A WOE Worldview: One Métis Woman's Story

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Abstract

This paper is an inquiry into "aha" moments I encountered while exploring my Métis ancestry and place. It seeks to alleviate trauma through expressive narrative and reveal ways for educators to teach Métis learners. This was accomplished by the revelation of the wâhkôhtowin worldview that emerged from my autobiographical exploration of my ancestry on Turtle Island (North America). Wâhkôhtowin is a Cree word for "all my relations" is the one I will use. This exploration is a form of praxis, an Indigenous story that I hope leads to action and educational change. To do this, I, an adult Métis from Northern Alberta, explored recent Métis scholarship and autobiographies of adult Métis from Northern Alberta and Saskatchewan. I then told my own story, finding themes that give rise to a Métis worldview. The results showed that teaching and learning for the Métis must comprise a sense of belonging for "all my relations" as well as a self-determining (otipemisiwak), respectful (ekichinantak) learning environment for wâhkôhtowin. I conclude with some implications for further study and for education.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

While I wrote this paper, the work presented is not mine alone, but ours, for my contributions cannot be separated from the contributions of those along the way because an Indigenous reality is a collective reality.

First, I would like to acknowledge my deep and wide appreciation for the critical role played by my paragon supervisor, and first reader Dr. Shauna Butterwick. Her kind, proficient and sustained empathetic listening, thoughtful support, knowledgeable wisdom, and quiet guidance, as well as endless patience and perseverance all speak articulately of this supervisee's privilege. Second, I would like to thank my second reader Dr. Tracy Friedel who I am humbly honored to share with her, a relationship with Man'tow Sâkahikan (Lac St. Anne), and through this wâhkôhtowin, otipemisiwak and ekichinantak bond, I felt an indescribable emergence of strength, confidence, comfort and healing as well I received her profound insight, and guidance. Moreover, it was in her class that I first learned that place was a relationship and to acknowledge nature. Next, I would like to thank Dr. Cash Ahenakew and Dr. Mark Aquash for introducing me to ceremony because it is an enriching embodied practice. Also, it was in Dr. Ahenakew's classes that I learned intergenerational learning in academia was possible and it was in his class I received my first introduction to the personification of non-living things. Likewise, I would like to thank Dr. Peter Cole who introduced me to talking with nature, and I would especially like to thank Dr. Michael Marker who suggested I let otâwask (cattails) speak. Similarly, I greatly appreciate Dr. Carl Leggo for demonstrating and facilitating me how to let the

Dedication

To our children

A WOE WORLDVIEW: ONE MÉTIS WOMAN'S STORY

"My people will sleep for one hundred years, but when they awake it will be the

artists who give them their spirit back" Louis Riel (as cited in Wyman, 2004, p.

85**)**

In the spirit of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the trauma

faced by Indigenous peoples of Canada, this study offers an autobiographical

approach in which I engage with my own truth and reconciliation by exploring my

ancestry as a Métis. I offer my worldview as an Alberta Métis woman/family who

has for most of her life lived away from her traditional territory. My story is not

unique; Métis individuals and families have been displaced from their homelands

through various processes such as land use policies and the 60s scoop

associated with settler colonialism. To do this study, I explored recent Métis

scholarship and autobiographies of adult Métis from Northern Alberta. I also tell

my own story finding themes that give rise to a Métis worldview. The results drew

on Self Determination Theory and showed that teaching and learning for the

Métis must comprise a sense of belonging for "all my relations" as well as a

critically reflective, respectful (ekichinantak), self-determining (otipemisiwak)

learning environment for wâhkôhtowin, and for transformation.

Before delving into the main parts of this investigation, I shall give some

background on Truth and Reconciliation as a precursor in presenting my

argument.

Background of Truth and Reconciliation

Following the Cold War, human rights, justice, and equality were on the rise (Shaffer & Smith, 2004; Neizen, 2016) and consequently Truth Commissions and Truth and Reconciliation Commissions began to emerge. Over 25 Commissions have been founded since the late 1970's as an effective method for sociopolitical justice (Avruch, 2010) "but [this is] only when a reformist political coalition foster improvements in institutional underpinnings of democracy" (Snyder & Vinjamuri, 2006, p. 32).

Although truth commissions maintain the key is for the offenders to confess their offences (Snyder & Vinjamuri, 2006), it is important to note that not all "commissions have added the notion of 'reconciliation' to their title or their project" (Avruch, 2010, p.39). Truth telling has it challenges, but reconciliation is where the transformation transpires (2010).

Truth telling or justice offers an exoneration for transgressions that otherwise have the potential for violence. Emotions, as Snyder and Vinjamuri (2006, p. 16) note, must be considered in these practices:

> institutionally structured truth telling or punishment might serve as a release valve for resentments that might otherwise be expressed as riots, pogroms, or exclusionary ethnonational political movements. Such arguments might be located more broadly in recent theoretical developments that demonstrate the intimate connection between cognition and emotion in appraising political situations and deciding how to act.

In 2005, several First Nations Bands in Canada brought forth the Baxter National Class action suit against the Canadian Government for cultural genocide, which brought forth the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) that led to the September 19, 2007, Truth and Reconciliation Commission as well as monetary compensation. The IRSSA settlement provided $1.9 billion for former students of residential schools. For the first year of residential school, each student is given $10,000 and additional payment for years attended beyond that year and for sexual, physical, and or psychological abuses (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2016).

Nevertheless, the traumatic effects on the survivors of residential schools "remain significant at many levels, particularly in terms of the disruption of intergenerational socialization of land consciousness and ancestral traditions" (Ahenakew, 2017, p. 28). The Métis, too, have some of these and other learning struggles from the trauma of colonization.

Truth and reconciliation is challenging for the Métis peoples to actualize. As Andersen (2014) argues, most Canadians have a very poor understanding of Métis history and experience. Andersen advocates an understanding of Métis that is culturally grounded, rather than racially-based. In other words, the roots of Métis communities are found in the colonial intimacies that existed between First Nation women and fur traders during the period late 1700's to mid-1800's. As we grew in numbers in specific locations, we developed distinctive identities marked by reliance on kinship/community, and so on and political self-consciousness marked by self-determination.

Our heritage is steeped in the ethnicity of several First Nations tribes and several European countries (Andersen, 2014). We are an anomaly, and we are heterogeneous. Métis peoples have internalized much of the racist view of Métis as we too are on a learning journey.

In summation, there is hope for the Métis peoples to achieve reconciliation, asserted in the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) 2016 *R. v. Daniels* case: "reconciliation with *all* of Canada's Aboriginal peoples is Parliament's goal" (SCC, para. 10).

Research Questions

The kind of questions one asks frames the inquiry and guides one to the answers. I hope the questions and answers I seek in this inquiry are respectful and in search of relationships by employing an Indigenous approach. This reflective exploration of the Métis worldview engaged with both traditional and Western perspectives. In this inquiry, I explore my experiences, relationships, journey, and values.

1. What is my experience of being disconnected from my/our Métis heritage? What does it mean to reconnect?

2. What are the implications of my story for education?

In what follows, I begin with an overview of relevant Métis scholarship before moving to a discussion about autobiographical and Indigenous methodologies. Then I introduce several Métis autobiographies before telling my own story. I conclude with a discussion about implications for education.

Review of Métis Scholarship

Within the body of Métis literature, the linguistic, familial, economic, political, spiritual and geographic histories have been researched (Andersen, 2014; Bakker, 1997; Belcourt, 2006; Campbell, 1973; Campbell et al, n.d.; Devine, 2004; Dubois & Saunders, 2017; Ens & Sawchuk, 2015; Fiola, 2015; Foster, 1985; 1994; Giraud, 1986; Macdougall, 2006; 2008; 2010; 2014; 2016; Peterson & Brown, 1985; Strasbourg, 1998; St-Onge, 2004; 2006; St-Onge, Podruchny, Macdougall, 2012; Teillet, 2008; Van Kirk, 1985). Giraud's 1945 dissertation was one of the earliest ethnologies on the Métis, but was not translated into English until 1986. Next, a body of literature by Foster (1994), Giraud (1986), Peterson and Brown (1985), and St-Onge (2004; 2006) focused on the western plains before the confederation of Canada. Many of the authors consider the self-determining nature of the Métis, but it is Belcourt (2006), Devine (2004) and Payment (1991) who briefly examined the "otipemisiwak" concept of self-ownership (the spelling used by the SCC in *R v. Powley* (10) para. 3 is "*otepayemsuak*"). Other authors described cultural aspects such as language, arts, and inventions (Bakker, 1997; Fiola 2015; Peterson & Brown, 1985). Fiola's focus was the religious and spiritual aspects of the Métis in today's society, while Macdougall (2006), Devine and St-Onge (2004; 2006) delve into the Métis worldview concerning family commitment and their high value of relationships including "all my relations" (Macdougall, 2006, p. 2). As for identification of the Métis, Andersen (2014) addresses it through nationhood, Macdougall (2010; 2014), through kinship, and Foster (1994) through their engagement with the fur

trade and inter-marriage. Ens and Sawchuk (2016) challenge these Canadian interpretations of the Métis exploring ethnicity and self-identification, while simultaneously giving an all-encompassing account of the Métis from their historical beginnings to today's current status. Lastly, Teillet (2008) who was a great grandniece to Louis Riel as well as a Métis lawyer who served as lead counsel for the R. v. Powley case, gives a historical legal overview of the Métis up to 2008.

Only Devine (2004) reconstructs 250 years of history of the Desjarlais family including their European history, and she notes how "emotional detachment" was the outcome of unstable family relations (p. 22). The literature that focuses on Turtle Island (North America) in the 1770's to 1800's explores the unions made between Montreal based fur traders and prominent Indigenous women as a result of "wintering" (Devine, 2004; Forster, 1994, p. 1). These unions were called a "country marriage" that involved two steps: developing relationships with the adult males of the tribe and severing ties with their trading post to become "*les hommes libres"* (freemen/otipemisiwak, p. 1). Wintering involved dispatching those traders from the posts who lacked technical skills and who would have eaten up the winter food supply. They made bonds with the Indigenous groups, marrying into the Indigenous community. The Indigenous peoples they encountered taught them skills like hunting and the like.

The argument regarding the children of these unions suggests they were enculturated by the Indian bands (Devine, 2004; Forster, 1994), but Peterson (1985), Brown (1985), and Van Kirk (1985) indicate that some children would

have been enculturated within the father's social group, away from the bands.

Brown traces the officer unions with Indigenous women and states that the

children would not have been raised Métis, while Van Kirk follows James Ross

whose father was Scottish and mother Indigenous. The younger Ross attended

the University of Toronto in 1853 and was a lawyer who wrestled with feeling he

was committing treason by assisting in the Red River Resistance (RRR) (1870).

Although Western indoctrinated, his struggle shows the influence of his

Indigenous mother (Van Kirk, 1985).

Self-identification as the Metis Nation emerged during their active

engagement in the Red River from 1812 to 1816 that included the hoisting of the

first patriotic Métis flag (Teillet, 2008). This sense of nationhood was closely tied

to the 1816 Battle of Seven Oaks involving a clash between Métis and Hudson's

Bay Company/Selkirk settlers (Andersen, 2014; Ens & Sawchuk, 2015).

However, following the battle, negotiations with Selkirk and the First Nations

chiefs of the region neglected the children of wintering since they "were not

acknowledged as an independent tribe…and accorded no claims to territory"

(2015, p. 85). Contrary to that, the Indigenous peoples did request consideration

for the Métis in the 1870 negotiations, but this was quickly dismissed by

Alexander Morris the lieutenant-governor of Manitoba (Devine, 2004).

When the transaction between the Hudson Bay Company and the

Dominion of Canada did not consider the territorial position of the Métis, the

Métis responded with the RRR (Andersen, 2014; Ens & Sawchuk, 2015). This

brought forth the negotiation of provisional agreement with Métis leader Louis

Riel that the government designated as scrip[1]. Scrip "refers to a certificate

indicating the right of the holder to receive payment later in the form of cash,

goods or land" (Teillet, 2008, p. 62). Due to unfulfilled promises by the new

government, the North West Rebellion (NWR) of 1885 erupted which ended in a

slaughter of the Métis and their allies (Devine, 2004).

