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A Cultural View of Music Therapy: Music and Beliefs of Teton Sioux Shamans, with Reference to the Work of Frances Densmore

Stephanie B. Thorne
Butler University

CERTIFICATE FORM

Name of Candidate: Stephanie B. Thorne

Oral Examination Date: Wednesday, June 23, 1999

Committee Chairperson: Dr. Penny Dimmick

Committee Members: Dr. Sue Kenyon, Dr. Tim Brimmer, Dr. Wayne Wentzel, Mr. Henry Leck

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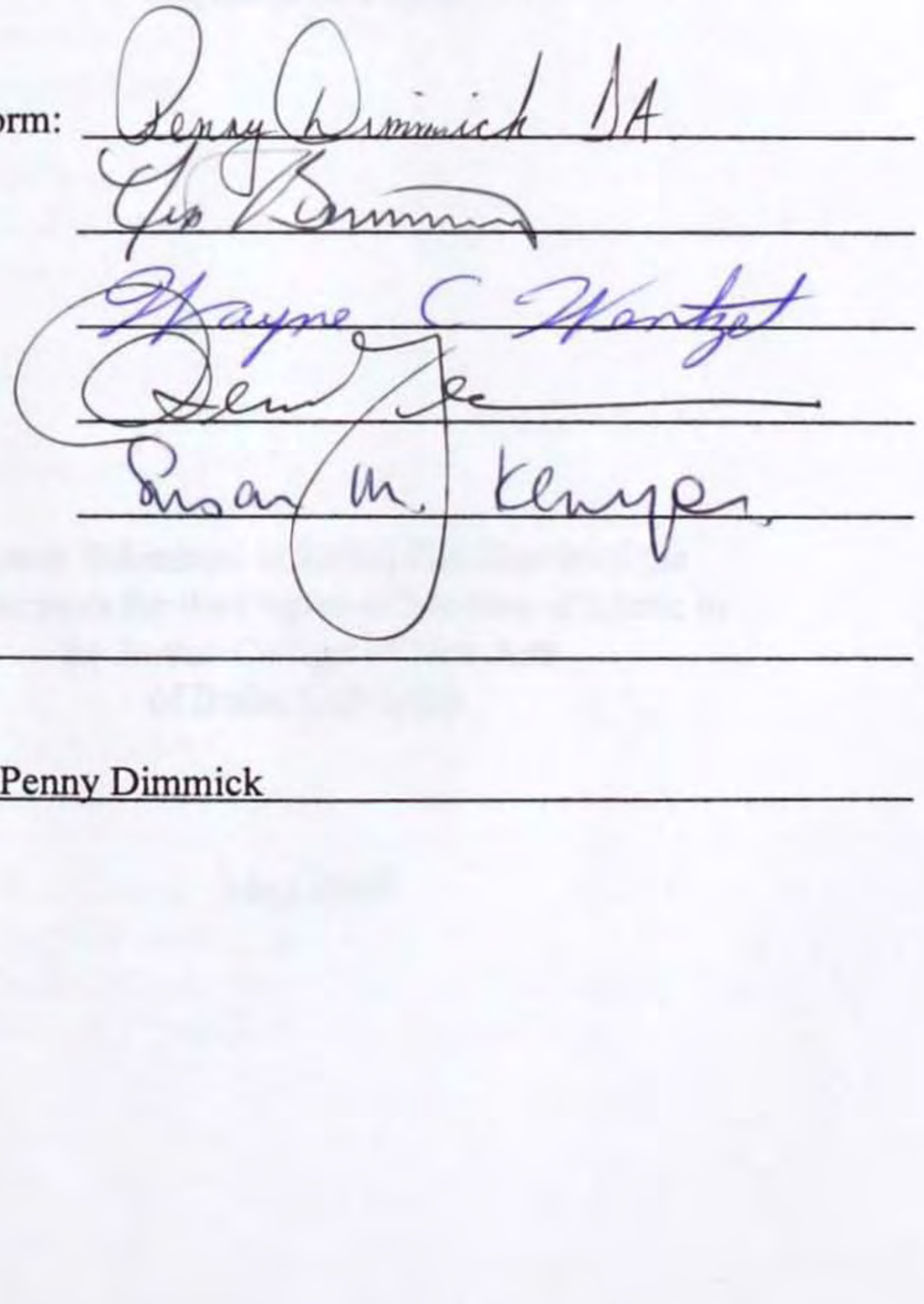

Date:

Major professor: Dr. Penny Dimmick

A CULTURAL VIEW OF MUSIC THERAPY: MUSIC AND BELIEFS OF TETON SIOUX SHAMANS, WITH REFERENCE TO THE WORK OF FRANCES DENSMORE

by

Stephanie B. Thorne

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND PROPOSAL

At the end of World War II, doctors trained in the western bio-medical tradition integrated music into their practice as a means of helping soldiers recover, both mentally and physically, from the atrocities experienced while overseas. For many, music was a solace, opening up the peaceful memories of home and family and pushing aside the war-torn landscapes. By establishing interpersonal relationships between the therapist and the patient, as well as patient-to-patient in group settings, music enabled feelings and emotions to flow freely. The mind was given a structured pattern to bridge the gap of the psychological and physiological experience. It was then that music therapy was introduced into the western practices of biological medicine.[1]

In the western practice of music therapy, music is used as a tool to elevate the moods of patients, to reduce stress before and after surgical procedures, and to promote and maintain physical rehabilitation/coordination and communication skills.[2] E. Thayer Gaston, a former head of the music therapy department at the University of Kansas, brought attention, in 1986, to the "three principles of music therapy: 1) the establishment or re-establishment of interpersonal relationships, 2) the bringing about of self-esteem through self-actualization, and 3) the utilization of the unique potential of rhythm to energize and bring order."[3] Underlying these principles is the belief that all people have a need for aesthetic experiences, yet it is the nonverbal communication which provides

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1Winn, Thomas. "Shamanism and Music Therapy: Shamanism - an Overview." Music Therapy Perspectives. (1989): 67.

[2] "FAQs about Music Therapy." American Music Therapy Association. (July 1999).

3Hodges, Donald A., ed. Handbook of Music Psychology. San Antonio: IMR, 1996, 542.

the ability to "express the ineffable."[4] However, music in medicine is not a new practice.

Gaston once said that "music is the essence of humanness, not only because man creates it, but he creates his relationship to it."[5] What, then, do other cultures understand that give a more personal/spiritual side to the use of music as a path to healing? Taking a look at the history of Native North America would provide a good first step in understanding the principles of the human spirit in music therapy.

The focus of this research was to provide a historical and cultural look at the use of music in the healing practices of the Teton Sioux Shamans through their spiritual beliefs. By studying the cultural ideas of music, researchers and music therapists would be able to gain a deeper understanding of the human response to music based upon cultural and spiritual beliefs.

In researching the spiritual guides and connections of the shamans, various areas of study presented possibilities for this project. However, it was found necessary to narrow the focus of the quest. One possibility was the complete historical perspective of music as a type of therapy. Expounding upon the complete evolution of humans and music would not have been plausible due to time constraints.

Another opportunity was a comparative study of music therapy in tribal-based cultures with western practice, which would have been a welcome approach to this study. Yet this did not provide a close examination of the historical information regarding western influences in music therapy development.

