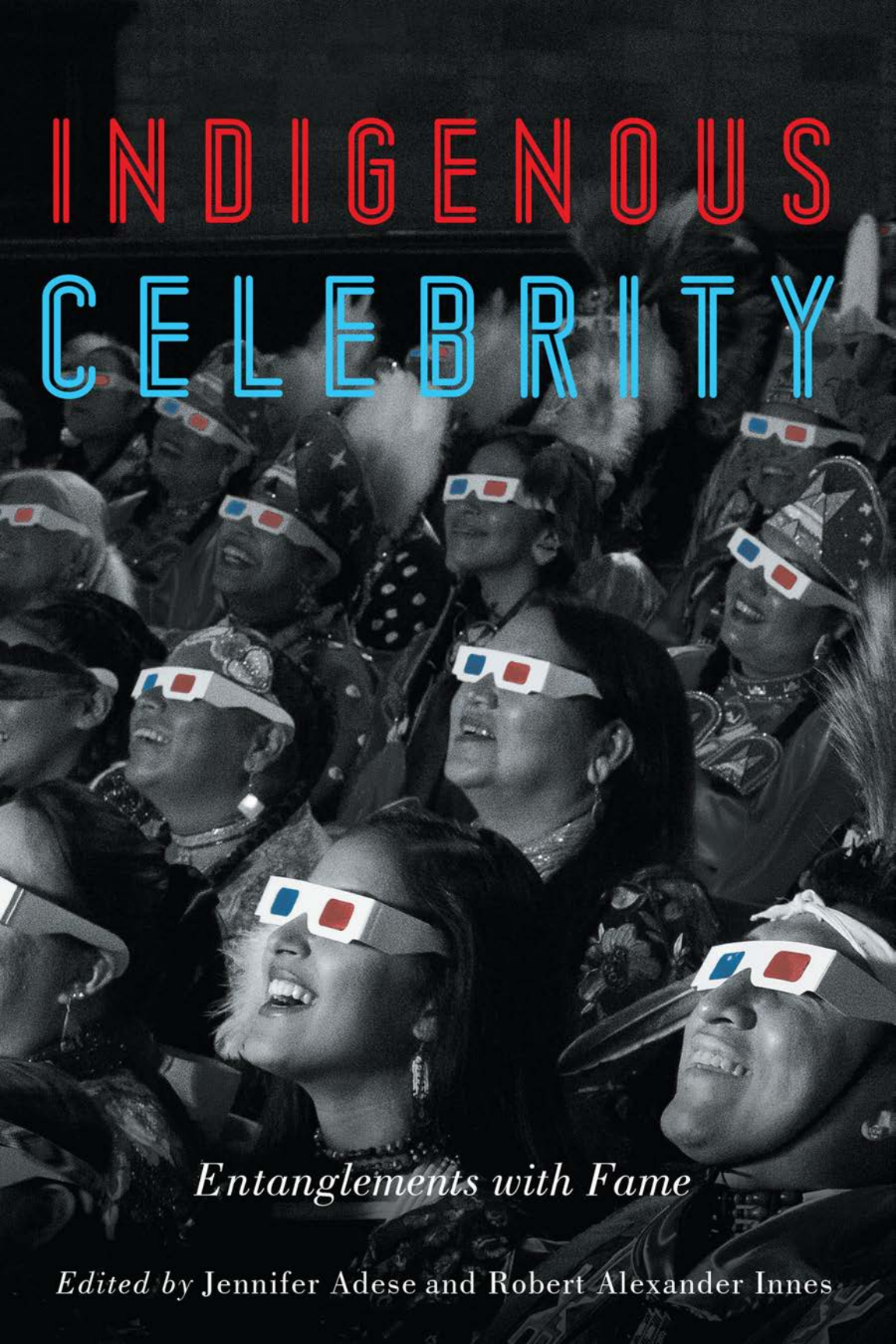
INDIGENOUS
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Entanglements with Fame
Edited by Jennifer Adese and Robert Alexander Innes

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## ENTANGLEMENTS WITH FAME

*Edited by Jennifer Adese and Robert Alexander Innes*

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Indigenous Celebrity: Entanglements with Fame


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INTRODUCTION

# Indigeneity, Celebrity, and Fame: Accounting for Colonialism

Jennifer Adese and Robert Alexander Innes

In late 2016, Canadian literary celebrity Joseph Boyden came under intense scrutiny regarding his identity claims by both Indigenous and mainstream news media; in some cases, journalists seemed to think that his status as part of the broader Canadian literary scene meant that Boyden was immune to critical questioning. A number of journalists derided questions raised about his identity claims, suggesting that they were little more than petty attacks.[1] Indigenous news outlet Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, on the other hand, and journalist Jorge Barrera in particular, published investigative pieces digging into Boyden's identity claims. They also examined accusations of plagiarism launched against Boyden in the wake of his being "opened up" to critical public scrutiny.[2] It became clear, at the outset, that a number of individuals had begun to take note of the shifting character of Boyden's claims and of the disturbing similarity between his work and that of the late Anishinaabe author Ron Geyshick. Yet many people hesitated to raise their concerns publicly. Why did it seem to some that Boyden was off-limits? Why did some hesitate to consider—or avoid discussing altogether—the accusations made against him? *Something* undergirded this reluctance and at the same time stoked fierce counter critiques intended to preserve Boyden and his legacy.

It is this something that the authors of this volume are interested in. In the context of this volume, that something is *celebrity* and the power, influence, and recognition that come with being construed as an "Indigenous celebrity." Boyden's status as an Indigenous-identified and -identifying literary celebrity, and the social, cultural, economic, and other forms of capitalism that came with his Indigeneity and celebrity status, cast a dark shadow over those concerned about what they framed as inconsistencies in his public narrativization of his Indigenous identity. To many, Boyden was "too big to fail" in that as the darling of the Canadian literary scene—and *the* voice on Indigenous issues in media in the early part of the 2010s—he was above reproach. At a key juncture in the history of Canada, that of intensive global attention to the legacies of its residential school system, Boyden emerged as a kind of "great hope"—a self-identifying Métis person in the ways that John Ralston Saul likens as a go-between of Indigenous and Canadian—that reached out and promised a bridge between two seemingly disparate worlds.[3] Eric Andrew-Gee writes that, "in an age of reconciliation, this mixed background was an asset: Boyden came to be seen as a 'shining bridge,' as one Indigenous scholar called him, able to mediate between white and Indigenous, at a time when the task seemed more urgent than ever."[4] Boyden's purported mixedness was a healing salve for the gaping wounds ripped open by Canada's long overdue reckoning with its devastatingly violent residential school system.

