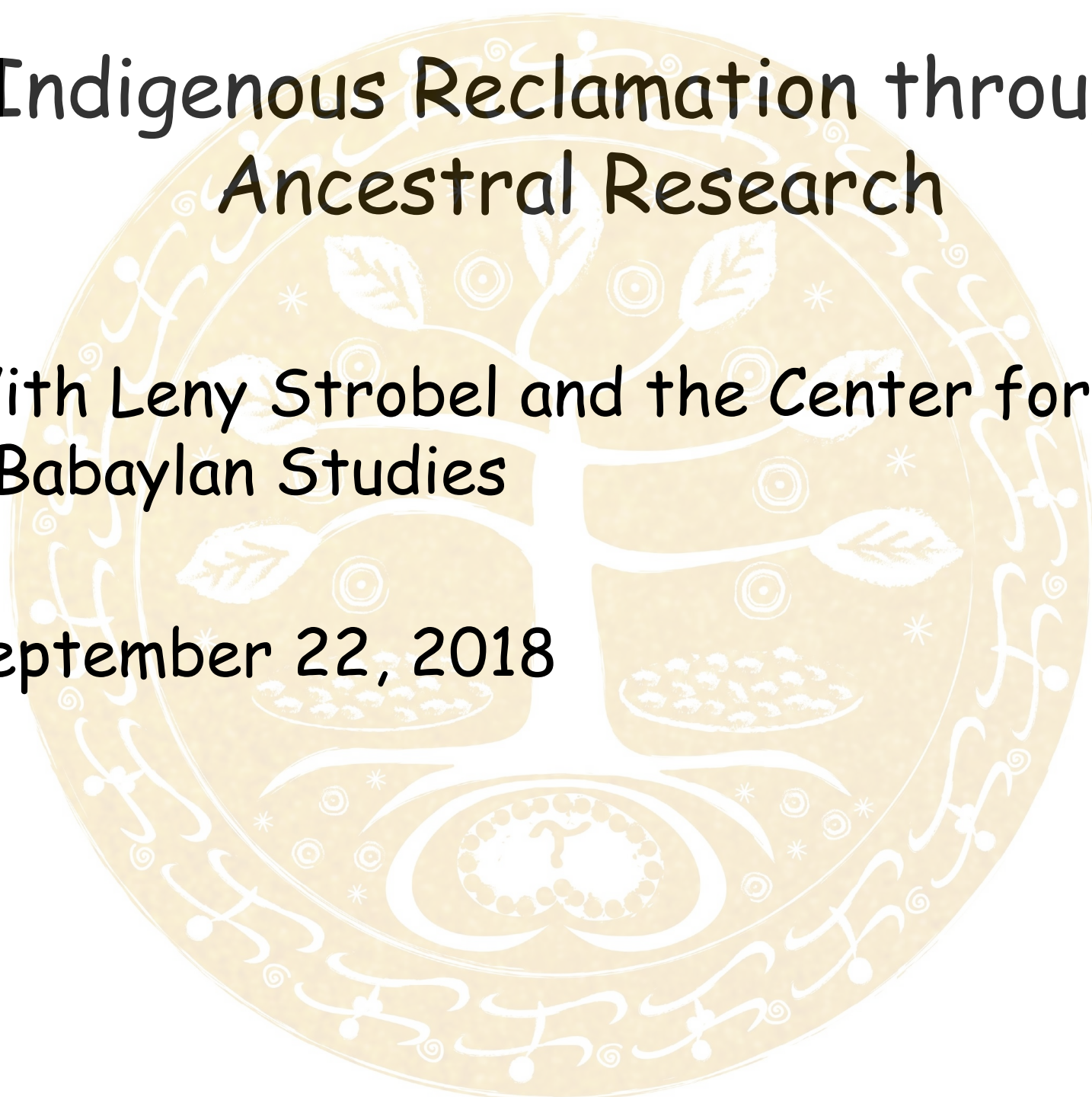


Indigenous Reclamation through Ancestral Research

With Leny Strobel and the Center for
Babaylan Studies

September 22, 2018





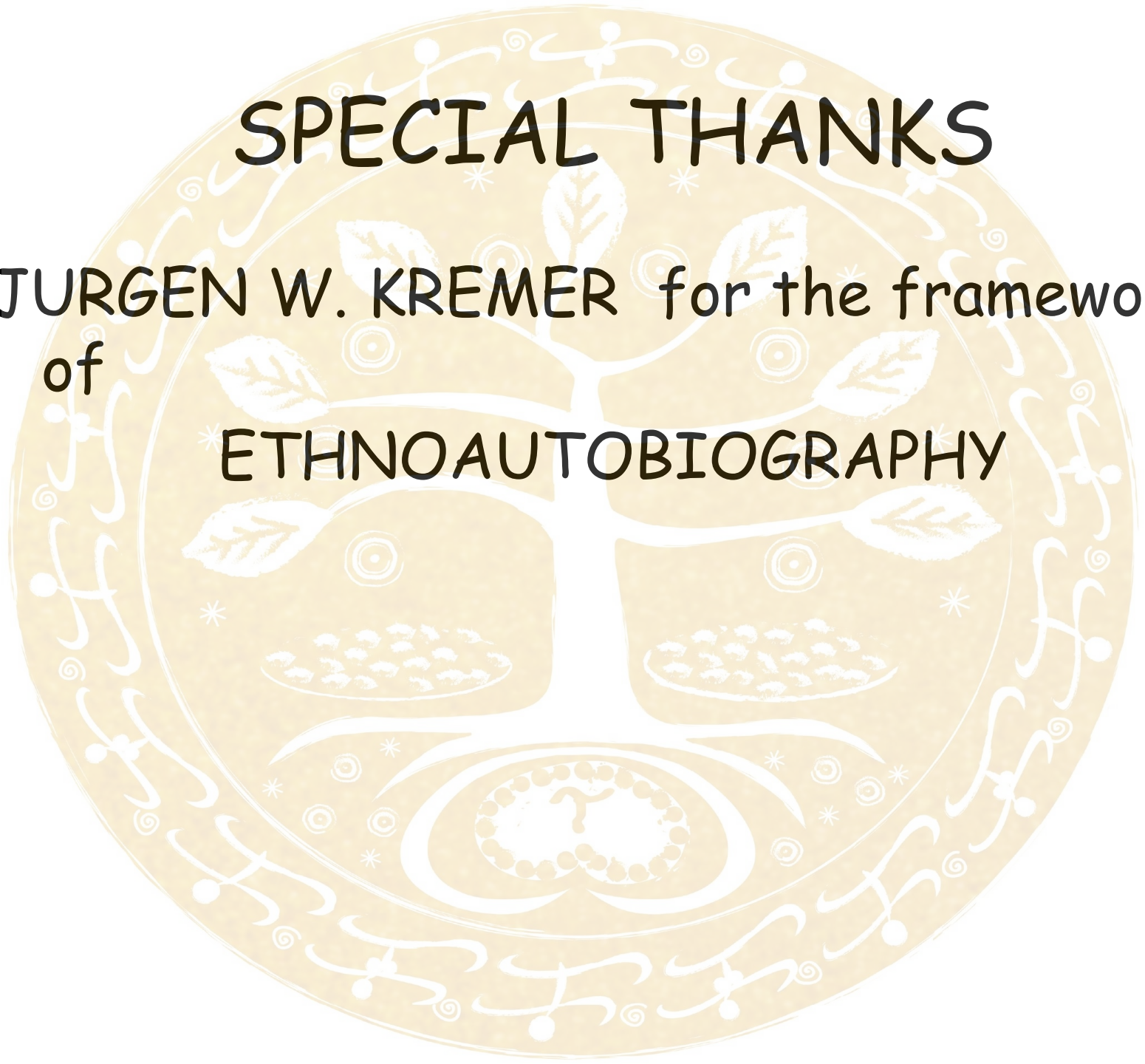
GRATITUDE

- Our Ancestors
- Our Homelands
- Our Presence
- Our Support Team: Olivia Sawi and Annie Aarons-Sawi

