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"Traditional Authenticity" and It's Relationship to "Indigenous Identity"

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Traditional Authenticity Identity: Background Approach and Readings:

In this paper I will explore ideas about the concept of "traditional" as it is used in verbal discourse and in musical expression to form an indigenous "identity". My focus will be on identity as found in contemporary American Indian communities of "Woodland cultures" of Eastern North America. As part of this, I will examine how the authorization and legitimization of tradition is constructed. For example, judgments of "authenticity" may be expressed as "a song sounds funny" or does not sound "traditional" if it strays too far from a conventionally understood form labeled "traditional". Authors, such as Nettl (1983) in his distinction between "prescriptive vs. prescribed" as in "play it this way" vs. the descriptive "it was played this way", inform the contemporary Indian communities' view of legitimate tradition. Both from within and from outside the Indian community

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there is pressure to follow old forms of tradition.

Also, I will examine the possible sources of this language ideology and legitimatization. I see two major sources for dialog about "legitimate tradition" among current American Indian community members. First is the emphasis on the past holding the pure view, and second is that reservations (U.S.A.) or reserves (Canada) have maintained this purity from the past. The focus on the past as a point of "real" and "authentic" tradition to establish identity can be seen in the efforts many contemporary Indians make to copy what are seen to be old forms. There is a large intertextual gap between the ways things are said or songs are song in the genres of Native performance when compared to the actual "traditions" of the past.

Many published works are available to help define tradition. In order to examine this topic, I draw from two treatises. One of these comes from the vantage point of spoken language, which is a focus of both folklore and linguistic anthropology. This first book entitled "'You're So Fat!': Exploring Ojibwe Discourse", by Roger Spielmann, makes use of both conversational and linguistic discourse analysis in contemporary Northeastern communities. This text combines vignettes with detailed description and interpretation the author has gathered from years of close association with Anishnabe community members.

The second book focuses on musical instruments used in the Northeastern Woodlands area and is accompanied by discussion of contemporary attitudes and discourse on the music. This book, jointly authored by Beverly Diamond, M. Sam Cronk, and Franziska von Rosen is entitled "Visions of Sound: Musical Instruments of First Nations Communities in Northeastern America". In this ethnomusicological study, there is a detailed description of instruments, their production and

use with critical discussion on culture and traditions. This text makes connections between the concepts of tradition, identity and music. Discussions are based on face-to-face conversations and direct experience the three authors have in the communities. The sources for the instruments themselves included visits to museums and communities in which both recorded texts and the knowledge of community members was utilized.

Both of these books are appealing because they combine a scholarly approach to the topic of identity with the retained voice of the "informants". In the text of both books, the informants are named and identified so that the context of the material can be more critically interpreted.

My reason for picking these themes is that in American Indian[1] communities today, performance as a "traditional" singer or speaker of a language are seen as indexes for "Native identity". In contemporary North American life Indigenous Peoples have been relegated to an almost non-existent status with reference often to the past.[2] The focus

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1) I will use the term "American Indian" as my designation for the original inhabitants of North America. Occasionally, I will substitute "Indigenous", First Nation", "Native American" or "Aboriginal" mainly when my intent is more focused on Canada, Mexico and other areas where Indigenous language issues are important to the discussion. Also, when I'm referencing the writing of other authors the terminology used may vary. American Indian is preferred in the case of this writing for two reasons, first it is easily defined historically and second it is the term conventionally used in US land rights and legal cases. Since we still feel there are legal issues in regard to the land base here in the US, I will use retain "American Indian".

2) For some good overviews of the past reference orientation for American Indian studies as found in anthropology the following works are useful: "North American Indian Anthropology: Essays on Society and Culture" by DeMallie and Ortiz (1994); and "And Along Came Boas: Continuity and Revolution in Americanist Anthropology" by Darnell (1998). Another book that overviews this

on the past as the point of "real" or valid identity for both Indians and non-Indians denies current indexes to identity.

Western scholars have researched American Indians in an attempt to find pure uncontaminated "specimens" representing the "culture". Much has been written over the past century on American Indian peoples. Many of these studies had focused on elders in the hope that they were less "contaminated" by western ways. Simultaneously, many Indian communities found themselves changing at a rapid pace through the efforts of missionaries, boarding schools, public education, "future looking" Indian parents, and the basic need to live in a world not isolated from contact with others.[3)]

The zeal of ethnographers to record what they could of "primitive" peoples before they disappeared led to primary emphasis on Indians being seen in reference to the past. This interest has fueled and given material for nostalgia and romantic visions of Indian identity. Here at Indiana University, as well as at a few other Universities, there remained an emphasis on American Indians, but these schools were in the minority. The majority of the research found in the bibliography informing the two texts discussed in this paper reflect a focus that has

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past and how it relates to various media in particular is a book by Ward Churchill (1992) "Fantasies of the Master Race: Literature, Cinema and the Colonization of the American Indian" and (1993) "Struggle for the Land".

