Beyond the Role of Drum and Song in Schools: A Storied Approach

by
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Abstract

My research reflects on the use of drum and song in schools and reveals its significance from an Anishnaabe kwe perspective. A storied approach is used relative to Anishnaabe ways of being and knowing as 'teachers' in two forms: debaajimowin (narratives) and antasokannan (tradition or sacred). Stories are a functioning part of both the framework and methodology to present a new and evolving story that is relevant to formal schooling. In addition to inquiring into Anishnaabe stories, Elders teachings, and archival records, autobiographical experiences shaped this inquiry. The analysis was guided by Anishnaabe perspectives, as well as several key questions asked by Justice Sinclair (2014), questions that link identity and culture. Key recommendations in relation to integrating song and drum in relation to formal schooling point to the necessity to be grounded in community and cultural ways of being and knowing.

Preface

This dissertation is an original work of Anna-Leah King. Given the autobiographical and archival nature of the research no ethics permit was necessary. Following aboriginal protocols the close work alongside elders guided the inquiry and writing of this dissertation.

Dedication

To my ancestors before me and the children yet to come.

Acknowledgment

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Vera Caine and Dr. Florence Glanfield for their commitment of work and weekly meetings towards this. Dr. Stan Wilson's guidance was significant and shaped my work in important ways. Dr. Paula Sherman's and Dr. Jose de Costa's contributions as examiners helped me see the importance of my work – thank you!

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The importance of language is visible in my dissertation and most significant to me. I would like to thank the people of my community for their patience in teaching me our language. Many people in my community are close to me – I value your teachings and friendships!

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The seventh prophecy that came to the people long ago said to be different from the other prophets. He was young and had a strange light in his eyes. He said,

> In the time of the Seventh Fire New People will emerge. They will retrace their steps to find what was left by the trail. Their steps will take them to the Elders who they will ask to guide them on their journey. But many of the Elders will have fallen asleep. They will awaken to this new time with nothing to offer. Some of the Elders will be silent because no one will ask anything of them. The New People will have to be careful in how they approach the Elders. The task of the New People will not be easy.
>
> If the New People will remain strong in their quest the Water Drum of the Midewiwin Lodge will again sound its voice. There will be a rebirth of the Anishinabe Nation and a rekindling of old flames. The Sacred Fire will again be lit. (Benton, 1988, pp. 91–92)

A story has no beginning and no end; it is cyclical and echoes the ebb and flow of the cycle of life itself. A person can come in anytime and leave at any time becoming part of a story and include their experiences. In this way experience of the present and new stories are told and lived alongside a backdrop of traditional teaching stories. Language and culture and story are always evolving, much like we are as a people. Over the past few years I have often wondered how well I make use of the English language to communicate traditional thoughts. How do I, and how do others, transmit teachings and our own evolvement and growth? I wonder if others can understand my ways of communicating. Thinking with the words of Audre Lords (1984), I wonder how I can challenge dominant stories, I think about her words: “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house.” In this research, I tell a personal journey as well as sharing

the literature; it is a storied way to understand experience. The story reflects my personal experiences and those of my parents that rest in my heart as a part of me. It is a story about schooling and its potential to be so much better for Anishnaabe people and all First Nations people. It is about healing and its relevance and importance to First Nations people. In my work I reflect on my experiences with the drum and songs and its medicine as an avenue for further exploration. Some parts are scary like the Wetigo that eats human flesh in the experiences of the children who attended residential school. Some parts are sad as the experiences of these children combating the Wetigo and their experiences of hurt and loss. Mostly however, my experiences reflect hope, and are an attempt to write the future as positive. Our people say that when the pale face came, they laid claim to the lands, and made their mark. They made great efforts to conquer our spirit as a people. In this, they did not succeed. We are still here; our languages, our traditions, our belief in a brighter future for our children. At other times and perhaps more and more often, I remind myself that I can erase, awaken, and rejuvenate all that is beautiful. It is a story I can tell, a story I can write, a story that speaks of my experiences of happiness and great hope. It is time to tell a new story, a very pleasing one of promise and new hope to honour my mother's namesake "Pitawanakwat", meaning between the clouds or coming cloud; to show great hope and promise for our people, the Anishnaabe. It is time to redefine, realign, and reassign my experiences – a way to tell a story through my experiences for future generations. From the Anishnaabe prophecies it was foretold that there would be some dark passages of time and great difficulties to overcome. As Anishnaabe people we can get past this. We can move forward from here.

Dibaajimowinan (As the story goes . . .)

There are two kinds of story my people the Anishnaabeg tell. One is called antasokannan meaning traditional or sacred story. The second, termed dibaajimowin is narrative or personal story. Both are of value and are used for teaching or transferring information. In this research I draw from traditional story or dibaajimowin as well as antasokannan to speak my own and the Elders stories – dibaajimowin. I attempt to take part in composing a vision of Anishnaabeg education for our future generations specifically with regard to drum and song.

Gleaning from Borrows (2013) in *Centering Anishnaabe Studies* there are antasokannan (traditional stories) told by Anishnabeg writers wherein,

> the readers [. . .] will learn why Anishnaabeg stories have the potential to transform how we relate to the world; they will more clearly understand our place within our Anishnaabe-akiing. (p. xiii)

Borrows (2013) shares the first traditional story of Nanabozhooo and the Flood Part 2. Nanaboozhoo and his friends fall through a hole in the sky and land on a turtle floating on a vast sludge-like sea.

> The fish didn't' think it was water. Nanboozhoo said ". . . there might be something below all this mess." He asked his friends if anyone wanted to dive in. Lynx looked at fish, who then looked at bear who shrugged his shoulders. Nanaboozhoo continued, ". . . there will be all sorts of stories as roots, relationships, revelations, resiliency, resistance, reclamation and reflection."
>
> Bear intoned, ". . . Anishnaabe stories are roots; they are both the origins and the imaginings of what it means to be a participant in an ever-changing and vibrant culture in

> humanity . . . stories can serve as a foundation and a framework for the field of Anishnaabeg Studies, providing both a methodological and theoretical approach to our scholarship." (pp. xi, xii)

Nanaboozhoo sat down amidst the papers and looked at Bear, Lynx, and Fish huddled together just as they had been when he met them in the forest above. They shared with one another as Nanboozhoo heard Bear say,

> Now this is what it means to centre Anishnaabeg Studies. When the world is covered with our knowledge, we will again find our roots, build healthy relationships, receive new revelations, meet our tests with resilience, effectively resist those who seek to oppress us, reclaim our presence within creation, and reflect our dynamic cultures with all humanity. (p. xiii)

Anishnaabe stories are told for the purpose of teaching. A listener or reader is meant to decipher its meaning and engage in interpretive truth. Truth, "tebwewin", a way of seeking what is really happening is a method for this research. To understand more deeply "What is the significance of song and drum in schools?" is to research its history and know that its roots are grounded deeply in the culture of Anishnaabe ceremony. The drum and song stem from traditions in various cultures and in bringing this history and archival record forward enriches the learning experience in schools.

Story is a gift; just as song and drum are gifts to the singers. Elders use song as a way to tell a story or to teach. At other times key words are used in song as guides toward ritual order in ceremony. Song is the language of the soul and the drums thunder magnifies songs, enhancing the echo of the universe and the heartbeat of the earth.

In writing this academic story I reflect on Elders teachings and the place of drum and song in the community. I keep in mind what the old man said:

> The drum and song goes with any gathering. The drum followed by song opens the ceremony and alerts people that it's time to listen. The song is followed by prayer, followed by story and back to song again. It is one long continuance of telling interjected with drum and song. (Wandering Spirit, personal communication)

In this chapter I describe my background as an Anishnaabe kwe, where I am from in a geographical sense and my blood line: essentially who I am relative to this research. I share a few of the pertinent prophecies relative to my personal story and this research. I share an aspect of learning and teaching with my mom in light of the effects of the residential schooling process, as a way to make visible my experiences. I share the impact residential schooling has had on language. I conclude with the prophecy of the Seventh Fire that prompts the vision toward language and cultural rejuvenation for the Anishnaabeg and my place in it as a teacher.

Ode to Ngashi and Nokomisaag. Ngashi, my mother, is Potawatomi. We would say Boodewaadamii, meaning Carriers of the Fire. This phrase relates to the Sacred Migrations (Benton-Benai, 1988) or as Simpson (2011) would call it - the Great Migration of the Anishnaabe people. These migrations were prophesized long ago before the arrival of Colonial settlers. The island where we come from is one of the resting places foretold during the journey. The initial inhabitants were the People of the Three Fires, namely the Ojibwa, Odawa and Potawatomi, all of whom speak Anishnaabe. This alliance was formed as settler encroachment forced people to move from their traditional territories. The names assigned to the three different

groups were relative to their role in the community. The Ojibwa were the hunters. The Odawa were the Traders and the Potawatomi were the "Carriers of the Fire".

There were seven fire prophecies that I have learned about from different Anishnaabek. I share one with you here that is relevant to this story and another further into the work in its place of relevance. The Great Migration was the first prophecy. There would be the arrival of a pale faced people and my ancestors were warned they must journey. They lived along the shores of the eastern ocean in the upper Michigan and Minnesota areas. At that time the St. Lawrence River, as it is called today, was much wider and contained sea water. The communities were huge and went for as far as the eye could see. The people thrived with bountiful waters and forests of game. Everyone had their role, food was plentiful and life was good.

One day, a warning was sent out to the community that they would have to journey. The coming of the pale face meant danger for the people. Like with any prophet or seer, some took heed and prepared to journey. Some chose to remain where they were. Life was so good and they could not fathom why they should move. And so, the journeying began. Westward, under the now Great Lakes until the megis shell revealed itself to the leaders to tell of which direction to follow or what would be a safe resting place. There were three islands that were revealed to be safe resting places – Machilimakinac, Bowating, and Nido Minissing or Manitoulin Island, the island of my family home. As safe places were revealed, some of the people stayed while the others continued the journey. The people who came in first contact with the pale face were the ones who chose not to journey and they were wiped out by disease.

One significant task for the people was to keep the coals of the sacred fire burning throughout the journey. The fire carriers, Ishkodewatimi, succeeded with their task very well.

They managed to keep the remaining coals of the fire burning and at each resting place reignited the sacred fire. It was the belief of the people that as long as the coals of the sacred fire kept burning, the people would continue but if they were to go out, like the fire, the people would be extinguished too. The term ishkodewatimii is similar to boodewaadamii and is used interchangeably. The word bode is to stoke the fire. Boodewaadamii later became Potawotimi. The migrations along the Great Lakes, to island settlements and then westward to now Manitoba were marked to record each moon, and each year that past. The Anishnaabe travelled further west to settle in the Q'Apelle Valley of Saskatchewan, the mountains of Alberta and then a small island in British Columbia and various places in the states. The journeying took place over a 500-year period and in this time the fire never went out. The Potawotimi, the carriers of the fire, are believed to have kept the people safe in this journey and we are here today because they kept the fire lit.

I share this story because the sacred telling is about our traditional fire, our ceremonial fire as our life-blood and identity as a people. I shared this story as an introduction to my research because it is this bold determination against adversities such as starvation, slaughter, relocation, disease and genocidal practice that we survived. In one of my classes, I shared this story and the significance of what had taken place struck me only then and that the Potawotimi were ngashi - my mother's people and therefore mine.

Reflections of the story told. When I spoke on the phone with my ngashi (my mother) the next time, I shared this story with her. I asked first if she was familiar with it and if she would like to hear it. I asked this, because my mom went to residential school. As I began to tell her

the story, I could tell she was really listening. She had not heard the story before. A million thoughts were running through my head, thoughts such as:

Am I my mother's teacher?

Am I really teaching something she has never heard?[1]

I could tell she was listening by her complete silence. I held my tears back with every effort, as the thunder of this realization shook me to the core. I was so taken for her. How could she have missed out on such a beautiful teaching that defined her namesake as a people? Potawotimi, the carriers of the fire, guardian of the sacred fire, was to ensure that the people go on. What a remarkable lineage that my mother was only now learning. As I reflect on the significance of this moment, I need to remind myself that my mother's learning involved being separated from her family at a very young age. My mother was placed in residential school. It was an important moment for me; a moment where I wanted to cry in tears for what was lost, but at the same time I wanted to celebrate that this knowledge was being restored. I found it profoundly healing to be the next generation who does know some of the stories. After I finished the story, I was quiet. I waited for any response from my mother. There was a moment of silence and I said gently "these are your people ngashi". "oh, yes, I guess so," she responded.

Together learning and teaching. As I learned more about the stories of my mother and my people, I began to share everything with my mother. I wanted to give her a chance to see what she would like to learn more about. I did not know everything, as I was learning too. Yet, this learning, was better when my mom was with me. I noticed as I travelled with my mom, young men gravitated to her, eager to establish a relationship so that maybe they could learn

[1] The use of italics indicates either personal stories or larger film excerpts.

from her. My Ngashi is a fluent language speaker and I believe this was why the young men wanted to spend time with her and they would view her as an Elder. As an educator, I could see the value of my mother in the eyes of these young men. My mother, like others, may have gone to residential school, but they still knew so much, especially if they had retained their language. Many people, like my Ngashi, came out of residential school still speaking the language. Many of my relatives spent their whole life working to give back that life blood to the people. This was their way to reclaim what was always theirs. When I became a teacher, I always thought the classroom was the best place to introduce language, culture and teachings. The students were present and learning about themselves and their own history would be interesting to them. I know it was interesting and important to me.

Residential school has affected many First Nations people and I have often wondered if it is my generation, who would return to believe culture and language to be so important. I learned its importance as I lived alongside my parents. Although I grew up among language speakers in my family and extended family my mom and dad made a conscious choice not to teach us our Anishnaabe language. My father, being a teacher, could see how students struggled in school when they came in as fluent speakers of their language. I wonder if this brought back memories of his residential school experience. I cannot help but feel this decision was a result of the impact of the 'imperial brainwashing' (Battiste & Henderson, 1990), or what is also referred to as 'cognitive imperialism' (Battiste & Henderson, 2000) he experienced in residential schooling. My father did not encourage us to speak Anishnaabe and he remains content with this even today. Many times my mother lamented over the fact that we did not know our language especially when she wanted to transmit something in Anishnaabe. At other times, our language

became beneficial when we were in the milieu of non-native people and my mom wanted to share information that others should not hear. It was in these moments, that I realized how much our language means to us; it was part of our relationships.

At a much younger age, I often felt to blame in not knowing my language and it is not until I was an adult that I realized that it was not my fault. I did not make the conscious decision to speak only English. My father wanted us to succeed in school and this was the sacrifice they made together as parents. Today I wonder about the consequences of this early decision. I carried this guilt for a long time, particularly when my grandmother (on my mom's side) would shame me for not understanding or speaking Anishnaabe. She was particularly incensed when I left one summer to study French in Quebec. I'll never forget her words that day. "You should be learning how to use those quills and learning to make quill boxes like your auntie. I don't know why you would go and learn some foreigner's language?!" I felt ashamed. In self-defense I exclaimed that if they would teach our language at the university, I would be the first to sign up and that I would rather learn my own language then the 'foreigner's' language. It was my parent's decision to speak English in our home, yet, we had to answer to our grandparents' frustration over and over.

Over time, I developed the courage to ask my parents why they did not teach us to speak Anishnaabe. Not all was lost as I did pick up some of the language in my childhood. Later I learned to say "kinomoshin gesha nishnaabemineyah" which says teach me. Asking my parents, grandparents and relatives to teach me, did help me to develop some capacity in our language. As my nokum - grandmother (on my dad's side) grew older, she would no longer make the effort

to speak English. I was fortunate that I could still understand her and could communicate with her to some extent; how fortunate that I had learned some of our language.

I surprised myself with my grandmother and she began to tell me stories in our language rather than in English. I would pull out words I recognized and the bit of English mixed in for things that would not "Ojibwicize" and I would do my best to follow her story. I did not have the heart to say to her that I do not understand as I could not face her disappointment. I knew it was important for my grandmother to speak our language. As my grandmother aged, I wondered if she thought that I understood by now and she would no longer need to speak English to me.

Over the years, there were others with whom I would speak our language. I remember the time when I took Bowser, my Saulteaux friend and traditional teacher for dinner. I was trying to figure out what he could eat, particularly as he was looking for healthier food from a food court. There was a Swiss Chalet. I asked him if he wanted "Kiindish bekakwe, pahnnise, mandamin, minna bishishabo - chicken, potatoes, corn and tea". He lit up when he understood me and agreed in the language grinning from ear to ear. I remember how important that moment was for me. He was so pleased to hear me speak. When I returned with the food, "wiisinin!" "let's eat" he said.

Residential School Effect on Language

I have witnessed that some people came out of residential school and have totally adapted to Christian values and customs. Others were opposed to what they had learned there with regard to religion, because of their negative treatment by the nuns and priests who were in charge. Other people hid their children away from authorities and they kept them back from school, few children were lucky enough not to attend residential schools. These children later in

life worked with their people to preserve their culture. As I reflect on my own families' experience I can hardly imagine how difficult this time must have been. One Auntie on my mom's side went to residential school and does not speak our language. She says she cannot because she was so young when she went in. I have heard testimonies of people who feel due to the beatings they either experienced or witnessed they had little to no recall of their language.

This brings me to the seventh fire prophecy that foretells the Anishnaabe will retrace their journey of the Great Migration to find the bundles that were hidden along the trail and in this search the language, songs and ceremonies will be restored. The belief, told through the seventh fire prophesy, is that the people would rise up, the Elders who had 'fallen asleep' in a figurative sense would be awakened by questions of the youth, and the culture would slowly be rejuvenated and our language would be revived. The Elders tell us we are now in the time of this prophecies fulfillment. I am aware of ceremonies returning to people and efforts being made to rejuvenate the language and the sharing of our knowledge.

My mom is one of those Elders wherein no-one had asked the right questions for a long time. There was seemingly no need for it as this old language and knowledge imbued within it had no real purpose as we struggled to submit to the Canadian ideal. Inherent in the language are all the cultural teachings and understandings that may be lost if they are not brought forward for the next generations. This is the challenge of my generation to work towards language and cultural preservation and restoration so that the people and their knowledge will live on.

Chapter 2: Turning Towards the Drum

In this chapter I share some of my experiences as a teacher of drum and song in schools. Working alongside Elders I came to realize that knowing where I am from, my lineage and our history as Anishnaabeg of Niido Minissing – Manitoulin Island, was good, but there was so much more to learn. While teaching at an all Aboriginal high school in a prairie city I became aware of the need for healing, the belief in the old ways of the Elders and their way of ceremony. It is here that I began my personal journey as a seeker. I would define "seeker" as one who questions their place and meaning in the world by turning to ancestry, cultural inheritance and one's personal relationship to the Great Mystery – Gitche Manitou. During this time I was always referencing the teachings of men and raising questions about the roles of women.

In this journey of seeking, I have acquired many songs by diverse means. I share these stories of song acquisition. There are different ways to learn songs. I started with powwow songs that are readily available through Sweetgrass Records recording company. Through a premonitory dream I had a vision of a ceremony of song that later became the precursor to being given two 'spirit songs'. I learned from my Elder and teacher the traditional way to learn songs is to hear them and sing them – no recording. I gathered with women who liked to sing and exchanged various songs. I also joined the sweat of two female Elders and soon learned their sweat songs. Over a 15-year period I learned songs from across the country in every genre.

When meeting the challenges of the Western institution I am faced with making awkward decisions to meet the institutions needs and come to understand the compromises we face in sharing our ways; and in sharing the knowledge I have been given. To share songs with people is one thing but to answer to its demands such as recording and testing is quite another. These

goals are incongruent with traditional teachings and learnings. It is often the demand of the institution that we produce - this is not without compromise each time on our part. For example at one time at the university a Round Dance was requested and held without the ceremonial fire. This discouraged a number of people from participating. Through this experience of navigating with the academy I learned that I do not want to intentionally compromise traditions or ways of being that are integral to song and drum.

Yet, there are also other challenges we face. Again the impact of residential schooling is a significant factor in the lives of Anishnaabeg and the need for healing is well documented and established. I introduce Bowser and his wife Maggie as my relatives who worked with me on my teaching path and my own healing journey of seeking minobimawdiziwin – the way of a good life. It is in light of the need for healing that I formulate my research question; "what is the relationship between drum and song and what are the implications for education?" It is the heartbeat echo of this drum that gives us life and our songs that accompany it. Traditional teachings are still with us and as an Anishnaabe kwe teacher I have always believed it is my place to see to our cultural continuance.

The Drum in Schools

As a teacher, I always thought it was my job to teach from a cultural perspective. I was placed in an all Aboriginal school where Elders were present. And so, a more sophisticated learning experience began for me alongside the students, as the teachings from Elders were rich and meaningful and raised new questions for me. More questions came and I began my personal journey as a seeker. Over time, I increasingly paid attention to Elders teachings and tried to

understand them. I was always inquiring into protocol as a woman, as a teacher or participant in ceremony and as a singer.

I had predominantly Cree students in my classroom, but there were Salteaux – our relatives, Dine and Dakota students in my classes as well. I believe, as educators, we go back to cultural understandings that we have of the prophecies and the knowledge and wisdom from our Elders and introduce them into the classroom. I believe it is my responsibility to do so.

The drum and songs have always been a part of each school I worked and part of my teachings. The schools also had dance troupes. Dance, drum and song are a part of culture for all First Nations people. Introducing these aspects of our culture in classrooms is to make at least a part of culture available and accessible to students. Although Powwows are more contemporary, the roots of powwows in terms of drum, song and dance stem from traditional culture. Powwows still work to affirm our identity and validate who we are as First Nations people. Powwows include ceremonial components, such as the sacred fire, smudge, ceremonial dance, the pipe and feast, carrying in the eagle staff, processing in circular formation and honour songs and closing ceremonies to rest the flags. There is much more ritual and protocol that has developed and been adapted over the years. In song, dance and drum, the recognition of our voice and dance and the continuance of culture plays out. In a sense, we are fulfilling the prophecies. The rattle still continues, the songs of the ancestors come forward and the sacred fire has not gone out. Against many adversities, the people go on and the resounding drum is even stronger.

A Dream

Before I moved to Edmonton in 2006 I lived in Saskatoon. While still in Saskatoon, I had had one of those dreams that I remembered clearly in the morning. It did not really make sense so I shared it with my daughter. "I dreamed the drums were behind us". The drum is usually at the centre in ceremonies and round dances that I had gone too. I could still hear the songs of my dream but found the positioning of the drum odd. I eventually forgot about the dream, until one weekend when we were invited to help tie down the fasters at a fasting camp in Saddle Lake. My friend really wanted Tanis, my daughter, and I to come. She wanted us to help with the singing. I agreed and we travelled the distance from Saskatoon to Saddle Lake. When we arrived we had time to greet people and visit with the Elders. Finally, it was time to go out to the fasting grounds through the bush beyond the yard. The women were at the base of a hill, and they camped in this small cluster of trees. We all pitched in to secure the fasters for the night. Once they were all secured, we gathered in a small group to sing. I wasn't really sure what the songs were but we were going to sing.

The women gathered and began singing. We were not long into the first song when I heard this whirring noise coming from the top of the hill behind us. I turned to see what it was. A truck had pulled up and in the back were all these fellows. They jumped out and started walking down the hill. They lined up behind us and joined in our singing including hand drums. In a flash my dream came back to me when it struck me that the singers were lined up behind us. I leaned into my daughter and whispered, "Tan we're in the dream". Even though I was not familiar with most people there, with the exception of a couple friends, I felt there must be something here for me. I felt even more elated with the singing then I usually do. After that we

headed back to our motel for the night. The next day we would join the sweat. It is during this fasting camp where I met the late Joe Cardinal whom I later learned, worked with many Elders and teachers in Edmonton that still make reference to him. I also met Elder Francis Whiskeyjack during my time in Saddle Lake, who is a cultural teacher at Amiskwaciy high school. He had these beautiful songs he would share with the students.

I was fortunate to attend the "Knowing Our Spirits 2012" conference where I participated in a session on song that was offered by Leo and Priscilla Mc Gillvery. There had been a major snow fall the night before so getting to the conference site took a lot longer. I was late by at least 15 minutes so I was anxious to find my session. I was really hoping they had not started yet. When I got there, everyone was sitting quietly waiting for them to start. I was so grateful. They had a brief round of introductions. Everyone was there to sing and to learn a new song. Leo and Priscilla spent time introducing their work and the songs they were going to give us. The first song was the Grandmother Song – notego. I think Leo and Priscilla were surprised when I could sing it. The next song was "keesikooskew" or Spirit women song. I too was very familiar with this song, as I had heard Francis sing this with the high school students. I was elated as I was familiar with these songs having heard them before. I have always wanted to learn them and now was my opportunity.

On the second round of our sharing circle, one of the women broke down in tears. Leo and his wife Priscilla covered her in a blanket and asked us to continue singing with him. They engaged in a healing ceremony. I am not sure what all transpired as I always close my eyes when I sing, which allows me to really hear. Once we had sung several rounds we were invited to share any final thoughts.

When it came to my turn, I told them where I was from and how I always wanted to learn those two songs. They smiled at this. I continued and said I wanted to share a story. I informed them that I do not normally share my dreams but that day I felt compelled to. I began talking about my *odd* dream and also told about my visit to Saddle Lake to tie down the fasters. When I explained the terrain and the truck pulling up behind us, Priscilla glanced at her husband. They exchanged glances and smiled at me. I knew then that they had been there. When I finished I thanked them. Priscilla spoke first, and said "I just got the shivers from your story". Then Leo interjected and said, "I was in that truck!" Priscilla would have been the lead singer. We smiled at each other for a while, knowing that we were supposed to meet. I thanked them again for the songs. If there is such a thing as going full-circle with a dream, I would say this was it. And I would conclude it was about acquiring two beautiful and powerful spirit songs.

