

UNDER

THE

**Solving
the Problem
of Race and
Representation
in Canadian
Journalism**

WHITE

GAZE

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CHEUNG**



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Gazing Behind

I have a hard time finding the Canada that I know in the news.

Growing up, my teachers taught us that we lived in a multicultural country, but they really didn't need to because I could see that for myself. Every class I attended from kindergarten on was a miniature United Nations. Our daily attendance was an international roll call: Alam, Cheung, Nardi, Pabla, Raeisi, Tabora, Zhang.

All of Vancouver is diverse, but my neighbourhood of Oakridge was at a special crossroads of class and culture, straddling the posh west side and the blue-collar east side. I was born to a family from Hong Kong, and my classmates had roots from all over: China, India, Iran, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, Vietnam. We might've been considered "minorities," but we were the majority.

Differences were everywhere. At recess, we shared a global selection of snacks from tangy fruit leather to paper-thin roasted seaweed. When the school bell rang, parents and grandparents showed up to tell my friends to put on their coats in languages from Punjabi to Tagalog. The Cantonese church my family attended, in a building purchased from Mennonites, was just up the hill from a

Sikh gurdwara, where the city's Vaisakhi parade starts every year. On the walls of living rooms in nearby homes were crosses and crocheted Bible verses, but also shrines and portraits of ancestors. Under these same roofs were families of every size and class. I'd visit friends who lived in mansions with their melancholy mothers, supported by fathers who did business overseas, and those who lived humbler lives, spending their evenings at the family restaurant serving hot bowls of phở.

My sense of a shared community only grew as I got older. Every time I walked the streets, took the bus, or visited another neighbourhood, I came to understand more and more how the city I lived in was made up of people of different identities – which is why the local news frustrated me when people of colour were too often missing, misrepresented, and marginalized.

Their lives revealed insights about society, everything from the cultural transformation of communities to the strength of our social safety nets. But were these stories being told?

Nope.

Was it because journalists were unfamiliar with the places in which we lived? Was it because they didn't speak our many languages? Was it because their lives were so very different from our own?

In time, I began to wonder which was worse: turning on the news and finding people of colour and their experiences absent from the places in which they live, or seeing that journalists were recycling the same stories about people of colour over and over again.

For all Canada's boasting about multiculturalism, its journalism was suffering from obvious omissions and problematic portrayals of people of colour. Numbers shouldn't be the only thing that dictate who is worth covering, but they do tell us how we're falling behind. Currently, people of colour make up 27 percent of Canada's overall population¹ and more than half of the population in urban

centres like Toronto and Vancouver, but this growing percentage is not reflected in the makeup of the country's newsrooms or in the coverage they put out.²

If you're white, the news is giving you a redacted portrait of who you share your community with.

If you're a person of colour like me, this mismatch between what you experience as reality and what you see on the news feels extra personal when the people you're familiar with, the places you frequent, the cultures you belong to, and the issues you care about are represented inaccurately. That is, if they're in the news at all.

This glaring absence is why I entered the industry: to see if I could help fix the problem of representation. I didn't set out to do this in a big way, leading boycotts or protests demanding that newsrooms commit to inclusive hiring practices or quotas of representation in stories. I simply wanted to see more reporting on the Canada that I knew.

In the summer of 2014, I sent my résumé to every newsroom in the city in hopes of getting some experience. After many rejections, the editor of the *Vancouver Courier* took the time to invite me in for an interview. After a brief chat, he asked, "When do you want to start?"

The paper was housed in a building on a slope in the shadow of the Granville Bridge. It was half underground, and the friendly journalists who worked there put together the semi-weekly broadsheets in a cozy, bunker-like newsroom with carpets and sagging leather couches. I couldn't have asked for a friendlier place to be introduced to the industry.

I had previously thought that every journalist carried a media pass like a magic amulet, one with the power to compel people to answer their questions. It turned out, however, that movies and TV shows got this part wrong. All you do is show up.

