

Talk-Story: Performing an Indigenous Research Methodology With Hesitant Non-Indigenous Participants to Learn Previously Silenced Knowledge

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Abstract

This article aims to broaden joint performances of talk-story, a form of Indigenous Research Methodology, to give voice to non-indigenous participants who presuppose misrepresentation in qualitative research. Indigenous Research Methodologies emerged to challenge axiological concerns with Western Research Methodologies, which participants perceive to disregard, oppress, and exploit those they claim to represent. Founded on the principle of relational accountability, Indigenous Research Methodologies place learning co-created knowledges and social epistemologies at the center of the study, promoting the publication of authentic explanations and representations that empower participants. In response to grounded theories emerging from talk-story with non-indigenous members of the global surfing tribe, describing their anger and powerlessness against cultural studies researchers who deceive and misrepresent them in a perceived culture war, I explain how non-indigenous researchers and disempowered populations can jointly perform talk-story to co-create depictions that survive participant scrutiny. However, I caution that influential gatekeepers will execute Western a priori assertions and cultural imperialism to silence opposing voices and epistemologies empowered by talk-story. Nonetheless, my article aims to contribute towards promoting performances of talk-story methodology by explaining how an indigenous paradigm enables analytical processes to be shared, thus exposing insights participants perceive to be silenced by Western Research Methodologies.

Keywords

ethnography, case study, grounded theory, narrative, oral histories

Introduction

In its simplest form, a research methodology has two purposes; 1), to create data with a diverse participant group, and 2), to authentically represent their worldview (Stern, 1998). Goffman's (1989) assertion, that findings should survive scrutiny by the participants provides a measure of how effectively researchers have met those two purposes. Fine (1993), suggests that most fieldwork research findings would fall short. Before Scott (2018) published a sociology of nothing, Fuller's (1988, 1996) suggestion that misrepresentation of authentic worldviews may occur because participants cannot express experiencing the mundane or that only expert sociologists can identify the injustices hidden in everyday banality, was plausible. However, that proposition is no longer

defensible. Instead, Fine (1993, p. 267), identifies a problem where academic constructs require researchers to perform 'methodological illusions,' working backstage making choices in answer to 'unresolvable moral dilemmas' which may work against the interests of their participants. Only selected codes and themes gathered from those who choose or are chosen for representation are ever heard, we never learn that participants may presuppose or experience

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misrepresentation. Indeed, Fuller (1988, 1996) suggests that researchers are only accountable to the elite in their discipline; they are answerable only to the people who publish their findings, with no relational accountability to the participants in their studies. Hence, behind Stern's (1998) methodological simplicity, there are complex questions regarding who should trust whom, why, and who should have the power to represent participant voices and epistemologies.

To address the methodological issues raised and offer a solution, this article presents lessons learned in the study of surf culture. As I explain in the context section since Westerners began telling Hawaiian surf culture's story in the 1800s through written narratives, indigenous surfers' voices have been silenced or misrepresented (Walker, 2011, 2020). This is only possible because Western Research Methodologies (WRM) provide researchers with gatekeeping power, which enables them to dominate the narrative and stifle criticism (Fine, 1993; Foucault, 1969; Wilson, 2001). Now there is an emerging consensus that Western cultural studies scholars also marginalize, silence or misrepresent non-indigenous surfer voices that do not advance their identity politics agenda (Cook, 2022; lisahunter, 2018; Prins & Wattchow, 2022). This acknowledgement by cultural studies scholars that their representations of surf culture do not survive participant scrutiny raises epistemological and axiological concerns. Conversely, this potential shift in power dynamics also provides an opportunity to address the persistent stories of unrepresentative versions of reality and lack of accountability as reasons not to participate in surf culture research projects.

Evidently, the cases and solutions I share in this article are not unique to Western participants. The non-indigenous surf tribe's argument that they are ignored or misrepresented in the absolutism and certainty of identity politics narratives created and debated by self-righteous researchers who are well-intentioned but deliver little to better the lives of those they claim to represent mirror accusations of exploitation made by generations of indigenous populations (Drawson et al., 2017; Mataira, 2019; Nakhid-Chatoor, et al., 2018). Thus, it is unsurprising that learning non-indigenous surfers' previously silenced stories emerged in the grounded data co-created through performances of talk-story, one of many Indigenous Research Methodologies (IRM). These perceived failings to authentically represent diverse worldviews encouraged me to revisit the questions underpinning Wilson's (2001) rationale for performing IRM to learn more about the methodological shift sought by scholars and participants of surf culture. I began to ask, what is my role as a qualitative researcher, and what are my obligations to the participants? In response to these questions, the purpose of this article is to address the surf tribe's grounded perceptions of misrepresentation by explaining the methodological disparities and analytical processes that differentiate gathering data to interpret employing the power dynamics associated with WRM

and co-creating authentic representations by performing talk-story as an IRM to learn and communicate relational knowledge.

