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Value and Values in the Interstices of Journalism and Journalism Studies: An Interview with Candis Callison and Mary Lynn Young

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Abstract

In this interview, Professor Candis Callison and Professor Mary Lynn Young, along with *MEDIA INDIGENA* podcast creator Rick Harp, provide a deep and sometimes personal set of insights as to why the field of journalism studies came to function the way it did and why that field so often falls short in its analysis of issues related to race, indigeneity, gender, and colonialism. Both Callison and Young highlight the arguments they make in their recent book, *Reckoning: Journalism's Limits and Possibilities*, about the role and practice of journalism as it relates to methods, ideals, aspirations, social order, and ethics. They conclude with a discussione of the theoretical and epistemological frameworks that undergird their analyses in the book, and address the tensions between value and values in the news.

Keywords: Indigenous media; journalism; organizational structure; values.

MEDIA INDIGENA is an independent, Indigenous current affairs roundtable podcast, hosted and produced by Rick Harp. This discussion with Candis Callison and Mary Lynn Young took place over episodes 214 and 215.[1]

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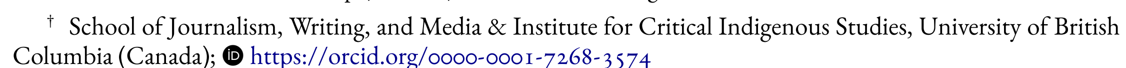

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1. The following machine-based transcript of the original audio has been edited for brevity and clarity. Please verify against the source audio before quoting.

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Rick Harp: These days we hear only a little about the possibilities of journalism but a lot about the limits of journalism. Today, among those who are hopeful, we are joined by the co-authors of *Reckoning: Journalism's Limits and Possibilities*, from Oxford University Press. A book about the media moments we're living through, a time where both crises and opportunity coexist.

We're honored that Candis Callison, and Mary Lynn Young, have agreed to sit down with us to discuss their book. Candis is an associate professor in the Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies and the School of Journalism, Writing and Media at the University of British Columbia. And Mary Lynn Young is a fellow professor of journalism at UBC.

To start out, could I get you two to each reflect on what got you into journalism in the first place? Was it a calling at first? Were you, like me, kind of seduced by its power and how shiny it was? Candis, let's start with you.

Candis Callison: Yeah, I kind of fell into journalism, almost by accident. I had to put out a ton of CVs after I got my undergraduate degree. And then I got a job with one of the very few Indigenous television producers at that time. I mean, this was the mid-90s. There weren't very many Indigenous journalists at the time.

For my undergraduate, I went for a degree in business though I was most interested in history, and I got a minor in psychology and a sort of almost minor in communications. I had this emerging interest in communications that happened over my four-year undergraduate degree. But when I got out, it was really hard to find a job. I was a sort of typical first-gen undergraduate graduate.

I was offered a few jobs. One was working for a bank and one was working for a ski school, and one was working for this documentary series that had, as I said, one of the very few Indigenous television producers who had produced at a high level for the CBC. And I started working on that series. I fell in love with storytelling with audio and video. I took a night school course in film. Then I got a job at the CBC and worked on all kinds of different news and current affairs shows and eventually moved to CTV. I also made a film independently with Canada Council grants on my own First Nation.

What I realized was my kind of core interest was: whose voice matters. The very things that I'm still writing and thinking about, and whether or not there were very many people in the newsroom who looked like me — those kinds of representational issues, and whether our stories were getting told and who they were getting told by and how they were getting told. Those were all the things that were the engine for why I kept going in journalism.

I ended up getting a Ph.D. also by accident because the Internet happened in the late 1990s. I moved to the United States and I worked for one of the very first stations to launch online and offline. And then I worked for a search engine which was one of the top search engines at the time, rivalling Yahoo! It was called Lycos. I always tell my undergrad students because they've never heard of it: at the time that I started at Lycos, people were leaving to work for this *new* startup called Google. It was at the very beginning of the dot com transformation that has really transformed our daily lives as well as what it means to do journalism. And from there, I started down the path towards becoming an academic. I went to M.I.T. and did a Masters in Media Studies first and then a Ph.D. (in History, Anthropology, and Science, Technology, and Society) and really never meant to come back to journalism. But again, my core interests were around whose stories matter, whose voices matter; how do we talk about issues like climate change that are of great concern to us all? And where are we speaking from? Those are the things that still animate what I do in research and what I do in teaching.

