MAPPING KAAY LLNAGAAY:

INDIGENOUS CULTURAL VISUALITY IN HAIDA GWAII, B.C.

by

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Abstract

This thesis maps out the wide range of knowledge and practices that form the field of Haida cultural visuality. Writing from an Indigenous space, which is interdisciplinary and relational, this thesis shows that culture encapsulates the relationships, responsibilities, practices and values made manifest through the actions and materialism of a people. Indigenous culture is a living experience that is informed by a wide range of relations including the use of tools and mediums of Western institutions. This thesis aims to illuminate the inalienable relationships between the past practices of Western anthropological institutions and the current movements within Indigenous owned and operated cultural centres, with a specific emphasis on research conducted at the Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay Llnagaay, in Haida Gwaii, B.C. Canada. Through the lens of cultural pedagogy, I illustrate how the Haida Nation is using education and representation as a tool to heal from cultural genocide. Within this context, I examine a wide range of international discourse and map out how, using a range of responses, the Haida have formed this emerging terrain. How have Indigenous people, caught between a European cultural system and their own traditional knowledge bases responded to appropriation, representation and pedagogy? How have they resisted and how do they continue to resist colonial cultural oppression? What are the cultural values and responsibilities that motivate Indigenous people to build their own cultural centres? How do they use these centres as pedagogical sites towards cultural regeneration? How do these sites further agendas of self-representation, cultural protection and self-representation? This thesis will show how the Skidegate Haida community has responded creatively to these issues and has created a pedagogy that continues to reiterate their relationships, protect and construct knowledge and is active within the Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay Llnagaay.
Preface

To the UBC Research Ethics Board, and their prompt and friendly service approving my canoe with its certification number # H11-02724, I thank you.
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P.S. my committee is a bunch of tricksters, and they put me up to the whole thing!

Marsi, Ay Ay! Thanks for journeying with me.

Sahkitowin! Kisâkihitin!
Introductions…

*Dishinakashon Marnie, doetchine Edmonton…*
*Meyinan, muskawisewin mena ayinesewin
Ta natohtamahk menata nahehtamahk….
Hiy hiy ki anaskomitinan…*

The Haida Gwaii community's newly built heritage centre is a 40-year project. The Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay Llnagaay\(^1\) is magnificently designed building. Within six traditionally styled and interconnected houses sit a range of cultural/educational sites, which overlap and interface each other in their daily functions. Conceived as a multifunctional space, it greets its local and global audience with the unique and sophisticated style that the Haida are renowned for. Heritage and culture for the Haida people incorporates all that is worth protecting, nurturing and passing forward to others and its presentation engulfs the vast array of relationships that are connected to both the tangible object and intangible concept (Gii-dahl-guud-sliiaay, 2006). This interdisciplinary, relational and situated nature of the “Kaay Centre”, as it is locally known, sets it apart from western cultural institutions.

This thesis will explore the ways in which the Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay Llnagaay functions to support and facilitate Haida cultural regeneration and representation through inter-cultural exchange. How do the Haida people want their story, culture, heritage and resources represented? What cultural values were important when deciding to create this site? How has the creation of the Haida Heritage Centre

\(^1\) The Haida Heritage Centre is known locally as both the Kaay Centre and the Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay Llnagaay. As with other oral cultures, names and spelling can change over time as the Elders make decisions on how it will be spelled. In this thesis the Kaay Centre and the Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay Llnagaay will be use interchangeably. The underlined K denotes the pronunciation needs an open throat, which denotes a forced and guttural sound to its pronunciation.
protected, supported and informed visitors about these values? How does this site represent their culture and how is this different from the ways they have been represented in museums and other cultural institutions? Has the creation of the Kaay Centre affected them personally, culturally, economically and politically? How does this relate to the global trends of Indigenous cultural regeneration, visuality and the politics of self-representation and determination?

Much has been written about the changing relationships between western research, social sciences and Indigenous people. However, most of this scholarship has been authored from a western perspective (Coody Cooper, 2008) while Indigenous views have been conveyed “through second hand accounts or less frequently the writings of Indigenous scholars and artists” (Fortney, 2009, p.ii). Within the literature sea of what I cautiously call 'Indigenous cultural visuality' there are large gaps, in particular Canadian scholarship, on the emerging movement of Indigenous cultural centres and museology (Baird, 2011). Additionally, there exist only a few Canadian case studies (Bell, 2005; Fortney, 2009; Koulas, 1987) and most research, which is available on Indigenous cultural centres, comes from elsewhere (Ellis, 2007; Kreps, 2003; Kelly & Gordon, 2002; Stanley, 2007). Heritage, tourism, environmental and economic development literature provides little from an Indigenous perspective (Notzke, 2006; McKenna, 2010; Rao and Walton, 2004; Radcliffe and Laurie, 2006) and neither does the field of visual studies (Leuthold, 1998; McMaster, 1995/2007; McMaster and Trafzer, 2004; Warn, 2007). This thesis will address some of these gaps and will add to the international discourse on

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Indigenous cultural visuality is a term I have coined to encompass the various activities that Indigenous people undertake to make visual the cultural epistemologies, values and histories which would lead others into knowing and understanding said issues. Differing from visual culture its primary focus is on cross cultural understanding and education.
Indigenous representation, economic diversification, cultural regeneration and pedagogy as well as heritage management.

The Kaay Centre has emerged out of a complex historical narrative directly situated within a larger Haida/ization process. Its tangential relations include the larger global movements of Indigenous cultural protection, restitution, representation, revitalization, Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination.

Using a Hybrid/Haida/Métis cultural lens, which focuses on Indigenous cultural reconnection as a pedagogical tool, this thesis will illuminate how Indigenous cultural, economic, environmental and social factors are relational, intertwined and inseparable (Rao and Walton, 2004) and how this relates to Haida cultural pedagogy and Indigenous cultural visuality. Leaning heavily on Indigenous research, this thesis uses the “communities of practice” theories of Wenger (2006); arts-based inquiry methods of Finley (2008); the rhizomatic surveying and mapping theories of Deleuze & Guattari (2004); the affirmative implicating, displacing and reintroducing rhizomes of Patricia O’Riley (2003) and the “contact zones” of Mary Pratt which stress the investigation into the “interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within asymmetrical relations of power” (cited in Erikson, 2005, p.28). The choices made were based on the research’s commonalities to Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous principles of inquiry and practice, which reflects the fluid “relational nature of Indigenous epistemology” (Kovach, 2009). The thesis reflects Haida/Métis/Indigenous values by using the Haida principles of Yahgudangang, which holds the relationship between the self and others as a moral act that requires one to be responsible and respectful to both the community and yourself at the same time. This thesis also incorporates the Haida values
of Gina Waadluxaan Gud Ad thll Kwaagiidang, which translates into English as *everything depends on everything* (Haida Laas, 2008 November, p.19). Together with the ‘R’s of Indigenous research’ put forth by Archibald (1997) I add the medicine wheel, a valued intellectual tool among the Métis and Cree Nations. The medicine wheel framework, together with the Haida Salmon Cycle is used here as a “flexible model for acquiring knowledge and understanding” (Coalition for the advancement of Aboriginal studies, 2003). The medicine wheel, which has been appropriated and translated for use by Haida educators into the ‘salmon cycle’ of balance and harmony, has commonalities also to the circular framework within the “Ethical Space of Engagement” (Ermine, 2007, p. 193). Together these form a rhetorical configuration for viewing subjectivity through a lens of interconnectedness and non-dichotomous interaction.

Another of the many ‘R’s’ of Indigenous research and pedagogy is repetition. The importance here is that through this mnemonic or self-remembering device, knowledge acts “like a chorus a refrain” (Cole, personal communication, March, 23rd, 2012) to reinforce community and communal values, teachings and ancestral knowledge using reiteration. This thesis will consciously use repetition in this way to reflect this oral device that the Haida, myself and other Indigenous peoples use to make knowledge known to others.

Ultimately, the goal in this thesis is to present Indigenous meaning making and practices and thereby illuminating the complexities of the Indigenous world and the challenges of cultural knowledge protection and regeneration; to show one corner of the Indigenous historical blanket, an assemblage of its narratives, a map of islands held within and outside of Haida Gwaii.
These islands, plotted out with agreed upon disorder, will move in a circular, flowing and fluid manner, illuminating and illustrating the ways in which they relate to each other. Through documenting my research journey, and the creation of the Haida Heritage Centre, the greater fields of academic discourse can be expanded to incorporate a new lens through which to view Indigenous cultural representation. The Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay Llnagaay, a site for and about rhetorical sovereignty, cultural regeneration and identity creation is a unique setting unlike any other educational/cultural site in the world. Visitors from around the globe have commented on its uniqueness, creation, operations and management, including Indigenous leaders who travel here to understand and take home these strategies for protecting environmental, cultural and territorial rights through Indigenous values of responsibility, respect, reciprocity, relevance in ways that will represent these values to others.

The mapping out of this thesis, via the four cardinal directions, sets out the groundwork for a larger project with a goal of creating a publication on the Haida Heritage Centre that may serve as a resource guide for the centre’s audience and researchers. This publication would honour the huge list of participants, many who have passed away. It would celebrate the community capacity process undertaken and the self-determination achievements of the Haida community. It would serve as an aid in the representation of their culture and as a pedagogical tool for others who come to learn from their successes and challenges of the Haida Gwaii community.
Foreward, Forward, and Forewarned…

Written from the four cardinal directions, which is shared by both the Cree and Haida people, this thesis strives to ground my research journey both physically and intangibly. From the west, I reflect upon my role as researcher, my resistance and refusal to settle for anything less than ethical cross cultural engagement and my responsibilities to all my relations, half of whom came from France and England, bringing with them our ever-present western forms of living and becoming. I look to these “contours of … ideas that have shaped the last era of domination” (Battiste, 2000, p. xxiv) and write my questions addressing how our modern society, with its ruptures and varied faces, has created and maintained silenced knowings. Through this door I map out my own colonization, with the hope of situating and re-storying the ways in which both members of the Haida community and myself have strengthened our cultures, while remaining cognizant of my responsibility to learn their worldview and pass it forwards, through the winter months of revising, to the springtime and its promises of an unraveled future.

I then turn to the north knowing that as an Indigenous person I have the right to be included in this artificial modern state, to be acknowledge and respected. The home of winter is a place of redressing old conflicts, researching through Indigenous ways and remembering these silenced knowings so that they will not be repeated. Through questioning and diagnosis, Indigenous researchers around the world reach out to learn from each other, exchange their stories of engagement and create dreams for the ‘unwinding of colonization’ (Giindajin Haawasti Guujaaw, August, 2010, personal communication). “Long nights of darkness evoke feelings of struggle and cold; long
winters are when our very survival is challenged. Indigenous peoples are challenged by winter, but from their experience they learn endurance and wisdom” (Battiste, 2000, p. xxiv). It is from this direction that a small group of dedicated Haida grew a community capacity project which created a cultural centre that would address the “unquestioned and conflicting assumptions that underpin oppressive relationships” (Ibid, p. xxiv) within western cultural institutions. I write these stories of survival and perseverance, respectfully acknowledging all my relations, from all around the globe, who make this possible.

To the east I meet the spring with its warm promises of returning salmon and I reclaim Indigenous ways of knowing. From this place I write to re-iterate that knowledge creation is “both a personal and collective process…based on personal responsibility and is informed by relationships within society” (McGuire, 2010, p. 127-8). I write to describe the reconnection process so that you can understand how we might heal “ourselves, our collective identities, our communities, and the spirit that sustains us” (Battiste, 2000, p. xxiv) whether that is through the work of repatriation, resistance or re-visioning cultural institutions to serve our own agendas. It is from here that I write Haida stories about responsibility and re-visioning in order to promote, develop, represent and protect their culture.

I turn to the south and walk towards the direction of the sun, which resounds with the joy of rejuvenation and re-building. It is here that we weave new blankets under its guiding light. The earth, to whom I am responsible, reminds me that my stewardship is my way of showing respect to the power of my world, to my existence and the pedagogy of place which it offers. From this place I write about preserving what has been given to
us, what has been co-generated and the hope for new directions as our circle expands. It is from the south that we celebrate the state of becoming through this unwinding process and the growing rhetorical sovereignty of the Haida people. With the awareness of historical injustices and the creation of new knowledge come new understandings. It is from here that I present one viewpoint using the many R’s of cross-cultural engagement, which I describe as Indigenous cultural visuality. It is through sharing knowledge that learning takes place but it is “our sociocultural context [which] acts as our social frame on the world and leads to different methods to transmit this knowledge” (McGuire, 2010, p. 127). It is this difference that makes Indigenous cultural productions both remarkably powerful and challenging to incorporate into western paradigms and cultural institutions.

As Indigenous people around the globe turn back to their communities and cultures to regenerate older knowings and doings, our education, governance and stewardship is strengthened with these commitments to re-learning, re-presenting and re-iterating who we are and where we want to go. Despite all that has occurred Indigenous cultures are surviving. We have grown past the ‘vanishing breed’ and the ‘collected artifact’ into contemporary and dynamic people who have retained, re-awoken and revitalized our different ways of being in this world.

These ways, of knowing, owning and sharing knowledge, which are different from ways others have learned, may perhaps hold the key to the very existence of everyone. For Indigenous people, despite all that has happened, it is our survival that “offers the foundation for reclaiming ourselves and our voice, as we vision the Indigenous renaissance based on Indigenous knowledge and heritage” (Battiste, 2000, p. xxiv).
Journeying West…

ney wapatin newah wasquay osah!
apoy! apoy!
êekaya pakaci
I see the canoes! paddle! paddle! Don’t give up!

In the spring of 2008 I had an unexpected and very pleasant surprise. The newly built cultural/ecological/community centre in Haida Gwaii postponed their grand opening and I was able to join their festivities. I had been watching and following the journey of the Haida for many years and became very interested in their tenacity of spirit to protect and re-generate their culture despite all that had been placed upon their world. Two years prior I had visited the islands for an all too brief summer visit and vowed to return after finishing my BFA at the University of Victoria. After phoning Nathalie Macfarlane, the Director at the Haida Gwaii museum, to ask if I could be of service documenting the events on film, I prepared to drive west. And while I packed my suitcases I played the childhood game of remembering all that had gone before….

Part of this voyage of discovery was a selfish one. As Jesuit priest Teilhard de Chardin has written, (cited in Samovar et. al, 2012, p. 157) “[w]e are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience” and I needed one. I jumped at the opportunity to travel, continue my learning journey and reciprocate to an Indigenous community I was becoming attached to. So, I packed up my five-bedroom house, sold most of my own artifacts and made my way to the islands in the mist.

Along the route I began to exercise what Memmi (1991) writes as the desire “to
understand the colonial relationship to which I was bound” (p. xvi). My position, as a Cree/Metis woman, raised in various cities across Canada, with the privilege of a western education, gave me both a broad spectrum of knowledge but also the tension of disconnect and separateness from place, community and an embedded Indigenous spirituality. To live amongst the Haida Nation, I believed, would need relevant acts of reciprocity, respect and responsibility. Through offers of my services, skills and experiences, I hoped to create relationships with the community as a whole and the individuals I was honored to engage with.

As Cree scholar wahpimaskwasis (Little White Bear) Makokis has written, it is through searching, or personal reflection, “that we figure who we are as a nehiyaw [Cree person] and what this journey of searching means to our position or relationship to our community and nation” (2008, p. 72). Embarking on a voyage of introspection, I faced the disturbing fact that part of me had internalized a non-Indigenous mind-set and that I must make conscious these colonial facets of my own epistemology.

Self-determination is the act(s) or journey we take to seek out who we are so we know what our responsibilities are to our nation thus allowing for a clearer vision of what we must do in our lives to contribute to the betterment and governance of our nation. Resistance to colonialism starts with reclaiming who we are and revitalizing our own indigenous ways of being and living what we learn through this experiential anti-colonial journey (Makokis, 2008, p. 118-119).

With this in mind I journey and map, reflect and write, as a way of awakening my own sleeping identity, triggered into motion by my visitations to museums, historical parks, art galleries and educational institutions. So I choose to swim around the famous sculpture of Bill Reid, “rather than viewing the sculpture from the perspective of a tourist or gallery patron whose feet are firmly planted on terra firma…I take up position in the
waters around *The Black Canoe* (floating), staying with it but outside it for the time being while I find my place” (Leslie, 2003, p. 20). And I examine here in this thesis how I have negotiated the meanings of my experiences within the social communities in which I have and continue to live. I hope to illuminate for you some of my own learnings and leanings in an attempt to show you one perspective from a canoe traveling towards decolonization and self-determination.

My choice was an interdisciplinary degree with the Centre for Cross Faculty Inquiry as it comes closer to making a space for an Indigenous cultural perspective on the world. From my Cree/Métis lens the world is in constant motion, cyclical in nature, changing and evolving as we spiral around forever revisiting our pasts, reliving these memories in the present, while moving towards a future as stewards of this world, for the sake of our children. This is a common theme in most of the Indigenous authored literature I have read over the past two years and in many of the interviews and comments from the Haida people themselves. In “Jagged World Views Colliding”, Leroy Little Bear writes that “[i]f everything is constantly moving and changing, then one has to look at the whole to begin to see patterns” (2000, p. 78). Seeing the whole of this project meant that I had to place myself, as researcher, into the circle as well, reflect upon my beliefs, my responsibilities, and my relationships that I bring to the research and will generate and reciprocate through the research process.

We, the current generation, have not created this inheritance of colonial dissonance but we can work towards the “unwinding of colonization” as the President of the Council of the Haida Nation Guujaaw states frequently here. This process demands a re-examination of our cultural lenses, our baggage, our visual, cognitive and oral
toolboxes, our his/herstories and our silences (Battiste, 2000; Brant-Castellano, 1997; Chamberlain, 2000; Tuwahi Smith, 2000; Wilson, 2009).

So I set forward on my voyage of discovery, hoping that it might produce a terrain through its mapping process, one which might prove useful to both myself and to others wanting to understand this sea bed of relations that I have coined ‘Indigenous cultural visuality’. I plot myself, and my cultural baggage, on the map first, sketching my routes outwards to my relations and relationships. From the islands that have birthed me, educated me, provided for me and protected me I paddle forth, exploring, charting and respectfully acknowledging the rightful owners of these lands on which I rest, visit and make my home. These islands, which hold stories full of knowledge, unfolded to me over the course of the last two years and are now refolded into this map of a thesis as a story unto itself. And while my research proposal was my map, I created a framework, a canoe, a hybrid/Cree/Métis/Haida vessel, that took the flexibility of willow from the plains sweat lodge, the skins from the buffalo on whom my ancestors depended, the storytelling traditions of Indigenous people around the world, the trickster in the form of coyote and raven, and the cedar from the forests that surround me here, in my new home.

I remember master carver Bill Reid’s words, “Oh the cedar tree! If mankind in his infancy had prayed for the perfect substance for all material and aesthetic needs, an indulgent god could have provided nothing better” (quoted in Stewart, 1984, p. 8). These monumental trees, that have produced an endless array of objects, songs, stories, medicines and community responses, are now in peril of being lost to generations unborn. So closely linked to their culture they are, that it is only through hope and persistent protection that the art of producing canoes, paddles, houses and totems will continue
As carver David Neel has stated, creating a vessel is a big responsibility, the life of the travelers are in the creator’s hands (cited in Pynn, 2008). As a new member of the Skidegate Haida community, I feel the weight of their story within my hands, my heart and my canoe. And so I pack up the words of Rosemary Coombe, who writes that “the romantic author and authentic artifacts are both, perhaps, fictions of a world best forgone” (2009, p.86) and I start the difficult task of critically and reflectively storying myself within this self-remembering research process in order not to obscure the histories of the Haida people “their interpretive differences, their ongoing transformations, and the cultural dimensions of their political struggles” (Ibid p. 86).

Mapping My Colonial Journey: How I Learned to Love Museums

“Near the end of Ghost Singer, Willie Begay tells his grandfather that he learned through his research among the historical records in Washington, D.C., that Euramerican society had no intention of allowing him and his people to survive” (D. J. Graber, 2000, p.14).

My first memorable visit to a museum was in the United States on a westbound family journey across the plains. We had dipped down into Montana on our way to Alberta and stopped at the Little Bighorn Battlefield. As we walked under the blue sky and scorching heat I couldn’t help but wonder, at the tender age of eight, what had happened to the Sioux and Cheyenne who died on that spot so long ago? It was the silences of these stories that set in motion a constant return to that day over the next forty years. It was there on the hills of the Greasy Grass that my criticality of western cultural centres began, with its grand narratives of colonial conquest and the blatant absence of
the Indigenous perspective. It drove me forward, through tides of romanticism, anger, denial and distrust. Visiting museums was always a painful and difficult experience for me. As the older I became, the more I expected of myself, to face the reasons why I was so conflicted within these spaces. The eddies of conscientization swirled around my ankles as I researched the commonalities of Indigenous thought on the matter. Third person identity, represented within museums, is for many Indigenous people a troubling, disturbing and difficult subject. Using the work by Sfard and Prusak (2005) I believe that when a third party (the museum) tells another third party (their audience) its designated narratives of a culture (colonial perspectives) that represent the state of affairs about another culture (Indigenous people), these ‘truths’ (whether they are expected to be either in the present or in the future) create a sense of loss, disconnect and injustice to the Indigenous people who they represent. It is this “sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” (Du Bois, 1969, p.45) that troubles most Indigenous people. This ‘double consciousness’ that Du Bois has investigated, is produced when one becomes aware that others view your identity as different than how you view it, that this creates a double-take, instigating a variety of responses including anger and protest. I have either heard or said to others… ‘This is not me!’ … ‘You have made a mistake!’ … ‘You don’t care to understand’ … ‘You just want me silent so that you can continue on your way’.

Living with the lasting effects of a western epistemological belief system based on the myth of the vanishing/assimilating native is a daunting task since these age old assumptions and stereotypes have become so embedded within our institutions that we no
longer recognize them for what they are. For many Indigenous people the solution is
simple: just stay away. For others, who have to work within these walls, it is much more
complex, difficult and is often a constant battle to create any kind of change for the
better. The brush stroke of this thesis leaves this whole topic to another artist, who may
investigate further the changes, from an Indigenous perspective, that have occurred
within the colonial museums of Canada. Suffice it to say though, that from the many
discussions I have had with Canadian, Maori and American Indigenous cultural workers
we still have a long way to go despite all that has happened since the repatriation of
cultural objects to the Kwakwaka’wakw people on the west coast of Canada in the
seventies and the pivotal exhibit in 1986, *The Spirit Sings*, at the Glenbow Museum, in
Calgary, Alberta.

For many, another choice has been to create their own centres and to date there is
no information on how many Indigenous owned and operated cultural centres there are in
Canada, let alone other countries around the world, but there seems to be evidence from
my research that the international numbers are steadily growing. From the creation of the
Woodland Cultural Centre in Brantford, Ontario, to the U’mista in Alert Bay, B.C, to the
recent opening of the Kaay Llnagaay in Skidegate, B.C. the trend has been on the rise
since the seventies, picking up speed in the last two decades. Is this an oppositional or
reactive stance? Why is it that First peoples around the globe are choosing to open their
own institutions? For what reasons and purposes? Are they representing themselves in
first person? and if so, does this help with the double consciousness effect that causes so
much turmoil for Indigenous audiences? How do they feel about using these colonial
tools, this salvage paradigm and how have they transformed them to meet their own
needs, wants and visions? In the end, will these institutions become viable pedagogical tools for the cultural regeneration, protection and promotion so desperately needed to combat the cultural genocide and economic hardship they have experienced?

So with these questions in mind I chart my course, not knowing the direction it will take me, my humanist, community minded self. On one side of my canoe sits my French and English ancestors, their imported and embedded systems of education and religion, and on the other sits my Cree and Métis ancestors who paddle along with me, whispering in the wind to remind me of their gifts and their presence. Looking across both gunwales of this canoe I realize that it is much more complex than I had ever imagined, that I may never find the answers that I yearn for. But that is part of both the challenge and excitement of learning. As Diane Hoffman (1998) writes, “[i]dentity has become the bread and butter of our educational diet” (p. 324) and I have become very hungry in this time and place as I paddle, westward bound.

Mapping my attachments to Haida Gwaii…

Know that Haida culture is not simply song and dance, graven images, stories, language or even blood. It is all of these things and then…(Giindajin Haawasti Guujaaw, cited in Collison and Jensen, 2002, p. 1).

Haida Gwaii, the birthplace of the Haida people, sits about 120 kilometres off the western shores of British Columbia. It is a seismically active place, with two tectonic plates that are “in a dance as old as the earth itself” (Parks Canada, 2008 p. 4). These plates colliding, docking and locking in an embrace have produced a beauty and an abundance of life that has sustained its people, flora and fauna for thousands of years.

Here, people are part of nature. Haida culture evolved living
within the natural limits of the environment generation after
generation. Yahguudang-the Haida word that embodies “respect
for all living things”- ensured naturally resilient forests, fish and
oceans for thousands of years (Parks Canada, 2008 p. 2).

Known as a proud, strong and fierce nation up and down the coast, they were
traders, fishers, hunters and renowned artists. Their culture, interrelated to their
environment and its seasonal cycles, is embedded in all that they do and say. “Humans-
our way of life is a result of the natural and supernatural; when and what we cultivate,
hunt, and gather” (Collison & Jensen, 2002, p. 14). With a distinct set of laws and
protocols that they follow, they share historical commonalities with other coastal First
Nations in that they engaged as both highly successful traders and warriors with the first
visitors who came to their islands. The Haida, whose numbers before contact are
estimated at a minimum of ten thousand, were colonized late in Canada’s colonial
history.

'Basically we're on the very western edge of colonialism in
Canada,' says Guujaaw, the elected president of the Haida
Nation. 'We were the last ones colonized and so that whole effort
is only about 100 years old here compared to the East Coast,
where it's about 500 years old' (cited in Tenove, 2003, p. 5).

With contact came the stories of cultural genocide similar to most Indigenous
people around the globe. It was the coming of small pox and disease that had the greatest
effect on the islands. Within those hundred years the population dropped to just under six
hundred people (Duff, 1964). Forced to deal with this trauma, missionaries strongly
encouraged villagers from outlying areas to move in to the reserves of Skidegate and
Masset to better serve their needs. With this movement and the work of the missionaries
came other difficult changes. As Nika Collison, curator for the Haida Gwaii Museum
states,
There was a time when our people were silenced — they were forbidden to speak their language, they couldn’t have a potlatch, and they couldn’t do the art that was part of their everyday life. Through the Indian Act, the residential school system and the church; we were forbidden to speak our language, we couldn’t wear the traditional clothes that identified us. Somehow our ancestors survived and prospered. They secretly carried on with a lot of our traditions—songs, oral histories, carving, art, and our potlatch systems. What I find just as fascinating and actually mind-blowing is that the knowledge of our art survived and has to develop (cited in Neel, 2008, p. 106).

For many in the community it is the Haida strength, adaptability and resiliency that has allowed them to not only survive but to regain their populations numbers and maintain the cultural strength that is their reputation. Amanda Reid-Stevens believes that “[f]amily and community is extremely important—how do you think we survived tragedies like smallpox? By coming together, it’s what keeps us strong” (cited in Collison & Jensen, 2002, p.12). It is this communal strength that drove them forward through the low years ahead and this same strength would inform them as they created Gwaii Haanas and the Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay Llnagaay.

With the coming of British Columbia came new industries, and logging would create both economic benefit and confrontation for both the Haida people and their culture. “Although these industrial activities spanned only a blink in the time scale of human occupation, many have caused profound ecological changes that persist today” (Parks Canada, 2008 p. 41). The clear cut logging practices of the foreign owned companies forced the Haida Gwaii community to realize that as the monumental cedar trees diminished so too was their culture. Haida epistemologies are based on values in which nature and culture are intrinsically connected. *Gina Waadluxaan Gud Ad thll Kwaagiidang*, like the Cree epistemology *Nehiyaw Pimatisiwin*, is a relational and
interconnected belief system. It is fundamentally grounded in protecting the relationships that are essential to sustaining their culture. As Miles Richardson, past president of the Council of the Haida Nation has said, “We’re not talking about 70 jobs…we’re talking about forever. The issue is not logging versus ‘eco-nuts’. It’s our ability to sustain our culture. And that lies in our relationship, as a people with a 10,000 year history, to the land and the sea and their resources” (cited in Martineau, 1999, p. 244).

