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AN OUTSIDE GAZE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDIGENOUS GROUPS AND THE MEDIA

by
Nicole Daoust

A thesis submitted to the faculty of The University of Mississippi in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.

Oxford
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ABSTRACT

NICOLE DAOUST: An Outside Gaze on the Relationship Between Indigenous Groups and the Media
(Under the Direction of Mark Dolan)

Indigenous groups around the world faced similar challenges. Many of these issues stem from stereotypes, one-sided stories, and overall lack of representation in the media. Without a voice or ally, they are often treated as second class citizens. For my research, I analyzed how the media affected public perception of indigenous people. I specifically focus on four groups: The Aboriginals of Canada, the Māori, Native Americans, and the uncontacted tribes of the Amazon.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The world's estimated 370 million indigenous people have long been under siege, removed from their lands, forced into Christian conversion, exoticized under a media microscope, and generally exploited by an outside gaze. Indigenous groups, for the purposes of this discussion, are defined as people who have "originated or occurred naturally in a particular place." They are minority peoples who can legitimately claim to have been in a region, though their voices at times have become muted by majority groups, their very identities at risk.

They differ from majority groups inhabiting a given region for a shorter time, in terms of economic power, religious and cultural dominance, to name just a few areas. The intersection of majority with indigenous groups, the ethical and moral dilemmas involved, and especially the nature of the communication between majority and indigenous groups, and mass communication about threatened peoples is my focus. As an Integrated Marketing Communication student, mediated portrayals of indigenous people are interesting reflections of how majority groups have thought about indigenous people, as well as the regard, or rather disregard, they have either shown when deciding to broach their worlds brandishing cameras and note pads.

The age of modern, mass media that began in the twentieth century is a reflection of majority group presence, and an accompanying consciousness. Moreover, the economic shareholders in media companies have majority group interests, and thus extend those majority interests through agendas they set. Such interests are linked historically to concepts such a Manifest Destiny in America, and to the "civilizing" of people who were in a given land first.

Though stereotypes of indigenous people abound in historic media, contemporary media, advertising for examples, exploits indigenous people, by appropriating aspects of their culture. Media culture in general shows the desirability of far-removed regions, and people who never sought the limelight. In today's society these stereotypes are often presented in more subtle ways than the past. However, companies have been basing their products off of Indigenous cultures selling everything from "cigars to station wagons" (Smith, 2018).

Communication scholar James Carey wrote that the origins of mass media are rooted in a desire to control people across space and time - much like a sermon from pulpit to pew. Older, ancient forms of what he called ritual communication, that communication practiced as a type of communal sharing and rooted in agreed upon symbols and practiced by indigenous people, Carey contended, is lost the moment the Native American first saw the telegraph wire, or when the modern newspaper arrived in the ancient village, or the instant a photographer presses the shutter. It then becomes a message meant to be shared with a much larger audience (Munson & Warren, 1997).

The older forms of communication, which consist of echoing what is already known and mutually agreed upon in a community, vanish in the face of a more sender-to-receiver model, in which information is transmitted for purposes of control and manipulation, a secular sermonizing, though with deep roots in the origins of the printing press and the Gutenberg Bible.

Indigenous peoples run the risk of marginalization in such a "transmission" model of communication. It's much easier to push people from their lands if they don't conform to majority interests and tastes. Who-lived-in-a-given-region first, sparks an emotionally charged rhetoric, and in attempting to address it, additional questions about ownership of the land and dominant culture emerge. Assisted historically by the media, indigenous people are placed in a perpetual sunset. They have been cast as savages, simpletons, sexually overactive, as idolaters and adulterers, as dishonest, and dirty. They are seen as an obstacle to industrialization and western progress.

Indigenous groups all over the world, including Canada, the United States, Australia, Mexico face racialized and sexualized discrimination, in part because of how they have been portrayed in media. Perhaps no other force in modern times has exerted as much influence over how we see each other as the media. Media is not reality, but a version of reality, as Hanno Hardt has written. Thanks to stereotypes and misinformation, indigenous groups have been kicked off of their land, denied rights, and stripped of their customs and cultures, treated like second-class citizens.

They often face discrimination within legal systems, too, because of mediated treatments that fostered bias, and their voices are not always heard in courts of law because they have not been given a platform in media (Amnesty International, n.d.). The very existence of minority media outlets attests to a historic unbalance. With little say, these groups are also susceptible to violence, abuse, and mistreatment. High rates of missing and murdered indigenous people are now being documented by police but were historically under-represented in newspapers, for example. Their land, cultures, and means of life, are all threatened without the help of political advocates.

For centuries, indigenous groups have faced persecution and discrimination from majority groups, which also happen to own and profit from media. Because the media historically played a considerable role in how these groups are perceived by society, the question of ethical treatment and coverage of indigenous people, even by those wishing to portray them with care as to their fragility, from professional documentarians to travelers posting images of indigenous tribes on social media – becomes relevant. In shining a light, so to speak, in every corner of the planet and then mass distributing what we see online and elsewhere, majority groups may be putting at further risk the distinct identity and even existence of indigenous people.

From the dawn of the printing press, the media has shaped how society views indigenous people. For example, Native Americans were routinely depicted as dangerous and barbaric. “Although Europeans sometimes saw the complex

variety of native life – as did Americans – Native Americans were over time, reduced to two broad categories: the bloodthirsty barbarian and the romantic, sentimental Indian" (Coward, 1999). Even though these identities did not accurately depict the cultures of Native Americans, these people were portrayed in a negative light, a light which allowed colonists to differentiate themselves and their ideals from those of indigenous native people.

Over time, magazines, television, and movies have also shaped how Native Americans and other groups are perceived, and oftentimes, they incorporate discriminating stereotypes which reflect poorly upon indigenous cultures. Native American women are rarely cast for lead roles, and when they are, they often play the role of damsel in distress who falls in love with the main character. Just look no further than the plots of Avatar, Dances with Wolves, or Pocahontas (InFocus, 2018).

