BEYOND AESTHETICS: DYNAMICS OF MUSICAL KNOWLEDGE IN THE CONTEST POWWOW

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INTRODUCTION

Advocating basically a radical constructivist point of view (e.g. Maturana 1987, Roth 1997, Schmidt 1992), I have, generally speaking, come to stress the aspect of “knowledge” as an emerging phenomenon on the individual level. Therefore, the inclusion of the individual actor into the discussion of concepts of “cultural knowledge” is of particular importance for my approach. Similarly essential is the acceptance of “emotions” as unconscious forms of “knowledge” and its crucial role in the whole process of selecting, memorizing and contextually (re-)producing “meaningful knowledge.” Thereby, I favor not only a multifaceted conception of “knowledge” but also stress its dynamic nature.

This, of course, has enormous consequences in dealing with “knowledge” on a collective level which is often perceived as being *the* “cultural level” per se. Although collective forms of knowledge may also be readily identified in connection with the case-study of this paper, the powwow (e.g. codices of conduct, notions of content or certain forms of expert knowledge), I clearly reject approaches that either limit the concept of “culture” to a collective level or support a general definition of “knowledge” as “information.” Restricting “knowledge” to its abstract forms cuts out some of its most important dimensions, especially when analyzing its importance in a social context.

Even though I have come to reject models of “cultural knowledge” that are based on the aforementioned dichotomy, I do not exclude the notion of “culture(s) of knowledge,” i.e. more or less specific concepts of knowledge evolved and modelled from social interaction. While this differentiation may seem petty, it is essential because most theoretical and ideological interpretations of powwow-culture are based on concepts of “cultural knowledge” in the sense mentioned above.

THE EMERGING CONTEST POWWOW AND SOURCES OF CONFLICT

Over the last three decades, the term “Powwow” has ever increasingly been associated with today’s most colorful and therefore most visible form of celebration, namely the so-called “contest powwow.” This form of “modern” Indian celebration is more or less a result of an increase of cooperation carried out by representatives of older regional Plains Indian dance celebrations usually labeled as “northern” and “southern” style. Although insufficient and superficial in many respects, this paper will use these categories for discussion, for they are actually felt and experienced differences. Still, this approach could be taken to any other more subtle level (overlapping regional, tribal, family, and peer group knowledge cultures).

There have been many factors that led to the development of this sort of celebration such as the increasing mobility starting with World War II and the impact of the “fancy dance,” a quite recent and highly competitive style of dance developed in Oklahoma. In most plains Indian societies, the present concept of competition experienced a boost through the Oklahoma Fancy

Dance in the 1960s and 1970s. This style of dance has created lasting effects on the different local dance traditions especially on the northern plains. The One Bustle Fancy Dance in South and North Dakota and Manitoba, for example, was transformed into what is today known as Men's Traditional and Northern Two Bustle Fancy. The formerly existing Northern Straight Dance disappeared as an independent style of dancing and became absorbed into today's Northern Traditional. In North Dakota, most of Montana, and the Canadian Plains, the prototypical forms of contemporary Grass Dance were almost completely supplemented by the Oklahoma Fancy Dance with only an extremely small number of dancers keeping this style alive in the 1970s. As a result, dance contests were mostly held in two categories - one for men and women each – until the mid-1970s. Only after 1975 this began to change rapidly.

Although, at first glance, the influence by Oklahoma Fancy Dance seems to be one-sided, it was actually a process of selective exchange. Some aspects of regalia and dance style have undoubtedly been fascinating but, as the following quotes will demonstrate, cultural pride and local concepts of aesthetics were strong factors in the process of selective adaptation. The recollections of the renowned fancy dancer Norman Roach (Lakota) demonstrate this point quite clearly:

> "Oklahoma people, when they were coming up [...in the] early '60s, late '60s, they had real short breechcloth and everybody said: 'Man they're showing too much legs.' [...] And they danced real stiff [...]. You know, [they danced] upright, that's what everybody noticed [...T]hey didn't look to me not graceful and not appealing to any of us younger dancers, so we didn't want to copy them."[1]

