Conor Kerr:

Today on the Circle of Knowledge Podcast.

Jamie Medicine:

Concept of justice and how it differs in every culture. And as an indigenous person, we have our natural laws that help us connect to us, to the people around us, to the world around us, to the animals in the land.

Hunter Cardinal:

When they're talking about justice, they are talking about how do we deal with this specific problem that's affecting this person. But it does require us as a community to come together and to have that conversation and to look at things with a more compassionate understanding that things are connected to each other and we do have a responsibility to this individual.

Conor Kerr:

Today in our Circle of Knowledge, Indigenous Speaker Series, we have a panel discussion titled Re-storying Justice. This is a conversation about indigenous representation and narratives and how it connects to our understandings and experiences of justice. Our panel discussion will be hosted by Hunter Cardinal. He's an actor and Indigenous myth-architect, Co-Founder and Director of Story at Naheyawin, and Cree from Northern Alberta, Treaty 8 territory.

Conor Kerr:

Our panel participants are Molly Swain, Otipêyimisiw, Métis. Molly's a PhD student in Indigenous Studies at the University of Alberta, co-host of Métis in Space, an indigenous feminist science fiction podcast, and a member of Freelands Free Peoples, an indigenous prison abolitionism project.

Conor Kerr:

We also have Jamie Medicine Crane. Jamie is Blackfoot from Kainai and Piikani nations in Southern Alberta. Jamie is a faculty developer with college learning and teaching development at NorQuest College.

Conor Kerr:

We also have Kyle Muzyka. Kyle is Métis and Cree from the Lesser Slave Lake region in Treaty 8 territory. He works with CBC Unreserved, a national indigenous radio program, broadcast across Canada, the United States, and Australia.

Conor Kerr:

[foreign language 00:01:50]Kimimastimotin. Enjoy the discussion, and we look forward to seeing you at our next event.

Hunter Cardinal:

Well, I'm really excited to be here to be having this conversation and we're in a bit of a different format right now. We're in a circle as you can tell. And one of the reasons we're doing this today is, we're reincorporating and almost revitalizing and applying an indigenous idea of how we create a full

understanding of not only tools or objects, but also ideas. So if we were gathered in a circle around a tree as we do every Friday, and we're trying to figure out, okay, well what is this tree? What does it look like? How can we understand it? I would say this is what I see from my perspective in this circle right now or the square rather.

Hunter Cardinal:

We go around the circle and I can see from your perspective, your side of the tree, but once we get to the other side of the circle, I can't really see what's on that side. Hi. I need the person on the other side, I need their perspective to really understand what we're about. And then as we complete this circle, what we've done is we created a multidimensional understanding of whatever it is that's in the center. So this conversation is not to find out the one right answer, but it is rather to make space for multiple perspectives, to create that ethical space, to create that opportunity to have these discussions, to interact with each other. So what we'll be doing is we'll be putting this idea of justice in the center of the circle, of media representation in the center of the circle, and we'll be sharing our perspectives on that.

Hunter Cardinal:

But before we do that, I think it'd be great to introduce our lovely panelists here today. So starting to the left, Jamie, would you like to tell us a little bit more about yourself, the work that you do, anything you want?

Jamie Medicine:

[foreign language 00:03:53](not sure, this is blackfoot, so Jamie might be able to spell it). Hello all my relations. My name is Jamie Medicine Crane. My traditional name is Brave Woman. I come from the Blackfoot territory in Southern Alberta, and it's such an honor to be here in this traditional territory of the Cree, the Dene, the Blackfoot, the Saulteaux, the Sioux, the Métis, and many nations that make this place their home. I am currently a faculty member here at NorQuest College, my official title is Faculty Developer Advisor, although I do provide a lot of professional development for our faculty and staff here at the college.

Jamie Medicine:

I also... a curriculum developer, and I've had a opportunity to put my, I guess shared knowledge, to use when I do my curriculum development work. One of the programs that I had a hand in helping develop here at the college is the new justice program that will be coming out. And we have about 28 courses that I reviewed all of them to ensure that indigenous perspectives, history, and culture, is included into the program. I also support the indigenization strategy here at the college, and I'm an advocate in the community. I do a lot of performing and advocacy work around indigenous women and rights.

Hunter Cardinal:

Amazing. Thank you. Kyle, what's good?

Kyle Muzyka:

I'm not sure I'm supposed to follow that up, holy smokes!

Hunter Cardinal:

I know, right? Yeah.

Kyle Muzyka:

So my name's Kyle. I work at CBC. I work for CBC Unreserved, and that's on Treaty 6 territory. I'm really grateful to be here with everyone. I've worked at CBC for about four years, and I wanted to be a journalist ever since I was a young Métis little boy. I was about nine. I'm happy to be here. I do a lot of work with committees, sort of inside the CBC to try to diversify our media a little bit, indigenize our media a little bit, and I'm just looking forward to sharing the stage with these three wonderful people today. And yeah, that's pretty much it.

Hunter Cardinal:

Amazing. Thank you.

Molly Swain:

[foreign language 00:06:27](Again, this is a cree introduction. Hi, my name is Molly Swain. I'm a Métis woman. I actually grew up in Calgary, on Treaty 7 territory. And yeah, I'm also very excited to be here with these awesome folks. This is great. So a little bit about me. As I mentioned, I'm Métis. I'm currently a PhD student at the Faculty of Native Studies. I haven't quite started my research yet, but I'm hoping to do either or/and some kind of project around 20th century Métis history and or either Métis political relationships with other than human beings. I'm also co-host of an indigenous feminist science fiction podcast called Otipêyimisiw-Iswêwak Kihci-Kîsikohk, Métis in Space, which you can check out if you are at all interested in any of those things.

Molly Swain:

Métis in Space, is doing currently a Land Raiser, we call it, for a project called Back 2 the Land: 2 Land, 2 Furious, where we're hoping to get a quarter section of land where we can bring urban indigenous youth out to the land who might not get a chance to go otherwise to learn cultural and language skills and practices out there.

Molly Swain:

I also, I have co-founded a group with Karrie, there she is, called Freelands Free Peoples, which is an indigenous prison abolitionism group here in Edmonton, which I'm also very, very excited to keep developing that over the next little while. Yeah, I think that's about it.

Hunter Cardinal:

Amazing. Well, thank you so much everyone. If at any point you want to have a conversation with someone in the circle and you need a mic, just let me know and I'll pass mine over. So I guess just the first question, and we can start, whoever wants to start, if we want to take a second to think it out, you've been voluntold that you're going first.

Hunter Cardinal:

So how do we fix this? No, I'm just kidding. So to you, what is our current society's definition of justice and where does it come from? When I mean current society, why don't we just say Canada right now, in all of that complexity and let's see where our thoughts take us.

