Challenging Boundaries: Seven Serigraphs By Kwakwaka'wakw Artist Francis Dick

By

Andrea Merriam Donovan
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[redacted]

Dr. Catherine Harding, Supervisor (Department of History In Art)

[redacted]

Dr. Lianne McLarty, Departmental Member (Department of History In Art)

[redacted]

Dr. Andrea Walsh, Outside Member (Department of Anthropology)

[redacted]

Ms. Dana Claxton, External Examiner (Visual Artist, MA Student, Simon Fraser University)

University Of Victoria

Supervisor: Dr. Catherine Harding

ABSTRACT

This thesis is an analysis of some traditional settler art historic practices within the realm of Indigenous art history. This work concentrates on seven serigraphs by Kwakwaka'wakw artist Francis Dick, foregrounding her words about her work and life.

The introduction of this thesis is meant to contextualize the process of witnessing, or listening to Francis Dick as the pivotal tool for myself, as a settler art historian, and examines how this notion has come to be vital for myself as a methodology. The first chapter, my methodology chapter, examines and critiques traditional art historical and academic protocols that are not progressive when dealing with contemporary Indigenous art history from a settler perspective. The traditional art historic and academic practices that I have chosen to critique include: the Human Subjects Committee protocol at The University of Victoria, multicultural art history, some postmodern tenants of art history, and new age art history. I then consider alternative methodology, which is used throughout the thesis. The methodology used for this thesis is based on dialogue with the artist, self-reflexivity, listening, a myriad of feminist epistomologies, the idea of marginality as a site of personal and political strength, narrative, and is broadly labeled discursive feminist ethnography. The second chapter introduces Francis Dick and examines some of the long history of colonization the Kwakwaka'wakw Peoples and other Indigenous Northwest Coast Peoples faced, and continue to face. This chapter is a brief biography of Francis Dick, predominantly in her own words, discussing her art and life. Chapter three deals with three self-portrait serigraphs by

Francis Dick, considering what they mean to her, and my own tentative analysis. Chapter four deals with three of Francis Dick's serigraphs that honor wommin, again, considering what they mean to her and including my own analysis. The conclusions of this thesis bring the critiques of traditional art historical methodologies full circle to exemplify how some texts use the oppressive epistomologies critiqued in chapter one. The conclusions of this thesis also recognize some very progressive Indigenous art historical texts, noting the difference in their methodological approaches, as opposed to traditional settler art historical discourse. I end this thesis with an evaluation of my methodology and the conclusion that this thesis is a site of intervention in the traditional discourse of Indigenous art history.

Examiners:

[redacted]

Dr. C. Harding, Supervisor (Department Of History In Art)

[redacted]

Dr. L. McLarty, Departmental Member (Department Of History In Art)

[redacted]

Dr. A. Walsh, Outside Member (Department Of Anthropology)

[redacted]

Ms. Dana Claxton, External Examiner (Visual Artist, MA Student, Simon Fraser University)

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Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to acknowledge Francis Dick for making this work a reality. Francis' art is only surpassed in beauty and depth by her person. It is so rare in this life that one is able to actually meet with one of their heroines, let alone get a chance to work with her, for this opportunity I will be grateful my entire life. Charlene Simon, with her intelligence, wit and wisdom expanded my vision of Francis and her work with her dedication and grace and facilitated all parts of this project. Sarah Hunt, a brilliant writer and amazing friend, who first introduced me to Francis' art and then to Francis herself, is a dear person in my life and a gift to the world. Randy Hart, editor and computer genius, was invaluable to this project and irreplaceable in my life. Anthony Hebert, audio technician and dog care expert, made 116 pages of translation possible with his exceptional knowledge of audio recording and extraordinary patience in teaching me what I needed to know in that realm. For accommodating my quirky need to long-hand this entire thesis I thank the following University Of Victoria Wommin's Studies Goddesses for providing me with space to write: Helen Rezanowich, Christine St.Peter, and Debby Yaffe. For providing me with serigraph write-ups I thank Caroline Riedel at the Maltwood Museum And Art Gallery, Patti Tugwell at Ancestral Journeys Art Gallery, and Vincent Rickard and Zoe Jackson at Pacific Editions Gallery. For tireless, prompt and enthusiastic encouragement in this project I would like to thank Dr. Catherine Harding, a womin who truly embodies the term teacher. I would like to acknowledge Dr. Andrea Walsh, for her inspiration and knowledge and Dr. Lianne McLarty for her politics that have sparked me since my undergraduate years at The University Of Victoria. Caroline Riedel and the other computer hyper-literate wommin at the Maltwood Gallery must also be thanked for their roles in scanning the serigraph reproductions that appear in this thesis. I would like to thank my mother for insisting that I "look with my eyes and not with my mouth" and my father for our mutual clashes that lead me to realize the power of my voice. I am grateful to The Rummoli Sisters and The Ultimate Man for the many evenings of lost pennies and nickels, curry dinners, conversation and true friendship. I would like to thank Jen Riedel for making me believe again in things lost. I would like to thank Caroline Riedel for making me re-value the strength in honesty. I would like to thank Randy Hart for sharing a common language with me and uncommon comfort. I would also like to acknowledge that this thesis was written on Coast Salish Land, a fact that I believe of dire importance to remember and appreciate.

In this thesis, the thoughts, feelings and opinions of Francis Dick are directly quoted. All other opinions represented here are those of the writer. **I come from an activist feminist viewpoint. Many of my terms of reference are located in a feminist dialectic.**

Introduction

...You can't just look at [Indigenous Northwest Coast Art] if you're really interested in looking at The Arts. It's got political innuendos, it's got historical reference, it's got personal expression. It's all intertwined in such a complex, deep kind of way that you can't just look at it and be separate from what's happening politically, you can't, it's just impossible. If you're truly, truly to understand what the art is about, you need to be able to look at the whole scope.

I guess [what] frustrates me is that people look at Northwest Coast Art [and] go, 'oh how lovely, oh how beautiful, oh let me collect this,' and it's like they have no idea, they have not a clue where it comes from and how it actually gets from this place to that place. It's an amazing journey. I don't think very many people know, maybe they're not interested, maybe they don't think to ask the question, but it seems really bizarre to me that people could be interested in Northwest Coast Art and not know the journey.

-Francis Dick, Kwakwaka'wakw Artist from The House Of Kawadelekala, Musqamakw Dzawadaenutw Band (The Four Tribes Of Kingcome Inlet), 1999.

This thesis is a struggle to listen, to witness Francis Dick's words and work, a hunger to learn, situated in a colonized country, this learning is grounded in "think[ing] to ask the question." I am convinced that the only way for me to write this thesis is by asking the artist herself about her own process. I am writing as a "settler"[1] sitting in the

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1. Lee Maracle, I Am Woman: A Native Perspective On Sociology And Feminism (Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1996), 119-121. Maracle, Stoh:lo Nation, writes: "My whole life is lived in the firm conviction that neither Canada nor the United States "belongs" to Europe. This land was wrested from us by force and since conquest, (not "contact"), Europeans have built a system of lawless pillage and plunder of the earth and its people on the graves of our ancestors....[Europeans] pillaged Africa for Black hands to build their colossus and they pillaged Asia for the skills and knowledge necessary to transform the world." Thus Maracle defines the term settler as people who are not

middle of Coast Salish land[2] attempting to write with and about Indigenous[3] artist Francis Dick. This thesis is most importantly about voice: Francis Dick's voice and my voice speaking both in dialogue and individually in reaction to settler work that voices-over or speaks the Indigenous artist in what I will be terming traditional art historical discourse. I consider traditional art history to be defined by the voice of the settler 'specialist' who uses patriarchical white supremacist dominant cultural methodologies that voice-over Indigenous art and artists. In order to foreground this transformational politic of *listening* to learn from the artist herself, I find it necessary to identify myself: why and how I came to this epistemology and met this powerful womin whose art and words

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Indigenous and not 'products' of the European project of forced labor and colonization. I shall be using it to describe European descended peoples and peoples who have settled in The Americas voluntarily past and present.

2. Bill White, University Of Victoria Aboriginal Liaison Officer, personal communication, January 21, 1999. According to Mr. White, the University Of Victoria is built upon the Coast Salish village site of Thuleescha. White cites this information as coming from Dr. Samuel Sam, Tsartlip, Coast Salish.

3. Christine Welsh, University Of Victoria Women's Studies instructor and Metis filmmaker, personal communication, February 8, 1999. Welsh communicated: "I tend to use the term Indigenous for a number of reasons. First, I feel that the term Fist Nations, at least in this country, is a political term that more often than not denotes status or treaty Indians (or at least those Aboriginal people who come under the agesis of The Assembly Of First Nations). For me it is an exclusionary term that does not include Metis, non-status and urban Aboriginal people. I do use the term 'Aboriginal," but I feel that "Indigenous" more accurately reflects the reality of who we are as first peoples of the land. It also reminds us of our connections to other original peoples around the world and can help to both put our experiences in perspective and help build awareness of and solidarity with other original peoples." In this thesis I will be using Indigenous when not using a direct quote from a source which may contain different terminology to indicate Indigenous peoples.

have taught and continue to teach me that there is never a reason for not asking, never a reason for relying solely on what is already published when I am able to listen.

As a settler from two colonized countries, The United States and Canada, I have a responsibility to grapple with my present and ancestral identity as a member of the dominant culture. As Lee Maracle, Stoh:lo Nation, puts it, "As mature adults, we are responsible for cleaning up the mess in which we historically have allowed ourselves to become enmeshed. Responsible; having the ability to respond to a given situation....We must respond to our conditions of life in order to change them."[4] This work, while written in response to a general tendency of traditional art history to ignore the words of the Indigenous artist in favor of the settler art historian's opinions about the artist, (hereafter a practice that I will note as traditional art history), is not an obligation in the sense of redemption for myself. This work is not an attempt to penance away my positionality. As Maria C. Lugones and Elizabeth V.Spellman write: Another reason for engaging in this task [cross-cultural research] is the motive of duty,

> 'out of obligation,' because white/Anglos have done people of color wrong. Here again two considerations: coming into Hispano, Black, Native American worlds out of obligation puts white/Anglos in a morally self righteous position that is inappropriate. You are active, we are passive. We become the vehicles of your own redemption.[5]

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4. Maracle, I Am Woman, 91.

5. Maria C. Lugones And Elizabeth V. Spellman, "Have We Got A Theory For You! Feminist theory, Cultural Imperialism And The Demand For The Woman's Voice" in Hypatia Reborn: Essays In Feminist Philosophy, ed. Azizah Y. Al-Hibri And Margaret A. Simons (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 32.

I hope to eschew any notion of writing away my identity through a self-reflexive dialectic engagement with Francis Dick that results in a learning experience wherein we are both active agents of expression.

So many times I catch myself thinking and saying in exhaustion and in grief that racism, sexism, homophobia and other harmful perpetrations of the dominant ideology will never end; but this attitude avoids responsibility and may even be internalized to recenter hopeless dominant discourses, another danger in cross-cultural dialogue and research. bell hooks writes that:

> Unfortunately, so many white people are eager to believe that racism cannot be changed because internalizing that assumption downplays the issue of accountability. No responsibility need be taken for not changing something if it is perceived as immutable.[6]

The impetus to change something, to do this work in a different way, a way that transgresses the traditional academics, is then realized as a way to truly address responsibility. Guilt and accountability being separate entities may result in responsibility and action. Wendy Rose, Hopi/Miwok, suggests that "Guilt is non-productive. Accountability is to recognize who benefits, who suffers and try to make amends. You try to find some way to balance it with something positive in your life."[7] This work is a search for balance in the way that Wendy Rose describes.

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6. bell hooks, Killing Rage:Ending Racism (New York:Henry Holt And Co. Publishers, 1995), 270-271.

7. Wendy Rose, "You...Who Have Removed Us: At What Cost?" in Messengers Of the Wind:Native American Women Tell Their Life Stories, ed. Judith Katz (New York:Ballentine Books, 1995), 212.

I came to this thesis paralyzed except for my feminism.[8] As a settler womin[9] I was convinced that I could not speak for an Indigenous artist because this would reproduce dominant traditional discourse by effacing Francis Dick's voice. However, my silence within the atrocities of colonization would surely signal approval of this dominant tradition. I decided to use the best tool that I have earned to regain action, feminism. Within my art historical feminist politic there is a vital concern for the words of the artist, Adrienne Rich notes that

> ...words *can help* us move or keep us paralyzed, and that our choice of language and verbal tone have something -a great deal- to do with how we live our lives and whom we end up speaking with and hearing; and that we can deflect words, by trivialization, of course, but also by ritualized respect, or we can let them enter our souls and mix with the juices of our minds.[10]

As I researched and lived within this paralysis, I found

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8. Susan Bordo, "Feminism, Postmodernism And Gender Skepticism" in Feminism/Postmodernism, ed. Linda Nicholson (New York:Routledge, 1990),142. Bordo explains the paralysis of cross-cultural work as such: "In the context of our specific history, assessing where we are now, I believe that feminism stands less in danger of the 'totalizing' tendencies of feminists than of increasingly paralyzing anxiety over falling (from what grace?) into ethnocentricism of 'essentialism.' (The often-present implication that such a fall indicates deeply conservative and racist tendencies, of course, intensifies such anxiety)."

9. I use the spelling womin and not woman to indicate that as a womin I believe we are not the unmarked of men, an additive, but beings different from men and with diverse concerns. Womin being the singular, and wommin being the plural. See also Brit As, "A Feminist University:The Thrill And Challenges, Conflicts And Rewards Of Trying To Establish An Alternative Education" in Radically Speaking: Feminism Reclaimed, ed. Jo Turner (Australia:Spinifex Press, 1996), 537.

10. Adrienne Rich, Blood, Bread And Poetry (New York:W.W. Norton And Co., 1986), 90-91.

that other settler feminists were situated very much like myself, armed to the teeth with awareness that it is only through action with respect that this constant inquiry must be breached in dialogue. Yet feeling uncertain about how this dialogue was to be framed.[11]

My commitment to feminism as a radical political intervention in the dominant discourses of overlapping oppressions (sexism, racism, homophobia, among a myriad of

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11. Marilyn Frye, "White Woman Feminist: 1983-1992" in Willful Virgin (New York:The Crossing Press, 1992), 148-149. And Minnie Bruce Pratt, "Identity:Skin Blood Heart" in Yours In Struggle: Three Feminist Perspectives On Anti-Semitism And Racism (New York:Long Haul Press, 1984), 18-19.I am including both of these perspectives because they articulate the paralysis of white/settler feminists wrestling with issues of being an ally and coming to critical consciousness that speak to parts of my own journey. Marilyn Frye writes: "All of my [feminist] ways of knowing seemed to failed me- my perception, my commonsense, my good will, my anger, honor and affection, my intelligence and insight. Just as walking requires something fairly sturdy and firm underfoot, so being an actor in the world requires a foundation of ordinary moral intellectual confidence. Without that, we don't know how to be or how to act; we become strangely stupid; the commitment against racism becomes itself immobilizing. Even obvious and easy acts either do not occur to us or threaten to be racist by presumptuous assumptions or misjudged timing, wording, or circumstances....The great enemies in my heart have been the despair and the resentment which come with being required (by others and my own integrity) to repair something apparently beyond my powers to effect." However frustrating this paralysis may be, it becomes much more exacerbated if these "apparent" aberrations are allowed to become excuses for not divesting of racism every day and all day, and they may come to be seen as articulations of some type of FALSE oppressed white feminist mantra that I defy. Minnie Bruce Pratt writes: "Yes, that fear [of being able to do nothing against the monolith of racism] is there, but I will try to be at the edge at my skin, listening, asking what new thing will I hear, will I see, will I let myself feel, beyond the fear. I try to say to myself: To acknowledge the complexity of another's experience is not to deny my own. I try to say: When I acknowledge what my people, what those who are like me, have done to people with less power and less safety in the world, I can make a place for things to be different, a place where I can feel grief, sorrow, not to be sorry *for* the others, but to mourn, to expand my circle of self, follow my need to loosen the constrictions of fear, be a break in the cycle of [self] fear and attack....To be caught within the narrow circle of self is not just a fearful thing, it is a lonely thing."

other discriminatory practices) transforms me from that place of paralysis to a place of consciousness. bell hooks states the necessity of this feminist transformation as such:

> True politicization-coming to critical consciousness-is a difficult, 'trying' process, one that demands that we give up set ways of thinking and being, that we shift our paradigms,that we open ourselves to the unknown,the unfamiliar. Undergoing this process, we learn what it means to struggle and in this effort we experience the dignity and integrity of being that comes with revolutionary change. If we do not change our consciousness, we cannot change our actions or demand change from others.[12]

To demand change is a paramount concern in this work. As such, I identify as a feminist activist engaged in narrative (asking, listening and telling). I identify as an ally and a witness, an ally in fighting dominant discourse that is oppressive, and a witness to Francis Dick's words and works. As a feminist activist invested in making conscious choices, I wish to explore this methodology for its potential for success in a self-reflexive analysis.

The process of becoming an ally, especially in an arena relegated largely to speaking about, as opposed to speaking with, an Indigenous artist comes with some exceptional concerns. Mohawk writer Beth Brant speaks to the appropriation of voice in settler research pointing out that:

> This leads me to ask you who are white to listen to us, the Aboriginal peoples whose land you occupy. What you will hear from us is the truth of how it is with us. The truth does not lie in the realm of colonial supremacy, nor in the kingdom of imperialistic propaganda. No one can speak for us but us. There may be those of European descent who want to be our allies

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12. bell hooks, Talking Back: Thinking Feminist-Thinking Black (Toronto: Between The Lines, 1995), 25.

> in the elimination of racism. I welcome you....I do not say that only Native peoples can write about Natives. I will never say that. I do say that you can't steal my story and call it your own. You can't steal my spirit and call it yours. This has been the North American Dream--stolen land, stolen children, stolen lives, stolen dreams--and now we are all living the nightmare of this thievery. If your history is one of cultural dominance, you must be aware of and *own* that history before you can write about me and mine.[13]

A large part of 'owning my history' in order to become an ally is identifying my positionality. With this identification of myself comes the awareness that this is not always a pleasant endeavor. During the course of the on-going dialogues between Francis Dick and myself I am constantly challenged to learn this ownership and from a place of cultural dominance. Lugones and Spellman so truly observe that in this type of research:

> ...you need to learn to become unintrusive, unimportant, patient to the point of tears, while at the same time open to learning any possible lessons. You will have to come to terms with the sense of alienation, of not belonging, of having your world thoroughly disrupted, having it criticized and scrutinized from the point of view of those who have been harmed by it, having important concepts central to it dismissed....[14]

Perhaps this is the aspect of the research that makes me feel that this thesis is active, is indeed activist. I embrace this new knowledge as a relief from the constant anger and agonizing over the fact that seminal texts are sometimes outright lies. Not that this surprises me, for I have experienced it before. That they are still being taught,

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13. Beth Brant, Writing As Witness: Essay And Talk (Toronto: Women's Press limited, 1994), 52.

14. Lugones And Spellman, "Have We Got A Theory For You!," 31.

bought and sold instead of the truths is a dynamic recolonizing practice.

This thesis is a political act, it is writing for social change:[15]

> [i]ntellectual work can itself be a gesture of political activism if it challenges us to know in ways that counter and oppose existing epistemologies...that keep us colonized, subjugated, etc. Intellectual work has that potential only if the individual is committed to a progressive political vision of social change.[16]

To posit a liberal humanist level playing field where we are all colonized or subjugated to the same degree is ludicrous.[17] Subversive writing necessarily understands that the current dominant paradigms are far too epistemologically deficient to even begin to acknowledge how most of 'us', (Indigenous peoples, wommin and other historically marginalized peoples) understand, and live within, the world. As a political examination of specific cultural inequity, writing as resistance, highlights the notion of diversity and material solidarity of overlapping oppressions by foregrounding the historical contexts of traditionally silenced voices.

In order to engage in this activism, the knowledge of the very oppressing nature of the status quo must come under

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15. bell hooks, Yearning: Race, Gender And Cultural Politics (Toronto: Between The Lines, 1992), 5-6. hooks writes that "Working in the academy, as many of us do, it is through a liberatory pedagogy that we make useful critical intervention. Two important spaces for the transmission of our ideas are writing and speaking."

16. hooks, Killing Rage, 234.

17. Jurgen Habermas, Charles Taylor in Multiculturalism: Examining The Politics Of Recognition, ed. Amy Gutmann (Princeton University Press, 1994). Both theorist's takes in this work exemplify the liberal humanist level playing field to which I am making reference.

interrogation. My own identification as a producer of knowledges for change that foregrounds experiential knowledges, is another prime consideration of this thesis. Himani Bannerji reminds us that "if knowledge is to be 'active,' that is, oriented to radical social change, then it must be a critical practice of the direct producers, whose lives and experiences must be the basis for their own knowledge-making endeavor."[18] As a settler feminist activist writing to identify as a critical interrogator of traditional art historical discourse, my next issue is to question how my active being considers overarching themes in ethical research.

The University of Victoria, like many other institutions, has a protocol for ensuring that the University does not become embroiled in costly litigations (among other pernicious situations). The Human Research Ethics Committee, the mechanism invoked (indeed mandatory) for university 'members' wishing to research, speak or interact with peoples who will then be considered "human subjects," through which I successfully gained approval to speak with Francis Dick, was never my first ethical concern.[19] The desire to be honest, to stand in solidarity, as an ally, and my position as a settler womin with a responsibility to continue to engage in the war against racism, are my base ethical concerns which will be introduced here and later expanded in my methodology chapter.

My reasons for engaging in counter-hegemonic practice within this work are vines that emerge from a very deep root, nourished by shame and remorse at what the history of this

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18. Himani Bannerji, "But Who Speaks For Us?" in Unsettling Relations: The University As A Site Of Feminist Struggles, eds. Himani Bannerji, Linda Carty, Kari Dehli, Susan Heald And Kate McKenna (Ontario:Women's Press, 1991), 76.

19. I will be addressing my concerns regarding The Human Research Ethics Committee in my methodology chapter.

country is and what it has been, but cultivated with righteous rage and a notion that change must be forced. Honestly, it would have been easier to write about anything else, but ever more honestly cultural imperialism is everything else, and I know it. As Katherine Kirkwood writes about personal response in feminist research methodology:

> I sometimes feel this overwhelming perspective must be a part of the preoccupation of a first-time researcher, like someone who spends all day in the ocean only to find when she comes home the waves still seem to be moving beneath her. But I have the uncomfortable suspicion that it is less 'taking one's work home with one' than it is discovering that we are living in that ocean all the time, and that the waves are such an integral part of our lives that we do not always perceive them until one crashes down upon us, yet they lie below our every move and perception.[20]

So I decided to honestly live in this ocean and face the politics that decide who is written about and how instead of riding the next wave in and walking away. Honestly, the shame leaves me no other choice:

> Because I was [am] implicated in the doing of some of these injustices, and I held [hold] myself, and my people, responsible, what my expanded understanding meant was that I felt in a struggle with myself, *against* my self. This breaking through did not feel like liberation but like destruction.[21]

In the "destruction," in the chaos of coming to

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20. Catherine Kirkwood, "Investing Ourselves: Use Of Researcher Personal Response In Feminist Methodology" in Women's Studies In The 1990s: Doing Things Differently? ,Eds. Joanna deGroot And Mary Maynard (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 18.

21. Bruce Pratt, "Identity: Skin Blood Heart," 35-36.

solidarity with Francis Dick, there were decades of miles of salt water swallowed and still I learn every day that more mouthfuls exist. Not to bemoan my skin color privilege. For, as I have mentioned, that is truly detestable. Again, this society is not situated on a level playing field where everyone is equally oppressed and it is folly to believe otherwise. I write this to introduce myself with as much honesty as I can. Yes, it is difficult to be hated in classes where I seemed to be bleating out the same old refrain, 'but what about racism, sexism etcetera?' More difficult still is to lose friends who could not stand my gravity on these issues, and then there is that professor who wrote a commentary lamenting my feminist 'phase.' But in my experiences there is absolutely nothing comparable nor imaginable to me that would signal that my 'oppressions' are in any way equal to, or more difficult than, the horror faced by Indigenous peoples who suffer daily under my privilege.

To stand in solidarity with Francis Dick means that I must be ethical. I must ask her permission for me to stand with her. She is my teacher; but not because she has to teach me. For too long settler peoples have been asking Indigenous peoples to educate us in order that we divest of our own racism. After over five hundred years of colonization, it is important to state that if I am to divest of dominant cultural racist notions, I must live every day to be responsible enough to search for and listen to the words and work of people of color. bell hooks highlights why a dialectical way of being is so vital:

> It is a utopian dream to imagine that white women will divest of white supremacist thinking in isolation without critical engagement and dialectical exchange with non-white peers. It is concrete interaction between groups that is the proving ground, where our commitments to anti-racist behavior are tested and

> realized. While white women can and must assume a major voice speaking to and about anti-racist struggle to other white women, it is equally important that they learn to speak with and, if need be, make it necessary too for women of color in ways that do not reinscribe and perpetuate white supremacy[22]

For me, solidarity in this project means working on anti-racist discourse through self-education and engaging in "critical exchanges" with Francis Dick on her own terms. Abiding by her terms is a part of an ethics for change. Lee Maracle summarizes this responsibility:

> Change is about being different; it is not about supporting this or that struggle, it is about being different. It is personal, in the sense that you take charge of yourself, own your convictions or lack of them and pursue them. Change is about never allowing someone to be silenced while you are there to speak. Change is not tolerating injustice. It is not about friendship, or supporting individuals because they are your friends. It is about personally taking on a different view of the world. No one supports me because I need it, but because they are against the racial inequalities built into this system and those inequalities violate white people and colored alike. Institutional inequity and passive acceptance of inequity by white Canadians prohibits your accessing me in any way, shape or form. Inequity denies you access to our different knowledge and experience: it condemns white folks to being half-smart, half-human.[23]

Inhabiting a location based on the production of institutionalized knowledge wherein dominant cultural forms are foregrounded as the main epistemologies (though not without progressive interventionaries in this hierarchically

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22. hooks, Killing Rage, 104-105. See also Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Class And Sex: Women Defining Difference," in Out There: Marginalization And Contemporary Culture, ed. Russell Ferguson (New York: MIT Pres, 1990), 281.

23. Lee Maracle, "Voice(s)-Over" in Telling It:Women And Language Across Cultures, eds. Telling It Book Collective (Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1990), 172.

ordered university setting) it is necessary for me to examine this site. By the term "progressive interventionaries" I mean students, professors and administrators that work in a counter-hegemonic style. While attempting to locate myself as a voice from within the university system, I will briefly touch on: what this context can mean for feminist scholarship; why history in art matters as a prime space for dissenting epistemologies; the values of interdisciplinary studies and some considerations for responsible art historical interventions in the dominant paradigm.

The context of university is thought to be self-contained, not the 'real world.' This is not at all the case. Educational institutions (not unlike other sites of human activity) work primarily to disseminate knowledges. As recent and on-going racial, social and gender inequities (to name but a few) on international campuses attest, it is ignorant to believe that meanings produced within this context are in any way more progressive than at other world-wide sites. The university is a site of privilege and prejudice, we are not exceptional. Unlike peoples discriminated against because of their cultural identities, I do have a certain amount of privilege within this institution. I do not wish to deny being given this hierarchical position, however, I am also disillusioned with this same paradigm that so well affords me a modicum of privilege. This institutionalized inequity, this privileged status which rests within the bounds of hierarchically discriminatory practices, is solidified by settler wommin when we become entrapped and limited in our learning by accepting this positionality uncritically. To reject this tradition of limitation, to engage in feminist cultural politics, is, as Adrienne Rich understands, to reject "...the limitations of a tradition that--a manner of reading, of speaking, of writing, of criticizing--which was

never really designed to include us all."[24] The gains to be experienced in realizing that as settler wommin we are 'protected'-- and by that I mean sheltered, pedestalized, trivialized and paternalistically dismissed in the European traditional sexist 'sensibilities,'- are huge. Specific to this project, wommin from two diverse cultures in dialogue via a university protocol, the MA thesis, is a self-induced challenge to all of us to work on examining structural oppressions everywhere that keep us divided in order to further and protect hegemonic, racist, sexist discourse.

Feminist movement is not specific to the university setting. I do not claim that all feminist movement considers overlapping systemic oppressions as part of their projects. I simply demand that they should, and testify that my feminism includes more than the refutal of sexist discrimination in order to interrogate systemic inequalities that work on and off one another. Feminism is a useful tool in the university setting as well as in all other places where inequities persist. bell hooks writes:

> At this historical moment, there is a crisis of engagement within universities, [and I would add that this is also true of many other sites within the world-wide contexts for the dissemination of knowledges, for instance the internet] for when knowledge becomes comoditized, then much authentic learning ceases. Students who want to learn hunger for a space where they can be challenged intellectually. Students also suffer, as many of us who teach do, from a crisis of meaning, unsure about what has value in life, unsure even about whether it is important to stay alive. They long for a context where their subjective needs can be integrated with study, where the primary focus is a broader spectrum of ideas and models of inquiry, in short a dialectical context where there is serious and rigorous critical exchange. This is an important and exciting time for feminist pedagogy because in theory and in

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24. Rich, Blood, Bread And Poetry, 95.

practice our work meets these needs.[25]

History in art is an important location for feminist interdisciplinary writing because it evokes the longed-for context and discussion of structural base within its very name. Because traditional history in art has, and continues to be, largely concerned with a canon of white male artists, it is time to question why it is that art history matters at all.[26] Asking why history in art matters highlights structural inequities. Art is a form of social production that makes meanings. Art is not merely a "reflection of the real, such attitudes assume that reality is a 'natural' order that exists independent of... artistic practice."[27] Contexts, which include everything from self-situated identity through to the very last word and beyond, must be framed as forms of social production in this thesis. The very idea that white male artists are a "reflection of the real" propagates the silencing of peoples outside the dominant engendered culture who have always functioned to make meanings through art. Traditional art historical discourse is in the business of making these white male artists the only "reality" by mediating societies' sense of what is "natural" and "accurate" as art. Because this structural inequity exists in traditional art historical work it is refutable, indeed, resistance is fruitful.

History in art is important because art is a political

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25. hooks, Talking Back: Thinking Feminist - Thinking Black, 51.

26. For an examples of what I mean by traditional white supremacist history in art see my discussion of Bill Holm in Chapter Two and Peter Macnair in Conclusions. It is my belief and my experience that we live in a white supremacist patriarchical society, this domination is bore out in both overt and covert ways.

27. Mas'ud Zavarzadeh, Seeing Films Politically (New York: State University Of New York Press, 1991), 91.

act permeating all locations. As such it has the potential and power to do many things. Most focal for this project are the two collary actions of perpetuating the status quo and radically redressing and transgressing the status quo's conceptions of art and artist. Puebloan writer Paula Gunn Allen writes that "...the image is where the action is begotten...whoever controls the image controls the population...those who define us determine not only our lives, but our concept of our very selves, and that colonization begins and ends with the definer...."[28] In order to transgress the traditional art historical meanings made about Indigenous art by settler art historians, by engaging in dialogue with Francis Dick, becomes an act to redress status quo conjecture on her art, this is a political act beside a highly politicized art and artist. The idea that "Art constitutes one of the rare locations where acts of transcendence can take place and have a wide-ranging transformational impact"[29] is far too reductive. Indigenous art production has been largely interpreted by settler discourse for colonial gains such as financial, individual connoisseurship, imperialistic national 'identity' and stymied in other ways in the forced service to the dominant culture. Art is everywhere and Indigenous art is no exception in Victoria. How it gets controlled by a traditional art historical paradigm leads me to the issue of accountability and why European and settler art historians need to be accountable for our interpretations.

Art, as interpreted by traditional European and settler

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28. Paula Gunn Allen, "Going Home, December 1992" in Reinventing The Enemy's Language: Contemporary Native Women's Writings Of North America (New York: W.W. Norton And Co., 1997), 151.

29. bell hooks, Art On My Mind: Visual Politics (New York: The New Press, 1996), 52.

art historical practice, is a project of making specific meanings about art that manifest notions of class. Within this paradigm art is seen to be the terrain of the white middle and upper classes. The project of disassociating the bourgeoisie conception of ownership of Indigenous art (and therefore its tacit 'ownership' of colonized art makers) is a reconceptualization of Indigenous art necessary through a repositioning of ourselves as art historians. The way in which settler and European art historians may first start to see ourselves as accountable for this propitiation of colonization is to realize and to call attention to our self-constructed authoritative state of being and then to consciously dispossess the voice of authority that speaks over artists and peoples whose silenced state we have produced in order to occupy this authoritative supremacy. This repositioning demands that we consider that "high culture [the traditional space occupied by art in bourgeoisie conception] plays a specific part in the reproduction of women's [and other traditionally marginalized peoples] oppression and in the circulation of relative values and meanings for ideological constructs...."[30] By accepting accountability for furthering the constructions of power that colonization, class, culture and gender have afforded art historians, an analysis of the ways in which these social productions of knowledge operate may be considered in order to come to a more progressive role for art historians.

The traditional art historical cultural imperialism perpetrated on the Indigenous artists of the Northwest Coast (which will be addressed more thoroughly in the following chapters) positions art historians as mediators between the artists, their art and the public. In this paradigm there

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30. Griselda Pollock, "Art, Art School, Culture: Individualism After The Death Of The Artist" in The Block Reader In Visual Culture (London:Routledge, 1996), 52.

may be a disregard for the meanings of the art within their contexts. This is indicative of a paternalistic degradation of the artists which results in countless re-colonizations of the artists through the manipulation of their art to fit the needs of dominant culture's on-going practice of colonization. Jon Bird addresses some of the dangers inherent in a system of traditional art history wherein Indigenous artists are silenced or voiced-over by the settler or European art historian:

> Museums and art galleries in the public sector are [in the traditional art history] part of those 'institutional state apparatuses' that exemplify the material effects of dominant ideologies; a process clearly identified by Carol Duncan and Allan Wallach in their influential article 'The Universal Survey Museum': "In the museum, the visitor is not called upon to identify with the state per se, but with its highest values. The visitor inherits this spiritual wealth but only on the condition that he (or she) lay claim to it in the museum. Thus the museum is the site of a symbolic transaction between the visitor and the state....Hence the museum's hegemonic function, the crucial role that it can play in the experiences of citizenship."...The consumption of the cultural experience is mediated through the discourse of experts and specialists-art historians, critics, curators, dealers-and is unavoidably linked with both the production of the obedient subject, and the beneficial (*sic*) effects of corporate capital[31]

Clearly the use of "value" here signifies ownership of cultural property that in many cases has been stolen, and therefore voiced-over by "experts" for the use of the dominant culture in order to gain both a sense of self and other. The "citizen" of dominant culture then may use the cultural property of the 'other' to 'gain' a national identity through cultural appropriation of the art as a sign of geographical place or static temporality. This dehumanizes

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31. Jon Bird, "Art History And Hegemony" in The Block Reader In Visual Culture (London: Routledge, 1996), 74.

the artist and cultural context as well as embraces a dominant cultural amnesia of how that art and the artists were, and continue to be, colonized by the "citizen's" gaze and own cultural impact. On the other hand, "citizens" may 'use' the cultural property to identify themselves in opposition to the commodified 'other.' This perpetuates another form of cultural appropriation that seeks to revel in the 'gains' of colonialism, a celebratory ahistoricizing voice-over of the seemingly non-existent artists of a distant and glorious past. The art historian's role in this cultural silencing is not only to 'mediate' the meanings made by the "citizen" but also to produce an identity for themselves as "specialist." These are a few basic considerations for why art historians must become self-consciously accountable for our interpretations in the traditional art historical paradigm that is mired in a voice-over silencing of Indigenous artists.

Jon Bird concludes his article by stating that as art historians "...we have to recognize that it is no longer [if it ever was ethically] possible to maintain the position of disinterested scholarship: whatever we do we are implicated in a politics of interpretation, and for our critical discourse to have any broader social effectivity it must also engage with and become part of, a politics of action."[32] Art history is an important space for dissent from this unethical practice of voicing-over Indigenous artistic subjectivity by becoming accountable for the traditional disciplinary problematics (some of which I will specifically define in chapter one) and ultimately defying the paradigm in favor of responsible art historical interventions. By interventions I mean responsible and respectful politically progressive methodologies and practices in settler art history that

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32. Bird, "Art History And Hegemony," 83.

operate against traditional art history's silencing of Indigenous artists.

