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“It’s all about love”: Tantoo Cardinal and modern day
Canadian indigenous activism

Bakalářská práce

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Prohlašuji, že jsem práci vypracovala samostatně. Všechny použité prameny a literatura byly řádně citovány. Práce nebyla využita k získání jiného nebo stejného titulu.

V Praze dne 27. 6. 2018

.....

podpis

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INTRODUCTION

“I come from the people who have a relationship with Mother Earth ... My mother’s people carry that knowledge, and the forces that came here and took over the land, they are the ones that have to learn that yet... Mother Earth is about balance. And we are not walking in a balanced way right now.”

Tantoo Cardinal¹

Canada is one of many states where indigenous² peoples and their colonisers live side by side in today’s societies³, yet they “...remain virtually invisible and relatively absent from the collective consciousness of most Americans.” (Grande 1999:307) Some might say that the relationship between the Canadian First Nations and the rest of Canada’s inhabitants is somewhat harmonic. However, the shadow of past events will never entirely disappear from the public consciousness⁴. As long as it is still alive in people’s memories, the issues experienced by members of the first nations are still tangible, and to assume that they are going away would be short-sighted⁵.

Many works have been dedicated to stereotypes concerning the First Nations/Native Americans. In a number of them, they are frequently perceived as the carriers of wisdom, peace and nostalgia, or alternatively they are seen to be the spiritual keepers of land (Bird 1999), some even go as far as to refer to them as eco-gurus or eco-saviours (Grande 1999:313). Such views are often criticised by the First Nations/Native Americans themselves

¹ Transcript 26, 6:59

² Throughout this thesis, the term indigenous will be used in line with (Sjørøsløv 2001) and (Šavelková 2010) as an overarching term for all native people. When referring specifically to Canadian indigenous people, the term First Nations will be used, while indigenous people from USA are referred to as Native Americans. However, the term Indian remains if it figures in the original text quoted or when it expresses a certain publicly recognized and frequently used phrases.

³ Transcript 23, 4:47

⁴ Transcript 12

⁵ Transcript 18, 5:14

(Deloria 1997), as well as by many scholars (Grande 1999; Bird 1999; O'Connor 1993), mostly critiquing such approach for its dehumanizing effect and objectification. Naturally, there are many conclusions claiming the opposite to be true (Krech 2000), and even within different tribes, a consensus is not always reached about the grounding behind these claims and stereotypes⁶. Nevertheless, it is often the case that public discourse creates, uses and adopts these stereotypes and reiterates them as the truth (Nedbálková 2007; Bird 1999). The goal of this work is not to judge which claim is agreed on by the majority. Rather, at the centre of all endeavours made while writing this thesis was a fairly simple goal - to understand what such stereotypes can connote when experienced in the life of a single human being.

Using an anthropological perspective, this thesis attempts to capture, in general terms, how indigenous identity can be articulated within environmental activism, and the different ways in which First Nations/Native Americans articulate their claims. Furthermore, it will aim to capture the strategies they implement in order to achieve them. More specifically, it will deal with one of the most significant Canadian environmental indigenous activists - Tantoo Cardinal.

The number of academic works on First Nations/Native Americans and the environment is substantial. These strive to make scientific sense and use scientific approaches, and work to analyse whether First Nations/Native Americans are the environmentalists they are stereotyped to be. Many academics approach this question from an anthropological perspective and in most cases, they are inclined to either agree that First Nations/Native Americans are truly the first ecologists, or alternatively they go strictly against this claim (Krech 2000; Anderson 1997). However, they often adopt a corrective tone, which is frequently based not only on hard data, but more often than not also on 'polemical backlash' illustrating their rather personal views, while failing to recognise the natives as a valid source of information (Grande 1999:314). There are also large quantities of research referring to topics such as First Nation's/Native American's identity (Šavelková 2010), or native human rights (Anaya 2004).

In this research, a mainly anthropological lens will be employed, with the implementation of qualitative research methods. While a personal anthropological background

⁶ Diamond, Bainbridge, and Hayes 2009

stands behind the first decisions in the pre-empirical phase, the research method has been chosen due to the subject of this work. By focusing on a single person, a qualitative research strategy will allow an attempt to capture the various factors regarding the individual, whilst enabling a deeper level of understanding to be acquired (Novotná 2009).

It was initially the geographical inaccessibility of Cardinal that has shaped the direction of this research and the choice of methods made during its construction. The most significant decision which directly succeeded the realisation that travelling to Canada in person isn't economically viable, was the choice of data sources. Information from publicly available sources, mainly via the internet, will serve as a primary source of data. These materials in their 'raw' form will be either in audio-visual or written format and therefore transcription will be essential in the first case, while the latter will remain unchanged. These will be subsequently analysed.

The aim of this work is the attempt to understand Cardinal's environmental activism whilst simultaneously capturing how she navigates her identity in the public sphere. Other goals will be to deconstruct and interpret significant features and themes within the discourse of Cardinal's activism, and consequently analyse how she navigates her own narrative within the public sphere.

The first chapter of this thesis will address the methodology used, elaborate on the research questions as well as describe how the field was constructed, and shed some light on positioning. The second chapter is dedicated entirely to ethics, especially on ethical issues regarding copyright, as well as the specific ethical considerations connected to working with publicly available sources. The third chapter refers to theoretical framing and will explain the key concepts used in this work.

Analytical procedures will be described in the fourth chapter, explaining the reasoning behind using particular analytical methods and elaborating on why some others were not applied. The fifth chapter is dedicated to the methods used, focusing on transparency in particular, especially regarding the video selection process. In the sixth chapter, the background of the data is referred to, elaborating on certain phenomena which might not be generally known in other than North American context.

And finally, the seventh, analytical chapter, is divided into 3 subchapters, each of them referring to a key theme within the data – activism, indigenouslyness, and personal narrative. The last of the aforementioned involves an attempt to (re)construct Cardinal’s biography.

Tantoo Cardinal

Cardinal is foremost a renowned Canadian actress, her most celebrated and well-known roles include films such as *Dances with Wolves*, *Smoke Signals*, *Legends of the Fall*, or *The Education of Little Tree*⁷. Alongside this, she has also won a BAFTA award⁸ and is referred to as one of the best know actors in Canada⁹. Thanks to her position of fame, she is able to talk to the general population through appearances on various media and she skilfully uses this platform to bring attention to her environmental and activist messages. In this way she stands out as a prominent figure, which allows her to achieve her activist goals in a way which would have been very challenging otherwise.

Cardinal devotes her time to various issues alongside acting, often in the field of environmental activism. The most recent of these include ground water protection, tar sands exploitation, and protests against the building of gas pipes (e.g. Keystone XL pipeline), where she is a visible public opponent to these developments. She was also an active supporter of the *Idle no more*¹⁰ movement and took part in the Paris Climate Conference in 2015 (COP21)¹¹. All her activities include not only the First Nations/Native Americans aspect of things, but she was able to step out of the domain of national borders and become part of global *indigenous network* focusing mostly on environmental issues, of which she has become a significant figure and a voice.

She often appears on national television, and there are countless examples of her work visible and freely available on the internet. It is a significant part of her activism to contribute

⁷ ‘Tantoo Cardinal - The Canadian Encyclopedia’ n.d.

⁸ “The British Academy of Film and Television Arts - BAFTA - is a world-leading independent arts charity.“ (‘About’ 2014)

⁹ Transcript 21

¹⁰ The Idle No More movement is further elaborated upon in the chapter 6.1.

¹¹ ‘Indigenous Environmental Network Delegation Travels to Paris for UN Climate Talks’ n.d.

to social networks (e.g. Twitter) as well as inspire others through various media realms, the latter will be the main focus of analysis within this research. The aim therefore, is not to clarify how indigenous identity is used in general, but to discuss how it is articulated and presented specifically by the activist Tantoo Cardinal.

Besides themes of identity and environmentalism, other topics will be dealt with within this research, these will be identified through their relevance towards these two main themes as well as the research questions. For this reason, this thesis will undoubtedly tackle for example, the conception of native human rights, or stereotypes generally associated with First Nations/Native Americans as such.



Source: Indian Country Today¹²

Interviewer: “So ... you're arrested in Washington?”

Tantoo: “Mm-hmm.”

Interviewer: “And how was that?”

Tantoo: “It was good.”¹³

¹² ‘Aboriginal Actress Tantoo Cardinal Arrested at DC Keystone Pipeline Protests - IndianCountryToday.Com’ n.d.

¹³ Transcript 19, 0:00



Source: The New York Times, Marta Iwanek/Toronto Star, via Getty Images¹⁴

“(...) all of this is important for helping people to remember where we come from. We come from the Earth. And it’s been our responsibility all along and here we have the opportunity to share some of that wisdom.”¹⁵

¹⁴ Buckley 2017

¹⁵ Transcript 26, 2:32

1. METHODOLOGY

This section will provide a detailed outline of the research proposal, introduce the research questions, and give a sketch of the research strategy to be implemented. Further on, more will be said about the field and its construction, as well as about its positioning.

1.1. Research proposal

As a research proposal of this thesis, the topic opted for is that of environmental thinking within the activism of Tantoo Cardinal – a member of Canada’s First Nations. The main research question is as follows:

- How does Tantoo Cardinal articulate her identity within her environmental activism?

1.1.1. Research questions

- How does Cardinal reflect on the associations between First Nations/Native Americans and environmentalism?
- How does she reflect upon the current state of the environment?
- Within which paradigms is she navigating while achieving her activist goals?
- What narrative does she use within the perception of her own identity?
- How does she utilize this narrative within her activism?
- Which meanings and contexts does she employ while constructing her identity?

1.1.2. Research strategy

Due to the disposition of this research having a single human being at the centre of it, the work will be executed using a qualitative research strategy and the principle of inductive reasoning. The main rule throughout the whole writing process has been having a constantly open mind towards new ideas and “...allowing questions to lead to methodology (rather than vice versa)” (Nader 1972).

Corresponding with the research proposal, this strategy will allow for attempts to capture the variables regarding an individual, whilst enabling the acquisition of a deeper level of understanding (Novotná 2009). Therefore, the ambition won't be a verification of any hypothesis. Neither will it be to strive to decide whether any statements and stereotypes regarding the relationship between First Nations/Native Americans and the environment are right or wrong. The main goal of this research in particular is an effort to understand the relationship between the two and attempt to become submerged in its intricacies. This work will therefore serve only as a representation of the topic and will refrain from creating any generalisations.

Initially, this research was intended to be conducted on a larger scale, dealing with Canadian indigenous activism as a whole, but after considering the scope of this work, a significantly smaller research area was opted for. Several important decisions were undertaken in the pre-empirical phase (Punch 2008), which have affected both the direction of the research and the understanding of the issue, as well as the applicability of any conclusions. The research alone, and more specifically latter analysis of Cardinal's interviews and speeches, will be carried out using available public sources such as YouTube. At the same time, the origin of most of this data is not YouTube as such, which is something that will be reflected on in this work.