As the research continued, the study was restricted to a few prominent cultures,

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4 Hodges, Donald A., ed. Handbook of Music Psychology. San Antonio: IMR, 1996, 543.

5 Radocy, Rudolf E., ed. al. Psychological Foundations of Musical Behavior. 2nd ed. (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1988), 10, citing E. T. Gaston, "Man in Music," Music in therapy. (1968): 15.

but the Native American cultures stood out from the literature found. The aspects which became apparent are how the dream songs of the Teton Sioux healers and their practices emphasized the spirituality of their use of music in healing.

The decision in choosing this research area stems from my own Native American heritage. Although lifestyles and social structures vary from one Nation to another, Native people have a common bond of spiritual oneness with the nature and environment which surrounds them.

There are two guidelines that must be taken into consideration when approaching the beliefs and practices of any Native American culture. First, a person must understand that there are no words available in the English language to describe every detail and concept of the Native culture. It is a way of life with no separation between spiritual and physical experience. Second, that which is sacred is a silent pact between a Native person and the Creator. Festival dances, healing practices, dream songs, and visions of spiritual guidance fall in this realm of sacredness. To give an "outsider" a glimpse into any of these experiences is much like giving away a part of your spiritual essence. Thus, it is critical to approach any shared information of the Sacred, such as that which is shared in this paper, with respect and reverence.

The method of research included investigating historic and documentary texts on various Native American cultures. However recordings of traditional shamanic music were difficult to find. In researching the work of Frances Densmore, some recordings of the Sioux sacred music were found. They were unobtainable from the Smithsonian Institution, however, since they are wax phonographic recordings. Nonetheless, the archives of the Smithsonian Institution, via research on the internet, provided many

articles on the styles of music used by various tribes, but these articles dated back to the early 1900's and are now out of print. I was fortunate enough to obtain photocopies of these bulletins from the Smithsonian and include them in my study of the Teton Sioux. The examples of dream songs and stories of the sacred stones were chosen for not only historical significance but also for their ability to provide a closer insight into the basis of beliefs which pervades the life and practices of a Teton Sioux healer.

To begin to understand the Teton Sioux culture, it is important to ask the questions:

1. What gave a person the "right" to be considered a healer?
2. What factors played a role in the choosing of a song?
3. What understandings did the healers have about their guides?
4. What was the significance of the dreams?

The term "Native American" is generally used in reference to describe the original peoples in the Americas at the time of European arrival. Although this includes a large number of groups, there are many common practices shared by these nature-oriented people. One attribute shared is the practice of shamanism, though found in many different forms.

Shamanism is a practice of spiritualism in which good and evil spirits are believed to be active in the world. These spirits can be summoned or talked to through a shaman. Shamans, also called healers or medicine people, were chosen, with little regard for gender, by powers of the spirit realm via the experience of a personal tragedy or dreams through which they were given signs from their ancestors or totems.

Sometimes totems were used by the shamans as teachers. Plants, animals, or anything else of nature were thought to be sent as a teacher and guide through life. For some, one guide would direct them for their whole life, yet other people had many teachers in their lifetime.

This project will begin with a chapter about the Teton Sioux culture and social structure. I will talk about the roles of men and women and moral codes. The next chapter will give a brief description of the role of a shaman and the importance of dream songs. Following the chapter on the shaman will be a biographical look at Frances Densmore, a woman whose life was devoted to preserving the cultures she thought were dying through the recording of songs. Next will be a focus on the music, religion, and healing of the Teton Sioux shamans using the information found in the work of Frances Densmore. Finally, the project will conclude with a summary and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2

THE TETON SIOUX

The Sioux are recognized by most people as a part of the stereotypical "Indian" custom attributed to the Plains cultures - the tipis, the feather headdresses, dancing. However up until the 17th Century, the Sioux were a part of the Eastern Woodland cultures around the Mille Lacs region of present day Minnesota, where they hunted small game and deer and gathered wild rice. In the Woodland region, the Sioux were surrounded by large rival tribes, and a conflict with neighboring Ojibwa people forced them to move to the Plains, where buffalo became a staple of their diet. The Sioux prospered in their new land, and in 1780, the population was estimated at 25,000.[6] (See maps, pg. 7.)

The Sioux often speak of themselves as the "Oceti Sakown, Seven Council Fires," which refers to the seven tribal divisions: "the Oglala ("Scatter One's Own"), Sichangu ("Burnt Thighs" or "Brulés"), Miniconjou ("Those Who Plant By the Stream"), Hunkpapa ("Those Who Camp at the Entrance"), Sihasapa ("Black Feet"), Stazipcho ("Without Bows"), and Oohenonpa ("Two Kettles").[7] Of these seven tribes were three major divisions: the Dakotas, the Nakotas, and the Lakotas. The Dakotas were also known as the sedentary and agricultural Santee. The Nakota were also known as the Yankton. The Lakotas ("allies"), the warrior and buffalo-hunter Teton, were the largest group, constituting over half of the entire nation and exceeded all other Sioux both in

