

Drumming and Singing Contributes to the Well-Being of the Anishinaabe Peoples:

A Literature Review

by

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Drumming and Singing Contributes to the Well-Being of the Annishinaabe Peoples: A Literature Review

Objectives

The objective of this Literature Review is to gain a deeper understanding of Native drumming, singing and songs. The Native group being reviewed will be the Annishinaabe peoples, also known as the Ojibway. The topics of interest are history of the drum, origins of song, song types, the power of song, vibration and sound, healing, and connection to Spirit and education. These topics relate to the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual lives of individuals, families and communities. The three sections are: Fire Eagle, Golden Eagle, and Thunderbird. They are a metaphorical representation of the continuous cycle of challenges, change and transformation that can be found in Native Education. The process of singing and drumming Native songs illustrates how sound is incorporated as a cultural form of healing for Native peoples. Some songs and singing are a form of prayer, transmitting through people and connecting to the Creator and all of creation. This Literature Review was conducted from February 2009–May 2009. The date range of the material begins with 1910 and ends at 2004.

The Literature being reviewed includes: four books, two articles, and four videos.

The four books are: 1) Chippewa Music I, by Densmore, Francis published in 1910, 2) Chippewa Music II, by Densmore, Francis published in 1913, 3) History of the Ojibway People by Warren, W., W. in 1984. 4) Drumming at the Edge of Magic: A Journey into the Spirit of Percussion by Hart, Mickey 1990.

The two articles are: 1) “The Way of the Drum: When Earth Becomes Heart” by Antone, Grafton & Turchetti, L. P., published in 2002, and 2) “Utilizing the Arts for Healing from a Native American Perspective: Implications for Creative Arts Therapies”, Dunfrene, Phoebe, published in 1991.

The four videos are: 1) Beat of the Drum: Music at the Heartbeat of First, produced and directed by Richard Hersley in 1997, 2) Drum Lake Archaeology, produced and directed by Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Center (n.d.), 3) Pow Wow Trail: Episode 1, The Drum, by Arbor Records Ltd and I.C.E. Productions Ltd in 2004, and 4) Healing of Nations, written and directed by Peter von Puttkamer in 1994.

Introduction

My Indian/First Nations/Native name is *Waashegaminaboornikwe* which means Clear Water Woman. This name was given to me by my mother and my auntie. My other Indian names are *Migizi Shkiingzhigoon* (Eagle Eyes) from my Grandfather and *Tatonka Winukcha* (Buffalo Spirit Woman) from my Sioux Elder. I am Annishanabekwe or an Ojibway Woman and I am Heron and Deer clan. My relations and Band is Mississauga of Scugog Island First Nations in Ontario which is the home of my traditional ancestors. The first thing we (‘we’ meaning inclusiveness of Native protocol) do when introducing ourselves includes: We state our names, who gave us this honour, our Elders, our band, our clan and our traditional territories. It is our protocol and we do this out of respect for ourselves, our families, our ancestors, our community and Mother Earth. “[Indian] knowledge is said to be personal, oral, experiential, [w]holistic and conveyed in narrative or metaphorical language” (Castellano, 2000, p. 25) and mode of transmission has been passed down from generation to generation through our families and communities.

Rationale for picking this topic

I grew up in a European home and when I was around the age of eight, I begged my parents to play the drum. Owing to the noise of drums, my parents said I was to play the accordion as their cultural background was German-Austrian. I felt disappointed but wanted to learn about music. My natural connection to the drum had to wait. I loved learning and hearing the possibilities of sound that turned into music. Although it was the accordion which felt foreign to me, I fell in love with the sound and the vibration it gave off. As I grew older, I began to become bored of this instrument and eventually, I stopped practicing and dropped the accordion.

In my twenties, I watched a documentary on Beethoven with my little sister in her apartment in Montreal, QC. While watching and listening to Beethoven's music in this documentary, I looked outside and saw the trees and heard them blowing in the wind. I noticed the colours on the leaves and how the colours varied from leaf to leaf. They moved in and out of various degrees of colour and sound. It felt and sounded peaceful. The wind did not disturb the tree; the sound of the leaves was in harmony with the wind, the leaves, the colours, and the weather— everything was in its place, creating sound that was absolutely perfect. To me, I understood at this moment that Beethoven had captured nature, sound, harmony and colour, all inseparable from the whole and he created some of the world's most beautiful music. My body, senses, spirit, my whole being memorized this experience. My heart and mind were still and I felt completely alive in other aspects of my being that I hadn't noticed before. My body was touched and moved with a light feeling or vibration. My being became the sound and, as the sound changed and the colours shifted, it brought out different feelings, memories and emotions. It produced a sense of calm,

love, connectedness, wholeness, emptiness and peace. I understood at this moment my relationship to my Creator, and that music could heal and connect everything inside and outside of my being. It was a ‘complete’ experience and nothing was left aside. Almost thirty years later, coming full circle, I was allowed to begin playing my Native drum—and my heart opened.

Section Fire Eagle:

Geographical Context of My Nation

The Ojibway “(also Ojibwa or Ojibwe, pronounced Ojib’way), Chippewa (also Chippeway) or Annishinaabe (also Annishinabe), is the largest Native group found in Canada and the third-largest group in the United States of America. The Ojibway were formerly located mainly around Sault Ste. Marie, at the outlet of Lake Superior and the French referred to them as Saulteurs. The Ojibway who subsequently moved to the prairie provinces of Canada have retained the name Saulteaux. The Ojibway who were originally located along the Mississagi River, made their way to southern Ontario are known as the Mississaugas” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ojibway>, 2009).

The meaning of the word “Ojibway has been a subject of much discussion as the derivation of the word from a root meaning ‘to pucker’ is established, but the connection of the idea is a matter of dispute. One suggestion is “Possibly the form of moccasin” (Densmore, 1913, p. 5). There are a few more translations for the Ojibway word ‘Annishnaabeg’ such as: ‘First or Original Peoples’. Another possible definition refers to ‘the good humans’ or ‘good people’, that are on the right road/path given to them by the ‘Gitchi-Manitou’ (Annishinaabe term for Great Spirit or Creator).

The Ojibway peoples include the Algonquin, Nipissing, Oji-Cree, Odawa and the Potawatomis. The Ojibway people number over “56,440 in the U.S., living in an area stretching across the north from Michigan to Montana. Another 77,940 of main-line Ojibway, 76,760 Saulteaux and 8,770 Mississaugas, in 125 bands, live in Canada, stretching from western Quebec to eastern British Columbia" (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ojibway>, 2009).

The Ojibway are scattered over a considerable area, from the Province of Quebec on the East, to a small settlement in British Columbia on the Western side of Canada. The Ojibway are also along the Red River of the North in Manitoba and southwards down through the States of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan” (Hoffman, 2005, p. 1). The Ojibway are a primarily ‘woodland’ person, which means they originally lived in the areas where trees are abundant. My personal background following my biological mother’s side is Ojibway (Annishanabekwe). My personal geographical context centres on the area of Scugog Island First Nation and Rama First Nation north of Toronto in Ontario.



Fig. 1: Ojibway Migis Shells (Photograph by D. Marsden, Nov. 11, 2009)

The Ojibway people are known for the sacred Migis shells from the Ojibway creation story (seen in Figure 1, they are also known as cowery shells), wild rice, birch bark canoes, maple sugar, and copper. The Ojibway are also known in history for their knowledge and technology of fire arms during the war of 1745 which helped to defeat and push out the Dakota Sioux Nation. The

Ojibway Nation was the “first to set the agenda for signing more detailed treaties with Canada's leaders before many settlers were allowed too far west (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ojibway>, 2009). The Ojibway lived in Wigwams and tepee and made birch bark canoes which the French fur traders adopted. The spiritual belief system of the Ojibway peoples is Midéwiwin which is a very well-respected society and is the keeper of detailed, complex birch bark scrolls. The Ojibway people are known for their sacred birch bark scrolls (‘wiigwaasabakoon’ in Ojibway) and when used distinctively for Midewiwin ceremonial use, these scrolls are called ‘mide-wiigwaas’. These are sacred scrolls with written hieroglyphics that contain traditional Annishinaabe beliefs and practices such as: events of history, family lineage, songs, stories, maps, legends, teachings, geometry and mathematics.