With politeness and persistence, I returned to the neighbourhood I grew up in and asked people I'd always been curious about

if they would mind sharing their stories. I sat down with the first sweet maker to set up shop in Punjabi Market as he showed off a colourful case filled with confections made from nuts, dairy, and flours. On the other side of 49th Avenue, I visited the cobbler who'd immigrated from China and worked in a pulp mill on Vancouver Island before turning to footwear, repairing everything from juttis to hockey skates on behalf of a nearby store owned by the family of NHL player Frederick "Cyclone" Taylor. And a few blocks down from the cobbler, at the family-run Au Petit Café, I chatted with the son who told me the story of his escape as an eight-year-old from Vietnam to Vancouver, in between taking rapid orders for bánh mì on his Bluetooth earpiece.

I was captivated by their stories. I wanted to do the same for my community as the *New Yorker* did with its Talk of the Town, publishing slice-of-life reportage. To me, American writer Gay Talese, a pioneer of 1960s literary non-fiction, dubbed the New Journalism, described the job best. Good reporters, he said, were masters at the "art of hanging out."³

But hanging out goes both ways. For interviewees used to the public spotlight or those familiar with the media landscape, no problem. But those who don't consume English news media, because they're too busy or because there's a language barrier, can be wary of journalists like me parachuting into their lives to ask personal questions and snap photos on behalf of outlets they've never heard of, not fully understanding what they're lending their names, faces, and responses to.

It was veggies, of all things, that taught me just how hard this can be. My grandparents lived in a house across the street from my family, where my grandfather kept a vegetable garden. Every year, we'd feast on the chayotes, green beans, and winter melons he lovingly tended to each morning. There were dozens of gardens like his in our neighbourhood, taking over not only backyards

but also front and side yards with overwhelming vines, leaves, and flowers. Many of the gardeners were Cantonese like us, such as Mr. Chow with his wax gourds and Mrs. Chang with her bitter melons. Others were immigrants from different parts of the world who started growing their favourite crops on Vancouver soil, like Mr. Stubos from Greece, with his giant tomatoes and sour cherries. Social scientists have called this a corporeal, culinary citizenship: by growing crops they're familiar with, people feel a deep sense of rootedness in their new homes as they re-establish food cultures they've been separated from.⁴

While living in other parts of the city, I met people with similar stories, like Auntie Mee Mee with her goji berries and Mrs. Fung with her Sze Yap bitter greens, which were missing from even the largest of our local Chinese supermarkets. On summer evenings, there wasn't a street or alley without lush gardens and some senior tending to them with a grandchild in tow. From these gardens grew community, because each was too bountiful for a single family. I watched my grandfather and others chat over garden fences, sharing their harvests and their heirloom seeds with one another.

Imagine my surprise, then, when I opened up the *Sun*, our daily paper, and read about how Vancouver is catching up with other North American cities, joining in on an urban farming "renaissance."⁵ Renaissance? These yards have been feeding Vancouverites since before I was born. Curious about what this renaissance might entail, I read on.

The story, one of many on this subject, celebrated gardens on forgotten properties being tended to by hip young urbanites looking to consummate a green lifestyle, with help from local government. It was farming by way of the Brooklyn playbook, which had gone viral, not the made-in-Vancouver approach that I saw in the yards around me. One such urban farmer, interviewed by *Montecristo* magazine in an article titled "Vancouver's Urban

Farms: A Growing Reality,” said that most homeowners’ lawns are about decoration for “leisure value or visual appeal.”⁶ He boasted about his “resistance,” “challenging” the idea of what a yard could be if it were farmed. He and others went on to talk about “reconnecting” people with food systems and their neighbours in this grand effort.

More green is good, sure, but these stories missed something. These new Vancouver farmers and the journalists reporting on them hadn’t checked their own city to see if what they were doing was actually new, something Google Street View could have told them. If this was, as they called it, a “resistance,” then my grandfather and thousands of urban farmers like him were the original overthrowers of the status quo, one melon at a time.

Frustrated by this mismatch between journalistic perception and reality, I was determined to set the record straight with a story of my own. My *Courier* editor enthusiastically approved my pitch. I asked friends if they had gardener grandparents, and I wandered immigrant neighbourhoods of the city’s east side with all the flattery I could muster. They were happy and easy to chat with. My Cantonese helped as it was the only language that many spoke fluently; however, it was hard to convince them to talk on the record once I revealed that I was a reporter.