The use of qualitative research design undoubtedly has its limits which have been designated essentially as the following. First of all, it is the positioning of the researcher as well as in this case, the issue of verification of the research results' validity due to its low degree of interactivity. In spite of these, it was found to be that in the case of this research, the positives clearly outweigh the negatives.

1.2. Constructing the field

The research environment is primarily the virtual existence of Tantoo Cardinal on YouTube, a website which allows users to freely upload videos into the public sphere. Internet can be theoretically perceived as a cyberspace, the similarity with an actual field lies in the fact that people are able to regularly meet, talk, and share specific meanings with each other. However,

the approach undertaken employs it rather as a valuable resource of virtual data as well as a source of certain representations, rather than an established field per se.

1.2.1. Anthropology & the internet

Due to the internet being a relatively new arena for social sciences, this section will be dedicated to various conceptualizations of it, in order to be able to explain in detail the decisions made in the pre-empirical stage.

Many approaches can be taken towards the using internet in this way such as cyber, online, digital, or virtual, just to name a few (Varis 2014). Those are mostly concepts created over time when study of the internet has been rapidly evolving and each of them is connected to a particular era as well as a specific approach towards the internet as a research field, tool or even a social phenomenon (Haverinen 2015).

1.2.2. Internet and digital ethnography

In this research, the internet (and YouTube in particular) is approached mostly as a source of data, therefore it is in line with Östman & Turtiainen's category of "internet as a source and the research being placed *on* the internet" (Östman & Turtiainen in Haverinen 2015). Most prominent approach in the anthropological study of the internet is that of digital ethnography (Pink et al. 2015; Varis 2014; Haverinen 2015), applying the understanding of ethnography not as a method, but rather as an approach (Varis 2014) referring to various field sites as well as different theoretical approaches (Haverinen 2015). Those have in common "...that they all include some kind of online data, and they all employ (a particular version or understanding of) ethnography in the research process." (Varis 2014:2).

The most fitting category however, is not purely aligned with digital ethnography which focuses mostly on the social media or internet as a research field, but simply the use of YouTube as a source of data, which Berger considers a perfect way to "...greatly improve the quality and creativity of student research as well as provide material that may be otherwise unavailable to researchers." (Berger 2012)

Using Berger's approach, many aspects of the research became more transparent as he for example makes the distinctions between raw data and the transcripts of those and in line with YouTube's Terms of Service (ToS) as well as anthropological ethics states that "...YouTube videos are considered published material, which are not subject to human subjects research guidelines." (Berger 2012)

1.2.3. Why YouTube

YouTube has over 1 billion users, making it the most prominent video-sharing platform in the world¹⁶. Working with the internet as the primary source of data has many advantages. Amongst the most palpable is undoubtedly an unlimited access to multiple data sources without the existence of a restrictive time frame. There are no temporal and spatial limitations of possibilities as an offline field would have, while having the opportunity to verify the sources used and consequently their context as well¹⁷. However, despite these benefits, it is important to keep in mind that from an anthropological approach, it is essential to ensure that information are not taken out of their original context where they were created (Varis 2014). Based on that, careful consideration and reflection on which sources are trustworthy has been made and the sources not standing up to the standards were left out¹⁸.

1.2.4. Online working environment

Despite initially deciding to work with an online environment for financial and other practical reasons, this decision has shaped this thesis in a whole new and unexpected way. This type of research allowed for a focus on representation of how Tantoo Cardinal navigates her identity and other methods wouldn't be able to offer this viewpoint. A number of considerable opportunities have therefore arisen which couldn't have been otherwise achieved, such as the possibility to include Cardinal's past activities or the use of secondary sources which enriched

¹⁶ 'Press - YouTube' n.d.

¹⁷ This has been done through careful consideration of the channels on which the videos have been published, mostly by estimating whether the content could have been manipulated in any way.

¹⁸ The particulars are described in detail in the chapter 5.1.

this work in an unexpected way. Thus, the data appearing in this thesis are “those already present in the public sphere, therefore not only existing independently of research, but also mostly primarily determined for other purposes” (Silverman 2005:132). This all will raise some issues, dilemmas and give certain limits to the project, however, it will be reflected upon and attempts will be made to prevent incorrect conclusions and interpretations.

Data will not be collected in the true sense of the word, but rather assembled (Heath 1997), and later analysed to allow emergence of new data through a careful selection and construction process. The secondary data will be used for transcripts of audio-visual data, as well as various types of notes and the analysis.

Working with the internet entails a huge volume of available information, which lures towards getting lost in the vastness of potential choices or divert to another topic. The attempt to avoid this will be attained by using keywords and progressive chaining of used sources (including recommended videos on YouTube). It is however assumed that not all relevant data sources will be discovered, and it is likely that some of them will slip under the radar. This will be prevented by careful and systematic work, while at the same time keeping in mind and reflecting on the fact that it won't be completely unavoidable.

At the same time ongoing notes will be written and will be continuously used for self-reflection, analysis, and ensuring the correct direction of the research (Heath 1997).

1.3. Positioning

Despite conducting the research without the physical presence of an informant, it would be wrong to mistake a situated perspective for an objective one (Abu-Lughod 1988). Even though an attempt to get closer to a neutral perspective has been made, the choice of the topic as well as all decisions made along the way, were certainly not (Nader 1972).

1.3.1. Personal statement

I feel it is my obligation to state that I am writing from a position of a young white straight privileged middle-class European female and I have been very aware of this throughout the entire making of this thesis. While applying the post-colonial critique seemed to be an obvious

way to go, after emerging into the study of it, I came to a decision to not attempt to apply it at the end. As much as I would like to do it, I am also aware that this is only a bachelor thesis and my inexperience with writing anthropological research could potentially result in appropriating a decolonizing perspective. This has been assessed as an even worse result than honestly reflecting my positioning and hoping that it will be in my powers to take this approach on board in my future works. The post-colonial approach has been however a useful tool in terms of ethics.

At the same time, I always resonated with the First Nations and besides occasionally coming across ‘the typical negative stereotypes’ from mainstream (mostly Northern American) media, I have never been exposed to any negativity regarding the First Nations. My first personal encounter was an unforgettable one – a volunteering experience at a Women’s Lacrosse World Cup in 2009 where the Haudenosaunee team played.

When first researching my (then) future thesis topic, I stumbled upon Tantoo Cardinal whom I knew previously only as an actress and when I found out about her environmental activism, the topic started crystalizing in my mind. Throughout the writing, I started to identify with Tantoo personally more and more, resonating with her ideas and visions. I am aware of this and attempt to distance my research thinking from my personal one, but I feel the need to reflect upon the fact that it might have an effect on my perspective.

Similarly, I am truly conscious that this might be perceived as another white person getting her degree on the ‘Indians’. As much as I hate this idea, I am grateful for making the decisions I did because I grew a lot as a person, and I truly believe it has helped me to become more educated and knowledgeable regarding the indigenous peoples in general as well as inhibiting my white perspective. I hope this will be visible throughout the whole work.

1.4. Research quality assessment

As has been previously stated, this research does not aspire to capture an objective reality, neither to judge what is ‘truer’. Due to the choice of topic, none of the findings will be generally applicable.

To ensure the correctness of the findings, continuous reflexivity and utmost transparency has been applied throughout this research. These 2 aspects are further elaborated upon throughout this thesis in the chapters where they were most significant.

2. ETHICS

Compared to the ethical perspectives encountered in most anthropological works, this project will fall outside of the common norms due to not being a field research in the usual sense. Some questions of ethics and the procedures which would generally be encountered through doing in situ research are therefore not relevant (Ezzedine et al. 2009).

The question dealt with in the pre-empirical phase was that of informing the subject about this research. Usually, it is a customary step to follow in the context of procedural ethics, however, in this case it has been omitted due to many reasons, one of them was taking into account that “YouTube videos are considered published materials, which are not subject to human subjects research guidelines.” (Berger 2012).

As the origin of all data were publicly available online sources only, there was no direct impact on the informant during the data collection process and therefore it has been concluded that in this instance, it is not a necessary to inform her. The Association of Internet Researchers’ (AoIR) ethical guidelines alludes to (amongst other things) the distinction between public and private and indicates that the “Individual and cultural definitions and expectations of privacy are ambiguous, contested, and changing.” (Markham and Buchanan 2012:6). This has been naturally taken into consideration, concluding that the nature of the data was truly considered public by the informant.

Due to the public nature of all the interviews, speeches and media appearances used within this research, it can be safely assumed that Cardinal must have agreed and understood that each of the outputs will be released in the public sphere and subsequently available for further use and manipulation. Most of the material used in this work does not relate to any truly personal matters, instead, it approaches political and activist topics within the backdrop of identity-related narratives, which serve as a contextualising background for getting Cardinal’s message across.

In the public appearances analysed, she often emphasises the importance of her voice being heard and considers it a key moment in terms of achieving her goals.

“I had to perform the role to the best of my ability. Then I would get another opportunity to tell another story, closer to the truth.”¹⁹

“And it's such a struggle to live as a full human being in this society, when your family's been demolished, your community has been demolished and it has all been demolished. And that's my passion is that I will live. And I will live to tell.”²⁰

Or in another context, talking about herself navigating the arena of storytelling on film, and how important she perceived her mission to be in order to set the record straight and tell her own, and her people's stories.

In a different context, she also mentions not having ‘her own drum’²¹. The highest possible ambition of this thesis is to be the metaphorical drum. It was mainly due to this approach towards her appearances that this thesis doesn't problematize the question of using publicly available data.

Concurrently, if some of the more sensitive data will eventually appear, it will be assumed that once again the very act of public speech holds with it an agreement to its further use. For similar reasons, she will not be anonymised.

One danger of indirect participation remains that, by not carrying out in situ research, it is possible to get an impression that any ethical questions don't concern this work. Thus, the strongest ethical sensitivity will be applied mainly in situations where there is a threat from omission of the context. Whilst reflecting upon the ethics themselves in the following analysis, a great degree of transparency will be achieved by drawing data from the aforementioned publicly available sources

A key ethical aspect of this research has been associated with the issue of copyright. Due to YouTube standing in the centre of this work, YouTube's Terms of Service (ToC) have been studied and in line with the paper of I. Berger, it has been concluded, that the ethical

¹⁹ Transcript 23, 4:58

²⁰ Transcript 1, 5:59

²¹ Transcript 19. Meaning that she didn't have a platform where she could be heard.

consideration of copyright consists of two aspects. a) public use of videos and b) copyright regarding the transcripts (Berger 2012).

a) Public video usage

This ethical aspect consists of issues regarding the direct use of audio-visual material which is considered property of the website provider and such material and "...cannot be played publicly without the consent of the copyright holder." (Berger 2012). After examining the terms and conditions though, it became apparent that as long as such material is only used for educational purposes, it is not considered public if the material is played directly from YouTube (it is prohibited to download the videos) (Berger 2012). Using direct links to the videos in the appendix of this thesis seems to comply with the copyright.

b) Transcript copyright

According to Berger, "A transcript, and especially with specialised notation used in some methods such as conversation analysis, is in most countries copyright the transcriber, not the copyright holder of the recording." (Berger 2012:3). Due to the analysis being conducted with the transcripts, not the video themselves, it doesn't raise many ethical issues. However, all interviews are numbered and indexed with direct links to the original YouTube videos in the appendix to prevent any potential copyright infringement.

