Merging digital tools with collaborative methodologies: *Circle of Voices*, a multimedia project on the cultural revitalization of young Indigenous women of Quebec

Louise Romain Watson

Bachelor thesis in social and cultural anthropology submitted to:

Institut für Ethnologie

Freie Universität,

Berlin, Germany

July 2017

Introduction

"Good intentions are not enough". I heard this critical comment quite frequently throughout cultural and educational events by Indigenous scholars, activists and artists. As a young anthropology student of European descent coming to North America to "learn about" and "work with" Indigenous women, I landed with latent expectations and the wish to transcend my positionality. Conducting this research turned out to be a transformative journey, whose first step was actually the acknowledgement of my origins, including my academic privilege and my whiteness. This project is an attempt to situate research at the intersection of anthropology, activism, and the arts, while being rooted in the digital age. I was eager to explore the potential of the web space to present academic knowledge and invite indigenous expertise and perspectives. But it would be naïve to believe that the web is free from the dynamics of power and representation, which is why those dynamics need to be theorized in the first place. Also, the mere practice of conducting research among Indigenous peoples seems to reproduce colonialist and hegemonic patterns, still at play nowadays. Working with First Nations women in a Canadian/Quebec context; the issues were particularly sensitive for several reasons. Apart from the current trend of white settlers fascinated by "Native culture" and scholars seeking to reconcile, the media often use strategies embedded in colonialist and patriarchal structures, hence depicting these women as victims. In that sense, this paper will hopefully join the broader stream of voices urging for critical and practical addressing of decolonization, and how it relates to feminism.

This thesis presents an anthropological research project I conducted in the summer of 2016 with a group of young women from the Atikamekw, Wolastoq/Maliseet and Abenaki Nations in Quebec, Canada. It explores the process of cultural revitalization through four themes: land, language, art and spirituality. The project included various activities such as: participatory photography workshops, sharing circles, sound recordings and video clips of traditional practices, intergenerational dance workshops (fancy shawl), and personal narratives (biographical interviews). These collaborative methodologies associated with multimedia components are displayed on an interactive website called *circleofvoices.com*. Eventually, this research project aims to bring educational awareness about the situation of Indigenous women and youths, and more broadly, Indigenous rights. From my stance, presenting the fieldwork through the web constituted a pertinent way to enact engaged anthropology.

From an early stage, I wanted to assume the full authority in terms of designing and programming the website. *circleofvoices.com* is conceived as a non-linear interactive website with a primary and a secondary mode of navigation. The user can either journey through the circle divided in four topics (land, language, art and spirit), where the activities are displayed via multimedia icons; or access the personal narratives of the six central collaborators and the four knowledge holders. The collaborative dimension occupied an essential place, building the most challenging and enriching aspect of the research. Working together with the young First Nations women was for me ethically and personally fundamental, due to the fact that: "collaboration is not only a moral choice for progressive ethnographers but a choice that makes good ethnography" (Rappaport 2008:1). My personal background, the broader socio-historical frame and the logistical conditions of fieldwork all shaped the boundaries of the collaborative process. Even though I tried to transcend my methodological and positional limitations by incorporating social media and going back to the community half a year later, this research project remains unbalanced and uneven. Therefore, the path created by the digital dimension must be counterbalanced by the critical analysis of the dynamics of production, dissemination and representation of knowledge, as well as the processes of subjectivity and authorship.

Ultimately, I was determined to conduct research that would be framed within the defence of human rights, and that would somehow contribute to communities outside academia. The theme of cultural revitalization became clear when I noticed its connection to struggles for self-determination. While questioning the meaning and role of being an ally advocating for social and political change, I intend to use my privileges to foster the dismantlement of systemic injustice. Is it even possible to capsize a science historically entrenched in oppressive practices to uphold the sovereignty discourses of "others"? I will draw upon international legal documents to highlight the link between revitalization and self-determination and conclude on the potential development of the project via social media.

In conclusion, this paper seeks to address: How can a non-linear multimedia website be used for sharing engaged anthropological research with First Nations women, taking into account the inherent dynamics of power and knowledge? Shortly, *circleofvoices.com* is an attempt to contribute to the growing field of digital anthropology, combining multimedia elements and collaborative methodologies by means of a non-linear interactive platform. If research is meant to serve a greater purpose than the enrichment of academia, it should position itself within the critical and theoretical discourses around decolonization.

