

# **“RED-HAIRED TEACHER SLAIN”**

Critical discourse analysis of news reportings in the case of Roseann Quinn

Master's thesis  
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<p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>Saamme suuren osa informaatiosta erilaisten uutisväylien kautta. Vaikka perinteisten sanomalehtien ja muiden vastaavien uutisjulkaisujen merkitys tiedonvälittäjinä on vähentynyt viime vuosina digitaalisten uutisten myötä, uutiset ovat yhä merkittävä osa tiedonsaantiamme. Ututissällön kuluttamisessa kriittinen lukutaito on ensiarvoisen tärkeää. Eri tahot saattavat pyrkiä välittämään tietoa tietyistä näkökulmista omien tarkoitusperiensä mukaisesti. Tämä voi tapahtua manipuloimalla, muokkaamalla tai muuten esittämällä uutiset tavalla, jotka toisintavat tietyn tahon näkemyksiä ja mielipiteitä.</p> <p>Tässä tutkielmassa tutkin diskurssin keinoja, joita eri uutisjulkaisut käyttivät artikkeleissaan. Tutkielma keskittyi erityisesti Roseann Quinin ja hänen murhansa raportointiin. Tutkimusaineisto koostui kuudesta eri uutisartikkelista: kolmesta uutisartikkelista, jotka raportoivat Quinin murhasta välittömästi sen paljastumisen jälkeen, sekä kolmesta mielipidekirjoituksesta. Tutkielman tarkoitus oli selvittää, mitä erilaisia diskursseja Quinin tapauksen raportointiin kuului, ja erosivatko ne keskenään eri uutisartikkeleiden välillä. Lisäksi pyrin selvittämään, vaikuttiko artikkelien kirjoitusajankohdan kulttuurinen ja yhteiskunnallinen ympäristö raportointitapoihin.</p> <p>Analysoin uutisartikkeleita kriittisen diskurssianalyysin keinoin. Perustana tässä analyysissä on Fairclough'n (1995; 2003; 2013) kolmetasoinen kriittisen diskurssianalyysin malli, sekä GDS-malli, joka lähestyy analyysiä genrejen, diskurssien ja tyylien kautta. Tutkielmassa kävi ilmi, että samasta tapauksesta samaan aikaan raportoivat uutiset kertoivat tapahtumista hyvin vaihtelevin keinoin. Mm. adjektiivien ja muun kuvaavan kielen käyttö vaikutti merkittävästi siihen, millaisessa valossa Quinin tapaus esitettiin. Mielipidekirjoitusten tapauksessa kirjoittajien omat mielipiteet ja tarkoitusperät vaikuttivat merkittävästi siihen, miten Quinin tapausta käytettiin kirjoituksissa.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tuloksia olisi mahdollista soveltaa esim. kriittisen medialukutaidon opetuksen yhteydessä. Koska tutkimus käsittelee sekä kriittisen diskurssianalyysin että entekstualisoinnin keinoja, voidaan tutkimuksen tuloksia käyttää soveltaen esimerkkinä erilaisten mediatekstien tulkinnassa.</p>	
Asiasanat – Keywords critical discourse analysis, news discourse, newspaper articles, three-dimensional model, GDS model	
Säilytyspaikka – Depository	
Muita tietoja – Additional information	

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

When thinking about ways in which we get information, news is usually the one that comes to mind. News comes in many forms, and in the contemporary world *news* covers significantly more than newspapers or news broadcasting. News articles are still one of the main ways for the public to get information, although digital news have trumped traditional newspapers in their popularity (e.g. Newspaper Fact Sheet 2019; Digital News Fact Sheet 2019). In today's informational climate, the term *fake news* has vastly increased in popularity, especially since October 2016, as the President of the United States, Donald Trump, has popularized the use of this term (Google Trends 2019). However, reporting or broadcasting information that is in some way false, e.g. misleading, sensationalist, a hoax or presented from an angle that is not considered objective is not a new phenomenon. Therefore, it could be said that the ability to critically process the information that is available to virtually anyone, anywhere is crucial.

Consequently, the motivation for this study comes from this need and the importance of being able to recognize different discourses and strategies that are being used to write news stories. Whether these strategies are used to reinforce or diminish the reader's own views and biases, knowing if, why and how they are used helps the reader to form an informed opinion. Additionally, the topic of this study is tied to women's representation in the media. These two topics have emerged through the author's personal interest and involvement, while conducting background research for a podcast series based on different true crime cases.

This study aims to critically analyze reporting of a criminal case in newspapers. Focusing specifically on the murder of Roseann Quinn in 1973, and if/how the reporting of her murder has changed over time, as it has been written about several times over the years since the crime occurred. Consequently, this makes the case of Quinn ideal for this type of study, as news stories typically focus only on current events. Quinn was a young woman, who was murdered in her apartment in 1973. This

case gained a considerable amount of attention in different news outlets at the time, and it has been discussed several times in the subsequent years, in varying contexts. The most recent interest in Quinn's case emerges from the growing interest in true crime stories. This will be further discussed in section 2.5.

The method of analysis in this study is critical discourse analysis. Moreover, the purpose of this study is to examine further if newspaper reporting about this case has changed not only over time, but additionally if it changes between different newspapers. Additionally, it is examined if the results of this study are applicable to newspaper reporting in general. Therefore, as critical discourse analysis studies language and power, the study aims to focus on if and what type of power structures can be recognized from the newspaper reporting.

In total six different articles were chosen for this study. This included three hard news stories reporting the case of Quinn as it originally happened in the 1970's. These articles are from *The New York Times*, *The New York Daily News* and *The Herald News*. The first two newspapers were chosen as the crime occurred in New York, and these papers reported the incident and subsequent investigation and events in depth. The third newspaper, *The Herald News*, was chosen as it was a publication in Quinn's hometown, and as such showed special interest in the case.

Additionally to the hard news stories, three think-pieces, each utilizing the case for different purposes, and approaching the topic from varying viewpoints, were chosen for the study. These think-pieces were written in three different periods of time and published in three different publications: *The News Journal* in 1970's, *Mail on Sunday* in 1990's and *Newsweek* in 2010's. Moreover, this study also considers the socio-cultural aspects of the era the newspaper articles were written in when analyzing the discourse. As a critical discourse analysis, this study focuses on discourse and power, possible exploitation of this power and how biased reporting might affect the production and consumption of news. These topics are studied especially through the lens of women in media, as well as women's position in society in general in these three time periods.

This particular viewpoint has been chosen, as the original subject of the news story, Roseann Quinn, acts as a representation of women in these articles.

News, as well as newspaper discourse is a subject that has been covered thoroughly in the past (e.g. van Dijk 2013). However, this study focuses on the reporting of the same case on three different time periods, covering roughly 40 years. Previous research has focused either on the same case and different newspapers on a certain point in time, or on newspaper discourse in general over time (Haig 2008; Teo 2000). Studying the discourse of one case over time has not been studied significantly, as news do not tend to write about the same event several times over decades. This type of approach allows for easier analyzing of the different eras the articles are from. Additionally, this allows the possibility to compare and contrast how the exact wording on reporting an event has changed. By also comparing articles written in the same time period, it is possible to examine how different newspapers approach the same subject from different angles and therefore create different discourses for it. The time periods the articles are chosen from are also known from significant stages of women's movements, such as the Women's Liberation Movement (from late 1960's to 1980's) as well as second- and third-wave feminism (starting from the 1960's and 1990's respectively). Additionally, as the murder of Roseann Quinn has been written about several times over the years, it is a convenient topic for the purposes of this study. Consequently, in addition to analyzing the texts and news discourse, it also allows for analyzing women as victims and women's portrayal in the news.

## 2 BACKGROUND

In this chapter, first is presented the theoretical background of the study, i.e. discourse and critical discourse analysis. Additionally, two theoretical models, three-dimensional model and Genres, Discourses and Styles model (Fairclough 1995, 2003, 2013) are explained, as they will be the main analyzing tools for the data. Second, as the data for this study will consist of newspaper articles, news as a genre is defined. In addition to this, specifically the topic of crime news is discussed further, as the focus of this study is reporting of a crime. Third, other key concepts that are central to the topic are elaborated on. This includes true crime and women as victims in the media and entextualization. Last, previous studies conducted in this or similar areas of research are presented.

### 2.1 Defining discourse

Discourse is language in action (Blommaert 2004: 2). This study focuses on news as discourse but defines the term from a broader viewpoint. Blommaert (2004: 3) noted that "Discourse to me comprises all forms of meaningful semiotic human activity seen in connection with social, cultural, and historical patterns and developments of use". While this does not especially narrow the definition of discourse, what can be taken from this definition for the purposes of this study is that the meaningful semiotic human activity in this case is news articles. This includes writing them, reading them and processing them. As will be discussed in the following sections, all of these actions contain steps that can be analyzed further.

According to Tannen, Hamilton and Schiffrin (2015: 12) discourse and analyzing discourse is something that goes beyond sentences. They note how grammar provides language users with information, and the way that information is both constructed and consumed affects the overall message it attempts to convey. Naturally, language in action can be analyzed starting from the smallest fragment (e.g. morphemes), but for the purposes of this study it would not be beneficial.



Fairclough (2003: 124) pointed out that different discourses represent aspects of the world, and consequently different people process these discourses in their own way. It could be argued that one of the most important points Fairclough makes about discourses is that they represent the world as it seems to be, rather than as it is. According to Blommaert (2004: 4), discourse “is what transforms our environment into a socially and culturally meaningful one”. However, he also notes that without distinguishing linguistic and sociocultural rules it would be impossible for us to make meanings from different aspects of our environment.

Consequently, different genres typically have their own discourses. As the definition of discourse tends to be so broad, and different genres of language and language use can differ significantly from one another, it is necessary to define more specific discourses for each genre.

This study focuses on discourse of texts, i.e. news articles. Although news articles arguably have their own discourse, Wodak (2001: 66) makes the distinctions between text and discourse. According to her, discourses are intricate linguistic acts covering several fields and focus on macro-topics, whereas texts are “materially durable products of linguistic actions”. Pynnönen (2013: 16-17) notes that whereas text’s main function is to provide a text from separate sentences, language’s purpose is to create representations of the world. Therefore, both Wodak and Pynnönen argue that texts are a tool for discourse. News articles as a genre of text have much more fixed characteristics, as opposed to news discourse, which depends more on the topic of the article and macro-topics attached to it. An example of such macro-topic in the case of this study might be gender in an article about a female homicide victim.

Additionally, Gee (2010; 2015) makes a distinction between discourse and Discourse with a capital D. Gee (2015: 30) defines Discourse as: “a characteristic way of saying, doing, and being”. This would include any kind of language use, how the language is being utilized, what type of characteristics the language user projects to it, et cetera.

Gee (2010) says Discourses are socially based conventions. He also defines discourse with a small d as language in action. To simplify, according to Gee (2015: 34) discourse is language-in-use, whereas Discourse is “language and ‘other stuff’”. Pynnönen (2013: 7) further explains that discourse focuses more on everyday language use and textual interactions, apart from further context and Discourse describes and analyzes, for example, the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which the language and interaction exists. In this study, the term discourse is used as a general term to describe both of these interpretations, and the data analyzed in this study is also analyzed according to both of these descriptions. This means that the present study analyzes both the so-called “language and ‘other stuff’”, meaning the social and cultural context of the eras the data of this study is originally published in, as well as everyday language use in the form of newspaper articles.

## **2.2 Critical discourse analysis**

In this study the analysis of the data is done through the viewpoint of critical discourse analysis (CDA). As this study is aiming to compare, contrast and analyze the content of different newspaper articles both as their own entity, as well as in relation to one another, this approach is the most suitable.

On the basis of critical discourse analysis is the relationship between discourse and power and how, for example, different discourse mediums are exploited by those in power in order to influence and even manipulate the message that comes across (see Fairclough 2013; van Dijk 2013). Fairclough (2013: 1) defines critical discourse analysis in his collections of essays through the importance of studying language in its relation to power and ideology. He notes:

Power is conceptualized both in terms of asymmetries between participants in discourse events, and in terms of unequal capacity to control how texts are produced, distributed and consumed in particular sociocultural contexts. (Fairclough 2013: 1)

According to Mayr and Machin (2011: 8):

Although CDA approaches have developed largely independently from each other, they are united by a concern with demonstrating how the use and abuse of social power is produced, reproduced and maintained through language. (Mayr and Machin 2011: 8)

It could be argued that it is virtually impossible to consume any content as an isolated, independent entity. In this thesis the content that is being studied is newspaper articles. In the case of newspaper articles, they are always written by an individual and hence, have a point of view, whether it is explicit, hidden or subconscious. Additionally, the reader also has a point of view when they are reading the article, and moreover, they are processing the contents of the article from a viewpoint that is the sum of all of their previous knowledge on the subject and how that has constructed. The aforementioned structure of news reports and people who consume them becomes increasingly questionable when the subject matter that is being reported is in the hands of those who hold the most power.

According to Pynnönen (2013: 17), discourse that is taken for granted and not questioned both limits and manipulates our understanding of what kind of behaviors and actions are acceptable. She adds that it is particularly of interest how inclusion and exclusion can affect how our reality is experienced. Arguably, the matter of inclusion and exclusion in news and news articles can affect the reality offered by them significantly. For example, omitting information or including something heavily biased can have an effect on how the information is consumed.

### **2.2.1 Three-dimensional model**

The approach to the data in this study is based on Fairclough's (1995, 2013) three-dimensional model. This model includes three processes of analysis: description (text analysis), interpretation (process analysis; discourse practice) and explanation (social analysis; sociocultural practice) (Figure 1).

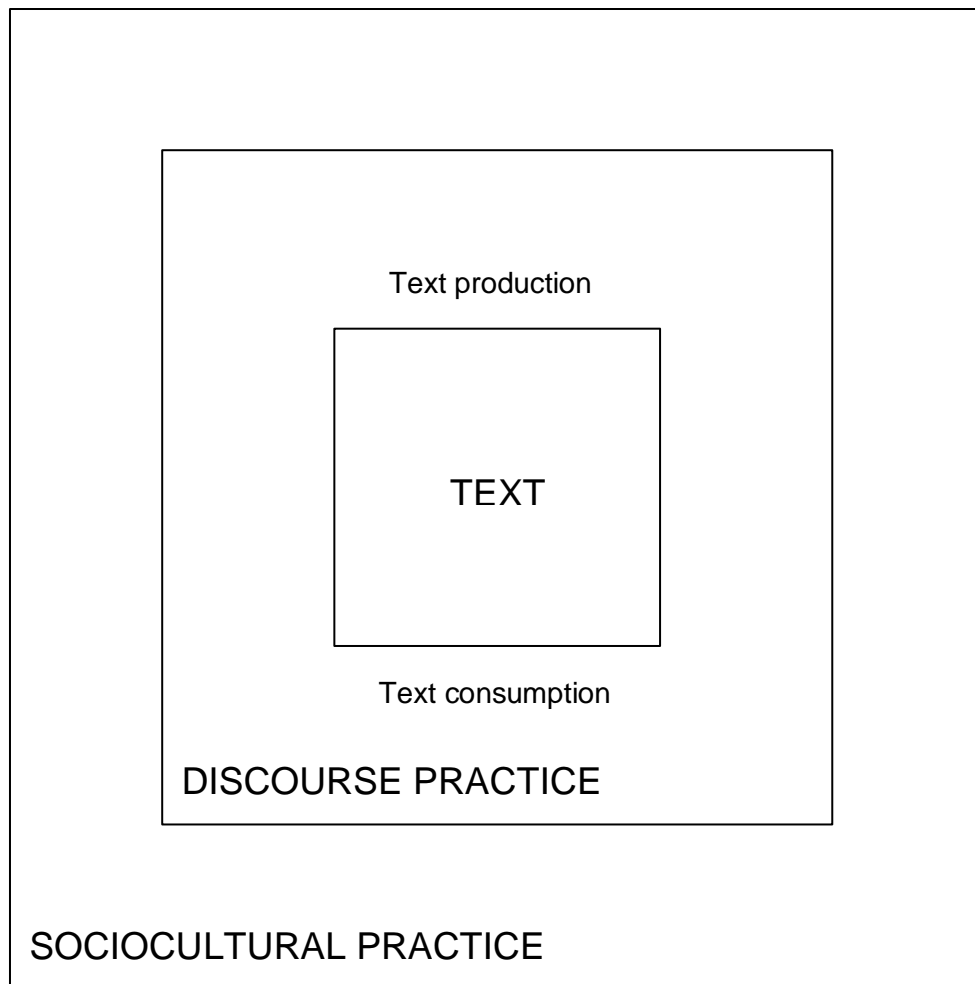


Fig. 1: The three-dimensional model for CDA according to Fairclough (1995)

These practices are linked to each other, and each part of this model affects one another. According to Fairclough (2013: 97):

How a text is produced or interpreted, in the sense of what discursive practices and conventions are drawn from what order(s) of discourse and how they are articulated together, depends upon the nature of the sociocultural practice which the discourse is a part of. (Fairclough 2013: 97)

According to Fairclough (1995: 57-58), in addition to analyzing texts by their linguistic features, they are also analyzed by meanings and forms and if the forms are different it could be assumed that meanings are as well. In the case of this study, when analyzing different newspaper articles, it should be kept in mind that articles are written by

different individuals. Therefore, change in form is not necessarily a conscious choice to change meaning. However, writers and readers alike have different associations with different word choices.