As Toni Bruce and Christopher Hallinan write in their book chapter on Aboriginal Australian runner Cathy Freeman, who won a gold medal in track and field for her victory in the 400-metre race at the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games, when unable to avoid confronting their horrific treatment of Indigenous people, settler colonial nations such as Australia tend to seek out symbols of national reconciliation.[5] Much like how Canadian literary circles, the media, and the government positioned Boyden as a beacon of reconciliation, Freeman's athletic accomplishments and indeed her very visage were upheld to demonstrate "powerfully and visually . . . the joining of two key parts of Australia's psyche: the first inhabitants and the white settlers/invaders."[6] Even after the 1994 Commonwealth Games, as Freeman began to speak more publicly about the discrimination that she had faced, white Australians constructed her as a symbol of national reconciliation: first, when she was selected to light the Olympic flame at the opening ceremony of the 2000 Summer Olympic Games in Sydney; second, following her win in the

400-metre race, when during her victory lap she "carried both the Australian and [the] Aboriginal flags—a true symbol of reconciliation and pride of her Aboriginal cultural heritage."[7]

Although Freeman was depicted in the media as reluctant to use her new-found celebrity to speak on "political causes," she nevertheless soundly critiqued Australian Prime Minister John Howard's refusal to issue a formal apology to Aboriginal people, in particular the stolen generations apprehended from their families under government policy.[8] In the case of Freeman, however, the intense public attention that accompanied her impressive win, and actively perpetuated the image of her as an icon of reconciliation, led her to gradually withdraw from the spotlight.[9] Whereas she appeared to reject attempts to make her into an Indigenous "reconciliation celebrity," Boyden, in contrast, leaned into the attention that his literary celebrity garnered, undertaking speaking engagements, appearing on panels and in/on the news, and writing op-eds, all on the subject of reconciliation. His words repeatedly reinforced the promise that, despite the horrific violence that Canada had perpetrated on Indigenous children, the country might yet arrive at a place of unity with Indigenous people: "We are at that crossroads in our country, the one where we face the decision of whether we strive for true reconciliation or whether we remain a country in denial. There is no more room for the politics of divisiveness. Now is the time where we must all come together as a nation not to just accept but begin to reconcile with what is our darkest stain."[10] So, again, whereas Freeman was placed in the role of reconciliation celebrity and took steps to remove herself from it, Boyden actively worked to take on such a role in the public consciousness, without any evidence, unlike Freeman, that he had actually experienced any racism or other oppression as a result of his supposed Indigeneity.

In spite of this lack of demonstrable lived experience, Boyden became what Elizabeth DiEmanuele calls a "Post-TRC Indigenous celebrity," defined as "a figure in constant negotiation between 'legitimizing' their position for the public, demonstrating their political utility, and modeling what a nation-to-nation relationship could look like. The Indigenous celebrity-diplomat is Canada's educator who resists oppression but who also compromises to make space for an Indigenous future in a settler-landscape that has done everything to suppress it."[11] For some, Boyden's name became synonymous with reconciliation, but it was this very thing—his willingness and comfort in speaking

and advocating on behalf of Indigenous people writ large—that also came to open Boyden up to critique, ultimately leading to his retreat from the public eye. Keen observers began to notice that, across his interventions in conversations on reconciliation, he inconsistently narrated his identity as an Indigenous person and his connections to Indigenous communities. At times, he invoked Indigeneity broadly, while at other times he referred to specific nodes of Indigenous national identity: Métis, Mi'kmaq, Ojibway, and Nipmuc, what Barrera termed a "shape-shifting" identity.[12] According to writer Rebeka Tabobondung of Wasauksing First Nation, when she asked Boyden which Indigenous nation he was from, he told her "Wasauksing First Nation"—yet no one in the community could confirm that he was, in fact, from there.[13] To be sure, media outlets initially (and generally) focused far more on his identity claims than they did on the accusations of plagiarism that Boyden faced. In the ways that celebrity scandals function—even on the seemingly small scale of Canadian literary celebrity and of Indigenous celebrity—the details of his private life and questions about his character were far more titillating to the public than the work that he had (or had not) done. Although many Indigenous people took to social media to decry his shifting identity claims and to question whether Boyden was exploiting those claims, many of his celebrity friends spoke out on his behalf, and the tide was relatively slow to turn toward questioning him, his claims, and by extension his integrity. When it did turn, however, it was profound, and in spite of a number of attempts by Boyden to address critiques, he began to shrink from public life.[14]

Some of this retreat from public life is framed as voluntary. In an interview with Candy Palmater of CBC Radio, Boyden states that "I've become too much of a go-to guy. I should be allowing those with deeper roots in their communities to speak for their communities. . . . Others need to speak and I do apologize for taking too much of the airtime. . . . It's time to jump off that train and pull back a bit."[15] Here Boyden also acknowledges the enticing lure of celebrity, noting that his "ego has gotten a little too big."[16] He has since largely disappeared from the media landscape, and what has remained in the wake of this incident are complex questions about the nature of Indigenous relations to the notions of celebrity and fame. What also remains is that it matters greatly whether those positioned as Indigenous celebrities, marked

for public consumption by all audiences, *are* in fact Indigenous and whether they are *recognized* by other Indigenous people *as* Indigenous people.

Conversations on Boyden intensified with the revelation that neither he nor the late great-uncle—"Injun Joe"—whom he used as a touchpoint for authenticity was an Indigenous person. This led us, as the editors of this volume, to question the manner and mode in which we elevate Indigenous people—or, in this case, those who claim to be Indigenous but carry with them often murky backstories about their connections to Indigenous communities. This raises a number of questions. What are the implications of Indigenous involvement with celebrity culture? How have Indigenous people become taken up and, at times, consumed by celebrity? What is the role of the non-Indigenous public in the celebrification of Indigenous people (or those who are effectively marketed and who market themselves as bona fide Indigenous people)?[17] What are the responsibilities of Indigenous celebrities to the communities that they come from and purport to represent? Are there innately Indigenous conceptualizations of celebrity, and if so how do Indigenous understandings of "well knownness," fame, and/or celebrity differ from mainstream and/or "whitespread" conceptualizations of celebrity? Finally, how have racism, colonization, and the global circulation of discourses of celebrity affected Indigenous people and communities the world over? The chapters in this volume explore these questions and the complexities of Indigenous people's relationships with celebrity and fame in past, present, and ongoing contexts, identifying commonalities, tensions, and possibilities. The multidisciplinary contributions to this volume thus explore the inherent complexities of Indigenous people's relationships with celebrity and fame on a global scale.