Some practices necessary to engage with in order to deny traditional settler and European art historical practices of speaking the artist may be explored by divesting of acts that seek to make meanings that recenter dominant cultural ideologies. As a feminist settler art historian writing with Kwakwaka'wakw artist Francis Dick, my main objective in this thesis is in direct reaction against the practice of traditional art historical claims of 'specialist' status over the artists who are truly the specialists. This goal means I must consciously interrogate instances of 'othering' and of voicing-over her, in order to connect with her as the primary source of knowledge and to foreground her art's meanings in her own words. This does not mean that I cannot identify with her and her work. For this very process, identifying with one of her works, *Honoring Malidi*, is how I became aware of many things in my life and it was also a part of how I became certain that I wanted to work with Francis Dick. It is not the project of this thesis to completely deny myself but to speak with Francis Dick in a way that decenters the notion that I am somehow an 'expert' on her. In other words, I will not be voiceless in this thesis, however, I will be a voice that foregrounds listening as vital to this project.

The value of having an interdisciplinary approach to this project is certainly one of decentering dominant ideology by identifying across disciplines that are constructed as discreet 'specialist' producing factions coded as apparent only within the academic setting. Judith Stacey comments that disciplinary borderlands nurture the "...intellectual audacity feminists have needed to think our ways radically through disciplines" in order not to "...blunt the critical edge as well as the public intelligibility of

our...visionary project."[33] My feminism, as stated before, does not come from a specific location other than my disdain for social injustice. My life certainly does not rely upon only art historical discourse. Interdisciplinary studies, like my feminism, become a tool to use in all situations. I will be, and have been, drawing on wommin's studies, cultural studies, sociology, philosophy, history and art history in order to foreground the idea that, in as much as the university is not separate from the 'real world,' neither are the objectives of this thesis separable through imposed disciplinary boundaries. Interdisciplinary scholarship breaks down the constructedness of specializing to make way for the broader project of continuous learning.

Through the processes of respect for geographical location, self-identification, feminist activist ethical practice, within the boundless areas of artistic production and cultural imperialism in art historical discourse and beyond, and by using interdisciplinary tools, I hope to produce a thesis that becomes aware and progressive art historical work. With this work I hope to become what Jordan and Weedon understand to be "a small but increasing number of art historians who pay specific attention to individual biographies....Employing a reflexive stance, the New Art Historians question their own points of view as well as the claims of earlier art historians...."[34] Doing this work successfully depends on being responsible. Marilyn Frye states that "...being responsible can simply mean that one

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33. Judith Stacey, "Disloyal To The Disciplines: A Feminist Trajectory In The Borderlands" in Feminisms In The Academy, eds. Domna C. Stanton And Abagail J. Stewart (Michigan:The University Of Michigan Press, 1995), 312-313.

34. Glen Jordan And Chris Weedon, Cultural Politics: Class, Gender, Race And The Postmodern World (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1995), 404 and 470-471.

does not passively and unconsciously submit to the winds of culture; it means primarily that one is living, throughout one's life, as an *agent* in the matter of who and how one is and the matrix of circumstances that conditions that; and it means recognizing and caring about the fact that who and how one is has consequences for others."[35] The responsibility of this art historical thesis will not be a formalistic study as I feel that this treatment when not joined to a larger context, eschewing cultural practices in favor of a formalistic or purely stylistic endeavor, recenters the traditional art historical narrative of the specialist by voicing-over. As Griselda Pollock writes:

> the project of feminist art history is to "...refuse the art historian's permitted ignorance of living artists and contribute to the present day struggles of living producers. Feminist art history should see itself as a part of the political initiative of the women's movement, not just as a novel art historical perspective, aiming to improve existing, but inadequate, art history.[36]

Many settler art historians writing about Indigenous Northwest Coast Art devote entire tomes to Northwest Coast Formline, not unlike many other art historians who delve only into the formal effects achieved by great white male 'geniuses' of every designated epoch. To recreate "existing but inadequate" art history is not the project of this thesis and I feel that yet another work that focused primarily on the aesthetics of Northwest Coast Formline would be just that.

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35. Marilyn Frye, "History And Responsibility" in Hypatia reborn: Essays In Feminist Philosophy eds. Azizah Y, al-Hibri And Margaret Simons (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1990), 303-304.

36. Griselda Pollock, Vision And Difference: Femininity, Feminism And The Histories Of Art (London: Routledge, 1988), 14 and 23.

I think it is important to point out that there have been and will continue to be throughout this thesis a plethora of direct quotations from sources that have been traditionally silenced, as a specific interventionary tactic. I would sabotage this thesis if at once I would signal that voice as a political issue is to be focal and then to simultaneously paraphrase ad nauseam voices of political activists. I wish to make the reader aware of the issues central to these discordant voices because I cannot pretend to know (in an experiential way) the struggles facing these writers. Yet I can provide a documentation of these voices. In witnessing these non-mainstream thinkers I hope to honor them as my teachers and to make the reader familiar with these counter-hegemonic writers in order to spark the reader to seek out and use this transformational writing to effect political action. To be honest with myself, Francis Dick, and anyone who reads this thesis, is imperative to me. Lugones and Spellman state that "when the outsider makes clear that she is an outsider and that this is an outsider's account...there is a touch of honesty about what she is doing."[37]

> bell hooks asks: When will white female art historians and cultural critics who structure their careers focusing on work by women and men of color share how this cultural practice changes who they are in the world in a way that extends beyond the making of individual professional success? When will they speak and write about how this work changes how they interact with people of color?[38]

My answer has to be, right now. The following narrative

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37. Lugones And Spellman, "Have We Got A Theory For You! Feminist theory, Cultural Imperialism And the Demand For 'The Woman's Voice'," 25.

38. hooks, Art On My Mind: Visual Politics, 131.

is artist Francis Dick telling the story behind *Honoring Malidi* [Figure One] a work that changed and continues to change not only who, but that I am in this world at all, and introduced me to the amazing, and, for me, life-saving art of Francis Dick.

> *Honoring Malidi* is...I first did *Wiuma* which is this picture of a woman embracing the moon and that was the closest that I got to a woman embracing herself. For me, I realized when I painted *Wiuma* a part of the story from *Wiuma* that I'm telling you, was that I realized that after I had created that piece and that after I had done the theater piece, I realized how important it was for me to do a woman embracing herself and how important it was for me to begin to start to move toward, more and more, me embracing myself instead of seeking, forever seeking, approval and acceptance outside of myself and I still continue to do that on a certain level. It was really scary for me to come to that and to paint that because I mean what is it going to look like? Is it going to feel desperate, What
> is it going to feel like? When I thought about what it might feel like for me, I thought
> about what does it feel like when I ask myself I want to paint a woman embracing herself? What I needed to do first was begin a process in order to begin feeling it and I didn't know what it was going to look like. I didn't know what the colors were going to be. I needed Kawadelekala to be there always, Kawadelekala has got to be there, so Kawadelekala is the headdress of this woman. I just got this desire
> in me to have a woman embracing herself because of my need to embrace myself and to know that I could embrace myself and I wanted to learn how to do that when I needed to do that and it's on going.
> When I was finishing it, I had this young
> girl come visit me, she was a blood relative of mine who was adopted out when she was a baby. They lived all over and I can't remember exactly what her dad did but they lived away from home for years.
> They ended up back here in Victoria, and I used to hear people tell me that there's this girl, her name is Melissa, she just got back from traveling all over the world with her parents, because of her dad's work and Francis, she really looks like you. I met
> her one time and we became really close we started to talk about family, and her biological father is my cousin. She was beginning to become interested in

> wanting to meet him. So we started to hang out and I soon found that she was having a lot of difficulty. I knew that she was having lots of problems, and she was really suicidal but I didn't know why, I didn't know, she didn't tell me anything but the person that I was involved with she told a lot to and she had a lot of problems and a lot of abuse happened to her when she was younger apparently and she came in one day and I was painting this painting and I said well, what do you think of this? She goes, 'Wow, I really like that.' She just stood there for about a half and hour looking at this piece. It
> wasn't very long after then that she suicided, she overdosed then I decided that I was going to call that piece *Honoring Malidi,* her Indian name was Malidi and I wanted to honor her through my work, through my painting, I could acknowledge her life and death. And that's why I called that piece *Honoring Malidi.* [Francis Dick added that *Honoring Malidi* addressed]: [a]ll my stuff around suicide and living and dying and walking the edge always, it's acknowledging that, it's acknowledging that because it's a really peaceful piece, it is peaceful and that's what I long for, just give me some peace, I need some peace. It is a peaceful piece with the full moon in the background. I love the moon, I just have this
> amazing love for it. Especially when it's
> full, I'm so drawn to it and it's such a powerful but soft presence. How can it be so powerful looking and have such powerful energy and be so soft at the same time? It's just amazing, so that's why I love it and I like to acknowledge it in my work[39]

Menominee poet Chrystos wrote three lines that represent (in my analysis) the transition that Francis Dick recalls from painting *Wiuma,* a womin embracing the moon, to *Honoring Malidi,* a womin embracing herself, that come to my mind when I consider these works: "I give you the moon shining on a fire of singing women/When my hands are empty/I will be

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39. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 22, 1999. (Transcript pages 23-25, dialogue two) For more information on British Columbia Child Welfare apprehensions, Indigenous children "placed in protective care in British Columbia" see Earnie Crey, "The Children Of Tomorrow's Great Potlatch" B.C. Studies 89 (Spring 1991) 154-158.

full."[40] I have incorporated this poetry here to call attention to another traditional academic construction. Because I am invested without division between the academic and the private in the honesty of narrative ('confessional') writing, I want to investigate non-traditional academic forms of writing in this thesis. bell hooks explains that "the public reality and institutional structures of domination make the private space for oppression and exploitation concrete-real. That's why I think it is crucial to talk about the points where the public and private meet, to connect the two." bell hooks also said, in an earlier interview, "I think about how privacy is connected to a politics of *domination*. I think that's why there's such an emphasis in my work on the *confessional*, because I know that in a way we're never going to end the forms of domination if we're not willing to challenge the notion of *public* and *private*."[41] It is within these connected beliefs, the immediacy of confessional writing, with its adjunct function of breaking down the division between the public and the private, that I need to write my truth of how *Honoring Malidi* came to be a life-saving work for me. It is "without fear of exposure, [professional, academic, personal, feminist and political] transgression might become an everyday action," a space beyond and within this thesis where "to tell the truth is to transgress" a politics of domination.[42] Francis Dick is a professional transgressor of dominant culture and politics,

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40. Chrystos, "Ceremony For Completing A Poetry Reading" in Not Vanishing (Vancouver:Press Gang Publishers, 1988), 100.

41. hooks, Talking Back: Thinking Feminist-Thinking Black, 2. And bell hooks, "Interview With Andrea Juno" in Angry Women (San Francisco: Re/Search Publications, 1991), 86.

42. hooks, Art On My Mind: Visual Politics, 134 and 135.

I do not think that I would be much of an ally if I were not to attempt to do the same from a culture based on lies.

For over a decade (maybe longer) I've suffered from severe to moderate (and back and forth between the two) mental illness. I have seen the insides of hospitals, overdosed, been stitched up, medicated and had periods of black-out, only to find myself on the doorsteps of any of these places continually. On January 12, 1997 I was on my way to visit Sarah Hunt, Kwakwaka'wakw "mixed blood" writer and wommin's studies graduate, as well as one of my deepest friends. We had planned to exchange holiday gifts, but I was also visiting to say what I thought would be a final goodbye. Once again my illness was controlling me and the need to escape, to commit suicide, had met with another plan. Sarah knew about my situation, about my fluctuating mental health, to what extent I am not sure but she situated me in front of a rectangular gift wrapped in brown paper. She had me open the gift, a specially framed print of *Honoring Malidi*, so that the image faced me. The glass reflected and superimposed my own image and I started to cry as Sarah explained why she knew I needed this visual reminder to hold myself.

Ever vigilant of cultural appropriation, self-reflexively criticizing my connection with the piece, I agonized over whether I had a right to identify with it at all. As a highly political Indigenous feminist who daily interrogates sites of cultural appropriation, Sarah taught me that day that there is a space where settlers may respectfully resonate with Indigenous Art without the trespass of appropriation. This is the lesson that has made it possible for me to write this thesis and part of what makes me consider staying alive since then.

A division between the public and the private in this specific case, and in many more that I have encountered,

would not let the reader know that I am grappling with a topic full of transformations: personal, political, artistic, cultural, etcetera. Without a mixture of the public and the private, in my opinion, there is a sense of closure that, while familiar in traditional academic writing, I cannot see as useful to explain a learning process which has no closure.

Chapter One--Methodology

> "Over the course of history if there's one thing that Canada's aboriginal people have learned and learned well it is that words flow easily, even eloquently. However, actions change and results are a different story"
> - Shirley Joseph, Wet'suwet'en/Carrier[43]

To be able to 'walk the talk' of this thesis, primarily to foreground Francis Dick's words on her work, a methodology that denies voice-over and cultural appropriation is imperative. In order to situate the literature that I will be using on both traditional and progressive art historical practices in this thesis, I will be examining some of the tactics of the dominant cultural politics within traditional art historical methodologies. By doing a survey of these silencing practices, I wish to call attention to the dire need for subversive art history. I will then make clear what my methodological work must consider and practice.

The University of Victoria's Human Research Ethics Committee, geared to a European scientific/experimental epistemology, while playing a valuable role in protecting the rights of peoples experimented on, is part of an objectifying process that robs both active participants and collaborators in a student's project. Further, it made me feel as if I were being interrogated on my own ethics. Ethics, that, in my case, were already being well guided by my supervisor, myself and in conjunction with Francis Dick. Certainly I am not suggesting that The Human Research Ethics Committee cease and desist, however I would like to make clear that this protocol is not sensitive to the diverse forms that research takes. The protocol is specifically dehumanizing to Indigenous Peoples who have historically had, and continue to

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43. Shirley Joseph, "Assimilation Tools: Then And Now," B.C. Studies 89 (Spring 1991), 65.

have their subjectivities stolen in order to make them "human subjects" (read objects) of settler research. As a part of unlearning traditional academic research epistemologies, a necessity for this project, I want to use this forum to strongly suggest that more diverse protocols that ensure that the university members are ethical in their work be established in order to provoke thought on what the researcher is doing as well as to note the inequality that standardized forms like The Human Research Ethics Committee's protocol perpetuate in cultural political thought and research.[44]

Unlearning traditional (European-based) academia is often not the most convenient thing to do. Jo-ann Archibald, Sto:lo Nation researcher, relates a story told by Eber Hampton, Chickasaw Nation, that explains the pitfalls of relying on traditional European and settler academic epistemologies when doing research with an artist to whom this epistemology neither speaks nor listens.

> Old Man Coyote had just finished a long day of hunting. He had walked miles and miles that day, over very rough ground. It was starting to get dark, so he decided to set up his camp for the night. After supper, he sat by the fire and rubbed his feet. They were tired and sore from the long day's walk. After he rubbed them, he decided to put on his favorite moccasins. He took his favorite moccasins out of his bag and noticed that there was a hole in the toe of one of them. He looked for his special bone needle to mend the moccasin, but couldn't feel it in his bag. He tried again, but he couldn't feel or see the needle. So he started to crawl on his hands and knees around the fire to see if he could find that special needle. Just then Owl came flying by. He

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44. I would suggest that anyone who has to submit to the Human Subjects Committee investigate other sources that provide a more illuminating discourse on why research protocols on methodology should consider more than litigation: The Canadian Research Institute For the Advancement Of Women's Feminist Research Ethics: A Process (Ontario: CRIAW/ICREF, 1996), 3-5. It deals specifically with the problems of university-based research protocol.

> landed next to old Man Coyote. "What are you looking for, my friend?" said Owl. Old Man Coyote said, "I can't find my bone needle, my favorite needle. I can't find it anywhere." Owl said, "I have very good eyes. I'll fly around the fire and look for your needle.' Owl made one big swoop around the fire and said, "I can't see your needle, my friend. If the needle were around the fire, I would have spotted it,' he said. "It can't be there." Then Owl asked Old Man Coyote, "Where did you use the needle the last time?" "Oh, quite far away, over in the bushes. I mended my jacket there." Then Owl said, "If you last used it some place else, why are you looking around the campfire?" Old Man Coyote looked at Owl. "Well, it's easier here. The fire gives off a good light and I can see better."[45]

In appreciation of Eber Hampton's analysis of "motive and method in research," I glean from this examination, as it applies to this research methodology, that although the 'light' from the traditional art historical discourse is good for 'seeing' certain things, it is not always the best place to look nor does it always provide the correct motives for learning. Paula Gunn Allen writes that "[a]ny original [Indigenous] documentation that exists is buried under the flood of readily available, published material written from the colonizer's patriarchical perspective almost all of which is based on the white man's belief in universal male dominance."[46]

The European scientific emphasis, based on Enlightenment refutation of diverse ways of knowing, results in the problematics of an experimental template (The Human Subject's Committee Protocol) that has become normalized as it is

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45. Jo-ann Archibald, "Researching With Mutual Respect," Canadian Journal Of Native Education 20.2 (1983), 190. This article also includes a great analysis of the use of narrative for teaching, learning and researching purposes.

46. Paula Gunn Allen, The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine In American Indian Traditions (Massachusetts: Becon Press Books, 1992), 32.

championed by the dominant structure (white, male, capitalist) and therefore an elitist requirement. As an institutional protocol that regulates all research involving peoples compulsorily, this experimental modality may obscure a larger hegemonic co-optation by foregrounding scientific approach as the only 'real' or 'viable' methodology or epistemology. The condoning of settler and European experimental and scientific methodology repositions the researcher in a colonistic epistemology and discourse. The concentration on "'data'/'evidence'/subject-matter for discussion in Western texts and courses" positions Indigenous Peoples as 'native informants' from whom white settler and European peoples are able to take information in order to provide our own analysis of Indigenous Peoples and their art. This sustains hierarchical relationships between the 'empirical' (the subject that is object) role and the "theoretical/interpretive role" of settler and European researchers.[47] Foucault asks, "what types of knowledge do you want to disqualify in the very instant of your demand: 'Is it a science?'--which speaking, discoursing subjects--which subjects of experience and knowledge-do you then want to 'diminish....?"[48] Foucault is noting the structure of white, capitalist, racist, imperialist, male preferences for 'our' own culture of dominance based on Enlightenment science and its power in traditional academic discourse which supplants

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47. Joanna deGroot, "Anti-Colonial Subjects? Post-Colonial Subjects? Nationalisms, Ethnocentrisms And Feminist Scholarship" in New Frontiers In Women's Studies: Knowledge, Identity, Nationalism, eds. Mary Maynard And June Purvis (Washington, D.C.: Taylor And Francis, 1996), 32. See also: Pat Mahony And Christine Zmroczek, "Working-Class Radical Feminism: Lives Beyond The Text" in Radically Speaking: Feminism Reclaimed, ed. Jo Turner (Australia: Spinifex Press, 1996), 67-76. On traditional academic practices versus experiential knowledges.

48. Michel Foucault, Power And Knowledge: Selected Interviews And Other Writings, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 85.

all other epistemologies through devaluation of these other paradigms as not 'supportable' ways of knowing or doing.

The hierarchy of traditional academic practice that places science and experimentation at its pinnacle promotes a one-way power-over that makes it clear to the student that they are not only under the 'command' of their advisor and faculty as well as the institution of the university, but also that they are subordinate to a seemingly exterior--in the sense that the student is only identified through their words in a pre-specified format--committee. This 'chain of command' naturalized through the university as correct and internalized by the student, may serve as an example to the student to then subordinate 'their' (note the possessive inherent in this idiom) "research subject." As Bannerji points out, "Education has been named as one of the major ideological state apparatuses-that is, not just a place of learning, but an institution where, as in the family, [and other sites] we are taught our places within a hierarchical system of class, gender and race relations."[49] Himani Bannerji also notes that the social relations of the production of knowledge are not discreet to the academy: "[I]t actually draws on and systematizes, and often uncritically, cultural common sense and everyday practices and invests them with the status of knowledge (as social facts, norm, etc.) as well as knowledge-creating procedures (theories and methods)."[50] In un-learning this system, in understanding that these practices exist and have power, the student may challenge, along with like-minded professors and administrators, "the norm of universal whiteness, [and maleness], which is the norm of the culture of academia and of the dominant culture

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49. Pollock, "Art, Art School, Culture: Individualism After The Death Of The Artist," 54.

50. Bannerji, "But Who Speaks For Us?," 75-76.

beyond...."[51] Understanding that hegemonic practices operate to perpetuate dominant ideology through various strategies, some of which I will examine below, is a way to comprehend and react in opposition to these constructions. bell hooks writes that "the academic setting is separate only when we work to make it so,"[52] pointing to the falseness of the academy versus the 'real world' but also, perhaps suggesting that progressive academic work need not be separate from any other type of analytical work that calls domination into question at any other site.

The celebratory movements of multiculturalism, postmodernism and new age movement are all proposed and permeated by dominant culture, in part, as supposed 'curatives' for ethnocentric actions or hailed as movements of positivity where the cultural other becomes pedestalized or 'given' an 'equal opportunity' by dominant culture. As constructions of the dominant culture coming from within a white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, they do not, and I feel were never meant to, succeed as interventions in dominant art historical discourse, especially when considering Indigenous art and the art of other traditionally marginalized groups.

Multiculturalism has been proposed as a 'cure' for the racism and silencing in (among many other sites) art history. In North America there are two dominant images that have come to stand for multiculturalism: the American "melting pot" and the Canadian "mosaic." Though many people feel that the metaphor of "mosaic" is less violently homogenizing than that of "melting pot," both have pernicious (overt and covert) implications as assimilatory tools. Mary Maynard suggests, "multiculturalism tolerates other cultures as long as they do

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51. Rich, "Toward A More Feminist Criticism," 88.

52. hooks, Talking Back: Thinking Feminist-Thinking Black, 78.

not fundamentally question prevailing relations of power and privilege."[53]

There seem to be two main ways in which multiculturalism operates as a conception of the dominant culture. The first way multiculturalism recuperates cultural diversity is through a 'divide and conquer' tactic that segregates diverse cultural groups within a racist, sexist capitalism that promotes white middle-class as the norm to be emulated. Segregated communities within highly competitive countries mired in capitalism keep peoples within the "prevailing relations of power." Dominant culture promotes the idea that "each separate group will then feel that it must protect its own interests by keeping outsiders at bay, for the group will always appear vulnerable, its power and identity sustained by exclusivity."[54] Thus divided, the dominant culture may celebratorially pursue the cultural 'other' in ways that appear benign, art being made into one of these sites of limited cultural expression. The second main way in which multiculturalism operates to control diverse cultural groups is to homogenize the groups' diversity by putting forth the politics of liberal humanism which endeavors to suggest that all peoples being equal, have equal opportunities to pursue privilege as defined by the dominant culture. In a racist, sexist idiom this idea is in no way a corrective to systemic inequality. Under hierarchical social conditions, some people are constructed as 'more equal' than others. Diverse artists are then represented as 'ethnic artists' as a way to erase

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53. Mary Maynard, "Challenging The Boundaries: Towards An Anti-Racist Women's Studies" in New Frontiers In Women's Studies: Knowledge, Identity, Nationality, eds. Mary Maynard And June Purvis (Washington, D.C.: Taylor And Francis, 1996), 18.

54. hooks, Killing Rage, 201.

individuality within diverse groups.[55] Multiculturalism as a product of dominant culture seems to either divide (as in "mosaic") or to homogenize (as in to "melt") diverse cultural artistic practices to maintain the center.

The multicultural model, as it applies to Indigenous art production, problematically either includes or homogenizes diverse art and artists or excludes these same producers and their work. Inclusionary tactics, seen as a curative for historically imposed 'anonymity' assigned to Indigenous artists by collectors, curators and art historians, have the ability to reinscribe this very purposeful dominant cultural amnesia-like condition. The prevalence of 'ethnic' art shows efface very diverse cultural productions through seemingly well-meaning inclusionary methodology and practice. This practice may also be analyzed as a homogenization of individual Indigenous arts into a "kinder, gentler" assimilation project. This methodology and practice reinforces the power and sense of art writ large, that is then coded as the domain of traditional European and settler art and artists.

To include Indigenous arts inherently suggests that someone, or more specifically the established art canon, is doing, is active, in the including. This situates the included as passive. This tokenization of Indigenous arts and artists serves dominant culture by subordinating Indigenous arts to dominant cultural arts that are regarded (constructed) as the normative in artists and artistic practice. Once Indigenous arts are 'included' in a subordinate position, dominant culture may mediate the meanings of Indigenous art and defuse the traditional, historical, personal, cultural and political meanings within

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55. For more detailed hypothesis on how 'ethnic arts' function to serve the center see: Jordan And Weedon, Cultural Politics: Class, Gender, Race And The Postmodern World, 478-479.

the art. Maracle writes: "Adding a sprinkling of our culture to European parasitic culture is offensive, particularly in the absence of an understanding of our laws and the philosophy that underlies them. To spice the ideology of exploitation...with the emptied art forms and stripped songs of the ancients, is to reduce ourselves to a joke. Tradition is useful only insofar as it allows us to continue to make use of our history."[56] This inclusionary methodology is particularly exclusionary in that the power of voice, the ability of the artists to make clear their own meanings, is suspended or co-opted by the overarching context of art coded as a white, largely male, endeavor. As Audre Lorde summarizes: "The tokenism that is sometimes extended to us is not an invitation to join power."[57]

Feminist art historian Griselda Pollock's theory of the danger and uselessness of inclusionary art history that seeks to insert wommin into the canon of white male art is applicable to an analysis of multicultural homogenization of Indigenous art history that incorporates Indigenous artists and their work into dominant cultural artistic practice, (which is socially and historically coded as the norm). This project and methodology of inclusionary art history fails as an intervention in art historical discourse because it is seen as 'allowing' Indigenous art production and artists to exist at all and to exist only under the terms of the

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56. Lee Maracle, I Am Woman: A Native Perspective On Sociology And Feminism, 89. See also Beth Brant, Writing As Witness: Essay And Talk, 13. And Trinh Minh-Ha, Woman Native Other (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1989), 79-116.

57. Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, And Sex: Women Defining Difference," 284.

dominant culture.[58] Ironically, of course, this specifically denies and ignores that Indigenous art production and artists are in fact the first artists of this continent; it hegemonically maintains Indigenous art production as at once separate and the same. Indigenous art and artists are seen to be separate or 'other' than 'real' (European/settler canonical) art and artists, yet homogenized as safely 'same' in that multiculturalism flattens and effaces diverse Indigenous art and artists into the 'ethnic art' category. Hegemonically, dominant culture re-centers itself as 'art' by silencing the context of diverse Indigenous art and artists thus recreating itself as 'the art' with possible adjuncts of 'other' (not as important) art and artists which are then rendered even less threatening when 'melted' or 'mosaiced' with still more 'other' (diverse cultural) art and artists. Jean Fisher understands hegemonic movement within artistic practice in a similar fashion: "Since art, as cultural investment and heritage, is one of the West's primary historical narratives, it is hardly surprising that the work of its institutions should not simply be to conserve its own myths...but [also] to suppress any historical position outside this agenda."[59]

Multicultural art history may be seen as a 'safety valve' wherein dominant culture is able to appear to be sensitive to issues of racism in the traditional art historical discourse yet not be seen to be accountable for the perpetuation of them. "Inclusion, without any disruption of the status quo, usually reinscribes, in a different form, the very patterns of domination that have been critiqued and

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58. Pollock, Vision And Difference: Femininity, Feminism And The Histories Of Art, 1-22.

59. Jean Fisher, "Editorial in Third Text," in Cultural Politics: Class, Gender, Race And The Postmodern World, 448.

interrogated to make an opening."[60] By invoking European (and supposedly anti-racist) binary oppositions under a liberal veneer of equality, multicultural art history suppresses interventionary practice and reinscribes dominant ideology. Indigenous art and artists, coded 'other' in dominant multicultural discourse, are placed in the 'service' of the center. Dominant culture that codes 'art' as white male genius, uses the binary model to construct Indigenous art as 'the other,' which is seen to be in opposition to, and therefore makes stable the European/settler construction of art as white and male. Obviously, this type of binary construction is not limited to art but is a tool used to re-center all dominant narratives. Binary opposition also may work to construct Indigenous art production as 'craft' (traditionally art historically located somewhere beneath 'real/high art') against European/settler 'art.'

Multicultural art history, with its pseudo-emphasis on 'other' than dominant culture art and artists, poses the question, "How do 'we' relate to 'them?'....The self, however, is as much a social fiction as the other and glosses an infinite number of alternative boundaries of difference."[61] The diversities of culture, gender and class become amalgamated into 'other' in multicultural art history. From this point of view one may realize that "domination arises out of an inability to recognize, appreciate and nurture

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60. hooks, Art On My Mind: Visual Politics, 104.

61. Molly Mullin, "The Patronage Of Difference: Making Indian Art 'Art, Not Ethnography'" in The Traffic In Culture: Refiguring Art And Anthropology, eds. George E. Marcus And Fred R. Myers (Berkeley: University Of California Press, 1995), 167.

differences."[62] Binarism is, however, not the "inability" to recognize difference but the refusal to respect it in favor of power over it. Binarism furthers stereotypes of Indigenous culture such as the 'noble savage' versus the 'blood thirsty cannibal.' Neither are desirable as images, yet both are containable within European and settler ideology as 'other than us.' This limited paradigm, reliant on dominant culture's constructions of good and evil, serves to reinvent and affirm traditional European and settler epistemological 'values' and are not really binaries (in a sense) when one considers that they are both part of one discourse that informs the main binary construction of "us and them."[63]

Although European and North American Modern Art Movements (c. 1880-1945) such as Primitivism, Dada, Cubism, and Surrealism were definitely pivotal in the colonistic 'celebration' (exploitation and appropriation) of Indigenous arts, they will not be included in the scope of this thesis. Briefly, some of these Modernist movements and artists 'celebrated' the cultural 'other' (in opposition to the white 'self') through such laudatory projects as ahistoricism, paternalism, and unabashed appropriation. Usually understood as a desire to escape the industrialization that was a product of European and settler culture, white (mostly male) artists and their colleagues sought what was considered to be

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62. Jane Flax, "Beyond Equality: Gender, Justice And Difference" in Beyond Equality And Difference: Citizenship, Feminist Politics And Female Subjectivity, eds. Gisela Bock And Susan James (New York: Routledge, 1992), 193

63. Helen Longino, "To See Feelingly: Reason, Passion And Dialogue In Feminist Philosophy" in Feminisms In The Academy, eds. Domna Stanton And Abigail Stewart (Michigan: The University Of Michigan Press, 1995), 20-25. Longino analyzes the dichotomization of knowing and feeling, bringing into contention the mind/body split and further examines the uselessness of this type of theorizing.

something more meaningful/mindless, rooted/ephemeral, savage and noble in Indigenous art. These movements ahistoricized the Indigenous peoples and their artistic production, whom they imitated, seeing Indigenous peoples and their artistic practice as unchanged by history (history of course as defined by European and settler experiences). Some of these Modern artists were making this ahistoricizing assumption based on binary opposition which 'understood' the Indigenous peoples to be somehow 'trapped' in an imagined time line that placed European and settler peoples at the terminal that was 'understood' to be 'progressing.'

The role that museums played in organizing the 'ideas' of some Modern artists and art historians is immeasurable. By stealing and buying, when disease brought by settlers had disseminated the Indigenous populations, or by legitimately collecting and commissioning works, museums became, and continue to be, largely a storehouse of colonialism's spoils. Indigenous 'inspired' (appropriated) images turned up on European and settler canvasses evoking 'fear' and 'magic' while some Modern artists paternalistically looked upon the Indigenous peoples, whose art they were stealing, as idyllic children, forever caught in the European Eden.[64]

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64. For further reading on Modernism and cultural imperialism perpetrated on Indigenous peoples and their arts during Modernism: See Sally Price, Primitive Art In Civilized Places (Chicago: The University Of Chicago Press, 1989), Jordan and Weedon, Cultural Politics: Class, Gender, Race And The Postmodern World (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1995), Janet Catherine Berlo, The Early Years Of Native American Art History (Washington: McLellan Books, 1992), James Clifford, The Predicament Of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature And Art (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1988) And Michael Ames, Cannibal Tours And Glass Boxes: The Anthropology Of Museums (Vancouver: University Of British Columbia Press, 1992) However, the final three books cited here are seriously flawed in their methodologies, but in order to gain some understanding of what the project of Modernism was in relation to art is important since I do not believe that there has been much 'advancement' in the field since Modernism. The best article that I have come across is Molly Mullin, "The Patronage Of Difference: Making Indian Art 'Art Not Ethnography'"

Postmodernism, or the 'politics of difference,' proposed, in part, to correct the past wrongs of Modernism, may be seen as a hegemonic repositioning of essentially liberal humanist (Modernist) 'values.' Postmodernist discourse that seeks to decenter the artist and critic--thus 'allowing' (again, there is implicit agency here) everyone to critique and make art without fear of marginalization or homogenization because it celebrates the 'death' of hierarchy in favor of multiple sites of equal value--is, like multiculturalism, completely informed by the dominant culture. This kind of postmodernism fails because it purposefully imagines that the world is a level playing field where ahistoricism, paternalism, exotification, trivialization, marginalization and homogenization have been evacuated from a highly structurally organized, colonialist, imperialist, sexist, capitalist, racist dominant culture that, has apparently neither politics nor historical context. While this *tabula rasa* of cultural imperialism seems to open up a plethora of opportunities, the arts favored (still white, still male) appear to reinscribe dominant cultural norms.[65]

Postmodernism comes at a time when feminist theory, cultural theory, queer theory, civil rights struggle and other traditionally marginalized epistemologies were, and are, making, and continue to make, important interventions in the bulwark of dominant culture's normative 'values.' The power structure of dominant culture remaining unchanged, the postmodernist movement may be seen as a reaction to these voices that seek to challenge it. The philanthropy (agency)

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in The Traffic In Culture: Refiguring Art And Anthropology, eds. George Marcus And Fred Myers (Berkeley: University Of California Press, 1995).

65. Dr. Lianne McLarty and Dr. Lynne Hissey were both instrumental in introducing me to their contentions with postmodernism and for setting me on the path to question some of these tenets myself.

of a dominant culture which 'allows' difference[66] is paternalistic in that it implies "an act of tolerance, kindness and charity. The 'equality' accorded to non-Westerners (and their art), the implication goes, is not a natural reflection of human equivalence, but rather the result of Western benevolence."[67] This reinforces the notion that settlers define, conserve, interpret and sell Indigenous art, thus retaining hierarchical power over the arts and artists by assuming a paternalistic role in the dissemination of meanings about the art and artists.

The silencing paternalism of postmodernism seeks to celebrate cultural difference in order to reference the dominant culture by using Indigenous art to symbolize or give identity to colonized sites. Settler Victoria is quick to send out invitations to Indigenous peoples regularly re-legislated against (see chapter two for some incidences of colonizing legislation) when the city needs to showcase 'its' colonized peoples without any kind of context in order to sell tourism or "spice" a settler event. This type of postmodern decontextualization is not only paternalistic but it is used to give settler Victoria all of the good (ceremony, art and song) without any of the bad

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66. The term difference in postmodern discourse effaces distinct peoples. Susan Bordo, "'Material Girl': The Effacements Of Postmodern Culture" in The Female Body: Figures, Styles, Speculations, ed. Lawrence Goldstein (Michigan: University Of Michigan Press, 1991), 115. "Instead of distinctions, endless differences reign-an undifferentiated pastiche of differences, a grab-bag in which no items are assigned any more importance or centrality than any others." This false bottomed plurality that renders everyone 'dislocated' or indistinct in our/their 'differences' actually homogenizes 'others' as all equally different, ie. just like everyone else, that is to say, not different at all. This reductive act in the service of the dominant culture makes meanings about different (same) 'others' that affirm the status quo in binary opposition as somehow distinct.

