

**Graduate Student
SYMPOSIUM**

Selected Papers*
Vol. 4
2007–2008

Queen's University
Faculty of Education



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DON'T STUDY US, STUDY YOURSELF: CONSIDERATIONS IN
CONDUCTING CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines considerations and issues relating to research with Aboriginal people, and my reflections about these as I prepare to develop my research methodology. Background about problems in music education prompting my research is outlined. Several elements associated with Smith's (2005) analysis of 'the problem of research' are explored along with responses and perspectives of other Indigenous scholars. The concept of culturally appropriate research and issues to be considered when developing a respectful research methodology are examined. Various Indigenous methodologies and two models which mediate western research paradigms in light of Indigenous needs, values and issues are described.

Over the course of the 19th century, a fascination for all things 'Native' gained popularity among European colonizers. In North America, while it was believed Native people were on the brink of extinction, European settlers invented an exotic idealization of 'nativeness' with imagined notions such as the 'noble savage' or the 'dying Indian' who needed to be 'preserved' (Wickwire, 1985; King, 2003). Scholars took on the task of researching the Native other before the 'other' disappeared. It is no coincidence that ethnomusicology, a blend of anthropology and musicology, had its earliest starts in the late nineteenth century particularly in North America (Wickwire, 1985). Ethnographies about the musical practices of Native peoples were prolific, particularly in the 1880s (Nettle, 1985) as Native communities were found to be troves of musical and cultural treasures from which collections of artifacts and wax recordings were sent away to museums and archives (Wickwire, 1988) where they were to be studied and preserved. Native people themselves were exhibited in Europe, and North American cities as novelties and exotic 'museum pieces'. Nine Nuxalt men from Bella Coola, British Columbia, for example, were exhibited in German zoos as exotic

'living cultural artifacts' to perform their songs and dances for the German public (Hiline Videoworks, n.d.).

Music 'experts' transcribed, analyzed, and classified Native musics with scientific rigor, objectivity, and detachment. As Wickwire (1985) states, comparative musicology's "roots lie deeply buried in the scientific rationalism inherited from the Renaissance" (p. 187). Many of these musical finds eventually made their way to school music textbooks and curricula in Canada. Detachment similarly characterizes their presentation in the school classroom, with limited or no connection to the cultural contexts from which they came (Boyea, 1999). These musical 'discoveries' are printed (negating oral traditions) (ibid) on the pages of music texts used in a curriculum characterized by multicultural pluralism and the celebration of diversity. There is no reference, in the curricula which I have surveyed and the texts I have used to the fact that this English word 'music', a signifier of western concepts which have evolved from origins denoted by the Latin *musica* and the Greek *musiké*, does not have a counterpart in many Native languages in North America (Diamond, 2008, p. 25). What westerners call the 'music' of a Native community is taught in mainstream schools using western conceptualizations, language, and musical meanings. It disregards the connection between a 'song' and the values, teachings, and understandings that may be intimately connected to its singing. Further, 'traditional' (that is, music of non-contemporary genres) music of Native people is slotted by music publishers and record companies into the "world music" category, centralizing the music of European colonizers, or, ironically, that evolving from their Black slaves, in (what we call) North America and further marginalizing that of First Peoples. Music education practice does not step outside of the ethnocentric comfort zone protected by a "lingering colonialism" (Bradley, 2006, p. 2) and relies on the "fabricated construction of a native/other" (Meiners, in Bradley, 2006, p. 2). Missing in music texts and curricula is the fact that children who may have sung these musical 'finds' were forbidden to do so in the residential school system or the fact that these 'songs' may have been associated with traditions, celebrations, and social events which were banned by the Canadian government. A host of discontinuities, omissions, and misrepresentations characterize

western domination in the inclusion and teaching of Native musics.

Nettle (1985) states that European colonizers had a mindset of superiority and a dedication to "taking on the world . . . [because] . . . people in Western culture thought they could do everything, conquer all worlds" (p. 6). Empirical science could help explain newly conquered lands and peoples. Influenced by the growing popularity of Darwin's evolutionary theory, scientists of the late 1800s regarded Native people as "less evolved." Ethnomusicologist Karl Stumpf, exemplifies such thinking with his assertion: "The range in human development can be measured by the difference between Bach and Nutsiluska [his Bella Coola singer]" as he studied the music of the Nuxalt in 1885 (in Nettl, p. 9).