3) Our Indian communities need to be future looking because that is obviously the direction we are heading. I have memories of some elders, now considered traditional and as references for past knowledge (now that they have died) that would frequently comment "you can't stand in the way of progress." We have to be careful about constructing a past that is not "real". perhaps a future focus combined with the past would be helpful as in our "Seven generations" model. in this framework Indian "traditionalists" in some tribes make no decisions without first considering the impact, past and future, for seven generations of descendants.

mainly shifted from Indian studies to a more global perspective. However, I think this work draws on, and benefits from, a multidisciplinary approach?[4)]

Formation of Traditional Authenticity

Bauman (2001c) points outs that there is a historical genealogy of scholars informing Western social theory in such a way that "tradition" has been defined as tied to a historical past.[5)] His definition includes

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4) The multidisciplinary nature of research I mention is that of disciplines and departments, not in terms of ethnographic areas. It has been necessary and valuable to combine fields because each has a piece of the picture for Indian America. Valentine (1995) describes the shift from an American Indian focus in linguistic research was clear "after, and perhaps resulting from the second world war" and that "studies of languages outside of Native North America began to dominate, particularly those within the South Pacific and African areas" (5). There were some schools in the United States that appear to have tried to hold on to some focus in American Indian research, often referred to as "Americanist" anthropology:

"At Indiana [University] the early unity of these 3 fields [of Boasian Anthropology] in the study of the American Indian was sustained as a dominant interest. The Chairman and founder of the Department of Anthropology C. F. Voegelin, was an Americanist and linguist; his colleague, George Herzog was primarily an Africanist and ethno-musicologist, but partly an Americanist and linguist... in these years after the Second World War, much of anthropology was turning away from the American Indian to study other parts of the world; and many American anthropologists were finding their traditional obligation to understand linguistics an increasing strain, when confronted with the new rigor of linguistic method; but at Indiana in those years the American Indian, folklore, linguistics, and anthropology were a natural unity and ambience" (Hymes 1983: 332).

5) Johann Gottfried Herder is described by Bauman (2001c: 15820-21) as arguing "that the authentic foundation of viable polity is the poetic tradition of its people, made up of the inspired expressions of its poets-who are also its 'lawgivers'-who give voice to the spirit of the Volk, rooted in its particular time and place." Bauman points out that this tradition is that which influenced Boasian Anthropology and most of Western social thought in its view that

the dimension of time but points out that it is passed on to successive generations through human interaction:

> ... the collective social inheritance of a particular people, culture, society, group, or collectivity, and as such, stands as the referent of its collective identity... So conceived, a tradition assumes the guise of a durable natural object, passed down through time by successive generations of 'culture bearers' (Bauman, 2001c: 15819).

The formation of what is considered 'traditionally authentic' involves an internalization of socially constructed views of the world. This worldview is then often incorporated in the belief of others peoples over time as part of the process of domination. This internalization may not be even noticed by the indigenous recipients of the "foreign" set of values This internalization is discussed in more depth below in terms of identity formation. Years of writing about and researching indigenous peoples of anthropologists, for example, has lead to their internalization of some of these definitions. As Bauman (2001c) points out even as the scholarly community is changing its definitions of what is tradition, those studied have already been affected. He writes that the anthropological constructs of tradition:

> have come to be accepted by the formerly 'traditional' peoples who have been its central objects of study. One of the challenges that now confronts

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"tradition is most powerfully operative in simpler, premodern, community based societies and in those sectors of complex modern society in which a sense of community cohesion, the emotionally resonant ties of locality, kinship, and attunement to national spirit still prevail." Bauman points out that the emphasis of on tradition being tied to a type of society is what encouraged emphasis on and theories about contrasts between social types, for example, "savage" vs. "civilized".

> anthropology is that... these peoples should base their claims on those foundational concepts just as anthropologists... are increasingly inclined to deconstruct them, to recognize traditionalization as an interpretive process, to challenge the reification of tradition, or to unmask primordial traditions as recent inventions (Bauman, 2001c: 15823).

Discourse about tradition has over the past several decades reflected a change from the inherited views from Herder. Some of this dialog is found in the views of Handler and Linnekin (1984) who write that the study of "tradition" is often referenced as an "inherited body of customs and beliefs". They point out that his definition has some inadequacies and leads to the approach "to see culture and tradition naturalistically" which attempts to show what is "new" and "old" separately (Handler and Linnekin, 1984: 273). Handler and Linnekin challenge this position by citing Edward Shils who felt that "tradition changes continually" and that an unchanging folk society never existed (274). Despite the idea of change, the authors "suggest that... tradition is a model of the past and is inseparable from the interpretation of tradition in the present" (276). In other words, we cannot have a "sure" knowledge of what is tradition as it comes from the past because it is filtered through our own thinking. Handler and Linnekin go on to discuss concepts of "fictitious" traditions but point out "it is impossible to separate spurious and genuine tradition, both empirically and theoretically." (280).

Spielmann (1998) describes definitions of tradition, found within American Indian communities, that are tied to context. One of these forms of definitions ties place and contemporary lifestyle together while indexing a connection to a past lifestyle:

> People seem to feel more at home at their bush camps. It was a place where you could relax and be yourself without the hassles and frustrations that so often go along with life on the reserve. After all, most of the elders spent more than half of their lives in traditional lifestyles: hunting, trapping, and fishing (Spielmann, 1998: 88).