Instead of reflecting public opinion, the media often shapes it, and then in turn reflects what it has shaped. What emerges is not reality, but this version of reality, which in turn gets magnified, extended across space and time. After all, how does one learn about the past or about current events? Media is for many the primary venue. Media directs society about how to view different topics and subjects. Agenda setting theory, which is relevant here, suggests that society tends "to include or exclude from their cognitions what the media include or exclude from their content. People also tend to assign an importance to what they include that closely resembles the emphasis given to events, issues, and persons by the

mass media" (Shaw, 1979). Journalist Tristan Ahtone, a member of the Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma, argues that "you can throw all the diversity you want at a newsroom, but if that newsroom doesn't actually think the stories those people can produce are important, then it's a complete waste of everybody's time" (What Native Americans Want Non-Natives To Know, n.d.).

During the Colonial Period in America, many newspapers depicted Native Americans as dangerous or savage. This caused society, comprised of media consumers, to stereotype the natives and view them as inferior – and these stereotypes then found their way back onto the pages of more newspapers, magazines, and eventually into electronic media. Whether it be through print, broadcast, or social media, it is often difficult to be completely unbiased while distributing information, though in early periods of American media history, partisanship and bias were a given. Objectivity as a goal for the media did not come until the twentieth century, generally speaking.

We reflect attitudes and impulses given to us, in part, by the media. This has helped paved the way to the destruction of indigenous people. Biased media coverage, laws, policies, and actions are just as harmful and deadly as the genocidal acts of the past (Discrimination in America, 2017). When reporting on news pieces involving indigenous groups, mass media commonly reinforce stereotypes that depict a "dependency on welfare, alcohol and substance abuse, abusive violence toward one another...pervasive laziness and lack of ambition" (Mitchell & Moletsane, 2018).

These stereotypes further push societies to form cultural attitudes that affect human relations with these groups. Moreover, when reporting on crimes against indigenous people, these stereotypes can lead readers to blame the victim, because they focus on how the victim is partaking, for instance, in high-risk behavior (such as homelessness, drug abuse, or coming from a difficult family situation) instead of the actual event that took place (Mitchell & Moletsane, 2018).

All of these instances further the stigma that these groups are a danger to society. By constantly portraying them in the media as a threat, it furthers the perception that they do not belong, that they are the outsider. If dominant groups continue to push them out, we risk losing them forever.

In 2019, I travelled to New Zealand to attend the University of Auckland for the spring semester. My interest in indigenous people began as soon as I stepped foot in the country. I was fortunate to become close friends with several Māori students and had the opportunity to emerge myself into Māori culture. The Māori are the native people of New Zealand, who arrived there from eastern Polynesia some time before 1300 CE. Once the Europeans arrived in the 17th century, the Māori population began to diminish due to disease, and conflict over politics and land. As of 2010, Māori make up only 15 percent of New Zealand's total population (Māori News and Analysis, n.d.).

I also was able to spend a weekend at a Marae, which is a communal and sacred meeting ground for the Māori. A group of us slept on the floor of the Marae wharenui (meeting hall), and before bed, we were treated with a tour of the grounds, and a cultural performance**.** The Te Hana Te Ao Marama Cultural Performance takes you back in time to the 17th Century with its replica of the Māori Village and the story of how the town got the name, Te Hana.

There I was educated on how to properly greet different members of the community, we ate a traditional Hangi buffet, Māori cuisine, which consisted of vegetables, meat, fish, salads, and delicious desserts. We spoke with the elders, learned some of the Māori language, a little bit of their vast history, and how they have maintained their culture throughout generations. They told me stories of the demi-god Maui, who according to the legends, fished up the North Island using his magic hook. This story seemed vaguely familiar until I discovered that the animated movie Moana, which translates to 'ocean' in the Māori language, was inspired by Māori and Polynesian culture.

It struck me that I had no previous knowledge about these people. I had never learned about them in school, on the news, or even on television. Being previously uneducated about their cultures and customs, it was fascinating to hear their stories and learn directly about their beliefs and history. Māori stories and knowledge have been passed down throughout generations. Although a lot of their culture reminded me of Native Americans, their heritage seemed much more intertwined with everyday life in New Zealand.

Moving to Mississippi for college has allowed me to see firsthand what divides people along racial and demographic lines. Income equality, access to healthcare, and the ability to obtain a proper education are battles people fight on a daily basis. Despite that as a nation have worked towards a goal of equality for all, these division are still prevalent, and potentially destructive to group cultures, to the entire *way* a people live. In New Zealand, those of European descent have similar divides with the Māori community. In Canada, the Aboriginals constantly face battles of poverty, and discrimination as well. These issues are not inclusive to America alone. It is a global issue. It was eye opening on my trip to New Zealand to see that the Māori face the same concerns as minority groups in America. This thesis is in part, a meditation on what I witnessed firsthand, a look into cultural appropriation, as well as the plight of indigenous groups around the world.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Over one hundred articles in mainstream magazines and newspapers have been consulted for my study, examining how the media covers indigenous people. In choosing these articles, I read many in which different societies viewed indigenous groups as inferior. Through this, I have isolated several subject areas related to this coverage of their lives: cultural appropriation, religious customs, justice issues, and socioeconomic status.

An analysis of these subject areas function within a larger tradition of western media values, which shape how audiences encounter these people, specifically the Māori of New Zealand, Native Americans, Aboriginals of Canada, and the remote tribes of the Amazon, touching on how the media has

perpetuated stereotypes and shaped public opinion against these groups within the context of what I saw and experienced.

The media has the ability to shape society's perceptions, as we have said. In a study by Children NOW, "a child advocacy organization examining children's perceptions of race and class in the media, Native youngsters said they see themselves as 'poor,' 'drunk,' 'living on reservations,' and 'an invisible race.' The Children NOW study concludes that 'Native American youth are concerned about portrayals of their race in the media'" (Hirschfelder & Molin, 2018).

