SEEING OUR LANGUAGE: THE EFFECTS OF MEDIA REPRESENTATION ON SCOTTISH GAELIC LEARNERS

by

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"*Sinn cho fada bho chèile 's tha 'n cruinn-cè 's e cho farsaing.*

*Sinn gun sgrìobhadh gun leughadh, och, gu sgeul a thoirt ead'rainn.***"**

– Ùghdar neo-aithnichte bho Eilean Leòdhais, Alba

"*We are as far apart as the world is wide.*

*We cannot write nor read, sigh, to give stories to each other.***"**

– Unknown Author from the Isle of Lewis, Scotland, lamenting the loss of Gaelic between him and his brother, who emigrated to Cape Breton Island.

(*Seanchaidh na Coille*; Newton, 2015, p. 26-27)

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ABSTRACT

Though it was once the third most-spoken language in Canada, Scottish Gaelic is now recognized as an endangered language. While previous scholarship has analyzed the causes of Gaelic's decline, little has discussed how Gaelic is portrayed in recent filmography, and how these representations affect the community they represent. What narratives remain associated with Scottish Gaelic today in film? Do these portrayals affect or influence Gaelic learners? Has film representation had an impact on Gaelic learning methods? Is media in demand by this community, and is it accessible to learners? I address these questions through a thematic analysis of recent film and television depictions of Gaelic. Additionally, I interviewed language students at the Gaelic College (Colaisde na Gàidhlig) as well as Gaelic media professionals. My research explores the most prominently associated narratives surrounding Gaelic in popular media, and how they discuss, enable, or deconstruct language stereotypes.

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

It is not common to think of language as being 'seen' in film, since film relies heavily on the visual aspects of storytelling. However, language in filmed media is often one of the first signifiers of a character, a community, or a location's role within their narratives. A character's speech patterns, slang, or dialect can reflect their economic background, their education, and their personality. This characterization is not limited to fictional narratives; studies suggest that a person's language or manner of speaking informs our initial judgement of them (Hogenboom, 2018). If language is such a key factor in how persons and communities are represented and understood, it stands to say that their fictional portrayals can have a significant effect, especially for endangered minority languages. In the case of Gàidhlig (hereby referred to as 'Scottish Gaelic' or just 'Gaelic'), its limited media representation can deeply influence the prevalence and understanding of the Scottish Gaelic language, specifically within historically Gaelic-speaking communities in rural Nova Scotia. While previous research has focused on understanding the historical roots of Scottish Gaelic's connotations and status or focused solely on Gaelic music as a media form, there is a significant gap in addressing how film and television can have a strong effect on Scottish Gaelic's preservation.

Despite government and community efforts, and the fact that it was once the third most-spoken language in Canada (Graham, 2018), Scottish Gaelic is now an endangered language. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines an endangered language as when "its speakers cease to use it, use it in fewer and fewer domains, user fewer of its registers and speaking styles, and/or stop passing it on to the next generation" (UNESCO, 2017, para. 2). Previous scholarship

acknowledges that English speakers diminished Celtic languages by attributing the language to poverty (Blake, 2000). These connotations began to reflect upon its speakers, framing them as "wild, barbaric, dirty, irresponsible, irreligious, and untrustworthy" (Blake, 2000, p. 131-32). The degrading stereotypes surrounding Scottish Gaelic forced many to abandon the language to receive any kind of employment, educational, and social security. It is important to emphasize that this is not ancient history; there are still people living in Cape Breton today whose parents kept them from using their Gaelic, hoping English would provide them with better opportunities and avoid physical punishment in school. By forcibly tying Scottish Gaelic to inherent economic, cultural, and social failure, a narrative emerged that circumstances like poverty were merely a symptom of a "backward[s]" (Demont, 2014, p. 2) language, and not the result of discriminatory attitudes. These beliefs infiltrated all levels of society, which meant a severe amount of influence on government and law as well.

A bill proposed in 1890 by Senator Thomas Robert MacInnes, originally from Lake Ainslie, Cape Breton, recommended that Gaelic be recognized as an official language of Canada (Kennedy, 2002, p. 36). The proposal was met with mockery, and it was defeated 42-7, despite the most recent census at the time numbering more Scottish and Irish inhabitants than either French or English (Kennedy, 2002, p. 35-37). Senator Kaulbach, who was the Senate Representative of Nova Scotia at the time, said Gaelic was "entirely useless" (Kennedy, 2002, p. 37) outside of poetry and fairy tales. He further added:

> "[E]ven in the part of the country from where these people come Gaelic is not used as an official language, and is it reasonable that privileges should be asked

> for Highland Scotchmen in this House that are not asked for in their own country?" (Kennedy, 2002, p. 37)

The impact of these representations on Gaelic speakers is felt deeply in places like St. Anne's, Nova Scotia, home of the Gaelic College (Colaisde na Gàidhlig), where the board of directors' proposed inclusion of the word 'Royal' in the institution's name drew local protests (Demont, 2014). Recent film and television projects reflect similar attitudes and concerns. Some media portrayals of historical English and Scottish cultural conflict struggled to find local UK distribution, as the British government aimed to prevent potential comparison to contemporary political events such as the Scottish Referendum in 2014 (Shacklock, 2016). Yet this increased presence of Gaelic in recent media suggests a shift in its recognition as a minority language. The expansion of Gaelic signage across rural Cape Breton communities throughout 2020 shows an active engagement of provincial powers in language and cultural preservation. What was once seen as an unprofitable, endangered language is now a hallmark of Nova Scotian tourism – a swift turn from the targeted suppression of the language in previous centuries.

The sudden turn-around from dismissing Gaelic as a language unfit for intellectual and worthwhile topics such as philosophy or mathematics (Kennedy, 2002) to a romanticized ancient tongue worthy of preserving for tourism leaves Gaelic hanging in a very strange and contradictory dichotomy. These conflicting ideas become reiterated through media, bringing them to life through visuals, movement, voice, music, and dialogue. As such, they gain more power and influence. Where does this leave Scottish Gaelic representation now? How do we see Scottish Gaelic used and portrayed in multimedia-based narratives? My analysis is based upon a thematic content analysis of Gaelic representations in film and television. The results of my analysis informed how I

structured my phenomenological interviews with language learners at the Gaelic College (Colaisde na Gàidhlig) and media professionals experienced with Gaelic media. My research aims to map out these newer representational trends and examine the external contexts that may have influenced them, as well as the influence these representations have had on the Scottish Gaelic language, its learners, and how learners may even approach learning the language. My research focuses on representation from almost entirely Canadian and Scottish creators, with an emphasis on a Cape Breton and Nova Scotian context. This means that my analysis will speak more generally to representations and experiences of Gaelic immigrants, rather than Gaels within Scotland.

B. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

This research was conducted as part of my Master of Information program at Dalhousie University's School of Information Management. In particular, my research targets the connection between information and society. Media like film and television are sources of information; they build narratives from their audiovisual aspects (the soundtrack, dialogue, cinematography, costuming). What we take away from media can have a lasting impact on us long after the television series ends, or the film concludes. The impact of media on its viewers is evident with the case of *Outlander*. BBC News reported the growing damage done to the area surrounding a stone marker engraved with "Clan Fraser" in the field where the Battle of Culloden occurred (2019). The Battle of Culloden refers to the final confrontation between British forces and the Jacobite Army in April 1746. While the conflict was not one of Scottish Gaels versus English colonization, and involved various political, religious, and cultural factors, it marked a

milestone in the Scottish Highlands' assimilation into the Kingdom of Great Britain. The stone markers honour clans that took part in the battle, such as Clan Fraser.

Because the main love interest in *Outlander* is the highlander Jamie Fraser, the marker has attracted particular attention from fans. The increased foot traffic off the paths to see the marker up close forced the National Trust to section off the marker temporarily to reinforce the ground (BBC News, 2019). A similar case occurred in Halifax, Nova Scotia, after the release of the 1997 film *Titanic.* A headstone of a man who died in the sinking of the ship named "J. Dawson" attracted wave after wave of tourists, who connected the headstone to the one of the film's central fictional characters, Jack Dawson (CBC News, 2012). Both Jamie Fraser and Jack Dawson are entirely fictional creations, but the actual historical contexts and the fictional narratives constructed around them produced real emotional connection to viewers, to the point where many made pilgrimages to these sites just to see them in-person. As sources of information, it is important discuss how such representations, even purely fictional ones, affect viewers and their own thoughts, emotions, and perceptions.

Outside of music, tourism marketing or fictional media is how many non-Gaels are first introduced to Scottish Gaelic, and what they see and hear can influence what they understand the language and culture to be. Scottish Gaelic is a very under-represented community, so it is more important than ever for research to explore what these representations are, and what effect they have.

CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In both 'Old Scotland' (part of the United Kingdom) and 'New Scotland' (Nova Scotia, Canada), people have fought for both the recognition and protection of Scottish Gaelic as an official language for centuries. While being an official language of a country does not guarantee its survival nor its revival, being recognized in such a way can open further opportunities and services to reverse language degradation. Though Gaelic's status in Canada has not changed, which has greatly limited the language's access in media such as film and television, Gaelic's current legal status in Scotland is much different. Because it is now a minority language, Scottish Gaelic has been rendered certain protections through Scottish legislation.

A. 'OLD SCOTLAND' AND GAELIC

In 2005, Scottish Parliament unanimously passed the Gaelic (Scotland) Act, which recognized Gaelic as an official language of Scotland (Dunbar, 2006). The Act also established a public board, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, that would be responsible for aiding, planning, and implementing Gaelic resources, from bilingual road signage to language courses. Unlike previous Gaelic movements, there were multiple key factors that pushed Gaelic legislation through royal assent. Firstly, the Gaelic Act was heavily inspired by the Welsh Language Act of 2003 (Dunbar, 2006), which proved to slow the declining rate of Welsh across the country. Significantly, the relationship between Gaelic in Scotland and Welsh in Wales has been a long and prominent one, with Gaelic revitalization taking many cues from the efforts made towards Welsh. The Director of Mercator Media in Wales noted that "it is common for minority language communities to look to other groups when trying to set aspirational, yet attainable, goals for their own

media endeavors" (Stewart, 2009, p. 5). Combined with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (Hutchison & Blain, 2008), and the gradual rise of multiculturalism, the social and political climate in the 21st century has called for wider acknowledgement of minority languages, including Scottish Gaelic.