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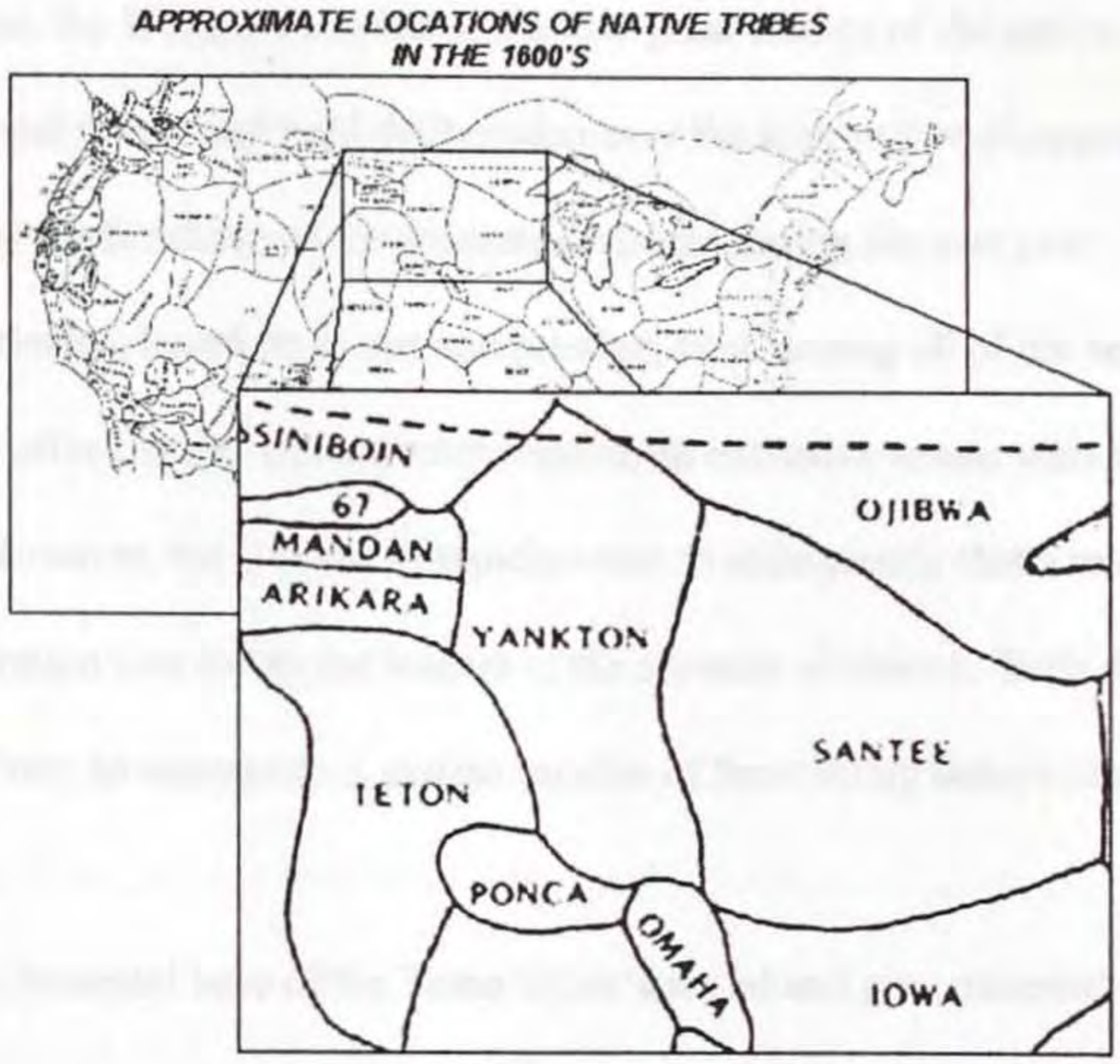
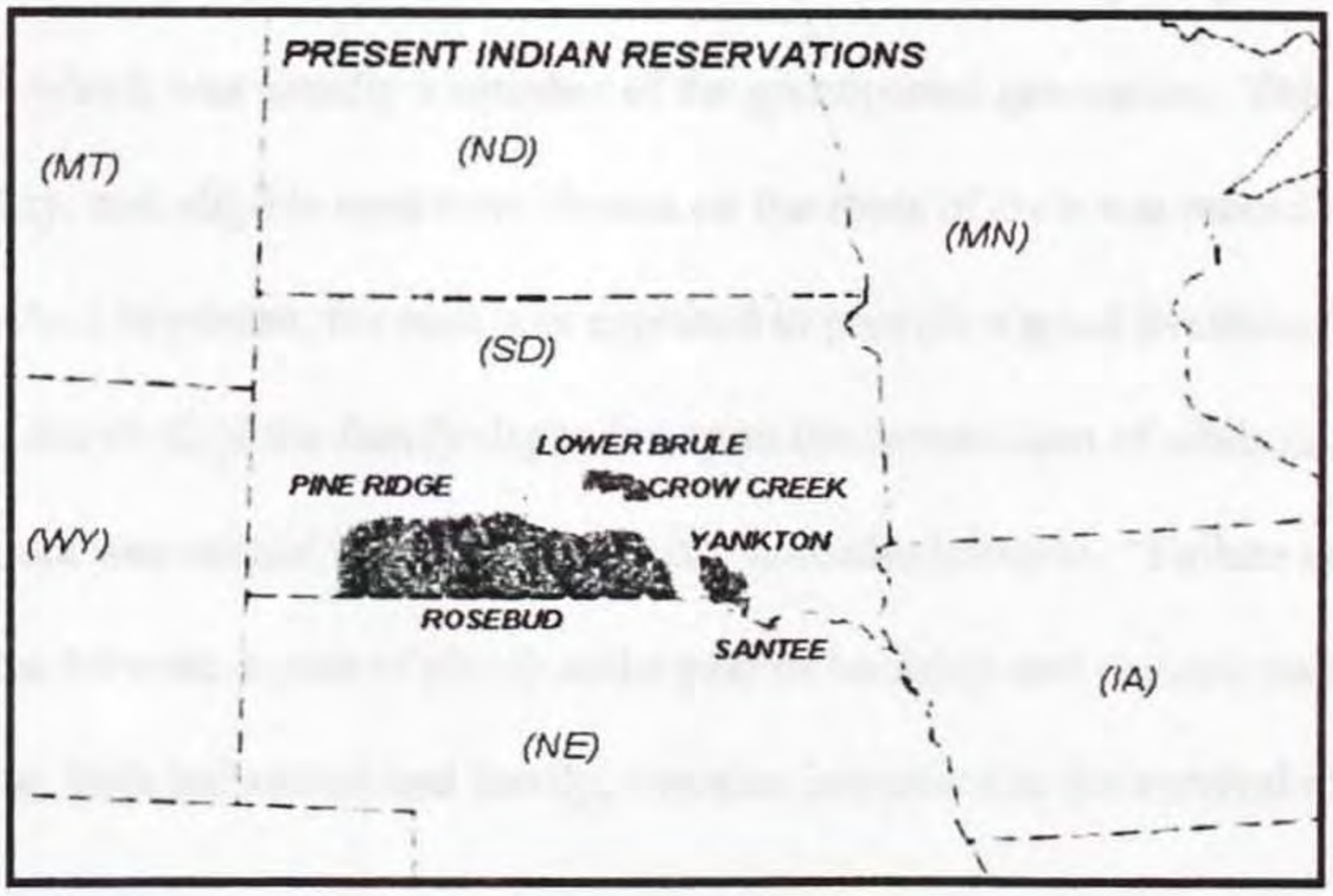
[6] Legay, Gilbert. Atlas of Indians of North America. (1995): 39.
[7] Hassrick, Royal B. The Sioux: Life and Customs of a Warrior Society. (1964): 3.

wealth and physical development.[8]





[8] Densmore, Frances. "Teton Sioux Music." Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology: Anthropological Papers, Bulletin 61. (1918): 2.

[9] Beck, Peggy V., ed. al. The Sacred: Ways of Knowledge, Sources of Life. (1992): covers with modifications.

Each Summer, the entire Sioux nation would assemble to hold council and celebrate the Sun Dance. This meeting "symbolized the cohesiveness of the nation."[10] During this time, the Wicasa Yatapickas, the four great leaders of the nation, met to formulate national policy and hold deliberation over the approval or disapproval of actions taken by the headmen of the separate divisions during the past year. These four leaders were selected, based on honor and prestige, from among all of the headmen. "They were, in effect, at this one summer session, an exclusive senate with supreme-court authority."[11] However, the Wicasa Yatapickas met so infrequently that a majority of tribal administration was left to the leaders of the separate divisions. Each division of the Sioux Nation "was an autonomous system capable of functioning independently of the tribe."[12]

The fundamental base of the Teton Sioux's social and governmental structure was the family hunting group, or the "tiyospe."[13] The tiyospe was led by the patriarchal family head, which was usually a member of the grandparent generation. This position was hereditary, and eligible men were chosen on the basis of their war record and generosity. As a headman, the man was expected to provide a good livelihood for his family unit. Survival of the family depended upon the cooperation of siblings. A successful hunt was critical in the Teton Sioux's nomadic lifestyle. "Failure could mean the difference between a year of plenty and a year of hardship and perhaps starvation."[14]

Status, both individual and family, was also important in the survival of the

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[10] Hassrick, Royal B. The Sioux: Life and Customs of a Warrior Society. (1964): 7.
[11] Ibid., 7.
[12] Ibid., 8.
[13] Ibid., 11.
[14] Spencer, Robert F. and Jesse D. Jennings, ed. al. The Native Americans. (1965): 357.

family. Separation of ages was based on "the accomplishment of youth and the wisdom of maturity."[15] Honorary fraternal groups helped promote a sense of well-being and maintain the value of a high reputation in the Teton Sioux society. There were two kinds of fraternal groups: the Akicitas, which were the policing societies and were open to all able young men; and the Nacas, which were the civil societies comprised of elders and former chiefs.[16] The Akicitas were responsible for keeping order during buffalo hunts and camp movements. They invited boys to join their society at young ages, but requirements had to be met. The boy must have been on at least one war party and would be even more desirable if he came from an influential family and had killed an enemy or had "gone on the hill" to seek a vision.[17] Other young men of lower status usually were not invited until their mid-twenties unless they showed a successful war record. The Nacas were a council of "patriarchs, including former headmen, famous retired hunters and warriors, and distinguished shamans. This council directed the political actions of the tribe. Other groups, such as the Ska Yuhas (White Horse Owners) required one to be a superior hunter.