Protests are common around the world and especially so in the lives of Indigenous people, who, living upon lands which hold a vast quantity of the world’s resources, use it as a battering ram against imposed values and practices that threaten their survival. Here in Haida Gwaii the stand off against logging took place on Athlîi Gwaii (Lyell Island) in 1985 when elders and other community members faced the logging trucks and eventually jail. Watching the daily news from Vancouver, I became involved with the Haida people, firstly through my father who was supporting their decisions to defend their territory; then with the ‘Indigenous adoption’ of my best friend’s son into my own family and later through my work in the field of Indigenous cultural visuality and education. The unique nature of Haida Gwaii and the commonalities with other colonized and acculturated First peoples were striking. This is what led me here, to these islands and its wilderness. What kept me here, and eventually led me back to school, were the wonderful and welcoming relationships I was to develop upon moving here permanently in 2008.

Haida society is far too complex to go into detail here. However it is important to understand some of its basic social organizations. “In the first place, the whole Haida stock is divided into two “sides,” or, as I have usually denominated them, “clans”. One of these is called the Raven clan; the other, the Eagle” (Swanton, 1905, p. 11). These two
lineages are central to Haida identity and their cultural values of reciprocity, responsibility, relevance, respect as well as humility and good competitive fun. As I have long considered myself a trickster, like Raven who steals the light and gives life to the Haida people, I readily see the connection between Coyote, my alter ego, and Raven. It was when I first started studying First Nations culture that my Coyote self started to play upon the connections and links between these two entities and identities. Raven, like Coyote, is mischievous, sneaky and a most humorous creature. They can also show us how we, as frail human beings, can adapt and acculturate as is required in our present circumstances through their ability to transform themselves into other shapes and configurations. It is this transformational and resilient aspect to Haida culture that is most apparent to me as I interviewed, filmed and taught here in Haida Gwaii. As Nika Collison writes, “[a]s the earth breathes, moves and changes, so do cultures-to adapt, to survive, to prosper” (Collison & Jensen, 2002, p. 11). And after all that has passed, their present culture has made a pro-active and unique transition to living with the contemporary facets of life before them now. Haida Nation president Guujaaw states,

Our people still live off the land to a major degree. Whether they're schoolteachers or policemen or whatever, they still go to the land for food and still fix it up in the smokehouse, put up logs for the winter. That's still going on (cited in Tenove, 2003, p. 5).

Now a vibrant, educated and astute community, the Haida have shown me how a remarkable renaissance is possible through methods of protest, resistance, co-operation, reconnection and reciprocity. Their population has rebounded; collectors around the world revere their cultural productions, which are highly sought after in galleries and museums around the world, and politically they stand on the threshold of a land title settlement that will re-iterate to the world how fierce their warriors can be. Packing “an
arsenal of lawyers…the Haida filed writ in the B.C. Supreme Court, claiming that the province and Canada ‘unlawfully occupied and exploited the resources of Haida Gwaii’ and ‘interfered with the culture and livelihood of the Haida Nation’” (MacQueen, 2003, para.6).

*Athlii Gwaii* (Lyell Island) and its tangential work which followed in its wake, continues to influence other Indigenous groups who are also working towards self-determination, territorial sovereignty or collaborative management systems of their own. Having met Indigenous researchers who have travelled from around the globe to see how the Haida have become leaders in Indigenous resistance and cultural revival, I am constantly amazed at the humble tenacity and perseverance of the people here. These community driven cultural productions, whether it be the creation of the National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage site known as Gwaii Haanas, the title settlement with the Canadian government, the repatriation journey, the return of the name Queen Charlotte Islands to the crown, or the building of the Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay Llnagaay, they have all worked towards a goal of visioning to others the identity and self-determination of the Haida Nation. Acting as both productions of culture and pedagogical tools, they are equally assertions to have Haida knowledge systems heard, acknowledged and understood. As Lavina Lightbown stated to an offshore exploration panel, “We can't deal just on your rules all the time to create better understanding. You must also look at our philosophy and our culture and our value system” (cited in Shapcott, 1989, p. 68).

These assertions over competing knowledge systems riddle the engagements of Indigenous people throughout the colonial world. Within anthropology, education, science and art history this is particularly pronounced. From the creation of the word
‘artifact’ to the phrase “white man’s burden” the alphabet is filled with words meant to silence Indigenous ways of being, becoming and knowing.

The Haida people have experienced first-hand the effects of western knowledge systems disconnecting them from their heritage. As with most other Indigenous groups, anthropologists came to study their ‘vanishing’ culture. And with these visitations came the theft and appropriation of their cultural artifacts. These removals, to museums and institutions around the world, were symbolically and metaphorically like burning a vast library. But when the smoke dissipated, the Haida, like other First Nations were left with the task of taking an inventory of what was disconnected from them.

However, unlike other First Nations, it was the ancestral remains that would be the first priority of their repatriation efforts. The horrors of repatriation and the return of kin galvanized the community into reconnecting, relearning, re-visioning and re-generating cultural practices and protocols. It was out of these efforts, that a revival in ceremonies, songs, dances, bentwood box making and the Haida language occurred. Repatriation, a long and difficult process, is framed within this thesis as a wholistic process of reconnection, for the purposes of healing, renewal and cultural preservation (Simpson, 2009; Bhabha, 1994) and is a powerful metaphor for political and cultural sovereignty and self-determination (W.R-West, cited in Hibbert, 1998; Tsosie, 2010). It remains an active and challenging process for many First Nations around the globe (Bell & Paterson, 2009, Clavir, 2002; Gii-dahl-guud-sliiaay, 2006/1995; Kramer, 2004, Tsosie, 2009). As Roy Jones Sr. of Skidegate states, “We are righting a wrong…we can’t blame the museums, but we can thank them for guarding our ancestors’ remains” (cited in Price, 2004).
The whole process of Haida repatriation, which is another island explored by other authors (Gii-dahl-gud-sliiaay, 2006; Krmpotich, 2010; Simpson, 2009) including their own excellent web site (www.repatriation.ca/) was however, closely linked to the creation of the Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay Llnagaay through its ability to re-connect communities with kin, extend respect to these displaced ancestors, research knowledge and cultural objects, re-generate cultural practices and re-animate cultural memory. This reconnection process, “highlighting the centrality of kinship within social, cultural and political life on Haida Gwaii” (Krmpotich, 2010, p. 160) worked parallel to the conceptualization of the Haida Heritage Centre, which at the same time was actively visioning itself through its own reconnection process, based upon community capacity strategies which sought to negotiate which parts of their world they would share with others. Instigated by a number of community members and the Haida Gwaii Museum board, which saw the need for an expansion of their site, the Haida Heritage Centre Society was created after discussions between various community members and stakeholders took place. Through this community engagement process agreements were made to create a heritage centre that could meet the long-term needs and visions of the community. Parks Canada, who would be a tenant, the Skidegate Band Council, who would own and operate the site and the Haida Gwaii Museum, who would have expanded facilities for incoming repatriated materials, became partners and players in the creation and on-going work of the site.

During this time of reconnection and envisioning there was both challenges and excitement. From many people I have talked to, it seemed the whole of Haida Gwaii was buzzing with activity. It was at this time that I adopted, into my own family, a Raven,
who would ultimately connect me to this place. Watching the events unfold from afar, the news constantly amazed me as to the tenacity of spirit they had during this reconnecting and regenerative time. And as I canoed my own vessel through the waters of University of Victoria, I began to feel drawn to this place, its people and their lands. Upon graduation, I packed my bags and jumped at the chance to see for myself, the success of one Nation to proactively respond to the issues I had been studying, living and learning about far away.

As Indigenous people around the globe prepare for their futures in an increasingly global world, so too do they plant seeds, the seeds of their ancestors, now in their hands and bodies, planted within the intertwined roots called globalism, deeply connected to each other through ongoing reciprocities, cultural exchanges, dialogues, trade systems and now the multinational agreements which secure the necessities we have created.

The seeds, planted here in this thesis, hope to show how, through the act of protecting their culture, reconnecting with kin and coming together in communally responsible and respectful processes, Haida cultural pedagogy has been transformed to communicate both locally and globally who they are, re-invigorating and regenerating cultural practices in the process.

As the late Chief Skidegate, Dempsey Collinson has written,

People are like trees, and groups of people are like the forests. While the forests are composed of many different kinds of trees, these trees intertwine their roots so strongly that it is impossible for the strongest winds which blow on our islands to uproot the forest, for each tree strengthens its neighbor, and their roots are inextricably intertwined.

In the same way the people of our Islands, composed of members of nations and races from all over the world, are beginning to intertwine their roots so strongly that no troubles will affect them. Just as one tree standing alone would soon be destroyed by the first strong wind which came along, so it is
impossible for any person, any family, or any community to stand alone against the troubles of this world (cited in Neel, 2008, p. 174).

This radical position is not about oppositional posturing. It is about being grounded in place, with a set of principles and tools that allow you to act according to your conscience. It's about looking for the roots of the issues, which are rooted in a community of practice. So as I paddle my own canoe, with its two gunwales and hybridized style, I think of my own roots and rooting process. To my Cree/Metis ancestors and now to my new community and relations here in this land that is “confronted with winter storms and trying to look after this precious place. All that we say is ours is Haida Gwaii. This is our lot, our heritage, our life…and one of the world’s greatest cultures” (Guujaaw, cited in Collison & Jensen, 2002).

And now for the Moccasin News!

[Camera cuts to Coyote]

Good evening! Tonight our top story is the opening of the long awaited Haida Heritage Center at Kaay Llnagaay, in Haida Gwaii, B. C. Conceived before the heady days of contestation with the Canadian governments over logging and land claims, the doors opened to the drum beats of over four hundred singers and dancers and an estimated two thousand visitors from all around the world. On location is our news reporter Raven to give us an update.

[Camera cuts to large cedar building with a totem pole in front and then pans across a large sheltered bay in which sits a string of interconnected Haida long houses, each with a
Thank you Coyote, yes, I am at the opening of the new Heritage Centre at Kaay Llnagaay, which means Sea Lion Town in the Haida language. And what a day it is Coyote, there are visitors from all over Canada, the United States and as far away as Peru! Despite the drizzle that is keeping itself to a minimum, the visitors are jubilant about this grand event. Starting with a food burning ceremony this morning to honour the Haida ancestors and their vision³, the day included a Clan parade with the most fabulous regalia, opening speeches from the Elders and directors, a dance of gifts for the museum and of course, plenty of eating! Coyote, it is quite a sight to see.

[Camera cuts to Haida gentleman who is standing in front of one of four canoes resting on beach and talking to a throng of people about the name he has given his canoe.]

“The name of our canoe is Bears Are Awakening Canoe… there are several reasons for this name….the most important reason is that I feel our people, traditions, culture and history have been in a state of oppression or hibernation for the last 150 years but now the tide has turned and we sail with the wind. And, as you all can see with [today’s] official opening of the Haida Heritage Centre, our people, art, culture, song, dance and history have survived and the bears are awakening.” (Bellis, 2008, November, p. 18)

[Camera cuts to Raven]

Coyote that was Billy Bellis, a carver commissioned to create one of these wonderful canoes that you see here on the beach. The Kaay, as it is known locally, cradles the beach here with a series of interconnected long houses that hold a wide range of cultural spaces.

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³ Haida food burning ceremonies include plates of flora and fauna that symbolize the various spiritual elements of Haida culture. These burned offerings will not only give sustenance to the ancestors who have passed on but acknowledges their contributions to the productions of the present, linking the past with the present in the process.
These include offices for Gwaii Haanas staff, spaces for community cultural education, a canoe house, performance hall, café, a grand foyer that doubles as a lecture hall, a gift shop, a museum, an art Gallery and an archive/research area that has a recording studio for Haida language documentation. Outside, in front of the buildings are six totems that were raised in 2001 before construction began. These poles commemorate the southern villages of Haida Gwaii, some of which were vacated after the small pox epidemics that started in the late 1700’s. Some here believe it was a deliberate act to destroy the Haida. Known as a fierce, proud and strong Nation up and down the coast, they were regarded as astute traders and able defenders of their territory. Recent archival research by the Haida (Wilson, 2004) has brought to light suggestions that traders were very unhappy with this state of affairs and may have intentionally set small pox infected bodies on their shores.

“Good afternoon, my name is Robert Russ. My Haida name is [Tak-wee-aoh], and I am of the [Tago Potag-oweh] Clan. On behalf of myself and the Haida Nation I would like to welcome you here to the Haida Heritage Center, Kaay Llna gaay for the grand opening ceremonies here that we have today on August 23rd. Today is a prestigious day, this is a forty year vision that we have here today…so again I would like to thank you all for participating and coming here today…Haawa for coming.”

“My name is Percy Williams. It’s a wonderful day. It might be raining but it is a beautiful day. We are witnessing the unveiling of how our people used to live a hundred years

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4 Robert Russ, personal communication, August, 8th, 2008.
“My name is Robert Davidson, and I am from the [Tsahl eagle clan]…as excited as everyone else about the Kaay opening, I feel that it is an important venue for the Haida people to express and tell our story from the Haida point of view and I’m as moved as everybody else about the launching of three canoes… celebrating the opening of Kaay in front of six new totem poles that were raised earlier. I feel this is very important. What also excites me is that there are so many singers. When I was younger there was only a handful of people who sang the songs but now we can draw on a whole group of people to sing so the burden is not carried by a handful of people.”

It seems the Haida people have great expectations that it will not only help to augment the staples economy that they were previously reliant on, but also able to re-generate their cultural knowledge and act as a site for cultural self-representation. Raven, do you think the Haida Heritage Centre will be able to do all that is hoped that it will do?

Too early to tell, Coyote, there are indeed great expectations, however with the rising Canadian dollar, sea levels and ozone it may have a hard time being as sustainable as they had planned. Tourism has swelled dramatically here over the last few decades; however, government is still the greatest employer. But for many in the Haida Gwaii community today is indeed a wonderful day, an example of the ability to change behavior.

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5 Percy Williams, personal communication, August, 8th, 2008.
6 Robert Davidson, personal communication, August, 8th, 2008
through communal action, resistance and renewal. The amount of regalia today is phenomenal, if one thinks that only a few decades ago, most of the cultural products produced by the Haida sat within museums far from these islands. Not only have they stopped the destructive logging practices of the past, they have repatriated all of their known ancestors’ remains, relearned many cultural practices including weaving, bentwood box making and canoe technologies. The building of this world-class cultural institute reflects their deeply embedded relationships to their physical, spiritual and social world and their culture’s values of wholistic, relational learning. For now Coyote, there are great hopes, dreams and well wishes from everyone I have talked to.

(A loud procession of drumming begins in the background…)

[Camera cuts to a large cedar wall, with two oval doors that are open. In one of them Raven is perched.]

What you are hearing now Coyote is the sound of the performance hall getting started. Today, for this historic event is the first full length play, called Sinxii ‘ganu, written in the Haida language since before many of the people here were born. It will be quite exciting to watch. All the costumes have been specially made and the performers have been attending Haida language school to prepare for it.⁷

[Camera cuts to a Haida dancer, wearing an ermine tailed spruce root hat and carrying a large, elaborately painted drum.]

“Well, this is just the beginning actually… I mean, now that the building has been blessed, the real work needs to be done, re-educating ourselves and sharing with others,

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⁷ Sinxii ‘ganu was written by Jaalen Edenshaw and his brother Gwaai Edenshaw.
hopefully from all around the world. We want people to come here and see what can be
done, that there is a Haida voice and that we are want to share it with the world. The
Haida Nation has woken up and we are ready to tell you all about it!”

[Camera cuts back to Raven]

Well there you have it Coyote, the Haida are having their day, one that will of course be
part of a long line of days as they Gud Al tla Daal, or as you would say in English,
“journey along in a fleet of canoes”. This is Raven reporting for the Haida Gwaii News,
good night and good paddling!

[fade out]

Trickster Tales from the Museological world…

“We know that while, legally and constitutionally, speech may be free, the space in which
that freedom can be exercised has been snatched from us and auctioned to the highest
bidders” (Arundhati Roy, 2003, p.78).

Dawn Casey, Director of the Museum of Applied Art and Sciences in Australia
writes “There is no going back to the grand, simple narrative of national progress,
however much some of our critics may long for it. The national story is complex and
emerges not from a neat time line, nor from a list of facts, but from the interplay of many
stories and points of view…they are the sum of us” (Casey, 2003, p. 2). As an Aboriginal
Australian, she has seen and participated in many of Australia’s challenges as they
journey towards de-colonization. Her writings echo many of the same thoughts, hopes
and difficult negotiations that have faced other indigenous populations around the globe
who are actively and persistently working towards an inclusive world.

Anonymous, personal communication, August, 8th, 2008.
To many Indigenous people, the museum has been historically a space of difficulty, pain, and constant negotiation. Museums are reminders of our colonial past and present and link our memories with time and space. On entering a museum, many Indigenous people are assailed by these memories, which are triggered by the very objects that have been taken, either freely or not, from their communities.

Mieke Bal’s notion of focalization is important here. She argues that academics must study the subject, the object, as well as the interconnectivity that is created between the two (Bal, 2001). It is the interactions and relationships that are important: How these stories are told, by whom, with what objects and perhaps most importantly, for what purpose or effect. In the past, the authority for making these decisions has sat solely with the dominant culture. Indigenous people were uninvited guests, their stories silenced and appropriated. Forced to journey from an “infinitely rich but also chaotic field to a reduced one with two cent[re]s” (Casey, 2003, p. 2) they have consistently chosen to contest this assumed authority and its hierarchical position. Over the last few decades we see that much has changed within western museums and museological practices (Ashley, 2005; Atleo, 1991; Baird, 2011; Bell & Paterson, 2009; Bolton, S., 2004; Boxer, 2008; Butler, 2007; Fortney, 2009; Kreps, 2003; Levell, 2012; Lonetree & Cobb, 2008; Mauze, 2003; McMaster, 2007; Sleeper-Smith, 2009; Tsosie, 2009).

It is through the persistence of many Indigenous people that this change has come about. This is the real story of Indigenous culture within the western institution. A story, that is neither pretty nor tidy but one that stems from the deep desire for self-representation and sovereignty. By their side, were many others and together, they have worked to create a new perspective, a new museology, one that is becoming much more
critical, reflexive and inclusive. However, there is still much to be done, cautions a chorus of voices. There are many more stories to be told. But for most of the Indigenous voices that I have included here, the current museum landscape seems to be moving towards a hopeful place, one in which they are now able to negotiate, so that a truly ethical space may emerge.

It is within these islands that I wish to explore the voices and perspectives that make up this transforming museology. My original intent was to limit the paper just to Indigenous perspectives. However, upon reflection, I chose to include the voices of many others for two reasons. Firstly were the limited and accessible publications that have been written from the Indigenous perspective, by Indigenous authors about this topic. Despite the Assembly of First Nations declaration that there would be a follow up report to their 1992 Task Force’s recommendations entitled “Turning the Page”, it does not appear to have been done (Hill & Nicks, 1992). Although a few symposia have been held, little has been published in Canada that creates links between the various historical events within Canadian museology, including the effects of the protests against the 1988 exhibition *The Spirit Sings*, which created the need for the Task Force on museums, the political climate of the last few decades, the present field of museology and the emerging field of Indigenous cultural visuality. There seems to be no quantitative research on Native participation within museums, staffing statistics or educational programs that the Task Force sought to address. I have found only one scholar who has written a historical overview of western museological practices from an Indigenous perspective and it focuses mostly on the United States (Coody Cooper, 2008; Sleeper-Smith, 2009).

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9 Museology is the study of how Western museums are designed, organized, controlled and managed through Western systems and lenses.
The second reason is much more simple. It has become apparent to me that the changes in the museum have occurred in concert with many people from within the dominant culture as well. The writings of these scholars show that through their efforts of criticality and deep reflection, questions have been echoed and voiced about museum practices and ethics. This jostling dialogue has produced new ways of researching, planning, consulting, producing and critiquing the stories that museums create (Coody Cooper, 2008).

This transforming museology is indeed new. Change is sometimes painstakingly slow and Canada is just beginning to fully deal with its colonial past. Thus, I have chosen to present the ideas and stories of those that have witnessed and participated in this change. I hope that these stories might help us to witness and understand, what Cree scholar Priscilla Settee sees as

[T]he hurtful aspects of colonization through the eyes of those who suffered in silence, through subtle and overt discrimination. Stories help us appreciate the informal structures that help people heal from and resist the hurtful features of Western domination. Stories help us see how processes of knowledge-generating either support or thwart the legitimation of Indigenous peoples (Settee, 2007, p. 269).

Ultimately, it is listening to stories by others that may help us see how we as a community can be ethical in our living and practices. They can show us that we all deserve a place within the museum as we wander through looking for our cultures, our identities and ourselves. And as Thomas King, a Cherokee novelist and broadcaster writes, “The truth about stories is, that is all we are” (King, 2003, p. 92).
The Museum: A Story of a Wannabee Ethical Space…

“The very hope for a just and compassionate future lies, at least in part, in working through the traumatic catastrophes we have inherited” (Simon, Rosenberg & Eppert, 2000, p. 6).

Willie Ermine, in his article “The Ethical Space of Engagement”, argues for a new landscape, into which all of us may enter in order that we might dialogue more respectfully and ethically (2007). This space that he describes has similarities to many of the scholars I have been reading these past few months. This space encompasses principles of *comunalidad* described by Tovar Gomez and the intercultural proposal that implies “taking into account the cultures that share a common space” (2010, p. 182). It has elements of the ‘contact zone’ of Pratt (1999) and Clifford (1997) and the reconceptualized ‘common ground’ proposed by James Tully and expanded upon by James Butt (Butts, 2003).

This “ethical space” is an idea I want to explore here in order to create connections with the multiplicity of voices within museology. Ethical space, for Ermine, is an entity in itself; a landscape in which the western cultures and the Earth’s Indigenous thought worlds can meet, engage and construct new languages based on the recognition of difference and diversity. The relationships created within this space are founded on an acknowledgement that each participating voice is “moulded from a distinct history, knowledge tradition, philosophy, and social and political reality” (Ermine, 2007, p. 194).

Ermine is specifically interested in this discourse’s relevance to Indigenous people and Canadian law. However, it echoes the language of Moira Simpson who calls for the museum to “give voice to underrepresented constituents” (cited in Mithlo, 2004, p. 758) and the writings of Ruth Phillips who argues for the museum to be a space in which
conflicts can be negotiated, community stakeholders can discuss projects and, given enough time, can resolve issues that are raised (Phillips, 2005). The creation of ethical space is the attempt to “understand other forms of life in their own terms” (Rosaldo, 1993, p. 26) and let go of the need to create ontological divisions. There is a long line of scholars who are dissatisfied with objectivism’s emphasis on structure including Gramsci, who saw that real democracy could only happen when “everyone has the capacity to deliberate thoughtfully” (cited in Settee, 2007, p. 256).

This echoing across the disciplines is a reminder of the complexity and interdisciplinary nature of our world despite the separations and divisions that we have inherited. Indigenous cultural producers and critics around the world are calling for dialogue and the renegotiation of the relationships between themselves and the dominant cultures that maintain control of the structures in which they must work.

Anthropologist Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban (2003) sees this dialogue as potential for respectful engagement and expanded knowledge production in the creation of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)\(^\text{10}\), which is more than just a law for her. It is a chance to allow the various disciplines to evolve, create standards, address their relationships to Indigenous people and reflect upon their code of ethics. She has seen the thorny issues of consultation, participatory engagement and collaboration play out but also sees hope despite the unwieldy nature of the legislation. For her,

Museums, archeologists, and Native groups have differed widely in their perspectives, but, when ethical conversations take place among stakeholders treated as equals, common ground can be found. Yet, given the past history of non-dialogue and lack of trust, this conversation is difficult to initiate and/or sustain.

\(^\text{10}\) NAGPRA is a federal US law that provides a process for cultural institutions to return Native American objects and human remains to their lineal descendants.
However, there is no possible retreat from this dialogue, as cultures and nations demand return of their cultural patrimony as part of the continuing historic process of decolonization. Much of the discourse about ethics is a result of the unfinished business of colonialism (Ibid, p. 17).

The business is indeed unfinished; in fact for many it is just beginning. John Ralston Saul, in his Laurier Institution Multiculturalism Lecture, held at UBC in 2009, argued eloquently to his audience that we are a Métis nation, and at our core, Canada’s deepest values are Aboriginal. He said, “Countries are built on conversation, they are built on ideas, they are built on relationships…and that conversation has gone on for a very long time…This is the missing conversation in our schools, our museums, our institutions and our media” (CBC & Saul, 2009).

Nancy Marie Mithlo would agree. For her the museum is in need of wide-ranging conversations in order to reinvent themselves, reinvigorate their research and “serve as negotiators between two parties with vested interests. It would logically appear to be the responsibility of the museums that originally collected the artifacts to lead the effort to make the situation right” (Mithlo, 2004, p. 757). Many are making the effort, but for some Indigenous museum directors the dialogue is still far from ethical.11 These tensions are a challenge, but they can also be viewed as a potential for dynamic creativity and a broader discourse, a metalinguistic perspective by allowing the perspectives and knowledge of Indigenous people to be seen and heard within museology.

When we enter an ethical space we must step outside the constraints of our individual lenses and freely enter the diverse, cultural space. By stepping into this space

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11 The Sechelt Nation are in the process of repatriating an object from the RBCM, and have been told that there are no plans by the museum to negotiate as they are not obligated to do so by law. (Personal communication, 2010.)
we enter a liminal state. We must know, assume and expect multiple and sometimes overlapping stand points that can seem, at times, chaotic. Ultimately, it is about being ready to give honest answers to questions that might make us uncomfortable in their criticality. According to performance theorist Richard Schechner (cited in Garoians, 1999) it is common to see people who are anxious when they must negotiate this ‘limen’. They will do so quickly, as it is unstable, indeterminate, and prone to complexity and contradiction. For these people, this liminal and uncontrollable space demarcates the polarities but for a trickster, it is a wonderful and desirable place in which to play. For the trickster, or critic or artist, this space is one of possibilities, syncretism, hybridization, with “the center being a site for focalization and reflection” (Casey, 2001, p. 232). It is Gramsci who helps us to understand that we are “an ensemble of social relationships rather than as peoples whose realities have been separately constructed” (Settee, 2007).

But many parts of the Eurocentric academy were unable to accept this principle until the very people that they were studying forced it upon them.

Stories: [Un]Told and [Un]Folding…

“Sometimes people are willing to listen only to those voices that confirm the conventions they already know. The unfamiliar makes them fear. Or makes them condescend. Neither fear nor condescension encourages listening. And no one who does not listen learns to hear” (W.H. New, cited in LaRocque, 2010, p.163).

According to the Society for Storytelling, a storyteller is one who has the following attributes: they are expert researchers, use objects, they are teachers and create connections to other concepts or forms of knowledge, they inspire people, and develop an
awareness of the world in which they inhabit (Society for storytelling, 2012, para.1). Stories are universal to all people around the globe, and through storytelling, relationships are born. All people have told stories since time immemorial but what is changing is that Indigenous storytelling is now being accepted not only by the legal profession but by the academy as well.

The stories told in the museums and the educational systems have not always been inclusive and respectful of Indigenous people. Created out of colonial expansionism, the growing European mercantile class, the zeal of missionaries and the interpretations of Darwin, museums functioned as a repository for the colonial collection, a consequence and reflection of these ideologies. The material objects were studied both for the scientific value and to legitimize, validate and perpetuate the colonial conquest. But most importantly for Indigenous people, they were worshipped for being a symbol and reminder of that which had been killed in the process. This “expression of the violence of the gaze” (Butler, 2007, p. 44) was built upon a paradox; “a person kills somebody, and then mourns the victim” (Rosaldo, 1993, p. 69). Museums were memorials for colonialisms mythic ideals and romantic notions. They were repositories of the emblems and remnants of what they had lost after the enlightenment and through the creation of secularism and science. “Museums use stories of innocent yearning both to capture the imagination and conceal its complicity with often brutal domination” (Rosaldo, 1993, p. 69). As Peter Cole writes,

we tried to sell our broken spirits
to the curator of the museum of civilization
we tried to barter our souls for bannock for a crust of bread
for recognition for a line or two in some book
but they only wanted materials they could classify put numbers
on so we traded them to the catholic church for wafers and
wine eternal life and a christian burial (Cole, 2006, p. 110).