The role of media has not gone unnoticed by the Scottish government. In 2008, BBC Alba was established as a digital cornerstone for Gaelic-based media, encompassing television, radio, and internet as language avenues (Milligan et al., 2011). In their book *The media in Scotland,* Hutchinson and Blain (2008) argue that Gaelic television may not strengthen verbal language skills, nor is it likely to "encourage [speakers] to speak the language more often" (p. 216). However, a greater Gaelic presence in media could help develop other language skills, such as listening or translation abilities. Gaelic media may not be essential to fully reversing language shift, but it may be crucial to *maintaining* the language.

Despite the rise of multiculturism and tourism which has provided new avenues for Gaelic to flourish, there is still the pressing issue of how centuries' worth of damaging stereotypes can be undone. Like Gaelic speakers in Canada throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, "generations of [Celtic] students, who came to school with little or no English, were educated wholly in an English-speaking environment, where their mother tongue was discouraged, often by corporal punishment" (Dunbar, 2006, p. 184). Such initiatives degraded intergenerational language transmission, with conversational Gaelic use in both the home and the public decreasing severely. A key issue remains for those who advocate for language protection and government initiatives: are such efforts doomed to be largely performative until intergenerational language learning rises? Milligan et al. (2011) acknowledge this concern, stating that media would only have a

sizeable impact on a minority language once "intergenerational transmission in informal and private settings" (p.350) has been normalized. Studies of Gaelic learners, primarily conducted through qualitative methods like narrative interviews (Armstrong, 2013) and quantitative surveys (Dunmore, 2017), note that the degradation of informal Gaelic use has led to a fragmented Gaelic community, where 'semi-speakers' (Dorian, 1977) and native speakers struggle to find a common place to simply converse. Gaelic's endangered status has also frustrated how speakers incorporate the language into their identity in an 'authentic' way. This could stem from a lack of representation, and it remains to be seen if a greater media presence could facilitate conversation between Gaelic language groups.

Gaelic's situation in Scotland continues to be a controversial, but consistent conversation. The language protections introduced, as well as the integration of Scottish Gaelic in schooling, has created a foundation for the future of Gaelic in the UK. With MG Alba's headquarters located in Stornoway, Gaelic media is made within Gaelic regions for Gaelic speakers and learners. Even if the language population is small, there is still an avenue for media representation that is centrally placed in the regions it concerns.

B. 'NEW SCOTLAND' AND GAELIC

The issue of 'authentic' Gaelic is also prevalent in Nova Scotia; while avenues like tourism provided the language new recognition and services, it has also been criticized for relying on "tartanry" or "tartanism" (Beaton & Muise, 2008; McKay, 1992). These terms refer to the over-romanticized idealism of 'Scottishness' or the Scottish past, reducing symbols like tartans to mere substitutes for what could be a

geographically or socially absent culture. Nova Scotia's utilization of tartanry has been discussed since the 1930s (MacDonald, 1988), with many arguing that it remains a problem today as Nova Scotia continues to use its ties to Scotland as a marketing tool. In fact, 'Cape Breton music' has been cited as a "cultural product" (Ivakhiv, 2005, p. 116) used by Nova Scotian tourism to reach national and international visitors – quite successfully – as seen with the annual autumn music festival Celtic Colours. Ivakhiv even suggests that the way in which the Cabot Trail itself was constructed was "consistent with [former premier] Angus L. MacDonald's vision of turning the island into a kind of drive-through permanent heritage museum" (2005, p. 121). Herein lies the problem for many within the Gaelic community; although events like Celtic Colours or tourism marketing that includes such tropes as a Highlander with a kilt and bagpipes may introduce people to the culture, it does little to bolster its continuation and health. Rather, the narrative produced by Nova Scotia tourism is of a Gaelic culture and heritage preserved firmly in the past. Ivakhiv (2005) likening MacDonald's Nova Scotia to a 'museum' is purposeful. It is used across Gaelic-focused scholarship to address the concern of whether such marketing affects Scottish Gaelic in a positive way, or if it only confirms the language and culture as a long-buried part of the past. Sparling (2007) asks, "How much will Gaelic pop's insertion within a context of an exploited ('quaint') cultural niche market help sustain – or otherwise – 'museumify' – its Gaelic base?" (pp. 38-39). The Gaelic language can be used and celebrated in festivals such as Celtic Colours, but what happens when the festivals end, and the tourists leave? Nova Scotia tourism creates a space for Scottish Gaelic culture and language in how it markets itself, but not actual space for Scottish Gaelic to be actively engaged in the present.

The same concerns can be seen with Gaelic film and television. The medium does not offer a complete solution to the issues raised in relation to music. However, film media's visual aspects create room for layered, complex representations that can also generate lengthy discussions (for instance, a Gaelic television series that airs one episode per week could potentially create an entire season's worth of post-watch discussion for Gaelic speakers and learners). Gaelic film and television can also much more easily address the cultural, linguistic, and historical differences between Scottish Gaelic and Irish Gaelic through visual cues. The conflation of Irish and Scottish Gaelic has long plagued both communities, often falling together under the umbrellas of 'folk' or 'Celtic' cultures. Generalizing Irish and Scottish Gaelic suggests that they are merely interchangeable, or in Scottish Gaelic's case: overshadowed by Irish Gaelic almost entirely. This is illustrated by how many Cape Breton traditions were originally thought to be "bastardized" (Sparling, 2011, p. 49) versions of Irish traditions. For example, such connotations were associated with Cape Breton step-dancing, until it was reclaimed as a form of Scottish dance (Sparling, 2011). The watering down of Scottish Gaelic continues to be an issue for its community members; more audiovisual representation could give its community more opportunities to see themselves as members of a distinct linguistic and cultural group alongside other language content, while also helping to establish the language and community identity to non-Gaels.

The issue of trying to be 'authentically' Gaelic, or recognizing 'authentic' Gaelic in media, adds another complex layer to media representation. However, the debate over what is authentic and what is not could also be used to argue for increasing the amount and diversity of available Gaelic media. Gaelic film and television would provide a separate avenue that could counteract or balance the use of Gaelic culture in marketing

and tourism. If Gaelic media continues to be limited, the most accessible exposure Gaelic culture would have in the wider world would most likely be through marketing strategies that depend on tartanry to define the language and culture.

C. GAELIC FILM

It is interesting to see how Gaelic film and television remains to be greatly overshadowed by another Gaelic medium: music. Much of the available scholarship concerning Gaelic media focuses solely on musical traditions. Chances are if you asked anyone with any knowledge of Gaelic about 'Gaelic media', they would default to discussing music. Scottish Gaelic has many oral traditions, so it is not surprising that music would continue to be so important to the culture and language. However, with the rise of audiovisual media across technology, it is necessary to discuss where Scottish Gaelic fits into this landscape and what this means for both the culture and its community.

While the greater impacts of Scottish Gaelic film media upon the Gaelic community have been largely ignored in scholarship-based discussion, there are parallels to be made with research done in relation to other endangered languages. For instance, the effects of film-based media on Indigenous languages in Canada have been largely seen as positive. Scholars like Bertrand (2013) believe film can be especially beneficial to traditionally oral-based cultures, or cultures with a strong oral tradition. Bertrand calls film a "technologically updated and mechanized form of orality" (2013, p. 67). Literature also highlights film as a way for First Nations peoples "to have a voice, to reinforce community ties, and to re-appropriate Indigenous culture" (Linds, 2020, p.8). Such

similarities to storytelling and oral traditions may warrant further comparison of Scottish Gaelic with how other cultures approach media for language revitalization.

Because of the small number of Gaelic films and television series, there is no true 'Gaelic cinema' to discuss (Nowlan & Finch, 2015) and Gaelic media cannot be placed within a long cinematic tradition or industry. This lack of film tradition does not encourage scholarship to focus on the actual narrative depictions of Gaelic within film and television, with the greater focus instead being on the available funding and/or demand for such Gaelic media. In relation to the content *within* Scottish Gaelic media, the *Directory of world cinema: Scotland* suggests that there are presently three characteristics of Gaelic media created in Scotland: engaging past oral traditions and folklore, the presence of youth both within the film's narratives and in those creating the media, and the use of rural landscapes that the story and its characters are greatly tied to (Nowlan & Finch, 2015). Besides Nowlan and Finch's assessment of Scotland-based Gaelic productions, Gaelic media created internationally remains left out of the discussion. However, the characteristics recognized by Nowlan and Finch can be further explored as they provide a benchmark for content analysis of other Gaelic media.

Outside of academia, Gaelic remains divisive. In an article for *The Herald,* Beacom (2018) questions the amount of money and time used for Gaelic initiatives rather than fields like healthcare. As in Canada, Scottish Gaelic continues to be deeply associated with negative economic circumstances, with many people arguing for resources to be instead dedicated to more 'useful' languages for working and travelling, such as Spanish (Beacom, 2018; Morrison, 2018). Others wonder if Scottish Gaelic is dying out, should it be allowed its natural death? Rice (2012) addresses this question by comparing Gaelic's precarious position to the Indigenous languages and communities

she has worked with previously. For her, Gaelic should live because language *is* communities. Language shapes our perceptions, our communication, and our identities. Gaelic's legal recognition in Scotland came in response to national and international multicultural movements; to keep such momentum, we need to better understand the current narratives attributed to Gaelic communities and their language, as well as who controls these narratives and who ultimately benefits from them.

