Y̱axa Uḵwine', y̱axa Gukw, dłuwida A̱wińagwis

"The Body, the House, and the Land":

The Conceptualization of Space in Kwakwa̱ka'wakw Language and Culture

by

Marianne Nicolson

B.F.A., Emily Carr University of Art & Design, 1996

M.F.A., University of Victoria, 1999

M.A., University of Victoria, 2005

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in the Departments of Linguistics and Anthropology

Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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Kwak'wala is an endangered language spoken by the Kwakwaka'wakw First Nations of the central coast of British Columbia. This dissertation seeks to address the ramifications of Kwak'wala language loss to Kwakwaka'wakw cultural worldview.   It asks the general question, "How much of an effect does Kwak'wala language loss have on cultural understanding?" It seeks to answer the question through a specific analysis of the concept of space mapped through linguistic and artistic expression. The concept of space is integral to the understanding of the body in relationship to objects, people, social structure and geographic conceptualization. Through linguistic morphological analysis a corpus of approximately 600 word and phrase examples drawn from the linguistic documentation of Franz Boas and George Hunt, David Grubb, the website First Voices and contemporary Kwak'wala speakers was analyzed for semantic content (meaning). The content (meanings of words and phrases) was then contextualized into broader cultural expressions and beliefs through prototype theory, radial

categorization, metaphor and analogy. The dissertation then explores the connections between "linguistic" spatial expression represented through words and speech with what can be considered as "non-linguistic" cultural expressions such as architecture, social structure, performance and visual art. Four major visual works were created that sought to express aspects of the spatial concepts that were emerging from the Kwak'wala linguistic study. Ultimately, the research reveals a strong spatial mapping process between the human body, the architecture of "the house" and the landscape traditionally occupied by the Kwakwaka'wakw which results in a metaphorical conceptualization of Body=House=Land/World which can be said to exist in Kwak'wala language forms and translates as highly productive in cultural manifestations.   With the replacement of Kwak'wala by English the strength of this metaphor is weakened but not eradicated within Kwakwaka'wakw cultural expression.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my grandparents Charles Eaton Willie [A̱l Sewidi], (1910-1964)

and Emily Mary Willie, [Wadzidala̱ga] nee Scow (1911-1956) and my mother Gloria Grace

Willie [ʼKixsisa̱las] of the K̲wik̲wasut'inux̲w, Dzawada̱ʼenux̲w, Haxwaʼmis and Kwaguʼł tribes

of the Kwakwa̱ka̱ʼwakw Nations.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Dream of Ha'etła'las

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

We went inland. Then we saw many cranberries and blueberry bushes which were

hanging down with many blueberries hanging from the points (of the branches) and

so we shook them into our berry picking baskets. Then our berry picking baskets

were full. I awoke after that. Then Ha'etła'las knew that she was going to keep

alive until the season of cranberry picking (Boas, 1925, p. 7).

1.1   Problem statement

Kwak'wala, the language spoken by the Kwakwaka'wakw First Nations is endangered as a

living language.   The Kwakwaka'wakw First Nations are comprised of approximately 17 tribes

who share a common language and culture (Jonaitis, 1991).   They occupy the northeastern

portion of Vancouver Island and the adjacent mainland coast of British Columbia, Canada.

Formerly known within Anthropology as the Kwakiutl, the Kwakwaka'wakw self- identify as "The

Kwak'wala speaking peoples.[1]" (Galois, 1994). Kwak'wala is linguistically delineated as a

Wakashan language. As such it shares both linguistic characteristics and coastal geographic

affiliation with six other tribal groups; the Haisla, the Heiltsuk, the Awikinuxw, the Makah, the

Nitinaht and the Nuu-chah-nuth (Lincoln & Rath, 1980; Grubb 1969). In contemporary times

the Kwak'wala language is now endangered due to massive population decline through

introduced disease, colonial oppression and the historic assimilationist policies of the Canadian

Government carried out over the last 160 years (Anonby, 1997; Boyd, 1999; Duff, 1997; Ray,

2010). How much longer the Kwakwaka'wakw can remain Kwakwaka'wakw, "the Kwak'wala

speaking peoples" by definition is a difficult and awkward question. Of approximately 5000

members only approximately 150 speakers remain[2] (Anthony, Davis & Powell, 2003). Without

extreme effort the Kwak'wala language may become a dormant language within 20 years as

most speakers are elderly and the younger generations do not speak the language. Over the

past 40 years while the Kwak'wala language was decreasing in use, a marked resurgence in

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

[2] First People's Heritage, Language and Culture Council's 2010 Report on the Status of B.C. First Nations Languages gives a speaker count of 148 on p. 23. http://fpcc.ca/language/status-report/

Kwakwaka'wakw cultural practice emerged encouraged both by tourism and a more positive identification with Aboriginal heritage.

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

This thesis seeks to address the ramifications of Kwak'wala language loss to Kwakwaka'wakw cultural worldview.   It asks the general question, "How much of an effect does Kwak'wala language loss have on cultural understanding?", and seeks to answer the question through a specific analysis of the concept of space mapped through linguistic and artistic expression. Figure 1.1 illustrates the general geographic areas occupied by the Kwakwaka'wakw tribes plus village sites which are referenced throughout the text.
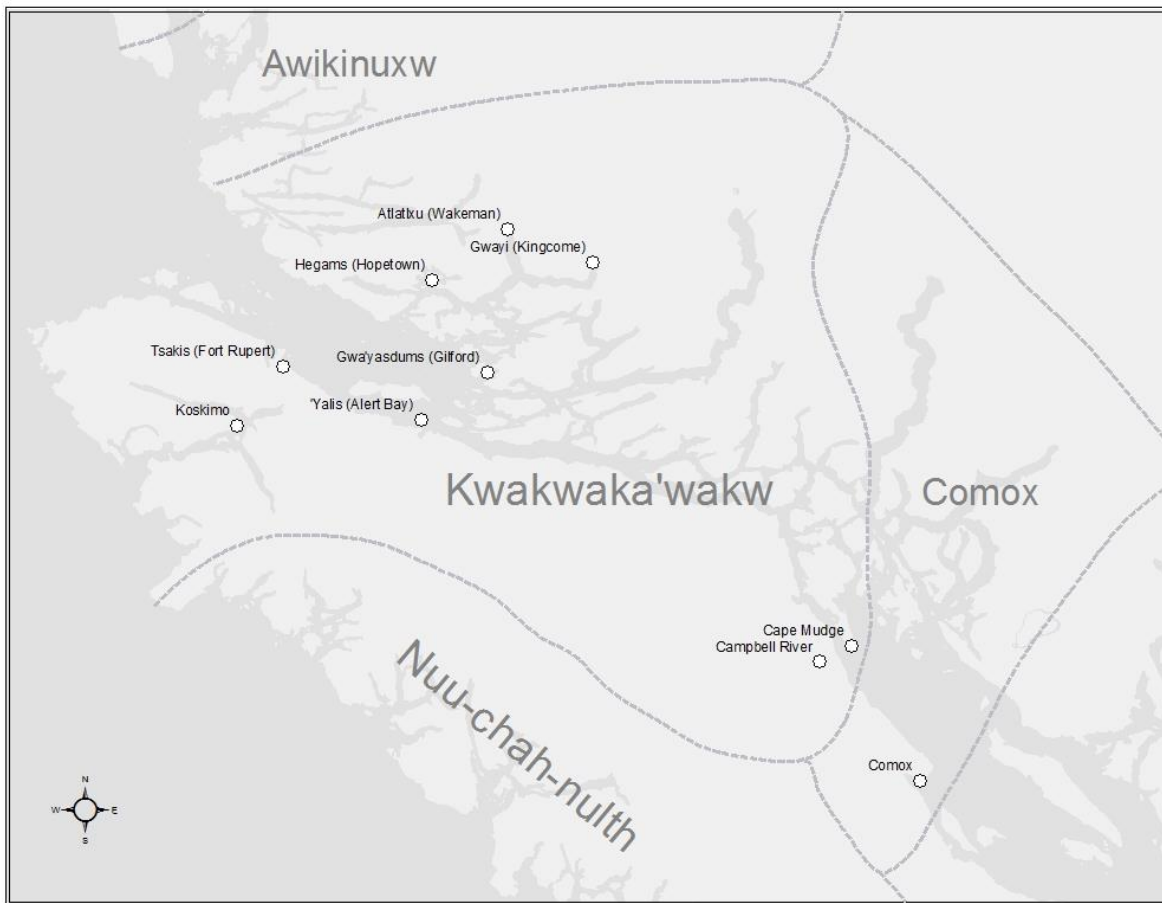
Figure 1.1 *Map of Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw territory showing villages referenced throughout thesis Image courtesy Midori Nicolson, Mus̱g̱amakw Dzawada̱'enux̱w Tribal Council Lands and Resources Manager*

1.2　Research objective

In order to better understand the implications of Indigenous language loss this research

focuses on the relationship of language to culture. The debate over whether language

influences culture or vice-versa, within linguistics goes back several decades, perhaps even

the entire 20th Century (Sapir, 1921; Whorf, 1956; Chomsky, 1965, 1966, 2006; Lakoff &

Johnson, 1999). In this debate, during the early decades of the 20th Century Franz Boas

(1858-1942), source of the majority of archival material in Kwak'wala, believed that language

and culture was a component of a whole working system that could only be understood within

the context of all its parts (Boas, 1966). Due to his belief in the cultural connection to language

he committed much effort to collecting and publishing remarkable amounts of cultural

information *in the Kwak'wala language*, with English translation. A student of Boas, Edward

Sapir (1884-1939) along with Benjamin Whorf (1897-1941) contributed to the discussion of the

relationship between language and culture in what has come to be termed the *Whorf-*

hypothesis or the *Sapir-Whorf hypothesis* (Thomson, 2000; Swoyer 2003) or, more recently,

the *linguistic relativity hypothesis* (Gumperz & Levinson, 1991).   The hypothesis proposes that

"the semantic structures of different languages might be incommensurable, with consequences

for the way in which speakers of different languages might think and act. On this view,

language, thought and culture are deeply interlocked, so that each language might be claimed

to have associated with it a distinctive worldview" (Gumperz, p.614).   On the other end of the

debate, during the 1960s, the famous linguist, Noam Chomsky (1928-) was a major agent in

the development of a linguistic theory of innate universal language structures that underlay all

languages. Referred to as *universal grammar* the theory was that humans had an innate

capacity for language and that this capacity is little influenced by environment (Chomsky,

1965).   Linguistic rules could generate formally correct speech much like a computer could

generate data based on proper inputs. Linguistic difference was considered to be topical or

surface oriented and the deeper structures of language considered as basically similar or

"universal". This *universalism* would espouse that different languages are fundamentally

similar and that they are grounded in human biology not human environment; a nature vs.

nurture argument.   This debate has been publicly, and at times contentiously battled between

Chomsky and the proponents of cognitive linguistics, popularly associated with the linguistic

scholar George Lakoff (Harris, 1993).