SPECIAL THANKS

JURGEN W. KREMER for the framework
of

ETHNOAUTOBIOGRAPHY



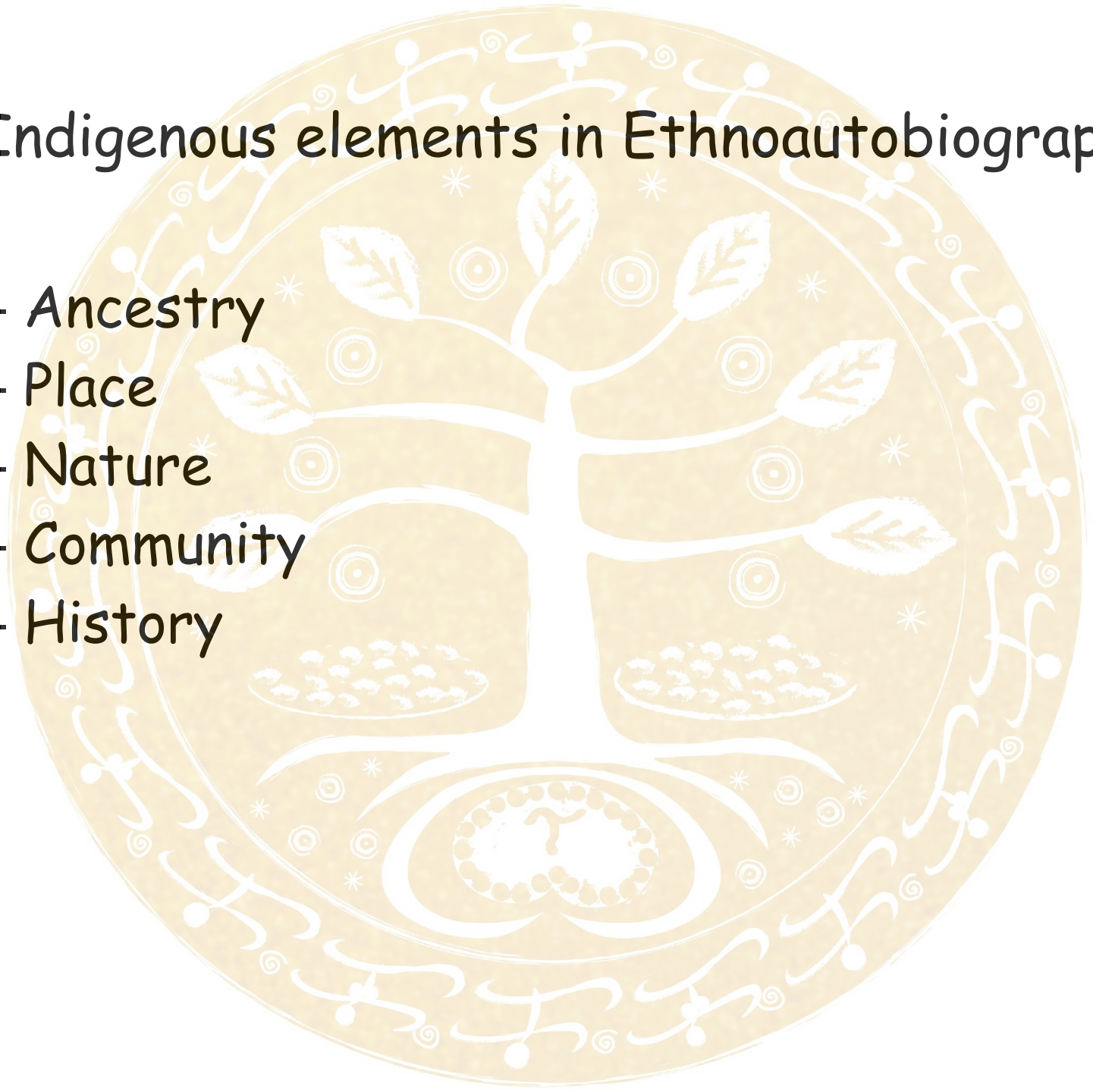
DECOLONIZATION



- Changing our appropriative and imperial stance toward the world
- A creative psycho-spiritual, moral, political, activist endeavor.
- Turns our gaze toward the center of "The West"

Indigenous elements in Ethnoautobiography

- Ancestry
- Place
- Nature
- Community
- History



Indigenous Elements in Ethnoautobiography

- Gender
- Dreams
- Faith, Spirituality, Atheism
- Mythic Stories
- Storytelling



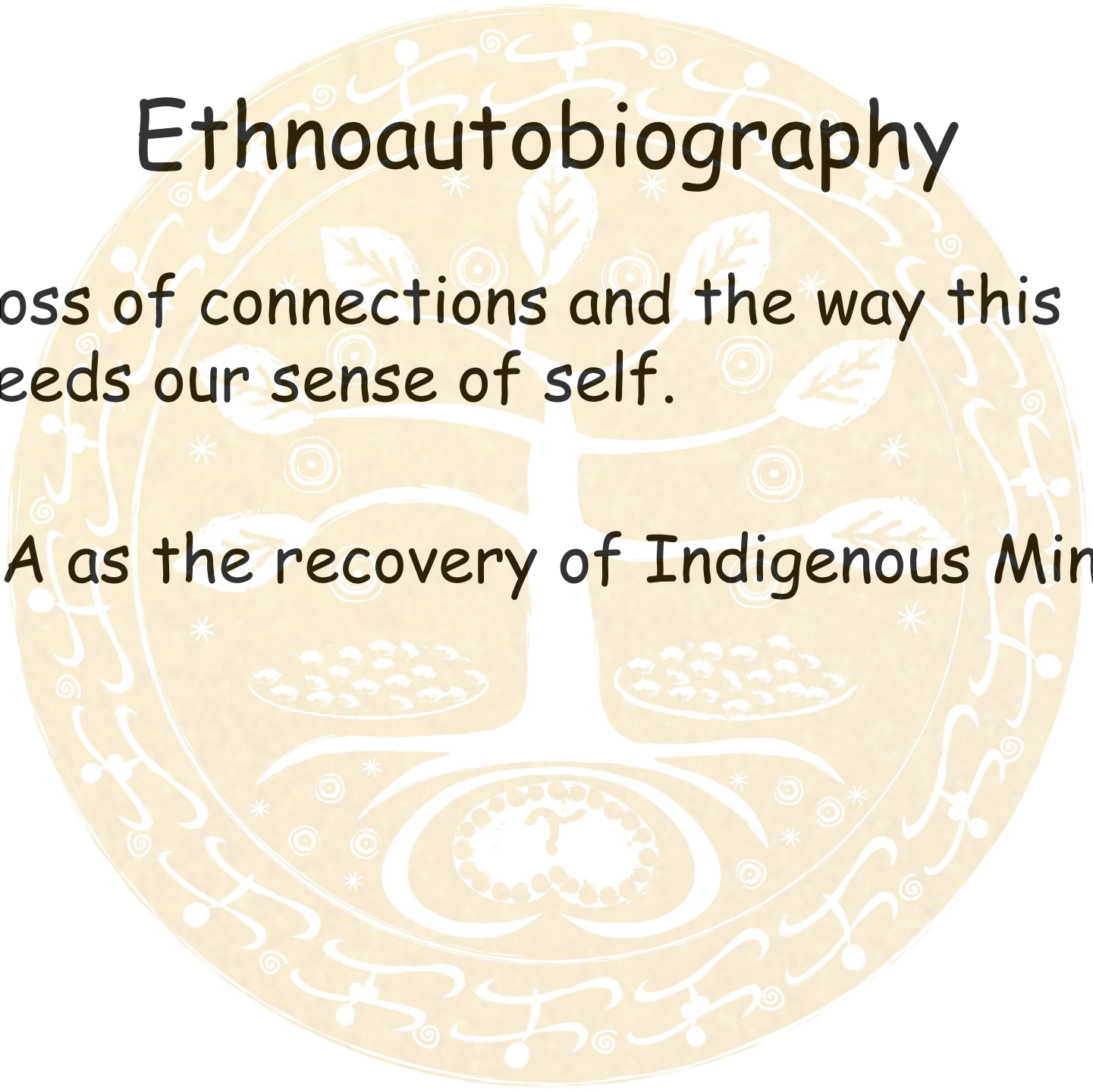
Ethnoautobiography



- to heal disconnection from history, place, nature, community, dreams, mythic stories, faith and spirituality, gender

Ethnoautobiography

- Loss of connections and the way this feeds our sense of self.
- EA as the recovery of Indigenous Mind





ancestry

community

place

gender

Storytelling

nature

Self

myth &
ritual

history

dreams

spirituality &
religion



We all have indigenous roots.

