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Indigeneity, Institutions of Media Culture,

and the Canadian State since 1990

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

Requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Film and Television

by

Karrmen Crey

2016

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Indigeneity, Institutions of Media Culture,

and the Canadian State since 1990

by

Karrmen Crey

Doctor of Philosophy in Film and Television

University of California, Los Angeles, 2016

Professor Chon A. Noriega, Chair

This project investigates the exponential growth of Indigenous media in Canada since 1990, and the role of institutions of media culture in this phenomenon. During this period, Indigenous social movements, state legislation and policy, and media technologies converged in media-producing institutions across the country, contributing to the proliferation of Indigenous film, television, video, and digital media. Indigenous filmmakers, producers, and artists navigate the complex terrain of institutional discourses and practices in the development of their work, negotiations that ultimately shape screen content. This approach intervenes in analytical trends that interpret Indigenous production in terms of oppositional cultural politics, setting this work against a monolithic colonial state apparatus. Such approaches position Indigenous producers as cultural "auteurs," whose work gives evidence of a shared cultural/political aesthetic, which risks overlooking areas of production not associated with the features of these cultural politics.

Further, juxtaposing Indigenous media with the state does not explain why the state would create policy and programs that support a body of work that would ostensibly undermine its hegemony. This project argues that state support represents an attempt of the liberal pluralist state to "manage" Indigenous challenges to its authority by incorporating Indigeneity into the national cultural fabric. However, examination of the institutional dimensions of production reveals the unevenness and contingency of state influence, as national policy and ideology are interpreted according to a given institution's cultures and practices, which are in turn navigated by media practitioners and their work. By doing so, this project contributes institutional analysis as a crucial but under-examined lens for the interpretation of Indigenous screen content, and applies it to areas of Indigenous production and institutions of media culture that have not yet had significant scholarly attention, including provincial television and academic research institutions, to begin recuperating these areas into the historical and scholarly record.

The dissertation of Karrmen Crey is approved.

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Chon A. Noriega, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2016

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A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

My use of the term "Indigenous" is meant to be broad and inclusive, and generally follows

the usage of "Indigenous peoples" by the United Nations from their which does not set out a

definition but rather outlines a set of characteristics through which to understand the term

"Indigenous peoples:"

- Self- identification as indigenous peoples at the individual level and accepted by the community as their member.

- Historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies

- Strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources

- Distinct social, economic or political systems

- Distinct language, culture and beliefs

- Form non-dominant groups of society

- Resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities

(United Nations, "Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Voices Factsheet")

The term "Indigenous" has become more prevalent academically in the past decade in

recognition of the global and transnational dimensions of Indigenous peoples' historical

experiences of colonization and ongoing struggles for political and juridical representation and

authority over their traditional cultures and resources. However, the terminology referring to

Indigenous peoples is highly variable, and in Canada they have different historical and legal

applications. As a result, the sources used for this dissertation referring to the Canadian context

employ Aboriginal, First Nations, Inuit, Métis, Indian, and Native, while sources outside of the

Canadian context use Native, Native American, American Indian, Aboriginal, Indian, and

Indigenous. While I use these terms when directly citing these sources, I use "Indigenous" to

broadly refer to all the groups identified within this existing terminology. "Indigenous" is also

capitalized throughout this dissertation as it not an adjective, but rather refers to the proper

names of groups of people.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION:

Indigenous Cultural Politics, The State, and Indigenous Media

When Canada patriated its Constitution from the United Kingdom in 1982, becoming a sovereign nation, it included in its Constitution Section 35, which formally recognized and affirmed Indigenous rights.[1] This was a watershed moment in Indigenous history in Canada and for Indigenous peoples globally, as Section 35 acknowledged that Indigenous peoples possessed legal rights predating the colonial settler state, and that their rights were not extinguished under colonial law and occupation. However, acknowledgement in law did not equate to acknowledgement in fact, and in the following decades, Indigenous groups fought state incursions on their rights and territory in order to force the Canadian state to abide by their constitutional commitments. Part of the federal response was to increase state support for Indigenous representation in the national cultural sphere through programs and resources for Indigenous cultural production. Since the early 1990s, Indigenous media has developed significantly across the country, providing rich and diverse production that has received substantial scholarly attention.

This dissertation examines the political, material, and historical conditions that have made possible the proliferation of Indigenous media in Canada since 1990.[2] More specifically, I focus on the institutions of media culture that form the backdrop for Indigenous media production, and the media created in relation to these institutions. Since 1990, the state has developed policy and legislation designed to boost Indigenous participation in the cultural sphere

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[1] Formally the *Constitution Act, 1982* Section 35. While Canada had been self-governing, prior to 1982, the United Kingdom Parliament could only make amendments to the Constitution. The patriation of the Canadian Constitution allowed the Constitution to be amended in Canada (Department of Justice 2016).

[2] By "Indigenous media" I mean media by Indigenous artists, filmmakers, and producers that seeks to represent Indigenous concerns and topics.

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and supported the creation of funding sources and programs for Indigenous arts and culture in public funding agencies and media institutions including the National Film Board of Canada (NFB), the Canada Council for the Arts, and Canadian national broadcasters. Other cultural institutions were responsive to these social and political shifts and in turn developed resources and programs for Indigenous film, video, television, and digital media, including museums, galleries, academic research institutions, broadcasters, and independent media collectives. While conscious of this broad institutional field, this dissertation is not an institutional history of Indigenous media in Canada; as I suggest, Indigenous production and institutions involved make up a very wide field. Instead, this dissertation models a form of analysis that accounts for the institutional dimensions of Indigenous production as they inform the representational strategies and modes of address of Indigenous screen content.

I examine nonfiction media specifically, recognizing that nonfiction production is by far the largest body of Indigenous media in Canada, and is therefore a reliable diagnostic for evaluating patterns in production, and shifts in these patterns over time. The timeframe for this project has been guided by these production trends, which emerged in the process of compiling a database of Indigenous media practitioners and their production output from 2011 to 2013. This database was produced using online databases and catalogues, including those from VTape (Toronto, ON), Video Out Distribution (Vancouver, BC), Moving Images Distribution (Vancouver, BC), the National Film Board of Canada (Montreal, QC), as well as university libraries (Appendix I). These sources indicate that prior to 1990 there were in the area of 30 Indigenously-produced nonfiction media objects; after 1990, however, this number climbs to well over 500 films, videos, and television programs and episodes (Appendix II). This remarkable phenomenon is the starting point for this dissertation, which examines the confluence

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of Indigenous social movements, shifts in national policy, and developments in media technologies through which it emerged.

This surge in media production is in part contextualized by Oka Crisis of 1990, which proved to be an historic turning point in Indigenous cultural politics, critical discourse, and cultural production in Canada. In the summer of 1990, a territorial dispute arose between the Mohawk people of Kanehsatake and the municipality of Oka, Quebec that would eventually become a watershed moment in Indigenous cultural politics and history in Canada. The previous year, the mayor of Oka announced plans to extend a golf course and residential development into the ancestral territories of the Mohawk of Kanehsatake, which included a traditional burial ground. The conflict escalated into a 78-day standoff between protesters and the Canadian military that lasted from July 11 to September 26, 1990 and dominated the mainstream news media for the duration (Robertson and Anderson 2011, 222). Sophie McCall has described the conflict as a "double-edged event in Canadian history:" it catalyzed Indigenous social movements and support for the Mohawk and across the country, yet "the representation of the 'Oka crisis' in the media reinforced Manichean stereotypes of violent Natives versus besieged settlers, while eliding the historical roots of the conflict" (2011, 77). The event spurred widespread debates about the politics of representation, and the problem of the appropriation of the Indigenous "voice," a discourse referring the practice of using and re-presenting elements of Indigenous cultures by dominant settler colonial society, producing cultural knowledge about Indigenous peoples without their involvement or consent, which in effect "silenced" Indigenous peoples and suppressed their perspectives (ibid; Todd 1990). Indigenous self-representation emerged during this era as a discourse shaping Indigenous cultural politics and driving Indigenous critical and cultural production, through which a significant number of filmmakers

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and media artists emerged over the next two decades, from approximately 10 artists prior to 1990 to over 160 by 2013 (Appendix III).

The Oka Crisis was unquestionably a watershed moment for Indigenous cultural politics and the growth of Indigenous media; however, focusing on this era immediately raises issues with the historiography of Indigenous media and how the identity-based category is conceptualized. The databases and catalogues consulted for this project largely reflected Indigenous media from southern, urbanized areas of Canada. These databases include some Inuit and northern Indigenous media content; however, it wasn't until after the data collection period had ended and the analysis began that questions emerged about why Inuit and northern Indigenous media, particularly television programming, was not widely represented in these collections. This may in part be attributed to the resource capacities of the collections, which are located in southern Canadian cities and tend to reflect media produced in and distributed to these areas, creating regional blind spots in their representation of Indigenous production. As a researcher, these blind spots became my own as I focused on this data, acclimating myself to the circumstances shaping the patterns emerging from it. Since the 1970s, however, Inuit and northern Indigenous communities have had a regional broadcasting infrastructure since the 1970s, airing television programming produced by northern Inuit and Indigenous communities and broadcast to these communities which has not been widely available in southern, urbanized areas of Canada.[3] Beginning in 2006, the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation (IBC) and the Nunavut Media Arts Centre has been digitizing and cataloguing their vast film and video archives, which according to their website holds 9000 hours of programming and footage (IBC, "Inuit Film and

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[3] The history of northern television is explored in greater detail in Chapters One and Three, reframing the historical scope of this dissertation to develop the context for the emergence of national Indigenous television from the 1990s onward.

Video Archives" 2016b). Since 2008, portions of this programming have been made available on Isuma.tv, an online distribution platform, and in 2016, IBC identified that a further 700 videos were uploaded to the site as a part of its efforts to preserve and distribute this content (IBC, "Online Video Descriptions" 2016a, 1). The work of IBC and the Nunavut Media Arts Centre have not only made an invaluable body of work available to view, but have also generated public records of these holdings that will greatly benefit research on media from this region. While 1990 marks a crucial period in the rapid expansion of Indigenous production across the country, by identifying northern production here I mean to make clear that Indigenous media is a complex terrain that does not resolve into a coherent history; and furthermore, that the creation and dissemination of records on Inuit and northern production raise questions about the ways that access to and the visibility of areas of Indigenous production shape how "Indigenous media" as a cultural category is perceived and understood; that is, what areas are included and what are excluded, and why – questions that I investigate throughout this dissertation.

Situating the Project: Models and Methods from Minority Media Studies

      In order to understand the conditions enabling the growth of Indigenous media across the country during this era, I draw on two important precedent studies by Chon A. Noriega and Jun Okada, who approach Chicano cinema and Asian American film and video respectively not as pre-given identity-based categories, but as historical and political formations debated and shaped through social and ideological forces including state policy, social movements, developments in media technologies, and institutional funding structures and practices (Noriega 2000, Okada 2015). Noriega argues that this form of analysis has been impeded by prevailing disciplinary tendencies in film and television studies in which minority cinemas are measured by the

oppositional cultural politics of social movements. Critical discourse has subsequently "followed the well-trodden path of social movement scholarship more generally, looking at the political, aesthetic, and cultural dimensions of contestation without considering its relationships to the state, the political representation system, industry practices, and the market" (19), and is instead preoccupied with "defining a vernacular aesthetic and cinema movement and a corresponding community, usually against the backdrop of mainstream exclusion" (19). Similarly, Okada argues, "there is no such thing as an authentic, organic, or autonomous 'Asian American film and video.' It is a concept invented by the network of grassroots, local, and national institutions that emerged following the civil rights and student movements of the 1960s and 1970s" (2015, 5). Okada echoes Noriega by pointing to the role of cinema and media studies in constructing this body of work as an identity-based genre, "which frequently focuses on subject matter or spectatorship" (3) at the expense of the institutional contexts that form the basis for its production. Furthermore, as Noriega argues, prevailing practice in cinema and media studies critical produce minority cinemas by, for, and about social groups, in which social identities are transformed into aesthetic categories (21). Within these categories, social phenomena are converted into textual effects that come to constitute sets of characteristics through which these media texts are recognized and interpreted. Ultimately, these approaches construct a monolithic cultural nationalism in opposition to the state that positions such cinemas are "outside" of the state. This paradigm raises several issues: it tends to overlook media texts that do not conform to expectations of the genre, resulting in historical blind spots when it comes to what artists or work gets acknowledged and discussed; and interpretation can be circumscribed by these socio-cultural markers of difference at the expense of other axes of analysis that contextualize the media texts: state policy, institutional discourses and practices, media modes, and genre and

format conventions, all of which participate in shaping the field. My project examines precisely these dimensions of Indigenous production, tracing developments in state policy, media technologies, and Indigenous social movements that coalesced in media-producing institutions across Canada, contexts that Indigenous media practitioners engage and navigate in the production of their work.

To do so, my research brings together interviews with Indigenous producers and institutional personnel with archival, institutional, and textual evidence to develop production histories of the media that form the bases of the case studies for each chapter. Institutional analysis includes legal and regulatory materials, websites, promotional materials, reports, and grant and award applications. Funding and regulatory materials describe institutional goals, mandates, infrastructure, and administration, and also make it possible to see institutions' relationships to governing entities that inform the organization and regulation of a given institution. The institutions involved that form the backdrop for the case studies are provincial educational television, the Banff Centre for the Arts, the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, the First Nations Studies Program of the University of British Columbia, the University of California, Los Angeles, and the National Film Board of Canada. Institutional analysis involves evaluating their production practices as expressed in institutional materials and by in other productions contemporaneous with those included in this dissertation.

Institutional evidence beyond documentation (reports, policy and funding documents) has been acquired through interviews with filmmakers and institutional personnel. Interviews are a key part of developing production histories that are not be available elsewhere, as well as building understandings of the relationships between institutions that producers and organizational personnel have navigated. I also take seriously interviews as a core component of

Indigenous research ethics. Historically, non-Indigenous researchers have extracted research from Indigenous communities, appropriating Indigenous knowledge and experience and re-presenting it in Western theoretical frameworks that have ignored the cultural, political, and intellectual contexts from which this knowledge emerged, obscuring Indigenous perspectives and imposing their own. Indigenous research methodologies consider how to redress this history and develop methods that are, as Linda Tuhiwai Smith explains, "more respectful, ethical, sympathetic and useful" (1999, 9). These practices seek to shift perceptions of Indigenous people as "sources" or "informants," and instead as collaborators in the production of knowledge, so that, as Renee Pualani Louis argues, "Indigenous people can take control of their cultural identities, emancipate their voices from the shadows, and recognise (sic) Indigenous realities" (2007, 133). I approach interviews as a means to support these perspectives and develop these understandings. Furthermore, the ethical principles that center Indigenous perspectives overlap with analytical and theoretical approaches used in cinema and media studies in which media are understood not as passively reflecting socio-cultural phenomena, but as doing critical, cultural work; in other words, the theory is in the text. Without purporting to reduce interview participants to "texts," I nonetheless approach their interviews as sources of the experiences, critical insights, and values that shape Indigenous media as a field, which I bring to bear on my own analysis. These interviews focus on those dimensions of their experiences that they identify as significant to their work, which I place into conversation with institutional materials and ultimately to the media texts, bringing together their institutional, technological, and historical dimensions to analyze their textual features and strategies.

Theorizing the State and Governmentality

While this dissertation has a national focus, I distinguish between "state" and "nation" to account for the variegated field of discourse and practice in which Indigenous media is produced. Benedict Anderson's definition of "the nation" as an "imagined community" argues that the nation is a social construction of a sovereign community bound together by shared sense of belonging (2006), which is relevant for understanding how Indigenous-state relations have been configured, which Michelle Stewart defines in terms of as "Native nationalism," which supposes two coherent national identities (Indigenous and Canadian-state) deployed against one another in a struggle for legitimacy (2001, 22).[4] However, the "state" is a conceptual model for a governing entity's dispersed and variegated influence over an institutional field, and the variability in the application of national policy and discourses of Indigeneity as they are interpreted through particular institutions' own organizational and discursive practices. Here I draw on John A. Hall and G. John Ikenberry's definition of the state (1989), which is composed of three elements: 1) a set of institutions manned by personnel that are 2) at the center of a geographically bounded territory (society), and which 3) monopolizes rule making within its territory (1-2). Hall and Ikenberry caution that states do not necessarily fully realize the elements that constitute "state-ness," and that states have been more aspirational than fully realizable. The "state" thereby provides a framework for understanding a nation less as a unified and monolithic entity than as an uneven and shifting terrain of governance over an institutional and social field.

This framework for state authority is fitting for contemporary liberal democratic states, which seek domain not (primarily) through the top-down force of despotic regimes, but as Michel Foucault argues, through administration (2007). Foucault theorizes "governmentality" to

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[4] Indigenous "nationhood" in this context does not refer to a singular cultural identity, but rather a status possessed by individual Indigenous communities.

examine the histories of states governance, explaining that "governmentality" means three things: first, it is "the ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations, and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific, albeit very complex, power that has the population as its target;" second, it is "the tendency…for a long time, and throughout the West, [that] has constantly led towards the pre-eminence…of the type of power that we can call 'government' and which has led to the development of a series of specific governmental apparatuses," and third, that "we should understand the process, or rather, the result of the process by which the state…became the administrative state in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and was gradually 'governmentalized'" (108-109). Within the liberal democratic state, populations are "disciplined," or "managed," through the state's administrative apparatuses through which it sustains its authority. Governmentality is the rationale for the Canadian state's response to the Indigenous self-government movement in the latter part of the 20th century. By recognizing Indigenous rights and representation within its legislative and policy structures, the state sought to incorporate Indigenous difference within its national identity, thereby stabilizing its authority and legitimacy.

The national cultural sphere plays a crucial role in stabilizing the hegemony of the state as one of its administrative apparatuses. Zoë Druick employs this Foucauldian framework in her analysis of the NFB's production of "government realism" to argue that this filmmaking style, shaped by social scientific methods, contributes to the creation of "Canada" as a nation:

> Social categories, the basis of the census and other statistical research and an essential part of documentary films, are themselves epistemological and policy decisions, yet they pose as social fact. In other words, measuring – or indeed documenting – the population may actually help produce it (2007, 24-25).

As the national film agency, the NFB is particularly germane to analysis of governmentality and the role of national cultural institutions. This dissertation, however, moves beyond the NFB to examine institutions that may not operate directly under the auspices of the state, but nonetheless engage with its discourses and policies in terms of their own. Furthermore, these institutions also "govern" themselves in the sense of having their own administrative apparatuses that are responsive to the broader social and political sphere, representing a "tiered" and dialogic form of administration that is a part of the ecology of media production.

The State and Media: National and Subnational Cinemas

To date, the relationship between the state and media has largely been discussed in terms of "national cinemas." National cinemas have been examined in terms of their modes of address, in which their textuality is examined in relation to political and cultural discourses that seek to bind people to particular identities (Rosen 1984). Attention to representational strategies is augmented by positioning national cinemas as cultural and economic responses to Hollywood's global supremacy, avoiding competition with Hollywood by differentiating itself textually and targeting alternative distribution channels and exhibition venues (for instance, art-house production) (Crofts 1993). The latter approach engages with questions of the relationship between national ideology and industrial practices that this dissertation examines in relationship to Indigenous media. More recent literature has pursued a similar path, arguing that "national cinemas" need to be understood not only as cultural strategies, but also in industrial and institutional terms. In their introduction to *Theorising National Cinema* (2006), Valentina Vitali and Paul Willemen identify the terms through which a cinema becomes national, arguing that national cinemas emerge from the cluster of institutional networks known as "the state" that interact with institutions of media production, and that the nature of those interactions requires

consideration of a host of factors, such as the character of power regimes, the influence of social groups, available technologies, and funding patterns. Vitali and Willemen's discussion of the industrial dimensions of national cinema point to a social and institutional field through which these cinemas are produced, and while this dissertation is not focused on "national cinemas" in hegemonic terms, it approaches Indigenous media in terms of the arenas of ideology and institutions through which it has taken form. Vitali and Willemen also crucially identify that social groups put pressure on state processes and institutional practices, an aspect of Indigenous production that I investigate not only in terms of the pressure Indigenous producers place on state apparatuses, but also on the cultures and administration of institutions of media culture.

Shifting attention to the field of production within the nation-state moves from more macroscopic and hegemonic perspectives of national cinemas towards cinemas by "subnational" groups: non-dominant and disenfranchised social groups embedded within nation-states. In "Reconceptualising National Cinema/s," Stephen Crofts describes these subnational cinemas as "regional/ethnic cinemas" to identify ethnic and linguistic minorities whose cinemas are distinct from those of the nation-states in which they are embedded (1993, 57). Crofts' article is an overview of varieties of national cinemas, and while he cites Indigenous, Chicano, and African American cinemas by way of example, the intent of his piece is not to closely investigate how these groups are distinct from nation-states beyond identifying their differences in linguistic and ethnic terms.[5] However, the claims of Indigenous groups exceed linguistic and ethnic difference; as I will elaborate in following sections, Indigenous cultural difference are markers of Indigenous peoples' distinct histories and legal and political rights that confer a unique status

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[5] To this list of subnational cinemas we could also add Asian American, women, LGBTQ groups, immigrants, and religious minorities, where examination of these cinemas in relation to the state is still relatively nascent.

with respect to the Canadian state that has been characterized as a "nation-to-nation" relationship (Coulthard 2007, 438). Indigenous cinemas thereby complicate Crofts' schema of the "subnational," particularly those areas of Indigenous media that affirm nationalism as the basis for Indigenous rights and representation.

Institutional Analysis and Indigenous Media in Canada

In Canada, institutional analysis of Indigenous media is not a new approach per se, though it has largely been undertaken in relation to the National Film Board of Canada (NFB), Canada's national and public film agency, owing to the significant role the NFB has played in Indigenous media history in Canada (Gauthier 2010, Abbott 1998, Druick 2007, Pick 1999, Lewis 2006, White 2002, Silverman 2002, Steven 1993). Since the 1960s, the NFB has developed training programs and resources in support of Indigenous production, including the Indian Film Crew in 1967 (Stewart 2007) and Studio One in 1991 (Cardinal 2008), which became the Aboriginal Filmmaking Program in 1996 (White 2006, 135). Furthermore, Alanis Obomsawin (Abenaki), one of the world's best-known Indigenous filmmakers, has produced documentaries and film-based projects at the NFB since 1967 (Lewis 2006), contributing to the agency's renown as a major center for Indigenous film in Canada, if not the world. A substantial body of Indigenous documentary, animation, and web-based media has been produced via the NFB, and scholarship on this work tends to set it against NFB documentary traditions characterized as the "Griersonian documentary style," which Jennifer Gauthier explains embodies characteristics of the expository documentary: it seeks objectivity in the construction of an argument, relies on the authority of the filmmaker/narrator as the representative of a governing body or social group, and employs evidentiary editing where images are placed as illustration of the argument. In other words, NFB

documentaries in this tradition have sought to "speak for" their subjects (2010, 28) in the process

of making these subjects "legible" to the state that the NFB represents; as has already been

stated, what Zoë Druick theorizes as "government realism" (2007, 23). The NFB and its

filmmaking style are therefore deeply implicated in the project of colonial nation building in

Canada as an apparatus through which the state attempts to extend control over populations

within its bounds. Since the NFB's early years, non-Indigenous filmmakers have produced

documentaries about Indigenous peoples from within this colonial framework, engendering a

highly problematic history of documentary practice, as described by Cree/Métis filmmaker

Loretta Todd:

> …I was already tired of the documentary style. I had written an article…about what I called
>
> media missionaries, who would come into the Native communities and bring their gospel of
>
> the documentary. It was something I was uncomfortable with. Having grown up with
>
> documentaries from the [National] Film Board, I knew how racist these films could be. When
>
> I was in school with white kids in the city, they would laugh and snicker at the documentary
>
> films about Native communities. So the standard documentary format always had a weight to
>
> it (qtd in Silverman 2002, 378).

Todd's critique of the NFB documentary tradition links it to the colonial oppression of

Indigenous peoples both in terms of those practicing it – the "missionaries"– and its institutional

style, which produces depictions of Indigenous peoples that justify and rationalize their

"management" *cum* oppression by the state.

Scholarship has been responsive to such critiques, and tends to proceed by examining how

Indigenous people, once in control of the NFB film apparatus, innovate on its documentary

conventions to overturn the colonial ideology it supports. This literature frequently revolves

around Alanis Obomsawin, whose career at the NFB spanning five decades and nearly two

dozen productions (NFB 2016). Her presence at the Board represents one of the most sustained

relationships between an Indigenous filmmaker and a national cultural institution, and has drawn

academic attention to the cultural politics of her engagement with the NFB's documentary

tradition in her representation of Indigenous interests. This scholarship argues that Obomsawin's

films "rework documentary conventions and place representation at the service of a Native

political and aesthetic agenda" (Pick 1999, 77) and employ theoretical frameworks from

literature on the radical politics of minority media to interpret her filmmaking style and ethic.

Zuzana Pick and Tia Wong, for example, draw on critical models from Latin American cinema

and Third Cinema for understanding Obomsawin's representational strategies: Pick utilizes Chon

Noriega's definition of interviews as a form of "testimonial narrative" that "gives voice" to a

community or social group via communication between filmmaker and subject(s) (78), while

Wong tests the applications of Third Cinema's "revolutionary, combative, and decolonizing

cinema that attacks the political and legal apparatuses of the dominant nation-state" in her

examination of Obomsawin's documentaries focusing on conflicts between Indigenous

communities and the Canadian state (2009, n.p.). These theoretical frameworks make sense of

the political and formal techniques Obomsawin's films employ to challenge the authority of the

settler state, which include subverting the objectivity of the didactic documentary by using a first

person voice over that foregrounds the filmmaker's subjective point of view and relationship to

Indigenous communities; historical segments narrating histories of Canada's oppression of

Indigenous peoples; ironic editing that undermines the claims and authority of state

representatives; and interviews in which she is shown with the interviewees, clearly sympathetic

to their positions (Lewis 2006, Steven 1993, White 2002). By examining how Obomsawin

challenges NFB institutional discourses and practices, this scholarship traces the stylistic and ideological negotiations that that she undertakes to produce her work, which are inscribed in the film texts. While these approaches tend to reinforce interpretations of Indigenous media in terms of oppositional cultural politics, they are particularly relevant in the case of an Indigenous filmmaker who is, in fact, directly engaged with a state apparatus in the form of a national film agency. I am mindful of the cultural relevance of such representational strategies for other filmmakers, though I also examine the specificities of the discourses and practices from other institutions of media culture that filmmakers engage in the textual features of their work.

Beyond the NFB is a wider field of institutions of media culture through which Indigenous media has emerged and that I examine here: provincial television, the Banff Centre for the Arts (an educational arts center), the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (Canada's national Indigenous broadcaster), and postsecondary research institutions. These institutions have been selected in part because they problematize established analytical models for Indigenous media, such as author-centered readings (Chapter One) or interpretations focusing on thematic similarities (Chapter Four). While there is an institutional focus for each chapter, this dissertation does not assume that these institutions are socially and discursively isolated; instead, I approach them as sites in which different areas of cultural production and critical though intersect with institutional discursive and representational practices that Indigenous filmmakers' work negotiate. Each chapter therefore explores these intersections even as it foregrounds institutional dimensions of production in order to make visible their role in Indigenous media history.

This history, the different institutions involved, and associated variety of production encourage a range of analytical perspectives, including state theory and governmentality, Indigenous political theory, institutional analysis, Indigenous cultural theory, and nonfiction film

and television theory. At present, literature on Indigenous media tends to understand it in terms an emancipatory politics and critique of the colonial state that Michelle Stewart has described as "Native nationalism." In her 2001 dissertation, "Sovereign Visions: Native North American Documentary," Stewart argues that Indigenous documentaries produced through the NFB during the early 1990s give evidence of from a counter-hegemonic politics of Native nationalism, a form of self-representation "conceived on a national basis in contrast to mainstream settler state representations" (2001, iii). Stewart argues that Indigenous documentary's emphasis on the representation of Indigenous identity in terms of cultural difference has a political agenda in that it participates in the assertion of Indigenous autonomy: the strategic deployment of the concept of "nation" in anti-colonial Indigenous struggles which "define[s] the terrain of identity, posits this identity in terms of a bounded history, and then sets this in motion in an international system which only recognizes 'national' players" (ibid, 22). In this formulation, cultural difference supports Indigenous claims to nationhood, which in turn validates assertions of Indigenous autonomy. Indigenous cultural production, which gives evidence of Indigenous cultural difference, participates in the political claims of Native nationalism.

Stewart's work provides an invaluable starting point for my own analysis. Native nationalism accounts for the legal and political terms by which Indigenous peoples negotiate participation at the state level, and provides an historical logic for the significance placed on Indigenous cultural production as a part of Indigenous social movements. While Stewart focuses on the Indigenous documentary at the NFB in the early 1990s, the terrain of Indigenous media during this same period is broader than can be accounted for by the NFB alone, and has since evolved as more Indigenous media practitioners have availed themselves of opportunities that have developed to produce media-based projects in affiliation with cultural institutions across the

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country. Even while focusing more narrowly on nonfiction media, Indigenous artists and producers have worked in range of formats over the past two decades, including film, television, and video, and take up diverse issues relevant to Indigenous peoples, all of which makes it necessary for each case study to draw on different bodies of theoretical and critical work in compliment institutional analysis. As the above suggests, production opportunities have shifted over time, and while these case studies do not represent a history of Indigenous media in Canada, the selection of case studies is responsive to major developments in the media landscape since 1990, particularly to the introduction of the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, a national Indigenous broadcaster, and the independently-produced television programming that it relies on for its content.

Indigeneity, the State, and the Stakes of Indigenous Cultural Nationalism

This project emerges from the history of Indigenous peoples' relationship with the Canadian state that contextualizes Indigenous representation in state institutions. Canadian political and legal scholars have framed this as a "nation-to-nation" relationship emerging from demands for federal recognition that Indigenous groups' rights and political autonomy precede Canadian nationhood and remain unextinguished (Cardinal 1974, Cairns 2000, Russell 2011, Schouls 2005). As discussed by Ian Peach, the 1980s was a vital period of Indigenous political organization and demonstration: Indigenous groups demanded participation in constitutional amendment processes; Member of Legislative Assembly Elijah Harper (Oji-Cree) undertook a filibuster in 1990 that contributed to the defeat of the Meech Lake Accord; and the Mohawk people of Kanehsatake, Quebec, stood off against the Canadian military for 78 days in 1990 to protect their traditional territories from municipal development, now popularly known as the

"Oka Crisis" (2011). Following these events, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was established in 1991 to investigate the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the government of Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, and Canadian culture and society more broadly. The Commission's final report explicitly identifies that Indigenous participation in "mainstream institutions" was crucial for providing Indigenous peoples with access to the resources and training necessary for building "Aboriginal institutions" (1996), indicating a developing discourse of Indigenous participation at the state level as the rationale for increasing Indigenous representation in Canadian cultural institutions.

State accommodation of Indigenous interests is hardly utopian; Indigenous political theorists such as Taiaiake Alfred, Glen Coulthard, and Jodi Byrd provide important critiques of Indigenous-state relations, arguing that federal recognition of Indigenous rights and the process of entering into treaty with the Canadian state are a form of "late" colonialism, as the treaty process converts Indigenous traditional political and economic structures, which are based in a relationship to territory, into Western governance and economic models: Indigenous territories become private property and are administered like municipalities, severing these traditional territorial relationships and undermining the very principles through which Indigenous sovereignty exists (Alfred 2005, Coulthard 2014). These territorial relationships underpin Indigenous groups' assertions of nationhood that distinguish Indigenous peoples from other ethnic and social minorities. Jodi Byrd argues that the strategies by which the liberal multicultural state seek restitution with Indigenous peoples actually "reinscribe the original colonial injury" by attaching the legitimacy of Indigenous nationhood to the colonial state in the form of "domestic dependent nationhood," despite the fact that Indigenous nations historically have held treaties with European nations as well as with Canada and the United States (2011,

xxii-xxiii). As Byrd states in relation to the U.S. context (which can be usefully transposed to the Canadian context), inclusion in the state actually require that

> American Indian national assertions of sovereignty, self-determination, and land rights
> disappear into U.S. territoriality as indigenous identity becomes a racial identity and
> citizens of colonized indigenous nations become internal ethnic minorities within the
> colonizing nation-state (xxiv).

In this paradigm, Indigenous people are converted to another ethic group. Such critiques identify the ways in which federal acknowledgement of Indigenous rights reinforce state authority, and asks important questions about what it means for the state to accommodate Indigenous interests. Byrd's analysis is not premised on political or cultural balkanization as a condition of Indigenous sovereignty, but argues that

> …indigenous [sic] critical theory could be said to exist in its best form when it centers
> itself within indigenous epistemologies and the specificities of the communities and
> cultures from which it emerges and then looks outward to engage European
> philosophical, legal, and cultural traditions in order to build upon all the allied tools
> available (xxx).

This statement crystallizes the importance of Indigenous self-determination to Indigenous groups, and for Indigenous control of Indigenous representation in the cultural sphere. Indigenous people are entitled to draw on Western theory and representational tools as an exercise of self-determination. This paradigm moves away from essentialisms that have stalked Indigenous cultural production for decades, and asserts that the subaltern can, in fact, speak. Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988) invokes scholarly debates evaluating the applications and limitations of postcolonial theory for Indigenous studies published in a special

issue of *Interventions* journal. In their introduction, "Between Subalternity and Indigeneity: Critical Categories for Postcolonial studies," Byrd and Michael Rothberg frame the debate by identifying that while postcolonial and Indigenous studies can be productively brought together, postcolonial studies is frequently viewed with skepticism by Indigenous scholars who question how settler states can be considered "post" colonial in any sense (2011). Further, they identify an issue of "incommensurability" when the subaltern and the indigenous are brought together. Where subalternity might be theorized as "a form of uneven development *within* the space of the nation, [emphasis mine]" the Indigenous resists the terms of "within," and instead "the project of indigenous critical theory involves decathecting from the *space* of colonization" (5). Subalternity raises useful questions about how Western intellectual, ideological, and representational traditions perpetuate colonialism by "silencing" the Other(s), though Indigenous scholarship responds with salient critiques of how the intellectual scaffolding of postcolonial theory similarly silences or covers over Indigeneity.