In the workshop, Priscilla had told us that she worked as a counselor and that she gave healing workshops. She worked with Leo who would assist her and share his songs. Leo shared with us that the songs came to him in a vision he had had in a sweat. I cannot share his story here, because he said he never has shared his story about coming to songs before. Priscilla and Leo referred to them as spirit given songs by the nature by which they were given and they know they are to share them. They feel they are healing to the people. In working with children, they noticed how the songs attracted the attention of young children. In fact Priscilla said she had given a CD to a pre-school student once. She suggested he bring it to school and ask his teacher to play it on her CD player. He did just that. What she found out later is that he and other children asked their teacher to play it every day for a long time. The children could not get enough of the songs.

Leo made reference to Dr. Perry who works with traumatized children. When I heard this reference my heart skipped a beat. Dr. Perry is a clinical psychologist whose work I have been studying. I attended Dr. Perry's seminar when he was invited to present in Edmonton. Priscilla and Leo went on to say that Dr. Perry supports their work in healing with the drum and songs. I was so happy to hear of this support of their work by a psychologist who tried things out of the ordinary in his own field. Dr. Perry would refer to rhythm and relationality as the most important connections for traumatized children to make; a connection that was necessary for healing (Perry, 2006). I realized through Leo and Priscilla's work, which included drum and song, that it can be done. It reaffirmed for me that I am pursing something meaningful. This understanding that there is a healing component to drum and song is important.

I left the session with Priscilla and Leo extremely satisfied, having been gifted two exceptional and beautiful songs. I was richer than before. I came in as if entering by a spirit doorway to the knowledge that began in dream. I came through learning two ceremonial songs and left with this gift of song.

I felt Dr. Perry's work was affirmed by the work of Priscilla and Leo. I may have dreamed these people before I met them and I certainly can say the circumstance of my dream echoed the songs of the fasting camp singers gathering in alignment with the song and drummers. In my quest for knowledge of understanding sacred songs, I knew I was at home here. Coming to song in my experience is a spiritual gift that I have become increasingly aware of through fasting and ceremony.

Coming to song: A personal story. I received my first drum as a gift in a 'give away' ceremony at my sister's wedding. It was made by my new brother in law. He had thought about

who he would make a drum for and prayed on it. When he learned that I was a teacher of First Nations children, he knew immediately that the drum had to be for me. I learned of all of this later, after my sister knew I was grateful for this gift. When I was first presented the drum, I was awe struck by its cultural significance. I had no songs. I could not remember ever hearing traditional songs in my family. The only drum singers I knew about were the Wikwemikong drum group who sang at our powwows. I was humbled in receiving this drum when I had no voice for it. I knew this drum was a wonderful sign of things to come. It birthed my journey of coming to song. I knew if I wanted to have songs for my drum it would be a learning process. I would have to do more than search to engage in this process; I would have to connect with singers, Elders and cultural teachers.

The first songs I learned were powwow songs and I worked with singers in schools. My first teaching assignment was a 'cultural arts' class which included dance, drum and song. We had an Elder from Yellowquill, Bowser Poochay, come to our high school once a week to sing with the students. The Elder and I always greeted each other with a smile, but never really spoke. I will introduce Bowser in more detail later. I also learned songs from the cultural resource teacher. These were predominantly powwow songs. Some songs were composed of simple word songs to teach children Cree language. I wondered about the songs origins, who has the songs, and how do they come to them. I knew that in families the songs are shared and passed down to the younger family members. Since I was eager to learn songs, I wanted to know the protocol for attaining songs. I had many traditional friends and this was easy enough to learn. It was easiest to learn someone's songs when they would share them. I went to different

singing circles with women who liked to sing; sometimes I would meet once a week. In the meantime, my Elder at the school was always teaching me.

These songs shared among the women were more social songs. I can learn them and teach them or pass them on. Sometimes I have heard the same song across provinces with a slightly different twist. I have always found the women are eager to sing and share songs. Along the way I learned some prayer songs and sweat songs or ceremonial songs. These were not easy to come by. I had to earn them and it took many years. I have learned that an Elder is always testing my sincerity and assesses my sincerity to learn. I have fasted for songs. I was given one related to nimki - the thunder beings, which makes sense as this is my dodem (clan) on my mother's side. I had female Elders as teachers. One was a female sweat lodge keeper from whom I learned all of her songs. She liked me to come to her sweats to support her singing. Another saw me as her traditional daughter and always encouraged me to sing. She would lead moon ceremonies for women and would have me sing for the ceremony. This prompted me to learn songs for the moon ceremony. I began to learn songs in Cree, Anishnaabe, Mohawk, and from a BC First Nation. I was also being asked to do prayer songs for different events and the women asked me to teach them to sing. Somehow, there was a shift and I had become the teacher.

Taking a stand as a singer. I want to share one story of how I came to a particular song. In my professional life, I resigned from the board office in Saskatoon and was offered a position in Edmonton. I worked at the Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute (CILLDI) as the coordinator. At the time the Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) had called for research on language and I was involved in a province wide project on Indigenous

Knowledge and language. The CCL had put out a call for presenters at their conference in Vancouver. They were advertising a pre-conference showcase of various traditional teachings and crafts workshops. The lure was conference fees would be waived and they would cover accommodations for the one night. I wanted to go to see what would be offered. I thought I could go as a singer and share a few songs.

I was a little apprehensive because I would be for the first time "taking a stand as a singer". I wanted to bring my drum as I only ever sang with it. I was worried about whether people would be accepting of a female singer with a drum. Some of the Cree male cultural teachers do not believe women had drums. I too wondered if I really had anything to offer. I was merely going to share some social songs for anyone who could pick them up. I could not share ceremonial songs in that context and it was not yet my time to pass them on. But, I knew that women were eager to learn and so I anticipated that some people would come. I ran my idea by my supervisor and was met with her approval. Then I spoke with my traditional friend who gave me encouragement and suggested I raise my concerns to her brother who is a lodge keeper. I asked him what he thought about me giving a singing workshop at the conference. He told me it is my role as a parent to learn and know all the teachings and in that light I could sing to my heart's content. I put in my application to present at the pre-conference showcase and titled it "Anishnaabe kwe Drum and Song".

When I arrived at the conference, there were many familiar faces. My daughter and I had just got settled in our room and I suggested we pray. I got my tobacco out. We had a room with floor to ceiling window panels. I slid one open and leaned over the balcony rail with my offering. I looked toward the ground and there was roof top after roof top with pavement in

between the buildings. I was contemplating whether or not we should maybe walk to the park and give this offering to the water. It struck me we were in a concrete jungle and I was not sure what to do. Then I resolved that I could offer my tobacco to the wind. My daughter and I prayed together. I always feel my prayer is stronger if my daughter is involved. We quietly made the offering and went back to ordering dinner. My daughter and I were sitting at the table. My back was to the view and my daughter could see out. Suddenly my daughter exclaimed, "Mom if you look now you'll see an eagle dip towards the water. It has a white tail". I turned and watched just in time to see it rise and fall above the water. So beautiful I thought. Then my daughter informed me that she watched it glide by the window almost in slow motion. She said it cruised slowly enough for her to see the tiny feathers around its eye and how great a wingspan it had.

I felt this was a good sign and maybe an answer to our prayers that everything would go really well for us at this conference. The next day was my presentation, one of the first on the agenda. I was still a little nervous but I made a commitment and had to follow through. I reminded myself that we made our offering and we were given a blessing. I set up a circle for my presentation. The women slowly trickled in. I knew some of the women from Saskatoon as I had made their acquaintance on a professional level. I noticed one of the women with long gray hair. I wondered if she would have something to say. I started my presentation, introduced myself and talked about songs I learned and wanted to share. The woman with the long gray hair kept smiling and nodding when I glanced at her. I felt more at ease with time, as she seemed to be happy with what I was sharing. The time flew by and my session came to a conclusion. I thanked everyone for coming. Some came over to say thanks and shake my hand. I noticed the

older woman stayed behind. Here it is, I thought; she is going to reprimand me. Finally, after everyone had left she approached and began to tell me her story as a teacher.

She informed me that she was teaching in an Anishnaabe community. She herself was Dene and was married into an Anishnaabe community in Ontario. She told me that she loves Anishnaabe people and their culture. I was immediately at ease with her. She continued with her story to say that she had approached this Elder to teach a song to her students. He did and after teaching her in the process, told her as long as she continues to share the song, it is never belost, she could have the song. She was honoured by this and now wanted to share the song with me. I was delighted. She sang one round and told me to join in. We sang a few rounds together and when she felt I had it well enough she informed me it is an eagle song. I realized my journey was not in vane and I had been gifted one more song.

Hallway teacher talk. While I was at Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (ATEP) in Edmonton, working as the Co-Director, I was invited to work as a teaching assistant for one of the music education professors. She asked if I would share Indigenous music in courses she was teaching. It sounded really interesting and I acquiesced. After sharing songs in a couple of her classes she asked if I would come in so she could record them. I felt this was asking a lot in the sense that I did not feel the songs were mine to record. It was the terminology she used that did not sit right with me. She asked if I would be willing to record my 'folk songs', so the students could get copies and study the song for their exam. Not only was the terminology inappropriate for the songs but the idea of multiple disc copies and that the students were being examined on the songs was unfitting in my eyes. This was the first time I ever heard of anyone being tested on their ability to learn a traditional song. I was opposed to the testing. In the context of

traditional music exchange there is no testing. You are either a singer or you are not and if someone can learn the song - that is good enough. I thought about what my dad taught me in terms of praise. I had asked him how to say some praiseful terms in our language. He said "good" is about all you get. There is not a rating scale of excellent, to very good then good. Good is good and excellent at the same time. It is all the praise in one simple word; "Minwendaagwad" is what it would be in my language (King, personal communication, 2012). It was a way to ensure that people did not get an inflated sense of importance over someone else. Competiveness is frowned upon culturally. In the community, one becomes recognized for their skills and called upon to share them. This is validation enough as my father explained it.

I knew how I felt about testing for songs and felt strongly that this was not the way to proceed. The challenge was finding a way to explain this in a respectful way. I stated that I did not feel comfortable recording someone else's songs. I did not have their permission. Appropriation is something that I am particularly opposed to. The response I got was the most disconcerting. She said, "I have met people who learn a little about the culture then want to hoard it". I stood there in disbelief. I reflected on my journey. My first sweat was when I was 16 years old. I laughed and responded with "I wouldn't call it hoarding when I already gave the girls the songs. It's the recording I am not comfortable with". Thus began a 2-hour conversation in the hallway about how I earned the songs over a 15-year period. I thought about the cultural teachings and protocol around song. Granted some of the songs are my own, yet I am not so sure I would record them, let alone have students be tested on them. It is known and understood amongst the Elders that the ceremonies are never recorded. I went into detail about what the songs meant to me and how I earned them. These were not the songs I was sharing with the

students. I was baffled and struggled for the right words to say; at the same time I recall feeling that she did not understand me.

I did in fact appreciate the opportunity to teach songs and this teaching assistantship became my livelihood when I became a full time student. I have nothing but respect for my colleague as well. It was the cultural misunderstanding I was stymied by. I know now what was being asked of me would be termed third party appropriation (Hall, 1997). The easy take of the microphone to the head to capture the songs or words of Elders. Then after recording proper credit is not given to the original sources wherein the origin of songs or words becomes nameless and faceless and eventually losing who the sources were.

I am fortunate to live in a time where research is more ethical in regard to Indigenous people and there are ethical guidelines in Canada when working with First Nations, Métis and Inuit people and communities in particular. The whole idea of testing students on traditional knowledge was appalling. There is a structure that is in place for education in the shape of a square box. First Nations teachings do not always fit readily into it. In fact, our survival as a people would rely on our ability to operate outside of it.

I informed my colleague that these songs were not mine personally. I was not sharing the ceremonial songs. I did however share what I have heard termed social songs. I encouraged her to purchase compact discs of First Nations songs as some of the songs I shared have been recorded professionally. Even though I explained a lot of my perspective, I felt that she did not really understand me. I knew that she would spend a lot of time in the next few years on a reserve teaching music and her plan was to find local people to teach songs. She would learn a lot in this time. In the meantime, I continued to teach Indigenous music inclusion from an

Anishnaabe perspective and shared songs. I learned to give more historical information and spoke mainly of my own people and how I learned my songs. No recordings were made.

Stemming from traditional roots. The drum and song is a part of Anishnaabe culture. It is a practice imbued with ceremony from the drum making to its use with song. I was witness to similar practice and understanding at a Native high school in Saskatoon as I worked with a Cree Elder from Loon Lake, Sakewew Tamowin, for a research project on *Indigenous Knowledge in Aboriginal Schools*. This was an Aboriginal high school with a 100% Aboriginal population, a higher number of Aboriginal teachers, two Elders and an Aboriginal Parent Council. One meaningful practice he engaged the students in was to make drums.

First, the students were taught that the hides are pulled from the water to be cleaned of hair and fleshing the hide before being fashioned into drums. The sacrifice of an animal for the hide and a tree are acknowledged through the offering of tobacco. The Elder then taught the boys how to make a drum, how to piece the drum together taking the necessary measures to ensure it does not break. Once the drums were made teachings were shared about the drum. There are protocols to being a drum keeper and students learned how to honour and protect the drums. The drum is a giver of life to humans' therefore proper care and respect is given to preserve the life giving element of it.

Once the students made their drums it may be that they have no songs. The Elder made sure the boys learned songs throughout the year. He shared his songs freely. The students who had songs shared their songs as well. Eventually, the boys had enough songs to participate as singers in the round dance in the winter. The stick boy presented them with sticks and it was their turn to sing. Tapwe miyasin! They are beautiful singers. Although the round dance is a

ceremony to remember relatives that have gone on to the spirit world it is also a life giving event. The songs are so good to hear and the young singers make it evident that the songs will continue.

Sakewew Tamowin (Sunrise) was also a lodge keeper in his home community. He was part of the Elders from his community that lead ceremonies. He was a pipe carrier and holder of the Sundance lodge and a sweat ceremony. We were so fortunate to have this Elder at the school. This was the first time that I witnessed an Elder from the community at the school. A community recognized Elder who could work in an urban school was rare. It was evident what he had to offer students and staff. His capacity in the language, his teachings and his wisdom all made him an excellent resource for any inquiry; he helped others to understand more deeply all aspects of the culture. To teach the students from cleaning a deer hide to making a drum was the epitome of holistic education. The learning process imbued with ritual, ceremony, language and teachings to the culminating feast and round dance exemplified the echo of a community practice in the microcosm of an urban school.

The young boys sang to celebrate their drum, the new songs they learned and all the teachings they had been given. They sang in honour of the ancestors, for the round dance itself, and in honour of their own lives. They learned that life is a cycle and to not take something from the earth without giving an offering such as tobacco before you take from it. They learned that taking something for its life and recreating it in a drum and praying with song brings new life. Most importantly they realize that they have been given a gift in song as a way to pray and dance, and celebrate of life.

The Need for Healing

Canada's Aboriginal people are governed by the Indian Act. They are the only people in Canada governed by legislature. One of the goals as quoted by a former prime minister:

> The great aim of our legislation has been to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian People in all respects with the other inhabitants of the Dominion as speedily as they are fit to do so. (McDonald, 1887)

Residential schools were created out of the legislation. The goals were clear. Remove children from the families and place them in schools far away to eliminate family influence on imparting the language and culture in order to assimilate them into the dominant culture.

I believe there is much healing needed in our First Nations communities. Our history, our truth in history has yet to be told or written in any comprehensive way from a First Nations perspective. As Europeans encroached, our territories became invaded and we were forced to relocate or were relocated through government policies or programs (Indian Act, 1876). These journeys continue to be hard on people. Many First Nations people died along the trails. With infringement on other First Nations territories, warring ensued. The relocations impacted many lives negatively and grief from the totality of loss persists today. Being relegated to reserves created poverty in food supply. The buffalo were being wiped out to allow the building of railway lines across the west. Many people starved to death in this transition. The First Nations people were weakened by disease, the introduction of alcohol and the threat of starvation. In fear of starvation treaties were signed (CBC, 2014).

Industrial schools were introduced to teach people trade skills. It was thought that learning these skills would help people become self-sufficient. But there was no avenue for

development on the reserve. First Nations people were not allowed off the reserve. So economic development birthed in a milieu of poverty. I have never heard stories of abuse or hard ship stemming from the industrial schools, with regard to residential schools, I have heard a great deal.

The residential schooling system was established in partnership with the government in order to "Kill the Indian in the child" (Stabler, 2010, p. 1). Separating children from their families, their parents and grandparents were viewed as a way to accomplish this goal. Children were often forcefully taken from their homes and transported to the residential schools. A mass exodus of children was followed by silence (King, personal communication, 2003). In theory, this plan may have worked if it weren't for the children's and community's resiliency. The hardship of being taken from home to a school far away was difficult emotionally for all family members, but what was worse was the abuse experienced by so many students. Physical, sexual, psychological and spiritual abuse occurred in these institutions regularly (T.R.C. of Canada, 2014). Stepping out of line was followed by a priest or nun's violent wrath. The classroom was full of torment and torturous violent acts on children as disciplinary measures. I speak from my parents and Elders experience as witness to what went on there.

In brief, First Nations' children, families, and communities experience has been extraordinarily difficult due to the impact of colonization. Against great adversity, Aboriginal people have managed to live despite the onslaught of colonization and many First Nations still have languages and many aspects of their culture. The Anishnaabe people preserved the sacred fires by being covert when the government outlawed ceremony (Indigenous Foundations, Indian Act, 1876). At the same time the grief lives on. Suicide rates among the youth population in the

First Nations communities are seven times the national average (Health Canada, 2014). Alcohol and drug abuse affects many Aboriginal people as a self-medication measure in disproportionate numbers (Our Voices, 2014). Poverty is all too prevalent in the reserve communities and urban settings (Policy Alternatives, 2014). Children taken into care was normalized by the '60s scoop (The Globe and Mail, 2015). All measures by the government and church working together have not been completely successful in annihilating the culture and language from Aboriginal people. Although, the fallout from colonization and residential schooling institutions have left their mark as we struggle to look forward and get beyond this trauma as a whole people.

The rekindling of the traditional fires is maintained by a very small number of traditional people who either were held back from attending residential school or retained their language and resumed a traditional lifestyle upon returning home. Others learned or relearned their cultural knowledge and were exposed to culturally relevant teachings. The prophecy of the 7th fire says we will return along the trail and search for the bundles to bring back to the people. The search and retrieving of the bundles to gather the remnants of our culture that were hidden for safe keeping are the work of the spiritual leaders. It is only through the strong commitment of Anishnaabe who want to preserve and learn the language and culture that the 7th fire prophecy be fulfilled.

Bowser – My Teacher

I first met Bowser at Joe Duquette High School in Saskatoon when I began my teaching career. I had just started my first teaching assignment there. One of my classes was cultural arts. This class involved dance, drum and song. The students would practice dance with the drum brought in by Bowser and his wife. Bowser was from Yellowquill Reserve, Saskatchewan. He

lived in the city but commuted back and forth to his reserve. When Bowser and his wife would come for class, they would just walk in, set up the drum in the corner of the gym, and then sing for the hour. We would greet each other with a nod and I would take my place on the bench. Then one day, his wife came over to sit with me. She was friendly and asked where I was from. I told her and she eventually went back to continue singing.

The next time they came, I was in the office. Bowser smiled when he saw me and came over and shook my hand. He said: "we are the same people". I remember he was beaming and smiled as he told me this. He said where you are from, is where we came from a long time ago. "Same language", he said. After that he would visit me before class. He would ask how to say something in my language. He told me they travelled to Leech Lake, Minnesota to discover that people spoke the same language. Minnesota is where Anishnaabe people from the island originated from as well. He was very happy to learn we were related. Over the years, we got to know each other well.

After 3 years of teaching in a high school, I decided to request a transfer to an elementary school. My university education had been in elementary training as well as my prior classroom experience. I was hoping for a Grade 1 classroom, as I had some experience working with Grade 1 students through teaching assistantships. My transfer request came through and I was on my way across the city to work at a community school. I was given a Grade 3 class. When Maggie and Bowser learned of this, they were surprised. Bowser told Maggie to invite me to Yellowquill for the next ceremony and they made arrangements to pick me up. My first ceremony was a spring round dance. The round dance was always a part of their ceremonies. It was unlike the city round dances.

Bowser and Maggie moved back to Yellowquill. Over the years, I was invited to stay at their house for weekends and over Christmas. Bowser would set up the drum and we would sing. He would always invite me to sing at the drum at powwows. I was happy to learn his songs. I became familiar with the Elders and the ceremonies. These were especially important when I had my daughter Tanis with me. It was important to me that she was always part of ceremony at an early age. Bowser knew the importance of this too. In time, I felt that his community accepted me us as one part of them. I would be given blankets more and more as gifts by the community. I was offered a chair once by a little kid, whom must have been sent over by his kokum (the kokomak always had chairs). Little gestures of welcoming were happening and making me feel more at ease and more 'at home' with my new found distant relatives.

One day I received a call from Bowser's wife, Maggie that he was in the hospital. She said Bowser asked me to call you. I said I will come over and I went straight away to the hospital. I soon learned that Bowser had had a heart attack. They had found a lump on his heart and were not sure how they were going to proceed. I entered the room and Bowser met me with his kind eyes. Maggie began telling me what had transpired and what the hospital was trying to figure out. Bowser wanted to go for a walk and Maggie went to have something to eat. I walked with Bowser to the visiting room. We sat there while he began to tell me of a dream he always had of having a women's drum. He told me he knew women were powerful and that he would like more women singers for his drum. He wanted me to sing in particular. He would teach me the songs if he got out of the hospital. I was happy to hear his story and that his dreamed future included me.

When Maggie returned they informed me that they were making arrangements that he could leave the hospital for a while to attend a ceremony. They asked me to come. This time they could not take me because they would have to leave early. I agreed to go to Yellowquill for this important ceremony. When I got there, the ceremony had already started. When I walked in Maggie and Bowser were happy to see me. I sat down and was greeted with tobacco. My bowls were filled. After much prayer, gifts were being distributed by Maggie and Bowser. Bowser sat this time but directed his brother to hand out the gifts. They always had certain gifts for different people. He handed something to his brother and asked that he give it to me. It was a tape cassette. I knew what it was immediately. They were his songs. I was so humbled that he chose me to leave these his songs with me. I understand then how uncertain his future was.

Bowser got better and was given the option of a heart transplant. This had never been an option for anyone in his community before. There were cultural boundaries that he would be crossing. Bowser did some soul searching and in the end decided to accept the offer of a heart transplant as he wanted to see his grandchildren. He spoke with the Elders and sought their approval and their prayers. After this there was a long recovery process. He still sang and life continued. As long as he was here to teach me, I put the tape away. I had listened to his recordings once and experienced how he represented the drum; in a softer voice he sang the songs almost a whisper. I realized he was tapping on the dash of the car while singing into the recorder on the way to the ceremony. This brought tears to my eyes. His future was uncertain and again I was humbled by the significance of this gift of songs.

My Research Puzzle

The heart of my research centers on song and drum that includes some of my personal experience of coming to song and drum. These songs have origins and the drums have stories that travel far back in time and are rooted in traditional culture. There is an unspoken history. When I taught with my colleagues we focused on song, drumming, dancing and teachings. We gave some teachings and history that evolved with powwow dance in the public commentary at performances that the students also listened to. There are teachings for song and drum. Hand drums, big drums, rattles and flute all derive from traditional cultural practice and there are origin stories for each instrument that describe their arrival either through gifts, ceremonial transfers, peace treaties or visions. And song origins are unique to each individual, family and community. The anthropological record is significant but must also be viewed with discretion because not only is it written through a Western Christian filter, but often these records are written by an outsider who interprets from their own cultural base.

In this research I draw predominantly from the voice of singers, Elders, cultural teachers, and wisdom keepers. My research too draws from conversations with Elders, literature and archival material. My overarching research question is: "What is the relationship between song and drum and then what are the implications for education?"

I explored as an Anishnaabe kwe – good human woman, from an Anishnaabe worldview what is the significance of drum and song in schools and more how can we enhance student learning? I do know healing is an important part of bringing drum and song into a school and into my teaching. I thought about my own teaching experiences of using drum and song. I also thought much about people like Bowser, a Salteaux Elder, who have taught me and many

students in school programming over many years. These are the people that provided me with insights into the meaning and significance of drum and song in schools.

My research looks at traditional music from an Anishnaabe perspective. I see traditional music as sweat songs or ceremonial songs or prayer songs. We do share prayer songs when we practice ceremony. The healing power of sound vibration and song has been understood in many First Nations cultures and is part of the ritual of healing ceremonies. This research study is informed by indigenous knowledge; it is grounded in my Anishnaabe perspective. It is a storied or narrative approach combined with literature and archival findings. It will inquire into my experiences of learning from Elders as well as cultural resource people who work in schools or the community.

I met Elders and traditional teachers throughout my professional career who have guided me and informed me by sharing their traditional knowledge. Traditional is a difficult word to define with regard to First Nations cultural evolvement. From the point before the arrival of the colonials would have been traditional practice. I am mindful of the term 'traditional' and that it represents a particular place and time. In this work I will not explore this term further.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

In my experience as a young female teacher and beginning researcher at the board office, Laura my kokum, Elder and friend, cautioned me to always take an Elder with me when I went to visit other communities. In this way, the protocol would be ensured. She said it is better to get advice from Elders you know to find information as they will direct you to who you need to speak to. Also, it is better to be introduced to an Elder by someone who knows him or her, because then what is understood is "here is someone I trust to be a good person with good intentions for their questions" and so it is alright to talk with them and share your knowledge with them. In my extended family from Yellowquill, I knew to speak to the wives for questions and not speak to the men. Further to relationship building, Steinhauer says, "it's all about relationships," (personal communication, 2009) meaning unless a relationship is built the deeper level communication will not happen. Inawendiwag means 'being related' which comes from the old teachings of making someone your relative who is not your blood line. Establishing relationships is more in keeping with the old teachings and allows for knowledge exchange to flow more easily.