Kyle Muzyka:

Sure. Canada's justice system obviously is very European by virtue, I mean, just by virtue of who designed it. Statistics generally show that people from marginalized communities, indigenous communities, often have higher incarceration rates than their white counterparts. So, there's hardly ever a system that's been developed by a person that does not benefit the person that developed it. Obviously indigenous people have been over represented in the justice system for decades, but our definition of justice I think also sort of expands into how we decide to treat people who end up in the system.

Kyle Muzyka:

The justice system here has had restorative justice practices in the Canadian justice system for like 40 years. But I saw a study that was published in March of 2018, that said over half of Canadians don't even know what restorative justice is, which I find really interesting. I think media has a lot to do with that, and I'm sure that we're going to get into that a little bit later, but there's this like really like monochromatic idea of like, if you do the crime, you do the time, that might sort of be worth revisiting, especially because there's lots of discussion around restorative justice and how effective it's been.

Kyle Muzyka:

And obviously it's been effective enough that Canada has sort of taken it as part of its own system, but I think society as a whole should be more aware of it instead of people just thinking that it's just if you do a crime, you get jail time kind of thing.

Hunter Cardinal:

Totally. And if you were to be talking to one of those members of our society today about restorative justice, I guess what's an easy way of describing it? Because it is a different idea from what I understand, from you do the crime, you do the time.

Kyle Muzyka:

Totally. Restorative justice is just this idea of rehabilitation. So if a person commits a crime, instead of putting them in jail and then releasing them right back into the cycles that they were in prior, it's sort of about rehabilitating and sort of giving them systems and support systems to sort of help them I guess. I'm searching for the term, but just sort of this idea of I guess, making sure that they aren't going into the same cycles that they left when they had been put into the criminal justice system. I'm sure these two ladies can expand on that definition a little bit.

Hunter Cardinal:

Absolutely. Okay.

Molly Swain:

Yeah, I'd like to take up a little bit where you were saying, I think justice sort of in mainstream or wide stream Canada, this idea of you do the time, you do the crime, is also hyper-individualistic and I think it really sort of reflects sort of a Euro-Canadian or Eurocentric idea of like the fetishization of both the individual and of property. And so I think it's really important as well when we think about how we define justice, we're also defining how we treat people not only who commit harm, whatever that harm looks like, but also people who experience harm.

Molly Swain:

I think that our current definitions of justice really focus on the person that does the harm rather than the person that experiences the harm. And so like, thinking about something like imprisonment, how does imprisonment necessarily or does it or can it always be inherently good for the person that experiences harm, right? How does that heal people who've experienced harm, just to have that person be away? Obviously that can be an aspect of healing, but how do we understand sort of the function of justice as being sort of a broader and a holistic idea, I guess?

Molly Swain:

I think the other thing that sort of our current "justice system" does is that it really defines or determines sort of among a lot of things, who is able to commit harm. So what is harm? Like what counts as harm? Who counts as being able to commit harm? And then who is able to experience harm? And so I think that for indigenous people, as Kyle mentioned, we're obviously overrepresented in the criminal justice system and we're sort of always already criminalized, but at the same time we're always already victimized to the point where we are sort of almost outside of being able to experience harm. And you see a lot of that through media and through sort of the discourse of harm and how we define what justice is and what harm is.

Hunter Cardinal:

Totally. Do you think you could expand a little bit more? You were talking about the fetishization of people and the lands. Were you talking about that at the very beginning?

Molly Swain:

Yeah, the hyper-individualization of justice.

Hunter Cardinal:

Yeah.

Molly Swain:

Yeah.

Hunter Cardinal:

Can you expand just a little bit more about that? I find that is pretty fascinating when we're talking about, not only is there multiple definitions of justice, but there's also differing worldviews as well, which can lead to entirely different concepts of what justice is. But just kind of like teasing out the current worldview that defines justice, I was wondering if you can expand on that just like a little bit more?

Molly Swain:

Yeah. And I think Kyle touched upon this a little bit as well, when he brought up sort of like this idea of cycles, people are re-entered into these cycles without any change or any rehabilitation. I think that our current model of justice sort of presupposes that people are somehow distinct from their communities and situations in which they live in, which they find themselves, right? And so the conditions that create opportunities for people to do harm or force people to behave in ways that are harmful, are sort of separated from what the person does. The person becomes completely distinct from their environment,

which I think is not an incredibly useful way of understanding justice or bringing people justice. So thinking about... Include and also for people who experience harm, right?

Molly Swain:

That harm is seen as sort of like outside the broader conditions that in a lot of ways create that space where harm can happen. So when we're thinking about justice, how do we start? If we want to start changing our conception of it, how do we start thinking about justice as a holistic or environmental set of conditions rather than just an individual set of actions that occur between two people or a small group of people? And that I think starts to implicate all of us in the work of what justice is.

Hunter Cardinal:

Yeah, it reminds me a little bit about the stories of the wihtikow or windigo that you can actually find in the... I think there's some legal court cases where they're talking about these stories of these essentially cannibal or these carnivorous spirits. And when they're talking about justice, they are talking about how do we deal with this specific problem that's affecting this person. But it does require us as a community to come together and to have that conversation and to look at things with a more compassionate understanding that things are connected to each other and we do have a responsibility to this individual. So I think that that's like pretty different right there. Yeah.

Hunter Cardinal:

Jamie, what do you got?

Jamie Medicine:

For me I really believe like what the two of you have been saying, and I guess it's that concept of justice and how it differs in every culture. And as an indigenous person, we have our Natural Laws that help us connect to us, to the people around us, to the world around us, to the animals and the land. And I think that as we look at the justice system, it conflicts with the natural laws, the way that it's set up because it's not set up to treat people with, I guess with equity. When we look at some of the systems that face our people, our people have been through oppressive systems right from the beginning, and when the justice system came into North America, at first it was used to be used against us, and I think you mentioned that Molly.

Jamie Medicine:

And you look at how our systems have been set up and even like in residential schools, the first model came from a men's prison down in Boston, and so if we look at how the system... the first jail here in Canada was in 1835, like 32 years before Canada was a country officially. And so when these systems have been put into place and used against our people, you see the marginality between our people and you see the differences that our people face.

Jamie Medicine:

And I think that for myself, I face this directly because our family has gone through the system for some so many reasons, and within the past five, six years, my family has been going to court for murdered and missing Indigenous women and men cases. And seeing the results at the end is heartbreaking because sometimes you wonder, if our people were a different race, would the system be different? And there's so many things that when I look at justice, I think about our traditional ways of being and the way that

our natural laws connect to the way we respect each other, the way we take care of each other, but not just us, the land, the animals, the cosmos, and how we're directly related to everything.

Hunter Cardinal:

Yeah. Can you talk a little bit more about the origins of Natural Law for I guess the Blackfoot or the Niitsitapi?

Jamie Medicine:

Sure.