I wanted them to spill the beans on their beans, but they answered me with similar degrees of detachment:

“This is nothing special. Everyone does this.”

“I’m not an expert. You should ask an expert.”

“Why would anyone find this interesting?”

As a reporter, I did not encounter such rejection when speaking with potential interviewees who were white, but I would run into these responses again and again from people of colour, on stories of every topic. Was it self-consciousness? Was it anxiety about exposure on a public platform they weren’t familiar with? Whatever

the reason, their deference to others, the downplaying of their own experiences – or their disinterest in sharing – spoke to the marginalization in news media that bothered me so much.

When I started journalism school at the University of British Columbia, one of the first things our instructors asked us was a seemingly simple yet epistemological question: “What is news?” One definition was information that is new. But with that came a follow-up question: New to who?

We were taught to craft stories with a target audience in mind, but who was that exactly? We talked about reading levels, wanting to ensure that an average high schooler would be able to comprehend our coverage. We talked about writing to the laity, people lacking inside knowledge of a particular field of study who would need a journalist to do some explaining. We talked about class, as stories interesting to readers of a magazine replete with Rolex ads would likely differ from what’s of interest to readers of a commuter daily with a free booklet of buy-one-get-one coupons for burger combos.

Typically, the target audience is imagined as the average Canadian. I wrote many stories before I realized that this so-called average Canadian that I was writing to, this so-called mainstream audience, had a clear racial and ethnocultural identity, and that identity ...

... was white.

Other journalists were doing this targeting, and somehow, I picked it up too. It didn’t matter that I strived to get more people of colour represented in media coverage. I had thought that simply making us visible was a win, but I hadn’t thought about *how* we were being portrayed.

I began to notice patterns in my stories. Cheer on this [insert identity here] person who did this remarkable thing! Cry about this migrant’s trials and tribulations! Celebrate this ancient cultural practice, which comes with a lot of symbolism and cool costumes! Aside from these narratives, there were also patterns in the way

that I overemphasized identity and difference. These realizations led me to a problem that was hard to understand, hard to confront, and hard to fix.

Behind the stories that I wrote to help with representation, I noticed a white gaze.

I took on the white gaze in everything from my language choices to my story frames. I treated white Canadians of European descent as the default viewpoint. They were the baseline. They were the “us” and everyone else was the “other.” When writing about non-Western cultures, I’d go to great lengths to explain them to a white audience, reporting on them with an air of discovery and distance, padding my stories with little encyclopaedia entries.

Let’s take a brief pause here and acknowledge the complicated feelings that can arise when we talk about whiteness. I saw this allergy from a young age, with adults like my parents being aghast whenever I used the word “white.” They feared it was racist because it drew attention to another person’s race, therefore highlighting differences that could divide. The mere mention of the words “white” and “whiteness” can make some people angry, avoidant, defensive, disarmed, and offended. Sociologist Robin DiAngelo talks about the desire for “colour blindness” in her book *White Fragility*. She believes the civil rights movement had the side effect of leading people to adopt a sense of avoidance: “Pretend that we don’t see race, and racism will end.”⁷ I saw this allergy in my readers, too. Whenever I mentioned whiteness in my stories, white-identifying readers would take personal offence. Frances Henry and Carol Tator, two of Canada’s leading scholars on race, have some words for them: “It’s important to emphasize that when we speak of Whiteness, we are not critiquing White people as individuals, but rather see Whiteness as an invisible social process by which power and privilege is exercised in a society divided by colour, as well as other social markers.”⁸

When we hear reports about how Canadian journalism is “overwhelmingly white,” what exactly does that mean?⁹ In 2023, the Canadian Association of Journalists’ newsroom diversity survey found that 75.5 percent of journalists in the country are white.¹⁰ That might sound pretty close to the percentage of white people in the country, but the survey notes that journalists of colour are clustered in a handful of large, national newsrooms. In small, whiter communities outside of cosmopolitan cities, journalists of colour interviewed by *J-Source* shared their experiences with the “revolving door” of newsrooms, due to challenges of “low pay, high demands, racism and isolation.”¹¹ There are, however, two depressing categories where there is a high degree of racial representation: part-time work and internship roles.

