“A World Away”: Decolonizing Journalism Methods

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ABSTRACT

"A World Away": Decolonizing Journalism Methods

Tashiina Buswa

This research-creation thesis is an exploration into the possibilities for future Indigenous journalism. With an emphasis on "decolonizing" journalism methods, this project attempts to re-evaluate the sometimes limiting and sterile approach to storytelling that comes with western journalism methodology. By applying Indigenous pedagogy, one can find that both the process and the outcome of telling Indigenous stories through a journalistic lens is much more rewarding and impactful. Prominent theoretical themes of this project included cultural identity and competency – both concepts which are rarely understood in mainstream media. Through the use of personal narrative podcasting, the topic of this project is Indigenous education. The intersection of podcasting and Indigenous storytelling allows for a meaningful auditory experience that is culturally competent. The use of podcasts, a fast-growing genre, is both an intimate and commanding space in which disembodied voices captivate the listener's immediate attention. This fact was not overlooked during the completion of the project, which attempts to give agency to those who have historically been ignored or misrepresented in traditional media. This type of journalism, guided by Indigenous-informed methodology, can be of great value to future journalists when pursuing stories within Indigenous communities.

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Introduction

Never has there been more urgency surrounding the need to document and magnify Indigenous voices to create diverse, informed, and nuanced journalism. In the mainstream journalistic landscape, these voices are all too often over-simplified and stereotyped in ways that ultimately diminish and further damage the way Indigenous people are perceived in a colonial world (McCue, 2011). This is especially pertinent in journalistic stories that focus on Indigenous "problems" without contextualizing the legacy of residential schools, the 60's scoop, and cultural genocide committed against Indigenous peoples, resulting in intergenerational trauma and socio-economic disadvantage. As an Oji-Cree journalist, I recognize and acknowledge the need to *decolonize* journalism, which requires re-shaping and contextualizing the narrative in which marginalized communities have been cast.

For my research creation project, I have created an original podcast "A World Away" that explores in depth Pelican Falls First Nations High School in Sioux Lookout, Ontario. I have also collected material to create a mini-series that would also include Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School in Thunder Bay. Both are private schools run by Northern Nishnawbe Education Council, and are made up almost entirely of Indigenous students from remote northern communities. I envision eventually creating four episodes, but for the purposes of this research-creation project, I was able to create one episode that focuses specifically on Pelican Falls high school. In the episode, I observe Pelican as an Indigenous education model, while simultaneously investigating the school's unique social successes/problems in a post-colonial society. The school is federally-funded, and was built roughly twenty years ago with the intention of Indigenous educators being able to teach their own youth, as opposed to having the youth taught within traditional western secondary schools. The school's students are from 49 different far-north reserves scattered across northern Ontario, and they live at the school for nine months out of the year. Some themes I encounter throughout the episode are

displacement, Indigenous self-governance/determination, and identity. Where, historically, mainstream journalism coverage of Indigenous topics has been stereotyped and biased (McCue, 2011), my work aims to counter this instinct by applying culturally-competent methodology to my journalism, focusing on both the complexities and successes of Indigenous education today. Throughout the process of the podcast creation, I have considered and gauged how my own Indigeneity informs and potentially enriches the final product. In an attempt to produce engaging, wholly-informed, empathetic stories, I implement Indigenous journalist Duncan McCue's rules from his 2011 guideline *Reporting in Indigenous Communities.* With this framework to follow, it allowed me to employ culturally-responsive research strategies, with the hope of confirming the efficacy of said strategies to the larger scope of academic discourse.

In this report, I will cover the following three broad categories:

1. The use of podcasting/digital audio storytelling to cover Indigenous stories.
2. My role and responsibility as an Indigenous journalist.
3. The use of culturally-responsive research strategies when reporting in Indigenous communities.

The podcast episode is based on in-depth interviews conducted with current students, ex-students, school staff, ex-staff, and various elders I met while at the school. Using my own voice as the primary narrator, I guide the listener through the series, immersing them in the school's settings as much as possible with natural sound (intercom announcements, hallway noises, classes being let out, the sound of birds singing in the school grounds), as well as music purchased from royalty-free music websites.

Research Questions

My work attempts to answer the following research question and sub-questions:

1. How does one *ethically* and *effectively* report on Indigenous topics while avoiding superficiality?
    a) How should researchers interact with a marginalized culture/community, while recognizing that cultural identity is constantly evolving and fluid, often looking very different from the romanticized, one-dimensional images of marginalized communities depicted in mainstream media? (Hall, 1990)
2. How should Indigenous journalists (such as myself) approach reporting on Indigenous issues? Do I have more of a "right" to set up camp in an Indigenous community with my equipment for two weeks than a non-Indigenous researcher does?
3. How is reporting on Indigenous topics via this digital form (podcasting) valuable, considering the emerging literature regarding the significance of oral storytelling in Indigenous culture? (Iseke, 2013)

Methodology

This project consists of two parts. First, I have created what will be the first in a multi-episode podcast series entitled "A World Away," which will explore two Indigenous-run northern Ontario high schools. For the purposes of this research-creation project, I have created one singular episode entitled "PELICAN," which explores Pelican Falls First Nations high school, located a twenty minutes' drive outside of the Northwestern Ontario town Sioux Lookout. The second part of this project consists of this written report, in which I will reflect on the podcast-creation process as well as review the literature and theory that helped define my work. I entered this project with the awareness that typically, journalists do not spend

much time in Indigenous communities at all. On a normal story assignment by any major media outlet, journalists have been known to be sent into a community for less than 24 hours to a few days to get their tape, get the story, and fly back to wherever they came from – this is sometimes referred to as "parachute journalism" (Wizda, 1997). A cutting 2019 tweet written by former *Globe and Mail* reporter Sunny Dhillon critiques this oft-used method of fly-in journalism:

> Parachuting white reporters (since that's who you've hired/given prominent roles) into a community for as little as a week to do stories on racism. With the usual gatekeepers deciding which ideas and quotes on race they're comfortable with and which they're not. (Dhillon, 2019)

My goal was to avoid this method at all costs, instead opting to stay at each school for approximately three weeks each, or until I felt I had enough tape to truly capture the many varied voices and perspectives found at the school. Each interview was loosely structured, with the base goal of finding out what the school meant to each individual person interviewed, whether that view gravitated toward the negative or the positive. Taking this extra time to integrate into each setting as much as possible, helping out wherever I could, and actively participating in the events taking place around me established what I believe to be a sense of relationship and trust with my subjects, paving the way for richer storytelling. I think it's also worthwhile to note that when I first introduced myself and my project idea to each of the school's principals, I made sure to introduce myself the Indigenous way, which is to make it known who I am, whose family I belong to, and what community/land I come from.