Mainstream magazines and newspapers, such as the National Geographic, have also been known to promote violence and often described the natives in a hostile manner (Coward, 1989). In 1866, the New Orleans Picayune claimed, "We cannot open a paper from any of our exposed States or Territories, without reading frightful accounts of Indians massacres and Indian marauding's." Examples such as these suggest a media perpetuating an anti-indigenous agenda. If you were to search through the archives of the Toronto Star, you would find over 300,000 hits associated with the word "Indian" (Couchi, 2017). Out of these 300,000+ hits, when discussing relations between indigenous groups and other majorities "the Indigenous perspective and oral history were repeatedly downplayed and treated as less trustworthy than the narrative of the colonizers" (Couchi, 2017). More recently in 2017, the Stony Plain Reporter, a newspaper in Alberta, ran a story about a school lice outbreak, and used a stock photo of an

indigenous child to go with it. This further perpetuates negative stereotypes of indigenous groups at a young age (Nagle, 2018). In addition, many newspapers such as The Houston Chronicle, Harper's Weekly, and the Australian (ABC Radio Melbourne, 2016) have included stereotypes in cartoons which profile different indigenous groups in a negative light.

We currently live in a world where instant communication is a priority. New technologies such as smartphones, the internet, and satellite communication have allowed for instant information at the consumer's fingertips. The news is a primary way for people to get their information. Society's view of the world stems from the information these different platforms deliver, and the agendas set by traditional mainstream media as well as citizen-generated content on social media platforms.

Indigenous groups are often on the receiving end of media bias and discrimination. In a 1916 article, (more than a century ago) National Geographic refers to Aboriginal Australians as "savages" who "rank lowest in intelligence of all human beings." Research has suggested that the mental health of Indigenous Australians has been negatively impacted by the continuous use of negative stereotypes directed towards indigenous communities in the media. This study revealed that a shocking 74 percent of the total coverage of Australian Indigenous related articles were negative: "The most common negative subject descriptors related to alcohol, child abuse, petrol sniffing, violence, suicide, deaths in custody, and crime" (Stoneham et al., 2014). This may cause society to primarily

focus on the negative aspects of these groups which ultimately can sway their opinions and attitudes towards them.

Native Americans have been exploited in various ways, at times for entertainment. Between 1910 and 1914, Hollywood produced over 900 Indian themed movies (Prins, 2002). The majority had similar story line of a battle between Cowboys vs. Indians (Young & Square, 2015). This further perpetuated the negative stereotypes given to Native Americans that they are inferior to their white counterparts. In Canada, Aboriginal groups face constant discrimination within the media. A CBC host and reporter, Duncan McCue stated in a panel in Nanaimo, B.C. that an elder once told him "the only way an Indian would make it on the news is if he or she were one of the 4Ds: drumming, dancing, drunk or dead." Although Aboriginals are still heavily under-represented in the media, a prominent news station prioritizes Indigenous voice and opinions. APTN, Aboriginals Peoples Television, reaches over 11 million viewers across Canada. They have become a platform for many indigenous communities to become united and share their voices among Canadian society (Levin, 2016). Having advocates such as APTN can help to improve public perception of these groups by giving them a voice.

Many indigenous groups have taken to the media themselves to combat these stereotypes. Indigenous journalism has increased over the past decade all around the globe. In New Zealand, Māori journalists "see their role as providing a counter-narrative to mainstream media reporting and as contributing to

Indigenous empowerment and revitalization of their language. At the same time, they view themselves as watchdogs, albeit within a culturally specific framework that has its own constraints" (Hanusch, 2014).

The Oxford dictionary defines cultural appropriation as "the unacknowledged or inappropriate adoption of the customs, practices, ideas, etc. of one people or society by members of another and typically more dominant people or society." Cultural appropriation in the media is disrespectful to various cultures because it downplays their voices and makes their practices and beliefs seem like trends or fads. For example, on Halloween, in recent years, a popular costume to dress up as Native Americans, and thus a culture is treated as a costume.

With the rise of social media, cultural appropriation is often quickly shut down. It has become easier to lodge complaints about virtually anything online, and if a company or organization messes up, its backlash is usually pasted all over the internet.

In September of 2019, Dior, a French luxury goods company, was set to release a marketing campaign called "We are the Land" for their perfume, 'Sauvage'. Dior described the campaign as "an authentic journey deep into the Native American soul in a sacred, founding and secular territory" on their twitter. The campaign featured a video in which actor, Johnny Depp, takes part, and as Dior described it, "an authentic journey deep into the Native American soul in a sacred, founding and secular territory." The name of the $150 perfume which was being advertised also added to the appropriation. Its name not only sounds and

looks like the word, savage, an offensive term often used to describe Native Americans in the past, but also suggests being wild, or untamed, outside societal bounds.

Scholars and critics have deemed the video as insensitive and racist. Due to the backlash, the company was forced to remove the video and all ties to Native American appropriation from its campaign. This Dior incident proves that the media can be both beneficial to indigenous groups. People are now able to combat cultural appropriation from behind the screens of their computers. Cultural appropriation leads to increasing racist stereotypes of the culture. Instead of appreciating the people of the culture, it is taking important symbolic items and exploiting them for personal gain (Graham, 2019).

The Washington Redskins, a professional American football team which competes in the National Football League (NFL), also culturally appropriates Native Americans. The name refers to the horrific events in colonial times, where a bounty would be issued in return for the bloody scalps of Native Americans. In the dictionary, next to the definition of Redskin are the terms ‘outdated’ and ‘offensive’. So why would one of the top five most valuable franchises in the NFL, a multi-billion-dollar industry, have an offensive name which promotes a racial slur? The mascot of the Redskins is also no better than the name. Chief Zee is the symbol of the team and wears a faux Native American war bonnet, rimmed glasses, and red jacket. So not only is the name offensive, but they have taken an entire culture and ridiculed it in the form of a sports mascot (Pata, 2017). Even

after backlash from a portion of the public, the Redskins seem to have no intentions of changing their name to something less offensive.

Not only does their name promote negative stereotypes about Native Americans, but it also directly affects Native American youths. Experimental studies reveal "the presence of Native American mascots results directly in lower self-esteem and lower mood among both Native American adolescents and young adults, as well as increased negative attitudes towards Native Americans among non-Native Americans. Importantly, these effects occur regardless of whether the Native American mascot is considered 'offensive'.

The Native American suicide rate has risen over 65 percent in the past decade, as these citizens "exhibit the highest level of psychological distress of any other group in the nation, including among the highest levels of depression, substance abuse and post-traumatic stress disorder." (Friedman, n.d.) These stereotypes and appropriation are dangerous to today's aboriginal youth. Many go through life searching for self-identity, however "they are vulnerable to internalizing the beliefs and misconceptions" that other majority groups have of them (Korff, 2020). Continuously putting these stereotypes into the minds of society can morph how these indigenous groups view themselves, and hurt their mental health (Korff, 2020).

