



## Global Indigeneity on the Move: The World Drum – Afterlives, Drift Matter, and Object Agency

SIV ELLEN KRAFT

*UiT The Arctic University of Norway*

### Abstract

In October 2006 a drum embarked on what is possibly the most extensive journey of any drum at any time. The journey's ambitions were similarly grand: to serve as a wakeup call to the needs of Mother Earth by linking people, things, and places. What follows is my take on this project in the context of the reclaiming of drums in Sápmi and globalizing discourses on Indigenous religion(s), as well as a focus on object agency and the modes and codes of Indigeneity on the move. I propose 'drift matter' (borrowed from the archaeological perspectives of Þóra Pétursdóttir and Bjørnar Olsen) as a concept to consider this case and for the unruliness of afterlives.

Keywords: *drum; Sápmi; Indigenous; shaman; drift matter; afterlives*

The World Drum Project comprises a drum, her travels, local organizers, digital followers, and hosts around the world. The ambitions are grand and simple: to serve as a wakeup call to the needs of Mother Earth, and a sowing of seeds; for humankind to 'unite, cooperate and heal' and to do so by connecting people, things, and places; 'from hand to hand and from land to land'.<sup>1</sup> Some 850 destinations had been reached by 2021, when Covid-19 brought the drum's journey to an end: around the world, usually alone, sometimes in the company of her home crew or local hosts. The home crew consists of Kyrre Franck and Morten Wolf Storeide, both leading members of the Sjamanistisk Forbund (the Shaman Association),<sup>2</sup> and one of whom is Sámi (Franck).<sup>3</sup> Having come to Franck in a vision, the drum was brought to life by the Sámi drum-maker Birger Mikkelsen and shipped off to the

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1 <http://www.theworlddrumproject.com/> 42694 9214

2 For the Shaman Association see Fonneland 2017.

3 Sápmi extends across the area of four nation states, encompassing parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the Kola peninsula of Russia.

first destination after a ceremony in front of the Norwegian Parliament (on 21 October 2006).

What follows is my take on this drum (hence TWD),<sup>4</sup> her adventures, and some of the issues they raise. It is grounded in a longstanding interest in ‘global Indigeneity’ and Indigenous religion(s), here explored through a material- and thing-centred approach.<sup>5</sup> What are the material qualities of this thing, and how do they matter? What can TWD tell us about object agency on the move and the modes and codes of global Indigeneity? What can ‘drift matter’ contribute to studies of afterlives in the making?

My approach is based partly on conversations with Storeide (the drum’s main organizer), partly on the drum’s Facebook group, and partly on the drum itself.<sup>6</sup> Theoretical inspiration comes from the field of material religion, particularly for object agency, affordances, and the relationality of things (e.g. Meyer 2019; Houtman and Meyer 2012), and the archaeological perspectives of Bjørnar Olsen and Þóra Pétursdóttir,<sup>7</sup> particularly for drift matter. In brief, and to be further developed, I see the agency of things as relational and context-dependent (Olsen 2010; Law 1999; Asdal and Reinertsen 2020; Gell 1998). Following Olsen, I combine attention to relationality with thing-ness, the ‘intrinsic material significance of things ... the qualities they possess beyond human cognition, representation, and embodiment’ (Olsen 2010, 3) and the ‘way they *therefore* work as mediators in collective action’ (ibid., 155). ‘Drift matter’ was developed through the ‘Unruly Heritage: An Archaeology of the Anthropocene’ project,<sup>8</sup> and concerns matter(s) on the move:

...parts of the past that are still here, beyond the control of human agency, like the stuff washing ashore on beaches, appearing to us in their ‘tumbled articulations’ (Pétursdóttir and Olsen 2018, 16, Pétursdóttir 2020) ... Thrown together, things bump into each other in weirdly unexpected ways, forming unimaginable coalitions and fusions (ibid., 3) ... at a distance from their human companions and their intentions for them (ibid., 16).

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4 Storeide uses this abbreviation in the Facebook group.

5 See Clifford 2013; Kraft 2021; 2022; Kraft et al. 2020. Kraft et al. 2020, based on a multiyear international study, argue that ‘Indigenous religion’ is evoked by a globalizing discursive formation, but also by ‘certain materials, artefacts, architectural structures, performances and gestures, competences, and sounds’ (2020, 187).

6 The interviews were conducted in Norwegian and translated by me. Communication in the Facebook group is in English.

7 Olsen and Pétursdóttir 2016; Þóra Pétursdóttir and Olsen 2018; Pétursdóttir 2020; 2018.

8 <https://unrulyheritage.com/about/>

First, I briefly describe the thing-ness and relationships of TWD. I then discuss three episodes in more detail: a reconciliation event in Nova Scotia (in 2018), the drum's arrest by the US Department of Homeland Security (in 2012), and the drum at Standing Rock (in 2016). While neither representative nor exhaustive of the life of this drum, these episodes constitute highlights in the sense of attention and agency, based partly on what I refer to as the scalar logics of global Indigeneity. Towards the end of the article I reflect on drift matter. Although developed for the fields of archaeology, 'drift' appears to have things to say about religious matters and contemporary Indigeneity.