Relationships therefore are an essential component to this research as I draw on my established relations and from the conversations or 'medicine talks' that have already begun. Elders do not always answer directly to any question. They may answer in an indirect way. This is inherent in the culture and language. Teaching or imparting information is done in an indirect way and it is up to the individual to decipher what is being transmitted. A story might parallel what I am seeking and metaphorically or in an analogous way I am being taught. Sometimes, these lessons are much richer as I am left to do the deciphering. This is much like the stories or

legends that are shared. They give an entertaining depiction of Nanabozho to children but to adults there is deeper meaning to the story as analogous to real life situations and how they are handled. A story told at one point in my life can have greater meaning told at another point in my life. This was and continues to be the way of teaching. According to Absolon, "We live in relationship and learn from our relationships; this is the genealogy of how we acquire and learn knowledge" (2011, p. 132). Prayer and ceremony are an understood part of any endeavor of significance or meaning. Organizing the ceremony or offering cloth and tobacco at the ceremony you frequent is appropriate. This ensures that things go well.

Bagijigan – offering: Wabanosse - cloth. It is a tradition of my people to give an offering of tobacco or sweet grass and a piece of cloth as a gift for the knowledge one is seeking. A tobacco pouch either factory made or traditionally gathered from the earth is acceptable. I like to give an offering of the old tobacco mixture because it immediately connects you to the land, to your intentions in a spiritual way and you begin the search journey in ceremony. It requires a little more work to gather the medicines and prepare them. In this way you have given a sacrifice of your time and expended energy to make the old tobacco or *kinniknik* and to model a true commitment to what you are seeking. Each Elder or cultural teacher was presented with this gift and the reason for my questions. The Elder or cultural teacher had the opportunity to think about the request and then either accept the offering or not. Once they took the offering, they are bound by that acceptance to help me in my search. If they do not know the answers to my wonders they may ask me to come back or suggest someone I can speak with. One time I was told that there is a ceremony the coming weekend and I was expected to be there and an offering of cloth was suggested. This gift of cloth was given to the Elder at the ceremony.

Miiggiwewin - gift. The gift can be something small or affordable, such as a small basket of jams and teas. It can be beautiful cloth for women or a pair of work gloves for men. The addition of cookies or candies would be appropriate. A blanket is most often given as a traditional gift. A blanket represents long life and this is what you are offering or have prayed for with the blanket. Moccasins are also a traditional gift. You are giving something in exchange for the knowledge you are seeking and it is whatever you feel it is worth to you. It is best to be generous with whatever you have.

Methodology and Methods

In approaching my research I reviewed pertinent and relative literature in the field of indigenous knowledge or IK research, Aboriginal education, Anishnaabe song, the power of song and sound vibration. These helped formulate the semblance of literature that supported my research. During my search I came upon a newly written book titled "centering Anishnaabe studies" edited by Jill Doerfler, Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair (Niigan) and Heidi Stark (2013). They speak the discourse relative to Anishnaabe legends, literary scholars and cultural understandings. Because this is what I have done in my work I was so intrigued and fascinated by their writings. It speaks to my heart and affirms that I am going in the right direction.

I proceeded with this research from an Anishnaabe worldview as an Anishnaabe kwe (good human woman). My first course of action was to start with ceremony. I offered cloth and tobacco to a pipe that my research goes well. I started my writing in ceremony. In this way, I have a greater mind helping me see, understand, visualize, create and comprehend the task at hand.

In choosing a framework for my study, I kept in mind the seven grandfather's teachings. These are fundamental teachings that define the values of an Anishnaabe world view. Outside of Western education are Anishnaabe teachings that we would normally transmit to children. For many complex reasons the knowledge is not being passed down to the next generations and we struggle to save the language and culture against the impact of time. The school classroom that has predominantly failed us now becomes the best place for cultural teachings and language given the increasing number of Aboriginal teachers. That is not to say they are strong speakers or culturally grounded as this cannot be assumed. The seven grandfather's teachings include love, respect, courage, generosity, truth, honesty and wisdom. They ensure the values of the Anishnaabe people and are an essential teaching. I also thought about Justice Sinclair's (2014) questions directed to youth that encompass identity and deep cultural understandings. These questions would be more of a frame work which I list in further detail in the method section of this dissertation.

Further, the work of Leanne Simpson (2011) resonates with me. She is a scholar drawing on teachings from Edna Manitowabi, an Elder from home. She interjects what she has learned with the academic discourse she is working with. I have already found it fitting, comfortable, even "home" to include what I know and have learned from who I am as an Anishnaabe woman. It is like being reaffirmed as a human being to allow myself to start with what I know or who I am. In reading Niing's (2013) and Simpson's (2011) work, both Anishnaabe people, I feel at ease and I feel at home with two models of scholarly discourse combined with our own worldview, voice and vision. Although I drew from the work of many Indigenous scholars it

was exciting to be able to include a plethora of literature from Anishnaabe scholars, whose work is relevant to my research.

Philosophical underpinnings. Simpson (2013) suggests a theorizing resurgence from within Nishnaabeg thought wherein the people who can think in culturally inherent ways reflect that diversity of thought within our broader cosmologies. Simpson relates her becoming a mother to revisiting the creation story of the Anishnaabeg with new found understanding. Relative to my research are origin stories of the birth of drums or the first rattle which are essential to this research providing foundational information to the story of new emergence and cultural evolvement.

She states:

> I believe we need intellectuals who can think within the conceptual meanings of the language, who are intrinsically connected to place and territory, who exist in the world as an embodiment of contemporary expression of our ancient stories and traditions, and who illuminate mino bimaadiziwin in all aspects of their lives. (Simpson, 2012, p. 279)

Simpson (2012) further commends the possibility of Indigenous thought as a way to step out of Western thought while building a renaissance of mino bimaadiziwin as a collective focus.

This is what I always viewed as our responsibility as First Nations or Anishnaabe teachers. Further, for Simpson the discussion begins with our creation stories as a theoretical framework providing the ontological context to interpret others stories, teachings and experiences. This therefore became the model or theoretical base for my research. She states: "Our elders tell us everything we need to know in relation to these stories, and relationships, ethics and responsibilities required to be our own creation story" (Simpson, 2013, p. 281).

Therefore, drawing from personal experience, archival record and literature and conversations with Elders, my research became a story guided by Elders wisdom.

> Theory is personal and in its basic form is simply an explanation for why we do the things we do. In thinking of theory this way, the aandisokaanan and our language encode our theories. We express those theories in both dibaajimowinan as echoing the Aandisokaanan. Our personal creation stories and lives reflect the Seven Fires of Creation. (Simpson, 2011, p. 32)

Aandisokannan refers to traditional or sacred story. Dibaajimowinan makes reference to personal story. Our creation stories are a part of us. They give us our understanding of the world and how we perceive the interrelatedness of all of creation. These Anishnabe creation stories tell us how to live in the world to ensure mino bimaadiziwin. The echo of our own stories on the land has become weakened. We need to live and tell these stories so the voice of the land becomes strong again. Resurgence is about picking up the stories, the language and activating resurgence from our cultural systems. As an Anishnabe educator, I always felt it was my responsibility to do so.

This research framework is also guided by the following questions raised by Chief Justice Sinclair in his presentation at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2014) meeting in Edmonton. These questions were posed to the youth and serve as an overarching framework.

- What is your creation story?
- Where are your people from? How did our people come to be?
- Where am I going? What happens to me when I die? What about the spirit world?
- Why am I here? What are my responsibilities?

- Who am I? Who are we? What is my purpose?

As an adult, I certainly appreciate these questions as I have thought about them many times in my own pursuit of learning everything I can about my Anishnaabe worldview. As a young adult, I remember the words of an elder stating: "Wherever life takes you, even if you are far away from home, always remember who you are and where you come from". I have pondered about the spirit world and what traditions we have around death and burial. I have learned about traditional practice with regard to death rituals and burials from a few different Anishnaabe elders. And in my life, I have questioned many times "why am I here?" and "What is my purpose?" Sometimes in the depths of despair and other times out of boredom for how my life was playing out these questions would re-surface. Always, keeping me in line with a higher purpose and steering me back to ceremony when I felt lost and was struggling to find my way.

I view these questions as the deep philosophical ones that we ask ourselves from time to time in our journey through life. It includes our belief system with regard to spirituality and our belief in our life's purpose. Justice Sinclair, in posing these questions to youth, is steering their thinking. It is like he is asking "do you know who you are and where you come from? And "does that mean anything to you?" Before we have children, have we thought of this? In my research process as I acquired deeper levels of meaning in my understandings around drum and song, I revisited these questions with a more profound understanding of all of these questions.

Method

This research is composed of narrative or personal stories related to Elders teachings, archival research and literature study. The stories are in keeping with the works of Simpson in regard to Anishnaabeg re-creation, resurgence and new emergence (Simpson, 2011). These are

personal experiences related to learning about song and drum and song acquisition relative to our Anishnaabe worldview and culture. Gehl (2010) refers to a debwewin journey methodology involving the "circle of the heart" knowledge and the "circle of the mind" knowledge working together. The idea here is stemming from an established traditional Anishnaabe knowledge system one comes to "debwewin" (truth) rooted in one's heart through this journey. I have learned from my Elders that the mind is not separate from the heart and seeking truth is the pathway of the heart. The word ode means heart and is a part of the word debwewin. The word for drum – dewe'igan also has the word for heart in it and literally means the sounding of the heart.

The drum and song of today is rooted in traditional culture and a certain evolvement to the modern context. My experience with drum and song personally and in the education setting provide the context for my debwewin journey – "a personal and wholistic truth that is rooted in the heart" (Gehl, 2010, p. 54). The Elder's teachings are a significant part of this work as knowledge holders, teachers, guides, mentors, keepers of ceremony and song sharers. In conversations over many years, I have learned from them. These conversations I would call good medicine as my father would call it or 'good talks' (Akan, 1992) as the Saulteaux Elder Manitoupayes describes in conversation with his granddaughter. As two or more people putting their minds together 'in the right way' and for the right reasons and together the resultant effect is good medicine. I draw on the good medicine of their teachings that informed this research.

In addition to narrative or debwewin journeying and reflecting on medicine talks I explored archives for details around the drum and song and the drums of my people, as well as other indigenous peoples. These studies followed with field notes which are also referred to as

data. In this research, Anishnaabe language is a significant component. Weaving the essential conceptual meanings inherent in the Anishnaabe language throughout the writing revealed the truest meaning from Anishnaabe perspective to English with regard to teachings and tebwewin (truth) around the drum and song. These truth are related to the Elders, language speakers and knowledge from the community whom are living examples of mino bimaadiziwin (good life). Mino bimaadiziwin is a cultural definition of health from an Anishnaabe perspective which is a component part of the research proper to enlighten understanding of what drum and song is in relation to Anishnaabe healing. Resurgance allows a modern perspective for what is happening with drum and song today sharing a broad scope from archival records, ancient practice depictions to contextualized modern day praxis in schools.

Significance of my Research

The significance of this research is to give insight to Indigenous education and inquire into the praxis in Indigenous education. There are plethoras of damning statistics that speak to the failure of Aboriginal students in school but there is not an equal amount of literature that attests to what is successful or what works. I do not like the reiteration of negative press on First Nations children and prefer to think there is a subconscious resistance to Western education when they are excluded. Meyer (2008) would call this "resistance" as a more positive and proactive term.

It is time to approach education for Indigenous people that recognizes their language and culture and centers on these areas. This may be remnants of what is left past residential schools obliterating the collective memory and/or Christianity doing its work. To even begin with our own experiences, our heartache, our pain – to acknowledge this and move toward a brighter

future that we create together in education would be a start. In some places ceremonies have been preserved. We can "go back along the trails and pick-up the bundles that have been left for us to find" (prophecy of the 7th fire) and restore all that we can.

Since the Hawthorn Report (1966) and Indian Control of Indian Education (1972), Tradition and Education: Towards a Vision for Our Future (1988) (AFN) to RCAP Report (1996) has maintained we need to attend to who we are - our worldview, our stories - and our truth in history, essentially our perspectives to make education more relevant. Each document retells our vision of our languages and culture is the place to start in education.

Not enough has been written into the body of literature about teachers experience teaching Aboriginal students. This research would add to that body of research. When the Indian Teacher Education Program (ITEP) first began 40 years ago at University of Saskatchewan, they started with a handful of students. Each year it grew until today there are at least 5,000 ITEP teachers who have graduated from the University of in Saskatchewan. In Alberta, the first graduates of the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (ATEP), University of Alberta are now acquiring Master's in Education to become teacher leaders. The leadership role allows for Aboriginal perspectives to come forward.

Indigenous knowledge.

The significance of this study affirms indigenous ways of knowing with regard to teaching, learning and healing. Indigenous knowledge has become part of the academic discourse at most universities across Canada, but there is a gap between what is defined as good for First Nations learning by academics and showing the way of integrating indigenous ways of

knowing in the classroom. There seems to be a gap between what is expounded upon in great measure and what is actually taking place in the classroom.

My first experience of attending to indigenous knowledge in education was when I worked at the school board office as a curriculum developer and writer. We did not use the term indigenous knowledge, but in a research paper that I was assigned to do I began to familiarize myself with the formulation of the term through the work of Grenier (1998). According to Grenier, indigenous knowledge was at first meaning traditional knowledge. In the field of science, Elders were being sought out for their traditional knowledge to give insight to certain fields of science explorations and pharmaceutical research. Indigenous knowledge is the broad term for all indigenous people's knowledge's wherein a multi-faceted complexity of worldview resides.

Indigenous knowledge discourse in academe needs to be translated to the classroom. First Nations students are failing at a significant rate as we are told and retold. Since I have been a teacher, the "problem" of failure in Aboriginal education is always turned over to the few Aboriginal administrators, teachers, and resource people as 'our problem' to solve. Over time I have recognized that it is near to impossible to change a system created and designed for the dominant or mainstream population. It would be beneficial if as First Nations teachers we were to lead in our own design for education, to inspire more success that is based in our worldview and cultural expression such as song, dance, story and language.

In order to make positive changes, we need to make space (Bhabba, 2004) to allow for indigenous knowledge implementation and we need to understand what we are up against to make those changes. My vision of this space is Aboriginal teachers and students housed in their

own facility provided by the boards much like Oskyak high school in Sasaktoon or Amiskwaciy high school in Edmonton. The question for education with regard to indigenous ways of knowing implementation is how? Considering a western system and a First Nations goal that is not congruent with the system. We now know that indigenous knowledge is organic and fluid and according to Battiste (2005) defies all definition. So, how do we make this practical in the classroom? As part of this I share my teaching experience with song and drum, or aesthetic learning as the place where learning from an indigenous perspective, cultural resurgence and healing can all take place at one time.

Personal: Who I am and who I am relative to this research. My spirit name is Ishkote. My dodem (clan) is the Niimke - thunderbird and Minegun – wolf on my mother's side. My mother is Pottawattimi. My father's dodem is the Crane. He is Odawa. We all come from a small island surrounded by the fresh waters perched between Lake Huron and Georgian Bay. Our island is called "nidoo minissing" meaning "resting place of the Great Spirit". It is more commonly known as Manitoulin Island and attracts many tourists with the ferry docking at Southbay and the subsidiary highway connecting with the Trans Canada off the island in Espanola. All the creatures and plants of Turtle Island are represented there as the creator made it so according to the oral stories. It is the biggest island in Canada surrounded by fresh water. The island is one of the resting places in the time of the sacred migrations. There are many sacred places on or about the island that I have heard in stories from my parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles.

Dreamer's Rock is in Birch Island enroute to my reserve where I have special ties. You may have heard of the play Toronto at Dreamer's Rock by an Ojibwa playwright Drew Hayden

Taylor. It is a place to seek vision quests. What was significant about it was the people would receive a vision immediately. It is believed to be a place with 'strong medicine'. Many Elder's gatherings took place here particularly in the 1970's after Indian Control of Indian Education. Elders from all over Canada gathered here as my Auntie Marylou Fox travelled the country inviting people. Mary Lou created the Ojibwa Cultural Foundation in Chigeeng formerly Westbay. She was a forerunner in Anishnaabe curriculum development, language preservation and promoting Anishnaabe artists. I worked for her as a summer student when I was attaining my first degree. I did all kinds of jobs working there. I spent the first few days with the other students and tech people going out in the fields and picking sweetgrass. We were all made aware an offering had to be made. We were taught the protocols and why they happened. When we had enough of a bundle we had an afternoon of braiding. It was easy to braid. This older lady taught me how to make a fishbone braid. My Auntie joined us that day. She pointed out how beautiful the day was and what an honour it was to spent the afternoon braiding and sitting among such fine women. She informed us that we were making the braids for the Elders gathering that summer at Dreamer's Rock.

In Cloche Island are geographical formations called the bell rocks. One of my friends told me about these rocks that used to sound like a bell if you tapped them with another stone. There were three big boulders that stood together. The people used to go and tap on them to hear them sound or echo. They were sacred. But one day the 'scientists' came and took one of the rocks away to study it further. After that, the rocks would no longer sound. They were meant to be together. Once not too long ago, I was studying a map of the island. I noticed a little island just off Manitoulin called Cloche Island. Suddenly the story came back as this naming cloche

island in French language means bell which triggered the memory. Could it be that those rocks were situated on this island and thus the name? I have begun to ask people about these rocks and hope to learn more as I feel it is important. Since this time, I have had two affirmations that inform me this is significant. One is finding a resource by Susan Hale (2007) that looks at the acoustic mysteries of Holy Places. The second affirmation is in visiting my mother last summer; she kept wondering where the bells rocks used to be and thought they may have been at my sister's house. It was like she heard my question although I never asked it aloud and she was attempting to answer it.

In my childhood, my parents would take us along when they went fishing at Kwanga Lake. This lake was up at the top of the hill in Southbay, the far end of the reserve and island where my mother is from. This was a remote lake and we had to take logging roads to get there. The story told was that a fisherman was spearing fish one morning. A beautiful Whitefish came across his sight line. He threw in his spear. But the fish kept swimming even though it had been speared. He continued fishing hoping he would see his fish again but the day ended and his speared fish never 'came up'. The next day, in Manitowaning Bay, another group of fishers were out. Much to their surprise, they caught a Whitefish with a spear in it. They were very surprised. When these stories caught up to each other, all parties knew this was the same fish but how did it get from one lake to another was the question. What was understood from that incident was that the island must have aqueducts or underwater tunnels that the fish can travel. These exceptional characteristics of the island made it that much more sacred. I am sure there are other places and more stories but I will share the ones that give a least a glimpse of the

beauty of my home and how these experiences were imprinting for what became important for me in teaching First Nations children.

I was fortunate as a child to have both sets of grandparents close by and both sets of great grandparents. We visited all of them regularly. The extended family was always around and part of our lives. My grandmother on my mother's side was a crafts maker. She made little birch bark canoes, corn and quill necklaces, little birch bark tipis and papooses. She also sewed things. She did not bead because we still used porcupine quills. Eventually, she taught me. First, I had to sit and observe as she made an entire canoe. I watched and then it was my turn. I was in shock. I picked up the pattern and etched it. She showed me how to start. In a short time, I made my first canoe with quill decorations on both sides. I remembered this for my teaching – to always model first. This way, the students would always do well. My great grandparents lived next door to Nokum's house. I would be encouraged to go and visit them. It is my great grandfather Daniel Wemigwans that my father used to go to for stories and to learn from. When I went alone for my visits, my grandfather would get up and call me over. He would speak to me in Anishnaabe and ask me to repeat what he said. He taught me some basics but what he mostly wanted me to learn was how to pray. I was pretty small. I could say what he wanted but I cannot remember today. I am grateful for this time. It probably tuned in my ear to really listen as that is the base for learning. He would pull out a bag of peppermints and offer me one. I loved this. To this day when I see peppermints, I go to this memory and feel loved.

My great grandparents on my dad's side I remember as well but I do not have a memory of interacting with them. I am sure we ran across to their house often as we lived across the street. My great grandmother on my father's side was a teacher. We had a one room school

house in Buzwah and she was the teacher. I have no recollection of this as I learned later. My grandparents lived in the house beside us. Because both my parents worked, we went to my grandparents after school each day. Perhaps it was my grandparents or great-grandparents that shaped my becoming of a teacher and also my inquiry into our knowing. One significant event in my childhood was the first powwow. My parents were on the powwow committee and instrumental in getting the first powwow going over 50 years ago. The big drum or powwow drum was my first sense of the drum. I don't remember dancing but my parents were adorned in buckskin regalia. And later, I had buckskin dance regalia too that my mother made for me. I did eventually become a dancer. But what I really loved was music and more importantly singing.

I always loved to sing. I can say I dream of songs I have never heard. I studied music formally at the Royal Conservatory as a budding pianist. This all took place when we moved off reserve to live in Ottawa, the traditional homeland of the Odawa's. I excelled quickly from my Beginner book to Grade 6 to 8 where I spent a little more time. My teacher would have me learn a piece from each section then move on to the next level. I went from Grade 1 to Grade 6 and skipped all the books in between. Maybe she was moving ahead to catch up to my age range for all I know but when I played in competitions with 60 to 80 competitors, I would win the gold most times. My nerves were my nemesis in performance and cost me a couple times. In high school I found Choral Ensemble as a class and I loved it. My Uncle gave me his old portable record player and my sister bought me albums. I listened to every one of them both sides until I memorized the songs. This is how I spent my time; learning songs, belting them out and practicing piano. I guess if I stuck with it I may have gone somewhere or would at least have a CD. Who knows but my high school career soon took a dramatic turn and I moved out west to

live with my father in my last year of high school. As a teenager I found other interests and soon dropped piano lessons. Invested time in music as a part of my lifestyle did not take place again until adulthood when I was given a significant gift.

The drum as gift. At my sister's wedding, she had a traditional give away as the conclusion of the ceremony. All the gifts were laid out on blankets covering the ground. I was in the bridal party as one of the bridesmaids. As we were invited to gather in a circle for the gift giving I noticed this drum. What a beautiful drum, I thought. I witnessed my sister picking up the drum and heading for the best man assuming it was meant for his best friend. But her husband stopped her and she was redirected to give it me. We were both surprised. I was in awe of my new drum, my first ever drum. I was also saddened because I had no songs and did not know at the time anyone that could give me songs. When I took the drum home and put it away I prayed over the drum that one day songs would come that I make good use of this drum and honour it for its purpose.

The powwow drum had always been a part of my life but I never saw myself as a singer, mostly because there were no women singing at the drum at the time. I remember going to my mom's friend's house and they had a big drum and a couple hands drums. We were told we could pick them up and check them out. I was hoping someone would sing. I think she was hosting rehearsals with a drum group around that time. As interested as I was in the drum and song, I did not see myself as part of that either because there were no women singing at the drums then. It was not until I moved out west that I witnessed women singing with the big drum.

Bowser. There was a big drum that came to St. Mary's school. The sister of the lead drummer was part of the drum group and a singer. I was amazed to see a woman at the drum and

became very interested. I was dancing for this drum at the time. It was a first introduction of culture to St. Mary's school as it had become the first Community School in the province. I did not know these people who were the drum group at first but if we say meeting people is not happenstance then I can say this family played a significant role in my life when I was raising my daughter. I became part of their family drum and I was invited to sing by the lead drummer, Bowser Poochay. These were our relatives as Saulteaux people. We speak the same language. It was Bowser who knew I was Anishnaabe and invited me to learn the songs and told me we were relatives". A long time ago, we came from over there," he said. He knew the stories of the sacred migrations. He said "a long time ago, the drum, the little drum of the midewewin, you could hear it at home (Yellowquill) but not anymore."

I spent the following years being taken in as family and attending ceremonies with my daughter. He could not imagine what it would be like to raise a child solely on your own. He felt sorry for me and Tanis and shared this with his wife. With her acceptance we travelled with them to seasonal ceremonies. The big drum was always a part of the ceremony. It would start with the pipe and then the drum songs would begin. The ceremonies went for hours . . . days. I was intent on listening to the songs and letting them become familiar. I noticed the tone changed slightly depending on the ceremony. No women gathered around this drum to support the singers. The drum was placed on the man's side of the lodge and the women had their side. This is how Bowser understood what ceremony was; where the laws of the drum and protocols were followed. Beyond the lodge, powwow was not considered ceremony to him. For him it was a new cultural adaptation to song and drum that was more social and women were welcome to sit at the drum.

Female traditional teachers and Elders. Irene became my female equivalent traditional teacher. As I worked for her preparing the sweat she would give me songs. She knew too that these were important to me and I always helped her sing. I can catch onto songs rather easily. I think this is a gift. I met Irene through a mutual friend, Laura who was my dear 'Kokum' of emotional support. She encouraged me to attend Irene's sweat. This was when my daughter was about four. I loved the women's energy in the sweat. I loved singing the songs. Sometimes, I would be invited to lead a round. She welcomed my songs. I do return to my reserve to see family whenever I can. My auntie had started singing. She encouraged me to learn her songs so I could sing with them. There were drum circles of just women and hand drums that had been happening for years. Women were also making drums and being told that this was always ours. I know in our ceremonial lodge the women are the Drum Chiefs. They are the ones who are the care takers for the drums. This is where I began to learn the songs from home. These songs are in my language. Over a 10- to 15-year period I attended ceremonies in Yellowquill to learn and partake. The learning was a bonus as I needed the support as a single mom. It was the ceremonies that gave me strength. Over this time, I learned a lot of songs from a lot of different teachers both Cree and Anishnaabe people.

Being invited to sing. I would not call myself a singer but some of the women knew I had songs that were readily shared. They began to ask me to sing prayer songs for different ceremonies. I always had medicines for prayer and smudge. There was a group of women that I began to have ceremony with. This is how I began to sing as prayer. Song is also prayer. When I began teaching at one of the "inner city" schools in Saskatoon, I started the day with smudge and sang to the students. I felt as a mom and a teacher and a believer in preserving the culture, to

start with ceremony was a natural course of action. The students responded so respectfully. We bonded with our morning circle. I share my story of my humble introduction to my drum where I knew I had no songs. But as I had prayed and hoped for teachers, all of this came. All of my teaching throughout my life I shared in teaching. If what I was given helped me it would help my students too.