Research among Indigenous peoples in Canada was fueled by notions of epistemological superiority, scientific rationalism, and a determination to "explain the world," in a strange juxtaposition to this fascination with the exotic. Ironically, from the late 1800s, while Native cultures were studied and cultural artifacts were appropriated, the colonial legacy was being shaped. Treaties were 'negotiated', reserves carved out, the residential school system implemented, and oppressive political measures made law with the ultimate aim to eradicate Native cultures and assimilate Aboriginal peoples into mainstream society (Battiste & Henderson, 2000, pp. 273-274). Bans on Indian dancing and ceremonies were legislated, the last of these not fully repealed until the 1960s (Diamond, 2008, p. 119).

Research, a tool of colonization and European imperialism, has a long and painful history for Indigenous peoples in Canada and the world. Only in the last thirty years have Indigenous people voiced concern about the "problem of research" (Smith, 2005, p. 87). Smith (1999) states: "The word itself, 'research' is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary . . . it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful" (p. 1).

Given this brief snapshot of the appropriation of Native musics within a wider colonial framework, the consequent teaching of it within a multicultural curriculum, and implications of this colonial research history, I consider my position as a researcher working with Native peoples. I am a Canadian of

European ancestry, interested in investigating Native peoples' perspectives about the inclusion and teaching of Native musics in the curriculum. I envision a research method which involves asking members of Native communities how (and/or whether) music of their culture should be taught and represented in schools. I have studied with Aboriginal scholars who have shared complexities and ethical considerations related to research within Aboriginal communities. I have witnessed, in the process of this learning, the spiritual and intimate connection some of my Aboriginal teachers have with song and the heartbeat of the drum. I contemplate the feasibility of such research particularly when one is studying something as spiritually connected to one's being, as their music.

In this paper I examine issues that I grapple with while considering the formulation of my research methodology. I address a number of topics that bear upon or deal with these issues. I first explore 'the problem of research' on/about/with Aboriginal people. I further interrogate the implications of, and responses to, issues related to this problem. I then outline some key features and attributes of Indigenous research methodologies which have been developed by Indigenous scholars. Throughout, I note various discrepancies I experience between Indigenous and western value/belief systems, in relation to research and my learning journey. Third, I identify methodologies that attempt to mediate between Indigenous and western approaches to research and use research protocols which respect the values and needs of Aboriginal people. Finally, returning to the title of this paper, I expand on meanings embedded in the words "Don't study us, study yourself," as they apply to the issues and methodologies discussed, and as they impact on my thinking about my research methodology.

THE PROBLEM OF RESEARCH

Peter Cole (2004) articulates the 'problem of research' in this 'conversation' between tricksters raven and coyote: Coyote, it is critically important to problematize nonaboriginal Indian experts making lifelong careers out of studying us, peering into our cultures, invading our homes, our lairs, our nests, dissecting us, sterilizing us, digging us up, stealing our cultures to sell to universities, pharmaceutical companies, governments, probing

our minds, bodies, emotions, spirits, practices, interfering in our ceremonies, patenting our genes, messing up our languages, stealing our rituals, trespassing into our sacred spaces, burrowing into our intimate places. . . If non-aboriginal scholars wish to research with us let them wait to be invited . . .(p. 26)

Given the immensity of cultural, personal and intellectual appropriation, "let them wait to be invited" is an appropriate phrase to express the distrust of researchers. Cole's articulation not only pungently describes a history of academic pillaging, it also alludes to a requirement for research which can benefit the economic, legal, health, and social circumstances of Aboriginal communities and people. Indigenous scholars Smith (2005) and La Duke (2005) stipulate that a key question should inform research decisions. That question is: How can this research benefit LIS?