Hunter Cardinal:

Because I think we just talked about like where the law came from that Canada's using. I think it would be great to expand a little bit more about one example of another form of law.

Jamie Medicine:

For the Blackfoot, one of our words is [foreign language 00:18:48], which means all our relations. It's very similar to wahkohtowin in Cree. But it's the foundation of the law and how we're all connected and how we relate to each other and that interconnectedness. And it's kind of like a spider web and how if we were all one of those main holders of the spider web, if one of us dropped that piece of the web, it would start to kind of to break down. And so that's the way I see our traditional law, our [foreign language 00:19:25] law, is that, when we are all working together, we have that healing together. When we're working separately, it disconnects us.

Jamie Medicine:

And so when we look back at our traditional ways of living way back, we were a very communal communities. We depended on each other, we worked with each other, and we lived in harmony. But now today we're very individual. It's very individual in this society. And so we look at our individuality more than how we connect with each other. And I think that when I look at our traditional ways, these have been since time immemorial, and these laws have been passed down from generation to generation through our languages, through our songs, and our stories, and how we connect and how we relate to each other.

Jamie Medicine:

And I think that when I talk about natural law, I talk about like sometimes, well sometimes that has been disconnected from many of our people. So many of our people might not understand our natural laws, but then they also feel that disconnection from Canadian law and how that kind of overlaps or relates to each other.

Hunter Cardinal:

Absolutely. Yeah. Are there any other thoughts about, I guess how indigenous worldviews has perhaps impacted your personal definition of justice or the law?

Molly Swain:

Well, I think one of the things that's very clear is that Canadian law, and this has been said, cannot bring justice for indigenous people. Like I hesitate to even say that justice is possible on stolen land. What is

sort of justice in individual contexts when this entire country is founded on the genocide and expropriation of indigenous life and the destruction of indigenous life. Thinking about the death of Colton Boushie for example, and his killer was acquitted, right? Like this idea that this white man did not commit a crime, there was no wrongdoing there. It gives you a sense of sort of the worth or I guess the worthlessness of indigenous life.

Molly Swain:

And then sort of the goal that the state has to try to inculcate us in its justice system, is sort of kind of mind-blowing. And I think to take up what Jamie said, I think it really bears sort of repeating and underscoring that, our laws and our sense of justice as indigenous people, was developed over millennia and passed down over millennia because it works because it keeps communities in equilibrium. It re-establishes balance in communities where there are ruptures or where there are issues. Whereas thinking about Euro-Canadian justice, even like a European sense of justice, the idea of prisons as these holding places, as punishment, it's only a few hundred years old, even in Europe.

Molly Swain:

And so you sort of have these two systems, and we give so much weight to this Eurocentric system when it's new, it's not been around for very long. All of the information, all of the research demonstrates that it doesn't actually do the healing work that Canada says that it does. And next to that we have our own indigenous laws, which are different but have a lot of very similar underpinnings that helped our own societies and our own nations grow and thrive and live together, and allow us within our own nations to live together for many millennia. And I think that that really is an important thing to think about when we're thinking through ideas of justice, what does justice look like on this land? And I think it's really important that we connect it outwards to everything that's going on. It's not just about this idea of the so-called justice system, the so-called justice system permeates every aspect of Canada's occupation here.

Kyle Muzyka:

Yeah. I'm trying to put together a show on indigenous law, and one of the things that I was looking at, there was a story from Calgary a couple of months ago of a... there's an indigenous court there now, and one the judges can speak Blackfoot. And one of the quotes that he said really stuck with me. He said that in our language, there's no word for crime, there's only a word for it. We call that a mistake. I think that that, like bouncing off what Molly said, there's this idea of, there's two completely different trains of thought around justice between indigenous people and non-indigenous people. It's interesting to watch the justice system play out and how it has... Statistics show that it's been incredibly harmful for indigenous people.

Kyle Muzyka:

And so wondering how, and I think we'll get into this later, but wondering how we sort of mesh the two because there's been lots of scholarship around people trying to tinker with the system, but does that really work? We're not really sure at this point.

Hunter Cardinal:

Absolutely. That's a great point. I was just writing that down. So in this Western perspective of what justice is, what the legal system is, how to maintain it as a system, what role do you often find

indigenous people play in that definition and what are the impacts or even different types of impacts of this very, perhaps a punitive carceral system to implement justice?

Jamie Medicine:

As we look at the justice system, indigenous people are, and Kyle mentioned this and Molly as well. Our people are overrepresented in the institutions. There's an unbalance of equity when it comes to the laws and the way people are sentenced. There are unspoken biases, stereotypes, and racism that our people face daily. Many people who I've spoken with and my own personal experience share that, it should be called the unjustice system. As it seems, it favors certain groups of people and indigenous people are one of those groups that are not favored.

Jamie Medicine:

Hundreds of years of colonization and oppressive systems has impacted our people deeply, emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually. And because of colonization, our people continue to face and suffer, and we see the impacts in our communities as they are faced with Third World conditions, with high levels of poverty, unclean and unsafe drinking water, high levels of suicides, addictions, health issues such as diabetes, cancer, and the list goes on.

Jamie Medicine:

The way the justice system has operated since the beginning was used to control our people. We talk about the forts that are held in almost every major city across this nation, and at one time that was a place where they held our people, they imprisoned our people. And even just looking at the prison system being built in 1835 here in Canada and the history of the residential school model, you could see how our system has been broken down as indigenous people. There is a father by the name of Father Lacombe, and he got to know the Blackfoot people. He met with the Blackfoot people. He even learnt Blackfoot language.

Jamie Medicine:

And my Late Elder Narcisse Bludge, my relative, he shared with me that this gentleman came into our community and he wanted to help our people. And when he came into our community, he learnt about us, he learnt our languages. But then he turned around and he went back to the government and he told them, "There's three things that you need to do to break our people. The first thing you need to do to break the people is that you need to take their land away from them because they're directly connected to the land and everything they do comes from the land or they're grateful for the land, they give back to the land." So they put us on reservations. They put us in small areas.

Jamie Medicine:

The second thing that he said to do was to take our spirituality away because we're very spiritual people, we're connected to everything, and that's a part of the [foreign language 00:28:35] wahkohtowin. We weren't allowed to celebrate our Sundances, our ceremonies. We weren't even allowed to gather at one time. If we gathered even in a group like this, we would all be thrown in jail.

Jamie Medicine:

And then the third thing that he said was, "Take away their children. Because everybody in the community evolves around that. Everyone raises the child. And so when you take these three things

away from these people, you're going to break them and they have no choice." And so that's when our children were start to put into residential schools. Later on we see the 60 Scoop. Now we see the foster system continuing from that, which they say that is larger than the residential schools. More children are being taken away from their kids even today. Then back in residential schools, and Alberta was one of the provinces that had the most residential schools and the most residential school survivors.

