Living Through Desirability: Expanding Identity and Disrupting Discourses and Ideologies

by

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Abstract

Utilizing a Foucauldian (1975) critical discourse analysis, my research examines discourses of damage and pathology in literature focused on Indigenous issues and how they can create a discursive frame that influences identity formation in problematic ways. My study embeds three main themes of discourse: problematizing, pathologizing, and culturizing of First Nation peoples.

I experienced a myriad of ways that deficit narratives in New Brunswick contributed to a damage-centred frame of reference for First Nation peoples. Consider, for example, the incessant references to the First Nation academic achievement gap or the practice of schools hosting cultural events without meaningful inclusion. These practices contribute to the essentializing of First Nation peoples. There needs to be action that goes beyond visual representations of Indigeneity and a move to address how power operates and truth and knowledge are maintained. I put forth that honouring **desire** is a way to challenge this framing.

Through an autoethnographic documentary film, I explore how problematizing, pathologizing and culturizing discourses inform(ed) my identity, taking the audience on a journey from damage to desire. My research utilizes desire-based strategies to re-conceptualize how Mi'kmaq identity might be understood. Tuck (2009) states that "desire-based frameworks are concerned with understanding complexity, contradiction, and the self-determination of lived lives" (p. 416). My research struggles for cultural negotiation and investigates how an expanded dialogue of Mi'kmaq identity informed by desire might create more space for First Nation peoples to thrive.

Keywords: Indigenous, First Nation, Truth and Reconciliation, autoethnography, critical analysis, visual research methods, damage, desire, cultural negotiation.

Dedication

My mother always demanded the best from me. She did this in an incredibly soft, humble, and nurturing way which created a foundation of strength and desire. This drive to honour (not impress) my mother kept me up at night when I wasn't making the best decisions but wrapped itself warmly around me at the same time. I've often caught myself wondering, What would mom think? There is not a day that goes by that my mother's voice isn't guiding me. My mother's life was filled with exceptional happenings, some that have left deep soul wounds and others that have brought incredible joy. Mom stood by me through my educational journey, from the early years when I was asking her for money on a weekly basis for "bills," to now when I ask her for advice and time. Time is so precious and fleeting, yet she always saved some for me. I am absolutely indebted and blessed to have my mother's love. Thank you, beautiful Mama. My love and gratitude for you are immeasurable.

Mom and I welcomed my son into this bond in 2015 and the three of us have been inseparable in heart, mind, and spirit ever since. This means that I now have two people that I must deeply honour. I tried my best not to let this dissertation interfere with mother-and-son time but those sleepless nights of doing work have consequences. I thank you so very much my beautiful little boy for your humour, joy, understanding, tolerance, resilience, strength, and love. The impact you have on my life is incredible. I hope in years to come, when you lay your head down at night, you feel for me the same deep love I feel for my mother. You certainly have changed my life, and I love you more than you will ever know.

To my sisters and our first baby in the family, my sweet, gentle, and smart nephew Nicky who tolerated my moods and stress levels throughout this journey, thank you for your love and support. I love you.

My dear father who we lost in 2008, I hope you are proud of me. I know you understand how difficult this was for me to accomplish because we were cut from the same cloth. I feel your presence at times and I'm sure you will be beside me at the defence. I continue to 'keep my stick on the ice'…most of the time anyway.

Gram (Monica), I cannot write this without acknowledging you. It has been a long time since I've been able to hug you and hear your laugh but when I close my eyes it brings me back. You are missed, but your heart and giving spirit live on.

Bruce, I included a clip of your gravesite in my documentary film. This was an honouring and a recognition of your life. I will never forget your incredibly tragic journey.

Finally, I want to thank Sacha (me)! This has not been easy. I read that a good reflective exercise is to hang a picture of yourself as a child and talk to it. This helps to be more aware of how we treat ourselves, the messages we tell ourselves and the unhealthy habits we partake in. I have been apologizing to little Sacha over the last few years for the sleepless nights, horrible eating habits and basic neglect of my health during this PhD. I will continue to take solace in talking to her, ensuring that I honour her innocent and hopeful spirit. I feel like we have been on this journey together, revisiting the past, realizing the present and dreaming about the future. This is for all those times people doubted you and for all those times you pushed back with your zest for life and courage. This is ultimately an honouring of our journey toward desire.

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Nutewestaq (Willow Talker) because he believed my words were medicine. Much love to you Walter.

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Wela'lin

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Glossary of Terms

Note: Do not use possessive pronouns when referring to First Nation peoples. I often read news articles that quote settler people referring to First Nation peoples as "our" First Nation communities or as Canada's Aboriginal Peoples. First Nation peoples are not owned by anyone and were here before this territory was named Canada.

Colonialism – An always exploitative relationship in which the sovereignty, political autonomy, resources, and social capacity of the one (nation, state) is seized by the other (the colonizer) for the benefit of the latter. The relationship is maintained by coercion and sustained by racist myths of inevitability, development, and the deficiency of the colonized that effectively require the intervention of the colonizer to normalize the relationship. Those myths are transmitted intergenerationally (Green, 2009).

Indian – "The term *Indian* is probably the most contentious…. In Canada, *Indian* continues to have legal connotations, and there is still an *Indian Act*; so you'll see it used officially, as well as colloquially. There is a long history of this term being used pejoratively — two good reasons not to use it" (Vowel, 2016, p. 9). Indigenous peoples were named Indian; we did not choose that term.

Indigenous – This term is used internationally to encompass all groups but it is good practice to use specific nations; for example, I am Mi'kmaq from Natoaganeg First Nation and a member of the Wabanaki confederacy.

Aboriginal – This term was adopted officially in the Constitution Act (1982) to refer generally to First Nations, Inuit, and Metis peoples. It has become the most common official term used in Canada but is used mainly in a legal context.

First Nations – Refers to that group of peoples officially known as Indians under the Indian Act and does not include Inuit or Metis peoples.

Wabanaki – The Wabanaki Confederacy formed around 1680 (some say earlier) in response to raids from the Haudenosaunee or Iroquois Confederacy (specifically the Mohawks) in Quebec and Ontario. The Confederacy fell dormant in the late 1800s after colonial Canada displaced Indigenous governance systems. In 1993 the Penobscots, believing that the five nations needed to participate in the discourse around protecting Mother Earth and Aboriginal title, called on the nations to re-establish the Confederacy. It was a political alliance between nations in the east, on both sides of what is now the U.S-Canadian border. The Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Abenaki, Mi'kmaq, and Maliseet joined together against the threat of colonialism and raiding Iroquois (Thira, 2020).

Mi'kmaq – Translated as "the people," the term refers to First Nations peoples of the Northeastern Woodlands mainly located in what is now called the Atlantic Provinces and the Gaspé Peninsula of Quebec as well as the northeastern region of Maine.

Status Indian – Is a legal definition used to refer to First Nations who are under federal jurisdiction and the Indian Act.

Indian Act – A Canadian federal law that governs in matters pertaining to Indian status, bands, and Indian reserves. Throughout history it has been highly invasive and paternalistic, as it authorizes the Canadian federal government to regulate and administer the affairs and day-to-day lives of registered Indians and reserve communities. This authority has ranged from overarching political control, such as

imposing governing structures on Aboriginal communities in the form of band councils, to control over the rights of "Indians" to practice their culture and traditions. The Indian Act has also enabled the government to determine the land base of these groups in the form of reserves, and even to define who qualifies as Indian in the form of Indian status. (University of British Columbia, 2009, https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/the_indian_act/#introduction)

You can read the Indian Act at this link: https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/i-5/

In my professional and personal life, I would normally distinguish between Indigenous, First Nation and Wabanaki but the external data collected for my documentary film highlighted common misconceptions and essentialist beliefs for Indigenous peoples. Therefore, separating would minimize the all encompassing affects of damage discourses across all groups. For purposes of this research, I use the terms interchangeably.

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

My life has been informed by desire, love, support, and progress. My family members are hard-working, successful, and compassionate. My son is a dynamic, energetic, talented boy who I am thankful for every day. We are Mi'kmaq. Unfortunately, I do not hear stories, read literature, or watch media that capture our story. The reason I chose to embark on this research journey was because of the incessant damaged-informed approaches and understandings of Indigeneity that dominate social, educational, institutional, and political contexts in Canada.

I use autoethnography to explore the social, political, and historical factors that have informed a damaged frame of reference for myself and Indigenous peoples. I investigate external texts that contribute to subject positions for First Nation peoples, essentialism in scholarship, and the issue of damage-informed identity. To struggle against this positioning, I introduce and examine an epistemological shift supporting desire-based strategies in relation to their potential impact on Mi'kmaq identity. To explore the implications of these discourses, I created a documentary film to use as data in my autoethnographic analysis, which juxtaposes damage-based narratives with my life experiences. As part of my autoethnographic analysis, I applied a reflexive analysis to the film to extract desire-based strategies from my experiences, which challenge damage-centered narratives, discourses, and ideologies.

This chapter includes a summary of my research study. I was able to follow my passion for critical studies through the Masters of Education program at the University of New Brunswick, which led to a more well-rounded understanding of how power and truth are maintained. I describe the framing of Indigenous peoples as taking place through

problematizing, pathologizing, and culturizing discourses. I also present my research questions and the context and significance of the research. The methodology, theoretical framework, and overall organization of the study are also addressed.

1.1 Positioning of Mi'kmaq Peoples

What if you are Indigenous but are not inclined or able to speak the language or practice ceremonies? Does this mean you are not Indigenous enough? What if you are a successful, happy, and healthy Indigenous person but do not see this reflected in scholarship or data collection? How do people understand who you are as an Indigenous person if you do not fit into the damaged frame of reference that colonization created? The effects of colonization reach far beyond land acquisition and deep into the souls of many Indigenous peoples.

Colonial ideologies continue to inform and influence Indigenous lives. For example, there are Indigenous understandings of identity that are informed by communal, relational, and familial criteria, but the Indian Act determines who is eligible for status, where Indigenous peoples can live, and what rights can be exercised. Samson and Gigoux (2017) note that, "Past and present colonial governments have not only deprived Indigenous peoples of their land and resources but also prevented self-identification through imposed administrative definitions of who Indigenous peoples are" (Samson & Gigoux, 2017, p. 10). These imposed administrative definitions inform and impact systems like education (Pratt, Louie, Hanson, & Ottman, 2018). Pratt et al. (2018), for example, write about how education has been negatively impacted through the formation and transmission of knowledge in Western schooling, leaving out Indigenous worldviews and positioning Western views as superior.

Chrisjohn and Young (2006), Walter and Anderson (2016), and Tuck (2009) write about the need to examine the positioning of Indigenous peoples as a problem that needs to be fixed and an illness that needs to be cured, or only understood through cultural attributes. My mother had to report to the federal government on the trauma she endured at Indian Day School to be considered for compensation. The survivor moved up a level in payment if they met the damage criteria set by the Federal Indian Day School Class Action (http://indiandayschools.com/en/who-can-submit/, 2002). This requires Indigenous peoples to write about how sick they are in order for those "responsible" to address it. I strive for a shift away from being allowed to "only speak from that space in the margin that is a sign of deprivation, a wound, an unfulfilled longing…to only speak your pain" (hooks, 1990, p. 152). There was a book written in 1980, made into a movie of the same name, titled *The Indian in the Cupboard*. A boy received a tiny figurine of an "Indian." When the boy placed the figurine in a metal cupboard and opened it, the "Indian" would come alive. The book is supposed to be some sort of awakening for the boy as he moves through varied ways of determining what is best for the "Indian." In the end, the boy decides not to use the cupboard anymore so that the "Indian" can go back to the place he came from. He gives the cupboard key to his mother so he is not tempted to use it again. This book sold over 10 million copies. The sad irony is that it succinctly describes the relationship between the government and Indigenous peoples, and the federal government is still holding the key.

The Indian in the Cupboard

Legal control over who is considered status Indian belongs to the federal government. I was born Mi'kmaq but only granted status at six years old with the passing of Bill C-31

(Indian Act, 1985). The impact of monitoring, regulating, normalizing, and restricting identity through the confines of policies such as the Indian Act can be compared to that on a prisoner where constant "surveillance of the body and self-surveillance" force the individual to become "docile" (Foucault, 1975). These policies, which aim to determine normalization, seep into communities and society, and their impact creates "Indigenous criteria." This practice is used as a tool of assimilation. Regulations enacted on how one can identify create categories of Indigeneity. I was *assigned* an Indian status card that recognized me as a number and stated the rights that I am *allowed* under the Indian Act (Indian Act, R.S.C. 1985, c. I-5, 1876).

Section 6 of the Indian Act explains how a person can be registered under the Indian Act. Sections 6 (1) and 6 (2) specify two categories of status Indians (Assembly of First Nations, 2020). These sections determine current and future Indian status. For example, if I had a child with a non-status person then my child would be considered 6 (2). If my child were to have a child with a non-status person, their children would not be considered Indian under federal regulation. If this is not discriminatory enough, Indigenous peoples must partake in lengthy legal battles for rights, which according to Vowel (2016) result in "small changes to the way status is defined" (p. 25). The purpose of this policy could be interpreted as being to eradicate Indigenous peoples.

The Indian Act has been a major area of contention and has been widely critiqued by many Indigenous scholars and authors who also consider it to be based on a theory of Western superiority, and practices of assimilation and oppression that continue to have devastating impacts on Indigenous lives (Battiste, 2000; Cannon & Sunseri, 2017; Frideres, 2011; Lerat & Ungar, 2005; Treuer, 2012). The Indian Act demands governance regulations for First Nation communities (Bruyneel, 2007; Krakoff, 2013),

and determines social services for First Nation peoples (Joseph & Joseph, 2017) while simultaneously perpetuating widespread stereotypes, discrimination, and discourse (Abele, 2007; Borrows, 2008; McGowan, 2011; Brodsky, 2016).

The Indian Act is an act of control and a way to maintain power. Its regulations have impacted Indigenous lives in many ways: the creation of reservations, the replacement of traditional governance with Western voting systems, and the regulation of bloodlines to determine identity, etc. It also indirectly informs social perceptions, scholarship, media, and policies through its regulatory control. An impact of this regulation is the perpetuation of narratives about, and frames of reference created for, Indigenous peoples. These narratives and frames of reference produce truths about Indigenous peoples which foster and maintain damage and deficit discourses. These discourses impact Indigenous lives in devastating ways. I will explore three main discourses that have been prevalent in the literature I have read and the experiences I have lived. This section acknowledges that the Indian Act may be the most damaging policy ever created for Indigenous peoples.

The Imaginary Indian

Some important themes in this dissertation are the discourses of culturizing, pathologizing, and problematizing and how they have projected a negative image and understanding of Indigenous peoples. Francis (1996) describes how Canadian culture has been propagating stereotypes of Indigenous peoples: “Since 1850…the Imaginary Indian has been, and continues to be, just about anything the non-Native culture has wanted it to be” (p. 3). These “Imaginary Indian” narratives can be found in policies, systems, and programs in a plethora of ways through various social services. It would

be impossible to identify and investigate the multiple effects that these narratives have had, and continue to have, on Indigenous identity.

For the purposes of this study, I chose to analyze their impact on three areas identified through my professional and academic experiences that impact identity: certain calls to action from the TRC, some Indigenous scholarship and statistics gathering, and reporting on Indigenous peoples that I worked with in New Brunswick. By analyzing key terms used throughout these documents, I "explore the way in which the policy text produces and constructs its objects of study" (Walshaw, 2007, p. 47). For the purposes of this study, a policy text refers to documents that inform practices related to First Nation peoples. The policy texts do this by creating a frame from which to understand First Nation peoples. This is an important analytical process in my research because it exposes discourses that impact Indigenous identity. Below I identify and define the three main discourses of culturizing, problematizing, and pathologizing. In chapter four I will explore how these discourses impact Indigenous identity.

Culturizing

The discourse of culturizing is problematic to me when Indigenous peoples are understood, categorized, and defined by their cultural attributes or assumed cultural attributes. On the one hand, one must fit within set parameters to be considered First Nation and if one moves outside of them, one might be viewed as not Indigenous enough. St. Denis' (2004) thoughts on the regulation of identity succinctly describe my experiences: "Cultural revitalization, acting as a system of true beliefs, depends on a construction of Aboriginality as a timeless, unchanging essence. It operates with a fixed notion of cultural and a social stratification that regulates degrees of authenticity" (p. 41). On the other hand, if one does identify through cultural attributes, one may be

viewed by Western society as living in the past and not able to contribute to the present or future. These are culturizing discourses.

Pathologizing

Pathologizing is to regard or treat someone as psychologically abnormal or unhealthy: "it requires Aboriginal Peoples to 'demonstrate' and accept their pathology, and to parade it before the Powers That Be, before those Powers will condescend to undertake the merest of amends" (Chrisjohn & Young, 2006, p. 51).

Pathologizing is a discourse of colonization that has severe consequences on identity. We are viewed as unhealthy, and the settler group is positioned as the healer. Indigenous peoples are set up to strive for colonial ideologies of health while settlers simultaneously maintain power.

Foucault (1967) describes the impact of pathologies in his work titled *Madness and Civilization.* By tracing the history of "madness" and the ensuing control over the bodies of those who were deemed "mad," he uncovered the philosophical and cultural values attached to the labelling of peoples and how power and truth were maintained and determined. For example, statistics in the Fact Sheet on Aboriginal Peoples (2016), which I use regularly in professional life, creates a narrative of sickness as established truth. Once this truth is established, the dominant group is positioned as the healthy experts who can fix them, which contributes to further subjectification of Indigenous peoples.

Problematizing

When one problematizes a group of people, one sets them up to be regarded as something that needs to be fixed. For example, Indigenous peoples are constantly

referred to and described from a deficit and damage perspective in the media (CBC News, 2021). Situating Indigenous peoples as a problem also maintains power for the dominant group and sets the foundation for many programs, policies, and practices in social services (Hankivsky et al., 2014).

The fisheries dispute in Esgenoopetitj First Nation (1999–2002), a Mi'kmaq community in New Brunswick, is a prime example of problematizing First Nation peoples. I am from the neighbouring community and vividly remember First Nation peoples being positioned as the problem, and many racist and ignorant remarks being spewed about Mi'kmaq peoples. The court ruling was in favour of Mi'kmaq peoples and recognized our treaty right to catch and sell lobster out of season. Did this ruling change the narrative of First Nation peoples being a problem? It certainly contributed to it. First Nation peoples were positioned as oppositional and expectant of special treatment while non-First Nation fisher people were positioned as being treated unfairly.

The Not Yet and Not Anymore

The implications of problematizing, pathologizing, and culturizing discourses reach beyond macro issues and seep into our lived realities. On a professional level, I was the only First Nation person that I am aware of in my former workplace, which employed over 200 people. I was nicknamed "Pocahontas" by settler friends and told by a First Nation educator that I was hired because I looked white, while another colleague expressed the thought that I only acted Indian when it benefited me. As a university athlete, I was denied sports scholarships (even though I was awarded Most Valuable Player) because my "tuition was already paid for."

I am status Indian, but not Indian enough for some and too Indian for others. I am partially included by both groups who have various definitions of what being Indigenous means. Combine these frameworks of identity with subjective policies, programs, scholarships, statistics reports, social services, etc., and one becomes aware of the various discourses of colonization that challenge First Nation peoples.

1.2 Significance of the Study

This study pushes against damage narratives and essentialist positions that assume that "people and things have natural and essential common characteristics which are inherent, innate and unchanging" (Sahin, 2018, p. 1). Advocating for an expansion of Mi'kmaq identity informed by desire has the potential to create more space in which people like myself can identify. The ideology of colonialism, the "us versus them" dichotomy, does not promote reconciliation or positively impact First Nation people's identity (Schouls, 2003). It is the choice of individuals who are part of a cultural group to identify which spaces to value and occupy. Reclaiming the narrative through our counter stories of desire leaves it "up to us to determine the parameters instead of taking a back seat to the culture narrative" (Picton & Tufue-Dolgy, 2019, p. 199).

As an Indigenous researcher who struggles against these discourses, I expect that this study will contribute to the limited body of scholarly work on the impact of desire-based understandings of First Nation peoples. What contributes to my identity are relationships, accomplishments, pride, joy, and love. My life experiences as a Mi'kmaq person have not been represented in society. Since I refuse to conform to discourses of damage, this research promotes a negotiation, an expansion of Mi'kmaq identity.

1.3 Research Questions

1) How did the statistics reports, the TRC, and Indigenous scholarship, which were mainly used in my profession in New Brunswick between the years 2008 and 2018, inform Mi'kmaq identity? What are the social, political, and historical influences of these documents on the formation of Mi'kmaq identity?
2) How do my life experiences as a Mi'kmaq person, as captured through an autoethnographic documentary film, contribute to a more expanded dialogue of Mi'kmaq identity?
3) How is an expanded dialogue of Mi'kmaq identity informed by desire and how might it be applied to statistics gathering and reporting, the TRC, and Indigenous scholarship (i.e., research written by and about Indigenous peoples)?

1.4 Research Approach

This study utilizes a qualitative research approach. According to Crossman, "Qualitative research is a type of social science research that collects and works with non-numerical data and that seeks to interpret meaning from these data that help understand social life through the study of targeted populations or places" (2020). This approach allows for more "descriptive analysis of culture and social settings" (Bradley & Sutton, 1993, p. 406). There are three main benefits of autoethnography, according to Chang (2008):

> (1) it offers a research method friendly to researchers and readers; (2) it enhances cultural understanding of self and others; (3) it has a potential

> to transform self and others to motivate them to work toward cross-cultural coalition building. (p. 52)

For me, seeing my life experiences on film through an autoethnographic approach is more meaningful and relatable than reading about them. One challenge with this approach is not focussing solely on self. The research needed to locate self in relation to others, institutions, ideologies, politics, and power. Indigenous peoples have dealt with colonization in various ways. The film represents the ways that I managed the impacts, which happened to be by incorporating desire-based strategies in my life. I will elaborate on autoethnography in chapter three.

1.5 Research Setting

This section was informed by an information summary developed with former colleagues (Williamson, Patrick, & DeWolfe, 2021). As of the 2016 Census Statistics on Indigenous Peoples, there were 29,380 people in New Brunswick claiming Aboriginal identity (Statistics Canada, 2022). That number represents a 67.1% increase since 2006. Of that number, 17,575 claimed First Nation single identity (only belonging to the First Nation group). As of the 2018–2019 school year, approximately 1,251 First Nation students who reside in a First Nation community attended K-12 provincial schools. This represents approximately 3% of the total student population. Most First Nation students live in the western and northern sections of the province. These numbers do not include Indigenous students who do not reside in a First Nation community. In 2017, it was estimated that more than 2,400 students attending provincial schools were Indigenous (including First Nation students who were not members of a First Nation community in New Brunswick).

As the former Director for the Office of First Nation Education at the New Brunswick Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, I was called to fulfill the following: in 2008, a tripartite Memorandum Of Understanding was signed with the New Brunswick Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD), Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and First Nation communities to work collaboratively on a range of educational services for First Nation students. The Enhanced Programs and Services Agreements were also signed in 2008 by EECD and First Nation communities. In 2015, the TRC 94 Calls to Action were released and influenced educational policy. The 10-year education plan, *Everyone at their Best* (2016), was launched by EECD with one objective dedicated to First Nation education. Also, in response to the TRC, the Education Act was amended in 2017 to include First Nation priorities, and a Treaty Education MOU (2017) was signed with EECD and First Nation Communities. In 2019, the Minister of Education released the *Succeeding at Home: A Green Paper on Education*, which also included Indigenous priorities. These documents guide and support provincial school approaches to Indigenous education in New Brunswick.

I worked in the context of my research setting for many years. Experiencing how documents like the Enhancement Agreements and the TRC reports were utilized within an educational setting placed me in a unique position in relation to my research. I worked with First Nation leaders and community members on how to best apply these documents in provincial schools and my team at the department was tasked with implementing them in practice. The knowledge gained from this experience allowed me to confidently use the Enhancement Agreement Template (2018) and the Truth and

Reconciliation of Canada: Calls to Action (2015) as part of the data for my critical discourse analysis.

1.6 My Context

My career in education has been multifaceted. I was a supply teacher in former District 16, an educator at a First Nation community school, a district First Nation subject coordinator, a First Nation learning specialist, and the director of the Office of First Nation Education at EECD. I am currently an assistant professor at Mount Allison University working in the Canadian Studies department with a focus on Indigenous education.

I am a Mi'kmaq status Indian and a member of Natoaganeg (Eel Ground) First Nation, which is in northern New Brunswick. I was an educator at Natoaganeg School for a short time and did youth engagement programs for the community health centre. The population is estimated at approximately 1,094 people, with over 600 living in the community. I attended provincial schools from grades K-12. I have many cousins, aunts and uncles residing in various communities across New Brunswick and Quebec. My mother grew up in Natoaganeg but left after high school. We moved back to the community after my father passed.

The process of recognizing and changing damage narratives is not an easy one. My grandmother had to quit school in grade three to look after her siblings as my great grandmother had tuberculosis. Indian agents tried to remove her from the community, but she was granted permission to stay home and take care of her younger siblings due to her mother's illness. This resulted in my grandmother being a non-reader and unable to work in a "professional" atmosphere for most of her life.

I am the daughter of an Indian Day School survivor. At the Indian Day School my mother attended, students had to make a "shh" sound once if they wanted to urinate and a "shh" sound twice to gain permission to defecate. The "teacher" would often deny children permission to use the washroom, so there were puddles of urine around the students' desks every day. The students were then beaten for urinating in their chairs. My mother had two brothers, one of whom was beaten daily in front of the class for speaking Mi'kmaw and being disruptive. My uncle's life was seriously affected by this abuse, which led to a tragic lifecycle that ended with his murder. Her youngest brother was run over and killed on his bike at 11 years old by a drunk driver who was never brought to justice. My mother completed her postsecondary education (against the odds), married, and had three daughters. She lost her status but regained it when Bill C-31 passed in 1985.

These experiences are important to include so that the reader and viewer are aware that my life was not one of privilege, and I did not come to desire-based thinking without enduring pain. The experiences my family endured were a product of colonization, but I am expressing my agency through this research to argue for the importance of desire-based thinking.

1.7 Research Design

The positivist view assumes that reality is objective and independent from the researcher. Scientific tradition, which is based on positivism, is the prevalent means of inquiry in the Western world, but it has failed to recognize the existence of perspectives that challenge some of its central assumptions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Varadharajan, 2000). In relation to my research, the dominant ideological lens that bleeds from the positivist approach is limiting. Wilson (2008) asserts that "Positivism espouses the view

that there is one true reality that can be broken down into overriding laws. The epistemology that goes along with this belief is that through objective thought, it should be possible to discover this one reality" (p. 36). Positivism takes the stance that there are facts about the world that are true for everyone, and they can be discovered and understood through scientific methods. Based on positivist thinking, Indigenous knowledges are rendered non-scientific. Nakashima and Roue (2002), explain that "Western science is positivist and materialist in contrast to traditional knowledge, which is spiritual and does not make distinctions between empirical and sacred (p. 317). An Indigenous paradigm is very much rooted in generational knowledge informed by land and place and requires relationships, connection and stories not necessarily analytics and categorization.

I spent a lot of time in my educational journey wondering why learning was so disconnected from my lived reality. My educators from grades k-12 were members of the dominant group and this influenced the content I was being taught and the learning environment. I understood at an early age that knowledge was not just gained in a classroom, but was an embodied experience informed by family, community, place and a connection to something greater. Later in life, I realized there were varied culturally informed approaches to knowledge and I did not relate to those that were identified as Western (constructivist, positivist). I did connect with an Indigenous paradigm which acknowledged and honoured my thoughts and feelings on learning being multidimensional. Indigenous knowledges embeds a more intuitive and holistic approach.

My mother was a health director in a First Nation community for many years. It was imperative that the community's environment, approaches, understandings, context,

barriers, and opportunities to health were considered as important as Western approaches to health. Health is considered relational in our communities and understanding this means that there is not one way to approach health that will work for every citizen. King et al. (2009) agree that the health disparities within Indigenous communities are varied and mainly social in origin. Health indicators relate to social, political, and environmental factors; therefore, one would need a deep understanding of the community to address the members' health. I note this example to show that scientific methods of health cannot be the only way to address or understand the health of people and communities. Inspired by Elder Marshall's two-eyed seeing analogy, Bartlett et al. (2012) note:

> Only when we come to realize that everything we do to the water, the air and the earth, we also ultimately do to ourselves...will we treat our environment and ourselves with equal reverence…and only with the understanding that all must be maintained and that all must be equal, will we be healthy. (p. 7)

This quotation encompasses an Indigenous paradigm where everything (plants, animals, etc.) and everyone is related; it is through this understanding that we come to know that knowledge is relational, and we are only interpreters of this knowledge. Wilson (2008) notes that "This distinction in the ownership of knowledge is one major difference between the dominant and Indigenous paradigm" (p. 36). Knowledge is not owned, it is ever changing and related to environment, and therefore cannot be positioned as one way through scientific testing.

A researcher's interactions with people and the world uphold the relational way through which we come to understand each other and our experiences. Without my

interaction with the world, I would not have come to know that damage was being maintained and used to understand Indigenous peoples. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), "qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them" (p. 3). My qualitative research utilizes a relational stance in which my research on desire is examined through the experiences of my life. My personal narratives and experiences are valuable data. They are based on the idea that reality and truth are constructed and shaped through the interaction between people and the environment in which they live (Silverman, 2000; Freebody, 2003).

Stemming from this understanding, my research design consists of two parts: Chang's (2016) ten-step autoethnographic method for external and internal data collection and Greenaway's (2010) and Hsiung's (2008) approaches to reflexivity, which I used to analyze the data presented in the documentary film. The external and internal data collected consists of both written and visual representations.

Chang (2008) describes the process of collecting personal memory data as "a building block of autoethnography because the past gives a context to the present self and memory opens a door to the richness of the past" (p. 71). For personal (internal) data or data that relates to my personal experiences, I listed and wrote stories about the major events and experiences from my life. I also collected external (personal) data like letters, newspaper clippings of events in my life, archival footage, and other artifacts like sports and scholastic awards.

I investigated how the external texts (TRC calls to action, an enhancement template, Indigenous scholarship) that guided my professional life influenced everyday discourses and the continued investment in colonial ideologies through a Foucauldian

discourse analysis. Chang (2008) states that "Data from external sources—other individuals, visual artifacts, documents, and literature—provide additional perspectives and contextual information to help you investigate and examine your subjectivity" (p. 103). I analyzed the impact of these discourses (problematizing, pathologizing, culturizing) on literature focussed on Indigenous peoples and how they have been used to uphold, maintain, and gain access to power. Additionally, I exposed the contradictory and complex representations and ways of being that are available for Mi'kmaq people like me.

The data used in my research was a combination of external and internal personal data. My professional life at the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development was mainly informed by the TRC calls to action, the enhancement template, and Indigenous scholarship. These documents were regularly used to collect data and inform practice. Therefore, exposing damage discourses throughout the documents was essential to my research. Using Foucauldian discourse analysis, I was able to code the data drawn from these documents into three themes: problematizing, pathologizing, and culturizing.

These discourses overlap and can be informed by the same power relations—the maintenance of power through preserving a truth of damage for First Nation peoples. For example, in education, First Nation students are referred to as having an academic achievement gap compared to their peers, which can impact First Nation students' self-perceptions and peer and educational staff understandings; schools may also only incorporate cultural events such as powwows to address the gap. When you read the

discourse analysis of the enhancement template in chapter four, it becomes apparent as to why the "academic achievement gap" narrative is widespread.

Autoethnography is narrative but not necessarily based on personal narrative. Once I had a better understanding of this concept, I tried to create a list of autoethnographic styles. The plan was to read about them and decide which one to use. This process proved difficult as autoethnography takes many forms. The forms of autoethnography differ in how much emphasis is placed on the study of others, the researcher's self and interaction with others, traditional analysis, the interview context, as well as power relationships (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011).

It was a challenge reflecting on my personal experiences while keeping them culturally meaningful. I did not want my bias to be misinterpreted as the way all First Nation peoples think or feel. I had to locate the study at the discourse level, meaning how the data included in my research perpetuates meaning for First Nation peoples, as opposed to the individual level.

Once I had the external (text, media headlines, television series) and internal (chronological timeline, photos, footage) data collected, it became obvious that my life experiences were culturally meaningful because they challenged the dominant damage discourses. For my internal data, I wrote 32 personal stories and coded them under themes. Some fit under the problematizing, pathologizing, and culturizing themes from the external data coding but most were coded under the heading of desire. For example, I encountered a brutal physical attack at one point in my life, but it happened at the same time I received a major sports award. I placed this story under desire.

Capturing on film how identity can be informed by desire was difficult, but

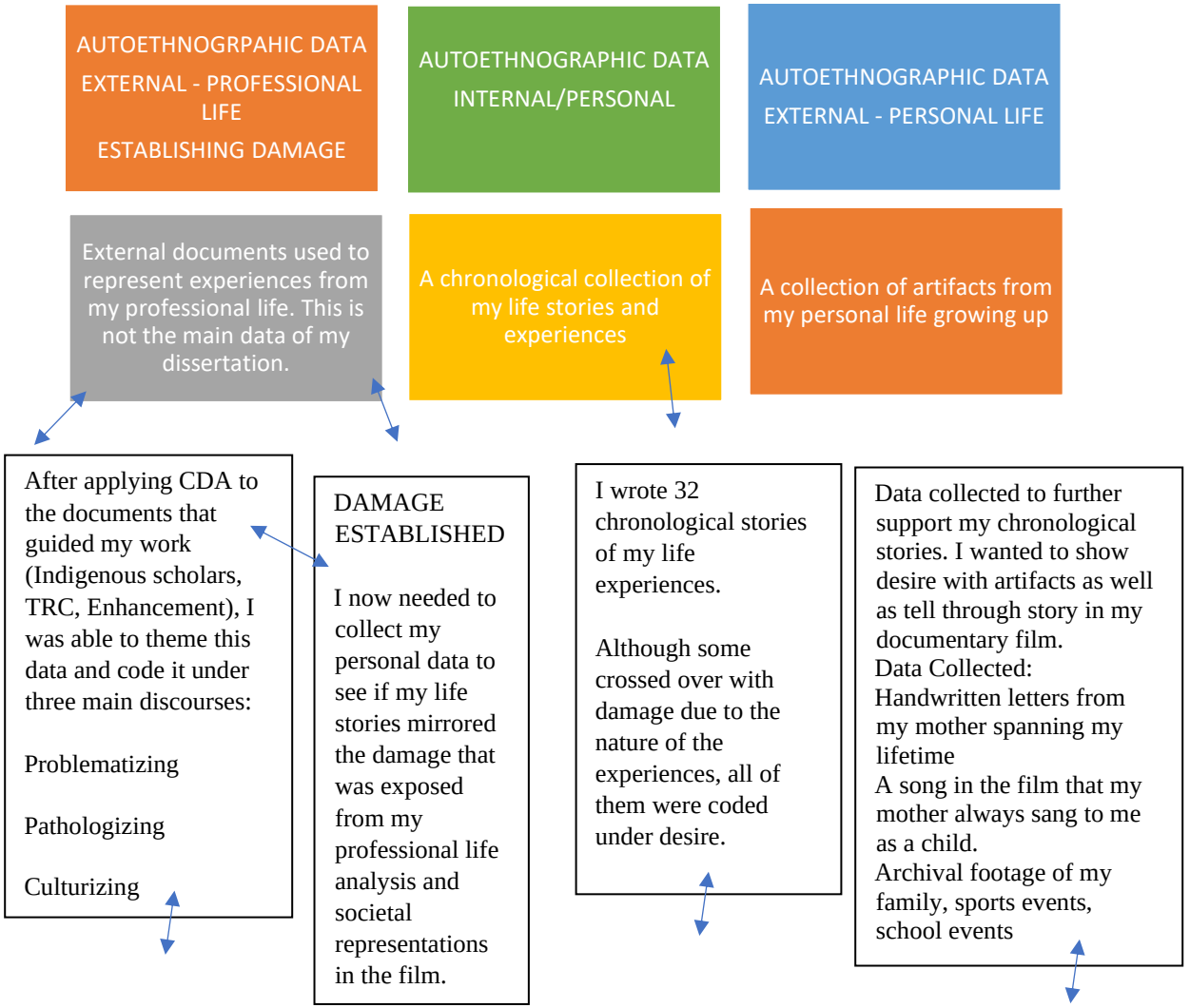
I was drawn to the idea of utilizing voice, sound, and sight in research. It brought me out of the invisible, challenged dominant ideologies of what counts as knowledge and pushed aside disciplines that did not allow for objectivity. Foucault (1975) wrote a book based on the idea of discipline as practiced from the 18th century onward and how its origins were about controlling the bodies of those not of the dominant group. The concept of discipline resonated with me because the narratives around Indigenous peoples were of damage, and I did not identify within that frame of reference. Smith (2012) states that "The concept of discipline is even more interesting when we think about it not simply as a way of organizing systems of knowledge but also as a way of organizing people or bodies...the most obvious forms of discipline were through exclusion, marginalization and denial" (p. 71). I remember when I was younger thinking about how disconnected my education was from family and community. The idea that education could only be offered within the four walls of the classroom impacted how I felt about being First Nation and my experiences with Indigeneity.

Being an academic did not include culture, it did not mean family or community, and it certainly did not mean learning about First Nation perspectives. Education was organized into systems of knowledge (mathematics, biology, etc.) and since they excluded Indigenous perspectives, I was marginalized and denied space as a learner. The documentary film I produced opened space that challenged this exclusion and denial through a counter story of strength and desire.

My data process is captured in a chart on the following page but for clarity I will explain the process here as well. I began this journey with the intuitive understanding that damage was largely being used to understand First Nation peoples. As I advanced in my professional career, damage was apparent in the documents that guided my work

but also in general society through media headlines, movies, etc. I collected this damaged based data as proof of status quo and was able to capture three main themes through CDA, problematizing, pathologizing and culturizing discourses. Once that data was collected, I began documenting my personal chronological timeline of events and themed this data under headlines like Family and Sports. To coincide my personal narrative data, I found artifacts in the form of letters from my mother, sports awards, etc., to support the stories I was collecting. I then captured this data in a documentary film which presented the data in a storyline form and made it easier to analyze. The main theme of the film is moving from damage (external data) to desire (personal data).

Coding Diagram (also represented as a data catalogue in Appendix B)



I also collected data from media sources (news headlines and broadcasts, legislation, Ted Talks, cartoons, movies, educational resources from my sons schooling, etc.) to better establish whether damage was only being produced in my professional life. I added this data to the documentary film. This data was also coded under the three identified discourses from my professional life analysis.

I furthered this by theming the desires under:

Family
Sports
Academic Awards
Friends
School Experiences
Place
Mentors

Footage of outdoor places where I spent time as a child.
Footage of events with friends like junior prom and prom
Awards, certificates, medals (sports and academic)
Footage of me dancing with my son
Many photos with family, sports teams, my son, etc.

This data coincided with the desire themes from my chronological story coding and fit under the same categories.







ALL DATA CAPTURED IN MY DOCUMENTARY FILM

I then analyzed my documentary film through reflexivity in chapter five.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study consists of two elements: the concept of discourse as developed by Foucault (1975) and desire-based theories according to the works of scholars like Tuck (2009), Calderon (2016), Renga, (2017) and Reiss (2002).

Foucault

Central to Foucault's work is the idea of social control in the classification, detection, and treatment of citizens through power relations in policy and other means of control that maintain power over time (Foucault, 1975). In his earliest writings, Foucault (1972) developed what he called "the archeology of knowledge." He theorized that by tracing the history of every institution one could discover discourses and discursive rules that construct subjects and shape how these institutions are organized. To do this, he used a form of discursive analysis to show how certain conditions produce discourses that emerge as knowledge. This social control could be exposed through critical discourse analysis (CDA). Waitt (2005) summarized Foucault's work in discourse analysis, which situates itself in how language is used, as including three main areas:

> (i) to explore the outcomes of discourse in terms of actions, perceptions, or attitudes rather than simply the analysis of statements/text (ii) to identify the regulatory frameworks within which groups of statements are produced, circulated, and communicated within which people construct their utterances and thoughts and (iii) to uncover the support or internal mechanisms that maintain certain structures and rules over statements about people…as unchangeable,
> 'normal' or 'common sense' rather than to discover the 'truth' or 'origin' of a statement. (pp. 164–165)

This quotation is important because it situates my use of CDA. Language use is a key perpetuator of truth and analyzing its use in policy, for example, helps to uncover truth-producing narratives, why they may have been used (e.g., political reasons) and how they can subjectify (e.g., possessive pronouns). I utilized CDA as a methodology to analyze external data and draw out how language use in the texts included in my external data were creating discourses of damage. CDA moves from how language is used to subjectify to how that language is used to achieve certain social means. CDA uncovered how discourses are taken up by institutions, what stances are supported or undermined, and hidden relations of power. It considered who was exercising power, who was gaining it, and who was using it to support their positions; in other words, it unmasked what Foucault called discursive structures. According to Waitt (2005), discursive structures "are the unwritten conventions that operate to produce some kind of authoritative account of the world" (p. 168). Some institutions may have First Nation art adorning their hallways but faculty that never mention Indigenous peoples in their teachings. Power in this instance is maintained through a decorated or mollified status quo.

Foucauldian discourse analysis of external texts (TRC calls to action, enhancement templates, Indigenous scholarship) that were used in my professional life unmasks these discourses and exposes how they negatively affect Indigenous identity. These damage discourses are used to create a frame of reference for Indigenous peoples. This frame of reference is used in a plethora of ways that impact Indigenous lives—for example, by perpetuating stereotypes and influencing statistics gathering and reporting. To counter these discourses, a new theory of change must be introduced, and that theory is one of desire.

Desire

I put forth that if desirability was also used as a theory of understanding for Indigenous peoples, then it would counter damage and pathologizing discourses. This would mean starting with the premise that First Nation peoples desire greatly, have experiences of desire that inform their lives, and live desirably. Renga (2017) cites
Smith (2009) and offers a framing of desire, "which treats humans as essentially desiring beings and defines desire as a potent force formed through participation in communal practices that orient practitioners' hearts (*eros*) toward particular futures (*telos*)" (p. 263). This description highlights community spaces as a force impacting our desires as opposed to desire only being individualistic. This means that one story of desire is not enough to really impact damage discourses; communities must foster desire, believe in desire, and be the space where desire can be nourished. As Lee (2022) states when furthering the symbolism around red dresses being hung in trees to represent missing and murdered Indigenous women, "Bring me flowers while I'm living, and I want my red dress to wear while I am alive" (lines 20–21). Lee is asking for recognition of desire and aliveness. We are not only what has happened to us, and we deserve and yearn to live outside of damage.

Although I utilize my life experiences to draw out desire strategies (behaviours I acted on to live desirably), my experiences with damage are like other First Nation peoples: I live under the Indian Act; watch movies that portray Indigenous peoples as savages and/or dreamlike beings; have been called names; have experienced racism in the workplace and communal settings; and have experienced trauma. Like other First Nation peoples, I have also experienced wonderful things: the birth of my son; growing up hearing Mi'kmaw; being loved by my parents; being happy; playing sports, etc.

These experiences allow for a transference of findings from the individual to that of First Nation peoples; we are common in our life experiences, whether joyous or traumatic. The entirety of my research aims to make desire, as a concept, culturally meaningful. To do this, I offer a vision of desire based on my life experiences through film, as a counter story to this problematic theory of damage. I set out to articulate the strategies and conditions that allowed me to live desirably and articulate them well so they might be used to contribute to a theory of change based on desire. I explain this articulation in the reflexivity section of my analysis in chapter four.

