gluck and Patai 1991)

There is a strong precedent for critically examining voice, authenticity, and representation within the discipline of anthropology. The work of anthropologists like Michel-Rolph Trouillot and Julie Cruikshank have inspired a generation of anthropologists to consider the homogenizing and silencing function of anthropology and history as a monolithic and objective representation of human experience. In his work on history and silence, Haitian anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995) explored the silences inherent to the production of history, such that marginalized voices are erased and excluded from grand historical narratives. In his work, he studied silences to reveal "the differential power of various groups of agents in producing history" (1997:38), and to fill those silences with oral histories and personal

narratives. In *Life Lived Like a Story* (1991) and *The Social Life of Stories* (1998), Julie Cruikshank explores the emergence of orally narrated life stories as a means of navigating the issues of representation and authenticity. While oral histories were traditionally used in anthropology to "breathe life into academic writing" (Cruikshank 1991:1) and supplement ethnographic description, more recent engagement with oral histories reflects ongoing collaboration between interviewee and interviewer that begins by "taking seriously what people say about their lives" (ibid.). By understanding the stories of the Indigenous women who she worked with as knowledge in and of itself, and not as evidence that either supports or contradicts western ideology and science, Cruikshank presents oral histories as contextual, contradictory, and complex. Her work on oral histories and life history promotes a decentering of the researcher in a collaborative effort to record stories and voices as nuanced, complicated, and polyphonic. While much scholarly attention has been paid to power and representation in anthropology and feminist practice, voice remains a salient category particularly due to its ongoing association with anticolonial nationalist movements and the emergence of new democracies, human rights discourses, and the rise of Indigenous movements (Weidman 2014:38).

In the blue and white boardroom, I was moved by Verna's courage and her ability to 'speak up' and 'break the silence' about violence against Indigenous women. I equated her actions with agency and empowerment. My reaction was rooted in the basic assumptions of the binary. I took for granted the nature and form of voice and silence. Like many feminist anthropologists before me, I held up the binary and valorized Verna's voice without critically examining the context within which she spoke, and the structure of the silence that followed. In so doing, I also engaged in the act of silencing. In equating Verna's speech act with liberation, I presumed the opposite – that those who do not speak lack agency, inadvertently reinscribing the very power hierarchies that feminist anthropology seeks to probe and dismantle (Russo 2013). Such an analysis denies the rich history of Indigenous women resisting and shedding light on the issue of sexual violence. As Indigenous scholar Sarah Hunt stated in her presentation *Decolonizing the Roots of Rape culture* (2016b)*,* "my relations before me have carried this weight since long before academics or feminists recognized that this was an issue worthy of writing or talking about and we need to honor this legacy."

Verna's story and her decision to share that story within the context of the negotiations with PRGT bring in to relief the intellectual, emotional, and physical labour of Indigenous women who have always understood sexual violence as intimately and necessarily related to the colonial project and to resource extraction (WEA-NYSHN 2016; Smith 2005; Million 2009; Simpson 2014). Following Hunt, Verna's speech act belongs to a long tradition of "everyday actions, beliefs and attitudes of Indigenous people who are already, constantly pushing back against sexual violence and the many manifestations of rape culture which we have been resisting since colonialism began" (October 2016). For Indigenous scholars, activists, and allies such as Hunt, Simpson (2014), and Smith (2005), the rape and violence committed against the bodies of Indigenous women is mirrored by the destruction of Indigenous land and the displacement of Indigenous peoples. "Sexual violence is an instrument of empire and colonization, not merely a symptom of a dysfunctional community" (Bubar 2014:528). Dian Million explores how gender-based violence has been indispensable to the subjugation of colonized peoples and the construction of hierarchical patriarchy in "indian Canada" because "rape interrupts and dissolves the ontological presence of person and community, their desire to be, to go on, to endure, to have integrity" (2013:38). For Lake Babine Nation members, violence against Indigenous women is also consequence "of internalizing colonial oppression" (Fiske 2000:188) and, "of the stresses of poverty, racism, and loss of cultural values (Fiske 2000:23). What might be revealed by theorizing silence in a way that considers a history of Indigenous women's resistance and the framing of sexual violence as "just one manifestation of the continuum of violence wrought by settler colonialism" (Hunt 2016)?

I turn to the work of anthropologists and others who explore the creative possibility of silence as a productive, meaningful, and creative force. In terms of troubling the binary and understanding silence as potentially positive, if not a politically charged and highly tactical strategy, Keating (2013:35) has distinguished between different forms of silence including silent refusal, silent witness, and deliberative silence. In outlining these distinct kinds of silence, Keating seeks to untangle the relationship between power and silence, and explore the dynamics at play. To uncouple this binary relationship, we might first reverse the binary and ask, *who is silent*? If Verna's speech act belongs to a deep genealogy of speech acts against violence, then who is silent in this encounter? Who bears the burden of *speaking up*? As Mazzei asks, what are the silences "about whiteness, racism, homophobia, or sexism, for example, that

are not spoken with words, but are spoken between words" (2007:39). I suggest that silence be approached as a creative act of resistance in the face discursive strategies that seek to "colonize talk" (Baurain 2011:95) and deflect responsibility.

While I was not able to ask the men at the table to reflect on Verna's story, the long pause that followed, and the phrase that interrupted the silence, I was able have this conversation with Verna. Her response was simple enough: "we're used to that kind of thing. And I don't think it (the long pause) was a bad thing." To take the silence as purposeful and creative is to understand "periods of silence as integral parts of speaking strategies" (Gomes and Paulo 2008:39). In the boardroom, Verna has effectively mobilized both voice and silence to her own ends. The silence that follows the story is instructive and the grounds from which new understanding can be fostered. It is a conscious silence, a pause in suspension, left to linger. This interpretation shifts the focus from those framed as marginalized and silent, to those who purport to be listening – in this case, the PRGT negotiation team. In this sense, silence can be explored as deeply relational, and as an experience shared between differently located actors. Malhorta and Rowe (2013:1-2) suggest that the simplistic binary formulation of 'voiceless' places the burden of social change "upon those least empowered to intervene in the conditions of their oppression." The burden of breaking the silence is on Verna, who like many other Indigenous women is motivated by a profound "desire to heal families, nations, and the earth" (Million 2013:25). Indigenous women like Betty and Verna present a threat to the Canadian governments' "single-minded obsession with drilling, mining, and fracking" and "insatiable vision" of resource development (Klein 2014). As Klein (2014) argues, the government has little motivation to strengthen the incentive to "heal and strengthen the very people that it sees as its greatest obstacle." Verna's response exposes the burden that is disproportionately borne by Indigenous women to decolonize, to teach settlers about the history and ongoing impacts of colonialism, and to resist the forces and structures that continue to produce suffering and insecurity in their lives and communities.

Malhorta and Rowe (2013:2) propose that we might focus our critical lens on those who are in a position to listen, hear, and respond to that which is being communicated to them through modes of expression that are often either framed or interpreted as silence. The silence being broken was not the silence of Indigenous women on the topic of sexual violence. The silence in the boardroom sheds light on

the silences produced by colonialism and whiteness, where gender-based sexual violence against Indigenous people is framed as distinct and separate from historical and ongoing settler colonialism where the context of resource extraction has no bearing on the bodies and safety of Indigenous women. Despite widely circulated statistics in media, and numerous government and public reports (Czyzewsky et al. 2014; Amnesty International 2016; Gibson et al. 2017), stories such as Verna's remain shocking and confounding to outsiders. Verna's response is telling, and for her, the relationship between the environmental and social impacts of a LNG development—that include sexual violence, are explicit. The onus is on Verna and women like her to bring clarity to the linkage between the violence against land and violence on their bodies to speak up and tell their story.

In her work on silence and whiteness in the research process, Mazzei (2003) explores how silence can be reduced simply to 'that which is not said', but can also be located in how people tend to respond to questions, how they rephrase and navigate questions that implicate race and gender, and what they choose not to explore in conversations. In the boardroom, the young man responded by framing rape as 'beyond the scope' of a resource extraction project and the responsibilities of the company in terms of mitigation. In doing so, Verna's experiences were distinctly unrecognizable, belonging to a realm outside of the boardroom, outside of what is recognized as direct impacts of resource development within LBN's traditional territory. His speech served to deflect Verna's story, and to evade the task of coming to know his own implicit involvement in ongoing colonial violence.