RH: Mary Lynn, outline your path into journalism.

Mary Lynn Young: Well, first, that's a great question. And I didn't know that about Candis and ski school. Always good to learn something about your co-author.

Basically, I can answer this in two ways. There's what I thought as a younger self. I see it quite differently now why I chose to go into journalism with the benefit of hindsight and a few decades under my belt. What I thought at the time was that, similar to Candis, I was looking for a way to have a job and to do something that I felt was meaningful and committed to in university. And, my mother and stepfather hadn't gone to university. And I didn't know many paths that were open to people with my kind of background growing up in Stoney Creek, Ontario.

When I was at the University of Toronto, they had two newspapers that you could volunteer for as a student. I was completing a history degree with a focus on the medieval and early modern period (I loved it, but not something that you can find a clear path to a career necessarily.) I volunteered at the underdog, more alternative newspaper on campus, called "the newspaper" (all spelled in lower case). And I enjoyed it. I started doing campus news and I started to find it interesting. And I got a job working for the Ministry of Culture and Communications, doing clippings. I'd show up at 7:00 a.m. and go through all the media newspaper clippings and cut out what was relevant to the minister so that it would be on her desk when she got in the morning.

And I thought, OK, this is a fascinating career. It's committed to all these principles of truth and holding power to account. And I bought into all of journalism's ideals when I was a young person and started. I ended up staying on at the ministry, doing some early communications work. I had applied to go to Ryerson. I didn't get accepted the first time that I applied. And, I thought, I've got to try and figure out what I do now to reapply, what I do in between not getting accepted and then trying to apply again the next year. I applied to work at a small weekly newspaper and worked there for a few months, and then I applied to work at the daily newspaper in my hometown, which was Hamilton. The city editor finally gave me a chance to cover a small little area called Flamborough. And I started to cover the council meetings. That's how I got my foot in the door.

My first job after that was as the night weekend crime reporter. I'd work 6 to 2 in the morning at the *Hamilton Spectator* on Friday and Saturday nights. And yeah, I'd cover death, destruction and anything difficult that happened in Hamilton on the weekend. I ended up getting accepted into Ryerson, and I was off to the races. That's what my younger self was probably thinking.

Fundamentally though, I was compelled and I believed the idealized mission that journalism told about itself. When I worked as a journalist, I thought I was finding the truth through fact gathering through my interviews, sources. It was only until I ended up reporting on crime in Houston, Texas, for the *Houston Post* that I started to have a number of moral dilemmas and crises about: was I representing things accurately? Could I, given my level of expertise, my educational background, given the complexity of the structural and sociological landscape that I was covering?

RH: So you were disabused of this crusade that we're supposedly on for The Truth, right? And I'm wondering — was it gradual or was it more an acute thing?

MLY: I had an epiphany about a question about am I causing harm here? It started to come into my consciousness: am I causing harm here?

Because I was covering Houston, the fifth-largest U.S. city; it's a major crime city. There were more than 500 homicides a year. And I was responsible. I worked out of the downtown police station. The city was ringed by petrochemical plants, two major international airports.

What would happen in a day in Houston wouldn't happen in a year sometimes in parts of Canada in terms of just the crime beat. Yes, I started to think I was causing harm, but really, it took decades to re-socialize myself. I have to be honest from both having been a journalist and how I thought I knew what I knew, what I thought I was doing. There was the epiphany about harm. And then I went to graduate school. And it took years there to understand the role of structure, power, gender dynamics. I went in for a master's and Ph.D. in Criminology, and then it took even more time in the university to see not all professional identities or professional groups interact this competitively. Not all professional identities engage in these kinds of relational ways.

RH: You just made me think, how many crime reporters have a criminology degree?