1.9 Methodology

For this study, I apply critical discourse analysis based on Foucault (1975) to the texts that informed my practice to expose the damage that informs Indigenous identity. This analysis is paralleled with my personal life experiences as investigated through Indigenous autoethnography informed by researchers like Adams and Ellis (2016), Whitinui (2014), and Houston (2007). I use Chang's (2016) suggested approach for data collection and Rosenthal and Eckhardt's (2016) wisdom for the creation of my documentary film (visual research methods), which captures my life experiences as a Mi'kmaq person (Weber, 2008 & Pauwels, 2010). I apply reflexivity to my documentary film as informed by Greenaway (2010) and Hsiung (2008) to identify and investigate desire-based strategies that were actioned in my life. The film endeavours to use my life experiences to show how desire can inform Mi'kmaq identity and in doing so expand the spaces Mi'kmaq peoples occupy. These desire-based strategies show a juxtaposition between the narrative of damage and the reality of desire-based

experience. Finally, I utilize the 16 basic human desires uncovered by Reiss (2002) in his study on human desires to name and define the desire-based strategies.

1.10 Organization of Study

This study is organized into six chapters: the introduction, literature review, methodology including data collection, two analysis chapters (which comprise the outcome of the CDA and my autoethnographic documentary film), and results and discussion. Chapter one is the introduction and provides an overview of the study. Chapter two is the literature review, which explores how colonization has impacted literature focussed on Indigenous peoples, how other researchers have experienced essentialism, and desire. Chapter three presents the methodology and discusses the research methods and design appropriateness of each framework; CDA informed by Foucault (1975); autoethnography informed by Adams, Jones, and Ellis (2016); visual research methods informed by Pauwels (2010); Chang's (2016) data collection process; and Greenaway's (2010) and Hsiung's (2008) suggested application of reflexivity. I also explain how they are connected and how they were used for data analysis. Chapter four encompasses the results of the CDA applied to external data and my reflective analysis of the film based on research question number two. Chapter five includes the results and findings. Chapter six, which tends to what Smith (2012) calls reframing, is a summation of my research findings and includes suggestions for future work.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Context

This literature review provides a history of how colonization impacted the development of literature about Indigenous peoples. The second section provides an overview of scholars who explore essentialism and how it impacted their lives. The third section establishes the theory of desire, which is positioned to struggle against colonial impacts on identity and an essentialized understanding of First Nation peoples. The literature review helps me theorize and elaborate on pathologizing, problematizing and culturizing discourses.

2.1 Literature about Indigenous Peoples

Colonization undoubtedly negatively influences how Indigenous peoples in Canada are understood and conceptualized. This influence has also made its way into various forms of literature. The economic greed for resources on Indigenous lands, for example, saw legislation developed in the form of policies like the British North America Act (1867) and the Indian Act (1876). These pieces of legislation influence contemporary approaches to literature like damage statistics gathering and reporting on Indigenous peoples (Statistics Canada, 2016).

Martin (2003) identified four phases in the development of Aboriginal research, such as *terra nullius* or empty land (1770–1900) where Europeans settled on the lands despite Indigenous peoples already being there. Research was based on "European observation" of Indigenous peoples. Stanner (1972) notes that Aboriginal people had already inhabited the land but were viewed with indifference, and Allen (1988) described Aboriginal peoples "possessing barely human status" (p. 80). The traditionalizing phase

(1900–1940) is what Wilson (2008) described as "any research conducted on Aboriginal people…based upon a racism that deemed them inhuman" (p. 48). Indigenous peoples were viewed as a hinderance to advancement. Martin (2003) describes research in this phase as a colonial discourse that established Indigenous peoples as "inhuman." The assimilation phase (1940–1970), according to Coomer (1984) and Beckett (1994) (as cited in Wilson, 2008), "saw the focus shift from exploiting Indigenous natural resources to examining our social structures, kinship structures and mythologies" (p. 49). This phase also saw non-Indigenous academics start to do research on Indigenous peoples to "advance their careers" (Wilson, 2008, p. 49). The early Aboriginal research phase (1970–1990s) saw Indigenous peoples continue to be researched but an expansion into "fields of linguistics, religion, education and health" (Martin, 2003, p.15). More control and power were exercised as the "experts" identified additional issues with Indigenous ways of life. Finally, in the recent Aboriginal research phase (1990–2000), according to Martin (2003), the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) created a movement in research that "contributed to the emanation of Indigenist research" (p. 17). More importantly, Wilson (2008) notes, "Indigenous scholars began to assert their power" (p. 51).

> During each phase, discourses and theoretical understandings were created. During the first phase, *terra nullius*, Wilson (2008) notes:
>
> As a further means of controlling this movement of Indigenous peoples, designated lands were established as reserves or missions, onto which all Indigenous peoples were forced to relocate. Under government acts and

> policing of policy, occupants were not allowed to leave the designated areas, nor were they allowed to continue ceremonial practices. (p. 47)
>
> For the purposes of this study, I note this as the first move to control the narrative of

Indigenous peoples and the birth of problematizing discourses. Not only were First Nation peoples viewed as a problem that needed to be eradicated but regulatory policies were put in place to monitor their bodies. This type of regulation and control caused devastation for Indigenous peoples in a plethora of ways: food security, ability to practice ceremony, disease, dependency, etc. (Datta, 2021; Lavallee & Poole, 2010; Crichlow, 2003; Bielefeld, 2014). An understanding that Indigenous peoples were abnormal, and a problem, was created (Wolfe, 2006). To fix the problem, they needed to be removed from society (Pihama & Morgan, 2019).

The second phase saw government support for agents to perform research on Indigenous peoples (Martin, 2003). Wilson notes, "Any research conducted on Aboriginal people…was based upon a racism that deemed them inhuman. Unfortunately, the effect of this research has forever racialized their existence" (p. 48). First Nation people's psychological sickness was sought to be proven and discourses of pathology were created. Wilson (2008) explains, "Experimental and empirical data collection in the form of 'scientific measurements' of 'native' intelligence by procuring specimens of human remains and material goods to send overseas to the repositories of universities and museums was widespread and acceptable" (p. 48). Indigenous peoples were also studied as subjects of traditionalism. Wilson (2008) notes that "this era…produced the concept of the 'noble savage' and culturizing discourses were

formed (p. 48). Even though this phase was over 100 years ago, its impacts on Indigenous identity are still prevalent and can be witnessed in reports such as the Fact Sheet on Aboriginal Peoples (Statistics Canada, 2016) and the reliance on cultural showcasing in schools to "celebrate" First Nation peoples.

The third phase, the assimilationist phase, secured the idea that Indigenous peoples needed settlers to help them. This was done through studies on Indigenous peoples by settlers and the government: "legislation that imposed regulations to control movement, marriage, schooling, employment…every aspect of Aboriginal life" were created (Wilson, 2008, p. 49). Under the auspice of protection, Indigenous children were removed from their homes and forced into Indian Residential Schools. As if the first few phases were not devastating enough, the aftermath of Indian Residential Schools continues to have overwhelming impacts on Indigenous peoples (Grant, 1996; Bombay, Matheson, & Anisman, 2014; Barnes & Josefowitz, 2019). Thousands of children's bodies continue to be uncovered in the dirt that surrounded these institutions (CNN, 2021). This phase saw the murder of children as an acceptable way of eradicating

Indigenous peoples. Today, Indigenous communities are left having to show how damaged they are within a certain timeframe to get any sort of assistance (Federal Indian Day Schools Class Action, 2022).

Legislation that followed these phases, such as the Indian Act (1876) and the White Paper (1969), continues to inform other documents like the First Nation Data Collection Template (Neu & Graham, 2006; Government of New Brunswick, 2018). In chapter four, I include a CDA of the literature that was part of my daily work experience to

draw out damage discourses in some Indigenous scholarly work, specific calls to action from the TRC, and statistics reports. The CDA exposes their impacts on identity for First Nation peoples in New Brunswick and how a damaged frame of reference is maintained. I use the CDA to illustrate this damage-informed narrative that was part of my work experience, not to do a policy analysis.

The next phase, the early Aboriginal research phase (1970–1990s), saw settler peoples continuing to do research on Indigenous peoples under the pretense of helping them (Smith, 2003; Hall & Patrinos, 2012). The research moved into philanthropic rhetoric: "We are going to help heal you." Wilson (2008) cites Beckett (1994) as saying, "Aboriginal welfare dependency was mediated by academics, professionals and researchers" (p. 51). The narrative of dependency was created and the discourse that Indigenous peoples cannot take care of themselves continued.

During the fifth and final phase, the recent Aboriginal research phase (1990–present), Indigenous scholars began taking more control of the narrative and articulating the research approaches and topics that were meaningful to them (Graveline, 1998; Irwin, 1994; Battiste, 2000; Dei, Sefa, Hall, & Rosenberg, 2000; Wente, 2021; Brunette-Debassige, 2024). Wilson (2008) points out that "They began to articulate their own Indigenist perspective and demanded to be heard" (p. 51). This approach continues today and can been witnessed in the works of Tuck (2009) on dissecting the term "decolonization" and its non-metaphorical meaning, Smith's (2009) thoughts on how there is not one way to be Indigenous and the representation of Indigeneity in art, King's (2012) modernizing of historic events and tales that represent Indigenous views,

and Lee's (2022) poem in which the speaker asks to wear her red dress now, moving the narrative from devastation and dereliction to aliveness, passion, and joy.

Steinhauer (2001) describes four phases that Indigenous scholars encountered during the assimilationist period to articulate an Indigenous paradigm. In the first two stages, Indigenous scholars struggled with utilizing Western methods to address Indigenous concerns but succumbed to using them to be "accepted" within academia (Brayboy, Gough, Leonard, Roehl, & Solyom, 2012).

> The third stage saw a focus on decolonization. Indigenous scholars like Smith

(1999) and Battiste (1995) focussed on decolonizing methodologies, proving that Indigenous scholars could use their own knowledges and approaches to do research, disrupting the colonial monopoly on methodologies. This phase proved to be vital by providing a foundation to move away from, establishing what decolonization meant for these scholars, and pushing the boundary of what researchers, like me, could explore. They brought the unimaginable to the surface and provided space for desire.

The fourth stage is the Indigenist research phase, which "challenges Indigenous scholars to articulate their own research paradigms, their own approaches to research and their own data collection methods" (Wilson, 2008, p. 54). This phase includes Indigenous scholars like Tuck (2009) and her research on desire, Picton and Tufue-Dolgy (2019) and their research on creating space for Indigenous peoples with disabilities, and Wente's (2021) writings on reframing our stories to celebrate joy.

Leaning on those who came before me, my research struggles against the damaged narrative that has been created and maintained for First Nation peoples and I position desire as a way through it.

This summary minimizes the great struggles that Indigenous scholars have overcome but highlights the impact that colonization continues to have on Indigenous literature. The historical lens is important so that the root causes of damage can be identified, and we can learn ways to prevent them. Researchers like Smith (1999) and Kovach (2009) were pivotal in challenging colonial ideologies in literature and struggled against them by concentrating on Indigenous ways of knowing and being, creating Indigenous methodologies, and decolonizing academia. Indigenous scholars from the decolonization era fostered space for contemporary scholars to choose their area of study. This freedom of choice was not available historically because settler peoples dominated academia.

I struggled with a damage-informed identity that colonization created my entire life. In addition to the above-mentioned damage discourses, there are less noticeable ways that colonization impacts Indigenous identity. For example, I am Mi'kmaq, so people make the judgement that I should be able to speak Mi'kmaw. My mother is a fluent speaker but French was positioned as a necessity to work in this province, so for me, it replaced the desire to learn Mi'kmaw. I have heard comments that I do not understand First Nation issues because I did not grow up in a First Nation community. I have been hired in jobs that are First Nation-focused but with these positions came hidden expectations about my role: advocate, token Indian, knower of everything First Nation, responsible for all First Nation "issues," etc. These happenings are products of colonial interference.

I often wondered whether people felt smothered by society's ideas of how they should act and if scholars struggled with living in juxtaposition to the narrative that was

produced for their group. The next section explores how scholars considered essentializing narratives.

2.2 Essentialism

To essentialize is to believe that there are intrinsic characteristics that make up a person within a cultural group. Prentice and Miller (2007) note that "All categories are not created equal in the mind's eye. Some are essentialized: They are represented as having deep, hidden, and unchanging properties that make their members what they are" (p. 202). They note that essentialism can affect how people perceive their members and how motivated they are to bridge category divides.

Colonialism has impacted how Indigenous peoples have honoured cultural practices. As part of reclaiming space, Indigenous peoples advocate for more cultural inclusion in institutions. What is concerning is that if students and staff are only seeing powwows as an expression of Indigeneity in their schools, then a frame of reference is created for how to understand and include First Nation peoples. I believe that school-wide celebrations of Indigenous peoples are beneficial but should be in addition to pedagogical change, purposeful hiring of First Nation staff and administration, community member inclusion, mandatory subjects such as Indigenous studies, learning opportunities on communities in addition to classrooms, etc.

Although practices of cultural inclusion like school powwows are based on good intentions, "Cultural revitalization has problematic implications because of a kind of cultural absolutism it imposes on the native" (St. Denis, 2012, p. 42). Non-First Nation and First Nation peoples are experiencing how fundamentalist ideals of Indigeneity can create social categories such as "real, traditional, and assimilated" (St. Denis, 2012, p. 38). The impact of this categorization can promote racism, as I experienced at a First

Nation-themed high school event. While sitting in the gymnasium listening to an Indigenous speaker, there was a group of non-First Nation students in the window above the gym tapping their closed hands over their open mouths repeatedly and laughing. Practices such as pulling First Nation students into a space to learn about First Nation culture in a colonial institution, at least in this instance, enacted racialized behaviours. First Nation students deserve more than only learning about culture, and non-First Nation students need to see inclusion beyond cultural attributes as an absolute inherent part of being Indigenous. In addition, there are many First Nation students who do not embed cultural practices into their lives.

Schouls (2003) writes about identity and politics and how the two interrelate. He defines identity as

> values that individuals share with other individuals, and about what differentiates one set of individuals from another. Identity is what gives individuals a sense of personal location and stability. But identity is also about conflict. By striving to express one's identity and the deeply felt desires and needs associated with it, individuals and their communities are often drawn into conflict with one another. (p. 2)

I am Indigenous but do not regularly practice ceremony. According to the categories noted above by St. Denis (2012), this would mean I am assimilated or that I am not Indigenous enough. The issue lies in the fundamental and essentializing idea that these parameters have been predetermined for me prior to being born. Schouls (2003) believes that Indigenous peoples should understand that identities are negotiable and situational. He coined the term "identification approach" and explains that "it is a mistake to limit human identity to aspects of it and then to reconfigure the political

world exclusively in terms of conflicts between those aspects. This is to reify identity and misunderstand the nature of politics" (p. 15). Utilizing cultural attributes as a way of defining all Indigenous peoples reinforces stereotypes. Culture is everchanging and the ways we choose to express ourselves should add to the vastness of our identities. This lends to greater flexibility; "it acknowledges that identity can change over time without jeopardizing the integrity of the individual's identity itself or the identity of the community to which that individual is related" (Schouls, 2003, p. 9). We are left to ponder, as Schouls (2003) points out, which comes first, Indigenous cultural attributes or the people who make up the cultural group and the ever-changing ways they might wish to express themselves.

Colonial framing of Indigeneity may be producing inflexible conceptions of identity which serve to "restrict Indigenous self-determination or rights, especially where Indigenous peoples are seen to depart from public expectations about proper native conduct" (Blackburn, 2013, p. 623). Stepping out of "proper native conduct" has rendered me and other Indigenous peoples invisible. It appears that I am only visible if I partake in cultural events; it does not seem to matter that I am working tirelessly in my profession to advocate for Indigenous peoples.

Although cultural attributes are an important and beautiful part of Indigeneity and celebrating and honouring them is imperative, we must take caution that the larger society (or other Indigenous peoples) is not defining who we are and what we are capable of according to our cultural attributes. Coombes et al. (2011) suggest that "rather than agonizing over the implications of cultural hybridity for Indigenous rights, celebrate its inevitability" (p. 74). One cannot remove the Indigenous blood flowing in your veins, and that Indigenous blood works its way through in whatever one is doing,

whether that be dancing at a powwow or ballet or fighting for self-governance while working for the provincial government.

First Nation peoples are diverse, and this is the same for any group. Coombes (2013) explains that "Indigenous identities are formed on the basis of dynamic interplay among peoples, places and social causes that collectively influence individual motivations, aspirations, and cultural differences" (p. 74). A First Nation person could have been raised in an urban setting with little exposure to traditional practices, their identity affected, supported, and developed in varying ways according to their environment, family and community. Below I explore examples of how scholars have grappled with desire in relation to essentialist beliefs in their identified group.

Essentialism is not secured for only First Nation peoples but is experienced across groups and induces similar discursive challenges. Butler's (2004) questioning of desire regarding gender identity provides a framing of social hibernation and exposes essentialist beliefs around what "acceptable" human behavior in a gendered context is. She asks, "If I desire in certain ways, will I be able to live? Will there be a place in my life, and will it be recognizable to the others upon whom I depend for social existence?" (p. 3). This questioning of dependence for social existence is also apparent in the spaces Indigenous peoples occupy professionally and as learners. I do not know any First Nation people in New Brunswick who are engineers or veterinarians. I coached only one First Nation student over my many years at various schools in the province. I do not see First Nation families at the city pool, the gym, my workplace, etc. Where is everyone? Some First Nation peoples are apprehensive about co-existing outside of First Nation communities or the socially imposed parameters of a culturally informed

identity. This may be due to racist structures and the essentialized ways in which we are "allowed" to exist. These valid apprehensions are based on a violent historical and contemporary social reality.

If society was informed about First Nation peoples through, for example, statistical reports based on desire instead of damage, it might contribute to diminishing stereotypes and create safer spaces for First Nation peoples. Damage-centred statistics and reports create a category of person, which is used as a basis for society to understand Indigenous peoples. The fear of social rejection because of one's gender identity (Butler, 2004) is comparable to the fear that First Nation peoples may feel when they try to occupy spaces outside of damage or outside of a First Nation community. Picton and Tufue-Dolgy (2019) write about the overreliance on cultural attributes from an Indigenous disability perspective. They posit that as individuals who are part of a cultural group it is their choice to identify which spaces to value and occupy. They believe that policy can support this empowerment "where it co-constructs disability with all stakeholder perspectives and prioritizes the voices and choices of people with disabilities. It will be up to us to determine the parameters instead of taking a back seat to the culture narrative" (p. 199). The authors write about not being able to partake in cultural celebrations that demand physicality and leave them on the outside of what society deems as "real" Indigenous peoples. This experience also points to the intersectionality of claiming space. Intersectionality in this instance is Indigenous/disabled. The writers describe this as the "unique interplay between cultural ontological perspectives of identity and their collision with individual conceptualizations arising in part from colonizing influences" (p. 190). Not only are the

authors struggling to be seen as "real" Indigenous peoples but also as people with physical challenges who are not only their perceived disabilities. The authors put forth a culturally infused framework from a "disability perspective" which struggles against preconceived notions of Indigeneity and perspectives on people with disabilities. They ask the reader: If they cannot physically participate, does this mean they are less Indigenous than someone who can perform ceremonies? The authors call for an expanded theory of Indigeneity that honours individual experiences within their group. Lomawaima (2002) writes about essentializing in relation to Indigenous education. In her study, she (citing Kleinfeld, 1974) challenges the discourse that Indigenous students learn differently than their peers:

> [She] examined whether altering nonverbal cues that communicate "warmth" in teaching styles would stimulate learning, question answering, and question asking among 20 White and 20 Eskimo (now referred to as Inuit) students. She found that "warm" college guidance sessions did increase learning for both groups, but that ethnic group differences were few and not altogether consistent. (p. 11)

There are Indigenous scholars who would debate Lomawaima's (2002) research because they believe that learning should be offered to Indigenous students in their ancestral language and that student academic levels would increase if learning was offered this way (Johansen, 2004; Reyhner, 2006; Cote-Meek, 2014; Pitawanakwat, 2018). Lomawaima's (2002) research points to the diverse perspectives that should be considered when discussing language resurgence. For example, St. Denis (2012) notes that Cree educators who were expected to teach the Cree language were left defending

why they could not speak the language and Elders were feeling like they were being blamed for the language loss when they were taught not to speak their languages. Lomawaima is an Indigenous academic who is not positioning language as unimportant but showing that there must be space for diversity within our cultural group and among learners.

My ability to learn Mi'kmaw was affected by place. The aftermath of Indian Residential and Indian Day Schools affected my mother's decision to move away from the community. I was raised outside of a First Nation community and my only exposure to Mi'kmaw as a child was when we visited my family in the community or when my mother had the opportunity to speak the language. Is it fair to say that I would learn better if taught in Mi'kmaw? An educator who cares deeply and nourishes students' passions, whether that be a hairdresser or a sweat lodge keeper, creates space for students to figure out what matters most to them. Their Indigeneity will shine through as they build confidence and participate in the world around them. Trying to exist within pre-determined parameters of how one should act or how one should be taught leads to further subjectification.

This section explored Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers and authors, who are struggling with essentialist ideas of identity within their cultural group and society. Their work is important because it acknowledges that there are researchers who are questioning the status quo, and it positions my desire-based research as a way of expanding understandings of Indigeneity. Below I explore how desire has been investigated by scholars to challenge essentialist beliefs.

2.3 Desire

The theorizing of desire seems to emerge as early as the 1570s when de la Boétie explored the question of why people consent to their own subjugation. His belief was that people want freedom but beget their own subjectification by consenting to be ruled. He passionately pleaded with the reader to

> Resolve to serve no more, and you are at once freed. I do not ask that you place hands upon the tyrant to topple him over, but simply that you support him no longer; then you will behold him, like a great Colossus whose pedestal has been pulled away, fall of his own weight and break in pieces. (de la Boetie, 1570, para. 9)

Although society was much different when this was written, his words resonate with my exploration of desire. I resolve to no longer identify with damage and deficit or serve that narrative. In freeing myself from this story, discourses of damage have no place to gain momentum in my life. De la Boétie (1570) positions desire as an act against tyranny, "There is nothing so contrary to a generous and loving God as dictatorship — I believe He has reserved, in a separate spot in Hell, some very special punishment for tyrants and their accomplices" (para. 72). The inclusion of God in his contemplative writing encouraged people to be more in God's presence, as he believed the Almighty moved one toward a state of desire. His writing, for me, which connects striving for desire (freedom) to a faith system (God in this writing), envisions and captures desire. He labels those who rule by control over others as tyrants. Tyranny, in the form of discourse, is less overt but nonetheless a method of control. A highlight from his work

is that desire has been a subject of contemplation for over 450 years and is positioned to advocate against control.

Deleuze and Guattari's (1983, 1994, 1997) theorizing on desire has an interesting commonality with de la Boétie's work. The same contemplative stance seems to re-emerge when they ponder, "why…people still tolerate being humiliated and enslaved, to such a point, indeed, that they actually want humiliation…not only for others but themselves" (1994, p. 29). The three theorists position desire as something situated within power structures or propose that society takes on the desires of the ruler unconsciously or because it is easier. For Deleuze and Guattari (1994), people are situated within "democratic capitalism even at the same time that they are working to confront and expose the fallacies of this system" (p. 44). De la Boétie's (1575) work does not exactly identify capitalism as the culprit but one might argue that tyrannical rule is not far removed from capitalism. For Deleuze (1997), "the capitalist machine is incapable of providing a code that will apply to the whole of the social field" (p. 33). So, do we learn to desire within the confines of tyrants' allowance and capitalistic structures or are we able to desire alongside this framing?

Tuck (2010) breaks with Deleuze and describes their irreconcilable differences: "His characterization of desire as wholly unconscious, and my conviction that desire is at least partially self-determined, represent a significant epistemological divide, too hefty to bygone" (p. 647). I break from the past's grapplings with desire and look forward to works that encapsulate a yearning yet empty space that no one has seemed to pervade—one where

> wisdom is assembled not just across a lifetime, but across generations, so that my desire is linked, rhizomatically, to my past and my future. It is in the way I can tell my grandmother's stories with as much fullness as I tell my own, a practice among many first peoples. I believe that our desire has expertise. In fact, I believe desire constitutes our expertise. (Tuck, 2010, pp. 645–646)

Tuck moved me slowly toward a more nuanced version of desire, one that gave me permission to explore desire from my life experiences, one that resonated and was plausible and maybe characteristically Indigenous. I agree that desire-based parameters (or damage-informed identity) may be determined by those in power (tyrants, rulers, capitalists, government) but actively work to provide a counter story that may be used to inform a more desire-based space. Through honouring the journey toward desire, offering a counter story informed by my life experiences, I discovered that self-determination happens alongside tyranny.

Although the particularities of individual lives might be marked by trauma, Tuck (2010) notes that "A desire-based research framework recognizes and actively seeks out complexity in lives and communities. It dismisses one-dimensional analyses of people, communities, and tribes as flattened, derelict, and ruined" (p. 630). Desire does not start or end with tragedy or tyranny, it welcomes it as a step in the *learning to desire* process. A paradoxical relationship is formed when damage is the fundamental driver that influences individuals to act in certain ways to fulfill their desires. Learning to desire challenges deficit and damage

understandings slowly and intentionally over time by chipping away at its effects on our bodies, minds, and communities.

In comparison with Tuck's (2010) position that desire can be, in part, self-determined, Hegel's (1977) work on phenomenology recognizes self-consciousness as being tied with another self-consciousness (or object) through desire and that desire is essential for recognition: "Self-consciousness is *in* and *for itself in* virtue of the fact that it is in and for itself for an other, that is, it is only as recognized" (p. 178). This would mean that social recognition would be tied to a sort of relational process with a person or object of sorts. According to Rockmore (2005), reflecting on Hegel, "both service and fear are necessary for the disadvantaged party to liberate himself, since it is only in the production of a thing that a person becomes self-conscious" (p. 72). If this is true, in relation to my research on countering damage, damage would be the object that the self reflects upon, and First Nation peoples have both served and feared this position.

This may lead to the realization or self-consciousness that damage is subsuming (after reflecting on the relationship with the object) and that there is a desire for recognition, which in my research is desire. Hegel purports that the relationship (unity) between self-consciousness and reflecting on an object to further self-consciousness is essential, "which is to say, self-consciousness is desire, full stop" (p. 167). In learning opportunities I led, I presented information to participants to see if they recognized a pattern. I showed them the enhancement template, First Nation statistics reports, the calls to action that ask the government to collect statistics, and I asked them what the documents have in common. When

participants were presented with this information in its raw form (meaning I did not incorporate any other information or persuade them) they consistently recognized the damage-informed lens through which the documents were created. This means that for Hegel this information would be the object through which self-consciousness is informed. Participants become conscious of the damaging patterns and upon reflecting on the object (documents) recognize desire cast away in the shadows.

From self-determination in desire (Tuck, 2010), to self-conscious reflection on an object that then reflects back to one's self-consciousness to recognize desire (Hegel, 1977), to people's situatedness within capitalist structures where they understand the fallacies but stay within control of it (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994), the message across time is that we can at least imagine desire. Understanding how desire has been theorized is an important step in moving toward more concrete actions on how to foster desire.

A concern for me is that there is no desire-based societal framework from which to understand Indigenous peoples or one that Indigenous peoples can identify. I write in chapter four about documents that guided my work at EECD and how they positioned First Nation peoples as damaged. I fully understand that as a First Nation person, I am exposed to damage in media, society, policy, legislation, etc. I know that First Nation people's lives are regulated by the Indian Act, and that we live in a capitalistic society. What I do not know is why damage is so pervasive for First Nation peoples. Why, if my life is in direct contrast to this damaged frame of reference, is that reality not recognized anywhere?

I had to move from an external to an internal search for desire because I could not find desire anywhere in relation to Indigeneity. At the beginning of my documentary film, I include the all-encompassing ways in which damage has informed Indigenous lives. This is alarming because it means that there is no societal framework from which to ground desire. Patterson (2009) notes that "We must know love, fulfillment, and peace or any other good in some way in order to ground larger hopes" (p. 3). If there is nowhere to know these things outside of maybe our families, then how do we keep hope alive? My research is an exposure of something that is malevolent about the functioning of society. How do we move beyond acknowledging this concern?

Patterson (2009) calls one to live differently in the present instead of searching for a utopia (God). This reminded me of how some people may think that once the calls to action of the TRC are fulfilled we will somehow be in a better situation. If damage remains the only way in which Indigenous peoples can identify, I do not think much will change, even if every call to action is fulfilled. Patterson (2009) refers to Thompson (1988), and notes that the proper new utopia should be found in the education of desire: "teach desire to desire, to desire better, to desire more and above all, to desire in a different way" (p. 3). Teaching desire is a concept I have been working on in my professional life. Often, people are programmed to think they want or need something to make change, but Patterson disrupts that cycle and asks that we pay attention to desire now and illuminate it.

Hegel (1977) and Deleuze and Guattari (1983, 1994) identify the obstacles (tyranny, capitalism) to transformation (freedom, desire) but acknowledge desire

exists in relation to external forces determining the parameters. Patterson (2009) puts forth that we need to "distinguish more clearly between the obstacles that are existential and ineradicable and those that are socially imposed and open to transformation" for desire to flourish (p. 5). In relation to my research, the Indian Act may never be eradicated, racism will never be eliminated, and capitalism is here to stay, but damage is largely a socially imposed and maintained narrative about Indigenous peoples. This is evident in my documentary film and the documents included in the CDA (chapter four) that informed my work.

To honour desire, "we need to identify the kind of practices that we want and need, for a better world; we need to understand what values these practices embody; and we need to learn how to expand them" (Patterson, 2009, p. 25). By investigating my life story and extracting what desire-based behaviours are embedded in my life, I was able to identify desire indicators. These indicators, while infantile in their application, are value-based practices that I expand upon in my personal and professional life. I explore this more in chapter five.

Ultimately, desire is not found alone, and it is not found externally through institutions, governments, or philosophers, but in the interpersonal relationships and experiences that give meaning to life. Thompson (2021) purports that "a great deal of what and how I desire has less to do with the object of my desire and more to do with being able to compete in my world, with being adequate and acceptable. Indeed, my desire is not so much about an object as it is relationality" (p. 13). This goes back to the previous example I used in the essentializing section when Butler (2004) describes her feelings around coming out; the trepidation for

her was centered around relations. I have often encountered racist beliefs and stereotypes around topics like taxation and housing for First Nation peoples that have been put upon us through legislation. First Nation peoples do not long for tax exemptions (objects); we long for relationality, meaningful personal and professional experiences that "expand our sense of ourselves in the process," much like everyone else (Thompson, 2021, p. 15). I have always been bothered by descriptions of First Nation peoples as resilient. I think that First Nation peoples have desired to be heard and seen for so long that we have "buried that longing under the work of survival" (Thompson, 2021, p. 26).

The scholarly research I read on Indigenous topics, legislation and the TRC included analysis and suggestions for practices but rarely applied this analysis to lived lives—recommending, for example, that a school incorporate more cultural events without addressing the lives that are affected by much of this discourse. Culture is positioned as a way toward achieving "salvation" despite colonization (St. Denis, 2012, p. 42). As hooks (2012) posits, "We feel we are constantly deconstructing and laying the groundwork for alternatives without making the interventions in how folks live daily that are needed if our society is to be utterly changed" (p. 7). A theory of change and practice based on desire is the overarching goal of my research—to illuminate desire in our lives and communities and actively work toward its honouring. My research challenges damage-based understandings and shows a way to counter them by utilizing my life experiences as a way of exploration.

Desire enters our lives when we live according to our passions as individuals who are part of an ethnically diverse group, but there are hurdles to overcome:

> Our conceptual map is influenced by our communal associations, and the imagination plays a crucial role in desire as a space populated by these precognitive perceptions of the world, which swirl around and motivate the construction of envisioned scenarios that we come to long for (or long to avoid)—future experiences that will expect to bring us pleasure or satisfaction (or minimize the likelihood of displeasure or dissatisfaction). (Renga, 2017, p. 270)

If colonialization continues to position First Nation peoples and communities as damaged and if our communities cannot imagine or enact desire because of this positioning, it may influence First Nation people's conceptual map. As Smith (2009) explains, "It is because I imagine the world (and my place in it) in certain ways that I am oriented by fundamental loves and longings" (p. 125). The perpetuation of damage discourses is a direct hinderance to desire. If I do not hear that Indigenous peoples are positive contributors to society, if I do not see Indigenous peoples working in positions of leadership, if I do not read about First Nation successes in the news, and if statistics are collected only to report Indigenous deficits, then what can I draw from in my communal space as an inhibitor of desire? How can I learn to desire? Tuck (2010) states that "damage-documenting researchers are not intentionally deceiving, but rather, damage-centered research is balanced upon a problematic theory of change" (p. 638). I worry that in New Brunswick, many leaders are invested in a problematic theory of change, meaning they are utilizing damage and deficit as the starting points from which to understand and advocate for First Nation peoples.

Desire-based frameworks appreciate that people possess a "complex and oftentimes contradictory humanity and subjectivity that is never adequately glimpsed by viewing [one another] as victims or, on the other hand, as superhuman agents" (Tuck, p. 4, 2009). Desire-based strategies acknowledge and honour complexity in lives and communities and dismiss linear analyses of people through recognizing not only damage but also passions, hope and *survivance* (Tuck, 2009; Vizenor, 1998). Renga (2009) summarized Smith's (2009) framing of desire as including three main areas: "(a) Humans are desiring beings who long to realize imagined futures; (b) desire forms through embodied, habituated, social practice; and (c) pursuing desire is consequential for who we are and will become" (p. 269). I will utilize these categories and relate them to desire in a Mi'kmaq context.

Humans are desired beings who long to realize imagined futures

Smith (2009) believes that people take on certain behaviors for interacting with others, according to cultural norms and through repetition. This can impact our conceptual map through "captur[ing] our hearts and imaginations by 'lining' our imagination, as it were—providing us with frameworks of 'meaning' by which we make sense of our world and our calling in it" (Smith, 2009, p. 68). Desire is largely impacted by our surroundings, by the spaces in society that we fit into, and by what we see and hear about ourselves. Smith (2012) believes that what we can dream or picture influences how we envision the "good life" and this yearning draws us toward it and "thus construe my obligations and responsibilities accordingly" (p. 125). Family life, community life and institutions like education should be contributors to the nurturing of desire. If we are learning in environments that are not nourishing a yearning for the good life, if

institutions are only reiterating damage, then students may construe their desires accordingly. A world where one is thriving and loved and successful is, according to Renga (2017),

> crafted from the corporeal, perceptual knowledge accrued through habits that have evolved in response to specific environmental demands. The resources one has available for imaginative construction are thus limited by one's social and material surroundings…If individuals can be said to be transmitting certain beliefs and views of the world to one another, it is not through telling, so much as through doing—through sharing in common perceptual experiences that give rise to a shared imagination, shared stories, and shared desires. (p. 270)

If one has come to know something through experience (colonization), through cognitive processes (understanding oneself as unhealthy) or even through co-construction (being taught from a colonial perspective) and that knowing is informed by damage discourses, then survival might be the only desirable future that one can dream. If as "social creatures our embodied *knowing* of those desires carries the imprints of our cultural habituation" to move toward desire, the stories we put into the world must replicate the change we want to see (Renga, 2009, p. 270).

Desire as formed through social practice

Storytelling is a social practice and a way of transmitting knowledge. It is considered a method of inquiry for Indigenous peoples (Iseke, 2013; Sium & Ritskes, 2013). Stories also conjure feelings of belonging within groups (Sonn, Quayle, Mackenzie, & Law, 2014). Stories about the creator, for example, are a way to transmit a belief system.

These stories capture and share knowledge that has been honoured through its passing over generations. Vizenor (1998) explains that stories of survivance are an "active repudiation of dominance, tragedy, and victimry and are the creases of transmotion and sovereignty" (p. 15). Stories that have been told for us, such as the ones captured in my CDA, carry and maintain narratives of problems and pathologies. In accordance with Vizenor's (1998) statement, Indigenous stories carry and exude motion over stagnation and challenge perceptions and definitions of Indigenous peoples through exuding the notion of propelling forward. If "participation in community engages us in liturgical learning that reveals and directs us toward what is loved, how it is loved, and to what end," then if the narrative is that of damage, how can desire be fostered (Vizenor, 1998, p. 271; Barker, Goodman, & DeBeck, 2017)?

Renga (2017) puts forth that "practices, socially enacted over time, develop *teleologic* knowledge, which individuals experience as gut-level, emotional signals of where one is and where one is headed" (p. 272). At the beginning of my documentary film, I show how damage is used to inform Indigeneity through policy, legislation, television, news, educational settings, etc. The social practice of subjecting Indigenous peoples began at contact and never stopped. As noted above, for hundreds of years Indigenous peoples have been positioned as a problem by settler peoples. The teleologic knowledge this pattern has created is one of hopelessness. This hopelessness is what society has offered Indigenous peoples and appears to be what society expects, making Indigenous peoples vulnerable to the actions of settlers.

Schools have incorporated many cultural events, like powwows, to celebrate Indigenous peoples. Although this practice is likely appreciated by some, schools might also

contribute to desire through practices focussed more on affective knowledge—the ability to think about the future and to desire something greater. This relates back to hooks' (2012) call to apply our learnings to lived lives and not just to publish and/or write for systematic change. Educators who believe that "we train our passions as well as our reasons for pursuing those passions" through teachings are pivotal (Renga, 2017, p. 272).

Madden (2019) writes about how educators are informing their learning from the perspective that Indigenous peoples are victims. The idea of victim and damage may be what is prevailing as the narrative throughout the 94 Calls to Action. She posits that:

> Complex counter-stories emphasize and enhance Indigenous sovereignty, agency, and strategies, as well as create a barrier to easily taking up colonial subject positions and ways of being in relationship (e.g., rescuer/victim), can better inform learning and consequently identity. (p. 284–312)

Developing educational programs or curricula informed by the dominant group under the augury of an authentic learning environment maintains power and informs what stories are being shared. One cannot predict that simply changing a practice will alter the lives of those people impacted by discourses of damage. As Alexie (1996) writes, "In the Great American Indian novel, when it is finally written, all of the white people will be Indians and all of the Indians will be ghosts" (p. 95). My hope is that eventually First Nation stories of desire will drown out stories of damage, not dismissing real issues but providing a new narrative for institutions and communities to take on, a measure of desire and a language for desire. Our lives are not to be captured and written about by settler peoples and our stories do not always have to be about survivance.

Desire as ontologically consequential

Renga (2017) puts forth that the various identities we construct are important, but more attention should be paid to the narratives perpetuated through social practices that influence our desires. He cites Smith (2013) and suggests that "transforming who we are requires direct confrontation with the market liturgy and a compelling alternative, or *counter-liturgy*, that not only orients away from the dominant *telos* but also orients toward richer visions of human flourishing" (p. 272). Frames of damage that are maintained through systems like education, for example, tell a story and ensure a language of maintenance that needs to be confronted. This includes how education is offered and how educators are guided by ideologies through sources like curricula toward certain ideals and ways of being. If teaching about Indian Day Schools (Global News, 2021) ends with intergenerational trauma, the narrative perpetuated through social practice is that First Nation peoples are unhealthy. Carini (2001) states that

> When the immeasurable isn't recognized or valued, it tends to slip from view.
>
> Out of sight, it ceases to claim our minds and attention. We forget how to see it. Left to lie fallow these kinds of experiences tend to become not talkable. The language left for saying them, for exploring their meanings, grows rusty, archaic, clumsy on our tongues, and sometimes, embarrassing or forbidden. (p. 175)

Focussing on damage does a lot more than perpetuate narratives, it creates a language, and an understanding, which in turn dismisses other ways of being. If damage can be measured, reported, and discussed, then desire can too. I read about the two-eyed seeing

approach, which honours Indigenous and Western ways of knowing (Hatcher, Bartlett, Marshall, & Marshall, 2009), resiliency and spirituality (Fleming, & Ledogar, 2008), and the positive aspects of cultural practices (Paraschak, & Thompson, 2014). I did not find any scholarship about individual First Nation people's experiences with desire, success, love, aspirations, etc. There are scholars and authors like Tuck (2009), Wente (2021) and Lee (2022), who write about positioning desire and understanding joy, but I have yet to come across scholarly work on individual lived realities of desire as the focus of study.

The impacts of colonization are all-encompassing and affect social practices, so I understand why Indigenous scholarship tends to address these large-scale concerns. If we do not celebrate and honour Indigenous successes and desires, if we do not create that counter story, then damage will continue to be used as the frame of reference from which to understand Indigenous peoples.

Desire is not only social, communal, and individual learning, but can also be fostered through institutions, "a liturgical view foregrounds social practice as the means through which desires are conveyed and learned within institutional communities" (Renga, 2017, p. 272). Therefore, institutions like education need to be mindful of how they discuss Indigenous topics; for example, a First Nation student is not just resilient, they have unfulfilled passions that should be encouraged. Anuik, Battiste, and George (2008) call this teaching to the "spirit, heart, mind, and body" (p. 3).

When people in society suffer, everyone suffers. Higgins (2015), reflecting on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, writes that "since cities exist, not for the sake of mere living but for living well, it is thus evident that virtue must be the care of every city" (p. 10). Indigenous peoples are being failed by the education system, which could increase

unemployment, thereby increasing other costs such as those related to universal health care. I use this explanation because it feels like empathy and understanding toward Indigenous peoples are not considered. There is growth in social connectedness; each person has gifts, and if these gifts are honoured, nourished, and used in a way that does not cause harm, everyone benefits. I posit that if educators lead with the fact that First Nation students are desiring beings, it will nourish students' "spirit, heart, mind, and body" (Anuik, Battiste, & George, 2008, p. 3).

2. 4 Reiss- Analytic Tool

The tool I used to identify desire-based behaviours, from my life experiences as captured on film, was Reiss's work on the 16 basic human desires. Professor Reiss searched for answers to questions about happiness in the field of motivational research. He discovered that there was minimal attention and no analytical models for the structure of human desires. In his research, he uncovered16 essential needs and values he called basic desires. I write more about the desires in chapter 5 and included a chart of how the desires intersect with my life experiences on page 216.

By studying the 16 basic desires and their indicators, I was able to apply this to my documentary film and draw out which desires and their correlating behaviours were evident in my life. This was the only tool I could find that made it possible to identify desires in my life and describe them. There is not only one way into this work, someone else may have another tool to draw out desire that works better for them, but this method worked for me, and is one I also use in my professional life.

When one reframes one's thinking to include desire and starts to live toward it, one may start to wonder, like I did, what behaviours one can invest in to continue living desirably. Reiss (2002) posits:

> When you learn the 16 basic desires, you can figure out how your behavior and life goals are connected to them. Because your desires indicate the path of psychological growth that you need to take to become who you want to be, they can help you think about what you need in order to gain value-based happiness. (p. 17)

Reiss's (2002) 16 basic human desires are utilized in the fourth chapter to name what desires I was able to identify through applying a reflexive analysis to my documentary film. This combination of thoughts about desire creates a pathway for investigating what might impact one's ability to desire.

The literature review, in chapter two, exposed the impacts that colonization had on the development of Indigenous research. Reading through the phases, it became evident that the impacts are not constricted to a certain time but are ongoing, which exposed a need for further research. The research phases included themes like perceptions of Indigenous peoples as a hinderance to advancement, of Indigenous peoples and lives as objects to be studied, and of Indigenous peoples and communities as something to be researched. My hypothesis was that the ongoing impacts of colonization were perpetuating damage discourses for Indigenous peoples through literature by treating Indigenous peoples as damaged as determined by Western standards. I utilized critical discourse analysis as the method to draw out this framing of damage so that I could move toward autoethnography and position a theory of change based on desire to address it.

An exploration of essentialism in scholarship enabled me to recognize how scholars were challenging frames of reference created for their group. This exploration enabled me to think more clearly about ways to challenge damage-based frames of reference and essentialized understandings created by colonial interference in literature. I thought about how my life contrasted with the frame of reference that has been perpetuated about First Nation peoples and wondered how I could use my life as counter story.

Autoethnography is the method that enabled me to do this, by allowing space to counter the "market liturgy" of what it means to be First Nation to show the audience an alternate story of desire. Analyzing my personal experience, showing that desiring First Nation peoples are alive and well, allowed the audience to understand that Indigenous peoples as a group are much more than what society or the media, for example, portrays. In illuminating desire, I create a space for it within the contextual and conceptual understanding of Indigeneity.

