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Comparative Indigenous Folklore Theory: For Liberation and Environmental Justice

Damon Joseph Montclare¹, Md. Habibur Rahman^{2*}

Abstract

This paper reviews and compares 12 examples of Indigenous folklore theories from Bangladesh, Canada, Colombia, India, New Zealand and The United States of America. Issues regarding Decolonization, shamanism, ecological aesthetics, organicism, and post-processual archaeology emerge as key themes. Conflict, cognition and cultural evolution are also taken into account. These frameworks are understood as charts of pathways towards justice for Indigenous people, the understanding of Indigenous knowledge and the protection of the environment. In conclusion this paper makes the following suggestions: a) include expressions of colonial experiences in Indigenous folklore studies discourse, and b) include more Indigenous scholars into the discipline of Indigenous folklore studies.

Keywords: Indigenous Knowledge; Folklore; Shamanism; Decolonization, Critical Theory.

1. Introduction

Indigenous communities are defined as societies that existed in territories before invasion, colonization, conquest, or occupation. Indigenous people are vulnerable to oppression, marginalization, exploitation, and genocide. Synonyms with the term Indigenous include tribal, aboriginal, First Peoples, and adavasis. Indigenous knowledge systems include agricultural methods, ecology, natural resource management, medicine, and other practical technologies. Indigenous folklore theory is primarily written or oral discourse that frames ways of understanding Indigenous folklore and guides approaches to its study and analysis. Indigenous folklore theory has been written by both members of colonial society and by Indigenous people themselves. Indigenous folk theory can reflect biases and support dominant social groups at the expense of the oppressed. Theories can also ignore environmental and gender justice. But theory can also be used as a tool to frame perspectives for understanding problems in society, so that they can be improved towards the liberation of Indigenous people and the protection of the environment.

New theories for the study of Indigenous Folklore have emerged in academia during the beginning of the twenty-first century, yet many are unknown and underutilized globally. These new theories highlight indigenous perspectives, authorship, identity and empowerment. They emphasize indigenous people's understanding and stewardship of the ecological world. Thereby, they improve and expand upon previous colonial models of analysis. The goal is to develop research methods that are more harmonious with indigenous culture and life. These theories are optics used to scrutinize indigenous folklore research methods, framing ways of seeing, based on various identity and

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ecologically based ideologies. This paper first introduces five emerging theories for the analysis of Indigenous folklore: 1) Indigenous decolonization theory, 2) Indigenous eco-aesthetic folklore theory, 3) Indigenous ecological shamanic theory, 4) Indigenous organic agricultural theory, and 5) Post-processual archaeological theory. Each of these theories can inform the construction of critical lenses that can showcase strengths and social realities of indigenous people. Indigenous decolonization theory seeks to empower Indigenous people from a legacy of oppression. Indigenous eco-aesthetic theory is associated with the arts, psychological healing and environmental justice. Indigenous ecological shamanic theory affirms Indigenous ecological knowledge. Indigenous organic agricultural theory establishes a link between Indigenous agriculture and the protection of the environment. Post-processual archaeological theory makes more room for Indigenous concepts and knowledge within the academy. New theories pertaining to the research of Indigenous folklore bolster opportunities for Indigenous innovation and development.

After a discussion of each of the above five theories with examples of their applications, our discussion will continue with further theoretical comparisons regarding: a) conflict and change; b) Indigenous technology and innovation; c) Marxist economics; and d) cognition and cultural evolution theory, with their applications to the study of folklore.

2. Decolonization Theory and its Application to Indigenous Liberation

Indigenous decolonization theory is here exemplified by the scholarship of Jarrett Martineau and Eric Ritskes, who jointly wrote, "Fugitive indigeneity: Reclaiming the terrain of decolonial struggle through Indigenous art" (Martineau and Ritskes 2014:i-xii). Decolonization is the undoing of the damages of colonialism. For L. T. Smith, Indigenous decolonization describes ongoing theoretical and political processes used to contest and reframe narratives about Indigenous community histories and the effects of colonial expansion, genocide, and cultural assimilation (Smith 1999). A shift in focus from the creation of knowledge by dominant and oppressive social groups towards Indigenous methods of knowledge construction, its preservation and resurgence, is emphasized as a key component of Indigenous decolonization. Structures of hegemonic, oppressive socioeconomic philosophy are challenged. Indigenous decolonization theory can be perceived as post-structural. Social applications for Indigenous decolonization theory include activism, holistic healing, resistance struggles, environmental justice movements, and language, knowledge and cultural preservation.