My research seeks to explore the connections between "linguistic" expression and what can be

considered as "non-linguistic" cultural expressions such as architecture, social structure,

performance, narratives (story-telling) and visual art. Are these alternative forms of cultural

expression complementary to the Kwak'wala language or arbitrary? If they are found to be

complementary then we can consider that they share underlying conceptual features therefore

making the connection between language and culture stronger. If they are found to be

arbitrary or only weakly connected then the relationship between language and culture can be

considered more topical. The end result is the examiniation of how connected the concepts of

space and time, as expressed in the Kwak'wala language are, with non-linguistic culturally

based expressions.

I have chosen to explore the primary domain of space and its complement time. This research

is an extension of my initial exploration of the conceptualization of time in my Master's thesis

(Nicolson, 2005). Space is the primary topic because time seems to take its conceptualization

from space.   Space and time concepts, while universal in their presence across cultures, can

vary in their expression and manifestation. They also form the foundation for many other

concepts.   All cultures engage with the concept of space. An understanding of space is

required in architecture (around, above, below), the hierarchies of social structure (above,

below, on par), ritual and performance (the body on stage) and art (shape and form).   Spatial

engagement operates as universal phenomenon across cultures.   Space is analyzed as a

universal concept where comparison between the very different languages of English and

Kwak'wala can render an understanding of variance in expression and conceptualization.

1.3 Central thesis

The linguistic research conducted over the course of this thesis reveals a strong spatial

mapping process between the human body, the architecture of "the house" and the landscape

traditionally occupied by the Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw which results in a metaphorical

conceptualization which is highly productive in cultural manifestations. This spatial mapping

emerges strongly in both linguistic forms (words) and semantic expressions such as contained

in speeches and narratives. The spatial mapping process appears to have a heavy influence

on the perception of the body in space in relationship to subjects and objects, the relationship

of the body both inside and outside of architectural forms, the composition of architectural

forms themselves and ultimately in how the body is situated within, and then navigates the

landscape. The concept of the self in relationship to others, social structure, ceremonial

choreography and the formal execution of art-forms such as masks and regalia reflects an

analogous approach to the concept of space as BODY=HOUSE=LAND. This general premise

then provides the basis for a particular and rich metaphorical expression that is found to be

present not just in language but is also manifest in other cultural expressions and ultimately is

able be translated into an engagement with modern, non-traditional spaces.

1.4   Thesis outline

My research is concerned with the relationship of "form" and "meaning'" in language and

culture.   It is interdisciplinary in nature and engages with linguistics, anthropology and visual

art.   The thesis is composed into two components; first, a written component which explains

the research findings regarding Kwakw<u>aka</u>'wakw space as it emerges through the Kwak'wala

language and second, a visual art component which explores the research findings in "real"

space. Chapter 1 is a general introduction. Chapter 2 deals with the primary theoretical

frameworks within which this research is situated; Linguistics, Anthropology, and Visual Art

and the methods applied to reach conclusions.   Linguistics is the scientific study of language.

Anthropology is defined by the American Anthropological Association as "the study of humans

past and present". One could generally say Anthropology is the study of culture. Initially

linguistics fell under the discipline of anthropology until the mid-Twentieth Century when it

broke off and attained its own status as an independent discipline and as a result there is

heavy cross-over in sub-disciplines. Anthropological linguistics is one sub-discipline of

Anthropology. What Linguistics and Anthropology share as disciplines is the investment in the

ultimate decipherment of "meaning."   Visual art is one discipline that falls under the variety of

human expressions considered to be the "Fine Arts" in academics. The visual arts can be said

to be heavily invested in the visual experience of human perception as opposed to other

faculties such as music and dance. However, the division of these sub-disciplines under the

umbrella of fine arts has become increasingly blurred as visual art has become increasingly

engaged with interdisciplinary crossover.   Visual art and art in general are also heavily

concerned with issues of "meaning."   Chapter 3 presents the Kwak'wala *u-[aʼw-]* stem and its

relationship to the body, the house and the land. Chapters 4 thru 6 deal with a linguistic

analysis of spatial terminology in relationship with the body, which then moves outwards.

Chapter 4 deals with personal space (the body). Chapter 5 deals with architectural space (the

house), while chapter 6 deals with geographic space (the land).   Each topic is explored

through a linguistic analysis of the language forms used to express these ideas. This linguistic

analysis is then compared to non-linguistic cultural expressions such as narrative, architecture,

and ritual for consistencies in the construction of meaning.   Chapter 7 explores conceptual

spatial/temporal crossover. Chapter 8 gives a description and analysis of the visual component

of the thesis. This component is considered a conceptual experiment in the relationship of

"form" and "meaning". It involves the creation of a series of works which seek to address the

spatial and cultural concepts which emerge from the linguistic and anthropological comparison.

Can a non-linguistic expression such as visual art as visual signifier (or visual language) take

the place of language as oral or written signifiers and still consistently express the same

underlying conceptualizations of meaning in space? Chapter 9 concludes this thesis and

provides an overall evaluation of the research presented.

1.5   Background of the author

I am in a particular position to conduct this research as a member of the Kwakwaka'wakw, my

maternal grandparents coming from the Dzawada'enuxw of Gwa'yi (Kingcome Inlet), the

Haxwa'mis of Aɫaɫxu (Wakeman Sound), the Kwikwasutʼinuxw of Gwayasdams (Gilford Island)

and the Kwaguʼɫ of `Tsaxis (Fort Rupert). I grew up both on and off reserve, while developing

an avid interest and engagement in traditional culture. An artist by training in both traditional

Kwakwaka'wakw visual forms as well as Western based art practice, I have an extensive history

of working in both traditional community based contexts and public museum and gallery

exhibits; local, national and international. In many ways my artistic inquiry initially framed this

academic research. I have spent much time considering the challenges posed in language and

cultural revitalization for First Nations in Canada as well as the cross-over of cultural forms from

their original traditional intent and their assimilation and appropriation into colonial systems.

This being said, my particular background renders simultaneously both the opportunity to be an

insider with privileged knowledge built up over a lengthy period of time but also an additional

impediment to objectivity. It was as a survivalist strategy that I chose to pursue academic

contexts to supplement traditional Kwakwa̱ka'wakw knowledge which, through colonization, I

had inherited as fragmented and conflicted.   Colonization is a concept I feel is important to

remain highly conscious of as both the Kwak'wala language and Kwakwaka'wakw culture have

been affected by it.   As an act of outside aggression to take over lands and resources which

included the subjection and oppression of indigenous cultures, colonization for the

Kwakwa̱ka'wakw came with contact with European colonists who have systematically attempted

to take over their lands and cultures within the relatively short time frame of a few hundred

years (since 1792) and remains an ongoing process.   It is important to acknowledge that the

language and cultural forms I am engaged with are not static, historical and frozen in time but

dynamic, ongoing and vital. They exist within changing contexts and relationships both internal

to the Kwakwaka'wakw and external to the broader Canadian state.   Colonialism has had a

large influence in this.

Throughout the 1990s, it was communicated to me personally by Kwak'wala speaking elders,

that without an understanding of the Kwak'wala language, I would have difficulty truly

comprehending Kwakwaka'wakw cultural forms.   This dissertation is the result of trying to

answer my own reflexive question "Why?" as well as learn the language by being able to study it

under a structured setting all the while considering whether a greater faculty with the Kwak'wala

language could have an impact on my artistic expression. My own personal objectives within

this research are twofold; one, to help facilitate the creation of a younger generation speaker in

myself, by providing structured study, and two, to provide information for other Kwakwaka'wakw

that may be useful in Kwak'wala language acquisition.   Under this premise I have been careful

to avoid overly-specialized technical language as much as possible particularly when it comes

to linguistics which can be so heavily laden with technical language that the information is

obscure except to others within the discipline.   While I acknowledge the value and necessity of

academic peer review and intellectual discourse my primary audience while researching and

writing has been my own community while generating an understanding of the complex

relationship of language to culture.   While this research project remains highly aware of the

endangered nature of Kwak'wala it also explores the broader questions of language use and

effect on worldview and the question "Why is it important to save this language?". As such, this

thesis and the artworks that accompany it are attempts at decolonization and arise from a belief

in voicing indigenous ideas on all available platforms. Within the very real possibility of

Kwak'wala language loss and Kwakwaka'wakw cultural assimilation my belief is that as long as

we continue to speak then we will continue to exist. For me personally, this means speaking the

Kwak'wala language and articulating our customs, beliefs and traditions in contexts academic,

or artistic, in private, or in public.

Chapter 2: Form and Meaning:
Theoretical Frameworks & Methodology

Dream of 'Naxnagam

I dreamed I was going to the house of the master of the Salmon on the sea side of

our world. I don't know why I was going there. There I saw my late father. Then

he scolded me because I had gone to the place where he was. He asked me to go

back home. Then I remembered that my late father had died long ago. Then I

went home. Then I awoke. (Boas, 1925, p. 49)

2.1 Form and meaning

This thesis, at its most fundamental level, is concerned with the relationship of form and

meaning. If there is a radical change of form how does it affect meaning, or the opposite, how

does a change in meaning affect form?   Specifically, if a language, as a formal expression of

a people is radically changed how does that affect the conceptualization of cultural

understanding?   Form is "what is" while "meaning" has a more ephemeral interpretation as

"what the form signifies".   In considering "form" specifically, I am attempting to gauge the

relationship between the physical characteristics (sounds which result in words) of the

Kwak'wala language with Kwakwaka'wakw cultural forms manifest as architecture, social

structure and art. I then pair these physical forms with their conceptual meanings to see if

there is a shared understructure which influences the resulting forms. By 'understructure' I

mean primarily, the belief systems and analogical connections which influence rules of

grammar (in linguistics) or 'proper' form (in architecture, social structure, artistic expression

and geographic relationships). This will be mapped out more explicitly through the thesis. The

hypothesis is that the more evidence that exists of a shared conceptual understructure the

more likely it can be asserted that language and culture are intrinsically linked, and that

significant changes in one domain will affect the other. In other words, a significant change in

language will significantly affect cultural understanding and vice-versa if they share conceptual

understructure. I then attempt to incorporate the spatial (space)/temporal (time) concepts that

emerge from the analysis of the Kwak'wala language and traditional Kwakwaka'wakw cultural

expressions into contemporary artworks.

