Yaxa Uḵwine’, yaxa Gukw, ḋuwa da ḡwa Awiṅagwis
“The Body, the House, and the Land”:
The Conceptualization of Space in Kwakwaka’wakw Language and Culture

by

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B.F.A., Emily Carr University of Art & Design, 1996
M.F.A., University of Victoria, 1999
M.A., University of Victoria, 2005

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in the Departments of Linguistics and Anthropology

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University of Victoria

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Kwak’wala is an endangered language spoken by the Kwakwaka’wakw First Nations of the central coast of British Columbia. This dissertation seeks to address the ramifications of Kwak’wala language loss to Kwakwaka’wakw cultural worldview. It asks the general question, “How much of an effect does Kwak’wala language loss have on cultural understanding?” It seeks to answer the question through a specific analysis of the concept of space mapped through linguistic and artistic expression. The concept of space is integral to the understanding of the body in relationship to objects, people, social structure and geographic conceptualization. Through linguistic morphological analysis a corpus of approximately 600 word and phrase examples drawn from the linguistic documentation of Franz Boas and George Hunt, David Grubb, the website First Voices and contemporary Kwak’wala speakers was analyzed for semantic content (meaning). The content (meanings of words and phrases) was then contextualized into broader cultural expressions and beliefs through prototype theory, radial
categorization, metaphor and analogy. The dissertation then explores the connections between “linguistic” spatial expression represented through words and speech with what can be considered as “non-linguistic” cultural expressions such as architecture, social structure, performance and visual art. Four major visual works were created that sought to express aspects of the spatial concepts that were emerging from the Kwak’wala linguistic study. Ultimately, the research reveals a strong spatial mapping process between the human body, the architecture of “the house” and the landscape traditionally occupied by the Kwak'wala'wakw which results in a metaphorical conceptualization of Body=House=Land/World which can be said to exist in Kwak’wala language forms and translates as highly productive in cultural manifestations. With the replacement of Kw’wala by English the strength of this metaphor is weakened but not eradicated within Kwakwaka’wakw cultural expression.
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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my grandparents Charles Eaton Willie [Al Sewidi], (1910-1964)
and Emily Mary Willie, [Wadzidalaga] nee Scow (1911-1956) and my mother Gloria Grace
Willie ['Kixsisalas] of the Kwikwasut'inuxw, Dzawada'enuxw, Haxwa'mis and Kwagu'l tribes
of the Kwakwaka'wakw Nations.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Dream of Ha’etla’las

I dreamed last night of a pretty woman who came to call me to pick cranberries.

We went inland. Then we saw many cranberries and blueberry bushes which were hanging down with many blueberries hanging from the points (of the branches) and so we shook them into our berry picking baskets. Then our berry picking baskets were full. I awoke after that. Then Ha’etla’las knew that she was going to keep alive until the season of cranberry picking (Boas, 1925, p. 7).

1.1 Problem statement

Kwak’wala, the language spoken by the Kwakwaka’wakw First Nations is endangered as a living language. The Kwakwaka’wakw First Nations are comprised of approximately 17 tribes who share a common language and culture (Jonaitis, 1991). They occupy the northeastern portion of Vancouver Island and the adjacent mainland coast of British Columbia, Canada. Formerly known within Anthropology as the Kwakiutl, the Kwakwaka’wakw self-identify as “The
Kwak’wala speaking peoples.” (Galois, 1994). Kwak’wala is linguistically delineated as a
Wakashan language. As such it shares both linguistic characteristics and coastal geographic
affiliation with six other tribal groups; the Haisla, the Heiltsuk, the Awikinuxw, the Makah, the
Nitinah and the Nuu-chah-nuth (Lincoln & Rath, 1980; Grubb 1969). In contemporary times
the Kwak’wala language is now endangered due to massive population decline through
introduced disease, colonial oppression and the historic assimilationist policies of the Canadian
Government carried out over the last 160 years (Anonby, 1997; Boyd, 1999; Duff, 1997; Ray,
2010). How much longer the Kwakwaka’wakw can remain Kwakwaka’wakw, “the Kwak’wala
speaking peoples” by definition is a difficult and awkward question. Of approximately 5000
members only approximately 150 speakers remain² (Anthony, Davis & Powell, 2003). Without
extreme effort the Kwak’wala language may become a dormant language within 20 years as
most speakers are elderly and the younger generations do not speak the language. Over the
past 40 years while the Kwak’wala language was decreasing in use, a marked resurgence in

¹ The term “Kwakwaka’wakw is problematic in that it has a changing application in relation to demographics in the last 100 years. Originally cited within Boas’ early works, the term specifically referred to the confederation of Kwag’ul tribes living outside of Fort Rupert from approximately 1850-1910. In the 1970’s it was revived as a term meant to encompass all Kwakwala speaking tribes including those tribes who identified with the separate dialects of ‘Nakwala, Gut’sala, ’Tlatlasiskwala and Likwala. There has been recent discussion as to the appropriate application of this term but in relationship to the time within which this thesis is written I will continue to use it within its contemporary definition which is inclusive of all the tribes speaking dialects of the Kwak’wala language.

Kwak’wala speaking elders have voiced the opinion that without proficiency in the Kwak’wala language mono-lingual English speaking Kwakwaka’wakw will have difficulty understanding and manifesting traditional Kwakwaka’wakw culture. While it is necessary to acknowledge that all traditions are part of a continuum of cultural adaptation, some gradual while others sudden, the issue of language loss amongst the Kwakwaka’wakw is specific in the context of having undergone a sharply delineated cultural shift under colonization. This shift has been defined by a rapid degeneration of Kwak’wala language use within 2-3 generations.

This thesis seeks to address the ramifications of Kwak’wala language loss to Kwakwaka’wakw cultural worldview. It asks the general question, “How much of an effect does Kwak’wala language loss have on cultural understanding?”, and seeks to answer the question through a specific analysis of the concept of space mapped through linguistic and artistic expression.

Figure 1.1 illustrates the general geographic areas occupied by the Kwakwaka’wakw tribes plus village sites which are referenced throughout the text.
Figure 1.1  Map of Kwakwaka'wakw territory showing villages referenced throughout thesis  
*Image courtesy Midori Nicolson, Musgamakw Dzawada'enuxw Tribal Council Lands and Resources Manager*

### 1.2 Research objective

In order to better understand the implications of Indigenous language loss this research focuses on the relationship of language to culture. The debate over whether language influences culture or vice-versa, within linguistics goes back several decades, perhaps even
the entire 20th Century (Sapir, 1921; Whorf, 1956; Chomsky, 1965, 1966, 2006; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). In this debate, during the early decades of the 20th Century Franz Boas (1858-1942), source of the majority of archival material in Kwak’wala, believed that language and culture was a component of a whole working system that could only be understood within the context of all its parts (Boas, 1966). Due to his belief in the cultural connection to language he committed much effort to collecting and publishing remarkable amounts of cultural information in the Kwak’wala language, with English translation. A student of Boas, Edward Sapir (1884-1939) along with Benjamin Whorf (1897-1941) contributed to the discussion of the relationship between language and culture in what has come to be termed the Whorf-hypothesis or the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (Thomson, 2000; Swoyer 2003) or, more recently, the linguistic relativity hypothesis (Gumperz & Levinson, 1991). The hypothesis proposes that “the semantic structures of different languages might be incommensurable, with consequences for the way in which speakers of different languages might think and act. On this view, language, thought and culture are deeply interlocked, so that each language might be claimed to have associated with it a distinctive worldview” (Gumperz, p.614). On the other end of the debate, during the 1960s, the famous linguist, Noam Chomsky (1928-) was a major agent in the development of a linguistic theory of innate universal language structures that underlay all
languages. Referred to as universal grammar the theory was that humans had an innate capacity for language and that this capacity is little influenced by environment (Chomsky, 1965). Linguistic rules could generate formally correct speech much like a computer could generate data based on proper inputs. Linguistic difference was considered to be topical or surface oriented and the deeper structures of language considered as basically similar or “universal”. This universalism would espouse that different languages are fundamentally similar and that they are grounded in human biology not human environment; a nature vs. nurture argument. This debate has been publicly, and at times contentiously battled between Chomsky and the proponents of cognitive linguistics, popularly associated with the linguistic scholar George Lakoff (Harris, 1993).

My research seeks to explore the connections between “linguistic” expression and what can be considered as “non-linguistic” cultural expressions such as architecture, social structure, performance, narratives (story-telling) and visual art. Are these alternative forms of cultural expression complementary to the Kwak’wala language or arbitrary? If they are found to be complementary then we can consider that they share underlying conceptual features therefore making the connection between language and culture stronger. If they are found to be
arbitrary or only weakly connected then the relationship between language and culture can be considered more topical. The end result is the examination of how connected the concepts of space and time, as expressed in the Kwak’wala language are, with non-linguistic culturally based expressions.

I have chosen to explore the primary domain of space and its complement time. This research is an extension of my initial exploration of the conceptualization of time in my Master’s thesis (Nicolson, 2005). Space is the primary topic because time seems to take its conceptualization from space. Space and time concepts, while universal in their presence across cultures, can vary in their expression and manifestation. They also form the foundation for many other concepts. All cultures engage with the concept of space. An understanding of space is required in architecture (around, above, below), the hierarchies of social structure (above, below, on par), ritual and performance (the body on stage) and art (shape and form). Spatial engagement operates as universal phenomenon across cultures. Space is analyzed as a universal concept where comparison between the very different languages of English and Kwak’wala can render an understanding of variance in expression and conceptualization.
1.3 Central thesis

The linguistic research conducted over the course of this thesis reveals a strong spatial mapping process between the human body, the architecture of “the house” and the landscape traditionally occupied by the Kwakwaka’wakw which results in a metaphorical conceptualization which is highly productive in cultural manifestations. This spatial mapping emerges strongly in both linguistic forms (words) and semantic expressions such as contained in speeches and narratives. The spatial mapping process appears to have a heavy influence on the perception of the body in space in relationship to subjects and objects, the relationship of the body both inside and outside of architectural forms, the composition of architectural forms themselves and ultimately in how the body is situated within, and then navigates the landscape. The concept of the self in relationship to others, social structure, ceremonial choreography and the formal execution of art-forms such as masks and regalia reflects an analogous approach to the concept of space as BODY=HOUSE=LAND. This general premise then provides the basis for a particular and rich metaphorical expression that is found to be present not just in language but is also manifest in other cultural expressions and ultimately is able be translated into an engagement with modern, non-traditional spaces.
1.4 Thesis outline

My research is concerned with the relationship of “form” and “meaning” in language and culture. It is interdisciplinary in nature and engages with linguistics, anthropology and visual art. The thesis is composed into two components; first, a written component which explains the research findings regarding Kwak’wa’wakw space as it emerges through the Kwak’wala language and second, a visual art component which explores the research findings in “real” space. Chapter 1 is a general introduction. Chapter 2 deals with the primary theoretical frameworks within which this research is situated; Linguistics, Anthropology, and Visual Art and the methods applied to reach conclusions. Linguistics is the scientific study of language. Anthropology is defined by the American Anthropological Association as “the study of humans past and present”. One could generally say Anthropology is the study of culture. Initially linguistics fell under the discipline of anthropology until the mid-Twentieth Century when it broke off and attained its own status as an independent discipline and as a result there is heavy cross-over in sub-disciplines. Anthropological linguistics is one sub-discipline of Anthropology. What Linguistics and Anthropology share as disciplines is the investment in the ultimate decipherment of “meaning.” Visual art is one discipline that falls under the variety of human expressions considered to be the “Fine Arts” in academics. The visual arts can be said
to be heavily invested in the visual experience of human perception as opposed to other faculties such as music and dance. However, the division of these sub-disciplines under the umbrella of fine arts has become increasingly blurred as visual art has become increasingly engaged with interdisciplinary crossover. Visual art and art in general are also heavily concerned with issues of “meaning.” Chapter 3 presents the Kwak’wala u- [a’w-] stem and its relationship to the body, the house and the land. Chapters 4 thru 6 deal with a linguistic analysis of spatial terminology in relationship with the body, which then moves outwards.

Chapter 4 deals with personal space (the body). Chapter 5 deals with architectural space (the house), while chapter 6 deals with geographic space (the land). Each topic is explored through a linguistic analysis of the language forms used to express these ideas. This linguistic analysis is then compared to non-linguistic cultural expressions such as narrative, architecture, and ritual for consistencies in the construction of meaning. Chapter 7 explores conceptual spatial/temporal crossover. Chapter 8 gives a description and analysis of the visual component of the thesis. This component is considered a conceptual experiment in the relationship of “form” and “meaning”. It involves the creation of a series of works which seek to address the spatial and cultural concepts which emerge from the linguistic and anthropological comparison. Can a non-linguistic expression such as visual art as visual signifier (or visual language) take
the place of language as oral or written signifiers and still consistently express the same underlying conceptualizations of meaning in space? Chapter 9 concludes this thesis and provides an overall evaluation of the research presented.

1.5 Background of the author

I am in a particular position to conduct this research as a member of the Kwakwaka’wakw, my maternal grandparents coming from the Dzawada’enuxw of Gwa’yi (Kingcome Inlet), the Haxwa’mis of Aalax (Wakeman Sound), the Kwikwasut’inuxw of Gwayasdams (Gilford Island) and the Kwagu’l of ‘Tsaxis (Fort Rupert). I grew up both on and off reserve, while developing an avid interest and engagement in traditional culture. An artist by training in both traditional Kwakwaka’wakw visual forms as well as Western based art practice, I have an extensive history of working in both traditional community based contexts and public museum and gallery exhibits; local, national and international. In many ways my artistic inquiry initially framed this academic research. I have spent much time considering the challenges posed in language and cultural revitalization for First Nations in Canada as well as the cross-over of cultural forms from their original traditional intent and their assimilation and appropriation into colonial systems.

This being said, my particular background renders simultaneously both the opportunity to be an
insider with privileged knowledge built up over a lengthy period of time but also an additional impendiment to objectivity. It was as a survivalist strategy that I chose to pursue academic contexts to supplement traditional Kwak'wala knowledge which, through colonization, I had inherited as fragmented and conflicted. Colonization is a concept I feel is important to remain highly conscious of as both the Kwak'wala language and Kwakwaka'wakw culture have been affected by it. As an act of outside aggression to take over lands and resources which included the subjection and oppression of indigenous cultures, colonization for the Kwakwaka'wakw came with contact with European colonists who have systematically attempted to take over their lands and cultures within the relatively short time frame of a few hundred years (since 1792) and remains an ongoing process. It is important to acknowledge that the language and cultural forms I am engaged with are not static, historical and frozen in time but dynamic, ongoing and vital. They exist within changing contexts and relationships both internal to the Kwakwaka'wakw and external to the broader Canadian state. Colonialism has had a large influence in this.

Throughout the 1990s, it was communicated to me personally by Kwak'wala speaking elders, that without an understanding of the Kwak'wala language, I would have difficulty truly
comprehending Kwakwaka’wakw cultural forms. This dissertation is the result of trying to answer my own reflexive question “Why?” as well as learn the language by being able to study it under a structured setting all the while considering whether a greater faculty with the Kwak’wala language could have an impact on my artistic expression. My own personal objectives within this research are twofold; one, to help facilitate the creation of a younger generation speaker in myself, by providing structured study, and two, to provide information for other Kwakwaka’wakw that may be useful in Kwak’wala language acquisition. Under this premise I have been careful to avoid overly-specialized technical language as much as possible particularly when it comes to linguistics which can be so heavily laden with technical language that the information is obscure except to others within the discipline. While I acknowledge the value and necessity of academic peer review and intellectual discourse my primary audience while researching and writing has been my own community while generating an understanding of the complex relationship of language to culture. While this research project remains highly aware of the endangered nature of Kwak’wala it also explores the broader questions of language use and effect on worldview and the question “Why is it important to save this language?”. As such, this thesis and the artworks that accompany it are attempts at decolonization and arise from a belief in voicing indigenous ideas on all available platforms. Within the very real possibility of
Kwak’wala language loss and Kwakwaka’wakw cultural assimilation my belief is that as long as we continue to speak then we will continue to exist. For me personally, this means speaking the Kwak’wala language and articulating our customs, beliefs and traditions in contexts academic, or artistic, in private, or in public.
Chapter 2: Form and Meaning:
Theoretical Frameworks & Methodology

Dream of 'Naxnagam

I dreamed I was going to the house of the master of the Salmon on the sea side of our world. I don’t know why I was going there. There I saw my late father. Then he scolded me because I had gone to the place where he was. He asked me to go back home. Then I remembered that my late father had died long ago. Then I went home. Then I awoke. (Boas, 1925, p. 49)

2.1 Form and meaning

This thesis, at its most fundamental level, is concerned with the relationship of form and meaning. If there is a radical change of form how does it affect meaning, or the opposite, how does a change in meaning affect form? Specifically, if a language, as a formal expression of a people is radically changed how does that affect the conceptualization of cultural understanding? Form is “what is” while “meaning” has a more ephemeral interpretation as “what the form signifies”. In considering “form” specifically, I am attempting to gauge the
relationship between the physical characteristics (sounds which result in words) of the Kwak'wala language with Kwakwaka'wakw cultural forms manifest as architecture, social structure and art. I then pair these physical forms with their conceptual meanings to see if there is a shared understructure which influences the resulting forms. By ‘understructure’ I mean primarily, the belief systems and analogical connections which influence rules of grammar (in linguistics) or ‘proper’ form (in architecture, social structure, artistic expression and geographic relationships). This will be mapped out more explicitly through the thesis. The hypothesis is that the more evidence that exists of a shared conceptual understructure the more likely it can be asserted that language and culture are intrinsically linked, and that significant changes in one domain will affect the other. In other words, a significant change in language will significantly affect cultural understanding and vice-versa if they share conceptual understructure. I then attempt to incorporate the spatial (space)/temporal (time) concepts that emerge from the analysis of the Kwak’wala language and traditional Kwakwaka’wakw cultural expressions into contemporary artworks.

In many ways this reflects on the work of Ferdinand de Saussure (1959), (1857-1913) where he posited that language is a system of signs, the signifier (form) and the signified (meaning).
“Sounds, images, written words, paintings, photographs, etc. function as signs within language” when they serve to express or communicate ideas.” (Hall, 1997). Saussure then went on to divide the “sign” into the “signifier” and the “signified”. The “signifier” he equated with form (words, images etc.) and the “signified” was equated with the idea or concept. He indicated it was the relationship between them that created meaning. (p. 31). Figure 2.1 is a diagram of the relationship between form and meaning with form taking the upper position as the surface manifestation of underlying conceptual meanings.

Figure 2.1 *The Sign: composed of its form and meaning*
The sign as an expression of communication exists as two components. The first component is the obvious one, the one that exists in the world. A linguistic example is a noun such as *dog* which refers to a type of animal. On the surface level of conceptualization one could say that the meaning of the word *dog*, as a type of animal can be translated into Kwak'wala as *wat'si* “a dog”. The words *dog* and *wat'si* are signifiers. However, at the deeper conceptual levels of belief and cultural association the “meaning” of the Kwak’wala word *wat'si* and the English word *dog* differ. In Kwakwaka’wakw belief systems *wat'si* are accorded an intermediate status as both associated with wolves and yet living companions to humans who assist them in certain tasks, and as such are to be respected. For example, there were inherited house names for dogs such as `Patl̓alagila, for the Dl̓idlagidi *naḿima* (house clan) of the Kwagu’l (Boas 1921, p. 801). The *'wat'saml* “dog mask” is used in a high ranking dance amongst the Dzawada’enuxw tribe. We also have names such as ‘Wat’s’pala “smells like a dog” and ‘Wayoł “old dog” which in English translation sound derogatory but according to my uncle, Ernest Peter Willie, were honorable names. (family recording). Dzawada’enuxw histories tell of the gift of a supernatural dog from Tawixa’xta’ to an early ancestor `Kalaḿin who helped catch mountain goats (Boas 1902, p. 37). The name `Was’wasaliga’e is given with the “dog dance”

---

3 Name of Tim Willie, brother of my grandfather, Charlie Willie  
4 Everyday name used in old age of my great-grandmother Mary Sewid, grandmother of Charlie Willie.
to ‘Nalbe’, the son of ‘Tsekame, the original ancestor of the Kwikwasut’inuxw (Boas 1902, p 191). From these examples one can see that while the words dog and ‘wat’si as linguistic symbols share a reference to a certain type of animal they differ in their underlying associations and extended meaning. According the Saussure, the sign has a symbol which exists in the world and a meaning which is defined by a relationship to conceptual understructure defined by particular beliefs and associations, as in Figure 2.2.

![Figure 2.2 The “sign”: relationship to form “signifier” and meaning “signified”: surface understructure and deep understructure](image)
2.1.1 What is form? : What is meaning?

The words “form” and “meaning” have their own specific interpretations under the disciplines of linguistics, anthropology, and visual arts, but they all share some fundamental features. In general, “form” can be defined as the physical configuration of some type of object in the world. In linguistics form is “anything that has a physical shape, be that in terms of sound waves or written characters.” (Bauer, 2004, p. 45) We can say words are a “formal” aspect of language as words are made up of sounds and letters which create speech. In anthropology “form” can be defined as material evidence, or the manifestation of expression into physical mediums like architecture (buildings in space), choreography (movement in space) and art (objects in space). Visual art defines form as “what the work is”, in other words its compositional features such as color, mass, shape, material etc. What joins these definitions of “form” across disciplines is a relationship to physicality in the world either as sounds, movement through space, or as objects. They are the signifiers of their disciplines and are manifest on the surface as speech, action and creations.

In general “meaning” can be defined as “the signification of a message” (Chrystal, 1999). In linguistics, meaning is considered to be the content of the linguistic form. For instance, the
word *child* can be associated with the meaning "a person who has not reached adulthood".

Similar to the example *dog* used in Figure 2.2, different cultures while sharing certain features of meaning will have varied associations dependant on cultural factors. In Kwak'wala there are two words that can mean *child*. The word *gananam* means "a generic child" which can be contrasted against the word *xwanukw* “one’s own child” or *sasam* meaning “one’s own children”. I suspect this distinction exists due to the Kwakwa’wakw cultural emphasis on ancestor and descendant relationships. In anthropology, meaning is derived from a number of contributing cultural factors such as belief systems, history and environment. Roland Barthes (1972) theorized that meaning could be ascribed to a signifier on two levels, the first at the level of *denotation*, or the most basic descriptive level and second, on the level of *connotation*, which ascribes to a signifier wider, broader based meanings. On the second level signifiers are assigned meaning “in terms of the wider realms of social ideology – the general beliefs, conceptual frameworks and value systems” of a given society (Hall, 1997, p. 38-39). In this thesis this could be mapped to the terms surface understructure as denotation and deeper understructure as connotation.
2.1.2 Semiotics in Anthropology and Visual Art

The extension of the “sign” from a purely linguistic approach to a broader cultural application led to the engagement of *semiotics* in anthropology and visual arts.

**Semiotics:** the study of signs and their use, focusing on the mechanisms and patterns of human communication and on the nature and acquisition of knowledge.

Language is viewed in semiotics as one type of sign system, along with other systems as bodily gestures, clothing, and the arts” (Chrystal, 1999, p. 302)

Semiotics by analogy extends the notion of what a “language” is to other forms of human expression that communicate ideas such as narrative, music, and art. Under semiotics each medium of expression can be said to have a “language” and as such will have surface representations and rules and common understandings that support those surface representations to create meaning.

In visual art meaning is ascribed by cultural understructures which inform the surface representations of form. “In the semiotic approach, not only words and images, but objects
themselves can function as signifiers in the production of meaning” (Hall, 1997, p. 37). “The semiotic approach provides a method for analysing how visual representations convey meaning” (p. 41). This means we can consider architecture, material culture such as masks and regalia, and the ceremonial compositions of the Kwakwaka’wakw as forms of culture whose meanings are derived from hypothetically shared conceptual under-structures. With a working knowledge of the conceptual understructures is it possible for novel forms to be created that still maintain fundamental connections to traditional meaning? It is under this inquiry that an attempt at a contemporary visual art translation is attempted and included as a component of research.

2.2 Written (literal) component of the thesis

There are two main methods that result in the two major components of this thesis. The first one is the written component which is compiled from research with text based information combined with participant interviews. The second component is the production of a body of visual works which attempt to translate Kwakwaka’wakw concepts of space and time into contemporary public art spaces. The first component is quite standard, the second somewhat innovative. The visual component arises out of a questioning of the privileging of literacy as
the most appropriate form of knowledge. Coming from a non-literate, oral society such as the Kwakwaka'wakw historically were, as well as studying a language which had no written form until the late 1800s it seemed appropriate to attempt to address the issues in an alternative medium to writing. This also presents the opportunity to test whether concepts which are symbolized by words can also be symbolized by other means under alternative circumstances.

2.2.1 Linguistic morphological analysis

Linguistic morphological analysis is a major component of this thesis. Morphology can be defined as “the correlation of form and meaning within the word” (Bauer, 2004:1). According to (Bybee, 1985) “The study of morphology approaches morphemes as the (minimal) linguistic units with semantic content, and studies the relations among them” (p. v). English words such as *it, on, car, bike* etc. can exist as single units to express an idea. Other words such as *biking* are composed of more than one meaningful unit *bik(e) + ing* [continual action] and are constructions of the meanings of its constituent parts. These word parts are called morphemes and are defined within linguistics as “minimal meaningful units".
Kwak'wala is an excellent language to explore morphological structure as it is a polysynthetic language; where a single word can express the equivalent of a sentence. An example is _amlaxdan_ “I played” which is composed of three morphemes _aml_ (to play) + _-xd_ (past tense) + _-_an_ (personal pronoun “I”). Most Kwak’wala words are composed of a stem/root meaning with modifying suffixes, sometimes several. My research examines meaning in Kwak’wala expressions by examining the morphology in words and phrases relating to spatial and temporal concepts. Figure 2.3 shows how a Kwak’wala word is broken into morphemes.

![Diagram](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FORM (Signifier)</th>
<th>MEANING (Signified)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>aml</em> - <em>xd</em> - <em>an</em></td>
<td>“play” past tense “I”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I was playing”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2.3 *The morphological breakdown of a Kwak’wala word*
I have used a simplified gloss for linguistic words and phrases. I wanted the information to be useful to a non-linguistic audience. For this reason, I have limited the gloss to the word or phrase as the surface form with the meaning of each morpheme written directly beneath, as in Figure 2.3. What is called the free translation is provided on the side in italics along with the source of citation.

In text example format:

(1) **amlaxdan**
   "I was playing." (www.firstvoices.com)

   play was I

Where it seemed important to make the differentiation I have separated the morphemes with a dash as in the following example:

(2) **aml - a - xd - an**
   "I was playing." (www.firstvoices.com)

   play was I

In order to generate linguistic data a formal morphological analysis of the Kwak'wala language was applied in order to derive the literal meanings of Kwak'wala words relating to spatial and temporal expression. These were then organized into conceptual categories and extensions which were then compared with cultural forms and expressions. Specifically, space and time
were analyzed through their manifestation within one component of the Kwak’wala determiner system (personal space), cardinal directions (geographic space), the occupation of objects in space (categorization), and the use of metaphor. My research examines how these topics are expressed in the Kwak’wala language and then compares how these concepts were mapped onto traditional cultural practices as manifested in the early 20th century when Kwak’wala was still the dominant language amongst the Kwakwaka’wakw Nations.

2.2.2 Review of Kwak’wala texts and participant interviews

The major source of Kwak’wala linguistic information, used in this thesis, stems from Franz Boas’ extensive work conducted from 1880-1940 (Boas, 1911, 1947, 1948). Both his 1947 “Glossary of the Suffixes” and his 1948 “Kwakiutl Dictionary” were only made public after his death in 1942. I have cross-referenced the Boas data with David Grubb’s 1977 “Kwakiutl Dictionary”, U’mista Cultural Society’s 1981 “Learning Kwak’wala Series” and the web based Kwak’wala resources available through the project “First Voices” developed by the First People’s Cultural Foundation (http://www.firstvoices.com). In addition, the accuracy of linguistic forms and cultural expressions were reviewed with contemporary Kwak’wala speakers through an interview process conducted in person and over the phone. The
interviews in person were audio recorded. The phone interviews were not audio recorded. All
elicted samples were written down in field notebooks. I elicited Kwak’wala words and
sentences as well as checked published examples. I used two consultants. The first was
born in 1928 and the second was born in 1937. Both grew up in Kingcome Inlet, Gilford Island
and Alert Bay. Elicited forms were checked with both speakers before being included as
dimensional examples. I also checked with the informants about general cultural understandings which
were emerging through the research.

2.2.3 U’mista Orthography

In this thesis I have chosen to use the U’mista orthography for writing the Kwak’wala words.

Historically there are several useful orthographies that have been devised for Kwak’wala.

Since the late 1800s various people have devised orthographies in order to be able to write the
Kwak’wala language. George M. Dawson published a Kwak’wala vocabulary in 1887. Around
the same time the Reverend Alfred J. Hall (1889), who worked in both ‘Tsaxis (Fort Rupert)
and ‘Yalis (Alert Bay) developed an early grammar which was published by the Transactions
of the Royal Society of Canada. After Hall and Dawson came Boas who developed a writing
system which he refined over the course of his 50 year engagement with the Kwakwaka’wakw.
Grubb developed his own writing system in the late 1960’s. In the 1970s the U’mista Cultural Society in Alert Bay developed the U’mista writing system (Galois, 1994). Most contemporary linguistic work on Kwak’wala has been documented in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). For this thesis I have used the U’mista Orthography as it is the predominant orthography in use in the territory I come from and least intimidating for basic usage. Where necessary, I have transliterated both Boas’ and Grubbs’ orthographic spelling into U’mista’s.

For a cross reference of these orthographies see Appendix A.

2.2.4 Linguistics contexts: Linguistic Relativity and Cognitive Linguistics

Linguistic Relativity and Cognitive Linguistics are two bodies of thought that have emerged from linguistics that have been useful in contextualizing my research. Linguistic Relativity is most often referred to as a hypothesis, while Cognitive Linguistics is a fairly new branch of modern linguistics. Modern linguistics began to take shape in the latter part of the 19th Century. In America, Franz Boas and Edward Sapir (1884-1939) were influential in developing methods for documenting the potentially endangered languages of Native Americans. Both Boas and Sapir considered that languages were intrinsically connected to
the epistemology, or “way of life and thought of its speakers” (McGregor 2009, p. 9). Under the influence of Boas and Sapir emerged the theory of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, or Linguistic Relativity, which is mostly credited to Benjamin Lee Whorf (1897-1941), who was a student of Sapir (Foley, 1997). This theory has been the source of much linguistic speculation. In Whorf’s own words:

the “linguistic relativity principle”…means, in informal terms, that users of markedly different grammars are pointed by their grammars toward different types of observations and different evaluations of externally similar acts of observation, and hence are not equivalent as observers but must arrive at somewhat different views of the world. (Whorf, 1956, p. 221)

In linguistics, this more contextual, historical approach to language was replaced by an interest in Structuralist Linguistics which emerged from the work of Saussure. (McGregor, 2009) When Saussure separated form and meaning into the “signifier” and the signified” it enabled linguists to focus more on the formal aspects of language and to treat language more like a science. McGregor (2009) calls the perspectives of Boas, Sapir and Whorf “mentalistic' which I interpret
to be conceptual or thought based and invested in “meaning”. This “mentalistic orientation”
was rejected by Leonard Bloomfield in his objective to make linguistics a science. (Campbell,
2003; McGregor, 2009) This is when a particular focus on “form” over “meaning” began to
emerge within the discipline. McGregor states the focus on the mechanics of language from
the 1930s to the 1950s diminished the role of “meaning”. Linguistic exploration of language
under formal analysis became highly developed and extra-ordinarily technical in its approach.

Today the discipline is characterized by two primary divisions, formal linguistics with its
emphasis on the formal aspects of language and functional linguistics which has reinvested
itself in context and meaning (Halliday, 2003; McGregor, 2009). Under functional linguistics
has emerged the sub-field of cognitive linguistics. Both linguistic relativity which was
influenced by the work of Boas and Sapir, and cognitive linguistics are of particular interest to
this thesis. The linguistic relativity hypothesis is used to provide academic context to the
issues. Metaphor, prototype theory, and radial categories from cognitive linguistics all help
shape the analytical results of the morphological analysis. Figure 2.4 diagrams the
relationships of “form” and “meaning” which is divided into “surface understructure”, which
could be also called rules for “proper form”, and “deep understructure”. According to this
thesis “deep understructure” affects “surface understructure / proper form” which then
manifests as “form” in the world. “Meanings” are produced in the mind while “forms” are produced in the world.

Figure 2.4 Cognitive linguistics and the focus on deep understructures through metaphors, prototypes, radial categories, analogical extensions and associations.
2.2.5 Linguistic Relativity

A re-engagement with Linguistic Relativity has been gaining momentum in the movement for the revitalization of Aboriginal languages in the last 20 years (Fee, 2003). Does the language one speaks influence the way one sees the world? This is a question pertinent to Aboriginal communities as traditional languages become more and more endangered. According to Battiste & Youngblood Henderson (2000), “Linguist Kenneth Hale has estimated that half the world’s 6000 Indigenous languages are doomed because no children speak them…Recent studies in Canada show that all fifty-three Indigenous languages are critically endangered” (p. 82). In losing languages are we losing just the forms of language or are we also losing diverse worldviews? Whorf (1956) had observed “a new principle of relativity, which holds that all observers are not led by the same physical evidence to the same picture of the universe, unless their linguistic backgrounds are similar, or can in some way be calibrated” (p. 214). In this statement Whorf emphasized the relationship between language and worldview. According to a Whorfian perspective then, in losing languages we are indeed losing unique and valuable ways of perceiving and being in the world.
A review of the issues from its early emergence in the writings of Franz Boas, Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf and later contestations through Noam Chomsky’s early work on Universal Grammar reveal that the question whether language shapes worldview has been answered with convoluted results. Rather than an emphatic ‘yes’ or ‘no’; it is really “to what extent and kind of impact does language have on thought” that may be the real question (Swoyer, 2003). This dissertation engages with this theoretical debate. Like studies before it the research found crossover in both universal aspects of spatial expression and particular aspects leading us back to questions of extents and impacts.

2.2.6 Cognitive Linguistics

This research is situated within the linguistic framework of what, used to be called Space Grammar, and is now referred to as Cognitive Linguistics. This branch of linguistic study has refocused their attention on “meaning” and its relationship to thought or underlying cognitive pathways (conceptualization). Cognitive Linguistics was developed as an approach to language study in the 1970s by George Lakoff, Ron Langacker and Len Talmy, amongst others, as a reaction against the focus on ‘formalism’ that was dominant in linguistics during the 1950s and 1960s (Evans & Green, 2006). Cognitive Linguistics has been gaining
momentum as a movement through the four decades since (Geeraerts & Cuyckens, 2007).

Under Cognitive Linguistics, language is considered to “offer a window into cognitive function, providing insights into the nature, structure and organization of thoughts and ideas” (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 5). The focus lies on function or context. This is considered to be in a polar relationship with the early works of Noam Chomsky, which treated language as an innate autonomous function contained with the mind and less influenced by environment (Chomsky, 1965). Within cognitive linguistics “the formal structures of language are studied not as if they were autonomous, but as reflections of general conceptual organization, categorizational principles, processing mechanisms, and experiential and environmental influences.” (Geeraerts & Cuyckens, 2007, p. 3) Cognitive Linguistics places language within the body, in relationship to the mind, which is then influenced by its environment. It is considered appropriate for this study in its approach to language and the extrapolation of meaning through the body in space; physical, architectural, social, ceremonial and artistic.

2.2.6.1 Metaphor and analogy as a component of Cognitive Linguistics

Metaphorical analogy is an important component of Cognitive Linguistic theory and is relevant to this thesis because the major conceptual tool for spatial conceptualization in Kwak’wala
appears to be metaphorical. Lakoff & Johnson (1980) define metaphor as “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (p. 5). For example: “the body is the house of the soul”. An analogy is when something is compared as being “like” something else in another domain: “the door of the house is like a mouth, swallowing the visitors who enter”.

Gentner & Jezioriski (1993) describe analogy as:

...mapping of knowledge from one domain (the base) into another (the target) such that a system of relations that holds among the base objects also holds among the target objects. In interpreting an analogy, people seek to put the objects of the base in one-to-one correspondence with the objects of the target so as to obtain the maximal structural match. (p. 49)

The concepts of metaphor and analogy are so similar that they are intertwined. It is observed that “conceptual metaphors are mappings across domains that structure our reasoning, our experience, and our everyday language” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Metaphor is considered “to refer to a pattern of conceptual association” (Grady, 2007). Prior to the emergence of cognitive linguistics, metaphor was considered a linguistic convention restricted in usage to the
poetic and rhetorical (Lakoff & Johnson). Since the 1980s however the consideration that metaphor is an intrinsic component of the way we understand our world has become increasingly viable.

The consideration of metaphor and analogy is appropriate because in my study spatial analogy is used often to create understanding from source (base) domains to target domains. Concepts are understood in relationship to one another and this comparative quality is highly prevalent within Kwak’wala speech, both every-day and ceremonial. For example, the statement, *Lan nagältawix t’axala’yasan wiwump’wola.* “I follow the road made by my late ancestors” is a metaphor for maintaining traditions (Boas, 1949, p. 238). Note the word *t’axala’ “road”* is the same word used for “the door of a house”. These metaphors cannot be fully understood under literal definitions but manifest their full meanings only under contextual/cultural based paradigms. In addition, metaphors have been found not to be simple one to one mappings with defined boundaries but map to complexes of linked understandings. It is this matrix of linked understandings which create a particular perspective or understanding of the world and is situated as part of the deep understructure of Figure 2.2 and Figure 2.4.
2.2.6.2 Prototype Theory and Radial Categories as Cognitive Linguistic theories

In my written research I use formal morphological analysis as a technique and then the theories of Metaphorical Analogy, Prototype theory and Radial Categories from Cognitive Linguistics to extrapolate meaning and conceptual associations in the Kwak'wala language. I then compare visual, architectural, and ceremonial examples to test whether the structures and concepts underlying Kwakwa'wakw thought are consistent with word based expressions in speech.

Prototype Theory addresses the concept of categories. As we develop our understanding of the world categories are fundamental to our understanding of what things are. Prototype Theory arose out of the reconsideration of the boundaries of categories for category membership. Prior traditions of thought around the issue of categories aligned membership in a category as bounded by the possession of certain features which gave each member equal membership. Prototype Theory argues against this and posits that the membership within categories are not equal but based on how much a member can map prototypical features but certainly do not, nor are required, to share all features (Rosch & Mervis, 1975). The “prior tradition of thought” is called the Classical Theory (Lakoff, 1987; Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk,
and was applied in ways that divided the world into defined domains which were thought to map to a predetermined reality. For example, the category bird could be applied to “beings that fly, have feathers, and lay eggs”. However, we find there are many anomalies to the definition. Is an ostrich still a bird if it cannot fly, or penguin if it doesn’t have feathers? What we find instead of cleanly defined predetermined categories with equal membership is a central prototype with varied membership. Some members fit the prototype for membership in all features, what Eleanor Rosch (1973) defined as ‘best examples’ and so are central while others share only a few features and so are peripheral. Categories then can be said to have a central prototype and fuzzy boundaries, not necessarily clearly defined, for membership. Some items can have membership in more than one category. In some ways the idea is linked to a nature/nurture, objective/subjective debate. In the Classical Theory categories are fixed by nature. They just are. In Prototype Theory categories can be influenced and defined by culture, and language can reflect differences in categorization. Through Prototype Theory once more is expressed a relationship between form and meaning, what is in the world and what is in the mind. In (Figure 2.5) I present an interpretation of the differences between a classical perspective of the world “as it is” and a cognitive perspective where the world is experienced through a lens of language and culture drawn from Lakoff (1987).
Figure 2.5  *Theory of categories Classical “in the world” and Cognitive “influenced by the mind”*

The concept of Radial Categories emerges out of Prototype Theory and addresses the notion of meaning in relationship to the prototype. This is described as radiating from the centre with members who are most like the prototype closer to the centre and members least like the prototype occupying the periphery. Lakoff uses the concept of “mother” as an example to explain radial categories. If “mother” represents the prototype or central ideal then subcategories and non-central extensions are variations. Thus, *birth mother* and *foster mother* are not understood purely on their own terms; they are comprehended via their relationship to...
the central model of *mother* (Lakoff, 1987:91). These theories have strong implications for technical linguistic debate but my primary interest is in cross-cultural categorization.

Cross-culturally and across different languages categories can possibly share features but differ in their prototype and radial category membership. This means associated meanings may vary from culture to culture. When considering spatial concepts and the words which delineate those concepts in the Kwak’wala language there appeared patterns of associated meanings which could be considered categorical. I arranged these into groups with the base stem as the central or prototypical concept. With the addition of suffixes the central meaning (prototype) is added onto creating radial extensions (of meaning) which are still associated to the central meaning. I consider these groupings to be conceptual categories which are culturally specific. For example, in chapter 6 and 7 the stem ‘na-’ appears to exhibit radial extension with culturally specific linkages. Figure 2.6 shows the ‘na-’ stem as a category whose central concept is provided by the stem and extensions by additional suffixes. While initially we might consider the extended meanings “upriver, the first” and “the day, the world” to be unrelated we see through a specific cultural perspective defined by history, environment and belief systems, explained in chapter 6 and 7, that they are indeed conceptually related.
Lakoff (1987) defines this as “polysemy as categorization: The idea that related meanings of words form categories and that the meanings bear family resemblances to one another.” (p.12)

By analyzing radial categories formed around the stems of spatial terminology in Kwak’wala I was able to make sense of metaphorical analogy in non-linguistic expressions. It helped to answer non-linguistic questions such as “Why is the back portion of the inside of a traditional house called “upriver”? This is answered in chapter 6.
2.2.7 Anthropology

While the morphological analysis of Kwak’wala terms relating to space is situated within the discipline of linguistics, the cultural analysis of this thesis is situated within anthropology.

Within academics, culture is generally understood as an anthropological inquiry. While the general subject is all of humanity historically, anthropology has spent much of its time observing ‘other’ cultures (non-Western), though this is changing in modern contexts due to a heightened comprehension of colonialism and its relationship to anthropology as a discipline (Asad, 1973; Pels, 1999). The majority of the material examined as part of this research was collected under the discipline of anthropology. This includes reviews of both ethnographic data and material culture collections of the Kwakwaka’wakw.

While Boas’ linguistic material has provided the base of my analysis of words and phrases in Kwak’wala he is also one of the primary sources for ethnographic material. Boas is considered widely to be the ‘father of American Anthropology’. He originally trained as a geographer in Germany in the late 19th Century and then moved to the United States in part, to escape the rise in anti-Semitism that was prevalent in Europe at that time (Darnell, 1998, Rohner, 1969). Over his lifetime, he brought to a largely undefined discipline a set of
principles and practices that helped define it. One theory to emerge from his work was that of *cultural relativity*, a belief that an individual’s culture, history and environment will influence their perceptions and beliefs and knowledge of the world (Boas, 1911, 1949). It was under this premise that Boas believed in collecting as much data as possible in the words and perspectives of the people or culture he was attempting to study (Berman, 1996; Boas 1949).

It was only under this methodology, Boas believed, that Western euro-centrism could be alleviated, though never completely overcome. Boas studied many cultures, but the people he studied the most, over the course of a five decade engagement (1890-1940), were the Kwakwaka’wakw (Kwakiutl). Much of the source material for both the linguistic and cultural research in this thesis comes from the Boas/Hunt corpus. Due to his belief in collecting as much information as possible in the words of the people he was studying, Boas, through his relationship with George Hunt, a Kwakwaka’wakw insider of Tlingit and Scottish/English descent, compiled vast amounts of texts in Kwak’wala with English translation (Berman, 1996).

In describing this material Berman states:

> Franz Boas published voluminously on the subject of his primary ethnographic interest, the people he called the “Kwakiutl.” …Nearly four thousand pages, about
four-fifths of the total, consist of translated but unannotated Kwak’wala language
text. Boas filled five volumes exclusively with myth and other narrative materials
(1910, 1935-43; Boas & Hunt 1905, 1906) and another six with ethnographic data
on subjects ranging from cooking and hunting methods, to chiefly inheritance and
succession, and to prayers, dreams, and the bird-souls of human beings (Boas
1909a, 1921, 1925a, 1930). Still another massive volume of mostly non-narrative
texts was in preparation at the time of Boas’ death (HCU XIV). (p. 216)

In addition to this impressive amount of published work on the Kwakwaka’wakw is an equally
impressive amount of unpublished material. It is no understatement to say that Boas was
prolific in acquiring ethnographic information. In order to accomplish this, however he needed
the help of his ethnographic assistant George Hunt.

The relationship of George Hunt (1854-1933) as Boas’ primary ethnographic informer on the
Kwakwaka’wakw cannot be understated. The majority of the raw data compiled by Boas on
the “Kwakiutl” was collected by George Hunt (Cannizzo, 1983; Berman, 1994 & 1996). Hunt
was not Kwakwaka’wakw by birth but was raised amongst the Kwakwaka’wakw when his
father Robert Hunt, a trader for the Hudson’s Bay company moved to `Tsaxis (Fort Rupert) in 
Kwakwaka’wakw territory with his high-ranking Tlingit wife. George Hunt was born in Fort 
Rupert and eventually married a Kwakwaka’wakw woman. He strategically married his sons to 
high-ranking Kwakwaka’wakw women. He lived his life immersed in the culture and was fluent 
in Kwak’wala despite his first language most likely being Tlingit (Berman, 1994). Together, 
over the course of five decades (1890-1940), Boas through Hunt was able to publish massive 
amounts of information on the Kwakwaka’wakw (Boas, 1897, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1921, 1929, 
1930, 1934, 1935, 2002; Boas & Hunt, 1902-1905, 1908). The topics covered by this 
extensive research include, birth, coming of age, marriage and death rites, social structure, 
traditional economies and harvesting practices, extensive histories, both genealogical and 
mythological, geographies, ceremonial inquiry and artistic documentation of dances, songs 
and material culture.

While much of the data used for this thesis emerges both from Boas and Hunt’s extensive 
literature on Kwakwaka’wakw social customs it is supplemented by a corpus of other published 
and unpublished documentation pertinent to the Kwakwaka’wakw including the work of Curtis, 
1915; Galois, 1994; Barbeau, 1950; Drucker & Heizer, 1967; Ford, 1940; Rohner & Rohner
1970, amongst others. In addition it is supplemented by material culture and collection notes, housed in institutions including the British Columbia Archives, the National Archives in Ottawa, and the U.B.C Museum of Anthropology. An additional research trip was made in 2009 to the National Archives in Washington DC, Columbia University and the American Museum of Natural History in New York and the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia in order to review and collect the unpublished and original manuscripts of George Hunt and Franz Boas as well as their personal correspondence.

2.2.7.1 Self Criticality of Anthropology and Visual Arts

The discipline of Anthropology under which the majority of this material was collected has fallen under criticism for its colonial roots. Frideres (1988) defines colonialism as a staged process of outside nations taking over territories, destructively supressing indigenous populations, imposing the colonial culture as dominant and rendering the colonized people as dependent upon the new imposed system. Colonialism is influenced by racism and the belief that the colonizer is superior to those colonized (pp. 367-370). The discipline of anthropology was colonial in that it originally came into being on the premise of a Western belief in its own cultural superiority against which other cultures would be measured. In self- critical response
to its origins, modern anthropology has turned its eye on its own practice of studying non-
Western cultures under a Eurocentric vision. The discipline has become self-reflexive. Pels
(2008) has suggested that this self-criticality of the discipline is “an anthropology of
anthropology” (p.280).

It was during the 1960s and 1970s where anthropology and Western art drew closer in their
agendas as Western art theory also became increasingly self-reflective and self-conscious of
its inherent Eurocentrism. Western art began to question the hierarchy of art as “primitive”,
eerging from non-Europeans and “high or fine art”, emerging from Europeans. This led to a
dynamic consciousness of the construction of spaces both physical (institutional spaces such
as the academy, the museum and the gallery) and their conceptual underpinnings (what these
spaces represented). What was once considered anthropological could be re-contextualized
as art and what was once strictly art became anthropological (Morphy and Perkins, 2006).

This crossover and questioning of disciplines, this self-consciousness of historicity and
context, also comes into play in my explorations of Kwakwaka’wakw “forms” and “meanings”
within institutions such as the University of Victoria, the UBC Museum of Anthropology and the
Vancouver Art Gallery. This self-reflexivity is also mirrored in my own academic exercise of
studying the Kwakwa'wakw while being Kwakwa'wakw where questions of authorship, authority, voice and objectivity come into play in complex ways.

My anthropological research most actively engages with the contemporary anthropological sub-divisions of Anthropological Linguistics and Visual Anthropology. Anthropological Linguistics basically embodies the concept that culture can be revealed through language and also shares a conceptual crossover with Cognitive Linguistic enquiry (Palmer, 2007). Visual Anthropology was chosen because it values the visual and the performative on par with the written and its crossover with Visual art.

2.2.8 Anthropological Linguistics

Linguistic Anthropology has maintained a particular approach to language that studies “the relations among language, society, thought and culture” (Danesi, 2004, p.VII). Linguistic Anthropology is one of the main four subdisciplines of American anthropology; the other three subdisciplines of anthropology being Sociocultural Anthropology, Physical Anthropology and Archeology. Where the discipline of linguistics has become more focused on the formal aspects of language since the mid-20th century, Linguistic Anthropology has maintained the interest in language as a cultural phenomenon. It is invested in the documentation of
indigenous languages with a particular interest in North America. The defined connection to
culture is an important distinction within this discipline. While linguistics provides the analytical
tools for formal analysis at the word and phrase levels, Anthropological Linguistics assists with
the broader contextual inquiry into the connection and influence of culture. In regards to the
discipline of Linguistic Anthropology Danesi (2004) also states:

The underlying premise that guides most of the work in linguistic anthropology is the
idea that language structures reflect experiential-conceptual structures which, in
turn, reflect social structures. This is not a discovery of linguistics, of course. One
of the first, in depth, articulations of this very premise can be found in a landmark
treatise of 1725, *The New Science*, written by the great Neopolitan philosopher
Giambattista Vico (1688-1744). Vico maintained that we come to understand the
world through our imaginative use of language, especially in its use of metaphor. As
remarkable as that insight was, it is really only today that metaphor has finally
started to attract the attention of a broad spectrum of anthropologists and linguists.

(p. VII)
This description of Linguistic Anthropology shows much cross-over with Cognitive Linguistics.

The extensions of language use to social structure and the mention of metaphor as a method for understanding the world are especially pertinent to this thesis as explained in chapters 3-7.

2.2.9 Visual Anthropology

My engagement with Visual Anthropology is twofold, the first is an analysis of existing imagery and material culture collections for research purposes, and the second, the development of a body of visual works which act as experiments in the non-linguistic conceptual translation of the Kwakwak’wakw spatial concepts which emerge from this research along with the text based analysis conducted under linguistic inquiry. Visual Anthropology initially emerged out of a modern engagement with visual documentation within anthropology in the 20th Century as photographic and film technologies developed. It has extended to encompass “the belief that culture is manifested through visible symbols embedded in gestures, ceremonies, rituals and artifacts situated in constructed and natural settings” (Ruby, 1996). There exists in Museums and other institutional archives a vast amount of visual material documenting the Kwakwaka’wakw. Since the late 19th century collectors (including Boas and Hunt) gathered Kwakwaka’wakw “artifacts” for museum institutions such as The American Museum of Natural
History, The Chicago Field Museum, The Canadian Museum of Civilization, the Royal British Columbia Museum, and the University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology amongst others (Jacknis, 2002). A review of the masks, ceremonial regalia and accoutrements, architectural models etc. that form these collections has assisted in defining cultural aspects of Kwakwaka’wakw ways of thinking.

In addition to the material culture documentation there exist collections of visual films and photographs. In 1930, Boas was one of the first anthropologists to document the Kwakwaka’wakw on film (Ruby, 1980). Edward Curtis quite remarkably had made the Kwakwaka’wakw the subject of a feature film in 1914 as an amateur ethnologist (Bunn-Marcuse, 2005). During the latter part of the Nineteenth Century the Kwakwaka’wakw were photographed by various government interests mostly invested in the issues of land (Savard, 2005). George Hunt himself considered the ethnographic potential of image based documentation in a letter to Boas in 1907, when he said that it could “show you every thing Plainer then writing it alon.”\(^5\) (Savard, 2005, p.55). It was also George Hunt who greatly assisted Edward Curtis in the filming of “In the Land of the Head-Hunters” (Bunn-Marcuse, 2005).

\(^5\) Original spelling errors retained
2005). From here the visual, audio and filmic documentation of the Kwakwaka’wakw has grown in to a massive corpus with ever changing contexts and dynamics based on access and availability. Throughout this thesis I have used visual images to exemplify much of the analysis. This includes diagrammatical images and photographs.

Visual Anthropology is useful for its focus to the context and meaning of image making which provides us with a comparison with language with the premise that they are joined by cognitive function. I analyzed spatial words and phrases in the Kwak’wala language for meaning through morphological breakdown and then sought to pair the linguistic markers with their visual signifiers in spatial architecture, social relations and artistic expression. Of course, spatial understanding influences so many other domains of thought (such as time) that it can be considered a major pillar of cultural worldview. I found that this was indeed the case within my own analysis.

It is primarily visuality that provides the alternative comparative expression to text in this thesis.

Visuality can be defined as images, objects in space (sculpture and architecture) and imaginative geographic mapping of the landscape which is beyond our ability to survey
through simple vision. In this context *imagination*, or “seeing with the mind”, is considered just
as important as the biological process of “seeing with the eyes.” In other words, how does
language create an image within the mind which then becomes manifest in the world, or vice
versa? How are meanings constructed and then connected between the domains of
language, thought and reality? Mark Johnson (1987), one of the leading scholars in cognitive
linguistics proposes that imagination is a major component of the construction of meaning and
that its dismissal to the periphery in modern Western philosophical and cultural traditions is
highly problematic. He states, “any adequate account of meaning and rationality must give a
central place to embodied and imaginative structures of understanding by which we grasp our
world” (p. xiii). Johnson, however does not align the imagination simply with the mind but
connects it strongly to the body. He states:

> Our reality is shaped by the patterns of our bodily movement, the contours of our
spatial and temporal orientation, and the forms of our interactions with objects. It is
never merely a matter of abstract conceptualizations and propositional judgements
(p. xix).
I have attempted to engage with these theories with the visual and the physical in two ways: first, by examining linguistic and cultural manifestations of Kwakw̓ak̓a̓'wakw space and writing about it and second, by imaginatively and physically engaging with Kwakw̓ak̓a̓'wakw spatial concepts in the creation of artworks. This resulted in the visual component of the thesis explored in chapter 8.

2.3 Visual (experiential) component of the thesis

The written component of this thesis is the literal translation of the underlying concepts of space which emerged from linguistic analysis of spatial terms while the artworks form the non-linguistic, non-literal expression of these concepts. What they are joined by is their engagement with the spatial concepts and belief systems of Kwakw̓ak̓a̓'wakw culture. If form (language and material culture) and meaning are intimately related then changing the contexts of their manifestation would test this connection in an innovative and dynamic way by replacing the institutional context (university to museum/gallery) and medium (writing to visual art). The subject matter remains consistent; the concept of space which is culturally specific to the Kwakw̓ak̓a̓'wakw and has a relationship to both form and meaning.
The inclusion of a visual component beyond the review and inclusion of visual data in this thesis is an important one. It highlights the interdisciplinary nature of the thesis as both necessary and integral. Both anthropology and Western art history as academic disciplines have problematic relationships with the representation of Aboriginal cultures (Ames, 1992; Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2000). Throughout art history Aboriginal cultures have been excluded from the dominant discourses on architecture, sculpture and painting. Aboriginal art was approached most often as subject matter, the passive object of the Western European gaze. Not until the 1960's did institutions begin to consider the art of Native Americans as possibly ‘fine art’ rather than anonymous craft or anthropological artifact. The National Gallery of Canada didn’t exhibit Aboriginal objects in its Historical Canadian Galleries until 2003 (Whitelaw, 2006). These attempts at inclusion came with their own sets of complexities and confusion as the categories of art as defined by the dominant Western structures could not accommodate the original intents of the works themselves. In collecting and exhibiting these objects art history had, through the gallery, and anthropology had, through the museums, transformed the material culture of Native Americans into objects of their own consumption leaving little but their aesthetic formal qualities intact.
If we consider the material culture of the Kwakwaka’wakw as a grammar, or a form of language, then we can comparatively say that the surface forms or “words” of that grammar were placed in foreign contexts, or that their relationship to meaning (their understructure) was disrupted. This disruption basically appropriated the formal expressions of the Kwakwaka’wakw in order to express its own concepts around what those words/objects symbolize. To re-frame this complex idea through the theory of Saussure, one could say that the connection between signifier and signified is disrupted by the exchange of one cultural conceptual understructure for another. While the surface form stays somewhat intact its actual meaning has been appropriated. For example, does a mask hanging in a gallery or a storefront have the same meaning removed from its original cultural context? Or does the mask become a symbol of the meanings of those institutions which have re-framed the object as “artifact” or “art” when originally it had no relation to these definitions?