The History of the Native Drum

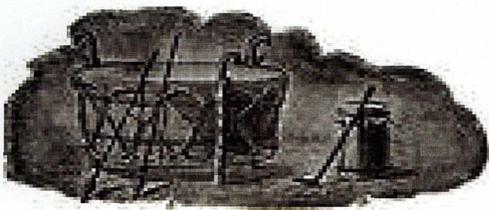


Fig. 2: Chief or Pow Wow and Water drum (Hoffman, W. J., 2005, pg. 42).

In the video *Pow Wow Trail* (2000), “Benton-Benai says the first drum is the grandfather Drum. It is the drum of drums, it is the water drum seen in Figure 2”. In the video, *Pow Wow Trail* (2000) Benton-Benai says the first large or big drum is a vision that an Omaamikwe (An

Annishinaabe woman) has and it is a chief drum or pow wow drum — Benton-Benai shows a version of the first large drum, the vision of Omaamikwe.

There are five versions in the literature that was reviewed, of ‘how the drum came into existence’. The literature being reviewed is in no particular order. The first version is found in the video, *Pow Wow Trail* (2000) a story told by Benton-Benai, a Midé leader and his version goes as follows:

The circumstances of the Annishinaabe and Dakota at the time was war with the soldiers, it was 1860-68. The Indian people were attacked all were killed. There was one woman who was able to hide. We know of her as Omaamikwe. When the Indian people were killed, the spirit spoke to her and she had a chance to flee. She went to the water and was told how to survive using a reed she laid in the water for 4 days and the spirit spoke to her again. She was to come out of the water and go to the top of a hill the spirit told her. My daughters do not be afraid; the soldiers are unable to see you. Go towards the soldiers and she walked among them. There was a table with food and then she had something to eat. The spirit instructed her to walk for quite a while. She walked and near evening she rested. The spirit woke her at dawn and she placed food on the earth and tobacco. The spirit received her offering and said that she needs to remember what was to come in to her for four days. She waited and saw something coming towards her from the sky, it almost touched the earth. It was a drum — a beautiful, immaculate drum. The spirit instructed her on the orientation of songs and everything was given to her. She was told to remember everything, songs, implements and how to make the drum. The people must do everything instructed by the spirit for the drum and to understand what is needed for the people. The men are ones who make the drum and the women organize and support by standing behind the drum.

In the book *Chippewa II*, a different version of the story is found. The difference is that the Manidó (spirit) told her that “the women could sing with the drum, but that only the men could dance around it; Manidó also told her that when the first drum was finished he would come down to it and that two men must be offered to him in return for the gift of the drum. The woman told the men how to make the drum. When it was finished and the singers had learned the songs they all gathered around it. The instant that the drummers struck the drum for the first time, the

Manidó (spirit) appeared again and the two men who had made the drum fell dead beside it” (1913, p.144).

Here too is a similar version except the woman is Sioux and her name is Tailfeather. The Great Spirit says the solution to stop the killing during the war is to build a drum. While making the Ojibway drum, Mickey Hart retells the story how the Ojibwa drum came into existence in the 1870’s. Mickey Hart, a contemporary drummer from the band called ‘Greatful Dead’ talks about his conversations with Tom Vennum, Jr. (A leading historian, anthropologist of the Ojibwa peoples. Also the author of ‘The Ojibwa Dance Drum: its history and Construction). Hart retells the story of Tailfeather:

“A vision had come to a “Sioux woman named Tailfeather Woman at a moment of profound grief and terror. White soldiers had just massacred her village, killing her four sons and almost killing her. She had managed to escape by hiding in a lake. For four days Tailfeather Woman hid under the lilypads. While she was hiding, the Great Spirit came to her and told her what to do. On the fourth day she emerged from the lake and walked to her village to see who had survived the attack. When the survivors had gathered around her, she told them that the Great Spirit had commanded them to build a drum. Saying that it is the only way you are going to stop the soldiers from killing your people. (Tom Vennum cited by Hart, 1990, p. 241).

The discrepancies between the two accounts include that *Chippewa II* says only the men could dance around the drum and that the two men who created it dropped dead, while Pow Wow Trail (2000) notes the ‘Big Drum Society’ was created after constructing the first drum. The most significant difference, however, is that *Chippewa II* notes that women “could sing with the drum” where Pow Wow Trail (2000) has women standing outside the circle. Neither works address the influence of Patriarchal lineage and Matriarchal lineage tribes and the effects of Native women during the 1800s. All rights were striped from the Native peoples, ceremonies, rights, land, drumming, hunting, even drumming was banned. Native women had even less rights. When the Europeans came, they brought with them their own laws and ways concerning women. The belief system of the Native women, spiritual connections to the drum, songs and the natural laws was severed and discounted. Discrimination, rights, position and Native women’s

natural place in society was oppressed by the imposed European viewpoint and law. These changes in Native women's historical roles constitute the discrepancies between texts. It is not certain the protocol around women and drumming. Therefore, Native women are creating strong drum groups around traditional songs, singing and drumming. The strength of the Native people is first found in the strength of its women and through the heart beat of the drum.

The second version is found in Pow Wow Trail (2000). One of the legends says that a young man hunted and he shot this buck. Then while skinning it, he heard the noise of "hostile Indians." He threw the hide when men were looking for him. When he threw the hide, it spun in the air and it fell on a tree stump. He ran and hid. The men took the meat but the hide dried in the sun on a stump. When the man came out of hiding, he found the hide and struck it. It was the original sound of thunder. The power of (wakina) power of thunder joins to become the power of the drum and you make peace with the thunder.

The third version is the story of Johnny Smith in Pow Wow Trail (2000). The solider boys (Chunukama) wanted to fight with the Ojibway (ojibikwum). The Ojibway won the fight and took the Chunkama's drum as a trophy. It was a bass drum from their marching band — the solider boys left the drum behind after the Chippewa chased them away and they called it a trophy drum and they put feet on it to honour the drum. This is the story told on Red Lake Reservation.

The fourth version in Pow Wow Trail (2000) was told by an Elder, Dora Morsay. There is no story said by Dora, she only states that Indian people have always had drums and the drums were given to the people from angels or spirits. Dora doesn't evaluate further on her explanation.

The fifth version in the Pow Wow Trail (2000) explains that the Elders at the Powwow or Watchitoo gathering say that the drum has been there since the beginning of time. In my experience, many of the Elders say that we have always had the drum since Time Immemorial. I find it strange to think that the Native drum had only come during the war in the 1800s. This assumption is similar to the racism in a Hollywood version of a movie where the minorities are marginalized and portrayed as not intelligent enough create a drum. Maybe the large drum was created at that time. It would also mean that Native peoples only sang their songs. They never used a drum while singing until the 1800's. Therefore, the songs would have been sung with a different instrument. The history of the drum would be an interesting research project.

Due to the effects of colonization, the “exact details of the origin of the ceremonial Dance Drum will probably never be known, as the story is shrouded in legend and has been embroidered over the years through oral tradition. Even the earliest published accounts are conflicting and have led to scholarly debate” (Vennum, 1982, pg 45).

The Effects of Colonization on Native Expression

Many Native people had their voice taken away during colonization. Due to “laws prohibiting the practice of traditional Native religion and medicine in the USA until the passage of the 1979 Freedom of Religion Act, many Native Americans have difficulty obtaining access to traditional healers” (Dunfrene, 1991, pg. 122). Many children and parents didn't have a say while being forced off their lands and into residential schools. Many children were stolen from their families and were not allowed or unable to speak about what had happened to them. Many of the families had no say when the children and family members were stolen. These displaced Native people are slowly finding their way back to their origins and homes. The word ‘home’ in this context

means that some of the children are returning to their birth families and beginning to renew their culture and heritage. The voices of the people are slowly opening up.