Given all this, there is a clear, identifiable gap in how we speak and think about Scottish Gaelic and how it is represented. More specifically, we don't seem to speak about it much at all. Regardless of whether one believes Gaelic should die out completely, or if one thinks that film media would not make any significant difference in Gaelic's revitalization, the fact remains that Scottish Gaelic is used and represented in media anyway. But what are these representations, and what do they say about our language? They are created with an audience in mind, so as creators and viewers, it is important to study Scottish Gaelic media and contextualize how these narratives depict such an endangered language. Through my research, I address the following questions:

- What narratives remain associated with Scottish Gaelic today in film?
- Do these portrayals affect or influence Gaelic learners? Has film representation had an impact on Gaelic learning methods?
- Is media in demand by this community, and is it accessible to learners?

CHAPTER III. METHODS

A. REFLEXIVITY

Growing up in a historically Gaelic-speaking community in rural Cape Breton Island, I have seen and experienced the stereotypes once associated with Scottish Gaelic speakers be passed on to its communities today. I quickly realized that such stereotypes seemed to comply with a narrative that was created around the language, its associated accents, and its speakers. My undergraduate degree, with a major in English literature and a minor in Gender Studies, involved close-reading and critical theory-based analysis of both text and media. Combined with my professional experience in working in local museums and cultural centres, I quickly became accustomed to seeing the narratives I recognized in fictional media be replicated in real life. When I returned home during COVID-19 to see our villages speckled with brand new, English-Gaelic bilingual road signage, it occurred to me that Gaelic had remained an influential part of my life. Despite never hearing a family member or a neighbour speak a word of it, Scottish Gaelic lingered in our accents, in old nicknames and stories, and now in our street signs. My background prompted me to not only begin learning Scottish Gaelic, but to also investigate how media uses our languages to tell specific stories. How such stories reach and affect me, however, can be much different from other's experiences. It is here where the diverse range of backgrounds and experiences of Gaelic language learners must be accounted for.

B. THEMATIC CONTENT ANALYSIS

To understand current media representations of Scottish Gaelic language, I used what I uncovered in my thematic content analysis, which focused on specific scenes

taken from various Scottish Gaelic representations in contemporary film and television, to frame the rest of my research. Thematic content analysis aims to uncover prominent patterns across data, which can then be interpreted by the researcher (Vaismoradi, 2016). I chose the media from what was accessible to watch on an online platform, and by what titles were mentioned in online discussions in publicly accessible Gaelic learning groups as recommendations to watch.

To find patterns, or themes, in thematic content analysis, the researcher codes the available data into labelled information categories, which can then feed into overarching themes (Cypress, 2018). Coding can be created from analyzing the data itself, or the coding structure can preclude the data collection – allowing the themes to emerge from the data (Friese et al., 2018). For my research, I selected scenes to watch and transcribe first. This allowed me to note recurring or conflicting aspects, whether visual, scripted, or audio-based, as I went through each scene one-by-one. I used the same approach when I began to gather data from my interview transcripts. While I kept in mind my research questions, I let notable quotes and noticeable repetitions across transcripts – whether clip or interview-based – form coding categories (see Appendix 4 and Appendix 5 for code lists). Though the data itself is different, these steps were applicable to both avenues of my research.

C. PHENOMENOLOGY

In each of my interviews with Gaelic learners and professionals, I wanted to capture specific experiences with media that have informed, and will continue to inform, their individual connections with Scottish Gaelic. Smith (2018) defines phenomenology as "the study of 'phenomena': appearances of things, or things as they appear in our

experience, or the ways we experience things, thus the meanings things have in our experience" (para. 2). Phenomenological research is also described as the following: "The goal of phenomenology is to describe the meaning of this experience—both in terms of what was experienced and how it was experienced" (Neubauer et al., 2019, p. 91). My research questions target individual experiences with media and *how* individuals experience and perceive Gaelic media. This requires an examination of the details pertaining to their personal backgrounds, experiences, and context, and, as such, a qualitative, phenomenological methodology suits the needs of this research best. McHugh (2015) approaches film through a phenomenological lens, describing the impact film can have on the viewer long after the film itself has ended: "Cinema incites affect, stimulating after the fact so to speak reflective thought and the search for interpretation, meaning, and significance." (p. 849). Phenomenology does not consider the phenomena (in this case, Gaelic film and television) to be wholly separate from the person's experience with it. Rather, phenomenology accounts for the subjective experience each individual has with the phenomena, to better understand the relationship between individuals and the specific phenomena they are engaging with.

My research is concerned with the emotional responses involved in Gaelic learning, and how important such reactions are with respect to identity through language and media. As such, my interviews have been designed in accordance with phenomenological principles to have open-ended questions with opportunities for diverse answers, which will best capture each participant's own experience with Gaelic media. As well, interviews were written to be semi-structured so that the interview may build upon and adapt to each participant's thought processes and responses as the interview progresses. Constructing each interview to be adaptable to each participant's

individual experiences let our interactions be more reciprocal; sometimes, a participant's response prompted an entirely new question that was later included in following interviews. This created an interview dynamic where both I as the researcher, and the participant, contributed to the interview's structure and flow (Høffding & Martiny, 2016).

In relation to sample size, my study aimed to interview between 8-10 participants. This size was determined by the fact that the Gaelic community is incredibly small, with approximately 2,000 Gaelic speakers in Nova Scotia today (Nova Scotia Gaelic Affairs, 2021). 8-10 participants who were recent learners provided enough scope of experiences to analyze media's effects in such a small community body. As well, this smaller sampling of participants allows for a greater focus on iterative analysis, so that new data categories and overall themes can be built upon through rigorous, repetitive reading of each interview transcript. According to Neubauer et al. (2019), phenomenological research emphasizes "deep engagement with the data via reading, reflective writing, re-reading and re-writing" (p. 25). My initial set number of participants accounted for these reasons – keeping in mind the time and focus required for a thorough and detailed analysis of both the media content and the interview transcripts.

Phenomenology is often associated with smaller groups of participants, with six being cited widely as the least number of interviews to be included in phenomenological analysis (Guest et al., 2006). 8-10 participants allowed me to prepare for circumstances where some interview data is unusable, or if some participants opt out of the interview. In addition, I aimed to interview 2-4 Gaelic media professionals to provide insight into the production side of Gaelic media. Given that there is only a small community of

Gaelic media professionals, 2-4 would be a reasonable number of participants to inform the experiences of Gaelic professionals in film and film-related industries.

A clip from the Nova Scotian short film *The Fiddler's Reel* (2011) was shown to each participant before recording, to gather their initial thoughts upon watching Gaelic media. The inclusion of a film clip also created a foundation for further discussion about whether what they watched was what they expected to see in Gaelic media representation, or if it contradicted their own personal relationship with the language. As I was interested in analyzing not only the effects of Gaelic media representation on Gaelic language learners, but the media representations themselves, having each participant view a clip in real-time and then follow that viewing with immediate discussion bridged these two wider aspects of the study. The structure of the interview incorporated Gaelic language media, the initial reaction and lingering impression on its viewer, and the connection of both the clip and the reaction to the wider net of Gaelic representation the participant has found and accessed.

D. DATA COLLECTION

As my research project started to take shape, I began to gather and review Scottish Gaelic film and television to see what patterns could be found. I selected scenes from various films and television series to analyze thematically; thereby providing a greater understanding of the current narratives associated with Scottish Gaelic in recent media. All scenes either contain Gaelic dialogue, or depict and discuss Gaelic communities and characters. My analysis included the following examples of Gaelic feature films, short films, and television:

- *Margaret's Museum* (1995)

- *Faire Chaluim Mhic Leòid – The Wake of Calum MacLeod* (2006)
- *Siubhlachan – The Traveller* (2008)
- *Ruidhle an Fhidhleir – The Fiddler's Reel* (2011)
- *Brave* (2012)
- *Outlander* – Season 1, Episode 5: "Rent" (2014)

From these 6 media examples, I watched each from beginning to end, and then selected one scene from each to transcribe and look at in-depth. In the case of the television series *Outlander,* I focused on the first season as it primarily focuses on 18th century Scotland, and then chose the episode based on the amount of Gaelic discussion and dialogue. I created a set of criteria to standardize how scenes were selected for transcription and analysis. I noted scenes that met the following factors:

- Does the scene have Gaelic dialogue? Are there multiple characters involved in the scene speaking Gaelic?
- Does the scene speak to the greater premise of the piece of media in its entirety? For example, the scene selected from Brave focuses on the relationship between the main character and her mother – which is also important to the overarching plotline of the film.
- If the scene does not feature Gaelic dialogue, does it address Gaelic in other aspects? Does the scene depict Gaels in a Gaelic community? Does it address Gaelic history, and/or the contemporary position of Gaelic language and culture?

Referring to the above considerations, one scene was chosen from each piece of media. Additional scenes were included if the scene had a prominent visual or textual similarity to a scene in another piece of media. For example, an additional scene was analyzed in

Margaret's Museum due to the discussion of the Battle of Culloden and its impact on Gaels, which is a major focus in the selected *Outlander* episode. Such scenes were included in the analysis as they show a clear pattern across multiple examples of Scottish Gaelic media. (See list of timestamps for all selected scenes in Appendix 1). The selected scenes were then transcribed and thematically coded through the qualitative research software, NVivo.

It is important to provide an overview of the current narratives associated with Scottish Gaelic in film and television. Analyzing the content within contemporary Gaelic media will allow for greater context of the media and its effects discussed in the interviews. I began my thesis research by conducting my thematic media analysis, so my findings greatly helped to orient and develop my interview questions.