Practical

It is my work experience as a teacher in the inner city of Saskatoon that brings me to this research. Centered in the heart of poverty the teaching assignment focused more on the care and nurturing of the students than implementing the curriculum. Students needed food and comfort. Our schools provided a breakfast program and a lunch program. As teachers we provided after school activities such as drum and song practice and dance practice. In the school we formulated a small dance troupe and presented in shows in various schools in the city and province throughout the school year. The dance troupe provided an outlet for the students, a social community, a family context and the students served as role models for the school. While it was important for the students to be part of the dance troupe, it was more difficult for the staff to support this.

In this school, it was the non-native staff who challenged the merit of the investment of time and the "pulling students" out on occasion. Feeling challenged to defend the merit of our volunteer investment of time which often brought us back to the school evenings and weekends for performances, I have thought about this long and hard. It appears where there exists a Western and non-Western dichotomy (Merriam & Associates, 2007) in an Indigenous school

wherein the First Nations teachers inherently bring forward teaching initiatives from an Indigenous perspective tensions among Western and the non-Western peoples heighten.

From a 24-year period as a teacher of Aboriginal students, first as a teacher associate and then as a teacher, I am more certain that drastic changes are needed to turn a significant failure rate to a great success rate. As Aboriginal teachers including an indigenous teaching and learning approach can turn things around for our students. Part of this is drum and song or teaching from the aesthetic realm. It allows for spiritual and emotional growth. It is not to say everyone needs healing but to recognize that everyone benefits from spiritual and emotional growth. Knowing drum and song remains critical. If the belief among Anishnaabe people that the ancestral voice works through us, then there is no stop and start in the time space continuum. Perhaps that drum and song finds their way to Aboriginal schools is guided by the spiritual will of the ancestors. There is healing to this drum and song, a reclaiming of our traditions, our voice, it is a celebration of who we are and that we are still here. Indigenous knowledge is more than baskets, handy crafts for tourists and dances per se (Merriam, 2007). Rather, "it is about excavating the technologies behind those practices and artifacts" (Hoppers, 2002, p. 9). And further, to become aware of those deeper spiritual meanings that become privileged information to those who seek this knowledge and become a part of ceremony.

Aboriginal student resistance. As I have stated before, I do not want to say that Aboriginal students are a problem or that Aboriginal education is a problem as Westerners view this at times. I could however say that western education has not been successful in graduating Aboriginal students and it is not congruent today with Aboriginal worldviews or epistemological and ontological views, nor has it ever been. We have survived to this point, but in the 21st

century education should not come at the expense of our identity as a people. It is time to reconsider education in the present condition for Aboriginal people and allow space for our own approaches to develop. Music and sound vibration from the people is just one small step toward engaging students in their learning process in a healthy and healing way.

To establish a teaching and learning field with roots in Indigenous knowledge makes sense for Aboriginal education. In the inner city where education has been ghettoized and it would seem the system does not care, it becomes a testing ground for inexperienced non-native teachers and administrators and a life-sentence in teaching for Aboriginal teachers. To introduce creative measures such as traditional music or sound vibration is not really new except maybe to non-native educators. This is a well understood practice within the culture. Research in this area would legitimize the practice and add to Indigenous scholarship. Aboriginal teachers know what works with Aboriginal students through lived experience in teaching. Western educators demand the scientific proof. In focusing the research on effects of sound vibration and music as healing science will only prove what has been understood by Indigenous people all along.

Significance to Education

In the context of Western education I implemented Anishnaabe perspectives, but navigating two worlds on completely opposite trajectories (Ermine, 1995) is challenged because of the difficulties that it brings forth. Ermine, in reference to Aboriginal epistemology stated education is about a move toward holism. Holism includes the spirit. It is the understanding that we are whole beings of body, mind, spirit and emotion. These are the complexities of our being. In education, since Descartes, the Western system does not recognize the spiritual component of our being (Hanohano, 1999). This has been detrimental for our learning as Indigenous people.

Reeling from the repercussions of colonialism has created an imbalance as a people. There needs to be avenues for healing alongside education. Further, by introducing indigenous worldview into the theoretical process allows a contrast in perspective to the idea of knowledge and its production. "The conceptual development of the ethical space opens up the possibility for configuring new models of research and knowledge production that is mutually developed through negotiation and respect in cross-cultural interaction" (Ermine, 2000, p. v).

Lather (1991), a feminist scholar, contends there is a need for intellectuals with emancipatory ideas to transform our own practices so that pedagogical and empirical work can be less towards our positioning as masters of truth and justice and more towards efforts to create space where those involved can speak and act for themselves. Further, Smith (2007) states imposing positional superiority over many Indigenous languages, knowledge and culture is the agency of colonial education. Hierarchies of theory and knowledge promptly developed accounting for the discoveries of the new world and were legitimated as the centre. Smith writes:

> Attempts to 'indigenize' colonial academic institutions, and/or individual discipline within them have been fraught with major struggles over what counts as knowledge, as language, as literature, as curriculum and as the role of intellectuals, and over the critical function of the concept of academic freedom. (p. 65)

Holism from the Anishnaabe epistemology includes the spiritual realm. Understanding our cultural teachings as knowledge plus creativity and spirit, our design for education are inclusive of these elements and the composition of a human being spiritually, mentally, psychologically and physically. "It is the affective elements-the subjective experience and observations, the communal relationships, the artistic and mythical dimensions, the ritual and

ceremony, the sacred ecology, the psychological and spiritual orientations-that have formed Indigenous education from time immemorial" (Cahete, 1994, p. 20).

I therefore proposed what better way to enliven the spirit by including all aspects of Indigenous learning and teaching through the sound vibration of song and drum. From the ancient practice rooted in ceremony and ritual to the modern classroom, the 'knowing' surrounding drum and song are still prevalent today. From Indian Control of Indian Education (1972) to RCAP (1996), we still reiterate our belief that Indigenous knowledge inclusions via cultural implementation are viable teaching threads for language acquisition to healing songs.

In Aboriginal education today, the drum is a part of the Aboriginal schooling as a central focus with regard to cultural input. It has become the central circle by which the students and teachers gather. In opening song or prayer song the day begins. It says we are still here. Our culture has been restored to its rightful place and its ceremony demarcates the traditional practice and teachings it encompasses. The teachings of the drum and song are shared and the effect is a more cohesive student body tied by ceremony and the drum circle. The Elder Sakewew Tamowin working in the high school in Saskatoon once said,

> The drum is the centre of ceremony. Then are the singers who make a circle around That drum. Next are the dancers who dance out our songs. Then there are the onlookers participate in the circle that encapsulates the dancers. Next is the community that surrounds the ceremony. After that is everyone else. All are part of it and all are affected by it. (Kitwiyhat, 2005, np)

Significance to Healing

There is a need for healing in First Nations communities. There is an over proportionate amount of drug and alcohol abuse. The suicide rate is well above the national average. There is an over representation of First nation men and women in the penal systems. In the history of Canada, First Nation people have experienced mass slaughter, starvation, land relocation, extreme poverty and most recently the residential schooling system. The colonial onslaught has been a great hard ship on Canada's Aboriginal peoples from which we are still reeling.

Song and drum are healing in and of themselves. It is the vibration that comes forward. Song has always been a part of the doctoring lodge. This is not a medical approach nor can indigenous healing be measured by western scientific ways. What is healing, is the ability to call on the drum spirit for healing. It is healing to us that the drum and songs are still here and survived with us.

In my language we would say "menoh" as the appealing quality of something. I tried to instill "menoh" as a way to teach children by making their learning enjoyable, by instilling aesthetic learning as a way of response to literature and as a way to become familiar with language. I relied on my creativity to instill in students a love of learning. I have heard Elders today express their concern over the youth and their lack of ability to be creative.

Mino Bimahdzewin: Living a good life and the medicine of song and drum. Based on the Aztec legend transcribed and written in English as a children's story, the birth of sound was an event of significance worth. The birth of sound in indigenous cultures is part of the oral tradition. The stories mainly refer to creation and the creation of first things for example the first rattle that was given to man as a gift. The stories vary according to nation. From my culture the

Odawa and Potawattimi or Anishnaabe, our ceremonial lodge, the Midewewin, we protect the sounding of the rattle. In the words of Jim Dumont, Mide Elder, the rattle in turn protects the people and ensures our continuance as a people (Diamond, 1994). Many Indigenous cultures hold sound vibration as sacred and necessary for healing. There is an understanding in Anishnaabe worldview of the healing power of song and drum. Song and drum go hand in hand as crucial elements to the culture. It is word and music that distinguishes man from the animal world.

Don Campbell, a skilled musician of the Royal Conservatory, learned through an experience that sound vibration is powerful, moving and healing. In his work *The Roar of Silence* he speaks of his epiphany, wherein he experienced an altered state of consciousness through music. This prompted further research and experimentation in the area of music's healing element through tone, vibration, and meditation. He shares a story of the monks who stopped the morning chanting and became sick. When chanting was re-instilled things restored to order and their health improved.

Exploring the healing power of sound vibration will teach us something to understand today that could improve education for Aboriginal students. Although we do not speak to this publically, our healing ceremonies were forced underground and people became cautious in who they would share knowledge with, from the onset of colonialism. Ceremonies became protected. To learn more one would have to be chosen as a student to learn all the intricacies of doctoring and what would constitute healing from drum, song and rattle. Today the drum calls me; I am drawn to song as part of my own healing and maybe those understanding are part of our knowing from blood memory.

The Pathway of Research

Considering the subject matter of wanting to find archival resources, I went to library archives only to learn the archival records were now stored on-line. In a fast moving digitized world this made sense, so much for white gloves and combing through old printed sources. I was directed to the library website wherein these resources were stored. When I typed in Ojibwa drum and song there were over 2,000 sources. I began combing through looking for archival resources I felt were the most pertinent to my research focus. I noticed in more then one place that the resource was actually an audio recording of song. I will go back to retrieve these songs in time as that is a part of my life's work – my hope is to return the songs of the Anishnaabe to my home community. There were so many resources I knew I could not view them all in the time I had to compose my work. I had to be very selective in the resources I sought out.

I am aware that once you find the call number of a few good resources that you can peruse the library shelf and find more related to your topic. I also had a lot of Densmore's (1913) work at home that I'd acquired from a private collection. I came to realize I had a plethora of resources available and that maybe I would not use every resource that I had found. At the beginning of the process the scope of my research was more global findings on song and drum in various Indigenous cultures that use song and drum in healing practise as I thought all of this would be beneficial to make my points. However, as I began to write my focus narrowed to Anishnaabe as this field of study was comprehensive enough.

I also spoke with scholars such as Dr. Carl Urion, an anthropologist of the Crow Nation and former professor of University of Albert. In our numerous conversations I could always run things by him and get his perspective. As a retired scholar he was generous with his time and I

found him extremely knowledgeable on many aspects of cultural understanding from his own people and the subject area of music of Indigenous people. In sharing his teachings, I was always left thinking about what we spoke about as many points he made resonated with my work. This always inspired further discussion. I completely valued Dr. Urion's insight and extensive knowledge on various aspects of my research that brought more questions to me as I attempted to narrow the search.

In my teaching experience the children in my classrooms were from anywhere in the province therefore I potentially could have Dene, Cree, Saulteaux (Anishnaabe), Dakota, Lakota, Nakota nations represented at any given time. My class population was predominantly Cree with a few Saulteaux. In researching further into traditional teachings of the drum and song, I reflected on my teacher and Elder being Saulteaux and seeing me as a direct relative since our language is the same – Anishnaabe. His 'big drum' was at all the drum classes in my high school and at every powwow as well as every ceremony I attended with he and his wife in Yellowquill. One of my female Elders and friend, Laura Wasacasse, who was also my teacher was also Saulteaux –Cree. Therefore, narrowing the focus to Anishnaabe as who I am and my teaching from Saulteaux-Anishnaabe made sense for the context of teaching and learning experience.

I also learned from Cree people - songs, language, culture, the way of the pipe, sweats, fasts. I like to honour this relationship and acknowledge all my Cree teachers, friends and colleagues. I learned a lot about song and drum embedded in the culture that is relative to the research. For example the piece sub-titled "My Relatives" is reflection on some of these Cree teachings. Having lived among Cree people for over 20 years and in participating in their ceremonies and gatherings, I cannot help but feel a big part of my life is influenced by the Cree

as well. Making reference to the Cree as relatives is not just a polite term of phrase as we are related through the Algonquin language phylum. The Cree language is a branch off the Anishnaabe or Ojibwa language wherein Anishnaabe or Ojibwa is the first branch off the Algonquin phylum. That is why so many words are identical or at times with slight variance such as the Anishnaabe use 'sh' instead of the Cree 's' (for example, shesheqwan is rattle for Anishnaabe verses sisikwan rattle for Cree). There has also been tremendous intermarriage that in fact has produced an Oji-Cree Nation in Manitoba. That is why the pipe ceremonies are almost identical. Only the old people know of this relationship anymore it seems. Knowing one's history is important.

Choosing what Elder's and language speakers as well as scholars was more by those that shared teachings relative to my work and they were predominantly Saulteaux – Anishnaabe. There is a growing number of Anishnaabe scholars. Before I wrote my first piece of research my father cautioned me not to use the newest term "Indigenous" when I spoke with Elders. Anishnaabe scholars draw from Anishnaabe worlview to define their frameworks and focus of study.

The Indigenous knowledge literature that I have read is predominantly an argument for Indigenous knowledge research to be a part of the academic institution and a critique of the Western dominated institution. This critique has been done very well by numerous scholars such as Smith (1999), Kovachs (2009) and Grenier (1998) but it is not my standpoint. I embrace the work of Sinclair (2013), Simpson (2011) and Gehl (2013) who draw from cultural teachings to define their research within the worldview of Anishnaabe. That is why choosing Anishnaabe

scholarship in resources and keeping the wisdom of Saulteaux-Anishnaabe Elders was paramount to my work.

The language speakers that I sought out were friends that are the speakers. I connected through on-line sources for immediate response. If I had a question concerning the community drum I was grateful for Gordie Odjig, my brother-in-law's input as he is a long standing dancer and singer for Wikwemikong Drum. Normally I would ask my parents and I have when I am with them. My father has given me many word translations. My mom is harder to access. My friends were easy to text and get a response for something I needed to know quickly while I was in the writing process. I trust them as my friends and relatives. I also had my sister, Alanis King, review a chapter of my work. I was in a stalemate with my writing and I needed her input. She has worked in the creative writing field as a published playwright for at least 30 years. She studies archival work to get the background information for her writing. She also lives among our people and has learned a lot of cultural knowledge that she shares with me on occasion. Ultimately, she was the best qualified second view I needed to help me pair down my chapter four. She kept the main thought clear and advised I lop off the global Indigenous focus since I had too much in there. Needless to say I was grateful for her input.

In composing this piece of research has not been solely my effort. I have asked lots of questions of language or historical clarification to friends and relatives in my community. I thought about who my significant teachers have been throughout the years and who were my greatest influences in learning to sing and the drum's teachings. In narrowing my view from global perspectives to Anishnaabe and Saulteaux-Anishnaabe as well as Cree my research became tighter. Music is a big field of study. I had to keep it limited to drum and song and that is

my experience as well. People, literature resources many times came by happenstance. It was not a set course to the library to draw out a number of resources. My first round of literature did not even make it into this document. What is here is a more Anishnaabe focused concise perspective that I hope says something to the deeper meaning and understandings of drum and song.

Chapter 4 Findings

This chapter includes some of my findings from archives, Elders teachings, and story or personal experience. Although there were numerous resources, I chose ones relative to Anishnaabe song and drum and the traditional understandings around it as well as some powerful teachings from our relatives the Nehiyowak (Cree). The idea of song and drum in schools has always been with the understanding that song and drum are the instruments of traditional culture and are used in ceremony to carry the prayer. The purpose of this research is to explore the deeper meaning relative to traditional culture. In my teaching experience some schools have song and drum in ceremony with the students. Traditional practice is put forward in schools with 100 percent Aboriginal students through the pipe, seasonal feast, round dance and smudge.

I introduce the chapter with a piece from an Aztec legend that depicts how music came to the earth. Like Anishnaabe, there are many origin stories that tell of the creation of how things came to be. I speak to the relationship understood by certain Elders who know this country's history through language connections – a place where anthropology could not begin to speculate as non-speakers nor have inclusion in the circle of collective memory. I use a framework of thunder to represent the drum and various kinds of thunder to describe metaphorically the depictions of story. Various aspects of ceremonial practice are highlighted wherein Anishnaabe song and drum are a part.

Initially I describe the context of education making the distinction between education that is life experience and education that is formal schooling. I introduce the order of thunders (female) in a scene from a play of an Anishnaabe playwright Alanis King. I draw from cultural understanding of the drum as thunders and organize the stories and archival findings in four main

categories of thunder relating to the elements; thunder of the fire, wind, earth and water and put the naming in the Anishnaabe language. Thunder of fire is the literal understanding that thunderbirds shoot fire bolts from their eyes and this is their natural power. Here I share a brief teaching of the order of the elements and follow this same order with the elements and thunder.

Thunder of wind is about the power of the wind, the power of song and the power of voice. Thunder of earth is representative of the power of thunder in stories related to the earth. Thunder of water reflects the natural association of the water and rain it brings.

The prophecy of the 7th fire speaks to returning to the path to find the bundles that were left along the journey of the Great Migration (Simpson, 2010). The journey westward brought the Anishnaabe into Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. The geographical roadmap of the journey westward is loosely paralleled in the order of stories. We say the journeys began from upper Michigan and Minnesota areas as evident in Vennum's work *The Ojibwa Drum Dance: Its History and Construction* (1982). In a sense the literature combs over the geographic areas. It is also a search for what is left along the trails as mentioned in the prophecy of the 7th Fire. Archives tell one story in a depiction of time a few decades ago or more.

Lastly, I introduce the origin stories of Cree Elder Walter Bonaise who speaks to song and drum as a natural way of life in relating to the spirit of things. Having spent many years living among the Cree, I have also learned a great deal from these Elders and knowledge keepers and through Elder Bonaise and wish to recognize that.

And All of You was Singing

…And the wind cried;

"Come, come, musicians of the sun. The earth is calling you."

The arguing made my hands become claws of lightning,

And my voice become the fury of thunder,

And in the blackness of my clouds, the sun drowned.

Afraid, the musicians of the sun ran into the arms of the wind,

which gently carried their melodies into the arms of you, the earth.

Your silence opened.

Your waking dawn sang.

Your dreaming man sang.

Your moving waters and your flying birds sang.

Your waiting mother sang.

All of you was singing.

Music had come to the earth. (Lewis, 1991, pp. 19–28)

The world of the Aztecs and Mayans is filled with a supernatural quality of aliveness not unlike the Anishnaabe world. In their complex system of gods, many personified the forces of nature. Tezcatlipoca, took on various forms but mostly represented night. Tezcatlipoca asked Quetzalcoatl – the god who represented the spirit of the wind – to journey to the sun and bring the musicians back to Earth. *All of You was Singing* is the retelling of this myth (adapted from Lewis, 1991) Lewis contends, that his sense of this myth is the profound importance of music to the well being of life. "To sing is an affirmation of the melody and rhythm of life," (Lewis, 1991, p. 1).

This Aztec legend was my inspiration to write on song and drum, an element of music. Music is far greater a being then what we witness in the classroom. We all know and have heard

the expression that 'music moves the mortal soul'. Song is a spiritual communication and I believe developed before the appearance of the voice box and before we became speakers. I believe it is an essential part of everyday learning in the classroom or outside of it. It is a sacred component of our being and essential component to our existence.

It may seem peculiar that as an Anishnaabe kwe (me) that I would begin this chapter with an Aztec legend. Knowing this is a translation made in the 16th century from a Nahua manuscript by Irene Nicholson, it is an Aztec myth of Indigenous origin. I see deep seated elements of our belief systems echoing. I have learned from an Elder that Mayan is also Miakuhn or Miingan (Algonquin/Anishnaabe/Cree) all meaning wolf. The Dine whose name means the people of the four directions and countless Indigenous peoples whose name translates to 'the people', I believe are all related. To prove this relationship is not the central focus of my research but to reveal the spirit in song and its worthwhile endeavor to teach drum and song in school is.

Origin Story

Origin story from an Anishnaabe perspective is Atsokanan meaning Sacred Story. Atsokanan are the teaching tools to explain and enforce the Laws of the Orders, the Creator's instructions and the values to live by (King, personal conversation, 2015). Johnston (1976) describes the young children's questions that necessitate story: "who gave to me the breath of life? . . . the power to heal? . . . The old men and women thought about it and gave their answers in the form of stories, songs, prayers, rituals and ceremonies" (pp. 11–12).

Simpson (2013) in conversation with Manitowabi refers to the story of Original Man and his first journey around the earth. Through his visit with multiple aspects of Creation our many

ways of Nishnabeg knowing become revealed. She quotes: "Original Man learns about the world... by visiting, observing, reflecting, naming, singing, dancing, listening, learning-by-doing, experimentation, consulting with Elders, storytelling and by engaging in ceremony" (p. 293).

Origin stories bring us back to the fundamental teachings of who we are and what we are about. It is up to us to find our place in the story as we are a part of it just as the stories are a part of us. The breath of life is in the stories. The following story adapted from Johnston's (1976) depiction is the origin story of music.

> *Chibiabos – The first musician. Nananozho had four older brothers – Chibiabos, Mudjeekwis, and Debajemud, Nanabozho was the youngest. Chibiabos came home from time to time and therefore became friends with Nanabozho. Chibiabos was a musician and was always invited to ceremonies and gatherings to share his music of drum, song and flute. He sang for people and for the trees, the grasses, the meadows the waters. He also taught people music. He also taught hunting calls. He made drums, and flutes. There was one occasion where all four brothers met on the day that Nanobozho married. Chibiabos sang for this happy event. Mudjeekwis-first born brother was the warrior who took exception to Chibiabos playing music over becoming a man of courage. He felt he was squandering his life away by not training to become a warrior. He challenged him to take on bebon (winter). Chibiabos was angered by this and said I will show you my courage. He took up a bow and arrow and got in his canoe to cross the lake. It was very stormy and dangerous to cross at that time. "Wait!" he was told but he did not listen. The first wave swept over him and he drowned.*

> *Nanabozho was so sad he went to the medicine people to bring his brother back from the bottom of the lake. All of his friends began to drum and sing and chant. Chibiabos returned from his death. Song and music had conquered death. In remembrance of Chibiabos' return to life he was declared to be the first of the underworld of water and earth. Chibiabos no longer made music himself but he made music through the rivers, leaves, trees, mountains, birds, and men. Music was considered the sound of the soul (pp. 156–158).*

Johnston shares this story as one depiction of how music came to be the echo of the soul. These stories would vary within each community and/or geographic region.

Turning toward my experience

I have always had a keen interest in music and a love of it. When I heard the singers in the powwow at home it peeked my interest to learn these songs too. I came to realize the road to learning is not as easy as I had hoped. There are protocols to learn in exchange for songs and there is a way of learning that would only work for some people. In the digital age it is very easy to record songs and learn them by listening repeatedly. These devices were never available before and a lot of Elders today do not believe in recording songs to learn them. If a person is musically gifted the songs are readily picked up.

Learning song. I first wanted to learn songs many years ago before I received my drum as a gift. I had attended an Aboriginal conference with my mom. There was a drum group and dancers featured in the evening for entertainment. The fellow I was sitting with encouraged me to join the women singing with the drum. "I can't I said. I don't know the songs" as much I was delighted to be encouraged to sing with them. "You can't learn the songs sitting here. Go and

join them and try to learn them." This fellow had no vested interest in my singing, and now I can see he was doing the right thing by encouraging a young person to just learn. I could see the women standing around the singers singing in high pitched voices but I was too self-conscious to join them. I wanted to know "what was the women's role?" in relation to the drum. Did they have a role? At that time I did not know other women who were drumming, it is only later that I saw women with hand drums and singing at the powwow drum and more recently at round dances. I see my research here as two fold. There is that from which I have "picked up along the trail" as the prophecy states "in our search to re-gather the bundles left alongside the trail" and that which I have gleaned from the literature. Learning in a traditional way is still happening if you can find a teacher who is willing to share their knowledge.

Maybe it is the time spent with Maggie and Bowser that I learned the significance of song relative to ceremony. I knew when Bowser invited me to sing and learn I would only sing with him. It is not as easy to learn the sweat lodge songs or songs sung at ceremony. It was not easy to learn Bowser's songs because he taught in the old way…when you learn the song it is yours. I believe songs are shared within a family because they are generated through the family. It could be termed intergenerational knowing or knowledge transfer. That is the ideal but not always a constant when there are Elders who share their songs with their daughters instead of their sons because the sons are struggling with alcohol or in some cases addictions. Songs are passed down through a family. When song is a gift of one person, it is likely the gift of the children.

Nimkii Ka (it is thundering) – the thunderers

I introduce the thunders as a framework for this chapter to report on findings because thunder is related to sound. Some drums actually sound like thunder. It is also a common term

of phrase amongst the Anishnaabe. There is a relationship to thunder and thunder is a dodem – or spirit in our clan system.

Thunder – Nimkii. Thunder beings. One exceptional expression of story is through theatre. Theatre allows for every voice and every language. Alanis King, my sister a playwright and artistic director of 30 years shares a scene from her first publication that animates the thunder beings as told by Shirley Williams an Elder from home (Wikwemikong).

Scene 5 –excerpt from Wisakedjak by playwright Alanis King with Paula Sherman

Glossary of Terms

Four Bi-mi-diingwe-siwejig nimkii-kwewag: Rolling Thunder Women

Binoojiinyag e-wiiji-niimtowaad Wiskedjak-kwisan: The Children Who Come To Dance With Wiskedjak

Ogichitaa-ninwag: Warriors

E-mkowaataagozijig ki-weziinh: Elders Who Give Advice

...Lightning flashes in the distance and there is faint rumbling thunder. Four Bi-mi-diingwe-siwejig nimkii-kwewag (Rolling Thunder Women) emerge and dance across the clearing. They raise up Wisakedjak in a healing ceremony. Gete approaches and cleanses him with cedar water. She gives him ceremonial clothes. He dresses....