One way voices are being heard and healed is through drumming and singing. Renae Morriseau in the video *Beat of the Drum* (1997) says that the “collection of voices give strength (healing) to Native people. It’s about learning personal identity for the native people in a non-native world.

The consciousness can be raised through expression of who you are in the music.” This is a form of healing and strength, to bring back the voice of the Native people. In the *Healing of Nations* video 1994, the belief is that when the consciousness is low, a person is less aware of their surroundings. The difficulties of life are too much and

people are in pain, they are dying and they think this is just how it is. The pollution of the minds needs to be cleaned. The importance of ceremonies is to have a vision and to have a vision to follow, we need to help each other with the personal vision....keeping harmony...understanding the prayers and the higher powers are helping you and the spirit is to understand yourself. (Puttkamer, 1994)

Antone, G. & Turchetti, L. P. (2002), says: “Native people who lost the most were the ones who attended residential schools and/or were removed from their home reserves by the Children’s Aid Society and subsequently adopted out to non-Native families. Many of these people lost their families, language and culture, and so their traditions were lost to them” (p.52). This created confusion in the Native people. By using our voice, singing our songs to clear away the confusion of colonization, Native people purify themselves through the use of the pipe; sweat lodge and the Sundance which are spiritual things. Here we are drumming, singing our songs, we use our own voices, and we use our own minds and the oppression of the past lifts. In ceremony,

we let go of absolutely everything from this world, there is nothing to hold on to and we are no longer confused. To fill the void and aloneness you need a relationship with the Creator.

In Antone's quote, she seems to blame Native people for the impact of colonization and the introduction of alcoholism and its effects as she states:

One of the greatest mistakes Native people made was to drink alcohol; whether it was beer, wine, or whisky, it all did the same thing. Liquor got the Native people (Indians) drunk, and that was the beginning of their degradation... Soon they lost their jobs, their dignity, and, most of all, their sense of identity. People gave "Indians" a bad name, putting them down with all kinds of negative and dirty names. Shamed and destroyed, the Native people struggled on. (Antone, G. & Turchetti, L. P., 2002, p. 52)

This statement does not explain the introduction and affects of residential school, stolen children and the results of all forms of oppression and colonization leading to the introduction of alcohol.

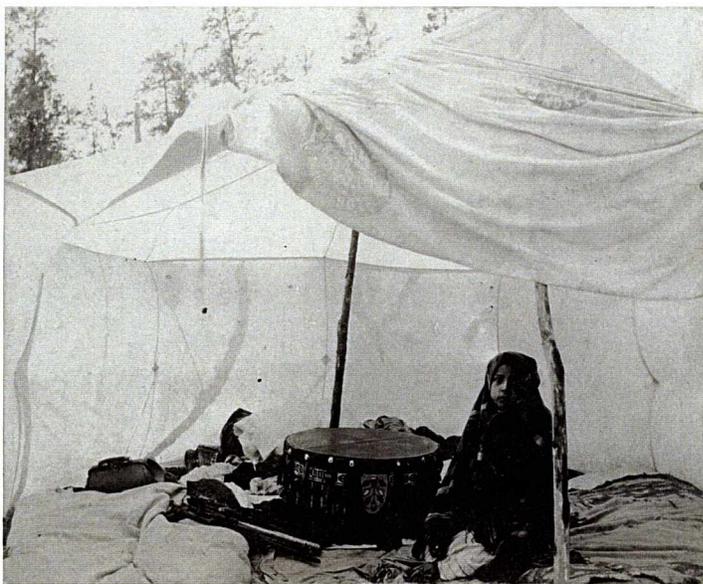


Fig. 3: The Ojibway Boy & Drum (Photo from Minnesota Historical Society, Nov. 10, 2009).

In *Pow Wow Trail* (2000), it states that:

Culture was lost and in the history by law the drum was not allowed to be played, the voices of the people were not allowed to be heard...the voice of the people must be heard and the drum carries the voice of the people in a universal sense around the world.

(Figure 3).

Not only do Native peoples need to be heard but we also need to hear the voices of our Elders who are knowledge keepers, historians and who give guidance. In the *Drum Lake* video, Paul

Write thinks about the past as he hears:

Voices of the elders, who would sit and tell us about the past. That way we knew what the future held in advance. As we traveled the land we would look around and see how good our lives were. This work can be best done by telling stories. If we tell stories they get the practical experience to truly understand life and sharing this experience will produce respect and co operation. This way nothing can be lost from the history of the past. They learn to help each other. (*Drum Lake*, n.d.)

Our Elders are our origins of knowledge, everything that was known before and our children are our continuum of this knowledge. It is innate, and in the blood and cells of every Native. Much of this knowledge is in our songs that reach as far back to the beginning of time.

Section **Golden Eagle:**

The Origin of Songs

Allegretto.
Drum. *pp*

Mi'-si-ni-en' - di-an Mi'-si-ni-en' - di-an

Mi'-si-ni-en' - dian, Mi'-si-ni-en' - di-an, Mi'-si-ni-en' - di-an

D.C. ad lib. Sung last time. D.C. ad lib.

Mi'-si-ni-en' - di-an, Ni-kan. Hū, Hū, Hū.

The image shows a musical score for a Chippewa song. It begins with a drum part marked 'Allegretto' and 'pp'. The drum part consists of a steady eighth-note rhythm. Below the drum part is a vocal line in G major (one sharp) and 6/8 time. The lyrics are 'Mi'-si-ni-en' - di-an Mi'-si-ni-en' - di-an'. The second line of the vocal part has the lyrics 'Mi'-si-ni-en' - dian, Mi'-si-ni-en' - di-an, Mi'-si-ni-en' - di-an'. The third line of the vocal part has the lyrics 'Mi'-si-ni-en' - di-an, Ni-kan. Hū, Hū, Hū.' and includes the instruction 'D.C. ad lib. Sung last time. D.C. ad lib.' above the notes.

Fig. 4: Chippewa Music (Hoffman, W., J., 2005, pg. 68).

This particular song is found in Hoffman's book entitled: *The Mide' wiwin Grand Medicine Society of the Ojibway*. It was first published in 1891. It is a song of initiation into the Midé.

In the literature (Figure 4), the modes of transmission or acquiring a song is through our ancestors, dreaming, trance states, fast states, from one person to another, mnemonics and symbolism. In the 1800's, Densmore said that some Chippewa music could be purchased but he doesn't say the types of songs that could be purchased.

Great-Great-Grandmother's Blessing

I dreamed my great-great-grandmother came and sang a song to me. I had never met her before. She encouraged me to sing along so I sat up in my bed and hummed her song. It was about three or four in the morning. I quickly went to write it down in a way I would understand the intonation and spelling. I translated the meaning of the song by how it felt. The song gave me a connection to my great-great-grandmother. I was asked to 'birth the song' or to sing the song in public. I did and honoured my great-great-grandmother. This is my personal experience.

Our grandmothers and grandfathers send our songs through our dreams. Our connection to our ancestors is extremely strong and vital. They guide us; give us instructions, directions and warnings. Antone, G. & Turchetti, L. P. called dreaming "picture-words. She saw the myths—the truth-telling of many ancestors and other, and saw ways of thinking in patterns and families. She learned that the people overcome their differences by "dreaming together" (2002, p. 56). In the *Beat of the Drum* the "song keeper was a 4-year-old Jerry. They wondered how he sang a song that came from his grandmother. He's getting help from the spirits. Jerry's ancestors are passing the song to him" (Hersley & Morrieseau, 1997). This statement shows how intimately connected we are to our ancestors and it shows another mode of transmission of songs. Dreaming is one way the Native people connect to and communicate with the ancestors. Here in dream time, the dreams finds a way to fill the gaps between the past, present and future. According to the Indigenous people in this video, this is how the songs come down through the ancestors.