Over the course of research for this dissertation a large body of major contemporary visual works were created and publicly exhibited under modern gallery and museum settings. Each exhibition, over the course of 2006-2012, sought to manifest the spatial relationships that I was learning about through linguistic analysis combined with anthropological ethnographic
research in institutions and museums. In this regard the crossover between art and anthropology becomes amplified. Issues of representation and perception within art and anthropology were considered complimentary (Schneider & Wright, 2006). I exhibited in anthropological spaces, fine art spaces, and general public spaces.

I have included this component into my research because ultimately it is my chosen medium of expression but also because I was seeking to explore how language and culture intersect on the level of conceptualization. Could I create artworks that reflected the conceptualization of space as it was expressed in the Kwak’wala language? If Kwakwaka’wakw language and culture were closely aligned, then by studying and learning Kwak’wala spatial concepts I would concurrently be developing a general understanding of the occupation of space. If the concepts were substantial enough at the conceptual level the hypothesis is that I would be able to apply them to alternative spaces in ways consistent with traditional Kwakwaka’wakw thinking.

Over the course of my research on the Kwak’wala language I was actively engaged in making art both for traditional contexts and museum/gallery spaces. Theoretically, the contemporary
creation of traditional, in-community works would through the process of generational imitation, most likely reflect the concepts of space found in the Kwak’wala language i.e. the conceptualization of the ceremonial space within a traditional bighouse will remain the same through the consistency of physical features. In order to test the viability of spatial concepts beyond mere formal imitation, the testing ground then became contemporary gallery spaces. Without the grounding features of traditional community based cultural expression could the concepts of space as expressed in the Kwak’wala language be replicated under alternative mediums within alternative spaces?

Four major works in particular examined Kwakwaka’wakw concepts of space as expressed in the Kwak’wala language and attempted to express them under varied contemporary settings.

In 2006, _Bakwinat’si – the Container for Souls_ was exhibited at the public gallery Artspeak in Gastown, Vancouver B.C. In 2008, _The House of the Ghosts_ was exhibited at the Vancouver Art Gallery. In 2010, _Wanx’id –to hide, to be hidden_ was exhibited at the U.B.C. Museum of Anthropology and in 2012, _The Land is a Person_ was installed as a permanent outdoor artwork in North Vancouver, B.C. Each of these works engaged with concepts of Kwakwaka’wakw
space to various degrees. The visual works act as complements and integral exploratory research documents to the written component of this thesis.

By including a non-literal component I am also challenging what might be considered the 'superiority' of writing over the acts of memory, repetition in action, ceremonialism, visuality and physicality relied on by non-literal societies. I am actively challenging that “text and language are the only paradigms for understanding and explanation, and that meaning can only be discovered by translating or decoding ‘texts’ “(Schneider & Wright, 2006, p. 8) and taking up the challenge that “anthropology’s iconophobia and self-imposed restriction of visual expression to text-based models needs to be overcome by a critical engagement with a range of material and sensual practices in the contemporary arts” (p. 4). I am also providing a non-linguistic method (art) to express underlying concepts that have been derived from linguistic analysis. By utilizing a non-linguistic expression I am able to consider whether the concepts of spatial relationship as expressed in Kwak’wala are connected strongly enough on the conceptual level that they can be replicated in completely alternative contexts. The results of these experiments in applying traditional spatial concepts derived from the Kwak’wala language into contemporary spaces is presented in chapter 8.
2.4 Summary

The relationship to “form” and “meaning” is mapped to the Kwak’wala language, as “form”, and the Kwakwaka’wakw culture as “meaning”. In order to explore this relationship I use linguistic morphological analysis to derive the literal meanings of Kwak’wala spatial terminology. I then cross reference this with cultural meanings as expressed through architecture, social structure, narrative, and art. From this analysis emerged a structural analogous mapping of space from the body, to the house, to the land. This then becomes a rich source of metaphorical conceptualization about the Kwakwaka’wakw understanding of the world. As a compliment to the written component of this thesis which details these finding I created a body of contemporary artworks which sought to express these Kwak’wala derived spatial concepts using non-linguistic expression. The replacement of the formal expression (art for language), is an exploration of whether the shared conceptual understructure can remain intact. By analogy, if Kwak’wala is replaced by English amongst the Kwakwaka’wakw how much of an effect will this have on Kwakwaka’wakw culture (worldview)? The next chapter presents the \textit{u-[aw]} stem in Kwak’wala and its relationship to the body, the house and the land.
Chapter 3: The \textit{u-fa’w-} stem: 
The Body=House=Land Metaphor in the Kwak’wala Language

Dream of Lakis

“I dreamed I had been called by a man to go with him to the upper side of our world, the sky. He took my right hand. Then he went up holding my hand while we were going straight up. Then we passed through the door in the middle of the upper side of our world. The man showed me everything that was in the house there. Then he said to me that we should go on. We went along. Then we came to the hole in the edge of the world. Then he said “Through this (hole) pass the children when they are born, when they come from the upper side of the world. Now pass through it and go home. I am going to help you that it may not be hard for you to pass through,” Then I went on, but before I arrived I awoke. (Boas1925, pp.48-49)

3.1 Analogy of the body, the house, and the land

In the Kwak’wala language spatial concepts can be expressed both through speech and the use of metaphor, as well as through the linguistic structure of the words. The spatial concepts
expressed in language forms can be correlated to alternative cultural expressions such as public oratory, narratives, rituals, ceremonies and artistic creation. Blevins & Blevins (2009) describe analogy as “a general cognitive process that transfers specific information or knowledge from one instance or domain (the analogue, base or source) to another (the target)” (p.2). This chapter deals with a specific Kwakwaka’wakw emphasis on spatial structural analogy from the small-scale to large-scale domains, which introduces the micro/macro expression of body=house=landscape metaphor through the use of the stem form u-[a’w] in the Kwak’wala language. Chapter 4 deals with space in relationship to concepts of the “body/self” Chapter 5 deals with space in relationship to concepts of the “house.” Chapter 6 then deals with space in relationship to concepts of the “land.” Throughout all three topics the metaphorical relationships between the body, the house, and the land are interwoven.

In Kwak’wala the notion of structural similarity/analogy between objects and the animate body is manifest on an ever increasing scale from vessels such as boxes and bowls to canoes and houses, and ultimately extends onto the landscape or the world. Under this system structural similarity is applied as a primary component of spatial categorization. Structural similarity becomes a linguistically “marked” characteristic that conceptually links one object to another.
By “marked” I mean that there is a distinct linguistic form that expresses this concept. In Kwak’wala, the animate body acts as the primary referential for physical objects in space. On the small-scale, a box can be conceived of as conceptually analogous to the body, having a front and back, two sides, a top and a bottom. By extension, on an expanding scale, the body becomes analogous to the house, the house then becomes analogous to the ‘na’mima “family/community group” and, ultimately on the grandest scale, the landscape (world). Under this premise the landscape is considered to share the characteristics of the body in the same way that an object such as a box does. Structural similarity is emphasized, while difference is accorded to scale. Due to the pervasiveness of this system reflected in the Kwak’wala language what might be considered less animate in English is applied more literal animation in Kwakwaka’wakw conceptualization.

Kwakwaka’wakw traditional art and architecture exhibit visual manifestation of this concept. For example, a house can literally appear as a being whose doorway acts as a mouth that consumes the people who enter it. The following photo (Figure 3.1) was taken by Edward S. Curtis in Gwayasdams (Gilford Island) village in 1914. It depicts the house owned by Chief Johnny Scow. The painted house-front depicts a sea-monster, a crest he acquired through his
first marriage with the ‘Namgis woman. The doorway is positioned where the mouth opens. In addition a pole depicting a whale, an inherited crest of the Kwikwasu’tinixw, whom Johnny Scow was head chief of, is positioned so that guests must enter through the mouth. Later this house-front was replaced with the image of a raven inherited from his second marriage. In the raven rendition of the house a massive raven’s beak was carved over the doorway.

Figure 3.1 Curtis, Edward, S. (Photographer). 1914 At Gwayasdams Village [Photo], Photograph courtesy of Northwestern University Library, Edward S. Curtis’s The North American Indian, ”2003 http://digital.library.northwestern.edu./curtis/
The visual representation of animate beings as houses is also found expressed in Kwakwaka'wakw historical (mythical) narratives that describe houses as living beings. In the following narrative not only is the house entrance described as having a mouth which swallows its guests but the structural house-posts which hold the house up are capable of thought and speech.

Then Kawadilikala spoke: “That is done. Now brother, come to my house. It is beyond this point.” They paddled on, and when they had nearly reached Kawadilikala’s house, he said: “Brother, take care. When I jump into my house, you and your slave must jump in at the same time.” Now they arrived at the beach in front of the house of Kawadilikala. They went ashore and walked up to the house. When they arrived at the front of the house, the mouth of the door of Kawadilikala’s house opened. They jumped in all at the same time and it bit only a corner of Tl̓utlatsa’s blanket. Then the posts at the sides of the door spoke, and the one on the right hand side said: “You made them come to your house, Kawadilikala;” and the post on the left hand side said: “Now spread a mat and give your guests to eat, Chief.” It is said that the crossbeams over the rear posts were
double-headed snakes (sisi’utl), which were constantly playing with their tongues.

(Boas 1895, p. 387)

While houses are the most obvious form of architectural/artistic analogical representations of the body, on a smaller scale, storage boxes and food dishes can be depicted as the body of an animate being whose cavity becomes a container. This feast dish (Figure 3.2) from Gwa’yi (Kingcome Inlet) is carved in the image of a dzunukwa, a large, often sleepy and slow moving supernatural creature. This being has been translated as “wild woman of the woods”. The large faces on either side are the lids to other feast dishes.
The landscape as well is animate and alive. Rivers and mountains are depicted as having human characteristics and in some cases having been human at an earlier time. The following story comes from the now extinct tribe of the Hoyalas, who used to occupy the northern tip of Vancouver Island but were wiped out due to introduced disease and inter-tribal war. In it Chief

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6 Back Row (left to right): Bill Wilson, Sam Webber, Jim Hamdzid, Alec Willie, Dick Webber, Harry Jack, William Webber, Willie Dawson, Jim King, Albert Dawson, Samual James
Front Row: Thomas King, Anderson Williams, Alfred Coon (names courtesy Ryan Nicolson)
`Kum gusta’els (Wealth-Coming-Up) is transformed along with his attendant into an island by the great transformer `Kaniki’lakw.

Then the tribe learned that `Kaniki’lakw was coming to set everything right all around our world. Immediately the great Wealth-Coming-Up spoke to his tribe.

And this is what he said to his tribe: “As soon as Lord `Kaniki’lakw comes, I shall ask him to transform me into a rock, and I shall be an island in this water, so that I may be seen by later generations.” Thus he said. Then one of his attendants also spoke and said, “O great chief! I will also be transformed into a rock by Lord `Kaniki’lakw; but I will be under you, else you would remain on the rock in this water.” Thus he said to him. As soon as he stopped speaking they went out.

Then, after a long time, `Kaniki’lakw came. Immediately the great one was invited by Chief Wealth-coming-up. Then Lord `Kaniki’lakw went to his house, and Wealth-coming-up spoke to `Kaniki’lakw. He said to him, “O great Lord! I invite you that you may turn me into a rock, that I may stay in the water at this river, that I may be prayed to by later generations.” Thus he said to him. Immediately the Lord called
him to go to the water, and immediately the great Wealth-coming-up went with his attendant and behind them went 'Kaniki'lakw. Then Wealth-coming-up and his attendant acted in their own way a little upstream of the place where water is drawn. Then the attendant lay down on his face, and the great Wealth-coming up sat on his back. As soon as he had sat down, he was transformed into a rock. Then the tribe of the past chief just prayed to 'Kaniki'lakw, for they were really frightened by what they had seen being done to their chief. That is the end. (Boas 1910, pp. 336-337)

The transformative power of the land is a pervasive concept in Kwakwaka'wakw thought. The body can be transformed into a tree, a rock, a river, a mountain and vice versa. Houses are built or appear on the land in supernatural ways. All is dynamic and animate. These are just a few examples of the extension of structural characteristics of the body onto feast-dishes, houses and the land. The structural analogue is the body, and it becomes the prototype for utilitarian objects, architecture and the landscape.
3.2 General concept of analogy in Kwakwaka’wakw belief systems

The Kwakwaka’wakw hold a philosophical belief in analogy in general. In relationship to ideas of “cause and effect” the Kwakwaka’wakw believe that efforts in one domain of existence can have an effect on other levels. For example, in order to affect events in the world as a whole one can through symbolic gesture imitate the desired outcome at a ritualistic level. This gesture amplifies the probability through analogy that the desired outcome is achieved. Expressing this belief system are the following examples:

The soil from a land otter slide which is used as a magic means for influencing weather is called *nawalakw*. It is said, “do not handle too roughly this supernatural one (namely the soil), otherwise our weather will be too rough” (gwa’la alalisaxwa nawalakwex atlux alalisants ‘nalax R628.7). (Boas 1949, p. 613)

The soil from the land otter slide is thought to have supernatural properties analogous to nature. If the soil is handled roughly the weather may become rough in correspondence. The belief expresses the notion that physical gesture at the bodily level can influence outcomes in the landscape. Through speech and concurrent actions we see the idea of microcosmic and
macrocosmic analogical expansion. Handling soil from the sea otter slide at the bodily level can have an effect on the world. The metaphor of the body as equivalent to the landscape takes on ritualistic significance. Further examples are;

Prayer to the Migratory Birds

“Welcome, Supernatural Ones, we have come to meet alive, friends, you, Long-Life-Makers. You have come and I pray you again that you have mercy and take out again, this my sickness when you go back to the place where you always disappear friends. Now protect me again during the time when you are here in summer in this good country where I treat you well, Long-Life-Makers, Supernatural Ones.” Then the man himself replies to his words, on behalf of the birds. He says, “Ha, I will do this.” (Boas 1930, p. 184)

This prayer is based on the analogy of the body with the land in that the sickness which occupies the physical body of man is requested to leave in the same way that birds migrate over the landscape. Under this premise it makes sense to use the metaphor of sickness “flying” away from the land/body. The act of birds flying over the landscape is linked by the words of
the prayer as the analogical act of sickness leaving the body. The following example regarding

birth show the concept of analogy as ritualistically practiced through bodily gestures.

A pregnant woman was cautioned against certain foods; if, for example, she should
eat salmon eggs or chew gum, their stickiness might be imparted to the fetus,
causing it to adhere to her womb and thus rendering her delivery difficult. By

somewhat similar reasoning she refrained from making baskets lest the navel cord
become twisted around the child’s neck. To ensure an easy delivery she could carry
out in pantomime an easy birth, taking four pebbles from the beach and letting them

slip through her clothing onto the ground while expressing the hope, “May I be like

these.” Shortly before delivery it was thought she might further facilitate her delivery

by opening her braids and drinking certain medicines. (Ford 1940, p. 30)

These examples show that the concept of analogy was strongly prevalent within

Kwakwaka’wakw belief systems. Outside cultures might label this general belief in analogy

across domains as “superstition” but I believe this dismissiveness to be misguided. We have

not yet come to understand the possible psychological and perhaps physical benefits to such
conceptualizations. Ultimately, through a general acceptance and belief in analogy, which in this case I shall interpret as “the connectedness of all things”, the Kwak’waka’wakw were especially primed for a highly metaphorical conceptualization of the world.

3.3 Metaphor as a major cognitive process

The difference between metaphor and analogy is slight. An analogy aligns things as being similar, one object or characteristic being mapped onto another; one ‘thing’ is like another ‘thing’ drawing a connection between apparently different domains. A metaphor maps this similarity more definitively; one ‘thing’ in one domain is another ‘thing’ in another domain. The difference lies in focus and emphasis and can be subtle; a cognitive leap from comparison to definition.

We could use the visual analogy of drawing a dotted line between things that are alike or similar to drawing a solid line or an equation sign between things. Metaphor takes analogy one step further. In general linguistic thought, metaphor has traditionally been thought of as a convention of language and expression. As such, metaphor has been considered as peripheral or superfluous to conceptual systems. Lakoff and Johnson (1980), have sought to dispute this understanding since their initial publication on the subject, “Metaphors We Live By”. Lakoff and Johnson’s views emerged from prior studies conducted by Ludwig Wittgenstein (1953) and
Eleanor Rosch (1973, 1975) on ‘family resemblances’ and ‘categorization’, as well as early studies of how language reflects the conceptual systems of speakers explored by Edward Sapir (1921) and Benjamin Whorf (1956), both contemporaries influenced by the work of Franz Boas. Drawing from this base of theoretical exploration Lakoff and Johnson propose that rather than being a simple convention of language, metaphor *is* our fundamental way of understanding our world. “…metaphor is not just a matter of language, that is, of mere words. We shall argue that, on the contrary, human *thought processes* are largely metaphorical. This is what we mean when we say that the human conceptual system is metaphorically structured and defined.” (p. 6)

### 3.4 Metaphorical extensions of the body

Examples of metaphorical extension analogous to the body do exist in other languages. In English, terms such as ‘mouth of the river’, ‘foot of the mountain’ and ‘head of the family’ are examples but their application has cultural specificity and the resulting conceptualization of relationships carries different interpretation than that which emerges from Kwak’wala. J. Douglas Porteous (1986) calls this the body-landscape metaphor, and in relationship to Western literature he writes:
The metaphorical use of body imagery in relation to landscape is fundamental in the Western world. The renaissance metaphor that understood the earth to be modeled on the human body has generally been regarded as a one-way relation, ‘landscape as body.’ It finds its expression in generic landscape naming. In imaginative literature at least, the reverse relation, ‘body as landscape,’ is of frequent occurrence and continues well into the machine age. The body in question is generally female, and the culmination of the ‘body as landscape’ metaphor is pornotopia. (p.2)

Porteous considers that in Western societies the concept of feminine gender has been linked to concepts of nature and that notions around taming and dominating the land are embedded in a highly patriarchal culture that projects notions of the feminine onto the landscape. He also concludes that the metaphor while certainly present in art and literature bears little scientific value; the most highly valued aspect of Western culture along with technology. In contrast the body-landscape metaphor as it emerges in Kwakwaka'wakw culture and language appears to
be gender neutral and a primary mode of conceptualizing phenomenon in the world. The main purpose of this chapter however, is not to compare English and Kwak’wala expressions regarding the body-landscape metaphor but to analyze how this metaphor is manifest in Kwak’wala’wakw thought through art and architecture. It was found that the “house” was an integral intermediary between the body and the land so the metaphor, as interpreted for the Kwakw’aka’wakw, is put forward as the Body=House=Landscape metaphor. An analysis of Kwak’wala linguistic forms in combination with Kwakw’aka’wakw cultural practices exhibits a particular, more pervasive and literal manifestation than English. The concept is emphasized linguistically through an unusual morphemic stem $u$-[a’w-] through its classification function as well as with suffixation.

### 3.5 The Kwak’wala stem $u$-[a’w-]

Kwak’wala is a polysynthetic language. Kwak’wala words are the combination of stems and suffixes, sometimes several. The amount of suffixes in Kwak’wala is vast and the construction of words without suffixation is small. It is the combination of stems and suffixes that create

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7I found little evidence of Kwakwaka’wakw gender conceptualization applied to the house or the landscape. I thought it interesting also to note that gender does not play a major role in the Kwak’wala pronoun system, as Kwak’wala pronouns are gender neutral. See Chapter 4 for pronoun descriptions.
complex meanings. A single word composed of several morphemes, each carrying distinct meaning, can convey the same amount of information that in English requires a sentence.

Franz Boas’ (1947) Kwak'wala dictionary catalogues words on the basis of the onset phoneme\(^8\) of stems (first letter of stem). He then provides subsets of the stem combined with a vast array of suffixes that create new words and extended meanings (like paradigms). This organizational system is appropriate to the polysemous character of the Kwak'wala language. Boas’ system also works because Kwak'wala while heavily reliant on suffixation does not exhibit prefixation in the same way. In other words, the construction of words in Kwak'wala is generally stem initial with modifying suffix(es) following. Where there does exist what appears to be prefixation is in actuality reduplication where the stem undergoes a process of copying in order to express a range of concepts. We can say then, that in general Kwak'wala word structure consists of the joining of word-initial stems, carrying base information that are further elaborated in meaning by the addition of a suffix(es). While for the most part stems are bound they are not devoid of meaning (or empty). Taking this into consideration, the stem \(u\)-[aw-] appears unusual in that its exact meaning is less defined than other stems. In Boas’ (1948) dictionary he defines \(u\)-[a’w-] as:

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\(^8\) Phoneme: perceptually distinct sound sets in language used to create meaning and symbolized by letters in an orthography.
A stem designating an action, state, or noun which receives its specific meaning from the attached suffix. Before consonantic suffixes it has the form *u*- . It is the opposite of *way*- , the corresponding negative stem; for instance *u*’*sta* “to go right into water”; *wi*’*sta* “to fail to go into water” (pp. 27 & 32)

The *u*-[a’w-] form lacks the content or obvious “meaning” generally provided by stems in Kwak’wala words. For example, the verbal stem *yaxw*- meaning “to dance” by the attachment of suffixes can form *yaxw-iwe’* “dancing headdress for forehead” or *yaxw-a* “land looms up in distance (dances)” (p. 42). In acting in opposition to the negative *way*- stem we might consider that the stem *u*-[a’w-] partially takes on the meaning “to be”. If one surveys the application of the *u*-[a’w-] stem across word glosses a pattern begins to emerge of spatial or locative character.

The majority of *u*-[a’w-] verbal forms relate to some form of action through space, while the majority of *u*-[a’w-] noun forms relate to spatial location upon a type of object; these types of objects being limited to vessels such as bowls, boxes and canoes, animate bodies such as human and animal, houses, communities and the landscape. The noun forms can be said to form categories and these categories act as analogies which emphasize some type of structural
similarity. That the concept is significant enough to be encoded in the Kwak'wala language is significant.

The most common form this morpheme takes is \textit{u-} or alternatively \textit{a'w-}. It appears as \textit{a'w-}, \textit{aw-}, and \textit{o-} in Boas' transcriptions. These are allomorphs of the same morpheme. Bauer (2004) defines an allomorph as “one of the realisations of a morpheme” (p.15). For example, the plural form suffix in English can have the variants "\textit{cat-s}" or "\textit{tax-es}". Both –s and –es mean the same thing, “more than one”, but take different forms based on the sound of the proceeding consonants. For the variant forms of the Kwak'wala \textit{u-} the shifts in vowel quality are influenced by phonological conditions brought on by the first phoneme of the attached suffix. When the introductory vowel form is \textit{e-}, rather than being an allophone of \textit{u-} I suspect that this is a reduplicated form indicating plurality or distribution.

The following 13 sets are the classes of nouns formed with the stem \textit{u-[a'w-]}. The types of nouns that are associated together can be said to form a type of class or radial category within Kwakwaka’wakw conceptualization. For example, in Set 1 it can be proposed that the “bow of a canoe”, “the front of a house” and a forehead are conceptually analogous. I have arranged the
sets in order of their suffix initial consonants. While initially the words may appear to be unrelated in their English translation it is my theory that the formal relationships of shared phonology (letters) will reveal relationships specific to Kwakwa'wakw underlying conceptual understructure that emerge as a radial category of associated meaning as illustrated in (Figure 3.3).

3.5.1 Example sets 1-13 of forms analogous to the body

Set 1: $u - gwijw$

(1) $u - giwe$ “bow of canoe” (Boas 1948:30, Grubb 1977:216)

(2) $u - gwi - we'$ “forehead” (Boas 1948:30, Grubb 1977:216)

(3) $u - gwi - wa - lil$ “front of house (forehead of house)” (Grubb 1977:216) “forehead of house, rear of house” (Boas 1948:30)

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9 This apparent discrepancy can be explained by points of orientation. When perceived from the exterior the front of the house that faces the water is considered the head. Once inside the house the interior shifts to the perspective of the person who has entered. The rear of the house then becomes the ‘head’ of the house. (Boas 1909:415)
Using the concept of *radial categories* each set could be configured as in (Figure 3.3). The *u-[a’w-]* stem provides the central meaning as a locative in conceptual relationship to the body as a prototype for spatial relationship. If one applies Boas’ interpretation of the *u-[a’w-]* stem as “a stem designating an action, state or noun which receives its specific meaning from the attached suffix” (Boas 1948, p. 27) then this radial category can be interpreted as “a location on an object which is analogous to the forehead” i.e. *ugiwe* “the forehead of a canoe”, *ugwiwali* “the forehead of the house”, the *ugwiwe’* “forehead of the human body.” As all the example sets begin with the *u-[a’w-]* stem each of the sets are organized by the form of the initial consonants and their meanings compared as somehow analogous. In (Figure 3.4) one can ask the question how is “the body imagined as a long object” similar to the “inside of a vessel” or the “bank of a
river". One could hypothesize that the inside of the vessel is referring to the upper portion of the interior of that vessel which is similar to the long thin embankment of a river bed which acts like a vessel, or long container for water in the landscape. The peripheral aspect of position or location on the body is referred to in the terms for toes and roof which are also peripheral in the same way that the upper portion of the vessel is i.e."near the edge of the main body of the river/riverbed". Also, one could say the river itself is imagined as a long body stretching across the landscape upon which are spatially peripheral features such as “toes”, “roof”, or “lower end of belly” or that an island is imagined as a long body with peripheral features such as the “east end of an island” or what could be referred to as the “head of the island”. Example (5) is a place-name located on the narrow end of Cormorant Island. Hence it is literally named the “head” of the body of Cormorant Island which is geographically shaped like a long kidney.

**Set 2: u - gw-**

(4) u –gwid -e’ “body, a person or long object" (Boas 1948:30)

(5) u –gwit -ame’ “east end of an island” (Boas 1948:30)
   “head of body of round thing” (Boas 1934: 46, map 8a 89)

(6) u –gwag -e’ “inside of vessel, bank of river” (Boas 1948:30a, 1947:352)

(7) u –gwamx –sidz-e’ “toes” (Boas 1948:31)
(8) u -gwas  “roof” (Boas 1948:30)

(9) u -gwayog -e’  “lower end of belly” (Boas 1948:30a)

Figure 3.4 Diagrammatic mapping of u-gw-
Set 3: \( u - xdl - \)

(10) \( u - xdle' \)  
     “stern of canoe” (Boas 1947:323, Grubb 1977:216)

(11) \( u - xdla' \)  
     “hind end” (Boas 1947:374)

(12) \( u - xdlax - xidz -e' \)  
     “heel” (Boas 1947:374, Grubb 1977:217)

(13) \( u - xdlas - xai'yi' \)  
     “lower jaw, chin” (Boas 1947:374, Grubb 1977:217)

Variations of similar words – (could be orthographic/transcription inconsistencies)

(14) \( u -'xsd -e' \)  
     “tail end” (Boas 1948:27)

(15) \( u -'xaw -e \)  
     “neck” (Boas 1948:31)

(16) \( u -'xwdl -e' \)  
     “butt end, base, back end of a point of land” (Boas 1948:31)

Set 4: \( u - xw - \)

(17) \( 'u - xw - to'yi \)  
     “very top of tree, top” (Boas 1947:324, Grubb 1977:216)

(18) \( u - xws -'ya'pi' \)  
     “shoulder” (Boas 1947:368, Grubb 1977:216)

(19) \( u - xw -tl' \)  
     “top, summit” (Grubb 1977:216)

(20) \( u - xwi -we' \)  
     “top of bank” (Boas 1947:365)
(21) u -xws  "inside of canoe" (Boas 1948:31)

(22) u -xws -giw -e'  "short end of dish" (Boas 1948:31)
    "shoulder?, nom."

Set 5: $u - xw -$ 

(23) u - xw -siw -e  "mouth of river" (Grubb 1977:216)

(24) u - xw -sidz -e'  "foot of mountain" (Boas 1947:323,370)

(25) u - xw -dza'mo -lii  "place in front of body" (Boas 1947:371)

(26) u -xw -iwa -'lis  "high bank of river" (Boas 1948:31)
    "on ground"

Set 6: $u$-$ba-$

(27) u - bo -'yi  "chest" (Boas 1947:337, 1948:29, Grubb 1977:216)

(28) u - ba -lis  "bank of river, beach, chest of beach" (Boas 1947:337, 1948:29)

(29) u' - ba - lii  "end of house" (Boas 1948:29)

Set 7: $u$-$'kw [kw]-$

(30) u - `kwin -e'  "human body" (Boas 1947:357, Grubb 1977:216)

(31) u - `kwa'edz -e'  "branch side of a tree" (Boas 1947:323,358)
    "front part of belly" (Boas 1948:31)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>u -ˈkwalɡ-e’</td>
<td>&quot;lap&quot; (Boas 1948:31)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>u -ˈkwe’yi</td>
<td>&quot;top of pile, box&quot; (Boas 1948:30a)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td><strong>Set 8: u’– nu-, u – n[u]-</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>u -ˈnutl -am’</td>
<td>&quot;temples –side of face&quot; (Boas 1947:323)</td>
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<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>u - nu’tsax - sd -e’</td>
<td>&quot;corner behind house&quot; (Boas 1947:373)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>u – nus -xsd -e’</td>
<td>&quot;hip&quot; (Boas 1947:373)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>u –nay -i</td>
<td>&quot;inside corner of house&quot; (Boas 1948:30)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>u –nigw -ił</td>
<td>&quot;side of house&quot; (Boas 1948:30)</td>
<td>&quot;inside corner of house&quot; (Grubb 1977:216)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>u –na -ya (ˈa’wana’ye)</td>
<td>&quot;side of round thing, tribe&quot; (Boas 1948:30)</td>
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<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>u –nuł - ge’</td>
<td>&quot;hip&quot; (Boas 1948:30)</td>
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<td><strong>Set 9: u’– dz -</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>u -ˈdza’ye</td>
<td>&quot;flat place&quot; (Boas 1948:27)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>u -ˈdza’las</td>
<td>&quot;place of flat layer [name]&quot; (Boas 1948:30)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>u -ˈdzoxsd -e’</td>
<td>&quot;small of back&quot; (Boas 1948:30)</td>
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(45) u –xsig -e’ “outside front of house” (Boas 1947:373, 1948:31)  
“in front of house” (Grubb 1977:216)

(46) u –sdlasx -a’ “chin” (Boas 1947:343)

(47) u –’dzaxs “canoe box” (Boas 1948:30)

Set 10: u –’tsa-

(48) u –’tsa “inside” (Boas 1948: 30)

(49) u –’tsa’la “rocky bay” (Boas 1948: 30)

(50) u –’tsakala “lengthwise” (Boas 1948:30)

(51) u –’tsa -lis “bay” (Boas 1948:30)

(52) ‘u –’tsa -lii “place in house near door” (Boas 1948:30)

Set 11: a – ‘w[j] -

The u-form changes to aw-[a-w] in front of vowel initial suffixes


(54) aw –iga’t –sidz -e’ “instep” (Boas 1948:28)

(56) aw -i'nagw -is
   “country, place, land, earth” (Boas 1948:27)
   “on ground” (Grubb 1977:167)

(57) aw -i'nagw -il
   “floor of house” (Boas 1948:28)
   “in house” (Grubb 1977:167)

(58) a'w -ilbe
   “point of land” (Boas 1948:28)
   “point/nose” (Grubb 1977:167)

(59) a'w –idlaxaw -e’
   “inside of mouth” (Boas 1948:28)

Set 12: a – 'w-

(60) a'w -am'y -e
   “cheek, side of canoe” (Boas 1948:28)

(61) a'w -odz -e
   “cheek” (Boas 1947:332)

(62) a'w –axst -e’
   “mouth of kelp bottle, inlet etc.” (Boas 1947:305, 1948:27)

10(63) a'w –am -ala
   “to move along bank of river” (Boas 1948:27)

(64) a'w - ilbe’
   “point of land” (Boas 1948:29)
   “nose”

10 This is a verb form rather than noun but is included as the (‘aw-) appears to provide the connotation of the related land form.
Set 13: *a- ‘wa [b,ʼp]*-

(65) a’w – Abedz -e’ “calf of leg” (Boas 1948:28)

(66) a’w – Aboyi’ “place underneath” (Boas 1948:27)

(67) a’w – Abo -ʼtsa -xsd -e’ “thigh” (Boas 1948:27)

(68) a’w – Abo -sx -a’ “lower side of bow of canoe” (Boas 1947:344)

(69) a’w - a’p - e’ “back of neck, behind” (Boas 1948:28)

“Imp of head including nape of neck” (Grubb 1977:159)

3.5.2 Independent forms

The following *u-[a’w-]* forms are considered independent only because when sorting the *u-[a’w-]* forms according to the shared initial consonants of the initial attached suffix, these ones were single examples. They are “independent” only in the sense that there were no other phonologically similar examples to pair them up with. It does not indicate that other forms don’t exist only that they may not have been listed in Boas (1947). What they do seem to share however, is that the majority of them have more than one glossed meaning. For example (75) can mean “bank of river” or “side of vessel”.

(70) e’wa - genisbe’ “nostrils” (Boas 1947:361)
Words with (vowel onset / glottal stop) that are directly translated across physical domains

(71) u-`pig-e'  
“shin” (Boas 1948:29) “knee” (Grubb 1977:276)

(72) u-`bal-`tsan-e'  
“ends of sleeves, or branches” (Boas 1948:29)

(73) i-`aw-idz-e'  
“front of belly of a person, or mountain” (Boas 1948:28)

(74) a`w-am`y-e  
“cheek, side of bow of canoe” (Boas 1948:28)

(75) u-`gwag-e'  
“bank of river, side of vessel” (Boas 1947:352)

(76) u-`gwage-lis  
“bank of river, rim of basket” (Boas 1948:30)

(77) u-`gwam-e'  
“head end, head chief, front of mountain”  
(Boas 1948:31)

(78) u-xsd-e'  
“tail end, lower end, stern of canoe” (Boas 1948:31)

(79) a`-giw-e'  
“bow of canoe, headpiece of cradle” (Boas 1948:37)

(80) a`w-axst-e'  
“mouth of kelp bottle, inlet, etc.” (Boas 1947:304)

(81) u- gwid-e'  
“the body of a pole, tree, canoe, woman”  
(Boas 1947:353)

(82) u-`gwaxto`yi  
“top, upper end of river” (Boas 1948:30)

(83) u-`bal - tsan-e'  
“branch of tree, foothills” (Boas 1947:372)
The list of words prefaced with the onset stem $u$-$[a'w]$ numbers approximately 136 in Boas (1948) dictionary. 83 of these are nouns which form the 13 sets I have compiled above. It is a comprehensive list of words. They are organized based on the initial consonants of the first suffix since the specific meaning of the word appears to be provided by the initial suffix and then modified by following suffixes. The extended meaning of the spatial analogy of Body=House=Land is provided by the $u$-$[a'w]$ stem. The majority of the 83 examples presented here refer to the body, the house, or the landscape with the odd one referring to a container or canoe.

3.5.3 Kwak'wala suffixes that reference the body

The $u$-$[a'w]$ stem is not the only form that can identify parts of the body. An array of suffixes denoting body parts exists in conjunction. These body part suffixes can be combined with
stems other than the *u-[a’w]* stem. When this occurs, the more concrete meanings supplied by the stems combine with the suffix to supply more specific information. The following list I have compiled from Boas (1947) list of suffixes. It is most likely incomplete since the morphemes of the suffixes attaching to the *u-[a’w]-* stem are not all accounted for.

**Kwak’wal’a body-part suffixes (Boas 1947, pp. 229-232)**

Boas lists 24 suffixes in his “Kwakiutl Grammar with a Glossary of the suffixes that reference body parts. The examples are bracketed as they represent the internal structure of the word and are not full words in and of themselves. For example (98) is represented as *(−xtla)*. When attached to a stem this could appear as *hanxtla* “on top of head [canoe is on top of waves or on island]” or *uxtlaye* “head of *‘namima’*, or “top of head”, referring to the name which represents a position of social standing affiliated with the top of the head of the *‘namima* body (Boas 1947, p. 374).

(87) *(−s’anál)* “main part of an object, body house, canoe”

(88) *(−’stu)* “round opening, eye”

(89) *(−kax)* “knee”
(90) ( `-ła`an )  “body”
(91) ( `-kalkala`)  “in front of body”
(92) ( `-ka’es`)  “front outside of body, tree, mountain”
(93) ( `-abedze’`)  “leg”
(94) ( `-ato`)  “ear”
(95) ( `-es`)  “inside of body”
(96) ( `-ek[ala]`)  “back”
(97) ( `-o’yo`)  “middle”
(98) ( `-xtła`)  “on top of head”
(99) ( `-xtlo`)  “top of tree, ends of branches, leaves, body hair”
(100) ( `-axsta`)  “mouth, opening, to talk about”
(101) ( `-xseka`)  “in front of house, body, mountain”
(102) ( `-`am’ya`)  “cheek”
(103) ( `-`a`)  “ear”
(104) ( `-[g]iu`)  “forehead”
(105) ( `-[g]it`)  “body as a whole”
(106) ( `-[g]iu`)  “bow of canoe”
3.5.3.1 Word examples using body part suffixes

The following is a small set of word examples where the stem plus the suffix(es) create more specific meaning through their combination. I provide these examples to show that the specific meaning supplied by the u-[a'w]-stem is missing the obvious definition supplied by other stems.

(107)  ( -[x]si’u )   “mouth of river”
(108)  ( -[x]dza’mo)   “in front of body”
(109)  ( -[g]am)   “face”
(110)  ( -[x]seka )   “in front of house, of body”

(111)  'tan – abedz -e’  “to have pains in calf” (Boas 1947:313)
       knot?    calf

(112)  'adl - a’p -e’   “behind (the neck of ) a mountain” (Boas 1947:314)
       behind    neck

(113)  na – gam -ala   “snow on face of mountain” (Boas 1947:315)
       snow    face    continuous

(114)  ‘wada’ -ato   “to have cold ear” (Boas 1947:316)
       cold    ear

(115)  gwa’w - ilbe’   “raven nose” (Boas 1947:330)
       raven    nose
(116) *ga’ – axst –ala*  
early mouth continuous  
“to breakfast” (Boas 1947:305)

(117) *’i’k – axst -a*  
good mouth nom.  
“to speak nicely, good mouth” (Boas 1947:305)

(118) *mag – axsta -’li̯*  
jerk? mouth of house  
“close to door of house” (Boas 1947:305)

(119) *nak – axsta -’lis*  
middle mouth of beach (land)  
“middle(entrance) of bay” (Boas 1947:305)

(120) *‘na’l - anxe’*  
11 north edge of flat or long thing  
“farthest upriver, also most valuable, noblest”  
(Boas 1947:305)

(121) *xwakw - s’anal*  
 canoe body of  
“body of canoe” (Boas 1947:341)

(122) *baxw - s’anal*  
 human body of  
“trunk of body” (Boas 1947:341)

(123) *gukw - s’anal*  
 house body of  
“frame of house” (Boas 1947:341)

From the above sample set of stem + body part suffix forms we see it is possible to reference body parts without using the *u-[a’w-]* stem form. It can be deduced then that the *u-[a’w-]* does not exist simply to express body parts but must perform a broader function that is connected to the conceptualization of structural cross-over between the body and certain utilitarian vessels,

11 This stem is glossed as north in many translations, however the definition is an approximation applied to extend western European cardinal directions onto Kwak’wala cardinal directions. They are not the same. The literal meaning is ‘upriver’.
architecture, and the landscape, the categories which emerged when the nouns formed with \( u-[	ext{a}'w-] \) were sorted into sets 1-13.

### 3.6 The stem \( u-[	ext{a}'w-] \) in Kwakwaka'wakw geographical names

The geographical terminology of the Kwakwaka'wakw, utilizes detail specific to geographic location, such as 'naldze' “upriver” and gwayi’ “downriver”, 'tlasde' “seaside”, or 'adlagamala” “facing inland”. Place-names tend to indicate either these positional notions or geographic character such as appearance; 'awe’s “foam beach” or utility; 'kogwade’ “having shelter”. They can be combined or separate. Occasionally names of a culturally significant nature are used such as madamxtala “madam on top”, the madam being a dance belonging to the 'tseka, or winter ceremonial. In Boas (1934) “Geographical Names of the Kwakiutl Indians” place names are listed according to the stem. Several names may appear in variation under one stem category. The place names beginning with the \( u-[	ext{a}'w-] \) stem form one of the largest subsets. Approximately, 60 place-names are listed as beginning with \( u- \), while, approximately 26 are listed under \( a'w- \) (pp. 44-46). Approximately 40 of these place-names specifically reference the body. Other significant subsets are names beginning with 'makw- “round thing is somewhere” and gwa- “downriver”. Added to this can be the numerous place names that
incorporate body part suffixes. Combined, it is feasible to say that amongst Kwakwaka’wakw geographical place names the association of the landscape with the animate body is a viable component.

Examples of place names prefaced with (u-), (aw-) that reference the body

(124) u –bal- ’tsana  “hand (branches) at end” (Boas 1934:45)
     end  hand

(125) u –sta -’lis  “beach at small opening” (Boas 1934:45)
     eye  on beach

(126) u –gwit –am -a’lis  “beach at head” (Boas 1934:46)
     body  face  on beach

(127) u –gwi -wa’lis  “forehead beach” (Boas 1934:45)
     forehead  on beach

(128) aw –axst –a -’lis  “beach at mouth (of inlet)” (Boas 1934:45)
     mouth  at beach

(129) aw -a’pa  “nape of neck” (Boas 1934:44)
     neck

(130) aw –ig -a -lis  “beach at back” (Boas 1934:45)
     back  on beach

(131) a’w -am’y -i’  “cheek, i.e. steep bluff” (Boas 1934:44)
     cheek
3.6.1 Body part suffixes used in geographical names (Boas 1934, pp. 15-17)

Many body part suffixes are used in Kwakwaka‘wakw geographical names. The place-names using the *u-*[aˈw-]* stem can be found on pp. 44-46 in Boas’ (1934) “Geographical Names of the Kwakiutl Indians.” Boas says:

Geographical terminology does not depend solely upon cultural interests, but is also influenced by linguistic structure. Kwakiutl has a very large number of suffixes expressing location and similar concepts. Many of these appear in the geographic terminology and the concepts expressed by these suffixes limit the range of names that can be expressed by single words. I give here a number of examples of suffixes which will indicate the range of concepts that find expression. (p. 14)

Boas then lists 61 suffixes present within geographical names. *Out of these 61 suffixes, approximately 40 reference the body.* About 20 of the 40 suffixes Boas lists, already appear under section 4.3 “Kwak’wala suffixes that reference the body” which were compiled from Boas (1947) “Kwakiutl Grammar with a Glossary of the Suffixes”. The following suffixes are the ones not listed in Boas (1947) but present in Boas (1934) pp. 14-18. Together with the suffixes listed
under section 4.3, they total approximately forty-four suffixes used in place-names that directly refer to the body. That approximately 66%, or 2 out of every 3, suffixes used in geographical place-names has a reference to the body indicates that the conceptual connection between the body and the landscape is a pervasive one.

(132) (‘xsd) “hind end”
(133) (‘xdla) “bottom end”
(134) (‘ilba) “point, nose”
(135) (‘xta) “on top”
(136) (‘nu) “side”
(137) (‘nutlame’) “side of head, temples”
(138) (‘xtlal) “top of head”
(139) (‘is) “abdomen”
(140) (‘mano) “head”
(141) (‘xu) “neck”
(142) (‘ap) “nape of neck”
(143) (‘bo) “chest”
(144) (-ege') “back”

(145) (-`kin) “body”

(146) (-git) “body”

(147) (-ak) “crotch”

(148) (-x’tsana) “hand”

(149) (-x’pega) “thigh”

(150) (-xis) “foot”

(151) (-sxa) “tooth”

3.6.2 Examples of geographic names that reference the body without the u-[a’w-]stem

(152) da`k –is –ala “grave on belly” (Boas 1934:16)
   grave abdomen in position

(153) dza’lał -bo’yi “lake on chest” (Boas 1934:17)
   lake chest

(154) gwa -ge’ “back of downriver” (Boas 1934:17)
   downriver back

(155) ‘maxw –sidz –e’ “round thing (island) at foot” (Boas 1934:17)
   round thing foot
The analogy of the body onto small-scale objects such as boxes and bowls, medium scale objects such as canoes and houses and ultimately the landscape is a conceptual theme that is given expression through linguistic form in the Kwak’wala language. The form *u-*[‘a ‘w-]*, while it may appear on first inspection to be an empty morpheme because it lacks the specific definition of other stems, actually acts as a classifier grouping the noun suffixes it attaches to as a category. In Kwakwa’wakw conceptualization this category is important enough to be marked. Adding to the significance of this concept in the Kwak’wala language is the large group of suffixes that in describing locations in relationship to objects, either ‘on’, or ‘in’ or as ‘a part of’ use body part references. Ultimately, this concept is further manifest in geographic names, of which, a significant portion use the idea of the body as a locative or descriptive.

3.7 Other forms: the object as a container, the body as a container

Though landscape terminology and house-forms have been focused on up to now, there are other structures that reflect the extension of the body as a primary spatial conceptualization that uses analogy to imagine spatial relationships that are represented in the *u-*[‘a ‘w-]* stem corpus.

It is the graphic and linguistic application of this concept onto canoes, bowls and boxes that
deepens the application beyond the large-scale of the house and the landscape to include the small-scale.

3.7.1 Canoes

Canoes, in particular, carry linguistic terminology descriptive of the body. Like, houses, they also carry names. They are conceptualized as having a front (bow) and a rear (stern). When setting about to build a canoe the canoe builder would send out a series of prayers in recognition that the tree from which the canoe was to be created from was a living being. While he falls the tree he prays, “Do not fall too heavily, else you, great magician, will be broken.” (Boas 1909, p. 344). (Figure 3.5) is a diagram of a canoe and the associated names for its parts. Of particular interest are numbers 8, 10, 18, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 33, which are prefaced by the \textit{u-[a'w-]} stem.
Figure 3.5 Canoe diagram re-drawn from Boas 1909, (p.349)

(156) – 8  uxdla’e’  “stern” (Boas 1909:349)
(157) -10  ustwilaxse’  “bailing hole, eye inside of canoe” (Boas 1909:349)
(158) -18  uxdla’atawe’  “nape of neck” (Boas 1909:349)
(159) -22  ugiwe’  “bow” (Boas 1909:349)
(160) -23  a’wabusxa’e’  “under chin” (Boas 1909:349)
(161) -24  uxawe’  “neck” (Boas 1909:349)
(162) -27  uxdlatlalasa ‘kigame’  “rear end of water cutter” (Boas 1909:349)
(163) -28  a’wanultame’  “cheek” (Boas 1909:349)
(164) -29  a’wabo’e  “bottom” (Boas 1909:349)
(165) -33  a’wabo’tlaxdle’  “under side of stern” (Boas 1909:349)
(166) -35  unutlaxdle’  “side of stern” (Boas 1909:349)
The paintings on canoes imply animation. The canoe is considered a living thing rendered from a living tree. Kwakwaka’wakw mythology is filled with references to canoes that can move on their own through supernatural means. In (Figure 3.6) the canoe is painted with one side of the *sisu’utl* “the double headed sea serpent”.

Then Only-One-On-Beach came in. Then he spoke, and said, “Oh brother! Now come and look at your canoe. I will advise you what to do with the canoe.” Then Head-Winter-Dancer went out of the house of Only-One-On-The-Beach. As soon as he had gone out, he saw at both ends the large double headed serpents putting out their tongues, and in the middle there was the head of a man. Then they walked down to the beach, to where the Paddleside-Serpent-Canoe was. The Only-One-On-Beach got into it, and he called Head-Winter-Dancer to go aboard also. Then he said, “Oh brother! Now listen to how I speak to the death bringing Paddleside-
Serpent-Canoe, for that is its name.” Then he said, “Go, now paddle!” Then the body of the canoe said “Wo!” as though many men were crying that way. Then all the paddles paddled, and it started at once, really going fast, for indeed it was not a common thing. (Boas, 1902, p. 202)
3.7.2 Bowls & feast dishes

Bowls and *łukwala* “dishes” were used in the ceremonial distribution of food. These bowls often were elaborate and usually depicted an animate being whose body cavity became the container for food. Food was presented in the larger dishes and distributed in the smaller dishes to small groups of people to eat from. Figure 3.7 is a staged photo by Edward Curtis that depicts a giant feast dish in the form of a *sisi'utl* “double headed serpent” in the foreground.

Figure 3.7 Curtis, Edward, S. (Photographer). 1914  *A Nakoaktok Mawihl* [Photo], Photograph courtesy of Northwestern University Library, *Edward S. Curtis’s The North American Indian,*” 2003  http://digital.library.northwestern.edu./curtis/
Feast dishes were part of the inherited rights of the *gigami* "head chief" of a *na'mima* "house group". A house was said to carry the rights to four feast dishes. The status of these types of dishes is made clear in an account of a chief who had the rights to four feast dishes and had them carved into a *kikw* "totem pole". It was said that the second figure from the bottom was placed upside-down because the dish was in the back of the man while all the others were in the bellies (Boas 1911, p. 379). Ordinary everyday bowls and dishes are less elaborate. It is difficult to ascertain whether differences existed in the linguistic application of components from feast dishes to everyday dishes as less information has been documented than in the case of houses and canoes. Two examples of the u-[a'w-] stem related to bowls/dishes are *uxwsgiwe’* "short end of dish" "shoulder?, nom." (Boas 1948:31) and *u'gwage’* "bank of river, side of vessel" (Boas 1947:352). Figure 3.8 shows another example of a feast dish in the form of a reclined Dzunukwa (Wild Woman of the Woods) at a potlatch in Alert Bay taken in the early part of the 1900s. Note the massive dimensions of these dishes. Not all dishes were this large but many were meant to be impressive and monumental in their presentation as a positive reflection on the prestige of the host.

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12 This is not to say that the information does not exist but rather that I have yet to come across it so far in my review of materials.
Figure 3.8  unidentified (Photographer) *Dzunukwa feast dish in Alert Bay* [Photo] c. 1900-1910. Photo courtesy of Royal British Columbia Museum [PN 1072].

(written on the back of the photo is a note recorded from Billy Sandy Willie in 1974 that states the “bowl was given in marriage for his sister Tletla.”)
3.7.3 Boxes/Chests

The u-[a\'w-] stem has been found applied to box/chest terminology. Two example are *u`kwe`i*
“top of pile, box” (Boas 1948:30a) and *u`dzaxs* “canoe box” (Boas 1948:30). Boas’
documentation of canoe terminology that use of the u-[a\'w-] stem is substantial I suspect this is
because he specifically asked George Hunt to elicit these terms for him. It is unfortunate that
the terminology of bowls, dishes, boxes and chests were not documented as comprehensively
since I suspect more terms using the u-[a\'w-] stem would be have been recorded. This was
such specialized terminology that it would be difficult to elicit from contemporary speakers
today.

The *xatsam, galdas or kawat`si* “boxes and chests” used by the Kwakwa`ka`wakw as well as the
tribes to the north were elaborate and animate. The structure of the formal images applied to
the outer surfaces of Kwakwa`ka`wakw boxes have been influenced by the north. On chests a
variance on a generalized image of a being with a broad face and eyes forms the central
composition on the front. In the corners appear joints and ears, head feathers, hands, and
stylistic conventions fill the rest of the space. Smaller boxes had more flexible regulations for
imagery and ranged from a similar generalized facial composition to pure abstraction of formal
elements. The similarity to northern house-fronts is demonstrated by comparison of the chests (Figure 3.9) with the version of John Scow’s northern style Raven House in (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.9 Kyla Bailey (Photographer) Bentwood Chest collected amongst the Coast Salish but clearly of Northern Origin. Pre-1900. Photo courtesy of Museum of Anthropology [A8211].

Carved bentwood chests were the specialty of the tribes north of the southern Kwakwaka’wakw, the Haida particularly were skilled at making these objects and they were traded for up and down the coast. Figure 3.10 depicts a Kwakwaka’wakw interpretation from Kingcome Inlet.
Figure 3.10  Kyla Bailey (Photographer) *Bentwood Box from Kingcome Inlet Carved by Tom Patch Wamiss*. Photo courtesy of the UBC Museum of Anthropology [A5307].

Figure 3.11 and Figure 3.12 depict a smaller type of bentwood box. Note the frontal animate face which often decorated these boxes. An intriguing movement in the latter part of the 19th century saw the development of an abstract style which broke away from this more standard depiction. (McLennan and Duffek, 2000)
Boxes and chests are containers for all types of articles. Of primary consideration, are the *dlugwe* “treasures” affiliated with ceremonial practice. This function in particular is extended as a metaphor. The ‘box’ of a family group chief is said to hold all of the songs, dances and positions of the ‘house’. In Walens (1977) study of Kwakwaka’wakw metaphor he considers the ‘box’ to be the primary metaphor in cultural conceptualization.
The structural characteristics of boxes as containers – with walls, an internal space, decoration on the walls and lids – repeat again and again throughout all Kwakiutl life. Houses, bodies, costumes and masks, world levels, lineages, numayms and villages, animal species, names and souls, months and days, cradleboards and sites, dishes, storage containers, canoes, fishing weirs, and many other items of Kwakiutl culture are visualized and interpreted as though they were boxes or parts of boxes. Different items can be so similarly boxlike as to seem merely variations on a single visual template (Walens p. 51)

I believe the observations made by Walens to be mostly accurate except that linguistic analysis reveals that the emphasis lies more with the body and that the box itself is simply an extension of this. This would appear to be verified by the combined linguistic applications of the *u-[a’w-]* morpheme and the large variety of suffixes that are extensions of the animate body. It is *the body* which is extended to the house, which is then extended to the landscape that serves as the prototype for the primary metaphor in Kwakwaka’wakw cosmology.
3.8 Summary

This chapter has examined one component of spatial conceptualization in the Kwak’wala language that appears to emphasize the extension of the animate body onto both small-scale and large-scale objects. This concept in the Kwak’wala language is marked by the stem morpheme $u$-[a’w-] that, when attached to suffixes, renders words that can be categorized as bearing structural similarity. These words relate objects such as bowls, boxes, canoes, houses and the landscape to the animate body. Facilitators of further extension are a vast array of suffixes that are directly related to the body and can be applied to stems other than the $u$-[a’w-] stem. Combined, these forms in the Kwak’wala language create a large enough corpus to consider the concept of spatial extension of the animate body as a prototype for architecture and the landscape as a pervasive component of Kwak’wak’wakw thought. In addition to the linguistic applications are architectural and artistic expressions that express this notion visually. Canoes, bowls and boxes also visually manifest this concept in their formal compositions and the naming of their parts. Ultimately, on the grandest scale this concept is prevalent in the naming of the landscape. The $u$-[a’w-] stem form in the Kwak’wala language reflects the Body=House=Land/World metaphor which emerges as a major concept in Kwak’wak’wakw culture. In Kwak’wak’wakw conceptualization it can be said “the house is a body” and “the land
*is a body*. Conceptualized this way both houses and the landscape are animate, alive and can be characterized in humanistic ways. Figure 3.13 shows the relationships of the Body=House=Land/World metaphor.

The u-[a’w-] stem acts as a classifier between the body, the house and the land and is encoded linguistically in the Kwak’wala language. The form represents a significant concept which is reflected in Kwakwaka’wakw culture and can be taken as an indication that in this case, language and culture are intrinsically linked on the conceptual level. The next chapter will present spatial terminology and concepts in relationship most closely associated with the body.
Chapter 4: The Body as Point of Origin / the Beginning

“Haha hanani! Now I come to think of my forefathers and of my great-grandfathers. Now
I will tell the story of my house when we were chiefs in the beginning of this our world”

(Wail of 'Tlat'łakwasila, a Gwa'sala Woman, Boas 1921, p. 836)

4.1 Kwak'wala Pronouns

This chapter outlines the Kwakwaka'wakw spatial relationship to the body as expressed in the Kwak’wala language. The body is associated with the self and exists in spatial relationship with others. In English, terms like I, you, he, she, and it indicate relationships to the speaker (or self). I is the central expression closest to the body; you is referring to the person spoken to which is outside of the self, he, she, and it are one step further removed. These terms are called personal pronouns. Demonstrative pronouns in English like this and that also express notions of spatial distance from the body/self as a central orientation.

I begin by looking at Kwak’wala suffixes which express the pronouns I, you, he, she, it and their relationships within space, and then engage with the demonstrative forms ga-, yu-, he- and their
extended application in constructing space both literal and imaginative. In Kwak’wala, pronouns are marked by suffixes which attach to verbal stems (an action word). Out of the pronouns expressed in Kwak’wala speech the most spatially marked is *he/she/it* which is divided into two forms: `-uxw"he/she/it [around]" and `-i “he/she/it [further away/away]” Figure 4.1 represents the Kwak’wala pronouns `-an “I”, -as “you”, -uxw “he/she/it”[around] and -i “he/she/it” [further away/away] as a gradual movement away from the speaker who is considered central.