To gather information about Gaelic learners' experiences with Gaelic-based media, I reached out to the Gaelic College (Colaisde na Gàidhlig) in St. Anne's, Cape Breton Island, to discuss the possibilities of interviewing their students for my research. The Gaelic College was established in 1938. Today, it offers programs for all ages and varying skill levels for "Cape Breton fiddle, piano, guitar, step-dancing, and piping, highland dancing, weaving" (*About The Gaelic College*, 2018) and Gaelic language learning. Their official website states that their mission as an organization is "To promote, preserve and perpetuate through studies in all related areas: the culture, music, language, arts, crafts, customs and traditions of immigrants from the Highlands of Scotland" (*About The Gaelic College*, 2018). Because of my own personal connections to Cape Breton's Gaelic community, as well as the Gaelic College being an internationally recognized Gaelic institution, I knew their students would provide a diverse student demographic I was hoping to target with my interviews. Since my

research involved human participants speaking about their personal, subjective experiences, I needed to obtain approval from Dalhousie University's Research Ethics Board. My contact at the Gaelic College provided a letter of permission detailing their expectations for the college's involvement in the research: mainly, the College would facilitate recruitment by distributing a poster of the study on their social media, along with an e-mail to their student body that outlined my research. All communication was directed to my e-mail, so that I could answer any questions or concerns interested participants might have had. All materials clearly stated that participation in the study would be voluntary and would have no connection to participants' grades or evaluation in their courses.

I regularly updated my contact at the Gaelic College to let him know how the study was progressing. I sent him an e-mail announcing the project's approval by the Research Ethics Board (June 29th, 2021), which marked an exciting transition in how the research was shaping. My contact replied with an offer of connecting me with a Nova Scotian filmmaker, who created several Gaelic short films, some of which I had already watched in preparation for my research. I happily accepted and met with the filmmaker for an informal discussion about what I hoped to get from my research and his own experiences with Gaelic and filmmaking. It was only then that I realized that media professionals could also add a valuable contribution to the conversation. I submitted an amendment to the Research Ethics Board to include a separate set of participants in my research and received approval (September 8th, 2021). From there, I continued to snowball sample potential interviewees that had relevant professional experiences with Gaelic media.

By including media professionals from both Nova Scotia and Scotland, I could depict a more complete picture of how Gaelic media affects both its creators and its viewers. As an endangered language, I also thought it was important to acknowledge the changing landscape for minority language filmmakers, and to highlight both the positive and negative challenges they encountered as Gaelic media professionals. As with my student participants, any potential interview candidate was given an explanation through e-mail of the research and its goals, as well as what to expect from the interview. Each participant was informed about their consent and the measures taken to prevent participants from being identified in the study. At the end of the recruitment period, I was able to interview 7 student participants and 3 media professionals in total.

E. INTERVIEW STRUCTURE AND DATA ANALYSIS

Interviews with Gaelic media professionals opened with a short clip from the Nova Scotian short film, *The Fiddler's Reel* (Almon, 2011), to open discussion about their instinctive reactions and impressions to how the clip represented Scottish Gaelic. The clip showed an elderly Cape Breton Gael in his home being interviewed by a researcher on Gaelic folklore stories. The clip's dialogue was entirely in Gaelic but had English subtitles. The following questions accommodated each participant's background with Gaelic, their career in Gaelic media, and their relationship to Gaelic media representation (see Appendix 2 for media professional interview questions).

Interviews with both media professionals and language learners took place over Microsoft Teams. This was an accessible option as a video-chatting service, since no specific software or e-mail account was required to access the meeting, as long as they had the meeting link from my interview invite. Video could also be turned off and on

throughout the interview, which gave participants the option to remove video if they felt uncomfortable, or to turn the video off to keep a more stable internet connection. Most interviews lasted 45-60 minutes, although some interviews extended to an hour and a half. Interestingly, many participants were happy to continue our conversation after recording was finished, often to talk about related aspects of Gaelic or to inquire about the background of my research came to be. Microsoft Teams recorded both video and audio; each recording was edited to remove video as an identifying feature of the participants.

During the interviews with language learners, participants were asked a series of questions related to their media exposure in relation to Scottish Gaelic, what prompted them to learn the language, and the resources they utilize in their language learning (see Appendix 3 for student interview questions). Before each interview, participants were reminded of their right to consent, as well as the option to pause or stop the interview at any point. Participating in the interviews had no effect on their academic standing within the Gaelic College; this was to prevent over-incentive which could have skewed study results, and to create a more welcoming and less intimidating environment for participants to discuss their language learning experiences. Interviews were conducted with the same steps as the professional participants – student participants were first shown the clip and asked about their initial thought processes after watching the clip. For student learners, this provided insight into their previous media exposure, as well as how they fit media into narratives they are familiar with.

Each interview was audio-recorded and transcribed; I then thematically coded each interview transcription through the qualitative research software NVivo to understand common thoughts, emotions, and experiences, as well as to highlight any

significant differences. Prevalent themes across the interview transcripts were compiled and discussed.

F. LIMITATIONS

With so few examples of Scottish Gaelic media accessible to the public, I allowed my choice of film clips to include media produced between 1990 and 2020 for my content analysis. This list of Scottish Gaelic media was narrowed further by their availability, which was sometimes due to the content being region-blocked or only available in certain formats. As mentioned previously, the scope of my project is focused on analysis and re-analysis, so I limited my selected media to 6 examples to keep a manageable analysis of emerging and relevant narratives. As media accessibility increases through online technology, alongside the growing trend of revitalizing minority languages since the 2000s, more film-based media has been created availably in these selected decades than in decades previous. Thematic content analysis focused on the key terms, tropes, and narratives associated with Gaelic characters, Gaelic communities, and the Gaelic language.

All interviews were conducted in English, rather than Scottish Gaelic. This is due to both my own skill level in the language, as well as acknowledging that current students at the Gaelic College may be uncomfortable speaking in a language that they are in the midst of learning. The study demographic does not include participants under the age of 18 due to most of the included media in the content analysis being intended for older audiences; a short clip from selected media were included in interviews, and the themes might be more distressing for younger audiences. Professional participants were also required to be over the age of 18, with professional experience related to the

creation, promotion, or teaching of Gaelic media. As interviews were conducted during COVID-19, participants were required to have access to a computer with a microphone, as well as a secure internet connection for the online interviews.

As a sole researcher in a full-time master's degree program, along with working part-time, I was also limited in how great of scope my research could encompass. Time constraints and outside responsibilities prevented me from widening the participant pool to its maximum capacity. The response I received to my research – from both students and media professionals – was absolutely astounding. I could not believe how vocal the community was, and how eager they were to engage in this conversation. The response became so great that I even established a waitlist in case participants dropped out – which still did not account for all those who expressed interest. While I regret not being able to include more interview participants, it is greatly encouraging to see such a tremendous response. The amount of people willing to speak about their own personal experiences, and how media affected their learning and their own understanding of the language, told me two things: one, that the Gaelic community, here in Nova Scotia and globally, are thoroughly engaged with the media available to them if it is accessible, and two, that there is a desperate need for these people to be listened to – and that this conversation needs to be continued.

CHAPTER IV. RESULTS

A. GAELIC MEDIA

Through my analysis, the most common attributes across the 6 media examples were the following:

- All emphasized rural landscapes of either Scotland or Cape Breton Island.
- All were either set within a previous time-period, from medieval Scotland being the earliest period piece (*Brave*), to 1960s-1970s Cape Breton being the latest (*The Wake of Calum MacLeod*).
- 4 out 6 contained magical or supernatural elements (*Brave, The Traveller, Outlander, The Wake of Calum MacLeod)*.
- 4 out of 6 focused on working class characters, established through dialogue or visual cues. Notably, the two most recognizable productions (*Brave* and *Outlander*) focused on nobility or upper-class characters.
- 4 out of 6 focused narratively upon familial relationships (*Brave, Margaret's Museum, The Traveller, The Wake of Calum MacLeod*).
- 3 out of 6 used Scottish Gaelic in the majority of the film's dialogue (*The Traveller, The Wake of Calum MacLeod, and The Fiddler's Reel*).

Through my content analysis of the scenes' visuals and transcriptions, two prominent themes emerged: the impact of history, and the importance of intergenerational relationships regarding trauma and healing. These two themes will be explained further and connected with the resulting phenomenological analysis in the discussion chapter.

B. INTERVIEWS

The interviews were helpful in mapping out the paths of the interview participants from their first introduction to Scottish Gaelic, their learning motivations, and methods, to their relationship to Gaelic media. When asked about their expectations of Gaelic media, the most associated words or phrases were “rural” environments, set “in the past”, “beautiful scenery”, “older generation” or “older characters”, “drama”, and “serious”.

Learning motivations were nearly evenly split across participants:

- Personal reasons: participants cited Gaelic ancestry or direct family ties to Gaelic as motivation to learn the language formally. One participant cited their own personal interest in learning languages as motivation – hoping that they can help revitalize the language.
- Media-based: other participants cited Gaelic music as their gateway into Gaelic learning. Other media that was mentioned to be motivation were *Outlander.* Media professionals cited film festivals or radio programmes as media that sparked their interest in possibly pursing a career in Gaelic media.
- Other: one participant grew up with Gaelic as their first language, and only began speaking English when they entered school.

From the reasons listed above, it can be said that media can have a positive impact on the language through introducing people to the language, as well as serving as a key motivator for Gaelic creators. It is also significant that many have a personal or familial connection to Gaelic and are choosing to pursue a formal education in it due its loss within their family and community.

The direct impact of media was explored by including a clip at the beginning of each interview. When asked about what caught their attention most, the following attributes were mentioned the most by participants:

- A feeling of sadness or loss.
- Accurate depiction of researcher-community relationships.
- Reinforced perception of Gaelic as a dead language.
- Positive remarks on the 'sound' of Cape Breton Gaelic

Interestingly, while several participants mentioned that they found the clip could possibly reinforce some stereotypes associated with the language: namely that it is a dead language spoken only by older generations, no participant felt that it was necessarily a negative portrayal or use of Gaelic. Older participants, like Participant 1C, felt that it was a familiar but nonetheless accurate depiction of what many communities in western Scotland encountered:

> "The story is familiar, the Folklore Collector sitting in a kitchen with a tape recorder, and coming into the community and recording their stories, and to be honest that's probably what I've done most of my life as well. It reminded me of my own experiences with that, and the film was portraying what happened in my own community."