Moreover, at the time of the RRR and before the NWR, Métis settlements

lived differently (Giraud, 1986; MacDougal, 2006; St-Onge, 2004; 2006). St-Onge

describes how "opportunists" came from older settlements when the bison were

in decline, the church was growing stronger, and social and economic differences

were emerging (2004). Also, after 1881, an influx of Québécois and Bretons led

to stratification. Following the NWR, the government disallowed Indians to have

firearms (Devine, 2004) and that interfered with their hunting and gathering way

of life. The Métis who had participated in the rebellion left the treaty because they

had no rights such as rifles and ammunition for hunting and they sold their scrip

to avoid starvation. The government was hard on the dissident bands and many

Métis did not have title to their land so they squatted (Devine, 2004).

On the heels of the NWR, Métis began vanishing (Dubios & Saunders,

2017). By the 1920s the term associated Métis was mainly low socioeconomic

class, and by the 1950s there were few people who identified as Métis (Devine,

2004). Many had assimilated into the now dominant colonial culture; their identity

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[1] For further discussion about scrip see https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/the-scrip-how-did-the-scrip-policy-affect-metis-history

as Metis was associated more with ways of living or "lifestyle" (p. 4). The repercussions of these uprisings brought forth government restrictions, stigma, and socioeconomic degradation and the Métis soon became invisible, but the inclusion of Métis as Aboriginals in the 1982 Constitution Act resurrected the nation (2004).

The landmark 2003 *R v. Powley* case recognized Métis harvesting rights. However, Métis were recognized by race, sociocultural heritage, and ethnic self-identification, but Métis nationhood, which had been recognized in the *Manitoba Act* of 1870, was not adequately addressed (Andersen, 2014). Thereby "disenfranchised Indigenous individuals (and communities)" can identify themselves as Métis because of the mixed blood ruling, which muddies the political waters for the Red River Métis (Andersen, 2014, p. 57). The above identification of Métis was influenced by Peterson's (1985) article (that she later revised) and historian Ray's testimony (Andersen, 2014). In other words, self-identification as a Métis rests on the "proof that the claimants ancestors belonged to the historic Métis community by birth, adoption, or other means" (R. v. Powley, 2003, para 32) and not that their ancestors' self identification as Métis (Anderson, 2012).

Another landmark case was *Daniels v. Canada, April* 14, 2016, because it ruled that the term "Indian" includes Métis and Non-Status Indians, which gives the Métis and Non- Status Indians treaty rights, but it again reestablished mixed ancestry over ethnicity by stating the first Métis community had developed in

Nova Scotia in 1650 (Dubois & Saunders, 2017; Macdougall, 2016). Now more

legal proceedings are "planned by political leaders, lawyers, and academics to

discuss socio-historical, legal, political and policy implications" (2016, p. 1).

Nevertheless, on April 13th, 2017 a Canada-Métis Nation Accord was signed by

Justin Trudeau and The Métis National Council and its Governing Members: the

Métis Nation of Ontario, Manitoba Métis Federation, Métis Nation-Saskatchewan,

Métis Nation of Alberta and Métis Nation of British Columbia. The accord

provides the right of self-government and self-determination for the Métis Nation

that "emerged with its own collective identity, language, culture, way of life and

self-government in the historic Northwest prior to Canada's westward expansion

following Confederation" and that its leader is Louis Riel (Canada-Métis Nation

Accord, para 1).

Historically the Métis of the Red River Settlement were dominantly Roman

Catholic (Devine, 2004; Fiola, 2015; Giraud,1986; St-Onge, 2004; 2006).

Belcourt (2006), Campbell (1973), Campbell et al (n.d.), Ghostkeeper (1995) and

Strasbourg's (1998) autobiographical accounts of Métis living in Northern Alberta

and Northern Saskatchewan explored how a mix of Christianity and Indigenous

views shaped their beliefs. However, how the Métis historically practiced their

faith (compared to the settlers) had not been researched until Fiola (2015). Fiola

(2015) used a Métis Anishinaabe methodology, which endorses the Anishinaabe

creation story, the seven fires prophecy, and *mino-bimaadiziwin* (good life and

good relations), which gives a current look into Métis experiences and behaviors.

Her research involved interviews of sixteen Métis who were geographically

connected to the Red River Métis Nation, and who participated in Anishinaabe spiritually. Seniors in participant's families spoke Aboriginal languages, but most of the participants did not, although most are trying to learn their family's Indigenous language. Most do not practice solely Christianity today, but all are practicing Anishinaabe and sometimes Anishinaabe with Christianity. All but one participant in Fiola's study experienced racism and discrimination. Their experiences ranged from discrimination from other Indigenous peoples to the larger community. Men experienced a high rate of physical violence and the women a high rate of sexual violence. Most experience transformation from addiction, abuse, family deaths, and suicide attempts through their determined and persistent spiritual path.

Further exploration of the Métis identity undertaken by Macdougall (2006) examined the Métis worldview. She names and spells it *wahkootowin,* which refers to family commitments and their high value of relationships as articulated in "all my relations" (2006, p. 2). Her work, as well as others, primarily looks at the relations of "family, place and economic realities [that] were historically interconnected" (Devine, 2014; Macdougall, 2006, p. 433)

A similar sense of the wâhkôhtowin and otipemisiwak worldview can be seen in Anzaldúa's (1987) *Borderlands*. In her examination of the history of Chicanas in the United States, I saw a similarity between Chicana experience to the Métis. Anzaldúa developed what she calls borderlands theory; she describes borderlands as the "threshold" people, and uses the term "nepantleras", that is,

people (including herself) who accommodate to the varying often-conflicting

environments, where they resist exclusive affiliations with any one individual,

society, or theory as a means of protection from numerable social ails. As the

nepantleras explore varying environments, they make constant readjustments to

themselves and their beliefs. Anzaldúa (2002) holds that this respect for

conflicting behaviors involves seeking "the deep common ground and interwoven

kinship among all things and people" (as cited in Keating, 2006, p. 6).

Métis Worldview

      Worldviews or paradigms are formed by concepts and group-orientations

based on "assumptions about human nature, the nature of the physical and

spiritual world, and fundamental beliefs about how humans should relate to each

other". Paradigm can also be understood as "value orientations" (Martin &

Nakayama 2000, p. 30). Consider the pronouns "I" or "we". Historically the

individualist "I" which has been most valued by the Western worldview, while the

collectivist "we" has been most valued by Indigenous peoples (Barnhardt &

Kawagley, 2005; 2000). Western individualistic assumptions are evident in

Abraham Maslow's (1954) positing that the "I" was the supreme need. Maslow's

humanist hierarchy of motivation (that bares a slight resemblance to the Hindu

Chakra system) theorized five stratified needs people are driven to fulfill:

physiological, safety and security, belonging and love, self-esteem and self-

actualization (1954). Self-actualization, I suggest, reflects an individualist

framework. A more collective orientation seems to be reflected in Maslow's

middle need (Hofstede, 1984): the psychological need of human belonging found

in the "love and affection" of meaningful relationships (1954, p. 43) and "having a place, or sense of homeness" (p. 72). These needs according to Maslow are fulfilled only after the basic and physiological needs are met. That said, I acknowledge that Maslow did say, "any person is one and interrelated" (p. xi) and he linked belonging as a key element of self-esteem; thereby showing he acknowledged our interconnectedness. However, unlike the Western view, I believe that the highest need espoused by Indigenous worldviews is "selves" actualization not *self* actualization. Baumeister, Smart, and Boden (1996) and Baumeister, Vohs and Tice (2007) argued that belonging, self-control and will power are the highest needs. The need for belonging is similar to wâhkôhtowin while self-control and will power resemble otipemisiwak and ekichinantak: together these support selves-actualization, not a self-actualization because self and selves are inseparable.

From a Métis perspective, I am suggesting that the "I" and "we" are equal and inseparable values. As noted in the introduction and as outlined below, concepts used by Métis are wâhkôhtowin, otipemisiwak and ekichinantak. The "we" of the Métis frame speaks to "all my relations" as a group orientated "own boss" frame that is driven by a "respectful" frame --which is an Indigenous frame and worldview.

Wâhkôhtowin. Wâhkôhtowin in the Cree language has been translated to mean "relationship" or "relation" (Online Cree Dictionary, n. d.); Macdougall (2010) argues the word signifies a worldview in which all things are related. Its

meaning is broader then the concept of relationship. It is also about emotional connection. She suggests wâhkôhtowin is the moral compass one "personifies" toward family members (p. 8). It encompasses values such as "reciprocity, mutual support, decency and order [which] in turn influenced action, behaviours and decision making processes that influenced all the community's economic and political interactions" (p. 8). Wâhkôhtowin, Macdougall suggests, also covers nature, spirit, the living, and the dead (2010). For the Métis, wâhkôhtowin was shaped by their Aboriginal values of family, the fur trade, and the Roman Catholic Church. Foster (2014) suggests the survival of Indigenous languages among Métis demonstrates the survival of traditional ways (p. 84).

Otipemisiwak. Otipemisiwak comes from the Cree language, and used by Indigenous peoples to describe the Métis (Devine, 2004; Belcourt, 2006). For Devine, Indigenous peoples valued autonomy and freedom, which she translated to mean "the people who own themselves", the people who are "their own boss," and "the people who govern themselves," (p. xvii). Belcourt viewed the term as meaning 'the people who work for themselves" (p. 65). Otipemisiwak is a term used in reference to those of First Nations descent who gave up their treaty rights. Moreover, Bakker (1997) found that otipemisiwak was a word articulated by Payment (1991), a government employee, who wrote *The Free People-Otipemisiwak* for the Canadian government. Bakker asserted that the literal meaning for "*otipéyimisowak"* was "those who command themselves"; he goes on to say that he had never heard this term before and suspected it has been made up as a translation of "freemen" (p. 64).

Another Cree term for Métis is âpihtawikosisân meaning half son (Bakker, 1997), but I prefer the *otipemisiwak* term because that is what I embody, which is similar to Ghostkeeper's (1995) translation. Both his parents spoke Cree and his development was immersed in a Nehiyaw (Cree) environment. He said "[o]wnership (tipeyichiwin) to the Métis is viewed as a gift of collective stewardship" (p. 78). Since everything is connected in the Indigenous world, it makes sense that one cannot have otipemisiwak without wâhkôhtowin. Ghostkeeper (1995) also acknowledges he "was taught to respect the land, plants, and animals because we were created with all the same aspects" (p. 69). Thus, although otipemisiwak refers to being your "own boss", it is not specifically from an individual perspective.

Ekichinantak. Berry and Bennett (1992) conducted an ethnography on a Cree tribe from Northern Ontario who up to the 1950's were nomadic. In other words, their ability to resist Western domination held fast for a long period after colonization, and it gives us a trustworthy look into authentic Cree values. However, scarcity of food to hunt brought about a change within their culture. The research team observed Cree words used to describe competence and like terms. The participants included 32 males and 28 females (mean age=41.3) [who had a mean of 6.97 years of normal schooling" (1992, p. 75). They determined that "*ki-ken-da-so"* means "'understands new things' and 'accumulated knowledge'" and noted that these competencies are most valued in Canadian education. This, however, was not a term highly valued by the Big Trout Lake Cree (p. 79). For them competence was recognized when one thought and

behaved with "*e-ki-chi-nan-tak*" (respectfulness) which had "overtones of personal satisfaction and positive affect" (p. 79). The researchers concluded that for the band, overall competence included social, moral, and relational aspects; they found that "good thinking [which was] taking time; being self-sufficient; and allowing abilities to develop [which involved] …patience with perseverance… [not having] unnecessary dependence on others…and [allowing] instead of forcing knowledge"(p.83) was the best term to describe the cluster of concepts for competence. Other Indigenous scholars point to how respect plays a key role in living the Indigenous way (Archibald 2008; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991 Ghostkeeper, 1995). Cajete says the "Indigenous ideal of living a 'good life'…[is] thinking in the highest, most respectful …way" (1994, p. 46).