In introducing talk-story as a methodological shift designed to include rather than exclude, I advocate its use beyond current indigenous settings by proposing that non-indigenous researchers should perform talk-story in wider cultural contexts to co-create relational knowledge to attend to the concerns of people who choose non-participation in research and to represent those who demand authenticity. Thus, we avoid a cyclical effect where we never learn from the diverse voices and epistemologies silenced and self-silenced. As a non-indigenous researcher schooled in conventional WRM, I discuss how performing talk-story necessitated a reconceptualization of power and a paradigm shift to embrace a holistic relational perspective that describes how people interact rather than confirming stereotypes of what they are (Bateman, 2019; Wilson, 2001). This paradigm shift informs the ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology central to IRM (Wilson, 2001), and is required to facilitate replacing the oversimplistic single-issue generalizations central to the 'decorative sociology' of cultural studies and identity politics (Rojek & Turner, 2001, p. 629) with representations explaining the complex and contradictory reality of diverse lived experiences in the group co-creating the data (Pilgrim, 2022).

Consistent with my recommendation towards a talk-story methodology, I structured this article as a sequential performance analysis (Riessman, 2008) to include non-judgmental descriptions and inescapable contradictions. In this analysis, I share layered narration that values all the participants' voices and perceptions to elucidate how talk-story revealed an emerging research problem and provided a solution to it. To provide context beyond methodological discussion, I share two case studies to demonstrate how talk-story provides hesitant participants with a voice and reveals the novel insights they co-create. The first case study is in a Western surf clan, where I am an insider (a Scottish/British surfer, a scholar of surfing, and a former examiner of surfing degrees). This case plays a dual role: (1), it describes how talk-story enabled the co-creation of relational knowledge with people who had no trust in the research process, and (2), the relational knowledge unobtainable through other methods exposed the disillusionment with contemporary representations of surf culture. The second case demonstrates the complexity of intersectionality when discussed in relation to Western concepts of power. This case locates me as an insider (an experienced surfer) and what identity politic scholars would describe as an outsider (through a priori assertions associated with race, ethnicity, gender, and nationality), in a talk-story performed with Hawaiian women and men who surf. Using these cases as exemplars, I discuss how the indigenous paradigms and concepts of power central to talk-story enabled surfers to explain their perceptions that scholars of surfing ignore the relational accountability of sharing a balanced representation.

Furthermore, I explain how cultural studies gatekeepers employ similar tactics to opponents of IRM to cancel any form of debate or alternative explanations, which illustrates the barriers faced when sharing co-created talk-story findings that survive scrutiny by the participants.

Background and Context

According to some of the most prolific cultural studies and identity politics scholars of surf culture (Iisahunter, Olive, Roy, and Wheaton), a methodological shift is required to explore the diversity, complexity and nuances of lived experiences silenced by the a priori assertions of single-issue identity politics (Iisahunter, 2018). Since Irwin's (1962, 1973) seminal studies of non-indigenous surf culture first defined surfers as deviants, cultural studies researchers have been responsible for the overrepresentation of surfing in studies of oppositional culture and conflict (Cook, 2022; Loland, 2023; Prins & Watchow, 2022). Rather than challenge theoretical power dynamics, which may be insufficiently grounded in the lives of people they claim to represent, many surf researchers have perpetuated the Western power-resistance dominant narrative to exploit editor and reviewer unawareness of the complex nuances of sports without formal rules (Loland, 2023). Within these echo chambers, the researchers' peers and readers are never exposed to or redress anything that confronts their worldview because the culture war instigated by identity politics scholars has made people afraid to present opposing opinions (Pilgrim, 2022). Consequently, Iisahunter, Olive, Roy, and Wheaton's recognition that single-issue identity politics and the decorative sociology of cultural studies enable the misrepresentation and exclusion of a dialogic polyphony of voices to prevail represents progress towards addressing the silencing or misrepresentation described by Walker (2011, 2020).

Nonetheless, the magnitude of the task to regain the trust of the surfing tribe and its component clans cannot be overstated. As Olive et al. (2013) explain, surfers expect to be patronized by researchers who hold the power to misrepresent. Thus, the researcher's relationship with the participant is frequently perceived as parasocial at best and exploitative at worst (Rojek & Turner, 2001; Wilson, 2001). As talk-story findings reveal, cultural studies scholars are perceived to have adopted methodological practices to silence critical voices. Thus, the prevalence of open and latent hostility towards identified cultural studies scholars of surfing or articles employing methodologies associated with a decorative sociology approach is a profound problem. Albeit a problem conspicuous by its absence in earlier studies employing WRM because researchers typically remove discussions of animosity towards the research from their final write-up (Fine, 1993, p. 272). Having identified previous failings, Iisahunter (2018) describes the need to convince people that their diverse voices will be privileged over the uncontested a priori assumptions prevalent in cultural studies.

Instead of working in partnership, participants perceive that cultural studies researchers use their authoritative voice to depict reductive fragments of selectively gathered data to stereotype in support of a favored standpoint with no regard for relational accountability (Anjeh & Doraisamy, 2022; Pilgrim, 2022). Broad generalizations of reality are imposed from the top down rather than emerging through a grounded analysis of multiple relational interactions from the top-down, bottom-up, and in whole-part; thus, denying representations of diverse and complex abstract thoughts and choices between contradictory actions that every individual constantly makes (Simmel, 1971, Quinn, 2022). The resultant narratives, where notions of empathetic cooperation are replaced with simplistic binary them versus us divisions, produce the self-perpetuating echo chamber of single-issue assertions, misinformation, and disempowerment employed in a culture war (Anjeh & Doraisamy, 2022; Pilgrim, 2022).