Section 1: Situating the research within the theoretical discourses at play

1.1 Acknowledging the dynamics of power, knowledge and Othering

As a white scholar from European descent, if I want to contribute to the practice and discourse of decolonization, I shall start by highlighting the intricacies of research with European colonialism and imperialism. Both have left a strong legacy to anthropology, as they were the initial processes allowing science to emerge. Writing belongs to the common practice of any anthropologist, and it has been used at times to assert power over civilizations and peoples, by scrutinising, labelling and classifying them. Through writing, the researcher would situate societies in space and time: "writing has been used to determine the breaks between the past and the present, the beginning of history and the development of theory" (Smith 2008:28). Smith argues that history is an Enlightenment or modernist project, because its formation is based on a linear chronology, moving from primitive, emotional, uncultured societies, towards progress, development and rationality. In order to assert the colonial ideology, a clear distinction had to be drawn between "them" -the colonised populations- and the "us" -the coloniser: "Views about the Other had already existed for centuries in Europe, but during the Enlightenment these views became more formalized through science, philosophy and imperialism, into explicit systems of classification and 'regimes of truth'" (Smith 2008:32). Furthermore, history was written by men and it strongly reflects patriarchal views of domination. In the imperial logic, peoples without history -as understood under European terms- were prevented from reaching modernity, hence stuck in their doomed backwardness. Mignolo points out:

> "People without history" were located in a time "before" the "present." People with history could write the history of those people without. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Max Weber transformed this lack into a celebration of the possession of true knowledge, an Occidental achievement of universal value" (2000:3).

Building on this hierarchy of knowledge, the colonial enterprise produced and perpetuated a subordination of non-European systems of knowledge, which is still enacted nowadays. This divide is expressed by Mignolo in terms of the colonial difference, defined as: "the space where coloniality of power is enacted" (2000:ix). Mignolo borrows this former

terminology of coloniality of power from Quijano.[1] This concept refers to the power structures and the hegemonic dynamics of knowledge that both reflect and reproduce the imperial ideology. What is entailed in the notion of the colonial difference is the impact of the colonial system, which generated that divergence, as well as the way the difference is evaluated and represented: ”the coloniality of power produces, evaluates, and manages the colonial difference" (Martín Alcoff 2007:87). A tangible effect of these mechanisms is the oppression of knowledge and people, as Mignolo articulates: "my understanding of coloniality of power presupposes the colonial difference as its condition of possibility and as the legitimacy for the subalternization of knowledges and the subjugation of people" (Mignolo, 2000:16).
Foucault brings up the terminology of subjugated knowledges as "historical contents that have been buried or disguised in a functionalist of formal systematization, (...) a whole set of knowledge disqualified as inadequate to its tasks or insufficiently elaborated"[2]. In a similar fashion, Mignolo uses subaltern knowledge from Ribeiro[3], which he perceives as the darker and necessary side of the development of Western societies and their image of modernity. For the past 500 years, various forms of knowledge have been subordinated for the sake of bringing forth European sciences and civilizations. This process of silencing the Other has been described by the Moroccan sociologist Khatibi:

> "Silenced societies are, of course, societies in which talking and writing take place but which are not heard in the planetary production of knowledge managed from the local histories and local languages of the “silencing” (developed) societies. “Silenced societies” even when they speak, are not listened to in their difference."[4] (Khatibi 1983)

Though many have written and critically reflected on the discourse of the Other (such as Said, Fanon, Spivak, Hall, in addition to the authors already mentioned), there is an author whose anthropological reflections around this divide bridges with the work of feminists. Abu-Lughod argues that, central to the paradigm and development of anthropology: "culture was the essential tool for making other" (Abu-Lughod 1991:470). Ethnographic accounts are thought

[1] Quijano, Anibal 2000: *Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism and Latin America*. Nepantla, Vol (1) No. 3, Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press: 536-49. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/23906/pdf (20.07.2017)
[2] [1976]1980: *Lecture One: 7 January 1976.* In: Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, I972-1977. Edited by C. Gordon. New York: Pantheon Books (quoted in Mignolo 2000:19-20)
[3] Ribeiro, Darc 1968: *Las Américas y la civilización. Proceso de fondación y causas del desarrollo desigual de los pueblos americanos.* Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho (quoted in Mignolo 2000:20-21)
[4] Khatibi, Abdelkebir 1983: *Maghreb pluriel*. Paris: Denoel (quoted in Mignolo 2000:71)

to (re)present the culture of the Other. She critically views the role of anthropology as: "a professional discourse that elaborates on the meaning of culture in order to account for, explain, and understand cultural difference, [as it] also helps construct, produce and maintain it" (Abu-Lughod 1991:470). In the process of differentiating cultures, there is a risk that culture becomes a static, coherent and homogeneous entity, potentially leading to essentialism.
Hence, we -as anthropologists- must insist on the variability of culture, shaped differently according to particular settings, the interconnections with other cultures and above all, the position through which it is experienced. Maintaining that difference also means preserving the inherent systems of power at play, so she wonders if difference always smuggles in hierarchy. Ethnographic representations are more than partial truths, a concept formulated by Clifford, they are also positioned truths. A critical review of our own positionality is essential if we want to challenge the basic configuration of power on which anthropology is based. And this can't be transcended by "letting the other speak"[5] as Abu Lughod indicates: "It has been and continues to be primarily the study of the non-Western other by the Western self, even if in its new guise it seeks explicitly to give voice to the Other or to present dialogue between the self and the other" (Abu Lughod 1991: 467).