I surmise that ekichinantak acts like the glue of wâhkôhtowin and otipemisiwak, and upon critical reflection, I see how it brings forth transformation and a non-colonial dimension. As well, I propose wâhkôhtowin, otipemisiwak and ekichinantak (WOE) are elements of Métis worldview and I use the words wâhkôhtowin, otipemisiwak and ekichinantak as a gesture of respect. Thus, wâhkôhtowin, otipemisiwak and ekichinantak are presented within the hub of the medicine wheel which is described later in the paper.

Methodology

Methodology comprises the rules and practices one adheres to when conducting research as well as the paradigm that frames the questions (Cresswell, 2013; Chillisa, 2012; Fiola, 2015). A more traditional Western approach has been the positivist or postpositivist worldview, which often relies on

the quantitative measuring tools. The newer constructivist worldview, also known as interpretive, relies more on qualitative methods. There are also transformative, pragmatic and the Indigenous worldviews that vary in their use of methods (2013; 2012).

Method

This inquiry has been informed by how I understand autobiographical and autoethnographic approaches to research. Ellis (2008) defines autoethnography and its links to the Greek language in this way: it is a "research process (*graphy*), on culture (*ethnos*) and on self (*auto*)" (p 50). What happens in the process is "[t]he life of the researcher becomes a conscious part of what is studied" (p. 48). This qualitative research method of the social sciences was first developed in anthropology by ethnologists who collected and analyzed the writings of the first ethnographers including colonial explorers and missionaries, who described their observations of the places and cultures they encountered (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Later, at the turn of the nineteenth century, anthropologists began to live with the communities and do their own ethnographies (2007). The work of anthropologists, Edward Said (1978) has argued, is problematic as it was framed by Western colonialist's generalized view of the East as "Other". For colonialists the "Other" have limited capacity. These earlier studies lacked reflexivity and awareness of how the worldview and social location of the researcher created a limited view. Another way to think about worldview and what counts as truth is offered in Clifford and Marcus' (1986, p. 8) observations of a Cree hunter in Canada:

> Ethnographers are more and more like the Cree hunter who (the story goes) came to Montreal to testify in court concerning the fate of his hunting land in the new James Bay hydroelectric scheme. He would describe his way of life. But when administered the oath he hesitated: 'I'm not sure I can tell the truth…I can only tell what I know".

Asking for such an oath demonstrates an imperialist perspective that one can know the truth because there is only one truth. On the other hand, the hunter understands there are varying truths, depending on one's frame and he can only tell his truth from his frame. This Cree hunter is describing his ontology and epistemology. Ontology refers to our understanding of ways of being, and epistemology refers to how we come to know truth. The hunter understands that truth is situated.

Anderson (2006) suggests there are two kinds of autoethnographies: emotional and analytic. He says the *emotional or evocative* is "a heightened self-reflexivity in ethnographic research, an increased focus on emotion in the social sciences, and the postmodern skepticism regarding generalization of knowledge claims" (p. 373) while the *analytic* has five features: "(1) complete member researcher (CMR) status, (2) analytic reflexivity, (3) narrative visibility of the researcher's self, (4) dialogue with informants beyond the self, and (5) commitment to theoretical analysis" (p. 378). Ellis and Bochner (2006) suggest that emotional autoethnography also has those five features: "the only real point of contention is Leon's [Anderson, 2006] commitment to developing theoretical understandings of broader social phenomena" (p. 437). CMR status has been further differentiated by Patricia and Peter Alder (1987) into two approaches: "opportunist and covert" (as cited in Anderson, 2006, p. 379). The *opportunist* is

"thrown into a group by chance (eg. illness) or [has an] acquired intimate familiarity through occupational, recreational or lifestyle participation" (p. 379). Covert status refers to being involved "purely for data research interest [but eventually] become a converted to complete immersion" through the research (p. 379). Tomaselli, Dyll, and Francis (2008) cite Tedlock 's (2000) distinction between the "native" and "[I]ndigenous" ethnographer (p. 351): a native ethnographer is not from Western culture and has experienced oppression from colonialism, while the Indigenous ethnographer is one who researches their own community (2008).

Ellis and Bochner (2000) recommend that an autoethnography begin with one's "personal life" (p. 737); they also noted that it should be embodied. Embodiment is a complex relationship between emotions, senses, the body, and society. It is not a Cartesian experience of duality, but an interconnected experience that shapes us as individuals and as culture (DeLamater & Ward, 2013). From an Indigenous perspective, embodiment is part of the four aspects of life: spiritual, emotional, physical, and mental as well as an orientation to all our relations. From an Indigenous perspective, these elements should all be working together simultaneously; we must strive to keep these elements in balance (Battiste,2011; Bopp, Bopp, Brown & Lane, 1984; Dapice, 2006).

Ellis and Bochner (2000) also suggest one should use what they call "systematic sociological introspection and emotional recall to try to understand an experience [one has] lived through" and then write their "experience as a story" (p. 737). I found that freewriting has helped me with recall; this together with

reflection helped me understand what the freewriting revealed (Elbow,1998; Pennebaker,1997a; 1997b) Goldberg, 1986; Cameron, 1992; Lepore & Smyth, 2002). Freewriting involves writing quickly, without stopping, without concern for grammar, punctuation, spelling, and whether it makes sense. The key is to get one's inhibition out of the way. It is a way that allows the unconscious to speak and this is a healing process (Pennebaker,1997a;1997b; Lepore & Smyth, 2002). After the revelation, one can do the "key task" of "identify the something" (Tomaselli et al 2008, p. 6), which involves returning to the freewriting and identifying themes. The themes become the 'something' for the expressive writing. From this, I see an iterative process between freewriting and formal writing that facilitates deep reflection into one's soul alongside academic writing. It maintains four sequential elements that are iterated: freewrite, identify theme, expressive write, and edit.

Autobiography. Autobiography shares similarities with expressive writing (Pennebaker,1997a) and narrative inquiry (Bruner, 1991;2004; Hermans, Kempen, & Van Loon, 1992). Expressive writing is also found in Freud's (1987) approach to psychoanalysis, but instead of talking, one writes repeatedly about stressful experiences; it is emotive writing without inhibition, while the narrative is more structured and organized and involves self-development through construction and dialogue (Hermans et al, 1992). Pennebaker (1997b) pointed out the more often positive emotion words were used the more improvement of health. Story telling practice is evident within Indigenous culture (Archibald, 2008; Marker, 2015; Whitinui, 2014).

Stories are central to the Cree as outlined by Muehlbauer (as cited in Van

Essen, 2014 p. 47) in a lecture on August 6 in 2010:

> Often in Cree stories and speeches experiential knowledge is crucial. Speakers use their own experience to explain how they know what they know; this is sometimes established through chains of information: they will identify influential teachers, parents, Elders, and storytellers.

Accordingly, the method I will be using to answer my questions will

incorporate autoethnography and autobiographical elements. Moreover, I will be

employing an Indigenous methodology.

Indigenous Methodology

There are many forms of methodology as mentioned earlier, but the

methodology for this inquiry will be Indigenous. For the Indigenous person the

elements of a paradigm are all one and cannot be separated unlike a Cartesian

approach (Wilson, 2008).

Indigenous methodology and epistemology are a decolonizing method of

research that involves giving space and voice to the "Other" who has historically

been oppressed or marginalized (Chilisa, 2012). This perspective recognizes

knowledge as a cooperative relationship with the cosmos, animals, and plants,

which cannot be owned, because knowledge is a shared in collaboration with all

my relations (Apfell-Marglin,1998; Wilson, 2001). The entire worldview of the

Plains tribes rested on the interconnectedness of the elements as illustrated in

the medicine wheel (see figure 1).

North

Métis Accord
(2017)

NWR (1885)

Critical Reflection

Daniels
v. SCC
(2016)

RRR
(1870)

Ekichinantak   Wâhkôhtowin

MFW
(1770)

Const.
Act
(1982)

West   East

Otipemisiwak

B7O (1816)

Powley v. SCC
(2003)

South
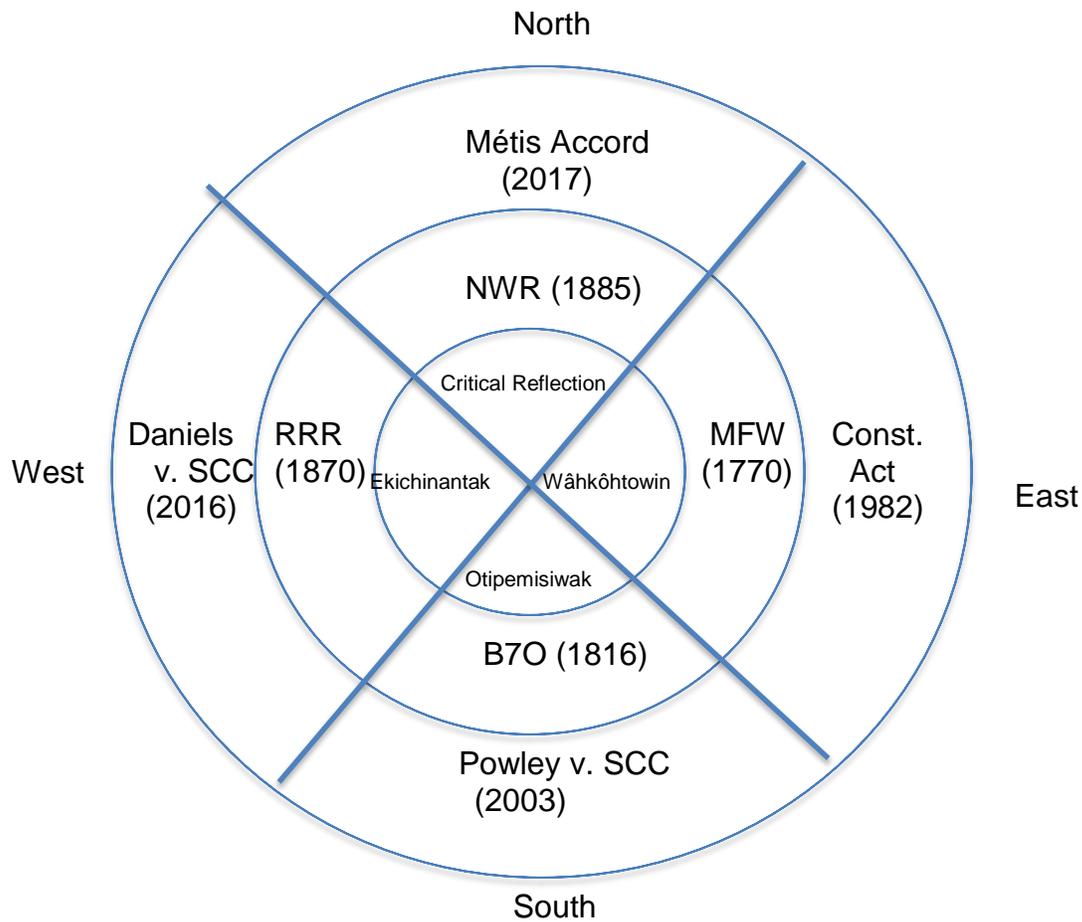
Figure 1. Métis History and Worldview Medicine Wheel. Hub represents the Métis worldview; next circle represents Métis birth and near death; in the last circle is rebirth because of wâhkôhtowin, otipemisiwak, and ekichinantak. Montreal Fur trader Wintering (MFW); Battle of Severn Oaks (B7O); Red River Resistance (RRR); North West Rebellion (NWR); Supreme Court of Canada (SCC); Constitution (Const.).

One representation of the medicine wheel was a formation of stones on the ground for ceremony, which resembled the likeness of a wheel with spokes and a hub. It was connected with the tipi, ceremonies, constellations, and artwork (Bryan, 2010). Erecting a tipi with artwork that illustrated constellations at the top and earth beings on the bottom was like a ceremony. Moreover, each pole of the tipi represented the spokes of the ancient medicine wheel ceremony and specific

stars, and the spokes of the ceremony wheel aligned with certain stars and

constellations (Bryan 2010; Gould & Rock 2016).