THE PROBLEM OF RESEARCH: IMPLICATIONS AND RESPONSES

The issue of community benefit is evident in the area of health research as researchers are increasingly recognizing the importance of inclusion and cultural understanding. Aboriginal communities are "designating research review committees to establish research guidelines for their community, review research requests, determine if the needs of the community are reflected in the research question, and decide on behalf of the community whether the research question and methods fit with their current and projected goals for health inquiry" (Arbour & Cook, 2006, p. 157). Music education research in Aboriginal communities, admittedly, is limited in scope and certainly does not hold such significance as to warrant review boards!

With regards to my intended research, the question about how this research can benefit Native people cannot be answered with assurance of an immediate or direct consequence, though it is my belief that long-term benefits would be facilitated. My belief is bolstered by recommendations calling for increased inclusion of Aboriginal knowledge in mainstream education (RCAP, 1996) and the Ontario Ministry of Education's (2007) Policy Framework which strives to, "significantly improve the knowledge of all students and educators in Ontario about the rich cultures and histories of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples" (p. 19). This objective (in conjunction with the others in the Ontario policy) is

believed to lead to positive educational outcomes for Aboriginal students (p 5). At the same time, however, music education, often regarded as a 'feel good' subject, lies at the margins of the educational landscape compared to the disciplinary heavyweights language, math, and science. Whereas literacy and numeracy are referred to numerous times (29 and 18 respectively) in the Ontario document, music is not mentioned. Yet music is embedded deeply within the cultural fabric, and as Diamond (2008) notes, is engrained within projects of cultural revitalization (p. 87) in Aboriginal communities. "Can this research benefit us?" is a question whose answer would depend on a perspective whereby musical learning is valued for its instrumentality - causal influences which would bring about improvement of educational outcomes—or on a community belief that this research deserves consideration relative to other, perhaps more pressing priorities such as related to treaty negotiation or standard of living. For my research, then this key question is problematical.

Among the Haudenosaunee, when it comes to the sharing of music, another element is relevant. Diamond (2008) notes "only when you are thought to be ready and able to use certain knowledge responsibly, will it be shared" (p. 9). I reflect on whether, when, and how I would be deemed (and would be) ready and able to use such knowledge. Intent on 'determining' (a western notion) a research proposal, and feeling the pressure to begin and complete research in a timely fashion, I envision the process I need to undertake to 'get there' on the path of learning at the university. However, it may take a great deal of time before I truly am 'ready' as my search for knowledge is dependent on my ability to show respect for the culture and the community, and awareness of the many resources associated with the 'problem of research'. Further tensions arise as I negotiate between the needs of academia and the 'problem of research'. Academia considers research beneficial if it contributes to a field of knowledge. It is my goal to contribute to the field of knowledge in music education, a field which traditionally has been linked to western aesthetics and values. Influential philosophies have shaped the field in recent years in North America such as Aesthetic Philosophy which (minimally described) promotes learning through an "aesthetic experience" based on understanding elements in musical 'works' (in Elliott, 1995, pp. 18-38) and Praxial Philosophy which focuses on music

making such as through performing, conducting, composing and so on (Elliott, 1995). These paradigms (among others) are inadequate when it comes to ways of thinking (and making music) that do not "fit" western paradigms. I reflect on the idea of a song passed on by a grizzly bear to her ancestors so as to protect twins, on the knowledge that the drum is alive, on the words of a Cherokee teacher who asserted that a song "came to me through the wind" , and on the comment from Haudenosaunee singer and songwriter' who does not think of herself as a "composer" but rather as one who "makes songs" (in Diamond, p. 24). Composing, conducting, musical 'elements,' and the other aspects of western music education practice do not matter here.

Music education approaches have shaped a curriculum that disregards wider conceptualizations of music and musical practice. However, it should be noted that long-held assumptions and premises are beginning to be interrogated. Previously unquestioned musical meanings are being examined, particularly among theorists in the Pragmatist school of philosophical thought (see Bowman, 2005). I envision my research as contributing to such paradigmatic expansion. Simultaneously, however, I am conflicted by the realization that my research addresses (what I see as) the needs of the field even though it is motivated by (what I see as) continued colonial practice. I contemplate that such research risks being simply another example of cultural and intellectual appropriation unless Aboriginal participants value and endorse it. Additionally, I struggle to negotiate across the academic and cultural divide that distinguishes the requirements of research (contributing to the field) as opposed to the need for research to contribute to the people being researched.