The experiences of these women are rendered unintelligible, unrecognizable as 'direct' impacts, such that the 'land question' remains more prevalent and separate from 'the woman question' (Maracle 1996:16). Through her speech act in the board room, Verna brings in to conversation the 'woman question' and the 'land question' as irreducible to discrete social problems. In doing so, Verna made settler-colonialism and whiteness visible in her speech act—and through her silence. By mobilizing silence, Verna destabilized the *business as usual* discourses that normalize violence against Indigenous women as a consequence of internal dysfunction and violent Indigenous men. Instead, violence was linked to issues of resource extraction, displacement, and community disruption. In some ways, Verna said as much in her pause as she did in her speech. Mazzei argues that the silences that racial and gendered discomfort sometimes produce demonstrate a failure to understand whiteness as a racial

category, where our whiteness serves as a veil to "mask what we choose not to see, or wish not to see, for to see is sometimes unbearable" (2003a:30), such as ongoing settler colonial violence through contemporary institutions. These silences, grounded in white privilege, produce a kind of social blindness to historical and political violence that is perpetuated through contemporary economic development efforts. Similarly, as a scholar of indigeneity, colonialism and whiteness, Moreton-Robinson explains that not all representations are equal within whiteness's 'regime of power,' such that:

> Some are deemed truthful while others are classified fictitious, some are contested while others form part of our commonsense taken-for-granted knowledge of the world. Imbued with a power that normalises their existence, these latter representations are invisible, unnamed and unmarked. It is the apparent transparency of these normative representations that strategically enables differentiation and othering (2004:76-77)

In his initial response, the young man denied the lived experience of sexual violence as a consequence of resource development and the actions of temporary male workers. In that moment, Verna extended to him a prolonged silence, a contemplative and shared silence, in which those present at the conference table could consider the 'taken-for-granted' and otherwise 'invisible' knowledge. In his work on silence and history, Gerald Sider suggests that silences are situated and contextual, that some experiences deemed as 'silences' may be "particularly silent precisely to us" (Sider and Smith 1997:16)— the non-Indigenous meeting attendees, the non-women, the non-victim-survivors. The silence that followed was the silence of a dominant group, a dominant society. By introducing that silence to the room, Verna made our whiteness audible, such that the silence was bound "within a myopia… that resisted seeing oneself as being seen" (Mazzei 2007:76). We inhabited the silence "full of words and sentiment" together (Johnson 2013:60). Silence was actively mobilized as a tool of negotiation that provides those who inhabit it the possibility to become aware of one's social location, one's position, and thus to *know differently*.

While this analysis does not entail a complete dismantling of the voice/silence binary, it does shift the focus towards those in positions of power, and asks us as researchers to consider *who* has been silent. To position Betty and Verna as silent is to deny a legacy of resistance to colonial and gender-based violence in LBN, obfuscating the intellectual and practical success and weight of their work. Framing rape as beyond the scope of a resource project denies the lived experience of Indigenous women in the Canadian resource development context and perpetuates the notion that sexual violence is

a domestic and reserve issue, as opposed to a central feature of the "on-going dispossession, occupation and erasure" of Indigenous peoples (Simpson 2014). By understanding silence as meaningful and useful, we can understand how silence can be mobilized consciously to produce spaces for alliance building across power lines. The challenge then for those in positions of authority is to acknowledge both their implicit and explicit silences on racialized and gendered sexual violence, and improve their ability to listen and hear those who bear the burden of resistance.

Section II: The C3 Workshop

On the first day of the C3: Communities and Construction Camp workshop, Betty addressed a crowd of 35 Indigenous women:

> We have always been excellent crisis managers; we respond to crises very well. But we need to work on prevention so that we can protect our grandchildren. A work camp is coming in a few kilometers from our community, and we need to prevent this kind of violence from happening to our community members. There are gaps in the management plans that do not address our most vulnerable. …this is right at our doorstep, so let's get started. Our focus is not on impacts today, but on strategies so that we can push the burden back on ministries and industry. (Field Notes, June 2016)

On June 22nd and 23rd, Lake Babine Nation, in collaboration with Nak'azdli Whu'ten and the Firelight Group, invited Indigenous women from across British Columbia to attend a two-day workshop in Prince George. The goal of the workshop was to produce a set of mitigations, programs, and policies that might limit the potential negative impacts of construction camps on co-located communities, particularly those impacts related to sexual violence. The workshop was made possible through the support and resources provided by Ginger Gibson and the Firelight Group, as well as the Ministry of Oil and Gas. We opened day one of the workshop with a welcome by Lheidli T'enneh, opening prayers, a smudge, and presentations by Betty Patrick, Ginger Gibson, and Indigenous women leaders from the region. Ginger was passionate and emotive as she discussed the context of her research and her dedication to Betty and Verna's cause. For Verna Power, the C3 was an opportunity for women to come together and discuss what "can't always be talked about in community, let alone in a public space" (Field Notes, June 2016). Verna continued:

> If we brought up sex and assault growing up, we were told not to talk about it. It was a sin to talk about the body, the flesh. We learned this in residential schools. But it is no longer like this, it is no longer a sin to express that your boundaries have been crossed. We were told to be quiet, our parents and grandparents too, in those residential schools. Why are we doing this? It's because industry doesn't believe that sexual assault is happening. They don't want to believe that their employees are doing these things, so they tell us to 'prove it'. This stuff doesn't brush me right. This topic alone can rip us apart… we need to keep it real.

A cursory analysis of Verna's statement relies on the voice/silence binary and presumes a community of women silenced by their experiences of a coercive and gendered Christian education, with such experiences resulting in unspeakable personal trauma. Such an analysis is predicated on the assumption that silence is a pathological response to violence, with voice and the 'telling' of those violent experiences presented as inherently 'healing,' and as a community building opportunity. Verna's

statement brings in to question the role of historical systems and institutions that have impacted how women like her have understood their bodies and the violence committed against them. Her statement points to *sin* and *shame* as learned through those institutions, producing specific kinds of silences that are historically contingent. In a continued effort to trouble and decolonize the voice/silence binary: how might a consideration of the historical context within which certain silences emerge inform a theorization of silence that is situated and structural, as opposed to individual and pathological?

In their work on the relationships between violence, silence and suffering, Hastings and Simpson (2007) have explored how ethnographic works on conflict and violence have tended to focus on the 'hyper-individuated' and subjective experience of violence as a traumatic event. This work, in their view, presents individuals as detached from social relations, "locking them into a world that they frequently seem unable to communicate to others, and that others seem unable to 'share'" (Hastings and Simpson 2007:5). Similarly, in her work on testimony and the holocaust, Carol Kidron has explored how academics frame silence as the consequence of trauma, "the burial or repression of speech, resulting not from personal volition but rather from the unspeakable nature of an experience that is… beyond words, beyond narrative, and thus beyond representation" (2009:7). Consequently, Verna's statement about the difficulty of discussing sexual violence and rape could readily be classified as a kind of 'psycho-pathologized' process of avoidance and repression, where well-being is "contingent upon the liberation of voice" (Kidron 2009:6). Such a pathological reading of silence positions the women in the room at the C3 workshop as "traumatized victims" who simply require the space and opportunity to testify about their experiences of violence, to share their stories.

Trauma as a psychological state and the 'new condition of victimhood' began circulating in the mid-20th century, when it gained prominence as a legitimate psychiatric condition affecting both individuals and entire nations (Fassin and Rechtman 2009). In *Empire of Trauma*, Fassin and Retchman (2009) seek to denaturalize trauma as the normal psychological state of victims and explore the historical construction of 'trauma' since the Second World War and within the current 'humanitarian age.' Their analysis suggests that trauma can and has been mobilized for political ends, and that persons are not the "passive recipients of the label 'traumatized'" (2009:xi). The assumed correlation between violence, trauma, and victimhood can adversely affect those labeled as victims.