Another aspect of the medicine wheel is how it addresses the learning,

wellbeing, and therapy of the whole Indigenous person (Dapice, 2006; Graham &

Martin, 2016; Gray & Rose, 2012; Verwood, Mitchell & Machada, 2011). This

representation of the medicine wheel includes the hub, and the four directions

that provides a map to restore an individual's spiritual balance (Nabigon &

Mawhiney,1996). The balanced cycle begins with the spirit in the east understood

as the spring season of the person (one's birth), then emotion in the south is the

summer season of the person (one's childhood), then the physical in the west as

the fall season of the person (one's adulthood), and ends with the cognitive in the

north in the winter season of the person (one's senior years) (Bopp et al 1984).

Wilson (2008) warns against the medicine wheel being used as dogma. In other

words having the four quadrants, beginning in the East an ending in the South is

fine, but not this is not the only way because in an Indigenous worldview

everything is entwined. For example, Battiste (2011) likens the Indigenous

philosophy of wholeness to a flower with four petals:

> [I]f a person is whole and balanced, then he or she is in a position to fulfill his or her individual responsibilities to the whole. If a person is not balanced, then he or she is -sick and weak- physically mentally or both- and cannot fulfill his or her responsibilities (p. 79).

The medicine wheel also contains concentric rings (Cajete,1994) that

resemble the tree rings of time and the "process of relationships" (p. 29) .This

image shows the medicine wheel in quadrants and concentric circles; the Métis

worldview is in the hub, followed by the 18th and 19th century of Métis history in the next concentric ring, and after the "sleep" the 20th century of the Métis political history in the last concentric ring. The Métis are now entering a new concentric ring in the/our story.

Critical for Indigenous education is intuitiveness about one's spirituality. The Indigenous of Turtle Island (the name the Indigenous peoples had for North America before colonization) believed the breath was the most concrete manifestation of the spirit in all of nature (Cajete, 1994). Cajete points out that from breath comes language, and the mother tongue plays the critical role as a manifestation of spirit, because it "contains the power to move people and express human thought and feeling" (1994, p. 42). Wilson (2001) maintains that an Indigenous paradigm involves "relational accountability" to "'all my relations" (p.177), which means the questions one asks are about "fulfilling [one's] role in this relationship" (p. 177). Thus, when conducting Indigenous methodology one must remember Indigenous education is fundamentally ecological, relational and guided by the spirit (Archibald, 2008; Battiste, 2002; Bopp et al; Cajete,1994; Chilisa, 2012; Deloria, 2003; Kawagley, 2006).

Archibald (2008) brings an Indigenous perspective to her description of storywork, which she indicates involves seven principles: "respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness and synergy" (p. ix). She adds that when these principles are used, stories "become the teacher" (p. ix). Moreover, she goes on to say that interrelatedness applies to the story and listener, and between the text and reader. This alludes to "all my relations" by

suggesting the personification of the text. These principles resonate with me because my ancestors seemed to be quite careful in how they spoke. Their words often felt kind and sagacious. Respectfulness and reverence towards the audiences particularly in writing sounds like a good way to develop meaningful writing.

These principles are important when telling stories for educational purposes. Archibald demonstrates Smith (2008) process of "'turning the gaze'", that is, the gaze is turned "back onto the dominant settler society, reflecting the momentum of political, educational, and economic change that already has occurred in many [I]ndigenous communities" (p.127). In other words, Indigenous researchers who have a grasp on Indigeneity are critically looking at the academy instead of the academy examining at the Indigenous, and the Indigenous scholars are benefiting marginalized communities.

Ways of Seeing

In what follows, I touch on several key concepts that have guided me in my autobiographical inquiry into my Métis heritage including power, survivance, self-determination, and transformation.

Power

A key concern of this writing method of coming to understand my Métis heritage is power. From a Western perspective, Bourdieu (1989) theorized that one's power is based on the quantity and structure of available capital including social, cultural, economic, and symbolic capital. Thus, my power when I write this is based on my quantity and structure of available capital. My capital, from a

class perspective, has been powerfully influenced historically by colonization.

Peterson and Brown (1985) note that in "travel literature, social inferiority and

degeneracy" were used to describe the Métis (p. 39). My/our capital is also

impacted by our experience as survivors of "intergenerational" trauma (Atleo,

2016, p. 36). I am a graduate student at UBC, and this raised my capital and my

responsibility.

Survivance

Dorian (2010), Visenor (2000), Powel (2002) and the Truth and

Reconciliation Commission (2015) discuss "survivance, a term used in the

Indigenous community to express survival in the face of genocidal forces" (as

cited by Atleo, 2016, p. 37). Although the purpose of this paper is to illustrate my

experience as one shaped by oppression, from an Indigenous perspective it is

important to remember that "survivance" is also operating in my connection to "all

our relations".

As Regan (2010) points out, the reality of our survivance is not to be taken

lightly. The trauma for the Indigenous began with the fatalities brought on by

disease, starvation (Fromhold, 2011; Waldram, Herring & Young, 2006) that

greatly reduced Indigenous populations. Moreover, these fatalities were

compounded by diaspora and racism (Devine 2001; Fiola 2015; Macdougall,

2016; St-Onge 2004) as well as the loss of the infrastructure and cultural

practices (Moss & Gardner-O'Toole 1991; Fiola, 2015), which all contributed to a

low socio-economic status and its repercussions (Bourdieu & Nice, 1977; Devine

2004; Dapice, 2006). The telling and piecing together of Indigenous stories of the

survivors provide the material for our future generations to rebuild our Nations and self-determination.

Self-determination

    I see a micro and macro perspective on self-determination. The micro (educational stance as self-determination theory) has yet to be articulated from an Indigenous perspective while the macro (the political stance Indigenous self determination) has been described from an Indigenous perspective. I seek to show it from a nepantleral's perspective.

    Self-determination Theory. SDT is an element of Self Directed Theory (S-DT) (a prominent theory applied in adult education). As noted, I suggest this is a micro perspective. Because the SDT elements of *competence, autonomy,* and *relatedness* finely articulate adult education and I noticed it reasonably resembles wâhkôhtowin, otipemisiwak the nepantlera in me was driven to examine it further. Wâhkôhtowin, and optepmisiwak are well-established Métis foundations, but I thought STD's competence was a Western perspective of competence, so I searched out an Indigenous view of competence and found ekichinantak. Hence I found SDT more contained by a limited view of relationships, notions of individual autonomy and its articulation of competence compared to wâhkôhtowin, otipemisiwak, and ekichinantak.

    Deci and Ryan (1985; 2000; 2006; 2008), Deci, Vanderand, Pettetier and Ryan (1991), Gage and Deci (2005), Marsden, Ma, Deci, Ryan and Chiu (2015), Ryan (1991), Ryan and Deci (2000; 2008a; 2008b), and Ryan, Huta and Deci (2006) delve deeper into Maslow's psychological hierarchy of needs by

suggesting human beings are wired for *competence, autonomy*, and *relatedness*.

They go on to say that when these three needs are met the result is instinctive

generative behavior and well-being, but when not met, things degenerate and

there is a lack of well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). There are those who lack any

kind of agency or motivation and are caught in a cycle of apathy; SDT research

suggests the social environment can both promote or demote one's agency.

Competence is how we "attain internal and external outcomes" and

efficacy in our performance (Deci et al,1991, p. 327). It is best attained through

intrinsic motivation that is nurtured by challenge and positive internal and external

feedback. Essentially, competence is one's capacity to learn that develops by the

feeling of efficacy (Deci & Ryan, 1985). *Relatedness* is associated with

attachment between people, which is our support within our communities, and

our experience of well-being arising from the connection (Ryan 1991). We

become whole by connecting with others. Relatedness is the core for

internalizing social learning and the foundation for our competence. As important

as relatedness is to SDT, it must be balanced with our attempts for autonomy,

and this is a fine balance. *Autonomy* is self-governing versus self-reliant and

because some see autonomy as self-reliant it is often associated with

independence and detachment, but relatedness includes attachment,

dependence and interdependence (Ryan, 1991). The imperialist, egotist, or those

oriented to subordinating others find difficulty with the concept of dependence;

they see it lower on the hierarchy. Dependence is viewed as being under

someone else's control but our competence originates from the social

environment. Detachment is not autonomy or relatedness, but individuation. This is the preferred term used by Ryan (1991), and he describes the process of development and what one does "*with*" familiar relationships not "*from*" the relationships (p. 223). Thus, dependence and interdependence (care giving and nurturing) such as accepting food, shelter, and clothing do not have to indicate loss of autonomy because these things can be given freely and do not threaten self determination. It is when control, threat, and oppression are operating; autonomy is stunted (Ryan, 1991; Noddings 1984).

SDT is useful for adult education because it is more applicable to working with older children and adolescents. It speaks to the importance of meeting the psychological needs of relatedness, competence and autonomy, through a warm supportive relationship with the educator (Wentzel, 2009). Noddings (1988) describes the caring encounter as embracing *engrossment* (nonselective attention or total presence to the other for the duration of the caring interval) and *displacement of motivation* (motive energy flows in the direction of the other's needs and projects). Bergin and Bergin (2009) elaborate on challenges and benefits of caring teacher-student relationships with older students. They say it is more challenging to develop secure teacher-student relationships in secondary schools; however, they cite several studies that point out the benefits of attachment and trusting relationships between older students and an educator in relation to motivation, class behavior, higher grades, attentiveness, engagement and risky behavior outside the classroom.

High competence in caring within the adult classroom comes from an

unlikely environment. A study with almost 100 undergraduates found compassion and empathy for others is higher in those from low socioeconomic and subordinate social ranks (Stellar, Manzo, Kraus, & Keltner, 2012). Also, proximity and support of those less fortunate develops one's prosocial behavior (Christoph Gniewosz & Reinders, 2014; Goetz, Keltner & Simon-Thomas, 2010; Reinders & Youniss, 2006; Youniss & Yates, 1999) and empathy is contagious (Shaltout, Tooze, Rosenberger & Kemper, 2012; Nummenmaa, Hirvonen, Parkkola & Hietanen, 2008).

SDT rests its emphasis on the function of mindfulness as the key element for autonomous regulation of behaviour (Ryan et al 2006). I believe that mindfulness is also part of an Indigenous perspective (Archibald, 2008; Battise, 2002; Berry & Bennett, 1992; Bopp et al 1984; Cajete,1994; Chilisa, 2011; Deloria, 2003; Kawagley & Barnhardt, 1998) requiring self control (Baumeister et al, 2007).

Indigenous self-determination. Deloria (1998) traces the Indigenous approach to self-determination to Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points address in 1918 following WWI, in which he outlined forms of self-determination for sovereign states. Today, self-determination is what gives a people a right to be a state as outlined in Articles 1(2) and of 55 of the UN Charter. Moreover "[it] is generally accepted that peoples subjected to colonial rule have a right to elect independence under international law" (Crawford, 2012, p. 141). Crawford sees this as the basis for Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty, which involves being assigned a name-state. To be given the name state, four

suggested criteria are needed to meet this identification: "(a) a permanent population; (b) defined territory; (c) government; and (d) capacity to enter into relations with other States" (2012, p.128)

Deloria points out that Indigenous self-determination has been active in the US since the mid 60's in efforts to build tribal self-governance, but it has not been clearly defined by most tribes (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001), but in Canada the Métis began efforts in 1816.

