



PATTERNS REPEAT: TRANSFORMATION THROUGH CREATIVITY IN RESEARCH ABOUT LAND AND COLONIALISM

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Margaret McKeon is an outdoor educator, poet and doctoral candidate in language and literacy education at the University of British Columbia. A person of Euro-Settler ancestry, in her research she is creating poetry and stories about land relationship, ancestral knowledges and colonialism.

Abstract: Within arts-based research, creativity becomes methodology. The art-work created may or may not participate in disrupting and renewing our world, may or may not bear its own heart beat. In this reflective and lyrical paper, I explore, in form and content, sacredness in the creative process and its potential for creating transformative works capable of disrupting deep patterns of colonial violence and loss. Sitting with a research question of what it means to “listen” to the land, I story experiences within and outside doctoral studies in which I grow and learn through Western, Indigenous and my ancestral Irish-Celtic teachings.

Keywords: creative process; transformation; colonialism; intergenerational trauma; relationship with land

The prospect of integrating spiritual knowings and processes, like ceremonies, dreams, or synchronicities, which act as portals for gaining knowledge, makes mainstream academia uncomfortable, especially when brought into the discussion of research.

~ Margaret Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies* (2009, pp. 67-68)

I am a tall woman refusing to stoop. I gesture to invite the Musqueam¹ ancestors and land spirits of this place and my own Irish and German ancestors to be present with my writing in a good way. This is writing which inquires into sacredness in the creative process, as I'm coming to understand it. After fifteen grateful winters in Mi'kmaw Newfoundland, I experienced a vision while snowshoeing the South East hills—a vision about telling stories from the land. Now I'm a PhD student at the Pacific-facing University of British Columbia (UBC) creating a dissertation about learning to listen to the land and sharing stories and poems from that listening—stories to disrupt and help heal colonial wounds and wounding. I am learning to stand into my present and ancestral complicity as a white settler Canadian. I am learning to stand into calling. Poems are part of my poet's humble offering. I continue to grow and learn through my relationships to Western, Indigenous and my ancestral European teachings. To know myself in place, I seek language, story and history grown from the soils that rub under my feet, including in the treated lands of Alberta where I grew up.² As a treaty partner, I am tasked with properly honouring and renewing these sacred (and often broken) agreements that the land be shared for the benefit of all. Today, however, I write today from unceded Musqueam territory in Vancouver, British Columbia. I sit very near *xʷməməqʷe:m* (Camosun Bog), which figures centrally in the Musqueam origin story (Sparrow in UBC, 2016). Last month, I felt called to defend my thesis proposal under a remaining 500-year-old Douglas fir with scraggy fire-thick bark and an eagle-topped crooked trunk. A co-presentation I believe.

I am working to understand how we are all creators and co-creators of our lives and of our art-making. To understand how the eyes in my belly hold stories without eyelids opening. So much of my knowledge I receive culturally—language, music, ritual, protocols around daily interaction and tasks. Hawaiian scholar Manu Aluli Meyer (2008) speaks of how our senses are cultural. Culture has shaped my hearing, sight, taste, intuition. Indoor and outdoor worlds continue also to craft my senses: television soap operas and boxed classrooms, wild strawberries, bear-filled mountains and nose-biting winter cold. What my body anticipates should happen next is received from my formative experiences of culture and place.

I watch myself grow more understanding of this part of lived experience, especially when I encounter places and cultures different from my own. Years ago in Newfoundland I was teaching alongside Mi'kmaw knowledge keepers and learning to participate in ceremony. I tripped on my Western cultural inheritances by speaking when I should be listening and circling the wrong way after making an offering to a sacred fire. Recently waiting in a long security line-up at Detroit Airport, an object loudly crashes to the concrete floor. I curiously glance towards it but a family ahead grips and twists their soft bodies toward a gunshot sounding. My senses know privilege. My unremarked white face in a grocery store expects privilege. My body unrestricted by Indigenous territories boasts entitlement. I work to understand my cultural and place inheritances to (co)create art-work that challenges and renews my cultural and placed communities.

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I can tell stories about the eyes in my belly opening and my spine straightening. I embarked on a healing journey five years ago following a rainy autumn night and sweat drenched repeating dreaming. I was 34 years old. My body had become increasingly disabled over the previous ten years, and the canoe portaging of my youth was distant memory. Hard to access specialists peered into a diagnosis of hypermobility syndrome. Reams of massage therapists, chiropractors and physiotherapists would move my pain around. I glimpsed an impossible gift when emotional and energetic healing from remembered childhood abuse began to unbind my crumbled body. Today, I raise strong hands in gratitude for returns to bike riding, swimming, backpacking. To walking while also carrying a laptop and two books. To typing.