By exposing discourses of damage through the documents used in my professional life, the reader experiences how damage discourse is perpetuated and how it thrives in academia, government, and society. The reader comes to understand how damage discourse informs, creates truth, and maintains power. The issue is that I am First Nation but do not fit under the themes of damage that this analysis exposed. By utilizing autoethnography, I draw out stories, experiences, and tangible evidence from my life that challenge damaged discourses. Once I wrote the chronological timeline of my life and gathered evidence to inform my documentary film, I was left asking the question, so what? What do I do with this information? How can it be used to foster a more nuanced understanding of Indigeneity? To move on making "interventions in how

folks live daily that are needed in our society if our society is to be utterly changed," I had to action what I learned from analyzing my autoethnographic documentary film (hooks, 2012, p. 7).

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

In the previous chapter, I focused on tracing the origins of damage discourses in relation to literature focused on Indigeneity, exploring essentialism and investigating desire as a theory of change. This chapter focuses on two main methods used to investigate my research, autoethnography and the use of tools from critical discourse analysis, to analyze the documents from my professional life.

Autoethnography combined with visual research methods allowed me to capture my life experiences as a Mi'kmaq person and present my story through documentary film. Critical discourse analysis, informed by Foucault (1975), contributed to the film by allowing me to expose the damaging discourses colonization has had, and continues to have, on the literature included in my professional life and how those discourses further inform deficit understandings of Indigeneity.

To support these methods, I used various tools, such as Chang's (2008) approach to personal data collection and Rosenthal and Eckhardt's (2016) knowledge of documentary film. The documentary film enabled me to show my personal experiences collected through the autoethnographic journey. I was then able to compare them to the discourses uncovered in the critical discourse analysis, which exposed a clear contrast. To further the research, I needed to find out why my life was not represented in the current narrative. To do this, I applied reflexivity informed by Greenaway (2010), together with a lens of desire informed by scholars like Tuck (2009), Renga (2017) and Reiss (2002), to the completed film. This approach enabled me to realize that I was living toward desire my entire life. There were qualities, skills

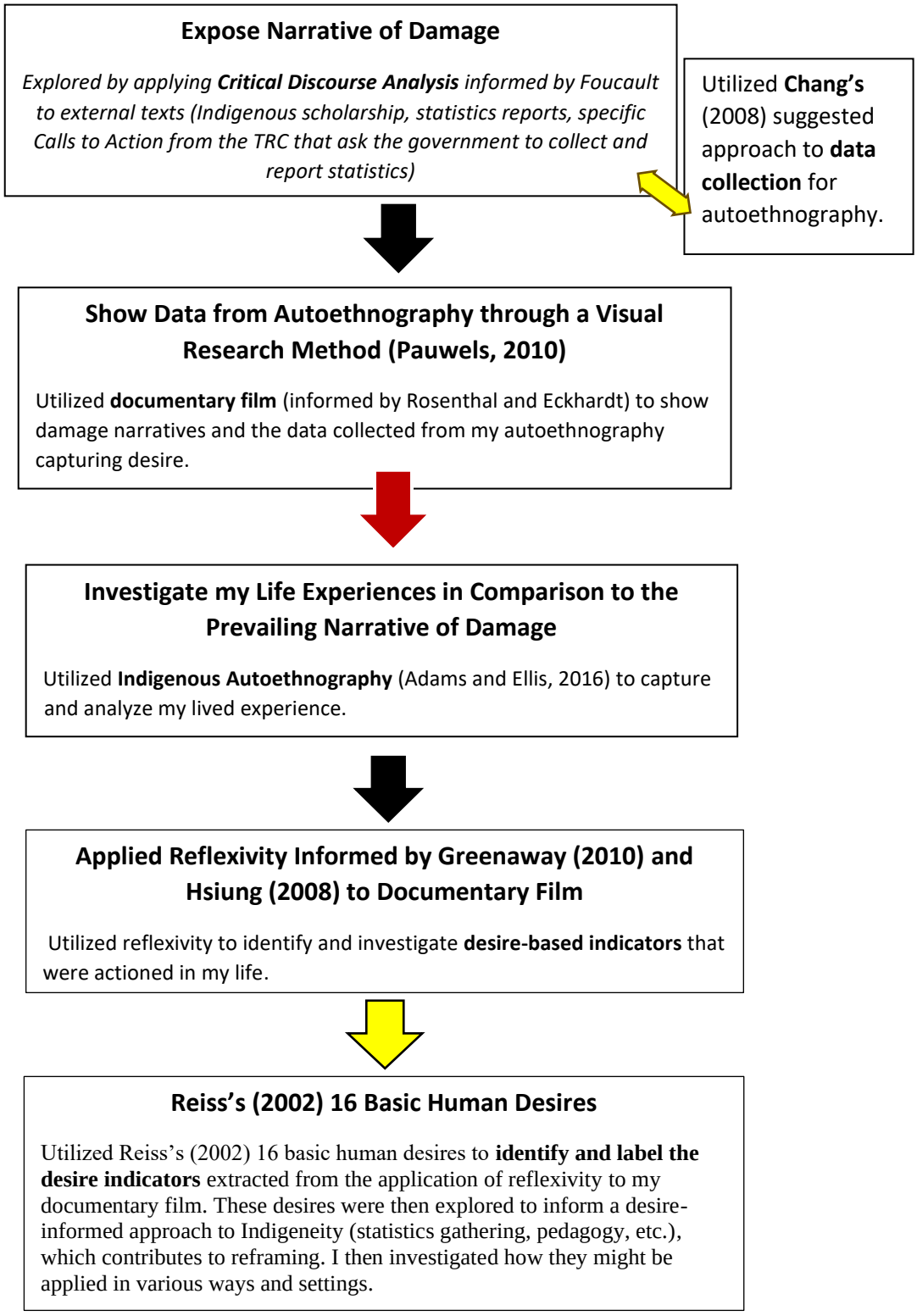
and relationships that thwarted my desire and because of Reiss's (2002) worldwide research on human desires, I was able to describe and name them.

> This chapter includes an explanation of critical discourse analysis informed by

Foucault (1975), autoethnography informed by Adams, Ellis, and Jones (2013) and Anderson (2006), and visual research methods informed by Pauwels (2010). This chapter also emphasizes the overall strategy, design, and techniques of each method. I propose that together they "pursue the ultimate goal of cultural understanding underlying autobiographical experiences" (Chang, 2008, p. 49). It includes my data collection process informed by Chang's (2008) approach and ends with a look at some ethical concerns in relation to my research. The data catalogue is included in Appendix B and consent forms for the use of the data in my documentary film are included in Appendix G.

This study sought answers to the following research questions: (1) How have the statistics reports, TRC calls to action, and Indigenous scholarship that were mainly used in my profession in New Brunswick between the years of 2008 and 2018 informed Mi'kmaq identity? What are the social, political, and historical influences of these documents on the formation of Mi'kmaq identity? (2) How do my life experiences as a Mi'kmaq person, as captured on film, contribute to a more expanded dialogue of Mi'kmaq identity? (3) How does desire inform an expanded dialogue of Mi'kmaq identity and how might this be applied to statistics gathering and reporting, the TRC and Indigenous scholarship? Below is a graphical representation of my methodology:

Methodology Graphic



3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

To uphold this relational stance, I used varied experiences from my life to draw out damage and desire. My professional life was directed and informed by three main documents: the TRC calls to action, the enhancement template, and statistics collected about First Nation peoples. All of these contribute to the ways in which First Nation peoples are understood and point to the prevalence of damage in some Indigenous-informed scholarship. To draw out how colonization has maintained a frame of reference informed by damage for Indigenous peoples, I applied CDA informed by Foucault (1967, 1970, 1972, 1975, 1980, 1988) to various forms of literature that informed my professional life in chapter four. I aim to show how Indigenous subjectivity as a discursive formation (how text and language define creating discourses) is intertwined with Indigenous scholarship and statistics reporting and gathering on Indigenous peoples. Foucault's work provides a frame of analysis to draw out discourses of power and truth that impact identity.

The objective of Foucault's archaeology was to uncover the order of discourse, in other words, the reason why certain positions exist. In his books *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (1967) and *The Order of Things* (1970), Foucault shows how discursive rules structure psychiatry and the social sciences. In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975), he writes about how discursive rules structure the penal system and form humans into criminals. Foucault (1978) traces origins of truth production within institutions, something he refers to as genealogy. He describes genealogy as a "history of the present" (p. 31) as it exposes how an individual comes to be subjected in ways that group and classify. "These conditions are not always apparent when looking at individuals and institutions, the

hidden aspect of subjectivity is essential to its continuance" (DeWolfe, 2012, p. 19). I draw from his various works to inform my CDA on Indigenous scholarship and statistics gathering and reporting on Indigenous peoples. Below, I describe the key texts and show how I use them in the design of my study.

A Foucauldian lens is a key analytical tool that exposes how knowledge, power, and identity are offered and rationalized for Indigenous peoples. It provides a pathway to struggle against colonial ideologies. A Foucauldian analysis applied to literature focussed on Indigenous peoples may provide connections for the reader between policy and practice as it exists in New Brunswick and how First Nation peoples are understood in this territory. Foucault believes concepts of knowledge and power are rendered into the dominant educational discourse to pose significant implications for identity (Hodgson, 2008). CDA highlights forces of power like policy, programs, and other means that contribute to discourses and situate First Nation peoples as a problem.

Cherubini (2011) utilizes a similar approach in his work, which is concerned with the overuse of multicultural approaches to education. He theorizes that multicultural education approaches dismiss Aboriginal people's unique relationship with the territories in which they live. Through a Foucauldian lens, he looks at the "interrelationship of knowledge-construction, power, subjectivity, and identity…related to…educational social policy in Ontario" (p. 3). Vindevoghel (2016) utilizes a Foucauldian approach to expose "how dominant social and historical ideology has been reflected in the education system forcefully through the residential school system, and how it can occur subtly within post-secondary education" (p. 88). She analyzes curriculum and its production of knowledge for educators and suggests the development

and delivery of curriculum cannot be seen as separate from historical and social context and that both perpetuate dominant ideologies**.**

CDA set the stage for my research by exposing how First Nation subjectivity as a discursive formation can be informed by the discourses produced within some Indigenous scholarship, certain calls to action from the TRC, and statistics reports on Indigenous peoples. A description and reasoning for each is included below. CDA was an approach that enabled me to identify, categorize, and theme the exposed discourses: problematizing, pathologizing, and culturizing. To support an epistemological shift to desire, the current narrative had to be investigated so that my research had a place to move from. The analysis enabled me to show how "discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hinderance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy" (Foucault, p. 101, 1980).

Fairclough and Wodak (1997) offer that CDA as "discourse is important because it works ideologically. Configuring and conditioning society and culture, creating and perpetuating power relations, while remaining curiously transparent or invisible even to the people who use it" (p. 258). Discourse analysis is a constructivist approach which assumes that reality is socially constructed. If reality is socially constructed, research should be conducted in a way that does not establish further harm but contributes to the betterment of people. According to Wilson (2008),

> knowledge in itself is not seen as the ultimate goal, rather the goal is the change that this knowledge may help to bring about…research is not seen as worthy or ethical if it does not help to improve the reality of the research participants. (p. 37)

To move from this narrative requires an analysis to expose discourses that are impacting Indigenous lives. I begin by defining CDA.

3.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

I utilize a Foucauldian (1967a, 1970b, 1972c, 1975d, 1980e, 1988f) CDA to show how Indigenous subjectivity as a discursive formation is intertwined with Indigenous scholarship and statistics reporting and gathering on Indigenous peoples. Foucault's work provides a frame of analysis to draw out discourses of power and truth which impact identity.

3.3 Discourses Within Indigenous Scholarship

My mother's initial reaction to my research was "Please be careful not to take anymore from us." Questioning identity could be interpreted as unrest or uncertainty. It could also be opening Indigenous peoples up to further scrutiny or, as a relative stated, viewed as an "act of assimilation." Nevertheless, respecting Indigenous peoples does not necessitate that aspects of Indigenous scholarship are immune to analysis. In fact, challenging the status quo, in my opinion, adds to the breadth of scholarship. My intention is not to do a critical analysis of what has been theorized by Indigenous scholars but to expand upon it by illuminating and fostering desire.

Indigenous methodologies are relatively new to academia but are informed by centuries of knowledge passed down through generations. Many scholars focus on social injustices like colonization (Barnhardt & Kawagley 2005; Battiste, 2002; Cajete, 1994; Smith, 2012). They embed concepts of relational knowledge and offer their own epistemologies, ontologies, and axiologies (Wilson, 2008, Henry, 2018, Kovach, 2021). Indigenous knowledges inform community life, relationships with the environment, practices such as *Mowiomi's* (gathering), and identity. Indigenous theoretical

frameworks include concepts like tribal and traditional knowledge, reciprocity, ceremony, language, and storytelling (Smith, 2012; Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008; Battiste, 2013; Urrieta, 2013). Part of the challenge around sharing Indigenous knowledges is that traditionally there was no "formal" way of recording them. Some scholars use research as a way of preserving Indigenous knowledges.

Indigenous methodologies might go unexamined for many reasons. Researchers' discomfort with critiquing the lived experiences of people outside their own cultural experience (Agyeman, 2008), the commitment to implementing the 94 Calls to Action of the TRC (Fullard & Rousseau, 2008), and research agencies recognizing Indigenous research as being a priority, such as how the "Government of Canada supports Indigenous research capacity and reconciliation" (Government of Canada, 2019). It could also go unexamined due to the number of Indigenous scholars compared to settler scholars being recognized in academia (Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008; Battiste & Youngblood, 2009; Smith, 2012; Tuck, 2009; St. Denis, 2004). It could even be viewed as an act of betrayal if the writer is Indigenous and/or as furthering the colonial agenda if the writer is not.

Many scholars have tried to define what Indigenous knowledges are: knowledge of unobserved powers in the ecosystem or cosmos (Spillman, 2017; Kawagley, Barnhardt, & Alaska Univ., F.A.N.K.N., 1998; Wilson, 2008); the interconnectedness of all things (Brown, 2010); perceptions of reality based on linguistic structure or ways of communicating (Romero-Little, 2006); the teaching of particular knowledge related to morals and ethics through tradition (Lavoie & Blanchet, 2018); and social traditions and practices passed from one generation to the next (Innes, 2010). These characteristics

emphasize a “metaphysical, holistic, oral/symbolic, relational, traditional, and intergenerational approach to knowledge” (Levac et al., 2018, p. 4). Siegel (2016) states:

> To say they are universal is not to say they are from God or from Nowhere, but only that they transcend individual cultures in that they are legitimately applicable, and have force, not only beyond the bounds or the particular cultures in which they are acknowledged, but also beyond all such cultural boundaries. (p. 213)

A shared theme among the authors is that Indigenous knowledges are universal. Kincheloe and Steinberg (2008) state that:

> By the term Indigenous knowledge, we are referring to a multidimensional body of understandings that have…been viewed by Euroculture as inferior and primitive…such peoples have produced knowledges, epistemologies, ontologies, and cosmologies that construct ways of being and seeing in relationship to their physical surroundings. Such knowledges involve insights into plant and animal life, cultural dynamics, and historical information used to provide acumen in dealing with challenges of contemporary existence. (p. 136)

The knowledge gained from these insights is valuable and informs, for example, relationality, science, and experiential learning. It is important to understand the history of Indigenous knowledges as well as their contemporary impact. It is just as important, in my opinion, to value individual life experiences within an Indigenous paradigm.

Much Indigenous scholarship attempts to address macro-level issues like "Indigenous political struggles, especially in regard to jurisprudence, or in terms of victimhood conceived of as the genealogical descendent of the trauma of colonization" (Hokowhitu, 2009, p. 104). A universal approach to Indigenous research may discount individual experiences and how knowledges inform everyday life. Spivak (1999) alludes to the macro-level approach in the name of "strategic essentialism." This is a position that forgets cultural heterogeneity in the name of a political cause. She argues that this can be a useful and effective strategy in the political struggle for redistribution of power and resources for Indigenous communities. This approach may dismiss the impacts of macro approaches in Indigenous research on individual identity and how these approaches may contribute to discourses.

3.4 Autoethnography

Autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze (*graphy*) personal experience (*auto*) to understand cultural experience (*ethno*) (Ellis, 2004; Holman Jones, 2005; Spry, 2001). Chang (2008) extends autoethnography to the idea of heightened interest in "self-narratives in the social sciences" and argues "that self-narratives can be used as cultural texts through which the cultural understanding of self and others can be gained" (p. 13). As informed by Holman Jones (2005) and Adams and Ellis (2013), autoethnography is a qualitative approach to research that requires the researcher to acknowledge "what other people have said" in their area of interest, "situate their work within these discussions," "critique current conceptualizations," and make "new claims and ask questions that can be explored in future projects" (p. 22).

To create autoethnographically, one must relive past experiences of trauma, joy, desperation, and other emotions related to their life experiences. This was an unsettling process, but I believe that "in sharing my own story, I inevitably share the stories of others" (Wall, 2008). I utilize my stories to expose aspects of First Nation identity that have been neglected. Although challenging mainstream discourse can be perceived as controversial, Potter (1996) propounds that "Some of the most useful analytical phenomena are cases that appear to go against the pattern or are deviant in some way" (p. 138). The word "deviant" positions research and has its own set of discourses, but as Muncey (2002) purports, although deviant might be understood as bad, it may also be the voice of people who continue to be unheard.

Another important understanding implicit in autoethnography, as proposed by Muncey (2010), is that "Experiences are not frozen in time but grow and develop and therefore need creative devices for capturing growth" (p. 8). I write in the spirit of growth. Although the past is relevant and the present seems permanent, the future is bright and not pre-determined. My perspectives will continue to change over time, and I believe that autoethnography captures the beauty of growth through humanness, voice, and body. Autoethnography, according to Denzin (1997), involves the "turning of the ethnographic gaze inward on the self (auto), while maintaining the outward gaze of autoethnography, looking at the larger context wherein self experiences occur" (p. 227). The literature review allowed me to better understand the larger context and what external forces were determining my positioning as a First Nation person. The inward gaze allowed me to investigate whether my life stories challenge or mirror damage discourses.

Holman Jones, Adams, and Ellis (2013) assert that, "If an author experiences an epiphany, reflects on the nuances of that experience, writes to show how the aspect of experience works to diminish, silence, or deny certain people and stories, then the author writes autoethnographically" (p. 23). I present my life experiences through documentary film to show that my identity as a Mi'kmaq person has been dismissed. In recent years, provincial schools have been including more cultural activities and programs (drumming and beading clubs, Mowiomi's, moose hide tanning, Rock your Mocs, Creative Native, etc.). These clubs and activities were designed for First Nation students but appeared to be at the cost of classroom learning that embeds First Nation topics and understandings, which could be interpreted as a way that institutions expect First Nation students to "perform" Indigeneity in a particular and stereotypical way. Tierny (1998) explains that "autoethnography confronts dominant forms of representation and power in an attempt to reclaim, through self-reflective response, representational spaces that have marginalized those of us at the borders" (p. 66). If a First Nation student does not participate in the clubs or activities, then into what social context do they fit? I understand that it is acceptable for a First Nation student not to join the clubs, but the issue is how First Nation students are categorized. Tuck (2009) expands on Grande (2004) by stating:

> For tribal peoples, this can mean resisting characterizing one another in ways that tacitly reduce us to being either trapped in the irrelevant past or fouled up by modernity and by acknowledging that as twenty-first-century peoples, it is our collective duty to ensure that any and every member who chooses can engage in traditional sustenance practices, use science and Indigenous ecologies to understand the world around us, and

> attend relevant, respectful, and responsive schools. In sum, it is our work to afford the multiplicity of life's choices for one another. (p. 421)

Through autoethnography I can challenge these characterizations by showing how Indigenous peoples are multidimensional and that cultural attributes, for example, may be one part of our lives in addition to others.

The method I use in my research is personal narrative, which Ellingson and Ellis (2008) and Ellis and Bochner (2000) locate within a wide range of autoethnographic methods. The aim of personal narrative is to discern meaning from moments and reveal layers of understanding from the disorderedness of lived experience (McNiff, 2007; Webster & Mertova, 2007; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). When I reflected on my personal data, I was able to draw out desire from artifacts like sports awards but was also able to reflect on how I felt when I received the awards, what led to my sports participation, who supported me, how sports made me healthier physically and emotionally, etc.—all those additional positive feelings and memories. During the time of one prestigious award, according to my chronological timeline, I had just experienced a major traumatic event that required emergency surgery and months of recovery. What I remember most from the distortedness was how sports made me feel. When thinking about that event in my life I did not realize that the trauma happened at the same time because for me damage was trumped by desire. I use my memory as a major source of data (Freeman, 2004) but I also pull in many connecting parts, a process guided by Chang (2008).

Reflecting on the chronological timeline of events in my life, I realized that being Mi'kmaq largely impacted many of my stories. My stories of trauma were like

those of many other First Nation peoples but so were my stories of desire. I needed a method of investigating my life experiences that would honour this knowing—a method that would honour the fact that whatever knowledge I gained from this research was also the story of others.

3.5 Indigenous Autoethnography

When I began this journey, I was adamant that I would not use an Indigenous methodology. I thought that to struggle against frames of reference I needed to position myself outside of them. Through my reading of Indigenous scholarship (Wilson, 2005; Smith, 2009; Kovach, 2021), I noticed a recurring theme of traditionalism (explored in the next chapter), and since I was not a traditional type of person, I thought that using an Indigenous methodology would falsely position me as such. Although I honour traditional practices and people who embed them in their lives, I am aware that some non-First Nation peoples or institutions may use traditionalism to their advantage. St. Denis (2012) explains that "it encourages incompatibility with socio-cultural change as the native must remain Other, distinctly different, and identifiable" (p. 42). By keeping Indigenous peoples as damaged and "Othered," we are positioned out of power and moulded into clients of a service system led by the dominant group.

> Tuck (2009) explains damage-centered research:
>
> Many communities engage, allow, and participate in damage-centered research and in the construction of damage narratives as a strategy for correcting oppression. However, I worry that the theory of change itself may be unreliable and ineffective. It is a powerful idea to think of all of us as litigators, putting the world on trial, but does it actually work? Do

> the material and political wins come through? And, most importantly, are the wins worth the long-term costs of *thinking of ourselves as damaged*. (p. 415)

The theory of change that Tuck refers to is what eased me into an Indigenous methodology. It allowed me to see that I can use an Indigenous methodology without feeling positioned through theorizing the *intention* of the methodology. If my theory, for example, is based on desirability, it changes the position of the research but can remain within an Indigenous paradigm.

Research from non-Indigenous paradigms (positivist, constructivist) is also positioning. Whereas one holds that knowledge is gained through observation and experimentation (scientific), the other posits that knowledge is subjective and constructed by individuals. Since positioning is inevitable from any stance, I was able to settle into an Indigenous paradigm. This provided a comfortable transition from autoethnography to Indigenous autoethnography. An Indigenous researcher using an Indigenous methodology might also avoid ethical dilemmas like appropriation, mis/representation, and oppression (Gonzalez, 2003; Madison, 2005).

Houston (2007) defines Indigenous autoethnography as "a form of scholarly resistance; a challenge to the way in which Aboriginal people, particularly Aboriginal women, have been represented and depicted by others" (p. 1). This resonated with what I was trying to accomplish through my research. I resist how I am represented and depicted by others. The "resistance" I felt was because literature focussed on Indigenous peoples seemed to leave no room for desire. Whitinui (2014) explains:

> Grounded within a resistance-based discourse, Indigenous autoethnography aims to address issues of social justice and to develop social change by engaging indigenous researchers in rediscovering their own voices as "culturally liberating human-beings." Implicit in this process is also the desire to ground one's sense of self in what remains "sacred" to us as Indigenous peoples in the world we live, and in the way we choose to construct our identity. (p. 456)

For me, cultural liberation, freeing myself from the categories of "real, traditional and assimilated" (St. Denis, 2012, p. 38), came in the form of desire, capturing it, moving toward it, talking and writing about it, and resisting damage narratives that anyone in my personal or professional life had to offer. I hope that desire will one day be considered an honoured part of Indigeneity.

Exposing how colonization impacted Indigenous lives enabled me to see how Indigenous peoples are constructed but this does not mean Indigenous scholars need to embody these constructions and write from that position. It is not sufficient for researchers to take on damage and write in support of decolonization because damage is a product of colonization. Wilson (2005) states that "it is only through a consciously critical assessment of how the historical process of colonization has systematically devalued our indigenous ways that we can begin to reverse the damage wrought from those assaults" (p. 257). If we start with desire as the core of Indigeneity and consciously refuse to take on any pathologizing, problematizing, or culturizing discourses in our writing, that is a move toward desire. If we start with desire, it changes the way we position ourselves and simultaneously struggle against colonization.

An Indigenous research paradigm and autoethnography are compatible in mainly two ways. Firstly, compatibility is actualized through the positioning of the self within research without a focus on separation between the researcher and the subject (Cordero, 1995; Hampton, 1995; Dei, Hall & Rosenberg, 2000). Secondly, there is the shared concept of storytelling as method. Kovach (2021) notes that the storytelling concept is shared among Indigenous peoples and that it can be accomplished in many ways: yarning, which is unstructured time to share stories (Bessarab & Ng'andu, 2010); Kapati time, which makes space and time for stories in a culturally safe space (Ober, 2017); and conversational method, which honours conversations that flow from an Indigenous paradigm (Fiddler, 2014; Kovach, 2019), etc. For example, Shay and Wickes (2015) utilized storytelling effectively as a research methodology. They blend their school experience stories as a counter to discourses about Indigenous students. They put forth that predominantly white educators need to examine their cultural identity and "understand the dominance of white cultures and the ongoing construction of Aboriginal identity for Aboriginal young people" (p. 109). This approach resonated with me because I did not read many examples that suggested the white population reflect on its practices through story.

Storytelling is a fundamental aspect of autoethnographic approaches as well as a respected and honoured method within Indigenous scholarship. Researchers across disciplines and cultural groups seem to share similar perspectives on utilizing story as data. Kuokkanen (2007) describes the process of using story as data to be "learning from a gift" (p. 159)—the gifting of one's story to a researcher or the gifting of one's story to research. Kovach (2021) explains that "data are more than things, they are living connectors animated through the exchange of story" (p. 156). Gergen and Gergen

(2002) offer that “autoethnography is the writing of relationships” (p. 12). Ellis (2004), cited by Poulous (2010), posits that “autoethnography is not really my story. When it works, it is the story of us, together, navigating this world” (p. 70). These aesthetically articulate descriptions, especially the last, give hope to those of us who are feeling alone in our research. With Indigenous research paradigms firmly in place, we can look to methods that “fit with our methodology” and note that “some fit well with an Indigenous paradigm” (Wilson, 2001, p. 177). Wilson notes that it is not always one or the other, that we can borrow from methodologies that are not necessarily recognized as Indigenous. Personal narrative (autoethnography), informed by a critical lens situated within an Indigenous paradigm, is one of these methods.

Personal narratives, written by social scientists about “some aspect of their experiences in daily life,” are more than just the story of one person. In my stories, there is a connection to family, teammates, communities, and the world, which Nash (2002) would describe as “a series of overlapping, concentric circles with others” (p. 26). What is important is that “the study of self-narratives through self-reflection is beneficial to cultural understanding” (Chang, 2008, p. 34). My personal stories are used to counter damage narratives that seem to be dominating societal understandings of First Nation peoples.

3.6 Documentary Film as Qualitative Inquiry

Bonny and Berkes (2008) posit that “video-based media are perhaps the most effective means for communicating the social context of knowledge shared: a viewer sees the environment, the audience, and the interaction between a speaker and the audience” (p. 249). This section includes an explanation of why documentary film is part of my dissertation and considers how video as research has been used and its

relation to Indigenous knowledges. I also include an overview of how I use documentary film as qualitative inquiry and provide an executive summary and treatment of my documentary film. The film presents a journey from damage to desire by utilizing personal data as evidence and exploration.

3.7 Utilizing the Arts for Capturing Data

For years, many Indigenous cultures have used various forms of art as an expression of life (Martin, 2017; Rickard, 2017). Martineau and Ritskes (2014) describe Indigenous art as working "Against colonial erasure, Indigenous art marks the space of a returned and enduring presence" (p. i). Knowles and Cole (2008) theorize that the arts (visual images, dance, digital film, etc.) "enhance research" and that it is "hard to overlook the prevalence of the arts in human enterprise for making sense of the human condition and the surrounding world" (p. xi). Traditionally, art was used to celebrate, heal, honour, and tell stories, but contact affected how Indigenous peoples could use their art (Connor & Napan, 2021; Rivera Santana & Akhurst, 2021; de la Luz Leake, 2021). Contemporary misappropriation and deliberate banning of cultural practices by government led to a reclamation of our place within the world of art. Ngugi (1998) explains that "[decolonial] art arms silence with voices that, even when the bodies that carry them are crushed and ground to powder, will rise again, and multiply, and sing out their presence" (p. 28). Some Indigenous peoples now view art as a tool for liberation. Simpson (2022), in *Head of the Lake*, sang, "Smoke did the things we couldn't." I think this aesthetically captures why I used documentary film to present my data.

I view documentary film as a form of art due to its link between creation and visual representation. *Biidaaban* (2019), a stop-motion short film produced by Strong

and based on Simpson's (2013) book, captures the rupture between Indigenous lands and settler ownership. The filmmaker was able to show the relational way Indigenous peoples view the land while also capturing the tension with settler interference. In *Against the Current* (2022), Moniz-Reyome utilized documentary film to show the impacts of colonization on her culture and traditions while beautifully incorporating the art of making. Arts-based data presentation utilizes the same process and rigour as traditionally written research. Rahn (2002) posits that video is a "continually evolving, interdisciplinary production process, the verbal exchange of ideas, the visual transfer of skills, and the interaction with an audience" (p. 303). Hofer, Swan, and Zuber (2014) quote Rosenthal by stating that "writing and directing are inextricably linked in the making of documentary" and that documentary production involves "discussion of ideas, research, and script structure; proceeds through preproduction and production [the composing of the video]; and then deals in depth with editing and commentary writing" (p, 131-132). The artistic process, meaning the process of the craft, is comparable to the preparation that a researcher might implement before writing. For example, one cannot simply film something and claim it to be a method of inquiry.

I use documentary film in my qualitative research to present my data and as the main source for my data analysis. Documentary film can simultaneously present data as an investigative tool for research, be "treated as the principal form of data on which insights and findings are based" (p. 38), and tell a story (Heath et al., 2010).

3.8 Utilizing Visual Research Methods for the Presentation of Data

My mother instilled a great appreciation for nature in me, and as a result I have always been drawn to visual images. I am not sure if this is a cultural thing, but it is a

part of my life. Weber (2008) cites Bruner (1984) and notes that "When we plan, analyze, imagine, think, or critique, our thoughts are associated with and largely constituted by images" (p. 41). The inclusion of images in my documentary film creates a more nuanced way of understanding my research. I knew from the beginning of this study that I would be including visual imagery. My collection of visuals came in many forms and were "researcher-generated" photographs, artifacts, archival footage, and current footage of my life (Pauwels, 2010, p. 552). It also came in the form of what Pauwels (2010) calls "found materials as data source" where "[s]ocietal images and not visual artifacts are ubiquitous and produced on a daily basis…(e.g., advertisements, newsreels, web site content, cartoons, etc.)" (p. 550). I used "found materials" as data at the beginning of my film to show how discourses have been maintained and included in news broadcasts, clips from movies, photographs, Ted Talks, etc.

In chapter two, I write about the colonial impacts on literature but one could deduct that the impacts on Indigeneity went beyond literature. For example, film was traditionally used to *study* Indigenous groups in the field of anthropology: "Early visual anthropology, for example, explicitly limited itself to 'salvage anthropology' (Mead 1975[2003]) as a way of preserving rapidly vanishing cultures by producing a permanent and data rich record of them for future scrutiny" (Pauwels, 2010, p. 547). One of the earliest examples of Indigenous peoples addressing this interference or misinterpretation of their culture was the film *The Ballad of Crowfoot* (1968). Researchers provided members of the Crowfoot nation with training on how to use equipment and they captured their way of life in still photographs. These photographs captured the beauty of their lives in addition to the impacts of settler interference. There is a resemblance to my film, which evokes feelings of stagnation. Fast-forward 55 years

(1968–2023) and Indigenous peoples are still trying to make a point that seems to die on settler ears and eyes: We are more than what you frame us to be.

Pauwels (2010) notes that "the focus of analysis in visual research can lie on: the content of a visual representation (the depicted), its form and style (most often in conjunction with the depicted), the processes that are related with the production and use of visual representations, and finally the verbal reactions to visual stimuli" (p. 559). With my film, I focused on how Indigenous peoples were depicted by sources like the media and contrasted those depictions with my life experiences. Pauwels (2010) describes this style as "focussing on the depiction as a result of a representational practice (which involves cultural and technological normative systems) and thus scrutiniz[ing] the ways in which particular objects or events are being represented visually by certain actors or institutions over time" (p. 557). My film incorporates the notion of "docile bodies" constructed through discourses of problematizing, pathologizing, and culturizing and how those discourses perpetuate stereotypes and dependency (Foucault, 1978). This approach extends visual research from not only representing what I want you to see but also how others have portrayed Indigenous peoples as being. Pauwels (2010) writes that "The visual form is then problematized, and the image is no longer seen as an unproblematic window to the depicted world, but (also) as mirroring the social and cultural knowledge of the medium and its culture" (p. 558).

In reading the research of other visual research method scholars, like Wang's (1999) work on photovoice, Ewald's (2000) work on inviting participants to determine the study subject alongside images, and Suchar's (1997) inclusion of "shooting scripts,"

I noticed that the sort of analytical approach that accompanies visual research was not predetermined. In other words, one can choose the type of visual research one is embarking on, think about how one will use it as a method of inquiry (if one uses that approach), and pair it with the analytical and theoretical approach.

Pauwels (2010) provided an integrated framework for visual social research where the analytical focus could follow what he labelled the "production process," which could have images that are "found or elicited" and include "representational choices and strategies" (p. 549). Within the theoretical foundation of visual research, he notes, the researcher could have a "choice of theories" that must have a "significant visual dimension," such as "cultural assimilation" (p. 549). He also points out that "visual research is still a rather dispersed and ill-defined domain within the social sciences" (p. 545). Documentary film has allowed the gift of presenting data and/or story artistically. I chose to interweave visual research methods with CDA and autoethnography and present my story (data) through documentary film.

In my documentary film, the discourses pulled from the CDA are represented at the beginning of the film. My autoethnographic data is used throughout to present my life experiences as a larger indicator of cultural fluidity while being shown through the visual research avenue of documentary film. The power of documentary film is evident in Pauwel's (2010) thoughts: "Looking at what people really do or have crafted as opposed to what they say they would do or supposedly have done (in surveys and interviews) is an essential extension of the study of culture and society" (p. 575). It is one thing to write about desire autoethnographically but much more powerful when it is shown. At the end of my documentary film, I am dancing with my son; the audience can

hear his laughter and see the smiles on our faces. Neither of us say that we are happy, but the audience can infer that we are from our actions. The audience in this instance can feel what I am trying to convey. Despite the all-encompassing control that colonization exercises over Indigenous lives, we can struggle against it by honouring desire in our lives.

3.9 Why Documentary?

Some Mi'kmaq peoples use oral storytelling (Atukwaqan) to explain creation, "think deeply," transmit knowledge, "reflect upon our actions and reactions," and/or provide entertainment (Archibald, 2001). My Mikiju (grandmother) used storytelling (Atukuo't) to soothe me. I can still feel the warmth of her wood stove while sitting on the love seat next to her rocking chair as she knitted. Kovach (2009) quotes Little Bear and explains that story "translates as involvement in an event" (p. 94). I chose to use documentary film to highlight that storytelling is valid inquiry and to demonstrate its connection to my research. Autoethnography insists that story is the most important aspect of investigation.

The movement from written word to digital video has been described as "fully represent[ing] a visual culture," as "a community-driven methodological approach," "a tool of decolonization," and as using "the power of *storytelling*" (Rahn, 2009; Willox, Harper, Edge, & Rigolet Inuit Community Government, 2009; Pratt, 2019; González, Lewis, Slayback-Barry & Yost, 2016). I posit that arts-based research situates itself as a method that fits within an Indigenous paradigm.

3.10 How Documentary Film Has Been Utilized

In the literature I read, there was no information on how documentary film can be explicitly used as a tool for autoethnographic analysis. I believe my work makes this

contribution to methodological literature and the field of visual research. My research embeds documentary film as part of my autoethnographic analysis to show my qualitative data, which is analyzed in chapter four. Borish et. al. (2021) put forth that "there are two overarching opportunities of this analytical approach: 1) explore and analyze qualitative data (e.g., social, health, and wellbeing analytics), and 2) create a storytelling output in the form of both short-length videos and a feature-length film" (p. 5). These combined approaches move the research to another level of understanding. Seeing and experiencing a lived life also showcases data to support the story one is experiencing.

Indigenous peoples have been using documentary film in a range of fields as an "instrument for the direct and indirect advancement of Indigenous rights" (Barber, 2011, p. 10). Indigenous documentary film also interweaves well with Indigenous research as noted by Herman and Spang-Willis (2021) and provides the "potential to open new channels between heretofore distinct fields" (p. 1). Gleghorn (2013) utilized video of the land to challenge systemic ideas of reconciliation, highlighting that there are more than humans involved in the process, and Capelli (2018) captures local struggles using visual representations for political and environmental injustices. These are examples of utilizing First Nation community land-based imagery in film to struggle against Western ideas of advancement. Cunsolo et al. (2013) show "how digital storytelling can stand as a community-driven methodological strategy that addresses, and moves beyond, the limitations of narrative research and the issues of colonization of research and the Western analytic project" (p. 1). The autoethnographic approach in the films is significant because instead of having our story told for us, First Nation peoples

are using film to show an honest depiction of lived realities. This is important because it struggles against colonial interpretations, and the maintenance of truth and ideologies.

Creswell (2013) highlights the focus on cultural meaning inherent in autoethnographic narratives, noting that they "contain the personal story of the author as well as the larger cultural meaning for the individual's story" (p. 73). This is important to my research because although I am Mi'kmaq, and write from that perspective, discourses of damage have framed Indigenous peoples. I expose this framing through CDA in chapter four. In my instance, utilizing my story to struggle against damaged-based understandings of Indigeneity is illuminated by bringing desire to the forefront; seeing, watching, and understanding a lived life is much more impactful than reading about it.

Much of the research I read supported the use of documentary film as a teaching tool (Kim, Yi, & Cho, 2014; Laird, 2004; González, Lewis, Slayback-Barry & Yost, 2016; Swan, Karb, & Hofer, 2017; Hofer, Swan, & Zuber, 2014) and for classroom practice, with students presenting learning projects through film (Seckin, Gultekin, & Cemil, 2015; Frank, 2013). Lotfalian (2013) provides the view that autoethnography in documentary film is about "mobilizing self and creating collective stories/ images in various ways" or where "self is mobilized through a bricolage of existing images" (p. 140). He also notes that it can "create a collective 'voice' through unearthing childhood memory" and that "an understanding of the works…is enriched by consideration of them through the filter of autoethnography" (p. 141). These various ways of approaching documentary film helped me to focus more on how I wanted to create my film.

In my search to find someone who used autoethnography through documentary film as qualitative inquiry, I discovered Lotfalian (2013). He describes the process of utilizing autoethnography through documentary film as "the connection and relationship between the filmmaker, the screen…and the audience from which a presumed collectivity…emerges" (p. 140). An autoethnographic approach to documentary film enabled me to convey a message through personal experiences and to soul search simultaneously. What drew me to this method was how it aligned with storytelling.

Modes of Documentary Film

What is difficult to articulate is that scholars of documentary film theorize the form through different modes. Nichols (2001) provides six modes to documentary film: 1) poetic, 2) expository, 3) observational, 4) participatory, 5) reflexive, and 6) performative. I provide a brief definition and example of each mode and explain why I chose performative. The modes are fluid and borrow from each other but there are common themes from which to create styles. Nichols (2001) points out that "the characteristics of a given mode function as a dominant in a given film, but they do not dictate or determine every aspect of its organization" (p. 179). In this section I draw explicitly on Nichols's (2001) work to describe the modes.

According to Nichols (2001):

> The poetic mode is particularly adept at opening up the possibility of alternative forms of knowledge to the straightforward transfer of information, the prosecution of a particular argument or point of view, or the presentation of reasoned propositions about problems in need of solution. This mode stresses mood, tone, and affect much more than

> displays of knowledge or acts of persuasion. The rhetorical element remains underdeveloped. (p. 103)

Samsara (2011), created by Fricke, incorporates background music throughout the film and the viewer is drawn to the images that relay messages without words. The fastmoving images of beauty and chaos combine to bring the viewer into a sort of trance-like state of reflection on the vastness of the world and our place in it.

The second mode is expository. Nichols (2001) explains that "The expository mode addresses the viewer directly, with titles or voices that propose a perspective, advance an argument, or recount history" (p. 105). An example would be the film by Guggenheim titled *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006). This film stars Al Gore and Billy West, who speak to the issue of global warming. There is a clear message that global warming is a universal responsibility. My interpretation of this film is that it is based on a truth that the producer is trying to relay and is meant to evoke feelings of ownership and unity toward a cause.

The third mode is observational. Nicholas (2001) describes this mode: "Honoring this spirit of observation in post-production editing as well as during shooting resulted in films with no voice-over commentary, no supplementary music or sound effects, no intertitles, no historical re-enactments, no behavior repeated for the camera, and not even any interviews" (p. 110). The film *Armadillo* (2011), directed by Janus Metz Pedersen, is an example of this mode. This film was difficult to watch as it followed troops in Afghanistan. The audience experiences what the subjects in the film are encountering. The raw fight-or-flight feeling that this film evokes is not easily forgettable and attests to the power of observation.

The fourth mode is participatory. Nichols (2001) defines this mode as:

> The researcher goes into the field, participates in the lives of others, gains a corporeal or visceral feel for what life in a given context is like, and then reflects on this experience, using the tools and methods of anthropology or sociology to do so… the field worker does not allow herself to "go native," under normal circumstances, but retains a degree of detachment that differentiates her from those about whom she writes. (p. 115-116)

An example of this mode is the film *Icarus* (2017), directed by Bryan Fogel. This film is about performance-enhancing drugs in sport that manifest in major doping violations of Russian participants in the Olympics. What makes this film participatory is the director's use of performance-enhancing drugs to see if he could go undetected as an amateur cyclist: instead he stumbled upon an international scandal.

The fifth mode is reflexive. Nichols (2001) explains "…the processes of negotiation between filmmaker and viewer…Rather than following the filmmaker in her engagement with other social actors, we now attend to the filmmaker's engagement with us, speaking not only about the historical world but about the problems and issues of representing it as well" (p. 125). An example of reflexive mode is the documentary film titled *Reassemblage* (1983) by Trinh T Minh ha. I chose this film because of its focus on cultural assumptions. This mode made me question the authenticity of all documentaries as my attention shifted from watching the film to focussing on the use of editing, camera placement, and the cultural background of the producer. Although the

film was a representation of culture, the focus on women as subjects instead of objects was most meaningful.

The sixth mode that influenced the production of my documentary was performative. This mode allows the creator to raise awareness of the various ways people can understand the world. Nichols (2001) states:

> Is knowledge best described as abstract and disembodied, based on generalizations and the typical, in the tradition of Western philosophy? Or is knowledge better described as concrete and embodied, based on the specificities of personal experience, in the tradition of poetry, literature, and rhetoric? Performative…sets out to demonstrate how embodied knowledge provides entry into an understanding of the more general processes at work in society. (pp. 130-131)

Catfish (2010), directed by Ariel Schulman and Henry Joost, is an example of this mode.

The film invites the audience into the world of social media dating and ends with one partner lying about their identity and getting caught. It has a *Blair Witch* feeling to it, meaning it is a documentary, but I am not convinced of its authenticity. After watching it, I thought about ethics in documentary film. I assumed that documentary films were based on fact or at least based on what the producer believed to be true. I had never pondered the use of documentary as fiction.