No one wants to be on the wrong side in a perceived epistemological culture war. One way of achieving this is to avoid saying or doing anything that can be unintentionally or willfully misinterpreted (Pilgrim, 2022). However, doing nothing has consequences (Scott, 2018). Doing nothing breaks the dual empirical research purpose of creating data with participants and authentically representing them (Stern, 1998). Without a dialogic polyphony of voices as an 'interaction of several consciousnesses' a monologic version of reality is controlled by the researcher (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 18) and theory is privileged over lived experiences (Bateman, 2019). Consequently, we enter a cycle where a lack of trust, perceptions of misrepresentation and subsequent non-participation pose epistemological, axiological, and methodological questions linked to systems of power where researchers control access to information meaning there is no entitlement to authentic representation (Fine, 1993; Pilgrim, 2022; Stern, 1998).

What is told, how it is told, and who does the telling is determined by the researchers' philosophy of life, as an ideology that guides their data interpretation and epistemological stance on how they represent participants (Redwood, 1999; Stern, 1998). Problematically, the axiology of top-down a priori assertions in WRM monologic representations are either overstated by researchers or have little importance to the participants; thus, they never report significant issues and the notion of partnership or mutual benefits central to IRM is absent (Wilson, 2001).

Accordingly, the methodological challenges of performing research and co-creating theory with members of the surf tribe who choose non-participation or are desperate to have their voices and epistemologies authentically represented are comparable with the anxieties described by advocates of IRM (Drawson et al., 2017; Nakhid-Chatoor, et al., 2018; Quinn, 2022; Wilson, 2001). Sharing and contextualizing the emotional response, such as the depth of anger and despair, emerging from performances of talk-story justifies and demonstrates the benefits of IRM as the innovative and inclusive methodological shift sought by Iisahunter, Olive, Roy,

and Wheaton due to the relational knowledge and accountability it demands.

Indigenous Research Methodologies: Speaking Relational Truth to Western Power

Methodological proposal studies (Mataira, 2019; Nakhid-Chatoor, et al., 2018; Wilson, 2001) explain that indigenous participants may be reticent to participate in research due to trust issues associated with experiences of being exploited by researchers employing a WRM paradigm to inform their perspective. Wilson (2001) explains that performative research approaches that declare solidarity with indigenous or marginalized groups are damaging because their Western-centric paradigms lack the depth of relational accountability required to satisfy participant apprehensions. Furthermore, an indigenous paradigm differs from an indigenous perspective; in the former, there is harmonious agreement that the co-created knowledge is authentic, whereas the latter presents a version of knowledge as authentic through the researcher's Western paradigm lens (Wilson, 2001). For example, Bateman (2023) criticizes Western researchers who describe Islamic dress codes as repressive symbols of patriarchal societies; thus, disregarding a choice freely made by millions of women.

Indigenous participants' reticence to participate in research studies also exposes a fundamental difference between Western and Indigenous concepts of power and resistance. Typically, Western-centric concepts of power are hierarchal and focus on who has the authority to impose their will (Walker, 2011, 2020). Thus, WRM privileges the researchers' power over another to make a priori assertions and values their skills in obtaining knowledge due to their hierarchal status as a researcher (Walker, 2011, 2020). Whereas indigenous concepts of power are often context-specific, and authority is freely given without resistance to the person with the lived experience and knowledge most suited to solving the task (Walker, 2011, 2020).

As Simmel's (2012) relational ontology explains, lived experiences are a disjointed notion of reality, where objective worlds and subjective lives meet. The objective world contains many socially constructed symbols with irrefutable givens. Whereas subjective lives are where people make sense of dialectical relationships, causal relations, and the interconnection between the perceived reality of their particular objective worlds to create the knowledge that informs their standpoint or worldview (Christodoulou, 2022; Ruggieri, 2017). Because this fragmented nature of reality exists beyond what a researcher can observe, the only way for them to understand the relational ontology and nature of reality is by conversing with its creator (Archer, 2012; Christodoulou, 2022). Rather than focus on the observable nature of reality, IRM seeks to explain relationships and interactions people have with each other and the physical world as a whole entity

rather than as objective versus subjective philosophical concepts (Wilson, 2001). Failure to understand that knowledge is created through relationships and not something abstract, owned, or waiting to be discovered is the flaw in WRM that is resolved by starting from an indigenous paradigm (Wilson, 2001).

Consequently, IRM have emerged as a means of working in partnership with indigenous research participants to co-create and share relational knowledge; thus, giving voice to populations previously marginalized by Western research assertions (Drawson et al., 2017; Mataira, 2019; Nakhid-Chatoor, et al., 2018). Like other forms of qualitative research, IRM rely on developing a co-beneficial relationship to explore topics of mutual interest (Capurro, 2021; Mataira, 2019). As with all forms of meaningful social exchange, interactional relationships are founded on trust, as a form of presupposed cooperation and compassion where each party works in partnership towards a reciprocal benefit (Mataira, 2019; Quinn, 2022; Simmel, 2001). Nonetheless, despite the paradigmatic differences, earlier studies (Drawson, et al., 2017; Quinn, 2022; Wilson, 2001) emphasize the value of combining indigenous and Western methods and acknowledge the solution-orientated approaches in participatory action research. But they emphasize the need for a different mindset where power and privilege in WRM are replaced by relational accountability as the paradigm that guides the methodology enabling data collection to become a shared experience of listening to and learning from indigenous voices and epistemologies. For some qualitative researchers, the indigenous paradigm shift will be an innovative development in their role as learners and problem solvers, while others will find it difficult to relinquish power to those they perceive to have lower status or are perceived as unable to describe their lived experiences.