But I believe research should go beyond critically reflecting on these mechanisms, and contribute to de-construct the dominant narratives through practice. There is a plethora of approaches towards decolonization and these are just some of the ways suggested by the authors quoted above. Smith, Maori scholar, mentions the need for: "rewriting and rerighting our position in history" (Smith 2008:28). Still today, numerous governments and institutions intend to deny the historical formations causing the marginalization and discrimination of Indigenous peoples. Martín Alcoff, through her analysis of Mignolo, suggests shifting the narrative and transcending the dichotomies, with the intent to: "rethink and reconceptualize the stories that have been told and the conceptualization that has been put into place to divide the world between Christians and pagans, civilized and barbarians, moderned and premoderned, and developed and undeveloped regions and people" (Martín Alcoff 2007:83). Mignolo, drawing from Khatibi's work, evokes allowing the emergence of an other way of thinking:

[5] Tedlock, Dennis 1987: *The Spoken Word and the Work of Interpretation.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. (quoted in Abu Lughod 1991:469)

> "as a way of thinking that is not inspired in its own limitations and is not intended to dominate and to humiliate; a way of thinking that is universally marginal, fragmentary, and unachieved; and as such, a way of thinking that, because universally marginal and fragmentary, is not ethnocidal" (Mignolo 2000:68)

For these approaches to eventually come into fruition, all sides need to share a unifying vision of tomorrow's society. Decolonization requires a profound examination of the ways we perpetuate the colonial systems. With this reflective practice, public political action, online and on the ground, there is potential to enact social change. As an example, the grassroots movement Idle No More in Canada (among the largest contemporary indigenous mass movement in the country) brought the issues of indigenous sovereignty and environmental exploitation to the forefront. Led by Aboriginal women in 2012, they united Canadians to support their claims against the discriminatory practices of the judicial and police institutions. Particularly targeted by the silencing process and kept out of their own governing structures, this movement empowered many Indigenous women to take action for themselves and their Nations.

1.2 The intricacy of patriarchy and colonialism

Historically in the western world (and beyond), women have been subjugated to men and considered as their property. In the past decades, women's rights have gained recognition and patriarchal patterns have been revealed and sometimes reversed: "feminism has been a movement devoted to helping women become selves and subjects rather than objects and men's others. (...) Feminist scholars, united by their common opposition to men and patriarchy, discover the self by becoming conscious of their oppression from the Other" (Abu Lughod 1991:467). But while forming our identities in an antagonistic and binary way, we also suppress other systems of difference: "the process of creating self through opposition to an other always entails the violence of repressing or ignoring other forms of difference." (Abu Lughod 1991:468). How does gender intersect with other dynamics of privilege and oppression such as race, class, sexual orientation, age and educational background?

In their article, Tuck (Alaska Native), Marvin (Native Hawaiian) and Morrill (Native American) emphasize the connections between colonialism and heteropatriarchy: "settler colonialism has been and continues to be a gendered process" (Tuck, Marvin, Morrill 2013:9). The settlers reproduced and imposed their paternalist behaviours on Indigenous peoples, engendering internalized discrimination over time in indigenous communities and families. They also insist in considering colonialism as structural, not contained in a period of time, and in taking into account the ongoing destructive impacts. Consequently: "a decolonization movement must thirst for the eradication of both heteropatriarchy and settler colonialism or else it will do little to achieve decolonization for either Indigenous women or men" (Tuck, Marvin, Morrill 2013:17).

It is only in 2015, that Canada officially admitted the cultural genocide perpetrated against their Aboriginal populations. The report issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that year confronted annihilating policies (such as the residential schools) and published 94 calls to action. One of the key calls was a National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The intrinsic violence against women originates further back in 1876, when the Canadian Parliament amended the 1868 Indian Act to establish patrilinearity as the criteria determining the rights and status of Indigenous peoples. This enactment defined who was and who wasn’t “Indian”. It was especially the regulation on marriage that

created profound inequalities unfolding through generations. If a Native woman was to marry a white man, she would lose her status, forcing her to leave the reserve. She could not own or inherit land, and she was excluded from the band's affairs. She was forbidden to ever go back to the reserve and her children would not be recognized as Indians. There were no restrictions if a Native man married a white woman. Through this provision of the Indian Act, patriarchy surreptitiously pervaded the social structures and inter-personal relationships:
"the social roles and responsibilities of heterosexual Indian men within bands and on the reserves was systematically elevated over that of women and non-heterosexuals by the institutions of Christianity, capitalism, sexism and homophobia" (Barker 2006:133).

This discriminatory feature started to be harshly criticized in 1970's under Pierre Elliot Trudeau's government. The emergence of Native women's groups (Native Women Association of Canada and Indian Rights for Indian Women) and the lawsuits that followed resulted in two major amendments (Barker 2006:135-140). First, a gender enumeration was added to the Canadian Constitution section 35 (1), certifying that Aboriginal and treaty rights equally apply to male and female persons. A few years later in 1985, the Bill C-31 was passed, leading to: "remove the patrilineal requirement for status from the Indian Act and [to] reinstate all women and their children who had lost their status or had never had it recognized as a result of enforcement" (Barker 2006:145). However, the amendments have not removed all gender bias, since the status can still be lost in two generations under certain conditions.