The two concepts of 'tradition' and 'culture' are often used in contemporary Indian communities as being identical. However, when "tradition" is used it is often seen to be an index to, and a direct connection with, the past. It was done before; therefore it is "traditional". Traditional authenticity is found over different genres of expression and study. Two broad areas of research have developed in which become their own domains folklore and ethnomusicology. From each of these fields I will take a portion as a focus. From folklore the focus will be verbal discourse as seen in language use and oral tradition. From ethnomusicology the focus will be on discourse about musical expression for indigenous peoples of northeastern North America.

Authenticity in verbal discourse and musical expression:

A concept of tradition as a form of verbal expression is informed by Ben-Amos (1984) who writes that tradition, particularly in its oral form, "has been the sine qua non of folklore, with no apparent need to belabor it's own meaning", he goes on to elaborate:

> For that matter, *tradition* does not defy definition, but simply does not need one. Its meaning appears lucid beyond clarification, perspicuous beyond explanation. The connotations of its Latin root *tradere,* to give, to deliver, to

hand down, still resonate in the abstract noun *tradition,* making superfluous any further explication" (97-8).

Farnell and Graham (1998) foreground the need to focus on "naturally occurring discourse". They point out that studying language used in a context of social relationships allows us to see how knowledge is passed on from one to another. These "discursive practices are seen as constitutive of culture". From this framework we can view discourse in "the central place it occupies in the social construction of reality" and that "culture" is "an emergent dialogic process" (411-2).

Geertz (1973) points to the need for the analysis to be "thick description" of general discourse because culture is much more complex than it first seems. He does feel that the semiotic approach to culture, aids us "in gaining access to the conceptual world in which our subjects live" (24). Bauman (1986) points out that the "oral literature of a people was both the highest and truest expression of its authentic national culture" (1). Hudson (1996) speaks of oral tradition as having a lengthy history of acceptance vs. nonacceptance. He writes that today we have an accepted "modern concept of 'oral tradition'" but that acceptance of it has entered "the discourse... through a slow and tentative process influenced by numerous interconnected fields of research" (176).

Philip V. Bohlman (1992) discusses the field of ethnomusicology as beginning out of a reflexive process: "I interpret modern ethnomusicology not as a field devoted to non-western and folk music, but as a field devoted to the study of these musics and others." This, Bohlman goes on to say, that this restores the study of music to language, which

allows for discussion and reflexivity (118). He also writes that the big problem in the 1950's was the gap between our music and the music of the Other. "Comparative musicology by its very nature took the gap as a given" and in terms of comparisons, one of the issues in this debate was "whether a music did or not have harmony" (120). The debate about what was "authentic" music was conducted in terms of western music traditions. American Indian music was originally studied because of its convenience for field work (128-30). The study of this music caused a lot of difficulty because it was so different than western music. As music, it may have been close to home, but conceptually it inhabited another realm entirely:

> Native American music had not lent itself well to the representational techniques of the comparativists. It had been too difficulty to pin down Tonsysteme ... Native American music was too different for the comparativists to appropriate conveniently." (Bohlman, 1992: 131).

The field of ethnomusicology grew out of comparative musicology and it was hoped that it would "halt the appropriation of non-western musics" which "purposefully bolstered the authority of European canons" (120). There was a growth of relationship among fields in the 1950s: "Signaling the 'new ethnography' was the proliferation of sub-disciplines 'ethnolinguistics', 'ethnohistory', 'ethnomusicology'." The first example of field work with American Indians was among the Navaho but: "Navaho music did not lend itself to direct comparison to western music" (Bohlman, 1992: 123). Music was thought of through western music perspectives and new technologies such as the new ability to record:

> "For several generations, ethnomusicologists have not gone into the field as auditory *tabula* rasa, but rather with preconceptions and expectations predicated on exposure to sound recordings." Here we find that music itself in the recordings may change everyone's perception of what music should sound like (Shelemay 1991).

An entirely different perspective is found in American Indian communities in terms of legitimizing music and the instruments that produce them. The emphasis on a long tradition of "civilization" separate from the natural world has developed a perspective on what is considered important that stems from separate world views. For example, in a discussion on the classification of instruments based on natural phenomena, their importance emerges:

> Some instruments actually are the things the Creator has given. Seed pods or gourds become rattles when the seeds are dried, while other instruments might be "manufactured" in imitation of these "real" gifts from the Creator." Still others seem to be in-between the "real/natural and the "real/manufactured," as in the case of the grandfather drum, where ... the materials are said to be provided by animals and birds, and the body of the drum carved from a tree trunk. Thus if we wish to apply the label "real" to sound producers, we come a bit closer to Anishnabe/ Ongwehonwe/ Innu ways of thinking if we connect them with actual sounds and forms of Nature- the wind, insects, birds, trees, and so on. Humans are also, in this sense, "real" sound producers, in speech and in song (Diamond et.al., 1994: 52).