Healing is a personal as well as social and environmental dimension of decolonization. Indigenous practices of herbal medicine function to challenge the colonial forces that have introduced allopathic medicine. In Bangladesh, Md. Shahidullah, *et al* in their study of Indigenous Santal folk medicine of the Rajshahi District, have worked to preserve indigenous knowledge (Shahidullah *et al* 2009:220-226). This scholarship can be used to create alternatives to current hegemonic forms of medical practice. Santal traditional healers have a highly developed knowledge of practical chemistry that was developed before colonial invasions. Indigenous plant knowledge challenges the dominating allopathic systems of colonial powers. Organic plant-based healing systems work in ecological harmony with the environment.

Indigenous folk art can also be understood as a form of colonial resistance. Indigenous Folklore, including dance, arts, and agriculture of the common people exemplify a form of resistance to colonial oppression. For Martineau and Riskes, “Indigenous art is inherently political... [and] thus occupies a unique space within settler colonialism: both as a site for articulating Indigenous resistance and resurgence, and also as a creative praxis that often re-inscribes indigeneity within aesthetic and commodity forms that circulate in the capitalist art market (Martineau and Riskes 2014:ii). Decolonial research methodologies in folklore studies emphasize an analysis of art, healing, and activism, in tandem with resistance struggles and the quest for Indigenous liberation.

3. Indigenous Eco-Aesthetic Folklore Theory and Its Application to Environmental Justice

Indigenous eco-aesthetic folklore theory concerns the intersection of the preservation of Indigenous creative practices, the psychological healing associated with an experience with nature and art, and the quest for the achievement of ecological and Indigenous justice. Its primary area of interest is organic, natural materials used in traditional Indigenous folk-art practices and their contextual folkways. Indigenous communities traditionally utilize ecologically sustainable materials in acts of creativity. Art, clothing, architecture, ritual, dance, food preparation and medicines are traditionally made with organic materials that are natural instead of synthetic.

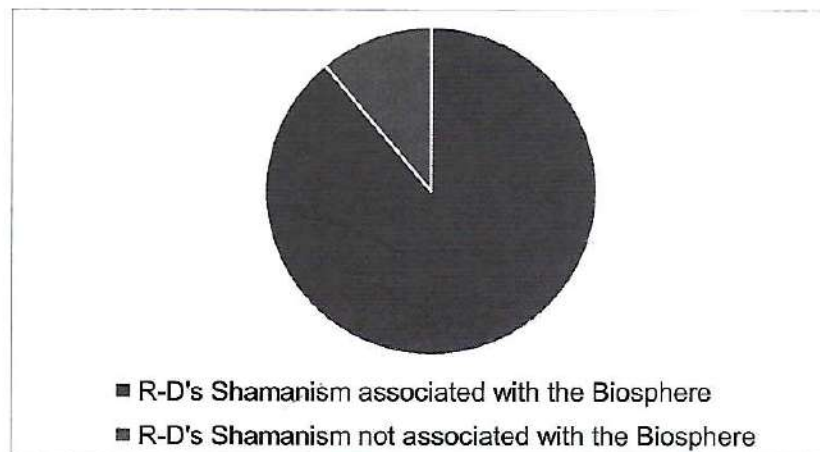
Indigenous ecological Folklore can be studied through the optic of eco-aesthetic theory. There is a continuity between the environment, Indigenous arts, and organic and ecologically sustainable folkways. Recognizing the connections between the oppression of Indigenous people and the ecological harm of the environment, through acknowledging colonial and supremacist acts, and striving to remedy this tragedy through liberatory methods, are key dimensions of Indigenous eco-aesthetic folk ideology. One successful application of Indigenous eco-aesthetic theory is the methodology of the folklorist C. R. Rajagopalan from Kerala, India. Rajagopalan understands eco-aesthetic folklore as a way to establish community and empower subaltern members of scheduled tribes and scheduled castes in ways that are ecologically sustainable (Rajagopalan: 2004). Rajagopalan has helped direct the ‘DESI Ethnoaesthetics Festival: International Folklore Seminar’ (2013) and ‘Shaman: International Film Festival’ (2015) both at the Kerala Literary Academy, Thrissur, India. In this ethnoaesthetics festival scheduled tribes and scheduled castes performed using traditional organic Indigenous methods. The Shaman film festival screened shamanic, ethnographic material from around the globe.