As mentioned previously, text and sociocultural practice are connected to each other mainly through discourse practice. Discourse practice includes both the production and consumption of text. Aspects such as society and culture affect the way texts are written (through writers) and how they are perceived (through readers). Fairclough (1995: 59) further divided discourse practices into institutional processes and discourse processes, through which especially media texts are processed. Whereas institutional processes include, for example, the many layers of editorial procedures that media text goes through, discourse processes are narrower transformations that the text goes through when written or read. These are the different interpretations that are made from the text, or when the text is produced.

Sociocultural practice acts as an explanation for the text (Fairclough 1995: 62). It answers and elaborates questions of why a piece of text was written in a certain way. It also explains what societal or cultural events affected the way texts were written and how do these events affect the way they will be read. It offers a context for both the writer and the reader. However, sociocultural practice may offer more of an abstract framework and analyzing it from the viewpoint of the text might be difficult. It could be argued that one needs to be fairly conscious of the situational context of the text in order to analyze it thoroughly. Moreover, as stated by Fairclough (1995: 62) the sociocultural practice might go through different levels from immediate situational context to a wider frame of society and culture.

### **2.2.2 GDS model**

Additionally, I will tie this three-dimensional model to the Genres, Discourses and Styles (GDS) model (Fairclough 2003). According to Fairclough (2003: 69), genres represent a way of acting. In the case of this study, the (inter)action is newspaper

articles as a genre. More precisely, a newspaper article would be what Fairclough described as a *disembedded genre*. Essentially this means that even though newspaper articles have some fixed characteristics, there is also a considerable amount of leeway. As Fairclough (2003: 84-85) notes:

News reduces complex series of events whose relationship may not be terribly clear to stories, imposing narrative order upon them. And it is not simply the relationship between an actual series of events in a particular order, and the story about them. Producing news stories is more fundamentally a matter of construing what may be fragmentary and ill-defined happenings as distinct and separate events, including certain happenings and excluding others, as well setting these constructed events into particular relations with each other. Making news is a heavily interpretative and constructive process, not simply a report of 'the facts'. (Fairclough 2003: 84-85)

In the case of a newspaper article, the journalist who wrote the article acts as a social agent, who generally works within the basic structure of a news article, but also has the chance to change the narrative it creates. This might include such aspects as including or omitting certain details, presenting the events in a certain sequence and, possibly most importantly, setting the tone of the news by choosing certain words over others.

According to Fairclough (2003: 124):

Different discourses are different perspectives on the world, and they are associated with the different relations people have to the world -- Discourses not only represent the world as it is (or rather is seen to be), they are also projective, imaginaries, representing possible worlds which are different from the actual world, and tied in to projects to change the world in particular directions. (Fairclough 2003: 124)

Incorporating this definition to the process analysis, as well as to the subject of this study (newspaper articles) in general, they both analyze how the readers process the text. The readers, as well as the writers, have a certain perspective of the world. When they are offered information in the form of news, it could be said that this information goes through several discourses in the reader's mind. The reader might ponder how they feel about the subject matter, or what kind of opinion they have of this particular news outlet. In addition, they might recall what kind of information (if any) they have received through other news outlets, and so on.

Furthermore, styles can also be applied to the process analysis along with discourse. Fairclough (2003: 159) defines styles as “the discursive aspect of ways of being, identities”. In relation to this study styles need to be applied to written text. This does not only mean the identities and styles that the readers have constructed for themselves and are applying to the text, but additionally what type of identities the text, and more specifically the writer creates. This could include, for example, emphasizing individuality or collectivity in the text (Fairclough 2003: 162).

Styles and identities are further categorized to modality and evaluation. Through modality, the active agent (in the case of this study, the writer) makes a commitment to their statement. This, in turn, reveals something about the writer’s attitudes and judgements towards the subject matter (Fairclough 2003: 164). Consequently, the reader will make assumptions based on these factors. The reader might not only make assumptions about the subject, but about the writer as well. This, as mentioned earlier, points out how consuming content as an isolated entity would be impossible. Furthermore, it makes it difficult for the writer to separate themselves from the subject, especially if there is a clear angle from which it is written.

In addition to making a commitment to their statement, the active agent also makes an evaluation: what is desirable (good) or undesirable (bad) (Fairclough 2003: 172). In case of newspaper articles, this connects significantly to word choices. The writer might make a decision to e.g. call an action good or bad in an article. This immediately sets the tone for the article, and also might either give some guidelines to the reader as to what they should think of the action (or rather, what the writer wants the reader to think of the action), and they can accept it or question it. Obviously, the stance an article takes is not often this black and white. However, it could be argued that writers make conscious decisions to use some words or terms over others in order to send a certain message.

### 2.2.3 Criticism on Fairclough

Fairclough (as well as CDA researchers in general) has been criticized for applying his political views to his research (Breeze 2011: 500-501). Breeze (2011) explains how Fairclough's views tend to be more left-wing, although he agrees that research does not need to be left-wing. Breeze (2011: 501) also mentions that although CDA researchers are transparent with their political views, this does not mean they are objective, or they would not have to consider objectivity in their research.

Fairclough has also been criticized for including several and somewhat contradictory social theories to CDA (Breeze 2011: 501). Thus, the field of CDA is able to draw on seemingly endless amount of resources. Consequently, according to Breeze (2011: 501), it would be beneficial to "[narrow] its intellectual base". Somewhat in a similar manner, Fairclough's three-dimensional method (1995) has been criticized for lacking *rigour* (Breeze 2011: 502-503). What Breeze means by this, is that the ways in which data is collected and interpreted is lacking proper methodology.

Widdowson (1998: 146) argues that Fairclough, along with his colleagues reveal that language can be exploited, but that they interpret "whatever linguistic features suit their own ideological position". Widdowson (1998) also criticizes Fairclough's theory on CDA as follows: "What strikes a particular reader, even one as astute as Fairclough, is hardly conclusive evidence of how ideological significance is written covertly into texts It is evidence only of what the reader reads into it" (Widdowson 1998: 146).

## 2.3 News discourse

In this section, news as a genre of text is defined in terms of news texts that are used as data in this study. This means that since different news texts have their own characteristics, only those characteristics that define hard news stories and think-pieces are discussed in this section. The basic structure and style of these types of texts is explained briefly. Next, news discourse, and more specifically crime news discourse



is discussed. This section covers the typical issues that are connected to reporting about criminal cases.

### 2.3.1 News as a genre

Defining news in absolute terms is an ambitious task. Van Dijk (2012: 4) presents the following definition, to help narrow down what is typically meant by *news*:

1. New information about events, things or persons.
2. A (TV or radio) program type in which news items are presented.
3. A news item or news report, i.e., a text or discourse on radio, on TV or in the newspaper, in which new information is given about recent events (Van Dijk 2012: 4)

The present study focuses especially on the third definition of news, as the data consist of newspaper articles. However, while van Dijk's definition mentions specifically recent events, this study also focuses on how a certain event has been reported not only when it first occurred, but how and why it has been mentioned in later articles over several decades.

According to Matheson (2005: 15): "the meaning of the news is about the act of deploying shared interpretative sources". This means that news is not just *the facts*, or act as a mirror of what happened. News makes sense in a social context, constructing a picture that is close to what the consumers of the news already know (Matheson 2005: 15)

In addition, *news* as a genre defined as above consists of several subgenres for different types of news (Van Dijk 2012: 5). News from different outlets such as TV or newspaper require their own characteristics. Furthermore, using a newspaper as an example, this genre has a multitude of articles that have their own distinct features, such as hard news articles, sports news, and opinion pieces.

In this study, the two types of news articles that are being analyzed are hard news stories and op-ed stories/think-pieces. Whereas a hard news story is contemporary

reporting of a recent event (see Bednarek and Caple 2012), a think-piece or an op-ed story (opposite the editorial page) is more free-form, opinionated yet informed piece (Shipley 2004; Haglund 2014). For the sake of clarity, from this point on only the term think-piece will be used.

The structure of news articles can be divided into basic parts, which then can be defined further according to subgenres and journalistic styles. Bednarek and Caple (2012: 96) divide hard news stories linguistically into three parts: headline, intro, and body text. Concerning information, hard news reports are typically presented starting with the most salient information, following with details that are considered decreasingly important. In hard news stories, the purpose of the headline is to summarize the event and ideally also attract readers. Arguably this sometimes leads to sensationalized headlines. The intro is a short preface into the topic, typically giving background information such as time and location. The body text then, as stated, tells the story itself in an order of most to least important information (Bednarek and Caple 2012: 98-101)

The form of think-pieces is not as fixed. They might be written more in the style of an essay and have been increasingly popular since the Internet provided an easy outlet for their publication (Haglund 2014). Hon (2018) summarizes the function of a think-piece in the intro of his article as “Something happened. Here’s what you think about it”, which is an apt definition. While think-pieces also typically consist of a headline, an intro, and a body text, they are different from hard news stories. Think-pieces headlines might be more creative and offer less information about the content of the article. As think-pieces are opinionated articles, they tend to represent one person’s experience and thoughts about an event or a phenomenon. Nevertheless, think-pieces are expected to have background information and reasoning, but they do not aim to be objective as opposed to what is expected of hard news stories (Haglund 2014).

### 2.3.2 Crime news discourse

Tabbert (2015: 19) argues that it is “of crucial importance to critically analyze news reports on crime and look behind the curtain so as to be aware of ideologies and manipulations.”. Additionally, as earlier cited by Fairclough (2003), news does not always report just the facts, but is prone to have narratives imposed upon them. Consequently, it could be argued that news about crimes can have a greater than average impact on readers. Crimes and, for example, being a victim to a crime is something one is trying to avoid. By reporting crimes in a certain way, a distinct narrative is chosen for them, which will further affect the readers opinions, thoughts, and actions. Naturally in some cases this phenomenon might work in a very straightforward way. For example, a newspaper could report that there is a significant increase in violent crimes in a particular area and therefore it should be avoided. On the other hand, an article could also be written about an individual who is perceived as a dangerous criminal for speaking against the government and therefore it should not be done. In these types of cases the morality of the article is in a much grayer area.

The first homicide that was sensationalized by “penny press” (i.e. cheap, tabloid-like newspapers) was the murder of Helen Jewett in 1836. The juxtaposition between the victim, a young prostitute, and the suspect, a rich, high-class man, rouse the public’s interest. Previously such cases were deemed too inappropriate for broader reporting, but this heavily debated, sensationalized, and sexualized case exposed the hypocrisy of class and sex privilege in American society (Buck 2017). In her study on female offenders and victims and how they had been represented in the press over the last three decades, Collins (2014: 307-308) found out that the descriptions of violence have become increasingly graphic over time, especially when the victim is deemed as particularly undeserving to the crime. Consequently, she also made the notion that the press had clearly made a distinction between *good* and *bad* victims. Details such as the victims’ socioeconomic status and race were major factors in categorizing them into these groups. Despite the fact that over two centuries have passed between the first

case and Collins' study, similar trends can be seen in the reporting and how the information is received.

Jewkes and Katz (as cited in Tabbert 2015) note that by reading news about crimes, readers are given a daily moral workout. As mentioned earlier, readers process the news through their own subjective viewpoint. They apply their own justifications, policies, and opinions to each case, which are presumably affected by the way the news article is written. Mayr and Machin (2011: 21-22) present the idea of moral panic. When crimes and criminal activity are reported from a distinct angle, it can shape the response from the readers. The response, in turn, might lead to more similar reporting and policing, working as a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Jewkes et al. (2014) come to the same conclusion in *Media and Crime: A Comparative Analysis of Crime News in the UK, Norway and Italy*, where they note that especially big, significant cases that get widely covered are subject to subtle differences in tone. This was especially in the case of news reporting in different countries in Europe. However, it could be argued that differently affiliated news publications would also have these differences. As can be seen from the data in later chapters, the differences are not always subtle or only noticeable if carefully dissected.

## **2.4 Gender and women as victims in media**

Although the present study aims to be what Fairclough (2003: 2) described as "textually oriented discourse analysis", it is impractical to attempt to merely analyze the language of the articles without also noting the social context they were written in. In this study the articles that will be analyzed are chosen roughly from three different periods of time. Each of these periods give their own frame of reference to the case of Roseann Quinn. The further justifications for choosing these articles is discussed in Chapter 3. In this section, I will elaborate how the media has viewed gender, and more specifically, women as victims in the media. It should also be noted that due to the topic of the present study, this section focuses mainly on Caucasian women as crime

victims. Non-Caucasian women are often portrayed very differently in media in western societies (Valdivia & Projansky 2006), and the concept of victimhood and women as victims is not universal in this sense.

As critical discourse analysis aims to review how discourse uses and/or abuses power relations, it crucial to note how language and power are used when discussing gender. In her study, Berns (2001) identifies two manners of discourse which are often applied when generally talking about women as victims and men as perpetrators: degendering the problem and gendering the blame. In the present study, especially the latter is discussed in the light of the articles. However, this study does not attempt to hypothesize that women are always victims and/or innocent and men are always the perpetrators. The focus of this study is one case where, according to the reports, the victim's fate is largely tied to her gender, and therefore analyzed from that viewpoint. The reporting of the case does not highlight the perpetrators gender the same way as the victims, due to which it is not discussed at the same length.

Berns (2001: 263) also pointed out: "analyzing popular representations of societal problems is important because individuals draw on these sources when constructing their understandings of issues such as violence against women", which is in accordance with earlier statements about media discourse. This means that it would be crucial to be mindful of the representations that we come across in mainstream media, because, as pointed out previously, people are not immune to them. Valdivia and Projansky (2006: 337) note:

Traditionally, coverage of rape, sexual assault, and battering has focused on cases of extreme violence and has been characterized by sensationalism and voyeurism. ...because of the ways in which news is defined and structured, coverage of gendered violence has remained skewed in many ways. (Valdivia and Projansky 2006: 337)

When Valdivia and Projansky's (2006) notion is viewed in the light of Berns' (2001) idea of analyzing representations, it could be argued that if most of the coverage of violence against women is sensationalist, this becomes the norm for women's representation. Consequently, when reporting about violence against women and women as victims, news articles at times tend to lead with shock value, rather than *just*

*the facts*. It could be argued that the phenomenon of trying to emphasize horrific details in order to gain interest is even greater today. As there is an enormous amount of information and news available to anyone at any time, the number of views and clicks might go before anything else, hence the popularity of “click-bait” articles and the like. This, however, is not to say that sensationalist journalism has not existed for a far longer time. Nevertheless, by choosing to lead with shock value over facts or neutral reporting, the writer makes a decision which affects the way the reader views and processes the news.