During both stays at the two schools, I recorded daily audio diaries which thankfully allowed me to recall much of what I am divulging in this report. Each day, I made sure to capture as much wild sound as I possibly could – this ranged from students playing basketball

in the gym, to the noise of a bustling post-period hallway, to the sound of birds singing in the empty school grounds during classes. I made an effort to stay out of the way and take up as little physical space as possible with my recording equipment. This was important to me, as I wanted to maintain my goal of relationship and reciprocity. In other words, I wanted my subjects to know me as a human first, not a journalist. Having a constant spread of recording equipment in the way, I feared, would inhibit this goal.

During the actual editing of the episode, I drew from my plethora of interviews, natural environmental sound, and music to weave the first completed episode together sonically and thematically. Using the Cree Medicine Wheel as a thematic framework, the intention was to group the podcast series into four 30-minute episodes, considering that the lessons we can learn from the medicine wheel can also apply to life and learning. When considering the medicine wheel, we know that there are four parts, and that each part – mind, body, heart, and soul – are interconnected, with no hierarchy between each part (Toulouse, 2018). By grouping my podcast into four parts, my intention is to keep Indigenous pedagogy and the lessons I've carried throughout my life as the foundation of the project – recognizing that each episode is related to the next in one connected "wheel" of knowledge and stories.

The more formalized theoretical aspect of this project lies in Stuart Hall's concept of cultural identity, defined in his canonical essay "Cultural Identity and Diaspora". In this essay Hall (1990) discusses a definition of cultural identity that undergoes "constant transformation" and is not dependent on any fixed point in an unchanging past. By using this definition of cultural identity, Hall argues that the trauma of colonization can begin to be truly understood. Additionally, I also considered Indigenous scholar Bryan Brayboy's (2005) Tribal Critical Race Theory in order to inform my work on this research creation project, which argues that Indigenous experience is dictated largely by colonial power structures, and that Indigenous storytelling should be validated as a theoretical framework. By using Hall's

definition of cultural identity and applying it to Indigenous identity, as well as considering the main tenets of Tribal Critical Race Theory, I strove to produce journalism that was informed by BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of colour) pedagogy in the name of decolonizing my methodology.

My hope that this project can serve as a significant journalistic contribution is due to several factors. The first is that stories on Indigenous communities are under-covered (Pierro et al., 2013) and when they are, they often lack depth, nuance, diversity in voices, and tend to fall into stereotyped territory in which the Indigenous subject is pigeon-holed into a victim/warrior box (McCue, 2011). Through the journalism I produced, my ambition is that this can serve as a supplemental blueprint of the alternative journalistic methods that are arguably needed to report on Indigenous communities. The second factor lies in the fact that Indigenous journalism by Indigenous journalists is needed to balance and confront western journalism, which is historically rooted in the colonial agenda (Gilpin, 2019). Being Indigenous myself, and having grown up in the same area I conducted my research, my intent was to enter this project self-consciously, constantly asking myself what my role as an Indigenous journalist is while covering Indigenous stories. Before collecting my tape, the personal questions I posed to myself were: How is my perspective significant (or not) to the subject matter? What does the power dynamic between the researcher and the subject look like if both sides are Indigenous? How can I most effectively use my narration of these two worlds to highlight injustice and subvert western media perceptions of Indigenous peoples? I considered all these questions deeply as I navigated my work. Lastly, this project has a chance to prove its journalistic significance due to its medium: digital storytelling allows for an intimate auditory space that also acknowledges the importance of oral storytelling in Indigenous culture (Willox et al., 2012). I collected first-hand accounts of students, teachers, and elders, giving them the platform in my final piece, using my voice only to provide

historical context and insight. By using this methodological strategy, I hope to move this project beyond the limitations of western research, in an attempt to contribute to the recent push to decolonize the institution of research, knowledge, and pedagogy (Willox, et. al, 2012).

In Consideration of the Word "Decolonization"

It is imperative to define "decolonization" for the sake of this report. In recent scholarly discourse, the word "decolonization" has become quite vogue. There is a risk that the meaning becomes oversimplified and therefore turns it into a 'buzzword.' However, I want to proceed with the use of this word, because, as Indigenous authors Waziyatawin and Yellow Bird (2005) contest – by giving a name to our modern experience as Indigenous peoples (decolonization), we are engaging in an active form of resistance to colonization:

> Decolonization is the intelligent, calculated, and active resistance to the forces of colonialism that perpetuate the subjugation and/or exploitation of our minds, bodies, and lands, and it is engaged for the ultimate purpose of overturning the colonial structure and realizing Indigenous liberation. (p. 5)

While I agree decolonization is a sweeping, potentially oversimplifying word, and it is probably overused, especially in academia, it is frankly a powerful word that we as Indigenous people can use as a tool to dismantle our own oppression. In this report, I use this word in reference to *active Indigenous resistance* to colonial institutions, methods, and imposed ideologies.

In Consideration of the Word "Indigenous"

A second important distinction must be made between the term "Aboriginal" and "Indigenous" – the former being an imposed settler term that fails to acknowledge the many

varied, distinct, and sovereign First Nations throughout Canada. The term “Indigenous,” however, has global connotations, recognizing the many differences between Indigenous peoples across the planet, but also captures their common struggles against colonial oppression (Todorova, 2016). Therefore the use of “Indigenous” in this report is used in reference to the many unique and singular nations that can be found Canada-wide, recognizing and acknowledging that Indigenous identity is not monolithic.

Review of Existing Research

The literature I chose to reflect on before, during, and after my podcast creation is a blend of research done on journalism in Indigenous communities, research on podcasting, and works that highlight the need for change in research methods in western research institutions when covering Indigenous topics. The literature review takes into account more pragmatic writings by both journalists and researchers regarding decolonization of research methods, reporting on marginalized communities, the potential of podcasting as a medium in an emerging digital age, as well as the theory that guided the creation of this project. A particular focus in the literature is the need for decolonization in curriculum and pedagogy in institutional settings (Reid, 2018). The literature I have assembled can be categorized into four categories:

1) Journalism in Indigenous communities
2) Research on podcasting/audio documentary
3) Indigenous research methods
4) Theory surrounding cultural identity and representation

While gathering sources, a concentrated personal emphasis was to collect works from primarily Indigenous authors and authors of colour. By centring Indigenous voices and voices

of colour, I can apply theories and research frameworks that are aligned with my goal to engage in decolonizing my work within a western institution (Ranjan et al., 2015).