Individualistic Societies

Sociocentric Societies

Collectivist or Communal Societies

Indigenist Societies

Independent view of self
Priority of self goals & traits

Interdependent view of self

Interdependent view of self

W = Western
E = Educated
I = Industrialized
R = Rich
D = Democratic

Priority of group goals

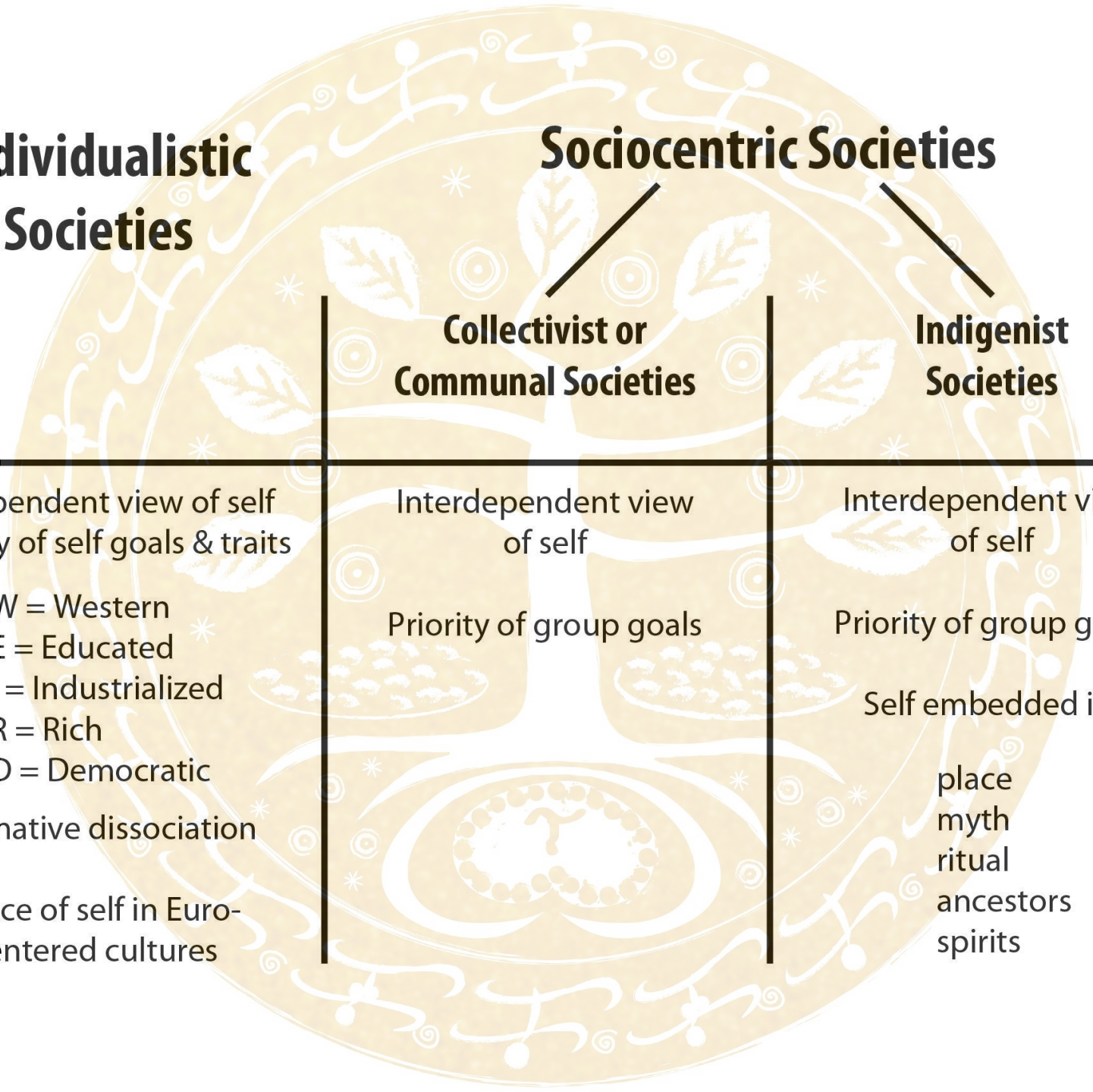
Priority of group goals

Self embedded in:

Normative dissociation

place
myth
ritual
ancestors
spirits

Sence of self in Euro-centered cultures



The Modern Self



- The modern self is about 200 years old
- Autobiographies emerged in the beginning of the 19th century
- Autoethnography
- Ethnoautobiography as a variant of such self-reflexivity

The Modern Self



- Individualism prevents us from access to sources we need to face crisis
- Individualism is a colonial construct; objectifies bodies, others, and the world

The Modern Self



- The Eurocentered mind or white mind has a habit of **FORGETTING** settler histories: the stories of how we came to be where we are.
- Example: "Hiding in Plain Sight" ...

The Modern Self



- white mind's sense of loss:
 - Loss of connection to nature
 - Dearth of spiritual experiences in nature or in community with others
 - No continuity, no stories, no rituals, no myths

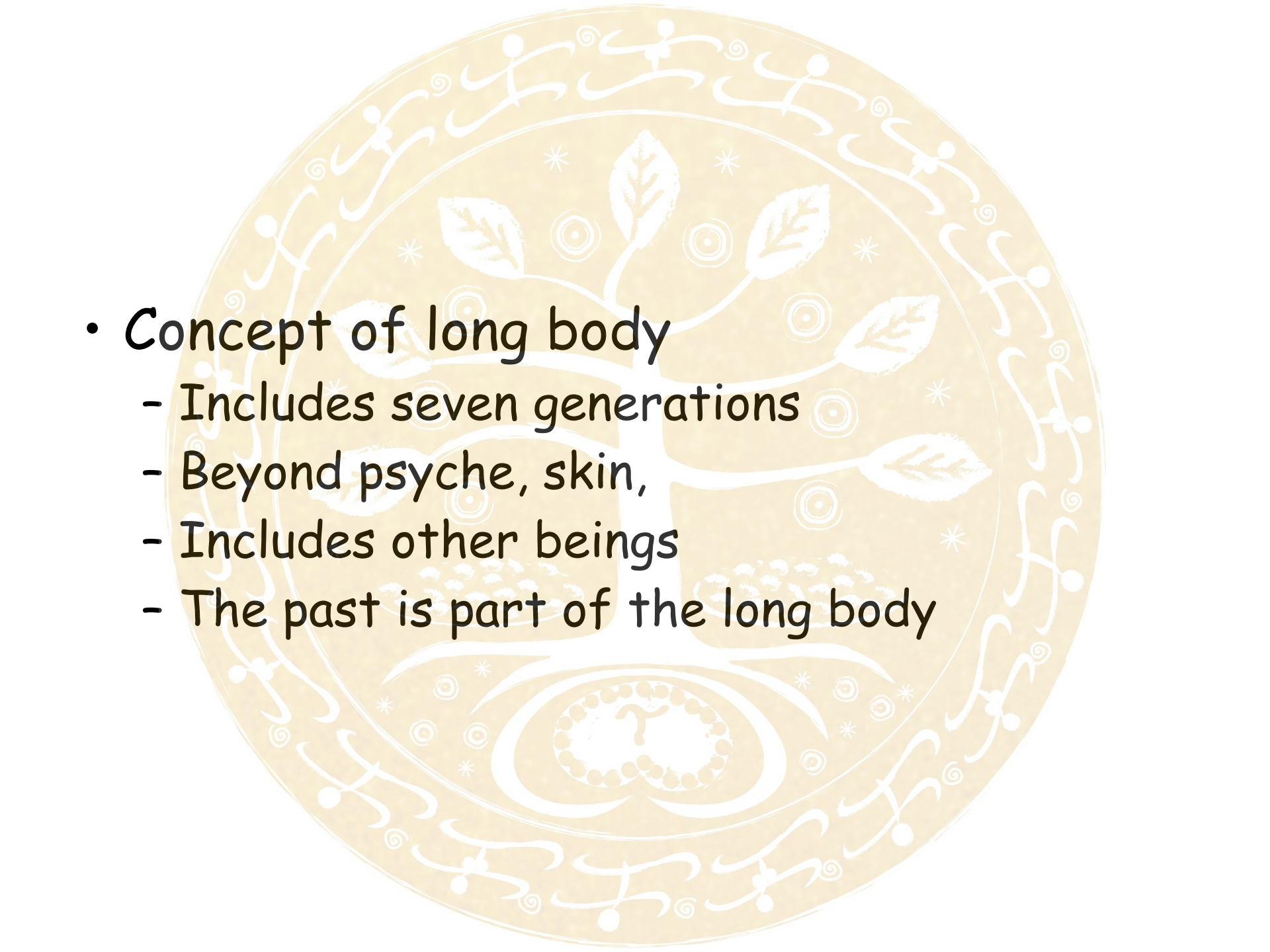
The Modern Self

- **NORMATIVE DISSOCIATION** in individualistic cultures.
- This self has thick boundaries, split between inside and outside
- This is the modern, western self; as an imperial gaze it has distancing effect
- It is masterful

The Modern Self




- Normative splitting from what is naturally a part of the indigenous sense of self *
- Place, story/myth, ritual, ancestors, spirits/gods, and more

- 
- **Concept of long body**
 - Includes seven generations
 - Beyond psyche, skin,
 - Includes other beings
 - The past is part of the long body