A third response to the 'problem of research' pertains to the perception of anthropology and education as deeply colonial academic disciplines and the conviction that Native researchers should, as a result, do Native research in these disciplines (Deloria, 1998; Graveline, 2000; Swisher, 1998). Deloria (1998) holds that academia is discriminatory, favouring non-Aboriginal researchers. He states that, in academia, "Indians . cannot be trusted to be objective, to be analytical, or to understand what is happening in their own communities" (p. 211). However, in contrast to this viewpoint, various "insider/outsider" debates provide arguments in support of both Native and non-Native

researchers (Banks, 1998; Lassiter, 2000). These are supplemented by the argument that "perhaps the focus should be on what is written, rather than who does the writing" (Lassiter, 2000, p. 611). Fundamentally, however, the reception of the non-Aboriginal researcher, as an outsider who 'conjures up bad memories' is, at best, guarded.

Deep resentment is felt by the experience of nonAboriginal "experts" speaking for and about Aboriginal peoples (Cole, 2004; Graveline, 2000). Reading about early ethnomusicological practices (see Wickwire, 1988), I imagine the acrimony which must have accumulated as hundreds of recorded songs were analyzed by 'experts' who then published results and shared their 'expertise' among colleagues thirsty for knowledge of the exotic. This must have been exacerbated, I envision, as results and publications were not shared back to the community, and, for example, as songs that 'belong to one's family' (Diamond, 2008) were removed to institutions and/or made public. Uncomfortably, I compare this mental picture with the fact that I too seek to be an 'expert' in my 'field' for indeed, that is a requirement of Ph.D level scholarship, and it is an ideal which is valued in my academic and social milieu. Deloria (1998) makes a succinct comment, "Indians recognize expertise only when they accept you as a person" (p. 219). Relationship is a key ingredient to research within Aboriginal communities, not the 'use them and lose them' approach that appears to be engrained in research practice. And yet relationship and emotional "contamination" are adversative to hypothesis-driven 'pure' research; research that is directed to a 'body of knowledge' and a field of study, rather than to the needs of a specific community.

Deeply rooted cultural and philosophical differences seat discrepancies which become magnified through research. As Native Studies professor Peter Kulchyski related in a televised interview (McKenzie, May 21, 2008), Western culture is grounded in a moral obligation to control and "improve" an imperfect world whereas Indigenous cultures are grounded in a moral obligation to connect, relate and interact with a perfect world (or at least, what once was a perfect world). 'Man' is the center of the western universe. In an Indigenous view, humans are part of a related and living universe, and relationship carries meanings and importance beyond western sensibilities. Western

epistemology and its modernist methodologies are a "product of 17th century Enlightenment thinking that is fundamental to the narratives and practices that constitute who we are as Westerners" (Vaugeois, 2007, p. 164). Vaugeois (2007) states, "discourses that place autonomous individuals at the centre of philosophical discussion do not require that 'we' (identified as rational agents) question how we have come to understand encounters with Others. Indeed such discourses constrain our capacity to even consider the ways that our philosophical, political and economic orientations are constructed in relation to Others" (p. 165-166) [*italics in original*]. The language, thought processes, and concepts embedded within western notions of research, even in evolving qualitative paradigms, are built upon and within these narratives. Tensions arise as I negotiate between these and my awareness of Aboriginal ways of being and knowing.