4. Indigenous Ecological Shamanic Theory and Its Applications to Indigenous Knowledge

Manvir Singh defines shamanism as a practice that involves Indigenous community leaders reaching altered states of consciousness in order to perceive and interact with what they believe to be a spirit world and channel these transcendental energies into this world (Singh 2018:1-61). Examples of Indigenous ecological shamanic knowledge can be found in the ethnographic work of Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff, who wrote the essay, “A View from the Headwaters” (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1999). Reichel-Dolmatoff uses the term shaman 9 times during his description of the Indigenous tribes of Colombia: 1) When leaving the hexagonal space of the river mouth, shamans say that one has

become a transformed person, that one is better and wiser, that from now on one will avoid noisy places and bad company; 2) It is what [Indigenous] Indians call “the path”, what other religions or philosophies would call Tao, the Way to Perfection, to fulfilment, to oblivion; In fact, in the shamanic idiom, the Vaupés river is called “river of transformation”; 3) the true power or decision-making in these ecological matters lies in the hands of shaman and elders; 4) I have seen shamans carefully measuring out the adequate amount of fish poison to put in a creek; 5) I have heard them [shamans] interpret dreams in terms of game conservation, explaining that the frightening appearance in a dream, of a certain animal, was a warning that the species was being over-hunted; shamans will control the felling of trees, the firing of clearings; they will control house construction, canoe making, the brewing of beer, the processes of daily food preparation; 6) and night after night people talk while the shamans and elders listen and occasionally ask some questions; 7) in the shaman’s minds, all this information will be organized into structured knowledge which henceforward, for the next few weeks, determines their activities, be they expressed in ritual, in recommending hunting strategies, or in arranging social gatherings; 8) I have mentioned some isolated customs; some animistic beliefs and shamanistic images such as might be described for many aboriginal societies of the tropical rainforest or the Andes; but what I want to emphasize is this: these beliefs and attitudes toward life, these visions of the universe, these hundreds of little things a person does or thinks or avoids, form a highly structured order; 9) how to read the signals the environment is sending out, a person has to learn through myth and ritual, through the long recitals of genealogies, the casting of spells, and above all, through the nightlong conversations of shamans and elders who are the true suppliers and transmitters of knowledge made wisdom (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1999). Shamans are leaders and experts in Indigenous knowledge and information and are therefore key informants in the study of Indigenous Folklore.

Figure 1: Reichel-Dolmatoff's Shamanism: Associations with the Biosphere



In Figure 1., the result of a discursive analysis of Reichel-Dolmatoff's *A View from the Headwaters*, there is a demonstration that the term Shamanism was used in association with the biosphere eight times, and just one time the term Shamanism was not associated with the biosphere.

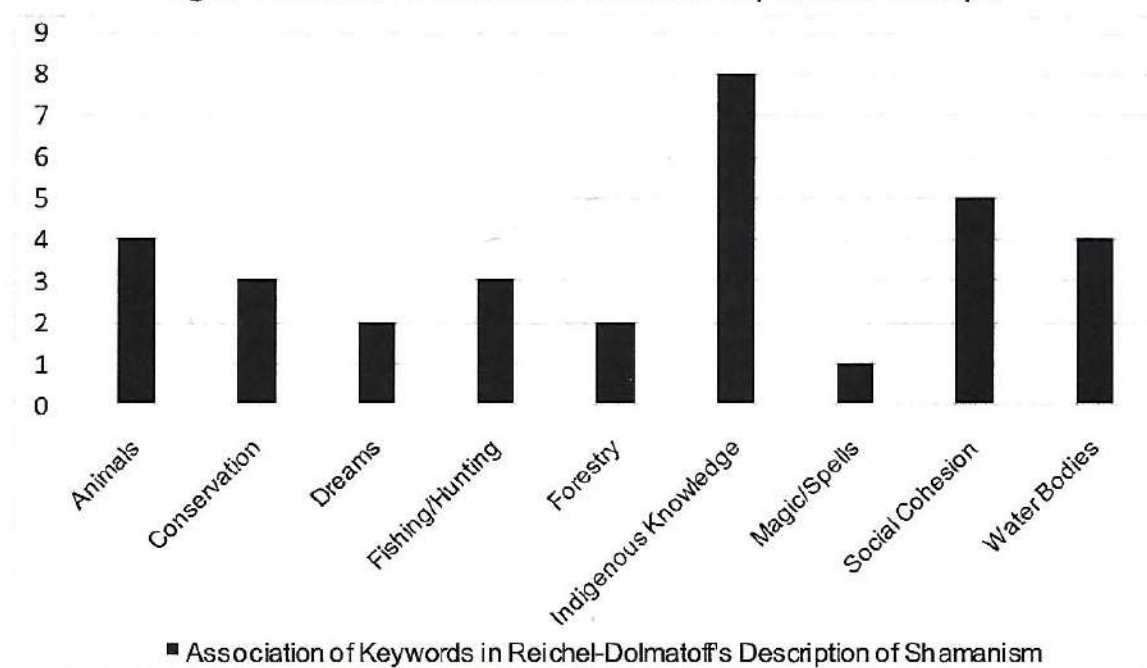
Figure 2: Reichel-Dolmatoff's Shamanism: Key Related Concepts