## Celebrity Studies: Theories and Approaches

In order to work through some of the tensions, limits, and possibilities wrought by Indigenous people's entanglements with celebrity culture, and to reclaim discourses of well knownness from the at times narrow cast of celebrity, it is worth discussing, at least in brief, some of the central tenets of celebrity studies. Etymologically, the word *celebrity* arises from "the Latin *celebritas* for 'multitude' or 'fame' and *celeber* meaning '*frequented,' 'populous,' or 'famous*')," and it "originally meant not a person but a condition—as

the *Oxford English Dictionary* says, 'the condition of being much talked about.'"[18] As the term expanded, it began to be used to speak to the condition of a person—a particularly well-known person. Over the centuries, various technologies would enable the global reach of certain figures and produce diffuse articulations and expressions of well knownness.

Some of the earliest scholars writing on the subject of celebrity, such as Daniel Boorstin, argued that the "Graphic Revolution" of the nineteenth century as the prime reason that "the slow, the 'natural,' way of becoming well known" was displaced by processes in which fame is actively manufactured.[19] Whereas prior to the Graphic Revolution history and time were the determinants of a person's well knownness, Boorstin argued that "we (the television watchers, the movie goers, radio listeners, and newspaper and magazine readers) and our servants (the television, movie, and radio producers, newspaper and magazine editors, and ad writers) can so quickly and so effectively give a man 'fame.'"[20] With the Graphic Revolution came a shift in which well knownness could be actively sought, performed, and maintained via media networks, and to Boorstin this meant that well knownness as a "hallmark of greatness" came to mean one's ability to get into the news and stay there.[21]

In the decades since the publication of Boorstin's book, the study of celebrity has exploded, with scholars agreeing or disagreeing with and building upon his initial take. Richard Dyer is largely credited with introducing celebrity studies as a discrete field of study in 1977.[22] However, it was through the late 1970s and into the 1980s, with the rise of globalization, that some of the earliest and most sustained attention paid to studying celebrity emerged—and came in the form of studies on celebrity impacts on marketing and advertising. Scholars working in this area turned their attention to studying the possibilities (and problems) of celebrity advertisements for public audiences.[23] Since then, the field has continued to expand, becoming incredibly diffuse, and in recent years much of the research on celebrity has been focused on its social, cultural, and political implications, alongside the impacts of new technological forms on the accumulation of attention capital and new processes of celebrity making.

One of the leading theorists in the field today, Chris Rojek, draws our attention to the ways that mass communication, print, analog, and more recently digital media have enabled the rapid accumulation of what he calls "attention capital," which confers celebrity.[24] For Rojek, how attention capital

is garnered in effect allows us to identify three kinds of celebrity formation: ascribed, achieved, and celetoids.[25] Ascribed celebrity is attention capital given to those who, for example, are seen as "hereditary titled individuals," such as members of royal families born into, and with, recognition.[26] Achieved celebrity, in contrast, "derives from recognized talents and accomplishments."[27] The third kind of celebrity that Rojek identifies are celetoids, whom he defines as "individuals who attain intense bursts of fame. The term is an amalgamation of 'celebrity' and 'tabloid.'"[28] For Rojek, the celetoid signals the central role of media in contributing to the accumulation of attention capital, but he also highlights the precarity of celebrity as conferred through media.[29] Celetoids who accumulate attention capital in "intense bursts" might (or might not) continue to flare, but principally they are manufactured, in Graeme Turner's view, to satisfy public demand for more celebrities. Turner writes that "the accelerated commodity life cycle of the celetoid has emerged as an effective industrial solution to the problem of satisfying demand."[30]

By their nature, then, celetoids are disposable forms of celebrity, never intended to occupy public view for very long. In the years since Rojek and Turner first grappled with the emergence of a "new kind" of celebrity (flagging the advent of reality television), other advances in media have continued to open up avenues available to people for the accumulation of celebrity capital. Theresa Senft, drawing on Michael Goldhaber's 2009 work on the existence of an "attention economy," argues that new media move us from being passive consumers to active producers of "attention." Rather than looking at the accumulation of attention capital as a thing, she argues, we should more concretely consider *how* technological shifts have refashioned the manner in which attention capital is accumulated and by whom. As Senft argues, the hyper-intensification of social media produces a landscape wherein *anyone* could (presumably) become a star. The arrival of new technologies has hailed the formation of "micro-celebrity," in which such "stars accumulate capital because they get attention; they accumulate capital because they have managed to *turn themselves from citizens to corporations*, vis-à-vis the proprietary organization of the attention of others."[31] As ever more people cultivate their online personas and attract attention from people whom they know—and those whom they do not—they garner "follows" on blogs and other social media sites. In turn, they emerge as smaller-scale celebrities—micro-celebrities.

Alice Marwick summarizes micro-celebrity, noting that celebrity has "traditionally been viewed as something someone is, based on how well known he or she is; micro-celebrity, by contrast, is something someone does."[32] It therefore speaks to "a state of being famous to a niche group of people, but it is also a behavior: the presentation of oneself as a celebrity regardless of who is paying attention."[33] In the context of micro-celebrity, "there are two ways of achieving internet fame—by consciously arranging the self to achieve recognition, or by being ascribed fame by others due to one's accomplishments."[34] Micro-celebrities therefore owe their existence to their cultivation of public personas that attract "follows," "likes," and "shares." As one iteration of the celetoids whom Rojek discusses, micro-celebrities in the digital landscape emerge across sites not traditionally associated with celebrity making—homemaking, interior designing, organization consulting, meme making, travel blogging, et cetera. The advent of digital technologies and social media in particular has provided new avenues for the accumulation of attention capital and led to a refashioning of celebrity. The conversation and public discourse on celebrity has therefore become incredibly diffuse.[35] What remains fairly consistent since Boorstin wrote his book, however, is that scholars generally support the view that celebrity is a manufactured process, that it is contingent on the accumulation of attention capital, and therefore that it is inextricably tied to capitalism itself.