Wisakedjak

Miigwech Bi-mi-diingwe-siwejig nimkii-kwewag. (Rolling Thunder Women.)

Thunderbirds

Debewewin (truth).

Wisakedjak

Debwewin.

Wisakedjak

Binoojiinyag e-wiiji-niimtowaad Wiskedjak-kwisan (The Children Who Come To Dance With Wiskedjak). Kendawswin.

Thunderbirds

Kendawswin (knowledge).

Wisakedjak

Ogichitaa-ninwag (Warriors)! Mushkowziwin (strength).

Thunderbirds

Mushkowziwin.

Wisakedjak

E-mkowaataagozijig ki-weziinh (Elders who give advice). Mushkowendimin (I give him a firm will).

Thunderbirds

Mushkowendimin.

Wisakedjak

Gchi miigwech. I need to get to their hearts.

Thunderbirds

Mino bemaadziwin.

Thunderbirds exit. Wisakedjak is renewed in ceremonial dress.

Lights out.

End of Act I.

(King, 2013, p. 29)

The order of thunders is animated in this scene. It is a scene I remember from another of my sister's plays that I witnessed titled *The Manitoulin Incident*. I was so awestruck by the animation that it brought tears to my eyes. In conversation with my sister Alanis, she reveals,

> Shirley told us the story as the above order of thunders during the storm, first we hear them coming in as the Rolling Thunder Women then The Children who come to dance are choppy and short spurts all over then the Warriors are loud and booming and crashing and really present then finally as they're heading away it's the Elders who give advice as they are gently moving on. (King, personnel communication, 2015)

The thunder birds begin here by their first happening in reference to the names for thunder, the understanding of them and the order for them. When I read this scene it strikes me that the names describe sound. I can visualize the thunder coming in through this scene's depiction and I can hear the escalation of their sounding as the storm develops and passes through. That re-creation is in the drums sounding although gently – the drum was never to be hit as it is today. The drum represents the heartbeat as the rhythm of the universe. It also represents the thunder birds. Drums are sometimes termed 'thunderers'.

Nimkii beneshii. The Anishnaabe term for thunder is nimkii. In our belief system thunder comes from a thunderbird we call nimkii. There are many kinds of thunderbirds that have many different purposes. Thunderers stems from a cultural understanding of how thunder and lightning is generated. It is from Morriseau (1980) that I first heard the term 'thunderer' used in reference to a drum. I have used this term as analogous to many things. In hearing Morriseau use it to speak about his drum I wondered if this was a common term among the

Anishnaabe as if it is rooted in our cultural beliefs and understandings of the thunder beings. Morriseau suspended a drum from the ceiling. It was like an oversized hand drum but only a few inches in depth. Its sound mimicked rolling thunder and he laughed as he made it sound. This was about 20 years ago when I had just started out teaching and I came across this dusty old video on the shelf in an art room. I brought it home to watch. It was the first time I viewed Morriseau speak, although I was well aware of his art work.

Remembering. Thunder is an understandable term culturally to be applied to various things or events. My homelands are a place of great thunderstorms where the thunder can be so loud it shakes the house and windows rattle. A clap of thunder before lightning when it is a perfectly sunny day can be such a surprise, it can make you jump. I love the rain storms. I have never been afraid of thunder. We often got pulled out of the water in a budding thunder storm, despite us wanting to stay. Rain above, immersed in water, I was never happier.

Turning towards my relations. I am related to the thunder beings. These are my dodem (clan) on my mother's side. I have always seen things in an analogous way. Therefore, nimkii or thunder is the central place in my research, and the framework for understanding the world of drum and song. Thunder is the sound of drum and thunder is medicine as drum and song are good medicine. We do not see the thunders as they come in, we hear them. When the thunder beings arrive in the spring they mark the change in season and the time for ceremonies to begin. The drums begin their sounding taking their cue from the thunders of the sky and echoing their sound.

Nimkii kaa miiwaa woyasaa (thunder and lightning or) – Thunder and Fire

The Elder once said out of the darkness, first there was fire, then there was wind and then there was earth.

The thunder beings shoot lightning and fire through their eyes. Lightning can set anything to fire. There is only one tree that is safe to take safety under and that is the birch tree. Just as the buffalo is central to the buffalo people in supplying food and every tool necessary for their existence it is the same for the birch tree for the Anishnaabe. A singular sheet of bark from any birch tree once made a canoe for transport. Birch bark sheets covered our tipis and wigwams. We made baskets for carrying. The bark can be used for tea in lean times. It is considered the "king-child" of all the trees because it is so central to supplying for all our needs.

Nanabozho and the thunderbeings.

One day Naanbzho set out to find an eagle feather for his bow. His grandmother had told him he could find the eagles in the far mountains. He set out on his journey and walked for many miles. As he approached the mountains he could see a nest way up at the top. He began his climb up. After a lot of hard work climbing he came upon the nest. In it were baby eagles.

Nanabozho thought how can I get these to trust me and decided to change himself into a waboose (rabbit). He played with the birds and noticed their fluffy plumes. These are the feathers I need, he thought. Once he gained their trust he grabbed a stick and killed them. He stuffed his bag with feathers. Suddenly from the sky this screeching sound and two thunderbirds came upon him shooting lightning and thunder. Nanabozho began to run down the mountain and away from the thunderbirds. He realized his baby eagles

were actually baby thunderbirds and the parents were fiercely angry. They continued to pursue him firing lightning.

As Nanabozho got to the bottom he saw a hallowed out log of a birch tree. The lightning was following very close behind. As he crawled in the log the lightning continued but did not hurt him. Marks came across the tree from lightening strikes. Eventually, the lightning stopped and he was safe to travel home.

This is why the birch tree is sacred to the people. It is a protector from the thunderbirds. It is marked as a reminder of what happened with Nanabozho. And it has a special marking of the thunderbird eye in it to remind us this is where the lightning comes from. If we are ever caught in a thunderstorm we are to seek refuge under the birch tree knowing it will protect us. (adapted from Densmore, 1928, pp. 381–384)

Aboriginal education – White fire. The experiences of Aboriginal people's formal schooling have been traumatic. Although we have experienced a history of subjugation and in some cases horrendous abuse, now is the time to step away from the systems to create and define our own. My first witness to the possibilities to work with community Elders in our schools was when I worked alongside one of our Elders while engaging in research for my Master's degree. The Elder was Bowser Poochay from Yellowquill Reserve (originally Nut Lake) who also taught me songs. When I worked with him, he was to teach drum and song with elementary school children in Grade 3. I found the experience transformative. Not only did I become informed by how the Elder contributed to the student's education in a positive way, but I felt we both learned from each other. Bowser was well aware that we were related by language and by the history of relocations of the people. He shared his travel journeys which were always about being invited

to sing and drum for various communities. The communities he travelled to, no longer had the songs. He sang for their ceremonies.

Within. I use the term within to refer to inside the square box of formal schooling. Understanding schooling as within is different than education. Education does not fit in a box, it belongs and is present everywhere we go – in families and in communities.

I worked in an urban context in core neighborhood schools with an all Aboriginal student population. Each school had a drum and a dance troupe. In the high school we transported students to sweats (as they are still doing in the Catholic system today). What may not be readily accessible to students in terms of ceremonies, we tried to provide. The ceremonies gave a sense of cohesion to the staff and student group. This was a more recent development at the school. As the sense of freedom to provide cultural practice was building with new administration we would add more to what the school had to offer. The school was governed by an Aboriginal parent council who served as an advisory body to the administration.

The big drum at each of these schools was provided for the students to accompany the dance troupe. The dance troupes were guided to see themselves as school ambassadors. We never had a problem. A hand drum was always brought by the Elder or pipe carrier who shared his ceremonial songs in pipe ceremonies or through a smudge. In the high school the Elder made hand drums with the young men and taught them songs. These drums were used at the round dance when the school opened up to the community.

Without. The term without is in contradistinction to the term 'within' therefore meaning outside the box of formal schooling and situated within the Aboriginal community.

The following are archival facts and origin stories relative to the first big drums to come to my home community. There is also a brief description of the midewiwin lodge. These stories stand outside the place of formal schooling. The songs and ceremony are a part of us. Despite the efforts of the residential schooling process in its effort to assimilate the language and culture of the Anishnaabek, there were not successful. These ceremonies have been maintained and the number of lodges has grown steadily over the past 50 years.

Our Home Drum and Teachings

As Anishnaabe kwe, song and drum have always been a part of my life in terms of having the big drum as part of my community, Wikwemikong. My cousin says the first drum came home via Mrs. Manitowabi. It was her son Ross who formulated the first big drum group. I believe it was by his vision that the powwow grounds are made the way they are today. My mother and father were a part of the first powwow committee. I have heard our drum from its start. I would have been an infant. My mother made buckskin dresses for us. Buckskin was the material for the first dresses. Powwow was a cultural revival measure.

The midewiwin our lodge for ceremony uses the "little boy water drum". Midewiwin means the good-hearted way. This drum is made in ceremony from the old way or the original teachings. This drum is smaller than the big drum and contains water. The reverberation of its sound can set off another drum miles away. Its sounding travels far and can be heard from a great distance. Densmore (1979) reveals beliefs and teachings around the midewiwin in an interview with Gage'dwin, Main'gans, and Na'waji'bigo'kwe the members of the midewiwin.

According to Gage' dwin, the medewiwin was to preserve the knowledge of herbs in prolonging life as the principal idea.

In addition to ceremonial songs there are songs for medicines. The drum used in ceremonies for the songs is called the mitig' wakik meaning wooden kettle more commonly known as the waterdrum (Densmore, 1979).

Aboriginal women sing ceremonial songs to their babies while carrying them; within these songs is our language. It is the beginning stage of instilling the language to our young (Eshkibok-Trudeau in Neal, 2000). Lodge songs were passed on when preparing or cleaning the lodge. Edna Manitowabi, an Elder and Mide teacher from home says the water songs are the woman's responsibility.

My reserve community Wikwemikong has a big drum or powwow drum. We still remember the teachings around the big drum also termed the peace drum. The following story was shared by the late Basil Johnston, an Anishnaabe literary artist of renown.

The Peace Drum (adapted from Johnston).

It has always been said that the big drum came to the Anishnaabe from Lakota. In this time we were infringing on each other's territories due to the encroachment of settlers. There was much bloodshed. The women on both sides were grief stricken. One Lakota woman retreated to fast. She gave a prayer offering and began to pray for the warring to stop and for there be peace among the people. Eventually she fell asleep and as she was sleeping she was given a vision of a big drum. She was also given song. When she awoke she told the men of her dream. They made the drum as she had been instructed. She taught them the songs. The drum was to be given as a gift to the Ojibwa. In the

transfer the drum would sound four times before the singers chimed in. When the ceremony of the big drum referred to as the peace drum or even peace drum treaty, the warring stopped. Everyone was suffering in this time. It was better to pull together then to kill each other due to the infringing on each other's hunting grounds.

Johnston introduces the origin story of the big drum coming to the people as a peace drum. A similar version of this story is mentioned by William Baker the last drum maker of the Lac Court Oreilles Ojibwa. The big drum was part of a peace treaty as an offering and was formerly known as the peace drum. The following is the words of William Baker as he makes his last drum. Sadly, he has no audience of young men as he would have hoped so he speaks to the camera as they create this archival film in the '70s.

Last Drum maker.

He [Elder William Baker] makes a platform for his large water tub with some 2 by 4's aand a wood sheet. He then fills a galvanized pail with water at the outdoor pump and fills his tub pail by pail. He drags the hide out of his house from where he had it stored.

He states that drum making was an authority given to each individual member of the drum. The drum was passed on to have peace with the other tribes of people. We did not originally have this drum. He gives no further explanation here but I previously shared this story as told by Johnston (1976) giving a description of the warring times between the Lakota and the Anishnaabe at the time of encroachment. Our first drum was called the Peace Drum. I have since heard variations to this story including the depiction from Tailfeather's of the Gros Ventre. The Gros Ventre people are also known as the Waterfalls people and they are the Salteaux

Indians of Montana. These are our relatives as they speak the Algonquin dialect and their depiction of the story is similar enough to be identified as the same story.

> *...he spreads the hide out and measures the length and width. He then trims the rough edges and then cuts the hide in half. He places it in the water to soak placing a big rock on top the hide to weigh it down into the water. He then covers the tub with a large wooden sheet. With two helpers he begins taking wooden pieces about a foot in length with a metal hoop to assemble the wooden pieces together to formulate a drum base. It becomes obvious right away that he is assembling half of a wooden barrel. The extra hands help to assemble and hold the pieces in place within the first metal ring as he taps a few nails to secure it into place. He then adds the top metal ring by tapping it gently into place. He hammers leather straps into place and nails them to the base toward the top end.*
>
> *...as he shaved the square edges with a carving knife, he continues his story. When the drum was brought here it was before I was born. It was a ceremonial war powwow drum. This here is a women's hand powwow drum, the same category. Now people have gone beyond the drum and it's all about music and performing for the White people. This is not what it's about. I will not participate in a marching band drum. "I guess I am too much of an Indian." He gets the hide out...*
>
> *He carries the hide into a treed area. He drapes the hide over a log and begins to trim the sinew with a butcher knife. He clears a big section. He doesn't know when the water will ferment and remove the hair off. He refuses to use chemicals. Again he soaks the hide. "Rush it is no good." He exclaims. He further reflects on young people keep*

asking 'when will the drum be ready' or 'is it done yet'. He does not like the "hurry up" people. It takes time to do this work.

He retreats to his house and is seated at the kitchen table to sew the skirt. He comments on his use of cloth which is readily available these days. At one time, they fashioned the drums skirt with bear claws, teeth of animals for decoration. Since white men came, they copy the material of the white man. He cuts into the cloth. He sews everything by hand. He says that he could use a sewing machine but doing it by hand is important. There are two pieces, actually four to attach to the belt called flaps. The belt is 18 inches long. The four flaps would have four people working on each of them. He talks as he sews a ribbon across the entire length of the skirt. I notice that his stitching is impeccable and reminiscent of my grandmother's hand sewing. He can't work too long. His eyes get tired.

Outside in the trees, he searches for 'y' shaped branches. His helper takes two from him. Although it would seem logical to suspend the drum from the crook of the 'y' shaped branch which is what I assumed. I am uncertain how the drum is suspended because he carves a slightly bent branch and secures a carved out second branch to fit into the other so as to make a 'y'. Maybe he couldn't find any more branches suitable to his needs.

(Vennum, 1978)

This is interesting to me because he never speaks about the formulation of the drum stand and the reasoning for its suspension. I am aware there is ceremonial understanding to all of this that Bowser taught me. Bowser's drum was always suspended in a cradle that he made wherein the four poles fit into the stand. The drum actually bounced when it was hit.

He sews corn beads into ties that hang across the drum with the yarn tassels. The field is black and white so I can't decipher if the corn is dyed or colored. "Song is ceremony," he says. "Supposed to be song (sung) four times over." He applies the flaps in the four directions. "Some paint with 'up above' like the thunderbird or an eagle. An eagle has special power you know."

When I sang with Bowser he would go four rounds just as William describes. If the dancers still looked energetic he would go an extra two rounds. Sometimes the eagle whistle gets blown on the drum and the song continues for many more push-ups. In ceremony, the songs are four rounds. Song is ceremony. That is why I am writing this paper. I believe what I hoped to discover about song was its power spiritually. It is affirmed in the wisdom of the Elders by statements like 'song is ceremony'.

He wraps the drum in a cloth and carries it over his back to the powwow grounds where the crowd waits for him in anticipation. He has been invited there to share and demonstrate this old way. He sets the drum up in the cradle. It is suspended. He begins singing an old song, a word song from what I can decipher.

This film recording has assisted in keeping that song alive today. Those first four drum beats are significant before singing. In Anishnaabe territory when it is done this way, it honours the recognition of the big drum as a peace drum and it honours the treaty agreement between the Anishnaabek and the Lakota. It honours the woman who had this vision. By this simple four honour beats we are connected to the ancestors who would be glad to hear it.

Thunder and Wind

Wind is the carrier for sound and echo, song and story.

Wind is the carrier of sound. It takes the voice and brings it around to the other side of the hill. There are times when we think we are alone in nature picking berries or gathering medicines when we hear voices of people we did not know were there. Looking around there is no one. The wind has carried the voice to us speeding up the process allowing us to hear them. Originally in my study I wanted to look at sound vibration and pair with scientific research to prove our understandings in traditional doctoring practices as valid. I learned from Elders that we have nothing to prove. There is a deep understanding on a molecular level understood by the people without science terms. Elders laugh when science proves something that we knew all along.

Due to time restraints and a slight deviation from answering the question of the significance of drum and song in the classroom I was discouraged from pursuing this line of research further. With Indigenous knowledge becoming a point of study in the science field, it is a worthwhile pursuit for future research. Wind is still an element with a close association with thunder. With regard to song, it is the wind propelling the voice that creates its thunder and the drum as the carrier. I share the words of two Elders, one Cree and one Anishnaabe who in sharing words for thunder make an immediate association with echo.

> The thunderbird prepares for flight. He flaps his wings a few times…flap, flap, flap. The sounds create waves – waves of wind and waves of sound. He screeches his loud cry of warning. I am here!
>
> Towowth teek - Echo

"Can you see an echo?" he asked.

The late Elder Peter Gladue, in teaching his grandchild about echo gently said, I will show you what echo is…

As I walked along the river bed, his student - now Elder - said let me show you what echo is. He asked me to look for flat stones. As he practiced his throw so that the rock would skip along the top of the water a few times and when it did he said "listen". Pht, pht, pht, glop! The sound of the stone hitting the surface of the water is carried back by the waves the first hit makes. Towowth teek is the wave that brings it back. That is the way to see echo. If you could envision sound in waves the waves are still happening. The second wave catches the first, and third the second and so forth. This amplifies the sound carrying it back to us. That is what an echo is. Towowth teek.

A thunderbird screeching refers to thunder in the clouds. (Piscoowuck) Peesqua kitoowuck. This word is the oldest word in the Cree language. It is a direct reference to the sound of the thunderbird screeching. I sat with my father one afternoon and asked him some words around thunder and thunderbird. In doing so he added echo to the list. Echo – pahsswehwey. Pahsswehweynin – is a sound coming back to you to echo or resound. Both teachers came up with echo as part of thunder. I guess the sound of thunder there is an echo to it or maybe that is what is understood to be happening.

Echo, sound, reverb, drum are all related. Elders use science terms such as sound waves and frequency to exemplify concepts. The language itself has the clearest meaning, which I will try to share throughout. The point is there was already an understanding of sound frequency affective and effective to man. For the Tibetans "ohm" is the sound of universe. The Mayan

story of the song of creation it is about the sounding that starts it. Scientists would refer to a "bang". And maybe sound is merely indicative of another presence – human. Humans can hear sound, interpret it and create it. Although at first I thought the addition of echo and speaking of resound had nothing to do with my thunder wording I was searching for when I spoke with my father. It made me think when I reviewed my discussion with another Elder only to find he went from a visual teaching of echo to the word for thunder. This is not a coincidence. When I ran this by the elder he said your dad knows what he is talking about because he made that association.

I had time to sit quietly and envision thunder as I have heard so many times before. I placed myself in my homelands, outside, listening as it rolls in. There is a boom followed by resounding echoes of boom. It is not so much the relationship that when you take a moment to reflect is quite obvious; it is really the relationship to sound vibration that strikes me. These understandings are imbued in Anishnaabe language. Helen Roy an Anishnaabe language teacher states that our language is based on the sounds in nature. In Centering Anishnaabe Studies one author from home writes the words around water reflective of the sounding and its nature in that moment (Doerfler, Sinclair, & Stark, 2013).

Nimke mina aski - Thunder and Earth

I was given a teaching once about the reason for the fog. The fog comes down to blanket the earth to allow the thunderbirds to land and move around unseen. Sometimes the thunderbirds walk among us because they have work to do here on earth.

Sounds of the earth - The Tibetan monk visit.

I was at my father's one evening when I scanned a weekend newsprint paper on the table. It informed of a visit of a Tibetan monk who was the right hand man of the Dahli Lama, and would be presenting a sand painting at the Mendel Art Gallery the next morning. He would be there the entire week working on developing the sand painting. I shut the paper and announced that my daughter and I would be witness to the painting early morning. We went to the Mendel to see what we could learn and to be present for what I thought would be a beautiful learning opportunity to my daughter. My daughter would have been around 7 at the time. We found the monk had begun his work in a roped off section in the lobby. He stood before a large table with a small metal cone in his hand that was filled with yellow sand. He tapped it gently and let the sand cover a marked out space on the table. He worked until his cone was empty. Then he turned to me and my daughter and approached us. He bowed and stood before us for a moment. I thought he was praying so I bowed my head too. He went from Tanis to me and took a moment with each of us. He then offered my daughter the cone and asked if she would like to try sand painting a little bit. He undid the cordoned off section and let her into his space. She was happy to give it a try. We both never expected this and I was really happy for her enriched experience. I was glad we came early.

The monk was there to promote awareness of the plight of the Tibetan people. He was exhibiting the creation of a sand painting to show what could be lost in terms of their traditions. He was sharing something dear to them probably only created in a ceremonial way. The news article said he was travelling across North America to raise

awareness about Tibet. Looking at the sand paintings formulation I recalled that the Navaho have sand paintings that are part of their ceremony. Through his gentle words and coaching he showed Tanis how to hold the instrument and gently add sand to the painting. When she was done he let her back out of the 'art' space.

He informed us of the dismantling on Sunday the following week and invited us to come back. I was honoured to be invited back. I assured him we would see him for the dismantling. We gave our thanks and went on our way. I felt really good about the whole morning and so glad that I had made the effort. I asked Tanis was she surprised to be invited to help. Would she like to go back for the dismantling? We agreed we would return in 1 week.

The next Sunday arrived and we journeyed to the art gallery again. I was not sure what to expect. I was moved by our initial interaction and felt compelled to bring a gift. I wanted to give them something of our culture. I chose a small pair of beaded moccasins and a little drum that I had made. It was all I really had to give at that time. When we got there, there were many people. The room was full. Tanis and I found a place to view the proceedings. I should say that before all of this happened my sister had passed away earlier in the spring. I think in one way I was searching again for things-anything- to support my continued journey and that is why this appealed to me. My sister was my best friend. I would consider her death as part of the fall-out of residential schooling. She struggled in her adult life.

...before dismantling the sand painting I will tell you about the symbology of the painting. He pointed out it was composed of the four sacred colours, blue, red, white and

yellow. These are the same for Anishnabe as well I noted with the addition of black. Then he spoke to the blue surrounding the piece was representative of the sky and the white for purity and wisdom. He described the elements represented by the colours and what the painting was depicting which was the interrelatedness of all things. He said we will dismantle the painting and mix the sand together to be swept away. This whole process is about transformation. It is symbolic of the impermanence of things.

He began to brush the sand into a pile towards the middle brushing the colours gently together. He then invited us to come up with our small containers to receive a little bit of this sand. He said we could sprinkle the sand on our front step to offer a blessing. We got in line and took our share of sand. The room was silent as we processed through the line.

Then the monk put the remainder of sand from the painting into a glass urn that he held up. He said we will proceed together to the river with the vase to offer the remainder back to the water. The whole time I thought about my sister and this loss weighed heavy on my heart. I thought about the fact that my niece, her daughter claimed she wanted to be cremated. I had never heard that from her but then I was not called to her bedside a few other times before this one. She must have discussed plans for the inevitable journey that she saw as close at hand. Since my sister did not have an internment or burial, her ceremony felt unfinished. This is like her symbolic ceremony I thought to myself. My heart ached.

As we processed to the river the monk and his assistant began to chant. There chant resembled chanting as I would have heard it with drum singers. Gentle, beautiful singing

melody as we walked out doors to the river's edge beside the gallery. The monk continued his words as he stopped by the river. I will invite you to help me distribute the sand back into the water as the final part of the ceremony of transformation. Silently he held the vase towards the crowd and someone moved forward. Tears welled up in my eyes as I watched the silent procession. It was my turn, they waited but my body started a tremor from my spirit place. I did not think that I would be able to maintain my composure so I just froze. Someone else went. As we return the sand to the river he said it is with the understanding that in time this sand will transform into rock again. The cycle will complete itself and continue should the rock be chosen for a sand painting again.

The monk and his assistant walked quickly back to the building. I said a prayer for strength and followed them. I gave the gifts to the monk and he smiled kindly and said thank-you. He embraced Tanis and told her she was Tibetan too. I was honoured by this statement and smiled in appreciation. He tucked the little drum into a pocket in his robe and gave the little moccasin to his assistant. I was so heartbroken yet grateful. I had something to consider and think about. This was a significant teaching that came at the precise right time that I was searching to make sense of something traumatic that was senseless.

Forward in Time.

We were to have a ceremony for my sister after the first anniversary of her death. It was time to complete the ceremony. We were going to sprinkle the ashes over a cliff at the south end of the island. This was not a place we ever frequented as children but my mom and dad knew

where it was. My brother had organized my cousin to clear the brush to make way for us to walk there. We were going to sprinkle the ashes in the water. My mom had made this beautiful cloth she decorated with the four colours. She sewed on a circle of life and the ribbons. My sister's photo was imprinted on the cloth. The cloth was for the ashes. Everything was planned and ready to go. We were going to have a mass service first then proceed to the water together with the immediate family and whoever else wanted to come. Then we would go back to my brother's place to feast.