Although many First Nations were considered matriarchal (Tuck, Marvin, Morrill 2013:15), with women being part of the governance structures, the ceremonial life and trade, their advocacy for equality was rejected by political organizations and bands led by Indigenous men. They saw their endeavours as a threat to sovereignty, considering gender issues as irrelevant to matters of self-government: "the exclusion of women and their concerns from national politics and discussions of Indian sovereignty was represented as normal and necessary to the survival of Indian rights" (Barker 2006:137). Whereas women believed that their traditional roles included full participation in many aspects of political decision making, informed by a “separate but equal” (Smith 2008:151) value of the place in the communities; Indigenous men claimed a tradition that justified the exclusion of women in politics, defining themselves as sovereign authorities.

This divide in considering the traditional roles of women is not merely a legacy of colonialism, it is also linked to contemporary sexism in social relationships and to the dynamics of representation.

This multimedia research aims to counteract harmful representations of Indigenous women and youth, by de-constructing stereotypes and prejudices. In his lectures[6], Hall reflects on the role of power to fix the one true meaning. In that sense, stereotyping is an attempt to attach a limited range of definitions. He argues that positive representations are somehow a fallacy, instead they should be kept open, fluid and enable new knowledge and identities to emerge. Presenting research via a multimedia website seems to me an accessible way to confront pernicious representations, while inviting the user to expand his understanding of what young Indigenous women nowadays can be like.

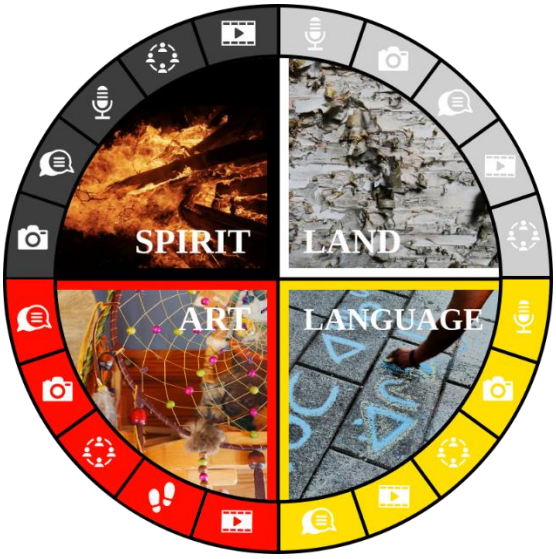
[6] Hall, Stuart 1997: *Representation and the Media.* University of Westminster. https://vimeo.com/191647636 https://vimeo.com/191649756 (28.07.2016)

Section 2: Circle of Voices, a non-linear interactive website with collaborative components

2.1 Academia 2.0: presenting anthropological research through the web

The initial inspiration for this research was the M.A. thesis and website *laviedurail.net* by Anna Lisa Ramella. She shares her ethnographic research through interactive multimedia representations, using a translinear structure. (Ramella 2014:18)

Whereas Ramella based her narrative structure on the linearity found in the field (the railway line), the non-linearity of *circleofvoices.com* was conceived both before and during my fieldwork. The central mode of navigation is circular, divided into four themes where the multimedia elements can be accessed individually. Each element conveys an aspect of the process of cultural revitalization unfolding through the land, the language, the arts and the spirituality. The circular design is drawn from the Medicine Wheel, with which I was familiar before starting the research. Originally ceremonial stone structures built among the Plains Nations, the medicine wheel now serves as a pan-Amerindian symbol and tool to find balance and harmony at the individual and collective levels. Divided in four cardinal directions, it is perceived as a holistic representation of the interconnectedness of all beings. I transposed the traditional colors, black, white, yellow and red, following the order which was most common in the South-East of Canada, where my fieldwork took place. To me, implementing the medicine wheel is a way to acknowledge indigenous worldviews and create a symbolical connection with the theme of cultural revitalization. Lastly, the user can map his/her journey around the wheel, as the color of elements changes once explored.



The choice of the four topics (land, language, art and spirit) exemplifies the progression of my understanding as a novice anthropologist. The two latter topics were central previous to my arrival as I wanted to research about artistic and spiritual practices. The first two emerged during my fieldwork in the Abenaki community of Odanak. I facilitated a first sharing circle with three of the young women and central collaborators, with the intention to learn about their experiences regarding this traditional practice and to identify the topics they were interested in. The sharing circle is a simple format for communication, disclosure and support. One of the young women brought up the theme of language and how it related to identity and culture. She was the only one in the circle who couldn't speak her native language, due to its extinction in the province of Quebec. Besides, I quickly realized the significance of the land through conferences in Montreal and informal talks with older Abenaki men and women. The moment of crystallization of these four themes happened as the youths and I discussed the first activity of the project, the participatory photography.