In her work with Indigenous girls on sexual violence, Métis scholar and trauma counselor Natalie Clark has suggested that "the current construction of trauma continues to create a colonial subject who requires intervention, support and saving," obfuscating the role of the state in perpetuating neo-colonial violence (2016a:2). Clark explains that trauma, as an individualized and medicalized state, has been framed as a mental health issue, resulting in state-funded and regulated programs and interventions that "further colonize and pathologize Indigenous children and youths' health and their bodies" (2016a:3). The result, for Clark, is a 'trauma industry' that contributes to a 'shock and awe' campaign which perpetuates "statistics of horror and shock" (ibid.) that are then circulated in the media and consumed by the public. The social response is to intervene at the level of the self and the interpersonal, as opposed to the political (McKinney 2007). The consequence of a pathological interpretation of silence undermines and neglects the economic, political, and social structures – the structural violence – that continues to infringe upon the rights of Indigenous women and communities.

In his seminal work on structural violence, Paul Farmer demonstrated the need to consider not only the individual experience of violence, but "the larger social matrix in which it is embedded to see how various large-scale social forces come to be translated into personal distress and disease" (1997:261). Like Farmer, the Indigenous women at the C3, were interested in exploring and mitigating the social forces that "crystalize into the sharp, hard surfaces of individual suffering" (1997:263). Locating and naming structural violence can be challenging, as its impacts are often "part of the routine grounds of everyday life and transformed into expressions of moral worth" (Scheper-Hughes 2004:4). In Lake Babine Nation for example, women participating in this research project described the sexual violence as "an ordinary condition of their lives… so common as to seem to be a normal phenomenon" (Fiske and Patrick 200:188). Kleinman and Kleinman warn against the Western process of rewriting social experiences and suffering related to poverty and conflict in to medical terms, where 'victims' are constructed as passive, as one "who cannot represent himself, who must be represented… then he becomes a patient" (1997:10). In short, one who has suffered political, structural, and economic violence becomes one who is sick.

As traumatized victims, Indigenous women are continuously framed as sick, as in need of help, and as inherently vulnerable and susceptible to violence. This process undermines their role as anti-violence experts and activists, as well as their capacity to contribute to intervention strategies and

resistance. Vulnerability itself becomes naturalized through this process as intrinsic to the population in question, rather than a historically and socially produced status through the ongoing process of colonization (Green 2011:25). Colonialism as the source of vulnerability is obscured. Consequently, it was not the pathological and highly traumatic nature of rape and sexual violence that was explored by the women at the C3, but instead, the structures that limit and curtail how they can talk about violence, seek out support services, and protect themselves and their families. This is not to undermine the potentially damaging and horribly disruptive effects of sexual violence, but to emphasize the capacity of survivors to contribute and even thrive despite the trauma they bear.

As the coordinators of the workshop, Betty and Verna were tasked with the challenge of navigating a topic that has frequently been labeled as 'taboo' and 'off-limits' by fellow community members. Attendance on day one of the workshop was by invitation only to ensure that those women present felt safe and supported as they discussed, disclosed, and deliberated on sexual violence and construction camps. Women representing communities already impacted by construction camps recounted their experiences with the influx of temporary workers from the south in to their territories, and the increased risks of sexual assault, rape, trafficking, pregnancy, STIs and drug use that are associated with the establishment of construction camps (see Gibson et al. 2017; Shandro et. al. 2014; Sweet 2014a). A woman who works with the Highway of Tears Initiative disclosed her experience of sexual violence at the hands of a camp worker. Her story was accented with long pauses, moments when the conviction in the room seemed to deepen. Solutions and viewpoints were collected and grouped by the women into categories such as health, employment, transportation, and cultural continuity. In the afternoon, we split up in to groups and focused on developing programs and policies that might mitigate the negative impacts, based on those categories. I spent the afternoon with the health group. Here, we talked about the need for culturally-appropriate health care services, free child-care for women employed at the camp, on-reserve sexual health services, and funding for drug and alcohol prevention programs in-community. A key concern for many at the table was that while they may feel healthy now, camp work might render them unwell – be it the result of shift work, or as a consequence of a dramatic increase in income that might result in unhealthy spending, or domestic conflict. The risks requiring mitigation were broad ranging and diverse. Repeatedly, the conversation circled back to sexual health and the safety of

women in camps and in community. When asked to discuss how we might go about mitigating the risk of increased STIs and pregnancies among community members, one woman who I call Jody said:

> Before we go in to that, can I just ask: if a woman is, you know… attacked—what is she supposed to do? We can talk about STIs and that, but I think, like she said, we need to talk about that first. Who do you even report it to? The boss of the guy who did it? The police? How do we deal with it on reserve? I wouldn't trust any of those guys anyways. … I can't call the police, and I won't. Maybe if someone had training who was on the reserve, you know?

While the women around the table nodded in agreement, I inquired: "What do you mean when you say you can't call the police?" The woman explained to me that there is no trust between her community and the RCMP, that in her community they have a special name for the RCMP because they're the ones who take their children away. In this statement, I can identify a deliberate and conscious silence (that of not calling the police) mobilized by a woman who is cognizant of the relationships of power in which she lives. Jody's silence reflects her own relationship with structures and institutions that have silenced and oppressed her in complex ways. This is not to entrench a voice/silence binary, but instead to consider the ways in which structures can incite or require conscious and even resistant silence. In short, does theorizing silence provide us with space and opportunity to shift towards a "mode of inquiry that turns the anthropologist's critical analytical lens outward, to history and to power" (Fernando 2014:238).

As Yep and Shimanoff argue, silence is neither exclusively oppressive nor liberatory, but both/neither "depending on the discursive, material, historical, and geopolitical contexts in which it is deployed" (2013:142). This woman's silence and speech regarding the RCMP and the removal of children from communities is grounded in the context of historical and neo-colonialism, the realities of the 'sixties scoop', and the current statistics that suggest that there is a disproportionate number of Indigenous children and youth in foster care in Canada. According to a report published in 2003, 40% of the 76,000 children and youth placed in out-of- home care in Canada are Indigenous (Farris-Manning and Zandstra 2003). Cindy Blackstock, a Gitxsan social worker and advocate for Indigenous youth-in-care, estimates that there may be as many as three times more Indigenous children in the care of child welfare authorities now than were placed in residential schools at the height of those operations in the 1940s (2003). In addition, the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry Child Welfare Initiative (2001) stated that some provinces claim that over 80% of children in care are Indigenous. These numbers are startling when we consider the fact that only five percent of Canadian children are Indigenous (Trocmé et.al. 2004:578). As Trocmé et. al.

argue, the disproportionate level of Indigenous children in care must be considered contextually, and this means considering "the history of assimilationist education and child welfare policies in Canada" (2004:578). As the women around the table explained to me, they feel that the removal of their children is part of the ongoing colonial project. While children are removed because their living situations are deemed to be unsafe, the *Too Many Victims* report released in 2016 by the BC representative for children and youth revealed that between 2011 and 2014, 121 youth-in-care reported being the victims of sexualized violence. Of the 121 children and youth, 74 (61%) were Indigenous girls. By understanding the violence as structural, I can begin to understand the silence as structural as well.

Jody's statement about not disclosing violence because of the structural factors and institutions that wield authority to remove children from their families, gives a weight to the form and function of her own silence. By exploring institutional and structural factors, we can observe how "the conditions of silence and silence as a condition arise together" (Perez 2013:203). Jane Parpart suggests that silence may be used as a resistive strategy and as a political tool for security and survival (2010:17). Here, silence reflects a necessity within the context of the current Canadian foster care system and its impact on the lives of Indigenous families. As Parpart states, an emphasis on 'speaking truth' assumes that those who speak will be "protected by international and national institutions devoted to democracy, freedom of speech, and human rights" (2010:15). However, the Indigenous youth-in-care example suggests that speaking out may in fact result in devastation. Consequently, Judy's silence mirrors and brings to light a more nuanced silence, through which communities negotiate violence locally, relying on internal strategies of retribution and justice (Parpart 2010:21). If she were to call the police, her story could be used as justification for the removal of her children. But, by enacting silence, this woman can preserve her family on her own terms, and resist the institutions that silence them in the first place, such as the settler-colonial Canadian state. Overall, this kind of analysis points to the role of the state, institutions, and public discourses in upholding, inciting, and maintaining specific kinds of silences to their benefit (Bhattacharya 2009). As such, structural silences might be addressed by silence at a different scale, the personal or local, "deployed as a tool to resist the very discourses that imposed the silence in the first place" (Bhattacharya 2009:360).

