

Moving Forward While Looking Back:
A Kwakwaka'wakw Concept of Time
as Expressed in Language and Culture

by

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ABSTRACT

**MOVING FORWARD WHILE LOOKING BACK: A KWAKWAKA'WAKW
CONCEPT OF TIME AS EXPRESSED IN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE**

The Kwak'wala language of the Kwakwaka'wakw First Nations is in rapid decline as a living language. How much does the loss of the Kwak'wala language affect Kwakwaka'wakw culture? Influenced, in part, by a contemporary re-evaluation of Benjamin Whorf's 'principle of linguistic relativity' this thesis presents an analysis of the concept of 'time' as it is expressed in the Kwak'wala language and assesses how that concept is then manifested in other Kwakwaka'wakw cultural forms such as myth, songs, ceremony and art. Building on Judith Berman's assessment of George Hunt's explanation of historical concepts this thesis presents a model of Kwakwaka'wakw time that is based on a premise of 'the alternation of opposing states'. Time is situated as state based and the concept of the past and the present are aligned with the physical (form) and the spiritual (essence) and the summer and the winter. It is shown that this concept of time, as expressed in the Kwak'wala language, is also expressed in Kwakwaka'wakw cultural manifestations such as ceremony and art, rendering them conceptually bound.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The Kwak'wala language is spoken by the Kwakwaka'wakw First Nations who occupy the upper eastern portion of Vancouver Island and the adjacent mainland coast of British Columbia, Canada. The word Kwakwaka'wakw literally translates as 'the Kwak'wala speaking peoples'. It is a relatively newly used term applied to identify the approximately fifteen tribes of what were previously referred to by the anthropologist Franz Boas as the Kwakiutl. Boas with the assistance of George Hunt, a Kwak'wala speaker, compiled a vast amount of ethnographic data on the Kwakwaka'wakw from the late Nineteenth Century into the mid-Twentieth Century (Codere 1966, Rohner 1969). Following Boas' instructions, Hunt compiled numerous texts written in the Kwak'wala language with English translations (see Berman 1994, Cannizzo 1983, and Jacknis 1991, for details regarding Hunt's contribution). This data is proving to be a valuable resource to contemporary Kwakwaka'wakw coming to terms with a cultural practice that was actively suppressed by the Canadian Government from 1884-1953 (Cole 1991). Currently, the Kwak'wala language documented so extensively by Boas and Hunt is facing possible extinction as a living language. Even up until the 1950s Kwak'wala continued to be the first language experienced by many Kwakwaka'wakw children. However, the influence of residential schooling and its active repression of Kwak'wala usage discouraged Kwak'wala speech. In general, parents began to speak primarily English to

their children in the 1950s though in less isolated communities this change may have occurred earlier. My personal observation is that current Kwak'wala speakers are generally over the age of sixty. Kwakwaka'wakw members under the age of sixty generally do not speak Kwak'wala fluently. Coordinated by U'mista Cultural Society in Alert Bay a recent report on Kwak'wala language retention and renewal was conducted jointly by Robert Anthony from the University of Victoria, Henry Davis from the University of British Columbia and Jay Powell, also from the University of British Columbia. Their findings indicated that the school programs had not produced single fluent speaker of Kwak'wala and that without community wide action and additional language programming Kwak'wala will become extinct. In Kwak'wala language revitalization research conducted by Stan Anonby in 1997 he estimated that there were around 200 Kwak'wala speakers which at that time amounted to approximately 4% of the Kwakwaka'wakw population. He also observed that for every Kwak'wala speaker there are approximately four semi-speakers, aged between 30-60, who may understand the language well but have difficulties speaking it. Given these statistics, if Kwak'wala is to be revitalized this gives a timeframe of approximately 15-20 years to create a new generation of speakers.

For many years, older Kwakwaka'wakw members have stated that without the Kwak'wala language Kwakwaka'wakw culture is endangered. What is the reality of this statement? How much influence does language use actually have on cultural practice? Are more than just words lost when a language ceases to be

spoken? In order to answer these questions my research seeks to analyze the single concept of 'time' as expressed in the Kwak'wala language and compare it to time as expressed in English. The concept of time as expressed in Kwak'wala is then compared with Kwakwaka'wakw cultural expressions such as myth, song, and artistic creations for conceptual consistency. If a definitive relationship can be established between two or more expressive forms in a single culture, such as language and art, then the premise that language attrition will result in cultural attrition is validated. Of course, this applies to the more radicalized state of language loss brought on under colonial conditions where a culture becomes dominated by another over a relatively condensed period of time, as this is the context under which Kwak'wala, and many other indigenous languages have become endangered.

1.2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The concept of 'time' has been chosen for two reasons. First, that recent linguistic research appears to support the idea that different cultures do not always share identical notions of space and time (Boroditsky 1999, 2001; Bowerman 1996; Davidoff, Davies and Robertson 1999; Imai and Gentner 1997; Levinson 1996, 1997a, 2000; Lucy 1992; Slobin 1996), and secondly, that time is an extremely influential component of our sense of reality.

Part of what it means to be conscious is to have a sense of the passage of time. Time, however, is a great mystery, in large part because it cannot be directly experienced. We only sense that it exists because we have the capacity to remember and note changes from our immediate sense impressions. If we had absolutely no recollection of the past, we would find ourselves to be caught at a single moment endlessly. There would be no inclination of the future because the concept of change would be unimaginable. Needless to say, the notion of time forms a crucial part of our understanding about reality (Whaley 1997:203).

In order to communicate ideas and events a speaker of any language is required to situate oneself within an idea of time and space. However, both time and space are concepts, not fixed realities in and of themselves. For example, while English speakers conceptualize time as an asymmetric horizontal progression from left to right, speakers of Mandarin can conceptualize time as a vertical progression from above to below. A Mandarin speaker might say “that Thursday is below Wednesday”, while an English speaker would say “that Wednesday is ahead of Thursday” (Boroditsky 1999, 2001). These differences in conceptualization reveal that time is a concept that is not a fixed reality but a structured thought process influenced by cultural and linguistic factors.

While in Anthropological circles discussions around the integral relationship of language and thought were actively maintained throughout the Twentieth Century (Hodge & Kress 1979, McCormack & Worm 1977, Eastman 1990), in Linguistics the debate was rendered irrelevant under the universal theories of Noam Chomsky in the 1960's. However, scholars in linguistics are once more seriously engaging in a re-evaluation of this relationship. The impetus for the inquiry is fueled by a theory referred to as ‘the principle of linguistic relativity’ that

was put forward by Benjamin Whorf in the 1930s. The theory has been termed the *Sapir-Whorf hypothesis* by scholars who later studied Whorf's writings and has largely been engaged with defining whether language influences thought. The connection between language and thought becomes relevant to the effect of language use on culture when one considers that all cultural expressions are manifestations of an underlying worldview or 'way of thinking about the world'. If language influences perception then indeed language influences culture in fundamental ways.

Whorf was a chemical engineer who fostered an acute interest in the study of linguistics. He was influenced and encouraged by the cultural anthropologist and linguist Edward Sapir. In regards to language Sapir made the following observations:

Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the "real world" is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group... We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation. As Sapir notes (Whorf 1956).

Sapir himself was greatly influenced by Franz Boas. In part Boas had conscripted Hunt to compile vast texts in the Kwak'wala language because he considered that a culture could only be understood on its own terms. He thought

that transcribing cultural information in the form in which it was relayed would most accurately portray that culture. Through his study of the Hopi language Whorf surmised that language use could indeed influence a person's perspective on the world. In his paper, "The Relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language", Whorf compared the concept of time between the Hopi language and what he termed SAE¹ (Standard Average European) languages. He compared the tripartite tense system (past, present, future) of the English language to the tense-less condition of Hopi. He elucidated upon English language objectification of time versus the Hopi experience of time as a system of the objective/manifest (things that exist now) and the subjective/manifesting (things that are coming into being). Whorf felt that these conceptual differences were so acute that the Hopi actually experienced the world in a culturally unique way – their world was different and that their language assisted to delineate this difference (Whorf 1956).

In Whorf's own words he made the following observations:

The phenomena of language are background phenomena, of which the talkers are unaware, or, at most, dimly aware... These automatic, involuntary patterns of language are not the same for all men but are specific for each language and constitute the formalized side of the language, or its "grammar"...

From this fact proceeds what I have called the "linguistic relativity principle," which means, in informal terms, that users of markedly different grammars are pointed by their grammars towards different types of observations and different evaluations of externally similar acts of

¹ The application of the term Standard Average European is problematic as it generalizes the variability of European languages into a single entity and denies their diversity. For the purpose of this research the comparison is between Kwak'wala and English, as it is English that is replacing Kwak'wala in usage.

observation, and hence are not equivalent as observers, but must arrive at different views of the world (Whorf 1956:221).

Whorf presented this theory in relation to studies in physics. Thomson in describing Whorf's theory states:

It is comparable in some ways to Einstein's theory of relativity. Just as Einstein said that how people saw the phenomena of the universe was relative to their point of observation, so Whorf said that a people's world view was relative to the language they spoke. (Thomson 1975:83)

So how does this debate relate to Kwak'wala language loss? If Whorf's 'theory of linguistic relativity carries weight then the loss of the Kwak'wala language will indeed influence fundamental worldview amongst the Kwakwaka'wakw. As English speakers modern Kwakwaka'wakw will become more radically acculturated to a western European ways of thinking. In other words, English speaking Kwakwaka'wakw members will be more inclined to partition the world as the English language delineates it. In this thesis, in order to assess the influence of language on culture, the concept of time is compared between Kwak'wala and English. It is shown that while maintaining some base similarity the conceptualization of time is expressed differently through language and that those differences in expression can be extended into different experiences of time. Chapter 1 reveals that Kwakwaka'wakw 'time' is embedded in a heightened consciousness of the past and that time is focused on as a state rather than as an object. In Chapter 2, while Kwak'wala tense forms express concepts of present, past and future such as English does the application of

Kwak'wala tense forms is presented as more diverse in both application and meaning. Most importantly, I propose that this expanded meaning is fundamentally related to a Kwakwaka'wakw conceptualization of the universe as ultimately a balance of opposing states. Chapter 3 then exemplifies how the Kwak'wala experience of time is embedded in an alternating consciousness and acknowledgement of the alignment of past and present with the spirit and the body and how this concept permeated cultural expression and production at the end of the Nineteenth and the early Twentieth Century. Cultural expression and production has shifted with radical acculturation in contemporary times but the foundation for Kwakwaka'wakw creation is built upon this conceptual platform, as is shown in Chapter 4.

1.3 GENERAL COMMENTS

In the context of this research, I feel it is important to identify myself and my background. I am member of the Dzawada'enuxw Tribe, one of the Kwakwaka'wakw Nations. The Dzawada'enuxw People occupy the Kingcome Inlet watershed on the mainland coast of the Pacific Northwest of British Columbia. The community is isolated and this has assisted in its fight to retain its traditional culture. Despite this, rapid changes have occurred over the last twenty years and even the Dzawada'enuxw are hard-pressed to hold onto their culture.

My mother was born in 1937. She was a mono-lingual Kwak'wala speaker until the age of eight. She was then required to attend St Michael's Residential School in Alert Bay and taught to speak English. I was born in 1969. Neither myself, nor the current members of my generation were taught to speak Kwak'wala as our first language. The study of Kwakwaka'wakw culture has been the primary occupation of my adult life. Professionally, I am an artist and have exhibited work extensively since the early 1990s. I am active in creating both traditional work for ceremonial purposes and contemporary work for public institutions. At a certain point in time I began to question my ability to comprehend, at a fundamental level, traditional Kwakwaka'wakw concepts, without an engagement with the Kwak'wala language. Was I not, as an English speaker, able to understand Kwakwaka'wakw culture in the same way as a Kwak'wala speaker? In order to answer some of my questions I began informal study in the transcription and translation of Kwak'wala texts. Through this process I began to realize that translation between Kwak'wala and English was a tenuous process that required me to open my mind up to new ways of thinking. I began to realize that as a mono-lingual English speaker I made many assumptions about the world around me based on my use of English, assumptions that studying a very different language like Kwak'wala challenged. The issues that I was facing with translation led me to consider the 'theory of linguistic relativity'. The connection of translation difficulties and linguistic relativity are linked in the following passage by Gumperz and Levinson.

Every student of language or society should be familiar with the essential idea of linguistic relativity, the idea that culture, *through*, language, affects the way we think, especially perhaps our classification of the experienced world. Much of our experience seems to support some such idea, for example the phenomenology of struggling with a second language, where we find the summit of competence is forever over the next horizon, the obvious absence of definitive or even accurate translation (let alone the ludicrous failure of phrasebooks), (leaving?) even the wreck of diplomatic efforts on linguistic and rhetorical rocks (Gumperz & Levinson 1996:1).

Influenced by Whorf's 'principle of linguistic relativity' I initiated an analysis of Kwakwaka'wakw time and space as expressed by the Kwak'wala language and sought to compare how these concepts reflected on Kwakwaka'wakw cultural expressions such as ceremony, songs and art. The combined concepts of time and space encompassed so much material that it was decided that the focus of this thesis would be time and the analysis of space would have to come later.

Source material for study

The Kwak'wala language has undergone changes in the last 100 years. Much of this change is a result of English influence. Even at the time that George Hunt and Franz Boas were collecting information on the Kwakwaka'wakw, in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries, Boas took note of the changes that were occurring in the language.

The records which I took among the younger Indians show a few marked changes when compared to the older forms of speech. The forms used by the younger people are discountenanced by the older generation of the same village who say emphatically that the forms are not good Kwakiutl. (Boas, 1932:90)

In her 1999 PhD thesis titled "Language, Culture and Identity", Anne Goodfellow studied the effect of Kwak'wala language change in a colonial context. She found that English was having an increasing influence on the language from generation to generation. She found that the youngest generation of Kwak'wala speakers (at that time in their 30-40's) tended to fit Kwak'wala words into English paradigms (Goodfellow 1999). As source materials for research on the Kwak'wala language the oldest documentation available are Boas' and Hunt's. For the purpose of reconstructing the conceptualization of 'time' prior to western European influences I have utilized this material as my primary source. I have also sought to include more contemporary Kwak'wala language research compiled by David Grubb (A Practical Writing System and Short Dictionary of Kwak'wala, 1977) and U'mista Cultural Society (Learning Kwak'wala Series, 1981). In this thesis I have chosen to write Kwak'wala words and phrases in the U'mista Cultural Society orthography. Some of the originally published material is in Boas' orthography or Grubb's. These words and phrases I have transliterated. Much of the transliterated material comes from Boas early collections when his orthographic renderings were less consistent than in later years making the process somewhat more tenuous. Having mentioned that, any mistakes presented are my own.

To present a concept of Kwakwaka'wakw time requires a comparative analysis of Western European time concepts. Whorf's early research has assisted with this process. I have utilized a further process of comparing translations with

morpheme by morpheme analysis in order to elucidate meaning. A morpheme is the most 'minimal meaningful unit' in the breakdown of a word. Anderson describes morphemes in the following way:

...Structuralist linguists of the 1940s and 1950s concluded that words are in general composed of such smaller units, to which (following a terminological innovation due originally to Jan Baudouin de Courtenay) they gave the name morpheme. Morphemes are composed of (or, as later morphologists would put it, realized by) phonological material, and they are also the bearers of linguistic meaning. (Anderson 1992)

Kwak'wala relies heavily on a system of roots and suffixes that can be broken down into morphological units each bearing a specific meaning. The overall meaning of the word can then be defined by observing the combinations of morphological meanings.

In regards to the Kwakwaka'wakw model of time, prior research conducted by Judith Berman, an associate professor at the University of Pennsylvania has proven invaluable for her elucidation of George Hunt's explanation of Kwakwaka'wakw historical sequencing and her own observation that it was tied into the division of the Kwakwaka'wakw seasons of summer and winter. From this observation I established the model and extended it to encompass broader associations. The construction of the alternate model of Kwakwaka'wakw time is based on heightened consciousness of states as opposed to the horizontal linear model delineated by English. My research then extends into the influence of Kwakwaka'wakw time conceptualization into mythology, songs, ceremony and

art practice. It is my premise that a greater comprehension of these areas of expression is gained by understanding the Kwakwaka'wakw conceptualization of time as expressed in the Kwak'wala language.

Ultimately, this research exemplifies the intimate relationship of the Kwak'wala language to Kwakwaka'wakw culture. Through a linguistic analysis of a single concept, 'time', one is able to see how language and culture reinforce each other. It is not conclusive whether language shapes culture or whether culture shapes language but it is conclusive that their relationship is bound together in expressing a particular perspective of the world. What happens when one of these mutually engaged pillars of cultural conceptualization is removed? What happens when an indigenous language is replaced by English? How affected will that culture be? This research seems to indicate that the effect will be substantial and that while exterior forms may be retained; meanings may be lost or fundamentally changed.

CHAPTER 2

TIME CONCEPTUALIZATION IN THE KWAK'WALA LANGUAGE

2.1. Time Segmentation in Western European Culture

English concepts regarding time that are often considered universal are; that time exists on a continuum, it is usually seen as a progression from the past into the present into the future and that it proceeds at a regular pace without interruption. Individuals exist in a present state that consistently progresses forward to occupy what was the prior state of the future. The present moment, having occurred then becomes the past. Time neither stops nor turns back. It consistently moves forward at a regular pace without interruption.

In the modern experience of time expressed by English the movement of time is kept track of in ranges of units that consistently reduce. Eras reduce to centuries, centuries to decades, decades to years, and so on down to months, days, hours, minutes and seconds. There are charts (calendars) and mechanical apparatus (clocks) that assist in the delineation of time. In English the passage of time is conceived of in units and objectified into countable quantities.

Characterized as an object, time can be lost, it can be spent, and it can be wasted. It can be either long or short. However, time objectification is merely a concept used to express an idea of time. Time in reality is not an object. It is abstract, and ephemeral; constant, without beginning and without end. A minute is not real time but a construct created to comprehend and monitor the passage

of time. For mono-lingual English speakers it might be easy to assume that 'concepts of time' as expressed in English are 'time' in reality. It is easy to fail to recognize that the measurement of time as expressed in English is a concept and that as a concept; it merely reflects a culturally based perspective.

Not all cultures conceptualize time in the exact same ways. In research comparing English and Mandarin speakers' conceptualizations of time Lera Boroditsky (2001) discovered that while English speakers conceive of time as movement as a horizontal linear progression, Mandarin speakers utilize a system that employs both horizontal and vertical movement. These differing conceptualizations of time appeared to influence cognitive processing of relative object positional and directional movement in imaginary space. Her research indicates then that time is not always conceived of as a horizontal progression from left to right. Considering this example, it appears quite possible that time can be conceptualized more variably than speakers of a single language can imagine.