Indigenous Cinema and Media Theory

Thus, while the literature on Indigenous media tends to follow cultural nationalist frameworks, the stakes have been the recognition of Indigeneity *outside* of the enveloping colonialism of the settler state, and as distinct from other subaltern groups. The discourse of cultural nationalism has therefore been premised on Indigenous cultural and historical continuity, variously configured as cultural renewal, revitalization, etc. Indigenous cultural theorists and media practitioners have made significant contributions to this discourse, all of whom begin from "where they are" individually and culturally as a starting point for their broader reflections on Indigenous media practice. Loretta Todd (Cree/Métis) argues for Indigenous self-government as

control of the means of representation, and argues that Indigenous artists have adapted Western

representational modes to represent Indigenous cultural and epistemological traditions (1990,

2005b, 1992, Abbott 1998, Eisner 2003). Victor Masayesva, Jr. (Hopi) and Barry Barclay

(Maori) have also theorized the specificities of Indigenous media engagement in terms of

"Indigenous experimentalism" and "Fourth Cinema" respectively. Masayesva's "third arm" of

video production is the edit cut that is borne of the specificities of an Indigenous persons social

and cultural location, an instinct and awareness cultivated by that experience (2005). Barclay

(2003) considers Indigenous cinematic specificity beyond the textual, using an anecdote of a visit

to Athens in which he encountered a display of soldiers' headstones, and how the legibility of the

display and the cultural and historical significance behind them were impossible to discern

without explanation from the curator. This metaphor elicits the limitations of the textual and

emphasizes the importance of the curator/filmmaker, as does Masayesva's "third arm." Thus,

while these theorist-practitioners variously consider the relationship between culture and form,

they overlap in the irreducibility of the filmmaker/artist/producer and the social and cultural

milieu through which they produce their work. These are not solely aesthetic arguments, but

should be considered in light of the realities of dominant media industries from which

Indigenous people have historically been excluded, either behind the camera as creatives, or on-

camera beyond the stereotypical representations that pervade Hollywood and mainstream media,

as discussed in greater detail below. Certainly scholarship around Indigenous cultural production

has been preoccupied with linking its aesthetic features to cultural forms and narratives

(Leuthold 1998, Pick 2003, Ryan 1999), however, questions of the industrial and economic

dimensions of Indigenous media production are never far from scholarship by Indigenous media

practitioners. Barclay's discussion of Fourth Cinema includes questions of political economy where he reflects on the audience for Indigenous production, asking:

> Can there be said to be a Fourth Cinema in the sense of dedicated buildings and attendances and box office takings? Perhaps there can, albeit in a fledgling way, via a loyal festival following, or via an interested and regular faithful - Indigenous and non-Indigenous - who attend screenings of Indigenous features when they appear at downtown cinemas. In this sense, there is already a cinema of Indigenous features - very small, but significant (2003, 11).

In addition to opening up audiences and screening circuits as aspects of Fourth Cinema due for scholarly attention, Barclay also develops a logic for financial support for Indigenous production that is not based in mainstream box office terms but rather through a philosophy of social value proven by the "interested and regular faithful" Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences. Therefore, Indigenous media cannot be distilled to aesthetic features, but are innately tied to the materiality of production: the economic and industrial conditions and the bodies doing the work.

The binds of the colonial nation-state represent one major frame of reference for Indigenous self-representation; another is the history of Indigenous representation in mainstream cinemas and popular culture, which has relied on a repository of Indigenous stereotypes that Indigenous media practitioners grapple with in their work. Discourses of Indigenous cultural continuity and renewal via media production must contend with the myth of the "Vanishing Indian," a figure that is consigned to extinction as a result of his inability to adapt to modernity (Francis 1992). Scholarship has skillfully investigated this colonial image repository and how Indigenous media practitioners engage it, which is seen an impulse to correct these images and their attendant narratives (Rollins and O'Connor 2003, Singer 2001, Kilpatrick 1999). More

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recent scholarship revisits dominant film and television industries to examine how Indigenous

people have participated in these industries behind and in front of the camera, not only to

recuperate them into the historical record, but to also consider the nature of Indigenous agency

within these oppressive industries and systems. Michelle Raheja (2013) examines Indigenous

actors in Hollywood and ethnographic films, arguing that their performances within stereotypical

roles and storylines frequently disrupt the "surfaces" of these roles and narratives in ways that

reveal the performers' agency, a phenomenon that Raheja theorizes as Indigenous "visual

sovereignty." Raheja's conceptual model provides a way of understanding these gestures as

irruptions that point to different social and cultural realities beyond screen content, which

intersect with Hollywood history but are not circumscribed by or enclosed within it. Visual

sovereignty is a guiding concept for this dissertation, as it can be extended to the kinds of

irruptions that Indigenous filmmakers and producers create while working "within" state and

dominant representational systems and institutions. Rather than see these individuals and their

work as "capitulating" to these regimes, or simply ruffling their edges, I argue that their work is

engaged in complex and critical ways with the political, social, and cultural areas and discourses

through which they create their work.

Indigenous Media – The Local and the Global/Transnational

Examining institutional contexts brings invokes Indigenous media's social milieus, which

owes to studies of Indigenous media from anthropology, primarily ethnographic studies of the

social contexts of Indigenous production. Faye Ginsburg cites the "reinvention" of anthropology

in between the 1960s and 1980s as context for this scholarly approach. She traces the reflexive

turn in anthropology that took place in the 1960s and 1970s that stemmed from an increased

awareness of the power relations embedded in ethnographic research, and instigating a shift towards more collaborative practices between researchers and subjects. By the 1980s, Indigenous and other groups increasingly took control of their own image-making (Ginsburg 1994a, 1995). There has subsequently been greater attention to Indigenously controlled production by anthropologists including Ginsburg (1993, 1991, 1994a, 1994b, 2012, 2007, 1995), Eric Michaels (1994), and Kristin Dowell (2013), who have examined Indigenous peoples' use of media technologies and the material contexts of its production. These authors approach Indigenous media as a form of "mediation," in which media enables and revitalizes Indigenous social relations that Ginsburg characterizes as "embedded aesthetics," which she theorizes in order to "draw attention to a system of evaluation that refuses a separation of textual production and circulation from broader arenas of social relations" (1994, 368). This dissertation draws on the concept of embedded aesthetics but expands it to include institutional discourses and practices as a part of the arena of social relations of a text and its producer/s. While ethnographic study tends to undertake deep analysis of specific social sites as a means to examine the intersecting social, cultural, and historical forces constituting it, this method does not necessarily lend itself to studies of historical phenomena, particularly because the history of Indigenous cultural institutions is frequently ephemeral. Rather than attempt a site-specific study, this dissertation broadens the scope to highlight the variety of institutions involved in Indigenous media history, and the different areas of scholarship and critical thought that can be brought to their analysis.

More recently, the transnational and global dimensions Indigenous media have been explored, recognizing colonialism's global scope and making political and social connections between groups and locations outside of the "restrictive framework of the nation-state" (Shohat

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and Stam 1994, 6). The attention to the global and transnational derives from scholarship in cultural studies that has sought to overcome analytical limitations of the nation-state, which do not sufficiently account for the shared history and political goals of non-dominant and disenfranchised groups. This work has theorized meta-categories, variously termed transnational media, Third Cinema, intercultural cinema, postcolonial cinema, and accented cinema, among others (Shohat and Stam 2003, Guneratne and Dissanayake 2003, Marks 2000, Ponzanesi and Waller 2012, Naficy 2001). While tracing the transnational politics, communities, and circulation of such cinemas, there is less attention to the material and industrial conditions of production, how those shape the politics and form of media emerging from them.

The literature on the transnational and global dimensions of Indigeneity argues that Indigenous politics, histories of colonialism, and resistance to it cross national boundaries, and that Indigenous media is frequently produced and circulated transnationally through broadcast television, online, and via international film festivals (Huhndorf 2009). In their introduction to *Global Indigenous Media: Cultures, Poetics, Politics*, Michelle Stewart and Pamela Wilson argue that shifting attention to the global and transnational raises questions about limiting understandings of Indigeneity to the local, and makes visible Indigenous media's place in national and global cultural politics, policies, discourses, and industries (2008, 2). Since this is an edited collection, there is no sustained examination of relationships between Indigenous production, nations, and industries; rather, the collection disrupts established patterns of scholarship for Indigenous media while linking academics and their studies of different contexts for Indigenous production worldwide.[6] While this dissertation remains focused on Canada, it is

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[6] Global Indigeneity is represented here by groups indigenous to the Americas, Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand, Sámi, the Welsh, Indigenous production in Myanmar, and in Russia, reflecting the expanded recognition of indigenous groups worldwide.

attentive to the transnational dimensions of Indigenous media. Indigenous politics in Canada are rooted in the local specificities, but are responsive to social and cultural movements across borders; in the 1960s, for instance, Indigenous filmmakers in Canada shared their films with the American Indian Movement in the US to solidify their political affiliations (Dowell 2013, 60). The transnational flow of film and television means that Indigenous media practitioners in Canada must confront the legacy of the Hollywood Indian in its different iterations. Consequently this dissertation utilizes Indigenous critical and cultural theory from across national boundaries to interpret the provocations and interventions of Indigenous media practitioners working in Canada. Chapter Four in particular has a transnational scope, undertaking a comparative case study of Indigenous documentaries from Canada and the US to elicit such connections and overlaps, as well as parse the social and historical specificities of works produced in each context.

Chapter Breakdown

Each chapter of this dissertation is a case study that demonstrates the applications of institutional analysis to the media output of different figures, organizations, and institutions of the field of Indigenous media in Canada. While emphasizing areas that have had little academic scrutiny, specifically provincial television and academic research institutions, I also examine production emerging from more widely known institutions of media culture, including APTN; though the broadcaster has been a research focus, there has been less attention to Indigenous television programming that it airs. Each chapter therefore places "text in context," a well-established vein of cinema and media studies, but adds institutionality to the cultural "context" of Indigenous media texts.

Chapter One, "A Diverse Oeuvre: Doug Cuthand, Provincial Television, and Indigenous Communications in the Field of Indigenous Media," examines the work of Doug Cuthand, a Cree journalist, television producer, and documentary filmmaker who, despite an extensive career in media production, has had little scholarly attention. This chapter undertakes an author-centered approach in order to make visible under-examined areas Indigenous cultural production that have contributed to the development of Indigenous media, specifically provincial television and Indigenous communications, areas that intersect with the expansion of Indigenous film and video. Following Noriega's work on Chicano film and television, this chapter challenges disciplinary boundaries that hold apart film and television in studies of minority media, where textual analysis (typically that of film and video) is seen as the domain of cinema studies, while communications attends to broadcast policy and infrastructure; these conventions can neglect textual analysis of television programming (which has historically fallen outside of both cinema and communications studies), leading to historical blind spots that obscure Cuthand's contributions. This chapter further argues that an analysis of Cuthand's oeuvre, which cuts across national documentary and provincial television, requires different historical, critical, and theoretical frameworks be brought to bear on analysis to understand their generic and representational strategies.

Chapter Two, "Negotiating Indigenous Self-Government: The Aboriginal Film and Video Art Alliance and The Banff Centre for the Arts," is driven by a similar recuperative drive as Chapter One, and examines the history and media politics of the Aboriginal Film and Video Art Alliance (AFVAA), an Indigenous art-based media organization founded in 1991 that emerged in the political ferment of the Indigenous sovereignty movement of the late 1980s and early 1990s. The AFVAA was dedicated to examining Indigenous "self-government" in media

practice and despite being identified as a catalyst for the contemporary development of Indigenous media in Canada, is largely absent from the literature. This chapter examines the AFVAA's institutional partnership with the Banff Centre for the Arts, a long established and renowned educational arts institution in Canada. This partnership, which lasted from 1993 to 1996, makes visible different interpretations of how Indigeneity would be represented at the Banff Centre that resulted in tensions that would ultimately lead to the dissolution of the partnership. While at the Banff Centre, the AFVAA hosted a nine-week retreat in 1994 that brought together Indigenous artists for training to develop a series of public service announcements (PSAs) on the topic of "self-government" that resulted in six PSAs that are the focus for textual analysis. This chapter argues that AFVAA modeled a form of Indigenous media engagement that married politics and ideology to form: because Indigenous self-government during this era was being debated and tested in the legal and social sphere, the AFVAA saw it as inherently "experimental," and therefore encouraged an experimental approach to the PSAs.

Chapter Three, "Programming Indigeneity: Indigenous Television in the Era of APTN," traces the influence of the creation of the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN), Canada's national Indigenous broadcaster, on the field of Indigenous production since APTN launched in 1999. The following decades saw a surge of nonfiction programming, though shifts in programming genres – from documentary and public affairs-style anthologies and series in the early 2000s to more reality-based programming in the later 2010s – point to the role of APTN's programming priorities on trends in independent Indigenous television production. However, as APTN does not produce content in-house but rather commissions content from the field of independent Indigenous production companies, the specificities of these series' production histories need to take into account the institutional dimensions of the production companies that

created them. Several independent producers emerge during this period; among the most prolific have been Jeff Bear and Marianne Jones, who have created numerous public affairs series for broadcast. This chapter includes a comparative case study of the production history and textual address of one first series aired on APTN, *Ravens and Eagles: Haida Art* (2002-2003) with a later program, *Indians + Aliens* (2013-present) a reality-based series produced by Rezolution Pictures. This chapter examines these series in relation to APTN programming patterns as well as their production companies' representational strategies, and demonstrates the different areas of television theory and scholarship that must be brought to bear on analysis of their textual features.

Chapter Four, "Indigenous Documentaries and Academic Research Institutions: A Comparative Case Study of *Navajo Talking Picture* (1986) and *Cry Rock* (2010)," examines the role of academic research institutions as sites of production, and as arenas for the development of Indigenous theory and research methodologies that contribute to the development of Indigenous documentaries. This chapter compares two documentary films, *Navajo Talking Picture* (Arlene Bowman, 1984) and *Cry Rock* (Banchi Hanuse, 2010), both of which deal with issues of generational ruptures in culture and language transmission. Like Chapter One, this chapter begins with a well-established approach to the study of Indigenous film – thematic analysis and comparison – in order to demonstrate that such analytical frameworks are not sufficient for understanding the filmmakers' very different approaches to their films, and their outcomes. Instead, I argue that each film takes up prevailing academic methods for Indigenous research at their respective postsecondary institutions. This chapter also builds on studies "practice-based film education," or film school studies, demonstrating that academic areas outside of film-based

programs, in this case Indigenous studies, is a part of the complicated academic and social "ecology" that contributes to filmmakers' educations and production output.

The conclusion marks out questions that this dissertation raises for areas of cinema and media studies. It points to the ongoing salience of the "nation" for studies of Indigenous media and minority media, and continues to be a significant force in media industries that rely on federal resources and programs for their existence. It also invokes questions about "authorship" that has historically guided studies of Indigenous media. Indigenous media studies has tended to sustain the somewhat worn model of individual authorship, in which the filmmaker is perceived as the determiner of a production's creative features, which are linked to the filmmaker's cultural heritage and politics. Each chapter seeks to complicate this model by tracing the institutional, material, and social forces that these media practitioners engage, challenge, and complicate in their work.

CHAPTER ONE:

A Diverse Oeuvre: Doug Cuthand, Provincial Television, and Indigenous Communications in the Field of Indigenous Media

As a part of evaluating patterns of Indigenous media production during the data

collection phase for this dissertation, certain names tended to occur with some regularity,

pointing towards substantial bodies of work associated with particular individuals. For instance,

Appendix IV shows that between 1968 and 2013, Abenaki filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin has 19

individual nonfiction productions to her name,[7] followed closely by Cree filmmaker and

producer Doug Cuthand, with 16 film and television works. While Obomsawin has received

substantial attention in the scholarship on Indigenous media, Doug Cuthand has yet to be the

subject much academic scrutiny. While the volume of a director's or a producer's output does

not necessarily determine their notoriety, it does raise questions about why certain Indigenous

producers enter the academic and historical record and others do not. Examining these questions

reveals the ways in which disciplinary boundaries between cinema studies and communications

studies, and analytical conventions of these fields, can inadvertently create historical blind spots

that cover over areas of production in Indigenous media history in Canada. Doug Cuthand

provides a unique opportunity to examine these disciplinary issues, and in doing so trace the

influence of such areas of cultural production, specifically Indigenous journalism and

communications and provincial television, as a part of this history.

Doug Cuthand (Cree), a member of the Little Pine Reservation and founder Blue Hill

Productions in 1987. A journalist by training, Cuthand has been an editor for several Indigenous

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[7] "Productions" indicates individual film, video, and standalone television productions. Because of the different production and broadcast demands for television series, this table does not include television series associated with these directors/producers, though television series are the focus of Chapter Three of this dissertation.

newspapers in Canada, and has had columns in mainstream newspapers, including the *Regina Leader Post*, *The Star Phoenix*, and the *Winnipeg Free Press* (Cuthand 2005, iii). He has two published books, *Tapwe: Selected Columns of Doug Cuthand* (2005), a selection of his editorials and articles, and *Askiwina: A Cree World* (2007). Cuthand has also worked as a filmmaker and producer for forty years, and has at least 16 productions to his name, spanning regional educational television programming, documentaries produced at the NFB, episodes for televised documentary series, and television miniseries (Appendix IV). Cuthand's background as a journalist points to the participation of Indigenous communications and journalism in the film and television landscape. His varied oeuvre reflects the production patterns of many Indigenous media practitioners who work between film and television, and his mobility between cultural areas opens up histories of available sites for Indigenous media production in the Canadian south, particularly provincial and public television. Furthermore, the scope of his output, and accompanying differences in formats and representational conventions, problematize auteurist interpretations of Indigenous media that pervade studies of Indigenous cinema. While Indigenous cultural politics do shape and cut across his work, this chapter demonstrates that cultural aesthetics do not satisfactorily account for representational and generic distinctions in his work. Instead, it argues that analysis of cultural politics must address the institutional representational practices and conventions through which he has produced his work, and models this analytical approach through case studies of two of his productions. The first, *Stay in School* (1995), was produced in association with the Saskatchewan Communications Network, a provincial public broadcaster mandated to support educational programming as a part of Saskatchewan's information and broadcasting infrastructure. The second, *Donna's Story* (2001), is a National Film Board of Canada documentary film that focuses on the life history of Donna Gamble, an

Indigenous woman working to overcome addiction issues, and examines the historical and social legacies of colonialism that underpin these issues and have engendered violence against Indigenous women. While both productions are fundamentally pedagogical in orientation, their stylistic distinctions and modes of address owe to their respective institutional discourses and representational conventions.

From Authorship to Cultural Mediation

By focusing on a particular producer, I am taking an author-centered approach, a method that has been well-established Indigenous media studies. However, while I focus on a specific author as an opportunity to investigate the intersections of different cultural arenas that have contributed to Indigenous media history, scholarship in this area has tended to link Indigenous authorship with media practitioners' cultural heritage or cultural politics. This work grapples with questions about the dynamics between individual authorship and collective cultural traditions, and the mediations involved in translating these cultural forms and practices into media representation. Studies of Indigenous media have been attentive to Indigenous cultural nationalism, particularly as articulated in the latter part of the 20th century, and have examined Indigenous media as a part of these cultural politics and their claims. Indigenous social movements in Canada have been premised on the existence of autonomous political formations prior to colonization and continuity of Indigenous cultural traditions, rationalizing and forming the basis for "nation-to-nation" political and legal frameworks of Indigenous-state relations. Indigenous artists, filmmakers, and other cultural producers have extended this project by investigating approaches to representing tribal/national cultural practices in Western

representational modes and technologies.[8] Scholarship has been sensitive to these cultural politics, attending to questions of cultural and political difference in Indigenous cultural production and the "translations" or "mediations" involved in such endeavors. As a result, Indigenous artists, authors, producers, and others have been framed as cultural *auteurs*, and their work examined for markers of Indigeneity, both formally and thematically.

Within cinema studies, this interpretive framework aligns with prevailing approaches for studying minority media discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, in which social identities are used to organize aesthetic categories, to which formal features are ascribed that are linked to these identities (Noriega 2000). This approach raises several issues: it tends to overlook media texts that do not conform to expectations of the genre, resulting in historical blind spots when it comes to what artists or work gets acknowledged and discussed; and interpretation can be circumscribed by these socio-cultural markers of difference at the expense of other axes of analysis that contextualize the media texts: institutional discourses and practices, media modes, and genre and format conventions, all of which participate in shaping these fields.

Questions about the role that media plays in Indigenous cultural survivance (Vizenor 1994) are accompanied by debates about the effects of cinematic apparatus on Indigenous cultures. These debates have variously characterized the "apparatus" in terms of the ideological constructs of Indigenous stereotypes that pervade Hollywood and mainstream (Kilpatrick 1999), and the ideological underpinnings of cinematic form and language through which screen stereotypes gain meaning (Todd 2005a). In anthropology, scholarship by Eric Michaels (1994), Faye Ginsburg (1991, 1994b, 1995), and Kristin Dowell (2013) describe Indigenous peoples' use

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[8] In addition to previously cited texts focusing on Indigenous media by Loretta Todd, Steven Leuthold, and Beverly Singer, investigation of these questions has been undertaken in Indigenous visual arts (McMaster and Martin 1992) and literature (Armstrong 1993), to name only two examples.

of media technologies as a form of cultural and social "mediation," where Indigenous media is understood as enabling and revitalizing Indigenous social relations. These anthropologists and others intervene in scholarly tendencies to privilege the text as sites of cultural meaning and expression, and shift attention to the Indigenous media's social dimensions as themselves meaning-making activities. These dimensions are fundamental to my own project, which brings in the institutional dimension as a part of the "apparatus" and participant in social relations that must be considered in analysis of Indigenous production.

Communications vs. Cinema: Academic Boundary Crossing

Cuthand's relatively scarce mention in the scholarship owes in part to academic and disciplinary boundaries that have held apart cinema and television studies. Where Cuthand has been discussed, it has been in communications studies as a part of research on Indigenous news and communications.[9] This is perhaps not surprising, given that his background in journalism and public television engage questions about the public sphere and mass media that have traditionally been the domain of communications. Cinema studies, on the other hand, has historically attended to film and video, which has been particularly the case for minority cinemas. Chon Noriega has described these trends in relation to Chicano cinema, arguing that minority media studies have been interpreted in terms of the politics of cultural nationalism driving minority social movements, and have thus this scholarship has been concerned with "looking at the political, aesthetic, and cultural dimensions of contestation without considering its relationships to the state, the political representation system, industry practices, and the market" (2000, 19). Similarly, studies of Indigenous media have been focused on questions of

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[9] This literature largely consists of unpublished dissertations and theses in which Cuthand has been cited as a source rather than the focus of analysis, see (Avison 1996), (Foster 2008), and (Mowbray 2010).

cultural aesthetics and Indigenous politics, while investigations of state policy, political

representation, and industrial trends in Canadian production have largely remained the domain of

communications studies. As Noriega identifies, these disciplinary trends have the effect of

obscuring or overlooking other patterns of production that do not fit within prevailing analytical

frameworks, creating what he calls "the history of absent texts" (27) that has an analogue in

Indigenous media histories in Canada in which Cuthand's work is enmeshed.

Indigenous Television and the North: Disciplinary Distinctions and Canadian Regions

The history of Indigenous television in Canada owes to developments in national

broadcast policy, Indigenous political and community advocacy, and the expansion of satellite

and broadcast technologies in northern Canada. Consequently, the north has been the focus of

much of the scholarship on Indigenous television in Canada. The "north" as it is used here and in

the scholarship refers to those areas north of the Hamelin Line, an imaginary line that runs east

and west at around the 50th parallel that divides Canada into north and south for the purposes of

federal policy and resource development. Lorna Roth (2005), Michael Evans (2008), Gail

Valaskakis (1983), and Valerie Alia (1999) have comprehensively mapped the history of

northern Indigenous television, though a overview of it is necessary here to contextualize

scholarly attention on the region.

Lorna Roth argues that the expansion of a broadcast infrastructure into northern Canada

beginning in the late 1960s owes to the confluence of two major phenomena: one, the state's

efforts to expand its sovereignty over the northern territories through media technologies and

policy development; and, in response, lobbying from northern Indigenous communities for

programming relevant to the needs and social realities of these communities that would stave off

the influence from the south (2005). As Roth relates, northern Indigenous communities saw satellite television carrying southern programming as a potential threat to their cultures and communities, stating, "[p]rograms designed for affluent Southerners and carrying advertising that fuelled the rising expectations of consumer-oriented individuals could not help but create conflicts within an indigenous [sic] cultural context" (91), as southern lifestyles could not be realized in the north. Moreover, there were concerns that desires for such a lifestyle would destroy Indigenous cultures and ways of life. At the same time, however, Indigenous communities understood that television had the potential to be used as a tool for cultural resistance and empowerment, and campaigned for northern broadcasting to produce and distribute programming relevant to northern Indigenous communities (Roth 2005). These efforts led to the development of thirteen regional Native Communications Societies by 1983, which lobbied for an Indigenous broadcasting policy as "a critical step towards the enshrining of their communication rights in legislation" (22). This policy was created in 1983, along with the creation of the Northern Native Broadcast Access Program (NNBAP), a funding entity with the mandate to provide northern Indigenous communications societies with resources (approximately 40 million dollars in 1984) to develop regional radio and television programming to protect and enhance Indigenous languages and cultures (Rupert 1983, 57).

The region served by the NNBAP was limited to those communities and organizations north of the Hamelin Line, meaning that while northern Indigenous communities could access funding for programming, Indigenous groups in southern Canada were not eligible. While the majority of Indigenous peoples in Canada at the time lived above the Hamelin line (approximately 210,000 people); which still, as Robert Rupert observes, left tens of thousands of Indigenous people below the Hamelin line without comparable means to produce programming

or access satellite or broadcast television, despite a desire to do so (58). In interviews about the Aboriginal Film and Video Art Alliance (AFVAA) for Chapter Two of this dissertation, Loretta Todd and Marjorie Beaucage, AFVAA organizers, identified that Indigenous producers in the south wanted to access television (Todd August 8, 2014). This was, however a period upheaval at the CBC due to extraordinary government scrutiny and budget cuts, which would have left little opportunity collaboration (Raboy 1990, 267-334). While television remained an objective for Indigenous media practitioners in the south, production opportunities largely remained with available resources and programming from art and cultural institutions, including the National Film Board, the Banff Centre, and, in the case of Doug Cuthand, provincial and/or regional broadcasting.

In reality, however, the north and south distinctions in Indigenous media have been far from absolute; for instance, Lorna Roth traces a history of NFB media training workshops in the eastern Arctic that began in the 1970s and brought NFB personnel from the south to the region (2005, 96-105). These workshops designed to provide training to the Inuit to support the production of culturally relevant film and animation for broadcast on northern television. Roth argues that the workshops and presence of the NFB in the north "played a significant part in motivating Inuit leaders to begin a comprehensive (re)assessment of their communication priorities in the mid-1970s" (106), and while the degree of the NFB's influence on Inuit public opinion is debatable, the Inuit's interactions with southern producers and personnel contributed to how the Inuit shaped their own directions and priorities for broadcasting (ibid). While this is a specific instance of north and south historical and cultural overlap, it points to a history of interactions between the north and south that blur academic or geopolitical boundaries between the regions, which is conceptually useful for thinking about the limitations of academic

distinctions between north and south in studies of Indigenous television. Further, the scholarly emphasis on the north raises questions about whether and to what extent Indigenous people engaged with television in the southern latitudes, and what this engagement might look like in a region outside of Indigenously-controlled broadcasting. Because cinema studies has tended to approach minority media in terms cultural politics linked to film and video, it has not traditionally taken up Indigenous television producers, despite the significant number of Indigenous filmmakers who have also worked to in television, even prior to the creation of a national Indigenous broadcaster with the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network in 1999.[10] Looking across the disciplines of communications studies and cinema studies is productive as it elicits their theoretical and methodological assumptions that have created conceptual gaps through which areas of production and producers have fallen.

Indigenous Sovereignty and National Cultural Policy Across Cultural Institutions

Disciplinary distinctions between cinema and television studies do not always hold up in relation to Indigenous cultural politics, national policy, and the realities of production opportunities for Indigenous practitioners in Canada. Indigenous cultural politics cut across all fields of cultural production. For instance, the Aboriginal Film and Video Art Alliance (AFVAA), was an activist-based art organization that took shape in 1991 to examine self-government in cultural practice, and its membership was comprised of Indigenous filmmakers, visual artists, journalists, and creative writers (Beaucage and Delegates 1993).[11] Though the AFVAA's creative output was ultimately video-based production (as discussed in detail in

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[10] The Aboriginal Peoples Television Network is the focus of Chapter Three of this dissertation.
[11] The AFVAA is the focus of Chapter Two of this dissertation.

Chapter Two), the political project of its membership indicates efforts to link different areas of cultural production with the discourse of Indigenous sovereignty.

Canadian legislation and cultural policy towards Indigenous peoples similarly cuts across federally supported cultural institutions and funding sources. Beginning in the 1970s, policy and legislation took shape with the goal of increasing Indigenous representation in the national cultural sphere by allocating resources and developing programs for Indigenous people in film, video, and communications media. In the postwar era, Canadian state policy and legislation addressed themselves to an increasingly fragmented public sphere under pressure for recognition from social groups, particularly women, immigrants, minorities, and Indigenous groups, in the context of the Trudeau era's "participatory democracy" (Bredin 1995, 127). Increased awareness of social constituencies manifested in cultural institutions across the country through the creation of programs designed to engage disenfranchised groups' social realities. The National Film Board of Canada developed Challenge for Change, a social activist documentary program that ran from 1967 to 1980 and was conceptualized as a way to bring together "government bureaucrats, documentary filmmakers, community activists, and 'ordinary' citizens" to create documentaries that would not only represent social issues, but would engender social change (Waugh, Winton, and Baker 2010, 4). State efforts to manage this variegated social sphere intersected with the patriation of the Canadian Constitution in 1982, during which Canada embarked on a process of re-imagining its national identity in terms of diversity, which culminated in *The Multiculturalism Act, 1988*, which formally enshrined multiculturalism as Canadian law.

Thus, national cultural policy was designed in order to keep pace and boost participation of Canada's most disenfranchised, including Indigenous peoples. Through the 1980s and 1990s,

special programs and funding envelopes[12] took shape in Canada's cultural institutions that sought to boost Indigenous representation: in 1993, the National Film Board of Canada founded Studio One, the Indigenous studio based in their Edmonton offices; Telefilm Canada created a special funding envelope for Indigenous filmmakers; and the Canada Council for the Arts, Canada's crown corporation for arts funding, established the Aboriginal Arts Office in 1996. Thus, Indigenous cultural politics and national policy cut across cultural institutions and fields of cultural production, raising questions about how politics and policy are then translated, negotiated, and shaped by the discourses and practices of cultural institutions and the demands of media technologies.

To this point, Canada's national public media agencies - the National Film Board and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) - frame their mission and address in terms of the Canadian "public." The NFB, as Canada's public film producer and distributor, seeks to represent the dimensions of the nation's "culture" (National Film Board of Canada 2012), and similarly, the CBC's mission is to "express Canadian culture" through programming and activities that "provide public value" (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation 2016). The discursive overlap between their organizing missions indicates parallels between their conceptualization of the national public sphere that ultimately comes to bear on their programming and production patterns.

The Canadian Documentary Tradition Across Film and Television

Cuthand situates his own background in media within a broader context of Canada's tradition of documentary production that cuts across media formats and institutions. He states

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[12] An "envelope" is a term typically used by the Canadian federal government to refer to an allocation of funds, see (Canada Media Fund 2016a).

that "the documentary is a Canadian invention...it's been a standard in the film, television industry here" (Cuthand January 27, 2015). Cuthand here perhaps is engaging in some embellishment, given that the documentary came to Canada directly from the United Kingdom via John Grierson, a Scottish documentary filmmaker, who served as Canada's first Film Commissioner and a major architect of the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) (Gittings 2002, 76-102). However, he does evoke documentary's canonical status in both film and television in Canada, characterizing the production output of the NFB and Canada's national broadcaster, the Canadian Broadcast Corporation.[13] David Hogarth traces the history of documentary programming in Canada that developed alongside Canada's documentary film history, arguing that documentary realism has fundamentally shaped Canadian public television. He defines public service television in term of an aesthetic of social realism that fulfilled its public service mandate by:

> …faithfully and creatively *representing* Canadians and the real conditions in which they live, while formally *empowering* them by engaging the civic and aesthetic skills they need to participate in cultural affairs. Over time, Canadian television has thus been charged with the task of documenting – and thereby defending – Canadian life (2002, 6).

Hogarth's project is to recuperate documentary television programming into the historical record, and in doing so formulates analytical frameworks for this body of work: he employs genre analysis that is "based on producers' and policy-makers' own changing definitions over time" (16), an approach that situates documentary television in a nexus of policy and representational conventions as producers interpret them. In doing so, Hogarth seeks a hermeneutic distinct from

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[13] It's also worth noting that throughout its history, the CBC has aired documentaries produced by the NFB, such the 1950s *Perspectives* series, or a series of vignettes through the 1970s and 1980s. There isn't a direct or feeder relationship between the two institutions; rather, this is meant to identify instances of material and historical crossover between the two institutions.

those that have been used for Canadian documentary film (12-13), thus evoking their historical and theoretical imbrications even as he seeks to hold them apart for the purpose of analysis.

Cuthand's comments linking documentary film and television can also be attributed to his career experience. His production output shows that he has worked in a variety of nonfiction formats and with multiple media-producing institutions: CBC, the NFB, Vision TV (a spiritual channel that had a strong documentary focus and emphasis social issues), and the Saskatchewan Communications Network (or SCN), a regional educational documentary channel. Though Cuthand's oeuvre shows range, it is not exceptional as a career model. In fact, very few Indigenous producers in Canada work exclusively in a single format or for a single institution in Canada.[14] Most of the Indigenous media practitioners with multiple productions to their names have worked in both film and television, including Loretta Todd, Gil Cardinal, Annie Frazier Henry, Lisa Jackson, and Zacharias Kunuk.

Cuthand's career illustrates broader trends in production having to do with the realities of the Canadian media production landscape for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous producers. The Canadian media industry does not have a studio system like that of Hollywood; rather, as Cuthand describes, crown corporations like the CBC and NFB have historically had filmmakers on-staff to produce content that was then broadcast or distributed by the institution (Cuthand January 27, 2015). However, as Brenda Longfellow discusses, funding allocations for federal cultural institutions, including the CBC and NFB, eroded through the 1980s and 1990s due to the shift towards the political conservatism and economic neoliberalism embodied by Brian Mulroney's Tory government, which sought to reduce government expenditures and minimize the state's centralization and role in the social lives of its citizens (2006, 180). With regard to the

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[14] The most notable exception may be Alanis Obomsawin, who has produced documentary films through the NFB for over forty years.

CBC and NFB, this led to pressures to shutter in-house production services and shift the model towards decentralized, privately owned production companies (Raboy 1990, 284-291). Increasing budget cuts through the 1990s continued to break apart Crown corporations, leaving them, as Jerry White describes, as primarily grant-giving agencies, to which private filmmakers and producers submit project proposals while agency producers act as selection committees (2006, 302).

Cuthand's work in the Canadian media landscape illustrates the vagaries of this semi-public, semi-private production field. He explains that his earlier work, including *Healing the Family: The Male Partner* (1994) and *Stay in School* (1995), were works commissioned by the Saskatchewan Communications Network, a regional educational television channel, while his productions in the later 1990s and early 2000s, including *Gift of the Grandfathers* (1997) and *Donna's Story* (2001) were projects he proposed to the NFB following their grant-giving model (Cuthand January 27, 2015). While separate funding envelopes and dedicated programs for Indigenous producers were created during this era, they nonetheless took shape largely along prevailing production trends that rely on contracts from broadcasters and distributors. Furthermore, Cuthand was an early adopter of the private production company model that is now the norm in the Canadian production industry, having founded Blue Hill Productions in 1987. In a sense, Cuthand's career across television and film has anticipated what would become prevailing trends in Indigenous production – the proliferation of independent production companies from the 1990s to the present.

Indigenous Journalism and Communications Media

Cuthand's early productions, such as *Healing the Family: The Male Partner* (1994) and *Stay in School* (1995) open out onto histories of Native communications media - which includes newspapers, radio, and television - and the history of provincial television. Cuthand relates that while earning his B.A. in Sociology at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, he also worked at *The Peak*, the university's student newspaper, where he "...learned the basics about how to do newspaper articles" (January 27, 2015). After graduation, he applied for a job with the newly launched Alberta Native Communications Society (ANCS) based in Edmonton, and was hired as the editor for *The Native People*, its first newspaper. Joel Demay examines the history of the ANCS, arguing that it emerged from a longer history of Indigenous print media that began in Western Canada in the 1960s, and would be a model for Indigenous communications in Canada more broadly (1991, 97-98). ANCS was the result of the pioneering work of Eugene Steinhauer, an Indigenous "entrepreneur," and with financial support from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, would grow into the largest and most recognized Indigenous communications society in Canada, exploring community radio and print media (Rupert 1983, 53).