In the structure of the Lakota society, men were the hunters and the women were the collectors and preparers of food. The men were taught to strive for the virtues of bravery, fortitude, generosity, and wisdom.[18] Of all virtues, bravery was considered the most important. "Bravery was not something heard about but never seen; bravery was a way of being, of acting, of doing."[19] The Teton men exhibited their bravery by "counting

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[15] Hassrick, Royal B. The Sioux: Life and Customs of a Warrior Society. (1964): 17.
[16] Ibid., 16.
[17] Ibid., 17.
[18] Ibid., 32.
[19] Ibid., 33.

coup," which involved things such as touching a fallen enemy, wrestling a rifle or bow from the hand of an enemy, striking an enemy in the thick of combat, stealing a horse from an enemy village, and making a vow to stand in one place during a battle. Killing and scalping were only secondary means of gaining honor.[20] Any man could organize a war party, but he would gain support only if his war record had been successful in the past. Men who had counted many coup held a prestigious status in the society and would quite readily publicize their accomplishments. Honest bragging was an accepted characteristic in the Lakota society for it was a sign of success. "Humility for the Sioux was an indication of stupidity, evidence of a deficiency of personal conviction."[21]

The virtue of fortitude consisted of enduring physical discomfort and pain and being reserved during times of emotional stress. From young ages, boys were placed in competition with each other to see who could endure the most intense heat of a sweat bath. In the ceremonies of the Sun Dance, the annual festival, skewers were stuck through the chest muscles of the men who danced, and they were required to dance for hours, in the end ripping the skewers from their chests. The quest for a vision also required fortitude during the period of fasting and praying.

Reserve was required from a very young age. Children were expected to sit quietly at the feet of their elders and absorb their words of wisdom. Respect for elders was considered to be a sign of a well-bred person. Affection between lovers or a man and wife were kept out of the public eye. Men and women were not to look directly at each other, and in group meetings, no one made direct eye contact with the speaker.

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[20] Spencer, Robert F. and Jesse D. Jennings, ed. al. The Native Americans. (1965): 368-69.
[21] Hassrick, Royal B. The Sioux: Life and Customs of a Warrior Society. (1964): 33.

Generosity was one of the highest prioritized qualities for a Teton man. The more a man was able to give, the more honor and prestige he gained. Ownership and accumulation of property for one's own gain was viewed as disgraceful, while at the same time for one to be unable to acquire property was pitiable.

Wisdom, although a desired quality, was something that only a small few possessed in the Lakota society. Wisdom was more than intelligence; it was also a gift of insight, of power from the supernatural. For a man to have wisdom, he was to be a leader and mentor in both physical and spiritual matters. These spiritual beliefs centered around one all-pervasive, omnipotent god, "Wakan tanka," which in translation means the "Great Mystery," or as many refer to in English as the "Great Spirit." "Wakan tanka" was a name that went unmentioned in normal conversation, for it was held sacred and was only to be spoken with great reverence and at proper times. "That which remains unspoken must be considered in any study of Indian thought, together with the fact that a 'sacred language' is sometimes used by which ideas can be conveyed between initiates without being understood by others."[22]

The Lakota women were also taught to uphold the virtues of bravery and generosity. In addition, women prized the qualities of truthfulness and childbearing.[23] Bravery to women was as fortitude was to men. Generosity was making clothing and preparing food then sharing these items with other people. Truthfulness held a two-fold goal: one was to reduce gossip among the women, and the second was to reduce infidelity in marriages.

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[22] Densmore, Frances. "The Belief of the Indian in a Connection Between Song and the Supernatural." Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology: Anthropological Papers, Numbers 33-42, Bulletin 151. (1953): 220.

[23] Hassrick, Royal B. The Sioux: Life and Customs of a Warrior Society. (1964): 39.

Infidelity in marriage was a common occurrence and would often lead to divorce. The Teton Sioux society believed in polygamy, especially when a man married two sisters. Women were to be monogamous and virgins at the time of marriage. In a society where the young men took pride in counting coup, the seduction of a woman would add to that count. A woman was believed to have the ability to destroy a young man because of the great power believed to be in her menstrual blood. Women were separated from the tribe and put in a hut during her days of menstruation to protect the men and their hunting weapons. If a woman was found guilty of adultery, her husband would have her nose cut off so that she would not attract any more men. The husband also had the option of divorcing his adulterous wife and have her pelted with dirt and buffalo droppings and driven from camp. If the husband was a very generous man, he would give his wife to the man who was involved in the adultery, give them a horse, and have them driven out of the camp.

Child-bearing was the ultimate achievement for a Lakota woman. Women could be dreamers and even shamans; however, nothing came before motherhood and raising a family. When a young girl began her menstruation cycles, she was taken to the women's hut where she was taught how to sew and embroider new clothes. The girl was given an elaborate ceremony which marked her change from child to adult, and she was then available for marriage.

Other qualities in the Teton Sioux society were things such as: respect for neighbors - one would always thump on the side of the tipi before entering; and the

offering of the ceremonial pipe to guests.[24] The pipe was a sign of relationship between Wakan tanka and the people, between the buffalo and the people, between kin, and between people, in general. The bowl was usually made of red pipestone, "the flesh of the earth," and the stem was made of wood.[25] The ceremony of the pipe would begin with an offering of tobacco to the seven directions: the four winds, up (Father Sky), down (Mother Earth), and center (Wakan tanka). The pipe would then be filled with the tobacco and offered again to the seven directions, symbolizing the oneness with the universe. The pipe was also used by elders as a sign of peace in a political action, in ceremonies of adoption, by shamans as a consecration of their relationship to Wakan tanka, and by people who were once enemies, being bound under friendship.[26]

Kinship was (and is) important to the Lakota people. Strangers were considered a threat to the tribe. Immediately establishing some type of kin relation in the group was essential for a stranger, or they would be run out of the area. However, kinship was more than just biological. It also included close friends ("kolas") or people who had been accepted into a family as a long term guest. "For the Sioux, kinship [was/is] an active force, the act of relating."[27]

With this understanding of relationships and societal codes, we now take a step further into the Teton Sioux culture by studying the role of a shaman and the importance of dream songs.

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[24]Hassrick, Royal B. The Sioux: Life and Customs of a Warrior Society. (1964): 47.

[25] DeMalle, Raymond J. and Alfonso Ortiz, ed. al. North American Indian Anthropology: Essays on Society and Culture. (1994): 129.

[26] Ibid., 130.

[27] Ibid., 132.