As of 2016, the Redskins had the second highest viewership in the NFL. (Diven) The games are viewed by millions of people annually, which only further

promotes a negative stereotype towards Natives. This shows how the media can negatively affect an indigenous group through its promotion of racial stereotypes.

In 2010, the Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver, faced major backlash. They incorporated an Inuit Inukshuk as their choice of emblem for the games. The Inuit are an indigenous group inhabiting the Arctic regions of Greenland, Canada, and Alaska. The Inukshuk is a commemorative sign or landmark composed of stacked stones. Traditionally, Inukshuk were used as a land marker by the Inuit people to inform others of good hunting game in the area, a symbol that indicated where food had been stored, or a marker for travelers finding their way. It was a survival tool. The symbolic meaning of the Inukshuk has been morphed by society over time. In the past few decades, it has gone from a symbol of survival to one of friendship. The Olympic Games utilized an image of the Inukshuk as their logo on their broadcast and print advertisements. Compared to traditional Inukshuks which are not supposed to resemble the human shape, the Olympics' logo consisted of a five-piece, multicolored statue resembling the shape of a human. The original goal of the logo was to pay tribute to the indigenous groups of the North. The cultures and traditions, however, were overshadowed by a marketing technique to tie the Inuit people and the Olympic Games together (Kaste, 2010).

What the Olympic games could have done is consulted with elder members of the Inuit groups. The Olympics are a worldwide event which cater to countries around the globe. Over 190 million viewers tuned in to watch the games

(TV by the Numbers, 2010). The 2010 Winter Olympics were the second most viewed games of all time. By having a non-accurate depiction of a traditional Inukshuk as the official logo of the Olympic Games, it eliminated the opportunity to properly inform people on the Inuit culture and customs.

The issue with the Inukshuk as the symbol of the 2010 Winter Olympic Games is not that it was perceived to symbolize friendship, but rather that it minimized the importance it has had to the Inuit people. The Inukshuks have played a large part in their culture, and by overshadowing the symbolic meaning of these statues in the media, who is to say that they won't become another trinket in someone's garden? Even though the Olympic Games incorporated the Inukshuk in hopes to show that Canada stands with their indigenous groups and attempted to show the importance the Inuit people have with Canada, the message was lost in translation.

Media is interpreted differently by every viewer. This is a great example of how cultural appropriation is not limited to racial slurs and stereotypes. Even when the intentions of a company or organization are not to be malicious, incorporating aspects of another culture for personal gain can negatively affect others.

In the upcoming chapter, the focus will be on the uncontacted indigenous tribes of the Amazon. These groups have lived their lives for thousands of years untouched and unplugged from the outside world. By trying to stay away and off of the grid, their isolation has drawn the attention from society. People are curious

of the unknown. The contrast between how mainstream society and these tribes live are on opposite ends of the spectrum. The tribes have made it very clear that they want nothing to do with any outsiders. However, what extent will outsiders go through to make contact for their own personal gain?

CHAPTER THREE
Uncontacted Tribes of the Amazon

It is estimated that there are less than one hundred uncontacted tribes, who have little to no peaceful contact with mainstream society (Quora, 2016). Many of

these tribes have shown no interest in assimilation with the civilized world. These tribes face a difficult choice: “avoid contact at all costs, or risk death from disease and violence at the hands of hired guns, settlers or construction workers” (Watson, 2013). Contact with these native groups could be devastating for their health because they have no immunity to outside diseases. They are much more susceptible to illness, and something as small as the common cold could wipe out an entire village.

In 1910, a military engineer gained the trust of the isolated Nambikwara tribe. He gave one of the chiefs a hug, and by doing so he transferred pathogens which these groups had previously not been exposed to (Kluger, 2015). Over the next three generations, the population of this tribe decreased from 5,000 to 500 people. Many of them were killed by the flu, whooping cough or the common cold which were spread to them by outside majority groups (Kluger, 2015).

This situation sparks many ethical concerns. Is it more ethical to let these people die from diseases, injuries, and illnesses in which there are cures for? Or is it best to leave them alone like they have been for thousands of years? If left alone, is it because their lives aren’t as important as those in mainstream society (Kluger, 2015)? Media coverage regarding the mass extinction of these groups is scarce. Up until this past decade, society seems to have an ‘out of sight out of mind’ mentality towards these tribes. Because little is known about them, there is less to report on. This is still the same today; however, the more technology improves, the more invasive humanity becomes.

On November 17, 2018, John Allen Chau, an American missionary from Alabama, ventured to the North Sentinel island with a group of local fishermen with the goal of preaching Christianity to the islanders. Once arriving on the island, Chau was killed by members of the Sentinelese tribe who inhabit this area. In 2017, the Indian government passed legislation to make it illegal to take videos or photos of these tribes. Doing so could result in imprisonment of up to three years (American 'Killed in India by Endangered Andamans tribe', 2018). Instead of punishing the natives for their actions, the government has taken their side, and instead holds anyone who comes into contact with these tribes accountable for their actions.

The fear of the outside world that has been instilled into these tribe's minds is understandable. For decades, colonization and contact with Europeans has wiped out millions of tribespeople as a result of imported diseases (Kluger, 2015). The government is also unable to prohibit this type of violence from the tribespeople because they are not able to arrest them like anyone else. Many of these tribes have made it clear that they want nothing to do with the outside world. All the government can do is warn outsiders about the dangers associated with contacting these tribes for both the traveler and the tribespeople. (American 'killed in India by endangered Andamans tribe', 2018) It is up to the media to assist the government in increasing awareness of these dangers.

National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) officials have also been monitoring other uncontacted tribes in the area via drone. Even though this is a noninvasive

way to monitor the uncontacted tribes in this area, it raises the ethical question of consent. These people being monitored have not given their consent to be constantly observed. Even if it is for their own benefit, where is the line drawn. Is consent not required when filming these people simply because they lead a primitive lifestyle?