While Indigenous newspapers have had a much longer life in Canada – beginning in the early part of the 20th century – Indigenous print media surged in the 1970s with lobbying from Indigenous communications societies for increased funds to support their services (Avison 1996, 133). The federal government's support for Indigenous print and radio has two major motivations: the release of Hawthorn Report of 1963, and as a means to ameliorate the backlash from Indigenous groups in response to the white paper of 1969. The Hawthorn Report was commissioned by the federal government to evaluate the welfare of Indigenous people in Canada, and when it was delivered in 1963, Canada's reputation for human rights was tarnished

when Indigenous peoples' social and economic welfare was exposed internationally. The federal government's attempt to redress the situation resulted in the white paper, which was met with outrage by Indigenous groups when it was introduced in 1969; not only did the document ignore the perspectives of Indigenous peoples provided during the consultation process, but its rhetoric and proposals were fundamentally assimilationist. As a result, the state backtracked on its assimilationist approach to Indigenous-state relations and, in the context of the Trudeau era's participatory democracy, addressed Indigenous groups in terms of historical and cultural difference. This resulted in the development of programs and services for Indigenous communities designed to support economic and social parity with the rest of Canada. Federal support for Indigenous communications societies took shape in this era, one of which was the Native Communications Program (NCP) that was founded in 1973 to encourage use of communications media among Indigenous people, and "to assist native people in defining and participating in the social, political and economic issues affecting their lives in Canada" (DSOS qtd in Avison 1996, 133). The NCP was administered by the Native Citizens' Directorate, a part of the Department of the Secretary of State, which was mandated to ensure that all Canadians have equal opportunity to participate in Canadian society (ibid). If it seems contradictory that Canadian federal government would fund communications media that would undoubtedly be critical of the state, it can be understood as an exercise of state "governmentality" that seeks to manage social and ideological disruption by appearing to accommodate it, thereby reinforcing the state's authority and validity.

The history Indigenous newspapers also maps on to northern and southern regionalism of Indigenous communications media prior to APTN. While northern Native Communications Societies had the means to produce their own television content, Indigenous communications

societies in southern Canada did not have comparable resources, and instead expanded into community radio and print media for which federal support was available (Fairchild 1998, Demay 1991). The fifteen southern Indigenous newspapers suffered a serious blow when federal funding for the NCP was cut in 1990. While federal funding has always been unstable and conditional based on the vagaries of the federal budget, this funding cut forced some of these newspapers to close, others to find financial support by converting to a form of "entrepreneurial" self-sufficiency funded by advertising, and yet others to seek funding by attaching to Indigenous political organizations, a potentially compromising situation given the efforts of Indigenous newspapers to maintain an arms-length relationship to any direct political interests (Demay 1991). The *Saskatchewan Indian*, for which Cuthand was editor since the 1970s, was shuttered for several months before finding support through the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (ibid, 103). Thus, while the late 1980s and early 1990s saw significant developments in federal support and resources for Indigenous cultural production, it was a time of instability for Indigenous communications in southern Canada. It is perhaps no surprise, then, that against this financially uncertain backdrop that Cuthand would later venture into independent production.

The Indigenous Public Sphere

Though the federal government attempted to supports its liberal pluralist claims by supporting Indigenous communications, and therefore stabilize its hegemony, Indigenous use and purposes of these media created a platform for Indigenous politics and concerns to be circulated to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous publics. Shannon Avison argues that Indigenous public sphere should not be considered as a non-dominant parallel to that of

mainstream Canada; rather, following Nancy Fraser's argument that there are multiple public

spheres, Avison defines the Indigenous public sphere as:

> ... both concrete sites like newspapers and processes of public opinion formation at the
>
> regional and national levels, as providing opportunities for people who are regularly
>
> subordinated and ignored in the mainstream public sphere. It allows them to deliberate
>
> together, develop their own counter discourses and interpret their own identities and
>
> experiences (Avison 58).

Michael Warner's concept of "counterpublics" compliments Avison's definition by calling

attention to the power dynamics addressed and engaged by nondominant publics, which is useful

for understanding Indigenous media during this period. Counterpublics, as nondominant publics,

produce themselves in conflict with the dominant group and the cultural norms that constitute it

"because they differ markedly in one way or another from the premises that allow the dominant

culture to understand itself as a public" (2002, 112-113). Counterpublics remain "publics" in the

sense that they "work by many of the same circular postulates" (113); that is, a counterpublic

does not exist prior to discourse, but is produced by the very discourse that it addresses, creating

what Warner describes as a "chicken-and-egg circularity" (67). Nonetheless, the terms by which

counterpublics operate help to characterize the political discourse of the Indigenous sovereignty

movement in Canada, which employs the terms of the nation-state to assert Indigenous a priori

nationalism, which is politically and culturally distinct from that of settler Canadian society.

The Indigenous public sphere is not confined to Indigenously controlled forms of

communication; that is, those organizations governed or directed by Indigenous people. Avison

explains that Indigenous public spheres "are also constituted in some measure through the

mainstream media. At the national level, the public sphere is a range of phenomena substantive

in every discursive interaction in face-to-face situations and representation in the mass media, where the topics of discussion are of concern to Aboriginal people, and especially their relationship to the Canadian state" (58). Her definition does not isolate the activities of the Indigenous public sphere to Indigenous controlled media/communications – for instance, Native newspapers – but argues that it is "the site where Indian, Métis, Non-status Indian, and Inuit individuals and communities find the information and resources they need to deliberate regarding issues of concern to them" (59). This "site" is not an information silo for Indigenous peoples alone; rather, the Indigenous public sphere "engages in interpublic interaction in which the cultural values, political aspirations and social concerns of its participants are introduced into the larger public spheres where they can have an influence on the discussions that take place there" (60). Indigenous public spheres interact with other public spheres while in tension with dominant ones. The counterpublic stance of the Indigenous public sphere can therefore find its expression within sites of dominant public spheres, which provides a framework for analysis of the politics and rhetorical strategies of Cuthand's articles and editorials in provincial newspapers.

Beginning in the 1970s, Cuthand wrote for the Indigenous newspaper, the *Saskatchewan Indian,* and in the 1990s was published frequently in regional and provincial newspapers, most often in the Saskatchewan *Star Phoenix,* where he had a regular column, and the Regina *Leader-Post*, as well as in the *Toronto Star* and the *Vancouver Province*. His editorials and articles published in Indigenous newspapers employ what Steffi Retzlaff has described as a "Native discourse," that "refers to a distinct discursive practice, i.e. a distinct way of speaking and writing and thus thinking employed and circulated by First Nations in Canada" (2006, 27). Retzlaff notes that this discourse should not imply a monolithic Indigenous identity, but rather that a shared experience of colonial history has engendered a "collective memory which is

reflected in the discursive practice of Aboriginal people today" (ibid). Among these different

discourse strategies, Retzlaff identifies the use of words and phrases from a "semantic field" that

exert a "cohesive force within texts" (29). Cuthand's articles published in the *Saskatchewan*

Indian employ lexical strategies that produce such cohesiveness between himself and a projected

Indigenous public, employing "our" and "we" in an editorial discussing treaty rights and

Indigenous governance (1982, 46), and using personal anecdotes to make broader political

observations and arguments (August 25, 1999, 1997).

However, Cuthand also uses these same semantic strategies, such as "our" and "we," in

his articles written for and published in mainstream regional and provincial newspapers,

embedding the Indigenous public sphere within dominant ones. Cuthand explains his rationale

for his shift to writing for mainstream newspapers:

> So I can reach a large audience of both First Nations people and non-First Nations
>
> people, simply because so many people are reading the newspaper now. I've always had
>
> the belief that information is power and you should share it with as many people as you
>
> can, so they can make some of the right decisions, because right now people in
>
> Saskatchewan have to do some serious thinking about Aboriginal issues and address them
>
> (Cuthand qtd in Foster 2008, 36).

By anticipating Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences, Cuthand's use of "we" and "our" in

mainstream newspapers enacts the Indigenous public sphere within a dominant public. The

personal pronoun and possessive determiner interpellates an Indigenous public, and index the

Indigenous public for non-Indigenous readers. These lexical strategies link Cuthand directly with

the Indigenous public, for which he is a nodal point in a larger body. It is therefore not surprising

that Cuthand has been described as "an important voice for the Aboriginal community" (Orthner April 1, 2009), which semantically enjoins him to an Indigenous public and body politic.

While the Indigenous public sphere can employ the communicative styles of the dominant sphere, Avison argues, "[i]ts raison d'être are understood to be [Indigenous] cultural preservation, self-determination and integration with the wider society" (59). "Integration" is a fraught term given its assimilationist implications; Avison, however, brings attention to the cultural politics of the Indigenous public sphere through which difference is expressed. Cuthand's writing speaks to these cultural politics in the terms recognizable to the dominant public. In an editorial published in the *Toronto Star* in 1999 titled "Remembering Dief the Man From Prince Albert," for instance, Cuthand commemorates John Diefenbaker, the 13th Prime Minister of Canada, on the 20th anniversary of his death as a means to raise questions about his socially progressive legacy for Indigenous peoples. Diefenbaker, a leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, is popularly known in Canada for his social reforms that included granting First Nations and Inuit people the right to vote to in 1960. Cuthand's reflections on well-known aspects of Diefenbaker's persona – his magnanimity, friendly relations with Indigenous people and immigrants, skills in debate and oratory – create a discursive "common ground" for an Indigenous and non-Indigenous readership, as these are generally "agreed upon" characteristics of the former PM. Doing so allows Cuthand to develop an "Indigenous perspective" on Diefenbaker and his legacy by relating an anecdote in which he and other members of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians visited him as a part of their lobby work:

> We headed into his spacious office. He greeted us and we proceeded to make our pitch to him. To this day, I can't remember what it was because he didn't have the slightest interest. He took over the meeting and gave us a tour of his office. The tour included a

small closet which, Dief said, Mackenzie King used for meditation and séances (Cuthand August 25, 1999).

This narrative is a distinct departure from popular perceptions of Diefenbaker, suggesting that his gregariousness is perhaps a cosmetic performance of office. Mention of Mackenzie King, 10th Prime Minister of Canada, is telling, as King had long been a Spiritualist during much of his time as PM which was unknown to the Canadian public and "caused Canadians to question the purpose of this activity, the extent of it, and its effect on King's public policy" (Government of Canada 2002). By evoking questions about the motivations for King's decision-making while in office, Cuthand raises similar questions about Diefenbaker's politics. Cuthand does not push the question, but instead continues to bracket Diefenbaker's persona and legacy with regard to Indigenous issues. Relating that Diefenbaker had been made an honorary chief of the Blood nation in southern Alberta, Cuthand states:

> And after he was inducted into the Kainai chieftainship, he stood up and announced that, as long as he was prime minister, our treaty rights would be recognized. I don't know if he meant it, or if he knew what treaty rights were, but it was a memorable declaration which struck a chord with Indian people that day (ibid).

Cuthand points to Diefenbaker's somewhat "ceremonial" role for Indigenous peoples in Canada: he is perhaps an inspirational and meaningful political figurehead, but one who ultimately does not and cannot represent Indigenous interests. On the anniversary of his death, Cuthand provides an "Indigenous perspective" on Diefenbaker that is at once diplomatic and qualified in its tribute, giving him a dimensionality that overturns mainstream tendencies to venerate former heads of state. Working with the conventions of commemoration produces a discursive common ground that supports Cuthand's claims, raising doubts about Canadian state leadership with regard to the

extent to which it is prepared to understand and engage with Indigenous concerns. The implicit

conclusion is that only Indigenous people can represent Indigenous interests, echoing a leading

assertion of Indigenous social movements. Cuthand's support for Indigenous political claims,

and his strategy of creating discursive common ground that validates Indigenous perspectives,

ultimately carries through his film and television production.

SCN and Provincial Television: New Regions From Fragments

Cuthand's early television productions were created for Saskatchewan's public

broadcaster, the Saskatchewan Communications Network (SCN), which itself emerged from a

provincial broadcasting model that developed in the 1970s onward. Given the specificities of

provincial educational broadcasting policy, funding structures, and modes of address, some

historical and industrial detail is needed to contextualize Cuthand's work. Provincial

broadcasting emerged in what Marc Raboy has characterized as "a period of intense

transformation in the social context of broadcasting in Canada" (1990, 226). With the

fragmentation of a unitary national identity flowing from the ideology of a "participatory

democracy," the centralization of the state was critiqued and fell out of favor ideologically;

furthermore, other provinces echoed Québec's assertions of sovereignty, seeking their own

"state" authority (ibid, 226-228). In this context, provinces gained jurisdiction over public

broadcasting in the form of educational broadcasting. Dorothy Zolf traces this history in close

detail, tracing the roots of provincial broadcasting's educational mandate lie to the Canadian

Constitution Act, 1867, which granted provinces exclusive jurisdiction over education (1986).

Through the 1960s and 1970s, provinces increasingly sought to wrest control over broadcasting

from the federal government as a part of asserting their political and legislative autonomy, which

would culminate in the federal "Direction" issued by the CRTC in 1973 which gave the provinces control over programming on educational stations (ibid, 22). Since what constitutes "educational programming" has been a matter of debate and interpretation, the Direction included the following definition:

(a) programming designed to be presented in such a context as to provide a continuity of learning opportunity aimed at the acquisition or improvement of knowledge or at the enlargement of understanding of members of the audience to whom such programming is directed and under such circumstances such that the acquisition or improvement of such knowledge or the enlargement of such understanding is subject to supervision or assessment by a provincial authority by any appropriate means; and

(b) programming providing information on the available courses of instruction or including the broadcasting of special education events within the educational system, which programming, taken as a whole, shall be designed to furnish educational opportunities, and shall be distinctly different from general broadcasting available on the national broadcasting service or on privately owned broadcasting undertakings (qtd in Zolf, 33-4).

In the 1970s and early 1980s, Quebec, Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia established provincial broadcasters, with Saskatchewan eventually founding its own broadcaster, the Saskatchewan Communications Network, in 1991.

SCN was established under Saskatchewan's *Communications Network Corporation Act, 1990* as the designated provincial authority for the Act (Saskatchewan 2004). As a provincial broadcaster, SCN's educational mandate is bound up in the province's efforts to link a

geographically dispersed population via its telecommunications infrastructure and support for

independent production in the province, as identified in its 2006-2007 Annual Report:

> SCN's public broadcast network creates opportunities for independent filmmakers to
>
> share Saskatchewan stories and culture. SCN's broadcast signal reaches 90% of
>
> Saskatchewan households, and satellite subscribers across Canada (Saskatchewan
>
> Communications Network 2007, 8).

Though somewhat unwieldy as a statement, SCN's role is meant to be comprehensive of

provincial telecommunications and the film and television industry. Whether the broadcaster has

been able to realize the kind of infrastructural integration claimed here, SCN nonetheless links its

educational mission to its broadcasting system and the field of independent film and television

production. This discursive framework guides its criteria for regional programs that it selects for

broadcast, which it defines as the following:

> Mandate: Programs must meet the SCN mandate of delivering cultural educational TV
>
> while supporting the work of independent producers.
>
> Public Priorities: Programs are also chosen to meet public priorities, like literacy,
>
> substance abuse, and energy and environmental issues (ibid, 9).

Cuthand explains that SCN commissioned low budget documentaries (by his account,

approximately $20,000 per documentary) that would air on the educational channel, or be held in

libraries. This form of television production indexes broader trends in Canadian television, in

which television is dominated by American programming, with Canadian content – in the form

of educational and documentary programming – primarily reserved for public and regional

broadcasters.

<u>The Canadian Documentary Tradition and the Educational Mandate</u>

The development of educational and documentary television in the provinces reaffirms the documentary as a defining mode of Canadian national film and television production. Canada's "documentary culture" has played a key role in debates around sovereignty: the provinces vis-à-vis the nation, and Canada vis-à-vis the United States. The proximity of the United States to Canada, and the pervasiveness of Hollywood film and television on Canadian screens, has long been perceived as a threat to a Canadian national culture; in relation to Canadian movie theatres, Charles Acland states that "[t]he U.S. economic command over Canadian movie theatres circulates as a symptom of the overall 'americanization' of Canadian culture" (2003, 168). The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), Canada's regulatory agency for broadcast and telecommunications, places Canadian content requirements on cable companies, though Canadian television producers are unable to compete with American counterparts; the same level of resources are not available, and the inroads that pay-television made in the 1980s in Canada has flooded Canadian television screens with American content that over time has entrenched its dominance. As Marc Raboy explains, pay-television gained traction through the debates in the 1970s and 1980s concerning the role of public broadcasting in Canada. The cable industry played a major role in these debates, lobbying for the introduction of pay-television modeled after the U.S. counterparts (1990, 272-279). Cable industry supporters pointed to the potential revenues that would be generated from subscription service, while couching their arguments in nationalist rhetoric that pay-television could represent all public interests – broadcasters, cable operators, producers, and the public (274). Their position was that "commercial success was the path to achieving what fifty years of public and private broadcasting had failed" (275), arguing that privatization and commercialization could be

used to achieve national goals. This rhetoric was intended to position pay-television within Canadian national broadcasting policies, and provide it with the rationale to support the private sector. This argument was ultimately successful when pay-television went on air on February 1, 1983 and was "another boon to the American export market" that made Canadian subscription television an extension of the American distribution system into Canada (276-277).

Canadian content requirements have taken shape in relation to the pervasiveness of American programming: it was to be what American programming was not, codifying national film and media representational traditions in which documentary played a central role, while reflecting the realities of funding limitations for Canadian production. As Cuthand states, documentary is much cheaper to produce than fictional or narrative work: "[d]ocumentary is quite popular in Canada because it's low-cost television compared to [fiction], and that sort of thing. It's quite a bit cheaper to produce, and we have a very small market up here" (January 27, 2015). Documentary is therefore seen as an appealing format for Canadian film and television production, ideologically and economically. Consequently, Canada's "documentary culture" has taken shape in response to geopolitical relations (in particular to the U.S.), television technologies and infrastructure, and the economics of Canadian screens, but was articulated in the terms of Canadian nationalist discourses, illustrating the imbrication of economics, politics, and culture in Canadian television that shaped the documentary opportunities available to media practitioners in Canada, including Indigenous producers.

Educational Programming and Indigenous Politics: *Stay in School* (1995)

The ideological and economic dynamics of Canadian public television intersect with Indigenous politics in Cuthand's early production for SCN, particularly his 30-minute

documentary, *Stay in School* (1995). Describing himself as "political but not a politician" (2015), Cuthand worked with Indigenous political organizations in Saskatchewan for approximately five years in the 1970s before leaving to work in print and media. *Stay in School* emerges from provincial television models as well as a major Indigenous political campaign in Saskatchewan that called for Indigenous control over Indigenous education. The documentary focuses on the importance of education for Indigenous people, and examines three Indigenously-run secondary schools and school programs in the region, interviewing administrators and students about the benefits of education that is culturally relevant and largely directed by Indigenous administrators, staff, and instructors. The subject matter for this piece extends from "Indian Control of Indian Education," a political project that dates to the 1970s and was driven by Indigenous political organizations in Saskatchewan. In the early 1970s, the Education Task Force of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians developed a two-volume report on the state of Indigenous education in the province. The report was undertaken while the federal government and province continued to impose an education system that extended from the longer history of residential schools, which had devastating effects on Indigenous families and communities, disrupting social and family organization and undermining Indigenous languages in order to eradicate their traditional cultures. Based on the report, the National Indian Brotherhood[15] developed a policy paper entitled "Indian Control of Indian Education" that that called for Indigenous peoples' control of the direction and design of educational programs and schools that served Indigenous peoples, which would involve parents and be managed locally, rather than provincially or federally (Taner 1999, 293). The policy paper was eventually adopted by then Minister of Native Affairs Jean Chrétien in 1974, enabling the creation of several secondary and postsecondary schools and

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[15] Now the Assembly of First Nations, a national organization consisting of the elected chiefs of Indigenous groups across Canada.

programs designed and operated by local Indigenous groups across the province in the subsequent decades.

Cuthand's focus in *Stay in School* is undoubtedly shaped by his participation in the political projects most meaningful and to the Indigenous people of Saskatchewan. From 1977 to 1982, Cuthand was Vice Chief of the Executive of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, and during his tenure participated in founding postsecondary institutions in the province (Cuthand 2005, xiv). In 1988, Cuthand published a column in *The Saskatchewan Indian* entitled "Indian Control Of Indian Education: A Brief History," that traces the ongoing negotiations between the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians and the federal government over educational issues and legislation, and the development of further programs and services by Indigenous groups (1988, 19). Clearly, educational issues continued to be of significance to Indigenous groups in Saskatchewan and to Cuthand himself, which shaped his editorial and media work.

Stay in School is reminiscent of a news magazine, and reproduces many of its conventions: it is issue-specific, employs familiar introductory and transitional musical cues, and concentrates on the "human interest" dimensions of the issues through interviews with staff, students, and instructors. While in some ways the documentary is "conservative" in the sense of staying close to established technique, the piece does demonstrate Cuthand's efforts to emphasize the voices of the documentary participants. Cuthand explains his rationale in relation to his participation in the group that would become the Aboriginal Film and Video Art Alliance (AFVAA), and their debates about Indigenous cultural autonomy in art practice:

> There was a group of us that continued the dialogue going about an Aboriginal
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> organization and what they could do. And there was a discussion around the topic of
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> screen culture. How could we shoot and be different? What were we doing that was

different? I'd have to examine my work and say 'this is different from the way a white

producer or director would have shot the same thing.' What I did, I used very, very little

narration. In fact, you could watch some of my productions all the way through and not

hear narration. Television stations want a star out front…taking you every step of the

way. To me, it was always important that the people themselves tell their stories.

Sometimes that wouldn't be my story, and I wouldn't force my story on them...you have

to be honest and truthful. It's the old Indian way of doing storytelling. It's the oral

tradition, you have to maintain the truth (Cuthand January 27, 2015).

In *Stay in School*, narration is quite spare, and only begins after segments of three participants

explaining their reasons for going back to school, foregrounding their perspectives ahead of the

narrator's. The voice of the narrator is a woman, who uses the characteristic speech pattern of a

news anchor: slow-paced, deliberate, and uses standard broadcast English. Despite its

conventionality, the narration is used very sparingly in order to provide more "room" for those of

the interview participants. Cuthand's description of his techniques makes several discursive

moves to describe Indigeneity on-screen: he invokes an historical discourse of Indigenous

"screen culture" through reference to the AFVAA, from which he gestures towards a broader

framework of oral traditional narratives, then locates within these traditions an ethic based on

"truth" that evokes associations with journalistic ethics. Through these moves, he historicizes the

formation of a discourse of Indigenous "screen aesthetics" emerging from discussions at the

AFVAA, while situating it into a journalistic context.

     Stay in School therefore reveals not only Cuthand's relation to the field of Indigenous

film and media ideologically, but in very concrete terms having to do with his interactions other

Indigenous media producers and organizations, providing a material, historical context for

discourses of Indigeneity in media practice. Attention to *Stay in School*'s production context is also revealing of the interfaces between Indigenous politics in a local and regional context, and how he negotiated the conventions of the media format and associated institutional practices in order to represent these issues.

Documentary Production at the NFB: *Donna's Story* (2001)

Cuthand referred to his production for SCN as practice for later production, which in the late 1990s and early 2000s was developed in association with the National Film Board. Cuthand relates that he approached the NFB after having developed experience and expertise in provincial television: "I had to build up a certain amount of credibility and experience before I went to the [NFB]" (ibid), speaking to both his increasingly specific focus on media, and expectations of experience and quality associated with the NFB. If the NFB was increasingly subject to budget reductions through the 1980s to the present, Cuthand's comments indicate that it nonetheless sustained its historical and cultural prestige. Furthermore, by moving between production opportunities, Cuthand gestures to the realities of working in media production in Canada, which increasingly became subject to contract work and commissions as public agencies were divested of their in-house production capacities through from the 1980s onward.

Donna's Story is a 60-minute documentary profile of Donna Gamble, a former sex worker and recovering addict, mother of six and recent grandmother, who at the time of filming worked with current and former prostitutes as an outreach worker. The film develops a nuanced portrait of an Indigenous woman that creates a counter-narrative to that which circulates in the Canadian mainstream media, which either ignores the plight of Indigenous women who work in the sex trade, or represent them in such a way as to naturalize the violence they

disproportionately experience. Gamble's work towards health and well-being is in part attributed to her return to traditional cultural practices, thereby linking the film's counter-narrative to an ethic of Indigenous cultural nationalism.

The structure Cuthand uses for the documentary lends itself to the NFB, which has established a body of individual portrait films stemming from their socially engaged documentary tradition, which Zoe Druick has theorized as "government realism" to characterize a documentary practice at the NFB that

> …reflected the technologies of the liberal democracy that it was developed to support. Not only was documentary intimately bound up with the democratizing projects of mass and adult education, but it also embodied social scientific techniques, such as the interview and the representative sample, which were foundational to the development of new techniques of governance such as the opinion poll (2007, 23).

Druick argues that the scopic and positivist dimensions of this practice shifted in the 1950s onward as multiculturalism and diversity became the state's modus operandi in response to challenges by social interest groups and Indigenous peoples to hegemonic regimes of knowledge and demands for control of the apparatus of representation as a part of redressing social power imbalances. Over the next several decades and into the 1990s, the NFB developed programs for disenfranchised social groups, including the poor, women, minorities, and Indigenous peoples. While seeking to "empower" these social groups, these programs nonetheless produced films in terms of the NFB's discourse of government realism; in terms of Indigenous production, Druick argues these films "tacitly become a part of the national dialogue about the place of aboriginal [sic] communities in Canadian society" and "contribute to a larger government dialogue about the meaning and organization of a federal system" (174).

Indigenous productions at the NFB therefore demonstrate interactions of political discourses of different stakeholders: those of the NFB, as a public film agency, seeking to adapt to and reflect a shifting social and political landscape through its programs and production practices; and those of Indigenous producers positioned in relation to discourses of Indigenous cultural nationalism who engage with these institutional practices to create space to represent Indigenous social realities and priorities. *Donna's Story* emerges from this discursive context, harnessing the social realist discourse of the NFB documentary tradition to make visible social issues affecting Indigenous women and the colonial legacies underpinning them. The film was, however, produced after the NFB terminated its formal programs for Indigenous production: Studio One, which launched in 1990 and headquartered in Edmonton, closed in 1995. Its subsequent iteration, the Aboriginal Filmmaking Program (AFP), converted resources for Indigenous production training and development to a funding envelope, an annual allocation to which Indigenous producers were directed for their project proposals to the NFB (Cardinal 2008). Nonetheless, the NFB still upholds its mission to represent Canadian national culture and its constituencies, and the ongoing promotion of Indigenous representation as a part of the NFB's institutional culture made Cuthand's project all the more viable.

Cuthand explains that he'd known about Donna and was interested in her story because she and her family had experienced endemic sexual abuse and subsequent addiction issues:

> ...they were all in the process of recovery. It was a story of a family that had gone off the rails, all generations were going back on…things were improving. It was an interesting story from that point of view. It was more the strength of the human spirit…the family story was what was interesting, and that's what I focused on (January 27, 2015).

He further described the film's development in terms of the grant-giving model that the NFB had adopted through the 1990s: he created a proposal, produced a twenty-minute interview with Donna, and submitted them to the NFB. He relates that the NFB was "very cooperative" (ibid), likely because the film fits with prevailing NFB production models and thematic concerns. The NFB regionalized in the 1970s in the same historical and ideological context as the decentralization of national television, establishing satellite studios in each province headed by an executive producer and would coordinate regional proposal processes and productions (McSorley 2006, 273). This institutional restructuring parallels the transfer of educational television production to the provinces with the goal of expanding regional representation ultimately supports he rationale for the local focus of Cuthand's film.

Donna's Story retains some of the qualities of Cuthand's television production: its structure is similar to that of the "human interest" approach of his earlier work, it is local to Saskatchewan, it emphasizes the personal dimension through talking-head interviews intercut with footage of Gamble's home, work, and social life, and de-emphasizes voice-over narration; there is in fact no voice-over narration at all. Instead, Gamble's interviews are the main structuring device, and interstitial footage illustrates topics or issues she raises in her interviews. The lack of voice-over narration for Indigenous documentaries was not new to the NFB: Loretta Todd, for instance, an filmmaker who'd worked with the NFB in the 1990s to the early 2000s, minimized her use voice over to de-center the authority of the filmmaker as the "voice of God" and give primacy to Indigenous voices in her more experimental documentary films; Jennifer Gauthier, describing Todd's style as "postmodern," argues that "[h]er films rely on multiple voices rather than a single narrator, celebrating polyphony and calling into question the act of

representation" (2010, 33). Though Cuthand is not "experimental" in his approach, his choice to eliminate voice over has theoretical and institutional precedent.

Gamble's life story is shaped by the devastating social and historical conditions afflicting Indigenous people, and women specifically, across the country. Coming from generations of sexual and physical abuse within her family and community, Gamble worked in the sex trade and abused drugs for years before entering recovery. Gamble's story, while her own, manifests broader social issues affecting Indigenous women in Canada that see them disproportionately overrepresented in the sex trade and subjected to higher incidences of physical and sexual violence (RCMP, 2014, 3). While these issues are, as the film goes on to explore, generations old, they began to receive greater public attention in the late 1990s as rumors of a serial killer in Vancouver, British Columbia began to appear in the national media (Vancouver Police Department et. al. 2015, 10).[16] As a journalist, Cuthand has shown himself to be responsive to issues most immediately meaningful to Indigenous peoples, and that *Donna's Story* closely coincides with renewed focus on the issue of systemic violence experienced by Indigenous women.

The film, however, is structured to explicitly work against victim narratives that typically enfold Indigenous women, and that the mainstream Canadian press promulgated in their coverage of the these events. The film opens with Gamble's voice over explaining that when most people see prostitutes on the streets, they only see a figure, while she beyond the figure to the abuse and pain in their backgrounds from which she escaped. The narration plays over footage of Indigenous women attending vigil for victims of the sex trade, visually reinforcing the

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[16] These rumors would be confirmed with the 2002 arrest of Robert "Willie" Pickton, whose pig farm in Coquitlam, BC, was used as the site for the murders of dozens of women, of whom many were Indigenous. Pickton was convicted of the murder of 6 counts of second-degree murder.

human dimension of the problem. The film then cuts to a scene of a bustling highway, while Gamble's narration is heard: "It's got to get better. It certainly couldn't get any worse that it has been." Gamble is then shown driving on her way to a speaking engagement at a local high school, where she speaks to an assembly of students in a gymnasium about her background as a former sex worker, the issues she faced, before turning to discussion of safe sex. Throughout, she is shown to be lively, funny, and engaged with students, showing them how to use condoms and providing them with sex education advice. The scene then cuts to her home, where she sits and sews with her young daughter, and teasingly sings "Que Sera, Sera." This opening sequence undoes the representational problem surrounding Indigenous women, showing Gamble to be professional, intelligent, cheerful, and loving, giving her complex human dimension. The visual structure of this sequence moves from death, implied by the vigil, to life, conveyed by Gamble's movement through traffic, the vigor of her work as an outreach worker, and her family life with by her children. As Cuthand states, his intent with the film was to represent the "strength of the human spirit" (January 27, 2015); more than a cliché, however, Cuthand here speaks to the film's overarching ethic, which is to show that Gamble is far more than is implied by the designation of "prostitute." The film goes on to show Gamble's wedding, her relationship with her family, her outreach work in which her mother, Sylvia, participates as a speaker, describing how she herself was brutally forced into prostitution at a young age, and subsequently had several children, many of whom were placed in foster care because she could not provide adequate care for them. The film details the social and historical factors that created the conditions in which these women found themselves enmeshed, and that they are complex and resilient women who were able to extricate themselves from these situations and build healthier lives, largely in part to their turn to their traditional cultural practices. In another sequence, Gamble is shown in full regalia dancing

at a powwow; she states that dancing is "probably the greatest high I've ever had without chemicals." Traditional cultural practices are framed here as a corrective to the violent and abusive conditions they previously suffered. In another scene, Gamble explains that she was taking substances while she was pregnant, and believes that it may have affected her son, who displays behavioral issues. She explains that her work is to learn to be patient with him, before the film cuts to a shot of Gamble burning sage and she and her son smudging. Her traditional culture, therefore, is a mediator for her recovery and work to build healthier relationships with her family and others.

A return to traditional cultural practices is a well-established discourse in Indigenous cultural politics, but *Donna's Story* does not distill to a cultural triumphalist narrative. Towards the end of the film, Gamble appears in an interview in which she explains that she has recently admitted to her mother that she has started drinking. She has recently cut her hair short, and explains she did so because she "had to start somewhere," that some people go to treatment or therapy, but she cuts her hair, and had done it once before. This segment positions Gamble at a point of transition: she is not mired in relapse, but rather moving herself into a process of recovery. Gamble experience is typical of the cultural narrative of addiction, where a part of recovery is falling off the wagon that should not be internalized as failure, but rather an opportunity to understand why the relapse occurred as a part of the ongoing process of recovery. As Gamble states, "*Today* I didn't drink," marking the ambivalence of addiction: the success of one day counterbalanced with the uncertainty of the future. The film structure echoes this dynamic. It opens and closes with images from the candlelight vigil, not to position Gamble within a cycle of abuse, but rather to visually convey her ambivalence and tentative optimism. Gamble's voice over echoes her opening statement: she is not sure what the future will bring, but

it has to be better than what she has gone through. While there is a cycle at work, it is entailed by the recovery process. The viewer is left with the impression that Gamble's tenacity and her ability to both survive and thrive through adversity will carry her through, despite the uncertainties of the future.

The film's resolution, or lack thereof, was an issue of debate and tension between Cuthand and NFB producers. He related that producers wanted a "clean ending" (ibid); that is, an ending with a resolution of some kind. Cuthand explains that the film did not have a resolution because "it's a person's life" and human lives do not resolve into such endings; however, he reportedly encountered some resistance from NFB producers over this choice:

> ...the story doesn't end. It isn't all wrapped up in a nice little ball. Some of the problems continue, the struggle continues, life continues, and we left it like that. [NFB producers] wanted to wrap it up. And I said, well, you really can't, it's a person's life, everybody's on their journey, we've been lucky enough to capture a piece of that journey (January 27, 2015).

Cuthand's statement links to his journalistic ethic in that he is being "truthful" to the realities with which he was faced, and would not impose "his story" or anyone else's on Gamble's. Pressure from the NFB for a more pat conclusion was in conflict with Cuthand's more "humanist" approach located in Indigenous representational politics and journalistic ethics. This tension is instructive, as it points to the intersection of competing institutional, ideological, and political frameworks in the creation of Indigenous production, as well as the traces of a regional television model in its textual features and lineage via Cuthand's production experience.