2.2. Issues of Translation between Kwak'wala and English

When I first started to transcribe Kwak'wala, as a mono-lingual English speaker I mistakenly thought that all concepts between languages could be directly translated from one language into another. When this failed to be the case I realized that I needed to open my mind up to new ways of thinking about concepts of the world. At times, while working with a Kwak'wala speaker, the

explanation of what the word meant was elusive for me as the concept lay outside the defined parameters of the English language. I began to realize that the process of translation was heavily engaged with the process of interpretation. While one translator may attempt to explain a meaning as succinctly as possible, a different translator may apply a more generic meaning to the same word/s. This variability reveals the complexity of translation. In order to address this I began to investigate literal morpheme by morpheme transcription as a tool that could provide an additional layer of understanding in the process of Kwak'wala translation. This process confirmed to me that all concepts are not directly translatable from one language to another and that where direct translatability is not possible, cultural difference and particularity may be revealed.

2.2.1. Imported Time Concepts in Contemporary Kwak'wala

European concepts regarding time that are not directly translatable into Kwak'wala assist in revealing differences in time conceptualization. Through European cultural influence certain concepts of time delineation have been imported into the current state of the Kwak'wala language. It is of interest to review the imported concepts to check for similarity and difference in the interpretation of those concepts by Kwak'wala speakers. I am proposing that when direct translation is possible this is an indication that the concepts are easily compatible and exist in both languages. When concepts are not directly translatable this can be an indication that while a concept may exist in one culture it either does not exist in the other or is conceptualized differently. Most

often, when a concept is completely foreign, Kwak'wala speakers make no attempt to create a word and the English equivalent is merely phonetically rendered in Kwak'wala. These loanwords, in their most obvious forms, refer to objects/nouns that exist in English that are not indigenous to Kwak'wala. They tend to refer to imported articles of foreign origin introduced through contact with Europeans.

Phonetic Renderings of Kwak'wala Words Borrowed from English

- (1) watsa - "watch" or "clock" (U'mista 1981)
- (2) abals - "apple" (U'mista 1981)
- (3) tsaya - "chair" (U'mista 1981)

More common than simple phonetic renderings, are words and phrases that attempt to translate imported concepts from English but fail to embody the English equivalent succinctly. When these 'somewhat inaccurate' translations occur the methodologies applied to the new word creations can reveal aspects of indigenous cognitive language patterns in conceptualization. At this stage of analysis the translation is from English into Kwak'wala.

In order to facilitate this, the process of literal transcription is applied. In transcription the literal translation appears directly below the Kwak'wala morphemes. In the following examples one can see how in direct translation the literal and the implied meanings are the same while in non-directly translated

words the literal and implied meanings are disparate.

2.2.2. Direct and Non-Direct Translatability

Direct Translations

- (4) 'nam - t'sak - "one long object" (U'mista 1981)
 one long object
- (5) nak - ela - "noon" or "midday" (U'mista 1981)
 middle continuative
 continuative action that has reached the middle
 In this case the action referred to is the movement of the sun

Non-Direct Translations

- (6) 'nam - t'sak - ila - "one o'clock" (U'mista 1981)
 one long object continuative
- (7) ma't - t'samk - ila - "two months" (Grubb 1977)
 two round object continuative

Direct translations have conceptual consistency between a word and its intended meaning. Non-direct translatability indicates a conceptual inconsistency between a word and its intended meaning. In the case of this research I utilize direct and non-direct translations as indications of conceptual equivalence or non-equivalence between two languages; Kwak'wala and English.

2.3. Modern Strategic Interpretations of English Time Concepts into Kwak'wala

Hours of the Day, Days of the Week and Months of the Year

Currently, there exist at least three interpretations of English units of time into

Kwak'wala that are not indigenous to the language. These consist of 'hours of the day', 'days of the week' and 'months of the year'. The structure of the interpretations reveal that the concepts are foreign and an indigenous Kwak'wala formula has been applied to come up with an equivalent meaning that differs from English in its literal translation. In 'hours of the day' and 'days of the week' the formula consists of a numeral attached to a descriptive suffix that conveys the meaning '-object shape'. In the case of months of the year, rather than 'object shape' suffixation, Kwak'wala utilizes the indigenous concept of 'seasons for'.

2.3.1. Hours of the Day

- (8) 'nam - t`sakila - "one o'clock" (U'mista 1981)
 one long object

Formula: numeral + suffix referencing shape

- (9) ma' - t`sakila - "two o'clock" (U'mista 1981)
 two long object
- (10) yudukw - t`sakila - "three o'clock" (U'mista 1981)
 three long object
- (11) mu - t`sakila - "four o'clock" (U'mista 1981)
 Four long object
- (12) sak`a - t`sakila - "five o'clock" (U'mista 1981)
 five long object
- (13) k`at`la - t`sakila - "six o'clock" (U'mista 1981)
 six long object
- (14) adlabu - t`sakila - "seven o'clock" (U'mista 1981)
 seven long object
- (15) ma'lgwa`nal - t`sakila - "eight o'clock" (U'mista 1981)
 eight long object

- (16) 'na'nama - t`sakila - "nine o'clock" (U'mista 1981)
 nine long object
- (17) 'naka - t`sakila - "ten o'clock" (U'mista 1981)
 ten long object
- (18) 'nam - t`sagagi 'yugwila - "eleven o'clock" (U'mista 1981)
 one long object ?on forehead
- (19) nakela - "noon" or "midday" (U'mista 1981)
 middle ?continuative

In Kwak'wala, there is no attempt to correlate the further reduction of time increments from hours into minutes and seconds. In other words there are no Kwak'wala words for either of these time denominations. Elaboration of a type of correspondence to the concept of the further reduction of time beyond hours is limited to two terms that reference relationship. It can be "just about four o'clock" or it can be "just past four o'clock". These concepts are delineated by the terms;

- (20) 'alak (U'mista 1981) - "just about" or "nearing"
- (21) heka (U'mista 1981) - "after" or "just passed"
- (22) lamuxw 'alak 'nakat`sakila - "It's nearly ten o'clock"
 go it near ten o'clock
- (23) lamuxw heka 'nakat`sakila - "It's just passed ten o'clock"
 go it past ten o'clock

'alak and heka in Kwak'wala express the relationships of objects or events in movement. The two examples below are applications of the two terms that do

referred to as 'long object' shapes, while months are referred to as 'round object' shapes.

(26) ma'ɫ - t`sa - kila - "two o'clock" (U'mista 1981)
 two long object continuative

(27) ma'ɫ - t`sam - kila - "two months" (Grubb 1977)
 two round object continuative

The time unit words literally translate as 'two of such and such shaped object'. In this case it would extend to mean 'two objects representing a period of time'. While talking about time in 'units of hours' is an introduced English concept, in Kwak'wala, the formula applied to construct a translation reveals an underlying structure that is indigenous to the Kwak'wala language: counting objects through the construction of numerals and suffixes denoting shapes. Kwak'wala has a complex of suffixes that denote objects by shape. Boas, terms these 'limitations of form' (Boas 1947). The suffixes include human beings, flat objects, long objects, and round objects amongst others.

2.3.2. Days of the Week

Days of the week are constructed from the same formula as hours and months with the addition of the morphemes meaning consecutively 'amount', 'days', 'season' or 'time for'. Most revealing is the literal translation for Sunday. Grubb translates this word as 'good day' or 'no work' while the literal translation is 'good time of'. It is obviously a new word influenced by the introduction of Christianity. The others are composites that attempt to express the days of the week through

the application of numerals one to five plus suffixes.²

The word for 'Monday' below is divided into individual morphemes with dashes as an example of how the words for days are constructed. The suffix -`pan is used for counting and the suffix -xwat indicates a day; the passing of a phase of daylight and a phase of darkness. The presence of the -t' is uncertain.

- (28) 'nam - `pan - xwat` s - anx - "monday" (U'mista 1981)
 one times days ? time for

Sunday to Saturday

- (29) 'ikila - `anx - "sunday" (U'mista 1981)
 good time of/season for
- (30) 'nam - `pan - xwat` s - anx - "monday" (U'mista 1981)
 one times days ? time for
- (31) ma't - `pan - xwat` s - anx - "tuesday" (U'mista 1981)
 two times days ? time for
- (32) yudaxw - `pan - xwat` s - anx - "wednesday" (U'mista 1981)
 three times days ? time for
- (33) mu - `pan - xwat` s - anx - "thursday" (U'mista 1981)
 four times days ? time for
- (34) sak`a - `pan - xwat` s - anx - "friday" (U'mista 1981)
 five times days ? time for
- (35) naxs'anda - "saturday" (U'mista 1981)
 ?

The literal translations for days of the week aside from Sunday and Saturday are numbers one thru five plus suffixes. A seven day week is not indigenous to the Kwakwaka'wakw and the constructions assist to convey this. I have not actually

² The literal translation of Saturday remains un-glossed as I was unable to definitively translate it.

come across an independent word for 'week' in neither Boas' or Grubb's research.

2.3.3. Months of the Year

The English language delineates twelve months for each year. The year is divided into months based on the division of the solar year (365 days) into 12 equivalent periods approximating the phases of the moon. Kwak'wala delineates the year primarily into winter and summer. A year is equivalent to the passing of one winter and one summer. The year is divided into seasons not based on succinctly solar phenomenon but into work and state related 'times for'. Modern attempts have been made to draw up a Kwakwaka'wakw calendar that equates the twelve months of the English calendar to Kwak'wala 'times for' or 'seasons for' since the late Nineteenth Century. An accurate equivalence is not possible however, given that the Kwak'wala 'times for' activities are not succinctly tied to solar phenomenon and therefore outnumber the months of the year. In addition, the names for 'seasons for' while containing some consistency amongst the numerous Kwakwaka'wakw tribes were not all the same.

2.3.4. 'Seasons For'

Kwak'wala seasons were based on food preparation requirements and landscape states. The current calendar created by U'mista Cultural Society (1981) attempts to equate the twelve month English Calendar to equivalent 'times for' in Kwak'wala. It is interesting to note that only the months August to

November lack the 'seasons for' suffix. This roughly delineates the time period in which the `tseka, or winter ceremonial season would be staged. August is an anomaly however, as no `tseka ceremonies used to take place at this time in past practice. Only in contemporary times, is the ceremonial now performed in the summer.

Contemporary Calendar

| | |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| January | wa'y - <u>anx</u> - "herring time" fishing season for |
| February | dza - dza'w - <u>anx</u> - "eulachon time" rdp. eulachon season for |
| March | `kwi - `kwa'l - <u>anx</u> - "growing/ sprouting time" rdp. sprouts season for or 'standing' |
| April | 'ma'wa - 'e'tl - <u>anx</u> - "moving to spawning grounds time" to move going season for along |
| May | `kam - `kamdzakw - <u>anx</u> - "salmonberry time" rdp. salmonberry season for |
| June | gwa - gwat - ' <u>anx</u> - "huckleberry time" rdp. to pick season for huckleberries |
| July | ni - nakw - <u>anx</u> - "salalberry time" rdp. to pick season for salal berries |
| August | <u>xams</u> - <u>xam</u> - d - i - "past (empty) boxes" rdp.? to throw past ? down box tense |
| September | 'lix - <u>am</u> - "big moon time" wide face across |
| October | magwa - bo - 'yi - "crescent moon time" moon chest ? |
| November | gwax - sam - "leaves falling time" what happens nominal? downwards |

December ɬo'y - anx - (listed as autumn in Grubb)
 autumn? season for

Seasons listed in Grubb (1977) are:

- (36) hi - 'anx - 'pa - 'nakwela - "spring (literally -coming summer)"
 summer season for end of gradually
 long object
- (37) `tsa'w - anx - "winter"
 to give season for
- (38) ya'w - anx - "windy season"
 wind season for
- (39) hi - 'anx - "summer"
 summer season for
- (40) ɬo'y - anx - "autumn"* See December in preceding list?
 autumn season for

Alternate seasons listed in Boas (1947) are:

- (41) `tsek - anx - "winter dance season"
 winter season for
 ceremony
- (42) `tsama - 'anx - "season of melting ice"
 water drips season for
- (43) `tso'y - anx - "season for digging"
 to dig season for
 roots
- (44) ma'yul - 'anx - "season for giving birth"
 to give birth season for
- (45) wi' - wa'me`ts - anx - "season for fishing"
 rdp. fishing on river season for
- (46) gwa'gwaxsi'ɬ - 'anx - "season for fishing dog salmon"
 dog salmon season for

Boas created a Kwak'wala calendar equivalent to the European calendar published in The Jesup North Pacific Expedition, Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History Volume V in 1909. He lists the names of the

seasons given by four Kwakwaka'wakw tribes; the 'Namgis from Alert Bay, the Ma'malilikala from Village Island, the 'Na'kwaxda'xw from Blunden Harbour and the Gusgimaxw from Quatsino Sound. Few of the seasons named are consistent across all four tribes. For the 'Namgis and the Ma'malilikala the list begins in March. It is interesting to note the position of the beginning of the year in March as this would be consistent with the delineation of a year as the passing of a summer and a winter with the end of winter coming in March.

Table 1: Boas Calendar – *The Kwakiutl of Vancouver Island*, Jesup Expedition Vol. 5 Pt. 2 pg.413

| About | 'nk'mgēs | Ma'maleleqala | Na'klwax·da'x ^a | Çō'sg'imux ^a |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| March | Qlwa'ē'nx [†] (Raspberry-Sprouting Season) or 'mā'wac'ē'nx (Olahen-Fishing Season) | 'Tē'nk'ē'nx [†] (Tree-Sprouting Season) | Te'kwabā'ē (Under [elder brother]) | Ql'ē'nu (No Sap in Trees [?]) |
| April | Q'ē'ndzē'k'ē'nx (Raspberry Season) | | Ē'dabō'ē (Next one under [elder brother]) | Go'ē'lex (Raspberry Season) |
| May | Gwā'ē'nx (Huckleberry Season) | | Sē'ng'sēm [†] (Trying-Oil Moon) | Gwā'ē'nx (Huckleberry Season) |
| June | Nē'k'ē'nx (Sallalberry Season) | | Nē'mnāla (Sockeye Moon [?]) | Nē'k'ē'nx (Sallalberry Season) |
| July | Wule'ē'nx (Season of ?) | | Aa'tsā'ya (Between Good and Bad Weather [?]) | Mēh'alasgēm (Tshā'tapla) (Southeast Wind Moon) |
| August | Xē'msxē'msde (Past [i. e. empty] Boxes [?]) | | Go'ē'lex (Raspberry Season) | Nē'mnāla (Sockeye Moon [?]) |
| September | Le'xēm (Wide-Face) | | 'nā'ē'pōhsnā'pā'ē (Elder Brother) | 'nō'la (Elder Brother) |
| October | 'mēgwā'ē'ē (Round one underneath, i. e. Moon after Wide-Face) | | He'ē'atsla (Right Moon [?]) | Te'kwabā'ē (Under [elder brother]) |
| November | Gwā'xēm (Dog-Salmon Month) | Wule'ē'nx (Season of ?) | Xē'kwā'ē (Sweeping Houses, i. e. for Winter Ceremonial) | Dzēy dzēw'ē'sēm (Pile-Driving Moon) |
| December | Qlā'xāla (Cleaned i. e. of leaves) | | Ma'g'ā'ya (Staying in Dance House [?]) | Wa'ē'mitsem (Fish-in-River Moon) |
| Winter Solstice | Tshā'tapla | | Tshā'tapla | Tshā'tapla |
| January | Wa'ē'nx (Spawning Season) | 'mā'wā'ē'ē'nx (Season of Floods?) | Wa'ē'nx (Spawning Season) | Wa'ē'wa (?) |
| February | 'Tsug'sēm (First Olahen-Run Moon) | 'mā'mawac'ē'ē'nx (Near to Olahen-Fishing Season) | 'nō'la (Elder Brother) | Q'ē'gō's'ra' (Nothing on it [?]) |

[†] First month of the count.

I do not believe these to be comprehensive lists and suspect that there were many more seasonal terms as the concept is quite flexible and applicable to various activities amongst the approximately fifteen different tribes of the Kwakwaka'wakw. The observation and delineation of time based on months of the year is not an indigenous Kwak'wala concept. Contemporary calendars were created to give an approximation of periods of time equivalent to the English concept of months. For the Kwakwaka'wakw, the passage of time was marked by seasons or 'times for' to delineate events in relationship to one another. The Kwak'wala passage of time is very clearly marked then by the natural cycles of life that the Kwakwaka'wakw were co-existent within and this is best exemplified by the indigenous reference words for 'states of the day' and 'times of' throughout the year³. These are marked most clearly by the Kwak'wala suffix, – *anx* – *season for/time for*.

2.3.5. Hours as 'long objects'; Months as 'round objects'

The Kwak'wala conceptual path that marks hours as 'long objects' and 'months as 'round objects' does not make sense in English. This may indicate the absence of the English concept of hours and months from the indigenous Kwak'wala lexicon. Modern Kwak'wala speakers have attempted to create an equivalent meaning through the pairing of numerals with 'object type' suffixes. This pairing reveals an underlying structure that is indigenous to the Kwak'wala

³ As an example of this, my mother told me about an older relative from Kingcome Inlet who could recall the majority of the birthdates of the members of the village from memory. She indicated that this woman used "seasons of/time for" in delineating time for particular birthdates not months

language that has been utilized in the attempt to express a foreign concept. While the words for English hours and months and Kwak'wala hours and months are translated as equivalent in literal translation they are not accurate conceptual reflections of one another. In English, the concept of an 'hour' or a 'month' denotes a certain amount of time not an object shape. The Kwak'wala pairing of numerals and object suffix is an indigenous construction used to denote a variety of objects besides hours and months. This underlying structure is applied widely as in the following examples.

-`tsak- suffix denotes long objects

- (47) 'nam - `tsak - ila - (U'mista 1981) - "one o'clock"
one long object continuative
- (48) mu - `tsak - "four long ones" (Boas 1947)
four long object
- (49) 'nam - `tsak - ayu - "one long (horn) on forehead" (Boas 1947)
one long object on forehead

-sgam's- suffix denotes round objects

- (50) ma'ɫ - t'sam - kila - "two months" (Grubb 1977)
two round object marker
- (51) 'nams - gam - "one round thing" (Boas 1947)
one round object
- (52) yudaxw - sam's - "three houses" (U'mista 1981)
three round objects

(53) nakas - gam's - "ten houses" (U'mista 1981)
 ten round objects

In Kwak'wala the concept of counting time in hours and months is positioned within the broader concept of counting objects delineated by shape. However shape plays no factor in the conceptualization of hours and months in English. While English does objectify time as having the characteristics of a noun, an hour is certainly not spoken about as being a long object in comparison to the roundness of a month. This indicates that the formula applied to the English time concept of hours and months is in fact non-equivalent and conceptually different. This research entails the comparison of resulting forms that are deemed equivalent across two languages, yet under linguistic analysis are conceptually different. A logical extension of this process that exists beyond the scope of this research would be the mapping of the conceptual path that results in the conception of hours as 'long objects' and months as 'round objects'. If the time concepts of 'hours', 'months, and 'weeks' are not indigenous to the Kwak'wala language as has been explained through the process of literal translation then what are the indigenous concepts of 'time' that are revealed in the Kwak'wala language?