As mentioned earlier, news and especially crime news might give the people who consume them a so-called daily moral workout. By reporting cases of violence against women in a certain way, the reporters give the readers or viewers of the news particular building blocks about the event and the victim’s life from which the viewer/reader can then assemble their own depictions of the case and how the potential wrong choices the victim made lead into a tragic outcome. Correspondingly, Valdivia and Projansky (2006: 339) point out

[Reporters] could do more to treat victims with empathy and dignity by eliminating unnecessary details that might identify the victim or cause shame and humiliation. ...such as the idea that victims provoke their own attacks through dress or behavior or that assaults occur when psychically abnormal men suddenly snap. (Valdivia and Projansky 2006: 339)

Valdivia and Projansky (2006) discuss mainly sexual assault and battery, but arguably this can be applied to violence against women on a more general level.

As mentioned in the previous section, Collins (2014: 298) makes a distinction between the *good victim* and the *bad victim* and depending on the circumstances women are portrayed as either or. According to her, the ideal *good victim* is someone the audience, i.e. reader or viewer sympathizes with; this *good victim* is completely innocuous to the crime that was committed against her. As opposed, the *bad victim* is often demonized in one way or another. The main discourse being that she is somehow to be blamed for what happened to her. While it is reasonable to assume that there is news content which clearly categorizes the victim as either or in their discourse, it is equally

plausible that in some cases their description of the victim is not this clear. For example, a victim can first be portrayed as an “everywoman”, who happened to be a victim of a crime. Then, her actions which lead up to this crime against her are scrutinized so that the reporter can find something upon which they can put part of the blame. Thus, this kind of reporting would work as a cautionary tale, making it so that the victim could be any one of the readers and as such, they should avoid certain actions, behaviors, ways of dressing, et cetera. Therefore, the reporting tries to police women’s lives, as opposed to condemning the perpetrator’s actions.

The aforementioned *good victim* versus *bad victim* composition is a good example of the power that the writers and/or the news outlet publishing has in deciding how the victim, a woman, is being portrayed in media. While this can be seen as manipulating the reader and their opinions, it cannot be forgotten that the reader is not a blank slate upon which any opinion can be thrown, and it will be accepted as a fact. However, arguably the people who in cases such as this hold the power, should be held accountable and as such act accordingly.

## **2.5 True crime**

In this section, I will elaborate on the true crime phenomenon and how it has contributed to the increasing popularity of and interest in different crime cases. This also includes older cases, especially those which are considered somehow particularly significant in present day. The true crime phenomenon has additionally affected the way that perpetrators, victims and especially women as victims are viewed and talked about.

The rapidly increasing popularity of true crime content in the last decade is generally credited to NPR’s podcast series *Serial*, which debuted in 2014 (Lawson 2015). *Serial*’s first season covers the murder of Hae Min Lee in 2000, and how her boyfriend Adnan Syed was blamed for the murder. According to Lawson (2015), the series reached over

68 million listeners. However, although the so-called rise of true crime is a fairly new phenomenon, true crime as a literary genre or a target of interest dates back centuries.

According to Vicary and Fraley (2010: 85), a notable majority of people who consume true crime content are women. However, there has not been a clear conclusion as to why this is. Studies like Vicary and Fraley's have proposed that there might be multiple reasons behind this. Women might be more afraid of crime and draw information and even "survival-tips" from these true crime stories. Another suggestion is that consuming true crime content is a safe way for women to process dangerous, violent, and traumatic events.

As mentioned in previous sections, the way victims and especially women as victims have been talked about has stayed moderately similar over the decades and even centuries. It could be argued that by consuming and producing true crime content, women are making their own narratives about the cases, questioning the articles that may have been written from a very biased viewpoint. Much of the true crime content that is produced today is not investigative, but rather re-telling and recycling old cases (Gregoriou, 2011: 10), which further helps criticizing and commenting on the original reporting of them.

## **2.6 Entextualization**

Leppänen et al. (2014) define entextualization as "re-uses of language and textual material as resources in meaning making - [entextualization] involves two related processes: decontextualization and recontextualization". In the context of the present study, this entextualization refers to the way that facts about the case of Roseann Quinn are taken out of context and consequently reused in different articles for the writer's and/or publication's own purposes.

Instances of the use of entextualization have been shown, for example, in media transcripts (Jaffe 2009) and in transcriptions in the criminal justice system (Bucholtz



2009). In these cases, original material, i.e. interviews and trial hearing transcriptions had been written, altered, and/or presented in a way that was seen as influencing the readers of these text or other involved parties.

While the argument for entextualization has been that it can offer cohesion and clarity in transcripts and other type of text, it can be argued that this practice can also be exploited. Jaffe (2009) noted in her study that compared to expert speakers, “ordinary” speakers were more often quoted as dialect speakers and using nonstandard spellings or words. While this can emphasize authenticity, it can also decrease the sense of credibility.

In the present study, the hard news stories, meaning the original newspaper reports of the murder in 1973, are what Haberland and Mortensen (2016) called first-order entextualization. While first-order entextualizations are typically audio-visual representations, they can also be textual recordings. Second-order entextualization in the case of the present study would mainly mean the think-pieces written in the 1990's and 2010's, that were largely based on previous written accounts of the case. The challenge with textual first-order entextualization is that it is much more difficult to both document and decipher non-verbal communication via text. As a consequence, this type of entextualization in the context of newspaper articles can cause misinterpretations. When these hard news stories are used as the base for think-pieces, especially ones written decades after the first-account stories, the subsequent articles can easily turn into a textual game of telephone.

Moreover, entextualizing articles for different purposes offers the possibility to twist the original case to fit the writer's own agenda. As think-pieces are often opinionated, this can largely affect the way information based on the same set of facts is presented.

## 2.7 Previous studies

One study of a similar topic was conducted by Haig (2008: 59-60). In his study, Haig analyzed the discourse in an English radio news program, focusing particularly on segments where a shooting of an 11-year old boy by a teenager was reported. Haig (2008) used Fairclough's methods of CDA as a base of his analysis. Haig was especially interested in finding out what type of (if any) ideologies were presented via the reporting. In his study he found out that the reporting was done in a way that suggested the shooting was a local incident in a bad neighborhood, rather than an example of a bigger issue of youth gang related violence or societal problems in Liverpool. Haig (2008) also pointed out that ideologies are most effective when they go unnoticed and referred to this type of reporting as *dog-whistle journalism*, where biases were not stated outright, but heavily implied.

Although dealing with a similar topic, there are significant differences between Haig's (2008) study and this study. Haig analyzed spoken language, whereas this study deals with written news articles. Haig pointed out one considerable detail in the spoken reports, referring to a segment where an interview of a police officer was played. He pointed out that judging from the wording the officer used it was possible the part of the interview could have been edited. Haig (2008: 54) noted that: "no doubt this is generally done for essentially journalist reasons of economy and coherence but the opportunities this affords for introducing ideological bias are considerable". However, as this study analyzes written text, the structure of the news is somewhat different. Nonetheless, written reports can also easily change or omit details or rearrange aspects to fit a (ideological) bias. It could be argued that when listening to a continuous, spoken interview, the listener would be more prone to believe it was unedited compared to reading a report.

Haig (2008) also pointed out the significance of the fact that both the news radio program hosts and most of their listeners represented the same social class. This would

additionally further create a trust and a connection between the producer of the text as well as the consumer of the text, which was mentioned in Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional model.

Another study analyzing agendas, affiliations and biases in newspaper reporting was done by Teo (2000), who in his study focused on how racist ideologies were exhibited in newspaper articles in the case of Asian immigrants in Australia. Similarly to Haig (2008), who was focusing on the issue of biased reporting as a problem on a societal level, one of the main focus points on Teo's (2000) study was how racism and racist reporting was neutralized through covert journalism. Teo analyzed his data on a broader level, according to general characterization of newspaper discourse, as well as more specifically according to their transitivity, thematization and lexical cohesion.

In his study Teo (2000) found out that different newspapers wrote about the same issue very contradictorily. This was demonstrated by how the information was presented in the articles and how lexical cohesion affected the way the two opposing sides in the articles (Australian police and Vietnamese drug gang 5T [who were made into a stereotype which represented Asian immigrants in general]). Teo (2000) also pointed out that the racist reporting is made possible by the ones in power, i.e. owners in media industry who are predominantly white in Australia. Consequently, the part of the Australian population who represented something else than this powerful, white elite were often vilified or sensationalized.

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

In this chapter the methodology of the study will be elaborated. The first section will focus on the aim of this study and the research questions and clarify them. Secondly, the case of Roseann Quinn will be discussed briefly to present the events and facts of the case as sequentially as possible, also aiming to be as objective as possible. This is done in order to give a basis for the following sections in which the data collection is explained further. Additionally, it aims to provide an objective point for comparison when analyzing the data in the later chapters. Next, the points of data collection will be elaborated. As the data has been collected from three different time periods, these sections will give justifications for each of them and describe how and why this particular data was chosen for the study. Finally, the methods of analysis will be talked about in more detail and how they are applied for this data.

#### **3.1 Aim and research questions**

The aim of this study is to identify and critically analyze the different discourses that are used in the reporting of Roseann Quinn's murder. This is done by analyzing each of the articles on their own. The study also aims to compare and contrast the articles and therefore analyze the differences in discourses, and what kind of effect these differences might have on the way the information is consumed and internalized. While analyzing the articles on a textual level, this study also focuses on the larger context in which the articles were written in.

The purpose of this study is to recognize and analyze the possibility of biases in newspaper articles. These biases might be perceived as positive or negative, but nevertheless it could be argued that it is vitally important to be aware of their existence. As biases can be used to reassert power relations, it could be argued that CDA could help to identify these biases and where they stem from. Ideally news reporting and the information that we are given, we provide, and we process would be absolutely objective. As this is virtually impossible, recognizing biases as well as possessing the

skills to critically analyze news helps us to construct a more objective picture of the events. This study focuses on the reporting of one specific case, but arguably the methods and information presented in this study could be utilized in different settings as well. As the study analyzes articles from different time periods, it also shows how news reporting has changed or alternatively how it has stayed the same, as well as showing what type of biases seem to be the most prominent in each era.

The research questions of this study are the following:

1. How is the discourse about Quinn's case represented in the hard news stories and think-pieces?
2. How do the discourses that can be identified in the think-pieces entextualize Quinn's story?
3. What socio-cultural factors could have impacted the discourse of the articles?

### **3.2 The case of Roseann Quinn**

The case whose reporting was chosen to be analyzed in this study is the murder of Roseann Quinn. This particular case was chosen, as it has been written about in several news publications at the time of the crime as well as over the years. The significantly differing accounts of the events and Quinn's lifestyle also offer an interesting case for analysis. Finally, it could be argued that these reportings have taken place during socio-culturally critical time periods for women and as such offer an accurate cross-section of women's position in the media.

Quinn was murdered in her apartment on January 2nd, 1973, in New York City. She was a 28-year-old teacher, who taught hearing-impaired children ("The Real "Goodbar" Murder" 2018). After Quinn was found dead in her apartment, her murder was widely reported in several newspapers, which led to several different accounts

of her lifestyle to be reported and talked about. Different publications had contrasting descriptions of the events as well as about Quinn as a person (Ferri 2016). After police investigation, a suspect named John Wilson emerged and was subsequently arrested. Wilson had previously confessed the murder to his friend. Wilson was held in prison waiting for trial, but he died by suicide before the trial began ("The Real "Goodbar" Murder" 2018).

In addition, a book based loosely on the case of Roseann Quinn was written by Judith Rossner and published in 1975. Later the book, *Looking for Mr. Goodbar*, was also made into a movie by the same name. As such, Quinn's murder has often been called the "real Goodbar murder" ("The Real "Goodbar" Murder" 2018).

### 3.3. Data

The data consist of news articles covering and discussing the murder of Roseann Quinn. The articles were chosen from certain time periods ranging from 1973 to 2015. The articles consist of text (including headlines, subtitles, intros and body text) as well as images. The main focus of the study is the written discourse of the articles. As the permission to use the images of the news article was not granted, the images will be not specifically focused on in the study. However, as the images, along with the text, form the full experience of consuming news articles, any images deemed crucial to the analysis will be described.

The news publications chosen for this study are both local newspaper and digital publications. The articles from 1973 were chosen mainly as they were the first ones to report the case. The newspapers chosen for this were two local publications in New York and one publication from New Jersey, as at the time the case was not yet widely reported. The later articles, written in 1973, 1999 and 2015 are written more in the style of a think-piece. This is understandable, as there is no need to report the case like it would have been a recent event.

**Table 1: Overview of the articles**

Publication	Article Title	Author(s)	Year
The New York Times	Teacher, 28, Slain in Her Apartment on West 72 <sup>nd</sup> Street	Michael T. Kaufman	1973
The New York Daily News	Young Teacher Slain in West Side Flat	John Randazzo, Henry Lee	1973
The Herald News	Stab victim from Morris	AP	1973
The News Journal	...Or She Can Court Danger in the City	Judy Klemesrud	1973
Mail on Sunday	Could <i>Sex and the City</i> Lead to Murder?	Sharon Churcher	1999
Newsweek	You Can't Kill Mr. Goodbar	Alexander Nazaryan	2015

### 3.3.1 Articles from 1973

Three articles from 1973 were chosen for analysis. All of the three articles were published on January 5th, 1973, one in *The New York Times*, one in *The New York Daily News* and one in *The Herald News*. These three articles were chosen, as they have been written and published immediately after the homicide happened and as such are very likely the first reports of the case to the public. Moreover, it could be argued that these articles were written in order to provide a sequential report of the events. The articles that were written about the case later, but within a fairly short time frame could be considered think-pieces, which are often written from an obvious angle, as opposed to news reporting. Therefore, it would be more beneficial to study sequential news reports, as they are assumed to be more objective. These reports also acted as the main source of information to the public who wished to know more about the case.

Additionally, these three articles seem to contain roughly the same information and as such would be ideal for contrasting and comparing.

The articles chosen from 1973 are selected newspaper reporting from the actual case. This was also a time in Western world's history when the Women's Liberation Movement had begun to draw attention, emerging in the late 1960's (Piven, Bronnen & Ness 2015: 422). According to Piven et al. (2015: 425-426), the Women's Liberation Movement strived to improve women's position in society in many sectors, including bodily autonomy, economic independence, and position in the labor market.

Consequently, the movement was not immune to backlash (Piven et al. 2015: 427), which could also be seen in the murder of Roseann Quinn and the reporting of it. Montaldo (2019) writes in his article that Quinn's lifestyle choices were scrutinized in the press and her story was made into a cautionary tale of what would happen if and when women would adopt these liberal views. Brownmiller (1973), points out in her article written a few weeks after the homicide that even as a victim of a violent crime, reporters tried to first and foremost portray Quinn as a beautiful woman. She also argued that cases such as Quinn's are often written to titillate the readers and awake their curiosity. As one of the think-pieces was also written in 1973, and arguably as a response to Quinn's case, it can be seen how the aforementioned societal and cultural climate affected it as well.

### **3.3.2 Article from 1999**

The article chosen for analysis is a think-piece published in a British newspaper *The Mail on Sunday* on February 14th, 1999. *The Mail on Sunday* is considered a conservative newspaper, as opposed to previously mentioned *The New York Times* and *The New York Daily News*, which are considered as left-leaning and populist publications, respectively. *The Mail on Sunday* article is comparing the TV show *Sex and The City* to the murder of Roseann Quinn. *Sex and the City* had premiered on TV the previous year, and was considered an embodiment of second-wave feminism, or post-feminism,



where women were portrayed as not only economically, emotionally and sexually independent, but also able to pursue different pleasures freely in New York City (Arthurs 2003; Brasfield 2006).