At issue as well is that fact that practical social and economic issues play a prominent role in determining priorities in research. Swisher (1998) holds that educational research must focus on an understanding of the issues of sovereignty and selfdetermination that distinguishes Indigenous peoples. This theme surfaces in the reception to the proposed investigation by molecular anthropologists, seeking DNA samples from the Dene and other Aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories. Scientists identify the need for this information in order to determine human migrations back 70,000 years (CBC News). At the time of writing this paper, Dene leaders and elders, have not agreed to participate in the research (by voluntarily donating DNA). They explain, on camera, that such knowledge contravenes traditional laws and beliefs relating to the origins of their peoples. Interviewed community members also mentioned that if research were directed to their needs (such as land claims and resource issues) they would be interested (APTN News). Dene leaders only briefly mentioned the issue of the cultural appropriateness in the use of DNA extraction. Dr. Frank Dukupoo, a Native American geneticist, when describing another situation explains: "To us, any part of ourselves is sacred. Scientists say it's just DNA. For an Indian, it's not just DNA, it's part of a person, it is sacred, with deep religious significance. It is part of the essence of a person" (in Arbour & Cook, p. 155). Several issues present themselves in this case. This research was not perceived as beneficial to the

community, or relevant to needs affiliated with sovereignty and self-determination. Its purpose contravened basic beliefs about the origins of the Dene peoples, and its scientific method is considered a form of desecration. A protective attitude appears to shield these people from further appropriation and a gap underscores the discrepancies between western science and local understandings. The notion of anonymity (ingrained in scientific objectivity) is incompatible with notions of relationality and connection. As I reflect on these issues, the element of the sacred impresses me. Many songs themselves have sacred meanings, to the point that Native peoples have gone to extreme measures to protect their songs from being shared openly, sung in inappropriate places, or written down (Boyea, 1999).

I find myself comparing DNA to music, both sacred and connected to "all my relations" with conceptions of time and place in a living universe. I appreciate the protective layers surrounding deeply held beliefs and contemplate the healing, balance, and well-being that are associated with music, dance, and drum. I wonder, does the researcher have the right to disturb that which promotes wellness and wholeness especially in the fragile course of cultural revival and healing?

Smith suggests that research is a site of contestation not only in epistemology and methodology but also as an organized scholarly activity that is "deeply connected to power" (2005, p. 87). Major funders of the five-year Genographic Project in the Northwest Territories include IBM and National Geographic Society (CBC News). Having the support of major benefactors is part and parcel of the research process linking academia and the capitalist economic system. Research is dependent on the power brokers within that system. Although I support Smith's contention of the relationship between research and power, I do see the tide changing with regard to support for Aboriginal researchers and Aboriginal research methodologies in Canada.

Smith (2005) asserts that concepts of ethics and ethical review in the university setting are at odds with alternative ways of knowing based on a different epistemology, alternative visions of society, and alternative notions of ethical behavior. She posits that Indigenous peoples may not understand the principles, codes, and conduct of research. They may not fully understand the concept of informed consent (p. 101). Again, the theme of cross-

cultural misunderstanding presents itself, this time in reverse. Smith (2005) also warns that little attention is paid to the benefit of the researched community in ethics guidelines and maintains, as does Cole (2004), that ethics review boards represent dominant interests and protect institutions. Indigenous persons are rarely represented "on these sshrc nserc cihr [sic] boards" (Cole, 2004, p. 10). Smith also notes that qualitative researchers adopting "emerging methodologies" often have a difficult time passing the review process (p. 101). I will now briefly highlight key characteristics from some of these emerging methodologies.

FEATURES OF INDIGENOUS RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

Indigenist Methodologies (Rigney, 1999), aboriginalizing methodology (Cole, 2002), Kaupapa Maori (Bishop, 1998; L. Smith, 1999), and Circle as Methodology (Graveline, 2000) are methodological approaches and philosophical writings that range from complete absorption within Indigenous worldviews, to mediation between western and Indigenous epistemologies. Cole's (2002) poetic writing uses the metaphor of a canoe to represent an Indigenous lifeway from which he challenges western worldviews and the protocols of research they house. He targets, for example, the structure of the dissertation:

the idea of chapter is anathema to who I am as an indigenous person it implies western order and format as "the" legitimate shapers of discourse the universe being ordered into rationally constructed geometries (p. 448)

Graveline's Circle as Methodology (2000) similarly 'plays with' the English language in her use of poetry as a means of more holistic, uneditable, expressive and fluid re-claiming of voice.