MLY: Not many. No, no. That's why I went back to school. I thought I would do a better job. That was my initial impulse after I started thinking about harm. I thought, okay, I'll go back, I'll get a master's degree... I thought, I'll go back to school and I'll come back as a better-informed crime reporter. I'll be able to do my job better. But then I realized that it was more complicated than that.

RH: But you Candis, how did you come to go, "Jeez, maybe what I'm doing here isn't what I want to be doing."

CC: I relate to both of you. I bought into the voice for the voiceless aspects of journalism, like: 'oh, we just need more of our stories' and not recognizing that there were real solid structural issues. And I don't think I realized that until, like Mary Lynn, I had gone through grad school and come back. I was working on this book that I wrote about climate change, which looked at not only journalists, but scientists, Inuit Circumpolar Council leaders, corporate social responsibility activists, and American evangelicals who were super involved in environmental issues. So, really different groups of people alongside journalists, and it made me start asking a lot of questions. At the same time, I was teaching a media ethics course and really questioning a lot of the foundations of how we thought about ourselves as journalists.

Part of my transformation also comes from the fact that when I started in journalism in Canada, there was no APTN [Aboriginal Peoples Television Network]. I always felt like I was the only Indigenous person in the room and I *was* — in most of my journalism experience. I was hired to work on shows to get the "Indigenous content," to find Indigenous people, because of course, nobody seemed to know an Indigenous person or an Indigenous community organization that they could call. So, that ended up being a very odd part of my career.

When I moved from CBC to CTV, we had the first-ever, national Indigenous current affairs show that was all about the kinds of issues that I was grappling with in my personal life as well. My father and his siblings went to a residential school. The episode that we did on residential schools, I think it was one of the very early, national shows that looked at residential schools. This was back before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

People talked about that show in general as being like the first time you really saw this kind of urbane Indigenous community — our first show was talking about the "urban reserve." It was a concept people hadn't even thought about at that time: all of the many Indigenous people who come to a place like Vancouver or Toronto or Winnipeg from different communities and different nations, different languages and cultures. I feel like that was a super-rich time and I didn't have time to process it until I got to grad school.

Of course, I really thought the Internet, too, was going to change our lives in very positive ways. Suddenly, those voiceless would have a platform of their own and that actually has been kind of true. We do a chapter in the book that talks about pushback, especially from Indigenous people when it comes to how media are covering them. So, I think some of that stuff has

happened. But, yeah, it's funny to think back to the younger self that was completely bought into thinking that journalists had a very tough job and they do, but not thinking about the broader structural issues that we confront in the book.

RH: Mary Lynn, my read of what you've mapped out in this book is that there are concurrent crises that flow out of this current media rupture and, at the risk of essentializing things, I submit that two broad crises are facing what's known as legacy media. One is a crisis of profitability. The other is a crisis of legitimacy. To me, it's very tempting to connect the two, and we can do that if you feel they very much are. But for now, I'm just curious whether you feel that the first crisis of profitability has sucked up much of the oxygen and effectively starved the other crisis of any attention or any sustained investigation.

MLY: I agree with you and we talk about the myopia that some of the journalism studies literature has focused largely on the business of journalism crisis and the technology crisis, the advent of digitalization or digital media, and its impact on the former legacy players.

CC: The crisis is real, right? The technological, economic crisis. We're seeing daily tweets right now about journalists who are being laid off and losing their jobs. That stuff is really real.

At the same time, what this book is, is a not-hot take on what's happening in journalism. Instead, it builds on this long-term critique of the story that journalism has told itself about what it's doing that often ignores ongoing harms, the way that journalism is very much a part of social ordering, the whiteness of newsrooms. The fact that there are very few people of colour, there are very few Black and Indigenous people in newsrooms in North America. I think that on one hand, we don't want to downplay the crisis. But on the other hand, we also have to look closely at what journalism has been doing and how it might do it better in this time of reorganization that is inevitable as we're watching this downturn economically. The way that journalism has done business as usual isn't working the way that it used to. How do we begin to rethink all aspects of journalism, not just the technology and economic piece of it?

RH: Well, there was this great short quote, and you've alluded to this a bit already in your comments, but I'm thinking here of the late sociologist Herbert J. Gans and his study of mainstream U.S. newscasts back in 1979 led him to conclude, "news reflects the white male social order."