I watch myself heal. I learn through inquiry into the skeletal weights I have been carrying, and the newness of who I am becoming. My abuse was intergenerational, performed on my young body by dissociated identities of my grandmother and my mother. Through healing that is like swimming through rock, I welcome back my own dissociated parts. I welcome these parts of me that had severed off from overwhelming distress, allowing my wakeful self to bear life alive. Allowing me to giggle with joy while making pickles, heart cookies or willow baskets with my mother. I survived. I survive as the kaleidoscope grandmothers long before me survived. I was witch-hunted as they were witch hunted.³ In watching myself heal and seeing others with new eyes, I am learning how patterns repeat through us until we disrupt them. Not just in dissociated parts but in our small compulsions, untouchable neediness and damning judgments. In the brutal everyday and institutional tamings of our own and each other's powerful wildness and portals of listening.

Manu Aluli Meyer (2010) describes deepening intelligence and wisdom as a knowledge-holder moves from knowledge that resides only in the head, to that which is known through experiencing, to that which is known through loving being, that is, through transformation and representation of a new self. I take-up self-transformation as methodology. To allow myself transformation, I draw into my body my research questions about colonialism. About its damming judgments and eradication of ancient knowledge holders, ancient knowledge and ancient trees. I turn from worlds of stories, books and hourly newscasts, to that which I know inside me, then back out again. I draw colonialism into my gut and find its growls sound deeply familiar. I work to understand how I might (co)create art-work that disrupts my and our cultural and ancestral inheritances.

We Can Be Creators Too

Patterns long ago
set in motion
at shores of all oceans

foreign dancers echo
in the form of your life

Open the eyes in your belly
we can be creators too

Touch the patterns

Touch traces of past, to tell stories:
make our history⁴

Your wiser tongue, tells stories again:
alters history

More Indigenous tales of loss than resilience
More newcomer tales of resilience than loss

Imbalance refuses a new chapter
make ready to stand up into grace

To listening that allows
a watery spine's melting, evaporation

Tell all stories again,
again, till our emergence here weaves a balanced shawl

Reveal patterns, long ago set in motion
that echo in the sweaty forms of our lives

We can be creators too

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I chew on my experiences and my teachings, taking up self-transformation as healing, learning and decolonizing. Seeking to dance in (co)creation, I chew on the leathery foods of experience until I feel change. I chew on teachings that provoke the eyes in my belly to reform. As Manu Aluli Meyer (2010) describes, in Indigenous Hawaii self-transformation is the highest form of knowledge because there is *Aloha*,⁵ there is service to others: “*Aloha* is intelligence with which we meet life.” This chewing helps guide me with no guarantee as I tightrope a vital winding line between appropriating and respecting Indigenous cultures and peoples. I offer my transformation as reciprocity, part of my service to others.

I watch myself chew on teachings from the Mi'kmaq of Western Newfoundland. Kevin Barnes, a Mi'kmaw knowledge keeper, and I are co-leading lessons we co-created. In many classrooms, we speak each in our own voice till some days we get lost. He finds my words. I recall what he misses. Our hearts sing with common loves of teaching together and Mi'kmaw culture which weave through the basket of each room. When I'm a distant PhD student, Kevin gets frustrated: “Margaret, stop calling to ask permission to share about our work. You know I trust you.” I always hope I honour that trust.

The elementary students ask at home for the stories of their ancestry. Stories tumble from forgotten family closets. We honour the ancestors who have gifted forward each of these splendid young bodies, but especially their Mi'kmaw ancestors. So much Mi'kmaw ancestry was hidden to protect children from tides of dangerous racism here. Children delight to be celebrated and welcomed. A glimmering piece of themselves returned. I am sometimes sad that I have no Mi'kmaw ancestry to celebrate. Years into this path and my cloudy belly still bloats with deep longing to fully belong to this sacred circle and powerful empty hunger.

I chew on the hunger and sadness until a teaching there all along grows inside me. I have my own ancestors to raise up and their stories and land traditions to learn. Of course! I am their gifts and their burdens. Their hungers. Their long ocean journey. When I dig deep enough, the earth-honouring lifeways of my belly-longing are within their ancient lives and within lands foreign to my body, awaiting. I visit Ireland. I learn offerings of song, fire and coins, and the land caresses and yells. My spirit experiences are so loud... "She's back." A traditional healer celebrates me and welcomes my dreaming. A supple skin I hadn't known missing is given back. When I swim home to Mi'kmaw territory, community and ceremony, I am less hungry, more solid. I chew long on my teachings and feed my aching belly. With my feet in this soil and my ancestors behind me, I offer my life for (co)creation.