Jamie Medicine:

And so when I look at how indigenous people play a role in that, the impacts are evident. The impacts our people are in the systems. And so how do we change a system that has been oppressing us for hundreds of years? How do we change a system so that it's a just system for all of us and not just for certain groups?

Hunter Cardinal:

And that's a really good point. Because we're starting to, and I think we'll go there for sure. I wrote it down, so we'll definitely get to it. Who knows? But this idea of who the current justice system serves, is it a who? Is it a person? Is it a group of people? Or is it a what? And I'm just curious about everyone's thoughts on that right now. Because for me, I'm looking at this more as a systemic issue as opposed to perhaps a certain group of people with a certain agenda. But I'm curious about your opinions on that.

Molly Swain:

Yeah, I think that's a really interesting point to bring up. And I think it really bears sort of like teasing apart, sort of more in depth. I think when Jamie was talking, one of the things that, well I guess two of the things that really got me thinking was, first, the Métis exclusion from the parameters of the TRC and the 60 Scoop inquiry. And so again, it's this idea of Canada in its "wisdom" deciding who is owed justice and under what circumstances. And the ways in which the state continues to divide us in order to control us, I think is really important, when we think about these big movements towards justice, that Canada tells us that it's doing. So like the TRC, people call it this watershed moment and it absolutely was. The TRC is extremely important, but what does it mean that an entire group of people who were also subject to these horrors, are excluded and sort of just not talked about in this conversation?

Molly Swain:

The second thing that this really brought up for me and thinking about, is it systemic? And who's benefiting? Was Justin Trudeau and the Liberal government's refusal to honor Jordan's Principle, which Cindy Blackstock has been working on tirelessly for years and years. What does it mean when the prime minister of this country is refusing to do... basically just to stop being absolutely monstrous in one particular way. That's all that's being asked of him. Actually, it's being ordered of him by his own governmental structures and he's what? Refused what? Seven noncompliance orders or something along those lines, right? That's absurd. So where's the justice in that? That to me is like an incredibly serious, monstrous crime with no oversight and no accountability.

Molly Swain:

When we think about, is this systemic or is this individuals? I absolutely... It wouldn't be a system, if individuals weren't benefiting, I think is sort of how you boil that down. And so I think that there is a balance there, because it's not like we can say, "These are the people that are settlers and all of these settlers are benefiting in exactly the same way to the exact same degree from the injustice that

indigenous people are experiencing." It's not necessarily true. Because if we say that, it shuts off I think certain modes of solidarity that we can start to build among people, which I think is really important.

Molly Swain:

At the same time, we need to recognize that all of us are complicit, and I include myself in this as a Métis woman and as an indigenous woman. We're all benefiting in some ways, some more or less than others from the injustices that go on here and in Canada's name abroad as well. And so it's really important that we are all implicated in these systems in different ways, and they harm us for sure really severely. But it is a complicated thing. Systems are complicated, but systems work in the interest of groups of people. Does that make sense?

Hunter Cardinal:

Totally. To me it makes a lot of sense. Did you want to get in on this?

Kyle Muzyka:

Sure, yeah. Amazing points by both Jamie and Molly. I think at the same time, what Molly said is bang on. Systems hardly benefit or systems hardly are created without a beneficiary, and so when we're unpacking this type of stuff, we really need to think about sort of I guess almost like revamping the system. I just wanted to read, this is pretty long, but I think it's really important, the... So Harold Johnson, he recently wrote a book called Peace and Good Order: The Case for Indigenous Justice in Canada. Just came out in September, I'm like knee deep in like 40 books and reports and stuff like that, so I haven't gotten to it yet, but [crosstalk 00:34:33] -

Hunter Cardinal:

Nice.

Kyle Muzyka:

It's not nice. We just had him on the show a couple of weeks ago, very briefly to talk about his book, and it was really interesting to hear him speak because he's Cree, he's from Saskatchewan, he's a former Crown Prosecutor, and he was inspired to write this book after he quit his job because he felt like he was contributing to a system he didn't believe in. And he was also sort of inspired I think to write the book after what happened to Colten Boushie. And so he did a Q and A with The Tyee, which is a publication in Vancouver a little while ago, and so this is him speaking. And I just wanted to share this because I think it's really interesting to hear somebody who has been within the system, working within the system for so long, and hear what he has to say.

Kyle Muzyka:

So this is him speaking. "I was at a conference last winter when... " Sorry. "I was at a conference last winter when Ovide Mercredi spoke. He said that his first conference was in 1970 on a boat on Lake Winnipeg and the topic was Indians and the Justice System. We've been talking about this for 50 years. When I went to study at university, I remember conferences in the 1990s. So, I've been personally involved for 30 years.

Kyle Muzyka:

I've come to law conferences and symposiums that talked about Aboriginal people in the justice system, and they were all really good. We had coffee, we were really well fed, speakers would stand up and speak, and we'd keep talking about it. We'd bring in more experts, and we'd keep having these conversations amongst ourselves.

Kyle Muzyka:

What we need to do is go out on the street and ask somebody, especially women, to come in and explain to us what justice means. And we never do that. We keep it academic. We keep it in the hotel. We keep it in the conference center. It never changes. We knew in 1970 there was a problem. And by 1990, Canada recognized there was a problem, so it started to change legislation. And we knew that there are too many Aboriginal people in the correctional centers and in the prisons, so we changed the Criminal Code. Parliament added a section to the Criminal Code telling judges that they had to take into account the unique circumstances of Aboriginal people when sentencing and to use jail as a last resort. But nothing changed.

Kyle Muzyka:

In 1999, the Supreme Court in R. vs. Gladue tells judges across Canada they have to pay attention to what the legislation says. They spelled it out for them, really clearly — "This is how it works and this is what you are supposed to do." But nothing changed. The incarceration rates continued to climb. The Supreme Court came back in 2012 and said, "Hey judges, we told you in Gladue that you have to do this. Now damn well do it!" The incarceration rates still continue to climb.

Kyle Muzyka:

So, even when they try to make a change, they can't. They cannot fix this. The machine is too big. They're not going to fix what's going on in our communities by tinkering with that system. Any change that is effective has to be fundamental. We have to change some of the fundamental ideas around justice. We have to get rid of that idea of deterrence. It does not work. All of the evidence shows that deterrence is a failure, and it's actually making things worse."

Kyle Muzyka:

I know that was long, but it was, when I read it, that was incredibly powerful for me, especially as a Cree person myself and him being a Cree person, a former prosecutor, to read that, that was incredibly powerful because he really gave me some perspective on feeling disenfranchised from a system that he at least at some point believed in, right?

Hunter Cardinal:

Yeah. And one thing that's coming up in my mind is, often, and my sister is much better at talking about this. We're talking that typically indigenous peoples are almost canaries in the coal mine for certain issues that right now looks like are just effecting indigenous peoples, but actually do have implications on the larger, I guess cross section of society as a whole. So I'm curious when we're talking about who benefits from these systems, when we're talking about, I guess the beneficiaries of that machine that you mentioned, is it like one group of people or is it like a very small selection of individuals? Or once again, like is it a very specific part of the system?