Foster care, the Indian Act, Bill C-31, the RCMP, police brutality, residential schools, the judicial system, the prison system, the service sector: these are just a few of the structures and institutions that were named and discussed on day one of the C3 workshop. Each one of these institutions could be explored in detail as I have done above in the case of youth-in-care. Leanne Simpson (2014) has explored in depth the role of residential schools in the destruction and reconstruction of sexuality and gender that she states, produces gender based violence as a necessary part of heteropatriarchy and the 'capitalist dream.' In her doctoral thesis titled: *Warrior Women*, Robyn Sanderson Bourgeois (2014) outlined at length the role of the Indian Act and Bill C-31 in the continued oppression of and violence against Indigenous women. Indigenous woman scholars and activists have written about and against these structures for decades. The women in the hotel conference room were profoundly aware and conscious of the structures and relationships of power within which they live. They argued that institutions like the RCMP, the service sector, and so on are tangled in the webs of colonialism, racism, and sexism. The confluence of these intersecting forms of oppression imparts an image of Indigenous women as "already and always the victims" (Field Notes, June 2016) to the public and to people working within those institutions to justify heightened state intervention 'for their own good.'

Throughout the first day of our meetings, women expressed how the colonial processes and institutions, such as those mentioned above, have made them feel like "bad mothers", "unqualified employees", "non-credible witnesses", "inadequate wives", and "unworthy women" (Field Notes, June 2016). For Lee Maracle, colonial processes deny Indigenous women personhood, reducing "whole people to a subhuman level" (1996:17). In Sherene Razack's view, sexism and racism frame Indigenous women as 'less than human' (2002), such that assault and death are treated as 'unexceptional' (Hunt 2016a). Moreover, in *Conquest* (2005) Andrea Smith has explored at length the ways in which colonizers have framed Indigenous bodies as polluted and sinful, "underserving of integrity and violable at all times" (2005:10). As the source and reproducers of a people and their culture, sexual violence is used as a tool of empire to destroy people, "as well as their sense of being a people" (Smith 2005:3). As such, as Weidman suggests, we need to explore when and why voice becomes a 'salient metaphor', and to consider what is at stake in it (Weidman 2014:38). If Indigenous women mobilize voice under these conditions, what is at risk? What kind of consequences do they incur? And "what forms of subjectivity,

identity, and public and political life are enabled…" through silencing and voicing (Weidman 2014:38)? As the C3 experience exemplified, not all kinds of disclosure or reporting serve the needs of the women present, but present risks and challenges. However, a space like the C3, designed and facilitated by and for Indigenous women, may provide a venue where certain kinds of disclosures, be they partial or shared in quiet voices, can have a powerful impact in the formulation of practical solutions and mitigations.

We stood together at the end of the day, reflecting on the work that had been done. A woman from Xeni Gwet'in First Nation performed a smudge for everyone in the room, the aroma of sage climbing to the ceiling. To end on a ceremonial note, two women suggested that we sing the Women's Warrior Song together. The weight of the silences and stories bore down heavily, but as the voices grew louder, positivity and enthusiasm took its place. As the room emptied, the shared stories stretched in to fill the corners of the room. The walls were plastered with poster board covered in words carrying the ideas and thoughts from the day. Decaling company vehicles, a no hitch-hiking policy, a 'wet' camp,[6] traditional food menus for camp workers, community hosted BBQs, cultural sensitivity training for workers, free child care, separate gendered dormitories, a private help-line for workers, female leadership at the camp, rape kit training and provision on the reserve, revitalization of puberty rites and rituals – just some of the proposed mitigations scrolled on to the sheets of paper. Day one was fruitful and challenging.

Day two of the C3 followed a different format, as Betty and Verna had invited provincial government representatives from several ministries, including the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, the BC Environmental Assessment Office, the Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Natural Gas Development. Additionally, they invited professionals from industry and shareholders including representatives from Summit Camps, TransCanada, and Domcor.[7] These guests were invited to enter the room at 10:00am. Prior to their entry, we spent an hour reflecting on the first day and preparing mentally and physically for the entrance of our guests. Once the two groups convened, Betty Patrick provided the welcome. Ginger spoke next, foregrounding our work in the important efforts of the Native Women's Association of Canada and the Sisters in Spirit campaign, the Walk4Justice initiative, Lorelei Williams'

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[6] A 'wet' camp is one where alcohol may be purchased and consumed within designated areas of the camp compound. 'Wet' camps may discourage workers from seeking out alcohol in nearby communities. For further discussion see Gibson et. al. 2017, page 21.

[7] Companies currently engaged in industrial development in the B.C Interior implicated in assessment and negotiation processes with the members of the Nations present at the workshop.

'Butterflies in Spirit' dance project, and the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council Highway of Tears Initiative, among many others. We introduced the recommendations outlined in many of these reports to the government representatives. Before we broke for lunch, an Indigenous woman with experience working in construction camps shared her experience of sexual violence at the hands of construction camp workers. She ended her story by saying: "I am more than this attack, we can prevent these attacks from happening, you here in this room have that power, use it."

With her call to action still ringing in our ears, we broke for lunch. We were all keen to start the afternoon session where representatives from each of the subgroups established on day one would present a summary of their group's findings and proposed mitigations. Melanie, a member of Nak'azdli Whut'en, opened the afternoon and set the tone for the presentations that would follow. She said:

> We are not here to attack industry or government. This is much bigger than that, this is about our survival, and our safety. There are five proposed pipelines right now, all of them will be traversing our territory in some way. …When we say we're worried about the higher burden on health services in our region, government and industry both say "prove it." When we say we're worried about sexual violence, you say "prove it." With Mt. Milligan, we saw our young mothers being evicted so that apartments could be renovated and rented out at a higher price. We saw an increase in STIs, and other health indicators shift for the worse…The government needs to fund and promote prevention across the region, not just based on those who have the capacity to ask. LNG development is the government's plan. We need rape crisis plans. Why is this on us to do when you're the one promoting these camps? How about you prove to us that your projects and camps won't hurt our women and children instead? There has been lot of anger, and this could get personal. We also know that talking about sexual violence can trigger people in the audience here today and in our communities. So, we need to be careful and caring, we need to speak gently and listen to each other. Our work is often done in isolation so we need to create a space for First Nations, government, and industry to work together to find solutions. We need to come together.

I present this quote to show the 'space' that was made by Melanie through her remarks. Here, Melanie acknowledged the systems and structures that have produced different kinds of silences. She acknowledged systems that have placed the onus of proof on to victims of assault, government plans that have ignored the aspirations of Indigenous peoples and their consent. Through her speech act, Melanie establishes the space within which the dialogue will take place. The decisions that Melanie and the C3 participants made on day one about which stories to share and how, and what to withhold and protect were part of a conscious process to change the terms of engagement with a public (government and industry) that has been implicated in the pathological trauma narratives explored above. As Weidman argues, the acts of silencing and voicing that these Indigenous women are engaged in are constituted in negotiation with "those who interpret, circulate, and reanimate them: by the communities of listeners,

publics, and public spaces in which they can resonate" (2014:45). On day one, the public was what Lauren Berlant calls an 'intimate public' or a grouping of people who come together based on a shared worldview or emotional knowledge "that they have derived from a broadly common historical experience," marked by a common lived and embodied experience (Berlant 2008:viii). Our goal on day two of the workshop was to engage in speech acts, both voicing and silencing, that would extend that intimate public, and include the representatives who had been invited to join. Melanie's remarks called on the public present within the room to resist anger, be caring, speak gently, and listen. In doing so, she called on industry and government to implicate themselves in the intimate public already achieved at the workshop.