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[1] Similar reactions have been recorded among the Gros Ventre, who received the Grass Dance at the end of the 19th century from the Assiniboine: "[They] had never had any dancing of that kind before and called it jokingly *inaetenin* (moving-buttocks) referring to the way [the Assiniboin] danced." (Flannery in Vennum 1982:55)

Similarly, northern influences started to infiltrate Oklahoma powwow cultures in the same period of time. Sandy and Sis Roades, both non-Indians intimately familiar with Indian culture in Oklahoma, recalled some of the resentment on both sides:

> “[Sis:] In 1975 [...] there were a few girls […] northern shawl dancing [here in Oklahoma]. [Sandy:] It [the northern style] was just starting to come down here. [Sis:] And they would laughingly call it the battle of the north and south as in like [the] Civil War, you know, the “northerners” and the “southerners.” [Sandy:] She [his adopted Indian mother] would get up and leave: ‘I don’t want to see that damn screeching [referring to the northern style of singing]!’ [...Sis:] And the women would all go and sit down if they [the Red Land Singers, Tony Arkeketah’s drum, the first Oklahoma drum that sang northern style] would start to sing [...]. And, boy, when they started actually bringing northern drums down [to Oklahoma...], those old ladies would just be hot. They go sit in their seats and they would refuse to get up to dance [...]. They would be just mad about it. The kids were the ones that liked it but the older people hated it [...].”

Obviously, the traditional centres of plains Indian cultures did not prove to be the ideal ground for the creation of today’s joint contest powwows. Rather, it was the emergence of mixed urban Indian Communities that paved the ground for this development. But in the beginning, existing mutual notions of distaste and more subtle conceptual differences led to a culmination of problems by the 1970s. Yet, forms of Indian coexistance and cooperation differed markedly in the major two areas were representatives of these powwow cultures clashed, namely California (Los Angelos and San Francisco) and the Southwest (Albuquerque).

In California, the coexistence of representatives of the two powwow-cultures was uneasy from the start. Norman Roach, who lived as a Lakota (and thereby as a prototype-proponent of northern powwow-culture) in Los Angeles in the 1970s renders a typical “northern” view on the situation:

> “Northern people don’t like southern people [...]. Northern powwows were usually in Huntington Park, southern powwows were usually in Belle Gardens, L.A. area [...]. I think they might be getting along better now.”[2]

A totally different strategy was chosen in the southwest. As a result, the process of fusion of both styles of powwow-tradition started decades earlier compared to California, were the new form of blended-powwow was not accepted until the 1990s. It is no coincidence that one of the countries oldest and largest Contest Powwow, the “Gathering of Nation,” is staged in Albuquerque. But what constituted the difference between the two?

Firstly, it was the geographical location of the southwest. Quite in the middle between Oklahoma and California, Albuquerque and Scottsdale powwows in particular became central meeting points for southerners. With the increasing numbers of Indians from the northern plains using educational facilities in the Albuquerque-area and the comparatively close distance to Denver further north with a higher percentage of representatives of northern powwow-tribes, Albuquerque also developed into a center along the evolving “north-south-axis” for travellers on the powwow-trail.

Secondly, I would like to turn to the central point which distingished the southwest from other regions: the presence of an Indian population that did not have a traditional connection or favor for either style of powwow-tradition. At this point, I would especially like to mention the Navajo as compromising the largest number of this “neutral” element. They gradually assumed a special role in the fusion process of the two styles of powwow. Even though the Navajo had come into somewhat regular contact with plains traditions through major events like the “Gallup Ceremonial” since the early 1930s (Gallup Ceremonials), it was not until the mid-1960s that they actually started to adopt aspects of powwow-tradition. They started to have Indian (“Powwow”) Clubs on their reservation. The first Navajo Indian Club was “Shiprock Intertribal.” One of its founding members, Oliver Ambros, remembers:

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[2] Kracht reports on the roots of this attitude among the Kiowa in California: “As early as the mid-1960s, evidence of Kiowa involvement in intertribal powwows was noted as far away from Oklahoma as the Bay Area in California. [...T]he Kiowa were a minority [in the Bay Area], yet they were leaders in the intertribal powwow circuit. Like the Sioux, they sponsored powwows and provided the majority of singers and dancers [...]. Gordon Krutz (1973a:107) interviewed some Bay Area Kiowa and discovered that they were ‘concerned over the fact that very few urban people really knew about the Kiowa,’ and that most non-Indians perceived the Sioux to be the most ‘typical’ Plains tribe. To counter this stereotype, Kiowas were heavily involved in Bay Area powwows [...], in powwows in Los Angeles and other parts of the West Coast [...].” (Kracht 1994:336)

> “It was mostly Oklahoma[-style], what they call southern style of singing [...]. This northern style of singing actually didn’t come in until maybe the middle ‘70s, somewhere around there [...T]he first powwow we really had here in Shiprock [...] took place about 1967 [at the Yeibichai ceremonial ground...]. It was just a powwow [...], no contest [...]. Ralph Zotigh [Kiowa], Saul Birdshead [Northern Cheyenne], [...Danny] Tallbird [Southern Cheyenne] and Ivan Pequin [Zuni] was very instrumental in teaching the people around this area how to sing [...].”

Northern powwow-traditions did not have any effects until the early 1970s when they first appeared at the Albuquerque powwows or when young Navajos, like Arlie Neskahai - today a renowned composer and singer - were first exposed to this style through the increasing importance of educational facilities and their Indian Clubs. Talking about his High School days in Cortez, Colorado where he attended meetings at the school’s Indian Club he recalled:

“I was standing there and I was listening to them sing and then they pulled up a chair [...]: ‘Come on, sit down, man.’ [...T]he first time I [...] just sat down and watched. They asked me if I wanted to learn [...]. So, little by little they started schooling me

> [...]. The first song they taught me was a 49 song [...]. I tried to drum. You know, at first, I couldn't even stay on beat. Man, I was terrible. And several times I remember sitting there next to Blair, he was the lead singer, and I try to drum. I would get all off-beat and his cool style of bringing me into control was he would reach down and grab his tape player and then he would hand it to me: 'Here hold this!' So I was like: 'Oh, cool!' You know, I got to hold the tape player. So I thought it was a big honor to hold the tape player [...]. But they really wanted me to stop drumming [...]. I really had to work on the beat, and I really had to work on it hard [...]."

But even in the southwest the coexistence of representatives of the different powwow-cultures did not prove to be easy. Arlie Neskahai (Navajo) experienced this difficult time. Being a follower of the northern style, he had to fight for his participation in many cases, because Navajo powwows were still predominantly southern style in the beginning:

> "[...F]or a while we [the White Eagle Singers] would go to these powwows and they would not let us sing. Because they were southern style. And we would sit there and just wait, sitting at the side, they wouldn't let us sing. They keep going, and going, and going, 45 minutes, an hour. I started hitting the drum.[3] They wouldn't care [...]. I just told the boys: 'I am tired of this. We came to sing, let's go sing outside.' So we pick up our drum and everything and walk our chairs and go out in the parking lot. We started singing out there. All these people would come outside. They would start dancing on the pavement outside [...]. Ladies would stand behind start backing us up[4] [...]. This was probably at Crown Point, probably 1976 [...]. So, we were out there just having fun, just singing song after song. Pretty soon the arena director came out, southern arena director: 'What the hell are you doing?' I said: 'What? We came here to sing, so we are singing.' 'You can't do that.' I says: 'What are you going to do? Take my drum away? Take my sticks away? People are having fun out here dancing. You got your powwow going on in

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[3] A sign of impatience among singers.

[4] He is referring to the lady's traditional way of singing.

> there.' He just looked at me and shakes his head and says: 'Alright man. Just wait a minute.' So he walked in back inside and did whatever he did. I don't know what he did. Came back out and says: 'Alright, you guys come back inside, they will let you sing.' So we did this about four times."