### **Sources, media, journeys – an overview**

TWD's home base is a cabin-style house in a remote part of Finnskogen in eastern Norway. The drum is away much of the time but present digitally on what Storeide calls 'an old hawk of a computer' in his kitchen. Storeide follows her adventures, provides help when needed, responds to requests for visits, and organizes transitions for a journey planned to continue indefinitely or as long as required.

I visited Storeide on 8 September 2018. We spent a long day discussing the drum, looking at pictures, and watching YouTube videos. The old hawk is an archive<sup>9</sup> of sorts, dating back to the drum's first journeys in 2008 and containing letters, messages, videos, and emails, most from people that have hosted her. Storeide estimated there were some ten thousand pictures, a portion of which have been posted in TWD's Facebook group. Europe, Russia, and North America are the dominant sites visited. For example, in 2008 and 2009 the drum visited locations in Denmark, Iceland, Finland, England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Switzerland, the Republic of Tuva, the Republic of Khakassia, Canada, and the USA.<sup>10</sup> Storeide had accompanied her on some of the trips and hoped to secure funding for a year on the road as her companion – not to control her movements, he stressed, but for his own sake and to share in her experiences. Plans also included a book, an exhibition, synchronized events for host-communities, and a collaboration with *National Geographic*.

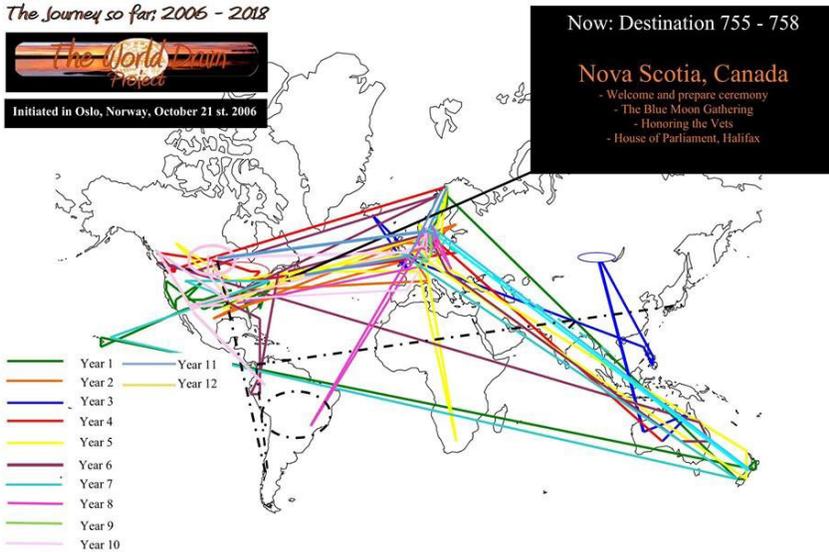
The Facebook group was launched in 2008.<sup>11</sup> It is listed as a public group, with Storeide, Franck, and Sandy Rowley (Gaia College, Netherlands) as

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9 Storeide himself used the word archive (No.: *arkiv*).

10 A detailed overview of the travel-route until 2012 is listed under "Files" in the Facebook group.

11 <https://www.facebook.com/groups/35901743683/>



**Figure 1.** The World Drum's travels, by Morten Wolf Storeide. Permission by Morten Wolf Storeide.

moderators. By 2021 2,656 members had enrolled, apparently from everywhere in the world where TWD travels. The site facilitates communication and community building, serves as an archive, and provides information about the project, including its foundation 'in a shamanic view of life' and Sámi traditions (design, materials, and a Sámi drum-maker). The profile is non-monetary, with a strict ban on commercial posts.<sup>12</sup> The idea is for the drum to participate in ceremonies around the world, thereby bringing 'attention to the critical situation for Mother Earth'. Hosts are responsible for collection (on arrival), housing (during the stay), and shipment to the subsequent destination. Storeide is by far the most active of the moderators, through postings and contributions to discussions and his responsibility for itineraries and annual events, including the drum's anniversary, counted from the time of her first departure. Reflections on her journey are typically posted on such occasions, along with thanks to the 'World Drum family'.

Members occasionally post links and comments of a general nature, connected with Indigenous peoples, shamanism, or threats to nature, but

<sup>12</sup> A website has also been established, offering information, photo albums, itineraries, graphic maps of journeys, and links to Facebook and Twitter.

most of the posts deal with TWD, often in the context of ceremonies.<sup>13</sup> They include (g)local formats (e.g. powwows, full moon gatherings, and drum circles); interreligious events (e.g. Santiago de Compostela and the World Council of Religion); activism (e.g. the Standing Rock protests in North Dakota); and reconciliation (e.g. a reception at Province House in Nova Scotia).