Conclusion

       Part of the challenge, and value, of taking an institutional and historical approach to

analysis of Cuthand's production is that his work does not easily cohere into unifying

frameworks – he has not worked solely within one institution or media format, leading to a

diverse portfolio that must take into account multiple and overlapping areas of influence –

institutional, political, ideological, and technological – in order to understand it. Placing the

filmmaker at the center of analysis elucidates the historical conditions that engendered the kind

of mobility and responsiveness to the media landscape that his work represents. Cuthand's media

trajectory is not exceptional for Indigenous production, but rather characteristic of Indigenous

producers following work opportunities in a field of defunded public media and cultural

institutions, and funding bodies that operate on a project proposal funding model. As a case in

point, Cuthand found work in the early 2000s directing episodes of television series produced by

independent production companies for broadcast on APTN. Cuthand explains that the Indigenous

documentary market has now shifted towards nonfiction series for broadcast on APTN – in this

arrangement, APTN acquires programming it requires to fill its broadcast schedule and that

fulfils its programming mission, while producers find in the longer process of producing series a

bit of financial certainty and stability in a field of piecemeal contract work and grant-funded

standalone. This model can be very tenuous, as Cuthand's most recent experience illustrates: the

Saskatchewan provincial government in 2014 eliminated the Saskatchewan tax credit on which

provincial film and television production relied; consequently, almost every Saskatchewan

production company has shut down, including Cuthand's Blue Hill Productions. This turn of

events, while unfortunate, is indicative of the constriction of public funding for media taking

place in Canada, and subsequent chapters will trace their effects on the production landscape as

Indigenous producers negotiate them.

CHAPTER TWO:

Negotiating Indigenous Self-Government: The Aboriginal Film and Video Art Alliance and The Banff Centre for the Arts

In April 1991, Wil Campbell, an Aboriginal filmmaker and producer, called a meeting to found an organization that would promote and practice Aboriginal self-government in the arts. Forty-five Aboriginal filmmakers, performers, artists, and journalists, gathered just outside of Edmonton, Alberta, to discuss how they would organize, which resulted in the formation of the Aboriginal Film and Video Arts Alliance (AFVAA), a group consisting of a thirteen member Steering Committee made up of representatives from regions across Canada, with four well-established artists and media practitioners as advisors: Alanis Obomsawin, Wil Campbell, Bernelda Wheeler, and Maria Campbell (Beaucage 1991). The AFVAA is frequently a point of reference for the rapid development of Indigenous media-based activism and organizing in the early 1990s (de Rosa 2002, Foster 2012). As a case in point, the 2014 ImagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival featured a panel called "indigiTALKS: Following that Moment" that traced a history of Indigenous media activism and innovation in Canada, dating it to the early 1990s and to the influence of the AFVAA (imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival 2014). Nonetheless, there has yet to be a sustained study of the organization, despite it numbering some of the most prominent Aboriginal filmmakers and artists as members, including Alanis Obomsawin, Loretta Todd, Wil Campbell, Doug Cuthand, and Cleo Reece (Beaucage and Delegates 1993). Founded in 1991, the AFVAA's mission was to explore an Indigenous approach to film and video production within an emerging political discourse of Indigenous "self-government," stated as "to promote and encourage the interdisciplinary art form of film and video production, and the creating [sic] of new cultural storytelling forms within the principles, values and traditions of Aboriginal Self Government [sic]" (Beaucage 1991). Underpinning this

statement are the AFVAA's operating principles that assert the continuity of Indigenous traditional cultural forms, invoked by reference to "storytelling," but within Western technologies of representation, specifically film and video. Indigenous "self-government" is the rationale for these principles, a discourse of Indigenous political and cultural autonomy driving the Indigenous social movement from which the AFVAA emerged.

As a part of this mission, the Alliance sought and advocated for the creation of Indigenously-controlled programs and resources in Canadian art cultural institutions. The AFVAA negotiated such a space at the Banff Centre for the Arts, one of Canada's most prominent arts centers, in a partnership that lasted for three years from 1993 until 1996. Though this partnership was relatively short lived, I argue that the negotiations between the organizations bring to light different understandings of how institutional programs and infrastructure could engage and represent Indigeneity. Examination of these discourses illustrates how Banff policies and agendas shifted to accommodate social change, though in order to stabilize its cultural relevance and authority. The Banff Centre attempted to incorporate the AFVAA into its operations through a framework variously termed "cross-culturalism" and "interculturalism," which aimed to provide marginalized peoples access to mainstream resources and incorporate their participation in programs and services. The AFVAA, however, advanced an agenda shaped by prevailing Indigenous political discourses of self-government, which is characterized by autonomous institutional spaces accompanied sufficient resources under Indigenous administration and authority, which would allow them to experiment with how self-government would look in art practice.

In addition to recuperating the AFVAA into the historical record, in this chapter I argue that examination of the AFVAA's institutional interactions makes visible a discourse of

Indigenous media in which media technologies' formal features were understood as extension of Indigenous cultural politics. AFVAA organizers Loretta Todd and Marjorie Beaucage explain that the exploration of self-government in art necessitated experimentation with and innovation on form as an aesthetic parallel to self-government, the design of which would only emerge "on the ground" through experimenting with traditional governance models within settler colonial society. The AFVAA therefore theorized aesthetic practice as an extension of a process of theorizing Indigenous self-government. The AFVAA's Public Service Announcement project put into practice this formalist approach to cultural politics. The project consists of a set of six PSAs developed and produced by a cohort of Indigenous artists over a nine-week residency program hosted at the Banff Centre in 1993. An emphasis on Indigenous youth and futurity thematically link the PSAs, in particular in *Hip-Hop* (1994) by Crissy Red (credited as Cliff Redcrow) and Ruby-Marie Dennis and *Future Child* (1994)by Angie Campbell, which employ hip-hop and features of speculative fiction respectively in their messaging. The producers' use of these generic features was an outcome of the cohort's debates and speculation about the potential of Indigenous self-government for Indigenous futures, linking discourse to form.

Indigenous Self-Government: An Emergent Discourse

As a part of its mission, the Alliance looked to examine "Indigenous self-government" in part by "visioning new partnerships, based on Self Government [sic] principles, with cultural institutions and funding agents" (Beaucage 1991). The AFVAA did not seek to codify a definition of "self-government" through its creative or organizational work; however, "self-government" as a discourse emerges from the context of the Indigenous sovereignty movement that forms the historical backdrop for the Alliance and its goals.

Until the late 1960s, Indigenous-state relations in Canada are best characterized as assimilationist, with law and policy geared towards the legal and cultural termination of Indigenous peoples in order to absorb them into the body politic. Canada entered the 1960s on the currents of the civil rights era, electing Liberal Party leader Pierre Trudeau as Prime Minister, whose administration ushered in the rhetoric of the "just society," a platform for participatory democracy based on human rights and equality (McMillan and Yellowhorn 2009, 324). Trudeau's government implemented universal healthcare, promoted greater regional political representation, and formalized a federal policy of "multiculturalism," which sought to reconcile Canada's diverse and not always harmonious constituencies by officially recognizing cultural and social plurality. Seeking to dismantle what his administration perceived as mechanisms of social inequality, Trudeau in 1969 presented the "Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy," or as it would become known more notoriously, "the white paper," which initiated a turning point in Indigenous-state relations. The white paper proposed abolishing the Indian Act and with it the distinct legal status of Indigenous peoples in Canada, arguing that the Indian Act was the source of socio-economic barriers and impoverished conditions facing Indigenous peoples (Canada 1969). Dismantling this piece of legislation, Trudeau's government reasoned, would remove the key apparatus preventing Indigenous peoples from equal participation in Canadian society. These assumptions stemmed from the 1963 Report, "A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada: Economic, Political, Educational Needs and Policies," or the "Hawthorn Report." The Hawthorn Report was commissioned by the federal government to investigate the social welfare of Indigenous peoples across Canada. The Report concluded that Indigenous peoples were Canada's most disadvantaged group, and that the history of residential schools and government policy had failed to prepare Indigenous people to participate in

Canadian society. Unlike the white paper's rhetoric of social well-being, the Hawthorn Report framed its findings in more explicitly economic terms, identifying the conditions contributing to Indigenous "economic inferiority" that hindered their ability to participate in the Canadian economy (Canada 1967, 24). When weighing social welfare expenditures for Indigenous peoples with Crown fiduciary obligations to Indigenous peoples guaranteed by the Indian Act, the federal treasury was spending 72 million dollars annually on services for Indigenous peoples (or approximately 516 million in 2016 dollars). While the white paper does not foreground these imperatives as a part of its logic, dismantling the Indian Act would not only bolster Canada's image as a participatory democracy, it would absolve the state of much of its financial responsibility for Indigenous peoples, serving state interests.

The white paper was met with outrage from Indigenous groups across the country, who criticized it on two major counts: despite Indigenous people's participation in consultations as a part of the Hawthorn Report, the white paper did not address these concerns, and was therefore a document unilaterally serving the state's interests; and abolishing of the Indian Act was seen as an extension of Canada's assimilation project, as it would dismantle the one piece of federal legislation that acknowledged Indigenous peoples' unique status, rights, and historical relationship with Canada (First Nations and Indigenous Studies 2009b). The white paper provoked widespread protests from Indigenous groups and organizations across Canada that ultimately led to its demise, but not before it had initiated a pan-Indigenous political mobilization dedicated to Indigenous sovereignty. The principles for sovereignty were expressed in the Indian Association of Alberta's response to the white paper, entitled *Citizen Plus* (1970), later popularly known as the "Red Paper." The Red Paper argued that the Indian Act should not be dismantled, but rather amended to eliminate its paternalism by supporting principles of Indigenous self-

government, the basis for an equitable relationship with Indigenous peoples (Indian Chiefs of Alberta 1970, 200). Here "self-government" is defined as the internal autonomy of Indigenous groups to govern their own affairs without interference from "outsiders,"[17] premised on having financial and social security by drawing on the community's resources, and those of federal programs (medical, educational) guaranteed by provisions of the Indian Act. As a capstone measure, the Red Paper called for the legal entrenchment of Indigenous rights in the Canadian Constitution to further formalize acknowledgement of these rights as the basis and rationale for Indigenous self-government, and guarantee that they could not be threatened by any legal maneuverings. The Red Paper was subsequently adopted as the national Indigenous position on the white paper and provided a framework for Indigenous self-government that would guide the Indigenous political agenda in Canada for the following decades (FNSP 2009).

When Canada patriated the Canadian Constitution in 1982, formalizing the country's sovereign national status, Indigenous political efforts focused on amending the Constitution to formally acknowledge Indigenous rights.[18] These political pressures were ultimately successful, and Indigenous rights were enshrined in the Canadian Constitution in section 35, which reads:

35. (1) The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed.

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[17] Historically "outsiders" has referred to Indian agents, representatives of Indian and Northern Affairs who had the authority to scrutinize tribal affairs without their consent, and from whom Aboriginal people would have to seek permission to travel off-reserve, sell livestock and other resources cultivated on reserve lands, among other restrictions. Over time, "outsiders" has come to encompass the state more broadly (see Indian Chiefs of Alberta 1970, 200-201; Milloy 2008).

[18] The efforts of Indigenous groups and organizations involved a thousand-person train caravan from Vancouver to Ottawa, and in 1981 sending a delegation of Indigenous leaders to England petition Parliament to refuse patriation unless the Constitution would recognize Aboriginal people (UBCIC 2010).

(2) In this Act, "aboriginal peoples of Canada" includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.

(3) For greater certainty, in subsection (1) "treaty rights" includes rights that now exist by way of land claims agreements or may be so acquired.

(4) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the aboriginal and treaty rights referred to in subsection (1) are guaranteed equally to male and female persons (Canada 1982).

While the Constitution protects Indigenous rights, it does not define them, which has resulted in much legal, scholarly, and community debate. The court system has become a venue for such debates and definitions of Indigenous rights, in Supreme Court cases such as *R v. Calder* and *R v. Sparrow* (First Nations and Indigenous Studies 2009a). Thus, while Indigenous rights have been recognized and affirmed within Canadian legislation, they have subject to processes of interpretation.

Similarly, Dan Russell has argued that "self-government" does not have defined "content" (11); that is, its "substance" cannot be codified and applied prescriptively to different Indigenous groups and communities who have their particular legal and political traditions. Self-government does, however, anticipate certain material conditions in order to be realized. Georges Erasmus, former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, identified that the biggest problem facing First Nations efforts to exercise self-government is a lack of resources, pointing out that while the state maintains certain fiduciary responsibilities towards Indigenous peoples, once the administration of certain programs and services - such as housing and education - are transferred to individual bands, government subsidies for these programs drop significantly (Erasmus 1989, 34-39). Moreover, the state has not demonstrated a willingness to invest in

initiatives to stimulate economic development that would allow Indigenous communities to

begin building a material base from which to develop autonomous forms of governance (ibid).

Glen Coulthard concurs, arguing that the historical dispossession of land experienced by

Indigenous people has not only undermined a material basis for sovereignty, but also a system of

place-based knowledge from which Indigenous social formations and knowledge flow.

Therefore, land is central not only as the basis for economic resources, but also for the

epistemological and political structures on which Indigenous governance is, and would be, based

(2014, 12-13). This political discourse forms the context for the AFVAA's organizational and

advocacy work. In its relationship with the Banff Centre, the AFVAA models self-government

within an institutional setting, seeking to create an autonomous space within the broader

institution to experiment with Indigenous cultural traditions in media production. For the PSA

project, the AFVAA implemented debates over interpretations of self-government to individual

Indigenous artists, taking discussions happening in the social and political sphere into the

creative sphere as a part of the media development process.

What's in a Name?: The Aboriginal Film and Video Art Alliance

The name for the AFVAA, and particularly the term "alliance," evokes the political

energy and organizing by Indigenous and other social groups during this period. During the late

1980s and early 1990, social democratic movements took place in Canadian art and cultural

arenas as racial and cultural minority groups demanded access to government resources for

cultural production. In "Building Blocks: Anti-Racist Initiatives in the Arts," Monika Kin

Gagnon argues that these groups were linked by a strategy of "identity politics" – artists who

"self-identified as First Nations or of colour, who presented a challenge to white-dominated

cultural organizations" (1999, 52). A series of conferences and organizational activities sought

inter-group affiliations, which Gagnon describes as "alliances," to find ways to address systemic

and institutional racism in Canadian arts and cultural institutions. However, it proved to be

problematic for Indigenous people to be grouped into a broader cultural category of "people of

color" given their unique cultural and political histories within Canada, as Marjorie Beaucage

describes:

> There was always 'people of color *and* First Nations'… They didn't have access either.
>
> We did collaborate together on some things. But there was big cultural differences
>
> between us too. They didn't get that we were First Nations. It was still 'people of color
>
> and… oh yeah, First Nations.' And I always tried to help them understand that this is the
>
> only place we have, that we've never been anywhere else. This is our home, and you're
>
> our guests (July 4, 2014).

Beaucage explains that the AFVAA use of the term "alliance" did describe political affiliation

between oppressed minority groups, but their form of organizing was distinct, taking place

within grassroots organizing shaped by Indigenous value systems. One of the Alliance's first

major projects was to take over governance of the Pincher Creek Film Festival in Edmonton,

Alberta, which Beaucage explained often featured films with highly problematic colonial

representations of Indigenous people and history. She elaborated that the film festival deterred

Indigenous filmmakers, not solely in their programming choices, but also owing to their

submission fees, which many Indigenous media practitioners could not afford. When the

Alliance took over the governance of the film festival, they renamed the Dreamspeakers Film

Festival and restructured the systemic barriers limiting Indigenous participation, for instance,

dispensing with submission fees for Indigenous filmmakers (Beaucage July 4, 2014). She

explains: "We tried to do things in partnerships or alliances. We went to the public library, the community friendship centers and asked them to host when we had events so that we were self-governing" (July 4, 2014). This was the implementation of one of the founding principles of the AFVAA, which was to remove systemic barriers to Indigenous participation in the arts, and forged relationships with sympathetic or related organizations and institutions in order to do so. The value of affiliation between groups, Beaucage explains, was an extension of Indigenous values that emphasize cultivating and sustaining community relations. In this model, the festival would have an open submission policy welcoming any Indigenous-produced film and video work without requiring submission fees. Their work would be screened under the principle of "giving back," in which Indigenous filmmakers would receive feedback on their work within the participation of community members:

> The first [Dreamspeakers] festival was free, and the first festival was in the community, the principles of giving back, right? When you do work, you give it back, and you talk to each other about what you made and why you made it. And you let people decide for themselves what it is for them (ibid).

Dreamspeakers Film Festival can be seen as an early test of Indigenous governance in the cultural sphere, which the Alliance then explored in its interactions with mainstream cultural institutions in Canada, and ultimately the Banff Centre with its three-year partnership.

The Alliance envisioned itself as a national body operating on self-government principles (Beaucage 1991), with regional representatives constituting the Steering Committee, and goals acting as a hub for the collection and distribution of information and resources relating to Indigenous artists and filmmakers (Beaucage and Delegates 1993, 4). Its national scope and centralized operations echo the design of a federal cultural institution, and suggests that it would

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operate parallel to such institutions in keeping with a national partnership model, but within terms determined by those Indigenous people participating in its creation. Commenting on the founding of the AFVAA, Loretta Todd, one of its organizers, stated: "[w]e hold as a philosophy the practice of self-government and the exercise of Aboriginal rights in the building of our own cinema and television industry/community" (1994, 7). Todd's characterization of "Indigenous self-government" has to do with control over the means of production, though she does not envision this work in isolation from other institutions or groups. Rather, Todd asserts that "[w]e want to work with other film and video industries and communities, but we want to do so from a site of power, and not as part of someone else's power, always on the margins" (ibid), making clear that while Indigenous media necessitates Indigenous people's access to and autonomy over media resources, Indigenous production does not occur in isolation from other social groups and arenas of cultural production. The Alliance's infrastructure reflects these principles: the role of the "runner" was created as a cultural "ambassador," acting as an interface and mediator between mainstream cultural institutions and the Indigenous programs and artists working with them:

> As tradition has it, the "runners" were the ones who went ahead to prepare the place and the people for what was to come. At the Banff Centre, these ambassadors would 'go ahead' and create cultural space for the artists, storytellers, communities who would come to the Centre as residents, associates, for gatherings, symposia, residencies, etc…(First Nations Film and Video Art Alliance 1993).

Marjorie Beaucage served as this "runner" in the AFVAA's dealings with mainstream cultural institutions. In order to develop its organizational capacity, the Alliance sought partnerships with these institutions, where "spaces" for Indigenous participation would be created and supported, and where the AFVAA could be located. These spaces would be

dedicated to Indigenous programs and services and would be administered by Indigenous staff,

working as an extension of Indigenous self-government by actualizing it within "sovereign

space" in a larger institutional body. As a part of this mission, AFVAA representatives

performed outreach at federal cultural institutions and funding bodies, including among others

the Canada Council for the Arts (CCF). Beaucage recounts having worked with the CCF as an

effort to build institutional representation of Indigenous people, who would steer decision-

making and resource allocation for Indigenous artists. As Beaucage explains, this organizational

restructuring would be an exercise of Indigenous self-government because it would transfer

control over Indigenous affairs and resources to Indigenous people, and involve Indigenous

people in mainstream processes:

> None of us had ever been invited to sit on media arts juries, we weren't a part of any of
>
> that mainstream process, or eligible as independent artists. The other disciplines only had
>
> the superstars of visual arts. Now every single department at the Canada Council has an
>
> Aboriginal arts component (ibid).

The CCF was responsive, founded the Aboriginal Arts Secretariat in 1994, which oversees grants

to support Aboriginal artists (Research Office of the Canada Council for the Arts 2008, 7), and

would later fund and participate in AFVAA initiatives (Maskegon-Iskwew 1994, 26).

AFVAA's search for an autonomous space was successfully negotiated with the Banff

Centre for the Arts. The Banff Centre, located in the picturesque tourist setting of Banff, Alberta,

is one of Canada's oldest and most renowned art and cultural institutions. Affiliated with

Alberta's post-secondary system, Banff Centre offers non-degree-based professionalization

programs for artists in all disciplines through what is known as the "Banff Method," a residency

program designed to immerse participants for several weeks in a creative and natural

environment to spur innovation (Cook and Diamond 2012, 23). In 1992, Loretta Todd was approached by Sara Diamond, then-Director of the Banff Centre' Film and Video Program, with an invitation to participate in one of the Banff Centre's artist residencies (Todd August 8, 2014). Todd, however, recalled that she guided Banff Centre away from residencies, which modeled individual creativity, and towards a framework of "community" that the AFVAA sought to embody, and encouraged Diamond to invite the AFVAA to meet with them and explore the possibilities of a partnership:

> I said that it's not about me, it's about the community, and really, we need to have a conversation with the Banff Centre because it shouldn't be just about individual artists coming here – certainly, individual artists can come here anytime they want, you guys should be more open and embracing of Aboriginal artists – but really we need to have a discussion with the institution, and we need to talk about systemic barriers, we need to find out about having that sovereign space within this institution…I said why don't we have a meeting with community, with people involved in the Alliance, we can come together and we can start to formulate some formal relationship with the Banff Centre, some formal arts space within the Banff Centre that we would control and be our sovereign space (ibid).

Both Beaucage and Todd had participated in residencies and therefore had existing relationships with the Banff Centre, which undoubtedly facilitated their interactions, as well as the meeting that took place in 1992 (Century March 12, 1993b, 40), and which resulted in an institutional partnership that lasted until 1996. Todd and Beaucage reported that the AFVAA envisioned an equitable partnership in which the AFVAA would be a place for experimentation, a kind of laboratory for examining Indigenous self-government in different art forms.

Indigenous Representation at the Banff Centre for the Arts

Diamond invited the AFVAA Steering Committee to participate in a meeting to "discuss workshops and residency programs on the national regional level, outreach and coordination," and outlines the Banff Centre's goals of finding approaches to "cross-cultural practice and inclusion" (1993). References to "cross-culturalism" and "inclusion" here point to the Banff Centre's developing institutional discourse for incorporating Indigenous programming into the institution. This discourse emerged from shifts in institutional policy occurring at the Banff Centre at the time in response to the broader historical and political environment supporting recognition of marginalized social groups and Indigenous peoples. In April 1993, shortly after the meeting with the AFVAA, Michael Century, Director of Program Development for Banff Centre, published a report entitled "A Policy Framework for Intercultural Programming." The report was the outcome of an internal assessment of Banff Centre programming, and sets out a rationale for incorporating "interculturalism" into its programs and services (Century 1993, 7). Century's exploration of "interculturalism," and Diamond's invocation of "cross-culturalism" and "inclusion," are more indicative of institutional players' attempts to grapple with concepts for engaging cultural and social difference, rather than a codified institutional framework. However, Century's report does illustrate how Banff, as an educational arts-based institution, made sense of cultural and social difference within its institutional operations and identity.

In a memo dated September 2, 1992, Carol Phillips, then Director of the Banff Centre for the Arts, asked Michael Century to research and develop cultural policy for the Banff Centre, guiding him to avoid using the term "multiculturalism" in his proposal of a framework for their policy. The itemized memo states:

1. Research and development of policy for the CFA [Centre for the Arts] addressing

transcultural programs. (I would not choose the word, [sic] "multicultural [sic] to define

our activities; but there may be a term preferable to the above) (September 2, 1992, 1).

In addition to further illustrating the unwieldiness of terminology surrounding cultural

difference, the aversion to the term "multiculturalism" is examined in Century's final report,

stating that the "traditional 'multicultural paradigm' damages the development of artist by

defining their practices in ways the exclude them from support schemes available to mainstream

artists" (1993, 8-9). Century argues that "multiculturalism" is an inadequate or even failed policy

for dealing with cultural and social difference, "perpetuating systemic racism" by segregating

minority artists from the mainstream (8). Century's critique of multiculturalism has been well-

established in debates about cultural difference in Canadian culture; as Ric Knowles has

described, "with its links to government policy and tendency to ghettoize" (2009, 3). Century's

report instead argues for a policy of "interculturalism" defined as "transformative personal

growth through the expansion of the individual's horizons of cultural significance" (15).

Though this definition is somewhat abstract, Canadian cultural critics and academics have

debated interculturalism as an alternative to multiculturalism: on the negative end of the

spectrum, critics have questioned "whether interculturalism is a form of homogenizing

globalization that' threatens the diversity of cultures and tends to level everything by reducing

the different to the identical,'" while others have seen it as a productive antidote to the cultural

balkanization associated with state-sanctioned multiculturalism, a "dialogic" process in which

"the representation of a cultural 'self' is articulated in response but not necessarily in opposition

to the 'other'" (Nothof 2012, 97).

Century's report is inclined towards the latter interpretation, contrasting interculturalism with multiculturalism by arguing that interculturalism moves beyond multiculturalism's ghettoizing identity categories and social barriers, to a "dialogic identity" through which to develop "mutual cultural understanding" (10-11) that emerges from contemporary global realities. The report states that

> When an Afro-Caribbean director stages *Oedipus Rex* from the standpoint of Yoruban conception of fate, or a Japanese director places *Macbeth* in the historical context of samurai warriors, the works are allowed to speak with new urgency, new complexity, new resonance (10).

These examples draw from international contexts that cast interculturalism in terms of a global cosmopolitanism, which seems to be an institutional priority: Phillips' memo to Century identifies that "detailed attention should be given to the Pacific Rim, aboriginal nations in North America, people of colour in North America, Latin and South American peoples" (1) and the report asserts that interculturalism is the means by which Banff would be able "to re-align itself as an innovative new breed of intercultural global arts centre" (15). In this way, the Banff Centre leverages and then discredits the outmoded federal party line of "multiculturalism" in order to distinguish itself as more culturally savant through an institutional rhetoric of interculturalism.

"Interculturalism" not only advances Banff's institutional identity as a cosmopolitan cultural centre, but also is consistent with its educational mission as a part of the provincial postsecondary school system. By implication, multiculturalism and other schools of thought that are believed to place boundaries around access to cultures, are designated as the opposite, as perpetuating social and cultural ignorance. In order to make this argument, however, the report circumvents debates about cultural appropriation, and by extension, questions about power in

cultural representation. The report states that it dodged the issue of appropriation, a move that "is

deliberate:"

> While certain cultural and political activists have advanced an extremely sharp and
>
> articulate case for the need for institutional guidelines that would restrict or limit one
>
> artists' ability to use materials 'originating' from another culture, there is neither
>
> unanimity within the First Nations of other visible minority groups that this is actually a
>
> necessary or productive strategy (10-11).

This implies that contention around cultural appropriation has more to do with the idiosyncrasies

of specific personalities involved in such debates rather than of historical trends in which the

traditions and experiences of Indigenous peoples have been employed by non-Indigenous artists,

filmmakers, academics and others to cultivate their own expert status and social position. These

critiques are concerned with the colonial logic underpinning assumptions of Western artists'

"access" to Indigenous cultures and history, which the report ultimately covers over. Similarly,

the report finds in interculturalism's accommodation of cultural difference the rationale for the

ongoing relevance of established arbiters of taste and quality, stating that while multiculturalism

has raised questions about how to define art and educational canons (and who gets to do so):

> It is one thing to argue that the cultural expressions from all traditions should be accorded
>
> the respect to be eligible for public support on equal basis to the Euro-American
>
> mainstream; it is quite another to assume in advance that on the sheer basis of historical
>
> oppression or marginalization, any particular expression in fact *has* equal value (9).

Here the report preemptively discredits queries into the legitimacy of existing curatorial

measures of value, while simultaneously and implicitly asserting the value of such measures in a

newly minted "intercultural" art field. It becomes, then, an issue of adding other perspectives to

existing schemas, or providing marginalized perspectives with access to these models. There is

no interrogation here of methods for evaluation and merit, and from which standards they derive.

The report illustrates how queries into the distribution of power can be transmuted into questions

of how to accommodate difference, or "diversity," in order for an institution to stabilize its own

authority in a shifting social and historical landscape.

The attempt to reinforce institutional authority and incorporate difference into the status

quo runs up against Indigenous self-government agendas, though the partnership initially

benefitted both groups. For the AFVAA, a partnership with the Banff Centre would involve not

only allocating resources for Indigenous programs, but also a shift in the administration and

control of those resources to Indigenous organizers. AFVAA organizers saw it functioning

autonomously in its own space with its own governance structure, actualizing self-government

within a cultural institution. At the proposal stage, the AFVAA's agenda and the Banff Centre's

appeared to mesh around the concept of "access" for Indigenous artists and filmmakers. The

AFVAA sought an institutional partner for both a physical space and resources to support the

skills development for Indigenous trainees and artists, which aligned with the Banff Centre goals

of to increase the representation of minorities in its existing training programs to fulfill their

interculturalism mandate. In a sense, the emergent formation of the AFVAA provided an

immediate "solution" to an institutional equity issue. Not only would this partnership build

cultural capital for both groups, the partnership clearly appealed to the Banff Centre's public

image as an innovator in the art world. Carol Phillips touts the partnership project in a memo to

the President and CEO of the Banff Centre, stating that, "it really could create a new model for

institutions like ours to work bilaterally with First Nations" (May 19, 1993). Given that the

partnership is still at the development stage, such enthusiastic rhetoric reads as institutional

strategy, which Beaucage alludes to by commenting that "at that time, we were the flavor of the month...1992, right?" (July 4, 2014). Beaucage refers not only to the 500-year anniversary of Columbus' "discovery" of North America and the celebrations planned to mark the quincentenary, but also the celebrations planned for the 125th anniversary of the Confederation of the Dominion of Canada of 1867 that fell on the same year. In an era of greater consciousness about the history and effects of colonization, the celebratory atmosphere received sharp public criticism from Indigenous and other social groups. These anniversaries resulted in major exhibits that placed Indigenous perspectives and critiques of the nation firmly within the sphere of cultural production.[19] As Beaucage points out, Indigenous people were a "hot commodity" in this moment, representing an historical corrective to the hegemonic narrative of the nation-state, and drawing resources and audiences to the representation of this counter-narrative. In terms of cultural relevance and trends in creative production, the partnership between the AFVAA and Banff Centre was a mutually beneficial relationship.

Ideological Fault Lines

Ideological distinctions between the AFVAA's and the Banff Centre's understandings Indigenous institutional representation are apparent early in the relationship. After the February 1993 meeting between AFVAA and the Banff Centre, Marjorie Beaucage submitted to the Banff Centre a draft proposal for the institutional partnership that details how both of their agendas would fit together, describing that "this creative joint project is a unique opportunity to negotiate

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[19] See for instance Gerald McMaster and Lee-Ann Martin, eds., *Indigena: Contemporary Native Perspectives in Canadian Art* (Vancouver: Craftsman House, 1992), a book that accompanied the INDIGENA exhibit held at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in partnership with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the Society of Canadian Artists of Native Ancestry, and the Canada Council for the Arts. This exhibit invited Indigenous artists to reflect on and critique the 500th anniversary of Columbus' arrival.

self-government in the arts and to provide professional development and creative opportunities

for First Nations artists" (First Nations Film and Video Art Alliance 1993, 1).[20] In his

commentary on the draft, Century identifies that Banff Centre preferred "cultural self-

determination" as a framework, concerned that "self-government" is too narrow to encompass

the motivations for all Indigenous artists:

> Considered broadly, there are many different interests and motivations among the First
> Nations artists. Some would wish to conceive their cultural development in terms of self-
> government, as you do; others we have heard from, involved with fields such as
> performing arts and writing, simply wish to acquire the training, skills, conceptual
> awareness necessary to develop as professional artists with a strong sense of their
> aboriginal identity. However what we think is held in common in both cases is the
> principle of cultural self-determination (March 12, 1993a, 1).

Century's reply is comparable to his and the institution's apprehensions about multiculturalism,

anticipating that it will act as a kind of "silo" for Indigenous artistic development. It conflates

"self-government" as principle and as "content;" that is, he presumes that "self-government"

necessitates a uniformity of cultural production and training. However, Indigenous self-

government during this period was an emergent discourse, particularly in the context of cultural

institutions. In this case, anxieties generated from untested cultural programming may have

attached to multiculturalism as the most immediate institutional discourse circulating around

cultural representation. This period of political and cultural shift within the institution would

invariably create uncertainty for those administering these changes, and as a result anxieties may

be shaped by interpretations limited to available institutional discourses, rather than as a

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[20] Note on citation: In an earlier iteration, the AFVAA was called the First Nations Film and Video Art
Alliance, but had been renamed the AFVAA by the time of their partnership with Banff Centre.

developing concept to explore AFVAA organizers. Instead, the response insists upon the validity

of existing institutional models of artistic development, suggesting that Indigenous participation

at Banff would be integrated into these models. While the AFVAA did adapt existing Banff

programs in its own programs, their work and insistence on autonomy put pressure on

institutional structures of authority that resulted in tensions that would lead to the disintegration

of the partnership in 1996.

Experiments in Self-Government: The Public Service Announcements

Once situated at the Banff Centre, the AFVAA initiated experiments in Indigenous

representation using the Banff Centre's existing program infrastructure. Though its scope

became interdisciplinary, Beaucage relates that the AFVAA maintained an emphasis on film and

video because it was an area to which Indigenous artists did not have widespread access.[21]

Further, Beaucage explains that film and video have unique properties that are relevant to other

art disciplines: "[w]hether you're a writer or a visual artist...you can all be a part of that film and

video process...and music and sound, and all of those things are all in film. It's like the seventh

art...it's all in film and video...and it's story" (Beaucage July 4, 2014). Beaucage here identifies

that not only does film and video possess medium-specific properties that can incorporate other

art forms, but links this medium specificity to Indigenous storytelling or oral narrative traditions.

Other Indigenous artists, including Cynthia Lickers, have identified that film and video are

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[21] The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, which was established in 1991, identified that Indigenous people's access to film and media was a priority, stating that "access to mainstream media is critical to achieving wider understanding of Aboriginal identity and realities" because the mainstream media "often contain misinformation, sweeping generalizations, and galling stereotypes about Natives and Native affairs." The Commission identified that Indigenously-controlled media - which includes film, communications, and journalism – plays a critical role in "the pursuit of Aboriginal self-determination and self-government" (3.6.11-3.6.16); see: (Canada. Royal Commission on Aboriginal 1993).

uniquely suited to oral narratives, sees as being "ideal carriers of stories, conduits for histories, conveyors of dreams" (Lickers qtd in de Rosa 2002, 329). Lickers' statement was included as a part of a report produced for the National Film Board (NFB) that argued for Indigenous access to NFB resources and programs, and therefore functions as both a philosophical statement about the relationship between oral histories and media technologies, and a rhetorical strategy for greater Indigenous representation in the institution. Lickers is, however, participating in an emerging intellectual practice theorizing the relationship between media and Indigenous cultural traditions that the AFVAA worked to explore in both their institutional partnership and media projects.[22]

In their comments on the relationship between media technologies and Indigenous oral traditions, Beaucage, Lickers, and Todd make formalist arguments about the cinematic apparatus, in which the technology can be shaped to the ideological and political concerns of Indigenous peoples. Therefore, the formal properties of media technologies become implicated in the representation of Indigenous cultures, epistemologies, and politics. The relationship between Indigenous cultures and the formal properties of expressive media has long been debated, in on iteration taking shape in terms of "Indigenous aesthetics" (Leuthold 1998), which has had its proponents, such as Hopi artist Victor Masayesva, who describes it in terms that link the social with the aesthetic in his video production:

> This first production was edited directly, using a 1640 Sony camera playing onto a ¾-inch Umatic recorder/player – an improvised process that requires intense concentration and three arms: one to start the camera, one to hit the record button, and the third to signal hallelujah when the edit hit the mark. This third arm has come to be a very important hallmark of my development and aesthetic (2005, 165-166)

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[22] Loretta Todd has written on the relationship between media and Indigenous traditions; see (Todd 2005a) Also, (Todd 2005b).

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Masayesva elaborates that "third arm" constitutes an "Indigenous aesthetic," an instinctive gesture cultivated through the "accumulative experience" of a person's social and cultural milieu (169). The formalist perspectives put forward by Beaucage, Lickers, and Todd resonate with Masayesva's in their linking of the socio-cultural with the formal, which was then tested in the AFVAA's PSA project.