Kerry Ferris writes that, "as celebrity studies establishes itself in the academy, it has begun to develop in both comprehensiveness and complexity, with a variety of sub-areas and different theoretical and methodological approaches."[36] This is undoubtedly true. The field itself is far too expansive for us to discuss at length here. It is also outside our scope for this chapter in that one of the critical arguments that we are advancing here is that, even in current iterations, celebrity studies has been unable to offer a sufficiently and necessarily nuanced understanding of Indigenous people's encounters with celebrity. Although such theories are important for situating the myriad ways that celebrity has been conceptualized, expressed, acquired, achieved, ascribed, and so on, left unaccounted for in the majority of these accounts is how Indigenous people navigate celebrity and the accumulation of attention capital within a landscape of racism and global processes of colonization.

"Mainstream" theorizing on celebrity has suffered from a lack of concerted engagement with questions of race and racism even though processes of

celebrity making are inseparable from race and racism. This has led a number of Black scholars to forge new pathways to contemplate the implications of race and racism for Black celebrities.[37] Black celebrity studies has challenged scholars to think of how racism and racialized sexism inform access to, and performances of, celebrity but also to recognize appropriations of Blackness within the industries associated with celebrity and the significant contributions of Black celebrities—their ability "to shape important political and social debates alongside the limitations placed on them through media discourse."[38] This sits in contrast to Boorstin and Rojek, and to some extent Senft, whose work assumes a kind of "neutral subject," eliding the ways that celebrity is constructed through the lenses of racism, colonialism, and racialized sexism. Neither achieved nor ascribed celebrity—or celetoid celebrity—is universal. Achieved celebrity has always been mediated by access: that is, the ability of those racialized as "non-white" to access the means to ascend to celebrity. As Sarah Jackson argues, "black celebrities are subject to incredibly limited conditions for inclusion and acceptance across time."[39] Race and racism are also implicated in ascribed celebrity. For example, royal weddings of the English monarchy are broadcast worldwide, and like the Royals (always capitalized) themselves they are ascribed a particular celebrity status. Meanwhile, "Nigerian princes" are the butts of many pejorative email scam-related jokes. Racism and discourses of civilization and savagery shape socio-historical processes in which such distinctions emerge. Celebrity itself is not a new development and in fact is "simply the extension of a long-standing condition" of elevating certain humans above others on the basis of perceptions of certain characteristics.[40] What we mean by this, then, is that not all heredity is viewed with equal admiration on the global stage; colonialism is the context in which particular forms of European ascribed celebrity have been circulated globally.

Recognition accorded to members of royal families on the basis of heredity is contingent on the embedded belief that particular kinds of human organization are superior to others. This is precisely why Robert Clarke puts forth that celebrity studies must also be attentive to the place of celebrities within "contemporary late capitalist cultures" that have been "profoundly influenced by the histories and legacies of European colonial imperialism."[41] Colonial regimes, he postulates, "benefited from the performance of the stars—the celebrated adventurers, explorers, missionaries, soldiers of

fortune, scientists, artists, administrators, writers, and so on—whose lives and achievements served as endorsement for colonial exploits and as comforting cultural metonyms in domestic fantasies of superiority."[42] For Clarke, celebrity, or fame, itself has been an important commodity in the circulation of European colonial markets. Although the tendency of celebrity studies, cultural studies, and media studies has been to treat celebrity as a phenomenon apart from colonialism, Clarke instead crucially argues that celebrity, as fame, has "long been a significant commodity in the cultural and political economies of European colonial regimes."[43] In the contemporary context, "celebrity colonialism" appears to be most recognizable in instances in which celebrities are able to use their fame "in bizarre and disturbing ways to leverage public institutions in purportedly 'vulnerable' nations."[44] Here Clarke points to articles from 2006 in which it was reported that Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie had effectively banned Namibian media from reporting on the birth of their child Shiloh. Clarke, drawing on the work of Adam Elkus, notes that "Western celebrity culture is implicated in contemporary neo-colonialism in Africa and elsewhere, despite the declarations of individual celebrities to the contrary."[45]

Although Clarke's analysis does not account for the racial dynamics at work between Pitt and Jolie's whiteness and the purported Blackness of Namibians,[46] his intervention is nevertheless vital. Rather than seeing his work as a valuable contribution to recognizing the limits of cultural studies and media studies, prominent scholars working in celebrity studies, such as Turner, have critiqued Clarke's intervention as a sideshow arising from a field of postcolonial literary studies with no meaningful investment "in the analysis of popular culture."[47] Turner argues that, though cultural studies and media studies represent the "heartland of celebrity studies . . . where academics already interested in popular culture and representation have readily applied themselves to the discussion of particular celebrities as texts," literary studies is ill equipped for the task of addressing celebrity in an appropriate manner.[48] Yet it is clear from Black scholars, and the Indigenous scholars in this volume, that cultural studies and media studies have failed to speak meaningfully to Black and Indigenous people's experiences with celebrity. To this end, then, irrespective of its disciplinary location and questions about the suitability of literary studies to speak to celebrity culture, Clarke's intervention stands: we cannot speak of celebrity without accounting for colonialism. The

elevation of certain humans and some human characteristics above others within celebrity culture cannot be decoupled from centuries-old discourses of civility and savagery, of white superiority and Black and Indigenous inferiority, that have long established a foundation for deeply striated patterns of celebrity formation.

We must not, however, think of celebrity in a singular sense. Indigenous people have long been drawn into "whitestream" celebrity culture (to borrow from contributors Kim Anderson and Brendan Hokowhitu) and able to use the platform accorded to them to amplify the voices of their communities, to challenge discourses of civilization and savagery, and to resist colonization. Likewise, as Jackson notes with respect to African American celebrities, their "public location and crossover influence . . . allow them unique access to mainstream debates around race and nation and thus a level of agency to influence such debates rarely allowed [to] or achieved by other African Americans."[49] The work of Olivier Driessens resonates here; he argues that "we should not ignore the differences between individualistic and collectivisitic cultures, western and non-western societies, and their implications for the value and ways of achieving celebrity status therein."[50] Driessens advances the argument that it is far more fruitful for those studying celebrity to understand that there might be no such singular thing, that scholars should recognize that there is a patchwork of celebrity cultures (small and large), and that we should be attuned to specific socio-historical and -cultural processes in which they arise and exist. He also highlights a vital point raised by Jackson and the scholars within this volume: celebrity might look entirely different in the context of what he calls "collectivistic cultures," in which Indigenous people and Black people are not only *individual* public voices but also become, are seen as, and are expected to be voices for the *collective* communities from which they come. We will return to this shortly.