But it depended on where "northern-style" Navajos went. They were not confronted with the same problems everywhere:

> "In Shiprock we were allowed. This is because of my family's name [...]. Ya, Shiprock they always were willing [...] and also because Ute drums came down from Toyac to sing down there, and a lot of them had connection through Native American Church […]. So because of that connection they respected the Ute Singers too. And [at] Teec Nos Pos, they would let the Ute singers sing there too, so right around the northern edge of the reservation [...], those powwows."

"PRESERVATION" VERSUS "INNOVATION"

The difficulties encountered by Arlie Neskahai and other "northerners" are not only to be attributed to different standards of aesthetics. They also reflected a clash of generations as well as major cultural differences. The latter are evident in different concepts of "the drum" yet also in diverging values and different attitudes towards innovation and creativity.

Southern style of powwow-music was, and in many ways still is, closely associated with the concept of "open drum."[5] In this concept of the "open drum" – which in fact may be a row or a conglomeration of several drums –, all singers invited to sit at "the drum" form a unit. In this original concept, which is still relevant for many tribal war dance and gourd dance powwows in Oklahoma, the “head singer” has a more important role than the “lead singer” in northern powwow-singing tradition. The head singer is chosen by the organizers of a powwow and bears the responsibility for all the music of that event (though he might bring in advisors). In theory, this means that he needs to know all the songs relevant for a respective community or organization and for all important families present.

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[5] The "open drum" is placed in the centre of the dance-floor. In one case (White Eagle, Ponca, 1992), I have counted about 40 male singers. But there was a similar number of lady singers seated behind them.

In contrast, northern powwow musical culture is dominated by the concept of „closed drum“[6] which basically stands for a singing group using one drum only. In contrast to southern “open drums” which stress unity among singers and the notion of “tribal music,” the “closed drums” represent family music traditions. Usually, several “closed drums” provide the music for “northern powwows.”

In the southwest, the rather rigid “southern” concept or interpretation of music was obviously not too appealing for younger generations. Erwin Keeswood, Sr. (Navajo) recalls:

> “[A] lot of people - at least out here - would talk real strict about southern singing: ‘You can’t do this, you can’t do that [...]!’ Northern style was real loose. It’s like no major restrictions. It’s just if you want to do this - fine -, find your own beat, more or less [...]. I think that’s the reason why a lot of singers, young people, […] went to northern style, because a lot of the older people were over here in “southern” [...] and it was pretty strict [...]. I think, a lot had to do with Gourd Dancing also at the same time [...]. It could have been Gourd Dancing at the beginning, and then eventually [...] more [war dance] powwow kind of picked up.”

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[6] The number of singers at “closed drums” has increased in the 1990s, from five to ten singers in 1970s and 1980s to an average of ten to fifteen singers. If one ignores the fact that northern closed drums were also situated in the center of the dance-floor until the 1970s, and that drums are still in that place in the Great Lakes area, one may, generally speaking, state for the present situation that they are almost always placed at the side of the dance floor. Exceptions to this rule may occur during honorings or special grand entries or exits.

Beside the popularity-wise differences of these two drum concepts in the eyes of the growing number of younger members within the powwow community, the combination of a more flexible attitude in the north, with the creative influx and needs of the younger generations, increased the differences between “northern” and “southern” style. With regard to the “original” southern style of singing, the insufficient degree of flexibility led to a further decrease in attraction of this style. Even younger generations in Oklahoma started to turn to the “northern” style.

Only a partial reformation of the “southern” style in the 1990s stopped this process. Ralph Zotigh (Kiowa) who had experienced all stations of this process in his career as a singer summarizes this as follows:

> “Southerns, we never had [‘closed’] drum groups. Like nowadays you got Cozads, Yellowhammer, Southern Thunder, these are [‘closed’] drum groups [...].[7] You know, and I didn’t like the idea: „What, a southern drum group? NOO, not me!“ But finally, I fell into that and now I have a closed drum […]. But a long time ago, what the northern people would do in Albuquerque and Scottsdale is they would bring drum groups and they would set up with their name, Porcupine and all those. Southern, we would get one singer and he would man the southern [‘open’ drum], that was our way [...]. We would get just the head singer. And that’s where I became popular [...]. I was the head singer in the southwest. [...S]outhern, we had our own ways, northern, they had their own ways [...]. In the ‘90s when the southerns started to form [‘closed’] drum groups, then the committees would start putting them like northern [drums…]. The old ways are in the past. But I still can serve as a head southern singer, but I don’t. If anybody invites me, I say: ‘Well, I have got to take my drum group with me now.’ So I’m in the trend now of the new way powwows [...]. So now southern drums are copying the northern ways. But it doesn’t necessarily mean that powwows are more northern [...], it’s just that the whole thing is brand new.”