Nevertheless, at the core of ethical considerations will be reflexivity of the researcher and reflection of the sources used, and an attempt will be made not only to interpret conclusions based on the views of the informant, but also to minimise any harm that could potentially be caused by this work.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMING

Within this thesis a number of terms will be used such as identity, strategic essentialism, and the concept of indigenusness. In this section, an attempt will be made to position this work within theoretical and conceptual frameworks and ground the research within the appropriate theories.

3.1. Identity

One of the most significant concepts will be that of identity. For this T. H. Eriksen's (2007) understanding of identity will be used, which conceptualizes identity rather as an identification, through which its processuality is allowed to be emphasised, and therefore perceives identity as something flexible and changeable.

This stance is also in line with the perception of identity within the conceptualization of indigenusness according to the United Nations (UN). A UN charter from 1945 states that: "all nations or groups of peoples have the rights of self-determination" (Šavelková 2010:193). That's also one of the reasons why the concept of identity as used within psychology will be irrelevant to this study. In addition, that of social anthropology and sociology will be used, where the emphasis is placed on identity as a question of relations within a group of people (Šavelková 2010:10).

3.2. Indigenous(ness)

Another key term in this research is 'indigenous'. There are many definitions, as well as many different approaches towards this complex phenomenon. In this thesis, primarily the arguments of L. Šavelková will be used, as they associate First Nations/Native Americans within the category of 'native inhabitants of the world', mainly for reasons linked to the "process of construction of this category through the global phenomena and political ideologies" (Šavelková 2010:180).

The construct of indigenusness is significant mainly because of how the indigenous peoples are treated within international discourse, which is essential in order to attain better

chances of achieving their goals globally through environmental activism. This is clearly illustrated in the well-known case of *Lovelace v. Canada*²². Another approach used is that of I. Sjørsløv (2001) which corresponds to and compliments that of Šavelková. Sjørsløv is discussing the category of indigenusness in a human rights context as that is where it has arisen from after the World War II (Sjørsløv 2001). While being aware of its limitations and contradictions (mostly related to the potential misuse of this category due to it being attached to a certain territory), she conceptualizes indigenusness as follows: “As a definitional category ‘indigenous’ bases itself upon self-identification and self-definition as indigenous implies a position that surpasses a national context and bring the whole issue to international realm, where the aim is to acquire a consensus on indigenusness as a universalising political concept.” (Sjørsløv 2001:57).

3.3. Strategic essentialism

One of the key conceptual frameworks, which will be applied in this research, is strategic essentialism. This theory was first devised by G. C. Spivak, a professor who specialises in post-colonial theory. And despite her originally being the main proponent, she later developed many arguments against it.

The main concept of strategic essentialism is that the ones subordinated or marginalised from a power-perspective can, in certain cases, use the rhetoric of the dominant society, and thus successfully achieve their goals by using the language of their colonisers (Spivak and Rooney 1993). In a similar vein, E. Bird formulates a thought which refers to creating popular stereotypization of Indians ‘by and for white culture’, which is often subsequently adopted by the Indians themselves (Bird 1999:62).

²² ‘Sandra Lovelace v. Canada, Communication No. 24/1977: Canada 30/07/81, UN Doc. CCPR/C/13/D/24/1977.’ n.d.

3.4. Environment

Regarding the environment, a theory of Tim Ingold will be applied, which considers the environment as something “what surrounds us and therefore can exist only in relation to that what it surrounds” (Ingold 2008:462).

He therefore designates an environment in relation towards people (and not only people) who inhabit it. In this thesis, the focus will be precisely on this relation, of which Tantoo Cardinal is an embodiment. Even though environmental anthropology won't be entirely omitted, at the core of this thesis will be mainly the conceptualization of the environment which accentuates humans at its centre.

As mentioned earlier, there is a lengthy account of scholarly books and papers dedicated to the connection between First Nations/Native Americans and the environment. Where this connection comes from would be potential for further study, but for the purpose of this thesis, one of the possible explanations could be that of R. White (1985:101), who brought to attention that the popular environmentalism is responsible for this linkage. However, the key notion of his text is critiquing mainly the popular misconception for the following reason. “It would, after all, be extraordinary if communities of hunters and gatherers, or of hoe agriculturalists, or even modern Indians, developed codes of environmental ethics which were on close examination found to have addressed the same problems in the same way as modern environmentalists.” (White 1985:101)

While this text won't attempt to decide to what extent or whether the First Nations/Native Americans were truly environmentalists at all, it will eschew from such judgments also for the reasons that such verdict would be very Western-centred at the very best.

4. ANALYTICAL PROCEDURES

In this chapter, the tools used within the analysis process will be described.

4.1. Transcripts

Since all data in this thesis was sourced via the internet, it is all in its “raw” form digital. All of the data used was originally audio-visual, to be more specific, they were YouTube videos. The key consideration, in particular while dealing with audio-visual data, was therefore their direct transcription and subsequent analysis by segmentation and coding.

4.2. Coding methods

Due to the nature of the research, the complexity and number of information sources used, a programme for qualitative data analysis ATLAS.ti was used. This allowed for better insight into the issue; and for disclosing the links between certain data which would otherwise have remained hidden (Konopásek 1997). Concurrently it was not expected that the use of such method of analysis would lead towards the programme being used as an 'autonomous actor within the interpretive process' (Konopásek 1997:53). Due to a number of reasons however, including the possession of the basic version and a personal preference of non-digital methods, ATLAS.ti served predominantly as an efficient accompaniment to the "scissors and glue" method (Konopásek 1997) rather than as a significant extension in the analysis process.

The latter - manual coding method, which will be described in detail below, proved to be better suited for this thesis as well as the needs of the researcher in terms of unravelling a more digestible visualisation regarding the codes, it has been used for all of the transcripts. ATLAS.ti has been used for a couple of transcripts. Following this the results from both methods were combined and any direct quotes were grouped together within two different documents. Later, the coding made on ATLAS.ti was incorporated into a single document with those coded manually to allow for easier manipulation.

Using this document, the process of analysis continued, using the strategies and theories sketched in chapter 7. Following this, narrative analysis was conducted on each of the

codes to allow for the string of narrative strategy to emerge. Simultaneously, the data has undergone a process of manual coding.

4.3. Coding

Within this method, open coding was applied and thus space has been made for inductively generated codes to emerge (Strauss and Corbin 1999:42). Within the coding process, most of attention was focused towards the themes of identity, activism and the environment, but simultaneously, all re-emerging topics were considered as well. The importance of those main themes was based mostly on the choice of relevant material early in the pre-empirical stage where audio-visual material concerning predominantly those themes was used. Despite an inclination towards the aforementioned key themes, the research had an unwinding character.

4.3.1. Code Tree

After manual coding of the transcribed audio data, all codes were written down into a single document. These were then used in order to create a comprehensive code tree which would reflect the particular meanings of each and every code as well as to create thematic clusters for each topic which emerged from the data. The code tree was a very helpful tool in terms of visualising the key themes within the data, however it has its limits - the main one being a linear hierarchical structure which doesn't allow for the interconnectedness of the themes to reveal. This is why it has been approached only as a complementary tool, not the main strategy for the analysis.

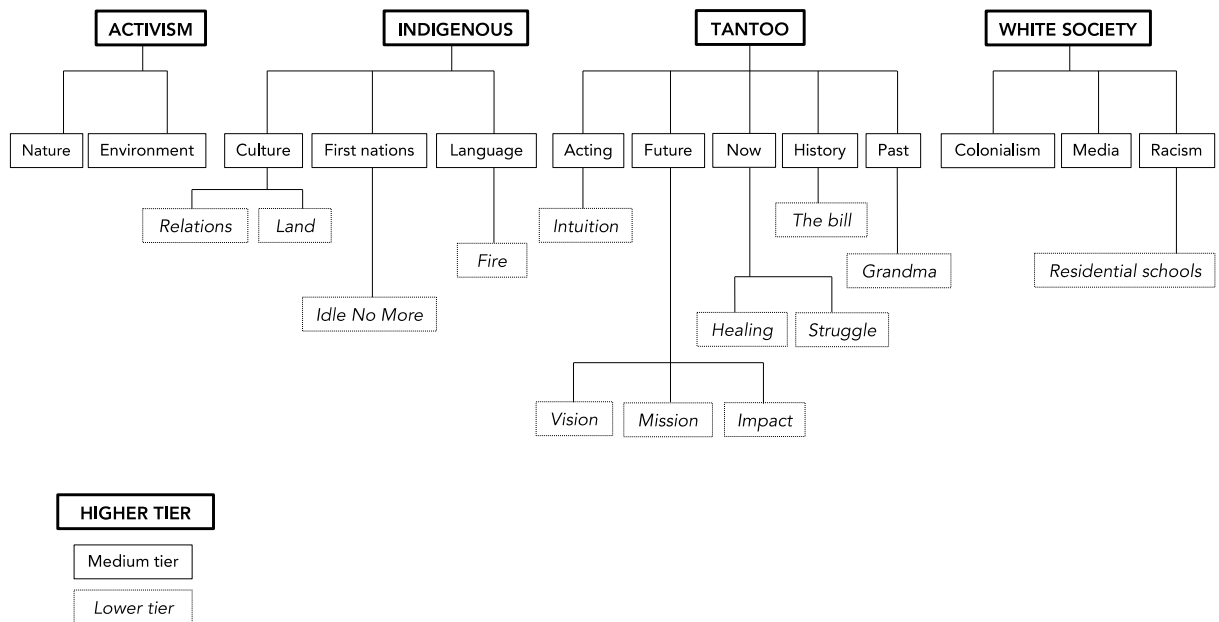
The production of a code tree applied the “scissors and glue” method, which involved cutting up the codes and creating a tree which was later revised against the coded material and eventually rearranged in order to be as cohesive as possible. Using this method allowed for visualisation of the material and mostly serves for visualisations purposes.

In total, 3 tiers of codes were identified and aligned in terms of their importance and frequency of use, as well as consideration of their meaning and whether it was a general term or a specific one. This method resembles a genealogy rather than anything else and its meaning is not to ascribe value to any of the codes, but rather to allow the researcher to create

a system in which the codes are used. That being said, the codes on ‘lower tiers’ are not more meaningless than the ones on ‘higher tier’ and the distinction serves merely for purposes of this analysis. Altogether, 30 codes were identified - out of which 4 were on the higher tier, 13 on the medium tier and 13 on the lower tier. Figure 1 below shows an illustrated representation of the code tree created.