As for who’s in charge, white journalists make up an even higher percentage of newsroom leaders. They are the ones who decide who gets hired, which stories about people of colour are important, and how such stories get packaged for audiences. Lived experience matters when it comes to identifying, researching, and producing stories. Newsrooms will continue to overlook, or struggle to report on, stories that represent a growing share of their prospective audience if they do not have journalists from different backgrounds in decision-making roles who can bring these stories forward.

This also affects mentorship. While I had great role models that taught me skills like how to find unique stories and how to make the most out of interviews, they were all white. I had no racialized mentors to teach me how to navigate the industry as a rare person of colour. Diversity can be a “second job,” wrote Vann R. Newkirk II in the *Columbia Journalism Review*,¹² with unspoken labour such as being the default diversity advocate in newsrooms or having to check in with other racialized journalists after working on traumatic stories that concern identity.

I happened to enter the industry around a time of increasing conversations about race and representation in media, spurred on by Idle No More in 2012 and Black Lives Matter a year later. I saw news outlets respond to these movements with pledges to diversify their staff and their coverage. “We believe what makes us different, makes a difference. And as a team, the diversity of our backgrounds, interests and experiences is what enriches our work, and our workplaces,” read one from the *Toronto Star*.¹³ I couldn’t help but feel hopeful when I saw movement like this from legacy outlets, who seemed to recognize the white dominance of their own newsrooms and the industry at large and were taking action.

While I have no doubt such commitments were written with good intentions, I couldn’t help but look at this another way: diversity was hot! Editors responded enthusiastically to stories I pitched that touched on race, ethnicity, and culture, and as a journalist of colour, I had the face and lived experience to sell them. But it was also a lot of pressure. You could call it a diversity reckoning, but it was also a diversity rush, with white editors on the hunt for journalists to help diversify their newsrooms and coverage. Editors from publications across the country must’ve seen my headshot and byline, because they started coming to me with pitches. One of them said they enjoyed my pieces on “Asian personalities” and asked if I could do more. I didn’t want to be tokenized and pigeonholed, but I also didn’t want to pass up opportunities to bring representation that was lacking into noteworthy publications.

You can see the danger in newsrooms treating diversity like a missing ingredient, making hires or commissioning pieces from journalists of colour, because this puts such work into a silo. I’ve seen newsrooms rely on journalists of colour for the “diversity beat,” sparing white journalists from having to think about diversity, let alone focus on it as if their very jobs depended on their coverage of it.

But we need to include *all* journalists in the work of diversifying journalism, because there is room for diversity in all areas of reporting. To truly diversify, newsrooms need to change the very recipe of how they do journalism, not just sprinkle a few stories here and there for diversity's sake. That requires interrogating the gaze from which news is reported. That means confronting the whiteness of newsrooms and how journalists do their work.

I have to admit that the thought of this made me uncomfortable. I too treated diversity like a missing ingredient until I realized that we could have a person of colour on every front page in the country and still fall behind on representation if those stories are told from a white point of view.

Representation in journalism is about more than just journalists covering under-represented groups and going, "Look, they exist!" It's important to ask what kinds of stories are being told about people of colour. How are they portrayed? Whose voices and perspectives are privileged? Whose are left out? Who decides which stories deserve coverage? What is the lived experience of the journalist telling a story and how does that inform or take away from the coverage? Is the story of interest to the people of colour being written about?

Just as we can't talk about reconciliation without talking about colonization, we can't talk about diversity in journalism without talking about whiteness. It's easy for newsrooms to say that they want to diversify, but what exactly are they diversifying from? If diversity is one side of the coin, whiteness is the other. If coverage or a particular perspective is lacking, newsrooms need to admit whose perspectives they have too much of. If journalists of colour are marginalized, newsrooms need to admit who holds the power. It's easy for newsrooms to talk about a happy-sounding thing like diversity, but it's harder for them to swallow the existence of a negative-sounding thing like racial inequality. Any newsroom that

wants to diversify but refuses to confront the dominance of whiteness in the workplace and in their reporting will fail.