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[7] Another exception were the Grayhorse Singers.

These changes enabled southern style singers to choose between the two concepts and to decide to what extend they wanted to engage in both fields or only one of them. The partial acceptance of the „closed drum“-concept had its effects on releasing creativity. Inspired by the fame of professional northern “Hit”-groups, especially younger southern singers preferred the „closed drum“-concept. Now, they increasingly started to form „southern“ music according to their needs. Creativity, just like in northern style, became *the* focus, for it was a predicament for successfully participating in “southern” song contests increasingly included in contest powwows in the 1990s.

This lead to a shift in the attitude toward songs in southern powwow-music altogether. When before there was a stress on assessing the quality of the Head singer by regarding his abilities in the field of “preserving” songs relevant for the southern powwow-communities (e.g. family or society songs), the perceptible output of good new songs became the new focus. This situation led to a fundamental reorientation and reinvestment of mental powers in many southern singers like Ralph Zotigh (Kiowa):

> “Back when I was head singer at Scottsdale [...], I knew so many different kinds of songs [...]. There was family songs. There was so many families, and when they call for their songs, I have to know it [...] because that’s my title. I’m the head singer. And I knew, I bet you, close to 300 songs [...]. So, I used to know a lot of songs, which I probably still do, but we don’t sing them anymore. Now, I am concentrating on new songs [...] but I hate to forget old songs.’….You see, where we have the advantage, we make our own songs [...]. And if we feel that we need to get into the Chicken Dance, we will make it.”

NEW FORMS OF "KNOWLEDGE" IN POWWOW MUSIC

As stated above, the interest in competition dancing became more immanent around 1975. A parallel process in powwow music led to the emergence of new song categories, although the establishment of a new dance style did not automatically lead to the creation of a new powwow song category.

Before the creation of specific powwow song categories, the singers used songs of categories belonging to older song traditions befitting the powwow context. Some of these categories, like Honor Songs, are still important and constitute basic powwow song categories. With the evolving concept of competition, the complex of song categories, associated with this aspect of powwows, experienced the most noticeable boom. On the basis of "trick songs" which added to the excitement of the Fancy Dance in the 1960s and 1970s, similar alternatives for new dance categories were created to further intensify the competition in the various new dances styles. Beginning in the late 1970s, it was expected from dancers of any dance category to be able to dance to more than one song category. Today up to three different song categories – which differ markedly on the basis of their characteristic rhythmic pattern - may be included into the competition in any of the existing dance categories.

Belonging to these new song categories, the categories "Sneak Up" and "Crow Hop" shall be highlighted. Arlie Neskahai (Navajo), whose statement is representative for several others, experienced the emergence of these categories in the Southwest about 1976 as follows:

> "When I first became really aware of contest [song] categories […] it was Sneak Up. I came across those at Albuquerque Powwow [....], probably about 1976 [...]. Somewhere around there they began separating the [dance] categories, [...Women's] Northern Style Buckskin, [Women's] Southern Style Buckskin,