Since I was left with an uneasy feeling about authenticity after watching *Catfish*, I decided to find another documentary film that used the performative mode. Far from inauthentic, and something I will not easily forget, was the documentary titled *Night and Fog* (1956) by D'Alain Resnais. Once I settled from the initial shock of the film, I

thought about the far-reaching power of it. This film incorporates the voice of a Holocaust survivor and brings questions of humanity to the forefront.

What fascinated me about this mode was being able to use the body as the knowing subject. This shifts from the idea that knowledge is centered in the mind (individualized) and can only be communicated through written words. It brings a factual account of experience, one the audience can see and hear and not one, in my opinion, that is easily discounted.

3.11 Research Design for Documentary Film

Being able to use my body as the knowing subject, I embarked on producing a documentary film that captured my life experiences as a Mi'kmaq person. This process demanded patience, time, and reflection. I go into more detail in the section of this chapter on the data collection process, but below I provide a brief context.

Firstly, I started the documentary film process by recounting and documenting stories from my life, which I captured in a written chronological timeline of events. This was emotional as there have been many both traumatic and amazing experiences in my life. After I wrote the timeline, I sought out physical data in the form of letters, awards, certificates, videos, photos, etc., to support my stories of trauma and triumph. My mother, son, and I went on a few road trips to capture footage of places that made an impact in my life, like the French Fort Cove and an abandoned ball field in my childhood neighbourhood. This gathering of personal data provided much of the content for the film but did not capture the story I wanted to tell.

Secondly, I collected external data that produced narratives of damage and discourses for Indigenous peoples, which included news stories, media clips, and photos. These capturings would prove to be in opposition to my life. With the addition of this data, I was able to write the treatment (the document capturing the essentials of my project) for my documentary film, which would be a journey from damage to desire.

Thirdly, I created the film using software I purchased online and received training through an online support system. I also purchased software that would allow me to extract snippets from larger videos and purchased music for the film from an online company. In addition, I hired a technician who could transfer film from VHS to USB, so I could use footage from my childhood in the film. Once I edited all the content and formulated the story, I created a YouTube channel to host the film. This process took a year to complete.

This method was exceptionally challenging. I questioned many times why I chose to include a documentary film in my research because it was extremely tedious and demanded multiple recordings of the same footage and massive amounts of editing. At last, I had to be fine with what I produced because once one starts a process like this one could edit forever. Complications came in many forms, from software failures and losing edited content to multiple timing, light, and sound issues with footage. I recall waiting in the range behind my homestead for 20-minute intervals over three hours for five seconds of footage that would not be interrupted by the sound of traffic. Showing my story without telling it while also reflecting and analyzing my behaviours and data was also quite challenging.

3.12 Executive Summary

My documentary film struggles against problematizing, pathologizing, and culturizing discourses of colonization and aims to move toward desirability. It is "intent on depathologizing the experiences of dispossessed and disenfranchised communities so that people are seen as more than broken and conquered" (Tuck, 2009, p. 8). My documentary film is designed as a strategy for qualitative inquiry.

3.13 Storyline

My documentary film is offered through performative mode and evokes "a strong sense of what it feels like to inhabit the world in a specific way or as part of a specific subculture" (Nichols, 2017, p. 22). This method allows me to present my personal data in a way that transports the experiences from my memory to a visual representation. I can see my deceased family members, watch myself participate in sports, visually and audibly capture the outdoor spaces I played in as a child—I can see my life experiences and not just remember them. This method helps me to feel and observe my memories in a more meaningful way. When I remember something, it is an isolated thought. I think about my father, for example, but I don't think about my father and sports and my mother's letters, etc. Memories come to me when something reminds me of the event or person; my brain thinks about them as isolated events. This way of processing prevents me from thinking about my life experiences as a story. Capturing my personal memories in an autoethnographic documentary film allows me to observe, feel, and reflect on my overall life experiences in a more meaningful way.

The concept of generational memory inspired deep reflection throughout the film. My mother's life experiences, for example, differ from mine (time, context, etc.), but have an impact on my identity. The film grapples with whether identity formation happens

linearly or cyclically, meaning whether the experiences of generations before impact identity. Lotfalian (2013) posits:

> the generational difference has to do with how this younger cohort has had to work through many possible versions of memory to construct the 'real'. This rendition of memory at the individual level overlaps with the politics of memory over which the state tries to impose a monopoly. It is in this context that one must understand the politics of the 'self' or 'auto' in autoethnography. (p. 135)

My grandmother and mother had varied experiences that influenced their identities. Those experiences, although impactful on my identity, did not determine my path. I hope the film expresses how discourses have impacted our identities in various ways.

The introduction (Act One) focuses on establishing damage discourses; where they come from and what they produce. I identify the social, cultural, political, and historical factors that have contributed to and informed my identity and relate them to how knowledge, power, or truth has been or is being produced.

In Act Two, I reflect on damage narratives and how they contribute to my identity. I unpack some of the meaningful experiences in my life. Before filming, I chose areas of focus such as childhood experiences, school experiences, and ideologies. These areas of focus were investigated through personal data such as life stories, mentors, and artifacts. Included are issues related to identity and a mission for the viewer to reflect on discourses. By the end of this act, I hope the audience starts to understand the

dichotomous relationship between frames of identity and real-life experiences. This sets the stage for the transformational arc that will take place in Act Three.

Act Three focuses on desirability. The final act introduces the most impactful turning point. I show desirability and how it influences my life, "upend(ing) commonly held assumptions of responsibility, cohesiveness, ignorance, and paralysis within dispossessed and disenfranchised communities. Desire…accounts for the loss and despair, but also the hope, the visions, the wisdom of lived lives and communities" (Tuck, 2009, p. 417). My film shows the impact of desirability on my identity and left me with a profound longing to make desire more visible within Indigeneity and curious about how to operationalize it.

3.14 Data Collection and Interpretation Strategy

This section outlines how I applied Chang's (2008) ten-step approach to interpret my chronological timeline and the data collection process. Although most of my stories are not included in this study (for privacy and personal reasons), Chang's process allowed me to pull out important indicators that were used to inform the storyline of my documentary film.

Qualitative researchers can use many available methods for data collection. One of the main methods has been interviews but as the use of technology increases, methods are expanding. Chang's (2008) method explains that when analyzing and interpreting autoethnographic data, one needs to keep in mind one important point:

> What makes autoethnography ethnographic is its intent of gaining a cultural understanding. Since self is considered a carrier of culture, intimately connected to others in society, the self's behaviors—verbal and nonverbal—should be interpreted in their cultural context. There, autoethnographic data analysis and interpretation involve shifting your

> attention back and forth between self and others, the personal and the social context. (p. 125)

For personal (internal) data, I utilized a chronological timeline of my life experiences and incorporated artifacts such as photos, news articles, letters, and awards; archival footage of various events such as Christmas celebrations, prom, and family gatherings; and mentors who have shaped my identity. I also included footage of places I frequented as a child such as the French Fort Cove in Nordin, New Brunswick; the former rifle range also located in Nordin; the abandoned ballfield at the local recreation centre in Nordin; the waterfront in Natoaganeg; the graveyard where my father is buried in Douglastown, New Brunswick; the graveyard where my uncle is buried in Natoaganeg; my former elementary school in Douglastown; and the beach in front of my cottage in East Point, Miramichi.

Chang (2008) describes the process of collecting personal memory data as "a building block of autoethnography because the past gives a context to the present self and memory opens a door to the richness of the past" (p. 71). In chapter four, I apply reflexivity to the documentary film that contributes to my data analysis, but in this chapter, I apply Chang's interpretation strategy only to my chronological timeline to frame the documentary film. The interpretation strategy follows Chang's (2008) suggested ten focus areas.

Number one considers recurring topics, themes, and patterns for the data. For example, in my chronological timeline I noticed that many of my written stories mirrored tragedy but my tangible data (awards, archival footage, photos) evoked memories and feelings of love and joy. I include an analysis of my data contained in the

documentary film in chapter five. Number two is related to a larger theme that can be promoted within society. As an example, when I analysed the first part of the documentary film, I noticed the theme of damage was prevalent about Indigenous peoples. Number three is related to exceptional occurrences. An exceptional occurrence marks a pivotal time in one's life and one that may impact data analysis. When reviewing my chronological timeline, it became evident that many of the tragic events in my life were related to being First Nation.

Number four looks at what might be included in one's research and what might not be and the related reasons. This strategy helps with biases. If when reflecting on my data I noticed that I left out my stories of trauma, it would signify that I was being biased in my collection of data by trying to smother damage. Number five, connect the present with the past, helps one to think about how present thoughts might be rooted in the past. For example, I had an amazing mother, and I know that how she raised me as a child impacts my experiences and thoughts as an adult. Number six requires the researcher to analyze relationships between self and others. For example, I made the mistake of positioning First Nation peoples who incorporate cultural traditions into their daily lives as the "Other" because I am not that type of person. I had to be aware of how I was Othering by thinking this way, even though it came from a place of feeling castaway.

Number seven, compare cases, includes Butler's (2004) experiences of coming out as a lesbian, for example, to how some First Nation people do not want to leave their First Nation community; both lie in the understanding that society will judge and condemn. Number eight, contextualize broadly, was challenging as it involved keeping

my research culturally meaningful and at the discourse level as opposed to the individual level. Number eight, also involved analyzing factors (sociocultural, political, economic, etc.) that allowed me to live desirably.

Number nine, compare with social constructs, made it apparent when viewing external data that a social construct of sickness was created for First Nation peoples. This was obvious through the media inclusions in the documentary film. Number ten, frame with theories, made it clear that when the damage is exposed, one moves to a theory of change that will address this framing; that theory for me was desire.

The main challenge in doing this type of data collection and interpretation was keeping the personal culturally meaningful. Chang (2008) suggests that in this process "you zoom in on the details of your life and zoom out to the broad context. This process also balances two opposing activities of fracturing data and connecting fragments to create a coherent story and cultural explanation" (p. 137). Visiting places from my childhood, for example, and showing the tranquility of space as a contributor to desire, is culturally meaningful. Having time to reflect on tranquility and how it relates to desire and place is explored in the next chapter.

I used confessional-emotive chronological writing of my personal stories. Chang (2008) defines confessional-emotive writing as "free to expose confusion, problems, and dilemmas in life. Personal agonies, usually hidden from public view, are often subjects of confessional and emotive writing" (p. 145). When chronicling my past, I started with my earliest memory as a child and moved through the years until I reached present time. This is what Chang (2008) refers to as "the Whole-life, all-major-event approach," which he writes "engenders the most comprehensive autobiographical

timeline" (p. 73). I focused on life events that were related to Indigeneity. In retrospect, memories that did not seem so impactful at the time did greatly influence my life.

I remember sitting at the kitchen table when I was six years old listening to my parents talk about mom regaining her Indian status. I recall not understanding what my mother meant when she said, "I can't believe that someone thought they could take that away (her identity) from me." One can only imagine the impact on identity that this type of event would have. This memory evokes feelings of being discriminated against, violated, and powerless. It also impacted my identity; I was not considered First Nation by law until 1985. Contained in my documentary film are letters (artifacts) from my mother written to me over my lifetime. When the external data is compared to the words in the letters from my mom, one begins to understand the strength and will one needs to move toward desire as an Indigenous person.

I did not live in our community until later in life when my father passed away. This largely contributed to my experiences of feeling like an outsider. I was viewed as First Nation by settler peoples off the community but when I moved to the First Nation community, I did not feel accepted as First Nation. I remember going to the community store to purchase something that required my status card. The cashier asked what community I was from, and I answered. There was a young woman behind me in line who said, "She isn't from here. I don't care what her status card says!" If I did not grow up there, I was not one of them; but I was not one of the settlers either.

This struggle for belonging led to feelings of misalignment with traditional ways of being. I pondered how traditional approaches required honouring the seven sacred teachings but for some reason did not apply to me. I recall stories like the one above but also of being in a meeting where an Elder made a comment like "She isn't really Indian;

she never grew up on a community." Respect is imperative when working with Indigenous academic integrity and one of the seven sacred teachings. This comment from the Elder was not respectful. I consider the misalignment between the narrative that all Indigenous peoples follow the seven sacred teachings and my lived experiences in the next chapter.

Combine stories like this with my grandmother's experiences of colonization and how she was shamed for being First Nation. Traditionalism did not have a place in my life. Further, only being defined as First Nation at age six impacted my developmental years. If I was not First Nation until six years old, never experienced traditionalism, and did not live on a First Nation community, was I even First Nation? The power of discourse is so prevalent that I started to question my identity. My documentary film was fascinating to reflect on (chapter four) because despite the feelings of misalignment and lived trauma, I still found a way to move toward desire. Out of respect for my family and to protect our privacy, I did not include my chronological stories in the data catalogue (Appendix B), but the exercise of chronicling was incredibly helpful.

I also wrote stories that were more thematically focussed on, for example, educational, sport, and personal and professional life experiences. When reflecting on my stories, damage started to surface: myths of free education; not being awarded scholarships when I played university women's volleyball, even though I was MVP, because "my tuition was already covered"; being called names like squaw, Pocahontas, and lazy Indian; and being labelled as uncompliant or unprofessional at work whenever I stated an unpopular opinion. These are hard experiences which I attributed to being

Mi'kmaq but might be better described as racism. Despite it all, I still feel joy, love, and pride. I set goals for myself and try to practice empathy toward people. What is it that enables me to do this? And whatever "it" is, can it contribute to an expansion of Mi'kmaq identity? My analysis of the documentary film in chapter four will attempt to draw "it" out.

3.15 Chang's Approach

I applied Chang's (2008) ten strategies of data analysis and interpretation to my chronological timeline. I used the information gleaned from this analysis to inform my approach to documentary film. I needed to understand why I might approach the film a certain way. Chang's strategies enabled me to separate myself from being the writer and experiencer of my stories to an observer of my stories who could somewhat objectively extract significant points. The main analysis of my study is in the next chapter where I apply reflexivity to the documentary film.

The first suggested strategy of data analysis from Chang (2008) is to search for recurring topics, themes, and patterns. I began this journey to show that my life experiences were in juxtaposition to the external discourses of problematizing, pathologizing, and culturizing but realized that my written stories in relation to Indigeneity mirrored a life shaped by these discourses. Equally interesting, which I will write about in the next section, is that my personal artifacts and archival footage did not mirror damage. Reflecting on my personal stories, I noticed those labelled "First Nation focussed" were all damage-based with themes like, sorrow, racism, loss, exploitation, anger, hopelessness, and fear. Those that were more narrowly focussed on areas such as my professional life but with an emphasis on Indigeneity also brought out themes of anger, frustration, and anxiety which I explore in chapter four. This pattern was

apparent for all stories related to Indigeneity. I believe that this is a sad tale of discourses playing out in real life and how devastating the impacts can be on our life experiences. Regardless of the devastating impacts, I was able to live a desirable life as I show in my documentary film.

The second suggested strategy from Chang's (2008) data analysis was to look for cultural themes. The cultural theme that reoccurred across my stories of Indigeneity were of exclusion, heartache, abuse, and trauma—in summation, damage. If my stories are used as the indicator of a larger cultural theme, it would be that identifying as First Nation felt like it meant identifying with damage. Chang's (2008) analysis proved useful because it would guide how I edited my film. I attempted to show this damage at the beginning of the documentary film as opposed to interweaving it throughout because it represented where I started, not where I ended.

The third focus of Chang's (2008) approach was to identify exceptional occurrences. This strategy identified events that contributed to changing the trajectory of my life. Chang (2008) notes that "After life-changing experiences, people rarely go back to their old selves, but rather move on to a new direction" (p. 133). As life progresses, we may not take the time to reflect on events that impact how we experience the world. This process enabled me to become a sort of external observer of my life, which provided a lens from which I could analyze it.

The entire chronological timeline was focussed on "inventorying the self," which involved "not only collecting but also evaluating and organizing data…you select and deselect certain items and rank them in the hierarchy of importance" (Chang, 2008, p. 76). Some stories were labelled under the heading of desire. These stories ranked at the top in the hierarchy of importance to my life. I am sure there is a psychological

explanation for the ranking of my memories, possibly impacted by repeated behaviours from exposure to dysfunction or the support of a mother who provided and continues to be my moral compass. The exceptional occurrence was that stories focussed on Indigeneity were damage-based and those that did not focus on Indigeneity were desire-based, although I am sure one cannot be without the other. This reflection allowed me to think about how to show this embodiment of damage and desire before creating the film. To reiterate, Chang's (2008) analysis and interpretation strategies provided me with the conceptual mapping of my film, a way to frame it, which I would not have been able to accomplish without applying his strategies to my written stories.

The fourth focus of Chang's (2008) approach was the analysis of inclusion and omission. I left out traditionalism and language because I did not embed either of these cultural attributes into my life. My grandmother and mother were fluent speakers, and I grew up listening to Mi'kmaw. I always knew when they were talking about something they did not want me to know because they would switch from English to Mi'kmaw. Wherever we were they could speak Mi'kmaw, and no one ever understood what they were saying (unless we were with other Mi'kmaq peoples). They would occasionally use this gift in public to comment on something funny. I never learned the language, so I chose to keep this out of my film to represent my lived experiences as a non-speaker. There is honour tied to language—stories, descriptions, and animate and inanimate ways of expression that some believe cannot be transmitted without understanding or speaking the language. I felt like language was a gift my mom and gram shared and not something for me to own in my film.

Another purposeful omission that was not obvious to me until I read my stories was that much of the pain I endured had a male at the center of it. I know this is a bold

statement but true nonetheless. Addiction, infidelity, men killing men, men assaulting women, men at work with inferiority issues, men leading racist policies, male coaches with issues, male friends making racist comments, etc. I am not sure what this means but I did make note of it. As the audience will see in my documentary film, my mother was the main influence in my life, and I wanted to be sure that I reflected the power of her spirit and women in general throughout my film.

The fifth suggested area from Chang (2008) involves connecting the present with the past. I never thought that I would choose a career focussed on Indigenous education. My experiences of being Mi'kmaq have not been the greatest but reading through my stories I think the journey was inevitable. I can see a clear pathway headed directly to exploring Indigeneity. My "A-ha" realization is that I am exactly where I should be.

The other connection of the present to the past stemmed from a conversation about my research with a friend. I was talking about how I was able to endure traumatic events in my life but still work toward desire. I was asking his opinion on why some people who have endured a lot of trauma cannot move past it. He replied that "some people don't have the good memories." We know that trauma does not necessitate being from a specific cultural group but when you are traumatized *and* only allowed to identify as damaged, the question emerges: Is there space in this "frame" for good memories? I hoped to honour my lived experiences by representing good memories of place, connection, and humanness in my film, but I needed to do so in a way that did not dishonour lives that have been totally devastated by historical and contemporary

violence. The idea of people not having good memories is very sad because it mirrors the damage narrative that has been maintained.

The sixth suggested strategy from Chang (2008) was to analyze relationships with self and others. One of the most impactful realizations I garnered by reflecting on my stories was that I viewed traditional Indigenous peoples as "others of difference and others of opposition" (Chang, 2008, p. 135). Because Indigenous peoples have been positioned by society as being only our "cultural attributes," I was frustrated to see Indigenous peoples fulfilling this role. I wondered why Indigenous peoples kept pushing for cultural events at institutions, places that are not structured for this type of honouring, when there was so much more that needed to change. What about those of us who do not practice ceremony: Where should we go? Although I still hold certain views about culturizing discourses, my feelings about Indigenous peoples who practice traditionalism as being the "others of difference" was wrong. I recognize that colonization did more than remove Indigenous peoples from their land and we have various ways to cope, address, and honour these experiences. Proposing cultural negotiation does not mean one replaces the other, but an expansion is sharing this space and honouring each other's journey. It has never been my intention to show that settler people are "others of difference" either, because positioning groups against each other does absolutely nothing but generate more damage. I did not include settler peoples in my film to position one against the other; I included the people I did because they led subjective policies that impacted discourses of damage.

The focus of Chang's (2008) strategy number seven was to compare oneself with other people's cases, which I interweave with point eight—to contextualize

broadly. My research is informed by my experiences as a Mi'kmaq person in New Brunswick, but I know they are relatable to others. I know this through the essentialism section in my literature review and from talking to other First Nation peoples. I also know that my experiences are not relatable to others. The whole premise of my study is to support an expansion of identity that moves beyond colonizing representations as the only way to be Indigenous.

Chang's (2008) ninth strategy is compared with social science constructs and ideas. I used this strategy to inform my literature review. I investigated constructs and ideas perpetuated by Indigenous scholarship to show how we have been constructed through discourses of problematizing, pathologizing, and culturizing. The constructs are examined through Foucauldian theory and included at the beginning of my documentary film.

My research is not based on something outside of my experiences. The 94 TRC Calls to Action guided my previous work as the First Nation education director at EECD, and I engaged with this document regularly. It was part of the Office of First Nation Education's five-year plan, and our team even hosted a conference for the National Truth and Reconciliation Committee in New Brunswick. The enhancement template also guided the work of our office; even though I had issues with the indicators and understood how it positioned First Nation students, I was considered the lead for enhancement from the perspective of EECD. This meant I was on the committee for the revamping of the data template and engaged with all First Nation communities in New Brunswick on the resigning of the Enhanced Services and Programs Agreement.

The surveys included in my analysis were also part of my work. I had to know what story was being told about First Nation peoples and attempt to reframe these

discourses that were subsuming the narrative. This data-rich environment that I was immersed in for several years influenced my research journey. Intimately experiencing my personal struggles with discourses, and working within environments informed by structural, institutional, and political discourse, provided a context and foundation for my research that not many get to experience. This wealth of knowledge moves my research from something I am studying to something that is genuinely important to me — an extension of who I am.

Point ten asks the researcher to frame their work with theories (Chang, 2008). The exposure of damage propelled me to theorize in a different way. Desire-based theory, summarized above, is interlaced with the reflection of my documentary film in chapter four. Trauma cannot be forgotten; one gets through it the best way one knows how: a strong familial relationship, a therapist, ceremony, whatever it may be. What I do know is that coming out the other side of it and reading headlines in the news about how sick we are, reading scholarship based on one way of being, and reading statistics reports based on deficit certainly does not honour my journey. When I write about the frame of reference that is available for Indigenous peoples in society, I do not do this from a naïve perspective. I do so with a deep personal connection with trauma, one that yearns for desire to be at least one theory of change for Mi'kmaq peoples.

I chose not to share my personal intimate stories in this research because this sharing would impact others in my family. Chang's (2008) approach to those stories allowed me to think about and plan how I would structure my documentary film. I would start the film with damage as the launching point to desire. I would not bring cultural practices and language into the film. I realized that the men in my life were at the centre of my pain and the film needed to draw out the power of my mother to show

how desire was fostered. The approach allowed me to see that this research and this area of study is exactly what I should be doing, and my life experiences led me here. I needed to highlight the importance of creating space for desire-based understandings of First Nation people; ultimately, since I was ethically and morally bound not to tell my family stories, I needed tangible data that could show my journey. I needed a way to capture desire without saying it; I wanted the audience to see *it* for themselves.

3.16 Tangible Data for my Documentary Film

In addition to my personal written chronological timeline, I invested a lot of time going through boxes of items that were in storage. The items, such as awards, letters from my mom and footage of Christmas gatherings, were coded under artifacts and archival footage (Appendix B). These mementos seem to be in opposition to many of my written stories. They mirror happiness, success, accomplishments, and recognition. When I compared the artifacts and archival footage with the dates of my chronological timeline, there was no correlation between what was happening in my personal life and what I was doing (sports, schooling, family gatherings)—meaning that even when things were bad, I was still doing well. Unfortunately, there was no frame of reference through which to identify as "doing well" in society. It is alarming that one can overcome so much and still be restricted by pre-determined ideas of what and how one should be. This is why I feel my research is so important: by highlighting desire one is creating space for it to flourish.

3.17 Process

After chronicling my stories and applying Chang's (2008) process of analysis and interpretation to them, I had a clearer vision of how I wanted to frame my story. I

collected artifacts from my life to be used as visual representations of my story in the film. After I filmed the footage of places and/or locations from my childhood, the clips were transferred from camera to laptop and organized into categories with concise labelling (the media bin/file which holds the data from the film software is included as a link in Appendix B). An important part of presenting my data was making decisions as to how to edit the footage. As Rosenthal and Eckhardt (2016) note, "Many people regard the shooting as an end in itself. It is not, it merely provides the raw materials for the film. The real building process take place during postproduction, which is supervised for the most part by the editor," who in this case was me. I had to do numerous takes to capture the exact clip from each location that *might* make its way into the film. Not all clips made the final cut. I also participated in training on how to create documentary film (edit, etc.) offered through New Brunswick Filmmakers' Cooperative. My film is approximately 20 minutes in length, so it was vital that I edited in a way that captured the main ideas but also told a story.

Once the footage was transferred to my laptop and organized, I had to transcribe the content. This was an important step because it facilitated the organization of my thoughts, helped me to decide what I wanted to keep in the film, and identify what might be missing. Transcribing footage was challenging because reading words does not provide the context of hearing voice: "you may realize that the voice at cutting point is too high and has clearly been caught in the middle of something rather than at the beginning or end of a thought" (Rosenthal & Eckhardt, p. 211). When you have a lot of footage it may be a while until you need it, so you rely on the transcriptions to jog memory of the clip. If the transcription does not relay exactly what happened in the clip (even sounds), you may end up with a scene that does not deliver the intended message.

Another important first step in the editing process was logging B-roll or the footage I captured without narrative. Rosenthal and Eckhardt (2016) define b-roll as "the footage that will show the viewer what your interviewee is talking about or show the interviewee moving through his or her world" (p. 212). I had to take the raw footage and log what each clip entailed—for example, File #1, Scene 1, 1:00–3:00 min–French Fort Cove (image from bridge), no talking (see sample in Appendix B). Another feature of my film was archival footage from my childhood, sports events, and other celebrations for which I followed the same process. I also had to be cognizant of elements of the film such as music and lighting.

I purchased the music for the film from Melody Loops and songs were selected according to the mood I was trying to convey in the scene. This music was provided through the software I purchased (Movavi) via an online support feature. Movavi also provided ongoing support when I could not figure out how to use a feature, and it was easily accessible. As previously mentioned, I also had to become familiar with other software I used and purchased, like Melody Loops and Snaploader. The process of prepping the film and then piecing it together was time-consuming and required a massive amount of patience as editing the content was very challenging.

To capture how identity is informed by desire on film was not easy but I was drawn to the idea of utilizing voice, sound, and sight to highlight the essence of my research. The film allowed for a more relational approach, a deeper connection with the viewers, and a glimpse at what a move to desire might look like.

3.18 Ethics

My research was approved by the Research Ethics Board at the University of New Brunswick and complies with the Tri-Council Policy Statement, 2nd edition and the University Policy on Research Involving Humans (file # 2021-038). I also received a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Award, which means that my research also fulfills ethical obligations under their Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research.

My research incorporates and complies with the Tri-Council Policy Statement on research involving First Nation, Inuit, and Métis people of Canada. My research does not involve participants, but needs to respect the obligations, as a researcher and First Nation person, to not cause harm to First Nation peoples and communities. I began this journey asking myself how my research is contributing to the betterment of First Nation peoples and communities and kept that question in my thoughts throughout the entire process.

As noted in the policy, research that does not include community engagement, but nevertheless may impact the identity or heritage of persons or communities, needs to seek "culturally informed advice before the use of such data to determine if harms may result" (Government of Canada, 2020). I met with Elder Oposenta prior to and during this research process to ensure that I was sensitive to the historical and contemporary relationship that First Nation peoples have with Canada. I have also embedded the desire-based concepts derived from my research in First Nation community-based learning activities. This endeavour is supported by a First Nation-led organization that is responsible for the educational needs of First Nation communities.

As summarized in the literature review in chapter two, there has been a long-standing unjust relationship between research and First Nation communities. For decades, First Nation peoples were studied through an ideological white lens which has caused much harm. This imbalance of power and the resulting harms have created the need for policies that ensure justice. Even though I am a First Nation person, I made sure that relationships of trust were established before embarking on this research and have the support of various organizations and communities.

Tuck (2009) captures the essence of what I believe Indigenous research should be when she asks, "what role, if any, research has in making our dreams come true for our communities?" (p. 423). Aligning itself with desire, this question positions the researcher in a more relational, reciprocal, and respectful space, which is integral to an Indigenous paradigm. This positioning contributes to and honours the cyclical flow that is found in much Indigenous knowledges. My desire-based research aligns well with the concept of making dreams come true for our communities.

Smith (2012) purports that "Within many Indigenous communities there is a deep conservatism and unwillingness to upset the status quo, and in these environments any agents of change—whether educators, researchers or activists—are regarded as suspect…This is not just a feature of Indigenous communities" (p. 217). As I embark on a journey of a proposed expansion of Mi'kmaq identity, I am aware of the entrenched beliefs, cultural expectations, norms, and stereotypes which I will undoubtedly encounter. I hope to portray through film and this dissertation that an expansion of identity is a form of desire.

There are basic concerns of ethics when using visual research methods. “The important question here is how visual researchers can use visual media to collect data or communicate insights about human behaviour and material culture in a way that will not harm participants” (Pauwels, 2010, p. 565). This ethical standard was accomplished by concealing the identities of those in photographs who are not related to my research, allowing access to my documentary film to a limited audience, and gaining consent from family members to include personal information. I also had to obtain copyright permission for all video clips in my documentary film and ensure that I followed the standards for how much time could be included from the originals, ensuring no profit would be made from the use of the films.

> I understand that my research might evoke feelings of uneasiness among some

Indigenous peoples. There is a long and painful history of “others” deciding how we can act in this world. Many battles have been fought and won regarding rights. I am aware of how my film might trigger the audience, Indigenous and beyond. Chapman (2007) also writes how “producers frequently push at the boundaries of production ethics, but what is sometimes not considered sufficiently is how audiences will receive the tactics” (p. 71). I am aware of the boundary I am teetering on, and thus positioned my documentary film in a way that was unsettling but ultimately hopeful. I did this through ensuring that I am not speaking for other First Nation peoples or communities and keeping harm at the forefront of consideration throughout my research. Caution had to be exercised so that one way of being First Nation was not positioned against another and this had to be carefully explored and articulated. I do not speak fluent Mi’kmaw or

regularly practice ceremony or traditions, but this does not mean that I do not highly respect people who value traditional ways of honouring Indigeneity.

My research aims for an expansion of identity that highlights desire-informed ways of being, understanding and knowing. It also strives for space within Indigeneity for those of us who may not fit into the frame of reference that has been created for First Nation peoples. I do not suggest one way of being is desired over another but that a desire-based approach takes back power through upending damage narratives and adds to the range of ways to identify as First Nation.

Universities are implementing Indigenous research ethics committees and some funding agencies have also provided ethical guidelines and policy documents designed to promote best practices within Indigenous research. Drawson, Toombs, and Mushquash (2017) describe these documents:

> These policies document acceptable research practices when collaborating with
>
> Indigenous Peoples, and prioritize Indigenous values, traditions, and knowledge. These policies have also created ethical guidelines for research agreements between the researcher and the knowledge holding communities, including proposed guidelines related to informed consent, community partnership, academic integrity, disclosure, equity and benefit sharing, empowerment, and adherence to OCAP (Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession). (p. 1)

There is value in understanding traditional Indigenous ways of knowing and being. There are also definitive ethical grounds by which an individual should conduct research with Indigenous peoples as cited above.

My perspectives as a Mi'kmaq person are not to be interpreted as the opinion or beliefs of all Mi'kmaq, Indigenous, Wabanaki, Aboriginal or First Nation, Inuit, or Métis peoples. Warmington Van Gorp and Grosvenor (2011) quote Bruzzi (2000), stating that documentary film is a "negotiation between reality, on the one hand, and image, interpretation and bias on the other" (p. 458). Although autoethnography is a way to tell my story, I cannot discount my bias and subjectivity in wanting the audience to see my perspective. It is equally important to understand that the audience will interpret my film based on any biases they might have.

In documentary film there is an ethical responsibility toward the audience. Chapman (2007) posits that "a documentary producer may have a very different conception of his or her responsibility towards the audience from the one that the people being filmed would want" (p. 71). I obtained consent forms from my mother to include any content related to her in the film (Appendix G). I also showed my family the documentary film before sending it to anyone else. I sent them an electronic version so they could watch it when they wanted to. I received supportive feedback from my sisters and my mother about the film.

Although not directly related to my research, I wanted to include the idea of colonial-blind epistemology or what Calderon (2008) calls "the practice of identifying, collecting, and interpreting data in ways that reify inequalities and obscure colonial histories," which is an important point to understand when reading through the section on statistics (p. 3). As a researcher I have ethical guidelines that I must follow. I question whether institutions, like government, who collect and report data for public consumption (not through scholarly research) on Indigenous peoples are following the tri-council ethical guidelines. This point brings to light the critical perspective that

consumers and creators of text should embody and urges those who are collecting and reporting statistics on Indigenous peoples to do so with care.

Positionality is also important. When I began my research, I held a professional position that could be viewed as powerful. I am aware that some educational professionals may use this research to guide their practice. More importantly, First Nation students may read this research and it could influence how they interact, interpret, and react to educational practice and possibly their identity. In my opinion, the position I am proposing improves upon the current colonial framing of First Nation peoples through highlighting desire.

Protectionism is an ethical issue, especially if you are from a cultural group that has been exploited for centuries. First Nation peoples are protective of rights and group members. Rosenthal and Eckhardt (2016) point out that "filmmakers use and expose people's lives," which can be unsettling and, if not done in a respectful way, unethical. It is my moral duty and ethical responsibility to guard First Nation peoples from further outside damage-informed understandings. I hope that anyone who watches my film does so with the understanding that I am proud to be Mi'kmaq.

3.19 Conclusion

It was a challenge deciding on which methods were best to investigate the effects of damage-based understandings on various texts focussed on Indigenous topics. It was also a challenge deciding which methods to use that could investigate experiences of personal desire in relation to expanding First Nation understandings. Just as important was the flow of inquiry—which method should come first (CDA), second (autoethnography), and last (reflexivity). Equally significant was the data I collected for

each category of examination (certain Calls to Action from the TRC, some Indigenous scholarship, statistics reports, personal data), and I was mindful to simultaneously tell a story. In the next chapter, I present my data analysis through the methods of CDA, Indigenous autoethnography, visual research methods and reflexivity.

CHAPTER 4: Analysis of Discourses of Damage

Education is one of the main ways that students learn about the world. If students are only learning about First Nation peoples from a damaged-informed lens, it is a disservice to all students. To inform my autoethnography I show the foundational narrative of damage that was apparent in my professional life. Damage was being used, in my context, as the basis of educational programs, pedagogy, practice, policy and curricula. I utilize three main documents that informed my work at the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD). These documents were chosen because they were used almost daily as resources to inform my work. In line with my autoethnographic approach, I wanted to be sure to use documents that I worked with intimately.

When one works in any field related to First Nation peoples, one must become informed of what topics Indigenous academics are noting as important. To do my job effectively, I read a plethora of Indigenous scholars' works, many of which are named throughout this dissertation. The main Indigenous academics and the books that were recommended to me when I worked at EECD were written by Smith (2012) and Kovach (2009). This is not to say that I have not read the works of many others, but during the time that I am including in this dissertation, these were the scholars whose work I used to inform the lens (theoretical frameworks and axiologies) from which I developed principles of learning, curricula, research, and many other educational resources, as well as hosted professional learning. As part of my autoethnographic analysis, I draw explicitly on these texts to show how power and discourses shaped my professional experiences.

In 2015, when the TRC report was launched, government entities were advised to use this document to inform practice across governmental departments. At the time, I was

the Director for the Office of First Nation Education at EECD, and the TRC calls to action became one of the main documents that was used to inform pedagogy, practice, policy, curricula, etc. To align with the governmental order of using the TRC to inform my work and the push from First Nation organizations, communities, etc., I had to embed the TRC in all aspects of my work. I also had to report on the progress made at EECD on the TRC at the legislature every year and submit reports showing progress on the Calls to Action. I chose to include the TRC in my analysis because it was the main document used to inform my work.

The final document that guided my work at EECD was the Enhancement Data Collection Template. This document was vital to my work because it collected academic data on First Nation students. The template was problematic because of the damage-focused data that it asked schools to collect (Appendix A). Schools would collect this data and report it to EECD. Districts were then asked to use this data to inform programs, services, resources, and funding allocations to support First Nation students. The reports collected were used to track progress or lack thereof and prove the need to continue the Enhancement Program in provincial schools and for communities to better understand the academic levels of First Nation students from their communities.

In the following chapter, my autoethnographic documentary film enables me to show how my life experiences are in juxtaposition to the damage narratives. This exposure of damage facilitated a secure shift into my autoethnography, with confidence that the reader and audience would better understand what my research was aiming to simultaneously challenge and honour. In my opinion, there cannot be one without the other. My research could not merely highlight desire because a vital part of

understanding this research is to understand the current context. The exposing and illuminating of damage and desire is the crux of the film and my story. Therefore, it was imperative that I use documents from my professional life that were used regularly to guide my work and more importantly to understand First Nation peoples and learners. By applying Foucauldian CDA to the texts that guided my professional life, (Indigenous works noted, certain calls to action from the TRC, and the Enhancement Template), I was able to expose discourses of damage. It is important to note that this is not the main data informing my research, but it establishes a foundation of damage to renounce. It set the stage for my dissertation, a view of the status quo. It is part of my autoethnography because the documents were a major part of my professional life for many years. The chapter also illuminates the need for desire-based understandings of Indigeneity.

4.1 Damage

In my former position as Director for the Office of First Nation Education at EECD, I monitored language, analyzed policies and curricula, and advocated for more culturally informed spaces, programs, and services. I was hyper-aware of damage discourses and asked colleagues to pay attention to the lens from which they developed resources. This type of monitoring rendered me a political being.

Deficit narratives "emphasize what a particular student, family, or community is lacking to explain underachievement or failure," which locates the problem at the individual level (Tuck, 2009, p. 413). For example, Jimenez (2017) writes about tools of resistance that Indigenous post-secondary students need to adopt to battle historical oppression. Gfellner and Armstrong's (2012) study aims to prove that traditional students (strongly identified through cultural practices) demonstrated greater ego strengths than bicultural (identified with both their own and mainstream cultures) adolescents. Wilson (2005)

and Yellowbird (2012) ask their readers to reflect on the extent they have been colonized, psychologically, mentally, and spiritually. Their work uncovers systemic issues influencing how the body can move around the world and how communities can function. For Tuck (2009), research based on damage, like the statistics reports I include in the CDA, document "pain and loss in order to obtain particular political or material gains" (p. 413).

This type of research sets up a certain category of person where one is understood, for example, as the problem and it identifies something they are lacking, such as "tools of resistance" to address the problem. These discourses exercise disciplinary power to constitute the body and do what Foucault (1967) refers to as "weakening the self" (p. 90). Macey (2003) furthers Foucault's thoughts on disciplinary power by explaining:

> the brute fact of the domination of the one over the many, or of one group over another, but the multiple forms of domination that can be exercised in society; so not the king in his central position, but subjects in their reciprocal relations; not sovereignty in its one edifice, but the multiple subjugations that take place and function within the social body. (p. 27)

Albeit Jiminez (2017), Gfellner and Armstrong (2012) and Yellowbird (2012) identify ways to combat colonialism that simultaneously bring to light subjective functions within the social body. In my professional experience, resistance was a biproduct of the bureaucratic environment. Indigenous and Western approaches to education clashed and I had the difficult task of trying to find common ground between them. People labelled

me as having a combative demeanour because I struggled against ideologies from both the institution and the cultural group of which I am a member.

In addition to the expectation that I work within a damage framework there were meetings where practices like land acknowledgements became the norm. Educational leaders would passively announce that the lands we were meeting on were the traditional lands of the Wabanaki. The term “traditional” was used because it did not denote ownership, and employees were advised not to say unceded or unsurrendered due to legal implications (The Conversation, 2021). Following meetings where land acknowledgements occurred, I was usually met with comments like, “We are starting to move in the right direction.” Tuck and Yang (2012) would describe this as “a settler move to innocence,” actions that aim to relieve settler guilt without doing anything meaningful. The more land acknowledgements, the more I felt like an appeased elephant in the room. Ultimately, a gesture that was likely coming from a good place felt like it was being used to check off the box of “reconciliation.”

Perry and Robyn (2005) write about how Native Americans continue to experience myriad and interrelated forms of economic (e.g., employment discrimination), political (e.g., structure of democratic elections), and social oppression (e.g., narratives of damage). Decorating a meeting with an acknowledgement that does not actually recognize ownership of land and continuing the meeting without mentioning Indigenous peoples again is political, economic, and social oppression.

I worked in a political environment, one where First Nations were challenging self-determination and treaty rights, so when land acknowledgments were provided without mention of land being unceded, rights were not being honoured. Economic devastation

is intimately tied with land and when acknowledgements are offered in a performative way, they fail to recognize that settler peoples have profited from the lands in numerous ways. Finally, when land acknowledgements are provided by settler peoples without explanation of both ownership and profit, settler people are situated in a social hierarchy, one that allows a move to innocence as mentioned previously and secures a hierarchical social structure.

Educational institutions that embed damage-based or ideological narratives in their programming, curricula, professional learning, etc., "maintain the settler colonial project as the place for reparation" (Calderon, 2016). I work to uncover these discourses because I believe they remain largely invisible and unspoken but continue to maintain power. Tuck (2009) states:

Damage research operates from a theory of change that establishes harm or injury in order to achieve reparation…damage-centered research is distinct [from deficit research] in being more socially and historically situated. It looks to historical exploitation, domination, and colonization to explain contemporary brokenness, such as poverty, poor health, and low literacy. (p. 413)

Below are examples of the ways in which ideologies and damage are maintained through legislation, some scholarship, and certain calls to action from the TRC.

4.2 Critical Discourse Analysis of Literature That Guided My Practice

In the literature that framed my work, Indigenous scholars tend to use a sort of universal understanding of Indigenous peoples, with attention paid to the uniqueness of nations (Wilson, 2005; Wilson, 2008; Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008). Although this is an honourable endeavour, utilizing one way of being as the foundation may contribute to furthering discourses of damage.

For each category of text, I focus on how damage influences discourses that are being unintentionally produced and how they construct and position Indigenous peoples. I also reflect on indirect assumptions that the sources of text do not explicitly state. I uncover subjective language used in the texts and theorize on the paralleling and relationship of discourses. Breeze (2011) summarizes Foucault's (1969) view of CDA:

> …discourse moves back and forth, both reflecting and constructing the social world of the different agents who use it or are situated by it…he concentrates on analysing the conditions of interpretations, and rejects the aims of hermeneutics, centering on discursive practices in a world in which all discourse are relative and constantly changing. (p. 22-28)

For example, although Indigenous scholars may write about a universality among Indigenous peoples for various reasons, for honourable reasons, discounting those who may not identify this way or incorporate certain beliefs into their lives creates a certain category of Indigenous peoples. This category creates a language, truth, and parameters for how one may act as an Indigenous person. Also, from an institutional perspective of damage, reporting on Indigenous people's addictions may fit under problematizing and pathologizing discourses (Government of Canada, 2022). Through this analysis, I examine how constructions of Indigenous peoples are being used, who gains and loses from these constructions, which institutions are associated, and how people are using them through actions to renounce responsibility. For example, if Indigenous students' experiences with learning are positioned as an "academic achievement gap" it ranks Indigenous learners lower than their peers and places blame on Indigenous peoples. I also analyze how subject positions inform spaces that Indigenous peoples occupy and how they are supporting the institutional maintenance of power.

It is important to understand what is informing First Nation identity but equally important to understand how it is being informed. Foucauldian theory enables me to draw out problematizing, pathologizing and culturizing discourses. This method exposes damage discourses and I use them as a launching point to introduce my story through autoethnography.