CC: We open our first chapter talking about the history of journalism scholarship by talking specifically about the apology that *National Geographic* issued in the last couple of years. They had a historian look through all of the *National Geographic* coverage. We did a show on this for *MEDIA INDIGENA* and we quote from that show because it's such a powerful moment in terms of media recognizing its participation in ongoing harm, in colonialism and at the same time doing very little to change how newsrooms are composed. Really, the same kind of exoticization of Indigenous people, of people of colour is still going on. That same hope, the same kinds of things that drove certain kinds of publications in response to who they think their audience is and what their audience interests are is still ongoing. We need to think more transformatively about what kind of tool journalism is and about the many kinds of journalism that are already out there operating, and what's good about those many different kinds of journalism.

RH: Still with Gans, though, Mary Lynn, it feels like a sweeping statement, "white male social order." Yet all you have to do is just look at the employment data and it bears it out to this day.

MLY: Yeah, and it is. And I think you are right. It is true and it can be more nuanced in terms of language. It's really about the performance of white masculinity — because we don't want to make it essentialized. Even the studies on gender, about the kinds of women

or the traits that women show who get ahead in newsrooms, end up embodying masculine traits to get ahead in newsrooms. It's not just white men. It's the performance of a certain kind of white masculinity in modern journalism that has become the primary authority and legitimized journalism more than its methods. So the fact that you had certain kinds of people with certain kinds of traits telling the news, you know, the major newscasters in charge of news organizations, those were stabilizing authoritative structures... news itself has been stabilized by the performance of a certain kind of white masculinity, and this repeated performance has grounded it.

RH: Candis, there's an expression I was reminded of by your book: "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder." And I thought, "Well, if that's true of beauty, how true might that be of the stories we tell?" If no single unitary narrative is possible, how many eyes do we need on a given day? If you want to step back further, where do we even choose to look? That's where my mind goes thinking about this.

CC: When we were writing the book, a lot of big issues came up. I had been teaching media ethics for a number of years at the journalism school. I had also been helping students wrestle with a lot of the inconsistencies and paradoxical looseness and rigidity of journalism methods of how to get to what happened, of which narratives matter, of whose voices should be prominent. When the book *Seeing Red* came out, I was grateful for historians who looked closely at how Indigenous people had been represented over time in the Canadian Press. The book mounted this pretty solid argument about how Indigenous people were always found wanting by the press and how it is absolutely part of the colonial social order in Canada.

MLY: There are multiple perspectives that are obviously required. It even goes deeper than that though, to the fact that content only matters so much in terms of developing relationships and engagement and trust. It's that relational piece. All of us have worked as journalists. I'm sure we can all remember that newsrooms didn't want to get calls from audience members complaining. People used to actively avoid trying to answer the phone. There was a whole system set in place that the audience could write short letters to the editor but it didn't filter over to the newsroom part, at least in the news organizations that I worked in.

It's the relational elements that have been undermined as they become more commercial. There are multiple elements to that. But the relationship elements have been undermined to the point that coming to that shared perspective requires navigation and relationship and some degrees of trust. We see this breaking down all over and that's what we try to unearth and get at in the book as well. That's why we moved to harm. All these audiences weren't included and or were harmed all these years and we've got to start there.

RH: We're seeing this turn to audience engagement, right? We need to be more "inclusive." We need to be more "responsive" to the audience. And it's almost like a tacit acknowledgement: yeah, all the things we weren't doing before the digital revolution upset the apple cart, upset our monopoly on — or oligopoly, as the case may be — on the creation and control and distribution of information.

CC: That's like the core questions that we try to open up because we think that digital media has opened up these questions. 'How do journalists know what they know?' 'Who gets to decide what good journalism is?'

These kinds of questions, they weren't necessarily asked. They were maybe asked among journalists themselves at the bar or in the newsroom once in a while. But most of the time what Mary Lynn said is right. We sort of had these very small interventions that the public could make or to ask us, as journalists: how did you get that story? How did you arrive at that conclusion? Whereas, with Twitter, if there is real problematic coverage, journalists find out

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very quickly and the uproar doesn't stop until it's addressed somehow by the news organization.

