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Native Spiritual Appropriation:

Words of Power, Relations of Power – Creating Stories & Identities

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Ce mémoire intitule:

Spiritual Appropriation: Words of Power, Relations of Power – Creating Stories & Identities

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Résumé

L'appropriation culturelle possède une diffusion très large et est un phénomène essentiellement intemporel. L'appropriation culturelle est définie comme «the taking- from a culture that is not one's own- of intellectual property, cultural expressions or artifacts, history and ways of knowledge» (Ziff et Rao 1997: 1). Cela comprend tous les aspects de la spiritualité, les objets sacrés, des valeurs, des histoires et des rites. L'appropriation est étroitement liée aux relations de pouvoir et à la politique. Avec la montée de la popularité du chamanisme et du néo-chamanisme dans la société occidentale, les peuples amérindiens de l'Amérique du Nord (ou d'Australie) expriment leurs inquiétudes et leur désapprobation en ce qui concerne l'appropriation de leurs cérémonies, rituels et croyances sacrées par les Occidentaux. Par le discours contre l'appropriation, les populations autochtones (re)gagnent et (re)créent une identité qui avait été négligée, supprimée et assimilée au cours de la colonisation. Cette création identitaire s'effectue par l'intermédiaire de l'écriture, dans les milieux universitaires, aussi non-académiques, et le partage des pratiques rituelles avec d'autres autochtones (pan amérindianisme). Les auteurs autochtones contestent le statu quo et désirent contribuer à faire avancer le débat concernant l'appropriation spirituelle, les relations de pouvoir et le néo-colonialisme. Les arguments et les opinions concernant l'appropriation spirituelle présentés ici traitent de génocide culturel, d'abus sexuels, de néo-colonialisme, de non-respect et d'inquiétude face aux dangers liés à une mauvaise utilisation des rituels et autres pratiques sacrées. Ce débat est lié au processus de guérison en contexte amérindien (Episkenew 2009). En participant à ce débat sur l'appropriation spirituelle, les peuples autochtones sont activement engagés dans la (re)définition de leur identité. C'est cet engagement actif qui permet à la guérison d'avoir lieu. Ce mémoire aborde quelques-uns des auteurs autochtones contemporains et examine leurs écrits. L'importance de l'histoire et du mot dans la création identitaire est explorée. L'analyse de certains textes portant sur la médecine, la sociologie, la religion et la culture de consommation rend explicite le lien entre identité et politique.

Mots clés:

Appropriation spirituelle, chamanisme, néo-chamanisme, identité, résistance autochtone, guérison.

Abstract

Cultural appropriation is a very wide spread and essentially timeless phenomenon. Cultural appropriation is defined as "the taking- from a culture that is not one's own- of intellectual property, cultural expressions or artifacts, history and ways of knowledge" (Ziff and Rao 1997: 1). This includes all aspects of spirituality, sacred items, values, stories and rites. Appropriation is closely linked to power relations and politics. With the rise of popularity of shamanism and neo-shamanism in Western society, the Indigenous people of North America (and

Australia) are voicing their concerns, disapproval and opinions with regards to Western people appropriating Native ceremonies, rituals and sacred beliefs. Through the discourse of countering appropriation the Indigenous, people are (re)gaining and (re)creating an identity which had been neglected, suppressed and assimilated during the course of colonization. It is through the medium of writing in the academic, as well as non-academic, and the sharing of practices with other Natives (Pan-Indianism) that an identity is created. Native authors are challenging the status quo and engage, contribute and advance the debate of spiritual appropriation, power relations and neo-colonialism. The arguments and opinions with regards to spiritual appropriation presented here range from cultural genocide, sexual abuse, neo-colonialism, and disrespect to concern of improper use that can be dangerous for the user/practitioner. By engaging in the debate Indigenous culture is engaging in the healing process (Episkenew 2009). By participating in the debate of spiritual appropriation the Indigenous people are actively engaging in (re)defining their identity. It is this active engagement that allows healing to take place. The thesis brings together some of the current, Native authors and examines their opinions. The importance of the story and the word as creating identities is explored. By using diverse literature, some texts focusing on medicine, sociology, religion and consumer culture the debate of spiritual appropriation and the link to identity and politics is made more explicit.

Key Words:

Spiritual appropriation, neo-shamanism, shamanism, identity, indigenous resistance, healing process.

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This thesis is dedicated to my grand-parents, Christa Günther, Rolf Günther, Charlotte Möller and Heinz Möller, who tell great stories.

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Introduction

When I was visiting Ireland in September of 2010, I went to a small town, Carrick-on-Shannon, in the County of Roscommon. Relative to other Irish cities, the town is not that small at all. There is even a movie theater. We went for scones and tea in a small bakery. It was quite busy in the salon. When we were ready to leave I was standing in the entrance, putting on my rain coat. It is there that I observed the wall of flyers and notices. Right in the middle there was an ordinary white paper, advertising in black typed letters, courses in shamanism, shamanistic experience. Shamanism has moved from ancient Siberia to even the remote towns of modern Ireland.

What is the phenomenon that is springing up in urban centers, an attraction to spirituality, shamanism, nature traditions, an enchantment with past traditions or an exotic Otherness? To properly comprehend the issue of appropriation, one needs to understand the attraction that Western people feel towards shamanism and Native spirituality. It is important to understand what exactly it is that makes Native spirituality so popular. Only once this is recognized can one continue to explore the conflicts surrounding this issue, as it mainly arises due to the interest of Western people.

Magnuson (1989) relates a story of a "tribal elder from Neah Bay, a village on the Makah Indian Reservation perched on the edge of Washington's Olympic Peninsula". The elder tells a story of a family of white people visiting the reserve. The people kept looking into the windows of the houses, searching. Finally, the elder asked them what the visitors were looking for. The non-Natives replied that "they were looking for real Indians". This statement is very telling, as it illustrates preconceived notions from non-Natives about Natives. The image of the Indian living on a reserve, and owning or renting a house, cooking their meals on a stove, going grocery shopping, somehow does not fit into the Western image of being Indian. An Indian is supposed to be wild, nature loving, sleeping in a tipi, hunting, wearing leather cloths and a headband of feathers, singing songs and drumming around a fire. One starts to wonder, where do these images come from? Are they based on historical reality? How much has been fabricated by Western imagination, only to be marketed by Indians? There is certainly money to be made nowadays with the concept of ethnicity. Westerners love to go see and experience the exotic, the other culture. And the more one can participate, the better. The bookstores are full of books about Indian Spiritual Guides, self-help books about shamanism. Countless retreats, work-shops and sweat lodges are made available to urban non-Indians. However, on the other side of this fascination and enchantment with Native spirituality are the voices of the Native people and their stories that merit listening to, in order to better understand the complex situation of spiritual appropriation.

Thesis

Identity (re)creation is the main concern for Natives, in participating and advancing the debate of spiritual appropriation. Through the use of the Western established framework of validating and authenticating opinions, academic writing, power is regained. By actively engaging in the resistance and subversion of spiritual appropriation Natives are challenging current power relations and are regaining their "balance". Thus through recreating their identity they are healing from historical, colonial, and current socio-political inequalities.

Native people are finding their voices and are in the process of redefining and reclaiming their identity. Ultimately, by voicing their concerns and opinions through writing and talking, Natives bring the subject of spiritual appropriation to the forefront. Indigenous people are using the debate of spiritual appropriation as a resistance technique, as subversion. The criticizing of spiritual appropriation is but one way to define their current situation. Spiritual appropriation is used as a political tool to come to terms with the process of colonization and to reconstruct an identity of their choosing. By speaking and writing about spiritual appropriation, it becomes real and tangible; words create.

Native spirituality, shamanism, is used as a tool for healing. Westerners seek words of power in Native spiritual wisdom as a way of healing themselves. Natives continue to use sacred ceremonies and rituals for healing in the traditional way, and also as a political tool. Native people seek words of power through their claim to Native spirituality by voicing their concerns, resisting. In the process of resisting, Natives are redefining and recreating their identity. Shamanism is a tool of healing, for Western and Native people alike, only used in a different way. Through reading the current literature on shamanism and the arguments of Native writers, some differences in the way that Natives and non-Natives use and regard shamanism become evident. Generally speaking the following differences can be observed: 1) The Western person focuses on the individual. The Native focuses on the community. 2) The Western person focuses on the individual beneficial result of a ceremony and the Native person is mostly concerned with the proper use of protocol. 3) For the Western practitioner shamanism is seen as a safe activity. For the Native ceremonies and ritual are often associated with dangers. 4) The Westerner has a tendency to psychologize (Atkinson 1992) the involvements of spirits and see them metaphorically. The Native person might take spirits literally. 5) The Western person tries to universalize spiritual fundamentals to a universal truth. The Native looks for a more local spirituality. 6) Shamanism to the West is something that is thought to be earned rather quickly and easily. According to the Natives to become a medicine men takes time and learning. 7) Non-Natives use shamanism for individual healing and benefit. In Native society shamanism is used also as a tool to reinforce rules within a society. 8) In the Western setting, ceremonies, sweat-lodges and retreats come at a price. Natives usually do not charge for spiritual ceremonies, however gifts are accepted. In conclusion, shamanism practiced by the Westerner is different from that of the Native person in purpose,

form and content, still achieving much the same, the healing of the self. Ultimately, these differences in viewing Native spiritualities create the conflict and debate of spiritual appropriation. Many Natives are not content with the way that "their" ceremonies are used and how spirituality has become a very profitable market niche. These differences also show and make visible a difference in identity and culture. It is precisely these differences that on the one hand fascinate Western people and make Native spirituality so desirable. On the other hand, these differences provide the Natives with the opportunity to examine their culture, history, and their identity and in the process re-create and re-affirm it.

These differences between Natives and non-Natives, rendered visible through the debate of spiritual appropriation, serve as a focal point to resist and to create. Some of the differences might be imagined, some exaggerated, some real, others forgotten. However, by actively engaging with the subject realities are created and become multifaceted. The relations of power between the colonizer and the colonized become questions, as Natives actively participate in resisting the current situation.

In both contexts (Native and non-Native), the debate of appropriation, as well as in the application of shamanism or traditional knowledge, neo-shamanism, the ceremonies and practices, become a healing tool. By speaking about the appropriation of shamanism, Indigenous people are indeed defining, redefining and creating a context of power and of identity. Through creating stories identities are created.

Why is it important to listen to what the Indigenous have to say? Because by saying things, by stating their opinion and feelings they are creating a story, they are producing an alternative myth to the one that the colonizer has been producing (Episkenew 2009). An alternative myth and story makes it more interesting. All of a sudden there are more varieties, more colors to paint the picture of reality with. The Indigenous are making themselves heard, they respond, and thus participate more actively in the creation of an identity and their context. O. Young and Brunk (2009: 93) state that

> "Any discussion of the ethics of the appropriation of religious belief must be particularly sensitive to the experience of Indigenous people. There are important reasons for this. One of the most obvious is that colonization of Indigenous peoples around the world, and certainly North America, has involved the massive appropriation of their land, art objects and ceremonial artifacts, and the extinction or near extinction of their languages, practices, the flora and fauna of their habitats, and not least, of their spiritual beliefs and practices by the missionizing practices of the colonizing culture."

The colonizer myth is being challenged and resisted; the healing process for Indigenous people is becoming more defined, more active. A Native identity is confirmed and re-created.

Methodology

This project is a library research project, focusing on current publications of Natives, Native authors, in North America. Their arguments bring to the forefront many concerns, enriching discussions within the current political context. Their arguments are centered around the subject of spiritual appropriation of Native spirituality by non-Natives. This thesis brings together different Native authors to provide an overview of their concerns and arguments. The concerns and objections to spiritual appropriation are very similar, yet take different shapes, intensities and emotional charges. The authors reviewed in this thesis are contemporary, they are University educated, and most of them teach as professors at Universities.

The criteria for the selection of the authors presented in this paper are based on a few main factors: 1) the authors' identification as Native and 2) being from North America and 3) having written about appropriation; 4) being contemporary. One thing that these authors have in common is that they have all received a University education and degree, many of them working as Professors or associate professors in the field of Native Studies. For the most part, the authors reviewed are against spiritual appropriation to a more or lesser degree.

In order to better situate the arguments against spiritual appropriation it is important to provide the current context of Native spirituality as being very popular with non-Natives. Fascination with the exotic Other, in this case Native spirituality and shamanism, has a long history. It is very important to highlight the power relations and dynamics between Natives and non-Natives, as they impact spiritual appropriation.

Organization

Chapter 1 deals with appropriation. Appropriation is defined and situated in the current context. The term appropriation has become associated with negative meanings, closer to "stealing" from a culture. Appropriation is also used as resistance, as explained by Kulchyski (1997). Appropriation is regarded as the dominant cultural group taking some aspects of the minority or colonized culture. Therefore the issue of power and dominance is central with regards to the subject of appropriation.

Chapter 2 is about power relations. The colonizing culture, the West, is dominant over the Native population, the colonized. This implies that power and authority are in the colonizer's hands. In essence the colonizer writes history, has the authority to write and speak about the other, thereby constructing the other and a specific discourse. Laws and regulations, such as the

Indian Act, Religious Freedom Act, Bill C-31, etc. all impose and construct a certain history and thus identities.

Chapter 3 discusses the current popularity of spirituality, the New Age movement and in particular shamanism and neo-shamanism. Throughout history shamanism has frightened and fascinated the Western culture. The shaman has been seen as an evil sorcerer, as a mental patient and as a wise medicine man. A perceived lack of meaning in our modern consumer society, an identity crisis and a resistance to religious institutions and hierarchy are some of the factors that might contribute to the enormous popularity of contemporary quest of spirituality and shamanism. Authors such as Black Elk, Mircea Eliade, Carlos Castaneda, Lynn Andrews and Michael Harner have certainly helped in bringing shamanism to popular and mass culture by mystifying the exotic knowledge as valid and authentic. They attract through the claiming of secret knowledge, magical knowledge, powerful knowledge.

Chapter 4 introduces some current Native North American authors and their opinions about Western people appropriating sacred knowledge, ceremonies and rituals. These authors are creating resistance through their writing and through academic discourse.

Chapter 5 examines the thesis that the reasons for writing against appropriation are to create and recreate an identity. Resistance through writing and creating a story and discourse about appropriation is part of the healing process of the Native nations. In this chapter the link is made between resistance, identity creation, and the healing process.

Chapter 6 addresses some of the issues that arise out of the discussion of appropriation and identity creation, such as power as a central dynamic in the debate, active engagement in the resistance process, the importance of protocol, other Natives borrowing ceremonies and lastly the role of ethics and laws with regards to appropriation.

Chapter 1: Appropriation

Cultural and Spiritual Appropriation

Cultural sharing, assimilation, as well as cultural appropriation have been going on since the dawn of cultures. As long as there is contact between peoples and cultures, elements of a tradition will be shared, appropriated, forgotten, modified and evolve. Appropriation of cultural traits is but one signifier of change and evolution. Culture is never static.

> "The appropriation of culture probably occurred before human records, but it has also been a function of 'tribal', national, and imperial expansion (…). Cultural appropriation becomes a question of cultural rights and difference and enriches or makes problematic, depending on the view, the possibility of community" (Hart in Ziff and Rao 1997: 138).

Cultural appropriation is defined as "the taking-from a culture that is not one's own-of intellectual property, cultural expressions or artifacts, history and ways of knowledge" (From Resolution of Writers Union, Canada 1992, in Ziff and Rao 1997: 1). This definition also includes spiritual aspects, ceremonies and beliefs. In the strict sense appropriation means to make one's own. Owen (2008: 14) writes that "Appropriation', ordinarily a value-free term to mean 'to make one's own', 'to annex' or 'to assign', in this context has become a negative signifier – the act of using something in a way that it was not intended". Thus, appropriation has to be seen in contrast to sharing or voluntarily giving away cultural knowledge or cultural material. In the current debate of appropriation the meaning has a negative connotation. Another definition which resonates this view is that cultural appropriation can be said to occur when "members of one culture take the cultural practices of another as if their own, or as if the right of possession should not be questioned or contested" (Hart 1997: 138 in Welch 2002: 21). Appropriation is about property, possession and ownership of culture. Culture becomes something that is owned and possessed by certain peoples.

Spiritual Appropriation

Spiritual appropriation is encompassing systems of beliefs, sacred rituals, artifacts, stories, regalia, symbols and other behaviors and traditions that have to do with the sacred. In order to better understand what is meant by spiritual appropriation, spirituality has to be looked at closer. What is spirituality? Sometimes spirituality is regarded as different from religion. Owen (2008: 7) notes that "the move towards 'spirituality' and away from institutional forms of religion is also part of a wider trend in Western society". In this sense spirituality can be seen as an alternative to religion. Carrette and King (2005: 1 cited in Owen 2008: 10) state that:

> "for many people, spirituality has replaced religion as old allegiances and social identities are transformed by modernity. However, in a context of individualism and erosion of

> traditional community allegiances, 'spirituality' has become a new cultural addiction and a claimed panacea for the angst of modern living."

Owen (2008: 9) draws our attention to the fact that Natives and Westerners might regard spirituality and what is included in the definition a little different. For the Natives, land, life, community can all be spiritual. Spirituality cannot be separated from everyday life. "Spirituality is the popular name for religion because Indians refuse to separate religion from everything else" (Vine Deloria Jr. in Owen 2008: 12). Owen (ibid.) continues that "this differs from the Western idiomatic use of the term "spirituality', which has tended to oppose it with 'materiality'".

Spiritual appropriation is a phenomenon that is seen and experienced currently by Natives around the world. The Western, urban, modern person has appropriated, made their own, a number of Indigenous ceremonies and spiritual beliefs. These include the communication with spirits and beings other than humans, participating in sweat lodges, vision quests, and the use of Native symbols such as the medicine wheel.

Laws of Appropriation

Native people have been objecting to appropriation in a number of ways and for some time. The most obvious examples in the objection of appropriation are the land claims of Native people. The Indigenous population is contesting the taking of land, which is important to the Native people for their culture, their ceremonies and their lives. Land-claims, however, are only one part of culture and "cultural property". Nason (in Ziff and Rao 1997: 252) points out some legislative forms that are already in place, dealing with more intangible cultural goods:

- The 1970 UNESCO Convention's identification of archival materials for protection as patrimony.
- The 1993 U.N. declaration that the intellectual property of indigenous peoples is theirs to own and control.
- The 1990 NAGPRA (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act) designation of sacred and patrimony objects as repatriable and specification that tribal governments have sovereign powers that can be exercised over special categories of inalienable property.