The lines were drawn between the secular and the profane and then worshiped for its rupture and loss. Classification systems, hierarchies and stereotypes were created out of the need to understand the world, which was moving at a ferocious speed as it swept around the globe. These stereotypes of a vanishing breed, a drunken Indian, a savage squaw, gave false comfort and ease as the Western world expanded and frontiers were civilized. “What matters is the character of the stereotypes, and the gullibility with which we employ them” (Lippmann, 2007, p. 89).

It is the philosophies behind these stereotypes that must be deconstructed, exposing the very notions of universalities and value codes that they reinforce. This is why for many, including Taiaiake Alfred and Jeff Corntassel (2005), personal truth telling has become a powerful methodology for decolonization. A re-storying process for Indigenous peoples entails exposing the imposition of colonial histories and definitions on our communities. Personal truth telling cannot be disputed, and has been helpful to illuminate “a world which turns out to be one in which those we honor are unworthy, and those we despise are noble” (Lippmann, 2007, p. 94). This turn of events for some is nerve-racking and can produce a backlash by unmalleable minds. This very situation played out in Australia with the opening of their newly storied National Museum, with many settlers very upset by its truth telling strategy, alluding to the fragile newness of the country’s acceptance of the de-colonizing journey (Casey, 2006).

As we become more inclusive and ethical our need for stereotypes will change and we will begin to “hold them lightly, to modify them gladly” (Ibid, p. 89). This objectification and essentialization has been for many Indigenous people an example of the extreme differences in our worldviews. For Indigenous people objects are inalienable
to the stories that they make manifest and create. The museum, in their act of separating these two cultural elements, produces a rupture that is almost illogical to the Native perspective. Objects are transformative and have cultural biographies, they are witnesses and can yield insights into histories of social relationships and life histories that can be researched and examined (Appadurai, 1986).

Tricksters, like James Luna, Edward Poitras, Rebecca Belmore and Gerald McMaster, have played upon these ideas to disrupt notions of the museum’s gaze and its subject/object/neutralist narratives. Their interventions, aimed at reinserting a person where one was not expected, creates a tension due to institutions’ reinforcement of the subjugation of Indigenous people. Performance artist James Luna, disrupts the narrative allowing the audience to “balance spatial and temporal concepts by re-injecting qualitative time in human affairs” (Cruikshank, 2000, p.15).

It is balance that is needed, for as Adrienne Rich writes, “[w]hen someone with the authority of teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing” (cited in Battiste, 2000, p. 198). “[Many], if not all, of the problems facing Aboriginal people can be traced back to a question of identity. We all ask—Native and non-Native alike—who am I? How do I fit into this mosaic? What is my role in society?” (Bellfy, 2005, p. 41). It is this vacancy that became, for many First Nations, and other marginalized peoples, the focus for the confrontations that occurred in the latter part of the twentieth century, confrontations, that produced many of the changes we see in museological practices today.

It is interesting to note that almost ninety percent of today’s museums were built
after the Second World War (Kreps, 2003). And despite this, the vast amount of Indigenous material culture still remains in storage, some rooms larger than football fields. These objects of the ‘vanishing’ tribes of the world, languished in their ‘dead worlds’ while their ancestors slowly grew in numbers, and gained a voice in the outside world.

By the nineteen sixties, Indigenous people started to take exception to how their cultural objects had been taken, to either private collectors, museums and other cultural institutions. For the Haida people, the sixties were “the lowest part of the material culture as far as carving and singing had gotten” says Guujaaw, president of the Council of the Haida Nation (cited in Gill, 2009, p. 38).

Starting in the sixties, the Kwakwaka’wakw, whose territory is on the east coast of Vancouver Island, proceeded to successfully negotiate the return of their confiscated Potlatch material. Forced by the government to build museums in order to house the items, they are presently in the process of taking legal action against the Canadian government to have the facilities funded in perpetuity to maintain them (Bell et. al, 2005). For many First Nations in Canada, cultural productions are not communal, a very different perspective from western cultures, which are using the arguments of patrimony and science to resist negotiation and repatriation. Many Indigenous people have their own systems of collection but those systems are and were very different from the museological methods practiced today. The creation in 1979 of the Kwakwaka’wakw cultural centres, one at Alert Bay and one at Cape Mudge, two of the first, in a long line of keeping places that were to follow in Canada.

Another agency for native voice was the Indians of Canada Pavilion for Expo ‘67,
which foreshadowed conflicts ahead when issues of representation and authority could not be resolved. In the end, there was a small amount of self-control by Aboriginal people to tell their story from their own perspective (Philips, 2006). Other public political events were to follow for these were years of great turmoil and re-discovery for First Nations people. Starting with the defeat of the White Paper, the next few decades would see incremental change to many institutions representing First Nations in Canada and around the world as well.

In the Canadian museum world, it was 1988 winter Olympics exhibition, *The Spirit Sings*, that created international debate. The Glenbow Museum made the unethical decision to have Shell Oil as a corporate exhibition sponsor. This company was trespassing and extracting oil on their land while the owners, the Lubicon Lake Cree First Nation, were in ‘stalled’ negotiations with the federal government. Using the opportunity to gain voice about Shell Oil and the Canadian government in the public sphere, a protest ensued including a performance piece by trickster Rebecca Belmore and her *Artifact#671B 1988*, one of the first few cultural works in Canada to explicitly critique museological practices. Like James Luna’s performance, which inserted a human presence into a ‘silenced space’, she wanted it known that Indigenous people would no longer be ‘artifacts’, ‘silenced’ and ready to be exploited by Canadian museums and corporations. She employed “an effective strategy to create a conscious sense of self and agency while critiquing authority” (McMaster, 2007, p. 75). The protest directly resulted in a Task Force, created to discuss and resolve some of the issues and challenges raised. Three major components came out of it, all with the clear statement that Indigenous people wanted to be invited into the museum. Museum consultations with Indigenous
people more than doubled following the task force (Coody Cooper, 2008). “Lee-Ann Martin, co-coordinator of the Task Force, believes that its most significant effect was the development of a framework to help non-Native museums work with Native communities” (Bolton, 2004, p. 2). Indigenous people, being wary at first due to past relationships, eventually came to the museums and collaborations have started to flourish across the country.

In Australia, similar voices rang out, calling for change. In 1983, Ros Langford, an Indigenous Australian addressed an Archaeological Association with these words,

You seek to say as scientists you have a right to obtain and study information of our culture. You seek to say that because you are Australians you have a right to study and explore our heritage because it is a heritage to be shared by all Australians, white and black. From our point of view we say – you have come as invaders, you have tried to destroy our culture, you have built fortunes upon the lands and bodies of our people and now, having said sorry, want a share in picking out the bones of what you regard as a dead past. We say this is our past, our culture and heritage and forms part of our present life. As such it is ours to control and it is ours to share on our terms (cited in Casey, 2001).

Dawn Casey sees the changes in Australia as beneficial, for everyone, but they are fragile and are in danger of being taken away if we, as a society, are not careful of the growing political right, that has an agenda to back away from cultural support and uses language that denies the country its ability to acknowledge past actions and heal. Australians may have “ended that long seemingly perpetual symposium on our self-identity” but having hired Casey as their first National Aboriginal curator, the museum decided that perhaps they were not ready for such a step after all and did not renew her contract (Casey, 2006).

In the United States, protesters there, determined to force museums to redress the biases they held, directly influenced many changes including the formation of NAGPRA,
which is legislation, opposed to the Turning the Page Task Force which is an agreement of understanding, with guidelines for museums to follow. Kristina Kreps believes that NAGPRA has taught museums how to reconcile their pasts, forced them to dialogue and come to some agreement to solve differences. However, she has seen how the legislation can be a huge burden for both museums and Indigenous people, and leaves many challenges left to be addressed. In Canada, there is current debate regarding the need for similar legislation. In particular is the need to have a mechanism to protect cultural property from leaving the hands of museums for foreign countries, and force museums to do what Indigenous people believe is the ethical thing to do (Bell & Paterson, 2009). The Task Force on Museums and First Peoples sought to level the playing field, to create training, employment, collaboration and support for Indigenous people wanting to have dialogue within the museum setting. However, no in-depth research or data is available to find out the reach and effectiveness of the Task Force. But it is clear that since the protests of the last few decades, and the Task Force’s creation Indigenous people are now being seen in museums, they have been invited in to collaborate and they are opening up their own heritage spaces to regain an autonomy of voice.

Another moment in this journey was the exhibition *Into the Heart of Africa* at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) in 1989. The African community of Toronto turned to rage at the reincarnated colonial expression, created through the use of their cultural objects, images and a curator’s strange sense of irony. Despite the attempt in the exhibit to be reflexive and critical it ended up reinforcing the very notions of domination, assimilation, civilization and paternalism that it sought to critique (Ashley, 2005). Protestors took to the streets and stayed there until an injunction was put into place by the
museum and eleven people were arrested (Mackey 1995). This exhibition was a moment on the journey of the ROM that will be remembered as one of both pain and opportunity. It gave the ROM the chance to learn from their mistakes and develop an ethical philosophy of inclusion and multiplicity.

This particular incident tells something of the variation in ‘civic seeing’ and the experiencing of ‘difficult knowledge’ – variation that is tied to the particular experiences, histories, biases, references, and desires of the viewer. The presentation of cultural history should reveal more than a contained and controlled institutional vision. It should illuminate the dynamism, fluidity, and tensions of a world of viewpoints – an unending and continually renewed sense of creation (Kelly, 2008, p. 37).

Additionally, ROM did not choose an African descent curator for the project. Instead they chose a curator who did not either express regret for the choices she made or for the misunderstandings that resulted. Curator Jeanne Cannizzo drew attention to the process of how museums re-contextualize objects. In this case, very insensitively, as there had been no collaboration with the large and diverse black community in Toronto. They too had been uninvited guests. By reinforcing the authority of the object and its colonial meanings, the centre of the ethical space was monopolized, which could only be disrupted by the voices on the streets. “[O]rality disrupts, and develops in the hearer, an ability to listen, to pick up subtleties and balance spatial and temporal concepts by re-injecting qualitative time in human affairs” (Cruikshank, 2000, p.155).

Protest serves the purpose of a battering ram, when all else fails. Protest, or struggle, has the goal of enacting social justice. Both of these events, perhaps only by the shear volume that is written about them, testify to their significance in the her/story of the Canadian museum.
New Stories and New Directions…

First Nations people will treat museum people and policy with respect even though respect was not reciprocated for most of the first five hundred years of contact… The dominant society owns the concept of museology, while the First Nations people own the heritage represented in the relevant collections. There is no ambiguity about the meaning of ownership when it is defined by source and creation. The concept of museology is sourced in, and created by, the dominant society, while the concept of indigenous cultural property is sourced in, and created by, in this case, First Nations people (Atleo, 1991, p.1-3).

The clarity between differences in definitions and concepts is very important to many Indigenous people who work in the academic world that is in turn based upon definitions, devastating categories and essentializing scientific thought. Often the issues surround language with the use of the English language being frequently challenged when describing Indigenous philosophies, values and actions undertaken to defend their rights to determine their own definitions of themselves and their cultures.

The creation of what are called by some in academia as Indigenous museums have caused once again self-representation to be appropriated and focalized through the lenses of the dominant discourses. This illustrates the need for a new language, one that does not carry with it the meanings of the past, of “dead places” and ruptures. Gloria Cramer Webster, past curator at the Umist’a Cultural Centre, on hearing the word “oppositional” used to describe the centre, wrote that there was no intent to be so, and that these are the words of those still needing to categorize and dichotomize the world of museology (quoted in Mithlo, 2004). “Oppositional denotes a reactive stance-betraying, I think, not only a focused belief in the operational strategies of the majority but also a lack of innovative proactive measures on the part of tribal initiatives” (Ibid, p. 32).

In asking whether museums can be Indigenous, Nick Stanley sets up a whole new
debate around issues of power, context, agendas, assimilation, on-going colonization and colonial historical ‘cultural baggage’. Each Indigenous museum, cultural centre or heritage site will have their own histories and museological practices as well as their own agendas and for me the real questions that need to be addressed in these “Indigenous” experiences is what or whose purpose does it serve? and why? What pedagogy underlies the site? Who created them? And how do they operate to illuminate, silence, protect, regenerate or alter the culture that it represents? The answer to questions like these will allow for an understanding of what any museum, Indigenous or not, means to the cultures they exhibit, the local community and their global audiences. By examining these questions we might get closer to knowing how they might either serve to illuminate, dismantle or perpetuate colonialism.

Labels and definitions like “Indigenous Museums” need to be critiqued if there is a chance that they are reinforcing the essentialist notions common in the dominant society. In addition, while it is recognized by many that museums are moving towards a multifarious nature, Mithlo believes that the “recognition of Indigenous interpretations as an extension of pre-existing cultural traits signals a movement toward embracing alternative ideologies” (2004, p. 32). However, we must also be cognizant of our present political reality that is always ready to sift presented knowledge through a heterogeneous lens.

Even with the new opportunities brought about by the formation of the NMAI12, Native voices will be filtered through a federal institution’s political expediency and conservatism fostered by economic concerns, as well as by the great number of non-Indian museum professionals who are employed by the

12 National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, D.C, USA. A Federally funded museum that has opened to both great acclaim and a healthy dose of criticism.
Here in Canada it is even more difficult, as there is no national museum for First Peoples, creating more challenges and fewer spaces to have voice, either as a curator, artist or academic. But Cree curator and artist Gerald McMaster believes that museums are becoming more conscious and are beginning to address issues openly and honestly. However, he continues to question the methods of interpreting and studying Indigenous cultures despite the strides that have been made and asks if our institutions are doomed forever to look upon Indigenous people with an ethnographic gaze (Government of Canada, 2002).

Cultural institutions owned and operated by Indigenous groups have other obstacles that have been put in their paths towards self-representation. The imposition of their existence in order to repatriate materials and the way that they are classified is just a start. The high costs of community support, collaboration, planning, infrastructure, maintenance, professional development, and repatriation name just a few more. Tom Hill of the Woodland Cultural Center stated at a recent conference “there is a sense of urgency at all Aboriginal gatherings these days. Every day communities are losing their Elders, who are their bearers of knowledge” (Government of Canada, 2002, para. 4). This sense of urgency is directly related to the re-animating of objects, remembering stories and regenerating knowledge held within the glass cases of museums. As Elders pass on, so too do the possibilities of knowing the objects mean and what relationships they hold.

Museums are supposed to be for everyone, but for some Indigenous people they are seen as protectors of their tribal knowledge in a world that is consuming everything in its path. Despite the challenges inherent in these sites, they are also hopeful places for
remembering, spaces in which to mine the archives for stories, designs, symbols and contemporary cultural vitality.

In our discussions with representatives of Native communities, we came to realize that a new museological approach to the display of Native artifacts was called for. We were asked repeatedly to ensure that our displays link the past to the present and acknowledge the ongoing vitality of Native cultures (Rombout, 1992, cited in Bolton, 2004).

Representing Indigenous people as contemporary people with a living culture is vital in order to confront and change opinions of First Nations people. Even as their languages remain endangered and under funded by the government, many continue to resist colonial assimilationist policies. While the greater issues of land title cannot be addressed within the museum, these spaces can reflect the complexities and interrelationships that are inherent in the Indigenous world. “Thus, economic, political, symbolic and spiritual considerations need to be taken into account in order to move beyond Eurocentric interpretations of [I]ndigenousness” (Dei, 2002, p. 15).

Perhaps, in the end, museums are like icebergs. Possibly Carl Beam13 was on to something; for as the layers of whiteness melts away they are transformed and created anew. The past is a foreign country after all and can never be preserved in its exactness for everyone and for all time. “[P]reservation itself reveals that permanence is an illusion. The more we save, the more aware we become that such remains are continually altered and reinterpreted. We suspend their erosion only to transform them in other ways” (Lowenthal, 2003, p. 410).

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Journeying North…

“I initially went into anthropology because it was one field in which I could read about and deal with Indians all of the time and still make a living” (Alfonso Ortiz, cited in Meyers, 2008, p.108).

I turn the bow of my canoe north and steer into the wind. I put up a sail and envision learning a new way of being and becoming as I pass through the islands of anthropology, education, science and philosophy. I think about how I will reconnect to Indigenous ways of working within the university; how I will transport these new stories; how I will weave them into my research blanket and how I will be received by my new community when I return months from now. “Indigenous people are gravely anxious that some segments of their culture are being destroyed, mutilated, or debased by outsiders” (Battiste & Henderson, 2000 p. 159). I am both an outsider and insider and I reflect upon my work as an early childhood educator amongst these islands; how I began to see that research interconnected to place, culture and people can be an act of self-determination, “a tool for promoting changes that can transform people’s lives” (Schnarch 2004, p. 94).

The work of Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) echoes in the wind. As she states,

Self-determination in a research agenda becomes something more than a political goal. It becomes a goal of social justice, which is expressed through and across a wide range of psychological, social, cultural and economic terrains. It necessarily involves the processes of transformation, of decolonization, of healing and of mobilization as peoples. The processes, approaches and methodologies – while dynamic and open to different influences and possibilities – are critical elements of a strategic research agenda (p. 116).

I glance down at the ‘baggage’ that is neatly stowed under my seat and realize that I must sort through their contents, to make sure that my perspective is respectful and responsible because I must own my knowing. I push the pause button and reflect upon all
the shoulders on which I stand. I silently paid homage to the ingenuity of my pathfinders, my ancestors who have guided me to this place, this time. I reach out to Leroy Little Bear, and his words that emphasize that we must know our own philosophies. This necessity is predicated on good citizenship, and the respectful relationality that is desired by Indigenous people that is not the end goal of western education.

My personal dimension is a map that I continue to alter as I journey. Along with me I have brought my cultural baggage, my “relational ethics” which challenges my “previous perspectives on study purposes, field relationships, and roles of power and reflections in the research process” (Glesne, 2010, p. 139).

As I prepare to enter into the classroom and start my research, not a moment goes by that I do not reflect upon how I will be perceived in all of my communities. I am becoming educated, accredited and have set myself aside in a margin of 'others'. Becoming Indigenous in the academy is as challenging as living in an Indigenous community. I am reminded of one of Coyote’s tales and drift into memory and humour….

Coyote goes to the summer pow-wow, and is excited to see the prairie chicken and hoop dancers. When it was over, he trotted up to the hoop dancer he liked best. “Oh, wow, that was really great” he howls, shaking the dancer’s hand. “Thanks, I am glad you liked it. It sure is hard work, have you ever tried it?” “Well, no, but I’m going to learn this fall at University.” “Really! They are teaching hoop dancing at University? Wow that’s great! Good luck with that.” “Yeah, I’m really going to need it, its called a graduate degree.”

And just like hoops, the journey has no beginnings, no ends, just bridges from one concept to the next, as we travel, get lost, ask questions, and then question the questions.
But if I hadn’t shared the experiences of Indigenous people searching through the archives for their lost and forgotten identities, I wouldn’t have desired it. So I search for a way to avoid the common symptoms of traditional research, finding the voices, now set in words, which will echo the feelings and visions that I am seeking to add to my canoe.

I begin to see how education is a living entity; that knowledge is acquired to transform how we think, act and engage with our worlds; how I, as a researcher, artist, educator and community member I will be confronted with my own colonial assumptions and beliefs during this research process (Makokis 2008) and that to be an Indigenous researcher is to engage in ceremony throughout (Wilson, 2009).

As I sit here, within this “ideological processing plant” (Maracle, 1988, p. 133) I prepare myself, girding my loins for the rest of my canoe trip, thinking about cultural-locatedness, politics because “[e]verything in the universe speaks” (Min-ha, 1989, p. 128). As McMaster & Martin declare: “I want to say my own things to the world, and so, of course, given history, part of ‘my own things’ is that [this place doesn't] let me say anything”(1992, p. 23). If “[i]nquiry thereby becomes a political act,” says Guba (1990, p. 24) then I will work to reverse the old narrative of “this is how we became… ‘those people’… the ‘Uncivilized’… ‘Vanishing’… ‘Disadvantaged’… ‘Dispossessed’… to ‘Unlearn White expertism’” (Graveline, 2010, p. 362).

My life, “affected by these social and political happenings” (McGuire, 2010, p. 119) has begun to paint a new depiction, one that strives to express itself as “a brush stroke in the evolving portrait of our families and nations–a single musical note, however small, in the symphony” (Daes, 2000, p. 5). A symphony, a becoming itself, constantly reinterpreted through its conductors, a tricksterism, a story, an engagement. And in the
end, I may be creating a story, but only as a co-author.

I step from my canoe and enter a new world, called academia, simultaneously walking on the beaches of Alberta and Haida Gwaii. Raven, with a clamshell in his beak, is with me as I dance amongst the halls of the museum, drumming, singing and talking back to the glass cases filled with the dispossessions and displacements of my ancestors. It is my desire for relationships that drives me to pick up a clam of my own and curiosity that knocks on its exterior. I iterate my responsibility as a facilitator and guide; I demonstrate respect for the Haida, by following their protocols; and I give back to the community through ownership of the final product and direct co-participation of the research process. Through these acts, I have chosen to engage ethically, knowing that I am honoured with their gift of stories. And all the while I paddle my canoe, from island to island, watching my “Coyote Positioning Device” (Cole, 2002).
Trickster versus Researcher…

**Researcher**

A person skilled in the use of questioning

Observing

Analyzing

To create a story, unspoken.

Searching for answers

Empowering the people

Giving voice...

Reporting reality?

**Trickster**

A person skilled in the use of tricks

And illusion.

To create a false reality, trick.

Creating and destroying myth.

Transforming reality

Hero-Savior...

Telling the truth?¹⁴

¹⁴ Barbara Dray “Trickster or Researcher?” *Qualitative Studies in Education* 5-16 Sept.-Oct. 2003:
Theoretical Underpinnings, or How I Became an Indigenous Researcher

“The word itself, 'research', is probably one of the dirtiest words in the Indigenous world's vocabulary” (Linda Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 2).

As a Cree/Métis artist and educator, I constantly balance the two worlds in which I reside. I have learned, as they say, to paddle on both sides of my canoe in order to stay on course. As an adoptee, raised in a Western culture, I am fully aware of the need to address the issue of disconnect that pervades the world today. This disconnect, common amongst us all, is a result of a dominating epistemology that values individualization and materialism above communalism and nurturance for our world. As McLennan (2004) writes,

[w]e are disconnected from place, and this disconnection starts in our own homes and carries through to our air-conditioned offices, theatres, shopping malls and museums. As a society, over ninety percent of our time is spent indoors. One cannot develop a knowledge and respect for place inside concrete and steel boxes. Once we disconnected our buildings from place we began the more insidious process of disconnecting people from place as well. Our disconnect with place has grown as our childlike belief in the ability of science and technology to solve our problems has grown (p. 57).

None of us are immune to this effect, which has now become a torrential stream, flowing from headwaters that continue to support economic colonization and materialism while blatantly dismissing cultural survivance and ecological sustainability. Using a language that ignores complexity, it gravitates towards universals and separates our environmental beings into ‘resources’ for consumption. This culture is now in a crisis, looking for answers from those that they have systematically tried to destroy and failing that have marginalized in a blanket of ‘otherness’. For the Haida, the issues of cultural disconnect and responsibilities have been the key factors in changing their collective
actions from an unconscious slumber into a proactive engagement with Canada and its problematic paradigms. This engagement, that I have watched from afar, was what drew me to Haida Gwaii. What made me stay, and eventually return to school, were the relationships that I had the honour of being a part of within the Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay Llnagaay. That journey became the middle of this rhizomatic paddling and now three years later I write about my experiences and the research that I have gathered along the way.

The re-connection, re-generation and revitalization of the Haida Nation’s culture demands that my research be conducted through a lens of decolonization and Indigenous self-determination. This Indigenization process is intertwined with the reclamation of territory, language and nationhood demanding that I interrogate Eurocentric concepts of civilization and knowledge (Battiste & Henderson, 2000). Thus, I leave my own footprints in this research as I deconstruct the academic language and reconstruct it into a Métis/Haida mind map of learning. Writing to articulate my insights, thoughts, questions, understandings and refractions of the knowledge shared is anticipated to be difficult as I try to seek the balance needed to check my ‘cultural baggage’ and maintain accuracy of my participants’ voices.

The research methodologies and methods I chose were qualitative, with ethnographic borrowings, leaning towards frameworks of 'situational learning' within a 'community of practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991). They incorporated elements of Indigenous relational inquiry with tools that aim to create an ethical space for all co-researchers involved.

The relational nature of Indigenous epistemology acknowledges the interconnectedness of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of individuals with all living things and with the
earth, the star world, and the universe. Indigenous epistemology is fluid, nonlinear, and relational (Kovach, 2009).

Thus, all four corners are given equal weight in the eventual synthesis of the research. This relational inquiry requires me to be sensitive to the complexities that are inherent in Indigenous communities that are undergoing transformative, re-generative and sometimes varying narrative accounts. The methodology sought to be flexible to the needs of each co-participant, the community and context in which the research engages. By developing the methodology in a relational manner, it was hoped that it would prove to be a locally situated tool engaging globally at the same time.

As a hybrid, boundary crosser and island hopper I have chosen methodologies and methods that are an assemblage of a number of scholars, allowing me to integrate various contexts and concepts within the field in which I would like to travel. Starting with the work of Margaret Kovach (2009), Terry N. Tobias (2000) and Sarah Delamont (2002) the methodology created is based first and foremost on a constant reflection of my Cree/Métis identity situated within a broader Haida and Eurocentric world. This balancing and cross checking of epistemological beliefs will necessitate that I have tools that will allow me to ‘check-in’ my understandings, assumptions, beliefs and what Blackfoot artist Joanne Cardinal Schubert has illustrated/performed as ‘cultural baggage’.

Using a Salmon Cycle/Medicine Wheel Framework…

“From an Indigenous perspective, the “truth” not only needs to be placed within larger dimensions of history and power, it must be experienced in actual places on the landscape” (Marker, 2003, p. 370).

As a valued intellectual tool among the Metis and Cree Peoples, the Medicine
Wheel framework is a “flexible model for acquiring knowledge and understanding” (Coalition for the Advancement of Aboriginal Studies, 2003, p. 1). The medicine wheel allows the learning process to be guided by a system of checks and balances that helps to create awareness of self positioning and self reflexivity. The Medicine Wheel, with no entryways, no exits, no hard and fixed points, is a visual and rhetorical configuration for viewing subjectivity within an ethical space while taking into account Indigenous epistemologies based on interconnectedness, balance and non-dichotomous interaction. The fluid and flexible nature of this model will allow me to understand the various components that create respectful dialogue, while generating and maintaining relationships founded on equity and acceptance.

The Haida have their own intellectual frameworks that are similar but are expressed differently. The four season salmon cycle is a commonly used rhetorical device within pedagogical circles here, which teaches students about the unending and interconnected nature of the Haida culture. Upon starting my research I began to speak with educators about this cultural pedagogical tool and how it was implemented within various educational programs. I became cognizant both of its flexible and tangential nature and the unique approach used to incorporate it into the methodologies of many of the Haida educators. While I sought out the commonalities that existed within these two different Indigenous knowledge systems I was able to create bridges of understandings.

Both devices are meant to create meaning and make sense of the world, through the celebration of the never-ending life cycle, complete with the diversity, harmony and balance inherent in our world. Contingent upon seeing the whole and refraining from
isolating or disconnecting the individual components or quadrants, it asks us to constantly circle through the cycles remembering the salmon who have left, respecting them when they return and act responsibly to the environment in which they will leave eggs for the continuation of our futures. With the coming of winter the salmon bodies feed our souls as we fish and watch as they leave for other places. During the winter we dream of things to come as we eat our canned salmon, remembering our past and reflecting upon changes to come. With the renewal of spring, comes the return of knowledge and sustenance. In the spring the nets are cast just as eggs are laid, ready to hatch and grow over the warm summer months of discovery, learning and harvesting. And when once again the salmon leave us, they either deposit their bodies along the rivers or swim out into the vast Pacific ocean.