67. Sally Price, Primitive Art In Civilized Places (Chicago: The University Of Chicago Press, 1989), 25.

(colonization, cultural genocide, racism and legalized theft). This eschews questions of accountability in favor of celebratory amnesia. Clearly not all events in Victoria that involve Indigenous and settler peoples overtly serve to reinscribe power structures. However, Francis Dick notes of some ceremonial Indigenous activities that are viewed by settlers without any historical context of historic oppression:

> People who don't understand are able to appreciate what they see and what they hear and they're able to feel that, but there's something wrong with that....Because you're not being accountable as a non-Native person in what we're suffering as being Native people within the confines of who we are, in our communities and in our homes. You think that you can just stand out there and appreciate who we are because you come to UVIC and you watch us perform and sing and dance and you stand and applaud us....Yet there's all this infighting and there's animosity [which is being perpetuated by dominant culture's on-going project of colonization] and you just get to celebrate and enjoy what's going on. Well that's not so and there's something wrong with that, because you need to know what's going on here because you're partly what created that.[68]

Names, images, and Indigenous ceremonial activity that are appropriated for capitalistic or photo-opportunity gain are especially pernicious considering how dominant culture (past and present) treats Indigenous peoples when not in need of their 'services.' Although one may argue that these postmodern sites of cultural expression--that are decontextualized and apoliticized--may seem to be progressive, they may also be read as a postmodern act of benevolence that serves to reinforce underlying base notions of power expressed paternalistically.

Imperialist nostalgia is another postmodern practice

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68. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 9, 1999. (Transcript pages 35-36). My brackets appear in this quote to clarify the context of our discussion.

that reinscribes dominant ideology by ahistorically situating Indigenous peoples. The practice of ahistoricizing Indigenous peoples in order to make them reference points in the project of defining the dominant culture, while prevalent in some postmodernist practices, is curiously stabilizing in a methodology that purports to decenter and dislocate. Ahistorical treatment of Indigenous peoples is a postmodern catch 22/double standard. While being 'dislocated' and 'freed' from historical 'constraints;' the Indigenous 'other' is made into a timeless standard placed in a nostalgic stereotype so that settler peoples (who are not really 'dislocated' at all) may gauge their own 'progress.' "Nostalgia is a particularly appropriate emotion to invoke in attempting to establish one's innocence, and at the same time talk about what one has destroyed....The relatively benign character of most nostalgia facilitates imperialist nostalgia's capacity to transform the responsible colonial agent into an innocent bystander."[69] This voice-over of contemporary Indigenous peoples is facilitated by the celebratory tenets of postmodernism that "deny accountability and historical connection"[70] in favor of knowing 'ourselves' better by 'knowing' an 'other.'[71] This type of epistemology relies on the presence of a highly ordered hierarchy of being (dominant cultural norms) and is paradoxically situated in postmodern 'dislocation' which re-enacts colonial practices.

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69. Renato Rosaldo, "Imperialist Nostalgia" in Cultural Politics: Class, Gender, Race And The Postmodern World, 420-421.

70. bell hooks, Black Looks: Race And Representation (Toronto: Between The Lines, 1992), 25.

71. Laurie Shrage, "Eschewing Ethnocentric Ethics" in Moral Dilemmas Of Feminism: Prostitution, Adultery And Abortion (London: Routledge, 1994), 8-9 discusses some more flaws in the idea of comparative 'knowing.'

The nostalgic act of believing to 'know' one's settler self through 'knowing' an Indigenous person's 'place' (as constructed hegemonically) may be argued as a corrective to past injustices through understanding a shared victimization. Lack of real context aside, this activity also serves to recenter dominant culture. As bell hooks observes:

> Many unlearning racism workshops focus on helping white individuals to see that they too are wounded by racism and as a consequence have something to gain from participating in anti-racist struggle. While in some ways true, a construction of political solidarity that is rooted in a narrative of shared victimization not only acts to recenter whites, it risks obscuring the particular ways racist domination impacts on the lives of marginalized groups. Implicit in the assumption that even those who are privileged via racist hierarchy suffer is that it is only when those in power get in touch with how they too are victimized will they rebel against structures of domination. The truth is that many folks benefit greatly from dominating others and are not suffering a wound that is in any way similar to the condition of the exploited and oppressed.[72]

Conflating the colonization of Indigenous voices and images with settler nostalgic belief of a shared victimization, foregrounds settler narrative on Indigenous oppression serving to recolonize Indigenous peoples by silencing them on their own oppressions. When oppressions are understood by settlers to be shared, nostalgia is perpetuated as a way of making order from a place that naturalizes these oppressions as 'universal' and, therefore, seemingly unavoidable. This evacuates all sense of settler accountability. This postmodern sense of timelessness in which "...things change without ever becoming different" positions history as a "vague and evolutionary march of

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72. hooks, Killing Rage, 152.

events"[73] in which dominant culture may readily celebrate or equally detrimentally, bemoan as 'our' loss. Both these acts violate Indigenous voices, reinscribe the settler experience as 'we' 'understand' it, and recenter dominant culture in a supposedly equal opportunity space.

Postmodernism as a methodology reproduces existing dominant cultural norms. Catherine MacKinnon understands the division between postmodern theory and practice as "...discourse unto death. Theory begets no practice, only more text. It proceeds as if you can deconstruct power relations by shifting their markers around in your head. Like all forms of idealism, this approach to theory tends to unselfconsciously reproduce existing relations of dominance."[74] The sense that the status quo is inevitable, as constructed in part by imperialist nostalgia, serves to belie the project of real methodological change in favor of repositioning the ethnocentric and racist notions of liberal humanism. Real political and methodological thought (theory and practice) cannot be progressive if situated uncritically in past colonial practices. Many cultural theorists and activists who understand postmodernism as a continuation of modernism's basic tenets of humanism with different rules, suggest that postmodernism's inability, or refusal, to note how the movement has, ostensibly, progressed beyond discussions of 'us and them' in cultural practices, signals that it really has not. Accountability is not a concern of postmodernist discourse, and radical political methodology demands accountability and context which call attention to the reproduction of dominant cultural practices.

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73. Zavarzadeh, Seeing Films Politically, 154.

74. Catherine MacKinnon, "From Practice To Theory, Or What Is A White Woman Anyway?" in Radically Speaking: Feminism Reclaimed, ed. Jo Turner (Australia: Spinifex Press, 1996), 45.

Postmodernism's supposed level playing field, one that liberal humanism also champions, sees everyone as having equal access to cultural production and personal being. Within the celebratory idea of one world equality, institutionalized inequalities are ignored in favor of a monolithic humanness, devoid of diversity, with individual (and somehow equal) players enjoying a Jungian-style collective consciousness barren of past and present hate crimes. Lee Maracle writes about postmodernism's level playing field as it manifests in practice between settler and Indigenous peoples:

> "Why can't we just be people?" Do you hear what you say? When did we ever question your right to be considered people? Do you question mine? I know what you think you say. You want me to consider myself not Native, not Cree, not Salish, but a person, absent of nationality or racial heritage. All of us just people, without difference. You fail to see your own hypocrisy. In the same breath, you pick up a guitar and teach European modern folk songs to all the children, but nowhere do European children learn the folk music of my children or any other nationality. Such sameness amounts to everyone's obliteration but your own.[75]

Thus, on the level playing field that postmodernism proposes, a 'politics of difference' is suggested that actually reproduces 'sameness' as defined by dominant cultural norms. As Lee Maracle notes, this 'sameness' recenters the dominant culture. The 'differences' of postmodernism are fragmented through decontextualization and imaginary 'dislocation' of power.[76]

Postmodern methodology, in its acknowledgment of 'other' voices, and as a corrective to modernism's monolithic voice-

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75. Maracle, I Am Woman, 81. See also hooks, Killing Rage, 265-266.

76. For more information on voice, the university setting and postmodernists 'difference' as effacing of true diversity, see also Bannerji, "But Who Speaks For Us?," 84-85.

over, may be seen as progressive. Considering that a level playing field is not existent in this society, however, the postmodern 'difference' recreates sameness because it does not contend dominant structure but simply ignores it. Bordo summarizes that postmodernism's "...narrative ideal of ceaseless textual play...while arising out of a critique of modernist epistemological pretensions to adequately represent reality, remains animated by its *own* fantasies of attaining an epistemological perspective free of the locatedness and limitations of embodied existence."[77] This postmodern 'playfulness' evacuates context in favor of content but is ultimately recuperated by that context, the dominant cultural norms. This 'playfulness,' located within a capitalist, sexist, racist patriarchy blurs domination, effaces distinct class, gender and cultural issues while foregrounding the text (the theory of postmodern methodology) over the reality and practice of inequality.

Postmodern methodology, quite problematically for Indigenous art and artists, suggests that a settler individual may choose from a potpourri of subjectivities. This subjectivity smorgasbord is ostensibly meant to "...create new meanings and identities which we define against those which we already know."[78] Image and cultural appropriation are nonsequiturs in this scheme. In a racist culture where Indigenous culture and formalistic styles are specific, inherited, intellectual property that have been historically stolen and continue to be appropriated by settlers, postmodern subjectivity swapping is a continuation of colonial silencing. North America is not a level playing field. There has been and continues to be colonization of

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77. Bordo, "Feminism, Postmodernism And Gender-Skepticism," 136. Her emphasis

78. Jordan And Weedon, Cultural Politics, 552.

Indigenous peoples by settler peoples. To engage in 'playful' appropriation denies the inequities that our diverse historic contexts have, and continue to, produce in us in. This postmodern free-for-all forgets that it has never been freedom for all that settler colonization condones.

Postmodern methodology poses significant problems for feminist methodology and anti-racist methodology. Particular to this thesis, postmodern methodology is especially limiting when I consider that in writing as a settler womin about an Indigenous womin and her artistic production, decontextualization would inevitably lead to commodification of Francis Dick's words and work. The decentered subject of postmodern methodology works entirely against the project of narrative and listening as ethical methods. "Considering that it is as a subject one comes to voice, then the postmodernist focus on the critique of identity appears at first glance to threaten and close down the possibility that this discourse and practice will allow those who have suffered the crippling effects of colonization and domination to gain or regain a hearing."[79] In this paradigm of 'polyvocal' hearing and speaking, peoples who have not yet been heard are structurally drown out by dominant discourse. These include the voices of Indigenous peoples and wommin. The absence of subjectivity or identity would appear to work most readily for "...those who are accustomed to and confident of having authority, of comfortably occupying and controlling any space, and therefore need feel no particular worry about such details."[80] This is not to suggest that Francis Dick is somehow incapable of "occupying and controlling any space" but to call attention to the reality

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79. hooks, Yearning: Race, Gender And Cultural Politics, 28.

80. Flax, "Beyond Equality: Gender, Justice And Difference," 198.

of postmodernism's ignorance of structural society and to posit that postmodernist modes of inquiry are not necessarily best for historically marginalized peoples. Historically marginalized peoples are not structurally privileged in this society and, I feel, would be much better off suspicious of white male 'interventionary' theory that seems to ignore the past and contemporary forms of domination.

My feminism, which includes analysis of overlapping oppressions, cannot afford a postmodern methodology. Postmodernism does not challenge dominant structures. It fails to name oppressions. Feminism (among many other progressive movements) has not gained a hearing. As Denise Thompson writes, feminism cannot "...drop out of the 'grand theory stakes. Feminism cannot drop out because it has never been in."[81] Feminism under postmodernism may result in a myopic analysis that "...itself may be a discourse of power, imposing a particular world-view in the guise of rejecting all."[82] This would mean recentering dominant discourse in the name of feminism (a kind of liberal feminism) a methodology that fails to make radical political interrogations of racist, sexist capitalist patriarchy and therefore is not a viable methodology for this thesis.

New Age movement is usually understood to be exterior to academia. This is neither my belief nor my experience. The particular aspects of the new age movement that I find contentious as cross-cultural methodology are those that appropriate Indigenous cultural forms or even invent cultural forms that purport to be Indigenous. These cultural appropriations are both postmodern and modernist in that

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81. Denise Thompson, "The Self-Contradiction Of 'Post-modernist' Feminism" in Radically Speaking: Feminism Reclaimed, ed. Jo Turner (Australia: Spinifex Press, 1996), 328.

82. Valerie Bryson, Feminist Political Theory (London: MacMillan, 1992), 229.

they: essentialize to celebrate without right or context; and commodify the Indigenous 'other' as one whose perceived 'special knowledges and being' are able to 'transform' the settler 'self' from 'our' own sense of alienation in 'our' colonized countries. I would like to start this analysis of new age appropriation with a vital distinction between settler/European perpetuated essentialism of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous world views which tend to become conflated in some analyses. When I asked Francis Dick what she thought of the new age movement with its obvious 'borrowings' from Indigenous world view, she commented as follows:

> I become angered and then I become intrigued because I wonder why, what is your purpose, why do you want to do this, what is the drawing for you, is it power? Or is it a true desire to 'seek enlightenment?' I find it curious and it intrigues me and I like to watch and see these people who are self portrayed shamans or whatever, they've gone to a six week program and they've become a shaman. To me it's a life-time, it's an experience that happens through a life time and you're chosen, at least that's what I think it is. It's not something that you kind of go 'oh I think today I'm going to seek out being a shaman or a medicine woman and I think I'll just kind of look in this catalogue and see which kind of book I could order, see which kind of weekend thing I could go to. Because I think that there's a lot of those places around. Maybe they work for other people.I'm really skeptical and I have a lot of questions when anybody comes to me and says that they're a medicine person or Francis meet this person, this is medicine man whoever or this woman is a pipe carrier....[83]

Richard Atleo, Nuu Chah Nulth, notes that "North American Indigenous people have a different view of reality

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83. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, April 6, 1999 (Transcript pages 5-4, discussion three)

from the Western world. The difference is important."[84] Because every diverse culture has its own world view that is used to order diverse cultural experiences, settlers cannot 'know' Indigenous world view. The experienced or expressed settler 'cultural poverty,' and the desire to hegemonically 'control' Indigenous peoples, may result in a new age essentializing of Indigenous world view, which then results in reductive consumable stereotypes that appear to offer instant redemption to the settler. Settler essentializing constructs Indigenous peoples, arts, beliefs and culture within the binary opposition of spirituality (coded Indigenous) versus intellectualism (coded settler). This reduces Indigenous peoples as mere signifiers of spirituality, environmental attunement and as purveyors of a more 'simplistic' epistemology. These practices reinscribe dominant cultural hierarchy by both ordering intellectualism as above and different from spiritualism, and embracing the Indigenous 'others' as long as they fit into settler hierarchical, racist constructs. This new ageism is in no way different from Dada or Surrealist's desires to "...endow their works of art with the equivalent of 'primitive' fetish power."[85] The acts of settler essentialization of the Indigenous 'other,' and the postmodern desire to choose a subjectivity from peoples who have not gained a hearing from dominant culture, serve as ways to locate, through dominant cultural norms, the settler 'self' and to colonize or appropriate the practices of the Indigenous 'other' in order to 'find' the settler 'self.' Again, this repositions the evolutionary model of cultural imperialism. Either way, through these methodologies, the settler voice has the last

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84. E. Richard Atleo, "Policy Development For Museums: A First Nations Perspective," B.C. Studies 89 (Spring 1991), 48.

85. Jordan And Weedon, Cultural Politics, 326.

(and perhaps the only) word on subjectivity. Indigenous artists and their art are 'understood' through new age epistemologies as historically located, unable to belong in the contemporary world, while settlers may easily traverse both ideologically constructed realms.

The distinction between settler and European essentialization of the Indigenous 'other' and Indigenous world views is one that I cannot speak to half of. Indigenous world views are diverse and in no way 'knowable' to myself as a settler. I feel that this distinction is so important to both this thesis and to the wider issues of cultural artistic production, that I will be quoting several Indigenous peoples whom I do not wish to omit nor voice-over because what these people are writing about and saying has helped me to understand that there is a distinction between settler essentializing and Indigenous world views. To listen to these peoples better situated me to understand that I was, in some of my research with Francis Dick, conflating settler analysis of essentialization as bad and as always easily named and known indistinctly from Indigenous world view. I admit that I found Indigenous world views unknowable to me unless I pushed them into a seemingly Indigenous self-imposed, self-essentializing role, which these world views clearly are not. My actions, as such, were perpetuating an indistinct settler idiom based on dualisms and attempts to 'know' where knowing is predicated on cultural experience that I cannot have.

To understand that new age, postmodern and modern essentialization are not Indigenous world views is very important. Settlers need to realize that we cannot speak or voice-over Indigenous peoples because we cannot understand these diverse epistemologies. This does not mean that we cannot learn from Indigenous world views and self-reflexively analyze our own misconceptions. The following section

contains some of the voices that I feel need to be included here because I cannot 'know' what these peoples do. These voices teach me to challenge my settler assumptions around essential Indigenous coding. As Paula Gunn Allen writes:

> I would caution readers and students of American Indian life and culture to remember that Indian America does not in any sense function in the same ways or from the same assumptions that western systems do. Unless and until that fact is clearly acknowledged, it is virtually impossible to make much sense out of the voluminous materials available concerning American Indians."[86]

> Lee Maracle writes: Over and over again I have heard it said, 'We are not a political people, we are a spiritual people.' Let us acknowledge that the people saying this learned it in the same place I did, college. This philosophy was first articulated by an English man in the eighteenth century. It arises from a debate between European intellectuals over how to interpret our society as opposed to their society. In debates between proponents of civil law and natural law, the adherents to natural law read very much like our modern-day urban traditionalists. To accept a European interpretation of our old ways is fool-hardy. Politics arise from law. To be without politics is to be lawless. To say our politics are in opposition to European politics would be correct. European law legalizes our oppression. Our law forbids it. But to say that we were lawless is to say that, indeed, we were savages. I expect that Europeans cannot define our societies with any accuracy or draw connections between our society and their own. Further, I hardly expect them to be able to look at our laws and see the traditions, values and body politic that arise out of our legal system[87]

> Jolene Rickard, Tuscarora, writes: There is an invisible spirit for everything, but there's no place for that idea in this civilization-no room in conversation, dreams, daily activity. The spirits are not separate

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86. Gunn Allen, The Sacred Hoop: Recovering The Feminine In American Indian Traditions, 7.

87. Maracle, I Am Woman: A Native Perspective On Sociology And Feminism, 39.

from the creatures or plants or whatever. I'm not talking about something mystical; there's no Don Juan experiences here.[88]

Juanita Espinosa, Dakota/Ojibway, writes: We believe our culture is in our blood, it's a root for us to hold on to, and we must perpetuate it[89]

Gloria Bird, Spokane, writes: In academia, if one argues for any type of distinction, or uses any means to determine who is Indian, the argument is often dismissed as 'essentialist,' a convenient term that is used to undermine native people's unique legal and political position to determine for themselves who are their members.[90]

Jeannette Armstrong, Okanagan, writes: ...I understand I have been given the ability to speak in two languages, to cross between these two languages in my mind. I also understand that our language comes from a sacred place. I don't understand where the English language originates, yet but when Native people think about the source of thought we consider the vast pool of creation and its origin. We think about things that formed us as thinking, human, walking people, different from the animal people. When we consider the spiritual place from which our thinking arises, the words become sacred things because they come from that place.[91]

Beth Brant, Mohawk, writes: There is no doubt that we see the universe through a different set of values and beliefs. It is impossible for non-Natives to *feel* the

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88. Jolene Rickard in Lucy Lippard, The Pink Glass Swan: Selected Feminist Essays On Art (New York: The New Press, 1995), 280.

89. Juanita Espinosa, "The Cottonwood Tree Talks To Me" in Messengers Of The Wind: Native American Women Tell Their Life Stories, ed. Judith Katz (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995), 108.

90. Gloria Bird, "Introduction" in Reinventing The Enemy's Language: Contemporary Native Women's Writings Of North America, 27.

91. Jeannettte Armstrong, Telling It: Women And Language Across Cultures, 28.

> sorts of emotions that are called upon when Indigenous peoples speak about ancestors, about Earth, about the symbiosis that exists between human and animal. Non-Natives come from another psychic and physical place. *We* have been here for centuries. Our ritual has meaning because we are *from here*, not because we plucked it out of the air and thought it would be fun or nice to perform. It is in us, perhaps even in the DNA of our cells, to give ourselves over to what whispers to us from the corn, from Deer, from Heron, from the rock that resides on the bottom of the waters. We have a relationship with the beings who share the Earth with us. I believe that non-Natives can love the wild spaces, can feel the excitement of Cranes lifting off into the sky, can testify to the beauty that still lives abundantly in North America. I believe this, for I have heard it expressed and written about it. I also know that *our* love comes from a commitment to Earth; She is our Mother, she holds the bones of our ancestors in trust....But what is in our blood is neither for sale nor for a fast spiritual fix. If non-Natives are hungry, let them learn to make food from what is in their blood.[92]

Of course not all Indigenous peoples may feel these ways and these wommin are not meant to represent all of Indigenous peoples. I include these quotations to illustrate points that I cannot make myself and to situate some of my own difficulties with European essentialization of Indigenous peoples by new age movement. To be sure, Francis Dick always situates her knowledges as her own, specifically not representative of anyone but herself. Throughout our work she prefaced her experiential knowledges as her own, citing where she was taught and reiterating that what she knows are her knowledges and beliefs. There is a tacit assumption because she explicitly 'owns' her opinions, that they are not representative of Indigenous thought as a whole.

When Indigenous art and culture become commodified by settlers in new age movement, it follows that Indigenous art (or appropriations of it made by settlers and Europeans) gets

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92. Brant, Writing As Witness: Essay And Talk, 33-34.

foregrounded as a way to remake and recenter dominant culture devoid of context via the constructed 'universality' of humanness. Clearly not all human experience is the same and when new age 'shamanistic' activity is practiced, Indigenous peoples and Indigenous art get reduced through essentialism. This reduction of Indigenous art and artists "leads to proposals of evolutionary models of social development which position the west as the most advanced instance. To conform to this model, distant societies whose pasts are as long as our own [or longer] are imagined to be unevolved, static, natural (organic) and simple."[93]

If postmodernism is the theory, new ageism, it seems, is the practice. Understanding aspects of new age movement to be a revival of Primitivism made possible by a postmodern climate, ignores the continuity of the project of colonization. It is no accident that the colonialism of dominant culture takes different forms. This is how hegemonic co-optation works to recenter dominant culture. It is this movement of dominant culture that makes the new age obsession with 'being' Indigenous, through appropriation and invention of Indigenous practices, as a way to occupy an 'other' postmodern subjectivity--the other side of the same racist coin that houses modernism.[94] New age movement depends on capitalism to perpetuate it, cultural imperialism to allow it and postmodern 'playfulness' to make it seem harmless.

As art historic methodologies, multiculturalism,

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93. Susan Hiller, "The Myth Of Primitivism" in Cultural Politics: Class, Gender And The Postmodern World, 405.

94. For more information on utopian longings of new age's obsession with indigenous art and culture see Daniel Maltz And JoAllyn Archambault, "Gender And Power In Native North America" in Women And Power In Native North America, ed. Laura F. Klein And Lillian A. Ackerman (Oklahoma: University Of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 242-243 And Brant, "Anodynes And Amulets" in Writing As Witness: Essay And Talk, 25-34.

postmodernism and new age movement are not successful as interventions in inter-cultural analysis. These practices serve to silence diverse artists and voice-over Indigenous art and artists by claiming the voice of the 'specialist.' This centers subjectivity for the art historian, connoisseur or lay person. I understand these movements as largely similar to one another in the project of gatekeeping traditional art historical practice that is rooted in dominant cultural traditions and epistemologies converging in the silencing of individual Indigenous artists.

The traditional art historical discourse that situates the settler student as 'expert' over the Indigenous artist is perpetuated by the idea that 'experts' in a discipline are better able to convey information about an artist or their art because we are well read, learned, and conversant. While we may be well read, the underlying assumption is that a person who has knowledge gleaned through the academic process is more able (or given more credibility) to speak about a person than the person who has experiential knowledge, culturally specific knowledge or intimate knowledge of their media. This settler authority-making may lack both information that is unknowable to the settler and endlessly relies on the settler rewriting of a subject position via the voicing-over of the Indigenous artist. As Brant writes, "it seems that the white man's version of who we are is still more credible than what we have to say for ourselves....'Indian experts' are inevitably white men and women who presume to do the talking for us as if we are a dead people."[95]

The distortion of experience that settler art historical voice-over perpetuates results in recolonization of Indigenous art and artists that I believe becomes less of a

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95. Brant, Writing As Witness: Essay And Talk, 39 and 50.

distortion when the settler art historian quotes at length from Indigenous experiences and voices.[96] There seems to be little reason to believe *all* of what a settler 'expert' on Indigenous art says if they do not have experiential knowledge attached to their academic prowess. Jeannette Armstrong surmises that

> First of all we do as Native writers suffer because of the kind of cultural imperialism that's taking place when non-Native people speak about Native ceremony and Native thinking, Native thought, Native life style, Native world view and speak as though they know what they are speaking about. That's appropriation of culture because no one can experience and know what I know and experience or what my grandmother knows.[97]

The academic cult of the expert suggests that once reaching this status, the 'expert' may then voice-over Indigenous art and artists. However, progressive learning both within and exterior to the academy must not see education as an ends but as a means for more learning experience.

The power and authority invested in voice-over 'expertise,' in the production of knowledge, works to continually control and dominate Indigenous voices. Francis Dick, an Indigenous womin in the arts, is subject to the colonization of 'specialist' voice-over, patriarchal voice-over and the marginalization of Indigenous arts within a society where art made by dominant culture is given more attention. These interlocking systems of domination are based on the silenced voices of Indigenous artists who are constructed as unimportant subjects (read objects) who may be spoken for. The settler cult of the specialist, as

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96. Evelyn Peters, "Subversive Spaces: First Nations Women And The City," Environment And Planning D: Society And Space 16 (1998), 669.

97. Armstrong, Telling It: Women And Language Across Cultures, 50-51.

constructed by dominant cultural methodology, is predicated on voicing-over artists and art that make diverse meanings which cannot be adequately addressed without using new and different methodological practices that interrogate this enforced and traditional art historically sanctioned silencing.

In order to produce a more individual and respectful thesis, my methodology relies on aspects of feminism, Marxism, a foregrounding of the artist's voice, narrative, discursive epistemologies, listening, self-reflexivity, diversity for context, marginal resistance to dominant discourse, the use of theory, and specific ethical concerns. By investigating how some aspects of these methodological tools work to create interventions in traditional art historical discourse, they may be invoked, with some tenets of discursive ethnography, to understand the way in which Francis Dick, Charlene Simon and I worked to develop a methodology that is respectful and reciprocal.

Feminisms are diverse. My feminism is a struggle to learn about distinct cultural practices, gender inequities, and overlapping oppressions that are formed in racist, capitalist, sexist patriarchy in order to envision and enact different ways of being within these oppressions, if not to overthrow them all together. My feminism is rooted in the understanding that inequities are structural, purposely recreated and socially upheld. Art historically, and for this thesis specifically, this means that while I recognize my own privilege as a settler womin, I must also recognize that the mechanisms of patriarchy control aspects of visual representations of, and by, Indigenous wommin artists. Art history is a male-dominated discourse that socially constructs specific meanings about Indigenous wommin artists in order to reaffirm status quo hierarchy. As Brant writes, feminist movement, if it has not changed from a white middle-

class movement, should, because Indigenous wommin and their allies are, "...changing the face of feminism. It is no longer a middle-class, white movement for acknowledgement and better pay--it is about uranium in our drinking water, fetal alcohol syndrome, family violence, a life for generations to come."[98] This is not to say that feminist movement has divested of racism. The critiques of white middle-class feminist gatekeeping are as valid as ever. I am just saying that some feminist movement understands the limitations that a 'sexism only' analysis presents.

Examining dominant cultural constructs in feminist methodology "...extends art historical methodology and makes connections between historical context and culture. Such a pursuit turns the art historian into a critic."[99] This means that feminism is a methodological tool for examining overlapping oppressions. Feminist methodology concentrates on text, experiential knowledges, narrative and political discourses. Seeking to relate with wommin from their and our own points of view is a corrective to traditional academic research that upholds power relations such as researcher and "human subject." Judith Stacey understands the use of feminist methodology to be an assault on "...hierarchical and exploitative relations of conventional research, urging feminist researchers to seek instead an egalitarian research process characterized by authenticity, reciprocity and intersubjectivity between the researcher and her

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98. Brant, Writing As Witness: Essay And Talk, 39.

99. Joanna Frueh, "Towards A Feminist Theory Of Art Criticism" in Feminist Art Criticism, eds. Arlene Raven, Cassandra Langer and joanna Frueh (New York: Harper Collins, 1988), 154.

'subjects.'"[100] This investment of the self in research with the collaborator signals a commitment to the end of the subordination of wommin by all of the wommin involved. The personal, political and academic may truly become more holistic when traditional methodology is eschewed in favor of methodology that refuses to be contained in the text and demands of all peoples involved in the project that they listen and speak, interact and inevitably grapple to learn. Proponents of feminist methodological research suggest that these research experiences are life-changing, frustrating, rewarding and, I would add, free from educational closure, signalling learning as a life-long pursuit.

Feminist methodology and cultural criticism may be linked through the understanding that dominant culture's hierarchy of power depends, in part, on its ability to define, divide and pit factions against each other. While my oppressions under this system are in no way comparable to Francis Dick's, I think that through my political and personal allegiance to feminist methodology, a way to work on issues of racism and sexism exists. As hooks writes, "[w]e are not looking to that Other [of dominant methodology] for recognition. We are recognizing ourselves and willingly making contact with all who would engage us in a constructive manner."[101] I believe that feminist methodology, as a way to understand that domination is not only located at the level of one's femaleness, but also is part of struggling against all domination and therefore a useful tool in this thesis.

Another methodological tool that foregrounds context and structure is Marxism. Unlike the dislocation of postmodern

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100. Judith Stacey, "Can There Be A Feminist Ethnography?" in Women's Words: The Feminist Practice Of Oral History, eds. Sherna Berger Gluck And Daphne Patai (New York: Routledge, 1991), 112.

101. hooks, Yearning: Race, Gender And Cultural Politics, 22.

thought and the ephemerality of new age movement, Marxism understands "historical specificity of the situation[s] experienced by different groups of women [in feminist methodology] and show[s] the ways in which racism, like sexism, is not simply a question of particular historical situations which [have] become embedded in the structures of society."[102] Context is foregrounded, structure is investigated as causal to such experiences as colonialism and cultural imperialism that serve capitalist society through hierarchical division. Marxist feminism refutes the abstract notions of postmodern dislocation by privileging experiential knowledges, political structural realities, and seeks to transform the experiences of subjugation through the evaluations of these contexts. Marxist feminist methodology understands that diverse wommin have specifically located concerns. Unlike the postmodern level playing field, Marxist feminism fights assimilation by endorsing personally, politically and contextually informed resistance.

In using some tenets of Marxist feminism, it should be understood as vital to foreground the artist's voice. Francis Dick's work is personally, culturally and iconographically specific to her, her words may then be understood as not only necessary but subversive of the traditional art historical voice-over. By noting her personal, political and artistic struggles, victories and being, she gives herself subjectivity, moving from a traditional "human subject" to a self-liberated voice within these progressive methodological epistemologies. Leslie Marmon Silko, Laguna, notes that "from the spoken word or storytelling, comes the written word as well as the visual

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102. Bryson, Feminist Political Theory, 255.

image."[103] To analyze Francis Dick's works without her words would be to reproduce only part of a secondhand interpretation. As Chrystos writes, "for the last five hundred years, Native people have been viewed through that Columbus binocular, rather than through our own words."[104] Wommin's voices are central to feminist methodology. The silencing of Indigenous artists' voices through traditional art historical practice reveals the systemic and contextual history and continuity of settler colonization. Kim Caldwell, Tsalagi/Shawnee states:

> When the invaders came to this continent they did everything within their power to silence the voices of indigenous women. They had already demanded the submission of the women of their own nations and the women of all the lands they subjugated and stole in their conquering and missionizing frenzy. What they clearly did not consider was the incredible tenacity, intelligence and adaptability of indigenous women in their relationship to the spirits and to all of their relations. Contrary to popular belief, all was not lost in the process of forced assimilation. The women who came before us gifted us with a sacred endurance, carrying families, communities and nations in their hearts and in the blood they passed on to us. They have kept our voices from eternal silence. They have given us the ability to speak now, in these times of such confusion and trouble on this continent, and throughout this world. To say what we see. To name it. To step outside our pre-programmed image of ourselves into the clarity of spirit and the strength of raising our voices into a diverse and richly textured song sung in present, past and future tense.[105]

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103. Leslie Marmon Silko, "Angelita La Escapia Explains Engels And Marx" in Reinventing The Enemy's Language: Contemporary Native Women's Writings Of North America, eds. Joy Harjo And Gloria Bird (new York: W.W. Norton And Co., 1997), 195.

104. Chrystos, "I Give You The Seeds Of A New Way," 136.

105. Kim Caldwell, "Dreamwalkers: The Returning" in Reinventing The Enemy's Language: Contemporary Native Women's Writings Of North America, eds. Joy Harjo And Gloria Bird (New York: W.W. Norton And Co.,

Narrative, in both breaking impositional silences and in honoring the Indigenous Oral Traditions, is a methodological tool that highlights subjectivity, context, individuality and voice. Narrative is an intervention in traditional academic discourses which dismiss experiential knowledges and stories as, ostensibly, not 'fact.' Some 'facts' themselves are obviously open to conjecture on many levels which is disputable enough to understand the use of narrative. When only certain peoples are engaged in the manufacture of 'facts,' the underlying structural inequality gets reproduced as the only 'reality.' Narrative is a way of gaining subjectivity and communicating contradictory beliefs and 'facts.' In narrating personal experience, we are able to communicate our truths about social existence.

In art criticism, the art historian, when faced with analyzing a piece of work from outside their culture through their own cultural knowledges, may either speak with the artist to gain insight (when possible and appropriate) or rely on textual knowledges. For this thesis reliance on textual knowledges has proved to be riddled with contradiction and mired in colonialism. Speaking from my own cultural knowledges has proved too reductive. While it is not true of all progressive art history, (indeed it can be downright unprogressive in some cases), speaking with the artist herself is the only way that I feel somewhat comfortable tackling this thesis.

Because dominant narratives are constructed as common sensical, they need to be examined. First person narrative from a traditionally marginalized artist speaking about some sensitive political areas is a space that disrupts the

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1997), 529-530.

normalized dominant narrative.[106] hooks writes that

> The history of colonization, imperialism is a record of betrayal, of lies and deceits. The demand for that which is real is a demand for reparation, for transformation. In resistance, the exploited and the oppressed work to expose the false reality-to reclaim and recover ourselves. We make revolutionary history, telling the past as we have learned it mouth to mouth, telling the present as we see, know and feel it in our hearts and with our words.[107]

Once Francis Dick's art is 'out there' meanings will be made about it, however, considering the colonial context, and the specific meanings within the art as narrative itself, personal narrative methodology subverts dominant traditional art historical practice.

Our methodology could not really be termed interviews with, as much as dialogues among, Francis Dick, Charlene Simon (Francis' partner) and myself. These conversations (methodology) were a conscious intervention in the power dynamics of the 'researcher,' and the 'researched.' Foregrounding our hierarchical positions in dominant culture was key to forging this dialogue. We consistently returned to these constructed structural inequities in order to have an honest transmission of beliefs. I feel that this honesty about racism and sexism that we shared in our conversations was successful in decentering any kind of 'authority' I may have possessed as the 'researcher' and instead invested that power in struggling to understand what I could and listen to learn. Laurie Shrage notes that "The dialogue puts us both [student/researcher and artist] in a position to give a

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106. Patrick Kelly, "The Value Of First Nations Languages," B.C. Studies 89 (Spring 1991), 141-142. Kelly relates a story that speaks to the issues of narrative in Indigenous cultural context through the use of narrative.