Journalism in Indigenous Communities

From the moment settlers stepped on Canadian soil, the predominant image of the "Indian savage" or the "Indian princess/squaw" has been mythologized in the collective Canadian consciousness (Carter, 1993). When discussing journalism in Indigenous communities, it is crucial to acknowledge how settler-imposed imagery surrounding stereotypes of Indigenous Peoples has influenced and shaped the representations of Indigenous people in mass media since Canada's conception as a colonized state. Scholar Sarah Carter illuminates how negative imagery of the Indigenous woman in the 1800s was largely shaped by government administrators and statesmen for reportage purposes back to the Crown, which in turn influenced the national press. Carter (1993) writes, "officials propagated an image of Aboriginal women as dissolute, as the bearers of sinister influences, to deflect criticism from government agents and policies" (p. 150). Carter observes how any social disintegration within the settler-imposed reserves was consistently blamed solely on the Indigenous women, deeming them 'lazy" and "slovenly" (p. 150). These women were demonized in reports written by government officials in order to deflect any possible criticism of governmental officials from the Crown and to legitimize the "constraints placed on the activities and movements of Aboriginal women in the world off the reserve" (p.148). According to Carter (1993), the officials in power used these negatively promoted images of Indigenous peoples in order to "explain conditions of poverty and ill-health on reserves" (p. 148). As Carter writes:

> The failure of agriculture on reserves was attributed to the incapacity of Aboriginal men to become other than hunters, warriors, and nomads. Responsibility for a host of other problems, including the deplorable state of housing on reserves, the lack of clothing and footwear, and the high mortality rate, was placed upon the supposed cultural traits and temperament of Aboriginal women. (p. 148)

By blaming the poor living conditions faced by Indigenous peoples on their "cultural traits and temperament" (p. 148), when these conditions were so clearly a result of forced displacement, poverty, sub-standard reserve housing, and a lack of access to the same resources as settlers, one can see how the stereotypes and biases planted at the inception of settler-Indigenous relations in Canada has shaped the narrative around ideas of Indigenous identity. Acknowledging this truth, it is then important to recognize how the negative imagery associated with Indigeneity in general has persisted throughout larger political structures since the colonization of Canada. This in turn affects how representation of Indigenous peoples continues to impact public policy, academic institutions, and mainstream media outlets – all of which are colonial-based, and therefore have a wide and enduring cultural, social, and political reach throughout the country (Todorova, 2016). Essentially, we can discern that western journalism and the mass media has its very roots in colonialism and in western imperialism, therefore journalism in Indigenous communities cannot be forged with this approach in order to produce *ethical* and *effective* end results.

With this in mind, when pursuing any type of journalism in a marginalized community, it is imperative to acknowledge and understand the historical, political, and cultural context from which said community originates (McCue, 2011). Arguably, no one stresses this particular need in a more pressing way than Indigenous CBC reporter Duncan McCue. In 2011, McCue created *Reporting in Indigenous Communities* – an online culturally-specific guideline created for journalists reporting on Indigenous topics. The

guideline summarizes three areas in which journalists need to change their approach when reporting in Indigenous communities:

1) At the desk – how to research and pitch stories
2) In the field – how to gather information for these stories; and
3) On the air – how we present stories about Indigenous peoples (McCue 2011)

In the first section, "at the desk," McCue establishes the fact that there has been a long history of parachute journalism, in which the reporter comes to an Indigenous community, gets their story, then leaves without ever speaking to any of the people they interviewed for said story again. McCue explains how oftentimes, the representations of the subjects of these stories are based on the "WD4" rule – which essentially implies that to make the news, an Indian has to be either drumming, dancing, drinking, dead, or acting like a warrior (McCue, 2011). To avoid perpetuating these tropes, McCue urges journalists to tell a range of stories, to include Indigenous voices in "non-Indigenous" stories, not to bury the "good news" stories, to strive for solutions to problems, and lastly to meet with people face-to-face for interviews as opposed to over the phone, with the consideration that Indigenous people are more likely to establish trust and connection with a reporter in person. This last tenet proved all too true for me during my work as I observed how much more willing people were to open up once they were able to see my face and get a sense of who I was. When I first reached out to my various sources for this project, I noticed that phone calls and emails only got me so far – my emails were often left unanswered and my phone calls largely unreturned. When I arrived physically to both schools, however, I was able to establish a sense of agency and relatability with my subjects, who seemed much more at ease when they met me in person.

McCue then provides instructions on navigating journalism "in the field," which addresses "Indian time." Indian time is hard to define, but it basically acknowledges that Indigenous people don't run on the same watch that dictates the schedule of the average

western workplace (McCue, 2011). Indian time could mean that a scheduled interview or event could happen much later than planned, much earlier, or exactly “on time” (McCue, 2011). Planning for Indian time, McCue argues, is most valuable to a reporter whose schedule is dictated by uncompromising newsroom deadlines. He suggests that asking your editor for more time for the story, making time in your own schedule, and expecting delays when cultural events are taking place will all be of utmost value when it comes to navigating the field in “Indian country.”

In this section, McCue also covers “Indigenous Customs and Protocols,” “White Characters and the Question of Agency,” “Who Represents the Indigenous Perspective,” and “Storytakers.” I took particular interest in the latter two topics as I navigated my own work. McCue stresses that Indigenous groups across Canada are not homogenous and cannot simply be lumped under the umbrella of “Indigenous.” Traditions, beliefs, governance, and perspectives vary widely across Canada’s 600+ Indian bands (McCue, 2011). With this in mind, a reporter must enter an Indigenous community with the awareness of that unique community’s autonomy. It was important then, for myself, to respect the 30+ different northern communities represented by the students living at Pelican – recognizing that some students were Cree, some were Oji-Cree, and some Ojibway – each nation with its own distinct way of seeing the world.