Journalism has done some great work, right? We're not saying that it hasn't, but the kind of dominant narratives that journalism has told about what it's doing have not necessarily been problematized. I think they are being more problematized now. I think the newsrooms are beginning to ask questions because they're getting pushback in a digital environment.

So, the arc of the book, the last half of the book looks at how repair and reform and transformation have begun to happen in different kinds of organizations and how hard it is to do at older media organizations, at startups.

MLY: The socialization process in journalism school and in newsrooms is powerful. I'm sure you all remember; I remember being singled out.

My first job when I was starting at the *Hamilton Spectator*, I was sent out to cover the extended bar hours for an hour from 11:00 till midnight on Sunday. I hadn't gone to journalism school yet and I was sent out to interview people… to see if it was busy. And it was really quiet and my lede was "it was quiet on Main Street" (there was a Main Street in Hamilton). So quiet in fact that you could shoot a cannon down the street.

And how did I spell cannon? Not with two *n*'s, unfortunately. Basically, "you could shoot a canon down the street" and that made the blooper board in the newsroom. I remember the censure and the internal practices that newsrooms do to socialize you into not making certain kinds of mistakes and then, as you said, Rick, some things that you can say, some things that you can't say. I mean, it's a powerful organizing force, the newsroom socialization process.

CC: The thing is that one of the real challenges of writing this book and basing it both on sort of a deep study and a deep dive into scholarship and also talking to working journalists right now in various kinds of circumstances — freelancers, newsrooms, etc. — the challenge is really to kind of get to how the interpretive aspect of journalism is also really about socialization, like Mary Lynn was describing.

What is it like to be inside a newsroom? How do we begin to think about that over time, historically, in the present with digital media, how have those things changed? All those kinds of underlying questions are woven into the book as well. I think this is something that journalism scholars have really struggled to also get their heads around.

You mentioned Gans. There have been a couple of other, really famous ethnographies that talk about how it is that stories, frames — the way that we think about what's at issue in a particular news story or what news even is — how much that is determined by the socialization processes in a newsroom. Once you've been working in a newsroom, you do have that sensibility that's hard to describe of what's a news story. What should the lede be? How do we line up what the top stories of the day are? You pick that up in a newsroom, depending on what kind of newsroom you've been in, what kind of platform it's putting the news out on, and who it thinks its audience is.

This is why we ended up doing a chapter specifically on Indigenous journalism because I think that the approach that a lot of Indigenous journalists take explicitly recognizes that they are part of communities, that they are already in an ongoing relationship with lands, waters, non-humans, each other. The question of what are your obligations to lands and waters is already part of how many Indigenous journalists approach their work, which is quite different than the kinds of obligations and responsibilities that a lot of mainstream non-Indigenous journalists might approach their work with.

We all know from *somewhere*. I think that is still a real mind-bender for many who've been kind of socialized and instantiated in a profession that still thinks it can take a view from

nowhere, that still thinks that it's possible to stand outside of your role, of your organization and assess what's going on and come up with a framing and a representation that is in a way omniscient. When in fact, the ways in which we make sense of the world deeply reflects who we are, where we come from, what our experiences have been, and what organization we're part of and who that organization thinks their audience is.

MLY: I wasn't very reflexive as an early journalist. I didn't have a lot of thoughts or hot takes on my backstage thinking and motives and understanding about what the profession was doing and my role in it. It took quite a while, but we devote a whole chapter to journalists' existential crises and the emerging meta genre of journalists' personal stories. They're speculative memoirs, we call them, and they're writing them in real-time and or else they're talking about them in the bar.

RH: Why do journalists, who purport to be deeply skeptical, they don't themselves get to be the subject of skepticism. I always thought it was just like a 'good for the goose, good for the gander' kind of thing. Shouldn't people be skeptical about you, and in turn, you skeptical about the place you work, and its motives and its ability to deliver on what it claims to want to do, serve the public?