Together, these devices celebrate “both the diversity and unity of our spiritual, mental, physical, and emotional experiences” (Atlantic Council for International Cooperation, 2010, p.4). These frameworks are a way of creating a practice of critical reflection, allowing for the remembrance of balanced, inclusive evaluation of data. This moves my research beyond the outcomes that lies on the surface, to deeper, tangential, interconnected impacts, often linked but hidden beneath the surface.

The Quadratic Dance: Researching the Self…

As I write, I realize how inadequate this language is, an expression that pushes as it pulls. It remains to be seen if it will be able to unwind that which has come before...

Kenelm Burridge (1973) writes that the doings of anthropology “entails a movement of the mind between the Aborigines themselves and their cultures, and the
investigators and their cultures: a quadratic relationship whose intricacies the mind has to hold and map” (p. 1). This quadratic dance illustrates well, the complexities that are inherent in the researching process, especially when all four corners represent complex systems unto themselves. ‘Cultural baggage’ is no longer pure and simple; they are filled with the representations, images, symbols and practices of relationships, learnings and leanings gathered and stored along life’s journey. Often unaware of what is present in a meaning bestowed on me the responsibility to look in these four corners and see what was in the suitcases.

“Research is a series of interactions, and good research is highly tuned to the inter-relationship of the investigator with the respondents” (Delamont, 2002, p. 8). Research and the knowledge it generates, writes Delamont, cannot be separated from the social world in which it created and shared. While being cognizant of who we are and where we come from, we must be willing to take risks “and develop a tolerance for uncertainty and vulnerability” (Ambrosio 2008, p. 255). Ambrosio also states that “since each recognition of our limits raises new questions and brings into view new and unforeseen cultural limits, we are always in the position of beginning again” (Ibid, p. 254) transforming the self with each interaction, engagement and relationship. It is through this process that we learn what it is to be courageous and comfortable living in a place of uncertainty and vulnerability. Through the curiosity of exploring these fluid and changing boundaries placed around our cultural islands we risk ourselves and test our tolerance to know, do and become. The self as boundary crosser can guide the research towards or away from concepts that warrant inclusion, clarification, respectful distance or outright exclusion.
As a facilitator, I worked to support and maintain an ethical space in which to
assemble, share and receive these gifts of knowledge. This space allowed all co-
researchers to have an emotionally safe place in which to enter, create, participate and
record their stories. By interviewing, listening, observing and documenting the co-
researched narratives and non-narratives within this space, my focus circulated and
navigated around the vision of the project, while clarifying the issues and questions
generated. Part of my job as the researcher then was to understand, illuminate, discover,
acknowledge, and relate back to co-researchers the linkages or questions on linkage to
remain clear on meanings and my appropriate use of text, images and knowledge.

As an artist, I see the bundling of patterns into concepts, metaphors and analogies
as a continual process from the time of departure. The mapping of the project was equally
the documentation of the islands visited, as it was the tools used to journey there and the
positioning devices employed. This experiential and conceptual excursion had no maps,
being uncharted territory and I had to be willing to land on any island that comes into
view. Before the relevance of the information could be mapped into a visible or auditory
presence for others, the assemblage of patterns into forms was made in a way that sought
clarity, cohesion and understanding, while remaining open to the complexities and
multiplicities within the community.

As a storyteller, my role was to make manifest the “truths” that have been given to
me, relaying these experiences through text, image and sound. Creating this narrative
meant that I needed to use reflective, critical thinking skills, that would combine,
juxtapose, compare, contrast and illuminate the islands of relationships gathered.

This co-produced and relational research created a narrative map of my
experiences and conversations with the Haida Gwaii community. Conceived almost forty years ago, and opened in the fall of 2008, The Haida Heritage Centre has a wonderful blanket of stories relating to its conceptualization, creation and management. This map was created from only some of these threads and experiences, generated through relationship, beginning from my research questions relating to issues of cultural pedagogical performance, reconnection, renewal and self-representation.

Relationships are the core to many Indigenous epistemological foundations and it is through these relationships that one can develop constructed knowings and doings. By developing relationships to the community and inviting community members to co-research in the project I was able to generate an open door of trust, respect and responsibility. The project worked towards ensuring that the administration of the research was responsible, accountable and confidential and immediately addressed any concerns raised in the process. These values and ethics are of particular importance to Indigenous people who have been 'researched to death', often with little control over the input and presentation of their data resulting in a general disdain for anthropological research (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999).

Methodologies that are compatible with Indigenous worldviews create ethically centred dialogues and exchanges that treat participants as co-researchers, accommodating their needs and incorporating a broad base of viewpoints from a variety of perspectives. By maintaining an ethical space in which to investigate, using high standards of quality, including sufficient time, resources and access to participants, an end goal of a pedagogical map of the Kaay Llnagaay was created for both the community in which I will continue to work and the University of British Columbia.
Developing method/ologies with individual communities acknowledges that although there is uniqueness to place and people, creating connections to other communities working towards similar goals is important to the research. By co-creating this respectful and reciprocal research relationship through dialogue, participants had the ability to see that by sharing their knowledge, they are part of a greater relational living cultural system, in which they are an active shareholder (Tobias, 2000).

The project acknowledged that while the main thrust of the research sought to elicit the what’s, how’s and why’s about cultural relationships within the Kaay Llnagaay, it would also illuminate and record other subjects and fields of study at the same time. This was seen as an added benefit and as the data will remain with the Haida Heritage Centre it will be available for future research. It is part of the reciprocal expectations of Indigenous research methodologies. Part of this research was formed on the premise that giving back to the community is a responsibility, is expected, and will be something of use to them, personally and communally. Kuokkanen (2007) writes that there is a “growing trend among Indigenous scholars towards reorienting our current practices and activities by seeking appropriate solutions within ourselves and grounding them in premises and values deriving from our own epistemic conventions rather than those of the west” (p. 24). By reestablishing reciprocity or gift giving as a key principle of social value we move ourselves closer to repairing the ailments of disconnect and imbalance within our world.

Tied to our physical, cultural and spiritual landscapes, while at the same time disconnected through the ruptures of colonialism, many Indigenous people around the globe feel ‘set adrift’ within this complex, modern, rational and English languaged world.
But many, like the Haida Gwaii community has started journeying on new directions to reconnect, re-generate and renew the fragile threads of cultural values once thought too thin to recover. My intention here, within this thesis is to trace a sketch of a map that may shed some light on the complex issues surrounding contemporary Haida cultural pedagogy and visuality.

Culture, in this paper, is of the broadest of definitions, including all outward expressions of internally held worldviews, be it political, rhetorical, historical narratives, relationships to environment, art productions or protestations against governmental policies. Most of us can readily see that artifacts are cultural manifestations. However, much of culture is unobservable, intangible and, as it is always evolving, requires time and space to grasp its fullest understanding. Culture is why we do things, say things and respond in the ways that we do. Indigenous culture is interdisciplinary by nature, has no boundaries and flows from one aspect of reality to the next through the relationships that are embedded within it. In many of the Indigenous languages around the globe that I have researched there are no words for art, science, environment and many other disciplines, definitions or rationally segregated concepts. These islands, in the western world, have, and continue to be studied in isolation, disregarding the underlying connections, overlaps and interrelated nature, hidden beneath the sea, on the ocean floor. This disconnect is not natural to the Indigenous world. Relationality was accepted and respected as the interplay of individual beings within a network of others, engaging in a jostling and engaging dance towards balance and harmony. Separating Indigenous cultural practices into western academic disciplines is extremely difficult, if not impossible. The words of Chief Skidegate, Lewis Collinson, written earlier in this thesis, echo throughout the voices of
this research and my tale of Haida cultural pedagogy. And so, if people are trees and our cultures are our roots, my research processes celebrate the intertwined and intrinsically linked theories that have emerged around the world over the past few decades.

It is from this culturally intrinsic relational framework that I engaged my research. The Haida Heritage Centre, created out of the Skidegate Haida’s need for an alternative space in which to engage, required me to also work from an activist research framework. This positioning of myself enabled me to connect with participants “social memory of struggle” and acknowledge “the political meanings that have been passed down from previous generations” providing a continuity between then and now (Hale, 2006, p. 113). My intention here is to share the world, the victories and the challenges of living within a colonial world, resisting its power, illuminating its excesses and creating a vital new approach developed out of an ethical space of engagement. I embrace this challenge as an investigator, a translator and an activist researcher firmly grounded in the belief that with the correct protocols and ceremonies, it is possible to research ethically and respectfully alongside other cultures.

Activist research asks to “refuse [a positivist] resting place and participate directly in the contradictory process through which claims in the name of identity politics are made” (Hale, 2006, p.114). The mandate of an activist researcher is to produce grounded theory that illustrates how actors in the project confront these contradictions, requiring the researcher to

straddle two disparate intellectual worlds. … It is not a comfortable, or even a very coherent, position. It requires deft deployment of varied intellectual registers—even epistemologies—depending on the exigencies of the moment. It leaves all of our varied audiences edgy and mildly suspicious.
But this alternating endorsement of both cultural critique and objective social science may be a necessary concession to the political realities of the worlds we live in and seek to engage with. It certainly embodies a more accurate reflection of the utterly contradictory struggles of the people with whom we are allied, and more importantly still, it entails a commitment to generating the kinds of knowledge they ask and need us to produce (Hale, 2006, p.115).

Indigenous people in many situations have no alternative but to resist, refute and redress their legal rights using the language, political frameworks and funding of the oppressor. This is true of the Haida Nation, who have actively worked to engage in political productions to protect their lands, their culture and educate others about their responsibilities and rights since time immemorial. The Canadian government, in response, has worked towards silencing them, either through legal or political means. The Haida, and many other Indigenous Nations, have found room in the margins to maneuver and in doing so have brought about changes that are often very different from those imagined, assumed or predicted in the minds of others.

Being situated within an academic community, I acknowledged that I must dance the ‘in-betweens’, using the ‘Masters tools’ to somehow dismantle the structures that persistently cause challenges for ethical cross-cultural communication and the acknowledgement and respect of differences in knowing. My intention to share these stories was daunting. But as an investigator, a translator and an ‘activist researcher’ firmly grounded in a political alignment with the Haida Nation in their struggles I allowed dialogue with them to shape each phase of the research “from conception of the research topic to data collection to verification and dissemination of the results” (Hale, 2006, p. 98). To align myself in this way implicated me within the process and thus I had to “refuse [a] resting place and participate directly in the contradictory process through
which claims in the name of identity politics are made” (Ibid, p. 114). The production of theory within this space, writes Hale, requires me to be cognizant of the two worlds in which I travel. On the one side I will be forming a type of cultural synthesis and on the other using the language and tools of science to defend my research.

**I Pack My Bags, and in them I Put… Assumptions of the Research Project**

“[O]perating from the Indigenous view that all information or “truths” exist simultaneously and [are] not limited by space or time … [this] Synergistic Participation process is a means by where these “truths” can be understood or “seen” by the participants” (White Shield, 2003, p. 64).

Assuming that these “truths” have in actuality existed all along, the process then shifted to the creation of an ethical space in which teachings, knowings and doings could re-emerge. It is the human limitations, then, that are addressed and problematized in order to synergize the research and provide the needed environment for supportive, encouraging, and valid experiential learning.

Indigenous research methodologies assume that the research will be beneficial to the community. As an interpretative, activist research inquiry, this research process actively and persistently scrutinized how the participants and community would receive my writing, both intellectually and experientially. The research design incorporated the spiritual aspects of Indigenous culture, which is pervasively absent in Western academic writings and research including anthropology and museology, allowing for a variety of data to be recorded and interpreted. The design was built upon the values and persistent determination of the Haida to strengthen their identity, culture, sovereignty and the voice issues on power inequality that pervade their lives. Thus, this inquiry became a political act, to thwart traditional anthropological practices by being actively engaged in the
experience, aligning myself politically with their values and viewpoints and remaining “pragmatically concerned about their changing situation” (Rabinow, 2003 p. 87).

I also acknowledge that research with Indigenous people needs to take into account the feelings of anxiety, confusion and fear that sometimes results as stories of colonial disruption and the de-colonization process are illuminated. This tension is anticipated and planned for. Being open to the multiplicities within a community, and guiding participants within an ethical space, the revelation of new stories and accounts will be seen as a beneficial addition to the complexity that is inherent in any community. The aim is not to cause or highlight the tension but to shed light on the need for complexity as a way of seeing all of our relative truths as equitable and valued in order to ease tensions. Here, the use of tricksterisms come in handy, through the storytelling of Raven, Coyote, or my own personal experiences and mistakes in order to inject a sense of humour, relativity and contextual analysis. First Nations people have a long history with humour and frequently the Tricksters comedic antics and troublemaking can be used to ease the tensions of living within domineering colonial constraints.

Even though the Haida community acknowledges that much knowledge has been lost through the passing of community members, there is also much that is still left etched in the minds of those present today. The Haida and other Indigenous people around the globe share common struggles and challenges with respect to the retention, transmission and control of intellectual knowledge within their communities. This challenge is echoed around the globe as the fragile and threatened link to cultural viability, sustainability and renewal. The generations yet to be born, who will be working towards weaving projects of renewal, revitalization and responsibility in their own time, depend on the
transmission, archiving and regeneration of knowledge today.

All Aboard! Participants and Research Site…

The Haida cosmology is based on *Gina Waadluxaan Gud Ad thll Kwaagiidang*, (Haida Laas, Nov. 2008, p.19) which translates to everything depends on everything. As such, I not only sent a research proposal to the Haida Heritage Centre Board members but also sent introduction and protocol letters to the Skidegate Band Council, Gwaii Haanas and the Haida Gwaii Museum Board. These requests to research and interview members of their community allowed me to follow my own traditional protocols, introduce myself and the project and garner support from the community.

The extension of the research ethics in this way was meant to respectfully acknowledge that the rightful ownership and control of the Haida territory sits with the Haida Nation. With the return of the name Queen Charlotte Islands to the Crown by the Haida Nation, they have re-affirmed their self-determination to create their own protocols, systems of management and proceed towards a settlement over their territory with the Canadian government. As a non-Haida, visiting their territory, I am responsible to them and must be respectful of their own protocols and keep foremost in my mind their efforts towards de-colonization and re-generation of their cultural values.

Through these letters and invitations a list of co-researchers started to emerge, firstly from prepared background research and eventually a final list of ten community members to interview. This list was based on the various questions I had on Haida
epistemology, community history, the site/geographical data, narratives of the site, the community or individual participation, curatorial and conservational practices and administrational processes. After discussions with Jason Alsop, CEO of the Haida Heritage Centre and Tanu Lusignan, who is the Operations Manager of the Centre, I revised the list and prepared for personal and group discussions on the project with potential co-researchers. A research agreement was emailed to Tanu and Jason in order for them to understand the parameters, roles and expectations of the project and consent forms based on the protocols were reviewed in a meeting with both of them. It was agreed that copies of the data generated would remain with the Haida Heritage Society, where it would be archived in the event that they might choose to publish a book about the Haida Heritage Centre at a future date. Other topics of discussion included the participants’ choices to be named or remain anonymous; how group facilitation at the centre would take place; how the challenges of getting participants to come to the Centre in winter would be overcome and what would be a good date for a community presentation on the research.

The first interviews were held at the Kaay Llnagaay after I set up a display within the café area. The large airy room lent itself very well to informal discussions with visitors who came in to have a bite to eat. However, as these interactions remained informal, it became apparent that I would need to contact my list of potential co-researchers personally for in depth interviews. After contacting them via phone and introducing myself I dropped off letters, which described the project. It was through this process that all seven of the desired participants responded and agreed to an interview. The locations of interviews became dependant on the needs and comfort zones of the
individual. Some were conducted in homes and some at their place of work, which
necessitated that I was sensitive and respectful to their space and time schedules. Each
interview included a gift in exchange and this usually involved either a gift of food or a
certificate to a local business. In all, the interviews took place over a six-week process
with follow up editing, which took upwards of an additional three weeks.

Up the Toolbox Sleeve: Methods and Mechanics…

“Tracing your subjective selves, as Peshkin [1988] described them, shows points on a map of
yourself. These points do not create a complete map because no research evokes all of your

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) write that when a researcher uses multiple means for
collecting data, it increases the likelihood of consistent results, allowing for questions or
investigations of themes that emerge as the journey progresses. The methods, tools and
techniques that were used were varied, accessible and easy to implement and adjust to the
variety of situations I found myself in. Through the use of both written and oral
journaling, via video tape/transcription, my hope was to follow my own map of learning
through the research process. These journals were reflected upon as data from which to
glean new questions and insights for the next day, week and month. Denzin and Lincoln
(1994) state that ‘reflexivity’ is a form of self-monitoring, a form of data analysis, and a
further method of establishing credibility by showing others, that your interpretations of
the data are reasonable. Reflexivity was used as an on-going tool to check the process and
the interpretations of meanings that were generated and transcribed. This response data
helped to theorize my own situational placement, my ways of interpreting, reacting and
moving through the process, “towards the unthought” (St. Pierre, 1997, p. 185).
St. Pierre states that her use of a variety of types of personal and embodied data was helpful in responding to the various meanings that she encountered. Dream data “added a layer of complexity to my study, fore grounded problems I encountered, and reconstructed and reproduced data in representations that helped me to think about data differently. Dreams refuse closure; they keep interpretation in play” (1997, p. 198).

Sensual data was also used to understand how the Haida Gwaii landscape formed a presence within the research. Just as St. Pierre has written, it “actually formed the ground of my consciousness, shaped what I saw, and influenced the way a scene was organized in my mental imagery” (1997, p. 198).

A particular importance for the Haida people is the geographical data, the place attachment that is embedded within Indigenous knowledge and epistemologies which can bring up questions of “[h]ow …these physical and theoretical sites of knowing [are] related and what are the effects of those relations?” (St. Pierre, 1997, p. 198). For Indigenous people, land, geography and physical symbols and metaphors are interconnected with the language, culture, politics and knowledge systems.

As Guujaaw, President of the Council of the Haida Nation told the world during the Lyell Island (Athlii Gwaii) logging blockades, “We wanted to make it real clear that our culture is our relationship to the land. That’s where our songs come from, that’s where our language comes from and the dances are all about the creatures that we share this land with and so we brought the songs back to the land, to express exactly who we are in relationship to the land” (Gill, 2009, p. 128). This epistemological difference from western cultures is the foundation of Indigenous cultural visuality, where representation is always situated in context to the relationships we have to our geographical and spiritual
place within this world, on and in the land.

When interviewing co-researchers I viewed myself as the facilitator, and used open-ended ‘lead-off’ questions. I actively listened and allow them to talk about their experiences and beliefs. Since it is disrespectful to interrupt Elders, patience and skillful questioning was necessary and follow up interviews were needed to add clarity and ensure an accurate interpretation. Sometimes up to three different visits were required.

When I began this journey with the Kaay Llnagaay over four years ago, my choice of medium to relate this story was film. Originally planned as a film documentary, this research continued to use film interviews and observations of community experiences as a way to capture and illuminate the complexities of place, language, identity and environment as they all come into play together. The presentation of story through media is a good fit for oral societies who rely on facial expression, costume and context to relay their intricate and multidimensional narratives. Film is able to capture feelings and nuances that often English text cannot. Although my skills at writing have been honed over the past few years, I acknowledge that I cannot expect to incorporate all that is learned, given to me and held within my heart or computer in its entirety. The film production, to follow this paper and remain in the community, is another medium in which to journey, another viewpoint, and will incorporate much that regrettably cannot be included within the paper project.

To use Jean Rouch’s words,

[t]he idea of my film, is to transform anthropology, the elder daughter of colonialism, a discipline reserved to those with power interrogating people without it. I want to replace it with a share anthropology. That is to say, an anthropological dialogue between people belonging to different cultures, which to me is the discipline of human sciences for the future (cited in Ruby 2000, p.1).
Through this research I show that the Haida Gwaii community has chosen to create their cultural centre for reasons that encompass a wide range of disciplines. It illuminates interrelated theory and research and broadens the discourses on cultural research and practices. It hopes to increase the understanding of research within these sites which demonstrates how the revitalization of Indigenous culture and self-determination can have broad, culturally informed effects on ecology, community, personal well being and political agency. Indigenous cultural knowledge and research contributes to the greater academic world in that it presents alternatives to the present paradigms that are restrictive by their use of rational science and disciplinary research. This thesis, focusing on the Heritage Centre at Kaay Llnagaay contributes to a greater understanding and appreciation of Indigenous people, their epistemologies and their research methodologies.

Creating my Ethical Canoe…

“Ethics is about making the world a less terrible place for humans and other sentient creatures. It’s not about keeping everything in its ordained place” (Schafer, 2006, p.3).

Cree lawyer and scholar Willie Ermine, in his article *The Ethical Space of Engagement*, (2007) argues for the creation of a new cross-cultural terrain, into which all of us may enter in order that we may dialogue more respectfully and ethically. It is an idea I want to explore here in order to create connections between the various islands of thought I am exploring, the canoe that takes me there and the journey itself. Ethical space, for Ermine, is a landscape in which the western cultures and the Earths Indigenous thought worlds can meet, engage and construct new languages based on a recognition and
respect for difference and diversity. The relationships created within this space are founded on an acknowledgement that each participating voice is “moulded from a distinct history, knowledge tradition, philosophy, and social and political reality” (Ermine, 2007, pg. 194).

Ermine is specifically interested in the discourse and relevance to Indigenous and Canadian law. However, I would like to expand this concept to include all dialogues, relationships and intersections between dominant voices and the ‘Others’ to whom they speak and speak about. The intentions here are to illustrate the way in which voices seek to be heard, recognized, acknowledged and respected across the cultural divide and how they are both spoken and heard in the dominant discourse about Indigenous people. Ethical space is instantaneously created when the two cosmovisions face each other across the mirror, which also acts like a lens. The formation of Ethical space seeks not to eliminate the mirror but to transform it, to concretize it in our minds and make it a conscious and automatic reflection that will inform the way we interact, engage and respect the differences inherent in an intra-cultural, cosmopolitan world.

It is within this space, a space that is desired by so many 'Others' in our universe, that perhaps we humans can work, consciously aware of our cultural baggage, in order to solve the complexities that have confronted our world so dramatically over these last few decades. “For Indigenous peoples, the thought world of Western society represents this undercurrent, the colossal unseen dimension that influences Indigenous-Western relations” (Ermine, 2007, p. 198). This undercurrent runs through all that we do within our interconnected global system that has now shrunk to the size of an Iphone.

“The danger for Indigenous peoples is that because their image is created through
western systems and institutions, this same image can also be controlled and manipulated to suit Western interests” (Ibid. p. 199). Consequently, we have lost what was once solely our own, the freedom of identity and self-representation. As Indigenous people gaze outward upon this new world, and wonder at the speed of our transformations, ‘Others’ in turn gaze upon us. The anthropologists, archeologists, lawyers, doctors, culture consumers, educators and now new colonialists called corporations wonder how to relate to our difference. Today the age-old attempt to engage continues but now Indigenous people are using their own lenses and knowledge systems, reiterating and reclaiming their voices and fabricating their own personal and political lenses through which the creation of ethical space is becoming both hopeful and possible.

“The dimension of the dialogue might seem overwhelming because it will involve and encompass issues like language, distinct histories, knowledge traditions, values, interests, and social, economic and political realities” (Ermine, 2007, p. 202). However, as Maori scholar Graham Smith asserts, we all must participate in the reclamation of “the validity and legitimacy of our own language, knowledge and culture; to position our own ways of knowing as being relevant and significant in the elite knowledge production and reproduction factories” (2003, p. 4).

Whether we are in the disciplines of anthropology or education, working at a gas station or in the fishery, we are all responsible for the remnants of our colonial past, and must engage in order to encourage our systems to expand and work for all people, not from a patronizing stance as Fitzsimons and Smith argues “but from a position of an engagement that is mutually beneficial” (Fitzsimons and Smith, 2000, p. 26). This implies that transformation must occur by all who enter the space, including western
ideologies and institutional systems. This notion of transformation, taken from Fitzsimons and Smith’s writings, is one that implies the need for knowledge to be “both informed and probably (re)formed by the theoretical challenges growing out of the indigenous context” (2000, p. 26). It is through the praxis of ethical space that we can liberate ourselves but only in fellowship with each other, while being fully aware of the grip of the dominant hegemony and the effects it has on all the realms of our being so that we can see ourselves as becomings. How this impacts and influences us will determine if, when and how we agree to interact with each other and if we also agree to interact and reflect upon our own cultural contexts or baggage. Ultimately,

what the mirror can teach us is that it’s not really about the situation of Indigenous peoples in this country, but it is about the character and honor of a nation to have created such conditions of inequity. It is about the mindset of a human community of people refusing to honor the rights of other human communities. The gaze staring out from the mirror is the mindful look of Indigenous humanity standing as it is with substantial heritage. This heritage acts as the standpoint from which Indigenous peoples gauge and view the unfolding of the…state. Philosophically, there is an expectation from our children and grandchildren that we resolve these issues and to leave them a better world than the one we found (Ermine, 2007, p. 200).

Ermine’s theory echoes the notion of ‘multiplicities of being’, from the concepts of Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) rhizomatic thought and the denial of transcendancy, which echoes Indigenous notions of relationality and the denial of Indigenous cosmovision (Martinez Luna, 2010). Ethical space also shares a commonality with the theory of ‘relative truths’ and the inclusion of ‘effective histories’ that Michael Foucault offers us (Foucault, Rabinow & Hurley, 1997). It also shares island boundaries of Emmanuel Levinas and his ‘Other’ (1991) who is not knowable and cannot be made into an object of the self, remaining “beyond any attempt at full capture…assumes that their
mere presence makes demands before one can respond by helping them or ignoring them” (Ben-Ari and Strier, 2010, p. 5). Levinas’ writings support the notion of ethical space through his philosophy of love and respect for relationship, and the creation of ethics that precedes the search for knowledge. He argues that we have, as human beings, a ‘basic ethical duty’ to the ‘Other’. Just like conscience welcomes the ‘Other’ (Levinas, 1991) so too, it welcomes the trickster, who “calls in question the naïve right of my powers, my glorious spontaneity as a living being” (Ibid, p. 84).

Ethical space is built upon the uncertainties, the messiness, the inconsistencies of life. It is a process, a ‘doing’, just like a tricksterism, through which one can explore the “strange phenomenon in which human knowledge is divided into separate categories variously called disciplines” (Deloria, 1977, p.12). It is neither a white washed room nor a place where one is a prophet. Rather it is a space where those that enter are responsible to “make windows where there were once walls” (Foucault, cited in Hyde, 1988, p. 283).

Ermine argues for the need to re-iterate, respect and remember the ethical boundaries that have been created by

> collective principles, such as our knowledge systems, the autonomy of our human communities, or our treaties. This is a heritage from our past that not only informs us of our roots to antiquity and the rights to traditions entrusted to our people, but it also reminds us of what is important in life as we collectively negotiate the future (2007, p.196-97).

Ermine, who is a lawyer, is specifically interested in the discourse surrounding treaty negotiations, the space that it can choose to create and how that space can affect those involved. His theory is easily expanded to encompass the politics and systemic culture of the museum and educational institute, which is also a site of negotiation and contestation for Indigenous peoples but equally can be a space where the ‘knots of
power/knowledge’ are resisted, re-iterated, acknowledged and discussed so that contestations and tension filled negotiations might be eased so that difference is experienced not as an anxiety or challenge but as an opportunity for learning and growth.

“How can we respect differences in others if we are not capable of seeing the world from the perspective that is not our own? By first recognizing difference as a point of entry and then engaging in alliance making, we are able to keep difference as a bond between us, as indigenous people” (Leslie, 2003, p. 23).