2.4. Indigenous Time Concepts as Expressed by Directly Translatable Suffixes

From the list of hours analyzed prior, noon and midnight are the exceptions to the applied underlying structure of numeral plus object shape applied to delineate

this would place her recollection at around the 1940's.

hours. Both words are derived from the root word for 'middle'.

(54) nak - ela - "noon" or "midday" (U'mista 1981)

middle continuative

(55) nag - ige - "midnight" (U'mista 1981)

middle ?

These two terms are used for 'twelve o'clock'. They refer to the position of being 'in the middle'. The root word 'nak-' is also used for 'the centre' and 'straight ahead'.

(56) nakawe - "middle" (Boas, 1948 p.230)

middle

Beyond the delineation of hours and months, there are other units of time that apply the underlying structure of numeral plus descriptive suffix. However, the suffix does not reference shape but an actual time frame. These suffixes which are indigenous to the Kwak'wala language refer to seasons and days.

-'anx – seasons

(57) ma'ł - 'anx - ila - "two years" (Grubb 1977)

two seasons continuative

(58) 'nam_x - 'anx - "one winter, one year"⁴ (Boas 1947 pg.305)

one season

⁴ This most likely could be applied to mean 'one summer' as well, as the literal translation means 'one season'

-xwa's – days

- (59) ma'l - p'an - xwa's - "two days" (Grubb 1977)
 two times days
- (60) hi'lu - p'an - xwa's - "right number of days" (Boas 1947 pg. 240)
 right times days
 proper

The existence of a directly translatable suffix denoting days indicates this denomination of time already existed in the language. 'Years' is an extension of the concept of 'seasons' into 'years'. A year, in Kwak'wala being conceptualized by the passing of one summer season followed by one winter season rather than the passing of the lunar twelve month year. In the same way, the passing of a day is equivalent to the passing of a phase of daylight and a phase of darkness rather than a period of twenty-four hours.

Non-imported Kwak'wala words used to reference time of day are:

- (61) 'na - la - "day" (Grubb 1977, Boas 1947)
 day continuative
- (62) 'na - 'nakwela - "dawn" or "returning home" (Grubb 1977, Boas 1947)
 day gradually
- (63) 'na - x'id - "becoming light" (Grubb 1977, Boas 1947)
 day to begin
- (64) ga - 'ala - "morning" (Grubb 1977, Boas 1947)
 early continuative
- (65) nak - ela - "noon" or "midday" (U'mista 1981)
 middle continuative

- (66) gwał nak - ela - "afternoon" (Grubb 1977)
 finished middle continuative
- (67) `pede`k - ela (sp) - "becoming dark" (Grubb 1977, Boas 1947)
 dark continuative
- (68) dzakwa - "evening" (Grubb 1977, Boas 1947)
 evening
- (69) ganutł - "night" (Grubb 1977, Boas 1947)
 night
- (70) nagige - "midnight" (U'mista 1981, Boas 1947)
 middle

These words give a representation of the delineation of time based on a day. A day was not structured into abstracted hours but experienced based on the physical manifestation of physical states in the landscape. e.g. "It is becoming dark, becoming light" etc. While English speakers have equivalent concepts to Kwak'wala day time-states post-industrialized Western culture requires English to embody 'times of the day' in more concise, objectified delineations. Western European culture requires this precision as a form that best facilitate its own economic function. In comparison, the Kwakwaka'wakw delineation of the day into dawn, morning, noon, afternoon, evening and night was sufficient for the types of nature based food processing activities they were involved in. These forms emphasize the concept of 'time' as a state over the concept of 'time' as an amount.

Beyond the concept of a day being the passing of a phase of daylight and a

underlying structure utilized in the new word is indigenous the concept is in fact foreign. Only when attempting to translate foreign concepts of time increments into Kwak'wala do speakers objectify the increments into objects such as English speakers. Apparently indigenous Kwak'wala words that reference time appear to focus on time as a state or an event rather than an increment or an objectifiable concept. For example the word *'nala* translates as "day" but appears to refer more to the state of "day" as opposed to "night" than to the possible interpretation in English of "a day" as an increment of time spanning twenty-four hours. It is polarized by the word *ganul*, which translates as night but as well refers to the state of 'night'. The difference between English conceptualization of 'day' as a time increment and the Kwak'wala conceptualization of 'day' as a state can be found in the Kwak'wala word for day –*'nala*. *'nala* can be translated to refer to 'the state of day', but its' root *'na-* extends widely to include upstream, south, east, weather, day, daylight and the world. In the same way, months are conceived not so much as 'denominations of time' but as equivalent to 'states that occur' during the course of a year that may or may not be the equivalent of an English month. Correspondingly, a year is conceptualized as the rotating states of a summer season and a winter season. While these time delineations may be conceived of as 'denominations of time' the Kwakwaka'wakw conception of time lays its primary emphasis on the experience of time as a state tied to natural processes rather than as objectified quantities.

Of course, I am referring to the experience of time prior to the imposition of western European economics. Once introduced, time as incremental became an invaluable concept within the commercial industries that began to exploit the natural resources on the Pacific Northwest coast in the latter Nineteenth century. Adaptation to English ways of thinking would have encouraged the development of new words in the Kwak'wala language to represent introduced concepts such as keeping track of time by hours, weeks and months.

As an example of differentiation of time conceptualization between cultures the initial comparison of hours of the day, days of the week and months of the year, may appear simplistic and obvious. English employs a complex system of time period delineation that encourages the conceptualization of time as an objectified noun. Periods of time can be counted, can be characterized and therefore experienced as long, short, slow or fast, amongst other adjectives. It is important to note the delineation of time as experienced by the Kwak'wala speaker before the importation of English time concepts primarily as state based and experiential. It is important to start here and build outwards towards tense applications (past, present and future) where the differences in time conceptualization become magnified and more complex.

CHAPTER 3

TEMPORAL APPLICATIONS IN THE KWAK'WALA LANGUAGE

3.1. Past, Present & Future

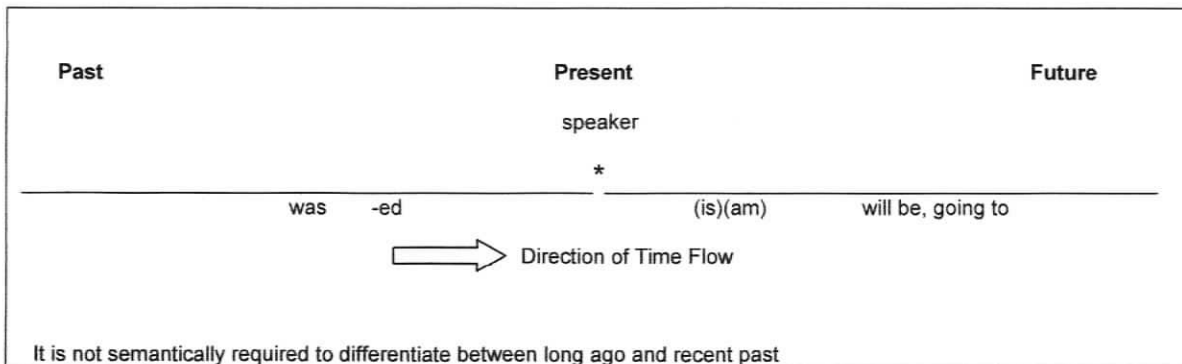
Past, present and future refer to time in relationship to the speaker and the event that the speaker is referring to. They indicate a position along a continuum of time rather than time as measurable periods or amounts. However, time conceptualized in quantifiable amounts and time conceptualized as positioned along a continuum *are* bound together in the conceptualization of sequences of events in English. This can be exemplified in the statement: "We bought the house two months ago." The event is positioned in the past and is quantified as occurring two months ago from the present orientation of the speaker. English time objectification does enable speakers to imagine time as "units within a row" and encourages the conceptualization of the past, present and future as units on a linear progression (Whorf 1956). In this sense then we can say that events occur before or after each other.

Tense relates the time of the situation referred to to some other time, usually to the moment of speaking. The commonest tenses found in languages – though not all languages distinguish these three tenses, or indeed distinguish tense at all – are present, past and future: a situation described in the present tense is located temporally as simultaneous with the moment of speaking (e.g. *John sang, John was singing*); one described in the future as located subsequent to the moment of speaking (e.g. *John will sing, John will be singing*). Since tense locates the time of a situation relative to the situation of the utterance, we may describe tense as deictic (Comrie 1976:2).

Kwak'wala concepts of time beyond the immediate present, and into the past reveal a worldview and a conceptualization of time that is different from Western European notions as exemplified in the English language. English delineates time in motion on a horizontal plane. The progression of time is marked from the past, forwards into the present. While smaller denominations of time such as an hour or a day can be experienced as cyclical (clocks) larger denominations of time such as months, years, decades and generations centuries are generally delineated on horizontal planes. Time in motion is structured as proceeding in a forward direction from the past into the future. Western European culture has evolved a complex system of numbering years that exemplifies this forward movement. This year is 2005, next year is 2006 etc.

In regards to what Whorf problematically referred to as Standard Average European he made the following observation.⁵

The three-tense system of SAE verbs colors all our thinking about time. This system is amalgamated with that larger scheme of objectification of the subjective experience of duration already noted in other patterns – in the binomial formula applicable to nouns in general, in temporal nouns, in plurality and numeration. This objectification enables us in imagination to “stand time units in a row.” Imagination of time as like a row harmonizes with a system of THREE tenses; whereas a system of TWO, an earlier and a later, would seem to correspond better to the feeling of duration as it is experienced. For if we inspect consciousness we find no past, present, future, but a unity embracing complexity (Whorf 1956, pg. 143)

Table 2: Diagram of English Tense: English Speaker's Frame of Reference

Kwak'wala conceptualizations of temporal flow contain both similarity and distinctiveness to English concepts. While Kwak'wala utilizes concepts of past, present and future the relationships '*in motion*' of these concepts may be different. In other words, temporal flow does not necessarily move from the past into the present into the future on a unidirectional arrow of time sequence. In order to understand this, an analysis of Kwak'wala tense morphemes must be explained.

3.2. Tense Morphemes in Kwak'wala

Present Tense

In Kwak'wala the present tense is unmarked. In other words, there is no identifiable morpheme that delineates the present but there are morphemes that indicate the future or the past in relationship to the utterance of the speaker. In English, present tense can be marked by the word '*is*' as in '*He is running*', or

⁵ For our purposes we should substitute the acronym SAE with more specific "English".

'am' as in 'I am working.'

- (74) i'axal - an - "I'm working" (U'mista 1981)
 work I am (unmarked)

Future Tense

The future, in Kwak'wala, is marked by a single morpheme that can be directly translated into 'will be' or 'going to'. The future tense in Kwak'wala can be applied to verbs indicating 'an action yet to occur' or the same morpheme can be applied to nouns rendering the meaning 'an object that is positioned in the future'.

- (75) i'axal - atl - an - "I will be working" (U'mista 1981)
 work future I am

- (76) gukw - tl - as - "your future house" (Boas 1898)
 house future you

Past Tense

When it comes to defining the past Kwak'wala speech differentiates from English more radically than in the present and future tense delineations. While present tense is unmarked and there exists one future tense morpheme, in Kwak'wala three morphemes exist to delineate the concept of the past. There has been some difficulty and hence some disparity in the translations of the exact meanings that the three morphemes convey by past Kwak'wala language researchers. This difficulty in translating the past tense morphemes accurately is a reflection on the lack of compatibility between English and Kwak'wala past

tense conceptualization. The most accurate descriptions appear to come from Boas' 1947 publication "Kwakiutl Grammar with a Glossary of the Suffixes". The following are translations of meaning imparted to each of the three past tense morphemes from three different sources.

The Past Tense Morphemes in Kwak'wala

- xd-** -something that is transitioning from the present into the past
it was present and has just gone out of existence (Boas 1947)
- very recent past (U'mista 1981)
- recently, a few hours (VICIA/Nanwakola Language Class, 2003)

(77) `tsax`ka - xd - an - I was (just) sick. (U'mista 1981)
sick recent past I

- x'id-** -recent past (Boas, 1947)
- something that happened some time ago (U'mista, 1981)
- about a week ago (VICIA/Nanwakola Language Class, 2003)

(78) `tsax`ka - x'id - an - I was sick (awhile ago). (U'mista 1981)
sick past I

-u'ł and **-'wał** (two forms of the same meaning⁶)

- remote past (Boas, 1947)
- seems to have happened long ago (U'mista, 1981)
- referring to a year ago, a long time ago
(VICIA/Nanwakola Language Class, 2003)

⁶ The forms u'ł and 'wał are allomorphs. Allomorphs are different forms that convey the same meaning. In this case the allomorphs exist due to phonological changes that are influenced by the last phoneme on the root.

- (79) tsax'k - u'l - an - I was sick a long time ago. (U'mista 1981)
 sick remote past I

The future tense maker *-atʃ* and the past tense markers *-xd-*, *x'id-*, and *-u'l-* or *-'waʃ* are required elements in proper Kwak'wala communication. While in English a speaker can say "I sing the song" and it makes sense without a reference as to when the song was sung, other than it was sung in the past, in Kwak'wala the time reference must be included or it is implied that the action occurs in the present. In addition to the three past tense morphemes there are two words that can confer the meaning 'long ago'.

- (80) kwis - ala - far away (Grubb 1977)
 far away continuative

Boas translates this word as 'far in space and time'. Additional examples include:

- (81) kwis - 'anx - e'lis gagamp - father of great-great-grandfather
 far away time of ? in the grandparent (=far edge of the world grandfather)
 world (Boas 1947)

- (82) kwisa'y - 'anx - next winter (Boas 1947)
 far away season for/
 time of

- (83) kwisa'y - 'anx -'waʃ - next winter (Boas 1947)
 far away season remote
 for past tense

The second word is:

- (84) gay - u'l - long time ago (Grubb 1977)
 long remote
 ago past tense

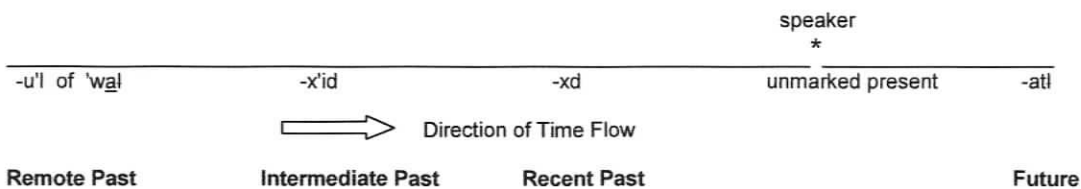
kwisa and *gayu't* exist as separate words. *kwisa* can be inserted into Kwak'wala speech in order to infer distance into the past or the future, while *gayu't* infers distance into the past. With two independent words available to express the concept 'long ago' why is there a need for the morphological forms of remote past tense? This would support the theory that the morphological tense forms convey a more complex meaning beyond that of relationship distance between speaker and event.

In part, the multiplicity of past tense markers stems from the requirement of an oral culture to be more precise. They act as a practical application required to document past events in memory by a culture without a written history. If this was the only application of the tense morphemes a linear progression could operate as an appropriate model. However, the function of the past tense markers encompasses a broader spectrum of meaning than linear time sequence in documentation of events. They also act to delineate the relationships of characters to the physical and spiritual world, a concept highly important in Kwakwaka'wakw cosmology that is not reflected on a linear model. As well, inconsistencies in the translated allocation of time frames to past tense applications seem to indicate additional variables present in the rendering of meaning. As in the earlier comparison of time segmentations the lack of literal translatability is an indication of conceptual disparity.

Comparison of Horizontal/Linear Delineation of Kwak'wala Tense Morphemes

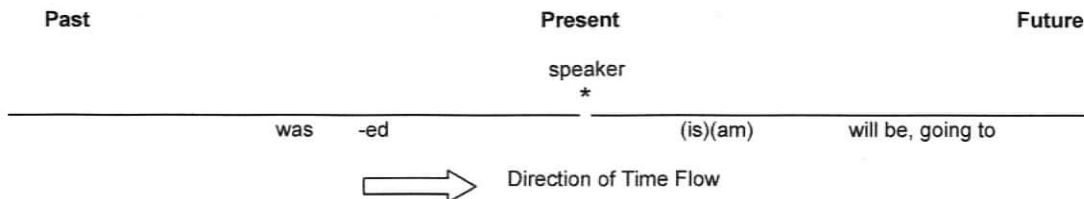
If the Kwak'wala tense morphemes are placed on the same horizontal linear progression as English tense the resulting diagram would appear as the one presented below. However, the presented diagram fails to embody the complete meanings conveyed by Kwak'wala tense applications and an alternative will be presented for comparison.

Table 3: *Kwak'wala speaker's frame of reference delineated as on a horizontal plane



Semantically required to differentiate between remote past and recent past.
The status of intermediate past remains in question.

Tense: English speaker's frame of reference



It is not semantically required to differentiate between long ago and recent past.

3.3. Past Tense Diversity in Kwak'wala Conceptualization (Why a horizontal linear model does not work)

At first, it seems logical to set up tense comparisons between English and Kwak'wala in the preceding manner. The prior examples delineate the past tense forms on a linear progression from recent past – to less recent past – to remote past. However, the application of past tense morphology is actually much more dynamic than a simple linear progression as is shown in the following examples.

As in English, tense is applied to verbs in Kwak'wala.

- (85) gay - u'tl - "long ago" (Boas 1947)
remote past
- (86) gax - 'wal - an - "I came long ago" (Boas 1947)
Come remote past I
- (87) kasa - x'id - "he went (about a week ago)" (Boas 1947)
walk intermediate past tense

However, in Kwak'wala tense is also applied to nouns.

- (88) 'ump - 'wal - "late father" (one who has died awhile ago)
father remote past
- (89) `tsa`tsadagam - 'ul - a - "girl from long ago" (Boas 1947)
rdp. girl remote continuative past
- (90) nu'las`tagama - 'ul - a - "oldest sibling from long ago" (Boas 1947)
the eldest one remote continuative past
- (91) dligad - atl - "he will have a name" (Boas 1947)
name future tense

- (92) xwa`kwan - atl - "a future canoe" (Boas 1947)
 canoe future tense
- (93) 'ax'as'i - d - a - "place where he had been before" (Boas 1947)
 place past continuative
 tense

In the case of nouns the past tense marker indicates that the object has gone out of existence or has been fundamentally changed. In the case of people the past tense marker indicates they have died. In Boas we see the use of the *-xd-* morpheme as an indication that a person has just died, or been transformed from one state to another. He translates it as "having just gone out of existence" (Boas 1947:288) or the "transition from existence to non-existence" (Boas 1947:290).

- (94) bibagwanam - xd - e - "men who were recently dead" (Boas, 1895)
 men recent ?
 past
- (95) tsada - xd - e - "the women who had just died" (Boas, 1895)
 women recent ?
 past

In the case of the 'remote past' morpheme *-w'at* and *-'ul* the meaning infers further distance into the past. While the *-xd-* morpheme indicates 'having recently died', the *-w'at* and *-'ul* can be translated as 'having died a while ago.