Figure 1

Figure 1: Code tree



4.5. Visual analysis

Visual analysis won't be used due to multiple reasons. (1) Most significantly, it is the nature of Cardinal's activism which led research towards focusing more on the message rather than the form. Even though she occasionally shows some 'stereotypically First Nations/Native Americans' traits such as braids, it is not an essential part of her activism. This might be due to her nation-wide fame which is responsible for an in-built recognition of her First Nation

identity (mostly due to her roles being exclusively 'Indian') within the crowds and conducting a visual analysis would provide sufficient amount material for another research topic. From a European perspective, it is likely that the way in which she presents herself does not immediately awake the 'First Nation' stereotype, and it appears that she doesn't deliberately aim towards it. (2) At the same time, her identity is often stressed in her speeches so there seems to be not much need to analyse her appearance for the purpose of this work. (3) And finally, many of the videos are either static, or filmed with a hand-held camera, recorded in lower quality, or simply filmed from too afar which would make visual analysis quite challenging.

At the same time, it ought to be clarified that the visual aspect hasn't been omitted in the analysis due to low level of corresponding value, quite the contrary. It is believed that visual elements are important in order to fully understand and interpret a personal narrative (Andrews, Squire, and Tamboukou 2008:11). However, it would be too challenging to address these within the current scope of this work.

The combination and consideration of all the aforementioned reasons led to the decision that using visual analysis wouldn't significantly enrich this research (at least in the current scope), nevertheless, it is an area for further investigation.

5. METHODS

This chapter will lay out the steps taken in undertaking this research and highlight the reasons behind these steps. Furthermore, explanations will be given regarding the procedures used to manage data.

5.1. Video selection process

Due to all data in this thesis originating on the internet, a transparent and very detailed video selection process was considered essential and was undertaken in order to prevent any confusion as well as to unravel the procedures and decisions behind it. The goal of this process was to create a list of prominent videos directly and indirectly linked to the research questions. The video selection process has been conducted in June 2017.

(1) The first step in the video selection process involved creating a list of all relevant videos within the field, this was done using various search engines.²³ From this step a list of 194 videos was created, which was catalogued by the particular page number as well as a range of other information such as title, name of video source and the type of source. The primary types of these were videos, however, also included were playlists, channels and topics.

(2) After this initial search, the most irrelevant videos from the list needed to be purged, as despite the title et cetera matching the keywords during the search process, there was still a possibility of some videos having no relevance. There were 3 main cases in which irrelevant videos were acquired. Firstly, Bengali-related entries (mostly via the TANTOO MEDIA CENTER). Secondly, entries in Spanish (in the form of slideshows with photos). And finally, entries related to the singer Tantoo Blacks. This selection of irrelevancy was carried out quickly, often based on the channels and source of video, making watching each video unnecessary. This allowed significant time to be saved in the refinement stage as individually

²³ 3 different search engines were used in this step – Google Chrome, DuckDuckGo and Safari. Out of these, Safari proved to be the most comfortable to work with due to being very user-friendly. While searching on YouTube, the keywords Tantoo and Cardinal were used to find all content (with a clear search history without signing into an account).

watching each video would have been very time consuming, and the data in the cataloguing stage often gave more than enough information to know the content of each video.

(3) The secondary step in removing irrelevant videos involved removing results which had Tantoo Cardinal only in the video description. This stage involved watching each and every entry in order to see that all relevant videos were kept and furthermore, allowed for an effective removal of other irrelevant material, which was most commonly trailers, film excerpts and full-length films. This also allowed the initial stage of removing irrelevant videos to be further refined. However, a list of all deleted entries was kept so that there was clear documentation for their absence.

(4) Following these steps, there were 96 entries left from the initial 200, all of which bore some relevance to Tantoo Cardinal. However, further refinement was needed in order to know which videos fell within the specific research topic. These videos were then divided into videos and ‘other entries’ (such as playlists, channels and topics). The ‘other entries’ were expected to contain videos which were already present in the main list of videos and this division proved to be very practical in order to avoid duplicates. However, it was double-checked by evaluating them quickly and cross-referencing the results with the main list of videos

(5) Now there were 58 videos and 30 ‘other entries’. Further detailed distinction was needed, therefore all main videos were watched (while the “other” entries were put aside) and divided in two categories. 1.) Directly relevant to research²⁴ - those containing material which will be used in research; and 2.) Relevant material in terms of context²⁵, or potentially relevant videos containing quotes which may become more relevant later in the research process, as they give some background or provide quotes to support the research. These videos however weren’t all directly used or fully transcribed. Some videos have been deleted because they only concerned acting, because they were either too short to be of any use, in very low quality, or contained only a brief mention of Cardinal. Two of the videos turned out to be identical (in terms of identical content, despite being filmed by different people - the one with higher sound

²⁴ Appendix A)

²⁵ Appendix B)

quality has been chosen, but the other video was used to cross-check that the transcript was correct).

(6) At this point a final list of videos has been created (see Appendix), all of which contains materials regarding Cardinal and the content fits within the frame of this research in a broad sense. The split into two categories remained the same. The first, directly relevant material, containing 28 videos, while the second category, contextual material, containing 14 videos. This list formed the basis of the data sources which were used within this research, and because of the video selection processes' comprehensive method, the likelihood of any other videos being used is very unlikely. However, notes from the previous videos removed from the list have been made, as there was the possibility of this thesis changing direction due to its unwinding character and the potential of such material becoming relevant again. At this stage in the video selection process, the initial method of organising sources depending on their relevance was no longer beneficial. A new method of cataloguing the videos was applied, listing them by date with a direct link in order to achieve absolute transparency. The oldest video used is from the year 2008, the newest from 2017.

(7) The final stage involved firstly double-checking that "other" sources only contained videos which have been on the initial list. After this step has been taken and the assumption that all of those videos have already appeared in the previous steps proved to be right, they were deleted. Through this last step, an exhaustive list has been double-checked, the entire volume of content (sum of length of all videos used) is 7 hours, 42 minutes, 21 seconds.

5.2. Transcripts

All audio-visual material has been transcribed using the original sources. The transcription was direct, with comments where strong vocally emphasized emotion was expressed, and distinctions have been made in segments where the material was indecipherable. The type of material analysed were mostly recordings from various protests, interviews and speeches which in themselves weren't always perfectly understandable. The quality of sound recorded varied rapidly and most material had quite high levels of background noise which made some segments of it impossible to understand. This is properly marked in the transcripts and the

utterly incomprehensible segments weren't used in final analysis due to the uncertainty of the content.

Certain words were also in American slang or 'Indian' and whilst having an excellent (British) English proficiency was definitely an essential skill throughout the whole process, some of the words remained (at least initially) unknown. However, developing a sense of better understanding towards Cardinal's idiolect, has made it easier over time to 'reconstruct' the missing words and take an educated guess on what word choices she could have made. Some transcripts were therefore edited afterwards to ensure that the information they contained corresponded to reality. Certain segments though remained a mystery, most of which were spoken in Cree.²⁶

Unfortunately, working with such audio-visual material gave little space for truly verifying the information they contained, for example the vast majority of them didn't have official subtitles available, and there was only one instance where a speech was published twice by two different people which allowed for cross-checking the content.

5.3. Notes

Due to this research being conducted over a longer period of time, notes have been taken throughout the process. They resemble field notes in a sense, but mostly serve the purpose of keeping in line with the chain of the research. However, as the research was conducted in an online field, the notes didn't prove to play an essential role in the analysis as such. The main purpose turned out to serve well in respect of a deeper coherence of the research, mostly due to the detailed description of all steps taken. That is also the main reason why they are not included in the analysis section as they proved to be important mostly for internal reasons.

However, also memo notes were jotted down throughout the transcribing period. Those were very valuable, as they often captured personal feelings and emotions experienced after listening to the material (usually multiple times in a row) and it became easier to follow the red thread throughout all the different 'performances' as some segments were repeated

²⁶ I personally tried the Cree app which is discussed in Transcript 2, but unfortunately didn't manage to find explanations to the missing segments.

regularly. This wouldn't certainly go unnoticed in the analysis stage anyhow, but knowing which information Cardinal considered vital in terms of her identity was a great help in order to create the first codes for analysis.

6. BACKGROUND

Even though the backdrop of First Nation and Native American activism (amongst other things) might be known to some, this chapter will briefly elaborate on some of the key terms, issues and aspects of history which are revealed and alluded to in the analysis chapter that follows.

6.1. Idle No More

Idle No More (INM) is an indigenous mass movement which started off with a twitter tag linked to protesting against the Bill C-45, which has passed in the senate on December 14, 2012 and would heavily impact first nations rights as well as give the Ministry of Aboriginal affairs potential chance to access and buy their land²⁷.

One of INM's key means is the "ongoing resistance against neo-colonialism", focused mainly on protecting water and land from corporate destruction²⁸. It is an inclusive movement in terms of race, gender and sexuality, promoting a peaceful action against corporate interests, conveying stories which were either untold or subdued and overpowered by the mainstream media²⁹. In paraphrasing words of Cardinal, the movement has struck a sensitive note, nourishing the smouldering fire that always surrounded the discussion about First Nations/Aboriginals in Canada³⁰.

6.2. Residential School System and healing from the atrocities of colonialism

The topic of residential schools has received increased public attention thanks to some actions by Canadian government as well as films devoted to the stories linked with it (e.g. The Education of Little Tree and Older than America – both of which starred Cardinal). The

²⁷ Ontario Native Women's Association n.d.

²⁸ 'The Story' n.d.

²⁹ 'The Story' n.d.

³⁰ Transcript 12

residential school system was essentially a grid of boarding schools for indigenous people, where very strict and Christian (of various denominations) rules and order were put in place in order to ‘civilize’ the Native children and fully assimilate them into Canadian culture (Partridge 2010). It was forbidden to speak ‘Indian’ or show any other than ‘white’ values and behaviour, with cruel punishments following violations of these rules. This was based on the assumption that indigenous peoples were in every way inferior to the dominant culture (Hylton et al in Ross 2014).

A common misconception is that the atrocities of colonialism and residential school system lasted only as long as the practices were in place, which simply has to be disregarded as another (quite literal) ‘white lie’. There has been a movement towards coming in terms with the past and an importance of healing has been highlighted by many indigenous peoples. The goal of this section is to emphasize the path of peace and light in terms of achieving structural healing, which Cardinal so often accentuates.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has been established in Canada based on numerous lawsuits which indigenous peoples filed against the government as well as the church (Ross 2014:xv) and there have been examples e.g. in form of various community healing programmes across the country which show how such healing can occur. Cardinal’s approach is eminent in the sense that she sees the potential of the arts to lead people towards embarking on the path of healing.

This knowledge is essential in order to understand the pain experienced by indigenous peoples and how it resonates with the indigenous communities until this day. Cardinal is no exception.

7. ANALYSIS

“As long as the long-term health and vitality of the Earth and its inhabitants continues to be threatened by the development model of the West, the voices of Indian and other non-Western peoples are vital.”

Sandy Marie Anglas Grande³¹

Throughout the analysis process, many considerations have been made and before getting to the data, this will first be elaborated upon further.