The author of the article questions whether broadcasting a show like *Sex and the City* will encourage women to act irresponsibly and end up ultimately with a similar fate to Roseann Quinn's. As the article is written as a think-piece, it naturally differs from sequential news reports which attempt to present just the facts. As such, it is in its nature more opinionated and has more descriptive language. This type of think-piece allows its writer more freedom to present the topic from an angle and to have a clear bias. Consequently, it might not be beneficial to compare it to the aforementioned news reports as the two types of articles are so different. However, it is still valuable to analyze it as an article talking about the case, and as a portrayal of women in media at the time.

As previously mentioned, in the article *Sex and the City* is seen as an ill-considered example to women that they can act however they want without the possibility of serious consequences. The fate of Roseann Quinn is portrayed as the consequence. Additionally, in the article both the show and Quinn's fate were considered to be the outcomes of feminism, which, as an ideology, was depicted very negatively. However, during its broadcasting on TV, *Sex and the City* received a lot of criticism from feminists, arguing that its portrayal of women represented a prototype of a wealthy, privileged Caucasian woman and as such was not an inclusive representation (Brasfield 2006). Thus, it could be said that although the show made a remarkable impact at the time, both feminists and those not agreeing with feminist ideologies used it as a "bad example" for their own gain to promote their own agendas.

### **3.3.3 Article from 2015**

The article from 2015 was chosen due to the increasing popularity of true crime in the 2010's (Lawson 2015). Older crime cases that are considered to be fascinating are being

brought to light again. The title of the 2015 article *You Can't Kill Mr. Goodbar* also refers to the previously mentioned book which was based on Roseann Quinn's story. The article was written in a mostly all-digital publication *Newsweek*. Additionally, all types of true crime content is mainly consumed by women (Vicary and Fraley 2010), and it could be argued that cases to which women can somehow relate to are more interesting to them.

In the article the author compares Quinn's case to the current atmosphere in New York City, as well as reminisces about his own life in the city. He also discusses other cases like Quinn's, but the main focus is on her murder as well as on the book, *You Can't Kill Mr. Goodbar*. Like the 1999 article, this is written as think-piece as well. However, their initial messages are vastly different, which would make them ideal for comparison. Both of these articles also mention similar topics, like feminism and the show *Sex and the City*. Nevertheless, these topics are discussed what seems to be from the opposite ends of a spectrum.

This article was written roughly at the same time as the shift from third-wave feminism to fourth-wave feminism. Fourth-wave feminism emphasizes the emergence of feminism on the Internet, which allows global discussion and activism (Munro 2013). Arguably this, along with the expanding popularity of true crime allows women to construct and curate their own narratives about these events that were previously written as a cautionary tale or in a way that put women to blame. Within these new narratives there exists a sense of camaraderie.

Moreover, the fact that this article was written originally to be published digitally, as opposed to the other articles that were only later digitally archived, affects the way it is consumed. Digital publications naturally have the prospect of achieving a considerably larger audience than traditional printed newspapers. Consequently, it also offers several ways for the reader to interact with the article, for example commenting on it or sharing it on different social media platforms.

### **3.4 Methods**

The aforementioned data will be analyzed on three levels, according to Fairclough's (1995; 2003) three-dimensional model and GDS model. First is a text analysis, which will focus on details such as semantic relation and lexical choices. This text analysis will also tie to the analysis on the genre and its conventions. Secondly, the data will be analyzed as to how it might be interpreted by the readers or what type of interpretations the writer might have been trying to induce. The third level will be the explanation analysis. In other words, what is the societal and cultural environment these articles were written in, and how does that affect the way they were written. To conclude, the following chapter includes an analysis of the headlines, the body text and the context.

As the method of analysis for this study is critical discourse analysis, topics of particular interest will be power structures and the representation of power in the articles. As the subject in each of these articles is the same, Roseann Quinn, the analysis will focus on how she is represented, and which position she holds in these articles. This means to analyze how she is seen as a subject, as a victim of a crime, as a woman, and so on. Whether she is presented to have any power in her situation. Consequently, the analysis of the position of power and how it comes across in each of them is included.

### **3.5 Research ethics**

The ethical question concerning this study is that it deals with a sensitive subject matter: a violent murder of a woman. As the articles used as a data talk about a real occurrence and include real people, it is essential that the topic is discussed delicately and tactfully. In addition, the person in the focus of this study, Roseann Quinn, cannot give consent for the use of her story as a research material. However, as all of the data used in this study is available to the public and has been published before in various news outlets, analyzing this data does not invade Quinn's privacy. Additionally, the

purpose of this study is not to critique Quinn's person, but simply the way she and the events of her life and death were reported.

Most of the articles used as data in this study were accessed through an online newspaper archive newspapers.com. Additionally, permission to use *The New York Daily News* article for research purposes was granted from the newspaper.

## 4 HARD NEWS STORIES

The data will be analyzed further in two parts: first, the hard news articles will be presented and analyzed in the light of the research questions. Secondly, the data from the think-pieces from three different time periods will be presented and analyzed. The justification of this is analyzing the data according to the articles' genre, as hard news stories and think-pieces typically have different structures and functions. However, both parts of the data will be analyzed using Fairclough three-dimensional-model, as well as the GDS model.

### 4.1 General structure of the articles

According to Bednarek and Caple (2012: 99), there is a general agreement that hard news stories are not written in chronological order. News stories also tend to start with the most salient information and add more details and information that is not deemed as important further in the article. Even when reporting the same case, there might be some differences in what newspapers consider to be the most newsworthy information.

For example, *The NY Times* (1973) article's body text starts with how the murder was not properly reported to the central police in a timely manner, which delayed it being made public knowledge via media. In *The NY Daily News* (1973) article, this same information is disclosed further into the article, after reporting how Quinn was attacked and killed and that she failed to report to her job. There was no mention of this in *The Herald News* (1973) article.

In general, all of the three articles end with information that, while giving the story and Quinn's character some substance, is not essential information. *The NY Times* (1973) article's second half is quotes from Quinn's neighbors and acquaintances and about the safety concerns of her apartment building and the general area. *The NY Daily News* (1973) article ends with quotes about her personality from people she knew, in

addition with a repetition of her family background. *The Herald News* (1973) article's structure is very similar to *The NY Daily News* (1973), giving the same information. Consequently, *The NY Times* (1973) article does not seem to be trying to achieve a personal touch to the story. While her acquaintances are interviewed, not much about her personality is mentioned.

## **4.2 Descriptive words**

Preliminarily, the data of this study will be categorized according to different main similarities and/or differences in wordings. This part of the analysis will focus on comparing what type of descriptive words are used to describe the victim, Roseann Quinn, and the crime that took place. In the case of this study, descriptive words mean words and phrases (including but not limited to adjectives) that are used to describe and elaborate the details of the case. The purpose of studying descriptive words is to critically analyze the necessity and connotations that certain words have. In addition, by comparing the descriptive language used in each article, it is possible to analyze what type of details each author and publication deems newsworthy. However, as Fairclough (1995: 57-58) stated, change in form does not necessarily mean change in meaning. Nevertheless, this section will aim to analyze the different meanings of different forms, and if the possible differences are only due to individual writers or trying deliberately to convey a certain meaning. This section will focus on the three hard news stories that were published in 1973. The analysis will include all parts of the articles, headlines, intros and body text. The newspapers in which the articles were published were *The New York Times*, *The New York Daily News* and *The Herald News*. Each of these articles were published within days after the crime occurred.

### **4.2.1 Headlines**

Understandably newspapers not only have certain guidelines to write their headlines, but they also need to be brief and attract interest from readers. Therefore, newspapers might sometimes aim for sensationalist headlines in order to increase sales, or web

traffic and clicks in the digital age. Including adjectives such as “young” to the headline might attract more interest.

**Table 2: Overview of the newspaper headlines**

<i>The New York Times</i> (1973)	<i>The New York Daily News</i> (1973)	<i>The Herald News</i> (1973)
Teacher, 28, Slain In Her Apartment on West 72nd Street	Young Teacher Slain in West Side Apartment	Stab victim from Morris

*The NY Times* (1973) article reads: “Teacher, 28, Slain In Her Apartment On West 72d Street”. This headline does not include any descriptive words, other than stating the occupation of the victim. *The Herald News* (1973) headline is: “Stab victim from Morris”. This headline refers to Morris County in New Jersey, the home county of the victim. Otherwise the headline does not give any information about the victim. *The NY Daily News* (1973) headline is: “Young Teacher Slain in West Side Apartment”. Similar to *The NY Times* (1973) headline, this headline also mentions the victim’s occupation. Additionally, the author of the article has used the adjective *young* to describe the victim. It could be argued that this headline as well as the one from *The NY Times* (1973) gives the most information about the victim. However, the significance of the descriptive words can be debated. As an example, while it could be argued that both *young* and 28 could be used to describe a person who is not old and, in fact, quite young, using just *young* leaves more room for speculation, as it does not disclose the victim’s actual age. Rather, it focuses on the victim’s youth.

Interestingly, both *The NY Times* (1973) and *The NY Daily News* (1973) articles mention the occupation of the victim in their headlines, whereas *The Herald News* (1973) mentions her hometown. The latter could be explained by the fact that *The Herald News* (1973) is a New Jersey publication, which was also the birthplace of the victim, which in turn might attract more interest in local newspaper readers. It could be argued that mentioning the occupation of the victim was done in order to create certain

connotations. Teachers might be seen as educators of children, which might increase the level or horridness associated with the crime. Additionally, according to Ingersoll, Merrill and Stuckey (2014), during the 1970's the vast majority of teachers were women, therefore stating the occupation might give some indication of the victim's gender.

Whereas *The NY Times* (1973) and *The NY Daily News* (1973) use the verb *slain* in their headlines, *The Herald News* (1973) uses the expression *stab victim*. Each of these give the reader general information of what has happened. However, *slain* also seems to indicate that the death of the victim was particularly violent. It is also a shorter word than for example *murdered*, making it more appropriate for a headline. Additionally, it could be argued that while it gives the impression of a violent death, it is not as graphic as *murdered*. It is also more descriptive than using *killed*, which could also mean an accidental death.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the text and the sociocultural practice are connected to each other through discourse practice. As an example, the text "Young Teacher Slain in West Side Apartment". The sociocultural practice that this headline is tied to could be, that as most of the teachers at the time were women, the reader will assume that the victim is a woman, which, in turn, is the discourse practice of consumption of the text. Similarly, the text and the context in which the text will be perceived in are tied through the writer of the text, who is affected by the societal and cultural environment of the time.

#### **4.2.2 Intros**

The intro of a newspaper article, or a *lead*, is typically a short paragraph that summarizes the article in an attention-grabbing way. It usually contains all the main information in a few sentences (Bednarek and Caple 2012: 97). In the following examples 1-3 are the intros of *The NY Times* (1973), *The NY Daily News* (1973) and *The Herald News* (1973) articles.



**Example 1**

A 28-year-old teacher of deaf children was found knifed to death in the efficiency apartment on West 72nd Street, to which she had moved because she was impressed by the comparative security of the building and the street. (*The New York Times*, January 5th, 1973)

**Example 2**

The body of an attractive young teacher who had dedicated her life to helping the handicapped was found naked, apparently raped, stabbed 18 times and brutally beaten in her small West Side apartment, police disclosed yesterday. (*The New York Daily News*, January 5th, 1973)

**Example 3**

Cheerful, quiet and dedicated to teaching deaf children were the way acquaintances described 28-year-old Roseann Quinn after learning she had been brutally murdered in her small upper West Side apartment. (*The Herald News*, January 5th, 1973)

While all of the intros provide roughly the same information, it is presented in varying ways. Comparing these intros show an exemplary example of change in form causing change in meaning. In Example 1, the intro expands on the headline by telling that the victim was specifically a teacher of deaf children. This intro does not describe the victim further but focuses on the tragicness of her moving into the building for its safety, yet still ending up being killed. Additionally, it mentions the victim being knifed to death, which gives a clear and somewhat graphic image of the events but is also very different from the expressions the other newspaper used to convey the same information.

Example 2 relies on several descriptive words about the victim. She is described as young, attractive, being found naked, apparently raped, stabbed, and brutally beaten. Whereas Example 1 offers comparatively compact information about the victim and the way she was killed, Example 2 uses descriptive words that could arguably be considered as non-essential information. Using adjectives such as *young*, *attractive*, and *naked* might be used as attention-grabbing words to rouse the public's interest in the story. Journalist Susan Brownmiller (1973) went as far as suggesting that these types of terms describing a woman victim were particularly used in order to make the victim alluring and even a fantasy to mostly male readers. Brownmiller was especially considering Roseann Quinn's case in her article.

Example 3 also uses several descriptive words, including *cheerful*, *quiet*, and *dedicated*. It could be argued that as opposed to Example 2, these adjectives give the impression of innocence. Moreover, these are reported to be words that her acquaintances used to describe her, rather than the reporter writing the article. The explanation to this could be, as previously mentioned, that *The Herald News* (1973) was her hometown news publication, and the reporting might have been aiming for a “girl next door” narrative. By interviewing Quinn’s acquaintances, the aim might also be to convey a collective style: the victim was a local, known girl, rather than just someone from New York City. Roughly categorizing it could be said that Example 1 is the most straightforward, factual and simple description of the events, Example 2 the most sensationalist, focusing on the victim’s looks, and Example 3 focused on her image as a person in a society.

Examples 2 and 3 both use the word *brutally* to describe the way the victim was killed, while Example 2 also mentions that she was stabbed 18 times. These words give the impression of an especially violent crime. Arguably, the expression used in Example 1 *knifed to death* is not as explicit. Additionally, Example 2 used unconfirmed presumption that the victim was raped, a claim which was later proved to be untrue (*The New York Daily News* 1973)

All of the three intros mentioned Roseann Quinn’s occupation as a teacher. It could be argued that this represents the cultural environment as well as the genre of news: mentioning the occupation of a murder victim, rather than using some other identifier. This, as will be explained in the following, also shows that these news texts have had some leeway when written, causing a varying portrayal of her occupation as a teacher. While Examples 1 and 3 describe her as a teacher of deaf children, Example 2 uses the expression “teacher who had dedicated her life to helping the handicapped”. It is noteworthy that these headlines and the expression in them that describe Quinn’s hearing-impaired students are most likely era appropriate, while they would not likely be appropriate terms to use today. As such, this analysis will not be focusing on this aspect. However, there is a significant difference between “teacher of deaf children”

and “helping the handicapped”. The latter might, for example, give the impression that Quinn was doing volunteer work with handicapped people. It could be argued that this specific phrase is used in order to portray her as particularly philanthropic and bring attention to the narrative that a person like her being murdered would be especially tragic.

### 4.2.3 Body text

The analysis of descriptive language in the body text first analyzes mentions of Quinn’s appearance. Secondly, the analysis will focus on her occupation. Finally, the study will analyze other notable descriptive language in the articles that do not necessarily appear in every article. This division has been made due to her appearance and occupation being two of the main points mentioned several times in each of the articles. Additionally, each article has other descriptive details about her and her life, which while not necessarily mentioned in every article, are noteworthy in analysis. Table 3 shows the complete list of adjectives used in each article.

### Appearance

*The NY Times* (1973) article’s only mentions of Quinn’s appearance were reported as said by a bartender of a bar Quinn frequented. According to the article, he described her as “a strawberry blonde. She had polio when she was a kid and walked with a slight limp”. It could be assumed that these specific sentences were picked from a longer interview but chosen deliberately to be included. The mention of Quinn having a limp from polio could have been made in order to make her seem more vulnerable. Interestingly, in both *The NY Daily News* (1973) article as well as *The Herald News* (1973) article Quinn is described as red-headed. However, this could be only a subjective memory of a witness compared to actual reports of Quinn. As such, it is noteworthy both here and further in the analysis that word choices might not be due to the writers’ decisions, but them only reporting what other people have said about Quinn.