The difference between what is considered a traditional instrument by an Indigenous performer and what might be expected, if only a view of old as valuable was used as the standard, can be seen in the Indigenous emphasis placed on sound rather than "traditional" appearance. This is likely due to the fact that the instruments, if they

are "traditional" from the Indigenous point of view, must also be useable in a context of performance:

> In still other cases, tourist instruments resemble those used within a community. At the Six Nations reserve, William Spittal's company, Iroqrafts, ...sells cowhorn rattles and water drums (used at social and ceremonial events) as well as bark and turtle rattles (used in ceremonial events) to the tourist market. These compare visually with traditional instruments, although many rattles feel cumbersome and less well balanced. Cowhorn rattles are generally thicker than those used by *hadreno:ta;* their sound is loud but not as clear. Tourist water drums are almost invariably made of wood and brightly painted; plastic drain pipe or pvc kegs occasionally used by traditional singers are not in evidence. Ironically, these drums (like turtle rattle handles wrapped with hockey tape) are valued for their beautiful sound by an Iroquoian purchaser, but appeal less to the authenticity-seeking, non-Native tourist (Diamond et.al., 1994: 48).

What is important to consider, from the above description, is the practical aspect of instrument use rather than it referencing an authenticity linked to the past that might earn the "artifact' a long term museum re-location. When we describe a "traditional" drum it is its use in a certain genre of performance that is most important. For example large drums of the band genre are often "changed" into instruments for pow-wows or other contemporary events. Then again, these drums may be chosen purely for practical reasons:

> The choice of instrument type may be pragmatic. A large frame drum (equal in size to a powwow drum but played vertically like a military bass drum) was constructed a few years ago to accompany the Abenaki troupe *Mikwobait* (a name which means "those who remember") because of its loud sound carried better in open-air performances. (Diamond et.al., 1994: 49).

The boundaries between what is defined as traditional and given authority is often blurry. Sue Tuohy (1999) discusses the need to think of classification of music in new ways as we look at other cultures than those of the "West". She points out that it is not just the sounds but something more: "when we connect a genre to a group of people and to human values, we do more with genre than simply label sounds..." (40).

Legitimatization and Authorization of Tradition:

On structures of traditional authority there is an ongoing dialog as Handler and Linnekin (1984) pointed out above. They stress that traditions are not entities themselves but are interpretations of entities. We, therefore, need to understand they are social constructions:

> Genuine and spurious – terms that have been used to distinguish genuine reality from hocus pocus – are inappropriate when applied to social phenomena, which never exist apart from our interpretations from them (p.289).

The media, books, TV, and movies of the contemporary world have performed themes of old icons representing the past. Therefore, Indian people today that are disconnected from the context of communities, who have "one foot in the 'white' society", use the past as a primary gauge of authority and identity. However, away from urban areas we sometimes find a difference in emphasis on traditional indexes to the past. This can be illustrated in a researcher Beverley Diamond's discussion about a conversation she had about traditional style related

to the past:

> Both Euro-Americans and First Nations sometimes look backward in time to label something as an "authentic" symbol of those who are, but their explanations of the authenticity of that symbol can be quite different. An anecdote will illustrate what I mean. An Innu consultant and I were discussing the black and red-sectored Montagnais hat which dates to the nineteenth century but continues to be typical dress for many Innu women. I assumed the hat was valued because it was old and I wanted to find out more about why it had been regarded as an important symbol of this Nation for over a century. My Innu friend explained neither the history of this type of had nor its meaning for the group but rather, the personal history embodied in each specific hat. Each ring of beadwork on the headband portion of the hat reflects a successful hunting season, she explained; she regarded the hat as "Montagnais" because it conveyed something about her family's experience, the annual cycles of their lives. The difference in our approaches makes me question how we have related "age" to ideas about cultural "purity" (154).

Charles Briggs points out a problem with a primary focus on the past for determining authenticity. He writes that the "constructivist studies of the invention of tradition" that are found in the non-native literature describes tradition as present creations and that those "that derive their authority from a perceived connection with the past are 'invented,' 'imagined,' 'constructed,' or 'made'". He expresses concern that much our "scholarly analyses of the 'invention of tradition'" does not adequately consider "Native" critiques which seem to have been "marginalized or dismissed" by anthropologists even in the dialogues that profess to be "progressive and anti-colonialist" (Briggs, 1996: 435). He foregrounds the difference between "White researchers" and "Indigenous scholars" in the critical analysis of tradition (436).

Ethnomusicologist M. Sam Cronk also points out the difference in perspectives that might come from an Indigenous point of view:

> One thing that strikes me is our academic fear of data that can be interpreted by other academics as "not authentic," not right, not real. Iroquoian colleagues rarely place such importance in our detailed measurements for cowhorn rattles, or the precise location of a design on a water drum, or even the use of plastic materials in the construction of an instrument. There are norms, certainly, but they might regard a different way of doing something, not necessarily as right or wrong, but often as "individual" or perhaps as "amusing." Harrah for laughter! (Diamond, 1994: 41).