CHAPTER 3

THE ROLE OF A SHAMAN AND DREAM SONGS

"Shamanism is an ancient healing practice that utilizes various techniques, including repetitive drumming and singing to access information from the human unconscious."[28] Those people who hold the understanding and are "responsible for maintaining a balanced relationship" between the natural world and the world of the sacred are known as "shamans."[29]

Shamanism is a common practice in many of the Native American traditional societies, but the term itself is not native to North America. "Shaman" is native to the Tungus language of the Tungus people from Siberia. Since the shaman held the understanding of both natural and spirit worlds, he/she was solely responsible for the interpretation of the world for the people and passed along a "cultural identity" through stories and songs. He/she is believed to be chosen by a greater spiritual power, and often, this happens through an illness or a dream.[30] The shamans in the Teton Sioux society were mostly men who had been given a vision through an illness or through a vision quest. Teton women could be shamans, but their dreams came only from illness or great duress, instead of a vision quest.[31] The women shamans of the Teton Sioux specialized in herbal remedies, child-birthing problems, and tipi-building.

Thomas Winn states that there are three basic assumptions which are fundamental to shamanism:

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[28] Winn, Thomas. "Shamanism and Music Therapy: Shamanism - an Overview." Music Therapy Perspectives. (1989): 67.

[29] Beck, Peggy V., ed. al. The Sacred: Ways of Knowledge, Sources of Life. (1992): 96.

[30] Ibid., 96.

[31] Spencer, Robert F. and Jesse D. Jennings, et. al. The Native Americans. (1965): 375.

1. One experiences only a portion of the total spectrum of life and that it is necessary to go beyond the physical realm to really 'see' or understand. One must use an altered state of consciousness different from every day cognitive processing to access this unseen, symbolic reality and bring the information into the conscious processing for examination and integration. The integration is the mechanism for balancing and health.
2. Everything in existence has a spirit or essence that can communicate with people. Therefore, all things should be treated with dignity and respect.
3. Health is the natural state of all living things existing in equilibrium and balance. It is a statement of one's personal power, and only with the loss of this power can illness or injury occur.[32]

However, these altered states of consciousness (or dreams) are not just connected to the realm of unconsciousness as a "white man" would perceive. To the Native American, "dream" is a term used to imply "an acute awareness of something mysterious," whether it be in the unconscious realm of sleep or the conscious actions of prayer and fasting.[33] It is when a person dreams that one is connected to the "mysterious power" that lives in all nature, as represented in the illustration below.

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[32] Winn, Thomas. "Shamanism and Music Therapy: Shamanism - an Overview." Music Therapy Perspectives. (1989): 67.

[33] Densmore, Frances. "The Belief of the Indian in a Connection Between Song and the Supernatural." Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology: Anthropological Papers, Numbers 33-42, Bulletin 151. (1953): 220.

[34] Beck, Peggy V., ed. al. The Sacred: Ways of Knowledge, Sources of Life. (1992): 94.

It is these travels to the spirit realm that allow the shamans to determine the basis of the disruption of balance in the patient's loss. The spirits and/or totems speak to the shaman and gives him/her a song which will help in the healing process. Often, a drum and a rattle are used in the healing, where the drum represents the heartbeat of the People and the rattle, the voice of the People.

The dream song is a common factor among many tribes. Frances Densmore was once told by an old Native, "'If a man is to do something beyond human power he must have more than human strength.' Song is a means through which that strength is believed to come to him."[35] "To these [healers], the songs are not <u>about</u> power, they <u>are</u> power. Their presence sings life and health into the body of the listener."[36]

When a person is first given their personal dream song, it becomes their most individual possession, for it defines who they are and special gifts which the Sacred has bestowed on them.

Densmore compared a white composer to that of a Native American. She says: "The white musician composes songs addressed to his deity. The Indian waited and listened for the mysterious power pervading all nature to speak to him in song. The Indian realized that he was <u>part</u> of nature - not <u>akin</u> to it."[37] For the Teton Sioux, the dream songs held the obligation of fulfillment or if not, the punishment from the Creator would be swift and mighty.

To help us understand the position of Frances Densmore's studies, it is important

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[35] Ibid., 219.

[36] Winn, Thomas. "Shamanism and Music Therapy: Shamanism - an Overview." <u>Music Therapy Perspectives</u>. (1989): 68.

[37] Densmore, Frances. "The Belief of the Indian in a Connection Between Song and the Supernatural." <u>Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology: Anthropological Papers, Numbers 33-42, Bulletin 151</u>. (1953): 220.

to look at her life from a biographical perspective.

CHAPTER 4

FRANCES DENSMORE

In the early part of the 20th Century, a woman by the name of Frances Densmore researched the music of various Native American groups and had her works published through the Smithsonian Institution. Much of her research was done during a period when it appeared that many Native American cultures were beginning to die out or melt into the larger American society. Although her publications date from the 1910's to the 1940's, the information she presents is very relevant and gives an authentic perspective of music in healing practices.

Born on May 21, 1867 to Benjamin and Sarah Adalaide (Greenland) Densmore, Frances Theresa Densmore lived near the shore of the Mississippi River in the small town of Red Wing, Minnesota. Growing up in a musical family, she would often get in trouble "for playing 'frivolous' music when she was supposed to be practicing."[38]

Across the Mississippi River from the town was an island where the Sioux often camped. Frances recounted those times in her autobiographical manuscript, "I Heard An Indian Drum:"

> We could hear the throb of the drum when they were dancing and sometimes we could see the flickering light of their campfire. If my mother had told me that Indians were savages, I might have been afraid to go to sleep. Instead I was told they were people with different customs from our own and there was no fear in my mind. I fell asleep night after night to the throb of the Indian drum.[39]

Densmore's musical training consisted of piano, organ, and harmony at the Oberlin College Conservatory in Ohio. She started teaching music and playing the

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[38] Smith, Stephen. "Early Life." Frances Densmore: Song Catcher. (Feb. 1997).
[39] Ibid., citing Frances Densmore, "I Heard An Indian Drum." (undated).

church organ in her early twenties. In her studies, Densmore discovered the 1893 publication of A Study of Omaha Music by the anthropologist Alice Cunningham Fletcher. The book brought back her interest in Native American music.

For the next few years, Frances Densmore spent her time reading books on Native American cultures, and in 1895, she started lecturing on Native American music. However, up until this point she had undertaken no field studies.

In 1905, Densmore and her sister, Margaret, journeyed to Grand Portage, Minnesota to meet with the Ojibwa people. This was the first expedition. Funding was difficult to obtain. Two years earlier, Frances Densmore had written to the Smithsonian Institution's Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE) in hopes of gaining financial support; however, the Bureau declined the request. Financing of a $50 check was provided by a wife of a wealthy Pittsburgh business man who had also sponsored the work of Alice Fletcher.[40]

The summer of 1907 set Frances Densmore apart from other ethnologists and anthropologists - it was when she started using the phonograph to record the music of the various Native people she worked with on her expeditions. Again, she wrote to the BAE, this time with mention of the phonograph, in hopes of obtaining funding. The Bureau granted her $350, and in coming years, continued to support and encourage her with this new type of research.[41]

Unlike many of her contemporaries, Densmore was not fond of living in a tent. Instead, she would often stay at the home of the local Bureau of Indian Affairs agent or at

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[40] Smith, Stephen. Frances Densmore: Song Catcher. (Feb. 1997).