As mentioned earlier, in *The NY Daily News* (1973) intro Quinn was described as being naked, the same is mentioned in *The Herald News* (1973) article's body text. The author mentions Quinn's nude body. Arguably the words *naked* and *nude* have different connotations. *Nude* is often associated with e.g. art, whereas *naked* is a more neutral term. It could also be questioned whether the word *nude* would have been used, if the victim had been a man.

*The NY Daily News* (1973) article mentions Quinn's appearance notably more often than the other articles. Additionally to the aforementioned, Quinn is described as *slim, 5-foot-5*, when reporting how the perpetrator had assaulted her. This, similarly to mentioning her having had polio, could have been mentioned in order to create a Discourse of vulnerability, especially in contrast to describing how she was attacked. Table 3 illustrates these significant differences in describing Quinn's appearance in each article.

### **Occupation**

All of the three articles focus heavily on Roseann Quinn's occupation as a teacher. As stated previously, it is mentioned in every headline and intro, and further elaborated in the body texts. In *The NY Times* (1973) article, although Quinn's occupation had been mentioned in the intro (Example 1), it is immediately mentioned again in the beginning of the body text: "Although the murder of the teacher, Roseann Quinn, was reported to the police Wednesday morning...". Additionally, her dedication to her job is mentioned. She is described by a friend as "very dedicated to her work", and how she would go above and beyond to tend her students with breakfast.

Similarly, *The NY Daily News* (1973) article talks about her commitment to her job and students, stating how she "voluntarily stayed after school to help [her students]". In addition, her colleagues described her as "a friendly, pleasing personality, not only with the children but also with the other teachers". These same details are again repeated in *The Herald News* (1973) article. A neighbor recalls that Quinn was

“dedicated to her work”, and her colleagues are again cited saying how “she often volunteered ... to give extra help to students”.

Arguably, all of these descriptions of her paint the picture of a great teacher, who cared about her students. While these details are not necessary information when reporting the case, they give substance to her character and contribute to the image that the readers create of her.

## **Other**

*The NY Times* (1973) article focuses heavily on both Quinn’s building’s and the area’s safety and previous incidents that had taken place recently. It is also mentioned how the area was somewhat unsafe, even though Quinn had moved into the building particularly because she thought it was safe.

Additionally, *The NY Times* (1973) article writes how a neighbor of Quinn’s told “she had no regular boyfriend but was the type of girl who would have a guy in if he brought her home”. Description like this is very ambiguous and seemingly leaves it up to the reader to interpret what is meant by that. Another interviewee said that he had seen Quinn with a date, and she had seemed happy. Although neither of these descriptions states anything outright, it could be argued that it is heavily implied that the perpetrator is someone Quinn brought home. Additionally, although both of these descriptions seem to leave the interpretation to the reader, the writer of the article, as well as possible editorial procedures work as a transmitter of sorts. They create the discourse practice, which also includes the consumption of the text. However, the text is available for consumption only after the process of writing it.

Although *The NY Daily News* (1973) article leads with Quinn being a teacher in both the headline and the intro, the body text starts with describing her as a daughter of a New Jersey executive, meaning her father. In the other articles her family and hometown are mentioned later in the article, telling about her family members and

their occupations. *The NY Daily News* (1973) also mentions the rest of her family later in the article.

As previously mentioned, *The NY Times* (1973) article does not particularly mention Quinn's personality, unlike the other two articles. In fact, the details the article reports seem downright impersonal, such as "she was a strawberry blonde", "she had had polio" and "she was evidently an average student". While this could be due to the fact that the article wants to focus on "hard facts" only, it can be debated if details such as quotes about her personality could or should be used in order to invoke more of an emotional response from the readers or create a certain Discourse.

**Table 3: Adjectives describing Roseann Quinn**

	<i>The New York Times</i> (1973)	<i>The NY Daily News</i> (1973)	<i>The Herald News</i> (1973)
Personality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● very dedicated</li> <li>● an average student</li> <li>● (had seemed) happy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● (had seemed) very happy</li> <li>● friendly</li> <li>● pleasing personality</li> <li>● easy to meet</li> <li>● nice to know</li> <li>● dedicated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● cheerful</li> <li>● quiet</li> <li>● dedicated</li> <li>● punctual</li> <li>● sweet</li> <li>● different</li> <li>● shy</li> <li>● very nice</li> </ul>
Appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● strawberry blonde</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● young</li> <li>● attractive</li> <li>● naked</li> <li>● slim</li> <li>● 5-foot-5</li> <li>● redheaded</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● nude</li> <li>● red-haired</li> </ul>

### 4.3 The crime

All three of the articles describe the way Quinn was attacked and her injuries early on in the articles, as these details would be considered as essential information. The following examples 4-6 show how the same information has been published by each of these newspapers.

#### Example 4

Miss Quinn's body had been found on a sofa and that she had been repeatedly stabbed. A hollow sculptured bust of a woman had been placed on her face, they said. An autopsy by a medical examiner showed that Miss Quinn had been raped and that she had been stabbed 14 times. The examiner said there were bruises on her face. (*The New York Times*, January 5th, 1973)

#### Example 5

...she had been stabbed six times in her stomach and 12 times in the neck. He said she had been beaten or punched severely in the face. A statuette of her likeness, weighing about 65 pounds, was found lying across her face ... Apparently the killer had picked up the bust – a likeness of Roseann – and smashed her full in the face with it. He also had punched her face. (*The New York Daily News*, January 5th, 1973)

#### Example 6

...stabbed her 18 times, beat her about the face and left her nude body on a couch. (*The Herald News*, January 5th, 1973)

Examples 4 and 5 have notably longer descriptions of her attack and injuries, compared to Example 6. Whereas Example 4 mentions that a bust had been placed on her face, Example 5 describes this as a statuette looking like Roseann had been used to attack her. These two reports create two vastly different images of the situation. In Example 4 it is also mentioned that there were bruises on her face, possibly implying that the bust had been used to inflict these. However, it is not stated outright. Example 5 gives a clear indication of this happening, reporting it twice in consecutive sentences. Example 6 only mentions that the perpetrator had “beat her about the face”, which gives clear information of the events, but omits any further details. Nevertheless, as previously stated, the intro does mention that she had been “brutally murdered”, which can give the readers some indication about the severity of the case.

However, in the brief description Example 6 does mention that Quinn's *nude* body was left on a couch. When disclosing so few details about the attack and injuries, it is an interesting choice to leave in a mention that Quinn was naked. As mentioned before, the word *nude* also has different connotations than *naked*, and as such has most likely been a conscious choice of words.

*The NY Times* (1973) article's intro declares that Quinn had been knifed to death in an apartment in which she had moved because she was *impressed* with the apartment's safety. However, later in the article this is revealed to be a quote by a bartender who *knew her passingly*. Additionally, he is quoted saying that Quinn moved away from her previous apartment because *she felt afraid there*, which does not imply that she was impressed by her new building's safety. Arguably the phrasing could have been chosen for the intro to point out the irony of the situation.

#### **4.4 Discussion**

Analyzing what type of image each of the article discourse gives to the reader is difficult, as this is a very subjective experience. However, by identifying certain patterns and choices made by the author, it is arguably possible to come into conclusions on what kind of messages, implications and Discourses the author has tried to achieve. Additionally, all of these articles have several relations regarding power structures between them. There is the person creating the article; they have most likely interviewed people who knew Quinn, and people who are involved in the investigation of her death. The writer makes the decision as to what details, what parts of the interviews to include in the article, and how to present them. Moreover, as these articles were written for a newspaper, there is most likely the power relation between the news publication and the people who are in charge, and the writer. The publication's management might give certain assignments to a reporter. They might be involved with the editing process of the article, therefore deciding what will or will not be included. The newspaper might also be affiliated with different beliefs, such as political or religious, which might affect the way treat the topic of an article. Next,



possibly the party most susceptible to the potential abuse of power is the reader. In the simplest sense, the only information they have about the event that was the subject of the article, is the only the information the article provides. However, typically there is more information available, in addition to which the reader makes their own decision whether they choose to believe the information the article provides or not. Although both the production and consumption of the text are on the same level on Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional model, the latter is more susceptible. However, this is not to say that the production process would not be affected by different influences, such as the socio-cultural environment.

*The NY Daily News* (1973) article uses more adjectives to describe Quinn's appearance than the other articles. Judging only by the number of adjectives, it could be said that the author wanted to paint a vivid picture of Quinn to the reader, possibly making her feel more tangible and easier for the readers to picture. However, when analyzing what type of adjectives were used, it could be argued that this was not the only thing the writer wanted to achieve. As shown in Table 3, the writer used adjectives that made Quinn sound beautiful, possibly even sexy. Additionally, the bust that was used to attack her was mentioned twice, as well as the detail that the bust had the *likeness* of Roseann. As it seems this detail is highlighted, it might make the readers focus on it. Arguably they might think what type of person has a bust of themselves. This combined with descriptions of her looks might give the impression of vanity, although this impression is purely constructed by the writer. However, as Roseann Quinn's case is one of the many that has been used as a cautionary tale of "a woman alone" or "a liberal woman", it is plausible that the writer tried to imply this narrative. As previously mentioned, it is also possible that as Brownmiller (1973) suggested, Quinn was portrayed as a fantasy. This argument is supported by the way Quinn is described in the article, e.g. "Redheaded Roseann Quinn ... was found sprawled on a convertible bed" and "Apparently, after stabbing the slim, 5-foot-5 in the neck and abdomen, the killer had picked up the bust".

While there is evidence that *The NY Times* (1973) might have been pursuing a more fact-based and neutral reporting, taking a deeper look into the article might unveil biases that the article's author had. It is mentioned several times that Quinn moved into the apartment because she felt safe there, and because she had felt unsafe in her previous apartment. Additionally, several previous crimes taking place in the area are mentioned, including a murder of a young woman. The article also talks about the area's drug problem, it being nicknamed *Needle Park*. Arguably, these details are linked to the aforementioned "a woman alone" narrative, as well as how women are and possibly even should be scared of living alone in the big city. As mentioned earlier, a neighbor was quoted saying that Quinn had no regular boyfriend but was the type to *bring a guy in*. This is a peculiar detail to include, and it can be seen as feeding into the bias that single women who live alone in the city are irresponsible and their lifestyle (i.e. dating life) can lead to tragic outcomes.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, this crime took place around the time of the Women's Liberation Movement and second wave feminism (Piven et al. 2015). As women were fighting for things like independence, bodily autonomy and sexual freedom, the idea of "a liberal woman" emerged. As pointed out by Dow (2014), often these ideas of "a liberal woman" were ridiculed and questioned by people who preferred the more traditional and stereotypical image of a woman. As such, the biases of the era can be seen in different texts, including newspaper articles. While it would be ideal that news would strive for objectivity and a "just the facts" approach at all times, news stories are always written by individuals with their own views. They also often go through editorial procedures and are published through different news agencies that may hold their own collective agendas.

As mentioned above in the analysis of the headlines, while both *The NY Times* (1973) article and *The NY Daily News* (1973) article headlines mention Quinn's occupation as a teacher, *The Herald News* (1973) article identifies her as a *stab victim from Morris*. Consequently, it seems she wanted to be identified as a New Jerseyan.

*The Herald News* (1973) article is much more cautious with its word choices. Whereas *The NY Times* (1973) and *The NY Daily News* (1973) quote the Deputy Chief Medical Examiner stating that she had been stabbed, her face had been beaten with a bust and that she had been raped or apparently raped, *The Herald News* (1973) quotes the Medical Examiner saying: “an autopsy on the body showed evidence of possible rape. Numerous facial bruises were probably the result of punching”. It is noteworthy that the other articles left out words indicating uncertainty, when quoting the same person. While a detail like this is not a blatant example of omitting or editing information in order to make it suit an agenda, it shows that even small details can affect a news story. It could be argued that *The Herald News* (1973) quotation is likely the more accurate one, as it would not be beneficial for the newspaper to tone down information about the case, and it can be expected that very early in a crime investigation it is risky to make definite statements.

It is also plausible that as *The Herald News* (1973) wanted to maintain a “girl-next-door” narrative with Quinn, they did not disclose many graphic details. As mentioned earlier and demonstrated in Table 3, the adjectives *The Herald News* (1973) chose to describe Quinn made her sound quite innocent. In addition to this, two employees of Quinn’s former high school were interviewed: Sister Virginia Reilly and Sister Mary Catherine. Arguably, it is quite unusual that the former high school teachers of a 28-year-old woman would be interviewed for an article like the one in question. The reasons for this could be, that the paper wanted to bring forward more local color, or they wanted to highlight the appearance of Quinn’s innocence by interviewing two nuns saying how she had been *quiet, cheerful and sweet*. In comparison, *The NY Times* (1973) and *The NY Daily News* (1973) could have been aiming for shock value, possibly in order to increase sales of the paper by making the public more invested in the story and how it will develop.

In each of these articles, the writer has ultimately decided what is desirable or undesirable (Fairclough 2003). From *The NY Times* (1973) article it could be concluded that Roseann’s lifestyle was portrayed as somewhat both. She was described as a

teacher of deaf children, who often volunteered her time with her students. However, she was also described as a young, single woman, living in an unsafe area, going to bars and bringing dates home. The variation in how she was described becomes quite stark, when comparing *The NY Times* (1973) article and *The Herald News* (1973) article. Whereas *The NY Times* (1973) interviewed bartenders in a bar she frequented, *The Herald News* (1973) interviewed nuns who used to teach her a decade earlier. This does not only illustrate the Discourse that these publications were aiming to create, but also the contradictory identities they aimed to assign to Quinn.

*The NY Daily News* (1973) article, with its several adjectives about Quinn's appearance, seemingly focuses more on the so-called "beautiful dead girl" trope. This trope that is often linked to TV shows and movies, has also been part of real-life crime reporting for a long time (Clarke 2018; Frank 2017). The narrative of a "beautiful dead girl" means that a crime, especially a murder, is particularly tragic as well as interesting when the victim is a beautiful, young, typically Caucasian woman. *The NY Daily News* (1973) article was also the only one of these three articles that included a picture of Quinn<sup>1</sup>. The picture of Quinn is likely a faculty photograph taken for her job as a teacher, and it shows a headshot-style picture of smiling Roseann Quinn. The caption reads: *Roseann Quinn – slain in her apartment*. Another larger picture is also included in the article. The picture shows Quinn's apartment building lobby, facing the front doors and a doorman walking towards the doors. For this image, the caption reads: "Doorman looks from lobby of W. 72nd St. apartment house where Roseann Quinn was murdered." Including a picture of the deceased person is not uncommon, but when comparing to the other two articles, it is plausible that *The NY Daily News* (1973) were using her picture to reinforce the "beautiful dead girl" narrative.

However, no matter how the article has been written, the reader always positions themselves in relation to the subject matter. Their own views and experiences affect the way they react to a news story. Some people might read *The NY Times* (1973) article

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<sup>1</sup> This study will not include the pictures used in the articles, as the author did not receive a permission to use them. However, pictures are described when it is deemed as important for the analysis.

and come to the conclusion that while Quinn's death was tragic, she also led a high-risk lifestyle. Others might read *The Herald News* (1973) article and just think how tragic it was that such an innocent young woman, a fine educator who volunteered and had attended Catholic high school was murdered. Obviously, these are somewhat extreme conclusions, but it seems that the two narratives aim to portray Quinn in these ways. Naturally it is also plausible that the readers question the articles, recognizing the discursive strategies that are used in them and, for example, seek other reports of the events in order to get a wider range of resources from which to compose the overall picture.