Bauman (2001b) discusses the connection between a speaker and hearer dyad can be made by a "mediator". His analysis is not suggesting simply "the relaying of a message... by a succession of speakers... but processes and routines in which the recontextualization is deliberately managed, conventionally regimented, in performance" (93). He points out that the manner of replication be done in such a way, although not always, that authorization of the "source utterance" takes place "by preserving its integrity and displaying special care in its reproduction". This "amounts to an act of discursive submission, the subordination of present discourse to discourse that emanates from the past". Done with the right form and "rhetorical power" there will be an investment of authority (111). This type of rhetorical authority is also described by Spielmann a found in American Indian story telling:

> Expository discourse frequently includes a final challenge or advice along with the appeal to authority....I have listened to many expository discourses over the years and virtually every one ends with some kind of appeal to authority such as we see in these instances. In other words, the speaker is saying

> something like: This isn't just me that believes this and I don't just make it up, I'm passing down something that has been taught among our people for generations (180).

In a recent overview of music and anthropology, Veit Erlmann discusses scholarly discourse on global culture and its contribution to the change of traditional cultures. Erlmann (2001) finds a focus on this "aspect of modernization that dominates current debates is the power of capitalism and comodification to transform 'traditional' cultures, and the capacity of the Western mass media to shape the collective imagination of large populations" (10254). Other authors have pointed out that colonialism and post-colonialism have changed the way we view distinctions between traditional and popular: "the relationship of colonial and post-colonial popular arts to change and innovation can be seen as distinctive. In traditional culture, innovation is always negotiated within a clearly defined framework: there are rules for setting limits to it" (Barber, 1987: 13).

Bourdieu points out that "intellectuals" from political, religious and artistic fields often feel authorized to speak for other "people". In this norms and attitudes of the dominant class are absorbed through "several generations of cultural intermediaries, school teachers, priests ..." (Bourdieu, 1990[1986]: 153-4). Burke (1984) also discusses the idea of a split between a "popular" and an intellectual culture, "but almost everyone shares the common culture of television" (12). With this understanding of outside voices in determining what legitimate or real tradition is we can examine how "the voice" of Indigenous people is often displaced in both popular and academic discourse. American Indian people live in the contemporary world, surrounded by images

created by outside authoritarian voices.

One crucial source for the legitimatization and authorization of tradition from an Indigenous perspective is a tie to the spirit world. Spielmann (1998) writes that "to ensure the survival and perpetuation of Ojibwe culture, communication with the spirit world is essential and is the responsibility of all members of a First Nation (174). In Indigenous constructs, musical objects, also become authorized by the manner of their manufacture. This process is one that that gives legitimization to the object and must be treated differently than items for the general public:

> Within Native events, boundaries defining the appropriateness of music instruments may sometimes relate to the symbolism of sound or the process .... Practitioners frequently relate the "realness" of a musical instrument to the experience of making or using it. Special processes of construction or usage, rather than visual distinctiveness, may make an instrument "ceremonial" or "alive." At an Anishnabe drum workshop, for example, a man making a ceremonial drum worked alone; we were told that he used specially selected wood, and prepared the hide and vessel with hand tools. Such instruments may be blessed in a special ceremony and it is not appropriate to make them for sale (Diamond et.al., 1994: 46).

Formation of Indigenous Identity

The discussion on what constitutes the strongest determiners for the formulation of identity varies, however, some scholars describe it as being primarily linguistically constructed:

> Identity is defined as the linguistic construction of membership in one or more social groups or categories. Though other, non-linguistic criteria may also be

> significant, language and communication often provide important and sometimes crucial criteria by which members both define their group and are defined by others (Kroskrity, 2000: 111).

One gauge to measure identity has been the degree to which an Indigenous language has been retained. This reflects the belief that culture and language are inseparably linked and if language is not saved the culture will die. Today we find this emphasis continued in desperate attempts to save Indigenous languages. Roger Spielmann (1998) describes this feeling as it relates to the Canadian communities he worked with:

> There is perhaps no greater sense of need in any Aboriginal community than to keep the Aboriginal language strong. Language is the soul of a people and many elders, from a variety of First Nations traditions, maintain that a nation which respects itself speaks, preserves, cultivates and develops its language. Some elders go so far as to say that, if an individual does not speak his/her Aboriginal language, that person is a not fully Anishnaabe and lacks a deeply-rooted sense of identity (49).

There is an ongoing dialog in the literature regarding the relationship between language structure and its reflection of the thought of the people that speak it. Two examples of the effects of language that Spielmann (1998) describes as having a direct link to culture and thought is that of gender roles and hierarchy. He feels it is the language that reflects differences in thought:

> Ojibwe is, in a very real sense, a **non-sexist** language. By that I mean that there is no specification of gender in the pronominal system (with the use of pronouns). Whether one is referring to a man or a woman can only be

> determined by the context of what is being said....I believe that this linguistic feature, built into the structure of the language itself, shed light on traditional male-female relations in many First Nations cultures, where women were considered relatively equal with men...Ojibwe is also distinct from English in what is referred to as a *hierarchy of person* which reflects the very basic cultural value and respect. What this means is that the second person, 'you,' always takes grammatical priority (45).