Performing Talk-Story

As a method, talk-story is similar to other oral forms of disclosing cultural knowledge, such as Sharing Circles and Anishnaabe Symbol-Based Reflection (Lavallée, 2009), Ubuntu (Mucina, 2011), Liming, Ole Talk, and Talanoa (Nakhid-Chatoor, et al., 2018). However, in comparison with the ceremonial nature of the aforementioned methods, talk-story is more practically accessible to non-indigenous researchers due to its spontaneous and/or casual approach. Indeed, once ethical sensitivity requirements are met, performing talk-story requires no more pre-planning preparation than Swain and King's (2022) informal and overheard conversation data-gathering methods. However, unlike informal and overheard conversations removing the 'performativity' of data collection to 'get nearer to the reality of individuals' experiences, values and perceptions' (Swain & King, 2022, p. 9), is not an option. Unlike WRM where disconnecting data from its context helps to standardize the research approach, a performance to co-create an understanding of relational contextualization is fundamental to talk-story (Drawson, et al., 2017;

Mataira, 2019; Saraf, 2020). For instance, Olive (2008) described an overheard conversation between two surfers, where a male made a potentially innocuous comment about a female's appearance. Rather than perform talk-story with the actors to establish context or provide relational accountability, Olive (2008) assumed power by employing an a priori moral assertion to interpret the comment through an objectification theory lens to conclude that the male was a misogynist, and the female was a victim.

Consequently, distinguishing informal and overheard conversations from talk-story is more than an exercise in semantics, it emphasizes the axiological difference between ethical and moral obligations. Talk-story is the sharing of narratives between diverse peoples, respectfully discussing the mundane as well as the extraordinary to form relationships, learn and co-create knowledge (Mataira, 2019; Saraf, 2020). Informal and overheard conversations data collection using a Western-centric paradigm can lack holistic representation, context, and awareness of social norms by focusing only on the extraordinary, which disempowers and exploits the participants. Thus, they do not meet the axiological standards expected of an IRM or Goffman's (1989) survival requirement.

Founded on the Polynesian oral tradition of knowledge sharing, respect, and accepting relational accountability for human interactions with the wider environment, talk-story has existed for millennia (de Silva & Hunter, 2021). Guided by the Hawaiian concept of Kuleana, meaning that each participant is responsible for delivering a reciprocal value, the benefits of talk-story are achieved by agreeing that the balance of rights in the researcher's and the participant's knowledge has equal worth (Das et al., 2020). Likewise, there is a tacit agreement that the holistic complexity of lived experiences will be explored beyond caricatures and single issues by acknowledging that reflexivity is a human trait rather than a gift bestowed upon a select few researchers (Archer, 2012). The founding principle of talk-story is that everyone brings distinct and collective knowledge to the assemblage; thus, talk-story is a dialogical performance where the researcher and the researched learn from each other in a safe co-creative environment (de Silva & Hunter, 2021).

Consequently, the trust in relational accountability central to talk-story contrasts with the surf tribe's perceptions of researcher misrepresentation. Rather than viewing the research participant as someone to confirm our assertions, talk-story seeks insight into the whole person and their relational groups, humans with hopes, desires, fears, and feelings (Nishizaki et al., 2019). Treating the participant as an individual and as an architect of social epistemologies encourages personal interaction in the process of co-creating relational knowledge, necessitating respectful listening which is holistically attentive to enlightening observations, body language, and other sensory clues (de Silva & Hunter, 2021; Mataira, 2019). Accordingly, talk-story incites 'rambling narratives about personal experiences' that are shared without

interruption (Au & Kawakami, 1985, p. 409). As an authentic joint performance, talk-story encourages respect for the participants' opinions and feelings, but playful questioning is permitted (Foy, 2009). However, trust in the knowledge-sharing process is assured by forbidding insinuations that the speaker does not understand their own lived experiences (Das et al., 2020; Nishizaki, et al., 2019).

Hence, talk-story is an emotional experience as it inspires confidence that the sharing of knowledge is contextualized by an individual's innate reflexivity to explore or create theory (de Silva & Hunter, 2021; Nishizaki, et al., 2019). In performances of talk-story, the individual can holistically explore their lived experiences, revealing contradictions and complexity beyond single issues; knowing that their performance is free from social scrutiny. Thus, talk-story provides unique insights that are frequently silenced in other methodologies.