In it she expresses the value of the talking circle as

an egalitarian structure
each voice acknowledged
heard in turn (p. 366)

Both writers use native symbols and metaphors as departure points for expressions of understandings, experiences, and insights into contextual 'ways of knowing'. Liberties in writing reflect an artistic and emancipatory freedom from the restrictions of conventional text and style. Words and meanings are emotionally open, and expressive of deeply felt values. A highly personal, storytelling quality emerges as relationship and connectedness

take on importance (as opposed to western linear discourse, deconstruction, isolation, and scientific reduction). These 'emerging methodologies' which reflect the world through an Indigenous lens, deviate from customary qualitative research processes or design, yet demonstrate rigour in their degree of exploration and examination.

To explain what Indigenous methodology is, Bishop describes what Kaupapa Maori is not. He explains that Kaupapa Maori is not an example of a western critical and/or cultural theoretical paradigm. He clarifies that it is not to be confused with grand narratives of resistance theorists such as Giroux and Freire, revisionists such as Bowles and Gintis, and cultural and social reproduction theorists such as Bourdieu (Bishop, 1998, p. 209). Bishop states "Lather and Giroux subscribe to a methodology that is based on reducing explanations to fundamental principles bounded by the Western tradition" (ibid). In contrast, validity and authority in Kaupapa Maori is evaluated within cultural and community norms and traditions, not those of the academy. Researchers address the concerns and issues of the participants "in ways that are understandable and able to be controlled by the research participants, and in ways that these concerns and issues also are, or become, those of the researchers" (p. 214).

Rigney (1999) describes Indigenist methodologies, as a collective term, belonging to and within Indigenous worldviews which may be described as complex, polyphonic, connected to the sacred, highly contextual, descriptive, holistic, and relational. They are not concerned with managing subjectivity or objectivity, or concern with a Western orientation of epistemological and methodological questions. Indigenous researchers are increasingly active in developing approaches to research that privilege indigenous knowledges, voices, and experiences (Rigney, in Smith, 2005, p. 87) and their prime motivation is the benefit of communities (Marker, 2003). Rigney contends that Indigenous researchers serve the difficult role of translating, mediating, and negotiating values, beliefs, and practices from different worldviews (in Smith, 2005, p. 96).

In summary, Aboriginal methodologies share in common a rejection of western theoretical paradigms, even those labeled as emancipatory. They share a key value in the notion of respect, which Smith (2005) maintains, differs in meaning from its Euro-

American premises. As she notes, it can become a "complicated matter of cultural protocols, languages of respect, rituals of respect . [It] embraces quite complex social norms, behaviors, and meanings . of many competing and active values" (p.98). The importance of respect, I suggest, is intensified by the effects and outcomes resulting from prolonged colonial and racist encounter. Arguments in favour of Native researchers, I posit, are supported by the intuitive and complex understandings of respect that 'insiders' have.

I have described various issues relating to the 'problem of research' and my perceptions of these as they pertain to my inquiry. The need for benefit to the community and 'waiting to be invited', the debate over the Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal researcher, the dichotomies between western paradigms of research and scholarship and Indigenous ways of knowing, and the contrasting perceptions of concepts such as expertise and the sacred, are examples of issues that complicate the cross-cultural traversing that such research requires. The importance of the four "R's" of Aboriginal research: Respect for Aboriginal peoples cultures and communities, Relevance to the community, Reciprocity through benefit to the community, and Reverence for the sacred or spiritual, are reinforced in me as a student and researcher at the University of British Columbia. These take on added meaning as I seek to appreciate the perspectives and methodologies described by Indigenous researchers.

How does the non-Aboriginal researcher, cognizant of the many issues involved in doing research in Native communities, reconcile this knowledge and avoid the inclination to generalize any of the issues or reduce any peoples or circumstances to a we/them dichotomy? So many terms and issues in this paper (e.g., 'Aboriginal' and 'non-Aboriginal', the 'academy' and the 'community') prompt such dualistic thinking. Certain knowledge has been illuminated and privileged, which gives the impression that straightforward divisions and boundaries exist. However these issues are blurry, boundaries are porous (or sometimes not), identities may be hybrid or multifarious, and values may be multiple. Perspectives presented in this paper are those of selected writers and teachers. However, the knowledge that I have, whether it is from the teachings of elders or the work of scholars (which in some cases are the same), or my own experience, is a developing

knowledge of a complexity of issues and an evolving history. From this rather shaky ground, I ask, how does one proceed along an 'ethical' path of research? How does one balance the "wisdom of the west" with the "wisdom of the elders" and show respect for both? I believe that disconnects between western and Indigenous values, understandings, and knowledge must be traversed in order for non-Aboriginal researchers to function ethically and productively within Native communities (and I also believe some disconnects respectfully should not). Many Native scholars have bridged this gap whereas non-Native scholars in several disciplines are only beginning to make this journey.

