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September 2021

(Un)Covering Chemical Valley: Canadian News Media Coverage of Environmental Racism in the Aamjiwnaang First Nation

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Citation of this paper:

Finnerty, Mikayla M., "(Un)Covering Chemical Valley: Canadian News Media Coverage of Environmental Racism in the Aamjiwnaang First Nation" (2021). *Inspiring Minds – Showcasing Western’s Graduate Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity*. 201.

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Inspiring Minds 2021 Submission

Title: (Un)Covering Chemical Valley: Canadian News Media Coverage of Environmental Racism in the Aamjiwnaang First Nation

Submission by: Mikayla Mackenzie Finnerty

Program: Master of Arts in Media Studies

Supervisor: Dr. Romaine Chaloner Fullerton

Submission:

The Aamjiwnaang First Nation represents a unique site of ecological conflict. For nearly a century, residents of Aamjiwnaang First Nation, located on the St. Clair River near Sarnia, ON, have experienced environmental harm and toxic pollution from the neighbouring Chemical Valley, an industrial zone containing the densest population of petrochemical plants in Canada. Despite the severity of the pollution, mainstream Canadian news media has infrequently covered the issue. Mainstream coverage that the issue *has* received has tended to focus on event-based issues, such as chemical spills or leaks — thereby ignoring the slow violence of accumulated daily exposure. My research, titled *(Un)Covering Chemical Valley*, comparatively analyzes how mainstream and Indigenous news media each frame coverage of environmental racism in the Aamjiwnaang First Nation. With resilience, community members have led the movement for environmental justice in Aamjiwnaang through use of alternative media, art, poetry, and creative direct action protests.

Word Count: 149