I apply CDA informed by Foucault (1975) to the identified Indigenous frameworks, Smith (2012) and Kovach (2009), to draw out dominant presumptions and explore what they may be perpetuating for Indigenous identity and research. Contained in the language used for the frameworks are assumptions about cultural rules and generalizations about how Indigenous peoples feel about research, colonization and academia. I also use CDA to draw out assumptions and beliefs that the authors are stating as a commonality for Indigenous peoples. These presumptions influenced how I approached my work and situated me as an outsider within my cultural group.

I chose the writings included in Smith's (2012) and Kovach's (2009) work because they were suggested as scholars to use when I worked at the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. They were and continue to be pivotal for Indigenous research understandings and their work has been groundbreaking for Indigenous scholarship. The projects were selected because they were noted by Smith (2008) as "projects currently being pursued by Indigenous communities" (p. 143), and by Kovach (2021) as being part of "three different emphasis areas, or branches, of Indigenous theorizing" (p. 188). I was seeking ways in which these projects might impact or inform Indigenous research and how they were being used by Indigenous scholars. I was particularly interested in how they may or may not perpetuate narratives about Indigenous peoples.

> The first theoretical framework identified by Smith (2012) is titled *Reframing*:
>
> Reframing is about taking much greater control over the ways in which Indigenous issues and social problems are discussed and handled. One of the reasons why so many of the social problems which beset Indigenous communities are never solved is that the issues have been framed in a particular way…The project of reframing is related to defining the problem or issue and determining how best to solve the problem…Reframing occurs in other contexts where Indigenous people resist being boxed and labelled according to categories which do not fit. (p. 154-155)

The idea of reframing is valuable, and I use this concept of reframing as a move toward desire in the final chapter, but how it is described above might contribute to furthering damage discourses about Indigenous peoples. As noted earlier, when one problematizes a group of people one sets them up to be regarded as something that needs to be fixed. There are many historical, political, and social issues that Indigenous peoples must contend with. If problems are largely informing Indigenous theoretical frameworks, then Indigenous peoples might unintentionally become contributors to damage discourses.

Words from Smith's description of reframing, such as "issues," "social problems," "defining the problem," and "solve the problem," are discourse indicators and contribute to how Indigenous peoples are defined and categorized. Also of note is Smith's use of a lower-case "i" when writing about Indigenous peoples. Capital letters indicate importance and respect and are widely used when referring to English, Spanish,

etc. Foucault (1975) states that "There can be no statement that in one way or another does not re-actualise others" (p. 98). By using these words, the framework creates a predetermined set of directives that the researcher is expected to follow. The word "resists" positions Indigenous people as a category of person and, in scholarship, a category of researcher. Words are powerful contributors to discourses.

LaFrance and Nichols (2010) utilized reframing in research to claim that Eurocentric approaches to evaluation do not work for Indigenous peoples. The authors performed a series of interviews with Indigenous Elders, staff from tribal colleges, and Indigenous community members to gain a better understanding of what concepts should guide a process of evaluation. The research proposes to improve student academic achievement in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics but the results point to an instrument for program evaluation. The implication is that if evaluation methods changed, it would impact academic levels—but the authors provide no clear argument against evaluation tools such as standardized assessments, and how, for example, they might negatively impact Indigenous students' academic achievement levels. Researchers have shown that standardized assessments are more closely correlated to the level of the parents' education and that standardized test results are more an indication of the socio-economic status of the family as opposed to a measure of students' or teachers' academic or performance levels (Klenowski, 2009; Schütz, West, & Wößmann, 2007; Robinson, 2009). This is not to say that families are to blame but that environmental concerns outside of education should also be taken into consideration. If this is true, changing the evaluative method may not improve results.

Lafrance and Nichols (2010) include stories and interviews that aim to reframe the concepts that guide evaluation practices, citing different values between Eurocentric and Indigenous approaches to evaluations:

> …articles on Indian educational research found that most of the literature concentrated on problems centred on the investigator's interest, and not those of the tribal people from whom the data were obtained. Often these research studies depicted Indians in a naïve or negative light. (p. 14-15)

Research that simply upholds a dichotomous narrative of "we" versus "they" for the sake of proving differences does little to address any issue or opportunity. Reframing questions in a standardized test, for example, might address the threat of stereotyping (Pennington et al., 2016), but does it address the assumption that Indigenous students are performing below their peers because of Eurocentric approaches to evaluation? These are hard theories to prove when there is currently no alternative test and/or a way to ensure that changing the content would increase or accurately measure levels.

The reframing approach has been used in other contexts by Indigenous researchers. Rigney (1999) echoes Smith (2012) by adopting a more activist approach to educational attainment through advocating for the decolonization of knowledge and power in research methodologies. Nakata, Nakata, Keech, and Bolt (2012) work toward what they call the "anti-colonial critique." Ironically, reframing, in the above examples, attempts to take problems the dominant group identified for Indigenous peoples and replace them with problems identified by Indigenous peoples for Indigenous peoples; both are problem-oriented.

Lafrance and Nichols (2010) use examples from interviews with Indigenous peoples to reframe evaluation concepts: “as tribal people, [we] want research and scholarship that preserves, maintains, and restores our traditions and cultural practices.

We want to restore our homelands” (p. 16). This excerpt is a generalized point of view and assumes that all Indigenous peoples want the same results from research. I value the restoration of traditions and cultural practices but that is not the goal of my research. The authors work for *The American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC),* and they are funded to do research which furthers the work of and secures funding for the organization. If they construct Indigenous peoples to be a certain way, they may profit from the findings, which begs the question: Who is benefitting from the research?

LaFrance and Nichols (2010) use participant comments to further their position by including remarks about Indigenous peoples who are *not* like minded: “Another participant noted the value of Indigenous knowledge, but cautioned that there are many who deny it exists, including even some tribal community members who have been educated through Western institutions” (p. 19). This is an interesting way to position non-traditional Indigenous peoples as outsiders. The idea that obtaining an education outside of communities makes an Indigenous person assimilated is presumptuous. It sets up a binary and further alienates Indigenous peoples who are seeking opportunities away from First Nation communities.

Furthering the binary opposition is the positioning of Indigenous versus Western perspectives. It may be true that various cultures see the world and experience it differently, using sarcastic language to describe one group in comparison to another. One is positioned as superior over the other and this positioning of power is where discourses gain momentum. For example, LaFrance and Nicholas (2010) posit that

> A tribe's Indigenous knowledge is intimately connected to the natural world and is centred on learning about the place of the People within it—nature's balances and relationships. This sense of place is the opposite of the Western perspective, which seeks to manipulate the natural world into a so-called "better" man-made environment. (p. 23)

This binary can also be found in the works of other scholars who use reframing, like Osborne and Guenther (2013) and their work around remote education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders:

> …including collective ontology (as opposed to the value of individualism that underpins western, neoliberal society), relationship structures that are far more expansive than a nuclear family structure and are ordered through reciprocal obligations and social norms that are dictated by traditional law/lore. The relationship to land is also at odds with that of western concepts of land ownerships and its 'purpose'. (p. 3)

To utilize the framework, Osborne and Guenther (2013) use words like "opposed" and "at odds" to support an agenda of opposition. The researchers, albeit possibly framing a difference in ideology, reposition power and note that social norms are dictated through traditional law and/or lore. This could be some Indigenous people's reality, but it is not mine. One interpretation might be that because the framework from which they launch utilizes the same ideology of traditional ways of being, the research utilizing the framework follows course.

> The second theoretical framework I chose by Smith (2012) is sharing (p. 162).

Her description is as follows:

> Sharing contains views about knowledge being a collective benefit and knowledge being a form of resistance…sharing is a process that is responsive to the marginalized contexts in which indigenous communities exist…sharing is also related to the failure of education systems to educate indigenous people adequately or appropriately. It is important for keeping people informed about issues…The technical term for this is dissemination of results, usually very boring to non-researchers, very technical and very cold. For Indigenous researchers, sharing is about demystifying knowledge and information and speaking in plain terms to the community…often the audience may need to be involved emotionally with laughter, deep reflection, sadness, anger, challenges and debate. (p. 162)

Narratives about Indigenous peoples are being created within these frameworks, or as Willig (1999) suggests they "construct objects, subjects, and experiences including subjectivity and sense of self" (p. 11). The words "failure," "challenges," "anger," "sadness," "debate," and "marginalized" may denote *pathologies* of hostility and hopelessness and situate Indigenous peoples in a certain category.

The descriptors Smith (2012) used for "sharing research results and knowledge with communities" were "very boring," "very technical," "very cold," "demystifying," and "speaking in plain terms." This language has an undertone of accommodation and one that might position Indigenous peoples as inferior. I have read a plethora of research from various peoples with diverse backgrounds and have found a variety of it technical and boring, including Indigenous scholarship. This is not only a characteristic of settler

people's writing. I have also found a lot of scholarly writing and data results to be interesting and engaging. Either way, none of it, in my opinion, would need to be demystified for Indigenous peoples to understand it. The subject position this framework offers Indigenous peoples is one that requires accommodation and supports the binary of Indigenous peoples versus non-Indigenous peoples. Frameworks that use binaries as their foundation produce power structures and from those structures come discourses.

I found a plethora of research that used sharing circles as a data gathering tool, mainly focussing on practical applications in areas like health (Lavallee, 2009; Hunt, & Young, 2021; Tachine, Bird & Nolan, 2016; Rothe, Ozegovic, & Carroll, 2009; Cueva, Schmidt & Cueva, 2021). I also read authors who focused on sharing research results with community members to improve outcomes (Castleden, Morgan, & Lamb, 2012; Dunbar & Scrimgeou, 2006; Kurtz, 2013) but nothing that analyzed the "sharing" approach. Sharing is a great practice, but one in my experience that may sometimes be done with ill intention, much like the land acknowledgement I wrote about earlier being used to check off a box under reconciliation. If one fulfills the obligation to share, what is the follow up? To support cultural negotiation, questioning the status quo is important.

When searching for researchers who used sharing as a method, I discovered two books written, as noted by the authors, for Indigenous peoples: *For Indigenous Eyes Only: A Decolonization Handbook* (2005) and the sequel, *For Indigenous Minds Only: A Decolonization Handbook* (2012), both edited by Wilson and Yellow Bird (2005, 2012).

The books share decolonial strategies that the authors believe should be adopted by Indigenous peoples.

In *Indigenous Minds Only,* the editors explain how they wish to help readers identify useful concepts, terms, and intellectual frameworks that will assist "all of us [Indigenous peoples] in our struggle toward meaningful change and self-determination" (p.1). The authors propose "culturally specific decolonization strategies to pursue collective liberation and a process of demystifying the language of colonization and decolonization" (p.1). They ask readers to reflect on the extent to which they have been colonized, psychologically, mentally, and spiritually. This request purports that Indigenous peoples must take on the discourses of colonization. This positioning regulates what and how Indigenous peoples can think and act, a recolonization of sorts, and is seen in sentences like: "the planting and igniting of this cultural bomb by the colonizing forces has been essential to the colonization process, for if our minds are contaminated with self-hatred and the belief that we are inferior to our colonizers, we will believe in both the necessity and virtue of our own colonization." This is a perilous use of words because they create a set of sanctioned feelings and beliefs as the norm for Indigenous peoples: we all have "self-hatred" or "believe that we are inferior" (p. 2). An issue for me is how Indigenous peoples are positioned within the colonial narrative. Colonization seems to be the explanation for all issues related to Indigeneity, which might be the case, but if we continue without "unpack[ing] characteristics and complexities of deficit thinking" (Valencia, 2012, p. xii), then what will disrupt the cycle? I purport that theoretical frameworks that use subjective language (language that

Others) furthers the narrative of hopelessness associated with sweeping macro explanations like colonization.

The authors also provide a definition and the process of decolonization for Indigenous peoples:

> …an active understanding that you are (or have been) colonized and are thus responding to life circumstances in ways that are limited, destructive, and externally controlled…it means restoring cultural practices, thinking, beliefs, and values that were taken away or abandoned but are still relevant and necessary to survival…it is essential to prepare for the worst in the rise of resistance, as some may see it as an act of terrorism. (p. 14)

Some Indigenous peoples may feel "limited, destructive or externally controlled" but some may not. The labelling of an Indigenous person as having been colonized is another social practice that contributes to the subjectivity of Indigenous peoples. Decolonizing has become an all-encompassing term but as Tuck and Yang (2012) describe "it is not a metaphor for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools" (p. 1). The language used by the authors is reflective of the language used in Smith's (2012) definition of sharing and points to an issue of truth. The framework is being used or interpreted as truth. These truths can create subject positions. In the above quotation, the authors are using strong language to describe the process of decolonization. The word "terrorism" as a way that non-Indigenous peoples will view Indigenous peoples if they show "resistance" is frightening and positions Indigenous peoples as radical.

As noted above, the authors continue to use sharing as a method to position Indigenous youth as the group that must save Indigenous peoples from demise. Waziyatawin (2012) states that Indigenous young people are what she calls the "do or die generation" (p. 26). The author feels that "Indigenous Peoples will be the ones to save the planet, but under an extreme preparation and fight to do so" (p. 40). The book continues with sections on survival, remilitarization for Indigenous purposes, land-based educational models, and a variety of other topics. The authors even write about how long a person can go without food and water and call this section a "doomsday prepper" (p. 44). They include a term called "neuro-decolonizer" and explain how it addresses brain function deficiencies due to colonization.

Throughout the book the authors make assumptions about Indigenous peoples that are overtly negative. They posit that Indigenous peoples need to think about life challenges from a colonial mindset which is self-defeating. The authors also shame people for choosing a path of Christianity due to the role the church had in implementing the Indian Residential Schools. Presently, there are many First Nation peoples, including myself, who are Catholic or follow various religions for different reasons. The authors lack concentration on positive values and relationships and offer a sort of re-colonizing through the forced assimilation of using traditional practices, which are positioned as an escape from colonization. I am reminded of a quotation by Foucault as cited in Dreyfus and Rabinow (1983): "People know what they do; frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what they do does" (p.187). I understand the authors may be writing from a place of care but when someone replaces one way of being and thinking with another, and claims that to be superior, an exchange of power is offered and from there power discourses fester. In this case, the pressure on First Nation

youth to change the past, the criticism of belief systems, and the positioning of traditionalism as the way to combat colonial interference perpetuate a set of rules that First Nation peoples should follow to combat colonization.

Researchers like me who try to work outside of this categorization risk experiencing purgatory (Russell, 2002). We are not Indigenous enough (Paradies, 2006) or deemed assimilated. This dichotomous acuity of Indigeneity is not reserved for First Nation peoples in Canada; it has influenced the educational experiences of Native Americans (Tierney, 2000), New Zealand's Māori (McIntosh, 2005) and Australia's Indigenous peoples (Pechenkina, 2015). Researchers who position scholarship as only an act of defiance (Peters-Little, 2000; Holland, 1996) might also negatively impact how

Indigenous peoples view academia and their learning experiences (Davidson, 1997; Ogbu, 2008). Pechenkina (2015), in his work using resistance as a driver in education, writes about how, when an Indigenous person becomes successful, their Indigenous authenticity is attacked or their success is defied and that "resistance enacted in retaliation may be as empowering as it could turn destructive, and finding a balance becomes a skill (p. 474). This relates to my research in that I am not denying that there are real issues that need to be addressed within the Indigenous context but that cannot be the only thing being discussed. Research that honours desire makes room for cultural negotiation and academic freedom, which might be a welcoming and needed addition to the narrative. It is unsettling to be a Mi'kmaq researcher questioning the status quo but it is imperative that space is created for various forms of Indigeneity. As Kovach (2021) states:

> The tendency to categorize Indigenous peoples as homogenous, wiping out personal identity and choice, haunts Indigenous peoples everywhere,

> all the time. Simply because a researcher is Indigenous does not mean that she ought to, or will, conduct research via an Indigenous form of inquiry. (p. 269)

The challenge for me is being an Indigenous person but not being able to connect with what is available. There are reasons why I may connect to some aspects of Indigeneity but not others, which should have space to flourish.

Lastly, this section exposes culturizing discourses of an axiology within an Indigenous paradigm, which Wilson (2001) defines as "a set of morals or a set of ethics" (p. 175). Kovach (2021), through a review of Indigenous scholarship, was able to categorize three main areas of Indigenous theorizing, noting that some can be used interchangeably: "Axiological-Cultural Emphasis," "Decolonizing Anti-Colonial Emphasis," and "Shared Space-Liminal Space Emphasis" (p. 188–192). I chose to analyze Axiological-Cultural Emphasis as it related to the framing of Indigenous identity and was significant in my professional life.

As stated earlier, Kovach (2009) was one of the main scholars recommended to me by First Nation partners when I worked at EECD. Her writings and thoughts were encouraged in my work, resource and curricula development, etc. The importance of including an analysis of her proposed axiological stance that encourages cultural emphasis is to draw on the discourses it produced in my work. Wilson (2008) describes an axiology as being built on relational accountability and writes that "value judgements lose their meaning" (p.77). What becomes more important is fulfilling one's obligation to relationships. I agree that our relationship to research is paramount but not when the methods used to do that research essentialize.

As noted in chapter two, essentializing is believing that there are intrinsic characteristics that make up a person within a cultural group. According to Kovach (2021), Indigenous axiology emphasizes "Indigenous beliefs, values, and practices found within Indigenous cultures" (p. 188). Scholars' use of this axiological stance reinforces parameters on what these beliefs, values and practices are. For example, Indigenous scholars like Debassiage (2010) support this approach by noting that "Traditional preparation and ongoing traditional participation be at the heart of the Indigenous researcher's way of knowing" (p. 24). Bremmner (2020) notes that "Evaluation [in research] should build on the communities' cultural, social and spiritual values, and support cultural resurgence" (p. 123). McCleland (2011) describes Maori research as utilizing methods that are "steeped in the principles, cultures, and philosophy of being Maori" (p. 363). Within Indigenous North American research, Wilson and Restoule (2010) highlight the use of tobacco in the research process, and Burchill, Lau, Pyett, Kelly, Waples-Crowe, and Liaw (2011) develop a hunting and gathering metaphor for creating focus groups. This axiology may reinforce essentializing beliefs about Indigenous peoples (traditional) and discount other ways of being or expressing Indigeneity.

When reading the above scholars work, I felt like I did not fit within this axiological frame because I did not use traditional practices, tobacco, or cultural attributes in my research. I had to utilize thoughts from her work to inform my work, even if it did not resonate with me. I worked closely with First Nation partners throughout my time at EECD, and resources, curricula, etc., were edited and approved by these groups. If I did not follow the works of scholars who were recommended to me, the First Nation groups I worked with would not approve the work.

Irwin (1994) defines Maori research as "research that is culturally safe, that involves the mentorship of kawmatua that is culturally relevant and appropriate, while satisfying the rigor of research undertaken by a Maori researcher, not a researcher who happens to be Maori" (p. 26). I interpret this to mean that if you do not follow a certain criterion set out for you by the cultural group of which you are a member, then you are just a researcher who happens to be Indigenous. Statements like this evoke feelings of being categorized as the Other within Indigeneity. They segregate and could possibly turn Indigenous researchers away from using Indigenous methodologies or doing Indigenous-themed research at all. If I do not fit the criteria of what it means to be Indigenous, then it appears that I either learn to be traditional or use a Western approach. I honour those who practice traditional ways and maintain them, but this is not the path I chose. Elder Oposenta is a Wolastoqiyik linguist, author and retired educator. He has guided me throughout this research journey and his thoughts are that I am honouring First Nation culture through my work—that my "words are medicine." There needs to be a broader perception of cultural inclusion. Deloria (1991) suggests that apart from documenting narratives of traditional culture for future generations, "there is a great and pressing need for research on contemporary affairs and conditions of Indians" (p. 461). Indigenous peoples may be erroneously perceived as belonging solely to the natural environment and the pre-contact past. Lawrence and Dua (2005) refer to this perception when stating that anti-racist theories ignore contemporary Indigenous presence, and Medak-Saltzman (2017) interestingly writes about how Indigenous stories always incorporated aspects of the future, including futuristic thinking. Maintaining the myth of the "authentic" Indigenous person, as Debassiage

(2010) suggests, undermines contemporary Indigenous values. To break from this discourse, it is imperative that Indigenous theoretical frameworks encompass recent expressions of Indigeneity, including urban Indigenous peoples and desire-based realities.

I analysed two frameworks offered by Smith (2012) and one theory of axiology from Kovach's (2009) work to show how the language they use may be furthering the subjectification of Indigenous peoples. There are hidden power relations and ideologies contained within the word use in each project which categorize Indigenous peoples. However, the authors are highly respected within Indigenous scholarship, and my experiences in relation to their choice of words and the cultural rules set forth in their descriptions have been different. Again, in relation to essentialism as described in chapter two, when Indigenous peoples are positioned as behaving certain ways, feeling certain ways, and experiencing things the same way, it subjugates our social, political and historical contexts. This essentialism impacted my work at EECD in negative ways because I could not find any support within my professional environment to focus on desire.

Although this is not the main data for my research, I needed to uncover discourses that seemed to be permeating literature. The three dominant discourses identified through this brief analysis were problematizing, pathologizing and culturizing, and I explored their possible impact on Indigenous identity. This was also done to expose how discourses of damage can also be unintentionally perpetuated through language. Discourses also branch from larger systems of subjectification like the Indian Act. Once a truth is established through a colonial historical and contemporary telling and framing of damage, it trickles its way into research, policy, media, literature, statistics, and many

other forms. This is the space that I am challenging with my research. I do not fit within this damage or pre-determined frame of reference, and it is frustrating to read much scholarship from this perspective.

4.3 Statistic Gathering and Reporting

I endeavoured to use data to drive practice in my former position. I was disheartened to learn what the government and other organizations were collecting for data on Indigenous peoples. I could not believe the amount of damage-based data that was being collected and used to inform programming and funding for Indigenous peoples. Also alarming were the TRC calls to action that demanded the government collect and report additional data about Indigenous peoples. Below I include a CDA of two government-led data collection reports and some calls to action from the TRC to draw out how these documents may also be supporting damage discourse. It is important to note again that I use CDA to establish damage. The intention is not for this to be mistaken as the main methodology in this study but rather one of the methods I draw on through my autoethnography to expose what was framing Indigenous identity in my professional life.

4.4 Truth and Reconciliation Commission

In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) released its 94 Calls to Action on behalf of Indian Residential School survivors, “In order to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation” (p. 1). There are two elements of the TRC that I believe impact Indigenous identity. One is the application of the TRC in institutions and its implications on identity formation—for example, using cultural events as a way of fulfilling the calls to action. Second, I believe

the statistics that the TRC calls the government to collect on Indigenous peoples perpetuate damage and dependent discourses.

My analysis of the TRC exposes how language is used and how narratives about Wabanaki peoples are created within the TRC document, or as Willig (1999) states, how it "constructs objects, subjects, and experiences including subjectivity and a sense of self" (p. 11). Throughout the analysis I reference the dichotomous relationship of "we" versus "they" and how various people benefit in dynamically powerful ways from this dichotomy—some gain funding (Wilson, 2008), some maintain control (Martin, 2003), and some gain intellectual credit (Beckett, 1994). This analysis exposes how identity formation can be influenced by policy and politics. The calls to action I include in the analysis (9, 19, 39, and 53 i, ii, iii, iv) are ones that ask government to collect statistics or publish reports on Indigenous peoples.

4.5 Application of TRC Calls to Action

The fulfillment of the TRC Calls to Action at some educational institutions in New Brunswick, as written earlier, consists of incorporating minimal surface activities such as a display case with Indigenous artifacts. Few have mandatory Indigenous courses:

> …institutions seem to be functioning at a mainly rhetorical level. What progress towards Indigenization there has been usually falls into… Indigenous inclusion as institutions work hard to recruit Indigenous students and appoint faculty and alter signage to make the presence of First Nations and Metis more visible…
>
> (Miller, 2019, p. 54)

To fulfill the TRC's calls to action, institutions must go beyond events and signage—otherwise Indigenous peoples are categorized and positioned. Some universities have

erected sweat lodges, changed signage to include Wabanaki languages, and hosted powwows. Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) state that "an Indigenous inclusion policy is a vital component of improving the experiences of Indigenous people on campus," but inclusion "is ultimately the low-hanging fruit of indigenization: it's the minimum level of commitment to Indigenous faculty, staff, and students, not the end goal" (p. 220). The allusion this supports is that important learning happens in the classroom, but we can have a First Nation event outside of classroom learning; this is a clear ranking of importance. Educators cannot just accept a powwow at their school as being inclusive. According to Madden (2019), "individuals and organizations must participate in theorizing reconciliation in terms of assumptions, purposes, goals, and discourses in order to more transparently position themselves in relation to and contribute within this emerging field" (p. 304). I hope educators in New Brunswick understand that embedding Indigenous history and contemporary realities into learning is necessary and contributes to the betterment of all students. I understand that educators struggle with how to do this, particularly because it is outside of their cultural experiences (Aikenhead & Elliott, 2010; Barrett & Pedretti, 2006; Hart, 2002).

Some educators have incorporated ways of learning that more authentically address the calls to action. Wiseman (2018) focuses on using place-based approaches to science, and Chan, Akanmori and Parker (2019) consider spirituality as pedagogy to extend the work of religious literacy. If institutions continue with only cultural showcasing as the way to fulfill the calls to action, they contribute to culturizing discourses that impact First Nation identity and societal understandings. As noted earlier, Tuck and Yang (2012) might posit that these practices support a "settler move to innocence":

> …those strategies or positionings that attempt to relieve the settler of feelings of guilt or responsibility without giving up land or power or privilege, without having to change much at all. In fact, settler scholars may gain professional kudos or a boost in their reputations for being so sensitive or self-aware. Yet settler moves to innocence are hollow, they only serve the settler. (p. 40)

To purposefully address the calls to action, there needs to be community engagement and focussed teaching and learning strategies. Students must understand the impacts of Indian Residential Schools on areas like politics and economic development, not just that they existed. If learners are only exposed to cultural displays of Indigeneity, they may not be able to move past cultural attributes as the way to address the calls to action or understand the far-reaching impacts of the Indian Residential School system. The TRC calls to action become a checklist of items, with cultural events being institutions' way of showing progress. Those in power can mark them off their list and feel satisfied they are doing their part.

4.6 Calls to Action

Holding the dominant group as the comparison point continues to be an ideology that is perpetuated and accepted as the norm. Call to action number nine states:

> We call upon the federal government to prepare and publish annual reports comparing funding for the education of First Nations children on and off reserves, as well as educational and income attainments of Aboriginal peoples in
>
> Canada compared with non- Aboriginal people. (p. 1)

Dichotomous language such as “compared” sets up a category of people where one group is seen as the ideological group and the other as lagging. Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) is in the process of transferring educational funding directly to communities. In the past, communities had to apply via proposals to access funding. Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) engaged communities in the process of developing a funding formula that they requested be a *comparative* model to provincial standards. Paquette and Fallon (2011) support a non-comparability stance, writing that “historical status quo solutions to the problem offered by non-Aboriginal scholars, most of whose central philosophical assumptions and recommendations for change remain steeped in the mainstream, liberalism-based cultural tradition” (p. 269). Communities and ISC were not aware of how the province allocated funding for schools. First Nation students experience different circumstances (e.g., language loss) than non-Indigenous students; therefore, comparative funding models would not be sufficient.

To support this process, I asked the finance branch at EECD to share information on how provincial schools were funded. A sample from a rural provincial school with relatively the same number of students as First Nation schools was utilized to create a sample funding model for the purposes of the new funding model. When this model was presented to First Nation communities by ISC the idea of comparability was challenged. If the dominant group is used as the mode of comparison or ideology, very real issues and opportunities go unaddressed.

The second part of Call to Action 9 is the request for the federal government to publish educational and income attainment comparisons. This type of data gathering looks for who to blame, not the causes. For example, the fact that earnings tend to increase with

age means that most people's incomes are not stagnant over their working lifetimes, so income itself is not proof of inequality (Sowell, 2018). If data is collected only to compare income levels, what is learned? Or more importantly, what can be done to address the apparent gap? Comparative data then seems to be useless unless the purpose for gathering the data, the empirical evidence used to inform the data collection, the intention of what the data will be used for, and the interpretation of the data is made clear. Requesting the government to collect this type of comparative data fosters an oppressive ideology.

Call to Action 19 states that,

> We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and to publish annual progress reports and assess long term trends. Such efforts would focus on indicators such as: infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic diseases, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate health services. (p. 3)

Requesting the government collect deficit and damage research and report progress on trends is an example of how damage narratives are perpetuated for Indigenous peoples. The government will never be able to "fix" inequality and relying on institutions to do so only furthers dependence and allows the government to determine the narrative. Russell (2020) states that "what is necessary for a good life has been outsourced from citizen space to the professional world of service, having been intentionally

commodified by a minority of arrogant elites and framed as 'needs' to be satisfied by the market" (p. 30). I understand that issues need to be addressed but it is disempowering and alarming to call on the government to collect and report statistics on Indigenous peoples. Government has an important function, but it does not have a "monopoly on the production of health, wisdom, and justice" (Russell, 2020, p. xiii). The areas that Indigenous peoples are asking for the government to collect "gap" research and report on are deficit based: mortality, suicide, addictions, life expectancy, health issues, chronic diseases, illness, injury, etc. Data is being used to position and maintain power. Pool (2016) notes that it is used "To displace and control indigenous people, imperialists required data—colonialism's almost universal fellow traveller" (p. 66). The government gets to tell a story about how sick and broken Indigenous peoples are without ever having to analyze what they have done to lead and contribute to the economic, political, and social realities of Indigenous peoples. As Chrisjohn (1998) expressed:

> I'm not denying that people in the Residential Schools—some of them—are having troubles today. But I don't want to talk about the pathology, the alcohol and drug abuse, and the suicide of people who went to Residential School when that takes us away from talking about the real issues, and that is, what are the political, the economic and the legal ramifications of what occurred to First Nations People in these schools. We keep talking about how sick we are but we never ask: how sick were these people who created these things? Why is the sickness on our side? Why is it we have to prove how sick we are in order to get something done about these kinds of things? (Chrisjohn, 1998)

This points to a much larger maintenance of power outside of my personal and professional experiences. What if communities collected information on areas like successes, opportunities for growth, or sustainability goals and used that as the basis for engaging government? Tell the government what and how they can contribute instead of what they will allow. I understand the reasoning behind wanting data that shows the impacts of colonization but asking government to collect it surrenders control and contributes to the perpetuation of many discourses for Indigenous peoples. We might want to ask, as Russell (2020) suggests, "How can agencies create more space so that communities can produce the things they value?" (p. xiii).

Call to Action 39 states that "We call upon the federal government to develop a national plan to collect and publish data on the criminal victimization of Aboriginal people, including data related to homicide and family violence victimization" (p. 4). The word "victim" situates Indigenous peoples as helpless or passive. In a federal report titled *Gaps in disaggregated data on Indigenous people and the Canadian justice system* (2017), one issue noted was "the need for the consistent definition of terms such as 'Aboriginal' across surveys and reporting agencies" (Government of Canada, 2017). This is the type of reporting that may be done when government is involved. The government was asked to collect information on the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in prison and one key finding was the need to come up with a term for Indigenous peoples that could be consistently used. The government might admit that there is a problem but the system cannot fix the problem. The system can create further issues if it has veto to do so. If programs the government develops to address

reconciliation do not show progress in data reports, then Indigenous peoples may be reclassified as the problem.

> Call to Action 53 states:
>
> We call upon the Parliament of Canada, in consultation and collaboration with
>
> Aboriginal peoples, to enact legislation to establish a National Council for Reconciliation…Its mandate would include, but not be limited to, the following: i. Monitor, evaluate, and report annually to Parliament and the people of Canada on the Government of Canada's post-apology progress on reconciliation to ensure that government accountability for reconciling the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the Crown is maintained in the coming years. ii. Monitor, evaluate, and report to Parliament and the people of Canada on reconciliation progress across all levels and sectors of Canadian society, including the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action. iii. Develop and implement a multiyear National Action Plan for Reconciliation, which includes research and policy development, public education programs, and resources. v. Promote public dialogue, public/private partnerships, and public initiatives for reconciliation. (p. 6)

Indian Residential Schools will never be reconciled. Bodies of children who were raped, beaten, and neglected continue to be dug up on sites of former Indian Residential Schools with an estimated 11,000-plus more to be found (The Star, 2021). How can that

be reconciled? Leading people to believe that somehow implementing programs and collecting data can remedy the aftermath of genocide is unrealistic and insulting.

My role within government required me to report on reconciliatory progress. The reports were used to fulfill the request to report rather than evaluate the program's success. The idea of reconciliation is a highly political term within government (CBC News, 2021). How do you accomplish "reconciliation" in an institution that has one First Nation person on staff? Perpetuating the idea that we will someday reach reconciliation (whatever that means), and asking the government to collect statistics to show progress toward it, leaves Indigenous peoples vulnerable to the actions of the very institution that created Indian Residential Schools. Reconciliation, according to Tuck and Yang (2012), is about:

> …rescuing settler normalcy, about rescuing a settler future. Reconciliation is concerned with questions of *what will decolonization look like? What will happen after abolition? What will be the consequences of decolonization for the settler?* Incommensurability acknowledges that these questions need not, and perhaps cannot, be answered in order for decolonization to exist as a framework. (p. 35)

The idea that we are working toward a state of reconciliation is an endearing thought, but historical and contemporary realities support that reconciliation should not depend on the government.

4.7 Micro and Macro

I recognized through my experience working in government that it should not be leading data gathering on First Nation peoples. As noted by Theodore, Boulton, and Sporle (2023), Indigenous Peoples require "data to inform decision-making and program development and to monitor government and state policies and practices" (p. 1). As noted by the authors, there is a plethora of data collected on Maori by the government but "To date, these data have been primarily used for governmental purposes as opposed to supporting Māori development aspirations and agendas (Taylor & Kukutai, 2017). Recognizing that the government should not be leading statistics and data gathering on Indigenous peoples does not mean an adversarial relationship is the way forward. On a macro level, fostering a dichotomous relationship between government and Indigenous peoples is dangerous. When the relationship between government and groups are strained for various reasons, it can be described as "failed citizenship" (Banks, 2015). Banks (2015) notes that 9/11 is a drastic example of this. Youth may disengage from active citizenship, reproduce hate and racism, and blame structural and systemic issues for unhealthy behaviours (Banks, 2015). In this instance, the government takes control of the narrative on our health and creates a story that may not be true for First Nation communities. There are definite social determinants of health, but the government may not have the pulse of our communities, thus creating a narrative of control opposed to community-informed and -led health approaches. On a micro level, this might influence self-worth, feelings and agency (Banks, 2017; Heggart, Arvanitakis, & Matthews, 2019; Jerome & Starkey, 2022).

On a macro level, Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers are awarded grants for problematizing Indigenous lives, which in turn influences dialogue and discourses in society (Love & Hall, 2020). "Professionals" are hired to fix Indigenous issues, which

usually means the money allotted for Indigenous programming goes to either an individual or an organization and rarely makes its way to communities (The Centre for Independent Studies, 2016) and statistics gathered by the government are a determinant of funding (Government of Canada, 2021). Policies and educational programs are based on what the government deems important. The relationship between these discourses can contrast on the same topic and objects can be constructed in contradictory ways. The consequences of oppressive actions, such as Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations constructing an issue to serve its needs, can be just as severe as the government collecting damage statistics to determine programming. Macedo (2000) quotes Freire (1968):

> False charity constrains the fearful and subdued, the "rejects of life," to extend their trembling hands. True generosity lies in striving so that these hands—whether of individuals or entire peoples—need be extended less and less in supplication, so that more and more they become human hands which work and, working, transform the world. (p. 45)

It is a sad reality that some Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations are forced to enter relationships based on false charity. A move toward desire would require questioning whether organizations that are supposed to be serving the best interests of First Nation peoples are indeed doing so. This would also require questioning how the federal government allocates funding and if, for example, it would support more human resources and training directly to communities. Damage discourses impact our lives in a myriad of ways, some of which manifest as "business as usual." If a process has always been in place, we may become complacent with its functioning.

The micro subject positions being created are too narrow in my opinion for contemporary times. Some Indigenous peoples do not want to be understood through a cultural lens. Writing about Indigenous identity, Weaver (2001) notes:

> People can identify themselves in many ways other than by their cultures. In fact, identity may actually be a composite of many things such as race, class, education, region, religion, and gender. The influence of these aspects of identify on who someone is as an Indigenous person is likely to change over time. Identities are always fragmented, multiply constructed, and intersected in a constantly changing, sometimes conflicted array. (p. 240)

The power of this discourse is that of mind and body. Cultural practices are positioned to mirror how Indigenous peoples understand and make sense of the world. Culture cannot be the only definition of identity and it is not totally representative of how one may think or feel. Culture may be one factor of how one identifies but it does not determine one's identity.

There are powerful subject positions evident in some Indigenous methodologies. Smith (2001) emphasizes that "Indigenous methodologies tend to approach cultural protocols, values and behaviours as an integral part of methodology" (p. 15). This statement leaves little room for those of us who do not embed cultural protocols into our lives. If I do not practice traditional ceremony, then I must not think or act like an Indigenous person; therefore I cannot identify as Indigenous. My position as an urban Indigenous person who does not speak Mi'kmaw or practice ceremony is the social context in which I identify.

Having no social context in which to identify is an interesting concept because the narrative is that Indigenous peoples encounter oppression by only the dominant group. Cote-Meek (2014) interviewed Indigenous students as part of her research, which was premised on the idea that post-secondary classrooms were used as a space to further colonization. One of the students in her study expressed their thoughts on oppression:

> First Nations people have been socialized to think that white people are the enemy. Who's oppressed, not just your own oppression. And talking about the different kinds of oppression and how they're all linked together. And how they all stem from…you know, where they come from, and link them together and make them common. Maybe that would have been more helpful. (p. 130)

The student understands that people are encountering oppression in groups across the world but instead of focussing on this as a commonality we can learn from, it is turned into a form of resistance. In accordance with my data, if I were to blame others for my experiences, I would not have had the inclination to try out for sports teams. This way of thinking would have caused me to retract and disassociate from those labelled as the enemy. Blaming one "race" for the demise of another furthers segregation and conflict. Macedo (2000) quotes Freire (1968):

> Any situation in which "A" objectively exploits "B" or hinders his and her pursuit of self-affirmation as a responsible person is…one of oppression. Such a situation in itself constitutes violence, even when sweetened by false generosity, because it interferes with the individual's ontological and historical vocation to be more fully human. (p. 55)

Although the intention of doing research to shed light on subjectivities is honourable, making the essentializing determination for a group that they must perform ceremony, for example, to fight oppression is itself a form of subjectivity. One's membership in a group does not determine one's actions, thoughts, and feelings. The beauty of being a member of a group is relationality and connection; once parameters are established on how one can function as a group member, they become a method of conformity.

Expecting settler peoples to amend historical wrongdoings is an impossible mission. Sowell (2013) expresses his opinion on equality sought this way:

> …real equality is not only harder to achieve, it is something whose achievement cannot be created by outsiders, as redistribution can be, but requires the efforts of those who lag…moreover earned achievements, whether modest or spectacular, bring a self-respect, as well as respect from others, that can seldom be gotten from even a successful playing of a parasitic role in the name of a make-believe equality. (p. 138–139)

When governments or institutions are positioned as the superior narrator and propose and implement programs to address Indigenous "issues," Indigenous peoples may be conditioned to think this way. The responsibility to move toward desire becomes distorted. I referenced this erroneous thinking earlier in this chapter when I wrote about treating the TRC like a checklist—when its complete the government has done its job, or Indigenous lives will improve. The responsibility to live toward desire is on Indigenous peoples. We need to expose issues like essentialism, damage-framed understandings, etc., for us to better understand how power is operating and how we can address the hidden discourses it produces. Sowell's quotation reminds us to be cautious of the parasitic role those in power may be exercising when it comes to equality.

There are settler people who do not feel responsible for the actions of their ancestors (Onyx Truth, 2017) and the battle for who is responsible to address historical trauma becomes more politicized and blurred as time passes. If you need traditional practices to live a better life, then do it; if you need to seek counselling, do that. The power lies in knowing that as an individual you choose what actions you take, and this should not impact membership in your cultural group. Although Indigenous people's lives are governed in subjective ways through legislation like the Indian Act, there are things we can do at the community and individual levels to better our lives despite being regulated. This is the essence of self-governance—the right to be who you choose to be.

4.8 Statistics

This section includes an analysis of three statistical reports: the Statistics Canada Fact Sheet on Aboriginal Peoples (2016), Enhancement Data Collection Template (2018–19, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development), and the New Brunswick Health and Wellness Survey (2018–19). I chose these reports because they are what were largely used in my former position as Director for the Office of First Nation Education at EECD to guide practice and inform programs in schools. My analysis reveals how each report impacts identity and contains "truth"-producing narratives. I also explore how statistics can function as a perpetuator of damage, narrate lives, and create understandings for Indigenous peoples.

4.9 Fact Sheet on Aboriginal Peoples

Statistics Canada, as a government-led data collection and reporting organization, has a major impact on how Indigenous peoples in this territory are understood. The Fact Sheet on Aboriginal Peoples collects data on Aboriginal children living with both parents, the percentage of children aged 14 by their living arrangements (one parent, etc.), those

living in crowded homes and homes needing major repairs, postsecondary qualifications, smoking and drinking rates, etc.

The data on employment rates is used to inform programs designed to get Indigenous peoples more job ready. The federal government invested $1.6 billion in the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) program:

> …to be delivered over five years and is working with partners across the country to ensure that Aboriginal people get the skills they need to participate in economic opportunities. ASETS is part of a government-wide approach to help First Nations, Métis and Inuit people secure sustainable and meaningful employment. This strategy focuses on supporting demand-driven skills development. (Government of Canada, 2019)

The sunsetting of programs that are developed implies that high unemployment rates can be resolved within a designated timeframe, as if decades of colonization can be remedied in five years by developing skills in First Nation peoples so they obtain employment. This positions Indigenous peoples as having something wrong with them that needs to be fixed, maintains power, fosters dependence, and ignores systemic and workplace racism.

Applying Foucauldian discourse analysis exposes words that position and subject. "Ensure" implies that the government can create a program that guarantees Indigenous peoples will obtain work—and if this program does not create employment, guess whose fault that is? This is the type of program that Sowell (2013) describes above in his thoughts about equality; sometimes programs that work toward equality do more

damage than good. For example, if Indigenous peoples are not considered in the development and implementation of programs which influence their lives, then programs like ASETS will fail. In this instance the government believed it was providing a program to help move toward equality but instead created more tension by implementing a program that Indigenous peoples did not feel was meaningful to their professional lives. Government staff are considered public servants who should work cooperatively with the people they serve on the creation of programs but they cannot ensure programs will work, especially when they are informed by data that is collected with colonial ideals in mind.

Words such as “they need” positions people as the Other where there is a distinction between “we” as being the ideological group and “they” as being the group that is lagging. Language is a strong perpetuator of subjectivity; government institutions need to be especially sensitive to this. The word “help” has philanthropic connotations which dismiss government accountability to uphold its responsibility to Indigenous peoples. In addition, offering a program on employability skills to a group that continues to be oppressed by the institution implementing the program will not generate huge uptake. The words “secure meaningful employment” assumes that the government knows what meaningful employment is for Indigenous peoples. Assumptions have a huge impact on identity. If there is no uptake, then it perpetuates the idea that Indigenous peoples are not interested and furthers damage discourses. “Demand-driven skills” might be useful if systemic racism did not exist. Industry may demand that an employee have certain skills but if it hires a member of the dominant group with the same skills over an Indigenous person, causing the Indigenous person to not be employed, it will place the Indigenous person in the unemployed category.

If data were collected on the desires of First Nation peoples and reported to reflect what some First Nation peoples are doing to obtain and retain work, maybe government funding would be directed toward more strengths-based programs. This approach would create a narrative of employability and desirability and not one of unemployment and deficit. According to Walter and Anderson (2016), "Statistics are powerful persuaders. As systematically collected numerical facts, they do much more than summarize reality in numbers. They also interpret reality and influence the way we understand society" (p. 7). A read through the Statistics Canada Fact Sheet on Aboriginal Peoples could lead to the false conclusion that Indigenous peoples are damaged.