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I am learning how patterns can be danced awake. I'm a PhD student at UBC, stepping into an invitation:

Oki, My name is Keith Chiefmoon, I am an elder of the Blackfoot confederacy and founder of the Natosi Okhan sundance society. For over 40 years, I have had a re-current sacred vision where people of the four directions would come together as one to heal the soul wounds of war, greed and colonization in a sacred way. In this sundance ceremony, people would remember how to be generous, compassionate and humble again, in order to create a different fate for the planet and all its children. If this vision speaks to your heart, you are invited to join us. (Ahenakew & Andreotti, 2018)

This unique course, *Indigenous Existential Resistance: The Sundance Practice*, blends academic and existential teachings and comes at the vision, request and invitation of Blackfoot Elders. In a glass-bound campus classroom, our Indigenous professors remind us that the sundance is not to be an object to study but a ground for our experience. After years being re-formed in Mi'kmaw territories, I circle back to the teachings, songs and ceremony of a people whose land I was born to. Prairie lands of my scraped knees and growing tall.

We're here as helpers—gathering sage and preparing community meals. We weave tarps into the round outer arbour that will shelter us from burning sun as we are invited to dance in support of those dancing and fasting within the ceremonial circle. Into the steamy darkness of sweatlodge, I speak gratitude for those who carried these ceremonies while they were illegal. Through years that my church-going ancestors supported their Canadian governments. I defy those ancestors in offering their burdens to this drumming fire of darkness.

Year Two, I'm invited to join again the ongoing community of this UBC course. Again the dance is offered to hot bright skies. I feel power pulsing through my body. In the arbour's shade, I dance outside the ceremony but face it, let it fill and reflect through my body. "I feel the power of your presence while I'm dancing," a sundancer tells me one evening, "thank-you." In the sun's growing heat of morning, exposed though under draping skirts, my belly learns to let ceremony flow through like water. My grandmothers line up behind their humble gift re-awaking at last.

My complicated belongings sift like sand through water, through a gift of letting spirit flow as the blood does. Neither inside nor outside, I am here as the river is. My belly's gifts are neither borrowed nor returnable. Sitting down, not my generosity. I am a tall woman, a granddaughter, in the sweltering summer days of Blackfoot Territory, being called to stand and dance. I seek to co-create life and art-work that calls on me to stand and dance.

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In working to understand how we might be (co)creators of our lives and art-making, I seek guidance in Métis Douglas Cardinal and Okanagan Jeannette Armstrong's 1991 book, *The Native Creative Process*. In an alternating exchange, they each describe a spiritual process central to community wellbeing and relationship with land. Jeannette Armstrong explains:

World renewal is a concept which many Native peoples express through their various ceremonial processes. The seasonal or annual practice to ceremonially and collectively incorporate the continuous new realities into the principles of harmony with the natural world is a spiritual journey for each individual. It is a creative journey culminating in action and recorded in the functional and expressive arts. (Cardinal & Armstrong, 1991, p. 54)

Douglas Cardinal speaks of creativity as a human responsibility or purpose of seeking through the unknown to bring forward the new. In this understanding of creativity, a creator guides them-self and allows them-self to be guided to a place of active surrender. This place of surrender, of creativity, is a place inside. It is the eyes in my belly looking outward, listening.

I watch myself, again and again, strain to rhythm with the horse of my dissertation, to find the gentle grip of guidance on its reins. I keep watch during the year I wait for my thesis proposal. I need to write it. I know the questions I am to take up. Coursework done, comprehensive exams completed. Did I expect a

proposal to stride through the door? Float in on the tide? In December, I travel to Victoria to visit a Haida knowledge keeper and friend with some hope she might lend clarity. We have a wonderful visit rooted in hospitality, ancestors, soils and water, but my questions jingle just as fresh in my pocket on the ferry-ride home. Resigned and quiet, facing the sticky salt winds, I see that I need to heal into my questions' answers, into receiving direction.