Indigenous Roots



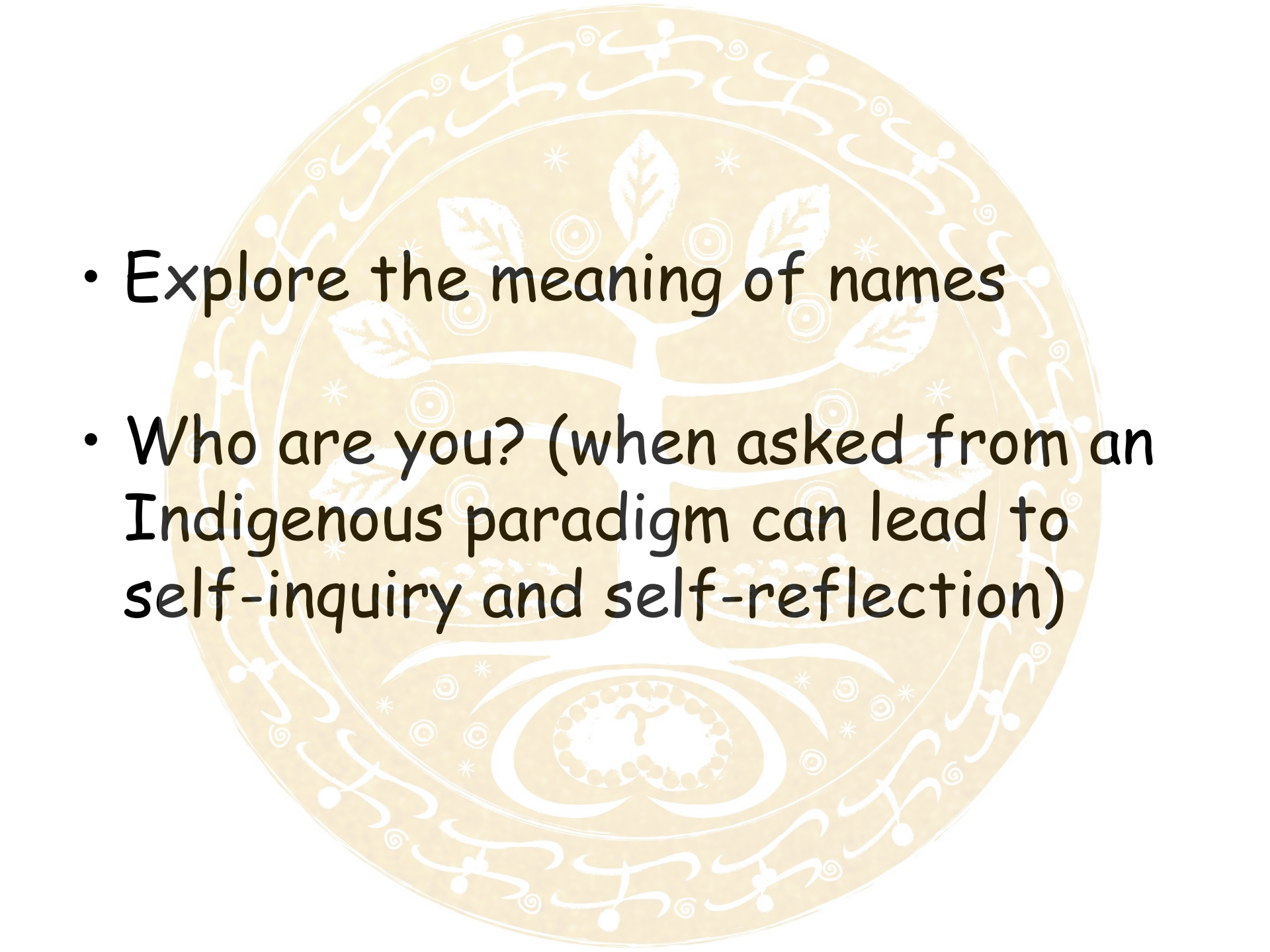
- At what point were we severed/cut off from our indigenous roots? What was the resulting trauma that changed their consciousness?
- Remember that there was a time when your ancestors all lived within nurturing conversations and relationships



Indigenous roots can inspire and feed our
creativity and presence today



Silko: Once you honor your ancestors, you are at home anywhere on earth.

- 
- Explore the meaning of names
 - Who are you? (when asked from an Indigenous paradigm can lead to self-inquiry and self-reflection)

ANCESTRAL RESEARCH



- Foundational to Ethnoautobiography
- *Genealogy*
- Exploring the worlds of the ancestors through genealogical imagination
- All people were Indigenous, at some time and in some place.

Genealogical Imagination

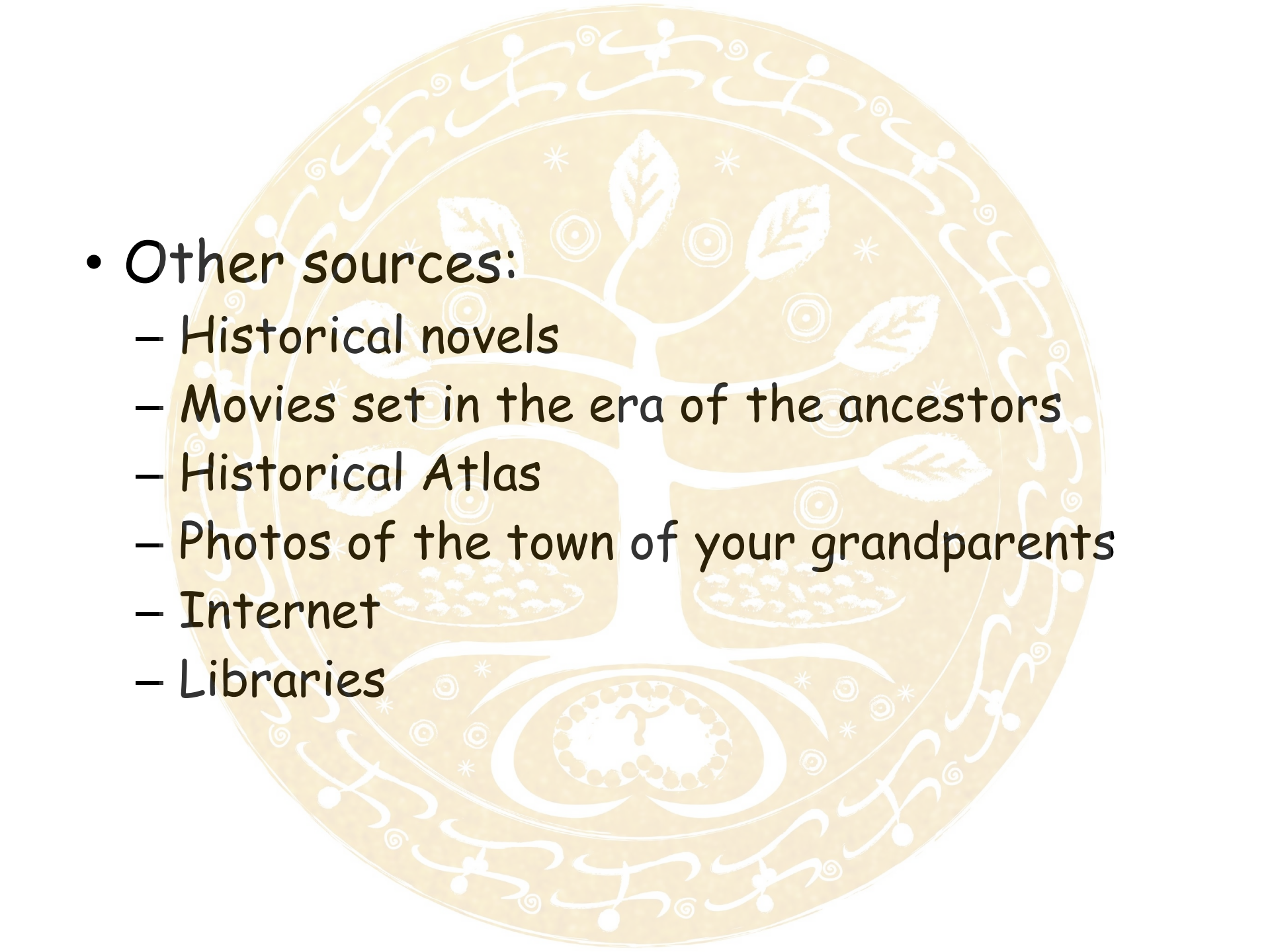
- Decolonizing settlement privilege: if settlement relies on forgetting about relationships, genealogical imaginings revive and forge them anew