Recently, I worked with an organization on a proposal for exceptional learners. This proposal was denied, and the feedback was that it should be included in high-cost specialized funding. This might make sense if there was room for this type of initiative within the high-cost specialized funding budget that the institution administers to communities. The team proposed an idea from a strengths-based perspective, but it appeared that because Indigenous peoples do not fit into that frame of reference the proposal was denied. Walter and Anderson (2016) state that "The social, cultural, and economic phenomena that are chosen for inclusion, and also those which are excluded, provide a reflection of the nation-state's changing social, cultural, and economic priorities and norms" (p. 7). We are forced to identify as damaged to access funding which coincides with the data collected in the fact sheet. This cycle has implications for how society understands First Nation peoples, how First Nations peoples are governed, and how First Nation peoples identify.

The statistics collected for the Fact Sheet paint a dreary picture of First Nation peoples and communities. I did not find any government reports related to desire-based data.

The fact sheet is a federal report but the provincial fact sheet mirrors almost the same collection methods.

> The content and purposes of data have historically been determined outside of
>
> First Nations communities…The move towards evidence-driven planning and policy making is a welcome change from the status quo, particularly for First Nations policy, as the use of meaningful data allows for decisions that are based on evidence rather than external value judgements. (Otim, 2015)

These external value judgements are what has largely driven damage discourse perpetuation and maintenance. Reclaiming Indigenous stories that map desire in data collection would challenge government interference.

Another indicator from the Fact Sheet on Aboriginal People records single parent households. What does it mean if an Aboriginal child is from a family with one parent? These value-laden indicators frame Indigenous peoples as dysfunctional according to colonial ideals of family. Many Indigenous communities believe it takes a village to raise a child. Pushing colonial ideals in data reports supports the notion that settler people know what is best for Indigenous peoples; if youth are members of homes with one parent, there must be something wrong. Schilling (2002) notes that when people are told they are sick, they take on a sick role, aligning their actions in ways that bring these notions of sickness to the surface. This labelling can affect physical, mental, and emotional health. These statistics twist reality to mirror colonial ideologies of what makes a healthy functioning family and in doing so they further pathologizing discourses.

Dilapidated and overcrowded homes seem like useful data for the federal government to inform housing budgets for communities. What happens though is that myths about First Nation peoples as recipients of free housing and not having to work for a living get perpetuated and communities continue to be underfunded. The reality is that many Indigenous peoples continue to live in third world conditions with no running water and mold, which causes major health issues. The idea that we get free housing may foster resentment fueled by misinformation. Houses are not dilapidated because people are lazy, they are dilapidated because of a forced system of dependence which the government created and then underfunded. Statistics like this further problematizing and pathologizing discourses.

Indigenous peoples have battled addictions like any other group. Addictions were a by-product of settler interference and the Indian Residential School system. Collecting data on our rates of smoking and drinking furthers the idea that we are sick and contributes to pathologizing discourses. This pathology influences how the wider population views Indigenous peoples, and it interweaves with other statistics related to broken homes and dilapidated housing.

If a reframing of data toward desire was the story that society had to inform its understandings, it would open spaces for a wider frame of reference. However, if acceptance, for example, was encouraged and documented, it might perpetuate a move toward self-awareness and self-care for Indigenous peoples. If data reports represented Indigenous people's curiosity to better their lives and honoured strategies that have been incorporated to address challenging circumstances, it could represent purposeful action, a new mindset, and a way of learning to desire. I understand that Indigenous lives are

very much impacted by historical trauma and contemporary violence, but one step toward disrupting this cycle is honouring our successes, passions, and desires.

If the federal government is encouraged to collect data on Indigenous deficits, the narrative that First Nation peoples do not have ability to thrive without colonial interference will continue. This narrative's influence on Indigenous identity, subjectivity, policy, programs, scholarship, educational practice, etc., enabled me, through CDA, to expose the various ways that the "fact sheet" was categorizing and truth telling. This unveiling was imperative to argue for a theory of change informed by desire.

4.10 The First Nation Enhancement Data Agreement Report

> In 2008, EECD, First Nation Chiefs, respective Education Directors, and the

District Education Councils signed the Enhanced First Nation Education Programs and Services Agreement. The agreement was signed "In support of improving First Nation Eligible students' learning outcomes." Furthermore,

> the Province of New Brunswick will dedicate, on an annual basis, 50% of the education and programs services fee paid by the First Nation to create the Provincial Enhanced Education Program and Services Fund in each school district where fees originated. This fund will be used to enhance the existing programs and services provided and not to compensate for those already in place. (p. 6)

Included in this agreement is the First Nation Enhancement Data Collection Template (Appendix A). Districts collect data on First Nation students living on First Nation

communities throughout the school year and submit the report to EECD for collation. The report is shared with signatories of the agreement and is meant to inform funding allocation and programs for the following school year. The data report indicators were co-constructed with First Nation partners. The data collection indicators are largely deficit-based; therefore, the data and subsequent report tell a story of deficit. For example, the report collects retention rates, the number of students who have been placed on special education plans, those who have been referred to alternative education programs, absenteeism, enrollment in level three courses, suspensions, and the number of cultural activities the school hosted during the school year.

In New Brunswick, the phrase "educational gap" is used to distinguish First Nation and non-First Nation students. As the former Director for the Office of First Nation Education at EECD, I witnessed how deficit data collection was used to inform educational practice. The narrative produced by the collection of deficit data holds steady in scholarship (Song, Perry & McConney, 2014; Warikoo & Carter, 2009), drives educational data collection (Health and Wellness Survey, 2016), informs meetings with government and Indigenous partners (Provincial Aboriginal Education Committee, 2013–2021) and drives practice in the provincial school system (Enhancement School-based Meetings, 2013–2021).

If data is collected only to document issues that First Nation students are encountering (as noted in the Enhanced Agreement) in the provincial school system, it impacts First Nation student identity—how First Nation students are viewed by educators (Bertrand & Marsh, 2021), how First Nation students approach their learning (CruzGarcia & Howard, 2013)—and a mistrust is sowed between First Nation families and the school system (Milne & Witherspoon, 2020). Boughey (2007) and Shay (2008)

contend that concerns and limitations are driving research which focuses only on student shortfalls and/or reform. This dismisses students who are having positive experiences with their learning and identify as a part of the student body. Coleman (2012) offers that "One way to work towards achieving this ideal [avoiding deficit conceptualisations of students and their learning] is to ensure that our research focuses on the students and their learning without neglecting the influencing role of institutional structures and values on this learning" (p. 9). If data is collected on student desires and strengths, it influences students' experiences with learning in a more meaningful way. I was consulted on the enhanced data collection template in 2013 and voiced my concerns on the deficit approach. The narrative that First Nation students were being failed by the system was so prevalent that my feedback was ignored. Problematizing (suspensions), pathologizing (special education programs) and culturizing (the number of cultural activities in the school) discourses informed the data collection template, which influenced First Nation students' experiences and perpetuated stereotypes about their academic abilities. Three years of data, despite what informed its collection, was evidence of academic improvement. I advocated within government to have the template revised to reflect desire- and strength-based indicators. There was a team formulated and it was revised. Hopefully this new data collection strategy is what informs educational practice in the future.

4.11 The New Brunswick Health and Wellness Survey

The New Brunswick Health and Wellness survey (2018–19), grades 6–12 is described as follows:

> … a provincial initiative of the Department of Social Development – Wellness Branch, in co-operation with EECD. Data collection and analysis is conducted by the New Brunswick Health Council. The purpose of the survey is to examine the health and wellness attitudes and behaviours of students. The data was collected from students of 187 (98%) public schools in New Brunswick. Data was also collected from two First Nations Schools to prepare a First Nations schools' specific report. (p. 8)

I included this data report because it contains risk factors, protective factors, and student voice—items that the previous data collection reports did not. The survey descriptor states that

> risk factors contribute to the development or worsening of undesirable conditions, protective factors act as a shield against them…In fact, focusing on protective factors can help manage risk factors and reduce the development of health conditions. (New Brunswick Health and Wellness Survey, 2016–18. p. 8)

A student voice survey (overlooking the impact of external factors such as who is administering the assessment and whose standards are being used) has potential to capture desire. Carini (2001) states:

> …there is that in learning which resists measurement...When the immeasurable isn't recognized or valued, it tends to slip from view. Out of sight, it ceases to claim our minds and attention. We forget how to see

> it. Left to lie fallow these kinds of experiences tend to become not talkable. (p. 173-175)

Including the voices of those being measured is vital. If data is going to be utilized to guide the lives of people, then those people should be included in the entire data collection process, including how it will be used and implemented. Those who are leading data collection need to be cognizant of discourses and how they operate so that questions included in data collection surveys do not lead to a predetermined outcome. This survey captured student voice as noted earlier. (Indigenous students reported feeling safe in provincial schools; 77% and 87% reported feeling connected to the school compared to non-Indigenous students who reported 81% safety and 89% connectedness, which captures desire and reality). The narrative that First Nation students are not faring well in school supports the "politics of hopelessness" and influences students' thoughts
and feelings toward schooling (Sowell, 2013).

This section explored damage discourses and how they inform identity for Indigenous peoples. I chose Indigenous scholarship because it influences spaces that Indigenous peoples can occupy within academia. It is also used to inform funding proposals to the federal government and other areas. If scholarship does not include desire or the various ways Indigenous peoples identify, then we are doing ourselves a disservice. There is beauty and power in diversity.

I chose the TRC because it has been a key topic of discussion in Canada since its release and largely informed and guided my former position at EECD. It is extremely important to teach about Indian Residential Schools. It is also important to do so in a way that

does not generalize and make assumptions about all Indigenous peoples. Asking the government to collect data on damage may seem to be addressing the problem, but also silos Indigenous peoples within problematic marginalizing discursive structures that contribute to more issues.

Lastly, I chose to include three data collection reports that contribute to damage-based understandings of Indigenous peoples. The Aboriginal Peoples Fact Sheet and the Enhanced Education Services Agreement template are riddled with damage and deficit indicators. The reports and collection strategies tell a story of low socioeconomic status, low levels of learning, addictions, broken homes, dilapidated housing, mental health issues, suicide rates, absenteeism, etc., all of which negatively impact Indigenous identities and create and maintain truths. The third data collection report, the New Brunswick Health and Wellness Survey, shows hope by incorporating student voice. The First Nation students' voices contained in this survey speak against some of the prevailing damage narratives.

To struggle against damage discourses and ideologies, I utilized my life story as a comparative model through documentary film. My life is not accurately reflected in the various texts included in my analysis related to Indigeneity. For example, I was never in level 3 classes, which means if that is the only data being collected in the enhancement template then I am not represented in schooling. I countered this narrative by showing the multiple academic awards that I received throughout my film. I do not identify through cultural attributes as an Indigenous person (the typical attributes one may associate with being Indigenous are not part of the film), so the scholarship that was recommended to use in my professional life was discouraging and isolating. The TRC

asks the government to collect data which I show as detrimental to Indigenous identity at the beginning of the film through multiple resources. I have never witnessed my story in data that was supposed to represent Indigenous realities. Chapter five includes my documentary film treatment and a move toward desire. As noted in my introduction, I utilize reflexivity to draw out desire-based indicators which challenge narratives of damage discourses and ideologies.

Chapter 5 Analysis of Documentary Film

This chapter focuses on the final two research questions: How do my life experiences as a Mi'kmaq person, as captured on film, contribute to a more expanded dialogue of Mi'kmaq identity? How is an expanded dialogue of Mi'kmaq identity informed by desire and how might this dialogue be applied to statistics gathering and reporting, the TRC and Indigenous scholarship? To answer these questions, I applied reflexivity informed by Greenaway (2010) and Hsiung (2008) to analyze the data presented in my documentary film. I then matched the desire indicators that were unveiled through the reflexive process with some of the basic human desires as noted by Reiss (2002). Reiss's (2002) work was a tool for my autoethnographic analysis. The literature I consulted informed my approach to making the film. This was also my first time ever making a documentary film, so I had to do a lot of learning through the process, which I represent in my writing. Finally, I also investigated how my data were collected and applied.

By applying reflexivity to my documentary film, I was able to draw out desire indicators that reframed damage discourses. The *sharing* of my story and the *reframing* of discourses are both Indigenous projects by Smith (2012) I analyzed in chapter four. I utilize both project concepts to move toward desire without incorporating damage or monocultural applications of identity. Below, I provide a treatment which outlines the scenes in the film, but if readers would like to watch the film it can be accessed at the following link: https://youtu.be/8kqm6bP3Lwo.

5.1 Treatment

It was a challenge finding peer-reviewed articles on documentary treatments. This gap in the literature is important to note as it may point to the value accorded to research through film in academia.

What to include in a treatment varies from technical to more of a parable. According to Desktop Documentaries, "The idea behind a treatment or proposal is to have a written document that fully describes the documentary project that can be made available to potential investors, participants or supporters" (Desktop Documentaries, n.d.). The treatment does not include a script or technical aspects of the "how" and "what" of the documentary but should provide the focus and reason. Barbash and Taylor (1997) note that "Writing treatments for yourself is probably the best way of forcing yourself to visualize your film—not so much to reiterate what you might want the film to say, but to imagine what scenes and shots the film might show" (p. 282). Almost every source I read reiterated the idea of using active voice. According to filmdaily.com, a documentary treatment should "Write in the active voice in present tense. Tell the reader what they will see and hear on the screen" (How to write a good documentary treatment, 2019, para. 2). This is a shift away from traditional scholarly writing. The movement to performative film uses the body as the location of knowledge.

For the treatment, I provide a minute-by-minute breakdown of what the audience will experience. The structure of the treatment was informed by a few sources. According to lightsfilmschool.com, "A treatment…states how the audience will experience the film…you want your audience to be able to visualize your film…

Reading a treatment…is the closest written equivalent to the look of your film" (How to write a documentary treatment, 2016). This is helpful to better understand the layout of one's film; it is one thing to edit the film itself and another to edit the written format that frames the film. This summary provided by lightsfilmschool.com did not include items such as log line or style, which I discovered on a website titled *Documentors*. Also contained on the website was the idea of probing questions for a filmmaker to think about what would be useful in framing their treatment:

> The Log Line is a one-line description of the action in your film…Who are the main characters and why are they interesting? What do they go through and how do they transform? What do we learn from them? How will this film look?
>
> What's your style? Are there any interesting aspects about the location, timeframe, etc.? ("How to make a documentary," 2019)

I was the main character in the film. I captured what I went through at the beginning of the film by including damage-based framings of Indigenous peoples in news headlines, television, legislation, etc. These framings impact the way I go through the world, they position me, and they disconnect me from other ways to identify, which goes back to the importance of including damage narratives as part of my autoethnography; they might not be directly related to internal data, but they certainly impacted and shaped my life experiences.

Also included in my treatment was a scene-by-scene overview. Swan, Karb and Hofer (2014) explain that

> the outline includes a scene-by-scene overview of the major components of the film…the essential ideas/concepts they [the filmmaker] wish to communicate to the audience, and a bulleted list…of key ideas/information to present for different segments of the film (e.g., Introduction, Body, Resolution). (p. 132)

I move from damage by introducing Crenshaw's idea of the misinformed frame" from which people see Indigenous peoples. I introduce desire and then show how desire was actualized in my life.

5.2 Documentary Treatment

Documentary Title: Learning to Desire

Mode: Performative (Indigenous Autoethnographic Approach)

Style: I am the "talking head" of the documentary, speaking directly to the camera.

Music for the film: "You Are My Sunshine" is a song copyrighted and published by Jimmie Davis and Charles Mitchell in 1940. I sing the song in the film. I chose to include this song because my mother used to sing it to me when I was a child. Brooks and Dunn, Working on my Next Broken Heart also plays at the end of the film. Other music I included throughout the film was purchased from Melody Loops and chosen to match the feel of the scene: Bittersweet Symphony, Lonely Violin Sadness, A Success Story.

Main Character

Sacha DeWolfe: Sacha's spirit name, which was provided to her by Elder Oposenta of Sistansik First Nation, is Pitiyahtessit (Firefly). She is a member of Natoaganeg (Eel Ground First Nation). She did not grow up in a First Nation community but after her

father's death she and her mother moved to the community. English is her mother tongue. Her mother is an Indian Day School survivor and a fluent Mi'kmaq speaker. She graduated from the University of New Brunswick with a B.A., B.Ed., and M.Ed., and is currently a Ph.D. candidate. She has been working in education for over 16 years as an educator, subject coordinator, learning specialist and Director for the Office of First Nation Education at EECD. Recently she accepted a professorship at a university. Sacha was an elite athlete at the University of New Brunswick and received many awards locally and nationally as a member of the UNB Varsity Reds Women's Volleyball team. Sacha continues to coach and play sports. She has also been an active volunteer in communities. She is a single parent of one son. Sacha is passionate about expanding the social, economic, and political spaces that

Indigenous peoples occupy.

The film is 20:40 minutes in length.

ACT 1: Establishing damage narratives (problematizing, pathologizing and culturizing)

0:00–0:41: Introduction to the film by Sacha (audio only with title)

0:41–1:54: Clip of Constitutional Conference 1983 (Pierre Trudeau and Bill Wilson exchange)

1:54–3:23: Various images presented to establish damage (including homework sent home with my son in kindergarten 2020; my mother and fellow Indian Day School students; the Indian Act; various prime ministers who led subjective policies; news headlines; video clips of cartoons and movies that position Indigenous peoples; fishery

crisis in Esgenoopetitj; red dresses representing missing and murdered Indigenous women; Oka crisis standoff photo of military man and Indigenous person)

3:23–3:40: Kimberle Crenshaw video (clip from her Ted Talk on Intersectionality) setting up framing problem—the frames used to view those who are subjected are partial and distorted.

3:40–5:56: News clips discussing Indigenous issues (incarceration, missing and murdered Indigenous women, housing crisis, addictions, educational disparities, Indian Residential Schools). Clip from Smoke Signals establishing culturizing discourse about real Indians.

5:56–10:34: Sacha discussing her personal experiences with non-traditional ways of life and the impacts of colonization (includes story of grandmother's funeral) on her identity. She ends with asking that we honour multiplicity within our group as we are much stronger that way.

10:34–11:19: Kimberle Crenshaw (clip from her Ted Talk on intersectionality) discusses various subjective ways that intersect and inform identity.

ACT 2: Transition to thinking about desire and what creates desire

11:19–11:25: Title clip – Overlapping Roads

11:25–12:24: Sacha in the valley across from her childhood home. She talks about many ways that colonization has enforced culturizing discourses

12:24–12:46: Kimberle Crenshaw (clip from Ted Talk on Intersectionality) discusses 'alternative narratives' this sets up the move toward desirability

12:46–13:28: Amber Krzys (Clip from Ted Talk – Paradox of Desire) discusses facing our fears and how that transforms to love of self, ultimately leading to desire

13:28–13:32: Title Bubbles of Love/ My Bridge- slide introduction before moving into desire as experienced in Sacha's life

13:22–13:37: Sign for French Fort Cove. A place Sacha used to frequent as a child. Quickly followed by a clip of running water in the cove.

13:37–14:44: First letter from Sacha's mother. Read aloud by Sacha. The letters are used to show a support system that contributed to Sacha's ability to live desirably. First letter is about the loss of her father. This was included as the first clip to represent a move in her life toward desire. His death pushed her to do better. This reading is supported by photos of Sacha's father and archival footage of him sitting on a couch.

14:44–14:54: Archival footage clip of Sacha's father making a joke with the family dog about how smart Sacha is. He is alone in the clip. This was at a time when Sacha was a teenager and giving him a run for his money.

14:54–15:08: Archival footage of Sacha's graduation from high school.

15:08–15:41: The second reading of letters from Sacha's mother. This letter talks about how proud her mother is of her accomplishments and is supported by photos of degrees and graduation photos from various degrees. One degree saw Sacha and her mother graduating at the same time.

15:41–16:18: Clip of Sacha walking in the rifle range. This is a trail by her childhood home where she used to play. This scene also has the reading of the third letter where Sacha's mother expresses having responsibility for your life.

16:18–16:47: Archival footage of Sacha, her mother, and her grandmother on a couch.

Sacha sings “You Are My Sunshine” while the clip plays. This scene represents the bond among family and women, and her mother’s support. Sacha’s mother used to sing “You Are My Sunshine” to her at bedtime to help her sleep.

16:47–16:51: The scene starts with a sign from Sacha’s elementary school.

16:51–17:06: Archival footage of Sacha in grade one reciting a Christmas prayer at a school festival.

17:06–17:38: Sacha talks about her positive experience in elementary school. This scene is supported by photos of awards that Sacha won as an elementary student (Mayor for the Day, various sports awards, essay contest winner [newspaper clipping], science project award, letters of recognition from elementary principal).

17:38–17:48: Scene begins with archival footage of Sacha’s mother talking about Sacha’s sports success.

17:48–17:50: Archival footage of Sacha as a member of the University of New Brunswick Women’s Volleyball team, hitting a ball and scoring in a match against Acadia University.

17:51–18:41: Exciting music starts. This scene includes news headlines about Sacha’s sports accomplishments, various photos of her on different teams, awards from elementary through to university for sports, banners won when coaching.

18:42–19:05: The fourth reading of Sacha’s mother’s letters. This scene acknowledges motherhood and grandmotherhood. Images of Sacha’s mother and her grandson as well as Sacha and her son. Also includes archival footage of Sacha and her son playing peek-a-boo.

ACT 3: Shows how desire plays out in life and poses an important question at the end for the audience to ponder.

19:05–19:08: The final act. Image of a candle on screen.

19:08–19:21: Starts with clip from Sacha's cottage where the family frequents, meant to represent new beginnings.

19:21–20:00: This scene is dedicated to desire and shows multiple images of accomplishments in Sacha's life, including some archival footage from her junior high prom.

20:00–20:28: The ending scene reflects on a Thomas King poem. While dancing with her son to Brooks and Dunn's "Working on My Next Broken Heart," Sacha poses the question, "Am I the Indian you had in mind?"

End of Documentary Film

5.3 Reflexivity as an Analytic Tool

I utilized my film as data to challenge problematizing, pathologizing and culturizing discourses. To do this, I applied reflexivity to expose desire-based indicators that were inherent in my life experiences as a Mi'kmaq person. Pollner (1991) describes reflexivity as "an 'unsettling' i.e., an insecurity regarding the basic assumptions, discourse, and practices in describing reality" (p. 370). Jooton, McPhee and Marland (2009) cite Parahoo (2006) and define reflexivity "as the continuous process of reflection by the researcher on his or her values, preconceptions, behaviour, or presence…This involves researchers recognising that they are part of the social world under study" (p. 1). I chose reflexivity because it lends itself well to discourse analysis and autoethnography in that it captures the messiness of life experiences and provides an avenue to think critically and objectively about my research. I could easily mesh the

three together to create an aligned approach to the overall goal of my research, which was to uncover discourses, tell my story, and reflect on how my story might contribute to a more nuanced cultural understanding of Indigeneity.

My analysis process was guided by responses to questions that Greenaway (2010) and Hsiung (2008) posed to reflect objectively on research written by the self. Primeau (2003) writes that "Reflexivity enhances the quality of research through its ability to extend our understanding of how our positions and interest as researchers affect all states of the research process" (p. 9). Through this process, I was able to draw out desire-based indicators from my film which correlated with some of Reiss's (2002) 16 Basic Human Desires. Of note is that Reiss's (2002) human desires are a way to label my behaviors from the film that moved toward desire. I do not fulfill or identify all 16 desires as I do not utilize all 16 in my life. This extraction (through Reiss's (2002) work) is a way to identify desire behaviours because it provided a description of each desire, some of which matched exactly with my behaviours. If another individual were to embark on this journey, they may extract different desires (according to Reiss) and choose to focus on those in pursuit of living desirably. Through this correlation, I was able to identify focussed areas of desire. Later in the chapter, I explore some potential avenues for how these desires might inform data collection and educational practice.

Reflexivity is the analytic process I use to inform an epistemological shift to desire. At a rudimentary level, reflexivity informs answers to questions such as "What do I know?" and "How do I know it?" (Carolan, 2003). Patnaik (2016) "acknowledges the role of the researcher as a participant in the process of knowledge construction and not merely an outsider-observer of a phenomenon" (p. 101). Basically, reflexivity is a process of self-

assessment by the researcher to scrutinize how their own experiences have influenced the researcher process (Dowling, 2006).

> Reflexivity also provides context for the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of my data:
>
> Credibility refers to the vividness and accuracy of description of the phenomenon under study. Transferability is the equivalent of external validity – how well were the data likely to fit into a context different from the one in which they were generated. Dependability is the extent to which the data demonstrates the phenomenon it is expected to demonstrate. Confirmability is essentially a confirmation that the previous three conditions have been addressed. (Patnaik, 2013, p. 8)

Reflexivity is "essential in augmenting the integrity, credibility, and trustworthiness of qualitative inquiry" (Valandra, 2012, p. 204). As Hsiung (2008) puts forth, it is "central to debates on subjectivity, objectivity and, ultimately, the scientific foundation of social science knowledge and research" (p. 211). My family watched the film and signed consent forms so that I could use personal familial data that included them. It is difficult to discount my data because much of it is tangible, meaning you can touch, see, and hear it. That is the beauty of using documentary film: I was able to include artifacts for the audience to observe and archival footage for the audience to see and hear. The external data in my film are referenced and taken from actual life events, news broadcasts, television series, photos, etc.

The transferability of the external data is easily accomplished but since my personal data relates directly to my life it could not be used as another person's experiences.

What is transferrable, however, is the idea of desire or feeling misaligned with the current narrative of Indigeneity. I supported the idea of transferability in chapter two under the essentialism section when I wrote about scholars who were feeling misaligned within their groups. I did not include stories from acquaintances in my data collection, but I do have friends and students who shared similar stories.

> As for dependability, Pillow's (2003) work on uncomfortable reflexivity states: A reflexivity that knows that the representations we make in the construction of knowledge will always be imperfect, and that such representations are still necessary. This is about finding analytical tools that can help to push educators towards an unfamiliar, towards the uncomfortable. (p. 192)

In New Brunswick, we do not yet have language or spaces that support a First Nation move toward desire. My research might not be perfect but it pushes toward the unfamiliar. Dependability in this context is actualized.

5.4 Intention of Film

Reflexivity facilitated the process of categorizing my data into themes. It allowed me to uncover themes related to values, traits, and practices that I embodied, which were indicators of a counter story to the discourses uncovered in the CDA. The film captured the vision and sound of my experiences in a way that written text could not. As Scott (1991) describes:

> This kind of communication has long been the mission of historians documenting the lives of those omitted or overlooked in accounts of the past. It has produced a wealth of new evidence previously ignored about these others and has drawn attention to dimensions of human life and

> activity usually deemed unworthy of mention in conventional histories. (p. 773)

It feels as if being Mi'kmaq is politicized and culturized to the extent that my lived experiences seem to be of no consideration or value. My documentary film is a counter to damage discourses and essentialist understandings and uses my body as data so that the audience can experience an alternative representation of Indigeneity. The approach of considering external data and internal data combined with reflexivity are elements that helped highlight desire.

The extracted desire indicators gleaned from the reflexive process could be applied in multiple settings and scenarios, such as data collection and educational practice. Utilizing the guidance of scholars who have written about desire and desire-based frameworks (Holland, 1992; Miles, 1992; Gordan, 1996; Vizenor, 1998; Pigantelli, 1998; Bohlin, 2000; Liston, 2000; Burch, 2004; Kessler, 2004; Zembylas, 2007; Tuck, 2009; Calderon, 2016; Renga, 2017; Reiss, 2002), I apply what has already been researched in this area and combine it with themes generated from my reflection to formulate desire-based strategies. Providing a way to operationalize my research extends the significance of this study.

5.5 Reflexivity in Action

> Actioning my research entailed responding to questions Greenaway (2010) and
>
> Hsiung (2008) suggest need to be answered when applying reflexivity. Patnaik (2013)

includes a description of these questions, which I answer below:

> How has my personal history influenced the choice of topic? What are my personal value systems that may influence the process of research? How do my gender, culture and professional background influence my positioning in this topic? What are the possible advantages that I have in terms of personal history and professional competence? What might be the barriers that my personal history and professional competence can create during data collection? How are the emerging data assimilating with my prior knowledge; making me revisit an earlier stance? (p. 103)

Reflecting on my data required a lens that could foster objectivity when writing and producing my documentary film. Although it is impossible to review one's work from an unbiased position, the questions Greenaway (2010) and Hsiung (2008) propose offer a way to do this objectively.

By answering the questions proposed by Greenaway (2010) and Hsiung (2008), I draw out themes and identifiers of desire from my life as portrayed in the film (Appendix D). These desire indicators are matched with Reiss's (2002) 16 Basic Human Desires, so that I can identify which human desires my desire indicators correlate with.

5.6 Reimagining

As noted throughout my dissertation, the narrative of damage impacts Indigenous identity across a wide realm of areas, such as scholarship, statistics gathering, etc. Walter (2016) writes about 5D data—disparity, deprivation, disadvantage, dysfunction, and difference —and how the "Australian Human Rights Commissions (humanrights.gov.au) uses statistical data to highlight overall inequality between Indigenous Australians and the rest of the population" (p. 104). As suggested in my

statistical analysis in chapter two, Canada is practicing much of the same data collection methods as Australia, determining the spaces that Indigenous peoples can occupy by producing truths framed from a colonial lens.

I propose that a move toward desire reimagines data collection through an Indigenous desire-based methodological and analytical lens and may alter the "narrative, concepts, discourse and, ultimately, policy directions" of Indigenous data (Walter, 2016,

p. 108). My purpose is not to delve into data collection methods that determine who Indigenous peoples are and who they are not but more to emphasize a new kind of collection that honours Indigenous desire. This section actively works against colonial versions of Indigenous realities by utilizing desire indicators from my documentary film.

As Davis et al. (2012) put forth, "The indicator represents an assertion of power to produce knowledge and to define or shape the way the world is understood" (p. 76). For each reflection, I identify desire indicators and for each indicator I match the correlating basic human desire as informed by Reiss (2002).

5.7 Desire – Reiss

Reiss (2000) developed a scientific test method titled the "Reiss Profile." This test measures the basic desires and points of happiness for an individual by helping to identify not only what they want but the value of that goal. Reiss (2000) provides a way for individuals to identify their personal patterns of desire. The premise of his work is that "True happiness comes from meaning, and meaning comes from basic desires and values" (Chowney, 2015, para. 8). Reiss (2000) posits that "Because your desires

indicate the path of psychological growth that you need to take to become who you want to be, they can help you think about what you need in order to gain value-based happiness" (p. 17). I needed a way to make sense of the information gleaned from my reflexive analysis of my documentary film. Reiss's (2000) work on desire provided a way to capture and title the behaviours I extracted through reflexivity. This capturing moves my research from discovery to deliverable, meaning that I did not just illuminate desire in a lived reality that challenged damage narratives but also showed a way to apply this data in practice.

Dr. Reiss was an expert in personality and clinical psychology who dedicated his life's work to the study of human motivation. Through surveys of more than 6,000 people across the world (including Indigenous communities), Dr. Reiss and his team were able to deduct 16 basic human desires and values that drive nearly everything we do. Reiss (2002) notes that "Knowledge of these 16 basic desires can ultimately improve your ability to gain value-based happiness, which is the sense that life is meaningful—something we all want" (p. 10). I utilize the desires and associated behaviors from this study to label and identify the desire behaviours in my life as shown in my documentary film.

Reiss's work has not only been used to identify individual human desires but also those of people in various areas. Reiss and Wiltz (2009) apply Reiss's profile to investigate why people watch reality TV, and Reiss and Havercamp (2005) investigate motivators of self-actualization. Tamura and Yoshioka (2014) apply Reiss's work to examine user satisfaction after service implementation about public transport. They also use Reiss's work in a 2016 study which investigates the mobility of elderly people from the perspective of their emotional value. Worthingham (2012) "examines desire as reflected

in the characteristics of our culture and the societies we have built since early history; then highlights which desires, according to Dr. Steven Reiss' research into what motivates and makes life meaningful" (p. 5). This varied application of his work aligned with my research and enabled me to investigate the behaviours in my life that led to actualizing desire.

Reiss (2000) posits that Maslow (1908–1970) was the first theorist to make the important point that "we are creatures of desire who are always wanting something….and that a motivational approach to human behavior potentially can explain much more behavior than is generally realized" (p. 8). This moved from the perspective, for example, that human behaviour was based on sexual pleasure-seeking (Freud, 1856–1939), or that our behaviours are private and cannot be known with scientific theory (Skinner, 1904–1990). Reiss theorized that their work was not based on "scientific research, and none was based on scientifically valid surveys" (p. 9).

Applying Reiss's (2000) basic human desire theory, which encapsulates elements of philosophy and psychology, allowed me to capture results that are more concrete and identifiable. Reiss's (2000) work with his graduate student (Susan Havercamp) made it possible to "study human motivation in a comprehensive manner" (p. 9). What was important for my research was being able to understand which desires led to more purposeful relationships to achieve happiness, joy, and success. I posit that one desire-based strategy for struggling against damage narratives would be to identify the desire behaviours of a community or an individual as the starting point for data collection, reports, and scholarship.

Reiss (2002) notes that "Sometimes we become so consumed by our daily business that we forget to take a look at the larger picture of who we are and where we are headed in

life" (p. 1). This statement partly captures the essence of what my research aims to highlight: "business as usual" can no longer be accepted because it is framing Indigenous peoples a certain way. Some may become complacent in this space of damage because it is constantly reinforced through media, text, pedagogy, policy, etc. Analyzing the landscape of scholarship, data collection, and the TRC, as I did in chapter four, brings to light what has been partly contributing to damaging discourses, or more so how colonial interference has perpetuated such discourses.

I utilized Reiss's (2002) 16 basic human desire behaviours to identify what behaviours I was implementing in my life and then used the desires to capture what quality my behaviours were exposing. I knew that I lived desirably but did not know how to explain what qualities or behaviours I was enacting that allowed me to live desirably. This approach provided a "new way of analyzing your behaviour; when you learn the 16 basic desires, you can figure out how your behaviour and life goals are connected to them. Because your desires indicate the path of psychological growth that you need to take to become who you want to be, they can help you think about what you need to gain value-based happiness" (p. 17). I played multiple sports but what I did not realize was that this was working toward desire in many ways. As noted in Reiss's profile, desire is nurtured when you face your fears and through social interaction.

Noting the Indigenous discourses identified in chapter four, it might be difficult to find an environment for desire behaviours to flourish. To challenge this, I apply the desire behaviors assembled from the Desire Chart below (that were evident in my film) and provide examples of how they struggle against the damage narratives extracted from the external data (Indigenous scholarship, data, and statistics). I am comfortable utilizing

Reiss's (2002) work on desires because Indigenous peoples were included in the data collection. I did not find any sort of desire-informed data collection or capturing of desire from an Indigenous scholar, aside from Tuck's arguments for desire-based research.

I identify potential data collection ideas for the use of each identified desire in relation to educational and/or societal understandings, keeping at the forefront the ideals of OCAP® (First Nations Information Governance Centre, https://fnigc.ca/ocaptraining/) —ownership, control, access, and possession. This means that any suggested ways forward in my research are not for anyone to adopt in practice without the consent of an affiliated Indigenous group to which the data relates, although I do strongly advocate for the conceptual understanding of Indigenous peoples as desiring beings.

The behaviours extracted from my documentary closely matched 10 of the 16 basic human desires of curiosity, family, honour, idealism, independence, power, social contact, status, tranquility, and vengeance:

Curiosity requires truth seeking and problem solving qualities, family requires parenting and homemaking skills, honor requires character morality and principled behaviour, idealism requires attention to social causes and fair play, independence requires self-reliance, social contact requires companionship with peers and joining clubs and groups, tranquility suggests avoidance of stressful situations, power requires the desire to lead and achieve and vengeance requires one to be aggressive and hold revenge as a priority. (Reiss, p. 21, 2002)

These desires were enacted in my life, which contributed to my ability to live desirably. Below I summarize the logic behind the pairings and explain their relationship.

Social contact, according to Reiss (2002), is the *desire for companionship* through behaviours like *joining clubs and groups*. Social contact led to many positive outcomes in my life. Although I encountered racism, I also encountered amazing people who supported and encouraged me. The desire behaviours that aligned with this desire indicator in my documentary film were my involvement in sports and clubs. Not nourishing a bond between non-First Nation and First Nation peoples could contribute to social isolation and segregation (Mehra, Smith, Dixon, & Robertson, 2006). "Them versus we" does nothing to move people forward (Golden, 1998). Students should not be influenced to focus on differences but encouraged to seek out commonalities so they can work together to enact positive change (Montgomery, 2009; Summers & Volet, 2008).

I never had a First Nation teammate or coach throughout my entire life, and I recall speaking with First Nation students about their participation in sports, which was influenced by many factors like funding and fear of being rejected. Encouraging social contact in order to be citizens of the world, and not only First Nation community members or students, is vital to development as a people and opens space for multiplicity in group cohesion (Martiniello & Rath, 2010). Indigenous scholarship in this context could celebrate First Nation students' citizenship and engagement with the world. Data could be collected on learning experiences that encourage citizenship to show how social contact in many ways contributes to First Nation students' self-worth and happiness.

Curiosity is the *desire for understanding* and, according to Reiss (2002), the behaviour associated with this desire is *truth seeking and problem solving*. I show this in my film through the various interests and experiences I have had. The film is a truth- seeking

mission and aims to debunk damaged understandings of First Nation peoples. Indigenous peoples are defined as a problem through statistics reports (Government of Canada, 2022); we are brought together as nations and tasked with having to figure out how to solve "our" problems in an environment of damage. This is obvious at the beginning of the film when our academic levels are discussed as being lower than non-First Nation peoples, suicide is related to poverty, and being a real Indian is said to mean that one does not smile all the time, etc. Learners and communities should not only be presented problems, but should also be presented opportunities to seek truth according to their own initiative (Arth, Darrin, & Willam, 2019). If this behaviour was encouraged, it would allow for more diverse approaches to opportunities and issues (Peterson, 2009).

The desire indicators from my documentary film that matched this desire offered by Reiss (2002) were *desire requires self-awareness and purposeful action, desire does not judge, desire requires a new mindset, and learning to desire is a form of desire.* Learning to desire acknowledges damage but ultimately strives to reframe it. The letters from my mother contained in the documentary film encouraged me to understand "how I was programmed so I could change the program." Indigenous peoples are constantly exposed to damage through external determinations of who we are; we are forced to relive damage and influenced to view each other this way. If Indigenous peoples were presented desire-based statistics—on, for example, our contribution to the economy—conversations and decisions might centre around a growth mindset. We need to be curious about the world, about things like digital transformation, and not just about Indigenous problems. We need to pay attention to the damage, but it should not

subsume us. There needs to be space for First Nation peoples to breath and think about life, not just survive.

Family is an important aspect of Indigenous lives (Muir & Bohr, 2019; Walter, 2017). This desire, according to Reiss (2002), is associated with *raising children, spending time with siblings, and being a parent and homemaker*. Collecting statistics, for example, on single-parent families, as noted in chapter four, perpetuates the idea of "broken" homes being the cause of Indigenous issues. "Broken" homes could be traced back to when kids were forcibly removed from their homes and brought to Indian Residential and Day Schools. These events had devastating implications for Indigenous families, but statistics do not capture that story.

Statistics capture single-parent homes, which removes people from the stark reality of historical violence. The opportunity to discuss strong support systems in, for example, single- and double-parent households or households with shared custody is missing. A focus could be on the Indigenous values and beliefs in family and how to foster an understanding of what that means. Another focus area could be on what approaches Indigenous peoples have implemented and enacted to enable parenting and homemaking to flourish. These types of statistics should be collected by and/or with First Nation peoples living on and off First Nation communities. Some clips and photos of my son are included in my documentary film. His father and I are separated but we are very much a family; although it took some time to figure out, we are doing it well. A broken home, as referenced by the government, does not resemble my life, which represents understanding, love, relationships, and the setting of a good example for our son. This is evident through the archival footage that includes his laughter and joy.

Honour is the desire for *upright character*. Reiss (2002) includes *principled behaviour and morality* as the associated actions. Honouring Elders is a value included in much Indigenous scholarship, which is wonderful (Quayle & Sonn, 2019; Macklin, Marchand, Mitchell, Price, Mitchell, & Bryan, 2021; McNally, 2009). Desire related to honouring as extracted from my documentary film were knowledge acquisition and understanding. I honour my mother and grandmother deeply; part of this means that I honour qualities that foster growth as an individual. I know life can be challenging, but if there was a capturing of work ethic, dedication, and knowledge acquisition in statistics reports it might add to the breadth of accessible solutions. There are many hard-working First Nation peoples who have faced their fears; capturing what they have done to honour themselves would be a welcome addition. There needs to be a defiance of damage in our stories. "Human beings are more likely to flourish if they attend to those internal characteristics that define who they are themselves, rather than focussing on life's external trappings of success (Bohlin, 2000, p. 81). This affective knowledge approach combats the pathologies that are prevalent in statistics reports and scholarship. This approach is obvious when I include my mother's letters as the foundation of my ability to live desirably in my documentary film. Her morality and principled behaviour led to my success as an athlete, mother, and daughter.

Idealism is the desire for *social justice.* Reiss (2002) notes that the behaviours associated with this desire are *social causes and fair play*. The desire indicator from my documentary film that correlated with this desire was *desire cannot be fulfilled by institutions*. Social justice is not contingent on whether settler people acknowledge wrongdoings. If the message to youth is that they need to "decolonize" as noted by Yellowbird (2012) in chapter four, it can be inferred that there is something wrong with

them. The encouraging words from my mother's letters captured in my film show that desire had nothing to do with institutional services but much more to do with family. The message I received as her daughter was one of hope, resilience, humility, love, and joy. What is the guarantee on the other end? Once you are "decolonized," what happens? I know from my professional experience in government that institutions are not capable of social justice; they will not be able to solve issues of social justice and are not designed to do so. In the beginning of my film, I capture damage, who it was informed by, how it is maintained and the consequences of this maintenance. Institutions are an interconnected part of a system that encompasses political whims, with main goals like structure, order, and maintenance. At EECD, for example, staff were reminded not to disrupt the system. If government controls reporting on Indigenous peoples (i.e., statistics gathering as recommended by the TRC), the situation becomes political. Communities can use their strengths to dictate what is important to them and tell institutions what they desire, it might avoid, to some degree, having our bodies politicized, tracked, and regulated. One way that institutions currently exercise power is through data collection and reporting. By keeping Indigenous peoples as a problem, the government is positioned as the problem solver.

What institutions like education can do is ensure that educators are not perpetuating damage discourses. I argue for a shift in mindset, and that mindset must include what social justice looks like for students outside of their own cultural experience. Social justice can be positioned as desire-based. First Nation students might be interested in poverty, or how to save the dolphins, or simply interested in happiness.

Social justice acts need to be nurtured according to students' passions, not according to which group they are a member of or what other people think their social justice interests should be. Much Indigenous scholarship is focussed on struggling against historical wrongdoings, so much so that it seems the present and future have been left out of the conversation (Augoustinos & LeCouteur, 2004; Corntassel & Holder, 2008; Nooitgedagt et al., 2021; Easton et al., 2021). Educators need to start with the passions of the student and not what anyone thinks they should be passionate about. Once the student feels respected in their learning and can move toward critical thinking within their area of passion, issues of social justice may naturally arise. Government institutions need to recognize that truth and power are politically driven and do not always consider peoples who are not from the dominant group. Since government employees are working on behalf of the public, they should consider what communities are currently doing to produce wealth and opportunities and what privileges communities have that can be leveraged to move toward a more socially just society. Instead of presenting macro-Indigenous issues to learners, allow them space to decide what social justice issues are most important to them.