![Diagram of personal pronouns](image)

Figure 4.1. *Personal pronouns: I, you, us (2)[you and me], he/she/it (near), he/she/it (away)*
Pronouns are what identify the self and others in relationship to one another. In order to consider the concept of the personal pronoun as a spatial one consider the idea of “I”, or “myself” as the central subject. Kwak’wala uses a suffix which attaches to a stem in order to identify the subject (person being talked about). Similar to English there exists an “I” identifier, called first person and a “you” identifier, called second person. Third person is where English and Kwak’wala diverge. Where English utilises “he/she/it” as identifying the third person, Kwak’wala does not divide by gender but by distance/proximity. This has in some Kwak’wala texts been translated as a “here/absent”, “visible/invisible” differentiation (U’mista, 1981; Boas, 1947).

Boas describes 1st person as “the speaker”, the 2nd person as “the person or persons addressed” and the 3rd person as “person or persons spoken of.” (p.251) Within these definitions there is the implicit relationship of space with “I” as the speaker being central, “you” as spoken to as nearest in relationship and “he/she/it” being one step removed. Kwak’wala divides an ambiguous 3rd person into a more explicit spatial relationship. 3rd person becomes, 3rd person (present/around) and 3rd person (away/absent). Figure 4.2 compares English and Kwak’wala pronouns I, you, he/she/it in relationship to degrees of space.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(179) Suffix</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Example (stem+suffix)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-an</td>
<td>“I” (First Person)</td>
<td>danxal -an I sing.  verb (sing) + PN (I, me)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-as</td>
<td>“you” (Second Person)</td>
<td>danxal -as You sing. verb (sing) + PN (you)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-uxw 13</td>
<td>“he/she/it” present (3rd Person)</td>
<td>danxal -uxw He/She is singing. verb (sing) + PN (he/she,it) [around]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-i’ 14</td>
<td>“he/she/it” absent (3rd Person)</td>
<td>danxal -i’ He/She is singing. verb (sing) + PN (he/she, it) [away]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.2. Comparison Diagrams (1st Person, 2nd Person, 3rd Person) in English & Kwak’wala

13 -uxw is the underlying form of this suffix. Sometimes due to phonological reasons the “w” is eroded and the surface form becomes –ux[w].

14 This suffix appears as both –i and as –i’ (with a glottal stop). Boas 1947:260 indicates that the differentiation was based on the concept of visibility –i (the subject was away but still visible) and invisibility – i’ (the subject is invisible.) This delineation is not so clearly marked in modern Kwak’wala speech and in the U’mista texts the –i or –i’ differentiation appears indiscriminate (U’mista, 1981, Book 7) . It may be that further research is required to define the underlying reason for this.
In English the single 3rd person is less specific than the divided 3rd person in Kwak'wala which marks a type of spatial relationship between subjects. This marking is extended into other domains where the concepts of presence and absence are further delineated. For example, a residual effect appears to exist in narrative where names ending with the consonant “d” are marked with the –’i’ (absent) suffix denoting the subject which while being discussed is considered absent.

(172) He’mis lagilts ‘nix kikis’sonuxWS dla’wa dlidlagam. La’am linamanami

‘Tat’andzid-I’ dlu’ Siwid-I’ la dlidlagams.

Therefore it is said they have crests, and the names

‘Tat’andzid and Paddled-to which were taken away.

(Boas 1910, pp. 82-83)

Kwak’wala divides the pronoun “we” into an inclusive and exclusive form. Figure 4.3 represents the inclusive form –an’s “I and you”. While Figure 4.4 represents the exclusive form –anu’xw “I and he/she/it, but not you”.
(a) -an’s  
Example:  danxalan’s  “We (I and you) sing”.

Figure 4.3  We –inclusive

The pronouns –an “I” and –as “you” in combination form –an’s “we” [I and you]

b) -anu’xw  
Example:  danxal-anu’xw  “we (us but not you) sing.”
Figure 4.4 Diagram of -an “I”, an’s “we” inclusive and -anu’xw “we” exclusive

In the exclusive -anu’xw, excluding person being addressed “we, I and he/she/it but not you” it appears that the pronouns -an “I” and -uxw “he/she/it [present] join to form -anu’xw.

The plural forms of the pronouns “you” and “he/she/it” are:

(174)  
-axda’xwas   “you all”

-axda’xwuuxw  “they” (present)

-axda’xwil’  “they” (absent)

To form plurals -axda’xw- is suffixed by the pronouns -as “you”, -uxw “he/she/it (present) and -i” “he/she/it (absent). Boas (1947) gives a much more comprehensive and elaborate breakdown
of the spatial relationships between “speaker”, “spoken to” and “spoken of” in the Kwak’wala language with more specific degrees of spatial location of whom or what is being referred to. In a 1932 paper on Kwak’wala language change he observes:

Perhaps the most striking change in usage is found in the new development of the demonstrative pronoun. The older generation use six demonstrative forms, one each for position near speaker, near person addressed, near person spoken of, each divided into two forms, visible and invisible. (Boas, 1932, p. 90)

The definite issue of visibility and invisibility has proven problematic in modern language acquisition as the specificity of the prior system has changed. Visibility and presence and absence are not necessarily the same thing, though there is of course cross-over as to whether a subject/object is present and therefore visible or absent and therefore invisible. For my purposes here the division of visible/invisible is dropped for the preferred and more accurate though generalized “present/nearby” and “absent/away” definitions which are more in line with contemporary speech. There still exists some nuanced variation in the “absent/away” category as it can also encompass the concept “further away while still in the vicinity”.

Kwak’wala has a complex and sophisticated demonstrative pronoun system. These pronouns are sometimes called determiners. Determiners are words like “the, this and that”, in the English language. They help “determine” what or who is being talked about. The modern manifestation of this system in Kwak’wala has changed somewhat from the system that Boas was analyzing at the beginning of the last century. For my purposes, I will address the spatial relationships as they are defined today and stick to broad outlines. I will also focus only on the certain features of this system which are specific to my analysis of spatial relationship in the context of this thesis.

The Kwak’wala system is more explicit in defining spatial relationships between speaker, subject and object than English with three required delineations of speaker to subject/object in space; “right here”, “around” and “further away/removed”. Such definition makes sense for an oral culture heavily reliant on the spoken word for accurate transmission of information. It also makes sense that with the growing influence of English, which lacks such specificity in spatial relationship, that the details of this sophisticated system would prove difficult for second language acquisition of Kwak’wala. The main reason I mention this here is to give at least an
impression of the internal visual mapping of events that would occur within the imagination
given such specificity.

Additional research into determiners was conducted with linguist Adam Werle and a more
comprehensive analysis of this topic was compiled into a 2009 unpublished report, *An
Investigation of Modern Kwak’wala determiner systems*. Our research led us to believe that the
underlying concepts behind the divided third person is one of vicinity, a presence and absence
which we translated as “around” or “not around” which is still retained in the contemporary
Kwak’wala third person. The definition is a spatial one. “He/she or it” is referred to as being
within the vicinity of the discussion or outside of it, either –uxw “around” or –i’ “not around”.

4.2 “Here and there” Degrees of personal distance *ga-, yu-, he-*

In a more direct engagement with spatial relationship of subject/object, Kwak’wala employs a
system of referential word initial verbal stems that indicate spatial relationship regarding the 3rd
person “this” or “that”, “who” or “what” a sentence is about. They are, in order of degree of
distance, *ga-, yu-, and he-* . *Ga-* can be loosely translated as meaning “this, in close physical

15 Sometimes pronounced ge-
proximity, or right here”. Yu- can be translated as “that”, in proximate distance (around), and
he- can be translated as “that”, which is away from here (not around).

(175) ga- “this” gada “this one” ga’sta “these” (all around) [Boas 1948:252]

ya- (yu-) “this” (near 2nd person, see demonstrative pronouns in grammar) [p. 39]

he- (1) “that, (2) in a straight direction to a distant point” (p. 97-99)

These are also correlated to 1st person, 2nd person and 3rd person (Boas 1948:258)

(176) ga- “this” (near 1st Person)

ya- (yu-) “this” (near 2nd person)

he- (1) “that, (near 3rd person)

While taking into account the above definitions identified by Boas, the actual application of these
spatial relationships are somewhat more fluid and the concept of “around” or “not around” can
expand and contract its boundary according to context. In other words, what is considered to be
“around” or “not around” expands or contracts according to what is being talked about. The
following sentences give an idea of the proximal relationships of ga-, yu-, and he-. The stem ga- is
often accompanied by the nominal proceeding word *gada* which is formed by the spatial referent *ga-* + the definitive or specific *–da* which can be translated as loosely as “the.” The following examples were elicited from and cross referenced with two contemporary Kwak’wala speakers.

(177) **Ge’man ump *gada***. “This is my father. [right here, beside the speaker](05/11/12)

(178) **Yu’man umpuxwda**. “This is my father. [near person being spoken to](05/11/12)

(179) **He’man umpida**. “That is my father.” [further away but still visible](05/11/12)

(180) **He’man mpi Alex**. “Alex is my father.” [away from the conversation](05/11/12)

The next set of examples are taken from “Kwak’walala gaxan: Speak Kwak’wala to me” compiled by the Nunwakola Cultural Society (2006) and from the U’mista Learning Kwak’wala Series (1981).

(181) **Ge’ams ump *gada***. “This is your dad.” [right here](Nunwakola, 2006)
(182) **Ge'man xandzas gada.** “This is my nose. (Nunwakola, 2006)

this my nose here/specific

(183) **Yu’mas wák̓wuxda**\(^{16}\)? “Is this your brother/sister? [close by]

this is your brother/sister specific (U’mista, 1981: Vol 2:8)

(184) **Yu’man abampux.** “This is my mother” [talking about someone close by]

this my mother around (U’mista, 1981:Vol 2:5)

(185) **He’man abampi.** “That is my mother” [talking about someone further away]

that my mother away/not around (U’mista, 1981,Vol 2:5)

(186) **He’mas wák̓wida?** “Is that your sister? [not close by] (U’mista, 1981. Vol 2:8)

that is your brother/sister specific

In Figure 4.5 the centre green circles represent two degrees of distance for subjects/objects that are “around”. The blue outer circle represents subjects/objects that are “not around”.

\(^{16}\) Opposite sex sibling
4.3 *Ga-* "right here", closest degree of distance to self

*ga-* referring to someone/something “in closest proximity to the point of origin”\(^{17}\)

(187) Gila’s lax **gada.** “Come over here. (www.firstvoices.com)

*come you to* **here/specific**

(188) Ge’man **kasane’ gada.** “This is my shirt.” (Nunwakola 2006)

*this is my* **shirt here/specific**

(189) Ge’man **‘namukw gada.** “This is my friend.” (23/10/12)

*this is my* **friend here/specific**

---

\(^{17}\) Sometimes in pronunciation the *ga-* can shift phonologically to *ge-* . There is no shift in meaning however.
When we consider the above examples we see that the location of the speaker/subject in relationship to space is always “nearby” or “close”. The shirt referred to is “right here”. Your father referred to is “right here”. I am located “right here”. I “right here” is located in the bedroom. I am “in” Tom’s house. This spatial closeness is not fixed however but can be contextual as exemplified in the following sentence which describes the geography in relationship to “right here”. *Ga-* is translated as proximate to the body regardless of how large the stage or context of the setting is. This is an integral concept to this entire chapter; the delineation of spatial relationship is contextual not fixed. The relationship of what is considered “near” and “away from” while anchored to the body are understood in relationship to the stage or context of the situation.

This has relativity to broader cultural understandings which will be addressed further on.

(190) **Ga’dan le gada kwalasix.** “I am in the bedroom.” (Nunwakola, 2006)

(191) **Ge’man laxga gukwas Tom.** “I am at Tom’s house.” (23/10/12)

(192) **Gadigan’xw attiga** “This is what is inland from us.” (Boas 1947:258)
The relation of proximity regarding the subject is defined by “nearby, close, in, or on” is also evident in some other related stems.

4.3.1 Related stems: Boas 1948, pp. 252-255  *gay-, gax-*

The stems, *gay-* “to be somewhere”, *gax-* “to come”, and *gay(a)-*, *gax'id*  “to move from a certain place, to come from” have a relationship both formally and conceptually to the base form *ga-.* The basic premise is spatial orientation of the centre to the subject and these words begin to give a general notion of how this relationship is conceived of and then expressed in the language. They can be said to form a conceptual paradigm.

*gay-* “to be somewhere” (Boas 1948, p. 246)

The definition refers to something that is located in a place. It could be translated as somewhat equivalent to the English spatial locatives “in” or “on”. If something is “on” or “in” something else the relationship is one of closeness. The base form *gay-* can change form based on the phonological relationship of the attached suffix. In the following examples *gay-* is the base form that shifts to *gi-, and *ga'.*
(193) gix’id  “to put down”\(^{18}\)

(194) ga’es  “to stay in an indian village (=on beach)

(195) ga’il  “to be on floor”

(196) ga’etlala  “to be going in”

(197) ga’yas  “place where something is”

\textbf{gax- “to come”}. (Boas 1948, p. 254)

Another related stem which refers to the proximate relationship of things in combination with movement is \textit{gax- “to come”}. While referring to movement the movement is defined as heading towards the subject. While \textit{gay- “to be somewhere”} (Boas 1948:246) refers to stationary close proximate relationships, \textit{gax- “to come”} adds motion and direction but is related due to the concept of close relationship or proximity.

(198) \textbf{gax-}  “to come” (Boas 1948:254)

(199) \textit{gaxan}  “I am coming, to me” (Grubb 1977:168)

\begin{tabular}{ll}
come & I
\end{tabular}

\(^{18}\) A subject/object is put on a surface
(200) **gaxus** “to you”  (16/09/11)

come you

Figure 3. 5 shows the location of *ga-* “to be right here” and the added motion of *gax-* “to be coming towards right here”:

![Diagram showing the location of “to be right here” and the added motion of “to come”]

Figure 4. 6 *ga-* and *gax-*

(201) **Ga**la **gaxan.**  “come to me.”  (16/09/11)

come towards me

(202) Gawalalaga’ **gaxan!**  “help me!”  (Boas 1947:267)

help now! come/to me

(203) **Gaxmi’** Bob laxa ḵakutlat’si.  “Bob has arrived at the school.”  (09/26/11)

come he Bob to the school
4.3.2 *La-, gax-, degrees of closeness and movement (away & towards)*

In order to better understand *gax*- we should briefly consider its opposite in motion the auxiliary verbal stem *la-. This stem is literally translated as “to go”, meaning motion away or sequential movement. Berman (1991) translates *la-* as meaning “movement onward on the narrative journey through time and space”(p. 372).

The second and third persons indirect object are always formed from *la-, because the motion is away from the speaker. (Boas 1947, p. 287) *La’m̲an na’n̲akw̲ex̲sta.*

“I desire to go home.” *La’la’e ́kw̲ag̲ale ump̲as.* “Then, it is said, his father cried.”

Nevertheless the feeling persists that *la-* means a motion away from, *gax-* a motion toward the speaker. (Boas 1947, p. 287)
In the first sentence example below the idea literally expresses the meaning “go”. In the second example the meaning is more general indicating that the action is sequential, or one could say figuratively the action is “on-go-ing”. Examples (207) and (208) are literal examples of the meaning “go”, while the next two have a more general function of implying events as ongoing.

(207) La’man latl dux’widtłaxan ‘namwut. “I’ll go and see my brother.” (Boas 1947:287)

(208) La’amtlas? “Will you be going.” (www.firstvoices.com)

(209) La’mux alak kismist’sanxa. “It’s almost Christmas time.” (www.firstvoices.com)


In Figure 4.6 la- represents “movement away from the centre of focus (subject/object), while gax- represents movement towards the centre of focus (subject/object). The following three examples (211), (212) and (213) are interesting combinations of the expressing motion and proximity in both time and space.
Figure 4.7 *la-* and *gax-* , movement “away from” or “towards”

(211) **la’etl**  “to enter”  
    go  enter

(212) **laga’a**  “to arrive”  
    go close proximity

(213) **lalaga**  “go now!”  
    go  now!

While *gax-* “to come” renders a relationship of close proximity through “movement closer”, or “coming towards” the center of origin, the stem *gay-* “to come from, or descend from”, while closely associated posits the spatial relationship in a more historical, cultural conceptualization. *Gay-* expands the notion of close proximity to the center to notions of ancestry which are *considered central*. Embedded in its meaning are culturally weighted notions of descent…or
literally “where one comes from” as in the following examples. The primary shift is that the focus has now shifted from proximity to the speech event to a more generalized historical concept of proximity; a proximity which is particular to the Kwakwa̱κ̕a̱wakw in their association and contextualization of the past. Again, the unifying concept expressed by the stem \textit{ga}- is “closeness in proximity.” In this case the proximate relationship is created by shifting focus from a literal space to an imagined one where the ‘self’ or 1\textsuperscript{st} person is situated at the site of origin. This relationship is illustrated in Figure 4.7.

(214) \begin{verbatim}
Gayutlan giga’ol’nukw lax Gwayasdams. “My parents are from Gilford Island.(16/09/11)
\end{verbatim}

Figure 4.8 \textit{gay}- “to come from”
gay(a), gax'id “to move from a certain place, to come from” (Boas 1948, p. 252)

(215) gayawe “descendant, coming away from”

(216) gaya'was “place of origin”

(217) gayabala “to start from”

(218) gayaxala “to come down” (used for ancestors coming down from the sky)

(219) gayagas “road you take, place you walk”

(220) gadzakwa “to walk from there, the road you take”

(221) ga'gali'lat'si “place, from which one comes in house, house in which winter ceremonial is held [Nak]

(222) gagatla'las “to go along from beginning to end”

It is significant that there even exists a separate yet so closely related stem. In particular the words gayawe “descendant, coming away from” and gayaxala “to come down” (used for
ancestors coming down from the sky) are explicit of this focus. *gayagas*¹⁹ “road you take, place you walk” and *gadzakwa* “to walk from there, the road you take” are metaphors for the imitation of one’s ancestors; the road being the precedent that they have set which one seeks to imitate or “follow.” Finally, *ga’gal’lat’si* “place, from which one comes in house, house in which winter ceremonial is held [Nak]²⁰” is a word embedded with cultural symbolism. The ceremonial house is a symbolic representation of the universe in space and time. The act of entering the ceremonial house is analogous to the act of original ancestors arriving in the land at the beginning of time. The stem is an anchoring or “point of origin” to the past which replicates spatial relationship in ways of thinking about relationships. This crossover between ideas of space and the past leads into the next topic.

4.3.3 Temporal Relationship –ga & gal- space & time moving out from the centre as the “point of origin”

A temporal (time based) example of particular interest is the command suffix –*ga*. This suffix attaches to action verbs as an imperative. It renders a sense of urgency that can be translated to

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¹⁹ Boas had this word written with a “g”. When cross-referenced with a contemporary Kwak’wala speaker the word reads more like the word meaning “eyes”. I suspect a spelling error as the stem form for “to walk” in Kwak’wala is *kasa* (personal communication 11/12)

²⁰ [Nak] means the word is specific to the ‘Nak’wa’x’da’xw tribe
mean “now!” Boas (1947) explains:

An imperative demanding immediate action is expressed by the suffix ga’, presumably identical with the demonstrative ga’ expressing “present invisible.”

Since it implies the immediate starting of an action it is almost regularly attached to inchoative forms with following a as under the forms 2. (p. 266)

In order to understand this better let us consider the following forms. The first set exemplifies regular requests, while the second set includes the imperative command suffix -ga.

(223) d łazw’i “stand up” du luzw’id “look” (25/07/11)

(224) d luzw’idaga’ “stand up!” d luzw’idaga’ “look!” (25/07/11)

I propose that if we consider the formal use of the morpheme (ga) whether acting as a stem or suffix signifier that the common denominator is proximity. In the stem form ga- denotes close proximity in space while the imperative command suffix –ga denotes close proximity in time.

“Do it now!”
From these examples one can see that history or temporal flow is also marked by *ga*- indicating “point of origin”. In everyday talk the point of origin is the speaker or subject on a space continuum where focus is on the present and the proximate relationship is related to the speech event. Under broader temporal conditions where *ga*- marks the “point of origin” as “the beginning” the point of focus shifts away from speech event anchored in the present and focuses on the broader historic culturally embedded notions, of the “point of origin.”

The following narratives give cultural context to the idea of “origin”. They are followed by a description of words that are created from the stem *ga-* “the beginning”, an extension off the stem *ga-. Culturally, for the Kwakwa’wakw the historical/temporal point of origin is where original ancestors “arrive” or “come down” to establish themselves in the land. Amongst the Dzawada’enuxw, this is marked by the arrival of the original ancestors [Kawadilikala and Kwalili, who arrive in the form of wolves, with their families in the upper Kingcome Watershed and are transformed into humans:

The first man of the Tsawatenok was Kawatilikalla, but before he was a man he was a wolf. They lived on the upper course of Kingcome River [at the head of
Kingcome Inlet]. One day a heavy rain was falling and he said: “I do not see why we should remain animals. We had better leave off these skins and use them only in dancing. Why should we wander about and have no home? If we had a house to live in when it rains, it would be well. His wife agreed, so they put off their skins and laid them away. (Curtis 1915, p.133)

Another version of this narrative was recorded by the anthropologist Ronald Rohner in the 1960's:

_Qawadeilakala_ with his four children and his younger brother _Koleili_ lived before there was light on the earth. They heard the voice of God who said that they were to go and find a place which they could claim as their own. The voice promised them the cloak of the wolf for ease of transportation [i.e., transformed them into wolves]. The two brothers and four children came first to Kingcome. The older brother claimed _lalaq_, a site up Kingcome River as his own. _Koleili_ did not want to share the same site as his brother, so he moved on to look for his own place. He travelled to _lax’oh_ “clear-water” and then to Wakeman River. (Rohner 1970, p. 86)

For another example from another tribe we can consider an origin story of the _Kwikwasut’inuxw_,
The first Koeksotenok man came from a cedar tree. His name was Hawilqwolas, ‘one who comes from a cedar’ (from wilEq, ‘cedar tree’). Later in life he changed his name to Ts’eiqami (Tseikami), ‘Supreme.’ He survived the flood or the deluge... Tseikami had several daughters, one of whom was Tseikeisilax. After his trials with Transformer, Tseikami returned to Mitap, Viner Sound. He had his daughters with him. Qolus, ‘Thunder-bird,’ was up on the mountain and, looking down, saw Tseikami’s fair daughters. He liked their looks and descended from the mountain. After making his face human by removing the Thunder-bird headpiece, he sang a song before Tseikami. He asked Tseikami’s permission to marry one of his daughters and was granted permission. Qolus then removed the Thunderbird cloak from himself and commanded it back to the mountain. He then became fully human. It is from the union of Qolus and one of Tseikami’s daughters that the Koeksotenok descended. (Rohner, 1964 p. 47-48)
These stories are of particular significance. They mark the beginnings, the origins of the first people in the land. The origin stories, called 'nu'ya'm, reflect a pattern of arrival, transformation and establishment in a land base or geographic location. This is the ‘point of origin’ for history and for time. The first narrative example explicitly states that this was before there was “light on the earth.” Other related words are; galagawe “in the front, in the lead, first”, galagawe'tlas “you will be the first”, galust’akasu’ “first man to receive potlatch gift” (www.firstvoices.com). Amongst the Kwakwaka’wakw the concept of the original (the first) and primogeniture are tightly bound in cultural practice. Rights and prerogatives such as names, songs and dances are passed from the original ancestors down to descendants ideally through the oldest to the oldest to the oldest. What is considered the oldest and the most closely connected to the source of origin is most valued.

In all speeches reference is made to the adherence of old customs. They “walk the road made by the creator of chiefs” (kasa lax t’axalasa gigamegila R790.62); they walk in “that what results as the groove of the world” (xwalt'alidz'am R789:25). The chief says, “I follow the road made by my late ancestors” (län nagałtawix t’axilə’yasən wiwump’wola CIII 124.22); or “what is laid down by our ancestors”
(kata’yasants galamgalisa CIII 146:10). Progress in social rank is “walking along on flat (blankets)” (kadzo CIII 130:22), or “walking along” (ka’nakwa’ala R791:71).

Customs are also called “the support of the tribe” (kadad CIII 884.10). (Boas 1940, p. 238)

Gagatla’las “to go along from beginning to end” is also a metaphorical reflection of the concept of generational descent anchored by the original ancestor and occupation of the land to contemporary times. Gayutli “where you come from” refers to your descent, “where you come from”. Ga’gali’lat’si “place, from which one comes in house, house in which winter ceremonial is held [Nak]” becomes the symbolic re-enactment of descent. The Kwakwaka’wakw winter house is a ceremonial microcosm of the universe both in space and in time. The literal “place from which one comes into the house” is a ceremonial metaphor for where one comes from in life, through one’s parents into the world, and one’s parents, through their parents and on and on back to the original source, the original ancestor, which is then re-enacted through symbolic ceremonialism. In the order of precedence for potlatch gift giveaway the highest ranked persons are given their gifts first. The closer in line you are to the original ancestors through descent the higher in social rank you will be; this explains the word galust’akasu’ “first man to
receive potlatch gift", as it is the highest in rank who ceremonially receive their gifts first. Let's consider also the next example meaning “first”:

\( \textit{galy} \) (before vowels) \( \textit{gal} \) (before consonants) “first” (Boas 1948, p. 255)

(225) \textit{galdzas} “belonging to olden times”

(226) \textit{galdza'yala} “sound (song) of olden times”

(227) \textit{galdzakwa} “to speak first”

(228) \textit{galdzakwalis} “first one to speak in olden times”

(229) \textit{galgila} “to make first things, to institute”

(230) \textit{galnuw} “belonging to ancient times”

(231) \textit{galamgalis} “first in world, i.e. first ancestor”

(232) \textit{gaxgila'el} “ancestors”

(233) \textit{gali} “former one, ancestor”

(234) \textit{gagile} “first ones”
(235) \textit{galaxalis} “ancestors”

(236) \textit{galsgamlił} “beginning (of time beating)

\textit{galgila} (\textit{gal-} “first”; \textit{-gila} “to make”) “to make things first”. This word has a relationship to “the beginning” as events occur first in the beginning of time. This word refers to how things were instituted in the land by the original ancestors for the Kwakwaka’wakw. Descendants are to imitate the ancestors. \textit{Galdzas} “belonging to olden times” refers to that which is ancient. In the following contemporary sentence the word denotes the object as old and valuable.

(237) ‘Walasuxw galdzasus \textit{t’ik waxa’we}’ “Your necklace is an antique.” (08/11/12)

great this/it old/valuable your necklace

A closely related word is \textit{galdas} which can be referred to as a chest where dance masks and regalia are kept. The dance masks and regalia are used to symbolically re-enact ancient events. Ideally, the objects are old and have been handed down through generations. The word \textit{galdas} (\textit{gal-} “first” + -\textit{as} “place for”) gives the meaning of the chest as “place for things that come from the beginning or ancient times.” \textit{Gaxgila’el} (\textit{gax-} “come” + \textit{-gila} “to make” + -\textit{el} “in the house” can be literally translated as “coming to make in the house” which ancestors do
when they come into the world to inhabit it historically and figuratively this is imitated by
descendants ritually in the ceremonial house. A contemporary Kwak’wala speaker translates
this word as “coming to enter” and agrees it can refer to ancestors. This speaker also gives the
following example:

(238) He’mo’le galgalis si Kawadilikala. “Kawadilakala was the first in the land.” (08/11/12)

The words, galnukw “belonging to ancient times”, galamgalis “first in world, i.e. first ancestor”,
gaxgila’el “ancestors”, gale’ “former one, ancestor”, gagile’ “first ones”, galaxalis “ancestors”
are all self-evident. Finally, let us consider the last example galsgamli, which is translated in
Boas’ 1948 dictionary literally as a verb, “beginning (of time beating)” but exists also as a noun;
the name of a ceremony whose name is derived from an aspect of its action. It is significant
that this ceremony is conducted at the beginning of the winter ceremonial (t’seka). The following
is a description recorded in Curtis (1915).
A peculiar pantomime in which none of the regular dancers appears is called huhsumlihl̓ə21, and is conducted as follows: On the first night the giver of the ceremony announces, “We will show our haoh̓tlin22.” This refers to all the masks owned by his family, which have been arranged in rows behind a curtain stretched across the rear of the room. While the people strike with their batons without singing, the curtain is raised with three ropes passing over a roof-beam, and every mask suddenly rises and moves about in its place. In a few minutes the curtain is lowered, and with brief intervals the spectacle is repeated three more times. The maskers are supposed to be carried away by the spirits which they represent, and hence they remain hidden for the next three days. On the second and third night there is no dancing, but a feast is given, and on the fourth night the dancing with masks is repeated in order to recover the maskers from the spirits that have captured them. (p.171)

The emphasis of the name for the ceremony is its relationship/proximity to the beginning of the Winter Ceremony. The beginning is a privileged position in Kwakwaka’wakw thought, as are

21 g̓alsgamliłə
22 Unsure of this word
origins. A contemporary speaker also gives the translation for this word as “first to show in the
house” (08/11/12). The idea of the first is closely associated with the idea of the beginning.

(239) Gigalgam “the first ones” (name of ‘naḿima)

This is the honorific name given to several ‘naḿima amongst different tribes of the
Kwakwaka’wakw. The `Tlat’lasikwala, the Gwa’ala, the `Kumuyoi (Kwexa) and ‘Walas Kwagu’l
of the Kwagu’l confederacy, the Ławit’sis, the Ñamgis, the Awa’etlala, the Kwikwasut’inuxw, the
Dzawada’enuxw, the Gwawa’enuxw and the Haxwarhis of the Musgamakw Dzawada’enuxw
confederacy as well as the Wiwe’ of the Ligwiłda’xw confederacy all have ‘naḿima named
Gigalgam. In Boas’ (1966) description of social organization, six of these tribes rank the
Gigalgam as number one rendering it a significant honorific which breaks from the more
institutionalized process of naming ‘naḿima after original ancestors. Again however, the
emphasis is on “the point of origin.” “The first ones” refers to the direct connection to the first on
the land, the first to be served, the first in social rank.
Another association we could consider here is the word for animals, *galga'omas* which is translated as “animal life” by Grubb (1977, p. 169), and by Boas (1948, p. 250) as “quadrupeds” or, a more literal translation could be, “those that crawl”. This class of beings can be associated with original ancestors on the land or perhaps there is a remnant of reference to “those who are first.” I am hesitant to apply this meaning too emphatically as this class of beings excludes both the sky beings and sea creatures who also exist as original ancestors. I merely mention it here as a point of interest.

The following diagram attempts to explain the ontological (worldview) paradigm created around the *gal-* stem. This is more broadly applied use of the word “paradigm” which in linguistics can be used quite specifically to refer to “grammatically conditioned forms all derived from a single root or stem” (Chrystal, 1999, p. 249). In this thesis, due to the interdisciplinary crossover of concepts I define paradigm as a form which functions much like a family which is connected through various resemblances which has crossover with the specific linguistic definition but is more broadly applied. Blevins and Blevins (2009) explain it in the following way:
Before turning to the particular role that analogy plays in grammar, it is worth highlighting some general aspects of those relational patterns. First, although the analogues in (1) constitute paired objects, strings, and concepts, there is, in principle, no limit to how internally complex the analogue or base can be. We recognize human families, as well as language families, with mother tongues, daughter languages, and sister dialects. In language too, families, often called paradigms, are a central locus of analogy in grammar. (Blevins & Blevins, 2009, p. 3)

The word family, or paradigm, extended around the stem ga- grants us one example of how language form reflects cultural understanding and belief. The actual repetitive usage of the language form in everyday life constantly reinforces the ontology (worldview) that is constructed around it. Figure 4.8 attempts to show the associated meanings that are formed around the stem ga- which render its meaning more complex than a simple definition as well as culturally specific.

23 Emphasis added by author
If we compare this conceptual paradigm to English we find it surprising. English tends to view
closeness/proximity in time consistently with that which is closest to the present. Kwak’wala
tends to reverse this association at times and in broader contexts deposit proximity/closeness
with the point of origin with the past. In a sense the past is conflated to meet the present. This
concept is enacted over and over within cultural ceremonialism. For example, one of the first
rites of the contemporary winter ceremony ‘tseka, a component of what is today called “the
potlatch”, is the /mas, where the return of the original ancestor is ritually re-enacted. This
ceremony involves a masked dancer entering the ceremonial house from the front, travelling the
floor and exiting out the back. The mask is carved according to the origin story of the particular
family hosting the ceremony. The Kwakwaka’wakw ceremonially bring the past into the present.

Berman notes this conflation and complete split from and Western based temporal understanding in her following description:

“Old” and “recent,” then, do not correspond to a linear model of time. In Hunt’s use of the term “old” (Q-marked) means a superimposition or conflation, between present and mythic past, human and spirit, the secular and the winter-dance season... The spirit or ancestor, or moment in the past, was the origin; the present is descended from that origin. ...even the most secular-seeming historical narratives take place in a framework of relatedness to the spirit world, to the mythic “quality,” and to the deep mythic past. (Berman 2004, p. 140)

Ga- is the seemingly most semantically complex and heavily associated stem of the three spatial referential stems ga-, yu- and he-. Now I will consider yu- which as an intermediate appears to have much more limited associations and then either ga- or he-.
4.4 *Yu-* referring to someone/something “around”

*Yu-* seems relatively straightforward in its associated meaning of distance (around). While both *ga-* and *he-* have temporal (time based) associations *yu-* seems to primarily refer to space relations. As with *ga-* phonological influence of the surrounding consonants can cause the vowel “a” in to shift to “u”. Boas actually spells the stem in his 1948 dictionary as *ya-* . While *ya-* may be the base form the, the surface form which emerges most often in speech is *yu-* , so this form is the one used throughout the analysis. To reiterate, Boas defines *yu-* as:

\[ ya- \quad \text{“demonstrative, something near third person” (Boas 1948:39)} \]

While this is the definition given in Boas’ 1948 unpublished dictionary his explanations of the stem in his 1947 Kwakiutl Grammar seem to indicate a closer relationship to second person which can be referred to as “near you.” In combination we can take this spatial mapping to encompass “in the vicinity of 2nd Person and closely around”. The stem can be loosely correlated to the English “this” (nearby) in opposition to “that” (further away). In the following example sets the *yu-* appears as a spatial intermediate between *ga-* “closest in proximity” and *he-* “somewhat distant.” If we look at the morphemes in bold in examples (241) and (242) we see that the demonstrative suffix –
ux(w) meaning “around”\textsuperscript{24} is used in correspondence with the phrase initial \textit{yu-} and is attached to the subject. In (241) the subject is the “treasure” while in (242) the subject is the “mother”. In example (243), with phrase initial \textit{he-}, the corresponding demonstrative suffix –\textit{i}’ is attached to the subject. The use of the corresponding suffixes emphasize the spatial delineation between speaker and what is spoken about. In the case of \textit{ga-} rather than a single morpheme suffix we see the application of the phrase ending word \textit{gada}, which is formed from stem initial \textit{ga-} plus the definitive \textit{-da} which can be loosely translated as “the”. The \textit{ga-} acts as a spatial locator “right here by me” while the \textit{-da} acts as to make the subject more definite in a similar way that “the” is more definite than “a” in English.

To compare:

(240) \textbf{Ge‘ams ganam gada.} “This is the one who is your wife.” (Boas 1947:258)  
\underline{This (right here)} your \underline{wife} this/the

(241) \textbf{Yu‘man dlugwa’yuxw.} “This (near you) is what is my treasure.” (Boas 1947:258)  
\underline{This (around)} my treasure this

\textsuperscript{24} See Table 1: Personal Pronouns
Also compare:

(242)  **Yu’m a n a b a m p u x**  
“This is my mother.” [close by] (U’mista 1981(Vol.2): 5)  
This (around) my mother this

(243)  **He’ m a n a b a m p i.**  
“That’s my mother.” [further away] (U’mista 1981(Vol.2):5)  
That (away) my mother that

The following set shows the three degrees of distance away from the speaker expressed by the  
*g a-, y u- and he- stems. In particular, note the intermediate distance signified by *y u.- These  
sentences are extremely reliant on context for proper grammaticality. Example (244) can be said,  
if someone phoned the house and the speaker answered and was asked *W idi’le Ryan? “Where is  
Ryan?” If Ryan is in the house the speaker can respond *G a’m a l a x g a n gu k w a x. “He is here, at  
my house.” Example (244) can be used when the speaker is just outside the house and is asked  
“Where is Ryan?” and example (245) is used when the speaker is away from the house and is  
asked “Where is Ryan?” In English, spatial location is ambiguous and the answer to the question  
“Where is Ryan?” can be answered by the single response “He is at my house.”

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25 I have transcribed U’mista’s example as they have spelled it. Notice the “w” has been dropped. The  
underlying suffix form is –u xw.
Set 1:

(244) **Ge’man laxgan gukwix**26. He is here at my house.” [in house] (23/10/12)

(245) **Yu’muxw laxan gukwex**. “He is nearby in the house.”[nearby] (23/10/12)

(246) **He’ml laxan gukwi’** “He is at my house.” [away] (23/101/12)

Note that the suffixed endings added to the objects referred to in set 1 (–ix, –ex –i)27, in this case “house”, are appropriate to those used with determiners (DET) which correspond to spatial distance classes in set 2.

Set 2.

(247) **’Maxwalan tlax gada gukwix**. “I admire this house. [I’m in] (11/29/10)

(248) **’Maxwalan tlaxwa gukwex**. “I admire this house. [nearby] (U’mista 1981, Vol.7:7)

(249) **’Maxwalan tlaxa gukwi**. “I admire that house. [away] (11/29/10)

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26 While the suffix is spelled –ax it sounds more like –ix, due to the shortened vowel

27 See U’mista Kwak’wala Series Book 7
Set 3:

(250) **Ge’amxdan le gada.** I was right here. (U’mista, 1981, Vol. 8:48)

(251) **Yu’xdan loxda.** “I was there.” [nearby, still around] (23/10/12)

(252) **He’xdan leda.** “I was over there.” (U’mista, 1981, Vol 8:48)

To reiterate, the examples (244), (247) and (250) through the use of *ga- (+ ga-da)* indicates that the subject is right here in close proximity, or right next to the speaker. Examples (245), (248) and (251) through the use of *yu- (+ -ux[w]j)* indicates that the subject is nearby, or in the vicinity of the one being spoken to. Examples (246), (249) and (252) show that *he- (+ -j)* indicates that the subject is removed from the speech situation further away than *yu-*. These are spatial differentiations which are required for proper Kwak’wala. This spatial definitiveness of *yu-* as intermediate between *ga- and he- is also expressed in the following examples from both a historical source (Boas/Hunt) and contemporary sources. There was no evidence that the use of *ga-, yu- and he-* has deteriorated in contemporary language use.
(253) Yu’mę’ ḷwanukwas George? “Is this the child of George (around).” (16/09/11)
    this he/she child his George

(254) Yu’man amį’wadtux. “playing with, that’s who I am” (www.firstvoices.com)
    this I play with he/she

(255) Yu’manu’xw mixoxda. “So we slept there.” (Boas 1947:258)
    this we (I & he/she) sleep there

4.4.1 Unusual older forms containing a temporal element

The next two sentences are interesting in that they appear to have an extended temporal (time
based) reference. Rather than express intermediate “distance in space” they appear to express
intermediate “distance in time”.

(256) Yud’ekus ‘alex waldama. “This is good your recent word.” (Boas 1947:258)
    this specific? your recent word

(257) Yu’am xwanukwa’nakwalas Kwanu’sila. “These came to be the children of
    this children next generation30 of Kwanu’silá Kwanu’sila”

28 Contemporary speakers would say this means “We are sleeping there.” Past tense would be
    Yu’amxd’a’nuwx mixoxda. “We slept there.”

29 The use of “d” in yud’ekus is not recognized by a contemporary speaker. It appears in many of Boas
    examples in his 1947 “Glossary of the Suffixes.” It is possible it is an older form no longer in use that marks
    a definitive on the verbal 3rd person. It does however, show up in contemporary speech “He’di” for the
    more distant 3rd person “that.”

30 The suffix -’nakwala “gradual, continued motion, one after another” (Boas 1947:241) al’nakwala “next
    generation” (Boas 1948:17)
In example (256), “your recent word” is introduced with the phrase initial *yu-* “nearby/around” which rather than correspond to a subject/object in space refers to a speech act which has just recently occurred. In example (257), the ancestor Kwanu'sila, is a being from ancient times. In the context of the narrative, the children referred to, are in close temporal relationship, as descendants to Kwanu'sila. This last sentence, in particular provides us with a more complex interpretation of the use of the *yu-* stem though these examples were hard to find and much more rare than extended meanings for *ga-* and *he-*.

4.5 *He-*: away from the point of origin, farther away / completely removed

Boas’ 1948 unpublished dictionary describes *he-* as having multiple meanings; “that” (3rd person demonstrative), and “in a straight direction to a distant point.” In his 1947 “Glossary of the Suffixes” he describes it as the “3rd person near the 3rd person”, meaning he/she/it beyond the person being spoken to and outside of the speech situation, “He/she/it is over there.” Reiterating Boas, Berman (1991) defines *he-* as “the verbal form indicating third persons outside the speech event as in *Hid Sewidi*, “He, over there, is Sewid.” (1991:337) *He-* has extended meaning which while not as pervasive as *ga-* is more prevalent than *yu-*.

In order to understand this let’s
consider the following examples. Expressing the strictly spatial deictic (context based) meaning we have the following:

(258) He’mas gukwida? "Is that what is your house?" (Boas 1947:258)
that your house definite

that is house his Joe

(260) He’am Carolida t’sat’sadagam. That girl is Carol." (U’mista 1981 Vol 2:12)
that is Carol (away) def. girl

(261) Hedi’les `Kiksîsalas si gukwas `Tayagîla’ogwa. “`Kiksîsalas is at `Tayagîla’ogwa's house.”
there at (name) of house (name) (16/09/11)

(262) He’moli gukwas Harry. “That was Harry's house." (16/09/11)
there long ago house of Harry

(263) Hedi’leda kwadzilas. “He is in the livingroom.” (www.firstvoices.com)
that def. in the livingroom31

(264) Hedi leda. “it’s over there.” (www.firstvoices.com)
there def. in def.

(265) He’mida. “it’s over there." ( 23/10/12)
there it def.

31 literally, “place for sitting”
It appears that some remnant of the visibility/non-visibility divisions on spatial reference, that Boas documented 100 years ago, still exists in contemporary speech. This seems to have survived in the 3\textsuperscript{rd} person \textit{he-} but is no longer present in the 1\textsuperscript{st} person \textit{ga-} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} person \textit{yu-}. The difference in meaning between \textit{hedi leda} and \textit{he\textquoteright{}mida} is visibility connected to distance. \textit{Hedi leda} is used for topics removed from the speech situation and therefore invisible while \textit{he\textquoteright{}mida} is used for topics within the speech situation but peripheral or “further away”, but possibly still visible. All examples encompass the meaning “away from the speech event” whether that distance is peripheral to a given location or completely outside of it. The following diagram seeks to illustrate the crossover, the red line representing the division between visibility & “around” to invisibility and “away”. In Figure 4.9 the red line represents the boundary where the concepts of around and away are divided. \textit{Ga-} and \textit{yu-} indicate that the subject/object is around. \textit{He-} can be used when the subject/object is still around but peripheral to the speech situation or more removed or is used when completely away from the speech situation. The arrows represent the ability of \textit{he-} to be used in both contexts.
In the following examples, in the first two sentences the father referred to is not around. The last two sentences show that much of the assessment of spatial distance is context driven and not strictly applied according to a defined spatial distance but is an interpretation of distance according to the topic and context of the speech event. In example (269) the cup is behind the kettle but referred to as “over there”, but possibly in the same room, while in example (270) the clam fork is “behind the house” which is obviously outside the vicinity of where the speech is taking place. This indicates that the encompassing parameters of distance are relative rather than fixed.
The next examples push the spatial meaning into broader domains that have crossover with time.

When speaking of events in the past it is appropriate in context to use the corresponding spatial distance marker he-. When speaking of the past it is only appropriate to use the corresponding yu- if the events referred to have occurred in close relationship to one another as in the example (257).

(271) He’gamoli gukwas Harry. “That was the house of Harry.” (16/09/11)

that long ago (PT) he (away) house his Harry
(272) He’gamølan amkwolit'.

"He was the one I used to play with."

that he long ago (PT) I play long ago (PT) (19/04/13)

(273) He’mole' Bida33 galsaxa t'samat'si.  

"Peter was the one who painted the church."

that was(PT) DET Peter paint DET church (16/09/11)

(274) Hex’idi ola'kala ‘kotla kas yaxwanłala’.  

"He really knew how to do masked dances"

that was (PT)34 he really know for he dance continuous (16/09/11)

(275) He’mole galgalis si Kawadilikala.  

"Kawadilikala was the first in the land. (16/09/11)

that was(PT) he first in the land DET Kawadilikala

(276) Hexdan le 'Yalis.  

"I was in Alert Bay." (www.firstvoices.com)

that was(PT) I at Alert Bay

Linguistic marking of distance in space and in time correspond. He- indicates distance in space and is used correspondingly with the past tense forms –xd (immediate past tense) “having just occurred, -x’id (intermediate past tense) “having occurred awhile ago”, and -ol [w’ol] (farthest degree of past tense) “long ago.” This can also be translated as meaning removed from the speech event by space and/or time. Berman (1991, Chapter 11) explains this by using the metaphor ‘the speech event is a stage’, with participants and actions linguistically marked as being “on stage” or “off stage.” I have found this to be a useful analogy when considering spatial

33 Peter
34 Intermediate (PT) past tense
relationships as relative rather than absolute. Spatial distance in time and space is relative to the topic being discussed with shifting points of focus and therefore “points of origin” which can be also described as “focal points” with close associations marked by \textit{ga-} and \textit{yu-} and more distant associations marked by \textit{he-}.

### 4.5.1 Related meanings: Boas 1948, pp. 97-99

With the meaning “to act” or “to be” we have the following set. We can consider these words and phrases to represent the idea of “to act like \textit{that}” or “to be like \textit{that}”. It is a conceptual abstraction of “that” as a thing.

(277) \textit{heyak} \hspace{1cm} “to do something” (Boas 1948:97)

(278) \textit{he\textsubscript{lag}wigili} \hspace{1cm} “act like this!” (Grubb 1977:176)

(279) ‘\textit{mas’anawis heyakwalak} \hspace{1cm} “I wonder what did it to him?” (Boas 1948:97)

(280) \textit{he gwixs} \hspace{1cm} “like that” (Boas 1948:97)

(281) \textit{he’yo} \hspace{1cm} “to happen” (Boas 1948:97)

(282) \textit{heda} \hspace{1cm} “it is that” (Boas 1948:97)

\textit{that} (DEF)the
(283) hinu_xw
   that someone
   “one who always does that” (Boas 1948:97)

(284) hex’id
   that to begin
   “at once” (Boas 1948:98)

(285) hexsa
   that still,yet
   “still” (Boas 1948:98)

(286) hexsa’am
   that still/always
   “to be there always” (Boas 1948:98)

(287) hala
   that to be
   “being that way” (Boas 1948:98)

(288) het’simas
   “the right way of doing something” (Boas 1948:97)

This last word is peculiar, and its meaning in relationship to ga- and yu- not entirely clear. I have placed it in here due to the opposition that Boas makes that he-t’simas refers to “of the kind belonging to that privilege”, or we could say “of the rights or cultural prerogatives of an individual” vs. the words ga-t’simas, yu-t’simas and ki’s- t’simas which he refers to as meaning “of the kind not belonging to.” If we look at the literal meaning of he- “that” and –t’simas “something of the kind belonging to” it would seem that somehow the idea of distance is related with notions of cultural correctness. The path this association travels is not clear to me but if we consider the
next set of words referenced in the secondary meaning of the stem, *he-* there does appear to be
a tenuous cultural correlation.

### 4.5.1.1. The secondary meaning of *he-* "in a straight direction to a distant point."

The secondary definition given by Boas (1948) *he-* “in a straight direction to a distant point” is
conceptually related to the primary meaning of “that- further away from the point of discourse/
origin or completely removed”, in that it implies distance and the concept ‘away from’. However in
this definition the meaning is a more literal and defined address of spatial relationship. The
addition of varied suffixes to *he-* render the following words:

(289) heyaka, or heka “to pass, to surprise, to exceed” (Boas 1948:98)

(290) heyaxsaka               “to overdo” (Boas 1948:98)

(291) hayud                   “to say right out” (Boas 1948:98)

(292) hayusta(la)            “go up river (Boas 1948:98)

(293) hebe’                  “to be killed at once (to go straight to end)” (Boas 1948:99)
This last example is a name for the transformer 'Kaniki'lakw who in Kwakwa'wakw histories went about the world challenging the original ancestors and “setting things right.” Hexalisala, an alternative name for 'Kaniki'lakw, is a literal expression of his activities. Referenced in the following text, Sutil Point is located on the north end of Vancouver Island.

Łaxalixalay, the son of Numasanxa'lis who lived at Tsiltsakala'lis saw 'Kaniki'lakw coming. He went into the house and said to his father, “There is a man coming towards our house.” His father replied, “I have been expecting him, our Lord, who is setting the world right. I shall ask him to transform me into a small island on the point of Na'widi (Sutil Point) and Xusba'lis (Fort on Point). The name of the island shall be Hanxstalis (Shining on the water), so that I may be seen by the canoes passing by.” (Boas 1935:10)

35 Contemporary speakers translate this as “to hurry” or “hurry up”. It is one of the phrases younger people tend to know. Variously pronounced as hanakwila
Culturally for the Kwakwaka'wakw the notion of “setting things right” is a significant one. As discussed earlier the imperative to follow the path set forward by ancestors requires travelling a straight road and the one prescribed by ancestors is to imitate and carry out the prerogative “rights” of the past and to do this as faithfully as possible. We can consider the following words in this context.

(296) he’stala  “1, go around repeatedly 2, the world” (Grubb 1977:176)

(297) he’stalisala  “around the world” (Grubb 1977:176)

In example (286), the act of going around repeatedly is carried out in the ceremonial house on the dance-floor as a symbolic act. The dancers imitate those before them. In a metaphoric sense they are repetitions of generations who have lived before them and who have enacted the same ceremonies. It is a Kwakwaka’wakw cultural imperative that this symbolic process is maintained and when these cultural ceremonies were banned by the Canadian government from 1885 to 1951 the Kwakwaka’wakw fought long and hard against it, in order that this generational cycle would not be broken (Cole & Chaikin, 1990). Metaphorically, the ceremonial house is “the world” and in Kwakwaka’wakw histories (what has been referred to as myths)
original beings such as `Kanikij`lakw travel the world. It is in this context that the word *hayigi` makes sense.

(298)  hayige` “to imitate [=to go straight back] (Boas 1948:98)

Yu`mis la  hayigi`sosoxda a`lex bagwanama. (R 626:79)
this is go imitate (DEF) the later man DET

This is imitated by later (generations of) man.

This means that metaphorically travelling in a “straight direction” is following the road set out by ancestors through imitation. The emphasis is not necessarily linear however, but focussed more upon the ideas of “purpose, imitation and extensions forward and backwards. As examples (286) and (287) show, this “straight direction” can be conceptualized as circular. A straight line is not necessarily conceptualized as a straight line from one point to another but consecutive points each following the next. Also consider the following:

(299)  he`la  “to inherit” (Grubb 1977:176)

(300)  hiilt`sa  “to catch up to” (Grubb 1977:176)
(301) helt’sasu “1. Great-great-grandparents 2. You have caught up to them” (Grubb 1977:176)

(302) hayulis “to continue” (Boas 1948:98)

(303) ha’yu’sala “to go right from one to another” (Boas 1848:98)

Additional cultural clues are contained within Kwakwaka’wakw personal names. The name *Ha’yusdisala* means “to go straight up from the beach” and the name *Ha’etlala* means “to go straight through the door”\(^\text{37}\). This means that when you arrive at the beach you go straight to this person’s house. The reference is to giving feasts and potlatches. Traditional travel by canoe meant arrival by guests, to coastal villages, by beachfront.

### 4.5.1.2. Temporal (time) crossover of the meaning of *he*-

The notion of moving in “a straight direction to a distant point” has a spatial dimension which maps to the verbal *he* - “away, over there, off-stage of the speech event”. It may also have a temporal application in Figure 4.10, where the *yu*- and *he*- stems seem to find expression in a spatial/time based crossover. The central green circle represents the concept “today” or “now”.

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\(^{36}\) Sometimes translated as “to always be doing

\(^{37}\) Translation of names given by GN & ES, personal communication
The next encompassing circle represents the temporal passage of time the length of a day.

“tomorrow” or “yesterday”. The final outer circle represents the passage of another day “day after tomorrow” and “day before yesterday”. These are commonly used terms for situation events in time in somewhat close relationship to the present. Outside of two days distance from the present (today) speaking about time based events switches to a different set of temporal locators.

Figure 4.11  *Distance in time, today, tomorrow and the day after tomorrow*

(304)  yexoxda ’nala  “today” (www.firstvoices.com)

(305)  ġanstla  “tomorrow” (Boas 1948:409)
(306) ḷans’wał  “yesterday” (Boas 1948:409)

(307) hi’lurws’  “day after tomorrow” (www.firstvoices.com)

(308) hi’lurws’ul  “day before yesterday” (www.firstvoices.com)

If we compare the outer rings of the framing for “a day” as marked by he- we could infer that the stem means “outside of, or removed from” by more than a day. In the same way we could consider the outer ring of the generational Figure 4.11 below and translate the he- to mean “outside of, or removed from” by more than two generations.

Figure 4.12  Generational distance
4.6 Implied distance of objects and events in time and space *gax-, la-, and he-.*

*He-* has a spatial relationship to *la-* and *gax-* . Earlier we discussed the difference in proximate relationships in motion between *gax-* and *la-* ; *gax-* meaning “movement towards close proximity”, while *la-* encompasses the meanings “movement away from close proximity” and “ongoing sequential relationship onwards”. In everyday speech and narrative the *la-* auxiliary is used most often as the following example from Boas, (1902):

Gukwala'la'eda galasida Dzawada'enuxwi lax Sagumbala lax 'naldzasida was

They lived it is said first of the Dzawada'enuxw at Sagumbala at up the river of river of

Gwa'i. Wa, la'la'e gigadas Kawadilaka. Wa, la'la'e dlu'walgadi Kawadilaka-

Gwa'i Well, then it is said chief having of Kawadilaka. Well, then it is said prince having Kawadilaka-

las Tawixi'lakwi. Wa, la'la'e halta'el holamale Tawixi'lakwaxa 'maltlulu.

of Tawixi'lakw Well, then it is said very it is said easily obtained Tawixi'lakw the mountain goat.

Wa, la'la'ida tawi'nexwi galakas la xusala. Wa, la'la'e palida galasida

Well, then it is said the mountain goat hunter long very now resting Well, it is said were hungry the first of the

Dzawada'enuxwi. Wa, la'la'e axkali Kawadilikalaxis dluwalgama'i ka las

Dzawada'enuxw. Well, then it is said, asked Kawadilaka his prince that he go

tawixaxida 'maltluwi ka hamgilayosexis gukwaluti. Wa, hex'ida'am lawise

hunt the mountain goat, that be given food of it to his tribe. Well, at once it is said
Tawixilakwa xwana'idla kaxs la'ma'i lati 'nax'idatl.38

Tawixilakwa made himself ready that he will go the (coming) will get day.

Free Verse Translation:

“The first of the Dzawada'enuxw lived at Sagumbala on the upper course of the river of Gwa'i. Kawadilikala was their chief. Tawixilakwa was the eldest son of Kawadilikala.

Tawixilakwa killed mountain goats with great ease. Now, the mountain goat hunter had been resting for a long time, and the first of the Dzawada'enuxw were very hungry. Then Kawadilikala asked his son to go to hunt mountain goats, that he might feed his tribe. Tawixilakwa got ready to go on the following day.” (p. 7)

The sentence initial la'la'e is a convention used in the narration of ancient type stories such as the one exemplified above. It can be translated as “and then...”. The primary expression is the movement (going) along a continuum. It makes sense that this would be more productive and appear more often in speech than gax- as the opposite movement “towards” once arrived can no longer be continuous. In this 1902 transcript almost every sentence is introduced by la'la'e, indicating the relationship of events as sequential. Only in the final sentence is this pattern

38 Orthographic conversion and bold emphasis by author.
broken and by an introductory phrase using *he-* (*he-x’id-a*) translated as “at once”. The
difference between “and then” marked by *la-* and “at once” marked by *he-* is subtle but
significant. Berman (1991) explains that while the *la-* infers sequentiality the *he-* infers an
activity performed concurrently; not in sequence but simultaneously. The difference is a spatial
one; concurrence in time, *distance in space*. In the following illustration the arrows represent
the use of *la-* , *gax-* and *he-* as verbal auxiliaries expressing the sequence of events in narrative.

![Diagram](image)

Figure 4.13  *Event relationships*
Berman (1991, pp. 322-336) gives a valuable analysis regarding the use of these verbal stems as discourse markers in narrative which is detailed and more comprehensive. The reason I touch on it here is that, once again, with the use of *he*- there is an implication of spatial distance that is consistent with a broader application in extended use and meaning than can be literally or narrowly defined.