In McCue’s “Storytakers” section, he reminds reporters that ultimately, as a journalist, one is more of a “storytaker” than a “storyteller.” McCue acknowledges the collective “500-Years-Of-Anger" worth of colonization that is often and understandably felt by Indigenous people, even more so understandably directed at colonizers or outsiders. This anger, McCue stresses, should never be taken personally if one is to ever be the recipient of that anger:

> Some Indigenous people you interview may have attended residential schools, where they experienced abuse and trauma. Therefore, it’s not surprising they have feelings

> of bitterness or rage directed towards authority figures. In a news reporting scenario, you may represent a person of authority...Unless you're offering your interview subjects the power to veto or edit your final story...then you are, in fact, a storytaker - and this Indian has probably got a lot of experience with people who keep looking to tell Indigenous "stories", whether it's the missionaries and anthropologists of old, or more recently, a steady barrage of administrators and bureaucrats looking for statistics, data, or "consultation." (McCue, 2011)

This concept was one that helped me keep perspective in check when I first encountered the principal of Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School, Sharon Angeconeb, to ask her for permission to pursue my podcast idea at the school. When I first pitched the idea to Ms. Angeconeb, I was met with trepidation and even guardedness. She was wary of my coming there and had a strict set of conditions upon my arrival at the school. She made it clear that I was not to interfere with any of the students' class time, nor was I to record any student without permission from their parents or guardians (which, to be fair, is certainly standard practice when interviewing minors). She also made it known that she expected me to compensate the interviewed students for their time – a concept generally frowned upon within the standard journalistic realm (Canadian Association of Journalists, 2011). I will discuss these conditions later on in this report's reflection section, but thought it relevant to reflect on the level of wariness and caution I was met with by Ms. Angeconeb in particular. It was not exactly a warm reception, despite the fact that I identified myself to her as an Indigenous journalist – she made it known that she had been burned by reporters before and those negative past experiences left her especially protective of the youth in her charge. Keeping what I had gleaned from McCue's insights regarding "storytakers," I was able to understand that Ms. Angeconeb came from a rightful place of distrust towards any journalists

coming into her school, thus solidifying the pressing need for trust to be rebuilt between journalists and Indigenous leaders.

McCue's (2011) website also includes a culturally-aware reporters "checklist" so that journalists may ensure that they have considered the ways in which they have/have not represented the subject in the most comprehensive way possible (e.g. "Are you looking beyond Pow Wows, cultural gatherings, and National Indigenous Peoples Day for Story Ideas? How will you include Indigenous people as "problem-solvers" in your story?" etc.) McCue's work in "Reporting in Indigenous Communities" is directly aligned with my own personal values as an Oji-Cree journalist and captures an ideal mandate in regards to both understanding a marginalized community's complexities/historical context in the larger global frame, while recognizing the potentially harmful practice of colonial research methods when imposed on said community. McCue's work undoubtedly proved to be an invaluable resource as I attempted to enter an Indigenous community as an "outsider," but also as an Indigenous journalist.

Reporting on Indigenous topics requires a level of complexity and nuance that most mainstream media fails to deliver on (Gilpin, 2018). Indigenous reporters can bring in-depth background knowledge and lived experience to the stories they produce, thus making them richer and more culturally accurate. Tanya Talaga, a long-time Anishinaabe reporter for the *Toronto Star*, now with the *Globe and Mail*, does just that in her 2017 book *Seven Fallen Feathers: Racism, Death and Hard Truths in a Northern City*. The book chronicles the unsolved deaths of seven Indigenous teenagers in Thunder Bay, Ontario from 2000 to 2011. All teenagers, except one, attended Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School, one of the schools I visited for this project. While the book offers a comprehensive timeline specifically regarding the events surrounding these deaths, it also provides a powerful critique on the treatment of Indigenous people in both historic and modern contexts. Talaga's painstakingly-

researched historic, geographic, and demographic details about the city of Thunder Bay and surrounding area was of utmost value to me as I navigated the area during my tape collection. Additionally, Talaga's position in her book serves as a case study in which I personally observe how she, as an Indigenous journalist entering Indigenous spaces, has navigated and balanced her own identity and autonomy in these spheres. There is a moment at the beginning of the book when Talaga interviews Stan Beardy, then-grand chief of Nishnawbe Aski Nation. She describes how she has flown all the way from Toronto to Thunder Bay, Ontario for this interview, with a particular story in mind involving voting-pattern statistics amongst First Nations across Canada. When she presents her interview questions, Chief Beardy ignores them, instead asking her why she isn't writing a story about the high death-rate of Indigenous youth in Thunder Bay – a topic that, until then, no media reportage had covered in depth. At first Talaga is annoyed, because she's been sent all the way from Toronto on a specific story assignment from her editor, and she knows that "a missing grade nine Indigenous student in Thunder Bay would not make news in urban Toronto" (p. 16). She then remembers where she is, that she was "sitting with the elected grand chief of 45,000 people, and he was clearly trying to tell me something" (p. 16). This incident, though relatively small, had a profound impact on me as I read it in preparation for my own work. Because Talaga was able to pause, recognize that this prominent Indigenous leader was trying to tell her something important about his lived experience, she was able to write a book that reflected the most pressing and urgent issues related to the Indigenous lived experience in Thunder Bay – as opposed to what a southern editor's idea of that story should be. By simply listening and making space for Indigenous subjects to reveal the stories they carry, the journalism that results is all the more richer. I carried this lesson with me as I made my own navigation into Indigenous communities for this project, acknowledging my identity, autonomy, and

subjectivity while trying to bridge the gap between speaker and subject, interviewer and interviewee.

The Efficacy of Personal Narrative Podcasting as a Form of Journalism

The catalogue of literature on podcasting is slim, but steadily growing. Perhaps, in a world where new media takes longer to be accepted as a valid social and cultural tool, podcasting has yet to be valued on the same level as its media predecessors. Researchers such as Willox et al. (2012) are challenging this through their digital creation work in Indigenous communities. They stress the need to decolonize institutional research methods when it comes to working with Indigenous communities, as western methods may not work when used in such a setting. Willox et al. (2012) emphasize that the power dynamic between researcher and subject needs to be re-constructed in this setting, where the researcher becomes more of a listener as opposed to a gatherer of information. Oral storytelling – a rich and long-standing Indigenous tradition – is an appropriate and effective method to use when collecting qualitative data on Indigenous communities. In this way, digital storytelling "can stand as a community-driven methodological strategy that addresses, and moves beyond, the limitations of narrative research and the issues of colonization of research and the Western analytic project" (p. 131). The idea of dismantling the power dynamic between the researcher and the "researched" was particularly important to me, especially considering the added dynamic of myself as an adult woman interviewing minorities still in high school. With this in mind, while collecting my interviews, I tried to blend into my surroundings as much as possible, sometimes sitting for hours at a table full of elders or students before even mentioning my podcast or bringing up the possibility of an interview. As an Indigenous person, I know that culturally, sitting down for a cup of tea and bannock with the elders in

your life is a part of daily living. With this knowledge, I not only was able to connect to the school elders on a deeper level, but I believe I also established trust and kinship that allowed me to interview some of them in the end. Respecting and reciprocating these knowledge-keepers' time and wisdom ultimately led to a gratifying experience that stretched beyond the bounds of journalism.