Deloria and Wildcat (2001) note that a common understanding of self-determination is "when one freely chooses to act or think a certain way" (p.136); they remind us that Dewey had pointed out in *Human Nature and Conflict* that with choice comes morality. Deloria prefers to see self-determination as "our cultural or social behavior as instinctive, albeit in a non-reductionist manner" and that we "do not have a choice about choice" (p. 137) we have to choose. For Deloria, Western approaches are problematic: "humankind's natural self-proclaimed moral autonomy from nature is dependent on reductionism that is at its core mechanical, naively empirical, and teleologically closed--precluding the impositivity of change" (p. 137), but Deloria and Wildcat say self-determination from an Indigenous perspective is for the good of all our relations**.**

Deloria (1998) goes on to say that "*[i]ntellectual sovereignty* and *individual self-determination* are scary concepts because they mean that a whole generation of Indians are not going to be responsible to the Indian people" (p. 28). He based this on his observation of Native Americans who by studying at

Harvard were powerfully influenced by Western ideas of economics, instead of supporting their tribal concepts of economics. This raises a concern for all Indigenous peoples who are educated in Western universities, which condition Indigenous peoples to assimilate with the academy's worldview, which is predominantly a self-centered self-determination.

Within educational environments, self-determination is critical, but there can be a problem if it does not consider the Indigenous worldview, which has the potential to support or freedom and responsibility to "combine majors, putting together unlikely fields" in higher education (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001, p. 131). Butterwick and Sparks (2004) suggest a direction to overcome self-centered self-determinism is through "equitable learning" (p. 288) whereby the educator needs to be aware of their Eurocentric bias they bring to the classroom.

Métis self-determination. Métis historically served as mediators between Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures during the fur trade (Foster, 1994; Giraud,1986; Richardson, 2002). They served as a bridge across differences in language and culture. This important role however has been forgotten and misunderstood to the point that they have been made invisible through the zeitgeist of the settlers toward Indigenous peoples who at that time considered them savages (2002).

In the Canadian North West "extinguishment of the Indian title was a prelude of the railroad construction, immigration and settlement" as well as the slowing of the fur trade and loss of food (Blue, 1924, p. 211). Following Riel's first rebellion in the 1870's, many disheartened "half-breeds" began to move west. (p.

211). In 1881 the population of North West Territories was "6,000 whites and 50,000 natives (Indians and half-bloods)", then the total population escalated to "588,454 in 1921" (p. 217). The statistics do not mention how many European or Indigenous make up the almost 600,000, but "315,090" were born in Canada (p. 217). This surge of settlers into the bison hunting community, who were my ancestors, must have been staggering for them; it was still a fresh reality when my mother and her cousins were born.

A century after the Red River uprisings, two self-identified Métis were charged with hunting unlawfully (Niemi-Bohun, 2009). The judgment in that 2003 *R. v. Powley* case provided the Powley's the legal Aboriginal right to hunt according to the 1982 Constitution Act. This effort of self-determination opened the floodgates for Métis efforts of self-governance. Subsequently, it was announced on April 14, 2016, that the Métis have treaty rights under Canada's 1867 Constitution. I imagined how my ancestors would have felt if they had not lost their hunting rights and how much more connected they would have been to our First Nation cousins and thus more whole. It has taken more than 200 years for the Métis to be recognized by the colonizers.

Self-determination (otipemisiwak) can and has been a process through which the Métis, who almost completely disappeared, have found their voice and have a presence. Understanding of the Métis has been undermined by certain uses of the term. For example, John Ralston Saul (2008) described "Canada [as] a 'métis' civilization'" (as cited in Anderson, 2014, p. 5), thus dismissing the oppression of the Métis and loss of homeland and relations; he created confusion

between the capitalized and non-capitalized use of Métis/métis when he used

non-capitalized version (2014).

A political perspective uses the upper case 'M' position (Anderson, 2014;

Devine, 2004). The lower case métis is a broad term whereas the upper case

position is important for Constitution and nation purposes. According to the R. v.

Powley decision:

> The term 'Métis' does not encompass all individuals with mixed Indian and European heritage; rather, it refers to distinctive peoples who in addition to their mixed ancestry developed their own customs …separate from their Indian or Inuit or European forebears…'[w]hat distinguishes Métis people from everyone else is that they associate themselves with a culture that is distinctly Métis' (SCC, para. 10).

Andersen dismisses the raciality of this decision and holds that Métis in the

upper case is about "history, events, leaders, territories, language and culture"

(2014, p. 24), which includes "kinship and nationhood" (p. 18) and is associated

with Métis 'buffalo hunting' and trading (p. 22). Nicks & Morgan (1985) call this

"Red River myopia" (p. 173). I think Andersen understands this to necessary for

us Métis be given our place and state status (that acts at a macro perspective as

Indigenous self determination and micro perspective as Indigenous SDT)

according to the four criteria Crawford (2012) outlines.

Place and Space

Macdougall (2016) and Ingold (2009) explore the concept of place and

space. Macdougall explains the theory of place and space as a way to examine

relations between people and territory. Place can be viewed as providing an

objective and concrete lens through which place is recognized by borders and

archival records. Space on the other hand, offers a subjective and abstract lens

which is more difficult to recognize because there are no borders; space is understood to be "social relationships and embodied in political, economical, spiritual, or cultural spaces" as well as the movement between places (2016, p. 66;). The former is static and a Western frame while the latter is dynamic. Macdougall (2016) argues that if the elements of space are included in the understanding of place we will have a more holistic view of human geography as well as a better way to examine Indigenous histories, epistemologies and effects of colonialism such as the diaspora founded on socioeconomic and political pressure.

Ingold (2009) compares Indigenous and Western understandings of space. Westerners travel through space, on the surface, while the Indigenous peoples inhabit place. This view is echoed by Wildcat when he posits that the Indigenous way of being holds that "power permeates the many persons of the earth in places recognized as sacred not by human proclamation or declaration but by experience in those places" (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001, p. 1).

For example, from a Western perspective, Locke (1690) considered self-personal identity, as entirely about consciousness, and memory, and that it has nothing to do with place. For Locke, self and place were equivalent to Descartes' differentiation between mind and matter (Casey, 2001). Postmodernism tells us that certain habitual patterns of relating to places have become weakened to the point of disappearing (Casey, 2001). From an Indigenous perspective, Casey holds that self and place are interchangeable.

Bourdieu and Nice (1977) described the between space of nature versus culture, consciousness versus body, and self versus other, while Casey argues for a middle term, -"thirdspace". For Casey, the between place of the self and lived place and geographical self is the "mediatrix" (2001, p. 687). He says the body is shaped by relationship with places; the "incoming" as" tenacity" is how we are "marked by" place and "subjection" is an "expression" of place (p. 688)**.** Tenacity is the feelings a place gives us that never leaves us and subjection is the expression of the feeling that we take with us. The incoming is the places we bring with us that have shaped us. For me, I bring a wâhkôhtowin, otipemisiwak, and ekichinantak of my ancestry that formed from Man'tow Sakahikan (Lac St. Anne), which is Cree for "Lake of the Spirit" (Anderson-McLean, 1999, p. 26). I am transformed by both ingoing and outgoing. He says "we are forever marked by that place, which lingers in us indefinitely and in a thousand ways, many too subtle for us to name" and the place is in us, and is us (Casey, 2001, p. 688).

As noted, both Casey (2001) and Ingold (2009) suggest place and self are one. Casey, in his "incoming", "outgoing", "tenacity" and "subjection" explanation, argues that we are in place and place is in us, but Ingold does not generalize like Casey does. Ingold suggests the wayfarer (nomad) has a deeper relationship with place than the scientist, and although the scientist does have a relationship with place, it is not as intimate as the wayfarer.

> Like the wayfarer, the
>
> Métis, and perhaps even the Saulteaux [the Ojibwe or Chippewa from Sault Ste. Marie] once they had endured their relocation westward, had a sense of human geography and a mental map of their world

> encompassing areas and population so vast that they boggle modern day thinking" (St-Onge Onge, 2006, p. 10).

More than that, Ahenakew (2017) says colonization interfered with

> Indigenous peoples' ancestral relationships and ongoing responsibilities to land…by diminishing Indigenous knowledges and the kinship relationship that are largely rooted in, on, and through the land [and] modern schooling continues to narrow possibilities of existence based on the commodification on the land (p. 82).

To me this resembles a death, but a boiled frog death through colonization changing us by subconscious desensitization of our intimate relationship with place. Possible resurrection for this relationship, I think, is awareness of this loss followed by mindful deep grief that must be experienced for healing from the layers of callouses brought on by colonization for transformation.

Transformation

Mezirow's (1981) notion of transformative learning describes a process of re-evaluating presuppositions by awareness through critical reflection. The process involves addressing our " habitual expectations" that are found in two dimensions of making meaning (Mezirow, 1990, p. 1). The first one is "meaning schemes", where we consider such ideas as "'if-then', 'cause and effect'", and implicit rules (p.1). The second dimension is "meaning perspectives", which are our bias, evaluations, and beliefs that are formed in hierarchal dyads (p. 1). Meaning perspectives are not theories such as behaviourism, Marxism and positivism that we intentionally learned, but meaning perspectives are acquired through cultural assimilation where we learn such things as stereotyping and desensitization. Habits of expectation are our "personal

constructs...metaphors...ideologies...and development stages" (1990, p. 1) we reveal through communicative learning that is understanding based, versus instrumental learning that is performance based. Critical reflection challenges the "validity of *presuppositions* in prior learning" (1990, p. 7) and it can challenge the core values of our "self-concept" (1990, p. 8).

An example is personifying the inanimate. In a high-level university class, I was struggling with my computer and the professor revealed that possibly the computer knows that I am not at peace with it. He said the Indigenous people believed that the inanimate were "all our relations" (and thus were treated respectfully). This is echoed by Little Bear (2007): "[m]ovement and flux of energy waves, in turn, generates a perception that all is alive and animate" (p. 9) and Apffell-Marglin (1998) relates that "Andean peasants converse with the stars, the moon, the plants, the rocks etc." (p. 26). The idea that the computer knows that I am not at peace with it shocked me. It was a "disorienting dilemma" (Mezirow,1981, p. 7) because my bias was "anthropocentric" (1998, p. 27) and I learned this presupposition through the hierarchical dyads with educators and older family members throughout my life. Moreover, not only was this idea out on a limb for me it also, reached way, way, way out there beyond the limb. It was so untraditional to Western and colonial thought, opposed to the secular and Judeo Christian teachings, and dissimilar to mainstream scholarly thinking. Yet, this is where this crazy idea was presented - a graduate class at a renowned secular Western university. The Great Oz was giving me permission to reach beyond its borders. My self-concept of my human identity changed. Resensitization to

wâhkôhtowin, otipemisiwak, and, ekichinantak to my computer changed me. It is transforming me by making me more holistically aware to my thoughts and actions to everyone and everything.

Evolution and Judeo beginning theories both agree *in the beginning light was brought into the darkness and it took shape: one was by a big bang; the other was by words.* That is what awareness is to me: light into darkness. The computer and I are shaped differently and we share value. When I use the computer, it is able to act on me. Before this, I never considered things wanted self-governing, familial relations, or respect. But why was it with me, and not others that the technology resisted? I moved to several different computers and received help from several different students who thought it was my error, but were mystified that they too could not get it to work when I was the possessor. Was it because it knew I was inferior? As the literature demonstrated, Métis were considered inferior. Was it because I was open? How many others would accept this idea of a computer's humanness? Does it want me to speak for it? I can take away its power or I can give it power. I have unconsciously allowed it power and that is how it was able to speak.

The critical approach is needed in autobiographical writing for transformation. But Brookfield (1995) points out the autobiographical part is just one lens. We need to consider the lens of stakeholders, and the literature as well. Also, it is a continuous iterative process of zooming in and out on our "habits of expectation" (Mezirow, 1990).

In the next section, I consider some autobiographical accounts written by northern Alberta Métis and then offer some of my own stories that have unearthed through this autobiographical writing

The Stories

North West Métis Stories

There is a small body of autobiographical literature authored by Métis reflecting on their relationships with place in Northern Alberta and Northern Saskatchewan: Belcourt (2006), Belcourt-Callihoo (2006); Campbell's (1973); Campbell et al (n.d), and Strasbourg (1998).