### 4.7 Summary

In order to consider the concept of space, and sometimes its conceptual analogy in time, I began this chapter by looking at personal space in relationship to the body, or self. This I identified as the subject or “point of origin” of the speech act. I first considered personal pronouns, which identify relationships between “speaker”, “person spoken to”, and “subject/object”. In Kwak’wala, we find that this system still retains much definition which is ambiguous in English. In particular we find that the 3\textsuperscript{rd} person subject/object “he/she/it” is divided into two spatial arenas which can be interpreted as “away from the speech event but still visible” and “completely away from the speech event rendering it non-visible.” From there I considered the verbal auxiliary stems *ga*-, *yu*-, and *he*-. These stems in particular delineate spatial relationships between the location of the speaker and subject/objects (persons/things spoken about); *ga*- meaning “in close proximity”, *yu*-,
meaning “around” and *he*- meaning “further away, or removed altogether = distant”. Each of these stems while having a literal formal application in everyday language have extended meaning beyond the literal. Of the three, *ga*- appears to have the most culturally applied extensions of meaning. These meanings are anchored to ideas around “points of origins” and “beginnings” which are not restricted to a single speech event but can be translated into social historical contexts of cultural “origins” which are highly potent concept in Kwakwaka’wakw ontology. *Yu*- is the most limited of the three, which is to be expected with an intermediate application. *He*- has extended meaning beyond the literal which encompasses the notion of “distance” in various contexts but is not as culturally pervasive as *ga*. Knowledge and understanding of these spatial markers in regards to space relationships is an essential component of proper Kwak’wala speech but in order to have a full comprehension of their meaning it is important that they are understood not just in their formal application but also in their extensions into broader contexts. These divisions of space and their extended meanings come easily to native speakers whose minds have categorized the divisions and their associations since birth. The next chapter will consider spatial terminology in relationship to the “house” and the extended conceptual associations manifest in culture.
...did you not see the soul last night which came and sat on my hand? It is the size of our thumb, when it shrinks and becomes small; then I put the soul on top of our head, and it grows so that it is the same size as our body ['ukwani'], for the body is the house of the soul...(Boas 1921:724)

5.1 Kwakwaka'wakw houses in relationship to the body and the universe

The Kwakwaka'wakw traditional house as an extension of the body is a major metaphor for Kwakwaka'wakw cultural understanding. Up into the early Twentieth Century the Kwakwaka'wakw lived in large homes 39 gukwala constructed of cedar. These architectural structures were expansive, measuring at times 40-60 feet in length and width. The roof could rise to approximately 20-30 feet in height. Several families of a 'namima “extended family group” could occupy one house. During daily life the interiors were sectioned off into rooms but

39 In modern times these houses are called gukwdzi which translates as bighouse. However, this appears to be a relatively new word as house terms from the turn of the last century refer to the house as just gukw or gukwa (Boas 1948:260) but do not list gukwdzi. In iteration of this Charlie Dawson, an elder of the Dzawada'enuxw, born in 1919, relayed the information that the proper term for a house was gukwam and that the term gukwdzi was simply a descriptive referring to a large house (gukw- a stem referring to a house and the suffix -dzi a descriptive of large size.)
during the ceremonial season the house would be cleared and transformed into a space of elaborately performed rituals. The house was considered a living entity, an extension of its inhabitants. Houses were adorned with hereditary crests and those acquired through marriage or warfare. (Easton & Nobokov, 1989) The concept of the house and the lineage it represented was of more importance than the physical house itself as the concept could be replicated in the form of a marriage gift. The gifting of a house, with its name and histories from the father-in-law to the son-in-law was an extremely prestigious act.

In Figure 5.1 the relationship of the house to the landscape is laid out. On a cosmic level then, it is possible to conceptualize the traditional Kwakwa’kawakw community house in multiple ways. In one way, the house is considered as a microcosm of the world. The roof represents the sky, or the heavens; the floor represents the earth. Under the floor is considered to be the underground, the place of the ghosts. During the ‘tseka winter season this conceptualization is amplified and granted expression through elaborate ritual. During Kwakwa’kawakw winter ceremonies all three levels are utilized in complex and varied performances.
La’lulala “ghosts” can rise from below the ground, as do sisi’ull “the double-headed serpent” and other beings. Sometimes the reverse occurs and dancers are sucked underground into tunnels dug out for the purposes of such performances. It is from the roof that the hamat’sa appears, dramatically dropping down through the smoke-hole, or through a hole in the roof created by the removal of boards. In one ceremony he descends down a post that is
considered to be an aspect of the heavens though this was a prerogative that belonged only to certain families. By analogy, the house, during ritualistic periods encompassed the universe.

Figure 5.2 Curtis, Edward, S. (Photographer). (1914). *Kwakiutl House-frame* [Photo], Photograph courtesy of Northwestern University Library, *Edward S. Curtis’s The North American Indian,* ”2003 http://digital.library.northwestern.edu./curtis/

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40 House of Nage’, father of Harry and Dick Mountain
The traditional Kwakwa'wakw house is composed of a skeletal framework of cedar posts (see Figure 5.2) covered by a shell of cedar boards. The posts were permanently installed and remained in place while family groups traveling to various locations to harvest food stores, could remove the outer layer of boards and take them for use on more temporary shelters. The skeletal post-work is structurally and conceptually similar to the body. Like a body, the skeletal interior structures are more permanent than the outer covering. Identity is embedded in the skeletal structure of the house. The outer covering could be removed and the house would still maintain its integrity. Graphic representations could be carved onto the 'č'kww “primary vertical posts” of the house and the katiwe’ “primary crossbeams” that support the roof. The secondary vertical posts that are not carved (not animated) are called ċlam “small house post”. The stem ċla- translates as “to stand”. It is applied to inanimate beings, while the stem ċlaxw “to stand” is used for animate beings (Boas, 1948). The carved primary posts and primary crossbeams are granted animation through their graphic representation as mythological beings. In Figure 5.3 a house post carved in the form of a human figure stands in the foreground and in the background is the skeleton post and beams of Johnny Scow’s house depicted in chapter 3 (Figure 3.1).
In a Boas (1888) narrative involving a marriage between the ancestors of the Dzawada’enuxw and the Kwagu’ł, the representation of a house as a living entity is emphasized. When Kawadilikalala brings his future son-in-law, ‘Umaxtalatle’ to his house, he warns him to be careful in entering as the doorway is a giant beak that may kill uninformed visitors. Kawadilikalala gifts the house to his son-in-law. When it is rebuilt at the village site of ‘Umaxtalatle’ the house is described in the following way:
The two uprights in the front part of the house represent two men: Yakent’eke (something talking inside) and Waweqamitl (the orator). The uprights in the rear of the house also represent men: Leqe’laqsta (the braggart) and Hasakawa’sui (attempting to talk louder than anybody else). The uprights in front of the house support the beams that represent the Sisiutl (a double-headed snake), while those in the rear of the house are connected by a cross-piece representing a Sisiutl (or wolf?), upon which the beams rest. The hinges of the house door are at its upper edge. It is very heavy and crushes every bad man who attempts to enter the house. His dancing mask was called Olikyen, and represented a wolf; the dance in which it is used is called Walasaqak (something great coming from above). When the house was finished Om’aqta’latle gave a great feast, and the beams and uprights of his house began to move. The sisiutl played with their tongues. The men began to talk and told the sisiutl to kill all enemies of their master (pp. 203-204).41

In this narrative, even the primary house-posts are given names. The house is given as

41 I have maintained the original spelling of the Kwak’wala names as is presented by Boas in his paper “Houses of the Kwakiutl Indians” 1888 except where the phonemes were presented as backwards. This occurs with the phoneme (k) where it appears both backwards and up-side down. Where backwards and up-side down (k) appear I have substituted k. This was a very early publication in the corpus of Boas’ research and his facility with the language as well as consistent application of phonological forms was less developed then in later publications.
an inheritance to the son-in-law in recognition of the children the marriage will produce and
the promise of maintaining the lineage of the father-in-law through them. In this sense the
“house” is re-built both literally and metaphorically. Figure 5.4 depicts the interior
houseposts of a contemporary version of the Kawadilikala house which still stands in Gwa’yi
(Kingcome Inlet).

Figure 5.4 Nicolson, Marianne. (Photographer). (1991). Interior Houseposts Kawadilikala
house in Gwa’yi 42(Kingcome Inlet) [Photo]. Photograph courtesy the author.

42 This house belonged to Jim Hamdzid, head chief of the Kikudilikala clan of the Dzawada’enuxw
While the structural value of a house appears to be invested primarily in its internal structure over the external, the conceptualized social value of a house lies in the accumulated history of the family whom the house represents. Like a living being the house carries the lineage of its occupants and this is represented by the carvings of the house-beams along with the iconography of the house-front.  

As well as symbolizing the heritage of the occupants the house is granted an independent bounded identity in the application of a name. The practice of naming houses has been maintained into contemporary times, though not without transition. The interior component parts of a house are given names as well but in a generic sense rather than having proper names. Some of the house component names carry more culturally applied information than others. The following interesting descriptive is given by Boas (1909) in “The Kwakiutl of Vancouver Island”:

\[A century ago Kwakwaka’wakw houses were occupied by a single family group (na’mima) and the name given the house was the prerogative of that specific group. Modern gi’gukwzd (bighouses) are built to represent entire communities composed of several family groups. In the case of the gukwzd built in ‘Yalis (Alert Bay) in the nineteen-sixties and re-built in 1999 its original intent was to represent all of the Kwakwaka’wakw nations. As far as I know, it does not carry a name. However, a smaller house built in Gwa-yi (Kingcome Village) in 2003 was given the name Hi’manis.\]
The parts of the house are oriented right and left according to the positions they have in relation to a person looking in at the door. The rear of the house is called its “forehead.” Thus we have the terms 'hake'wa'lii (middle forehead of house) for the middle of the rear part (a); hi`kutiwa'lii and gamxutiwa'lii respectively for the right (b) and left (c) of the rear part; hi`kudani'gwil and gamxudani'gwil for right (d) and left (e) rear corners. The rear part of the sides (f) is called “up river;” the front part (g) of the sides “down river;” and we have ‘nal`kudo'ya'lii and gwa`kudo'ya'lii, “up-river and down-river middle of house,” and more specifically these terms combine with hi`kudo'ya'lii and gamxuto'ya'lii (“right and left sides”). Right and left sides of the door (h, i) are hi`kutsa'lii and gamxutsa'lii respectively (pp. 415-416)
Figure 5.5  *Interior House Diagram*  (re-drawn from Boas 1909:415 fig 95)

The term (a) is significant in relating the imagery of the body onto the house in a very literal way. Also of significance are the terms (f) up-river and (g) down-river in reference to the

(309)  ‘nak -i’w -a’lìlì “middle forehead of house” (Boas 1948:415)

middle forehead of house
rear and front portions of the sides (this will be re-visited in chapter 6). These two terms bring into focus the concept of the house as a metaphor of the landscape. The application is conceptual rather than literal as literally houses would face the river and their sides would correspond to up-river and down-river not their front and back. The terms focus the interior of the house as a space that exists independent of its position in the landscape. It is a spatial interior that is conceptualized on its own terms, except that however malleable the conceptualization of the space might be, its structural similarity to a body remains consistent.

5.1.1 The house as a microcosm of the universe

While the modelling of the house as a microcosm of the universe is manifest in its architecture, the traditional living arrangements of families within traditional Kwakwaka’wakw houses reflected deeply embedded analogical conceptualizations of societal and environmental structure. The application of the terms “upriver” and “downriver” to the corresponding “back” and “front” of the interior of the traditional house reflected the social rank and hierarchy of the community with the chief and those of higher aristocratic standing occupying the back “upriver” sections of the house and the lower ranked house members occupying the front or “downriver”
sections of the house. Figure 5.6 shows the interior “upriver” view of John Scow’s bighouse at Gwayasdams (Gilford Island) village. Traditionally the chief of the house occupied the back portion of the house through an entrance which was situated between the two back house posts. Ernest Scow, nephew of John Scow remembers that his uncle maintained this section of the house as his living quarters (personal communication).

Figure 5.6 unknown (Photographer). (pre-1950’s). *Inside view of back of Scow house* [Photo], “Image (PN 2430) courtesy of the Royal BC Museum, BC Archives”
The symbolism of the “upriver and “downriver” sections of the house interior are situated within the concept of the house as a microcosm of the land. Once the body is outside of the house the orientation is no longer symbolic but literal, the upriver component of the community taking its appropriate placement within the literal physical environment of land and water (sea and river).

Figure 5.7 Symbolic Divisions of the House Interior
The house symbolically becomes a microcosm of the universe and the universe can also be considered as an expanded house. Synthesized to this relationship is the conceptualization of the body as a microcosm of the house and of the land. The house is analogous to both the body and the land; the body is analogous to the house and the land, and the land is analogous to the house and the body. The Kwakwaka'wakw rendering of this analogy as explicit pushes it into a major metaphorical concept; the body is a house, and the house is a body; the house is the land and the land is a house. The body, the house and the land (world) are all reflections of one another. The spatial relationships of objects within these defined spaces are relative only to the expansion and contraction of the stage or platform defined by context (body, house or land) but they maintain their structural relationships.

5.2 -il "inside the house", -is "outside on the land"

The experience of “the house” as intermediary between the body and the land has linguistically marked significance. Just as the world is divided into regions of the land and sea the house divides space into inside and outside, interior and exterior. These are given expression in the often applied suffixes –il “in house” and –is “on beach or land”. The following examples are taken from Boas (1947) “Glossary of the Suffixes” p.239
(310)  (-'s) “on ground” :  ḱwa’es “to be seated on ground” X173.22

lawals “to go out of house” III 19.8

(311)  (-is) “open space, bottom of sea, world, beach, in body”

ḱwa’dzis “to sit on beach”

galdis “long breathed”

mágwis “round thing in stomach”

(312)  (-i) “floor of house, in house”

lagwil “fire in house”

kwa’lil “to lie in house”

Also consider:

(313)  -eł “into house, into inlet”

‘axelila “to put into house”

-dabedlisala “to tow ashore”

In Figure 5.8 shows the division of space into “inside the house” and “out on the land”.
-s’ and -is are allomorphs of each other, as are -il and -et. We can consider the base forms to be the meanings -is “on the ground outside” or -il “in the house”. These two suffixes are used extensively in Kwak’wala speech and are often compulsory. It is a significant division in the Kwakwaka’wakw mindset. If we consider English by comparison we see that the concepts “in the house” (inside) and “on the land” (outside) are not required delineations in everyday speech.
(314)  ḱwadzl'sida ḱangananam  “The children are sitting (outside)  
[19/07/12]

(315)  ḱwa’ ṭlida ḱangananam  “The children are sitting (inside)  
[19/07/12]

(316)  ḱwa’əmo’ abampex?  “Is your mother home? (in house)  
[19/07/12]

(317)  ḱwa’esmo’ abampex?  “Is your mother home? (in the village)  
[19/07/12]

The division between the inside and the outside is a significant division in Kwakw’wakw spatial conceptualization that is marked in the Kwak’wala language by the locatives generally meaning “in the house” and “in the world”. While the definition of the suffix –ił appears to be defined in relationship to interior spaces within the “house” the suffix –is can be defined more broadly and poetically. –is can encompass meanings such as “on the beach”, “in the world”, “on the bottom of the water”, “on the bottom of the body”.

(318)  τl̓ama’is  “beach” (Boas 1947:328)

(319)  ’na’is  “light on beach” (Boas 1947:328)

(320)  bagwis  “merman” (Boas 1947:328)
kwigwis  “eagle of sea bottom” (Boas 1947:329)

t’sagwis  “with short breath, somewhat hungry (Boas 1947:329)

t’lasodis  “land in direction of ocean” (Boas 1947:329)

bagwana’míł  “man of the house” (Boas 1947:328)

mawił  “sacred room, [tied in house, maxw-] (Boas 1947:328)

dlawił  “[person] stands on floor” (Boas 1947:328)

nawilam  “family [house] story [nus=ím=am]” (Boas 1947:328)

ha’níł  “vessel is on floor” (Boas 1947:328)

yákandíł  “speaker of house” (Boas 1947:328)

-ís indicates the region of the land outside the house.  -íł indicates the region of the interior.  -íí can also act as a locative meaning “on the floor of the house.” These regions can have symbolic significance as well. Kwakwaka’wakw ritualized gestures made on the secular level can be linked to the sacred through analogy. The act of name giving by the father-in-law through marriage to his son-in-law ritually mimics the original acts of naming performed by animal ancestors to humanity (Boas 1935). These marriage rites of naming the son-in-law are performed in the “house” in the same way that original naming occurred “in the land”. The
difference is the setting or stage upon which analogous actions occur. The analogy also has a
temporal quality since the original act in the sacred past is mimicked in the secular present:

The first names are those of beings that live in the sky and come down in the form
of birds, quadrupeds or sea animals, that become men. As soon as they become
real human beings they assume new names… Names are often bestowed as part
of the gifts that a person receives from supernatural beings. These gifts are quite
analogous to those given by a man to his son-in-law. In C181\(^{44}\) the hero actually
marries the daughter of the supernatural beings. The assumption is that the
names the father-in-law gives away have first been obtained through an encounter
with a supernatural being. (Boas 1935, p. 52)

The intermediary of the house between the body and the land is also given form through
mythological description. One version of the origins of the ‘Wi’womasgam of the
_Kwikwasut’inuxw describes how their original ancestor, a _kolus, younger brother of the
thunderbird, descends to earth through the door of the upper world:

\(^{44}\) C181 refers to Boas’ own system for cataloguing his publications.
The Thunder-bird was living in the upper world with his wife; and the name of the Thunder-bird was Too-Large. Now Too-Large was very downcast. He spoke to his wife, and said, “Oh mistress, let us go to the lower world, that I may see it.” Thus he said. Then his wife said, “Oh master, do you know about your name, that you have the name Too-Large, for you will be too large a chief in our lower world?” Thus said his wife to him. The Too-Large only said, “Just let us get ready to go.” Thus he said; and then he put on his Thunder-bird mask, and his wife also put on her Thunder-bird mask. They came flying through the door of the upperworld. (Boas 1902, p.165)

The Kwak’wala words for the last sentence are:

\[
\text{Wa, gax’la’e pałtsa lax t’axalasa i kadzilisasants ḳalax.}
\]

Then, came flying through door the upper they world

The universe is described as a giant house and the division between the land and the sky is accessed through “a doorway”. In addition to this description we have the following ancestor story of the ‘Tlætalamin of the ḳamgis which also describes the original descent of a kulus:

Kulus was a bird when he came down. He looked for a house. Then the bird disappeared, and he began to be a man. He became possessed of a house, the
outside of which was cloudless; and stars were on the house that he brought down
with him. Then he married. He had children, and they became many, and they
became the `Tlat'alamin clan. (Boas 1910, p. 81)

In this version the description of the house is analogous to the land in a more literal sense; the
roof of the house is a cloudless sky. Stars adorn the house as they do the night sky.

Figure 5.9 shows the _kolus_ over grizzly bears back house posts from Johnny Scow's house
(see Figures 3.1 and 5.6). The right to use this carving was directly connected to the origin
narratives of the _Kwikwasut'inuxw_. While literally the _kolus_ forms the structure of the wooden
house of Johnny Scow it is also the _kolus_ who form the foundation of origin and lineage which
holds up the “house” of Johnny Scow metaphorically. All material culture manifestations
amongst the Kwakwaka’wakw had to be connected to an origin or source either through lineage
or marriage and that story needed to be validated publicly. The “house” became the ultimate
expression of identity and as such was loaded with symbolism and rich metaphorical extensions
into social structure.
5.3 The house metaphor and social structure: the 'naríma is a house

The metaphor of “the body is a house” has particular significance in Kwakwaka’wakw social structure in both literal and symbolic ways. The individual is conceived as a component of a social whole. The extended family is represented through traditional house architecture and occupation. Large houses were occupied by both independent and extended families with independent family groups occupying partitioned and separated spatial sections of the house. The primary social unit of the Kwakwaka’wakw is not the tribe but the naríma house groups
which form the tribes. These groups have been variably referred to in English as the “clans” and sometimes “houses” of the tribe. In Boas’ texts there are a few words that defy English translation to the point that he chooses not to interpret them but to retain them in their Kwak’wala form. The word ʰən̓ima is one of them.

The inhabitants of each village are further subdivided into groups called ʰən̓ima, meaning “one kind.” The individuals in each ʰən̓ima are called “ ʰən̓ima fellows” (ʰən̓imut). These divisions are the ultimate units bound together by strict social obligations. (Boas1966, p.37)

Judith Berman in her 1991 dissertation “The Seal’s Sleeping Cave” gives a valuable and revealing morphological analysis of the word and the concept of ʰən̓ima.

The name for the Kwagul descent group suggests that it was conceived of as in some way an egalitarian organization. ʰən̓imut derives from a stem ʰən̓ima, which in turn derives from a root, ʰən̓ or ʰən̓ə-. The root expresses notions similar both to English “one” as a measure of quantity, and “oneness” as a quality of relationship. It appears
in many terms for social relationships, in which both these meanings are combined:

’nənimut “descent group members”, ʼnaʔnwut, ʼnaʔwiyut “brother, cousin of same sex, friend”, ʼnaʔnukw “friend, person”, ʼnaʔa’il, ʼnaʔa’ilʷut “house-mate,” ʼnamgustolut “age mate,” ʼnamxtləla, ʼnamxtlə’ini’ “[nuclear?] family,” and so on (Boas n.d.:239-40). In the word ’naʔnimut, the root ’nə- is suffixed with –[’]ima “class of thing, kind of thing. “

Nənimima literally means “one kind of thing.” By itself ʼnənimima can be used to refer to “brothers” or “cousins” (e.g. Boas 1897; 682; 1921; 824), as well as to the descent group as a whole. The ’naʔnimut, then, is a “group of fellows of the same kind.” The name at least connotes equality, sameness, commonality, unity and fellowship, in the same way perhaps, that “brother” does in English. In English, Hunt always referred to the ’naʔnimut as a “brother tribe,” that is, a social group composed of brothers (Hunt to Boas, 11/12/16 et seq.) [Berman 1991, p. 70]

The ʼnənimima can be translated as “the house”. The house is used as a metaphor for the ʼnənimima. In the same way a literal Kwakwaka’wakw house is filled with linked families so the ʼnənimima is filled with the social standing of “family” members. Both the domestic household and the social “house” (clan) are composed by human occupants in ranked order. This order was
represented in the placement of living quarters within the domestic house but became amplified in the arrangement of seats in the ceremonial house where rank is accorded specific seating arrangements based on the notion that the most highly considered guests were seated in the “upriver” sides of the house. The specificity of seating arrangement is no longer adhered to today.

The *hən̓ima* is the fundamental unit of the tribe. When conducting a survey of Kwakwaka’wakw social organization Boas (1897) lists four tribes under the Koskimo (Guskimukw) subdialect, two under the Newettee (Nawidi) subdialect, and twenty under the Kwakiutl (Kwagu’l) subdialect. It is interesting to note that he defines only the Kwakiutl subdialect tribes as referring to themselves as Kwakwaka’wakw. Each tribe is composed of two to several *hən̓ima*. I consider the *hən̓ima* to be the fundamental unit rather than the tribes as prior to contact the majority of ceremonial inter-relations occurred amongst smaller less extended groups and only since the early 1800’s onwards do we see the rise of the inter-tribal ceremonialism of today. This means that prior to contact traditional inter-relations occurred mainly at the *hən̓ima* to *hən̓ima* level. This has shifted to the tribal level only in the last one hundred and fifty years.

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45 The contemporary application of the name Kwakwaka’wakw to all the tribes is a fairly recent adjustment in self-identification. (1980’s-today)
which required the fairly modern development of a tribal ranking system. This is clearly mapped out in the unpublished notes of the anthropologist Wilson Duff when he recorded Mungo Martin in the 1950-60s. When we consider the occupation of the coast by the Kwakwaka'wakw to extend at least over thousands of years we can comparatively identify the ʰaʔnimə as the fundamental social unit. To show by example how the ʰaʔnimə are composed under a tribal group I have excerpted the following for the Dzawada'enuxw; whom Boas lists as Tsawatainx (Boas 1897:331) In his notes published after his death Boas(1966:40-41) had added the 6th ʰaʔnimə Gigalgam.

   2. Gigagama'i (=chiefs)  
   3. Wi'ukwama'i (=whom no one dares to look at)  
   4. 'Ka'kakila'ka (=always wanting to kill people)  
   5. Kikudilikala (=the Kawadilikalas)  
   6. Gigalgam (=the first ones)\(^{46}\)

According to the Kwakwaka'wakw themselves who started to keep written ledger records of potlatch give-aways as early as the 1880's once members had acquired some literacy the ʰaʔnimə groups were kept track of under their corresponding tribal units confirming much of ________________

\(^{46}\) Ledger accounts list a seventh ʰaʔnimə as the Yiyagadalal (personal communication R. Nicolson).
Boas documentation with some changes. As late as the 1960’s the names of the Dzawada’enuxw ḥaḿima groups, their rank in correspondence to each other and the individual standings of the ḥaḿima members were written down in ledger books.

A comparison of household compositions documented by the Canadian Census from 1881, 1891, 1901 and 1911, when the Kwakwaka’wakw still occupied traditional houses exhibit evidence that ḥaḿima groups, for the most part, corresponded to household memberships. The ḥaḿima family group is both symbolic of and literally identified with the concept of the “house”. The analogy of the body with the house by extension is given example by Boas in the following way;

The structure of the numayma (ḥaḿima) is best understood if we disregard the living individuals and rather consider the numayma as consisting of a certain number of positions to each of which belongs a name, a “seat” or “standing place,” that means rank and privileges. Their number is limited, and they form a ranked nobility. I am told that among the thirteen tribes of the region extending from Fort Rupert to Nimpkish River and Knight Inlet, there are 658 seats (Boas 1925a, 83) These
names and seats are the skeleton of the numayma, and individuals in the course of their lives, may occupy various positions and with them take the names belonging to them (Boas 1966:50)

The seats of a Ṣarnaḵima form a household, or literally a “house”. According to Boas, “The numayma consist of families embracing essentially household groups and the nearest relatives of those who married into the household groups” (p. 48). The house is composed of a membership, who are ranked by what Boas terms a “seat” or “standing place”. Literally, once inside the ceremonial house these seats are arranged in rank order. The membership of the Ṣarnaḵima form its body while the leadership (gi ga’mé’) or chiefs form the head. This standing was symbolized in spatial allocation both within the domestic household and the ceremonial.

The highest-ranking chief of the Ṣarnaḵimut is the head chief, called by a number of terms, among them dlaxwamala “standing at the head” and xamagame’ “(the one) alone at the front.” Lower ranking chiefs were called by such terms as gigal “second chief,” or gigabo’i “chief at the end” (Berman 1991, p. 71)
The *naáima* is conceptualized both as a house and as a body. In the Kwakwaka’wakw mindset the equation of the two concepts are closely aligned. A house is an architectural version of the animate body made up by its occupants. The *naáima* groups lived on the land in distinct locations sometimes associated with encounters with ancestors.

According to Indian theory, the ancestor of a *naáima* (sometimes also of a tribe) appeared at a specific locality by coming down from the sky, out of the sea, or from underground, generally in the form of an animal, took off his animal mask, and became a person (Boas 1935c, 41). The Thunderbird or his brother (Kolus), the gull, the Killer Whale, a sea monster, a grizzly bear, and a ghost chief appear in this role. (Boas 1966, p.42)

A general rule of land occupation followed that these locations were most often occupied during summer months during what was considered the *baxus*, or season of the profane.

*Naáima* groups then joined one another for the sacred winter season rearranging the village collective into a tribe. Sometimes several tribes would gather together rendering even greater distinction in arrangement of houses in relationship to one another. It might serve our purpose
to consider at this point the linguistic analysis of the words for house and village. The word for house in Kwak'wala is *gukw*. The word for ‘one’s own tribe’ is *gukwala’t*. Obviously the stem for ‘one’s own tribe’ is the word for house. “The villagers are called the “fellow inhabitants of the houses” *gukwala’t* (Boas 1966:37). The formal compositional expansion of the words *gukw* and *gukwala’t* mimic the actual spatial expansion of “the house” to the tribe “several houses”.

The concept of expansion and contraction (microcosm/macrocosm) is reversed within the transition of the domestic house to the ceremonial house. The large multi-family dwellings of the Kwakwaka'wakw were cleared of their partitions and emptied for the transition into a ceremonial house. The ceremonial house was divided into a main central space with a central fire and a back room reserved for initiates and preparations. Seating was arranged along the walls, front entrance area and back. During ceremonies seats were deliberately arranged in order of the rank or position of each *hamíma* member. Depending on the type of ceremony being enacted the house seating took on different forms. The attendance of more than one *hamíma* required certain adjustments as the *hamíma* would be placed in order of rank next to one another as well as recognizing internal standing. As mentioned before, prior to contact
ceremonial gatherings were more self-contained affairs with single Ńámíma or multiple Ńámíma gatherings taking place. The occasion of multi-tribal gatherings occurred less often.

After contact, the Kwakwaka’wakw tribes began to conduct their ceremonies more extensively with each other forcing them to come up with additional ranking systems and seating arrangements. In other words, the seating delegations of the ceremonial house expand to encompass and include additional Ńámíma and tribal groups. A single house under ceremonial conditions expands from the occupation of a single Ńámíma (house, clan) to the occupation of several Ńámíma and even tribes. In contemporary times this expansion now includes all the Kwakwaka’wakw tribes and acknowledgement of the individual Ńámíma groups of the tribes has been largely forgotten. It has become part of our contemporary exercise to return the understanding of the Ńámíma ‘houses’ to contemporary ceremonialism. In a figurative sense then when the Ńámíma groups gather together within the ceremonial house it becomes a case of houses contained and arranged within a house analogous to how the Ńámíma houses were at one time contained within the landscape – ‘houses within a house’ under ceremonial conditions mimics “houses within the land (the world as a house)” under geographic conditions. That this same ‘house as landscape’ can also be related to as ‘house as body’ is reflected on by Judith Berman in the following:
Three interrelated metaphors, which were used with particular frequency to talk about the 'nānimut, embody the notions of “rank” and “substance.” These are the metaphor of the house, the metaphor of the body, and the metaphor of precedence.

3.3.3. Chiefs and the metaphor of the house. The myth that describes the founding of the 'nānimut, and the origin of 'nānimut seats and prerogatives, is often called nuyamīl, literally “myth in house” or “History of the house.” In this trope, the bighouse is used as a metaphor for the 'nānimut as a whole. (Berman 1991:94)

Her linguistic analytical observations of the House / Body metaphor are as follows:

Lexically, the usage of a number of words and morphemes connects houses with the bodies of animate beings. The somatic suffix =axsta “mouth, at or on mouth, to do something with mouth,” is often used with the suffix =il “in or of the house” to refer to the door into a house or a room. A door is thus literally a “house-mouth” (=axstalīl). Thus we have forms such as ḵwaxstalīl “to sit at door of room” (ḵwa- “to sit,” =axsta “mouth,” =il “in the house, of the house”). A related suffix =iṭl, means, variously, “to go into house, to go into mouth, to go into inlet.”
Not only is the house door like a mouth, the whole house-front is like a face or head.

The suffixes –gam “face, head” and –[g]iu “forehead, to have on forehead,” are used in this regard. Thus, the planks forming the front façade are called, individually or collectively, tsagami’ “standing on edge at the face” or “face that is a vertical plane” (tsag- “vertical plane,” –[g]am “face, head,” –i’ “nominalizing suffix”; Boas 1921:805-6). Similarly, a beam supporting carvings on the upper edge of a house-front is katiwi’ “long object [put on] forehead” (kat- “to put long object somewhere,” –[g]iu “forehead, to have on forehead,” –i’ “nominalizing suffix”; Boas 1921:810). Inside the house the “front” is reversed. The rear of the house, where the chief’s living quarters are located and where the chief and the highest-ranking nobles sit during public events, is called ‘ugwiwa t̖ił̖, literally, “forehead inside the house” (‘u- “empty root”47,” –[g]iu “forehead,” –ił “in the house”; Boas 1921:944. (Berman 1991, p. 77)

The house is decorated in accordance with the hamima history. Its’ architecture of post and lintel beams are often, though not always, carved with the images of ancestral encounters and

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47 In accordance with Chapter 3, I consider this form to be a categorizer rather than an empty root.
acquired crests through marriage rendering in a figurative way the skeleton or backbone of the

'namima history. In comparing the 'namima house to the body Berman also states:

The chief was the 'namimut's head; the commoners were 'ugwidi’ the “body,” or bagwilidi', “chief's men of the body,” both terms using the suffix –git “body as a whole, all over surface of body.” The chief’s official speaker was called, variously, the “mouth” (sams), “tongue” (kalam), the “blood” (alkw), and the “belly” (taksi) of the chief (Curtis 1915:154,176) (Berman 1991, p.81)

The primary social unit of the Kwakwak'wakw was the namima, which can be variously translated as ‘clan’, 'family group', or ‘tribal subdivision’. Boas describes the namima as “the ultimate units bound together by strict social obligations.” (Boas 1966:37) The most accurate metaphorical translation of the namima is the “house”. I am proposing that one of the major metaphors for Kwakwak'wakw spatial conceptualization is the three level expansion/contraction of “the body is a structural and spiritual equivalent to the house; the house is a structural and spiritual equivalent to the land; the land is a structural and spiritual equivalent to the body.” This conceptualization rendered an empathetic approach to Kwakwak'wakw ideas of the community (social life) and of the land. The community is seen
as an integral extension of the individual body. The land is seen as an integral extension of both the body and the community. Individual relationships had a higher definition of social placement in that the individual was seen as being a part of a whole social body. The individual is surrounded by family which is surrounded by the ńamíma, which is surrounded by the tribe.

The individual human body is encased within the metaphoric house of the ńamíma. The ńamíma house/bodies in turn are symbolically contained within the ceremonial house through seating arrangements where social obligations are negotiated and played out. More literally, the ceremonial house is conceptually transformed into the universe with the roof representing the sky, the floor representing the earth and below the ground representing the land of the ghosts; all significant domains of the Kwakwaka’wakw cosmos.

The extended metaphor of the house as the land renders an approach to the landscape which is empathetic in nature. The land is considered an extension of the individual body and family group. My reiteration of this point may appear repetitive but I place a heightened focus on this statement as it is the primary proposition of this thesis. Kwak’wala words introduced in chapter 3 are emphatic of this sympathetic relationship.
5.3.1 Temporal considerations of the social body

In regards to temporal metaphor Berman gives the following analysis of the concept of “the social body in time”. This analysis renders a structural analogy of the head or front as having “precedence in time” and the rear or back as “following in time”. The front or head of the namima are represented by the chiefs or highest standing nobility who occupy these positions while the lower standings are occupied by the rear or back. This only makes sense in a temporal context if the association between the chiefs and nobility is made as the front or head because they are closest in line to the point of origin of the namima (see chapter 3). According to the rules of descent the oldest family lines based on primogeniture are the closest to the original ancestor and thus of higher standing. Younger lines are more distantly associated with
the original ancestor and therefore, further away; literally “further away in time.” She gives the following linguistic analysis:

As noted above, many of the terms for chiefs use the suffix –[g]ame’ “first, in front of, ahead” (Boas 1947:360). The common term for “chief”, “gigame’, derives from gig- “chief, chiefly,” and -[g]ame’ “first, in front of.” The chief is the one in front, but before him came the ancestors. Ancestors are called by many different terms. Some are derived from kin terms, including wiwump, literally “fathers, uncles [bilaterally?]” (1910:28) and gagasala, “great-grandparents, and great greatuncles [?]” (1921:843). Many are derived from gal- “first, to be first,” among them gali’ “the first one” (1921:223; n.d. 255), and galdzasi bakwam or galdzasi bagwanam “the first Indians, the ancient men” (1921:77, 547). Also from the stem gal- come the terms galnukw “belonging to ancestors” (1921:1247), and galgila “to make first things, to institute” –what the ancestors did (1909:204). Still other terms derive from the stem gig- “chiefly.” The most common is gigagiwe’ “chief at the forehead” or perhaps, “chief at prow” (1921:842); another is giga’anawe’ “chief anchor-line, chief root” (1921:843)…
...In the term gigagiwe’ “chief on forehead” we again encounter the analogy comparing the ‘nįmimut to a body. Here, however, it is a body laid out in time, not space. In time the ancestor stands at the very front and top. (Berman 1991, p.84-85)

Much like the spatial character of contracting and expanding frames from the minute to the grandiose (body, house, universe) temporal character also expands and contracts according to context. The current head chief is the temporal equivalent in time to the original ancestor. If the metaphor of the family tree is applied then the chiefs and nobility are those closest to the root and are formed by the oldest of the oldest lines. Younger lines form the outer branches. In the words of a song a Chief uses the metaphor of his body as a tree.

I am the only great tree, I the chief! I am the only great tree, I the chief! You are right under me tribes! You are my younger brothers under me, tribes! You sit in the middle of the rear of the house, tribes! You surround me like a fence, tribes! I am the first to give you property, tribes! I am your Eagle, tribes! (Boas 1921, p.1290)
This speech is imbued with the notion of precedence “that which comes first”. In this context it is the ones who come first in time that are granted the spatial equivalence of being “ahead of” or “in front of.” In this regard Berman observes:

The 'namimit is portrayed not just as an animal, but also as a tree, which in traditional thought was also an animate being. The chief is ‘upik, “post” or “tree,” and the chief’s forebears are ‘awa’nawe’, the “root” of the tree. Commoners are bagwəlidi’ which means “men of the body,” but also, since the suffix –git found in this term can refer to various types of bodies, “Men of the [tree] trunk” (Boas 1921:836; Hunt to Boas, 2/4/18). In Hunt’s description, the chief “is the body of a walkw or great cedar tree, and the branches of this tree is the tribe of the opək [the] chief, Hanging onto the chief body as it is said by the tribes…the Gusgamuxw use [the word] opək for [the] Post of Heaven that holds up the sky)” (letter of Hunt to Boas, 4/11/180. When a chief and his heir die together, it is as if “both tree and root were killed” (Curtis 1915:113) (Berman 1991, p. 83-84)
The metaphor is a spatial one in arranging placement of membership in space, but also if we consider the growth cycles of a tree it is a temporal phenomenon that renders first the root and trunk and then the branches. It is because they come first that the root and stem (chiefs and nobility formed by the oldest of the oldest) are considered to be integral and of more importance in social context. Consider the following example which is repeated quite often throughout Kwakwaka’wakw documented histories.

In some cases we find in a tribe a subdivision which has for its name the stem of the tribal name with the ending –am, as in the division just mentioned, the Sint’lam and dlik’am and outside of the Kwakiutl proper, the Mamalilik’am. The meaning of this ending is “the real ones.” According to the statement of the Indians there was, in former times, in almost each division a noble family that bore a name of this type, while the rest of the people were designated by the ordinary name of the division. Mythologically this is explained as meaning that the select group, called “the real” members of the division, were descended from the ancestor, while the other families at an early time became associated with the ancestor without being descended from him.
On the other hand, according to tradition, several pairs of subdivisions of one sept of the Kwakiutl are considered as the descendants of two brothers, one the elder, the other of the younger one. (Boas 1944, p. 357)

The concept of primogeniture, or custom of the first born, was so strongly recognized within traditional Kwakwaka'wakw society that younger branches often broke off in order to form their own *hənima*; or to create “their own house.” The relationship is one of temporal character with that of the oldest and most ancient taking precedence. In order to consider the significance of this concept to Kwakwaka'wakw worldview we need only consider that the reverse has much more cultural currency in contemporary Western culture where in many contexts youth and “the new” are infused with more value than the aged.

Consistent with the idea of primogeniture the Kwakwaka’wakw social body in time is not oriented facing forward to “the future” however, as in many other cultures, but is oriented towards the past as we saw in chapter 4. The movement is also cyclical rather than linear as explained by the Kwexa (Kwagu’l) chief Charlie Nowell (1870-1956). When chiefs give up their positions at the head of the *hənima*’ they then occupy lower positions.
When I gave the potlatch with the strap from the copper, I changed my name to Hamdzidagame, which was the name Lagius gave me, and I gave Alfred the name Melide, which means “people are satisfied with olachen grease.” At the same time, I put him in third position in my clan, where I was, and I went to the lower one – the ninth. From then on I received the gifts to him in potlatch myself and took care of him, but it was his position just the same. The same year, at Alert Bay, Johnny Whanuk also gave my brother, Owadi, articles for marriage, because my brother had married his sister. With these articles my brother gives a potlatch, calling all the same tribes that I called. At the same time he told all the people that Alfred’s name will be “giving away of big coppers,” and my brother put him in number one position in our clan, and my brother went down to his other position lower where he had another name. This was the sixth position in our clan, but he continued to get gifts for Alfred in the first position and take care of them until Alfred would be old enough to take them himself. If my brother had died before Alfred, then Alfred would have been head chief. (Ford 1940, p. 177)
It is a constantly renewing social body not constantly moving forward in time as we might attempt to understand it but rather continually self-perpetuating; a moving forward, then stepping back. Hence, we get metaphoric speeches such as the following:

In all speeches reference is made to the adherence to old customs. They “walk the road made by the creator of chiefs” (kasa lax t’axalasa gigamegila R790.62);

they walk in “that which results in the groove of the world” (xwalt’alidzam R789.25).

The chief says, “I follow the road made by my late ancestors” (lan nagaltawix t’axilayasan wiomp’wola CIII 124:22) (Boas, 1949, p.238)

An interesting observation is that the word for road in Kwak’wala is the same as that used for doorway. In an alternative metaphor one could say “walking a road” is “entering a house”.

(335) t’ax (ala) “door, trail, custom” (Boas 1948:173)

(336) t’axila48 “to make trail, establish custom” (Boas 1948:173)

In order to perpetuate oneself both individually and in the social body one must have a descendent to replace you; preferably a son, a daughter, or a grandchild but in the case of

48 It is quite possible this is the same word as (335). Boas has two different entries (t’axala & t’axila) as does the First Voices Kwak’wala website so I have retained them as separate examples.
absence of these immediate descendants a more distant relative would suffice. The imperative however lies in the perpetuation. As membership ages it is replaced by descendants but the emphasis is that the descendants are simply a perpetuation of the social body made up of individuals from the very beginning. The importance of this perpetuation is expressed by parents and grandparents who refer to their descendants in the following ways:

...children are addressed as “the one who owns (me) like a dog (‘wadzid). The grandfather calls himself “old dog” (‘wayoł R1313.3). Parents also call themselves “slaves” (kaku R712:44); and they call the children “treasures” (dlugwe’ R712:44).

(Boas 1944:238)

In this regard Berman in addressing the metaphor of the 'nārīima as an animate body states:

This animal is laid out in time as well as moral space; the ancestor is the “chief at the forehead” of the animal. In general, what comes before in time or space is chiefly, ancestral; what follows is lower-ranking and contemporary…To which animal is the ’nārīmut being equated? One answer is the founding spirit-animal, the “first one moving in the world,” from which the ’nārīmut has descended. Present day
'nəmimut members, especially the nobles, are "of one kind" through their descent from this ancestor. They are his children; in a sense they are his perpetuated self, as is expressed in the eponymous descent-group names. The chief in and of himself perpetuates the ancestor. (Berman 1991, p. 88)

This belief is not restricted to the social body or to the nobility but is extended into the general belief system of the people as expressed in the following quote from Clellen Ford who interviewed Charlie Nowell.

The Kwak’iutl were not much concerned with theorizing about where their children came from; in general, they thought of babies as ancestors who had returned to this world. In accordance with this view, it was customary, when a person died, for those comforting the survivors to say, “after all, the departed one will come again, born to his niece or his granddaughter.” Proofs of reincarnation were numerous: the baby might look like the deceased, he might have a birthmark where the ancestor had a scar, or, as an adult he might evince a special skill such as wood carving which could only mean that he was an experienced wood carver reborn. The great
number of births which seemed to follow this pattern reinforced the belief and insured its persistence. (Ford 1940, p. 29)

In many ways it is difficult to talk about time without making reference to space. Spatial metaphors are used in order to conceptualize time. The “body in space” appears to be a fundamental metaphor for time conceptualization. In order to understand the importance of metaphor for the understanding of societal belief systems Lakoff & Johnson (1999) explain how the metaphors “time is a resource” and “time is money” operate in contemporary Western culture:

Our culture happens to have a great many institutions that reify the Time is A Resource and Time Is Money metaphors. One of them is the institution of paying people according to the amount of time they work—by the hour or week or year. Another is the institution of appointment books, by which time is budgeted. There are also the institutions of time clocks and business hours, which are ways of pairing income with time worked. And of course, there are deadlines, which define the limitations of time resources.
Not every culture has such institutions, and not every culture has a Time Is A Resource metaphor. According to anthropologist Elizabeth Brandt (personal communication) the Pueblos do not even have in their languages a means of saying the equivalent of “I didn’t have enough time for that.” They can say “My path didn’t take me there” or “I couldn’t find a path to that,” but those are not instances of time being conceptualized as a resource. The view in which time is not considered a resource, in which there is no rush to get things done with maximum efficiency, is sometimes viewed mockingly by those who are not part of Native American culture as “Indian time.” Western businessmen seeking to set up factories in Third World countries often see Indigenous peoples who do not conceptualize time as a resource as being lazy. Part of Westernization is the importation of institutions that reify the Time Is A resource and Time As Money metaphors (p.165).

To be clear, many cultures exhibit space/time crossover for metaphorical understanding of temporal experience. What renders the Kwakwaka’wakw experience of time particular in relationship to its spatial metaphors is the concept of expansion and contraction. While the
physical experience of the body in space is mediated by scale from the minute to the grandiose reflecting structural similarity, time also expands and contracts based on individual and social considerations. The individual life experience is bounded by a single lifetime which can be metaphorically aligned to the span of “a day” or “a year”. However, the temporal experience is expanded to consciously address the inter-generationalism of one’s ancestors and descendants. The boundedness of the single lifetime is expanded to encompass an almost infinite experience from the beginning of time through to eternity. This can be spatially compared to the ideas of the bounded independent body in space outwards to encompass the expanded social body of the family (hamima = house) in the world. This belief system exhibits itself through narrative accounts where time (as well as space) is represented as both expanded and contracted as in the following examples:

Now we will talk again about Head-Winter-Dancer (Tsekame’). Now his wife,

Winter-Dance-Woman (Tsekamaga), was with child. When she had been with child for four months, she gave birth to a boy. Head-Winter-Dancer said at once to his wife, “His name shall be Upper-End (Nalbe).”
Head-Winter-Dancer washed him always in cold water. When Upper-End was four months old he was a full-grown man. (Boas 1902, p. 180)

This passage illustrates the compression of time in the growth of ‘Nalbe’. What would normally take two decades; the growth of an infant to adult-hood, is accomplished in four months. In another example a chief refers to his original ancestor and then to himself collapsing the temporal space between them:

Immediately, ‘Kumukwa arose and spoke. He said, “True chief, true is your word, chief Lalakut'sa. My ancestor, according to the myth from the beginning, ‘Nalanukwa came down with supernatural power. There was nothing that he went for in vain when he went into the house of ‘Kumukwa at ‘Tsigtat'si. Then he obtained supernatural power/ all kinds of dancing paraphernalia, the sea-monster dance, the killer-whale dance and the /great bullhead, and therefore his name was ‘Tlakwagila and ‘Kumukwa. I am ‘Nalanukwamglakw. 49(Boas 1925, p. 269)

49 Italics added by author
These are only two examples of many where the temporal passage of time is rendered as flexible rather than fixed. Like space, time can collapse, be compressed and pass quickly or can expand. Rather than being conceptualized as the fixed passage of set amounts, the Kwakwaka’wakw perceive time and spatial relationship as flexible and fluid. In spatial terms a body expands to become a house, the house expands to become the world. In reverse, the world compresses and becomes a house and a house is compressed to become an individual body; a body which can swallow guests like food. Time is equally flexible. A single day is likened to a year, or to a lifetime. The single lifetime of a chief is stretched to encompass all time. These concepts of spatial and temporal analogy are the basis of the empathetic relationship between the body, the house and the land/world. Each are a vital component of the other and all are conceptually connected as similar, or the same. It is from this belief system that the rich metaphorical imagination of the Kwakwaka’wakw emerges into artistic expression.

5.4 The house metaphor in Speech and Song

The Body=House metaphor can found in ceremonial speech and song. Consider the following speech:
Ah, this is our name, tribes! Ah, this is the great house of our famous one, tribes! –It speaks, the great house, your great famous one, tribes! Like hunger sounds this great house, carrying in one hand the tribes all around the world! It sounds like hunger for those at the far end of the world, tribes! Go on, chief, invite them to come to make a turmoil, and to harden the floor of the large house of our chief, tribes!

(Boas 1921, p. 1279)

In this speech the house is given animation through description. The house carries the other tribes in its hand like a person. The house is hungry like a person. Hardening the floor of the house is a reference to dancing which packs down the floor. In the next speech a chief refers to his guests that he looks for to arrive at his beach as salmon and his village/house a salmon weir:

…and he ran up and stood on the place made for standing on at the top of the watchman’s pole. Then he shaded his eyes with his right hand and stood looking seaward. Then he said aloud, “Ha, ha, ha, hu, wa.” Then he spoke and said, “My schools of salmon are coming to my salmon weir here, chiefs.” Four times he said
thus. Then spoke one who belonged to the numaym Kukwakum of the `Kumuya'yi
and whose name was Hawalkwalal and said, “Now go on, chief `Tlakudlas, haul in
hard that you may ascertain what kind of salmon it is that your salmon weir, chief,”
thus said he. (Boas 1940, p. 234)

The tribes paddling to attend the “potlatch” of the host chief are descibed as salmon which are
swimming towards the entrance of a fish weir. In another speech the salmon weir is likened to
the ceremonial house and again, the guests as salmon:

“Stand up, Kwagu’l, that I may call out of the house this chief that he may come and
look at his guests.” Thus he said and then he said aloud, “Come chief `Tlasutiwalis,
now your salmon have come; they have come in great schools,” said he. And
immediately `Tlakudlas came out of the door of his house and stood outside. The
he put his right hand over his eyes and looked at the canoes that were stopping
outside. Then he put down his hand and he spoke and said aloud, “Come,
`Tlasutiwalis, your salmon has arrived,” said he as he told all the men to beat fast
time on the front of the house. (Boas 1925:173)
Like salmon, the guests to a potlatch provide vital sustenance. The ceremonial exchange between the host chief and his guests is also empathetic in nature. The chief needs his guests as witnesses to validate his ancestral claims, to validate his familial connection to the past, the present, and the future through his descendants. Without them there is no substance to his identity. It is only through communal acknowledgement that his crests and stories carry any weight. Without an audience his speeches and his stories are only words. It is the validation of his guests that bring these stories and crests to life. The chief and his guests are necessary to each other in the same way that sustenance and those whom consume that sustenance validate one another. By eating prey such as animals and fish, humans are able to continue to existence physically. This is the reason for the various prayers before killing or eating. In exchange for their physical bodies the animals and fish are fed spiritually through prayer. The Kwakwaka’wakw world is one of constant transformations and exchange both physical and spiritual. This is also the reason guests are paid. It acknowledges the social and cultural sustenance provided to the chief by their attendance and validation of his social standing embodied in artistic and oral performance. This is the key to understanding the particular metaphor of potlatch guests as food.
The metaphor of “the house is the world” is again prevalent in the following song:

Praise, the killer whale, coming up in the house,
real in the good house, the chief real (Boas 1985, p. 730)

These words are sung in the ceremonial house. During a performance the mask of a whale would be displayed imitating the breaching motions of whales in the ocean. Literally, this is enacted in the house, but metaphorically it reference the action of whales “in the world” which in breaching the surface of the sea are “coming up in the house”; the house floor of the world being the surface of the ocean. Figure 5.10 shows a killer whale dancer with other dancers as a part of Edward Curtis’ 1914 silent film “In the Land of the Head Hunters (In the Land of the War Canoes)” The dancers would not normally be seen together this way. Curtis grouped them for dramatic effect. During real ceremonies the killer whale mask would be performed by itself.
In the next song from Boas (1895), wealth is described as a mountain and the importance of the idea of origins is also reiterated.
Tale from the beginning, your tale from the beginning,

you came up, Your `Kumukwa house came up,

real wealth is moving, real wealth coming ashore,

wealth on his back, making a mountain of property,

great real mountain, your tale from the beginning (p. 673)

In this song, the name `Kumukwa refers to the chief of the sea. In Kwakwaka’wakw histories, the house of `Kumukwa is located under the sea, and is made of copper. Beings who encounter this being are gifted with his house and other treasures. This is the reference to "mountains of wealth" which is coming ashore. All the treasures come from the sea. In a metaphoric sense the sea is the house of `Kumukwa. The story itself is considered an aspect of this wealth and is referred to as "your story from the beginning". Figure 5.11 is an Edward Curtis image of a `Kumukwa mask. Note the bird on his head which is most often a loon and the split whale’s tail near the back of the mask emblematic of its oceanic origin.
Figure 5.11 Curtis, Edward, S. (Photographer). (1914). Kōmuqi-Qágyuhl [Photo], Photograph courtesy of Northwestern University Library, Edward S. Curtis’s The North American Indian, ”2003 http://digital.library.northwestern.edu./curtis/
The figurative language used in ceremonial speech and song composition are comprehensible under the more fundamental metaphoric understanding of the Body=House=Land/World metaphor.

### 5.5 The house metaphor and the structure of button blankets

The Body=House metaphor concept emerged in the new form of the button blanket. The Kwakwaka’wakw were extremely innovative with the new materials that were introduced with contact with European traders. Prior to contact, clothing and blankets were manufactured by hand from cedar and wool, either dog or mountain goat. (Jonaitis, 2006) When wool trade blankets were introduced on the coast the Kwakwaka’wakw quickly took to wearing them and using them as a form of ceremonial currency. In Figure 5.12, a photo taken in Quatsino Sound, wool trade blankets are hung around the house adorned with buttons and paper currency.
By the latter parts of the 19th century ceremonial trade blankets adorned with trade buttons were being manufactured as potlatch gifts and ceremonial regalia. Though museum collectors shied away from these innovations due to their own concerns over cultural authenticity the button blankets were completely traditional in their conceptualization. The blankets functioned both as regalia worn over the body, and as two-dimensional expressions of crest lineages. While
Figures 5.12 and 5.14 show the blankets in two-dimensional display Figure 5.13 shows men wearing button blankets at the potlatch of Thomas and Charlie Nowell held in Alert Bay in 1900. Note the particular overlapped way with exposed left shoulder the man on the far left wears his blanket.

There is a theory articulated by George McDonald, former director of the Canadian Museum of Civilization that the blankets "replicated housefronts, but they changed the dimensions of meaning by reversing them…and changing the frame of reference from the social (the painted housefront) to the personal (articles of clothing). (Jenson, 1986, p. 1) This theory was also told to me years ago by my uncle Ernie Willie when we started to make button blankets for our potlatches. The theory is that the red borders are the sides and roof of a house. The break in the middle at the top is where the main smoke-hole is in traditional house architecture. The crest is considered the spirit of the house and functions much like the crest on the front of a house or on its house-posts. The symbols sewn onto the borders of blankets tend to depict natural elements pertinent to the territory of the 'namíma (clan/house) or tribe depicted. For example, the triangular forms on the border of the blanket worn by the man with exposed shoulder symbolize mountains.
The connection between the body and the house is pronounced in the concept of the button blanket. The blanket covers the body as does the house. Its two-dimensional layout mimics the architecture of a house. The red color of the border is said to represent blood and the red cedar bark of the Kwakwaka’wakw winter ceremonial.
In Figure 5.14 the blanket has been hung upside down but the basic composition of borders along top and bottom and the main crest in the centre is still evident. The invention of button blankets is a significant example where the internal cultural meaning, or concept remains intact but is interpreted in a new formal expression using new materials. The object as a blanket
performs the same conceptual function as the traditional house in providing a cover for the body while simultaneously asserting historical lineage.