Lindgren (2016) explores the practice of podcasting as an emerging digital medium in journalism. She takes a particular interest in personal audio storytelling, in which the author is as present in the storytelling process as the subject is. Through her analysis, Lindgren argues that "the movement toward personal narratives is linked to the intimate nature of the audio medium" (p. 24). She acknowledges that despite the lack of scholarly research done yet on podcasting as an emergent genre in journalism, it is undeniably a powerful digital storytelling tool. Because of its "un-intrusiveness," podcasting, Lindgren argues, is perhaps the most intimate of mediums as it forces you to produce accompanying images in your mind, therefore requiring more engagement and creating a uniquely personal relationship between speaker and listener. The additional physical act of wearing headphones, which creates the auditory illusion of intimacy, of listening in on a conversation with a friend, further strengthens the emotional bond between the listener and speaker. While Lindgren touts the many virtues of personal narrative podcasting, she also acknowledges that its subjectivity potentially raises ethical red flags: "Listeners are required to have acute awareness of the artefact that is podcast and a well-developed ability to critically understand what they hear as they follow presenters moving seamlessly from 'wild speculations' and opinions to facts" (p. 37).

While I understand what Lindgren suggests here, and recognize the importance of flagging the potential pitfalls of the medium, I would counter that the audience's intelligence should not be underestimated. If the journalist producing the podcast is structuring the

episode in an effective way, there should be no room for confusion on the listener's end. This can be achieved by rigorous transcription of the recorded interviews, a flow chart depicting the episode structure, and a clearly written script reviewed by an editor. These were the practical steps I took when completing my project, and I believe that precision and attention to detail here was crucial in producing an end product that ultimately distinguished the primary voice (narrator) from the unique thoughts, feelings, and perspectives of the interviewees.

Weiner (2014) writes about the immersive effect that podcasting has on the listener. As he aptly puts it:

> Staring at a laptop or a tablet for hours on end exacts a physical toll; podcasts present a way to re-enter, and move through, the natural world without logging off. In an antidotal, and almost paradoxical way, podcasts are the Internet freed from pixels. (para. 14)

Aware of the particular immersive effect podcasts have generally on listeners, I attempted to create a sonic work that appeals empathetically to the listener, while still being grounded in checked facts, background research, and even theory. This bridge has hopefully allowed me to successfully experiment with the more emotional aspects of subjective narration, while still producing what can be called narrative journalism.

The Indigenous Call to Decolonize Western Methodology in Institutions

Decolonizing journalism education itself is essential to transform the structural institutional approach. Todorova (2016) argues that mainstream journalism education is based on "a hegemonic formation revolving around hierarchically ordered journalistic knowledges, which perpetuates rather than bridges the social rift between Indigenous and

non-Indigenous Canadians" (p. 676). Using critical theories surrounding topics such as power, hegemony, knowledge production, and colonialism, Todorova suggests that to fix this gap in journalism education, a collaboration must be made with Indigenous media outlets in order to transform the largely Euro-centric structure of western journalism. Changing this paradigm would, according to Todorova, require incorporating both Indigenous and non-Indigenous ideas and practices into modern journalism practice. She aptly uses the Aboriginal People's Television Network (APTN) as an example of how Indigenous journalism practiced by Indigenous journalists can serve as an act of colonial defiance in itself. By inviting interviewees to speak in their own language, covering stories in far north remote communities that larger media outlets seldom pay attention to, and "rooting stories within the cultural and historical specificity of the affected community" (p. 686), APTN has shown that culturally competent journalism that appeals to the "anti-capitalist" imagination can exist and even thrive (p. 686). Additionally, Indigenous reporters "further defy the hierarchy of knowledge in mainstream news, specifically the supremacy of the expert who narrates, interprets, or validates an event" (p. 686). As Todorova writes:

> In mainstream media, this expert is usually an academic, politician, or someone with expertise gained through special education and professional training. Indigenous journalism relies on such experts but also honours and respects the wisdom, life experience, and knowledge of Elders who are leaders and role models in the community (Hafsteinsson, 2013; Retzlaff, 2006). The presence of experiential knowledge and Elders in news stories not only makes meaning; it also connects generations and keeps the links between history, tradition, and the present alive. (p. 686)

Keeping this last tenet in mind, I strove during my own research creation to include Elders as interviewees. By acknowledging that experiential knowledge is deeply valued and

honoured in Indigenous culture, one can begin to produce Indigenous journalism that is anti-colonial by incorporating Indigenous pedagogy and experience.

Iseke and Moore (2013) examine the significance of Indigenous storytelling as it has a "complex mindfulness" and requires a "deep respect" when conducting any type of institutional research. Acknowledging that the art of story is an essential focus in Indigenous epistemology, pedagogies, and research approaches, Iseke and Moore emphasize the need for researchers and educators to recognize the significance of Indigenous storytelling in order to understand the past, future, and the unfolding world around us. Iseke and Moore claim there are two types of Indigenous stories: those with mythical elements that are intended to share and teach – this type of story is called "Atayohkiwina" in Cree – and personal stories, which include observations and commentary on life events, called "Acimona" (p. 154). This careful analysis of types of Indigenous storytelling (and the significance of these varying types) provides a strong basis to contextualizing the role of oral storytelling culturally and its role as a research method. I feel it is essential to examine how storytelling can shape and alter how we see the world, and to consider the link between the cultural significance of storytelling in Indigenous culture and its relation to audible sound.

Theoretical Context: Cultural Identity and Tribal Critical Race Theory

Review of Stuart Hall on Cultural Identity and Diaspora

Throughout the course of producing this research-creation project, a recurring theme was Indigenous identity and how the rhetoric around said identity shapes how Indigenous people are represented in western media. Jamaican-born cultural theorist Stuart Hall (1990) gives two definitions of what constitutes cultural identity. The first is the idea that cultural

identity is unified, unchanging, moored to the past and largely unmoveable. His second definition of identity is fluid and ever-changing:

> [Cultural] identity is not a fixed essence at all, lying unchanged outside history and culture. It is not some universal and transcendental spirit inside us on which history has made no fundamental mark. It is not once-and-for-all. It is not a fixed origin to which we can make some final and absolute Return. (p. 225)

With this second definition, Hall maintains that the cultural identity of any particular group is not grounded in strictly the past, whether in history or myth. Throughout his canonical essay *Cultural Identity and Diaspora*, he maintains that by understanding there is no fixed point or ideal past in which cultural identity can be legitimized or "finally" realized, one can more keenly comprehend the trauma of colonialism. With this concept in hand, ideas marking modern Indigenous identity do not have to be embedded in that unchanging past. Upon reflection of my own work and methodology for this project, I agree that it is imperative that ideas of cultural identity today not be constructed on imagination or myth. When considering Indigenous identity, the realities marking said identity often fall outside of how they are represented, whether in media or in the public imagination. As Hall reiterates, "cultural identity...is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being.' It belongs to the future as much as to the past...far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power" (p. 225).