107. hooks, Talking Back: Thinking Feminist-Thinking Black, 3.

better account of each other's and our own experience."[108] While this is hopefully true, one of the most important aspects of this methodological intervention is the reciprocal value that I believed we garnered in these conversations. Any problems with authority, interpretation, evaluation and arrangement of material are to be engaged with during joint editing between Francis Dick and myself which I will elaborate on at the end of this chapter. Leonard George, Burrard Band, writes that cross-cultural sensitivity "...results from serious dialogue and sharing. When we understand our differences and the things we have in common, then we may grow and survive together."[109]

To form a solidarity based in dialogue of personal and professional experiences, overlapping dominations and hierarchical positioning is to call attention to these structures in order that the 'researcher' might become an ally, a witness and a listener. bell hooks posits that "It is only as allies with those who are exploited and oppressed, working in struggle for liberation, that individuals who are not victimized demonstrate their allegiance, their political commitment, their determination to resist, to break with the structures of domination that offer them personal privilege."[110] The success of this methodology, in part, depends on the solidarity formed in dialogue, and one of the major goals of this thesis for myself is to strengthen a political commitment to break with dominant ideology and methodology.

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108. Shrage, "Eschewing Ethnocentric Ethics," 25.

109. Leonard George, "Native Spirituality, Past, Present And Future" B.C. Studies 89 (Spring 1991), 161.

110. hooks, Talking Back: Thinking Feminist-Thinking Black, 109.

Listening as a methodological practice for this project is essential. If the 'researcher' listens well, it is my belief and experience that they will be both more able to arrange their research, and continue to learn during and after the project. This recognition of the artist, based on respect, leads to alternative epistomological avenues that guide the project. It may seem absurd to note that listening is important, but since there are so many texts on Indigenous art that do not engage in this practice, it is worth reiterating.

Self-reflexive critique as a self-interrogatory methodological practice, makes the settler 'researcher' aware of their own internalization of dominant cultural ideologies. In being able to critically engage with my own instances (in one discussion) of cultural insensitivity and to discuss it with Francis Dick (at a subsequent meeting) I was able to start to become more vigilant of my own thought processes and to be accountable for the things that I say and think. Self-reflexivity is a tool to unlearn and investigate dominant thinking and being. This process leads to a more honest engagement with one's self and, ultimately, results in a more ethical research and being. Marcus notes that "reflexivity requires attention to the conditions and relations of the production of knowledge....Through a keen sensitivity to how one is always in a very definite and complex social relationship to an object of knowledge...raises immediately the dimension of differential power...."[111]

Although marginalization of Indigenous art and artists by the dominant culture is often 'corrected' with equally, if not more problematic, inclusionary methodology, marginality

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111. George Marcus, "The Power Of Contemporary Work In An American Art Tradition To Illuminate Its Own Power Relations" in The Traffic In Culture: Refiguring Art And Anthropology, eds. George Marcus And Fred Myers (Berkeley: University Of California Press, 1995), 208-209.

may also be understood as a methodological and artistic arena of resistance to dominant culture. Because I consider Francis Dick and her work as exemplary of successful inhabitation of the margin wherein she controls where she shows, sells and what she will and will not do and make entirely as a part of her process and being, I believe that marginal methodology, methodology that subverts parts of traditional research protocol, is best suited to a discussion of and with her. Marginal resistance as championed by Foucault's "subjugated knowledges" is best explained by contemporary feminist writers and activists such as Fatmagul Berktay, bell hooks and Gloria Anzaldua.

Fatmagul Berktay writes that "people who are peripheral to the central loci of power and authority are incorporated only weakly into the central structure of the society that they live in. It is this lack of strong central articulation that provides the marginalized with the ability to criticize existing power relations...."[112] Marginality then becomes a space that "peripheral" peoples may resignify as a site of resistance to homogenization and also as one within which they may remain vigilant of dominant cultural ideology while still producing transformational political work, as I understand Francis Dick to do. bell hooks makes a distinction between "...that marginality which is imposed by oppressive structures and that marginality which one chooses as a site of resistance-as a location of radical openness and possibility."[113] While I agree with hooks that marginality is a space for resistance, I would also add that one does not

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112. Fatmagul Berktay, "Looking From The "Other" Side: Is Cultural Relativism A Way Out?" in Women's Studies In The 1990s: Doing Things Differently?, Eds. Joanna deGroot And Mary Maynard (New York:St. Martin's Press, 1993), 127.

113. hooks, Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics, 153.

always have the luxury of choosing this location, but sometimes does have the ability to act transgressively within this site. I believe that as long as marginal methodology and practice are grounded in context, the margins offer a subversive space for interdisciplinary, political work and being. Gloria Anzaldua's conception of marginal resistance is articulated as a "borderland" where one is "never comfortable, not with society's clamor to uphold the old, to rejoin the flock, to go with the herd. No, not comfortable but home." Anzaldua understands that residing in the borderland "...is what makes poets write and artists create."[114] Francis Dick's work and being resists labels. For instance, she may have a one womin show, a show with other Indigenous artists or with diverse wommin. Her art, while utilizing traditional Northwest Coast Formline, is not iconographically, colorisically nor bound in subject matter to all of this traditional practice. It seems to me that it is from these margins that she exists to make startling, specific and distinct interventions with her work and words.

To maintain a marginal methodology I must rely on non-traditional art historical practices, the use of narrative and mixtures of feminisms with a rootedness in context and an eye to dominant practices. Feminist art historian Griselda Pollock defines such a methodology as crucial for the progressive art historian and artist in fending off "deadly universalism." Pollock suggests that "It is only on the margins that one can still call attention to what the universal system leaves out."[115] As a site of methodology grounded in both analysis and meaning, the margins offer

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114. Gloria Anzaldua, Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987), preface and 73.

115. Pollock, "Art, Art School, Culture: Individualism After The Death Of The Artist," 64.

spaces to make interventions that may be sensitive, abrupt and changeable while still denying the celebratory dislocation of postmodernism.

As marginal methodological practices are able to critique dominant cultural practices, an understanding of dominant theory is necessary both to decipher how the center makes meanings that reinscribe itself as normative, and to act in opposition to dominant oppressive theory. Theory, defined basally as a way, or ways, in which to examine or explain something, is a practice that is in no way only academic and may be understood as a practice in which most people engage daily. The academic mystification of specific theories, what Deborah Rhode terms "the temptations of theoretical purity"[116] may lead marginalized peoples to believe that these theories are not useful for them/us to know because they seem to have little to do with solving racist, sexist, homophobic, and other dominant oppressive practice, and conditions of existence. As many of these theories uphold structural inequality, for instance some postmodern theory, it is important for this methodology to dispute the mystification of theory and disrupt it by using counter theoretical practices.

bell hook's article, "Theory As Liberatory Practice" makes the following points. Theory should be used as an interventionary practice in order to mend experiential knowledges and cultural practices. Some obscure, jargon-ridden theoretical models of communication may be seen as practices of mystification that "obscure what is really taking place," in many instances 'new' ways to name power as within the hands of dominant culture thus 'legitimizing' the

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116. Deborah L. Rhode, "The Politics Of Paradigms: Gender Difference And Gender Disadvantage" in Beyond Equality And Difference: Citizenship, Feminist Politics And Female Subjectivity, eds. Gisela Bock And Susan James (London: Routledge, 1992), 149.

'right' of dominant order to judge everyone else. hooks writes that to ignore dominant cultural theorizing as too difficult or inaccessible is to abdicate a critical site of interrogation, assuming that "theory is not a social practice." When theories seek to make a split between ideas and practice, they seem only to reinscribe domination by refusing to implement other ways of being that might intervene in dominant practice.[117]

When theory is clear, understanding that words should become practice and that words themselves are coalition-building, theory may be seen as a subversive space in which to resist dominant ideology. Methodological concerns that theory is able to address for challenging research include: foregrounding experiential knowledges (the real sites of dominations that solidify a theoretical standpoint), understanding the contexts of inequities in order to disrupt or call attention to oppressive structures of domination and to "...remain constantly alert to its own methods and procedures, to question the way [theory] goes about producing meaning, and to be aware of its lapses and what they might have to tell."[118]

Feminist Marxist theory must recognize that all feminist movement is theorizing, attempting to explain social production on diverse levels. "To assert that it is predominantly 'white middle-class' women who do feminist theory is an elitist exclusion which denies feminism's

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117. bell hooks, "Theory As Liberatory Practice," Yale Journal Of Law And Feminism 4.1 (Fall 1991).

118. Nicole Dubreuil-Blondin, "A Woman's Touch: Towards A Theoretical Status Of Painterliness In The Feminist Approach To Representation In Painting" in Reimagining Women: Representations Of Women In Culture, eds. Shirley Newman And Glennis Stephenson (Toronto: The University Of Toronto Press, 1993), 156.

origins in the lived experiences of women."[119] For my methodology, theory must be located from the personal as it is informed by the dominant structure. I do this in order to understand how these sites of domination work to recenter themselves and how these sites may be intervened in.

Methodological intervention through theoretical practice must include ethics. The ethics involved in this project are respect-based. Manipulative practices such as voicing-over Francis Dick's conceptions of her work and life, upholding the traditional research positions of 'researcher' and "human subject," locating my voice in the cult of the specialist, or decontextualizing the structures of domination are unacceptable. I will be using the tentative voice for analytical suppositions about Francis Dick and her work and be exercising self-reflexive critique where applicable. Utilizing the methodological considerations that I have outlined for this project, I hope to amalgamate these tools with discursive feminist ethnography.

Feminist ethnography is "consistent with three goals mentioned frequently by feminist researchers: (1) to document the lives and activities of women, (2) to understand [or present] the experience of women from their point of view, and (3) to conceptualize women's behavior as an extension of social contexts."[120] For this thesis, the use of the word discursive is meant to signify the form of dialogue, the conversations, among Francis Dick, Charlene Simon and myself. Discursive is meant to describe a conversational and relational way of being and expression. I believe this methodology is a vital (if not the only way) for a settler to

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119. Thompson, "The Self Contradiction Of Post-modernist Feminism," 332.

120. Shulamit Reinharz, Feminist Methods In Social Research (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 51.

respectfully write about and with a contemporary Indigenous artist when the artist is available for commentary.

Drawing from several research methodologies as well as from my personal experience with Francis Dick, the projects of feminist discursive ethnography refute some traditional aspects of ethnographic research such as the division between 'researcher' as 'authority' and artist as "human subject," in order to go beyond inclusionary tactics that seem to reaffirm canonical art history. Judith Stacey cites feminist discontent with "...dualisms, abstractions and detachment of positivism [which operate to buttress] ...separations between subject and object, thought and feeling, knower and known and political and personal"[121] as the springboard for interdisciplinary contextually grounded theory. In refuting the experimental, 'field work' ethnography may still present an inclusionary quality which I hope to avoid through "critical ethnography [that invites a reflexivity] at the center."[122] Gloria T. Hull lists seven fundamental tenets for research methodology that I will be incorporating with many of my own concerns and interpretations for a respectful methodology.

> (1) Everything about the subject [artist] is important for a total understanding [connection] and analysis of her life and work; (2) the proper scholarly stance is engaged rather than "objective;" (3) the personal (both the subject's [artist's] and the critic's) is political; (4) description must be accompanied by analysis; (5) Consciously maintaining at all times the angle of vision of a person who is both [Indigenous] and female is imperative, as it is the necessity for

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121. Judith Stacey, "Can There Be A Feminist Ethnography?" in Women's Words: The Feminist Practice Of Oral History, eds. Sherna Berger Gluck And Daphne Pati (New York: Routledge, 1991), 111.

122. Hal Foster, "The Artist As Ethnographer?" in The Traffic In Culture: Refiguring Art And Anthropology (Berkeley: University Of California Press, 1995), 305.

> class-consciousness, anti-capitalist perspective; (6) being principled requires rigorous truthfulness and "telling it all;" (7) research/criticism is not an academic/intellectual game but a pursuit with social meanings rooted in the "real world."[123]

A mutual friend of Francis Dick and myself, mixed-blood Kwakwaka'wakw writer and wommin's studies graduate, Sarah Hunt, made preliminary contact with Francis Dick and gave me her personal recommendation. I contacted Francis Dick and asked her to work with me on this thesis, to which she agreed. Upon meeting with Francis Dick and her partner, Charlene Simon, for the first time I presented them with my letter of informed consent to sign as required by the Human Research Ethics Committee. After several conversations with Francis Dick and Charlene Simon, I transcribed a total of 116 pages. Francis Dick has approved all of her words for use in this thesis and has edited all the transcript, providing spellings for Kwakwala words. Francis Dick provided me with all the images of her work that appear in this thesis and we have decided that I will help Francis and Charlene work on Francis' major retrospective, starting March 17, 2000 at The Maltwood Museum And Art Gallery in Victoria as a gratuity for the use of her images over which she retains full copyright.

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123. Gloria T. Hull, "Researching Alice Dunbar-Nelson: A Personal And Literary Perspective" in All The Women Are White, All The Blacks Are Men, But Some Of Us Are Brave, eds. Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, And Barbara Smith (New York: The Feminist Press, 1982), 193.

Chapter Two -- Brief Introductions To Francis Dick And Historical Over-View Of The Kwakwaka'wakw Nation And Other Indigenous Peoples Of The Northwest Coast Under European And Settler Colonization

In this chapter I will be discussing Indigenous oral histories as vital components to progressive Indigenous art history. This chapter will also briefly look at some of the European and settler oppressions of the Kwakwaka'wakw peoples and other Indigenous peoples on the Northwest Coast in order to give the reader a sense of *some* of the historical context that informs Francis Dick's life and work. After briefly charting the early meetings between Indigenous Northwest Coast peoples and European peoples, as well as some of the results of these meetings, I will discuss The Indian Act of 1876, anti-Potlatching legislation against the Kwakwaka'wakw Nation, and residential schools. This chapter will conclude with a introductory biography of Francis Dick.

Traditional art historical discourse rarely foregrounds Indigenous oral histories as viable epistemologies. This action perpetuates the voicing-over of primary documentation and presents an active (settler) versus an inactive (Indigenous) dichotomy. Oral tradition is subjugated to dominant cultural textual discourse on Indigenous peoples, much like Indigenous art is voiced-over by settler 'specialists.' These practices are rooted in the binarism of settler (coded intellectual/academic) versus Indigenous (coded solely in spiritual terms or, worse, as vanishing). When dominant cultural myths about Indigenous cultures become 'common sense,' history, as the intellectual property of diverse groups, becomes a limited scope of production and reproduction of hegemonic power. In the attempt to write (at times to control) the past, history may be used to 'validate'

the dominant culture, its actions, and its political power over Indigenous peoples.

Oral history's validity need not be argued for. That language, arts, and other cultural imperatives have survived and flourished under colonization's legislated and covert attempts to destroy oral tradition clearly indicate that it must be recognized as a primary source of historical documentation. To foreground Francis Dick's history, the oral history of Kawadelekala, is to respect that Indigenous peoples held and continue to hold numberless "...place names, thousands of people names, untold thousands of biological names, untold thousands of rules and regulations about different rituals and traditions, untold numbers of stories and songs and a great many other things"[124] that Europeans and settlers have largely voiced-over and ignored.

Francis Dick, who is an artist and a bilingual historian of Kwakwaka'wakw oral tradition, selected this version of the story of Kawadelekala (one that she transcribed from her grandmother's oration) for this thesis because it tells who she is and where she comes from. Francis Dick told me that this story is "important to me because it always reminds me that I come from something. I come from something that is sacred. I come from something that feels like it's grounded, it's solid, it's real, it's magical, it's powerful, and it's something that has always been there, way before I existed."[125] This is Francis Dick's history, an oral history from which she draws much of her inspiration and artistic subject matter:

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124. E. Richard Atleo, "Policy Development For Museums: A First Nations Perspective" B.C. Studies 89 (Spring 1991), 52.

125. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 22, 1999 (Transcript Page 7).

The Story Of Kawadelekala

There was a time on this great land when all was not separated. Long before the flood, long before the beginning of the world as we know it today. All the kingdom spoke with one language and with one voice. The animal kingdom, the undersea kingdom, the elements and the creatures that flew the closest to the heavens. This world knew no boundaries, no limitations. Everything was alive, the trees, the plant life, the wind, the sun and the moon. Nothing was separated, all was one. Man and women were to come into a land where all was interconnected and interdependent of each other. In the great circle of this land, all hands stretched out between the worlds, the kingdoms and the elements. All had a responsibility to this planet. It was a time of harmony, great humility, and the profound awareness of how each one's supernatural energy balanced the other. This was the foundation of the Kwakwaka'wakw people and culture of this territory. This was the land, the home and the house into which our ancestors were born. Each Nation of this great land has their own truth, its own reality. This is the legend of the beginning of time. This is from the Box Of Treasures inherited by Kwaxsistala, Chief Adam Dick, from the spirits of Kwaxsistalas before him. This is our truth. We all have great gifts and ties to the sacred, this is what makes us brothers and sisters. We have different ways of celebrating, some more private, some more public, all are just as powerful.

Far atop the towering mountains at Gwa'yi there roamed a great wolf named Galalalite. Man was not yet born in this supernatural time before memory. This was the time when the animals dominated the planet and had the supernatural power of transformation. Galalalite was a gigantic beast of nature that moved with great strength and agility. He emerged from the mountain. He moved in a cautious, steady foot past the glacier and by the river. His majestic stature appeared at the tree line above the valley floor. And from the body of the great wolf, came forth a man who would be known through time as Kawadelekala. Next to come forth was Kalili, the younger brother. The third supernatural gift was a woman, her name was Hayalilegas. Finally, the youngest brother, 'Nanolakw emerged. And so it came to pass that the first four human beings of the Kawadelekala People came from the great wolf Galalalite.

The land was filled with beauty and wonder as far as the eyes could see. The three brothers and their sister stood in the great unknown land and wondered if others like them existed. Kawadelekala, the first-born, turned to the south direction, and howled a piercing, lonely cry. The only answer was the echo returning from the mountain. Time itself stood still, as Kawadelekala awaited a response that did not

come. He turned to the north and howled a haunting cry. The answer was a deafening silence. Kawadelekala turned to the east direction and gave a spine-tingling howl. As with the other two calls of the wild, he was met with an emptiness and a solitude that cut into his soul. Kawadelekala turned desperately to the west, in a final howl, that emerged from his very core. Suddenly the vast expanse and solitude was shattered by a kindred wolf cry from an unknown distance to the west. The first four people that came forth from Galalalite now knew others lived in a distant place that is known as Quatsino.

In time the brothers and their sister wanted to explore their new-found territory. They began their journey in a Sisiutl canoe. The canoe was made from a two-headed serpent that was powered with supernatural energy. A Sisiutl had the ability to travel on land and water. It could be either a positive or negative experience for those who encountered it. This supernatural creature was to become the main crest of Kawadelekala and was also to become the beam of his first house. The four siblings wandered from their homeland, down the beautiful river in their Sisiutl canoe. As they approached the river's mouth, they saw that it was teaming with silver creatures, swimming upstream. A supernatural man suddenly appeared in front of the three brothers and their sister. The man asked, "Do you know what is swimming up your river?" They replied, "We do not know, we thought they might be worms." The man said to them, "This is what you are going to eat, they will be known to your people as eulachons [candle fish]. They will be one of your most important foods. You will not eat the small creatures that swim in your waters that are clothed with fur. Nor will you eat the creatures who swim on land. You will eat the hoved animals, clothed in fur, but not those that have paws." Kawadelekala and his brothers and sister listened to the supernatural man as he instructed them on what they were to eat and what they were to leave to feed the other living creatures of the world.

As the days passed, the brothers and their sister played with their supernatural powers to entertain themselves. They loved to play a game of toss and catch with a ball made from 'xwila, a living crystal. When Kawadelekala lost the last game to his younger brother, in frustration he hurled the 'xwila to the mountainside. It landed on the bluff, on the face of the mountain, and left a large circle the color and shape of the ball for all to see. That mountain came to be known as 'Xwila'al'. Kawadelekala then took his youngest brother, 'Nanolakw, and pulled him apart and with his supernatural powers transformed him into eagle down. He blew into the air that who once was his brother and the down spread all over the world. Kawadelekala vibrated his hands, as he chanted, "Ai. Ai. Ai. Ai. Wherever you will land, you

will be a different people and you will speak a different language." And so it came to be that the down that was once 'Nanolakw became the different people of the world.

Kawadelekala then decided that they should continue the journey south down the river to see if others like them lived in this world. As the two brothers and their sister started down river, the supernatural man appeared to Kawadelekala and he asked him how the birds of the valley sang. He replied, "Dzawadzali, dzawadzali" The supernatural man decreed from this day on, you will call the people of this valley Da'naxda'xw." Kawadelekala told his sister, Hayalilegas, this is where you will be, it has all the power in the world. You will stay here and chase away all sickness for the generations to come. Kawadelekala told his sister to look after the valley so she wouldn't have to walk amongst the Devil's Club and hurt herself. Kawadelekala and his younger brother, Kwalili, continued on their journey. They came to another river. The supernatural man called to Kwalili, and asked what songs the bird sing at this river. Kawlili replied, "**Howawoo*." From this day on, the supernatural man commanded, the people will be known as Lawitsis. The eldest brother told Kawlili, "This will be your river, look after it well." And so the youngest was left at Liglda'xw as the guardian of the river. This was to be the beginning of the Kawadelekala People, their homeland and their religion. The Kawadelekala People passed through times of great joy, great sorrow, great feasts, great Potlatches, great famine, and the great flood. Remnants of the legend were permanently cast on the mountains at Gwa'yi.

During the flood thousands of years ago, proud reminders of the legend survived today in songs, dances and crests. As the people tell the history of Kawadelekala through the passage of time. The Chieftainship of Kawadelekala that was handed down through the generations came to be known as Kwaxsistala which means the smoke of the Big House fire reaches around the world. This Big House symbolizes the first house of Kawadelekala, and it is said that all parts are alive. The housebeams, the Sisiutl posts, and the walls of women who are the foundation of our culture.[126]

Because Francis Dick identifies herself and her images within this origin story, it becomes apparent that as an art

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126. Anitsa Dawson, Transcribed by Francis Dick for Daisy Sewid-Smith to orate at the Opening Ceremonies Of The 1994 Commonwealth Games, Victoria, British Columbia, August 18, 1994. My transcription of this oration is taken from a video tape of The Commonwealth Games Opening Ceremonies.

historian who wishes never to voice-over Francis Dick, oral tradition is of paramount importance. Without this story of Kawadelekala, much of the iconography in Francis Dick's work would be decontextualized. Without the story of Kawadelekala Francis Dick's words would not only be decontextualized, but it would also be difficult to appreciate the interconnectedness between her art and her history as we shall see in the following pages and chapters.

A Brief Historical Over-View Of The Kwakwaka'wakw Nation And Other Indigenous Peoples Of The Northwest Coast Under Settler And European Oppression

This section is meant to give the reader a sense of *some* of the historical context of colonization within which Francis Dick's art production and personal being is situated. The Kwakwaka'wakw Nation is located within what is now British Columbia, Canada. Francis Dick is a member of the Musqaamakw Dzawadaenutw Band (The Four Tribes Of Kingcome Inlet), which is geographically situated on the Northeast of Vancouver Island and across the strait to Kingcome Inlet on the mainland. The first (European recorded) meeting between Kwakwaka'wakw and European peoples was in 1792 "when the Vancouver expedition stopped at Whulk," a Kwakwaka'wakw settlement at the mouth of the Nimpkish River.[127]

In 1785 the maritime fur trade in sea otter began and Indigenous and European fur traders conducted business with each other. Although this trade was not without negative repercussions for Indigenous peoples, who were 'introduced' to alcohol, firearms and disease, it was less violent than the later oppression that Indigenous peoples were to suffer

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127. Pamela Margarete Creasy, "Five Visible, Vocal Women Of The Kwakwaka'wakw First Nation: Making Culture" (MA Thesis, University Of Washington, 1988), 19.

under European settlement on the Northwest Coast.[128] Roman Catholic, Anglican and Methodist missionaries started to arrive on the Northwest Coast in 1849. The British, in a bid to strengthen 'their' claims to resources in the new colony of British Columbia, promoted colonization by settlers. Between 1851 and 1860 settler populations were increasing rapidly and reservations for Indigenous peoples were created on Vancouver Island as "temporary" settlements. These non-treaty reservations were made up of some of the least viable land (while settlers occupied and took over traditional Indigenous land). The reservations were patrolled with gunboats to prevent Indigenous insurrection.

The British Crown placed The Hudson's Bay Company in charge of immigration and settlement.[129] In 1862 a ship from San Francisco brought smallpox to Victoria. Indigenous peoples camped outside of Victoria contracted the disease and settlers drove them away, causing the epidemic to spread until at least one third of the total Indigenous population of British Columbia were killed. 20,000 Indigenous peoples died between 1862 and 1864 in this particular incidence.[130] In 1871 British Columbia became a province and Ottawa took control of (legislated against) Indigenous peoples from that point.

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128. For more information on early trade between Indigenous and European peoples on the Northwest Coast see: Thomas Vaughan and Bill Holm, Soft Gold: The Fur Trade And Cultural Exchange On The Northwest Coast Of America (Portland: Historical Society Press, 1990).

129. For a more detailed description of British colonization of the Northwest Coast see: Wilson Duff, The Indian History Of British Columbia: The Impact Of The White Man (Victoria: Royal British Columbia Museum, 1997).

130. Victoria Wyatt, "The Northwest Coast" in The Native Americans: The Indigenous People Of North America, ed. Colin Taylor (London: Salamander books, 1991), 180.

Creasy notes that the definition of "Indian" in The Indian Act of 1876 is problematic in the following ways:

> *Men* who belonged to a band that held lands or reserves in common, or for whom the federal government held funds in trust. The wives and children of these men also had status. Women who married outside the status-Indian community-and their children born of the marriage-lost their Indian status and all rights associated with status and band membership forever. It was not until 1985 that an amendment to The Indian Act, Bill C-31, revised this sexually discriminatory definition of "Indian" and then only after Canada was embarrassed in the World Court Of The United Nations for being "in violation of an international covenant on human rights." The case was heard by the U.N. because The Supreme Court Of Canada had ruled that The Indian Act took precedence over the country's own Bill Of Rights. Bill C-31 restored status to only one generation and to their children, however, and specifically excludes succeeding generations, with few exceptions.[131]

The sexist definition of "Indian" and the ensuing disenfranchisement of some Indigenous wommin and their children is important to note here because of the governmental ruling's particular concerns with patriarchy and power. It may be obvious to point out that patriarchy and colonization are both power-over tactics, but examining the overlap of oppressions is key to a feminist reading in this thesis.

In infantalizing Indigenous wommin, the Government Of Canada's bid to alienate and therefore to extinguish Indigenous peoples by forced assimilation was reiterated in a non-gender specific outlawing of the Northwest Coast Potlatch Ceremonies from 1884 to 1951.

The Northwest Coast Indigenous ceremonies known as Potlatching, a Chinook trade jargon term known to the

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131. Creasy, "Five Visible, Vocal Women Of The Kwakwaka'wakw First Nation:making Culture", 22.

Kwakwaka'wakw as 'Pasa, but which Francis Dick refers to as Ancient Ceremonies, were outlawed by settler government from 1884 to 1951. Kwakwaka'wakw participants in The Ancient Ceremonies were jailed, harassed, degraded and had their ceremonial regalia confiscated during this ban. The ban on Ancient Ceremonies was a settler bid to assimilate the Indigenous population to Christianity and settler ways of life. The Ancient Ceremonies, however, *never* ceased.[132] Art was seized from the Kwakwaka'wakw. Some of this art has been repatriated to the U'Mista Cultural Center in Alert Bay and the Kwakwaka'wakw Museum in Cape Mudge however, the pieces of regalia stolen, largely from the well-documented Dan Cranmer Potlatch in 1921, have not all been repatriated. Further Legislation against Potlatching was never repealed. Because settler administrators, erroneously believed that their legislations and actions against the Ancient Ceremonies were successful in eradicating 'Potlatching' entirely, they did not include a law against 'Potlatching' with revisals made to The Indian Act in 1951.

Under the Indian Act of 1876 all Indigenous peoples in Canada were considered wards of Canada, not allowed to vote, receive pensions or family allowances and were considered neither citizens of British Columbia (in the case of Indigenous peoples living in British Columbia) nor Canada until 1960.[133] The Indian Act removed Indigenous children from their homes to attend Christian-run residential schools from the age of five until the age of sixteen. In residential schools, where Indigenous children were beaten for speaking their own languages, physical and sexual abuse

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132. For a concise documentation of the sixty-seven year ban of Kwakwaka'wakw Ancient Ceremonies, see: Daisy-Sewid Smith, Prosecution Or Persecution (Cape Mudge: Nu-Yum Balees Society, 1979).

133. Daisy Sewid-Smith, "In Time Immemorial," 29.

was rampant. Some residential schools treated the children as if they were in work camps and separated family members from one another. These experiences continue to have lasting repercussions for the survivors and their families. In British Columbia residential schools were operated from 1829 (St. Michael's in Alert Bay, where Francis Dick attended) until 1983 (Christie/Kakawis in Tofino).[134]

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134. Provincial Residential School Project, Newsletters And Information Package, 911-100 Park Royal South, West Vancouver, British Columbia, V7T 1A2. For more information on residential schools in British Columbia see: Earnie Crey, "The Children Of Tomorrow's Great Potlatch," 151-154.

Francis Dick: A Brief Biography

The gravity of colonization on the Northwest Coast is severely betrayed in this brief survey. Colonization is a force that tries to extinguish Indigenous peoples in this country. From purposely infecting Indigenous populations with smallpox to refusing to recognize Indigenous land claim rights, settlers have, and continue to personally, politically, 'legally,' and barbarically degrade and kill Indigenous peoples. It is from these atrocities and many others, past and present, that Francis Dick comes and through which she renders her art and her life. Born in Alert Bay, British Columbia in 1959, Francis Dick is the daughter of Wilkwilakw and Kwaxistala.

Francis Dick recalls: "when I was six years old my mother died and I think I stayed [in Alert Bay] for maybe a year. From that point on I was moved from home, to home, and back to Alert Bay, at times, and then I went out on my own."[135]

Round Lake is an addiction program in Armstrong, British Columbia, that Francis Dick says "was probably one of the best things that ever happened to me, not in terms of going into an addiction program, but because of the Native Spiritualism that they practice there."[136] Throughout her life Francis Dick has been involved with Kwakwaka'wakw ceremony and spiritualism as a way of life and she views it as an innate component of who she is and where she is from. Although Francis Dick notes that her spirituality was "awakened" during her time at Round Lake, she also notes that

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135. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 22, 1999 (Transcript Page 30).

136. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, April 6, 1999 (Transcript Page 2).

Kwakwaka'wakw Spirituality has always been a part of her life from as early as she can remember.

Shortly after Francis Dick completed the program at Round Lake in 1986, her grandmother, Anitsa, passed away and Francis started her career as an artist as a way to honor her grandmother. Francis described this process:

> The first time I started to create was after my grandmother died. My grandmother was the head of the house so to speak, she was the backbone of the family and her name was Anitsa, which is the auntie of the Four Tribes of Kingcome.
> When she passed away I was there and it was really significant for me to be there because when I saw her,it wasn't a death that I was experiencing. It was a transition. There was this whole moving ceremony that took place within a really institutionalized setting, which was a hospital. There was this amazing magic that was taking place there. I had just gotten out of a six week program in Armstrong, B.C. And because of the stuff that I'd learned there, there were things that I was beginning to become aware of like my spirituality, the spirituality of who I was, my family, my culture, community and Nation. There was an amazing convergence of things that were coming. So I was watching this transformation take place. After my grandmother had passed away, it was after the fourth night of my being there.
> When she passed away I felt compelled to find a way to honor her. One of the ways we honor our people who have passed on, or people who are born is through a ceremony which is called a Potlatch. Potlatch, I don't like calling it that because it's not a name that comes from our Nation, it's a name that comes from outside of ourselves, so I like to call it Ancient Ceremony. In our language we call it 'Pasa. Normally what you do is you have a 'Pasa, you have a Potlatch to honor the death of your grandmother, or the transition of your grandmother. I didn't have the resources nor did I have the power to do that. [There are] guidelines and rules that come from within that cultural arena. So I thought what can I do? What can I do to honor my grandmother?
> So I decided that I was going to create the beginning of the story of Kawadelekala which is our crest, this is

> our family. This is our family legend.
> I sat down and I drew and then I painted.[FIGURE TWO]
> When I had finished the piece, I went to my cousin Beau Dick, who's just this renowned artist.
> [Beau Dick] said go to Victoria and see this guy named Vincent Rickard and he'll do the printing for you.
> I came down here and I showed it to Vincent and Vincent asked me, are you related to Beau Dick? And I said yes, he's my cousin. And [Vincent Rickard said] great o.k., this is good. Your name is Francis Dick, related to Beau Dick, Beau Dick's a famous person, you're a woman doing the art, o.k. this could be really interesting.
> He printed it, it didn't cost me any money to print. [There were 200 copies made of] my first print that was my first painting. I took a hundred and
> he took a hundred and he distributed [his 100] That's how my role as an artist began. I didn't see myself as an artist. I got this thing published and
> now I'm beginning this relationship with something outside of myself. I didn't think about that at all, all I thought about, was how important it was to me to be able to create something for my grandmother and honor her. It was 1986 when my grandmother passed away and that was when my conscious journey within myself began. It was from that point that I began to create and express my life through my paintings.[137]

Soon after Anitsa passed away, Francis' youngest brother, Jesse, with whom she was very close, committed suicide. Francis cites his death as another major shaping force in her artistic process. The first song that Francis composed was a mourning song for Jesse. Francis includes an eagle, a symbol honoring Jesse, in many of her pieces and speaks of him as an inspiration to her work. After Jesse's death, Francis completed a degree in social work at the University Of Victoria and practiced as a social worker in Kingcome Inlet for a year before she decided to practice her arts full-time. Since then, Francis has composed songs in Kwakwala, written the sold-out theater production *Wiuma:Honoring The Spirit Of Women* in 1992, and continues to

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137. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 9, 1999 (Transcript Pages 3-5).

"honor her process" in various media. Francis was initiated to The Hamatsa Society, the highest ranking in her Nation, in 1994, a society that many anthropologists, art historians and historians claim is reserved only for men.

During a conversation in which Francis was philosophizing about the degrees of "gray" in her life (in opposition to the usual dichotomies of 'black and white' of some issues) I asked her what it was that she could say that she knew for sure. Francis answered:

> What I know for sure is that I'm an Aboriginal woman who does Northwest Coast Contemporary Art and I live in a non-Native society, trying to cope. Trying to cope is exactly that, just trying to cope. Trying to cope on a day to day basis. Trying to do what I love to do the most and doing that with as much honor and dignity as I can possibly have, as I create what I create and trying to learn from what I create and be aware of where it comes from and to acknowledge and honor where it comes from. Trying to make it work in a society that is just generally big, bad and oppressive.[138]

Francis describes part of the "big, bad and oppressive" as:

> Part of where I come from it's part of my history, it's part of my abuse as a child, it's part of being in residential school, it's part of my mother dying when I was really young. It's part of being passed around from one family to another, families who didn't want me. It's about living and coming from a place where there's an incredible high percentage of alcohol and drug abuse, where suicide and sexual abuse and physical abuse is rampant. It's about coming from those places, trying to be aware of those places, acknowledging those places, embracing those places, hopefully moving through those places, never forgetting those places and all the while

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138. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 22, 1999 (Transcript Page 22).

holding fast to myself close where I come from.[139]

Francis speaks about her process of making art as expressing something that is inside of her, a process that acknowledges her relationship to the media and her personal journey through her life.

A large part of my learning process through dialogue with Francis Dick entailed a complete challenge to some of the 'facts' that I had learned about Northwest Coast Formline. Drawing from Bill Holm's book Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Analysis Of Form, still considered by many students and scholars to be "The Bible" of Northwest Coast Indigenous art, I initially understood the following assertions to be true: That Northwest Coast Formline is "strictly bound by tradition." Holm asserts that before the advent of his book, Formline had "escaped analysis;" has a "conservative character;" is "essentially an applied and decorative art;" that Formline "display characteristic[s] tended [he uses the past tense in his book] to conventialize the symbolism;" that there "was on the Northwest Coast a highly developed system for the organization of form;" and that is was only through apprenticeship that an Indigenous Northwest Coast artist learned Formline.[140] Through Francis Dick's words and work I learned that none of this is true for her and that she considers much of it, as I now do, in direct opposition to the continuous production of Northwest Coast Formline by Indigenous artists. Because I had learned that Formline was only transmittable through apprenticeship, I asked her how she learned to work with these forms. As she explained my misunderstanding to me, the conversation lead to

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139. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 22, 1999 (Transcript Page 25).