If you're picturing Canadian newsrooms like those depicted in popular cinema, from the classic *All the President's Men* to the Oscar-winning *Spotlight* to the whimsical *The French Dispatch*, you're missing something. These cinematic newsrooms are portrayed with reverence, full of scrappy reporters and wise editors serving as society's watchdogs.¹⁴ Certainly, all newsrooms have their heroes on the hunt for scoops. But the reality is that these are complicated workplaces with inherent power dynamics. You can't picture the modern Canadian newsroom without racial challenges and a struggle to represent the diverse communities they serve.

In recent years, many have been speaking up about the “forever battle of a journalist of colour,”¹⁵ putting up with unequal treatment and white managers' views of what constitutes diversity. “Canadian media is designed so that journalists of color give up,” wrote Soraya Roberts in a *Longreads* essay titled “The Great White Nope.”¹⁶ “Politically, socially, economically – in every way – Canada misrepresents itself. What results is an entirely misinformed public but, more than that, a public represented by an industry that cloaks itself in white and believes that saying nothing will make it invisible.”

Non-representation is a form of “oppression,” added Shree Paradkar, the *Toronto Star's* first internal ombud.¹⁷ And oppression happens when newsroom leaders allow “one dominant group – whites – to play gatekeeper to all the stories, generation after generation.”

Meaningful discussions about diversity can be overshadowed at a time when journalism itself is facing existential questions about its own survival in an increasingly demanding and ever-changing media landscape, with shifting delivery systems and precarious funding models. Mass layoffs at legacy media outlets and the

emergence of new digital products are the norms in the industry, and journalists can get caught up in the daily grind of churning out content to compete for eyeballs rather than contemplating the craft. “Feeding the beast,” we sometimes call it.

The shakeups came fast and furious even as I was working on this book. I handed in the first draft mid-2023, tacking on more bad news with each subsequent version. Meta started blocking users from sharing news on Facebook and Instagram, not wanting to negotiate with publishers to license their content in response to Bill C-18.¹⁸ The CBC announced that it would be cutting ten percent of its workforce, amounting to 600 positions and 200 unfilled positions.¹⁹ Then came Bell’s announcement to sell off stations, cancel newscasts, and cut nine percent of its workforce, a loss of 4,800 jobs.²⁰ Black Press, publisher of 150 community newspapers, filed for creditor protection and announced its sale.²¹ Vice Media, the digital upstart that gained a following for its edgy content, said it would stop publishing on its site entirely.²²

Grim as all this is, I argue there are other existential questions. If it’s the job of journalists to seek out and report the truth, how can they do so without asking who they are *not* serving? Or how the lived experiences of those in the newsroom shape which truths are reported? If they don’t ask these questions, their audiences lose out, receiving an incomplete picture of current events and the society in which they live.

It’s now been a decade since I became a journalist. That’s not very long, but considering how many people of colour have left the industry with fewer years than that, it’s a milestone. Diversity has been a big part of my career so far, whether that’s through my own work, mentorship, class visits, public events, or being interviewed in turn. In the world of entertainment, if you win an Emmy, a Grammy, an Oscar, and a Tony Award, it’s a grand slam known as an EGOT. In my work as a journalist, I’ve won awards with “diversity,” “inclusion,”

and “ethnic media” in their name, some named after late journalists who were white. I’ve joked about winning the racialized reporter’s EGOT, which is nice I suppose, but it makes me wonder how many years it’ll be before we can stop reminding journalists about representation because it will simply be accepted as common practice. Because I’ve managed to stick around in the industry, the requests for speaking engagements and pieces of writing are far more than I can handle. On panels and with publications I’ve freelanced for, I’ve looked at the names beside me and it’s obvious that I was selected to be either the only person of colour or the missing yellow crayon among a carefully chosen rainbow.

I’m still learning. But I know things now that I wish I’d known when I was starting out. That’s where this book comes in: to help you spot the white gaze in journalism, from local broadcasts to chewy features to the bite-sized nuggets of news that pop up on your social media feeds.