Some fields of law do recognize intangible cultural or individual property and ideas, such as intellectual property law, and its subfields of trademark law and copyright law. However, these

fields might have one major shortcoming in the sense that other cultures might view property in a different way and have different opinions and notions of property. In this sense, laws and regulations are based on Western notions of property. A further complication in the application of certain laws with regards to appropriation is that "the existence of shared cultures and histories suggests that sometimes these entitlements might also be shared or sharable" (Ziff and Rao 1997: 3).

One of the basic premises for these laws and acts is that culture is essential to well-being and identity and that appropriation can have harmful effects on the appropriated community. "This claim is therefore based on a concern for the integrity and identities of cultural groups", it can "damage or transform a given cultural good or practice" and that some can profit financially and economically to the "detriment of others", and finally, a claim based on sovereignty, that the laws that are currently in effect "fail to reflect alternative conceptions of what should be treated as property or ownership in cultural goods" (Ziff and Rao 1997: 8).

A lot or most of the spiritual knowledge and wisdom is thought to be taught through the spirits. The spirits are helpers, they guide and teach the shaman. Most of the times it is the spirits that chose a person to become a shaman or a healer, a choice manifested through some experiences, dreams, visions, etc. In most cases the chosen individual has to oblige to the spirits wishes, if not, they might get very sick (see for example Eliade 1964, Harvey 2003). Brown (1997) examines the question "who owns what spirits share?" This is very important. If wisdom comes from spirits, it is essentially open to all who will listen to spirits. Brown (1997) provides an example, where Patrick, a nationally known Californian channel, encounters such a problem. Patrick is frequently given advice, which he exploits financially to help other people, by a Scottish spirit Owen Campbell. One day Patrick realized that another channel was using the same spirit to help people. This is a bit of a conundrum, as to not contradict oneself one cannot deny the spirit, nor claim exclusivity over him/her. "Both on logical and spiritual grounds, it isn't easy to sustain proprietary claims to spirits. Struggles over spiritual property are therefore displaced to debates over the authenticity of a channel's message" (Brown 1997: 11).

The question of appropriation is a difficult one with regards to material culture, and even more difficult and complex with regards to spiritual appropriation. There are a number of different issues of appropriation at the moment: land-claims, museum artifacts, cultural artifacts (art, souvenirs, etc.), excavation of bones and gravesites, ethno-botanical knowledge, and belief systems and ceremonies.

What is being appropriated:

"Many neo-shamanism practitioners rely on symbols and artifacts that are usually associated with North American Indians. Among the most popular are vision quests, eagle feathers, hawks, the four directions, the sacred circle, the sweat lodge, drums, dream catchers, and sacred pipes" (Znamenski 2007: 279). As a response to this appropriation, during the World Congress of Religions in 1993 in Chicago Indian leaders denounced "the intolerable and obscene imitations of sacred Lakota rites by hucksters, cultists, and self-styled New Age shamans" (Brown 1997: 183). Many people, some claiming Indian ancestry, are promoting and profiting from the distribution of sweat lodges, pipe ceremonies, and medicine wheel rituals, causing the debate of appropriation (Brown 1997). Owen (2008: 50) observes that the two most appropriated ceremonies are that of the sweat lodge and vision quest. The pipe ceremony is also often appropriated.

Owen (2008) remarks that most of the spiritual elements appropriated by Westerners, as well as borrowed by other Indigenous groups, are those of the Lakota tradition. The most often appropriated rituals or ceremonies are that of the sweat lodge and the pipe ceremony, as well as the sun dance. The Lakota traditions became popular because of a book *Black Elk Speaks: Being the Story of a Holy Man of the Ogalla Sioux* by John Neihardt. A Lakota Elder, Black Elk, interviewed by Neihardt, describes the way of life of the Lakota in order not to lose this knowledge. Therefore,

> "the Lakota universalized their ceremonial traditions in order to preserve them and make them accessible to non-Lakota, both Native and non-Native, at different times for different reasons, whether to present Lakota spirituality as a 'world religion' or as a source of 'authentic tradition' adapted for a pan-Native American resistance movement" (Owen 2008: 58).

The book was first published in 1932, however it was only in the 1970s that the book became a best-seller and very popular (Owen 2008: 41). This illustrates how in different times of history the aims of speaking of Lakota spirituality were adapted to the historical context. The first context was that of fear of the disappearance of a tradition and to bring it therefore to equal value terms as Christianity. The second context is that of Native people wanting to build a stronger community and stronger bonds with other Natives in order to validate their claims. During this time organizations, such as the American Indian Movement (hereafter the AIM) established in 1968, arose in urban San Francisco. This further complicates the debate of appropriation, as sometimes it is unclear what elements are shared voluntarily and which ones are taken. With which aim is cultural knowledge shared and with whom seems to make a very big difference. These two instances also illustrate the power of cultural diffusion for political purposes. Culture in this way is used as a tool, as a strategy, as a resistance to the current political situation.

Appropriation as Subversion

> "Appropriation and subversion involve a process of semiotic reversal: taking signs which point in one direction and somehow intervening to reverse their meaning-effect so that the signs indicate an opposing meaning or an opposite direction" (Kulchyski 1997: 614).

Appropriation can serve as a focal point in resisting a current political status quo. Subversion is a kind of rebellion or resistance with regards to appropriation. Some resistance to appropriation is very well documented in history, especially when a law or an act is passed due to this subversion. In his article *From Appropriation to Subversion* Peter Kulchyski (1997) makes an interesting connection between appropriation and subversion. According to Kulchyski (1997: 614), appropriation and subversion are two sides of the same coin and the same cultural trait that is appropriated can be subverted and used as resistance to appropriation. The two examples provided above, described in Owen (2008), that of the book about Black Elk and the forming of a Pan-Indian movement and groups such as AIM, illustrate how appropriation becomes resistance.

> "Appropriation involves the practice on the part of dominant social groups of deploying cultural texts produced by dominated social groups for their own (elite) interests. […] Subversion involves the practice by marginal and dominated social groups of deploying cultural texts produced by and for the established order in the interest or with the effect of cultural resistance" (Kulchyski 1997: 614).

Appropriation has to do with power dynamics and relations. Culture and spirituality becomes something that is owned. Once culture has the status of property the necessary question arises of whom does this property belong to, who has control over what? The laws such as intellectual property law, and regulations such Repatriation Act (NAGPRA 1990) have some impact on these questions. It is necessarily political. Since appropriation is closely related to power, as it is usually the dominant society that appropriates traits from the minority culture (Ziff and Rao 1997, Episkenew 2009). The Western society in North America is the dominant society, the colonizer, the law maker, the majority. It thus becomes imperative to understand the historical relations between the colonizer, the West, and the colonized, the Natives, in order to fully comprehend the debate of appropriation and the power dynamics in play.

Chapter 2: Power Relations

History and Colonization

The colonization of Indigenous people of America started with the arrival of European explorers and settlers. The colonizers imposed their laws, forms of thinking, religion, education, and ways of trading on the Native people. Infectious diseases and warfare, along with policies and laws greatly reduced the numbers of Native people. The colonizers tried to assimilate the Native population by imposing their laws, seizing land, and forbidding their religious practices. Native children were taken from their parents to be educated in boarding schools, not allowed to speak their languages, wear their clothes, practice their religion and were often abused.

Even the term indigenous is an indicator of dominance and power. Owen (2008) notes that the term indigenous usually refers to marginalized people. She goes further, stating that

> "[f]or Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith they are the 'colonized peoples' (1997: 7), a definition that excludes 'indigenous" Europeans. Although contemporary Druidry may be considered by some as indigenous, the people it belongs to are not, leading to the omission of white European expressions from the category 'indigenous religions'" (2008: 1).

This observation further reinforces the importance of the history of colonization, as well as illustrates the ongoing political struggles and categories. Owen (2008:4) notes that "Native American activists and several scholars address appropriation of Native American spirituality as a further symptom of colonization and argue that struggles over land and religion are inseparable". Znamenski (2007: x) writes that

> "I do have my personal take on the topic. I do not agree that we can dissociate shamanism and spiritual life in general from their contexts, or what Eliade called the 'terror of history'. Although our spiritualities and beliefs do acquire lives of their own, they carry the stamps of our upbringing, the spirit of our time, and our time. As much as we may desire it, we cannot escape our history".

Shamanism and spirituality are closely linked to history and to identity. The dominance of the colonizer has impacted the expression of spirituality and the sense of Native identity through the application of their political and social power.

Policies and Laws

The Indian Act (Canada 1876), Religious Freedom Act (US 1978), Bill-C31 (Canada 1985), NAGPRA (North American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, U.S. 1990), and the Indian Arts and Crafts Act (U.S. 1990) are some of the major laws that directly affect Native identity, religion, and their arts and crafts.

The Indian Act was passed in 1876 in Canada and "provides Canada's federal government exclusive authority to legislate in relation to Indians and Lands reserved for Indians" (Wikipedia, accessed Dec. 3, 2011). The act defines who is "Indian". Many amendments have been made to this act, refining and redefining some aspects. In 1885 an amendment was made to forbid religious ceremonies and dances. Bill C-31 was passed in 1985 which is trying to make the law less discriminatory. Bill C-31 mostly deals with who can have Indian status. It allowed some people who had lost it to regain it, therefore it deals with defining Indian identity and Indianness.

> "1985: Amended to allow First Nations women the right to keep or regain their status even after "marrying out" and to grant status to the children (but not grandchildren) of such a marriage. This amendment was debated in Parliament as Bill C-31. Under this amendment, full status Indians are referred to as 6–1. A child of a marriage between a status (6–1) person and a non-status person qualifies for 6–2 (half) status, but if the child in turn married another 6–2 or a non-status person, the child is non-status. If a 6–2 marries a 6–1 or another 6–2, the children revert to 6–1 status. Blood quantum is disregarded, or rather, replaced with a "two generation cut-off clause". Under amendments to the Indian Act (Bill C-31), Michel Band members have individual Indian status restored. No provision made in Bill C-31 for the restoration of status under the Band enfranchisement provision that was applied to the Michel Band. According to Thomas King, around half of status Indians are currently marrying non-status people, meaning this legislation accomplishes complete legal assimilation in a matter of a few generations" (Wikipedia, accessed December 3, 2011).

The law is defining Native identity through the application of Western law, rather than Indian law. Many acts and policies have been extremely dominant and violent towards the Native population, making it just to take their land, their children and their identity. In 1892 Thomas Morgan established a series of criminal offenses for Natives with regards to their religious practices:

> "Medicine Men – Any Indian who shall engage in the practice of so-called medicine men, or who shall resort to any artifice or device to keep the Indians of the reservation from adopting and following civilized habits or pursuits, or shall use any arts of conjurer to prevent Indians from abandoning their barbarous rites and customs, shall be deemed guilty of an offense, and upon conviction thereof, for the first offense shall be imprisoned for not less than ten days and not more

> than thirty days: Provided that, for subsequent conviction for such an offense the maximum term or imprisonment shall not exceed six month" (Irwin in Irwin 2000: 296).

Practicing any form of Native religious activity became a crime. Considering these laws and how recently religious freedom was granted, it becomes quite ironic to find so many accounts, books, work-shops, etc. in our midst, advertising and selling exactly that, Native American spirituality and shamanism.

What does the law have to say about appropriation? There are some cases and concerns about cultural appropriation. A lot has to do with Indigenous knowledge, for example about plant use, especially medicinal plant use. However, there is also talk about use of spiritual appropriation. Can anyone forbid someone to use what they have seen or observed on their own? Many Indigenous people are frustrated and unhappy with the way that Western people use their spiritual ceremonies. The usual claim to validate these ceremonies is by saying that they are traditional. However, many Natives feel that this is a form of disrespect for them and their form of life. Does intellectual property law cover spiritual beliefs and practices? Owen (2008: 25) concludes that this situation is very difficult, as many non-Native people have been given information from Natives freely. They might thus feel a sense of entitlement to this information. In modern times, the sharing of information is so vast, modern technology places information for access at the tip of your fingers and texts are becoming a form of authenticity and validation.

In Western society there is field of law that protects the intellectual property of an individual. Therefore, if a person invents something they can claim it as theirs. However, there is no such law for community property, such as a belief system or a ceremony. This is how and why there is a debate over spiritual appropriation. It becomes further complicated by some statements or sentiments of Native people who claim that some knowledge is specific to a particular shaman or medicine man. He or she will pass the knowledge on to people who are ready and worthy to receive this knowledge. The knowledge is also obtained through visions and communications with spirits. Parts of the spiritual wisdom are thus part of the community and part of the individual medicine man. Depending on the circumstances Natives might either argue that the knowledge belongs to an individual or to the community. And what happens when an individual willingly shares his or her knowledge with an outsider? And sometimes Western individuals will claim that knowledge came to them from "spirit", not from any particular culture or person (Brown 1997). This shows how complex the question of intellectual and traditional property is. However, one thing remains, to claim knowledge - traditional, spiritual, medicinal – is to have a certain power.

The Power of the Colonizer (authority, who can speak about whom)

The colonizers' domination and imposition of ideas, laws, and ways of being has ensured and contributed to their dominance. More than that, they have always felt and believed themselves superior towards the "uncivilized" Indigenous people and many of the colonizers' efforts have been directed at civilizing the Natives, by way of laws and religious reformation.

How can one achieve authority to write about a specific people? Writing, as a medium of information transmission, is very important to Western societies. In order to write about other people in an "authentic" and recognized manner, one has to go to University. University gives people the necessary credentials to be regarded with authority and credibility. At University one can become an anthropologist and study and write about the "mystic" other, through ethnography. However, things are not as simple as it might seem, lately there is a lot of discussion about ethnographic research, namely with regards to respect, communication, "going native", emic and etic perspectives. Jocks (in Irwin 2000: 71) also notes that in order to be able to truthfully write about a community is to take into account their history. "Of course historical study is the only way to achieve depth in the analysis of religious, political, or other developments and questions" (ibid.).

Colonial history and the importance of writing have given the Western society a feeling of dominance and importance, which is necessarily reflected in our scholarship, in our laws, in our way of being and interpreting the world and Others. Lee (2000: 2) notes the following about ethnography:

> "The issue is not analysis but communication. One never becomes the other but only coexists through meaningful relationships that are more or less insightful and revealing, more or less central or marginal to the issues of the day, more or less in contact with the reality of the other. The complexity of this engagement requires a degree of honesty that allows for a transformation of perceptions, an awakening to the value of being other in a context of spiritual authenticity that often demands a re-contextualizing of first impressions and then, more substantively, of later impressions".

In the current texts of scholars, there is a lot of concern about respect. When writing about another culture one has to deeply respect the people. The other concern is that of dialogue. The researcher has to be in a close relation with the other person or people, understand them, and respect them, in order to have a meaningful dialogue with them. Authors, such as Lassiter (2005) and Ridington (in Irwin 2000), only to name a few, are criticizing ethnographies of being monologues, where the researcher already interprets and analyses the other culture, without

truly ever engaging in dialogue with the people. This again is a manifestation of the feelings of superiority of Western scholars vis-à-vis their Native subjects. Jeremy Narby, in his book *The Cosmic Serpent* illustrates the same underlying superiority problem that haunts many researchers. This feeling of superiority and "knowing best" results in a lack of dialogue, indeed a lack of listening and therefore understanding. This lack of proper understanding can lead to misinterpretation of the informant's story. Scholars interpret and analyze mythical stories of creation and their belief systems in terms of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, with external frames of reference and understanding, instead of simply listening. Narby's book is showing another way of listening, taking the Indians word for word, not looking for any metaphors and interpretations. As a result, Narby puts forward a new thesis, which undoubtedly is not very accepted among scholars, due to the novelty of it all. No matter the acceptance of his theory or how scholars view his ideas, the important lesson to take away from this book is the approach of listening to what the 'Other' has to say. The next challenge is the proper translation of the thoughts and information in question.

Brown (1997: 14) also raises the question of the anthropologist with regards to the question of appropriation.

> "After all, haven't we 'appropriated' myths and rituals for our own ends by writing about them in books and journals? Until the authority of anthropology came under fierce challenge, didn't we claim special insight into traditions of others? Although we may not perform the rituals about which we write, doesn't our retailing of those rituals in professional monographs have a subtly performative dimension? I pose these questions to suggest that we should examine our own mixed motives before we throw stones – or should I say healing crystals? – at those who would grab pieces of Indigenous religions to enrich their own lives."

Resistance

There has always been some form of resistance by Native people to the oppression and imposition of the colonizer. As Irwin (in Irwin 2000) describes, this resistance came mostly in the form of charismatic Native leaders who deemed it very important to keep spiritual and traditional values going. Resistance can take many different forms: armed resistance, protests, juridical resistance, through information and education, etc. Newton (in Ziff and Rao 1997: 195) comments on the Crazy Horse trial. The case had been deliberately constructed "as part of a multiple strategy: as a vehicle to engender cohesion and community pride; to educate and to build opposition (…)". Ward Churchill writes about various resolutions of the AIM and Traditional Elders Circle that have been passed against spiritual appropriation by non-Natives. Two examples are the *AIM resolution Sovereign Diné Nation, Window Rock, AZ, May 11, 1984* and the *Resolution of the*

5th annual meeting of the Traditional Elders Circle, Northern Cheyenne Nation, two moons' camp, Rosebud Creek, Montana Center, October 5, 1980 (Churchill in Harvey 2003). Irwin (in Irwin 2000:297) notes that the strategies of the Native people in responding to "this crushing onslaught against their spiritual lives, goods, and diverse religious practices […] has been a range of strategies in a spectrum between two major alternatives: accommodation and resistance." He further states that accommodation was seldom, if ever reciprocated by the colonizer, "resulting in a subordination of Native concerns to those of the dominating political hierarchies on state and federal levels" (Irwin in Irwin 2000: 297). Inevitably this resistance sometimes ended in tragic deaths. One of these examples is the massacre at Wounded Knee in 1890 where the U.S army killed over one hundred Natives, including children, because they were practicing a Lakota dance. An official resistance movement, called the AIM was formed in 1968 in Minneapolis, by George Mitchell and Dennis Banks (Chippewas). "The 'spiritual rebirth' of Indian rights was affirmed as a union between traditional religious and political leaders espousing a revival of Native identity and a rebirth of Native religious practices as a means for political empowerment" (Irwin in Irwin 2000:303). SPIRIT (Support and Protection for Indian Religions and Indigenous Traditions) is another organization in this sense. These two organizations joined in 1993 at the Lakota Summit V and passed the *Declaration of War against Exploiters of Lakota Spirituality*. The declaration is to warn non-Natives about the appropriation of Native spirituality and against the desecration of Native ceremonial ways. Present at the Summit were "about 500 representatives from 40 different tribes and bands" (www.thepeoplespaths.net, accessed January 10, 2012). They have passed the "Declaration of War against Exploiters of Lakota Spirituality" unanimously. The principal authors of the *Declaration of War against Exploiters of Lakota Spirituality* were Wilmer Mesteth, Darrell Standing Elk and Phyllis Swift Hawk (ibid.). The internet provides also another tool for Native people to reach out across different traditions and countries, creating a Pan-Indian movement, where information, insights, ideas, and traditional knowledge are shared among Indigenous people.