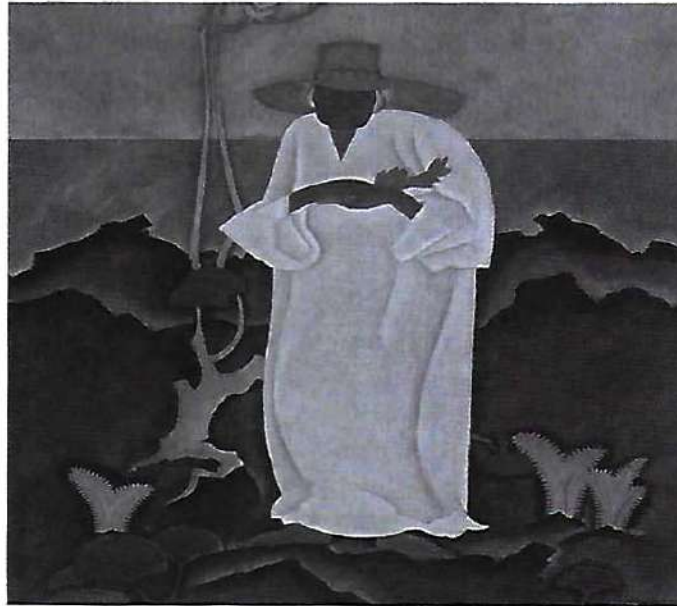
Figure 2. shows that in the selected work by Reichel-Dolmatoff the concept of shamanism exists in a matrix or web of other key concepts, the strongest two being Indigenous Knowledge/Wisdom and Social Cohesion. Figure 2. indicates how many times the major concepts Animals, Conservation, Dreams, Fishing/Hunting, Forestry, Knowledge/Wisdom, Magic/Spells, Social Cohesion and Water Bodies were associated with the term Shamanism. Figures 1. and 2. show that for Reichel-Dolmatoff the concept of the shaman is inextricably linked with the biosphere; the shaman is also portrayed as the possessor of Indigenous knowledge. We therefore question authors who neglect to express the importance of ecology in the study of shamanic folk knowledge. And we also assert that the study of Indigenous shamans is of utmost importance for those seeking to understand Indigenous knowledge, especially when concerning the biosphere.

Shamanic knowledge in the work of Reichel-Dolmatoff describes the benefits of interacting with the natural world: how a river, for example promotes in humans peace and positive social relations/social bonding. For the shaman, a river has the power to assist in personal evolution. The shaman possesses ecological and forestry knowledge. Shamans are experts in agriculture and in hunting management. Shamans are leaders. The Indigenous knowledge of a shaman is practical socially, materially, environmentally, and seems to go beyond Singh's (definition of shamanism, which focuses on the knowledge of an immaterial spirit realm and magic. Though shamans are understood to be spiritual experts, that is not their only role, nor their primary function in society.

Shamanic theory is emerging, fairly new to the academic mainstream and it is important to study it for the preservation of Indigenous knowledge and folklore. Simultaneously, New Age appropriation of Indigenous shamanic wisdom for the monetary gain of non-

tribals continues. This practice has been criticized by the scholar Lisa Aldred (Aldred 2000:329-352). In what ways do non-Indigenous scholars also profit off of their collection of Indigenous knowledge? As academics we need to resist supremacist and exploitative analysis. Perhaps the term "shaman" should be redefined or abandoned altogether. Problematically, the term in its current use does not always emphasize the practical, scientific and material knowledge of Indigenous shamans.

Figure 3: Arman Manookian's *Shaman*, 1930.



Arman Manookian's genre painting, *Shaman*, 1930 depicts a scene from Hawaii, U.S.A., Figure 3. Manookian paints a modern, international conception of the Shaman as an elder. He is depicted in front of water with his hands clasping herbs that are signifiers of medicine. He stands among vegetal and fungal motifs, connecting him to the elements and the biosphere. Figure 3. is an expression of what a Shaman looks like from the perspective of a non-indigenous artist. Considering the critique of New Age shamanism as being exploitative by Alfred, the question arises to what extent this image inaccurately portrays the Indigenous image it represents.