Beaucage explains that the PSA project grew out of one of the AFVAA's first initiatives, which was to create an Indigenous residency program analogous to the Banff Centre's existing residency program, which would operate in the winter months for 5-10 weeks. Their first residency program invited six Indigenous artists for nine weeks to work together to produce a series of six public service announcements exploring the topic of self-government. Following the national scope on which the AFVAA was premised, the PSA participants were drawn from across Canada, and included Joane Cardinal-Schubert, Gary Farmer, Ruby-Marie Dennis, Isabelle Knockwood, Cliff Redcrow, and Angie Campbell, several of whom had not previously worked with media but who underwent production training in preparation for their projects. The PSA project aligned the conceptual and the formal: because "self-government" was a discourse being debated and interpreted in political and social arenas, the PSA project asked participants to debate the concept as a part of the production development process, which, as Cardinal-Schubert discusses, involved in-depth group discussions that often led directors to adapt their productions: "[t]hose people who arrived with scripts and concrete ideas began to adjust them and those who had never thought about...script began to get ideas" (1994, 12). Collaboration was also emphasized, with all participants taking part in each other's productions. Thus, the AFVAA modeled a form of collaborative creativity generating interpretations self-government that shaped the PSAs themselves, giving evidence of Faye Ginsburg's "embedded aesthetics" in practice;

that is, the imbrication of text and social relations in Indigenous production (1994b). In this case, the process by which the project came about is at least as significant as the product itself because through discussion and collaboration, each artist developed their interpretation of "self-government" that then shaped their individual productions.

Angie Campbell, one of the participants, explains the relationship between the collaborative and individual dimensions of the PSAs. Maintaining the individual "vision" of each participants' PSA, Campbell explains, arose in recognition of the specificity of each person's Indigenous heritage and experiences:

> Everybody that came to the training at Banff Centre for the Arts on this project came from different places across Canada, they all had different issues from their lands from where they came from and their whole experience of life living at that place and time period of events that occurred there. It was about how that combination of events and growing up there, the contrast, the ideas, the politics and everything there was to talk about – that's what we talked about. We talked about ourselves and it gave us all a broader image of where we were [as Indigenous people] (May 3, 2016).

The group's exploration of the concept of self-government echoes the premises of Indigenous cultural nationalism, which does not seek to homogenize Indigenous groups, but rather insists that they be understood in their tribal or national specificities. As Campbell describes, "self-government" could not be codified because different groups or communities had different experiences and issues. To return to Dan Russell's argument, "self-government" on its own has no "content," but as a discourse enables debate about and development of it within individual communities. Further, the project's emphasis on creative autonomy was amplified by the artists' freedom with the PSA format. Campbell explains that they did not follow broadcast quality or

standards in the creation of their PSAs; there were "no restrictions" (ibid). The PSAs to different

degrees take an "experimental" approach and as a result are remarkably different stylistically

given the particularity of each producer's "third arm," to invoke Masayesva's metaphor: their

creative, cultural, and political background. The PSAs' experimental approach echoed the

"experimental" nature of the AFVAA's negotiation of a form of "self-government" in their

relationship with Banff administration, and in the broader social and political sphere as

Indigenous groups and organizations tested Indigenous sovereignty in the court system and their

own communities.

The PSAs and Indigenous Futures

The PSAs are oriented towards television, a medium that Beaucage relates was very

much a priority for the AFVAA from the start (Beaucage July 4, 2014). When the AFVAA was

formally incorporated, it identified that one of the corporation's goals as "to promote and

encourage interest in the art of film and television production, particularly in the area of

Aboriginal peoples' story-telling" (Beaucage 1992). The AFVAA also considered Television

Northern Canada (TVNC), Canada's northern Indigenous broadcaster; however production

support for Indigenous programming did not extend below the Hamelin line that, as has been

discussed in Chapter One, divided Canada into "north" and "south" based on latitude, and only

provided infrastructure and funding for Indigenous television in the north, leaving southern

Indigenous producers without comparable resources (ibid). Nonetheless, the PSA project

demonstrates aspirations to television broadcast, and as Beaucage explains, with the goal of

intervening in the federal government's framework for Indigenous self-government, which was

understood as an extension of assimilation. As a part of then Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's

neoconservative agenda, the federal government increasingly decentralized federal institutions and resources, and transferred responsibility for local services and programs to provincial and regional governing bodies in the name of economic efficiency. Mulroney's approach to Indigenous policy sought to dismantle the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND), the federal agency responsible for Indigenous programs and services, and transfer responsibility for these programs to reserves, an approach the conflicted with Indigenous goals of self-government by forcing them to operate as administrators of state programs (Cosentino and Chartrand 2007, 308-9). As Beaucage explains, this model of local governance would effectively convert reserves to municipalities, a community and land tenure model alien to Indigenous approaches to land stewardship. Moreover, it would mean acquiescing to a political and social system imposed by the state, in which Indigenous people would become administrators of their own oppression: "[it was] their idea of a real estate deal…you can buy/sell your land…make your rez into a municipality, collect taxes…and when you can't pay them…we'll take the land …no more treaties. That was Mulroney's plan…didn't work" (Beaucage July 27, 2014). State models for Indigenous governance conflicted with Indigenous concepts of self-government, and these contemporary iterations of colonial politics and assimilation added urgency to the work of the AFVAA that contextualizes the public service announcements.

Michael Warner's concept of counterpublics has been discussed in Chapter One in detail, and is also is useful here for understand the Indigenous public that is constructed and addressed by the PSAs as a television genre. To return to it briefly, publics are produced through the circulation of discourse; that is, through a speech act that "is addressed to indefinite others, that in singling us out it does so not on the basis of our concrete identity but by virtue of our

participation in the discourse alone and therefore in common with strangers" (2002, 77-78).

Counterpublics are similarly produced through the circulation of discourse; however, these acts produce "a scene where a dominated group aspires to re-create itself as a public and in doing so finds itself in conflict not only with the dominant social group but with the norms that constitute the dominant culture as a public" (112). A counterpublic, Warner elaborates, is not simply "subaltern," but maintains awareness of its subordinate status in relation to a dominant public (119). The PSAs, as productions intended for circulation via television, are such speech acts, and construct a specifically Indigenous public that sets this audience against the dominant, colonial public sphere.

PSAs are messages from an authority or expert entity intended to serve the interests of a community. George Dessart identifies that public service announcements, particularly in the United States, came into being during World War II and are currently defined by the FCC as the following:

> [A]ny announcement (including network) for which no charge is made and which promotes programs, activities, or services of federal, state, or local governments (e.g., recruiting, sale of bonds, etc.) or the programs, activities or services of non-profit organizations (e.g., United Way, Red Cross blood donations, etc.) and other announcements regarded as serving community interests, excluding time signals, routine weather announcements and promotional announcements (Dessart n.d.)

PSAs are therefore directly linked to social reality, working to generate awareness of a problem or change public opinion about a social issue. PSAs intend to rally support behind particular campaigns of immediate social imperative. This genre of televisual address lends itself to the AFVAA's creative activity and the urgency of social issues to which they were addressed.

The PSAs, while being stylistically distinct, have thematic parallels in addition to their focus on the concept of "self-government," particularly the emphasis on Indigenous youth and youth culture, which are associated with ideas of Indigenous futures. Half of the PSAs feature young Indigenous actors - *Hip Hop*, *Future Child*, *Indian Life With TV* - and *Hip Hop* and *Future Child* engage with youth oriented themes and genres as a part of their mode of address. Indigenous youth are frequently linked to a horizon of Indigenous resurgence that the concept of a "seventh generation" represents, as Gail Guthrie Valaskakis describes:

> In Indian Country, some Native people speak about the prophecy of the Seventh Fire, predicting a time when we will return to traditional ways, relationships, and responsibilities. Some Elders say that this prophesy decrees that only Native people will be among the "New People," the Seventh Generation, who will return to the cultural teachings of Indian traditions. Other Elders say that non-Natives, too, are among those who will recognize the cultural ways that honour the earth and its people. For both, there is the promise that the Seventh Generation will lead us to the Eighth Fire, which embodies an eternal era of peace and kinship built upon the shared ideology of renewed wisdom and a new relationship among Indians and Others (2005, 257-258).

The projection of an Indigenous future is necessarily linked to the idea of a generation embodied by Indigenous youth, who in the 1980s and 1990s would also be the children of the generation that experienced residential schools, which had a devastating impact on Indigenous families, communities, and cultures. The residential school system, which existed from 1879 until the 1980s, was nominally an educational system set up by the Canadian state and administered by churches to prepare Indigenous children to participate in Canadian society; in reality, the schools were designed to assimilate Indigenous children into colonial settler norms and facilitate

Indigenous cultural termination. Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families and communities, forbidden to speak their languages or observe traditional cultural practices, rules that were often enforced through physical and psychological abuse (Milloy 2011, 14-15).[23] The children of this generation represent Indigenous survival and cultural renewal; at the same time, cultural renewal is accompanied by anxieties around Indigenous cultural continuity, as expressed in the Report by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples:

> Among the tragic consequences of this failed policy [the residential school system] are the scores of Aboriginal youth and young adults with no attachment to Aboriginal ways — they may even distrust them; yet they do not have a foothold in non-Aboriginal society either, or any sort of commitment to its rules (1996, 68).

While the AFVAA and PSA producers do not express this anxiety, their projects register the urgency of the participation of Indigenous youth in ensuring the survival of Indigenous peoples and cultures.

As a part of conveying these messages, Beaucage relates that the PSAs had to contend with and challenge prevailing colonial discourses of Indigenous peoples that consign them to the past, which she identified as "the New Age notion of 'empowerment' current at the time" (Beaucage July 27, 2014). Philip Deloria's analysis of New Ageism locates its roots in the counterculture movements of the 1960s and 1970s, and by the 1980s it had gained visibility and traction in popular culture (1998, 170). New Ageism draws on romanticized versions of Non-Western cultural traditions, and particularly Indigenous North American cultures, fetishizing cultural traditional practices for the purposes of individualized spiritual growth. As Deloria

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[23] This history is explored in greater detail in Chapter Four of this dissertation.

argues, New Ageism is both the appropriation of Indigenous cultures, and the de-politicization of Indigenous social movements that had linked Indigenous peoples across North America:

> When non-Indian New Age followers appropriate and altered a cosmopolitan understanding of Indianness, they laid bare a slow rebalancing away from the collective concerns with social justice that had emerged in the 1960s and towards the renewed focus on individual freedom that has characterized America since the 1980s (173).

New Ageism's romanticization Indigenous cultures reinforced associations between Indigenous peoples and the past, which conflicted with Indigenous peoples' contemporaneous efforts to make clear that Indigenous concerns are ongoing and unsettled. The PSAs' themes of youth and futurity undermine such associations by affirming the contemporaneity of Indigenous peoples and their social and political perspectives and experiences.

As the title indicates, the structuring device of *Hip-Hop* (Crissy Red [credited as Cliff Redcrow] and Ruby-Marie Dennis) is Indigenous hip-hop, a genre that insists upon Indigenous cultural persistence. Literature of Indigenous hip-hop argues that it challenges essentialist discourses of Indigenous cultures linked to "past-ness," instead using theoretical frameworks of hybridity and cosmopolitanism to characterize it as a form self-expression grounded in contemporary social realities of Indigenous identities. In his analysis of Indigenous hip-hop, Craig Proulx employs the concept of "rooted cosmopolitanisms" to describe the simultaneous local and global dimensions of social relations that shape Indigenous identity and examines "how roots and routes are creatively reconfigured in emerging social, oppositional, and self-determinative projects of Aboriginal hip hoppers" (2010, 42). Indigenous "rooted cosmopolitanism," Proulx argues, is "premodern;" that is, it existed prior to contact, as Indigenous groups maintained trading and social relations across broad geographical and cultural

regions while sustaining their own distinct tribal and cultural identities (43). Marianne Ignace

employs a similar spatial, social, and cultural framework of the global/local, examining "how

artists weave the functions and messages of hip-hop music as art of resistance into very localized

messages shaped by their particular histories, meanings, languages and experiences" (2011, 204).

The work of Indigenous hip-hop artists are therefore "intertextual messages…of dialogue

between the artists' own lived experiences of the rez and the city, between Aboriginal culture and

globalized pop culture, marginalization, and race, and with the images of Aboriginality out

there" (204-205). Just as Proulx locates Indigenous cosmopolitanism on a continuum of

Indigenous history, as a part of a longer, pre-colonial practice movement and exchange, Ignace

argues that Indigenous hip hop is a form of "storytelling:" "where stories creatively employ

images of the past, interwoven with commentary on the present and intertextual messages from

other contexts, to engage in moral commentary" (205). Therefore, Indigenous hip-hop is not

surface consumption of popular culture or the dilution of Indigenous cultures, but a

contemporary iteration of Indigenous cultural traditions.

At the same time, hip-hop undeniably has a popular appeal, a dimension of the genre that

Crissy Red states that she drew on as a part of her strategy for her messaging around self-

government. In keeping with the AFVAA's emphasis on realizing an individual's creative vision,

Red drew on her own her own familiarity with hip-hop in order to create an accessible message

that encouraged youth to engage with the concept of self-government. She explains that as a

participant in the PSA project:

> I was young at the time, I was in my early 20s. That was the music that was there, that
>
> was the big thing at the time, hip-hop and graffiti. I was young, I think I was one of the
>
> younger ones there at the time as far as the students. And I think that made sense too: do

what you know as well. Incorporate what you're familiar with, and I think that was the thing. The music was familiar to me (Red October 16, 2016).

In addition to drawing on familiar cultural forms, Red explains that hip-hop's popular appeal linked youth, who she perceived as self-government's greatest stakeholders, to this political project:

It just makes sense that if we're going to talk about stuff like self-government, that we have to bring in the youth. And at the time, I thought this is what would make it interesting for me. If I'm going to do this, it has to be interesting to me, and then it has to incorporate self-government, and logically for me it was having young people involved. And also bringing in hip-hop music because it's attractive to them (ibid).

In order to engage youth with the concept, Red reasons that messaging that is more accessible and popular had a greater chance at being received by a youth audience. However, accessibility of the form is also linked to her personal cultural politics, which value a more form of self-government that participates with Canadian society, and the risks of more radical interpretation of self-government:

If you look at it in the extreme, Native people no longer have anything to do with Canada. We make our own rules, our own laws. We take back huge sections of the land to control. That for me was very scary, because that's when people start getting hurt, when the radical-ness of it comes out. Then the wrong people get involved, the wrong people have voices that are maybe not there to create a wonderful society, but get back with anger at the oppressor. That scared me. I didn't like that whole aspect of it. In my mind, trying to convey my opinions on it with them, was, I want to do something that

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shows we want to work together with the rest of Canada, and come to a certain respect…

(ibid).

Red's comments make visible specificities in understandings of self-government that are not shaped exclusively by a person's Indigenous heritage, but rather by personal perceptions of what constitutes effective political action. Red invokes a radical interpretation of Indigenous self-government in order to voice anxieties about potential conflicts that such radical politics might entail. She instead advocates for a more participatory form of self-government that works with the Canadian state, in a sense identifying a version of self-government "accessible" to the Canadian mainstream, which parallels her use of an accessible cultural form for the PSA. Form is therefore linked to cultural politics, as the larger project design intended, though this is perhaps not the form of "cultural politics" that this project anticipated. Red's individual vision did not seek to represent a tribal- or community-specific issue or priority, but is guided by her personal politics.

In *Hip-Hop*, Red's ambivalence about self-government registers in the PSA's messaging, which appeals to Indigenous youth to engage with self-government, by urging youth to "talk about it," a refrain that occurs at the beginning and end of the PSA. Red explains that

[m]y whole idea was, let's all work together to convey this message in a way that is not threatening, and involves youth, and makes younger people think about this stuff. About their culture, and where you want it to go. Do you want to not be a part of huge government, or do you want to run your own laws? I wasn't coming from the aspect of 'I have this message,' but like, 'this is the subject, what do you think about it? What do you think? Talk about it.' That's the whole thing about my video, 'Talk about it' (ibid).

The PSA is structured around a hip-hop track composed by Russell Wallace, which combines a beat with Indigenous singing. Visual images are edited to the beat, and show Indigenous youth break dancing, hanging out together, and sitting together with an elder. The voice over is comprised of different voices and consists of directives to "learn your language," "know about your heritage," "get your education," "follow your traditions," and "listen to your elder." These statements evoke Indigeneity broadly, containing identifiers that cut across specific Indigenous cultures ("your traditions," "your elder"), and as "instructions" point to the kinds of social and cultural relations that would form the basis for debates and discussions over self-government. Thus, the PSA is less concerned with expressing a vision of self-government based on Red's particular heritage, and more in the social and cultural conditions that would support its development.

Angie Campbell's PSA, *Future Child*, is similarly concerned with Indigenous futures, though unlike Red, Campbell draws on experiences of her community's experiences of unchecked resource extraction for her piece. She links her approach to understandings of the cultural background that each participant brought to the table for their group discussions, explaining:

> Everybody that came to the training at Banff Centre for the Arts on this project came from different places across Canada, they all had different issues from their lands from where they came from and their whole experience of life living at that place and time period of events that occurred there. It was about how that combination of events and growing up there, the contrast, the ideas, the politics and everything there was to talk about – that's what we talked about. We talked about ourselves and it gave us all a broader image of where we were [as Indigenous people] (Campbell May 3, 2016)

Thus, while Crissy Red drew on her personal approach to Indigenous politics to guide her PSA, Campbell drew on her community of origin for her individual creative vision. *Future Child* uses generic markers of science fiction to depict a dystopia for Indigenous peoples without self-government. William Lempert argues that Indigenous speculative fiction and futurism is distinguished by dystopian narratives, stating:

> Unlike Hollywood sci-fi films that project Western desires and anxieties regarding colonization, self- destruction, and Euro-typical utopia–dystopias, Native counterparts explore categorically different subjects, including noncolonial encounters of the third kind, utopian sovereignty, and dystopian assimilation (2014, 165).

The "future" projected by *Future Child* is one of dystopian assimilation, should Western development continue unchecked. Campbell elaborates on this scenario, linking it to exploitative forestry practices in her community:

> …[i]f our people don't take a stand on the oppressors that continue to destroy our homelands and our way of life, which includes our forests and water, that's how it's going to look. It's not science fiction. That's reality. That's how it's starting to look in my home community when they're cutting the trees (May 3, 2016).

Campbell's comments align with those of Mi'kMaq filmmaker Jeff Barnaby, who has stated that "Native America *is*, by any measure, a post apocalyptic culture" (Barnaby qtd in Lempert 2014, 172). These comments make clear that for Indigenous peoples, the apocalypse is not a potential scenario, but has already happened. Campbell's use of science fiction tropes is therefore not so much "speculative" as a heightened representation of a present.

The PSA depicts a young boy (Campbell's son) in a plastic jacket and metallic boots, standing at the edge of a dry and decimated land lit with a burning orange-red light; his face is

dirty and his hair disheveled, indicative of the apocalyptic conditions he has endured. The scene cuts to the landscape again, and the burning orange sun dissolves to a portal, through which are seen images of a green landscape, a healthy body of water, and animals grazing and swimming. A voice-over states, "the destiny of our land is pitiful. If we do not respect and care for our land today, our grandchildren will suffer." The boy then rubs his eye, and walks towards the horizon, as titles come up over the images saying, "[s]elf-government. Talk about it. For the future of the next seven generations." It is unclear what future the child is walking towards, if he is simply walking the dystopian path of the present, or moving towards the vision of a more hopeful future. It is suggested that the portal is the product of the child's vision, and may therefore be the latter, implying that given the right conditions, the child would be the source of the land's redemption, saving it from its fate. Here, an Indigenous "worldview," represented by the child, is positioned as the means by which to save the land, carrying with them the values needed to rescue the land from settler colonial society, the source of its suffering. The stark contrast between the boy's vision and the wasteland heightens the distinction between the status quo and the Indigenous counterpublic that the PSA addresses, while the dystopia of the present amplifies the urgency of its message.

Conclusion

Beaucage has stated that when the AFVAA attempted to find a broadcaster for the PSAs, they were considered too "political" to air (Beaucage July 4, 2014), suggesting tensions and contradictions between ideologies of liberal pluralism and the extent to which pluralism actually confers authority to social groups. The Banff Centre appears to have followed suit: according to Beaucage, conflicts between the AFVAA and Banff Centre persisted throughout their three year

partnership, ultimately leading to its demise in 1996 (ibid). Evidence of such tensions appears early on: in a memo to Carol Phillips, Sara Diamond expresses concern about what she perceives as limitations to the Banff's ability to work with Indigenous artists due to the institutional relationship with the AFVAA:

Containing our work with the aboriginal [sic] community to the alliance does raise some issues for me, because we are speaking of very diverse national groups, politics and cultural practice within the Aboriginal communities as well as our own history at Banff (1994).

Diamond discusses Indigenous artists who had previously collaborated at the Banff Centre, arguing that such partnerships should continue, and sets these presumably successful relationships against the AFVAA, identifying that on one hand the Banff Centre has seen it as necessary to accommodate the AFVAA to acknowledge cultural specificity and rights, "but on the other do not take as [sic] essentialist position or exclude aboriginal [sic] artists from contact with other artists and practices or force them into the mould that one aboriginal cultural group defines" (ibid). Diamond's memo identifies a pressure point between an institutional policy of diversity – which would be represented by Indigenous participation integrated throughout existing programming – and the kind of institutional cultural representation embodied by a separate, self-governing unit within that structure. It also invokes the Banff's critique of multiculturalism to imply that the AFVAA was siloing Indigenous artists within certain parameters of Indigenous expression. Diamond's concerns, however, seem to be exacerbated by not being privy to the AFVAA's decision-making process, saying "[i]t has been clear to you and I, as the relationship with the Alliance emerges, that they have a very hard (but not always clear) position on who is okay to work with and who is not" (ibid). For Diamond, institutional

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operations involve a level of transparency and access that the AFVAA resisted for reasons of political autonomy. Beaucage later described the dissolution of the partnership as stemming from an unwillingness on the part of the Banff Centre to grant power to AFVAA, and Diamond's memo seems to echo her conclusion, as much of her concern comes from discomfort with having limited access to and influence over this program.

At the same time, the PSA project makes visible the parameters of how Indigeneity was conceptualized in terms of identity and cultural politics. Crissy Red's reflections on the meaning of self-government reveal the variability of how the concept was being theorized as a political platform by the PSA participants. Her apprehensions gave shape to moderate messaging that sought to attenuate associations of Indigenous self-government with more radical politics, making an appeal to broad engagement with it as a concept to be further debated and discussed. Angie Campbell drew on her community's experiences of deforestation and resource exploitation for *Future Child*, aligning her creative vision community interests; Red, however, drew on her personal politics to guide her creative practice. Their different ideological and political approaches to the topic of self-government raise important questions about the relationship between the individual and a collective, or in what sense we envision an individual as representative of a cultural group or collective politics.

While the AFVAA's partnership with the Banff Centre formally dissolved, Beaucage explains that the AFVAA did not; rather, its members went to their respective regions to continue their work on Aboriginal self-government locally:

> After I left [the position at Banff] to return to my filmmaking, new staff was hired. And the way of doing business slowly reverted to the "Banff Way." The council wasn't being convened, and because our system of governance was not being respected anymore, the

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AFVAA council made a decision to…pull out of Banff. And we still continued to work

locally in our respective areas, like Saskatchewan, Ontario, B.C.… everyone worked

wherever they were to continue to work against appropriation of our stories, and work

towards telling our own, and having our workshops in different areas with gatherings of

our own on a smaller scale…to try to continue that vision in other ways (Beaucage

2014).

She suggests, then, that the AFVAA's reach and agenda has legacies across a broader cultural

field than a single site analysis can account for; nonetheless, a focus on the AFVAA's

institutional relationships makes it possible to locate historically the formation of a discourse of

Indigenous media that brought together politics and ideology with form, where developing

political debates about the possible forms that Indigenous self-government could take were

transposed into cultural production in similarly experimental terms.

CHAPTER THREE:

Programming Indigeneity: Indigenous Television in the Era of APTN

The Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN), headquartered in Winnipeg, Manitoba, began broadcasting on September 1, 1999. Celebrated as the first national Indigenous broadcaster in the world, APTN is carried in all basic cable packages in Canada.[24] APTN airs both first- and second-window programming that includes feature and documentary films, drama and comedy series, news magazines and current events programs, documentary series, children's series, music and variety, lifestyle programs, and reality television. Since its launch, however, the network has consistently sought original first-run content created in the Canadian independent production sector. APTN publications do not break down the total number and kind of programs it airs; however, in 2014, it reported 46 television productions and almost 330 hours of original television broadcasting in English, French, and 11 Indigenous languages over the previous year (APTN, 2014, 5). Since it first launched, APTN has acquired and broadcast dozens of nonfiction programs and series, with several series commissioned for multi-year productions, many of which are rebroadcast each year. This nonfiction content includes documentary, news magazines, and reality television, and is widely represented across the schedule over the past two decades. The pervasiveness of nonfiction programming has much to say about APTN's broadcast and audience priorities, and how they have shifted over time. Programming that APTN acquires and commissions is positioned at the intersection of network priorities and the Indigenous independent producers that create them, and illustrate the network's influence on the independent Indigenous television industry in Canada. I examine two nonfiction series, *Ravens and Eagles: Haida Art* (2002-2003) and *Indians + Aliens* (2013-present), as representative of two different

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[24] APTN was granted mandatory carriage by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), the federal regulatory agency for broadcasting and telecommunications in Canada.

eras of nonfiction programming: its early years when these programs and series were largely educational and informational; and in the early 2010s when nonfiction began to proliferate across the program schedule in popular reality television formats. This shift aligns with broader cultural trends in television programming in North America as reality television definitively took hold as a popular genre from the early- to mid-2000s; it also intersects with APTN's shifts in audience priorities to appeal to a multigenerational audience, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, and particularly and older youth audience drawn to American-style reality programming. Audience considerations position the network's cultural concerns of "sharing our Peoples' journey, celebrate our cultures, inspiring our children, and honouring the wisdom of our Elders" (ABoriginal Peoples Television Network 2016a) within commercial considerations, and they are innately tied to APTN revenue streams: audiences represent markets for advertisers, and audience numbers are used by federal funding sources to justify allocations to Indigenous television production, on which APTN depends for its content. I examine the cultural politics of each series within this shifting industrial milieu, and how their representations of Indigeneity respond to commercial considerations of the Canadian television industry.

A Brief History of the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network

The history of APTN has been traced in detail by Valerie Alia (1999), Lorna Roth (2005), Michael Evans (2008), Marian Bredin (2012), and Jennifer David (2012), who locate the network's origins in the longer history of northern Indigenous broadcasting and pressures from southern Indigenous producers and professional organizations for access to television. These accounts overlap in their emphasis on the role of the Northern Native Broadcast Access Program (NNBAP), a program of thirteen regional northern Indigenous communication societies that

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since 1984 had, with federal support, produced radio and television content relevant and meaningful to northern Indigenous communities.[25] These groups did not have the means to distribute their own content but instead made distribution arrangements with regional, provincial, and national radio and television broadcasters, arrangements that Bredin explains "notoriously unstable and did not provide optimal scheduling for Aboriginal content" (ibid, 76). The NNBAP societies lobbied the federal government for a dedicated northern channel to distribute their content, and were granted a license for the northern satellite channel, Television Northern Canada (TVNC) in 1992. TVNC operated primarily as a distribution mechanism for existing content by existing federally funded groups, and did not have resources to produce its own content; circumstances that left TVNC, as Bredin describes, as "a 'parallel' Aboriginal system, marginal to the new kind of broadcaster incentives and production funds being developed for the larger Canadian television industry" (ibid).

Developments in northern broadcasting intersected with shifts in legislation and broadcast policy that ultimately supported the creation of APTN. Section 35 of the amended *Canadian Constitution, 1982*, which recognized and affirmed existing Indigenous rights and treaty rights, gave Indigenous-state relations a national scope. Following the repatriation of the Canadian Constitution in 1982, Canadian underwent a period of law and policy reform meant to bring the state into alignment with the prevailing social and political climate in the 1980s. "Multiculturalism," which had been Canadian cultural policy since 1971, was made law under the *Multiculturalism Act, 1988*, and cultural policy through the 1980s developed in terms of "diversity" in which women and minorities were prioritized (Druick 168). Indigenous peoples' unique relationship with the state, was formalized within Canadian broadcasting via the *Broadcast Act, 1991*, Section 3, which states that the Canadian broadcast system should reflect

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[25] The history of the NNBAP has been discussed in more detail in Chapter One of this dissertation.

"the special place of aboriginal peoples within that [Canadian] society," and identified a need for Indigenous programming within Canadian broadcasting (Canada 1991).

Within a social and political climate in which Indigenous peoples and issues had unprecedented visibility, TVNC was able to successfully argue for a national Indigenous broadcaster. This was first proposed by TVNC in 1993, but gained momentum following the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* in 1996, a federal inquiry into the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian state following numerous conflicts between Indigenous communities and regional, provincial, and federal governments, the most visible of which was the 78-day standoff between the Mohawk of Kanehsatake and the Canadian military that became know as the "Oka Crisis" of 1990. The final report argued that the Canadian media, and mainstream visual culture more broadly, are saturated by Indigenous stereotypes that contribute to tensions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups. Citing media coverage of the conflict at Oka, the report states that:

> The events at Oka are remembered for startling media images of rock-throwing residents and scuffling Indians, staring soldiers and crying children. But in all the television, radio and newspaper coverage, one image was repeated again and again: that of the 'warriors' — bandanna-masked, khaki-clad, gun-toting Indians… The image bore a remarkable resemblance to the war-bonneted warrior — the dominant film and media image of Aboriginal men in the last century (Canada, Dussault, and Erasmus 1996, 582).

The report goes on to cite northern broadcasting controlled by Inuit peoples as a model for Indigenous self-representation, which serves dual and interrelated projects: it cultivates greater understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups, where lack of understanding is understood as the basis for Indigenous stereotypes; and does so by more meaningfully

representing Indigenous cultural values and traditions in broadcasting, stating "[t]he potential of

Aboriginal media to reinforce identity and community while providing a bridge to participating

in the larger society is demonstrated in the history of broadcasting in the north" (ibid). This

statement brings together a politics of Indigenous cultural autonomy with the technological and

discursive apparatus of the state, a dominant paradigm guiding Indigenous media engagement

during this era. Assisted by calls from southern Indigenous producers for access to television

broadcasting, TVNC partnered with southern Indigenous producers to submit an application to

the CRTC for a national Indigenous broadcast network, the Aboriginal Peoples Television

Network, which was approved in February 1999 (Bredin 2012, 76).

Canadian Cultural Policy, Indigeneity, and National Broadcasting

In the social and political climate of the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Canadian public

sphere was framed in terms of "multiculturalism" as the Canadian state attempted to manage

minority demands for social and political representation, in which national broadcasting and

communications policy became deeply implicated. In Canada, the induction of multiculturalism

as state policy in 1971 marks a reconfiguration of discourses of "national unity" from integration

and assimilation, to the "ethnic mosaic" attending multiculturalism. Sarah Wayland explains that

this policy was introduced to ameliorate the social unrest from ethnic groups that followed the

1963 Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, which was established to

recommend steps to

> …develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of equal partnership between the two
>
> founding races [sic], taking into account the contribution made by other ethnic groups to

the cultural enrichment of Canada and the measures that should be taken to safeguard that

contribution (RCBB qtd in Wayland 1997, 46).

These groups expressed concerns that their history and contributions to the nation were being

ignored (1997, 47). Along with the widespread protests accompanying the white paper of 1969,

which represented an updated version of Canada's assimilation policies toward Indigenous

peoples, Trudeau's liberal government quickly abandoned biculturalism and instead sought a

"multicultural society within a bilingual framework," attempting to balance Quebec's interests

with ethnic collectives that represented important votes to the Liberal Party (ibid). Critics of

multiculturalism, Wayland notes, have argued that it celebrates cultural and ethnic difference at

the expense of addressing the economic and social needs of minorities: "The ethnic groups which

originally fought for a multiculturalism policy were mainly white, European, and had resided in

Canada for some time. Their needs were principally expressive, namely cultural promotion and

language retention (48)." Will Kymlicka has argued that this forms of multiculturalism

effectively results in social balkanization, maintaining "a wealthy, educated white majority and

impoverished, unskilled racialized minorities" (2010, 21). These criticisms emerge from the

recognition that multiculturalism does not necessarily represent a shift in the status quo. As

national legislation, multiculturalism converts the terms of state management from policies based

on assimilation to "management" via the recognition and maintenance of cultural or ethnic

difference.

Legislation concerning national communications participated in this political shift.

Following the passage of the *Multiculturalism Act, 1988*, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

(CBC), Canada's public broadcaster, had its mandate reaffirmed by the *Broadcasting Act, 1991*,

which stated that it was to "contribute to shared national consciousness and identity…(and)

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reflect the multicultural and multiracial nature of Canada" (Statutes of Canada 1991: art. 3.1.m, qtd in Raboy, 189). Lorna Roth explains that as a part of Canada's cultural development strategy minority and Indigenous broadcasting would help to "inscribe…cultural pluralism as a prime characteristic of the democratic state" (2005, 10). However, Indigenous peoples refused to be subsumed within multiculturalism as another constituency group, and instead argued that they "merit a special status because of their exceptional positioning within Canada's history as a subjugated people in a settler society" (ibid, 13). This position has been echoed in Canadian liberal political philosophy, particularly work by Will Kymlicka, which concerns the minority groups' collective rights. When discussing patterns of "cultural diversity," Kymlicka differentiates between diversity arising from immigrant "ethnic groups," and that arising from "the incorporation of previously self-governing territorially concentrated cultures into a larger state," which he terms "minority nations" (1995). In Canada Indigenous peoples and the Quebecois constitute minority nations and, Kymlicka asserts, possess collective rights apart from those of the state owing to their unique histories preceding the formation of the contemporary state. Given Quebec's colonial origins and its displacements of Indigenous peoples, it is highly problematic to equate the basis of Indigenous peoples' rights to those of the Quebecois; however, Kymlicka's work speaks to the rationale for a special category of "Indigenous rights" that fits and functions within the liberal pluralist state.

Roth's analysis of Indigenous broadcasting echoes this logic, arguing that it participates in the Canadian public sphere, "as integral participants in the developing fabric of a pluralistic community of communities" (11). Indigenous recognition in Canadian federal law and policy implicitly position Indigenous peoples within the Canadian pluralist public sphere. As argued in Chapter One, however, when speaking of the pluralist liberal state, it is more useful to think of

multiple and overlapping public spheres as the context for Indigenous broadcasting (Avison 1996, Meadows 2005). This is relevant to APTN in particular as it constructs and addresses an Indigenous public sphere in terms of "counterpublics" that, as discussed in detail in Chapter One, describes how nondominant groups employ the discursive norms of the dominant group in order to produce themselves in conflict with it, a framework useful for understanding how Indigenous social movements have deployed "nationhood" to mark out a terrain of Indigenous historical and cultural difference as the basis for claims to political and social autonomy. APTN, as a minority yet national broadcaster, retains the cultural politics of an Indigenous counterpublic even as it seeks to resolve them within the discursive and institutional demands of national broadcasting.

APTN emerged from this organizational, economic, and discursive field as a national broadcaster that seeks to reconcile Indigenous cultural nationalism with the multicultural discourse of national broadcasting. Like the CBC, APTN operates in "the public interest" as determined in the CRTC's 1999 decision grating APTN's broadcast license (CRTC 1999), which the regulator justified citing Section 3 of the *Broadcasting Act, 1991* that affirmed Indigenous peoples special place in Canadian society and the importance of Indigenous programming. The CRTC decision therefore uses the law to rationalize policy by defining Indigenous broadcasting as integral to the Canadian public sphere:

> APTN will offer new, diverse programming with a high level of Canadian content that reflects the culture, history and concerns of Aboriginal peoples. Through this programming, APTN will provide social benefits by strengthening the cultural identity of Aboriginal peoples and offering a cultural bridge between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians. The Commission has, therefore, determined that national distribution of APTN is in the public interest ("The Commission's rationale for approval," CRTC 1999).