When I arrived I was informed that there would be no ceremony at the water. My mom had called me to let me know ahead of time. She said my youngest niece had an emotional breakdown and did not want to part with her mother's ashes. I was alarmed for her. Apparently as she approached the island the idea was getting too real for her. She had a sudden severe pain in her tummy. She and her sister went to the hospital as my older niece was really worried. They could find nothing. It was not appendicitis. The nurse asked a few questions eventually asking the right one something like have you had some kind of trauma in your life recently. She began to wail. She let it all out as the nurse and my niece soothed her. It was then that she told her sister she could not part with her mom's ashes. It was all she had left and she just wanted to live with them for awhile. It was my oldest niece who had hung onto them for the year. She gave into the idea immediately because her sister needed this. We were expected to go along with this new plan.

When I arrived everything seemed to be all right. My niece having "let it all out" was in good spirits. In fact we had a few laughs back and forth before the mass. Rather than process formally out to the water we were going to hike out there together the next day and just see what

it looked like. Everyone was happy with this altered plan. We had a nice church ceremony and meal together after. The next day we packed into the back of my brother's truck and headed to the far end of the island. As we drove on the rough logging road I noticed the forest floor was covered in lilies -big purple and pink with occasional white lilies. I had never seen this before. It was breathtakingly beautiful. And the smell of the forest - it had rained significantly the days before. It still had that fresh rain smell. The logging roads were water soaked with puddles that got bigger and bigger. My brother stopped and said we have to hike from here.

Back in time to a retreat on the prairie, we drove out to another part of the terrain lead by the Elder. There was a creek bed but just before it we came upon what was like a mini bog or ground spring. There were rocks all around and water bubbling up from them as if there was an underground sacred place and spring feeding them. Further down the way was a small creek bed. He had us take note that this place was sacred because the water was birthed from the land at this place. Someone pointed out the first crocus. "Moostoos ohtsi" he said, the buffalo's belly button. There is a story about the crocus and why it is called this. He studied the ground for tiny pebbles. He picked them up and put them in his shirt pocket. He said these stones are for the rattles. He turned and we followed with our offerings to the creek. I had made a small replica of the larger offering that we were taught to make. I had enough material leftover to make a second, smaller version. I wanted to make an offering for my sister. She had said she wanted to give an offering and make a ceremony to the piiensuk. She had wanted to ask me to help her do a small ceremony. We had talked about what she could do before she went.

As we prayed in preparation to give our offering the little boy with the oskapewis said 'she made one for the little people'. It surprised me that he picked that up. I am aware of stories

from Cree people wherein they believe the piiensuk will lure children away. I felt I was continuing a ceremony that we had not finished yet in honour of my late sister. I was interjecting an Anishnaabe ceremony alongside my Cree ceremony. I did not think it would be a concern. The Elder said 'shush' to quiet the boy. I said my prayers as I let my offerings into the water and watched as they were carried away by the stream.

Back in the forest, we finally made our way through the wet forest floor to the cliff's edge. The view was stunningly beautiful. The feast for the eyes was worth the trek. Everyone was awe inspired at the beauty of the place. The entire journey was full of beauty. This was my home. My mom knew where to present my sisters ashes. She must have known this beauty. She chose it after all. What was this whole situation like for her? One of the significant factors is the dreams of one of our in laws who in ceremony was visited by my sister. She (my sister) was dressed for ceremony. My brothers sister in law Muriel, interpreted her vision was as we needing to have closure and complete the ceremony of her internment.

I share this story of a sand painting's creation because it is a personal journey enlightening my understanding of the cycle of life. The sand painting was created over a week-long period at the art gallery perhaps more for the draw of the audience in that time but regardless, there were ritual and ceremonial aspects to its whole creation. In viewing the making of the sand painting it brought to mind the sand paintings of the Navaho and what ceremony they entailed.

Navaho sand paintings are created in a similar fashion for the purpose of healing. Cajete (1994) shares the Indigenous community's relationship to all things taught through story, art, dance, ceremony, and prayer, as culturally patterned knowledge and experience. He made

reference to the Navaho Sing that embodies the communal complex namely the individual, family, clan, tribe, and natural world. In a Navaho sing the ritual creation of a sand painting takes place and provides a context for learning about Indigenous health and wholeness. The ill person considered to be out of balance with their world, is placed in the centre of a dry painting identifying the ill person with the power of the image that gets pressed into the body. As the person identifies with the image an appropriate cure ensues. Through the Sing, the person re-establishes a harmonious relationship with their community as related to the mythic story behind the ceremony. The Sing, "in their complete expression, they reflect an integral wholeness and are, themselves, vehicles for human wholeness" (p. 178).

Cajete continues, there is a direct relationship between Indigenous community, the learning process therein, and the quest for health and wholeness. Not unlike many Indigenous communities whose ceremony is about striving for good health in the Anishnaabe understanding of Mino bimaadsiwin - living the good life. The Tibetan sand painting ritual stems from an ancient tradition. It exhibits the four elements represented by the four colours that many North American Indigenous cultures also recognize in painted drums, cloth offerings, and then of course Navaho sand paintings. The common feature of ritual and ceremony was to bring people to balance. It was to maintain good health and good relations.

Earth and all its bounty seems taken for granted. There is a serious lack of understanding of ecological balance when there is constant exploitation of it. Traditional knowledge, traditional practices, language and the people become in crisis due to the desecration of every frontier. It is always with the fight against time we try to correct and restore balance to language and culture in education when things are already in crisis.

Kitche Nimkiikaa (big clashes of thunder) - Water and Thunder – nibii miinwa

There is a relationship between the thunder beings and the water beings. The thunder beings are protectors of the people against evil water beings. They perch in a certain corner of the sky to watch over the waters.

Mishepiishoo the water being is our keeper of the water. When we cross a water body it is here that we give offering to ensure our safe passage. Mishepiishoo is also known as the Great Lynx with a catlike face, copper horns and a serpent tail. As King and guardian of the underwater he has such power that he can use force for malevolence or compassion. He is also the guardian, mediator and keeper of balance between water spirits, land creatures and sky beings. Mishepitshoo has always been enemy to Thunder beings.

The relationship of thunder to water or the thirst dance. Mino Bimadiziwin, living the good life of health and balance, is maintained traditionally by good medicines and good thinking. If a person falls ill, help is sought through doctoring. In my community people called upon the chiiskininni – the medicine man and he would make recommendations for what medicines to take. These medicines were all natural and the practice of 'doctoring' varied depending on who the chiiskininni was.

In reviewing *Persistent Ceremonialism* of the Saulteaux-Anishnabe of the western Qu'Apelle valley area, it appears that doctoring was still happening up until the 1970 – 1980's. Some Elders felt there were so few passing on the knowledge that it would not last because the knowledge would die off with the Elder. These Elders all had similar understandings and were connected by ceremonies and their belief system. They knew who to seek for medicines or doctoring ceremonies.

There were certain descriptions of ceremony that peaked my interest as they mimicked what I had learned from Yellowquill. For one thing, the Sundance was termed the Thirst dance. I only heard this term at home and Yellowquill from the Saulteaux reserve where my Elder Bowser Poochay was from. The Thirst dance or the Rain dances are the terms used. The dancing was to bring on the rain. At the top of the centre pole was the thunderbirds nest. I did not know at that time it was a spirit. Certain Saulteaux Elders used song and or drum and rattle as part of the doctoring. They would sing ancient songs considered medicine songs. Anything that was felt as having power, such as healing or curative properties, we would apply the term medicine.

Thirst dance.

Laura, my Elder friend

Before we look at Persistant Cermonialism of the Cree and Salteaux, let me tell you about my friend Laura. The late Laura Wasacase was from the Ochapowace and Cowesses reserves. She was a residential school survivor. In fact, I first heard through here about the experiences of residential schools, as women would visit her and share their stories. Laura was my Elder, but she was so much my friend. She was always kind and loving. She helped me with my daughter and took her swimming and included her when she took care of her relatives. She would house sit for me when I would travel. She brought me to ceremonies and round dances. In fact, my first fast was through her. She connected me to where it was taking place which was on the Dakota Whitecap reserve. A Saulteaux/Cree couple was leading the fasting group of women. Laura offered to watch my 3-year-old daughter. I was grateful for Laura to provide me this opportunity. I knew

the Elders as they worked in the community and often carried the pipe for round dance feasts. This fast was significant as I received my first song.

I have always been grateful for what I learned from her. She partook in the Sundances in the Qu'Appelle Valley over the years. When I look at the ceremonies in Qu'Appelle Valley as she would refer to them, I think of her with a certain knowing that she would be pleased I acknowledge her and her communities.

Tarasoff (1980), who spent many years interviewing various Elders in the Qu'Appelle Valley reserves, gathered important information. First, we need to describe the local. There are four reservations that border the Qu'Appelle River Valley in southeast Saskatchewan in the Broadview rural development area. With the decimation of the buffalo herds the prairie tribes became dependent on the Canadian Government. There are six tribes that have made their home in Saskatchewan; the Prairie Cree (originally woodland), the Salteaux (Anishnaabe or Plains Ojibwe), the Chipewyan, the Sioux, the Assiniboine and the Blackfoot. They all have ceremonial customs that are unique and others that are shared due to related languages or past history (intermarriage). According to Kehoe, for example, the Rain Dance considers the bundle of brush fastened to the centre pole as the Thunderbird nest. The differences and similarities in ceremonies reflect the past history in terms of alliances and the effect of changes in more recent times (Kehoe, 1980). This could be said for Broadview area reserves of Sakimay, Cowesses, Kahkewistahaw and Ochapowace.

One of the principal Elders from Sakimay reserve is Felix Panipekeesik, Saulteaux, who is a Rain dance lodge keeper. He recalls the stories of the generations before him that with the introduction of the gun to the Crees of Ontario and Manitoba moved westward driving the

Blackfoot out of Saskatchewan and into Alberta to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. The buffalo had been massacred. The Indians would stay within range of the Fort as this was a necessary food supply to which they had now become dependent.

Felix' name was Rain Thunderbird. He was Saulteaux. He recalls a story of a thunderbird told by his grandfather. It is a spirit bird that pervades the Rain dance and sweat bath ceremonies.

> a 22 year old boy was going hunting for buffalo. When he climbs on a big stone for a better view, he is grabbed from behind and carried to what might be called "heaven". He is led to a big teepee. Inside he meets an old man with long braids who resembles a big eagle sitting – a Thunderbird. After staying for ten days he returns to his people and tells them what the thunderbird has taught him. From then on people begin to make the Sweat Bath and the Rain Dance ceremonies; the Thunderbird becomes one of the powerful all providing forces which when respected could bring good health. (Tarasoff, 1980, p. 5)

He tells another story of a hunter being visited by a buffalo that turns himself into a man with horns and hoofs. The former buffalo came towards him and told him to instruct his grandfather to make the mark of a buffalo on centre pole. In addition the mark of a crescent moon and thunderbird are also etched unto the pole.

Peter George was Salteaux from Sakimay. Peter's parents were Salteaux from Manitoba coming over in 1874. Peter was an herbalist and known as the best specialist in the area learning his skill from his mother's people. It was in the 1930's that Peter held his first Rain Dance and since then 11 dances in total. Peter participates in Felix' Rain Dance and Felix reciprocates in attending his. When local Salteaux hunters have come for help he uses drum and sings good

luck songs. According to Tarasoff (1980) "He has obliged by smoking a peace pipe, praying and singing Good Luck Songs and beating the drum. Following this ritual, one hunter saw seven beaver, shot two and came home satisfied that he had a successful hunt" (p. 10). He was certain that Peter had helped him.

Ms. Wasacase or "Girl Bird" came from Elphinstone, Manitoba and married into Kahkewistahaw reserve to Hector Wasacase. Here she gained great knowledge about medicines from her mother-in-law who lived with her family. She helped to cure many people's different illness. She learned about roots from her grandmother from Ochapowace. She never used drum or rattles in effecting cures unlike some old medicine men did (Tarasoff, 1980). She also claimed she did not have the knowledge to make a Sundance, sweat bath feast or smoking teepee or give Indian names. She has many cures for many ailments but never wanted to know what goes into bad medicine. She believed when she passed on there would be nobody to carry on her knowledge and that her medicine would be placed in the bush in a clean place.

Kina N'dawendaagamak - Our relatives nehiyowak.

An Elder and I were walking along a river in the fall. He grabbed some leaves and slowly crunched them by my ear. They crackled. He said now imagine what a fire sounds like. Close your eyes and let me do this again. He picked up more leaves and let them crackle in my ear. I closed my eyes and visualized the fire. It was true, the same sound. He said: "The crinkle of the leaf is a song. The crackle of the fire is the same sound and this is the song of creation. Fire is the song of life. There is also two of everything. We walk on the fire that is the womb of the earth. What we have here deep below us is also out there. It is also a part of us. The earth has a sound".

I was awestruck to be given exactly the knowledge that I needed at the time. I said I am amazed that you speak of the song of creation because I have been wondering if we have a song. "Yes", he said, "you manifest your learning and your teachings as you need. You put that thought out there. I just picked it up." He went on to tell me this was not his teaching but the teachings he learned from the late Wandering Spirit, Snowbird and Whitehair.

Peesqua keekoot -Thunders Calling

In different ways the thunders call like my new friend that I met in Montreal that was invited to the research conference to sing. We went to thank him after and he shared with us his story of how songs come to him. Thunders' calling is like a spiritual calling to sing. Or in my friends story of attending music class with her granddaughter is moved by the music and envisions herself in ceremony. As Johnston (1980) spoke in the origin story of music that Anishnaabe music has a soul. The thunders calling speaks to your spirit.

Singer

> *I was in Montreal at a conference and there was a local drum group there that had been invited to sing. When they were finished my friend wanted to meet the singers and talk with them. She introduced me as a singer. The lead singer looked at me and smiled. She asked him where he gets his songs. He was happy to tell us. He said he hears them in the air. It's like they come down to him. He said if he does not take the time to capture them in that moment he loses them. So, he phones his home and sings the song into the answering machine. The whole time he looked at me as if he was only speaking to me. I thought these song origins were fascinating. He was the first person I met who captured songs. In reflecting on Chibiabo's story, when he left the music in the trees and the*

waters and the sky, his story came back, making even more sense. In my own experience, my mother's healing song came to me out of the water. I could perfectly understand song origins are put out there by Chibiabos in hopes that we have appreciative listening.

Adam

It was only as an adult that I began to wonder if thunder birds were actual birds. I thought that they were. I went to see this healer "Adam" that I had heard of and he was said to be a really powerful healer. I came across his books in the bookstore.

He shared a story of a recurring dream he had. It was a bird in his nest calling him to come to this island. He thought it was nothing until he had the dream again. He looked the place up on the map and it was an actual place. He decided he would go. His parents went with him. He said as he pulled up he knew he would find the bird. He jumped out and started to run into the trees until he came upon the bird. It looked like a baby eagle only full size. I immediately thought it's a thunderbird. He said he sat and the bird looked at him. They observed each other for a long time. Everything was as it was in his dream. Although there was no exchange of words for communication he felt perhaps the bird was transmitting whatever message he wanted to deliver. He left the island not really sure what transpired there but felt he did the right thing by coming and answering the bird's call. He concluded the story by saying he does have Aboriginal blood and that when he asked different Aboriginal people they were not sure what it all meant. I was disappointed. I was sure it was a thunderbird. He was being taught or empowered by it. I thought maybe the people he spoke to did not know the thunderbirds. I have not gone back to yet to see if he has gained any further insight.

My sister had this 'thunderstick' in her apartment. She shared with me that a tree had fallen due to being struck by lightning in a community she had been working in. She was told to take a piece of the tree to protect her home. It is believed that the power of thunder and lightning resides in that tree and it will serve as a protector for the home. This is also part of the ritual for creating the baby's tikanagun (cradle board) which is made out of a tree struck by lightning to protect the infant.

Residential school impact.

I went for coffee with a friend. We are just getting to know each other but experience the same pain at work and see things the same way. We are becoming fast friends. In the last time we visited she asked about my writing and how it was going. She asked if she had told me about music class. She began to describe an awesome gathering with her granddaughter. This was a community offering on Saturdays for kids and parents together. For 1 hour they sing, play instruments and generally have a good time. She talked about how this was so appealing to her to get any instrument and just play along with the eclectic rhythm. She forgot how much she loved music.

She said that one time the children were in the centre circle and she was in the outer circle with the adults. They were all engaged in the song. She said she wept because in that moment it struck her like it was a sweat - two circles of people and everyone singing with rattles. That would be so beautiful. I felt for her in that moment. As a single mom these moments are precious gifts. I recall witnessing my daughter's Kindergarten play. I do not remember what it even was about but I remember the lump in my throat and the tears in my eyes. It was always like that for me when she went through school. I can't

explain what that grieving was about. I was grateful to the school, the good teachers and the great arts program in music and visual art as well as theatre. It was a great public school.

Again residential schooling left a hole in the heart of all the men and woman and hurt the family. How could we possibly have good models when the system was so brutal it caused people to shut down emotionally? How could we know how to parent fully loving and engaged without some coaching. We remarked that not many people can admit they do not know how to parent or needed help. My parenting class was like a support group. Parenting was not easy for me either and no one warns you of the personal challenge it can be. Becoming a single parent after my daughter was a year and a half old made it harder still. You are constantly on and 'at the ready' for whatever may happen - like the time my daughter and I had the flu. Or when my daughter had pneumonia and I had to take her to the hospital by cab because I did not have a car.

I love the work of Dr. Martin Brokenleg, Dr. Larrry Bentro and Dr. Steve Van Bockern in their work of "Reclaiming Youth at Risk" and the Circle of Courage philosophy. Dr. Brokenleg is an Aboriginal psychologist and teaches about belonging, mastery, generosity and independence. Emerging research on positive youth development is an additional component of this. The circle highlights the importance of shared values of generosity, courage, independence and mastery. They refer to the words of Ella Deloria (1998), "be related to everyone you know".

In witnessing Dr. Brokenleg's presentation of his work a few times, I loved most Ella's phrase he used and the reality that we could be related with 53 cousins. The value of a

child was imbedded in the language and cultural understanding to say "Standing Sacred" as the literal translation for child. Brokenleg spoke to the impact of the industrial revolution on European societies and their use of children to work in this industry. Children were to be seen but not heard and they could speak when spoken too. Corporal punishment as disciplinary tactic was the norm. These social understandings are what came over with the European settlers and residential school teachers and of course the purposeful breaking of the family unit. All of this has created generations of youth who struggle with their own identity and value as a human being within the western dominated world.

I learned many teachings before I raised my daughter and during her childhood. I had a naming ceremony for her and the Elder suggested I get my name at the same time. I raised my daughter by the way of the pipe. I raised her in a sweat community of woman. I raised her beside Elders who shared their teachings to both of us. I brought her to my fasting grounds so that she would know where I was for the weekend. I took her to every round dance and feast that I was ever invited to. She does not know these ways are dying. My daughter may or may not take up the torch and keep the fire going. As a parent I felt I did my best and tried my hardest to instill the values in traditional teachings and hope that they are at least a part of her and that she acts out of her heart.

Distant Thunder

The following are some examples of how music - song and drum – was and is a part of the traditional or ceremonial context. The resources are diverse from different locations and culturally diverse representative of different nations. St. Pierre and Tilda Long Soldier (1995)

have written on the Plains Indians, namely the Lakota and in particular the role of medicine women in ceremony. They sought out holy women to make record of these women and their ceremonies that they used for healing. In addition to this they sought out relatives of historic holy women in an attempt to set a small piece of human history straight when you consider the absence of women in the historical record. (Certainly writers of the time are most often mainstream, male, Christian and patriarchal which had always predominated the field of research and consequently narrowed the view.) The care of the soul, even after death, is the primary objective for ritual life among the Plains people.

There are three types of ceremonies associated with healing; the Lowanpi ceremony or "sing", the Yuwipi or the "they tie them up" ceremony and the Wapiye used by women herbalists. A fourth form of doctoring is a herbalist who does not call on any ritual, these women are Pejuta Win. Only certain women use both medicine and Wapi yekiya (Indian medical practitioners) those who make and apply medicine using herbs to make someone well or restored to balance (St. Pierre & Long Soldier, 1995). "The plants used as remedies may need special songs learned in dreams to unleash their healing power; without the songs they are just plants" (p. 28).

An example of this is how a grandmother would doctor spontaneously. She did not need an elaborate ceremony. She would sing a medicine song and one of the birds from her number of dried bird skins would begin to sing. It would pick up the song in its own voice. As with the Temiar, song is central to healing ceremony and tightly affiliated with the plant world.

I would first like to talk about the Yuwpi or "they tie them up" Ceremony known also as "to doctor with stones" (St. Pierre & Long Soldier, 1995, p. 184). The ritual involves tying up

the medicine person with buckskin cord. The woman is bound at her fingers, knees, ankles and wrists then covered in layers of cloth or blankets and tied in like a mummy. They are placed on a bed of sage facedown. To free oneself from the ritual of binding is viewed as the medicine person's personal highest achievement. This ceremony I have participated in. I happened to be home on my reserve for the summer when a ceremonialist was travelling through. He was offering the ceremony and travelled to communities interested. By a certain time the door would be locked as they had to cover all windows and light coming in. There had to be complete darkness. The drum is picked up and the singing begins. Then the spirits come in and pick up the rattles.

Ceremonial ties.

An Elder (the late George Larocque) sat and had coffee with me and my friend (his daughter). He began to speak. "At one time people were really powerful. They could do the ceremony of being tied. They would be bound in ropes. There was no way they could get loose unless someone helped them. I have seen it. They would be left by themselves to get untied. Sure enough they would become unbound from the ropes. No one has that kind of power anymore. They say the spirits help them become untied. You never see that ceremony anymore. Unless, maybe you can do that ceremony?" he asked and then roared with laughter as I pondered the possibility of such a tremendous feat. It echoed Houdini, the only thing I could think of at the moment.

Not long after this conversation, I went home one summer and was invited to a Yuwipi ceremony. The lodge keepers were letting people know that everyone was invited to attend. There was a Sioux man travelling with this ceremony inviting different

communities to partake. My brother in law was going and he asked if I wanted to go along. I wanted to participate in the ceremony and I was also curious as to who would be there from my community. When I arrived at the school gym, I was amazed to see the large crowd gathered. The gym was nearly full. They had covered all the exit signs and windows and any place that light came through. The place of the Elders was lit by candles. There was a row of Elders sitting on chairs, so unfortunately I could not see what was going on but the Elder had an oskapeyos to tell us what was happening. The main thing was the tying of the Elder or Ayupi ceremony holder. He was bond in ropes that he couldn't possibly undo. Then the lights were turned out and the rattles began to shake. There was a sound like thunder that you could hear occasionally.

My brother in law had let me know beforehand that the rattles could tap you on the head or on the shoulder. This was considered a blessing. It is the spirits that pick up the rattles, shake them and move them around the room. Our job was to pray. Eventually, the tied person becomes unbound. It is the spirits who helped untie him. Then the ceremony is over. When my brother in law and I spoke after, he said there was a stone left in front of him. He said that he would put it in a safe place in the house that it may give protection to their home and everyone in it. Something or someone had tapped my shoulder. We both left the ceremony feeling content that we were blessed by it.

The ceremony of being tied is still alive and well. I think this ceremony was related to the ceremony holder's power and provides the opportunity to exhibit the relationship to the spirits that help him become unbound. I would love to know how the sound of thunder comes.

These varied forms of traditional ties come to mind from what John Crier shared about his conversation with an Elder. He said there was like a binding over the people and until it is lifted things will continue as they are. In our Anishnaabe prophecies we refer to a dark period for the people. This dark period was started by "the coming of the pale faced race" and the resultant hardship to the people on these lands. Disease, warring, relocations, relegation to reserves, starvation and residential schooling would all contribute to the psychological burden of the people. It is like we are bound in intergenerational trauma that is perpetuated through unresolved grief into the next generations.

The Lowanpi is closely tied to the Yuwipi. I believe the Lowanpi is the singing that accompanies the ceremonies of the Yuwipi at times. The Lowanpi is also known as the night sing. When the medicine person is bound or tied it is known as the Yuwipi rather than the Lowanpi. This ceremony has been witnessed in Mongolia, with the Laplander's, Nepal, northern China and the Icelandic peoples of Amazonia. The prayer ties that have been introduced to the ceremony are from the Lakota. The Ojibwa version of this is the shaking tent which is similar to the Lowanpi and has been recorded since the 1800's as well as out west. The Elder George LaRocque was referring to this very ceremony and noting its absence in his home community.

In the work of Preston's *Cree Narrative* (1931), he researches the Cree of Waskaganish area during the 1960's which compiles a storehouse of lost knowledge. It is primarily an oral account of John Blackned detailing traditional Cree society in terms of thought, beliefs, and feelings of living on and off the land. Traditional narrative and song are of little use or are not

even remembered today. Where people once relied on close relationships to animals to get their food they now can have the choice of purchasing food at the store.

Preston shares aspects of Cree culture that are not practiced any longer today. Songs are important as part of the setting of the Misteabo spirit. Misteabo may be loosely defined as a spirit guide although it is individual to each person as there is a relationship of intimacy. The manifestation of which is in dreams. Songs therefore are the form of communication in the conjuring tent. There are some songs with words of no known meaning. George Head, Samson Naccapo and Charlie Kanatiwat share songs and discussion. Gerti Murdoch and Josie Sam are the interpreters. Out of 70 songs Gerti only understood one complete song. Josie, understands some of the songs as he understands the old way of speaking. The words are minimal and come from an old-fashioned way of speaking. The songs are used for hunting and express the emotion. It is believed songs add ability to the power of the hunter. In a spiritual way, songs influence animals and add to the hunts success in this way (Preston, 1931, p. 198).

The power of songs in reference made may or may not be to Mistabeo, in some songs the power seems less localized or personalized but a sense of power outside the person singing. In some songs the reference is explicit such as a song for curing "my helper will help me cure the person" (Preston, 1931, p. 207). Sometimes he sings to someone rather than about someone. A singer expressing deep hope is laying straight the spiritual path to the goal of getting meat (Preston, p. 208). Gerti Murdoch states song is not just expressing emotion it is sending a message to the animal and it is understanding it.