140. Bill Holm, Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Analysis Of Form (Ontario: Douglas And McIntyre, 1965), 11, 13, 19, 20 and 92.

an interesting part of biography on Francis' work and experiences with Formline. Francis answered my question as follows:

> How did I know that I was going to be using Northwest Coast Formline, well I don't know. I didn't think about the technical aspects of putting the design together or creating the design. What I was aware of mostly throughout the whole process were the feelings. I didn't kinda' go o.k. well here's the ovoid, here's the U Form and here's the Split U and these are the different places that I'm going to put it to create these wolves. It wasn't like that. I was driven by my feelings. I was driven by something inside me that I needed to express.
> I think that growing up within a culture, within a family that was really strong in its cultural foundation, having the masks, the designs, the songs and the language all around me as I was growing up, it was just a part of me. It's like if you grow up in a family where you have your brothers and sisters with you, growing up, they're your brothers and sisters and you just know that they're there you know where they are, you know how they are, who they are. I think it's like that with a design, it's a relationship that you have as you're growing up. So you're born into something and there's this innate relationship that you have with it. It's within your cellular level, it's you. You breathe it in, it's part of who you are, it molds you, it's just there. It's this relationship you have and I think that some people [Indigenous] are more aware of it than others. I think some artists aren't even really aware of it. I mean it's kind of esoteric or something, if that's a word that could be used to describe it. It's bizarre but it's really deep, that's how I feel, that's what I think, it's just a part of who you are.
> [Andrea: So it would not be part of a non-Native artist at all obviously?]
> Francis: No, not at all, I don't think.
> [Andrea: So what do you think when you see a Susan Coleman, that woman that does Northwest Coast Formline, but not really, and transposes it with her own images and she's non-Native?]
> Francis: I think it's disrespectful, I think it's dishonoring, I think it's sacrilege. I think there's not very much thought involved with where it comes from. It's a total dishonoring of where Northwest Coast art comes from because Northwest Coast art is not separate from dance, song, language and culture.

It's not a separate thing and I think that's one of the biggest insults, that it's looked upon as a separate entity from all of that. It's all together, it's all connected, you cannot isolate it from the other things. As I understand it, as I grew to understand it. People think that they can just take it as they can take different subjects within the university system. This is 099 here and that is philosophy here and this is psychology over here, it's all separated and there are all these compartments and all these little files that fit in these compartments. Whereas it is not like that for me in Northwest Coast Art. I think when it's taught like that, [when] it's made to be understood as a separate entity, it is such an insult to Indigenous Peoples of this country.

[Andrea: So when I read Bill Holm for instance, this settler man who wrote Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Analysis Of Form and he, at the time, was credited for 'giving the Natives back their art form' after 67 years of the Potlatch ban, it's not true. I'm reading this and I'm thinking this is horrible....]

Francis: No, it's a practice that has never ever stopped. It's something that's always been continuous. There has never ever been a place or a time where it has stopped. There was certain times when it went underground and certain places that went underground, the masks, way back when, they were carved in isolation, were carved in the forest, they were carved in the woods.

[Andrea: So your technical training and your background is, I read in your biography, with your cousin and other people whom I'm not familiar with?]

Francis: When I became really interested in wood (and I'm very fascinated with [wood] I think it is just the most amazing medium and it's really interesting because it's not my first medium that I work in). I sought out different people to work with and there was one person who was really willing to work with me. Beau, and there's a group of these men in Alert Bay who seemed to have difficulty working with me. They sort of let me hover on the outskirts of their circle but they never ever really invited me in to be able to study and carve with them. When they felt like it they'd show me some stuff but it wasn't consistent and it wasn't something that I could count on. I learned quickly enough that this isn't my place, they don't want me here I tried desperately to become a part of them because [Beau Dick] just the most amazing artist, he's phenomenal and there's a young group of men who he's

working with as well. It was so neat to watch this energy because these other people [who] were working with Beau are beginning to study the arts, to be part of it. So I didn't really apprentice with him. It was just really short, and then with silver I hung out with Fah Ambers for awhile. They kind of act like they want you there [but] it seems like, my experience was and my perception and my feeling was, that they didn't.
[Andrea: And how does that make you feel as someone who does really powerful woman-centered images? How does that make you feel when men from your own culture don't want you to learn the art and that might be really ethnocentric of me to say....]
Francis: Well you know, at the time I didn't think of myself as a girl or as a female I just thought of myself as a person really wanting to learn the arts so it wasn't like--I didn't really separate it. But on some level I knew, but I didn't think about that. I didn't feel then that they were doing that because I was a woman, later on I kind of put it together. [At the time] I kind of just went, I know they don't want me [here] and that's so connected to my history because when I was growing up after my mother died I was put into all these different homes and I knew that they didn't want me there, they made it really clear so I was really sensitive to that. Now though, when I think about it, it's frustrating, I'm frustrated by it. Not [being] taken seriously whenever I started to learn how to do wood carving even up until very recently working with people there was real difficulty in these people who I tried to work with to show me just the basic things around carving and that's like having a sharp tool. It's like come on, I need to know how to sharpen my tools and they won't show me how to sharpen the tools, yet that's the most important thing
when you are creating and that's bizarre
and it's really twisted and I feel there's something in it. I think there's more in it than people really want to be aware of. Because why? Is it about being threatened? I don't know, I don't know, I find it frustrating. It's really hard as a woman to be working in the arts and to work with men who are high profile artists and the treatment that I get from these guys and how I am really aware of the treatment and then I decide to a certain degree how am I going to be in this?
To get what I can out of
it or do I just say I don't need to learn
from you that bad and I have to find my own way. This has been what it's been like trying to work with wood for since I was 19.
[Andrea: So you've negotiated an artistic territory

> basically that's really pretty gendered and had to make your own...you've done a lot within yourself.]
> Francis: All that I've done I've had to do myself.
> With the wood I'm still trying to find
> somebody to apprentice with and it's not working and I'm going into 40 and wood is so important to me. I love wood. Wood is just so alive and so amazing
> I think it's magic.
> I've done my paintings, my designs,
> solely on my own. It's all my own stuff it's all my own creativity and maybe it has to be that way with wood too. [Andrea: I saw a piece of your at Ancestral Journey a box, a bentwood box that's a beautiful, an amazing piece, so obviously this is working for you.]
> Francis: Well I guess it is but the thing is I don't believe it is because I don't have the right tools.
> I'm not doing the wood in the traditional sense.
> I think that part of it is me finding
> things that will work for me as a woman.
> It's just taken so long and I
> don't know within this life time if I'll ever, ever be able to exist within that arena (with me developing and maintaining a consistent relationship with wood).
> There's nothing more that I'd love to do than to be able to study it full time and I can't for all kinds of reasons I'm unable to right now.[141]

Francis Dick's words and work clearly refute Holm's conception of Northwest Coast Formline. Holm's description of Northwest Coast Formline as static and knowable only through his 'expert' analysis belies Indigenous epistemologies by foregrounding a settler scientific-style of formal analysis over an innate culturally specific experience and world views not knowable to him. I believe that arranging an argument along the lines of solely formalistic visual deductions, while typical of traditional art historical practice, is also typical of the voice-over form of 'analysis' that settlers and Europeans sometimes bring to Indigenous art production. By using diminutive art historic terms such as "decorative," Holm devalues Indigenous

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141. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 9, 1999 (Transcript Pages 5-11).

Northwest Coast art to 'craft' (a problematic division in itself) and dissects pieces of an entire art complex that was and continues to be a complete expression within social contexts. As Francis notes, a lot of Indigenous art history is foregrounded in this reductive fashion. While it is important to recognize and appreciate the formal complexities of this art, Holm evacuates context and denies Indigenous voices in a recentering of traditional art history throughout his book.

My misunderstanding of the innate form that Francis' experience with Formline takes (until my understanding was altered through listening to Francis' experience with Formline) and the adjunct fear that I would be essentializing her relationship with this process, challenged me to understand that Francis' epistemologies are not art historically nor personally knowable to me in some areas. This realization, that a settler dichotomy between learning and knowing exists and is imbedded in many different ways in as many different disciplines, is a very important construction for people wishing to study Indigenous art history to grapple with on the basis of a particular artists' process. I brought this idea up in a later discussion with Francis, explaining my initial confusion and eurocentric reaction, which Francis and I discussed further.

> [Andrea: There are so many things that you've spoken about that I've never heard about or that I was taught to think....For example when you were talking about Northwest Coast Formline being within you, innate, my mind was blown because I have read that Formline is something that an Indigenous artist learns only from another Indigenous artist. This is a very European way of understanding. So when I was stuttering through that question, 'so how did you know how to do Formline?' [from our last conversation] it was because I've been educated that it's something that a person learns how to do, Indigenous peoples learn this through an apprenticeship. So when you say it's innate, I was

completely confused].
Francis: Well, yeah, I could see that. Maybe it is, I've never sat down with another artist and asked them 'how did you learn how to do that?' I don't know if they really think about it. That's a really interesting point because it's just the way it is for me. I wonder if Beau feels the same way or does he believe that it's something that's taught and why does he believe that? Does he believe that because he was told that or does he believe that because that's what he really believes?
[Andrea: So you've never actually considered that other artists, Indigenous Artists, may not experience the forms in the way that you do? [Obviously, much to my embarrassment, I had never considered that Indigenous artists may experience the forms in any other way than how Holm described it].
Francis: Well no. I don't think about it. I've never thought about that, it's really very interesting, it's an interesting question, a very interesting point. I think it's amazing because when you look at bios. they usually [record that artists have] apprenticed with this person for so long but really what does that mean, so you study with him. You learn technical skills, I guess that's what I've learned mostly when I've studied with somebody, not so much the form, not so much the use of Formlines and designs used to create my own painting or whatever.
[Andrea: So it's more of a technical aspect when you say apprenticeship?]
Francis: Yeah, for me when I did [an apprenticeship] and it wasn't really a huge amount of time that I spent with the people that I spent it with. Mostly it was technique.
[Andrea: That's amazing to me because I would automatically assume, coming from a European background, [dominant culture educated] and learning what I learned, that you were learning technique, that you were learning formline].
Francis: Oh.
[Andrea: And that is a bias].
Francis: Interesting.
[Andrea: Yeah, and that is automatically what I assume is meant by apprenticing].
Francis: Because for me, when you asked that question the first place that I went to was being in my grandmother's house and seeing the art work, seeing the masks in the Big House, and my grandmother's house, in my grandfather's basement, the paintings that were created by my uncle, hearing the music, hearing the language, it was just, THERE! It was a part of

> me, I mean, it's a part of who we are. It's kind of there so it's just within.
> [Andrea: And non-Native students are taught [sometimes] that if I were to say that [as a non-Native person] about an Indigenous artist, say I didn't know you and I wasn't familiar with your work or anything like that but I said [as an art historian] 'well, oh Francis Dick, well let's see, she, I think she has an innateness that sort of enables her to do this' I would come across as a complete asshole. [Laughter] It's true! Because what I would automatically do to that art historian [who had made such a conjecture] I would say, that's essentialistic, you're essentializing her into this being of some eurocentric constructed spirit world and you know that's not right to say, you don't have that right. That's not the way that I was schooled or that I self-educated. I was schooled to say that this is a highly intellectual form of art and that it is learned from generation to generation and it is passed down and this is what I was taught, by specialist texts].
> Francis: Oh my god that's so interesting you know, what would be interesting for me to know would be do high profile artists, would a high profile artist agree with that? Because that's what the experts say? Or because they themselves believe that?[142]

Francis Dick's art, her process of honoring her innate cultural knowledges and personal experiences, transgresses an linear or solely culturally traditional epistemology, while still acknowledging Kwakwaka'wakw forms and the world views of her heritage. Defying some boundaries of tradition while still expressing herself from within that tradition, Francis is an artist whom I see as negotiating her own space, cultivating unique and empowering pieces on her own terms. Francis' art, which began as an expression of her cultural heritage with the honoring of her grandmother as a teacher of the Kwakwaka'wakw oral tradition, seems never to deviate from her rootedness as a direct descendant of Kawadelekala. Francis cites Kawadelekala as the constant force within her life. Francis told me:

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142. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 22, 1999 (Transcript Pages 8-10).

> The closest thing that I could come to, if I think of home,would be the story of Kawadelekala. That's always been there, consistent, all the way through my life. Everything else has just been chaotic and inconsistent.[143]

Within the context of Francis' life and cultural history of being a colonized person, it is significant that her cultural origin has given her strength to communicate her many political views on the oppression of Indigenous peoples in spite of the measures taken by settler culture to extinguish those histories. The settler attempt to erase Indigenous history has failed, despite the on-going violent racism of dominant culture's past and present legislation against Indigenous peoples. Oral tradition is clearly not only a way to transmit knowledge but, as demonstrated in Francis' case, it is identity informing and a key component in cultural and personal survival.

To conclude this brief biography, it seems appropriate to consider Francis' first piece, *Kawadelekala*, [FIGURE TWO] because it informs her identity and her process, her ancestral legacy and her beginnings in many senses of the word. Francis describes her physical process as beginning with the inception of a piece in its entirety. Francis remarks that the image is "inside" of her. Desperately trying to understand what she was describing, I clung fast to the internalized settler dichotomy between emotion and knowledge, heart and head (the typical body/mind split that my feminist sensibilities refute utterly backlashed in my research). I held fast to the traditional (non-feminist) notion of the mind as the place of origin for all that the body might then realize or create. Francis corrected me, citing a more holistic process than having an image in one's

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143. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, April 6, 1999 (Transcript Page 3).

head. Francis said:

> Well first of all I don't have it in my head, I feel it inside. I have the image right here [Francis indicates the middle of her chest]. That's where I feel it. What I usually do is
> when I have an image that I feel inside me, I have a sketchbook and I sketch. I sketch until I see what I feel. Once I see what I feel I take this image and I decide what size I want it and that's a process for me, how big am I going to have this? So I take that, once I've got my sketch I decide what size it's going to be. I look at the different colors, I use
> colors that connect with how I feel about the feeling that's inside of me. Then I look at the visual part and kind of go back to the feeling and then I decide on the colors. I just look around at different colors
> Then I transfer the size on to a multimedia board. Then I just paint, I just start. Sometimes
> I'll have a color in mind, but it never really turns out to be the color that I use. In the past it did. I'd go o.k., I'm going to use fuchsia. Now
> the image kind of does its own thing, it's neat.[144]

Francis' use of Formline in the piece *Kawadelekala* (published July, 1986) has what she terms a "rhythm" to it. Francis also considers the rhythm in every piece that she creates similar, containing "lots of curves and movement."[145] Francis' choice of iconography comes from her knowledge that she

> comes from a mythical being....From the wolf Kawadelekala, that's where my family comes from. It's important for me to always acknowledge that.... It's about acknowledging my history. It's acknowledging my grandmother. It's acknowledging my grandmother's grandmother. It's acknowledging a

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144. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 22, 1999 (Transcript Page 27) And February 9, 1999 (Transcript Pages 22-23).

145. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 9, 1999 (Transcript page 43).

historical line from the dawning of time.[146]

Francis' artist statement, a part of her process that she includes with each piece of her work, details *Kawadelekala's* subject matter as such:

> My grandmother taught me who she was and where we connect with different tribes and people. I chose to do this part of my grandmother which is Kawadelekala....Anitsa [also Francis' grandmother's name] was the daughter of Kawadelekala, the root of the Kingcome People, and my family are direct descendants of Kawadelekala....Kawadelekala is the first wolf and the main wolf in this print. His tongue shapes out into a hand, which is the sign of man, which Kawadelekala becomes. The second wolf is the younger brother, Kalili, who sits at the rear of Kawadelekala. Then comes the female, who's name is Hayalilegas, who is set in the shoulders of Kawadelekala. Finally comes 'Nanolakw, another brother who sits at the opposite of Kawadelekala's head....The face of the moon represents my grandmother who is connected safely inside Kawadelekala, her father, in the way given to her by our creator, and her place in our world and the world beyond.[147]

Traditional art history would likely take this space to speak about the forms, the technical aspects of the work. Formalistic discussions are important to progressive art historical discourse, but this is specifically not my focus within the scope of this thesis. My aim is to foreground oral history as primary cultural documentation, set within a colonized land. I believe that detailing context, some personal biography, and specifically listening to and foregrounding Francis' voice, is a vital component to an art history that respects more than one part of an artist's

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146. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 9, 1999 (Transcript Pages 45-46).

147. Francis Dick, Artist Statement, *Kawadelekala*, 1986.

process. My experience of Francis' explanation of her process and world view refuted some of my reading and thinking about Indigenous art practices in a generalized way.

When I started to grapple with these various ways of knowing and methodological inconsistencies, I found that through comparing four well-known catalogues of Indigenous art provided me with some general conclusions. I compared two traditional art historical texts, Chiefly Feasts: The Enduring Kwakiutl Potlatch and The Legacy: Tradition And Innovation In Northwest Coast Indian Art to two progressive art historical texts, Indigena: Contemporary Native Perspectives and Robes Of Power: Totem Poles On Cloth. The incidence of voice-over in the traditional texts seems to reflect and perpetuate a more traditional art historical analysis, while the progressive texts contain a more diverse and personal tone, highlighting artist statements and Indigenous essays in an overarching project of foregrounding individual artistic voice. I will be addressing these catalogues in my conclusion, however I find it useful to mention them here because I believe that individual Indigenous world views and oral histories are imperative to an analysis of how traditional settler art history voices-over Indigenous artists. Traditional settler art history that tries to fit Indigenous art into traditional European and settler art historical formal (and even voice-over contextual) analysis is a project of on-going colonization.

Chapter Three--Self Portraits

In this chapter on three of Francis Dick's self-portrait serigraphs the impetus for Francis' production of self-portraiture will be discussed. I chose to arrange the three serigraphs under discussion in this chapter not in chronological order, but by thematic significance. *May a<u>x</u> la* depicts Francis' historical beginning of her process of self-actualization through self-portraiture, which seems to be the basis of her process, so I chose to discuss it first. *Comes A Woman* seems to speak to Francis' issues of being and becoming an active agent in her process of self-actualization, I believe that it expands on ideas Francis expresses in *May a<u>x</u> la*, and so it is discussed second. *Walking Thru My Fires* exemplifies Francis' use of the tools that she has earned and continues to use to depict a continual resistance to her personal and structural oppressions. The reason that I choose to organize these serigraphs thematically is because I believe that they illustrate Francis' development of her process of honoring her self. By organizing the serigraphs in this way, I hope to familiarize the reader (and to continue to learn myself) about the process that Francis describes as her art. I believe that in this organization, each piece works to aid the reader's sense of what Francis is doing in her process. I also believe that these serigraphs work, in this organization, to make the reader aware of the sense of motion and process without closure that Francis' self-portraits demonstrate.

Discussing some of Francis Dick's serigraphs in terms of self-portraiture and honoring wommin (the later being the subject of the next chapter) is difficult because Francis is incredibly prolific and because there is a lot of cross-over in the subject matter of these two areas. For this chapter;

I will concentrate on three self-portrait serigraphs. The works that I have chosen are: *May ax la*, printed in August of 1991 [FIGURE THREE]; *Comes A Woman*, printed in December of 1993 [FIGURE FOUR]; and *Walking Thru My Fires*, printed in November of 1992 [FIGURE FIVE].

When I asked Francis why self-portraiture is important to her she replied that it involves:

> Honoring myself, my pain.
> Because that's what I experience. [Andrea: And in doing that, honoring your pain through self portraiture, does that help to eradicate any of your pain?] I think to a certain degree, not really emotionally, but somewhere, I guess spiritually, it does. Maybe the suffering is not in vain. Maybe there is something that I'll get from this and maybe there will be some peace in there somewhere. Because my desire is for peace. That's what my journey feels like, it's about, let me experience, here on this earth, just even for a short time...let me be in peace.[148]

In a later discussion, Francis described what this peace means to her and how she experiences brief moments of it through drawing on her identity that she expresses through her art.

> I draw that [feelings of safety, groundedness and identity] from inside. I think that it's a combination of all of who I am. I think it's just who I am *always*. I get to this place where I have no questions, where I have no judgements and I have no criticism about who I am. I'm just able to honor and acknowledge who I am, where I've come from, what I have. It doesn't last very long, It's just like [Francis snaps her fingers] seconds. I think partly why I paint is so that I can see that place because I see those places in my work.[149]

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148. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 9, 1999 (Transcript Page 66).

149. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 22, 1999 (Transcript Page 27).

Francis' process of honoring her pain, doing her art to achieve some peace for herself, refutes a feminist postmodernist position that understands embracing a 'victim status' as disempowering. Denise Thompson notes that "[a]nother reason why 'post-modernist' feminism might be reluctant to focus on male domination [as well as racism and other institutionalized forms of domination] concerns the risk of characterizing women as 'victims.'"[150] However, I believe, and Thompson goes on to reason similarly, that naming one's oppression is a form of freeing one's self from that oppression. It seems that by articulating her oppressions, Francis is able to repudiate all characterizations or labels of being solely a victim by claiming her own experiences and naming the ways in which she is managing them instead of internalizing her oppression. This subversion of embracing a victim status occurs because Francis exposes her oppressions and refutes the idea of blaming herself for personal and political abuses that are clearly no fault of her own. If Francis were to deny her experiences of pain and oppression, in a postmodern idiom of declining to name her oppressions and oppressors, it might both silence her and perhaps even result in a torturous mode of internalized oppression. As Denise Thompson writes: "to refrain from naming victimization is a failure to name oppression."[151] This postmodern denial of claiming a victim status contains the tacit implication that everyone is an active participant with equal agency, that everyone might equally resist oppression for fear of being ghettoized as a one dimensional 'victim.' However, dominant racist, sexist

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150. Thompson, "The Self Contradiction Of Post-modernist Feminism," 326.

151. Thompson, 327.

society is not an equal opportunity space. By 'reasoning' that it is good and desirable to refuse to name one's pain from a site of institutionalized oppression works to continually validate dominant society's oppressive actions. Francis is obviously not willing to exonerate oppression, nor is she interested in a positionality that refutes her experiences of domination and her fight against it.

In terms of settler violence against Indigenous peoples, some postmodern theory may be seen as urging Indigenous peoples not to claim a victim status and instead to remain silent in that space of victimization without articulation of their pain, thus encouraging an internalized state of oppression. Ironically (or not) this results in solidifying dominant culture's hierarchy in a supposedly decentered postmodern world and works to maintain an arena in which Indigenous peoples are forever 'other' and exploitable in a reinscription of status quo 'values.' Francis' resistance to these institutionalized oppressions by depicting her own personal experiences of abuse are vital as interventions in contemporary art and society that is built upon a highly stratified structure of inequality.

Francis' self-portraits (and much of her other work) are therefore liberatory spaces that refuse to be silenced, that refuse to be seen as supporting cultural imperialism, sexist, racist and other abusive dominant cultural sites of oppression. Francis' serigraph *May a<u>x</u> la*, created in August of 1991, demonstrates an acute awareness of the necessity to name her pain as a site from which she comes to challenge domination. The artist's statement by Francis that accompanies *May x<u>a</u> la* describes the work as such:

> *May x<u>a</u> la* is a Kwakwala word meaning 'to honor.' This print is a self-portrait of Francis at the age of about eleven. She sits on a bentwood box grieving for her mother who died four years earlier; however

> she is surrounded with strength from her spiritual guides--Kawadelekala, the wolf, on her left and the eagle representing the soul of her brother Jesse on the right. The small black face next to the wolf represents the human world. Since moving from Alert Bay to Victoria Francis has been involved in a personal process of self discovery. She believes each individual has the child within and is acknowledging her own childhood in this print. The earthy tones used are grounding colors which reflect Francis' stance from where she looks at her background while working toward her future.[152]

In this self-portrait, Francis is creating from a location of pain and oppression, working through and displaying her life past, present and future. *May xa la*, while rooted in a place of pain, is not articulatory only of that space. Francis' resistance to her oppressions are signaled coloristically and iconographically through the very act of naming herself and claiming her pain as contextual to her life. Coloristically, she is perhaps making a conscious choice to stay in the earthly realm even though her victimizations are overwhelming. Iconographically, she names and renders the forces of strength that she draws on in order to fight this victimization. *May xa la* is a work that seems to describe a process of liberation for Francis that necessarily speaks to the idea of searching to understand and deal with her pain. The work is grounded in Francis' reality and therefore not without context. Context appears to provide her with a means of traveling both back to this particular pain and, in doing so, to comprehend its nature. Through complete isolation she realizes her journey and considers the strength with which she has surrounded herself. As previously stated, *May xa la* flies in the face of postmodern theory's 'concern' for artists who articulate a victim status by locating the cause of personal pain and by

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152. Francis Dick, Artist's Statement, *May xa la*, 1991.

naming it. This forms a multi-dimensional critique of the many oppressions that individuals face.

May xa la is neither a purely celebratory piece, nor a purely empowering piece. Francis successfully navigates the margins between the two dichotomies and produces a work that gives the viewer a sense of Francis' self-described movement within these borderlands. Francis' resistance to one dimensional labels is exemplified through her self-portrait, through painting her own journey, and through her refusal to be caught in only one state of being while simultaneously calling attention to the rootedness of her being as coming from places of diverse adversarial and triumphant contexts. I suggest that Francis' subject matter (subject matter that contains a strong sense of personal narrative) claims the margins as locations of introspection, identity, anger, grief and power. Further, I understand these margins as contextual places constructed by Francis from her memories, her experiences and her insight as enabling her to articulate a less static and more personally historical space wherein she is able to address her experiences without being labeled as an artist who fits into reductive traditional categories such as: exclusively Indigenous artist, womin artist or traditional Northwest Coast Formline artist.

The ability to tell one's own story, the power of narrative, is crucial in eschewing traditional art historical practices that seek to impose absolute readings on experiential knowledges that are imbued with specific personal messaging. Francis' self-portraits interfere with dominant cultural ideas of compartmentalization while defying postmodern dislocation. Francis controls her own subjectivity by literally controlling the means of production and infusing her production with her own narrative. Francis specifies that her process of making art and her life are not separate; her life's narrative mingles inextricably with the

narrative of her art. Francis attributes this consistency to a self-examination of her thought process.

Francis' self-awareness and introspection seem to be very important components in both her production of art and the processes of her life. Francis brings this self-conscious subjectivity to her narrative process to produce self-portraits that have a sense of motion, of journey both within her art and her life. I understand Francis to be deeply involved in identifying with her historic and cultural contexts of oppression, and speaking of those places in order to understand her past and present situations. Francis' self-portraits may be understood as "...hold[ing] up the mirror to [her] life [and in doing so] reflecting what has been done to [her] by the culture that lives outside that mirror."[153] Further, I understand Francis to be speaking about being accountable for, and aware of, social contexts. Francis' owning and telling of her life stories through her work and in discussion seems to be partly about claiming her identity and vigilantly examining her process to reflect her experience and to make new and original meanings regarding oppression and abuse.

Issues of abuse, oppression, power and resistance are key in much of Francis' work. Francis' serigraph *Comes A Woman*, printed in December of 1993, demonstrates Francis' incredible ability to depict herself as a moving agent through her life. bell hooks, writing about claiming subjectivity through art, posits that:

> The body is the boundary most of us are unable to move against to recover the dimensions of self lost in the process by which we are made to behold to fixed locations, by which we are bound in conformity against our will in many facets of our daily lives. The fact that the word *transgress* appears most

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153. Brant, Writing As Witness: Essay And Talk, 10.

> often in discussions of the sexual is an indication that the body is the fundamental boundary of self. To transgress we must return to the body.[154]

In the work *Comes A Woman*, Francis appears to be exploring her subjectivity by challenging the constraints placed on herself as a womin and on the bodies of wommin. Francis depicts herself emerging from the ocean, her heart at her throat, possibly signalling her frank and honest ability to speak to anything. The artist's statement that accompanies this print explains *Comes A Woman* as:

> A design I created to honor my journey as well as the journey of other women who continually search within self to gather our own power. Power of spirit, truth and light, rather than power of deception, exploitation and darkness. *Comes A Woman* is a celebration of woman's spiritual awakenings world-wide. This woman rises from the water that is alive with vibrant, strong healing energy and spirit just as the woman who rises from her. She has in her body the wolf, Kawadelekala who my family and I are direct descendants of; an eagle which represents my youngest brother Jesse who ended his own life in 1986. My memories of Jesse and his spirit continue to be much needed strength through my continuous journey on this planet....The woman in the print has wings of an eagle which represents our ability to eventually fly beyond our places of stagnation; the faces on her chest represent spirit faces. There is a heart in the woman's throat because she reminds me that finding my voice to speak from my heart, the secrets in my life that stifle my spirit, was the beginning of my healing process. She has upon her head a crown of quartz crystals, to acknowledge the relationship that I am developing with crystals; also, in one of the stories from the Nimpkish people, a young boy acquired the power to fly from quartz crystals that had rained on him from a mountain in the Nimpkish Valley. She touches the moon, for she has a passion for the moon! She holds

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154. hooks, Art On My Mind: Visual Politics, 133. Her emphasis.

> an eagle feather to signify coming into her own power, finding her own strength, from oppression to freedom.[155]

The many shades of purple in the self-portrait are symbolic for Francis. She describes them as follows:

> It was really important for me to use the purples in there because that's how I think I would envision the spiritual entity. It's a spiritual color to me and it was important to have that color in the various tones in my work because it was acknowledging that relationship that I was developing with my self, with my spiritual self and my hopes that my spiritual self and my relationship with my spiritual self had been connected with a higher spiritual being.... [purple is particularly prominent in Francis' earlier works][156]

While Francis' intent is clearly to honor herself and other wommin with this serigraph, I chose to include it in a discussion of her self-portraiture in part because of a story Francis related to me about the inception of some of the imagery in *Comes A Woman*. Francis told me that she had been experiencing some difficulties in her life. While walking by a Victoria beach, she decided to jump into the ocean, fully clothed. Francis recounted the exhilaration and power of the event as part of the catalyst that helped to form the image of a womin emerging from the ocean. This event, a good indication of Francis' spontaneity and inventively beautiful self-expression, is yet another example of how Francis' artistic and self-expression are melded.

When I was invited to Francis' condominium and then later to Charlene's house, it was impossible not to notice

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155. Francis Dick, Artist's Statement, *Comes A Woman* , 1993.

156. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 9, 1999 (Transcript Page 25).

that both of the homes' walls are exquisitely decorated with many of Francis' prints and paintings. Perhaps most breathtaking is the large version of *Comes A Woman* that hangs in Francis' living room, framed in a layered and relief-like fashion that absolutely complements the idea of water expressed in the work, one that almost drips with movement. This encounter with *Comes A Woman* made me understand that Francis is a womin who is moving against the metaphorical ocean of white supremacist patriarchy and resignifying the water's very flow to fit her personal visions and experiences. The often evoked postmodern concept of 'the death of the artist,' which posits that the artist and her experiences no longer produce meaning but rather it is the audience whose interpretations should be paramount, has never rang so hollow for me as it did in viewing this piece and hearing Francis tell the story around it, detailing the iconographic and formalistic elements.

Francis' work, especially considering the narratives that inform it, evacuates all notions of disconnection between the art and the artist. In a Marxist, feminist informed reading, *Comes A Woman* provides a historical sense of oppression and the ensuing revolution. I understand Francis' work and being as revolutionary because she articulates her specific historical, cultural and personal situations, and depicts them with tradition and invention. Within the realms of production and reproduction, Francis' self-portraiture occupies both positionalities, enabling her to control and express her own image. Francis transgresses the boundary of body from within her own body in *Comes A Woman*. By depicting herself as inhabiting a physical body with a social, political and spiritual being, she seems to redefine notions of womin's body as a site to be acted on and replaces it with the idea of womin's body as a site of action and power. This denies all traditional notions of wommin as

powerlessly 'caught' in our bodies. I suggest that *Comes A Woman* signals what bell hooks means when she calls for a "return to the body" as a site of radical transgressive recovery.

Francis' control over her images and self-images does not end at the site of production and reproduction in rendering. Francis explained that she selects which galleries and people with whom she will work:

> How do I get my stuff out? Sometimes I take trips to various galleries that I've decided I'm going to work with. My prints are primarily distributed through a distributor.[157]

Francis' caution with art dealers and gallery owners was forged in part by a very disturbing event in which she was told by a Victoria gallery owner that because her jewelry did not look enough like Bill Helin's or any of the Sewid family artists' that it was not worth his time. After she confronted him, she decided to concentrate on working only with people who are respectful and understand that all Indigenous art is not alike, does not look alike and has specific personal styles and cultural nuances. As a result of her insistence that dealers be respectful to her, Francis controls the sites at which her work will be sold.

The version of *Comes A Woman* that I saw in Francis' home, hung along with so many of her other works, prompted me to ask her where it was she considered herself most at home. She answered that besides the story of Kawadelekala:

> God, nowhere. Absolutely nowhere has been home. I guess when I refer to home, I refer to where my family is, but when I think of home, a definition of home is were I feel safe. Some place where you

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157. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 9, 1999 (Transcript Pages 28-29).

> can go where not only your cultural roots are, but your heart roots, like where you feel safe in that home. I don't feel like I have a home.[158]

When I asked Francis if she considered surrounding herself with her work as a form of building or creating a site of resistance, as a way to re-grasp a piece of what was, and continues to be, stolen by settler culture, she replied:

> I think it also depends on what your history was, like if you were uprooted all the time and shifted all over god's creation, there's this innate need to root somewhere, to find some place that can be yours. When you're a child, you don't have that power to do that, but when you become an adult it's like, yes, I'll plant myself right here and this is where I'll be and try to create a safe place for myself. Wherever I am and wherever my pictures are, that's my home, that's where I feel the safest.[159]

Francis' self-portraiture, and I believe that this may be extended to her autobiographical works, which I consider to be a large amount of her profuse artistic production, may be understood as an active resistance to personal and cultural domination. By constructing a home in which her work surrounds her, Francis may be seen as articulating the home (significantly a site of traditional wommin-centered activity) as a space of resistance. By resignifying the domestic space, in opposition to a site traditionally coded as one in which wommin work unpaid for other familial members, or in which wommin work in custodial positions, Francis seems to be embroiled in defining her home site as a

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158. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, April 6, 1999 (Transcript Page 4).

159. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, April 6, 1999 (Transcript Page 5).

location of identity production and self-reproduction with her work. In my analysis, Francis seems to be engaged in creating what bell hooks terms "...the importance of homeplace in the midst of oppression and domination...as a site of resistance and liberation struggle."[160] Within the overlapping dominations of colonialism and sexism, it seems that Francis has defined and made a space where she "feels safe" in order to reclaim herself and her space from colonization and sexist coding of the domestic sphere. I believe that Francis' use of her self-portraits within her space may be considered a contextually-based installation work that exemplifies the power of self-portraiture in order to create alternate social conditions from within the confines of dominant society. Thus, Francis may be seen as making and inhabiting the very margins in which she uses her art to intervene in mainstream society. Always working to redefine terms to fit her experience, Francis may be read as resignifying the domestic site as one of diverse production and reproduction of self through her active claiming and defining of space.

Resistance to settler culture that concentrates on removing Indigenous peoples from their lands, the forced relocation of the residential school experience, and the imposition of legislation against Indigenous land claims are all subjects of Francis' experience and scrutiny. Significantly, this type of colonial trespass is involved in the taking and assigning of space. Francis' self-portraiture, and her arrangement of it within her home, may be read as a reclamation of space, again defining her as revolutionary in Indigenous liberation struggle against settler domination and spatial invasiveness. Francis' resistance of dominant culture through her self-portraits may

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160. hooks, Yearning: Race, Gender And Cultural Politics, 43.

also be seen as a site of self-recovery, a place where she is grounded and empowered through memory, experience and creativity. I feel that this is important within the contexts of North American settler experiences of modern/postmodern 'alienation.' Considering the past and present violence against Indigenous peoples at the hands of European and settler peoples, that Francis has created a way to recover herself from within this violence, and through her personal losses, signals an amazing will (which she absolutely embodies) as well as an interventionary methodology (her art) that she makes herself to survive and critique dominant culture. European and settler senses of 'alienation' and 'cultural poverty,' as expressed by some new age devotees, is shameful when considering what Francis herself has endured, emerged from, and continues to intervene in.