The metaphorical language of a "cultural bridge" links national identity to the public sphere via communications policy and broadcast technologies. Thus, in terms of policy, APTN is positioned as a mechanism for enjoining Indigenous people to the national public sphere while sustaining Indigenous cultural, historical, and political difference. The discursive context for APTN, then, supports key premises of Indigenous cultural nationalism that assert Indigenous cultural and political continuity. The discourse of "cultural bridge" also invokes the RCAP report's characterization of Indigenous broadcasting, as it implies communication and mutual understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadian society.

APTN in the Field of Canadian National Broadcasting

APTN has emerged in the context of Canadian national television, which must be understood in terms of its internal industrial structure and its relationship to the global television market. Marc Raboy describes the domestic television industry as a hybrid system or semi-private system owing to the mutual imbrication of public broadcasting and private production sectors that definitively took shape in the 1980s (1994, 178). Canada's national broadcaster, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), had not been an exclusively public enterprise since the postwar period, when it began to derive a portion of its funding from advertising, though its relationship to the private sector developed further when it was positioned an "alternative" to private broadcasters, which the CRTC licensed throughout the 1960s and 1970s. In the 1980s, the private sector was nested within Canadian national broadcasting when in-house production was contracted out to private producers, who received subsidies from the newly created Broadcast Program Development Fund that was administered by Telefilm Canada (187). The CBC's new role was to be a "provider" of Canadian programming created by private producers –

in other words, a significant portion of the CBC had now been privatized, with the private sector receiving public funds (ibid), leading to its current semi-private state.

The particularities of the "internal" industrial makeup of Canadian public television, and the programming that it airs, takes shape within the broader global television market. Serra Tinic argues that Canadian productions negotiate between domestic and international markets via a process of "mediation," which:

> …increasingly characterizes Canadian television production in a global, postnetwork era of channel proliferation and multiplatform programming. Herein, Canadian productions are successful "mediators" in the global market to the extent that they reproduce recognizable Hollywood genres but tend to speak to a broader range of social, political, and cultural discourses. This particularly enhances their value to media buyers in countries with similar histories of public broadcasting (2009, 171).

Tinic invokes the external, market-based logic of Canadian television production, and by doing so complicates cultural nationalist analyses of Canadian television that seek out the expression of Canadian "identity" or "sensibility" in its screen content. "Mediation" is less concerned with making claims to a coherent national identity than in the ways in which this content appeals to and navigates the requirements of different international markets.

Tinic's concept of "mediation" is useful for examining how APTN attempts to reconcile Indigenous cultural nationalism with the national and transnational dimensions of Canadian television. Like the CBC, APTN is a hybrid public-private system. While it is regulated by the CRTC, it does not receive federal funding and instead generates revenue through a subscriber fee of $0.31 and advertising sales, which in 2013 came to just under $38.5 million and $2.4 million respectively, of which about two-thirds goes towards costs associated with network

programming (KPMG LLP 2014, 5). It is governed by a 21 member Board of Directors "from all

regions of Canada" ("Board of Directors," 2016b), seeking representation in nation-state terms.

Its programming policies demonstrate how "Indigenous control" is implemented in institutional

policy and practice. APTN relies on content commissioned from private production companies,[26]

and as a part of its eligibility criteria, require that these be "Aboriginal Production Companies" in

which "Aboriginal Persons" or "Aboriginal Businesses" have at least 51% ownership and control

(Aboriginal Peoples Television Network 2016c), attempting to facilitate the growth of the

independent Indigenous television sector through institutional policy. In his ethnography of

APTN's head office and national news division, Sigurjon Baldur Hafsteinsson describes APTN's

journalistic practice as an exercise of "deep democracy," as theorized by Arjun Appadurai

(2002), which "endeavor[s] to introduce or revive deep democratic principles among Aboriginal

peoples and others in a way that that 'suggest roots, anchors, intimacy, proximity, and locality'"

(Hafsteinsson 2008, 5). Through interviews with APTN personnel and analysis of their

journalistic practices, Hafsteinsson argues that APTN exhibits sensitivity to Indigenous

ceremonies, national differences, and "foreground…narrative, feeling and intimacy" (2010, 60),

techniques that are not frequently seen in mainstream media practices, which align with practices

of an Indigenous counterpublic, as evoked by his claim that "APTN suggests an institutional

model for the representation of difference that rejects mainstream news-media practices fraught

with sensationalism and stereotyping" (ibid, 53).

Issues of Scope: Indigenous Cultural Nationalism in Canadian National Broadcasting

APTN has been subject to critique from Indigenous groups and organizations arising

from the complexities generated by its mandate and national scope. During the CRTC's license

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[26] APTN's only in-house production is its current affairs and national news programs.

renewal hearings for APTN in 2005, the Independent Aboriginal Screen Producers Association

(IASPA) submitted an intervention that critiqued APTN for, among other things, what it

perceived to be the limited representation of Indigenous languages on the network, arguing that

> [o]ur languages hang precariously perched on the edge of survival. Without our language
>
> we lose our distinctiveness as first nations and aboriginal people. Some languages are
>
> stronger than others. We need to develop a system where we can address both the
>
> educational and entertainment needs of the Canadian audience while placing emphasis on
>
> the need for a more effective and diverse language programming strategy (Bear May 20,
>
> 2005).

IASPA's emphasis on the importance of languages to Indigenous cultural survival, and the role

of broadcasting in sustaining Indigenous languages, no doubt owes to the 1996 Royal

Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, which throughout its 4,000 pages emphasized the centrality

of languages to Indigenous cultures:

> Language is the principal instrument by which culture is transmitted from one generation
>
> to another, by which members of a culture communicate meaning and make sense of their
>
> shared experience. Because language defines the world and experience in cultural terms,
>
> it literally shapes our way of perceiving – our world view (Canada, Dussault, and
>
> Erasmus 1996, 563).

In the Commission's recommendations, it positions broadcasting as a means to enable cultural

revitalization via language programming, stating:

> By increasing the presence and legitimacy of Aboriginal languages, broadcasting
>
> reinforces the interest and language competence of younger Aboriginal community

members and helps slow the growing linguistic and generation gap between them and older unilingual members (ibid, 588).

The view of the RCAP Commission, echoed in IASPA's intervention, is that Indigenous broadcasting would not only serve a directly educational function, but equivocates between media programming and its reception by Indigenous audiences that Chon Noriega, in his analysis of Chicano public television, characterizes as the "hypodermic needle" model of media reception (2000, 170), a discursive strategy that allows minority interests to argue for the need for minority programming. In this case, the Commission and IASPA argue that resources for Indigenous television and language broadcasting can directly facilitate language competency and intergenerational and community relations.

In his response to IASPA's intervention, Jean LaRose, CEO of APTN, reinforces APTN's role as a means for enabling Indigenous cultural revitalization, but within the material, industrial limitations of a national broadcaster. LaRose identifies that while APTN has a "role to play in revitalizing Aboriginal languages," that role must be weighed in relation to "other aspects of [their] mandate," and that IASPA's recommendations for prioritizing Indigenous language programming would actually "disadvantage" Indigenous peoples who do not speak an Indigenous language, which were about 75% in 2005. Further he states that:

> APTN must ensure that the balance that is struck in providing Aboriginal language programming, on the one hand, and programming in English and/or French on the other, be reflective of APTN's mandate in this regard, but also very mindful of the audience reality and the expectations of that audience that they can also "share in the stories" by understanding them (LaRose May 27, 2005).

LaRose here makes an argument about language programming based in proportional representation in order to foreground APTN as first and foremost a broadcaster subject to the parameters of institutional and broadcast policy and resource limitations to fund program development. LaRose is grappling with the complexities of APTN as a broadcaster established through the politics of Indigenous cultural nationalism that is premised on Indigenous cultural resurgence, yet within the political economy of Canadian broadcasting. He therefore seeks to resolve the issue within this political economy, specifically the field of independent television production, identifying growth in Indigenous language programming that he attributes to "the growing diversity among Aboriginal producers of applications to the Aboriginal language fund administered by the Canadian Television Fund" (ibid). By identifying alternative sources for funding for Indigenous programming, as well as a diversified field of Indigenous broadcasters, LaRose locates the potential for Indigenous language programming in the private sector of the Indigenous production industry, rather than solely within APTN's resources. Thus, IASPA's intervention and APTN's response, among other things, makes visible to political economy of Indigenous television industry and APTN's symbiotic if not harmonious relationship to it.

Approaches to Analysis of Indigenous Television Programming

Since independent Indigenous producers largely create the programming aired on APTN, I examine how these producers respond to and interpret APTN programming priorities and broadcast standards as it shapes the representational strategies of the series. Literature testing analytical approaches to the interpretation of Indigenous television programming in Canada is a developing area of study as already discussed, Hafsteinsson's ethnography of APTN's journalism division links institutional discourses to APTN's journalistic practice, though he does

not undertake content analysis; rather he focuses on "the fluid ideas and practices that are essential in producing the network and its diverse programming" (2008, 48-49). Bredin's political economy of the Indigenous television industry includes two case studies of drama series that link the social position of the production companies (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) to ideological differences in the series, where the series by Indigenous producers links contemporary social issues with the legacy of colonialism, while the other elides colonial history, locating social issues in the realm of the personal (2012). Bredin argues that APTN's programming is not ideologically consistent, typing these differences to identities of the producers themselves. Similarly, Kerstin Knopf identifies ideological contradictions between APTN's mission and some of its content, arguing that non-Indigenously produced children's series and feature films by non-Indigenous filmmakers that the network has licensed because they have Indigenous themes or performers, complicate what Knopf characterizes as APTN's decolonial mission (2010).

While calling for closer attention to the diversity of APTN program in terms of mode, genre and ideology, both of these authors link their ideological issues to the identity of the producers, conclusions that resonate with prevailing hermeneutics that use the producers' identities as a framework for interpreting the politics of screen content. Using Tinic's application of "mediation," I instead examine how different nonfiction series engage discourses of Indigeneity circulating in the field of Indigenous television. APTN, as a national broadcaster with ideological links to public and educational programming, positions itself as a "cultural bridge," a discourse seeking to sustain Indigenous cultural difference while positioning the network and its programming as an interface between Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences.

I examine two series, *Ravens and Eagles: Haida Art* (2002-2003) and *Indians + Aliens* (2013-present), in relation to this discourse and within the industrial dimensions of Canadian television.

In order to contextualize these series in relation to APTN, this chapter first addresses the broadcaster's audience construction, in which educational, informational, and "lifestyle" documentary has been linked to older audiences, generally those who would be at home during the day and not at work or school. Primetime has been reserved for "entertainment" content, mainly variety programming and dramas aimed at general adult audiences. APTN's audience construction makes visible an education/entertainment split onto which different audiences have been grafted. Audience *construction* is key here since, as Marian Bredin argues, research on APTN's actual audience is difficult to obtain; moreover, there isn't a mechanism by which to consistently and reliably measure Indigenous vs. non-Indigenous audiences over time (Bredin 2010). Bredin identifies that some research is proprietary and therefore not readily available, but draws together several quantitative sources to develop a picture of APTN's actual audience in the early 2000s, including the Bureau of Broadcast Measurement (BBM), Neilsen measures, a focus-group study commissioned by APTN in 2002, a Print Measurement Bureau (PMB) study from 2004 of urban Indigenous media use, surveys commissioned by APTN in communities north of the 60th parallel, and an Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) study from 2003 of on-reserve residents' responses to APTN (82). Bredin identifies that the INAC study, for instance, identified that nearly half of on-reserve residents watched APTN some of the time (ibid), and that the PMB study reported that southern, urban APTN audiences were "75 percent white, 7.4 percent Aboriginal people, 5 percent black, and 12.6 percent from 'other ethnic backgrounds,'" and that of these audiences, APTN reaches 46% of southern urban and Indigenous audiences in

the eighteen to twenty-four year-old age bracket, concluding available quantitative data indicates that APTN reaches a broad audience and was drawing young Indigenous viewers (83).

Bredin's research on audience demographics from the early 2000s suggests that APTN would have been aware of the coveted older youth demographic as a key constituent of its audience from the mid-2000s, and therefore an important market to court in its programming decision-making. APTN's audience priorities were further refined over the 2000s to young adult and teenage audiences; at the same time, reality television was gaining traction in North America as popular television genre. While the origins of the genre has been dated to 1992 with MTV's *The Real World*, Leigh H. Edwards points to the remarkable success of *Survivor* (CBS, 2000) as the starting point for the reality television "boom" that definitively took hold by the mid-2000s (2013, 4). Dominated as it is by American television programming, Canadian television would have been a build-in audience for reality television. The point at which reality television gained a foothold in domestic Canadian television industry deserves more detailed attention; however, as is discussed in relation to *Indians + Aliens*, it is possible to identify a trend towards reality television on APTN in the later 2000s. Bringing together APTN's audience priorities with broader cultural trends in television programming, and within the political economy of the Canadian television industry, suggests that this programming strategy was designed to boost primetime audiences overall, which would appeal to APTN advertisers, while also triggering more funding for independent Indigenous television producers, where funding bodies use audience metrics to determine annual allocations for production; in other words, the larger the audiences, the greater the allocation, making more programming available for broadcast on the network.

Ravens and Eagles: Haida Art

While it was not commissioned by APTN, *Ravens and Eagles: Haida Art* (Ravens and

Eagles Productions) was licensed for broadcast on APTN from 2003-2005 (Aboriginal Peoples

Television Network 2005), during a period in which the broadcaster sought more programming

from Indigenous producers in southern Canada. During APTN's early years, it relied in existing

"shelf product" even as it issued annual Requests for Proposals for original content to fill the

weekly schedule (Bredin 2012, 87, David 2012, Chapter 7). Much of this existing content was by

northern Indigenous broadcasters, which was critiqued by IASPA during APTN's 2005 license

renewal hearings and characterized as an issue of APTN's governance, which it perceived as

being in the control of northern producers:

> Between February 22, 1999 and May 12, 2005 at the writing of this letter the APTN has
>
> remained a 10-member organization…These ten members appoint the 21 members
>
> referred to above [referring to the constitution of the Board of Directors]. This is not
>
> national and the control is in the hands of a very tiny percentage of aboriginal producers
>
> (Bear May 20, 2005).

As an association representing primarily southern Indigenous producers, IASPA's letter points to

APTN's governance as a means to bring forward issues of access to resources and

representation; southern Indigenous producers had supported APTN as a national broadcaster in

part to rectify these issues. The license hearings make visible questions of how the network

would achieve "national" scope and representation, which licensing *Ravens and Eagles* would in

part address.[27]

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[27] Jeff Bear is one of the producers of *Ravens and Eagles* (with Marianne Jones), as well as a member of
IASPA and attributed as author of the intervention.

Ravens and Eagles is representative of trends in nonfiction television series that aired on APTN in its early years. Nonfiction content, which tended to air in the afternoon timeslot, was categorized as "documentaries" and "lifestyles/culture" as distinct from primetime programming that was defined as "entertainment" (Aboriginal Peoples Television Network 2003). Nonfiction programs of this era included the cooking series, *Cooking With the Wolfman* (2002-present); the "arts and crafts" series *Creative Native* (2004-2011); and the profile series *Chiefs and Champions* (2005-2007). Some documentaries did air in primetime, and were in the same vein as those from the afternoon, including the business-based documentary series, *Venturing Forth* (1999-2009); the nature series, *Great Canadian Rivers* (2002); and rebroadcasts of *Creative Native.*[28] These series were the minority, however; instead, primetime nonfiction was largely defined by "variety" programming such as *APTN Mainstage* (1999-2005) and *First Music & Arts* (1999-2005). As a result, "variety" programming was tied to an entertainment-oriented primetime category targeting a general audience, while more "educational" forms of nonfiction programming, variously referred to as "lifestyles/culture" and "documentary," was linked older adult audiences associated with the afternoon timeslot.

Ravens and Eagles: Haida Art is pedagogical in intent, described by the series' webpage as: "…a 13 part series on Haida Art and Artisans. This series will introduce you to the world of traditional Haida Art. You will learn the roots of Haida Art and meet the creators of the art form. Each episode will present an artist and their individual craft or art form" (Urban Rez Productions 2003). Produced Marianne Jones (Haida) and Jeff Bear (Maliseet), who together make up Urban Rez Productions, *Ravens and Eagles* consists of two seasons that focus on different forms of

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[28] As one of APTN's first commissioned series, it is reasonable to assume that the broadcaster would promote *Creative Native* by airing it during primetime.

Haida cultural art forms.[29] The series took shape through the synthesis of both producers'

backgrounds and experiences: Marianne Jones is Haida and a traditional dancer (Jones February

5, 2016), and Jeff Bear comes from a background in Indigenous communications and working in

Canadian television, having worked at the CBC for three years in Toronto producing segments

for its current affairs show *CBC Journal*, then at the privately-owned national network, CTV,

where he produced 78 half-hour documentaries for the current affair show, *First Story*, (CMPA,

Canadian Media Producers Association 2016, Interview with Karrmen Crey, Bear July 20,

2015).

Stylistically, *Ravens and Eagles* resembles a current affairs program: Marianne Jones is

host and narrator, and each episode contains talking head interviews with Haida artists intercut

with segments of Jones and the artist visiting sites of cultural significance to the Haida and their

practice. Ideologically, however, the series operates as a cultural corrective to mainstream

perceptions and interpretation of Haida art. When discussing the development of the series, Jones

explained that "museums don't talk about it as a living entity," then stated that "artists have an

interesting perspective on how art came to be" (Jones February 5, 2016). Jones' comments

invoke a particular history of Haida art's relationship with museums as a part of the series'

revisionist project. In Canada, and western Canada in particular, Haida art is among the most

popularly known, to the extent that it is almost iconic of Indigenous Northwest Coast art as a

whole, as are its most well-recognized and internationally celebrated artists: Charles Edenshaw,

Bill Reid, and Robert Davidson (Augaitis and et. al. 2006). Haida art is also synonymous with a

history of salvage ethnography, in which anthropologists, frequently in partnership with

museums, removed Haida cultural work for "preservation" and display in museums, a form of

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[29] Employing the term "art" in application to Indigenous cultural production is extensively debated given the epistemological implications it carries and that Indigenous cultural production exceeds, but given that the producers and series employ this terminology, I do as well throughout analysis of the series.

cultural theft justified by the belief that Indigenous cultures were in decline and would inevitably

vanish, a regrettable but inevitable outcome of westward expansion and colonial settlement.

Jennifer Kramer describes this process as "museum object collecting" (2004, 161) that has

historically alienated these works from their contexts and converted them to "object" status. The

"salvage paradigm" has undergone rigorous critique in British Columbia for both its history and

persistent traction in the art world; Tsimshian-Haida cultural critic Marcia Crosby, for instance,

has taken contemporary Canadian artists to task for perpetuating the "salvage paradigm" by

drawing "inspiration" from canonical Canadian artists who brought the salvage paradigm into

Canadian art history by depicting Indigenous cultures in decline (1991). Historically and

culturally, the removal of Haida art to museums has implied "death" as a part of the colonial

ideology of the "disappearing Indian," and as the art is converted to object status once it enters

the museum.

Jones' description of the series positions it within these debates, intervening on dominant

assumptions about Haida art by insisting upon the work's living status, a perspective emerging

from the cultural context of Haida cultural production. The series positions the work, its history,

and its meaning firmly with Haida artists; not, for instance, with museum curators, collectors, or

academics, as Jones explained:

> I had experiences of going to museums, and he [Robert Davidson] was just so fascinating
>
> with his interpretation of the history of the art form…I just found it fascinating to go into
>
> a museum with him and have him look at different pieces and describe them to me with
>
> that sense of history. He could tell me that, here the ovoid shape comes from pre-1800.
>
> He knew things like that, that it had changed over hundreds of years, and you could see it
>
> in some of the older pieces (Jones February 5, 2016).

The series circumvents academics and museums as interlocutors between art and knowledge, instead identifying that Haida artists represent an underexplored area of expertise. In their interviews, Haida artists speak to the relationships between different art forms to their role in Haida society and culture, theorizing the cultural form through their reflections and their practices. In the first episode, Haida carver Christian White is interviewed in his carver's shed, and displays an array of masks that he explains are intended to be used in traditional ceremonies. The camera pans across the display, when White suddenly mimics a raven's call, stating, "they start talking to you," as he holds up a raven's mask and closes and opens its beak, repeating the call (Bear and Jones 2002). The effect is startling, as the mask suddenly takes on a sense of liveness, which is only partly about mimicry or puppetry; rather, there is a sense that the mask possesses a kind of agency that has affected the artist, pulling the reaction from him. Jones explains this phenomenon, saying:

> My elders and other artists say that, in the Haida way of thinking of things, your regalia, or totem poles, or masks, are actually alive, they become alive through ceremony. So you're not looking at some inanimate object, they're obviously not alive in the same way we are, but there is a belief that they acquire a charisma through use and are brought to life through use. Like a pole, as soon as it's raised, it's considered to be in the traditional sense a living entity, it represents that family and clan." (ibid).

White's spontaneous interaction with the mask communicates this charisma. Throughout the series, artists further discuss Haida art's charisma: carvers speak of the rigor of Haida carving traditions, describing the "tension" of the form lines that invokes in them a tension response while carving them; and the producers also create a sense of "liveness" in the objects by, for

instance, using a lazy Susan to display objects held by museums, literally giving them movement in a context in which they have been treated as static objects.

The personal dimensions of the series for Jones and Bear make an important contribution understanding ways of relating to Haida art, and Indigenous art more broadly. In her analysis of contemporary Indigenous artists' interventions in museum displays, Jennifer Kramer notes that artists used personal items to create an interaction with museum pieces, "teaching a non-native audience what kind of connections can be made with these cultural objects that are not based in the language of money or legal possession" (2004, 176-7). Working against a history of colonial exploitation of Indigenous art, the series can be understood as a form of representation that labors to undo exploitation by developing understandings of the personal relationship between culture and a people via the artist's relationships to their practice and the art's relationship to their creators and society in which they come alive.

APTN and Popular US Television Genres

Rezolution Pictures was one of the first independent production companies to be recognized for borrowing from reality television formats (Bredin 2012, 80), and its institutional profile is positioned it in the vanguard in Indigenous media, both economically and creatively. Rezolution Pictures was co-founded by husband and wife Ernest Webb (Cree) and Catherine Bainbridge in 2001.[30] The company's website outlines a diverse production history that includes dramatic and documentary feature-length films and television series, claiming that "[s]ince 2001, Rezolution Pictures has been at the forefront of Canada's cultural landscape, having attracted

---

[30] Both co-founders were unavailable for interviews, therefore unlike *Ravens and Eagles: Haida Art*, this institutional profile has been created without interviews with producers and instead draws on available published and public materials.

over $25 million to develop and produce award-winning projects…" ("About Us" 2016a). The

company has produced several dramatic and documentary-based series for APTN, including *Rez*

Rides, *Indians and Aliens*, *Working It Out Together*, *Mohawk Girls* (2014), and *Moose TV*

(2011). These series draw on and popular US television formats or recognizable Indigenous

personalities,[31] which are designed for widespread appeal and which capitalize on contemporary

popular figures and genres.[32] Press coverage contributes to Rezolution Pictures' aura of

innovation, characterizing its production as "edgy" (Broadcaster Magazine February 18, 2014),

"eye opening" (Dunlevy 11 April 2011), and includes quotes from the executive producers

stating that they are "breaking new ground" and that their comedy series are "a refreshing

change" (Canadian Press 2006).

Their company profile is consistent with their production strategy and output, which

aligns with APTN's audience priorities and programming trends that cater to older youth

audiences. Marian Bredin notes that as of at least 2005, the network sought programming

targeted at "Aboriginal Youth" that not only included youth-oriented programs, but also content

that was more "broadly appealing and accessible" for "a diverse audience, including urban and

rural, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, and speakers of English, French, and Aboriginal

languages" (2012, 80). In the latter 2010s, however, APTN made a more definitive shift in

audience priorities, stating that "young adults and teenagers have been identified as the primary

demographic and mature adults and younger children are the secondary demographic"

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[31] As previously mentioned, *Rez Rides*, *Indians and Aliens*, and *Mohawk Girls* draw on US television counterparts, while *Working It Out Together* features former Olympian Waneek Horn-Miller (Mohawk) and *Moose TV* stars Adam Beach (Anishnaabe), who gained fame as one of the stars of *Smoke Signals* (Chris Eyre, 1998).

[32] Rezolution Pictures also has also established Minority Media, a studio dedicated to virtual reality game development, which further enhances its "cutting edge" profile.

(Aboriginal Peoples Television Network 2011a), and on the "Milestones" page on its corporate

website, announced that in June 2011, "APTN approves a new business plan developed and

focused on youth as a primary target audience" (Aboriginal Peoples Television Network 2011b),

linking this audience demographic to market considerations. While the network does not provide

an explicit rationale for this shift, there are industrial considerations influencing the network's

direction. APTN does not provide funding for the majority of the programming it airs; rather,

independent producers rely on a both private and public funding to develop their work. The

Canada Media Fund (CMF) is particularly significant: it is a public/private entity created by the

Department of Canadian Heritage and the Canadian Cable Industry, which delivers significant

financial support in the form of allocations referred to as "performance envelopes" – totaling

some $1.4 billion dollars – to Canadian television and digital media content (Canada Media Fund

2016b). The CMF has an Indigenous "performance envelope" called the Aboriginal Program,

which delivers development and production funding for Indigenous television programming,

approximately $10 million dollars in 2012. APTN therefore depends on the CMF to support

programming it airs. However, the annual allocation is not stable, but rather based on a set of

criteria, or "performance factors," that the CMF uses to determine each year's allocation:

audience success – total hours tuned (to CMF funded programs); audience success – Original

First Run (total hours tuned to new CMF funded content); historic performance (the

broadcaster's previous success in securing CMF funding); regional production licenses (an

incentive to develop regional production); and digital media investment (an incentive for

broadcasters to develop digital media content to augment broadcast programming) (CMF 2016).

Audience success factors are the most heavily weighted, and with the historic performance

factor, total approximately 70% of the weight (CMF 2013). Thus, there is an industrial incentive

for broadcasters to support popular programming that would encourage a broad audience, either via new content or through programs that can encourage greater return viewership. APTN suggests that Indigenous youth represent a potentially large and growing audience, stating that "[w]ith the growing population of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada, especially the rising proportion of youth, it is more important than ever that Aboriginal Peoples see themselves and their experiences and aspirations reflected in mainstream media" (LaRose 2013). Cultivating this audience with youth-oriented programming – particularly those based on US popular genres such as reality-based television – would potentially encourage youth audiences (who may develop network loyalty over time), as well as a larger general audience drawn to such formats. Larger audiences are attractive to advertisers, of course; therefore popular formats attracting larger audiences represent a promise of greater revenue for APTN.

Reality-style programs had already begun to appear on APTN's schedule by 2007, the first among them being *Rez Rides* (2007-2009) that its producer, Rezolution Pictures, describes as "[i]n the spirit of *Pimp my Ride*, *American Chopper* and *Monster Garage*, *Rez Rides* is a documentary series about two very different custom car shops" (2016b).[33] While nonfiction series tended to be confined to the afternoon timeslots that APTN dedicated to lifestyle, educational, and cultural programming, by 2013, a substantial number of entertainment-based documentary series are represented across the schedule. "Lifestyle" programs include the long-running kitchen series, *Cooking with the Wolfman* (2002-present) as well as more recent series that include *Chefs Run Wild* (2014); *Native Planet* (2014); *Moosemeat & Marmalade* (2013-

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[33] While explicitly citing reality television precedents for this series, the use of "documentary series" to describe *Rez Rides* is largely rhetorical in response to CRTC policy guidelines for Canadian programming, which historically has defined nonfiction television federally-recognized categories such as 2(b) "Long-form documentary" (Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission 2010). The designation of "reality television" in this chapter is therefore analytical, and is intended to identify generic conventions employed by these shows.

present); *Akiboyz* (2016); *Face the Music* (2016); *Fit First* (2011-present); and *Fish Out of Water* (2007-present). Lifestyle and cultural programming still largely remains associated with older adult audiences in the afternoons; however entertainment-based nonfiction and reality formats are increasingly represented in primetime, including the long-running true crime series *Exhibit A* (2002-present), *Rez Rides*, the front-lines emergency services series *Chaos and Courage* (2012), the paranormal reality series *The Other Side* (2014-present), and *Indians and Aliens* (2013-present). Primetime continues to be associated with a "general adult" audience (Aboriginal Peoples Television Network 2004), but the greater representation of series based on popular US formats speaks to an effort to appeal to youth audiences and a broad Indigenous and non-Indigenous audience as well.[34]

Indians + Aliens: Indigenous Belief Systems Meet Reality TV

Rezolution Pictures describes *Indians + Aliens* as being "about encounters with unidentified flying objects in the Cree territories of northern Quebec. From the unexplained to the all-too-explainable: it is a slice of truly contemporary Native mythology, now taking shape in the Canadian North" (Rezolution Pictures Inc 2016). The series consists of six 30-minute episodes hosted by Ernest Webb, who is himself a member of the Cree community of Chisasibi in northern Quebec. Each episode investigates an Indigenous witness's first-hand account of their experience with unexplained phenomena and explores possible explanations for these sightings from scientific and traditional Cree perspectives. The co-presentation of these perspectives anticipates both Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences, doing ideological

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[34] In the realm of drama series, APTN has since 2014 aired *Mohawk Girls* (Rezolution Pictures), a comedy-drama series modeled after *Sex and the City*, which has been renewed each year since it began airing.

double-duty by providing a platform for Cree perspectives and belief systems, and giving them

weight and credibility associated with scientific explanations, which can, as represented in the

series, supersede scientific perspectives.[35] The contrast between belief systems sustains

Indigenous cultural difference, here represented as a hermeneutic system for unexplained aerial

phenomena. As is the case with *Ravens and Eagles*, knowledge and expertise are deeply tied to

community and those sustaining traditional knowledge therein.

The first episode sets up the narrative structure and presentation of "evidence" that each

subsequent episode generally follows. Webb acts as narrator, describing the history of

unexplained sightings by Indigenous people from the northern region, then introduces the

witness whose account will be investigated in that episode. The witness' sighting is then

recreated, followed by Indigenous and scientific interpretations of the event. The first episode

focuses on a sighting by Matthew Mucash, a former Cree political leader who went through a

period of illness and participated in a traditional ceremony to help treat it. His interview, which

takes place in his home, is intercut with a dramatic recreation of the encounter. He relates that

following the ceremony, he and a friend were walking down a forest trail and were approached

by a set of lights that emerged from the forest. His friend gave the lights an offering (in his

recollection, either of candy or tobacco), and then returned to the lodge to get the elders to

witness and explain the event while Mucash remained with the lights. Mucash recounts that he

prayed to his Creator, saying that he needed healing, and as he stood there, the symptoms of his

illness abated. The elders, upon witnessing the lights, were very moved, and explained that

traditional oral narratives contain accounts of such sightings, but that this was the first time they

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[35] My argument follows Bill Nichols' definition of a documentary as an argument about the historical world (1992, 111), and so approaches analysis of *Indians + Aliens* in terms of the argument it makes about Cree and Western epistemological systems.

had seen them. In the re-creation, the camera assumes Mucash's perspective, observing renderings of the lights floating gently through the dark forest and hovering in front of him. The music for the sequence conveys the benevolence and spiritual reverence of the encounter, which Mucash echoes in his interview, describing the moment as "very emotional," his hand held to his heart. He relates that his friend told the lights that they could go, and they disappeared into the west, which is depicted in a the re-creation as a shot in which the lights gather together and arc away above the tree line.

The story and Mucash's subsequent recovery from his illness are spectacular events, and to convince of their veracity, the episode methodically establishes Mucash's credibility as a witness. In his analysis of a UK-based paranormal reality television, *Most Haunted*, Mikel J. Koven argues that the show, which investigates legend-based paranormal experiences in different regional locales, "recognises the ambivalence of the legend genre itself, which encourages neither belief nor disbelief, as essentialist categories, but a metatextual debate about whether or not such events are *possible*" (2007, 187). As such, *Most Haunted* employs a range of techniques designed to encourage the audience to consider of the possibility of supernatural interpretation, which in part relies on the credibility of the parapsychologists who investigate these events (192-193). Similarly, *Indians + Aliens* sets out to convince the audience of the witnesses' credibility in order to support the possibility of interpreting these events through Cree belief systems. The first 10 minutes of this 22-minute episode are a portrait of Mucash, who is at time of production in his early 60s and a longtime political representative of his community. He is grounded by his professional experience, age, and commitment to the Cree people. In his interviews, he is soft spoken, clear, and humble. His character lends credibility to the experiences he describes, which is then reinforced by an interview with Harry Snowboy that follows

Mucash's account. Snowboy is introduced as a former police officer who is currently a traditional healer and who, as Webb states in voice-over, is "familiar with Cree legends and our view of the universe" (Webb 2013). The development of Snowboy's credibility parallels Mucash's, but also contextualizes and bolsters Mucash's first-hand experience. Snowboy explains that "legends" encode historical experiences, saying that they are "passed on from generation to another, and these stories are very, very old." By way of illustration, he explains that "[t]here are stories that talk about the time when there was no summer. So that would be the Ice Age. And there are stories that are about certain creatures that existed during this time that are now extinct. So you can tell how old these stories are." Having asserted the historicity of Cree oral narratives, Snowboy describes Cree stories that refer to "other worlds than this one that we live in now, and there are other beings that inhabit that world." Between Mucash's experience and Snowboy's expert knowledge, the episode builds the case for the plausibility of otherworld encounters as understood in terms of Cree oral narratives.

At the same time, Snowboy's comparison between Cree oral narratives and scientifically-verified historical events like the Ice Age enact a comparison between Indigenous and Western epistemologies that acts as a motif for series as a whole. The series places oral histories and scientific interpretation side-by-side, often at the expense of scientific perspectives. The sequence with Mucash and Snowboy cuts to Webb's voice over, where he states, "[s]o if our legends talk about other worlds that are inhabited, what's really out there? What if Matthew [Mucash] encountered intelligent beings from another planet? … I want to know what people are saying from the scientific perspective." This transition is also an ideological one, marking a distinction between Cree and scientific forms of knowledge. The sequence then cuts to an interview with Chris Rutowski, introduced as a "science writer," who describes a history of

unexplained aerial phenomena in Canada. Like Mucash, Rutkowski is represented via a talking head interview, though while Mucash is interviewed in his home amongst familiar belongings, Rutkowski is recorded in front of a less-personal green screen onto which is displayed images thematically related to the phenomena he discusses. The intimacy given to Mucash's account contrasts with the more abstracted knowledge that Rutkowski represents, which empathetically weighs the episode towards the Indigenous "perspective." This effect is enhanced by Rutkowski's depiction – his expressive personality as shown in the interview is accompanied by shots of him in his somewhat claustrophobic office, its shelves stuffed with books mixed with stuffed toys of aliens and other alien-related paraphernalia. Mucash and Snowboy's gravitas contrasts with Rutkowski's enthusiasm, their culturally-grounded respect with his academic and pop culture-informed fascination.