Preston's depiction of the Cree of Waskaganish exemplifies the spiritual connection to song. In the next and final story Walter Bonaise, a singer of renown tells stories he learned in his

childhood from his grandparents who explain the meaning behind various aspects of drum and song and why song is so important.

Walter Bonaise

The video starts with a story of a dream, a visitor - the Northern Lights.

> *...In the beginning people did not know how to dance. The girl fell asleep; while she slept the Northern lights came to her. They asked her do you see the road going south? Yes, she said. That is the road of our spirits. But we are hungry. We will heal you. We will teach you a song. The Northern Lights taught the girl four things. First, they taught her of the spirit road going south. They taught her about feasts because in those days the people had no food – only pemmican, berries and tea. They taught her to offer this food to them. Third, they gave her this song of the Northern Lights but told her only men could sing it. Fourth, they gave her the round dance. This was the first song and the first dance that came to earth.*
>
> *My father told this story to me. He was told this story by his mother, my grandmother. She in turn was told the story by her father who was Chief Poundmaker. My grandmother was Agnes Poundmaker and she was a very good singer.*
>
> *Walter is sitting outside a tipi and reminiscing on how he always watched his father cut and chop wood as a small child. My father sold wood. He chopped it. He was always splitting and sawing wood. I was amazed at how much wood there would be after. I used to hear him singing a song he made many years before I was born. "Why are you singing to the wood," I would ask. "You are only going to put it in the fire". "You must*

sing to everything you see. You have to understand yourself and understand why you do what you do. The way you understand these things is to sing to their spirit."

My father sang to everything that he touched and over the years through singing, through following his example I have come to understand why. There must be a few Elders around who remember what singing truly is.

The Grass Dance

When you grass dance you move our body gracefully that's what the Elders tell me. You move like the grass in the wind.

In 1915 my father was singing. In the round dance (at a powwow) we did not hold hands. If a woman danced beside another woman's husband they would give her something like a shawl or a blanket for honouring her husband.

I used to hear my mother singing. This is her round dance song. I asked her "Why do you sing when you sew?" I asked my Grandmother, my father's mom. She was blind and she taught me how to bead. She did everything; bead, tan hides, and sew. I always wondered how she knew what my beadwork looked like. She used to sing. She sang to awaken her spirit, to understand what she was singing, to respect the needle, the Creator, mother earth. If she didn't sing to it, she didn't understand her sewing.

Walter's wife, Doris Bonaise, spoke about her mother in law. She taught me how to bead, cut hide, tan. This is you're future she would say to me. You're going to make you living from this. And I do now.

River crossing by ferry. All of our songs were given to us by the spirits. We give tobacco so we understand where it came from. Manitou Lake we would see a chestnut horse

come out of the water. We traveled by stream, by horse and wagon. When we came here as a child, my grandmother would always pray to the water and they would throw in tobacco. I asked her "Why do you throw tobacco in the water?" "Oh, you crazy little boy, sit down here". She would ask me to look across and around and tell her what I see. And this is the water. It has a spirit, that's why I offer it. My blessing to this water so that we can cross safely. In those days we honoured the spirit in everything. People would never cross the water without first praying to that spirit.

"We must cross, we don't want to offend you, and we just want to cross safely". Manitou Lake is a sacred place. My grandmother this water has a powerful spirit and it can't be taken away." She tried to come home once but got halfway and the water disappeared. It had come back to Manitou Lake. There are insects in the water and she told me all these spirits have brought us their songs and the water too has its honour songs.

My father used to tell me a story about the island in the middle of the lake, a spirit horse was living there, inside, a chestnut mare with a beautiful black mane. People used to camp at the south end of the lake and my father would go and stay there. He told me the spirit horse would appear amongst our horses. We used to try and get close enough to touch her but every time we came near she would chase away. She would keep going until she reached the cliff on the south side of the island. The cliff would open and the spirit would go in.

I was aware Walter Bonaise worked with the University of Manitoba and that there would be writing about his work. Walter Bonaise or Wandering Spirit came from a significant

family with regard to song and drum. His grandmother is the one who had the vision of the first round dance and was given the first song for this ceremony. Walter is a Cree singer and Elder from Little Pine Saskatchewan. His great grandfather was Chief Poundmaker. He travelled all over Canada singing and dancing, sharing his knowledge of traditional Cree song, drum and dance. He was always interested in where the songs came from. Walter has his own songs, and many of his father's songs, which go back to 1915. "Many of the old songs are "just straight singing . . . in those days there was no such thing as a grass dance song or whatever, not like today with the grass dance or sneak-up or whatever . . . it was just straight singing, with no words" (Bonaise, 1985, p. 1).

By 1985, Walter witnessed the songs with words completely take over. He continues: "now all the singers are putting words together, and they think that's the traditional way of singing. It's not right." He recalls in his early days there was no such thing as word songs. This is the same as what Bowser had taught me. Word songs were a newer development. Walter believed the songs sounded much better and you could dance to the old songs. He used to dance until they started competitions. "You can't compare a powwow today with a traditional powwow back in, say, '45. I don't go to powwows anymore because I miss my old traditional singing, the real Indian singing." The traditional powwow Walter grew up with ended around 1960 in his area. "Traditional powwow was a sacred dance, more or less. The only ones who used to dress up were the elders. There were no women dancers, only the men. The women would only dance at a Victory song, and they would dance in the back".

Walter remarks how today the songs and ceremonies have changed. He is cognizant that the powwow songs heard today originated with the Sioux. Walter began making his own songs

in 1956. Today the ceremonies and the songs have changed. "You have to see something, an object or a moving object, or the sound of something... that's how I make a song."

He is inspired by sounds he hears and songs come to him readily at any time. Most of his songs are social dance songs. His style of singing is like his father wherein the voice is always pitched higher than the drum. He feels the young singers today sing too low and all you can hear is the drum. I always thought these were new singers and they did not know the song very well and that was why you couldn't hear their voice. Walter says his drum hardly rests because he still uses it to heal. In 1915, his father's first song (1965, p. 1) was a round dance song.

> Some days we wouldn't feel good, in the winter, that's when we would have these healing dances, that's where these round dance songs came in. We offered food to our forefathers first, to give us strength, to give us our strength back through this dance. Lots of people used to walk out from the powwow, from this dance, feeling healed.

Walter describes the old Cree round dance as being a healing dance. "The sound of the beat of the drum is a medicine to us singers…the same thing as the song, it's a medicine. That's why we used to have healing dances long ago." Walter travelled across Canada with his father (Alec) in 1973. He assisted at sweats, sang at gatherings and translated for his father who was predominantly a Cree speaker. When his father passed, he continued travel with his wife Doris. When he visited University of Manitoba they invited him to teach a course titled Music in Traditional Native Culture which he taught in a few communities in the east. Walter (1985) is not only a pipe carrier but is also a respected singer and teacher of songs. The last words go to him:

Within the songs lies the spiritual centre of Indian culture ...one sings open like the wind . . . Our Elders believed that singing is a way to talk to and honour the spirits . . . A powwow singer is not just another musician/songwriter working for his daily bread; he is one of the mystical connections the soul of the Indian culture has with its people. (p. 1)

Chapter 5 Moving forward

What I had hoped to find was traditional practices from archives of recorded interviews with Anishnaabe and Cree Elders to understand better the cultural roots of drum and song. As revealed in Chapter 4 much traditional practice is still in place. The Elders who speak to this are aware of the erosion of language and therefore culture over time. Time is always a concern. As an Anishnaabe educator, I worked to instill traditional teachings to my students in every way possible. I worked in three schools with Aboriginal students wherein each school had a drum and dance troupe. As a co-choreographer after school hours, this experience enhanced the lives of the Aboriginal students and parents that chose to volunteer with us. Through these experiences, the question of "what is the significance of drum and song in schools?" came to mind as non-Aboriginal colleagues questioned its validity.

Having worked in schools with only Aboriginal students, we always had Elders working with us in the schools or at the ceremonies. I learned a great deal from the Elders over time and in particular Bowser Poochay and his wife Margaret Poochay who took my daughter and me into their family and ceremonies. In pondering the question of the drum's significance in the classroom I am fully aware of its place in ceremony. It is in reflection of Elders teachings and drawing from literature and archival records, I search for the deeper meanings for drum and song that stem from ceremony.

Music has always been important to Anishnaabe people. It is an integral part of the culture and it is a focal point of ceremony. Music is the essence of traditional culture and has its purpose. For many cultures around the world it held the same significance. Drum and dance in schools stems from a recognition of these traditional systems, systems that have always been.

The instruments have their origin stories which are considered sacred that are spoken in ceremony and are re-told once again.

Traditional Practice

It is impossible to essentialize Aboriginal histories and impacts of colonization as it affected each community in different ways at different times. There is no real clear cut definition for the evolvement of drum and song or its complete elimination from some communities. There are oral histories still in place in several communities that need to be brought out and taught to others. As Vennum's (1978) film brings forward the last drum maker laments that he has no-one to teach the making of his last drum in the 1970's from Lac Court Oreilles, Minnesota. The Elders in Western Canada see the erosion of cultural traditions around the drum faltering today, primarily due to the erosion of language and understanding of sacred traditions and teachings relative to the drum. Densmore's (1978) recording took place in the time of transition and colonial onslaught and things are different from that time period to now. The people of the Qu'Apelle valley were predicting their Sundance songs would be gone in their lifetime with no-one to pass them on to.

At the same time the ceremonies are still taking place across Canada. The more isolated the community the more chance their ceremonies are more intact. In some places, I have been told that Arapaho Elders from the USA came up to re-teach about the sweat to Cree communities in the south of Western Canada. Our Anishnaabe prophesy states that we will go back along the trails of the Great Migration and look for the bundles which I interpret as what has been preserved in terms of language and ceremony. Ceremony transfers have already begun. New treaty is forming amongst the First peoples as we always did. The sharing of songs to relations

who broke off from the original group and became separated overtime are now making efforts to re-unite in order to restore the songs. The Dine and the Navaho is a good example.

In spite of great disruption to our ways through relocation, warring, starvation and the residential schooling, many ceremonies, songs and stories have survived and have lived with the old people. The young have more awareness of the vital importance of preserving everything we have. There are those who believe we only have remnants and the language and culture is dying. There are those who believe it can be preserved and it is worth making efforts through formal schooling to do so. This effort was also prophesized by the Anishnaabe. In the time of the seventh fire the people will rise up and rejuvenate the language and culture. They will approach the Elders with questions and the Elders will wake up as if from a long sleep to bring the old knowledge forward and to answer questions they have been waiting for.

Gender

The role of gender came up at different times through my dissertation. Densmore claimed she did make attempts to record woman but found they did not have a role in song and drum. She managed to record lullabies but the men did not give a name forward of any she may want to record. This is in the time of transition. Researchers, artists, and photographers were recording culture that they could see was fast changing. The significance of the women's role was not really researched to any great extent. This is a significant gap in past work and silences women's role.

The original teaching for the Anishnaabe is that the drum came first to a woman in her vision. The first songs came to her as well. She shared her vision and the men made the drum and learned the songs. This is the vision of Johnston and Tailfeather's and many tribes hold this

story. The men however played the dominant role in ceremony including the drum. Because so little research has been done on women's roles it is hard to know clearly if they had a role in singing. Bonaise shares the vision for the round dance and its first song was given to a woman, but was to be passed on to a man and not be sung by a women. The question of the women's role remains. In Knight's words "without a clear history, the issues of when and why the gendered ownership transpired and became the norm remains ambiguous" (Knight, p. 53).

Bidiku ahm ook nimkeek (rumbling thunder) - Thunder and Healing

My research depicts one small fragment of the Anishnaabe culture namely song and drum through pondering my research question "what is the relationship between song and drum and what are the implications for education?" Drum and song is one small piece that holds major historical and cultural significance. In researching the traditional aspects of drum and song in Anishanaabe communities, Elders teachings, archives, debaajimowin and antasokaanan I have compiled a small body of knowledge that can be grown. Like any part of curriculum development we look at one small view before we step back and see how it fits in the larger context. The bigger contexts in education include understanding what the importance of this study is for education and teacher education specifically.

In reflecting on the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), Chief Justice Sinclair (2015) in a vimeo on the TRC website stated there is no quick solution to repairing the damage done by the Genocidal mission of the Canadian government. That the efforts we make today will take many generations to turn around. The relationship of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people with non- Aboriginal Canada is the point of reconciliation wherein the highest standards need be set to restore the balance to this relationship. The TRC

has offered a set of principles to go by in their summary report. One principle relating directly to education is Number 4 - Reconciliation requires constructive action on addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism that have had destructive impacts on Aboriginal peoples' education, cultures and languages, health, child welfare, the administration of justice, and economic opportunities and prosperity (TRC, 2015). The broad context for Aboriginal education sits here in light of the TRC's recommendations, the TRC principles and the TRC's call to action.

In my research I had hoped to find tebwewin – truth and meaning around the drum and song of the Anishnaabe to think about what can be added to enhance the teaching of drum and song in schools. There is an exceptional amount of archival records that calls for more archival research to be done. There are also a plethora of stories that accompany the drums coming to a community and the origin of song. Anishnaabe use a storied approach to learning and these stories compiled together is a place to begin for future educators and curriculum developers. To know the antasokaanan or sacred story enriches the understanding of drum and song and brings light to the traditional ties of all cultural expression today.

We as First Nations, Métis and Inuit people need the freedom to develop our own education in the way that we see fit for our future generations. We need to establish our own priorities in terms of language and cultural preservation and restoration. We need to have the appropriate teachers set in place via the Indian or Aboriginal Teacher Education programs. We need to look at university teacher education and evaluate what would be the best course offerings to suit our needs and begin writing the courses. I switch to we because it is through a collective effort – Elders, speakers, writers, educators, artists and visionaries working together to create that vision of education for our next generations. Some of these efforts need to be guided by a

theoretical framework. A framework that is helpful was introduced by Chief Justice Sinclair. He posed a number of questions at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's finale in Edmonton which are as follows:

- What is your creation story?
- Where are your people from? How did our people come to be?
- Where am I going? What happens to me when I die? What about the spirit world?
- Why am I here? What are my responsibilities?
- Who am I? Who are we? What is my purpose? (Justice Sinclair, TRC, 2014)

These questions need to be answered at home and in communities. Cognizant of the disruptions in cultural teachings by the residential schooling process, Anishnaabe educators need to begin the process of how we will come to these traditional understandings and work collectively to restore our knowledge systems in formal education.

I believe that when the first thunders sound in the spring they are telling of a time to begin ceremonies. It is a time for us to retreat to the land for prayer, fasting and ceremony and maybe it is time for the education system to align with the natural order of things for us. Schools can close their doors at the first thunder and resume again the fall. This way the students are back in the communities and with family and extended family to learn through ceremony and long immersion to antasokaanan and in the winter through debajimowin. In this way our children become culturally grounded and are immersed in the language. When the weather cools, the students return to the schools to focus on reading and writing and a more self-directed learning program. The exact details would be worked out collectively with the community. This is just one possible scenario that is simpatico with Anishnaabe worldview and understandings of cycle of the seasons.

I am cognizant that not everyone is a singer, beader, artist or dancer. Our education system needs to provide for every budding talent. The children's gifts need to be recognized by parents, families, community members and the students be taught accordingly. As an experienced educator, I believe the singular most important thing we need to teach children in school is a love of learning, learning that engages children and invested in families and communities. Everything thing else can be learned from that point. Our systems need be based on teaching, coaching, mentoring and guiding students in their learning relative to what interests them and not the same old menu of the dominators story and recipes for competition. Let the schooling design be the Anishnaabe way and restore the focus on Mino Bimadiziwin – living the good life. Given new possibilities with the TRC's call to action, the question becomes "how would we collectively envision this"? The instillation of drum and song is one way that is already being done in schools in Alberta and Saskatchewan where the population in a growing number of schools is completely Aboriginal.

Drum and song are central to the culture and central to ceremony. Elders or cultural teachers are always willing to share the songs. They want the songs to continue. The drum and song are healing. In the words of Anishnaabe Elder David Courchene, "We as a people are defined by our Seven Sacred Teachings. If our people are to be healed and get well again they will have to go back to the teachings that were given to them" (2015, np).

Many Elders have said we can only heal by going back to our traditional teachings such as drum and song. In recapturing what has been lost allows us another opportunity for healing that is part of us. The prophesy of the seventh fire states that we will journey back along the trails to find the bundles that have been hidden. We will revise our culture and our language.

The Elders will "wake up" from a long rest where their wisdom will once again be called upon. The possibilities for education are infinite. To set the framework around our value system housed by animal spirit as Elder Courchene's (2015) teaching will tell you are a beautiful start. They include; respect, love, courage, trust, humility, honesty and wisdom.

Recently the Truth and Reconciliation Commission came to a close in Ottawa announcing principles to consider and send a challenge out for a call to action. There has been a steady positive response but actions speak louder than words and only time will tell if actions follow. There is no question after thousands of testimonials about the detrimental impact of the residential schooling practice on First Nations peoples. The following are letters to my mom of the little she shared with me about going to residential school. It was only in her 70's that she began to talk about it more than likely because it was in the news that she felt she could break her long held silence. Understanding my early landscapes of learning within my family is important to me as it allows me to situate who I am in a larger context. It is the same context that also nurtures my interest in song and drum.

Returning to my early landscapes

Letters to Momma. As I think about my research puzzle, I think often about my mother. Knowing my mother has deeply shaped who I am. I turn towards her and contemplate writing letters. As I think about writing to my mom I reflect on our conversation yesterday, how we laughed together, how my mom showed a brave front. Just before our conversation I had spoken with Shoo-Shoo (my little sister) who had told me that my mom had not been well. I was grateful for the conversation with my mom. I like to think we are connected in spirit, my mom has taught me many things and I share some of what I have learned. As I share my experiences

alongside my mom, I would in no way dishonor her. I like to think I understand now and proceed with my heart heavy for my unresolved grief but also filled with love and compassion.

Dear Mom,

I am writing to you as I think of you so often in my writing - you and mamma both. As I try to decide a rational for my work on drum and song schools relative to traditional teachings. I guess with one foot in the past I always have the repercussions of residential school in mind. Sometimes, I think of writing only on that. A significant negative impact that resonates is the removal of children from home and the disconnection from parents and grandparents loving ways of child rearing but the language and their knowledge ways as well. The void I am aware of in writing a story on our relationship to drum and song. The stories of the people need to be told and not in a sugar coated way by pledging allegiance to a Catholic Priest in an almost brainwashed kind of way but a truthful, heartfelt depiction that allows you to heal from sharing your story. Debwewin, truth in its purest form needs to be revealed in these reflections. I know you spoke of good times with classmates like the time you fell back in line when it was time for your endless Sunday walk. You convinced a few friends to hang back with you assuring them to trust you, as you would not let anyone be caught. You had discovered a crawl space in the laundry room and that is where you hung out. You knew once they took attendance, they would never miss you as they did not take it again upon your return. You managed to have fun for a change considering the strict regimen you experienced on a daily basis. Fun was far from the descriptions I have ever read or heard about different friends accounts of their residential schooling experience. The experiences were far more brutal

and abusive. It is as difficult to witness someone being abused as it is to experience it. I am not sure that anyone was ever spared. I remember the first stories you ever shared with me was when we were waiting for Denise (my late sister) and you were putting some lipstick on. As you watched in the mirror and carefully applied the lipstick you smiled to yourself. I boldly asked (at least I thought it was forward of me to come forth and ask) "what are you thinking about that makes you smile"? You began a story that I have never forgotten as it moved me and I grew a deeper understanding for you and became far more aware of your life experiences.

I was in the "san" (Sanatorium) recovering from T.B. (tuberculosis). I had been placed there when I was 11. My lung was so far gone with infection that they did not think I would live. They performed an operation yet unheard of in the medical practice and removed my lung. It was a drastic measure and they took a real chance on my life. They said they did not think I would survive otherwise. Because the incision was so significant, they cut through the muscle front and back on one side of me. They did not think I would regain the use of my arm or the fine motor skills in my hand. They thought that the chances of me losing the use of my one arm was at risk but felt it was worth trying as it meant my survival. I was in there for a long time recovering. It was about 2 years. One time, the Indian Affairs agent, offered Mamma and Grandpa a ride to the "san" to see me. He happened to be from Six Nations reserve, just on the other side of Hamilton and he was aware that I was in there. They stopped by for a visit. Mamma did not really have anything on her to give me so she gave me the pin curlers in her purse and a tube of lipstick. "I guess she just wanted to give me something".

Well that night I waited until the last nurse checked in on me. Once she was gone, I sat up and began putting the curlers in my hair. Back then they were cloth that you have to wrap around. It took a bit of time but I got it done. Then I went to sleep. I woke early the next morning before the nurse came in. I took the curlers out. My hair was set with pin curls and I applied the lipstick Mamma had given me. When the first nurse came in I was sitting up with my hair all curled and my lipstick on! The nurse was so surprised. She called the other nurses to see me. They all complimented my new hair-do. They even called the doctor in. He did not work on Sundays, so it was significant that he came back in. I thought they were excited about my hair and lipstick but what they were amazed by was the fact that I proved to them that I had regained full fine motor skill coordination on my arm and hand. They did not know if I could lift my hand above my head or even hold it there for any length of time. They were very happy for me.

I smiled because I find it amusing that I did that and imagine what I looked like at with my hair all curled sitting up in bed with bright lipstick on. I laugh at my own antics and every now and then I think of that when I apply my lipstick.

I was bemused by this story. I saw you as a little girl for the first time doing something a young girl might do to impress her nurses and doctor confined to a bed for 2 years. I noticed the scar across your body but I never knew why you had them and I guess we never questioned it. I felt closer to you that day knowing this one story. I wondered what else could have happened in your life and why was there such a space between us. You probably never thought the stories you shared would be of any value to us or maybe because we were children. Maybe all that time you were working on your own healing in

the prayerful way you do, trying to raise five kids on your own. Another story puts me right back in that room was when you wanted to sit up shortly after your operation. You had asked the nurse, "Could I sit up?" "No," she said. It's too early. But as I lay there day after day, I really wanted to sit up. I asked again and again. Each time she would say no. Finally she probably got tired of my asking or she wanted to teach me a good lesson. She said okay, and she cranked my bed up. As I came up, the pain was excruciating. My eyes grew big. "Put me down, put me down"! I begged. She did and gently she said, I thought it might be too early but you had to see for yourself. I did not ask again.

I think about the pain involved in this whole 'experimental' operation you were subject to, so young. I think about the fact your parents only came to see you once or twice. It must have been so painful for such a recovery. I shudder to think about it. Not only were you relegated to step in line at residential school but contract T. B. in its' severest stage. You never spoke to me about your experiences with the exception of these few stories. And when I thought about it, dad never spoke of his experience either. In fact, I remember the time you and Auntie Joyce were cleaning up the church attic. It had some old dishes and things that were free for the taking. I remember Aunties comment about not wanting to imagine what may have gone on up there in that little room. I paid close attention. This was my first witness to a dialogue about a priest that was more sardonic then the usual revered stance. Then my Auntie said something like: "we deserve a little more than these old dishes!" You chimed in with "I would think so," and we all laughed. The church would never be able to repay the hurt they caused the people. I was

reminded that you do not say much. I understood though because you were in the church and not far away was the father. You always had so much respect and still do inspite of everything.

I could say more about residential school experiences but for now I will say that I became aware on a grand scale the hurtful effect of the residential schooling process. I began my own personal healing journey as a young adult. I attended this healing conference. Here I listened to Bea Shawanda from my reserve talk about healing and its importance for our people. She was comical but also made me cry. I was so moved by what I learned there. She had us visualize our parents as young children, happy and free. This is where I felt heavy with grief. I thought about you and dad, my aunties and uncles, my grandparents, my great grandparents. I could feel the pit of my stomach begin to convulse and I knew I had to wail. I removed myself and went outside to regroup. I never looked at you and dad the same way again. That was a defining moment for me that explained a lot. When I think about this now it makes me weep. My first draft of my work included the story of the Ishkodewattimi and now Potawattami. I thought about my ancestors as I was writing…writing something beautiful about us, that maybe a few words on the page for us could make it better. I know that's silly and I cannot single handedly right the wrongs of our people. I am not even sure what we can write in terms of tradition considering the void or chasm between traditional understandings of drum and song and the negative impact of residential schooling that has created this distance. I will write from my heart to honour you, mom, once and for

all and strive toward mino bimahdiziwin for us as a family, my writing and future teaching.

With love, Anna-Leah.

Letter to Momma cont'd

Dear Mom,

I so hope your voice does not fall to a whisper before I am finished. It means everything to have you there when I am done. I remember the story you shared of checking off that you would like a copy of your transcripts sent home even though you had been instructed not to. You said you were not being defiant and that you had heard the message but somehow in being thorough in filling out your form the option of having transcripts sent home sounded like a good thing. All was good until you returned in the fall to answer to your disobedience. You never said what the punishment was but you did say you were reprimanded. I recall a story from an Elder at this healing conference I attended. She shared a story of her grandmother whose hands were arthritic with gnarled fingers. She said this Elder was brutally punished as a small child in residential school for speaking her language. She honestly believed this grandmother had nearly crippled hands because of the severe brutality she experienced too often left in the care of nuns. These nuns were childless and it seemed as if they hated children. It was like they put the strictest disciplinarians with the most vulnerable to kill your spirit. I never knew until I was a university student that residential school was set up to do just that and more.

I learned from Shoo-Shoo (my sister) that you had your hair cut off and you were deloused upon entering. I can understand the experience haunting you, knowing it would

have been so unpleasant. It would be similar to the depictions in movies of people entering prison except I don't think they delouse them. The chemical poison of kerosene dripping onto your head, the god-awful smell and you were naked and even more vulnerable. Mom you must never feel ashamed for the sickness of these Godless people. The church will get its comeuppance. As my Nokum would say, 'watch how you treat all beings because that will always come right back to you'. You do say there were some better times like when the one nun would let you borrow the roller skates whenever you wanted them. You thought she was an exception being kind. I think you said she also taught you how to play piano.