- (96) Yaxtlan - 'ul - "Yaxtlan the dead" (Boas, 1895)
 name remote past
- (97) 'Max - 'ul - "'Maxwa the dead" (Boas, 1895)
 name remote past

It is important to note that the apparently intermediate *-x'id* - 'less recent past'

tense form is the exception to this application. I have yet to find an example of this tense morpheme being applied to persons 'having died' like the other tenses. The lack of application may be an indication that its meaning exists or is extended within other parameters than those defined for *-xd-* and *-w'aʔ-* and *-'uʔ-*. The complexity of the intermediate past tense form *-x'id-* is given greater depth by the existence of an aspectual suffix *-x'id-* that is exactly the same in form and position.

Aspectual *-x'id-*

This morpheme is an aspectual suffix that indicates the beginning of an activity. In addressing the aspectual morpheme *-x'id-* Boas states: " *-x'id* expresses fundamentally the change from one state into another. It is most commonly used as an inchoative in contrast with *-a*. It is identical in form with the tense suffix *-(x)'id*" (Boas 1947:290).

Without the existence of aspectual *-x'id-* the following form might be translated as a man who had died 'awhile ago', an intermediate time period between 'recently' and 'long ago'. However the intermediate past tense morpheme *-x'id-* is not applied this way. The form *-x'id-*, when applied to nouns, is identified as aspectual *-x'id-* and translated as indicative of the beginning of an activity.

- (98) bagwanam - x'id - "he began to be a man" (Boas, 1895)
 man began to be (aspectual *-x'id-*)

That the tense morpheme and the aspectual morpheme both represented by

–x'id- can appear together on verbs is an indication that they are indeed distinct.

(99) kas'idax'id - "he took a walk" (Boas, 1895)
walk/past tense/ began (aspectual –x'id-)

(100) kas'id - "to start (to begin to walk)" (Boas, 1895)
walk/ began (aspectual –x'id-)

Unlike aspectual –x'id- ,when applied to nouns the tense morpheme loses the initial 'x'. " tense –x'id loses the 'x' when suffixed to nouns.) (Boas1947,pg.231)
This is another indication that the morphemes are distinct. However, the absence of the –x'id- morpheme on persons or objects 'having died or been substantially changed' positions it as in a somewhat different category than the other past tense morphemes representing recent past and remote past.

When tense is applied to verbs it does indeed mark a linear regression in time similar to English, however, when the forms are applied to nouns they operate in quite a different way and seem to mark the transition of state as well as time frame.

In addition, while the intermediate tense morpheme –x'id- occurs often in conversational contexts, it appears rarely in more ritualized contexts of mythological oratory or ceremonial songs and presentations. This is important to note as the absence of the –x'id- morpheme in these areas of oratory is an omission that will be elaborated upon later.

- (102) hi'luxwsu't - "day before yesterday" (U'mista 1981)
remote past tense

Why is 'yesterday' and 'day before yesterday' marked with the remote past morpheme? According to a linear progression shouldn't it carry the recent past morpheme being only a day or two from the point of speech on a continuum from recent past to less recent past to remote past? The following are other examples of past tense morphological applications.

Variability in the translation of past tense -xd- and u't-, 'wal
in Boas' and Hunts' interlinear translations

- (103) xandzas - d - es - "the nose broke" (Boas, 1895)⁷
nose recent past
- (104) hamsaya - xd - e - "having been eaten" (Boas, 1895)
to eat recent past ?
- (105) `kwil - d - e - "the guests of the feast had left (Boas, 1906)
sit in the recent ? (they were no longer guests) "
house past
- (106) waldam - xd - asida - "the former words (Boas, 1906)
words/ recent past
- (107) hayo't - 'wal - "former rival" (Boas, 1911)
? remote past

⁷ This can be translated as "the nose came off".

- (108) 'namux - 'waf - "past friend" (Boas, 1911)
former/ remote past
- (109) gax - 'waf - an - "I came long ago" (Boas, 1911)
came remote past/ I
- (110) wa'y - u'f - "old dog" (Boas, 1911)
dog/ remote past

In translation then, we find the past tense morphemes to encompass the meanings old, recently dead, long ago dead, long ago, a former state, and an alignment between the first of something that is situated in the past. None of the glosses indicate time frames that could be translated directly as 'a week ago', 'a year ago' etc. in relation to -xd-, -x'id-, -'u'f and -w'af, other than that of 'recent' and 'remote' past. This is not to say that the translations of 'a week ago' or 'a year ago' are not possible but that as concepts they are the translations most succinctly aligned with an English model of time conceptualization.

In regards to the past tense morphological applications Boas observed:

The temporal suffixes are used much more frequently with nouns than with verbs. -xde is not only used for recently deceased person or something recently destroyed as -u'f is those dead or destroyed a longer time ago, but it is also applied when for some reason an old relation is discontinued. -xde is also used when the destruction is just occurring (Boas 1947, pg 290).

What appears to be common amongst the 'recent past' examples is the transition from present condition to past condition or the transition from living condition to non-living condition; that which is occurring in real-time versus that which has

ceased to exist in real-time and has transformed from the physical into the ephemeral. Attached to this is the marking of objects or events that are associated with the past/spiritual with past tense in mythological and ceremonial contexts. While events and entities recently transitioned carry the -*xd*- morpheme, events or entities situated further into the past are marked with the 'remote past' tense morphemes -*uʔ*- and -*wəʔ*. The applications appear to apply according to an embedded status as opposed to a linear sequence. For this reason a tense paradigm of parallel layers is proposed.

3.4. George Hunt's observations on Kwakwaka'wakw Time Perspective as Presented by Judith Berman

Judith Berman has explored Kwakwaka'wakw oral history through a linguistic analysis of the Kwak'wala language. The foundation of her study has been the vast collection of ethnographic materials collected by George Hunt and Franz Boas on the Kwakwaka'wakw and in particular, the Kwakiutl. With tremendous insight Boas taught George Hunt an orthography for writing information down in Kwak'wala. The Kwak'wala transcriptions of George Hunt are invaluable resources. They are a direct source of information without the mediation of translation. Though Boas and Hunt worked to translate as much of the materials as possible, their translations are still a form of interpretation. As has been stated before interpretation relies heavily on the interpreter. Fundamental meanings may be missed or lost in translation. Access to the Kwak'wala transcripts provides the opportunity to get one step closer to the source of information if one is willing to study the Kwak'wala language in order

to do this Berman utilizes a process of painstaking formal analysis and careful retranslation of Boas/Hunt Kwak'wala texts in order to elucidate 'meaning'. Her research is a valuable and lucid contribution in the contemporary re-evaluation of Franz Boas' ethnographic collections. In her paper, "Some Mysterious Means of Fortune: A Look at North Pacific Coast Oral History" (Berman 2004), she reflects on Kwakwaka'wakw perspectives on time and refers to the possibility of mobile cycling between the present and the past that Hunt himself attempted to explain. It is in relationship with the information Berman presents and my own analysis of past tense morphological forms and the Kwak'wala emphasis on time as a 'state' that an alternative to the horizontal linear time sequence as expressed in the English language is proposed. In quoting both Boas and Hunt on the historical relationships of narratives Berman writes:

While Hunt placed the four genres on a kind of evolutionary timeline, the relations between the myth age and the historical era are more complex. In some contexts, such as the mourning song just mentioned, the four genres do indeed seem to be conceived of as set during successive eras of the cosmos, as lying on a unidirectional arrow of time. But in other contexts the mythic and "secular" time periods appear to be more like states of being – or, as Boas expressed it, "qualities." These "qualities" not only succeed each other in cosmogony, but, since that first winter dance performed by human ancestors, they also alternate cyclically, between the winter ceremonial season and the *baxwas* or secular portion of the year (Boas 1966:172; Berman 2000:137).

In observing George Hunt's explanations to Franz Boas regarding Kwakwaka'wakw temporal flow Berman writes that from the Kwakwaka'wakw perspective the past and the present are not irrevocably fixed in continuous time.

With respect to Q, then, “old” and “recent” do *not* correspond to a linear model of time. In Hunt’s use of the term, “old” (Q-marked⁸) means a superimposition or conflation between present and mythic past, human and spirit, the secular and the winter dance season. “Recent,” Q-less parts of stories, on the other hand, lack conflation – but not relationship – between present and past, human and spirit (Berman 2004:140)

In the context of George Hunt’s observations regarding ‘qualities’ (Q-marked), summer is associated with the physical (real) world while winter is associated with the spiritual world. The spiritual (supernatural) world is definitively associated with the past – is the past, while the physical world is embedded in the present. All things that have passed out of the present are then associated with the spirit world. Considering this perspective it makes sense that the past tense morpheme “-xd-“ extends onto people who have ‘recently died’ and objects that have recently transformed. The application of the morpheme “-xd-“ is not limited in meaning to the linear regression from present to past but also indicates the shift from one level of existence to another. The consideration of time as a state rather than a fixed field is consistent with the exploration of Kwak’wala morphological forms outlined at the beginning of this thesis.

3.5. The Conceptualization of Past and Present as Alternating States of Heightened Consciousness

I am proposing that under analysis the Kwak’wala language delineates a concept of time that may be conceived of as existing on two co-existent levels of consciousness, one embedded in the past, the other imbedded in the present. At

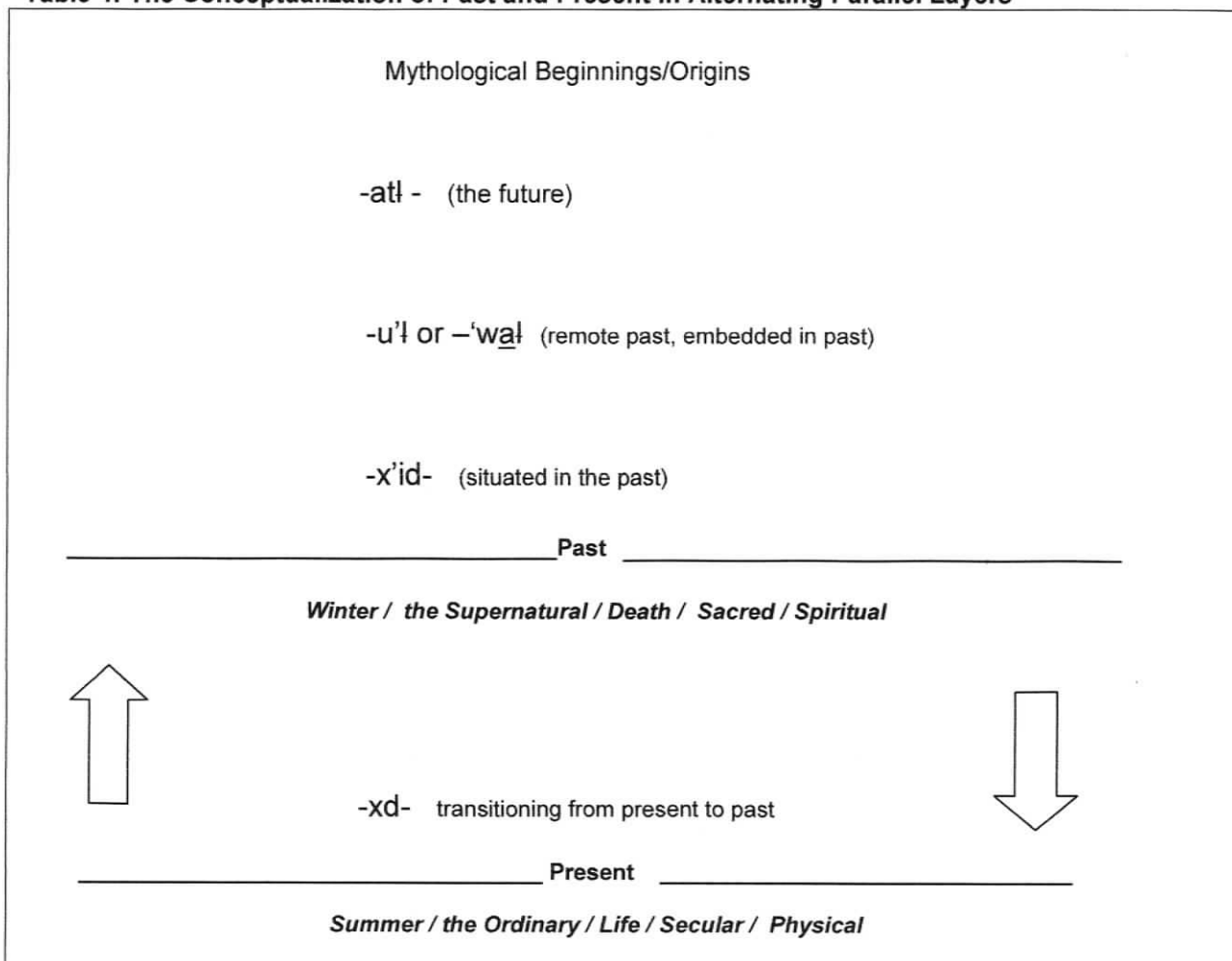
⁸ In the above passage the symbol “Q” refers to the “quotative” terminology used in Kwakwaka’wakw oratory that signified an early stage of history. This term usually was translated

specific times one state of consciousness is heightened, while the other is muted. These states alternate or “turn over” in metaphoric equivalence to the alternating states of day and night and winter and summer. The alternation of states has been exemplified within the Kwak’wala language as a significant concept in temporal flow. The past becomes associated with the ephemeral. It exists as memory and thought but is intangible in the physical world. The present is associated with all that is tangible and physical. The concepts are contained within dynamic spheres of balanced, yet opposing levels of existence. The winter recognizes the past and its’ association with the spiritual, while the summer is embedded in the present and is associated with life and the body.

3.6. Parallel Modal of Kwakwaka’wakw Time

In examining the conceptual boundaries of past tense delineation in Kwak’wala a linear model fails in its ability to relay the complexity of Kwak’wala meanings. It fails because the translations of the past tense morphemes convey only the meanings that can easily be conceptualized as equivalent to English tense application. The linear model cannot contain indigenous Kwakwaka’wakw concepts of time and the associated cultural belief system from within which they are embedded. This leaves us with the question; if a linear modal does not work, what might encompass a more appropriate modal? The following model attempts to be inclusive of Kwak’wala time

by George Hunt as “Well, then it is said...” This quote would sometimes appear as a preface to

Table 4: The Conceptualization of Past and Present in Alternating Parallel Layers

conceptualization. It consists of a primary emphasis on alternating states. The use of the same tense morphemes to indicate both the relationship of the speaker to a past event and the mortal status of individuals is an indication of a relationship between meanings. Why use the same morpheme if there is no conceptual connection between the two applications? In English, we could say 'my late father' or 'my father from the past' but the forms are different indicating a

almost every sentence. George Hunt took to leaving it out in translation.

greater disparity in meaning. In Kwak'wala the morphological forms applied to indicate, 'one who has died' and 'something situated in the past' are the same. This application of past tense morphemes onto objects and persons who have ceased to exist in the physical world appears to indicate a stronger cultural connection between the present and the past with the physical and the spiritual with the real and the ephemeral. The concepts of life and death are an extension of this symmetry.


The morphological form of past tense *-xd-* marks the transition from perceived reality to unreality. From events that are occurring in present time to those that continue to exist only in memory or imagination. Equated to this is the linguistic application of the past tense morphemes to nouns denoting death or fundamental change. These ideas can be aligned and begin to emerge in the primary cultural expression of the Kwakwaka'wakw, *'tseka*, otherwise known as the winter ceremony.

3.7. Summary

That the past and the present are aligned with the winter and the summer is elaborated upon in the detailed descriptions collected by George Hunt and Franz Boas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During the winter ceremonial the past along with the spiritual is emphasized while in the summer the physical and the present are brought to the foreground of Kwakwaka'wakw consciousness.

The passage of a year is the passage of time over the change of states from summer to winter but it is also conferred the status of the alternations between life and death, secular and sacred, physical and spiritual, the ordinary and the supernatural, the present and the past.

Table 5: Alignments and Associations of Present and Past

| Bax'us |  | 'Na'walakw |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| present | | past/future |
| secular | | sacred |
| summer | | winter |
| day | | night |
| life | | death |
| physical | | spiritual |
| ordinary | | supernatural |
| real | | imagined |

In the Kwakwaka'wakw belief system the past is imbued with the spiritual. The past is associated with the time when animals and men were of the same class of beings. At a certain point in time animals transformed into men and established communities. These ideas are embodied in the Kwak'wala word for class of animals which contains the root word meaning "the first".

- (111) gal - ga'omas - "class of animals" (Grubb, 1977)
 first class of beings
- (112) gal - dzas - "belonging to olden times" (Boas, 1947)
 First belonging to
- (113) gal - dza'yala - "sound (song) of olden times" (Boas, 1947)
 first belonging/to go to look for
- (114) gal - gam - "name of an ancestor" (Boas, 1947)
 first face

This belief is repeated over and over in Boas's collected texts in the following way;

According to Indian theory, the ancestor of a numayma (sometimes also of a tribe) appeared at a specific locality by coming down from the sky, out of the sea, or underground, generally in the form of an animal, took of his animal mask, and became a person (Boas 1935c: 41)

Supernatural beings in the form of animals are the first class of beings on the earth. Therefore they mark the origins and the beginnings of time. They are embedded in the past. Human ancestors stemmed from transformations from one form into another. In a sense then, the passage of time can be viewed as not only the temporal relativity of past, present and future but an omniscient transformation from the supernatural past into the present everyday physical world. This transformation is not static and embedded in non-dynamic space but alternates with the seasons of winter and summer. Again, this is a reflection on the cycles of life and death

manifest in the natural cycles of plant and animal life. The Kwakwaka'wakw concept of time is deeply intertwined with the associated concepts outlined in Table 5. When the morphological tense forms are applied to nouns they do more than position an object in the present or the future. In a sense they also serve to recognize the polarity of balanced oppositional states and their perpetual transitional motion.

CHAPTER 4

THE CONCEPT OF TIME MANIFEST IN KWAKWAKA'WAKW CULTURE AND ART

How does the Kwakwaka'wakw conceptualization of time manifest in expressive forms other than language? The Kwakwaka'wakw conceptualization of time appears as a common undercurrent between language and art. The associations laid out in Chapter 3 are present in songs and legends, the conduct of the winter ceremonial, and in artworks.

4.1. Associations of the Past with the Sacred through Boas/ Hunt Texts in Mythology and Songs

Throughout the Boas/Hunt Kwak'wala transcripts are many examples of past tense applications that are not translated into their English counterparts. While the meaning is included in interlinear translation it is absent in the free-verse. This exists as an example of difficulty in alignment of Kwak'wala meanings with English. In other words, in certain contexts the application of past tense in Kwak'wala is not easily translated into English. This provides further evidence that the meanings are not directly comparable and that Kwak'wala extends past tense meaning into domains that English does not.