Indians + Aliens is not necessarily interested in reconciling Cree and scientific perspectives; in fact, over the series as a whole, Indigenous interpretation tends to win out. The first episode sets up an Indigenous interpretive framework through Mucash, who says that when it comes to spiritual events, "you don't try to figure out how things work." Instead, a person must accept what they see as an encounter with another world, which can be a gift. This is ultimately a faith-based argument, which contrasts with evidence-based scientific perspectives that persistently seek explanations, and in the series, more often than not come up short. In each episode, Webb and a representative of the scientific perspective do experiments to test possible explanations for unexplained phenomena, but these invariably end up raising more questions. This rhetorical structure argues for the inadequacy of scientific explanations, as the cycle of questioning-testing-questioning generates frustration as answers continue to elude the researchers. Such frustration is not found in the Indigenous perspective, which can accommodate

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the unknown because it acknowledges the autonomy of other realms that cannot be "disciplined" by scientific knowledge production.

The deliberate contrast between the Cree and "scientific" perspectives creates an ambivalence in the series' argument: the Western scientific perspective is used to contextualize and give credence to the Indigenous perspective, yet at the same time is subtly and not so subtly slighted, represented as an exercise of navel gazing by somewhat ingenuous scientific professionals. Some of the experiments conducted with the scientists are played for levity: in a scene where Webb and a scientist attempt to use balloons to test if they might be mistaken for UFOs, there is a lightness and touch of absurdity at the scientist's joy at playing with his instruments. Mike Rutkowski's office is dominated by bookshelves stuffed with science texts and science fiction novels interspersed with toys and collector's paraphernalia. The scientists' environments contrast with the gravity of the Indigenous experts. Thus, while arguing for the validity of Indigenous epistemologies, the series relies on the scientific perspective, but simultaneously disavows that reliance in order to give credence to Indigenous cultural knowledge. This ambivalence in part owes to cross-cultural work of Indigenous television on APTN: it represents an "Indigenous perspective" as a condition of the industrial and discursive context for Indigenous television in Canada and APTN in particular, but also speaks and appeals to a broader, non-Indigenous audience. In part, this may be ideological and industrial strategy: where an Indigenous audience might be more likely to be receptive to oral histories as explanation for these phenomena, the inclusion of the scientific perspective appeals to skeptics; that is, those unfamiliar with Indigenous belief systems, likely to be non-Indigenous viewers. In this case, the structure of the series is strategic as much as ideological in order to appeal to the

widest possible demographic, while utilizing popularity of the genre in order to draw youth audiences as a part of APTN's programming priorities.

The series does, however, possess some issues that attend the format more broadly. *Indians + Aliens'* closest US popular counterpart is *Ancient Aliens* (2010), which airs on the H2 Network, an offshoot network of the History Channel. At best, *Ancient Aliens* can be considered pseudo-science, but generally sacrifices scientific merit for entertainment. While *Indians + Aliens* strives to create ideological and critical space to consider the viability of Indigenous interpretive models for unexplained and potentially supernatural phenomena, the producers replicate some potentially problematic dynamics of the US genre, particularly its gender dynamics. H2 and the History Channel are decidedly oriented towards male viewers; an article in AdvertisingAge (adage.com) quotes Paul Cabana, H2 head of programming, who stating that, "History is a male megabrand that has outgrown just one network" (Poggi 2013), and that A&E present of ad sales Mel Berning "not[ed] that H2 reaches a lot of men who aren't necessarily sports viewers" (ibid). The content of *Ancient Aliens* skews towards such audiences in part by predominantly featuring male hosts and "experts," and women appear infrequently. *Indians + Aliens* has a similar gender disparity, featuring one Indigenous woman as an eyewitness in the final episode of the first series. There are numerous factors to take into account that trouble any easy comparison of the gender representation in each program: H2 as a niche network within the realm of US cable television, while APTN is a national network appealing to a broad audience; gender representation in STEM and particularly "popular science;" the cultural specificities of experts within different Indigenous communities; and the role of the producers in selecting individuals to feature in the program. Nonetheless, gender does raise questions about the relationship between audience priorities and the conventions of particular genres.

<u>Conclusion</u>

Approaching Indigenous television programming using institutional analysis makes visible the relationship between the independent Indigenous production sector and APTN, which while not integrated, are mutually implicated in one another, making it possible to trace discursive and industrial trends in Indigenous television production. Each series emerges from different eras of APTN's production priorities, and register these changes in their generic and stylistic conventions. They have in common features of Indigenous cultural nationalism, particularly the personal relationship that the producers have to the specific Indigenous communities and nations that are their focus. This approach aligns with the insistence on acknowledgement of individual Indigenous nations that is a part of the ethics Indigenous social movements. Furthermore, both series are platforms to present these cultures' epistemological systems to a broad audience, further underlining Indigenous cultural specificity and historical continuity while enacting the "cultural bridge," in line with APTN's dominant institutional discourse.

At the same time, these programs cannot be separated from commercial considerations. APTN series are tied to particular audiences, and therefore represent markets for advertisers. Shifts in programming priorities and genres are linked to APTN revenue streams, for independent producers developing programming that APTN relies on for its broadcasting schedule, and for advertisers seeking network audiences. Thus, the terms of "cultural autonomy" are tied up with the industrial structure of Canadian television, using templates from US commercial television to navigate them.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Indigenous Documentaries and Academic Research Institutions: A Comparative Case Study of *Navajo Talking Picture* (1986) and *Cry Rock* (2010)

For a graduate level course on documentary, I took the opportunity to develop a comparative analysis of two documentary films by Indigenous filmmakers that I had observed bear remarkable similarities to one another: *Navajo Talking Picture* (Arlene Bowman 1986) and *Cry Rock* (Banchi Hanuse 2010).[36] Both film are by Indigenous women emerging from university contexts seeking closer contact with their Indigenous heritage, which they explore through their relationships with their grandmothers. These relationships manifest a cultural disconnect: while their grandmothers are fluent in their traditional languages, neither filmmaker is a speaker. The gap in language proficiency is indicative of a break in language facility that has taken place in the interceding generation. Such generational ruptures experienced by Indigenous peoples under colonialism are well-documented: efforts to eradicate traditional social organization through residential and boarding school systems – among other legal, institutional, and physical methods – were designed to destroy Indigenous cultures and assimilate Indigenous peoples into colonial settler society. As a part of this process, boarding and residential schools were created to separate Indigenous children from their families and communities, and to force them to adopt colonial settler values. Indigenous languages in particular were targeted for eradication, and school administrators often used psychological and corporeal punishment to prevent students from speaking their traditional languages.[37] As a result, Indigenous

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[36] An article based substantially on this chapter, titled "Screen Text and Institutional Context: Indigenous Film Production and Academic Research Institutions," will appear a forthcoming issue of *NAIS Journal: Journal of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association*.

[37] For an invaluable overview of the boarding school system in the United States, see (Marr n.d.) John S. Milloy provides a detailed and comprehensive history of the residential school system and its impacts on the Indigenous peoples of Canada in (Milloy 2011).

communities suffered massive cultural and social disruption manifested in generational

differences in Indigenous language abilities. This crux is the central motif for both films, through

which they investigate the applications of the cinematic apparatus for connecting Indigenous

people to their communities and cultural heritage.

Though their themes, historical concerns, and representational motifs share much in

common, comparison of the films reveals fundamental differences in how the filmmakers go

about representing their relationships, which have very different outcomes on-screen. This

project, which became the basis for this chapter, ultimately sought to better understand these

outcomes by examining the methods employed by each filmmaker for engaging and representing

these topics, which revealed that they draw on frameworks for undertaking Indigenous research

that emerged from academic research institutions in distinct historical periods and national

contexts. Bowman produced *Navajo Talking Picture* in the early 1980s through the University of

California, Los Angeles film production program in association with the American Indian

Studies Center (AISC), and *Cry Rock* was deeply informed by Hanuse's experience in the First

Nations Studies Program (FNSP) at the University of British Columbia in the mid-2000s, and her

experience in media-based project development at the National Film Board of Canada (NFB).[38]

For *Navajo Talking Picture*, the reinvention of film-based anthropology that began in the 1960s

intersected with developments in Indigenous studies during the same era to engender a research

environment in which it was understood that Indigenous people are best equipped to undertake

research on Indigenous people and topics, a frame of reference that the film examines and

complicates via Bowman's interactions with her grandmother, Ann Biah. Made twenty years

later, *Cry Rock* engages with debates in Indigenous studies about the relationship between oral

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[38] The First Nations Studies Program has since been renamed the First Nations and Indigenous Studies
Program.

narrative traditions and the media used to record them, questioning the impact that recording

technologies have on oral narratives and their survival. By doing so, the film intervenes in

assumptions that the cinematic apparatus can function as an extension of oral traditions, a

discourse promoted by the NFB, raising the possibility that recording technologies actually

hasten their erosion. *Cry Rock* ultimately explores oral narratives as a mode of understanding

that is intrinsically tied to specific geographical places and relies on a direct relationship between

storyteller and listener, which media technologies cannot replicate.

As a study of Indigenous filmmakers and their film production education, this chapter is

preceded by Sol Worth and John Adair's research with the Diné people,[39] *Through Navajo Eyes:*

An Exploration in Film Communication and Anthropology (1972). This study is often positioned

within an historical trajectory of ethnographic research, and cited as an example of the reflexive

turn that took place in the discipline in the 1960s, which sought to cultivate participatory

research methods between researchers and their "subjects" in order to redress the inherent power

imbalances between those that produce knowledge and those that are the object of it (Ginsburg

1991). Worth, a Professor of Communications, and Adair, an anthropologist, designed the

project as an attempt to determine if a Diné "film language" could be determined if the film

apparatus was put in the hands of Diné participants, who received minimal training or

intervention from the researchers in order to derive an "authentic" Diné visual communicative

structure (1972, 28). Despite its efforts to develop a collaborative approach to film and research

production, the project has been critiqued for its essentialist assumptions that cultural identity

can be directly expressed and interpreted through cultural production (Pack 2000, 274), and for

focusing on the films as "texts" requiring expert interpretation by the researchers while

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[39] "Diné" is the traditional name of the Navajo people, which I use throughout this article except when
directly quoting sources.

neglecting the Diné participants' own interpretation of their experiences or of the films, thereby reinforcing power dynamics their methods were meant to ameliorate while reifying the film text as the source of cultural meaning (Bredin 1993, Ginsburg ibid). Nonetheless, this project has been acknowledged as the start of "Indigenous media" as an area of academic study (Deger 2006, 38), which coincided with one of the first instances of "film education" for Indigenous filmmakers as a part of the academic record, despite the process receiving very little examination.

This chapter focuses on questions of Indigenous filmmakers' "education" by virtue of examining the filmmakers' institutional contexts at the time their work was produced. Both Bowman and Hanuse worked in affiliation with academic research institutions, raising questions about the ways in which these contexts informed their theoretical and representational approaches. Indigenous media practitioners have availed themselves of media training programs for decades, both within and outside of formal educational institutions. In Canada, such programs have existed for decades, beginning with the Indian Film Crew at the National Film Board of Canada in 1968, though programs affiliated with postsecondary institutions are a more recent phenomenon that began in the early 1990s, and include the Banff Centre for the Arts (as discussed in Chapter Two), the Indigenous Independent Digital Filmmaking program at Capilano University (British Columbia), Indigenous Visual Culture at the Ontario College of Art and Design (Ontario), and the Mohawk College broadcasting programs (Ontario) (Bear 2004, 103). In the United States, Beverly Singer dates the beginnings of Indigenous film training education to *Through Navajo Eyes*, and her summary history following the project reflects the diverse landscape of media training programs from which Indigenous filmmakers have emerged, a small handful of which are associated with postsecondary institutions, such as the Institute of

American Indian Art (Santa Fe, New Mexico) and the Center for Media, Culture and History at New York University (2001, 33-44). Programs focused on Indigenous production education are fruitful areas for future research, and hopefully this chapter contributes to scholarship in this direction. Institutional analysis of *Navajo Talking Picture* and *Cry Rock*, however, requires a somewhat broader institutional framework, as these films did not emerge from Indigenous-focused media training programs but rather through academic research institutions in association with Indigenous studies; nonetheless, institutional analysis of these documentaries benefit from scholarship on media production education that offer analytical frameworks through which to understand their complex institutionality.

Practice-Based Film Education

By attending to debates in Indigenous studies and their effects on film produced in relation to academic research institutions, this article engages somewhat elliptically but productively with scholarship from film schools studies or "practice-based film education," which seeks to understand "how filmmakers become filmmakers" (Hjort 2013, 1). Scholarship in his area has historically tended to consider a filmmaker's education in terms of two institutional models as described by Duncan Petrie (2014): the "national conservatoire" that emerged in continental Europe in the early 20th century to benefit national film industries and cinema cultures, which received state support; and university film schools, which expanded in the United States during the postwar period to examine the theory and practice of film linked to a "larger educational establishment and therefore constrained and guided by the academic policies and practices of that institution" (Petrie 2010, 34). Petrie explains that both models seek a theoretically-informed production practice that has "sought to combine hands-on filmmaking and

an intellectual framework that embraces the theory, criticism, and history of cinema, providing students with a context for locating and understanding their own creative practice" (ibid). To this I would add that such intellectual frameworks must also consider the theory, criticism, and history of disciplinary areas *outside* of film areas, but which nonetheless inform production. Students, faculty, and administrators bring their experiences from different social and educational arenas into film practice, including other areas and disciplines of universities, contributing to the development and evolution of film education, circumstances that Mette Hjort outlines in her introduction to *The Education of the Filmmaker in Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas* (2013), where she states that

> [t]here can be no one-to-one correspondence between the profile of a given film school on the one hand, and the priorities and values of its graduates on the other. After all, film schools are subject to the full range of complexities that characterize institutional life… If being a filmmaker is the outcome of a process of becoming, factors shaping that process are not merely to be sought in the institutional landscape of film schools and practice-based training programs (4).

The complicated "ecology" (11) of practice-based film education that Hjort describes is important for contextualizing Bowman and Hanuse's films, which engage with intellectual frameworks from other areas of postsecondary institutions and other institutions of media production. Their institutional "unwieldiness" is generative, however, as it makes visible the ways in which intellectual frameworks and practices from academic research institutions intersect with and put pressure on the discourses and practices from other institutions of media culture.

Indigenous Studies: From Methods to Theory

    While the case studies of *Navajo Talking Picture* and *Cry Rock* examine in detail the

prevailing theoretical and methodological approaches of Indigenous studies in their respective

historical and institutional locations, this brief overview of the field contextualizes each film's

focus on the question of research methods that structure each film. Indigenous studies[40] is an

interdisciplinary field of study that Elizabeth Cook-Lynn dates to the late 1960s and early 1970s

and the interdisciplinary efforts of Indigenous academics, professional personnel, artists, and

traditional historians of the era to create an academic discipline in which "a body of intellectual

information such as the Natives of this land possess about the world be internally organized,

normatively regulated, and consensually communicated" (1997, 10). This body of knowledge is

held in oral traditional narratives that are bound to the geographies of Indigenous groups from

which they emerge. Cautioning that Indigenous studies cannot be conflated other areas of ethnic

studies, Cook-Lynn identifies that the discipline:

> …would differentiate itself from other disciplines in two important ways: it would emerge
>
> from within Native people's enclaves and geographies, languages and experiences, and it
>
> would refute the exogenous seeking of truth through isolation (i.e., the "ivory tower") that
>
> has been the general principle of the disciplines most recently in charge of indigenous study,
>
> that is, history, anthropology, and related disciplines all captivated by the scientific method
>
> of objectivity (ibid).

Thus, in its origins, the discipline gave rise to at least two premises: it positions Indigenous

peoples as the source of expert knowledge, and therefore best equipped to produce research

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[40] As it is used here, "Indigenous studies" is intended to be inclusive of Native American studies, First
Nations studies, and Aboriginal studies, and to reflect the recognition of the global and transnational
dimensions of Indigenous experiences of colonization and shared intellectual and political strategies for
engaging its legacies and ongoing manifestations.

concerning Indigenous peoples, and undertakes research that works with and benefits Indigenous communities.[41]

Thus, questions of research methods and ethnics are of particular concern in Indigenous studies. A history of scholarship by non-Indigenous researchers has imposed Western interpretive lenses on Indigenous peoples and concerns that have been inadequate for fully representing these experiences. Indigenous researchers, it was understood, would focus instead on Indigenous experiences as the basis for developing theory and knowledge, as Cook-Lynn argues and has been extensively theorized by Linda Tuhiwai Smith's landmark text, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (Smith 1999). The emphasis on "Indigenous experiences" has historically been concerned with areas of knowledge linked to particular Indigenous groups, which in Indigenous literatures has been theorized as Indigenous "literary nationalism" (Womack 1999, Warrior 1995), a theory in which the themes and concerns in Indigenous literary production are seen as reflecting tribal culture. Indigenous experiences that have complex relationships with notions of Indigenous communalism and interpretations of "tradition" have received close attention from Indigenous feminisms, an area of study scrutinizing the social, cultural, and intellectual legacies of colonialism and interrogating the imposition of patriarchal systems on Indigenous societies that disproportionately impact Indigenous women, obscuring their historical and social roles, and intellectual contributions. This work examines Indigenous women's histories and cultural production, adding much needed complexity and nuance to understandings of "community" and "tradition" (LaDuke 2005, Suzack 2010, Goeman 2013).

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[41] While these emphases center Indigenous knowledge and experiences, Indigenous studies is, and has always been, an interdisciplinary field with a wide range of Indigenous and non-Indigenous specialists.

While this overview is wholly inadequate as a history of Indigenous studies, it is meant to highlight research methodologies as a priority for Indigenous studies and researchers, and a major ethical orientation for the field. This imperative shapes both *Navajo Talking Picture* and *Cry Rock*, both of which test different methods for undertaking research with Indigenous peoples and make major contributions to understandings of the applications and limitations of these methods. In order to understand their approaches, close attention is required to their specific institutional relationships and socio-historical contexts, and the remainder of this chapter is dedicated to detailed analysis of these dimensions of production in order to elicit their interventions.

Navajo Talking Picture (1986)

Navajo Talking Picture is perhaps best known in Indigenous cinema history for its controversial depiction of its filmmaker's interactions with her grandmother, Ann Biah. The documentary was Bowman's thesis film for her MFA degree in film production at UCLA. Bowman, a Diné (Navajo) woman, was raised away from her family's Diné community, and set out to create a ethnographic film of the daily life of her grandmother, who speaks only the Diné language and largely eschews a Western lifestyle and conveniences.[42] In the film's voice over, Bowman explains that she intended to create a portrait of her grandmother and her lifestyle, but that after several days of filming, her grandmother stopped cooperating with the film crew and asked them to leave. Bowman, unable to speak the Diné language, did not understand her grandmother's objections, and returned to the reservation several times to continue filming. The

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[42] In *Navajo Talking Picture*, Bowman refers to herself as Diné, the traditional name of the Navajo people, though she often uses "Navajo" interchangeably. To remain consistent, I use "Diné" except when quoting from the film or sources.

film is reflexive about her efforts and frustrations: she narrates her confusion with her grandmother's behavior, and attributes her hostility to being misperceived as a "big shot" from Los Angeles who is bent on exploiting her.

For Bowman, the film's central conflict emerged from cultural differences between herself and her traditional grandmother. The film portrays Bowman as very much urban and cosmopolitan: she lives in Los Angeles, wears youthful and stylish clothing, and attends UCLA. Her grandmother, meanwhile, is shown living in a small hogan without plumbing or electricity, weaving wool rugs, and periodically traveling to the local store for provisions. Their cultural divide is compounded by their inability to speak the same language, which, Bowman explains in the film, exacerbated tensions between them. Ultimately, Bowman incites a confrontation with her grandmother in the climactic moment of the film where she ambushes her in her home, accompanied by the film crew and translator. Through the translator, Bowman tries to explain her intentions to her grandmother and find out why she is so resistant, while Biah tries to evade them, telling them to leave. The scene is extremely charged and, as Randolph Lewis has detailed, the focus for much debate and criticism.

In *Navajo Talking Picture: Cinema on Native Ground* (2012), Lewis identifies that critiques of the film largely focus on the filmmaker's "ethical lapses" (79) owing to her persistence in filming her grandmother despite her clearly stated refusal to participate. Such critiques, he argues, overlook how Bowman's techniques are typical of prevailing filmmaking practices, and cover over its interventions in critical paradigms attending Indigenous identity and cultural production. Lewis discusses, for instance, the film's relationship to family portrait films in which intergenerational conflict is a central feature that is often thematized by tensions between the filmmaker and their family members' reluctance to engage with the camera (114-

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115). By showing that such techniques are characteristic of the genre, Lewis seeks to reveal the

film's complex textuality, "bracketing" criticism in order to make visible the film's contributions

to understandings of Indigenous identity, art, and ethics. He argues *Navajo Talking Picture*

intervenes in major critical paradigms in Indigenous studies that he critiques for making

essentialist claims about Indigenous identity and art, "tribalcentric criticism" and "Indigenous

aesthetics." Both paradigms, Lewis argues, are premised on "authenticity" as a means to

recognize and legitimize Indigenous artists and their work. In his view, tribalcentric criticism,

which emerged from Indigenous literary nationalism, is "a sort of aesthetic nationalism in which

tribal citizens, or at least those fluent with the culture's history and language, are ideally

positioned to appreciate a work of art that originates among its ranks" (133) and risks "granting

critical authority solely by virtue of biography" (136). Indigenous aesthetics, he states, is an

concept that has been enigmatically described as an underlying "logic" to Indigenous cultural

production, or as a set of characteristics appearing in this work, including intergenerational

continuity, respect for elders, a sense of community, a schema that does not accommodate work

by Indigenous artists that does not possess such features (140). Looking at Bowman and *Navajo*

Talking Picture through these critical lenses makes visible their limitations, as they cannot

accommodate her "liminality" as an Indigenous person, nor account for the film's problematic

representation of Bowman's grandmother. Doing so, Lewis argues, allows him to produce an

"anti-essentialist" reading of the film that defines its major contribution to understandings of

Indigenous identity and art:

> [I]ndigenous filmmakers face the same hazards as any other documentarians working in
>
> the field, and that to assign them special representational powers (or a unique aesthetic) is
>
> as misguided as the limiting notions that portray them as spiritual, wise, or close to

nature. Unless they choose otherwise, Native filmmakers have no special purchase on

accountability to their subjects but instead operate like artists anywhere, able to persist

long into the night with ill-advised plans for wrong-headed projects just like anyone else

(142).

Lewis' intent is to make visible Bowman's complicated identity as a Diné person, and thereby

recover her from criticism emerging from essentialist assumptions about what an Indigenous

filmmaker is "supposed to be." Doing so makes it possible to appreciate the human dimensions

of her flawed endeavor, and the way the film raises important questions about the applications

and limitations of critical paradigms in Indigenous studies. At the same time, it's not clear that

all criticism of the film's ethical issues comes from the same essentialist assumptions about

Indigenous identity. Lewis brings together non-Indigenous students' responses to in-class

screenings with those of Indigenous scholar Beverly Singer (2001), though there are differences

between the perceptions of students who have a limited grasp of Indigenous issues, and those of

an Indigenous academic firmly grounded in the field. Singer's analysis is attentive to Ann Biah's

perspective in order to identify the cultural and historical underpinnings to her responses, arguing

that Biah's inability to fend off the camera "is reminiscent also of history when Native people

were unable to defend themselves against white encroachment. Bowman's grandmother appears

to be in her seventies; in her youth she would have heard stories about the campaign against the

Navajo and of the 'Navajo Long Walk' (77).[43] By linking Biah's responses to the Diné history of

forced relocation, Singer exposes layers of unvoiced traumas that Bowman's interactions with

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[43] The "Navajo Long Walk" refers to the period of the 1860s when the Diné people were removed from their traditional territories by the US government and made to march to eastern New Mexico where they were forcibly resettled. Thousands died during and as a consequence of the march and resettlement, a collective trauma that Thomas J. Csordas has argued "is critical to contemporary Navajos' sense of identity as a people" (4), see (Csordas 1999).

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her grandmother invoke. I understand her critique as a pedagogical one, and as a part of the drive of Indigenous academics and researchers to bring scholarly attention to Indigenous histories and issues. Lewis raises valuable questions about studies of audience demographics and reception for Indigenous media that deserve more attention, however, this is not his project here. Rather, he is interested in unpacking the way the film complicates essentialist discourses that attend studies of Indigenous media, and reception of the film as one possible source of such discourses.

Lewis centers an Indigenous film "outlier" to demonstrate the pressure that the film and Bowman herself place on critical frameworks in Indigenous studies, providing a compelling analytical model that I build upon by bringing institutional analysis into the interpretive fold. As a film emerging from an academic research institution, it speaks to beliefs and practices for undertaking Indigenous research contemporaneous with its production circulating in Indigenous studies, anthropology, and ethnographic film at UCLA. Lewis touches on ethnography in his analysis of *Navajo Talking Picture*, acknowledging film's original intent to be an "ethnographic film," but more so as a means of attenuating criticism of the film's ethics by arguing that such critiques are anachronistic when considering the film in light of documentary trends of the era (i.e. family portrait films). Thus, Lewis' analysis shifts away from ethnography and attendant questions of ethics in order to contextualize the film and examine its textual plurality. Institutional analysis, however, re-centers questions of ethics by examining the film's contributions to understandings about research and knowledge production of Indigenous peoples. Examining the intersections of ethnography and documentary film at UCLA, in compliment with Bowman's training in still photography, contribute to understandings of the film's representational strategies for depicting cross-cultural conflict between Indigenous people.

Challenging Colonial Legacies: Anthropology and Indigenous Portraiture

Bowman describes the rationale for the film in annual progress reports submitted to the UCLA American Indian Studies Center, a research unit that provided funding to assist her project from 1982 to 1986, and in interviews conducted in 2015 reflecting on these reports and her experience making the film. The reports detail Bowman's progress, difficulties encountered in the filming process, and her reasons for employing particular approaches to address them. Though these challenges are documented within the film itself, the reports are revealing of the ethnographic and documentary discourses through which the project was designed and to which it was responsive. In interviews, Bowman also describes the influence of still photography on the film, demonstrating the confluence of photography-based and ethnographic practice.

The first annual report from 1982/3 indicates that the project was intended to be a portrait of her grandmother, Ann Biah, but explains that her grandmother's lack of cooperation and interaction motivated her decision to include herself in the film because "[i]n an ethnographic, direct cinematic film, if the film depiction of a person's daily life does not interact with other people a lot, the film looks less interesting" (1983, 68). Moreover, the choice to include herself in the film was a reflexive move intended to "make the connection between both our worlds," indicating that the film shifted from an "ethnographic, direct cinematic film" (ibid) to, as Bowman describes in an interview, a "personal documentary" (July 7, 2015). For Bowman, the "personal documentary" dispenses with objectivity, and is instead defined by her point of view (ibid), which was enacted by reflexively inserting herself into the film in order to focus on issues affecting the progress of the film, which were thematized as issues of cross-cultural dynamics. Bowman links this approach with the genre of self-portraiture in relation to her training in still photography:

I remember being introduced to it a little bit by a teacher in high school, about still

photography's history...I know still photographers take self-portraits . . .That's probably why

it influenced me . . . (ibid).

While Bowman describes a personal dimension to her entry into the film as a form of "self-portraiture," this approach intersects with a long colonial history of the Diné people in photography and film that contributed to tensions during production. Throughout the film, Bowman is aligned with Western colonial practices, particularly the history of exploitation in Western visual culture. In her 1983 report, Bowman states that family and community members told her grandmother that she should not be filmed and that Bowman was "exploiting her," suggesting that Bowman was aware that Diné community members interpreted her project along a continuum of colonial practices. Lewis includes a comprehensive summary of the history of colonial fascination with images of "the Navajo" in portraiture, Hollywood cinema, and anthropology, which has generated a substantial body of scholarship examining Diné relationships to visual culture, as both "objects" of its gaze and as agents in its production and reception, specifically *Through Navajo Eyes*. James C. Faris (1996) examines the extent to which the Diné have been the object of photography, first as a part of nineteenth and twentieth century ethnographic investigations of the colonial "Other," and increasingly in the twentieth century as tourist curiosities when photographic technologies became available to a mobile American population -- so much so that "[t]he impression is that few people crossed northwestern New Mexico and northern Arizona without pointing a camera at Navajo" (150). While recognizing Faris' important analysis of the visual regimes through which Indigenous people have been subject to the colonial gaze, subsequent scholarship has been more closely attentive to Diné

agency throughout this history and in their relationships to film and photography.[44] Lewis (2012) and Limbrick (2010) examine Hollywood productions that were filmed in Diné territory that employed Diné actors and extras, and the negotiations between the Navajo Nation and these productions in which they defined the terms of their participation. This literature overwhelming indicates that the Diné people possess a sophisticated understanding of the ideological and economic interests of photography and filmmaking, and that this knowledge motivates their wariness to Bowman's project. Thus, while *Navajo Talking Picture* uses "self-portraiture" to intervene in colonial representational practices, this approach did not resolve them, instead bringing to light complexities and striations internal to the Diné people resulting from colonial history.

Minority Media Histories and Indigenous Studies at UCLA

As a photographer by training, Bowman brought a background in visual arts to bear on a film that was aligned with traditions of ethnographic filmmaking and direct cinema, which speaks to the history of minority-directed film production at the University of California, Los Angeles that largely took shape through the Ethno-communications Program founded in the late 1960s. As David E. James details in *The Most Typical Avant-Garde: History and Geography of Minor Cinemas in Los Angeles* (2005), the Ethno-communications Program emerged in the context of the civil rights movement in the 1960s, and particularly the Watts Rebellion in Los Angeles in

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[44] Terence Turner (2010) and Joanna Hearne have critiqued Faris for his claims that the film and photographic apparatuses are inherently colonial because they construct their subjects always as "the Other." They argue that this position denies the agency of Indigenous filmmakers, and overlooks the specific social relations that Indigenous viewers may have with the images, relations that Taskigi/Diné artist and Hulleah J. Tsinhnahjinnie theorizes in terms of "photographic sovereignty," which describes Indigenous reinterpretation of Indigenous images. Sam Pack's ethnographic work of Diné audiences' responses to film and television representations of Diné people can also be understood in terms of Indigenous reception studies. See (1992) (2012) (Pack 2007) (Tsinhnahjinnie 1998).

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1965. In response to these social pressures, UCLA founded ethnic studies centers and programs, and began recruiting students from minority groups, specifically African American, Asian American, Chicano, and Native American students. The ethnic studies centers were designed to support minority groups' greater control of and representation in research. For the American Indian Studies Center at UCLA (AISC), this has meant working towards self-determination for Indigenous people by "soliciting Indian priorities for research, training Indian researchers...and disseminating accurate information about American Indian peoples" (UCLA American Indian Studies Center 1980, 3). This statement voices the founding principles of Indigenous studies as it took shape in North America, as has been discussed in the section above on Indigenous studies research priorities and methods. Bowman's project, funded by AISC, fits this mission. The film is framed as a research project in the AISC reports, with Bowman as principal investigator, and addresses AISC's goals of preparing Indigenous researchers to produce knowledge about Indigenous peoples. However, *Navajo Talking Picture* complicates these premises as they are applied in the historical world via documentary film.

Along with the founding of the ethnic studies centers, thirteen students and faculty at UCLA formed the Media Urban Crisis Committee in 1968 (also known as the "Mother Muccers") to advocate for access to film training and resources, resulting in a pilot film program that enrolled the Mother Muccers as its first students. The Program was modeled on UCLA's already-established film production program, though it operated independently and had its own instructors and curriculum. The Ethno-communications Program provided training and resources for minority students to represent their own interests and concerns and develop their own cinemas, a response to the exclusion of minorities from mainstream film industries, and to Hollywood cinema's frequently racist representations of minorities on screen (Hawkins 1970).

The Ethno-communications Program paved the way for filmmakers like Bowman, whose own film can be seen as emerging from this history and ethic.

Navajo Talking Picture's original ethnographic design likely emerged from the influence of ethnography and anthropology in film production at UCLA during this period, which overlapped in certain regards with the political and ideological commitments of Ethno-Communications. Colin Young, a visual anthropologist and ethnographic filmmaker at UCLA, was the first chair of the Media Urban Crisis Committee, and his colleague and fellow anthropologist, Richard Hawkins, was the chair of the Theater Arts Department (now the School for Theater, Film, and Television), as well as Bowman's supervisor for her film (ibid). Young and Hawkins participated in the "reinvention" of anthropology in the 1960s and 1970s that resulted in more self-conscious processes that involved subjects in the production and interpretation of research.[45] Young and others recognized the influence of the ethnographer/filmmaker and camera on the behavior of their subjects, and argued that the film's subjects decided how to interact with the filmmaker in any scenario. The subjects therefore determined the film's project, and rather than projecting understandings of their subjects, the task of the ethnographer/filmmaker was to facilitate and make visible the negotiations between subject and filmmaker as a part of the filmmaking process. Bowman's original project design speaks to this ethnographic tradition, an attempt at more equitable, subject-directed interaction.

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[45] Faye Ginsburg provides a concise summary of this epistemological shift in light of political movements of colonized peoples beginning in the 1960s onward, and Indigenous people's increased participation in self-authored media in (Ginsburg 1995).

Forcing Interaction: The Crisis Structure

As Bowman relates in her report from 1982/1983, however, her grandmother stopped interacting with her and the crew after several days of filming and ordered them to leave. Bowman's solution was to add "interaction" and "interest" by inserting herself into the film. She states that this would create the "drama and conflict needed for the film," and that through this forced interaction, "a sense of my grandmother's personality could be depicted" (1983, 68). She suggests that the conflict could produce a more dimensional representation of her grandmother, a technique owing to methods of direct cinema. In "Direct Cinema and the Crisis Structure," Stephen Mamber describes the function of the crisis structure in direct cinema of the 1960s as a way of revealing subjects' personalities, since a person's reaction to a crisis would reveal something of their character that would not be seen otherwise, resulting in a more multifaceted representation (Mamber 1972). Bowman echoes this logic were she states that "[e]ither she could have spoken to me or not spoken to me. She *reacts* in either case [emphasis mine]" (1983, 68). Creating a crisis structure was, in a sense, a functional solution to the scenario Bowman was facing to move forward the production.

A crisis structure also made it possible to thematize "cultural conflict" within the film, which Bowman identifies as the basis for her fraught interactions with her grandmother. Bowman explains in the 1982/83 report that "[t]he appearance of myself in the film, [*sic*] literally opened interaction and made the connection between both of our worlds . . . [s]he is coerced to speak to me. This is a central conflict and meeting of two cultures" (ibid). In interviews, Bowman describes experiencing a history of culture clashes, explaining it in terms of having been brought up in Phoenix, Arizona and then undertaking her training in photography in San Francisco, and contrasts these experiences with working on the Navajo reservation several

years before undertaking her work at UCLA, which she describes as "isolating" owing to her struggles to live and work in a "small town" after living in urban spaces (September 9, 2015). She elaborates that this sense of a "culture clash" carried into the film, stating, "maybe I didn't know enough about . . . Dine people who live on the reservation . . . I'm so frank, and so blatant, and I don't think many Dine people are blatant and frank." (ibid). Bowman elaborated that her "frankness" took shape as a defense mechanism against the racism she experienced throughout her life, and the sexism she encountered while working in the film industry in southern California, where such forthrightness and assertiveness served her well; as she states, "I usually fight back with my words" (October 31, 2015). Her demeanor was therefore a very rational response to the realities of living in settler colonial society. In the context of her interactions with her grandmother and community, however, Bowman felt this same demeanor alienated her and exacerbated cultural tensions. By inserting herself in the film she not only "fixes" the problem of non-interaction, she also reflexivity represents the cultural conflict that that she understood being the core of the film.