Through the literature examined in my project, many of the Native peoples received songs through dreaming. The Chippewa songs are "very old and are found on several reservations; others are said to be the more recent compositions of certain men and women who compose them

‘during a dream’ or ‘upon awaking from a dream’ (Densmore, 1910, p. 1). The songs in some groups are not composed in the usual sense of the term but are said to have “come to the mind of the Indian when he was in a dream. We cannot fully understand this dream or trance of the Indian—we can only accept his statement that, by isolation and fasting, he was able to induce a certain condition in which he “saw a vision” and “composed a song.” In the belief of the Indian fasting is a condition essential to certain classes of musical composition. (Densmore, 1913, p. 37). Both *Chippewa I* and *Chippewa II* state that songs come though dream time and are sometimes induced by attaining altered states. The dream songs were undoubtedly composed under abnormal conditions, but no drum was used in their composition and Densmore’s study concerns only the manner of their rendition. In this connection it is interesting to note that, according to Densmore, the rhythm “of the adult heart, beating 60-80 and acting normally, is a triple rhythm” (Densmore, 1913, p. 10).

Chippewa songs are not “petrified specimens; they are alive with the warm red blood of human nature. Music is one of the greatest pleasures of the Chippewa. If an Indian visits another reservation, one of the first questions asked on his return is: What new songs did you learn?” (Densmore, 1910, p. 1). The protocol for Native songs is to mention the location from whence the song came from, if the song was from the Cree, it was stated before the song was sung. The history of the “Chippewa songs is well known to the singers, and is further preserved by the Indian custom of prefacing a song with a brief speech concerning it. On formal occasions the Chippewa singer says:

My friends, I will now sing you the song of _____,” Describing the subject of the song. At the close of the song he says: “My friends, I have sung the song of _____,” repeating the

title of the song. In this way the facts concerning the song become strongly associated with the melody in the minds of the people (Densmore, 1910, p. 2).

In the Chippewa, the protocol is that it is not permissible for one man to sing a song belonging to another unless he has purchased the right to sing it. The songs owned by individuals are those connected with the use of medicine, and when a man buys a song he receives some of the medicine for use. (Densmore, 1910, p. 26). I think this comment is very important, that with the transference of a song, its medicinal properties in its words, its power and music come with it. These songs must be handled with care and respect. The Native people who practice this receives the knowledge and benefit of the song. In the video *Beat of the Drum*, the songs were passed from one person to another. He “passed his songs to Chuck Nelson. That’s how he acquired a song. To be a warrior these days is a hard thing to do because we are in the new and modern world but we want to keep our old world” (Hersley & Morrieseau, 1997).

We the Native people will keep our traditions and our old world by keeping our songs and rites.

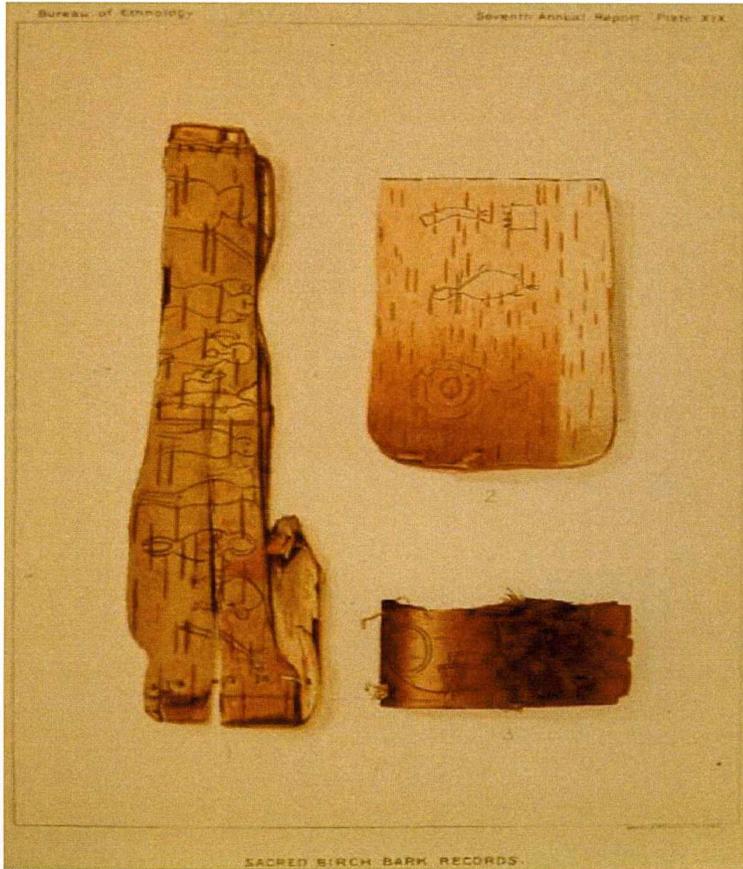


Fig. 5: Sacred Birch Bark Records (Hoffman, W., J., 2005, pg. 139).

This is a pictograph or visual record in Figure 5, of Chippewa music that contains rites which are ancient and sacred hieroglyphics. For the Chippewa, it is a mnemonic interpretation of cultural expression, common language, a record of their history and songs. Some of the birch bark scrolls also contains pictographic images of astronomy, rituals, maps, and family lineage. Many of the sacred scrolls were hidden away in caves. In the words of these songs, the “ancient teachings and beliefs of the Chippewa are preserved. There are an estimated several hundred Chippewa songs. Ceremony, initiation, medicine or dancing songs called ni’miwûg in Ojibway. The songs are recorded in mnemonics on strips of birch bark. This serves as a reminder of the essential idea of the song and is different in its nature from our system of printing. The Indian picture preserves

the idea of the song, while our printed page preserves the words which are supposed to express the idea but which often express it very imperfectly” (Densmore, 1910, p.15).

Dunfrene (1991, p.123) writes a similar statement about visual records: “ The symbols here too are passed through traditional Native healers or shamans that draw upon a vast body of symbolism passed down through the centuries. These images are stored in the memories of traditional healers and passed from stored memories of the traditional healers and passed from generation to generation. Here, myths, prayers, songs, chants, sand paintings, music, etc., are used to return the patient symbolically to the source of tribal energy” It is said that the ancient rock paintings even had records of visitors from other countries and even other planets outside our star systems. The paintings were recorded dreams of ancient people, prophets and healers. Antone, G. & Turchetti, L. P., “had a ‘new way of seeing’ and because Western educators were raised under the influence of written traditions, it is often hard for them to think in mythical ways, in the way of dreaming or ‘picture words” (2002, p. 56).

Song Types

Much of Native life and experience is expressed through music. Native peoples sing about their experiences, which are often connected and often related to a spirit; therefore, everything has a voice, a sound, a vibration.

Densmore states in *Chippewa II*, a Native man “sang a song which he heard the trees singing, he repeated the song which the crow sang and he sang the songs of the thunderbird, the deer, the buffalo and also songs about water spirits, war, medicine, and even maple sugar”(1913, p. 37). In

Beat of the Drum, Hersley & Renae Morriseau (1997) agrees with *Chippewa II* and *Chippewa I*, Densmore (1913). They state that: “songs are to be sung while you paddle your canoe, in the morning, deaths, pole raising, putting the spirit back into the salmon—there are songs for everything.....Chuck Sam through his songs and carvings connects himself to his past, to his ancestry, to his native heritage. Chuck’s journey to his own traditional heritage was not an easy one. When his house burned down, he decided to go back to his heritage — to who he is — and to learn about his own culture. He received his first drum and he began playing, then everything began to fall into place in his life after that. It led to carving” (*Beat of the Drum*, 1997).