Ethnomusicologist Beverley Diamond agrees that there is a connection between language and thought in a similar way:

> The English language ties concepts of "authenticity" and "authority" so closely to "legitimacy." "Legitimate" implies social or moral rules which define the criteria of authenticity hierarchically. It is often not a matter of judging something right or wrong as much as distinguishing between that which is acknowledged to exist and that which is ignored or not noticed (Diamond et.al., 1994: 41).

Spielmann (1998) also reflects on the discourse on language and identity being tied to more than language proficiency in isolation of other things. These other things seem to be embodied in a larger conceptualization of 'culture'. In this system of thought a person retains a sense of identity tied to an indigenous community, even when speaking English or French:

> Knowing how to speak one's Aboriginal language is a key component to one's sense of identity, but is it the sole determinant? Many Aboriginal people claim, instead that culture is more than merely an expression of language. Culture comprises the values and traditions of a community as well as the social and political formation of a group of people who define themselves as unique... my sense is that assimilative policies have failed because the

> Canadian government consistently underestimated the resiliency of spirit of Aboriginal elders.... The natural conclusion, based on the fact that First Nations had managed their own affairs for a millennia prior to the arrival of European peoples, is that the identity of the Aboriginal person can also be found in his/her cultural values and in the perception of how one sees oneself. In other words, traditional values continue to exist and inform Aboriginal attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors which in turn continue to provide the foundation for their sense of identity (55-56).

Therefore, we see in the voice of the community a tie to the past that is based on a world view that is somehow absorbed into the very being of the individual:

> There certainly is strong support and empirical evidence that today deeply entrenched traditional values, and not merely language, are the main factors which influence a Native person's sense of identity, of who one is deep down (Spielmann, 1998: 57).

The relation of identity to language then is important, but is the tie that language has to the community that gives it power as an index. Spielmann ties this use of language directly to the performance of storytelling in a social context and place:

> Language provides identity roots to both individuals and nations in concrete, tangible ways. For First Nations peoples, language is the original and most natural way of transmitting traditional stories and the wisdom of generations of elders. To understand the uniqueness, beauty, insight, and power of an Aboriginal language, it is not enough to merely know its structure. You have to hear it in its social context, in the places in which it belongs (p.234).

The transfer of knowledge and identity form the past to the present

is accomplished verbally through traditional stories: "In Algonquian languages such as Ojibwe, Cree, and Algonquin, speakers of these languages differentiate between two genres of discourse; *aadisokaan,* or traditional legends and tales, and *tibaajimowin,* personal accounts and narratives" (Spielmann, 1998: 187). The connection of these stories and their role in a traditional education that gives identity is described by Spielmann as part of a discussion about a story including a bear theme:

> In this first story the elder is identifying and portraying the living interaction with other-than-human persons, in this case the bear. All cultures change, yet traditional education, even in a modified form, is still maintained in Aboriginal societies today. These are not just old stories but are told by a living voice; they recognize and support the very real strength of the interaction between humans and other-than-human persons in Algonquian society, even though these teachings more often than not take place at the subconscious level in today's generation of Ojibwe learners. These beliefs are not merely relics of the past; they are things Native people are taught and are expected to know as part of their identity as Anishnaabe (174).

In the discussion of identity for Native peoples making and using 'traditional' instruments, there is also an acknowledgement that there is connection to other aspects of culture. In terms of musical expression, for example there is often a connection, through performance to dance. In dancing there is found the additional identity index of traditional clothing:

> Individuals also chose to express different levels of Native identity through their outfits. Some dancers prefer fringed buckskin, but many women dancers wear black skirts encircled with coloured ribbons and beaded or embroidered

> collars and aprons characteristic of Abenaki clothing design. There are of course, shifts in the "preferred" styles of outfits. Photographs from the 1940's and 1950's depict full feather headdresses while contemporary dancers prefer the Iroquoian *gustoweh*. The fashion for powwow outfits similarly shifts rather quickly (Diamond et.al., 1994: 48-49).

Relationship of Authenticity and Identity to Indigenous Peoples

The importance of a continuity and tie to the past from the present is crucial for a sense of identity. Believing this tie to be "authentic" is also vital in that it gives a sense of legitimacy to claim of an identity. The difficulty of connecting the "authentic" past to a "legitimate" present may be described as a result of perceived or actual gaps found between the two. A review of "intertextual gap" as a concept will help illustrate the issues of relationships and distance between genres over time and space. These gaps are informed by an understanding of how both verbal and musical texts are classified. This system of classification is often discussed in terms of the concept of "genre". Genre helps to focus the types of verbal discourse and musical expression that are being discussed and used for analysis. Genre may be described as:

> A speech style oriented to the production and reception of a particular kind of text. When an utterance is assimilated to a given genre, the process by which it is produced and interpreted is mediated through its intertextual relationship with prior texts. The invocation of a generic...framing device such as 'once upon a time' carries with it a set of expectations concerning the further unfolding of the discourse, indexing other texts... (Bauman, 2001a: 79).