As James Clifford writes, the substrata of these kinds of tensions can be explored through looking at identity not as boundaries to be maintained but as “a nexus of relations and transactions actively engaging a subject” (cited in Archer-Lean, 2002, p. xxxv). This echoes the writings of Greg Sarris, who states,

> for cross-cultural communication to be open and effective, interlocutors must be aware of their boundaries, both personal and cultural, so that they might know the limits on and possibilities for understanding one another in the exchange. That is, in understanding another person and culture you must simultaneously understand yourself. The process is ongoing, an endeavor aimed not at a final transparent understanding of the Other or of the self, but at continued communication, at an ever-widening understanding of both (1993, p. 6).

The resulting dialogues, stories and relationships are exposed as much more complex, less linear and teleological and raise new questions about subjectivity, objectivity and context. For indigenous peoples around the world, who share in common the core premise of relationality, context is the center of all inquiries, and thus, necessitates that these localities, spaces and planes negotiate and mediate all events, all relationships. The echoing across the disciplines is a reminder of the complexity and interdisciplinary nature of our world despite the separations and divisions that we have
inherited. Indigenous cultural producers and critics around the world are calling for dialogue and the renegotiation of the relationships between themselves, their departments and the dominant cultures that maintain control of the structures in which they must work. When we enter an ethical space we must step outside the constraints of our individual lenses and freely enter the diverse, cultural space. We must know, assume and expect multiple and sometimes overlapping stand points that can seem, at times, chaotic.

Ultimately, it is about being ready to give honest answers to questions that might make us uncomfortable in their criticality. According to performance theorist Richard Schechner, it is common to see people become anxious when they must negotiate, what he calls a ‘limen’. They will do so quickly, as it is unstable, indeterminate, and prone to complexity and contradiction (cited in Garoians, 1999). For these people, this space demarcates the polarities, but for a trickster, it is a wonderful and desirable place in which to play. For the trickster, or critic or artist, this space is one of possibilities, syncretism, hybridization, with “the center being a site for focalization and reflection” (Casey, 2001, p. 232).

We are all assemblages, maps, webs and moving tectonic plates as we learn and become, constantly revisiting our pasts, through our memories, to produce a better future for our children. This “ensemble of social relationships” (Settee, 2007, p. 264) is reflected in the tapestry of words within the academy and as I paddle through the sea of theory I am constantly reminded of our inheritance, based on the

unexamined, essentialized view of indigenous knowledge…[and I now know that] we must strive to develop plurality wherein a space is created for juxtaposing different systems of knowledge and actions in structures of complementarity rather than of competition and adversity—one that might also lead to a greater understanding of the complexity of indigenous knowledge systems and practices (Davis, 2008, p.153).
And Now, from the Desk of Coyote.....

Tonight on the Moccasin News, this is just in….it is a revolutionary breakthrough in technology. It is called The STORY. Needing no wires, no electric circuits, no batteries, the STORY requires nothing to be switched on, only that to be switched off! The STORY is easy to learn too. Just open the mouth and presto! Out comes the story! Traveling well, as it fits into any cranial storage device, it is impressive when pulled out at a moment’s notice to entertain guests, and fellow travelers.

Because the STORY is housed in this easy-to-use format retrieval is simple and instantaneous and can be stored indefinitely. Research is showing that the STORY will last well over four hundred years under the right cultural conditions without any signs of degradation or appropriation. Used together with a STORY Retrieval System®, the STORY is guaranteed to make you a hit at your next family function. Whether that is a potlatch, a retirement party, or your grandchild’s birthday becoming a welcome guest is assured. In addition, by personalizing your STORY, you can make yourself stand out in a crowd, gain status and solidify your identity within your community.

Although experts are still divided on the prospects of the STORY as a scientific and theoretical communication carrier its market share value as a commodity is growing daily and its acceptance in the academy has made great ground. This is partially due to the addition of the optional programming and design tool, the Portable Erasable Nib Cryptic Intercommunication Language Stylus. It is with these handy devices, the PENCIL for short, that you can embellish your STORY with symbols, designs and other forms of representation as well. PENCILS can help you transfer your STORY onto a paper format that will continue to entertain long after you have left the room. But don’t take my word
alone, read the following endorsements from famous storytellers around the world who will surely convince you to adopt the STORY into your lives….

“Telling or listening to stories is an almost universal activity of younger children, but it is a capacity that is rarely capitalized on, guided, or developed toward positive learning” (Cajete, 2008, p. 489).

“[T]he trick is this: that the implicit or embedded text, itself, contains clues, directions-better yet-for the interpretation of an implicit text embedded in it… A hearer isn’t meant to understand the story at all levels, immediately. It is as if it unfolds” (Wapapskwan, cited in Archibald, 2008, p. 65)

“There is a void in which Indigenous stories might have been expected to exist, and points out that writers don’t think to ask about why the void exists in the first place and I’ll tell you why it exists. It exists because this country, this place called Canada, outlawed native cultures. Outlawed the ceremonies. Outlawed the dances. Outlawed the clothes. Outlawed the languages. And with that the stories. That’s why those voices are not there” (Lenore Keeshig-Tobias, cited in Morra & Reder, 2010, p. 70).

“Maori people struggle to gain a voice, struggle to be heard from the margins, to have our stories heard, to have our descriptions of ourselves validated, to have access to the domain within which we control and define those images which are held up as reflections of our realities” (Leonie Pihama, 1994, p. 241).

“We believe that history is also about justice, that understanding history will enlighten our decisions about the future. Wrong. History is also about power. In fact history is mostly about power. It is the story of the powerful and how they became powerful, and then how they use their power to keep them in positions in which they can
continue to dominate others” (Linda Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 34).

“[We must give serious attention to changes in official knowledge in those nations
that have sought to overthrow their colonial or elitist heritage. Here, the politics of the
text takes on special importance, because the textbook often represents an overt attempt
to help create a new cultural reality” (Michael Apple 2001, p. 11).

“Take it. It’s yours. Do with it what you will. Tell it to your children. Turn it into a
play. Forget it. But don’t say in the years to come that you would have lived your life
differently if only you had heard this story. You’ve heard it now” (Thomas King, 2003, p.
151).

Story time with Thomas King!

…the truth about stories is…that is all we are…The end. (applause)

For some time the narrative sickness that is plaguing our world continues
unchecked. Doctors in Stockholm are now using story telling to facilitate a wholistic
approach to their practices and have seen remarkable results with their patients suffering
from a wide range of disorders.

The stories people tell are important not only because they offer
an unmatched window into subjective experience, but also
because they are part of the image people have of themselves.
These narrative self-representations exert enormous power. They
shape how we conduct our lives, how we come to terms with
pain, what we are able to appropriate of our own experience, and
what we disown—at the familiar price of neurosis (Öchberg, 1988,
p. 174).

While it has been recognized by Indigenous peoples that our stories are thousands
of years old, it is nice to know that others are catching up to our wisdom. I do not mean to
sound arrogant, but stories from the land, as opposed to on the land, have played
important roles in Indigenous knowledge creation and identity formation for longer than any of us can remember. The land is an archive, a repository of story, and these stories are full of time, time that is running out because the land is disappearing. What then? asks Maori scholar Graham Smith; will stories become voices relegated to entertainment and frivolity? (Smith, 2003).

Storytelling is central to the preservation of Indigenous culture, writes Priscilla Settee.

In the Indigenous world, storytelling is also about resilience, endurance, cultural survival, and resistance to the elements and forces that challenge us and create hardships for us. Storytelling is about precision and using the cycles of nature to ensure our survival as peoples and the seven directions—the east, west, north, and south, above in the celestial heavens, below in our Mother Earth, and the inner direction of our body and our heart. Storytelling and culture represent Indigenous resistance as well as a framework on educating for truth and discovering what lies within peoples’ heart (2007, p. 244).

Coyote stories have long been employed by my ancestors to challenge people to re negotiate how they perceive and construct the knowledge and relationships within their world. Coyote, who is a discursive trickster figure, asks us to not only ‘think again’ but to ‘look again’. Tricksters, who are elusive and indefinable, can take the shape of a provocateur, educator, and assemblageur. Through Trickster we are shown the mistakes of this world (Burkhart, 2004), Coyotes are agents of change, able, through paradox and other non-oppositional strategies, to create fresh viewpoints, including those of the colonial wrongdoings that continue to haunt the fields of academia and museology.

Author Allan Ryan, in his book, The Trickster Shift: Humour in contemporary Native art, (1999) allows us to see “Coyote as artist” actively working towards a renegotiation and transformation of the gallery space. Indigenous people, all around the
world, use trickster strategies to deconstruct and reconstruct ideas about themselves and their culture, manifesting the native perspective of fluidity and transformation, resilience and adaptability. Trickster theory, through its state of “doing” enables us to compare, reflect, and contrast the inequities, inconsistencies and inconclusiveness within our world (Archibald, 1997; Cole, 2002; Morra and Reder, 2010; Warn, 2007). The recognition of Trickster theory, I argue, is “an outcome of the repression of Hegelian dialectics, which subsumes difference into the same” (Lather, 2006, p. 42) and the growing interest in Trickster theory is “part of the break up of cultural monoliths” (Ibid, p 42). Using Trickster theory will allow me to ‘research back’ in order to disrupt the rules of the research game, introduce principles of inquiry that are respectful, ethical and culturally safe and place the Indigenous voice at the center of the story (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999).

Trickster, who is unaware of his origins, and is in a perpetual spirally motion of de-constructing, creating, juxtaposing and reconstructing, is a perfect personae to use to illustrate the interconnected, messy and transformative nature of philosophy. S/He is the sacred fool whose antics remind us of the place of disorder in the creation of order. But he also reminds us of our self-indulgence and greedy nature. It is through these actions that the museum, as a site of colonial greed and indulgence comes into play. The power imbalances that are inherent within present western institutions, has set off a long line of tricksters, working both inside and outside the museum to set things right. Many of these attempts were deemed successful in their attempt to ask us to ‘look again’ as they raised questions about the need for a new language, an Indigenous perspective and a recognition of Indigenous self-determination regarding their stories and knowledge systems.

By employing Trickster theory, we can explore and reflect upon the differing
lenses and obstacles that are inherent in the research process as we journey forwards. It is through this dedicated work of tricksters, both from within and outside the native perspective, that we are now seeing the first baby steps of the *museum transformed*, one that has glimpses of Ermine’s “Ethical Space” (2007).

And as I witness these “break ups of cultural monoliths”, (Lather, p. 42) I witness the emerging narratives of those that have been ‘othered’ and marginalized. The Trickster who “employs competitive distrust of the rival as much as amorous striving towards the object of desire” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, p. 4) can show us how philosophy is both “claimant and rival” (Ibid, pg. 4). This notion of philosophy as a ‘friend’ who cannot be trusted, reflects the tricksters constant ‘production of distress’ and creation of mistakes. Through these messy, humorous and sometimes disastrous events we are called to hone our abilities to cross boundaries, generate creative juxtapositions and assemble our narratives. This echoes the work of Patricia O’Riley who describes assemblages as “dynamic, heterogeneous, and non dichotomous; … they propagate, displace, join, circle back, fold … rhizomes like crabgrass, ants, wolf packs, and children, de- and reterritorialize space” (2003, p. 27). Noel Gough, who is interested in the narrative construction of these assemblages, asks us to consider the ethical and material quandaries and considerations in the process of “affirming the perpetual immanence of the gap between the materialization of the concept and its possibilities of future development” (2004, p. 55).

We live our lives based on the selected fictions we chose to listen to, learn and hold within our minds and our libraries. Our views on reality are based on where in time and space we presently inhabit. Each book or object within these tangible and intangible
spaces have their own unique position in this world, be that a totem pole, or the intangible concept, an epistemology. We all can choose what we want to listen to and we can choose to create new futures, based on the stories of the past and stories created for the future. The deepest listening, however, produces the greatest learning and paddling blindly with disregard to the safety and well being of the stories shared will take us to places changed forever.

The Haida Nation has been re-storying their Nation. They have now opened up a space in which to tell their stories and are committing themselves to the re-development of their tangible and intangible libraries. They are performing their stories loudly and proudly as they share with others who they are and what it means to be Haida. The generosity and reciprocity that I have felt within this community is a testament to their commitment to their oral tradition, now made manifest through the tools and practices of the Museum, Gwaii Haanas and the Community Centre who all are working together to tell others a story full of pride and perseverance. Carrying these stories of events and experiences I can tell you, the reader, that research changes you; that research is only one way of coming to know; that this is only my story, about their story and really, that this story is also for me and about me.
Journeying East…

Don’t give up people of the north use your minds
Don’t give up! you who are your own bosses!
Don’t freeze up people of the earth
Use your good hearts
Don’t give up! I acknowledge you all
(Cheryl L’Hirondelle, 2009)

A new chapter begins today and I lift my orange juice to the east…Kilslaay, to a new day! I think of my book of firsts and travel to my boys now in the east, across the continent, past the wide-open plains where my ancestors were born and my Great grandmothers birthed babies for centuries. Kahgee pohn noten took! I raise my hands to them for the long winter is over and the air is full of spring’s scent. I drift back through the winters past and I reiterate who I am becoming, reclaiming my identity, my relations, my future.

My mind trembles as I contemplate the piles of new threads that await me on my desk, waiting for fingers to weave them into a blanket/Métis sash/basket. This object, that will hold and caress the stories and experiences I have had over these last few years, is also a narrative that will commemorate this journey in its own book amongst my book of firsts. I lift the cover of “Our Story” and turn to Brian Maracle and I read to the east,

[Let us put our minds together as one and give greetings to all the peoples of the earth. And let us give thanks for all the peoples here gathered, that we have all arrived here safely, that we are all at peace and of good mind. Let us remember those who could not be here because they are sick, and let us pray that
they quickly regain their health. Let us remember as well and thank those who help us to keep our language and traditions alive (Maracle, 2010, p. 29).

To the east I celebrate new beginnings and new spaces in which we all can engage; a place where knowledge is reconnected, received, reflected upon and respected. To the east I revision my future, my herstory, rewriting as I go, making notes on top of notes, on notes about loss and concealment, forgiveness and responsibility. The joyful bubble of hope and hard work rises up above the pile and I paddle towards a place of resiliency and perseverance, out of concealment and into the dawn of a new day.

I turn my canoe towards the oncoming spring, pulling the silences from my mind. I call to Raven and Coyote and ask them to sing us all home, for we live but for the ancestors who bring lightness to our hearts. We all must laugh again at our resilience, our strength, our courage. To the troubles that are behind us and the horrors of our inheritance: we dance! In our power to adapt, to transform and to become voices for ourselves: we sing! To the winds of hope in which we hear our ancestors sleeping peacefully: we rejoice!

Passing under an island cloaked in cedar, I take the time to strip bark, carefully folding and placing the bundles within the ribs of my canoe. I think of the hands that have woven before me and give thanks that I can look back at age-old trails, which have not overgrown, and that the sea is still negotiable in new canoes made from memory, archive and courage. I prepare my cedar, soaking it in the cool tributaries of knowledge and start to connect the reconnections, weaving my story of stories.

And in this space I tremble, that it may be honourable to the voices that dance and thrum through my mind as I type, tired and sore and in awe of the grace and persistence that rings out from my computer. I wave my tale as I trot through the piles of papers.
printed for an audience far away and around the corner and I dream for a coming-to-an understanding. We are all related and that it is through the wefts and warps of this world that we are made complete. But the blanket itself is but a journey, slowly moving towards an ending that will never come.

To the east I turn for warmth, to nourish and heal my fragile spirit, invoking the supernatural beings, kitatamishatinawaw! I shout, stretching my arms wide and singing to the sea, you are acknowledged! and I thank you! for placing me in this canoe, with these people, within their lands and amongst their wisdom. And as I swirl amidst these ‘Haida Eddies’ I remember that it is through their eyes I must look and it is behind my eyes that I must interrogate, making sure that I know: This is your land, and these are your stories, these are the words and phrases that will last. My words, which have power, are laid down gently, in an act of reciprocity, as we journey along in a fleet of canoes…..

Culture/Economy/Environment/Community: The Matrix Overloaded…

“All landscapes ask the same question: I am watching you-are you watching yourself in me?” (Lawrence Durrell, 2004, p.5).

Haida epistemology, is a wholistic, culturally intrinsic world view. I reiterate here Lewis Collinson’s now famous words, written in 1966, “… the people of our Islands, composed of members of nations and races from all over the world, are beginning to intertwine their roots so strongly that no troubles will affect them” (cited in Neel, 2008, p.174).

This rich, relational matrix enabled Haida society to maintain balance and stability for well over ten thousand years, through the respect and nurturance of all the beings
within its web. These deeply embedded and meaningful relationships between the environment its people and its ‘resources’ are the ultimate source of Indigenous views about the nature of reality. Culture is the blanket in which we are all woven into. It embodies the past, present and future and provides the community, the environment and the economy the support system and tools through which these relationships flow. The Haida share with other Indigenous cultures the view that people are in an equitable, symbiotic relationship with all who are woven in to this fabric. Culture flows out from the earth, through our relationships to it, to others if we chose to share. The choices of our communication tools, mediums and devices in our contemporary world have transformed and are now vast. But for many Indigenous peoples, it is the relationships that are created through dialogue that are of more importance than the medium. Both the Haida and Cree epistemologies are based on the respect for all living and non-living things; acts of reciprocity that will nurture these beings and the responsibility to be stewards of the earth's gifts and act ethically and intelligently in all engagements. “With good hands and a good heart” is a common intention in both the Cree and Haida languages.

Haida artist and lawyer Gii-dahl-guud-sliiaay writes, “[f]or indigenous peoples, the Earth and all of its life forms the fundamental context, the foundation and ultimate source from which culture emerges” (2006, p. 99). Responsible to these ‘other beings’ within the blanket, the relationships are based upon respect for this state of equity and sustainability; the responsibility to nurture resources within their lands; the right to their role as stewards of the land so that their children, unborn today may inherit this role in turn tomorrow. Miles Richardson explained this concept to an exploration panel eloquently:

One reason the Haida Nation is still here after 10,000 years...is
because of the spiritual relationship our people have had with the resources we depended on, that we live amongst; we always knew that if we were to survive on Haida Gwaii that those resources must be managed and taken care of. There must be a balance maintained between our people and those resources (cited in Shapcott, 1989, p. 64).

Eurocentric discourse about culture is still predominately separated into disciplines of knowledge, often discounting the cultural lens through which they are communicated; the relationships from which they descend and the ethical and political ramifications of their existence. Science, economics, health, religion, education and social studies still view themselves from an anthropocentric lens, outside the earth’s blanket looking down upon it from a detached, hierarchical and patriarchal standpoint. By imposing these values and methods on Indigenous people through colonization a disconnection between people and the ‘things’ that they depend upon to create well-being was created. And when these relationships are broken, imbalance ensues which wreaks havoc not only on a community’s relationship to their environment, but a society’s ability to confront and manage the effects of trauma and cultural change. By disconnecting Indigenous peoples’ relationships to land a dualism is created.

Nature-culture dualism should be recognized for what it was, a tool that the Roman and later Western empires deployed to define other nations and peoples out of the domain of culture. As part of nature, the lands of other societies could be appropriated without moral or legal scruple (Barsh, 1999, p.18).

Through the long process of colonization, Western hegemony has moved from having cultural values that seek a balance between the needs of the community, the environment and the economy to one where the economy and all its related support systems are prioritized while all other cultural values are relegated to the margins. Indigenous communities all around the world, whose lands hold some of the last available global resources, have seen first hand the acts of colonial destruction. These
relationship destroying activities, both past and present, include the colonial practices of missionaries, Indian agents, government officials and policy, trans-national corporations and other institutions which have actively tried either to destroy their culture, in order to create access to the resources they control, appropriate their knowledge or marginalize them in order to silence dissention, opposition or debate on the inequities created in colonization’s wake. These imported and imposed cultural practices led to an environmental, cultural and spiritual crisis in Haida Gwaii when the horrific logging practices of foreign owned and operated lumber companies over the course of about fifty years destroyed most of the cedar forests in Haida Gwaii and the interrelated water, flora and fauna ecologies that have sustained them.

The Haida depend on their forests, oceans and streams as a source of cultural and physical sustenance. It provides them with medicines, informs their spirituality, and generates knowledge and identity. In return, the land is dependant on them, to make wise decisions as stewards and managers. This symbiotic relationship has ensured the survival of the Haida people for well over ten thousand years and perhaps as much as thirty (Fedje & Mathews, 2005). As Diane Brown, a Haida Elder has said, “You have to treat things very gently...The Earth gives us everything we got — food to give us energy to survive, to live the spiritual aspect, the mental well-being. You can't have a balance if one of these things is missing” (cited in Shapcott, 1989, p. 63).

The Haida Nation who have had a long history of colonial resistance like many other First Nations communities in Canada have also had a history of participating in the resource industry as well. This balancing of the two worlds came with complex and difficult choices regarding personal survival, environmental sustainability and
community health. But the sight of barge loads of monumental cedar leaving for foreign ports left many motivated to see this end and it sadly reflected the state of their culture. As Arnie Bellis writes “[t]he condition of the land and sea is a reflection of our state of mind” (cited in Haida Laas, 2008, November, p. 5).

Cedar trees, part of the foundation of the Haida culture, fed, clothed and transported them. Cedar recorded their history and was, as the late Haida artist Bill Reid once wrote “an indulgent god could have provided nothing better” (cited in Ramsay and Jones, 2010, p.75). It was “a material ideally suited to the place, the people, and the times” (Lorden, 2002, para. 2). It still remains an integral part of Haida culture, but its existence has been placed into jeopardy due to the over harvesting by logging companies and the importation of deer who find the new seedlings irresistible eating.

Among the Haida … a “cultural keystone species” is the western red cedar. Cedar, and especially old growth cedar, provides for much of the material, social, cultural and spiritual needs of the Haida. … As the shift to globalization has opened global corporate access to these revered western cedar forests, the Haida relationship with them has been injured. Haida access has been sharply restricted, and cultural and ecological devastation has resulted. The rapidly diminishing areas of monumental red cedar and old growth forests in the Pacific Northwest have reached the point where full regeneration is now questionable, and that is a serous setback for the regeneration of Haida culture as well (Gii-dahl-guud-sliiaay, 2006, p. 104).

Very little monumental cedar is left in Haida Gwaii and its harvest is now regulated. Even still, the future of monumental art is unclear. The days of massive warrior canoes and sky scraping totems may be at an end. The Haida Gwaii community, seeing the environmental and cultural destruction, chose to weave a new story and took pro-active measures to halt the assault on their lands and through this process started the long journey towards replacing western culturally framed practices and policies with their
own. When diplomacy and reason failed the Haida spirit rose to the challenge.

The Haida Nation, choosing to confront the practices of logging companies, blockaded logging access to *Athlìi Gwaii*, or Lyell Island, in 1985. Through this protest and later the tangential work of the community, an agreement was reached with both the Provincial and Federal governments to place almost 1,550 square kilometres of the southern portion of Moresby Island into a national park in order to protect it from resource extraction. Not without a price tag, this measure was a pro-active and creative response that has shown the world their passion, perseverance and eloquence in the process which has endeared them to the public through their effective use of media and relationships to environmental groups around the world...The Haida have demonstrated amazing grace and generosity of spirit in the face of opposition which is often intransigent and self-interested. They have insisted upon negotiation and cooperation, and in private conversations and interviews reassured non-Natives of their willingness to share the “resources” of Haida Gwaii. They have been patient, standing up repeatedly to defend their belief in the integrity of their rights, claims and values. Their attitudes and actions underscore a gentle but tenacious commitment to manage their lands their way (Shapcott, 1989, p. 66).

With the signing of the Gwaii Haanas agreement between Canada and the Haida Nation to co-manage the Gwaii Hanaas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site, we are shown vividly the difficulties of folding together two very different knowledge systems and cultural practices through the Haida’s choice of documentation.

The agreement is written on two sides of the paper, with the Haida wording and understanding on one side and the Government of Canada wording on the other side. This acknowledges feelings that it is impossible to translate concepts of stewardship and management from one knowledge system to the other, from one language to another....Our relationship to the resources of Haida Gwaii cannot be managed by governments of another culture with a different set of values. This perhaps is the most important reason for co-management—to provide a means for different cultures with conflicting values to share in a
resource (Miles Richardson, cited in King, 2004 p. 169).

This agreement would allow the Haida and the rest of Canada to work towards a respectful relationship between human beings and the environment where people can learn “about a way of life where humans are part of nature, where they can experience Haida culture and respect sacred and spiritual values. Traditional activities continue to take place here as part of the living and evolving culture of the Haida” (Gwaii Haanas, 2011).

While not part of a treaty, the Gwaii Haanas Agreement established new co-management arrangements for a terrestrial protected area…and committed to negotiate an agreement for management of the adjacent marine area….The model of a living Haida culture in a protected ecosystem described in the draft management plan is unique in Canadian national parks and illustrates how co-operation can achieve results that benefit society overall (Jones and Williams-Davidson, 2000).

In my interviews it became apparent that this new model or pedagogy extended itself throughout the process and creation of the Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay Llnagaay. As Pearl Pearson states, “Lyell Island showed us that we could do anything we wanted to do…It was very touching…things happen when you work together” (personal communication, January 18th, 2012). The community, galvanized and proud of their achievements in the south looked towards implementing this same community based, inclusive strategy in the creation of what was a long dream for some. “I always wanted a cultural centre. It was a life long dream that came true….We felt we had so much to offer the world, mainly Haida art and the location” says Pearl. Her words echoed many of the Elders here in Skidegate. And many believe it was the success of Gwaii Haanas and the way it was negotiated that informs them still today.

During my interview with Ernie Gladstone, Field Unit Superintendent for Gwaii
Haanas (January 25th, 2012) it became apparent that this new model, or pedagogy, also extended itself into the negotiations between Gwaii Haanas, who were looking for new office space, and the community, who were looking to develop the idea of an art school/cultural centre. Starting in the late eighties a commitment to participate in the building of the new site began. Although nothing was written formally at first, Ernie joined the Haida Heritage Society Board, and successfully began the difficult and challenging process of creating what would become a leased space for the Parks administration and its outreach activities. The challenges of federal institutional processes versus community goals became apparent as the discussions got underway. The federal government, which had never seen such complexity, with its multiple partners, needs, and policies, were usually in a receiving mode through construction milestones. Instead, they were being asked to take a leap of faith and put monies up front so that other funding bodies might be secured and construction could begin. Having to be very creative to find the legal ways to provide the Skidegate Band Council the funds upfront became part of Ernie’s contribution. Additionally, there were challenges with the site’s designation, that it was on federal lands and that the land held complicated lease agreements between Parks Canada, Gwaalagaa Naay Corporation, the economic development arm of the Skidegate Band Council and the federal government.

Needing treasury board approval, which took time, the pressure mounted as the project came closer to becoming a reality. In the end, Parks Canada would put up six million dollars for a ‘prepaid’ lease on exhibition space, occupation space and educational space. Gwaii Haanas, now a tenant, continues to financially contribute to the Haida Heritage Centre but at a reduced rate due to this complex but successfully
negotiated ‘prepaid’ model.

It was the creativity involved in the negotiations that would create an overlapping, fluid and multi-purpose functioning to the Heritage Centre. The administrational offices, needing a secure space of their own, now sits connected but separate at one end of the six interconnected Haida style houses. Their classrooms and exhibition spaces however, are in the main body of the site and are used not only by themselves but also by the community when tourism is low or when they are otherwise vacant. Through the creation of ‘shared’ and interdisciplinary spaces relationships, partnerships and collaborations have resulted through the various educational activities held within the Haida Heritage Centre. These shared spaces, include Slay daaw Naay (Welcoming house), a grand foyer which doubles as an exhibition, conference and community gathering space; an archival space within Saahlinda Naay ( Saving Things House or the Haida Gwaii Museum); the classrooms where visitors are taught about the Gwaii Haanas experience and Ga Taa Naay (Eating House or café) where posters about flora and fauna are exhibited and where employees can chat over lunch.

In talking to some members of the community it became apparent that there had initially been concerns when the news broke that Parks Canada would become involved in the project. Some of these were based on the fact that they had very few employees that were Haida; that this inequity would produce a power structure that would be inequitable but perhaps more importantly, as one person asked, why would the Haida people want to give any institution of the Canadian government any level of control over their heritage centre (Anonymous, personal communication, January 20th, 2012)? With Athlii Gwaii (Lyell Island) fresh in people’s minds it is no wonder that caution was in the
air. But throughout the process it is also apparent that the community had the time and opportunity to respond to these concerns. “I think in the end the Kaay works because it is still open, accessible and Gwaii Hanaas has done their part in welcoming and hosting educational events that are meaningful to us” says Joanne Yovanovich, Aboriginal Principle for School District 50, who has worked closely with both Gwaii Haanas and the Haida Gwaii Museum on a number of projects (personal communication, February, 3rd, 2012).