The secondary mode of navigation is constituted by the personal narratives of the six young women and the four knowledge holders, the former being integrated in the circle. I choose to create a unique page for the women to emphasise the centrality of their collaboration. I met some of them in Montreal, at a symposium hosted by the CIERA (Centre Interuniversitaire d'Etudes et de Recherches Autochtones) on the theme of "being an Indigenous student: experiences and trajectories at the post-secondary level". At the time of my fieldwork in 2016, most of them were studying at Kiuna College, in Odanak. There, I met two other women whose curiosity was sparked by the project. I ended up spending quite some time in Odanak thanks to a room available in the student residence. Ivanie (the first woman on the picture below) happened to be the cousin of Lisa, one of the students. I had met her earlier at a cultural event where she was performing fancy-shawl dance. I built a unique relationship with each of them, due to shared interests, levels of engagement and availability. Focusing on specific individuals helps counter generalization, as Abu-Lughod suggests with the ethnographies of the particular, which "subvert the most problematic connotations of culture: homogeneity, coherence, and timelessness" (Abu-Lughod 1991: 476).

From early on, I had the wish to reach a double audience: non-Indigenous, keen to learn more about the current cultural practices of First Nations; and Indigenous youth, wanting to affirm or question their identity, and possibly getting inspired by personal narratives mirroring their struggles and aspirations. Because the user is also implicated in the production of meaning, I can't predict how the website will be shared and used, I hope it will impact both sides and bring forward a sense of resilience, pride and hope.

I understand cultural revitalization as a self-conscious indigenous empowerment movement about: "converting imaginings of the past into conscious vehicles for self-representation and the active construction of an affirmative twenty first century [Indigenous] identity" (Willow 2010:43). In that process, I see my role as an anthropologist, in enabling mutual understanding between Nations through the reflective sharing of knowledge. As a human being, I intend to actively participate in shaping a more comprehensive world with the tools I possess. The multimedia elements described below reflect culturally specific experiences and perspectives of a continuous movement, and they are largely shaped by my own position and interests.

The website combines the women's photographs and my anthropological work. I merged my experience in youth facilitation workshops, my practice as a photographer and the PhotoVoice method to design the participatory sessions. PhotoVoice belongs to the participatory action research methodology and stems from photojournalism.

I used their guidelines[7] to investigate the visual cultures of the young women. We also discussed their experiences and curiosity towards photography, which ranged from very enthusiastic to not interested.

Due to logistical reasons, I only hosted photography sessions on the topic of the land in Manawan and Odanak. Ideally, it combined my intentions and theirs. I wanted to investigate the dimensions of transmission and self-identification to the land. For example, Raphaelle's intention was to show the beauty of her land.

Raphaelle photographed by Marie Kristine 15.06.2016, Odanak

«That was fun, relaxing. It shifted my perception of Odanak a little, I discovered there were beautiful and tranquil places and not only boring houses. I would like to show the development [of the village] too, with the new houses, the roads...» (Raphaelle's feedback, LRW fieldnotes, 15.06.2016)

To enable the sharing of further photographs, I created a Facebook group where the women could post, comment and review each other's pictures. The purpose was also to value the contributions of all, despite their different schedules and levels of engagement. The most interactions happened while they were choosing their profile pictures for the biographical pages. I wanted to foster a dimension of self-representation and encouraged them to send me self-portraits. A clear sign that this activity resulted positively was when Marie Kristine bought her own camera and started documenting family's events back in her community, as

[7] *The PhotoVoice Manual*: 8-90 https://photovoice.org/photovoice-manual/ (06.2016)

well as taking on the photographer job at the school. She recently created her blog where she is publishing her photographs: “it made me re-discover a passion I had lost, which is photography… Yes, I started by using your camera, but I ended up buying my own you know” (Louise Romain Watson interview transcript, 20.07.2016, Odanak). I decided to come back half a year later, in March 2017, to review and select the images together. Indeed, I was able to show them their photographs directly on the website, and insert their comments in the html code.

The biographical interviews followed a semi-structured format. Whereas the questions differed for the four knowledge holders, adapting it to each theme, I used the same frame for the youths, who all agreed to be recorded, except one. I always started by asking them to introduce themselves in their language, as a way to acknowledge their identity through language. The recurrent topics were: envisioning the future, the specific challenges encountered by the youths, the power of stereotypes and prejudices, and their perception on cultural revitalization. We also talked about the pride of being Indigenous, the representation of First Nations women by the media and their passions. All the interviews took place in a quite formal anthropological manner. My original intention was to conduct group interviews, inviting the women to film, record and/or interview each other. But the limitations of time, and sometimes of enthusiasm, brought me reproduce a frontal dynamic, and assume a position of power. Only once, we managed to implement it.

«They chose the location and MK installed the cameras, mine and hers. I felt relieved not to be in charge of the recording and to be able to fully dive into the interviewing. But I also felt nervous being observed by two cameras. Catherine also expressed her discomfort and anxiety a few times. She had received the questions via our Facebook group, and I could see she had been preparing for it before. Often, she would do the transitions herself between the different themes and I would follow up by adapting to what she had shared. (…) I asked if MK wanted to edit the video, and she seemed excited because she had never done that kind of editing before» (LRW fieldnotes, 03.08.2016, Odanak).