I would like to note that Belcourt-Callihoo (2006) and Strasbourg (1998) were not academics, but scholars of Alberta Universities acknowledged their writings. Also, Campbell (1973) was not an academic at the release of her critically acclaimed book, but she eventually completed a Master of Arts and received an honorary doctorate. Lastly, Campbell et al (n.d.) was a collection of stories told by Métis elders Boucher, Faichney, LaCorde and Powder that was overseen by researchers Campbell and Evans.

These biographies are all collections of stories connecting the past to the present. They all recognize that their people are the Métis, neither European nor First Nations, rather the marriage and offspring of the two former. The authors discussed their genealogies. Belcourt outlines his Métis genealogy going back five generations to Jacques L'Hirondelle (1759/1760) and Josephte Pilon (1783) who happen to be the great, great grandparents of my great grandparents, whom I called Kôhkom (Cree for *your* grandmother) and Môsom (Cree for grandfather).

Additionally, Campbell's (1973) grandmother whom she called Cheechum was the niece of Gabriel Dumont.

The discussions are written by authors at least a generation before my time as evidenced by their memories. For example, in Belcourt-Callihoo (2006) who shared Kôhkom and Môsom's stage in life and social group, remembers the buffalo hunt and when money as currency was introduced in her chapters "Early Life in Lac St Anne in the 1870's" and "Our Buffalo Hunts". Strasbourg (1998) who was raised in a convent because of her parents' early death remembers her Métis grandfather saying "no one fences me in…the government won't control my life" and recalls "loosing homestead to taxes" (p. 7). She says they lost their home because they were "unable to write let alone understand rights" (p. 8). Boucher (n.d) remembers "no hospital until 1938" (p. 48) and (Lacorde, n. d.) remembers "[n]o cars that time, lots of horses, boy" (p 10).These memories suggest Campbell et al (n.d.) and Strasbourg were closer to my grandmother's age. However, Belcourt (2006) who says "1958…I resolved to act on the advice of my father…I would work for myself" (p. 83) and Campbell (1973) who says she was born "1940" (p. 16) were closer to my mother's age. I was raised by these three generations. In other words, my story continues their stories.

The author's stories tell of the developing stages of the Métis inferiority complex and of dominated experiences, of living on the margins of two opposing worlds. They all share a story of trapping, living in the bush and on the homestead without sewer, electricity, telephone, and running water and they tell of rare teepee experiences, but Belcort-Callihoo (2006) is the only one who

recalls the buffalo hunt. Strasbourg, Campbell et al, and Campbell discuss the

trap line the most, whereas Belcourt speaks of the in-between of the trap line and

trade with the North West Territories and later with the Hudson Bay Company.

In Campbell et al (n.d.), the Métis responded to pictures chosen by the

editors while the other autobiographies were more autonomous. For example, in

Campbell et al the photos triggered memories of health, labor, environment, and

relationships. Campbell (1973) gives an intimate look into her "road allowance"

Métis family, her abusive marriage, her escape from drug and alcohol abuse, and

her role in social change for Métis. The others share similar accounts.

These Métis describe wâhkôhtowin when they recognize we are all

(including nature) in this together and we are more alike in that way than we are

different. As for relationships, all authors mention an orientation of inclusiveness

toward Europeans, First Nations, Métis and the environment. There is also

disesteem, but it is toward behaviour not race. For example, Powder says "What

is the difference between Métis and others? Different name….We're all the

same…[t]here is only different living" (Campbell et al, n.d., p. 44). For Faichney,

peoples' disregard of nature has led to his ache: "[t]he trees and everything

they're alive. And that whiteman doesn't realize…[h]ow do we know, maybe

they're suffering … Its not only trees that suffer. It's us too" (n.d., p. 41).

Strasbourg speaks negatively about her Indigenous husband because of his

abusive treatment towards her. Although the authors had different stories, they all

talk of house dances, the jig, and the fiddle that I too have fond memories of at

Kôhkom and Môsom's home. Spiritually, their stories triggered several religious

memories of the Catholic Church instead of First Nations ceremonies.

Linguistically, Belcourt (2006), Faichney (n.d), and Campbell (1973) say their

parents spoke Cree at home, although Belcourt mentions it was a Michif, which

he described as a "mulligan stew" (p. 41) of French, English, and Cree.

Belcourt (2006) mentions the "Cree word for the Métis people is

otipemisiwak- roughly meaning-'the people who work for themselves" (p. 65). His

experience with otipemisiwak was "[o]ur mother did not teach us things. We

taught ourselves by watching" (p. 73). Also**,** Strasbourg (1998) and Campbell

(1973) discuss being taught the otipemisiwak way, but do not use that word, but

language like self- responsibility and "never wanted anything except to be left

alone to live as we please" (1973, p. 11). Following Campbell's (1973) father's

disappointing political Métis meeting that brought Campbell to tears, her

grandmother, Cheechum, makes a prophetic announcement, similar to Riel's,

that the Métis would one day would be politically self-governing: " '[i]t will come,

my girl, someday it will come'" (p. 75). Lastly, Belcourt (2006) tells stories of

escape from the educational and other government authorities, which I have

been told too. The group orientation of the Métis of Man'tow Sâkahikan was to

"holler, one person to the next person in Cree" to warn each other the

government was coming (p. 58).

Scholastically, the Métis did not fare well in school (except for Strasbourg

(1998) who suggested her experience was pleasant). In Campbell et al (n.d.)

they all indicate they had little educational experience, in Campbell (1973) she

states she experienced shame from her peers in school, and in Belcourt (2006)

he says "kids called us half-breeds at school, and that made me feel dirty" (p.55).

Their narratives of ekichinantak ties in with their wâhkôtowin and otipemisiwak descriptions; they recognize that respectful relationships depended on a person not treating people or the land with violent words or deeds, and their recollections of their value of inclusion and recognition of our sameness with each other and nature.

However, it is Belcourt-Callihoo's (2006) story that most depicts the wâhkôhtowin, otipemisiwak, and, ekichinantak. The elements of wâhkôhtowin were presented by the buffalo hunts with the families of St Albert and Man'tow Sâkahikan, which were "Métis of French extraction like us, good fellowship" (p. 200). Otipemisiwak was not an individual sense of self-government. It was a group sense of self-government for she says "[t]here were no police-no law" …"we always had a leader in our caravan and his orders were respected" (p. 201) indicating they governed their own people. Also, ekichinantak was expressed in "[n]othing would be wasted…[c]alves were not killed" (p. 202).

In summation, what was repeated in these stories were themes of inclusion, respect for nature, autonomy, and bringing together. They provided respectful memories of their ancestors they had known, and there was recognition of the similarities we share in suffering with all living things as well as respect towards all living things.

My Stories

Heritage. I am focusing on my Indigenous heritage of place from Turtle Island, since it is the one in greatest need of "relief from intergenerational tension

of chaos and despair" (Atleo, 2016, p. 36). My Métis heritage began on the East coast through miscegenation between John Frobisher who was born in 1740 and partnered with a Cree woman; Joseph Desjarlais Jr who was born near 1754 and partnered with Okimaskwew (Ojibwa), Joseph Boucher who was born in near the 1750's and partnered with a Chippewa (Saulteaux) woman, and Jean Dupuis who was born 1756 and partnered with Marie an Assiniboine woman (Devine, 2004; Personal Communication Darrel McKellar, 1991). McKeller found birth dates, and first and last names of all these European men of our Métis beginnings, but for our Indigenous grandmothers only Okimaskwew and Marie's names', and their tribes' were found while the other grandmothers are only known by their tribe. However, for their Métis offspring the women's names and dates appear. Most of my ancestors, were pushed West by settlers and they eventually settled in Man'tow Sâkahikan following the Red River and North West conflicts. My grandmother's children and some of their cousins moved to the South West Coast of British Columbia. We are now settled in the Vancouver area. My nationality is 50% Welsh and 50% Métis, or 100% Métis depending on one's method of identification.

Who I am though, is an Indigenous woman who follows Christ Jesus and is working towards the redevelopment of a wâhkôhtowin, otipemisiwak, and ekichinantak worldview as well as transformation through a critically reflective worldview (see Figure 1). Also, I am one who is in a constant state of resisting colonialism since that is the family environment within which I was raised.

Kôhkum and Môsom in their earlier years were likely exposed to some of the events that were transpiring such as the dispersing of the Métis by scrip and settler invasion. "In 1880...Inspector of Indian Agencies ...transferred eighty-four members of purported "mixed descent" directly out of Papaschase (sic) Band (#136)" …in response to pressure to remove Papaschase Band from the Edmonton area" (Adese, 2011, p. 208). Many members of my family tree had family connections to this racist event. Following this was the NWR to which family members participated. Also, close to that time the Métis were "forced" (Adese, 2011, p.203) to sign treaty #6 June 12, 1885 in Alberta, which all "Treaty Indian" rights were given up and they became "Half-breed"(p. 203)[2]. They received scrip for this, which could be cashed in to the government for $193.00 (2011). My great grandfather would have been a child at the time. Mary Siggens called it "the biggest land grab in the nation's history" (as cited in Adese, 2011, p. 205). This is because many non-Aboriginals bought the scrip from the Métis for very little money or a bottle of alcohol. Belcourt-Calihoo (2006) recalls when money was first introduced to the Indigenous in the West in the last quarter of 1800's. She said, "I heard of some Indians trading a used five-dollar bill for a brand new dollar bill" (p. 200). Also, many non-Aboriginals were claiming to be Métis and receiving scrip. My cousin told me that Môsom said his mother, who was a Métis woman, went with Treaty # 8[3], which was further north of Alberta.

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[2] For further information on the use of the terms Métis and Half-Breed see http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/metis/metis-scrip-records/Pages/term-half-breed.aspx)
[3] Further discussion of Treaty # 8 see
http://www.aadncaandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100028809/1100100028811

The treaty and scrip government policies interfered with wâhkôhtowin by this diaspora.

Although, my Métis heritage began with the English explorer John Frobisher's son, Joseph Frobisher, he is the only British European in the family tree until my grandfather. All other European descendants are of French heritage up to my great grandparents. As noted earlier, most of the Indigenous women who were tracked in our family tree did not have personal names. Môsum's great, great, grandmothers noted in our genealogy were Cree, Chipewyan, Ojibwa and Assiniboine and these are the grandmothers we have tracked; however, the tracking of our family tree is incomplete. This history shows our sense of place and heritage was ripe with "intergenerational tensions of chaos and despair" coupled with treaty and scrip (Atleo, 2016, p. 36). Because of the racism, stratifications, colonialism, and displaced territories from the late 1600's to the late 1800's, our sense of worldview became confused, our sense of culture was demoralized which caused our people to suffer with inferiority complexes that were inherited by their children (Anzaldúa 1987; 2002, Dapice 2006; Ens & Sawchuk, 2016; Graham & Martin, 2016; Hertzman & Boyce, 2010; St-Onge Onge 2006). Our disappearing years of the 1900's were in entropy as our new ethnicity became fully colonized.

I was given my Métis categorization through Môsom and Kôhkom. My great grandfather and his half brother received land grants in the form of 160 acres next to each other in Man'tow Sâkahikan, and that is the place where most

of my childhood memories of wâhkôhtowin, otipemisiwak, and ekichinantak

reside and the place I return to meet up with family.

When my great uncle spoke to me in Cree, he was alarmed that I

did not understand him upon our return. More than four seasons after Môsom's

death, when I was about five, a tragedy had provoked my father to send my two

younger siblings and I to live with his family in the UK for about three years. My

great uncle said that I used to understand Cree, but I do not remember

understanding it. My grandmother's generation was the last of our fluent

speakers, of our language within our family. We were always told it was Cree, but

I am coming to understand that it was probably Michif, which takes the verb from

the Indigenous language and the noun from the European language (Bakker,

1997).

Our historical core values of wâhkôtowin, ekichinantak, and otipemisiwak,

helped us to survive. The strong sense of relational bonds, respect for all our

relations and a self governing nature had almost disappeared as a result of the

"epigenetics" of colonialism, but wâhkôtowin, ekichinantak and otipemisiwak has

been the survivance of my people (Hertzman & Boyce, 2010). Essentially, they

are an oxymoron: *otipemisiwak colonized*. Given that the First Nations, the

colonizer settlers, and Métis of Turtle Island were all colonized, how did the

otipemisiwak remain free and self-governing under colonization? Answering this

question through the eyes of the *otipemisiwak* may provide answers for the

colonized First Nations and the settler.