## Indigenous Interventions: Celebrity Entanglements and Resistance

In recent years, a growing number of scholars have taken up examinations of Indigenous experiences with and conceptualizations of celebrity, attentive to dimensions of racism, colonialism, colonial nationalism, and Indigeneity.[51] Cecilia Morgan offers a historically situated analysis of "travellers through empire," Indigenous people who, she argues, crossed the Atlantic

Ocean to Europe as transatlantic celebrities. In an analysis that resonates with Coll Thrush's *Indigenous London: Native Travelers at the Heart of Empire*, she contends that Indigenous people existed in dual capacities: inside the market for colonial oddities, and outside the celebrity machine, arriving in Europe as agents of their own (Indigenous) selves and of their nations.[52] The drawing up of Indigenous people into early whitestream celebrity circuits was ultimately driven, however, by the desires of non-Indigenous people to view and interact with Indigenous people in ways that affirmed deeply ingrained racial stereotypes of Indigenous people as savages. Whereas Indigenous people were figured as savages, people of European descent, particularly those of Anglo-Saxon background, were imagined as "whites," as bearers of civilization, and as racially superior to inferior "red Indians."

Métis scholar Emma LaRocque writes that this "civ/sav dichotomy" is an "ideological container for the system construction of self-confirming 'evidence' that Natives were savages who 'inevitably' had to yield to the superior powers of civilization as carried forward by Euro-Canadian civilizers."[53] As some of the authors in this book discuss, Indigenous people the world over have thus been constructed through travellers' journals, creative fiction, and other forms of media as animalistic, constitutive of lesser humans, who would inevitably "die out" in the face of a superior civilization.[54] For example, Euro-Canadian tourists in the nineteenth century desired "authentic Indians"; they wished to absorb visually Indians before they disappeared with the purported inevitability of time, modernization, and civilization.[55] This is consistent with Morgan's analysis, wherein she argues that a desire for consuming Indianness ungirded the popularizing of select Indigenous people. An Indigenous person's ability to *achieve* celebrity among non-Indigenous people was largely mediated by one's confirmation of racial stereotypes of Indianness.

Morgan writes in detail of the cases of those she refers to as transatlantic celebrities, such as Gakiiwegwanebi (Peter Jones), Shahwundais (John Sunday), Kahgegagahbowh (George Copway), and Naaniibawikwe (Catherine Sutton). They were catapulted into transatlantic celebrity as a result of their roles as Mississauga people engaged in missionary and religious work amid a growing kind of global humanitarian celebrity culture.[56] The aforementioned Mississauga, Morgan contends, were important examples of the kind of "new" celebrity enabled by mass media. They were not necessarily

propped up by wealthy aristocrats, as other Indigenous people in the past had been upon arrival in Europe; rather, she writes, "the medium of the British press, both missionary and secular," introduced them to ever-growing audiences.[57] The missionary movement, Morgan writes, used tactics of celebrity cultivation familiar to other forms of celebrity—such as theatrical celebrity—and engaged in "crafting and manipulation of images and reputations through prints, pamphlets, paintings, and material artifacts; the development of an obsession with bodies; the circulation of details of domestic or private matters which collapsed the distinction between private and public; and, finally, the cultivation of the notion of an achieved, rather than ascribed, celebrity."[58] Although she distinguishes between achieved and ascribed celebrity, she never fully situates her use of the latter.

We can fairly assume that by distinguishing between them Morgan draws from Rojek's work, as outlined above. Flagging such early characterizations of celebrity and fame hinges on the idea that an Indigenous person's well knownness was tied to his or her achievements and, to some extent, exceptionalism rather than an inherited well knownness drawn from his or her position as dominant in social hierarchies. Morgan argues that Peter Jones, in particular, "achieved the status of a religious *and* Indigenous celebrity."[59] In a sense, he *achieved* celebrity by his religious devotion, and in a departure from Rojek's definition he was *ascribed* celebrity by his existence as an Indigenous person and the British fascination with "Indians." In this sense, ascribed celebrity refers to something external to oneself, perhaps something that one does not even have control over; one is "made" by others and does not "earn" her or his celebrity. Taken in this way, then, Morgan's writing implies that Indigenous celebrity was derived from British fascination with Indigenous people as objects subjected to the British gaze. Widespread attention to various Indigenous people was premised on the projections of imperialists of "their own desires and fantasies onto Indigenous subjects."[60]

Morgan recoups space for people such as Jones to be seen by imperialists as "individuals with names and histories" and not just members of an exotic "dying race" through her acknowledgement that Indigenous people were not "helpless victims of colonial history" but used every opportunity available to them to challenge colonial policies that had detrimental impacts on them and other Indigenous people.[61] Here Morgan makes it clear that Indigenous entanglements with celebrity culture in Europe were not exclusively for the

(white) "us" but arose from within a meaningful entrenchment in one's own existence as an Indigenous person. When Gakiiwegwanebi (Peter Jones) met with Queen Victoria, he presented her with a petition (opposing Francis Bond Head's plan to remove First Nations from southern Ontario to "Indian Territory" on Manitoulin Island) and a wampum belt, presumably one invoking the queen's obligations under the Treaty of Niagara of 1764. Gakiiwegwanebi thus used the doors opened by religious and Indigenous celebritization (written as such to reflect the process by which Indigenous people were constructed and represented as celebrities and people "of note") to advocate for his people. He thus engaged in celebrity culture not for the benefit of a (white) "us" but in direct opposition to the very tenets of white settler colonialism.

In addition to utilizing access granted by his celebrification, Gakiiwegwanebi rejected core tenets of celebrity culture, of making the private public, as he grew weary of the attention that he garnered when he appeared in traditional Mississauga clothing. He eventually refused "to wear anything other than his black suit, for, when 'clad in the garb of an Englishman,' he attracted 'little or no notice' when not making public appearances."[62] His refusal to put himself on display outside formal appearances, and his rejection of celebrity culture's hyperintensive desire to eliminate the private lives of celebrified people, are notable. Gakiiwegwanebi rejected attempts to market his Indigeneity and refused to sacrifice himself to the rapaciousness of celebrity and fame. Although it is difficult for us to gauge through Morgan's analysis whether his strategic dressing for public appearances played a role in the reception of his messages, it is likely that the fetishistic desire for Indigenous people as "Indian objects" detracted from the important activism that he, and others like him, undertook.