Genealogical Imagination

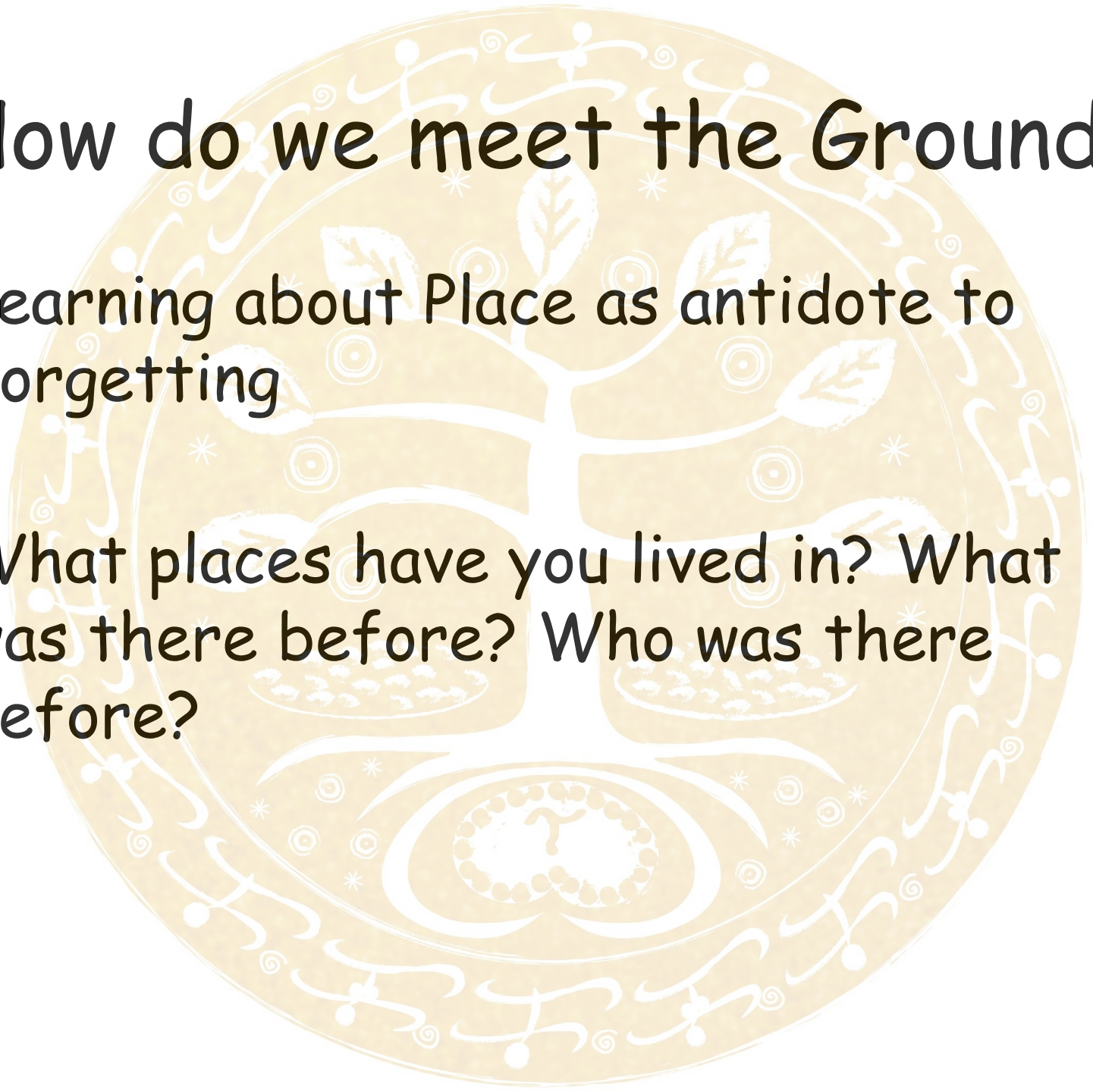


- Visualize, imagine, and creatively put yourself in the situations in your family stories
- What story about Place, Self, and Community emerge?

- 
- A circular decorative background in a light beige or gold color. It features a central white tree with several leaves. The tree is set against a backdrop of musical notes and symbols, including a treble clef, a bass clef, and various note heads. Below the tree, there are two circular patterns resembling eyes or faces, each with a central pupil and a surrounding ring of dots. The entire design is framed by a decorative border of musical notes and symbols.
- Other sources:
 - Historical novels
 - Movies set in the era of the ancestors
 - Historical Atlas
 - Photos of the town of your grandparents
 - Internet
 - Libraries

How do we meet the Ground?

- Learning about Place as antidote to Forgetting
- What places have you lived in? What was there before? Who was there before?



Family Trees

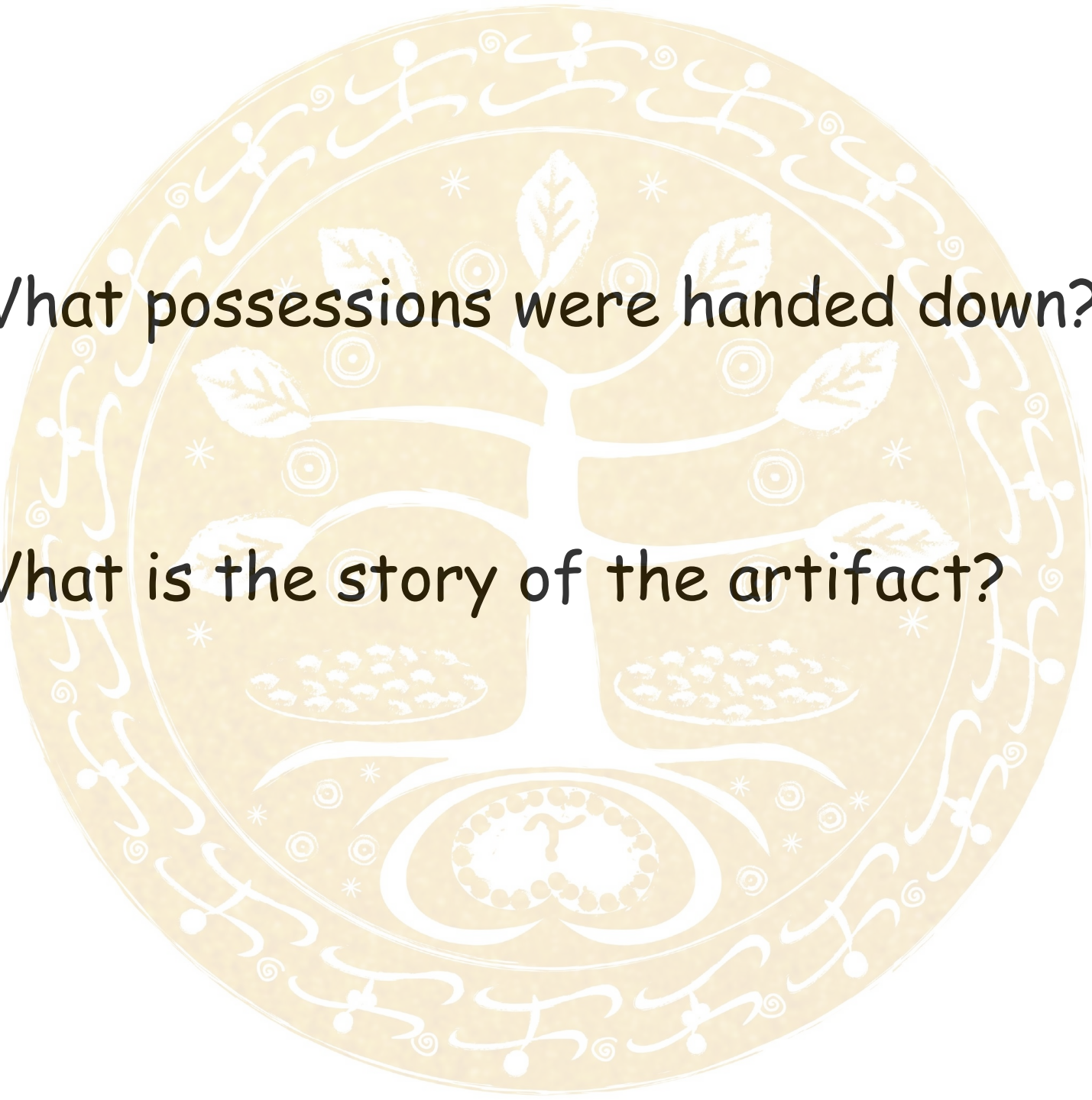


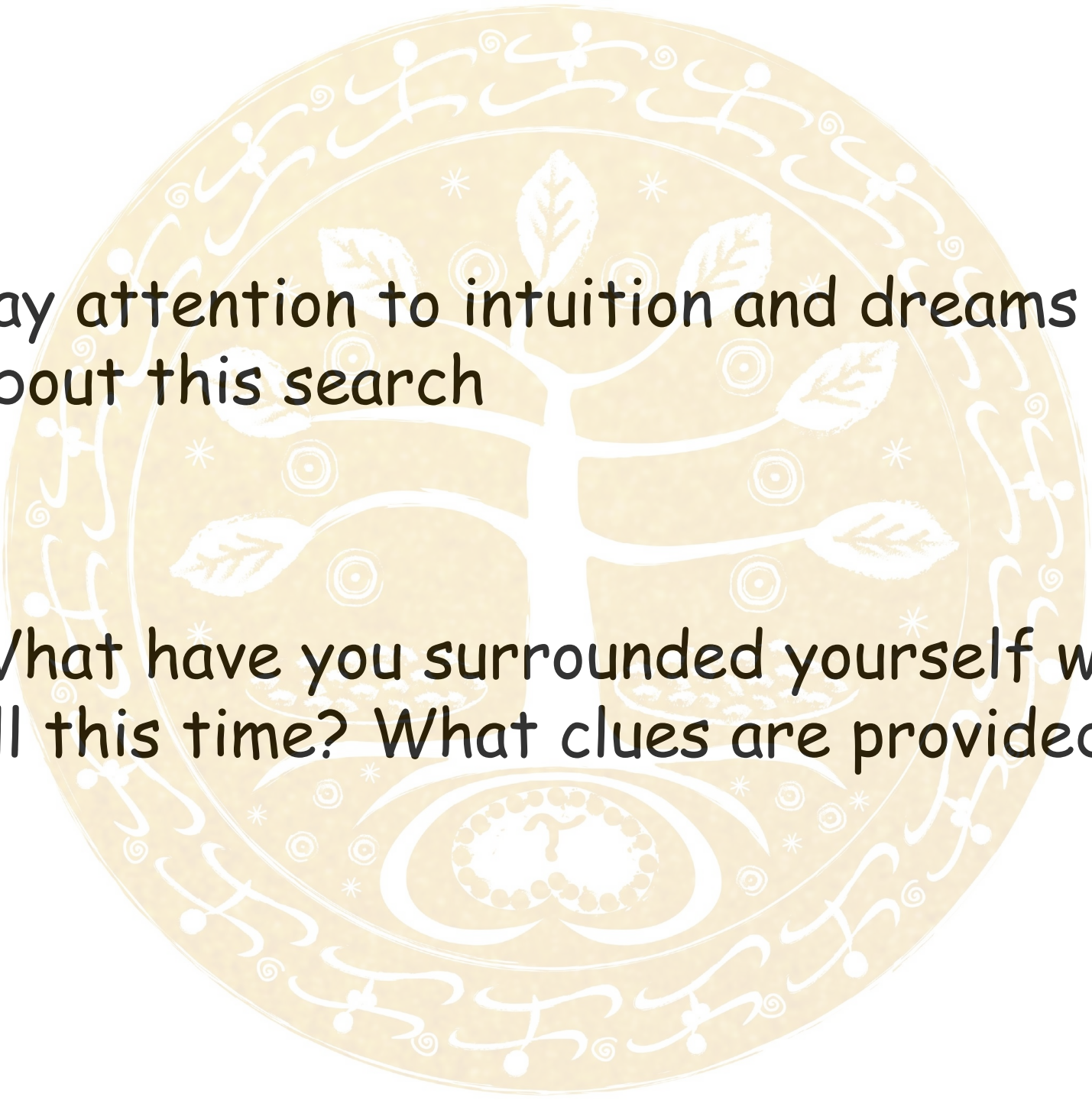
- Ask living relatives
- Look through photo albums
 - Who is in the pictures?
 - Any documents available?
 - Is there a heirloom family bible?