Issues that impact independence can be collective and individual. The basic desire for *independence* is complex for Indigenous peoples because we were once sovereign nations. The behaviour associated with independence, according to Reiss (2002), is *self-reliance*. This may seem in contrast to "all our relations," but self-reliance does not necessitate neglecting others. Self-reliance seems unattainable when our homes are owned by the band, our lives are regulated by the Indian Act, and treaty rights are ignored. As Indigenous peoples fight for sovereignty, there is also a need for individuals

to nourish their independence. I worked toward self-reliance by pursuing my education, obtaining employment, purchasing a home and property, saving money, and investing. Self-reliance is a theme throughout my documentary film when I show my academic awards, sports awards, and connection to land, people, and family, which have all contributed to my self-reliance. Many First Nation peoples also incorporate these values into their lives, but this does not appear in any statistical reports or scholarship that I have read. Instead, I read about dilapidated housing, poverty, unemployment, and factors that make First Nation peoples appear less self-reliant. How can the desire to be self-reliant be honoured? It is one thing to have a communal goal of sovereignty but another to have your personal life move toward self-reliance. Indigenous scholarship and statistics reports could, for example, include what individual Indigenous peoples have done to move toward self-reliance and show how this improved their lives despite not being part of a sovereign nation. Scholarship tends to focus on macro issues like health, environment, conservation, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which can be overwhelming and generate feelings of hopelessness (Luzar, et al., 2011; Colchester, 2004; Goehring, 1993; Kingsbury, 2011; Ring & Brown, 2003). Our success stories are not dependent on macro issues being resolved and desire can be fostered by individual moves toward self-reliance.

Power is another basic desire that the analysis of my documentary film exposed. My behaviours of power were *hard work and dedication*. To gain any sort of power in my life I needed to be disciplined and dedicated. The behaviours associated with this desire according to Reiss (2002) are *leadership and achievement*. I showed these desires in my film by including awards from academia and sports but also through obtaining

employment as an assistant professor. The greatest achievement of my life is my son, whom I capture and honour through my mother's letters. Durie (2006) parallels resilience with success and alludes to how it contributes to desire:

> …indigenous resilience is a reflection of an innate determination by indigenous peoples to succeed…Restoring the Balance perspective to the more usual scenarios that emphasize indigenous disadvantage and allows the indigenous challenge to be reconfigured as a search for success rather than an explanation for failure. (Durie, 2006, p. 2)

From this standpoint, Indigenous peoples are innately moving toward desire but resilience without hard work, or dedication and determination, is just resilience.

There is not much opportunity to advance in careers in some First Nation communities. Many communities have health centres, schools, child and family services, HeadStarts, forestry, etc., but there is usually, as per the norm everywhere, only one director and staff. Marshall, Shepard, and Batten (2002) note that "Communities and families are deeply concerned about the diminishing educational and work opportunities available for their children" (p. 2). There has been considerable economic development (businesses) on First Nation communities in New Brunswick, such as a tourist fishing guide business in Metepenagiag First Nation, a CrossFit gym with additional features such as virtual golf in Natoaganeg, carpentry businesses, etc., but these stories are not prevalent. What qualities do Indigenous business owners currently possess that could be shared and harnessed for youth? What is the process they went through to get there? To highlight these features and skills, in my current position as assistant professor at a university I developed a course focussed on entrepreneurship

where students connect with mentors to design and create their own businesses largely informed by current successful First Nation entrepreneurs and community passions.

I did not find much scholarship or statistics acknowledging the contributions that First Nation peoples have on the overall economy in New Brunswick. If people were more aware of First Nation contributions, this awareness might impact stereotypes and myths about First Nation peoples. Much of the work done on communities is outsourced to non-Indigenous communities, cars are purchased from communities, etc., which points to issues of opportunity, knowledge sharing, and funding opportunities. Are First Nation students happy with the current situation? Have they been provided opportunities to understand what is happening or just opportunities to understand history?

> When we cut the deal, when we settle for their interest in the bottom line, when we don't challenge our students to assess the worthiness of their goals; when we give in, we allow our students to actively pursue misguided ideals. We give in when we neglect to challenge the limited vision of the student who is apparently on track to a respectable job but who has not thought about what it takes to be on track to happiness. (Bohlin, p. 9, 2000)

Fostering desire requires us to think about what desire means, and what happiness means. If the status quo remains the same, you might land a great job but will wind up dealing with the issues that arise because of a damaged frame of reference—for example, applying for job A but having to also do job B (native informant, advocate, representative, etc., for all Indigenous peoples). Understanding what is deterring our

ability to desire is important. Our position economically is just another indicator of discourse—how we are kept and referred to as lower socioeconomic status. It would be beneficial to see statistics that mirror these desires in scholarship, a celebration of hard work, dedication, and happiness, not only "decolonization."

The desire for *tranquility* made me reflect on the state of some communities and how life seems to be in upheaval a lot of the time. Living in a constant state of survival seems to be portrayed as a by-product of being Indigenous or normalized through the rhetoric of trauma (Kreig, 2009; Clapham et al., 2006; Kirmayer, Gone, & Moses, 2014; McKenzie, 2022). Reiss (2002) notes that tranquility *aims to avoid experiencing anxiety and pain*. The behaviour associated with this is to *avoid stressful situations*. Desire for me in this regard was place-based. I lived in a community with some issues but was surrounded by peace, safety, forest, water, and family. I included some of these places (French Fort Cove, the Range, an abandoned ball field, the First Nation community where my mother lives, a valley next to my childhood home, my elementary school) in my documentary film to portray how where we live can affect how we feel. I know many First Nation peoples who enjoy living on First Nation communities and I know many who are forced to live there because they cannot afford to live anywhere else. I know the experiences my family encountered in community and how those experiences impacted our lives. I am not alleging that all First Nation communities are struggling or surrounded by trauma, but I am suggesting that there needs to be acceptance for those who decide to live elsewhere. Friedel (2009) notes that "for the growing number of Indigenous youths under pressure to become 're-rooted' to land, an ecology-focused learning that de-emphasizes or effaces important social aspects of place fails to meet youth 'where they are'" (p. 4). I lived peacefully, happily, and successfully off a First

Nation community. Desire is place-based, and this place is wherever you feel at home. We should celebrate Indigenous peoples no matter where they choose to live. People choose their location to better themselves, not to dishonour their ethnicity.

Vengeance was the last desire that my analysis of the documentary film highlighted. My desire indicators were that *desire can be in the shape of resistance and desire requires a new mindset*. Vengeance, according to Reiss (2002), is the desire to *confront those who frustrate or offend us*, and the behaviour associated with this is *aggression and revenge*. Vengeance can be subtle. In the film, I contrast external narratives of Indigeneity with my lived experiences; I include images of my mother's time at Indian Day School and my uncle's gravesite, which depict the suffering and lived experiences of colonization. Their experiences are indirectly my experiences, and are those of many First Nation peoples. My research and film are an act of vengeance. When vengeance is not used productively, it can have detrimental consequences. Stuckless and Goranson (1992) (as cited in Koleji, 2009, p. 298) noted that vengeance was positively related to anti-social behaviors and expressions of empathy (as cited in Koleji, 2009, p. 298) and associated vengeance with weak psychological well-being; Cardozo, McCullough et al. (2001) (as cited in Koleji, 2009, p. 298) identified aggressiveness and negative affect associated with vengeance and that it negatively related to life satisfaction. Ysseldyk, Matheson, and Anisman (2007) (as cited in Koleji, 2009, p. 298) wrote that it impacted psychological health. Moreover, Berkowitz (1993) (as cited in Koleji, 2009, p. 298) suggested that vengeful people experience more negative affects and are easily angered and offended by others.

My reading of some calls to action in the TRC is that they are directed at the government to address the legacy of Indian Residential Schools. If the calls to action are remedied, then what? Will we move toward desire? Or can we move toward desire while the calls to action are being addressed? What does desire look like for each call to action? Vengeance can be useful if desire is not forgotten. I can certainly be aggressive, but I am able to redirect my aggression in positive ways: sports, leadership positions, or writings about desire. These actions are not vengeful toward someone or a group of people, but they puncture damage narratives and recentre First Nation desires. Contributing to desire, living desirably, and sharing how we may move toward desire is vengeance.

My documentary analysis, as part of my autoethnography, was informed by a chronological timeline of events (internal data) and a collection of external data (photos, archival footage, awards, letters, etc.), all of which informed and were presented in my documentary film. To analyze and make sense of my data, I apply reflexive questions proposed by Greenaway (2010) and Hsiung to the documentary film to show how these desires could be utilized to inform statistics gathering or pedagogy.

Reflection #1: How has my personal history influenced the choice of topic?

Desire "is both the part of us that hankers for the desired and at the same time the part that learns to desire" (Tuck, 2009, p. 418). Recognizing that the learning process is a move toward desire purports that an identifier of desire is that it can be the process of *learning to desire*, which is the title of my documentary film.

> My family's experiences with colonization are not unique. I think many First Nation families deal with some form of shame brought on by our

> violent history with Canada. I talk in the film about my grandmother and her experiences as a Mi'kmaq woman largely being informed by shame. She was shamed for being First Nation, which led to her feeling ashamed of being First Nation. When you are ashamed of something you may try to hide and deny it as a coping mechanism. Think about how frightening it would be if you are admitted to the hospital and when people realize you are First Nation you receive neglectful care (CBC News, 2021). Or imagine, as my mom experienced, getting off the bus at school and a group of non-Indigenous kids yelling, "Go back to the reserve, squaw!" You are taught early on that being First Nation is something to be ashamed of and you learn ways to protect yourself from the continued onslaught of racism.

As noted in the introduction, I had friends and boyfriends who called me names like Pocahontas and referred to me acting a certain way because I was First Nation. This shaming partly led to my avoidance of traditionalism. I come from a long line of shame brought on by colonization, and I need to recognize this fact in relation to my research. Watching myself on film, I see the shame, especially when I state that I do not apologize for my experiences with colonization; it is so deeply entrenched that it is hard to tell whether I behave in certain ways because of it or despite it.

The judgement from First Nation peoples about not living on First Nation communities is a form of damage. According to Bombay, Matheson and Anisman (2014), some behaviours connected with damage are lateral violence, including "bullying, gossiping, feuding, shaming and blaming of other members of one's own

social group as well as having a lack of trust toward other group members" (p. 2). As noted, I was told by a First Nation woman in a meeting that I would not understand what they were talking about because I did not grow up on a First Nation community. It did not matter that I lived in the community later in life. Being First Nation and residing off a First Nation community was not easy. I also know from the experiences of my mother, family, friends, and myself in later years that living in a First Nation community is not easy either.

I fully acknowledge that my history with colonization has influenced my choice of topic. I am annoyed by the unwritten identification rules for Indigeneity, such as identifying with damage, and I am bewildered that none of those appear to require success, happiness, and desire as identifiers. We are so much more than the bad things that happen to us or our reaction to the bad things, and we need to celebrate that.

Desire in this instance comes out as a way of combatting shame. Reflecting on my film, maybe I thought that the more I accomplished the less shame I would feel. Ironically, I have never really taken the time to appreciate what I have done because it never seemed to be enough. I guess this is the conundrum in the cycle of shame. Combatting shame, for me, is a silent internal journey but one that is propelled by desire.

The main theme brought from reflecting on the question of how my personal history has influenced the choice of topic is that *desire can be in the shape of resistance.* Herndi and Taylor (1993) posit that:

> Resistance also involves a degree of self-reflexive awareness on the past of a social agent, and an understanding of the ways in which social

> reality is connected to material conditions and has been constituted to serve specific ideological interests. Thus action which seems disruptive to those in positions of power and authority can be understood as a positive movement toward critique and change. (pp. 6–7)

With this definition in mind, I can move from a sort of "purposeful resistor" to an agent of change. When viewing the documentary film, I kept the idea of resistance in mind and watched to see if I was somehow purposefully enacting it in my life. I thought about the negative connotations associated with resistance (i.e., troublemaker) and how I did not view my experiences from that lens. This led to the realization that my embodiment of desire could be interpreted as a form of resistance without the negative connotations that I associated with the word. This moves the meaning of resistance from something that may be viewed as an activity (i.e., protesting) to one that might be better understood in communities as a form desire. Capturing that desire moves the conversation from, for example, how Indigenous paradigms differ in relation to western paradigms to how Indigeneity is impacted and informed by diverse experiences.

How the extracted desires could be honoured in practice

> The indicator *learning to desire is a form of desire* is most closely related to

Reiss's (2002) description of curiosity. He explains that "truth seeking is perhaps the purest example of curiosity…the curious person…feels an additional need to distinguish between truth and falsehood" (p. 42). For data collection purposes, I purport that a way into desire-based work would be to gather information around the desire of curiosity. This idea stems from extraction through reflexivity of this desire in my documentary film. I used my life experiences as a way into this work but suggest that this work be

done on an individual and communal level. An approach to educational practice that supports this type of desire could be the following example.

When co-creating learning opportunities for First Nation students, I had to be curious about where they were from and what the communal and individual goals of members from that community were. The students in my course titled *Indigenous Community Assets* were asked to wander around the community and talk with people. They spoke with over 80 members from a local First Nation community and asked three questions: What would you like to see happen in your community to foster community engagement? What would you like to learn more about? How could you contribute to actualizing this desire, meaning what gifts do you bring and/or what gifts and strengths does the community already have that could support this endeavour? The ideas that community members put forward were brilliant and purposeful. This approach to learning embeds curiosity at its core. Students were then tasked with how to analyze the data they collected, create an implementation plan, and present it to the community. We hosted a community barbeque and had members attend the student presentations throughout the day.

This approach to learning accomplishes many things, brings First Nation desires to the forefront, challenges institutional learning spaces and processes, embeds community values and goals, exposes students to a real-life application of learning, etc. The data collected is co-created with community; utilizing desire as the foundation, it is implemented in community and resides in community. Being curious about what communities desire is the foundational push behind this work and a prime example of how this desire can be actioned.

The second desire indicator that this reflection exposed was that *desire can be in the form of resistance*. This one is a bit more contentious because the desire I associated with this was vengeance. I am furious when I read about more children being dug up out of the dirt on former Indian Residential School sites. I wonder if any educators or communities have taken the time to ask youth how they are feeling about these children who are being dug out of the dirt. One cannot let something like this go unaddressed and hope that it goes away. Vengeance can fester. The anger and hurt need to be addressed and redirected. One way to capture this desire would be to understand what it is that people are feeling angry about and reframe this anger in a productive way.

Reflection #2: What are my personal value systems that may influence the process of research?

Desire requires one to *face one's fears.* I have an inclination to "walk toward my fears" to cite a Ted Talk segment by Krzys (2014) included in my documentary film. She continues: "When you face your fears, they transform into bubbles of love that can carry you across the bridge to desire" (Krzys, 2014). Fear, judgement, and shame are blockages to desire, and one needs to understand and address them. This research was a way for me to struggle against damage but also a way of owning the fact that I am not the "Indian" most people have in mind. Facing fears instills an inner strength and every time one faces another, the strength builds and turns into self-love. At the beginning of the film, I show how discourses of damage impact many aspects of Indigenous lives. Indigenous peoples wake up to these realities every day. If one does not want to buckle under the pressure, one must face one's fears.

The next indicator is that *a strong support system creates a pathway to desire* and the associated desire is family. My personal value systems have been influenced by my mother. This is evident in the documentary film when I use her letters as the foundation of my ability to desire. In her letters, there are key messages that have contributed to my learning of desire. She wrote: “celebrate the connection with your father and the positive attributes you inherited from him, it is important to know how you were programmed so you can change the program, take responsibility for your life, you will be a success in anything you do, I am proud of what a great mother you are, you will make the right decisions in life and I’m proud of your accomplishments.” She also describes me as “caring, special, soft hearted, courageous, willing to take the lead, great, generous, and kind.” She expresses her support, love, and belief in me. That is how desire is fostered!

Some people have this support in their lives and still waiver, but for me, my mother has been an incredible support system. Her love has been my constant, and she has taught me to work hard, enjoy life, and take care of myself. She sang and read to me as a child, attended all my sporting events, and celebrated my achievements as if they were her own.

The next indicator extracted from my film was that *desire is fostered by hard work and dedication.* Reflecting on the awards presented in my film, I realized that I am an achiever. If I was competing in sports, I wanted to play to the best of my ability, and I wanted to win. To do this, I had to practice. I practiced at school in the morning before class, during recess and lunch hour, and after school. I practiced in my yard, at the community centres, with friends, and I participated in sports camps every summer. I

always thought I was sports-minded but after watching my documentary film and reflecting on the archival footage and artifacts, I see that I was a high achiever in other areas as well. This is evident when I recite a Christmas poem at my elementary school concert, by the awards I received, like Mayor for the Day, and by other accomplishments like essay contest awards, honour certificates, acknowledgement of achievement in various disciplines like science and language arts, scholarships, and degrees. In the film, it is evident that I had a positive relationship with school, and I believe fostering a positive work ethic and relationship with learning is important.

How the extracted desires could be honoured in practice

The first desire indicator in this section was that *desire requires knowledge acquisition and understanding* and the desire associated with this indicator was honour. Honour is described by Reiss (2002) as "the desire to be loyal to one's parents and, by extension, to one's heritage, ethnic group, culture, moral code, religion, city, or nation" (p. 52). In a course I developed titled *Indigenous Community Assets,* students were tasked with spending a week on a First Nation community and speaking to the community members about community engagement. Some expressed discomfort about walking around and speaking to people on the community. With honour comes the apprehension that you may disappoint or misrepresent those you care about. They were worried people would ignore them or react negatively to the questions. I walked around with the students on the first day to ensure their comfort level was satisfactory before leaving them on their own the following day.

One student became quite emotional about being alone while talking with community members. I assured the student that one of her gifts was that she was shy, that this meant she was likely more introspective, that she was probably a great listener, that showing

interest in people and listening to them is a wonderful honouring, and that they were lucky to be able to speak with her. I drove around the community taking note of the various experiences each student was having with community members. While parked at one location, I saw the same student marching with her backpack, head held high and a determination on her face that had not been there before. She completed the course with one of the most conscientious and productive community-based projects of the class. Being open to gaining knowledge through place and understanding that everyone is vulnerable, in this example, was amazing to witness. Ironically, her project was informed by some community members' trepidations about attending university. Allowing space for this understanding to be acknowledged and addressed is an honouring to those one serves. Opportunities like this, which embed chances to learn and understand, could be collected as examples for other communities to ponder. This collection of desire-based work could propel more of the same projects, moving closer to desire.

The second desire indicator from this reflection was that a strong support system creates a pathway to desire, and the desire attached to this indicator is family. Family is described as the desire to raise children and spend time with siblings. It can be actioned through parenting, homemaking, and other ways. My film drew out the idea of family through the reading of my mother's letters, the inclusion of family archival footage, and the singing of a song my mother used to sing to me. A student in my *Indigenous Community Assets* course collated data from community member discussions and noticed the theme of life skills training emerge. This was directly related to raising children and homemaking. The members felt that a valuable community engagement project would be to offer life skills classes to members of the community. The members

identified areas such as cooking, budgeting, gardening, parenting tips, child-minding services, and other areas of focus. The student was also required to do an asset map, meaning she had to figure out through discussions with community members who in the community could contribute their gifts to this project. Sure enough, there were people who loved to cook and would lend their skills an evening a week, another whose daughter had a babysitting course, etc. These types of learning opportunities do much more than teach students about, for example, asset-based community development; they honour community by listening to their goals and desires and draw out the strengths and opportunities within community to accomplish them.

The third desire indicator was that desire is fostered by hard work and dedication, and the associated desire was power. According to Reiss (2002), power is the desire for influence of will, which is actualized by leadership and achievement. Reiss (2000) writes that "If you are looking for a more meaningful life, and you have always enjoyed the experience of mastery, maybe you need to challenge yourself. You may try to do so by setting higher career goals, seeking a leadership role in an organization, finishing a marathon" (p. 136). As stated above, I captured this desire indicator in my film by showing footage of achievements. I also worked hard for the professional opportunities I have had. These accomplishments generate internal power and confidence in one's abilities. Again, this is what was extracted from my journey of learning to desire that the autoethnographic documentary film unveiled, but desire will look differently for everyone.

I do not see many First Nation peoples in positions of power from First Nation communities. One way to fulfill this desire is not only by celebrating the accomplishments of First Nation peoples in public forums but also through information

sharing with First Nation communities. Information about opportunities in settler spaces is not readily available.

Data collected on power could be in the form of success stories and asking that media pay attention to these stories instead of focusing on damage narratives. Data could also be collected on businesses, organizations, and institutions that are employing First Nation peoples and what positions they hold. This would identify gaps of power and could be focus areas of educational and societal energy.

Reflection #3: How do my gender, culture, and professional background influence my positioning on this topic?

Greenaway (2010) and Hsiung (2008) suggest this area of exploration to draw out possible bias, which enabled me to perform a more objective analysis. *Desire is not dependent on cultural attributes.* When applying Chang's (2008) 10-step process to my chronological timeline, I noticed that many stories of trauma included men. I include a scene in my documentary film about my father, which is informed by a letter of encouragement from my mother. Men are also at the helm of subjective policies in the damage section at the beginning of the film. My gender very much comes into play when I view my data from this perspective. These experiences add to my understanding of subjectification and contribute to intersectionality as noted by Crenshaw (2017) in the film. I considered including my gender in this research because it is an important dimension for further intersectional analysis; however, in this study my focus remains fixed on constructions of Indigeneity more broadly.

The framing of this question implies that culture means the customs of a group or something related. Although I respect those who embed culture into their lives through

customs, I honour my identity through my approach to learning. Friedal (2009) contends:

> In an era of cultural revitalization, knowing language and culture has become a key to meeting one's obligation as an Aboriginal person. Yet, the way culture tends to be 'included' in schools, as material, superficial, stereotypical forms of difference, offers little aid for youth dealing with the effects of racism and worse, can be understood as serving to fortify a racialized identity. (p. 4)

Being a non-traditionalist, immersed in politics, and an educator brings a certain perspective to my research.

Another desire indicator that I extracted from my analysis was that *desire cannot be fulfilled by institutions.* My professional background is almost completely in Indigenous education. As noted in chapter one, I worked at every level of education— schools, district, department, and university. These experiences have influenced my perspectives. I worked diligently in my position at EECD to create Indigenous resources and curricula, awareness, conversations, professional learning opportunities, committees, conferences, policies, etc. There were also First Nation subject coordinators hired in districts to support educators and schools. The school my son attended was near a First Nation community, which meant the school was more cognizant of First Nation inclusion. As seen at the beginning of my film, my son was sent home with stereotypical readers and assignments: a book titled *My Reserve* and an assignment representing Thanksgiving with a headdress and a turkey in 2020–21.

My experiences as a First Nation person working within government provided me with a unique skill set that positively influenced my research. I realized that no matter what you do someone will not agree with it. I learned how policies and curricula were developed and approved, and how many priorities there—with very little time to fulfill them. Hearing the issues and priorities from all perspectives—federal, provincial, and communal—was a valuable experience. I witnessed educators, ministers, First Nation peoples, etc., using a damage framework to discuss, understand, and advocate for First Nation students. I know firsthand that government cannot and will not address damage narratives without Indigenous peoples advocating for it. These narratives seep their way unnoticed into pedagogy, policy, funding allocations, etc. As someone who was responsible for co-developing many educational resources, I know there is a gap in desire-related content when it comes to Indigeneity.

I also know through years of experience in a senior-level position within government that the institution is more focused on maintaining regulations and rules than how those might be affecting people. Friedland and Alford (1991) offer that society is influenced by institutions and that agency is dependent on "individuals competing and negotiating, organizations in conflict and coordination, and institutions in contradiction and interdependence" (pp. 240–24). If this is true, then the realization that desire cannot be fulfilled by institutions moves the responsibility to people, and those people need to be cognizant of institutional power in framing reality. My film attests to the power of witnessing lived experiences so that institutions cannot determine our realities. Life is not determined by rules and regulations, nor is identity.

How the extracted desires could be honoured in practice

I led a learning opportunity where participants focussed on challenging the perception that First Nation peoples were all the same, noting that diversity within Indigeneity was not recognized. The desire attached to this opportunity is what Reiss (2002) identified as acceptance, which is the desire for positive self-regard. I did not influence this team's work, and I think it supports the importance of my research and the significance of providing opportunities for dialogue around Indigeneity.

The indicator that desire cannot be fulfilled by institutions is most connected with idealism. According to Reiss (2002), idealism is the desire for social justice. Reiss (2000) describes social justice as a motivator for people to "get involved and contribute to the betterment of humankind" (p. 55). There are Indigenous leadership groups that work tirelessly to advocate for Indigenous rights, such as the Assembly of First Nations, Congress of Aboriginal People, Native Women's Association of Canada and many more. These organizations tend to deal with macro issues. Communities are also heavily involved in advocating for their nations and collective Wabanaki. There are also departments such as education, fisheries, housing, health, child and family services, etc., in communities that advocate for Indigenous rights within their specialized fields. I am sure a concern of all is the collection and reporting of data.

One way to actualize idealism would be to challenge current data collection methods that are determined for Indigenous peoples. It would be beneficial to reclaim and develop Indigenous-led and -informed data collection processes that government institutions could use. More importantly Indigenous communities could use the data indicators to match their goals, aspirations, and opportunities. As it stands, government data collection (much like the enhancement template included in chapter two) is based

on colonial values and interpretations. Integral to my reflection has been the extraction of desire data indicators from my documentary film. Davis et al. (2012) assert that, "The indicator represents an assertion of power to produce knowledge and to define or shape the way the world is understood" (p. 76). Outside data collection indicators need to be replaced by First Nation understandings and experiences of the world. I am not saying that my indicators are the way forward, but they are better positioned to provide useful data than those included in the provincial enhanced data template where the number of students in level three courses was a valued measure.

Reflection #4: What are the possible advantages that I have in terms of personal history and professional competence?

The possible advantage I had in terms of personal history was where I grew up. As shown in my documentary film, my childhood was surrounded by nature and tranquil spaces. Lippard (1997) describes place as having "influenced her life as much as, perhaps, more than people" (p. 4). The connection people make to place, in my opinion, is vital to our development. I captured this in the film by including footage of places from my childhood. My house was ten feet from a beautiful valley with a tree swing, 40 feet from a rifle range made into ski trails in the forest, a five-minute walk to breathtaking French Fort Cove , and a five-minute walk to a horse stable and recreation centre. I did not realize what these spaces meant to me until I revisited them with my camera last year. I captured a lot of still footage, which required me to stand in silence as I filmed the scenery and sounds at various locations that I frequented as a youth. While doing this, I reflected on what it meant as a child to have safe spaces and how

lucky I was to have these outdoor places to play. This led to the realization that *desire is place-based.*

In my documentary film, I draw attention to the idea that place can foster desire. After my reflection on the film, I realized how important place attachment was for me and its impact on my ability to live desirably. I have read literature on how Indigenous peoples connect with the land, such as the eloquent stories by many Indigenous authors in Kimmerer's (2013) book *Braiding Sweetgrass*, but found no literature on place attachment for First Nation peoples and how to foster this vital part of development through education.

Listening to the words from my mother's letters in my documentary film made me realize that the foundation of my desire was nourished by her. There is also footage of her describing a highlight of the year—an award that I received from the University of New Brunswick women's volleyball team. Her words were always encouraging and loving, which made me believe that I was worth the effort of self-care. This example fostered the idea that *desire requires self-care, self-awareness, and purposeful action*, which can be nourished through *social interaction.* She encouraged me to advance myself through education, stay involved in sports and activities, and be aware of how I was reacting to the world, which she believed was a way to secure independence and valuable life skills.

How the extracted desires could be honoured in practice

Tranquility belongs to the indicator that desire is place-based. I also chose to include the second and third indicator in this section. The second desire indicator was that desire requires self-care, self-awareness, and purposeful action and the desire attached to it is

independence. The third is that desire requires social interaction, and the desire assigned to it was social contact. Reiss (2002) noted that tranquility aims to avoid experiencing anxiety and stressful situations, and independence is the desire for self-reliance. For social interaction Reiss (2002) noted companionship with peers as being important. These desires might be hard to fulfill when one is monitored by the Indian Act, which created segregated reservations that are chronically underfunded by the federal government. These factors impact First Nation people's place attachment, independence, and opportunity for social interaction in various ways, one being that one may be living in dire conditions. Palmater (2019) noted:

> The chronic lack of funding for housing on-reserve has also created a crisis — one that auditors general have raised on more than one occasion. Federal funding for on-reserve housing does not keep up with population growth, inflation or the actual costs of constructing homes in remote or northern First Nations. As a result, more than 26 percent of all homes on-reserve are in need of major repair, some homes are uninhabitable and thousands have sat on waiting lists for homes for decades. (Palmater, 2019)

Self-governance would alleviate these issues because First Nation peoples could appropriately collect data and administer the funds required to service their needs and opportunities. Living in places that are falling apart without clean drinking water or that are miles from the nearest city has devastating impacts on people's ability to be independent, to socially interact and attach to place. Since my research on desire purported that I lived desirably through attaching to place and being socially connected

and independent, I wanted to action my research through learning opportunities and witness the outcome.

I experienced the absolute beauty of nature as shown in my film. These places were comforting, safe, and affirmed my connection with nature, which moves everything into a broader perspective. I embarked on a journey to address place attachment through a learning opportunity I led that focussed on place. We explored the differences and similarities between land connection and place attachment and learned about them through interaction with community members and theory. Participants engaged with First Nation people and developed a way to foster place attachment. There are many ways that place attachment can be nourished and various reasons why we attach to place; these had to be addressed in their projects.

Knowing that "settler spaces" offered more places to attach to, we set out on a journey to foster place attachment on First Nation communities. We asked the younger participants questions like, if you could imagine a wonderful place to play what would it look and feel like? What could you do there? Who would be there? Do you have a favourite place already? Why is it your favorite place? This information led to our community/participant joint projects where we actively addressed fostering place attachment through the voices of youth and community partners, collecting and sharing these learning opportunities and outcomes, celebrating successes, talking with each other and across various cultural groups, acknowledging people and their desires, seeing children smile, working together with industry and various community members, while simultaneously moving toward desire. This a prime example of actioning desire.

Reflection #5: What might be the barriers that my personal history and professional

competence can create during data collection?

I do not bring traditional practices or Mi'kmaw language into my research. This may be viewed as a weakness or a strength. A barrier that my personal history might create is that people may focus on why I did not incorporate cultural practices into the film. As noted in the film, my family's generational experiences with colonization influenced our participation or non-participation in traditional practices. Nothing stopped me from practicing traditionalism and honestly, I would have more easily found acceptance among Indigenous peoples if I did. I would also have fit into how I feel the dominant group thought I should act, which was to be visibly Indigenous by wearing certain clothing and/or performing certain behaviours. Because I did not fit into these essentialist beliefs about how First Nation peoples should act, I spent much of my life being treated as an outsider. At the end of the film, I ask if I am the "Indian you had in mind," because the Indian that most have in mind is the one at the beginning of my documentary film, the one with problems and pathologies conjured by settlers. I am not that Indian (King, 2007).

A friend of our family watched my documentary film, and his thoughts were that I was assimilated. He is a traditional person and claims to embed the seven sacred teachings into his life, yet he is quick to judge other First Nation peoples if they do not fit into his version of First Nation. LaRocque (2001) states that "both society and academia, including some Aboriginal people, have traditionally assumed any cultural change by Aboriginal peoples must ipso facto be viewed as assimilation. But Aboriginal peoples have long demonstrated that change, even under enforced circumstances, does

not result in cultural amnesia" (p. 163). I tried to capture this misalignment between philosophical positioning (the clip from the film *Smoke Signals*) in my documentary film. I also included a more in-depth (not seen in the film) misalignment chart below. If we want to move toward desirability, then we must stop judging each other; *desire does not judge and requires a new mindset.*

How the extracted desires could be honoured in practice

There were four desires that this indicator fulfilled: curiosity, honour, idealism, and independence. I will not explain them as I did in the above sections, but I believe the way to foster this indicator is to provide opportunities for students to be who they want to be without any assigned labels or expectations. Provide learning opportunities and watch students flourish. I have been teaching at the university level for over a year and my students have had discussions with well over 150 First Nation peoples on various educational projects. I have yet to hear one community member note damage as the foundational underpinning of any community-based project. When presented with an opportunity from a desire-based lens, community members come up with desire-based ideas. This points to an issue of truth that is being maintained.

Reflection #6: How are the emerging data assimilating with my prior knowledge, making me revisit a stance?

I reflect differently on this question than the others. I have a lot of prior knowledge from my professional and personal experiences with Indigeneity. This knowledge derives from my experiences with Indigeneity and may not be same for other Indigenous peoples or communities. The strategy I utilize to reflect on how the emerging data is assimilating with my prior knowledge to make me resist a stance is

through a sort of Venn chart. This is informed by Chang's (2008) suggested Venn diagram process, which involves compare-and-contrast techniques. He notes "that you select one written by an 'other of similarity' and another by an 'other of difference' to you" and that "this process is likely to dissipate classification of people on the basis of superficial similarities and differences" (p. 101). I incorporate the contrasting ideals one must contend with when trying to reframe their thinking toward desire. I wanted to capture the various ways in which I conceptualize Indigeneity.

The chart includes the aspects of Indigeneity that are not shown on film. The seven sacred teachings, Indigenous realities as I have experienced them, and life in the community as informed by conversations with friends and family and personal experiences, are charted to show the divergence between a philosophical model or belief system and how it can clash with lived realities. I believe the film captured the misalignment I feel toward narratives of Indigeneity, but the chart adds an unseen element. I started this journey with the intention of struggling against damage narratives but when pulling out my desire indicators from the documentary film reflection, it became apparent that my feelings of misalignment went deeper. I chose the seven sacred teachings (Marshall, 2021) because they are considered a belief system for many Mi'kmaq peoples.

The first column lists the seven sacred teachings. The second column represents my lived reality as an Indigenous person compared to the seven sacred teachings. It is difficult to accept a way of life or a value system that has not made space for me. It is hard to feel respect, which is one of the seven sacred teachings, when people judge where you live as an indicator of your authenticity. The last column lists Indigenous

realities, although these realities are not the fault of Indigenous peoples. It shows how our lives, which are governed in subjective ways, contrast with an Indigenous belief system. The chart represents not only my personal experiences with elements of Indigeneity but also how my reality contrasts with beliefs and systems that are in place to govern my life.

Table 1: Misalignment Chart (informed by chronological timeline)

Seven Sacred Teachings	**My Experiences with Indigeneity**	**Reality (informed by friends, family, and personal experience)**
Love	If you have one parent who is not First Nation, you are not really First Nation. (Is there love in this unconscious bias?)	You are accepted as an authentic First Nation person if you live on a First Nation community.
Honesty	If you do not partake in ceremony, you are viewed as an outsider.	You are assimilated if you do not partake in ceremony.
Respect	If you do not live on a First Nation community, you do not understand what it is like to be First Nation.	You do not own land on communities, nor do you own your house (in most cases). It is challenging to move from the community because you do not own your land, so it isn't considered an asset. Therefore, the bank will not recognize it for a loan.
Truth	There is lateral discrimination within and across communities.	Comments made to me by Indigenous peoples: You look white; that is why they hired you. You never lived on a First Nation community, so you do not understand First Nation peoples or issues. You only act Indian when it's convenient for you. You should speak your language.

Humility	If you have "certain qualities," you think you are better than other First Nation peoples.	If you do not live on the community but are a band member, you do not have the same access to services as those living on the community.
Patience	It takes strength to deal with discriminatory comments from both non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples.	There have been many instances in meetings and other occasions where I have witnessed Indigenous peoples practice no patience at all.
Wisdom	If you do not practice traditionalism, you have been assimilated.	This quality seems to be something only Elders can embody.

When I hear First Nation peoples explaining the teaching of respect, I wonder why we do not consistently practice this teaching with each other, and how we can continue to hold a set of values that contrasts with our realities. As I was extracting desire indicators and revisiting prior stances, the idea of misalignment between values and realities kept nagging me. I am not questioning the value of the seven sacred teachings; what my data exposed is that desire cannot be framed without actions being assigned to it. My documentary film captured the various actions I performed to move toward desire, like playing university sport, hosting parties at my home, spending time with family, etc. If we honour desire and do not assign actions, there is a possibility of reproducing misalignment. For example, if I am practicing and sharing the seven sacred teachings with others, I should ensure that I am speaking respectfully to, with, and about people.

I now move from the "unseen" misalignment, which deepens the understanding of the penetration of damage discourses, to a showing of the data extracted from my documentary film. The below chart includes Reiss's (2002) 16 basic desires of human

nature, damage discourses of Indigeneity, and the desire indictors I extracted from the reflection of my documentary film.

Table 2: Desire Chart (chart includes the 16 basic human desires but I scored low in some areas, so I did not include them in my research)

16 Basic Desires of Human Nature	Behaviour Associated with the Desire	Indigenous Realities (Damage Informed)	Desire Indicators from my Documentary Film	Personal Desire Profile
Acceptance: the desire for positive-self regard	Assertive behaviour	Through a CDA of statistics reports included in chapter four it is inferred that the current structure of Indigenous understandings requires First Nation peoples to be situated within a framework of monoculturalism	Desire is not dependent on cultural attributes	Medium
Romance: the desire for aesthetically appealing experiences	Sexual flirting and courting			Low
Curiosity: the desire for understanding	Truth seeking and problem solving	Included at the beginning of my documentary film are the multiple ways Indigenous peoples are framed, leading to the conclusion that the dominant framework for how Indigenous peoples can be understood is one of damage.	Desire does not judge. Desire requires a new mindset. Learning to desire is a form of desire.	High
Eating: the desire to consume food	Eating, dining, cooking			Low
Family: the desire to raise children and spend time with siblings	Parenting, homemaking	Family is particularly important to Indigenous peoples and there is a narrative of "it takes a village to raise a child." This is widely written about in Indigenous scholarship and relationality is a part of Indigenous academic integrity (Kovach, 2021, Smith, 2012 Wilson, 2008)	A strong support system creates a pathway to desire.	High
Honour: the desire for upright character	Character morality, principled behaviour	Honoring Elders and ceremony are revered ways within many Indigenous communities (Windchief & San Pedro, 2019)	Desire does not judge. Desire requires a new mindset. Desire requires you to work	Medium to High

			toward knowledge acquisition and understanding.	
Idealism: the desire for social justice	Social justice and fair play	Social justice is a constant battle: missing and murdered, high incarceration rates, suicide rates, etc. (evident in my film when news clippings are presented).	Desire cannot be fulfilled by institutions. Desire requires a new mindset.	High
Independence: the desire for self-reliance	Self-reliance	Sovereignty has been an area of contention since contact. We are currently ruled by the Indian Act and most of our lands are occupied by settlers (Schouls, 2003).	Desire requires self-care, self-awareness, and purposeful action. Desire requires a new mindset. Desire is place-based.	Medium to High
Order: the desire for structure and stability	Makes many rules, clean, "perfect," compulsive			Low
Physical Activity: the desire for muscle exercise	Physical activity and sports	Diabetes and other chronic illnesses related to health and exercise, movement to more facilities on communities.	Desire is fostered through social interaction.	Medium
Power: the desire for influence of will	Leadership, Achievement	Indigenous peoples were never in any leadership positions in my various places of employment (schools, district, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development) or any other government department that I worked with (Health, Social Development, Post-Secondary Education Training and Labour (PETL), Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries, Aboriginal Affairs, Indigenous Services Canada).	Desire is fostered through hard work and Dedication.	High
Saving: the desire to collect things	Collecting and frugality			Low

Social Contact: the desire for companions hip with peers	Companionship, joining clubs and groups	Intergenerational trauma does not just affect individuals; it can impact entire communities, which can cause positive peer relationships to be strained (Seto, 2020).	Desire is being involved. Desire is nurtured through social interaction.	Medium to High
Status: the desire for respect based on social standing	Concern with reputation, showing off	I would argue that Indigenous peoples currently have no social standing and if we do it is a constant fight to be heard.		Low
Tranquility: the desire to avoid experiencing anxiety and pain	Avoids stressful situations	Intergenerational trauma, suicide rates, mental health issues, poverty, etc., all contribute to living in upheaval; some say ceremony helps to deal with this.	Desire is place-based.	Medium to High
Vengeance: the desire to confront those who frustrate or offend us	Aggressive, revenge	Indigenous peoples use whatever outlet they must to express this subjectification and it comes out in various ways like protesting.	Desire can be in the shape of resistance. Desire requires a new mindset.	Medium to High

The main identifiers of desire that I pulled from my reflection are also separately listed in Appendix D. Reiss (2002) notes:

> The desires give you a new way of analyzing your behaviour; when you learn the 16 basic desires, you can figure out how your behaviour and life goals are connected to them. Because your desires indicate the path of psychological growth that you need to take to become who you want to be… (p. 17)

As indicated in the chart, the basic desires are at odds with Indigenous realities. For example, power was rated high in my desire profile, and data from my chronological timeline and film showed that I held leadership positions in sports and my professional

life. I did not have any First Nation teammates from elementary to post-secondary school, and during my professional life there were no First Nation peoples in positions of leadership (Minister, Deputy Minister, Assistant Deputy Minister, Director) across government. This disparity can impact the relationship First Nation peoples have with government. If there is not a chance for First Nation peoples to hold these positions or if the system is not an environment in which Indigenous peoples want to work, then it can impact the power dynamics between groups. In this example, the circumstances are not conducive for Indigenous peoples to desire or fulfill the desire for power. If I only consider the discourses (problematizing, pathologizing and culturizing) extracted from the literature review about Indigenous lives, the stark reality is that we do not have the societal framework or supports in place to foster the desires noted by Reiss (2000).

After applying reflexivity to my documentary film, my extracted desire indicators from the documentary film reflection fit under certain desires as noted by Reiss (2002). When I did the desire profile included in Reiss's (2002) book, outside of the documentary film the results were concentrated in certain areas. The usefulness of viewing my data this way is that it reveals actions I never realized were moving toward or determined by certain desires. I added my personal indicators because I know that individual desires do determine pathways in our lives and what I scored high in, some may not. This was not the purpose of the chart, but I felt it needed to be included. I think viewing actions first and then fitting them into desire categories supports the dependability of the research. If another First Nation person who lived desirability were to embark on this journey, their actions could be extracted and matched with certain desires.

If you were to watch the film again with these desires in mind you would see that my actions and/or data move toward these desires, and they are used interchangeably throughout my life. Some desires are supported by family and some by the social structures in which I participated. I do not propose to create a desire-based framework for Mi'kmaq peoples. I also do not suggest that Indigenous peoples need to change their behaviours. What I am attempting to do is pull from my experiences of damage and desire to negotiate a more expansive Mi'kmaq identity. I believe one way to do this is to focus on desire-based strategies which include the desires I identified through reflexivity.

5.8 Reflection on Discourse

After watching my film, I thought about the overall impact of the three main discourses on my life: problematizing, pathologizing, and culturizing. I read about fight-or-flight response and how over time it "results in the physiological (e.g., increased heart rate and shallow breathing), cognitive, (e.g., alertness and worry), and behavioral (e.g., escape) symptoms of anxiety" (Milosevic & McCabe, 2015, p. 180). This aspect of identity is important to learn about. I want to know how living in a state of constant upheaval—of false truths being produced, stereotypes, statistics reports and data spewing out damage, media and headlines reporting our deficits, poverty, etc.—impacts our ability to desire. I am not talking about intergenerational trauma in relation to Indian Residential Schools or any one event but more so how the contemporary impacts of recolonization through reconciliation (i.e., the TRC calls to action that ask the government to collect statistics) are furthering the maintenance of power for the dominant group. Contemporary practices are contributing greatly to damage-based

understandings, and this takes a much more deliberate communal, individual, familial response than a request or demand on the government.

Going back to the idea of reframing, we need to take much greater control over the narrative. I am proud of how I have handled life's challenges. You can witness those in my film, buried in the graves of my family and in the eyes of my mother on the church steps in her white gown. I have battled discourses in multiple ways but work to reimagine a future for myself that considers the past, present, and future. What these discourses have done for me is set a bar, a comparative model to move away from. Lear (2008) notes that "This hope is radical in that it is aiming for a subjectivity that is at once Crow [people] and does not yet exist" (104). Much like a cycle of abuse, passed down over generations, these discourses surely impacted my thought patterns, produced self-depreciating behaviors, self-sabotaging behaviors, and issues with relationships. What is important is not so much how the discourses negatively impacted my life or what I think about them but imagining a future despite them and thriving in that space; the what if and why not. The sixth chapter tends to what Smith (2012) refers to as reframing.