Bowman's reports also identify that her grandmother's resistance to being photographed was a part of cultural taboos against photography, adding another axis of "cultural conflict" structuring the film. In the 1982/83 report, she states that her grandmother "believed in traditional ways regarding camera and sound equipment," and that "a granddaughter is not supposed to film her grandmother" (68). She discovers this during her third visit to the reservation, which forms the penultimate scene of the film. Biah keeps her back to the camera repeatedly tries to leave the room, while pursued by Bowman and the camera, with the translator awkwardly trailing along. Biah finally sits on her bed, turns away from the camera and has the translator tell Bowman that the Diné never used to take photographs of their grandmothers, and

when she was a child her grandfather told her stories that she remembered in her prayers; she never thought of taking pictures. Biah's response invokes cultural taboos against photography as explanation and context for her evasion of the camera, but also strategically addresses the immediate situation. When she explains that she remembers her grandfather's stories in her prayers, she identifies that she listened to him out of respect. She contrasts her actions to Bowman's: since Bowman is not listening to her grandmother, she is being disrespectful. While the film positions taboos against photography to emphasize the theme of "cultural conflict," the photographic apparatus is not the only issue here -- more pressingly, it is Bowman's behavior.

Following the scene of the "crisis" encounter, Bowman is shown in a close up outside the hogan, anxious and exhausted, debating with herself and someone behind the camera whether she "forced" her grandmother, followed by a scene of her in a pen of lambs, chasing one until she catches it and, laughing and breathless, shows it to the camera. This scene comments reflexively on her dogged pursuit of Biah, the reasons for which are alluded to in her reports. These reports track the film's development over at least four years, and show that the film represented a significant investment of time and financial and personal resources. The film itself identifies Bowman's financial hardship in a scene where she looks for work opportunities at the student financial aid office. As a thesis film, Bowman's M.F.A. degree depended on completing the film. The possibility of not finishing the film would mean a major personal and professional loss. These dimensions of her production provide a way of framing her persistence in the face of her grandmother's resistance and despite her own apprehensions.

The film concludes with an interior shot in Bowman's car as she and the crew drive away from the reservation, and in voice-over, she reflects on the issues she felt were the basis for the conflict with her grandmother: the language barrier, her perception that her grandmother did not

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understanding the project, and her own lack of understanding of Diné cultural and social

prohibitions around photography. She states that she had set out to develop "understanding"

between herself and her grandmother, and between herself and "the Navajo," a goal that she felt

had actually been realized to a degree in the filmmaking process. She states that she also came to

understand the limitations of her own position: despite being a Diné woman, her lack of

familiarity with Diné cultural values and history created problematic cultural dynamics that she

attempted to address through reflexive techniques of inserting herself in the film and

commenting on her upbringing in the "white world." This is one of the key insights of the film,

pointing out that shared ethnicity and heritage does not translate into shared cultural values and

understandings: there is not a unified Diné perspective. Such assumptions do not take into

account the Indigenous peoples' historical realities of displacement and movement to urban areas

in order to access resources not available on reservations, conditions underpinning the

differences in Bowman and Biah's cultural positions. Just as Lewis identifies that an Indigenous

documentarian can make the same mistakes as any other documentarian, from an institutional

standpoint it can be argued that the film makes the point that the power dynamics and

representational issues of ethnographic practice are not necessarily resolved by involving a

person of the same social or cultural position as their subjects; it is possible for researchers of

Indigenous heritage to perform just as problematically as non-Indigenous researchers, and

therefore makes visible the need for attention to methodologies for producing knowledge about

and representing Indigenous groups and issues. This insight makes it possible to productively

foreground the film's ethical issues as a part of the film's insights.

Though these ethical lapses can be considered "productive," they are no less distressing

to witness and worth reflecting on to examine the issues relevant to academic research that they

elicit. Lewis skillfully demonstrates how Bowman's techniques are not so different from those used in family portrait documentaries, and suggests that condemnation of the film is perhaps disproportionate when viewed within its historical context. As Lewis points out in his discussion of the reception of *Navajo Talking Picture*, viewers frequently condemn Bowman, responses that Bowman alludes to from the first in her final report that states that she found that audiences "did not fully understand what [she] was trying to present about the conflict and reasons between Arlene [Bowman] and the grandmother over the filming at the beginning of the film, when they should have" (1985, 46). The language here is somewhat ambiguous, but it suggests that the issues of cultural conflict that emerged while Bowman attempted to create a portrait of her grandmother, and that Bowman sought to foreground, was overshadowed by the subsequent direction of the film. These responses are shaped by expectations that the documentary genre bears a close relationship to historical and social reality, and therefore involve ethical considerations regarding their "subjects." Such ethical considerations are compounded when engaging with socially and historically marginalized people. It is reasonable to assume that most audiences understand that Indigenous peoples have been historically oppressed, particularly if they view the film in a classroom setting, where the instructor is likely to provide this context. Even a general appreciation of this history compounds the impact of film's "crisis," as it depicts the re-victimization of an Indigenous person by her own granddaughter, no less. It is therefore instructive to consider how techniques used in prevailing documentary practices create different sets of issues when applied to the representation of Indigenous groups, not necessarily because of different expectations of the documentarian, but out of recognition of the social and historical specificities of Indigenous peoples' experiences and the legacies of colonization that these approaches can and do replicate. Therefore, methodologies for knowledge production, which

documentaries and research share, require attention and debate prior to undertaking such projects, a process that *Cry Rock* (2010) examines as its structuring narrative.

<u>*Cry Rock* (2010)</u>

Navajo Talking Picture largely emerged in relation to one academic research institution, which has retained a set of production records that contribute to understandings of institutional discourses and representational practices contributing to the film's development. *Cry Rock* engages dynamically with multiple institutional discourses and practices owing to its production history and context, which traces the filmmaker's professional experience in film and media production and in Indigenous studies at a postsecondary research institution. Thus, *Cry Rock* requires a broader framework for institutional analysis than *Navajo Talking Picture* in order to elicit how the film brings together representational practices and discourses of Indigeneity from multiple sites. Further, while records exist for *Navajo Talking Picture* that enrich institutional analysis, such records are not the sole sources through which institutional discourses can be read; in the case of *Cry Rock*, I draw on websites, reports, and publicity materials in compliment with an interview with the filmmaker.

Cry Rock is a 28-minute documentary by Nuxalk filmmaker Banchi Hanuse, independently produced in 2010 by Smayaykila Films Inc. Combining documentary footage with animation, the film is begins at a point of urgency: there are only 15 fluent Nuxalk language speakers and storytellers left, including Hanuse's grandmother. As Hanuse relates in voice over, she cannot speak the language and wants to ask her grandmother if she can record her stories on camera; however, she cannot bring herself to ask her. Instead, the film is an investigation of her apprehension, opening up an exploration of Nuxalk understandings of storytelling, and the

potential repercussions of recording these stories using media and writing technologies. Her grandmother does appear in the film, though does not directly interact with the camera; instead, she is shown in a second narrative strand interwoven with the first in which she fillets and smokes a salmon.

Hanuse explains that she had been considering recording her grandmother for several years before undertaking the project, in the meantime undergoing film training largely at Capilano University (Vancouver, BC) while gaining experience on film sets and at the National Film Board of Canada (NFB), and complimenting her professional training with First Nations Studies and International Relations at the University of British Columbia (UBC) (Hanuse April 14, 2015). While Hanuse's experience is diverse and multi-sited, for the purposes of this essay I concentrate on the institutional locations closest temporally and contextually to the production of *Cry Rock*. Hanuse identifies that her postsecondary education at UBC was "the base and the kick start . . . to continue to pursue film" and worked at the NFB during her postsecondary education leading up to the production of *Cry Rock* (ibid).

Hanuse recounted that "[w]hen contemplating recording elders, such as my grandmother, questions came to mind that concerned me. Thinking of my grandmother turning 80, I realized there is so much knowledge my Grandmother has that I want to pass on" (ibid). Historically, the Nuxalk language and stories were transmitted through oral traditional methods, and *Cry Rock* asks if recordings can capture the meaning of the language and the stories -- and if, having been recorded, they can still be considered Indigenous cultural knowledge. The film ultimately presents cultural knowledge as a *modality*, and asks questions about what happens when certain forms of cultural knowledge are taken into a different cultural representational system. Indigenous languages emerge from cultural knowledge systems, and are understood as being key

to transmitting traditional cultural knowledge. The Nuxalk language is endangered as a consequence of colonialism and the Canadian state's efforts to eradicate Indigenous cultures, which targeted Indigenous languages in particular. In *Cry Rock*, elders of Hanuse's grandmother's generation are shown to be fluent in Nuxalk, but we do not see people from Hanuse's *parents'* generation, a structuring absence that marks the break in language ability within that era. Questions about the effects of technology in cultural transmission thematize the generational cultural ruptures since, without the same language facility, these generations do not share the same framework for engaging traditional cultural knowledge. As a result, "mediation" is both a dominant visual motif and the focus for the film.

Inter-institutionality: Indigenous Studies and the National Film Board

Cry Rock's examination of the value and meaning of oral traditions, and the mediations that take place when oral narratives are recorded, reflect debates that take place in Indigenous studies taking place in the First Nations Studies Program (FNSP) at the University of British Columbia, from which Hanuse graduated in 2004. FNSP is a research-oriented undergraduate program designed to equip students with theoretical and methodological skills in order to undertake Indigenous community-based research (First Nations Studies Program n.d.). Its core courses focus on research methodologies that debate methodological approaches for undertaking Indigenous research, which includes questions about the effects of recording technologies on Indigenous cultures. While Hanuse was a student in the program in 2003, a unit of the required course "FNSP 310--Theory Seminar" focused on technologies and their effects on Indigenous peoples, including readings from Jerry Mander's *In the Absence of the Sacred: The Failure of Technology and the Survival of the Indian Nations* (1992) and Elise Mather's "With a Vision

Beyond our Needs: Oral Traditions in an Age of Literacy" (1995); further, the course asked

students to examine "the relation between technology and First Nations cultures" in a written or

media-based assignment (Kesler 2003a). "FNSP 320-Research Methods," a second required

course, engaged even more deeply with debates surrounding research methods, and includes

workshops and readings on research ethics -- including Linda Tuhiwai Smith's foundational text

Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples (1999) -- in preparation for

students' major assignment, an interview-based research project (Kesler 2003b). *Cry Rock*

echoes these debates in its questioning of the applications and limitations of recording

technologies for preserving and transmitting Indigenous cultural knowledge, a critical framework

dovetailing with Hanuse's long-held deliberations about whether to record her grandmother's

stories.

These debates intervene in and complicate institutional discourses around Indigenous

cultural retention that circulate at the National Film Board of Canada (NFB), where Hanuse

worked throughout the 2000s, and which was an associate producer of *Cry Rock*. Hanuse was the

co-producer and project coordinator of *Our World*, an Indigenous language-based program that

took shape in the early 2000s out of NFB's west coast-based Pacific and Yukon Centre (Hanuse

April 14, 2015). *Our World* partnered the NFB with remote Indigenous communities in British

Columbia and the Yukon to teach youth how to use digital technologies in order to make short

films in their traditional languages (National Film Board of Canada 2011).[46] Filmmakers and

digital animators visited communities whose traditional languages are endangered, and worked

with youth 18 to 29 to develop projects that would engage with their traditional languages in

ways relevant to their experiences, as described by the project's archived website:

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[46] Snapshots of the "Our World" website were located through the Wayback Machine, which do not retain
its full content, an unfortunate reality of the ephemerality of internet-based records.

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Our World is based on the concept of giving voice and inviting others to hear. The

project aims to leave something behind that benefits both the individual and the

community. By facilitating active communication and reception, we encourage positive

social engagement. It is also about exposing young people to potential future career

options by learning how to express themselves creatively with modern, digital media

(ibid).

Social engagement and empowerment predominate as discursive frameworks for the project,

wherein media technology acts as a facilitator that supports Indigenous people's connections

with their cultures and communities. The "social engagement" framework is enhanced by the

language of professionalization, in which participants would be equipped with skills transferrable

to the employment realm.

This social engagement framework echoes long-established NFB discourses for minority

and Indigenous production. As Zoë Druick argued, the NFB, as a national film agency, is

responsive to Canadian law and social policy and seeks to reflect policy in its programs and

productions (2007). Beginning in the 1960s in the context of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's

liberal platform of a Canadian "participatory democracy," the NFB sought to equip

disenfranchised social groups, including Indigenous people, with the film apparatus to produce

their own representations with the mind that "media representation might effectively bring about

improved political representation" (127).[47] This mission was reinvigorated in subsequent decades

with increasing population and political shifts in Canada. From the 1980s onward, Canadian

social policy was framed in terms of "diversity" to manage and govern population changes

including increased immigration, the Québec sovereignty referendum of 1980, and Indigenous

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[47] Called "Challenge for Change," this activist documentary initiative has been widely discussed, and has received extensive examination in (Waugh, Winton, and Baker 2010)

demands for autonomy (ibid 168). In response, the NFB prioritized youth, women, and minorities, and opened Studio I -- the Indigenous studio -- in 1991 (ibid). Through Studio I, the NFB sought to provide institutional resources -- including training, equipment and technology, and facilities -- to equip Indigenous filmmakers to undertake their own projects. Owing to its programs and resources for representing Indigenous social realities, the NFB has been discussed as facilitating Indigenous cultural continuity. In "Studio One: Of Storytellers and Stories," Maria de Rosa links NFB media practice with Indigenous cultural traditions, citing statements by Indigenous filmmakers, including Loretta Todd and Carol Geddes, who relate that filmmaking is a part of a continuum of "storytelling" (2002, 329-330). De Rosa evokes a discourse of Indigenous media as an extension of Indigenous cultural tradition, which overlaps with the NFB's social empowerment mission. *Our World*'s design explicitly brings together cultural revitalization with social empowerment:

> Before the projects are produced, we ask each community to identify young people interested in visual art and/or storytelling . . . We then send instructors to the First Nations communities where they spend a week working with a group of young people who then create their own short films in the First Nations' language. At the end of the week, a public screening of their work is held to celebrate their accomplishments and to invite the community to come see and hear the stories (National Film Board of Canada 2011).

The project thus engages with an urgent social issue, the decline in Indigenous language speakers, by seeking to equip Indigenous youth specifically with the media skills to develop projects to support language retention. In this configuration, film and media a role to play in cultural continuity. However, *Cry Rock* reflects on the role digital technology in transmitting

Indigenous cultural knowledge, and what is changed, or even lost, when cultural knowledge is recorded. *Cry Rock* intervenes in prevailing discourses of media's relationship to Indigenous cultures, arguing that this dynamic risks conflating oral traditions with recording technologies. *Cry Rock* thereby enters into a critical dialogue with national cultural policy and institutional discourses that challenges their underpinning logics in order to create space to reflect on the specificities of oral traditions.

Visualizing Cultural Mediations

The pervasiveness of Western cultural influences on Indigenous communities is visually conveyed through the representation of a broad range of media technologies: notebooks, a reel-to-reel recorder, photographs, DVDs, and video cameras. The film is ambivalent about the use of these technologies, at once acknowledging that they play a role in cultural preservation, while at the same time arguing for the distinctiveness and value of oral traditions. Hanuse's voice over rhetorically enacts this ambivalence: it is structured as a series of questions about her reluctance to record her grandmothers' stories and reflections on her childhood, bracketing her perspective to create a point of departure for representing others'. Hanuse's cousin, Deborah Nelson, is shown in the process of video-recording her father's stories so that she can both preserve and learn from them. She is particularly interested in the more recent history of when the entire village was moved from the north side of the river to the south side due to an historical smallpox epidemic. She both records him at home speaking Nuxalk, and also travels with him to the old site of the river where the village once stood, recording her father's memories on a small digital camera. Nelson could be said to be using a "mixed mode" approach to oral history, in which electronic recording and oral narratives are both involved to record cultural knowledge. Hanuse,

however, is interested in the specificity and value of oral traditions. Though Nelson asserts that recording is imperative because every time an elder dies, those stories are lost, Hanuse states in voice over, "and still, when I turn my camera on my grandmother, I can't bring myself to ask her for her stories." Though Hanuse gives space to represent a perspective supporting the use of recording technologies, the film distinguishes the two in order to give oral traditions their due.

In addition to interviews with community members, the film features evocative watercolor animation of Hanuse's memories of her youth learning from elders in the community. These sequences are warm and intimate, and as Nuxalk is spoken, the words appear in watercolor on-screen, conveying that the Nuxalk language is "animated" and alive in these environments. *Cry Rock* describes language and stories as living entities that are a part of the cultural history, and this cultural history lives within a physical and social world. In "Oral Tradition and Oral History: Reviewing Some Issues" (1994) Julie Cruikshank describes the unique social and historical character of oral narratives. Cruikshank, an anthropologist who has done extensive ethnographic work with Indigenous peoples to theorize oral traditions, evaluates prevailing analytic approaches to oral traditions: they have been considered material culture that give evidence of the past, and have been theorized as a method for interpreting and understanding social conditions in the present. To these dominant interpretive methods she adds more contemporary approaches that recognize that the meanings of oral narratives are not self-evident, but must be understood in social practice where meaning is enacted. Context is particularly meaningful for oral histories because they bear an intrinsic relationship to place. Cruikshank cites a case study of an anthropologist conducting field research with Indigenous groups in the Philippines, in which he came to understand that in oral traditional modes, "[e]vents are anchored to place and people use locations in space to speak about events over

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time" (1994, 409). Thus, by relating events to place, oral narratives shape perception of the landscape as a part of history. Oral narratives resist codification -- which would render them into a static form -- because their meaning comes from the context of their telling, enacted by the person relating the narrative in a particular place where that narrative is "located."

Cry Rock explores dimensions of oral narratives that convey place relationships. The film crew travels with Clyde Tallio, a young Nuxalk speaker, and Alvin Mack, a local Nuxalk artist, to site that they believe might be the Cry Rock, a spot in a local river where, as Clyde describes, a supernatural being called the Sniniq once sat crying for her dead child. Two local boys heard her crying and approached her in their boat, and when one boy stepped out on the rock next to her, he began crying too. After a while the Sniniq turned to him and thanked him for crying with her. Alvin's voice is heard over a long shot of the bend in the river that he believes could be the site of the story, and the camera slowly zooms in to consider the spot. The story is shown to have a physical and historical location and it transforms perceptions of the site; the story "becomes real" in the world, living in a particular territory. This scene links storytelling to place, something the film can point to but cannot reproduce or embody.

The Sniniq story also tells another story, one about the limitations of electronic recordings to communicate the full meaning of oral narratives. The young boy who joins the Sniniq on the Cry Rock experiences her grief empathetically, but does not share the source of her grief. The Cry Rock becomes a site of mediation, where a certain social and cultural interaction can take place, but a fullness of understanding through shared experience is not realizable. It is telling that the Sniniq is a mother, and the boy a child -- in the story's telling in the film, they are from different generations. Generational difference is therefore the framework for the disjuncture between them, echoing the generational ruptures experienced within Indigenous communities.

Elsewhere in the film, the presence and influence of the elementary school in the community is foregrounded, evoking the colonial education system and its impact on Indigenous communities and cultures. As Clyde Tallio relates, the provincial educational curriculum limits the amount of time that the Nuxalk language can be taught in class to 30 minutes a week -- in effect, perpetuating the colonial project of cultural erosion through its inadequate language programming.

The relationship between the boy and the Sniniq allegorizes Hanuse's own relationship with her grandmother. Like the boy, she is at a remove from her grandmother's conceptual and cultural frameworks by virtue of descending from a generation in which a profound cultural disruption took place. Her relationship with her grandmother is therefore mediated by a generational cultural shift. This should not, however, be understood as an inflexible barrier to understanding. Though Indigenous communities have experienced an irrevocable cultural change over the past several centuries, Julie Cruikshank helps us to understand that oral traditions are used to make sense of contemporary circumstances, and gain meaning in practice as they relate to those circumstances. Oral narratives are thus flexible and adaptive, constantly making sense of the present in particular places. As illustrated by the film, the Cry Rock story allegorizes the generational rupture, and reflects on the cultural and social changes that have taken place in the community as a result. It simultaneously identifies the limitations the documentary mode, since we cannot be in the physical place to which the story refers and in which it is meaningful. The film thus argues that oral narratives are able to both account for cultural and historical change – and in fact, are meaningful in that they do address the present -- while at the same time require certain conditions in order to be more fully meaningful: the language in which they are relayed and the environment in which they live. Oral traditions are both flexible and finite, and the film

registers this tension, particularly since the conditions through which these stories are meaningful are increasingly under threat. Though different conceptual frameworks will be at play due to generational differences, the film makes the case that given the right conditions, the knowledge that the stories possess can be transmitted across that divide.

As in *Navajo Talking Picture*, the representation of Hanuse's relationship with her grandmother is a central trope of the film. Where the conflict-based interactions between Bowman and Ann Biah thematized cultural conflict as the structuring device of the film, Hanuse and her grandmother do not interact on camera for the majority of the film; rather, her grandmother appears in a sequence in which she prepares and smokes a salmon, which is intercut throughout the film and which the camera observes discreetly. I would argue that it functions pedagogically, modeling a kind of careful attentiveness required of in oral traditions. The camera is aligned with Hanuse's perspective, enhanced by the film's first person narration and Hanuse's memories. While grandmother preparing the salmon, the camera-as-Hanuse patiently observes. While the film ultimately argues that oral traditions cannot be fully realized through the film apparatus, it guides the viewer towards recognition of the interpersonal dynamics necessary to participate in them. At the end of the film, Hanuse's states that she decided to learn the Nuxalk stories following the oral tradition, and in a long shot, runs from behind the camera up to her grandmother's porch steps to embrace her. This shot compliments the salmon preparation sequence in that it suggests that attentiveness, modeled throughout the film, has prepared her for the interpersonal relationships required of oral traditions.

Cry Rock intervention is particularly timely given the proliferation of Indigenous film and media production worldwide. The film's attention to the value and relevance of oral traditions and critique of the applications and limitations of recording technologies is crucial ballast for

social and institutional discourses that align media with oral traditions. It thus brings together critical frameworks from Indigenous studies with discourses around Indigenous production from state-sponsored film institutions. Attention to the institutional dimensions of the film illuminates an area of discursive convergence that enables a productive critique of discourses conflating filmmaking with oral traditions, enabling closer examination of these two modes and their specificities.

Conclusion

Though produced in different national contexts, both *Navajo Talking Picture* and *Cry Rock* emerge in relation to university programs affiliated with Indigenous studies, and their films give evidence of their negotiations with institutional discourses and practices in their production and ultimately in their screen content. At UCLA, the "re-invention" anthropology sought to involve Indigenous people in the production and interpretation of research, but did not anticipate or understand how colonial processes might be replicated in what was intended to be a culturally empowering project. In trying to better represent Indigenous needs, the NFB designed programming to support Indigenous social empowerment that aligned Indigenous media with traditional cultural practices, perhaps not fully cognizant that even with the best of intentions, contemporary applications of media for engaging with Indigenous cultural knowledge risks displacing traditional modalities. These films do, however, make visible the complexities arising out of such efforts and contribute to understandings of the possibilities and limitations of particular institutional approaches, valuable insights that can advance institutional and disciplinary practices in Indigenous studies and other studies of marginalized groups.

In a sense, the insights of both *Navajo Talking Picture* and *Cry Rock* pivot around the limits of representation. *Navajo Talking Picture* shows the audience Bowman's "failure," which demarcates the boundary of what she sought to represent -- her grandmother's traditional lifestyle -- and what she is unable to, which is ultimately attributed to the irreconcilability of their cultural positions. *Cry Rock*, meanwhile, shows the audience what it cannot show, since the film apparatus, and indeed any other recording technology, cannot represent the fuller meaning of oral traditional narratives. These documentaries are ultimately reflexive in their address and construction, and in their reflexivity intersect with documentary traditions that circumvent spurious debates concerned with documentary as "fact" or "fiction," and instead acknowledge documentary as a discourse about the world (Nichols 1992), raising questions about the representational conventions that support nonfiction media's claims to authority and authenticity. The relationship of nonfiction film conventions and truth-claims has been variously investigated through scholarship on nonfiction genres such as the fake documentary, which Alexandra Juhasz and Jesse Lerner argue mimics the conventions of documentary to reveal documentary's constructness, thereby satirizing the authority and knowledge that it produces (Juhasz and Lerner 2006); and experimental ethnography, which Catherine Russell argues parodies the conventions of ethnography in order to hold up a "mirror" to audiences that reveals their assumptions about that aspect of the "real" that the film engages (1999). While perhaps not as formally "experimental" in their constructive features as these examples, Bowman and Hanuse similarly employ reflexive techniques in order to denaturalize closely held assumptions about Indigenous knowledge production and cultural representation, holding up a mirror not only to non-Indigenous academics and audiences, but also to the field of Indigenous studies itself.

CONCLUSION:

Indigenous Media and Understandings of Nation, Genre, and Author

The case studies on which this dissertation is built are intentionally diverse as a means to demonstrate the range of institutions and production areas comprising the field of Indigenous media, whether they are well known (such as APTN) or less prominent (postsecondary research institutions). Further, the institutional contexts of Indigenous media are sometimes complex and multi-sited, as seen in Chapter Four's case study of *Cry Rock*, requiring an understanding of "institutionality" that is flexible and integrative, capable of synthesizing the discourses and practices from different social and institutional locations to guide analysis of screen content. This approach not only points towards the complex and variegated field of Indigenous production, but also models a form of analysis that puts pressure on analytical trends that are satisfied with understanding the cultural politics of Indigenous media in terms of resistance and oppositionality. While there are certainly dimensions of the colonial state that are directly oppressive (Alanis Obomsawin's *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance* [1993] documented perhaps the most visible and photographed instance of the Canadian state's suppression of Indigenous peoples in recent history), to imagine the state's power as so absolute and uniform risks nullifying the many permutations of Indigenous political and cultural engagement and resistance; and conversely, recognizing only certain forms of engagement that would seem to fit within an oppositional schema. Instead, understanding the nation in terms of the "state" makes it possible to perceive its unevenness and inconsistency as Indigenous media practitioners navigate its terrain.

The process of undertaking institutional analysis complicates dominant analytical frameworks that accompany Indigenous media, as I suggest above. The political and aesthetic

assumptions inherent in oppositional readings construct Indigenous media as a genre, a well-established approach for representing and analyzing identity-based media in cinema and media studies. As each chapter has shown, however, the variable topography of Indigeneity in media practice does not neatly constitute a coherent body of texts linked to a social identity; further, reducing Indigenous production to such features covers over producers and work that do not exhibit features associated with the genre. Institutional analysis provides an entry point for recuperating individuals and areas of production into the historical record, and an analytical framework that can evaluate the nuances of their critical and cultural interventions. These interventions may not appear as stark or provocative as the texts linked to the "genre," but that does not mean they are any less critical or culturally significant; as Michelle Raheja points out through her concept of "visual sovereignty," this work represents negotiated spaces and resources and are evidence of Indigenous agency within conditions circumscribed by prevailing material and political circumstances.

The thread running through this dissertation, and these preliminary conclusions, is the question of authorship in relation to Indigenous media practitioners. The spaces and images that Indigenous filmmakers and produces negotiate, the role of the state, and institutional discourses and practices that accompany them, require rethinking the model of the Indigenous cultural "auteur" that tends to follow Indigenous media practitioners and their work. Authorship is an inherently constructed concept, and raises questions about the conditions by which authorship is asserted and attributed. Individual authorship is circumscribed by the cultural and industrial conditions that underpin the field of Indigenous production, challenging direct links between author and text. Similarly, notions of Indigeneity, or sets of relations determined by kinship and place, raise questions about individual authorship and a text, and the extent to which a shared

sense of ethics and cultural practices inform the work of Indigenous media practitioners. Conversely, many of the filmmakers interviewed for this project have emphasized the importance and role of individual creativity in their work, which is not always directly linked to traditional cultural practices or communities. Instead, their comments align with classic models of authorship from cinema and media studies, indicating its ongoing value for those working in the field. Their comments indicate ways in which authorship can also challenge understandings of Indigeneity as it has been conceptualized and deployed in cinema and media studies, and point to productive areas for future investigation.

APPENDIX I: CATALOGUES AND DATABASES

1. Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (http://aptn.ca/shows/)

2. Banff Centre for the Arts Library and Archives (https://www.banffcentre.ca/library-and-archives)

3. Isuma.tv (http://www.isuma.tv/)

4. Melvyl Catalog, University of California Libraries (http://www.library.ucla.edu/)

5. Moving Images Distribution (https://www.movingimages.ca/)

6. National Film Board of Canada Collection (http://onf-nfb.gc.ca/en/our-collection/)

7. Nunavut Media Arts Centre, Inuit Film and Video Archives (http://www.building4dreams.ca/about-ifva/)

8. University of British Columbia Library (https://www.library.ubc.ca/)

9. Video Out Distribution (http://videoout.ca/search-catalogue)

10. VTape Video Catalogue (http://www.vtape.org/video-catalogue-basic-search)

APPENDIX II: INDIGENOUS NONFICTION PRODUCTION, 1968-2013*
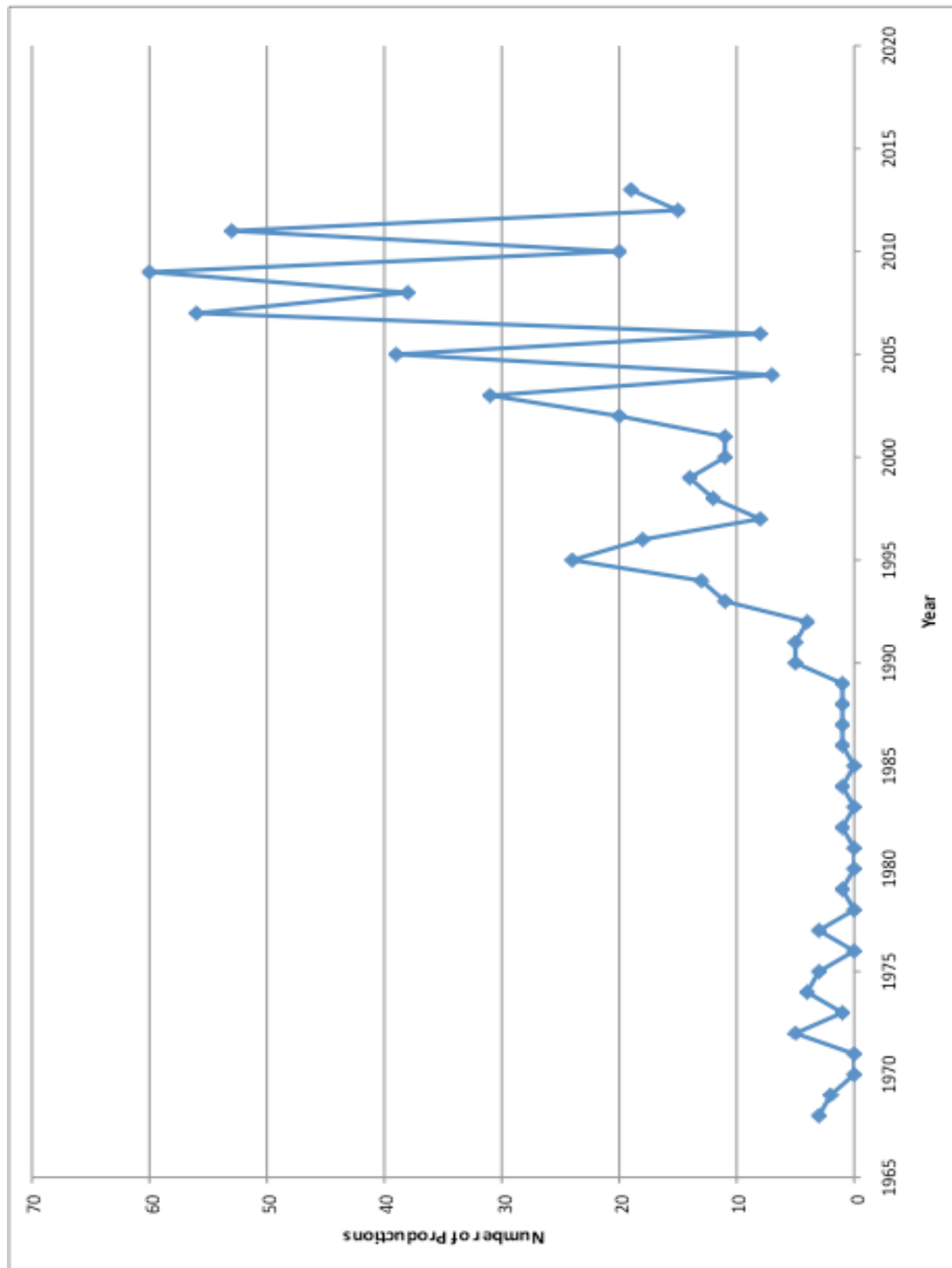
*"Production" includes film, video, standalone television productions, and individual television episodes. The spikes and troughs between years are due to the two-year production cycle for television series.

APPENDIX III: NUMBERS OF INDIGENOUS NONFICTION DIRECTORS AND PRODUCERS BY GENDER*

Table A: Directors and Producers 1968-1989

Women	1
Men	9
Total	**10**

Table B: Directors and Producers 1968-2013

Women	84
Men	77
Total	**162**

* I acknowledge that using two genders for any population is inherently simplistic and problematic, and future iterations of this research will seek to better reflect the gender spectrum should that information be publicly disclosed. These numbers have been gathered from the databases and catalogues listed in Appendix I, except those published by Isuma.tv and the Nunavut Media Arts Centre, as discussed in the Introduction to this dissertation. Future iterations of this research will reflect these records. As is the case with all databases, these numbers do not reflect the actual numbers of nonfiction Indigenous directors in Canada. Instead, these numbers indicate general trends.

APPENDIX IV: NUMBER OF PRODUCTIONS BY DIRECTOR/PRODUCER, 1968-2013*

Director	Number of productions**
Alanis Obomsawin	19
Doug Cuthand	16
Annie Frazier Henry	10
Barb Cranmer	8
Marjorie Beaucage	8
Gil Cardinal	7
Zacharias Kunuk	6
Loretta Todd	5
Nitanis Desjarlais	5
Paul Rickard	5
Zachary Longboy	5
Greg Coyes	5
Lisa Jackson	4
Catherine Ann Martin	4
Christine Welsh	4
Darryl Nepinak	4
Dennis Allen	4
Thirza Cuthand	4
RoseAnne Archibald	3
Kevin Lee Burton	3

*This table reflects directors and producers with records of more than two standalone nonfiction film, television, or video productions, for the sake of brevity. This table does not reflect narrative fiction or experimental productions by the same directors/producers.

**The production numbers have been compiled from databases and catalogues including the National Film Board of Canada, VTape, Video Out, APTN, the Banff Centre, and university library databases and as discussed in the Introduction, do not reflect production by the full scope of Inuit and northern Indigenous producers, which will be corrected in future iterations of this research. Further, the numbers identified here will inevitably be incomplete, and the author apologizes for any omissions. Future iterations of this research will more comprehensively and accurately reflect actual productions by director/producer/collective.

APPENDIX V: INTERVIEWS

Jeff Bear, July 20, 2015
Marjorie Beaucage, July 4, 2014
----, December 20, 2014
Arlene Bowman, July 7, 2015
---, September 1, 2015
Angie Campbell, May 3, 2016
Doug Cuthand, February 13, 2015
Sara Diamond, October 10, 2014
Carol Geddes, January 29, 2015
Cory Generoux, March 15, 2015
Danis Goulet, December 10, 2015
Lisa Jackson, September 9, 2015
Marianne Jones, February 26, 2016
Graydon McCrea, January 1, 2015
Crissy Red, October 12, 2016
Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers, August 20, 2015
Loretta Todd, December 1, 2012
----, August 17, 2014

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