The discussion of genre is also important to ethnomusicology. Sue

Tuohy (1999) discusses the complication of defining genre as a permanent and stationary object. She writes that there is a "dual set of processes, those that work to keep genre in its place and those that work to spin it out....both transform genre and produce genre's inherit plurality" (69). Her description of genre categories, also foregrounds attention to boundaries between genres where gaps might occur. Bauman (2001a) describes the concept of an "intertextual gap" as an inevitable result and the "calibration of the gap – its relative restriction or amplification – has significant correlates and effects" (80). Bauman describes "the relative tightness or looseness of generic regeneration" as having ideological implications:

> Prescriptive insistence on strict generic regulation works constructively in the service of established authority and order, while the impulse toward the widening of intertextual gaps and generic innovation is more conducive to the exercise of creativity, resistance to hegemonic order, and openness to change (Bauman, 2001a: 81).

The effect of ideology in causing a hegemonic order to develop seems to be different for those occupying the periphery (in terms of power) and that of the center.[6] There is strong tendency toward

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6) The interpretation of American Indian genres of traditional culture has been interpreted through the western anthropological viewpoint of modernity. This is due to a center to periphery relationship (Hannerz, 1992) in the fact that tribal communities have many forms of dependency on the dominant culture. But there is a contrasting sense of centralness existing for off-reservation Indians in relation to the "Rez". In American Indian communication, one often hears deference to "the way it is done on the reservation" as the place of authority for tradition. In a similar way there is a periphery to center relationship much as that described by Hannerz (1992): "But then there are other kinds of cultural transfers from periphery to center, which in themselves exemplify asymmetry in

traditional tightness and a strict adherence to the way things were done in the past:

> Gayatri Spivik articulated a fundamental danger in the definition of a cultural Other: the very act of individuals from one group describing anOther has tended to homogenize their wide-ranging human experiences. This falsely implies that richness, diversity, and individuality are realized (or more fully realized) only in the society of the "describers." We are well aware that the "describers" were, in centuries past, the European colonizers and that the most privileged mode of their discourse-print-acquired a legitimacy which disempowered not just other modes of discourse (storytelling, for example) but other styles as well. Hence, the homogenized versions of non-European cultures became the ones labeled "true" or authentic. We also acknowledge the many ways in which this colonial legacy continues to be perpetuated (Diamond et.al., 1994: 44).

Today this may be seen in conservativism and authoritarianism expressed in opinions of some "traditionalists" in American Indian communities. There is the possibility of the performance of a ceremony being labeled as "wrong". Members of Native American communities seem to strive for both an ultra orthodox approach to maintain cultural survival, and a regular acceptance of adaptability forced by changing circumstances. However, the need to adapt to daily life, such as in accommodating work schedules, leads to necessary compromises. Ethnomusicologist Franziska von Rosen sees little conflict in this if viewed form an Indigenous perspective:

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other manners. One involves particular embodiments of meaning: material objects of art, ritual, or other significance, which are not really replicable at the periphery, but which are at one time or another exported, due to the superior economic and political power of the center, and absorbed by its museums or other collections" (222).

> Perhaps we can come closer to answering your questions if we consider an aspect of motion which relates to "authenticity" in a number of Anishnabe stories-that is the motion of turning. When things turn, they often become something else. Hence, they are no longer what they were, no longer "authentic" in relation to their former identity. The sun symbol, or four directions in motion, becomes the swastika if it faces the wrong direction. The military bass drum becomes a powwow drum if it is turned on its side. The power changes. In each case there is a shift of power involved (Diamond et.al., 1994: 154).

There is a need to examine the roles of the Indigenous communities themselves using a construct of voice to build a reality acceptable to their own communities. In examining the Indigenous perspective, Briggs (1996) reports he is "neither attacking or affirming the legitimacy of their performance; nor am I suggesting that the claims regarding issues of authenticity and historicity are either valid or fictitious. Why?" (448). He goes on to say that these issues regarding legitimacy are already discussed in the Indigenous communities. The author is interested in the discourse rather than trying to speak over it. These discourses are called metadiscursive due to the fact that they are constituted of powerful techniques, representing "presence and absence" and that they consist of "inter-textual links and gaps" which are imbued with "different degrees and types of reality". Some of this relates to "nostalgic rhetorics regarding disappearance of tradition". Also they are metadiscursive not only because of the non-present but also "by creating gaps and links, and senses of presence and absence, they also construct their own positionality as well" (449) This, he writes, creates a discursive authority.

A theme in the dialog on performance of traditional genres is the importance of context. This discussion occurs in regard to the difficulty

of abstracting the social elements from the structure of performance. The importance of a story's context to a specific social moment is expressed in the following:

> the meaning and relevance of a particular teaching, as exhibited in the story/exposition series we have been examining, is not something that can be determined merely by inspecting the details of the story and following teachings. What one can see happening in this instance is a social occasion, a traditional teaching which emerges in the context of the particulars of a culture-specific situation.. (Spielmann, 1998: 180).