While no participants felt that the clip was distractingly stereotypical, participants overall did find that the clip matched their expectations of what Gaelic film would entail, and that it may reinforce preconceived notions others outside of the Gaelic community have of the language being long dead.

What surprised me the most in my interactions with interview participants were the emotional reactions that resulted from the discussion following the film clip being

shown. Of the 7 student participants, 3 had a strong emotional reaction. I had had emotional reactions to pieces of Gaelic media myself, as having any kind of representation of the Gaelic community – or even of Cape Breton Island in general – was a huge thing for myself and my family to see. However, I did not expect to see strong emotional reactions in my research. In discussing the clip, some participants began to choke up, or began to cry. When I asked the participants what it was about the clip that provoked such a reaction, they answered:

- Participant 2E: "Gaelic in in my family was a lost language. And I think it is for a lot of people, which is why I'm learning it now, finally, after wanting to know it from my whole life, up until now. So, to hear this gentleman speak about it also becoming a lost language, and the community that spoke Gaelic and told the stories and sang the songs that came together. That's a thing of the past for him, where he is. And I just find that so sad. You know, I find that so sad."
- Participant 2F: "There is a…oh boy, I might be picking at the scab here a bit, but and I'm not trying to be like, uh, I don't know, angry about this or anything, but just what was done to the Gaels – not just by the English, but by the church and by their own communities. Because sometimes Gaels were doing it to Gaels. It just needs to be told."
- Participant 2G: "I had really no idea what was being said. It was just watching the people and having the sense that: this is where I come from. And why? Why do I not understand these people?"

From the 10 interviews in total, three clear themes emerged in relation to Gaelic media representation:

- Gaelic media about Gaelic, and Gaelic media that is simply *told in* Gaelic
- Gaelic media as validation and catharsis
- Gaelic media as a bridge to community.

These three themes will be outlined in greater detail in the following chapter.

CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION

A. GAELIC MEDIA

When examining the television series *Outlander* and the film *Margaret's Museum,* there seems to be little to nothing the two pieces of media have in common. They are set in different time periods, concern different geographical regions, and focus on different events, conflicts, and issues. However, closer analysis reveals one important thread that shapes their narratives. The theme that connects the Scotland of *Outlander* and the Cape Breton of *Margaret's Museum* is mourning. The first season of *Outlander* focuses on the Jacobite Rebellion and the fateful Battle of Culloden in 1745 – historical events that saw the rebellion's defeat and solidifying Scotland's integration into Great Britain. The central character, Claire Beauchamp, is an English woman from the 1940s who has time-travelled to 18th century Scotland and must survive in a region that is in English-Scottish conflict. In episode 5, "Rent", Claire remembers when her and her husband visited the battlefield of Culloden in the 20th century (Figures 1 and 2). Her husband, Frank, remarks:

> "[T]he interesting thing is that in the years following Culloden, the estates of the clan chieftains were plundered, sold. The government banned the wearing of tartan, banned the carrying of swords, even the Gaelic language. So, in effect, Culloden marked the end of the clans, and the end of the highlander way of life" (Kelly et al., 2014, 0:51:30).

Not only is the series set in the literal past of the Scottish Highlands, but the series explicitly frames Gaelic as something lost in the foreboding historical events to come. The tombstones mark not just lives lost, but of a culture and language that is no more, effectively removing Gaelic from having a place in the present.

Figures 1 and 2. We see tombstones erected in memory of the fallen clan members who took part in the Battle of Culloden. Claire stands before the tombstones, with the open moors of Culloden behind her (*Outlander;* Kelly et al., 2014, 0:52:05; 0:52:08).

Figures 3 and 4. Margaret sits before the gravestones of her family members, both lost to coal mine accidents in Glace Bay, Cape Breton Island. Margaret looks at the grave markers, with the coast of Cape Breton behind her (*Margaret's Museum;* Belec & Ransen, 1995, 0:45:10; 0:45:19).

In *Outlander's* first season, when the television series is set in 18th century Scotland, Scottish Gaelic is depicted as romantic, wild, coarse, and ancient. Its fall, along with Scotland, to the English is mourned. This mourning echoes across centuries to 20th century Cape Breton in *Margaret's Museum.* The stereotypes pinned to the Scottish Gaelic language from the 18th century still shape the lives of the characters in *Margaret's Museum.* Margaret's father's Gaelic dies with him, and her mother shuns the language and culture, regurgitating many of the historical, negative connotations associated with Gaelic. Margaret is denied any true connection to her heritage by the circumstances her parents face. Even Margaret's uncle, who works over-time and refuses to support the worker's union and remains loyal to the mining company, suffers just as greatly. He tries to avoid the intergenerational trauma inflicted upon him by saving enough money to allow his teenage nephew to move to Toronto – to prevent him from working in the mines at such a young age – but the company strips him of his wages before it reaches his hands. Afterwards, he shows up at Margaret's door drunk, re-counting a poem: "'1745: hardly half of us left alive. 1944: half in the pit, half in the fucking war'…they killed us, Margaret. Since the Battle of Culloden, and one way or another, they're still trying to pick us off" (Belec & Ransen, 1995, 1:28:43-1:29:21). *Margaret's Museum* frames the island's poverty and cultural decline as direct acts of violence, perpetuated by Canada's British colonial powers. The film uses intergenerational relationships to highlight how historic events like Culloden still affect communities centuries later and an ocean away – and how the resulting trauma can be passed down as easily as any language, and that sometimes circumstance can actively *prevent* the intergenerational bonding of language and culture. *Margaret's Museum* mourns the loss of so many to

British and Canadian capitalist powers, the loss of culture and language, and ultimately the loss of choice, but it does not mourn quietly.

In comparison, *The Fiddler's Reel* highlights how the *lack* of intergenerational interaction can harm Gaels. The main character of the short film is an elderly Cape Breton Gael who is interviewed by a researcher interested in Gaelic folk stories. The short film opens with the Storyteller's narration, as he reflects on the changes in his community. He tells the audience: "Years ago, we'd gather to sing songs and tell stories. Now all that's left is this [researcher] here, who comes by and collects them for his machine. Strange…" (Almon, 2011, 0:00:37-0:00:55).

Figures 5 and 6. The Storyteller sits across from the researcher who begins the interview (*The Fiddler's Reel;* Almon, 2011, 0:00:40; 0:00:46).

The frames above show how the scene emphasizes the distance between the Storyteller and the researcher. Not only do they not occupy the same shot, but the tape recorder sits directly between them as an almost physical divide. This distance is also depicted through the characters' differing actions: the Storyteller looks directly at the researcher, holding his cup of tea close. The researcher, however, looks down at his writing, with his cup off to the side. While this interaction provides an opportunity for Gaelic stories to be shared, the distance that is illustrated throughout the scene also shows just how prevalent the Storyteller's isolation has become.

From *Margaret's Museum* and *The Fiddler's Reel*, the theme of intergenerational relationships continues, and how Gaelic language, history, and culture are passed on from one generation to the next. Like *Margaret's Museum,* the *Wake of Calum MacLeod* focuses on death, history, and the importance of intergenerational relationships. The short film's dialogue is almost entirely composed of Scottish Gaelic – a first in Canadian

cinema. The opening of the short film begins with an idea that has resounded through Cape Breton literature and sentiment for centuries: “There are but two places in the world: Cape Breton Island, and that other place…Away” (MacDermid & Almon, 2007, 0:00:15-0:00:24). The geographic isolation, coupled with the insular Gaelic-speaking communities, emphasizes both the metaphorical and physical divides between the island and ‘Away’. The film’s central character, Calum, tells a story to his three children, which is revealed at the end to all be part of a greater story he is telling his grandson in the present day. While Calum tries to continue his story, his children interrupt with various questions. The question that first forces Calum to remember his children are now grown and have left the island is asked by his youngest son: “Papa, are we to eat tonight?” (MacDermid & Almon, 2007, 0:02:04). The question visibly shakes Calum, and the sudden reminder of poverty coldly contrasts the light-heartedness of Calum’s story. This evokes a visible environmental change in the film as well; the warm oranges and yellows of the fireplace are replaced by the deep blues of an empty house and wind-blown landscape. What is also significant about this line’s inclusion in the short film is that it connects back to the actual economic circumstances Gaelic communities faced in Cape Breton and abroad (McArthur, 1985; Graham, 2018). The same associations of impoverishment to Gaelic that became rooted in the 18th century still affect Calum and his family in the 20th century. Calum’s poverty is directly inherited by his children, and their situations only change when they leave Cape Breton Island. As Calum rages against the ‘Baron’ of his story, who has manifested into the billowing storm outside his home, Calum feels not only isolated from his children, but from those he shared his stories. The ‘Baron’ has taken his children and, therefore those who shared his language and traditions.

As Calum stands in his empty house, he laments to the viewer: “But what are stories without an audience?” (MacDermid & Almon, 2007, 0:02:33). However, the film’s end shows that Calum and the Gaelic language live on. Furthermore, his language is something he can share with his children and grandchildren, and that will not be resigned to the past. The fear of isolation and death that permeated throughout the film is overcome by the connections with his family and his community. Calum’s grandson tells Calum that his story does not tell what actually happened. Calum, smiling, tells his grandson that next time it should be *him* who tells it. The significance of passing on stories and language is particularly strong to Scottish Gaelic communities. When their language and culture were threatened with extinction for centuries, and families had to choose between using their language or burdening their children with uncertain futures, *The Wake of Calum MacLeod* chooses to show their resilience. Where *Outlander* and *Margaret’s Museum* uses the language to highlight its negative connotations and encroaching disuse, *The Wake of Calum MacLeod* highlights its revival.

Brave is a fairy tale set in medieval Scotland, specifically the Scottish Highlands. The main character, Merida, is a princess whose relationship with her mother becomes strained under the expectations of tradition. Merida’s mother, Elinor, is cursed as a result of Merida’s actions, and takes the form of a bear. As they adventure together to reverse the curse, Merida and Elinor shelter from the rain. Merida remembers a childhood memory of her and her mother during a storm. It is notable that this scene contains almost the entirety of Gaelic used within the film. When the thunder and lightening outside worsens, Merida’s mother sings a Gaelic lullaby (written for the film) called *A Mhaighdean Uasal Bhan* to calm her fears about the storm.