In *Chippewa II*, Densmore (1913) has a detailed listing of songs and types:

1. Midé songs--general motive of songs: The securing of a definite result through supernatural power, the person affected being usually someone other than the singer (p. 51).
2. Dream songs—General motive of songs: The securing of supernatural aid in personal undertakings (p. 52).
3. War songs—General character of songs: (1) Dream songs of individual warriors; (2) Songs concerning war medicines; (3) Songs incidental to a war expedition; (4) Songs concerning success on the warpath (p. 53).
4. Love songs—General character of songs: The expression of disappointment, loneliness, and sadness (p. 53).

Love songs usually are played by the flute...”Love songs of the Chippewa are plaintive in character, usually expressing sadness and disappointment. Only one

love song expresses a promise and one a request, six concerning the departure of a lover, and five concern loss and longing. Two express jealousy and offense, two express fickleness and two related to an attempt to drown disappointment in drink” (Densmore, 1913, p. 42).

5. Moccasin game songs (Makizin’ata’ diwin’ na’gumowi nun)—Elements in moccasin game: Controlled excitement, desire for success and gain, pleasure, and confidence in supernatural aid (p. 54).

6. Woman’s dance songs (ikwe’ nimiwin’ na’gumoni’ nun)—Elements in the dance: Pleasure and securing the gifts offered with the invitation to dance (p. 55).

7. Begging dance songs (bagosan’ninge’nimiwin nun)—Elements in the dance: Pleasure and acquirement (p. 56).

8. Pipe dance song—Elements in the dance: Ludicrous pantomime and contortion (p. 56).

9. Songs connected with gifts—Comprising songs which are sung when a gift of considerable value is given or received at a social dance (p. 57).

10. Songs for the entertainment of children: Comprising songs of mimic warfare and of warfare between animals—two songs intended only for amusement, and one lullaby (p. 57).

In addition “to songs connected with dreams and with triumphs gained by supernatural aid, there are love songs, and songs of physical activity (as the social dances) and of home life like the

songs for the entertainment of children. Almost without exception the love songs are songs of disappointment and longing. There are a few love charms songs included among those of the Midé” (Densmore, 1913, p. 16). The Chippewa believe when you sing a love song that the power of the song brings well-being to the self or the partner.

The Power of Song

All nations gathered in front of the Carnegie library this year (2009) in Vancouver Canada, to march for our 500 missing Native women that we lost over the last 30 years. The people gathered, marched, drummed and sang the women’s warrior song for hours. As women created a huge circle and people drummed on the outside of the circle, our female Elders performed a sacred ceremony in its center. This ceremony was so strong it pushed out all heaviness and negativity from my being and connected me to an opening in my spirit that went up through the sky as far as the eye could see. The power of our ceremonies and the gathering of peoples while singing and drumming heal. It brings a sense of well-being to all people involved in sacred ceremonies. All things connected at this space and place creating healthy interconnections between each other and pathways of transformation for our lost women in the next world and in this world. Many eagles came at that time while the people cheered their soaring wings because the eagles had shown us the ceremony and our fallen women warriors had been blessed that day.

Steve Keeshick says that, “in the lodge sacred connection to the spirit world heal the soul. The spirits calls out to find the needs of the people. Then the water drum summons the spirits, spirits of medicine and spirits that heal the soul. The drum cuts at the heartstrings of the Indian soul. There is an instant knowledge to any Indian who has heard the beat of the drum. There is an instant connection to its power” (*Pow Wow Trail, 2000*).

Drums were highly honored and treated “like people for the Ojibway. They had names and special clothes and were ritually fed. When tobacco is donated at a ceremony and the pipe tender receives some of it, the greater share goes to the Drum” (Hart, 1990, p. 233).

In the DVD *Beat of the Drum*, “all colours at one point were tribal people. The four races were tribal people and they all had their own songs. All I wanted to do was carry my songs forward” (Hersley & Morrieseau, 1997). Songs can be handed down and sung for centuries, this is a very great honour for many Native people. The power and memory of the song lives through singing.

When there is a feast held in the lodge, a “man is designated as an appointed leader of this feast, and when it is time for the guests to depart he leads in the singing of two songs, shaking his rattle as he sings. Anyone who knows these songs may join the leader in singing them” (Densmore, 1910, p. 33). When the community sings together it creates a powerful connection between each person. It strengthens the human bond and promotes caring.

The Elders say “that a person begins to sing from the mouth. As years go by, the songs begin to move deeper in the being of the singer and he or she learns to sing from the throat. At this point the singer begins to touch the power and essence of the song. As more years go by, the singer begins to sing from the heart. Here, the singer finds the light, the flame within the heart, which is the source of purification of the song. As more years pass the singer travels even deeper into the spiritual reality of being and begins to sing from the center. At this point, the singer becomes connected to creation through the center of their being. When they sing the songs they connect with the ancestors receiving strength, are purified as they pass through the heart, receive the power of the throat and the intonation of the voice and fly from their mouth to descend upon the community as a blessing” (Brown, 2004, p. 7). I have witnessed our Native men drum and sing

for days at our sacred ceremonies and at our community Pow wows. Our men have pushed forward their songs for the people and by the end of our ceremonies; the energy is vibrating so high that peoples' lives can change through the power of their songs. It is not only the words of the songs or the power of the drum but how the drummer, witnesses, dancers and people have connected to its sound and music. People are mesmerized by the completeness of the experience and drawn to the spirit of the drum. The vibration of song has reached the spirits of the people and the transformation of life begins.

Vibration and Sound

In an overview of traditional Native and Midéwiwin (which is an Ojibway spiritual practice) spiritual drumming and song, through literature review and participatory observation there is an “umbilical cord of spirituality”. Drumming and song is foundational to the Native way of ‘wholistic being’ and is connected to the teachings and being of Mother Earth. Native peoples see Mother Earth as a living being that sustains all life forces. Without the incorporation of this epistemology and ontology the Native people are fragmented. The Elders say that the vibration of sound travels through the Earth. For example the Elders say the songs, prayer and prophecies of the Hopi are similar to that of the Monks of Tibet. The vibration of sound from the drum, songs, prayer and prophecies over time has made its way through to the other side of the world and back again.

There are many drums in the Native culture traditional hand drum, the pow-wow (sometimes called the chief drum), the peace (sometimes called the warrior drum), the juggler drum (medicine drum) and the water drum (specific to the Midéwiwin ceremonies). Depending on the hide and how it is made, each drum would have a different sound and vibration. The pitch would

be deepest in the hide of the buffalo, next would be moose, cow, elk, and then deer. Deer hides have one of the highest and lightest pitches when being drummed.

Playing the drum is an interesting process, “the kids play louder and louder. It lasted about an hour. These things have life cycles—they begin, build in intensity, maintain, and then dissipate and dissolve. (Hart, 1990, p. 238). The vibration of sound in the drum beat resonates in the body and opens up the heart. Some of these hearts have been closed and emotional blockages have resulted from the effects of colonization. Gerald Vignor writes, “there is a ‘spoken feeling’ of the songs found in the Anishinabe woodland people” (1965, p. 138). The beat of the sacred drum changes the emotional state through the ‘spoken feeling’ of an individual in such a way that by singing we begin to be heard and by being heard we are validating our presence as human beings and that we are worthy of being human with a clear strong voice. Sound and singing can therefore be thought by the Native people as a form of healing. It’s time to hear the thunder of the drums to allow healing of the people.

Marie Battiste and James Henderson (2000) write that Aboriginal peoples have experienced a “colonization of our creation, our ecologies, our minds and our spirits” (p.11). Our Elders remind us that the beat of the drum is the ‘the beat of our hearts’ and our beings resonate with this sound, with colour, and the vibration opens us and heals us, it lifts our spirits, our feeling.