I hope journalists will find it useful, whether you’re just starting out or are already years into your career. There are many journalists who report on race but have never read any scholarship on the subject and its intersections. However, just reading the scholarship won’t do either, as many social scientists who study media either left journalism long ago or have never done journalism. This book attempts to bring different perspectives on news media together: sociology, geography, feminist and critical race theory, and more, alongside the world of practising journalists – from reporting stories to newsroom life to industry insights. I hope the lessons in this book challenge how you approach race and representation as they did for me.

Regardless of how you identify, your help is needed. When John Miller was the deputy managing editor of the *Toronto Star* in the early 1990s, he remembered riding a streetcar downtown and thinking to himself, “My God. The city has changed.” In an interview with

the *Review of Journalism*, he said that he barely saw the reality of the diverse city that he covered because he worked in an office during the day and drove back home at night. “I was as guilty when I was at the newspaper of being blind to this as they are,” said Miller of editors reluctant to address diversity in their newsrooms.²³ These conversations were overdue then and are just as important now.

If you’re not a journalist, my hope is that this book helps you be more conscious about your own media diet where race, ethnicity, and culture are concerned. It’s like being conscious about the food you’re eating on a daily basis: asking where it comes from, who made it, what was put in it, and what you might be taking in.

Before we continue, what would you consider to be problematic journalism on race? Perhaps articles from Canadian newspapers in the nineteenth century that called Indigenous peoples “degraded” and “savages”?²⁴ Or articles like the *Victoria Daily Times* in 1922 calling for a ban on immigration from Asia to “Save B.C. for White Race”?²⁵ If it’s explicit examples like these, you’re not going to find very many in mainstream news media today. Instead, there are stories aplenty that promote assimilation, make judgments about cultural inferiority, and use race as an explanation for people’s behaviour. The racism and stereotypes contained within these stories can be hard to detect, like hearing a racial comment at a party that makes you uncomfortable but you’re not sure why. Is the speaker parroting racial stereotypes that have become normalized? Or are they dog-whistling to racists? Whatever the case, this book will help you catch the stories that are inaccurate and harmful, and explain how the reporting could’ve been done better.

I first wrote about the white gaze in Canadian journalism in a series of essays for the *Tyee*, an online news magazine in BC. There was a small group of readers who took the time to tell me that I was being terribly racist for investigating race. They didn’t seem to understand that doing so isn’t meant to be an attack on white

journalists, nor is it a call for white journalists to be banned from writing about cultures they don't have a personal connection to. All journalists, even journalists of colour like me, are susceptible to taking on a white gaze. Investigating the white gaze in journalism simply means investigating how journalists are doing work that touches on race. And in Canada, as we'll see in the chapters that follow, that white gaze has the tendency to delete, dehumanize, and even demonize racialized communities.

Chapter 1 begins by challenging the idea that journalists should take on the “view from nowhere” when attempting to be objective. When reporting on under-represented groups, it's crucial for journalists to be conscious of the standpoint from which they're reporting and of the audience they're reporting to. As journalist Pacinthe Mattar powerfully stated, “Objectivity is a privilege afforded to white journalists.”²⁶ This chapter also examines what a “gaze” is and why journalists need to watch out for its ability to shape their work.

Chapters 2 and **3** unpack tropes that journalists have come to rely on when reporting on racialized communities in Canada. We've all read stories about sad refugees and criminals of colour, but even seemingly positive tropes like “model minorities” and cultural celebrations can prove to be misleading or harmful if not handled with care.

Chapter 4 shows the importance of intersectionality. Journalists, knowingly or not, often rely on race as an explanation for people's behaviour. This ignores the role of other dimensions like class, gender, sexuality, religion, and more. Journalists who consider these intersections introduce much-needed nuance to the stories they are reporting.

Chapter 5 examines how racialized places are commonly covered as interesting sites to explore, un-Canadian problem-ridden anomalies, or are wiped off the map altogether. Foodies out there

will recognize, in this chapter, the special destination known as the “hidden gem,” a popular showcase for newsrooms who want to offer up exclusive expertise through a taste of culture.