[41] Smith, Stephen. "A Professional Amateur." Frances Densmore: Song Catcher. (Feb. 1997).

a local boarding school. She chose to set herself apart from the Native people whom she studied and obtained her research information from only those "at the top" of the society. In return, she paid them 25 cents per song.[42]

In her mind, Frances Densmore wanted to preserve the music of a culture which she felt to be dying. The 19th Century's romanticized view of Native people which she held during the beginning of her field work drastically changed to feelings of resentment later on in her life. Her writings went from an early combination of cultural and music studies to strictly music studies.

> I never let down on the ground that I was a *white* person and they were *Indians*. There was always an invisible line that I never let them cross. I never let them criticize the government nor the white race, nor come across with any sob-stuff about the way they had been treated, as a race. That was simply *out*.[43]

In 1925, Densmore asked for a staff position at the BAE, but she was denied an official position because she "lacked proper, formal training."[44] Instead, she was given the title "Collaborator in the Bureau of American Ethnology." Some thirty years later, two weeks after her 90th birthday, Frances Densmore died, alone, of pneumonia and heart failure.[45]

Frances Densmore's contributions of innovative research methods and collection of material were not fully appreciated by her contemporaries because she was not schooled in the proper methods of ethnology or anthropology. Her work marked an important turning point in history when it was felt that the Native American cultures still

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[42] Smith, Stephen. "The Sioux and the Ojibwe." Frances Densmore: Song Catcher. (Feb.1997).
[43] Smith, Stephen. "The Densmore-Hofmann Letters." Frances Densmore: Song Catcher. (Feb.1997).
[44] Smith, Stephen. "From Desert to Rain Forest." Frances Densmore: Song Catcher. (Feb.1997).
[45] Smith, Stephen. "Lonely Years." Frances Densmore: Song Catcher. (Feb.1997).

lingered in traditional ways but were also on the verge of merging with the more "modern" American society. Today, ethnomusicologists and anthropologists readily regard her writings on the culture and music of Native American cultures as a source of reference for understanding the traditions before so many of them were forgotten or transformed.

Densmore's paper, "The Belief of the Indian in a Connection Between Song and the Supernatural," is a summation of her research on the dream song, which is a common aspect among many tribes. She goes on to say that "to the white man, the term 'dream' is connected with unconsciousness, but the Indian term implies an acute awareness of something mysterious," for it is believed that dreams are the true state of consciousness of the spirit.[46] In this receptive state, a song is given to the Native person, and it becomes his guide in life.

In another short paper, written around 1953, "Technique in the Music of the American Indian," Densmore says " . . . but music to [Indians], in its highest sense, is connected with power and with communication with the mysterious forces that control all human life."[47]

Her 1918 publication, "Teton Sioux Music" talks of how dream songs played a vital role in the treatment of the sick. Densmore gives a detailed description of the use of the sacred stones, conjuring, and the use of herbs. She also talks of the how the "wakan' han" (the highest type of medicine men) and other healers used the dream songs given

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[46] Densmore, Frances. "The Belief of the Indian in a Connection Between Song and the Supernatural." Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology: Anthropological Papers, Numbers 33-42, Bulletin 151. (1953): 220.

[47] Densmore, Frances. "Technique in the Music of the American Indian." Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology: Anthropological Papers, Numbers 33-42, Bulletin 151. (1953): 216.

specifically for each occasion.

Today, the legacy of Frances Densmore's work can be found on wax recordings in the archives of the Smithsonian Institution and also in the publications of the Bureau of American Ethnology.

CHAPTER 5

MUSIC, RELIGION, AND HEALING

For a Teton Sioux, a dream was a binding agreement, much like fulfilling a vow to a relative or neighbor. Dreams were sought by the people, for to be given a dream from Wakan tanka was considered a great honor. It was believed that the type of dream a person had was solely based on their character, but no matter how insignificant the dream may seem, the person was in complete obligation to do as it directed.

Dreams of small stones were highly regarded, for the dreamer, on completion of the dream, would be blessed with supernatural powers which would give the ability to use the sacred stones to cure the sick or even predict the future.

Brave Buffalo, a prominent healer of the Standing Rock Reservation in the early 1900's, described his dream of the sacred stone:

> When I was 10 years of age I looked at the land and the rivers, the sky above, and the animals around me and could not fail to realize that they were made by some great power. I was so anxious to understand this power that I questioned the trees and the bushes. It seemed as though the flowers were staring at me, and I wanted to ask them "Who made you?" I looked at the moss-covered stones; some of them seemed to have the features of a man, but they could not answer me. Then I had a dream, and in my dream one of these small round stones appeared to me and told me that the maker of all was Wakan tanka, and that in order to honor him I

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[48] Densmore, Frances. "Teton Sioux Music." Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology: Anthropological Papers, Bulletin 61. (1918): 209.

> must honor his works in nature. The stone said that by my search I had shown myself worthy of supernatural help. It said that if I were curing a sick person I might ask its assistance, and that all the forces of nature would help me work a cure.[49]

It was soon after his dream that Brave Buffalo found his first sacred stone on top of a high butte. He continues on the nature of the stones:

> It is significant that these stones are not found buried in the earth but are on the top of the high buttes. They are round, like the sun and moon, and we know that all things which are round are related to each other. Things which are alike in their nature grow to look like each other, and these stones have lain there a long time, looking at the sun. Many pebbles and stones have been shaped in the current of a stream, but these stones were found far from the water and have been exposed only to the sun and the wind. The earth contains many thousand such stones hidden beneath its surface . . . In all my life I have been faithful to the sacred stones . . . I have tried to qualify myself as well as possible to handle these sacred stones, yet I know that I am not worthy to speak to Wakan tanka. I make my request of the stones and they are my intercessors.[50]

Another member of the Teton Sioux, Lone Man, went to a medicine man for advice about his future and was given a sacred stone for protection from misfortune. "The medicine man also told me that the sacred stone may appear in the form of a person who talks and sings many wonderful songs. Among these was the following song, in which the sacred stone says that all living creatures look to him for protection."[51] This song was composed and used by Red-Streaked-around-the-face, a man who dreamed of the rainbow and painted a red arch on his face. (See song, pg. 25.)

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[49]Densmore, Frances. "Teton Sioux Music." Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology: Anthropological Papers, Bulletin 61. (1918): 207-8.

[50] Ibid., 208.

[51] Densmore, Frances. "Teton Sioux Music." Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology: Anthropological Papers, Bulletin 61. (1918): 215.