The ni’miwug (dancing songs) are always “sung vibrato, with the wavering of voice which would be produced by the motion of the body in dancing. This wavering of the voice is inseparably connected with the song. In some Chippewa songs, there is a tendency toward

uncertainty of intonation. The melodic material is extremely limited and this wavering of the voice may seem to add to the effectiveness of the song. In summarizing the preceding information, we find the songs of the Chippewa to be essentially a musical expression, the form of the words being subordinate to the form of the melody” (Densmore, 1910, p. 19). Musical expression is medicine. The words of the “Elders remind us that each word is spoken in an exercise of power and a use of medicine. Therefore, with our words we can create good medicine. With our words we design our path of life, with the etching of power that lies within the wisdom of the word. Singing is the concentration and magnification of this power. Fortunate is the man or woman who can raise their hand to the mountain and sing with all their being as an expression of joy” (Brown, 2004, p. 6). The vibration of sound in singing is power and good medicine.

Healing

The Midé is central to Native music and the Ojibway (Grand Medicine Society). which is the native religion of the Ojibway. It “teaches that long life is coincident with goodness, and that evil inevitably reacts on the offender. Its chief aim is to secure health and long life to its adherents, and music forms an essential part of every means used to that end” (Densmore, 1910, p. 13).

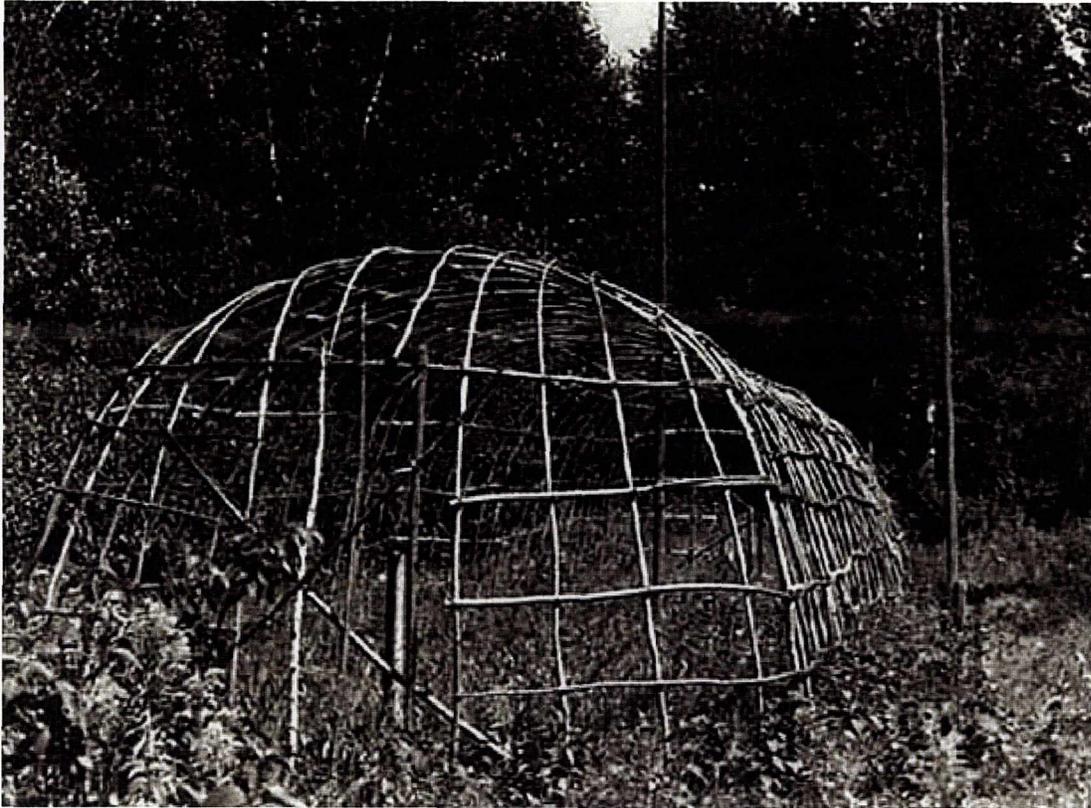


Fig. 6: Framework of lodge used in Chippewa *Midewewin* ceremony at Henry Benner's, Nett Lake. (Photo from Minnesota Historical Society, Nov. 10, 2009).

This photo in Fig. 6 is the framework of a lodge is used Midéwiwin ceremony, a gathering place of the Ojibway. When the Native people gather and play the drum together it creates a sense of harmony. In *Pow Wow Trail* (2000), Dakota, Sioux and Annishinaabe had a lot of fights, the use of the drum signalled unity and peace amongst the people. Antone wanted to get deeper into the culture, and so began to attend Iroquois social drum singing practices. He began to promote healing after learning about the negative impact that residential schools and the Church had on Native people. Antone found “healing in our language. Healing is found in our stories. Healing is found in listening to our Elders. Healing is found in education. Healing is found in our traditional

ceremonies. Healing is found through the drumming, singing and dancing. Healing is found in the traditional foods of our Nations. Healing is our emotional, our mental, our physical and our spiritual aspects—all these bring me back to you” (Antone, G. & Turchetti, L. P. 2002, p.53).

Antone says: “The songs began a new healing for those of us who were learning the depth and strength of the social dances and discovering their power to lift up the spirits of the people who listened to the music and danced at the social gatherings. Her group began to sing at various events in Toronto, and the people seemed to have so much fun because of the prayers and the spiritual impact the songs were having on them” (Antone, G. & Turchetti, L. P. 2002, p. 54).

In Figure 6, the Ojibway gather in the Midé lodge and songs that are sung are seen as prayers. These songs are used as a way to bring in the Manitou (Spirit) to aid in the process of healing.

Many “Midé songs mention sickness, but always with an affirmation that it will be cured by supernatural means” (Densmore, 1913, p. 17). As well as the Midé, “Trance, dance, painted drums and shields were central to early shamanism, as they are to the continuing practice of this art today. For the shaman, the cosmos is personalized. Rocks, plants, trees, bodies of water, two and four-legged creatures, are all animate. The world of the human being and the world of nature and spirit are essentially reflections of each other in the shaman’s view of the cosmos. This special and sacred awareness of the universe is codified in song and chant, poetry and tale, carving and painting” (Dunfrene, 1991, p. 123). Dunfrene explains the mystical side of Shamanism where as Hart writes about Shamanism who is demonstrating a sick person. When the “Shaman shouted for the sick person’s body to arise healed, the body really did rise, and so did the kids in the audience, who all jumped to their feet, their mouths wide open” (Hart, 1990, p. 246,).

In the video *Pow Wow Trail* (2000), “we hear thunder it is clear and we are not acting well—the prayer must be sung in order to heal our self. We sing a prayer song and a healing song...the thunder of the drum comes from the thunder of the universe, a spiritual message, understanding and healing. The thunder can be heard after 500 years in the drum -the drum exists for 500 years it exists the same way. ”

It is a “profound struggle to bring back the culture, the old ways” (Puttkamer, 1994). “The consciousness of peoples in Canada I think is the most important instrument in healing the Earth” (Hersley & Morrieseau, 1997). In *Healing of Nations* they teach the “sacred hoop is not broken, the people have just been pulled away from it...the weapons have been taken from the warriors, the spirits broke because they had no weapons to hunt...without our culture we are dead, without ties to the holy Earth mother we are dead. That is why the young people have nothing to connect to” (Puttkamer, 1994). This disconnection of Native culture causes “suicide, drinking and drugs. Some of the youth want to be dead. We want to reawaken the echoes of chiefs so we can heal the nations....to carry on our great culture and our great ways of life. Many great truths we just have remnants of and the new generation doesn’t know what is real and they need the experience so they know what is real – what we read in books is not real. In spiritual gathering and songs and drumming ceremonies the sacred knowledge is being utilized—it is our responsibility to use it...the people are coming to the native way and they are reconnecting because the bowl of information is being pieced back together...”(Puttkamer, 1994).