The following examples remain somewhat of a puzzle as to their exact meanings but they are shown as applications that reveal broader, more varied meanings for past tense beyond time sequence. These examples exist in both myths and songs. Certain myths and songs are associated with the sacred. Myths that

narrate the origins or beginnings of family groups along with those detailing the acquisition of supernatural privileges are of a sacred genre. Songs accompanying the *`tsa`tseka* or winter ceremonial are also considered sacred. The past aligns with the sacred in being ephemeral or existing only in imagination. Enacted through present day ceremonies - dances, songs and masks are considered sacred privileges that are transferred from past encounters, or transformations that occurred at 'the beginning of time'.

4.1.1. Examples of Past Tense Application in Myth

"Kawadilikala and U'max`talatle" Boas/ Hunt 1893

Within Boas' research into Kwakwaka`wakw mythology is an example of objects that were transferred in ownership of a supernatural status that are marked with the past tense morpheme -xd. In a narrative describing the encounter of *U'max`talatle*, the ancestor of a chiefly lineage of the *Kwagul*, with *Kawadilikala*, the original ancestor of the *Dzawada`enuxw*, *Kawadilikala* gifts *U'max`talatle* with treasures from his country.

Free Verse Translation

Then he put his nettle line into his canoe. He and his uncle *`Tlu`tlawatsa* went out. He went across the Sound trying to reach Noomas Island. Then he saw a canoe coming from *Ya'aixugiwano*. They met at Noomas Island, and held the sides of each other's canoe. "Good day, brother," *U'max`talatle* said to *Kawadilikala*, "I do not come without purpose. My father sent me, because you are the only one whose daughter I will marry." *Kawadilikala* replied: "Paddle behind me and follow me to my house." *U'max`talatle* said: "I will give

you my harpoon line, friend, my nettle line, my harpoon shaft, and my mat.” Kawadilikala then gave his leather line to his brother and they exchanged canoes and everything in the canoes that they used.
(Boas 1893: 383-4, emphasis added)

Interlinear Translation

The following is Boas' and Hunt's interlinear translation of the above paragraph emphasized in italics. In it one can see the past tense -xd- applied in both the Kwak'wala and literal transcription.

⁹ “La'laxi gin *kaluxde* gin lotl 'namwut.” nikle 'U'max'talatle yex
Go this my harpoon line my to brother said 'U'max'talale to
past you

Kawadilikala. “Yi'xa gunkan kalkwa dlawis *ma'stuxde* dlawis
Kawadilikala. “That my nettle bark line and his harpoon *past* and his

tle'wixde.” La'la'e Kawadilikala 'u'gwaka la sas
mat *past* Then Kawadilikala also went his

k'axiwaxwanxde k'alkw la'xis 'namwut. A 'amlawis la tlaya'pa
leather line *past* line to his brother. Only, it is said they exchanged

sis *ale'watsexde.* We'la'am la gigaxsax ya'yats'ixdes.
their hunting canoes *past.* Everything things in the canoe canoes which they
had used

(Boas 1893, pg. 679, emphasis added)

While the free-verse translation mentions nothing of the presence of past tense, in the Kwak'wala text the 'recent past' morpheme is applied to the following gifts

⁹ The transliteration and translations are Boas's. I have converted the orthography into U'mista and highlighted pertinent words and sections

exchanged.

- (115) kalu-¹⁰xd-e - "harpoon line past" (Boas, 1893)
harpoon line/ recent past
- (116) ma'stu-xd-e - "harpoon past" (Boas, 1893)
harpoon / recent past
- (117) la'wi-xd-e - "mat past" (Boas, 1893)
mat/ recently past
- (118) k'alxiwaxan-xd-e - "house past" (Boas, 1893)
leather line/ recent past
- (119) ale'watse-xd-e - "hunting canoes past" (Boas, 1895)
hunting canoes/recent past

Why are the objects exchanged marked by the past tense morpheme? Is it perhaps because they have been exchanged and they are no longer the possessions of the prior owners that the past tense morpheme is applied. This might seem the most obvious reason for the past tense application. However, not all things given or exchanged between two men have the past tense morpheme as is shown in the next passage.

Free Verse Translation:

Then 'U'max`talatle married Wilxstasila'ogwa, the daughter of Kawadilikala. The house and the images and all kinds of food were given him in marriage, and blankets of lynx, marmot, wolverine, mink and dressed elk skins. Then his father-in law and his tribe brought him home. They brought everything, also the house. (Boas 1893:384)

¹⁰ Boas indicates the "x" in the past tense -xd as underlined while U'mista does not. The difference is a slight shift in pronunciation in the back of the throat.

Interlinear Translation:

La'am kigatixidas Wilxstasila'ogwa xwanukwas Kawadilikala. Wa,
 Then he was married to Wilxstasila'ogwa his child Kawadilikala. Well,

la'am gukwalxtlayid da gukw dluwa kikas'o dluwa naxwa kas
 then the house was given the house and the carvings and all for his
 to him in marriage

kwixsdam xa hamay'i `ka`kanutl wa'lasxe, kwekuxdi, na'tlaskam,
 different kinds the food blankets lynx marmot wolverine

ma'tsaskam, ala'kim. Wa, la'am gax si'wadayu sas nagu'mp
 mink, dressed elk. Well, then they came they too him his father-in law
 skins home

dlawis gukwalot. Wa'wilaxsa amla'i gaxe da gukwde.
 and his tribe. Everything, it is said came the house past.

(Boas 1893, pg.679, emphasis added)

While gifts of food and blankets of lynx, marmot, wolverine, mink and elk are given by Kawadilikala to 'U'max'talale in this passage, only the house is marked in the Kwak'wala transcript with the past tense morpheme. What is it about the house that differentiates it from the other articles? Possibly, the house has supernatural status while the other articles are considered mundane and ordinary in comparison. Perhaps as well, Kawadilikala's harpoon line, his harpoon, his mat and his canoe are his personal possessions that he uses marking them as sacred while the blankets are articles accumulated to for the purpose of distribution rendering them ordinary. These observations are far from conclusive but the examples highlight a difference in the delineation of the concept of past tense between Kwak'wala and English that is not directly translatable. The past tense morphemes are evident in the Kwak'wala transcript and the interlinear

translation and yet the meaning they convey is absent in the free verse translation.

Tewixi'lakw – the Mountain Goat Hunter Boas/Hunt 1906

In the following examples the introductory term, *Wa, la'la'e* is used in various forms to introduce almost every sentence. As Judith Berman has indicated in her research on Kwakwaka'wakw mythologies the use of the quotative, "well, then it is said", is an oratorical signifier that the story is a part of the mythological past as opposed to historical past. All Kwakwaka'wakw stories that contain this phrase are considered as mythological and aligned with supernatural times. Historical narratives lack the 'quotative' and are therefore associated with the more secular present.

In the Dzawada'enuxw story of Tewixi'lakw, a mountain goat hunter is granted the supernatural ability to kill mountain goats. When he kills four mountain goats through his newly acquired ability, the dead mountain goats are not marked with the past tense morpheme as might be expected. Perhaps, this might be because the story is embedded in the mythological past, a past the mountain goats are a part of already. In dying, the morpheme that would mark 'the late mountain goats' is not applied perhaps because it is not required to mark the distance between the mythological past and the human present. The goats are already from the mythological past therefore they need not be marked as

transitioning from one level to another. The absence of the past tense morpheme where one might expect it based on a western model of past tense applications again indicates a difference between Kwak'wala and English in past tense morphological distribution.

Free Verse Translation:

Then he walked down to them and found them. Then he dragged them towards the entrance of his house. When he had all the mountain-goats there, he skinned them; and after he had skinned them, he carved them. (Boas and Hunt 1905:20)

Interlinear Translation:

Wa, la'la'e kas'ida ka's la laxa lak. Wa, hax'ida'am'lawise `kak. Wa,
Well, then it is he walked that he then go down to them. Well, at once it is said he found Well,
said them

la'la'e nax'idak ka's la' la'e'tlas la'xis gukwe. Wa, gil'am'lawise 'wi'leda
then it is he hauled that he now enter in his house. Well, as soon as it is said were finished
said them with them the

'mi'ma'lxthuwe, la'e hax'ida'am sa`pidak. Wa, la'la'e gwal sa`pak. Wa,
mountaingoats when at once he skinned Well, then it is he skinning. Well,
them. said finished

hax'ida'am'lawis sasa'xws'andak.
at once it is said he carved the meat.

(Boas and Hunt 1905:20, emphasis added)

Earlier in the story Tewixi'lakw had watched as four mountain goats came towards him and descended into the mountain through a secret doorway. When

a second group of goats appear, the original group of goats is marked by the term *galxde* meaning 'first past'. They were the first to go by and descend into the mountain. The term implies a special consideration of 'those first'.

Free Verse Translation:

Well, now it is said, it was not long when again he saw four mountain goats coming towards him. *Those, it is said, also came from the place of where the 'first past' came.* (Boas and Hunt 1905: 8, emphasis added).

Interlinear Translation:

He'am'la'xa gax'ide ga'ya'nakilasasida *galxde* gaxa.

Those it is said also came from coming from place of the first past came.

(Boas and Hunt 1905: 8, emphasis added)

Once Tewixi'lakw goes inside the mountain where the mountain goats are gathered for a winter ceremonial he witnesses them singing the first song of the dancing society. The word for song is prefaced by the same term *galxde*.

Free Verse Translation

Then the speaker of the house spoke, and said, "Sing again, friends."
Then the first song of the dancers was sung again.
(Boas and Hunt 1905, 13).

Interlinear Translation

Wa, la'la'e hax'ida'mida ya'ya`kanta'melas'ida gukwe ya`kegala.

Well, then it is at once the speaker of the house of the house spoke.
said

La'la'e 'nika: "Wa, wiga 'ni'namukw i`tid la'dzakwa danx'idax."

Then it is he said Well, go on friends again go forth with sing
Said voice

Wa, hax'ida'am'lawise xe danx'idayuwida galxde danxalayusi'da

Well, at once it is said that was sung the first past song by the

gwegudza. (Boas and Hunt 1905: 13, emphasis added)

(dancing society)

- (120) galxde - "the first past-where they had first come from(Boas, 1906)
first recent past The mountain goats come from the place where the 'first' mountain goats came from.

- (121) galxde - "the first past-the first song of the dancers(Boas, 1906)
first recent past The singers sing the first song of the dancers

In the last two examples the word used is exactly the same – *galxde*. What they have in common is the origin of the event. The origin of the event is anchored as 'the first from the past' giving the acts a status connecting both the 'first goats' and the 'first song' in past time.

While a complete analysis of past tense applications in mythological texts exists beyond the scope of this thesis the examples provided at least serve to demonstrate the disparity between western notions of applied past tense and the varied meanings of Kwak'wala applications. These meanings do not easily translate into English and therefore are most often absent in English free-verse translations despite presence in both Kwak'wala text and English interlinear translation.

4.1.2. The Past Tense in Kwakwaka'wakw Songs

Kwakwaka'wakw songs are grouped according to the sacred or the secular. All songs associated with the *tseka* are sacred. They are performed with great care and mistakes are avoided at all cost. If mistakes are made in the singing of winter ceremonial songs an indemnity must be paid out. Secular songs are those associated with the *tlasala* or *dlugwala* portion of performances, love songs, fun songs, gaming songs (*la'hal*) and baby songs. Sacred songs are in accordance associated with the winter and the secular songs with the summer.

In Boas' transcripts of Kwakwaka'wakw winter ceremonial songs the past tense morpheme *-xd-* is used extensively. The following is a ha'matsa song that originated from the 'Awik'inuxw.

Secret Song of Ha'matsa – 'Awik'enuxw Dialect (Boas 1893:691)

Ya, wune'nasu'xsiya ka es ha'msayakasde¹¹. We'kas nu'gwa
 Ya, go you for his food real past Nothing I

kwa'kulagamlatkasde ha'msayasotlas Baxbakwalanuxsiwa'ekasde.
 living face real past food that will be Baxbakwalanuxsiwa'e real past
 obtained from

Free Verse Translation (Boas 1893:459)

Now I am going to eat

My face is ghastly pale

I shall eat what is given to me by Baxbakwalanuxsiwa'e

The free verse translation reveals nothing of the past tense morphological meaning. The *-kasde* that appears in this song is a composite suffix combining the past tense morpheme *-xd-* with the suffix *-kas* meaning 'real' or 'really'. Phonologically the *-xd-* drops the introductory 'x' when following a 's'. The resulting *-kasde* is a common form in *`tseka* songs that attaches to both persons, objects and actions. It appears to infer a sacred state conferred from the past.

Other samples taken from winter ceremonial songs are:

- (122) la - kas-d-e - "went real past" (Boas, 1893)
went real past
- (123) Gwaxgwaxu'a'lanuxsiwekas-d-e - "Gwaxgwaxu'a'lanuxsiwe real past" (Boas, 1893)
raven's cry real past
- (124) ma'yuxwana - kas-d-e - "salmon real past" (Boas, 1893)
salmon real past
- (125) ya'ikawe-xd-e - "property past" (Boas, 1893)
property/ recent past
- (126) ha'msaya-xd-e - "food past" (Boas, 1893)
food/ recent past
- (127) K'omin'aga-xd-e - "K'omin'aga past" (Boas, 1893)
name recent past

¹¹ Listed as a suffix that will lose the initial "x", an effect based influenced by the terminal consonant of

(128) la'ista'isalayxd-uxs - "going around the world -past"(Boas, 1893)

In a Salmon Song of the Ma'amtagila the following verse contains past tense on almost every word.

Song of the Salmon Weir (Boas 1893:710, emphasis added)

2. dlaxwa'ix dlaxwa'ikamxstle dlaxwsamxde ya'yaxoyugwxde
 Stand still, stand still who stands on top/ past who make the tide rise/ past

le'lasta'idlaxde, tsa'nestadlaxde wa'wiyakilxde ya'yaxwoyugwxde
 whirlpool/ past where the tides meet/ past his skirt/ past who makes the tide rise/ past

Free Verse Translation:

2. (Speaking to the chief of the tide)

Stand still, chief! You who makes the tide rise,
 who causes whirlpools where the tides meet, whose skirt of seaweeds makes the
 tide rise.

Again, in the English free-verse translation there is no attempt to translate the past tense morpheme. This supports the case that the concept is foreign to English and difficult to translate. In reviewing these particular songs the concept of linear past tense does not seem to apply. The tense application appears to be honorific and connotative, unless the descriptions are actually names. In that case the translation might be altered to read.

Stand still! Stand still, The One who Stands on Top (past), The One who
 Makes the Tide Rise (past), Whirlpool (past), Where the Tides Meet
 (past), The One whose Skirts of Seaweed make the Tide Rise (past).

In this case the descriptive phrases would be actually nouns and could carry the past tense as people who have died or who are embedded in the spirit world rather than the physical.

The literal translation of *ʔseka* songs reveal the application of past tense as ceremonial and honorific. It is of interest to note that the morpheme most often applied is that of the 'recent past'. While the exact meaning of the past tense applications cannot be discerned, what is obvious is that the English application of past tense delineating distance between the speaker and the event spoken about as presented on a linear progression does not suffice in explaining the application. In accordance with the model presented in the Chapter 3 the past tense morphological application in *ʔseka* ceremonial songs is honorific and marks both the infusion and recognition of a heightened spiritual consciousness.

The examples presented are taken from Boas 1897 publication "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians". In reviewing the songs published within this volume only *ʔseka* songs utilize the term *-kasde* – "real – past tense", while songs associated with the less serious dance cycle termed *ɗla'u'ɗlaxa*, contain only the version *-kaso* – "real", or *-kasowa* – "real/

good". I suspect that the *dla'u'dlaxa* dance cycle as Boas termed it is the predecessor of what is called in modern time's *tla'sala*. The *tla'sala* dance cycle used to be performed in the spring or summer, though at times it could be danced in the winter but it is polarized against the '*tseka*' by its' secularity.

4.2. The Kwakwaka'wakw `Tseka or Winter Ceremonial

As has been expressed before, the Kwakwaka'wakw divided the year into the summer and winter. The summer season was a time for food gathering and stockpiling of provisions for the winter. The winter was the time for the sacred ceremonial season. During this period of time the Kwakwaka'wakw practiced tremendously sophisticated and dramatic performances in recognition of this spiritually imbued state. In reference to the '*tseka*', as it existed at the end of the Nineteenth Century Boas observed:

Thus, at the time of the beginning of the winter ceremonial the social system is completely changed. The period when the clan system is in force is called *ba'xus*, which term also designates those who have not been initiated by any spirit, and might be translated "profane". The period of the winter ceremonial is called '*tsa'tsa'eKa*', the secrets, which term designates also the ceremonial itself. It is also called '*tseka*' (singular of '*tsa'tsa'eKa*'); '*a'ik'igala*' (making the heart good); and '*ga'xaxa'akw*' (brought down from above) (Boas 1897: 418).

The cycling of the summer (present) and the winter (past) seasons are given metaphoric spatial mobility, most dramatically, in the continuation of the quote; "The Indians express this alternating of seasons by saying that in summer the *ba'xus* is on top, the '*tsa'tsa'eKa*' below, and vice versa in winter." (Boas

1897:418) The importance of this concept is repeated and its conceptual consistency is exemplified in a later publication by Boas that states; "The contrast between the sacred and secular seasons is expressed by the Indians by the saying that in summer the secular quality is on top, in winter, the sacred quality." (Boas 1966 pg. 172).

The secular is marked by the terms *bax'us* (ordinary) and the sacred by the term *'na'walakw* (supernatural). The summer state is considered *bax'us* and the winter *'na'walakw*.

The term *bax'us* also designates the season in which the sacred ceremonials (*'tseka*) are not performed. Everything that refers to the profane summer season is called *bax'us*. There are *bax'us* names (*bax'adzaxdla'yu* R 925.32);...At the beginning of the winter ceremonials the profane quality is wiped out of the eyes...(Boas 1966:167-168)

This change of state is so pronounced that in the Kwakwaka'wakw *'tseka* ceremonial names are changed from summer names to winter names. The change of names marks the change of state from the everyday to the sacred. The following quote comes from the opening of the winter ceremonial season when dyed red cedar bark is brought into the ceremonial house, sanctified and distributed amongst the people to wear as headpieces. It refers to the actions of one of the masters of ceremonies.

As soon as the song is ended, he cries out, "*hwip, hwip*," looking at the red cedar bark which he is holding and saying, "Now the supernatural power has gone into this red cedar bark. Take care of yourselves, for as soon as it is given to you your winter dance names are given to you also." (Boas 1966: 254).

At the end of the winter ceremonial season another ceremony is conducted to recognize the return to a secular state and the red cedar bark headpieces removed. This is an example described by Boas taken from the *Da'naxda'xw*.