Figure 7. Calum looks down at his daughter, who asks about the story (*Wake of Calum MacLeod;* MacDermid & Almon, 2007, 0:02:14).

Figure 8. Elinor looks down at her daughter, who hides from the storm (*Brave;* Sarafian et al., 2012, 0:52:16).

Figure 9. Merida looks up at her mother, who speaks to her in Gaelic (*Brave;* Sarafian et al., 2012, 0:52:19).

Figure 10. Calum's children look up at their father, who tells them a story in Gaelic (*Wake of Calum MacLeod;* MacDermid & Almon, 2007, 0:00:50).

The frames shown above utilize the same lighting, colouring, and shot composition. Both frames occupy a scene that centers around the character's memories of the past. Both scenes focus on the relationships between children and their parents, with Gaelic as a source of comfort. Both scenes use yellow and orange-based colours to emphasize the

warmth of the fireplace. In both scenes, Scottish Gaelic is represented as something more than just a language; the sharing of Gaelic distracts from the storm outside. For both the main characters – Calum and Merida – the memory of Gaelic and family is a source of warmth and comfort when faced with isolating and uncertain circumstances.

Figure 11. Merida looks up at the rainstorm, before retreating into the memories of her and mother (*Brave;* Sarafian et al., 2012, 0:51:49).

Figure 12. Calum looks up at the windstorm, having completely removed himself from the memories of his children and storytelling (*Wake of Calum MacLeod;* MacDermid & Almon, 2007, 0:02:47).

When the characters are outside of their memories, they are dwarfed by the outside landscape, rendering them small and exposed by the natural environment. Both characters are alone in the shot, whereas in their memories, they are interacting with loved ones. The cool-toned colours are bleak and cold in comparison to warm yellows and oranges that saturated their memories. The contrasts help to draw attention to what is missing when the characters are outside of their memories. Here, there are no stories and songs, and their family is distant or estranged. Even the characters' behaviours signify the difference in tone. Merida, who is characterized as a strong-headed and fiery teenager, is quiet and unsure in the rain-soaked shelter. Calum stands in the windstorm and says defeatedly, "I'm done telling stories" (MacDermid & Almon, 2007, 0:02:59). It is not until their familial relationships have been reconciled that they began to heal. In the case of *The Wake of Calum MacLeod,* this culminates with creating new stories in Gaelic with his daughter and grandson.

Like *The Wake of Calum MacLeod* and *Brave,* the plot of *The Traveller* revolves around a familial relationship that encounters supernatural happenings. Seonag inherits her grandfather's pocket-watch after his death, which allows her to travel through time. She uses the pocket-watch to go back before her grandfather's passing.

Figure 13. Seonag embraces her grandfather, as they confront his eventual passing (*The Traveller;* Murray, 2009, 0:02:22).

Figure 14. Merida's mother comforts her during a storm and sings a Gaelic lullaby (*Brave;* Sarafian et al., 2012, 0:52:20).

The Traveller portrays how the love between her Seonag and her grandfather even overcomes death. Seonag's grandfather tells her that they have to let time go on, but holding her hand, he reminds her, "Remember Seonag. We all exist in time. Even when our days are over, there is a small fragment in time where we still live. Don't think of me

as gone forever but instead just think of me as being somewhere else" (Murray, 2009, 0:04:05-0:04:18). This carries a similar message to what Elinor tells Merida in the scene shown in *Figure 14*: "Ah, *fhuil mo chridhe* (translation: 'blood of my heart'). My brave wee lassie, I'm here. I'll always be right here" (Sarafian et al., 2012, 0:52:11). Here, the narratives depict older generations comforting children, and confronts fear and loss in a way that does not render the loss of something or something as final. In *The Traveller* especially, the narrative can be seen as an allegory for Gaelic language and culture – in that what has been lost does not there is no future.

From these 6 narratives, there are two themes that are the most prominent: the impact of history, and the importance of intergenerational relationships in regards to trauma and healing. The common threads listed in the Results chapter – of rural landscapes, period settings, supernatural folklore elements, working class characters, and familial relationships – play into these two larger themes. Nowlan and Finch (2015) highlight location, oral tradition, and the presence of youth as growing characteristics of Gaelic film. My analysis correlates with their findings. The growing Gaelic media sector, as seen with BBC Alba, very much ties back into the continuation of oral storytelling traditions. Oral traditions of storytelling and singing are also used by many examples of Gaelic film and television to establish familial relationships and intergenerational language use, as seen with Calum and his children in *The Wake of Calum MacLeod,* Seonag and her grandfather in *The Traveller,* and Merida and her mother in *Brave.* The many working-class characters and families we see in Gaelic stories remind the viewer of the lasting impact cultural and linguistic assimilation had on many. The landscapes of Cape Breton Island and the Scottish Highlands are almost characters in of themselves. The large mountains and valleys emphasize the rural, work-classing communities

associated with Gaelic stories, and physically embody the cultural and linguistic isolation felt by characters like Calum in *The Wake of Calum MacLeod,* the Storyteller in *The Fiddler's Reel,* and Seonag in *The Traveller.* Significantly, in *Outlander* and *Margaret's Museum,* it is the landscape itself that holds physical reminders of Gaelic's history and bereavement – grave markers.

What happened at the Battle of Culloden continues to occupy people's imaginations, but as shown in *Margaret's Museum*, the events of Culloden also continued to shape the lives of Gaels for centuries after. While *Outlander* frames the Gaelic language as something that died in Culloden, *Margaret's Museum* shows the struggles of those who centuries later who try to hold on to their language and culture, something also depicted in *The Fiddler's Reel,* where the Storyteller no longer has a Gaelic community to communicate with. How history shaped the economic and social circumstances of many Gaels is also touched upon in *The Wake of Calum MacLeod,* where the memory of his children's hunger begins to bring Calum back to reality. One detail that all 6 examples share is that they are set within a previous century, ranging from medieval Scotland to 1960s-1970s Cape Breton. This is significant, as a criticism raised by participants is the perception of Scottish Gaelic belonging purely to a past time and place.

B. INTERVIEWS

While interviews were conducted with Gaelic media professionals as well as Gaelic language learners, many thoughts, experiences, and expectations were shared across both sets of participants. As such, the resulting themes will be discussed with references to both media professionals and language learners, rather than keeping their

contributions separate. The themes will be discussed one-by-one in the following order: what participants want to see in Gaelic media, Gaelic media as validation and catharsis for its Gaelic viewers, and how Gaelic media can play a role as a bridge to community.

When participants were asked about the stories they *wished* to see told in Scottish Gaelic, rather than the stories they expected or had seen before, answers were consistent. It is interesting to note however that there was a slight difference in how media professionals and learners answered. Gaelic media professionals emphasized the quality of production and storytelling. Rather than give specific examples of what stories they wanted to tell and see, they tended to focus on Gaelic stories in general. For example, Participant 1B answered: "Good stories. **laughing** Stories that interest people, stories that are rooted and relatable, and by that I don't necessarily mean it has to be about language." This also touched on another prevalent theme mentioned across the interviews with media professionals – that of stories that focused solely on Gaelic itself. Participant 1A elaborated on this issue:

> "I think one of the problems is that the language has been relegated to existing in some sort of past place, and I think that's harmful, and that's not to say that you can't have a story set in the past, but you know…my favourite writer in English is Jane Austen and I love watching adaptations of her stuff. But when I'm watching one of those films, I'm not thinking, 'Oh, English lives in 1802', you know? There's so much stuff in English. You never have that kind of messaging. But because there's so little stuff in Gaelic, if most of it is period, then that's the messaging. People are gonna be like 'Oh, it's dead. This is from the past.' So, I think it's important to have a lot set contemporarily, and in different genres. I think it's just important to normalize Gaelic in any genre, in any context. If we

> really want to revitalize the language, it has to be used in lots of different contexts."

For media professionals, there is an emphasized importance on creating Gaelic language content that pushes boundaries and expectations. That is not to say that student participants did not feel the same way. Many referenced how they would like to see Gaelic in modern, urban settings, in a range of genres from comedies to science fiction. Yet, student participants still wanted to see more Gaelic content that depicted Gaelic's history and culture, that discusses frankly what many Gaelic communities faced just by being Gaels. This may also be because learners expressed frustration in trying to access Gaelic content, whereas media professionals have a direct hand in creating Gaelic content and networking with other Gaelic creators. Through these answers, it is clear that Gaelic creators and learners see stories as an avenue for two important things: a way to address a history that many do not know about, and to see new stories that welcome Gaelic in a variety of characters and settings.

The need for Gaelic stories to address what Gaelic went through over the last few centuries is something that was discussed across both sets of interviews and was also a topic that made some student participants emotional. From the emotional reactions I saw just from one short clip from *The Fiddler's Reel,* it was evident that Gaelic media can play a role in validation and catharsis for many in the community. When discussing the sadness often associated with Gaelic stories in media, Participant 2E said:

> "I think there's very, very possibly a generational trauma from everything that our people have gone through, right? I think that's kind of at the heart of this. What people are feeling and, and the loss is now coming to our conscious awareness. As my father said: in the past, people were too busy surviving to think about what

they've been through and what'd they lost. So it's coming, it's coming up now and it's good."

Representation can make a huge difference in validating identities for both Gaelic creators and Gaelic learners. Seeing your language and culture in a variety of genres and contexts reinforces the idea that Gaelic belongs anytime, anywhere, and its use does not need to be justified. Participant 1A spoke about the role of Gaelic media as motivation in relation to their own experiences with Gaelic media as a Gaelic media creator:

> "I think making these films and showing people this is possible…it models a way forward for them. It helps with learning to a degree, but I think it also does a lot for motivation. So it's hugely important for films to continue to be made and for people to see them. It lets people know they're not alone, and lets them connect with something."