> "There is nothing 'radical' about such resistance – it is a natural inclination to preserve valued cultural practices that are inseparable from a way of life and identity grounded in deep, abiding spiritual principles distinct from those imposed by aggressive missionization and assimilative government policies" (Irwin in Irwin 2000: 309).

Chapter 3: Popularity of Shamanism

From Ancient Siberia to Contemporary Urban Bookstores

One of the reasons that the discussion of shamanism and appropriation is becoming such an important subject is because it has become very widespread in popular culture, with non-Indigenous people. Courses and books are advertising shamanism in bookstores, online, and on flyers, for spiritual enlightenment, and as a tool of self-help. This shift from- traditional, tribal settings to global, urban centers changes some of the aspects of spirituality and ritual that might be associated with shamanism. The political and social context of the 1960s, with the counterculture movement, has contributed widely to the spread of shamanism in urban centers. In books, academics and non-academics portray the shaman as a wise figure. The author, or the voice of the text, becomes often the apprentice and the receiver of special and secret knowledge. The books focus on the experiences of the author. The lore of the exotic becomes more fascinating, mysterious and, valid, as the "real" Natives are "seemingly" vanishing.

The word shaman is derived from the Tungus language, a native group of Siberia. Russian settlers started to adapt the term to native spiritual healers. Germanic explorers eventually introduced the term into Western literature, in order to describe spiritual doctors from Siberia (Znamenski 2007: 5). Since the meeting of Western and Native cultures there has always been some fascination with the Other. And there have also always been interpretations of the Other. Shamans and their practices have been regarded as evil sorcery, mental illness and true techniques of spiritual healing. Throughout history Western people have constructed an image of the Native person, which often became romanticized. Native Americans were thought to become extinct (see King 2003 for example), which, in the mind of the Western person, put the Native in a special category. Romanticization of the Native is done in various ways, through photography, films, etc. One example of this are the photographs by Edward Curtis (1868-1952), taken around 1900.The pictures show Indians in their traditional outfits, even though most of them were staged. Movies portraying the image of Indians as the "noble savage" or the wise elder, the beautiful, sensual Indian woman, and connected to nature.

Authors, such as Mircea Eliade in *Shamanism: Ancient Techniques of Ecstasy*, provide a scholarly context for shamanism, underlying some universal traits. John Neihardt's book *Black Elk Speaks* became very popular during the 1960s, even though it was first published during the 1930s. Another important contribution to the popularity of shamanism in popular culture is Carlos Castaneda's book *The Teachings of Don Juan*. A more recent book is Michael Harner's (1980) *The Way of the Shaman*. Harner is also using a universal technique approach to shamanism, similar to Mircea Eliade. Books that have caused great controversy are Lynn Andrews' books, including *Medicine Woman*, since the author allegedly describes her own experiences, which are not true

and misrepresent some Native traditions. With reference to the book by Lynn Andrews, Magnuson (1989: 4) writes that "Andrews's own religious experience is not the issue as much as her use of Native American references and symbols out of context". He goes on to illustrate that the Cree, about whom she had written, did not know of Andrews, furthermore, she places religious traditions with tribes that had never practiced such versions. The difference between the *Don Juan* and *Black Elk* and even Andrews' books is the reversal of roles. Historically reports of shamanism were often written from an etic perspective. More recently a more emic perspective has also been adopted. Many books on shamanism are now reversing the role of the author from bringer of knowledge to the student, from teacher to apprentice (personal communication with Prof. Crépeau Nov. 8, 2011). Intimate and secret knowledge is shared with the apprentice. There is the lore of the secret, the mystic and the exotic. When reading such books, the reader might feel special and acknowledge much more easily the stories. The reader becomes a witness and a receiver of special knowledge, which is usually only available through long training or a spiritual or visionary event. Tribal and ancient knowledge becomes so much more valuable since many traditions and cultures are seemingly disintegrating, losing their traditional way of life to modern capitalistic and consumerist ways. It is an economic principle, that commodity is scarce it is valuable.

Popular Culture and Enchantment

The "Imaginative Indian" has always captured and enchanted the minds of people, which can be seen throughout history in different circumstances (Greene 1988). However, during the counterculture movement in the 1960s in America, shamanism made it to popular culture and became much more visible through books, work-shops, and retreats. It is really during this time that Native spirituality has started to be massively appropriated by non-Natives. Although people in the past always had some fascination with Indians, and used their image for political purposes, the 1960s saw the beginning of a new era of appropriation of their spirituality. As being Indian has increased in popularity since the 1970's (Deloria 1998) there is also census data from the United States, as well as from Canada showing an increase in the demand to be registered as a Native (see Canada Statistics for example, www.statcan.gc.ca, accessed January 11, 2012). Canada statistics shows an increase in the percentage of aboriginal population from the year of 2001 to 2006.

"Playing Indian" has been going on since the contact of Natives and Westerners, as Green (1988) points out. There are countless instances in which the Western person has appropriated some parts of the Native identity and culture, for different reasons. The Boston Tea Party is a historical example of non-Natives dressing up as Indians, playing Indian, for identity and political reasons. "Those original rebels had used Indianness to shift the location of their identities from Britain to America" (Deloria 1998: 161).

> "Similar dynamics characterized the more positive meanings being attached to and detached from Indianness, White radicals sought political power by appropriating and cobbling together meanings that crossed borders of culture and race. In the process, they devalued such words like *Indian* and *nigger* and deemphasizing the social realities that came with those words. […] And if whites claimed and then diluted the very words that described those social words, they could offer in return only a power more linguistic than actual" (Deloria 1998: 164-165).

The "Red Power" movement started in the 1960s as Natives got political voices (Deloria 1998). At the same time Black Power, antiwar protest, feminism, multi-culturalism, and the New Age movement were the political and social context, with a heavy emphasis, as contradictory as it may seem, on individualism and community. During this time non-Natives started to appropriate Native rituals and idealize the imagined Native links to nature. Native people became politically stronger as well, policies and laws slowly backing up their claims. "In building the political movement, young Indians looked to elders and traditional, fundamentally altering the way subsequent native people would construct their identities" (Deloria 1998: 166). Deloria quotes Paul Goodman:

> "In such a decentered world, many people found themselves searching for something fixed, real and authentic. Paul Goodman concluded that what really drove the counter-culture was a crisis of meaning that was spiritual at the base and that 'in the end it is religion that constitutes the strength of this generation and not, as I used to think, their morality, political will, and common sense.'"

Deloria argues that by playing Indian, people got everything they needed, that is an individual interpretation of what Indianness meant to be, along with tipis and a close relationship to the earth, as well as something stable, a 'first principle' (Deloria 1998: 167).

Deloria further continues his historical overview through the 1960s and 1970s, when spiritual figures such as Sun Bear became very popular. Deloria argues that this was to counter Christianity and its authority, using Indian spirituality along with hallucinogenic drugs, vision quests and personal experiences (1998: 168). Popular books at this time where *Black Elk Speaks* (1972) and *Seven Arrows*. Deloria distinguishes previous attempts at playing Indian in the 1950s, from the emerging Indian spirituality starting in the 1970s. As the popularity increased, the number of people who actually studied with Indians decreased and the cultural gap between the real Natives and white people seeking authentic Indian spirituality grew wide. As

> "non-Indians began taking up permanent native identities in order to lay claim to the cultural power of Indianness in the white imagination [,] many native people found empowerment in a white-focused, spiritual mediator's role, and they acted accordingly. It became difficult to sort out who was whom along this continuum,

> and the question of mediators' Indian identity has been fiercely and frequently contested ever since" (Deloria 1998: 168).

The problem became that people interested in Indian spirituality rarely ever engaged with real Indians, only with such mediators as Sun Bear, who, as Deloria puts it, "served not to reveal the lines between Indian and non-Indian but to blur them even further" (1998: 169).

The counterculture movement made way to the New Age movement in the 1970s and 1980s to the present. It is not a very well defined movement, as it incorporates many practices and beliefs in America, as well as in Europe. It is centered on self-help and personal development (Deloria 1998: 170). Deloria describes the New Age movement as follows, inspired by MacLaine:

> "In New Age identity quests, one can see the long shadows of certain strands of postmodernism: increasing reliance on texts and interpretations, runaway individualism within a rhetoric of community, the distancing of native people, and a gaping disjuncture between a cultural realm of serious play and the power dynamics of social conflict. New Age thinking tends to focus on ultimate individual liberation and engagement with a higher power, having little interest in the social world that lies between self and spirit" (Deloria 1998: 170).

Another important idea and movement was that of multiculturalism which came along in the 1970s and 1980s. This however, intended to relieve unequal power and opportunities of diverse people from one nation, brought about other difficulties. The new difficulties faced by embracing multiculturalism were that the "breaking down of inequities and social restrictions enlarged the number of people who fit multiple categories at the same time: one might be Swedish, Dakota, and Latino all at once" (Deloria 1998: 173). Deloria (ibid.: 174) suggests that this view of Indianness is very positivist, focused on environmental wisdom, is community centered, spiritually insightful, however it has a tendency to erase "the complex history of Indians and others."

Deloria's (ibid.: 177) criticism of New Age is that "indeed, New Age's greatest intellectual temptation lies in the wishful fallacy that one can engage in social struggle by working on oneself." Deloria examines how the real Native and the one imagined and sought after by white spiritual practitioners are in contrast and sustain each other. Because there are real Indians, living on reserves, poor, living far removed from the actual spiritual seekers, they are different. This difference provides the Indians with power and authenticity (ibid.: 176). However, he continues that only certain aspects of a different culture are sought after, the rest is forgotten. Yet, the difference also authenticates the parts of a culture that become marketed and purchased. In an Indian-run newspaper, called *Indian Country Today*, some of these issues received a critical reflection from Native writers. Deloria (1998: 178) observes that as Indians felt disempowered, mediums such as *Indian Country Today* gave them back some sense of power and a voice. Now,

using the same mediums, such as newspapers, that had made them feel powerless before, power could be regained. Deloria writes, inspired by Foucault:

> "The power to define and exclude, the power to appropriate and co-opt, the power to speak and resist, and the power to build new, hybrid worlds are sometimes one and the same, and that power flows through interlocked social and cultural systems, simultaneously directed and channeled by humans and yet often beyond strict human control" (Deloria 1998: 178).

Indians do have power that they do use, for example at Wounded Knee, they have power by playing on nostalgia, guilt and the desire of white people to be Indian or sustain an authentic Indianness (ibid.: 179).

Deloria writes of his communal experiences during his youth, where he was sent to live in a community-like environment, complete with tipis and a lack of communal effort. This experience fitted right in with the social context of the popular Indianness and Deloria became another actor in this field.

> "My communal Indian friends were attempting to redefine themselves and their local community. […] Yet like those who had come before, they found that Indianness inevitably required real native people, and that those people called everything into question. Playing Indian, as always, had a tendency to lead into, rather than out of, contradiction and irony" (Deloria 1998: 180).

Some of the shamanism leaders were "Sun Bear, Rolling Thunder, and Wallace Black Elk, the first spiritual practitioners who positioned themselves as Native American healers on the American countercultural scene in the early 1970's" (Znamenski 2007: 265).

As this short historical overview illustrates, many different aspects have contributed to the increasing popularity of Native spirituality. The appropriation process was greatly facilitated by figures such as Sun Bear, academic and non-academic books, the "imagined Indian", and the political and social context of the counter culture movement.

Neo-Shamanism

There are countless examples of neo-shamanism. Some of the people who are making shamanism available are Natives, such as Sun Bear, Black Elk and Fools Crow, others are non-Natives, such as Michael Harner and Lynn Andrews. Black Elk, Fools Crow, Carlos Castaneda have all contributed to the increasing popularity of shamanism in popular culture. Some authors have anthropological backgrounds, such as Harner and Castaneda, others do not. The notion that

traditional practices and ceremonies are authentic, valid and effective is one of the main reasons that shamanism is such a popular practice. How do these urban shamans claim authority? There are essentially three ways to validate one's knowledge as a shaman towards the general urban public:

1) Being a Native Indian, or at least claiming Native descent or ancestry. In some cases it is sufficient to claim to have studied with a Native person;
2) Having a University Degree, for instance in anthropology, thus having the privilege of specific knowledge and the credentials to interpret, analyze, and experience this knowledge;
3) Receiving special knowledge from the spirits, in other words being initiated. However, this is often seen in conjunction with at least some "training" or contact with a Native person.

Sun Bear obviously falls in the first category, of being a Native. Michael Harner would fall into the second category, being an anthropologist. All above mentioned categories are being criticized by Native activists and Native scholars.

How does the shamanic experience become validated and authenticated to the Western person? Lynn Andrews and Michael Harner describe personal journeys. They describe the contact with the 'Other' culture, with their mysteries and their way of life and knowing. Michael Harner has an additional credibility and source of authority in the sense that he is an anthropologist, studied at the University. In modern Western culture scientific research and validation through scientific research is of utmost importance in establishing the "truth", the "reality". Having studied at a University, Harner's personal experience becomes even more validated for readers. It is interesting to note that the basis for the book are Indigenous teachings, adapted to the Western person. Harner's description of "initiation" is very interesting and captivating to read, it stimulates the imagination and the fascination with the exotic Other. This seems essential in New Age practices, the lore of the traditional, the historic and romantic (Znamenski 2007). The New Age movement is often noted as a response and resistance to modern values of materialism and technology (Aldred 2000). Harner echoes this sentiment by writing that

> "The 'New Age' is partially an offshoot of the Age of Science, bringing into personal life the paradigmatic consequences of two centuries of serious use of scientific method. These children of the Age of Science, myself included, prefer to arrive first-hand, experimentally, at their own conclusions as to the nature and limits of reality. Shamanism provides a way to conduct these personal experiments, for it is a methodology, not a religion" (Harner 1990: xii).

Here, Harner makes valid a personal experience and makes it equal with science. His personal experience is like a scientific experiment. Harner continues about the appeal of shamanism, stating that (1990: xii):

> "at the same time, the classic shamanic methods work surprisingly quickly, with the result that most persons can achieve in a few hours experiences that might otherwise take them years of silent meditation, prayer, or chanting. For this reason alone, shamanism is ideally suited to the contemporary life of busy people, just as is was suited, for example, to the Eskimo (Inuit) people whose daily hours were filled with tasks of struggle for survival, but whose evenings could be used for shamanism."

There are a few noteworthy issues brought to light by this quote. One of them is the quick results that shamanism promises. A second issue is that Harner places shamanism to be even more effective than meditation or prayer, invoking the notion of Buddhism (meditation) and that of other religions, such as Catholicism (prayer). Mediation is associated with Buddhism and prayer is associated with Catholicism. So whereas mediation and prayer are only a way of expressing a certain belief system, shamanism is more useful as it is not a belief as much as a method, a very effective method (Harner 1990: xii). Thirdly, a link is established with traditional society, as the similarity in both is that of being busy and not having much time. However there is a notion of romanticizing when speaking of the "struggle for survival" of the Inuit. The sense that one gets is that even though the way of their daily life was hard, uncertain, a real struggle to survive, the Inuit, or other traditional societies, have survived, aided by shamanism.

Michael Harner describes in his "do it yourself" book about shamanism, *The Way of the Shaman*, what he terms 'core shamanism'. This core shamanism is a technique that is common to all shamans, is universal, as Harner writes. Harner (1990) describes the shamanic state of consciousness (SSC) in contrast to the ordinary state of consciousness (OSC).

> "The SSC, it can be said, is safer than dreaming. In a dream, you may not be able to extricate yourself voluntarily from an unwanted experience or nightmare. In contrast, one wills himself into the SSC and, since it is a conscious waking state, is able at any time to will himself out of it, back into the OSC" (ibid.: xxii).

Here the shamanistic practice is described as being very safe. However, Natives often warn against the dangers of shamanism and loosing oneself in the spirit world.

> "Shamans may learn to control their modes of consciousness (e.g. trance), evoking and entering 'altered states' at will, but close attention to shaman's discourses demonstrates that only rarely do shamans have total control. This, if nothing else, might be clear from common stories of dismemberment and violent assault in the otherworld and manifest as severe illness in this world. It might, therefore, be better to say that shamans are masters of etiquette and protocols by which relationships are maintained and enhanced. They are distinctive in that they enter relationships with other-than-human persons who overwhelm and harm other humans" (Harvey 2003:29).

This quote illustrates two things, first that shamanism can be dangerous, the dangerous effects resulting in illnesses, and secondly that protocols are essential for the safe and proper functioning of any shamanic practice.

The way that the lore of shamanism is working on the non-Western person is in the following general ways:

1) It is a powerful universal technique to find your inner self, to heal yourself, and to spiritually grow.
2) It is quick to learn, even by reading a book.
3) It is safe.
4) It has proven it's worth through thousands of years of practice, enhancing the life and health of traditional people.
5) You can experience it yourself.

These qualities make neo-shamanism practical and a valuable way without much effort, to access healing powers, to help on the individual quest for spirituality and meaning.

Consumerism

In today's society spirituality is also closely linked with consumerism. All spirituality can be purchased, all rituals can be purchased. This has an effect on how rituals become available as well as to whom. It also changes some aspects of spirituality. Spirituality is no longer closely tied to a specific tradition or locality, the function of performing a ritual might be altered to suit individual needs and by making it available for purchase, spirituality and rituals become mass-produced.