As Fairclough (2003) stated, ideally news would consist only of objective facts. However, it is challenging to format complex events into simple informational news. Fairclough suggested that news stories always have a narrative put upon them, and as such, do not represent the world as it is, but rather as it seems to be. As has been previously stated in this study, it is fairly impossible to present news in a way that would be completely neutral and objective. Even though that would be the aim, there is no knowing how the readers will process the news and what type of styles, identities and/or discourses they will attach to the story on their own.

Another thing to note is how the perpetrator is addressed in these articles. In *The NY Times* (1973) article, the killer is not addressed directly. However, it could be argued that mentioning how Quinn "had no regular boyfriend but... would bring a guy in" and quoting a bartender saying he had seen Quinn with a *date* and an *escort* seems to imply that the perpetrator would have been the date, or one of her dates. It is possible that including these details shows that the writer of the article is steering towards the "single woman alone in big city" narrative. *The Herald News* (1973) does not directly address the perpetrator either, other than mentioning how there are no leads on who committed the crime. *The NY Daily News* (1973) article refers to the perpetrator as *the killer* several times, but also once as *he*. While it might be statistically more likely that the perpetrator of a case like Quinn's is male, at that point it was not clear in the

investigation. However, it is plausible that the writer of the article is mirroring the bias subconsciously as well, and not deliberately trying to portray the killer as a man.

Interestingly, as mentioned in a previous section, *The NY Daily News* (1973) article begins with describing Quinn as a daughter of a New Jersey executive. Later in the article it is again mentioned how she was “the daughter of John Quinn, an executive with Bell Laboratories in Whippany, N.J., and his wife, Roseann”. In comparison, both *The NY Times* (1973) article and *The Herald News* (1973) article describe her parents as “employed by Bell Laboratories” and “Bell Laboratory employees”, respectively. Consequently, *The NY Daily News* (1973) article only mentions her father’s occupation, referring to her mother as *his wife*, even though they evidently worked in the same company. To some extent, this could be explained with the traditional gender norms of the time, with man as the breadwinner and woman as the housewife. However, as the other articles mentioned both of her parents working for Bell Laboratories, it seems that it was *The NY Daily News* (1973) author's personal choice to present the information in such a way. Nonetheless, it could be argued that this choice was made more out of subconscious assumption in the socio-cultural context, rather than out of the writer’s intent to belittle Quinn’s mother’s occupation.

As it has been pointed out previously in this study, *The Herald News’* (1973) approach to Quinn’s case seems to be to portray her as an innocent small-town teacher. In comparison, *The NY Times* (1973) focused on her neighborhood’s unsafety and her dating life, but still mentioned her occupation as a teacher. *The NY Daily News’* (1973) focus was on Quinn’s appearance, as well as what a dedicated teacher she was. *The Herald News* (1973) is presumably a more local paper as well as smaller publication to *The NY Times* (1973) and *The NY Daily News* (1973). As such, it is possible that their focus was not on the violent details of the crime, the safety of a New York City neighborhood, or Quinn’s appearance, but rather her significance to the area in which the paper was published.

As mentioned in a previous study of similar topic by Haig (2008), ideologies are most effective when they go unnoticed. This appears to be true in the case of the hard news articles in the present study as well. While some implications to certain biases or Discourses were more subtle than others, an unsuspecting reader might not see a reason to question the details that are presented to them as a fact. Additionally, Teo (2000) found out in his study that different newspaper publications reported the same issue in contradictory ways. Teo (2000) pointed out that the ones in power in the media industry were mainly the ones who dictated the tone (in the case of Teo's study, racist tones) of the articles. While differing discourses are apparent, in the case of the present study it is not clear whether it is due to the publications' e.g. political or religious alignments, or the writer's personal choices.

To conclude, there are several Discourses applied to Quinn's person that can be detected from the hard news articles. Deducing from the above analysis, the main Discourses would be "dedicated teacher of the handicapped", "vulnerable woman alone", "a single, liberal woman", "a girl next door", and "attractive victim". Arguably some of these Discourses are contradictory. This shows that even with hard news stories, which are generally credited with reporting events as they happen and ideally including "just the facts" (Bednarek and Caple 2012), the way in which the information is presented is crucial. This further shows how the writer of the article acts as an agent between the text and sociocultural practice. However, as the text, discourse practice and sociocultural practice are all connected, sociocultural practice affects the discourse practice as well.

## 5 THINK-PIECES

### 5.1 General structure of think-pieces

Haglund (2014) notes that the term “think-piece” itself is sometimes used to describe a type of text that is lacking in substance or credibility, meaning that especially in today’s online environments, virtually anyone can have their think-pieces published. However, think-pieces can nevertheless be fully thought-out, opinionated yet informed texts, that can offer interesting insights on current events.

Consequently, on the base of a think-piece is an opinion. Hon (2018) described the style of a think-piece as: “The thing that happened really matters. Or doesn’t. The only way to learn whether it does or not is to read this think-piece”. Schilling (2013) describes the first step of writing a think-piece as: “Step one: find something to be mad at”. While both of these are humorous accounts, the core message of them is factual. If think-piece requires the writer to have an opinion, it is typically something about the current events that rouses a response from them.

Shipley (2004) states that think-pieces may show the writer’s own personal style, in terms of writing styles, personal narratives and humor. In other words, think-pieces do not have to be neutral, objective pieces of writing. While think-pieces are allowed and even encouraged to be opinionated, it becomes apparent in the analyzing of the data of this study, that these following think-pieces have entextualized the same base information to complete the narrative that supports their own opinion.

### 5.2 Headlines

As stated above, think-pieces are more free-formatted to hard news stories. As such, the headlines, while still trying to be catchy and interesting, do not have to offer much information about the topic. While it has been established that hard news stories might also rely on sensational headlines, it could be argued that think-pieces use them more



frequently. The three think-pieces analyzed here represent vastly different viewpoints and have been written in different eras. What they do have in common is trying to rouse readers' interest with their headlines.

**Table 4: Overview of the think-piece article headlines**

<i>The News Journal</i> (1973)	<i>The Mail on Sunday</i> (1999)	<i>Newsweek</i> (2015)
...Or She Can Court Danger in the City	Could Sex and the City Lead to Murder?	You Can't Kill Mr. Goodbar

The headline of the 1973 think-piece from *The News Journal* is constructed in a way that it continues from a photo caption that is placed above it. The caption reads: "A single woman can invite trouble by bringing home a strange man she met in a singles bar", and the headline follows: "...Or She Can Court Danger in the City". This think-piece was written January 26th, 1973, a few weeks after Roseann Quinn's murder. While there have been cases similar to hers, it seems apparent that her murder is what evoked this article to be written. Analyzing the headline from that viewpoint, it becomes quite clear that the photo caption and the headline are talking about the "single woman alone" narrative. The caption even states outright that actions such as dating or bringing men home invite trouble. As for the headline, it also implicates that a single woman living her life in the big city is guaranteed trouble. Additionally, the word *court* can have multiple meanings. Whether it is interpreted as looking for something, or wooing or alluring, the headline gives the impression that women are putting themselves in harm's way on their own volition. The photo caption has similar connotations. Instead of saying that a single woman can *run into trouble* or *get into trouble*, the author of the article wrote *invite trouble*. This, again, seems to put the blame for getting into trouble on women, rather than the people attacking or harassing them. As will be established when analyzing the body text of this article, this viewpoint does not seem to be the clear focus or the goal of the article, where several young, single women are interviewed on how dangerous they consider New York City to be. However, reading the caption and headline first arguably sets the tone for the body text as well.

The 1999 article on *Mail on Sunday* has a headline: "Could Sex and the City Lead to Murder?" with a continuation that would be considered as a subtitle and is separate from the intro: "Roseann Quinn was brutally killed by a stranger she picked up in a bar. Now TV is encouraging women to play the same, potentially deadly, game". These titles sound remarkably provocative and seem to carry some heavy presumptions. However, flashy headlines are used in all types of writing, and while they might summarize the contents of the article in an intensified way, their other purpose is to attract readers. The headline seems to suggest that there would be a direct connection between the show *Sex and the City* and murder, as though watching the show would be the culprit. The subtitle further explains how the author or the article, Sharon Churcher, would have come to this conclusion. However, as stating something as egregious as "*Sex and the City* leads to murder" or that the show is encouraging women to get into trouble would arguably be too precarious, the expressions *could* and *potentially* are the operative words here. However, it can be argued that based on these titles the article's author seems to agree with these statements.

The subtitle used the term *picked up*, referring to Quinn bringing home the man who turned out to be her killer. The title also refers to picking up a man from a bar *potentially deadly game*. It could be argued that this gives the impression that women, including Quinn, treat their dating lives as a game where the objective is to date as much as possible, or the price is to *pick up* or bring home a man.

In the subtitle, Quinn's death is used as an example of what can happen, if you look up to or act like the characters of *Sex and the City*. The writer of the article uses Quinn's fate here (and later several times in the body text of the article) to further her own agenda, which, judging solely from the titles, seems to be that the show *Sex and the City* is potentially dangerous, if women act similarly to the characters and end up being killed. Additionally, it could be concluded from this that Churcher deems the life that the show represents (sexual freedom, active dating life) as undesirable. It seems that the core message from the titles could be that dating and having encounters with

strangers can be potentially dangerous to women, it is expressed in a way that puts the blame onto women, as well as the show *Sex and the City*.

The 2015 *Newsweek* article by Alexander Nazaryan is titled: "You Can't Kill Mr. Goodbar", with the subtitle: "Everybody loves a lurid sex-murder story, but there's another reason we keep telling these tales: to slut-shame single women". The headline, as stated previously, is referring to the book "*Looking for Mr. Goodbar*", which was loosely based on the story of Quinn. The first part of the subtitle makes a presumption how everyone is fascinated by sensational stories involving racy and gory details. While, as discussed in section 2.5, the popularity of true crime has increased in the last decade, it is presumed here that especially stories containing sex and murder are especially interesting to readers. The second part notes that part of the interest comes from the want to "slut-shame" women. Slut-shaming in this context means criticizing and judging single women for being sexually active. Overall, the subtitle claims that the readers love not only consuming sensational murder stories, but also judging or possibly feeling superior over the victims for acting in a way that the readers do not necessarily approve and ending up being killed. Arguably the headline could refer to the fact that stories such as Quinn's will keep happening, and people will be fascinated by those stories. As mentioned in section 4.4, this type of fascination links to the "beautiful dead girl" Discourse, and these types of stories will be popular decades and centuries after they happened.

However, it is noteworthy that in this subtitle it is addressed that one reason people keep telling these tales is to slut-shame women. While that seems to be the underlying implication in *The News Journal* (1973) and the *Mail on Sunday* (1999) articles, in the *Newsweek* (2015) article the phenomenon is discussed openly. This is possibly due to the *Newsweek* (2015) article not condemning the lifestyle that Quinn's story is entextualized to represent. Additionally, Nazaryan writes that *we* keep telling these tales. Arguably this refers to the fact that whatever our own views about the so-called slut-shaming might be, the narrative is quite normalized, and it is difficult to separate

oneself from it completely. It is also possible that everyone partakes in it, however subconsciously.

In these three articles, none of the headlines give much information about the article itself. While the subtitles elaborate the topics further, it seems like the headlines aim to be somewhat flashy and stylized in order to gain interest. The authors' opinions and views on the topics can also be interpreted, and while this might be also possible with hard news stories, in the case of think-pieces it is rarely the objective to be objective.

### 5.3 Intros

Think-pieces do not have similar intros to hard news stories, as there does not tend to be a certain chain of events that need to be summarized. However, the three articles have their own types of introductions that lead the reader into the topic. In *The News Journal* (1973) and the *Newsweek* (2015) articles they focus on murders of young women, while in the *Mail on Sunday* (1999) article the intro constructed from different parts of the article itself to create a narrative of Roseann Quinn's last moments and how *Sex and the City* links to her story. The intros are presented in the following examples 7-9.

#### Example 7

These are some of the victims: Kitty Genovese, Janice Wylie, Emily Hoffert, Patrice Leary, and now, Roseann Quinn. (*The News Journal*, January 26th, 1973)

#### Example 8

The attraction was instant the moment Roseann Quinn walked into the bar on Manhattan's fashionable West Side and spotted John Wilson sitting alone drinking a Scotch. What happened next has never been fully explained, but in moments of indescribable horror Wilson seized a knife, stabbed Roseann repeatedly and then bludgeoned her face with a small statue. City series about four New York women who relentlessly pursue new sexual conquests and talk of little else, today's young women are being positively encouraged to follow the very lifestyle that led to Roseann's tragic death. (*Mail on Sunday*, February 14th, 1999)

#### Example 9

You can tell an unsettlingly comprehensive and riveting history of New York City through the murder of its single white women: Elma Sands, strangled and thrown down a SoHo well in 1799; Helen Jewett, a prostitute killed with a hatchet and then lit on fire in 1836; Alice Augusta Bowsby, discovered in a suitcase in 1871, killed by an abortionist, in what came to be known as the Great Trunk Mystery; the so-called Career Girls, Emily Hoffert and Janice Wylie (who worked at *Newsweek*), murdered in their Upper East Side apartment

in 1963; Kitty Genovese, stabbed to death in 1964 outside her house in Queens, as neighbors listened to her cries; Kendra Webdale, pushed in front of a subway train by a schizophrenic in 1999; Sarah Fox, killed in 2004 while jogging through a park in the gentrifying upper reaches of Manhattan, possibly by a deranged Russian. (*Newsweek*, July 17th, 2015)

Examples 7 and 9 have effectively very similar intros. From both of these intros it can be deduced, that the article has something to do with women who have been killed, especially in New York City. *Newsweek's* (2015) intro is much longer and detailed, and it starts by stating outright what *The News Journal's* (1973) intro is just implying: "You can tell an unsettlingly comprehensive and riveting history of New York City through the murder of its single white women". Both *Newsweek* (2015) and *The News Journal* (1973) also mention many of the same cases. As *The News Journal* (1973) article was written only a few weeks after Quinn's murder took place, it seems that the author Judy Klemesrud already considered Quinn's case to be one that would become famous along with well-known cases such as Kitty Genovese's. Consequently, as can be observed from the *Mail on Sunday* (1999) and *Newsweek* (2015) articles that were written decades later, she was right. The *Newsweek* (2015) article has also listed cases that took place after Quinn's, but the article focuses on her. This further proves that her case would end up being a symbol for the single woman in a big city, no matter from what viewpoint the subject was approached.

It could also be argued that by explicitly mentioning white women in the intro, the *Newsweek* (2015) article is emphasizing that only the tragic murders of white women gain the public's interest, which is why it seems that the history of the city is littered with such cases made famous. As has been stated in section 2.4, non-Caucasian women are not represented as victims in the same manner, and their cases tend not to get the same amount of attention.

The *Mail on Sunday* (1999) intro is constructed of three parts: first, there is the imagined description of how Quinn and Wilson met. Next, the attack of Quinn was described. This part is more based on facts, as it is known how Quinn was attacked and what injuries she suffered. Finally, there is the connection to the show *Sex and the City*, which is Churcher's own assumptions of what will happen because of it.

Example 8 shows the *Mail on Sunday* (1999) article starts with a sentence that evidently is a presumption made by the author Sharon Churcher, as there is no way of knowing what Quinn and Wilson were thinking at the moment when they met. It seems Churcher was attempting to put the reader in the assumed mindset of Quinn. It could be argued that Churcher's use of language is hyperbolic at times, as can be seen from her description of Quinn's and Wilsons meeting. Moreover, Churcher describe the characters of the show *Sex and the City* as "women who relentlessly pursue new sexual conquests and talk of little else". Additionally, it could be argued that claiming the show *positively encourages* women to act similarly makes a grand assumption that, as is customary for a think-piece, is not backed up by sources, but is based on the author's own views and opinions.