> [Men's] Northern Style Traditional, [Men's] Southern Style Traditional. So when they came out, then they would say: 'Sneak Up Dance.' Everybody only sang one Sneak Up [song] in those days: 'Heyuha manipe.'[8] That was when I became aware of it [...]. There was a period of time when they would do this dance [as a 'special'] and then they would not do it in a contest [...] because they said this is not a contest dance. [...But] they put it in a contest later [...]. It was there at Albuquerque Powwow when I have seen it, and I was like: 'Shit, I got to learn some of these songs, so I can catch up with it, that I can be able to sing if they request it [...].' And then coming back after that, then was the Crow Hop [coming up...]. Crow Hop was what we heard [as a term]. [I] first became aware of that really strong with Ironwood Singers [Lakota, South Dakota] coming through [the southwest] in 1981 [or '82] somewhere around there. They were host drum in Window Rock. I think, I might have heard Howard [Bad Hand] singing 'specialties' every once in a while, singing that one [old 'Crow Hop']: 'Chocolate bunny cooking buffalo'[9] [...]. So that song pretty much everybody learned from [...] Howard [Bad Hand…]. So that song then became one of the first Crow Hops that pretty much everybody began to learn how to sing."

Both Sneak up and Crow Hop were originally tribal dances which were associated with specific songs. They were first introduced to the world of powwows as "specials" / "specialities" like many other dances too, which retrospectively turned out to be short lived phenomena. Only after this initial stage, they were introduced to the competition complex. But this was a gradual and not actually an intentional process. As may be seen by the following example narrated by Howard Bad Hand (Lakota), the creation of new powwow song categories sometimes was a result of the traditional singers' tendency of challenging the dancers:

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[8] The words in Lakota say: "Heyuha manipe:" They are walking with him. "Heciya Lakota Hokshila ki washosheyape:" They have made a brave warrior out of this Lakota boy (Black Bear und Theizs 1976:62f.). The older version of the song says: "Le yuha manipe:" They are carrying him (the wounded warrior). "Eca blokaunta ca washosheyape:" Behold the warrior in the thick of battle (Powers 1990:145).

[9] Arlie Neskahai sings a joke-version of the song with English words. The known version of the song at that time was: "Taku Wakan mani kokipapelo:" They are afraid of anything that walkst he earth. "Wahukeza wankatuya makute:" The enemy throws his spear at me-too high! (Powers 1990:155; another version of the song is rendered in Black Bear and Theizs 1976:39).

> "I mean [...] it depends on the mood and the dancers you are singing for. We pull up Stomp Dance [Crow Hop] for Fancy, for Men's Traditional, Shawl and even for Jingle dress sometimes [...]. It's amusing! It's entertainment! And you know, the thing as a singer, I really don't try to get into a position where you create 'sacred cows' [...]. Some form is just something you do for a moment, but everybody thinks it is so sacred. They treat it as such, and sometimes it takes off from where they heard you singing. And this is true of any other singer. It takes off and then it seems to have a long history or tradition behind it [...]. I think a lot of fads and a lot of things [traditions] that are now part of the powwow world started that way."

Once embedded in the context of competition, the original unity of song, dance, and rhythm was lost. Instead, the rhythm, itself by no means limited to the musical traditions of a certain group, gained in importance. Rhythm developed into *the* defining element of these new powwow song categories. It was the rhythm that provided the bridge for linking the different tribal musical traditions and it facilitated the inclusion of old tribal songs no longer in use. Rhythm also started to serve as basis for composing new songs. But this development also furthered terminological confusion because now new terms (that in some cases concealed tribal claims of origin) were added to standard terms like „Sneak Up" und „Crow Hop." Howard Bad Hand recalls:

> "In 1980 we sang at the Oglala High School Powwow in Oglala, in winter, and they had asked us [the Red Leaf Takoja] to sing for a traditional dance contest. Tom [Teegarden] and I kicked up this old kind of 'Crow Hop,' you know, slide kind of song [...], those old Trot Songs and Stomp Song. [...F]or a lot of us young singers that [the powwow] is the only place you can do a lot of this old music,

> because a lot of those traditions that they used them for don’t exist [anymore]. So if you have a contest and you have a chance, who is going to come up and say: ‘You can’t do that!?’ I mean, you run into that all the time. [...So we just used the song] and worried whether somebody is going to complain about it or not later. [Actually], I kind of used a combination of an old 49song [and an old Stomp Dance Song (‘Taku wakan mani’)...]. We didn’t call it Crow Hop [...]! And then later on somebody told us it was ‘Crow Hop’. But, you now, ourselves we never called it ‘Crow Hop,’ we called it ‘Stomp Dance.’”