Consistent with its roots in the oral tradition, talk-story aims to be empowering (Saraf, 2020). When performing talk-story, knowledge is co-created and jointly owned; therefore, the important messages learned are agreed upon and become the moral compass guiding the interpretive strategy and synchronized conclusions. It is this joint ethical and moral approach to performing talk-story, which provides holistic and authentic representations, which addresses Pilgrim (2022) and Rojek and Turner's (2001) concerns with the power bias and fragmentation of data in cultural studies. Consequently, the purpose of sharing relational knowledge must lead to authentic representations and positive actions as a fundamental final act of performing a talk-story methodology (de Silva & Hunter, 2021; Mataira, 2019; Saraf, 2020).

As the following two cases reveal, talk-story provides insights into conflicts and contradictions that are typically unnoticed or silenced in Western research. The participants explain why we have arrived at a point where there is consensus that surf culture has been misrepresented and voices silenced in a misplaced sense of accountability to a dominant narrative instead of authentically representing the diverse people who choose to surf. Thus, I argue that talk-story provides the new methodological approach needed to begin to provide an authentic representation of surfing that stands the scrutiny of its participants.

Case 1: Presupposed Misrepresentation

Due to its ease of use, I first employed talk-story as an unplanned contingency plan. I knew Dennis through reading his work as a social history academic and veteran surfer, but we had never met previously. I had arranged to interview him at a beach in Newquay to gather data for my ethnographic doctoral study, which adopted a consumer culture perspective to explore identity construction through surf apparel consumption. Given his academic role, I was surprised when Dennis suggested 'let's go for a drink, and you can write what you want?'. I declined. What followed was a brief and tetchy interview, where Dennis provided terse and nondescript answers to my

questions. After the interview, Dennis said 'I feel bad for how I have treated you, let's go for that drink.' Over this drink, the formality of an interview was replaced with surfers engaged in talk-story.

Reflecting on his participation in previous studies of surf culture, Dennis stated that:

They [sociologists] just write what they want. It is a complete waste of time doing an interview if they ignore what you tell them. They exploit surfers and surfing and misrepresent the entire culture. They damage surfing and surfers' reputations.

Dennis said that he agreed to an interview because he wanted to challenge my assumptions and motives face-to-face. I assured him that I was engaged in consumer culture studies, which is entirely different to cultural studies. However, on reflection, it is the similarities in data collection methods that are problematic, as paradigmatic, and methodological distinctions are not obvious to research participants. Notwithstanding my disciplinary clarification, Dennis stated that he did not trust scholars of surfing. He perceived that researchers feign interest in lived experiences to deceive surfers merely to enhance their careers at the expense of those they have interviewed. Indeed, he had considered legal action and a letter to a university ethics committee describing misrepresentation in two previous cultural studies articles.

Dennis's lack of trust was problematic because the anticipation of trust precedes cooperation and compassion in every meaningful social interaction (Möllering, 2001). Nonetheless, for the next 2 hr, we performed talk-story, candidly discussing our experiences of surfing and surf scholarship. During our talk-story, we established parallels in our lived experiences, we also examined geographical and surfing era differences in depth. Our talk-story was different to the formality of the interview process, as we talked, a friendship based on mutual respect and trust emerged. Since our initial meeting, we have performed over 30 hr of talk-story to discuss the merits of recent academic articles.

Dennis was not the only surfer to decline an interview due to a lack of trust and presupposed misrepresentation. In a talk-story in the ocean, one of my Scottish surfing friends (a law student) justified not being interviewed because he did not want to contribute to the 'lies sociologists write about surfers. We are all either drugged-up hippies or aggressive locals. Come on Paul, you are better than that.' Over seven hundred hours of pre-arranged and impromptu talk-story at the beach, in surf shops, on campus, and in cafes with more than one hundred British surfers lasting between minutes and hours, co-created performances have provided grounded theories and relational knowledge into the fear of misrepresentation that we could not co-create using other methodological approaches. Indeed, talk-story revealed the difficulty of interviewing someone about why they choose not to participate in an interview. Thus, talk-

story gave voice to people who had chosen not to participate in research; the hard-to-reach group of deliberate non-participants as well as those who had been misrepresented in previous studies. Performing talk-story alleviated the axiological concerns of the reluctant participants through a connection at a human level; systems of knowledge built on the relationships central to IRM (Wilson, 2001). Furthermore, talk-story provided insight into why they had chosen non-participation. The problem and solution emerging from talk-story was the need for authentic representation, which contradictorily the participants demanded before participating in traditional data collection. Despite the talk-story insights, I was frustrated that surfers who presumed misrepresentation would not participate in my studies, and angry that others had been misrepresented in previous studies.

The fears of the participants were initially challenged and then supported in a talk-story with Wendy. Despite our friendship of over 10 years and her lengthy involvement in developing British surfing, Wendy always declined invites for formal interviews. But she consented to representation from over one hundred hours of talk-story we have performed in our professional and personal relationship. Wendy and I have always been critical of the objective world's influence on surfing because we believe that surfers find solutions to challenge inequalities in their subjective lives through co-operation. However, she has always respected academics/people who challenge the status quo, which is how we met. In our most recent talk-story, Wendy reflected on and justified her non-participation in interviews citing erroneous representations of surfers by cultural studies scholars she had met at a conference:

W: They don't surf much.

PI: Did they tell you that? They publish a lot so probably don't have much time.