Magnuson writes about the phenomenon of commercialization of religious experience that "[t]his trend may be yet another example of the burden of materialism and our hunger for alternative realities. It also betrays a subtle but destructive prejudice that continues to divide and plague the American psyche" (Magnuson 1989). Further Magnuson paraphrases Christopher M. Lyman

> "in a time of cultural disintegration such as ours the longing for a 'golden age' or an 'original people' is natural, emotionally comforting and even psychologically appropriate. But it is a problem, Lyman writes, when such collective longings serve to categorize and limit a people's authentic religious expression."

At the 12th Annual Conference of the Traditional Circle of Indian Elders in British Columbia in 1989 the following statement had been made:

> "It is important to respect the fact that some ceremonial knowledge is sacred and private, meant only for the medicine societies that are responsible for those particular functions. All people are beneficiaries of these ceremonies. It is a great offense to exploit sacred knowledge. Proper performance and participation is the duty of designated traditional religious leaders. Many of these ceremonies are site-specific in their respective indigenous nations" (In Magnuson 1989: 5).

Magnuson further questions what to "make of the Renaissance of Native religions in North America? Is it fiction? Ask any of this summer's 200 sun dancers" (ibid.: 5) or other Native peoples. Magnuson concludes that "Native spirituality takes specific forms among specific people, places and communities. There is no generic Indian religious experience that can be packaged and sold." (ibid.: 6). Kulchyski (1997: 617) notes that "commodification is appropriation, in the current historical conjuncture, to the extent that it involves a process of reshaping Aboriginal cultural productions so that they accord with the logic of the commodity form." This consumerism and commodification of culture can have dangerous effects on the appropriated culture, as its meaning is transformed and changed.

> "The commodification of a cultural text does not leave the text unaffected, but rather profoundly alters it and the meaning it produces. The spiritual element no longer clings to mass-produced dream catchers. The sweat lodge ceremonies that can be experienced, for a price, have little to do with the healing sweats of gift economies practiced in ancient and contemporary times" (Kulchyski 1997: 617).

In one way this statement illustrates the exclusivity of a ceremony; its place, its time, and the reason for it matter and have to be brought carefully in context. Kulchyski (1997) cites Walter Benjamin and his concept of "mechanical reproduction". In essence the argument is that art is based in ritual and therefore the place, the context and the resulting meaning are all significant in the production. The example Benjamin provides is "the elk portrayed by the man of the Stone Age on the walls of his cave was an instrument of magic. He did expose it to his fellow man, but in the main it was meant for the spirits" (Benjamin in Kulchyski 1997: 617). Mechanical production thus alters the meaning of the cultural image, symbol or ritual that is reproduced. In a sense, once the context changes the thing itself changes as well. The spiritual dimension loses its potency and, according to Benjamin, politics enter the game.

> "Mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual. To an ever greater degree the work of art reproduced becomes the work of art designed for…the instant the criterion of authenticity ceases to be applicable to artistic production, the total function of art is reversed. Instead of being based on ritual, it begins to be based on another practice – politics" (Benjamin in Kulchyski 1997: 617).

This argument is reflected in the argument of the Natives, that spirituality is so specific to certain landscapes and places. By removing Native spirituality out of the local context and tradition and

by making it available for mass-production, some fundamental elements of the spirituality and rituals are altered. Lisa Aldred (2000: 330) notes to this effect, that the New Age Movement is part of consumerism: it is a “consumerist movement” (ibid.). The current search for spirituality is a form of resistance to the capitalist consumer culture. However, this is paradoxical and will not work in the long run, as the spirituality is following consumer culture, since it is bought. The spirituality is bought by purchasing a book, a work-shop, sacred items, such as incense, and so forth. Aldred (2000) notes that this ultimately defies the purpose of the resistance and opposition to the capitalist consumer attitude, as spirituality also forms part of it.

Transformation of Ritual and Spirituality

During the late 1960s in America the rituals of Native Americans really started to be transformed through the appropriation of Westerners. Native rituals and spiritual beliefs started to be adopted by more non-Native people and with the New Age movement they became part of popular culture. As the rituals, books, and spirituality become part of popular culture, they also become altered, mass-produced, available for a price. Rituals become altered in the following ways:

1) Rituals become part of consumer culture, available for purchase.

2) Anyone can gain access to rituals through books, work-shops and retreats. Rituals are no longer specific to a certain community or tradition, done for a specific purpose or ailment, no longer connected to locality and surroundings. In short they can be mass-produced and replicable.

3) Rituals are no longer associated with dangers and they tend to be universalized. Protocols are not seen as essential for the working of a ritual.

4) The emphasis is not on the community activity, but rather focuses on individual growth and search of spirituality.

As for spirituality, it is very important to understand some fundamental differences between the “Native way of life” and the Western life, as Deloria, Ronwanièn:Te Jocks and others allude to. For the Native person the land is deeply connected to spirituality, all aspects of life are somehow spiritual, services such as sweats are ‘bought’ with gifts, the word has power, protocol is extremely important to ritual. The Western person might have difficulty grasping some of these differences, and at the same time it is this perceived difference that makes Native culture attractive and exotic. As Owen (2008: 12) concludes, for the non-Native person, spirituality is regarded as opposed to materialism. Therefore, the meaning of spirituality becomes changed in different contexts and cultural settings.

Philip J. Deloria as well as von Stuckrad suggests that the popularity of shamanism in Western society is partially due to an identity crisis. The white Americans themselves might be struggling with the definition of their own identity, as they are neither European, nor Native, but settlers to a new land.

> "Throughout this history, I have suggested that whenever white Americans have confronted crisis of identity, some of them have inevitably turned to Indians. What might it mean not to be British? The revolutionaries found a compelling array of ideas in Indianness. What did it mean to be authentic? Using furs and feathers, headbands and hair, generations of white Americans have, at many levels and with varying degrees of intent, made meanings and, with them, identities" (Deloria 1998: 156).

He states the following about the current era of postmodernism

> "(…) at the center of this complicated tangle of ideas and social transformation are three sensibilities that necessarily underpin this final chapter: a crisis of meaning and a concomitant emphasis on the powers of interpretation, a sustained questioning of the idea of foundational truth, and an inclination to fragment symbols, statements and to reassemble them in creative, if sometimes random, pastiche" (ibid.: 157).

An interesting note is that many Natives include the danger of practicing ceremonies without proper training and historical background; however, the dangers are never elaborated and explained properly. Some authors (Avila, Jocks, Deloria, Churchill, etc.) write about physical, psychological and emotional harm, but do not specify any further. So what exactly is this harm? In Owen (2008) it is stated that the ritual and ceremonies are very powerful and thus have to be respected and carried out properly, otherwise harm can befall the practitioner. So the ceremonies are powerful, but again it is not really said in what way these rituals are powerful. However, the popularity of shamanic ceremonies speaks for themselves. People, I assume, look for precisely these rituals because they are, in some way, powerful. The search for spirituality, is it not also a search for power? A power that is hidden, might be found within us, with God, with the spirits, is it not that why people start to become spiritual? To find this source of power, to try to comprehend it in some way or another, even as a pure illusion, is this search not at the center of New Age spirituality? To have some control over at least ourselves, try to manage and understand ourselves either with the metaphors of spirits and deities, God or energies, trying to manage life, to understand it, to help us overcome our own failures, answer our questions? The actual power of these ceremonies and the harm that might befall the disrespectful or untrained individual are not described or elaborated.

Rituals, such as the sweat lodge have been commercialized, because participants are charged a fee. According to Native tradition, the sweat lodge ceremony was not something that

could be purchased (Owen 2008). However, gifts might be presented to the leader of the ceremony or tobacco might be offered to the leader when the request for a ceremony was made (ibid.). To charge a fee to participate in a sweat lodge, however, according to Natives such as Churchill (1994), is not the proper way of conducting such a ceremony and is not in harmony with the traditional way and the Indigenous way of carrying out a ceremony. Therefore, the ceremony becomes commercialized. Owen (2008) notes that Sun Bear, a controversial figure when it comes to Native people providing sweat lodge ceremonies to white people, has elegantly resolved this problem. In his pamphlets (see Owen 2008) it is written that the ceremony is offered as a gift within the work-shop, however that the fee that is charged to participants is for food, lodging and the other teachings during the weekend work-shop retreat.

Chapter 4: Native Voices

Resistance through Writing

Throughout the history of Native domination there have been inspirational and prophetic leaders, affirming Native traditions and values as of key importance to Native identity. These leaders have inspired resistance to colonization to various degrees, sometimes resulting in tragedies, such as the massacre at Wounded Knee. Today the resistance continues, although not as violently and lethally. The Native people have started to use the colonizers' tactics to gain authority and to make themselves heard, they have appropriated the way of resistance through writing. As previously stated, in order to be recognized as having valid arguments and being taken seriously, a University degree and education is very essential to establish a proper authority in Western society.

Authors

The authors that will be discussed in more detail are Ward Churchill, Thomas King, Andrea Smith, Christopher Ronwanièn:Te Jocks, Vine Deloria Jr., and Ina Hernández-Ávila. These authors have been chosen for this thesis, as they are some of the main names that come up when researching on the subject of spiritual appropriation. Many references and articles cite these authors, thus, they are visible. When searching the subject of spiritual appropriations, the above authors are some of the most common. The authors chosen also represent their opinions about spiritual appropriation with different arguments, from genocide and sexual abuse to a lack of respect and ethics. Therefore, the arguments presented provide a good overview of the different nuances and approaches of spiritual appropriation. These authors have been chosen for the following reasons:

1) they are contemporary
2) they identify themselves as Natives
3) they are from North America
4) they all hold University degrees
5) they are opposed to spiritual appropriation to various degrees
6) they write and publish about spiritual appropriation, therefore resisting through writing
7) they participate in more active roles in the support of Native issues, such as organizations, etc.
8) they are often referenced and are among the most authoritative authors writing about spiritual appropriation

The authors have many commonalities; however their arguments show the diversity of the spiritual appropriation debate. However, even though the arguments vary in degree of opposition, as well as in their form, the basic argument remains the same: a lack of respect.

Opinions

The arguments collected below are encompassing a wide range of opinions. The arguments are mostly summarized from one of the author's works, thus focusing on one specific angle, in order to provide a more in-depth understanding of the different points of views of the authors and their personal approach to the subject. The arguments brought forward by various indigenous authors are different in their approach; however, the essential idea remains more or less the same. Arguments against spiritual appropriation range from cultural genocide, sexual abuse, neo-colonialism to disrespect, danger to the practitioner through wrongful use and moral and legal responsibility. The different approaches and arguments illustrate how each individual is constructing a personal narrative, making sense, and creating an identity for themselves, as well as for their community.

1) Ward Churchill

Ward Churchill identifies himself as American Indian, namely Creek and Cherokee Métis. He was born in 1947. He has published many articles and books about Native American history and politics. Churchill was a co-director of the American Indian Movement (AIM) and assisted in various other groups and committees for Indians. Ward Churchill was also an Associate Professor at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Research on the life and opinions of Ward Churchill makes clear that the AIM no longer associates with him. His professional career as a Professor at the University of Colorado at Boulder has been terminated in 2007 after a lengthy court process, accusing Professor Churchill of research misconduct. The AIM had a press release dated July 26, 2007, with the heading "Ward Churchill, Academic, Literary and Indian Fraud" (www.aimgrandgovcouncil.com accessed on April 13, 2011). The American Indian Movement Grand Governing Council also accuses Churchill of "fraudulently representing himself as a member of the Keetoowah Nation of Cherokee Indians of Oklahoma, which he is not". A search for the name of Ward Churchill, on the council website of the Keetoowah Indians (www.keetoowahcherokee.org accessed April 13, 2011) results in the same statement coming up, noting that Churchill is not a member of their band. Therefore, there seems to be some conflicting opinions about Churchill: first of all with his claim about being of Native descent, his claim to speak on behalf of Natives, and also his claim to speak and write as a scholar. However, Ward Churchill is a strong advocate of the misuse and wrongful appropriation of Native spirituality.

Arguments

His writings are very strongly advocating political correctness for Indians, both judicially, morally and ethically speaking. His style of writing, in his book *Indians are Us*? is very direct and forceful. He uses the words genocide to describe the process that has been happening and continues to happen in the United States with regards to the Indigenous population. He goes back

to the Human Rights declaration in order to contextualize the situation of the Natives in America. He compares the process of colonization to genocide, where no one yet has been punished for their crimes against humanity. In one of his chapters he actually 'declares war' on people who continue to exploit Indian spirituality. "We hereby and henceforth declare war against all persons who persist in exploiting, abusing and misinterpreting the sacred traditions and spiritual practices of our Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota people" (Churchill 1994: 275). This is very aggressive language that gets your attention, but provokes a bit of hostility as well. With a war there is no dialogue, no education, no learning. Churchill succeeds to get the reader's attention when he describes the use of sport teams' names, such as "Redskins" as offensive, even racist, towards Indians. "A substantial number of American Indians have protested that the use of native names, images, and symbols as sport team mascots and the like is, by definition, a virulently racist practice" (Churchill 1994: 66). Even though some people say that this is a way of 'honoring' the Natives, Churchill does not agree with this practice. He continues by saying that "as a counterpart to the Redskins, we need an NFL team called "Niggers" to "honor Afro America" (Churchill 1994: 67). If at first his argument was interesting, now it hits home. It would be unimaginable to have a sports team called "Niggers", unless it was named, created, and composed by Afro-Americans, and even them it might still arouse opposition.

Churchill is very clearly against the appropriation of Native spirituality. Churchill (1998) is describing an encounter with a man, doing a ceremony on a field with another man (or other men). A few days later Churchill encountered the man again and asked him about the ceremony he had witnessed. The man answered that the ceremony was a work-shop, conducted by Robert Bly who "made a commitment to recover the Druidic rituals which are part of our heritage" (cross reference Churchill 1998: 211). Churchill (1998: 211) goes on to say that this man who "is an anthropology student at the University of Colorado, is of Slavic descent, making Druidism about as distant from his own cultural tradition as Sufism or Zen Buddhism." The conversation continues and the question arises of how the Druidic ritual is reconstructed and the man replies that it is mostly guesswork, it feels right and Black Elk is their teacher (ibid.). Churchill concludes that since the Druids are extinct, the only model to look for is Indigenous people, in this instance the Native Americans. "After all, Native Americans and our ceremonial life constitute living, ongoing entities. We are therefore, far more accessible in both terms of time and space than the Druids or the Old Norse Odinists" (1998: 215). It seems that Churchill is not in agreement with Druids appropriating Native American ceremonies. Owen (2008) however, when asking Druid leaders that are performing sweat lodges, if they are aware of the controversy and the point of view of some American Indians on the issue of appropriation replies that yes, he is aware of it. However, he goes on to say that once the Natives know that the ceremony is adapted to local historical deities and local landscapes the Native American no longer object.

> "Shallcrass [druid leader] is aware of the issue of appropriation: 'There are many Native Americans who dislike white folks ripping off their traditional spirituality or being wannabe Indians. When I explain that what I do is teach and practice Native

> European spirituality we get on fine'" (quoted in Wallis 2003:89, cross referenced in Owen 2008: 106).

How many attendees to the sweat lodges are actually aware of these disputes? And how many readers of books on shamanism and spirituality are aware of the issue of appropriation? Through active involvement in political movements such as AIM and through the publishing of books and articles some awareness is brought to the public. By using this rather aggressive language, such as genocide, awareness might be more acute.

Churchill is especially critical about people claiming Native descent and selling Native spirituality to non-Natives, such as Sun Bear and more recent Ed McGaa, an Ogalala Lakota.

> "Increasingly, the non-Indian commerce in that which belongs to Indians has come to center in our last definable asset, our conceptual property, the spiritual practices and understandings which hold together the final residue of humanity which was once Native America. When these are gone – or hopelessly prostituted – there will truly be nothing left with which we may sustain ourselves. Yet, as always, there are those of Indian lineage who step forward, eagerly offering up that which was never theirs to sell" (Churchill 1994: 286).

This statement shows various points. It underlines the assumption that spiritual knowledge and practices are property. Churchill is using the Western sense of property and entitlement to make claims on Native spirituality. He also uses the term "prostituted", which has negative connotations, it seems improper. Churchill further states that individual Natives have no right to offer their knowledge to non-Natives, as permission of the other band members is needed. He also appeals to Native communities to stop selling spirituality and to work together actively in order to survive. Churchill (ibid.: 287) further criticizes a "how to" book that Ed McGaa has published on Indian spirituality, entitled *Mother Earth Spirituality: Native Paths to Healing Ourselves and Our World*. Essentially Churchill explains that it is not possible to learn Native spirituality from a book, to break down a Sun Dance in steps or sections, a check-list for building a sweat lodge, instructions to do a vision quest and then a short explanation of possible meanings of it all.

> "Ed McGaa knows full well he is peddling a lie, that it takes a lifetime of training to become a genuine Lakota spiritual leader (which he is not), that the ceremonies he describes are at best meaningless when divorced from their proper conceptual

> context. And that the integrity of Lakota cultural existence is to a large extent contingent upon the people's retention of control over their spiritual knowledge" (Churchill 1994: 288).

The notion of power is brought up in this statement, in the sense that cultural existence depends on retaining control of spiritual knowledge. Knowledge is power, especially when other people are seeking this knowledge, as is currently the case with non-Natives searching for Native spirituality. Another important point is that all ceremonies are performed in a specific context and this context is not always easily understood and thus makes the ceremony ineffective. In order to become a medicine men, or shaman, it takes time, understanding, and experiencing.

Churchill makes clear that there is a lack of proper understanding from non-Natives, as well as some Natives, that spirituality is something that can be so easily appropriated. In a way, Churchill alludes to the naïveté of non-Natives to believe that spiritual wisdom and healing can be achieved by purchasing a book or a sweat lodge ceremony.

2) Andrea Smith

Andrea Smith is a Cherokee woman, has a PhD in History of Consciousness and works as an assistant Professor of Native American Studies at the University of Michigan. Smith is also a co-organizer of INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, a feminist movement "which builds coalitions around the intersections of state violence and interpersonal sexual domestic violence from a grass-roots-organizing, rather than a social service delivery, perspective" (Smith 2005: 2).