Another issue with releasing the footage to the public was that it could potentially incite people to seek out these tribes on their own. People like John Allen Chau who are willing to go the extra mile to come in contact with these groups, do not realize the long-lasting impact they can have on their lives. FUNAI decided it was worth it to publish this footage to the public because they feel as though the public needs to be aware of these groups and their diminishing status (Wallace, 2018).

Many tour groups have emerged over the past decade offering a glimpse into the lives of tribes' people who have had little to no contact with westerners. Dominant societies have exploited these tribes for entertainment purposes (Christ, 2013). These tours are harmful to the tribes for many reasons. People want to see a different way of life, but by doing so, they are destroying it. In order to do these tours, companies need to provide vehicles, accommodation, food, and other tourism services. A video from one of these tours shows a police officer making girls dance in front of cameras and tourists throwing candy and biscuits to children out of their bus windows. This further encourages the notion of condescension towards the natives due to their primitive lifestyle (Christ, 2013).

These tribes are already quickly decreasing in numbers and by turning them into a tourist attraction, it is only hurting them more. Society has turned these tribes into a spectacle and exploited their Neolithic lifestyle for entertainment purposes.

The only way for tourism to be beneficial to these tribal groups is if it is on their terms. Tribes who have previously come into contact with the outside world can benefit from the money that comes from tourism. For example, the Inuit people of Canada have set up carefully monitored tours in which they showcase their singing technique and ways of foraging for food. By having indigenous groups dictate how tours will happen, they can ensure that it benefits their people first (Christ, 2013).

Similar to these tribes, many other indigenous groups around the globe face similar issues. Native Americans are also often are left few options but to partake in exploitive careers. Hundreds of roadside shops are scattered across the United States claiming to offer ‘authentic’ native artwork and goods. In New Mexico, the Zuni tribe relies heavily on selling handmade arts and goods. In fact, 80 percent of working Zuni adults make arts and crafts for sale (McBrinn et al., 2018). Despite that these shops provide a source of income to many indigenous families; it has become much more difficult over the years to make a living from this.

Many indigenous groups have been undercut by people selling knockoffs made overseas. This not only takes away business from different indigenous groups but also takes away its authenticity. A Navajo jeweler, Liz Wallace, says

that "all this fake stuff feels like a very deep personal attack." Not only does this add more competition to this job market, but arts and crafts are also a way for many indigenous people to feel connected to their culture and history. The longer we allow non-indigenous people to sell knock-off products for profit the sooner the authenticity vanishes (McBrinn et al., 2018).

Many of the indigenous groups I have researched have been exploited in similar ways by majority groups. Whether it be for resources, entertainment purposes, religion, or for someone else's benefit, indigenous groups are often swept to the side because of their minority status. The uncontacted tribes are one of the rarest examples of humanity. Whose job is it to keep it intact? Hopefully, society will look to the past interactions with other indigenous groups, such as the Native Americans, to avoid repeating history.

In the following chapter, we will discuss how Native Americans have been treated like second class citizens. My previous knowledge about Native Americans had been limited to what I had learned in school and have seen on the media. After thinking about it, I realized that I could not list a single indigenous actor. I could not list more than 10 different tribes. I was not aware of the challenges these groups go through on a daily basis. I was ignorant. Considering these groups make up such a big part of United States history, it has shocked me at how little I had learned/remembered about them. Majority groups threaten minorities on all continents, and the Native Americans are a great example of this.

CHAPTER FOUR

Native Americans

How similar are Amazonian people to the Native Americans during colonial times in America? Or to the Māori before Europeans arrived in New Zealand? Indigenous groups have constantly lived through discrimination and exclusion.

In 2019, it is a lot harder to imagine how people can live unplugged, completely separated from civilization. Many people consider the tribe's people to be primitive and lesser then. However, as history repeats itself, the tribes' people are in a similar position to that of the Native Americans. The term Native American refers to the group of people who inhabited the Americas long before the Europeans arrived. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Native Americans make up about 1.5 percent of the population in the United States. They have especially decreased in numbers by means of disease and war over land. In 2017, the tuberculosis rate was almost four times higher for Native Americans than other majority groups. (Office of Minority Health, 2018)

Their falling numbers, however, has not been adequately discussed throughout history and in the media (Than, 2011). In history textbooks, there is more positive information on people like President Andrew Jackson who is responsible for forcefully removing the Cherokee Nation off of their land (Loewen, 2008). Little is discussed about how Native Americans were not even given the chance to succeed in European society (Smithers, n.d.). It was not in the

interest of Europeans to have the Native Americans live vicariously with them. In 1789, the Massachusetts legislature passed a law which prohibited teaching Native Americans how to read and write and doing so was punishable by death (Loewen, 2008). Without the ability to communicate to the masses through print, the Native Americans were at a disadvantage.

Native Americans have been exploited since European explorers arrived in America. They have been forced off of their land for colonial benefit. For example, in result of losing The Battle of Horseshoe Bend in 1814, Native Americans "yielded more than 20 million acres of land to the federal government" (History.com Editors, 2017). Although overt exploitation is not as obvious today, it still continues on the economic front. In 2015, Native Americans had the highest rate of poverty of any racial group in America (Riley, 2016).

In order to combat economic inequality, many Indian reservations have opened casinos and resorts on their sovereign lands in order to generate revenue for the community (Wells, 2010). Casino gambling may seem like a way for tribes to achieve their goals. Unfortunately, history shows that although the tribes do benefit with increased jobs, educational opportunities, and better healthcare options from casinos operations, in many cases an inequitable portion of profits and wealth generated end up off reservation. As of 2017, up to 75 percent of all jobs provided by these casinos go to non-Native Americans (Robertson, 2017).

When colonists first arrived in America, they viewed the natives as savage, uneducated, and barbaric. Print media helped to encourage these

stereotypes. Fictional books about of rape, torture, infanticide, and dismemberment spread through the towns and fascinated the settlers. Newspapers also encouraged violence between the settlers and the natives.

Rewards for killing or capturing Native men, women, and children were placed in articles. “Once war with the Cherokees engulfed South Carolina in 1760, an astounding 30 percent of all stories in the South Carolina Gazette that year, 18 percent in the Pennsylvania Gazette, and more than 15 percent in the New York Gazette were about violence by Native Americans” (González & Torres, 2011).