Place. Before, I thought I permeated Man'tow Sâkahikan, but now I see that through my learning at UBC, and in reflection, that I only walked the surface. In writing here, now, I attempt to inhabit Man'tow Sâkahikan: fetching water from the well, and carrying wood to the house for the cook stove, jigging to the fiddle and guitars, going to Pilgrimage, and receiving the ever present affection of family at Kôhkum and Môsom's, but especially hearing my ancestors speak our language, and looking out on the lake with its many otâwask (cattails) that I noticed, but never knew.

The first six years of my life were immersed in this Métis community. I can remember living in six locations that were in Edmonton and Man'tow Sâkahikan in the sixties. We lived with my grandparents, parents, siblings, uncles, cousins, aunt and other relations in one house in various places in Edmonton. My cousin said that moving from the country to the city was challenging for the Métis. In Man'tow Sâkahikan the only non-Métis I remember were the owners of the stores, hotels, gas stations, and such. It felt like everyone else was Indigenous and most of us were related.

Before I was six, I lived on the property adjacent to Kôhkom and Môsom's 160 acres in Man'tow Sâkahikan with only my immediate family. I recall time spent at Kôhkum and Môsom's. My mom's cousins who were close to my age were often there too because they had a home on the land. My cousin and I used to race to pump the water, fill our buckets, run up the hill and fill the tan stoneware crock. Then we would race to fill the handled tin cup with water and drink it. We would do the same with the wood. I recall chopping it and racing up

the hill to stock the pile for the stove for Kôkum to cook. It seemed like that was all Kôkum did. In the mornings, the kitchen table that seemed so huge often had what seemed like lots of kids being fed breakfast. Porridge was the usual morning meal with brown sugar and milk not cream.

After that house burned down (my second house fire by this time), I lived with Kôhkom, Môsom (he died near this time) and our great uncle, until my immediate family moved to Edmonton and soon after my pregnant mom died. Only my two younger siblings and I were home at the time of her sudden fatality. Wâhkôhtowin and optipemisiwak got us through this. I had to figure out we needed help and sought help from my family via phone.

Then the dynamics of place and heritage abruptly changed. My place became Wales and my heritage became the Welsh, and the language Nian (Welsh for grandmother) and Tiad (Welsh for grandfather) spoke to each other was Welsh. Following three years of root growth there, my siblings and I were relocated to a new place and culture in the Lower Mainland of Vancouver. I was now immersed more heavily among the colonizer settlers. However, my mother's Métis cousin was my new mother (for awhile) and eventually all but one (who died) of my mother's six brothers, and other related Man'tow Sâkahikan Métis relocated here to Vancouver and its suburbs. My place was in several locations on the South West Coast of British Columbia, auspiciously, the Métis heritage among the settlers helped make it softer (more affectionate like a warm blanket) because my gracious, fun loving, accepting Métis family were always involved in our lives until my father began a relationship with an outsider, who dismissed my

mother's family. My mother's eldest brother was the last of her living brothers to move to BC, and he came here late in his life. A result of this move was my eldest son, in his formative years, experienced a great deal of his great uncle's attentive encouragement.

In Gunn, a hamlet of Man'tow Sâkahikan, my grandmother purchased a home next door to her cousin whom she shared a well with overlooking the lake, and her sisters purchased homes on the lake. They all lived no more than a block from the Gunn hotel and store, during the late west and north time of their lives. They were within walking distance to Kôhkum's. Also, I remember visiting Granny in Gunn, in my early twenties while Môsom's half brother (who no longer owned his adjacent farm) was visiting. He had long silver braided hair and wore high top moccasins that he put on when exiting my grandmother's home. As we watched him walk down the road past the Gunn hotel toward the lake by the store. Granny said, Kôhkum (who cared for him in her home, following the death of his wife) used to make him moccasins and he said they were of high quality.

I remember looking out on the lake and I remember looking at the otâwask but I never knew the lake or the otâwask. It was always a good time when someone caught pike or whitefish that were immediately fried up with a light coating of flour and salt and pepper accompanied with bannock with butter, of course.

The pilgrimage was a Catholic event since "1889", but an Indigenous spiritual event before that date that was very important to my ancestors-for healing (Anderson-McLean, 1999, p. 17). They always attended and I did as a

child; moreover, if I was visiting my grandmother or great aunties late in July, I would have to go to pilgrimage to see them. They would camp out there for over a week. I remember Indigenous people I would meet there telling me they had come from the North West Territories and some from the United States. My uncle remembers going to it in the horse and buggy along with the tipi. When my adult children went for the first time (that they remember), my eldest commented that it was like a "giant garage sale", but I do not remember it being like that.

The Jig. The early years of the jig at Kôhkom and Môsom's are faint. But the family reunions at Man'tow Sâkahikan bring forth stronger memories of the jig. Seeing Granny and family jigging at the reunions was like I was seeing it for the first time. Later we were awoken when my children learned it shortly following the 1982 Constitution revision, when a Dion family member, who was involved with the Louis Riel Métis Association in Surrey, invited them to participate in a performance. It felt like I was learning it with them, but as I learned it was the same dance we did at Kôhkom and Môsom's, I now think I was relearning it. I have faint memories of seeing family musicians with the fiddle and guitars and most everyone else dancing. When I look back, it seems like it was something we did regularly. We had basic steps of heel toe with a kind of jump with additional personal styles when the tune changed and returned to the basic step when the main chorus reoccurred. It was a sharp focus of attention with the ears and a relaxation of letting go of the feet. Looking back, the Red River jig to me solidified our wâhkôhtowin, otipemisiwak and ekichinantak--it was what made us Métis. We danced our own way and the Red River song was our remembrance. At a Dion

memorial service in Surrey, a Dion said that when the music played, Môsum said dance, and we danced. To this day, I hear music and instinctively my feet move, now I know why. Quick (2008) gives an exhaustive account of the Red River Jig practiced in the North West and suggests it was a means of survival of the "marginalization and diaspora" (p. 78).

Medicine. My great grandparents had relationships with the plants and animals. My aunt said she saw the Royal Canadian Mounted Police burn Kôhkom's medicine twice, and Kôhkom cried. I am surmising those incidents played a role in her knowledge not getting passed down. My cousins remember her sending healing packages to members of the family that healed internal bleeding and cysts on ovaries. My uncles remember Môsom going out in the woods and coming back with remedies for baldness, burns and ringworm. They remember one of his remedies required that they chew the bark before putting it on a cousin's leg which left no scar. But I do not personally recall this medicine.

Otâwask (Cattails). Today my sense of place and nature is desensitized and this story is an attempt to soften the calluses from years of disassociation with nature and place.

"Maskihkîy" is the Cree word that means "medicine, herb, plant, chemicals… a medicine gift has spirit power benefits" (Online Cree Dictionary, n. d.). So accordingly, I have gone to the medicine to help me with my story. The Indigenous healing plant that I have had the longest and most intimate relationship with is the one that gets collected at the end of its life: otâwask.

According to Anderson (2000), who was a Métis from Man'tow Sâkahikan, otâwask in Cree means "plant in the middle of the water" (p. 60), but in English we called it cattails. Anderson said a young otâwask leaf was good food. Other resources state that a poultice can be made from the jelly like substance pounded from the root that heals inflammation, sores and burns. The Omaha tribe pounded the root for burns and then covered the burns with otâwask flowers while the Cheyenne powdered the root for abdominal cramps (Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, 2015).

Otâwask and I have had a long journey together. I try to remember our first meeting, but the earliest meeting I can recall was when I was about five, when we lived behind Kôhkom and Môsom's farm (before our house burned down- in the late hours at night or wee hours of the morning). I can recall brown paper on the front part of my head. I think it was otâwask because when we used it we put brown paper over it. I have asked if anyone remembers why I had brown paper on my head, but no one remembers.

I thought the otâwask here in British Columbia were the same as the otâwask in Northern Alberta, but Micheal Marker (personal conversation, 2017) conferred with my uncle and pointed out that may not be so. My cousin told me her father (my mother's oldest brother) would get his otâwask from Edmonton area because the otâwask in BC are not the same. He knows better than me because his relationship with the otâwask was stronger and longer than mine. I suppose one way to explain how locations change properties of a plant is that cannabis varies

due to location. Depending on the location a plant is grown, the properties will change due to soil, sun, and other factors (Pate, 1994).

Otâwask, I think your roots would have suffered greatly by the shaking off of Man'tow Sâkahikan soil, being transplanted among the UK otâwask, and while you were beginning to emerge from survival mode you were transplanted again among Vancouver area otâwask. The different otâwask, soil, and weather would have made it so difficult for you to grow, never mind be healthy. For humans, Attachment Theory suggests that the younger one is when experiencing a main caregiver disruption, the more severe the repercussions such as insecurities, resistance, disorganization and disorientation as well as lack of emotional and social competence (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters & Wall, 2015; Bergin & Bergin, 2009; Bowlby, 1976; Hertzman & Boyce, 2010).

The otâwask medicine that I grew up with works best at the end of its season, when it is seemingly dead. As otâwask, gave me healing when it was at the end of its life, I am revisiting it as I move towards the north end of the medicine wheel in my life, and the end of my graduate program. What I mean by this, is that much of the otâwask plant has healing properties, but my connection with otâwask is the healing property at the end of its life. This is all I have of Kôhkum and Môsom's medicine knowledge. I feel as if the Cree, Saulteaux, and Assiniboine heritage from great, great, great, great grandmothers is seemingly dead, too. I do not know our language, I know very little about our culture, and most of my grandmothers physical features have disappeared. Also, our Métis practices of jigging, wâhkôhtowin, otipemisiwak and ekichinantak seem to be

disappearing. My Indigeneity has almost been Westernized out- colonization caused this death.

In Gunn, we believed in otâwask as a poultice for removing deeply embedded slivers of wood, glass, steel or the like from one's skin where tweezers could not reach, or to draw pus from an infection. The plant would be harvested in the fall just before the brown heads turned white and fluffy, and it was stored in a jar (after it had dried out usually in a paper bag). When needed, the otâwask would be mixed with lard, typically we used a butter knife to mix the two in the palm of our hand. When the mixture got nice and soft, it would be applied to the wound and a brown paper bandage would be placed over it and usually medicine tape to adhere it (but my mom's cousin remembers a bandage as a piece of fabric that was torn in two at one end and the opposite end placed on the wound and then the cloth was wrapped around the wound until the tear part began, and then the tear ends were wrapped in opposite directions and tied where they met). The bandage would be changed daily until the object came out of the body. I remember that whenever the otâwask poultice came out with someone who had never seen it before was always an event. We would all huddle around the person preparing and look with great earnestness. I remember smiles, jokes and questions. Actually, it was always an event when I did it with my ancestors. When I do it now, it does not seem so magical. Maybe because my ancestors brought something to it that I do not have. Métis and other otâwask believers would be excited about sharing our unconventional way of healing. I loved to watch the technique of pushing the knife flat on the hand and the twist to bring it back when

the lard was blended with the otâwak. Eventually, one day I got to mix the equal amounts of the lard and otâwask myself on my palm with a butter knife. It was like a short meditation.

However, there were times the Métis presented Indigenous ideas such as the otâwask and they would be dismissed or ridiculed by the European settler members who married into the Métis family. This dismissal and ridicule within one's own family created shame towards our Indigenous ways. As social psychology points out - our behaviour Is learned from our social context: we copy what we see (Bandura 1971; 1986; Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934). The shame was part of the process of losing our medicines, language, and ways of being. I wonder if the otâwask remedy remained, because it was the determined one, who resisted dismissal. I would like to note that a bread poultice does have a similar effect as otâwask, and both the bread and otâwask have wheat like properties. Even though *most* of the otâwask can be used for medicine; my relationship is with the seeds; the part that absorbs the poison and marked the end of a season that put forth new life also. On a side note, another use for osâwack was to stuff pillows, blankets and the like to make them soft.