CHAPTER 6: Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the key findings of my research, future recommendations for research on desire, the main contributions of my study and the conclusion.

6.1 Key Findings

This research aimed to expose damage-based understandings of First Nation peoples and challenge those understandings by highlighting desire. Based on applying CDA to various external documents, three main discourses were uncovered: problematizing (creating the narrative that First Nation peoples are a problem that needs to be fixed), pathologizing (creating the narrative that First Nation peoples are sick and need to be healed), and culturizing (creating the narrative that there is one way First Nation peoples should behave that makes them First Nation). Qualitative analysis through autoethnography, CDA, and documentary film showed how these discourses have been taken up by society and institutions but mainly how my life experiences informed by desire struggled against these understandings. It is within that space that this research concludes that a desired-based lens is a much-needed addition to the understanding of First Nation peoples. This should be honoured as one of the main sources of understanding when developing policies, performing data collection, writing scholarship, and enacting educational practice. The results indicate that First Nation desires and desire-based understandings of First Nation peoples have been ignored and excluded.

I was exposed to racism my entire life; I did my best to deal with it, but it can really beat you down. When you are young, addressing injustices and unfairness seems unattainable so you try to find a way through the dark however you can. As I grew

older, I realized that my struggles with racism went beyond me, my family, and my community and that colonial violence was attacking, informing, and interfering with everything. This realization made me very cognizant and aware of how words were written and spoken, who was on the nightly news, what was being left out of curriculum and what was included, who was leading in government, who was suffering, and who was not.

The reason I approached my research from an autoethnographic lens was because I grew exhausted by the damage-based narratives in my personal, professional, and social life and felt that I did not identify with what was available. I am no longer taking a back seat to interpretations and ideologies of how I should act, speak, or present myself. Yes, I experienced racism, but no, I am not a problem, a pathology, or an adornment. Utilizing the love, nourishment, joy, success, and support that I experienced in life, I set out to capture this experience in a documentary film. The film is an expression, a resistance, an exclamation, a reclamation, a call to action, a truth, a lived reality, a counter story, a liberation, and a celebration of desire.

When I embarked on this journey, I expected to find that desire was not the lens that was being used to understand Indigenous peoples nor was it the lens that was informing societal understandings, policy, statistics, or educational practice. Through my literature review and application of CDA to external documents (some Indigenous scholarship, some calls to action from the TRC, and statistics reports), I learned that there were very limited resources on desire related to Indigeneity and that the documents I chose to analyze supported and perpetuated damage and essentialist discourses.

The results of my research, obtained through applying autoethnography to my life experiences and then a reflexive analysis of my documentary film, showed a counter story to damage. As suspected, the behaviours extracted from my film showed a life congruent with desire and matched the description of 10 basic human desires as noted by Reiss (2002). Utilizing my life experiences as a launching point to a broader conceptual understanding of First Nation peoples, I am confident that damage narratives are not only oppressive and untrue but maintained for reasons of ignorance and power. I am also confident through my research and current work within Indigenous education at the post- secondary level that there are ways to disrupt and dismantle this cycle of abuse and one way is through honouring desire.

My research shows a need for desire-based understandings but will only take hold if First Nation peoples actively work against damage. We can no longer accept statistics that frame us as damaged; educators who refuse to embed Indigenous peoples, worldviews, and realities in their teaching; research that frames us to be one way and only allows stories of pain. I encourage readers to consider damage-based studies with critical perspectives, to recognize how one is contributing to deficit constructions of Indigenous peoples and to challenge this framing in one's work. Disrupt the discourse before it takes hold.

6.2 Future Recommendations

An area for future study could be to look further into how desire is informing classroom practice. The questions proposed by Renga (2017) are one way into that investigation. He asks, "What does desire look like in classrooms, schools, teacher education and local communities? How does it form? What does it produce? Which desires are latent, and

which are privileged? How are multiple and competing desires navigated by individuals and communities?" (p. 264).

Foster Autonomy

One way to capture desire in the classroom would be through learning opportunities that foster autonomy. Tuck's (2009) quote included on page ii noted that "desire-based frameworks are concerned with understanding complexity, contradiction, and the self-determination of lived lives" (p. 416). If this is true, then educators who are working toward fostering desire need to pay attention to how they present, discuss and include First Nation identity in their teachings so they are not perpetuating essentialist beliefs. Tucks (2009) use of the term 'self-determination' brings a political nuance into the teaching of desire. Educators who are working toward desire need to explain to students the differences in terminology and dissect what terms mean and the power they carry, for example the word self-determination. In 2007, Article four in the UNDRIP included, "Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions (p. 8). This description lacks clarity and accountability, leaving educators at a loss when analyzing the term self-determination in relation to desire with students.

The term 'self-determination' is riddled in political ideologies and as Mills (2018) notes, 'self-determination is the language of our settler-colonizer" (p. 140). This moves the idea of freedom within self-determination into a colonized space. Rademaker (2020) noted, "Self-determination meant that Aboriginal people were 'free' to be Christians in their own way" and that this was "part of the legacy of the missionaries" (p.11). His

thoughts draw out the idea that self-determination can only be accomplished within the confines of colonial parameters. Simpson proposes that in relation to self-determination, "Aboriginal people's cultural rights to language received broader recognition from governments than their communication rights" (p. 11). This is a clear maintenance of power and exposes the essentializing notion that colonizers will allow for something that does not present a challenge to their power.

Pearson (2014), argued that self determination fails because it maintains "preservation of some kind of imagined cultural purity" which is subsuming and ignores Indigenous peoples genuine choices about "how to reconcile their cultures with the demands of development" (p. 47). Educators should not be presenting one way to be Indigenous to students. I led a learning opportunity that paired participants with community members to address negative perceptions that First Nation peoples were experiencing on and off First Nation communities. Participants were tasked to work with a First Nation partner from a community to address the identified perception with a desire-based approach. This approach to learning pushes community members to think about desire and acts against essentialism. One group led a pod cast panel with three First Nation peoples who talked about how they were feeling on the outside of the prevailing assumption that all First Nation peoples were traditional. Self-determination means different things to various people therefore positioning it as an act against colonialism alludes to the idea that it never existed at all.

Hand and Gresalfi (2015) analysed identity from a situational perspective and cite Greeno and MMAP (1998) to explain that "joint accomplishment refers to the idea that what someone does in a particular activity is always done in relation to what one has

opportunities to do" (p. 191). If self-determination in the learning environment is only positioned as an act of defiance or the way into identity formation, it dismisses what participants bring into learning the environment, how they interact, understand, and grapple with activities. Exposure to various life experiences is vital to how students engage with activities. Hand and Gresalfi (2015) write:

> One's participation [in learning] is interpersonal in that it frames how one recognizes and positions oneself (and is recognized and positioned by others), and the sense one makes of oneself in relation to both local and broader contexts.
>
> At the same time, one's participation is informational, in that it involves the use of the tools and practices of a discipline or community that can be leveraged in multiple ways. (p. 191)

This countering of damage exposes individuals, communities, and educators to desire. A future recommendation would be for educators and communities to actively seek out ways to utilize desire as the foundation of their practices and pedagogies while simultaneously working against essentialism and over arching terms like self-determination.

Storylines

The enhancement data collection template is an example of how First Nation students are framed in provincial schools. The CDA exposed the damage-framed strategies within this template, which in turn informs student, educator, administrator, guidance counsellor, etc., understandings. Further, "students come to school from homes and communities where they have developed values and orientations not encompassed by

the school" (Holland & Eisenhart, 1990, p. 7). This issue highlights the importance of nourishing and celebrating stories of desire not only in educational settings but also in communities and homes. As shown in my film, nourishing desire can impact our experiences with the world. Bohlin (2000) argues that "Genuine happiness…depends less on our academic success, money, and circumstances than it does on our virtue, our disposition to see well and choose wisely in all spheres of life. When we recognize what is worthwhile, we can choose to commit ourselves to a worthy purpose" (p .7).

I am currently involved with a research team focussed on changing storylines with strength-based pedagogies, which in part reflects on and analyzes the "stories" learners bring with them into the classroom that impact their learning (Wagner, Anderson, Herbel-Eisenmann, Huru, Culligan, DeWolfe, 2022). For example, the phrase "academic achievement gap" is often used when comparing First Nation and non-First Nation learners. This is a storyline that students are bringing into the classroom that can negatively affect their performance: I am underperforming compared to non-Indigenous students; I am not as smart as non-Indigenous students. How can these storylines of damage be disrupted? I put forth that one way would be through starting with the premise that First Nation students are desiring beings. The opportunities that I wrote about in chapter five include First Nation peoples as the drivers of educational practice. The implications might be that the research team will need to investigate classroom storylines and ones that live in the community outside of educational contexts. If a student loves hockey but does not enjoy school, what are the storylines of desire that the student is telling themselves about hockey? What are the storylines around the activity that the student enjoys and how might they be influencing a positive experience?

Ultimately, how can this desire-based storyline transfer to other areas of the student's life? We do not see this type of data collected. Desiring not only includes how the students perceive themselves but also how society perceives them in a certain context. Research should start with the fact that First Nation youth want to succeed; they have goals, dreams, and gifts, and they are diverse, talented, and determined. This would mean that the research team starts with desire and not a focus on deficit storylines as the foundation. The researcher's job is to not only identify what might stand in the way of desire but also disrupt the storylines that do and suggest ways forward based on this reframing—learning that is informed by and co-created with First Nation peoples challenges storylines. A recommendation for further work would then be for educators to partner more with First Nation communities in New Brunswick, document success, and make it public. Any practice that embodies a desire-based lens when working with First Nation peoples is furthering this work.

Professional Learning

A student may learn how to celebrate their desires, but their teachers may be overtaxed or unaware of how their understandings of First Nation peoples impact their practice. Educator ignorance would contribute to a damage-framed learning environment which is not conducive to desire. Professional learning for teachers on Indigeneity cannot only include how to incorporate Indigenous content into practice and cannot continue to be something educators are not mandated to do. I know from my professional experience that most educators are not including Indigenous content in their classrooms. I was a member of a school review team at EECD. Of the eleven classrooms that the review team visited, none of them mentioned First Nation peoples or topics. Professional learning around Indigenous education in New Brunswick over the last few years has

been largely centred around Indian Residential Schools and the TRC. McWilliam (2004) proposed that we see a desire to teach as "not a spontaneous inner feeling…but a product of training individuals in particular ways of thinking, speaking, and doing as a 'proper' teacher" (p. 147). This approach to teacher education mirrors the colonial ideologies that are perpetuated through statistic reports, totally dismissing desire. Teachers are not at fault; they are part of a conservative institution that requires them to take caution and detach from any unauthorized desires (Kelly, 1997) and push aside their desires to focus on educational outcomes and proficiency (Palmer, 1997).

As educators, we need to be aware of which desires are latent and which are privileged so that narratives of deficit or ideologies of superiority do not dominate the learning space. Connor and Allen (2010) posit that

> Learning encompasses the organization of possible futures. Classrooms and schools that support desire should understand that learning involves identity formation, where identity involves becoming recognized, and recognizing oneself, as a member of a community. Learning is thus fundamentally a relational and not an individual phenomenon. (p. 161)

This situates learning within an Indigenous paradigm by recognizing that knowledge is relational. It is difficult teaching outside of our cultural experiences, but privilege should not be ignored; there is a certain value system that is unconsciously part of schooling in New Brunswick. A recommendation for future research in this area might be to collect data on how many teachers are being exposed to professional learning that includes

Indigenous topics and how many teachers are working with First Nation communities in New Brunswick to meet the desires of First Nation students. Another future recommendation would be to interview teachers about their desires and how they may contrast with their obligations.

Reorganizing of Activities

Before I left my position at EECD, I developed an experiential and community-based learning program with some First Nation communities. This offering saw students bussed from schools to the community for two courses in the afternoon. The learning was based on community and student goals in economic development, sustainability, and passions. It connected students with industry, community experts, and mentors who were all, including students, part of the learning process.

Offering learning on communities did "not yet have conditions readily reassembled," meaning that there were no predetermined outcomes or values inherent in the learning, no system already in place (Nespor, 1994). This was a rearranging of activities. Utilizing the community as the learning environment allowed students to experience their social futures as engaged citizens. They participated in real-life learning from mentors who worked in their fields of passion and discovered opportunities for growth. The learning did not require new curriculum or any sort of disruption to the current system; it was simply a rearranging of activities.

> What if education was primarily concerned with shaping our hopes and passions—our visions of "the good life"—and not merely about the dissemination of data and information as inputs to our thinking? What if

> the primary work of education was the transforming of our imagination rather than the saturation of our intellect? (Smith, 2009, p. 18)

Situating learning opportunities on communities provides hope through fostering desire and place-based education that is relevant to student and community lives. Educational institutions mostly have students sitting in a classroom, learning from pre-determined curriculum based on colonial values and from one teacher (likely from the dominant group), not knowing how their learning translates to the real world and listening for a bell to move on to the next subject. Desire is fostered through learning that is relevant to students' lives and futures. A future recommendation would be to do more research in New Brunswick on learning opportunities that are taking place outside of schools and the successes of these approaches.

Desire is Everyone's Business

Reiss (2002) identifies two types of happiness: "Feel good happiness refers to the pleasant sensations people experience when they are watching a good movie…or eating their favorite dessert. Values-based happiness refers to the deep sense of satisfaction people experience when their lives are meaningful" (p. 1). Community members and organizations, families, individuals, educators, industry experts, etc., are all responsible for fostering desire and creating experiences that are meaningful to students. The education system does not have a monopoly on learning.

Vollmer (2010), reflecting on his work as an education critic for the American public school system, noted that "politicians, academics, members of the clergy, and business leaders saw public schools as a logical site for the assimilation of immigrants and the social engineering of the citizens—and workers—of the new

industrial age. They began to expand the curriculum and assign additional duties" (p. 32). He mapped a timeline filled with decades of what used to be the responsibility of communities and shows how they have been added to the duties of schools and teachers. He also noted that "America's schools were not designed to teach all children to high levels. They were designed to select and sort young people into two groups: a small handful of thinkers and a great mass of doers according to the workplace needs of an agro-industrial society" (p. 41). I wonder how educators can focus on desires (theirs, the communities', students') when they are overwhelmed with changes, demands, standardized testing, political whims, etc. Future desire work could focus on how to reverse this trend, "how to articulate a new vision of desire and the necessary conditions for its enactment" (Renga, 2017, p. 279). Youth are co-constructors of their destiny. Without an educational environment for desire to thrive, the education system will continue to produce value-laden learning.

6.3 Contributions to the field

I began this journey because I did not feel that my life experiences as a First Nation person were represented in statistics gathering and reporting, which were framing Indigenous peoples as damaged—nor were my experiences as a non-traditional person represented in Indigenous scholarship. I was also worried that the calls to action from the TRC, which were driving my professional work at the time and asked the government to collect statistics on Indigenous peoples, would further damage narratives. I challenged this trend by bringing to light my strengths and desires because I believed that my story was ultimately the story of others. Historically our story has been told for us, so this research was a way of taking back control of the narrative.

In the literature review, I noted decades of research that furthered colonization and focussed on Indigenous peoples as the research subject. This research aimed to prove our damage and come up with ways to solve it. The research also noted that Indigenous researchers are now taking more control over what and how research is done with and by Indigenous peoples. The essentialist section exposed researchers who were questioning definitions of Indigeneity. The final section on desire showed how it is lacking within definitions of Indigeneity and scholarship, and described what impacts desire and how it can be made visible. This created the space I needed to delve into desire-based research and address a gap in the literature.

I analyzed three government-led statistics reports: The Fact Sheet on Aboriginal Peoples, the New Brunswick Health and Wellness Survey and the Enhanced Programs and Services Data Collection Template as well as the TRC reports. When I applied CDA to these reports, it exposed subjective language such as “they need,” value-laden indicators, dominant group comparisons, colonial ideologies, blaming discourse, stereotypes, pathologies around addictions, damage research and data collection on areas such as suicide rates and chronic disease, victimization, problematizing discourses, and stories of deficit. The main question I pondered when reading the calls to action was, Why are we asking the government (TRC) to collect more data and reports on Indigenous peoples?

Under the three main discourse themes (problematizing, pathologizing, and culturizing), I formulated collective statements that captured what Indigenous scholarship, the TRC, and statistics reports contributed to those themes. For example, each area of focus utilized deficit understandings of Indigenous peoples, drew on subjective and

dichotomous language, highlighted differences and made comparisons between settler and Indigenous peoples, perpetuated victimization, and used value-laden statements, stereotypes, pathologies, and deficit stories. Misalignment between what I read and how I experienced life was apparent in all the categories.

In Indigenous scholarship, there were references to traditionalism and generalizing statements about how Indigenous peoples live with which I did not connect. The statistics reports did not mirror my life experiences as a Mi'kmaq person. I challenged these discourses of damage by focussing on the desire behaviours associated with the identified desire indicators extracted from my documentary film and explored how they contribute to reframing.

6.4 Conclusion

My research aimed to identify that desire was not informing understandings of Indigenous peoples. The central questions for this research were as follows: (1) How have the statistics reports, TRC documents, and Indigenous scholarship, which were mainly used in my profession in New Brunswick between the years 2008 and 2018, informed Mi'kmaq identity? What are the social, political, and historical influences of these documents on the formation of Mi'kmaq identity? (2) How do my life experiences as a Mi'kmaq person, as captured on film, contribute to a more expanded dialogue of Mi'kmaq identity? (3) How does desire inform an expanded dialogue of Mi'kmaq identity and how might this dialogue be applied to statistics gathering and reporting, the TRC, and Indigenous scholarship?

To address these questions, I critically analyzed the discourses exposed through CDA in some Indigenous scholarship, statistics reports and certain calls to action from the TRC.

These external documents support the perpetuation of essentialized ways of being which stagnate desire-based understandings. When there is only one way to understand Indigenous peoples, it directly affects many social systems, like education. Through counter stories of desire and a deliberate move toward desire-based strategies, I believe there will be a shift in how Indigenous peoples are understood and what spaces we occupy. Future research will be needed on the effect of implementing desire-based strategies when working with Indigenous topics, peoples, and communities.

The research shows that I live desirably as a First Nation person and have actualized desire throughout my life. This might have potential for other First Nation peoples to capture their stories of desire and use what they learn from an analysis like this to impact practices in their speciality areas. For example, I am an educator and utilize desire-based strategies and understandings of Indigenous peoples in my courses. Our time should not be misspent trying to fulfill a pre-determined criterion of how to be in this world. LaRocque (2001) posits that nations need to recognize that they are always in a state of cultural fluidity, “In fact, cultural continuity happens through cultural change. We must...shed the notion that cultural change is foreign to Indigenous cultures, whether in precontact times or now. The point here is that by taking our rightful place in our contemporary world, we are breathing cultural continuity" (p. 163). We need to desire greatly, and through this desiring our Indigeneity will shine through. Our relationship with Canada is not one to be proud of and the discourses stemming from this oppositional relationship have bled their way into how we are experiencing the world. It has negatively affected our health, educational attainments, our interactions with each other, and maybe even our ability to love ourselves unconditionally.

Storytelling has always been a means of transferring and sharing knowledge for

Indigenous people. Kovach (2009) writes:

> Stories remind us of who we are and of our belonging. Stories hold within them knowledges while simultaneously signifying relationships… They are active agents within a relational world, pivotal in gaining insight into a phenomenon… (pp. 94–99)

My counter story is meant to inspire readers to recognize how First Nation identity can be expanded by disrupting discourses and ideologies. There is a choice in this world, become a passive recipient to those laying claims on our desires, or desire so greatly that we change the world around us. I aim to illuminate and honour desire and hope that my journey lights your way.

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Appendix A: First Nation Enhancement Data Collection Template (Government of New Brunswick, 2018)

APPENDIX E

First Nation Enhancement Data Collection

General Data
Total School Population
Number of First Nation Students at each grade level
Graduation Rate of First Nation Students (#in grade 12/# graduated)
Grade Retention Rate (Grades K-8)
Number of First Nation Students on SEP
Number of referrals to Alt Ed
Number of students absent on bi-annual basis:
• Days absent (5-10)
• Days absent (10-20)
• Days absent (20+)
Details on actions taken to address student attendance
Number of suspensions
Types of suspensions
Types of interventions following suspensions
Number of FN students meeting with FN support worker/guidance
List of student cultural activities at each school
Details on Transition Process from Band Operated to District School
Provincial School Improvement Plans – List Strategies Identified for First Nation Students
First Nation Enrollment by Course Level (Gr. 11-12)
English Language Arts 121
English Language Arts 122
English Language Arts 123
English Language Arts 111
English Language Arts 112
English Language Arts 113
Calculus 120
Pre-Calculus B 120
Pre-Calculus A 120
Foundations of Math 120
Financial and Workplace Math 120
Pre-Calculus 110
Foundations of Math 110
Financial and Workplace Math 110
Biology/Chemistry/Physics 121
Biology/Chemistry/Physics 122
Biology/Chemistry/Physics 111
Biology/Chemistry/Physics 112
Biology/Chemistry/Physics 113
Modern History 111
Modern History 112
Modern History 113
Assessment Data
EYE-DA Results
Literacy Assessment Type and Results
Numeracy Assessment Type and Results
Provincial Assessment Results

Appendix B: Data Catalogue

Audio and visual films recorded for my documentary film (over 233 which do not include the multiple takes for each clip). I thought a quick video of the media bin might be better than including written pages of cataloguing.

https://youtube.be/TU-TVQ8BKgY

Included on the next page is the data catalogue for external and internal data as well as an example of the B-roll catalogue.

External Data (professional life informed)	**Descriptor**	**Personal Data**	**Descriptor**	**Footage (B-roll)**	**Training and Preparation for Documentary Film**
Indigenous scholarship	Mainly Smith and Kovach (theoretical frameworks and axiology)	Written Chronological Timeline of Events	Chronological timeline of life events People Who Have Been Important to You- How it made me Think and Feel Places Where Significant Events in Your Life Occurred- How it made me Think and Feel Activities or Experiences Important to You- How it made me Think and Feel Songs Sang to Me- How it made me Think and Feel Proverbs Passed Down to Me- How it made me Think and Feel Story Titles: 1.Earliest Memory 2.5yrs old 3.6yrs old 4.16yrs old 5.19yrs old 6.21yrs old 7.22yrs old 8.24yrs old 9.26yrs old 10.29yrs old 11.32yrs old 12.35yrs old 13.36yrs old 14.37yrs old	**Travelled to the following locations for footage:** **Natoaganeg First Nation**- graveyard, powwow site, grandmothers former land, mother's yard **St. Joachims Cemetery** – Uncle and Grandmother gravesites **Nordin** French Fort Cove The Valley- reflection on colonization The Rifle Range The Rec-centre The Ballfield **Douglastown** Gretna Green Elementary School- reflection on school experience **St Samuels Cemetery**- Fathers' gravesite reflection **Newcastle** Harkins Middle School-	Training NB Film Cooperative (3 sessions) Training UNB on film (Dec) YouTube video training on documentary film Movavi- training on how to use the software Snaploader- training on how to use the software Melody Loops- training on how to use the software Met with technician to figure out how to move footage from VHS to USB

			15.40yrs old 16. Grandmothers house 17.Elementary Experiences- academic 18. Band Card 19. High School Intercom 20. Friends? 21.Bruces Death 22. Fathers Death 23. Grandmothers Death 24. Mothers' experiences – childhood, Indian Day School, and community 25. Attack from Indigenous Woman – surgery 26. Sisters' trauma 27. Sports – elementary, middle, high, university 28. Relationships- family, personal, work 29. Work Experiences- discrimination overt and hidden 30. Mentor stories 31.Medical Trauma 32. My son	footage of former site and reflection on school experience Miramichi Valley High School- footage on site and reflection on school experience **East Point** Cottage footage at beach	

Statistic Reports	Fact Sheet on Aboriginal Peoples, New Brunswick Health and Wellness Survey, First Nation Enhancement Data Report Template. Truth and Reconciliation 94 Calls to Action				
External Data (society-included in film)					
Media Representations - written	News articles (CBC and GLOBAL)				
Media Representations - visual	News Broadcasts (TVO, APTN, CBC, TEDTalk, Footage of Senate)				
External Personal Data (included in film)	Letters from mother, archival footage, photos, awards (scholastic and sports), song from childhood (sang in film)				

B-Roll Catalogue Example

Location	Time	Clip Summary	Act
December 12, 2021 Natoaganeg First Nation – Mom's front yard	3 minutes 9:22am	Placed photo of my grandmother in the tree that was left on her old homestead. Tried to capture 'nature' sounds but traffic was heavy. Sun in weird spot and seemed to blur the image. Tried this scene multiple times. Deleted all clips except this one. Not sure it will be of any use. I could cut clip down and only use image with moving leaves for a few seconds. This might fit in the part where I talk about her funeral and move to images. Labelled N1- Gram	**3**
Moms' backyard	3:54 minutes 11:34am	Holding my grandmother's photo, I talked about the trauma that took place on the property. Main point "inherited their strength" Can hear traffic but its not that bad.	**1**
	3:21 minutes 12:45pm	Re-did the scene in my mother's back yard, not holding the photo and not using tripod. Can hear traffic.	
	3:44 minutes 1:54pam	Mothers back yard because too much fog coming from my mouth in N1, 2, 3. I am also shivering too much in N3. I talk about my grandmother and mothers' strength and how I came from a long line of strong woman. Did not use tripod or mic.	
	4:34 minutes 3:33pm	Re-did the scene in moms' backyard. If I include this clip, I will use this one, it is likely way too long. It is a bit personal for the doc film. No tripod or mic. Labelled N4. *Decided not to use any of this footage in my documentary film but it took an entire day of filming and editing to get the two clips I wanted.	

Appendix C: Documentary Film

Learning to Desire https://youtu.be/8kqm6bP3Lwo

Appendix D: Desire Indicators from Documentary Film Reflection

Learning to desire, is a form of desire – This aligns with my thinking from the beginning of this journey. Desire is not something we just land in; there is an entire learning process to get there.

Desire can be in the shape of resistance – This is in direct contrast to my prior beliefs. I am acutely aware of damage discourses, so anything positioned as resistance was alarming. I would like to go back and read some of the research I categorized as resistant to this new lens to see if it could be interpreted as a move toward desire. If one is resisting stereotypes, this can be positioned in a way that is not deficit-based.

Desire requires you to face your fears – Overcoming things that you fear transform into love of self.

A strong support system creates a pathway to desire – I always knew that my mother was my saving grace but until I put her letters into story and visited places from my childhood, I did not realize that she was there all along. If she was not there, things would have been very different for me. This makes me think about all the First Nation peoples who were turned into statistics, and I wonder if they got to experience love.

Desire is nurtured through social interaction – If we do not spend time with people outside of our cultural groups then we allow societal discourse to determine how we feel about people. I know many First Nation peoples who would rather stay on the rez than interact with non-Indigenous peoples. This is related to fear of not being accepted, avoidance of racism, misconceptions of understanding, and I believe nurtured through the "race industry." Getting to know people fosters empathy and it is good for the soul.

Desire is fostered by hard work and dedication – Nothing in life is free and everything must be worked for. When I reflect on the awards in my documentary film, none of them came without hard work. I look at the dates on my degrees and can think of stories in my life that were horrible at the same time I would have received the degree. Any of the stories would have been grounds to drop out, but I did not. Dedicating time toward your passions can train your brain to want more and although we all veer off the path time and again, it is well worth the struggle.

Desire is not dependent on cultural attributes – I am First Nation and I do not practice traditionalism. I have been able to desire; therefore, I contend that including cultural attributes in your life are not directly related to desire. They may be for some but not for me.

Desire cannot be fulfilled by institutions – The documentary film attempts to bring out "the institution" as a major contributor to and perpetuator of damage. Communities then need to figure out what is strong within communities and demand that institutions support their journey toward desire. Communities cannot rely on the institution to fix issues; they are not capable, nor do they have the power to do so. Nor should we give them the power to do so.

Self-care is an act of desire – It is easy to get caught up in damage and allow it to seep into our lives in harmful ways. Taking care of ourselves is vital to being able to desire.

Desire requires self-awareness and purposeful action – We must understand what has been influencing our conceptual map to reframe it. Once understanding is accomplished, actions need to be directed toward this reframing. Like my mama said, "Know how you were programmed so you can change the program."

Desire is place-based – Desire is not contingent on whether you live on a First Nation community. The spaces where I grew up off the First Nation community were beautiful, safe, and nurturing for the soul. I went outside to play after school and on the weekends and did not return home until I could hear my mother shouting my name across the dusky sky. You cannot grow up in a community that is in turmoil and feel safe and nurtured. The space depends on more than location; it also depends on love of family.

Desire does not judge – We cannot support a move toward desire and then judge each other by ridiculous unwritten rules of what makes someone Indigenous. Desiring greatly means acceptance and a purposeful move toward desire.

Desire requires a new mindset – We need to find a way to understand ourselves as desirable and as able-bodied people who can desire greatly. We need to keep putting out stories of our desires, successes, achievements, goals, and strengths, and demand that anyone who wants to be a part of our story does the same.

Appendix E: Consent Forms

Consent Form: Use of Family Archival Footage

Consent of Participant

Research is in compliance with the Research Ethics Board: File Number REB #2021-038

By signing this consent form, you are not waiving your legal rights or releasing the investigator or involved institution from their legal and professional responsibilities.

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Sacha DeWolfe, a doctoral candidate at the University of New Brunswick. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted. I am aware that I may withdraw my consent without penalty at any time by advising the researcher of this decision. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of New Brunswick Ethics Committee (will add clearance info here).

For questions contact Sacha DeWolfe:

Email: W6qz6@unb.ca

Phone: 506.988.8887

If you have any concerns about the research and do not want to speak with Sacha you can contact her Advisor, Dr. Amanda Benjamin, Faculty of Education at the University of New Brunswick.

Email: ajb@unb.ca

Phone: 506.453.5182

If you have any concerns about the research but would rather converse with the Associate Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of New Brunswick, please contact:

Email: erose@unb.ca

Phone: 506.452. 6125

This form is to gain your consent in utilizing archival family footage in my documentary film. The footage will be shared publicly and will be stored in secure cabinet until the completion of my research. When the research is complete, I will return the footage to you.

This consent form grants Sacha permission to use parts of the family's archival footage. There is no timeline assigned to the use of the footage.

Your consent is not contingent on this form. You may renege your approval at any time during the period indicated above. As a consenting member to my request, I will keep you appraised of the research as I progress through the doctoral program. You will have the opportunity to view the film at any time, to meet with me at any time and approve the final film before its submission.

If you would like your image blurred, please check the appropriate box.

☐ I grant permission for Sacha DeWolfe to use clips from our family's archival footage.

☐ I grant permission for Sacha DeWolfe to use clips from our family's archival footage with my image blurred.

☐ I do not grant permission for Sacha DeWolfe to use clips from our family's archival footage.\

I have read (or have been read) the above information regarding this research study and consent for Sacha DeWolfe to use parts of our family's archival footage in this study.

_____ (Printed Name)

_____ (Signature)

_____ (Date)

Research Description

Title: Living Through Desirability: Expanding Identity And Disrupting Colonial Ideologies

Sacha DeWolfe, Faculty of Education of the University of New Brunswick, Doctor of Philosophy in Education

My doctorate research will utilize a desire-based framework to re-conceptualize and struggle against damage narratives that have informed my identity as a Mi'kmaq woman. My research aims for cultural negotiation and investigates how an expanded dialogue of Mi'kmaq identity informed by desire might present opportunities for First Nation students in this territory. I will be implementing an autoethnographic methodology which requires me to collect and report on my life experiences as the research subject. To fulfill this requirement, I need to collect personal data to inform my study.

Consent Form: Archival Footage Deceased Family Members

Consent of Participant

Research is in compliance with the Research Ethics Board: File Number REB #2021-038

By signing this consent form, you are not waiving your legal rights or releasing the investigator or involved institution from their legal and professional responsibilities.

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Sacha DeWolfe, a doctoral candidate at the University of New Brunswick. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted. I am aware that I may withdraw my consent without penalty at any time by advising the researcher of this decision. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of New Brunswick Ethics Committee (will add clearance info here).

For questions contact Sacha DeWolfe:

Email: W6qz6@unb.ca

Phone: 506.988.8887

If you have any concerns about the research and do not want to speak with Sacha you can contact her Advisor, Dr. Amanda Benjamin, Faculty of Education at the University of New Brunswick.

Email: ajb@unb.ca

Phone: 506.453.5182

If you have any concerns about the research but would rather converse with the Associate Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of New Brunswick, please contact:

Email: erose@unb.ca

Phone: 506.452. 6125

This form is to gain your consent in utilizing sections from archival footage of deceased family members (grandmother and father) in my documentary film. The footage will be shared publicly and will be stored in secure cabinet until the completion of my research. When the research is complete, I will return the footage back to you.

This consent form grants Sacha permission to use parts of the footage for the documentary film and there is no timeline assigned to their use.

Your consent is not contingent on this form. You may renege your approval at any time during the period indicated above. As a consenting member to my request, I will keep you appraised of the research as I progress through the doctoral program. You will have the opportunity to view the film at any time, to meet with me at any time and approve the final film before its submission. This consent form grants me permission to use parts of our family's archival footage that include deceased family members.

If you grant permission but would like their images blurred, please check the appropriate box.

☐ I grant permission for Sacha DeWolfe to use clips from our family's archival footage that may include images of my deceased mother (her grandmother) and former husband (her father).

☐ I grant permission for Sacha DeWolfe to use clips from our family's archival footage with my mother (her grandmother) and my former husband's (her father) images blurred.

☐ I do not grant Sacha DeWolfe permission to use clips from our family's archival footage that includes my mother (her grandmother) and my former husband's (her father).

I have read (or have been read) the above information regarding this research study and consent for Sacha DeWolfe to use parts of our family's archival footage in this study.

_____ (Printed Name)

_____ (Signature)

_____ (Date)

Research Description

Title: Living Through Desirability: Expanding Identity And Disrupting Colonial Ideologies

Sacha DeWolfe, Faculty of Education of the University of New Brunswick, Doctor of Philosophy in Education

My doctorate research will utilize a desire-based framework to re-conceptualize and struggle against damage narratives that have informed my identity as a Mi'kmaq woman. My research aims for cultural negotiation and investigates how an expanded dialogue of Mi'kmaq identity informed by desire might present opportunities for First Nation students in this territory. I will be implementing an autoethnographic methodology which requires me to collect and report on my life experiences as the research subject. To fulfill this requirement, I need to collect personal data to inform my study.

Consent Form: Permission for Use of Written Letters from Mother

Consent of Participant

Research is in compliance with the Research Ethics Board: File Number REB #2021-038

By signing this consent form, you are not waiving your legal rights or releasing the investigator or involved institution from their legal and professional responsibilities.

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Sacha DeWolfe, a doctoral candidate at the University of New Brunswick. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted. I am aware that I may withdraw my consent without penalty at any time by advising the researcher of this decision. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of New Brunswick Ethics Committee (will add clearance info here).

For questions contact Sacha DeWolfe:

Email: W6qz6@unb.ca

Phone: 506.988.8887

If you have any concerns about the research and do not want to speak with Sacha you can contact her Advisor, Dr. Amanda Benjamin, Faculty of Education at the University of New Brunswick.

Email: ajb@unb.ca

Phone: 506.453.5182

If you have any concerns about the research but would rather converse with the Associate Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of New Brunswick, please contact:

Email: erose@unb.ca

Phone: 506.452. 6125

This form is to gain your consent in utilizing sections from letters you have written to me over the span of my life. The hardcopy letters will not be shared publicly but will be read in part throughout the documentary film. The hardcopies of the letters will be stored in secure cabinet until the completion of my research. When the research is complete, I will continue to keep the letters at my residence.

This consent form grants Sacha permission to use parts of the letters for the documentary film and there is no timeline assigned to their use.

Your consent is not contingent on this form. You may renege your approval at any time during the period indicated above. As a consenting member to my request, I will keep you appraised of the research as I progress through the doctoral program. You will have the opportunity to view the film at any time, to meet with me at any time and approve the final film before its submission.

This consent form grants me permission to use parts of those letters.

☐ I grant permission for Sacha DeWolfe to include or discuss sections from letters I have written to her over the years in her dissertation and/or documentary film.

☐ I grant permission for Sacha DeWolfe to take pictures of the letters I have written to her over the years for use in her dissertation and/or documentary film.

☐ I do not grant permission for Sacha DeWolfe to include or discuss section from letters I have written to her over the years in her dissertation and/or documentary film.

I have read (or have been read) the above information regarding this research study and consent for Sacha DeWolfe to use parts of the letters in this study.

_____ (Printed Name)

_____ (Signature)

_____ (Date)

Research Description

Title: Living Through Desirability: Expanding Identity And Disrupting Colonial Ideologies

Sacha DeWolfe, Faculty of Education of the University of New Brunswick, Doctor of Philosophy in Education

My doctorate research will utilize a desire-based framework to re-conceptualize and struggle against damage narratives that have informed my identity as a Mi'kmaq woman. My research aims for cultural negotiation and investigates how an expanded dialogue of Mi'kmaq identity informed by desire might present opportunities for First Nation students in this territory. I will be implementing an autoethnographic methodology which requires me to collect and report on my life experiences as the research subject. To fulfill this requirement, I need to collect personal data to inform my study.

Curriculum Vitae

Academic Background

Candidate - Doctorate of Philosophy in Education, University of New Brunswick (2018-present)

Dissertation titled: *Living Through Desirability: Expanding Identity and Disrupting Colonial Ideologies*

Masters of Education - Critical Studies**,** University of New Brunswick (2010-2011)

Thesis titled: *Schooling Behind Bars: A Foucauldian Analysis of the Therapeutic Community Model and How it Shapes Education for Incarcerated Youth*.

Bachelor of Education - Elementary, University of New Brunswick (2009-2010)

Bachelor of Arts - Major in Sociology/Minor in Business Administration (Human Resource Management/Industrial Relations), University of New Brunswick (1999-2005)

Employment History

Assistant Professor, Mount Allison University (2022-present)

- Faculty in Canadian Studies with a focus on Indigenous Studies and Community Engaged Learning

Educational Consultant, Innu Communities in Labrador (2022-present) (Natuashish, Sheshatshiu)

- Summer Learning Program - Community Builders

Director, Office of First Nation Education- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2016-Present)

- Advised senior management on the direction for programs and services impacting First Nations students in Anglophone schools.
- Supervision of the Office of First Nations Education staff responsible for curriculum development and project coordination. (30 staff members)
- Develop and provide for the implementation of policies for the office, maintain good working relations within the Department and with other education stakeholders, and will play an essential role as an advisor on interdepartmental, pan-Atlantic, and pan-Canadian projects and relations.
- Responsible for supervising the creation of and adherence to annual project plans, managing the office budget, and overseeing ministerial briefing documents, ministerial correspondence, and human resource documents.
- Work with First Nation communities to address their educational needs, consult regularly with community stakeholders; and assist with student services
- Lead Community Learning Model on First Nation communities for High School students
- Collaborate with the Band-operated school system
- Department contact for school districts.
- Required to maintain strategic relationships and advise the Department on participation in partnership activities.

First Nation Learning Specialist – Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2014-2016)

- Development of culturally appropriate classroom materials
- Development, Identification, and facilitation of professional development
- Revision of current curriculum and development of new curriculum related to First Nation culture, language, and history
- Consultation and collaboration with Elders, First Nation organizations, and stakeholders
- Presentations on First Nation Perspectives
- Working with district teams on program, curriculum, and services implementation
- Maintenance of teacher portal

First Nation Subject Coordinator – Programs and Services – Anglophone West School District (2013-2014)

- Lead on the Enhancement program in the district
- Professional Development – incorporating First Nation culture and history cross curricular
- Organizing First Nation events in schools across district

- Work with EECD on curriculum development
- Created and participated on Native Education Advisory Teams at all schools that have First Nation students
- Working with classroom teachers and school staff on incorporating First Nation content into practice
- Presentations across district schools, universities, NBTA, and Council Day on First Nations
- Active member on Enhancement committee for each First Nation community in ASD-W

Teacher – Natoaganeg School (2010-2012)

- Worked in collaboration with the community health centre on offering health focussed curriculum
- Coach for the school basketball team
- Held youth events after school focussed on health

Publications, Research Teams & Conference Presentations (Highlights)

Journal of Mathematics and Culture - *Challenges, opportunities, and key questions in research for Mathematics in Indigenous and Migrational (MIM) contexts through a language-focused lens*, Culligan, Simenson and DeWolfe (2023)

Research Thesis - *Schooling behind bars: A Foucauldian analysis of the Therapeutic Community Model and how it shapes education for incarcerated youth* (2012).

Foucauldian Discourse Analysis of the Therapeutic Community Model. ED 6108, Theory to Practice: Creating a Critical Classroom, University of New Brunswick, (2010)
Research Team: Storylines in Mathematics (collaboration with Michigan State University, University of New Brunswick and University of South-Eastern Norway) (2019-2021)

Research Team: Retention of UNB First Nation Nursing Students (collaboration with UNB Nursing) (2017-2018)

Editor for paper submissions to the Atlantic Education Graduate Student Conference (February 2019-2021)

Insight Grant Application reviewer for Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (2022)

Publications in Progress:

Utilizing the Community as the Learning Environment (2023)

Policy:

Co-creation of the Masters in Education: Community Engaged Learning, Mount Allison University (2023)

Enhanced First Nations Services and Programs Agreement (2021)

Co-Development Memorandum of Understanding, Institute for Transformational Education, (2020)

Consulted on Education Act Amendments (2020)

Developed Memorandum of Understanding, Treaty Education, (December 2017)

Consulted on Policy 322 (Inclusion) (2021)

Conferences and Presentations:

Panel guest and host of various presentations:
Stanley Lecture – Mount Allison University Fostering Desire: A First Nation Perspective on Community Engaged Learning, 2024
Presenter- New Brunswick Education Research Symposium, Desire Based Pedagogy and Experiential Community Based Education, 2024
Guest Speaker, Martin Luther University College, 2024
Presenter, Maple League presentation – Learning to Desire, 2023
Developer and Co-host of my own podcast, The Connected Community, 2023-ongoing

Guest Speaker, University of New Brunswick SciClub, Experiential Learning< 2023
Panelist, University of New Brunswick, Faculty of Education, What Is Research in Education (2023)
Development of podcast episode: *Strength-based Design*, Russell, Armani, and DeWolfe (2023)

Presenter, The Arctic University of Norway, Mathematics in Indigenous and Migrational Contexts, 2022
Presentation- Canadian Ministers of Education, Canada – First Nation Education in New Brunswick (April 2021)
Hosted Professional Learning Sessions with teachers across NB on various First Nation Educational topics virtually and face to face, co-developed and with a range of First Nation peoples: Discourses for First Nation peoples (April 2021)
Delivered professional learning sessions on Mental Health and Wellness to various teachers (April 2021)
Presenter and Panelist: 9th Annual Otilia Chareka Memorial Lecture on Education and Social Justice (October 2020)
Presentation to Youth Fusion staff- Cultural Sensitivity (December 2020)

Moderator for the International Launch of the Renewal Centre – Asset Based Community Development (July 2020)

Delivered learning sessions on Education for Reconciliation for teachers and the New Brunswick Teachers Association (Various months 2017-2020)
Delivered professional learning session for Indigenous Studies teachers (September 2019)
Delivered professional learning session for music teachers (May 2019)
Delivered professional learning session for Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqey Language (Various months, 2016-2021)
Delivered professional learning session for Art teachers (May 2017)
Delivered professional learning session for Science teachers (October 2016)
Presentations to staff at the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development – Cultural Sensitivity (Various months, 2016-2021)