Hunter Cardinal:

I'm just curious because like what I find when we're talking about this is there can be perhaps an unintentional antagonism that pops up when we're talking about injustice. To claim that there is an injustice has people go, "Whoa, no, you're unjust." I guess I want to kind of tease that out right now. We're going off the script, but I'm curious your thoughts. Jamie.

Jamie Medicine:

Unfortunately, we see the system benefiting mostly color, the way that I see it with my family and having all of these, I guess, encounters with the law and not just with murdered and missing indigenous women, just certain like traffic violations and maybe... the sentencing is just very, very heavy on indigenous people. And when I look at the beneficiaries, it's not just the skin color, it's also that systematic. It's very deep. It runs very deep that impacts our people because it was a system that was designed to be used against us right from the beginning.

Jamie Medicine:

So if we're talking about a justice system, how is it just for all if it's just benefiting one group of people and unfortunately most of the time it's skin color?

Hunter Cardinal:

Yeah, it makes me think. Because like around the time that it was... What was it? 1835 was the first justice system? We start seeing a very slow increase in paternalistic practices from the government. But that was trying to help the system of empire that Canada was a part of, I guess the dominion of Canada. No, it wouldn't be the dominion, the crown at that time, sorry. Canada Confederated 1867. It was not Canada then, I'm so sorry everyone. But you see that there is a need to build the infrastructure for that system, which was the crown, which was the colonies that the crown was controlling, and then therefore that justice system is put in place to reinforce and make sure that those resources are giving to I guess that system. That's kind of what's coming to my mind right now.

Hunter Cardinal:

Anyone else have any... Oh, yeah, yeah. [crosstalk 00:41:03] -

Jamie Medicine:

Can I just talk about like, you mentioned patriarchy and I think that that's one of the biggest conflicts with our people is because our societies were based on matriarchy. We had very matriarchal societies and when patriarchy came in, I guess it flipped everything upside down because as women we were the natural leaders in our communities. And I remember an elder telling me one time when one of the first boats came over and they started talking to the native people, they said, "Bring us all your leaders." And they brought them the women and they started laughing.

Jamie Medicine:

And you think about that and you also think about like how it's a patriarchal system and how women overseas, over the big pond, were fighting for feminism for hundreds of years already prior to coming here. So you could already see that imbalance of how patriarchy favors one side than the other. Even when you go to the big house in Ottawa and you go into the legislature and you see all of the people or all of the politicians, a majority of them are white middle class men. And so how is that a balanced system even when we talk about patriarchy within our own society now?

Hunter Cardinal:

Absolutely.

Molly Swain:

Yeah. I think these are really, really good points. I'm really glad that we're starting to talk a little bit more about patriarchy. I think that's really foundational to this discussion. I think, Hunter to your question, first I want to say I don't think antagonism is necessarily a bad thing.

Hunter Cardinal:

Go on.

Molly Swain:

I'm actually fairly pro... I like being antagonistic, and I think defensiveness I think is the thing that we should be addressing and fragility is what we should be addressing rather necessarily than antagonism. I think part of what we've seen, thinking about my own people's history here in Alberta, with the organizing that was being done in the 30s and 40s around the Métis Association of Alberta, which is now the Métis Nation of Alberta, and then of course throughout the prairies as we began developing organized political organizations in the 20th century, a lot of what we found is that, if we try to play their game using their tactics of civility, we don't necessarily get as far as we want to. We don't gain what we're trying to gain from it. I don't think playing to what is essentially white civility is necessarily going to get us what we want because it's not been working.

Molly Swain:

I think what we need to do is what we need to start addressing, and I mean this individually and I mean this working it out in groups and I mean a big systemic change is we need to place a higher emphasis on truth telling than we do on civility. If I'm angry and I tell you the truth, it doesn't make it any less the truth. So I think one of the things that we can all do and maybe a way to reframe this conversation sort of more broadly as we're having it, as we're sort of like working through our ideas of justice and injustice, is to start thinking about rather than trying to be defensive and saying, "Oh, this is my fault, I have to take all this responsibility right now and bloody blue," maybe instead what we can start saying is, "How am I implicated in this?"

Molly Swain:

Because we are. We are all implicated in it, as I mentioned before. And so if we start from the baseline that we all have responsibilities, that we're all implicated, that we are responsible to one another, thinking about wahkotowin and thinking about all of my relations, what work can we then do? And how does that instead of putting us on the defense and putting us on the back foot, how does that allow us to step forward into doing that work? And if we start stepping forward and we start taking that responsibility really actively, what does that mean when people confront us antagonistically or in ways that we feel hostile about? It's harder to push us back if we're already stepping forward, I think.

Molly Swain:

So in terms of thinking who benefits small and large groups, obviously the main people that are benefiting are these middle, upper middle, upper class predominantly white, predominantly men, who are gaining just massive amounts of material capital from our lands. I really love your sort of like your

history of sort of the justice system and how the justice system comes to be in place. And I think as a Métis person thinking about that history, it becomes really obvious. Because we don't get the Canadian "justice system" until after the land is violently cleared by the North-West Mounted Police.

Molly Swain:

They come into Batoche with a Gatling gun, they raised the entire town, kill many people, crush Métis trying to defend our homelands against settler incursions without our consent, and then they start bringing in things like prisons. They start expanding these police services. They create the North-West Mounted Police as an anti-indigenous paramilitary in order to open up our lands for conquest, for expansion, and for expropriation of our resources. And so, even calling it a justice system, when you think about that history, the justice system was put into place in order to continue to subjugate us. And I think when we start thinking and talking about those histories, that's really important.

Molly Swain:

I think people talk about reform, but I think your long quote, Kyle, really sort of drives it home. You can't really reform a system that at its base is foundationally about maintaining injustice. So I think when we're talking about changes that we can make, they need to be like radical from the base changes. And we're really lucky too. When Jamie was talking about European women fighting for generations in order to regain their rights and their standing in society, we're lucky enough as indigenous people and as indigenous women that all we have to do is remember.

Molly Swain:

I think in Europe they've forgotten a lot of that, it's been crushed so drastically for so long, but for us, our cultures and our societies still have that strength and those memories that we can draw on, which I think is really important. So it sounds like scary work but a lot of it is just about remembering.

Hunter Cardinal:

Absolutely.

Kyle Muzyka:

Yeah, really quickly. I just think of, in regards to Harold's quote, I don't know if there's such thing as radical civility. So it's like if you have to make radical change, you can't really do it through the systems that exist. And I think that's sort of what Harold's trying to get at is sort of, and I think what Molly has been saying too is just this idea of you need to completely uproot the system that currently exists in order for there to be any chance at equity.