Perhaps Hall's second definition of identity and culture allows for a more grounded approach to the preservation of said culture, which involves acknowledging that culture is transformative. Therefore, it is important to be rid of the concept of "recovering" a mythologized sense of identity rooted in "some timeless zone of the primitive, unchanging past" (p. 231). It is no secret that western ideas of Indigenous identity have been crusaded by

mainstream media for decades with vaudevillian, reductionist iterations of what it means to be an "Indian." Iterations of the "Savage Princess" or the "warrior Indian" (Valaskakis, 1993) perpetuated in mass media not only need to be expelled, but replaced with nuanced, multi-faceted, individualistic examples of the *modern* Indian. By considering Indigenous people as they are now, in their modern context, in which, for an obvious example, a snowmobile might be used instead of a dogsled team – recognizing that traditional ways can marry the old with the new, be complex, and have the aesthetic ability to evolve through time – we can begin to implement a much-needed shift in the Indigenous cultural narrative.

Hall discusses the idea of three cultural "presences" which dictate Caribbean cultural identity. Although he applies these metaphors to specifically Caribbean culture, I believe the core tenets of these presences act as the common denominators for many diasporas globally. (Hall acknowledges this himself when he discusses the 'New World' presence.) These three presences can be understood as follows:

The first is the *Presence Africaine*, or African Presence, which remains the "site of the repressed" (p. 230). According to Hall "Africa, the signified which could not be represented in slavery, remained and remains the unspoken, unspeakable 'presence' in Caribbean culture. It is 'hiding behind every verbal inflection, every narrative twist of Caribbean cultural life'" (p. 230). While obviously African-American slavery and the cultural genocide of North American Indigenous peoples are two separate things, a connection here can be made to this first presence that looms quietly in the background of Indigenous life and ways of being. This presence is the pre-colonial, pre-Columbian world that was once known as Turtle Island.

The second "presence" is the "*Presence Europeenne,*" which is about "exclusion, imposition, and expropriation" (p. 233). Hall argues that while it is tempting to regard the European presence as an external force that can be diminished or cast off, its imposing nature

has latched onto the collective Caribbean identity and even become a vital part of that identity. Applying this idea to Indigenous identity in Canada can arguably also be done, considering the deep roots of colonization that are embedded throughout the nation. One example that can be used here is the pervasiveness of the church in many northern communities. Many post-residential school generations, myself included, were not taught about traditional spirituality, ceremonies, or the sweat lodge, but instead grew up in the church, indoctrinated by the ideologies of Jesus Christ and the holy spirit. From this example, it is made clear how the *Presence Europeenne* and the cultures, traditions, and beliefs held by those who colonized Turtle island have become embedded permanently in modern Indigenous identity.

The third presence of which Hall speaks of is the *Presence Americaine,* or the "New World" presence, indicating "the 'empty' land (the European colonizers emptied it) where strangers from every other part of the globe collided" (p. 234). As Hall writes: "The New World has to be understood as the place of many, continuous displacements: of the original pre-Columbian inhabitants, the Arawaks, Caribs, and Amerindians, permanently displaced from their homelands and decimated" (p. 234). Understanding then, that this third presence, the New World presence, is what constitutes the political and social melting pot of the many cultural identities that make up Canada today, one can begin to understand the significance of diversity. By acknowledging that the diaspora experience is "defined...by...a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of identity which lives through and through, not despite, difference; by *hybridity*" (p. 235), it is possible to possess a comprehensive, newly-constructed idea of what cultural identity really means. Recognizing that Indigenous identity also has the power to be transformative, adaptive, and receptive to the ever-changing, diverse world, journalists can begin producing journalism that is sensitive and connected to that identity.

By using Hall's main tenets regarding cultural identity and diaspora in my own work, with the knowledge that ideas of identity should not be fixed on an essentialist past, that (Indigenous) identity is influenced not just by its own origins but also external colonial forces, and that it has the capacity for constant fluidity and transformation, I was able to apply the theoretical groundwork of these tenets to my methodology approach.

Tribal Critical Race Theory

While my methodology relied theoretically on Stuart Hall's ideas of cultural identity, upon further research after my interview collection, I also discovered what is known as Tribal Critical Race Theory. This theoretical framework, also known as TribCrit, was introduced by Indigenous scholar Bryan Brayboy (2005) with the purpose of exploring the connection between Indigenous issues and the laws and policies of the United States government (though I argue it can easily be also applied to a Canadian context). The framework rests on the back of Critical Race Theory, but is particular to the racialized plight of Indigenous people. TribCrit, much like Critical Race Theory, treats lived knowledge and storytelling with the same weight as theory and data (Brayboy, 2005). Waziyatawin and Yellow Bird (2005) assert, "since the truth about injustices perpetuated against Indigenous People has been largely denied in the United States, truth-telling becomes an important strategy for decolonization" (p. 7). It is this main tenet – that stories are as valid in research as theory – that resonated with me as I edited my project in post-production. If stories, lived experience, and truth telling are essential to making space for marginalized voices, and if journalism's aim is to "seek and report the truth" (Canadian Association of Journalists, 2011), than why shouldn't storytelling be just as valued as formalized theory?

I believe it is critical for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous journalists to have a firm footing in the knowledge of the following nine tenets of Tribal Critical Race Theory:

1. Colonization is endemic to society.
2. U.S. policies toward Indigenous peoples are rooted in imperialism, White supremacy, and a desire for material gain.
3. Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the political and racialized natures of our identities.
4. Indigenous peoples have a desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification.
5. The concepts of culture, knowledge, and power take on new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens.
6. Governmental policies and educational policies toward Indigenous peoples are intimately linked around the problematic goal of assimilation.
7. Tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but they also illustrate the differences and adaptability among individuals and groups.
8. Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being.
9. Theory and practice are connected in deep and explicit ways such that scholars must work towards social change. (Brayboy, 2005, p. 429-430)

As journalists, it is imperative to approach Indigenous stories with the understanding that the hegemonic social and political structures of the western world dictate modern Indigenous life, that these structures are colonial and capitalist, and that Indigenous stories can be used to transform the social landscape, thus resisting further colonization. Bolstered with these significant and powerful ideas, journalism then has the potential to act as a catalyst of social change, with the aim of dismantling colonial systems in our own workplace, decolonizing our own ways of being.