I turn now to two researchers who take into account these issues, and whose disciplines embrace the fields intersected by my research—education and music. Eric Luke Lassiter, an ethnomusicologist researching the music of the Kiowa, and Mark Edwards, a researcher in education working in an Okanagan First Nations community, are non-Aboriginal researchers who, I believe, have made an effort to center Indigenous perspectives and voice in their research.

MEDIATING BOTH WORLDS: Two METHODOLOGIES

Lassiter (2002) calls his methodology collaborative ethnography. He asks members of the researched community, whom he refers to as "consultants," to collaborate fully in all stages of the research process. Their role is "to elaborate the meaning of narrative in the context of a community discourse, not in the context of an academically-positioned discourse" (2000, p. 611). For Lassiter, human relations should shape ethnographic practice and writing, and ethnographers should construct text for and with local communities. The "consultants" collaborate in how the text is defined and written. This open-ended, democratic, and contextual orientation aims to put the researcher on equal footing within the group and allows for the emergent nature of knowledge production.

Edward's dialogic research similarly is based on dialogue as a process that, in his words, is coherent with communication patterns of the Native community (telephone interview, Dec. 5, 2007). His purposes include developing a protocol of respectful dialogue and communication with the ultimate goal of improving communication between the Aboriginal community and the

school community (2007). Edwards developed a theory of communication based on Western conceptions of dialogue drawn from Gadamer, Buber and Freire, and Aboriginal oral traditions as theorized by Archibald, Sterling, Lightning, Armstrong and Hart. From extensive interviewing and reinterviewing, in a recursive method in which questions were coconstructed with respondents, he developed a dialogic framework to improve understanding, relationship and communication. He named this theoretical model PURC an acronym for shared Purpose, recognition of the importance of Understanding, Relationality that is ethical, and ways of Communicating which respondents structure (ibid). Edwards notes that promoting agency throughout the process was critical. He posits that, through such a deliberate and intensive focus on communication (and slowly overcoming the many barriers to communication which have been constructed through years of colonial subjugation) participants eventually were empowered to safely share with the researcher their needs of the school community. Respect and trust were found essential in the research process and were developed through a lengthy program of research, which involved continued feedback at every stage with the community collaborators.

Lassiter's and Edwards' research strove to bridge western notions of research with Indigenous communication, worldview and experience. Both have addressed issues of representation and legitimation by putting the needs, voices and members of the Indigenous community first while creating a methodological practice which is accountable to both the university and researched community. Lassiter (2005) notes, collaborative ethnography is essentially about power and control, about who has the right to represent whom, and for what purposes, and about whose discourse will be privileged in the ethnographic text.

These methodologies are not without their drawbacks. Edwards notes the extremely time consuming nature of this method, having taking six years to completion (telephone interview, Dec. 5, 2007). Lassiter (2006) comments on the thorny process of reaching consensus: "while the ethnographers and consultants who have chosen to enter into collaborative ethnography may agree on the project's larger goals and purposes . . . they can, and often do, disagree about the particulars of specific ethnographic facts and, most especially, how these

ethnographic facts will be represented in final ethnographic texts" (p. 20). Additionally Lassiter (2005) holds that collaborative ethnography brings little prestige, power, and authority for academic researchers. Few actually engage in it. On checking major qualitative research anthologies I found no listing or reference to this methodology.

Both researchers address, to varying degrees, the four "R's" in their research methodologies, and both have described a level of rigour and risk-taking as control and empowerment is transferred to the research subjects. In the case of Lassiter, the very nature of the research process is interrogated as his use of "consultants" challenges the definition of ownership of the research. The two methodologies have much in common yet are not compatible. One works within the paradigms of the research establishment, the other challenges it.