W: It's not that. Their research is not as well-informed as you would expect. ... To be blunt, they don't know what they are talking about. In 30-plus years of surfing and working with disadvantaged groups in and out of the water, I have never met anyone who has experienced what they presented. But who are we to challenge what they say? We can't. You know that more than anyone.

This admission by Wendy was unexpected, the work of scholars she had previously revered and defended she now described as deficient. Indeed, lisahunter, Olive, Roy, and Wheaton also acknowledge that their previous cultural studies and identity politics methodologies have resulted in the oversimplification of single issues, which has alienated and marginalized many voices (lisahunter, 2018). Thus, lisahunter, Olive, Roy, and Wheaton's search for innovative and inclusive methodologic approaches is commendable, but their reliance on Western a priori assertions and notions of power presents a

challenge in convincing people that they will be authentically represented.

Case 2: Women's Desire and Men's Reticence to Talk-Story

In my PhD viva, the identity politics examiner informed me that my analysis was gender-blind. I had gathered data from a representative sample of women who surf; however, my findings did not fit with their favored neo-Marxist narrative of gender conflict and marketplace exploitation. Previous studies (Padfield & Procter, 1996; Treviño, 1992) reveal that when men interview women and vice versa (Jachyra et al., 2014; Lefkowich, 2019) they gain novel insights which supplement or contradict existing understandings. These new understandings are either embraced or dismissed depending on the readers' ideological outlook (Pilgrim, 2022). Indeed, Lefkowich (2019) explains that identity politics are commonly employed to discredit disagreeable findings, albeit this typically benefits rather than hinders cis, white, male scholars.

Consequently, I reengaged in reflexive practice, reanalyzing my interview transcripts and field journals, which (Lefkowich, 2019) describes as essential to confront dominant social norms and power dynamics that may consciously and unconsciously influence analytical processes. I then reengaged the representative sample of women who surf in talk-story, resharing my narrative analysis for member checking. A desire for authentic representation emerged as a frequent grounded theme from the talk-story followed by trust; researcher gender was secondary. Indeed, surfers supported Olive, et al., (2013) assertion that female researchers patronize recreational women who surf. In a face-to-face talk-story, one of the participants became emotional and told me 'Don't you dare misrepresent me, we trusted (names identity politics scholar) and she made us (female surfers) look like perverts or a bunch of weak idiots. Don't do that to me.' Others cited their hesitancy or intention to withdraw from the study if I changed my original analysis or allowed my examiner to influence it. To address the power imbalance favoring my identity politics examiner, I included additional literature and observations in the PhD thesis, but the authenticity and dialogic complexity of a polyphony of voices that lisahunter (2018) claims prior identity politics scholars now seek continued to faithfully represent the participants.

Cognizant of the benefits of a talk-story methodology and intrigued by the shortcomings of the single-issue approach employed in cultural studies/identity politics, I began a partially self-funded IRM-informed consumer-oriented ethnography examining recreational surfers' surf wear choices and experiences when surfing on O'ahu. I chose a tropical location because women have more choices of how to self-present when surfing – in Northern Europe everyone wears wetsuits. Performances of talk-story with women and men who surf revealed layers of complexity and contradictions that they

believed were previously silenced by scholars seeking to emphasize single-issue them versus us gender divisions. For example, a talk-story with Simon provided insight into the hesitancy and presupposed misrepresentation which leads to silencing. Before my visit, I sought a snowball sample and reached out to various surf clubs and organizations on O'ahu. Simon agreed to promote my research, resulting in several inquiries and talk-story meetings. However, in a Skype talk-story, Simon declined a formal interview. Consistent with Prime & Moss-Racusin's (2009) identification of fear as a barrier to male participation in gender studies, Simon feared misrepresentation, stating that he valued his female friends and did not 'want to open that can of worms' (Cook, 2022, p. 823). Fear of misrepresentation emerged as a common end to impromptu talk-story when initially enthusiastic male participants would self-silence and decline further discussions of women who surf due to their previous observations of the culture war of identity politics.

Contrary, women who surf were keen to talk-story about previous representations in contrast to their lived experiences. In a pre-arranged meeting at a local café, university professor Sarah participated in an interview, but in the subsequent talk-story stated:

S: You have asked all the wrong questions. You have followed the correct process, reviewed the literature, and designed a study. I have read the same articles as you. What is in the literature is too trivial, it doesn't represent what matters to women. Even if women had equality many of the surfing issues they discuss would remain, competing for waves, dealing with aggressive idiots, and looking lustfully at people we find attractive. Women don't care about things like that. But it makes a good story. ... "But you already knew that didn't you?" (Cook, 2022, p. 823). In your research, I think you will discover how desperate women are to discuss what matters to them, rather than gaslighting ... having opinions imposed on them.

Talk-story provided insight into the complexity and contradictions of what matters to women who surf (see Cook, 2022, 2023). For example, Sarah suggested that women should dress modestly when surfing, but admitted that she and her friends would occasionally surf naked. Likewise, expert surfer Carisa chose to surf in a bikini but contradictorily believed that other women who surfed in bikinis were not taking surfing seriously. As Simmel (1971), and Quinn (2022) argue, researchers should document and represent these types of contradictions in a non-judgmental manner because they are part of every relational interaction.