In many ways this reflects on the work of Ferdinand de Saussure (1959), (1857-1913) where

he posited that language is a system of signs, the signifier (form) and the signified (meaning).

"Sounds, images, written words, paintings, photographs, etc. function as signs within

language" when they serve to express or communicate ideas." (Hall, 1997). Saussure then

went on to divide the "sign" in to the "signifier" and the "signified". The "signifier" he equated

with form (words, images etc.) and the "signified" was equated with the idea or concept. He

indicated it was the relationship between them that created meaning. (p. 31). Figure 2.1 is a

diagram of the relationship between form and meaning with form taking the upper position as

the surface manifestation of underlying conceptual meanings.

Language	FORM: Manifest in the world [PHYSICAL]	Culture
	MEANING: What it is about [CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTRUCTURE]	
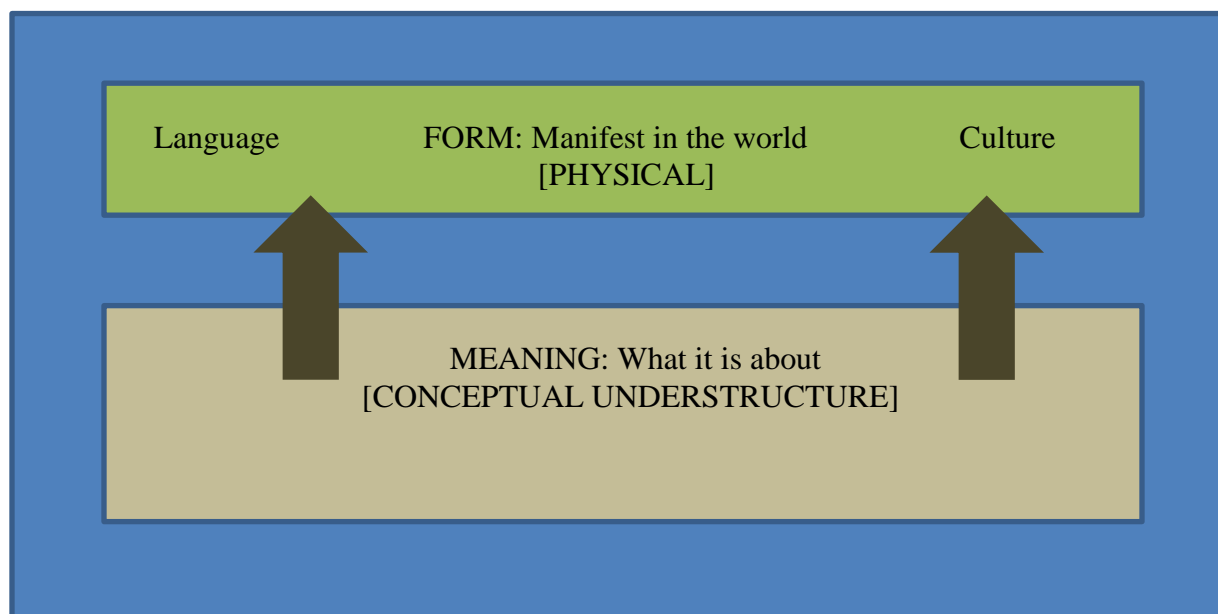
Figure 2.1 *The Sign: composed of its form and meaning*

The sign as an expression of communication exists as two components. The first component

is the obvious one, the one that exists in the world. A linguistic example is a noun such as *dog*

which refers to a type of animal. On the surface level of conceptualization one could say that

the meaning of the word *dog*, as a type of animal can be translated into Kwak'wala as *wat'si* "a

dog". The words *dog* and *'wat'si* are signifiers. However, at the deeper conceptual levels of

belief and cultural association the "meaning" of the Kwak'wala word *'wat'si* and the English

word *dog* differ. In Kwakwaka'wakw belief systems *'wat'si* are accorded an intermediate

status as both associated with wolves and yet living companions to humans who assist them in

certain tasks, and as such are to be respected. For example, there were inherited house

names for dogs such as `Patłalagila, for the Dłidłagidi *'naṁima* (house clan) of the Kwagu'ł

(Boas 1921, p. 801). The *'wat'samł* "dog mask" is used in a high ranking dance amongst the

Dzawada'enuxw tribe. We also have names such as 'Wat's'pala "smells like a dog[3]" and

'Wayoł "old dog[4]" which in English translation sound derogatory but according to my uncle,

Ernest Peter Willie, were honorable names. (family recording). Dzawada'enuxw histories tell of

the gift of a supernatural dog from Tawixa'xta' to an early ancestor `Kalaṁin who helped catch

mountain goats (Boas 1902, p. 37). The name `Was'wasaliga'e is given with the "dog dance"

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[3] Name of Tim Willie, brother of my grandfather, Charlie Willie

[4] Everyday name used in old age of my great-grandmother Mary Sewid, grandmother of Charlie Willie.

to 'Nalbe', the son of `Tsekame, the original ancestor of the Kwikwasuťinuxw (Boas 1902, p

191). From these examples one can see that while the words *dog* and *'waťsi* as linguistic

symbols share a reference to a certain type of animal they differ in their underlying

associations and extended meaning. According the Saussure, the sign has a symbol which

exists in the world and a meaning which is defined by a relationship to conceptual

understructure defined by particular beliefs and associations, as in Figure 2.2.
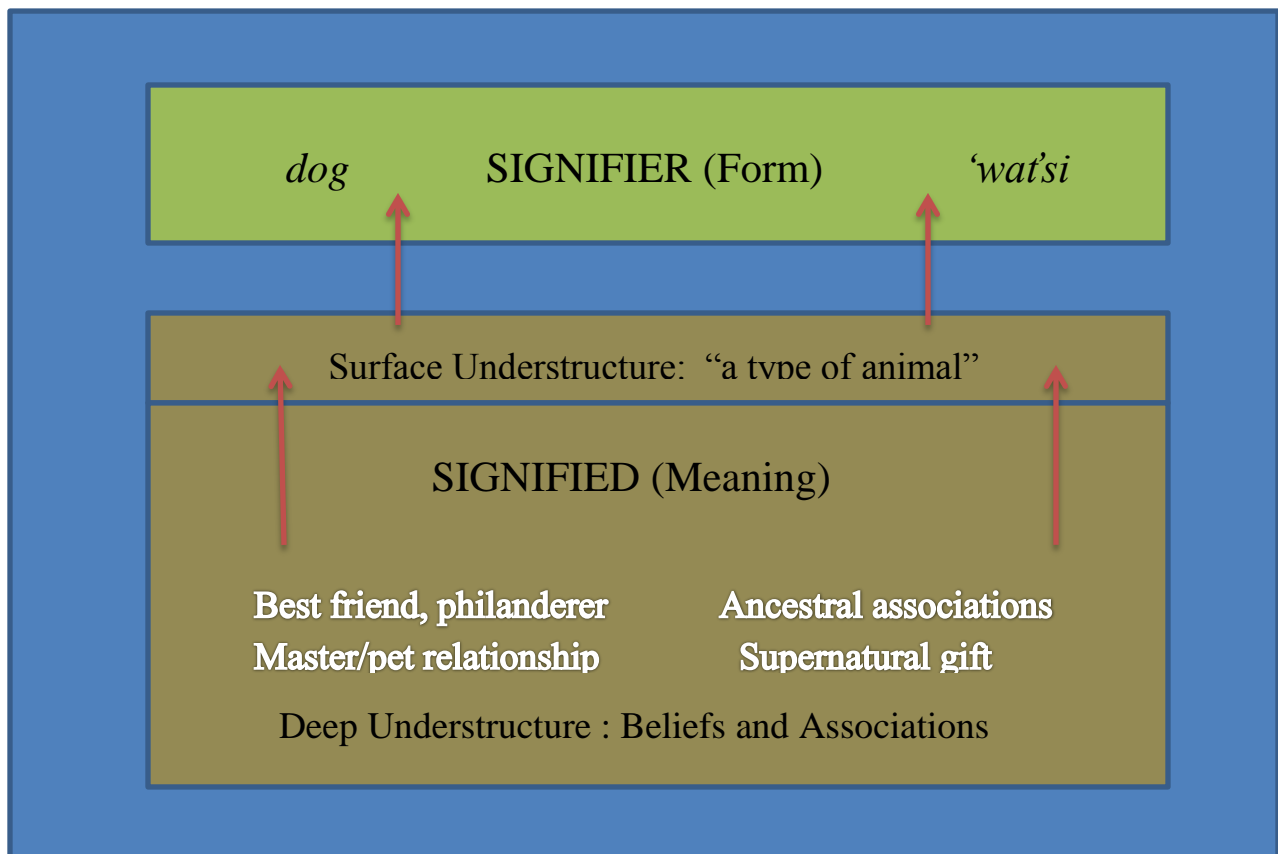
Figure 2.2 *The "sign": relationship to form "signifier" and meaning "signified": surface*
understructure and deep understructure

2.1.1 What is form? : What is meaning?

The words "form" and "meaning" have their own specific interpretations under the disciplines of

linguistics, anthropology, and visual arts, but they all share some fundamental features. In

general, "form" can be defined as the physical configuration of some type of object in the

world. In linguistics form is "anything that has a physical shape, be that in terms of sound

waves or written characters. "(Bauer, 2004, p. 45) We can say words are a "formal" aspect of

language as words are made up of sounds and letters which create speech. In anthropology

"form" can be defined as material evidence, or the manifestation of expression into physical

mediums like architecture (buildings in space), choreography (movement in space) and art

(objects in space).   Visual art defines form as "what the work is", in other words its

compositional features such as color, mass, shape, material etc. What joins these definitions

of "form" across disciplines is a relationship to physicality in the world either as sounds,

movement through space, or as objects. They are the signifiers of their disciplines and are

manifest on the surface as speech, action and creations.

In general "meaning" can be defined as "the signification of a message" (Chrystal,1999). In

linguistics, meaning is considered to be the content of the linguistic form. For instance, the

word *child* can be associated with the meaning "a person who has not reached adulthood".