Native societies in which “shamans or holy people share the power of their visions include the Iroquois Society of the Mystic Animals, the Midéwin of the Ojibwa and the numerous societies of the Pueblos and Navajos. All of these societies incorporate some aspects of the arts into their

healing and religious ceremonies. In traditional life where religion, medicine and art are intertwined in a unity of purpose, the central principles in healing are: return to the origins; confrontation and manipulation of evil; death and rebirth; and restoration of the universe” (Dunfrene, 1991, p. 123).

These songs are so “beautiful that there is only one object—that the person shall fall unconscious, showing that he is “entirely controlled by the medicine.” When it is desired that a person be energized to some great undertaking the rhythm is irregular but so fascinating in its irregularity that it holds the attention. This is what is always sought—to control over the person” (Densmore, 1910, p. 19). The person is moved and controlled by the spirit through singing and prayer. The songs of the Chippewa are so important that the Chippewa “sing almost continuously for several hours at a time, each song being repeated an indefinite number of times. Here the songs are “usually accompanied by the drum...and the songs connected with the use of medicine producing a benefit and healing to the singers and listeners” (Densmore, 1913, p. 15). In a spiritual belief system, the reiteration of a phrase, song, prayer brings the intention of the song to connect with the soul. Hence the common phrase “as above, so below” or “from the inner to the outer and the outer to the inner”.



Fig. 7: Chippewa Medicine Man Singer with Ceremonial Turtle Clan Drum (Photo from Minnesota Historical Society, Nov. 10, 2009).

Investigation of the source and the use of Chippewa songs lead to the conclusion that most of them are linked, either directly or indirectly, with the inspiration and reliance on supernatural help. The Chippewa Medicine Man seen in Figure 7 uses the drum and song to connect to powerful healing forces. This idea rarely assumes the form of direct address, though one song contains the words ‘be kindly, my Manidó,’ and in some of the Chippewa songs a manidó (spirit) animal or bird is represented as speaking—‘I am a spirit able to become visible, I am a male beaver: and ‘I am about to a light that you may see me” (Densmore, 1913, p. 15). This connection to ‘spirit’ is very important; it can teach us everything we need to understand about the forces of nature and the universe.

Spirit

Creation Story and Sound (Soul and Light)

“How did the Universe begin and how did our Mother Earth come into being, Nokomis (Grandfather)?” Nokomis answered, “Grandson, first there was a void in the Universe. There was nothing to fill this emptiness...but a sound. This sound was like that of a She-she-gwun’ (shaker)” (Benton-Banai, 1988, p. 15). The void that is found sometimes in a human being caused by loss, grief, illness abuse or even addiction can be filled by the power of song, which can be love and connection and therefore healing on many levels. Song can be connection to one’s cultural heritage, to land, to people, to prayer, to creation and to the Creator. Every song holds many notes and these notes resonate with the human body. Every song holds notes that resonate with the human body. The way of the heart in *Pow Wow Trail* (2000) is the Midéwiwin and the dewegun is the drum and the heart. The religion central to that, Midéwiwin, is from the heart beat—Midégun the heartbeat or center from the heart of the creator. We pound the drum to keep the heartbeat—the rhythm of creation is the drum amongst the people. The magic or spirit is the connection to the drum”. Hart says: “Voice of the drum is a spirit thing, which is why the Ojibwa go to elaborate lengths to infuse their drum with the proper voice. There is a spiritual way, which has nothing to do with technique. It is simply to tune oneself to the music” (Hart, 1990, p. 236). In *Pow Wow Trail* (2000), the people believe in the connection to the spiritual and connect through the heart, the beat of the drum. Why do people “cling to the past physical, spirit, mental? They need to cling to something real even though this world is not a real world—the duality of physical and spiritual associated to that is the songs as thanksgiving to spirit and life and connection it is the heartbeat of creation is the heartbeat in the individual.”

The video, *Beat of the drum* says that the Medicine Wheel points to where the spirits enters our world, “original birthplace of which they all came... in unison—all directions north for movement, east and yellow for technology, black for persecution, red and west for vision” (Hersley & Morrieseau, 1997).

Each color found in our Medicine Wheel serves a specific purpose, we use colors in our ceremonies, we use color in our prayers ties, and we use color when we are creative. Colors are doorways through the various worlds. The colors aid us when we sing. Each color vibrates at a different level. Each level of vibration holds a musical note and a musical note corresponds to different parts of the human body and causes either a physical, emotional, spiritual or mind reaction. There is a correlation between color and musical notes. Each color holds different meanings like in the Medicine wheel; color has importance in Ojibway singing and drumming.

As the “four colors converge, the four brothers unite and a new color is formed, a blue green hue, representing the spirit of Mother Earth. The songs merge and a new melody is formed. A new form that will point the way to a new direction, to a new future...”(Hersley & Morrieseau, 1997).

I have met medicine people along my journey that also encompass the use of color, while singing and drumming to heal. The color concept of the medicine wheel has four colors; nature shows us more colors for example, the colors of a rainbow, or the colors of a sunset. When I was about the age of nine, I said to my mom, ‘did you know that the colors in this world are different from the colors in the next world and when we sing, the colors can change?’ There was a spiritual understanding of color and music at a young age. According to Puttkamer, ”spirituality is going back in history and getting in touch with the songs, culture, language and ceremonies”

(1994). In the Native context, it's impossible to separate music from healing as healing comes from spiritual union and music is intrinsically bound to that.

Section Thunderbird:

Linked to Education and Identity

According to Antone (p. 2), the elders tell us that, to be fully developed, one must maintain balance in all four of the areas of the Medicine Wheel. By passing through different stages of life, he realized that something crucial was missing in her life. The main issue that Antone's article raises is realizing that the formal Euro-Western education journey caused a form of suppression "emphasizing physical and intellectual development" whereas the Aboriginal model or Medicine Wheel consisted of four parts: emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual. What was missing was the cultural link of her Native language which she felt would produce a balance in her life. There is a deep "way of life" couched in the native language; by writing down and translating it Antone began to understand the "deep mystery that dwells within the language" (Antone, G. & Turchetti, L. P., 2002, p. 50). The Native language is in the Native songs and music is one way to learn the language and the culture. Ojibway drumming and singing is also a way for Native people who have not been raised in their own culture or on reserve to understand the intimate connection to drumming and song. The songs themselves contain everything a student needs to learn. It will give the student a sense of pride, inclusiveness and identity to sing the native culture that feels most natural to them. Drumming and singing is emotional, mental and the spiritual connection to the medicine wheel. I was extremely excited to learn my first Native song. I sang it over and over again until my tongue decolonized and the words began to flow. My Elders laughed with me as I tried to pronounce the Ojibway words to the song 'Manitou Makwa' (Spirit Bear). It took time, patience

and eventually the content of the words of the song touched my inner and I became alive with Manitou Makwa and my eyes filled with tears and joy! It took me so long to come home, so long to feel connected, so long to take back my voice and my Native spirit...

Music can help us balance. Hart writes: “listen to yourselves, you’re making music with an ‘Ojibway’ drum!...I wanted to give them something larger, the spiritual side of drumming” (Hart, 1990, p. 236).

The physical act of singing and drumming is also in creating a drum. The students made their own drum and were “celebrating themselves. They knew that they had created something that was alive, that had a force of its own, out of nothing but their shared energy” (Hart, 1990, p. 238). The shared energy and personal relationships with traditional Native teachers and Elders where knowledge is passed to the next generation and relationships are made through the creation of a drum.

In the video *Healing of Nations*, “our grandparents didn’t go to school but they taught me everything ...we need to teach each other these things...putting sacred knowledge to work together” (Puttkamer, 1994). The healing struggle to “keep the First Nations students in school....incorporate the culture...the curriculum texts books can be changed to native....not going to be intellectual but now wholistic with ceremony...first time in the Vancouver school board that we are allowed to be Aboriginal people-if we just let the youth do ceremonies they instantly know...”(Puttkamer, 1994). I never grew up with my biological family but the innate Native understanding I have is deep, it comes from spiritual place at a cellular level. I can feel it in my blood. Our Native ceremonies have given our people a chance to reconnect to the culture. I have a natural curiosity, love and understanding of nature, the rocks, the plants, the animals, humans, ancestors and interconnections between these life forces. We are the ‘tree of life’ which

connects us to the whole and these interactions and spiritual relations are the most important part of life and growth in all the worlds.