Arguments

Her general position is that sexual violence is a strategy of colonialism and patriarchy. "We cannot limit our conception of sexual violence to individual acts of rape – rather it encompasses a wide range of strategies designed not only to destroy peoples, but to destroy their sense of being a people" (2005:3). Smith continues that "sexual violence is a tool by which certain people become marked as inherently 'rapable'. These peoples then are violated, not only through direct or sexual assault, but through a wide variety of state policies, ranging from environmental racism to sterilization abuse" (ibid.). Andrea Smith, like other authors such as, Deloria, Churchill, etc., use the term genocide to describe the current political and social situation of Native people, as well as referring to the past. Likewise, many of these authors link spirituality with survival and continuous struggle. Therefore, by talking about spiritual appropriation, one has to take into

account the past and the present political and social struggles. Spirituality cannot be separated from the issue and context of Natives, and when speaking about political resistance, spirituality will likewise be incorporated in the talk.

> "Native spirituality's have always been a cornerstone of resistance struggles. These spiritualities affirm the goodness of Native communities when the larger society dehumanizes them. They affirm the interconnectedness of all things that provides the framework of re-creating communities that are based on mutual responsibility and respect rather than violence and domination" (Smith 2005: 5).

According to Smith (2005), the appropriation of Native spirituality by the colonizing people is but another form of sexual violence. She starts her analysis with the definition for sexual violence, derived from the Bible, where 'to know a person', translation of the Hebrew word YDH, is taken to refer to knowing a person through sexual relations. "Inherent in the definition of 'to know' is the sense that sexual intimacy conveys a profound knowledge of a person, but also that knowing a person intimately conveys a sense of sexual relatedness" (2005: 119). This implies boundaries of the physical space of a person, as well as the psychological space.

> "Consensual sexual relationships require the loosening of the boundaries of one's physical and psychic space – they involve not only allowing another person to become close to you physically, but allowing another person to know more about you. Sexual violence then suggests that the violation of these boundaries operates not only on the physical but on spiritual and psychic levels as well" (Smith 2005: 119).

Smith continues that sexual violence is about power and power relations. The power is used to control the other. As the old proverb goes, "knowledge is power". Smith agrees to this and therefore to know someone gives you power as well. Smith makes the relationship of colonizers wanting to 'know' more about Native people, be it through New Age spiritualism or academia, or fear. The colonizer fears the power of Native people, and through knowing them better is a way to gain power and control over them.

> "Native peoples as well as other people of color who continue to survive centuries of genocide are a constant threat to the dominant culture's confidence that it will remain triumphant. Native peoples who continue to exist pollute the colonial body from the colonizer's perspective – they are matter out of place. To fully understand, to 'know' Native peoples is the manner in which the dominant society gains a sense of mastery and control over them" (Smith 2005:120 with references to Mary Douglas).

Smith observes that one of the premises to know Natives better is that through this knowledge they will be better understood, therefore more valued and taken into account, in a political and social sense. Anthropologists would also fall into this category of studying to know, to understand, to appreciate fully. Therefore, ignorance prompts people to want to know more about Natives.

However, Smith also says that part of the continuous genocide of Natives has to do with material conditions, material culture and capitalism. Natives own land and on most of this land are energy resources, agricultural resources, land for sale to private ownership, land for houses, highways and factories. Andrea Smith then comes to the conclusion that when Native genocide is looked at from the materialistic point of view, the ignorance becomes willful ignorance. “The larger society will never become educated about Indians because it is not in their interest to do so” (2005: 121). If people are ignorant of the values of Natives it is easier to take their land. Not knowing can serve as an excuse to let things happen, to not get involved.

Native spirituality is very closely linked to the land as many authors insist (Vine Deloria for example). Therefore, Smith argues that when Natives are arguing about their spirituality, they are in essence arguing about land. As scholars have observed, Native spirituality is centered on practice, rather than on belief (2005: 121). The places where ceremonies are practiced are therefore important. Deloria Jr. (2006: xxiii) had noted that Native peoples are very tolerant of other Native’s spirits as each spirit depends on the surroundings. Smith (2005) and Owen (2008) both comment on the importance of protocol, doing a ceremony correctly.

> “As Vine Deloria (Dakota) notes, from a Native context, religion is ‘a way of life’ rather than ‘a matter of the proper exposition of doctrines’. Even if Christians do not have access to church, they continue to be Christian as long as they believe in Jesus. Native spiritualities, by contrast, may die if the people do not practice the ceremonies, even if the people continue to believe in their power” (Smith 2005: 122, cross referencing Deloria 1977).

It has been demonstrated by at least two court cases over Indian land that the material approach of the white people wins over the spiritual concerns of the Natives. What is not being understood by the law and the colonizing materialistic society is that the practice of ceremonies is vital to the religion or spirituality of the Natives, that without these practices the spirituality might not survive.

> “For the Lakota, however, stopping the practice of traditional beliefs destroys the belief systems themselves. Consequently, for the Lakota and Native nations in general, cultural genocide is the result when Native landbases are not protected” (Smith 2005: 122, cross referencing Sharon O’Brian 1991).

Smith’s main concern about the appropriation of Native spirituality by non-Natives is that it gives the impression that “anyone can practice Indian spirituality anywhere, so there is no need to protect the specific Native communities and their lands that are the basis of these spiritual practices” (2005: 122). Another concern is that it is assumed that “Native knowledge is for the taking […]. Current intellectual property law only respects individual ownership and not community ownership over intellectual or cultural property” (ibid.: 123). “Thus, in this society, white people have clear legal boundaries over their knowledge, while indigenous communities

have none. Native communities and their practices can be known to all; their boundaries are inherently violable" (ibid.: 123). It seems not to be helping the Indians that they are sometimes seen as a vanishing race, therefore in need to be protected, their knowledge written down, before it is too late.

And some Native people thought likewise, for example Black Elk. He agreed for his story and wisdom to be written down, so that other Natives, or other people in general, might read it and know about Native practices (Owen 2008). Smith cites a Native Hawain activist, Haunani-Kay Trask, on the topic of appropriation as sexual violence and prostitution, "who argues that colonizers destroy the cultural base from which indigenous people resist colonization by commodifying it to meet Western consumerist needs. She terms the phenomenon 'cultural prostitution'" (2005: 124).

To recapture Smith's arguments, knowledge is power, therefore when knowledge is shared it gives power to the other. At the same time, knowledge not revealed can assist in the resistance and struggle of the oppressed. Spirituality is knowledge. Spirituality is enacted, practiced on sacred land, it is a way of life. Through the commercialization of this knowledge, by selling books on shamanisms, selling sweat lodge ceremonies and using land for capitalistic purposes, tourism, highways, etc. the genocide of the Native people is continuing, by way of sexual violence.

Smith had discussed spiritual appropriation in one of her classes and was surprised when the white students, having explained to her the personal benefits they had derived from Native, told her that they had not thought about the political and social context of Natives and had no responsibility toward a Native community. Many non-Natives feel they have a right to Native spiritual knowledge and do not question the issue any further. In a way this is not surprising, seeing that most of the Native literature on the subject is written in the academic context, whereas shamanism, Native spirituality, sweat lodges-, are available through popular culture, in book stores, through flyers, in urban settings, work-shops, easily accessible through the internet. Native people as a whole are not the majority of the population in Canada or the United States. The non-Native population however has the ability to make information and products available for purchase globally very fast. As King and Deloria have observed, this wanting of Native spirituality is understood by many non-Natives as honoring Native spirituality and wisdom. So I would argue that to many non-Native practitioners of Native spirituality it would also come as a surprise or as a shock to hear the Native's perspective.

It is interesting to read the next observation by Smith, inspired by Will Roscoe, that spirituality has been sexually colonized through the documentation of what is perceived as

"sexual perversity" in Native ceremonies [and stories] in order to suppress them. Just glancing at some accounts of Native myths, for example in Eliade's book *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, I had noted that there is a lot of reference to sexuality, especially since we all had at some time or another, read about Freud and his theories. Smith continues to provide examples of how Natives are associated with sex through various ways, one being the promotion of seminars and workshops of "Spiritual Sexuality", conducted by the Golden Wind Dreamers Lodge in Arizona (Smith 2005: 129). As Native people are associated with nature, they are then linked to "unbridled sexuality". Smith argues that through books and films published, centering on the sexuality of Native people, historic interpretations of Native life, the Natives themselves have internalized the view of the non-Natives and practice it as well, as violence and sexual abuse on reservations can account for. Also various "plastic medicine men", as well as some Natives, during the performance of supposed Native ceremonies, have been accused of sexually violating their clients. These abuses were said to be part of the Native ritual. At a conference of Bonnie Clairmont, who is working to expose sexual exploiters that claim to be spiritual leaders, one elder had said "the New Age movement has helped to create conditions ripe for sexual exploitation within "traditional" spiritual ceremonies" (ibid.: 131).

Smith then readdresses the notion that since spirituality is focused on practice, it is of utmost importance that the ceremonies are performed correctly. Only when they are performed correctly they can be beneficial to the practitioners. Smith says that she has

> "heard many elders express concern about the non-Native practitioners who dabble in Native spiritual practices, because they do not fully comprehend the possible consequences of their actions, and it is likely that something bad will happen if ceremonies are not performed correctly" (ibid.).

The dangers for incorrectly performing a ritual are no further explained, however, once again it becomes clear that there are dangers involved.

3) Vine Deloria Jr.

Vine Deloria Jr. was born in 1933 and passed away in 2005. He was a member of the Sioux. Deloria Jr. was a lawyer, a historian, a theologian and an author. He received his law degree from the University of Colorado in 1970. Deloria Jr. was teaching at different universities during his life, including University of Arizona and University of Colorado at Boulder. At the University of Arizona, Deloria Jr. established the first Master degree of American Indian studies (Deloria Jr. 2006). Deloria Jr.'s publications include *God is Red* 1994 and *Custer died for Your Sins* 1969. His last work *Remembering the Powers of the Medicine Men* was published in 2006. In the book by Vine Deloria Jr., *The World we used to live in: Remembering the Powers of the Medicine Men*, his son gives the

preface to the book, summarizing the context of the book and Vine Deloria Jr.'s life. He was always interested in spirituality and theology, which was reflected by his choices of study, graduating in Theology at the Lutheran School in 1959. He became politically active, helping Indians as he joined the National Congress of American Indians in 1964. As Philipp Deloria explains, Vine Deloria never very much practiced Indian spirituality himself, but he was however, very interested in the subject.

Phillip Deloria states the following about his father, his, life and his writings:

> "His political and intellectual path- which had both spiritual origins and spiritual consequences- pointed him away from specific, intimate engagement with any home community. And if there was one essential of which he was convinced, it was that indigenous spiritual practice relied decisively upon the unity and presence of a human-scale community. He found himself arguing for the power and legitimacy of indigenous spirituality then, without engaging substantially in its practice. This disengagement had no small measure of irony, perhaps, but it should also be read as a measure of his understanding of and respect for that practice" (Deloria 2006: xiv).

This is a very nice analysis and it ties in with the question of anthropological practice and representation. There are many anthropologists writing from an etic point of view, however, there are those that write from an emic point of view. Von Stuckrad (2005) provides us with some examples of this.

Deloria further states about his father, that although he had argued for spirituality using logic, he believed in the true powers of this practice.

> "A collection of these stories, placed in a philosophical framework, might demonstrate to the present and coming generations the sense of humility, the reliance on the spirits, and the *immense powers* that characterized our people in the old days. It might also inspire people to treat ceremonies with more respect and to seek out the great powers that are always available to people who look first to the spirits and then to their own resources" (Deloria 2006: xv, italics added).

The book, *The World We Used to Live In*, was finished in manuscript form only a few months before Vine Deloria Jr. passed away. It is his last book, and as his son calls it the tip of the pyramid, and it sort of brings together his previous works, a closing of the circle.

Arguments

Vine Deloria Jr. does not agree with the way Indian ceremonies are exploited for monetary gains by Westerners and Native people alike. He also criticizes the way that ceremonies are conducted by the Native people themselves, that they have lost their power, in a way. "What we do today is often simply a 'walk-through' of a once-potent ceremony that now has little visible effect on its participants" (Deloria 2006: xvii). He continues by saying that society and the way people live, especially Indians, have been removed further and further from the spiritual powers. There are few elders left who can counsel in important life stages and decisions. Deloria observes that in today's secular society science is very important in validating experiences. Accounts of eye-witnesses, written reports, stories become questioned, analyzed and discarded as mere mythical phenomena. Deloria argues that the mystery is long gone. The author explains that the spirits are still active in the world and they were used in the past in order to help with daily problems.

> "Our ancestors invoked the assistance of higher spiritual entities to solve pressing practical problems, such as finding game, making predictions of the future, learning about medicines, participating in healings, conversing with other creatures, finding lost objects, and changing the course of physical events through a relationship with the higher spirits who controlled the winds, the clouds, the mountains, the thunders, and other phenomena of the natural world" (Deloria 2006: xiv).

Deloria argues that the accounts of "strange and spiritual" events are abundant, however, people tend to explain them away using various other explanations: they have not been recorded properly, there are other natural explanations for it, and so forth. In a way Deloria's arguments and thoughts are not that different from those advocated by New Age practitioners, by anthropologists that became 'shamans', such as Harner, and Deloria acknowledges this fact. The last book Vine Deloria Jr. wrote is to be an example of these powers, powers that are very real. These powers are intended to be used again by Indians, so that they may help themselves. These powers would provide spiritual strength to overcome substance abuse, suicide and poverty. There is an interesting controversy in Deloria's writing when, telling about materials and stories he found, he congratulates some tribes, the ones where almost no accounts have been found. The congratulations are given to the tribes since they have managed to keep their ceremonies sacred and thus protected from the accounts of white men. On the other hand, Deloria writes about Densmore's book *Teton Sioux Music and Culture*, sadly wishing that it is unfortunate for the author not to have visited more tribes, as had she, or people like her "visited every tribe and written down their stories, for each tribe had its special relationship with the higher power and could have contributed many marvelous stories to this collection" (2006: xxii).

This quote illustrates that the manner that these stories are recorded and analyzed or not, is of key importance. Many Native people today are upset at the little respect that is shown to them with regards to the stories and knowledge and ceremonies they have shared with the white

people in the past and up to the present. Vine Deloria Jr., however, contrary to Ward Churchill for example, seems to better grasp the entire context and picture of what is going on presently.

4) Christopher Ronwanièn:Te Jocks

He is both Kahnawake Mohawk and Brooklyn Irish. He has published various books and articles, including *Redeeming Men: Religion and Masculinity* in 1998. His writing focuses on activism, religion, and masculinity. Christopher Ronwanièn:Te Jocks currently teaches as an assistant professor of religion and Native American Studies at Darthmouth College.

Arguments

In his article *Spirituality for Sale: Sacred Knowledge in the Consumer Age*, Christopher Ronwanièn:Te Jocks (in Irwin 2000: 61) illustrates two arguments against the appropriation of Native spirituality as it is often done. His first argument is moral and political and his second is hermeneutical. As Jocks distinguishes, the first aspect deals with what should be taught, and the second aspect with what can be taught (in Irwin 2000: 62). The hermeneutical issue deals with "[…] what can be taught, or what can be translated accurately out of a Native context into a non-Native one." This implies that some aspects of the Native culture are not easily or not at all understood by people outside the culture, due to a lack of proper context and specific cultural knowledge and behavior. To this point, another author, Ridington (in Irwin 2000: 99), notes that most anthropologists or individuals that do not belong to the community in the Arctic had a hard time following the conversations of the Natives. The context and the references Natives made were not known to the outsiders.

> "Ronald and Suzanne B.K. Scollen (1979: 186) point out that fieldworkers in the subarctic often 'find it virtually impossible to follow a discussion or argument' because they lack a shared context of knowledge and experience within which conversation becomes meaningful. In particular, outsiders are unprepared to understand the spirituality of conversations that create a world that is alive with storied voices. Conversation is possible only when storyteller and listener respect and understand one another through shared knowledge and experience" (Ridington in Irwin 2000: 99)

Jocks concludes (ibid.) that "without firmly grounded and enacted knowledge about the internally prescribed limits of externally available knowledge, such 'data' is liable to be not only ethically clouded, but logically and intellectually unreliable".

Jocks (in Irwin 2000) relates a story that one of his friends, a traditional Mohawk woman tells him. She, the Mohawk woman, was asked by two members of a "New Age" spirituality group if they could participate in an Indian ceremony. They were very insisting, and at last, the Mohawk women agreed to share with them a ceremony. She told the two people of the New Age group to do the following: one evening they were to cook a meal and invite all their friends. While cooking they were to think about all the ingredients, where they came from, and so on. They were to make sure everyone had enough to eat, ask them about their life, listen to them, ask them questions, give them advice, invite them to stay the night, if necessary. This they were to repeat four times, and with that they would have done an Indian ceremony. The author, Jocks, remarks that this reply was a very smart and witty reply, as it showed two things:

> "…her reply was based on a critical distinction between what might constitute a ceremony for members of the participating ceremonial community […] and those aspects of it that are considered useful or accessible or teachable to others. It had the further merit of politely but clearly unmasking the arrogant assumption that one can prepare to participate in ceremony, and in fact earn the right to do so, in any way other than by becoming a member of the community enacting the ceremony" (Jocks in Irwin 2000: 61).

This story and quote illustrate beautifully two assumptions of most Western people, first that all ceremonies must be related to some spiritual aspect, for example a sweat lodge, etc. and secondly that people should in some way earn the right to participate in any ceremony, indeed to share anything meaningful with a given people or community. Another important issue that is revealed here is the context, the context and history of any given ceremony are very important and cannot be transplanted by anyone who desires.

Further Jocks (in Irwin 2000) voices some of the concerns that Indigenous people, as well as some scholars have with regards to appropriating Native American spirituality:

1) Lack of Reciprocity: The scholar who is studying a community, earning his livelihood through this study, should give back to the community as well, especially since many communities and their way of life, their lands and languages are threatened.
2) Right Motivation: It is important that the motives for studying a people, a ceremony or a belief are ethical.
3) Willingness to learn from the Other: scholars should be open to accept, to really accept newly learned knowledge, frameworks of thought, and in turn "evaluate aspects of non-Indian life" with these new data.
4) Violation of Intellectual Property: Native sacred works and their interpretation of the world and those sacred works should be considered as intellectual property and treated as such when sharing it with others. The permission of the community, and or individual person, should be obtained before publication.