Similar to the example *dog* used in Figure 2.2, different cultures while sharing certain features

of meaning will have varied associations dependant on cultural factors. In Kwak'wala there

are two words that can mean *child.* The word *gananam* means "a generic child" which can be

contrasted against the word *xwanukw* "one's own child" or *sasam* meaning "one's own

children". I suspect this distinction exists due to the Kwakwaka'wakw cultural emphasis on

ancestor and descendant relationships. In anthropology, meaning is derived from a number of

contributing cultural factors such as belief systems, history and environment. Roland Barthes

(1972) theorized that meaning could be ascribed to a signifier on two levels, the first at the

level of *denotation,* or the most basic descriptive level and second, on the level of connotation,

which ascribes to a signifier wider, broader based meanings. On the second level signifiers

are assigned meaning "in terms of the wider realms of social ideology – the general beliefs,

conceptual frameworks and value systems" of a given society (Hall, 1997, p. 38-39). In this

thesis this could be mapped to the terms surface understructure as denotation and deeper

understructure as connotation.

2.1.2 Semiotics in Anthropology and Visual Art

The extension of the "sign" from a purely linguistic approach to a broader cultural application

led to the engagement of *semiotics* in anthropology and visual arts.

Semiotics: the study of signs and their use, focusing on the mechanisms and

patterns of human communication and on the nature and acquisition of knowledge.

Language is viewed in semiotics as one type of sign system, along with other

systems as bodily gestures, clothing, and the arts" (Chrystal, 1999, p. 302)

Semiotics by analogy extends the notion of what a "language" is to other forms of human

expression that communicate ideas such as narrative, music, and art. Under semiotics each

medium of expression can be said to have a "language" and as such will have surface

representations and rules and common understandings that support those surface

representations to create meaning.

In visual art meaning is ascribed by cultural understructures which inform the surface

representations of form. "In the semiotic approach, not only words and images, but objects

themselves can function as signifiers in the production of meaning" (Hall, 1997, p. 37). "The

semiotic approach provides a method for analysing how visual representations convey

meaning" (p. 41). This means we can consider architecture, material culture such as masks

and regalia, and the ceremonial compositions of the Kwakwaka'wakw as forms of culture

whose *meanings* are derived from hypothetically shared conceptual under-structures. With a

working knowledge of the conceptual understructures is it possible for novel forms to be

created that still maintain fundamental connections to traditional meaning? It is under this

inquiry that an attempt at a contemporary visual art translation is attempted and included as a

component of research.

2.2   Written (literal) component of the thesis

There are two main methods that result in the two major components of this thesis. The first

one is the written component which is compiled from research with text based information

combined with participant interviews.   The second component is the production of a body of

visual works which attempt to translate Kwakwaka'wakw concepts of space and time into

contemporary public art spaces. The first component is quite standard, the second somewhat

innovative.   The visual component arises out of a questioning of the privileging of literacy as

the most appropriate form of knowledge. Coming from a non-literate, oral society such as the

Kwakw<u>aka</u>'wakw historically were, as well as studying a language which had no written form

until the late 1800s it seemed appropriate to attempt to address the issues in an alternative

medium to writing. This also presents the opportunity to test whether concepts which are

symbolized by words can also be symbolized by other means under alternative circumstances.

2.2.1 Linguistic morphological analysis

Linguistic morphological analysis is a major component of this thesis.   Morphology can be

defined as "the correlation of form and meaning within the word" (Bauer, 2004:1). According to

(Bybee, 1985) "The study of morphology approaches morphemes as the (minimal) linguistic

units with semantic content, and studies the relations among them" (p. v). English words such

as *it, on, car, bike* etc. can exist as single units to express an idea. Other words such as

biking are composed of more than one meaningful unit *bik(e)* + *ing* [continual action] and are

constructions of the meanings of its constituent parts. These word parts are called

morphemes and are defined within linguistics as "minimal meaningful units".

Kwak'wala is an excellent language to explore morphological structure as it is a polysynthetic language; where a single word can express the equivalent of a sentance. An example is

amłaxdan "I played" which is composed of three morphemes _amła_ (to play) + _-xd_ (past tense) + _-an_ (personal pronoun "I"). Most Kwak'wala words are composed of a stem/root meaning with modifying suffixes, sometimes several. My research examines meaning in Kwak'wala expressions by examining the morphology in words and phrases relating to spatial and temporal concepts. Figure 2.3 shows how a Kwak'wala word is broken into morphemes.
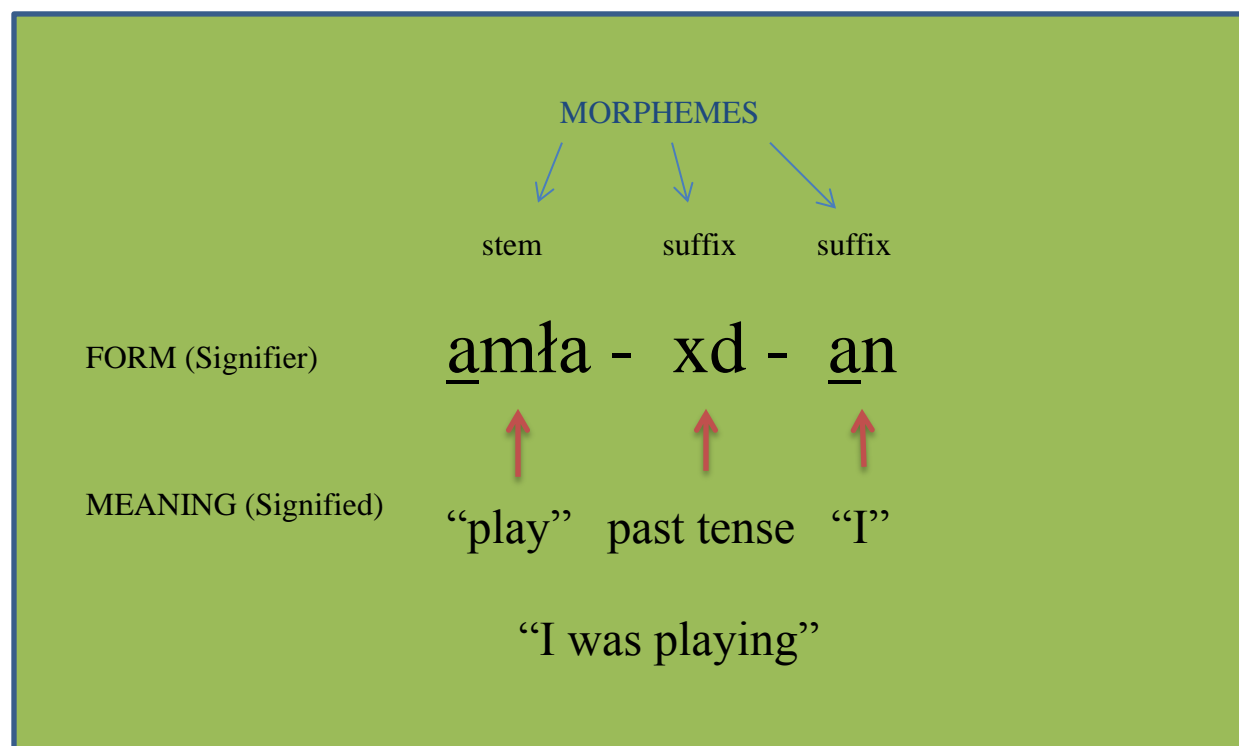
Figure 2.3 _The morphological breakdown of a Kwak'wala word_

I have used a simplified gloss for linguistic words and phrases. I wanted the information to be

useful to a non-linguistic audience. For this reason, I have limited the gloss to the word or

phrase as the surface form with the meaning of each morpheme written directly beneath, as in

Figure 2.3. What is called the free translation is provided on the side in italics along with the

source of citation.

In text example format:

(#)   amłaxdan   "I was playing." (www.firstvoices.com)
         play was I

Where it seemed important to make the differentiation I have separated the morphemes with a

dash as in the following example:

(#)   amła – xd - an   "I was playing." (www.firstvoices.com)
         play   was   I

In order to generate linguistic data a formal morphological analysis of the Kwak'wala language

was applied in order to derive the literal meanings of Kwak'wala words relating to spatial and

temporal expression. These were then organized into conceptual categories and extensions

which were then compared with cultural forms and expressions. Specifically, space and time

were analyzed through their manifestation within one component of the Kwak'wala determiner

system (personal space), cardinal directions (geographic space), the occupation of objects in

space (categorization), and the use of metaphor.   My research examines how these topics are

expressed in the Kwak'wala language and then compares how these concepts were mapped

onto traditional cultural practices as manifested in the early 20th century when Kwak'wala was

still the dominant language amongst the Kwakw<u>a</u>k<u>a</u>'wakw Nations.

2.2.2 Review of Kwak'wala texts and participant interviews

The major source of Kwak'wala linguistic information, used in this thesis, stems from Franz

Boas' extensive work conducted from 1880-1940 (Boas,1911, 1947, 1948). Both his 1947

"Glossary of the Suffixes" and his 1948 "Kwakiutl Dictionary" were only made public after his

death in 1942. I have cross-referenced the Boas data with David Grubb's 1977 "Kwakiutl

Dictionary", U'mista Cultural Society's 1981 "Learning Kwak'wala Series" and the web based

Kwak'wala resources available through the project "First Voices" developed by the First

People's Cultural Foundation (http://www.firstvoices.com). In addition, the accuracy of

linguistic forms and cultural expressions were reviewed with contemporary Kwak'wala

speakers through an interview process conducted in person and over the phone.   The

interviews in person were audio recorded. The phone interviews were not audio recorded. All

elicited samples were written down in field notebooks. I elicited Kwak'wala words and

sentences as well as checked published examples. I used two consultants. The first was

born in 1928 and the second was born in 1937. Both grew up in Kingcome Inlet, Gilford Island

and Alert Bay. Elicited forms were checked with both speakers before being included as

examples. I also checked with the informants about general cultural understandings which

were emerging through the research.

2.2.3 U'mista Orthography

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

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

Since the late 1800s various people have devised orthographies in order to be able to write the

Kwak'wala language. George M. Dawson published a Kwak'wala vocabulary in 1887. Around

the same time the Reverend Alfred J. Hall (1889), who worked in both `Tsax̲is (Fort Rupert)

and `Yalis (Alert Bay) developed an early grammar which was published by the *Transactions

of the Royal Society of Canada*. After Hall and Dawson came Boas who developed a writing

system which he refined over the course of his 50 year engagement with the Kwakwa̲ka'wakw.

Grubb developed his own writing system in the late 1960's. In the 1970s the U'mista Cultural

Society in Alert Bay developed the U'mista writing system (Galois, 1994).   Most contemporary

linguistic work on Kwak'wala has been documented in the International Phonetic Alphabet

(IPA).   For this thesis I have used the U'mista Orthography as it is the predominant

orthography in use in the territory I come from and least intimidating for basic usage.   Where

necessary, I have transliterated both Boas' and Grubbs' orthographic spelling into U'mista's.