Reflections on Podcast Creation Process

Practical Reflections

When reflecting back on my experience navigating this project, it is important to consider and answer my original research questions, which I will repeat here:

1. How does one *ethically* and *effectively* report on Indigenous topics while avoiding superficiality?
    a) How should researchers interact with a marginalized culture/community, while recognizing that cultural identity is constantly evolving and fluid, often looking very different from the romanticized, one-dimensional images of marginalized communities depicted in mainstream media? (Hall, 1990)
2. How should Indigenous journalists (such as myself) approach reporting on Indigenous issues? Do I have more of a “right” to set up camp in an Indigenous community with my equipment for two weeks than a non-Indigenous researcher does?
3. How is reporting on Indigenous topics via this digital form (podcasting) valuable, considering the emerging literature regarding the significance of oral storytelling in Indigenous culture? (Iseke, 2013)

It would be impossible to answer the first question and sub-question without mentioning the relevance it has to the mission of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). This commission was founded in 2009 as a multi-year process in which survivors of Canada’s residential schools shared their stories in order to create a framework for a nation-wide reconciliation process. In the TRC’s 2015 Final Report, recommendation number eighty-six focuses on Canadian journalism specifically in regards to Indigenous reporting:

> We call upon Canadian journalism programs and media schools to require education for all students on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. (p. 236)

In a direct answer to this call, it is imperative for journalism institutions to implement a strong Indigenous element to their required courses. It is also imperative for future journalists to seek out such education individually, if their school does not have required courses. This is perhaps the most pressing need for change in journalism in Indigenous communities – for one cannot be expected to *ethically* and *effectively* report on Indigenous topics if they are not first comprehensively educated on them. When such education and understanding is obtained, *ethical* journalism can be produced because the right steps have first been taken in order to pursue it, and the journalist will be in possession of the correct historic and cultural knowledge needed. *Effective* journalism will be possible because the resulting journalism will be culturally competent, comprehensive, and nuanced. This in turn will cultivate more empathy, awareness, and understanding by its audience while avoiding superficiality.

Other important values in relation to this question are the concepts of reciprocity and relationships. McCue (2011) aptly quotes Margaret Kovach on this matter:

> Giving back is not a difficult concept, yet one of the most egregious actions of Western research into the lives of Indigenous peoples is the negligence of this ethic. Giving back does not only mean dissemination of findings. It means creating a relationship throughout the entirety of the research.

As I navigated my field work for this project, I kept the idea of relationships and reciprocity – two crucial concepts in Indigenous ideology and concepts that Duncan McCue

advocates for – as an ethical framework for my tape collection. If I collected an interview from an elder, I made sure to offer them tobacco beforehand. If I interviewed a teacher, I offered to help them in a class workshop or to introduce myself to their class, and give a short presentation of who I was and why I was there in their school. If I interviewed a student, I did not do so without first establishing some basis of relationship and trust before collecting said interview. A simple act of reciprocity, a value so revered in Indigenous culture and practice, can act as a natural and culturally-competent approach to achieving journalism that is both ethical and effective in the long-term.

A third value of importance when considering this question lies in the idea of sustained connection, taking time to do things the right way, and considering the earlier-discussed idea of “Indian time.” As I mentioned earlier, during the tape collection for this project, I purposefully made sure that I had already previously spent time with any student I interviewed. For instance, during my time at Pelican, I was asked if I would be willing to chaperone a student incentive road trip up north to Sandy Lake First Nation. The trip required a 12-hour truck ride on the northern ice roads, which, to my dismay, I was told I was to be a driver for. Having no experience driving a pickup truck, much less any experience driving on an ice road, I climbed into my truck with three female students in the back and began to drive. The first three hours of the drive were anxious, but after I became more familiar with the feel of the road, I began talking to the girls in my truck. The small-talk I struck up with the girls eventually led to long, sprawling conversations that ranged from colonization to their desire to raise their future children in traditional Indigenous ways – topics I would have never imagined discussing with teenagers until then. My point being, due to the trip’s length, I had a chance to authentically bond and lay down a relationship foundation with the students. Because I was willing to drive and immerse myself in the community of Pelican, I was able to glean stories that were truly reflective of the students’ experiences. For instance, there is a

moment in the podcast episode where Crystal, one of the students in my truck, discloses that she believes the grounds of Pelican are haunted by the ghosts of residential school survivors. I don't believe I would have ever come across this information had I not spent so much time with the students before interviewing them. This level of familiarity would have never been achievable via parachute journalism, and illuminates the need for longer and more meaningful sustained connections with Indigenous communities when approaching them for journalistic content.

In response to my second research question regarding my role as an Indigenous journalist: during the completion of this project, I strove to be culturally intentional in the way I approached my interview subjects. Generally, in Indigenous culture, the way you greet someone carries a lot of weight. Being Anishinaabe, I know that when I introduce myself to another Indigenous person, I should make it known what land I come from, and whose "people" I belong to. Therefore, when introducing myself, I made sure to acknowledge my nationhood (Oji-Cree from North Spirit Lake First Nation) and who my family is, making any possible connections to said family with whomever I was speaking with. I feel that this approach aligns with my original commitment to cultural competency when producing Indigenous journalism. I also feel that by using my lived experience and knowledge as an Indigenous person in my journalistic approach, I am in turn working towards that ultimate goal of decolonizing and dismantling a system that has historically ignored Indigenous lived experience as a valid resource.

In terms of an Indigenous journalist having more of a "right" to enter an Indigenous community than a non-Indigenous person – it is a difficult question to answer simply, and evokes the earlier subsequent questions asked at the beginning of this report: How is my perspective significant (or not) to the subject matter? What does the power dynamic between the researcher and the subject look like if both sides are Indigenous? How can I most

effectively use my narration of these two worlds to highlight injustice and subvert western media perceptions of Indigenous peoples?

These questions are not easy to answer, but based on my experience during this research-creation project, I would deem to say that Indigenous journalists have a unique role and a responsibility to carry the knowledge they obtain into the larger social discourse. Because Indigenous journalists potentially have an advantage over non-Indigenous reporters in regards to easier access to communities and built-in lived experience of what it means to be an Indigenous person, these journalists should be constantly aware of this power. By using their knowledge and proximity to Indigenous communities, Indigenous journalists can create journalism that is all the more nuanced and impactful. There have been many powerful examples of Indigenous journalism produced in recent years – Tanya Talaga's *Seven Fallen Feathers*, Ryan MacMahon's *Thunder Bay* podcast series, the *Missing and Murdered* podcast series by Connie Walker, amongst countless others. In each of these examples, the subjective voice of each author creates a sense of both emotional intimacy and immediate autonomy, which engages its audience on a level that certainly rivals a detached, "outsider" narration. Simply put, subjective narration in journalism is unexpected, and has the capacity to create a more intimate "relationship" between the audience and narrator (Lindgren, 2016).