The fetishization of Indigenous "clothing, jewellery, hair, and gesture" under imperialism meant that the adoption of traditional clothing played an important role in facilitating Indigenous access to European publics (and thus the wider circulation of the causes or messages that Indigenous people shared on arrival in Europe), and the refusal to fulfill Euro-Western fantasies of Indigeneity produced a notable tension.[63] It reflected what Michelle Flood argues in "Intersectionality and Celebrity Culture": insofar as celebrity culture has afforded "wide platforms" that have given people "a persuasive potentiality that cannot be ignored," discourses in circulation "simultaneously

become disciplining and emancipatory structures for marginalized groups."[64] Likewise, Karen Fox argues in her chapter in this volume, drawing on the work of Anna Haebich, the idea that Indigenous celebrities' embrace of the trappings of modernity (in this case clothing) signalled their assimilation into Euro-Western cultures and values obscures the complex relations at work. Indeed, in the case of Gakiiwegwanebi, like others, he came to insist on wearing "a form of male dress that had come to signify sober, industrious, respectable middle-class masculinity" that allowed him to shield himself from the prying eyes of celebrity culture.[65]

That a line was drawn and recognized between public objectification and "normalcy" of dress reflects a consideration of this tension. Gakiiwegwanebi's niece Naaniibawikwe (Catherine Sutton), as an additional example, condemned calls for her to appear in Mississauga clothing. She elected to wear an English dress for her meeting with the queen. Naaniibawikwe rebuked calls for her to wear "Indian dress," rhetorically postulating, after missionaries tried to "civilize the Indian, and make us like white people: and was I to go back and dress like pagan Indians, and come over here to shew myself?"[66] She faced particular pressure from the band council of her community to dress in accordance with English desires for "Indian costume." When pressed on why she "didn't fetch [her] Indian dress," she recounted that she told her band council that she refused, stating, "I had none, this was my dress; this is the way we dress. I tell them we are not pagan, that we try to be like white people—to be clean and decent, and do what we can to be like the civilized people."[67] Although to some her statements might sound "colonized," that Naaniibawikwe "bought in" to her own people's inferiority, it is also possible that her statements and her adoption of "white people" clothes comprised a profound rejection of the contradictory nature of white desires for Indianness. Although celebrity culture's fetishization of Indianness demanded that Indigenous people dress and therefore perform a particular celebritized ideal of Indianness, people such as Gakiiwegwanebi and Naaniibawikwe troubled and rejected this pressure. This, Morgan argues, is precisely because they travelled not to become celebrities but for distinct religious and political reasons. In particular, in their homelands, they were embroiled in struggles against colonization, gradual attempts to dismantle their collective cultures, concerted pushes by colonial governments to force them into individualistic

capitalist regimes, and efforts to transform their lands from collectively held property to privately held property.

This echoes the aforementioned passage from Jackson regarding how access to whitestream celebrity culture enables celebrified African American people to influence public discourse and, with hope and by extension, the lived social and political realities of African American communities. Indigenous people likewise used the platforms offered by whitestream celebrity to attempt to speak back to colonizers, often at the highest registers possible. Since these early encounters, Indigenous people the world over have continued to amplify their voices via whitestream celebrity to address the experiences of their people under colonization and the ongoing struggle against the genocide of their nations. As much as whitestream celebrity culture has done for "global media conglomerates," it also "functions as a site in which meanings of affluence, visibility, accountability, value, talent and inequality are contested and struggled over."[68] This function marks it as particularly important for Indigenous people and other racialized people, generally denied access to decision making within nation-states because of race-based marginalization and oppression. Celebrity, then, is also a site of struggle, a site of contestation, and as Patrick McCurdy writes, we ought to distinguish that there are "celebrity *activist[s]*" and "*celebrity* activists." The former term refers to a person "loosely defined as an individual who gains a prominent or notorious status in new media as a result of his or her activism."[69] The latter term refers to "individuals who use their celebrity status to undertake activism."[70] In their study of Tūhoe Māori activist Tame Iti, Julie Cupples and Kevin Glynn situate Iti as a celebrity *activist* whose half-century of struggle against New Zealand's colonization of his people has propelled him, often in contentious ways, into whitestream media and celebrity culture.[71]

In contrast, as Glenn D'Cruz writes in the context of Adnyamathanha and Narungga footballer Adam Goodes, the attention paid to him allowed him "to contribute to national conversations about race and national identity in the public sphere."[72] Yet both Iti and Goodes—along with Freeman—faced critiques for actions that D'Cruz argues defied dominant culture's attempts to "neuter" them politically.[73] For D'Cruz, the "status of the black celebrity is dependent on both the endorsement of the dominant white culture, and the political neutering of the black celebrity."[74] This is particularly why "reconciliation" celebrities hold so much appeal; they navigate a delicate

balance between maintaining the endorsement and support of dominant white culture and couching their political messages. Cupples and Glynn highlight a poignant truth with respect to Iti and non-Indigenous public reception of his activism. It was not until a documentary film was created that presented Iti as a "softer man" that the non-Indigenous public scaled back (somewhat) their vitriolic dislike of him.[75] Also at work here under the surface is what D'Cruz notes with respect to Goodes: endowed qualities of celebrities (heroism and athletic prowess in the context of sport) intersect with discourses of and ideas about masculinity. Discourses of masculinity circulate as well with respect to Iti and as reflected in Anderson and Hokowhitu's chapter in this volume. In contrast, Kahente Horn-Miller contends in her chapter with how celebrity culture is not only racialized with respect to Indigeneity but also deeply sexist. Masculinity and femininity are thus discourses that not only run through contemporary Indigenous encounters with whitestream celebrity but also resonate deeply with the experiences of Mississauga, as discussed earlier. Racialized and gendered assumptions also frame the terrain in which Indigenous people can see whitestream celebrity culture as a site for possibility.

In spite of this seemingly intractable bind, Indigenous people—as the chapters in this volume demonstrate—have myriad strategies for refusing and rejecting co-optation by whitestream celebrity culture. In the cases of Iti, Gakiiwegwanebi, Shahwundais, Kahgegagahbowh, Naaniibawikwe, and others such as kahntinetha Horn, Indigenous people consistently name the violence that they have experienced, never swaying from their commitment to use their platform to speak the truths of their peoples. In the case of Iti, Cupples and Glynn argue, his active refusal to have his *voice* co-opted, even as his *image* often was, helped to "shift public discourse around him."[76] There is a distinction between Iti and the others, however, in that he appears to fit into the framing of celebrity *activist*, whereas the others were well known for other reasons and in turn used the attention given to them to confront the oppression of their peoples. Truthfully, neither of McCurdy's framings seems to fit overly well in the context of Indigenous celebrities or celebrified Indigenous people. Whether they become well known for their activism or well known in a manner that enables them to promote political or social change, it remains that being born Indigenous persons in a world where hierarchies of human

society have actively worked toward their destruction is itself a political act.[77] To be Indigenous and live under ongoing oppression is to be political.