CC: Journalists don't like to be critiqued, Mary Lynn said that earlier but I think this is a really big challenge. The challenge around providing good critique for journalists is that journalists are able to take it on board and recognize not just when it's an egregious mistake, but when their framing is not necessarily identifying what the problem is.

One of the things that fascinated me when I started researching climate change was how to make climate change meaningful for diverse publics meant that you had to dive into ethics and morality and reasons why people should change the way they live in order to address climate change. Those sorts of questions also end up falling off the table if you're just focused on a more objective approach to reporting. If you're just reporting the facts then you're leaving off the table what's meaningful.

How do journalists begin to navigate that, especially when it's a pressing issue like climate change? But you could also apply that to Indigenous issues as well. We have a pressing issue when it comes to murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls. We have a pressing issue when it comes to addressing what's happening with Indigenous children who are in care and Indigenous children in the education system. I think these sorts of ongoing issues demand more engaged journalism.

There have been some great examples of that where Indigenous journalists have intervened. Think about the kind of work that Tanya Talaga has done. She's somebody we also interviewed and quote in the book. She says that before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, before Idle No More, thoughtful, fair, nonracist reporting on Indigenous issues was hard to find.

We're still really struggling to get to the kind of fair and engaged reporting that might change the system, that might actually use journalism as a set of tools to make significant changes or to prod the system towards making significant changes.

MLY: That's a great point, Candis — really great point. When I think about when I was doing my Ph.D. and when you look at the nature of event journalism, you could almost argue that it's a cultural working through. We cover the same events over and over again. We cover the same kinds of crime stories. We cover the same kinds of public events in terms of politics and other areas of the public sphere.

RH: Almost ritualistically, eh?

MLY: Definitely. My most generous read is that it is a cultural working through because when I was doing my dissertation, I had a hard time coming up with a research question. I

knew the topic area I wanted to cover. It was crime journalism, media, economics and gender. But I had a hard time coming up with the question and at one point, my advisor said to me, "Mary Lynn, you can't solve the nature of good and evil in a dissertation. You just have to have a research question." That's when the light bulb went off. I thought, oh, I can do this. But I didn't realize that those were some of the larger conceptual themes that I'd been working through from a very young age. I think that as a culture, these are the connections we need to be making as we're doing this cultural working through on this ritualistic event coverage. Ideally, we're also generating moral values. We're generating wisdom, although I'm hesitant to use that word; we're generating other kinds of knowledge to help our communities make sense of these wider questions that these events called into play. But right now, journalism is just that: ritual. Without the other questions, it is just event after event.

Because when you look at the homogeneity of most news coverage globally, the fact that people across the globe who conform to a certain kind of journalism style and believe that that's the method, how the stories look the same, how they come up with similar angles except when there's a nationalist or a national context piece. It's really impressive how powerfully conformist this genre has been in terms of both people's emotional and ways of being in the newsroom, as well as what the content looks like.

I mean, how is it that Canadian Press style and spelling come to matter more than potential harm or harm that's actively ongoing? How is it that style comes to matter more than everyone you're talking to? People misremember. People are conspiracy theorists. People have inner conflicts. They get things wrong. But, because it is so messy, journalists have had to come to these shorthands. It's much more complicated and people's lives, Rick, as you say, are at stake. We try to bring that to the fore in the book that it is life and death as we quote you as saying and that journalists need to care.

RH: Let me ask you, Candis, is racism a fact… or not? And I'll tell you why I ask: because every time I see it, it's slapped inside quotation marks whenever it's reported on, as if it was opinion, not fact.

Is racism a fact or not, and if it's treated as if it isn't, how telling is that on the part of those who do so?

CC: It's such an interesting question, point, observation about journalism — that racism ends up being a claim that people make as opposed to an observable experience, documented with much precision increasingly over the last century.

We talked a little bit already about the *National Geographic* apology, right? They needed a documented, analytical opinion from somebody who had gone through all of their reporting to say: actually, it was racist. When, in fact, one of the interesting points they make in this story that they do on themselves is that at a time when they were reporting on the crowning of a king in Ethiopia, Black men and women in the United States could not get into a lecture at a *National Geographic* place because everything was segregated still at that time.