One of the few activists at this time who spoke with the interest of the natives in mind was Benjamin Franklin. Compared to other articles promoting violence towards the natives, Franklin described an Indian massacre by labeling the natives with words such as ‘innocent’ and ‘murdered’. He worked to change the tone of the news he produced in a way that made the natives appear like the victim instead of the issue, and to show the settlers that the natives did not deserve the treatment they were getting. He was one of the few colonial editors to discourage violence between the Indians and the colonists. However, by having few activists on their side, the media swayed public opinion to view Indians in a negative light. This ultimately led to the discrimination that Native Americans still face on a daily basis.

Many images about Native Americans added to the stereotype of them being barbaric and savage. In the image located above, a white man is about to be killed by the natives. Image 1 depicts him as an innocent man who is being attacked. By having the woman shield him, it makes him appear the victim. Images similar to this one is not uncommon. Colonists were illustrated in ways which made them appear angelic while the natives appeared to look monstrous.

The woman in image above depicts the Europeans coming to America to colonize and improve the lands. Everywhere that the woman has yet to reach is dark and gloomy. The natives in the background are running away, back to the darkness. This adds to the impression that the natives live in the dark and are uncultured and ignorant. Photos like these, even though they do not upfront say anything racist or negative, are to be interpreted by the viewer. The messages they are trying to convey still manage to portray indigenous people in a bad light while the Colonialists thrive on.

CHAPTER FIVE
Māori

Like so many Americans, my knowledge about the Māori came from the media. In the United States, Māori affairs are rarely discussed. It was not until I went to see it firsthand, that I was able to get a new understanding of these people's lifestyles and history. New Zealand, from an outsider's perspective, seems to be a nation which greatly appreciates and is proud of their Māori roots. In the Auckland International Airport, many guests who arrive and leave different terminals are surrounded by Māori design elements. In 2019, Dr. Johnson Witehira, a well-known Māori artist, helped transform the airport by making Māori design more prominent in the environment. He "hopes that these designs will take travelers on their own journey through parts of the Māori world, as they wait to take their venture into the outside world" ("New Māori look for Auckland Int. Airport ", 2019).

When pop singer Billie Eillish flew into the Auckland Airport later that year, she was greeted by a traditional welcome by a Māori Hatea Kapa Haka group who performed one of her songs to her in their native Māori language (Friedlander, 2019). These both are examples of how integrated life appears to be with Māori and Non-Māori. Considering the Māori ethnic population makes up

only 15 percent of New Zealanders, their culture is visibly prominent throughout the nation from the moment you enter the country.

Despite their physical presence in New Zealand, Māori visibility within the media is scarce. Few media sources covered the Auckland Airport's Māori design transformation, and those who did were primarily Māori newspapers. In an Interview with Atamira Walker, a New Zealand native who affiliates with Te Arawa, Te Whānau-a-Apanui, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Te Wairoa, Ngapuhi Nui Tonu and Ngāi Tūhoe, she writes, "Māori customs and history are often ignored and the only picture people see are poi, songs and warriors - and that's all Māori culture is to them and it's so much more. The true history of the Māori people is barely educated amongst New Zealanders today." Even though the nation is taking steps to incorporate Māori culture into everyday life, many people still perceive Māori individuals from a stereotypical viewpoint. Walker faces discrimination on a daily basis: "I've been thrown the assumption that I only eat certain things, less veggies more meat. People say all we do is sing, that we are lazy, unemployed, and that I come from a poor family with no idea of the world."

Despite the nation's efforts to integrate the cultures, there needs to be education among the public of the history, issues, and affairs of this indigenous group. With the Māori population growing, the press has a social responsibility to provide unbiased coverage of Māori affairs to the public. Reverend G. I. Laurenson, Superintendent of Home and Māori Missions for the Methodist Church declared at a 1951 annual meeting of the Māori section of the National

Council of Churches that, “There is a very deep ignorance of the Māori needs on the part of many Pakehas (a person who is not of Māori descent). This is evidenced by careless handling and featuring and headlining of news bearing on Māori people in many newspapers.”

The Māori are under-represented in media. When they are represented, the issues that are covered do not represent the Māori population as a whole, and instead focus on topics which have a detrimental impact of non-Māori perceptions of Māori. A study from the Canterbury University College which evaluated New Zealand’s most reputable daily and weekly newspapers revealed that “almost 50 percent of the attention value (Each item was given an attention score in order to determine how much information was devoted to the various aspects of Māori news) for the year in the papers of the four main urban areas was concerned with crime, sport and accidents—in that order of importance, with the amount of attention value ranging between 43 percent as the lowest proportion given by any of the papers and 53 percent as the highest.” By only focusing on the negative aspects of Māori culture, it does not allow people to learn about their cultures, it instead perpetuates negative stereotypes and opinions of the group. By not running stories that reflect all of society, the media is adding a layer of bias against the Māori through selection omission. “The categories of health, housing, liquor, land, religion, race relations, education, employment and politics together only managed to achieve on the average 27 percent of the year's total attention value in the main urban dailies and 23 percent in the remainder of the sample”

(Thompson, 1953). If society bases their views on the Māori based solely on what they read in the news; their views could be one-sided. According to Walker, "people are so easily convinced just because of what they see every day.

Similar to the Native Americans, Walker also revealed that language has played a huge role in her culture. In 1867, the Native Schools Act decreed that English should be the only language used in the education of Māori children. As a result, multiple generations of Māori had their language beaten out of them by schoolteachers and were not allowed to speak the only language they knew. This continued for over a hundred years, English became the predominant language while te Reo Māori (the Māori language) became "a dying language". Furthermore, the Māori people were a fading race. Walker's grandparents were never taught the Reo Māori as their parents did not want them to face the potential repercussions at school. It was also considered a "waste of time" to learn or speak the Māori language as it was dying, and English was encouraged to get further in life. Consequently, Walker's parents do not speak te Reo Māori either.

Walker said she is privileged to have been born in the age of the Māori language revitalization. "There are still Māori out there who struggle to feel connected to their own people because of this, and there are still many who have to take out loans to learn a language that was stolen from them." Although they have come a long way, they still have a long way to go.