At the same time, some have argued that, in addition to walking a political tightrope between "dominant white culture" and responsibilities as Indigenous people to Indigenous communities, celebrified Indigenous people are constrained in their activism. Rosemary Popoola, Matthew Egharevba, and Oluyemi Oyenike Fayomi, writing in the context of celebrity advocacy on women's rights in Nigeria, put forth that "celebrities only have the power to call the attention of the government to social problems confronting women. They do not have the legal and executive power to make meaningful changes. Most of the issues that they fight for have ended up producing administrative and legal decisions that end on the desk[s] of governors and heads of government across the country."[78] There is undoubtedly truth to this in that, inasmuch as celebrity activism can draw *attention* to matters of injustice, it alone cannot guarantee material change.

Beyond all of this, the dialectical tension between non-Indigenous publics and celebrified Indigenous people, there exists another reality. Although this book is intended for everyone to read and think about, the chapters are not concerned only with mapping Indigenous relations to whitestream celebrity and fame; nor are they overly concerned with battling whitestream celebrity culture's long-standing preoccupation with individualism. Lorraine York writes about the cultivation of what she terms "Indigenous publics in Canada," suggesting that Indigenous publics enable "alternative and overlapping celebrity phenomena [that] offer us a means of decentering existing assumptions about the individualistic nature of celebrity (even as individualistic modes of celebrity continue to circulate within those publics). Indeed, Indigenous media publics in Canada hold the potential to reconfigure celebrity as a collectivist achievement."[79] York appears to highlight Indigenous people's relationship with celebrity in order to figure out what it can offer to whitestream celebrity. She juxtaposes Indigenous celebrity with mainstream celebrity, suggesting that the collectivist nature of Indigenous celebrity engagement resists the troubling individualism of other expressions of celebrity.

It appears, then, that some of the academic writing on Indigenous celebrity is geared to making intelligible what the relationship means to an invisibilized white "us." There is no discussion in York's work, for example, of Black/African American celebrity and the way that people (e.g., Colin

Kaepernick, to offer a recent example) effectively use their celebrity status to draw attention to histories of injustice from a position rooted in a commitment to collective social justice.[80] So celebrified Indigenous people are *once again* essentialized—this time for hanging on to a sense of collectivism, of responsibility and reciprocity to community—and cast as agents to guide an (invisibilized white) "us" to decentre the individualism of contemporary celebrity culture. Yet, as the chapters herein demonstrate, though many celebrified Indigenous people draw from the attention capital given to them to narrativize oppression publicly, as Renée Mazinegiizhigoo-kwe Bédard's chapter and many others highlight, Indigenous people have their own conceptualizations of what it means to be well known and recognized within their respective nations, spheres of recognition, and Indigenous languages.

The chapters herein provide a comprehensive, Indigenous-centred engagement with celebrity and fame that foregrounds Indigenous perspectives and objectives. Although some of the authors reflect on particular people or communities concerned with the (white) "us," many more focus on what Indigeneity and celebrity might or might not mean for Indigenous peoples, communities, and nations. As mentioned, our intention here is not to provide a comprehensive historical account of all Indigenous entanglements with celebrity, nor is it to provide an in-depth theorization of cultural and media studies approaches to celebrity. Rather, our purposes are to highlight some of the prevailing points of overlap among Indigeneity, celebrity, and fame and to prod at some of the tensions. Each of the chapters elaborates on the often fraught relationships among these things. Some reject outright the juxtaposition of the terms "Indigenous," "celebrity," and "fame," whereas others position celebrity in multiple registers that see Indigenous people making diverse interventions in celebrity culture and practices of celebritization.

## Where Is the "Indigenous" in Indigenous Celebrity?

As mentioned, the chapters in this volume examine, expand, and critique Indigenous entanglements with celebrity and fame while navigating the complexities of Indigenous recognition and well knownness. Each of the chapters engages with the impacts and implications of processes of celebritization and the tensions evoked therein when Indigenous ways of knowing, being, seeing, and living in the world collide with, or reject, celebrity. In

Chapter 1—"Mino-Waawiindaganeziwin: What Does Indigenous Celebrity Mean within Anishinaabeg Contexts?"—Renée Mazinegiizhigoo-kwe Bédard explains that Anishinaabeg have no word in their language for the modern concept of celebrity. Through an engagement with Anishinaabeg language, ideas, laws, and ethics, she examines the relationship between traditional Anishinaabeg ways of knowing and celebrity status in relation to teachings on leadership, authority, and responsibility to all our relations on Mother Earth. Bédard contextualizes this examination by considering how particular Anishinaabeg are accorded respect because they live in accordance with their traditional teachings as Anishinaabeg; they thus reflect the central importance of Anishinaabeg values in garnering respect from other Anishinaabeg. This, she notes, sits in stark contrast to the heavy emphasis on individualism at the root of Euro-Western celebrity culture.

The second chapter echoes Bédard's analysis in many ways. David Lakisa, Katerina Teaiwa, Daryl Adair, and Tracy Taylor present a profound analysis, originally published in the *International Journal of the History of Sport* in 2019 and revised here, derived from a series of ten interviews with retired Pasifika and Māori rugby players in Australia. Through talanoa, a research method that, according to the authors, is a "culturally appropriate and 'authentic' way for researchers to engage with Pasifika communities," they elucidate how the interviewees understand their place within semi-/professional rugby as rooted in communal Pasifika values that emphasize respect, love, humility, and reciprocity within and through kinship networks. The retired athletes, who migrated to Australia in or after 1969, highlight the significant role that mana played in shaping their lives as successful athletes. The authors observe that mana, a pan-Pacific concept "denoting spiritual power, integrity, or status or the acquisition of success and prestige by (and conferring on) an individual, group, or object in sport and other contemporary settings," is central to any conversation on Pasifika sport involvement. The authors write that "an object's or person's mana benefits others, and in this case the retired Pasifika pioneers are accorded great mana because of their revolutionary influence, respect, and power to perform in early Australian Rugby League competitions." They also note that, though "acquiring 'mana' or prestige for the collective benefit is considered commonplace and praiseworthy in Pasifika cultures, it can place enormous social, emotional, and economic pressures on young male Pasifika athletes." In particular, the authors flag how

racism continued to affect the athletes, reflecting that the status associated with being an elite athlete was not enough to safeguard them from racism. In fact, some of the pressures discussed involved being tied to their Pasifikaness. The chapter introduces an important conversation on the intersection between Pasifika and Māori people, sports, and success and recognition. Although the authors do not explicitly invoke celebrity, we contend that sports celebrities (both mainstream and Indigenous) are important in our societies, and it is important for us to include a chapter that speaks to this. At the same time, its focus on Pasifika ways of knowing and understanding one's role within what we as editors have referred to at times as "celebrity culture" is reminiscent of Bédard's evocative challenge to thinking of celebrity only through the lens of mainstream (and whitestream) ideas of well knownness.