Since opening their doors at the Haida Heritage Centre, Gwaii Haanas has undertaken many new initiatives to connect both local and global visitors with the Haida culture; they have increased the number of Haida employees to fifty percent of the staff and they encourage local tour operators to participate in the Gwaii Haanas experience. The Park provides a mandatory cultural orientation program to all those who enter Gwaii Haanas throughout the summer months, which provides employment to both Haida and non-Haida community members and brings this audience into the Museum and Heritage Centre. It has started collaborating with the Haida Gwaii Museum in an artist-in-the-park residency program and has an outreach program in the school district that has developed additional relationships within the greater community.

As the first model of its kind in Canada it became unique in both its creation and ongoing efforts to teach others that a healthy environment “is vital to the social, cultural and economic well-being of coastal communities” (Gwaii Haanas, 2008, p. 1) and that by “working and learning together, we can maintain, restore and enhance what we have today with a goal to leave more for future generations” (Ibid, p. 49). This unique approach, created out of the need to address ecological, cultural, economic and social
challenges is now a model used across Canada as other First Nations negotiate their own agreements with Parks Canada (Gladstone, personal communication, January, 25th, 2012).

Today, the Gwaii Haanas staff and management are equitably distributed between Haida and non-Haida representatives and the park provides much needed employment opportunities for its local population. Ernie Gladstone, having played a decidedly key role in the planning and construction of the Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay Llnagaay continues to encourage partnerships as much as possible reaffirming Haida cultural values embedded in the connections between land, sea and people.

Re: Placements, Renewal, Re: Self-Representation …

“We are a people of strength. We owe this legacy to our ancestors and to the beauty and richness of Haida Gwaii. We owe it to our children and our grandchildren to pass this legacy on….The Kaay ‘llnagaay Heritage Centre is a way for us to preserve and celebrate our past, enabling us to share our history with our children and with visitors” (Diane Brown, 1995, para.1).

Faced with a number of challenges in the community, including the economic uncertainties resulting from the curtailment of logging activities, the Haida community produced a novel solution. The dream of a cultural centre, which had been discussed in Skidegate for forty years, started to take shape as a number of key players within the community began to discuss various events, which were simultaneously occurring during and following the Athlìi Gwàii (Lyell Island) blockade and the Gwaii Haanas Agreement. Starting with conversations between the Haida Gwaii Museum, Haida artist Bill Reid, Iona Campagnola, the then chancellor of the University of Northern British Columbia and the Skidegate Band Council of the day, the vision for a new cultural centre moved outwards into the community. Bill had a dream of having an art school on the islands,
which would enable young Haidas to learn, through mentorship, not only about Haida art but also give them business skills to apply to their work. The Haida Gwaii Museum, needing new and expanded facilities, moved the discussions along and led the group towards forming the Qay’Llnagaay Haida Heritage Society\(^\text{15}\) (Collinson & Jensen, 2002), the initial board of which was made up of representatives of the various stakeholders. This Society, started in Skidegate, went on to receive a great deal of moral support from all of the Islands’ communities which was key in terms of presenting the project to potential funders and helping with fundraising efforts.

Upon formation, the Society hired Laverne Davies as coordinator and Amanda Reid-Stevens, became executive director. As Society discussions continued, a process emerged, one that would be reflective of the community’s desire for an inclusive and respectful process from which the new institution would be created.

Much of the initial discussions centered on the topic of representation. However, the group decided to take on a very proactive approach. Rather than critiquing or deconstructing other museums, they began with the visions and goals of the individual stakeholders and community members. Questions about what was desired; what it should do and be; what would and would not be shared; what it would look like; how it would be shared; and through whose perspective were the initial focal points (Collison & Jensen, 2002).

For the group, the answers to these questions around representation lay in finding the correct balance between valuing tourism, and the attitudes and assumptions it would bring, with the need to have respectful engagement without feeling like ‘puppets’

\(^{15}\) This is the original spelling of what is now Kaay Llnagaay.
performing on demand (Anonymous, personal communication, February, 12th, 2012). The living culture of Haida people is “much more than dancing, carving and eating” as this same member of the community confided. It is also generally believed within the Haida community that not all parts of their culture can be shared. In synthesizing the voices held within Collinson and Jensen’s “Qay’llnagaay Heritage Centre Preliminary Content Report” from 2002, it is apparent that the Haida community wanted the decisions to rest in their hands, that they would be the ‘interpreters’ giving visitors “an interpretation [of the] lands and culture from the people who live here” (Anonymous, personal communication, February, 12th, 2012). The desire was to have exhibits that were community developed, for their own purposes, and to teach and build relationships in a friendly way.

This non-confrontational and community based framework became useful when it was decided to begin public meetings and discussions to elicit public input and response. As these meetings began in earnest, the ideas, the architectural drawings, the alternatives, the cost analysis roller coaster and the sometimes-heated debate flooded the community. Working in a cyclical process, updates ran through the consultants, the coordinator, the Society’s Board and the community, who were constantly consulted and given opportunities to become involved. Representatives from the community were invited to the meetings, one of whom was Delores Davis, who represented the artists. When interviewing Delores, she stated that it was generally felt that even though there were challenges with this community based strategy in the end it was for the best (personal communication, December, 17th, 2012). This was echoed by many I interviewed including Pearl Pearson, who sat on the board throughout the process. On the success of
the process and project she said, “Mistakes were made…but a lot of it is the way we wanted it to be” (personal communication, January, 19th, 2012).

To choose a site, the Society board asked the Band council to look for appropriate lands and a number of places were chosen throughout the islands. “It was like a competition almost,” said one co-researcher (Anonymous, personal communication, January, 21st, 2012). The present location, within the bay called Kaay Llnagaay, was deemed perfect as it was close to the airport, the ferry terminal and while forested on one half it was also outstanding low bank oceanfront, ideal for launching canoes.

Throughout the public visioning and consultation process it was both exciting and exhausting work for everyone involved. But things were shifted into high gear with the raising of six new monumental poles on the site in 2001. These poles were among the first to be raised in Skidegate in over one hundred years. Even though totem poles were continually being carved over the last century, most were made for the commercial trade market as models. In recent times only 2 monumental poles had been raised in Skidegate, one in front of the Skidegate Haida Immersion Program (SHIP) and one in front of a private residence. The new poles on the Kaay site would be a testament to the commitment of the Society and the community at large. This monumental week-long event of raising six poles had begun earlier with a call out to carvers. With the flood of responses came the difficult task of choosing who would be the master carvers and who would be their apprentices. Much was at stake, as the creation of these poles, with their cultural, symbolic, and artistic significance, would give the carvers exposure and prestige. These poles representing each of the six historic villages in the southern regions of Haida Gwaii were to be carved on site. The monumental pole carving tradition in
Skidegate was regenerated through the ‘Kaay project’ and was seen by many I talked to as both a challenge and a tremendous opportunity for both the artists and the community.

Once carvers and apprentices were chosen, trees were located and shipped onto the site, carving sheds were created and work began. Acting as ambassadors and teachers, the carvers greeted inquisitive visitors to their carving sheds and passed on their knowledge of the Haida culture and carving practices. This Haida cultural pedagogy was a two way process, with the carvers receiving support, encouragement and praise from their audiences. As some of the apprentices and carvers had never carved a monumental pole before this was indeed an important aspect of learning the process as well as being, for many of them, a challenging experience. As the regeneration of monumental-pole carving took place so too did the growing enthusiasm for the pole-raisings. Even though coordinating the huge project was no easy task, the communities of Skidegate, the Islands’ community and visitors responded in huge numbers, coming out to participate, pull on ropes, volunteer with food and document it on cameras.

Leading up to, and throughout the whole heritage centre project, fundraising was a core focus. However, after the raising of the poles it became somewhat easier to generate successes with so much enthusiasm and pride standing beside the group. Beginning from an estimated cost of thirteen million the proposed project expanded, contracted and ultimately ballooned to its final number hovering around twenty-six million dollars.

During the design stage it became clear to the Haida Heritage Board that ancestral remains would more than likely be unearthed in its construction. The invaluable contributions of the Hereditary Chiefs led to the creation of protocols caring for these ancestral remains. Working in conjunction with the Chiefs, Elders and Council of the
Haida Nation to develop these protocols, the Society decided that a mortuary house would become part of the site design to shelter and secure the remains until they could be properly buried. Ancestral remains did indeed become unearthed and housed there and the house still stands, now empty, as a memorial to those who made Kaay Llnagaay their final resting place.

The construction of the Haida Heritage Centre began in 2003 with a groundbreaking ceremony. After a mammoth local and national fundraising effort, funds were secured. With major contributions coming from Parks Canada, Indian Northern Affairs Canada, Heritage Canada, Aboriginal Business Canada, the Province of B.C. and the Skidegate Band Council the ground was blessed and the shovels began preparing the site.

By 2004 the building of the six Haida cedar longhouses was underway. These houses, using traditional architectural form and language, hold the various activities of the partners. Interconnected with beautifully designed glass fronted walkways and portals they nestle the bay in a beautiful contemporary style. Entering the Haida Heritage Centre you are greeted in Slay daaw Naay, (the welcoming house) with its glass top roof spacious interior and massive glass front, which faces one of the most beautiful beaches in the world. Turning to the north you enter the eating house, Ga Taa Naay, where both locals and visitors mingle over food and is frequently rented at night for private functions. The next house is Gina Gwuahl Juunaay, (the Performance House) which is designed after the traditional big houses of Chiefs and in which there are weekly dancing performances in the summer months, film festivals in the winter and weddings throughout the year. Moving along the corridor one enters Skajjang Naay, (First Canoes House) where Bill Reid’s Loo Taas and the three canoes commissioned for the opening
of the Haida Heritage Centre live when they are not taking passengers out to sea. At the far north of the site, sits Gyaa K’id Naay (Carving House), a huge open walled space that can accommodate as many as five canoes and a number of monumental carving projects. It was here that these commissioned canoes were carved starting in 2007. Once again artists were called upon to carve, educate and produce both objects and knowledge that would fill the archives of Haida minds.

It is at this end that the Parks Canada offices are housed connected through a long westbound corridor with offices for the community along its route and a permaculture roof above. At the opposite end, to the south of Slay daaw Naay (Welcoming House) sits the classrooms of Gwaii Haanas and Northwest community college and further down Saahlinda Naay (Saving Things House or the Haida Gwaii Museum).

In order to build the architecture of traditional Haida homes, local cedar beams were eventually located from rare, old growth cedar forests. This in itself was a difficult task and caused some anxiety since it took a good deal of time to procure them. Once located though, Haida craftsmen were trained, through a purposefully designed program, to cut the monumental beams and columns, regenerating knowledge about Haida construction practices in the process. Rock was brought in from local quarries to be cut and placed throughout the building as flooring, except in Gina Guuahl Juunaay (the Performing House) where a sunken cedar performance area was created based on traditional big house design.

"Everything in the centre comes directly from the community, even the words," says museum curator Nika Collison, who spent hours consulting with community members about how they wanted to share their culture with the world (Ramsay, 2007, para. 14).

This long and complex community consultation process produced a site that
incorporated the common goals of the three anchor tenants. (Collison & Jensen, 2002)
The Skidega te Band Council operates a portion of the site; another by Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Heritage Site and the third the Haida Gwaii Museum, who now have their much-needed expanded facilities.

Similar to a ‘community based enterprise’, the Haida Heritage Centre acts as both entrepreneur and enterprise in pursuit of these common goals. The Skidegate Band Council has rented portions of the space to the Northwest Community College, who offer programs for local residents, the Eating House to a local entrepreneur, offices to its economic department and the performing and welcoming houses to various community groups throughout the year. Augmenting the activities of the three major tenants, this revenue offsets the costs of such an expensive undertaking and aims to make the building as sustainable as possible. But these activities also add to the wholistic approach they are taking to reconnect, revision and redirect education to support their community and its cultural regeneration. The activities of the Northwest Community College are being intensely watched and reflect the community’s desires for on-island and culturally relevant educational opportunities. The Bill Reid House is presently full of students learning about artistic practices, the classrooms are being used by off island students learning about ecological practices of both Haida and western-based science and local schools make regular visits to engage with the partners’ various activities.

Although the Kaay Llna gaay has been open for over four years, it may still be too early to tell if it will remain economically sustainable over the long term. The building is very large, extremely expensive to maintain and the changing economic times are already being felt within the community. The challenge to diversify the Haida Gwaii economy
has been taken up by the Haida Nation as a whole. They are moving away from the previously heavily dependent resource based revenues and taking a long-term, wholistic approach instead. The Council of the Haida Nation’s land use plan has developed an ecosystem based management plan with goals which would protect, maintain and restore ecosystem integrity; maintain spiritual and cultural values; enhance sustainable economic opportunities and foster social and community wellbeing (Council of the Haida Nation, 2007).

The Council of the Haida Nation is reaching out to the logging community, the fishing and tourism industries and the municipalities to assemble, strengthen and create relationships that will aid them in dealing with the long term issues that lie ahead. The land use plan can be seen as tangentially related to the Haida Heritage Centre through the mutual communal goals of replacing western frameworks with culturally relevant ones, renewing the relationships between the local and global world, representing themselves through astute, intelligent and highly proactive responses and processes. By restoring spiritual, cultural and economic values, sustainable economic opportunities have begun to appear as well as a sense of social and community well being.

As part of a new Haida/environmental/cultural and economic vision, the Heritage Centre at Kaay Llnagaay works tangentially to support the transition from an economy focused primarily on resource extraction to a tertiary economy with eco/cultural tourism playing a more dominant role (Gill, 2009). Local labour, supplies and materials were used as much as possible and many people learned new skills and knowledge in the construction process. Arriving in Skidegate in 2008 to document the events of the Grand Opening, I heard many community members talk about these new learnings proudly as
they prepared for the day ahead. Although I heard many comments about the construction challenges and mistakes, the overall feeling was pride in the community’s ability to accomplish such an enormous task.

This project was indeed huge and was attached to the overarching vision to build a cultural center, a hotel and a destination style convention site for tourism as an augmentation to the reduced economic activities through the decline of resource extraction (Gill, 2009). “That part hasn’t happened yet, but hopefully it will,” says Joanne Yovanovich. Joanne sees the many benefits of the Kaay Llnagaay to include not only the employment opportunities for youth and local economic spin offs through trade and tourism but also the tangential educational programming that is being specifically developed with the needs of the Haida people in mind. “It is validating to be greeted by the young people and to have a place that is ‘Haida’. It’s a place that is comfortable and welcoming” (personal communication, February, 3rd, 2012).

Functioning as a site for cultural relationship building through education and knowledge production it incorporates Haida environmental values through the work of Gwaii Haanas in one house, enveloping the fields of cultural ecology and environmental pedagogy. With the expansion of the Haida Gwaii Museum space came the expansion of the curation, repatriation and conservation of artifacts and research activities of community members. Through the repatriation efforts of the Haida, they were creating strong relationships with international museums holding their heritage, gaining and exchanging knowledge about themselves and others (Skidegate Repatriation & Cultural Committee, 2012). The Haida Heritage Centre is, as Jason Alsop, the CEO, states, “the training ground for a new generation of managers, stewards and guardians of Haida
Gwaii…By visiting us here at the Haida Heritage Centre, you are helping to contribute to
the continuation of the Haida way of life and sharing in the responsibility of protecting on
of the world’s greatest cultures” (Alsop, 2012, para. 3, 6).

This desire to create a learning space where everyone makes a contribution is
refracted back in Ermine’s “Ethical Space of Engagement” (2007). To have a wholistic
view of the world and to act upon these values is necessitated by the creation of a space
in which this can happen. As Turnbull (2000) writes “…knowledge is not simply local, it
is located. It is both situated and situating. It has place and creates a space. As
assemblage is made up of linked sites, people and activities; in a very important and
profound sense, the creation of an assemblage is the creation of a knowledge space” (p.
19).

It is this hope, by many in the community, that through these culture/concept
islands, their worldview can be voiced, illuminated, absorbed and taken back to other
spaces where it can be shared once again with others. It is through this sharing that the
Haida culture will continue to survive, grow and live in other places and spaces. The
Haida know well the advantages of having educated ambassadors in the global world that
can help support their claims to land title, self-determination and representational
sovereignty. The Kaay Llnagaay acts as a launching pad for new knowledge and
enterprise while creating a stronger Haida cultural system. It is also a destination of other
Indigenous leaders and activists who travel here to learn from the strength of the Haida
Nation in order to counteract the effects of colonialism, capitalism and growing western
domination in their own lands. It is through sharing that many Indigenous people around
the globe have indeed learned to survive, recover and heal the cultural devastation that
has fallen on them. The Haida Heritage Centre acts as a commemoration of the past and their ability to overcome its challenges; the ability to reconnect with hidden/silenced knowledge; to create new memories and celebrate their identity as a “resilient people and culture in the midst of an exciting transition” (Alsop, 2012, para. 5).

From the international coverage of the logging protests, to the creation of the Gwaii Haanas Park and the Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay Llnagaay, the Haida have demonstrated how a local, located, situated and situating culture can encourage community action which then circles back upon itself to reinforce these very same values creating a deep sense of pride, identity and entrepreneurship within the community. Built on social capital, it in turn creates social capital and feeds the community emotionally, socially, economically, intellectually, spiritually and literally with its restaurant and conferencing events.

The interactions and interplays within the contemporary history of the Haida Nation are eloquently laid out in the dreams, visions, community capacity development process and the final construction and functions of the Haida Heritage Centre. Not only did the community incorporate the look, feel and materials of their traditional architecture but through the use of contemporary building design and construction materials they have represented themselves as a relational and vibrant people who have transformed themselves through their relationships with the rest of the world. The refined and well integrated contemporary forms and design elements make manifest the “reflection of everything happening on Haida Gwaii” (Alsop, 2012, para. 3). The overall impression of the Haida Heritage Centre is one of vibrancy, warmth and intimacy despite the vast open spaces within which reflect the greater world of Haida Gwaii.
This impressive and sophisticated style is not surprising, considering that Haida art productions are highly sought after and artists here have few worries when it comes to making a living if they choose to actively pursue this line of work. Haida cultural productions, which have a long history as ambassadors for Haida cultural visuality is perhaps another research project for the future. However, Haida art, says Jason Alsop, CEO of the Haida Heritage Centre, “holds onto our stories and histories containing information and embedded values we integrate into our daily lives” (Alsop, 2012, para. 5).

It is through cultural productions, in all its forms and mediums, that knowledge is transmitted. As Métis leader Louis Riel wrote long ago, [i]t will be the artists who will transform the worlds of Indigenous people and their allies who care to listen and learn. And it is through the Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay Llnagaay, as a cultural production, that we are invited by Jason and his Nation to “participate in our story and to witness our resilient people and culture in the midst of an exciting transition” (Ibid, para. 5).
Raven and Coyote Sing them Home: Ode to Repatriation …

In their slumbers they dreamed of canoe journeys…
of kin awakening to their calls…
to arms reaching out for embraces…
and homecoming drums beating songs of their lands

In their slumbers with spirits…
from all around the Indigenous world…
their dreams filled with gratitude, that at least…
eyed rested with relations of likeness...

In their slumber of disconnect…
they lie on shelves lined with plastic…
sealed in cases of glass… tombs of another’s making…
waiting for the sound of footsteps… dancing h(e/a)ls

We hold our hands high and thank you…
for your actions, which linger on our minds…
we sift through dark years of whiteness…
for respect packed tightly… in fluffy cocoons

Packed like an iceberg emerged…
in seas filled with currents and tides…
the layers they melt… and out of concealment…
our relations are flown home from far

We thank you for looking after …
these tagged, defined kin…
stuffed in fields the size of reserves…
our ravenousness recovery requests you, answer please..

We thank you for your trades…
new relations will make us complete….
but our grave concerns for ancient learnings…
are not yours who have wants and not needs…

We thank you for holding the light….
for the souls wandering about your great halls…
their searching for threads is over….
woven thin they could not follow them home…

Now in their slumbers kin rest….
as we weave our way through the archives…
looking for clues to our inheritance…
we confront ourselves in mid air…
Futures are upon us now…
as we dress our identities with new robes…
rewrapping ourselves in new blankets…
we trade for trust now with great care…

The new canoes have been carved now…
they take us to destinies unknown…
steamed out of the blood of our ancestors…
our relations, it seems, includes you…

We thank you for letting us work…
our ways into your hearts…
the circle which always had you in it….
now less white, we lay to rest our anger…

We thank you for this blanket of healing….
warming hearts made frozen by frigid souls…
learning to make new nests for our children…
who now fly not where we flew to you…

We thank you for the gift of these lessons…
to share, to create, to sing…
our learning is a learning about learning….
paddling through memory, now and when…

And emerging like a butterfly…
we see the trails were not all lost…
transformed, transmitted and now renewed…
the stories begin to flow again…

Out of concealment they come…
emerging with the memories of the past…
once asleep we are now wide awake…
the matrix expands every day…

But as time speeds up irregardless…
as a gasp from the floor turns all eyes…
weeping at thoughts about courage…
she sings praises not all has been lost in the storm…
“In practical terms the emphasis on preservation of the context and associated activities, not just the object itself, involves the re-socialization of objects: their return to the place of origin where the intangible aspects of heritage provide meaning and where the objects themselves may stimulate renewed activities of the intangible aspects of culture” (Simpson, 2009, p. 2).

Saahlinda Naay, Saving Things House, is located in the southern portion of the Heritage Centre. At first glance it appears similar to other contemporary museum models around the world, with its contemporary and sophisticated design, which includes ‘open storage’ exhibition cabinetry, a flowing movement between galleries and high tech lighting design. However, it too has taken on a unique culturally centered approach. Composed of six different gallery spaces, the first is a temporary exhibit space which hosts rotating exhibitions from a variety of curators, from within and outside of the Haida territory. Wandering through you come into, what is best described as a supernatural zone, where huge masks tell the stories handed down through the ancestors about the supernatural beings who have informed Haida cultural beliefs and values since time immemorial. Sill incomplete, it will also include the ‘scientific’ perspective with an exhibition of recent archaeology findings on Haida Gwaii from the earliest archaeological site yet discovered in B.C. at 12,800 years old (Nathalie Macfarlane, personal communication, March 5th, 2012).

Continuing along the permanent galleries one walks through a torn canvas, on which is depicted the ‘traditional’ culture of the Haida, into a small video gallery with a floor to ceiling reproduction of Bill Reid’s graphic depiction of the small pox epidemic. The bold use of marks, spots and simplistic forms is striking and holds the viewers attention until the video begins, which tells its audience about the Haida people, the
coming of western culture and their hopeful future ahead. Upon walking further, visitors enter the ‘Keeping our way of Life’ gallery. Here historic works sit comfortably with contemporary work in a depiction of the Haida’s vibrant and living culture. Large wall displays recount contemporary stories, including the various ways that the Haida have lived in, adapted to and protected their world while the Box of Treasures house holds pieces collected from various places around the world. At the end of the House visitors pass by totems both contemporary and ancient to enter the last of the galleries at the southern tip of Kaay Llnagaay. Walking down a long corridor that teaches visitors about tree culture, we enter the last of the galleries that exhibit contemporary local art and a permanent ecological exhibit, complete with sophisticated interactive displays and glass cases of wildlife specimens.

In an interview with Nathalie Mcfarlane, the director of the Haida Gwaii Museum, it is explained that

[I]it was really important to the community that this be a living expression, that it does not present Haida culture as an artefact of the past. So when you go through this museum you see a lot of contemporary photos of cultural activities going on whether it is gathering bark, potlatches, or carving or food gathering all of those…more than three quarters of the images in the museum are from the living, from the present and the recent past. What we have really done here is presented history alongside the contemporary picture, we have pulled the past into the present (personal communication, June 15th, 2010).

Working in the museum for over twenty years she has seen a great many changes in the Haida Gwaii Museum’s journey. The museum, which sits on Skidegate Haida Band lands, started as a very small institution but always had big dreams. Beginning with a Board of Directors that had very little Haida representation it now has an equitable and active membership of the Haida and non-Haida community that creates a sense of
vibrancy within the museum. This active leadership of Board members reflects the communities desire to have a museum that reflects and responds to their contemporary issues and values. Western museums, which have responded to the reactions and critiques of Indigenous people, have recently started to re-present their exhibitions by placing the present, contemporary cultural trimmings within their cases and halls of artifacts. While not completely addressing the rupture created with labels like modernity, artifact and art, these museums end up reifying the ruptures and linear progress. The Haida Gwaii Museum on the other hand, by placing the past into the present, allows the contemporary space, audience and exhibits to interact and learn that the commonly held myth of loss and disconnect between ancestral knowledge and ‘trimmings’ and present day practices and processes was never broken. Like the silver bracelets that adorn most wrists here, it was hidden from the view of ‘others’ for many years but now, with a site of their own making, the true Haida story is revealed.

With contemporary exhibitions and cultural displays initiated by the community, the space ends up feeling very much alive. This approach creates a feeling of anticipation, as it seems that every month a new endeavor has been taken up by a community member.

[T]he museum has been really a facilitator of that initiative so its not necessarily the museum that has taken these initiatives its the people have taken the initiatives and the museum has been kind of like the platform and staging ground for a lot of these things. That particularly is what makes me both proud to be part of this and grateful to be part of this incredible synergy that’s happening in the Haida community over the last twenty years (Mcfarlane, personal communication, June 15th, 2010).

As a community-based, initiative-supportive and participatory institution it functions strikingly different from western museums who have a long history of representing Indigenous cultures as vanishing or distanced from the realities of
contemporary society and who collaborate with Indigenous communities but rarely allow them to take on full control of projects. Functioning as a platform from which community members can engage in cultural research allows for easy equitable participation, expanding research without the hierarchies taken as normative in western approaches and allows for active, ethical and respectful engagement. One community led project has created a genealogical map of the families of Haida Gwaii, which aims to allow many people to know and discuss uncovered Haida names, lineages, crests and chiefs for the first time since the dislocation caused by the smallpox epidemics. Haida archaeologist Captain Gold explains the importance of his research…

[T]o me, if this wasn't done where would the future children be able to stand. To me its like uh, this gives them the foundation to make their statement that they are Haida… But it is every generation’s responsibility to build that bridge from the past to the future. If we don't do that we are failing (personal interview, June 15th, 2010).

Once again the value of responsibility to future generations is revealed. It is this obligation, to reciprocate forwards to future generations, that drives many of the activities in and out of the Haida Heritage Centre. The museum remains actively involved in maintaining and developing relationships in all that they do. This is particularly important when engaging with international institutions in order to locate and repatriate cultural knowledge or when developing educational programs with schools and members in the community (Baird, 2011; Skidegate Repatriation &Cultural Committee, 2012).

The Haida began repatriation efforts in the seventies, starting with the return of monumental poles to the Haida Gwaii Museum in 1976. Next came concerns by the Haida over the removal of ancestors from an archeological dig in the south and from the Museum itself to an institution in the United States (Macfarlane, personal interview, June 15th, 2010). Following upon this was the work of Lucille Bell and Vince Collison, who
took it upon them to send letters to museums around the world asking for an inventory of
known ancestors within their institutions (Collison, personal communication, June, 22nd,
2011). With the responses and their inventories came the horrific shock of discovering
the enormous task ahead, one that they felt had to be taken so that future generations
would not be left with the task. The removal of Indigenous remains by westerners is a
global phenomena and one that is still an active and challenging process (Clavir, 2002). It
requires both skill and courage to negotiate and is part of a long process of reconciliation
between the two disparate narratives within the Indigenous world (Tsosie, 2009).