Asked to comment on media interest, Storeide responded that he had regularly been contacted by foreign news and popular media, occasionally by Norwegian platforms, and never by Sámi media. While beyond the scope of this article, such tendencies match what I have found for Sámi shamanism. In brief, Sámi newspapers tend to ignore what they consistently refer to as ‘new shamanism’ (or ‘city shamanism/asphalt shamanism’), even when Sámi shamans, drums, and audiences are involved (Kraft 2022). Norwegian tabloids tend to be more positive about these formations and to take their position as (traditionally) Sámi and Indigenous (ibid.) for granted. Shamanism is usually presented as the religion of the Sámi,<sup>14</sup> and drums are usually presented as their thing par excellence (despite the overall dominance of Christianity in Sámi areas). Similar views are common among city Sámi, diaspora Sámi, and those who are sometimes referred to as ‘new Sámi’ – people who have recently discovered and/or claimed an identity as Sámi (ibid.).<sup>15</sup>

Paul Johnson has noted (2018, 108) that notions of authenticity are played out in relation to ‘problems of identity, the aura of the original, and commodification’. I would add that several variables are involved for Sápmi, and that designs and constellations are contested. Drums almost disappeared in the wake of targeted missionary attacks from the seventeenth century onwards. They have been back since the 1970s, increasingly, and in multiple formats: as art, musical and ceremonial instruments, and as identity symbols, accompanied by complex logics of authenticity. The similarity with ancestral models is basic, along with the identity of the drum-maker (Sámi or not), context of use (e.g. commercial or private concerns), format (e.g. art, heritage, or religion), and site (e.g. churches or traditional sacred places). Drums may be fine in the context of museums but not on church

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13 The visits vary in online attention, due partly to the presence or absence of linguistic barriers and access to Facebook. For example, a visit to the Tuva Republic was covered mainly by Storeide, due (presumably) to little access to Facebook in this area.

14 The translation of *noaidi* (a north Sámi term for a ritual expert) to *shaman* had already started in the nineteenth century (Kaikkonen 2018; 2020). Later developments were shaped partly by historians of religion (ibid.), partly by Michael Harner’s core shamanism (Fonneland 2017), and partly by encounters with globalizing discourses on Indigenous religion (Kraft 2022).

15 City Sámi currently outnumber Sámi in the core areas. For studies of the city Sámi see Pedersen and Nyseth 2015 and Berg-Nordlie, Dankertsen, and Winsvold 2022.

grounds (especially from the perspective of Sámi Christians). Mass production is likely to be more contested than art and personal use, and religious concerns (e.g. shaman ceremonies) more than secular formats (e.g. theatre and concert stages). Instances of cultural appropriation are occasionally straightforward (in the wrong hands, for the wrong concerns, in demeaning circumstances) but are more often greyish, unsettled, and contested.

### **Form, features, and affordances**

Asked to describe the makeup of the drum, Storeide said that the frame was beech, the drumhead and the sinew connecting it to the frame were of reindeer skin, and a version of the Sámi sun symbol was painted on the skin. ‘This symbol exists in many different cultures,’ he later added.<sup>16</sup> While connected to the Sámi people and traditions, TWD is for everybody, everywhere.

The drum has expanded during its travels. Two separate covers were gifted during visits to Nova Scotia and Ontario. They have gradually been covered with signatures, drawings, symbols, and messages, some on top of earlier inscriptions as they have faded and partly disappeared.<sup>17</sup> We thus have a Sámi drum (origin, materials, format, and crafting) connected to layers of skin from elsewhere and to inscriptions by people and traditions from outside Sápmi. The drum has grown physically into the project for which she was envisioned through encounters which have literally figured and formed her.

Running parallel to this material growth is a virtual growth story played out in the Facebook group. What started as a small project has increased digitally in membership, geographical reach, worldwide connectivity, textual corpus, sensemaking, and storytelling. Digitally connected lifelines extend into physical spaces, as when new hosts welcome TWD in their homes. Virtual and material environments occasionally come together in real time, as when events are livestreamed to the Facebook group, or Storeide gathers the drum, the old hawk, and his camera in the kitchen. Material and virtual environments converge, combine, and intersect as mutually constitutive and constructive, enabling the drum’s multiple and simultaneous existence.

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16 Email on 14.09.2020. For studies of Sámi drums historically see Kaikkonen 2018 and 2020. For the contemporary revival see Kraft 2016, 2020, and 2022. For drums in the art-culture system see Grini 2019 and 2021. For the early collection of Sámi drums see Nordin and Ojala 2018.

17 A suitcase and a travel bag protects TWD during her travels. The bag was a gift, based on a vision by a person connected to the Canadian Centre of Shamanic Studies. Information from Storeide (email), September 2020.