For a cross reference of these orthographies see Appendix A.

2.2.4 Linguistics contexts: Linguistic Relativity and Cognitive Linguistics

Linguistic Relativity and Cognitive Linguistics are two bodies of thought that have emerged

from linguistics that have been useful in contextualizing my research. Linguistic Relativity is

most often referred to as a hypothesis, while Cognitive Linguistics is a fairly new branch of

modern linguistics.   Modern linguistics began to take shape in the latter part of the 19th

Century.   In America, Franz Boas and Edward Sapir (1884-1939) were influential in

developing methods for documenting the potentially endangered languages of Native

Americans. Both Boas and Sapir considered that languages were intrinsically connected to

the epistemology, or "way of life and thought of its speakers" (McGregor 2009, p. 9). Under

the influence of Boas and Sapir emerged the theory of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, or

Linguistic Relativity, which is mostly credited to Benjamin Lee Whorf (1897-1941), who was a

student of Sapir (Foley, 1997). This theory has been the source of much linguistic speculation.

In Whorf's own words:

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

In linguistics, this more contextual, historical approach to language was replaced by an interest

in Structuralist Linguistics which emerged from the work of Saussure. (McGregor, 2009) When

Saussure separated form and meaning into the "signifier" and the signified" it enabled linguists

to focus more on the formal aspects of language and to treat language more like a science.

McGregor (2009) calls the perspectives of Boas, Sapir and Whorf "mentalistic' which I interpret

to be conceptual or thought based and invested in "meaning". This "mentalistic orientation"

was rejected by Leonard Bloomfield in his objective to make linguistics a science. (Campbell,

2003; McGregor, 2009) This is when a particular focus on "form" over "meaning" began to

emerge within the discipline.   McGregor states the focus on the mechanics of language from

the 1930s to the 1950s diminished the role of "meaning". Linguistic exploration of language

under formal analysis became highly developed and extra-ordinarily technical in its approach.

Today the discipline is characterized by two primary divisions, formal linguistics with its

emphasis on the formal aspects of language and functional linguistics which has reinvested

itself in context and meaning (Halliday, 2003; McGregor, 2009). Under functional linguistics

has emerged the sub-field of cognitive linguistics.   Both linguistic relativity which was

influenced by the work of Boas and Sapir, and cognitive linguistics are of particular interest to

this thesis. The linguistic relativity hypothesis is used to provide academic context to the

issues.   Metaphor, prototype theory, and radial categories from cognitive linguistics all help

shape the analytical results of the morphological analysis. Figure 2.4 diagrams the

relationships of "form" and "meaning" which is divided into "surface understructure", which

could be also called rules for "proper form", and "deep understructure". According to this

thesis "deep understructure" affects "surface understructure / proper form" which then

manifests as "form" in the world. "Meanings" are produced in the mind while "forms" are

produced in the world.
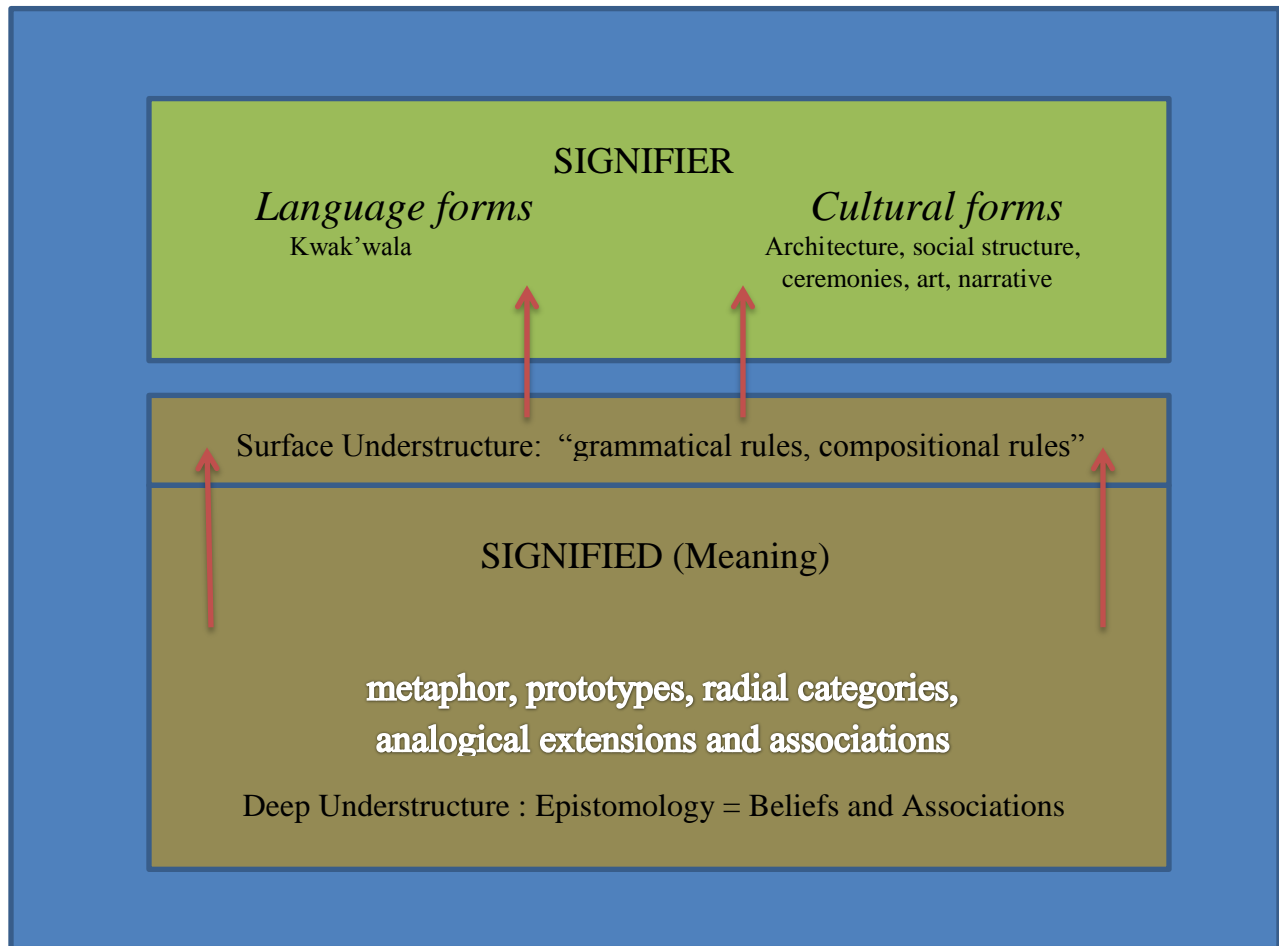
Figure 2.4 *Cognitive linguistics and the focus on deep understructures through metaphors, prototypes, radial categories, analogical extensions and associations*

2.2.5   Linguistic Relativity

A re-engagement with Linguistic Relativity has been gaining momentum in the movement for

the revitalization of Aboriginal languages in the last 20 years (Fee, 2003).   Does the language

one speaks influence the way one sees the world?   This is a question pertinent to Aboriginal

communities as traditional languages become more and more endangered. According to

Battiste & Youngblood Henderson (2000), "Linguist Kenneth Hale has estimated that half the

world's 6000 Indigenous languages are doomed because no children speak them…Recent

studies in Canada show that all fifty-three Indigenous languages are critically endangered" (p.

82).   In losing languages are we losing just the forms of language or are we also losing

diverse worldviews? Whorf (1956) had observed "a new principle of relativity, which holds that

all observers are not led by the same physical evidence to the same picture of the universe,

unless their linguistic backgrounds are similar, or can in some way be calibrated" (p. 214). In

this statement Whorf emphasized the relationship between language and worldview.

According to a Whorfian perspective then, in losing languages we are indeed losing unique

and valuable ways of perceiving and being in the world.

A review of the issues from its early emergence in the writings of Franz Boas, Edward Sapir

and Benjamin Whorf and later contestations through Noam Chomsky's early work on Universal

Grammar reveal that the question whether language shapes worldview has been answered

with convoluted results. Rather than an emphatic 'yes' or 'no'; it is really "to what extent and

kind of impact does language have on thought" that may be the real question (Swoyer, 2003).

This dissertation engages with this theoretical debate. Like studies before it the research found

crossover in both universal aspects of spatial expression and particular aspects leading us

back to questions of extents and impacts.

2.2.6   Cognitive Linguistics

This research is situated within the linguistic framework of what, used to be called Space

Grammar, and is now referred to as Cognitive Linguistics. This branch of linguistic study has

refocused their attention on "meaning" and its relationship to thought or underlying cognitive

pathways (conceptualization). Cognitive Linguistics was developed as an approach to

language study in the 1970s by George Lakoff, Ron Langacker and Len Talmy, amongst

others, as a reaction against the focus on 'formalism' that was dominant in linguistics during

the 1950s and 1960s (Evans & Green, 2006).   Cognitive Linguistics has been gaining

momentum as a movement through the four decades since (Geeraerts & Cuyckens, 2007).

Under Cognitive Linguistics, language is considered to "offer a window into cognitive function,

providing insights into the nature, structure and organization of thoughts and ideas" (Evans &

Green, 2006, p. 5). The focus lies on function or context. This is considered to be in a polar

relationship with the early works of Noam Chomsky, which treated language as an innate

autonomous function contained with the mind and less influenced by environment (Chomsky,

1965). Within cognitive linguistics "the formal structures of language are studied not as if they

were autonomous, but as reflections of general conceptual organization, categorizational

principles, processing mechanisms, and experiential and environmental influences."

(Geeraerts & Cuyckens, 2007, p. 3) Cognitive Linguistics places language within the body, in

relationship to the mind, which is then influenced by its environment. It is considered

appropriate for this study in its approach to language and the extrapolation of meaning through

the body in space ; physical, architectural, social, ceremonial and artistic.

2.2.6.1 Metaphor and analogy as a component of Cognitive Linguistics

Metaphorical analogy is an important component of Cognitive Linguistic theory and is relevant

to this thesis because the major conceptual tool for spatial conceptualization in Kwak'wala

appears to be metaphorical.   Lakoff & Johnson (1980) define metaphor as "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (p. 5). For example: "the body *is* the house of the soul". An analogy is when something is compared as being "like" something else in another domain: "the door of the house is like a mouth, swallowing the visitors who enter". Gentner & Jeziorski (1993) describe analogy as:

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

The concepts of metaphor and analogy are so similar that they are intertwined. It is observed that "conceptual metaphors are mappings across domains that structure our reasoning, our experience, and our everyday language" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Metaphor is considered "to refer to a pattern of conceptual association" (Grady, 2007). Prior to the emergence of cognitive linguistics, metaphor was considered a linguistic convention restricted in usage to the

poetic and rhetorical (Lakoff & Johnson).   Since the 1980s however the consideration that

metaphor is an intrinsic component of the way we understand our world has become

increasingly viable.