Hunter Cardinal:

Whoa. This is a good point because now we're turning into the conversation where we can, or we're turning into the part of the conversation where we can start talking about taking shape, having our narrative start taking shape in mainstream media as well and how to go about doing that. So I guess, Kyle, because you're involved in the CBC, how important do you think it is that indigenous people shape their representation in the media, specifically when it comes to any interaction with the justice system?

Kyle Muzyka:

Yeah, I think it goes without saying it's incredibly important. Indigenous people haven't really had a seat at the table when it comes to media representation for a long time. This is the obligatory part where I talk about how we've made strides, but you know, it's still not anywhere close to where we needed to be. There's this saying that used to exist in media and I think still exists, although I think people would probably be a little bit afraid to say it in front of people like me or you folks today, but when... there was used to be this saying in like the 70s, especially like when indigenous people were in the media, it was the four Ds. Was either drumming, dancing, drunk, or dead. Which is so stark. That's so stark. And unfortunately for a lot of years, true. That's what the media coverage looked like for a long time.

Kyle Muzyka:

And so when we're talking about indigenous people's role in media and sort of how we shape that specific to justice but also in general, that wouldn't have happened if there were indigenous people at the table. There would have been stories about... we do stories about all sorts of things, politics, sports, economics, you name it. If there was an indigenous person at the table, we would be doing stories that involved indigenous people, that involved sports, that involved politics, that involved economics. Again, we're doing that a little bit today, which is great, but we're still a long ways away to get to a point where it's normal for us to see an indigenous person in a story that's not about, specifically about indigenous issues.

Kyle Muzyka:

In regards to justice, I think Jamie makes a lot of really great points about, wahkotowin, and all these ideas of kinship. If there was an indigenous person seated at this table, I think the conversations would be much more nuanced and much more interesting rather than sort of this monochromatic idea of what we know as justice today. So, yeah, I can talk about that for hours, but I'll let somebody else go.

Hunter Cardinal:

Absolutely.

Molly Swain:

Yeah. I think it's... Sorry.

Hunter Cardinal:

It's a hot mic, hot thoughts.

Molly Swain:

Yeah, so hot. I think it's really interesting to hear Kyle's perspective on this because he does work in the CBC, which I feel like is, at least in my mind, sort of like the Big Kahuna of Canadian media in terms of both sort of like the work that they do sort of with news, but as well the work that they do driving the foundational narratives of Canada. And I think that's where, not just news, but I think news in particular can be really interesting and powerful sort of space to analyze. Because I think... thinking about the four Ds, I think that's absolutely right. And I think to a large extent, the four Ds are still what we encounter when we encounter indigenous people in media.

Molly Swain:

But I think those four Ds, when we think about it closely, like they really are part of, one of the foundational stories that Canada tells about itself. In order to drive itself, in order to continue to be legitimate in its own eyes, indigenous people have to be disappearing or we have to become implicated in Canadian society as decorative. Stories in mainstream media about drumming and dancing, which are incredibly important in central, in all of our cultures. I can't think of a single one where it's not. Get really flattened out into sort of like this pretty costumes, they call a regalia, right? Interesting music they call it... There's none of that sort of weight behind it.

Molly Swain:

And then of course the other two Ds are very much still about disappearing native people from the land, and again, who gets to count as being harmed and who gets to count as having done harm and what gets to count as harm? All of these big sort of organizing questions are both organizing questions about justice, but they're also organizing questions about what constitutes Canada itself. Sort of from my perspective, because most of the work that I do is in sort of speculative fiction, indigenous representation spec fic. So fantasy horror and science fiction.

Hunter Cardinal:

Cool.

Molly Swain:

Yeah. By cool you mean nerdy. Yes, absolutely.

Hunter Cardinal:

I do.

Molly Swain:

We see the same stories over and over again, as I'm sure you see the same news stories over and over again, right? You get these, and again, it's about disappearing. You get these narratives of this chosen white man who goes on the spirit quest and becomes more native than the native, sort of like a dancing with wolves situation. He's got to swoop in and save everybody. You get these stories that are really grounded in sort of settler anxieties. Because they're not only stories that Canada tells itself about sort of its own legitimacy, they are also stories that Canada tells itself about its underlying illegitimacy. What is Canada afraid of? What are settlers afraid of? They're afraid that somebody's going to come and do to them what they did to indigenous people.

Molly Swain:

So you get these alien invasion narratives. Like that's what that is. That's not fears of outer space, that's fears of indigenous people sort of doing onto them what they have done on to us. And they do it in these ways that are very cliche, very flat. You know, monochromatic, to use Kyle's word. And what we start to see sort of in my experience anyway, you can sort of see indigenous representation, "good indigenous representation", and by good, I mean like not terrible. It gets better and better until sort of the early to mid 90s and then it falls off again.

Molly Swain:

Indigenous representation in fiction that's not done by predominantly indigenous people is getting worse, not better, which I find really fascinating. And I haven't entirely thought through why that could be, but on the other hand, what we're seeing is more and more indigenous people being able to take the space and they're not being given the space, like I want to make that really clear, I think people are fighting for that space every step of the way. But you get indigenous filmmakers, indigenous writers, indigenous artists, who are busting into these spaces and giving us new narratives that are really fascinating and interesting and often mundane.

Molly Swain:

So thinking about like Blood Quantum, Jeff Barnaby's, new zombie film for example, I'm sure there's a lot in there in terms of like textual analysis that you can do, but on it's face it's really just a standard zombie movie but this time with native people. We need that. Like, yeah, we deserve to have that honestly. Like, let's be real. So you get these like these new types of media that are being driven by indigenous people and it's not just having Graham Greene out there in his like beautiful long wig, like doing his Graham Greene thing. Graham Greene's great, by the way, no offense to him.

Molly Swain:

But you get people... Like we need indigenous people at every single level to create these types of media. They need to be writing, they need to be acting, they need to be doing the sound, the lighting, the cinematography, the editing, the sound, all of it. That's where you start getting those good narratives. I don't know why it is, but it seems like mainstream media is really unable to account for the complexity of an... well, I do know why it is. But anyway, mainstream media is unable to account for the complexity of indigenous life, I think is what sort of at its base what that is. And so when we force them to confront the complexity of our lives, I think it opens up a lot of space for that radical change.

Jamie Medicine:

I think that it's really important, and thank you Molly and Kyle. Everything that you said I already wanted to say, so I'm done.

Hunter Cardinal:

Goodbye everyone.

Jamie Medicine:

I just wanted to like also include, it is really important to have our representation in all those areas because it's not only to have our voices heard and to be able to share our stories and our narratives of who we are as indigenous people, but it's also important to have our younger generations to see that in our media, to see that in every forms, so that they have that empowerment to go out and achieve whatever they would like to in this life. And I think that that's one of the biggest things is that we have to remember who's coming up? Who's our next generations? And how is this going to affect our children? How are we going to affect their children? And the list goes on.