When employing a method where emotional sharing between perceived equals is a given, intersectionality differences were an unexpected benefit. The participants cared about the study and were keen for me to succeed. Thus, consistent with indigenous concepts of power, being a cis, white, male was secondary to the 'mana (spiritual power)' (Walker, 2011, p. 99) that the participants assigned me. Nonetheless, the women

who surf explained that talk-story with a non-local man stimulated deeper levels of self-reflection than they would be required to perform when talking with a female or local researcher. As word spread that a non-local man wanted to talk-story with Hawaiian¹ women about surfing experiences, a snowball effect ensued, and volunteers inundated me with requests to participate. This resulted in one interviewee inviting her friends to a spontaneous online group talk-story as we sat at the market in Hale'iwa, and another inviting me to an evening lū'au gathering at her house to talk-story with her buddies. There were also invites to go surfing with groups of women to talk-story in the ocean. What emerged was the co-creation of complex and contradictory lived experiences, each worthy of the authentic representation they desperately desired.

Perhaps the most illustrative example of talk-story in practice was my meeting with Lisa. I arrived at Lisa's North Shore house at 10 a.m. and concluded the interview by 11.30 a.m. However, I did not leave until 5 p.m. We chose to talk-story with rambling narratives about surfing, music, travelling, her PhD studies, and why I cared about representing women. Lisa's husband joined us to provide his reflections and insights. Similar to Walker's (2011, 2020) critique of post-oral narratives which disregard the important historical and contemporary role of women who surf, Lisa and Larry explained that no one cares about women who surf, stating that they are either ignored or misrepresented. Consistent with the emotional sharing of talk-story, when I was leaving, Lisa said *Aloha A Hui Hou* [farewell until we meet again] with an authentic Hawaiian pūliki (hug) and kisses on the cheek lasting several minutes, saying 'mahalo [thank you] for caring. You are ohana [family], welcome to visit anytime.' The following day Lisa responded to my thank you email with a reflective narrative contextualizing our co-created grounded theory with extensive local insights.

Co-creating performances of talk-story was a physical and emotional experience, signified by pūliki and kisses when greeting and saying farewell to many of the participants who had shared their time and stories with me. The duration of my interviews was 18 hr with 16 participants, but I talk-story for over 25 hr. I was elated with the relational sharing and the insights I had been exposed to, and demoralized by surfers' perceptions that they have no voice. I was unsurprised but disappointed that the findings were unrelated to those published by cultural studies scholars, previous experience challenging the status quo of identity politics through publication meant that it was unlikely that I could give the women the voice they demanded. It is here that IRM and WRM diverge in the form of a culture war. The IRM underpinning talk-story states that I have a moral obligation to avoid employing a Western or hegemonic patriarchal position that would contribute to the marginalization of already marginalized voices by publishing narratives that misrepresent the participants.

Sharing Talk-Story

The cases above reveal the benefits of talk-story as an emerging methodology to include the epistemologies and voices of the hesitant and misrepresented. However, the paucity of previous studies means that establishing a process of analyzing, interpreting, and sharing the findings of talk-story remains open for methodological debate (de Silva & Hunter, 2021). As qualitative researchers know, we cannot reproduce the researched world in its entirety; therefore, we must perform some form of data reduction (Redwood, 1999). However, what researchers choose to leave out is as important as what they include because it is the remaining fragments of data that inform the readers' interpretation (Fine, 1993; Stern, 1998). Hence, the moral dilemma of relational accountability in qualitative research (Fine, 1993), where WRM thematic analysis separates the story from its teller.

Thus, authentically representing the polyvocality of individual innate reflexivity and social epistemologies presents a challenge (Simonds & Christopher, 2013). Narrative analysis is a potential solution. However, in Western research, a narrative is the researcher's account of a story that someone has told them (Redwood, 1999). Consequently, narrative analysis is susceptible to epistemological, analytical, and interpretive issues (Riessman, 2008; Rojek & Turner, 2001). There is, however, a narrative analysis solution compatible with the tenets of an indigenous paradigm. A story analysis typography elucidates the holistic complexity of lived experiences, and a detailed performance analysis explains the interrelatedness of co-creating an authentic representation of individual stories (Smith & Sparkes, 2009). Because the researcher co-created the talk-story, they are part of it; thus, performance analysis is a continuation of the epistemological commitment to caring for how we represent people with an emphasis on what is important to them (Riessman, 2008; Smith & Sparkes, 2009). Similarly, as adopted in this article, layered narration enables representations of the researcher and participant voices to retain equal status throughout the narrative (Stern, 1998).

Disempowering Talk-Story

Performance analysis requires the reader to become a participant in the story, sharing in the co-creation of meaning and authentic representation (Riessman, 2008; Smith & Sparkes, 2009). Some readers are willing co-creators, intrigued to learn about unfamiliar places and cultures (Simonds & Christopher, 2013). However, others will resist and dispute any information that contradicts their a priori knowledge or standpoint in the culture war of identity politics (Pilgrim, 2022).