5. Indigenous Organic Agricultural Theory and its Application to Contemporary Farming

Indigenous organic agricultural theory and practice understands the universe and its parts to be living entities. Organicism rejects mechanism and reductionism. In organicism, human society is also perceived to be analogous to an organism. The contemporary organic movement is involved with the organic farming of food that is not engineered nor grown with the assistance of toxic chemicals. The organic movement intersects with indigenous ideology and practice. Indigenous traditional knowledge can be viewed as organic as it is plant, animal, and mineral based. It is not preoccupied by innovations in chemical insecticides, many of which are seen by the organic movement as poisonous. By studying organic Indigenous methods, researchers in Folklore can discover alternatives to the use of harmful chemicals for agriculture. Indigenous organic

methods are sustainable and eco-friendly. Therefore, they can have a positive impact on human health and the health of the planet. Organic farming is currently being practiced by Indigenous communities of the Southwestern United States in New Mexico in the following places: Tesuque Pueblo Farm, Santa Cruz Farm, Tiwa Farms of Taos, and Red Willow Farmers Market (Tsosie-Peña 2019). Researchers Gudade, *et al* have also studied Indigenous organic agriculture, of large cardamom in the Sikkim state of India. Guadade, *et al* have proven Indigenous organic methods are eco-friendly and less expensive due to the utilization of local resources, family labour, and traditional [folk] wisdom (Guadade, *et al* 2013: 4-9). Indigenous organic agricultural theory therefore has practical benefits to yield nutritious food for people while sustaining the environment.

6. Post-processual Archaeological Theory and the Development of an Indigenous Academic Voice

Ian Hodder is the author of *Theory and Practice in Archaeology* (Hodder 1992). Hodder is an expert in the theory of post-processual archaeological theory. Hodder's post-processualism rejects the positivistic assertion that the scientific method could be applied to archaeological investigation. Hodder's post-processualism involves the utilization of a method in archaeology that emphasizes subjectivity and allows each excavator the opportunity to record an individual interpretation of the site.

Researchers in Folklore through post-processual methods can be open to observing fluid processes rather than fixed categories. Post-processual archaeologists seek to break down categories, entities, and essences to embrace a radical notion of process, according to which all aspects of societies are situated, contextual, changing, moving, and dialectical (Hodder 1992:75). Hodder's post-processual cultural analysis makes room for minority Indigenous voices whose different conceptions of their pasts have confronted establishment archaeology. Through post-processual cultural analysis, subordinate groups and their allies are able to establish new meanings of material culture in order to resist and act against oppression (Hodder 1992:76). It is therefore a theory that is of use to Indigenous scholars whose understanding of the past often is radically different from those espoused by scholars of hegemonic academic institutions. Post-processual archaeology, however, can also be used as a tool by an elite, be indulgent in its subjectivity, and not acknowledge the political urgency of Indigenous resistance. Hodder situates the discussion of post-processual theory within the context of other theories of practice used in Folklore Studies, including 'Material Practice, Symbolism, and Ideology,' and "Gender Representation and Social Reality' (Hodder 1992:174-183, and 219-225).

7. Indigenous Folklore Theory: Further Comparisons

The above five theories subtly overlap and reinforce one-another. For example, the acknowledgment of subjectivity within academic discourse discussed in post-processual archeological theory can also be an effective way to liberate Indigenous voices from oppression- an important component of Indigenous decolonization theory. And the psychological and environmental healing component of Indigenous eco-aesthetic theory can also be found in Indigenous organic agricultural theory because the act of organic farming can be similarly psychologically therapeutic. Also, within each theoretical

movement discussed above, there is a diversity of different yet associated viewpoints. There are other innovative theories and methods of studying Indigenous Folklore not mentioned in this article worth mentioning for future reference, including eco-feminist Indigenous theory and holistic Indigenous theory. Knowledge of all of these theories that inform methods relating to Indigenous Folklore research provide avenues for innovation in the discipline of Folklore studies, and more importantly they empower the indigenous people's resurgence and preserve their sacred ecological knowledge.

8. Theories of Conflict, Change, Technology, Innovation and Marxist Economics

For further comparison, the Bangladeshi scholar Mazharul Islam studies Folklore of the Indian subcontinent, Bangladesh and the U.S.A., through various lenses of social change theories. This paper proceeds to explore how Islam's understanding of innovation and technological theory of social change can further inform the above theories of Indigenous folklore. Islam describes how innovations are made by recombining elements into new complexes, or by inventing new processes, new ways of doing things, or by accident (Islam 1998:213). Islam asserts that utilitarian devices are responsible for social change. For Islam technological factors of social change are concrete, measurable, demonstrable and therefore are the forces that offer greater prospects for the scientific mind (Islam 1998:214). Islam describes how technology initiates social change and supersedes tradition.

Islam successfully demonstrates how innovation and technology effect social change and changes in folk art. Decolonial theories of folklore emphasize Indigenous knowledge, technology, and ecological sustainability. It is useful to use Islam's definition of innovation as a recombination of elements. There is a potential for the integration of Indigenous and modern technologies for the making of ecologically sustainable innovations. The importance of Decolonial theory is that this innovation should not appropriate Indigenous knowledge in a neo-colonial way without explicitly rewarding the Indigenous people for their contribution. Organicism is an example of a theoretic concept embedded in Indigenous traditions that can be used to create innovations that will contribute to a more sustainable, eco-friendly society.