7.1. Perspective

In the early stages, the decision between synchronous and diachronic perspectives was made. While the diachronic dimension is significant to this thesis, building the whole analysis on it would be very tricky. Considering that the source of all data was YouTube with all its advantages and limits, it meant that the material wasn't coherent in terms of time-continuity. The number of videos uploaded varied greatly throughout the years and often depended on external influences, such as the current topic within media mainstream (often in Canada or the USA, but also at COP21 in Paris for example), how visible were the First nations within a certain “trending” topic in the public discourse, or whether a new film starring Cardinal has just been released. Only 1 video was (most likely) recorded by Cardinal herself³² despite being published on the channel IdleNoMoreMedia. All other material has been filmed by someone else and published on their respective channels, meaning that Cardinal probably had very little power over the making and publishing of each of the videos besides giving consent to the filming.

This caused the research to have gaps in terms of the content frequency, which doesn't necessarily mean that Cardinal's activism was less visible, but there was simply an absence of

³¹ Grande 1999

³² This can be estimated based on the static position of camera (probably a webcam) just above her computer, the shadow behind her which only shows one silhouette and basically no background noise.

videos being publishing at the time, which could have been caused by various things which cannot be known to this research. This has been taken into consideration and while the diachronic perspective won't be employed as such, it will attempt to apply synchronous perspective with a diachronic overlap.

The analysis section will then be divided by themes identified in the data (often correlating to the codes used). However, the themes themselves are constructed and their emic understanding might differ from the categories used, so that they serve rather as a generalized representation of Cardinal's message.

Using a code tree as a method of organising data meant certain amount of abstraction as well as consideration of potentially overlapping themes. This hasn't been taken lightly and despite its limits has been very helpful throughout the analysis process. The first 2 chapters of analysis roughly correspond to the identified key themes (while the third one is employing different approach), but generally it serves mostly as a visualisation tool for the scope of Cardinal's activity.

7.3. Activism

This chapter is dedicated to aspects regarding Cardinal's activism as well as some of the codes identified.

7.3.1. Motivation

Cardinal's motivation to be active and change things for the better stemmed from the need to contribute, as well as to correct the misrepresentations regarding the First nations in the public discourse. Seeing general ignorance surrounding nature encourages her to take things further, whilst being aware of the environmental damage being done awakens her urgent need to fight it.

“(...) I wanted to find some way of contributing, to try to undo some of the real misinformation that people have in their heads about who we are. And the stuff that has been taught in school and the way my people have been treated ... And I just couldn’t rest easy.”³³

“My reason for being here, is ... I feel that there is an absolute refusal, and the blindness about the natural resources that are here ... that we’re quickly using (...) I just feel that the greed has not left.”³⁴

On the other hand, she recognizes her prominent position in terms of being able to divert mainstream media attention and finds that both exciting and inspiring – because things are finally changing for the better (partly) thanks to her actions – but also painful, due to the issues she is protesting against taking a long time to be noticed by the society in the first place.

“(...) and the reaction that came when it was publicized that I was arrested, I mean the phone calls, the e-mails, the texts, the buzz that went on about it, it was really exciting because it has really been painful ... of how quiet the whole process has been, how frustrating it has been.”³⁵

In terms of activism, Cardinal rarely talks just about herself as an individual. She could be elaborating on her personal motivation et cetera, but it is always indigenous people as a whole or the chance of helping the planet, which play a prominent role in the material. Often, indigenusness is put in contrast with the culture/mindset of mainstream society - the dichotomy *us vs. them*³⁶ - even though not necessarily purely on ethnic or racial basis. The otherness is conceptualized rather in terms of a social structure than being aimed at people as individuals. Within the framework of this dichotomy, certain aspects of the past (mostly those

³³ Transcript 21, 2:38

³⁴ Transcript 4, 0:20

³⁵ Transcript 24, 17:38

³⁶ “You know, I think it was just: *“Okay we’ll sign this, and we’ll do what we want to do. Because they’re a bunch of uneducated people anyways. And we’ve got them where we want them, we got them locked up on their reserves, and they’re depending on us for food and everything...”* (Transcript 10, 19:49)

which endure until present) are frequently emphasised, resulting in statements regarding the majority of society's stereotypes, such as how the ways and opinions of indigenous peoples are outdated and not valid in the modern times we live in.

“But the people who know everything, who have decided that we are primitive - and have no sense of civilisation - have decided that we have nothing to offer and then we don't know nothing, you know.”³⁷

7.3.2. The storyteller

Cardinal doesn't refer to herself in terms of being an activist. Mostly, explicit mentions of activism only emerge when she is specifically asked by an interviewer. She is frequently referring to herself as a storyteller or as someone who is simply speaking up for Mother Earth, and often doesn't distinguish between her roles in the acting world and her public appearances outside of it. This can be elucidated given the fact that her roles are exclusively those of First Nations/Native American characters and therefore there is a direct link between her personal narrative, which she perceives as inevitably linked to taking care of the planet, amongst other things, and her activism. According to Partridge (2010), storytelling actually fulfilled a vital role in terms of continuity concerning native people's relationship to the natural world.

“(...) What is a life where only a few, say 1%, the one percent, are allowed to live and that'll be for a short time. When the CO2 levels reach that place we fear, people won't be able to breathe. Much less find water. These are the sources of my insanity that have led me to the place of storytelling.”³⁸

“So this whole movement of speaking up for the land, speaking up for the Earth, speaking up for the water, is very important to me, you know.”³⁹

³⁷ Transcript 12, 4:37

³⁸ Transcript 23, 8:11

³⁹ Transcript 26, 0:17

However, the term activist is used despite the aforementioned emic incompatibility. Understanding of activism in this work is approached more in terms of being active in the public discourse rather than agreeing explicitly with a certain political stance.

7.3.3. Emic perspective

The activist theme in the data has been evolving more over the studied time period than other key themes, this means that the diachronic aspect is vital in terms of the analysis. This has been interpreted as a reaction to changing topics within Cardinal's activism or acting career (from INM to the ACTRA Awards) as well as a reflection on the type of material used (interview, student documentary, protest speech). As mentioned before, also at this point, the fact that the material used is not coherent in terms of time-continuity, results in having a direct impact on the data and it must be highlighted that the perspective taken here is only partial. However, this partness also reflects the current topics which were prevalent in the media and Cardinal's reaction to them. In this sense, it becomes apparent that identification with different aspects of activism as well as evolving ways of referring to activism itself is taking place and is truly relational and situational (Eriksen 2007).

Towards the more recent data, Cardinal seemed to refuse the term activist entirely and in one of the outputs even states:

*"I suppose maybe I am a reactivist. I'm someone who try to see new things, or try to see more of who we are."*⁴⁰

This is emphasized when put in context with her personal narrative and the sense of her identification, within which she highlights the fact that she feels the obligation to change things for the better because other people are blind towards the issues important to her. That offers the question of whether she would be active (in terms of environmental activism) if it wasn't for the general ignorance surrounding environmental issues.

⁴⁰ Transcript 28, 2:19

7.3.4. Nature & Environment

In terms of Cardinal's activism itself, 2 main topics have been identified which have been designated as nature and environment.

Term nature indicates meanings regarding the association with positive qualities or points towards direct relationships with the surrounding environment. This involves for example Mother Earth, the need to take care of water and soil et cetera. These statements are not necessarily explicitly positive, but they bear a deeper meaning which always indicates positive value for Cardinal. Nature is also used to describe sections where connection of indigenous peoples to the land is emphasized. This connection is seen as ubiquitous and quite automatic in Cardinal's narrative. Whenever nature and the indigenous (in this instance North American) people occur to be referred to together, it becomes clear that Cardinal highlights the indigenous peoples' connectedness to the planet and the need to protect her.

“There are ceremonies where we would have our relationship with the Earth, and all the forces that are part of the Earth. You've heard of sacred sites - those are places on the Earth that we—it's a part of our law—that we have to interact with that part of the Earth. That's where the voice comes from. Our Earth has a voice.”⁴¹

“(...) And it's a cycle of truth, and it's a cycle of light, and Idle no more is connecting with the planet all over indigenous people, people connected with the land and ... water... If you drink water, you should be paying attention.”⁴²

Environment on the other hand implies more complex connotations and sections where the root of the word is used (for example environmentalist), the meaning is often related to more negative things. It can be referring to destruction of the environment (in many cases by white people), more scientific aspects of nature which might not be known to everybody (CO2

⁴¹ Transcript 9, 4:25

⁴² Transcript 12, 5:41

emissions, fracking wells, etc.). The main difference though remains to be the absence of indigenous people within the discussions surrounding the environment.

However, when it comes to environmentalism in terms of directly protecting the environment, indigenous people are perceived as the missing link, implying that the environmental movement is not complete without their presence and their participation in it is therefore considered vital by Cardinal.

“(...) Because I was watching the environmental movement, and watching it going to occupy and—and it’s always felt that—that the missing link was indigenous people.”⁴³

When the term environment is used, it is frequently stemming from misunderstanding of Earth as a living organism. Cardinal finds the acceptance of the Earth being alive a vital part of taking good care of nature and even makes comparisons between the Earth and human body.

“And as far as I’m concerned, the way it seems to me and what I come to understand that if they want to expand the tar sands and up that production that’s gonna create so much more poison, more poison - that’s cancer! The Earth has cancer.”⁴⁴

“Cancers that used to be rare are rampant, respiratory diseases, the sicknesses that come from a land that is sick. The land is sick, the people are sick and—and I’m really hoping that this is a time when our voices will be heard.”⁴⁵

“Can you imagine that a spike of poison going into your core, into your bones? They are shovelling the bones of Mother Earth and she is creating earthquakes all over the place, she

⁴³ Transcript 10, 14:38

⁴⁴ Transcript 5, 7:11

⁴⁵ Transcript 7, 0:53

has a language. That's about fire going on in Australia, that's going on in India, the air in China... volcanos, earthquakes, hurricanes, cyclones..."⁴⁶

*"(...) What's happening with the Earth right now, could well give her a stroke that's what comes after a fever that you don't try to cool down what happens to your body when you let that fever just keep going ... it seizes up your system and that's that is a reality that we have to consider, it's not some poetic thing, the Earth is alive. And that's what that means, that she's a living body."*⁴⁷

Understanding and accepting that Earth is alive is considered essential in terms of its protection, which is in Cardinal's view desperately needed. She often accentuates the fact that we need to change the general approach and along with it how we treat all the natural resources, otherwise we are inevitably headed towards destruction.

*"They devoured the propaganda of fear, raised money and built the railroad in a furious hurry (...) switch this paradigm."*⁴⁸

*"In a way, it's a vote. A prayer of good will and act of conservation, an act of moving away from 'take take take' without 'give give give'. And I really do believe that that's what's gonna make a difference."*⁴⁹

In segments where she is referring to a 'man-made society', a critique of neoliberalism can be sensed and it could be argued that in order to change the general outlook towards the environment, a systemic change might be needed. However, this is not necessarily always the message as she highlights the importance of individual action as well, therefore the switch of paradigm is understood as a change on individual and collective level (in terms of communities) rather than a systemic political change.