**Figure 2.** The World Drum's cover. Photo by Morten Wolf Storeide. Permission by Morten Wolf Storeide.

There is also archival growth in the sense of increasing volumes (on- and offline, with varying access) and value. Archives are afterlife technologies and tools of validation. To be archived is to be worthy of afterlives beyond the old hawk, the cabin, distant locations, and current relationships. Expanding archives demonstrate momentum and importance and point to lives to come. Similar growth is happening elsewhere, beyond the control and knowledge of the organizers. During my visit Storeide moved between personal experiences with the drum, events of which he had not been part but had followed digitally from a distance, and spaces of wonder – parts of her life that are unknown, even to him.

TWD has aged through the wear and tear of her travels, visibly through cracks in the frame and the fading of inscriptions, discursively through refer-

ences to ‘grandmother drum’ (in recent years).<sup>18</sup> Two modes of temporality are played out. One is time as durability (Olsen 2010) through the ancient roots of the drum format. The second is chronological time, involving the lifespan of this particular drum. A similar binary can be ascribed to spatial reach, with drum connections to Indigenous peoples (past and present), and TWD as travel-based worlding,<sup>19</sup> globality performed and embodied.

Gender adds to humanlike features, along with age.<sup>20</sup> Grandmothers belong to a privileged category of Indigenous elders, associated with wisdom and tradition keeping on the one hand and maternal care on the other, here extended from local kin to *distant selves* (Indigenous people elsewhere),<sup>21</sup> even to Mother Earth. The gender reference is consistent, along with a body, clothes (the skin layers), emotional registers, free will, and personality traits.<sup>22</sup> Facebook updates portray a headstrong being, able to change plans, depart from itineraries, and find a way when lost. There is often an element of uncertainty in updates – will she find her way, manage to overcome challenges along the way? – followed by relief as problems are solved, and her whereabouts are settled. While solid, capable, and strong, TWD is also vulnerable and exposed, much like other beings on the move, on their own, away from home.

Sentient features include feelings, relationality, and responsiveness – being sad, tired, caring, joyful, vulnerable, and energized. TWD can carry things (gifts and sacrifices). She can touch and be touched and can connect the community built for her support: directly through established practices of holding her, even of lining up to touch her; indirectly through recorded versions available to her Facebook community. Touch is a basic means of contact, known from religious practices in every age (Chidester 2018; Flood 2014; for sensory aspects see also Promey 2014). It entails intimacy, relationality and connect-ability, here between the drum and the person touching her, between the drum, touchers, and host communities around the world, and between past and present drums and touchers. Touch-based relations are sticky. They stick to the toucher and to the drum as basic to her appeal and charisma, comprised by and expanding with the enabled connections.

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18 For material decay and religion see Kendall 2017.

19 Gayatri Spivak introduced the term ‘worlding’ in an essay (1985).

20 On gender as a way of asserting agency, see Hoskins 2015.

21 The concept of ‘distant selves’ is inspired by Jonathan Z. Smith’s ‘order of othering’. For a more elaborate discussion, see Johnson and Kraft 2018a, 505.

22 For example, Storeide notes in a Facebook post (31.10. 2016) that ‘Since TWD has Her own will, She finds Her way on new paths’.

Surrounding tactile and visual affordances are sonic features, referred to in Facebook posts as sounds and singing, vibrations and beat. Drum sounds are relational. Drums are silent on their own; they sound only when touched or played. Thus handled, TWD can gather audiences, instigate ceremony, centre her community, constitute contact zones, even manifest '(a) liveness', to borrow a concept from Reason and Lindelöf (2016). (A)liveness involves *nowness*, whether through recorded versions or in real time, at a digital distance or physical co-presence, and based on the multimodality of the drum, including similarity-based connections between drumbeats and heartbeats – drums, audiences, and Mother Earth. This is sonic aliveness with a past – moreover, coded as the sound identity of Indigeneity.<sup>23</sup> Drums are among the world's oldest musical instruments. They sound Indigenous due partly to their position in earlier strata of primitivist discourses, today widely accessible in museums, exhibitions, and popular culture, partly to material qualities (wood, skin, bone), sonic features (rhythm, beat, vibrations, simplicity), and the overall absence of 'modern' technologies. For the same reasons drumming can indigenize events, people, and surroundings, connect ancestral pasts (*here* and *elsewhere*), and demonstrate continuities (*now* with *then*).