A lot of these issues it seems should have been covered with the ethical consent form that researchers should always provide with their study. There are strict guidelines and ethics that an anthropologist should follow, when conducting fieldwork. However, looking at the above-described concerns, it seems that these ethical and consenting rules are not applied to the satisfaction of many Indigenous people. However, the first points that Ronwanièn:Te Jocks voices, the moral/political and the hermeneutical are of primary concern, as it is the basis of understanding by non-Natives. It therefore becomes an important point of reference to start discussing the issue of spiritual appropriation. Many of the concerns that Native people might have and voice depend on the critical understanding and respecting of their culture and the cultural difference and with that the possibility that not all aspects, rules, behaviors, ceremonies are correctly interpreted and understood. The four points summarized above depend on the hermeneutical understanding of the other culture and then the- proper application of morals and politics.

5) Ina Hernández-Ávila

Ina Hernández-Ávila is a Nimipu Indian (Nez Percée) from her mother's side and of Mexican descent from her father's side. She says of herself: "I recognize that my 'Mexicanness' is really a 'Mexican indigenousness'. I am a Native woman of these Americas" (Native Wiki, accessed Dec. 28, 2011). She has received her Ph.D. in English at the University of Houston. In 2002 she became a full professor of Native American Studies at the University of California, Davis. There she has established an M.A. and Ph.D. program in Native American Studies, which is the first in the country that has been officially approved at the system-wide level in fall 1998 (Irwin 2000: 318). In addition to that, Hernández-Ávila is the Interim Director of Carl J. Gorman Museum and the Director of Chicana/Latino Research Center. She is very interested in Native American studies and Chicano/Latino studies with relation to identity, spirituality and woman's literature, poetry and essays (Native Wiki). She writes, "I focus on issues of identity (formation), community (building), representation, and intellectual sovereignties …" (Native Wiki, accessed Dec. 28, 2011).

Arguments

What are the dangers in divulging Native spiritual information to non-Natives? What are the concerns of the Natives and some non-Native to this regard? There are several dangers and concerns, outlined by Hernández-Ávila in her paper of 1997 entitled *Mediations of the Spirit: Native American Religious Traditions and the Ethics of Representation* (in Irwin 2000). Her arguments are as follows:

1) <u>The "dying" of the particular spiritual expression:</u> (Hernández-Ávila in Irwin 2000: 14). Hernández-Ávila (ibid.) notes that she remembers a film-maker, making a film about a Mexican pueblos's dance of the "voladores". Later, watching the film, she learned that it had been the last time the dance was performed in that village. After being exposed to observers, however noble their intentions might be, there is a risk that it might

contribute to, or even cause, the extinction of this ritual. The author asks herself: “At what price does the revealing of the *danza*, or any other ceremony, happen so that the world tends to dismiss any ethical considerations in the fervor of ‘discovery’” (ibid.).

2) Betrayal of Confidence: When assisting at a ritual, the people performing the ritual who have invited the observer do so for any number of reasons. However, a spiritual ritual is something that is a personal or communal experience, it is not a commodity. Hernández-Ávila (ibid.) notes that the confidence is betrayed when writing about a spiritual ceremony, because “my intention within the circle of ceremony [in this case of the sweat lodge] would have been not to pray, but to record and tell”.
3) Stealing of Property: there seems to be a sense of entitlement to appropriate indigenous things, be it archaeological material, such as grave sites, bones, artifacts, as well as spirituality (Hernández-Ávila in Irwin 2000: 27). This notion is heavily related to the way that indigenous people are perceived, colonization, as well as current struggles of identity.
4) Danger of getting hurt: Hernández-Ávila (ibid.) mentions that people (and this might be indigenous, as well as non-Natives) might get hurt “physically, spiritually, emotionally, mentally, or in any combination thereof …” (Hernández-Ávila in Irwin 2000: 27). Hernández-Ávila (ibid.) tells a story of a medicine man, leading a sweat lodge for a non-Native woman. The author explains that usually woman holds sweat lodges for women. She further explains that this particular Native made sexual advances on the women participating in the sweat lodge. She continues by saying that, without excusing the behavior of this person, he probably hurt himself (emotionally, spiritually?) by doing so. In this regard, Hernández-Ávila describes a personal story, where her family members, of the Shaker Indian tradition, did not want her to learn the traditional old songs of her people, but rather to learn the Shaker songs, as they are “safer”: “…to them they [the Shaker songs] are not only better but ‘safer’ than ‘unChristian’ songs” (Hernández-Ávila 2000: 17). There is no further elaboration to what this ‘safer’ actually refers to, if it is safer in light of the historical oppression, i.e. it is safer not to practice “Indianness” or is it safer in a real way, that these songs have a certain power to effect changes, such as healing or spiritual enlightenment? Does the danger refer to a judgment and categorization of other people with regards to the Indigenous or to the inherent power of the knowledge and practices?
5) Danger of Disassociation: There seems to be a danger to appropriate spirituality, without a greater concern for the people and their contemporary struggle. There is a loss of wholeness, when only taking interest in the spiritual issue. As authors, such as Hernández-Ávila (2000: 31) note, the spiritual is interlinked and intertwined, indeed, “our distinct and evolving spiritual traditions remain the base of what we do as conscious human beings”. This is a danger of taking spirituality out of the context of its people, their unique history and indeed their current concerns, ideas, struggles and opinions. It disconnects and therefore disrespects the people who tradition it is part of.
6) Danger of loss of potential and actual support for legitimate issues: (Hernández-Ávila in Irwin 2000: 28). There seems to be a gap between what Westerners perceive from

> Natives, namely their desirable spirituality, and the concerns of the Natives. Natives are concerned about land claims, inequality, and justice.
>
> "The appropriation of Native American spirituality relies on the romanticization (and objectification) of indigenous peoples. Those who appropriate ignore the humanity, complexity and intellect of Native peoples, just as they ignore the history of oppression that has been the experience of Native peoples in relation to the United States government and 'mainstream' society" (ibid.: 26).

7) "Quicky Spirituality": Hernández-Ávila (ibid.: 28) notes that consumer culture and cultural, especially spiritual, appropriation result, or are in danger of resulting, in a superficial "quicky spirituality". Hernández-Ávila makes reference to the phenomena of "instant" medicine man and woman. Instead of needing proper training, explanations or context, Western people can participate rather easily in Native spiritual ceremonies, such as sweat-lodges and retreats. Even through books one can learn the mysteries of Native spirituality. Michael Harner's book *The Way of the Shaman* is a classic example of this. This approach is in stark opposition to Eliade's ([1964] 2004) descriptions of initiations to become a shaman. To become a shaman is time consuming and not always pleasant. "For many shamans, however, initiation is the result of traumatic and unexpected illness or injury" (Harvey 2003: 27). It seems that whereas in the Native setting to be a shaman is a profession, in the Western setting it can be considered more of a "hobby". Also, as the experience seems more important than to follow a specific protocol, the learning process is much faster and less profound.

There seems to be a concern of a continued colonization, a continuous struggle for Indigenous people to be taken seriously, and treated with respect, and most of all, equality. In the current consumer culture money provides people with a sense of entitlement (Hernández-Ávila in Irwin 2000: 27). There is a strong belief that money can buy everything. However, there seems to be a counter current to this belief, exposing itself through the various forms of New Age spirituality. There seems to be a need to go beyond the commodities, to find what is spiritual. There seems to be a loss of spirituality in modern consumer culture. However, even the search for spirituality and the search for deeper meaning and the search for some other value than money, is controversial and indeed contradictory. This search for spirituality comes at a price that is a monetary price. In order to learn about spirituality and New Age movements there are books available to buy, such as *The Way of the Shaman*, etc. People that are interested can also participate in sweat lodges or have a consultation with a medicine man or a shaman, and all of these services, of course, have to be paid for. So the individual looking for spirituality necessarily will have to pay for it in one instance or another.

The social inequality that is present since the days of colonization, between the indigenous and the Non-Native people is more than obvious when studying the situation of the

Indigenous in more detail. It might seem to some people that appropriating some aspects of Native spirituality might bring value to the Natives, it depicts them as teachers of great spiritual wisdom, role models to look up to. However, as the author Hernández-Ávila notes, these same people are absent, looking the other way, or outright ignorant about the issues that the Native people are dealing with currently. This struggle includes land claims, search for their identity and lost traditions, re-learning their language and their culture, being respected and treated as equals. Therefore it seems that when imitating or trying to replicate an aspect of a spiritual ritual or tradition, the non-Native is again engaging in colonizing behavior, this time not in a physical way, but in a mental way. And worst of all is that, even after four hundred years of colonizing and "feeling" superior, we still are not understanding and still being blind.

Many of the scholars, Native and non-Native, dealing with Native people, studying them, observing them, learning from them and engaging in dialogue with them, are coming to the realization that it is no longer enough to do ethnography. The focus should be on building relationships, learning from each other, respecting each other, and engaging in meaningful dialogue with the other (Lee 2000, Lassiter 2005). This seems to be a strange statement within the context of anthropology, as ethnography is precisely meant to accomplish a dialogue with the Other. However, recent concerns are reevaluating the researcher's role in the study of the Other. The concerns of Natives are a clear indication that much is still missing on the part of the researcher, that it is not enough to study and report, but that there should be a true and active interest for the people and the community in question.

6) Thomas King

Thomas King's father was Cherokee and his mother Greek. He was born in 1943 in Sacramento, California, and became a Canadian citizen in 1980. He teaches Native Literature and Creative writing at the University of Guelph. King is the author of numerous works, including children's books. His most famous writings are *Green Grass, Running Water (*1990) and *Medicine River (*1993), among others. He is one of the writers who subtly, poetically and creatively bring to the forefront current Native issues, making a link to the past. In 2003 King was the first aboriginal person chosen to hold the Massey Lectures. King tells great stories and in one of his books (Massey Lecture Series), *The Truth about Stories* published in 2003, he lets the reader know, through his writing style, the stories he tells and the way he tells them, how important stories really are. "In the series, King examined the Native experience in oral stories, literature, history, religion and politics, popular culture and social protest in order to make sense of North America's relationship with its Aboriginal peoples" (Wikipedia.org, accessed Dec. 28, 2011). Although King makes no explicit statement about spiritual appropriation, he nonetheless provides the reader with a lot of insights through his stories. However, throughout the book King illustrates the importance of oral tradition among Native people, and by doing this he makes explicit a

fundamental difference between Native and Western culture, namely the importance of oral tradition for the former versus the written word of the latter. King thus confirms and reconfirms a particular identity, culture and spiritual tradition.

Arguments

In the book and Massey Lectures *The Truth About Stories* Thomas King (2003) talks about how in his youth he wore beads and other items that made him easily identifiable as Indian. Nowadays he wears a suit. King starts all of his chapters with the same Native creation story:

> "There is a story I know. It's about the earth and how it floats in space on the back of a turtle. I've heard this story many times, and each time someone tells the story, it changes. Sometimes the change is simply in the voice of the storyteller. Sometimes the change is in the details. Sometimes in the order of events. Other times it's the dialogue or the response of the audience. But in all the tellings of all the tellers, the world never leaves the turtle's back. And the turtle never swims away" (King 2003: 1).

He ends his chapters by saying that "now I have told you the story, do with it what you like, but in years to come don't tell me you would have lived your life differently if only you had heard this story" (King 2003). This sentence illustrates well the difference that he discusses in the beginning of the book, about literature versus oral tradition. Repetition is one of the signs of an oral story. Also, the word, as it is told, has much more significance than what someone, focused on a scientific and literature-based culture, could imagine. In his book, King says that stories are all we have, stories are what we are. This is a very subtle way of describing identity.

King also describes how the West has always seen Indians from its own point of view, as savages, devil's worshippers, a misled people who need to be saved by Christianity, a noble savage and, lately, the carrier of ancient wisdom. King explains how the photographer, Curtis, made many photographs of Indians during the early 1900s, as they were thought to become extinct very soon. However, it is believed that Curtis had brought some props and costumes with him, in order to picture the "real" Indian, that is, the Indian as the West was imagining him.

According to Thomas King, one can know a whole lot about people based on what they say, the stories they recount. Stories reflect how people think, their ideals, their fears, their fantasies, their morals. Stories are important, as they create. Stories create history, identity and realities. "Stories are wondrous things. And they are dangerous" (King 2003: 9). Stories create realities and therefore words have to be chosen carefully. Once words are spoken, they cannot be taken back. "So you have to be careful with the stories you tell. And you have to watch out for the

stories that you are told" (ibid.: 10). This relates again to King's approach to stories and identity. King says that we are our stories, we tell the stories we are, and we are the stories we tell. He says that we could switch our story, but that this act would also require of us that we switch part or all or our established identity. King says we write our own stories to a certain degree, and that we definitely tell our version of the story, our interpretation. The story about colonization, about and power is one story, the story as it is told today by the West, the colonizer. As Natives find their voices, another story emerges, a story of resistance to genocide, inequality, abuse and powerlessness. Through his use of stories moral values, ethics, and cultural differences between Natives and non-Natives are made explicit and the importance of listening and communication are underlined.

King asks the question, "what is it about us that you don't like?" (King 2003) and he explores a number of factors that could explain why white people do not like Natives. One of these reasons is that Natives get government grants and have land. However, King continues that this representation does not make sense, since we live in a capitalist environment, where everything is owned and someone can claim ownership. King cites examples of golf clubs, were you can only have access if you are a member. The same is true for Natives.

With his narrative, King brings historical awareness to the audience and reader, in a critical manner drawing attention to the differences between Native and non-Native culture, the injustices and prejudices that are still in play. King also provides, through his stories, a sense of pride to Native identity, something that is worth reclaiming and fighting for. Although there are no explicit references to spiritual appropriation, the sense of disrespect and misunderstanding that the non-Native has for Native culture, starting with the image of the Indians, becomes evident through King's writing. "For my part, I told stories. Stories about broken treaties, residential schools, culturally offensive movies, the appropriation of Native names, symbols, and motifs" (King 2003: 63). King thus counters the story of colonization with a different story, establishing a new reality, or at least or more multifaceted reality. King (2003) tells two creation stories, one from a Christian perspective, and one from a Native perspective. The differences between the two stories are numerous. The worlds are created very differently in the Native story and in Genesis.

> "So here are our choices: a world in which creation is a solitary, individual act [Genesis] or a world in which creation is a shared activity [Native story]; a world that begins in harmony and slides toward chaos [Genesis] or a world that begins in chaos and moves toward harmony [Native story]; a world marked by competition [Genesis] or a world determined by co-operation [Native story]" (King 2003: 24).

The differences in the stories reflect ways of thinking, ways of dealing with problems. The Native creation story features many animals that work together, make mistakes, and try again. In Genesis, one mistake is made and Paradise is lost. Mistakes are punished. King asks

> "But give this a thought. What is the creation story in Genesis had featured a flawed deity who was understanding and sympathetic rather than autocratic and rigid? (…) What kind of a world might we have created with that kind of story? (ibid.: 27).

The stories that are told reflect an identity, societies' morals and their beliefs. If the story changes then reality might change accordingly.

Although King does not specifically comment on spiritual appropriation, it is his approach to the subject of history, religion, politics and popular culture that illustrate the relationship between Natives and non-Natives, through the use of stories and historical facts. This relationship, essentially a relationship of power and domination, is challenged. By challenging the story as it is told by Westerners, another reality is brought to the light, another reality is created.

Overview

In conclusion, the main arguments against spiritual appropriation are that it is genocide, continuous colonization, theft, it is disrespectful to Natives and it is dangerous. Smith makes an example of two people, non-Natives, who died through asphyxiation in 2002, during a sweat lodge ceremony. There have been more deaths since then, reported on CNN in 2005. These are real dangers of ceremonies not done properly. Through the lack of proper communication between cultures, appropriation is an act of disrespect, as the non-Natives, as well as some Natives, are not listening to the protest and the voices of those concerned. Listening is very important in Native communities, through listening you learn. This is echoed in Smith (2005:134), as well as in Hernández-Ávila (1997 in Irwin 2000). Respect is of utmost importance. Tony Incashola, a tribal member of the Flathead Indian Reservation states:

> "In my culture, it has always been taught that when you don't respect, you don't show respect, you don't treat things properly, in the end it comes back on you. In the end, it will hurt and destroy you in some way. And I believe the punishment, whether it be today, tomorrow, or somewhere down the line will come back on you" (Tony Incashola in Smith 2005: 132).

The disrespect is manifested through the commodification of ritual and ceremonies and the inherent belief that non-Natives are entitled to sacred knowledge. A Cree historian, Winona Stevenson Wheeler echoes this view by saying:

> "One of the major tenets of Western erudition is the belief that all knowledge is knowable. In the Cree world all knowledge is not knowable because knowledge is property in the sense that it is owned and can only be transmitted by the legitimate owner… You can't just go and take it, or even go and ask for it. Access to knowledge requires long-term commitment, apprenticeship and payment. As a student of oral history, in the traditional sense, there is much I have heard and learned yet so little I can speak or write about, because I have not earned the right to do so. I cannot tell anyone or write about most things because it has not been given to me. If I did it would be theft" (Winona Stevenson Wheeler in Smith 2005: 133).

Specific knowledge becomes thus part of a cultural identity and tradition. Therefore the struggle against spiritual appropriation is not only about disrespect for a people. It is also a struggle for identity, and who owns and controls what knowledge, who is entitled to sacred knowledge and how can it be protected. In order to accomplish this, Natives have to face their history, their current identity, reconfirm and rebuild their community and then voice their concerns and opinions.

Chapter 5: Identity and Healing

Identity is made up of personal narratives/myths that change over time, depending on our memory, new experiences and old convictions.

> "Personal myths play a central role in the construction of identity. Without a complete and coherent personal myth, a person is prone to suffer from emotional and mental illness. By reconstructing a complete and coherent personal myth and then sharing that myth with others, one can heal from the effects of postcolonial traumatic stress response" (Episkenew 2009: 15).