Many Indigenous people around the globe and here in Haida Gwaii have shared
with me their feelings of disgust, rage and injustice that this has happened (Atleo, 1991;
Bell, 2005; Cole, 2006; Paul Tapsell, personal communication, June 24th, 2011). The
removal of remains and cultural material is seen as an unethical and incomprehensible
notion (Frank, 2002). When asking about the feelings towards repatriation in the
community, one co-researcher went so far as to equate the experience by asking what
would have been the response of Westerners to have their graves dug up for the gold in
their ancestors’ teeth, (Anonymous, personal communication, January, 15th, 2012)
alluding to the greed that was inherent in anthropologists’, collectors and others’ search
for knowledge about the ‘Other’.

Repatriation is a response to the need to pay respect and create reconciliation and
for many Indigenous people is an act of community responsibility, to the ancestors who
have been dislocated from their resting places and to the future generations who should
not have to be faced with these tasks. For the Haida, it was both these things and more.
The reconnection process, which was used as an emblematic phrase for the journey
ahead, was long and arduous. To reconnect and respect the ancestors by bringing them home and taking care of them responsibly when they arrive, the Haida were being responsible to both the ancestors and their communities needs to heal. *Yahgudangang*, which is the Haida name for repatriation, means to pay respect. To pay respect is to perform the value of relationship held by the individual in relation to the community. This reiteration acts as a communal pedagogical performance through its repetition of values, knowledge and practice.

The Haida, through bringing home their ancestors, journeyed themselves through a life changing transformation. By reconnecting the ancestors with their home they have brought both knowledge and healing into the community. “And perhaps most important, after each ceremony, one can feel that the air has cleared, that spirits are resting, that our ancestors are at peace, and one can see that healing is visible on the face of the Haida community” (Skidegate Repatriation & Cultural Committee, 2012, para. 5). This process of healing would include facing the tensions within the field of museology and their participation with it.

Learning that their journey was long, “but also rich in learning and healing” (Ibid, para. 4) they included museum staff from U.S. and Canadian museums in their work and built relationships, which would help them to learn as much as they themselves were. “We have learned together, we understand our history better and we see the need for other people to understand our history and our current way of life…” (Ibid, para 4) Through this collaborative/trade process learning occurred about western museums; how to gain their trust; how to fundraise to visit, collect, and bring them home; how to treat them when they arrived with correct protocols, songs and prayers, most of which had to
be created as this was a first for the community. There was the need to relearn the art of cedar bentwood boxes in which the ancestors would be buried and this process, which took place at Kaay Llnagaay, was a “history lesson from the ancestors”, as repatriation committee member Andy Wilson told me (Personal communication, February 15th, 2012). These lessons, taken up by the Haida people in a proactive response to the inventories of western museums, are believed by my co-researchers to have been informative to the visioning of the Haida Heritage Centre and the creation of a new space in which to represent, restore, repatriate and research the newly acquired treasures. “The most wonderful outcomes of repatriation work are right here at home” (Skidegate Repatriation & Cultural Committee, 2012, para. 1).

The Haida have repatriated all known ancestral remains and are now working towards creating digital archives and thus cyber relationships with artifacts outside their nation. This is a new challenge for Indigenous museology in that these cyber worlds have brought about new ownership and representational challenges. International museums wanting to find a solution to repatriation have put forward digital libraries in the hope that they will appease First Nations in lieu of returning cultural material. But as Frits Pannekoek writes, the new movements to “Native Portals” accentuate this segregation and separateness. Native content “is usually in a separate cyber gallery, and is usually at the beginning of the storyline, rarely scattered throughout the various subject specializations or exhibits. Even where modernity is desired, the subject is dealt with in the Aboriginal section of the exhibition” (2004, p.65). The Museum at Kaay Llnagaay is the only space that they can claim as their own, by their own hands and through their own voice.
The Museum, which was created in the early 1970’s by a small group of locals, was a small institution in those early years. Sitting on the lands of the Skidegate people, it required the active support of the Band Council, who set aside Kaay Llnagaay for this purpose. However, for many years there were few Haida representatives, until the 1990’s when the forty-year dream of a larger cultural site began to emerge as a reality as a concert of activities began to occur. It was through the efforts of the Massett and Skidegate Repatriation Committees that the museum would need expanded facilities to deal with the outcomes of its engagements. Along side were discussions between Bill Reid and Iona Campagnolo, who wanted an art school for Haida students. The Museum Board then took these ideas out into to the community and the Haida Heritage Centre Board of Directors was created. It was through a long, community capacity visioning process that the eventual partnership between the Skidegate Band Council, the Haida Gwaii Museum and Gwaii Haanas was created. “This vision for a larger site was an expression of the community’s departure from a western approach to museology, a movement from third to first person” explains Nathalie Macfarlane in our interview (personal communication, June, 15th, 2010).

“Bringing home the intellectual knowledge is equally important for the Haida community”, says Nathalie (Ibid, 2010). Intellectual knowledge, within this matrix, implied the need to learn about the language, songs, dances and practices that were in relationship to both the objects returning and the people themselves (Skidegate Repatriation & Cultural Committee, 2012). Funded and driven by the Haida people, the knowledge that has been illuminated over the past twenty years is astounding. Songs have been uncovered, researched and re-recorded, dances have been choreographed, plays in
the Haida language have been performed and a new list of published works is growing.

[W]hat has kept me here for so long is the incredible evolution of Haida culture in the last twenty years; the incredible explosion in the arts, in the weaving arts and the carving arts. The tremendous effort that has gone in to preserving the Haida language and teaching it; the huge amount of research that Haida people have been involved with in recovering their songs and their genealogies and the museum has been right in the thick of it (Nathalie Macfarlane, personal communication, June, 15th, 2010).

The learning that occurred through repatriation was not only a community response. It stimulated knowledge production within the larger community as they reconnected with themselves and their returning kin from overseas. Repatriation has been a fundamental part of Nathalie’s work but she insists that it was set amongst the larger picture that was the cultural re-awakening process of the Haida people. With repatriation came the need for a new space and a vision for a community based education that would bring in community members to co-research knowledge, generate ideas on how to represent the pieces and stimulate interest in being involved as staff and researchers. This need for a larger space, meant that there was an opportunity to adapt the museum concept into a form which could reflect the local cultural practices and values they hold and enable their intellectual knowledge to be preserved, protected and regenerated through culturally relevant research and pedagogy.

Part of this culture of relationship building included the publishing of a resource guide on the Haida culture to be used by learning institutions and in particular those within their own community. The Museums’ recently published book “Gina ‘Waadluxan Tluu, The Everything Canoe” echoes the voices of the Haida Nation that culture is central to all things including education thereby prioritizing social change through the act of relearning about the cultural blanket and how it is woven, or in this case paddles
throughout all facets of life.

We chose a central icon of Haida culture, the canoe…as one of the major expression of Haida culture and the canoe as a way of entering into an understanding of Haida culture and its relationship to the land and sea …You could use the canoe to enter through any door in Haida culture because the canoe was so central. Again, there was extensive consultation and one of the really surprising things was to find out how much knowledge there was about traditional canoe making in the community today (Mcfarlane, personal communication, June, 15th, 2010).

Winding through the museum is also a culturally centered approach to conservation, diametrically opposed to the standard western techniques. As Guujaaw, President of the Council of the Haida Nation has described them, objects are the “trimmings of culture”. Once damaged or worn out, they are sometimes allowed to ‘retire’ or in some cases return to the earth. These ‘trimmings’ in and outside the museum walls are replaced as an act of re-invigorating the culture through performance, thus relating the act of renewal, the cycle of life and its inherent transformation process. Replacing the “trimmings of culture” and not treating them with chemicals care for these objects with both respect and responsibility to this cultural value system. Many Indigenous people around the globe share these values. Objects, returning to the earth, renew and replenish the creators’ energy. In a contemporary capitalistic world, which values materialism, this is a delicate subject within Indigenous museology (Jessica Casey, personal communication, February, 12th, 2011). As Captain Gold explains,

[Q]uite a few totem poles are being raised today and I think we are living up to our responsibility. Those old poles that are here are going to fall apart eventually but that is the way, that's the way it should go. That's the way to keep that honour of the ancestors foremost. We just can't think about chemicals in that way (Captain Gold, personal communication, June 15th, 2010).

Thus the totems within the UNESCO site Sgan’gwaii, in southern Haida Gwaii for example, are co-managed with Haida scientists, experts and conservators without the use
of pesticides, fungicides or other toxins still common within other heritage sites (Captain Gold, personal communication, June 15th, 2010). This is equally true with the poles and other plant based material within the museum space. Thus, the need for a carving studio was pivotal not only to teach visitors through performance but also to demonstrate the living culture that is Haida. Within the last four years living here, I have witnessed these cultural values through many Haida acts of ethical, respectful and culturally grounded politics. One example is the repatriation of totems from distant locales and replacing them with new ones that allows totems of cultural significance to return to the islands. Another is the raising of totems all across the islands.

This relationality of the culture and thus the museum’s activities is reflected in how it interacts with other researchers who come to the islands to learn and create knowledge. Jill Baird, co-researcher and facilitator with the recently published Gina ‘Waadluuxan Tluu, The Everything Canoe resource book, states that a third space can be created when museum professionals and community members cultivate relationships which aim not to be one way or another, rather “it is a productive blending that is responsive to the issues, the people, and the place where these interactions occur and where they matter most…. a place where local options emerge and take root” (Baird 2011, p. 173).

It is this ‘radical essence’ that I have witnessed as an educator, researcher and community member that forms a Haida cultural pedagogy. It is the community’s desire and ability to create relationships between islands of belief systems, concepts and values in an interplay that might effectively transform the ways in which we co-generate knowledge. And according to Jill Baird, the creation of this necessary space within
museums, which she calls a liminal museology, takes time. Jill’s own research with the Haida Gwaii Museum illuminates for us that these engagements are “sometimes subtle and sometimes severe, often humourous and always instructive” (2011, pg. 172) and requires all who are doing cultural work, as a member of the audience or as a researcher, to constantly reflect through a conscious state of mind how these ethical spaces for engagement are created. By keeping ourselves and our cultural baggage within our minds as we work and by “embracing competing knowledges and understandings…[we can] constantly interrogate the forms of expressions and representations used…seek ways to support not control…[and] listen, wait, and listen some more” (Baird, 2011, p. 173).
Journeying south…

Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing, there is a field
I will meet you there
When the soul lies down in that grass, the world is too full to talk about
Ideas, language, even the phrase each other doesn’t make any sense
-Rumi

I fly southbound towards the dawn. My head turns this way and that, trying to determine the route. I brush my beak across my bright red feathers and call out to test if I am alone. Down into my nest I fly, in which there are brand new chicks, fluffy and beautiful as they chirp out songs of anticipation and replenishment. “I have done this!” I call, as I proudly feed them nourishment brought home from my travels. “They will prosper!” I shout for the entire world to hear so that they can share in my celebration of the seasons and its glorious hope.

The wind has shifted, and it swirls around me as if it is trying to grab hold of my spirit and whisk it away in its darting grasp. My heart jumps as I place objects and possessions into boxes in preparation for reconciliation. This task, which has become progressively heavier with each repetition, reinforces both the sense of loss and disconnection that I have had since birth and its hope for renewal and change. I pile the precious objects and collections in boxes and take them home in an act of respect, responsibility and reciprocity. I lay them on tables and ask them to rediscover, regenerate and revision the narratives. I ask them to give me the possessions in a re-enactment of my Métis ancestors’ rebellion, as a shout of refusal to participate in the master narrative of greed, consumption and collection. But it pains me and through this I know that I am of two worlds, forever dancing in the in-between.
I glide into Kaay Llnagaay and walk amongst its trails and tributaries of stories and hear the ancestors whispering to me. And just as I am about to cry out in anger and frustration an eagle soars overhead watching my movements and I know that I am not alone and will return to this place which has taught me so much compassion and cooperation. My canoe is full now and I start paddling south, towards Vancouver, towards the University of British Columbia, towards finishing this bend of my journey. I watch the landscapes and seascapes and see signs of acceptance, love, bounty and passion. It is summer, the blush of brilliance is everywhere and as I paddle I learn to accept the changes in me; to understand I must become a warrior; that I can become a weaver and I am leading others into knowing, in my own way, “to do justice to the encounters between people and the images that occur to them when they see things” (Bal, 2003, p. 267).

My voyage of discovery, now nearing its (b)end has made me realize that my own perceptions, informed by the institutions in which I have engaged, have now been forever altered. With the healthy sounds of drums, song, language and laughter my own ceremonies have returned as I practice each day the art of blessing and thankfulness. Turning to voices from around the world I see a great robe of thought, the commonalities making a whispering song throughout its beauty.

I vision this resistance/reconnection/renaissance based on the heritage of the people who have had little freedom of expression but ample amounts of dedication and perseverance. And as I hold the paintbrush of oppression and use it as a tool for the voices that have been shared I grow radical as I paint. I am growing new roots, rhizomes and relations, to confront, connect, reiterate and share knowledge and thought processes
once narrowed within a white frame.

So I travel, to trade like my ancestors have done, to build alliances and convey knowledge. I link up the islands of “like-minded peoples in other parts of the globe [realizing that]...the feeling and beliefs of the colonized, far from being strange or backward, are the feelings and beliefs of most of humanity” (Daes, 2000, p. 7-8).

By playing amongst the museum I have found a “more community-oriented way of life that is more existentially and spiritually meaningful” (Duran and Duran 1995, p. 155). One that is rich in languages that embody the way we think. These languages lost and on the brink of the world, take with them the collective thought processes of the people, leaving us with boundaries and goodbyes (Little Bear, 2000). And as I return to the sacred, I see Raven and Coyote, who are smiling at their work, grinning that they have concocted all of this.

Weaving The Blanket and other Synthesizing Tales of Weft and Warp…

“*I weave because I could not do otherwise. Weaving dances through my dreams at night*” (Lisa Hageman, Yahgulanaas Kuuyas 7waahlal Gidaak, 2012, para., 1).

This research acknowledges that at the same time that I am working with these communities, a number of other First nations communities are also mapping out their cultural journeys elsewhere in various planes, places and spaces within local and global maps. My work with the Haida Gwaiii community has continually paddled between both local and global islands just as all culture does. Through an invitation to co-research with me, participants were given the opportunity to choose to have their voices recorded, transcribed, checked for accuracy, published and shared within the final thesis. By communicating to them about where I hoped to have their stories go within this blanket, a
forthright respectful, responsible environment for dialogue has been created.

The meanings, relate/abilities, ‘truthfulness’ and significance of the stories was verified by the participants through a transcription process that allowed both the co-researcher and myself to reflect upon the meanings conveyed, transcribed and re-contextualized to ensure that it has been accurately conveyed. Context is of particular importance to Indigenous people, who have been made ready objects of de-contextualized research throughout academia’s history. With the desire to include the Haida language, it was necessary for me to become involved with the Haida language programs in Skidegate in order to maintain accuracy of meanings when translating concepts into the English language. I have made the utmost attempt to make sure all my sources were crossed checked to ensure an up to date spelling has been include. However, like all things and processes, names and concepts change over time. Within the time frame of this thesis the Skidegate Haida Immersion Program, which is the body of Elders who nurture and protect the language here, have changed the name of the Sea Lion town a number of times. From Qay’llnagaay, to its present spelling Kaay Llnagaay, it too reflects the living culture that is the Haida people.

The synthesis throughout the research project was carefully constructed with good intentions and I remained constantly cognizant of the feelings, thoughts and research protocols I put in my research proposal while also keeping in balance the tensions, challenges, hopes and dreams of those with whom I learned. I sought to explore the Haida ‘islands of thought’ as a radical configuration, mapping the myriad of roots, routes, translations and intertwining located in these seas. This interstitial and liminal space, where meanings, understandings and conversations can be interrogated and synthesized
was my destination (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). As Kaustuv Roy puts it

> [m]ost truths are less interesting than the complex and dynamic intercrossing of forces, intensities, discourses, desires, accidents, idiosyncrasies, and relations of power that produce those culminations (2003, p.1).

But these cracks and crevices, tectonic fractures and blockades are fodder for change and regeneration, renewal and growth. It is from these sites that the Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay Llnagaay was born.

By reviewing these islands of thought through the framework of the Salmon Cycle/Medicine Wheel in order to ensure a balanced analysis/synthesis, I attempt to interpret, assemble and collage the data through spiritual, visual and auditory lenses. While I held the stories of those who have shared with me I de/fragmented, conversed, trickstered and reflected upon my own lenses and other sensings so that a clustering the data into patterns emerged, which aimed at linking up voices to create a blanket of the various themes and concepts that I have encountered and journeyed with. As Webb has written

> Mapping these kinds of policy and organizational ‘dances’ would indicate how power is socially and spatially constituted and reconstituted. More importantly, mapping power relations would describe the ‘terrain’ that structures educators’ interests (2008, pg.138-39).

As an educational institution, supporting pedagogical interests, the Haida Heritage Centre is also a map of policy and organizational dances. These dances, like the ones I have witnessed come from a culture that is both different and untranslatable at the same time. But, I shall make the attempt to show you through my words a story, a blanket, a map of what I have interpreted as Haida cultural pedagogy within the sea of Indigenous cultural visuality.
As a study of cultural difference, which “is expressed not by attempting to find common ground, common words, common symbols across cultures” I worked instead towards “protecting all sides from zealous over-simplification, by acknowledging a final untranslatability of certain concepts and subtleties from one culture to another” (Townsend-Gault, 1992, 100-101).

This final product then is an assemblage of narratives, a map of knowledge islands held within and outside of Haida Gwaii. These islands, plotted out with agreed upon disorder, move in a circular, flowing and fluid manner, illuminating and illustrating the ways in which they relate to each other. Through documenting this research journey, and the creation of the Haida Heritage Center, the greater fields of academic discourse can be expanded to incorporate a new voice from afar.

This site is not one ‘thing’ or one ‘place’; rather it is a thingness, a placeness and more (Roy, 2003). It is a site of self-determination, rhetorical sovereignty, ecological education, cultural re-generation, educational opportunity and identity creation. It is unique, unlike any other educational/cultural site in the world. Visitors have commented on this, both in its creation and management. Indigenous leaders and researchers come in order to understand the Haida Nations strategies for protecting environmental, cultural and territorial rights and responsibilities.

This story can show that institutions, governments and cultures are able to work together and be successful for their communities while maintaining balance in their environments and economies while re-generating cultures, once thought to be asleep. The Haida Nation has shown the world that they are wide-awake and thinking globally while acting locally.
And Now a Word from our Sponsors!...

Good Evening, tonight we join Coyote and Raven in the Home Economics Department. They have kindly agree to show us how to make a Pedagogical Soup...

Coyote: Let’s make soup Raven, come on, collaborate with me!

Raven: Oh great I like soup; actually I like anything good to eat. It will be good to eat, won’t it Coyote?

Coyote: Well, I don’t know if you are going to want to eat this soup Raven. It is more like a learning soup, you know a pedagogical soup.

Raven: What! You can’t eat it!

Coyote: No, but it’s food for the soul Raven! It will nurture the intellect, the mind, and the passions of people! And it will create new relationships that will blow your mind.

Raven: Well… if it means I get to stir up a little chaos and confusion, count me in!

Coyote: More than that, we will be serving a purpose, it will feed the souls of the hungry.

Raven: But what if the only ones hungry for it are those that don’t need it, if ya know what I mean?

Coyote: Hmmm…you have a good point there Raven, I guess this is going to be trickier than I thought…you’d better get ready to become a pine needle just in case…ah, here is the recipe…

To make pedagogical soup, start by browning as much militant meat as you can stand. When racially exhausted, stir in a handful of civil disobedience and affirmative action. Let simmer for a few years, then stir until thoroughly distinct and condensed. Remove from heat and apply for an Indigenous research grant and an ethical review.

At this point, the soup is at a critical stage. To create a new learning process, one that is
less dispassionate, less disembodied and conceives of knowledge as co-invention, be
constantly on guard for silences, snores, subordinations, submissivenesses and
acquiescences. It is at this time that communality, self-determination and voice must be
added. With vigilance and integrity, relationships can be created but only through
dialogue that is ethical and rejects long-term use of universalities, definitions, labels and
boundaries. In the final moments before serving, add a sprinkling of humour, wit and
emotion. Spirituality should be added, but with caution, some learners are highly allergic
to it. Serve the soup with co-researchers, in moments of dialogue and co-elaboration, and
discover its wonderful ethical flavor and nuances!

[Fine print: This counter-hegemonic soup will conscientize even the most stubborn systems of
disconnect, domination and control. Not to be used in conjunction with dichotomies, status quos
or any other colonial devices that might render its properties redundant.]

Meanwhile, back in the Home Economic Labs, the soup has been ladled into bowls….

Coyote: Okay, Raven! Soup is ready!

Raven: Ah Coyote….uh, this soup doesn’t smell too good…it smells kind of strange.

Coyote: That’s because when you removed it from heat, those black suits snuck in here
and threw in their conditional processes, categorical dichotomies, disciplinary boundaries
and essentialist universalities.

Raven: Black suits, you mean those people who sweet-talked me into giving them my
secret stash of salmon skin and my collection of eagle feathers?

Coyote: The very ones. You gotta watch out there Raven, can’t have a good soup,
without mutual respect and trust.

Raven: Trust! Who cares about that, those eagle feathers have been in my family for
generations. They were gonna get me into the best salmon feast of the year!
I want to begin here by sketching out to you the territory of common threads that have made the map of what I shall call Haida/cultural pedagogy in relation to the Haida Heritage Centre. During the time that I have lived and worked here, in and out of ‘traditional’ education spaces, I have seen and experienced a wide range of perspectives and projects that have formed this archipelago of knowledge production and its practices. From the preschools, re-orienting their curriculum towards the Haida methodologies and content to the Haida Child and Family Services researching Haida pedagogy within archival texts, to the secondary schools implementing new strategies and programs in and out of the school setting, the whole of Haida Gwaii seems to be taking up the challenge of finding a new ‘radical pedagogy’ in order to ‘reawaken the imagination’ and find their own ‘inside-out’ model which will help them to address the challenges they face (Smith, 2003).

As E.P. Thompson has written, “There is no such thing as economic growth which is not, at the same time, growth and change of a culture” (cited in Dutton & Hurst Mann, 1996, p.163). The Haida culture has indeed changed and like all other Indigenous communities around the globe it looks to pedagogy to help lead others to know their world and values, so that they can responsibly pass forward knowledge which will lead their Nation to culturally balanced growth. Looking at pedagogy as the process of ‘leading others to knowing’ allows us to see that it is a political project, complete with questions about who will decide, how to stimulate curiosity, where a person is able to go, what they will see and how they will investigate just to start.
Western pedagogies for and about Indigenous people are rife with challenges, and the need to develop new ways of knowing, representing and exchanging has been taken up by hundreds of Indigenous scholars around the world. This is born out of the desire to address the effects of colonization, cultural genocide through the creation of spaces which are ethical. The global movements of Indigenous scholarship within the islands of education have blossomed over the last few years but in my research I have found only limited amounts of Indigenous pedagogical scholarship which specifically addresses Indigenous cultural centres, art galleries or museums and the ways they lead others, through Indigenous ways, to know.

As the narratives within this thesis have become synthesized and woven together it became apparent to me that pedagogy, here in this space, place and concept, is both cultural and political, inseparable in their relationship. And that Haida pedagogy, demonstrated through the voices of my co-researchers and the experiences I have been honoured with, is a process of leading others to know the relationships that are important within this world called Haida Gwaii. From our relationships to land, sea and animals; to the relationships between ourselves here; and on to our relationship to our audiences in the global world, we are all in a matrix of relationship building, trading and journeying towards growth, balance, openness and sometimes, consciously or unconsciously, towards a narrowness which produces cultural suppression as a by-product.

By viewing cultural pedagogy as a relationship pedagogy one can sidestep ethnocentrism or multiculturalism and instead put the focus on the questions regarding your place within the circle, your situationality, educational methods, teachings, practices, policies and lenses. Thus it becomes a critical pedagogy but only insofar as one
can speak about their place in the circle, from their perspective, while leaving others to talk from their own.

By placing the perspective of the Heritage Centre in first person it tells me, in their own words and ways, that the Haida people and culture is a complex, indefinable, and living culture. The Heritage Centre illuminates the relationships it has created with western knowledge and technologies, while at the same time holding onto their own knowledges, practices and purposes. Thus, it reveals to me the ugliness of ‘modernism’ and its assumed ruptures, dislocations, disconnects and definitions. The Haida Gwaii community has eloquently shown me, through various cultural productions, that there is a conscious effort to transcend definitions about themselves and their cultural practices. These re-iterations of who they are not only replaces the myth that they ‘lost their culture’, it seeks balance within the community, opens communications with others and maintains the relationships with the outside world on which they depend.

Haida pedagogy, which I have no doubt is as old as time, is illuminated in the Heritage Centre and the community and is continuing the tradition of relationship building in order to pass knowledge forward so that others can witness their evolving, transforming and living culture. I have seen that Haida pedagogy is not always outwardly critical. Often it is a passionate and persevering re-iteration of knowledge that illuminates the possibilities of another way. Through eloquently sharing stories and knowledge, the dedication to the dreams of the community are revealed. At the recent environmental assessment hearings for the proposed Enbridge bitumen pipeline, the Haida community came out to share, repeat, teach others about their cultural values, practices, dreams and desires to any who would listen, both in the room and over the radio waves. By placing
cultural values in the centre of its circle, these orations took on a political and moral imperative in a world that is still full of the knots of power and control lingering on from our colonial past. This cultural pedagogical moment lead me to know more about the relationships that are important within this community and see the common threads between the various activities. Whether that is in the work of the repatriation committees, the language classes at SHIP or the work of Gwaii Haanas, I have been led to know how these productions work to create understanding, empowerment, belonging, identity, responsibility and respect for ethical, equitable and relevant ‘disruptive daydreaming’ which might find a solution to the present state of cultural genocide.

Education and disruptive daydreaming share a common project: the production of hopeful images. That is the production of images that which is not yet’ that provoke people to consider, and inform them in considering, what would have to be done for things to be otherwise (Simon, 1992, pg. 2).

The act of dreaming the Haida Heritage Centre and producing a site of hopeful images is a political act that provokes the visitor to look, listen and learn from the relationships that are important here, that have been silenced elsewhere. Pedagogy itself is a cultural production, which aims to produce ‘educated’ citizens for a community. It is inherently a political process and thus changes with the evolving political, moral and ethical imperatives of its community. Cultural pedagogy is a way of being and becoming conscious of your culture. It aims to guide its audience to know the culture while being aware of where both the voice and ear comes from, through which voice does it speak, with what cultural baggage is it surrounded and in what cultural direction does it want to go. It is oriented towards the recovery of subjugated knowledge, to construct new relationalities, to revive community capacity and agency and continue the journey towards cultural healing and democracy.
Viewing the Haida Heritage Centre through the frame of cultural pedagogy reveals its embodied values of relationships, respect for all and for difference and the responsibility of First Person voice. First Person perspective is imperative for cultural democracy and the goals of the Ethical Space of Engagement (Ermine, 2007). Pedagogy is viewed here from the Haida perspective, acknowledging its ownership, voice, agency, points of reference, vision spaces and political, economic and social goals. Haida pedagogy within the Haida Heritage Centre aims to lead others to know that respectful, relevant and responsible relationships to land, sea, kin, ancestors, supernatural beings and others in their world is important to being and becoming Haida.

The Haida Heritage Centre, with its tangential relationships to projects in the community demonstrates perseverance to the continuation, recovery, voicing, co-generating and archiving of knowledge once thought to asleep or stolen. As a tangential becoming itself, out of the visions and actions of the greater Haida Gwaii community, the Haida Heritage Centre is inseparable from the activities outside its walls.

Haida cultural pedagogy is wholistic and relational; it acknowledges the competing, overlapping, symbiotic and interrelated nature of relationships; it works through visioning pedagogy as sharing and facilitating, so that all can learn and co-generate together; that Haida styles of learning like apprenticeship, mentorship and trained knowledge keepers are valuable, productive and can re-awaken knowledge when the time is right; that it engages in relationship-building through practices and processes rather than control and that repeated participation, listening and experiences are needed in order for knowledge to become internalized.