While I was not able to formally interview any of the government and industry personnel who attended, feedback forms were circulated to participants and returned to the workshop team. A government representative wrote: "this was a special day, I am leaving with a heavy heart, but I am glad we were invited here to work on solutions." An Indigenous C3 participant said in their evaluation: "I appreciated creating awareness with government and industry at a very intimate level. We don't get these opportunities often." Both comments suggest that affective and intimate connection was made at the C3, at least for some of those present. In discussing the value of achieving intimate publics, Berlant says that the "tiny point of identification can open up a field of fantasy and de-isolation…" (2008:11). Identification comes from the shared desire for a 'better good life' felt by people "often in contradictory social positionings" (2008:270). The C3 participants, as an intimate public, integrated outsiders in to the affective atmosphere that they had established on their own terms: through negotiated and measured silences, calculated speech acts, and ceremony. As Weidman states voice and silence as speech acts are generative of publics insofar as they give rise "to new forms of collective identity, affect, and intimacy" (2014:44). This is not to over-determine the affective experience of industry and government representatives, but to honour the ways in which the Indigenous women in the room managed the silences incited by colonial processes and structures, and negotiated their lived experiences of sexual violence in the face of a public comprised of people implicated in such structures, either implicitly or explicitly.

A strength of day two was that Melanie, along with the other presenters, moved a community of listeners, an 'intimate public,' towards solution-seeking. Feedback on the workshop evaluation forms reiterated the importance of this strategy. The meeting was led by Indigenous women; held on their territory using their frameworks and concerns as the foundation for conversation; they navigated the acts of disclosure, stories, and the development of solutions and mitigations using ceremony and cultural awareness. While we acknowledged on day one that these women are not disclosing to the RCMP due to structural constraints framed by racism, they developed and facilitated a kind of controlled and partial disclosure that served their own ends, despite those structural barriers.

Indigenous women have always and will continue to establish spaces in which they voice their stories and disclose their experiences. Under structures that silence—structures of silence— Indigenous women know what to share and what not to share. Here, I understand silence as both partial and negotiated. As Hastings and Simpson (2007) argue, silence is rarely complete. In fact, like speech, silences are "necessarily partial accounts, shaped and constructed in a particular situational, biographical, institutional, cultural, historical, and interactional context" (Poland and Pederson 1998:294). In its partiality, silence marks moments of profound agency and restoration for those engaged in its negotiation. Furthermore, in the process of negotiation, women like Betty and Verna and the attendees of the C3 workshop may determine who to speak to, when, and under what conditions. While many of the women in the room may not have reported their experiences of assault, they have chosen specific elements of their stories to share, on both day one and day two of the workshop. In creating the C3 as a safe space managed by Indigenous women, they decided what to tell, and what not to tell, mobilizing both voice and silence in creative ways to navigate unequal power structures.

Section III: In Babine, With Babine

Though only 105km from Smithers, the drive to Fort Babine can take anywhere from forty-five minutes to two hours depending on who is driving, the state of one's tires, and the level of traffic on the primarily single lane dirt road. The Nilkitkwa forestry service road, known locally as the 4000 road, was constructed in the 1970s to support the booming forestry industry. It runs parallel to Lake Babine River— the longest natural lake entirely within British Columbia. This road, a part of the intricate network of forestry roads all over the industry-marred landscape, connects the deep woods to industry processing plants in small towns like Smithers. It is along this road, 5km from the Wit'at reserve (Fort Babine), that PRGT has proposed the construction of their 1000-person construction camp. In late July and August 2016, I had the opportunity to conduct fieldwork in Lake Babine Nation and participate in an internship organized by Ginger and Betty. In cooperation with Garaline, a young Indigenous woman and LBN member, I helped to create a community-based sexual violence preparedness plan. As interns, Garaline and I enjoyed the beauty of Babine territory together. In August, the air was thick with the plumes rising from family smokehouses in keeping with Wit'at's namesake, 'the place of making dry fish.' Red salmon belly hung in the rafters, slowly drying in to tender morsels while whole fish hung in the sun attracting flies and curious children. Members fished, gutted, dried, pickled, and packaged salmon by the thousands during the harvest season. Families picked, cleaned, boiled, and canned pounds of berries. It was during many of these activities that I came to know and spend time with the members of Lake Babine Nation.

Nation members frequently refer to Fort Babine as the heart of the Nation, and as the most traditional of its five communities. One LBN member who lives and works in Woyenne described Fort Babine as "the closest you can get to God." This woman, like many LBN members, visits Fort Babine in the summer where she reconnects with her relations. Families continue to make the long journey each summer from Vancouver, Chilliwack, Nanaimo, and Kelowna to make their fish and visit family and friends. Many speak fondly of Babine, referencing long summer nights and the nostalgia of childhood. "They didn't have WiFi there until about a year ago," one man told me, as he reflected on the 'quiet' that can be found in Fort Babine. As the most remote of the five communities that make-up Lake Babine Nation, Fort Babine is at the center of the Nation's resource disputes and negotiations. Consequently, Fort Babine residents are accustomed to visits from researchers, consultants, and professionals hailing

from the South. These experts take soil samples, collect survey data, and gather traditional knowledge. LBN members are veteran interviewees; however, their knowledge and narratives risk being "appropriated, interpreted, retold and sold" by 'experts' (Castillejo-Cuéllar 2005:172).

In our efforts to 'bring voice' and to 'break silence' about violence, researchers (like myself included) risk becoming engaged in an extractive industry that relies on the retelling of violent experiences that become commodities in the market for academic prestige (Castillejo-Cuéllar 2005:173). Furthermore, as Fiske and Patrick (2000:22) explore in *Cis Dideen Kat,* "no dialogue of equals is possible in a situation in which Babine women are primarily clients and rarely the service providers" of health care and social services. Babine women's experiences and aspirations are rarely considered, but are dominated by the discourses of so-called 'helping professions' such as psychology and social work.

The structural silences produced by colonialism and extractive contexts continue to limit how and where Indigenous women in the region disclose experiences of sexual violence and ways they access support and resources. Much of the 'data' presented below came from informal conversations with men and women while preparing meals, swimming in the river, and cleaning our freshly harvested huckleberries. Very few of the twelve formal interviews conducted were recorded in part because our hands were often covered in fish guts, but also as a reaction to the extractive quality of ongoing studies in Fort Babine. Women like Nancy, Helen, and Sharon welcomed me in to their homes and lives. It was during informal time spent with these women that I began to understand silence, in both the instructive and structural forms discussed previously, but also as a way of being in the world, as embodied practices and experiences that are felt and lived every day by Indigenous women.

I visited Nancy regularly during my two stays in Fort Babine. She invited me over for lunch or dinner when I was not occupied by interviews or fishing. Her house was often bursting with kids, loud chatter, and pop music. As a meeting point for kids in the community and having five children of her own, Nancy was often preoccupied with the tasks of preparing, serving, and tidying up meals. On a muggy Wednesday afternoon, Nancy and I sat in her kitchen and talked about my research and the construction camp. She stirred a pot of boiling blueberries as we spoke, the sweet aroma of macerated berries and sugar filling our nostrils. We discussed the unemployment rate in Babine and the desperate need for jobs,

especially for women. I asked Nancy about the kinds of programs and training that might be useful in

terms of employability. She said:

> Nancy: "That's not … that's not the solution. That's not what I've been saying. [Pause]
> I know that the violence and stuff is really bad. But I want to talk about something else, hey? I am in
> that stuff every day, you know? It's in my bones [long pause]. I just, …you know? I have scary stories
> and things, I know a thing about this girl, but I don't want to do that… [Turning to the stove to stir a pot
> of water and noodles], I want us to talk about this Kraft dinner we're gonna eat. [Pause] I don't know…
> you know?

> Hannah: I'm sorry, I didn't mean to push. Did I say something wrong?

> Nancy: Don't be sorry. Oh you white ladies. I just want to talk about some good things, you know? …
> [Pause] I'm not sure you understand where I'm coming from…"

On other occasions, Nancy offered countless mitigations strategies and insights in to camp-life and

women's safety. Today, she extended her silence to me.

Audra Simpson (2007) has explored this kind of stoppage in an interview as 'ethnographic

refusal' taken up in generative and productive ways. While I sought to make sense of, order, and make

more explicit the impacts of construction camps and potential mitigations, Nancy chose on that day to not

'get in to it' (Simpson 2007). Like Simpson and her interviewee, Nancy and I reached a limit. However, I

would like to suggest that Nancy's refusal does not reveal a level of unspeakability or incommunicability,

but instead speaks to her desire to shift towards different "representational territory" (Simpson 2007:78).