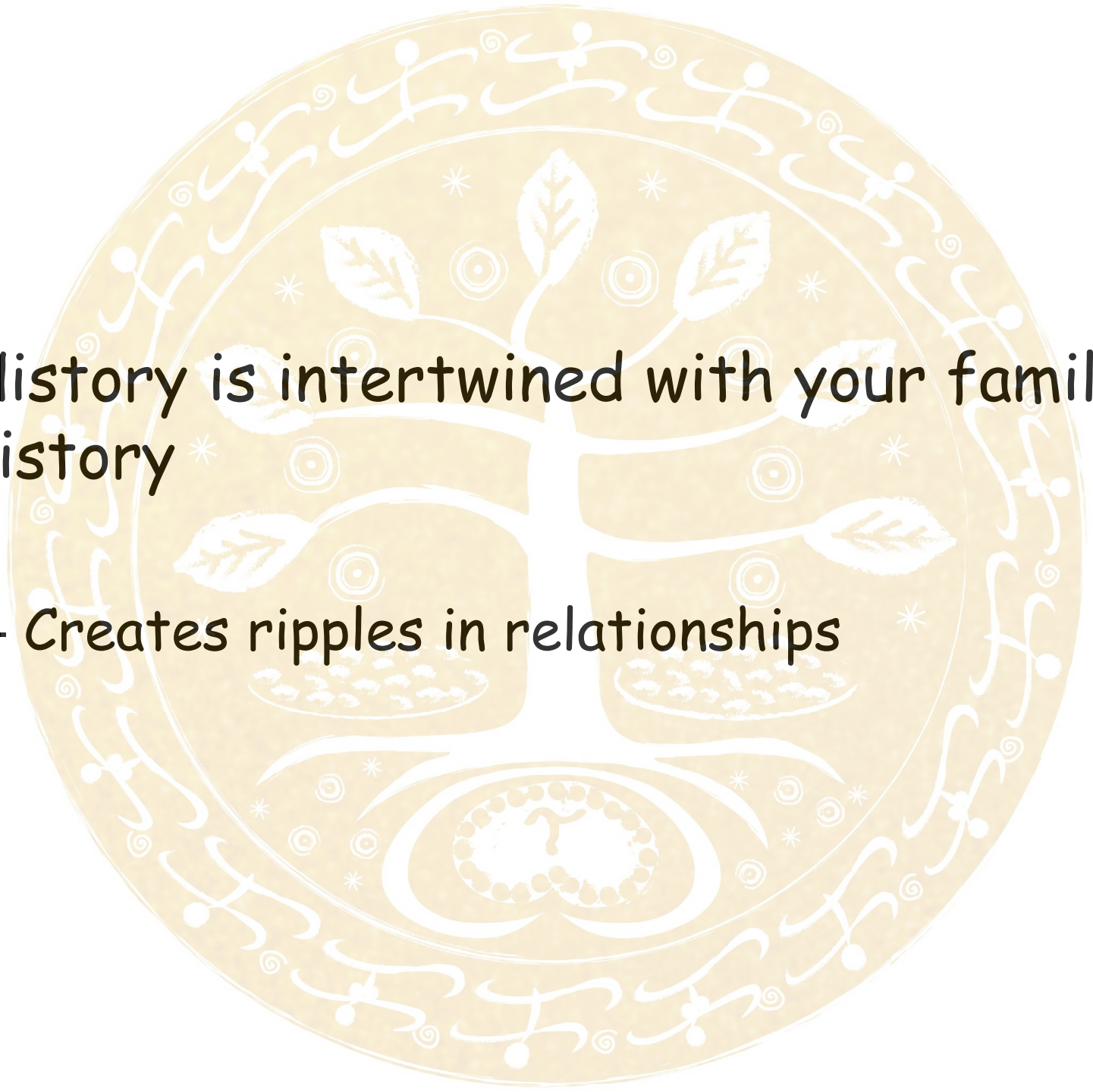
Family Trees

The background is a circular emblem with a light beige or gold color. In the center is a stylized white tree with several leaves. Below the tree are two circular patterns resembling musical notes or decorative motifs. The entire emblem is surrounded by a border of white musical notes and decorative swirls.

- The process can be challenging in case of:
 - Adoption
 - Descendants of Slavery
 - Descendants of Slave owners

- 
- What possessions were handed down?
 - What is the story of the artifact?

- 
- A circular golden emblem with a tree, a face, and musical notes. The emblem is centered on the page and features a stylized tree with leaves and a face with a crown. The background of the emblem is filled with musical notes and symbols. The text is overlaid on the emblem.
- Pay attention to intuition and dreams about this search
 - What have you surrounded yourself with all this time? What clues are provided?

- 
- History is intertwined with your family history *
 - Creates ripples in relationships *

Shadow Work

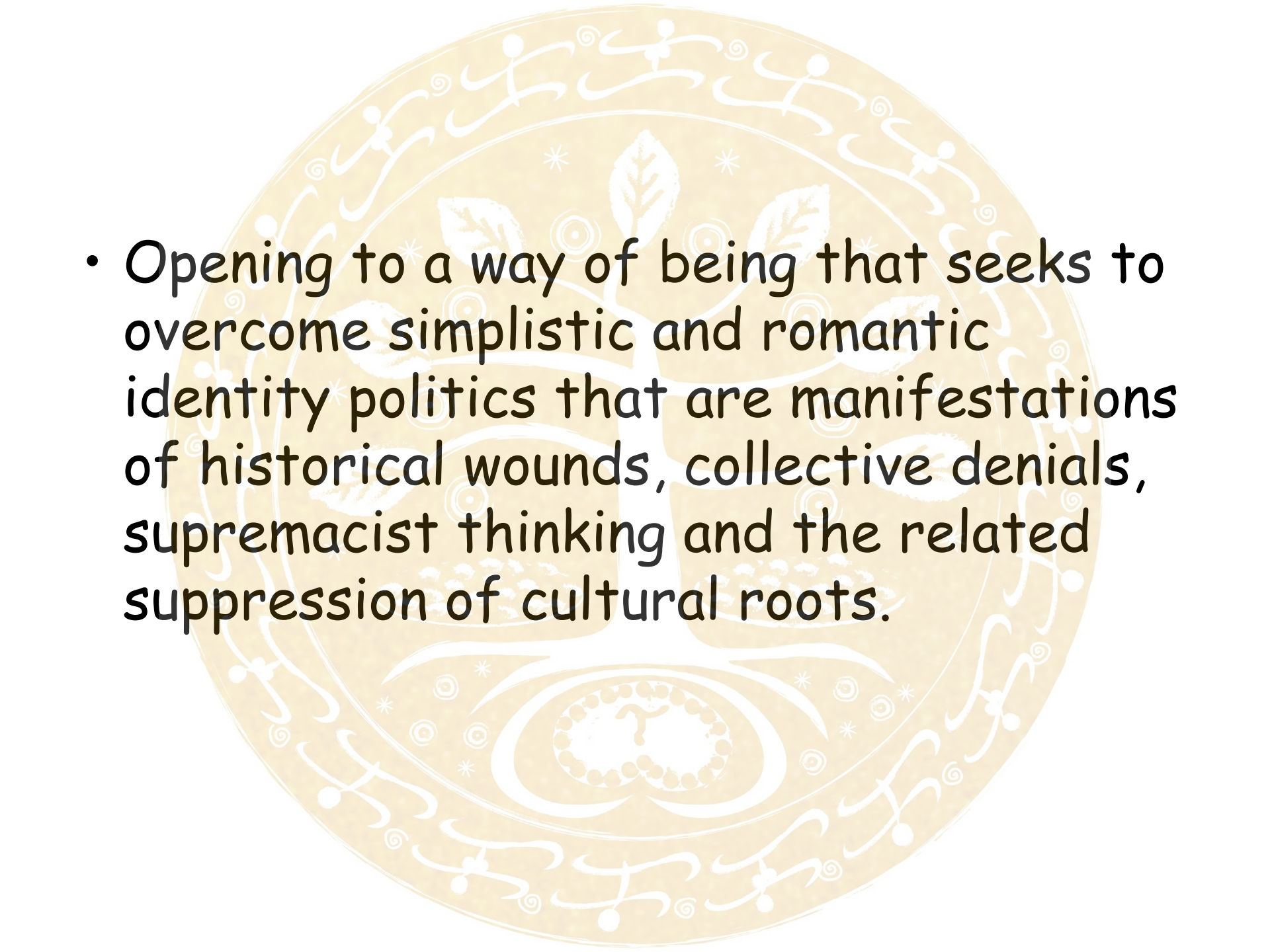


- Is it possible to have deep roots in a place without facing the shadow of conquest, whiteness, colonization, enslavement?