## 5.4 Body text

### 5.4.1 *The News Journal* article

In *The News Journal* (1973) article, the author Klemesrud has interviewed several single women who live in New York City. They are asked about their living situations, their dating habits, if anything has happened to them in the city that made them feel unsafe and how safe or unsafe they deem the city in general. Many of the women who were interviewed said they had experienced something unsettling while living in New York. Their general opinion was that to live there, one needed to have a thick skin, be extra careful and possibly carry some sort of weapon in order to better defend themselves. However, the interviewed women also say that despite all of this, they do not think New York City is much more dangerous than any other big city in the world.

At the beginning of the article, the author writes that single women living in New York City are "both emotionally and physically vulnerable". Further into the article, Klemesrud writes that these single women still seem to have a "cocky sort of confidence" when it comes to living in the city, believing that nothing bad is going to

happen to them, specifically. This cocky confidence and a sense of security in benefitted to living in a safe neighborhood and having roommates. It is said later in the article, that women who have roommates also tended to bring dates home more often than those who live alone.

Furthermore, after the writer notes that women with roommates feel safe bringing dates home, a woman who had written a book about safety is quoted saying “the worst thing a girl can do is bring a stranger to her apartment”. Following that, another woman is quoted saying “The only time I would bring a man home from a bar was if I was smashed”. While these two consecutive quotes express completely opposite opinions, it seems they are placed one after another in the text to emphasize the difference in attitude. Klemesrud does not comment on these two quotes in any way, which gives the reader the possibility to make their interpretations and judgements about these statements themselves. However, the two people quoted are a woman who wrote a book on the subject and a woman who said she would bring a date home if she was *smashed*, respectively. Consequently, it seems the author of the article is leading the reader to think that one of these opinions is what Fairclough (2003) called a good, desirable one, and the other one is bad.

A woman who was on a first date was interviewed saying that she let her date pick her up from her apartment, because they were introduced through friends. This is followed by Klemesrud writing that the woman’s “major protection in her apartment is a West Highland Terrier named Whitney”. This gives the implication that the author of the article is criticizing or even making mockery of the lack of security precautions the woman has made. However, the woman is not quoted saying that she has her dog as a protection. This could have been mentioned in order to make the woman sound silly or naive for believing that a small dog would offer protection, while still going on dates with people she did not know.

The article lists ways in which women have had to change their behaviors (e.g. not riding the subway, carrying illegal weapons). Several of the women interviewed also

said that they had taken measures in order to physically defend themselves, if need be. One said she had picked up karate. Her friend said she kept a baseball bat next to her bed. Another woman said she had three handguns in her apartment. One of the women also expressed her doubt whether the police or the justice system would aid women when handling cases about violence against women. However, the article does not mention actions which could or should be taken in order to increase safety in the city. A head of the police department is interviewed, but the only advice she offers is that women should avoid being alone in the city. The impression that one gets from this is that the women are completely on their own when it comes to being safe, even if that means taking illegal actions to increase their safety.

Consequently, it is also questioned why women will not move somewhere else. When the women interviewed were asked this, one of the answers were reported as: “‘Where could I go?’ wailed Miss Weiner, the unemployed actress”. Arguably, the use of *wail* to describe the way she answered the question has negative connotations. Moreover, questioning why women would not just move somewhere else gives the impression that moving away and as such completely pack up their lives would be the only resolution to single women feeling unsafe in New York City.

It could be argued that the underlying message of the article is that even though Quinn was murdered only a few weeks prior and her case was in no means unique, the women interviewed were still living their lives similarly to Quinn, going out, going on dates and living in the city in the first place. All of this is said through the lens of criticism. There seems to be a juxtaposition between quoting the women listing safety precautions they have taken and what has happened to them in the city, and them continuing their regular lives in the city. If the aim of the article would have been to encourage women to take better safety precautions in their lives, it could be argued that this should not be done by belittling or ridiculing the actions they have taken so far. Additionally, using one of their peers as a cautionary example of what might happen to them might be effective, but it might also be considered as purposefully trying to ignite fear in single women.



In *The News Journal* (1973) article, Quinn's death is used as a cautionary tale. While it is not done blatantly, interviewing women who go to the same bars as Quinn and asking about their living situations and dating lives shows this. As Quinn did meet her murderer and alleged date in a singles bar, and brought him back to her apartment, it seems apparent that there is an attempt to compare this tragic case and how similarly other single women are acting. This seems plausible, especially as in the article some women are being interviewed in W. M. Tweeds singles bar, which was where Quinn met John Wilson, who ended up killing her.

*The News Journal* (1973) article's focus is single women and how their actions could lead to danger, and how they should change their behaviors or even move away from the city in order to be safe. Consequently, it seems to put blame and responsibility completely on women. As previously mentioned, the era in which the article was written was during the Women's Liberation Movement (1960's-1980's). It could be argued that this type of viewpoint has been chosen in order to criticize the Discourse of a "liberal, single woman". This woman is portrayed as someone who is independent, lives alone or possibly with (female) roommates, goes on dates and spends time with friends in bars. However, as mentioned previously, these women are also said to be vulnerable, both emotionally and physically. As becomes evident from the article, women are not shown in a particularly positive light. It is implied that these women make all the wrong decisions and could end up like Roseann Quinn, who, by extension, also made all the wrong decisions. Their lifestyles and attitudes toward living in the city are described as "not-too-serious California dreaming", meaning that they have delusions or are somewhat in denial about their life, in this case especially about their safety.

#### **5.4.2 The *Mail on Sunday* article**

The *Mail on Sunday* (1999) article consists of interviews of people who were familiar with the case of Quinn's murder, or had known her. The article also includes the

author's own commentary, as well as her presumably imagined descriptions of Quinn's life and thoughts.

As opposed to *The News Journal* (1973) article, the *Mail on Sunday* (1999) article author Churcher states very clearly that she thinks the idea of a "liberal woman" is harmful and dangerous. It could be said that the think-piece she wrote is quite provocative. This is due to her making the connection between *Sex and the City* and getting murdered, but also because she tells the story of Quinn with a narrative that makes a lot of presumptions and also adds an almost prose-like flair to her descriptions of Quinn's life.

The beginning of the article seems to be written like a dramatization of the events of the night when Quinn was murdered. Churcher uses sentences such as: "The pair made eye contact and Roseann thought she saw the hint of a smile", as well as: "Without a second thought, she picked up her drink, crossed to his table and introduced herself". These are things that the author of the article is either presuming happened, or she is adding them to give the story she is telling some color. It seems Churcher was aiming to communicate that there was chemistry between Quinn and Wilson. This is something that cannot be known for sure but can be assumed from later evidence that has emerged from the case.

Moreover, Churcher describes the alleged interaction between Quinn and Wilson as a *mating ritual*, which included "discreet touching and whispered promises". These are also details that are just assumptions. However, Churcher paints a picture of mutual flirtation and attraction, which led Quinn inviting Wilson to her apartment. Churcher's narrative gets a stark turn, when next she describes how Wilson attacked Quinn and murdered her.

Next, the article talks about the book *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* and the following movie that were based on the story of Quinn. Like in the article intro, it could be said that the language used in the article is hyperbolic at times. Churcher describes how the movie

as a “apocalyptic warning of the terrifying dangers women face when trawling bars for casual sex with strangers”. While her statement is true on the account that women do sometimes face dangerous situations, it also seems to diminish women’s experiences and their life in general, saying that single women go out simply to look for casual sex. Churcher also notes how the movie was credited with decreasing “promiscuous single scene”. This, too, seems to call all singles, especially women, promiscuous. By extensions, this also means Roseann Quinn. Not only is her story used as a cautionary tale, but the movie based on it is praised because it managed to scare single people into not going out or on dates as much.

The author of *Looking for Mr. Goodbar*, Judith Rossner, is interviewed for the article. She is quoted saying that it is irresponsible and dangerous to depict the life of single women as is done in *Sex and the City*, as it downplays the dangers of real life. Interestingly, she is quoted saying both that “In this age of disease and crazies, we should be telling single women to calm down, not playing to their neuroses”, as well as “Today's generation of young men have grown up exposed to so many fantasies that involve a great deal of violence and potentially that means more of them are going to be violent to women”. These quotes seem to go along with the Discourse that women should be held responsible of getting or not getting in dangerous situations, while men can help but be potentially violent, as they are being exposed to violence. Additionally, both of these statements are based on the assumption, that both women and men and highly susceptible to the content, e.g. TV shows that they consume or are being exposed to.

While it has been stated previously in this study that these articles utilize Quinn’s story for multitude of reasons, it also becomes apparent in Rossner’s interview. She wrote a book based on Quinn’s case, therefore profiting from Quinn’s death and the following media interest. However, she is also condemning Quinn’s way of life.

Compared to the hard news stories, this think-piece portrays Quinn in a very different light. Whereas people interviewed in the 1973 articles said Quinn was very dedicated

to her job and volunteered her free time to help her students, in the *Mail on Sunday* (1999) article and acquaintance of Quinn's, "a man who met her at clubs and bars she cruised looking for one-night stands", said: "She started working at a school for deaf children in the Bronx. She felt misshapen and believed that gave her a lot in common with them". This refers to Quinn having suffered from polio as a child, which resulted in her having a slight limp.

Regarding this, Churcher also interviews one of Quinn's friends, Mary McGuire. McGuire is quoted saying "No man would ever find her attractive enough to marry", which was followed by a statement, which is unclear if it was Churcher paraphrasing McGuire's comment or Churcher's own contribution: "and, she insisted, she no longer cared. She had become a feminist and could get all the solace she needed from casual sex".

As seen from the quotes above, while the article is arguably trying to portray Quinn's life and decisions as negative and that she had been unhappy with her decisions, all of these are based on statements made by friends, acquaintances or are Churcher's own speculation. However, it cannot be confirmed which of the statements about Quinn in this article, or *The News Journal* (1973) or *Newsweek* (2015) articles are actually factual. Nevertheless, the fact that the descriptions seem somewhat contradictory seem to indicate that some of them are untrue.

#### **Example 10**

Sex And The City seems determined to turn the clock back to a time when casual sex was seen as fun and risk-free. All that has happened in the past 25 years is studiously ignored. The dangers are non-existent and transitory pleasure is everything. The impression is that women can choose to escape from their dreary, daily lives into a world of hedonistic promiscuity. What Sex And The City doesn't tell us is that a very similar choice killed Roseann Quinn. (*Mail on Sunday*, February 14th, 1999)

In Example 10 the sentence "the impression is that women can choose to escape from their dreary, daily lives into a world of hedonistic promiscuity" arguably holds large presumptions made by Churcher. This, again, is quite a hyperbolic sentiment. Additionally, it seems to suggest that these women Churcher is talking about in her

article see “normal life” as dreary, while the world of *Sex and the City* offers *hedonistic promiscuity* but is ultimately dangerous.

### 5.4.3 The *Newsweek* article

The *Newsweek* article, published in 2015, is written in the height of true crime’s popularity. While at the point of publishing the article, over 40 years has passed since Quinn’s murder, it has still gained interest. According to the article’s author, Alexander Nazaryan, Quinn’s case describes New York’s history well. Unlike the *Mail on Sunday* (1999) and *The News Journal* (1973) articles, this article does not include interviews, but is the writer’s own personal account, tied with Quinn’s.

In the article, Nazaryan proposes that history is written by great men and dead women. He states that although the dead women are silent, their stories have the most effect in New York City’s history. Here Nazaryan implies that the stories of these women who have been killed are more universal than those of the great men in the city’s history. Nazaryan notes that Roseann Quinn’s case was one of the most meaningful ones, as Quinn represented the “everywoman”, a small-town girl trying to build a life in the big city.

Nazaryan describes the night of January 2nd, 1973 and Quinn’s last moments as: “an encounter in a basement bar, a walk across 72nd Street, the lights of her native New Jersey burning in the distance like the bonfires of an enemy encampment”. Nazaryan, like Churcher in the *Mail on Sunday* article, uses a prose-like description of the setting. The comparison of New Jersey lights as enemy bonfires could be interpreted as an implication that Quinn wanted to escape the small town she was from and pursue life in NYC. This, however, is not stated in any of the original hard news articles about Quinn’s murder. Nevertheless, as the author of the article seems to indicate that Quinn’s life and story could be a typical experience, he might be trying to portray a Discourse of a life that was easier to identify with; a person from a small town, wanting to live in a bigger city.

Nazaryan suggests that there exists a false sense of safety and hospitality in New York City. He claims that the people living their daily lives simply “subsume their animal yearnings and anxieties as they daily board crowded trains and wait in line for cronuts”. He also makes a counter argument by writing “Not so, whispers Roseann Quinn”, implicating further, that the sense of normalness in NYC is not real. He also suggests that this was what Quinn would say, were she still alive.

Nazaryan then refers to his own time in New York City, and how he is reminiscing Quinn’s story, as he feels it was his time to leave NYC. He ties his love for the city to a bygone time; time of Roseann Quinn, as shown in Example 11:

**Example 11**

the city of riots, strikes and blackouts, of dusky bars where Roseann Quinn spent her evening hours, some nights craving solitude, other nights craving company. The city back then, as I saw it, was more dangerous and more compelling. It was Gotham fallen, brooding and bruised, a city for Roseann Quinn, not Carrie Bradshaw. If you could make it there, why would you want to make it anywhere else? (*Newsweek* July 8th, 2015)

It appears that Nazaryan is somewhat romanticizing Quinn’s life and experiences. Referencing “dusky bars” and New York City as “Gotham falling, brooding and bruised”. Nazaryan, like Churcher in the *Mail on Sunday* (1999) article, is creating a narrative around Quinn’s life. He is also stating that Quinn was “some nights craving solitude, other nights craving company”. However, it would be argued that this is glamorizing and mystifying a very universal feeling of sometimes wanting to be alone and other times wanting company.

Through the article, Nazaryan walks in the footsteps of Quinn, visiting bars she had visited, walking in the same neighborhoods and riding the same trains. With this, it appears he is trying to tie his own life and experiences with Quinn’s. However, although Nazaryan emphasizes with Quinn and other women who had been killed in NYC, he seems to deem their stories more as an interesting talking point, as well as a something to which he wanted to compare his own life to. For example, he says that being told that actor Kevin Bacon had bartended in a bar he frequented was “plausible

but not all that impressive”, whereas knowing how a woman, Roseann Quinn, met her murderer there was “infinitely more intriguing”.

Interestingly, whereas Churcher states that *Sex and the City* is encouraging women to act in a way that will lead to a path similar to Quinn’s fate, Nazaryan says that Quinn’s New York City was not the city of Carrie Bradshaw, the main protagonist in *Sex and the City*. It could be argued that he means that the Gotham-esque, dangerous NYC of the 1970’s was, at least in his opinion, nothing like the glamorous 1990’s NYC as portrayed in *Sex and the City*.

Regarding the remaining popularity of stories such as Quinn’s, and why people keep telling and re-telling them over the years, Nazaryan suggest that: “Goodbar endures because it feeds our ongoing moral panic over women and their sexuality”, referring to the book *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* by Judith Rossner. He also compares this fascination with “slut-shaming” and condemning women’s lives going back to Nathaniel Hawthorne and *The Scarlet Letter*.

Nazaryan, who has compared the present-day New York City to Quinn’s, ends the article with the following:

**Example 12**

Then a woman sat down next to me. She ordered a drink and proceeded to sip it in a way that suggested she wasn't waiting for anyone. It dawned on me how rare it was, in 2015, to see a woman alone in a bar, sitting by herself, snug in her solitude, looking for no one, asking for nothing. I couldn't see her face, though it didn't matter. It could only be Roseann. (*Newsweek*, July 8th, 2015)

It could be argued that Example 12 shows how Nazaryan saw Quinn more as an enigmatic creature of mystery, rather than a victim of a violent crime. However, Nazaryan could also be suggesting that Quinn’s story was not a unique one: although hers gained attention and inspired a book, similar things happened to other women all the time.