Initially, I was embarrassed and apologetic. I fidgeted in my chair, blushing hard. I recalled the silence in

the boardroom from almost ten months earlier, the silence that protected colonial desires and deflected

the lived experiences of Indigenous women. I considered how this situation might be like the one in the

boardroom. I said to Nancy: "I talk too much, don't I?" Nancy replied, "Yep! [laughing] No, no, I like talking

too. Just don't forget to look around, look at how people are living too."

In my attempt to get to know Nancy and understand her insights, had I forgotten how to listen?

Was I in the position of power, like the men in the board room, impervious to my own positioning and

privilege? In their article *Voicing Silence and Imagining Citizenship,* Herakova et. al. (2011) discuss the

ambiguity and confusion of verbal pauses and silences in focus groups and interviews. Their work

focuses on dialogue between differently-situated actors in dialogue over issues of racism and privilege,

and the numerous silences that emerge. While reflecting on their own experiences as focus group

facilitators with youth, the authors distinguished between the act of *being* silent, and the act of *going*

silent. While the silence in the boardroom may speak to silence of and by those in power—of *being* silent, the instance of silence in Nancy's house reflects the latter; the importance of *going* silent. By suggesting that we change the subject and focus on the present moment, the life in the room, Nancy moved me to reflect on my privilege, my position as a white settler researcher, and the assumptions that I bring to this work. Through the lens of ethnographic refusal (Simpson 2007), Nancy's silence served as an invitation – an opportunity to *go silent*. In accordance with the experiences of Herakova et.al., "going silent was simultaneously a conscious pedagogical act and an emotionally charged reaction" (2011:385). By intentionally going silent, space was created where Nancy could orient me, on her own terms. For the intersectional feminist, the outsider, the act of going silent is "the practice of being aware of not knowing, of stepping back, of committing to being in conversation, not domination, with a range of relational knowledges… rather than entrench, existing power lines" (Russo 2013:39).

I turn again to Ann Russo and her work on silence, voice, and accountability. Russo explores her position as a white feminist with the responsibility to disrupt the hegemony of white feminist privilege and the hierarchical relational dynamics it produces (2013:36). To do this, Russo requires that white feminist scholars and activists engage in active listening, which implies "a willingness for our identities, ideas, theories, and actions to be transformed, in the process of dialogue" (2013:36). Active listening does not cease when we feel blamed, guilty, or bad. As researcher Jaskiran Dhillon argues, deep listening requires "decentering the author/researcher/advocate as the single voice of authority" (2015:25). If researchers are going to center research on the lived experiences of Indigenous women, then we need to take seriously their leadership role and knowledge in concrete ways (ibid.). And that means taking direction from them. Going silent and active listening requires that we live in these sometimes fleeting and sometimes profound feelings of "alienation, of not belonging, of having your world thoroughly disrupted, having it criticized and scrutinized from the point of view of those who have been harmed by it, having important concepts central to it dismissed, being viewed with mistrust, being seen as of no consequence except as an object of mistrust" (Lugones and Spelman 1983, in Russo 2013:36). It is only through going silent and active listening that I can know differently. Such an understanding of silence encourages us as researchers to approach silence methodologically, as a pedagogy of listening *to* and *through* silence. In his description of silence as pedagogy, Baurain suggests that an "authentic, attentive listening

understands the importance of contexts and relationships and the potential richness of silence" (2011:89). While such a pedagogy on the part of a researcher is valuable (and necessary to decolonize community-based research), Nancy had also made a parallel request: to pay attention to "how people are living." This leads me to consider the relationship between silence and the body, or silence as embodied.

As the site of lived experience and felt intensities, the body presents itself as a unique avenue through which to explore silences that are affective and affecting. Acheson suggests that silence produces symptoms in our phenomenal bodies, "both when we encounter it and when we ourselves produce it" (2008:547). Such embodied responses draw our attention to our own being-in-the world (ibid:548). By going silent, I open myself up to witnessing my own embodiment and that of others, of our embodied presence together in silent moments of meaning making (Johnson 2013:62). What might an approach to the body as a bearer of silence and creator of silence reveal about the lived experience of violence and resistance for Babine women? One Elder whom I call Rachel spoke to me about her perspective on violence. She said,

> We used to get together much more a long time ago, but people keep to themselves more and more now, so we don't always know what's happening to our women. The government helps in this, and makes a lot of hate between one another. They do that with the money and positions in government. It's all that money, money, money. I have aches in my hands and fingers because of the sadness I feel about that. But when I hug my grandchildren and when I see that they make fish, that's how we push that sadness out.

Rachel speaks not only to the structures that create silences among people, but to how that process of alienation has created a symptom in her body, the sadness felt in her joints. While Rachel did not talk about the violence that has led to the sadness, she did not *not* talk about it. By situating the sadness within her body, Rachel reveals the presence of violence in her everyday embodiment. Though it is not articulated in words, it is articulated in and through her body.

Many of the women I met with did not talk about sexual violence directly or disclose their personal experiences. However, by going silent, by being aware of embodiment, I felt more attuned to the affective awareness and experience of violence, as the silent embodiment of that pain and anger. For example, one afternoon, Nancy and I were outside kicking a soccer ball around with her children. The baby sat on a cotton blanket in a shaded area, his cheeks stained blue from freshly picked berries. Gesturing to her children, Nancy said:

> I want them to know our culture, the way I grew up with my grandmother. They know how to sew, and cut moose meat, and pick berries. A lot of people go missing on this road here, I live with so much fear in my body, thinking about my kids going missing or getting hurt – ending up in the tall grass all alone. I wish I could make myself bigger and bigger so that I could just protect them everywhere and keep them safe. I don't like to talk about it though.

Like Rachel, the affective impact of violence lives quietly but voraciously in Nancy's body. It affects how she feels about and interacts with her children. Though she spoke of violence infrequently with me, the fear is embodied by Nancy as it animates her desires and actions. Only by *going silent* was I able to become attuned to the lived and embodied presence of violence.

Kathleen Stewart writes that "everyday life is a life lived on the level of surging affects" (2007:9) and that their significance lies "in the intensities they build and in what thoughts and feelings they make possible" (2007:3). Embodied fear, not often spoken about but always felt, motivates Nancy to protect her children, to pass on the cultural knowledge that was shared with her, to "make herself bigger and bigger" for her children. There is significant bodily investment involved in feeling fear, and in the "tenuous preservation of silence" (Pollock 2013:162). I have discussed embodied silence as sensed, yet numerous women also discussed these silences in and of the body as a kind of knowledge. Women spoke of a kind of "knowing through the body" (Kidron 2009:6) when discussing sexual violence, its impacts, and prevention strategies.

One night, sometime past midnight, I was cleaning fish with four women by floodlight. I noticed that my hands were cramping in the cold air, when one women, whom I call Helen started discussing my research. She briefly mentioned young woman she knew from another community, a story like the one Verna had shared in the boardroom. She said, "talking about assault can hurt ..." We stood together quietly for a few moments. Helen continued:

> I had to tell my family, then police, and then they ask you if you want to go to the hospital and you feel bad, like you shouldn't want to go. Then you meet doctors and nurses and all of these people and they ask you over and over 'are you sure that's what happened?' One hundred and fifty times they ask you. By the end of it you start to wonder if it really did happen. This violation happened, but you start to doubt yourself. My body knew it, but *I* wasn't sure anymore. My body knew; It always knows.

Many women that I spent time with chose not to disclose sexual violence to the RCMP or social services for fear of not being heard or taken seriously, but that silence did not mean that it is not expressed non-verbally, lived, felt, and experienced (Kidron 2009). Binary assumptions surrounding voice/silence imply that voice, as vehicle for self-representation, has a body, while silence does not. However, as Jackson

argues, silences are also embodied insofar as "experiences and subjectivities are always embodied" (1989). As Dian Million stated at the *Decolonizing Rape Culture* Workshop in October 2016, "the body is the magnificent bearer of the storyteller; how we feel matters." Bodies speak and perform a kind of silent testimony through every day, embodied action. Jackson, who has studied women's speaking strategies in developing countries, suggests that "women's bodies talk… these embodied vocabularies of protest address both personal and broader politics" (2012:1013). To consider how women's bodies speak suggests a phenomenological approach to silence, where silence is the discursive terrain of "felt knowledge" and of embodied emotional knowledge (Million 2013). It is from this terrain that acts of speech and silence are constituted and negotiated. The visceral and embodied experience of the silences surrounding sexual violence suggests not only a conceptual silence that is political and historical as explored above, but silence as lived and felt phenomena.