Shadow Work



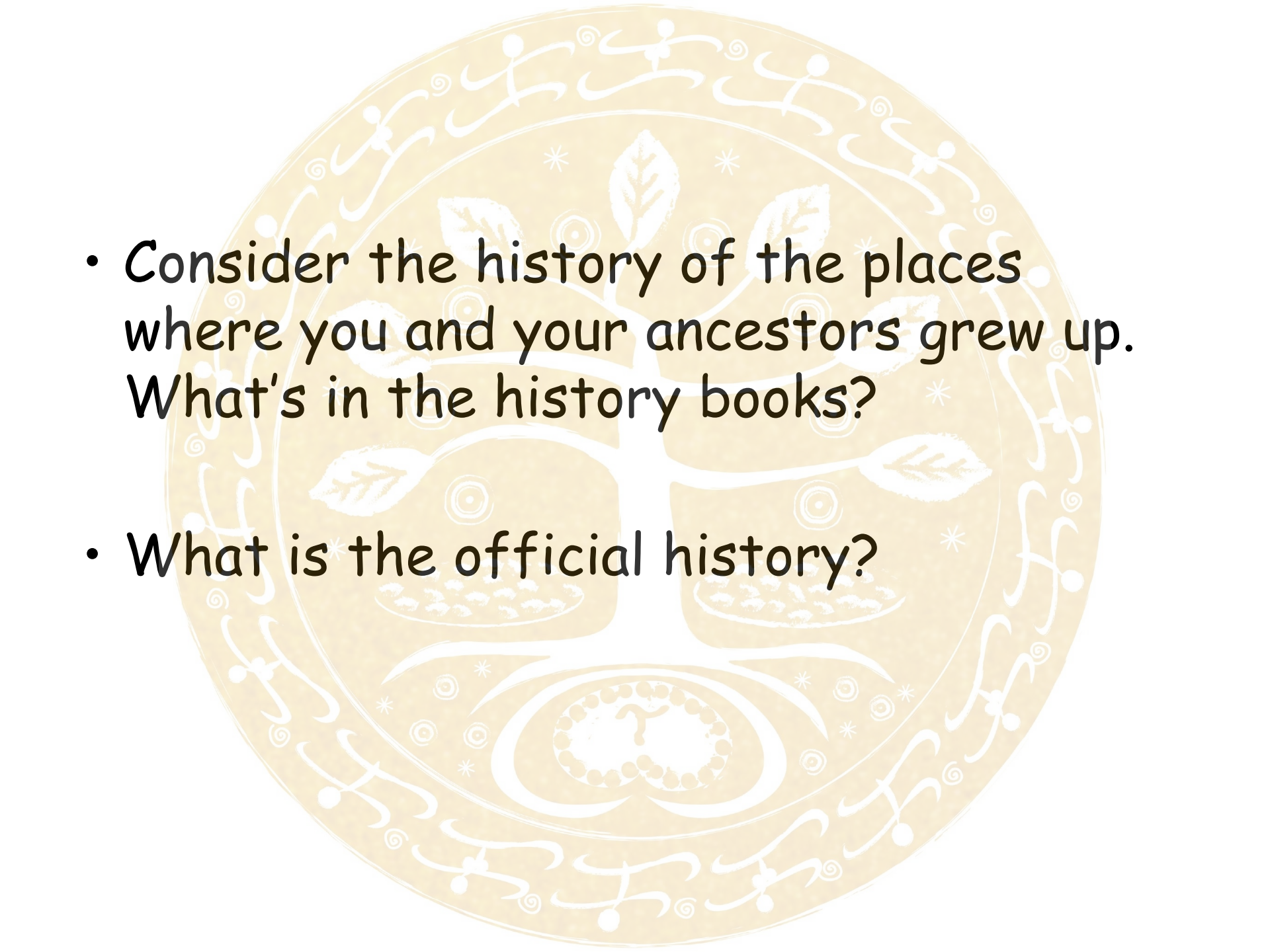
- Forgetting or denying or destroying the language of a place is not just murder of people but it is also a violence towards plants and animals.

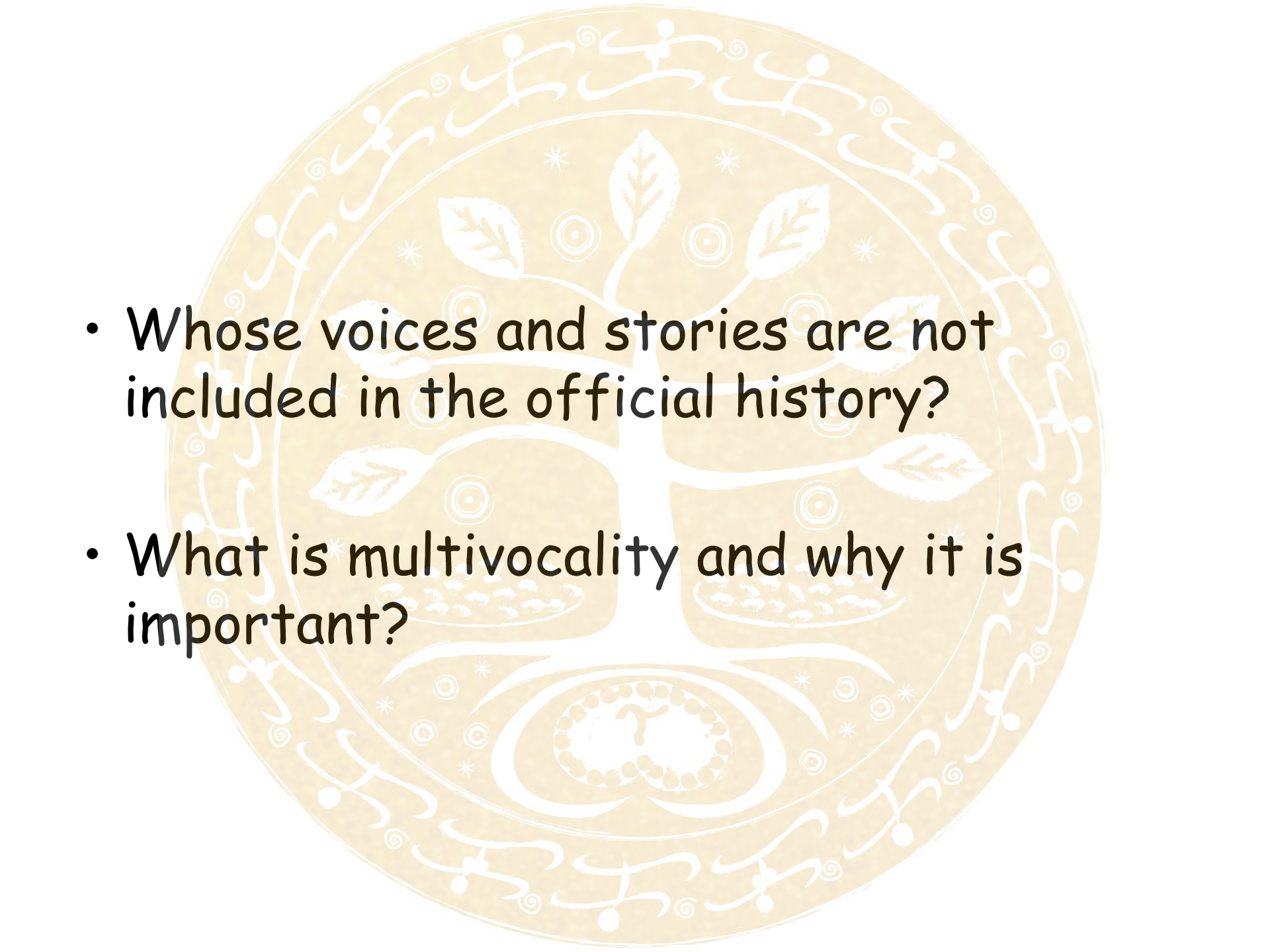
- 
- Opening to a way of being that seeks to overcome simplistic and romantic identity politics that are manifestations of historical wounds, collective denials, supremacist thinking and the related suppression of cultural roots.