CONCLUSION

Turning to the specific local constellation in the south-western United States and to the realm of music, I took a closer look on the interaction among representatives of the two main styles of powwow which. The latter were presented for theoretical purposes as “knowledge cultures.”

Firstly, I have focused on the effects of the general management of “knowledge” (preservation, ownership and reproduction) and of conceptual and structural differences of these knowledge cultures in the context of coexistence. Elaborating the “open drum” concept on the one hand and the “closed drum” concept on the other hand, one thing became obvious in this case: in the context of closer interaction and choice, aspects like flexibility, innovation, individualism (“closed drum”) appeared generally speaking to be more appealing than rather conservative and restrictive attitudes toward knowledge and its transmission (“open drum”).

Secondly, an analysis of song categories in powwow-music has dealt with the emergence of new forms of knowledge. I have come to distinguish between song categories that predate the emergence of contemporary contest powwow and those that were created in the course of its unfolding. The analysis clearly showed that there was an overall focus on finding new ways of coping with ever-changing social realities. The re-contextualization of defunct elements of older tribal musical knowledge cultures may be regarded as an aspect of this focus.

Generally speaking, the analysis shows, knowledge-fields in the realm of powwow-music do not constitute absolute cultural elements. They may rather be seen as flexible and constantly changing tools of singers in their dealing with the dancers and with their expected role as community-generating agents. In other words, it became obvious that not “knowledge” as an objectifyable entity is of central importance. Rather, it is the specific manifestation of phenomena that might be labelled as “knowledge” in a certain social context. This point became quite clear in the different statements of the consultants quoted which in turn underlines the advantages of the individualized approach pursued in this paper. These statements underline the importance of acknowledging the existence of complex and overlapping personal, family, tribal and other forms networks when dealing with more or less “collective” forms of knowledge. Furthermore, they highlight the role of politics as well of coincidences and misunderstandings in connection with the regeneration of knowledge in various contexts of interaction. These examples also show how important it is not to deal with “knowledge” only on a “de-humanized” (i.e. “information”-defined) level.

I would like to conclude this paper by returning to the realm of music. As contemporary powwow singers frequently have to deal with individuals from a great variety of “Indian“ communities, and, therefore, with representatives of multiple knowledge cultures, they are also especially exposed to criticism while pursuing their task of re-contextualizing and producing musical knowledge. Therefore, I would like to close by citing Howard Bad Hand’s phrasing of what may be regarded as a typical powwow-singer’s philosophy:

> “And that’s the role you have as a singer. You realize that you create tradition. Even as a singer you are creating tradition, you are creating experience, you are in the forming of it [...]. So, sometimes you stretch where people’s boundaries are in relation to certain categories. And you are doing it for that moment. [...] The fact that you sound good and you are professional about it, makes people think you know what you are doing [...], it is an edge to try things. It’s the way it is. It is not ego to say that, but that’s the function of how singers operate […]. As a singer you have a right to [...] touch the ‘spirit world’. Whatever you get from it, you have to help people connect with their own reality. You are not giving them something. What you are doing is have the people really reconnect with what is their own reality. Any artist’s function is that.”

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Ambros, Oliver - Shiprock, New Mexico, 02.29.00

Anquoe, Jack - Tulsa, Oklahoma, 02.03.00

Bad Hand, Howard - Taos, New Mexico, 1, 16.02.00 and 19.02.00

Baker, Wade - New Town, North Dakota, 24.08.00

Keeswood, Erwin - Window Rock, New Mexico, 29.02.00

Neskahai, Arlie - Portland, Oregon, 12.03.00

Pacheco, Paul, Ruth and Pat - Albuquerque, New Mexico, 22.02.00

Rhoades, Sandy and Sis - Tulsa, Oklahoma, 04.03.00

Roach, Norman and Ramona - Gallup, New Mexico, 27.02.00

Zotigh, Ralph - Albuquerque, New Mexico, 21.02.00 and 22.02.00