DON'T STUDY US, STUDY YOURSELF

Edwards and Lassiter found that self-study, selfknowledge, or as Edwards' participants mentioned, "self-work" are a constituent feature of their research. Lassiter explains:

Understanding song from this point of view has made clearer some of the more absorbing dimensions of Native American experience, an experiential dynamic that should help to establish an understanding of American Indians on community-defined terms, not those of outsiders. In the end, then, to learn about Native America is also to learn about ourselves. (Lassiter, 2002, p. 15)

Edwards (2007), drawing from Gadamer, points to the maxim: "in order to understand an other we must first understand ourselves" (p. 21). This tenet harmonizes with a colleague's words, "don't study us, study yourself" spoken early on in my learning journey. It is, I am learning, a necessary and major component of researching with Aboriginal (or any) peoples who have suffered profound oppression.

This sentiment "don't study us, study yourself" is also reiterated by numerous Indigenous scholars (for example, see Marker, 2003; Cole, 2004; Swisher, 1998; and Deloria, 1998). It is a just response to a record of atrocious research practices that cannot be undone. However, this sentiment also resonates as I reflect on these (and other) writings, listen to stories, share in songs and celebrations, and engage in discussions, all of which

remind me of my western orientation towards the world. I have shared some of my self-learnings (and conundrums) in the reflections in this paper however self-study continues as I review themes which are emerging from the various issues discussed. I conceptualize these themes as the re/claiming of Native voice, the issue of understanding and respect for people of a culture, the issue of acknowledging colonial and racist agendas and practices in research, the need for protectionism of valued and sacred traditions, and the focus towards the specific and practical needs of Native communities in tandem with their control over research. I find myself comparing these themes to the methodologies described in this paper and see them firmly rooted in 'alternative' Aboriginal methodologies, but partially represented in collaborative methodologies which mediate some of these themes in their overall structure. However, in collaborative methodologies, the final word, regardless of the degree of recursive dialogue, still belongs to the researcher. His interpretation pervades in the theoretical models he constructs. An 'after the fact' response by the members of the Kiowa and Okanagan communities detailing the impact of the research on their communities, and spoken in their voices, would provide a fuller account than that given in the assurances of the researcher about extensive collaboration with them.

I find myself testing these themes against my own knowings and behaviours. I am alert to the language of academic discourse (theory, philosophy, paradigm, conclude, rationale, research) as word-symbols aimed to clarify thinking rather than word-concepts such as canoe or the circle which contextualize thinking. I am alert to my practices in music education, which make assumptions about another's music, teach an appreciation of music through a western lens, and by-pass opportunities to explore contemporary musical critiques that have the potential to disrupt comfortable habits. I look for omissions in school music agendas: meanings which lie outside Western musical and philosophical paradigms (Boyea, 1999), and messages of oppression of Aboriginal peoples expressed musically (Potts, 2006). I sensitize to the language of educators (including my language) and educational materials which perpetuate stereotypes. I begin to hear words of marginalization and racial coding (Bradley, 2006) which

I have been previously oblivious to. And then I wonder how many of these things, and others, I don't see or hear.

Marker's comment "the ethnographer's needs ... are being fulfilled, not the needs of Indigenous communities" (2003, p. 367), prompts me to confront the eventual question: whose needs are being fulfilled by my research? My first response, "whose needs are fulfilled in anyone's research?" evades this challenging question. Perhaps by facing it directly, my methodology and ethical path will become one. The words "don't study us, study yourself" carry a moral imperative which I am only beginning to appreciate. Perhaps this appreciation is part of the process of finding this path, and of becoming "ready."

Worby and Rigney state: "The dynamic relationship between givers and receivers of knowledge is a reminder that dealing with indigenous issues is one of the most sensitive and complex tasks facing teachers, learners, and researchers at all levels" (in Smith, 2005, p. 97). This paper illuminates some of these issues, and the self-reflection that they have incited at this stage of the journey.

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