Throughout the four years of working and experiencing here I have been
constantly reminded through the work of many of the cultural workers, no matter what ‘island’ they inhabit, that they are moving towards these goals. Depending on who you talk to, this new pedagogy of place, people, sea and land began in earnest after the *Athlii Gwaii* (Lyell Island) blockade, after repatriation, after the ‘re-awakening’ or after the pole raising. And it seems to pop up all over the islands. During the year that I was the program co-ordinator for the Haida Gwaii Childcare Resource and Referral, I was going to no fewer than two ‘pedagogical revisioning’ events each week. This led me to research the potential of a ‘disruptive daydream’ or Haida pedagogy for the whole community. Others have now taken up that project and while I could add a myriad of other projects to this map that is best left for other researchers.

However, the thread that winds itself through this archipelago of a concept is that this place, the Haida Heritage Centre, is ‘in relation to’ the activities underway in and around its property line. While the Haida Heritage Centre at *Kaay Llnagaay* offers the space, programs and services to the community, through reciprocity, the community participates in making the centre a living culture unto itself. Stressing friendly and respectful engagement the relationships that have been created span the globe as Indigenous and non-indigenous people from far and wide come to visit the islands and learn from the successes of the Haida people. Our identities, as Indigenous people, our values and epistemologies are learned and shaped from a cultural context. With the coming of residential and Western-based schools came pedagogical disruption and a fall out with the generations that followed. Whole communities, including Haida Gwaii feel the repercussions, the disjunctions in intergenerational pedagogies and practices. The Haida Heritage Centre as a community place for the transmission of knowledge works
towards supporting intergenerational learning thus re-awakening traditional methods of learning.

By viewing pedagogy through a cultural lens, whether you are a Haida, an Englishman or work in the stock market world, the theory that supports pedagogy is consequently framed from the position in which it was created. Theory uses filters and tools to make sense of its world and transmit it to others. Cultural pedagogy allows us to see clearly how knowledge is constructed, marginalized and appropriated. It also allows its students non-judgmentally inspect and reflect upon the values, policies and practices that are used opening up opportunities for seeing other ways of becoming. All cultures change, and thus conscious decisions can be made to change the directions we take for the betterment of our world. But this is contingent on a willingness to look, listen and acknowledge that as humans, who make mistakes, we can learn from the past and take lessons from others with whom we are 'in relation to'.

First Nations may hold a key to survival, not only of their own cultures, but of the species and environment that were integral to the well-being of their community. There are opportunities to develop new relationships with natural resources in Canada but changes will be required-in values in institutions, and in public policies. Raven, who created the Haida world, had many human qualities and made mistakes that humans where meant to learn from. Canadian society, in turn, needs to accept its limitations in managing modern fisheries, become aware of the spirit and inherent value of other living beings, and become more connected to place if fisheries are to survive into the new millennium (Jones and Williams-Davidson, 2000, p. 113).

Today, like many Indigenous communities, the Haida Gwaii community is revisioning itself within its acculturated world. It has held on to their unique worldview, born out of deeply rooted cultural beliefs, despite the huge losses that they have endured as a community. Immersed within a broader field of western culture and using its
technologies and educational tools they are working towards meeting the challenges ahead in this increasingly global and corporate world. Many of the productions underway in Haida Gwaii today are attempts at maintaining a healthy balance between Western and Haida paradigms, that have been married together in the acculturation process, while keeping Haida culture front and center to all their approaches.

As a hybrid, boundary crosser and paradigm illuminator I readily see the challenges of living with the two worlds I inhabit. My Cree/Métis canoe is complete with its mismatching of cultural values and perspectives. The Haida proverb “the world is as sharp as a knife” illustrates eloquently this careful balancing of needs, desires and quality in relationships. The Haida people, like myself, are finding ways to live in both the world of Western knowledge while re-iterating, regenerating and archiving their own knowledge and ways of knowing.

The cultural/ecological resistance and revival of the Haida Nation is a wonderful example of its attempts at ‘dancing on the edge’ within the margins of self-determination, for the good of all beings living within their island communities. This dialogue allows for a Haida/ization process in which to re-iterate, regenerate and renew values, approaches and knowledge that may well show the rest of the world how to solve some of the crises that face our planet.

Traditional (e.g. environmental education) and alternative (e.g. ecojustice) ways of engaging people in existential questions about the way human beings and other species live on this Earth run the risk of being marginalized or excluded. The same holds true for individuals and communities wishing to deal with such questions in a self-determined, relatively autonomous, and contextually grounded way (Jickling and Wals, 2008, p.18).

This risk is one that many in the Haida community continue to take for the culture was very close to slipping on that edge called assimilation but for the trust in their
cultural values. As Miles Richardson recently told the community at the Athlii Gwaii (Lyell Island) anniversary celebrations, “[w]e’re celebrating a moment where our generation took matters into our own … To all the young people, just remember … if we trust our culture and pull together, anything is possible” (cited in Haida Laas, December, 2010, p. 8). This trust, in the relationships to the land, sea and people is eloquently written into the Haida Land Use Vision,

Yah’guudang—our respect for all living things—celebrates the ways our lives and spirits are intertwined and honors the responsibility we hold to future generations…about knowing our place in the web of life, and how the fate of our culture runs parallel with the fate of the ocean, sky and forest (Council of the Haida Nation, 2007, p. 4).

By repeatedly reiterating their trust in cultural values through relationships the Haida are illustrating to others a cultural pedagogy that places the fate of Haida culture in the hands of future generations and their ability to be learn about themselves and the important relationships in their world. These representations and reiterations illustrate the importance of culture and its pedagogical moments within its performance. The greater Haida Gwaii community is starting to pick up on this culturally intrinsic pedagogy in a wide range of ways.

Joanne Yovanovich, who was born into the Skidegate Ts’aahl Eagle clan, works as the Principal of Aboriginal Education for School District 50, Haida Gwaii, B.C. Within the time that Joanne has held her position, she has seen a great deal of change within her field. With the signing of a School Board’s Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement, which took eleven years to negotiate and many people to create, the District looks ahead to addressing their population proactively and creatively.
The Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement with the provincial government is described by Joanne Yovanovich thusly:

The purpose of the Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement is to enhance the educational success of Aboriginal students. It is the belief of all of the partners to this agreement that enhancing the achievement of Aboriginal students requires changes that will benefit all students in the district. It is our vision that we must prepare the next generations to adapt to, live in, and flourish in a rapidly changing world, which our students must be an integral part of. The appendix of our agreement includes a timeline that notes important dates of Haida Gwaii and it begins with the beginning of time for Haida Gwaii. During many of our discussions we often had to go back to see where and why things were and to also determine our future educational direction (Yovanovich, personal communication, February, 3rd, 2012).

By including this new timeline, the agreement acknowledges that the cultural history of the Haida people is valid and important to the informing of students cultural values, identities and relationships to their past, whether they are Haida or non-Haida. Joanne Yovanovich sees first-hand the challenges that come with educating a changing and growing population. As with many other First Nation communities in the north, Haida youth are now the majority of students in the district at 64%, bringing with these numbers the slow transformation of its educational system. “Really it is about our survival and perseverance. Our population is now growing,” she states (Yovanovich, personal communication, February, 3rd, 2012).

But with a changing, conscientizing and decolonizing world comes the search for new educational programs and opportunities and the Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay Llnagaay plays a part of this process. With a very successful Haida language program in the schools, the permanent language exhibit in the Haida Heritage Centre functions as a bridge to community based learning, embedding school learning and allowing students to
perform their language in the public space.

Joanne Yovanovich sees the many benefits for youth in the Centre to include employment opportunities, economic spin-offs and tangential educational programming that is specifically developed with the Haida people in mind. Education, both on and off the site, bridges and connects school, community and home life. This relational value is important to Haida cultural pedagogy. With the highest graduation rates amongst First Nations communities in BC, the Haida struggle with keeping young adults within their community (Yovanovich, personal communication, February, 3rd, 2012). With only small satellite offices on the islands, the Northwest community college, a tenant at the Heritage Centre, struggles to create relevant programming for its tiny population. This is due to a number of factors and economics plays a major role.

The Kaay Llnagaay hosts many educational opportunities for its visitors to learn about Haida knowledge, history, culture, pedagogy, their communities and their culture through community based programming and pedagogical collaborations. But many of these courses are either not accredited or irrelevant to the changing economic reality which has shifted from a predominantly resource based community increasingly to an eco/tourism/government based economy. With the vast majority of young people leaving the islands for education, the remaining population is left with limited education opportunities. Many individuals slip through the administrational cracks and it leaves the remaining population vulnerable to unemployment, welfare and a number of other rural Indigenous challenges.

Joanne asks, “[d]o we want them to stay here and not be self sufficient? No, that is my personal position anyways” (Ibid, February, 3rd, 2012). Joanne who is actively...
working towards creating educational opportunities throughout the community sees relationships as the core to starting educational projects. “We are collaborating with Gwaii Haanas to create respectful and meaningful relationships. Gwaii Haanas has offered many varied programs to our schools, that work cannot occur without positive relationships with school and community” (Yovanovich, personal communication, February, 3rd, 2012).

One of the largest contributions made to the Haida Heritage Centre and its museum was helping to generate knowledge for the book Gina ‘Waadluxan Tluu, The Everything Canoe, the recently published book on the Haida canoe and its relationships to the Haida culture. As a resource book for community members and teachers, it provides a portal through which educators can enter Haida culture. Brainstorming with a team of researchers, Joanne assisted in creating supporting guides for the School District which bridges the book’s content into curriculum ‘how to’s’. These include fieldtrips to Kaay llnagaay, what to do and see there and, perhaps more importantly, how to bring the learning back into the classroom. The “Gina book”, as the canoe book is known here, has allowed educators to see how cultural pedagogy can be used to transform education into a more relevant way.

Another project, tangentially related, is the book “‘Tluuwaay ‘Waadługan Mathematical Adventures 2011”, edited by Dr. Cynthia Nicol and Joanne Yovanovich (2010), a companion to Gina Waadlugan Tluu The Everything Canoe. It was designed to expand awareness and relationships with the land sea, and sky and transform possibilities for teaching and learning mathematics. This book compels us to learn more about Haida mathematics, Haida culture and how ‘everything is connected’. “Our hope with this book
is that it will serve as a valuable resource to teachers who strive to have a culturally responsive classroom and that the community will see themselves respectfully reflected through this work” (Yovanovich, personal communication, February, 3rd, 2012).

And finally for this chapter, but not for Haida cultural pedagogy, was another important and successful program that Joanne recently assisted in implementing, in collaboration with the Skidegate Health Centre. Canoe Journeys, a program for youth, uses a wholistic and culturally intrinsic pedagogy to address self-esteem, addiction, healthy lifestyles choices and suicide prevention. Imported from a Cree First Nation, the modules values and epistemologies were very similar to those of the Haida. However, some content needed to be translated into Haida cultural pedagogy and through this translation/transformation, it not only made scaffolding much easier for teachers and students, but added another rhetorical device to the list of tools used in school programs. This program, held within a number of sites, including the Heritage Centre, allows Haida and non-Haida youth to see first-hand how, through practicing and performing culture, healing and healthy living can be learned.

These concepts and methods which include the ‘passing forward’, ‘leading others to know’, the ‘listening to the lessons from the ancestors’ and the ‘waking up and being storytellers’ all seek to describe how the people here are “living through a profound and transformative era of cultural rebirth, regeneration and expansion. All of us as Canadians are better for it” (Wade Davis, cited in Steedman & Collison, 2012, p. 12).
Re: Visuality, Re: Haida Cultural Visuality…

“One way or another we are living the stories planted in us early or along the way, or we are also living the stories we planted—knowingly or unknowingly—in ourselves. We live stories that either give our lives meaning or negate it with meaninglessness. If we change the stories we live by, quite possibly we change our lives” (Ben Okri, 1997, cited in King, 2003, p.153).

I want to now turn my canoe, as an Indigenous artist/researcher/cultural producer, to the task of mapping out the archipelago of what I term ‘Indigenous cultural visuality’. Keeping in mind the vast differences between individual cultures there seems to be common threads that run through my research with Indigenous ‘artists’ around the globe and here in Haida Gwaii. To be clear, my use of the word ‘artist’ is a tentative one as there is no word for art in either the Cree or Haida languages. There are many words however to describe the concept of producing objects, with good intentions and good hands, creatively or with a pedagogical purpose. ‘Artist’ used here is a very large island, encompassing all cultural workers who seek to make visual, in any form of representation, their culture. I also want to call attention to the term ‘making visual’ which does not mean to discount orality or other senses but rather it aims to emphasize the way we ‘see things’ in our minds as we engage with the cultural productions in our worlds. From researcher, to politician; from filmmaker, to fire-side storyteller, the ‘artist’ is one who assembles meaning from a wide variety of sources, using a multitude of mediums, to pass knowledge forward for others to ‘see’, imagine, enjoy, interpret, comprehend and enfold within their own memories and archives. Just as we see the characters of Raven and Coyote as we read these words, so too do I, the author see them as I write these words on my computer screen.

While much has been written about Haida art, there is very little Haida literature
that uses Haida narratives and perspectives to explain the ways that contemporary Haida artists are fusing their traditional values, aesthetics and pedagogies with Western systems. Nicola Levell in her soon to be published paper “Haida goes pop! Transpacific graphics and Indigenous narratives” (in press, 2012) writes that the art of Michael Nicol Yahgulanaas, the ‘Haida-manga guy’, explodes the traditional canon of Indigenous Northwest Coast art through its transculturation of Haida form lines and oral histories with manga, the Japanese genre of graphic illustration. This process of art creation she argues, invigorates and extends Haida visuality beyond the dominant forms of expression that are bought and sold within galleries around the world. I would like to add that this explosion is the tangential result of ‘Others’ realizing, through critique and deconstruction, that the boundaries that have been put in place by Western disciplines are understood to be flawed, lacking and inadequate. In their silencing and misunderstanding of the complex meanings, relationships, goals and creative practices within Indigenous cultural visuality, what is not seen is that Indigenous cultural visuality is a constantly evolving, transforming and re-building project which uses relationships through the endless array of tools, technologies and mediums to express itself. This includes transculturation but also includes many other practices and mediums. The Haida have always used the tools of the day to teach the stories of the past and Michael continues in this ‘tradition’.

As Schmidt has written, “technology is the expression and product of a way of thinking and a set of values” (1980, p. xi). Through Haida culture visuality and its productions, such as Yahgulanaas’ work and the work of many other Haida artists, as well as the Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay Llnagaay, the Haida have married their two
worlds in relationships that are both sophisticated and communally driven. As Levell points out, the Haida manga narratives circulate to others around the globe, a different way of being and becoming. Expanding on this, I add that Yahgulanaas uses the medium of the manga to serve as pedagogical tool for this message, that the living culture that is Haida refuses boundaries and definitions.

Indigenous cultural visuality is a pedagogical tool that helps audiences to learn that the detachment and alienations created from delineations like ‘modernity’ ‘traditional’ and ‘primitive’ are wrongfully silencing a way of being that has not ruptured itself from its past, its spirituality and all its relations within this matrix called the global world. As Steven Leuthod (1998, p. 4) writes,

[detachment and alienation result from a culture that seems mechanical, ugly, dehumanized-in a word, soulless. Have non-natives lost a sense of grace and elegance that others have retained, lost ways to deal with the most essential aspects of our existence: birth, death, spirit, or life force?

He asks non-native cultural workers to rethink the aesthetic purposes of Indigenous art. I believe that it is not just the aesthetic purposes but pedagogical purposes we need to examine as well. Pedagogy cannot be separated from aesthetics, politics or any other cultural tool within our social field. The call by Indigenous artists for self-representation is a reflection of the dawning awareness that “the social construction of the visual field has to be continuously replayed as the visual construction of the social field” (Mitchell, 2002, p. 176). With the ‘social field’ within the Indigenous world being full of the effects of colonization, the resulting ‘visual constructions’ re-iterate, reflect, represent and regenerate the contemporary cultural values, beliefs and knowledges that are chosen, by the ‘artist’, to be shared with others. Whether this is a painting, or the images we create in our minds as we comprehend an oral story, these ‘images’ are constructed by the
‘artist’ in an attempt to help others understand or ‘see something’.

Thus, Indigenous cultural visuality is a political project. It allows both the creator and the audience to explore the politics of identity, representation, community affiliation, global relationship building, economic development, aesthetics and spirituality (McMaster and Trafzer, 2004). It pushes at the boundaries that have been imposed upon Indigenous people as a way of poking and expanding the dialogue so that there may be “other ways to narrate our histories rather than through art or anthropology, or from a “reductive” treatment of the colonized” (Loretta Todd, cited in Davis, Segger, Irvine, 1996, p.77). Indigenous cultural visuality is about the ‘creator’ taking responsibility. As filmmaker Victor Masayesva Jr. states, the Indigenous ‘artist’ has

[T]he accountability built into him. The white man doesn't have that. That's the single big distinction. Accountability as an individual, as a clan, as a tribal, as a family member. That's where we're at as Indian filmmakers. We want to start participating [in] and developing an Indian aesthetic. And there is such a thing as an Indian aesthetic, and it begins in the sacred (cited in Leuthold, 1998, p. 1).

As I read and come to understand the voices of Indigenous people around the world, I see that the sacred, the spiritual and the ceremony are used in object making as a way to remain connected, through relationships, to the power of this universe to create, to bless and to renew the world (McMaster and Trafzer, 2004). “Why were these ceremonies developed?...Ceremony was the entry point to knowledge-it helped us to begin to understand” (Jones, 2008, p. 20). Kwiaahwah Jones goes on to ask the scientific world whether they will take the opportunity to find a wholistic and ceremonial approach, by honouring Indigenous knowledge, which may be able to address the issues facing our worlds.

Ceremony, performed through our bodies, minds and spirit, maintains the vital
relationships we need and demonstrates our thankfulness for the bounty of this world. This is a relationship that is a central totem to much of the Haida cultural productions that I have been a part of. Often it cannot be explained, analyzed, or understood as Western epistemologies have ruptured themselves from their spirituality in an attempt to be scientific and rational. Scientific language cannot incorporate these concepts easily because it has been born from a very different place for a very different purpose and uses a very different language. And as the languages of Indigenous people are being endangered and lost, so too go the ways of interpreting their art from their own relational positions, within their own relational languages.

Haida Elder Taalgyaa’adad, (Betty Richardson) explains her perspective on the importance of the endangered Haida language. “To me, Xaayda kil means the continuation of our very being, what it means to be on this Earth. To be able to pass something down to the younger people will be a sign that we were here, and are here, and we will continue on in this world as a nation” (2011). The Haida language is spoken fluently by only a handful of Elders and attempts are being made to teach younger people but it is a very difficult task with the bombardment of the English language. Like Dr. Suess’s ‘Star On and Star Off Machine’ (2004), the effects of residential school, television, computers, ipods and school systems have taken their toll. Haida cultural visuality is working to address this with exhibitions on the Haida language that honours the Elders who have persevered and continued to persevere in the teaching, recording and translating despite the cultural holocaust.

The wide range of cultural productions within the Haida Heritage Centre, and the Centre itself as a production, demonstrates to its audience how the ‘living culture’ that is
Haida is producing more than what is ‘traditionally’ perceived as Haida art. Despite the fact that Haida aesthetics are so well recognized by others around the globe and that we might look at Haida style as evidence of their historical continuity (Leuthold, 1998), Haida cultural visuality is a larger archipelago of knowledge, practice and mediums. Haida cultural visuality is easily seen through the production of totem poles, canoes, songs and dances. But within the site of the Heritage Centre much more is revealed or made visual. These values, relationships and beliefs are embedded in the architecture, the operations, the relationships amongst staff and community, the land and sea that it is connected to and the audience with which it engages.

The Haida identity is a complex one, full of transculturations, exchanges, intermarriages, and local/global relationships. And while the historical ethnocentrism of Western philosophy allows me to illuminate the commonalities and make connections beneath the umbrella ‘Indigenous’ I caution you that universalisms are dangerous. The Haida cultural ‘trimmings' are not the same as others. They are unique responses formed over thousands of years, out of the land, sea, sky and their beings and becomings. And when I ask ‘what is Haida art?’ the answers are either not forthcoming or are inconclusive. As Haida carver George Martynuik sees it, “No one can say for sure. I don’t think there is an answer, every carver is different, no one can say what Haida art is cause it is seen through the eyes of the carver, not through theirs” (personal communication, February, 12th, 2012). His statement illuminates the complexity of representation and that even the term Haida is a complex construct. But many of the artists with whom I have spoken, whether they are assemblers of written knowledge, orators, bentwood box makers, singers or carvers, believe that being a Haida cultural
worker and making things visual to others means being responsible to both themselves and their communities. As carver Marcel Russ said, “I teach my artwork to keep my culture alive and make sure the next generation has something to understand who they are” (personal communication, June 15th, 2010). The Haida Heritage Centre has eloquently illustrated to me that it is a living thing, and as Bill Reid has said, “great art must be a living thing, or it is not art at all” (Heritage Recreated, 1977, p. 26).

And as I turn my canoe south, towards the University finish line, I leave the last words to my most appreciated author who has written, “Equilibrium [characterized by resistance to ideology], in the Western Experience, is dependent not just on criticism, but on non-conformism in the public place” (Saul, 1995, p. 194). By not conforming to the traditional model of cultural institutions elsewhere in the world, the Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay Llnagaay shows us that we are all called to become ravens, coyotes and other tricksters in revealing, Indigenizing and re-visioning the world in which we live. It is the tensions, warps and wefts that not only make us human but will ensure our survival and sustain us until tomorrow. We are all woven into this global blanket called planet earth. The threads of love, spirit, nurturance and viability are, in some places, wearing thin. But like the Haida it is possible to reweave new stories through pushing the boundaries and illuminating the potential for relationality within our public institutions. Perhaps, through the positioning of culture as central to all learning we can see that it will take all of us, as threads, coming from place, to create solutions. By looking into our hearts, minds and wallets we can find the solutions today for our children tomorrow.

Haawa, Marsi, Thank you
And Now From the Desk of Coyote…

Say, now that should shed some light on things—but I shall go further.

The fur is mightier than the pen!

Does that help? Well, perhaps it is time for a confession….

I am not a monologic dialogic or an authoritarian, but I can do great impressions. I write fictions and fantasies all with great doses of the truth. My tales are tails that wag this way and that, depending on how I feel, and! Using the words of one of my ancestors, my stories are not meant for Indian people, but for thinking people! People who don’t want answers, but those who want more questions.

So, if I tell you a story, do not dare to steal it, appropriate it or deconstruct it without my consent. I admit, that it is indeed a little frightful, but perhaps that is what makes this life so delightful…

Remaining always,

Coyote
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(Gud Al Tla Daal: Journeying along in a fleet of canoes)


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Appendix A: Summary of Research, Letter of Introduction

(This letter was sent to the Haida Heritage Centre Board, Gwaii Haanas Staff, The Haida Gwaii Museum Board, Skidegate Band Council and The Haida Heritage Centre staff members)

Marnie Smith, MA candidate,
Center for Cross Faculty Inquiry, UBC

To the members of the (Skidegate Band Council):

My name is Marnie Smith and I am presently undertaking research towards my MA at the University of BC. Some of you may already know me, for when I moved to Haida Gwaii I was the woman running around documenting the opening of the Kaay Llnagaay. The grand opening was a thrilling event with the hopes and dreams of an ongoing Haida/ization permeating the interviews I was honoured with. It was through the wonderful relationships and experiences I have had living in your land that I decided to embark on this research project.

The purpose of this project is to document the knowledge, held within the community, regarding the conceptualization, creation and meanings of the Kaay Llnagaay. It is hoped that through this project the local and global community may be better positioned to understand the unique nature of its “cultural pedagogy” that has been formed directly out of your efforts. Around the world other Indigenous communities are looking towards cultural centers of their own and the story of the Kaay can serve to both celebrate your accomplishments and inform others about its successes and challenges.

The project seeks to create a 'map' of the knowledge on the Kaay Llnagaay, which will remain here in the community as a testament to the success of the Haida Gwaii community. ‘Heritage’ for Indigenous people incorporates all that is worth protecting; nurturing and passing forward to others and its presentation engulfs a vast array of cultural islands connected to both the tangible object and intangible concept. Culture is a lived experience based upon the stories of the past with an eye to aspirations of the future. This vibrancy sets the Kaay apart from western institutions. The creation of Indigenous cultural institutions challenge mainstream notions about culture, education, resource and community-based development. They act as strategies towards community, environmental and economic regeneration.

This research will show others how that the Kaay Llnagaay is a unique, hybrid and place-based educational site; that through the efforts of community social action the Haida community have always engaged with ‘voice’ but are now moving towards re-connection and regeneration. By placing culture as a central totem of community development Haida ways of being are nurtured and that cultural centers are successful in many different ways for Indigenous people.

I hope that you will join me in supporting this project and that you feel
comfortable becoming involved, sharing your stories for both your community and for others around the world. But most importantly, I wish to thank all of you, for the Haida Nation has inspired me with its dedication to culture and persistent loving spirit.

If you have any questions about this research please feel free to contact me at any time.

Howa'a, Tansi, Thank you,
Marnie Smith
Appendix B: Co-researcher’s Informed Consent form

Informed Consent Form  “The Kaay Project”  1 of 2

Study name:

Indigenous Cultural Pedagogy: Exploring the cultural islands of the Kaay Llnagaay, known as “The Kaay Project”

Date:____________________

Researchers: Marnie smith (Cree/Metis) MA candidate, Center for Cross Faculty Inquiry, U.B.C.

Purpose of the Research: This research seeks to explore the meanings, values and processes behind the creation of the Haida Heritage Center at Kaay Llnagaay and to honour the cultural capacity involved in its development.

What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research: You are being asked to share your stories and knowledge about the Kaay Llnagaay and the relationships and meanings that you may have with this place and you will be able to see the final video footage and transcriptions.

Risks and Discomforts:
I do not foresee any risks or discomforts from your participation in the research.

Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You: The research will create an archive of knowledge on the creation, meanings and functions of the Kaay Llnagaay through written, audio and video recordings. All data generated will be the property of the Haida Gwaii museum but may be used for educational purposes by myself.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision to withdraw will not influence the nature of the ongoing relationship you have with UBC or myself.

Confidentiality: All information you supply which will be recorded through photocopying, note-taking, audio or video recordings and will be held in confidence. Unless you specifically indicate your consent, your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. Your data will be safely stored in a password encoded computer and only I will have access to this information. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

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Questions About the Research? If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact Dr. Peter Cole or Tanu Lusignan at the Heritage Centre.
(This research has been reviewed by the University of B.C.’s office of Research Ethics and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines.)

Legal Rights and Signatures:

Date____________________________

I______________________________, consent to participate in “The Kaay Project” conducted by Marnie Smith. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to co-research. My signature below indicates my consent.

I agree to video recording _____ I agree to notes___________
I agree to be named___________ I agree to remain anonymous_______

Signature_______________________________
Co-researcher

Signature_______________________________
Principle Investigator
Appendix C: Advertisement of the project.

This Advertisement for recruitment was placed in the local paper and 2 community posters.

Mapping the Kaay Llnagaay: Cultural Regeneration and Pedagogy in Haida Gwaii. The community of Haida Gwaii is cordially invited to participate in a research project at the Kaay Llnagaay every Friday and Saturday in the canoe house, starting November 4th. The purpose of the project is to gather your stories and thoughts about what this place means to you! Come and help Marnie Smith, MA candidate at UBC map out our islands of knowledge. Together we will come up with a 'visual map' to show how our community has created something unique and inspiring for the whole world. Email Marnie at __________ for more information.
Appendix D: Project principles of Respectful Research

(This was included with the letter of introduction and given to all co-researchers)

The Kaay Llnagaay research project is informed by the following principles:

· That I am responsible, as researcher, for my work within the Haida Gwaii community.
· That Haida culture, traditions and knowledge are respected and knowledge shared will be used responsibly and ethically.
· That I conceive and conduct the research as a partner.
· That I consult those in the Haida Gwaii community who have relevant expertise.
· That I involve them in the design of the project wherever possible and relevant.
· That the best efforts are made to ensure respectful, responsible and relevant research at all times.
· That all co-researchers will be acknowledged in the ways that they have asked.
· That the community will have an opportunity to respond, reflect, and react to the research findings.
· That the Haida Heritage Centre Society would hold hard copies of all generated data.