5.6 Summary

The analogy of the body as a structural equivalent between objects and beings from the small-scale to the large scale permeates Kwakwaka’wakw cultural practice as well as language. The structure of the body, as the house of the soul, is analogically expanded to the structure of a house, which is the container for the individual body, or the family unit. This spatial conceptualization of expansion and contraction is consistent with Kwakwaka’wakw concepts regarding temporal flow. Rather than considering time as an ever progressive succession of individual linear events Kwakwaka’wakw time is considered as a cyclical perpetuation of a single moment that expands and contracts through ceremonial repetition (Walens 1977; Nicolson 2005). Spatial forms are simply repetitions/ reflections of one another that are experienced on an ever increasing or decreasing scale in relationship to the human body. From this emerges the major conceptual metaphor Body=House=Land/World. This chapter has presented evidence within Kwakwaka’wakw cultural expression that manifests this metaphor. In particular this chapter focussed on the “house” as in intermediary between the body and the
landscape and how the house is conceived of, imagined and perpetuated in Kwakwaka’wakw culture. The next chapter will focus on Kwakwaka’wakw conceptualization of the land.
Chapter 6: Laxa aw’inagwis’ “On the Land”

Kwakwaka’wakw Geographic Space

Dream of Malidi

I dreamed I was going to the upper world, which was very beautiful. Then I saw many people and all of them seemed to be women. One of them came to me and spoke to me and advised me never to speak a lie, “for I know that you always lie when you talk about the feasts that you give to your tribe in the country down below. If you go on talking this way you will fare ill with our chief here when he judges you. And you shall not steal your brother’s property and you shall not hate your fellow men. If you obey what I tell you will have no reason to fear,” thus she said to me. Then she asked me to go home. She opened the rear door of the house and I went out, and when I looked up I saw my house. Then I awoke.” (Boas 1925, p.51)

6.1 Land and sea / upriver - downriver

When we talk about geography we are talking about the lay of the land. Much of this is considered to be absolute. Places are fixed in spatial relationship to one another. However, perspective plays an integral role in our conceptualization of geography. While our physical
bodies can observe from certain points aspects of the landscape it is beyond our human observational capability to observe all of the earth at once. So humans have developed conventions, such as cartography (mapmaking), that allow us to understand space within the landscape. Each culture has developed their own set of conventions to help them both conceptualize the landscape and to navigate it. The conceptualization of geographic space, as described through the Kwak’wala language is based on the division of the land and the sea and the occupation of village sites within the intermediate zone between them. This primary division is given further definition by a secondary application loosely defined as up-river/down-river.

This chapter deals with the primary and secondary geographic orientation systems in an attempt to elucidate the self-contained and high cultural relevance of the Kwakw’akawak system. The body and the house are used as a structural prototype for the Kwakw’akawak spatial understanding of the land. The body/house is the central location off of which the primary regions of t’las- in front of (seaward), atl“behind (towards the forest)”’, nal-[nal-]“upriver” and gwa- “downriver” are derived. The body/house is also used to map structural characteristics onto the description of the landscape rendering a culturally amplified animation. The regions the sky, the earth (house) and below the ground are also significant.
6.1.1 Prior Research

Prior research has attempted to translate the absolute geographic orientation words of “north, south, east and west” onto Kwakwa’wakw geographic terms with varying results. The earliest recorded European contact dates for the Kwakwa’wakw territories are placed within the late 18th Century. In 1786, James Strange, a British ship trader visited what is now called Queen Charlotte Strait. In 1792, American, British and Spanish ships also travelled the territory (Codere, 1990; Menzies, 1923, Galois, 1994). These traders documented to some degree the geographic aspects of the lands they were travelling for their own purposes. It was not until nearly a full century later that a documentation of the understanding of Kwakwa’wakw geographic perspective was attempted by outsiders. In 1885, the celebrated Canadian geologist George M. Dawson (1849-1901) travelled through Kwakwa’wakw territory and collected a small selection of nine geographical terms published in 1885. Twenty years later, Edward S. Curtis also recorded a limited vocabulary of what he called “cardinal points” which was published in 1915. In some ways, Curtis’ work overlaps with Dawson’s in relaying primarily the directions of the wind.
Table 6.1 Dawson (1887:33) and Curtis (1915:331) Early Collection of Geographic Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dawson</th>
<th>Curtis</th>
<th>Tlatlasikoala</th>
<th>Wiken</th>
<th>Haisla</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>south-east</td>
<td>nul'-tse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>north-west</td>
<td>gwi-na-kw</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>out to sea</td>
<td>ttā-sakw</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>northwest wind</td>
<td>tsā’-kw</td>
<td>tsā-kwa</td>
<td></td>
<td>tsā-kwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>southeast wind</td>
<td>mat-las</td>
<td>mū-hlās</td>
<td>mū-hlās</td>
<td>mū-hlá-yal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>southwest wind</td>
<td>tlās'-pa-la</td>
<td>i-yūhs-a</td>
<td>tlās-pa-hla</td>
<td>yūh-sa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>west wind</td>
<td>keakš-ala</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>east wind</td>
<td>HA-iotl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>northeast wind</td>
<td>yoo’yāla</td>
<td>há-yuhl</td>
<td>yū-ya-la</td>
<td>há-a-yuhl</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Dawson’s consultant was 50 Ya’akutle’akutlas Tom, a member of the Kumuya’i, a clan of the Kwagu’l tribe of Fort Rupert

**Curtis compared the words across these four tribal groups. The first two are Kwakwaka’wakw tribes of Northern Vancouver Island

While these minor references represent the earliest published accounts of Kwakwaka’wakw geographical concepts it is of course, Franz Boas in collaboration with George Hunt who provided the most comprehensive engagement in the 1934 publication “Geographical Names of the *Kwakiutl Indians*”. This 83 page Boas & Hunt text contains an introductory essay which outlines the meaning of geographic names and then provides an index of example suffixes that

50 This extended name was what Dawson recorded however the name appears to be simply a repetition of the name Yakudlas.
express location. This information is followed by examples of names that are significant in the
mythologies. Of these he chooses a few out of the vast amount of mythological texts that he
along with George Hunt collected. This includes a list of origin sites for tribes and ‘nə̓mima.

Unfortunately, the list is not complete. The body of the publication also includes a list of place
names that is completed by a set of 22 maps to which those place names are attached.

Since Boas and Hunt, the most comprehensive contemporary published text to deal with
Kwakw̓a’wakw geography is Robert Galois’ (1994) “Kwakw̓a’wakw Settlements, 1775-1920
A Geographical Analysis and Gazetteer”. It provides maps, place names and in some but not all
cases origin stories. The impetus for this book came from the combining of the research of
Franz Boas with that of Wilson Duff. As an anthropologist working for the University of British
Columbia and then later the Provincial Museum, now called the Royal British Columbia
Museum, Duff had acquired vast amounts of geographic information on the Kwakw̓a’wakw in
the 1950’s before his premature death in 1976. Much of his work remained unpublished and in
the 1980’s as an initiative of the U’mista Cultural Society, perhaps anticipating future land claims
processes, Robert Galois, a historical geographer, was hired to review the materials and publish
a manuscript. To quote Galois:
Just as Wilson Duff felt that Northwest Coast Native art could not be appreciated without understanding the cultural logic that motivated it, we have argued that the story of Kwakwa’wakw land requires an appreciation of Kwakwa’wakw culture. For the Kwakwa’wakw, thinking about land involves knowing what group or family claims and has the right to use it, knowing its resources, and finally knowing how to use those resources. This book can certainly be used without appreciating the distinctive cultural values and thoughts of the Kwakwa’wakw. But to do so is to pass up a chance to view the story of the lands of the Kwakwa’wakw through their own eyes. (p. 11)

While the book is a valuable contemporary contribution to Kwakwa’wakw geography and certainly the idea of a Kwakwa’wakw perspective was given consideration the actual engagement with that perspective is limited to topical considerations of inclusion. The fundamental structure and delineation of the material remains within Western academic parameters and despite the above mentioned desire to present a Kwakwa’wakw perspective on land the text falls short of accomplishing this. Galois admits an awareness of this as his introductory statement reveals:
Nonetheless, I came to the study of the contact process as a White male and sometimes academic. Both my reading of the evidence and my presentation of the findings have been conditioned by this background. I know that in some respects the results violate Kwakwa’wakw sensibilities. The geographical organization of the gazetteer, for example, makes little sense from a Kwakwa’wakw perspective. The tribes of course should be presented in the rank order of the feast rather than by location. (p.xv)

Despite being 60 years older, Boas’ 1934 analysis comes closer to engaging with the internal Kwakwa’wakw cultural perspective on land than Galois. Boas accomplishes this through the inclusion of a linguistic analysis. The linguistic analysis provides invaluable insight into the conceptualization of the landscape and the occupation of territory than Galois is able to provide in just delineating territory, mapping it and providing origin stories. Boas applies the idea that how a people talk about a subject reflects how they think about it and so provides a linguistic breakdown of how geography is given specific Kwak’wala terminology and hence Kwakwa’wakw perspective. That being said, the presentation format of both works are consistant to the training and interests of both authors and are therefore not unexpected.
When we think of maps we are conditioned in modern times to assume an aerial perspective.

As a convention this is the primary perspective that has been derived of the relationship between landscape and space. Without the visual interpretation of aerial mapping how would we perceive of the spatial layout of the land? This is the question I want to engage with most.

What were the conventions contained within the Kwakwaka’wakw mind that allowed an image of the land in space to be conceptualized and what forms did that take? These Kwakwaka’wakw conventions emerge from both the specific topographic character of the land the Kwakwaka’wakw occupy and the lifestyle of the people. The forms ultimately are embedded in the way that people speak about the land and their place within it. This knowledge, this way of knowing, is embedded in Kwak’wala linguistic terminology. Boas prioritized this information in his collection and analysis of Kwakwaka’wakw geographic data and then translated it into modern European style mapping. I will include here a brief description of the landscape occupied by the Kwakwaka’wakw and then move on to describe from a linguistic point of view the conventions applied by Kwak’wala speakers in conceptualizing and navigating this geography. I will borrow Boas’ description as it covers the basic details of the geographic terrain quite sufficiently.
The region inhabited by these people is a mountainous coast intersected by innumerable sounds and fiords and studded with islands, large and small. Thus intercourse along the coast by means of canoes is very easy, while access to the inland is difficult on account of the rugged hills and the density of the woods. A few fiords cut deep into the mainland, and the valleys which open into them give access to the heart of the high ranges which separate the coast from the highlands of the interior, forming an effectual barrier between the people of the interior and those of the coast. (Boas 1966, p. 7)

6.2 North, south, east or west?

Researchers in the Kwak'wala language encountered variations in conceptual models when attempting to understand Kwakwaka'wakw geographic terminology. The conceptual model expressed by the terms “north, south, east and west” as absolute cardinal points assists modern geographic comprehension and goes back hundreds of years in Western based understanding. It seems natural to attempt to map Kwakwaka'wakw geographic terms onto these fixed directions and every researcher who has addressed the topic has attempted to do this. However, this cannot be accomplished because the “north, south, east and west” conceptual
model and the geographic conceptual model that emerges from the Kwak'wala language do not map accurately and are in fact substantially different. In order to understand Kwak'wala geographical concepts it is better to give up the convention of “north, south, east and west” altogether and accept that the cardinal concepts for geographic orientation are completely autonomous and attempt to understand them on their own merits. This being said all of the texts dealing with Kwak'wala geographic space have attempted to map Kwak'wala terms onto the “north, south, east, and west” convention, including Boas (1934 &1948), Dawson (1885), Curtis (1915) and Grubb (1977). The idea within this next chapter is not to toss out altogether the prior linguistic attempts but to be aware of the process and understand that the English linguistic terms are not true equivalents but merely attempts by researchers to understand Kwak'wala terms through an English prototype. Hopefully by the end of the chapter the structure of the concept of geographic space as expressed in the Kwak’wala language can begin to be understood “on its own terms”.

6.2.1 “The landscape” in Kwak’wala

A first language Kwak’wala speaker is not born into a world of ‘north, south, east and west’. One needs to throw this concept out and learn the way a Kwak’wala speaker would. As a
Kwak'wala child, while learning how to speak Kwak'wala the elementary geographic terms applied to the landscape around the developing individual divided the environment into the land and the sea. This is the primary orientation for the Kwakawakwakw. This seems logical given that the Kwakawakwakw traditionally occupied the beach areas intermediate between these two primary allocations. This concept is embedded in the Kwak'wala language. It is expressed by the stems atl- “inland, forest region” and `tlas- “seaward, or ocean region”.

![Figure 6.1 the land, the sea, the village](image)

The body in space is primarily identified with a house, or community that faces the water. It could be proposed that it is the body, marked by the u-[a`w-] stem that is situated as the central
spatial locator off of which the other four directions are derived in order to conceptualize the landscape. The prototype of the body is then marked by the \textit{u-[a'w-]} stem which is then extended to the house and to the landscape rendering them conceptually analogous or “a category”. This would account for the large body of words having to do with the body, the house and the land, which are prefaces with the \textit{u-[a'w-]} stem as explained in chapter 3. If we consider the notion that the body, the house, the land are containers (as are bowls and canoes) then we could say that the body is a container for the soul, the house is a container for the body, and the land is a container for houses, or communities.

In Figure 6.1 these zones are diagrammatically mapped. Figure 6.2 and 6.3 are photographic illustrations of how Kwakwaka’wakw villages are located within the intermediate zone between the forest and the sea/river. The first image is of Gwayasdam village situated on Gilford Island, the second image is of Gwa’yi village located in Kingcome Inlet. Note the position of the houses facing the river with water in front and woods in behind.
Figure 6.2 Newcombe, Charles. (Photographer). (1900). *Gwayasdams Village* [Photo]. “Image (PN 235) courtesy Royal BC Museum, BC Archives”

Notes on the back of this image read:

“Mūl-las⁵¹ house lakim⁵² – figure in front in remembrance of sale of copper (from original print). House to left of Johnny Scow’s painted house belongs to Dick Webber (Chief ‘Kodi) note from Ernest Scow Sept 2004, also verified by Jim King on picture PN 10728.

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⁵¹ Malas (one of Johnny Scow’s names)

⁵² Yakim “sea monster” referring to house-front painting.
The central zone is occupied by the body (house) with two primary zones extending outwards from the front, towards the sea/river and outwards from behind, towards the forest. To some degree this is a locally fixed orientation based on the location of land, sea and beach. Boas (1934) has an awareness of this and provides a brief description in his 1934 publication. He
describes it as “…inland, away from sea or river; and seaward, away from land; are the principal
directions which appear commonly in geographical terms” (p. 9). Figure 6.4 shows the
secondary primary orientation stems *‘nal-[nal-]*“upriver” and *gwa-“downriver”:*

![Figure 6.4 ‘nal-[nal-] “upriver”, gwa- “downriver”
Based on a village residing on right side of river, left side directions reverse](image)

The secondary cardinal orientation can be described as an upriver, downriver dichotomy. It is
expressed by the stems *gwa- “downriver” and ‘nal-[nal-]“upriver”. Boas describes this
orientation in the following way: “Instead of the points of the compass they orient themselves
according to the direction of the coastline or rivers. Down river and down along the coast (in the
sense of northward or westward); upriver and up the coast (in the sense of southward or
Note that he still attempts to map the orientation onto Western cardinal direction albeit loosely by applying the preface “…in the sense of…”. If we take these two major principles of orientation from Figure 6.1 and 6.4 and apply them together we get the major conceptual construction of geographic spatial orientation from a Kwak’wala speaker’s point of view. I cannot emphasize enough however the need to understand these orientation configurations on their own merit away from any type of attempt to apply them to a Western ‘north, south, east and west’ prototype; for to do so is to ultimately fail to understand the Kwakwaka’wakw mindset, literally, on its own terms. I will however, explain later in the chapter why the ‘north, south, east and west’ prototype does not function well after explaining the working features of Kwak’wala geographic orientation in and of themselves. Figure 6.5 shows the four cardinal directions of the Kwakwaka’wakw, both primary atl- “towards the woods”, tl̓as- “towards the sea”, and secondary, gwa- “downriver”, hnal-^[nant]-“upriver”. 
While Boas designates the four directional stems as carrying similar referential weight I have designated the seaward/landward dichotomy as primary and the up-river/down-river dichotomy as secondary. My reason for doing so emerges from the nature of the Pacific Northwest coastal typography and the occupational zone of the beach. If you imagine the developing awareness of a child within this environment the most obvious primary zones are the sea/river and the forest. The primary orientation of the traditional house is to face the water. This makes practical sense if one is travelling by water and approaching the home from the beach.

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53 Having lived in Gwa'yi Village along the river I fully understand the practical need for the house main entrance to face the river while carrying all my groceries and gear up from the beach. In Kingcome the traditional houses all faced the water. It was not until the replacement of traditional houses with single family western style houses that the format of houses facing a central street began to be implemented. My mother’s contemporary house now faces the main road and away from the river. In order to access
sea/river is in front of the home while the forest is in back of the home. The developing consciousness of space outside the home in the developing Kwak'waka'wakw child can easily make this division as it remains fixed in relationship to the body and the house. The upriver/downriver dichotomy is slightly more sophisticated in its application due to a more relative or flexible application. The application is relative to moveable objects in space within the community. Downriver is only downriver relative to the subject being discussed. For example, old villages usually build their homes along a shoreline making for a row or rows of houses facing the water. If your house is the third house from the lower part of the village then you are downriver from the remaining seven houses that are upriver from you but you are upriver from the remaining two houses that exist downriver from you. If your location within the village is changed to house seven for example, then houses one thru six are down-river from you and only houses eight to ten are now upriver. Figure 6.6 attempts to demonstrate this relative positioning.

the main entrance when arriving home on the river we must walk around to the front of the house which in traditional Kwak'waka'wakw orientation is actually the back (atlana'we').
This relative flexible orientation from within the expanded sphere of the village renders a slightly more sophisticated application than the more limited location of the body in the house presented by the front/back orientation of the land/sea dichotomy. In other words the fixed or absolute
nature of the land/sea dichotomy renders it primary while the relative nature of the
upriver/downriver dichotomy renders it secondary. Also, while the terms “upriver” and
“downriver” are specific to river based communities “towards the water” and “towards the land”
are maintained for all communities both river and island based.

To add another layer of understanding to this flexibility in conceptualization of space let us
consider the words for ‘house’ and ‘community’ in Kwak’wala. The word for “house” in
Kwak’wala is *gukw* “to live in a house” is *gukwala* and *gukwalas* is “house where one lives or
where you live”. Another extension of *gukw*- includes the word *gukwalut* ‘which means ‘tribe’. It
is literally the extension from the independent single house to the groups of houses that
represent the village groups living along the shoreline. The extended identification of the term
*gukwalut*, with the self, is highlighted by the existence of an alternative term for ‘tribe’
*lilkwalatle*’ meaning “other tribes outside of one’s own”. *Lilkwalatle* literally translates as
“having fires moving on the water” which describes the other tribes arriving on the water to visit
one’s own community (Boas, 1966). Addressing the previous discussion of primary and
secondary axis of orientation it follows then that the singular *gukw* facing the water is primary
and the extension of gukwalu’t “tribe” to one’s own village influences the nature of the secondary orientation of upriver/downriver.

There is also a degree of expansion and contraction that occurs in conceptualizing the body in space. The conceptualization of the independent body represented by the house gukw is expanded to encompass the tribe/village gukwalu’t while maintaining its fixed orientation to the land and sea. Relationships within this expanded and contracted concept of the body in space are considered relative under the upriver/downriver axis. In an interesting linguistic formal analogy the word gukw itself exhibits expansion when joined with the suffix –alu’t expanding the singular concept of the “house” gukw to the plural concept of “the fellow inhabitants of the house” gukwalu’t.

Taking this into consideration, the Kwakwaka’wakw initial geographical understanding is anchored by the body (independent self) and the house which is then applied to the primary orientation of land and sea, with the body/house facing the water. The secondary geographical spatial orientation utilizes an expanded notion of the self “within the community” and is applied to upriver/downriver concepts. By this, I mean the upriver/downriver orientation is applied
relative to where one is presently, i.e. located within the village. The cardinal directions for the Kwakwaka'wakw are not based on “north, south, east and west” but the stems *atl-, t'las-, gwa- and 'nal-['nal-].

6.3 The primary geographical division of the stems *atl- “land region” and *t'las- “sea region”

The following are a general selection of words reflecting the geographic notions contained within the stems *atl- “landwards, forest region” and *t'las- “seaward, ocean/water region” from Boas 1948 unpublished dictionary and 1934 “Geographical Names of the Kwakiutl Indians”.

*atl- (adl- before schwa initial suffixes\(^ {54} \))

(337) \( \text{atli} \) “the woods, forest” (www.firstvoices.com)

(338) \( \text{adlige'} \) “back of anything” (www.firstvoices.com)

(339) \( \text{adlabala} \) “pointing inland, trail leading inland (Boas 1948:18)

(340) \( \text{adlabe'} \) “inland end” (Boas 1948:18)

(341) \( \text{adlagila} \) “to go into woods” (Boas 1948:18)

\(^ {54} \) The *atl- changes to adl- due to the phonological influence of the following shwa (a)
269

(342)  adlagamala  “facing inland” (Boas 1948:18)

(343)  atladzi’  “inland side” (Boas 1934:39)

(344)  atlagam’la  “facing inland” (Boas 1934:39)

tlas-

(345)  tlasadzi  “seaside” (Boas 1934:82)

(346)  tlasa’la  “seaward rock” (Boas 1934:82)

(347)  tlasbe’  “seaward point” (Boas 1934:82)

(348)  tla’tlasa’aka  “to go seaward” (Boas 1948:442)

(349)  tlasagwit  “bedroom on sea-side of house” (Boas 1948:442)

(350)  tlasudis  “sea side of world” (Boas 1948:442)

(351)  tlasulala  “to come from woods going towards beach” (Boas 1948:442)

Of particular interest is the extension of atl- to the general meaning of “behind.”

(352)  ‘Angwuxda atlaxeyex loll?  “Who is behind you? (27/04/13)
who is that behind you

(353)  He’dida gangananam laxa atlaxnowe’ sa gukw.  “The children are behind the house”
The DEF children at behind the house (27/04/13)
The extension of **tlas**- to the meaning “in front of” is less prevalent in contemporary speech as **atl**- to “behind” but still exists in the older texts collected by George Hunt for Franz Boas.

> They are just put down in front of the guests. And the oil dish is also put down in front of what is to be eaten. (Boas 1921, p. 312)

> …the man takes the long food mat and spreads it in front of his guests and after he has spread it, he takes up the dishes and places them in front of his guests;… (Boas 1909, p. 442)

The following are terms pertinent to the structure of the house.
(356) atlanowe'  “back of the house” (09/16/11)

(357) t'lasanowe'  “outside front of house” (Grubb 1977:76)

(358) adlaxsa  “to go through the back door” (Boas 1948:18)

(359) atlala'as  “something behind house” (Grubb 1977:158)

(360) adlabit'sa’  “behind inside on floor” (Boas 1948:18)

(361) t'lasagwil  “bedroom on sea-side of house” (Boas 1948:442)

The following are contrasting terms of particular cultural significance. Example (352) “land food” can be contrasted against example (352) “sea food”. Each word relates to the region of land or sea. These words are a selection of words which emphasize the delineation of the primary regions of forest and sea.

(362) adla'kanam  “land food, i.e. roots, berries” (Boas 1948:18)

(363) t'latlasda'nam  “sea food” (Boas 1948:18)

(364) atla'nam  “wolf” (Boas 1948:18) [literally: “one from the forest”]

(365) atlagut  “farthest inland, country of the dead” (Boas 1948:18)
(366) atłakam "an inland ceremonial" (Boas 1948:18)

(367) atludalalis "the world of man" (landwards in contrast to tłasudalalis “the world of salmon”) (Boas 1848:18)

(368) atłu’linuxw “wolf” (Boas 1948:18)

(369) at’lasamk “inland people” (Boas 1948:19)

(370) atlabała “to walk in woods” (27/04/13)

(371) t’lat’lasikwala “tribal name” (Boas 1948:442) [of people living at Nawidi]

(372) t’lasudis “sea side of world” (Boas 1948:442)

(373) t’lasutiwa’lis55 “outside of world” (Boas 1948:442)

The relationship between static regions and motion i.e. “direction towards” is complex. Consider the example (376) which expresses a motion towards the woods from the position of being on water.

(374) t’las’kinuxw “tribal name” (Boas 1948:442)

55 Also used as a personal name.
Of particular interest is a ceremonial dance called the atla’kam “the dance of the woods” (see example 366). This dance is said to have its origin in the forest and the many characters that are depicted represent the forest creatures, both plant and animal. A variety of creatures are called by Ximsalitlas, the main grouse dancer, out from the back room of a ceremonial house onto the dance floor. Significant to the metaphor of the House=Land/World is the first creature called out by Ximsalitlas which is named ‘Tlat’apalalagalas “Door-Keeper-of-the-Woods”. In contemporary versions of this dance performed in Kingcome Inlet I was taught that this being comes out first and symbolically each creature then passes by “Door-Keeper-of-the-Woods” in order to take their place on the floor. (Johnny Moon, personal communication). Boas (1921) gives an account of how this dance was acquired by the Gixsam ‘narнима of the Naḵwaxda’xw tribe of Blunden Harbour and the Awikinuxw of Rivers Inlet. In it the “Door-Keeper-of-the-Woods is called as the twenty-seventh dancer out of forty who have names such as “Stump-of-the-Woods”, “Laughing-Woman-of-the-Woods”, “One-Side-Moss-of-the-Woods”. The
name 'Tlatlapalalagalis is curious in that the stem t'la- refers to the sea. We could interpret this as meaning “in the direction of the sea from the woods”. Figure 6.7 illustrates in a photo the house that the dancers of the att̓akam emerge from as well as the caller Ximsalilalas.

Figure 6.7 unknown (Photographer).(1946). Att̓akam Dance, Gwayasdams Village. Image (PN 15241) courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives.
6.3.1 Place names using atł- and ʔlas- (Boas, 1934)

Boas (1934) gives a list of approximately 13 place names prefaced by the stem atł- and 10 place names prefaced by ʔlas-:

(377) atla’s "inland" (Boas, 1934:39)

(378) atla’dzas "inland place" (Boas, 1934:39)\(^{56}\)

(379) atładzi’ "place inland" (Boas, 1934:39)

(380) atłanudzi’ "inland side" (Boas, 1934:39)

(381) atlaka "inland’ (Boas, 1934:39)

(382) atlala "being inland" (Boas, 1934:39)

(383) atliga’lis "inland from beach" (Boas, 1934:39)

(384) atłudis "inland side beach" (Boas, 1934:39)

(385) attu’ta "opposite rocky inland side, Vancouver Island entire"\(^{57}\) (Boas, 1934:39)

(386) atłabi’s bo’mix "inland of bo’mix" (Boas, 1934:39)

(387) adlagamala "facing inland" (Boas, 1934:39)

(388) adłakani’ "inland body" (Boas, 1934:39)

\(^{56}\) Boas situates this place as up-river from the village of U’kwanalis “sand bar in river”; a village of the Dzawada’enuxw. In modern times the name Atładzi’ is used. Map 13:27 (Boas, 1934)

\(^{57}\) Map 15:50 (Boas, 1934)
6.4 The secondary geographical orientation of ‘*nal-[*nal-]* “upriver” and *gwa- “downriver”

Boas describes the phonological conditions for the different forms of “upriver” in his 1948 Dictionary as ‘*nal- having a full vowel /a/ before vowels and ‘*nal- having a schwa before consonants. He gives the general meaning as “upstream, south, east”. In Boas (1931) he

58 Just north of San Josef Bay Map 2:52 (Boas, 1934)
59 An extinct tribe that formally occupied territory in the north western portion of Vancouver Island.
describes the stem in the following way; “The Kwakiutl expresses by the stem ‘na- light, sky, world, dawn, south” In his 1947 Grammar he describes the stem ‘nala as “up river, south, world” (p.228). The following are a selection of words derived from this stem:

(399)  'nalulala                    “to go south” (Boas 1947:228)
(400)  'nalkila                      “to go up river” (Boas 1947:228)
(401)  'naladzi’                    “upriver side of a point” (Boas 1947:228)
(402)  ‘naldzi’                      “up river, south” (Boas 1947:228)
(403)  ‘nalband                  “to go up river, to go south” (Boas 1948:242)
(404)  ‘nalkudo’ya’ye                 “upper part of river” (Boas 1948:242)
(405)  ‘na’nala’aka          “to pass upstream” (Boas 1948:242)
(406)  ‘nalaxne’                   “upper end of river; the best, most valuable” (Boas 1948:242)
(407)  nale’nagwis           “up river, south country” (Boas 1948:242)
(408)  ‘nalkilatl                 “going south” (Grubb 1977:201)
(409)  ‘nalaxstala                “facing south village”60 (www. firstvoices.com)
(410)  ‘nalakanwe’               “south side, toward or on the” (www. firstvoices.ca)

60 Name of the town of Port McNeill
(411) ‘nalbała “something south” (www.firstvoices.ca)

(412) ‘nalaxdlala “hind end up river i.e. eastward” (Boas 1934:9)

Examples of ‘nal-[‘nal-] used in names.

(413) ‘Nalbalis “up river point beach”\(^{61}\) (Boas 1934:63)

(414) ‘Nalbe’ “up river point”\(^{62}\) (Boas 1934:63)

(415) ‘Nalgamlis “beach facing up river”\(^{63}\) (Boas 1934:63)

Boas(1948) translates the stem \textit{gwa-} as “downriver i.e. north”. The following are a selection of words derived from this stem.

(416) gwa’yi “name of place”[downriver] (Boas 1948:291)\(^{64}\)

(417) gwa’yas “place down river, northern tribes” (Boas 1948:291)

(418) gwagwa’aka “going northward” (Boas 1948:291)

(419) gwaba’lis “downriver side of beach” (Boas 1948:292)

\(^{61}\) Located in Knights Inlet Map 22:128 (Boas, 1934)

\(^{62}\) Located in Knights Inlet Map 22:16 (Boas, 1934)

\(^{63}\) Located south of the entrance to Nimpkish lake Map 8:40 (Boas, 1934)

\(^{64}\) Name of current Dzawada’enuxw village in Kingcome Inlet (means “downriver”).
(420) gwagawe’ “further, next down” (Boas 1948:292)

(421) gwe’nakw “north region, downriver” (Boas 1948:292)

(422) gwolisala “go downstream, poetry” (Boas 1948:292)
    “going towards mouth of river (www.firstvoices.com)

(423) gwanxi’ “lowest down river, north edge” (Boas 1948:292)

(424) gwe’nagwis “down river, end of village” (www.firstvoices.com)

(425) gwe’nagwisex “something down the beach” (www.firstvoices.com)

(426) gwe’nakola “up north, in the north” (www.firstvoices.com)

(427) gwigwatala “slow to understand, stupid” (www.firstvoices.com)

(428) gwitala “highest ranking Kwagu’l tribe, northerners”
    (www.firstvoices.com)

(429) gwołala “heading, going north” (www.firstvoices.com)

Both Boas and Grubb identify the stem ‘nal-’nal-’ as referencing the directions south or in some cases east. Boas (1934) describes this as “up river and up the coast (in the sense of southward or eastward)”(p. 9) The stem gwa- is associated with the north and sometimes the west. These associations have been applied because in some specific cases it does coincide, but if gwa- north is equated with downriver and ‘nal-’nal-’ south with upriver it fails. North and
south do not always align with the upriver/downriver orientations though east and west quite often do. For instance, if we take the village of Gwa’yi in Kingcome inlet as an example the village is situated on the left lower portion of the Kingcome River facing the direction of the inlet. The village faces the river, giving it a westward orientation. The fixed compass orientations of north and south are then opposite to the directions of up river, down-river. In this particular case tl’as- is west, atl- is east, gwa- as “downriver” is actually heading southwest, and ’nal-[/’nal-] as “up river” is actually heading northeast. Relatively, depending on the bends in the river course a good village site could be situated facing any of the four fixed cardinal directions.

Boas 1934 description of ’nal-[/’nal-] as “in the sense of southward or eastward” and gwa- “in the sense of northward or westward” references this flexibility in direction. It is also alluded to in Dawson’s (1885) definitions:

(430) ‘naldzi’ “south east” (Dawson 1885:33)
(431) gwenakw “north west” (Dawson 1885:33)

In Kwakwaka’wakw territory most coastal rivers (Kingcome Inlet, Knights Inlet, Bute Inlet etc.) run from an eastern origin towards a western outflow towards the ocean. In the case of Vancouver
Island river systems can run in either an eastward direction towards Queen Charlotte Straight (the Nimpkish River for example) or westward toward the Pacific Ocean (Quatsino Sound for example). We can see then that even when the definitions "south" and "north" are broadened to "southward" or "eastward" they remain insufficient definitions to convey the integral meaning of the stems *gwa*- and *'nal- [ˈnəl-]*. In order to better understand these stems we must look at the definitions separate from each other. Upriver and downriver must be taken literally as a river based axis and the application of north and south considered independently as a coastal axis.

Figure 6.8 Orientation of Gwa’yi Village in Kingcome Inlet B.C.

From this example we can see that the Western fixed absolutes of north and south are not a sufficient definition of what *'nal- [ˈnəl-]* and *gwa*- mean. In some cases north and south will be
accurate but in many others they will not be. This is why I mentioned earlier in the text that we must try as best as possible to ignore these definitions and attempt to understand the stem meanings “in and of themselves”. This seems somewhat difficult given that the above lists are heavily reliant on the attempt to correlate Western absolute cardinal directions but certainly possible if we keep in mind that it is merely an attempt to map Western concepts onto Kwakwaka’wakw concepts. In a general sense the concepts of north, south, east and west can be applied but the conceptual framework that emerges from within the Kwak’wala language will fail to be understood. Our change of focus is to attempt the reverse and understand the Kwakwaka’wakw concepts as they are expressed in the Kwak’wala language.

To do this let’s consider the two primary meanings expressed by the terms ‘nal-[‘nal-] and gwa-.

We have seen previously that the general definition provided has been ‘nal-[‘nal-] “upriver, south” and (gwa-) “downriver, north”. The most broadly expressed definitions for the stem ‘nal-[‘nal-] can be found in Boas’ 1931 paper published in the International Journal of American Linguistics “The Kwakiutl expresses by the stem ‘na- light, sky, world, dawn, south “(p.165). In his 1947 Kwakiutl Grammar Boas also gives the definition ‘na’la “up river, south, world; before consonants ‘nal- “ (Boas 1947:228). The extensions alluded to within the broad definition
notably include the concepts of “light”, “sky”, “dawn” and “world” in addition to “upriver” and “south”. These extensions give us a better idea as to the conceptualization of the term ‘nal-’nal’ in that they provide additional context. In comparison gwa- does not appear to have similar conceptual extension. The definitions are limited to “downriver, north”. If we examine the correspondent meanings found within the stem ‘nal-’nal’ meaning “upstream, upriver” and the stem gwa- what we find is an orientation taken from the fixed location of the village or a position within the village. It has no direct correlation to any particular fixed direction of north or south.

However, if the orientation is reconfigured to the coastline of the Pacific Ocean we can achieve the definitions of north and south. Now, the focus of orientation has expanded from that of a village along a riverbank to that of a geographically broadened coastal occupation. This change in orientation is emphasized by a contemporary Kwak’wala speaker in the following way.
“Here we go again with “Where is so and so?” and the reply is “Li 'nalkila.”

Somebody went to Vancouver and then you ask where this other person is. “Li
gwesta li laxa ‘Awikinuxw. Li gwakila.” And if you’re in the village, like Kingcome,
you say the same thing if they were to inquire about somebody “Oh, li laxa ‘naldzi’.

Upriver. And then this other person “Li laxa ‘uxwsiwa’e.” Mouth of the river. So we
say “gwenakw”when you’re going up north. Cause River’s Inlet is north of Alert Bay,
Kingcome and Gilford, Port Hardy but you say “Li laxa gwenakw.” Or if you’re going
to Prince Rupert, “Li laxa gwenakw gwolali. But when you’re in the river like

Kingcome “gwola”; you’re going south.” (08/11)

The name given to the city of Vancouver by the informant is ‘Nalkila. It came to be used as a
proper name though ‘nalkila, in general refers to a southward coastal orientation from

Kwakwaka’wakw coastal territory. His reference to the ‘Awikinuxw refers to the people from

Rivers Inlet which is north from Kwakwaka’wakw territory (Alert Bay, Kingcome Inlet, Gilford
Island, Port Hardy). Here he uses the word gwakila, meaning “north”. He then refers to Prince

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65 Li ‘nalkila translates as “gone to Vancouver, or in the direction of Vancouver (south). Li is an auxiliary
with the meaning movement away from the point of focus, or the position of the speaker. It will be dealt
with in a later chapter.
Rupert which is even further north than Rivers Inlet. The speaker emphasizes the contextual distinction between ‘nal- and gwa- usage within a river based axis versus a coastal.

(432) Li laxa gwenakw gwolali66 “Having gone even further north.” (08/2011)

go to the north further

Figure 6.9 Coastal map showing orientations of ‘nalkila and gwakila

66 -w’ol or -ol is the past tense suffix meaning “far distant in the past” or “having passed out of existence”. In this case there appears to be a temporal/spatial relationship relating to distance “farther”.
The 'nal-[nəl-] “south” and gwa- “north” definitions hold true in the majority of coastal orientations as in the following examples derived from a contemporary speaker:

Speaker: That’s like we say gwakila and in my mind I’m right away thinking about when I used to go up to River’s Inlet. Yeah, gwagawa’, like from Smith’s Inlet, River’s Inlet is gwagawe’, then Smith Inlet, further north. You picture in your mind what we are saying about going north, you gwakila. But in the river it’s different, you’re going down the river.

MN: So ‘gwenakw’ is a general term. So it can either mean ‘north region’, so the northern part of the coast, or down river.

6.5 Proposed theory of downriver descent

I am going to propose that the meanings as derived appear to indicate that the older form is “upriver/downriver” and that a coastal “north/south” orientation emerged later. This hypothesis stems from a growing body of evidence indicating Kwakwaka’wakw populations descended from higher, upriver more mountainous locations as rivers flow from a glacier source towards downriver locations and ultimately outwards towards outlying coastal islands. This would
support a premise of land occupation following the reduction of sea water levels. Upriver
territory would therefore have a longer history of occupation while downriver territory heading
out towards the islands would have come later as sea-levels receded. As Cannon (2000)
observed while studying archeological core samples from clam middens on the British Columbia
coast:

…the next question is why the culture history of settlement in this region, including
Namu, should correspond so closely to elevation above current sea level. One
explanation is that sea level has declined steadily over time as the result of
postglacial isostatic rebound (Clague et al. 1982), making these locations available
for settlement as they emerged from the sea (p. 73)

Archeological data would suggest that right after deglaciation, 13,000-8,000 years ago, that
water levels were high along the coast (Andrews & Retherford, 1978). This was followed by a
drop in water levels to a point actually lower than today. The subsequent rise of the water after
dropping may perhaps explain the numerous flood stories amongst the Kwakwaka'wakw.
In accordance we need to jointly consider linguistic analysis and cultural historical context.

Boas (1948) Dictionary includes the words:

(433) gwartala  “next down, lower (in rank)” (Boas 1948:291)

(434) gwignwa’enuxw  “those at lower end of village” (Boas 1948:291)

(435) ‘nalanxi’  “upper end of river, the best, most valuable” (Boas 1948:242)

(436) ‘nala’las  “side up river, higher rank” (Boas 1948:242)

(437) ‘nala’lagud  “to get ahead going up river, in rank?” (Boas 1948:243)

Rank is social standing. Primogeniture was a highly valued aspect of the Kwakwaka’wakw traditional social system. It remains so today. The oldest members of the branches of a family are considered to be of higher rank than those lower. In older days primogeniture outweighed even gender in certain situations. The closer a person was to the original source of the family, be that through mythological historical narrative or through genealogy, the higher was one’s rank. The words collected by Boas/Hunt referring to rank equate the concepts of “upriver” with “higher rank” and “downriver” with “lower rank”. This analogy supports a theory of land population coming from upriver coastal regions and spreading downriver to occupy new territory as sea waters receded. As populations grew over generations, younger branches of the
families would have left older upriver sites to pursue new sites of occupation downriver, eventually spreading far enough to leave the river estuaries and establish communities on adjacent islands.

The origin story of the Dzawada’enuxw gives us an example. Kawadilikala, the original ancestor of the Dzawada’enuxw tribe was a wolf. He came from the north travelling down the Kingcome River with his brother (some stories include a sister and another brother) and their families. Kawadilikala established his home in the Kingcome Valley. Later on his brother Kwalili decided to find his own land. He travelled on until he arrived at the river system next to Kingcome that empties into Wakeman Sound. He made his home there and established the Haxwamis tribe. In the Kingcome watershed Kawadilikala’s tribe grew. As his tribe grew they established ‘namima or clans who occupied different places along the river. It is only within more recent historical times that the Dzawada’enuxw ‘namima left their separate village sites and united at the location now called ‘Ukwanalis or Gwa’yi.

According to Lagius (born mid-1800s) the Dzawada’enuxw informant for Edward S. Curtis and my great-grandfather’s brother, the ‘namima now called Wi’ukwama’i were originally called the
‘Ninalkinuxw, or “upriver people”. They descended from Dabánd, who had been a mountain, and was one of Kawadilikala’s first adopted sons. Also according to Lagius, one of the last ‘námima of the Dzawada’enuxw to be established was the ‘Ka’ki’kilaka (those who always wish to kill) who descend from Kawadilikala’s adopted son Halxabo’i. It is said that this clan built their houses near the mouth of the river. (Boas, 1902; Curtis 1915; Galois, 1994) Figure 6.10 is a photo taken of Lagius by Curtis.
Figure 6.10 Curtis, Edward S. (Photographer). (1915). “Lagyus-Tsawatenok” Curtis’ Dzawada’enuxw informant [Photo]. Photograph courtesy of Northwestern University Library, 

Edward S. Curtis’s The North American Indian,” 2003
http://digital.library.northwestern.edu/curtis/
In Lagius’ narrative the oldest branches of the Dzawada’enuxw ‘nə́mima occupy the upper portions of the river system and younger branches occupy lower portions. It is hard to estimate the course of time that it would have taken for generations of the Dzawada’enuxw to fully occupy the Kingcome valley as it emerged from the sea but eventually the people came to settle at their current location, approximately 3km up from the mouth of the river.

Another indication of early upriver occupation is contained within six Dzawada’enuxw narratives collected by George Hunt for Franz Boas for the 1902 publication of “Kwakiutl Texts”. The first three of these narratives begin with the expression that the earliest of the Dzawada’enuxw were living on the upper course of the river Gwa’yi. These narratives in particular speak of the experiences of K’awadilikala and his children. The following three refer to the activities of the descendants of these early people. These three stories are not prefaced with the expression that they were living on the ‘upper course of the river Gwa’yi’. This tends to confirm that the upper courses of the river at the very least are symbolic of the idea of origin.

Gukwala’la’ida galasa Dzawada’enuxwi’ lax ‘naldzas Gwa’yi.
They lived at (it is said the) first of the Dzawada’enuxw (absent) at upriver Gwa’yi river
“It is said that the first of the Dzawada’enuxw lived in a village on the course of the river Gwa’yi.” (Boas 1902, p. 36)

The Gwawa’enuxw are a sister tribe to the Dzawada’enuxw. Their name has been translated as the “downriver tribe” (RBCM, Duff fieldnotes, 1960). It is possible that the name could have been derived as the “northern tribe” but there remains the question of “downriver from what/whom?” or alternatively “north from what/whom?” The inference is that the Gwawa’enuxw tribe derive their name from a relationship to, either a historical “people” or aspect of geographic occupation. Similarly, the Kwikwasut’inuxw, another sister tribe to the Dzawada’enuxw, have as their name the meaning “people from the opposite shore/other side” (RBCM, Duff fieldnotes, 1960). Again, the question can be asked, “opposite from whom, or where?” The symbiotic notion of “to whom or where” is given greater clarity in the following description derived from Boas collection of Kwikwasut’inuxw stories.

Wa, la’la’e duxwatlalı́ Tsekam’yaxa galasa kwikwasika laxa
Then `Tsekame’ was seen by the ancestors of the tribe of the other side, that is,

Dzawada’ enuxwi’ gwo’ya
the Dzawada’ enuxw. \(\text{Boas 1902, p. 192}\)

The Dzawada’ enuxw people are described as ‘the tribe of the other side’. In positions of
adjacency and reciprocity the _Kwikwasut'inuxw_ and the Dzawada'enuxw are joined by the very term _kwikwasika_ that is used to name the _Kwikwasut'inuxw_. The Dzawada'enuxw and the Haxwa'mis on the other hand through origin stories derive their names from the sound of the birds that occupy their valleys⁶⁷. One theory that supports the notion of original river based coastal occupation particular to the history of the ‘Mugamakw Dzawada'enuxw comes from an oral history quote from member Ernest Willie (1940-1999).

"Understand the origin or the root word if you like of the _Kwikwasut'inuxw_ people from Kingcome, when the man crossed over at Anchorage Cove, over to the other side which is Bond Sound. And his name was Gwalsalas. _Gwal – sa – las_. It's an interesting name because what we anchor ourselves to as _Kwi – kwa – su’t – inuxw_ people, and we depict that on our totem which stands beside the church, `Tsekame', but he was not the origin figure if you like of the _Kwi – kwa – su’t – inuxw_ people. They went in a direction.

The direction again is the _kwisadza’e_ of Anchorage Cove which is at the mouth of the Kingcome or the head of the Kingcome Inlet and it goes overland into the “far side”

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⁶⁷ Origin stories say the name of the Dzawada’enuxw comes from the sound of the robin which sings “dzawadzall!”; The name of the Haxwa’mis from the sound of the lark which sings “haxwala!” Duff gives the meaning of Dzawada’enuxw as “people of the place of eulochons”. (Fieldnotes 1960) as does Boas in his notes which Duff may have been referring to.
which you end up at Bond Sound. This is where we as a people began again. You have to remember that as a family again, they come out of Kawadiilikala. They do not originate out of nothing. They do not originate from a different source altogether. They are from Kawadiilikala. They only continued Kawadiilikala’s direction, heading, if you want to use the compass points of today...he headed south, why his name was Gwalsalas. If you were heading downriver, as of for instance, you will gwalsala. Gwa– li– sala, you refer to the house that is downriver from you. Then you may use the word as well. Gwalsalas’. Hedi leda gwalsalas lax...similar to the...so you find our people then have this whole thing around being anchored together. It was Gwalsalas who went over there with his family and began the storyline if you like of the Kwikwasu’inuxw people.”

(Ernest Willie, personal recording)

The words which I have hyphenated in this transcript were pronounced emphatically morpheme by morpheme by Ernest Willie within his speech to emphasizes his own breakdown of the meanings of the names he was trying to explain. When he refers to Gwalsalas, the ancestor who left the Kingcome River system to establish a community at
Hada across from Anchorage Cove, he indicates that this man’s name literally means “going downriver”. He also indicates that the name of the Kwikwasu’tinuxw people is derived from the act of occupying land “on the other side” of Bond Sound geographically across from Kingcome Inlet. These were his theories of historical movement and land occupation based on oral history and his own linguistic analysis of names. The following are a list of words derived from the stem _kwis_- “far in space or time” (Boas, 1948, p. 343) recorded by Boas.

(438) _Kwikwasutinuxw “people of the far side” (Boas 1948:344)

(439) _kwisadza’e “far side of a flat thing” (Boas 1947:228)

(440) _kwisakan’we’ “to be on far side” (Boas 1947:228)

(441) _kwis- “direction towards there” (Boas 1947:227)

Or its opposite:

(442) _gwas- “direction towards here” (Boas 1947:227)

“The side” (Boas 1931:175)

The stem _kwis_- “direction towards there” is contrasted with _gwas_- meaning “direction towards here”. These stems together give an account of spatial placement in relationship to a subject.

In the case of Willie’s narrative it is the historical movement outwards “towards the other side” of
Hada and Bond Sound away from the point of origin within the Kingcome Valley which gives the 
\textit{Kwikwasut'inuxw} people their name. He is explicit in saying that the \textit{Kwikwasut'inuxw} people 
are also descendants of the \textit{Dzawada'enuxw} ancestor, the wolf \textit{KawadiliKala}. In this regard in 
certain \textit{Kwikwasut'inuxw} origin stories the wife of `Tsekame' is transformed from a wolf and in a story 
collected by Franz Boas the home village of the \textit{Gwawa'enuxw}, Hegams is formed by ancestors who remove their wolf skins and transform them into land (Boas, 1935). In addition, 
in George Hunt’s handwritten notes he identifies \textit{Kumugaxto'i} as the name of \textit{KawadiliKala}. In 
“\textit{Kwakiutl Texts, Second Series}”, \textit{KawadiliKala} is given the name \textit{Kumugaxto'i} along with the 
great ghost dance, the \textit{masdika (madam)} dance, the dog mask (\textit{‘walasaxa ‘wasamł}) and many 
 wolf masks (\textit{‘walasaxa długwala}). The name \textit{Kumugaxto'i} is used as a \textit{‘n̓amíma} or clan name 
of the \textit{Gwawa’enuxw}^{68}. The theme of the wolf as an aspect of origin runs through all four tribal 
histories of the ‘\textit{Musgamakw Dzawada’enuxw}. This wolf theme parallels the historical 
movement of land population in the Kingcome Valley outwards into the Broughton archipelago 
as mapped out in Figure 6.11.

\footnote{68 Derived from 20th Century potlatch ledger analysis (Ryan Nicolson, personal communiction)}
Figure 6.11  *Map of Kingcome Inlet and direction of occupational descent*
6.6 Expanding ’nal-[’nal-] and gwa- to the British Columbia coastal axis

The river based geographic meaning of ’nal-[’nal-] “upriver” and gwa- “downriver” is consistent.

There are no discrepancies. However, on the coastal axis while generally ’nal-[’nal-] can be taken to mean “south” and gwa- “north” there are notable inconsistencies. For instance gwitala is translated as “people from the north” by Grubb (1977:171) and gwitalabidu’ is a word translated by Boas (1948:295) as meaning “little northerners”. Boas also lists gwitalakala as meaning the “Tsimshian language”. The Tsimshian live north of the Kwakwa’wakw.

“However, he also lists gwit’ala as referring to the West Coast (Nuu-chah-nulth) language and gwikwatala as a word for the West Coast (Nuu-chah-nulth) people in general. The Nuu-chah-nulth people live south-west of the Kwakwa’wakw. Grubb (1977) lists gwigweta as a Kwak’wala word that refers to the Coast Salish who live south of the Kwakwa’wakw. One possibility for the variance in interpretation of these terms might be the stem gwil- (Boas 1948:295) which means “to scatter, to spread”. If we take into consideration the cultural historical context of the upriver/downriver dichotomy then the population dispersal in a downriver direction is also applied to the extension of population outwards to the north, south and west. This would also be consistent with origin stories which detail how during the great floods
various populations broke away and were dispersed from the Kwakwaka'wakw coastal center outwards both to the north and to the west.

(443) gwiltsi'ståla  "scattering things, objects around" (www.firstvoices.com)

(444) gwilt'sand  "take something apart" (www.firstvoices.com)

(445) gwilid  "separate (like a couple) or scatter things around, to" (www.firstvoices.com)

The broadening of the interpretation and application of the gwa- stem to encompass “a movement away from the centre” is also evident in the following words:

(446) gwa'ku'taxdi'  "lower side of a tree on a river bank" (Boas 1948:292)

(447) gwa'a'pelaxs  "second thwart, behind first man in canoe" (Boas 1948:292)

(448) gwa'kudaxtlalisa `tlisala  “afternoon” (Boas 1948:292)

Another example of the mapping of the core concept of 'nal-['nal-] / gwa- upriver/downriver onto the coastal axis is contained within the words of a song for a Kwagu’l chief named Nakapankam
who initiated a war against the Saanich (Coast Salish) people in order to avenge the deaths of his sister and his niece in the latter half of the 19th Century. The song goes:

I began at the upper end of the tribes.

Serves them right! Serves them right!

I came downstream setting fire to the tribes everywhere with my firebringer.

Serves them right! Serves them right!

My name, just my name, killed them, I the great mover of the world.

Serves them right! Serves them right! (Boas 1921, p.1380-81)

The actual war waged by Nakaṿ̱aṿ̱am was fought in a north to south direction; Nakaṿ̱aṿ̱am being based in on the northern part of Vancouver Island and the Saanich people situated on the southern portion. The poetry of the song commemorating this war describes the location of the Kwagu’l as “up” and their movement, as heading “downstream”. This use of metaphor in poetic language supports the hypothesis that the concept of upriver/downriver was the original source from which a broader coastal axis of “north/south” was derived as populations expanded. This
is also supported by the inconsistency of the north/south meanings rendering them a less stable application than that of the upriver/downriver axis. A contemporary speaker when asked about the use of the ‘nal-[nəl-] and gwa- stems in an island based context like Gwayasdam on Gilford Island said the terms were still applicable. This indicates that the terminologies from river based communities was retained despite changes in geography.

6.7 Radial extension of meanings associated with ‘nal-[nəl-]  

We have discussed previously that atl- can be associated with the general meaning of “behind” and that tiłas-, at least in the past, was associated with the general meaning of “in front”. Of the four stems associated with geographic region or direction ‘nal-[nəl-] appears to have the widest extension of applied meanings. While gwa- seems to refer primarily to “downriver”, a generalized coastal “north”, and of “lower rank”, ‘nal-[nəl-] is given the additional meanings of “light”, “sky”, “dawn” and “world” in addition to “upriver” and “south”.

(449) ‘na- “light, sky, world, dawn, south” (Boas 1931:165).

(450) ‘nala – “up river, south, world; before consonants ‘nəl- “ (Boas 1947:228)
These extensions are key imperatives to understanding a Kwakwaka’wakw perspective of the universe more so than any other of the four major roots expressing region or direction. ‘na- is a reduction of the root ‘nal-[‘nal]- to the stem ‘na-. It includes the concepts “light”, “sky”, “world” and “dawn”. If we take into consideration the earlier discussion of cultural context then we can see how these concepts might map to an “upriver” epistemology and promote the application of certain metaphorical analogy. If we consider the root ‘na- in the Figure 6.8 it contains within it the concepts “light, sky, world, dawn and south”

Figure 6.12: Radial diagram of ‘na- stem
(451) 'nala                              “day” (Boas 1948:241)

(452) 'nax'id                           “it gets daylight” (Boas 1948:241)

(453) nagala                           “light appears” (Boas 1948:241)

(454) nagila                           “to live, act, until dawn” (Boas 1948:241)

(455) 'nakwała                          “light” (Boas 1948:242)

(456) 'nak'walis                       “light in world, on beach” (Boas 1948:242)


‘nala while meaning “day” can also mean the “world” as in the following phrase:

(457) ‘na’istłuxda ‘nalax               “daytime will be this world” (Boas 1948:241)

In the following phrase the stem ‘nala is used to mean both “best” and “world”

(458) …yu’manuxw ‘nalanxa ha’ma laxa i’ka’dzilisa ‘nala (Boas 1902:178)
     This is our best food in the upper world

If we take these varied meanings and place them within a broader context we begin to see how
the association between meanings starts to unfold as a particular Kwakwaka’wakw worldview
where the associations make sense. The beginning of a day (‘nala) is associated with ‘the
breaking of dawn (‘na’nakwala) and the emergence of light (‘nakwala). If we apply the metaphor of a “day” as equivalent to “all of time” we get:

the emergence of light = the beginning of time.

We can see this metaphor in action with the following narrative told by my grandfather Charlie Willie to the anthropologist Ronald Rohner:

Qawadeilakala with his four children and his younger brother Koleili lived before there was light on the earth. They heard the voice of God who said that they were to go and find a place which they could claim as their own. The voice promised them the cloak of a wolf for ease of transportation [i.e. transformed them into wolves]. The two brothers and four children came first to Kingcome. The older brother claimed lalaq, a site up Kingcome River as his own. Koleili did not want to share the same site as his brother, so he moved on to look for his own place. He travelled to lax’oh “clear-water” and then to Wakeman River...

(Rohner1970, p. 86)

Identification from Ryan Nicolson, personal communication
It is the events “at the beginning of time” that set the standard for the following generations to mimic and replicate within their ceremonies. It is also set within an earlier historical time frame that the original tribal ‘nən̓ima began their gradual descent “downriver” from their “upriver” locations. Literally, within a Kwakwaka'wakw mindset the “day” and the “world” are equivalent in time and space as “where events occur”. Events begin with the emergence of light in the day and in the world. Up river is associated with the oldest and the best locations both geographically and historically. In this conceptualization time is compressed or expanded to encompass “a day” or “all time”. “Upriver” is associated with the most distant past in time and the most valuable and ancient of land occupation. Because the Kwakwaka'wakw value primogeniture and the idea of the origin/original these associations make sense in Kwak’wala while they appear disparate in English. Another example of this way of thinking can be found in the name of the oldest son of `Tsekame’, the founding ancestor of the Kwikwasu’tinuxw Tribe.

Wa, la’mans i’tidatl gwagwixsalał lax `Tsekama’i.

go we again discuss again to (name)

Now we will talk about Head-Winter-Dancer.

Wa, la’am’la’e bawikwi ganames `Tsekama’i.

and then pregnant she wife his (name)

Now his wife Winter-Dance-Woman, was with child.
When she had been with child for four months, she gave birth to a boy.

Head-Winter-Dancer said at once to his wife, “His name shall be Upper-End”.

(Boas 1908, p. 179-180)

The significance of the name ‘Nalbe’ lies in the geography of the lands occupied by the Kwikwasut'inuxw tribe that ‘Tsekame’ founded. The Kwikwasut'inuxw occupy lands in the Broughton Archipelago and their main village is on Gilford Island. The name ‘Nalbe’ translates as “upper end” (Boas 1908) or ‘those at the upper end of the river” (Boas 1966). The naming of ‘Tsekame’s oldest son is significant in two ways. First it draws together the geographic location of up-river with the symbolic association of the oldest and the best. The second issue of significance is that the geographic demography where this story takes place and the evolution of the ancestral lands of the Kwikwasut'inuxw is island or inlet based not river based. ‘Nalbe’ builds his house at Wato, near Xìwikán in Thompson Sound, eastward from the home location of his parents at ‘Mitap. I believe the significance of his name is not so much a direct reference to an up-river location but the application of an eastern point that runs parallel to the upriver/downriver axis on the broadened geography of the Kwikwasut'inuxw movement.
outwards into the Broughton archipelago. This geographic significance is joined to the social significance of being the oldest. This example shows how the original association of upriver/downriver is carried outwards even into a geographic that is no longer situated on the axis of upriver/downriver but inlets and islands.