Submitting an 18-year ethnography exploring the lived experiences of Scottish surfers exposes this challenge. Exhibiting Western surf scholars' willingness to disconnect data from its cultural and geographical context and flagrant disregard for relational accountability, self-identified Australian and American reviewers could not conceive that the culture in

an isolated Northern European surf clan could be different to the overcrowded beaches of Australia and California. Indeed, the Australian reviewer stated that their a priori assertions enabled them to represent the experiences of a surf clan in a country they had never visited better than an ethnographer who had spent eighteen years learning and co-creating relational data. Furthermore, the Australian reviewer suggested that I familiarize myself with the works of Lisahunter, Olive, Roy, and Wheaton, oblivious that those scholars are seeking novel methodologies to provide the silenced with a voice. Thus, unwittingly, the Australian reviewer proves that talk-story provides unique insights from those silenced in the identity politics of cultural studies. Likewise, the review process in a different journal reveals the challenges faced by authentically representing talk-story performances and dissenting voices. Reviewer one responded that it was refreshing to read the type of unfiltered representation of an underrepresented population's lived experiences. Indeed, it was an antidote to the questionable depictions presented by ... (named two cultural studies researchers). Reviewer three did not trust relational ontology and Simmelian theoretical frameworks. However, it is reviewer two's response that reveals the depth of Western-centric bias in cultural studies and the challenges researchers face when sharing authentic representations of unfamiliar cultures employing a talk-story methodology. Reviewer two was incensed by the performance analysis. They declared that the research participants were morons because people who had no formal training in reflexivity and had never had their knowledge peer-reviewed could not understand their lived experiences; ironically, seven professors had participated in the performances of talk-story. Likewise, I was naive for giving voice to participants without filtering the fragments to suit accepted Western-centric understandings of surf culture (none of which related to Scotland). Although these reviews are not representative of all sociology journals, they support the participants' talk-story grounded expectation of exploitation and misrepresentation. Likewise, they strengthen Pilgrim (2022), and Wilson's (2001) argument that researchers can misrepresent data to confirm stereotypes of what people are rather than adopting a relational perspective that authentically represents how they interact.

Consequently, as earlier articles exploring indigenous groups' experiences of collaborating with researchers (Nakhid-Chatoor, et al., 2018; Wilson, 2001), have suggested, the challenge with talk-story is not just how to analyze and share the data but also how it is received. In cultural studies, academic journals are predisposed to publishing data obtained through conventional Western-centric methodologies (Pilgrim, 2022). Thus, justifying the grounded insights provided by performances of talk-story, which often contradict a priori assertions, and processes of sharing the relational knowledge co-created in talk-story are ongoing discussions.

Conclusion

The aim and purpose of this article are to propose talk-story to address the challenge of presenting research findings that survive scrutiny by the participants. As demonstrated throughout the article, similar to the solution offered to indigenous peoples who are hesitant and/or fear misrepresentation in research, talk-story facilitates the authentic representation of voices, knowledges and social epistemologies of non-indigenous participants who self-silence because they presuppose misrepresentation in WRM-informed qualitative research. Talk-story is methodologically different from the unresolvable moral dilemmas inherent in WRM; instead of the researcher's interpretive judgments being distinct from the processes participants employ to make sense of their lived experiences, talk-story requires a sharing of co-created analytical processes to produce an agreed interpretation of the data. Thus, talk-story presents the methodological solution Lisahunter, Olive, Roy, and Wheaton seek as they progress beyond single-issue non-inclusive representations of identity politics in surf culture. However, despite its Hawaiian origins, talk-story is not limited to studies of surf culture. Grounded theories of feminism, consumer culture, self-presentation, cultural heritage, and environmental activism were learned from the performances of talk-story in this article, demonstrating the usefulness of talk-story when including hesitant voices on a range of topics.

Further development of talk-story by non-indigenous researchers with non-indigenous participants requires us to embrace a paradigm shift. Western-centric researchers must progress from rewarding gathering data and owning knowledge to valuing co-created authentic representations of social epistemologies that pass participant scrutiny and achieve mutual benefits (Wilson, 2001). Researchers must be prepared to learn from findings that do not correspond with their narrow ideological perspectives in the culture war of whose voices are heard. Lisahunter, Olive, Roy, and Wheaton's acknowledgement of past deficiencies in cultural studies will undoubtedly help. Likewise, outside of methodological publications, reviewers and publishers must acknowledge the challenges of communicating complex and contradictory authentic representations of oral stories and cultural symbols into written narratives that are familiar to Western reviewers and readers (Swain & King, 2022). Therefore, editors and reviewers need to establish a level of trust in the 'integrity of the researcher' to enable articles employing oral traditions to be shared (Swain & King, 2022, p. 8). Without this shift, the axiology of morals and ethics inherent in a research paradigm and our ontological beliefs about the nature of reality, which guide the epistemology and the methodology adopted to acquire and share knowledge, will continue to be dominated by and benefit researchers employing WRM (Wilson, 2001). Accordingly, the indigenous paradigm underpinning talk-story methodology offers an innovative solution to the

enduring problem of presenting qualitative findings that survive participant scrutiny.

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Notes

1. I use the term Hawaiian to designate place of residence rather than cultural heritage. Indigenous or native Hawaiian is defined as ‘any descendant of not less than one-half part of the blood of the races inhabiting the Hawaiian Islands previous to 1778’ (Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, 2023). All of my participants self-identified as non-indigenous residents or visitors.

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