Granny Died. The drive to Granny's from Vancouver to Gunn was a mysterious shift. I think it has something to do with Casey's (2001) "place and self" [and] "*outgong*" and *"incoming"* and we were in the "mediatrix" of them (pp. 687-688). Or maybe it was wâkôhtowin, ekichinantak, and otipimisiwak: all our relations were free to gather, go home and show respect. It felt like a spirit of love and acceptance-very soft. It was a collective positive frame.

Only uplifting conversation happened in the car ride there. Yes, some in the car had their differences and those discussions were raised, but only in humor and kindness. Once the conversation left those rules, it was stifled. This I think was the practice-albeit intuitive. The ride there was a frame of inclusion and no discriminatory thoughts. Whoever wanted a ride for whatever reason came, but we all shared a deep connection to the place we were going.

When we arrived at Granny's house and crossed the threshold, we entered a highly evolved domain. A way to describe it may be a collision of Casey's (2001) "place and self" and we were in the "mediatrix" of them (pp. 687-688). We were bringing the stark *outgoing* with us and our *incoming* was bringing that *outgoing.* Moreover, this was a second round of *incoming* as well as the mediatrix within, and this could explain the evolved domain. I do not think it was self and place, but us and place that formed some kind of unconscious beauty to the development, and I was in the process of experiencing, recognizing, and holding on to it. It could have been the working of wâkôhtowin, ekichinantak, and otipimisiwak's strong presence. The car ride was the practice and preparing us for it. The air was literally thick with only reflexive thoughts of fond memories and affection. Thoughts and actions of affection, and deep appreciation were mixed with tears of mystery in our good bye **"**kîhtwâm ka-wâpamitin" (I will see you again) (Online Cree Dictionary, n. d.). Learning the Cree for good-bye gives clarity because it is the frame I live by, as I believe it is true, even though I do not know it is true. It is like a faith in the unknown. It begins with a hunch. Then an intuitiveness one develops through the practice of guessing, and the more often

the guesses are correct the stronger the intuition becomes (Bandura, 1978; 2011). It takes determinism to override the failures, and the determinism is built on the successes.

Were others in the same frame as me? I would have to ask. In the bathing of the goodness I was feeling, I looked out the window and I saw a first cousin removed standing outside by a tree in tears. I did not understand how she too was feeling our feeling, and why she did not come in or why the elders did not invite her in. Possibly, we brought something from Vancouver with us that did not recognize she was out there by herself. In our culture, our great aunts were like grandmothers, so I am guessing our aunts were like mothers, so she too had lost her mother. She lived in Man'tow Sâkahikan most of her life and probably had a stronger relationship with our grandmother/mother because of it. Most of us who were in the house had moved away to Vancouver and were bringing Vancouver back with us to Gunn for the funeral and maybe that is why she did not come in.

What was causing that air? Why was it so intense *in* her home? I remember the mental work it took for me to keep the frame. It felt so good; I did not want to let it go, so I had to partially be aware of holding it and partially just let it happen. It was the way I felt about my family. It was like going back to my childhood where everyone was appreciated, and I was so glad to be with them, but leaving each other and this place was like ripping a Band-Aid off. It was like it had to be done because our current lives were pulling us away from the reminiscing of our childhood. The spirit of wâhkôhtowin, ekichinantak, and otipemisiwak peaked those days we were there for her service.

I get the feeling when I go back there for other memorials, but that was the strongest. Maybe it was so strong for me because I never buried my mother. It was like two funerals in one so to speak, and it was revisiting words of wisdom.

Her death seemed to hit me deeper than my mom's because Granny was my unconditional love and my safety and they too were dying with her. The wisdom their deaths gave me were the words my granny said when my mom (her only daughter of seven children) died, and they were my life force more than ever now: "we don't understand, but we know it is for good".

Moreover, empirical research in positive psychology shows this frame builds us up by creating emotions for wellness (Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson, 2005; Fredrickson, 2004; 2013). Also, my grandmother who attended the Catholic Church adhered to the faith by actions of generosity and grace. She lived as if God was good. The hell and damnation was not a frame she took from the church. She instinctively knew what part of Roman Catholicism to hold on to for survival. Empirical research is only just now revealing the power of good thoughts, but my grandmother instinctively knew its power. Her words were a frame for survival: see and look for good in all things.

The Bullet. I recall my mother's cousin telling me about her memory of a story about Kôhkom hanging clothes by the lake at Man'tow Sâkahikan that was close to where they were building the railway. The men used to yell to her my cousin said. This made me think about their life, before the railway. I am guessing there was a time when she could peacefully hang her clothes to dry, but

this new steel track was the inevitable bullet that marked the death of our way of

life.

Conclusion and Implications

This paper was my effort to capture my exploratory journey of these two

questions:

1. What is my experience of being disconnected from my/our Métis

   heritage? What does it mean to reconnect?

2. What are the implications of my story for education?

A Marxist view developed by Gramsci from 1925 to 1935 while in prison,

identified the reproduction of socio-political hegemony that reproduces cultural

and economic supremacy within a society (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003).

Echoing Gramsci, Butterwick and Sparks (2004) suggest a direction to overcome

hegemony is through "equitable learning" (p. 288) whereby the educator

becomes aware of their Eurocentric bias they bring to the classroom such as

"structural elements (fuelled by sexism, racism and classism)" (p. 288), and "how

all policies, programs and institutions of adult education reflect and reproduce

certain worldviews" (p. 289). Also, attention to "different learning styles, differing

perceptions as well as ideology" (p. 279) to prevent "reproduce[ing] cultural

conflict and tension" (p. 279) is necessary.

From an Indigenous perspective, Atleo (2016) argues, "[c]ritical adult

education is about creating consciousness and self-consciousness [, and]…is

fundamentally about seeing…colonial oppression, cultural desire, [as well as]

yearning for revitalization and relief from intergenerational tensions of chaos and despair" (p. 36). Essentially these scholars agree critical adult education is about awareness of power dimensions, and having dialogue to narrow power inequalities. I think this autobio-ethnography contributes to the dialogue by bringing in such concepts as wâhkôhtowin, otipemiswak and ekichinantak and making the case for them to be included in the larger organization of adult education systems such as curriculum. This paper and exploration is also a form of 'rewriting/rerighting' (Smith 1999). By using an Indigenous framework, I hope to contribute to a "rewriting" and "rerighting" of an Indigenous position in society by bringing Indigenous Knowledge into research instead of continuing the dominance of Western theories (p. 29), such as assimilating Indigenous students in "*[i]ndividual self-determination*" (Deloria, 1998, p. 28).

For example, we could flip our understanding of competency for teaching and learning as a way to rewrite and reright (Smith, 1999). Instead of the Western frame of "'understands new things' " and " 'accumulated knowledge'" as a major prerequisite of educators and education of educators, the main competency could be empathy, which I suggest is woven in wâhkôhtowin, otipemiswak and ekichinantak (Berry & Bennett, 1992, p. 79). The latest research supports compassion as a prerequisite since it shows caring adult educators bring forth academic success and prosocial behavior (Bergin & Bergin, 2009; Noddings, 1984;1988). Instead of mostly privileged adult educators, caring adult educators could come from low socioeconomic status (SES) instead of high SES because studies show they have the highest compassion (Christoph et al, 2014;

Goetz et al, 2010; Reinders & Youniss, 2006; Stellar et al, 2012; Youniss &

Yates, 1999). Additionally, a policy, program, and institution change supported by

this inquiry suggests a learning environment that relieves oppression because

proximity to caring behaviour brings forth prosocial behaviour (Butterwick &

Sparks, 2004, p. 289). This flip could look like the place for a classroom (low SES

community or a wâhkôhtowin, otipemiswak and ekichinantak community) and the

frame taken into the classroom (wâhkôhtowin, otipemiswak and ekichinantak

frame combined with a "'understands new things' " and " 'accumulated

knowledge'" frame). Thereby, the learning institution could provide a new "ingoing

and outgoing" learning experience. The low SES context would flip by who the

caring adult educators are and they can teach us (they save us) instead of we

(the learning institution) teach them (we are saving them). This potentially gives

rise to a new kind of setting for what is termed a so-called classroom as well as

beyond eurocentrism and anthropocentrism.

Next, as a form of critical adult education, writing this paper has been an

initial attempt of connecting "theory and practice to explore the pedagogical

potential of truth-telling and reconciliation process" (Regan, 2010, p. 17).

Accordingly, I engaged in transformational learning through critical reflection and

raised my consciousness of the oppression and chaos, the almost

disappearance, and the beginning of revitalization and reconciliation faced by the

Métis. First, I had to return to the place of my heritage and there I found

otipemisiwak who helped me to better understand myself as a learner. Given too

much prescription, lack of trust, and low expectations in self-management and

motivation was stifling my pre-colonial epigenetic way of learning. Next, I found

wâhkohtowin (who developed otipemisiwak in me). I knew the feeling and

experience of wâhkôhtowin well, but reconnecting with the Cree words that have

been lost by our family provided solidification, clarity, and made it more holistic. I

needed ekichinantak as a guide in wâhkôhtowin and otipemisiwak, which led to

otâwask. Otâwask showed me that anthropocentrism, self-centrism, and

disrespect were the poison otâwask was trying to suck out, so an inclusive

wâhkôhtowin, otipemiswak and ekichinantak could be restored. It required the

attuned ears, and the willingness to change as in the Red River Jig. It was more

than a change in meaning perspectives; it was a shift of meaning schemes. The

'"if-then"' expectation holds that 'if' I talk to an inanimate object, 'then' it will not

respond, but it did respond. I had to hear otâwask, and I had to change my bias

that otâwask did not have the capacity to speak. Also, I mistakenly saw

otipemisiwak as autonomy for the individual and did not see that I was

contradicting myself until I recognized the Métis otipemisiwak was the

"*independent ones*" not the "*independent*" one (SCC R.v. Powley, para 10 (3)).

   Not just one seed of otâwask can suck out the poison; it takes the whole

group/classroom/community/nation working together in critical reflection. It is the

group-discipline of remembering to respect everyone and everything, and this

comes from remembering that it comes from everyone and everything not the

individual. For example, I think the experience of the love (good feeling; positive

thoughts) I was giving, was coming from the love (good feeling; positive thoughts)

I was getting while in Granny's home and in Man'tow Sâkahikan for her service

(Fredrickson, 2004; 2013; Seligman et al, 2005). It was a good reciprocal frame. This is a more developed engrossment of Noddings (1988) that echoes Rosenthal and Jacobson's (1968) Pygmalion effect by the educator seeing this good in each participant and participants in group work see the good in their partners, as well this good you see is reflected (Nummenmaa et al, 2008; Shaltout et al, 2012). It is a shift in meaning schemes.

Lastly, each otâwask is a generation of seeds; although they die, they give new life as represented by the rings of the Medicine Wheel in Figure one. Our NWR seeds died in 1885, but were reborn almost a century later in 1982 - never giving up.

From how I function as a Métis, I suggest the educator apply SDT in tandem with the wâhkôhtowin, otipemiswak and ekichinantak worldview for a more holistic approach in learning that not only creates a better learning environment for the Métis, but I think for the immigrant, Western, Indigenous, and International learners too who are or are not trying to recover from trauma as well as learn. Some simple applications are try to be at eye level as much as possible and make eye contact (when the learner is comfortable with it); provide space for anonymous communication like write notes; expect to hear brilliance when a participant speaks or contributes, and build on that brilliance; lots of group work; give plenty of opportunity for choice; ask for input on what, where, when and how to learn; provide group assignments that require meeting outside the classroom; take away any form of threat and provide challenge (Caine & Caine, 1997).

In summation, wâhkôhtowin recognized otâwask needed to speak,

otipemisiwak trusted it to speak, and ekichinanak gave the ability to speak and

what it said was recognize they exist and need a place to grow; build

relationships of trust; know they have capacity, and see the good in them.

My next question: what is the concentric circle within the hub and the

concentric circle that follows 2017.

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