Islam discusses the legacy of Marx and Marxism in his discussion of economics as an agent of change in society. Islam describes how changes in folklore reflect economic changes. We assert the creation of Indigenous folklore can change economic status. Tourism, crafts, and performances can generate income for the indigenous people. A largely untapped market is the development of Indigenous medicine companies that are both organic and herbal. The potential for economic development for Indigenous people through the sale of herbal medicine is worth exploring. Herbal medicine is therapeutic and challenges the colonial power structures of large pharmaceutical companies. It is sustainable and often created from a shamanic Indigenous knowledge base.

E. Unnikrishnan has documented a collection of ecoproverbs from Kerala, India that contain Indigenous knowledge of herbal medicine. One sophisticated system of herbal medicine from India is called Ayurveda. Figure 4. shows the juxtaposition of a contemporary Ayurvedic medicine product, the plant it was derived from, and an ecological proverb collected by Unnikrishnan:

Figure 4: Haritaki: Ayurvedic Medicine

Ayurvedic Product	Plant: <i>Terminalia chebula</i>	Ecoproverb
		<p>ദശമാതാഹരീതകി. <i>daśamātāharītaki.</i> Inknut is like ten mothers (Unnikrishnan 2011:153)</p>

A discursive analysis of the ecological proverb in Figure 4 reveals a poetic simile between the plant, *haritaki* and ten mothers: similarly, contemporary ecological feminists perceive a resonance between the female body and the ecosphere (Warren 1997). This ecological proverb reflects indigenous knowledge that can be looked at for innovations in modern science and the business world. It is important for the Indigenous communities to be economically compensated for this knowledge contribution.

Conflict, as formulated by Marx, is another concept Islam explores theoretically as an agent of social change. Marxist conflict theorists maintain that the competition between groups for scarce resources inevitably produces divergence, opposition and conflict (Islam 1998:218). For Islam, it is possible to trace two conflicting forces from the structure of almost all genres of folklore (Islam 1998:224). Bangladeshi, Indian, and American folklore is replete with examples of class, religious, and tribal conflicts. Conflict theory as explained by Islam has numerous applications for the study of the place of Indigenous people and their folklore within a larger societal context.

Conflict is a major element of the colonialization of Indigenous people and landscape when cultures clash violently. For decolonial change to take effect, an Indigenous confrontation with current colonial aggressors through peaceful protest has been encouraged by Indigenous leaders. For example, Sioux tribal leader LaDonna Brave Bull Allard in the state of North Dakota in the U.S.A. established a camp to protest the Dakota Access [Oil] Pipeline in 2016 at the site of Standing rock, that was claimed to be Indigenous ancestral land. The oil company was perceived by the Indigenous people and their allies, to be a colonial aggressor that threatened to pollute the natural water resources of the area. At Standing Rock Indigenous people performed folk music and chanted hymns as a peaceful protest against the building of the commercial oil pipeline on sacred Indigenous land.

The folklore theory of Islam identifies how folklore reflects conflicts in society. Decolonial Indigenous folklore theory of Martineau and Ritskes perceives a responsibility of academic analysis to be an active decolonial agent for change by acknowledging the effects of colonization, such as genocide, and reframing our understanding of Indigenous knowledge from an Indigenous perspective. In decolonization theoretical applications there is an intension to shift a power balance from colonial discourse about oppressed groups to champion Indigenous scholarly discourse concerning themselves in order to achieve social and ecological justice for oppressed groups and the environment.

9. Theories of Cognition and Cultural Evolution with their Applications for Shaman Studies and Decolonial Studies

Singh's methods of studying shamanism also provides interesting and potentially useful models for comparative Indigenous folkloric analysis. Singh defines his research objective as identifying the social and cognitive foundations of a more general, cross-cultural suite of practices and beliefs (Singh 2018:1). Singh proposes that shamanism is a suite of practices developed through *cultural evolution* to convince observers that an individual can influence otherwise uncontrollable outcomes; for Singh the shaman is an individual who violates intuitions of humanness to convince group members that he or she can interact with the invisible forces who control unpredictable, important events (Singh 2018:4). Singh's theory in this regard is rooted in two conceptual foundations: a) *cognitive underpinnings of magic and religion* that reveal built-in adaptive components of human psychology that predispose us to adopt certain beliefs, and b) *cultural evolutionary theory* that describes how the differential transmission and adoption of cultural traits lead some beliefs, practices, and institutions to propagate at the expense of others, giving rise to adaptive culture like igloos and spears (Singh 2018:4).