While humanlike and approachable, TWD is also set apart, treated with respect, even with awe, as a sacred thing and godlike being. Many of the photographs feature her in ceremonial contexts. Many of the updates involve extraordinary powers such as empowering effects on other drums, the sending of heartbeats across space, connections with the heartbeats of Mother Earth, and an ability to take on and participate in the pain of others – even to collect, transform and release pain, as in sacrificial transferal. During my visit, Storeide said of the drum's returns to Finnskogen that:

when I sit down and open the lid, it's just so intense, I get completely knocked out [...]. There are sounds, there are smells, there are songs, there are rhythms. It just comes rolling out. But the strongest experience – you have been to Standing Rock – was when I picked the drum up when she came from there, and then she had been there a long time.<sup>24</sup>

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23 For a discussion of Indigenous soundscapes see Hackett 2017. For 'ethnic sound' see Meintjes 2003 and Powell 2012.

24 No.: *når jeg så setter meg ned og løfter opp lokket, altså det er jo poh. Det er så voldsomt. Jeg blir helt satt ut. [...] Det er lyder, det er lukter, det er sanger, det er rytmer, det bare kommer veltende ut. Men den sterkeste opplevelsen – du har jo vært på Standing Rock – det var da jeg tok opp tromma da hun kom derfra, og da hadde hun vært der lenge.*

Returning to this episode, his eyes watered, as he recounted ‘all those people who have touched, who have in a way prayed for the drum’. ‘It’s incredibly fascinating,’<sup>25</sup> he added:

And that’s something I feel strongly when I regain contact with the drum myself. Pouring out, having come to the drum. When she came from Standing Rock, I sat on a picnic spot, just by Flisa, I recall. I sat there and cried. There was so much sorrow from everything that had happened there. It just flooded out. It was so strong. When the worst parts had come out, I felt more of the pleasure, the cooperation, everything that took over. But the second it was opened, it was like being bulldozered. I felt all the pain that was there.<sup>26</sup>

Things are normally present to us in a ‘ready-to-hand mode’, and they are usually taken for granted, noticeable only when failing or falling apart (Olsen 2010). TWD is insistently noticeable – born to be extraordinary, dressed for fascination. This is a thriller, a reality show, slow TV, and a documentary, and as an unfolding story, available digitally, in real time and in archives. Asked to describe her, both Franck and Storeide used the term *cornucopia*, a ‘horn of plenty’ (in Greek), related to Amatheia, the goat that provided milk to Zeus as an infant. I understand the reference as descriptive and prescriptive, centred on the drum as a being and their need to stand back; give her space to unfold and find her way. This is thing-based theology and theology of drift (to stick with the language of my conceptual approach). The idea is *not* to complete or close her story, what she is and can be, but rather to stay tuned, prepare for surprises, and trust her moves.

## Episodes

Having provided an overview of journeys, allies, and material competences, let me discuss three events in more detail. They stand out in their enthusiasm and numbers of Facebook postings and as highlights regarding pride, high-key action, and excitement. They also imply ‘magnification’ in the sense Marilyn Strathern suggests: shifts in scope, scale, and importance (2004,

25 No.: *Det er utrolig fascinerende.*

26 No.: *Og det er noe jeg kjenner veldig når jeg kommer i kontakt med tromma sjøl. Som velter ut. Som har kommet til tromma. Når hun kom fra Standing Rock. Jeg satt på en rasteplass, like ved Flisa, husker jeg. Satt – og grein så følt. Det var så mye sorg fra alt som hadde skjedd der. Og det bare flomma ut. Det var så sterkt. Når så det verste hadde kommet seg ut, så kjente jeg mer på det med gleden, samarbeidet, alt det som tok overhånd. Men det der sekundet den ble åpna opp – det var som å bli valsa over. Jeg kjente all den smerten som var der.*

xiv–xvii), including the ability to make claims on behalf of an Indigenous *we*. As such, they lend themselves to a focused approach to the issues that concern me in this article: object agency; the unruliness of drift matter; and the relationship between local and global Indigeneity.

*The translational logics of Indigeneity – reclaiming, remembering, reconnecting*

On 21 March 2018 a reconciliation event took place at Province House in Halifax, Nova Scotia, involving TWD, First Nations representatives, and the then Minister of Culture and Community, Leo Glavine. It was shared with the Facebook group in a 26-minute video, along with several posts.<sup>27</sup> One sequence features an old woman crying in front of TWD. ‘You cannot imagine how big this is,’ she says. Having been deprived of the drum traditions of her people, she could finally hear, see, and touch them.

The Facebook posts revolved around two features. The first was pride for contributions to an important political event, marked as such by the cause (reconciliation), the site (Province House), and the company (the minister). The second was the old woman’s emotional reaction, available for distant viewers through the video, and based on the translational logics of global Indigeneity. While anchored in Sámi traditions, TWD was dressed for a pan-Indigenous position (the covers and inscriptions). She emerges as an object ambassador, representing Indigenous drums vis-à-vis the minister and the drums of ancestral traditions in Nova Scotia vis-à-vis the old woman. The logic is scalar: from *this* drum to *all* drums. Temporally *here* (as a visitor), the drum links *then* and *there* (in Sápmi) with *then*, *here*, and *now* (in Nova Scotia). The colonial history of drums adds layers, based on a similar logic of scalar translation: from the destruction of drums to the destruction of peoples, traditions, and religions; and from the (later) restoration of drums to the restoration of ancestral traditions. To reclaim is to take back and talk back; to no longer be silent and invisible; to demand ownership and demonstrate presence: of things, traditions, practices, and identities.