The following words may represent the presence of a linguistic phonaestheme pattern.

According to Bauer (2004) a phonaestheme is:

…a sequence of sounds which, while it often correlates with a particular meaning, cannot be analysed as a morph in a word because morphs lead to an exhaustive analysis of the word but phonaesthemes do not. The $gl$- in words like gleam, glimmer, glitter is often cited as a phonaestheme whose meaning can be glossed as ‘having to do with light’. (p. 84)

‘$na$- may express a very generalized meaning that reflects the idea of “origin” with that of ‘$na$- “day, light, world and ‘nal- “up river, the best, higher rank”. At the very least it
represents a type of radial category that infers a connection between meanings connected to a minimal remnant of linguistic phonological form.

(459) 'nám  "one" (Boas 1948:239)

(460) ‘nāḿima’  "clan, of one kind" pl. ‘nāl’namima  “family group supposed to be descendants one ancestor, but assignable in paternal or maternal line, also including adopted members” (Boas 1948:240)

(461) ‘nula  "older brother, sister" (Grubb 1977:202)

(462) ‘nulawalił  "first born line" (Boas 1948:245)

(463) ‘nulagila  "the highest type of potlatch" (Boas 1948:245)

(464) ‘nulagame’ gigame’  "chief who has given such a potlatch" (Boas 1948:245)

And also perhaps by extension:

(465) nugwa  "I" (Boas 1948:236)

(466) numas  "very old person" (Grubb 1977:200)

(467) nogad  "wiseman, songmaker" (Grubb 1977:200)

(468) nuyam  "myth of the family story of a ‘namim” (Boas 1948:237)
(469) nuxwnamis "myth people, animals in human form in mythical times, stories from way back" (Boas 1948:237)

In a way the stem 'na- has similar connotation as the stem ga- discussed in chapter 3. Both refer back to ideas of temporal/historical origin; ga- in spatial relationship to the self as the point of origin with references to historical origins, and 'na- more directly related to the spatial location of the village with spatial extension into the broader context of geography and referential relationship to ideas around origin and primogeniture within which these village sites are contextualized.

6.8 Ḳi "above" and ba'ni "below"

Boas (1848) Dictionary defines Ḳi- as “above, up”. It tends to denote a more generalized notion of spatial position with specific extension into the geographic zone of the sky, or heavens through words like iḳadza'lis “upper world” (pp.23), Ḳi “sky or above, the” (www.firstvoices.com).

In the following line from the contemporary hymn “Abide with Me” the translation refers to the English word for “heaven”: 
Boas (1948) Dictionary defines the stem *ba’n*- and words *ba’nala* and *ba’n i* as “underneath, below”. Again these are general spatial orientations. Geographically zoned extensions include words such as *ba’nagawi* “farthest underneath, the ghost country”.

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**Figure 6.13**  *Up in the sky and beneath the earth*
In general the word *iki* refers to the sky region and the word *ba’ni* refers to the underworld.

Birds and other beings that possess the capability of flight occupy the sky region, while ghosts are considered to occupy the land beneath the earth.

(470) *iki*  
“sky, or above the” (www.firstvoices.com)

(471) *ba’ni*  
“below, down there, underneath (www.firstvoices.com)

The following lists of words are extensions off the stems *iki*- and *ba’ni*-

(472) *ikala*  
“something high” (Boas 1948:23)

(473) *ikabala*  
“slanting rafters of house” (Boas 1948:23)

(474) *ikadze’lis*  
“upper world” (Boas 1848:24)

(475) *ikagamata*  
“to look up” (Boas 1948:24)

The root *ik*- can be applied more generally than just the arena of geography or architecture as in the following examples:
An interesting relationship appears with the phonologically related stem $i^k$- meaning “something good”.

The following words correspond to concepts of “below”:

(476) $i^këtìala$ “just above the other” (Boas 1948:24)

(477) $i^kòdaxste'$ “upper lip” (Boas 1948:24)

(478) $i^kol'ëtsënd$ “to fill more than half” (Boas 1948:24)

(479) $a'ikës$ “fine weather” (Boas 1948:23)

(480) $ikادzala$ “sky is clear” (Boas 1948:23)

(481) $ika$ “to overcome, to win [as in a game]” (Boas 1948:23)

(482) $ixkasala$ “to be happy” (Boas 1948:24)

(483) $ixstukwan$ “bright colored” (Boas 1948:24)

(484) $ixt'sam$ “abalone” (Boas 1948:24)

(485) $bən- (-ala, -i')$ “underneath, below” (Boas 1948:111)
In a contemporary sense the understanding of “below ground” and “in the sky” are given expression in the disciplines of archeology, astronomy and astrology. They are considered to be associated, but somehow separate from geography. In the cultural Kwak’wak’wakw conceptualization of the land they are more intimately associated. While “below ground” and “in the sky” remain relatively beyond the physical ability to traverse most of the origin stories of the Kwak’wak’wakw conflate the appearance of an ancestor who comes from “below ground” or “in the sky” to a certain geographic place within Kwak’wak’wakw territory in order to establish a community. In the case of the Dzawada’enuxw, the original ancestor Kawadili’kala comes from the north-east and travels south along the Kingcome River meeting new tribesmen who found the Dzawada’enuxw ‘namíma (clans). Lawagila, the raven, who meets Kawadili’kala while walking the beach, comes out of the sky and forms the Lilawagila ‘namíma. Daband, who comes out of a rock, but was originally a mountain forms the ‘Wa’ukwama’i ‘namíma. ‘Kixtlala
is the sun that comes out of the sky and forms the _Gigagama'i _'nálima. Only Hałxabō'i, who
forms the _'Ka álila'ka _'nálima, meets Kawadilikāla while he is already in his human form.

The first man of the Tsawatenok\(^70\) was Káwatilikāla, but before he was a man he
was a wolf and his wife was a wolf. They lived on the upper course of the
Kingcome River [at the head of Kingcome Inlet]. One day a heavy rain was
falling and he said; “I do not see why we should remain animals. We had better
leave off these skins and use them only in dancing. Why should we wander
about and have no home? If we had a house to live in when it rains, it would be
well.”…His first son was Tlárwitsá, his second Kulili and his third Ná'nuwalaq
[“miracles”]. Tlárwitsá and his father were sad because they had no companions,
and one day as they sat outside the house talking about it, they heard a crying
sound in a large rock. They arose hurriedly and broke it open, and revealed a

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\(^70\) I have kept the original spelling of Curtis as published

U'mista Orthographic Conversion of names from Curtis orthographic spelling:

Tsawatenok (Dzawada'enuxw); Kawatilikāla (Kawadilikāla); Tlawitsa (Dlawitsa); Kulili (Kwalili); Na'nuwalaq ('Na'nawalakw); Tāpunī (Daband); Ninulk'īnuh ('Nī'nalkinuxw); Wioqumi ('Wī'ukwama'i); Luwagilya (Luwagila); Ryakyamutlalasu (Kākamutlausu); Kekatilikāla (Kīkadiilikāla); Kekawatilikāla (Kīkawadilikāla); Līluwagilya (Līluwagila); Kēhtlala ('Kixtlala); Kēhtlalatsi ('Kixtla'la tsī); Kyilupstala (Kilupstala); Gyiğyikumi (Gigigame'); Kekuhtlala ('Ki'katlala); Halhapui (Hałxabo'i); Gyiğyikyilaqgya (´K̓a kikilaka)
youth. “Welcome!” said the old man. “I am glad to see you. We want someone to come and live with us.” “That is why I have come,” said the youth. “I heard your wish and decided to come and be a man with you. I am Ṭapūnt [“helper”]. Now that I have come, you may have all my names. My name is Stone, my name is Mountain, my name is Big Mountain, my name is Increasing Mountain.” He repeated many other names of this kind, and concluded, “All these you may have and use when you need them. “His descendants formed the gens which was formally called Ninūlķinuh [“people of the head of the river”], but which now is called Wioqūmi [“irresistible”].

Again, Káwaṭilikálla saw a Raven strutting along the beach. All he could think of was how to get tribesmen. He said to the Raven: “I wish you were a man so that you could come and be my tribesman.” The Raven threw back his feather dress and replied: “What am I, after all? You see I am a man when I wish to be.” Said Káwaṭilikálla, “Well, you had better put that feather coat away. Come and be a man, and use this feather dress only when we dance. That is what I have done.”

This the Raven agreed to do. “Tell me your name,” said Káwaṭilikálla. And the Raven replied: “My name is Lūwágyila, and my name is Kyakyamūtlalasū [“folded
“Well, then,” said Káwaṭilikálla, “you shall be the rival chief of my son Tláwitsá, and your children shall be the rivals of the Kékaṭilikálá [abbreviated form of Kékawaṭilikálá, the plural of Káwaṭilikálá].” So the Raven man was the first of the gens Lilȗwagyila [plural of Lȗwágyila]. On another day Káwaṭilikálá and the others heard thunder. He said, “It is a strange time of year for thunder! Perhaps, he too wants to be a man with us.” Now this noise was not caused by the thunderbird but by the Sun, who had borrowed the wings of kolus, a great bird. Leaving his wings in the mountains he came down in the form of a man, and Káwaṭilikálá was glad to have another tribesman. Said the Sun; “You may have my names. I have brought many with me. My names are Kéhtlala ['much wood in the fire'], Kéhtlalatsi ['much wood in the big fire'] – and he named many others having to do with fire. He built a house and above the smoke-hole he made a wooden chimney so that when a great fire was burning the flames shot up to the sky. This house he called Kyilúpstala. [a chimney is still added to the house when the Gyigyikûmi (“chiefs”) gens give a feast or a potlatch.] This gens formerly was called Kékûhtlala [plural of the founder’s name].
One day all the people embarked on their canoes and descended the river to see what was at its mouth. On the way they found a man living alone with his mother.

His name was Hálhapui ["looking out from under a shadow", such as the rim of a hat might cast]. He had much to tell them, how he had been captured by the wolves and had received from them the living water and the magic death-dealer.

After listening to his story Káwaṭilikálła took Hálhapui and his mother and proceeded to the mouth of the river, where the people built houses. Hálhapui founded the gens Gyágyikylagya ["those who always wish to kill"]. (Curtis 1915, p. 132-134)

The locations of “below ground” and “from above “ are significant in that while physical provision comes from the sea and forest regions through both plant life and animals, spiritual provision is acquired from “below ground” or “from above”. In the case of Dabànnd, he emerges from stone and he embodies the mountains. In later narratives he is associated with the ability to capture mountain goats; a gift acquired through entering a hole in the mountainside. In the case of ’Kixa’tłala, he emerges from the sky in the form of a bird and is associated with the sun and with fire. In a later historical time period an ancestor of the Dzawada’enuwxw is married to a man
named Sānt'le' (Sunbeam) who takes her up into the sky world where she is given a house named 'Kīkastlān whose house-front is painted with an image of the sun and moon. She returns from the sky realm pregnant and with many gifts which are manifest on earth.

...Then Sānt'le' spoke, and said, “O mistress, don’t feel badly, for I will let you go home. If you want it, only say, ‘I want a house to come,’ and my father’s large house will be at once at the place where you want it to be; and if you want anything, you have only to call my name, for I shall be near you all the time.” Thus spoke Sānt'le' to his wife. Then Food-Giver spoke to her husband and said, “Thank you master, that you do not want to keep me and my younger sisters in this upper-world.” Thus spoke Food-Giver to her husband. Then Sānt'le’ called Brain-eating-Woman and said, “Go and borrow the long rope of The-One-Who-Climbs-down, that is the spider.” Brain-eating-Woman went at once, it was not long before Brain-eating-Woman came, carrying on her arm the long rope of The-One-Who-Climbs-down. She gave it to Sānt'le’, who took it and called the four women.

Then Sānt'le’ said to them, “Don’t be afraid. Stand close together.” Then he wrapped his large dressed-skin blanket around the four sisters, and tied one end of
the long rope to the four women. After he had tied them, he opened the door of the upper world and put his wife and her younger sisters, bundled together through it.

It did not take them long before they reached this (our) lower world. Food-Giver did not know who untied them. Then she saw our world here. Food-Giver just arose and sat down and gave birth to a child. (Boas 1902, p. 52-53)

Food-Giver (Hamdzidi) is also gifted with names which refer to light and to abalone which is equated with light. These names have been passed down to contemporary generation today and have spread amongst other Kwakwaka’wakw tribes through marriage. In another Dzawada’enuwxw story, ‘Kumukwa, who is also named Copper-Maker (’Tłakwagila) dwells under the sea and is an intermediary between mankind and the wealth of the ocean realm. In order to meet him Wealthy (‘Kumxkomgila), the chief of the ‘namima Lilawagila (Heaven-Makers) is pulled underwater in a supernatural canoe prepared by his wife. She turns out to be the daughter of Copper-Maker and after descending beneath the sea they come upon her father’s village where he is given many gifts.

...Then the pretty woman got ready. She took the stout rope and tied one end of it to the bow of the canoe, and then she pulled it tight and tied (the other end) to
the stern of the large self-paddling canoe; then she took eight dressed skins and
threw them over the stout rope, and she pegged them with yew-wood pegs at the
edges of the sides (gunwales) of the large canoe. Now she had made a house of
the canoe, that it should not let in water. Now she had finished her work. Then
the tide [of the sea] was going out. It was very low tide. Then the pretty woman
called her son and her husband and the four attendants, and she said, "Come. let
us start. Only take care! You must all help and paddle, that we go fast when we
pass through the door of the underworld." Then they went into the canoe, and all
the attendants paddled, and the pretty woman steered the canoe. Then they
went into the cave, and the attendants saw that the sea-water ran through it; and
they saw the bones of men, many of them, on each side of the channel. These
are the bones of all who are drowned all around our world. Then the large self-
paddling canoe went down with the tide.

As soon as they passed through (the cave), Wealthy saw many houses.
Then he heard (people) at the houses shouting, and saying, "O Copper-Maker!
Copper-making-Woman is coming in sight here." Then for the first time Wealthy
learned the name of his wife. (Boas 1902, p. 79-80)
Wealthy (‘Kumxkomgila), is gifted with his father-in-law’s house and his names which he returns to earth with. The ‘tlakwa “copper” is still considered to be the highest symbol of wealth amongst the Kwakwaka’wakw. It came to Wealthy (‘Kumxkomgila), from beneath the sea.

Figure 6.13 shows a painting of coppers above the tide line at the mouth of Kingcome Inlet.

Figure 6.14 Duff, Wilson. (Photographer).(1955). *Painting of coppers at mouth of Kingcome Inlet to commemorate potlatches held in 1921 and 1927* [Photograph]. "Image (PN 2197) courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives"
The story excerpts I have presented are only a few of many that illustrate the relationship of the Kwakwaka’wakw to the geographical domains of “below ground” and “from above” in ways that are less physically tangible than the geographic zones of “the sea”, “the woods”, “up-river” and “down-river” and yet are just as significant within the Kwakwaka’wakw imagination and ultimate geographic conceptualization. The zones are inter-related because the regions of “below ground” and “from above” are the source domains of spiritual wealth which are translated into the ability to acquire physical wealth in the earthly domains of the forest and the sea. This connection exists primarily in the mind and in the imagination of the Kwakwaka’wakw as the physical ability to traverse these domains was limited to climbing up into the mountains and the use of existing caves underground. Yet, I highlight its significance as a conceptual interface of geographic experience inter-related to actual physical experience in the land.

6.9 Spatial and temporal expansion and contraction in narrative

Western European standards of geography tend to approach the concept of land under the notion of distribution. Under measurement conditions a landscape is given character through height and distance. For example; a river runs so many kilometres in a northwest direction; a
mountain can be surveyed to reach 3000ft in height. By mapping the formal characteristics of geography we are able to create maps that take a landscape beyond our ability to humanly observe in a single setting and collapse that observation down into an image that we are able to expand and contract. However, as much as the landscape exists as a physical presence in the world and as much as the map exists as a physical referent to the landscape it is the analogical conceptual process of contraction and expansion that creates an understanding of the landscape in the mind by the use of the map. I am using this example to highlight the cognitive process required to generate an image in the mind that is translated into meaning; a process of analogy. In this case the map is a contracted analogical derivative of the land in real space which helps us formulate an impression of the land in our minds which we cannot see under ordinary biological single perspective observation. I am using this example because the cognitive process of expansion and contraction is an analogical process which is prevalent in the Kwak’wala language and reveals itself in Kwakwaka’wakw culture in particular ways.

The particularities of analogy exemplified by expansion and contraction in Kwak’wala reveal some of the cognitive processes in place for a Kwakwaka’wakw epistemology or world-view. It begins with our mental conception of our physical selves ‘in the world’ we inhabit. In this regard,
to a limited extent, we have discussed in this chapter the concept of *tlas-* “sea region, facing the water” and *atl-* “forest region, behind” as they relate to the expansion of the independent body to the home, the village, and the world (geography). In addition we have discussed the further defined notion of locations of the body within the village, and of the village in the world (geography) with historicity, ideas of origin and by extension, primogeniture and rank.

The Kwakwaka’wakw concept of geographic space is not limited to just relationships of geographic forms to one another but is imbued with symbolism and extended meaning through metaphor, what I have referred to previously as ‘the analogy of expansion and contraction’.

Analogical expansion and contraction is not exclusive to Kwak’wala. In the English language, the notion of expansion and contraction of time is also evident. For example, in poetry, where the idea of a lifetime is measured metaphorically in the physical character of the passing of a year; winter is considered the time of old age and spring the time of youth or in the following example by Dylan Thomas, where the temporal length of a human lifespan at approximately 85 years can be collapsed metaphorically into the temporal span of a single year or a single day.

Do not go gentle into that good night,

Old age should rage and burn at close of day;
Rage, rage, against the dying of the light.

(Dylan Thomas, 1951)

While both English and Kwak’wala exhibit the concept of analogical spatial and temporal expansion and contraction. What I want to point out here are the particularities of analogical expansion and contraction that relate to the land. Examples we have reviewed are the temporal expansion of a ‘day’ into ‘all time’ and the spatial expansion of down-river / up-river to the coastal north and south through historical population movement. An apparent crossover of the two is the analogy of up-river with greater historical depth. The concept of temporal and spatial expansion and contraction is also evident literally in Kwakwaka’wakw mythological histories. In many stories the theme of collapsed and expanded time is made literal, as well as the themes of collapsed and expanded spaces. Consider the following excerpts:

When `Tsekame’ (Head-Winter-Dancer), the original ancestor of the Kwikwasu’tinuxw has sons each of them grow up to be men in the space of months rather than years. These events are conflations of time (months rather than years) and space (growth from small to large). The following describes the growth of `Tsekame’s third son.
'Tsekame' - Head-Winter-Dancer's sons

Then Winter-Dance-Woman was with child again, and after four months she gave birth to a boy. Head-Winter-Dancer said at once to his wife, "O Mistress, now his name shall be Cannibal." Thus said Head-Winter-Dancer to his wife. Now Head-Winter-Dancer always washed his son in cold water, and when Cannibal was four months old he was a full grown man. (Boas 1902, p.180-181)

In this second example, 'Kala’min’, an ancestor of the Dzawada’enw is given a supernatural dog by Tawixa’xta’, a supernatural man who is really a mountain goat. The dog has supernatural ability to successfully hunt mountain goat. Tawixa’xta’ also gives ‘Kala’min’ his name.

‘Kala’min’s dog

…But he did not walk long [on the ground] then he arrived in front of a large mountain. Then he saw forty mountain-goats eating the grass of the mountain. At once, he who had now the name Tawixa’xta’ took off his red cedar-bark and took out his small dog from the cross-piece in the neck part of his head-ring of red
cedar-bark. As soon as he put it on the ground, it became a large dog. At once it turned its face towards the place where the forty mountain-goats were, and ran.

When Tawixa’xta’ saw the dog, it was as though he threw something, therefore all the forty mountain-goats were at once dead. But it was not long before the dog came back to the place where the master of the dog was standing. The Tawixa’xta’ took it at once in his arms, and spoke to it kindly. Then he pressed it.

*The dog at once became small again, the size of a humming-bird.* Then he put it into the cross-piece in the neck part of his red cedar bark. Then he finished. (Boas 1902, p. 39-40)

In the third example, a story from the ‘Namgis people, a boy has a supernatural experience where time is expanded. He becomes upset with his parents and leaves the village. Wanting to commit suicide he throws himself into the river but unsuccessful he continues on and arrives at a steep rock whereupon he starts to climb a mountain:

He went on and soon saw a mountain top ahead which shone like a light. It was the Nawalakwa rock, where there was a constant rain of rock crystal. He picked
up four pieces the length of a finger and stuck them in his hair in a row from the
front to the back. He climbed up the mountain and became completely covered
in rock crystal, he had acquired the ability to fly. Thereupon he flew all over the
world. *He thought that he was absent for four days, but it was four years.* At last
he flew back to his home. His relatives happened to be in Ni’nalgas and were
working on the side of the lake by torch light when he appeared in the shape of a
snow-white eagle and caused rock-crystal to rain down. (Boas 2002:336)

In a story relating the acquisition of the hamat'sa ceremonial, objects thrown by boys
fleeing from the cannibal Baxwbakwalanuxwsiwe, expand to block his pursuit. A comb
becomes a thicket of brush, a stone becomes a mountain, hair oil becomes a large pond
and a stick becomes a tree:

> Then (the eldest one) threw the comb backward. Immediately there was a

*thicket of crabapples*?*. Cannibal-at-North-End-of-World was tangled up in it.

Then the brothers crossed the mountain, and again they heard him coming near
behind. Then his brothers ran along level ground, when Cannibal-at-North-End-
of-World approached again. *Then the eldest one threw the stone backwards,*

*and it at once became a mountain.* (Boas, 1910, pp. 391-393)

Each of these stories provides examples where either time or space has the ability to expand or collapse. A supernatural child is born within four months instead of nine. This same child grows into an adult within four months. A supernatural dog can grow and shrink on command. A boy is gone for what he experiences as days but upon his return is told it has been years. A stone becomes a mountain. For the Kwakwaka’wakw the concept of analogical expansion and contraction of time and space is a common theme in narrative. Through these imaginative expressions it is possible to see how the concept of empathetic expansion of structural characteristics is repeated throughout Kwakwaka’wakw conceptualization. This acts as both primer and complement to concepts of spatial expansion and contraction between the relationships of the body, the house, the village, and ultimately the landscape.

### 6.10 Summary

Specific to this thesis is the proposal that it is the body within a specific environment that contributes to particular cultural understandings. Lakoff and Johnson (1999) posit that the most
familiar human experience is that of the body and that metaphorical extensions are derivations of this bodily experience. These theories have tremendous consequences for how the domains of space and time are conceptualized. Boas (1935) was able to accurately identify the polarities of atl-“landwards” / ʔtlaːs-“seawards” and gwa-“upriver” / ʔnal-ʔnal-“downriver” as major orientations within the Kwakwa’wakw conceptualization of geographic space. It is the body=house marked by the uʔaʔ stem that is situated as the central spatial locator off of which the other four directions are derived in order to conceptualize the landscape. The premise is that the body/house in space is oriented to face the water with the back to the forest. This is the primary orientation of the Kwakwaka’wakw as expressed in the Kwak’wala language. This primary orientation is then further delineated by the secondary orientation of “upriver” and “downriver”. These orientations have culturally relevant association with histories and social standings. Geographic terminology in Kwak’wala is determined by the landscape of its origin and by extension reflects cultural expression. By practical application houses (and the body) are oriented towards the sea and all physical forays into the world are defined by the movement into the zone of the sea or that of the land. Transformative spiritual forays into the world are defined by imaginative movement into the sky or below ground. Historical movement, the movement through time, expands the concept of upriver / downriver from simply geographic to
temporal. It operates under the premise of the conflation of space with time. Time and space are marked by analogical contraction and expansion and Kwakwaka'wakw geography must be considered under this primary premise or the engagement remains merely topical. These ideas are expressed in linguistic word based analysis and narrative. By considering how the linguistic forms manifest in stories we are able to begin to comprehend a different and particular way of negotiating one’s place in the world, or one’s geography that is equally defined in the mind by the physical phenomenon (or form) of the landscape itself as well as language and cultural practice (the meaning or comprehension of that form).
Chapter 7: Time and Space Crossover

Dream of Gwagwadaxala

I dreamed that I had been taken by a man unknown to me to a distant place. We were travelling in a strange looking canoe. I thought I would ask the man where he came from. Then he spoke to me and said, “I know your thoughts. You wish to ask me where I come from. I will tell you. I am the great star which goes down twice and which you see in the evening,” said the man. Then I was afraid on account of his speech. I awoke and I went to sleep again. (Boas 1925, p. 49)

7.1 What is time?

There is substantial crossover between the conceptualization of time and space in the Kwak'wala language. This chapter explains what these crossovers are and grants further insight into Kwakwaka'wakw space through the analysis. It helps to consider modern time and how it is constructed and experienced. Then I consider how modern concepts have been translated into Kwak'wala but are not innate but appropriated. Finally I consider Kwakwaka'wakw time as it was considered prior to the importation of modern Western concepts.
Time is a pervasive concept in the modern experience. Time is ever present in our consciousness. We are surrounded by devices designed to keep track of the time and our movements in accordance with it. Clocks are everywhere both in the public and private realms reminding us what time it is and even more intimately, the majority of people wear watches strapped to our wrists so that we always have access to the time. Our cell phones declare the time to us every time we use them. Our relationship with time is so much a part of our everyday experience that we rarely question it. But what is time? How real is it? How much of our experience of time is innate to human nature and how much of it is culturally constructed? Do all cultures experience time in the same way?

My research into the concept of time as expressed in the Kwak’wala language and Kwakwaka’wakw cultural forms indicates that while the concept of time certainly exists cross-culturally the actual ‘conceptualization’ of what time is varies considerably (Nicolson, 2005). This conceptualization is deeply influential on our perceptions and experience of time. Modern culture and the English language, along with the other Western languages that have been engaged with the development of modern Western notions of time help facilitate an experience of time that is particular; it is the one that dominates our experience of time today. In the same
way, the Kwak’wala language and Kwakwa’wakw culture also facilitate a particular experience of time. This experience and understanding of time differs considerably from modern Western based notions. This indicates that while there are certain fundamental cross-cultural universals regarding time that the particular expressions and concepts about time can render the *experience* of time across cultures quite differently. For example, the modern notion of ‘Indian Time’ while seen derisively from the modern Western point of view as the inability of Aboriginal peoples to be punctual can actually be accounted for by the difference in relationship to the idea of time and its correspondence to the flow of events. ‘Indian Time’ is not an innate characteristic of being aboriginal but the remnant of a culturally based conceptualization of our relationship to time. As we shall see in the following linguistic analysis the highly defined incrementalism of Western notions of time are particular to Western culture and are reflected in the English language as such.

Both Kwak’wala and English exhibit conceptual space/time crossover. Boroditsky (2001) states that “recent evidence suggests that people do not just *talk* about time in spatial terms, but that they also use their spatial knowledge to *think* about time” (p. 6) Lakoff & Johnson (1999) state, “All of our understandings of time are relative to other concepts such as motion, space and
events” (p. 137). The relationship between the concepts of space and time is a close one. In
the Kwak’wala language we see similar conceptual structure across the two domains.

Time is as basic a concept as we have. Yet time, in English and in other language
is, for the most part, not conceptualized and talked about on its own terms. Very
little of our understanding of time is purely temporal. Most of our understanding of
time is a metaphorical version of our understanding of motion in space…and motion
is defined as the change in location over time. (p. 139)

We borrow understandings from space in order to frame our understanding of time. So what
are the crossover metaphors that emerge from the Kwak’wala language regarding time
concepts? We could start with asking what is the word for time in Kwak’wala? There doesn’t
appear to be any directly translatable word for time directly equivalent to English. The word
‘wa’wayas is derived from the stem ‘wa- meaning ‘to measure’. Boas gives the word
‘wa’wasdam as equivalent to ‘wa’wayas.

(490)  ‘wa’wayas    “time” (Boas 1948:73)
The conceptual connection between time and space is made apparent by the word for ‘length’ which shares the root ‘wa-.

The relationship between space and time is further emphasized by the suffix -as meaning ‘place of’. Boas states “While this suffix designates primarily place, it also has many derived meanings such as time, size, number, way of.”
The auxiliary stem *hi*- which can be translated as ‘that’ attaches to an allomorph of -*as* ‘place of’ to form *he’mis* “time of” or “that place”. We can see in this construction the delineation of a ‘certain time’ equated to a ‘certain place’. The following expression is possible:

(499) He’misan ba’was. "That was the time of my leaving" (Boas1947:319)

The following example also exhibits the conflation of time with space:

(500) ‘yá’kaga’las "time of speaking" (Boas 1947:319)

These examples give us some idea as to how time concepts crossover with space concepts in the Kwak’wala language.

The next few topics will deal with the introduction of Western time concepts and the Kwak’wala language forms that have been constructed to accommodate them. My point in making this delineation and analyzing the following word structures is that the concepts underlying these new structures arise out of Western cultural practice and industrialization. They are not intrinsically Kwakwaka’wakw. That being said, they are part of the process of Western cultural
integration we have been participating in over the last few hundred years. Also, of interest are the forms that Kwak’wala uses to adopt foreign concepts.

To ask “What is the time?” in reference to a clock is a relatively new concept introduced with modern Western notions of time increments. This is evidenced in the following morphological analysis of the sentence.

(501)  \textit{Luxw –gan-t’sakila’?} (“What time is it?”)
A round group- how many?- pointed at object

The sentence begins with \textit{luxw-} which Boas (1948) translates as “to roll round thing”. (p.404) It could be translated as a group of things that go together with a circular reference. Possibly it refers to the round face of the clock with the numbers forming a circle. The second morpheme, \textit{gan[s]}- translates as “how many”, while \textit{t’sakila’} refers to long objects. The long object in this case may refer to the shape of the clocks hands. So the translation might read loosely as “How many, or which number is the pointed object (hands) at?” This is a literal interpretation of the Western act of counting time with a clock. It is not a concept indigenous to Kwak’wala but one that adapts Kwak’wala morphological forms and expressions to fit as accurately as possible an imported concept of incrementing time into hours.
The following basic response pattern also reflects the morphological structure and conceptual logic of the question: *Luxw gant'sakila’?* “What time is it?” Examples (502)-(513) are cited from Nunwakola Cultural Society (2006).

(502) *La’muxw ńam-t’sakila.* “It is one o’clock.” Or more literally; “It is pointed at one.”

The following times on the hour follow in the same pattern from one to eleven.

(503) *La’muxw mał-t’sakila.* It is two o’clock. “It is pointed at two”

(504) *La’muxw yudaxw- t’sakila.* It is three o’clock. “It is pointed at three”

(505) *La’muxw mu-t’sakila.* It is four o’clock. “It is pointed at four”

(506) *La’muxw saka-t’sakila.* It is five o’clock. “It is pointed at five”

(507) *La’muxw Ḳat’la-t’sakila.* It is six o’clock “It is pointed at six”

(508) *La’muxw adlabu-t’sakila.* It is seven o’clock “It is pointed at seven”

(509) *La’muxw ma’tgwa’nál-t’sakila.* It is eight o’clock “It is pointed at eight”

(510) *La’muxw na’hana’ma-t’sakila.* It is nine o’clock “It is pointed at nine”

(511) *La’muxw la’stu-t’sakila.* It is ten o’clock “It is pointed at ten” or

(512) *La’muxw naka- t’sakila.* It is ten o’clock “It is pointed at ten”
It is not until the twelfth hour marker that we get a response that rather than reflecting the attempt to map Kwak’wala onto a foreign concept of time we get an indigenous response; a response which already exists in the Kwak’wala lexicon. “It is twelve o’clock.” can be directly translated either as “It is noon.” or “It is midnight”

Both words take their root meaning from the stem morpheme *nak-* which means “straight or direct” (Boas 1947 p.228). This can be translated as “in the middle” when considered spatially. If something is directly in front of you it is “in the middle” of the visual field. Noon is in the middle of the day, straight ahead of us as the sun reaches its’ apex. Midnight is somewhat more intriguing. The suffix *-ige*’ is a locative that can be translated as “on the back”. Together the root *nak-* and the suffix *-ige*’ combine to create “middle or straight on the back”. These words are fundamentally Kwakwaka’wakw in their conceptualization and map directly onto the English

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71 In the Kwak’wala words mid-day (noon) to midnight the change from back “k” to “g” is simply phonological.
concepts of ‘mid-day’ and ‘mid-night’, unlike the numbered times which are Western in concept with applied Kwak’wala forms. The word for midnight is particularly intriguing in that it references a spatial location in reference to the body. It is possible that the moon is described as being on the middle of the “back” of the world as if the world was a body.

In considering the concept of hours we find that an ‘hour’ is an increment of time developed out of a Western cultural framework of time measurement. While contemporary Kwak’wala speakers created a new form that can express the concept of hours, the further reduced increment of ‘minutes’ is not even attempted. The closest that can be translated is to express that the hands of the clock are either ‘approaching, coming up to’ the hour or ‘just past’ the hour. These ideas are constructed from words which reference the movement of objects in space ‘alak meaning “almost” and heka meaning “to pass”.

(516) La’muxw heka mut’sakila. “It has passed four o’clock.”

(517) La’muxw ‘alak mut’sakila. “It is approaching four o’clock.”
There are no minutes or seconds in Kwak’wala. The way of expressing hours is an adopted concept and only the markers of time ‘noon’ and ‘midnight’ are indigenous to the language. The next section outlines the more customary way of marking time throughout the day and their morphological breakdown is revealing of how the passage of time is conceptualized.

7.2 Temporal markers throughout the day in Kwak’wala

If the hourly markers of time given in the previous examples are a relatively new form of expressing time concepts in the Kwak’wala language then the following examples document daily temporal marking as it may have been expressed before the introduction of Western based time measurement. The words for the most part appear to take their form from the description of light and the position of the sun.

(518) ’nax’id  “becoming daylight, bright” (Grubb 1971:61)
  daylight – becoming (inchoative)

(519) nehkwa-la
  “daybreak, going home” (Grubb 1971:61)
  returning home – ongoing action (aspect)

(520) ga’ala
  “morning, early” (Grubb 1971:103)
  early (long ago) – ongoing action (aspect)

72 Possibly two words ’na-nakwala “daybreak” or literally “light-gradually” and ne’nakwala “going home”
This list of words describes the light conditions of the day from dawn throughout the day and into the night, which then begins again with dawn. Figure 7.1 illustrates this movement. It should be noted that the “evening” has four different words for its description and that there are two words for “daybreak or dawn”.

(521) **nak-ela**
middle – ongoing action (aspect)  “mid-day” (Grubb 1971:102)

(522) **gwał nakela**
finished middle – ongoing action (aspect)  “afternoon” (Grubb 1971:37)

(523) **pañakala**
dark – becoming (inchoative)  “dusk, becoming dark” (Grubb 1971:43)

(524) **or, pañakañakwala**
dark – gradually

(525) **dzakwa ñakwala**
evening – gradually  “towards evening” (Grubb 1971:143)

(526) **dzakwa**
evening  “evening” (Grubb 1971:68)

(527) **ganult**
night  “night” (Grubb 1971, 105)

(528) **nag-ige’**
middle – of back (locative)  “midnight, in middle of back” (Grubb 1971, p.102)
Figure 7.1 Night and day, the increments of time in Kwak'wala
7.2.1 ‘Nala, the word for day, nagige’, the word for midnight

It is within the temporal word for “day” that we see a strong spatial connection with “the world”.

In the following selection of words connected to the word ‘nala “day”, note the diversity of associated meanings.

(529)  ‘na-  “stem meaning ‘day, daylight, upstream, south, east’”
     (Boas 1948:241)
     “light, sky, world, dawn, south” (Boas 1931:165)

(530)  ‘nala  ‘up river, south, world (Boas 1947:228)

(531)  ‘nala  ‘day, earth’ (Curtis 1914:334)

(532)  ‘nala  ‘day, sea and heavens’ (Barrett 1966:77)

(533)  ‘nala  ‘day’ (Grubb 1971:61)

Curtis’ (1915) vocabulary gives the meaning for ‘hala as both “day” and “earth”. The word ‘awi’nagwis is listed under the Kwagu’l and ‘Awikinuxw dialects for “earth” but the word ‘hala is given for Gsusgimuxw and T’lat’lasikwala dialects (p. 334). Barrett’s (1966) collection notes give a linguistic breakdown of the word ‘hala as meaning “day, sea and heavens” (p. 77).

‘Nalanukwamgi’lakw is the name of a Gwawa’enuxw ancestor. The name translates as “Born to be Head of the World”. These varied meanings for ‘nala provide clues to a broader
conceptualization of 'nala in relationship to space and time. If 'nala as ‘day’ and 'nala as ‘world’ are compared for similarity we could say that ‘nala, as “day” represents the stage or background (timeframe) upon which temporal activities are defined while as “world” it exists as the background (stage) upon which activities take place. Both contexts provide a bounded region. The day is bounded in time by the cyclical movement of the sun while the earth/world is bounded by physical space. This interpretation might account for Barrett’s translation of “sea and heaven” as both these spaces can also be defined as bounded regions within the world where activities take place. This conflagration of time and space might also account for the dual meaning of nagige’ which can mean “midnight” but also “middle of back”. If the day or the world is seen as an entity of bounded space then when the moon is in the middle the sky is conceptualized as the ‘back’ of that bounded space. In temporal context the word 'nala as “day”, delineates when events occur. In spatial context ‘nala represents “the world”; a bounded area of space where events occur. That Kwak’wala uses the same word to represent these two concepts indicates their temporal/spatial inter-connectedness.
7.2.2 *Ne'hakwala*, the word for "dawn, the break of day"

This leads us to consider also *ne’nakwala*, the word for “daybreak or dawn”. This word can also mean “returning home”. Boas (1948) gives the meaning of the root *'na* as “day, daylight, upstream, south, east”. If old village sites were situated upstream, then a return home would require travel in that direction. A poetic possibility is the idea that the dawning of the sun was considered the return of the day or a homecoming of sorts. Regardless of the definitive explanation of these three words and their applied meanings, which remains speculative, the point I want to make is that these words clearly mark deviations from English or Western conceptualizations and begin to exhibit extensions of meanings that rise out of a Kwakwaka'wakw cultural paradigm and hint at a different way of perceiving and expressing the concept of time.

One thing to consider is whether it is possible that these are merely homonyms; two words that are spelled and sound alike but have completely different meanings. While homonyms do exist in the Kwak'wala language they are not as profuse as in English. The reason for this is the polysynthetic nature of Kwak'wala. Kwak'wala words are made up of a stem with attached suffixes. The stem gives the word its’ primary meaning and the attached suffixes modify that
meaning. The structural character of Kwak'wala words renders it less likely that words sharing a stem will not share the stem’s meaning. In the case of ‘nala the attachment of suffixes can create words such as the following:

(534) ‘nala-kants                           “our world” (Boas 1947:296)
    world  our

(535) ‘na-gila                             “to live, act, until dawn or to make weather” (Boas 1948:241)
    day/weather – to make

(536) ‘na-‘nala-xsila                       “to influence weather with magic” (Boas 1948:241)
    plural73 – day/weather – to work at

(537) ‘na’nala-lał                            “the weather dance” (Boas 1848:241)
    plural – day/weather – dancer

The association with weather tends to tie together the notions of the ‘day’ with the ‘world’.

Weather is what takes place during the day and in the world. In this regard there are two dances in particular that are expressions of “the day”. The first one is danced wearing a mask called ‘nax’nakagamł “dawning of the day or sunrise mask”. Boas (1897) describes the ‘nax’nakagamł as “an immense mask, the mouth of which is made so that it can open wide.

73 Plurality, repetition and distribution are expressed by repetition (reduplication) of the first syllable in Kwak'wala. (Boas 1947:219) I have written plural here but it is possible this is a distributive meaning spread out in space which makes sense in relationship to weather.
Therefore it is also called *haxilagam* “the yawning face”. The opening mouth means that the day is yawning when the dawn appears.” (p, 484) i.e. the world opens its mouth wide and the sun emerges from it. Sometimes this mask takes the form of a bird or human face “with “wings” on either side, which are painted on the outside with a black serpentlike figure. White spots decorate the outside portion of the “wings” and may refer to the night sky.” (Bill Holm, personal communication in Jonaitis, 1991, p 127). A version of this dance was given to the Gu’pinuxw, who were living near Quatsino Sound when the world was still in darkness. Daylight was kept in a box by a woman named ‘Nenalat’sega of the Gusgimaxw. A man named Kwixalalagalis was able to trick her into giving him the box and he released the sun to the world. The sun then gave him a sisi’utl dance and the sunrise mask called lkt’samatusalagalalis (abalone shell from one end of the world to another). “In this manner the Gu’pinuxw obtained the sunrise mask (‘nax’nakagaml) and its red cedar bark.” (pp, 410-411) The words to a ‘nax’nakagaml song are translated as:

You will rise, you known by all around the edge of the world

You will rise, famous everywhere at edge of the world

You will rise, being vanquished, rival chiefs of the world
They say that I beg food from the rival chiefs of the world

(Boas 1897, p. 714)

There appears to be a metaphorical reference to the rising of the sun (dawn at the edge of the world) and the presence of the chief amongst the people who is likened to “being above” his rivals.

The second dance that is related to the day is called ‘na’nalala”day or weather dance” Curtis (1915) calls this “the embodiment of the personation” of weather” (p.158). This dance has sometimes been confused with the ‘nalala”swan dance” perhaps due to the similarity of the words ‘nala”day” and ‘nala”laughing goose (or swan)” (Boas, 1921, p. 1416). In a reference to the daybreak it is said that the dancers “wear a headdress shaped like a bird and dance back and forth in front of the singers. The dancers cover and uncover their faces, indicating the break of dawn.” (Umista, 1981, Vol 12, p. 41 ) Figure 7.2 shows the dance outfit for the na’nalala (daylight/weather dance). The woman has been identified as Sarah Constance Smith (Abaya), granddaughter of George Hunt, who later in life was married to Mungo Martin.

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74 Curtis uses the word “personation” which could also be stated as “personification”.
Figure 7.2 Curtis, Edward. S. (Photographer). (1915). “Nu’na’lalahl - Qagyuhl” 75 Curtis’ [Photo]. Photograph courtesy of Northwestern University Library, Edward S. Curtis’s The North American Indian,” 2003  http://digital.library.northwestern.edu./curtis/

75 Sarah Constance Smith was also briefly married to Johnny Scow just prior to his death in 1934.
7.3 Temporal extensions beyond the 'day'

‘Nala’ “the day” acts as a fundamental unit of Kwak'wala time. The time frame of a “day” is then incremented by the list of descriptive words (518)-(528) much like how a “day” in English is incremented by “hours”. Word examples (518)-(528) represent the internal structure of time throughout a day in the Kwak'wala language prior to contact which influenced the innovations that can be translated as “one o’clock, two o’clock etc. listed in examples (502)-(513). The following set of words, refer to or are built off of, the fundamental unit of “a day” and extend outwards. This operates in a similar fashion to how a week is an extension of a day into a larger unit of time measurement in English. What we must be conscious of is that the word “week” is a particular cultural construction. I say ‘in particular’ because while the concept of ‘a day’ still references the movement of the earth around the sun, and a month references the cycles of the moon, the unit of a week comes out of Western industrialization, not natural cycles. A week is constructed of five days for work and two days for rest. Similar to the more recent introduction of hourly timekeeping in Kwak'wala we find new constructions for describing the days of the week. These are new constructions. They did not exist in the Kwak'wala language prior to the introduction of Westernization. They are Kwak'wala forms mapped onto a Western concept. If we break down these new words we can see how they function.
7.3.1 Kwak’wala word innovations applied to the foreign concept of “a week”

The following list is the word innovations that contemporary Kwak’wala speakers have come up with for days of the week.

(538)  ikila -‘anx  “Sunday” (www.firstvoices.com)
        good    season (time of)

(539)  ‘nam-pan-xwat’s-anx  “Monday” (www.firstvoices.com)
        one    time    days\textsuperscript{78}    season (time of)

(540)  mał-pan-xwat’s-anx  “Tuesday” (www.firstvoices.com) (Grubb 1971, p.144)
        two    times    days    season (time of)

(541)  yudaxw-pan-xwat’s-anx  “Wednesday” (www.firstvoices.com)
        three    times    days    season (time of)

(542)  mu-pan-xwat’s-anx  “Thursday” (www.firstvoices.com)
        four    times    days    season (time of)

(543)  sāka-pan-xwat’s-anx  “Friday” (www.firstvoices.com)
        five    times    days    season (time of)

(544)  naxs’andi  “Saturday” (Boas 1948:229)
        half    days    work

\textsuperscript{78} I am not completely confident of my translation for this affix. Boas (1947:240) gives (-xwa’s) as a suffix for ‘days’. The weakening of the back x to x and the hardening of the ‘s to ‘ts may be due to phonological consideration.
The division of days into five working days and two off days is maintained in the new constructions. From Monday to Friday we have a conceptually simple construction of numeral stems plus suffixes for “times”, “days”, and “season of”. For Saturday, we have the construction for a half day’s work which indicates an earlier historical time period for the words’ inception.

For Sunday the translation of ‘good’ may refer to the act of going to church and of not working.

Again, within the translation of this word we have an indication of an earlier historical time period when the Kwakwaka’wakw were beginning to observe Christian belief systems. The deconstruction of modern Kwak’wala terminology for days of the week, reveal it to be an introduced system with the advent of Westernization.

The following forms appear to originate prior to Western contact, and the list gives an idea of how time beyond the increment of a day was conceptualized.

(545) ye - xwa ʰala\footnotesize{of the day} “today” (Grubb 1971, p.142)

(546) or, ye - xoxda ʰala\footnotesize{of the day}

(547) ḩans -tl -a\footnotesize{one day distant – future tense} “tomorrow” (Grubb 1971, p.142)

\footnotesize{77 Sometimes pronounced lənstle}
If ‘nala refers to the day as an object bounded by time then yexwa hala or yexoxda hala refers to “today”, or “the day” placed within present tense. “It is happening now” within the bounded temporal frame of a day. The temporal present of today is then extended outwards in both directions into the future and the past. The Kwak’wala language includes one and two day length extensions to ‘tomorrow’ and ‘the day after tomorrow’, and ‘yesterday’ and ‘the day after yesterday’. It is interesting to note that the furthest extensions from the present tense hi’luxwsa and hi’luxwsu’ł begin with the stem hi- which is defined by Boas as “that, in a straight direction to a distant point”, reinforcing a spatial analogy to distance in time. A possible derivation of this stem is hi’lu- “something added” which refers to ideas around “growth” or “of building up” or “extending” which are spatial concepts.

(548) ḷans -’wəl  “yesterday” (Grubb 1971, p.155)

doing distant - remote past

(549) hi’- luχw -sa  “day after tomorrow” (www.firstvoices.com)
something added - round object

(550) hi- ’luχw -su’ł  “day before yesterday” (Grubb 1971, p.61)
something added - round object - remote past

(551) hi’lala  “something added” (Boas 1948:104)
(552) hi'lux'wid  “to come to be of right size, to grow up” (Boas 1948:104)

(553) hi'luband  “to extend end” (Boas 1948:104)

(554) hi'luxwsa (?)  “three days” (Boas 1948:105)

(555) hi'luxwsu'l (?)  “three days ago (Boas 1948:105)

(556) hi'lulisala  “to grow to old age” (Boas 1948:105)

The hi'lu- stem has both temporal meaning (the adding on of time) as well as spatial meaning (the adding on of height or length). I am not sure why Boas noted the meaning as three days removed in examples (554) and (555). Other sources Grubb (1977) and FirstVoices, as well as contemporary speakers, consider the meaning to be an extension of two days. Figure 7.3 is a construction of Kwakwaka'wakw time beyond a ‘day’ in the same way that Western incrementalism conceives of a week as beyond a ‘day’. As we can see the structure is quite different in how it manifests. A Western structure includes the concepts of ‘today’, ‘tomorrow’ and ‘yesterday’ but ‘the day after tomorrow’ and ‘the day after yesterday’ are not utilized enough in English to warrant independent words. The temporal framing beyond a “day” which in English

78 (?) present in original
is a “week” becomes instead a framed extension of two days outwards from the present moment which is “today”.

Figure 7.3 Time diagram: extensions of “a day” and “two days”

7.3.2 La’am “now”

La’am can be translated as “now”. It infers the immediate. La’am is constructed from the root auxiliary meaning “to go”. In speech la- is an introduction to movement along a narrative or event occurrence. For instance:
La-tł-an a’edakal la-xa kalwilas
   go future I return to the store
“I’m going back to the store” (www.firstvoices.com)

...la’-a’las ‘na-x’ida
   go place light began
“…it began to be light” (Berman, 1991:327)

la’am lawis gigals kasa
   now there where for a long time walk
“now, they walked for a long time” (Boas, 1966: vi)

la’am mixi gada babi’x
   now sleep this here baby
“the baby is going to sleep (now)” (Nunwakola, 2006)

la’am Íkulala gada wa’x
   now rising high this here river
“the river is rising (now)” (Nunwakola, 2006)

La’am is a component of event structure. When we talk about time we must also consider events and how they are situated ‘in time’. Boas describes la- as a motion away from the speaker, which contrasts with gax- a motion towards the speaker (Boas 1947, p. 287). If we consider this meaning when applied to la’am then we can see how the spatial relationship of “moving away from” is then applied in a temporal sense to “what is happening now, or immediately”. All other time frames outside of ‘the now’ are movements away from it. This is why I have situated la’am under the day as the central concept or moment from which events are extended outwards in Figure 7.3. Berman also addresses the temporal quality of la- and gax- when she states “… that la- and gax- auxiliaries also express a temporal idea. This
temporal idea might be best described as ongoingness or sequentiality in space or time. An action described by a verb in a clause beginning with la- or gax-, especially in the main clause, simply follows in time the action described in the preceding clause." (Berman 1991, p. 336)

The connection between la-, gax- and he- is the movement in space. While la’am anchors a moment in time and space, other sentence initial phrases beginning with la- express the movement away from this position “the position of now”. Gax- also signals a movement in space and time away from an initial position and he-, especially in the form hi’lu- expresses extensions in space and time.

7.4 Kwak’wala tense and aspect

‘Tense’, or the situating of events in time (present, past and future) along with ‘aspect’, the description of events in time (ongoing, momentary, inchoative [to begin to] etc.) branch off from this discussion and are both integral to a full exploration of Kwakwaka’wakw time concepts.

Both words, _lans’wal_ “yesterday” and _hi’luxwsu’_78 “day before yesterday” contain the remote past tense suffix –ol [-wal]. _Lans\'la_ utilizes the future tense marker -tl.

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78 Underlying form is –ol. The vowel tends to shift between /oI/ and /u/.
Past tense: three forms [degrees of temporal distance] –xd, -x'id and –ul [-wal]

(562) i'axala-xd-an
     work   was I
     “I was working” (29/04/2013)

(563) i'axala-x'id-an
     work   was I
     “I was working (awhile ago)” or “I used to work” (29/04/2013)

(564) gila-dl-ex ‘nagalis-ants ‘nalax
     come   long ago   light   our  world
     “when long ago first light came into our world” (Boas,1947:289)

Future tense: single form (-tl-)

(565) i'axala-tl-an
     work  FT  I
     “I will be working” (29/04/2013)

Unlike English, which applies tense only to verbs, Kwak’wala tense can be applied to both verbs and nouns. The final past tense form –ol [-wal] when attached to nouns or names gives the meaning past, or gone from this world.

(566) gax-'anga-'an ump 'wal-a'
     come in a dream  my  father  past
     “in my dream my late father came” (Boas 1947:289)

80 I have found that vowel shift occurs between /i/ and /e/ in pronunciation of the word to work. Could possibly be a dialect difference. I have defaulted to the spelling i'axala for “work” rather than e'axala because the majority of written sources spell it this way.

81 Sometimes pronounced e'axalatlan (vowel shift between (i) and (e)).
There appears to exist an immediate future tense relationship between \textit{la'\textunderscore am} “now” and \textit{la'mis} “so now” indicating actions which move forward into the present while closely originating from the present.

\begin{equation}
\text{(567)} \quad \text{La'\textunderscore ams lo\textunderscore l g wadat\textunderscore lasan gukwa\textunderscore kan.} \quad \text{Now you will be the house owner of this my house (Boas 1947:289)}
\end{equation}

\textit{–ol [\textunderscore wall]} and \textit{-xd} past tense forms are suffixed to names and objects considered dead or destroyed (having experienced a fundamental change of state, a change of state from the ‘now’). \textit{-xd} means “existing in the past”, while \textit{–ol [\textunderscore wall]} means “situated far in the past” which can be conceived of as meaning “completely off the stage of the present” (here and now), or “no longer here or now”. The intermediate past tense \textit{-x'id} has a complicated relationship with an aspectual form \textit{-x'id} which is phonetically an exact replica.

According to Bauer (2004), aspect is “a morphological category (usually marked on the verb) which provides information on the internal temporal make-up of the action denoted by that verb” (p. 18). An example of aspect in English is \textit{–ing} in the word running. The \textit{–ing} indicates that the action is “ongoing” or “continuous”. Aspect provides information on the internal
structure of an event; whether it is ongoing or complete, a single event or in an ongoing state that does not change. According to Boas (1947) Kwak'wala has four main aspectual suffixes:

(568) -a  “single action or continuous state” (Boas 1947:290)

(569) -x'id  “the change from one state to another” (Boas 1947:290)

(570) -ala  “multiplicity, repetition or continuity” (Boas 1947:291)

(571) -ala  “to be in the position of performing some action” (Boas 1947:291)

While past tense -x'id has the meaning ‘having occurred in the not so recent past’, the aspectual -x'id encompasses the meanings “momentaneous and inchoative”. “Momentaneous” describes an instantaneous or very limited amount of time for the action and “inchoative” describes a transition of state “to begin to”. In order to understand “momentaneous” more clearly in Kwak'wala we can compare it to another aspectual suffix, (-ala [-ala]) which describes an ongoing or pluralistic action; ‘multiplicity, repetition or continuity’.

(572) danx-ala  “singing” (ongoing, stretched out in time)

sing  Aspect (ONGOING)
The ‘inchoative’ aspectual (-x’id) renders forms like the following:

(575)  t’saxka-x’ida  “He began to feel sick.” (Boas 1947:290)
       sick  Aspect (INCHOATIVE)

(576)  bagwanam-x’id  “to become a man” (Boas 1947:291)
       man  Aspect (INCHOATIVE)

What appears to unify the aspectual -x’id and the tense -x’id forms is the idea of transformation.

With aspect we see that “something has begun to be”. For example, “He became a man.” or “He began to feel sick.” Both indicate a marked change of state. To understand the idea of transformation in the Kwakwaka’wakw mindset we need to consider it as the sudden transformation of a thunderbird or a wolf into a man, not the gradual growth of a boy into a man.

The moment marked in time is compressed and instantaneous as opposed to the aspectual -ala which is ‘ongoing’ and ‘repetitive’ in character. All past tense forms carry some indication of a change of state. Most markedly the -xd and -ol past tense markers when attached to names
indicate that the person referred to has died. We can extend this application to the tense \textit{-x'id} suffix as indicating a 'change of state' or a transformation.

As evidenced by the use of three past tense markers that the Kwakwaka'wakw consciousness of the past is amplified. This is a cultural amplification of the type discussed prior in chapter 4 with the morpheme \textit{ga-} “close to source of origin” and in chapter 6 with the morpheme \textit{‘nal-} \textit{[‘nal-]}“upriver, the best, the oldest”. It is also of interest to note that the past tense forms act like a deictic in time rather than space. In Figure 7.4 the stem forms \textit{ga-}, \textit{yu-} and \textit{he-} indicate spatial distance between the speaker (source of origin) and the subject as ‘close by’, ‘around’ and further away, removed’, the past tense forms correspond to these three divisions according to distance in time, ‘just occurred’, ‘having occurred further in the past’ and ‘having occurred long ago’.
7.5 Months and seasons, the suffix \(-anx\)

Unlike ‘hours’ or ‘days of the week’ which take their conceptual structure from Western time measurement, months and seasons have some conceptual consistency with pre-contact Kwakwaka’wakw time measurement. This mostly likely is due to the fact that both take their cues from natural cycles. This being said, they do not map entirely but differ in some respects.

The suffix \(-anx\) means “season, or time of” which can also be extended to mean “years”. For instance, the passing of a winter season and its return can be considered the passing of a year.

The primary seasons are two, \(tsa\_wanx\) “the winter season” and \(hi\_anx\) “the summer season”.

These two seasons had extreme cultural significance. The winter season was the ceremonial...
season and the summer was considered the time of resource gathering and preservation of food for winter. These seasons were given the ceremonial terms *tsit'seḵa* “sacred” and *baxwas* “secular”. Of less significance are the seasons *hi’anḵpa ˮnakwela* “coming summer” or “spring” and *lo’yanka* “autumn”.