Jamie Medicine:

And I think that when we create these spaces, and like Molly mentioned, we're fighting for those spaces that, in some spaces, well most spaces. Like sometimes we're the only indigenous person doing one job, that should be a whole team of people that should be doing the job. And Kyle and I had that

conversation like with him at CBC, and me here, and everywhere, I think that that's really important that... even just sitting in this circle and having the opportunity to have different perspectives on a topic is really important.

Jamie Medicine:

So having those multiple perspectives is so important because as indigenous people, we have many perspectives, we have many experiences, and even though we have a lot of things that are similar, we have a lot of differences within our culture. And so those are things that we need to be able to share. And I think that, like for myself, I've been in the media for a long time, as a model, as an advocate, as an actor, and those are things that we push ourself into those spaces to be, but at the same time, they're still casting roles for indigenous people in indigenous roles.

Jamie Medicine:

And so that's a big thing because they used to not do that. They used to wear wigs and colored themselves to be able to be us on screen, and so it's a, like Kyle mentioned, we have been making strides, but there's still a lot of space that needs to be taken up and a lot of opportunity for us to hold that space and to be able to give us that opportunity to speak on that platform in many ways.

Hunter Cardinal:

Absolutely. And one thing that I'm hearing, especially at the very beginning of the conversation, we were talking a lot about a healing component of perhaps indigenous justice, when we were talking about restorative justice. That idea of, that is inherent in, we have a responsibility as a community to make sure that individuals who need our help, can have that help. Or individuals who perhaps are deviating from the overall health of the group, how can we make sure that they're in alignment so that it benefits everyone, including them?

Hunter Cardinal:

And one thing that I've been told is often that with indigenous peoples since time immemorial, our stories through our myths, through our stories even that take place in today, how we kind of order the chaos of our events, in our recent past as well, those hold the laws that can help. So when it comes to indigenous people practicing indigenous law and having those stories be told, what I'm hearing is that it could also be beneficial for non-indigenous people as well. Because one thing that I was hearing as well, if it's not working for indigenous peoples, it could also not be working for non-indigenous peoples as well. So it's not just an isolated thing.

Hunter Cardinal:

So when we're talking about how to create space for these conversations, for these stories, what does that look like and how can non-indigenous peoples help create that space in a respectful way? We talk about a lot of the troubles of tinkering within a system, maybe even the troubles of losing ourselves of who we are at our core as indigenous peoples, in that fight for recognition because we're struggling so much to have a space at the table that suddenly our identity as indigenous peoples becomes reduced to just always fighting for a space at the table, which is quite reactionary to an outside force and not so much who we are. But I'm just curious, what are your thoughts on that whole thing that I just said?

Kyle Muzyka:

Yeah, that was a long one, Hunter.

Hunter Cardinal:

I know. I didn't breathe once.

Kyle Muzyka:

First of all, to your point of stories and healing, I think it's an interesting connection to make and it's something that we've been talking about for like you said, time immemorial, is just this idea of using our stories to heal. I remember when I was a kid and I wanted to be a journalist, I was like nine, I didn't see anybody on TV that looked like me or my cousins or said they were Métis or Cree or anything, so I just automatically assumed that that wasn't possible. And so it wasn't until I was like 14 or 15 when I saw Duncan McCue on TV one time doing a story and I was like, "Oh, that's a native person, holy smokes!"

Kyle Muzyka:

So when we talk about representation, like it matters. It matters. And it matters when people who are representative of us tell our stories because it's just different. There are non-indigenous reporters who are great reporters who tell indigenous stories, there's just nothing quite like having an indigenous person tell that story. I go into community sometimes and people look at me weird because I present as non-indigenous. And so after we started talking, and I think this happened in our first conversation, Hunter, I think it was within like the first 10 seconds we were trying to figure out who our kin were because we're from around the same area.

Hunter Cardinal:

Yeah.

Kyle Muzyka:

After those conversations happen, there's just a wall that breaks down. And so when you talk about healing and stories to heal, having indigenous people at the table and telling these stories is hugely, hugely important. In regards to a system or like the system that you were talking about, how it might not even necessarily work for non-indigenous people too, and sort of how we sort of, I guess, navigate that, a seat at the table is a great start. Having somebody who is native at the table talking about these stories and having discussions around not only media representation but also just like justice in general. Honestly, I would advocate for an indigenous person to be at every single table that has ever existed because I just value their perspective so much.

Kyle Muzyka:

I just think it's really important to do that. I just wanted to share this one story. I remember when I was, I driving in Maskwacis, this was like last year, a year and a half ago. I remember thinking, driving in the community that it's like, I feel really privileged that I can do this, and drive into the community and it feels like... you feel kinship, right? I got back to the newsroom that day after I was doing a survey and I was just talking about how great it was and I had a reporter who has much more experience than me, was telling me, he was like, "Yeah, back in the 70s, we used to go to the reserve and people used to shoot BB guns at our vehicles and throw stuff at our vehicles."

Kyle Muzyka:

And that just really tells you, a, the hostile relationship that native people had with media. And rightfully so, media went in, swooped in, basically stole our stories for... and then came out without any real collaboration with the family and stuff like that. So they were rightfully hurt, rightfully hurt. And so that was them in response. And so now that I can go into these communities and have these conversations with people and not worry about having eggs thrown up my car or whatever shows that we've made strides, but again, like Molly and like Jamie has said, there's still a long way to go, right?

Hunter Cardinal:

Absolutely.

Molly Swain:

Yeah. I really appreciate that perspective. I also wish there could be, actually, I wish all the tables were just like full of indigenous people, just kicking ass, or kicking butts.

Hunter Cardinal:

[crosstalk 01:05:27] related.

Molly Swain:

Yeah.

Hunter Cardinal:

And was fine.

Molly Swain:

Yeah. But I also think it's really important to talk about the limits of representation. I think representation while crucial, I think we're still at this place where fighting for representation makes a lot of sense, and indigenous stories being told is obviously very important. There are limits to it. And I'm going to put my own people on blast here a little bit. Recently, the Manitoba Métis Federation and the MNC worked with the Royal Canadian Mint to release a Louis Riel commemorative coin -

Hunter Cardinal:

Oh, yeah.

Molly Swain:

Yeah, which I am not thrilled about to say the least.

Speaker 6:

[inaudible 01:06:05].

Molly Swain:

Oh yeah, just wait. And I think it's really important to be critical of, what kinds of stories are we telling? In all of the media releases about this, it's about how Louis Riel, his important contribution to Canadian history. This is a jaw droppingly bad narrative in my perspective. Louis Riel fought two Guerrilla Wars against Canada, and Canada through this coin, they're literally transforming whatever you think of Riel,

he was one of our greatest and most important leaders. They're transforming him literally into Capital, into the State's Capital as a coin. It's a commemorative coin, but you could hypothetically be trading Louis Riel for goods and services. That is not liberatory. This is not anti-colonial or decolonial in any sense.