Bjørnar Olsen has noted that materials confront us with ‘coexisting temporal horizons’; with a capacity for ‘enduring’, for upholding the past, and remembering it (2010, 108). They also confront us with multiple layers of intimacy, described by Anne Lester for textile relics as ‘a closeness to those who wore, carried, sweat, and bled in the garments’ (2019, 539), for TWD: to those who have held, touched, played, and heard her, in the past and

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27 The video was posted by Patricia McNair.

around the world. The video sequence emerges as an intimate encounter and a public sovereignty claim. While centred on the old woman and her people's traditions, this is also about colonial relationships vis-à-vis the Canadian nation state, and even Indigenous people vis-à-vis (Western) colonizers.

TWD adds gender to return-oriented refusal.<sup>28</sup> Contrasting with the male heroes of colonial crusades is a female drum on a wanderer-style journey, open to improvisation and adjustments along the way, and centred on the registers of motherhood: relations and relationality; nature and nurture; peace and love. Contrasting with the destroy and replace tactics of colonialism is a gathering of victims (Indigenous peoples, shamans, drums, and Mother Earth) in a joint mission to save the world.

*Borderline Indigeneity – to be or not to be an Indigenous artefact*

A Facebook update on 12 April 2012 states that the drum had been 'arrested, seized and held back by the US Department of Homeland Security and The Department of Fish & Wild, for crossing an international border with restricted objects attached', among them a feather (Storeide, Facebook 12.04.2012). A later post refers to:

huge protests and negotiations on a high political level with involvement from APIN – Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, Chief of Aboriginal affairs, diplomats, ambassadors, and other politicians. With great efforts from a lot of people, The World Drum did get released without any damage (ibid.).

Among the stated conditions of release was the permanent removal of the attached objects, and reassurance that TWD will "NOT ever travel with restricted/unregistered/unidentifiable wild-life parts attached (feathers, bone, shells and plant materials and ribbons)' (ibid.). 'If you find objects attached to TWD, please respectfully remove them immediately,' Storeide ended the Facebook post.<sup>29</sup>

The arrest is the most dramatic of the drum's adventures thus far. Storeide described it in detail during our first encounter.<sup>30</sup> At stake, as he described it, was the status of the drum and the attached objects. The feather was initially

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<sup>28</sup> For refusals see Simpson 2014.

<sup>29</sup> Facebook group, posted by Storeide 12 April 2012, under 'The World Drum Journey so far'.

<sup>30</sup> The gift-giving started spontaneously, Storeide said. People left small gifts on the drum's back, or in her suitcase. The gift collection was placed in a museum in Canada in the wake of the feather incident, awaiting collection by the home crew.

categorized by the border control as wildlife and therefore forbidden to cross nation state boundaries. It was released in the wake of successful interventions by Indigenous organizations, based on claims that this was an Indigenous ceremonial drum, that the feather should accordingly be categorized as religious and Indigenous rather than as wildlife, and that different regulations would thereby apply. Names matter, in this case at the level of life or death for the feather, the drum, and her project. The defence power of ordinary drums (and feathers) is limited. The defence power of Indigenous drums (and feathers) is currently greater. As for the Nova Scotia episode, locally distinct artefacts were upscaled to the category of Indigenous things, and then downscaled to the category of Native American sacred things. Whether the case would have stood up in court is an open question. My point is that this worked, despite the foreign origin of the things concerned, from *elsewhere* (Sápmi), yet from *here* (as Indigenous). A second point concerns relationality. Alone, the drum was not recognizably Indigenous. Recognition depended on the intricate networks of contemporary Indigeneity, set into motion by a shaman in Finnskogen, his US connections, and their links with Indigenous organizations.

#### *Protest sounds and global Indigeneity*

TWD's visit to the Standing Rock camps dominated the Facebook group's activity between September 2016 and January 2017 through several photos, posters, stories, and declarations of support.<sup>31</sup> Posts included versions of the (then) established 'stand with' slogan ('TWD stands with Standing Rock'). Among stressful elements were TWD's disappearance in the postal system en route to North Dakota. Her host, Linda Daniels, recalls nerve-wracking days before finally locating her and heading for the camps. 'Many people were present at the Fire Circle and appreciated the efforts of The World Drum to be there,' Daniels reported from the first day, and 'Many hands played the Drum' (<http://www.theworlddrumproject.com>).<sup>32</sup>

There is some excitement in the Standing Rock updates, supported by extensive digital accessibility and a sense of worldwide attention. There is also a sense of *being there* through the drum and playing a part. One post shared the fascination of a person whose signature was inscribed on the drum's cover, and who accordingly felt that part of him was there, on these grounds, as part of her and her team, participating in her mission and in the protests.