Then the song was sung which was sung for *'Kamtalal*, their mythical ancestor, when his people took off their cedar bark rings at the end of the winter ceremonial:

1. Now dance! Take off by means of your dance the great head ornament, the head ornament that you inherited from the mask of the winter ceremonial worn by the first of our tribe.
Wo,o ,o ,o ,o , huwai, huwai, wo,o ,o ,o ,o .
(Here all the people lifted their cedar bark ornaments)
2. O let us now put away our great head ornaments. The head ornament that you inherited from the mask of the winter ceremonial worn by the first of our tribe.
Wo,o ,o ,o ,o , huwai, huwai, wo,o ,o ,o ,o .
(Here the people lifted the head ornaments again)
3. O let us now put down our great head ornaments. The head ornaments that you inherited from the mask of the winter ceremonial worn by the first of our tribe.
Wo,o ,o ,o ,o , huwai, huwai, wo,o ,o ,o ,o .
(Here they lifted the head ornaments again)
4. O now dance and take off this our great head ornament, the head ornament that you inherited from the mask of the winter ceremonial worn by the first of our tribe.
Wo,o ,o ,o ,o , huwai, huwai, wo,o ,o ,o ,o .

As soon as they had finished this song, they changed their names. The one who had been *Xugwamsila* was now called *Ha'mdzid*, and the one who had been called *'Paḵala'dzi* was now called *Nage*. The latter said. "O, tribes, now the red cedar bark has been taken by my chief, who will keep it until next winter. Now we have all come to be secular, for we have finished our winter ceremonial." (Boas 1966: 278-279)

Even in contemporary times the term used to refer to this part of Kwakwaka'wakw ceremony is 'turning over'. "A Kwak'wala term used to describe the change from

secular to winter dance “seasons” is *lix'id*, “to turn over or revolve” (Boas and Hunt 1905:470) (Berman, 2004:138). Once again, the language used delineates the conceptual alternation of the states of winter and summer seasons with the sacred and the secular, which are aligned with a heightened consciousness of the past and the present. In the song used for the closing of the winter ceremonial outlined above two connections are emphasized in the repeated stanza “the head ornament that you inherited from the mask of the winter ceremonial worn by the first of our tribe”. The first is the connection between the winter ceremonial and the past and the second connection is between the past and the first or original ancestor.

This section on the *`tseka* merely presents the concept of polarity regarding the winter state and the summer state and their associations with the past and the present. A comprehensive evaluation of the concept of ‘time’ as it relates to the *`tseka* is far beyond the breadth of this thesis. With regret, I shall only refer to the wealth of symbolic imagery embedded with the Kwakwaka'wakw consciousness of time in the winter ceremonial by outlining some major themes.

It is in ceremonial choreography that we first step away from the literal applications of language and can see their conceptual connectedness in alternative forms. The application of the past tense form *-xd-* as presented in Table 4, pg 58 in language use parallels the conceptual division of the spiritual and the physical realms. The cycling of winter and summer recognizes this

division and it is manifest in the ceremonial composition of the *lix'id*, “to turn over or revolve” Here we see clearly the mutually enforcing conceptualization of worldview operating within both language and cultural forms.

4.3. The Past in Autobiographical Narratives

In analyzing Kwakwaka'wakw cultural beliefs one can then situate the mythological beginnings in the remote past and historical times in the state of transition between the present and the remote past. Under this model, the historical past could be considered more recent past. This perspective on the past is expressed in autobiographical narratives of Kwakwaka'wakw born before or near the turn of the twentieth century.

To the Kwakwaka'wakw born during this period it was culturally imperative to view ones lifespan from the beginning of one's ancestors' transformation from an animal/nature based being into humanity. The head person of these community family groups (*nu'yam*, *'nami'ma*) was considered the continued embodiment of the original ancestor. He or she would carry the inherited name of this entity and pass it down to his or her successor keeping it alive. The majority of members of a community group stemmed from this shared ancestry and it was of utmost importance to one's identity to be able to recite the origins of one's family. Slaves, or people without standing were referred to as *xa'mala*, this word translates as 'orphan' or 'one without parents'.

In what would appear to be an extraordinary act in contemporary times is the reiteration of a Kwakwaka'wakw family history obtained by George Hunt on behalf of Franz Boas in 1916. The account of her family history was performed by a woman who was mourning the death of her brother. The narrative covered a remarkable twenty-two to twenty five generations of her genealogy.

I hear a woman crying for the death of her brother. and in her crying she starts to tell the whole History of her family. she Began from the Whale before it turn into a man. And this man came to marrie to the Kwagul tribe. She kept on crying or singing from 7 o clock until nearly 3 o clock. and after she finished. I went to her and asked her if I could write the story of her cry song. she said that she would be proud of it...nobody is allowed to sing it But the oldest daughter of the family she Belongst to (BPC: Hunt to Boas 7/4/ 1916; Boas 1921:836-85).

What is remarkable here is the ability to recall such an extensive history and that it could be traced back through historical times to the origins story of her family. Her consciousness of the connection between the past and herself is exemplified in her recitation. The modern Kwakwaka'wakw consciousness of ancestry has eroded considerably and many members of the younger generations no longer know their origin stories. However remnants of this culturally motivated capability to recall ancestry still exists in older members of the Kwakwaka'wakw community who display what are now considered feats of memory in the recollection of family ties.

In the autobiographical narratives of Kwakwaka'wakw born in the late Nineteenth Century such as Agnes Alfred (1893-1992) and Charlie Nowell (1870-1957)

examples of conscious extension into a remote past is evident. In narrating her autobiography Agnes Alfred, referred to by her daily name 'Axu'w, begins her narrative with origin or myth stories. Charlie Nowell's autobiography begins with his birth but repeatedly emphasizes his consciousness of the origins of his lineage. In these autobiographies exists an importance in establishing one's identity from the origin of one's people in great detail.

Martine J. Reid when writing about Agnes Alfred observed:

As 'Axu'w grew from childhood to womanhood as the wife of a Kwagul nobleman, myth time slipped even further into the background, but the bond that secured her to her past and formed a pattern for her present was never broken. Until the end, from her home in the small fishing village of Alert Bay, her connection to her mythic past and to her people remained strong.

When 'Axu'w spoke, we confronted an awesome compression of time. She was born one generation before slavery had ended and two generations before storytellers came to rely on the written word. She made a very clear distinction between the times of myth ('nu'yam) (see Chapter 1); the times she had heard about but not experienced ('tsa`kalam) (see Chapter 2); and the times she had lived and known personally (see Chapters 3-7). This sequence formed the basic chronology of her memoirs, but her stories often wove the three time periods together in a non-linear way (Reid, Sewid-Smith 2004: xxviii).

This concept is also revealed in 'Axu'w 's choice of past tense morphology that in translation might not make sense to an English speaker.

How did 'Axu'w's concepts of time compare with those of individuals who do not share her culture? It seems that 'Axu'w's sense of time and temporal flow had something to do with her personal experiences. For example, she told us that she was "baptized *not long ago*", or that "her

father had died *not long ago*. Both events, which she had witnessed, had actually taken place some fifty or sixty years earlier, during a period of time that Westerners would refer to as the past. For 'Axu'w, however this time belonged to her present, her lived reality. What 'Axu'w had not witnessed and had not experienced personally was referred to as happening "long ago" and did not belong to her field of lived experiences. Such events may have taken place in mythical times (e.g., before or after the flood) or in historical time (e.g., with reference to a type of food she did not eat because it was no longer prepared, or to events of which she had heard but had not experienced) (Reid, Sewid-Smith 2004: xix, emphasis added).

In Charlie Nowell's life story he relates how ancestry was emphasized to him as a child and that for the remainder of his life the consciousness of his ancestry never left him.

When I was very young, I used to sleep sometimes beside my father. When I lie in bed beside him, he talked to me about our ancestors. He told me about my grandfather and his father and his father, and what they did, and about how our ancestors knew about the flood...My father also tells me about the potlatches which has come down from our ancestors, how our great-grandfathers used to give potlatches, and so on down to his time (Ford 1941: 55-56).

When Charlie's father is dying, Charlie is in Alert Bay at school. He summons Charlie to Fort Rupert and on his deathbed he repeats to Charlie lessons about ancestry.

I went to Fort Rupert, and as soon as I get there, my father calls me to go to his bedside, and told me he is going to leave us, and told me to remember what he has taught me regarding potlatches. He told me to do the same as my brother does – that he is always loaning out blankets to other people, and that is the only way to get other blankets. "If you spend your earnings foolishly, you will be no good. They will not look upon you as they are looking upon your brother. Most of all I want to say is, I know you have been to school, and I think the only way for you to remember the

main positions and all the ancestors is for you to write them down, because it seems to me that everybody is forgetting their ancestors and names. I have often heard people make mistakes. The first thing you will write down our ancestors until now." So I did – all our ancestors right down to him (Ford 1941:107).

These autobiographical accounts reflect a culturally heightened consciousness of the past. They indicate a particularly Kwakwaka'wakw extension of beginnings of the self beyond physical birth into the mythological beginnings of time.

This consciousness began to erode with contact and the influence of English culture as is expressed in Charlie's father's observation of the loss of this knowledge in the people around them. A hundred years later, this consciousness is no longer a cultural imperative for all Kwakwaka'wakw. However, with the contemporary revitalization of cultural practices many Kwakwaka'wakw have returned to actively seeking this knowledge.

4.4. Reincarnation- the Perpetuation of the Past into the Present (and Back Again)

"Come friends, that you may see the manner in which I perform the Winter Ceremonial. This was given to us by the creator of our ancestors. Your ways, Kwag'uł, differ greatly from ours. They were given to you in the beginning of the world. Take care and do not change your old customs, Kwag'uł!" (Boas 1966:203)

In analyzing Kwak'wala texts collected by George Hunt in the late Nineteenth Century and Early Twentieth, Berman notes:

Although the present is situated between past and future, the past is morally and ontologically privileged: The proper relationship between Kwakwaka'wakw chiefs and nobles and their ancestors was expressed in such Kwak'wala terms as Hayigi "to imitate , to follow, to use someone else's existence as a model for one's own" and du?igi "to look back and imitate deeds of one's ancestors" (Berman 1991:86-7).

She also observes:

In this worldview, both what we might call "myth" and "history" are part of a single system of knowledge about the past, a system shaped and unified by the persistence of chiefly descent lines that are anchored in the past and extend into the future (Berman 2004:136).

The past can be called upon, recreated, and emerge into the present through ritualistic and artistic expression. Included in this is the belief that individuals are actual reincarnations of entities that stem from the beginning. Chiefs are the embodiment of a continued lineage that has no end as long as the acknowledgment of the spirit of the original ancestor remains and there is a living being on earth that can to represent that ancestor.

In a sense then humans are containers for souls. The souls stem from the beginning and occupy human forms from birth to death. When the physical body dies the soul reenters the spirit world and at a certain time in the future is reincarnated into the world again. The following Kwak'wala word is emphatic of this concept.

(128) 'alum – gal - il - "to be dying" (B.Lagis, 2005)
new in the house

The literal translation could be translated as “becoming new again” The root is ‘*alumas* – “new”, the suffixes are *ga-* “to arrive?”¹² and, *il-* “in the house”

It is believed that souls will return to inhabit their own family group descendants.

Within this line of thought much of the activity of the winter ceremonials are simultaneously the recognition of past ancestors and the perpetuation of rights and privileges for the reincarnated generations of the future. In a sense then, the maintenance of traditions ensures that there is an inheritance for one-self to be reborn into. An example of this perspective is expressed in Agnes Alfred’s biography, “Paddling to Where I Stand”.

...once we asked her if an individual could be reincarnated into a descent group (*‘nama`yam*) different from his/her own. After a long reflective pause, she said she did not think so and immediately started telling a myth to prove her point (Reid & Sewid-Smith, 2004:xxx).

This mind-set, or worldview is reiterated in myths and in prayers. In myths taboos are observed and behaviors carefully curtailed in order to maintain continuity. In order for the salmon to return each year and be bountiful, the bones of the first salmon caught are ceremonially returned to the water. Once the bones are returned the salmon regenerates and comes back to life.

The powers of salmon were fundamental in other ways. One reason for disposing of fish remains in salt water was to prevent dogs from eating them and, thus, driving away the offending fish. Even more important, however, this practice ensured the reincarnation of the salmon’s spirit and its return the next year. “It is said that the various kinds of salmon come alive when the offal is put in the water at the mouths of the rivers” (*laxa`uxwsiwa`yasa wiwa*) (Boas 1921,609; see also Boas and Hunt 1905,317)

¹² The translation of this morpheme is not definitive

My mother recalled her own childhood memory of the first salmon feast being conducted in Kingcome Inlet. A man named *Hamdzid* (Jim Humchitt) had the privilege of giving the first salmon feast. The first salmon would be brought to him and he would feast with the men of the village. In the 1940's the salmon ceremonial was still intact. Currently, in Kingcome Inlet, this practice has fallen out of use.

In order to maintain the balance of life and death and the continuity of all things into the future careful protocols must be observed. Indeed, in order to facilitate the return of souls to family and ensure one's own future beyond this lifetime an investment must be made in ritualistic practice. Prayers, observances and rituals assist to maintain balance between the physical and the spiritual worlds.

A mother whose child has just died addresses it, "Ah, ah, ah, child, why have you done this to me? I have tried hard to treat you well when you came to me to have me for your mother. Look at all your toys and all the things you have. Why do you desert me, child? May it be that I did something, child, to you in the way that I treated you? I will try better when you come back to me, child. Please, only become at once well in the place to which you are going. As soon as you have been made well come back to me, child. Please do not stay there for good. Please, do have mercy on one who is your mother, child! (Boas 1966:158)

The preceding passage emphasizes two points; one, that perhaps the mother had failed to maintain proper behaviors toward her child and that this had assisted in the child's death and secondly, that she believed the child's soul could return in the form of another baby to be born to her in the future.

I have an aunt who at times has been referred to as the second 'Gert' who is currently in her mid-sixties. Her parents had an older daughter who lived only until she was a young teenager. Her name was also 'Gert'. Years after she died the second 'Gert' was born and given her deceased sister's name. I consider this process of naming a remnant of the traditional belief system that Gert's parents still upheld at her time of birth in the mid-1930's.

The concept of reincarnation is conceptually consistent with the idea of alternating states. In a sense one could view the movement of summer, to winter, to summer as a birth and a death followed by re-birth. This movement is reflected in the relationship of body to spirit or form to essence.

4.5. The Kwakwaka'wakw Concept of Time as Reflected in Art.

The Kwakwaka'wakw concept of time as fundamentally tied into the polarity of body (present) and spirit (past) underlies all cultural and artistic representations. The concept of time is embedded in Kwakwaka'wakw artistic meaning and composition. Just as human bodies are containers for souls, following the same line of conceptual thought, objects and articles are physical containers for spirits. As long as the memory or idea of an object is maintained in the collective consciousness of a community, then the physical manifestation of that object can be created, destroyed, and re-created. The emphasis lies not in the object but in the idea or spirit it embodies. Under this conceptualization of the world all

entities are comprised as both body and spirit. Humans, animals, plants, and even stones have a spirit that is granted equivalence to humanity. This is exhibited in the following two stories narrated by my uncle, Ernie Willie.

The Killer Whale Hunter

And so that in all of the legends as I read it and understand it, is always somehow the appreciation of these animals, and these birds and every living thing. That we as human beings are just but a part of the whole creation. That seems to be the emphasis about all the legends that I have heard of...because, you could take one very simple one, that I remember. It was about this young boy who was a real good hunter, and I think it was where our people cried in a way when we first got a killer whale *Mobidai*, some years back, maybe ten, twelve years ago. There is a story about a young boy who is a good hunter and he wanted to try his prowess in the open sea and to get himself a killer whale, '*maxi'nux*. And he goes up to this island where he knows that the '*maxi'nux* would play from time to time you see and he goes there and all he does is, you know like, and if you talk about a high powered rifle or a harpoon, you know he would get them stuck in there all right but he would never kill them. '*mitla*, he was just hurting them, that is all. One day the big bull whale came right up to the beach and it opened up and a man came out of there. And ran after that young boy and caught up to him in no time at all as he was trying to run away and just grabbed his Achilles tendons and pulled them all. These two here (gestures to his heels). He didn't kill him. And told him at that point, "You remember from this day forward, that we too - are men. And you will live a long time to tell this. And that will be your plight from here on end. You cannot walk but you must tell our story." And that's how that one, just that one little legend goes. And all of those stories, you know they tell us how to respect nature and always to worship God and to know what our fellow man was about. (Ernie Willie, transcript of audio recording late 1970's early 1980's, collection of the author)

The boy failed to respect the killer whales as equals and as a result of his careless behavior the whales punish him. The leader of the whales literally becomes a man in order to chase the boy down and communicate his lesson. In the next story the second son of Kawadilikala emerges from stone.

The Stone Child of Kawadilikala

It is, at least Kawadilikala was the first son, this even goes beyond, Kingcome stories. It seems to me anyway. Anyways, his first son was so lonely that he didn't have a playmate. This talks about our relationship to the rock, to the earth itself. He was so lonely. He was sitting in front of the house with... (digresses) , see and first of all Kawadilikala himself and he and his brother when they decided to become men, see, they then built the house and if you remember, and I think it's the house that's in Kingcome and I think it's the one that is copied in Alert Bay, that new one. Two men, it's actually in the back of the house, but it's called the front when you go in. It's called the back of the house. And , uh, its two human faces if you like, two human persons and one says "Welcome", the other one says "Come in and the other one says "Welcome" And the other two in front which is, I guess in one the *kulus*, and the *dzunukwa* on the bottom. They say "Feed them", see, "Bring food and feed them". Or the other is to say "make them comfortable around the fire", as they would say. And you see that, that was divinely given – the way to build our longhouses and to use the kelp, which if you go into Alert Bay one, you will see the beam ties at least the gable beams are supposed to represent kelp and at the bottom in Kingcome I believe it was –*sisi'utlxwa*.

Tim Willie – "That's the bighouse that still stands"

Yeah, and that's the bottom one you see. So anyways Kawadilikala and his first son were sitting in front of their longhouse. And the young boy was saying to his father, "I'm really lonely. I want someone to play with. Someone that can go around the woods with me and so on." And Kawadilikala was thinking, you see and wondering what he can do for his son. And they heard somebody crying, now, I don't think that's the right word - *lagwal* , but that's not the word 'cry'.

Tim Willie - "*kwa'yala*"

Kwa'yala, eh. So they heard all that see and they said, "Come and we'll go and see, we'll go and investigate. And they couldn't see anything. But they could hear this crying. They were in the right place. And finally he decided, well, he was going to cut that rock in half. And he saw the young man in there. It was inside that rock and he was crying to be set free. And he became Kawadilikala's second son.