So, it's the same thing with objectivity. If you think about the way that the history of journalism has been told, we talk about the rise of objectivity and how it emerged in the 1920s. Well, in the 1920s, who had the vote? Who was able to fully participate in democracy?

When you start asking those kinds of questions, it becomes sort of untenable that the way that journalism has perceived itself as recording a story that gets better over time when you know the experience of many minority populations. Marginalized populations, Indigenous populations have definitely had an uneven experience with democracy, with colonialism, and have often suffered and not had their stories told in anything like mainstream news. In fact, in most cases, at least when it comes to Indigenous people, we've had to start our own media. If

you look at the way that media has evolved, you see the way that Indigenous people have taken it up at every single turn, including when it came to digital media.

RH: Is genocide a fact? Is settler colonialism? What's a fact anymore? I don't understand!

MLY: It's a really good question. And I think, obviously, genocide's a fact as is settler colonialism. Facts, as Candis talks about in her first book, are often settled upon in the social. And when you look at James Carey's definition of journalism, it's a special kind of public conversation and it performs a cultural function. And one of those functions is to, as he talks about and Candis mentioned earlier, create enemies and allies.

But I would also suggest it's this kind of, as Candis talks about, "the communality of facts." It's to help people work through the communality — the coming together — of what makes a fact. And that's really what journalism's function is to both recognize that it's part of a much larger set of systems and to try and help people work through what's more likely to be true than not.

CC: I think it also goes to: if Indigenous journalists or other journalists from communities of colour come into a situation and sort of pronounce on it, they're immediately called out as having some form of bias. And of course, in the book, we argue that coming from a community actually gives you a form of expertise; the knowledge that you have from your community and from your communal experiences is a form of expertise. And it should be treated as such.

It's interesting because the example you're talking about — you could right away say: well, are you biased or are you supporting one particular social order or view of the world or, one hoped for kind of future and present?

I think these are the challenges that we try to open up by recognizing that there are multiple perspectives and that journalism is often making choices about enemies and allies, about the systems that they want to support and reinforce. At the end of the book, we call for a kind of *systems journalism* — so that journalists situate themselves as adding to prior journalisms, as coming from somewhere, and as providing a window through their reporting on events of the way that systems interact and intersect and the ways a particular moment can shed light on broader trends, on broader problems, and potentially also, on broader solutions.

MLY: Candis and I co-teach a course that comes out of the book. One of the early lectures is on what is journalism, and we take many different approaches.

The first approach that journalists would likely all agree to — they would all say, yes, journalism is a fourth estate function. It holds power to account. It is fundamental to democracy.

The second one that we go through is journalism is a professional ideology — basically, it is what journalists say it is. And this is from many scholars, not us. It's how journalists practise journalism, their norms and practices, their ideals. That's what journalism is at any point.

The third one that we go through is that journalism conforms to dominant ideology. Like Noam Chomsky, that it supports state interests; Anderson and Robertson, that it supports settler colonialism; McChesney and other scholars are political economists, that it supports capitalism.

And so arguably, a challenge is that, again, if you go back to Carey, it's a special kind of conversation. Journalism is all of those things. It's such a broad umbrella term. Trying to parse it is so hard when it is doing all of those functions in different ways.

RH: In some ways, I find political/legislative reporters to be in the worst position to try and talk about power because power operates outside the halls of parliament. And if we want to get into these bigger structural pictures of how power works and reproduces itself. Looking at Bill X or Y or whether Party Z is up or down in the polls and all this horse racing stuff and

the scandals are more soap opera and drama. It has nothing to do with helping its audience understand how power works.

It's funny you mentioned Chomsky, though, because never far from my mind in these types of discussions is a scene in a documentary called *Manufacturing Consent*, which is a doc about Noam Chomsky in the media. And there's a *New York Times* editor who was interviewed and he had this to say:

"There's a saying about legislation that legislation is like making sausage, that the less you know about how it's done, the better for your appetite. The same is true of this business. If you were in a conference in which decisions are being made and what to put on page one or what not, you would get, I think, the impression that important decisions were being made in a flippant and frivolous way. But, given the pressures of time to try and get things out, you resort to a kind of shorthand and you have to fill that paper up every day."