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<sup>31</sup> Many of TWD's followers were engaged in the protests. See also Kraft 2020.

<sup>32</sup> The quotation is from a five-page summary of the event posted by Daniel, under the headline 'The World Drum Project's 10th Anniversary Story'.

Encounters with g(local) challenges added to the excitement. Consider the following post, uploaded to the Facebook group on 21 October 2016:



**"The Gitche Spirit Warriors"**

In 2008 The World Drum was on Her way from Metis Nation in Canada to USA and was then taken in arrest by the U.S government with the intention of being destroyed. This led to huge protests and negotiations on a high political level with involvement from APTN - Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, Chief of aboriginal affairs, diplomats, ambassadors and other politicians. With great efforts from a lot of people The World Drum did get released without any damage.

Today people are arrested in Standing Rock for peacefully trying to protect the water and sacred grounds, or because reporting about what is happening there. Let us now have the hope that these people also will be released and that no further damage will be done, as it happened to The World Drum in 2008.

Finally we would like to share some of the words from Charlie Fife of Oshawa Metis Council after he received the message that The World Drum would be released:

*"The Gitche Spirit Warriors*

*This is the story of The World Drum and the Eagle Feather and how they united to challenge two of the most powerful offices the world has ever known;*

*The United States Department of Fish and Wildlife and the powerful Department of Homeland Security. It is a win/win story of how the Eagle Feather used it's power to raise the issue of The World Drum to an International status, and how The World Drum used it's powers to raise awareness of the Plight of the Eagle Feather, both on a World stage. Like two of the greatest warriors, uniting to go into battle.*

*Like the story of the Eagle and the Condor, uniting to gather strength to speak with one voice for all of the America's Indigenous Peoples on the world stage, the story of the Spirit of the Feather and the Spirit of The World Drum is also a great occasion that all mankind has a stake in.*

*We are ALL connected  
Charlie Fife - Human Family"*



With these words we thank the Creator of all things, and look forward to continuing peaceful actions of the protectors in Standing Rock as for the further journey of The World Drum. The beat of the drum is the beat of Heart and Mother Earth as it is the beat of all that dwell upon her.

**The World Drum Project**

Figure 3. 'The Gitche Spirit Warriors', posted on The World Drum's Facebook Group, on 21 October 2016.

TWD's project is united with the Standing Rock protests in this poster, based on connected concerns: the arrests of the drum and the water protectors; a shared cause (saving Mother Earth); and opposing bodies (US agencies). Both involve prophecies along the line of Indigenous repertoires: the Condor, the Eagle, and the Black Snake (for Standing Rock);<sup>33</sup> the Eagle Feather (for TWD in Nova Scotia). The latter emerges as a forerunner of (then) ongoing events in North Dakota, and one for which victory had already been secured. It also emerges as an allied cause and case, upscaled to the level of what was at this point the most globally visible Indigenous protest.

The second part of the post deals with the battle. Charlie Fife, presented as a member of the Oshawa Metis Council, ascribed the release of the drum to clever strategizing. The feather succeeded in raising 'the issue of the World Drum to an international status'; TWD used its powers to 'raise awareness of the plight of the Eagle feather, both on a world stage'. In this case a sovereign drum contrasts with a position as a colonial trophy, on a mission to unite and heal people and Mother Earth.

Drums were key to articulations of Indigeneity at Standing Rock. Clothes, languages, and flags characterized the specifics of Indigenous belonging (e.g. Sámi or Maori). Global Indigeneity was primarily demonstrated through drum beats: at the camps; during ceremonies and direct action; and even as the soundtrack of protest marches (Mni Wiconi – water is life). While centred on a particular river (the Missouri) and a specific threat (a pipeline), this was upscaled to the foundations of life and the forces that threatened it, demonstrated audibly through the constant sound of drumbeats. A few weeks before the visit of TWD, the Sámi activist and musician Sara Marielle Beaska Gaup performed her 'We speak Earth' during a welcome ceremony.<sup>34</sup> She did so while holding a drum and asking the audience to clap their chests to the drumbeats, literally linking their heartbeats to the beat of the drum, synching the beat of their respective bodies; that of the audiences, that of the drum, and that of the earth; threatened here and now (the river) and everywhere (water is life).

Commenting on their visit, Beaska Gaup's sister noted that the Sámi, unlike most Indigenous peoples, were white (Kraft 2022). Things made the sisters recognizably Indigenous in this context: their *gákti* (Sámi dress); *lavvo* (tent); and drums. TWD is largely unknown in Sápmi, among *near selves* in geographical terms. She was recognizable here, among *distant selves* on foreign grounds.