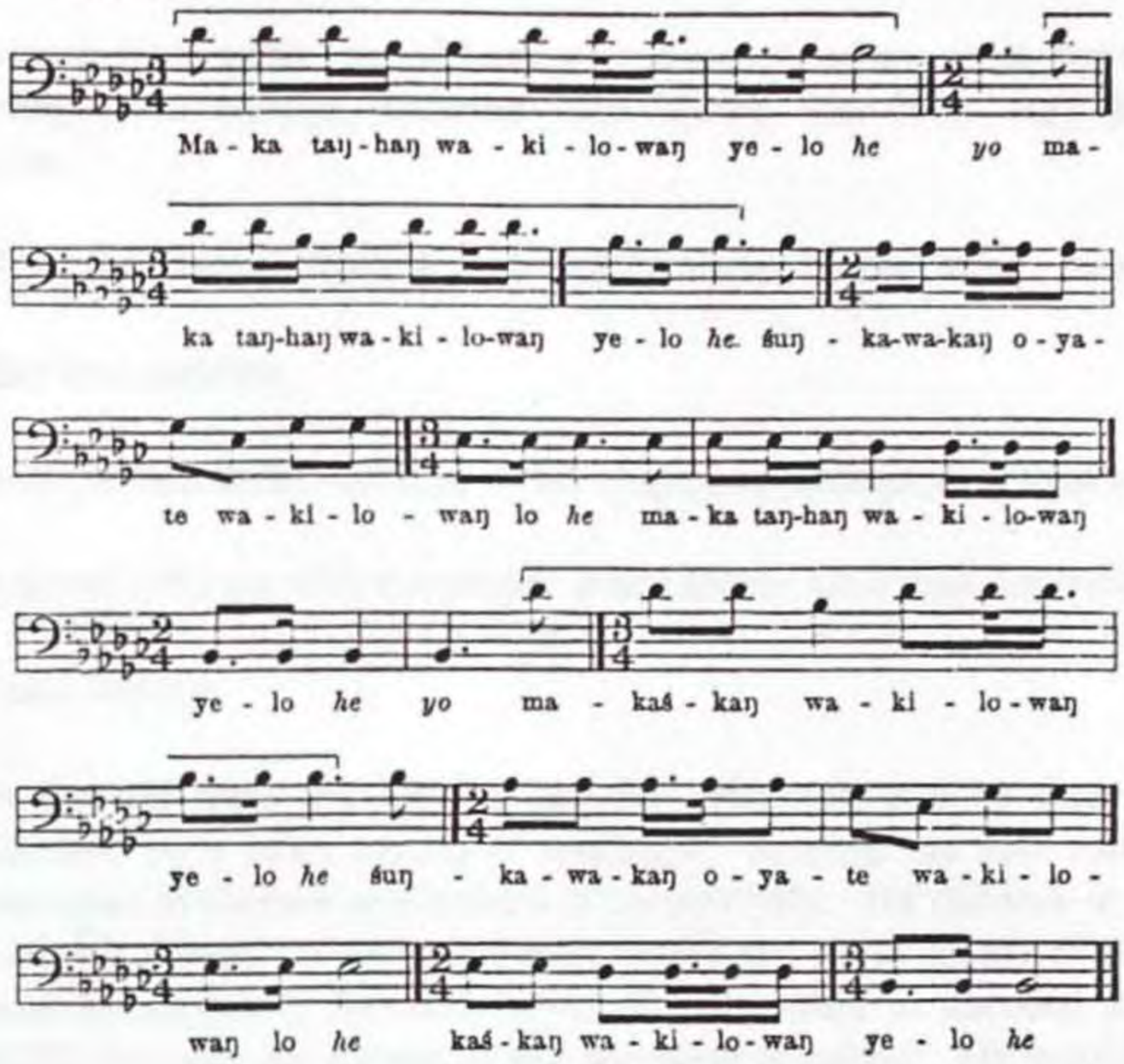
No. 61. "I Sing for the Animals" (Catalogue No. 489)

Sung by LONE MAN

VOICE ♩ = 84

DRUM ♩ = 96

Drum-rhythm similar to No. 6



WORDS

maka′ taŋhaŋ′	out of the earth
waki′lowaŋ yelo′	I sing for them
śuŋka′wakaŋ oya′te	a Horse nation (see p. 162, footnote)
waki′lowaŋ yelo′ [1]	I sing for them
maka′ taŋhaŋ′	out of the earth
waki′lowaŋ yelo′	I sing for them
wama′kaśkaŋ [2]	the animals
waki′lowaŋ yelo	I sing for them

52

Lone Man's song was comprised of a five-tone scale. The rhythmic pattern of the first phrase was somewhat consistent throughout the piece, with the phrasing of AABCab.

After singing this song, Lone Man bowed his head and prayed the following prayer:

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[52] Densmore, Frances. "Teton Sioux Music." Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology: Anthropological Papers, Bulletin 61. (1918): 215.

Maka'tanhan wica'sa wan wico'han wan awa'hiyaya tka hena' on on'simala yo, tuwa' wanka'tanhan in'itancan he'cina.

(Translation)

A man from earth I am, I have sung concerning an event, for which have compassion on me, whoever from above, you [who are] the supreme ruler.[53]

Lone Man asked for forgiveness from Wakan tanka because he had sang a sacred song for a purpose other than healing.

The most important understanding is that no person attempted to treat any illness unless he had received a dream with the proper instructions. One man described the treatment of the sick saying:

> In the old days the Indians had few diseases, and so there was not a demand for a large variety of medicine. A medicine man usually treated one special disease and treated it successfully. He did this in accordance with his dream. A medicine man would not try to dream of all herbs and treat all diseases, for then he could not expect to succeed in all nor to fulfill properly the dream of any one herb or animal. He would depend on too many and fail in all. That is one reason why our medicine men lost their power when so many diseases came among us with the advent of the white man.[54]

Use of the sacred stones in treating the sick was outlawed by the United States government during the early part of the 20th Century. However, there are still the accounts of the older men of the Teton Sioux who used the sacred stones.

When a healer was called upon to use the sacred stones in helping a sick person, he was expected to give a showing of his powers. This was a public event. Those who did not believe in the powers of the sacred stones were punished by Wakan tanka. Songs

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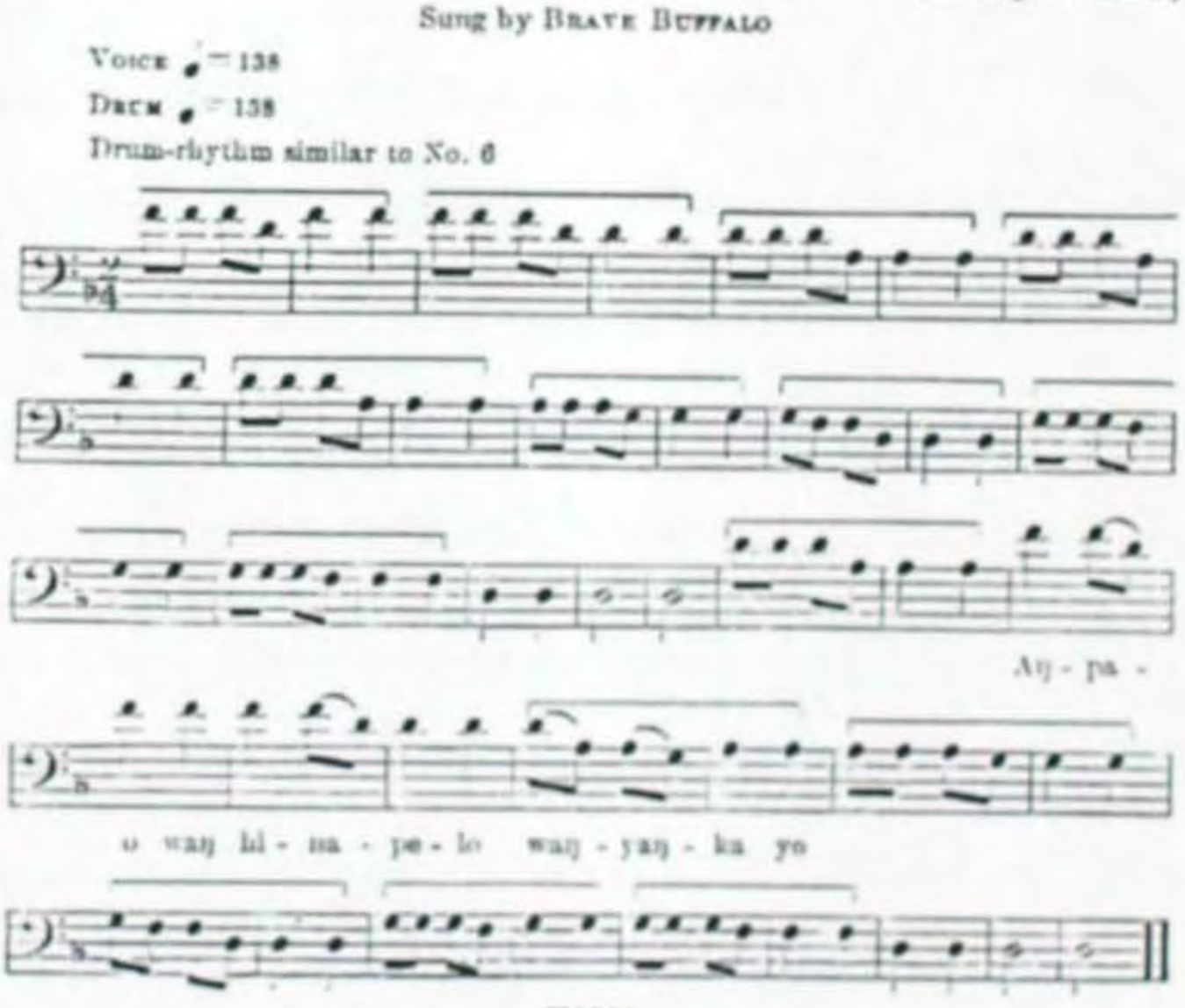
[53]Densmore, Frances. "Teton Sioux Music." Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology: Anthropological Papers, Bulletin 61. (1918): 216.