My favorite story is when they sent all of you home. The girls went home to be done with school at Grade 8 but the boys were encouraged to continue until Grade 12. You were not going to let someone else dictate your future so you went to the one room school house in Kaboni (on the reserve) and you demanded that you be allowed to finish your schooling until Grade 12. You were a trailblazer for all the other young women who might want to finish their education. You showed them it was possible.

Last summer, I took you to the island so we could visit with everyone. We drove to Auntie Joyce's house and took her for dinner. She invited us back for dessert. As you were visiting she began to speak about residential school. Do you remember this person and that person. You both recalled 'Balogna Legs', a nun who was exceptionally mean. Auntie Joyce wondered how they could let someone like that work with children. She shared some antics of how you would trip her up and both of you were laughing. It was so good to witness you both finding humour in painful memories. Listening to Aunt Joyce

made me see the experience involved your whole family. All of your siblings were there except maybe the younger ones. I hope we can talk more about your experiences when I come out to see you. I hope you have the strength to visit and my constant line of wonders.

I remember mom when my grandma (on my dad's side) ran the store. She had all kinds of things for sale but it was mostly a confectionary with some groceries and personal care items. She sometimes cleared the shelf of things that would not sell and gave them to us. One of these items was a small container of Noxema cream. I was young to be using face cream but it was exciting to have my own face cream and I was determined to enjoy its full benefits. I started right away. Everything was good until my mom could smell it one day. "Who brought this disgusting Noxema cream home?!" she exclaimed. "I did", I answered. "Well - throw it out!" She demanded. I did not understand. She went on…I will not tolerate the smell of that stuff in my house! It is disgusting! That is what the nuns used in residential school and I never want to have to smell again as long as I live."

I put the Noxema cream in the garbage. I was still baffled. Why did she hate the smell of that so much? What did the nuns have to do with it? It does smell like BO in a cream. I did notice its funky smell. But, it was my first beauty cream, so what did I know. I believe it was shortly after this incident that my mom enrolled me in a "Self-discovery" beauty course with Sears. She started to purchase us Clinique beauty supplies and Estee Lauder make-up products for Christmas gifts. Maybe it was to avoid the possibility of the 'remindful' cream appearing in the vanityagain.

One winter evening, you invited me to a film you had wanted to see. I was happy to go. It was not often that we ever did anything together just the two of us. We went to the arts centre to view the film "Cold Journey". It was the latest produced film by the National Film Board of Canada. I had no idea what we were in for. The film was about this one fellow's journey to residential school. At the beginning of the film we see a frozen body by the railway tracks. The star of the film has segments of being in school, and then being billeted with this white family. There are awkward times for him like the time he blew up the China cabinet when they handed him a loaded gun. He did not realize it was loaded. Another scene I remember was upon returning home he went with his father to fish but he lacked the skills to be helpful. His father chastised him for this. He felt he did not belong or fit in at home nor did he fit in the Whiteman's world. He decides to journey home on a very cold day. We return to the first scene of the movie which we had forgotten by now. His body is frozen as someone finds him by the railroad tracks.

I had a big lump in my throat. I wanted to cry but I couldn't. I wasn't allowed, especially in a public place. I was in total angst. I looked at you mom but you did not show any emotion. We walked out in silence. In the parking lot as I tried to hold back tears I asked "why did you take me to that film?" You had some logical answer that I do not remember now. At that time, I never thought about you as a residential school survivor. I did not even know you went. If I was holding in my grief, I imagine you must have been. Why could we not just cry for what it was – devastating! I still cry today over this…for the tears I never got to cry and for the understanding that I have now.

If I could fast forward to our time in church on the res shortly after "mamma" had passed. I believe it was my first times back in that little church in years. It smelled like varnish and holy water. It was a beautiful summer day. I had been devastated by the death of Mamma. I was there for her passage and held her hand as she went. None of my immediate family was there. I kept looking at my grandfather for help or support. I was trying to tell him with my eyes she is going. I wanted him to come up and hold her too. It was too big a responsibility for me. But my other grandmother was there. She knew I had stayed up all night. In fact when I called her the morning she gave me a lecture on ""where were you, I was worried?" I told her they are calling the family. In the meantime you had headed back to Ottawa. You did not make sense to me. They had said my grandmother's kidneys were shutting down. I knew this was serious but you acted as if it was not significant. I could not contest your thinking so I had to let you go. But I already knew she was going when I reflect back. When I had first got there to the old folks home, she did not look good. She was half the weight I had seen her at the last time. I was shocked by this and retreated from the room. Again I wanted to sob but you followed me and asked 'what's wrong?" I did not know what to say but since I was in the middle of the hallway and in front of the reception desk, I wanted to regain my composure. I semi-resembled myself and went in. I smiled for my aunties and approached my grandmother's bedside. I gave her a hug but could no longer hold back my tears. She cupped my hand in her hand and looked at my teary eyes. Sometimes, I think she knew that I knew. She talked easily until she made me laugh and then I could sit down.

It was a long night as she went in and out of focus. She prayed out loud. We prayed too. She was seeing the ancestors. She switched to our Anishnaabe language. My aunties would gasp every once in awhile. At least this is what I believe was happening because it is always the teller of things to come. She was physically still with us but she was also travelling. In the early morning she asked for breakfast. This is also normal for the Elders to come back for one last meal for their journey. They are with it and with you. It is a pleasant last meal. And then she slipped away. When she was really gone, when she breathed her last breadth, I wanted to wail! But, I couldn't. I am not allowed. I got a horrific pain in the pit of my tummy. It would not go away.

Back at the church, we sat quietly waiting as the priest gets mass ready. I thought about my Mamma and all she did for the church. I remember her big raisin and molasses cake that she would sell for 10 cents after church to fundraise. I loved her spice cake the best. I thought about the hotdog sales at the church bazaars and that I worked beside her selling hotdogs. I remembered the fish pond and the prizes she kept in the porch. I thought about all the good she did for that church and how much she was a part of it. I began to weep. Just tears, quiet tears that I could no longer hold back. I was with you mom but I was an adult now and I knew I had every right to cry. You noticed this and offered me a Kleenex. I needed another as my tears became stronger by your kind gesture. "What's wrong?" you asked gently. "I don't know", I said. This answer struck us both as funny for the situation. I think you knew but asked anyway. We started to giggle and as we started to giggle we began to laugh - silently. I shook with laughter and grief uncontrollably for a good minute or 2. Eventually, I settled down. You joked that

we were going to get kicked out of church. I whispered to you in my tears that I missed Momma and the church reminded me of her. It was not long after that the drum became even more significant to me. I am so glad mom that I will be able to keep writing letters to you, as a way to explore and inquire where I am from, to where I am going, and contemplate the responsibilities I hold and the communities I belong to.

With love, Anna-Leah.

Sept.12th – mother's song

Since I began my healing journey, I have prayed for a healing song. I wanted a song that I could sing for you so that your healing would happen alongside me connecting us through this song. I have learned many songs but not one termed a healing song. I would have thought with resonating in this field of healing would have generated more healing songs. One of my first experiences in my own healing path was a "doctoring ceremony" that I was privy to. I attended the Four Worlds Healing Conference in Lethbridge Alberta about 30 years ago. I am not sure how I chose my session but I know it was more than I expected as I found it deeply moving. Dr. Phil Lane was the presenter sharing his personal healing journey. He shared how he came to discover his own healing abilities. There was a woman in the audience that asked for his help. That is why they were there. He asked everyone to make a circle and pray for this woman as he "doctored" her. He was working with the women when he called out does anybody have a healing song? My ears perked up. A healing song! How appropriate. A woman there had a song and with a rattle she began to sing. I immediately felt at ease. It seemed more like a ceremony with the song. He invited us to sing. More voices chimed in. I tried to sing too but was not familiar with the song. When the ceremony was over the song ended and we dispersed.

Since that day I have prayed for a healing song. Then one day listening to the water, I thought about the water's soothing quality. I thought the water must be healing too. As I pondered this I began to hear a song emerging. I thought about the history of loss and grief in my family and the grief in my community. I have a song now that I sing for your for healing. I sang it at every sweat for 15 years and will continue to.

Residential Schools

According to Chief Justice Sinclair, residential schooling included sexual, physical, verbal and emotional abuse and he termed residential schools as "Cultural genocide". Many never left the school but they left this world while at the schools. This was a horrendous experience for the students who attended. Chief Justice Sinclair, the first Aboriginal Manitoba Court Judge was the head of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Everyone in Canada needs to know Chief Justice Sinclair recommends that school curriculum across Canada include this history. The commission established principles to follow. We are in a good time where it at least feels like there could be positive change. Again, as an Anishnaabekwe teacher, I see this a brilliant opportunity to evaluate our own efforts to question that we have done everything we could to honour the prophesy of the 7th fire and "pick up the bundles", learn from them, in essence learn our traditional teachings, history, worldview to share our Anishnaabe perspective in the classrooms.

Now is the time to bring forward all aspects of the culture and worldview to teaching to freely introduce traditional teachings of drum and song and its cultural grounding as a meaningful way of understanding. Drum and song is just one doorway to deeper truth – tebwewin. What is beautiful is that there are many ways.

N'Danis – to my daughter Tanis

Ever since you were born, I realized my reason to be. I had one important job and that was to see to your well-being and I can say I did my best. I may not have always been perfect but I sure did my best. You are my anchor in bringing me back to my purpose which is to see that you are loved and know you are loved. I always put your needs before my own as my parents taught me. And so I write this letter to once again centre myself as I look forward with you in mind to the task at hand in thinking about our future generations.

As a teacher I think about the fact that I worked in schools that had only Aboriginal children. Many came from single family homes. When your father left you were only 18 months old. We did not have much but we had a lot more going for us then the children at school that for the most part had very little including food. I learned to count my blessings in this time. Although I found it hard as a single mom with no support to raise you, I made sure there was always food. I knew how to stretch food to last and cover multiple meals. I took you shopping to the local Salvation Army to purchase clothing and anything else we needed. Then I would get our week's grocery supplies, as much as would fit on the stroller. We had a very tight budget.

I thought about raising you as a single mom and how many children in my classroom were in similar experience. Being a teacher helped me see that schools are alive with of knowing as Indigenous people. Each place I worked there was a dance troupe and drum. I brought you along to all the evening and weekend shows. You danced with the kids as well. It was fun, a social outlet if you will. We had an instant community. You learned

the songs and sang with me too. I don't think you even remember that. I loved when you would lay my cassette brief case on the living room floor and stand on top of it and do a little song performance. You liked to belt out Buffy St. Marie. Well in a manner of speaking. You had a sweet voice and you could really sing. You knew the songs and I was impressed.

My favorite time that I heard you sing was when I was asked to sing at a conference. It was an Aboriginal conference of some kind. I was a little apprehensive being a female singer with the drum in predominantly Cree country. You followed me to the stage and I sang "Family Honour". You suddenly picked up and sang with me. It was so beautiful. You saw singing to a live crowd of about 800 as natural. Your voice was powerful, yet sweet. I really thought you were going to be a singer.

I could see I had important work to do as a mother and a teacher. I wanted to pass on everything I had learned and was still learning to the students. I could see the language and the culture diminishing as I met new students. The Elders wanted you to learn too. That is why we had a ceremony for your baby name and then another for your adult name - Gi zha ba gi zha ka kwe (Walking Heavenly Spirit Woman). Your new name was so beautiful to me especially since the Elder shared how the name came down. He (Bowser) said he prayed for a long time before anyone heard him. The grandmother said" I already told Anna-Leah this name". I recalled in that moment a dream wherein my grandmother came to me when I was pregnant with you. She handed me something. Two grandmothers came in separate dreams. One grandmother I had never met but I had time to tell mom about her. She had long black hair and wore it in a ponytail. My

mom immediately knew who she was. "That's Semakwe, my great grandmother and your great, great grandmother!" You would not have met her. Both grandmothers smiled with their approval of you coming into the world. When Mamma handed me something, maybe it was your name at that time. I believe with a significant name comes responsibility. I believe you will honour your namesake.

I always brought you to ceremony. I felt I was doing the right thing in that you would know ceremonies. They would be a natural part of your life to gather, pray and feast together in our ceremonial community. You were always willing to attend and participate. In truth (bedwewin), I saw our spiritual community as extended family. You see my family means everything to me. When I raised you far away from home and far away from all your relatives I did not realize growing as a collective in a circle of loving relations would be absent from your experience. I can't function if there is disharmony amongst my siblings and nieces. I like to feel loved by everyone as I love them. I did not realize you would feel more estranged by your family. I believe this was why Bowser took us in and included us with his family. He could not fathom someone raising a child solely on their own. I appreciated this family as well. Everyone treated us as a friend and counted on us being there at all the family ceremonies. I am sorry that you are not as close to your whole family right now. They don't know how beautiful of a young women you have become and how sensitive you are. Oh well I hope and pray in time you will become closer because you may not think you need each other but in this big cold world – you do. Even just to know you have each other's support. I am always grateful

when my siblings find ways for us to gather now. We all feel it. No better place than a family gathering.

When my sister passed away, we gathered in ceremony. I asked Bowser to help. He was most interested in meeting my mom. It was one of those rare times where we had my mom and dad together. I had made a commitment to have four ceremonies in my sister's honour after she passed. My sister died of a broken heart. Bowser was so respectful to my mom. I am not sure what it was. Maybe he saw her as the matriarch, a language speaker, a residential school survivor and a mother of five children and heartbreakingly one passed away. Bowser was kind to everyone. My brother impressed me when he brought gifts of medicine from home. Everyone was welcoming and warm. Maggie and Bowser stayed until well after the ceremony. We had time to fire up the BBQ and have a hotdog party. My mom and dad were telling stories. It is one of my fondest memories. It was the pipe and the ceremony too. We gathered to honour my eldest sister in my family. We have all suffered greatly her loss.

My sister was my close friend. I could always count on her to remember my birthday and give me a call. Or she would call to check in and make sure all was going well. She loved you Tanis unconditionally. She absolutely adored you the minute she met you. She saw you as a mini me. I so appreciated her exuberant love for my you. It made everything seem right. My sister and I were simpatico on everything and we both loved outrageous humor. We would always try to outdo each other in hilarity probably to others annoyance. We would laugh and laugh. Life was never easy nor did it seem it ever would be. So we found ways to laugh. We could always bring each other's spirits

up. Sometimes long after her passing, I would wake up and think "I am going to call my sister. So happy at the first light of day until reality hits you and you remember. She is no longer there! I can't call. She still comes to me in my dreams. She talks to me now. I can't remember what we say but I am aware there is conversing. Sometimes, we have work to do.

Anyways, my teachers, my adopted families, my value of family and family relationships are really important. I believe my daughter; you will learn the value of this in time and make effort to be a part of everyone when I am gone.

With Love Mom

An Elder once said the hurt of one generation that goes without healing affects the next generation. Unless efforts are made to turn things around, it continues. Intergenerrational trauma is a real concern for many Aboriginal families.

Bidiku ahmook nimkeek rumbling thunder…moving forward (after the storm)

Thinking about song and drum in formal education, it calls for the implications for education. We as educators need to certainly be cognizant of the traditional roots. We as Anishnaabe need to pass forward this information. We, as Anishnaabe educators need the students to know it. How? -By involving the community. We need to include the Elders on the how to become educated formally and not by losing our traditional understandings and practices of who we are and where we come from. Policy needs to be in place to accommodate the need for community input in multiple capacities. Policy must also be approached from our perspective and must consider Anishnaabe worldview. In this way, the traditional understandings of drum and song and all aspects of language and culture can be ensured.

Policy

I am drawing on my father's perspective on how policy is positioned from Anishnaabe worldview.

Naakonnigewinan (The Rules)

In contemporary times since the Indian Act and the treaties, the Band Council makes policies within the limited power granted to the Band Council by the Canadian law. Before the Canadian government enacted the Indian Act and before the treaties were signed, the Odawak lived by the Laws of the Orders, "Enendagwad," and so it was meant to be. These laws, we believed came from the Creator not human beings.

Enendagwad set the framework of our lives. We were last in the universe, the most dependent. We recognized our limited knowledge and beseeched the Creator to give us direction for creating the policies by which we governed ourselves. The Creator gave us instructions on how to derive the policies. To develop the policies for living together, the Creator gave the Odawak a number of ways to ask –ceremonies, medicine, the Shaking Tent, the Sweat Lodge, the Sun Dance, prayers, etc. in developing policies for relations with other First Nations, where different nations agreed on policies on how to live together.

The Creator gave us the Seven Grandfathers and Grandmothers teachings. They are not policies. They are values which a person must learn to be able to follow the Creator's Laws. Atsokanan are the teaching tools to explain and enforce the Laws of the Orders, the Creator's instructions and the values to live by. The proper behavior, "Gwekwadissowin" which follows from the Law of the Orders the teachings result in what might constitute community policies as the community struggles to maintain life according to the Laws of the Orders. "One might say

that Enendagwad - the Creator's Policy and Innowkohnigewinan - policy to fulfill the Creator's policy" (King, personal communication, 2015).

Ihzhitchigewnan – direction

The Law of Orders would be a starting place for establishing policy toward Indigenous or Anishnaabe education because it stems from Anishnaabe worldview. It encompasses Atsokannan, the stories and the values of the people. The principles of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada need to be considered. The TRC believes reconciliation between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Canada can only be met by their established recommendations, principles and call to order. There are a few principles that pertain in particular to formal education.

The first of which is number 4: Reconciliation requires constructive action on addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism that have had destructive impacts on Aboriginal peoples' education, cultures and languages, health, child welfare, the administration of justice, an economic opportunities and prosperity. Formal education today is no more successful for Anishnaabe people. The opportunity to centre Anishnaabe worldview and all First Nations worldviews as the pinnacle of learning alongside language immersion allows for cultural restoration and reconciling. Drum and song as the centre of all ceremony is a natural teaching and learning focus.

In collective efforts Canada wide or at least Anishnaabe country wide, it is our time now to remodel our education systems to ensure our language and culture is not lost by instilling the language teachers are a part of it as well as cultural teachers and Elders. It is not for me to say alone. By collective efforts with parents and grandparents, Elders, teachers and administrators

and everyone's input together that is needed to set the direction in education for our children's future. Therefore, the communities must also be central, as song and drum are central to them. We are fully aware of the destruction on our own cultural systems, now is our chance to turn this around in the formal education setting no longer at the expense of our language and culture. The drum and song will be alive and thriving as the central gathering place to our new positive world of teaching and reconstruction of our Anishnaabe ways.

In this way we uphold principle number 7: The perspectives and understandings of Aboriginal Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers of the ethics, concepts, and practices of reconciliation are vital to long-term reconciliation. I would add that these perspectives are needed in redesigning formal education where the centering is based on Anishnaabe worldview which requires drawing from the wisdom of Gite Anishaabe and language speakers.

And lastly, a final principal that pertains to all of the above mentioned forward movement in revitalization and reconciliation number 8: Supporting Aboriginal peoples' cultural revitalization and integrating Indigenous knowledge systems, oral histories, laws, protocols, and connections to the land into the reconciliation process are essential.

Currently there is a great distance between the four walls of formal education and a connection to the land and its' pedagogy. On the land, Anishnaabemowin comes alive and the teachings inherent in the language. The land is the place of ceremony, song and drum. The land is our teacher with the ancient markers of the petro glyphs, the mountains and the medicines. Our language is more closely tied to the land and the waterways. Connecting with our first teacher – aki, the earth is essential to our efforts to revitalize our knowledge systems. Kinamago – all earth teaches us as we come to know in returning to the Original teachings.

Educators will bring together Elder's and wisdom keepers who will give guidance towards efforts in reconciling and reconstructing formal education as we know it. This effort of reconciling Simpson (2011) has termed Aanji Maajitaawin meaning to start over, the art of starting over, to regenerate (p. 22). She defines reconciliation as the process of regenerating values, political process and philosophies. Connecting to the land, language and culture would be a part of this. Further, she leaves the term resurgence undefined believing this if the term defined by Elders and community in terms of what does it mean to them. This is the beginning place for formal educations redesign. Incorporating the principles generated by the TRC ensures a better working relationship and future for our children.

Formal Education

From our worldview, language and cultural understandings are where we can begin a re-assembling learning for our children. Language speakers would be called upon to assist in the effort to revitalize the language. Cultural teachings would be an essential part of the curriculum which would include the field of drum and song. Formal education would be based on our Anishnaabe perspective, our history, our truth-tebwewin, and our language. From the natural laws and traditional laws that have always governed us we embrace and move forward. Together with the community, we can create a vision that will serve the needs of our children in education. Drum and song will be a central part of it. To include the history and acknowledgement of the disruptions is important. All cultures evolve and change and grow. To be cognizant of the past and reveal all truth – tebwewin, we will be more academically sound and it will make us stronger as a people to know who we are and from where we come.

The way forward with regard to schools meaning formal education is to provide an Indigenizing of the academies or school systems. I believe in Dr. Stan Wilson's words he coined the term "indigagogy" (Wilson, personal communication, 2012) which can be interpreted as to look at education and consider indigenizing all that could be set in place there. Formal education would be our design from our own creative thinking taking in the Elders voices and the community and inviting them to become involved. We have at least 5,000 teachers in the school systems in Saskatchewan. Surely they have developed things that work in their classrooms and their experience is a vital contribution to reconciling and revitalizing efforts. In fact, I have already witnessed and experienced drum and song in schools as the centre for gathering and the centre of ceremony. These schools are viewed as highly successful in terms of being open to creative and positive change.

Drum and song are only a part of the bigger picture for change and reconciliation but they are certainly together a powerful element and a crucial one. As the Elder Sakewew Tamowin (Sunrise) has shared, the drum is at the centre of any ceremony. He like many Elders before him use the drum as a teacher, singing and interjecting with song and back again to story. It is a teaching instrument as much as it is for song and song itself is a teacher. "Songs are thought, sung out with the breath when people are moved by great forces and ordinary speech no longer suffices (Kawagley, 1995, p. 34). In addition, our origin stories, our creation stories are all a part of who we are and what better opportunity to be retold than story time in a school setting.

What's In a Song?

Song is the most powerful means to connect with spirit. It is a way of prayer. Our songs hold the knowledge. That is what the Gite Anishnaabek have told us. It may seem insignificant

to an outsider or a non-First Nations teacher as an outsider to the culture. It is very significant to us. We need the singers and the drums to promulgate ceremony. The singers create the vision or pathway of ritual to the ceremony. A deeper level of meaning and significance can be revealed with the Elders leading ceremony with the schools. For students who are seeking to learn more on a deeper level the formal school setting can be the gateway to ceremony should they choose this path.

A song can take you. Look at the young fellow who sang for our new prime minister in his Swearing in Ceremony. He led the new leader to his place in ceremony. We could not have imagined this even just 10 years ago. This is symbolic of great hope as the new leadership invites Aboriginal people to the governing circle and promises to recognize the work of the TRC and their call to action. I would hope that there will be funds behind the promises to ensure we achieve our goals of reconciliation through the TRC's recommendations and principles. The complete redesign of formal education stemming from Anishnaabe worldview is one.

There has always been this critique in academe that not all First Nations people are artists, singers or dancers. This is true but to eliminate the possibility in learning for providing them the opportunity to learn is really wrong. Every opportunity need be provided for Anishnaabe to learn their language and culture to find their place in it. Idle No More was not only an example of being on a united front across Turtle Island as Aboriginal people; it also showed the country we are still here. Our drums and songs are still prevalent and realigned us in multiple dancing circles country wide - our circle symbolic of togetherness, support, ceremony and the sacredness of life. Our "Peaceful Protest" across the country must have been a surprise to all those who witnessed. We acquired global support as people stood up, held up placards

stating “we support Idle No more” and posted them on Face book in response to our cause for weeks after. No-one would have guessed the hundreds of Aboriginal people that came out and the non-Aboriginal support that danced with us.

The Anishnaabe Elders are predicting we will soon enter the time of the prophecy of the eighth fire. Once the fire is lit we walk the pathway of spirituality.

The 7th Fire Prophecy (cont’d)

> It is this time that the light skinned race will be given a choice between two roads. If they choose the right road, then the Seventh Fire will light the Eighth and final Fire, an eternal fire of peace, love brotherhood and sisterhood. If the light skinned race makes the wrong choice of the roads, then the destruction which they brought with them in coming to this country will come back at them and cause much suffering and death to all the Earth's people.

Traditional Midewewin people of Ojibway and people from other nations have interpreted the "two roads” that face the light skinned race as the road to technology and the other road to spiritualism.

Anishnaabe prayer. Translated by Cecil King (2016)

Kithetwa Manitou gi miigwetch ighouh kinah mandah zhwendijgehwinon begidinemoh wih yang kinah wendahninimug niiwin nodinowinangiizis ensh giiziguk bahdaod minneh sagkiiwin kinah bedkidek omnpii egidkamig, niodin miinwan bemiidoad gidin mihewanin. Nipi e nahbeduk wii mishkawgamig gi misskwiimminah menkahgo nan kinah bemahdzijik. N’dahn ah mik kinah anishnabeg jim mizweh goding giizhiguk. N’dahn mukuk mih n’bogsendah min jih moon dah wiyang kinah anishnabeg omani pii a gid kamig n’wikanehnanik giigh

n'dahwaminah nik, kinah missiweh niiwen nodinon wiskama gag eneo giidziguk miinwah dush pune djina mah suh wendahng kinah begotin moh wiihyang monpii a king gwenahjiwahng knah. Ahoh!

Holy Creator, we pray in thanks for all you give us – the gifts of the four directions. The sun, that gives all life to earth, the fire – the spark of life that is our spirit as we know we are a part of you, the earth and all its bounty, the wind that spreads the seeds and carries our voices in prayer, the water as our life blood that sustains us. We pray for all Indian people everywhere and for our brothers and sisters of the fours direction. We pray that we one day come together to preserve earth's bounty that we may continue to live in her beauty. Ahoh!

Drum is for song. Our song is our prayer. As we move closer to the prophecy of the eighth fire our prayers will be answered.

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