⁴⁶ Transcript 14, 5:36

⁴⁷ Transcript 4, 2:29

⁴⁸ Transcript 23, 7:26

⁴⁹ Transcript 6, 1:17

*“And the fact that there are even any native people left on this planet should be a clue, that there is a way of survival, that does not include money and politics. We survived by our relationship with natural force. We’ve always known that the Earth is our mother. My father’s people just figured that out some time in the 60’s.”*⁵⁰

The role of indigenous peoples in protection of nature places them rather in a position of ‘naturalists’ (read as people protecting nature) than environmentalists with all its western-centred connotations. This could be caused by Cardinal’s slightly (though not consistently) negative associations with the environmental movement as such (again, due to the omission of indigenous peoples’ perspective), but it doesn’t necessarily imply that First Nations/Native Americans are not environmentalists. Based on Cardinal promoting and emphasizing the connection of indigenous people with nature and its protection, it is argued that she does actually perceive them as environmentalists when understood in a broad sense, despite not using this specific term.

As most things in her life, she finds it important to see deeper meaning, implied signs that she is doing a good thing. This can be seen throughout the material, often linked to auditions for a certain role, or even to getting arrested. Those ‘moments of impact’ lead her life in the right direction and she takes note of them as well as listens to what they have to say. She recognises these as the things she was simply meant to do.

*“Although that was the plan, Marie definitely was gonna get arrested ... But, I was going to be sure and leave things open, so I would know - if that's what I was meant to do or not. So that's what I did. I felt it out and by the morning, I knew that that's what I was going to go ahead and do.”*⁵¹

⁵⁰ Transcript 9, 5:09

⁵¹ Transcript 19, 0:42

7.4. Indigenusness

Indigenusness is a reoccurring theme within the data. While I was using the term First Nations/Native Americans throughout this thesis, Cardinal doesn't identify herself with any of those categories⁵². She uses the overarching term indigenous in her personal narrative as well as when talking about her culture, history et cetera. This correlates to Sjørsløv's category of indigenusness built mostly on self-identification and self-definition (Sjørsløv 2001:57).

It is also meaningful as a backdrop to the transnational collective action (Porta and Tarrow 2005), which is a global phenomenon. Porta and Tarrow identify the following changes regarding environmental activism in the international context. (1) The collapse of Soviet bloc which resulted in the emergence and growing support of left-oriented organisations which would have been labelled as communist before. (2) The boom of electronic communication as well as cheap travel options arising from general technological development and, (3) the growing influence of international institutions such as the World Trade Organization and the World bank (Porta and Tarrow 2005:7).

Whilst this research can't account for the points 1 and 3, it will be argued that especially the boom of electronic communication, specifically how that of social media and internet in general, allowed indigenous environmental activists to identify themselves with each other across borders and create a general awareness of other indigenous communities. This is referred to as the *indigenous network*.⁵³

“And I think that it's power in that we're connecting with people all over the planet that have been fighting this battle. And trying to save their water and try to save their land.”⁵⁴

⁵² In Transcript 21, 4:43, she even says: "(...) I don't legitimately if I'm an Indian, or if I'm Métis, or what I am."

⁵³ This is my own term, unlike Indigenous Environmental Network which is an established indigenous organization

⁵⁴ Transcript 10, 17:01

Other aspect of creation of a transnational indigenous awareness could be attributed to events like COP21 in Paris, where indigenous activists had the chance to meet personally and stand together for their cause (then again, cheaper travel options might play a role in this).

There has been a growing amount of research dedicated to exploring how indigenous communities are often the first to directly feel impacts of climate change as well as the studies of the different ways in which this happens (Krakoff 2016; Tsosie 2007) and it is sometimes highlighted by the indigenous activists themselves.

It's so frustrating, we tend to be the first communities to feel the effects of climate change. (...) We're also often times at the point of extraction - whether it's mining, or fracking oils, or coal companies are coming in, or deforestation efforts and so it's a double whammy that we're getting here..."

Dallas Goldtooth (Indigenous Environmental Network)⁵⁵

For Cardinal, identifying as indigenous rather than member of the First Nations has another level, potentially originating from her personal family history of being Métis – therefore a ‘mix’ of white and Aboriginal culture and member of formerly institutionally unrecognized nation⁵⁶, which doesn’t have a reservation⁵⁷. Other aspects have been identified as her dual citizenship (which is both Canadian and American⁵⁸), her involvement in the US acting world as well as her activism across the Americas (and beyond).

She makes it clear that she is aware of situations in other parts of the world (India and Australia for example⁵⁹) and even shares a story of success regarding environmental protection in Ecuador.⁶⁰ This all proves that (at least for Cardinal), indigenous activism isn’t limited by

⁵⁵ Transcript 27, 0:30

⁵⁶ The Supreme Court of Canada recognized and affirmed the existence of Métis as a distinct Aboriginal people with existing rights on 19. 9. 2003 (‘Métis Nation Rights | Métis National Council’ n.d.)

⁵⁷ Transcript 10, 13:06

⁵⁸ Transcript 1, 3:10

⁵⁹ Transcript 14, 6:02

⁶⁰ Transcript 11, 5:43

national borders and takes form of *indigenous network* rather than separate groups of activists scattered around the globe.

All the aforementioned arguments have potential in playing a role in herself identifying as indigenous. For the same reasons, it could be important to contextualize the stated indigenousness, because it can mean either only First Nations in certain excerpts, but also indigenous peoples as a whole in other ones. While the first is mostly true for accounts of history or culture accompanied by concrete examples from her own life or from history of her own people, indigenous in the transnational sense is often used when the topics are broader and a general action is required. However, most of the time, her use of the word indigenousness is linked to things from the North American context, it therefore prevails in the analysis as well.

7.4.1. Culture

Due to the nature of data used in this thesis, it can't be considered representative in terms of epitomizing Cardinal's view of her culture as such, but it serves as a representation of how she frequently links indigenous culture with being connected to the Earth. The dichotomy *us versus them* is present as well as examples of mainstream society's stereotypes concerning (mostly specifically) North American indigenous culture.

*"(...) But, you know, the whole idea of who we are as indigenous people belonging to the Earth, was not really considered all that important. Still, you know, the idea of us being thought a little primitive was there. And you could feel it."*⁶¹

*"(...) The old idea, that—that women are to be kept in the background, that we have nothing to contribute - it's the same idea about who we are as indigenous people, as native people, to be kept in the background, we have nothing to contribute."*⁶²

⁶¹ Transcript 19, 2:51

⁶² Transcript 22, 1:01

7.4.2. Land

Equally important is the connection of indigenous peoples to land. That is not only in terms of land as a physical entity, but also in terms of pursuing traditional ways of living as well as spiritual interaction with their environment (Tsosie 2007:1628).

“(...) It’s a responsibility to be caretakers of this land.”⁶³

“There are people who can hear Mother Earth, our traditional people that live close to the land, close to the water, we can hear her. There are people who can hear the rocks (...)”⁶⁴

7.4.3. Relations

Another key theme is that of relations. This term is used purposefully as it brings the “All my relations” prayer on mind, meaning that all things are connected, both living and inanimate (Ross 2014). However, this category has been broadened to cover relatedness or the need of collective action as well. I would like to highlight this aspect as it allows for the importance of interconnectedness to appear, which Cardinal often emphasizes.

Collective action is frequently perceived as the best way to protest as well as to heal and is seen as essential in order to achieve a change in the world. Coming together is emphasized also on symbolic level. A Cree-Métis psychologist, Joe Couture, accentuates the collective aspect of a native mind as “embedded socio-centric self”. Unlike the western approaches to healing, indigenous healing therefore doesn’t function well when focusing on healing people as individuals (Couture 2013 in Ross 2014:25).

“(...) It may seem like a small thing, but it’s gonna go on a pile of somebody else’s small thing. And I think that we just have to hold that faith and keep on moving in that direction.”⁶⁵

⁶³ Transcript 12 4:08

⁶⁴ Transcript 14, 2:40

⁶⁵ Transcript 9, 12:18

“(...) To be able to find our community. It’s that place that’s really important for communicating to the heart and soul and mind and spirit, to help keep you grounded and keep you on your path.”⁶⁶

7.4.4. Idle no more

The importance of the INM movement being involved under the category of indigenusness has a particular significance. Despite it originally being a Canadian movement, it managed to (at least to a certain extent) transgress national borders and is quite well known in the US too (Bender 2013).

Cardinal frequently emphasizes the transnational potential of it as well as its symbolic meaning in terms of uniting people, giving them platform and even confidence to fight for their cause⁶⁷. INM is a unique movement, showing that North American indigenous people are coming together, which is a trend surrounding other grassroots indigenous movements such as the *Stand With Standing Rock*.⁶⁸

Another important aspect surrounding the Idle No More movement is the fact that it is led mostly by lawyers who speak the language that power understands and therefore are able to bring out the arguments in a way that has potential to resonate with the mainstream as well.⁶⁹

“(...) It’s hard and it’s been set for a long time, and what I think Idle no more is doing is, it’s bringing it all out, so it can move and it can start to heal.”⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Transcript 28, 5:07

⁶⁷ Transcript 12

⁶⁸ Divided Films 2016

⁶⁹ Transcript 10: 24:41

⁷⁰ Transcript 12, 8:28

7.5. Personal narrative

“The perceptions that Europeans and Americans have had of the Native American were emotional and contradictory. Either an enemy or a friend, he was never an ordinary human being accepted on his own terms.”

John E. O’Connor⁷¹

In this chapter, narrative analysis approach will be applied, which will be using the definitions of Squire, Andrews and Tamboukou (2008) and will result in an attempt to (re)construct Cardinal’s biography.

7.5.1 Narrative approach

Within narrative research, various approaches towards narratives can be applied. Here, the *experience-centred individually-oriented* narrative approach will be used (Andrews, Squire, and Tamboukou 2008:5,7), focusing mainly on the individual representations created by Cardinal. It has been taken into consideration that “...single phenomenon may produce very different stories, even from the same person.” (Andrews, Squire, and Tamboukou 2008:6). Simultaneously, the fact that narratives can be influenced by the audience has also been taken into account, however, it is not considered central to this thesis in terms of finding answers to the research questions, and therefore won’t be expanded on. It will be presumed that focusing on personal narrative (therefore an individual experience) will further relate to how her use of agency is navigated (Andrews, Squire, and Tamboukou 2008:7).

Throughout this entire fieldwork, Cardinal’s personal narrative played an essential role in order to understand her activism, identity and past, as well as every other aspect of the material studied. She is using her narrative in a very skilful way, as a true storyteller, repeating the sections which require repetition, making clear distinctions between her narrative and the stories of others, while at the same time combining both in order to create a coherent storyline, framing everything into an all-encompassing *‘big story’*.

⁷¹ O’Connor 1993:17

This might not be evident while reading segments of the transcripts, but “binge-watching” all of the audio-visual material in close proximity – which has been done multiple times – allowed for this *big story* to crystalize. One of the potential interpretations is that it is this deep-level consistency which has the most powerful effect on the listener (whether it’s an interviewer, crowd at a demonstration or a young student making a documentary about her)⁷². She manages to enchant her listeners, which is visible throughout the material used. In this section, it will be attempted to elaborate on this with use of narrative analysis.