Identity is made up of relationships, of passports and nationalities, history, politics and dreams. Through resistance identity is confirmed, reconfirmed, created and recreated. Through resistance identity creation becomes a more active engagement, as some aspects of cultural identity and tradition are actively confirmed, while other parts are resisted. The forms of resistance that Native people are currently using to confirm their identity are political organizations, such as AIM, SPIRIT, etc. The other form is through writing, especially academic writing. Through the active participation in resistance and confirmation of identity, the Indigenous person is entering their healing process (Episkenew 2009, Brady 1995, etc.). A strong sense of identity and cultural identity is often associated as a primary factor of health and healing (Brady 1995, Schneider & DeHaven 2003, etc.). The loss of Native culture is associated with addiction and health problems. Therefore, the embracing of one's culture and the regaining of balance is seen as healing. "Cultural affiliation in itself is now increasingly perceived to counter drug abuse" (Brady 1995: 1489).The reestablishing and reconfirming of an identity provides the individual with power, agency, balance and ultimately health: "(…) Aborigines reclaiming their Aboriginality speak of redemptive powers" (Swain 1992 in Brady 1995: 1489). The process of colonization is blamed for ill health and loss of identity. "Drug and alcohol abuse, and ill-health too, are said by many indigenous people to have arisen from, or been exacerbated by, deprivation and the erosion of their cultural integrity (acculturation) as a result of colonization" (Brady 1995: 1489). The process of colonization is resisted through the reclaiming of identity.

Identity through Writing

The written word is very important in society, especially in Western society. The written text has power, it creates history and it diffuses knowledge. However, in Native history, oral tradition has much more significance than the written word. In indigenous culture the written word barely exists. History, morality, way of life, culture are mostly transmitted through oral history and storytelling. Anthropologists have long contributed to the process of identity creation through their work and ethnographies. At the very least they contribute to how Western people perceive the "Other" through their accounts and research. "Keesing goes so far as to say that we

(anthropologists) *invented* the tribal world of otherness, and that we 'continue to overstate Difference, in the search for the exotic and for the radical Otherness that Western philosophy, and Western craving for alternatives, demand'" (Brady 1995: 1490).This statement is very interesting, as it combines culture and commodity and the search for the exotic, the enchantment. It further shows the effect that writing can have on culture and the perception of identity. It is now the turn of the Natives to write their own story and start thus to "create" their culture and identity, as a means to resist colonization.

When writing one is active, and one also participates in the common and Western accepted way of dealing with issues; writing about them. In order to be heard, the Native person has 'appropriated' and acculturated to the way of the Westerner, meaning that they achieve authority through academic writing. The resistance becomes more powerful with the authority of University degrees. When writing, historical events, ideas and stories are reprocessed, reexamined and re-experienced. The Native person can analyze existing texts, the current socio-political context and incorporate their own interpretation, feelings and experiences in a meaningful way, as well as a valid, authoritative way. Linnekin (1992 in Brady 1995: 1490) states that "self conscious reflection about one's own culture is certainly intensified where perceived cultural or ethnic differences are politicized." Within the context of colonization and the existing current socio-economic inequalities, this self-reflection on the part of the Native with regards to their identity and culture is thus understandable. Through the process of writing and also reading,

> "[the indigenous] reassemble our individual and collective memories to gain a sense of both personal and community control, thereby reclaiming the Indigenous knowledge that colonial policies attempted to eradicate, clarifying feelings about self and community, and validating Indigenous ideas, values, and beliefs" (Episkenew 2009: 16).

The Power of the Word

In order for any of this to be meaningful and true, the word has to have the power to create and to affect. The word, whether written or oral, has to be acknowledged as powerful, as an agent of change, a thought provoker, something to describe reality by, to reflect it and also to create it. Words bring attention to a certain subject or aspect. "A person maintains his or her balance by means of both actions and words. Reality mirrors the spoken word, and for this reason, words should be chosen carefully. A person's words do not merely describe the surrounding world but in fact help create it" (Carrese and Rhodes 1995 in Schneider et al. 2003: 418).

Through writing, sharing, discussing an identity is created, re-created and confirmed. Through writing and "by 'reinventing' both the 'enemy's language' and literary traditions,

Indigenous writers contribute to the construction of what Frantz Fanon has termed a 'national culture'-albeit under Fourth World conditions-thereby furthering the process of decolonization" (Episkenew 2009:19). By reading and writing about spiritual appropriation, the author engages with the historical and current political context of identity construction.

> "Personal myths are the narratives 'that each of us naturally constructs to bring together the different parts of ourselves and our lives into a purposeful and convincing whole.' We come to understand the texts of our lives during the process of constructing our personal myths. Personal myths play a central role in the construction of our identity. Without a complete and coherent personal myth, a person is prone to suffer from emotional and mental illness. By reconstructing a complete and coherent personal myth and then sharing that myth with others, one can heal from the effects of postcolonial traumatic stress response" (Episkenew 2009: 15).

By the same token, myths when shared are not only for the individual writing or telling them, but also for the person reading them or listening to them. Reading or listening to stories helps make sense, to put into context, and understand. Willie Ermine, helper of the Cree Elders in Saskatchewan explains that "sacred stories [and stories in general] are not only spiritual stories but are themselves spirit. He explains that they enter into the listener and transform that person" (Episkenew 2009: 15). This would make the word very powerful. The word affects the listener, provokes actions, understandings and thus transforms. King (2003) also asserts the power of the word, as being able to create and change. As such, the word has the power to create and recreate Native identity in both the reader and the writer.

Creating Native Identity: Discourse, Laws and Imagination

What does Native or Indigenous mean? In part Indigenous identity is made up of laws, history, nationality, stereotypes, and imagination. The term Native or Indigenous brings up some very potent associations in the mind of the Western person. As previously discussed, the imagined Indian plays an important role in the process of spiritual appropriation. The term Indigenous conjures some romantic images that essentially help commercialize their spirituality. As Owen (2008) notes, there is an exclusion of European Indigenous people, when speaking about Indigenous. Therefore, colonization plays an important role in the current definition of Indigenous people. There is the colonizer and there is the Native. The colonizer is in the position of power and therefore defines Native identity in his terms, through his laws and imagination. Academia also helps to establish a certain identity of the Native person through research, observation and the writing of historical texts.

Ian Anderson (in Grossman 2003) in his article *Black bit, white bit* considers the impact of anthropological study on Australian Aboriginal people: "Given anthropology's traditional pursuit

of the 'real' Aborigine, it is perhaps not surprising that the discipline had a troubled interest in people who were 'non-traditional'" (47).

> "Cultural essentialism now defined the 'authentic' Aborigines by their cultural forms, as surely as biological essentialism had once fixed them by their racial characteristics. In other words, now you could pick a real Aborigine by his or her 'authentic' or 'traditional' cultural practice" (ibid.).

Anderson notes that he "[…] agree[s] with Deloria that representations which describe Indigenous peoples (or any other peoples) as caught 'between two worlds' become 'conceptual prisons'" (ibid.: 51).

Native identity is defined differently in Canada and in the United States. In the United States blood quantum is used and in Canada the Indian Act and Bill C-31 define Indianness. The law is a powerful tool in establishing identity. Identity can provide a person with certain benefits, such as taxes, as well as with perceived stereotypes, and associations of superiority and inferiority. Identity as established by law is very rigid and categorized, either you fall within the category of the Native or not. However, in reality, when taking into consideration the individual's feelings, history, personal and social connections, the identity might not always be so "black and white". Anderson echoes this view when he writes that

> "[a]s I am Aborigine, I inhabit an Aboriginal body, and not a combinations of features which may or may not cancel each other. Whatever language I speak, I speak an Aboriginal language, because a lot of Aboriginal people I know speak like me. How I speak, act, and how I look are outcomes of a colonial history, and not a particular combination of traits from either side of the frontier" (ibid.: 51).

Thomas King also discusses the legislations surrounding Indians, especially the Indian Act in the United States and Bill C-31 in Canada. Both legislations are the most recent ones with regards to Natives. In the United States, the Indian Act is supposed to protect Native artists and art, regulating that only Native people can produce art with the description of "Native". In Canada, the legislation protects women from losing their status as Indian when marrying a non-status man. Today, women are able to retain their proper status, and women that had previously lost their status, as well as their children may now reclaim it. This is all very good, King says, however, one needs to take into account what it means to be of Native identity or to have Native status. In the United States, status is defined through the blood quantum. In Canada there is a two generation cut-off line (King 2003). Therefore, as King explains, with these kinds of legislations and acts in place, Indian people as defined by law will cease to exist at some point in the future, even if the people themselves still define themselves as Indian, feel Indian, have connections to this identity. To be Native might have some advantages, however there are also many historical stereotypes associated with it. Therefore, many Natives might not want to be considered Natives.

In recent years though, through the resistance and reestablishing of a more stable and proud identity, Native status might be more sought after. Socio-economic inequality experienced by Native people might be one of the major concerns to the Indigenous. In Western romanticized imagination the real problems, claims, and struggles of Natives have little or no place. However there is a place and almost a need for the mythical Indian that has plenty of wisdom and spirituality to offer. The struggling Native from the reserve and his needs receive little attention from Western people. However, the romantic version of the nature loving Indian that has wisdom to heal the planet and the self receives a great deal of attention from Western people. This can be attested to in any book-store. This dichotomy of the visible and invisible Indian is at the root of the debate of spiritual appropriation. The needs of Western people for the search of spirituality override the needs for equality and respect of the Natives.

For the Native person and the Native identity spirituality is very important and is an integral part of everyday life. As such, the discussion of spiritual appropriation is always, in part, a discussion about the reclaiming of identity. Identity can thus be imagined and romanticized, in short it is created. It is created by the individual, as well as the society.

Healing Process

The healing process involves many different aspects of life: health, identity, stories. These different components are all linked and together achieve healing.

> "Healing is described as a process that brings part of one's self (physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual) together at a deep level of inner knowledge. This can result in an integrated and balanced whole self, with each part having equal importance and value" (Dossey et al., 1995 in Hunter et al., 2006: 13).

One way that Natives use the healing powers of shamanism and their spiritual traditions is in the medical setting. Indigenous people, in America, as well as in Australia are now fighting alcoholism and other drug addictions with culture, including the use of sweat lodges, and other spiritual practices (Schneider & DeHaven 2003, Hunter et al. 2006, Brady 1995). The problem of addictions, alcohol, drugs, and even the use of gasoline as a narcotic, etc. is thought to have been provoked through a loss of culture, through colonization. Therefore, the remedy is to regain culture, to regain balance through embracing ones traditional practices, history and spirituality. According to a study by Hunter et al. (2006: 16) they identify healing as being composed of at least three parts. The study researches how urban-based Natives address their health issues. Natives are using traditional healing ceremonies to regain their health. Culture, or the regaining of culture, can have a beneficial impact on health. Aboriginal healing can take place through regaining balance and culture. The three parts of healing are:

1) Following a cultural path (ceremonies from past and present)

2) Regaining balance (spiritual, mental, physical, and health/holism and self-care)

3) Sharing in the circle of life (through communication and modeling behavior)

For healing Native people use methods such as "smudging, talking circles, and drumming circles to the use of sweat lodges" (Hunter et al. 2006: 19). The use of sweat lodges is very prominent among Natives, in order to perform healing rituals, recreate their identity, as well as to promote Pan-Indianism. Healing involves not only the body but also the mind. Modern physicians are often being accused of not listening to the patient properly, "[they] often seem alienated from those they treat – perceived by patients as mere technicians wielding dehumanizing technology, rather than as healers (Schwartz and Wiggins 1985) - with the result that patients frequently turn elsewhere for healing" (Schneider et al., 2003: 414). This might certainly be one of the many reasons contributing to the popularity of shamanism in Western society. An important point is that doctors are not relating the illness of the patient in a significant way back to their life. "Traditional healers, who often help patients make sense of their illness within the context of their day-to-day lives, may offer lessons for contemporary physicians (Al-Adawi, etc. in Schneider 2003: 414). It seems that in traditional systems and healing a narrative is constructed, which helps the patient to construct meaning and therefore deal with the illness in a more effective and efficient way.

Health is closely linked to identity (Episkenew 2009). Culture is a marker of identity, therefore to belong to a strong culture can have positive health benefits. If the culture is in peril, marginal and not maintained, this can have negative effects on identity and therefore health. Health is achieved by regaining balance. Balance includes spiritual aspects and using traditional healing techniques, such as drumming, the sweat lodge and chanting. Also, "renewed contact with the land, regaining what was lost, has thus come to be associated with pathways out of addiction" (Brady 1995: 1494). Culture is used as a form of treatment in this sense (Brady 1995). To have a culture is to have identity; to have identity is to be healthy.

Appropriated Healing

The sweat lodge, as one of the main ceremonies, adopted and appropriated by non-Natives, becomes an interesting phenomenon. The sweat lodge heals the non-Native person by allowing them to find their self, essentially, their identity. "Eliade concluded that before it was too late, Europeans and Americans should learn from the non-Western other in order to see the surrounding world through the lens of myth and the spiritual, which would bring people back to

the original harmony" (Znamenski 2007: 177). Harmony could be seen as achieving balance, thus regaining balance is health. There are many accounts from non-Natives who find Native ceremonies, such as the sweat lodge extremely beneficial. To adopt Native spirituality, sweat lodges, vision quests, communication with the spirit world, is to make use of the mind and the imagination. Many of the books on shamanism and work-shops are advertised as self-help tools. Native spirituality becomes a technique to master and heal the self. Native spirituality is used as a personal quest. Brown (1997: 8) suggests:

> "By abandoning the concept of congregation, people who seek spiritual revelation must find other models to organize their personal quest. Two major alternatives are available: the self-help group, in which a number of people agree to join forces for their mutual development, and the therapeutic workshop or counseling session, in which spiritual experts provide services to clients for a fee."

In a way it is ironic that people abandon institutionalized religions, only to look for another guide in their spiritual quest, such as an elder, a shaman, the inner self. The more mysterious and exotic healing rituals of Native cultures, such as the sweat lodge and spirit communication thus fulfill the role of healing the self by providing meaning and increasing the sense of identity. One way that non-Natives can relate well to the practice of shamanism and use its healing powers is the notion that it is a universal technique (Harner 1990). Of course there are also Western practitioners of shamanism who critique the universalizing of shamanism, as found in the approach of Harner (Znamenski 2007). However, it seems the universalizing approach fits very well into modern identity search. The local approach, even though it might very well work for some (Druid shamanism, Scandinavian shamanism, etc.) might not work so well for others. Science pushes the mysterious further and further away, as more discoveries are made and explanations are found. Science is about universal laws. It seems that there is a search for some ultimate truth. The universalized approach is also convenient for today's life style. Many people live not only in the place they are born, but travel the globe, live in different cities throughout their lives. So, one can simply not get too attached to a particular locality.

For both, Natives and non-Natives, the debate of spiritual appropriation, the practicing and participation in Native ceremonies and ritual, the reading of self-help books on shamanism, the writing of academic texts all help to establish a strong sense of identity, thus bringing balance and health. For Natives healing is achieved through the act of resistance and for the non-Native through appropriation of the exotic. However, in both cases spiritual appropriation is in relation to a form of power; power through resistance and power through knowledge.

Chapter 6: Discussion

There are a number of important points for discussion. The notion of power has permeated the discussion of spiritual appropriation in various forms, is thus an important aspect. Another important observation has to do with the differences between Native and non-Native culture and how these differences manifest themselves through the debate of spiritual appropriation. The differences between Natives and non-Natives are made visible through identity construction; a complex process, which involves affirming stories, as well as resisting. Culture is used as a tool for healing, using sweat lodges and other ceremonies. The way knowledge is obtained becomes very important, is knowledge shared or appropriated? This largely depends on the context and power relations. Culture, spiritual knowledge, is sometimes treated as property, which some laws try to protect. Culture, it appears, can be owned and used according to the context as a tool for healing or political resistance.

Power

The notion of power and politics is very important in the context of appropriation. However, there are two types of power that come into play in spiritual appropriation. The first type is the socio-political power and the second type is the magic-religious powers, or also healing powers, of the ceremonies and ritual. The socio-political power is a lot easier to grasp and understand. It is produced out of a historical context, with the colonizer being dominant over the Native, imposing their laws, way of life and way of thinking on the Native people, as discussed in chapter 2. The power of the ritual and ceremonies is somewhat harder to grasp and to understand and prove. Rituals are powerful in more than one way, they arouse the curiosity of non-Natives through their exotic otherness, and they enchant Western imagination. Non-Native participants do report positive changes in themselves after participating in sweat lodges, for example. Natives too, attest to the power of rituals and ceremonies (Deloria 2006, Brady 1995, Ingerman in Harvey 2003, etc.). Even the powers of ceremonies and rituals are not made very explicit it becomes clear that, when performed correctly, they are powerful tools for healing (Ingerman in Harvey 2003, Harner 1990 for example).

Other Voices

The arguments put forward in this paper are based on different criticisms of spiritual appropriation, as the phenomenon is experienced right now by various authors. However, this does not mean that all forms of sharing of knowledge, including sacred knowledge, should be frowned upon. Even Native authors are not strictly against non-Natives using their ceremonies and rituals. The important distinction is how the knowledge is treated, shared, and used. Many non-Native academics also participate in the debate of appropriation, such as Lee Irwin, Christina

Welch, John Grim, Ronald Grimes, and Sam Gill, to name but a few. One concern of some of these authors is the right of representation. Can non-Natives accurately participate in writing and teaching Native subjects? Deloria (1998) speaks about Mr. Buhler, a professor at Boulder University. Buhler seems to think very positively of people like Lynn Andrews and Harner, commenting on their synthesizing of different texts and research. However, Deloria does not seem to be very hostile toward Buhler, even though he is clearly of a different opinion than Deloria, with respect to appropriation. Therefore, the intentions of people seem to be of importance for Deloria. When reading Deloria one gets the impression that since he understands social, historical and political context of colonization very well. Deloria puts more emphasis on why things are the way they are, instead of making accusations.

Non-Native authors writing about the subject of shamanism and spiritual appropriation also have different profiles, there are the scholars, who are either against appropriation or try to stay neutral, there are the scholars that "turned shamans" and promote it, there are also many others who are not scholars and write about shamanism and spirituality. The latter category is not extensively represented in this thesis. However, they form an important part of bringing shamanism and its mysteries to the general public.