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33 The Dakota Access Pipeline was referred to as 'the Black Snake', based on a Lakota prophecy.

34 I was at the Standing Rock protest camps at the time for joint fieldwork with Greg Johnson: see Johnson and Kraft 2018a and b.

### **From Finnskogen and beyond: Final reflections**

By way of ending, let me return to the questions from which I departed. My starting point was material qualities, and how they matter. The drum's intrinsic power (in Olsen's sense) emerges from multimodality and multi-functionality. Tactile, visual, and auditory qualities work together for this as sound, image, and touch with the (joint) capacity to build, bond, and gather; to summon, centre, and instigate ceremony; to trigger communication, interpretation, and imagination; to accumulate geographies; and to store time and connect temporalities, including time as succession and durability. Other (humanlike) features are similarly material: the ability to age and grow; to carry and be carried; interact and respond; to be solid and fragile, dressed and naked, sealed and open. Emerging from this particular assembly is a recognizably Indigenous mixture of sacred thing and godlike being, sanctified through attention, sites, and ceremonial circumstances.

My second question involves global matters: the modes and codes of Indigeneity on the move. More than anything else, drums visibly and audibly demonstrate this new form of collective identity. Such a position must somehow be related to the intrinsic powers discussed so far, along with mobility (easy transport) and simplicity of form (aiding reproduction and recognition). Colonial regimes paved the way for logics of reclaiming, even animated drums, for sovereignty claims to come. Drums had already been set apart, as the 'heathen and primitive' instruments of a particular grouping, associated with the premodern fabric of fetishism, magic, and nature-religion. They were thus prepared for a scalar shift to 'good' religion: for set-aparthood in the positive sense of sacredness; and nature people as protectors rather than civilizational obstacles.

Global Indigeneity hinges on a different type of scalar translation, between the locally specific (Indigenous peoples/religions) and notions of shared features (Indigenous people/religion in the singular). To be recognizably Indigenous is to know these codes, have access to translational devices (material and/or discursive), and be able to demonstrate them, as in the reconciliation event in Nova Scotia and the arrest by US Homeland Security. Specifically Sámi codes had little bearing on these grounds. Hosts in places like Nova Scotia are more likely to know the taxonomies of (pan-)Indigenous religion than the details of Sámi religion, and are likely to be steered more by the former than the latter. Nuances fade at a distance. Contested-ness is likely to decrease in line with distance from home, along with increased object agency.

I have used drift matter as an orienting device, a concept to think with. Concerning potential relevance for religious matters beyond this case, let me suggest the following.

First, movement: to be a drifter is to be unsettled, to have exceeded forecasts, proceeded 'via new conduits' (Pétursdóttir 2020, 87). Although unusual, even extraordinary, TWD invites reflections on thing-ness on the move, on the potential for becoming differently, beyond origins. And she invites attention to drift as an object agency, to drift as 'potential, coincidence, contingency, sleeping giants and dark forces' (Pétursdóttir 2018, 99).

Second is unruliness. Drifty lives are bound to be unruly. TWD was born to be wild; to move freely like a force of nature, even as nature. I have been intrigued by the emic appeal of unruliness and of its productiveness. Unruliness invites wonder in my examples and in a *more-to-come* mode of ongoing mysteries. Corresponding to a lack of 'beliefs' are notions of this thing as fascinating, intriguing, interesting. We may even speak of a theology of drift, centred on the drum and her unruliness and offering *fascinans* on the one hand and sovereignty claims on the other. Colonialism was an ordering regime, imposed from outside, and aided by religions of dogma and destruction (Sámi drums were literally destroyed). To be unruly is to reject this regime, literally to move elsewhere and differently, beyond the colonial world and its religions. Unruliness versus control is a basic theme in the history of religions. While unusually unruly, TWD is accompanied along the trails of wanderer-style religion, in the past and – with the increasing turn to seeking style spirituality – as a dominant form of contemporary religiosity.

Third are ethical matters, relative to naming. Drift implies change, though accompanied by duration and continuity. The current categorizations of shamanism as either a 'new religious movement' or the 'traditional religion of the Sámi' are problematic from this perspective and in various ways. They are normative (critics tend to choose 'new'; supporters typically prefer 'traditional'). They are misleading (for formations that are neither new nor simply traditional). And they are potentially destructive. To be new is bad in religious contexts, and can similarly be bad in the context of law and jurisdiction. 'Afterlives' is neutral in conceptual terms, fairly intuitive in and beyond academic circles, less likely to offend the people involved and to have a negative impact on their projects, including political and environmental ones. It is also a plural term. Remains are the same but are shaped differently through the specifics of encounters, contexts, and rationale.

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SIV ELLEN KRAFT is Professor at the Department of Archaeology, History, Religious Studies and Theology at UiT, the Arctic University of Norway. Email: Siv.ellen.kraft@uit.no

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