The consideration of metaphor and analogy is appropriate because in my study spatial

analogy is used often to create understanding from source (base) domains to target domains.

Concepts are understood in relationship to one another and this comparative quality is highly

prevalent within Kwak'wala speech, both every-day and ceremonial.   For example, the

statement, *Lan nagałtawix t'axala' yasan wiwump'woła.* "I follow the road made by my late

ancestors" is a metaphor for maintaining traditions (Boas, 1949, p. 238). Note the word *t'axala'*

" road" is the same word used for "the door of a house". These metaphors cannot be fully

understood under literal definitions but manifest their full meanings only under

contextual/cultural based paradigms.   In addition, metaphors have been found not to be

simple one to one mappings with defined boundaries but map to complexes of linked

understandings. It is this matrix of linked understandings which create a particular perspective

or understanding of the world and is situated as part of the deep understructure of Figure 2.2

and Figure 2.4.

2.2.6.2 Prototype Theory and Radial Categories as Cognitive Linguistic theories

In my written research I use formal morphological analysis as a technique and then the

theories of Metaphorical Analogy, Prototype theory and Radial Categories from Cognitive

Linguistics to extrapolate meaning and conceptual associations in the Kwak'wala language.   I

then compare visual, architectural, and ceremonial examples to test whether the structures

and concepts underlying Kwakwaka'wakw thought are consistent with word based expressions

in speech.

Prototype Theory addresses the concept of categories. As we develop our understanding of

the world categories are fundamental to our understanding of what things are. Prototype

Theory arose out of the reconsideration of the boundaries of categories for category

membership.   Prior traditions of thought around the issue of categories aligned membership in

a category as bounded by the possession of certain features which gave each member equal

membership. Prototype Theory argues against this and posits that the membership within

categories are not equal but based on how much a member can map prototypical features but

certainly do not, nor are required, to share all features (Rosch & Mervis, 1975).   The "prior

tradition of thought" is called the Classical Theory (Lakoff, 1987; Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk,

2007) and was applied in ways that divided the world into defined domains which were thought

to map to a predetermined reality. For example, the category *bird* could be applied to "beings

that fly, have feathers, and lay eggs".   However, we find there are many anomalies to the

definition. Is an ostrich still a bird if it cannot fly, or penguin if it doesn't have feathers? What

we find instead of cleanly defined predetermined categories with equal membership is a

central prototype with varied membership. Some members fit the prototype for membership in

all features, what Eleanor Rosch (1973) defined as 'best examples' and so are central while

others share only a few features and so are peripheral.   Categories then can be said to have a

central prototype and fuzzy boundaries, not necessarily clearly defined, for membership.

Some items can have membership in more than one category. In some ways the idea is

linked to a nature/nurture, objective/subjective debate. In the Classical Theory categories are

fixed by nature. They just are.   In Prototype Theory categories can be influenced and defined

by culture, and language can reflect differences in categorization. Through Prototype Theory

once more is expressed a relationship between form and meaning, what is in the world and

what is in the mind. In (Figure 2.5) I present an interpretation of the differences between a

classical perspective of the world "as it is" and a cognitive perspective where the world is

experienced through a lens of language and culture drawn from Lakoff (1987).

CLASSICAL "In the world"   COGNITIVE "Influenced by the mind

Literal   ⟷   Imaginative and Image Based
                   Metaphorical

Objective   FORM   ⟷   Subjective   MEANING

In the World (what is)   ⟷   In the mind/body

Formal   ⟷   Functional (Contextual,
                           Historical)

Categories as fixed   ⟷   Categories as defined
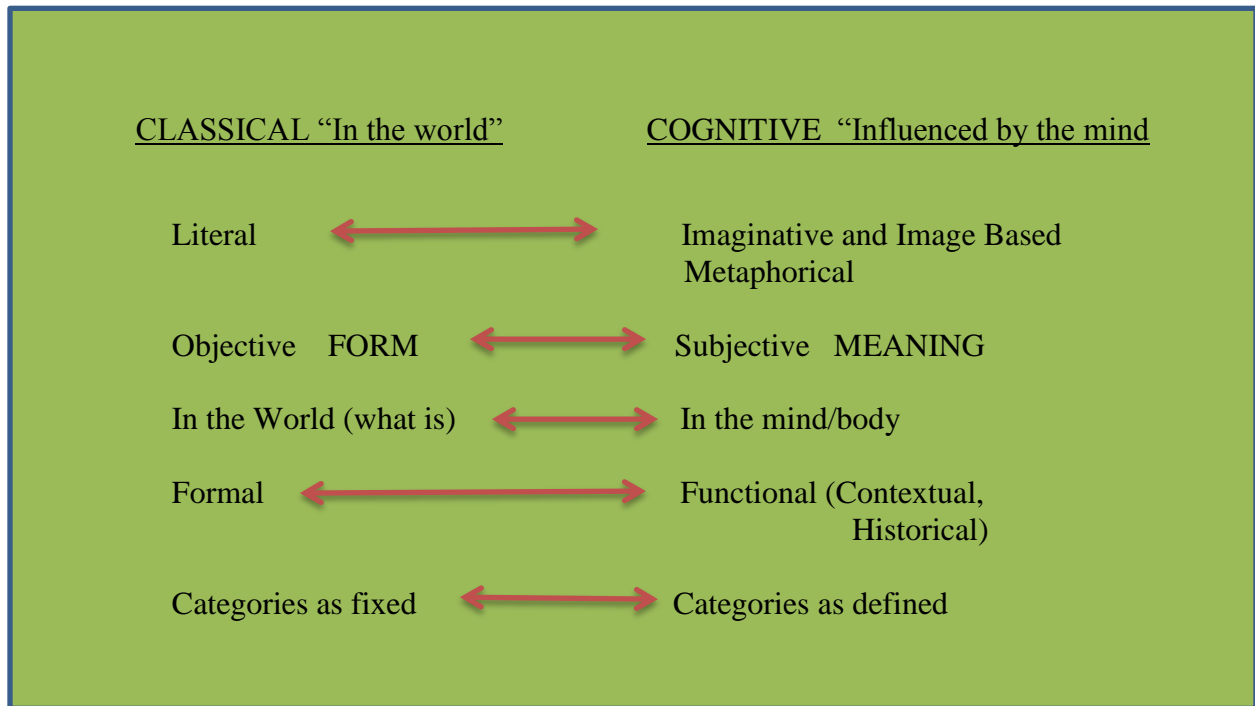
Figure 2.5 *Theory of categories Classical "in the world" and Cognitive "influenced by the mind"*

The concept of Radial Categories emerges out of Prototype Theory and addresses the notion

of meaning in relationship to the prototype. This is described as radiating from the centre with

members who are most like the prototype closer to the centre and members least like the

prototype occupying the periphery. Lakoff uses the concept of "mother" as an example to

explain radial categories. If "mother" represents the prototype or central ideal then

subcategories and non-central extensions are variations. Thus, *birth mother* and *foster mother*

are not understood purely on their own terms; they are comprehended via their relationship to

the central model of *mother* (Lakoff, 1987:91). These theories have strong implications for

technical linguistic debate but my primary interest is in cross-cultural categorization.

Cross-culturally and across different languages categories can possibly share features but

differ in their prototype and radial category membership. This means associated meanings

may vary from culture to culture.   When considering spatial concepts and the words which

delineate those concepts in the Kwak'wala language there appeared patterns of associated

meanings which could be considered categorical. I arranged these into groups with the base

stem as the central or prototypical concept. With the addition of suffixes the central meaning

(prototype) is added onto creating radial extensions (of meaning) which are still associated to

the central meaning. I consider these groupings to be conceptual categories which are

culturally specific. For example, in chapter 6 and 7 the stem *'na-* appears to exhibit radial

extension with culturally specific linkages. Figure 2.6 shows the *'na-* stem as a category

whose central concept is provided by the stem and extensions by additional suffixes. While

initially we might consider the extended meanings "upriver, the first" and "the day, the world"

to be unrelated we see through a specific cultural perspective defined by history, environment

and belief systems, explained in chapter 6 and 7, that they are indeed conceptually related.

nal-anxi' "upper end, the best, most valuable"

'nal- "upriver, the first"

'na-

'na-la "day, world, earth, sky"

'na-m "one, first"

'na-kwaɫa "light"
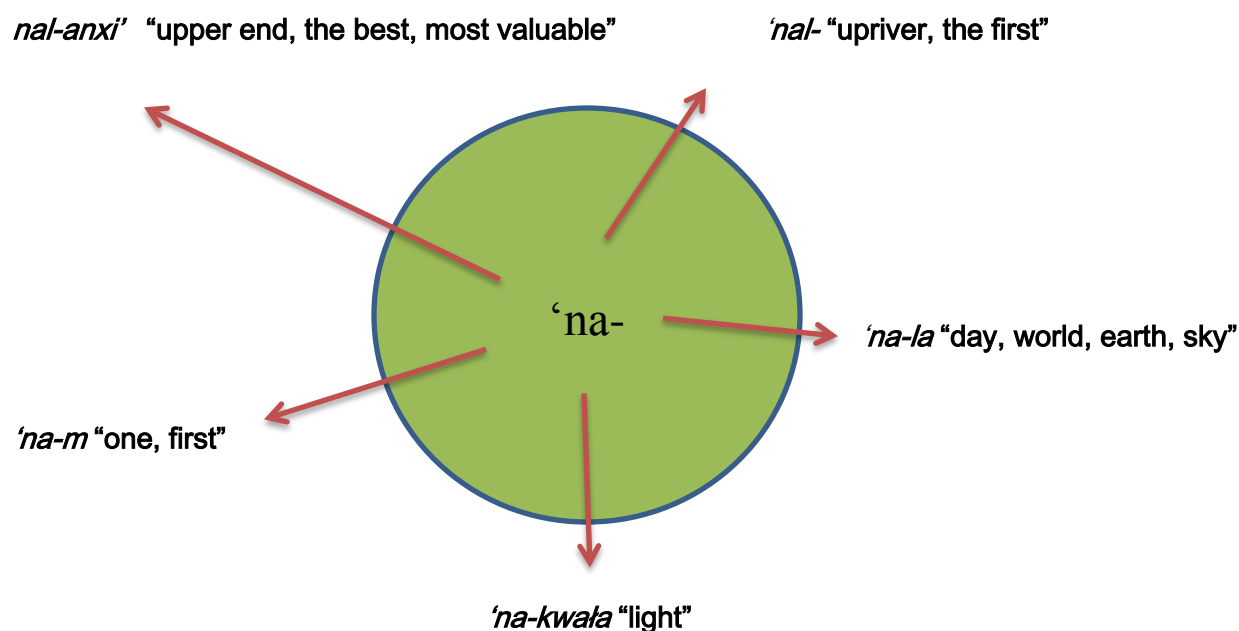
Figure 2.6   *Radial extensions of the stem 'na- forming a conceptual category*

Lakoff (1987) defines this as "*polysemy as categorization:* The idea that related meanings of words form categories and that the meanings bear family resemblances to one another." (p.12) By analyzing radial categories formed around the stems of spatial terminology in Kwak'wala I was able to make sense of metaphorical analogy in non-linguistic expressions. It helped to answer non-linguistic questions such as "Why is the back portion of the inside of a traditional house called "upriver"? This is answered in chapter 6.