I understand Francis to be creating a home site of resistance, rooted in the memory of her grandmother's oral tradition. It may be suggested that Francis is able to create this active space of resistance because she has the financial means of production. However, this is not historically the way in which she started to work. In fact, it was just the opposite. It was because she did not have the financial means to create a traditional ceremonial honoring of her grandmother. Francis' home site, her self-portraits and autobiographical work, are material culture that she has received through experiential knowledge: suffering, listening and a great deal of research. I understand these experiential and cultural knowledges to be the main tools in Francis' artistic production, earned not through monetary exchange but by encounter and cultural heritage. Political resistance does not have to come from finance (or the site of traditional capitalistic exchange) if one is able, as Francis is, to keep making interventions from a site of lived

experience. I am not positing that money is unnecessary, I am suggesting that the means of self-production and reproduction are mediated by diverse social, gender, cultural and personal grounds.

This counter-hegemonic positionality from which I understand Francis to be operating and occupying is expressed in her self-portraiture as various themes of resistance. For instance, (and this is a reduction of the multi-faceted meanings made through these works) Francis expresses resistance by occupying marginality as a space of redemption in *May ax la*; she uses resignification and narrative as spaces for resistance in *Comes A Woman*; and willfully breaks silences with anger in *Walking Thru My Fires*.

Walking Thru My Fires, the last of these three self-portraits that I will be discussing, was printed in November of 1992. Francis' artist statement describing the work details her continual resistance to her personal and cultural oppressions.

> This design is a phoenix rising from the fires. The faces in the circle are different faces of anger, the face in the phoenix represents my connection to one of the most important people in my life. In the wing of the phoenix is the moon, in the fullness of the moon is the crescent moon, in the moon is a figure of a young woman being lifted from the fires, the young woman is a self-portrait. In the center, in all the darkness, I sit with a wolf headdress. The wolf represents Kawadelekala, the first people of Kingcome Inlet, a legend belonging to my family. The red in the belly represents anger inside of me. In spite of the darkness that surrounds me, I sit upon a light which represents faith that I believe I have always had throughout the difficult times in my life, although I don't always feel this faith. The fire surrounding the designs and the fire ball that sits on the wing of the phoenix represents the varying degrees of anger I sometimes feel. *Walking Thru My Fires is* an expression of my experiences of journeying within myself, facing my

> fears and reclaiming back my spirit and power. Before I am able to reclaim back my power I believe it is necessary for myself to acknowledge, own, understand and honor my many faces of anger. I shared my design with some individuals before I decided to get it printed. I asked their thoughts of using a phoenix that is not a part of our ancestry. They felt that *Walking Thru My Fires* is in fact a cultural piece because I am expressing my experiences through design, a traditional way of story-telling. My ancestors created new experiences through design before European contact, just as I am living in a system foreign to my spirit.[161]

Walking Thru My Fires depicts the movement of Francis' experiences, her struggles, her cultural traditions and continuous motion of anger. *Walking Thru My Fires* is a double self-portrait. Francis has chosen to depict herself in the center of the work as an adult and as her child self emerging from the fires and contained within the moon's strength. Francis' use of self-portraiture as representative of the process of her growing up lends an additional sense of motion to the work. Francis depicts herself as journeying chronologically through her life, her positionality, it seems, has changed and 'grown' with her maturation.

Faith is depicted as something Francis possesses through her anger. Again, this signals a process or a sense of motion. When read in concentric circles from the center, *Walking Thru My Fires* seems to depict the intermingling of seemingly separate forces, subverting any notion of emotionally pure polarities. The red at the center of the work, which signifies anger in Francis' adult being, is balanced by the light on which she sits, which represents faith. The anger then becomes reestablished through the iconography of the faces around the circle in which she resides. *Walking Thru My Fires* culminates in two equal, but

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161. Francis Dick, Artist's Statement, *Walking Thru my Fires*, 1992.

seemingly oppositional circles, one of fire and one of moon, giving the viewer a sense of oscillation between anger and faith. Neither anger nor faith appear to be entirely dominant. Both seem to be in motion. This is formalistically achieved by the flames upsweep--or downsweep--and the repetition of the circle, which may ultimately signal that these dual emotive responses do in fact mingle and move dependant upon the individual situation. This lends yet another sense of motion and sequential experience to the work.

The moon itself is both full and crescent. Perhaps this iconography describes the moon's waxing and waning, echoing the sequential temporal movement of the two self-portraits as well as repeating the motion signified between iconography representative of faith and anger in the work. The crescent moon is contained in the full moon, which may be interpreted as reiterating the interplay between states of being, the fluidity of emotive response.

Francis cites the use of the phoenix as a "cultural piece" though she also cites her initial hesitance with using iconography from outside her culture. As such, Francis is perhaps depicting an imagery not entirely reconciled. This supposition may then be extended to posit that the imagery of the phoenix, when taken with Francis' initial concern about the imagery, may reiterate the sense of 'journeying' or motion without closure through this new (and simultaneously familiar) experience. The culturally 'foreign' element of the phoenix may be seen as intermingling with the culturally traditional form of 'story-telling,' Northwest Coast Formline and experiential knowledge.

Francis brilliantly throws binary oppositions into contention in *Walking Thru My Fires*, in part by implying their absolute antagonisms and then, through pushing them into interaction with each other, by skillfully depicting

motion and echoing it in iconographic representations. I believe that the movement in *Walking Thru My Fires* expresses Francis' assertion that her struggle, her work, and her life encompass many parts that are in harmony, cacophony and process simultaneously, resisting closure of her narratives. The resistance to closure that I believe Francis conveys in her self-portraits may be understood to signal a resistance to both the European/settler traditional linear development that culminates in closure and might also be understood as exemplifying Francis' conscious decision to develop her art in conjunction with her life processes, thus making closure an undesirable component.

Francis related that, though the majority of people whom she has observed reacting to and interacting with *Walking Thru My Fires* identify with the piece positively, seeing the anger as empowering, some of the people that she has encountered find *Walking Thru My Fires* too difficult to embrace or identify with because of the anger. Francis said to me that she has had encounters with people who believe the anger expressed in *Walking Thru My Fires* is too strong.

> Actually with *Walking Thru My Fires*, I remember going to a conference in Nanaimo [British Columbia] I was talking about my work and women were sitting there going, 'Yahoo!, Right On!' and so I'm embracing their anger and all that kind of stuff and there's this one woman going 'Oh my god, no, oh no!' [Francis then related that this type of reaction to her work happened again] There's this woman who owns a gallery in Vancouver [British Columbia] who was totally negating my experience in *Walking Thru My Fires*. [The gallery owner said] 'Oh no, you're not an angry person. Oh no, you're not. Oh no I don't believe that. Oh no, you're not like that.'[162]

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162. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 9, 1999 (Transcript Pages 52-53).

This led to a discussion among Francis, Charlene and I on wommin showing anger and how it gets constructed as taboo in this society.

> [Andrea: Well, is there a sort of dominant cultural fear of people that have been and are colonized 'getting out of control?' You know, like the uppity womin syndrome? Like if wommin get too much power god knows what we'll do, go crazy and take over the world and make it a better place, you know?] Francis: Oh for sure, and anger too is such a huge thing. First of all I'm not supposed to be an angry woman in this culture, women aren't supposed to be angry...
> Francis: So, that's why I just really had to do it [honor her anger by creating *Walking Thru My Fires*] because that's my core stuff, my rage is my core. It's like the thing that has survived me and the thing that will eventually kill me if I don't work through different levels of that.[163]

Rage and anger are often viewed as solely destructive forces when wommin and traditionally marginalized peoples express them in dominant society. However, rage and anger in white men is often equated with righteousness, while rage in wommin becomes equated with an out-of-control type of 'hysteria.' This sexist discrimination robs wommin of the power and empowering forces that anger and the disapproval of the status quo provides. It is in no way coincidental that wommin (and especially wommin of color) get coded as hysterical, mentally unbalanced and irrational when expressing this very powerful emotion. Power is not something that a white supremacist patriarchy condones in wommin because the dominant order recognizes it is a weapon against oppression. Juanita Espinosa, making a connection between anger and art as expressive forces writes:

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163. Francis Dick and Charlene Simon, Personal Communication, February 9, 1999 (Transcript Page 53).

> Anger gives you energy. Sometimes, it is the juice that makes a person strive to keep doing his or her art. Art is healing. It is a way of perpetuating your family's lifeways, and your own vision.[164]

To deprive wommin of experiencing the power of anger, is to naturalize a state in which wommin are seen to be powerless, passive and unable to control our diverse visions. Similarly, Faith Smith, Ojibwe, adds that "[a]nger is a compelling force that makes you take on issues directly."[165] The anger at injustice that makes Francis able to produce self-portraits like *Walking Thru My Fires*, articulates her desire to 'perpetuate her family's lifeways' and allows her to deal with her issues of abuse and oppression in a very direct and immediate fashion. Anger in wommin generally and Francis' anger specifically, is a site of resistance to dominant culture because it subverts the dominant paradigm that seeks to code Francis as 'out of control' or 'hysterical,' and replaces these sexist and racist notions with clear, specific messages of discontent coming from a womin acutely aware of her process. I believe that Francis' style of embracing her anger is perceived as threatening to the dominant culture's view of wommin as inferior to men. When wommin and men, who are socialized to believe that wommin should not show anger, encounter a piece like *Walking Thru My Fires* they may perceive it as a threat to the established power, or they may fear that if they identify with this source of inspirational anger, they might be perceived as out-of-control or hysterical.

When I asked Francis to describe the movement and

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164. Espinosa, "The Cottonwood Tree Talks To Me," 106.

165. Faith Smith, "I See An Incredible Force Within Native People" in Messengers Of The Wind: Native American Women Tell Their Life Stories, ed. Jane Katz (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995), 128.

process that I believed I was seeing in *Walking Thru My Fires*, she replied:

> *Walking Thru My Fires* I titled it that because it's a particular piece I'll be walking through until the end of my physical time here. *Walking Thru My Fires*, when I first started painting it, I wanted to do work around anger and stuff and I thought I'd go do this work and I wouldn't be angry any more and unfortunately that's not the way it's working. Unfortunately what's happening is I'll hit different layers of different places where I need to deal with my rage and my anger I'm still walking through the piece and I think that some pieces I can be finished with but a lot of them, I think, I'll come back to. I'll come back at different levels.
> [Andrea: How much of your passion comes from anger?] Probably all of it, I just don't know it.
> [Andrea: So it might be a good thing to hang on to?] I think for sure what I learned about my anger and my rage is that it's something that's survived me all of the years that I've been here. I need to be in a different relationship with it. I'm discovering for the first time why I'm so angry. I used to be able to go, of course, I'm angry because I've had this, this and this happen to me to me as a child. But they were just words I couldn't really fathom what had happened because it was so huge, how could that possibly happen to a young child? And it's just not real, it's like looking through a window it's like you see something happening out there, you don't feel the emotion of it happening, it's just happening. Whereas now I'm kind of going whoa! There's an unfreezing taking place within me and that's related to the anger and the rage and I'm finding that out so I think I'll always have the magnitude of that passion but it may be in a different form not so much destructive to myself or to whoever is close to me.[166]

bell hooks writes that the expression of anger by traditionally marginalized peoples should not be constructed by dominant culture as a sickness or some pathologically rooted phenomenon when it may be seen as a potentially

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166. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 22, 1999 (Transcript Pages 34-35).

healthy and healing "...response to oppression and exploitation."[167] Dominant cultural anger is constructed as more acceptable. This suggests that settlers are somehow more 'able to handle' our anger. However, this construction is about power. The settler man is constructed as 'fighting for his rights,' while Francis, using her anger to develop her critical consciousness and to use that awareness to depict herself and her anger, may not be seen as so empowered. This delineates who dominant culture is comfortable with expressing anger and why dominant culture may be uncomfortable with Francis' expression of anger. By calling attention to the fact that oppression under this dominant culture is harmful to her, by placing herself at the 'scene of the crime' through self-portraiture, the idea of settler men 'fighting for their rights' gets sullied in the reality that settler peoples have been engaged in fighting against Indigenous peoples' rights for over five hundred years.

Settler peoples are constructed as having 'rational' anger based on the colonistic idea that all we see is 'ours,' an idea popularized by notions of 'manifest destiny.' This results in the coding of settler senses of injustice as definitive of all injustice in this white supremacist patriarchy. Indigenous peoples are constructed as having 'irrational' anger in order to reaffirm dominant cultural 'ownership' over the powerful tool of anger and all the spoils that it might bring when wielded 'righteously.' Anger is necessary in the fight to resist the powers of domination. This is why the dominant culture has no reason to code anger as anything but dangerous in the 'wrong' hands (read people of color, wommin, children, and other historically marginalized peoples). For example, most of the media

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167. hooks, Killing Rage, 12.

coverage of Mohawk resistance at Oka in Quebec in the summer of 1990 portrayed Indigenous anger as bad, while settler anger, alternately dressed in military uniforms or throwing rocks at cars driven by Indigenous peoples, as 'justified' and 'correct.' This type of 'owning' of anger coded 'good' by dominant culture "...ensures that there will be no revolutionary effort to gather [rage experienced by historically marginalized peoples] and use it for constructive social change."[168] White supremacist patriarchy, fearful of losing its power, frustrates many sites of revolutionary rage when it is expressed by historically marginalized peoples.

Anger allows people who are victimized, as Francis was and continues to be, to move into a position of understanding (as her artist statement from *Walking Thru My Fires* notes) and into a position of resistance. *May xa la, Comes A Woman* and *Walking Thru My Fires* are all self-portraits that represent resistance to oppression through many strategies. All three works incorporate the idea of breaking the silences of abuse, oppression and degradation. Betsy Warland notes that "...if you give birth to that which is within you, that which is within you will save you. If you do not give birth to that which is within you, that which is within you will destroy you."[169] Breaking silences, Francis' 'giving birth to that which is inside of her,' seems to be a key redemptive and subversive strategy in the three self-portraits under discussion. Metaphorically, this rebirth is represented by the phoenix of *Walking Thru My Fires*, by the ocean in *Comes A Woman*, and memory in *May xa la*. I suggest that Francis' breaking of silences allows her to 'give birth' or to create

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168. hooks, Killing Rage, 18.

169. Betsy Warland, Telling It: Women And Language Across Cultures (Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1990), 119.

and recreate herself against and with her experiences. This belies any notion of closure and subverts the dominant paradigm of linear art and action (beginning, middle and ending) by foregrounding her work as process. However postmodern this may sound, I believe that by grounding all of her work in contextual, experiential and traditional knowledges and by working these self-portraits with both invention and tradition, Francis has located herself as neither decentered from, nor attached to, canonical theory or traditional artistic practice. I believe that Francis firmly creates and occupies her own sites within the margins between labels.

Francis often speaks about breaking silences with her work in order to expose abusive and oppressive practices. Francis explained this part of her process and personality as political expression.

> It's political because of the issues that I raise in my art work and the images that come with the issues that I raise of course, in my art work. Like issues of suicide and abuse, all kinds of abuse, sexual abuse, physical abuse, ritual abuse, and by ritual abuse I mean Residential School experiences.
> I think that, I think it's critical in that way. I speak about my experiences and I know that my experiences are shared by other people. We don't want to talk about these issues because if we talk about these issues there's all kinds of backlashes that come with that. I just really don't care about that because I know what it's like to have that happen and I've managed to find a way to stand on my own. It's important for me to challenge all that I feel needs to be challenged. I feel that it's about exposing secrets, it's about exposing people, people who are supposed to be leaders and people who talk so eloquently about healing, health and vitality, revitalization, the renaissance of Northwest Coast Peoples, Northwest Coast Art and these people are offending in some way and that is wrong. And as a result of that people have certain feelings about me and towards me because I talk about stuff that I'm not supposed

> to talk about, that's supposed to be kept secret. [Andrea: But if you don't challenge things that are taboo then there is no real progression in yourself or through your art and your art is the way you speak and...]
> Exactly. And for other people too, because ultimately what happens is that it resonates with people and somewhere down the line it's going to quicken somebody to some place of awareness. It's really hard to recognize and to realize that we have choices especially if you come from the reserve and all you know is being on the reserve. I don't believe, this is just my belief, I don't believe many people realize and recognize that they have choices.[170]

The backlashes and controversies that Francis experiences by being an artist who "...puts history through a sieve, winnows out the lies, looks at the forces that" as an Indigenous person, as a womin, she has experienced makes "...a conscious rupture with all oppressive traditions...she communicates that rupture, documents the struggle."[171] Breaking silences through self-portraiture is, as I understand, a very charged arena in which Francis is not always appreciated for her honesty and frankness. Toni Morrison writes that "...to rip that veil drawn over 'proceedings too terrible to relate'" is critical for wommin of color because "...historically we were [and are] seldom invited to participate in the discourse even when we were [and are] its topic."[172] Dominant culture (and within that, traditional art historical practices), in its silencing of wommin of color who dare to speak from a subject position,

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170. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 9, 1999 (Transcript pages 15-16).

171. Anzaldua, Borderlands: *La Frontera*: The New Mestiza, 82.

172. Toni Morrision, "The Site Of Memory" in Out There: Marginalization And Contemporary Cultures, eds. Russel Ferguson et al. (Berkeley: University Of California Press, 1990), 302.

punishes such activity by coding the primary trespasses of settler culture as 'taboo' subjects and defuses these sites of resistance by constructing them as 'inappropriate' subjects for interrogation. Dominant culture uses this defusing strategy in the maintenance of its power to oppose critique of institutionalized domination. Francis resists these categorical impositions by positioning her identity (through her self portraiture) as existing within these very 'taboo' spaces (coded as 'inappropriate') in order to point out this power imbalance. Positioning herself within the proverbial 'line of fire,' Francis appears to be choosing to reclaim these sites of encroachment as spaces in which to subvert the paradigm of dominant culture's self-serving code of silence. The act of creating controversy by telling the truth, as Francis experiences it, is itself an act of reclaiming power and also a site in which Francis may risk alienation by doing so. bell hooks writes:

> It came to me right then that there are some folks for whom openness is not about the luxury of 'will I choose to share this or tell that,' but rather, 'will I survive--will I make it through--will I stay alive.' And openness is about how to be well and telling the truth is about how to put broken bits and pieces of the heart back together again. It is about being whole--being whole-hearted.[173]

As I understand Francis' political work, she is one of these folks who do not have the luxury of telling, but who is breaking silences from a space of self-survival, recovery and self-preservation. Francis' self-portraiture is a political act of resistance to oppression, a conscious choice to survive and to reclaim herself by speaking and visually creating pieces about her own experiences of the oppression

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173. hooks, Talking Back: Thinking Feminist-Thinking Black, 2.

she has said "survives her." Francis recounted some experiences she has had with backlash to her work during our conversations. She spoke about her introduction to controversy when she was involved in the staging of her theater piece, *Wiuma: Honoring The Spirit Of Women* and how her political commitment to breaking silences has sometimes endangered her. When I asked Francis if she saw herself as an artist who pushed the boundaries of dominant culture, she replied:

> Well I guess I do in a sense when I want to talk about abuse or I want to talk about exposing secrets within the culture or within the system. I guess I do think about that I do think yes, I'm going to do this because it has to be heard.
> [Andrea: So if you take on these sort of taboo subjects, you're risking alienation?]
> Oh yeah, big time. Yeah, very real. I had no idea how real it was until I did *Wiuma*. I had no idea, honest to god. All it was to me was an expression of who I am, my journey, my life. Things that were important to me that I needed to expose and I could do it in this theater-like way. I just was doing my thing and then what happened to me--what happened for me was this whole introduction to the dark side,and people were threatening friends of mine.
> And I was astounded, *Wiuma* was a threat to more people than I thought. I never believed it to be a threat anyway, it was just something that I do, it was just important to me, to voice and then there was a backlash, people bad mouthing me.
> Why? I'm just doing what I do, what is the problem here?[174]

To break silences that are sanctioned through institutionalized oppression obviously has very real political repercussions for Francis. Francis' opposition to these forms of oppression are articulated in her self-portraiture. I understand Francis to be revolutionary in that she is engaged in a process of claiming her oppressed

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174. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 9, 1999.

identity, naming the oppressors and resisting further oppression by depicting her memories and her experiences in identifying herself from a self-made site of resistance. Although she has experienced backlashes to her work, she seems to have no intention of abandoning her self-expression in the face of such critique. Francis breaks silences as a part of her process of life and art, honoring her pain to create and draw closer to those fleeting moments of rare peace in her life.

Chapter Four--Honoring Wommin

Why is it important to honor wommin? When did you last feel truly honored as a womin or were able to honor yourself as a womin? These are questions that make Francis' work revolutionary. Francis explained that she honors wommin in her work because it is important. She does wommin-centered work because of:

> My own experience with myself and other women in my life, women who were in my life, women who are in my life, [to] honor them. [It is] important to honor, it's important for me to honor women who have gone through stuff, women who have really kind of managed to, in spite of all their oppressions, they've come through, come through for themselves. It's just about honoring the hardships that we have to endure as women.[175]

In asking the question "who is going to honor us?," Francis interrogates a society that is not invested in honoring wommin. Francis claims sites of patriarchical disempowerment of wommin, and makes the viewer consider that wommin are not honored in this society, and that we are not alone as wommin who are experiencing oppressions. Francis insists on honoring wommin, again acting from a site that she has resignified as a place where messaging about the oppression of wommin is articulated. By subverting the dominant paradigm of a male-centered art market, creating it as her space in which to depict critiques of patriarchy and to create a space of empowerment for wommin, Francis is again acting from a political margin of her own definition, in order to call attention to male domination. Defying the dominant notion of fixed places for wommin in which we are

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175. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 9, 1999 (Transcript Pages 57-58).

not deemed 'worthy' of honor in this patriarchy, Francis names the process of honoring wommin as a "journey." Significantly, she seems again to be denying static notions of hierarchical power, undermining systemic inequity by claiming a site in which she works to honor herself and other wommin suffering under sexist oppression. Francis describes this work as a process in which there can be no closure, where there can be no end to the "journey," because patriarchical hegemony is not stationary. I understand Francis to be a revolutionary in that she is engaged in fighting the motion of hegemonic patriarchy with her own personal womin's movement; she refuses to interrupt the patriarchy only to stand still and be subsumed by it. Francis' works takes on sexist 'common sense' by seeking to examine why it is that wommin need to be honored. Francis also pursues ideas of self-empowerment in order to resist sexist constructions that keep wommin from honoring ourselves.

I choose to discuss three of Francis' serigraphs that honor wommin and have arranged them to give the reader a sense of history and motion that Francis explains as a part of her process of honoring wommin. *Hayalilegas* is discussed first in order to reiterate and contextualize Francis' commitment to honoring Kwakwaka'wakw wommin. While this honoring of Kwakwaka'wakw culture is a theme within all three serigraphs, there is a seemingly more personal tone between *Wiuma* (discussed second) and *Honoring Malidi* (discussed third). I arranged these serigraphs in this order to call attention to what I see as Francis' journey from honoring the wommin of her Nation to being able to honor herself and all wommin who struggle under oppressions. I do not see this as a linear journey, for Francis always returns and revisits sites of cultural, self and systemic oppressions. I do not wish to suggest that Francis' journey through these three

serigraphs is linear, for it is not, however I have organized them in a linear fashion for ease of access. It will become apparent that Francis' journey in honoring wommin is not linear and defies closure. As we shall see, then, my introduction here, detailing my organization of these serigraphs is reductive and shall be expanded on in the chapter. For the purpose of elucidating parts of Francis' honoring of wommin, I believe the order that I have chosen to discuss these serigraphs contextualizes some of Francis' continual process.

In this chapter I have selected three serigraphs as examples of Francis' process of honoring wommin. The works that I have selected are: *Hayalilegas*, printed in July of 1991 [FIGURE SIX]; *Wiuma*, from 1991 [FIGURE SEVEN]; and *Honoring Malidi*, printed in December of 1995 [FIGURE ONE]. In this chapter on these three serigraphs that honor wommin, I will be discussing Francis' involvement as a womin in Indigenous Northwest Coast Formline, and the Hamatsa, both politically transgressive artistic gender roles, which Francis uses to honor wommin. I will also address Kwakwaka'wakw wommin who keep oral tradition and survival as issues of resistance to colonization. Further, I will discuss issues in Francis' art such as: memory as a site of resistance, Francis' responses to oppression within patriarchy and racism, Francis' experiences with wommin who have identified with her work, and how Francis uses her experiential knowledges as liberatory tools in her work that honors wommin.

As an Indigenous womin working in Northwest Coast Formline, a market traditionally dominated by men, Francis has situated herself as a political transgressor of traditional Indigenous gender roles in Northwest Coast serigraphy. Although there are now more Indigenous wommin working in Northwest Coast Formline serigraphy, Francis is

still among a minority of artists.[176]

Francis was initiated into the Hamatsa Society in October of 1994. Many texts on the subject of The Hamatsa Society (the highest ranking society in Kwakwaka'wakw Culture) insist that this society is exclusively male. Francis, a Hamatsa Society member and a Kwakwaka'wakw womin, again breaks with tradition, yet is distinctly rooted to tradition, negotiating a territory from which she makes her artistic interventions in dominant Kwakwaka'wakw society and the dominant culture's patriarchy. Charlene asked Francis during one of our discussions:

> It's Political just to be a woman in your community doing your work too, isn't it Francis? [To which Francis replied] Yes, to sing, to dance. To do the dance I dance. I was initiated to the Hamatsa Ceremony which is predominantly men....Well my brother and my family had talked about it [but] I had no idea that this was happening. I didn't know. I'd heard rumors about it and I thought, well, they're just jiving me, this isn't going to happen. And then it did. My father had said to me, we are doing this because we know that people feel these certain ways, [have] these negative feelings towards you, and they speak about you negatively. This is the highest honor that we can place on you, so that's what they decided to do. To sort of armor me I guess would be a neat way of describing that, because it's used as more of an armor, I am Kisxelis and I am a Hamatsa for my oldest brother, so it was really neat. My family, doesn't know what I do. I've done this all on my own, I celebrated it all on my own, and I've been in pain in it all on my own, it's been solely just me, all by myself. So it was really nice to hear that they recognized that there were some hardships that came with doing what I do and for

176. Priya Anne Helweg, "Evolving Traditions: professional Northwest Coast First Nations Women Artists" (MA Thesis, University Of British Columbia, 1990). Helweg discusses contemporary Indigenous wommin using Northwest Coast Formline and the growing, yet still fairly small, group of artists involved in this art form.

> them to say, o.k., we're going to give you armor here.
> [Andrea: After your initiation into the Hamatsa Society, did you experience or do you experience a difference in your art and or daily life as a result of having this honor bestowed upon you?]
> Well, maybe. I think that anything like being initiated into a very ancient society, has to have some sort of impact on some part of you. Some part of me, maybe, that flickers wisdom.[177]

Francis has had success as a womin practicing traditionally male-centered art forms. Francis even resignifies traditionally male dominated art forms to honor wommin. For instance, Francis danced the Hamatsa in her theater piece *Wiuma: Honoring The Spirit Of Women*, for which she became embroiled in controversy.[178] Francis also uses Northwest Coast Formline to depict wommin honoring themselves (which will be detailed in a discussion of specific works) and seeks her strength from within her conceptions of Kwakwaka'wakw tradition and her individual experiential knowledges in combination. These transgressive political acts are all examples of how Francis has subverted male dominated areas in order to honor herself and other wommin.

In Victoria, British Columbia, almost all Indigenous artists involved in serigraphy work with Pacific Editions Limited which is owned by Mr. Vincent Rickard and managed by Ms. Zoe Jackson. Francis has worked almost exclusively with Pacific Editions for her serigraphy. In a personal communication with Ms. Jackson, I learned that Francis is "the primary female artist working in the two dimensional

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177. Charlene Simon And Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 9, 1999 (Transcript Pages 17-18 And February 22, Transcript Page 19).

178. This event addresses many issues of complexity that go beyond the scope of this thesis.

field" of serigraphy in Victoria.[179] Francis' unique status as one of very few Indigenous wommin artists working in Northwest Coast Formline serigraphy may be considered even more rare in Victoria in the otherwise male-dominated two-dimensional art market of serigraphy. Francis' use of this hard-earned place in Indigenous art in Victoria is ever more transgressive of the male dominated two dimensional serigraphic art market in that she chooses to explore the theme of honoring wommin.[180]

Kwakwaka'wakw historian Daisy Sewid-Smith cites that in Kwakwaka'wakw culture, "women are the keepers of knowledge. Women pass on the knowledge to the next generation."[181] When considering that Francis is using an art form that is not traditionally one in which wommin have used (nor is currently used by many wommin) to transmit her own experiences of wommin's oppression, while simultaneously occupying a traditional position as a "keeper of knowledge," it may be suggested that Francis is deeply involved in both tradition and innovation in order to manifest radical personal refutations of patriarchical norms.

Francis' serigraph *Hayalilegas*, printed in July of 1991, seems to exemplify how Francis, working in the traditionally male-dominated medium of Northwest Coast Formline serigraphy, honors wommin in a traditional Kwakwaka'wakw position of a womin as a keeper of oral tradition. I believe *Hayalilegas*

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179. Zoe Jackson, Personal Communication, June 26, 1999.

180. Francis also commented on her experience of the Vancouver, British Columbia Indigenous art market as one in which "predominantly men have their stuff, we're talking about big sculptural wood pieces. Women, in my experience of Vancouver, have nothing. Women artists are nothing, that's what I think, maybe I'm wrong, but that's what I think. Personal Communication, February 9, 1999 (Transcript Pages 56-57).

181. Daisy Sewid-Smith, Lecture given at The University of Victoria on Ethnobotany, March 1, 1999.

to characterize Francis' denial of gender-specific roles within and outside of Kwakwaka'wakw culture. Francis' artist statement describes *Hayalilegas* as such:

> From the top end of Kingcome Inlet came a large wolf and his name was Galalalite, and from him came four other wolves. The first wolf that came from him was Kawadelekala and the second brother was 'Nanolaw. The third was a female whose name was Hayalilegas and the youngest brother was Kalili. Eventually Kawadelekala shed his animal form to become the first of the Kingcome People who I am a direct descendant of. Kawadelekala brought Hayalilegas down to the Kingcome River which is called Gwayi and there he told her that this is where her home would always be. There were not yet any people, but she would always live in that area to protect the people that were to come. In terms of my own personal process, it's very important for me to portray the female wolf to acknowledge and honor myself as a woman, as well as my female ancestors and women today. The culture that this legend is derived from was a patriarchical system, however, it has always been the women who have worked, largely unacknowledged, to support the culture. Even after the banning of Potlatches it was the women who preserved the dances and songs and passed these on to the younger generations. With this print I honor these women. Hayalilegas, the first female wolf, still sits at the river protecting the people from any ill will that may want to come into the village.[182]

Francis' honoring of wommin within Kwakwaka'wakw patriarchy as the transmitters of culture, however "unacknowledged," might be seen as parallel to her own experience as a womin in contemporary art working in Northwest Coast Formline serigraphy. In a more metaphorical reading of *Hayalilegas*, there may also be a parallel between Hayalilegas and Francis as wommin who protect culturally specific knowledges from spaces of relative isolation:

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182. Francis Dick, Artist's Statement, *Hayalilegas*, 1991.

Hayalilegas being geographically isolated and Francis being one of the very few wommin who practice Northwest Coast Formline serigraphy that honors wommin. This supposition is not in any way meant to essentialize Francis, but to suggest cultural and artistic parallels that may be apparent in this work.

That Hayalilegas continues to "sit at the river protecting the people" may resonate with Francis' constant process of acknowledging wommin and may signal Francis' "journey" without closure. These parallel senses of continuity may serve in this work as reminders that Kwakwaka'wakw wommin are in a situation of constant cultural honoring. *Hayalilegas* may be seen as a direct undermining of patriarchical power through the occupation of a dynamic cultural and personal site from which Francis honors herself and other wommin. Francis again seems to be throwing binaries into motion, perhaps suggesting a changeable sense of gender power. While Francis lets her audience know that her culture is patriarchical, she also appears to specifically interrogate gender-grounded power by explaining to her audience that it is in fact the wommin who "support the culture."

The composition of *Hayalilegas* oscillates between 'naturalistic' and Northwest Coast Formline, perhaps again suggesting a non-static site of meaning. The supernatural, coloristically signified by the two tones of purple and by the figure of Hayalilegas, are mixed with the 'natural,' the female presence of the full moon and the river head, perhaps signalling a continuum of both elements. This seems to be enhanced by the circularity of the piece. This type of continual residing (cultural continuity, Francis' perpetual honoring of wommin and Hayalilegas' lasting occupation of geographical space through time) may be a metaphor for the survival of the oral tradition for which the wommin of the

Kwakwaka'wakw culture are responsible. Survival, as a political act under settler colonization, is a key theme in many texts by Indigenous wommin and may well complement Francis' ideas of continuity in *Hayalilegas*. Gloria Bird writes "[t]hat we are still here as native women in itself is a political statement. Our physical presence denies the American [and Canadian] myth of the vanishing red man."[183] The survival of Hayalilegas, who "still sits at the river," may be understood as interconnected to the Kwakwaka'wakw wommin who ensured her survival through cultural preservation of oral tradition. The Kwakwaka'wakw wommin who have preserved this oral history and have passed it on to Francis may be understood to be engaged in a dynamic political process which at once stabilizes cultural histories and fluidly moves these histories into future sites, signalling a cultural continuity through the movement of time. Similarly, Francis occupies the role of the Kwakwaka'wakw oral historian and the cultural interpreter of this oral history, linking the two forces of continuity and cultural stability with imagery that signals motion and personally presents political meanings. Francis again seems to be denying notions of a static or ahistorical oral history and exemplifying how her art and personal insights illuminate the constant motion of a traditional Kwakwaka'wakw culture. Francis appears to be pursuing ideas of cultural continuity while remaining vigilantly opposed to any notions of stagnation within oral histories. Survival then may be understood as something political, ever-present and interpretive in the serigraph *Hayalilegas*, just as the Kwakwaka'wakw wommin who have preserved this oral tradition have always been and continue to be.

Beth Cuthand, Cree, writes of colonization and cultural

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183. Gloria Bird, "Introduction," in Reinventing The Enemy's Language: Contemporary Women's Writings Of North America, 30.

continuity, detailing survival as a part of breaking silences:

> So what's the bottom line
> to all this shit?
>
> What lies will survive the fires of
> this goddamn war?
>
> Don't speak! Don't feel!
> It's all in the past! In the past!
>
> We will speak!
> And face the killer of our
> liberation....[184]

Kwakwaka'wakw oral tradition, as a political survival tactic, may be understood as wommin honoring themselves. The Canadian legislations against speaking these histories were, and continue to be, ignored and fought against by wommin like Francis who refuse to be silenced, who refuse to forget the past and search constantly for liberation. Francis' honoring of herself and other wommin who refuse to submit to dominant culture's sexist and racist 'amnesia' is exemplary of the survival of Kwakwaka'wakw cultural traditions and the wommin who have supported this culture. Survival is not taken lightly by Francis. She stated the interconnectedness of her work and life as such: "My work is my life and I think if it wasn't for my work, I think I would have been dead a long time ago."[185] *Hayalilegas*, a work that honors the Kwakwaka'wakw wommin who have protected, and continue to protect,the Kwakwaka'wakw cultural traditions, seems to be a

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184. Beth Cuthand, "The Heroes Of The Revolution" in Sweetgrass Grows All Around Her, eds. Beth Brant And Sandra Laronde (Toronto: Native Women In The Arts, 1996), 11.

185. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 9, 1999 (Transcript Pages 46-47).

testament to survival on many levels, which I understand as including Francis' self preservation through this honoring of herself as a womin.