So basically, newsrooms are like abattoirs. But, it's funny, as white male dominated space, I guess they are indeed sausage factories.

CC: But this is partly why we argue that, in fact, the crisis facing journalism is maybe more profound. That it isn't just about economic changes and technological changes and new platforms coming along, but it's really about questioning what kind of tool journalism is, what kinds of work can you do with it, what kinds of interventions and transformations can be made. And we can point to many instances in which journalism has done better and we can point to a lot of instances in which journalism hasn't.

We actually teach with that film, *Manufacturing Consent*. We're probably really some of the few journalism professors who do teach with it. It's considered a bit, I don't know, what's the word? Passé?

RH: It's a pre-Internet film so it's dated.

MLY: Rick, you just said it so brilliantly about power. Journalists tend to focus on the horse race and the discrete events versus the fascia or the links between them. There's another scholar who writes about the strategic role of emotionality as a strategic ritual of emotionality versus objectivity. Part of the horse race and part of some of these events are also emotions run amok. You get a certain set of emotions in journalism: outrage, anger, fear, anxiety. You only have to look to some of the COVID-19 coverage, and this is not to suggest that the pandemic is in any way not fearful or anxious. But, journalism adds its own emotional cocktail, ritual of emotion that is, again, under-addressed in some of our conversations to Candis' point.

RH: Well, I'm glad you spoke about this concept of "the news event" because that's something you flag as a key element of current media practices. Let me quote you.

"Journalism's focus and forte of elevating what anthropologists would call the particular through its focus on news events has made it difficult to reflect and name structures and contexts in the reporting."

So, reporters can't see the forest for the trees. They privilege the micro at the expense of the macro. Having said that, changing that — and I guess we're starting to move a little bit into fixing things — changing that sounds like more than just a tweak around the edges, does it not?

MLY You talked about it, your capacity for reflection, earlier. When I look at my trajectory, the discrete events worked for me because my backstage I was still trying to work through the universal. I think it takes a tool kit. It takes a personal tool kit at that level of the self, structural, sociological, cultural tool kit. It takes a lot of tools to be able to start to bridge the particular to the universal and create understanding and be able to digest it.

CC: I think you're right, though, Rick. I think it is more than just a tweak.

And that is the challenge, right? As people who work in journalism education and actively participate in conversations like I do on this podcast; Mary Lynn has co-founded *The Conversation* [Canada]. The kinds of work that we do both in and out of the university are really thinking about how journalism considers its role and thinking about its potential and its possibility to shine light on these persistent episodes of injustice. Because of the event orientation of news — like what's new here, what happened here, that prevents us from really taking into account the broader trends and the broader structural considerations when it comes to gender, race, colonialism, etc.

Turning these questions to the broader problems to which events could direct our attention, that's something that journalism necessarily hasn't always reached for. Certainly in news, that's true; but, maybe more of that has been done in investigative journalism. So, maybe more so in some genres of journalism rather than others. This systems perspective really matters when it comes to looking at certain events where marginalized individuals, communities, and populations have continually encountered a press who have really not taken into account the history. We interviewed Jenni Monet, who was arrested at Standing Rock. She's an Indigenous journalist [Laguna Pueblo], and she talked about how it's important not only just to know that history matters, but *when* it matters. That's an important aspect of journalism and journalism education that I think has been neglected and particularly so in North America, where the history of Canada and the United States when it comes to Indigenous people has largely been erased.

RH: I think it's pretty clear we could talk for many hours more. I mean this is — it's an existential crisis as you've described it. So I want to thank you both for being so generous with your time and for being so generous with your book, your work.

CC: Thanks, Rick, and thanks for having us on. One of the great things that I think is woven through the book is my participation in this podcast. So, thank you for inviting me to be part of many conversations.

RH: Well, I expect some royalties any day now. [laughter]

CC: You and me both. [laughter]

MLY: Thanks, Rick, for your leadership in this space, really. You've done an excellent job on this podcast; it's impressive. Thank you.

RH: Happy to do so. Take care, you two.

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