Chapter 6 tackles criticisms journalists receive when they report on race, from “There are more important issues to report on!” to “We are all part of the human race!” Journalists come across efforts like this to shut them down on the daily, especially via social media channels. This chapter will counter those increasingly widespread arguments that reporting on race is offensive or unnecessary.

Chapter 7 looks at how the language of diversity is evolving faster than style guides can adapt. In determining the right words for stories on race, language, and cultures, this chapter highlights the importance of specificity, the harms of othering language, and cases in which too much colour can hurt coverage.

Journalists are storytellers telling a collective story. “The sum total of all the individual news articles, op-eds, and analyses is a meta-narrative – the overarching story we’re telling and being told about ourselves and our society,” wrote journalist Ashton Lattimore in *Poynter*.²⁷ Without representation, we don’t have a clear picture of who we are.

When examining my own reporting for the white gaze, as well as that of other journalists, I did have moments of self-doubt about whether I was looking for something that did not exist. I felt affirmed when I learned that I was not alone, that most media scholars are in consensus that there is a pattern of racism in Canadian journalism, and that in general, journalists produce a negative view of people of colour.²⁸ I include many of their insights in this book.

Regarding the white gaze, we have Toni Morrison and other Black American writers to thank for popularizing the term. They used it to talk about literature, but it’s a helpful tool that we can use to analyze the representation of racialized experiences in journalism. Most of the discussion on the white gaze comes from the US.

This book will examine how the white gaze manifests differently in Canada, especially with respect to how we view multiculturalism.

Regarding Indigenous representation in Canadian journalism, that is not the primary focus of this book; however, I do reference Mark Cronlund Anderson and Carmen L. Robertson's *Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers*, which explores the century and a half of colonial misrepresentations of Indigenous peoples and how these misrepresentations persist today. Another key text is Duncan McCue's *Decolonizing Journalism*, a practical reporter's guide and an inspiration for this book. While Indigenous peoples are othered in different ways when compared to other non-white groups, learning how they are portrayed in news media offers insight into how the country's colonial roots have shaped its conception of national identity, and how the white gaze uniquely manifests in a place like Canada.

Regarding what news media will be sampled, the vast majority of this book's analysis will be using recent examples of English-language journalism in Canada. This book is not concerned with the coverage of international issues from a Western perspective in Canadian news outlets, but rather how people of colour are represented in a country with a history and a continuing legacy of European colonialism. French-language journalism is not explored. The book does, however, include some discussion on the role of what's been called "ethnic media," "minority media," and "multicultural media," and their representations of people of colour. In my opinion, these monikers are terrible labels, but that's further evidence of the white gaze at work for you, positioning such news outlets as the media of the other. "Diasporic media" is perhaps the least othering of these terms.

Regarding Vancouver, my home city and its surrounding communities will pop up a lot as it's where I work as a journalist. Vancouver serves as an example of how even in one of Canada's

largest and most racially and ethnoculturally diverse urban centres, where racialized people make up 55 percent of the population, journalism can nonetheless fall behind on representation.²⁹ As other Canadian communities diversify, Vancouver holds many universal lessons about representative journalism. While many ethnocultural groups are discussed in this book, you'll notice greater detail when it comes to Chinese Canadian experiences as they are the ones I'm most attuned to, due to my own identity. I believe these examples show how one of Canada's oldest diasporas can still face misrepresentation today.

Journalism is continually evolving, as is how newsrooms champion representation. Rather than supplying you with a black-and-white list of what is considered good representation and bad representation, may this book serve as a guide on how stories are constructed and how othering portrayals of people of colour can be banished and replaced by authentic representation. For newsrooms worried about their audiences shrinking, there is evidence that representative journalism can help audiences grow.³⁰ I hope you will be encouraged to seek out, share, and support news outlets working to reflect the range of experiences in their communities.

I know race isn't an easy topic to talk about. But as the Canadian Press puts it, the job of journalists is to provide "concise and accurate reporting that explains all of Canada to all Canadians."³¹ I was aware from a young age that diversity is a part of our society. What's the point of doing journalism if it's not reflective and representative of where we live and who we are?

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