In many ways, Cardinal’s public appearances can be approached in a similar manner as one might approach different chapters of her own autobiography. She often mentions the importance of storytelling in her culture and ascribes fundamental value to keeping the stories alive⁷³. Her key motivation in terms of telling a personal narrative on the backdrop of a bigger story has been identified as the feeling of necessity to point towards either the history of Canadian indigenous people, which the mainstream society is often not fully aware of; discrimination as well as sexism, racism et cetera in today’s society; or healing, which she believes can and must occur (in indigenous communities as well as on Mother Earth), whilst emphasizing that there is hope.

7.5.2. Identity

The theme of identity has been omitted from the code tree as it was also a topic visible throughout all of the data and therefore difficult to ascribe to just one of the 4 key themes. It is impossible to separate any of the material from its creator, (unless it’s done for specific analytical reasons) and the topic of identity played an equally essential role throughout the whole writing of this thesis.

As mentioned in the beginning of this work, Eriksen’s understanding of identity as identification will be applied here. It allows for processuality and time-relatedness to emerge and involves a diachronic aspect. Due to its ubiquitous presence, the notion of identity became

⁷² This is visible based on the positive/affirmative reactions from the crowds (clapping) or verbalised praise from some of the interviewers.

⁷³ Transcripts 16 and 28

central to the analysis and bears deep symbolic value. However, to truly illustrate how Cardinal is creating and navigating her identity, an experimental approach will be taken here. A ‘constructed biography’ was created combining all available data and creating something resembling an introduction of Cardinal - from her own perspective. This has been of course created truthfully and with the best intentions based on the data available, nevertheless, it is a (re)construction after all and therefore has its limits.

This approach has been taken aboard in order to illustrate some aspects of identity which would remain hidden if the analysis was carried out in a similar way as in the previous chapters. The biography hasn’t been created in purely chronological or thematic order, rather it is an assemblage of transcript segments built in a way so that the text could function as a story. This also meant that not all aspects of her narrative were involved in order to keep the storyline. The constructed biography therefore doesn’t include the entire personal narrative, but only serves as a representation of some of the themes which Cardinal considers important. Some other aspects of her narrative have been described in previous sections and didn’t all fit into the biography. Simultaneously, for similar reasons, reoccurring themes are marked in bold so that the reader could see what part of her narrative she is emphasizing.

Around 99% of the words used have been said by Cardinal at some point, but the way they are combined doesn’t necessarily correspond to their original context. Besides giving answers to some of the research questions and giving platform to the data to speak for themselves, a significant aspect behind the decision to take this approach has been the fact that Cardinal is usually introduced by others as a ‘renown actress’, ‘member of the order of Canada’, et cetera and those statements usually don’t coincide with her perception of what is important in her life. The ambition of this account is to create a more truthful biography which could be embraced by Cardinal herself.

7.5.3. Constructed biography

Hello, my name is Tantoo Cardinal, **I’m indigenous**, I was born way back in the day of 1950 in Fort McMurray, Northern Alberta, which is now the heart of the tar sands. The first one in my family to be born in a hospital. I was raised by my grandmother in a bush, basically. It was a very small and isolated community, I couldn't even really call it a hamlet, but being raised by

my grandparents and by people who lived close to the land and off the land, I grew up with what we call nowadays a **relationship with the Earth**.

I remember when the land was clean, eating the fish and the meat that we got from a healthy Earth. I remember catching my first fish, bringing it home and the tradition of burying your first fish in the land, so that you would always have food. We would go and just camp by the creek. Go take water, make tea, cook your food right there ... but our children won't see those days. **We have lived off that land** since forever. Then, the highway was built through and the mining really kicked in. It was the year 1965, that's when I left to go to high school and that's when the mining boomed. I went back for holidays, and it was absolutely swarming with people from all over the planet, who were there to make lots and lots of money. Nobody cared about the land.

I come from the world where families are decimated, and communities are decimated and it's certainly true, that **the place that I grew up is decimated**. And it's with my generation that we were essentially pulled off the land. The industries and the government knew what was under that land already in the late 1800's.

And I'm part of that history, that rape. I'm mixed blood - my mother's people are from the land, my father's people came on a ship with scurvy and my mother's people doctored them. My mother's people showed my father's people how this land works, how live off it, that's how it started. And I don't know legitimately if I'm an Indian, or if I'm Métis, or what I am. I grew up with Cree and Dené and English and Paqua, which is Cree and some French mixed in with it and heard many kinds of languages all the time when I was growing up, and it was delicious, I loved it. So, I am the mix of those cultures and **I am an observer in that place where the stories are held**. In my Métis world, I heard I was privileged to hear some of their traditional stories, it is actually quite rare.

But I also felt the injustices. I wasn't allowed to have my mother, I didn't have my father... My grandparents were there in my life, and my grandfather was gone by the time when I was 10. And my brother had an early death, there's just so little left of our family. I was born in a situation where people didn't wanna give you hope for the future.

I was probably about 12 when my granny dragged me to an Easter mass. And we were very fortunate, because the priests could only come in sporadically. And this little priest, he was a buddy of my granny's, he was a Métis man. We were just standing and talking outside

the church and then all of a sudden, he asked me: *“Tantoo, what are you gonna be when you grow up?”* And it just shocked me, you know, I looked at him, and then I realised I hadn’t thought about that, no one ever asked me that question before...

I remember asking my granny once: *“Mum, why did you always tell me that I was stupid and ugly and no good for nothing? Because it’s not true...”* I forced myself to say it, I could barely even say it. She held still, didn’t talk for a while. And then she said: *“I never wanted you to **expect anything from those people...** Around here, everybody treats you good, but you go out there, people will come, put your arm around you, they’ll smile at you, and they will make you think that they care about you...but they don’t, it’s only themselves they care about.”*

In the early 70’s it was a time when Canada was trying to strengthen its culture. Because the US was pretty much taking over everything - everything that was on the air, television, radio, magazines, and buying land, taking over land, businesses - everything. So, within that was this germ of thought that they would do Canadian stories and why don't hire **native people to play native roles**. So, my friend got a role that way, and he put my name up, because I was involved politically with the native youth and he knew that I knew how to stand up in front of a crowd and say things. So, he figured that maybe I would be good at this. That was it. And I was looking for someplace that **I could make a contribution** anyway, since I barely made it through high school. I didn't have to go to theatre school, because if I had to go to theatre school, if I had the idea *“Well, I’m gonna break into this white man business”*, no way, that wouldn’t work! It took a force much stronger than that to make it happen. And then other roles that have come my way, there's some that I turned away, but I've been really blessed with the things that have come my way. It was certainly not anything that I felt was there for me, but it came and got me. **I don't think there's any accidents in the world.**

When I ran into the film business, I saw on the call sheet that it is marked on there what time the sunrise was, what time sunset was, what the weather was gonna be, what the winds were. All that kind of stuff and that made me feel better - maybe I would be able to live with these people, with this part of the society.

It was often difficult though. Especially when I expressed something cultural that might be helpful to a story, or make it a little more interesting, or more true for me as a performer. I was just accused of being a romantic. It was very much the thinking that we were

neanderthal people, **that we didn't have much of a culture and only wished to have a culture.** Those were the early days...

Even then, sometimes I grew tired of it and my fire started to go out. Tired of being an actor, being a little colour, a little flash or something in somebody else's story, living someone else's dream and sometimes, my only close up was an arrow through the neck...

But no matter how small the role was though, to me it was a sacred duty trying to get it as real as I could. Try to live that experience, because people live that experience. It may get into some dead molecule somewhere, it might wake up some cell somewhere. And it might start a chain reaction of remembering. Once, I get this three-page letter from a woman, who just laid it all out ... That all through her school years, whenever she heard about Indians being massacred, and what has happened to Indian people, it never bothered her, never touched her, didn't mean a thing. But with then she came to know us as human beings. And it just tore her up when we were massacred in the film. And she said she cried, and cried, she was in mourning for about three days - because not only were the people that she had come to care for, but all of those massacres, things that had happened through history that she had ignored, it all came back to her. So, who am I to say? If I'm put in that place to do that, then **I will do it to the best of my ability.**

I really believe in the arts as an energy and that it's fundamental to who we are as human beings and who we are as community and civilisation. So, when the opportunity came, it was very exciting, and it made sense to me. **A huge part of our culture is the stories.** When I was growing up, people who were storytellers would come and tell their tales of where they've been, and what was coming.

And on my journey, I've had to go and look, and dig, for the riches that were meant for me, and my people at birth. I had to find pieces of wisdom, pieces of stories, songs, ways, traditions... And sure enough, I built alliances with people that are in the arts and that's kind of a solace, since I come from a place where as far as I'm concerned, I'm landless, because it's been completely taken over by the tar sands and by the corporate movement of things.

So, I really kept my eyes open for new thinking, for people who were educated in a broad kind of way. I was looking for people who were, in a sense, colour blind, though that's really hard, because racism and sexism is very very deep and people often don't even know, that they are

carrying it on. So, my activism stemmed from seeing the inequity and the racism, the complete misrepresentation of our people.

And it felt like the right thing to do. That's something that has bothered me for many many years ... and people were not thinking about it, they were not at my back, even my own people. When I would talk about the **environment**, when I would talk about fire, when I would talk about water when I would talk about our stories. I would talk about the arts, how they are fundamental force for any society to be healthy. I don't care what part of the planet you come from, what colour you are, or anything. That's fundamental - in my mind. And I would go to Métis assemblies or something like that, and I would talk about these things. They would be talking economic development and business and all of that, and then I would bring up these ideas and I'd be elbowed away from the mic nobody wanted to hear anything about it.

But I think you have to follow your inner voice. And for me, I believe in peace and light. That's what we're defending. Peace is absolutely the way to go, violence really doesn't get anything done, except more violence, and peace is connected with love and remember that **love is the most powerful force.**

8. CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this thesis was a decision to conduct fieldwork using data from publicly available sources, focusing on the various ways in which Tantoo Cardinal is articulating her identity. In particular, the research questions of how Cardinal perceives the associations between indigenous people and environmentalism; how does she reflect upon the current state of the environment; which paradigms is she navigating while achieving her activist goals; and what narrative and contexts does she employ while construing her identity in relation to activism have been explored. In order to be able to elaborate on this, many aspects surrounding her existence have been explored, with a particular focus on how she uses the category of indigenusness, in what ways is her activism linked and influenced by the *indigenous network*, how she perceives the environment as such and what connections are being made between the environment and indigenous people.

An important aspect throughout the whole process has been the utmost transparency and reflexivity, therefore taking into account arguments of e.g. postcolonial studies, amongst many others. Within the research as such, various themes have been identified, but the scope of this work unfortunately isn't sufficient to address all of them. Despite the perceived emic importance of all the themes, some of them have been omitted based on relevance towards the research questions. Within these, some would be very interesting to study further, for example the gender aspect, questions of language and its constituting power towards cultural and personal identity, or the question of (post)colonialism, to name a few.

The whole work is attempting to lead the reader step by step through the various considerations made, methods used, as well as through the analysis. While working with the internet has its limitations, it has been concluded that for this particular type of research, it was perceived as the perfect environment to gather data in order to answer the research questions. An important aspect to consider was that of ethics, especially the issue of copyright.