Not only can Gaelic media motivate viewers in their Gaelic learning, or to *begin* learning Gaelic, Gaelic media can encourage new Gaelic creators by seeing what is possible.

The issue of validation also connects to another prevalent theme that came from my interview data – which is the role of Gaelic media as a bridge to community. Where many learners are not geographically able to meet with others, media can give learners the chance to see and hear Gaelic used in various situations that they would not be privy to otherwise. Many participants referenced the program *Speaking Our Language* (MacDonald, 1993) as especially helpful in their Gaelic language learning, as it showed Gaelic being used in day-to-day situations in public areas, such as going to the pub. Even as students in a formal education programme, they were only speaking Gaelic a few hours per week. When asked what would make the biggest difference in their Gaelic learning, Participant 2B answered, "Real people who I can learn with together in-person,

who are as eager as me to speak exclusively in Gaelic". Culture societies can help mitigate this problem, but for many this is not an option where they live. Audiovisual media that uses Gaelic in various contexts and situations can act as an option for those not able to be with other Gaelic speakers or learners but wish to maintain their language skills.

C. ADDRESSING RESEARCH QUESTIONS

From the information gathered through my thematic content analysis and my phenomenological interviews with both Gaelic creators and Gaelic learners, I have been able to fully address my research questions as stated previously. While I cannot offer perfect solutions to the many barriers that exist for the Gaelic community in relation to media, I can hopefully provide suggestions for going forward.

What narratives remain associated with Scottish Gaelic today in film?

What I learned through my thematic content analysis and my discussions with participants is that Scottish Gaelic narratives tend to be set in rural environments with grand sweeping landscapes that are often within the Scottish Highlands or Cape Breton Island. The characters that speak Gaelic are often older, although intergenerational relationships are greatly emphasized within the story. It is still common for Gaelic to be associated with a romanticized past that is framed as 'ancient' or a 'wistful, simpler time.' Narratives are placed in other time periods rather than in a modern context, which implies that there is little place for Gaelic in the present. Many of these aspects were expected by participants when imaging a Gaelic film or television series, which means

that these details can be easily found in media outside of the 6 selected for thematic analysis.

Do these portrayals affect or influence Gaelic learners? Has film representation had an impact on Gaelic learning methods?

As illustrated through the varied clip reactions, media representation can evoke strong emotional reactions from viewers, as well as generate post-viewing discussion. From participants' responses in the interviews, media can bring people to the language that may not have ever known about Gaelic otherwise. Both Celtic music and the television series *Outlander* were examples mentioned in interviews as what first caught their attention and motivated them to learn the language and engage with the culture. The varying opinions on *Outlander* proves just how one piece of media representation can generate important conversations within the Gaelic community. Some participants felt that *Outlander* was a respectful portrayal of the time period, the language, and the spiritual aspects of the culture, while others saw the series as taking a tragic aspect of their culture's history and turning it into something digestible and marketable to a fandom. One television series can conjure a variety of different reactions from both within and outside the Gaelic community, which shows how wide-reaching audiovisual media can be.

While film and television has certainly introduced people to Scottish Gaelic, Gaelic film and television has had little effect on person's learning methods. Other media, including music, podcasts, Youtube videos, and learning apps such as Duolingo, were mentioned consistently as being part of the student's learning approaches. What separates such kinds of media from film and television seems to be mainly two factors:

accessibility and mobility. Podcasts and music are something that can be listened to while doing day-to-day chores or during travel to work or school. Regarding audiovisual media, Participant 2B stated, “It’s very easy to kind of absorb while eating or cleaning or something. You can kind of taking it in while you’re doing something mindless on the side, which you can’t do while reading.” Video platforms like YouTube or mobile apps can be accessed almost anywhere at anytime. Much of this content is also free and does not cost the learner anything to routinely access and use. Yet it is important to note that learners *want* to see Gaelic film and television, but keep encountering barriers to access it. However, an increase in Gaelic film and television media that is available outside of the United Kingdom may have a greater effect on Gaelic learning methods in terms of occupying the role of a ‘Gaelic community.’

Is media in demand by this community, and is it accessible to learners?

Media is very much in demand by Scottish Gaelic learners, but accessibility prevents them from accessing the majority of it. Of all 10 participants, only 2 had seen *The Fiddler’s Reel* and were able to recognize it from the clip used in the interviews. Every single student participant stated that they would like to incorporate more media in their learning methods, and that they wanted more diverse representation of their language and community. Their enthusiasm for Gaelic language media is matched by their frustrations in trying to locate it. Gaelic learners *want* to watch Gaelic film and television, but they keep encountering boundaries that prevent them from doing so. Not only does this negatively affect learners, but it also shrinks the possible audience that Gaelic content can reach, which can further affect how much Gaelic content can be made

in the future. As an already endangered language, Scottish Gaelic cannot afford to lose any further ties to its community.

CHAPTER VI. CONCLUSIONS

A. RECOMMENDATIONS GOING FORWARD

It remains an unfortunate fact that much of the Gaelic community is dispersed internationally, and as highlighted in my interviews with learners, some are the only Gaelic speaker in their community. As such, media can play an even more vital role in maintaining their language skills. While not all Scottish Gaelic media is created or produced through BBC Alba, they have a much wider selection of audiovisual material than anywhere else, especially as there is no significant media industry in Nova Scotia as there is in northern Scotland through BBC Alba. Until Gaelic film and television increases in number and diversity, there needs to be options for the Gaelic community outside of the United Kingdom. I cannot offer a perfect solution, but my interview participants raised important questions when asked about media accessibility. Frustrated by the foreign language media they could access within Canada *except* Scottish Gaelic, Participant 2F said:

> "They have a lot of BBC content on [CBC Gem], but maybe, you know, for the people of Cape Breton who would like to have access to that content without having to pay for a VPN, maybe the CBC should have access to that stuff on their own apps. I mean, they buy programming from every other place in the world. Why not? Why not from BBC Alba?"

If possible, purchasing select Gaelic media through a streaming service like CBC Gem might mitigate the existing issues surrounding BBC TV licensing fees.

Another possibility, as mentioned in interviews, is allowing temporary access to members of Gaelic culture societies or current students in Gaelic institutions (like the Gaelic College or Taigh Sgoile na Drochaide, a Gaelic primary school located in Mabou,

Cape Breton). Having access to a wider selection of Gaelic content, whether subtitled or dubbed, could encourage post-viewing discussion of Gaelic media in a Gaelic language environment, actively engaging listening and speaking skills.

Though it is reliant on what platform the media is hosted on and upon the technology available, allowing subtitles to be optionable on Gaelic media would be a great step forward. Participant 1C reflected on their experience in teaching Gaelic and Gaelic media courses: "I have to admit to covering the subtitles when I screen them to my students, like I cover them with black tape, because it is better for them to tune in and listen to the words." They further referenced an option present in Welsh media: "the 'Red Button' they call it: you press the red button; you get your subtitles." This may be something that could be used as a model for Scottish Gaelic media going forward. It is also important to consider optionable *Gaelic* subtitles. Studies have found foreign language subtitles to have a greater impact on language learning than English subtitles (Aliyev & Albay, 2016; Birulés-Muntané & Soto-Faraco, 2016). Gaelic language subtitles would also increase accessibility to fluent Gaelic speakers; just because someone is fluent in a language does not mean that they do not need to use subtitles. Gaelic subtitles would be beneficial to the Gaelic community in general – not just specifically learners.

Two participants spoke about the positive effect dubbed media had in their other language learning. Participant 2D explained:

> "When I was learning German, being able to put on, like, *Harry Potter* and have it translated to German so I could listen to it and know what was going on. And then that made a lot of connections for me because I already knew the dialogue in English, so if I could hear it then in German I was like, 'OK, I can make those

connections as I go,' so I could just learn the vocabulary in German. I wish I had more access to that kind of thing in Gaelic."

Another participant had used a VPN (Virtual Private Network) to get around the geo-blocked restrictions surrounding BBC Gaelic content and was able to watch *Peppa Pig* with Gaelic dubbing to watch something in Gaelic that maintained a lower level of vocabulary. Dubbed media could be a great way for learners to engage with Gaelic media and improve their language skills, as it is a method many use in other foreign language learning. This would also be great for children who are learning Gaelic alongside their first language, as most young children are not at a reading comprehension level for subtitles.

B. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

When I was gathering materials for my literature review, I noticed just how difficult it was to find papers about Scottish Gaelic film and television. There remains a large gap in academic research when it comes to Scottish Gaelic media, particularly for media formats outside of music. Even though there is only a small number of Gaelic audiovisual media, they still exist, and they still portray the Gaelic language and culture to an audience. This does not even include the use of Gaelic in tourism marketing, or the quiet emergence of Gaelic usage in fantasy video games, such as *The Witcher 3* (CD Projekt Red, 2015) and *Greedfall* (Spiders, 2019). Although Gaelic music is an incredibly important part of the culture's oral traditions, and has brought many to the language, it is important that research includes other types of media in their analysis. They still carry weight in how the language and culture is perceived by others.

As mentioned above, the narratives promoted in Nova Scotian tourism could stand as an entirely separate research project. Especially with the push to boost the tourism industry after the impact of COVID-19, how Gaelic culture and language is utilized in Nova Scotia's marketing to national and international audiences will continue to be an important discussion both inside and outside Gaelic communities.

It would also be interesting to compare the use of and impact of Gaelic media to Gaelic learners within the United Kingdom compared to those in countries such as Canada, the U.S., and Australia. Does increased media access change how someone understands and uses a piece of media? Such questions should be addressed as research into Gaelic media grows. If the issue of accessibility to Gaelic media outside of the United Kingdom improves, researchers could include a wider breath of Gaelic film and television in their analysis, which will further build upon the analysis provided in my project, as well as the analysis conducted by authors like Nowlan and Finch. I also think it will be important to continue to include Gaelic media professionals in future research, as they are integral to the creation and distribution of Gaelic stories onscreen, and as evident in my interviews, are pushing the boundaries of what we understand Gaelic stories and characters to be.