The most outspoken advocates of resistance to spiritual appropriation can be found in the United States. According to Owen (2008) it is mostly the Lakota tradition that is being appropriated by Non-Indigenous people around the world. There are also different degrees of resistance and opposition. Ward Churchill is one of the more aggressive and less tolerant voices with regards to spiritual appropriation. He phrases his arguments in terms of racism and cultural genocide. There is also a variety of Natives who actually speak out and publish articles on the subject, such as Deloria, Churchill, Jocks, and numerous others. However, there are also those voices that are heard only indirectly, through ethnography, such as that of Maria Sabina. "Maria Sabina quite honestly admits in her narrative that once she began to divulge her ways to the investigators, she began to feel her powers weaken" (Hernandez-Avila 1997 in Irwin 2000: 21). The indirect voices are less explicit. The statement of Maria Sabina reminds of Andrea Smith's analogy that to know someone is to have power. Here the powers are weakened by sharing them. Essentially there is a loss of control over a specific power and knowledge. Therefore one can conclude that secret powers are stronger. If something is secret and hidden, only the secret keeper (owner), knows how to control the knowledge. Once it is shared, or the secret is revealed, it loses its power. As Campbell (in Harvey 2003: 126) says "the magical loses its magic".

Differences

According to Owen (2008) a ceremony conducted in the right way, that is to say, by a Native person, and a ceremony conducted by a non-Native, or 'white shaman', differ in two fundamental ways. The first difference is that of safety. Whereas Natives caution of the dangers of a ceremony not conducted according to protocol and with the right intentions, 'white shamans', non-Natives, usually continuously affirm the safety of the ritual (see Harner for example 1990). The second difference is that of protocol. Whereas in the Native context the protocol is essential, in most Western settings it is omitted and seen as not important to the working of the ritual.

Another important reason for protocol is that it distinguishes right behavior from wrong behavior and sets clear boundaries. Therefore, one could argue, protocol is important for Natives, as it helps to set boundaries and definitions that help in establishing identity and customs. For non-Natives protocol is secondary, or of no importance, as they are seeking spiritual enlightenment rather than identity. As Harvey (2003: 29) concludes,

> "It might, therefore, be better to say that shamans are masters of the etiquette and protocols by which relationships are maintained and enhanced. They are distinctive in that they enter relationships with other-than-human persons who overwhelm and harm other humans."

These are just the main differences between Natives and non-Natives conducting ceremonies. The reasons for performing a ceremony might also differ, as the non-Native usually searches for individual growth and healing, whereas Natives might be more community oriented. In the Native setting, ceremonies are usually not conducted for money, even though gifts might be brought. These differences, of course not always strictly dividing Natives from non-Natives, are of key importance, as they alter the meaning of the ceremony and its context. These differences further show a lack of proper understanding of the Native spirituality and bear evidence to the adaptation and evolution of certain practices to specific contexts and situations.

Sharing of Knowledge

The opposite of appropriation seems to be the voluntary sharing of knowledge or tradition. In the current debate on appropriation, the instances where Natives have voluntarily shared parts of their knowledge, even sacred knowledge, with people from outside their culture, are not discussed in much detail. Some classic examples include Nicholas Black Elk, Fools Crow, and Maria Sabina. Many Natives today are also in favor of sharing their knowledge. This is evident from many examples where Natives participate in and conduct ceremonies and sweat lodges with

non-Natives. The Canadian Natives do not seem to be that hostile towards Westerners participating in ceremonies such as the powwow or a sweat lodge, as some of the Natives from the United States, as is reported in Owen (2008). Calvin White, a chief of Flat Bay Mi'kmaq in Newfoundland states about powwows that "they are occasions for bringing people together, and for the young" (in Owen 2008: 122). Owen (ibid.) observed that "At Conne River powwow, sweat lodge ceremonies are offered to all participants regardless of ethnicity". Many Natives have also shared their knowledge with anthropologists. Some Natives are frowned upon, such as Sun Bear, treated as frauds by other Natives, for sharing ceremonies without respecting the proper protocols and for monetary gain.

The sharing of knowledge is not restricted to the sharing between Natives and non-Natives. Through modern technology and increased awareness, many Native people and communities have established extensive networks, through internet forums, traveling, writing and reading that span from the Americas to Australia (see Brady 1995, Owen 2008 for example). Owen (2008) describes the sharing of ceremonies between Indigenous groups. As she interestingly notes, when other Indigenous groups appropriate a ceremony the word used is not appropriation but rather borrowing. The term borrowing implies that it will be given back one day. "Native Americans claim there is a difference between non-Native 'appropriation' and intertribal 'sharing' conducted according to collectively recognized and transmitted protocols […]" (Owen 2008: 110). Thus, when other Native nations "borrow" the sweat lodge ceremony it is not something that is frowned upon. Suzanne Owen (2008) describes how the Mi'kmaq of Newfoundland, Canada, are using the sweat lodge ceremony. The leaders of the ceremony cite that they learned how to perform these ceremonies from other Native tribes, by observation and participation in their sweat lodges. The main reason for them to participate in sweat lodges and powwows in their communities in Newfoundland is to create a sense of unity and to revive their traditional ways, especially for the younger generations. This is an illustration of the way that Black Elk had intended to universalize Indian spirituality for the purpose of preserving their way of life and their spiritual traditions. There does not seem to be any resistance from Natives when other groups are appropriating the sweat lodge ceremony (Owen 2008). Owen (2008) describes yet another way that the sweat lodge ceremony is appropriated, and this time by European people. Druidism is part of the spiritual revival that has become rather popular in Europe lately. Some of the leaders of -druid groups have also started to use sweat lodges, modeled once again on the Lakota sweat lodge ceremony. Most of the time, the leaders of the new sweat lodge ceremony have learned from North American Indians or have participated in an Indian sweat lodge ceremony, which seems to lead them to believe that they now have authority and validation to perform this ceremony in Europe. Having "learned" from a "real" Indian provides these leaders with the authority and authenticity; it validates their claim to authentic spiritual knowledge. Whether a person is qualified to lead a sweat lodge ceremony is decided by the people who pay to participate in it. The relevant criteria are the proposed leader's experience and whether the particular way in which she or he learned the ceremony is acceptable to his or her pupils. An

important twist to the Druid sweat lodge, as described in Owen (2008) is that is becomes adapted to the local ancient deities and the local landscape, thus making it more significant for the participants. This strategy can serve two purposes. First, people might be able to better identify and thus accept the ceremony for their personal use. Secondly, it helps to reconstruct a link with the past and with nature, which is an important trait in the search of spirituality in the New Age. The sweat lodge ceremony is validated, as well as romanticized. The archeological records of ancient Europe are not conclusive if such a ceremony as the sweat lodge ceremony really existed (Churchill 1994). However, the British Druids, as well as some Mi'kmaq claim that their people, in the past, did have some sort of a sweat lodge ceremony (Owen 2008).

The sharing of knowledge, values, traditions and ideas is something that is inevitable. It is by this process that progress is made, improvements are conceived and different opinions and meanings originate. Michael Harner is often criticized for his sharing of 'shamanic wisdom' in a do-it-yourself approach. However, he might just be another person who seriously thinks that the knowledge of Native people is worth sharing with the general public. This knowledge might benefit individuals in managing their lives and living better.

> "Specific techniques long used in shamanism, such as change in state of consciousness, stress-reduction, visualization, positive thinking, and assistance from non ordinary sources, are some of the approaches now widely employed in holistic practice" (Harner 1990: xiii).

There are many terms in this phrase that are specific to Western terminology and categorization. They are very broad categories and in a way shamanism becomes not only universal, but also very general. Shamanism becomes a very broad category which allows people to bring together different techniques for well-being. Indigenous, as well as other authors, are responding to this generalization. As Ronwanièn:Te Jocks (in Irwin 2000)and Deloria Jr. (2006) affirm, the context of a specific people is very important, their specific history, the details of the ceremonies, as it is meaningful in a very specific way. The Western person has a tendency to generalize spirituality in order to adapt it to the modern, individual, urban, consumerist life-style (Harner 1990, Ingerman in Harvey 2003, Atkinson 1992 for example). Harner defends Western people that practicing shamanism,

> "[…] these new practitioners are not 'playing Indian', but going to the same revelatory spiritual sources that tribal shamans have traveled to from time immemorial. They are not pretending to be shamans; if they get shamanic results for themselves and others in this work, they are indeed the real thing. Their experiences are genuine and, when described, are essentially interchangeable with the accounts of shamans from non-literate tribal cultures. The shamanic work is the same, the human mind, heart, and body are the same; only the cultures are different" (Harner 1990: xiv).

This seems to be written with passion and conviction. In the authors reviewed, Michael Harner is not that openly attacked to participate in spiritual appropriation, which is interesting to note.

Historical abuse, current socio-political inequality and the intent with which a ceremony is used and performed are of utmost importance.

> "The demonization of Native American belief-systems continues into the present and has implications for Native American religious freedom today. In some instances, this historical repression figures into the present reluctance of many Native peoples to share their belief systems with anyone. It also figures into the decision of some elders not to pass on their knowledge or even languages to their younger generations, in some way to protect them" (Hernández-Ávila in Irwin 2000: 23).

Using shared knowledge with respect, and to fully understand the historical context of a certain people and their struggles can enhance the sharing experience and make spiritual appropriation something that is not necessarily perceived as negative, but rather as enriching and enhancing.

Appropriation Revisited

The concept of appropriation in the context of Native spirituality has mostly negative implications, as it questions morality, rights to intellectual and communal property, ownership, and cultural genocide. However, the issue is not that simple. Cultural sharing has always been part of cultural histories and traditions, culture is not static. Natives can be said to appropriate the life style of Western people. Since relations of power and dominance are in play though, it becomes easier to victimize Native people. Welch argues in her article *Complicating Spiritual Appropriation* that the dichotomy of "bad western appropriator" and "good Indian victim" is too simplistic, as well as reinforces the notion of neo-colonialism and the dominance of Western culture and agency.

Appropriation has a lot to do with identity construction. In the proper sense of the word one can only appropriate something that is not yours or "rightfully?" yours. Therefore the sense of one's identity and also of one's culture is essential to define or to be clear about. Otherwise the discussion about appropriation looses potency. The discussion can only come about when there is a perceived difference and otherness between the cultures. To establish identities with more fixed boundaries is essential for appropriation to become an issue. The Native person, currently redefining their identity and culture, reaffirming it and reconstructing it can therefore enter the discussion about appropriation and spiritual appropriation. It would be interesting to see how the Native cultures in the future will negotiate their identities, especially taking into consideration

that many 'Western' elements have been incorporated, appropriated, accultured. One example might be the negotiation of Native spirituality with Christianity. There are many Natives who have converted to Christianity due to colonial pressure. What category are they supposed to be in? Are they not themselves making a 'hodgepodge' of different traditions? Or are they completely converted? And can one even avoid a mixing of different traditions and knowledge? In what way can the law protect cultural knowledge? It seems that once monetary gain results from using cultural knowledge, in this case the commercialization of Native spirituality, Natives are objecting to this as inappropriate.

Overview

What is it exactly that the Natives want? Respect is probably on the top of the list, along with rights, this includes rights to lands. The two organizations that have voiced strong opinions on the Internet and at meetings it seems are the AIM and SPIRIT, urban based centers. Then there is the whole question about tradition, traditional symbols and way of life. On the website (www.wolakota.org, accessed March 8, 2008) there are many pictures of Natives dressed in feathers, horses, drums, all items that non-Natives associate with Natives. The question arises, seeing how these centers and institutes spring up in cities and use modern technology, such as the Internet to diffuse their ideas and their presence and at the same time appealing to traditions seems a little at odds, especially from a modern Western point of view, where spirituality is seen as something in opposition to materialism and technology, something in the order of back to earth, back to the roots. Depicting many Native symbols on the Native websites is almost paradoxical, as it reaffirms the Western image of the Indian. Churchill (1994:81) says that "[a] concerted, sustained, and in some ways accelerating effort has gone into making Indians unreal". The same symbols that the non-Native is associating with ideal "Indianness" are thus used by the Natives to create and recreate their Native identity.

All of these above mentioned points are making the debate of spiritual appropriation multifaceted and a complex issue. However at the heart of the debate are two very important elements: respect and communication. As many current anthropologists are pointing out, to establish a meaningful dialogue with the other is of key importance. Once real respect and real communication are achieved, both parties will learn from each other and the Western sense of dominance might be corrected.

Conclusion

Shamanism is at the front of a political debate, reclaiming of identity and healing. For non-Natives, healing is mostly of a spiritual nature, meaning they reconnect with nature and spirituality, finding the "inner self". For Natives shamanism is also used for healing, in the traditional meaning and also from a political point of view. Healing takes place and is induced through ceremonies, by using protocol, and also by engaging in the debate of spiritual appropriation. Through the politicization of shamanism Native people are finding a voice: a voice to express their feelings and opinions to non-Native, and also to bring the issue closer to Indian people themselves. By debating the use of shamanism by non-Indians, consciously and unconsciously boundaries and terms are defined and negotiated.

The contemporary Native authors reviewed in this thesis, Ward Churchill, Andrea Smith, Ina Hernández-Ávila, Christopher Ronwanièn:Te Jocks, Thomas King and Vine Deloria Jr. all remark upon the lack of respect that becomes apparent through spiritual appropriation. Although their arguments are very different, the showing of non-respect from Westerners with regards to Native spirituality is a common complaint. The lack of respect arises of the power relations of colonizer and colonized. Native systems of thoughts, their land and their stories are not of equal value to Western notions of reality and thought. However, Native spirituality has become a valued commodity to Western people. Since Native spirituality has become so popular it becomes a target point for Native resistance. One form of resistance is through academic writing. The question becomes how many people that attend sweat lodges, Native ceremonies, work-shops, and read books on shamanism are aware of the opposition of Native people? Taylor (1997) observes that some non-Natives participating in movements such as Earth First! are aware of objections of Natives. They are trying to work together with Natives during ceremonies in order to resolve conflicts. Taylor (1997: 189) observes that many Natives are mostly concerned that non-Natives adopt a proper spiritual attitude than the actual borrowing of some elements of Native spirituality.

The debate about spiritual appropriation is part of a larger problem, namely of "real listening". For real listening to take place, you have to forget about yourself for a moment. This means to forget about your problems, thoughts, and preconceived notions. It means to try to not analyze and interpret the words of the other person with your framework of knowledge, science, and psychology. Real listening is extremely hard, because the self, the ego, and attitude, preconceived notions have to be suspended for a brief moment, in order to properly appreciate the other persons' words, story or knowledge. Western people often feel superior out of arrogance, conscious and/or unconscious resulting out of colonial history. Real listening becomes very hard. This notion can be seen in the current focus on dialogue and real communication with the Other of many anthropologists, such as Lassiter (2005), Irwin (2000), Ridington (in Irwin 2000),

among others. When really listening, forgetting about oneself, the other can be heard properly, and a learning process can take place. Real listening involves being open to learn something new, to maybe put established frameworks of analysis and thinking aside. Real listening can be challenging, as it can lead to self-reflection and maybe change. It can also lead to new and novel theories that can encounter resistance from the established status quo. Change challenges the status quo and is likely to run into resistance. Real listening involves accepting. When listening properly one has to focus and pay attention. During a ritual to have the proper intention, to focus is of key importance to Natives. Because by focusing, they become powerful.

Any form of religion and spirituality is never static and unchanging, new ideas or revelations lead to new forms and eventually to different ways of doing things and thinking about things. The issue of spiritual appropriation is more complex than two opposing points of views, as Welch (2007) suggests. There are many opinions and voices: voices of Natives, non-Natives, academics, and believers. It is precisely these voices that bring life to the debate, that tell stories and create a context.

The responsibility of any researcher, anthropologists, and believer, is to listen to the stories, to take them into serious consideration. Speaking to a friend of mine[1], with a bachelor in History, as well as a Law degree, we were musing at the thoughts and feelings of ancient pharaohs in Egypt. My friend then told me that the greatest challenge of historians and archaeologists is indeed to put themselves into the shoes of the other, separated by time. She continued that she read once that even the most bizarre fiction movie dealing with aliens, etc. will be more understandable to us than an ancient Egyptian pharaoh, as the model of behavior and thought is based on our understanding and experience of emotions and simply our world view. Is this in a way not the same with other cultures? The Egyptians were thought to place thought in the heart, which therefore was the only organ that was placed back in the chest cavity during mummification, not the brain[2]. Today, the brain is a very important organ, as it is perceived as the place of logic and thought, at least in the Western tradition. It is now the challenge of anthropologists to listen to the debate of spiritual appropriation and maybe even learn to apply some Native ways of thought to areas of Western life (Ronwanièn:Te Jocks in Irwin 2000).

The notion of power, its relations and dynamics, has permeated the entire debate of spiritual appropriation. There is the power relation of the colonized Native, and colonizer. This

[1]Personal communication over Sushi March 15, 2011.

[2]Personal communication, ibid.

power relation is of a political nature. There is the power of the spiritual, the power of a ceremony or ritual. Performers and participants of the ritual or ceremony have specific power relations with each other, which are mostly of a social nature. And then there is the actual power of the ceremony or ritual, which can manifest in healing powers or dangers to the person. These powers are of a magical, religious nature. As previously questioned (Chapter 3): Is the search for spirituality not also the search for power? Some power relations can be easier understood and analyzed, such as political, socio-economical. Once power relations and dynamics are understood, they become easier to manipulate and control, at least in theory. The magic-religious powers cannot be easily understood and therefore controlled. The spirit world is thought to be partially influenced by ceremonies and shamanic communication. Natives place much importance on protocol, as this is a way to ensure safe proceedings for a ceremony. “The very essence of spiritual force is that it takes precedence over the wills of human beings” (Colson in Fogelson & Adams 1977: 386). Spirits can thus be unpredictable and present a potential danger. Non-Natives tend to psychologize shamanic experience.

When conducting research and starting to listen to the Other, as Ronwanièn:Te Jocks (in Irwin 2000) suggests, the willingness to learn from the Other is very important in showing respect. Only when the Other’s information, system of thought, knowledge and frameworks of interpretation are accepted to “evaluate aspects of non-Indian life” (ibid.), is the willingness to learn and the inherent feeling of superiority of Western people put at rest. This willingness to evaluate frameworks of analysis, ways of doing and thinking with the Other’s knowledge would put the power relations in balance, as equals. In conclusion, power, enchantment, spirituality, identity, resistance can bring healing. The healing can be to the individual, to a community of Natives, to curious scholars, who try to understand the other.

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