Unlike the other youths, Marie Kristine and Catherine had been involved in the realisation of movies (Marie Kristine had received a training from the Wapikoni Mobile[8], and Catherine had been assisting in the shooting of "Before the Streets[9]") and they had developed a passion for visual arts, in particular filming and editing.

Each theme displays a traditional practice, merging video clips, pictures and text. I didn't intentionally choose to document these practices, they resulted from the encounters and experiences from fieldwork. The spiritual celebrations, such as pow-wow, were outlawed during the 18th century in North America. The Indian Act of 1876 formerly restricted Indigenous peoples' right to conduct cultural and spiritual ceremonies. The pow-wows are now a strong site of honoring indigenous cultures and identities and they take place all over Canada in the summer, which happened to be during my fieldwork.

Regarding language, storytelling is an essential element for the transmission of knowledge in oral traditions. As Marie Kristine invited me to visit her family in Manawan, I was for the first time immersed in a community where the language was strong. Even though, I spent only a week-end there, I was invited to take part in all the family's celebrations (the 80's birthday of her grandmother and the ritual visit to her grandfather's grave, recently deceased). Because I had already built trust with Marie Kristine and she had a loving relationship with her grandmother, I was able to record a story in Atikamekw. Whereas storytelling and pow-wow celebrations are shared among Nations, the two other practices are specific to the Abenaki culture. Through my participation in an external project with the Naskapi Nation at the First Peoples' Festival in Montreal, I met Luc and Kenny. They were pounding ash during the festival, while their aunt and cousin were weaving baskets with the fresh strips of ash. These two traditions are only practiced by a few men and women in Odanak. The traditional practices displayed on the website are just a glimpse of the existing diversity and they shall be seen as contemporary expressions of cultural heritage.

[8] Wapikoni is a First Nations travelling audio-visual and creation studio https://www.facebook.com/pg/wapikoni/about/

[9] The first dramatic feature shot in the Atikamekw native language. https://www.beforethestreets.com/

Compared with the two former ones, the medium of sound can convey an atmosphere while leaving space for imagination. Technically, the sound recorder presents an advantage over the camera, as it is more discrete and less intimidating. The recordings displayed on the website are either connected to the land or to cultural events (such as songs), and they disclose more intimate aspects of the Atikamekw, Wolastok/Maliseet and Abenaki cultures. These sounds add a layer of perception into the diversity of territories, languages and celebrations of these Nations.

Finally, I used text as a tool for contextualization and as a pathway into my anthropological subjectivity and experience. Throughout the website, excerpts from my diary can be found at the bottom of the page. That way, I am being explicit about my academic position and I can share my internal reflections with transparency, while clearly separating my voice. Besides, I wish to publish this paper on the website, as I believe in the free dissemination of knowledge to enable social and political change.

My intentions by merging multimedia elements were to transmit the multileveled richness of the fieldwork experience and to open the space for intersubjectivity: “by combining different media for ethnographic representation, researchers can juxtapose different types of knowledge, subjectivity, epistemology and voice in ways that compliment one another" (Pink 2014: 144).

Through the website, I wish to counter the widespread narratives about Indigenous women, usually leaning towards victimisation or romanticism. But the doubt remains on how much do they actually tell their own stories and engage in self-representation. To a certain extent, presenting research through the web enables multivocality and multilinearity to emerge, although its collaborative side is still bound to epistemological and ethical limitations. (Walter, Grasseni 2014)

b) Initiating collaborative methods in a limited frame

Minh-Ha expresses a virulent critique towards those willing, in the words of Malinowski: "to grasp the native's point of view and realize his vision of his world" (Minh-Ha 1997:375). She confronts the legitimacy of the "outsider" gathering knowledge through the subjectivity of the "insider", for its own ethnographic production. By claiming to represent the Other's reality through his/her perspective, the scientist overlooks his share of authority and simply reinforces hegemonic structures. A way to undermine the internal/external division is through a reflexive practice, assessing and reflecting on one's own positionality. Though, reflexivity shouldn't limit itself to its methodological aspect but lead to an internal questioning and de-centering process. On the website, I manifest my subjectivity and demarcate my perspective via visual and textual media. Below each of my photographs, I specify my authorship by writing my name, the space and time, and I share my field notes in several locations throughout the website, thus "allowing my own voice to coexist in texts and media with those of my interlocutors" (Ramella 2014:5).

Another way to invite reflexivity was through the evaluation of the collaborative dimension of the research among the young women. Rappaport strives for the emergence of knowledge through collaboration in what she calls the co-theorization of knowledge (Rappaport 2008:4-5). Far from reaching such a level of complexity, the following methods constituted an attempt to take distance from pure data collection and shift the power imbalances. Designed as invitations to the co-creation of beneficial and enriching experiences for us all, both the sharing circles and the intergenerational dance workshops, presented below, intend to create a shared ground and to foster trust.