Building upon my research, future projects could adapt a similar approach to the general Gaelic speaking population – utilizing phenomenological interviews to understand the role media plays in more household-based environments, rather than in relation to discovering and learning the language. While my research establishes the importance of media in introducing people to the language, how does someone who is fluent in the language, or comes from a Gaelic community or household, approach

Gaelic media? In particular, it will be important to understand *where* and *when* Gaelic is used in domestic, everyday environments, and if media has a place there.

While the current gap in academic literature regarding Scottish Gaelic film and television prevents there being a foundation for Gaelic-based scholarship, it also means that there is a wealth of possibilities for future Gaelic research. Beginning these conservations is just as important as continuing them.

C. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

When I first began my research, I planned on only conducting a thematic content analysis on Gaelic media. It was only with the encouragement of my thesis supervisor that I tried reaching out to the Gaelic College about possibly interviewing their students, and it was only through my contact at the Gaelic College that I was able to meet with Gaelic creators. Seeing how willing the community was in speaking about their experiences renewed hope in me. It is easy to get lost in the constant obstacles that Gaelic revitalization faces, but I now know first-hand how involved Gaelic learners and creators are in the community, and how much they want to support Gaelic media. Access needs to be addressed, and options must be offered, because many Gaels continue to be isolated when they want to be engaging with Gaelic content.

I remember my dad watching the news, covering something-or-other about a historical event, and I remember him saying quietly, “They never talk of here. No one ever talks of what happened here.” It always stuck with me, that ghost of a history that just…*lingered.* That feeling sits heavy, and it only grows heavier as time passes. I also remember how I have felt, stumbling across my local cultural history by accident when working at a local museum, and asking myself, “This is varied and interesting and it

connects to so many other places and events in so many ways. Why is this not in a movie or a book or a show? Why did we not even learn this in school?" It was disheartening, and until I undertook this research, I doubted I would ever see such stories be shared. Despite becoming teary at sharing their own family's history with losing their Gaelic, Participant 2E told me: "The funny thing is, I'm so happy to talk about it, so I'm being surprised. I'm surprising myself." I knew exactly what they meant, because I felt the same way talking to participants once the interview was over and the recording had stopped. We need to talk about our history, our culture, and our language, and seeing it represented onscreen is one way to do that.

From my research, current narratives around Gaelic media fit most participants' expectations: rural environments with mainly older characters speaking the language, with narratives that focus on loss and grief and what is left behind. These narratives often emphasize the importance of intergenerational relationships, and how the language and its history and trauma can be passed down from one generation to the next. Yet, these stories still have an important place. They made viewers cry and laugh. Even in more controversial examples like *Outlander,* they provoked conversation about Gaelic representation and history and respecting cultures. Maybe most importantly, some examples even brought people *to* the language, because when they first heard it spoken, they had to know more. Gaelic's story is an emotional one, one that left many with a kind of trauma that has been passed down through generations. It needs to be told, because if it is not, it may simply be forced to fade into silence. Whether it is historical, dramatic, comedic, or futuristic, every story has worth, and every story deserves a chance to be told. I am hopeful for Gaelic's future, and I am excited to see the future Gaelic stories that will emerge from our community.

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APPENDIX 1. TIMESTAMPS FOR SELECTED SCENES

Margaret's Museum (1995)

Scene 1: 0:07:54 – 0:10:30

Scene 2: 0:44:13 - 0:47:20

Scene 3: 1:28:44 – 1:30:00

Faire Chaluim Mhic Leòid – The Wake of Calum MacLeod (2006)

Scene 1: 0:00:10 – 0:03:30

Scene 2: 0:06:00 – 0:06:23

Siubhlachan – The Traveller (2008)

Scene 1: 0:03:10 – 0:04:40

Ruidhle an Fhidhleir – The Fiddler's Reel (2011)

Scene 1: 0:00:00 – 0:01:15

Brave (2012)

Scene 1: 0:51:06-0:52:40

Scene 2: 1:23:17 – 1:24:38

Outlander – Season 1, Episode 5: "Rent" (2014)

Scene 1: 0:50:52 – 0:52:56

APPENDIX 2. MEDIA PROFESSIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

[Greet participant. Confirm consent and answer any questions participant may have before starting. The chosen clip from The Fiddler's Reel will be played before audio-recording begins. Once clip is finished: begin questions.]

Clip questions:

- Have you seen this short film before? If so, in what context?
- Now, let's focus on the clip I showed you. Can you describe what caught your attention most in the clip?
- How did you feel about the use of Gaelic language in this film? Could you understand any of it without subtitles?
- Did the use of Gaelic language seem to match the setting of the film? Did Gaelic seem out of place, or did it match the characters and location?
- From what you saw, did the clip reinforce any stereotypes or cliches associated with Gaelic?

General questions:

- How were you first introduced to the Scottish Gaelic language?
    - (Did you have a familial connection? Were you raised around the Gaelic language? Do you have Gaelic heritage?)
- Can you describe why you chose to learn Gaelic? Do you know other languages?
    - (Do you have experience learning languages? Is this your first time learning a language through an instructional course?)
    - Why did you choose the Gaelic College?
- Could you describe some of the positive and/or negative responses you received when others learned you were learning Gaelic?
- Could you please describe your processes for learning Gaelic in the classroom? How about outside the classroom?
- Is media like film, music, podcasts, or other media forms included in your courses? What kind of effect do they have on your own learning?
- Do you look for Gaelic language media to supplement your language learning outside the classroom? Were you ever encouraged by your instructors to look for Gaelic language media?
- What setting do you imagine for a Gaelic language film? What kinds of places or characters do you see in such a setting?
- In recent years, Scottish Gaelic has been featured in more mainstream media, like Disney Pixar's *Brave* and the Starz drama *Outlander.* Have you seen either?
    - **(If 'yes'…)**

        - What your initial thoughts after finishing them? Was *Brave/Outlander* what you expected it to be?
        - Did you feel that their portrayal of Scottish Gaelic language and culture to be accurate?
        - Can you describe how Gaelic was used in the film/show? Was it a prominent part of the story? Who used the language? Was the language used in the media's music, text, etc.?
    - In general, have you found Gaelic media to be accessible or easy to find?
        - From your own experiences watching Gaelic media, what do you think are the most common stories associated with the Gaelic language and community?
    - **(If 'no'…)** Have you seen any Gaelic media? Would you be interested in watching a Gaelic-language film or television show? Why or why not?
        - Are there other kinds of media that are not films or shows that you utilize more in your language learning? What are they?
- Are there other kinds of media that are not films or shows that you utilize more in your language learning? What are they?
- What would be the most helpful thing to have access to when it comes to learning Gaelic?
- In your opinion, would more Gaelic representation in media have an effect on your language learning? Would it foster language learning? Would it be irrelevant?
- What stories would you like to see told in Gaelic?
- From your own experiences watching Gaelic media, what do you think are the most common stories associated with the Gaelic language and community?

APPENDIX 3. STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

[Greet participant. Confirm consent and answer any questions participant may have before starting. The chosen clip from The Fiddler's Reel will be played before audio-recording begins. Once clip is finished: begin questions.]

Clip questions:

- Have you seen this short film before? If so, in what context?
- Now, let's focus on the clip I showed you. Can you describe what caught your attention most in the clip?
- How did you feel about the use of Gaelic language in this film?
- Did the use of Gaelic language seem to match the setting of the film? Did Gaelic seem out of place, or did it match the characters and location?
- From what you saw, did the clip reinforce any stereotypes or cliches associated with Gaelic?

General Questions:

- When you hear, "Gaelic film", what immediately comes to mind?
- What inspired you to pursue a career in Gaelic filmmaking?
- Can you describe the first time you heard Gaelic in television or film? Did this have an affect on your decision to pursue film?
- Was Gaelic media featured in your language learning, either inside or outside the classroom? If so, which film/television series were used? Was this beneficial to your learning?
- When creating a Gaelic film, what do you try to prioritize in your storytelling?
- Does the necessity of English subtitles affect your cinematography, or how you film a Gaelic project in particular?
- Could you describe some of the funding opportunities and/or barriers you have encountered in relation to Gaelic-based projects?
- Could you describe some of the positive and negative reactions you have received when you chose to learn Gaelic/create Gaelic films?
- When it comes to creating Gaelic media, do the Gaelic communities in Nova Scotia and Scotland collaborate? What about from elsewhere? In your experience, do the communities tend to stay insular?
- Is there a piece of Gaelic media that you think has greatly helped Gaelic representation? What about negatively?
- Has there ever been a time where preconceptions of Gaelic culture and language affected your projects? (For example, a project's genre not being "well-suited to Gaelic"?)
- What kind of stories should we see depicted in Gaelic in the future?

- As someone who creates Gaelic films, in your own opinion, what can visual media do for language revitalization that other mediums cannot?

APPENDIX 4. THEMATIC CONTENT ANALYSIS CODE LIST

Associations made with Gaelic

- Negative
- Positive

Atmosphere

- Landscape
- Weather
- Colour Palette

Characters

- Age
- Motivation
- Social Class

Driving emotion

- Grief

Folklore Elements

Gaelic Usage

Relationships

- Professional
- Familial
- Romantic

Setting

Significant Quotes

APPENDIX 5. INTERVIEW CODE LIST

Clip Reactions

Creator Obstacles

- Specific to proposed story
- Specific to funding

Emotional Response to Media

- Negative Effect
- Positive Effect

Gaelic's Future

Gaelic Media Expectations

- Characters
- Settings
- Themes

Introduction to Gaelic

Learning Methods

Learning Motivation

    Media-based

    Personal

Learning Obstacles

    Access to Community

    Media Accessibility

Outside Responses to Learning Gaelic

- Negative
- Neutral
- Positive

Stories Learners Want to See

Stories Professionals Want to Tell

The Job of Visual Media