To allow myself to become a fertile soil where ideas might implant and grow, at the sea I offer tobacco, part of the language of this land. I pray. I call out to the approaching full moon, show me what in me is closed, what tough skin is to be shed. Weeks later, brimming with blank budget lines and urgency in grant application deadlines, I have a dream. In my dream, I am in a house with a bear who is trying to leave but finds only walls and corners. Finally, she approaches the door, and the door is opened, but people I have invited are entering so the bear turns away. I understand that on this occasion the house is built of fear. The bear, who often interrupts my dreams to guide me, is trapped far from her woods of knowledge. As in earlier experiences, I discover that confronting the rigidities of security to find my thesis proposal is painful and scary. Fear of wildness and strong language grip my hands and numb me to rhythm. I work to understand how (co)creation is about preparing to receive, surrendering to deep disorientation and gazing from outer to inner worlds and back, always trusting in the invisible ground.

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As I work to understand how we can be (co)creators of our lives and art-making, I offer reverent attention to periods when I do not write. I see how patterns repeat through us, and I seek teachings on (co)creating art-work that disrupts and renews my cultural and Irish and German ancestral inheritances. Irish author Delores Whelan (2010) offers guidance from the Celtic calendar on how balance in our lives and in creativity is necessary for personal and communal renewal. The Celtic calendar organizes four seasons into *giamos*, a more feminine period dominated by darkness, deep being, transformation and receptivity, and *samos*, a more masculine period dominated by brightness, active doing and productivity. The death and stillness of winter allow for the land's rebirth in spring. Similarly, for people, transformation lives in the times of stilled hands and the discomforts of interiority. It lives in times of more being than doing. In seeking personal transformation as an offering of my scholarship, I encounter a shame of inefficiency, shame that bricks in walls and corners to my inquiry.

The Celtic New Year is celebrated in early November. In Irish-Celtic understanding everything new begins in the dark, germinating slowly toward

emergence in the light of spring. Delores Whelan (2010) describes a creative process that begins in emptiness, receptivity and gestation, slowly coming to emergence through inner growth, then strengthening, flowering, ripening, harvesting and again pausing. I am finding new rhythm, learning about showing up for writing and creativity in a way that echoes its season. I am learning to forgive myself the indulgence of pause. To actively wait for readiness like the stirrings of seeds. To let myself catch fire with a project that with nurturing forms tender roots and grows to encompass my whole being.

The Irish word *neart* describes the life force energy that gives rise to all living beings and that is their sovereignty. As I strain to perceive the sovereignty of a child or a tree, a boulder, so, too, do I call to my hands a paper I'm writing or a dissertation; I trust its spirit to reveal itself in time. I work to understand how (co)creation, like life, happens in the ebbs and flows of a stream: in deep shadowy pools, the sands of being settle for a time, and water becomes clearer, while a rush of movement is the making of a course.

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On the ferry, drawn by wafting sound, I linger at distance. The man pauses from drumming and singing, hooks me to sit alongside. Songs for Kwakwaka'wakw potlatch, for an uncle in Alert Bay. I'm a foreigner in the language but taste for its stories. He carries over a hundred songs for this side of the family, each a dance. To learn, a particular-place in the longhouse where learning comes easy, where spirit helps as teacher.

An encounter as teacher for fertile time. For a spring when I seek to dialogue my flute's song with land: a fishery, an inquiry, a practice. Could I draw into ceremony to prepare, to ask, listen, embody dialogue? Will I meet or (co)create my particular-place where spirit helps as teacher? Once, showered from my ocean swim, a seer-woman perceived the sea in me. I wonder about this still.

To understand how we can be creators and co-creators of our lives and of our art-making, I reach for teachings about art-creation as ceremony. Shawn Wilson is a Cree scholar whose 2008 book, *Research is Ceremony*, describes ceremony as strengthening relationships. Research, too, is ethical when it strengthens the relationships among people, places, ideas. This is doing things in a good way. Pueblo Gregory Cajete (1994) describes art-creation—"a prayerful act of bringing an entity, a form that lives, into being" (p. 150)—as central to a traditional Indigenous education:

The ceremony of art touches the deepest realms of the psyche and the sacred dimension of the artistic creative process. This is the level that not only transforms something into art, but also transforms the artist at the very core of being. (p. 155)

I have been learning how (co)creation is about chewing on hunger, standing to dance and gazing between disorientation and making, trusting in the invisible ground. I appreciate strong teachings in Cajete's (1994) articulation of the Ceremony of Art and the four stages of the creative process: first insight, preparation/immersion, incubation and evaluation.