Kahente Horn-Miller's chapter, titled "My Mom, the 'Military Mohawk Princess': kahntinetha Horn through the Lens of Indigenous Female Celebrity," is resonant with the first two chapters in its attention to how her mother was effectively able to use the attention garnered by her engagement with mainstream celebrity to push back against a system that oppressed her people in her home community of Kahnawà:ke. Here celebrity culture's desire to elevate select individuals became a strong light that Horn used to shine on and challenge the impacts of collective oppression—upholding values core to Horn's existence as Kanien'kehá:ka. Horn-Miller writes that kahntinetha's legacy reflects the fact that Canada "didn't know what to make of her because she didn't match the stereotypes that most had been socialized to—she was Indigenous, beautiful, smart, vocal, and could throw a good punch." Her work as an Indigenous model in an "industry populated by whiteness" in the mid–late twentieth century saw kahntinetha made into "the Indian Princess of the Indigenous and Canadian imaginations." Through a series of interviews with family members, along with an analysis of photographs and short movies, Horn-Miller argues that, though kahntinetha was shaped externally by the multiple narrations of projected Indigenous feminine identity, she nevertheless "countered them with stories of her own making."

The fourth chapter, by Jonathan Hill and Virginia McLaurin, continues the book's focus on addressing the impacts on and implications for individual Indigenous people entangled with and ensnared by celebrity culture. They acknowledge the complexities facing Indigenous celebrities who also engage

in activism related to the concerns of their people. In "Indigenous Activism and Celebrity: Negotiating Access, Expectation, and Obligation," the authors contend that Indigenous people as celebrities adopt activist roles for myriad reasons. Some Indigenous celebrities are driven, or even pressured, to speak on behalf of causes and concerns stemming from their own experiences as Indigenous people, from those of their home communities, or from those of other First Nations, while some actively seek to use their access to wider audiences to work on behalf of the struggles facing their nations (as with respect to kahntinetha Horn in Chapter 3). In their chapter, Hill and McLaurin draw from original ethnographic interviews with Indigenous celebrities directly involved in recent pipeline struggles. They discuss the relational complexities that Indigenous celebrity-activists manage in their celebrity and activism and address the impacts on Indigenous celebrities as they navigate through constellations of expectations, roles, and obligations among the audiences and communities that they engage.

In Chapter 5, "Rags-to-Riches and Other Fairytales: Indigenous Celebrity in Australia 1950–80," Karen Fox offers a critical overview of the rise of a number of Indigenous Australians on the celebrity circuit in the middle decades of the twentieth century. Fox contrasts this rise with a capacious examination of the repressive nature of Australian colonization of Indigenous lives and the subsequent civil and land rights resistances to such marginalization. In a line of analysis resonant with that of Hill and McLaurin, Fox ultimately argues that popular portrayals of Indigenous Australian celebrities often elided differences in their lives, experiences, and cultural backgrounds, drawing on a vision of Indigeneity differentiated only by tropes such as assimilated/traditional and authentic/inauthentic. Arguing that Indigenous celebrities were often placed under considerable pressure to represent both their people and—in the context of increased international criticism of racially restrictive societies—a positive view of Australian race relations, Fox also demonstrates the considerable strength and resilience of Indigenous celebrities who negotiated such pressures. She extends one of the thematic threads of the volume—the way in which Indigenous people navigate the affront to collectively held responsibilities posed by the enticing pull of individual forms of recognition.

Fox also highlights how Australia, as a settler colonial state, constructs nationalist fairytales with regard to Indigenous people. Kim Anderson and

Brendan Hokowhitu, in Chapter 6, speak to a different kind of fairytale, that of "gentleman versus savage." They utilize the framework of Indigenous masculinities to analyze the March 2012 boxing match between then Member of (Canadian) Parliament Justin Trudeau (now prime minister) and Patrick Brazeau, an Algonquin person and Canadian senator. Through reference to media coverage and Canadian public response to the match, Anderson and Hokowhitu note that the narrative of the event traded in well-worn stereotypical dichotomies of gentleman versus savage that, rather than being held up for scrutiny, were celebrated in Canadian media, by the public, and in the country's political landscape. By analyzing the discursive construction of white hetero masculinity, Anderson and Hokowhitu reveal that Brazeau was caught in an intractable representational bind: his loss echoes the continual subjugation of Indigenous people in everyday life; had he won, though, he would have been seen as enacting violence because of his status as an "ignoble savage." The chapter highlights the tensions that Indigenous people face when racist stereotypes are amplified through celebrity and the media's embrace and facilitation of them. Their discussion resonates with Horn-Miller's discussion of how her mother navigated the seemingly inescapable racist stereotypes of Indigenous women as Indian princesses.

Anderson and Hokowhitu's discussion of the resilience of stereotypes is echoed by Jenny Davis in Chapter 7. She contends with the figuration of Indigenous "last language speakers" as a subgenre of "'last' Indians." Davis makes a fascinating intervention into media representations of Indigenous language speakers, endangered languages, and Indigenous erasure. She extends Jean O'Brien's work on "firsting and lasting," in which "lasting"—in the case of the chapter by Davis—signals the practice of reporting on "'last' speakers of endangered [Indigenous] languages" as representative of a "centuries-old practice of creating famous Indians as a means of counting down the inevitable end of Indigenous people, assuming an unavoidable loss of culture, space, and eventually existence." Davis argues that such "superlative enumeration" overemphasizes language endangerment and linguistic decline while simultaneously de-emphasizing the ongoing emergence of new language speakers and efforts toward language reclamation.

In Chapter 8, "Celebrity in Absentia: Situating the Indigenous People of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the Indian Social Imaginary," Aadita Chaudhury examines the context for particular Indigenous groups within