Traditionally used as a format for communication, decision-making and support, knowledge from the sharing circles emerge through personal and collective disclosure. They leave an equal space for listening, expressing and staying silent and the sharings are framed by the passing of a talking piece. I facilitated the circles, drawing from my previous experiences and trainings, and I implemented ways representative of my culture and my identity. For example, I used a piece of amber gifted from my father as the talking piece, and some snacks would be offered in the centre of the circle, instead of more formal items, such as a candle. I would usually end the circle with a reflective feedback question on how

they found the experience. For each theme, thus each circle, I developed the questions on my own, merging personal reflections and inputs from readings, conversations and events. The sharing circles constitute the only activity to which all the women participated (Lisa-Maude and Catherine went to all the circles, Marie Kristine attended three, Raphaelle two and Jessica Ann one). While cultivating mutual understanding, this practice discloses our different perspectives on the same themes. On the website, the encounter is presented mostly through voice clips, as the sound recorder was less intimidating than the camera.

The sharings are available in the original audio in French, with the English translation next to it. Although, I also engaged into self-introspection by answering my own questions, I edited the published content on my own, reflecting once more my authority in the research. I consider this method as a way to honour indigenous ontologies and epistemologies, and to support self-determination: “as a reflection of traditional world views, sharing circles can facilitate the empowerment of First Nations peoples. (…) When First Nations utilize processes that are based upon their views within their communities, then the people determine their own destinies” (Hart 1996:66).

Finally, the activity where I saw the authority as truly shared, were the intergenerational dance workshops, hosted by Ivanie. My role was to take care of the logistics, organizing people and places, creating opportunities for the sharing of the dance. Both workshops took place in Odanak and were attended by some of the youths (Lisa-Maude, Ivanie's cousin and Marie Kristine), older Abenaki women, young girls and their mother(s). As a dancer, I enjoyed learning new steps and jumping along, stepping in and out of the shooting. Ivanie was experienced in hosting dance workshops with various age groups and the transmission happened freely between the women, without any intervention from my side. This webpage displays pictures and video clips from the dancing, sound recordings from Ivanie’s explanations, text to contextualize the evolution and meaning of the dance and fieldnotes.

First dance workshop, 12.05.2016, Odanak

«In a second time, Elise joins us for the dance of the shawl. The four of us spin around, like butterflies. Suddenly, Lise picks up the drum and starts singing. Mira and her daughter sing along too, and Thérèse hums. (…) At the end of the workshop, Mira thanked me and left with the words: the magic happened.» (LRW fieldnotes, 15.05.2016, Odanak).

Second dance workshop, 12.05.2016, Odanak

«Ivanie invites the participants to form a circle. We begin with stretching, jumping, spinning and kicking, and different combinations of it all.» (LRW fieldnotes, 29.06.2016, Odanak).

Conclusion: Moving forward with engagement

I choose to focus on cultural revitalisation because I believe research has a role to play in enacting social and political change, thus "shifting our emphasis from the production of ethnography as a central goal to that of engaging in activist research" (Rappaport 2008:3). To me, a way to achieve that is to connect the themes of the research with actual issues and the defense of human rights. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples serves as the international frame of reference for work relating to the promotion of Indigenous peoples' rights, and I will simply refer to a few articles here:

- "Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions (…)" (article 31).
- "Indigenous peoples have the right to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes (…) artifacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies, visual and performing arts and literature" (article 11).
- "Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies (…)" (article 13).

The second subsection of these articles always states that: "in conjunction with Indigenous peoples, States should take effective measures to recognize and protect the exercise of these rights". It is clearly up to the Indigenous Nations themselves to define how to proceed with the implementations, as they are best positioned to determine the ways in which the rights should concretise: "only as viably self-determining communities will Native peoples be able to revitalize and reform their cultures and relations with one another" (Barker 2006: 154).

Accordingly, I wonder how my exercise of power through the production and dissemination of knowledge, can contribute to the enforcement of these rights, and potentially hold the institutions accountable for their part. The largest influence might actually be on the dynamics of representation, as they are so deeply intertwined with power. In that regard, the article 15 states:

> "Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations, which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information. States shall take effective measures (…) to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination and to promote tolerance, understanding and good relations among Indigenous peoples and all other segments of society."
> (article 15)

Almost a decade after it was adopted at the General Assembly, Canada officially adopts the UNDRIP in summer 2016. Its adoption and implementation counted among the 94 calls to action from the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in order to frame reconciliation. One call specifically targets the critical situation of Aboriginal women: "We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal organizations, to appoint a public inquiry into the causes of, and remedies for, the disproportionate victimization of Aboriginal women and girls" (call 41 2015:8). With the start of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in September 2016, the awareness is rising and measures are being taken.

The discourse of resurgence, revitalisation and resilience is brought forward by Indigenous scholars (i.e. in Canada: Simpson, Alfred, Coulthard) and picked up by grassroots activists and members of the civil society. Culture being a self-conscious process of construction, it is also determined by: "a projection of how future lifeways should look, driven by a process in which elements of the inside are revitalized through the incorporation of ideas from outside" (Rappaport 2008:20).