The data has been analysed in 2 different ways. The themes of activism and indigenusness have been analysed using the method of segmentation and coding, allowing for inductive codes to emerge, while at the same time proving that the theme of identity has been ubiquitous throughout all of the material. A different approach was therefore needed to address such an all-encompassing topic. In order to understand Cardinal's personal narrative,

the approach of *experience-centred individually-oriented* narrative has been employed (Andrews, Squire, and Tamboukou 2008). This led towards a comprehensive understanding of how identity is used and navigated as well as revealing other links and connections within the data.

Most importantly, none of these themes can be separated from each other. Despite attempting to reach a certain level of abstraction as well as visualising the codes used in the analysis, the personal narrative (including all the themes and connections) is truly significant only as long as seen on the backdrop of a bigger picture, sustained by a coherent story line.

In terms of how Cardinal reflects on the associations between First Nations/Native Americans, it has been revealed that in Cardinal's opinion, indigenous people are connected to the Earth on a fundamental level, that this connection is absolutely essential to their existence. This is true both in a purely physical sense, as well as in terms of spiritual interaction with the environment that surrounds them. Simultaneously, indigenous people are also ascribed an exceptional role in terms of taking care of the Earth which stems from their position as people living close to the land (or off the land), as well as from the traditional connection with the Earth through ceremonies and the 'special powers' - of being able to understand the Earth's language.

At the same time, action on the part of indigenous people is considered essential in terms of stopping the destruction of the environment. This destruction is often conceptualized as a man-made society's obsession with power and money, resulting in absolute selfishness, which is directly impacting both land and water. The fact that indigenous communities are often radically influenced by the state of the environment before anyone else, falls directly in line with other (post/neo)colonial efforts, such as the residential school system.

Cardinal's activism has its origins in the need to contribute, the need to change things for the better, but also from disappointment regarding the misrepresentation of indigenous people as well as ignorance surrounding environmental issues. Some of this activism was (partly) done through her acting, which served as an important platform to voice her other, especially environment-related concerns.

Her fame resulted in a higher amount of attention on part of the mainstream media, which frequently influenced the strategies employed within her activism. At various events

dedicated to acting, for example the ACTRA awards in 2015, being the centre of media attention, Cardinal skilfully used her position to convey a message most important to her. As one of the interviewers phrased it after the event “she schooled the whole country about indigenous history”⁷⁴ including her concern for the current state of the environment. This is just one example of how she is navigating her agency, bringing the attention to topics she considers to be important and through diverting attention to what truly matters to her actually manages to get her message across to the wider public.

Cardinal’s identification with the indigenous rather than Indian identity allows her to relate her personal narrative to a global context. This is significant especially in relation to the *indigenous network* which functions transnationally, illustrating the fact that it’s not only ‘air that has no boundaries’⁷⁵. Identifying as indigenous whilst accentuating the connection between indigenous people and the Earth serves as a bridge between her personal narrative and environmental activism, allowing her to symbolically walk from one side to the other without any constraints.

Her personal narrative serves as a story, an illustration of interconnectedness. Despite referring to seemingly unrelated issues, a bigger story can be spotted in the background after closer examination. Cardinal manages to effortlessly relate racial injustices with activism, indigenous history with acting, the importance of taking care of the planet with storytelling and sometimes combines all of these, and in doing so, creating a storyline which is coherent and emphasises hope, peace and love as the solutions.

The narrative also illustrates her motivations, dreams and hopes which are frequently highlighted in her activism along with the importance of collective action in order to stop the destruction of the environment. Her personal narrative is also used to demonstrate the impacts of what it means to become disconnected from the Earth. By telling stories about her own life that has been impacted by this disconnection, her goal is to inspire others to take action and help the Earth to heal.

⁷⁴ Transcript 24

⁷⁵ Transcript 8

It can be argued that adopting the positive stereotypes regarding the connection between the indigenous people and the environment, actually falls in line with strategic essentialism – an approach where the ones subordinated or marginalised from a power-perspective adopt the rhetoric of the dominant society, and thus successfully achieve their goals by using the language of their colonisers (Spivak and Rooney 1993). While there probably is a certain strategic aspect behind using the language of the white society on Cardinal's part (at least to a certain extent), she consistently shows that it is not only the 'white language' she is employing. In many situations, she highlights the (North American) indigenous categories such as Mother Earth, natural force, or the Creator. In this, she skilfully navigates her agency in order to use the categories which resonate with the particular crowd, rather than blindly accepting a certain type of narrative in all situations without considering their context.

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APPENDIX

Title

Channel

Link (time)

A) Relevant videos

1. Older Than America - Tantoo Cardinal - SXSW

Gordon Vasquez

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5xLZX2JR1k> (07:15)

2. Actor Tantoo Cardinal on UR

urbanrushshawtv4

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwSAZraQLZI> (08:38)

3. Memories of an Encounter Part 1.flv

ArtistJimPoitras

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tSNBpy1HTng&list=PLXAqtu-DF5D5WD-MoHOIP4IrUAm3INvWQ&index=13> (09:58)

4. Tantoo Cardinal: Why I Joined the Tar Sands Action

StopKeystoneXL

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SXneN2YcZic> (04:20)

5. Tantoo Cardinal

MiningInjustice

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_oZenP3Yeow (08:23)

6. Tantoo Cardinal - Draw the Line

GreenpeaceCanada

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iB5u1Sgiuz0> (01:51)

7. Environmental Activist and Actor Tantoo Cardinal

Clayton Thomas-Muller

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcIq64ZG1-U> (02:45)

8. Indigenous Actress and Activist Tantoo Cardinal Speaks on Tar Sands Oil Devastation

cantenizhoni

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfr3eu0U5FU> (10:26)

9. Tantoo Cardinal - Tar Sands Oil and the Natural Force of Mother Earth

WilderUtopia

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FWTiDDliRnA> (16:10)

10. Tantoo Cardinal (Metis) this Sunday, 1-13-2013

Raven Redbone

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=15Uiomb-lw0> (37:03)

11. Tantoo Cardinal Idle No More

Don Kossick

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uEkccZdUkwc> (18:45)

12. CTV News Channel Tantoo Cardinal on Idle No More January 16, 2013

MsBeautifulRed

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Paxc3bA7qvY> (08:42)

13. #Oct7Proclaim Tantoo Cardinal

IdleNoMoreMedia

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZLj-L0W7e8> (03:10)

14. Tantoo Cardinal judges ruling on hydraulic fracking

Rights4Nature

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hN_-T7bw8s4 (07:05)

15. Tantoo Cardinal on classical Shakespeare vs. new theatre works (Part 2 of 9)

Theatre Museum Canada

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zIdVB2p4FI> (06:24)

16. Tantoo Cardinal on storytelling (Part 5 of 9)

Theatre Museum Canada

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqAlYJk7nRc> (08:25)

17. Tantoo Cardinal on overcoming cultural bias (Part 6 of 9)

Theatre Museum Canada

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FkPJp9_pKJQ (06:45)

18. Tantoo Cardinal on Native storytelling (Part 9 of 9)

Theatre Museum Canada

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yKe2-B7e9aA> (06:06)

19. Tantoo Cardinal on being an activist (Part 3 of 9)

Theatre Museum Canada

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5MHlVWbhsI> (07:20)

20. Tantoo Cardinal on the impact a small role can have (Part 4 of 9)

Theatre Museum Canada

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_N39tjh7epM (05:35)

21. The Zed files Tantoo Cardinal 2014

Hotel Zed

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EKXOQiiL1ds> (06:18)

22. KATIE CHATS: ACTRA Awards, TANTOO CARDINAL, ACTRA AWARD of EXCELLENCE RECIPIENT

Katie Chats

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjQFdQ0fY3E> (06:51)

23. ACTRA Toronto Award of Excellence Winner - Tantoo Cardinal

ACTRA Toronto

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqzRG6LpxCg> (16:11)

24. Tantoo Cardinal on Unreserved (CBC)

Unreserved (CBC player, not YouTube)

<http://www.cbc.ca/player/Radio/Unreserved/ID/2656277111> (18:41)

25. Periscope replay: Actor @tantooC on being #grateful #ActraGetsLoose #tiff15

WhatSheSaid Talk

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qDRXbiF6BVA> (04:16)

26. Tantoo Cardinal Interview, Nov 7, 2015

skyearthstories

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zq-EpkTOeoQ> (10:10)

27. Keep It In The Ground: Indigenous People Demand Climate Justice

AJ+

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twD703Pp850> (02:53)

28. 'The Words She spoke to Me' Heritage Doc Profile on Tantoo Cardinal

Heritage Docs

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YQx9ZBuyHc0> (07:42)

(Idle No More Rally, Saskatoon at White Buffalo Lodge w Glenda Abbot and Tantoo Cardinal - Identical with no. 11)

Daeran Gall

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CfC3r2jOgcA> (26:20)

B) Context videos

1. Tantoo Cardinal Interview at 2015 ACTRA Awards

Mr. ShoBiz

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1YYTpAToBs> (04:10)

2. Tantoo Cardinal on connecting and disconnecting (part 1 of 9)

Theatre Museum Canada

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=biGi9N-dKbY> (08:39)

3. Tantoo Cardinal: “This is and invitation to be part of a renewable and kind economy”

The Leap

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I91KsDzZa2E> (0:50)

4. Tantoo cardinal | Indigenous Environmental Network Delegation to Paris

Indigenous Rising

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1u_YOz6ZqyA (01:16)

5. Tantoo Cardinal on Native theatre (Part 8 of 9)

Theatre Museum Canada

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aW9OUKIFQJg> (04:37)

6. Excerpt: Storytellers in Motion Episode 11: Tantoo Cardinal - Lights, Camera and Action

Jeff Bear

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnkEa2AEKh4> (03:07)

7. Tantoo Cardinal on opportunity and perspective (Part 7 of 9)

Theatre Museum Canada

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ObvQGI75pI> (04:59)

8. 150 years? That's cute | Canada 150 | 22 minutes

CBC Comedy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DBXfPwy5OSw> (02:18)

9. Voces del Mundo contra el fracking, Tantoo Cardinal, Canadá

Alianza Mexicana contra el Fracking

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_eNhUY84zUw (01:41)

10. Gunargie O'Sullivan Interviewing Aboriginal Women

WhenSpiritsWhispers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dxl6scAWz9U> (04:01)

11. The Leap Manifesto's 15 Demands

The Leap Manifesto – Canada

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kYtP_lGVf0o (06:13)

12. The Arts and Culture in Action: A Panel Discussion | MacArthur Foundation

macfound

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JfRwRG0NY6M> (1:26:50)

**13. 09 18 2013 220621 Q&A After the Premiere of Chasing Shakespeare at The MIBFF
2013**

Yvon Ratté

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PhEv_1ud8Jk (32:04)

14. Montana Women For...

StopKeystoneXL

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QE_oWXu2_Zk (08:11)

A) Relevant videos 4:49:25

B) Context videos 2:48:56

All together 7:42:21