In *Therapeutic Nations*, Dian Million (2013:57) defines what she calls a felt theory of knowledge rooted in "lived experience, rich with emotional knowledges, of what pain, grief and hope meant or mean now and in our pasts and futures." This approach suggests that affect itself is knowledge, a felt knowing. Million's argument centers around the role of Indigenous women in bringing their felt knowledges and experiences to academia and to popular discourse through the sharing of their stories – primarily in the form narrative fiction. In her words, through their story work, Indigenous women "changed the actual conditions for what *could* be said about the poverty and discrimination that were their daily fare" (2013:56). As an Indigenous scholar, Million outlines how academia has segregated felt knowledge from theory as polemic, feminine, subjective, and "not as knowledge at all" (2013:57). While Million highlights narratives written by Indigenous women, I highlight storied lives and bodies of Indigenous women, where every day acts of existence are the living narratives of felt knowledge.

When we were done cleaning the fish, Helen thanked me for my help with the fish, and for the work I was doing, she said, "It just makes me so angry, these stories aren't stories, they're our lives." This woman's statement sheds light on how the lives, bodies, and lands of women are storied by the lingering affective and emotional consequences of sexual violence. Women like Helen lives with the felt knowledge in their bodies, as felt intensities that are challenging to write about both affectively and effectively.

Silences are frequently identified in my field notes through the signifier: [long pause]. What is contained in these square brackets reveals to me time and again the affective quality, the lived and embodied experience of sexual violence that is shared through silent refusal. This emotional and affective terrain is managed and negotiated through lived acts and every day practices. The felt knowledge of these women is embodied pain, anger, and frustration expressed through daily acts of persistent and triumphant living. By going silent and heeding Nancy's request to learn about how people are living, I began to bear witness to ways in which these women are living their embodied rage, pain and silence in the present, to the ways they are surviving and thriving, disclosing to each other, healing with each other. As a listening witness, I became a partner in the resistance of these women (Clark 2016b). Sarah Hunt writes, that, as witnesses "we have a role that is not to take up the voice or story of that which we have witnessed, nor to change the story, but to ensure the truths of the acts can be comprehended, honored and validated" (2014:38).

Felt knowledges and lived silences are not only embodied by individual bodies, but as one member discussed, they are felt by the Nation as a whole. I had arranged to meet Sharon early in the morning, before heading to Smithers to conduct interviews with front-line workers. At 7:30am I phoned Sharon to confirm that she would still be available at 8:00A.M. She was out of breath, "I'm workin' on a hide, can you come down here?" When I reached Sharon's home she was sitting on her front steps. Wiping sweat from her brow, she asked if I could tell her about the construction camps and why I was in Fort Babine. I recounted Lake Babine Nation's negotiation process, the location of the camp, and Betty and Verna's desire to implement a plan to prevent and respond to sexual violence. Sharon listened closely, speaking sparingly. She wiped her hands clean of moose dermis and fir, and picked the dirt from under her nails. After a long pause, Sharon said to me, "It effects all of us if someone gets hurt here, all five communities. It takes the whole community for one person to heal. We can do ceremony, drumming, … I tan, all the people should be tanning, doing what the ancestors taught us." I sat quietly beside Sharon. Slowly, she stood up and collected twigs and brush from around her porch. "A child hurt is like having your arm cut off." We exchanged a few more thoughts, but Sharon had to get back to her moose hide while the morning air was still cool. I walked back up towards the center of the village, ruminating on Sharon's statement. She had offered up the possibility of a Nation-wide embodiment, where pain and

suffering are felt profoundly and collectively. The silence is embodied by the Nation. Fassin (2008) speaks to the ways in which collective histories and experiences (of colonialism) can become inscribed on individual and collective bodies in a corporeal sense as affects and feelings. Through partial silences, punctuated by highly affective statements like the one Rachel shared, I arrived at a closer understanding of silence as embodied, be it by individuals or entire communities. The silence that violence produces in these bodies, as Rachel tells us, can be expressed without words through acts, such as tanning, and "doing what the ancestors taught us."

I began to ask others about how the Nation deals with the silence that envelops sexual violence and was frequently told about ceremonial dances, drum circles, beading, and the *Bahl'at* – particularly Headstone *Bahl'at*. At the Headstone ceremony, families of the deceased come together after a year of mourning to celebrate the end of the suffering and sadness. Garaline explained to me that women wear black clothing and cut their hair to demarcate the beginning of the mourning process, and let it grow again until the Headstone feast. "Our hair is our connection to the earth and to our ancestors, we cut our hair to lessen the pain, to cut it short," one woman from Babine said. Another woman spoke to me about grief, explaining, "It is traditional here to be calm during times of great pain and sorrow, like when there is a death. Our ceremonies are not about crying and things, that's actually bad luck. It is best to be quiet and calm, it's more respectful to be quiet." Each of these utterances sheds light on how the Nation manages the affective experience of the "weighted and reeling present" (Stewart 2007:1) through their ancestral teachings. In a way, the social body of Babine practices silence as a means of negotiating and resisting the realness and everydayness of violence. Like death, violence is responded to through ceremony collectively. It is from this silence that every day acts of existence emerge and are formed. Silence is an ongoing experience "that is continually 'done'" felt, and enacted (Warin and Dennis 2009:112). Through rituals, ceremony, and every day acts of being, these women 'break' silence in unexpected and embodied ways. In maintaining and celebrating these traditions, the Nation is still and calm, engaging in a creative and "deliberate refusal to stop living, to stop documenting their continued existence" (Farah 2013:242). Ultimately, this reading of ceremony is based on my own experiences in Fort Babine, and is limited by my lack of personal cultural knowledge and experience.

For people like Sharon, the silence that institutions produce is embodied, the pain is felt and the knowledge gained through those experiences is felt. Unlike 'data,' as Million suggests, the stories these women choose to share, contain the affective legacy of their experiences (2014:33). As I became aware of "felt knowledge," the bodies that harbor the silence of violence, I became more conscious of the everyday practices and acts that Babine women engage in. By living their ancestor's teachings and by practicing ceremony, they are building the world they want for their children. As Million states, one of the most important features of these felt knowledges is "their existence as alternative truths, as alternate historical views" (2014:64). Nancy taught me that this embodied, felt knowledge could not always be ascertained through talk but had to be witnessed. This is not to say that felt knowledges are silent, but that it may be perceived as such to outsiders. For these women, felt knowledges may indeed speak loudly to them, and be spoken of amongst each other. No amount of engaged listening guarantees researcher access to embodied and felt knowledges. Women like Sharon and Rachel communicate on their own terms in ways that are not necessarily shared with me or audible to me, they are precisely silent to me due to my position as an outsider.

On one of my last days in Fort Babine, a community member brought me to the fish fence to see how the salmon are counted and caught. We walked along the fence, talking about the traditional fish harvesting methods using weirs, ecological change and industrial impacts, and the decrease in fish stock in recent years. Three little boys were standing by one of the fish catchments. One boy opened the lid and called me over to review the contents. "They let a million go through the fence before they start catching the food fish," one of the boys said. Fifteen or so salmon thrashed in the shallow water, when one jumped out onto the dock. The boys squealed with excitement as they chased after the slippery fish. One of the fish monitors, named Tom, pointed to the shoreline and asked if I knew about the archaeological expedition that had been undertaken by a research team from the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC). Shaking my head no, he explained to me that the UNBC team had started excavating in 2010. Over the course of six years, the team had uncovered hundreds of artifacts. Well over a thousand years old, the artifacts confirmed for many in Babine the longevity and continued presence of their community in Fort Babine. The man said to me,

> All that stuff that those people dug up, the archaeologists. Can you imagine all those things? Buried under the ground for years and years and years, in the cold and dark. It's got to be so quiet down

there. They've been taken up now, and… I don't know if that's good or bad. But it's like us, all this violence and things, we're stuck in the ground. We need to dig ourselves out! No one can do it for us.