Molly Swain:

What stories are we telling ourselves and future generations, as Jamie mentioned, when we start to inculcate our greatest leader who fought a Guerrilla war against the State, into Canadianness in this way. A lot of people, and I really see their perspective, a lot of people are really celebrating this as an important moment of recognition for the Métis by Canada. Is that what we want to be recognized for? Do we want to be recognized if the trade-off is having us become pawns in Canada's own story about itself? And in what ways does that alleve it's responsibility for our peoples genocide.

Molly Swain:

And so like when we think about representation, we think about these stories, it's so, so, important that as we're fighting for these things that we're fighting for liberatory decolonial stories that support indigenous sovereignty and anti-colonial action and thought. If we're talking about stories as being healing, I think that's so true and so important, but who are we healing and what are we healing for? If we're healing into Canadianness, what is the difference between that and assimilation? If we're healing our people, but we're not thinking about the animals, the plants, the water, the earth, the air, what are we doing? We're not fulfilling our responsibilities in those ways. And I think that as we move forward, as we do that fighting work, that we take those responsibilities up as we're doing that. We can't shut off parts of our responsibilities in order to gain or win something.

Molly Swain:

Anyway, I feel very passionately about that commemorative coin.

Hunter Cardinal:

But it's very interesting because it throws into question. I sat down with Audrey Patras and Norma Spicer and we're talking about the Métis and what they called themselves. And what I remember them saying is, "We called ourselves the otipemisiwak, which means the people who own themselves." And what I was hearing is a history and a story of how do we remain separate and sovereign peoples in a unique relationship with other people. And I thought that that was really interesting. So hearing about this coin it throws that, and it's just like, what? That's even more complicated now. So, absolutely, thank you.

Jamie Medicine:

I think that the whole being able to talk and tell your story is healing, and so when we're represented in the media and able to tell our stories, we're able to heal. And through that process were also helping others heal. I once was told I was... I've been on my own healing journey my whole life, and I often think about this elder who told me that healing comes in many forms. And one of the ways that we start to heal is to be able to talk about it, to be able to share our story. And I think that that's really important that our stories are being told by indigenous people because at one time we weren't allowed to share them. At one time we weren't allowed to use our voice or our songs or our stories.

Jamie Medicine:

And this whole concept of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, when it came about was to be able to share the stories that were never told, the stories of our survivors, the stories of the people that were silence for many years. And for myself, like I'm the first generation in my family that did not go to residential school and my mother was also a part of the 60 Scoop. And so seeing all of those pieces and really trying to find the healing within myself, I think that that's one of the biggest ways that, I guess in mainstream to be able to share our stories at many platforms is very important.

Jamie Medicine:

It starts to chip away at that decolonial way of thinking, and when we start to be able to have those spaces in multiple areas, and not just as indigenous people, we look at even here at NorQuest, we have so many cultures from all over the world. Having that intercultural space to be able to share who we are as people, to be able to share with each other, is healing in itself and it helps to bring us together.

Jamie Medicine:

I was doing a session the other day on Medicine Wheel Teachings and we were talking about how every nation in the world is represented on that medicine wheel and how we're all equal and no one is bigger or better than another, we were all at one time... Creator placed us in different places in the world and knew that we were all going to come together. And that's one of the reasons why we're faced with what we're doing is because I think that sometimes people, and I'm not saying any specific culture, people feel like they need to be bigger than another in that competition piece, and so with that, some voices are not heard.

Jamie Medicine:

And so when we look at that in a bigger picture and look at here just on microscope here in Canada, it's happening to indigenous people around the globe, but they're facing the same things of colonialism. And how do we heal not just as a nation within Canada but also world? Because there's so many people that are hurt and that are going through trauma and that are going through healing, and the way that we're able to share that is through stories. And one of the things that, I think that as we've grown up, we've seen that technology change and be able to share it in different ways through the media, and being able to represent ourselves in different ways is amazing. But we still have that barrier of being able to have that space. So creating those spaces and allowing us to use our voices and allowing us to use our knowledge, allows for our ancestors to be heard as well.

Hunter Cardinal:

Absolutely. Any final thoughts before we call it?

Kyle Muzyka:

I wanted to just add a little bit to what Molly was saying earlier about some media representation that we've had today, and I do agree that it seems that there is bad media representation for sure. But you mentioned Blood Quantum. We had the director on our show, I can remember his Twitter handle but I can't remember his name right, Jeff Barnaby, here @tripgore. He was on our show about this, talking about Blood Quantum, and he was just... he was telling us how shocked he was that nobody had come up with that idea before, just this idea of an indigenous community sort of being like the last refuge for the zombie apocalypse.

Kyle Muzyka:

And that's exactly what we're talking about when we talk about representation and when we talk about a seat at the table, because the reason why that idea hadn't been done before is because there was hardly any indigenous people doing that stuff before, 10 years ago. And we're talking about other sort of media. Obviously, the big mainstream medias have made strides, some of them anyways. But even Native people on their own, Molly is a perfect example of this with their podcast, Métis in Space, indigenous people are just doing it themselves now and it's incredibly powerful and incredibly empowering to listen to this type of stuff, and Molly is just doing it. Molly and Chelsea started doing it.

Kyle Muzyka:

Maybe you can talk a little bit more about the impetus of it, but it just became so much more than I think. You guys have just been continuing for so long and like the Land Back thing is incredible, and so it's just been amazing to watch. It's just been awesome to see modern media representation and indigenous people doing that themselves. I do wonder with the Louis Riel thing, it sounds like the MNF was at the table, but you just really have to wonder about, thinking about spatial awareness a little bit. But, yeah, I just wanted to share that. I think it's improving, but at the same time there's lots of work for us to do, and CBC included.

Hunter Cardinal:

Absolutely. I want to thank you all so much. Hopefully we get that thought. I'll stall for you. Yeah. Yeah. Thank you so much for your thoughts, your perspectives, for your stories, this was a great conversation and I am very thankful. So hey-hey, yeah.

Conor Kerr:

Circle of Knowledge was recorded at the NorQuest College Innovation Studio, and is hosted by me, yours truly, Conor Kerr. Production and editing by Corey Stroeder. Theme song is Eagle Rock, by Wes Hutchinson. Special thanks to the Edmonton Community Foundation, whose generous sponsorship made the Indigenous Speaker Series and the Circle of Knowledge Podcast a reality. Lastly, and most importantly, big shout-out to all the speakers who have been involved. We are incredibly grateful for the knowledge and time you share to make this series a possibility. Thoughts, comments, questions, anything else regarding today's Circle of Knowledge episode, we'd love to hear from you. Contact us at Podcast@NorQuest.ca.