stop and light your candle a white one

*fill the small crow-black bowl with water: the gift of her handmade pottery, she said,
for contemplating the void*

light the candle make the rain louder than your thought

Over the course of my studies, I see myself cycle through Cajete's four stages of the creative process like a spiral, deepening in my inquiry and preparation, strengthening and clarifying. For all stages, *today* I stand at the *kaleidoscope beginning*. I gather my voice from fragmentation, train to speak from my full height. *I am a tall woman. Stand up.*

One: First Insight

It's true. Long before a student number or first doctoral class, I received its vision. I was snowshoeing a frozen pond in the South East hills at dusk's end. It was about listening for stories from the land: I was given the wolf for listening, told people will know me by my listening. Two days after, a skeptical Western mind met a Mi'kmaw man, Old Wolf, who enunciated "I can tell I should be giving you these teachings by the way you are listening."

Creative thought begins with dreams, intuitions, explorations of archetypes, forms and images.... Next comes a period of searching, introspection, and intellectualization, which develops the artist/poet's level of sensitivity and empathy for the creative work. (Cajete, 1994, p. 162)

*** searching and introspection, a shamefully unproductive doctoral context ***
but it belongs

A ceremony of creativity will belong in the academy. I presented my thesis proposal under a remaining 500-year-old Douglas fir with scraggy fire-thick bark and an eagle-topped crooked trunk. Earlier that week, I sat, shared my draft with this giant. Only its young outer layers have known English. In English, we gathered under a busy black squirrel and cool rain.

Finally, the creator enters into the realm of macrovision, which is characterized by metaphoric thinking and transformative vision upon the metaphysics and spirituality of that which is to be created. (Cajete, 1994, p. 162)

It was a co-presentation I believe. With the tree behind, I faced a small quiet altar, opened the four directions with my flute and closed them again to finish. After, we all shared pumpkin curry soup and discussion under the canopy of an outdoor classroom. I passed. It was a co-presentation, I believe. I passed.

Two: Preparation/Immersion

I keep writing. I write like a fire. I explore through my reading and my writing, which mostly I refused to publish.

[This stage] begins with a process of making meaning, addressing contingencies, and exploring key relationships.... there is a learning of tools, research and application of strategy and logic. (Cajete, 1994, p. 162)

When asked about my comprehensive exam papers, I say, their words are like soil, like sacred soil from which to grow my dissertation.

I am growing a voice for my work, a voice from fragmentation, the tattered speaker.
This opportunity, the gift of my time.
Patterns repeat until they are touched.

The process then moves to more reasoning, symbolization, responding, and searching, combined with establishing the proper emotional and intellectual context for the making of the artistic work. (Cajete, 1994, p. 162)

My thesis proposal was stitched from metaphor-stories: harvests of recipe-less ingredients that floated in on the tides of four seasons. Winter fragments matured through the fullness of summer were presented late in October.

Swim through stone. Strain harder. A river knows ebb and flow, knows wholeness, how to weave a shawl of tributary stories.

Three: Incubation

I can't write about this part. Can I write about this part?

Spring, 2017. I was behind on the papers anyway. On Sunday my jaw/cheek started working into an infection, which by Tuesday was intense, sustained, pain.

The eyes in my belly blink.

The doctor couldn't tell what was infected and so swollen. Gave me antibiotics and grip-less pain medication.

The breath. Sounding rain.

As sirens ransacked my still body, I flipped through my rolodex of self healing. I learned always from my healing practitioners: I had worked with an Irish Shaman for a time, and she taught me to journey.

The drum. Get out the drum.

I am carried on the back of an eagle, eventually to a nest—becoming the chick, and the egg and then the time before, when all things were whole. The time before I entered a broken world and was broken apart.

The presence of wholeness is laughing and joyful. Reaching for it pulls me through. Jubilant and weak, I yearn to yell I love you to every big and small tree on my road.

Incubation, at its deepest levels of expression, gives rise to metamorphic processes and mythological thinking revolving around transformation and rebirth. These processes and thoughts are in turn expressed through forms of intuition, ritual, ceremony. (Cajete, 1994, p. 162)

I can't talk about this part. In the academy. It was a co-presentation, I believe. I passed.

Four: Evaluation

I cannot sing on the days fear rises up through my skin, clogs my throat. I am frog. I croak through centuries of censure. She was burned alive. She witnessed. He witnessed. None emerged whole. ALL FRAGMENTED.

One evening I was preparing for a poetry reading. Instead of rehearsing I wept and wept, for a voice laid silent over a 1000 years. Even capitalism has a grandmother. She weeps, wishes to speak. She's ready. The fires die, gust the fear out of her way. Her wholeness persists.