Singh's objective to identify the social and cognitive foundations of cross-cultural practices is potentially useful for the comparative study of ecological Indigenous folklore. Singh's analysis of cultural evolution by a series of selections is also potentially useful. Singh claims a shaman is an individual who violates intuitions of humanness. Alternatively, Reichel-Dolmatoff describes the shaman as strengthening human relationships and promoting peace and social cohesion in the community by engaging in night-time chats and systematically offering practical advice. For Reichel-Dolmatoff the shaman is able to heal a community by systematic processes that have predictable outcomes, such as knowing how much fish poison to use to catch fish.

Singh, in contradistinction asserts that the shaman is concerned primarily with convincing observers how unpredictable events can be controlled through non-humanistic powers. Singh's methods of using cognitive science and cultural evolutionary theory have potential use for the analysis of Indigenous environmental knowledge and Indigenous technology. Cognitive underpinnings can be searched for to reveal built-in adaptive components of human psychology that predispose us to protect the environment. And we can explore how the differential transmission and adoption of cultural traits lead some Indigenous beliefs, practices, and institutions to propagate at the expense of others, giving rise to adaptive culture.

10. Reichel-Dolmatoff's Ethnography in Support of Decolonization

From a decolonial point of view, Singh chooses not to express current and systematic oppression of the many tribes that he studies. Reichel-Dolmatoff's ethnography appeals more to the decolonial cause of Indigenous liberation when he states, a) "We all have been marked by a cheap stereotype of Amazonian Indians: a man or family peacefully paddling a canoe; but to the Indians, the meaning of this picture is immensely more complex"; b) we should heed the Indian words, because they convey to us the true meaning of these terms, a meaning we have lost in the course of our frantic advance

towards what we call progress”; c) “the river is life because the water is life; in some languages of the north-west Amazon, the word for river or water is the same as the word for health, for medicine; when the Indians [Indigenous] see stagnant, polluted waters they say the river is ill: but when the current is swift and clear the river is healthy;” d) I am quite aware of the fact that, occasionally, the Indians have contributed to the destruction and degradation of their lands, especially when acting under the pressure of encroaching mestizo peasants, but as a general rule they have managed their natural environment with ecologically-sound land use planning; e) we have to be realistic, and accept the fact that the Indian [Indigenous] world is on the wane; the amazon basin and many, many other, formerly remote, regions of the Third World are being opened to outside influences and to technological development; in some regions this process will be slower and less turbulent than in others; some aboriginal societies will be able to re-adapt, but others will become profoundly modified, and some will perish altogether, biologically, culturally, linguistically (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1999). Singh, in contrast, emphasizes the cognitive underpinnings of shamanism. Singh’s analysis does not describe the shaman’s practical knowledge of ecology, biology, agriculture, and natural resource management- Indigenous knowledge that continues to be made vulnerable by colonialism.

11. Charts that Compare the above Theories

The Table 1 below provides the following information regarding each of the 12 discourses cited above: Do the authors claim membership in an Indigenous Tribe? Does the discourse successfully express the effects of colonization, genocide, and forced assimilation of Indigenous people?

Table 1. Authorship, Identity and Expression of Colonial Violence

	Author(s)/Year	Location of Author	Tribal Identification of the Author	Explicit Expression of Colonial Violence
1.	Aldred (2000)	U.S.A.	no	yes
2.	Guadadeet <i>al</i> (2013)	India	no	no
3.	Hodder (1992)	U.S.A.	no	no
4.	Islam (1998)	Bangladesh	no	no
5.	Martineau & Ritskes (2014)	Canada	Martineau: Plains Cree/Dene Suline Ritskes: No	yes
6.	Rajagopalan, Ed. (2004)	India	no	yes
7.	Reichel-Dolmatoff (1999)	Colombia	no	yes
8.	Shahidullah et al (2009)	Bangladesh (and U.K.)	no	no
9.	Singh (2018)	U.S.A.	no	no
10.	Smith (1999)	New Zealand	Ngāti Awa/Ngāti Porou iwi	yes
11.	Tsosie-Peña (2018)	U.S.A.	Santa Clara Pueblo	no
12.	Unnikrishnan (2011)	India	no	yes

Table 1 showcases information concerning the authors selected for the article, the country of origin of the article, the tribal affiliation of the author (if any) and whether or not the article describes colonial trauma. The dates of the articles range from 1992-2018 providing a solid sample of contemporary scholarship on this topic. Articles were taken from North America, South America and South Asia. The authors of the majority of the scholarship do not claim affiliation with an indigenous community. Most indigenous authors do describe colonial violence but not all. At the same time a minority of authors not from indigenous communities do describe colonial trauma.