This connects well to the last research question, which asks how reporting on Indigenous topics via a digital form is valuable, considering the emerging literature regarding the significance of oral storytelling in Indigenous culture (Iseke, 2013). As discussed earlier in this report, podcasts offer a unique and intimate auditory experience, which allows the listener to move freely through the natural world (Weiner 2014, para 14). I believe podcasting as a method of preserving Indigenous stories is closely, if not identically, aligned to the goal of what oral storytelling attempts in Indigenous culture – to keep knowledge alive. Therefore, it was natural that I chose the podcast form as my digital component to this research creation

project. Additionally, acknowledging that podcasting as a rapidly emerging storytelling genre in the past two decades (Weiner, 2014), it is also relevant to link this fact to Hall's idea of cultural identity as transformative and adaptive to modernity, as opposed to frozen in a timeless past. By marrying an emergent medium with the centuries-old tradition that is oral storytelling, one thereby acknowledges and respects Indigenous culture as an ever-changing, ever-adapting entity of resiliency that can move through the world in many forms and iterations.

Reflection on Ethics

In standard journalistic practice, it is generally accepted that payment for interviews is not an ethical means of obtaining information. In the Canadian Association of Journalists' Ethics Guidelines (2011) the following is stressed:

> We (journalists) do not pay for information, although we may compensate those who provide material such as photos or videos. We sometimes also employ experts to provide professional expertise, and pay for embedded activities. We are careful to note any such payments in our stories. (para. 2)

In the spirit of transparency, I wanted to make it clear that I followed the conditions set out for me by Sharon Angeconeb, the principal of Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School, who I mentioned earlier. When I approached her about this project, she made it clear that she expected me to compensate all students I interviewed in some way or form, whether that was in monetary form or, perhaps a Tim Hortons' card. Her reasoning for this was because her students were constantly being interviewed by journalists, often about traumatizing events. (Dennis Franklin has had an abnormally high number of mysterious Indigenous student deaths over the years.) Therefore she believed the students ought to be compensated for their time and the emotional labor that is often involved when journalists occupy their space,

especially considering their youth. In respect of her wishes and in the spirit of reciprocity, I offered each student I interviewed (whether at Dennis Franklin or Pelican Falls) either a $20 Tim Hortons' gift card or a $20 cash honorarium. Most chose the money, one chose the gift card. However, I did not mention this honorarium until after I had established some sort of relationship with each student, as this was an important tenet of my work. Additionally, since this project relies so heavily on alternative journalism methodology, I believe that this was the right thing to do in this project's spirit of dismantling oppressive or constricting practices that might not work universally across all cultures and groups.

Future Impacts

Practical Outcomes

Applying the journalistic framework employed in this project to future works will undoubtedly create journalism on Indigenous topics that is more comprehensive, nuanced, and true to the Indigenous experience (McCue, 2011). From the personal experience gleaned from this project, I maintain that the average media outlet's biggest flaw when collecting Indigenous stories is simply not giving the reporter enough time to truly be immersed in the community. There is no respect here for "Indian Time," in which everything happens in "the time it takes to do things in a good way" as quoted by an elder (McCue, 2011). McCue suggests that to remedy this problem, the individual reporter should make time in their schedule to account for Indian Time, or ask their editor for an assignment extension. While these are good suggestions in the interim, I propose that media outlets devote funding to allow journalists to stay for longer stretches of time when working on stories – twenty-four hours is simply not enough time to create something that is genuinely reflective of the Indigenous experience. Future journalists, given the right amount of time in a community,

will benefit by reaping deeper insights, well-rounded subjects, and the opportunity for deeper critical reflection in the post-production process, should they decide to approach the project subjectively via personal narration.

The second major flaw is the lack of reciprocity in standard journalistic practice – a defining value in Indigenous culture, cemented in the Medicine Wheel and its four parts that are not separate but entwined, intrinsically bound to each other, oblivious of any border (Toulouse, 2018). By specifically training journalists to be culturally competent, they will understand that reciprocity, whether it's giving back to their subjects in the form of their time, tobacco for elders, or even just a shared cup of tea, will forge a sense of relationship and establish the trust that Indigenous people have, in varying degrees, lost in journalists over the past few decades. Bearing this culturally-competent knowledge, future journalists will be able to rebuild trust, connection, and better relationships with communities, which will in turn produce better journalism.

Applying this framework to future journalism projects could potentially open more doors to alternative ways of reporting, which is in itself an act of colonial resistance. By challenging traditional journalistic norms such as objectivity and strict schedule-adherence, alternative journalism methods can not only be beneficial to representing Indigenous communities, but potentially other marginalized communities as well.

Theoretical Implications

Finally, regarding educational institutions, it is imperative for journalism students and academics to consider how Indigenous storytelling can and should be valued equally to formalized theory. In the words of Brayboy (2005): "Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being" (p. 430). I believe that by validating the lived experience and knowledge of

Indigenous people, it reinforces their status and strength not only in a journalistic or academic setting, but in their own communities. Iseke and Moore (2011) believe this to be an active form of colonial resistance: "Collecting community stories through digital means ensures that communities honor their oral traditions and resist the dominance of texts that are prevalent in the dominant society" (p. 34). Podcasting, in this specific project, has allowed me to access the intimacy and immediacy of the medium in order to reflect the deep-seated power that oral storytelling possesses in Indigenous culture. By acknowledging this power and giving life to it, it can be seen as a way to reinforce cultural competency within journalistic practice.

I additionally propose that journalists are educated with at least some of the tenets of Tribal Critical Race Theory, which explicitly iterates how the colonial agenda has impacted North American Indigenous life since settler dominance. With this historic and social knowledge, future journalists will be well-equipped to pursue Indigenous stories.

Concluding Statement

With all I have learned and observed from Duncan McCue (2011) and countless other Indigenous scholars and journalists, Hall's (1990) theories of cultural identity, Brayboy's (2005) insights on colonization and Indigenous ways of being, and the elders, teachers, and students interviewed for this project, I feel sincere hope for the potential and future of Indigenous journalism. As I begin to see both Indigenous and non-Indigenous journalists pursuing Indigenous stories in decolonized ways, testing the boundaries of traditional journalism practice, and questioning what has been done before, I see a rich threshold of journalistic potential waiting to be tapped into. This project was in many respects an experiment in journalism, wherein traditional rules were at times sidestepped and even broken. However, my hope is that the project bears witness to this possibility: that alternative, culturally-competent journalism practice can greatly alter the outcome of Indigenous stories

in the media and wider cultural discourse. This outcome not only benefits journalists, but the Indigenous communities in which they report, and in turn the greater audience to which these stories are told.

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