## 5.5 Portrayal of danger

Although the common theme in each of the think-pieces is Roseann Quinn, there is another theme that repeats in the articles: danger. Interestingly, while Quinn's story can be easily tied with the theme of danger, each of the articles approaches and deals with it very differently. In *The News Journal* (1973) article, the danger seems to be the city of New York. The article's author, Klemesrud calls New York City "the Naked City" at the beginning of the article. This refers most likely to a film of the same name, in which a woman's murder is investigated in New York City's streets. Example 13 shows ways through which NYC and living in it is portrayed as dangerous in the article.

### Example 13

A single girl needs a stomach of iron, nerves of steel and a sense of humor that goes beyond the pale [to live in New York City].

The phone is often unlisted . . . the woman often has a fixed route that she takes home - keys are carried in one's hand.

In this city, something can happen anywhere . . . a single woman should avoid being alone in any area of the city.

West Side is the most dangerous area of the city for single women.

Miss Meyers no longer rides subways . . . Miss Stern never carries credit cards. (*The News Journal*, January 26th, 1973)

While the article recognizes that the danger that single women face in New York is usually caused by men, the emphasis is clearly that the city itself is dangerous, not, for example, some people living in it.

The *Mail on Sunday* (1999) article clearly indicates that the danger lies in women's own actions, and the growing trend of young, single women frequenting bars and having casual affairs. The article's author, Churcher, also places blame in admiring feminism as well as TV shows such as *Sex and the City*. Example 14 illustrates how the responsibility, as well as the blame, are put upon women.

### Example 14

An apocalyptic warning of the terrifying dangers women face when trawling bars for casual sex with strangers.



Today's young women are being positively encouraged to follow the very lifestyle that led to Roseann's tragic death.

In this age of disease and crazies, we should be telling single women to calm down, not playing to their neuroses.

Sex And The City seems determined to turn the clock back to a time when casual sex was seen as fun and risk-free. All that has happened in the past 25 years is studiously ignored.

The dangers are non-existent and transitory pleasure is everything. (*Mail on Sunday*, February 14th, 1999)

The *Mail on Sunday* (1999) article, like *The News Journal* (1973) article recognizes that it is typically men who instigate violent actions towards women. However, there still remains a Discourse where women are still blamed for getting into situations that allows this, as well as acting in a way that is seen as high-risk behavior. Example 14 shows that women are encouraged to *calm down* in order to avoid dangerous situations.

The *Newsweek* (2015) has a somewhat different take on danger. While Nazaryan realizes the horrors, dangers, and difficulties that women face in New York City especially in the 1970's when Quinn's murder took place, he also seems to idolize and romanticize that era and the danger it held. However, it also clearly portrays men as the danger women face. Nazaryan's romanticizing seems to limit to the city, while his condemn is solely put on men. Example 15 shows Nazaryan's portrayal of the *bygone* era of dangerous and dark New York, which he misses.

#### **Example 15**

All history, in the end, is just a romance with bygone time. My own romance was with a time and place more frequently scorned than loved: the city of riots, strikes and blackouts, of dusky bars.

The city back then, as I saw it, was more dangerous and more compelling. It was Gotham fallen, brooding and bruised, a city for Roseann Quinn, not Carrie Bradshaw. If you could make it there, why would you want to make it anywhere else?

The place was a little too bright, a little too clean. There was nothing sinister about it. And there should always be something sinister about a basement bar. (Referring to a location where Quinn met her murderer Wilson in 1973.) (*Newsweek*, July 8th, 2015)

It could be argued that Nazaryan's at times longing description of bygone NYC is due to him being a man, and therefore his experiences in the city are less likely to include instances that are, for example, mentioned in *The News Journal* (1973) article. This is not to say that men could not face violence in the city, but that women are statistically

more likely to be victims. In contrast, Example 16 shows that Nazaryan is at times quite stark with his judgement and blame put upon men.

**Example 16**

The mere perusal of the morning paper often leaves me horrified, at once afraid for my daughter and ashamed of all those who carry the Y chromosome. Men are the carriers of the virulent darkness . . .

Deliverance is about the violence in the heart of all men; when Dickey writes of the 'unbelievable violence and brutality' of the river, I fear he gives moving water a bad name. All it does is flow, following the dictates of gravity and surface tension. It is we men who color that river with blood. (Referring to a book that was found in Quinn's apartment.) (*Newsweek*, July 8th, 2015)

To conclude, as with Quinn's case in general, the theme of danger is tied to her story in varying ways. Depending on the writer's viewpoint, it is used for cautionary purposes or to add a more dramatic flair to the article.

## 5.6 Discussion

Regarding all of these articles, Quinn's fate is being used to further the writers' own agendas, whatever they might be. Whether the agenda is deemed good or bad by the reader, the fact remains that they benefit from using Quinn's story as an example, or a point of interest in their articles. Consequently, as the articles have been written from a very different points of view, this shows that one story can be entextualized in a way that furthers different Discourses. What these articles have in common, is that they emphasize that Quinn's story is not a unique one.

As the author of the article has always the choice to edit what they write, whether it is, for example, by omitting quotes or presenting them in a misleading way, they have the possibility to affect how the story will be received by the reader. Although the reader processes the text on their own, they can only process what is presented to them in the text. Moreover, as think-pieces are generally seen as independent pieces of text, it stands to reason that the writers are not as much, if at all, influenced by the publication and their management.

*The News Journal* (1973) article interviewed single women living in NYC and commented the women's thoughts and opinions about living alone in a big city in a manner that suggested the women were in the wrong or looking for trouble. The *Mail on Sunday* (1999) article interviewed people who knew Roseann Quinn, in order to validate the writer's own opinions on how Quinn's life as a single woman was miserable and dangerous. It could be argued that depending on the angle of the think-pieces, these same interviews and quotes could have been used to affirm different opinions. Additionally, what needs to be taken into account is, that what cannot be known from the articles or the interviews is how the people were interviewed. It is possible that the interviewer presented their questions in way that lead the interviewees to answer in a certain way. Another possibility is that the interviewer/writer chose only the parts from a longer interview that fit their agendas. However, this is not to say that the interviews could not have been truthful and accurately portrayed, only that it profits the reader to be aware of these possibilities.

Considering that the *Mail on Sunday* (1999) article was written as a type of a protest to *Sex and the City* beginning to air in the UK, it is important to remember that the author Churcher was seemingly projecting her own views to both the show, and to the life and death of Roseann Quinn. Moreover, utilizing the case of Quinn for their own purposes becomes apparent through the use of *Sex and the City*. Churcher in the *Mail on Sunday* (1999) article describes the world of the TV series as glorification of the single life in a big city with promiscuous behavior and no consequences, and that the show is a modern recreation of the world of Roseann Quinn. Churcher also decontextualizes Quinn's life and story in order to compare her to TV show characters. Arguably people in real life have more substance than fictional characters. However, in the case of the think-piece, it helped to illustrate Churcher's point to view to reduce Quinn's person to a set of (undesirable) characteristics and choices.

Nazaryan, however, says that Quinn's New York City in the 1970's was much darker and more dangerous than the city that is presented in *Sex and the City*. In both of these articles the authors apply styles to the text, and in this instance to *Sex and the City*,

through modality and evaluation. Both Churcher and Nazaryan commit to their statements, and assign meaning to the TV show. Interestingly, both evaluate *Sex and the City* as undesirable, or bad (Fairclough 2003: 172). However, their definition of bad is very different. Churcher sees the show as corrupting and possible endangering young women, while Nazaryan thinks the world of *Sex and the City* is not as tough and dangerous as the real NYC in the 1970's, implying that the show's protagonist Carrie Bradshaw would not survive in this NYC.

As seen in Table 5, all of the think-piece articles use some type of descriptive language to portray Quinn and single women. Comparing these expressions, it can be argued that their intended effect on the reader is not necessarily instantly clear. *The News Journal* (1973), while depicting women as vulnerable, also state that women living in NYC have to be confident. However, this is presented as having a cocky sort of confidence, which could imply that the confidence is based on false sense of safety and invincibility in the big city, where young women were attacked and killed on a regular basis. The *Newsweek* (2015) article describes a woman such as Quinn as *good girl gone bad*, comparing her to Rihanna, who had released similarly titled album and also suffered as a victim of domestic violence. Nazaryan states: "The terrible subtext is always the same: The girl is a victim, she didn't deserve it, except didn't she, kind of, just a little bit? It was true with Rihanna. It was true with Quinn". In contrast, the *Mail on Sunday* article seemed to state outright, that Quinn's fate was inevitable, and a consequence of her promiscuous actions, which, in turn, were the result of her life as a liberal woman, just like the ones in *Sex and the City*.

**Table 5: How Roseann Quinn and/or single women are described in the think-pieces**

<i>The News Journal</i>	<i>Mail on Sunday</i>	<i>Newsweek</i>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physically and emotionally vulnerable</li> <li>• (have) a cocky sort of confidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promiscuous</li> <li>• Bitter</li> <li>• A very lonely lady</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good girl gone bad</li> </ul>
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Another aspect of Quinn's story that is entextualized to represent opposing viewpoints was Quinn's supposed opinion on having a family. In the *Mail on Sunday* article Churcher writes:

**Example 17**

Her family were devout Catholics and her mother told her a woman's role in life was to get married and bear children. But Roseann believed this wasn't an option for her because she had suffered from a spinal disease that left her with a slight limp. No man would ever find her attractive enough to marry, she told a friend, Mary McGuire. (*Mail on Sunday*, February 14th, 1999)

This gives the impression that Quinn would have wanted a more traditionally seen family life with marriage and children but was under the impression that it was not possible for her. As opposed to this, in the *Newsweek* (2015) article Nazaryan states how "[Quinn's] escape to Manhattan, in part, is an escape from the fate of a sister who has become just another 'Catholic baby-making machine'".

It is impossible to know for certain what Quinn's true motivations for her actions were, as all the information presented in these articles is second-hand information, or speculation from first-order as well as second-order entextualizations. In the original hard news articles, the reporters who wrote the articles had interviewed people, who knew Quinn, and as such had some type of audio-visual account from which to construct the written account. However, the subsequent think-pieces were written based on these written accounts, making them much more prone to the writers' own interpretations of what happened and what, for example, Roseann Quinn was thinking and how she was acting.

While *The News Journal* (1973) was written relatively soon after the fact, it does not impose these interpretations on Quinn as much as it does to single women in general, through the women interviewed for the article. Characteristically to a think-piece, the article includes the writer's own opinions. However, it seems apparent that this is done on the expense of the women interviewed, as the writer comments and critiques the women's accounts of their lives in the city. It could be argued that by doing this, the writer encourages the readers to have a similar reaction. However, arguably a well-written think-pieces manages to convince the reader of the writer's opinions.

In a previous study of similar topic by Teo (2000) on how racist ideologies were exhibited in Australian newspapers, he found out that the actions of a Vietnamese drug gang were generalized to represent all Vietnamese people, and further all Asian immigrants in Australia in general. Similarly in the case of the present study, Quinn's story is generalized to represent all single women. What differs from Teo's (2000) study is, that Quinn's story is generalized to be both "bad" and "good". It is made to represent both the downfall of women into being single and living a high-risk lifestyle, as well as the right women should have to life their lives independently and without fear, leading the type of lives that they choose.

## 6 CONCLUSION

The aim for this study was to critically analyze the way newspaper articles discuss the case of Roseann Quinn. Quinn's murder was reported in different newspaper when it first occurred in 1973, as well as in several other publications in the form of think-pieces during the next years and decades. The purpose was to find out if newspaper articles in the form of hard news stories used different discourses to report the same event, and how these different discourses might affect the way the information is interpreted. Additionally, this study aimed to highlight the societal and historical context the articles were written in and consider its potential impact the reporting. This study also presented three think-pieces concerning the case of Quinn, but which presented her case from vastly differing viewpoints. It aimed to analyze if and how Quinn's case and the earlier hard news stories about her murder were entextualized to attest the writers' own opinions.

In total six different articles were analyzed: three hard news stories, and three think-pieces. The method of analysis was critical discourse analysis, using Fairclough's (1995, 2003, 2013) three-dimensional model as well as Genres, Styles and Discourses model.

The answer to the first research question is, that there were significant differences in the way the same event, Quinn's murder, was reported in different news publications. Different lexical choices were a major aspect affecting the overall picture, as well as which people who knew Quinn were interviewed for the articles. Additionally, while hard news stories generally should strive for objectivity, it stands to reason that the reporters' personal views affect the reporting, either on purpose or subconsciously. Moreover, several different and even contradicting Discourses could be identified within the articles, such as "dedicated teacher of the handicapped", "vulnerable woman alone", "a single, liberal woman", "a girl next door", and "attractive victim".

In the think-pieces, the writers' own personal viewpoints naturally affected the way Quinn's case was discussed. Analyzing the think-pieces displayed how easy it was for the writers to twist Quinn's story to fit their own purposes. For example, whether Quinn's life in NYC was portrayed as "an escape of becoming a baby-making Catholic like her sister", or if she escaped to teaching hearing-impaired children, because "No man would ever find her attractive enough to marry", as she was suffering from a limp due to polio. While both of these statements are true – her sister was a Catholic who had several children and Quinn was single and had slight limp – the way these aspects are portrayed paint vastly different pictures. This also answers to the second research question, as it could be said that depending on the article, Quinn's story was either entextualized as something undesirable, bad or dangerous (*The News Journal* 1973; *Mail on Sunday* 1999) or as dangerous yet exciting, representing the bygone era of New York City (*Newsweek* 2015).

The answer to my third research question is that there are several aspects of the societal and cultural environment that could be seen affecting both the hard news stories as well as the think-pieces. The murder of Quinn happened in the midst of Women's Liberation Movement (1960's-1980's), which offered an opportunity to make Quinn either a cautionary tale of the dangers of being a "liberal woman" or an example of how single women should not have to be constantly scared of being by themselves and living their life on their own. The previous Discourse of a "new, liberal woman" is present in the think-piece written in 1973. As for the 1999 think-piece, it was written as a response to the airing of the TV show *Sex and the City*, the first TV show where single women were portrayed as having casual sexual relations and being very independent. As the writer of the think-piece did not approve of this, she compared the fate of Quinn to the inescapable fate of women who wanted to live life like the characters in the TV show. The 2015 article was written as a reflection of the author's own departure from New York, comparing his life and experiences to Quinn's. As the popularity of true crime stories had increased immensely during this time, especially amongst women, the story of a single woman murdered had been brought to light again.



This study showed that there are significant differences between reportings of the same event in different news publications. Similar findings have been made in previous research about news discourse. However, as previous research has not focused on the reporting of the same event over several years or decades, the findings of this study call for more research on the topic. Especially, it would be crucial to study how re-telling and re-reporting older cases for whatever reason are affected by entextualizing. If the original material is only in the form of written accounts, it is possible that second-order entextualization changes the original material even more. Nevertheless, as more and more material is now recorded not only in written accounts, but also in audio-visual recordings, it is easier to convey more accurate representations of events. Despite of more accurate and detailed recording of different materials to be reported on later, the implications of this study apply in audio-visual original material as well. While technology is developing fast, there are several ways to edit and manipulate audio and video recordings as well.

It could be argued that the strength of the present study is also its weakness. While analyzing the reportings of a one, single case offers important information on news discourse as well as how different outlets and viewpoints attach different Discourses to the same story, it still analyzes only one case. To be able to make more general implications about news Discourse, a larger study needs to be conducted. However, the present study could offer insight to the importance of critical reading skills, showing with concrete data and examples how differently just one story can be told. As it also shows how one story can be made into an example from a multitude of viewpoints, the present study could show how first- and second-order entextualizations have the potential to change the story completely or how in the process only the details serving the writer's own purposes can be picked and entextualized. Further research could also be conducted to study if the social class of the news publications and/or their target audiences affect the discourse. This was found to be the case in a similar study by Haig (2008), focusing on English radio programs.

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