[54] Ibid., 244-45.

would be sung and sometimes voices of animals would be heard speaking. Healers, like Brave Buffalo, would often roll the sacred stones on the sick person's body in order to find the illness. Then he would use a small bone to "suck out the disease," and in the end, he would administer herbs to finalize the treatment.[55]

Brave Buffalo would often sing a song once sung by his father, Crow Bear, who was a famous medicine man among the Teton Sioux. By singing this every morning, Crow Bear was faithful to the dreams given him.

No. 80. "Behold the Dawn" (Catalogue No. 610)
Sung by BRAVE BUFFALO



words

aŋ'paó waŋ..... a dawn
lima'pelo..... appears
waŋyaŋ'ka yo..... behold it

56

The song of Brave Buffalo's father was comprised of steady rhythmic patterns of 4 eighth notes followed by 2 quarter notes. At the end of each phrase, the pattern was

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[55] Densmore, Frances. "Teton Sioux Music." Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology: Anthropological Papers, Bulletin 61. (1918): 250.
[56] Ibid., 250.

followed by 2 quarter notes and 2 half-notes. Most of the progressions move in a descending pattern. The melody consists of the first 5 notes of a d-minor scale.

As found in the examples of Brave Buffalo and Lone Man, the Teton Sioux had their "songs with games, dances, legends, and folk stories, but those phases of their music were apart from its chief function - their communication with the supernatural, through which they believed that they could secure aid in every undertaking."[57]

[57]Densmore, Frances. "The Belief of the Indian in a Connection Between Song and the Supernatural." Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology: Anthropological Papers, Numbers 33-42, Bulletin 151. (1953): 223.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In studying the roles music has played in the Teton Sioux society, one theme is common - there is no separation between the human spirit and the practice of medicine. The Sioux stand firm in their cyclical way of life, where all life intertwines with itself in a cause-and-effect motion.

The concept of a cyclical pattern is much different from the linear way of thinking, today, where western music therapy is based upon psychological and physiological rules. In western belief, it is the mind that is trying to connect to the conscious level and the body that is trying to perform with that knowledge.

Western music therapy establishes interpersonal relationships between the music therapist and the patient, and in group settings, patient-to-patient. Feelings and emotions are encouraged to be expressed. Doors of communication are opened. The mind is given a structured pattern to which it is able to respond. In responding, the patient (or group) is able to develop an identity from the inside-out. What may have been thought impossible to express or coordinate is now transformed into "doing" and is released from the psychological and physiological paralysis.

For the Teton Sioux healers, the dream songs are not just an interpersonal relationship between themselves and the patient. They are a communication from Wakan tanka to the healer, from the healer to the sacred stones and the herbs, from Mother Earth to the whole of creation, from the healer to Mother Earth. They are an establishment of faith and knowledge between the patient and the shaman, in that the patient must have faith in the sacred calling of his healer.

Illness is believed to be caused by an imbalance in a person's wheel of life. However, categories of good and evil, of art and math, of science and spirituality are non-existent in the traditional ways of the Native people. The dream song allows this continuous flow of energy and rhythm of all life to be shared through the stones, the shaman, and the herbs so that a balance may be restored to the patient's circle.

In his article "Relating the Present to the Past: Thoughts on the Study of Musical Change and Culture Change in Ethnomusicology," Bruno Nettl states:

> A society's identity is substantially determined by its view of its own past. And so, in relating a society's present to its past, we also study the way societies imagine the relationship in their own cultural systems, interpret what happened and sometimes invent what did not. The way in which the musicians of a society see their own past plays a major role in their present.[58]

What re-establishments of cultural roles could be profited from further study of the Native American legacy? Perhaps it is as simple as the approach taken towards the field of music therapy, or maybe it is a complex as the circle of life, itself. Merriam once stated of music, "There is probably no other human cultural activity which is so all-pervasive and which reaches into, shapes and often controls so much of human behavior." [59]

It seems that as technology progresses, the biological knowledge of humans progress. However for many cultures, it is the spiritual/emotional aspects which transcend all science. In essence, it is the epic struggle of science versus spirituality. Who is right? Who is wrong? Maybe there are no right or wrong directions in the search for

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[58] Nettl, Bruno. "Relating the present to the past: thoughts on the study of musical change and cultural change in ethnomusicology." Music and Anthropology: Journal of Musical Anthropology of the Mediterranean, Number 1. (10 Dec. 1996): article 4.

[59] Radocy, Rudolf E., ed. al. Psychological Foundations of Musical Behavior. 2nd ed. (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1988), 9, citing A. P. Merriam, The anthropology of music. (1964): 218.

understanding the cultural purposes and basis of music therapy. Perhaps it is only the way of perceiving the connection process to the human body, mind, and spirit.

As the western medical community continues to strive in their search for new paths to better the life experience of patients, possibly much of the answer will be found with the integration of "alternative" healing practices. Therefore, future research is recommended in this field of "medical ethnomusicology," for its findings have the ability to greatly enhance the knowledge used to bridge the gap of the psychological, spiritual, and physiological planes in the world of the music therapy patient and that potential which lies dormant inside him/her.

APPENDIX

For recordings, please note the following information:

Smithsonian Institution houses all recordings made by Frances Densmore, including those of the music samples given in this paper.

Also visit the following website for other recording examples.

Smith, Stephen. Frances Densmore: Song Catcher.
<http://news.mpr.org/features/199702/01_smiths_densmore/docs/index.html>

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