2.2.7   Anthropology

While the morphological analysis of Kwak'wala terms relating to space is situated within the

discipline of linguistics, the cultural analysis of this thesis is situated within anthropology.

Within academics, culture is generally understood as an anthropological inquiry. While the

general subject is all of humanity historically, anthropology has spent much of its time

observing 'other' cultures (non-Western), though this is changing in modern contexts due to a

heightened comprehension of colonialism and its relationship to anthropology as a discipline

(Asad, 1973; Pels, 1999).   The majority of the material examined as part of this research was

collected under the discipline of anthropology.   This includes reviews of both ethnographic

data and material culture collections of the Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw.

While Boas' linguistic material has provided the base of my analysis of words and phrases in

Kwak'wala he is also one of the primary sources for ethnographic material.   Boas is

considered widely to be the 'father of American Anthropology'. He originally trained as a

geographer in Germany in the late 19th Century and then moved to the United States in part, to

escape the rise in anti-Semitism that was prevalent in Europe at that time (Darnell, 1998,

Rohner, 1969).   Over his lifetime, he brought to a largely undefined discipline a set of

principles and practices that helped define it. One theory to emerge from his work was that of

cultural relativity, a belief that an individual's culture, history and environment will influence

their perceptions and beliefs and knowledge of the world (Boas,1911,1949). It was under this

premise that Boas believed in collecting as much data as possible in the words and

perspectives of the people or culture he was attempting to study (Berman, 1996; Boas 1949).

It was only under this methodology, Boas believed, that Western euro-centricism could be

alleviated, though never completely overcome.   Boas studied many cultures, but the people

he studied the most, over the course of a five decade engagement (1890-1940), were the

Kwakwaka'wakw (Kwakiutl). Much of the source material for both the linguistic and cultural

research in this thesis comes from the Boas/Hunt corpus. Due to his belief in collecting as

much information as possible in the words of the people he was studying, Boas, through his

relationship with George Hunt, a Kwakwaka'wakw insider of Tlingit and Scottish/English

descent, compiled vast amounts of texts in Kwak'wala with English translation (Berman, 1996).

In describing this material Berman states:

Franz Boas published voluminously on the subject of his primary ethnographic

interest, the people he called the "Kwakiutl." …Nearly four thousand pages, about

four-fifths of the total, consist of translated but unannotated Kwak'wala language

text. Boas filled five volumes exclusively with myth and other narrative materials

(1910, 1935-43; Boas & Hunt 1905, 1906) and another six with ethnographic data

on subjects ranging from cooking and hunting methods, to chiefly inheritance and

succession, and to prayers, dreams, and the bird-souls of human beings (Boas

1909a, 1921, 1925a, 1930). Still another massive volume of mostly non-narrative

texts was in preparation at the time of Boas' death (HCU XIV). (p. 216)

In addition to this impressive amount of published work on the Kwakwaka'wakw is an equally

impressive amount of unpublished material.   It is no understatement to say that Boas was

prolific in acquiring ethnographic information.   In order to accomplish this, however he needed

the help of his ethnographic assistant George Hunt.

The relationship of George Hunt (1854-1933) as Boas' primary ethnographic informer on the

Kwakwaka'wakw cannot be understated. The majority of the raw data compiled by Boas on

the "Kwakiutl" was collected by George Hunt (Cannizzo, 1983; Berman, 1994 & 1996). Hunt

was not Kwakwaka'wakw by birth but was raised amongst the Kwakwaka'wakw when his

father Robert Hunt, a trader for the Hudson's Bay company moved to `Tsaxis (Fort Rupert) in

Kwakwaka'wakw territory with his high-ranking Tlingit wife. George Hunt was born in Fort

Rupert and eventually married a Kwakwaka'wakw woman. He strategically married his sons to

high-ranking Kwakwaka'wakw women. He lived his life immersed in the culture and was fluent

in Kwak'wala despite his first language most likely being Tlingit (Berman, 1994). Together,

over the course of five decades (1890-1940), Boas through Hunt was able to publish massive

amounts of information on the Kwakwaka'wakw (Boas, 1897, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1921, 1929,

1930, 1934, 1935, 2002; Boas & Hunt, 1902-1905, 1908). The topics covered by this

extensive research include, birth, coming of age, marriage and death rites, social structure,

traditional economies and harvesting practices, extensive histories, both genealogical and

mythological, geographies, ceremonial inquiry and artistic documentation of dances, songs

and material culture.

While much of the data used for this thesis emerges both from Boas and Hunt's extensive

literature on Kwakwaka'wakw social customs it is supplemented by a corpus of other published

and unpublished documentation pertinent to the Kwakwaka'wakw including the work of Curtis,

1915; Galois, 1994; Barbeau, 1950; Drucker & Heizer, 1967; Ford, 1940; Rohner & Rohner

1970, amongst others. In addition it is supplemented by material culture and collection notes,

housed in institutions including the British Columbia Archives, the National Archives in Ottawa,

and the U.B.C Museum of Anthropology. An additional research trip was made in 2009 to the

National Archives in Washington DC, Columbia University and the American Museum of

Natural History in New York and the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia in order to

review and collect the unpublished and original manuscripts of George Hunt and Franz Boas

as well as their personal correspondence.

2.2.7.1 Self Criticality of Anthropology and Visual Arts

The discipline of Anthropology under which the majority of this material was collected has

fallen under criticism for its colonial roots. Frideres (1988) defines colonialism as a staged

process of outside nations taking over territories, destructively supressing indigenous

populations, imposing the colonial culture as dominant and rendering the colonized people as

dependent upon the new imposed system.   Colonialism is influenced by racism and the belief

that the colonizer is superior to those colonized (pp. 367-370). The discipline of anthropology

was colonial in that it originally came into being on the premise of a Western belief in its own

cultural superiority against which other cultures would be measured.   In self- critical response

to its origins, modern anthropology has turned its eye on its own practice of studying non-

Western cultures under a Eurocentric vision. The discipline has become self-reflexive.   Pels

(2008) has suggested that this self-criticality of the discipline is "an anthropology of

anthropology" (p.280).

It was during the 1960s and 1970s where anthropology and Western art drew closer in their

agendas as Western art theory also became increasingly self-reflective and self-conscious of

its inherent Eurocentrism. Western art began to question the hierarchy of art as "primitive",

emerging from non-Europeans and "high or fine art", emerging from Europeans.   This led to a

dynamic consciousness of the construction of spaces both physical (institutional spaces such

as the academy, the museum and the gallery) and their conceptual underpinnings (what these

spaces represented).   What was once considered anthropological could be re-contextualized

as art and what was once strictly art became anthropological (Morphy and Perkins, 2006).

This crossover and questioning of disciplines, this self-consciousness of historicity and

context, also comes into play in my explorations of Kwakwaka'wakw "forms" and "meanings"

within institutions such as the University of Victoria, the UBC Museum of Anthropology and the

Vancouver Art Gallery. This self-reflexivity is also mirrored in my own academic exercise of

studying the Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw while being Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw where questions of authorship,

authority, voice and objectivity come into play in complex ways.

My anthropological research most actively engages with the contemporary anthropological

sub-divisions of Anthropological Linguistics and Visual Anthropology.   Anthropological

Linguistics basically embodies the concept that culture can be revealed through language and

also shares a conceptual crossover with Cognitive Linguistic enquiry (Palmer, 2007). Visual

Anthropology was chosen because it values the visual and the performative on par with the

written and its crossover with Visual art.

2.2.8   Anthropological Linguistics

Linguistic Anthropology has maintained a particular approach to language that studies "the

relations among language, society, thought and culture" (Danesi, 2004, p.VII). Linguistic

Anthropology is one of the main four subdisciplines of American anthropology; the other three

subdisciplines of anthropology being Sociocultural Anthropology, Physical Anthropology and

Archeology. Where the discipline of linguistics has become more focused on the formal

aspects of language since the mid-20th century, Linguistic Anthropology has maintained the

interest in language as a cultural phenomenon. It is invested in the documentation of

indigenous languages with a particular interest in North America. The defined connection to

culture is an important distinction within this discipline. While linguistics provides the analytical

tools for formal analysis at the word and phrase levels, Anthropological Linguistics assists with

the broader contextual inquiry into the connection and influence of culture.   In regards to the

discipline of Linguistic Anthropology Danesi (2004) also states:

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

This description of Linguistic Anthropology shows much cross-over with Cognitive Linguistics. The extensions of language use to social structure and the mention of metaphor as a method for understanding the world are especially pertinent to this thesis as explained in chapters 3-7.

2.2.9   Visual Anthropology

My engagement with Visual Anthropology is twofold, the first is an analysis of existing imagery and material culture collections for research purposes, and the second, the development of a body of visual works which act as experiments in the non-linguistic conceptual translation of the Kwakwakw'wakw spatial concepts which emerge from this research along with the text based analysis conducted under linguistic inquiry. Visual Anthropology initially emerged out of a modern engagement with visual documentation within anthropology in the 20th Century as photographic and film technologies developed. It has extended to encompass "the belief that culture is manifested through visible symbols embedded in gestures, ceremonies, rituals and artifacts situated in constructed and natural settings" (Ruby, 1996). There exists in Museums and other institutional archives a vast amount of visual material documenting the Kwakwaka'wakw.   Since the late 19th century collectors (including Boas and Hunt) gathered Kwakwaka'wakw "artifacts" for museum institutions such as The American Museum of Natural

History, The Chicago Field Museum, The Canadian Museum of Civilization, the Royal British

Columbia Museum, and the University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology amongst

others (Jacknis, 2002).   A review of the masks, ceremonial regalia and accoutrements,

architectural models etc. that form these collections has assisted in defining cultural aspects of

Kwakwaka'wakw ways of thinking.