Figure 5: Expression of Colonial Trauma by Selected Authors



Figure 6: Indigenous Status of Authors in the Article

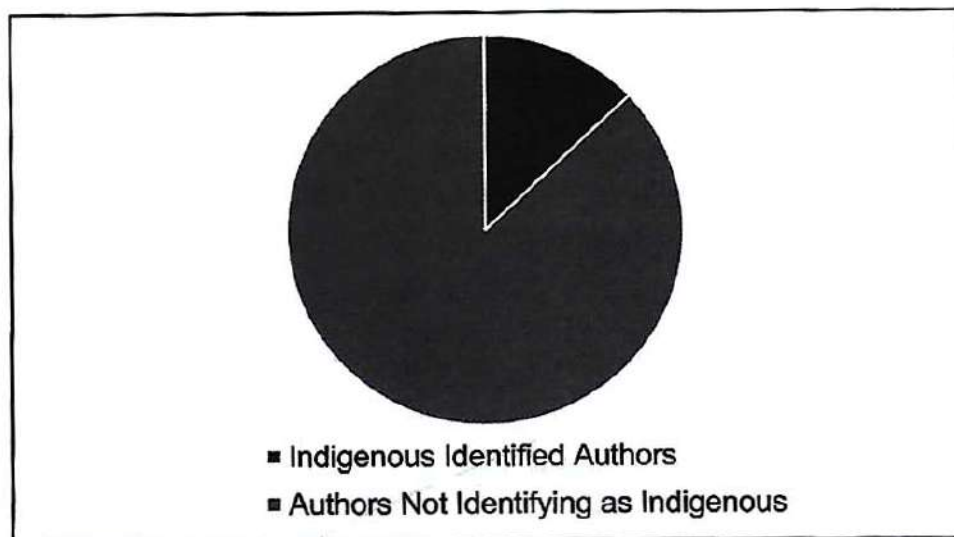


Figure 5. reveals that only half the authors selected for this article mention any violence or trauma experienced by the Indigenous cultures that they study. Figure 6. shows that the vast majority of authors selected for this study do not claim membership in an Indigenous community. However, certain authors who do not identify as Indigenous, such as Aldred (2000), Ritskes (2014), Rajagopalan (2004), Reichel-Dolmatoff (1999), and Unnikrishnan

(2011) successfully include discourses relating to the violence of colonization against Indigenous people. One key ideology of the theory of Decolonization is the inclusion of discourse related to colonial violence when analyzing Indigenous people. Decolonial theory advocates for the inclusion of Indigenous authors within the scholarly field of Indigenous Studies. Among the authors selected for this article 3 identify as Indigenous, 20 do not identify as Indigenous. Efforts would be warranted to a) include more scholars of Indigenous affiliation into academic institutions and b) emphasize the need to accurately express issues of colonial violence when analyzing Indigenous folklore.

11. Conclusion

In conclusion, Indigenous Folklore theories are selected to frame methods of research analysis. When used dexterously, Indigenous folklore theory can help us elucidate Indigenous knowledge and preserve social equity through the empowerment of ethnic minorities. Theories such as Decolonialism can help empower oppressed and marginal groups. Decolonization theory contains an important emphasis on resistance to colonial oppression, the creation of a space for the expression of trauma, and healing through the development of commodity forms that utilize time-tested traditional indigenous knowledge. Inclusion of Decolonial theory in research work assures the progress of mainstream academic practices and ideologies towards the empowerment of Indigenous subjects. Indigenous Eco-aesthetic Folkloric research methods highlight the organicism of traditional art materials and symbology and reveal how the arts act as educational tools to raise the environmental consciousness of a community. Indigenous Ecological Shamanic theory focuses on the research of tribal elders and their masterful ecological knowledge of biodiversity and conservation. Indigenous Organic Agricultural theory prioritizes the research of traditional agricultural techniques that provide contemporary solutions for a more sustainable ecological future. The primary importance of Post-processual Archaeological theory as described in this article involves the importance of identifying and prioritizing the researcher's subjectivity as a key component to how subsequent analysis is framed. Though the practice of indigenous experiential analysis new meanings can surface to challenge the social oppression of ethnic minority groups. Inclusion of more Indigenous and ethnic minority authors in the study of folklore will benefit the teaching of traditional knowledge. A further theory of folklore to be explored in this indigenous context is Eco-feminism. Indigenous knowledge and experience of the biosphere will continue to contribute to folklore studies and mainstream academic science in socially progressive and innovative ways. The effectiveness of Indigenous theoretical selection by scholars may be measured by its effectiveness in improving society, the lives of Indigenous people, and environmental justice.

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