The Māori have been portrayed as uncivilized, savage, violent, ignorant and indolent by the European observers (Salmond, 1997). There have been many

studies which have shown how the media has perpetuated racism, marginalized Māori, and has damaged social cohesion. “The cumulative effect of negative coverage and the absence of good news is perceived as entrenching an overall negativity” (Abel, n.d.). There is also an alarming amount of “Good Māori/Bad Māori discourse in the media. Māori are either portrayed as a “Good Māori” who are law-abiding individuals which fit in with colonial society, or a “Bad Māori” who resist change, seek restitution, or whose views do not align with other majority groups. “It is rare for such contrasts to be made in such a way that Māori appear better than Pakeha; almost every negative statistic from violence to socio-economic status is presented as an implicit comparison with Pakeha that makes Māori look bad” (Barnes, et al., 2012). This contrast supports the media agenda that non-Māori media have the ability and right to judge the Māori, but not the other way around. This produces a hierarchy of cultures, with the Māori on the bottom.

Choosing which indigenous groups to focus on for my research was not done at random. From the start I wanted my research to be able to tie into my personal life and experiences. While my travels to New Zealand sparked my interests in the Māori, being originally from Quebec, CA, had influenced me to also research the Aboriginals of Canada.

CHAPTER SIX

Teresa Edwards on Aboriginal Issues in Canada

When concerning Indigenous Canadians, also known as the Aboriginals of Canada, the media has both hurt and helped their journey towards equality. This chapter addresses the struggles Indigenous people have faced and how they have used social media and the press to try to combat it. Teresa Edwards is a Mi'kmaq woman and a member of the Listuguj First Nation. She has devoted her life to advocating for indigenous people. "As a member of Status of Women Canada (SWC), Edwards worked with the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) to secure funding for the Sisters In Spirit initiative, a research, education, and policy initiative aimed at raising public awareness about the growing number of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada. Working with SWC, and as a Consultant and Legal Counsel representing Aboriginal organizations and governments, Edwards organized the FPT Policy Forum on Aboriginal Women and Violence: Building Safe and Healthy Families and Communities, and was part of the Planning Committee for the two National

Aboriginal" (Aboriginal Self-Governance in North America) She still continues to advocate for Indigenous rights at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and with the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Edwards has seen and experienced firsthand how the media has played a role with the Aboriginal community throughout her career. Edwards spoke of her involvement in peaceful protests with other Aboriginal men and women. She explained that when native people were doing a peaceful protest, for example on an issue surrounding their health concerns, they would reach out to local news sources to try to get coverage of their protest and to raise awareness. The government would come in to control the media and potentially kill all the stories regarding the protests.

Because all of the stories had to be passed by the senior editor of the news stations, many people from higher positions would urge them to cut the stories, and they often did. Having scarce media coverage to begin with, and then being restricted even more by the government and other influencers higher in power, limits public awareness on the issues Indigenous groups are facing on a daily basis.

On the other hand, Edwards has praised social media for giving the opportunity for Aboriginal people to build allies. It has allowed outsiders to receive information that they previously were not able to get through traditional media about what is going on in their communities and around the world.

A good example of this is the Pipeline protests. The Coastal GasLink was set to be placed throughout British Columbia in order to provide gasoline to a liquified natural gas terminal which was being built at the time. However, 28 percent of this pipeline would pass through the land of the indigenous group, the Wet'suwet'en. They argued that they were being forcibly removed off of their lands and that the pipeline project would have detrimental impacts on the nearby forests and rivers (Explainer: Why are indigenous groups protesting a Canada gas pipeline, 2020). Compared to other protests Edwards described this event as ending "rather peacefully." She claims that even though some indigenous members were still treated poorly and were even arrested, it was nothing in comparison to what would have happened in the past because there is a public eye on what is going on. Many non-native people help to spread the stories of injustices that indigenous people are facing, by recording what is actually happening and posting it online. The rise of social media has given everyone a voice to be heard, and because so many people are now able to share content instantaneously, it makes it so that traditional news sources and the government are not able to set their own agenda of what they want the public to see and hear. "It has actually been beneficial for Indigenous people overall. If it weren't for social media, and all of the young activists and environmentalists standing up and recording everything, a lot more people probably would have been arrested or even killed" said Edwards.

In the 1990s, Edwards reflects on a time when she went to the Kanesatake, a community outside of Oka, QC, to support the Mohawk aboriginal group. It was there that she and her cousins smuggled food by boat for the Mohawk elders and children who wouldn't leave to show their support for their sister Mohawk lands which were being seized by the government to expand a golf course onto ancestral burial grounds of the Kanesatake in the Pines. To try to get the indigenous members to leave, the members were harassed with death threats, helicopters with large lights would parade around the area all night to spark fear in the community and prevent anyone from getting any sleep, and many more forms of intimidation. Edwards responded to an emergency work call while being there, which sent her to a nearby hotel to help the many Aboriginal youth had been transported there. While there, Edwards saw first-hand many instances of children who would commit suicide or overdose because of the constant fear they were living in that either themselves or their families were going to be killed.

In a letter of support for the Mohawk, John Ciaccia, Quebec's Minister of Native Affairs, wrote "these people have seen their lands disappear without having been consulted or compensated, and that, in my opinion, is unfair and unjust, especially over a golf course" (Alanis, 2010). After being in Kanesatake for a while, Edwards briefly left to go to Vermont for a weekend. When she arrived there, she met a group of Americans who explained their disbelief that she was allowed to leave Canada because they had heard in the media that "the Natives have had all of the borders closed and surrounded by guns." According to

Edwards, it seemed as though the media had tried to vilify the natives to justify bringing in the army. All of the people she spoke to were shocked at the discrepancies between what they were hearing from their media, and what was actually going on. The media still attempts to do the same today but not nearly as much because there is so much exposure from people's cell phones and social media, they can't get away with it like they used to.

Many people had resentment toward the Mohawk and accused them of being violent and for being the reason for road closures and closures. What they did not put into perspective was that 10 years prior, aboriginal groups went to the oil companies offering alternative routes through their lands that would not affect their burial grounds. The oil company denied their offer because it would cost them more money. By trying to push through their plans at the quickest and cheapest way possible while disregarding the concerns of the aboriginal groups, the Oil company ends up spending way more money on court fees, delays, property damage, and ultimately never even completes the project.