Some scholars have reflected on the formation of disciplinary divisions and their respective discussions of genre. It may be important to consider that many additional insights that might come from acknowledging the interrelationship between of music and language texts. Fornäs (1997) states that "the text/music dichotomy is an illusion" (121) He is clear on the point that music does carry meaning without words, in that it is constructed through a society, in a symbolic mode. Some American Indian songs also occur without words, only vocables, as one elder told me "they don't need words they are old like mountains because they go up and down and you just go for the journey". Maybe what they index is beyond words as Fornäs (1997) reports "in the use of music to 'flee' from words". The author goes on to point out, however, "that there is no pure non-symbolic field anywhere outside of verbal language, not even music!" (120).

Some authors point out that language plays a similar role as does music. Feld and Fox (1994) find similarities in cognition, structure and the social dimension when analyzed in relation to genre. It is interesting to see the parallel arguments to linguistic anthropology, in

the literature on ethnomusicology. Nketia (1990) points to a clear inclusion of language in a discussion on music: "When a drummer embodies a verbal message in a drum piece, he expects it to be recognized, interpreted, and responded to in appropriate behavioral terms" (91). He also discusses the importance of context versus "the traditional practice of thinking of formal elements in complete oblivion of their sociocultural or other contextual determinants and relationships" (94). The important point here is that, the audience does hear and find that a song's words do index something. Perhaps, an integration of Indigenous thinking might lead to an additional endorsement of multidisciplinary study of culture and "traditions" in context. The construct of reality is, according to ethnomusicologist Franziska von Rosen, very different coming from an Indigenous point of view:

> In Micmac, according to Silas Rand, the word for "reality," *ketla'wa'uokn,* is closely associated with truth, belief, security, faithfulness, and power. The emphasis is not on the legitimacy of authority or law. Reality is rooted in personal stories and dreams that people share with one another. They are "real" because they come from the undisputed origin of personal experience. Surely, it is the way people themselves define the "real" that we want to focus on here (Diamond et.al., 1994: 41).

Conclusion

In this paper I have discussed how constructs about tradition are related to forming identity. I believe there are many features shared between the two texts that illustrate the need to closely examine complex interactions in order to understand the Indigenous perspectives.

This examination should be both thickly descriptive and thickly interpretive building on Geertzian appeal for close analysis and immersion in a culture being studied. The many discources and interactions found index each other, as word choice embedded in a song, which is also embedded in a larger performance. Overarching this is a context, and nested within the context are many possible choices of genre. Audiences, comprised of their own real histories and their associated constructs of reality, are also an important part of the connection, especially in filling the gap between what is written and what is understood. Both verbal and musical discourses address the past, present, and future, and are directed toward and from various audiences, in both human and spirit worlds, through a variety of ways. Sometimes words and music are used together, sometimes separately. But they both carry meaning and can inform the broad discipline of folklore studies, embodying an "ethno" sphere of study that is truly transdisciplinary.

Another point I found recurring in the texts is that western academic discourse could benefit in finding ways to empower and learn from the voice of the Indigenous peoples. Those who have been studied as the "Other" might better then have their knowledges contribute to folklore, ethnomusicology and anthropology. Here is true potential for a reciprocal and reflexive process. Shifting focus to include an Indigenous perspective is, also, one means to appreciate the variety and depth of western society's own cultural systems. But this is only possible to do, if Indigenous communities are able to acquire and sustain the political, social and material resources needed to focus on sustaining their own internally defined sense of identity, not dominated by external perspectives. The continuation of the verbal and auditory

transfers of knowledge over time, including distinctive linguistic and musical genres, nurtured by an interactive context of communication, needs to develop within an overall context that allows for its growth.

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[Abstract]

This paper examines the concept of "tradition" for Indigenous Peoples as a construct of reality developed through the lens of Western scholarship and American Indian perspectives. The resulting notions of American Indian tradition constructed by a Western point of view, has been incorporated into the thinking of Western peoples as well as those of American Indians. Possible reasons for this include the lasting effects of colonialism and current mass media and the description of cultural "others" through the Western sciences of Anthropology and Musicology. A definition of what is valid or important in defining "traditional culture" for members of an Indigenous community may utilize significantly different measures than those of Western scholars. In order to illustrate this, the author uses two treatises focusing on the Indigenous American Indian cultures of communities in Eastern North America incorporating Indigenous points of view. One of these two books provides a focus on connections between language and culture and the other on ethnomusicology. From both of these perspectives, traditional identity is seen as continuing in the present day through persistent perceptions of reality, linked to community social performance. These perceptions and their accompanying indexes to tradition are

still present despite the disappearance of or frequent changes in the surface forms of both language and manufactured cultural items. The emphasis on "legitimate" or "real" tradition is tied to performance within an ongoing cultural community rather than to Western constructions of what is real found in past descriptions of cultures. An alternative view of "valid" tradition and its relationship to Indigenous identity, needs to incorporate Indigenous perspectives rather than depend on constructions developed using non-Indigenous Western frameworks.