(577) *hi’anḵpa ˮnakwala* “spring, coming summer” (Grubb 1971:133; Boas, 1947:241)

(578) *hi’anx* “summer” (Grubb 1971:136)

(579) *lo’yanka* “autumn” (Grubb 1977:39)

(580) *t’saw’anka* “winter” (Grubb 1971:152)

7.5.1 Months of the Year

The months of the year are loosely connected to the time frame of a month calculated from the cycles of the moon but not explicitly. They also utilize the suffix *-anx* “season of, time for” and most often reflect harvesting activity. An early list surveying the names of the “months” for four of the Kwakwaka’wakw tribes was compiled by George Hunt and Franz Boas (1909). The ‘Namgis and Mamalilikala lists are closely matched from April to September and December but vary in the other months. The lists provided for the Naḵwaxda’xw and Gusgimuxw tribes vary
considerably; though all four tribes give berry seasons, conditions of the moon, and fishing

conditions as ‘months / times for’. Of particular interest are the months which translate as ‘nula

or ‘na’nulasnakagila”elder brother” or tikwabo’i “under [elder brother]” and i’dabo’i “next one

under [elder brother]” which may relate to phases of the moon in a culturally specific way.

Figure 7.5 is an adaptation of Boas’ 1909 list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>‘Namgis</th>
<th>Mamalilikala</th>
<th>Nakwaxda’xw</th>
<th>Gusgamuxw</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Kw’ałanx (Raspberry-Sprouting)</td>
<td>Tămkinx (Tree-Sprouting)</td>
<td>Tikwabo’i (Under [elder brother])</td>
<td>Kanu (No sap in Trees?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Kamdzakanx (Raspberry Season)</td>
<td>Edabo’i (Next one under)</td>
<td>Gu’lanx (Raspberry Season)</td>
<td>Gu’lanx (Round one underneath, i.e. Moon after Wide-Face)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Gwa’ťanx (Huckleberry Season)</td>
<td>Samxwsgam (Trying-Oil Moon)</td>
<td>Nakanx (Huckleberry Season)</td>
<td>Dzaxwdzawitsam (Fish-in-River Moon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Nakanx (Salalberry Season)</td>
<td>Namnala (Sockeye Moon [?])</td>
<td>Nakantaxyalasam’satsapə (Season of?)</td>
<td>Wa’mitsam (Pile-Driving Moon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>Wulit’sanx (Season of?)</td>
<td>A’ats’ya (between good and bad)</td>
<td>Gu’lanx (Raspberry Season)</td>
<td>‘nuła (Nothing on it [?])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Xamxamsdi (Past[i.e. empty] Boxes[?])</td>
<td>‘na’nulasnakagila (Eldest Brother)</td>
<td>‘nuła (Elder Brother)</td>
<td>‘nuła (Season of?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Lixam (Wide-Face)</td>
<td>Helat’sa (Elder Brother)</td>
<td>Tikwabo’i (Under [elder brother])</td>
<td>(Sockeye Moon [?])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>‘magwabo’i (Round one underneath, i.e. Moon after Wide-Face)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Gwaxsam (Dog-Salmon Month)</td>
<td>Wuliti’sanx (Season of?)</td>
<td>Xikwalil (Season of Floods)</td>
<td>(Spawning Season)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>K’ała (Cleaned i.e. of leaves)</td>
<td>Maga’ya (Staying in Dance House[?])</td>
<td>‘Tsatapha (Near to Eulachon)</td>
<td>(Pile-Driving Moon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>Wa’anx (Spawning Season)</td>
<td>‘ma’walit’sanx (Season of Floods)</td>
<td>Wa’anx (Elder Brother)</td>
<td>(Nothing on it [?])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solstice</td>
<td>Tsuxwsam (First-Eulachon-Run Moon)</td>
<td>‘ma’maw’a’tl’gənxi’na’ ‘nula (Elder Brother)</td>
<td>(First-Eulachon Fishing Season)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7.5  Months and seasons (adapted from Boas 1909, p.413)
The following list are the words of the month cross-referenced for definitions with Boas (1947) and (1948).

(581) wa’yənəx “January ‘spawning season, from [was-] ‘spawning’” (Boas 1947:305)

(582) dzadzə’wanx “February ‘start of eulachon season from (dzaxw-)’eulachon’” (Boas 1947:305)

(583) kwikwa’lanx “March ‘salmonberry sprouting season’” (Boas 1947:371)

(584) ma’wa’et’lanx “April ‘time of going into inlet’, from (‘ma’wa-) ‘to move away’” (Boas 1948:1480)

(585) kamkamdzakwanx “May ‘salmonberry season’ from (kamdzakw) salmonberry” (Boas 1948:340)

(586) gwagwat’anx “June ‘huckleberry season’ from (gwadam) ‘huckleberry’” (Boas 1909:413)

(587) ninakwanx “July ‘salalberry season’ from (nakwə) ‘salalberry’ “ (Boas 1948:228)

(588) xamsxamsdi “August ‘dry salmon season’ from (xa’mas)’dry salmon’ “ (Boas 1948:382)

(589) lixam “September ‘wide face’ referring to the moon” (Boas 1909:413)

(590) magwabo’yı “October ‘moon after wide face’ ” (Boas 1909:413)
“November ‘dog salmon month’ “(Boas 1909:413)

“December (‘autumn’)” (Boas 1909:413)
gives (kax'ala) ‘cleaned i.e. of leaves’ for December

Of the four tribes listed only the Nakwaxda’xw name months which refer to the winter ceremonial. These are for November and December which were the height of the ceremonial season.

“November ‘sweeping houses, i.e. for Winter Ceremonial’ “
(Boas 1909:413)

“December ‘staying in dance house?’ “ (Boas 1909:413)

We cannot take this list to be exhaustive nor comprehensive as seasonal name variety would have manifested itself across various tribes living in slightly different geographies. We should consider this list a sample only across four tribal areas of the Kwakwaka’wakw.

7.5.2 Seasons and Years

The suffix -anx can be translated as “time for” in contemporary speech in relationship to “season of”. However, the foundation of this suffix is conceptually grounded in the act of harvesting as indicated by the existence of the related suffix -x’anx [-xakw] “place where there is much of
something”. Again, we see spatial and temporal crossover. We could say that the extension of “time for” from “season of” is an abstraction of the meaning rendering it less specific. We have the following words which utilize this suffix in their construction and we can see how this abstraction functions in a broader sense.

(595) kwisə’yanx’wal
    “last year”
    far away time/season long ago

(596) namx’anx
    “one winter, one year” (Boas 1947:305)
    one time/season

(597) ma’l’anx
    “two winters, two years” (Boas 1947:305)
    two time/season

(598) yudax’wanx
    “three winters, three years” (Boas 1947:305)
    three time/season

(599) mux’wanx
    “four winters, four years” (Boas 1947:305)
    four time/season

(600) sākax’anx
    “five winters, five years” (Boas 1947:305)
    five time/season

(601) ḵat’lax’anx
    “six winters, six years” (Boas 1947:305)
    six time/season

(602) nakx’anxala
    “ten winters, ten years” (Boas 1947:305)
    ten time/season distributive
When we consider the broader application of suffix \(-\text{anx}\) for season we realize that it applies to
a sense of cyclical time period but not necessarily to a set length of time such as a ‘month’ or a
‘year’ but actually can refer to both. The true nature of the suffix is the idea of an event that
cycles and returns. It is considered to take up a certain “space” within the temporal stage of a
annual cycle of a year. The most significant markers of these “annual returns” are berry picking,
fishing, and ceremonialism. Figure 7.6 Shows a Gwat'sinuxw (Quatsino) woman picking berries
around 1900.
The major ceremony of the Kwakwaka'wakw is the *ťsit'šeka*, or as it has been translated “the winter ceremony”. This translation is not literal of course. Boas’ (1966) attempt at literal translation defined the *ťsit'šeka* as “to be fraudulent, to cheat”.

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Figure 7. 6 Leeson, Ben. W. (Photographer) Quatsino woman picking berries [Photo]. Image courtesy the Vancouver Public Library (14078)

7.6 The *ťsit'šeka* “winter ceremonial”: conceptual extensions and associations
The period of the winter ceremonial, which begins in November and last well into the following year, is called t'sit'se'ka or t'sit'sa'eka also i'kikala, to be good-minded or happy. The name is curious, for t'saka means “to be fraudulent, to cheat.” For instance, when a person wishes to find out if a shaman has real power or if his power is based on pretence, he uses the term “pretended, fraudulent, made-up shaman” (t'sagakw paxala). Even in the most serious presentations of the ceremonial, it is clearly and definitely stated that it is planned as a fraud. (p. 172)

Boas’ translation of the name t'sit'se'ka is very literal. The notion of fraudulent may very well just refer to the idea that the ceremonies are imitative or reflections of events that originally happened at another place in time. Regardless of Boas’ speculation regarding the meaning of the name, the non-literal translation of the word t'sit'se'ka as “the winter ceremony” refers to the heavy symbolism that this season and its accompanying ceremonies are embedded in.

The contrast between the scared and the secular seasons is expressed by the Indians by saying that in summer the secular quality is on top; in winter the sacred quality...The theory of the winter ceremonial is based on the belief that in winter,
certain supernatural beings, who reside in summer in distant countries, come to the village. (p. 172)

The summer months are spent gathering foods in preparation for winter when food is not as abundant. The summer is associated with the physical and the body. This is contrasted to winter when the focus shifts from food gathering to ceremonialism. The winter is the time for spirits and the spiritual. The summer season called baxwas “secular or ordinary” (Boas 1948, p. 117), seasonally cycles with that of the tsit'seka, which is associated with that which is nawalakw “supernatural, extraordinary” (Boas 1948, p. 232). The summer is associated with the present, while the winter is associated with enactments of past encounters with ancestors and supernatural beings who bestow privileges on their recipients; dances, songs, names and ceremonies. These analogies and conceptual connections were a pervasive and important component of Kwakwaka’wakw ontology. Figure 7.7 shows the seasonal associations.
An interesting collusion of the winter ceremonial state with the day/world is expressed in the following statement:

“Wa, dìlxwid kas ła’os ‘wiila t’suxwstoda ᵇa laweyesos babaxusta’yakus, ᵇaxs la’mə’ax ogux’idans ‘nalax, ᵇas duxwatłala’osaxa t’sagadzux ‘nala.”

“No, arise, and wash your eyes, so that the secular season may come off from your eyes, for our season has changed, and you will see the winter dance season.” (Boas 1921:914)

The orator uses the word ‘nala and it is translated as “season” but could certainly mean “world”; the summer season being akin to the “world of the ordinary” and the winter
season being akin to “the world of the sacred”. The world is where events take place in

time and in space.

The ceremonial house during the sacred season is a microcosm of the Kwakwaka'wakw

universe and it is during this time that temporal and spatial flow is creatively and

symbolically reconfigured. “Singers and messengers “tell the world” (*nilaxa 'nala* R789.22)

what is being done. In the sacred winter ceremonial a special messenger is sent out of the

house to tell the world that the ceremonial is beginning…Chiefs, "make the world smoky

(by the fire of their feasts) (Boas 1949, p.234 & 238). Privileges bestowed in ancient

times on ancestors are made animate and alive through contemporary dances and

masks. They present themselves in the house as coming from the sea, from the woods,

below the ground and from the sky. The host chief becomes the personification of all

those who have come before him. He becomes the direct link in time from now back to

the beginning.
7.7 Summary

This chapter has attempted to lay out the conceptualization of time and its interface with concepts of space in the Kwak'wala language. It begins with a look at concepts which existed prior to Western contact and how the introduction of Western time incrementalism has been translated into contemporary Kwak'wala forms. These differences are important to establish as each category arises out of a particular approach to the phenomenon of time. The concept of ‘a day’ is shared by both Western time conceptualization and that expressed by the Kwak’wala language, after that the concepts tend to diverge. Western based time incrementalism is highly defined. A day is divided into 24 hours; an hour is divided into 60 minutes and a minute is divided into 60 seconds. These components of time measurement are abstracted from nature and applied according to uniform features of a ‘length of time’. These are the concepts which underlie the existence of modern watches, clocks and scheduling. It is a pervasive feature of all Western based contemporary existence. In extension the acute awareness of time passage that this conceptualization of time manifests has become an integral part of Western culture. In Kwak’wala, I have attempted to show that the division of the day into hours is not indigenous to the language but an attempt to incorporate the introduction of the Western workday and its modes of calculating that workday into a Kwakwaka’wakw sensibility. In accordance, the
creation of these new forms can most likely be accounted for at the time that the
Kwak'wak'wakw began to engage with Western based industries in the mid-19th Century. Even
so, they did not completely take hold until the early part of the 20th century when their reliance
on natural resource harvesting began to be replaced by reliance on Western wage earning.

Kwak'wak'wakw time concepts appear to have a heavy engagement, not with notions of
abstract measurement, but with natural cycles. The course of a day is delineated not by hours
but by the conditions of light as provided by the sun. Extending from the concept of a day
outwards the concept of a week is shown to be equally imported from Western labour conditions
with 20th century attempt to apply Kwak'wala forms. The concept of a week and its translation
into Kwak'wala is originally Western. Figure 7.1 attempted to show what the extension of time
beyond a day looked like prior to Western influences. Again, it is heavily anchored in the cyclical
condition of the movements of the sun. Two days away from the immediate moment in time is
measured by the alternation of daylight and darkness in the same way that the measurement of
‘years’ was noted by the cyclical alternation of winter and summer seasons. Words for
yesterday and tomorrow are expressed using tense forms. The tense forms in Kwak’wala have
particular associations which are not found in English. Both the concept of ‘the day’ and the
The concept of ‘a month’ do share some conceptual features with English. They both emerge out of natural cycles. In the case of months, the paramount feature is the condition of the moon. Beyond this Kwak’wala diverges from English in highlighting harvesting practices that are particular to the region and to the culture. Ultimately, these differences in time conceptualization enable us to see that while ‘time’ exists as a phenomenon in both English and Kwak’wala the conceptualizations underlying the experience and expressions regarding time differ in their particularity. These differences should not be underemphasized as the underlying concepts are heavily connected to other aspects of extended meanings and cultural belief systems; for example the extended meaning of the word ‘nala’. This concludes the linguistic analysis and cultural comparison component of this thesis. The next chapter will explain the attempt at translating the concepts discussed in the preceding chapters into a contemporary visual art format.
Chapter 8: Traditional Concepts in a Contemporary Context


Wosida gaxa’nuxw, Ha’yaliligas kas waxidage’os ka `kwaligalite’sa naxwa!

Come Ghosts! You, whose night is day and whose day is night, in this Great House.

I beg you, Great Healer, to take pity on us and restore us to life!


8.1 Premise for the visual component

The research presented in the written component of this thesis found that the Kwak’wala

language and Kwakwaka’wakw traditional cultural forms exhibited in architecture, social

structure, masks, dances and ceremonies were mutually supportive and it could be stated that

they all had strong connections to the same underlying concepts. Hence we see reflected

throughout both language and culture the concept of the Body=House=Land/World metaphor.

This is the analysis which has been presented through chapters 3-7. In order to test the

connections one step further my inquiry led me to consider whether it would be possible to
interpret the underlying conceptual “meanings” in a completely new “form”. Hypothetically, the traditional art and architecture of the Kwakwaka’wakw should reflect the same conceptual under-structures (which forms Kwakwaka’wakw worldview) as Kwakwala linguistic forms as they would have developed together over an extended period of time within the same environment.

Creating new forms for traditional ceremonial settings would be one way to test the connections between surface forms and conceptual under-structure. I had witnessed this in contemporary song composition. Songs which were composed with an understanding of the underlying traditional rules and concepts of compositions (the grammar of Kwakwaka’wakw songs) were successful new introductions into contemporary potlatching and could be considered consistent with tradition. Young song composers who attempted to create new songs using the Kwak’wala language applied to underlying Western under-structures of melody, rhythm etc. appropriated from over exposure to Western musical canons failed as new musical introductions within a ceremonial setting. Older people would respond to these new compositions by saying “It doesn’t sound right.” This was one example where imposing the formal surface expression of Kwak’wala onto non-Kwakwaka’wakw conceptual under-structure
created unsuccessful compositions. It seemed from this example that the success of new works was more dependent upon maintaining the conceptual under-structure. To test this theory, could one take the same concepts i.e. “meanings” which underlay traditional Kwakwaka’wakw language and culture and create new “forms” to express those concepts in a radically different environment? Could new forms be adapted to express the same ideas as long as they maintained consistently a connection to conceptual under-structure?

I decided that the test would be the attempt to create contemporary artworks and situate them in a radically different context where the emphasis would lie with the underlying concepts or “meanings” and the form would be adjusted in order to express those meanings. In these formal artistic executions I used the traditional Kwakwaka’wakw concepts of space that had emerged, through the linguistic analysis of Kwak’wala and my comparison with traditional Kwakwaka’wakw cultural forms, as my premise to create modern formal interpretations. Figure 8.1 shows the relationship of Kwakwaka’wakw “forms” with Kwakwaka’wakw “meaning”. I have aligned the “formal” with “being in the world” and having a worldly manifestation be that in words, houses, art, ceremonies, or stories. I position these as Kwakwaka’wakw signs or significations of culture. They are the surface manifestations or
resulting forms derived from Kwakwaka'wakw conceptual under-structure. Conceptual under-structure I have aligned as “meaning”, “existing in the mind”, i.e. cognitive, and ephemeral.

They are the underlying belief systems of culture; the signified meanings “in the mind” that the signs are created to express “in the world”. These concepts would be the content of new formal expressions using new materials. The “X” in the diagram represents the “new signs” I would attempt to create to express old “meanings”.

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![Diagram of “form” and “meaning”, the “sign” and the “signified”](image-url)

**Figure 8.1** Diagram of “form” and “meaning”, the “sign” and the “signified”
This artistic enterprise became analogous to the history of radical acculturation of First Nations. Was it possible to retain traditional concepts, meanings and worldview under radically changing environments and contexts? The gallery space became a contracted analogy or metaphor for the contested and colonized spaces of Pacific Northwest Coast lands and the contracted temporal span of the exhibition became analogous to a colonial history steeped in radical cultural change, both linguistic and cultural. If I could strategically occupy Western framed spaces with Kwakwaka’wakw traditional concepts derived from the Kwak’wala language and other cultural forms, perhaps it would demonstrate the possibility that these same concepts could continue to survive within the broader space and history of the colonized Pacific Northwest Coast. In this context the visual component of this thesis became decolonizing. It was an indigenous attempt by an Indigenous artist/writer to insert not just indigenous forms, which are easily appropriated, into Westernized spaces but indigenous ideas and conceptual systems. In particular I sought to express concepts about the relationships of the body, the community and the land and how those relationships are reflected in spatial delineation.
8.2 Context: modernism & post-modernism in the arts, form & meaning

The reflexivity of visual anthropology in its consciousness of contexts or “the frame” can be mapped onto a parallel critique of Twentieth Century art history through the rise of post-modern thought. Postmodernism began questioning the hierarchy of dominant Western discourses during the late 1960s and gained momentum as a critique through the 1970s and 1980s (Arnason & Prather, 1998; Harrison & Wood, 2003). Prior to this, modernism was invested in ascertaining reality through scientific inquiry and that this reality was to be found through physical evidence embodied in the world. In this sense modernism was related to “form”. Its investment was in the world, or a knowable reality. Modernism covers a broad spectrum of thought but to contextualize it for its implications to this thesis I will quote Harrison and Wood (2003), that modernism was invested in ascertaining “one natural ‘reality’ which is available to us to explain our beliefs and sensations” (p.1015). Harrison and Wood also describe modernism as having the following associations:

Modernism refers to the typical forms of a hegemonic culture. This culture is defined as Western in its orientation, capitalist in its determining economic tendency, bourgeois in its class-character, white in its racial complexion, and masculine in its
dominant gender. Others of the characteristics of this culture, such as its

investment of the ‘high’ from the ‘popular’ arts, its tendency to forms of specialization

and abstruseness, and its individualism, are seen as following from these. For

those thus persuaded of the character of Modernism – or persuaded, at least, of the

inescapable implication of Modernist art in the values of modern culture thus

characterized – to talk of a postmodern culture or of postmodern forms of art is to

talk of forms of opposition to hegemony. (p, 1015)

As a reaction to modernism the emergence of postmodernism posited that a single scientific

understanding of the world was impossible because all understandings of worldly

phenomenon, i.e. “meaning” were interpreted through particular experience. The particular

experiences of cultures “other” than the West, such as First Nations began to be considered

more centrally and less peripherally. Postmodernism was less interested in “forms” and more

invested in the interpretation of forms. O’Donnell (2003) states, that postmodernism held the

underlying “belief that all human knowledge is limited and culturally conditioned” (p.6). Reality

did not exist in the world “as is” but was shaped by the human mind. The interpretation of
“meaning” was not fixed but relative to culture and contexts. This relationship of “form” and “meaning” is a familiar argument that runs through the inquiry of this thesis. “Form”, is what exists in the world and “meaning” is how we interpret “form”. While modernism and postmodernism are intrinsically connected as reflections of each other, modernism placed its focus on “form” while postmodernism placed its focus on “meaning” in the same way that Chomsky’s linguistics from the 1960s could be said to be focused on form or surface understructure of “proper form” or “rules for proper form” while cognitive linguistic inquiry from the 1970’s onward was focused on deep understructure; the concepts, ideas and belief systems that influence surface understucture “rules for proper form” and of course, ultimately form itself. Figure 8.2 demonstrates the relationship of modernism and post-modernism. Like linguistics these intellectual philosophical movements coincided with the belief in a knowable reality based on rationality and rules such as universalism and the reactionary push against this within societies which demanded recognition of diversity.
MODERNISM (approx. 1850s – 1960s)
Belief that truth exists in FORM, what is real in the world, observable, scientific, a single reality, is progressive

POST-MODERNISM (approx. 1970s-Ongoing)
Belief that truth exists in the mind and is shaped by society and environment, multiple and diverse, based on perception, in the mind=CONCEPTUAL, is relative

Figure 8.2 *Relationship of modernism and post-modernism, form and meaning*

The ability of myself as a First Nations artist to place contemporary works within gallery and museum spaces is, in part, credited to the reaction of post-modernism against modernism which forced these institutions to reconsider the linear, Eurocentric and racist notions of superiority which underlay their approach to what was art, how it was defined and who made it.
8.3 The museum and the gallery as an experimental space for decolonization

Throughout the 20th Century, in First Nations communities, traditional modes for the production of art were waning due to cultural oppression and colonization. The forum for traditional art production and exhibition, the potlatch, was outlawed by the Canadian government and Kwakwakawakw members who participated had become subject to incarceration (Cole & Chiakin 1990). In 1921, William Halliday, the appointed Indian Agent to the Kwakwakawakw tribes took the unusual step of offering up the physical exchange of potlatch materials for the suspension of jail sentences for Kwakwakawakw members who were being prosecuted under the anti-potlatch law. For those who gave up their material culture in order to escape jail time he collected from them their precious masks, coppers and regalia and placed this material on display in the Alert Bay Anglican Church parish hall, charging a small fee for locals to come and view. This was an early, extreme and devastating example of the forced appropriation and display of the material culture of the Kwakwakawakw. The objects were then sold and shipped to various Museums in the east. For a more complete history of the partial return of this material see “A Strict Law Bids Us Dance”, a film directed by Dennis Wheeler and produced by Tom Shandel (1975) in collaboration with U’mista Cultural Society. Figure 8.2 is one of the many photos that Halliday took of the confiscated dance masks on display.
The potlatch ban and the appropriation of material culture were conducted under the premise of assimilation; that First Nations should give up their traditional culture and become Westernized (Cole & Chaikin, 1990). By appropriating the symbols of the Kwakwaka’wakw worldview it was hoped that this worldview could be replaced with those of Western Europe.
This included the re-contextualization of those objects/symbols in museums or private collections where they would take on new meanings severed from their original function.

In addition to the suppression of cultural practices and the appropriation of material culture, Kwakwaka'wakw children were removed from their families and communities and placed in residential schools. It was here that the attempt was made to eradicate the Kwak'wala language, another major component of Kwakwaka'wakw cultural worldview, by forcibly replacing it with English. To quote Milloy on the strategies employed by the residential school system in order to assimilate indigenous children into European culture (1999):

> A child’s ontology, “the symbolic ordering of the world” through which “actions and objects take on meaning”, is “inherited from [its] parents” and community from the moment of birth. Thus, for example, the child, parent, and community exist in a landscape – a culture’s translation of an environment into a “meaning” filled place.

> Parts of the programme of studies would disorient children and then attempt to re-orient them in a place filled with European “meaning” (p. 37).
Figure 8.4 illustrates how within the residential school system the traditional symbols of Kwakwaka’wakw culture were being appropriated into Western canons of artistic/artifact display. It is a 1936 photo taken of artwork done by children at St. Michael’s Residential School on display at Pacific National Exhibition. While their parents and grandparents were fighting the government over the imposed illegality of their traditions Kwakwaka’wakw children were being encouraged to display those symbols only under conditions completely disassociated from their original meanings. The Pacific National Exhibition had originally opened in 1910 as an annual public exhibition and fair meant to showcase the industrial and agricultural achievements of British Columbia. The display of the art of children at the “PNE” was meant to symbolize, to the colonial general public, the success of the civilizing process of the “indian” under the residential school system.
Figure 8.4 Leonard, Frank. (Photographer). (1936). *PNE display of artwork done by students of St. Michael’s Residential School in Alert Bay.* [Photo]. Image courtesy the Vancouver Public Library (VPL 9359).

Figure 8.5 is a photo taken of my uncle Ernest Willie while he was a student at St Michael’s Residential School after he had won an award for his artwork. His traditional Kwakwaka’wakw drawing of a whale and thunderbird has the words “TB Thrives on Superstition” written on it; a slogan most likely promoted by the school.
The image is telling in that the symbol of crest lineage has been converted by the influence of the residential school into a logo that promotes the notion that “tradition” aligned with “superstition” is detrimental to First Nations health. For promoting this message while
removing the traditional meaning of the whale and thunderbird image the young boy is
rewarded. The “meaning” of the image has deliberately been co-opted and replaced by the
residential school belief system in order to assimilate young First Nations into Western ways of
thinking.

In the same way that one can see the traditional artwork by children in St Michael’s Residential
school and individual drawing of Ernest Willie systematically appropriated by Western
institutions and conceptual frameworks, vast collections of Kwakwaka’wakw material culture
were amassed and appropriated by museums and private collectors. Eurocentric
categorization defined First Nation’s art as artifact and anthropological subject and placed it
within “museums”. It was separated from Western based art which was exhibited in “fine art
galleries”. Both types of institutions operated under different modes of viewership and public
consumption tied into assumed notions of cultural hierarchy linked to Western superiority

By the 1970s, subject to post-modern critique the modern art gallery system began to
reconsider these relationships and open their doors to First Nations art both traditional and
contemporary and museums in turn, began to reconsider the nature of their collections and
their exhibition. Symbolic of the times, Diana Nemiroff (1992) states, “As the opening sentence of Ruth Phillips’ article, “Indian Art: Where do you put it?” suggests, exhibitions of First Nations art have raised a variety of theoretical and practical questions for the dominant institutions of the post-colonial West” (p. 16).

Entrance into the fine art gallery systems of the visual arts brought its own dilemma for traditional works in that the system exhibited assimilative features rather than maintaining traditions. A mask on display in a setting completely entrenched within Western constructs whether that institution was a museum or a gallery was still subject to the curatorial, exhibition and viewing lens of the institution. The “meaning” or signification of the same mask exhibited in a museum or a gallery shifted within institutional contexts in the same way that it was shifted once removed from its traditional context in a Kwakwaka’wakw community made for Kwakwaka’wakw purposes. Douglas Cole (1985) quotes Virginia R. Dominguez and Lumilla Jordinova in the relationship of cultural objects in museums in the following:

Virginia R. Dominguez, in the most trenchant comment on captured heritage, wrote that the museums collected less because of the importance of the objects to Indians
themselves than because of what they told Europeans about themselves.

Everything about these ethnological collections – the way they were collected, why they were collected, and how they were displayed – points to the process as part of the European effort at self-definition. To Ludmilla Jordanova, museum objects are trophies of victory, mastery, ownership, control, and dominion (p. x).

Removed from its original ontology, or relationship to traditional understandings the mask as a “sign” looked the same but no longer “meant the same thing”. As signs they had been appropriated into Western frames of understanding and value. Figures 8.6 show the Dzunukwa feast dish which was earlier pictured in Figure 3.7 in the context of a potlatch display. In Figure 8.5 the dish is displayed with its apparent owner and several other most likely related men and boys. This image acts as an intermediate document between Figure 3.7 and Figure 8.6. This image, taken outside a potlatch setting, still shows a connection to the people from whom it originated. Figure 8.7 shows the dish today in its contemporary setting in the Portland Art Museum divorced as an object from both ceremonial context and personal connection.
Figure 8.6 Paull, Albert (Photographer). (1926). *Indian men and boys with carving at Alert Bay*². [Photo]. Courtesy the Vancouver Public Library (1707).

² The man in front is Japanese Charlie also known as Charlie Hunt. His first wife was a sister/cousin to Toby Willie verifying the connection written by Toby Willie’s brother Billy Sandy Willie on the back of the picture of the dish in (Figure 3.7) (personal communication William Wasden Jr.)
I am showing these images as a way of demonstrating how the dish has changed contexts. In Figures 3.7 and 8.6 the context is still personal and connected to community while in the second image it rests under an analytic anonymity within the museum. In both instances it is the same dish (the same signifier) but under these different contexts its meaning has shifted.
8.4 The strategy of agency," to focus on the concept"

One strategy for dealing with these inherent issues of representation was to attempt to occupy museum and gallery spaces with “agency”. In anthropology the concept of “agency” is most often associated with the ability of an individual to create meaning within the frames of the communal or society. Within the context of my own work I identify “agency” within a broader framework of the ability of individual communities, or societies, such as the Kwakwaka’wakw to self-define within the broader and often overwhelming institutional contexts of the Western European gallery and museum. By this, I mean, not to simply accept inclusion into these spaces but to actively engage with modern museum and gallery spaces with a critical understanding of their own history and existence as agents of social meaning born of Western frameworks. Rather than accept the overriding narrative of the institution it became an imperative to attempt to speak from the position of Kwakwaka’wakw communal understanding while highlighting and remaining conscious of the Western “framing” of meaning that would occur within the gallery. With a consciousness of Saussure’s relationship of the “sign” and the “signified” in relationship to the traditional art of the Kwakwaka’wakw I deliberately chose contemporary art over the traditional in my placement of objects in museum and gallery institutions. I self-consciously began to compose specific works which attempted to insert not
just Kwakwaka’wakw formal signifiers into public art galleries but Kwakwaka’wakw concepts.

In the same way that post-modernism shifted the focus away from the formal considerations of modernism in order to make more room for interpretation I was attempting to shift the focus from the formal considerations of Kwakwaka’wakw material culture collections towards the meanings and interpretations of those objects. I was attempting to re-assert a particularly Kwakwaka’wakw connection between formal objects and their meanings by occupying gallery and museum public spaces with Kwakwaka’wakw concepts just as much as with objects. In this regard rather than occupy the periphery with a passive acceptance of imposed contexts I wanted to create agency and occupy spaces conscientiously while acknowledging the histories and contexts of those spaces. Is it possible for a museum or a gallery space, both major sites of public representation to be truly made Kwakwaka’wakw? I could only attempt this if I had a concrete comprehension of the conceptualization of space and its metaphorical associations. One strategy was to learn what Kwak’wala had to say about space and having garnered an understanding from within the language map that understanding into an actual visual/physical engagement with space.
This brought me back to an engagement with “meaning”. I knew from personal experience that the surface explanation accompanying the Kwakwaka’wakw mask hung on the wall in either a gallery space or a museum was a dislocated fragment of what that mask symbolized to its makers. I knew this because I had experienced “the mask” internally within its own contexts and histories as a Dzawada’enuxw and Kwikwasut'inuxw member. I remember questioning why it was acceptable to sell the masks and my uncle replying that the value was in its “meaning”, its symbolism, not the object itself…that the mask could always be re-made.

So it seems ironic to me that it was the symbol (or form) that was so prized by the Western institutions while its “meaning” was so prized by us. As, I looked at masks in the UBC Museum of Anthropology and in the commercial galleries of downtown Vancouver I felt that they had becomes symbols of something else, high-jacked into a different narrative altogether and I was not sure I liked what they were saying. Townsend–Gault (1992) reflects on this dilemma of signification in the following statement:

How First Nations artists choose to represent themselves, and how they contest the representations of others in a world of cultural disjuncture, fall centrally into what it is that the postmodern queries. There may be little agreement on how to define it and
too much generalising social metaphysics, but what is useful is the querying of

signification, because we need to ask to what extent “meaning” depends on cultural
difference. (p. 79)

If Kwakwa’wakw forms had become subject to appropriation within institutional settings was it

possible to maintain the integrity of original “meanings”? My experiment would be a reversal of

the Western institutional trajectory of appropriating forms (signifiers) and changing what they

signified. My artwork would attempt to retain the integrity of the meanings (the signified) while

manipulating the signs (signifiers).

8.5 Entering the gallery space

In order to explore the complexities of the relationship between “form” and “meaning”, I

attempted to reverse their priority in the occupation of space within a modern gallery setting.

Prior attempts at inclusion had placed the formal signifiers of Kwakwa’wakw culture within

these gallery and museum spaces with varying results. My strategy was to place

Kwakwa’wakw concepts with some recognizable reference to Kwakwa’wakw form into

these spaces but the emphasis would be on the “meanings” rather than the “form”. These
meanings were derived from my research into Kwakwaka'wakw space as expressed through
the Kwak'wala language. This act would be consistent with a shift in art historical approaches
from the 1960s onwards where the focus under consideration in the artistic space had shifted
from the form to the concept or idea (Morphy & Perkins, 2006) as postmodernism raised its
critique of modernism. It would also be consistent with the complementary movement within
anthropology to consider the significant social aspects of art production as part of the
emergence of visual anthropology and the converging objectives of art history in addressing
the gap between ethnological artifact and art.

The resulting artworks did not occupy traditional spaces but, like the contemporary
Kwakwaka'wakw, seeking to infiltrate and find a place within a tumultuous context of modern
Western based colonial society, they found expression within the margins of Western
institutional spaces, the gallery, the museum and the outdoor public. I say margins, because
unfortunately the concept of art has been marginalized in modern Western society as somehow
superfluous. These spaces were occupied initially with the thought that they are neutral spaces
where-in which one could create an expression in a supposed blank space; the minimalist
gallery space of white walls. However, as is the case with all spaces they are demarcated by
their histories of existence; ultimately defined by the Western society which evolved them. In an attempt to keep alive certain philosophies it appeared strategic to enter and occupy both academic space (the University) and visual space (public galleries and spaces). Realistically, the traditional spaces of the Kwakw'akw have become so oppressed and marginalized that rather than fight to continue to occupy spaces under siege it seemed survivalist to attempt to occupy the spaces of the occupier; an attempt at decolonization on two fronts one could say. This was done to create dialog, to simply be, to attempt to maintain tradition in adaptive and imaginative ways. I had seen the precedent of this attempt in the creative strategies of the Kwakw'akw in the attempting to maintain their potlatch traditions during the early decades of the 20th century by mapping potlatch give-aways to the Western notions of Christmas gift giving in order to still maintain the traditional obligation of paying witnesses in spite of these practices being outlawed (Cole, 1990) or in the creation and raising in 1936 of a memorial pole for King George V by the Musgamakw Dzawada'enuxw in Gwa'yi (Kingcome Inlet) which was also done to bypass the law against traditional practice. The will to maintain tradition fueled creative thinking, innovation and adaptation in order to facilitate survival.
The following artworks are an attempt by me, as author/artist to express traditional concepts in contemporary ways; to conflate the past with the present and to honor the process of the visual and the ritualistic. These works integrate and seek to ‘embody’ the concepts and ideas of the previous 7 chapters of this dissertation. They were all composed during the period of time that the research was being conducted for the written component of this dissertation. In 2006, *Bəkwinit’si – the Container for Souls* was exhibited at the public gallery Artspeak in Gastown, Vancouver B.C. In 2008, *The House of the Ghosts* was exhibited at the Vancouver Art Gallery. In 2010, *Wənχ’id – to hide, to be hidden* was exhibited at the U.B.C. Museum of Anthropology and in 2012, *The Land is a Person* was installed as a permanent outdoor artwork in North Vancouver, B.C.

### 8.6 *Bəkwinit’si – the Container for Souls* 2006

In *Bəkwinit’si – the Container for Souls*, a glass chest was placed in the centre of a white walled gallery. The chest acted as a formal reference to the traditional chest of the Pacific Northwest Coast made to house regalia, masks for dance prerogatives, and which sometimes acted as a coffin for the body. These chests were made of cedar and elaborately painted with a conventional design that varied in its application. They were utilized up and down the coast
most prominently amongst the Heiltsuk of the Bella Bella area and northwards amongst the Haida and Tlingit. Through trade and influence they also became objects of possession amongst the Kwakwaka’wakw. Photos of Kwakwaka’wakw villages taken between 1870-1910 show the northern stylistic influence of these box designs on house-front applications. For comparison see Figures 8.8 and 8.9.
This house was Kwikwasutinuxw Chief Johnny Scow’s house. It is the same house pictured in Figure 3.1 but the sea monster façade and whale pole have been replaced with a raven with large extended beak, a prerogative that came from Johnny Scow’s second marriage with a Bella Bella woman. This might account for the northern influence.
The analogy between the box and the house is clearly manifest in this art installation. The glass chest is incised with imagery creating a white on clear effect (Figure 8.10). Lit from the interior by a single light the incised images are cast as shadows onto the four walls of the gallery (Figure 8.11). The box, as representative of the body is visually expanded to create the house on the gallery walls. Viewers are simultaneously inside and outside the chest, inside and outside “the house”.
Figure 8.10 Nicolson, Marianne. (2006). “Baḵwinat’si – the Container for Souls” Glass Chest from installation. Photo courtesy the artist/author
Figure 8.11 Nicolson, Marianne. (2006). “Bákwinał’si – the Container for Souls” Shadow cast wall Installation. Photo courtesy the artist/author
This artwork visually expresses the metaphor of “the body is a house”. The glass box is a stand in for the body and conscientiously references the traditional use of the chest as a container for inherited prerogatives and ancestry. Referencing the metaphor “the house is a ‘nə́mɪma”, photographic representations of the author/artist’s mother and aunt adorn the exterior sides of the box implicating family connection within the metaphoric “house”. The biological body is derived from the genealogical “house”. As a further reference to the idea of the body are the incised images of owls on each end of the chest which are a Kwakwaka’wakw referent to mortality and the belief that the soul, once it left the body after death would enter the body of an owl for a period of transition before entering the spirit world. In this work the soul is equated with the ephemeral while the box is equated with the body. The body is equated with the material culture of the Kwakwaka’wakw while the soul is equated with the more ephemeral notions of cultural beliefs and worldview. By analogy, the ephemeral beliefs and cultural understructure of the Kwakwaka’wakw are the soul of the people while the manifestations of material culture are their body.

By extension the work also engages with analogical relationships between objects and contexts.

The chest represents the body, but also the objects of the Kwakwaka’wakw which have been
objectified as decoration, curio, or trophy within Western frameworks. The original installation was exhibited in Artspeak Gallery in Vancouver’s Gastown, home to some of the most prestigious Northwest Coast commercial galleries. The work sought to draw the analogy between Kwakwaka’wakw material culture, peddled and proliferated and valued under Western economic constructs and Kwakwaka’wakw intangible culture; the Kwakwaka’wakw worldview as expressed in the concepts and ideas embedded in an endangered Kwak’wala. “Bákwínaťsi – the Container for Souls” sought to reconfigure a balance between the object/chest (materiality) with the subjective/shadows (immaterial); a balance more akin to Kwakwaka’wakw traditions and belief systems which has become skewed in contemporary times by the imposed and inescapable economic value systems of the West which tend to revere the object and the material.

The work operates as a symbol in a space representing a body and a house. It is also literal, in that the viewer’s body becomes part of the artwork and occupies the gallery space in a heightened state of self-consciousness. The traditional Western experience of viewer observing an artwork is disrupted and the viewer becomes both the observer and the observed. The experience parallels the embodiment that Lakoff and Johnson (1999) subscribe to in cognitive
linguistics. The construct of an objective and independent ‘reason’ (mind) is removed by the physical participation and engagement of the viewer. This embodiment in artistic practice is more closely aligned with traditional Kwakwaka’wakw artistic experience in the ceremonial house/village/world than the constructed viewer/object relationship of the Western gallery.

By placing the physical bodies of the viewers inside the work, *Bakwinat’si – the Container for Souls*” mimics the performance based spatial engagement of Kwakwaka’wakw rituals. By creating physically engaged works, the visual objectification of the fetishized cultural object would be disrupted and thus make room for Kwakwaka’wakw intent. Figure 8.12 presents some of the analogies utilised in this artwork.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOX</th>
<th>HOUSE</th>
<th>SHADOWS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“The Body”</td>
<td>“The Soul”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>Conceptual/Mental</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material Culture</td>
<td>Immaterial Culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangible</td>
<td>Ephemeral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 8.12 Associations in “Bakwinat’si – the Container for Souls*
8.7 “The House of the Ghosts” 2008

In 2007, I was approached by the Vancouver Art Gallery to compose a site specific work for the exterior of the Gallery. Using a banner and light projection I transformed the Georgia Street gallery façade into the interior of a Kwakwaka’wakw ceremonial house in a performance that spanned the traditional winter ceremonial season from October 2008 to January 2009. My initial thought was to consider the Robson Street side but upon further consideration I deemed the Georgia street side more appropriate because it faced the water and as far as referencing houses went my linguistic research was indicating this to be an orientation of significance. The installation was a conscientious address of the temporal shift between night and day and the symbolic treatments of the spatial interior and exterior architecture of a Kwakwaka’wakw house.

In particular, this work utilized concepts of analogical spatial expansion and contraction, the metaphor “house=world”, the primary orientation of t’las- “seaward” / atl- “towards the woods”, and the concept embodied in the word ‘nala- as both “the day and the world”

The art addressed the history of Kwakwaka’wakw cultural oppression through the official potlatch ban instituted by the Canadian government from 1885, until the ban was dropped in 1951 (Cole & Chaikin, 1990). The Vancouver Art Gallery building was originally built in 1906
as the B.C. Provincial Courthouse. As such, it was a symbol placed upon the landscape that announced the legal authority of the new province of British Columbia; a province in league with the Federal government in actively promoting the suppression and demise of Kwakwaka’wakw traditional culture in an effort to assimilate the “Indians” and appropriate their lands. In 1921, many Kwakwaka’wakw were given jail sentences for potlatching (Cole & Chaikin, 1990). The courthouse building eventually became the home of the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1983 and has been Vancouver’s most popular site of social protest since. In 2001, artist Ken Lum installed a permanent artwork of four boats, one on each corner of the building roof. On the Georgia street side is installed a white ‘trade’ ship, such as those which first brought non-indigenous people to the coast, and a red Aboriginal style canoe. Taking these visual icons resting on top of what used to be the Provincial Courthouse, into consideration as markers of the historical events of Western European contact, the potlatch ban, and of the cultural difference in approach to the landscape (or stage) of British Columbia the artwork was conceived.

A banner was hung across the exterior façade visually referencing a ma’wil “dance screen”.

These were traditionally mounted in the Kwakwaka’wakw house between the two back (upriver

84 Lum also installed a yellow ship and a black ship on the other two corners of the roof.
associated) posts during ceremonial performances (see Figure 5.5). In Figure 8.13 a dance screen is stretched between the two rear houseposts during a dance performance of the Atłakama “dance of the woods”, at Gwayasdams Village (Gilford Island) in 1946. These screens were not always there but would be hung for ceremonial purposes. To see the rear of the same house without the screen see Figure 5.6. In this photo the dancers are assembled in front of the screen for the sake of the photograph. They wouldn’t normally be seen this way.
Figure 8.13 Unknown (Photographer). (1946). *Atłakama dancers in front of dance screen at Gwayasdams Village, Gilford Island*[Photo]. Image (PN 15250-35) courtesy the Royal BC Museum, BC Archives.

The screen made for the Vancouver Art Gallery was visually divided into red and grey sections mimicking the divisions of the national flag of Canada. This tied in well with the colors of the white ship and red canoe, amplifying their symbolism as icons of coastal First Nations and colonists. In the centre portion of the image a ghost puppet was portrayed straddling a red cedar ring through which a skull emerges. An owl occupied the stomach portion of the ghost puppet. In the image the hands of the ghost form the owl’s wings. The ghost is referred to as a
puppet because it is associated with the *t'ukwid* performance of puppets in the ceremonies of the Kwakwaka'wakw where they would rise out of the ground. It is referenced in this installation as having “the supernatural ability to arise from the dead or come to life.” Figures 8.14 and Figure 8.15 show the daytime ceremonial curtain in place at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Figure 8.16 shows a puppet called *nulamgila* “foolmaker” collected from Gwa’yi Village (Kingcome Inlet) from Peter Moon. In an older collection of puppets in the *American Museum of Natural History* collected by George Hunt for Franz Boas from Kingcome Inlet a large ghost puppet has as her two children two *nulamgila*. The reference to the “foolmaker” I use in a contemporary context as a Kwakwaka’wakw perspective on modern Western short-term exploitative approaches to the land.

Upon the red colored fields are two printed texts; one in Kwak’wala, the other, the English translation. These read as:


*Wosida ga_xa’nuxw, Ha’yaliligas kas wa’xidage’os ka ‘kwaligalitle’sa naxwa!*
Come Ghosts! You, whose night is day and whose day is night, In this Great House.

I beg you, Great Healer, to take pity on us and restore us to life!
Figure 8.15 Nicolson, Marianne (Photographer). (2008). *Daytime view of dance screen hung outside the Vancouver Art Gallery during the winter of 2008-2009* [Photo]. Image courtesy the artist/author.
The text is highly metaphorical. In the text the “ghosts” are “ancestors and spirits”, the “Great House” is “the world, the earth”, and the “great healer” is reference to the killer whales who are referred to as *Ha'yaliligas* which literally translates as “Healing Woman” or “Woman-Setting-Right”, an honorific often used in prayers for healing. Boas (1932) states, “*Ha’yaliligas* is a term used to designate ghosts as well as all beneficent supernatural beings” (p.210). The reference to day and night comes from the Kwakwaka’wakw belief that the ghosts (spirits), comes closer
to the physical world at night and in winter. This makes perfect sense in the Pacific Northwest
Coast geography, where in summer the day stretches until 10pm in June and only 4pm in
December, if we remember that the winter is aligned with night and the spiritual, while day is
aligned with summer and the body. In the work the following temporal metaphors are used:

A day and a night is a summer and a winter

Summer and winter are symbolic of the body and the spirit/soul

The text expands the temporal timeframe of a day into the timeframe of a year by drawing the
analogy that day=summer and night=winter. It also expresses the concepts described in
chapter 7 where a day is analogous to the world as the temporal stage where events occur, “in
this Great House”. The Kwakwaka’wakw world is one of opposites which require balance. The
ghosts are the spiritual equivalent to humanity and in many ways human prosperity is reliant on
their good grace. The world is divided into day and night, summer and winter, spirits and
humans. They are intrinsically connected but opposite. Together they make a whole. This is
the metaphorical explanation as to why, in the land of the ghosts, day is night and night is day.
In Boas (1935) it is stated, “Everything in the ghost village is the same as in our world, only their day is our night, our night their day (p.131).” Figure 8.16 shows these analogous relationships.

Figure 8.16 shows these analogous relationships.

Figure 8.17  *The analogous relationships of “ghosts and humans”, “day and night”*

The text printed on the daytime banner is a prayer for assistance in this world with dealing with the ill health of the planet and the imbalance of the contemporary capitalist based disassociation of humans from the land (exploitive rather than empathetic) as explained in chapter 6. It points to the Kwakwaka’wakw concept of balance between the physical world (human body) and...
spiritual health. Spiritual health is marked by the concept of respect and acknowledgment of all
life forms as animate and equivalent to humanity. “We are the land and the land is us, if we
mistreat it, we will suffer.”

In “The House of the Ghosts” art installation, as evening fell, a light projection gradually
transformed the red printed texts areas into the images of killer whales and the Vancouver Art
Gallery architectural posts and lintel, which framed the banner (dance screen), were
transformed into carved houseposts and crossbeam. The crossbeam image was a sisi’utl, the
double headed serpent, which represents balance. The housepost images were wolves (the
land equivalent of the killer-whales) overtop of killer whales both considered to have the ability
to heal humans. These beings are considered the chiefs of the land and the sea. The wolves
are sometimes called atla’nam “wolf”, literally, “one from the forest” or atlu’linuxw “wolf” (Boas
1948, p.18). Note the use of the atl- stem. While I could not find an equivalent tl’as- name form
for whales meaning specifically meaning “one from the sea” I did find that whale names are
often derived from the stem tl’as- “seaward, region of the sea”. For example, ‘Tlalis means
“whale blowing on beach”, or ‘Tlalis kasu “the real whale blowing on beach and ‘Tlalili’lakw
“(whale) blowing in house” (Boas, 1925? unpublished manuscript “Personal Names in Kwakuitl”,
The whale and wolf posts represent the relationship of the land and sea regions. As houseposts they symbolically hold up the “house of the world”. Figure 8.18 shows “The House of the Ghosts” at night.
Figure 8.18 Mills, Trevor & Robideau, Henri. (Photograph). (2008.) *The House of the Ghosts.* Site specific light projection with banner, dimensions variable approx.. 12 x 12 m. [Photo]Image courtesy the Vancouver Art Gallery and the artist
8.7.1 Spatial transformation: From outside to inside, exterior to interior

The light projection symbolically transformed the architectural exterior of the Vancouver Art Gallery into the interior posts and lintel of a Kwakwaka’wakw bighouse. In doing this the ‘outside’ space of the viewer became the interior ceremonial floor of the house, the night sky becoming the ceiling etc. The viewer, by standing within the symbolic ceremonial space while viewing the work, was now implicated in a ritual performance. Viewers then become a part of the work and as such are addressed as a participant in the condition of the world which is questioned by the words on the banner. Figure 8.19 diagrams this spatial relationship.
In *The House of the Ghost’s* temporal performance, what is in the daytime, the exterior of the Vancouver Art Gallery becomes the interior of up-river side of the Kwakwaka’wakw ceremonial house at night. During the day the Vancouver Art Gallery is a house with a declaratory banner. At night the façade is now the rear part of a ceremonial Kwakwaka’wakw house. The world has become a house and the viewers who stand within the symbolic ceremonial floor are the
performers. The witnesses to this ceremony, this potlatch, are the people who walk or drive by over the course of the installation.

This work had a visual precedent embedded in the history of radical culture change symbolized by architectural shift at the turn of the last century. Figure 8.20 is a photo of houseposts in Alert Bay taken in 1914. In this image we are looking at the *interior* houseposts of the traditional bighouse which formerly occupied this space. The modern Western European style house has been built in the same spatial location where the upriver, chief’s quarters would have been if the exterior of the communal house was still present. Encouraged by the onslaught of Western based norms the “community” houses were eventually abandoned and replaced by modern “individual” family dwellings. In this case, the original *interior* houseposts become the *exterior* model of the now iconic “totem pole” of the Pacific Northwest Coast. In an interesting and somewhat tragic aside, from the point of view of the Kwakwaka’wakw, these same poles eventually were installed as decorative features around the entryway of the St. Michaels Residential School, which had been opened in 1929 (see Figure 8.21).
Figure 8.20 Curtis, Edward, S. (Photographer). (1914). Carved Posts at Alert Bay\(^{85}\) [Photo], Photograph courtesy of Northwestern University Library, Edward S. Curtis’s The North American Indian,” 2003 http://digital.library.northwestern.edu./curtis/

\(^{85}\) Back of a copy of the photo in the BC Archives says “Ned Harris house on right, posts are his” (Billy Sandy Willie Dec, 1974) and underneath is also written, “Totems in front of house belonging to Paul Rufus” (W.N. Corker June 1974).

The houseposts originally belonged to Chief ɬtłəkwudłas of the ‘Namgis Tribe. The house was never finished. The poles were eventually given as a dowry to Paul Rufus when he married ɬtłəkwudłas’ grandson Ned Harris’s oldest daughter Martha Harris Wadzidalaga, ɬaxw’mawidzamga. (personal communication, William Wasden Jr. 05/13)
8.7.2 Temporal and spatial analogies

The contemporary artwork “The House of the Ghosts”, utilized temporal and spatial metaphors and analogies. The symbolism of day and night, interior and exterior are grounded in traditional
concepts and used to reflect on contemporary conditions in the light of Kwakwak'wa’wakw and colonial history. Both “the world is a house” metaphor, in its approach to architecture, as well as the metaphor “the house is a body” in its references to sickness and healing, as well as “the world is a body” are manifest in its formal execution. Strategically the house orientation of t’las-“seaward” is also used in relationship to its position within the cityscape of downtown Vancouver “facing the water”. The Kwakwak’wa’wakw ceremonial space is heightened in the winter when village becomes a sacred site where spirits and ghosts come close and the past is brought forward to meet the present.\textsuperscript{86}

To reiterate, the Kwakwak’wa’wakw traditionally divided the year into two primary divisions, the summer and the winter. The summer season was aligned with the physical, the body, gathering provisions and being out on the land. This season was considered baxus “the profane or ordinary”. The winter season was its opposite. The winter was aligned with the spiritual, the soul, ritual enactments (the winter ceremonial), feasting, gathering of ’namíma and tribes in a central location. It was considered nawalakw “supernatural”. The division and difference between these seasons were so pronounced that the membership held two names, one for the

\textsuperscript{86} This symbolism has been alluded to throughout this dissertation and is more fully explained in Nicolson (2005).
summer season and one for the winter season. The installation takes place in the winter and
plays with the temporal notions of day and night as a contraction of the summer and winter
seasons. It is at night and in winter that the Vancouver Art Gallery is transformed into “the
house of the ghosts” through symbolism and architectural reference in an expression of dismay
over present concerns over the state of the land/world, of British Columbia and its history of
cultural oppression of Indigenous bodies and ideas.

8.8 “Wanx’id – to hide, to be hidden” 2010

The artwork “Wanx’id – to hide, to be hidden” plays with the notion of exterior and interior
knowledge which is aligned with form and meaning, material culture and cultural
conceptualization or ontology. It visually aligns the idea of the body, the box, the house, the
village and the land. Eight glass chests mimic in dimension and form eight wooden
boxes/chests on exhibit in the UBC Museum of Anthropology’s main hall (see Figures 3.9 and
3.10). This interior installation was made for the UBC Museum of Anthropology and reflects on
the institutional practices of museum collections and display from an Indigenous perspective.
Each chest is blackened from the outside and incised with form-line imagery on their interior surfaces. The blackened exteriors block the viewer from the visual expectation set up by the main exhibition hall and open storage displays where everything is well lit and visually accessible. It isn’t until the viewer comes close that the interior imagery starts to emerge from inside the box compelling the viewer to stand over the boxes to look inside. The boxes are lit from below and transparent images taken in the 1930’s in Gwa’yi (Kingcome Inlet) are found on the bottom. Figure 8.22 shows the installation of eight boxes. Figure 8.23 gives a closer perspective where one can begin to see the carved box interiors.

The inset photographic images refer to a particular time period in Musgamakw Dzawada’enuxw history. It was in the 1930’s that the day school in Kingcome Inlet was shut down in favor of sending the village children to the newly built St Michael’s Residential School which had opened in Alert Bay in 1929. This act in particular, which was enforced by the Indian Agent, dealt a severe blow to the passing on of language and culture by separating children from their parents.

The images in each of the boxes are divided into portraits and landscapes. Figure 8.24 shows the interior photo of a class of young girls posing with their teacher prior to closing of the day school in Kingcome Inlet. Some of these young girls I knew as elderly women in the 1990’s
when the push was on to record and gather as much oral history as possible before these elders were no longer with us.

Figure 8.22 Nicolson, Marianne. “Wanx’id –to hide, to be hidden” art installation at The UBC Museum of Anthropology (2010). Image courtesy the artist.
Figure 8.23 Nicolson, Marianne. “Wanx'id – to hide, to be hidden” art installation at The UBC Museum of Anthropology (2010). Image courtesy the artist.
Figure 8.24 Nicolson, Marianne. “Wanx’id –to hide, to be hidden” art installation at The UBC Museum of Anthropology, Interior image inside box. (2010). Image courtesy the artist/author.
The title of the work “'Wanx'id – to hide, to be hidden” has a double meaning. On one hand, it refers to the deliberate masking or withholding of Indigenous cultural information from the consumption of the public but on the other hand it refers to the cultural distance and confusion created between different generations of the Kwakwaka’wakw by the potlatch ban and the residential school system. It was this systemic oppression that deliberately disrupted and

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Figure 8.25 Ms. Arrowsmith? (Photographer). (1936). Junior WA. Image (9b) courtesy the Diocese of British Columbia Archives, Victoria B.C.