Tom's reflection on the archaeological dig and found artifacts suggests a body immersed in silence. While his imagery may recall the binary approach to voice and silence—voices that must speak up and speak back to power—I suggest that Tom's reflection contributes to a theorization of silence as embodied, as affective. The lived affective intensities of violence produce a surface tension on the skin. As Stewart writes, the body, "hums along, rages up, or deflates. It goes with the flow, meets resistance, gets attacked, or finds itself caught up" (2007:75). By living, by persisting, by resisting, the Babine people are and always have been "digging themselves out" building a world on their own terms, in relation to the world they find themselves inhabiting. in creative and meaningful ways (Trend 2013).

I thought back to Nancy, standing in her cluttered kitchen, kids all around, music blaring, stirring the Kraft Dinner as she disclosed violence and then stopped speaking. Ordinary acts that serve to mediate the moment to moment question of being in the world; the silence extended to manage the difficult affective terrain. As Dian Million (2013:76) writes, "stories form bridges that other people might cross, to feel their way into another experience." That is the promise of going silent. These feelings, these affects, "embodied pain, shame, distress, anguish, humiliation, anger, rage, fear, terror, can promote healing and solidarity… and provide avenues for empathy across circuits of difference." In learning to listen, to *go silent*, I engaged in more meaningful witnessing of felt knowledges and embodied silences that comprise the life-affirming stories and world-building that Indigenous women in Lake Babine Nation are engaged in. To echo the words of Sarah Hunt (2016b), "other worlds are alive on this land, and in our bodies."

Conclusion

What is to be made of that which is unsaid, that which is withheld, those spoken words punctuated by long pauses and hesitations within the research process? As researchers, reliance on a dichotomy that positions silence as absence limits analytical potential and obfuscates the intensely meaningful, fertile and generative function of silence (Baurain 2011). To engage with silence as meaningful is to "make space for the returns, the interruptions, the resistances, the denials, the subtle eliding of text present in the unspoken" (Mazzei 2003b:362). The purpose of my concerted focus on silence has not been to produce or impose a grand theory of silence on my research participants and their experiences. Rather, the goal has been to attend to the pauses, the gaps, and the refusals as they emerged in the research process, in a non-binary way. By extending silence, women like Verna and Nancy invited me to reflect on my positionality, the structures of domination in which we are implicated, and on their embodied and affective realities. What I find myself left with is silence as invitation— an invitation to learn, to unsettle and untangle colonial and racial relationships, to refuse, to resist, to show respect, and to listen.

The invitation of silence requires being attuned to silences in our research encounters. Such attunement presents theoretical and methodological challenges. Theoretically, how are we as anthropologists and researchers to define silence? As argued in this thesis, silence was present in fantastic variety: discursively, conceptually, structurally, relationally, and affectively. Moreover, what tools might be used to theoretically examine the unspoken? I suggest that any analysis of silence must consider the various scales at which silence is encountered, the historical and political context that elicit such silences, and the relational and narrative contexts in which pauses and gaps emerge. The meaning of silence is highly nuanced, context-dependent, and often contradictory. In attending to silence, researchers such as myself may consider several questions: Who has been silent and why? Whose responsibility is it to break silence, or to become silent? How is silence structural and historical? When is silence mobilized as a resistive and creative force? By asking these questions, I have attempted to establish that silences are a legitimate and fruitful focus of investigation in qualitative research and, "indeed, that silences are an enduring feature of human interaction and, therefore, of our work" (Poland and Pederson 1998:308).

Methodologically, I am guided by women like Nancy and Verna who extended silence to myself and others on numerous occasions. Their silences and invitations to listen have led me to consider and develop a pedagogy of listening. By *going silent*, researchers such as myself may be able to build alliances across power lines, across difference, and through the research encounter. If we are to understand the silent dimensions and products of colonialism, racism, and sexism in the lives of Indigenous women, then we need to listen to their concerns and experiences (Dhillon 2015). The stories, felt knowledges, and personal truths shared by women like Betty and Verna have the potential to destabilize the very structures and processes that incite and animate their silences. The voices suspended in silence, and silences suspended in structures "will necessarily confront, disturb, demand that listeners even alter ways of hearing and being" (hooks 1983:16 in Clark 2016a:10). As researchers, a pedagogy of listening requires that we make our own silences audible, and that we bear witness as essential partners in the resistance of Indigenous women (Clark 2016a:10). By going silent, I became a witness to the world-building (Million 2016) processes in which Indigenous women have always been engaged.

Indigenous women like Betty and Verna and their relations have been committed to anti-violence work since contact, since their lands, resources and bodies were first encroached upon by outsiders. They are experts of their own felt knowledges, their lived experiences of sexual violence. My exploration of silence has revealed the nuanced ways that Indigenous women engage with silence and voice to resist sexual violence and build the futures they want for their children. My experiences learning from these women and their relations has taught me that the solutions are not quite as nebulous and complex as they seem. As those invested in decolonization, our responsibility is to take direction because for the most part, the failure of settler intentions has been our inability to listen, not in Indigenous people's inability to articulate and share solutions. Engaged listening may be the first step in ending the logic of silence engrained in colonialism so that we might stop reproducing violent colonial relations, and start producing meaningful solutions.

On February 16, 2017, Betty, Verna, Ginger, and myself met in a boardroom together once again. It had been nearly a year and a half since our first meeting together at the Firelight office in the fall of 2015. Our report, *Indigenous Communities and Industrial Camps: Promoting Healthy Communities in Settings of*

Industrial Change (2017) was about to be launched at a high-level provincial meeting of First Nations from across British Columbia. The report itself is seventy-eight pages long and replete with the insights and suggestions of community members, front-line workers, engaged industry professionals, government representatives, and the many Indigenous women who came out to share their stories. The team revised their speaking notes preparing to present the report, the context within which it emerged, their hopes regarding the future and the intended impact of the report. The report is designed to be applicable across regions impacted by large-scale and rapid resource development. It is a call to action for grandfathers, husbands, sons, and brothers to take women's experiences seriously and to support the process of violence prevention in communities. The document outlines recommendations for government and distinct ministries therein, for industry, for the employees of industry, and for local community members. As Betty said to the crowd of onlookers,

> Regulatory processes don't highlight social issues. Other things like money and jobs take precedence. Leadership is ill-equipped to deal with issues of sexual assault. When you see these issues, compounded with other impacts on the land, the environment, health—is very challenging. We have to find ways to make it safe to talk about sexual violence at these higher levels. Leadership across the board is primarily made up of men and the EA process isn't First Nations friendly, or open to social issues like these. It's time to come together around this issue, it can no longer be 'beyond the scope' of the project.

As a witness to this project and process, I have observed intentional and arduous acts of world-building by Betty, Verna, and their relations. With each step, the world that Betty envisions for her grandchildren comes in to clearer focus. For Betty, there is safety, there is culture, and there is a Nation *Niwh Di Ghil B Ghehw Dzi Nee Deeh, '*dancing to the beat of our own drum.' The final report, open on laptop screens and pressed between fingertips, reads rather technical and practical. The information is presented in tables and graphs. The document is given life through the voices and silences extended, shared, and situated. The content is buttressed by the stories, disclosures, visions, and solutions proposed by all the women who came in and out of the research process. As Million states, it "is from this potential, the potential of our proposition for other ways of being and living, that we generate and attach ourselves to our intensely dreamed future, always becoming" (2014:40). Betty and Verna's efforts reveal the centrality of anti-violence work to the process of decolonization and self-determination, where women's experiences foreground negotiation and drive social change at the community level and in the board room. Verna closed our meeting, her hand covering her heart:

These are our stories; we live with these realities. We hope that this report will be taken up by you and brought to your communities. It is up to you to see what you can use, to give this work your voice. Bring it to your table, and if we can prevent one girl from getting raped, then it has been worth it. But, there is much work to do yet.

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