I believe technological tools are paramount in propelling these practices and discourses: "Heritage renewal and artistic creation use new technologies to reroute cultural connections" (Clifford 2013:21). Where colonization disrupts and dismantles, resurgence is about reconnecting Nations and generations.

The power of the web is its interconnectedness through time and space. In that sense, it surely offers a much larger outreach for presenting anthropological research and hopefully engage the audience to reflect.

In the coming months, I wish to expand Circle of Voices on social media (Facebook and Instagram) together with some of the young women. The vision is to create a unifying space, transcending the isolation and marginalisation expressed by some youths, (especially when they leave their communities to pursue their education). I see that online space as creating connections of support and inspiring the youths to share stories of pride, resilience and hope of their cultures and identities. That space shall also serve for educational awareness while encouraging the dissemination and mediatisation of indigenous knowledge. Indigenous scholar Corntassel, drawing from Simpson's approach, encapsulates the notion of "visioning resurgence, [as] the importance of visioning and dreaming a better future based on our own Indigenous traditions" (Corntassel 2012:97). As a young woman from the Western world, I wish to collaborate and connect with other women and youths facing the impacts of colonization and patriarchy.

Literature

Abu-Lughod, Lila 1991: *Writing Against Culture*. In: Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present. Richard G.Fox. Santa Fe, School of American Research Press: 466 - 479. http://xcelab.net/rm/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/abu-lughod-writing-against-culture.pdf (13.07.2017)

Barker, Joanne 2006: *Gender, Sovereignty, and the Discourse of Rights in Native Women's Activism*. In: Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism. vol.7 (1): 127–61. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40338720 (09.07.2017)

Corntassel, Jeff 2012: *Re-envisioning resurgence: Indigenous pathways to decolonization and sustainable self determination.* In: Decolonization, Indigeneity & Society, vol 1 (1) :86-101

Clifford, James 2013: *Among Histories.* In: Returns, Becoming Indigenous in the Twenty-First Century. Cambridge, MA: University Press.

Grasseni, Cristina and Walter, Florian 2014: *Introduction. Digital Visual Engagements.* In: Anthrovision 2.2. http://anthrovision.revues.org/1445 (09.07.2017)

Hart, Michael Anthony 1996: *Sharing circles: utilizing traditional practice methods for teaching, helping, and supporting*. In: From our eyes: Learning from Indigenous peoples, O'Meara, Sylvia and A. West, Douglas. Toronto: Garamond Press: 59-72

Martín Alcoff, Linda 2007: *Mignolo's Epistemology of Coloniality*. In: CR: the New Centennial Review, Singularities of Latin America, Michigan State University Press. vol. 7 (3): 79 - 101 https://muse.jhu.edu/article/236349 (09.07.2017)

Minh-Ha, Trinh T. 1997: *Outside In Inside Out*. In: Frauen Und Film, n° 60:75–86. www.jstor.org/stable/24055739 (13.07.2017)

Minh-Ha, Trinh T. 1990: *Documentary is/Not a Name*. vol. 52 MIT Press: 76-98 http://sed.ucsd.edu/files/2015/02/Documentary_TrinhMinhHa.pdf

Mignolo, Walter 2000: *Local Histories/Global Designs. Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges and Border Thinking*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: 05-55

Pink, Sarah 2014: *Doing visual ethnography*, Sage Publications Ltd.

Ramella, Anna Lisa 2014: *De-hierarchization, trans-linearity and intersubjective participation in ethnographic research through interactive media representations: www.laviedurail.net*. In: Anthrovision 2.2. http://anthrovision.revues.org/1401 (09.07.2017)

Rappaport, Joanne 2008: *Beyond Participant Observation, collaborative ethnography as theoretical innovation.*In: Collaborative Anthropologies, vol. 1: 1-31 https://muse.jhu.edu/article/367015 (13.07.2017)

Tuck Eve, Arvin Maile and Morrill Angie 2013*: Decolonizing feminism: challenging connections between settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy.* In: Feminist Formations, vol. 25 (1): 8–34. https://ethnc3870.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/25-1-arvin1.pdf (09.07.2017)

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai 1999: *Decolonizing methodologies: research and indigenous peoples*. Zed Books, London & New York, University of Otago Press. Twelfth impression, 2008 (13.07.2017).https://nycstandswithstandingrock.files.wordpress.com/2016/10/linda-tuhiwai-smith-decolonizing-methodologies-research-and-indigenous-peoples.pdf (13.07.2017)

Truth and Reconciliation Canada 2015: *Honouring the truth, reconciling for the future: Summary of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf (30.07.2017)

UN General Assembly 2007: *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly*, 2 October 2007, A/RES/61/295: 5-9 http://www.refworld.org/docid/471355a82.html (30.07.2017)

Willow, Anna 2010: *Cultivating common ground: cultural revitalization in Anishinaabe and anthropological discourses*. In: The American Indian Quarterly. vol. 34, (1):33-60