This stage engenders self-confidence through boldly taking risks and defending the principles and integrity of the creative process that has led to the art. A relative state of spiritual centeredness and holistic perspective, which is expressive of the good heart engendered by the completion of a creative work, characterizes this last stage of creativity. (Cajete, 1994, p. 163)

Stand up. Tell the stories. The end is the beginning. I gesture to thank the Musqueam ancestors and land spirits of this place and my own Irish and German ancestors for their survivance.

Tell about Cajete's (1994) Ceremony of Art and remember how the potlatch ceremonies of Canada's Northwest Coast peoples were banned for 70 years, everything created sacred stolen. Tell about forty-four people arrested in Alert Bay in 1921 for "giving speeches, dancing, and carrying and receiving gifts" (Griffin, 2016).

Potlatching made illegal in 1885
Chiefs and Noblewomen jailed
masks, ceremonial objects burned

in 1921 exhibited as trophies
on benches in Alert Bay
(sacred tradition, out of sight when not in use)
Indian Agent charged an admission price,
collectors came⁶

And my uncle took me to the Parish Hall, where the Chiefs were gathered. Odan picked up a rattle and spoke, "We have come to say goodbye to our life," then he began to sing his sacred song. All of the Chiefs, standing in a circle around their regalia were weeping, as if someone had died. (James Charles King, at Alert Bay, 1977, in Umista Cultural Society, 2017)

Spring 2016. On the ferry, the man pauses. Songs are for a potlatch, for an uncle in Alert Bay. Over a hundred songs for this side of the family, each for a different dance.

Tell all the stories again.

We must decide, about our being and making. Our generational offering: what to repeat, our giftings?

Patterns repeat until they are touched.

Patterns repeat when they are touched.

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I am working to understand how we are creators and co-creators of our lives and of our art-making. This is writing which inquires into sacredness in the creative process.

To move from the known, you must know the moment you make a decision in that direction.... It is at that moment that you jump out there in a creative sense. To do otherwise is not new. It is not creative, but simply a shifting of pieces. (Cardinal & Armstrong, 1991, p. 64)

This writing is my poet's humble offering of reciprocity. On Musqueam unceded territory, I stand and dance in these stories with my ancestors. At footprints' end, there is no rest here.

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ENDNOTES

¹ The Indigenous Nation on whose traditional, and ancestral, unceded territory the University of British Columbia sits (in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada).

² I was born in Edmonton, a city in central Alberta in Treaty 6 Territory. Treaty 7 Territory encompasses the south of the province, and Treaty 8 and 10, the north.

³ Between 1400 and 1750, over 50,000 women and men across Europe and in North America were executed as witches, usually by public burning. Relying on torture confessions and the intellectualization of demonic possession, most likely to be targeted were older women and practitioners of ancestral magic traditions. As Julian Goodare (2016) describes, “the twelfth century saw the development of what has been called a ‘persecuting society’” (p. 33). Defining most of Europe (and its colonizing activities), Christianity saw itself as a universal religion: “no other gods could be tolerated” (Goodare, 2016, p. 32). Unlike my German ancestors, my Irish ancestors would have faced severe punishment and stigma but not public execution.

⁴ Paul Ricoeur (1990) asserts that only by inquiring into our received past can we imagine a future that departs from it. History comprises narratives created between our storytelling selves (fiction) and the traces of the past. History can be altered by changing the position of storytelling, that is, by acting on our world and changing who we are as storytellers. “Men make their own history, but not as they please. They do not choose for themselves, but have to work upon circumstances as they find them, have to fashion the material handed down by the past” (Brumair of Louis Napoleon, cited in Ricoeur, 1990, p. 213).

⁵ Shim and Taum (2009) further describe *Aloha*, a multi-layered Hawaiian spiritual principal, a guideline or law of how to live, with words from Auntie Pilahi Paki, a “keeper of the secrets of Hawai’i”:

Aloha is made up of five words, with the following literal and symbolic translations:

- *Akahi*: Grace, kindness to be expressed with tenderness
 - *Lokahi*: Unbroken, unity to be expressed with harmony
 - *Olu’olu*: Gentle, agreeable to be expressed with pleasantness
 - *Ha’ha’a*: Empty, humility to be expressed with modesty
 - *Ahonui*: Waiting for the moment, patience to be expressed with perseverance
- (Shim and Taum, 2019, p. 1)

⁶ Found poem from The Bill Reid Centre for Northwest Coast Studies (n.d.) Online Exhibit.