Part of Francis' personal survival and her position as a Kwakwaka'wakw womin who works to preserve her culture, seems to depend on memory as a site of resistance to dominant culture's racism and sexism. The "radical authentication of self," from which Francis culls her memory and experiential knowledges, seems to be largely an honoring of wommin such as her grandmother and other wommin whom Francis describes as "keepers of the fire" for insights into resistance.[186] Memory is treated as an innate cultural and personal political response by Francis. Memory, in the work *Hayalilegas*, may be seen as a key to withstanding cultural imperialism. Francis states that "even after the banning of Potlatches, it was the women who preserved the dances and the songs...." Therefore, *Hayalilegas* appears to articulate one of the reasons that Francis finds it necessary to honor wommin, because it is wommin who, using memory as a site of resistance, create a way to decolonize themselves.

Stuart Hall writes that "[f]ar from being grounded in a mere 'recovery' of the past, which will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past."[187] Clearly Francis occupies both a traditional Kwakwaka'wakw role as a womin who is a preserver of history and uses this position to

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186. Nellie Y. McKay, "The Narrative Self: Race, Politics, And Culture In Black American Women's Autobiography," eds. Domna C. Stanton And Abagail J. Stewart in Feminisms In The Academy (Michigan: University Of Michigan press, 1995), 74.

187. Stuart Hall in Martha Gever, "The Names We Give Ourselves" in Out There: Marginalization And Contemporary Culture, eds. Russel Ferguson et al. (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1990), 193.

identify herself with both narratives of the past as well as propelling meanings made by herself and oral traditions that she has received into her current life narrative. While occupying this traditional Kwakwaka'wakw 'female' role, Francis simultaneously forms her identity by occupying a traditional Kwakwaka'wakw 'male' role, using oral tradition to inform parts of her Northwest Coast Formline serigraphy. Francis is defining her role in her own terms by occupying a position of marginality that allows her to select the best ways that she is able to honor her cultural, experiential and political view points. While using memory to document her own ideas and personal insights, Francis combines oral tradition with her personal commitments to honor wommin in an inventive and traditional Kwakwaka'wakw style. This Kwakwaka'wakw style is flexible enough to encompass both tradition and invention as ways to secure a sense of self for Francis and as a way to ensure that Kwakwaka'wakw culture survives and flourishes.

Francis speaks about the importance of honoring wommin in terms of honoring herself as a womin who is familiar with the struggles that we face. Francis speaks of her work that honors wommin as continuous:

> There's this really on-going desire to be able to honor women. Women within process, women within their journeys, women who are kind of just going in and are exploring themselves and the shadow parts of themselves and trying to intertwine and trying to recognize, trying to make sense out of all the fragmented parts. There's so many broken parts and it's just a mess inside.[188]

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188. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 9, 1999 (Transcript Page 19).

This sense of continuity within Francis' process of honoring wommin is apparent when looking at the transition between *Wiuma* of 1991 and *Honoring Malidi* of 1995 (addressed later in this chapter).

In addressing wommin's issues of oppression and our struggles to recognize and realize our "broken parts" as systemic and possibly conquerable, Francis' work resonates with many wommin. Francis describes her main audience as wommin:

> Women seem to be drawn my work. I only say that because of the different conferences and places that I have been asked to speak at, to be a part of. And it's women who are really interested in my process and how I'm able to create my process through my paintings. The issues that I speak about, issues that women can connect with... [Charlene: And relate to?] Yeah. So I think primarily that [my] audience is women.... [Andrea: How do you think that wommin generally react to your images?] I think it is appreciated.[189]

I believe that Francis' work with honoring wommin is so well received and widely known by many wommin because of Francis' strength in depicting moments that many wommin may feel are either descriptive of their own struggles or perhaps depict places that we would like to inhabit, places that are not deemed 'acceptable' in dominant sexist society. For instance, *Walking Thru My Fires* may encourage a response from wommin who have never been in touch with their power from a place of anger, a place that is not sanctioned by dominant culture as a 'womin's place.' *Comes A Woman* may spark some wommin who have never spoken of their victimization to break dominant culturally upheld silences. Similarly, *Wiuma* or

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189. Francis Dick And Charlene Simon, Personal Communication, February 9, 1999 (Transcript Pages 12 and 52).

Honoring Malidi may move wommin who have never been taught to honor ourselves to question why this society is not interested in instances of wommin honoring ourselves. These scenarios are commonplace for wommin who have interacted with Francis' work on honoring wommin. These instances of identification and empowerment are common for wommin who have seen Francis' work because there is a scarcity of positive images of wommin that speak to wommin's issues, and because Francis is neither visually nor verbally shy about speaking to experiences that many wommin may have in common.

Francis said that wommin are "really interested in my process." I believe that this is because wommin identify Francis' art as process pieces that describe an experiential movement. Experientially, wommin living in a racist patriarchy are aware of our oppression. When Francis' art speaks to wommin who are embroiled in these discourses, we recognize the analogous movement between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic messaging. When wommin resonate with Francis' art that honors wommin, we recognize that it describes a process of oppression that is moving and mutable, a hegemonic operation that has silenced us. By being familiar with the movement of hegemony, Francis' counter-hegemonic process is invigorating, it provides continual sites of subversive freedom and possibilities for liberation. In my opinion, to make art that encourages a liberating social movement for wommin is one of the very best effects that an artist is able to achieve and what makes Francis a revolutionary artist.

Francis is a sought-after keynote speaker for many diverse wommin's groups as well as art historic, historic, ethnobotanic, and other groups. Francis' experiences of the exchanges that she has when invited to speak about wommin are significant. Francis describes a reciprocal interchange wherein she gives and receives positive energy from wommin.

Francis describes one of the purposes that she hopes her art to have as such:

> I guess to be able to resonate with people who are drawn to it, people who appreciate whatever part of the image resonates with them, [to] connect.[190]

When I told Francis about my continuous relationship with *Honoring Malidi*, she spoke of the energy that stories like mine, where a womin identifies deeply with her art, give her:

> Oh god, it just makes me feel so good because I don't know what people think about my work. Is my work still touching people, or does it touch people? I don't hear it very often.[191]

Within this reciprocal power that narrative and dialogue make possible, there is the inverse, traditional art historic methodology, that demands separation of the artist, her work and the art historian. Certainly I am not suggesting that Francis gets her inspiration from feedback, for clearly her inspiration is part of a more personal process. What I am convinced of is that reciprocal interaction between the artist and the art historian is valuable for a better understanding of the artist's work. In Francis' work that honors wommin "...the function of art is to do more than tell it like it is--it's to imagine what is possible" when art creates social and personal awareness.[192]

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190. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 9, 1999 (Transcript Page 20).

191. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 9, 1999 (Transcript Pages 20-21).

192. hooks, Angry Women, 91.

bell hooks writes that "[p]atriarchical politics in the realm of the visual frequently insure that works by powerful men, and that includes men of color, receive more attention and are given greater authority of voice than works by women."[193] This is very true, and it should encourage researchers to question our conception of who it is that has defined, and continues to define, art, and how, then, to seek out and listen to wommin artists. If researchers examine sex, class and race in our work, we may not continue to be stymied in what men do to oppress wommin, but need to extend that analysis to an examination of contextual oppression (and yes, this necessarily involves an in-depth analysis of men's oppression of wommin). Yet, perhaps we may move towards identifying also what wommin can, and do, do for each other as a means to liberatory methodology and practice in the arts as part of our lives. Francis' position as an Indigenous womin in a racist, sexist patriarchy is especially radical. Francis' work is transgressive of racist, sexist hierarchy in that she calls attention to both of these oppressions while building a coalition among diverse wommin through her cultural heritage and personal experiences. Settler wommin may identify with Francis' work but there are always Kwakwaka'wakw traditional considerations that we should use to understand our own culpability as members of diverse (and in some cases dominant) cultures even as we identify with our common oppressions. While bonding as wommin through Francis' art, I think wommin should remember that we are bonded through our common oppressions and that racism is an overlapping domination that must be interrogated in our own diverse experiences of sexism and through our actions.

Wiuma, from 1991, is another example of how Francis resignifies to make her own meanings while still using

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193. hooks, Art On My Mind, xiii.

traditional Kwakwaka'wakw culture. Francis explained the English translation of Wiuma and her resignification of it to me:

> Wiuma means, the best translation in English means, 'women of nobility,' but I redefined it. I redefined it when I did the theater piece called *Wiuma*. I redefined it to be 'women who walk in spirit,' because when I hear women of nobility in this time and in this society, to me, it indicates women of different status, a hierarchy and I just hate that, I hate it. I don't like it, [so] it's just women, women who are walking. Women who are doing their thing, that's what I redefined it into, so I'm redefining things as they fit for me.[194]

Francis' resignification of the Kwakwala word *wiuma* is another example of how she is politically committed to breaking with dominant notions of power. Francis' insistence on resignifying traditional Kwakwaka'wakw words' meanings and Kwakwaka'wakw artistic practices while still being directly involved with her cultural heritage as a context, again situates her within a margin of her own design wherein she is able to make meanings that are both rooted and inventive. This practice also exemplifies the motion that cultures must have in order to retain meaning through time. By resignifying the word wiuma, Francis is questioning dominant notions of class while changing conceptions of 'nobility' to include wommin who are struggling to be 'noble' in different senses of the word. The definition of *wiuma* as 'women walking in spirit,' carries a more conscious sense of overlapping and multiple sites of oppression. Wommin 'walking in spirit' defies categorical class hierarchies in order to seek common ground for wommin regardless of our

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194. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 9, 1999 (Transcript Pages 19-20).

types of oppression, our class, our race, our sexual preferences and our many other diverse ways of being and knowing. In this way Francis' political commitment to speak of things that are deemed by the dominant male order to be 'unacceptable' topics becomes clear. Francis refuses to be a silent party in the struggles that wommin face. As she claims the power to honor wommin, Francis provides the necessary analysis, naming the site of sexist oppression as part of a hierarchical system of inequity.

The serigraph *Wiuma* was explained by Francis to me as a process in learning about honoring wommin:

> I first did *Wiuma* which is this picture of a woman embracing the moon and that was the closest that I got to a woman embracing herself.[195]

Francis also wrote about the serigraph *Wiuma* in her narration for her theater piece *Wiuma: Honoring The Spirit Of Women* as such:

> The design you see on the dance screen on stage is called *Wiuma: The Woman Who Walks In Spirit*. The woman embraces the moon to symbolize Francis' passion and ancestral connection to it. This design was created by Francis to express her love, honor and respect for an individual who journeyed through much of her pain. Through this painting Francis honors this woman as a healer and a woman who walks in spirit. Throughout her journey through her fires, and from this piece, Francis came to a place where she clearly sees that women within her Nation have been denied spiritual expression. She has seen the oppression of women in this dominant culture. She hears and reads about women of color who, too, live in oppression, and encourages all to follow their hearts, to do what they need to do to heal, because from healing an awakening and a

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195. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 22, 1999 (Transcript Page 23).

> strengthening of spirit occurs. The more we heal, the more light we have to shed on the darkness. This is a time of change, this is a time of the awakening of spirit. Let the awakening of spirit be your path.[196]

In this final act of *Wiuma: Honoring The Spirit Of Women*, Francis critiques oppressions and then suggests ways for wommin to start to free ourselves of these oppressions. By critiquing oppressions, Francis presents herself as a politically and personally engaged womin. By offering advice on self-preservation for wommin in both a visual and verbal format, Francis is revolutionary. In my opinion, to critique the oppressions that face wommin is a necessary personal and political act. However, to couple this analysis with a directive for action against these oppressions is what I believe truly define revolutionary art and being.

In the serigraph *Wiuma*, Francis depicts the face of a womin that is neither all 'in the light' nor all 'in the dark.' Francis' use of negative space in her treatment of the face of the womin may suggest that the womin is in the process of becoming whole, of "shedding the darkness." Alternately, the negative space may signal the place in which individual viewers (wommin) may resonate with to create from, metaphorically, to "awaken" and fill with our diverse experiences in order to become whole. The depiction of the womin's face in *Wiuma* may also be read as the crescent moon, paralleling the full moon in the figure's arm. Perhaps this iconography describes the process of becoming aware that what wommin know (or carry) about oppressions are in juxtaposition with what we are seen as knowing, or that we are in the process of taking what we know and internalizing this knowledge against a society that would see us as half aware. In all of these analyses, motion, and especially the motion

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196. Francis Dick, *Wiuma: Honoring The Spirit Of Women*, June 1992, 12.

of personal recovery, are present. This sense of motion, that seems to be such an important force in Francis' work (significantly what she terms her process), seems again to signal that the completing of a journey within oneself and from a place of oppression is without closure.

Within the body of the figure of the womin in *Wiuma* is the eagle with its wing spread out to cover the side of the womin. The eagle is usually present in Francis' works to honor her brother Jesse. In Francis' artist statement for *Comes A Woman*, the eagle's wings represent flight, the ability of wommin to raise from our oppressions. Perhaps in *Wiuma* the eagle is meant to represent both flight, the freedom of wommin to be liberated from our oppressions and as a way to honor Jesse.

The moon, as Francis often states, is a culturally and personally significant female presence for her. The full moon that the figure of the womin in *Wiuma* embraces is meant (as Francis has stated) to represent wommin's ability to embrace herself by embracing the moon, a female-coded power source. The moon, especially the full moon, is frequently used by Francis to indicate a passionate, light and female presence to which Francis is drawn. In embracing the moon, perhaps the figure of the womin in *Wiuma* is accepting and celebrating the commonalities between herself and the full moon while still aspiring to the moon's completeness (fullness), signaling a process of personal growth within "healing."

The purple that Francis chose for *Wiuma* fills the interior of the figure of the womin and seems to represent the spiritual power of "awakening" that Francis describes and advocates as a freeing force from oppressions. The motion of *Wiuma* is formalistically achieved by Francis' distinctive use of line that swells and diminishes into stylized U Forms and

Ovoids.[197] This motion conveys Francis' ideas of wommin who are walking or journeying in the interiority of our lives. This interior motion works to signal that even in this moment of stillness, when the figure of the womin embraces the moon, there is an inherent internal dialogue of emotive and processional movement.

Francis' insistence on the need for wommin of her Nation, the dominant culture, and wommin of color to heal indicates her advocation of resistance. In calling for "a time of change" through the "awakening of spirit," Francis acknowledges the oppressions that diverse and individual wommin face. Through this acknowledgement, Francis appears to be calling for a revolution from inside individual wommin's experiential knowledges. bell hooks describes the process of interior revolution and resistance to oppression:

> How do we create an oppositional world view, a consciousness, an identity, a standpoint that exists not only as a struggle which also opposes de-humanization but as that movement which enables creative, expansive self-actualization? Opposition is not enough. In that vacant space after one has resisted there is still the necessity to become--to make oneself anew....That process emerges as one comes to understand how structures of domination work in one's own life, as one develops critical thinking and critical consciousness, as one invents new, alternate habits of being, and resists from that marginal space of difference inwardly defined.[198]

Francis has created and continues to create an

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197. I capitalize the terms U Forms and Ovoids to indicate my respect for a distinctively Indigenous Northwest Coast design form.

198. hooks, Yearning: Race Gender And Cultural Politics, 15.

"oppositional world view" through her honoring of wommin as self-actualizing peoples. Francis does not stop at opposing domination, but creates a process conceived in the understanding and naming of oppressions that results in her advocation of and personal being in an alternative margin that she herself creates and that must be created by wommin for ourselves to survive and heal from our oppressions.

Francis' experiential knowledges are directed in *Wiuma* in order to call attention to the need for wommin to honor ourselves and other wommin. As Marcie Rendon, Anishinabe, writes:

> As Native people, we have known that in order to survive we had to create, re-create, produce, re-produce...The effect of the denial of our existence is that many of us have become invisible... the systematic disruption of our families by the removal of our children was effective for silencing our voices...however not (everyone) can still that desire, that up-welling inside that says sing, write, draw, move, be...we can sing our hearts out, tell our stories, paint our visions....[199]

In resignifying the meaning of wiuma, Francis re-creates for change, demanding that wommin be honored. Francis consistently exposes political truths through her experiential knowledges and her denial of silence in the face of oppression. Francis advocates an "awakening of spirit" for wommin and depicts it through her cultural traditions, personal cultural consciousness and her insistence on never compromising herself to any hierarchical position. *Wiuma* captures Francis' compassion for wommin in struggle and honors these wommin from her experiential knowledges.

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199. Marcie Rendon, "Awanewquay "Fog Woman" Eagle Clan Pillager Band White Earth Anishinabequay" in Sweetgrass Grows All Around Her, eds. Beth Brant and Sandra Laronde (Toronto: Native Women In The Arts, 1996), 46.

Honoring Malidi, printed in December of 1995, is part of Francis' continual honoring of wommin in her work. Francis links *Wiuma* to *Honoring Malidi* by describing the process she experienced between the two pieces to me:

> For me, I realized when I painted *Wiuma*, I realized how important it was for me to do a woman embracing herself and how important it was for me to begin to start to move toward, more and more, me embracing myself instead of seeking, forever seeking, approval and acceptance outside of myself and I still continue to do that on a certain level. It was really scary for me to come to that and to paint that because I mean what is it going to look like? Is it going to feel desperate, is this piece going to...what is it going to feel like? When I thought about what it might feel like for me, I thought about it and I thought about what does it feel like when I say to myself I want to paint a woman embracing herself? What I needed to do first was begin a process of in order to begin feeling it and I didn't know what it was going to look like. I didn't know what the colors were going to be. I needed Kawadelekala to be there always, Kawadelekala has got to be there, so Kawadelekala is on the headdress of this woman. That's how it came to be, I just got this desire in me to have a woman embracing herself because of my need to embrace myself and I wanted to learn how to do that when I needed to do that and it's kind of on going, on going.[200]

In *Honoring Malidi* Francis is continuing to move, without closure, to a space within which she may draw the strength from her process to honor herself and other wommin. As an artist who is inspired through experiential and cultural knowledges, Francis recognizes the necessity of remaining in perpetual motion, countering the motion of hegemonic domination. Gloria Anzaldua describes this process

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200. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 22, 1999 (Transcript Pages 23-24).

of continual self-discovery as necessary for resistance to domination as a creative process, one in continual flux, made on the journey through one's life ways: "*Caminante, no hay puentes, se hace puentes al andar*--Voyager, there are no bridges, one builds them as one walks."[201] Francis' project of building these bridges as she walks is visually evident in the transition between *Wiuma* and *Honoring Malidi*. Francis' awareness of the need to begin a process of embracing herself exemplifies the movement that underlies all of the serigraphs discussed in this thesis. Francis' work (the work included in this thesis and all of her other work) depicts a process of engagement with herself and her experiences. Francis' work that honors wommin continues to describe a process of unending revolution that continues, both exterior to wommin and within wommin, which Francis is able to convey simultaneously.

Francis remains rooted to Kwakwaka'wakw traditions but is not bound by them in that she introjects her own experiential knowledges to create works that describe multiple and moving analyses on diverse oppressions. For instance, Francis depends on the presence of Kawadelekala to represent many facets of her heritage and her spiritual strength while culling her experiential knowledges to create *Honoring Malidi*, a piece that incorporates Francis' ties to Kwakwaka'wakw culture and to her personal process of needing to honor herself. It seems to me that these two sites of meaning, the cultural and the personal, are bound together in Francis' work and result in the sense of motion and continuity that all of Francis' work embodies.

Francis is adamant that there is no division between her

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201. Gloria Anzaldua, "Forward To The Second Edition: Refugees Of A World On Fire" in This Bridge Called My Back: Writings By Radical Women Of Color, eds. Cherrie Moraga And Gloria Anzaldua (New York: Kitchen Table, Women Of Color Press, 1983).

art and her life. Francis' work exemplifies this complete combination of art and life. While Francis is in dialogue with her cultural knowledge constantly, she is also in dialogue with her desire, her process, her experiential knowledges in a continual way, forging a bond among all of who she is from a margin of her own design wherein she is able to express her process. The continual renewing of Francis' commitments to a process, which she defines in her work on honoring wommin, may be seen to be a challenge to we wommin who are struggling with our diverse oppressions to renew our commitments to ourselves, to get in touch with our experiential knowledges in order to be able to embrace ourselves.

The artist's statement for *Honoring Malidi* expresses Francis' use of her art as a freeing process for herself:

> *Honoring Malidi* is a painting I created to express my journey, honoring the existence of me. A woman sits before a full moon which I feel passion for, she embraces herself, knowing that it is from herself that love first comes. Her headdress is that of a wolf which represents the first wolf of Kingcome Inlet which my family are descended from. The eagle within her body represents the spirit within her, majestic, strong and free. This piece I named after a young relative who ended her own life, her name "Malidi." Her English name, Melissa. I honor her and her journey upon this earth and her journey after her exit from this earth. I honor you Malidi.[202]

Honoring Malidi, much like *Comes A Woman*, could obviously be considered in a discussion of self-portraiture as well as one on honoring wommin. I chose to include *Honoring Malidi* in this chapter on honoring wommin because of both my personal appreciation of the work and because I believe that it exemplifies a very important aspect of

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202. Francis Dick, Artist's Statement, *Honoring Malidi*, 1995.

honoring wommin, our issues around the difficulties some of us face in honoring ourselves in this racist patriarchy. The "journey to self" that Francis describes is resistant to dominant sexist notions of wommin's proscribed roles in this society as people who are continually pressed to deny ourselves in order to nurture the growth of children, significant others and men in general in order to get "approval" from others that is often a lesser form of appreciation than we are able to find if we may truly embrace ourselves. Wommin in this society are not encouraged to be kind to ourselves, certainly not before we are kind to others and significantly not to other wommin in general. This patriarchical 'policy,' the construction of wommin who achieve power through honoring ourselves as deviant beings, is one in which male supremacy robs us of considering ourselves and works to keep us in a secondary position in terms of power.

Francis' experiences of fright and desperation when first thinking about creating *Honoring Malidi* perhaps speaks to this patriarchical construction of power. Why should wommin feel frightened about embracing ourselves? Yet some of us do. The power available to wommin who contact ourselves, embrace ourselves, is an act of resistance, a threat to the domination of patriarchy. When wommin honor other wommin it is a political act of resistance. Coalition building among diverse wommin who share ideas on oppression is part of a revolutionary movement. In suggesting that wommin embrace themselves and honor other wommin, Francis advocates a revolution against patriarchical thought by providing alternative ways of being for wommin. Clearly it is up to individual wommin to take this knowledge on, but art that sparks so many counter-hegemonic ideas and depicts them in practice is revolutionary.

Honoring Malidi has a serenity that is countered by

Francis' signature love of motion in form, perhaps signalling that this type of self-love while serene, is not stationary. It is, as Francis describes, "an on-going process." The full moon behind the figure of the womin in *Honoring Malidi*, which Francis describes as a force that she "feels passion for," may also be read as analogous to the 'fullness' of the womin who has learned to embrace herself. The gradation in the color of the full moon perhaps signals the mutability of wommin's processes of embracing ourselves, again depicting motion in the fluidity of both emotion and changeable sites of oppression that make this act of honoring one's self a process without closure, a life-long pursuit.

That Francis chose to depict Kawadelekala as present in the form of a headdress upon the figure of the womin in *Honoring Malidi* may be understood as Francis' bodily and spiritual connection to her ancestry as a site of resistance. Francis considers Kawadelekala as signifying, among other things, a home. That Kawadelekala appears in this work as physically 'housing' the figure of the womin, it may be suggested that Francis is depicting herself at home, a place of safety within resistance to a patriarchy that is not interested in the safety of wommin. It is possible also that Francis may be resignifying the Kwakwaka'wakw patriarchy by claiming Kawadelekala as a signifier of safety and honoring the Kwakwaka'wakw wommin who have kept this oral tradition despite colonization. In this reading, Francis may be seen as both receiving 'shelter' and spiritual 'safety' from Kawadelekala, even as she continues her work of protecting her oral tradition. This sense of reciprocal salvation between Francis and Kawadelekala may be seen as expressing the movement in Francis' dynamic relationship with both herself and her cultural heritage.

The eagle, which represents the "spirit within" the figure of the womin in *Honoring Malidi*, "majestic, strong and

free," gives the viewer a sense of liberation and the interiority of that struggle for liberation.

Francis' works: *Hayalilegas*, *Wiuma* and *Honoring Malidi* all contain the idea of honoring wommin through cultural continuity, memory, experiential knowledge and a critique of patriarchy. The struggle for liberation, also a recurrent theme in these three serigraphs, I feel, portray themes of revolution from sites of oppression where Francis is able to honor wommin in a world where we rarely are honored.

Conclusions

Traditional, European/settler patriarchical art history is neither a progressive nor a useful methodology in which to learn about and research Indigenous art production. This type of 'white old boys' art historical discourse perpetuates and continues to make racist and sexist (among other oppressive tactical) meanings about Indigenous wommin's art and the artists. The cult of the settler specialist, who has ostensibly read 'enough' about Indigenous art or who has spoken with 'enough' Indigenous artists to consider themselves 'specialists,' signals the death of the learning process, a process which should have no such closure. The equally detestable traditional academic protocol, based on European enlightenment epistemologies, compartmentalizes disciplines, protocols and peoples in a way in which dominant culture's racist patriarchical perspective is solidified and upheld as the 'correct' (read only) way in which to participate in education. When we follow patriarchical white supremacist constructions for research and education, we are participating in the silencing of the voices of historically marginalized peoples.

Traditional European/settler patriarchical art history is not useful in a discussion of wommin artists and wommin's art because there is no value in methodologies that ignore hegemonically based overlapping oppressions. Traditional art history is deeply invested in withstanding marginal interventions by revolutionary artists such as Francis Dick. The ability to call attention to unequal and oppressive structures, such as Francis Dick does, is not appreciated by the group that epitomizes traditional patriarchical white supremacist art history. It seems obvious to me that progressive art historians need to divest ourselves of these systemic paradigms and consider alternative ways of

researching and being in the world. Being or becoming a 'specialist' should not be valued in a context of real and progressive continual learning.

Research should be contextual, and not be decentered in a postmodern idiom in which power, understood as 'up for grabs,' is never really decentered from the dominant patriarchical culture. Research needs to be done with direct contact between the artist and the researcher when it is possible, examining how the complexities of race, gender, class (and other sites of meaning) impact on individual art production. Marginal resistance, and the power that an artist may experience and inspire by making their own marginal location from which to act, needs to be understood as a serious and effective intervention in traditional art historical discourse. As Francis' work exemplifies, a contextual, marginal, self-realized space can work to refute traditional patriarchal white supremacist art history. When an opportunity to speak and work with a living contemporary Indigenous artist is possible, the settler art historian is being irresponsible, and helping to buttress traditional art history, if they refuse to accept the challenge of working with the artist. I believe that the art historian who decides not to accept a dialectic methodology, when one is possible, is consciously submitting to traditional academia and foregoing a real and continuous learning experience.

When Indigenous artists are voiced-over by settler and European art historians, divide-and-conquer multiculturalism, divide-and-efface postmodernism, and valorize-and-appropriate new ageism, are only some of the negative and very real repercussions that we see.

By *briefly* discussing three contemporary texts that I consider to be exemplary of traditional art historical practice, I hope to make clear that consistently respectful research is impossible when using the dominant cultural

paradigms of multiculturalism, postmodernism, the voice of the specialist and new age romanticism as I defined them in chapter one. I am using these texts as a vehicle to demonstrate the dominant art historical methodologies in practice, to show that traditional art history is not progressive and to reconnect my methodological concerns with contemporary practice in order to demonstrate a connection between theory and practice.

I will consider the following texts: Mixed Blessings: New Art In Multicultural America (1990), The Legacy: Tradition And Innovation In Northwest Coast Indian Art (1984), and Chiefly Feasts: the Enduring Kwakiutl Potlatch (1991). I will then, ever more *briefly* address two art historic texts that directly deal with issues of power, inequality, racism, sexism, and Indigenous voice in art history as protocols for respectful and progressive art historical discourse. Again, this is meant to demonstrate that progressive dialectical methodologies work in practice and to make critical interventions in traditional art history. The texts I will be considering are: Robes Of Power: Totem Poles On Cloth (1993), and Indigena: Contemporary Native Perspectives (1992). By foregrounding these two texts, I wish to make the point that respect and dialectical methodology in theory can and does result in respectful art historical practice. I selected these two texts to elucidate some of the reasons why I chose a feminist discursive ethnography for this thesis. I will then be concluding by evaluating the collective methodology fashioned by myself, Francis and Charlene for effectivity, respect, and reciprocal value in order to demonstrate that this thesis is a part of a learning process without closure.

Mixed Blessings: New Art In A Multicultural America by art historian Lucy Lippard, exemplifies some basic problematics when a settler art historian uses a mixture of

multicultural inclusionary tactics, postmodern 'playfulness,' new age homogenization, and writes without entirely divesting herself of the 'specialist' voice. Although Lippard states that her work is not a survey of art from "Native, African and Latino [sic] American communities," her text in fact demonstrates most of the features of a survey study.[203] Lippard states, on the same page, that instead of a survey she is attempting to produce " a patchwork of images," which does in fact amount to a survey, albeit under a none too creative recentering of mosaic style imagery.[204] Even more contradictory still is Lippard's notion that:

> More or less taken for granted for two hundred years, the concept of the monotone meltdown pot, which assumed that everyone would end up white, is giving away to a salad, or an *ajiaco*--the flavorful mix of a Latin American soup in which the ingredients retain their own forms and flavors. This model is fresher and healthier; the colors are varied; the taste is often unfamiliar. The recipe calls for an undetermined simmering period of social acclimation.[205]

After critiquing the melting pot and reproducing the mosaic of multiculturalism, which may be understood as functioning similarly, as I discussed in chapter one, Lippard in fact seeks to reestablish the melting pot. I question the metaphor of an *ajiaco* as being any kind of new model of multiculturalism. In Lippard's playful soup, there is no interrogation of herself as the 'specialist' who has the power to name, or metaphorically, 'cook' up this tired notion

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203. Lucy Lippard, Mixed Blessings: New Art In A Multicultural America (New York: Pantheon Books, 1990), 4.

204. Lippard, Mixed Blessings, 4. See my discussion on multicultural art history in chapter one.

205. Lippard, Mixed Blessings, 5.

of a settler hostess (specialist) serving a bite of the cultural other. Perhaps the dehumanized artists and art "retain their own forms and flavors," but this stab at diversity is greatly undercut when considering that Lippard is doing the 'cooking' and selecting the 'ingredients.' By appropriating the metaphor of the *ajiaco*, Lippard recenters the melting pot (here set to "simmer") and playfully camouflages her "new" model within a colonistic paradigm by resignifying a Latin American soup, a product made for consumption. The celebratory new age appropriation of *ajiaco* as "fresher and healthier" does nothing to counter the multicultural homogenization of diverse artists under the settler specialist's control, and, in fact, 'serves' these people and their work up to a settler targeted audience's 'appetite' for exotification.

It is important to remember that this model, like the melting pot and the mosaic, homogenizes as it excludes. Ostensibly this soup is for everyone (note the implicit level playing field of evacuated political power). Why is it then that this soup is considered by Lippard as an "unfamiliar" taste? Because a Latin American soup would taste unfamiliar mainly to non-Latin Americans. Lippard's model excludes through both familiarity and unfamiliarity while simultaneously including (homogenizing) via her metaphor. Lippard goes on to make unfortunate suppositions about this false multicultural diversity and then uses these suppositions as an excuse not to divest of her own specialist place, nor to interrogate with any real seriousness the power that 'her' model invests in dominant culture.

Lippard's model moves quickly into that of a postmodern level playing field, even while she periodically (and poorly) refutes postmodernism. Lippard writes that:

> The goal of the new, more globally inclusive

> curricula being forged amid heated debate is the perception of Western civilization as one of many worth studying in a multicultural nation, where white students will be encouraged to see themselves as simply another Other.[206]

Lippard's continual evacuation of contexts of power and oppression in favor of celebration are not anti-postmodern, but definitive of the postmodern level playing field where diversity is effaced and all peoples are constructed as being equal, where we are all different, just like everyone else (i.e., the same). The idea of white students seeing themselves as "simply another Other" is dangerous. If white peoples opt to decontextualize ourselves from our colonizing and racist contexts, racism and the power of hierarchically structured dominant culture will never be challenged. The newly decentered white students will either end up willingly engaging, or hegemonically co-opted into, the dominant culture's pernicious hierarchy which Lippard seeks to naturalize by effacing a structural context. Again, the trouble with constructing everyone as equal is that in this society we are subject to specific hierarchical power structures that will not magically vanish if we ignore them.

Lippard, basing herself on the work of problematic postmodern 'ethnographer' James Clifford, writes that she is attempting to create her book in

> that moment in which the possibility of comparison exists in unmediated tension with sheer incongruity...a permanent ironic play of similarity and difference, the familiar and the strange, the 'here and the elsewhere' and I have tried, as he suggests, not to 'explain away' those elements in the foreign culture that render the investigator's own culture newly incomprehensible.[207]

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206. Lippard, Mixed Blessings, 23.

207. Lippard, Mixed Blessings, 5.

Playing with cultures and peoples that one's own group has colonized and attempted genocide on is disrespectful. There are no "unmediated tensions" in life and especially not in cultural politics. To engage in postmodernism in this way purposefully evacuates all sense of history, context and accountability in the white art historian who would rather not listen to culturally other individuals in order to better cloak themselves in a sense of decontextualized mystification of their own culture--which is not unknowable to them at all.

Lippard's multicultural art history leads to a recentering of dominant traditional art history. Lippard writes:

> Sometimes I am saying things that I cannot really know. Despite the best intentions to make Mixed Blessings an egalitarian collage, I still find myself, paradoxically, speaking for others whose voices I am hoping to make heard. Yet another contradiction, since I am all too aware of the history of such co-optations.[208]

In this way,Lippard self-reflexively ruminates on her poor art historical methodology, while simultaneously excusing it as an attempt at "egalitarianism." This passage exemplifies how cross-cultural art history fails, despite good intentions, when the art historian uses a traditional dominant cultural methodology. Lippard does not use the tentative voice ('perhaps', 'it may be', etcetera), rather, she chooses to say 'things that she cannot know.' To excuse this exercise as an altruistic gesture of 'hoping to make other voices heard' is paternalistic and disrespectful. This type of embracing of the specialist position, even while admitting that historical context alone should signal poor

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208. Lippard, Mixed Blessings, 10.

methodology, makes Lippard's 'excuse' neither 'paradoxical' nor 'contradictory'--she is simply engaged in traditional art history.

Finally, it becomes clear that Lippard also uses new age celebratory tactics to excuse her own voicing-over of diverse artists. Lippard writes:

> Many of those whose work appears here are politically active and/or spiritually intelligent artworkers. Sometimes they achieve a rare fusion of these two usually polarized motives. For various psychological and sociological reasons, many of these artists seem inspired (and sometimes enabled) to combine theory and practice in ways that open common ground for those of us seeking deeper meaning and broader participation for cultural work.[209]

The essentialization of culturally diverse artists and their work as "spiritually intelligent" plays on dominant cultural binary oxymoronic semantics. Lippard achieves pragmatic effect by combining two concepts, spirit and intelligence, that she coded (and that are understood in dominant culture) as separate in order to call attention to the difference of the cultural other and then to valorize this difference as "common ground" from which she and other new age settler devotees might gain a "deeper" experience. Lippard waxes poetic on the merits of non-white art (specifically versus white art) in order to excuse her voicing-over of distinct cultural artists that make art that should not have to be qualified against dominant cultural comparisons. Ironically (but not really) Lippard seems to want to be the only white person (and specifically in a specialist control position) in 'her' *ajiaco*. This is very interesting considering that Lippard consistently compares culturally other art to dominant culture art--as if

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209. Lippard, Mixed Blessings, 10.

culturally other art and artists are not able to exist without white art and artists and especially not without white art historians. I write "ironically", because in Lippard's book white people are created as the audience who are invited by 'our' white hostess to enjoy ourselves by making a "common ground" (or level playing field) for the culturally other artist and ourselves, thus erasing notions of dominant cultural culpability in the very formation of a multicultural art in which Lippard constructs white folks as the occupiers of the gaze. Multiculturalism, in Lippard's book, and in many other sites, is then highly selective and controlled by the dominant culture, not a plurality of cultures.