87 Left to Right: Top Row: Ms. Wakefield (teacher), Gertie Willie, Nora Webber, ?
Middle Row: Malidzi (Mary Coon), Susan Wallace, Jay Dawson, Violet Dawson, Alice Frank
Front Row: Maggie Howard, Harriet Wilson, Eliza Dawson, Laťsa (Elizabeth Willie)
“made hidden” cultural understanding between the Kwakwaka’wakw who experienced this and their children.

The work also considers the irony in that current generations (such as myself) are now tasked with researching the vast collections of information and material culture that had been removed from the communities and placed in museums and archives in order to return it to the community physically and conceptually. The people pictured in the images inside the boxes were in a sense a storehouse of cultural information themselves and the portraits emphasized the fact that as a living culture this information existed within human beings and within their interactions and understandings amongst each other rather than as materials in a museum or archive.

The exterior view of the boxes mimicked the architecture of a village or cluster of buildings. This reference is simultaneously to both the village community and contemporary institutions. The use of glass is a particular reference to this. The UBC Museum of Anthropology is a building made of glass that contains the material culture of the Kwakwaka’wakw, which are exhibited behind glass. Figure 8.26 shows The UBC Museum of Anthropology from the side facing the
water. Based on the post and beam structure of a bighouse the Museum actually faces the water of Burrard Inlet. Most people don’t realize it but according to Kwakw̱a̱ḵw̱a̱ḵw̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱̱°
house. ‘Wanx’id – to hide, to be hidden’ also refers to this radical divergence in the display of masks between internal community display and public displays in museums and other institutions such as commercial galleries.

Figure 8.27 Kwakwaka’wakw masks on display inside the UBC Museum of Anthropology. (Dick Webber’s houseposts from Gwayasdams Village (Gilford Island) are in the background.) Image courtesy the author/artist.

The form of the boxes most obvious reference is to the traditional cedar container which would hold foodstuffs and *dlugwe* “treasures”, masks and regalia, the symbols of lineage rights and histories. An analogy is drawn between the ideas of continuity in lineage, cultural property and inheritance. Some of the images are of the land and village (Figure 8.28). Other images are of the Chiefs from the late 1930s time-period (Figure 8.29).
Figure 8.28 Nicolson, Marianne. “Wanx’id – to hide, to be hidden” art installation at The UBC Museum of Anthropology (2010). Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 8.29 Nicolson, Marianne. “Wanx’id – to hide, to be hidden” art installation at The UBC Museum of Anthropology (2010). Image courtesy the artist.
Figure 8.30 and 8.31 shows Musgumakw Dzawada'enuxw hereditary chiefs trained and active in the traditional governance structure before the imposition of the Department of Indian Affairs modern governance structure of elected chiefs and councils was imposed in the 1940s. The first photo was used in the art installation and shows some of the chiefs. The second photo was taken at the same time and shows almost all of them.

Figure 8.30 Wakefield, Amy. (Photographer). (1937). Pole with Chiefs. Image (44b) courtesy the Diocese of British Columbia Archives, Victoria B.C.

L to R: Frank Dawson, ?, Peter Harris, ?, Jim Hamdzid, Alex Morgan, Percy Frank, George Scow
The people, the village and the landscape and the epistemology, or worldview, they create are the *długwe* contained within the boxes. These “treasures” are the less tangible aspects of Kwakwaka’wakw culture which have been separated from their “material culture” counterparts in museum institutions. However, the material culture is merely derived from the intangible

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89 Musgamakw Dzawada’enuxw chiefs: L to R: Herbert Johnson, Himas Johnson, Percy Frank, Jim Hamdzid, Tom Williams, Tom Dawson, Alec Nelson, Fred Williams, William Dawson, (Bishop de Poncier), Töm Lagis, Peter Harris, Dick Webber, Billy Johnson, Dick Hawkins, Kingcome Joe, Alex Morgan, Hillier Landsdown (friend), Toby Willie, Peter Scow. (a few are absent: Johnny Scow, head chief of the Kwikwasu’tinuxw had died a few years prior)
culture. The masks and poles and regalia are the surface, formal expression of what is considered in traditional Kwakwa’wakw thought as most important; the ideas and concepts and lineages which they represent. So in contemporary times through museums one experiences a reversed engagement. Institutions have inherited a legacy of preserving the objects of cultures while the conceptual source from which these objects emerged was largely ignored and misunderstood. It has become the challenge of these institutions to redress this imbalanced approach.

The blackened exteriors of the boxes disrupt the expectation of the viewer who has become accustomed to having free visual access to symbols of Indigenous culture. The format of the boxes forces a physical engagement again mimicking the performance aspect of Kwakwa’wakw cultural traditions which engage the body in space. Figure 8.32 shows my nephew, Ryan Nicolson, and my mother, Gloria Nicolson, looking inside the boxes. This image is symbolic of how I perceive myself as a Kwakwa’wakw artist and author anchored and accountable to both the generation who comes after me and the generation before me.
The title “Wanx’id – to Hide, to be Hidden” hints at the idea of the ephemeral and the intangible, notions of access and inaccessibility. It plays with the notion of interior knowledge and contained spaces which are known only to those who truly occupy them. In a nod at current conditions it also acknowledges the dilemma of contemporary Kwakwaka’wakw to understand and know a culture that they have inherited under duress and disassociated from its origins through colonialism. The work addresses the awkward reality that many Indigenous communities are now reliant on information and collections documented by the societies which
caused their traditional cultural educations to be broken down. In a way it is a self-reflection on my own survivalist strategy to re-cover and revive Kwakwaka'wakw culture by infiltrating the academy, the galleries and the museums. The work is a visual analogy of my own process of entering archives, sourcing material, cross referencing information, analyzing linguistic forms, reconstructing historical narratives, staring at photographs, listening to the people around me, witnessing and participating in ceremonies, walking on the land and hoping to understand. In a sense the work reflects on the process inherent in compiling both this thesis and the motives and issues behind that act. Taiaiake Alfred (2010) states in regard to this artwork:

Our art is our life, and to me the power of Marianne Nicolson’s work is not on display in drawn designs or shaped forms. What makes her an artist in my mind is her conscious engagement with the elements of her people’s culture and their homeland. The pieces of wood, the paint on rocks, the arrangements of light all form a constant chronicle of her continuing journey as a person striving to be a true human being. The works are affective and beautiful. But her art and that of any artist is her journey and how she makes us think and feel about our own lives. In this sense her work is a powerful teaching to those of us who are struggling to find
ways to regenerate ourselves and to re-establish our presence in these homelands of ours, now called Canada. (UBC MOA Borderzones website, http://www.moa.ubc.ca/borderzones/features_nicolson.html)

My feeling is that Alfred understands at a fundamental level what I am trying to express; the ideas, experiences, an often elusive comprehension of life which are framed by a specific culture. These ephemeral elements are linked by physical acts which create physical objects but ultimately the motivation is conceptual. In ‘Wanx’id – to hide, to be hidden” I have returned once more to the relationships of form and meaning, the physical and spiritual and the metaphor of the body=house=land in a work which also challenges representation and the social politics of Indigenous relationships to the colonial spaces of the museum and the gallery.

8.9 “The Land is a Person” 2012

“The Land is a Person”, is the last work in the series of four which are presented as the visual component of this thesis. This work in particular provides the most literal manifestation of the metaphor, body=house=land as evidenced by the title. I was approached by the developer of a retirement home to propose a permanent site-specific installation along Mt. Seymour Parkway in
North Vancouver B.C. Utilising the Kwakwaka’wakw temporal concepts of value and emphasis placed upon the past and the connection to ancient beginnings I proposed an artwork that would complement its physical and social environment. A 22’ high hat made of steel, glass and wood is now permanently installed upon the landscape near North Vancouver’s Mount Seymour. The form of the hat mimics a mountain. During the day it is the form that dominates the work. The material qualities of steel, glass, wood and concrete are tangible, solid and complementary. At night the work is transformed by light, the etched image of a killer whale emerging in the dark. Like “The House of the Ghosts” this work exploits the alternation of day and night, the physical and the ephemeral. Figure 8.33 shows the artwork in daytime. Figure 8.34 shows the work at night.
Figure 8.33 Nicolson, Marianne. (2012). *The Land is a Person*. glass, steel, wood & light installation. 22’ x 22’ (Daytime View) Image courtesy the artist/author.
Figure 8.34 Nicolson, Marianne. (2012). *The Land is a Person*. glass, steel, wood & light installation. 22’ x 22’ (Nighttime View) Image courtesy the artist/author.
The hat is worn by the landscape. The “hat on the land” is literal. It acts to personify and animate the land as equivalent to the human body. The body of the land is the vertical depth of layer upon layer of material built up over thousands of years. It honors a sense of agedness in “place”. Figure 8.35 shows a traditional hat made of cedar bark or spruce-root worn by the man on the right holding staffs covered in silver bracelets for a potlatch give-away. Note the stack of hats in the background that visually mimic the stack of blankets behind the men. These can be metaphorically referred to as “mountains of wealth”. Boas (1949) states: “The large amount of property given away “stands a mountain of blankets, reaching through the world.” (p. 234).

Referring back to chapter 6, in the words of Daband, ancestor to the Wa’ukwamayi ‘namima of the Dzawada’enuxw, when he came out of the stone as a human being to become a tribesman of Kawadilkala: “My name is Stone, my name is Mountain, my name is Big Mountain, my name is increasing Mountain.” (Curtis 1915:133) These examples show an empathetic and animated perspective of the land. The land is both personified and like a chief, a source of wealth. However, the interpretation of what wealth (value) is, and its means of distribution are radically different from Western capitalist concepts.
Figure 8.35 Cadwallader Collection. (prior to 1912). *Potlatch Giveaway on display in Alert Bay*\(^9^0\) [Photo]. Image (PN 1098) courtesy the Royal BC Museum, BC Archives.

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\(^9^0\) Man on left is identified as “O’wadi donor of the material in the background, button blankets, bracelets, per Mrs. Tom Johnson.” Is written on the back of the photo card at Royal BC Museum.

O’wadi was the older brother of Charlie Nowell perhaps linking this photo to others in the BC Archives collection which document a potlatch given by O’wadi (Thomas Nowell) around 1900.

After some discussion with William Wasden Jr. the identities of the three men are most likely Thomas (O’wadi) Nowell (far left), Lagiyus (Charlie Nowell’s father-in-law), a chief of the ‘Namgis People (centre), and Charlie Nowell
In Dzawada’enuxw history the mountain births a man who becomes the ancestor of the Dzawada’enuxw. His biology, the biology of the mountain becomes a part of the people. When the people die, their physical bodies return to the land/mountain. The mountain acts as a symbol of the land and is considered as equivalent to humanity. As demonstrated throughout this thesis through language and cultural practices the Kwakwaka’wakw perspective of their relationship with the land is both material and spiritual. This is in contrast to a contemporary Western based, capitalist economic and philosophical approach to the land which is transitory, fleeting and focused on the material.

*The Land is a Person*, was inspired by the legislation of “Pachamama” from Bolivia, in South America, where the land has recently been recognized by law, with rights equivalent to human rights (Vidal, 2011). I saw this belief as akin to the Kwakwaka’wakw traditional approach to the land where the land is considered animate and alive, deserving of respect and a status equal to that of humans. In addition, after thousands of years of occupying the same landscape, the land is literally imbued with the remains of one’s ancestral biology. This is ideologically contrasted against the current status within North American legal definitions of United States commercial corporations as “persons”, or citizens (Hall, 2010). The hat built on the land in
North Vancouver is a visual affirmation of the Indigenous perspective of the land and the approach to the landscape as a partner to humanity rather than subservient.

Again, the killer whale is a referent for healing of the body/land that we saw expressed in *The House of the Ghosts*. The use of the color blue refers to the sea and to the sky. The visual transition from day to night is a reference to the idea of the body (day) and the spirit (night) and the idea of balance between both which was elaborated upon in the section describing “The House of the Ghosts”. One aspect of this work that is less prevalent amongst the others is its literality. The work literally engages with the land; is placed upon the land. The analogy of the body with the land is made explicit in the occupation of the space by viewers. When in the space the hat crowns both individuals present in the space and simultaneously continues to crown the land. The hat also acts like a house in that it provides shelter for the human body. This manifests the metaphor Body=House=Land/World and the concept “you are the land”, amplifying the empathetic character of Kwakwaka’wakw land/human relationships.
8.10 Summary

Each of the four works described attempts to express, under contemporary conditions, metaphorical and analogical concepts that arise from a Kwakwaka'wakw traditional approach to space and time. These concepts have been derived from language forms and ‘ways of speaking’ that emerge from the Kwak’wala language. One might ask the question, “Why contemporary works and not a more comprehensive analysis of traditional ceremonialism and artistic expression?” The answer to that lies in the purpose of the analysis itself. If the premise of this dissertation was to further explain Kwakwaka’wakw culture to an outside audience as an individual pursuit by a student within the academic setting then the logical follow through might have been that type of explanation. However, I approached this endeavor as a survivalist strategy to learn about the Kwak’wala language and to consider its relevance to contemporary Kwakwaka’wakw. In contemporary contexts the perusal and exploration of the formal aspects of Kwakwaka’wakw culture have been examined on many fronts and will continue to be, given the curiosity of the broader society. However, it has been my own concern as a contemporary Kwakwaka’wakw person, to explore the underlying notions, conceptual associations and the ‘ways of thinking’ that originally brought forth those creations. While we might imitate what has gone on before, how much do we understand and think like our ancestors given our current
colonized state of living in a Western styled society while speaking English? The true test it
seemed was to create works that while innovative in material and context would address these
new materials and contexts in a way that had conceptual consistency with that found in the
Kwak'wala language and traditional expressions. To paraphrase, it was akin to approaching the
issues at hand while thinking like our ancestors. If our ancestors had access to the materials
and spaces that I had access to what would they create and would those creations reflect
concepts and ideas that had spatial and temporal familiarity?

It is easy to imitate forms without fundamental understanding but impossible to innovate without
fundamental conceptual understanding. Of course, in the long run it cannot avoid becoming a
hybrid practice but one I thought worthwhile pursuing over the option of placing what appeared
as traditional works in non-traditional settings (galleries and museums) where the works have
the appearance of visual consistency with their past but through re-contextualization have
become more about Western colonial culture than Kwakwaka'wakw culture. Again, like this
dissertation, it is simply a strategy engaged in by the author/artist because the traditional
channels of cultural transmission were actively suppressed and appropriated years ago. The
discussion becomes one of form and meaning and the attempt to engage with the meanings
and apply the forms rather than just engage with the forms alone. In this sense the work is an extension of the postmodern critique of a single narrative or knowable reality. These works contest the narrow singular understanding of their formal elements previously focused upon in the gallery and museum exhibitions of indigenous works that emerged out of modernism in the first half of the 20th century by attempting to speak from within their own understandings rather than an imposed one. In a sense the artworks attempt to appropriate the Western construct of the exhibition space into one which is intrinsically Kwakwaka’wakw in its meaning in addition to its form. As postmodernism has attempted to make room for additional narratives and voices so then do these works take the opportunity to express Kwakwaka’wakw ideas in alternative spaces and in doing so, perpetuate the traditions of the Kwakwaka’wakw in new and innovative ways.
Chapter 9: Conclusion

Dream of Alkilayogwa

I dreamed I travelled across the water in a small canoe. I was not half way across when a northwesterly gale began to blow. I steered towards Naxagad. Then my small travelling canoe capsized. I climbed out of the small canoe that was drifting upside down on the water. I lay on it with my chest down. Then a gull came flying and alighted on the bow of small canoe that was drifting on the water. It took my hand and told me to walk on top of the water. Thus I arrived at Blunden Harbour.

Then he taught me what to do when a great epidemic should come in summer. He said so, and spit out a quartz crystal. Then he put the quartz crystal into my body at the lower end of my sternum and pressed it in. Then he said, “Now make a rattle in my form (imitate me). Then you will be a great shaman,” thus said the gull. “Now you shall have the name ‘Ku’lant’sisamega from now on.” Then I awoke. (Boas, 1925, pp. 27-29)
9.1 General Overview

Through the exploration of the concept of space, the written component of my thesis has demonstrated that the Kwak’wala language and traditional cultural forms are mutually supportive. Language and culture reflect each other because they derive from the same conceptual source or understructure (worldview) that was developed over thousands of years in the same landscape. Reflected throughout the Kwak’wala language and traditional Kwakwaka’wakw cultural forms such as architecture, social structure, ceremonies and narrative is the primary metaphoric concept Body=House=Land/World. This empathetic analogous relationship is influential in the formal linguistic manifestation of the u-[a’w-] stem, the spatial division of Kwak’wala pronouns and certain required aspects of the determiner system, in particular, the radial categorization of the stem ga- “referring to someone/something in closest proximity to the point of origin” and he- “further away, or removed altogether, distant, (off-stage)”. Relationships of the body are mapped onto the architecture of the house in terms such as ugwiwali “front of house, forehead of house, rear of house”. Terminology referential to the house, such as ‘naldzi’ “upriver” and gwe’nakw “downriver” are analogous to social structure which is also reflected in village and land occupation. All of these are mapped onto orientations within the landscape which are marked by the stems all- “landwards, forest region”, tlas-
“seaward, ocean/water region”, ’nal-[’nal-]“upriver” and gwa- “downriver”. These four primary geographical orientations are anchored by the u-[a’w-] stem which is associated with the body, or site of origin.

Analogical spatial expansion and contraction is used as a method for the conceptualization of geographic and temporal relationships. The beliefs “the house is an expanded body”, and “the world is an expanded house”, are examples of analogical expansion. The belief, “the ceremonial house is the world” is an example of analogical contraction. It is particularly through the stem ga- “referring to someone/something in closest proximity to the point of origin” that temporal expansion and contraction are exhibited. Ga- can encompass the meaning “closest to the body as occurring now in time and space” but also “closest to origins in time and space historically.

Concepts of time appear to share conceptual features with space exhibiting time/space crossover. This is most evident in the stem ’na- “the day, or the world”. The day is the temporal time frame when events occur, while the world is the stage or space where events occur. The year is divided into two primary seasons which are heavily symbolic of social
relationships in space. The winter village and the winter season are composed of close relationships both physical and spiritual in that ‘ni’nəmima “clans” come together to winter in a single location with spirits for the t’sitʼseka “winter ceremonial”. When together in the ceremonial house, the ‘ni’nəmima are spatially positioned in relationship to one another in a reflection of social standings. In the summer, the ni’nəmima “clans” spatially spread out over the land for resource based activities. Again, within this movement one can see the concept of expansion and contraction operating. One could say that the social “body” of the tribe is brought together in the winter and spread out over the land in the summer. In the winter, the ceremonial house becomes a microcosm of the universe where temporal and spatial relationships are imaginatively and symbolically reconfigured. Figure 9.1 demonstrates the relationship of Kwak’wala forms to understructure. The understructure can be said to form a grammar that is connected to extended meanings (semantics) which form the ontology of the Kwakwaka’wakw. Radial categories are part of the relationship between the grammar and the ontology.
The underlying systems which are represented by radial extensions, conceptual associations, and beliefs ultimately influence the manifestation of “surface forms” both linguistic and of cultural practice. Surface form and deep meaning are mutually enforcing. Kwakwaka’wakw cultural forms stem from the same conceptual substructure\textsuperscript{91} that Kwak’wala language forms

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\textsuperscript{91} The words “substructure” and “understructure” are interchangeable; both referring to the base or foundation of an entity. I have used the term “understructure” more often due to its literal expression of spatial relationship.
emerge out of. This deeper substructure can also be called worldview. This worldview has developed over thousands of years within the same geographic environment and is indeed, deeply connected to the particular landscape of Pacific Northwest coast land, sea and the intermediate village zone situated in between. Figure 9.2 diagrams the relationship with cultural forms.

Figure 9.2  Relationship of surface forms and understructures in Kwakwaka’wakw culture
This relationship is a result of relative stability over time and space. In other words it developed and maintained itself over an extended period of time within a defined geography. One of the pivotal questions underlying this thesis regards the effects of radical colonization where Kwakwaka’wakw culture and language were forcibly suppressed in order to replace traditional ontologies (worldview and belief systems) with Western ontologies throughout the latter part of the 19th century through to the 20th century. Kwak’wala speech was actively discouraged and young Kwakwaka’wakw were encouraged to abandon “old ways of thinking” through an imposed residential school system. The potlatch was outlawed and participants were incarcerated. Massive amounts of material culture were appropriated and interred in museums. This can basically be characterized as assimilative. Figure 9.3 demonstrates which areas of formal manifestations and conceptual understructure were attacked by colonial suppression and imposed authority.
Figure 9.3 Effects on the structure by colonialism
In Figure 9.3 I have lightened the boldness of the connecting arrows to show that the connections have become weaker but that they have not disappeared altogether. The surface forms of Kwak'wala culture have been appropriated and suppressed by Western colonialism but the erasure of underlying forms (belief systems) are less easily apprehended.

This thesis has shown that while there are still Kwak'walo language speakers, while there are still members interested and invested in maintaining traditions and most importantly, where there are still Kwak’wakw living within the traditional landscape of sea, forest and village, remnants of the traditional ontology are still evident.

9.2 Metaphor of the Kwakwaka’wakw “house”

Entering the 21st Century, the traditional Kwakwaka’wakw ontology has become weakened but it hasn’t been replaced altogether. I credit this remarkable survival to two factors. First, it is a testimony to the variety of ways in which a worldview is constructed and reinforced within the mind and second, it is testimony of the tenaciousness of the Kwakwaka’wakw to maintain their worldview and remain within their territories. In regards to the first factor, if language and culture as formal manifestations are mutually supportive then as long as remnants of these systems remains there is still the ability to relate back to the originating conceptual
understructure. In other words, losing the Kwak'wala language is indeed threatening to a

traditional Kwak'wala ontology but through the maintenance of alternative forms there still

exists the possibility of maintaining that belief system to some degree. The connection is
definitely weakened but not altogether lost by the replacement of Kwak'wala with English. That

being said I want to still emphasize that losing the language remains a significant threat to

traditional Kwak'wala worldview. It is as if the Kwak'wala "house" is held up by a

number of weight bearing posts and with each post that is removed or weakened in its weight

bearing ability, the remaining weight is spread amongst the other standing posts. The

Kwak'wala "house" is still standing but its structural stability has been weakened.

Eventually if each post is weakened sufficiently it will no longer bear weight and collapse upon

itself. Using this analogy one can say that the Kwak'wala language is one of the major weight

bearing pillars of the Kwak'wala house. Figure 9.4 demonstrates this metaphor of the

house.
In order to maintain traditional Kwakwa’wakw culture, our contemporary objectives remain in strengthening each post of the Kwakwa’wakw traditional house. This means revitalizing traditional social structure and governance, rituals, ceremonies and art, knowledge of traditional narratives and their relationship to our histories, the Kwak’wala language and our traditional
relationship to the land. This revitalization must take place while acknowledging the context of
the radical cultural change of the 20th century. As Kwakwaka’wakw we must find ways of
adapting and utilizing the introduced modern systems to traditional principles. It is not so much
the technologies of the Western colonial culture which are antithesis to Kwakwaka’wakw ways
of being but the principles and beliefs which guide and apply them. As examples we can see
how literacy was adopted by the Kwakwaka’wakw into their potlatch system in order to maintain
records in “potlatch ledgers” at a time when much of the traditional means of maintaining oral
histories were breaking down due to population loss and cultural oppression. From a material
standpoint we can see how from the introduction of blankets and buttons emerged a brilliant
new art form that could further express familial and historic relationships through the
development of the ‘kangext’ola”button blanket”. If we can firmly ground ourselves within the
traditional principles and beliefs that our ancestors upheld and that is expressed within our
language than we can adapt the institutions of education and social engagement as tools to suit
our understanding of the world. This is what I have referred to earlier as claiming “agency” and
being active in our engagements rather than passively accepting a status quo which has been
historically imposed upon us.
We have discussed in the previous section how the diversity of ways in which an epistemology is constructed and manifested has assisted a Kwakwaka’wakw worldview to survive into the 21st century. The second factor influential in the contemporary survival of the Kwakwaka’wakw traditional worldview was the tenacity of our ancestors. They fought the potlatch suppression and found sophisticated ways to get around it (Cole & Chaikin, 1990). They resisted their children’s removal from their homes and placement in the residential school. They also resisted the removal of their communities from traditional village sites to areas more convenient for the Indian Agent, or colonial government administration. This is significant, as relocation was being used as a tactic all over Canada to remove Indigenous peoples from their traditional land base in order to gain access to resources (Ray, 2010). As contemporary Kwakwaka’wakw we need to consider which aspects of our traditions our ancestors felt were most important to hold onto.

Some academic research has posited that it was egotistical grandiosity which fueled the desire to maintain tradition in the face of opposition (Codere, 1950). While an element of this can be considered I believe the majority of the impetus to maintain tradition would have come from social obligation and reciprocity in relationships between both rival nal’namíma and the individual family members and their chiefs who made up the nal’namíma. It was these relationships that established for the people a sense of belonging and of contributing to a larger
whole that was connected both in time (to ancestors and future descendants) and space (to the village and to the land). It was to the basic principle of Body=House=Land/World as

*Individual=Community/Village=Land/World* that was the impetus for their tenacity, their very sense of being on the world under a particularly Kwak’waka’wakw understanding as manifest in the Kwak’wala language. This was the way our old people knew their place in the world, what was expected of them and the purpose of their life. It is no wonder they held on so hard to their traditions and under this premise the statement of some of the old people that in being forced to give up their traditions they would no longer have anything to live for can be understood, not as a maniacal desire to outdo one another in a game of one-up-manship but in perpetuating a sense of belonging and of place.

A better understanding of this impetus towards tradition is worth considering. Modern capitalist influenced approaches to tradition would have it reduced to exotic spectacles worth paying money to see or to own, completely divorcing it from its original intent. The magnitude of this pressure to appropriate tradition into spectacle can be understood in the context of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games where Pacific Coastal First Nations were heavily solicited to exhibit a viable commercial perspective on their cultures that pointedly avoided the unresolved
issues between First Nations and the Canadian nation state. There is a vast spectrum of gradation between the objectives of tradition as experienced by our ancestors and the commercialization of tradition due to modern capitalist objectives for propaganda and profit. How we as Kwak'wa'wa'kwa manage to find a balance between the two remains one of our contemporary challenges.

9.3 The Kwak'wa'wa'kw "house" in the land

As I have attempted to show throughout this thesis, spatial language in Kwak'wala is intimately connected to a particular landscape. Kwak'wala linguistic forms emerge from the relationships of land, sea and village and within this context the Body=House=Land/World metaphor makes sense. Having stated this, it becomes important then for contemporary Kwak’wa’wa’kw to maintain their places within their territories and re-occupy traditional sites. This is proposed against the current movement towards Kwak’wa’wa’kw urbanization which removes the Kwak’wa’wa’kw from physically experiencing their traditional lands. *The metaphoric traditional Kwak’wa’wa’kw “house” is one situated within Kwak’wa’wa’kw lands.* Figure 9.5 shows the village of Gwa’yi at ‘Ukwanalis in Kingcome Inlet. It is one of the last occupied traditional villages within Kwak’wa’wa’kw territories. The importance of maintaining these communities
within their traditional locations, within their lands, cannot be understated. This is the significance of the Kwak'wala formal expression of the spatial relationship between the body *ukwine' “body” and the land *awinagwis “land”.*

![Figure 9.5 Gwa’yi Village (Kingcome Inlet). Home of the Dzawada’enuxw People. Photo courtesy Midori Nicolson](image)

The visual relationship of community within a landscape is made explicit within this aerial photo of Gwa’yi village “down river place” at ‘Ukwanalis “beach (or place of) body” in Kingcome Inlet.
shows the primacy of the landscape as defined by land and water, upriver and downriver (see Map 13, Boas 1934). It also shows how the individual would be spatially encompassed by the house, the village and the ultimately, the land.

What does all of this mean to contemporary Kwakwaka’wakw? If we consider the Kwakwaka’wakw relationship to land under the template of expanding and contracting spheres of analogous forms; the Body=House=Land/World metaphor as manifest in Kwakwaka’wakw culture is an empathetic one. The similarity of formal structures is given more prevalence in the Kwakwaka’wakw mind rendering a conceptualization of objects and the land which emphasizes equivalence with humanity and similarity. This is different from modern Western based human-nature notions which de-emphasize empathy and highlight hierarchy. The Kwakwaka’wakw conceptual model that emerges is one of expanding spheres on a level playing field while the Western conceptual model is a hierarchy which places mankind above and nature below. The investment and engagement of this egalitarian Kwakwaka’wakw conceptual understructure are manifest in language, ceremonies artworks, storytelling, and actual engagement with the land. All is animate and granted the equivalent status as mankind, even at times recognizing that it is humanity that is subject to the land. This empathetic understanding of human/land relationship
facilitates an approach to lands and resources which is mutually nurturing and extended over
time. In particular the Kwakwaka’wakw approach to time is more highly conscious of extensions
into the past and the future. Kwakwaka’wakw social obligation is not to just the current
generation but to both ancestors and descendants. The idea is embodied within the statement
that we have been here since “time immemorial”. This statement basically recognizes our
commitment to a particular landscape that we are derived from and are committed to continue to
occupy and nurture. The relationship is symbiotic. We are as much the land as the land is us.
The Kwakwaka’wakw body IS the Kwakwaka’wakw house, which IS the Kwakwaka’wakw lands.
This belief is the very essence of how we have understood ourselves as Kwakwaka’wakw
human beings. As Kwakwaka’wakw people we are bound by this belief system to each other
and to the landscape. In comparison, Western colonial approaches to the land appear
fractured, exploitive and limited. The fundamental conceptual premise of empathy and
reciprocal responsibility between the self (body), society (house) and land (world) is not a belief
system upheld by Western notions of the independent autonomous self which through
capitalism encourages competition over cooperation, individualism over community, and
privatization of lands over communal stewardship (Hall, 2010). Having said all this, the
complexity of the dilemma facing the modern Kwakwaka’wakw is that these beliefs as described
are traditional. They are derived from an ancient way of living and from speaking a language which enforced this way of living. What happens when the overwhelming forces of colonization and modern Western capitalism have changed the language and lifestyles of the majority of Kwakwaka'wakw peoples? Our task becomes the translation of tradition into modern existence. This is not as difficult as it might initially appear. My suggestion is that as long as we place our efforts in maintaining the basic principles manifest and expressed by tradition then the surface forms and technologies of the colonial west can be utilized to meet these ends, reinforcing and reinventing tradition. This means a shift in focus to the concept of “understructure” and a shift in consciousness from the importance of “how we do things” which are formal considerations, to “why we do things” which are conceptual considerations (Figure 9.3).

9.4 Conflicting ideologies: Colonization, capitalism, the house, and the land

The Kwakwaka'wakw do not exist in a static condition of perpetual tradition, despite having a cultural mandate to attempt this, but have been adapting and adjusting to the massive wave of change brought on by colonization in the last 200 years. This cannot be ignored. It is the very reason that the Kwak'wala language has become endangered and cultural practices have shifted. Negotiating these changes has become the challenge not just to modern
Kwakwaka’wakw but all of the indigenous peoples around the world. However, particular to the Kwakwaka’wakw and other indigenous coastal nations of British Columbia are the unresolved and conflicted issues around ownership/stewardship of lands in relationship to the colonial province of British Columbia and the mostly unsuccessful British Columbia Treaty process (1992-ongoing). Land ownership/stewardship is the dominant issue that modern Kwakwaka’wakw face and the different perspectives on the relationship to land is where the metaphor of Body=House=Land/World gains in significance. It is into this equation that the economic system of capitalism which has come with the colonization of British Columbia needs to be considered.

Capitalism is an economic system based on the premises of private property (individual ownership of physical phenomena such as lands and resources), commodification (the assigning of standard values to goods, land and labour) and the establishment of a sovereign “modern” state which can uphold and enforce these notions (Wallerstein, 1992). Capitalism has become the dominant global economic system of the 20th Century. While capitalism, as an economic system, is not the same thing as colonialism its incentives are bound with those of imperialism and colonization.
Colonialism in North America emerged from European imperialism and the capitalist based need of European states to access new forms of both resources and labour. Samir Amin (2006) states, “colonialism arose out of the economic and social logic of capitalism”. Colonization was a way of gaining access and control over regions and peoples outside of the originating country. The incentives for initial Western European contact on the British Columbia coast were capitalist in nature as the Spanish, British, and American traders arrived under the prospect of discovering and claiming new lands (and hence resources) and continued to return to the coast upon discovering a lucrative trade in sea otter furs (Gibson. 1992). This introductory enterprise in a capitalist based relationship with the west based on the over hunting of the sea-otter brought to the Kwakwaka’wakw and other indigenous peoples of the coast, an initial influx of material wealth and prestige followed by the decimation of their populations by introduced disease. As well, the almost complete annihilation of the sea otter disrupted the ecological balance of the coastal environment. These episodes appeared to go against the concepts of empathy and balance accorded to traditional conceptual understanding of the relationship of people to the land. Upon contact, what the Kwakwaka’wakw gained in terms of material wealth, they paid for in mortality. The trajectory of capitalism would eventually lead to British colonization and the suppression of Kwakwaka’wakw cultural practices and language for
economic reasons. The traditional social economic system of the potlatch went against the maximization of labour capital as participants were considered unproductive during the ceremonial season by the Indian Agents. As well as the giving away, or "potlatching" of goods, rather than the accumulation of wealth was seen as illogical according to capitalist standards.

Ultimately, the empathetic ideological approach to the landscape successfully practiced for thousands of years by the Kwakwaka'wakw did not function well with a modern capitalist system which required the land to be considered as a resource to be exploited for maximum profits.

The emphasis of the Body=House=Land/World perspective lies with notions of collectivity and joint ownership of lands and resources. The notion of collective stewardship and social accountability to group identity is anchored in the intermediate metaphor of the “house”. The individual Kwakwaka’wakw “body” is contained within the social and historical “house”, which is contained within the land. This notion of collective identity does not work well in a modern Western capitalist economy based on privatization of land and individual ownership. In a sense the Western free market capitalist interpretation of the body to both social and geographic spaces could be considered Body≠House≠Land/World; the antithesis of the traditional Kwakwaka’wakw approach mapped out in this thesis.
Capitalism, as an economic system, was initially defined as “individualism” or “economic individualism” (Hessen, 2008). It was called “economic individualism” due to its fundamental belief in the pursuit of individual self-interest and the individual right to own private property.

Free market capitalism also posits that the role of the state (government) is to protect individual rights and freedoms in the pursuit of economic profits in order to foster economic growth.

Robbins (2007) explains that collective ownership is a barrier to economic growth based on capital accumulation; the accumulation of wealth based on investment for profits, or “making money”:

The collective ownership of resources, which supports community solidarity represents a severe drag on capital accumulation for it inhibits the exchange and economic development of resources. Value systems that attribute spiritual significance to objects in nature – animals, trees, plants, mountains, etc. – while serving important social and ecological functions are barriers to capital accumulation because they limit the exploitation and destruction of the environment and must be removed, modified, or ignored for capital accumulation to occur.

(http://www.faculty.plattsburgh.edu./Richard.robbins/staff/Polanyi.htm)
In order to maximize market potential, limits on resource exploitation must be removed as well as social obligations which might limit this exploitation. In Figure 9.6 I have interpreted this as the capitalist hierarchy of the individual (Body) over society (House) and nature (Land/World).

Connected to the notion of the individual is the concept of privatization which is realized in the relationship to land as “private property”. Under the premise of “private ownership” individuals own land and are able to exploit land based resources with minimal regulation from social accountability. In this way one can theorize that under capitalism it is necessary that the needs and desires of the individual “Body/Self” be prioritized over the social obligation and restraint represented by the House/Community (Body≠ House).

Figure 9.6 Capitalist hierarchy of the individual over society and nature
The hierarchical relationship of mankind over nature as an aspect of capitalism is also reflected in general Western beliefs systems. This belief was presented by Boas (1911) as being linked to racist notions of colonial white superiority over localized Indigenous populations. He made the following introductory statement in his book “The Mind of Primitive Man” in order to discredit it throughout the text.

Proud of his wonderful achievements, civilized man looks down upon the humbler members of mankind. He has conquered the forces of nature and compelled them to serve him. He has transformed inhospitable forests into fertile fields. The mountain fastnesses [security or refuge\(^{92}\)] are yielding their treasures to his demands. The fierce animals which are obstructing his progress are being exterminated, while others which are useful to him are made to increase a thousand fold. The waves of the ocean carry him from land to land, and towering mountain-ranges set him no bounds. His genius has moulded inert matter into powerful machines which await a touch of his hand to serve his manifold demand.

With pity he looks down upon those members of the human race who have not

\(^{92}\) Definition provided by author, not in original text.
succeeded in subduing nature; who labour to eke a meagre existence out of the 
products of the wilderness; who hear with trembling the roar of the wild animals, 
and see the products of their toils destroyed by them; who remain restricted by 
oceans, rivers or mountains...What wonder if civilized man considers himself a 
being of higher order as compared to primitive man, if he claims that the white race 
represents a type higher than all the others! (pp.1-2)

Notions of communal ownership and social accountability are paramount to maintaining a 
Kwakwaka'wakw traditional worldview. These are ways of being, or beliefs which are manifest 
in the world and conceptually reinforced through the Body=House=Land/World metaphor and 
the Kwak'wala language. The Kwakwaka'wakw belief system Body=House=Land/World as a 
way of being in the world is under duress due to Western colonial and capitalist expansion.

To the Western mind the Kwakwaka'wakw cultural animation of all things may come across as 
irrational, fanciful, superstitious, and the product of a primitive mind. To the Kwakwaka'wakw 
the cultural manifestation of the Body=House=Land/World metaphor formally expressed in the 
Kwak'wala language makes perfect sense in maintaining a closely connected network of human
to nature relationships that nurtured our existence for thousands of years with little sacrifice on
the part of the land. In the last two hundred years we have experienced both the demise of the
Kwak'wala language that conceptually reinforced this empathetic conceptualization as well as
the demise of the land itself as Western concepts of hierarchy and exploitation have taken over,
creating clear-cut forests, poisoned rivers, diseased oceans and ultimately global warming. This
brings me back to one of the early questions posed by this thesis. If we lose the Kwak'wala
language how does it affect us as Kwakwaka'wakw? The answer is complex and as stated
earlier, involves primarily our relationship to each other and to the land. An extension of this
question asks; what is the cost to modern society in general if we lose the concepts embedded
in indigenous languages like Kwak'wala?

9.5 Survival of the Kwak'wala language and the Kwakwaka'wakw Peoples

Replacing Kwak'wala with English shifts our relationship to our past, our histories, our lands and
to each other as Kwakwaka'wakw people. A complete disassociation however, is not
completely valid while the landscape which gave birth to the language forms still remains
occupied. In other words, as long as the Kwakwaka'wakw continue to inhabit their ancestral
lands a tenuous connection is still viable. Certain symbolisms rendered through bodily
experience in a specific landscape will still render conceptual associations, which while suffering from the lack of cognitive reinforcement through language, can still exist. These associations are like well-travelled paths. The less the path is followed the less defined it becomes. In many ways, the minds of modern Kwakwaka'wakw are criss-crossed by conceptual paths that were worn smooth by our ancestors but for us have become overgrown and hard to follow. The premise is that these paths would become more clear and easier to travel upon through the reinforcement of Kwak'wala usage.

The other issue at hand which tends to obscure this world-view, way of thinking or metaphorical “path/road” is that our relationship to our territories is changing. Many of our people through circumstance have chosen to live in urban cities where the relationship of land and sea, upriver/downriver, night and day, winter and summer, the sacred and the ordinary are no longer relevant to modern life. In these new contexts we are more likely to consider roads and cars, jobs and wages, housing, heat and electricity, work and entertainment to be more relevant to our internal concepts of navigating the world. In this context, the symbolism, analogies and metaphors of the Kwak’wala language seem less relevant to a contemporary urban lifestyle.
Given this observation one would think traditional Kwakwaka’wakw ways of thinking beyond salvage and yet there remains this pervasive, stubborn way of being in the world and on the land which still has a heartbeat. Within many Kwakwaka’wakw young people there still remains something of the way our old people thought of things. Perhaps it is that we still occupy our territories to some degree, that we still travel the waters and that some Kwakwaka’wakw still live by the sides of rivers and the ocean. It could be that even though translated for our benefit into English some of our stories that tell us who we are and where we come from still make it into our consciousness. It is also possible that many of the Kwakwaka’wakw, still retain a memory trace of the language spoken by our parents and grandparents and the affection they expressed for family relationship and a sense of community and of place. It could be that we still practice a broken and severely disrupted version of our traditional ceremonies and it could be that we are at least considering what it might mean to return to our traditional ways of governance. But it is all very tenuous and the stakes are high. The pressing influence of Western society is all around us and the mediation of our ways of thinking through modern media pervasive. Over and over it is reinforced upon us, a globally promoted generic way of life which would have us separated from our lands, our histories and our traditional way of being in the world. To relate to and understand our culture through exterior Western frameworks is to accept our culture as
merely a past-time, a recreational act, or entertainment; a surface cover, an outfit to wear on
special occasions. To our old people from one hundred years ago this perspective is
completely foreign and yet in the words of Gloria Cranmer-Webster (1991), great-granddaughter
of George Hunt;

If my ancestors from two hundred years ago were able to be with us today, I often
wonder what they would think of a contemporary potlatch. Would they be able to
recognize what we do as being related to what they did? Would they pity us for
having lost so much, or be proud that we are still here? I think that after recovering
from the shock of seeing so many changes, not only in the potlatch but in all aspects
of our lives, they would tell us that under the circumstances, we are not doing too
badly. They would also urge us to keep on strengthening what we have, if we are to
survive and continue having our good times (p. 248).

The issues are complex and there are no black and white answers for how to proceed. There
are however some guideposts to help us navigate the difficult road we are faced with. The
Kwak'wala language embodies the traditional Kwak'wakawakw way of being in the world and
the fact that young people still have the desire to learn it is hopeful. This interest in the
maintenance of Kwakwaka’wakw culture and the Kwak’wala language is the reason why this
thesis exists. The analysis presented in this dissertation seeks to explain why it is so vitally
important, beyond a romanticised reinvestment in Aboriginal identity, to keep this language
alive. The visual component to this thesis sought to present these ideas in a public space as a
complement to the written component. Both written presentation in an academic setting and
visual presentation in gallery and museum contexts are used by the author/artist as
contemporary strategies for maintaining traditional concepts. I cannot vouch for how
successful this strategy will ultimately be but it serves as a testimonial to the ways in which the
Kwakwaka’wakw have creatively found ways to perpetuate their ontology despite attempts to
eradicate it. My artwork and this thesis are my own attempts to perpetuate the traditions that
were taught to me by prior generations. It seemed important to enter the public realm outside of
the Kwakwaka’wakw community and attempt to create dialogue and understanding between
ourselves and the people we now share this land/space with. It is ultimately a negotiation of
space both physical and conceptual. In considering the wider sphere of global relations and
how the concepts within this thesis relate I am attempting to broaden the interpretation of the
house as village or community to the modern concept of Canadian nationhood. Not all readers
of this thesis or viewers of artwork are Kwakwaka’wakw, and yet I felt that there was relevance in the analysis for non-Kwakwaka’wakw under this broader application now that we are required to in a modern sense “share the same house”.

9.6 The value of maintaining traditional Kwakwaka’wakw conceptual understructure / worldview on a global stage

The overt colonization of the Kwakwaka’wakw people, our bodies, our society, our culture and our territories, has gone underground due to international pressure, and is no longer considered acceptable. What we are fighting is the ongoing, less obvious colonization of our minds. My presentation of the relationship of “form” and “meaning” throughout this thesis has shown that while the surface forms of our culture have been appropriated and oppressed the underlying conceptual understructure of that system still maintains a level of integrity. It is at this level that we can still “think” like our Kwakwaka’wakw ancestors. Full assimilation will only occur once we completely accept the conceptual frameworks and ways of thinking of Western colonization and its compatriot capitalism as the only way of approaching our relationship to each other and to our territories. For example, if we begin to think of the land as a resource to be exploited for our immediate economic benefit as individuals, in doing so, we discard our accountability to
community, our ancestors and our descendants. By accepting capitalist individualism as a viable worldview we sever the connection between the BODY, the HOUSE, and the LAND.

Holding onto our language as indigenous people is the most direct access we have to our traditional conceptual frameworks and ways of thinking. Maintaining the Kwak’wala language as a living language strengthens the BODY=HOUSE=LAND/WORLD connection that maintains we are all equals in the experience of our existence in the world and that we are obligated to practice both empathy and accountability to our communities and to the lands and territories we occupy. It is unfortunate that this perspective of indigenous empathy with the land has been dismissed as a cliché at times. Rather than attempt to build a thesis off of a perceived cliché or attempt to avoid it, the findings of the thesis itself re-assert the connection between the Kwakwaka’wakw, their communities and the land through an analysis of linguistic forms in Kwak’wala.

The consciousness of conceptual frameworks is not an easy process to comprehend. It first takes open-mindedness to understand that there are more ways of thinking about phenomena than just one. When we are mono-lingual we take for granted that certain conceptual frameworks are in fact conceptual; that they are mapped out in the mind just as much as in the
world. Concepts are ephemeral, interpretive and hard to pin down but the understanding that we perceive just as much with our minds as we do with our physical senses is a valuable one.

Drawing an analogy between biology and intellect is helpful. Biology requires diversity in order to thrive, as do ‘ways of thinking’. In facing greater and greater global challenges the world needs intellectual and cultural diversity to help solve its problems. The world needs indigenous perspectives as it faces global deterioration in the face of industrialization and mass resource extraction and land exploitation. The ontology of Body=House=Land/World worked for the Kwakwaka’wakw for thousands of years. In the two hundred years since contact the Pacific Northwest coast has suffered serious environmental damage evident in disappearing salmon stocks and the loss of old growth forests. In Gwa’yi (Kingcome Inlet), the valley has been completely logged out over the last 100 years and traditional fishing has been seriously impacted, particularly the annual eulachon run from which the traditional staple ‘tł’ı’na “grease” is derived. In 2010 Gwa’yi Village experienced the worst flooding in its recorded history and the village was evacuated by helicopter and rebuilt. The extreme nature of this flood was due to a

93 ‘tł’ı’na “grease” is an oil derived from a small fish called dzaxwan “eulachon”. The eulachon run up river systems along the B.C. coast in the spring. Amongst the Kwākwaka’wakw the major river systems for eulachon runs are based in Knights and Kingcome Inlet. The annual rendering of the ‘tł’ı’na by communities an activity of major cultural significance.
combination of unusually high rainfall, and changes in the river system due to accelerated glacial run off due to global warming.

While it is obvious that the health of the land has been impacted, so has the health of the Kwakwaka’wakw peoples, which has become ravaged by startling rates of diabetes brought on by an imposed change of diet from traditional staples derived from the local environment to imported cheap foods high in sugar and salt and low on nutritional value. While the Kwakwaka’wakw lands suffer from ill health and mortality of species so too, does the Kwakwaka’wakw human body. These are serious issues requiring solutions and redress that are affecting, not just the Kwakwaka’wakw, but the globe. It is not just the Kwakwaka’wakw who are suffering from the effects of capitalist inspired colonization of their lands and bodies but considerable global populations (society/house) as well as geographies (lands) as well are reeling from the effects of exploitation. We see the results of this environmentally in global warming, diseased oceans, and species in decline. Human health is experiencing an alarming rise in global obesity rates in developing countries (Kim & Popkin, 2005) while simultaneously experiencing an increase in climate related diseases such as malaria in underdeveloped countries (Patz, Gibbs, Foley, Rogers, & Smith, 2007). An additional threat to human health
and habitation exists through climate change influenced environmental disruptions such as hurricanes and massive flooding. The effect of climate change (land/world well-being) on human health (body well-being) was addressed succinctly by Dr. Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) in the following remark made at the United Nations General Assembly on Oct 24, 2008:

We are meeting at a time of crisis. We face a fuel crisis, a food crisis, a severe financial crisis, and a climate that has begun to change in ominous ways. All of these crisis have global causes and global consequences. All have profound and profoundly unfair, consequences for health. (Chan, World Health Organization [WHO], 2008)

The health of human populations is intimately tied into the health of the planet. Socially, as human industry induced stresses continue to deteriorate oceanic health, freshwater sources and arable land affecting agricultural productivity, competition over food and water sources may erupt in human conflicts and hinder the ability of governments to maintain order and authority (Fidler, 2009). This brings into question the health of “the
house” as a social order. In this thesis we have considered the “house” to be the family, community and village. In a broader interpretation we can call the “house” society.

The Kwakwaka’wakw conceptual metaphor of Body=House=Land/World asks us to consider an alternative foundation for how to be in the world. Some aspects of it are of socialist orientation. Within an increasingly capitalist extreme, this metaphor asks us to reconsider the balance between the needs of society and those of individuals at a time when socialism has been vilified by capitalist enterprises and the failures of 20th century communism. In requiring a people to consider society and the land on par with the independent human being it at the very least provides an alternative to a global epidemic which has swept aside the concerns of socialism and environmentalism under the terms of capitalist expansion. The importance of maintaining alternative systems cannot be understated. The existence of alternatives helps to ensure that a single monolithic system does not rise up to dominate global relationships. In addressing the legacy of Benjamin Whorf and linguistic relativism, Lakoff (1987) addresses the consciousness of alternative conceptual systems in the following way:
Like Whorf, I believe that differences in conceptual systems affect behavior in a significant way. It is vitally important to understand just how our behavior is dependent on how we think. In areas like human relationships, where failure rates tend to be higher than we would like them to be, an understanding of differences in conceptual systems, and how behavior depends on them, might well be helpful…

…Conceptual relativism of the sort that appears to exist does not rule out universal ethical standards of some sort – at least as far as I can determine. Nor does it seem to tell us very much about what such standards should be. However, a refusal to recognize conceptual relativism where it exists does have ethical consequences. It leads directly to conceptual elitism and imperialism – to the assumption that our behavior is rational and that of other people is not, and to attempt to impose our way of thinking on others. Whorf’s ethical legacy was to make us aware of this (p. 337).

Acknowledging that there are equally valid cross-cultural differences in conceptualizing our relationships in numerous spheres of thought is valuable. Perhaps, this was the root of Franz Boas’ final thoughts on culture difference. Despite that the majority of his academic colleagues dismissed his copious collecting and publishing of Kwakwaka’wakw texts, he felt that under
their own conditions these thoughts, reflections and observations were valuable both to the
people who expressed them and in and of themselves, and perhaps, just maybe they could
prove to be valuable within Western academic and societal frameworks if those frameworks
could possibly be reconfigured to consider the notion that indigenous voices actually have
something to contribute besides the decorative, quaint or romantic.

Ultimately, as my research suggests the Kwak'wala language anchors us to the land and to
each other as Kwakwaka'wakw people, it reinforces connections in both time and in space.
The Kwak'wala language manifests and reinforces an epistemology appropriate to the lands the
Kwakwaka'wakw nations inhabit. When the language is removed there are still non-linguistic
structures in place to maintain this epistemology to some degree but it becomes severely
weakened. We may hold onto the surface signifiers of our culture but fail to grasp the
underlying concepts from which those forms arose. In a worst case scenario we will no longer
live on our lands, nor speak our language but fight each other over possible monetary profits to
be made from their exploitation from our offices in the city. When it comes time to sign
documents with Canadian federal and/or British Columbia provincial representatives we will pull
out our regalia, dress up and play the part while forgetting all our ancestors believed in; our
symbols, our bodies and our minds completely assimilated. Or alternatively, it is possible we will hold onto our principles and values as expressed to us through our traditional culture and language and uphold a bastion of society where social obligation and environmental stewardship are prioritized over profits. Perhaps other nations will take notice and from our example be influenced to consider realignment of their own priorities. Perhaps then, as indigenous ideas are incorporated into national political policies we will then be embraced as partners in nation building rather than a marginalized, social problem left over from the failed colonial policies of eradication and assimilation.

We, the Kwakwaka’wakw live in a tenuous state but not a hopeless one. If we can bring a consciousness to these issues then we can acknowledge that in order to survive as Kwakwaka’wakw people we need to retain both our language and our lands. We need to return to our understanding of our relationship to one another as families and ‘namima, we need to reconnect our cultural ceremonies with the social political structure it used to represent and find strength in unification and reciprocal obligation rather than individualization. It might also benefit Western society, to consider our traditional approach to the land in empathetic ways since their current approach threatens to send us all into deprivation. I would like to quote
Lakoff & Johnson (1999) here in a statement that seems to reflect the same philosophy of traditional Kwakwaka’wakw. They arrive at their opinion after questioning the history of Western intellectual thought and helping to give birth to cognitive linguistics. The Kwakwaka’wakw arrived at the same conclusion after successfully living in our lands for thousands of years.

The environment is not an “other” to us. It is not a collection of things that we encounter. Rather, it is part of our being. It is the locus of our existence and identity. We cannot and do not exist apart from it. It is through empathetic projection that we come to know our environment, understand how we are a part of it and how it is part of us. This is the bodily mechanism by which we can participate in nature, not just as hikers or climbers, or swimmers, but as part of nature itself, part of a larger, all encompassing whole. A mindful embodied spirituality is thus an ecological spirituality.

An embodied spirituality requires an aesthetic attitude to the world that is central to self-nurturance, to the nurturance of others, and to the nurturance of the world itself. Embodied spirituality requires an understanding that nature is not inanimate and less than human, but animated and more than human. It requires pleasure, joy in
the bodily connection with earth and air, sea and sky, plants and animals – and the
recognition that they are all more than human, more than any human beings could
ever achieve. Embodied spirituality is more than spiritual *experience*. It is an ethical
relationship to the physical world (p. 566).

While the encroachment of the western European culture brought with it to the indigenous
peoples of Canada inconceivable wealth in the form of new materials and technologies, it also
brought disease, population decline, cultural oppression and appropriation. Innovation,
imagination, and perseverance have enabled indigenous peoples to successfully maintain on
some level old traditions in new ways through incorporation. This thesis has attempted to
incorporate a distinctly Kwakwaka’wakw voice through the Kwak’wala language into a dialogue
within academic and artistic public spaces. I cannot vouch for how successful this strategy will
ultimately be but it serves as a testimonial to the ways in which the Kwakwaka’wakw have
creatively found ways to perpetuate their epistemology despite attempts to eradicate it. The
impetus is that by speaking out perhaps the traditional thoughts and philosophies of the
Kwakwaka’wakw and other indigenous nations have a chance to still influence the trajectory of
Western thought and hence political action. We as Kwakwaka’wakw are not alone in the issues
we face in regards to our relationship to society and land. Canada, as a relatively newly formed
nation also faces decisions on how it will continue to fabricate its social relationships within the
defined geographic region of what is now called upper North America. Is it still possible to have
an effect on how these relationships are mapped? Is it remotely possible that Kwakwa'wakw
concepts and the concepts of other indigenous nations that now are now contained within the
modern nation state of Canada can influence the principles and hence practices of our
environmental policies? The technologies of the “West” are brilliant achievements but they are
directed in their application by the principles and beliefs of those who have the power to define
their focus and activity. So far, the Canadian state has not allowed a place at the table for the
voices of indigenous peoples but has continued to deny indigenous agency and abilities while
pursuing less overt policies that are basically assimilationist. This is only a detriment to the
Canadian state. By considering the incorporation of indigenous concepts, such as the
Kkwakwa'wakw upheld of social and land based obligation the modern state of Canada might
have a better shot at resolving the dilemmas of human health and environmental degradation
which currently are only increasing. This failure of the state to truly listen to indigenous voices
may become a tragedy for all Canadians.
Throughout this dissertation we have seen how the relationship between the Kwakwaka’wakw individual, the community and the land is an empathetic one. We occupy our individual body but it is a body composed of extended relationships to our family, community and our environment in space, and our histories in time. The traditional Kwakwaka’wakw way of being in the world is a valuable one with much to offer us as human beings. It is worth our while to continue to strive to keep this way of life alive but in order to succeed at this we will need to work hard to keep our language alive, continue to live within our lands, and hope for meaningful dialogue with other nations in terms of how we negotiate our shared future. With optimism, the last word I will leave to one of our ancestors, recorded by George Hunt, many years ago:

Prayer of a Sick man and his Relatives to the Sun

Waga’ wax dukwalal gaxan, gigame’, umpdzi kas waxa’os damodalaxganu’xw

t’sit’saxkulam d’il’gan wawxtusak, kas waxa a’ix’idamas gaxanu’xw, tatusalagildzi,

yutlaxs axilala’akusaxwa ‘nalagilayaks latusala gilidzi, ump.

Ha, nanax’ma’ya Tlisala
“Please, look upon me Chief, Great Father, and have mercy and protect us against
our sickness (me) and my relatives, and pray make us well, Great-Walking-All-Over-
the-World, for you are making in every way this world that you made. Great-
Walking-to-and-fro-all-over-the-World, Father.”

“Ha,” answers the Sun.

(Boas 1930, p. 182)
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Rohner, Ronald. P.


Ruby, Jay.


Townsend-Gault, Charlotte.


# Appendix A: Orthographic Conversion

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