(Transcript of audio recording 'Yaxatlanis – Ernie Willie and 'Wats'pala – Tim Willie, late 1970's early 1980's, collection of the author)

These two legends illustrate the relationship of spirit and body in all things in the Kwakwaka'wakw traditional worldview. All beings have bodies and spirits as humans do. Even stone can be characterized as human. This belief system is a vital component of Kwakwaka'wakw artistic renditions of their world. In this world houses can be entities that contain an idea or a spirit. This idea or spirit is what is considered eternal and is passed on from generation to generation keeping it alive. Just like people die and their physical forms degenerate back into the earth so too do objects and articles. A wooden house can collapse over time and return to the earth but it can always be recreated by people who have inherited that idea, or the prerogative, of that house and the spirit will return to it. It is the spirit and the soul that is permanent and enduring while all things on the earth both human and non-human are transitory. Under this premise, what would be considered inanimate under English perception is considered animate by the Kwakwaka'wakw. This concept is artistically expressed in the ability of objects to reflect human characteristics. Following Kwakwaka'wakw conceptual paths this is not only possible but logical. A house can be an entity in itself with a face and a mouth that consumes its guests as in the following photograph of my great-granduncle John Scow's house taken in Gwayasdams in 1905.



Figure 1: Gwayasdams -Gilford Island, C.1900. John Scow's House

Photo by C.F. Newcombe. RBCM PN 235

The style of a house and the crests represented are prerogatives. They are passed down to consecutive generations as inheritance. However, their powers lie in the perpetuation of lineage rather than possession. Houses, like people, have names and histories. While not all house-fronts are painted to represent faces house-front paintings depict most often images of family origins or inherited prerogatives. The 'house' is a powerful metaphor for family. In a literal sense the interior house-posts carved to represent ancestral beings hold up the house in the same way that ancestry holds up the concept of a family group, or *nuyam*. If destroyed, the physical house can be recreated as long as the family who holds the rights to that prerogative continues to exist and the knowledge of the

house history remains. In *Dzawada'enuxw* history, when the original ancestor *Kawadilikala* marries his daughter *Wilxstasila'ogwa* to 'U'max`talatle he gifts his new son-in-law with his house. In the narrative the house is marked with the past tense form *-xd-*. A detailed description of the house is provided and the house is depicted as animate and alive. This section continues the story of *Kawadilikala* and 'U'max`talatle from the point where they had exchanged their canoes as presented previously.

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 in 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 the corner of *Tlu'tlasta's* blanket. Then the posts at the sides of the door spoke, and the one to 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 cross-beams over the rear posts were double-headed snakes (*sisi'u!*) which were constantly playing with their tongues. The posts in the rear of the house were wolves, and a grizzly bear was under each of the wolves. Carved images were all round the house. 'U'max`talatle and *Tlu'tlasta* were sitting in the house and were given mountain goat meat to eat. When they had finished eating, the speaker of the house said: "What do you want here?" Now 'U'max`talatle beheld the daughter of *Kawadilikala*, who was sitting in the rear of the house. He thought: "I will say that I came to marry her." Then the thought hearer of the house spoke: "Chief 'U'max`talatle came to marry *Kawadilikala's* princess." *Kawadilikala* said at once: "O, brother! thank you that you want to marry my daughter. It has been my desire that you should marry her, brother 'U'max`talatle. Now you marry my princess and you shall have this house for your house as a gift from your wife and the great dance 'Walasaxa. Its names are *Galgayalis*, and *Galkamalis* and *Ga'muta'yalis* and *Ga'mutilelagalis*, and your summer names will be *Nage* and *Nagedzi* and *Kwaxot!* and *Gigastlan*. The great dance 'Walasaxa has forty songs. You will use this house for the celebration of the winter ceremonial, my son-in-law. That is all." Thus spoke *Kawadilikala* to 'U'max`talatle. The latter

replied: "Thank you, Chief Kawadilikala. I am glad on account of your speech father-in-law. Now teach me the songs of the dance 'Walasaxa, for I will at once invite all the tribes when I reach home." Thus spoke 'U'max'talatle.

The speaker of the house said: "O, Chief Kawadilikala! Let us have the winter ceremonial to-night, that our son-in-law may see our ways." Kawadilikala answered: "My speaker, your advise is good," and turning to the wolf posts of the house he continued: "Now take care friends, you, Ga'muta'yalis and you, Ga'mutilelagalis. Howl, that our friends Galatila and his children may come." When he had finished, 'U'max'talatle said: "O, father-in-law, I now invite you and your tribe to bring my house, myself, and my wife to my place. I can not withstand your words father-in-law! I say, thank you! Now let me watch your supernatural dances to-night, else I shall not know what you are doing in this great dance."

At night the speaker of the house said: "Now, magicians, howl! that Galatila and his children may come." Then Ga'muta'yalis and Ga'mutilelagalis, the posts of the house, howled four times each. At once a howl like theirs was heard back of the house. Then Kawadilikala called his tribe, the ancestors of the Dzawada'enuxw. They entered their chief's house, and as soon as they had assembled the wolves came in. All the men cried: "Yihii, hu, hu,hu,hu,hu,hu!" Four times they did so, and then they sang

(song)

These are all the songs I know. If you will go to the Dzawada'enuxw you can learn all the forty songs of the 'Walasaxa. When the dance of the wolves was at an end, Kawadilikala said: "O, friends, I invite you my tribe, that you may know that I give my daughter in marriage to 'U'max'talatle, chief of the Gigalgam on the other side. Now let us go and take our son-in-law, his wife and his house home. And he shall take this great dance. Let us go tomorrow!" Then the people left the house and the next day they made ready to start. They went across, taking the house and Kawadilikala's daughter. They stopped at Ga'yux. They built a foundation of drift logs. In four days they finished the house (Boas 1897:387-389).

In this story, the door of the house is referred to as a mouth and unless approached properly the snapping mouth will kill those who attempt to enter. When 'U'max'talatle marries Kawadilikala's daughter he is in fact joining with her to continue the legacy of Kawadilikala through the eventual birth of children. It is

interesting to note this matrilineal descent from the father, through the daughter, to the son-in-law. The house is presented as supernatural and alive. When it is gifted it is moved to 'U'max`talatlē's place of residence and rebuilt in only four days. The house in itself is a transitory physical object. It is only in the gifting, or transfer of ownership to the son-in-law for future descendants that the house maintains existence beyond the physical. In this way the house is perceived of as equivalent to the physical human body. As the human soul alternately occupies the physical bodies of one's own descendants the spirit of the house occupies houses as they are recreated by those descendants.

The application of human characteristics is not limited to houses but to practically everything that is physically manifest in the world. With this concept as a fundamental aspect of Kwakwaka'wakw worldview the arts are bound to be profuse with fantastic images. Beings are constantly transforming from human to animal, from physical to spiritual, from visible to invisible, from inanimate to animate just as the world constantly transforms itself from winter to summer, from life to death from the past into the present. Kwakwaka'wakw art and culture abounds with formal expressions of the concept of balance between the physical and the spiritual. The following are but a few.

4.5.1. Masks

The most visible physical manifestation of Kwakwaka'wakw material culture is masks. There are sun masks and moon masks, wolf, dog, raven and bear

masks. There are masks that represent beings from the sea, from the land and from the sky. There are even masks that represent humans. Kwakwaka'wakw ceremonials are filled with masks and the performances they are a part of. The illustration below depicts an 'Atla'kim dance performance staged in Gwayasdams Village in 1946. This performance exhibits the spirits of the forest, including a grouse, a stump, a door, a laughing spirit, moss, a sneezer, a woman who gives birth, and many others. It is a spectacular example of the animation and spirit of all things. This is but one example of the myriad of masks created by the Kwakwaka'wakw for complex and sophisticated performances.

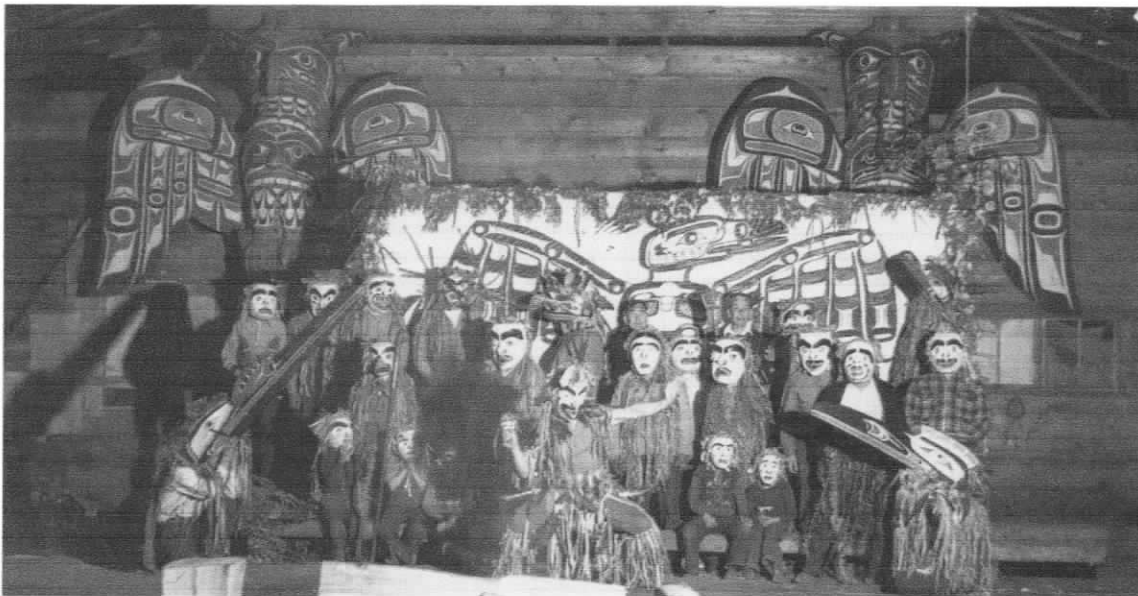


Figure 2: 'Atla'kim Winter Ceremonial at Gwayasdams (Gilford Island), 1946.
The photographs are said to have been taken by a Provincial Police Officer.

RBCM 15250-42

Original ancestors traveled the land in the forms other than human. At some point in time the alternate form was removed and the ancestors decided to remain human. The act itself is described as 'having taken off an outer form'.

In a sense the original ancestors in removing their outer layer of being were removing their 'masks'. Masks are an obvious expression of interiority and exteriority. They reflect the relationship between the physical outer being and the interior life force. Bodies act like masks in providing a physical form for the spirit. In regard to masks, Berman quotes Boas and Hunt in the following:

The animal's mask is a covering, but to human eyes, the mask appears as the flesh and form of the animal. In other words, the mask is both the thing that transforms and the end-result of the transformation. Only the core – the bones, intestines, blood, etc. – of an animal's immortal substance separate from the mask (cf. Boas and Hunt 1905:304-305;322-330). From the human perspective, the important fact about the mask is that it is in a sense disposable: the spirit-animal is not destroyed by human consumption. After its mask has been eaten, and it has been reduced to a ghost (luł), to bones and offal, it can reincarnate itself (cf. 1905: 329, 1921: 727-8). (Berman 1991).

4.5.2. Transformation Masks

Transformation masks are used in both the *'tseka* and *tha'sala* ceremonies. They are a logical manifestation of the concept of exterior and interior selves; the balance of the spirit and the body. They also exemplify the innate transformative state of all life. During a performance the outer face opens to reveal an inner face. At times, the inner face is humanistic in appearance and the outer face animistic, though this isn't always the case. In an obvious way the transformation masks recognize the duality of nature. The outer being opens to reveal an inner being. In performance, the showing of the inner face is fleeting and momentary. The outer physical manifestation is the most obvious of forms, while the spirit remains less tangible, though present and acknowledged.

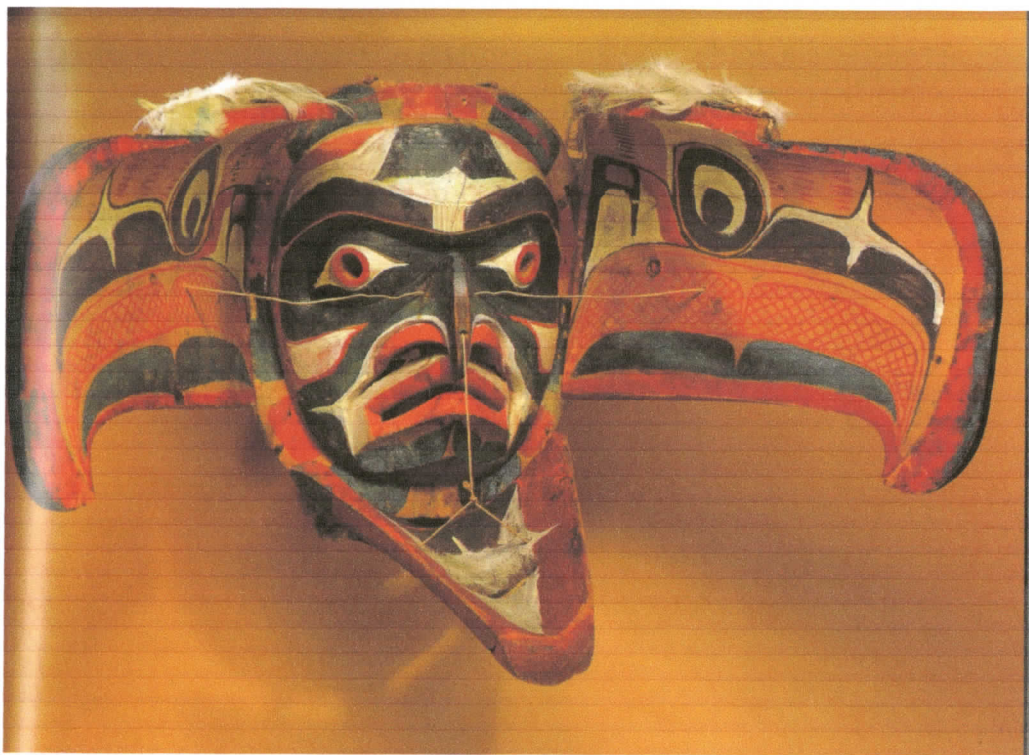
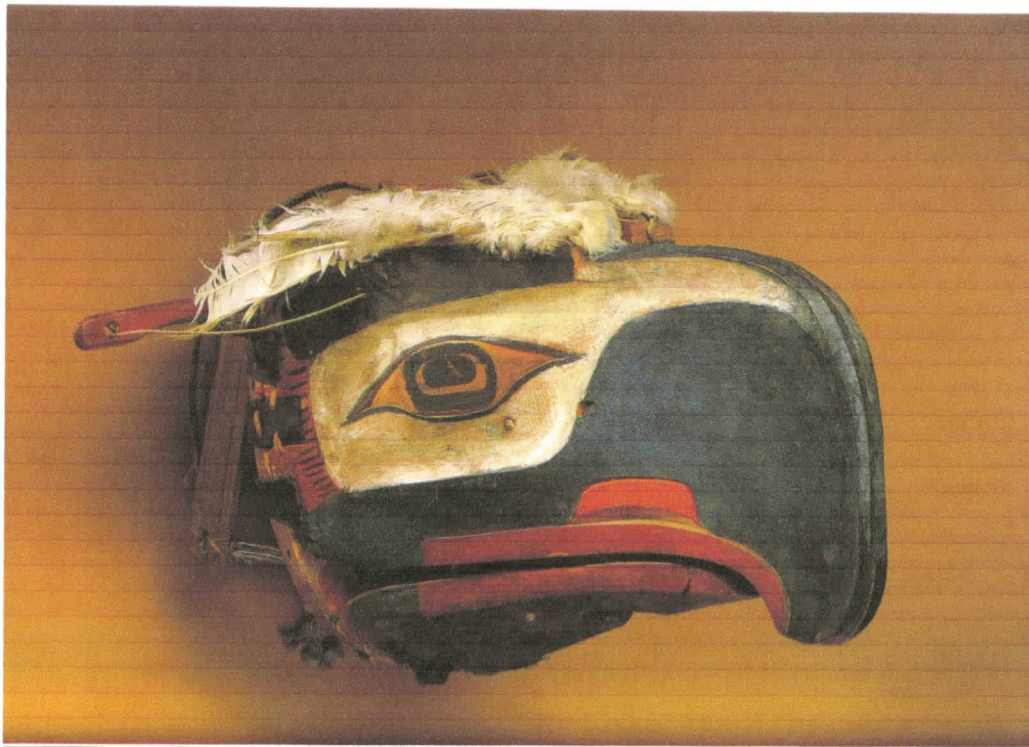


Figure 3: Transformation Mask (open), Alert Bay. Collected by George Hunt ,1899. 16/6770AB, AMNH

4.5.3. 'Imas

The *'imas* is a ceremony performed to acknowledge the final return of a deceased ancestor. In a sense, it is also the acknowledgement of the point of origin of a family history. In "Chiefly Feasts", Gloria Cranmer-Webster describes it in the following passage.

Infrequently, if the potlatch is in memory of a high-ranking deceased person, a dancer wearing a *'imas* mask appears, accompanied by four chiefs. The mask may take the form of a killerwhale, the chief of the undersea world, or whatever is appropriate for the deceased. The dancer and his attendants move slowly around the fire and leave through the front door. The attendants return, without the dancer but carrying his neckring, apron and blanket, indicating that, although he is gone, he has left his rights and privileges for the use of his surviving relatives (Cranmer-Webster 1991:236).

The ceremonial of the *'imas* symbolizes the physical manifestation of the deceased one last time. It is a very serious ceremony and the state of the ceremonial house is subdued. The deceased is represented by the carved housecrest, indicating the connection of the deceased to mythological times before animals transformed into men. Shown at the beginning of a potlatch ceremony the *'imas* is a visible reminder of the past. It acts to anchor the prospective proceedings to the past. When the regalia is brought in by the attendants and shown the connection of past, to present, to the future is amplified. The prerogatives that were acquired in mythological times, are carried by living beings consecutively making them perpetual. Once the person

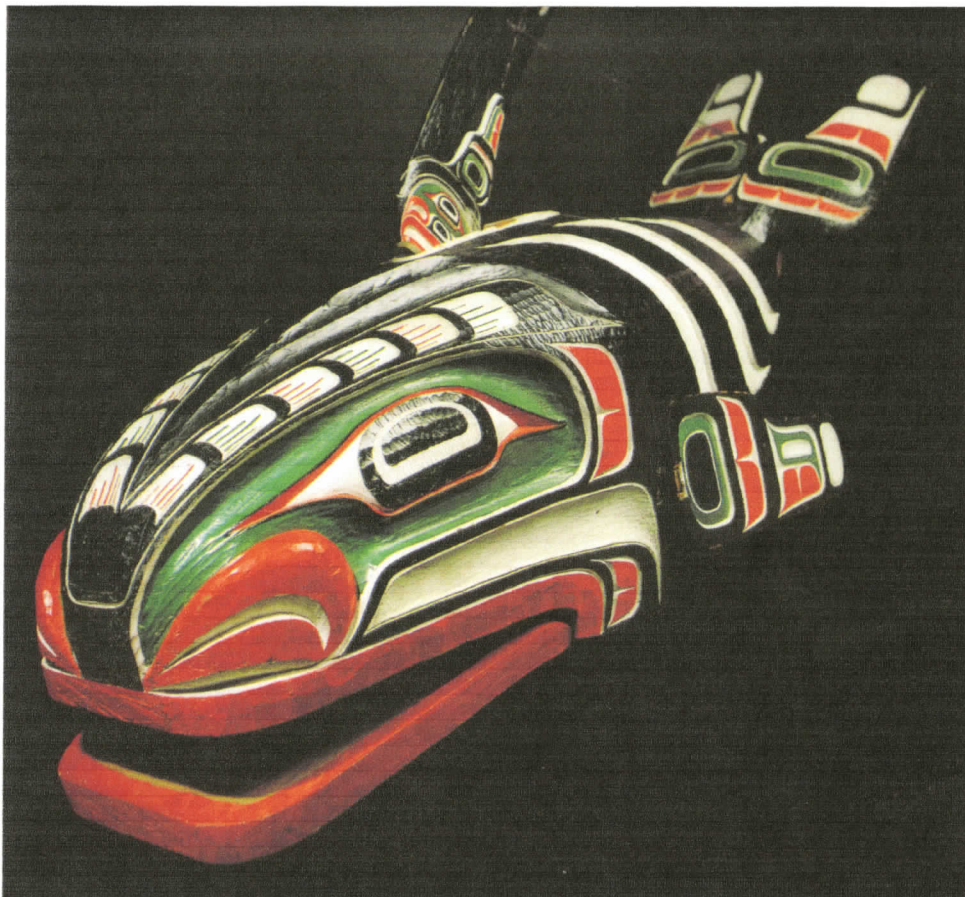


Figure 4: Killer Whale Mask used in the 'Imas by Richard Hunt, 1980.