In Mixed Blessings: New Art In A Multicultural America, Lucy Lippard relies on the constraints, exclusions and inclusions of multicultural art history. Lippard engages in postmodern playfulness to excuse her methodological disrespect and employs numerous instances of new age celebratory essentialism in order to create a book that centers her as the specialist and invites a white audience to join her in appropriation and the controlling gaze. This type of art history is what I would term multicultural art history as I defined it in chapter one. Lippard also uses postmodern playfulness and new age tactics (also discussed in chapter one).

The second text considered here is The Legacy: Tradition And Innovation In Northwest Coast Indian Art, by Peter Macnair. It exemplifies the traditional art historic cult of the specialist which I defined in chapter one as a dominant cultural tool invoked by settler and European art historians in order to voice-over Indigenous art and artists. In Macnair's acknowledgements for The Legacy, he writes:

Finally, [for the artists showcased in The Legacy

> are the last peoples to be acknowledged] we must extend our thanks to all of the artists from whom work was commissioned for this exhibition. Without exception, they were most cooperative and helpful in providing personal background and information about their works. We also thank them for the consistent excellence of the pieces which they provided for The Legacy; we feel that all of them provided us with their best work.[210]

That the artists who made the show possible are the last peoples acknowledged after funders, the government of Canada, transportation faculty, the Canadian Department Of Cultural Affairs, The Royal British Columbia Museum and private collectors, exemplifies the continuity of disrespect that past and present Indigenous artists endure under settler colonization. To praise professional artists in a publication for their professionalism and "consistent excellence" of their work is paternalistic. Why would professional Indigenous artists contributing to a show about Indigenous art from their Nations allow anything other than what they themselves deemed good work to be shown alongside their name? I think that this 'acknowledgement' trivializes, in a very paternalistic tone, the artists involved in the show. These artists are professional artists who make their livings doing their art. To reduce the art and artists to equally excellent is to overlook the diversity of the artists involved and serves to recenter all value judgements as located within solely the domain of the specialist. These sentiments undercut the status of the artists involved as professionals and as individuals by homogenizing them and paternalistically praising them for doing their jobs in an additive fashion ("finally") to the otherwise long list of peoples who were also doing their jobs or writing checks.

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210. Peter Macnair, The Legacy: Tradition And Innovation In Northwest Coast Indian Art (Vancouver: Douglas And McIntyre, 1984), 11.

Macnair goes on to write that:

> Anthropologists prefer to differentiate them [Indigenous Northwest Coast peoples] on the basis of language and promote the term and concept "linguistic group" instead of "tribe" or "nation," expressions which imply a far-reaching political organization that did not exist. Generally these indigenous inhabitants simply referred to themselves as "people" but the vagaries of historical fate have settled names from a confused variety of origins. However for the purpose of this presentation the less-cumbersome term "tribe" will be used.[211]

Although Macnair gives no indication how it is that he 'knows' that a "far-reaching political organization...did not exist," Francis Dick's and Daisy Sewid-Smith's recounting of oral tradition which appears in chapters two, three and four, seems to contradict this supposition. It is my understanding that the Kwakwaka'wakw peoples referred to themselves as Kwakwaka'wakw. It appears that Macnair is interested in reducing the Indigenous peoples of the Northwest Coast to "tribes" in order to more effectively commodify their arts and to depersonalize the pieces which are then seen to be old and by extension more 'authentic.' This specialist voicing-over of Indigenous peoples who are alive and have oral histories that have been well documented in other texts and who continue to use these oral histories in their contemporary lives (not to mention in the art in this very show) is inexcusable. I believe that when a settler art historian is faced with a choice to either simplify Indigenous histories for public consumption (despite the contradictions of the artists' knowledges) or to listen, learn and then write, they should exercise respect and choose to present experiential knowledge over specialist

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211. Macnair, The Legacy, 18.

abbreviation.

Macnair suggests that:

> The ultimate expression of the *wood-carver's* art is of course found in the plethora of ceremonial objects [sic] that exist today mainly in museum collections.[212]

As an upper echelon administrator at The Royal British Columbia Museum, Macnair is obviously interested in propagating the notion that the only 'real' or 'authentic' Indigenous art is in museums. However, as art historians, I believe that we need to realize that contemporary Indigenous art, such as the art that was commissioned for The Legacy, is good, authentic and real. That Macnair writes that the "ultimate expressive" wood pieces are "mainly in museum collections" is disrespectful to the contemporary Indigenous artists who worked on The Legacy, as well as to other Indigenous artists who work in wood professionally. Macnair's assumption implies that Indigenous Northwest Coast artists are a group of the past, that contemporary Northwest Coast Indigenous artists, apparently if in existence at all, are not 'real' artists. As an agent of the Royal British Columbia Museum, Macnair's specialist critique may also be read as strongly implying that he is the curator or 'owner' of all the 'really' important work, buttressing his already institutionalized specialist status.

The Legacy includes many incidences of specialist voice-over that are not in any way progressive art history. Macnair writes:

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212. Macnair, The Legacy, 20. My emphasis. Macnair uses the term wood carver and not artist, evoking the traditional art historical construction of art versus craft, craft here signaled as a 'lower' art form than 'art.'

> Many Westcoast women living today make fine decorated basketry; unfortunately the work of all cannot be represented here. Instead a typical sample is offered, one which is appropriate as it is a representation of a whaler's hat made by Mrs. Jessie Webster of Ahousat.[213]

Obviously, Francis Dick is an example of a womin who works in other media (perhaps not viewed as "typical" wommin's work in Macnair's view?). However, Macnair leads the reader to believe that Northwest Coast Indigenous wommin artists work solely in basketry. That Macnair refers to the whaler's hat as a "representation," is a further insult. The implication of this description being that 'real' whaler's hats are not produced any more. This account is not accurate. By ahistoricizing Indigenous Northwest Coast artists, Macnair is better able to secure his specialist position, abbreviating historical information, ignoring oral traditions and insisting on the authenticity of the art that he controls.

The third text that is considered here is Chiefly Feasts: The Enduring Kwakiutl Potlatch. It exemplifies the voice of the settler specialist art historian, new age essentialism, postmodernist decontextualization and voice-over of the Indigenous peoples of the Kwakwaka'wakw Nation. However, I consider this catalogue a transition work, because although it includes the above mentioned elements of traditional art history, it also contains some more progressive types of art historical analysis.

In Aldona Jonaitis' opening chapter of Chiefly Feasts, she demonstrates some of the difficulties that can emerge

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213. Macnair, The Legacy, 20. Macnair also distinguishes between "artists" and "women" on this page, writing that artists "worked [sic] in a variety of media but essentially within two traditions....Women who gathered the inner bark of yellow cedar beat it to a surprising softness which they then wove into capes...." Interestingly, I was under the impression that weaving is an art form....??!!

when the author has not considered and practiced the importance of respectful scholarship. This is indicated by Jonaitis' refutal of the very basic respect for the power of naming oneself or one's cultural group, she writes:

> Since 1988, I have worked with the people commonly known as Kwakiutl, who would prefer to be called Kwakwaka'wakw, a name that means speakers of Kwakwala.[214]

Jonaitis goes on to refer to the Kwakwaka'wakw peoples as the Kwakiutl throughout the book, yet tokenistically uses Kwakwaka'wakw in a one sentence acknowledgement of the peoples who "...allowed [her] to see a different world from the one [she] knew."[215] This specialist abbreviation of the correct Kwakwaka'wakw to the "commonly known" Kwakiutl, which Jonaitis uses with the expressed knowledge that the Kwakwaka'wakw peoples would prefer otherwise, recenters the power of naming as a settler specialist activity. This disrespect of Indigenous oral tradition and personal communication, voices-over the very identity of the peoples themselves. Ironically, Jonaitis critiques the dehumanizing settler anthropology of Boaz for his effacement of individual peoples. By using Kwakiutl, I would argue, Jonaitis similarly effaces individuals at the core of their identity by ignoring the word they use to name themselves.

Semantically, Jonaitis continues to choose very unfortunate and loaded words to describe her work with the Kwakwaka'wakw peoples. Jonaitis claims that her life was changed with the "discovery of the real people behind the books and artworks, the real Kwakiutl...." Jonaitis seems to

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214. Aldona Jonaitis, Chiefly Feasts: The Enduring Kwakiutl Potlatch (Vancouver: Douglas And McIntyre, 1991), 21.

215. Jonaitis, Chiefly Feasts, 23.

slip into new age romanticism by going on to explain "[t]o an urban academic like me, participating in this community, with its shared values and sense of real identity is most seductive."[216] The use of "discovery" is disrespectful of the historical context of colonization and recenters the racist notion that Europeans somehow 'discovered' peoples on the Northwest coast as if they had not been living here for millennia. Jonaitis also stresses a false separation between the Kwakwaka'wakw peoples and their art, insisting twice that the "Kwakiutl are real," tacitly implying that somehow their art is not. The separation of art from the Kwakwaka'wakw peoples seems to be a settler/European construction that serves to locate the art historian as the specialist who might then never have to speak with the peoples whose art they discuss.

In my conversations with Francis Dick, she stressed that the idea of separating Kwakwaka'wakw art, ceremony, song, dance and being is not her experience with the culture. This idea of separating Indigenous peoples from their art was also continually refuted in many of the Indigenous sources that I cited in chapters one and two. Although none of these Indigenous peoples should be taken to represent the whole of their Nations, if one Indigenous person disagrees with generalizations made about their Nation, then it is time to consider the generalizations as non-representative, no matter how convenient abbreviations are. I believe that settler art historians must be alert to diverse world views and beware of imposing our own traditional art historic templates onto cultures that we cannot know.

Jonaitis' use of "seductive" sexualizes, exotifies and generally creates Kwakwaka'wakw peoples as a tourist site for culturally 'empty' settlers looking for a new age spiritual

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216. Jonaitis, Chiefly Feasts, 21.

fix. The sentence vacates notions of politics, poverty, colonization and other pernicious situations that occur in this seemingly idyllic community as a direct result of settler occupation. Jonaitis continues in this celebratory new age vein, describing her experiences of the cultural other as a transformation of herself. I do understand that learning from peoples that are from diverse cultural groups can be a life changing experience, for I believe that I have had this sense of learning myself. However, to couch one's settler self in metaphors and semantics of exotification and mystification is disrespectful and unnecessary.

Jonaitis critiques the museum representation of Indigenous peoples, cautioning against ahistoricism. To do so, she buttresses her argument by relying on the words of another scholar who, at least in the way she represents his words, seems to be condoning instances of ahistoricism through postmodernism. Jonaitis writes:

> As Dean McCannell has noted, the process of preserving the "authentic" primitive serves to actually position modern culture above that of the represented society. This is not, McCannell correctly observes, an intentional act, but the logical consequence of the structure inherent in such representations.[217]

In my opinion, this exemplifies a postmodern decentering of accountability. To posit that white supremacist colonistic structure is not intentional evacuates dominant culture's culpability in the project of the representation of Indigenous cultures as hierarchically 'lower' than settler culture. "Logic," in this instance, appears to be natural and disassociated from real historical contexts of oppression. I believe that there is nothing inherent (or

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217. Jonaitis, Chiefly Feasts, 31.

without regard to dominant cultural racism) in specialization that seeks to represent (or voice-over) Indigenous peoples that cannot be directly linked to systemic contexts of domination and colonization. This systemic context of white supremacy is not an inherent structure vacated of human agency as Jonaitis would apparently suggest it is.

As settler art historians we must be accountable for our choices that serve to recenter hegemonic naturalizations. The naturalized "logic" of European and settler domination leads to statements like the following:

> In a sense, the Kwakiutl have appropriated an artifact of the western educational system to help educate their children about a tradition central to their culture. The words they use to convey the significance of their rituals to the youth are compelling and poetic.[218]

In describing the Kwakwaka'wakw school system, Jonaitis employs the tired and untrue edict of so-called "reverse racism." Despite the impossibility of this action (one must be a member of the dominant culture in order to perpetrate racism; discrimination would be a more accurate phrase), Jonaitis actually accuses the Kwakwaka'wakw peoples of "appropriating" an "artifact" of western discourse in a concise reversal of traditional looting-centered museum 'collecting.' I suspect that Jonaitis uses this slight-of-word to condone her status as a museum specialist curating a show of confiscated (stolen) Potlatch art. This essentialization of Indigenous peoples and their culture seeks to recenter the traditional settler institutionalized education bias that understands Europeans and settlers as somehow owning the rights to certain methods of passing on knowledge. Although Kwakwaka'wakw oral tradition is well

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218. Jonaitis, Chiefly Feasts, 31.

established, Jonaitis seems to think that institutionalized education is a European/settler invention. This supposition is not true. In the Kwakwaka'wakw Nation there are many institutions, notably the Hamatsa, discussed by Francis in chapter four.

Jonaitis relies on traditional art historical concepts such as the supremacy of the specialist, postmodern deflection of culpability and new age celebratory essentialism in Chiefly Feasts. There are, as in Mixed Blessings and The Legacy, too many examples of these practices to critique ad nauseam. I include these three texts in this conclusion as examples of traditional art history in contemporary cross-cultural writing as a means to illustrate the points made in my methodology chapter on some of the oppressive activities present in contemporary Indigenous art historical practice. Notably, Chiefly Feasts ends with an article on contemporary Kwakwaka'wakw Potlatches which includes what I understand to be a telling critique of traditional settler art history written by Gloria Cranmer-Webster, a Kwakwaka'wakw historian. She uses the name Kwakwaka'wakw, never Kwakiutl, and, in a highly critical and political intervention in the book writes:

> Sometimes white people are invited to dance in the *tla'sala*. They are friends of the host family or have made some kind of contribution. The custom has become accepted in recent years and there are a number of politicians, bureaucrats, and others who take great pride in having names they can't pronounce and the meanings of which they do not know.[219]

Cramner-Webster's article is one major reason that I

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219. Gloria Cranmer-Webster, "The Contemporary Potlatch" in Chiefly Feasts: The Enduring Kwakiutl Potlatch, ed. Aldona Jonaitis (Vancouver: Douglas And McIntyre, 1991), 242.

consider Chiefly Feasts a transitional work. For all the traditional art historical problematics in the book, there are some very progressive points made. The passage quoted above is significant within the context of the book because it calls the use of Kwakiutl into question as, perhaps, a name that is more easily pronounced than Kwakwaka'wakw by the non-Kwakwala speakers who Cranmer-Webster may be referring to when she uses "politicians and bureaucrats" among other settler peoples. Cramner-Webster, although curiously relegated to the end of the book, makes herself clear. I understand her to be critiquing traditional colonistic and art historic practices, reminding settlers that Kwakwaka'wakw peoples are all too aware of the tokenization of their culture and that they will not be silenced by these practices.

Because progressive and political work in Indigenous art history is being done, I will very briefly note some of the important methodological concerns in two Indigenous art historical texts that exemplify respectful Indigenous art history. I have chosen to address Robes Of Power: Totem Poles On Cloth and Indigena: Contemporary Native Perspectives because these texts contain Indigenous voices that I believe are vital to note, yet they are far too voluminous and diverse to discuss in depth within the scope of this thesis. My aim here is to point out that traditional art history does not have to be reproduced in order to create a successful Indigenous art historical text, and, in my opinion, to do so would betray the goals of many Indigenous artists and art historians as well as respectful settler art historians.

Respect-in-theory, the act of creating a progressive Indigenous art historical methodological mission statement, is translated into respect-in-practice in Robes Of Power: Totem Poles On Cloth by Doreen Jensen, Gitksan, and Polly Sargent. The publications team for this book compiled the

following partial list to ensure respectful research methodology.

> -Tell it as it was told.
> -Conduct the interviews in an unstructured way, taking to the "field" a mental list of questions, a small tape recorder, a photographer, an open mind.
> -Focus on the present, but glean all possible vestiges of the past.
> -Give everything you've got to ensure that the informant's opinions and personalities reach the reader. For the sake of clarity, taped information may be rearranged but never changed.
> -Make sure that every informant has seen his or her material and is satisfied with its content.[220]

These principles are in fact borne out in the book. Robes Of Power includes stories in the words of the artists, histories gleaned from oral tradition and discourse written by both artists and progressive, respectful art historians. Both assertive and tentative (where appropriate) conclusions are drawn. I consider Robes Of Power to be exemplary of a progressive and respectful work based in thoughtful methodology and followed in thoughtful practice. Robes Of Power relies on diverse Indigenous voices in order to produce a text that directly addresses issues of artistic voice, political context, historical context, and issues of gender roles in the creation of Northwest Coast Button Blankets. In my research for this thesis I studied the methodology for Robes Of Power, adopting, with modifications, some of the tenets of this methodology to try to ensure a respectful relationship with Francis and to have that respect translate in our conversations, methodology and the thesis presentation.

Indigena: Contemporary Native Perspectives edited by

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220. Doreen Jensen And Polly Sargent, Robes Of Power: Totem Poles On Cloth (Vancouver: University Of British Columbia Press, 1992), 8.

Gerald McMaster, Plains Cree, and Lee-Ann Martin, Mohawk, is a show catalogue of Indigenous responses to the five hundredth anniversary of Columbus' landing on The Americas. Indigena contains poems, prose, statements, essays and nineteen visual artists, who have all written their own accounts of their work and activism as Indigenous peoples living in a colonized country. In the opening statement of the book by Georges Erasmus, who was the National Chief Of the Assembly Of First Nations, there is a clear call for a new paradigm in reaction to European and settler peoples' wish to celebrate the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of the confederation of Canada as well as Columbus' landing. Erasmus pointed out that:

> It's really time for some change. It's really time that the European people and their descendants, and the rest that are here, that are now Canadians seriously begin to address the basic relationship they have with this land and the people that were here first.[221]

Political calls for new paradigms that examine settler oppression of Indigenous peoples are a major theme in Indigena. Topics such as: art repatriation, the racist accounts by some settler and European historians of the colonization of The Americas, new age cultural appropriation of Indigenous traditions, ideas on diversity of Indigenous perspectives, and issues of Indigenous voice and settler voice-over are all brought into dialogue by the writers and the visual artists in Indigena. For my thesis, Indigena made me consider themes such as: essentialism and Indigenous world views, the construction of histories, the importance of learning to listen, the necessity of looking to Indigenous

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221. Georges Erasmus, "Statement" in Indigena: Contemporary Native Perspectives, eds. Gerald McMaster and Lee-Ann Martin (Vancouver: Douglas And McIntyre, 1992), 8.

sources for oral histories, the pitfalls of apologetics without action, the importance of ethnographic research, new age re-colonization,[222]settler artistic privilege and the interconnectness of artistic production and political resistance. The writers and the visual artists in Indigena combine personal, political, artistic, mythological, traditional and theoretical meanings to produce a critique of dominant culture's continual trespasses against Indigenous peoples. The writers and visual artists in Indigena consistently pursue new methodologies while never succumbing to the decontextualization of postmodernism.

From Robes Of Power: Totem Poles On Cloth, Indigena: Contemporary Native Perspectives and through many other texts and peoples that I have cited throughout this thesis I have been encouraged to build a methodology that attempts to counter the voice of the specialist with the voice of the student witnessing the voice of the artist; deny the traditional art histories of multiculturalism, postmodernism and new ageism; and always listen to the voice of the artist for her truths about herself and her experience. Feminist dialectical ethnography, as I defined it in chapter one, is the result of having a feminist sensibility and working with Francis Dick and Charlene Simon to help realize the learning experience possible in discussion methodology. I chose to use feminist dialectic ethnography because it promotes ethical, respectful and reciprocal behavior, not because it is an easy methodology, for it is not. However, I am convinced that it is the best way for me to continue to learn throughout my life, teaching me to value the peoples whom I meet and constantly remind me that there are very few things

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222. Loretta Todd, "What More Do They Want?" in Indigena: Contemporary Native Perspectives, eds. Gerald McMaster And Lee-Ann Martin (Vancouver: Douglas And McIntyre, 1992), 71-77. Todd gives a great analysis of new age movement and postmodernism in the practice of voicing over Indigenous peoples.

I have accomplished without difficulty.

The goals of my methodology may be summarized as an effort to listen to Francis Dick in order to learn about her process and to realize that closure in the learning experience throughout my life will only signal a stagnation in the continuous flow of life's processes. As a settler womin who is deeply touched by Francis' words and works, my methodology had to be a collective venture with Francis and Charlene. Through our conversations I have realized that guilty white womin paralysis cannot be completely eradicated in my life and that it may actually serve to fuel a life-long self-reflexive being wherein domination, patriarchy, racism and traditional art history and academic processes need to be questioned and continually contested. I believe that through what came to be our (mine, Francis' and Charlene's) methodology, we have been effective in disrupting traditional art historical practices through feminist dialectical ethnography.

Much more than a thesis, this has been a lesson in respectful researching, reciprocal value and has resulted for me in the conviction that righteous rage, radical honesty and respect are base to an engagement with ceaseless cross-cultural research. Francis locates herself as a revolutionary artist through her work and words; she is, in my opinion, a person who has claimed the margins against systematic domination and makes her meanings from a position that she has constructed for herself. I feel so privileged to be able to bear witness to Francis' process. I know that I would never have come to this space of intense, continual inspiration and learning without her voluminous contributions. To engage with a contemporary Indigenous artist of such magnitude makes me sure that this methodology is an important intervention in the discourses of traditional art history.

Francis explained the significance of her art as it relates to her continual spiritual process, remarking on the power inherent in her work which I also believe pertains to the presence of her work and words in this thesis:

> [Andrea: Because your art has spiritual significance, spiritual context, how do you feel about selling it to an audience who might not understand it?]
> It doesn't matter to me. What matters to me is where it is created from....Where it goes from there it just goes and wherever it goes, wherever it lands, there's some significance to it because where it came from is significant. Like if it hangs in some corporate place where people walk around in three piece suits, there's a significance to that piece being there. Maybe they don't understand it yet, maybe I don't understand it, I don't know. But because of the place that the art came from for me, wherever it ends up is going to be significant.[223]

Francis' conviction, with which I absolutely agree, that her art carries significance because of where comes from regardless of where it is, leads me to conclude that this thesis is significant as a site of intervention in the discourse of traditional art history and cross-cultural research. Francis' words and works have made this thesis significant even if it is located within a traditional academic context. I believe that I too have contributed to breaching the gap between protocol and education and that the thesis is also significant for me in this way. This thesis is itself a process for me in learning, and, as such, it cannot end. As Francis told me about our work on this thesis:

> I believe that it's not just about the thesis, it's about supporting. You're supporting me

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223. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 9, 1999 (Transcript Page 45).

and I'm supporting you. That's what I think is really neat, I don't see this as a one-sided thing, I don't see it that way at all. I think that this is about you giving to me and me accepting that and me being willing to give to you and wanting to.... It's establishing a connectedness and an honoring and acknowledgement of your work and my work and it's having something created that I have a big part of creating and it's going to be there. To me, it's about connectedness and what comes from that I don't know. I don't know the gifts that will come from this but there will be, I mean there already is, isn't there, I mean, I feel it....Something will come from it.[224]

224. Francis Dick, Personal Communication, February 9, 1999 (Transcript Pages 64 And 65).

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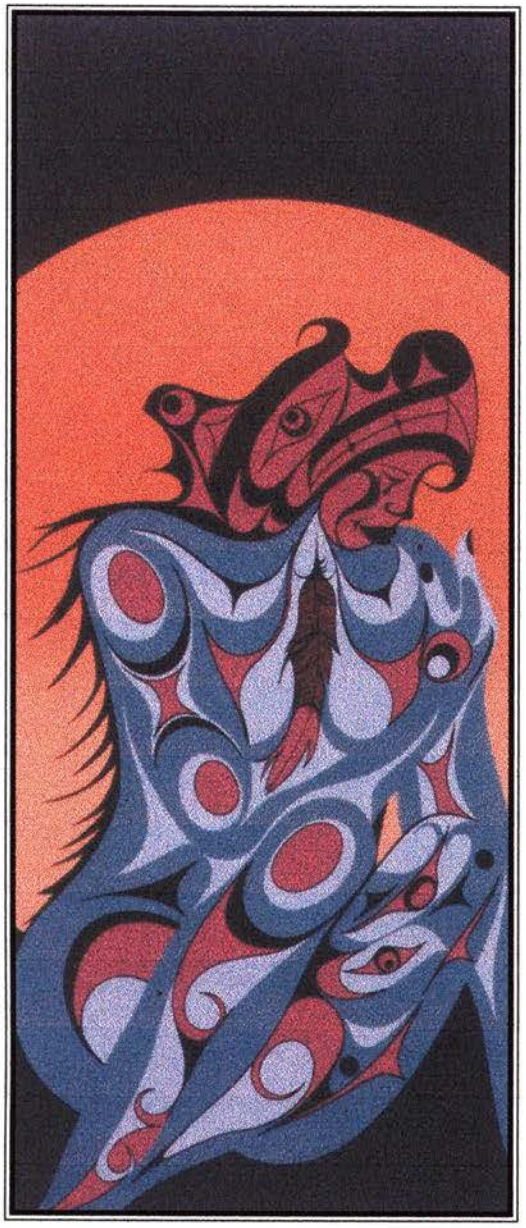

Figure 1: Honoring Malidi
Francis Dick
Serigraph 10 3/4" x 25 1/4"
1995
Reproduction courtesy of Francis Dick

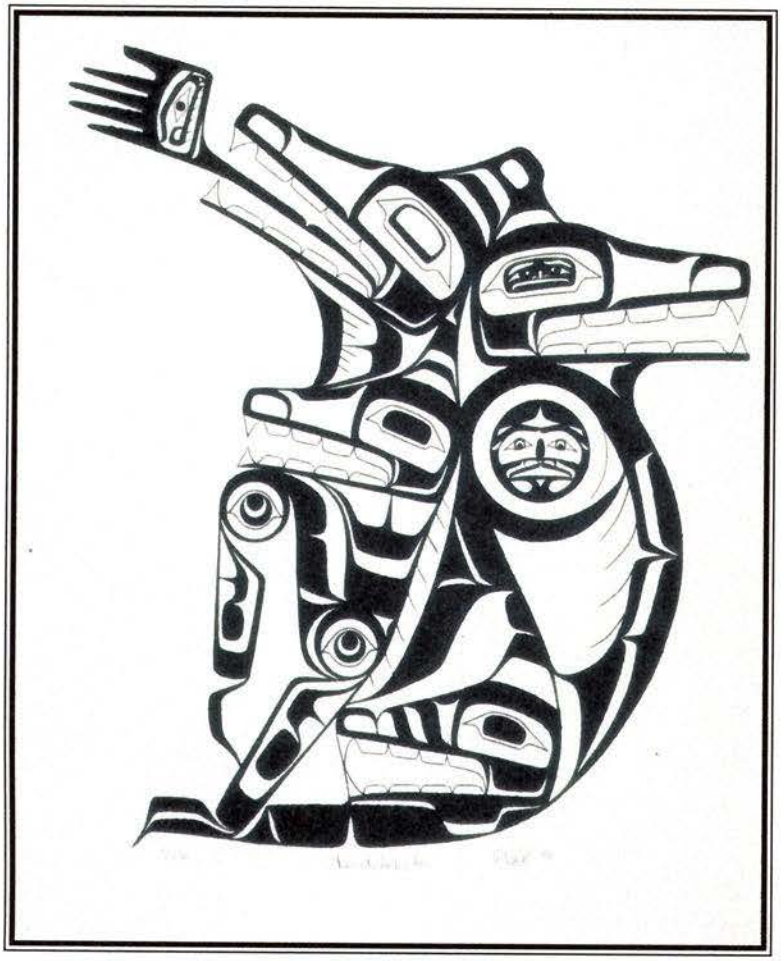

Figure 2: Kawadelekala
Francis Dick
Serigraph 44.5 x 50.5 cm
1986
Reproduction courtesy of Francis Dick

Figure 3: May a<u>x</u> la
Francis Dick
Serigraph 37 x 47 cm
1991
Reproduction courtesy of Francis Dick

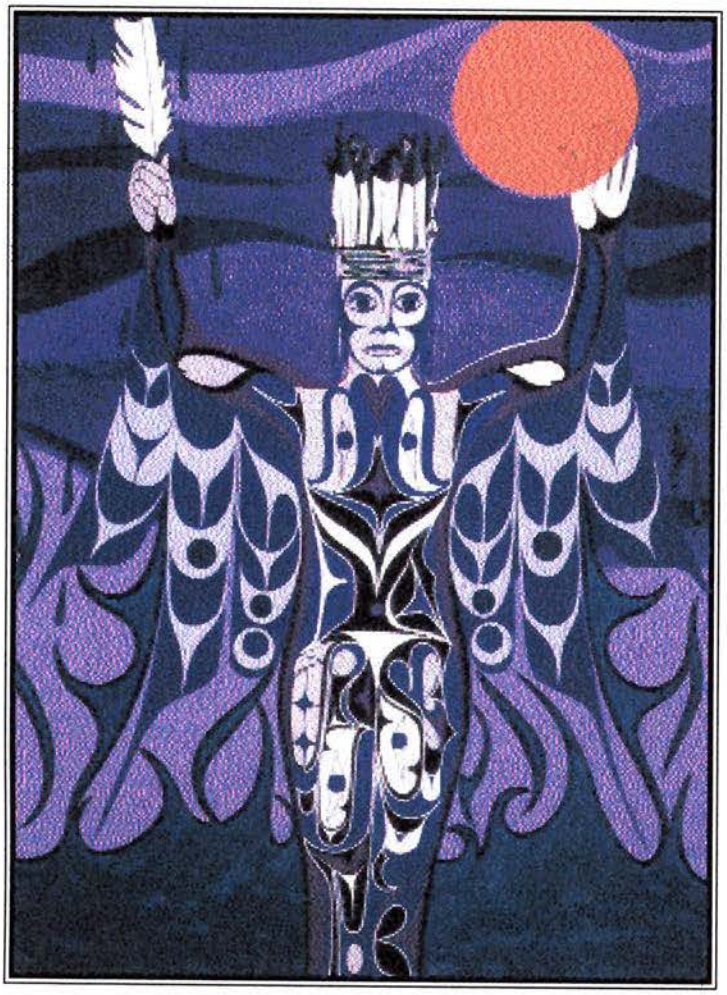

Figure 4: Comes A Woman
Francis Dick
Serigraph 22" x 30"
1993
Reproduction courtesy of Francis Dick

Figure 5: Walking Thru My Fires
Francis Dick
Serigraph 17" x 23"
1992
Reproduction courtesy of Francis Dick

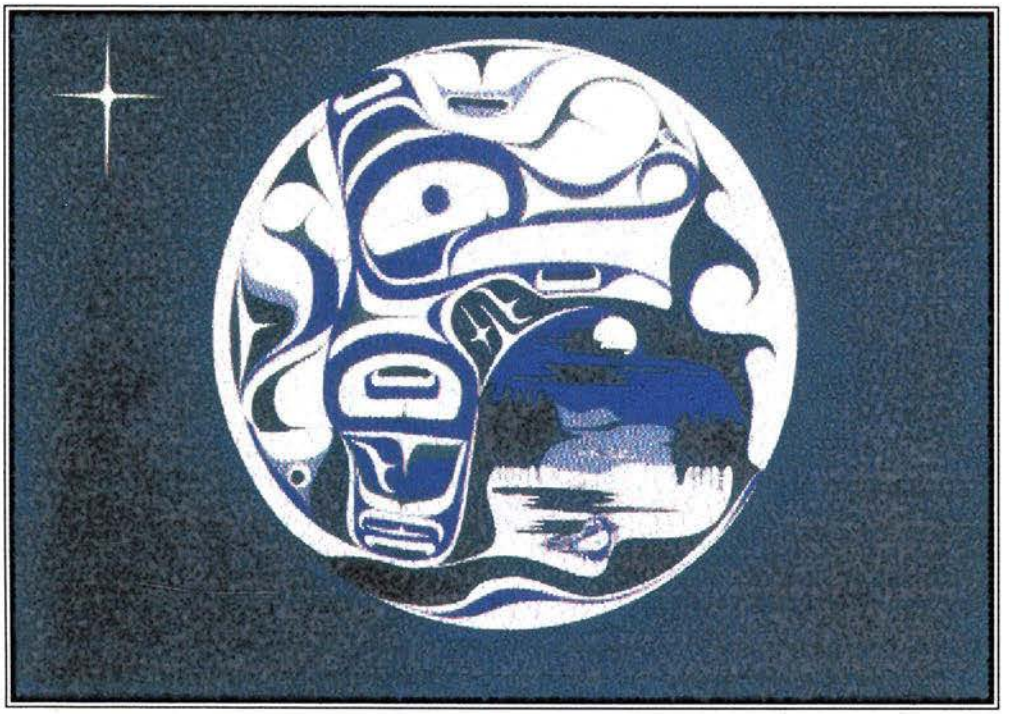

Figure 6: Hayalilegas
Francis Dick
Serigraph 47.5 x 66.5 cm
1991
Reproduction courtesy of Francis Dick

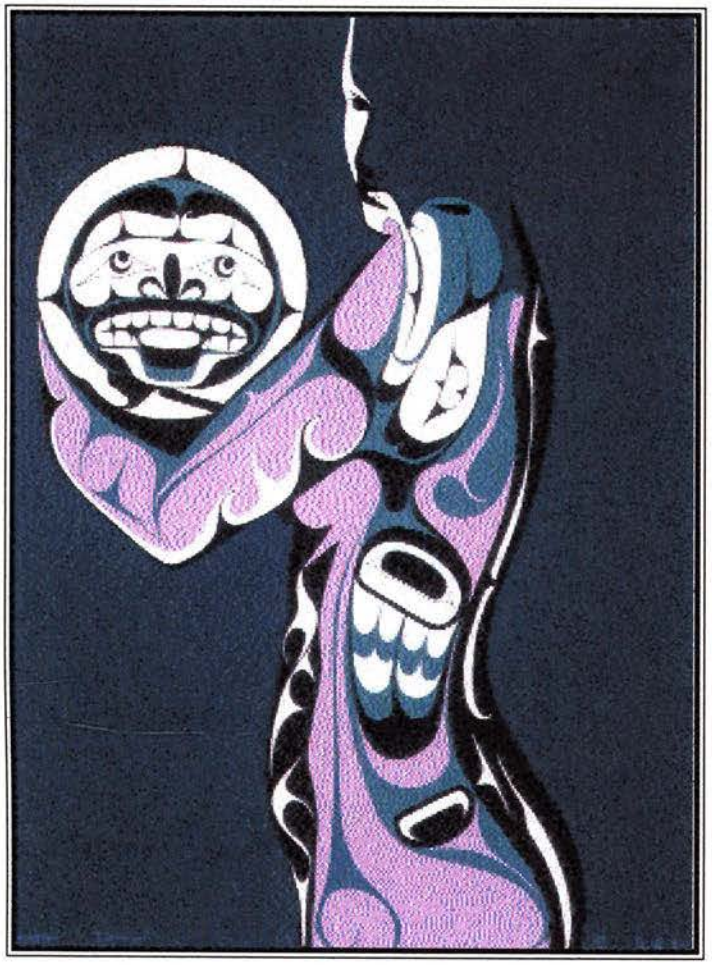

Figure 7: Wiuma
Francis Dick
Serigraph 22" x 30"
1991
Reproduction courtesy of Francis Dick

VITA

Surname: Donovan Given Names: Andrea Merriam

Place Of Birth: Yankton, South Dakota, U.S.A.

Educational Institutions Attended:

University Of Victoria	1993 to 1999
Kwantlen College	1988 to 1993
Western Washington University	1988 & 1993

Degrees Awarded:

B.A. (With Distinction)	University Of Victoria	1995

Honors and Awards:

Flora Hamilton Burns Fellowship	1996
Graduate Teaching Fellowship	1997
Graduate teaching Fellowship	1998

Publications:

Degrees Of Blue	Douglas College Journal, Pearls	1993
Jared	University Of Victoria Journal, The Inner Harbour Review	1996
Various Poems	University Of Victoria's Feminist Newspaper, The Emily	1996

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Title Of Thesis: Challenging Boundaries: Seven Serigraphs By Kwakwaka'wakw Artist Francis Dick

Author [redacted]
Andrea Merriam Donovan
September, 1999