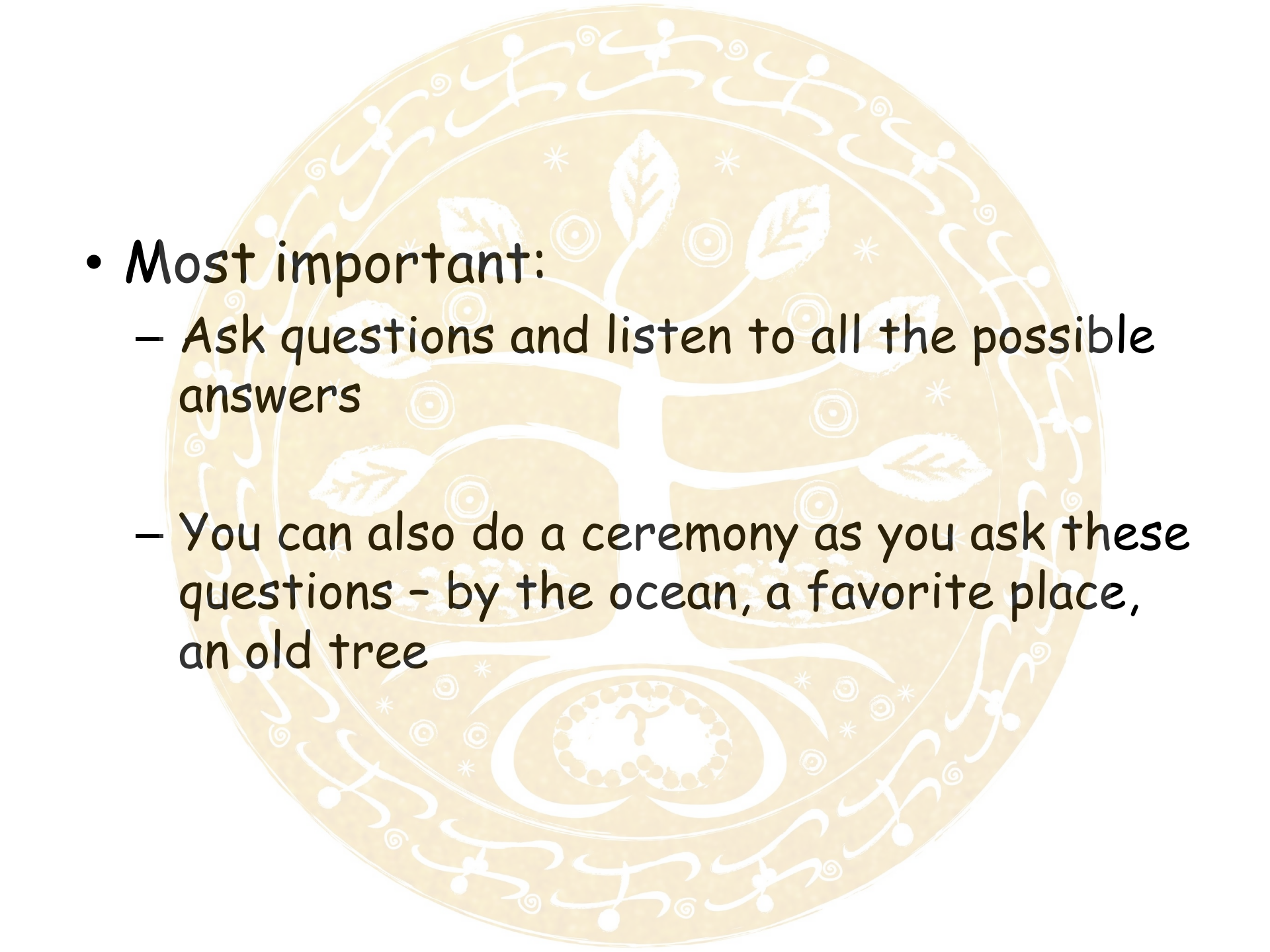
History and Place



- Is your presence shallow and incomplete?
- Do we behave as if we have deep roots in place?
- What is missing from ourselves, our own stories, and the narratives told by and about where we live? How does that manifest in our lives?

- 
- Consider the history of the places where you and your ancestors grew up. What's in the history books?
 - What is the official history?

- 
- Whose voices and stories are not included in the official history?
 - What is multivocality and why it is important?

- 
- **Most important:**
 - Ask questions and listen to all the possible answers
 - You can also do a ceremony as you ask these questions - by the ocean, a favorite place, an old tree

we may have lived
in different cultures

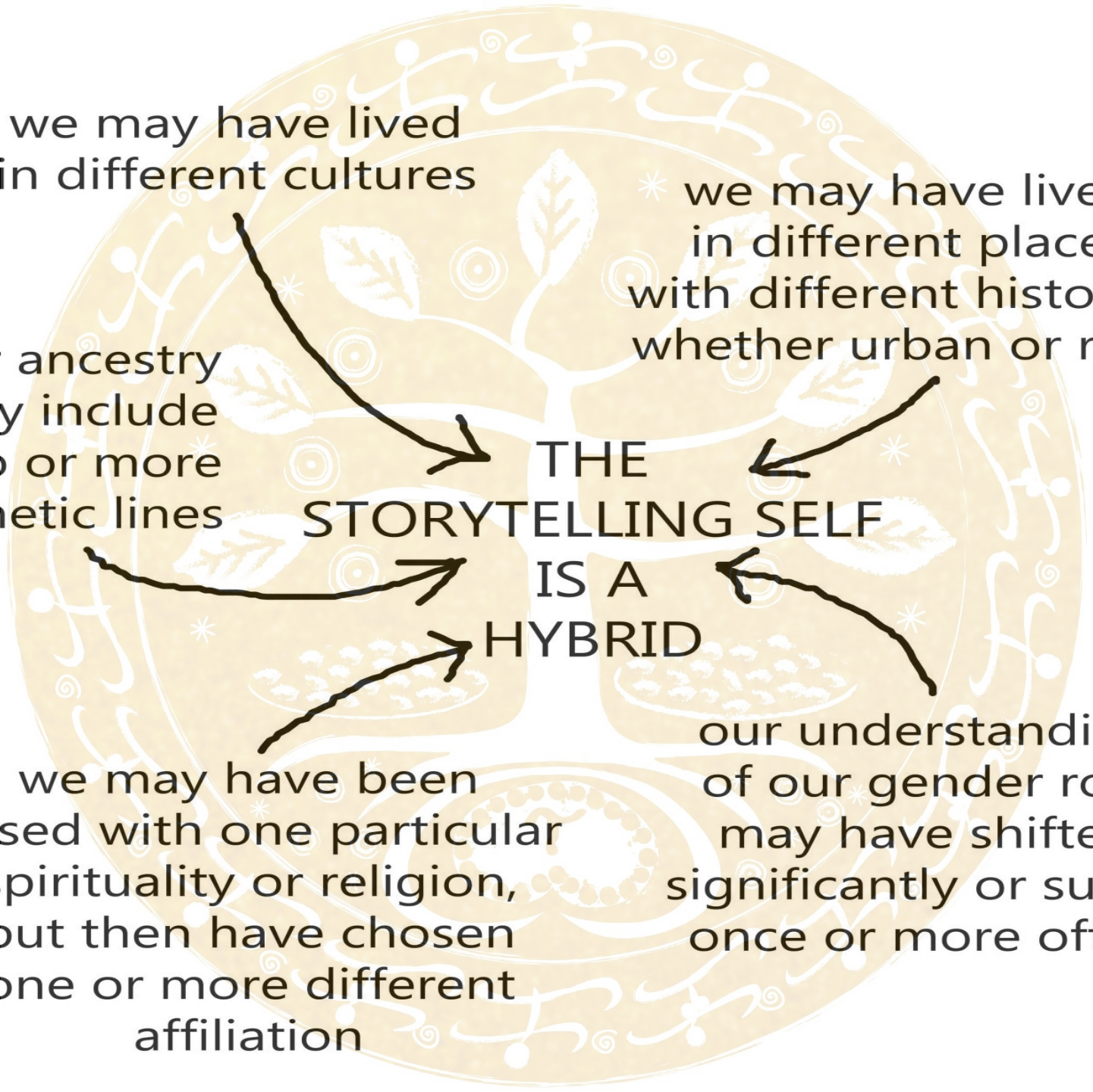
* we may have lived
in different places
with different histories,
whether urban or rural

our ancestry
may include
two or more
genetic lines

THE
STORYTELLING SELF
IS A
HYBRID

we may have been
raised with one particular
spirituality or religion,
but then have chosen
one or more different
affiliation

our understanding
of our gender role
may have shifted
significantly or subtly
once or more often



Communitas



- To experience ourselves as part of something larger (individualism makes this difficult)
- People seek experiences of the sacred and communal bonding (festivals, fiestas; in nature; in revolution; in times of catastrophe)

Communitas



- Loss and repression of ecstatic rituals as they were deemed inappropriate for “civilized” beings
- Loss of ‘cultural container’ - traditional rituals and stories for guidance and interpretation.
- Personal and collective rituals provide opportunity to experience communitas

Other Elements to be Explored

- Sex/Gender
- Sexuality
- Community
- Faith/Spirituality
- Dreams
- Mythic Imagination
- Storytelling



List of Resources



- Ethnoautobiography : stories and practices for unlearning whiteness, decolonization, and uncovering ethnicities, by Jürgen Werner Kremer and R Jackson-Paton
 - <https://bit.ly/2O1dycz>
- Books published by the Center for Babaylan Studies and friends
 - <http://www.babaylan.net/art/books-by-cfbs-organizers-members-friends/>