RBCM 16460

carrying those prerogatives dies, his privileges are passed onto his living descendants. Through the *'imas* ceremony the concept of the transitory state of humanity is contrasted against the permanence of cultural prerogatives. In relationship to time, cultural prerogatives are anchored to the past and permanence while the physical present is considered transitory.

4.5.4. `Kangaxtola - Dancing Blankets

When new materials were introduced to the Pacific Coastal Peoples through

trade with Europeans new art-forms emerged. These forms maintained the conceptual integrity of the indigenous communities but presented these ideas in new ways. One of the new innovative forms was the *`kangaxtola*, or dance blanket. These woolen blankets began to replace cedar and fur blankets and by the late nineteenth century were widely in use amongst the Kwakwaka'wakw, and all the tribes north of them. *`Kangaxtola* consist of a heavy material such as wool upon which buttons, beadwork and various decoration is applied. For the most part *`kangaxtola* compositions follow a prescribed form.

The overall composition references the architecture of a ceremonial house. The side borders represent the walls, while the top border represents the roof. The break in the top border is representative of a smoke-hole. The inner crest image represents the spirit of the house. In ceremonial architecture the smoke from the central fire is physical substance (wood) transformed into an ephemeral substance (smoke). The smoke travels through the smoke-hole into the sky which represents one realm of the spirit-world. In ceremonies the blanket is draped over the shoulders and the break is positioned at the back of the neck. Before wool blankets were introduced, ceremonial blankets were made from the outer covering of a cedar tree (bark) or animal (fur). This outer covering is the most obvious physical manifestation of the body. Like a house covers the family unit, the body is the covering for the spirit. In the case of modern blankets they exemplify the concept of the body and the spirit in both their reference to house architecture and in the way they are worn when performed in. In



Figure 5: Button Blanket. Village Island.

RBCM 13685

Kwakwaka'wakw thinking one could say that when dancing in a *'kangaxtola* the performer represents, or is carrying, the house lineage of their family. In addition to this when a dancer enters the ceremonial dance floor during a performance they are required to make a complete 360 degree turn to the left indicating their transformation from the physical to the spiritual, from an ordinary state into the a supernatural one.¹³

¹³ This information was relayed to me in conversation with my late uncle Ernest Willie. While not all Kwakwaka'wakw may adhere to the theory that blankets are based on house architecture this is one perspective that exists

4.5.5. The Sisi'uł

A mythological sea creature, the *sisi'uł* is formally composed of a central human face from which two serpent heads extend outwards. In legends, the *sisi'uł* can grant either great fortune or misfortune to beings who may come across it. This dynamic being might best visualize the Kwakwaka'wakw conceptualization of the world as a balance of oppositional and alternating forces.

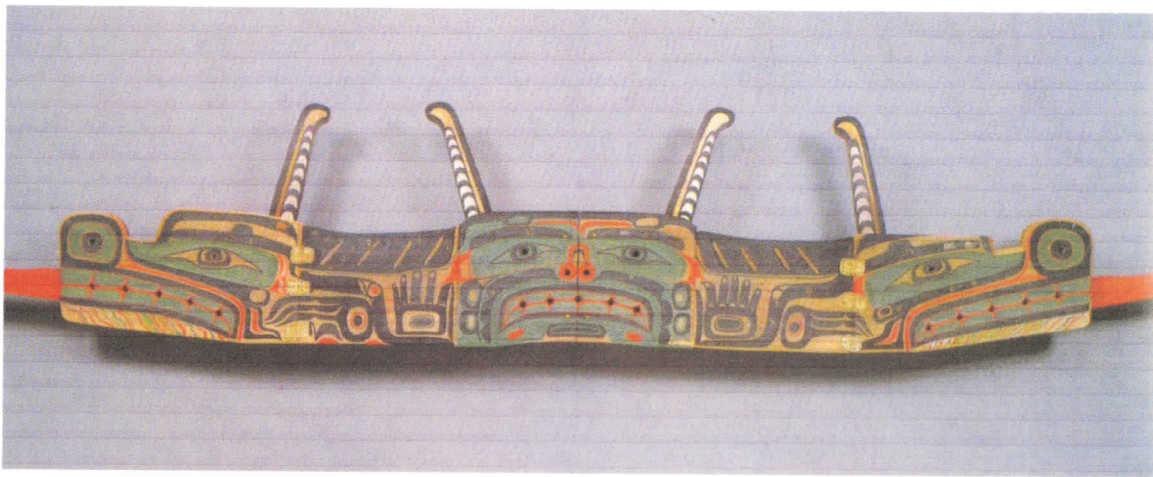


Figure 6: Sisi'uł Board. Fort Rupert. Collected by George Hunt, 1904.

16/958, AMNH 1904-41

The following is an ancestor legend from the Kwikwasu'tinuxw of Gilford Island describing an encounter with a *sisi'uł*. The Kwikwasu'tinuxw and the Dzawada'enuxw are closely aligned both historically and in contemporary times.

ʼTsekame had a wife called Kwakwis'palayugwa. Her sons were Nalpe', Gwalsalas and Pudlidi. ʼTsekame had a salmon weir in Kwakulawat. Once, when Kwakwis'palayugwa was pregnant, ʼTsekame went in his canoe, to his weir, to see if he had caught any fish. He found the weir completely filled with salmon and among them were there was the *sisi'yul* as well. ʼTsekame was carrying the fish ashore when Pudlidi came running up with the news that his mother

had given birth to a child. `Tsekame asked, "Is it a boy or a girl?" When he heard it was a boy, he killed the sisi'yul, had the boy brought to him and bathed him in the blood. Then the boy's skin turned to stone. The only spot where his father forgot to coat him was under the chin and the skin there remained soft. He was given the name Tlatlaxwas or `Tisamgi'lakw (Turned into Stone) and became quite invincible in war (Boas 2002:343-344).

In a Kwagu'l story women mistakenly eat a sisi'uł and die.

Once, several women went out fishing. Among the fish they caught there was a small fish with beautiful shiny scales. And because they were very hungry, they cooked it. Only one among them did not eat it, as she did not know the fish. When the women had eaten the fish, their skin burst and they died. Only the one returned and told what had happened. But she had scarcely finished speaking when she too fell down dead. They had caught the sisi'uł (Boas 2002:357).

These two stories illustrate the power of the sisi'uł to be destructive or beneficial to those who encounter it. Artistically it is rendered on the belts, headpieces and harnesses of different dancers. It is also often used as the manifestation of supernatural power for the *tukwid*. The central human face anchored by serpents who point in opposing directions is a powerful symbol of the potential of life and death.

4.6. Summary

In reviewing the Kwak'wala transcripts of Kwakwaka'wakw mythology the application of past tense forms appear to express a relationship beyond that of relative position between the speaker and an event. Past tense forms can also be associated with the sacred, the ephemeral, and the supernatural. This

application in mythology is also reflected in winter ceremonial songs. The primary ceremonial complex of the Kwakwaka'wakw, the *tseka*, or winter ceremony is conceived as being anchored in the past and the spiritual, opposite of the summer season which reflects the present and the physical world. These dynamic polarities are exhibited in the creativeness of Kwakwaka'wakw art-forms.

Art-forms demonstrate how in Kwakwaka'wakw conceptualization the separation between physical form and spirit is a common denominator amongst all life. The fact that objects such as canoes, bowls and houses are created from living



Figure 7: Devilfish Dish. Quatsino.

Collected by George Hunt, 1900. 16/8161, AMNH 1900-73

beings (trees) can grant them an applied animation. They are in a sense alive and can manifest both human and animal characteristics like the bowl illustrated above. Animals are also granted human equivalence; they too, are composed of body and spirit.

At a certain time in history animals transformed themselves into men and chose to remain as such. In mythology, when a human witnesses animals without their animal forms on, the animals are shamed and grant the observer masks and dances.

Masks and blankets are symbols of interiority and exteriority. They cover the human form in the same way that the body clothes the spirit. Like the body, they are transitory. As physical entities they are subject to deterioration and decay. However, concepts around lineage and history that masks and blankets represent endure and if the physical manifestation of those ideas is destroyed it can always be re-created. This concept is equivalent to the consideration of human existence. The physical body while subject to mortality is only a temporary house for the spirit. The spirit is enduring and in guaranteeing the security of one's own lineage house ensures security for one's eventual re-emergence into the physical world through the process of reincarnation through one's own descendants. This division of spiritual and physical spheres is present in the application of the past tense form *-xd-* that expresses the division between existence and non-existence when it is applied to nouns. The prior examples of

songs, myths, narratives, ceremonies and artistic forms exhibit how Kwak'wala linguistic conceptualization and Kwakwaka'wakw cultural conceptualization are extensions of the same worldview and, as such, mutually enforce each other.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The Relationship of the Kwak'wala Language to Kwakwaka'wakw
Culture as Reflected in the Concept of 'Time'

In analyzing the concept of 'time' as expressed in the Kwak'wala language I began by deciphering concepts that were indigenous to the Kwak'wala language from concepts that have been introduced through English influence. This is not to insinuate that the new terminologies are not 'real' Kwak'wala but an attempt to illustrate how the Kwak'wala language expressed concepts of 'time' prior to contact. Was there a difference? Yes. If there was little difference between English and Kwak'wala concepts regarding time, Kwak'wala speakers would not have had to construct new words in order to express the Western European concept of time segmentation and objectification. The concept of 'time' as expressed by indigenous Kwak'wala time words appears to focus on time as a state as opposed to another state (day and night, morning and evening) rather than as an amount or an increment. This is not to say that the Kwakwaka'wakw did not conceive of time in objectified periods, but that the conscious experience of time was linguistically framed to focus on time as a state.

This polarity of 'state as opposed to another state' is further expressed in the application of tense morphemes onto nouns and persons. The same tense morpheme that indicates relationship distance between speaker and event on verbs, when applied to nouns and persons indicates a shift from living to dead, or

a fundamental change or transformation. This application is consistent with the conception of time as a state balanced against another state. In this case the state of being alive, against the state of being dead. The state of life and death can be easily spoken about in other ways in Kwak'wala than the morphological application of past tense forms as there are quite a few independent lexicalized words for death.

- (130) `yax'id - "death, to die, destroyed" (Grubb,1977)
 bad to become
- (131) ɬa`l - a - "died" (Grubb,1977)
 dead continuative
- (132) `paɬ - emx'id - "to die" (Grubb,1977)
 to shut eyes forever

This would support the notion that the application does not exist out of pure necessity to differentiate that which is dead from that which is living but that its meaning is extended. I propose that the application of past tense forms onto persons and nouns is a concept embedded in a particular worldview that associates the dead with the past, the spiritual, and the ephemeral while the present is associated with life, the physical, the body, and the immediate. This association aligns states with the passage of time symbolically and ceremonially over the passage of a year. The year is divided into two states of heightened consciousness, one the Winter Ceremonial state associated with the sacred, and two, the summer state associated with the profane.

These alignments are set up in a diagrammatical model that sets up the movement of time in alternating layers. The conceptualization builds upon the research of Judith Berman into Kwakwaka'wakw mythological models as originally presented by George Hunt and Franz Boas. A model of alternating states of the past and the present, each with associated conceptual extensions is illustrated as an alternative to English notions of fixed linear time that moves on a horizontal axis.

The consciousness of polar, yet balanced states is expressed throughout Kwakwaka'wakw mythology, songs, ceremonies and art. In art, in particular the concept manifests itself in the idea of interiority and exteriority. The creation of elaborate and wonderful masks and theatrical devices meant to express the winter ceremonial connection to the spirit world. Indeed, in the winter, spirits come close and present themselves in a myriad of ways. They are heard as whistles in the forest, or behind the village houses, as the *l'mas* who returns one last time, as beings who rise up and appear in the ceremonial house at the beckoning of a *tukwid* dancer. All of these performances exhibit spirit power. The masks themselves exemplify the relationship of body and spirit as an outer form that covers an inner form. In a conceptual reversal of time, during the present, a human is masked by an image of an original ancestor or benevolent being from the past, as a reversal of the original transformation of animal forms to human. The original transformations occurred in the past through supernatural means. In the spectacular transformation masks that open to reveal an inner being, the inner image is revealed but fleetingly reflecting the

intangibility of the spirit as opposed to the immediacy of the body. Again, conceptually intertwined, in the long run, it is the present that is transitory, and like the body occupies but a moment of time, while the past and the future are associated with the spirit which is enduring and all-encompassing. Like summer always follows winter, life follows death and the physical form is always reborn. In the context of such a belief system the concept of reincarnation is deeply integrated with the concept of an enduring spirit that occupies successive forms.

In comprehending the fundamental principles around the conceptualization of time in the Kwak'wala speakers consciousness there is an irony in the contemporary preservation of Kwakwaka'wakw objects in the modern western world. They are housed in museums, carefully monitored against deterioration, observed and studied. Yet to the Kwakwaka'wakw, who made these objects it was not so much the object itself that was of importance as the spirit or idea of it (its meaning). In modern times we are left with the forms of our culture and those are easy enough to imitate but what was traditionally valued (the meanings) are rapidly disappearing. These meanings are embedded in the Kwak'wala language and our loss of it continues the loss of our culture. If this loss continues we are more apt to be maintaining the physical forms of our culture while arresting the natural perpetuation and movement of our original concepts. The objects will have been usurped by western notions of material value and their original Kwakwaka'wakw meanings over-ruled, just as our primary mode of expression, Kwak'wala, is being over-ruled by English.

The Kwak'wala conception of time appears to be integrated into a larger matrix of thought and consideration regarding universal human experience. It is not so much that time itself is different but that the Kwak'wala language indicates a focus on a particular aspect of the 'experience of time' that is culturally different from English. In English the notion of time is conceptually linked to the notion of progress. Time moves forward and supposedly up towards a utopian ideal. It is still considered that humanity can improve life through consistent innovation and development. The present is considered to supersede the past. The Kwakwaka'wakw notion of time differentiates in that the focus appears to lie with perpetuation rather than progression. With a consistently alternating past and present it is the past that is considered the ideal and the present is tied up in honoring and maintaining that which occurred before. It is the duty of contemporary Kwakwaka'wakw to perpetuate "that, which has always been".

In studying the concept of 'time' as expressed in the Kwak'wala language I have found it to be deeply embedded in Kwakwaka'wakw culture. The Kwak'wala language and Kwakwaka'wakw cultural forms are mutually reinforcing. With the loss of the Kwak'wala language however, we are losing one of the primary components of conceptualization that perpetuates a particularly Kwakwaka'wakw way of being in the world. By speaking only English rather than Kwak'wala, modern Kwakwaka'wakw are apt to process concepts about the world as the English language delineates it and will fail to experience how Kwak'wala may delineate the same concept (time for example) differently. Peripherally,

alternative expressions such as songs, dances and rituals may maintain the physical forms and some of the conceptual foundation of Kwakwaka'wakw worldview but without the continued use of Kwak'wala we may be losing the most vital component of our culture, a comprehension of fundamental meanings as encoded in our thought processes through language.

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APPENDIX :

Orthographic Conventions compiled by *Patterns of Reduplication in Kwak'wala*.
Michele Kalmar, 2003 *the NA (this thesis) refers to her own thesis

Comparison of Orthographic Conventions

Consonants:

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|----|----|---|----------------|---|----------------|---|
| NA (this thesis): | p | t | c | χ | k | k ^w | q | q ^w | ʔ |
| Boas: | p | t | ts | l | k | k ^u | q | q ^u | ε |
| Grubb: | p | t | ts | tl | k | kw | k | kw | ʔ |
| U'mista: | p | t | ts | tʔ | k | kw | k | kw | ʔ |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|----|----|---|----------------|---|----------------|--|
| NA (this thesis): | b | d | dʔ | λ | g | g ^w | G | G ^w | |
| Boas: | b | d | dz | l | g | g ^u | g | g ^u | |
| Grubb: | b | d | dz | dl | g | gw | g | gw | |
| U'mista: | b | d | dz | dʔ | g | gw | g | gw | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|----|----|-----|-----|----|-----------------|----|-----------------|--|
| NA (this thesis): | p̣ | ṭ | c̣ | χ̣ | ḳ | ḳ ^w | q̣ | q̣ ^w | |
| Boas: | p! | t! | ts! | l! | k! | k! ^u | q! | q! ^u | |
| Grubb: | p' | t' | ts' | tl' | k' | kw' | k' | kw' | |
| U'mista: | p̣ | ṭ | tṣ | ṭʔ | ḳ | ḳ ^w | ḳ | ḳ ^w | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|--|---|--|----|---|----------------|---|----------------|---|
| NA (this thesis): | | s | | ʃ | x | x ^w | χ | χ ^w | h |
| Boas: | | s | | ʃ | x | x ^u | x | x ^u | h |
| Grubb: | | s | | lh | x | xw | x | xw | h |
| U'mista: | | s | | ʃ | x | xw | x | xw | h |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|--|---|---|---|--|--|--|
| NA (this thesis): | m | n | | l | y | w | | | |
| Boas: | m | n | | l | y | w | | | |
| Grubb: | m | n | | l | y | w | | | |
| U'mista: | m | n | | l | y | w | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|----|----|--|----|----|----|--|--|--|
| NA (this thesis): | ṃ | ṇ | | ḷ | ỵ | ẉ | | | |
| Boas: | m! | n! | | l! | y! | w! | | | |
| Grubb: | m' | n' | | l' | y' | w' | | | |
| U'mista: | ṃ | ṇ | | ḷ | ỵ | ẉ | | | |

Vowels:

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| NA (this thesis): | i | e | a | o | u | ə |
| Boas: | i | e | a | o | u | a/ε |
| Grubb: | i | e | a | o | u | e |
| U'mista: | i | e | a | o | u | a |