Social media is what keeps many indigenous groups alive. It gives them power in numbers, allows them to educate people on indigenous affairs, and helps to connect to other indigenous groups and the world about issues that would otherwise be shut down by the government. Edwards hopes that as social media grows, the cases of missing and murdered indigenous women will grow in the media spotlight as well. Multiple indigenous women were suspected to be murdered by Paul Bernardo in Saskatoon. At the same time, stories of multiple

other white women who were also murdered by Bernardo were flooding the news.

In 2001, Edwards attended a peaceful protest to support her friend Terry Brown whose sister had been murdered. They set up candles, posters, and hung banners in honor of the woman who was murdered. There were no further investigations on her murder, so many people came together to host an event that they called “Stolen Sister” to raise awareness on Valentine’s Day. Edwards and other supporters called up all of the local news stations and reporters to get the story covered. They all showed up with their camera crews to get the story of why this group of protesters were there. Once the protesters went home, they turned on the television in hopes that their cause would be plastered over the news. The only coverage that they saw was that of a naked man running down the streets of Ottawa in a cupid costume. Once again, indigenous affairs were swept under the rug and were not properly represented.

In Edwards’ career, she has constantly struggled with trying to get non-indigenous people to try to become more educated on what is going on in their communities and the inequalities these minority groups face on a daily basis. It is not an easy thing to change the agenda of the media. However, with the rise of social media, education is one of the best ways to change public perception. It is very difficult to change generations of stereotypes and media bias, however, with small steps, we are becoming more aware of public occurrences and are able to take action.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion

Questions remain about the ethical repercussions of the media's involvement in indigenous affairs. Due to the fact that they have been inadequately represented in the media, society has based their worth off of how other people portray them. Justice issues, health concerns, and economic struggles that these indigenous groups face are swept under the rug by society.

Should uncontacted tribes be left alone? For the past 60,000 years these tribes have lived on their own. They are aware of the civilization that lurks outside of their communities, and yet they have shown no interest in assimilating with their ways of life. When John Chau tried to preach his religion to the tribes, they made it clear they wanted nothing to do with him and shot him with arrows. They have made it very clear that they want to be left alone and they should have that right.

Many would argue that by leaving the tribes alone, we are allowing them to die from illnesses and injuries that are easily cured. We are allowing them to continue living the way they have for thousands of years. Because these groups live in a time period in which resources are diminishing at an incredibly high rate, their land is more and more likely to be under attack. Without the governments of these areas monitoring how outsiders interact with the natives, who knows how far people would go to be one of the first individuals to come in contact with these natives. As technology improves and social media grows more important in people's everyday lives, it is easy to assume that there will be people who attempt to contact these tribes' people for their own personal gain.

As cities and modern life develop, more people are drawn to the stark contrast between modern daily life and cultures that harken back to a way of life that most of us only read about in history books. Journalists want to be the first to break the story that taps into the lives of these untouched groups. In 2011, a photograph of Amazonian Natives was taken and once posted, received huge

exposure from mainstream society. The photo was of a nameless tribe staring overhead at an airplane passing by. Once the images were posted, “Survival International, an NGO that is campaigning for the tribe's protection, says that it has had nearly 1.2m page views on its website in three days, compared to an average of about 15,000 a day” (Vidal, 2011).

People are invested in the unknown and have a love for the unusual. By seeing these tribes living their primal lifestyle, it sparks a level of interest among everyone around them. People want to know what it would be like living in their shoes. They are fascinated by the way they separate themselves with mainstream society, and how they have no interest in assimilating. “Less than 36 hours after the pictures were posted on websites, the Peruvian foreign ministry leapt into action, announcing it would immediately work with Brazil to stop the loggers entering the tribe's territory along the joint border” (Vidal, 2011). The government had failed to protect these groups and has had an out of sight out of mind mentality towards these tribes for a long time. The overwhelming amount of publicity of these photos provided the necessary push for government intervention. There is a thin line of how the media can help or hurt these tribes. Too little exposure can lead to the lack of regulations and awareness of the group's affairs. However, too much exposure can lead to unwanted contact between these tribes and the rest of society. There needs to be a fine line drawn when it comes to the interaction of these groups and the outside world, but who is responsible for drawing that line? Much of media coverage is looking to exploit

these groups for entertainment, or a good feature story will only end up hurting the tribes. Media coverage for research purposes is still a matter of ethics. It can help to inform society of these people and how to protect them, but once that information is in the hands of the public, there is no saying what people will do with it for their own personal gain.

Whose responsibility is to protect these rare examples of humanity? Every time we interact into the lives of these uncontacted tribes, we gain a small insight as to how they go about life, but what is lost? Similar to the current Covid-19 pandemic, it is a metaphor for life. Sometimes social distancing is required to keep communities safe. Why is it that when these small indigenous communities are plagued by viruses unknown to them, we brush it off and let them die, yet continue to try to make contact? However, when the rest of the world faces a similar issue, panic ensues and suddenly society is looking out for each other and doing everything possible to combat the issue?

As the Covid-19 storyline continues to unfold, media has coined the tagline “we are all in this together.” What does this mean? Hopefully one of the silver linings once the pandemic fades will be that the concept that we are all on one planet, interconnected together, and how actions cause reactions that are unforeseen no matter your geography, race, or culture.

One of the goals in teaching history class is to try to educate society’s youth to ensure that they learn from mistakes of the past to avoid repeating them. With this being said, what if these mistakes are not covered in schools? What if

mistakes, clouded by biased, among historians and the media, were not addressed properly? Unfortunately, this has been a far too uncommon fault when reporting on indigenous groups regardless of geography or race. The uncontacted tribes of the Amazon are one of the few hidden gems in the world who have avoided assimilation and survived as an independent culture for over 55,000 years. Will it be our generation that destroys them? Despite government regulations, these tribes are not completely untouched from the outside world. Local food sources have been depleted over the past century because of poachers who steal their game. Consequently, this forces them to change their diets and way of life passes down from ancestors. Although their lands are supposed to be closed to the public, roads crisscross the region, making contact more likely.

Many tribes have made it known that they do not want to assimilate into society. However, soon they may have no choice. If the amount of connection they are receiving from the outside world continues, they will either be forced to assimilate or will go extinct.

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