We are “relearning our past and I have learned so much about my ancestors” (*Drum Lake*, n.d.). Also in the *Drum Lake*, (n.d.) video, reconnection to the Native culture gives the people a sense of place and identity. Cultural education strengthens an individual to know where one has come from and to know one still belongs. These bridges of acceptance place roots in our natural understanding of our land, the life forces, ancestors, and our families.

In a recent analysis of current curriculum research, Dr. Lee Brown states that from a Native wholistic worldview, a balanced education would incorporate mental, physical, emotional and spiritual education (Brown, 2004). If we apply Dr. Brown’s findings to public education, a preliminary assessment would suggest an education system devoid of Native spiritual teachings. These Spiritual teachings are contained in Native drumming and song and necessary for the public education system. In traditional education, we are taught to sing to the fish so that they come to swim in our rivers, they hear us, they come and they bless our families with food. In turn, we take care of the water, the land and the air for these forces sustains all life. When we sing for a child who has found her way home, we sing to reconnect to each other so that we rejoice in becoming whole and we have waited a long time to come home. We sing to lift our spirits when life has been hard and to thank the Creator for keeping our secrets alive as we pass them to our children through drumming and song. No stronger is an education than the connection between each other as knowledge is passed from Elder to child and child to Elder. We gain speed in our recovery from legacy of residential school, stolen land, stolen children and fallen warriors who fought for our freedom and peace. We sing to honour our mothers and father

seven generations ago of ancestors who still whisper in our ears, our songs, their love and our connection. We are open channels of hope and a gentle future, so we can continue to carry our drums and we sing our knowledge on our way home.

The Midéwiwin drumming and song are still widely embraced and sung as forms of healing and many songs are socially used. The social songs are songs that are sung in public. When Native songs are used, the vibration of the song resonates within the singer and/or drummer and offers Native students a connection to the culture. The context of the song connects the singer specifically to the culture, land and people from whence this song came from. If the song is Ojibway, then the content exclusively is Ojibway rich in ‘spoken feeling’ of the land, and its people. This is especially important to the Native students who still lack roots in their own culture. This reconnection to culture for many Native people is extremely important for their personal development. The lack of roots gives the Native student the sense that something is missing in their being. This reconnection to culture through singing and drumming diminishes the disconnection to culture seven generations down the ancestral line, which is an extremely important method of healing our Native people. “For Ojibwe People, making a decision with an eye on seven generations ahead means more than just making a long-term decision. It means taking into consideration the lives of seven generations of children. According to Ojibwe tradition, thinking seven generations ahead means that your decisions are not selfish and rash. It means that your decisions take into consideration the circle of life. Although it is not always possible to plan so far in advance, it’s important to hold seven generations as an ideal” (7 Generations, 2008). One of the keys to Native success in education is to break this continuous fragmented spirit due to colonization of our Native people and stop it from spiralling further down our generations. We stop this by developing curriculum that includes traditional values,

song, teachings, ceremonies and arts, weaving them back into the education system, in order to allow the evolution of a healthy wholistic education system.

It is said that the “ancient rock writing was the scribbling of the little people, or the writing of visitors from other countries—even from other planets—and that the drawings were recorded dreams of ancient healers-in-training. Ancient healers used drumming and song to heal. Antone had a ‘new way of seeing’ and because Western educators were raised under the influence of written traditions, it is often hard for them to think in mythical ways like dreaming or ‘picture words” (Antone, G. & Turchetti, L. P., 2002, p. 56).

Perfect images limit our potential for creative seeing, and so wherever poems, sculptures, songs, paintings, dances, or stories are “told, the ‘speaker’ cannot separate ‘words’ from the Aboriginality of spirit that touches and moves the ‘listener’ from the heart. Because of this, myths and poetry created with the ancient words serve as an interdisciplinary, intercultural way of teaching, and so the spoken and ‘written’ depend on each other. This is evident in the central role of the creative arts in Native education”(Antone, G. & Turchetti, L. P., 2002, p. 57).

In *Shared Learnings* (1998), BC’s Aboriginal Education Initiative, has many ideas on Native education. For example they have a ‘Drum Making’ video for grades 7-10 (p. 188). More and more public and private education is embracing the Native culture. I worked at Whytecliffe independent school in Burnaby BC and hired as an Aboriginal Teacher-Coordinator. I had the honour of connecting and bridging with our Aboriginal community. Many people recommended Elders and educators to teach, engage and pass down traditional Native education to our students. Our Elders and educators were invited in from all directions of BC’s lower mainland. We had Elders participating with our students in the making of drums and singing. We began “a drum

making activity that took students through the entire process from curing the bison skin, to stretching and making a drum, to performing a song using the drum” (Cassidy & Marsden, 2009, p. 6). For all of them, it was the first time making a drum. Our youth shone and prospered after learning about their personal heritage and culture. Many of them fell in love with their own culture. Their Aboriginal identity flourished, some of their grades began to go up, their attendance increased and their self-confidence grew while experiencing traditional education. Many of them made it a point to attend school on the days that we had something ‘Native’ going on. I hope to see the school systems continue to increase the use of traditional educators and our Elders.

Conclusion

The main hope for the Native people is to continue the journey of identity and reignite the cultural self-direction and knowledge of identity to heal the scars left behind from colonization through a spiritual awakening. A path of “lightening” the soul sorrows of the past through song and drumming, through culture and compassion, through stories, gifts, receiving and ceremony is needed. We must aim to light the fire again in the heart to burn away the impurities of the past and the legacy of trauma, to support, love and lift each other out of despair, alcoholism, drugs, abuse and survival. This becomes possible when we create a sound spiritual base that turns the Medicine Wheel into a life of balance, to heal the soul from fragmentation. More research is needed to understand how the body reacts to sound, and spiritual connection. It has deepened my knowledge and understanding of how our Native songs can connect one to culture, community, healing and self. I have found very little literature on Native sound, vibration, healing, drumming

and song. Some of the articles advance the idea of healing through continuing to practice Native culture such as; Antone, G. & Turchetti, L. P. (2002) "The Way of the Drum: When Earth Becomes Heart" and Pow Wow Trail: Episode 1, The Drum (2004). The theme of healing through drumming and singing as part of ceremony to reconnect to the 'Mother' or the drum is a constant suggestion in all the literature reviewed for my project.

Traditional Native spiritual practices are still relevant to contemporary Native culture.

Traditional training is used to strengthen the qualities of Indigenous people, and is evident in Native society. This society is known as a centre and a vehicle which transmits spiritual and cultural beliefs of the Native people to all nations. It promotes healing through culture, drumming and song. It also preserves the cultural integrity of the people and their individual healing life journeys. In the Midéwiwin, one of the main threads is to continue passing on Ojibway traditional drumming and its traditional songs. I am personally interested in the social songs that are drummed from the Midé because of my own Ojibway heritage. I was honoured to learn songs from my own Ojibway heritage during this literature review. It took me almost 40 years to learn one song.

The Native peoples have preserved the traditions and continue training in and maintaining culture. The people have preserved ceremonies as a way of addressing the conflicts and continuous challenges that Native people face. The ceremonies used drumming and singing to preserve the culture, heal, and support the people, through natural and organic processes. Always included are the use of songs, stories, teachings and drumming. Our Native practices are based upon a self-discipline, experiential learning and reflexive practice. It is proven in the sample of

literature reviewed for this project that the connection between sound, vibration, Spirit, drumming and singing is indeed healing our people.

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