In addition to the material culture documentation there exist collections of visual films and

photographs. In 1930, Boas was one of the first anthropologists to document the

Kwakwaka'wakw on film (Ruby, 1980). Edward Curtis quite remarkably had made the

Kwakwaka'wakw the subject of a feature film in 1914 as an amateur ethnologist (Bunn-

Marcuse, 2005).   During the latter part of the Nineteenth Century the Kwakwaka'wakw were

photographed by various government interests mostly invested in the issues of land (Savard,

2005). George Hunt himself considered the ethnographic potential of image based

documentation in a letter to Boas in 1907, when he said that it could "show you every thing

Plainer then writing it alon."[5] (Savard, 2005, p.55). It was also George Hunt who greatly

assisted Edward Curtis in the filming of "In the Land of the Head-Hunters" (Bunn-Marcuse,

---

[5] Original spelling errors retained

2005). From here the visual, audio and filmic documentation of the Kwakw<u>a</u>kwakw has

grown in to a massive corpus with ever changing contexts and dynamics based on access and

availability. Throughout this thesis I have used visual images to exemplify much of the

analysis. This includes diagrammatical images and photographs.

Visual Anthropology is useful for its focus to the *context and meaning* of image making which

provides us with a comparison with language with the premise that they are joined by cognitive

function. I analyzed spatial words and phrases in the Kwak'wala language for meaning

through morphological breakdown and then sought to pair the linguistic markers with their

visual signifiers in spatial architecture, social relations and artistic expression. Of course,

spatial understanding influences so many other domains of thought (such as time) that it can

be considered a major pillar of cultural worldview. I found that this was indeed the case within

my own analysis.

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

Visuality can be defined as images, objects in space (sculpture and archirtecture) and

imaginative geographic mapping of the landscape which is beyond our ability to survey

through simple vision. In this context *imagination*, or "seeing with the mind", is considered just

as important as the biological process of "seeing with the eyes."   In other words, how does

language create an image within the mind which then becomes manifest in the world, or vice

versa?   How are meanings constructed and then connected between the domains of

language, thought and reality? Mark Johnson (1987), one of the leading scholars in cognitive

linguistics proposes that imagination is a major component of the construction of meaning and

that its dismissal to the periphery in modern Western philosophical and cultural traditions is

highly problematic. He states, "any adequate account of meaning and rationality must give a

central place to embodied and imaginative structures of understanding by which we grasp our

world" (p, xiii).   Johnson, however does not align the imagination simply with the mind but

connects it strongly to the body. He states:

Our reality is shaped by the patterns of our bodily movement, the contours of our

spatial and temporal orientation, and the forms of our interactions with objects. It is

never merely a matter of abstract conceptualizations and propositional judgements

(p. xix).

 I have attempted to engage with these theories with the visual and the physical in two ways:

first, by examining linguistic and cultural manifestations of Kwakwaka'wakw space and writing

about it and second, by imaginatively and physically engaging with Kwakwaka'wakw spatial

concepts in the creation of artworks. This resulted in the visual component of the thesis

explored in chapter 8.

2.3 Visual (experiential) component of the thesis

The written component of this thesis is the literal translation of the underlying concepts of

space which emerged from linguistic analysis of spatial terms while the artworks form the non-

linguistic, non-literal expression of these concepts.   What they are joined by is their

engagement with the spatial concepts and belief systems of Kwakwaka'wakw culture. If form

(language and material culture) and meaning are intimately related then changing the contexts

of their manifestation would test this connection in an innovative and dynamic way by replacing

the institutional context (university to museum/gallery) and medium (writing to visual art).   The

subject matter remains consistent; the concept of space which is culturally specific to the

Kwakwaka'wakw and has a relationship to both form and meaning.

The inclusion of a visual component beyond the review and inclusion of visual data in this thesis is an important one. It highlights the interdisciplinary nature of the thesis as both necessary and integral.   Both anthropology and Western art history as academic disciplines have problematic relationships with the representation of Aboriginal cultures (Ames, 1992; Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2000). Throughout art history Aboriginal cultures have been excluded from the dominant discourses on architecture, sculpture and painting. Aboriginal art was approached most often as subject matter, the passive object of the Western European gaze. Not until the 1960's did institutions begin to consider the art of Native Americans as possibly 'fine art' rather than anonymous craft or anthropological artifact. The National Gallery of Canada didn't exhibit Aboriginal objects in its Historical Canadian Galleries until 2003 (Whitelaw, 2006).   These attempts at inclusion came with their own sets of complexities and confusion as the categories of art as defined by the dominant Western structures could not accommodate the original intents of the works themselves. In collecting and exhibiting these objects art history had, through the gallery, and anthropology had, through the museums, transformed the material culture of Native Americans into objects of their own consumption leaving little but their aesthetic formal qualities intact.

If we consider the material culture of the Kwakwaka'wakw as a grammar, or a form of

language, then we can comparatively say that the surface forms or "words" of that grammar

were placed in foreign contexts, or that their relationship to meaning (their understructure) was

disrupted. This disruption basically appropriated the formal expressions of the

Kwakwaka'wakw in order to express its own concepts around what those words/objects

symbolize. To re-frame this complex idea through the theory of Saussure, one could say that

the connection between signifier and signified is disrupted by the exchange of one cultural

conceptual understructure for another. While the surface form stays somewhat intact its actual

meaning has been appropriated.   For example, does a mask hanging in a gallery or a

storefront have the same meaning removed from its original cultural context? Or does the

mask become a symbol of the meanings of those institutions which have re-framed the object

as "artifact" or "art" when originally it had no relation to these definitions?

 Over the course of research for this dissertation a large body of major contemporary visual

works were created and publicly exhibited under modern gallery and museum settings. Each

exhibition, over the course of 2006-2012, sought to manifest the spatial relationships that I was

learning about through linguistic analysis combined with anthropological ethnographic

research in institutions and museums. In this regard the crossover between art and

anthropology becomes amplified. Issues of representation and perception within art and

anthropology were considered complimentary (Schneider & Wright, 2006). I exhibited in

anthropological spaces, fine art spaces, and general public spaces.

I have included this component into my research because ultimately it is my chosen medium of

expression but also because I was seeking to explore how language and culture intersect on

the level of conceptualization. Could I create artworks that reflected the conceptualization of

space as it was expressed in the Kwak'wala language?   If Kwakwaka'wakw language and

culture were closely aligned, then by studying and learning Kwak'wala spatial concepts I would

concurrently be developing a general understanding of the occupation of space. If the

concepts were substantial enough at the conceptual level the hypothesis is that I would be

able to apply them to alternative spaces in ways consistent with traditional Kwakwaka'wakw

thinking.

Over the course of my research on the Kwak'wala language I was actively engaged in making

art *both for traditional contexts and museum/gallery spaces*. Theoretically, the contemporary

creation of traditional, in-community works would through the process of generational imitation, most likely reflect the concepts of space found in the Kwak'wala language i.e. the conceptualization of the ceremonial space within a traditional bighouse will remain the same through the consistency of physical features.   In order to test the viability of spatial concepts beyond mere formal imitation, the testing ground then became contemporary gallery spaces. Without the grounding features of traditional community based cultural expression could the concepts of space as expressed in the Kwak'wala language be replicated under alternative mediums within alternative spaces?

Four major works in particular examined Kwakw<u>aka</u>'wakw concepts of space as expressed in the Kwak'wala language and attempted to express them under varied contemporary settings. In 2006, *Bak̓winat̓si – the Container for Souls"* was exhibited at the public gallery Artspeak in Gastown, Vancouver B.C.   In 2008, *The House of the Ghosts"* was exhibited at the Vancouver Art Gallery. In 2010, *W<u>a</u>nx'id –to hide, to be hidden* was exhibited at the U.B.C. Museum of Anthropology and in 2012, *The Land is a Person* was installed as a permanent outdoor artwork in North Vancouver, B.C. Each of these works engaged with concepts of Kwakw<u>aka</u>'wakw

space to various degrees. The visual works act as complements and integral exploratory

research documents to the written component of this thesis.

By including a non-literal component I am also challenging what might be considered the

'superiority' of writing over the acts of memory, repetition in action, ceremonialism, visuality

and physicality relied on by non-literal societies. I am actively challenging that "text and

language are the only paradigms for understanding and explanation, and that meaning can

only be discovered by translating or decoding 'texts' "(Schneider & Wright, 2006, p. 8) and

taking up the challenge that "anthropology's iconophobia and self-imposed restriction of visual

expression to text-based models needs to be overcome by a critical engagement with a range

of material and sensual practices in the contemporary arts" (p. 4). I am also providing a non-

linguistic method (art) to express underlying concepts that have been derived from linguistic

analysis. By utilizing a non-linguistic expression I am able to consider whether the concepts

of spatial relationship as expressed in Kwak'wala are connected strongly enough on the

conceptual level that they can be replicated in completely alternative contexts. The results of

these experiments in applying traditional spatial concepts derived from the Kwak'wala

language into contemporary spaces is presented in chapter 8.

2.4 Summary

The relationship to "form" and "meaning" is mapped to the Kwak'wala language, as "form", and

the Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw culture as "meaning". In order to explore this relationship I use linguistic

morphological analysis to derive the literal meanings of Kwak'wala spatial terminology.   I then

cross reference this with cultural meanings as expressed through architecture, social structure,

narrative, and art.   From this analysis emerged a structural analogical mapping of space from

the body, to the house, to the land. This then becomes a rich source of metaphorical

conceptualization about the Kwakwaka'wakw understanding of the world. As a compliment to

the written component of this thesis which details these finding I created a body of

contemporary artworks which sought to express these Kwak'wala derived spatial concepts

using non-linguistic expression.   The replacement of the formal expression (art for language),

is an exploration of whether the shared conceptual understructure can remain intact.   By

analogy, if Kwak'wala is replaced by English amongst the Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw how much of an

effect will this have on Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw culture (worldview)?   The next chapter presents the

u-[aʹw-] stem in Kwak'wala and its relationship to the body, the house and the land.

Chapter 3: The *u-[a'w-]* stem :
The Body=House=Land Metaphor in the Kwak'wala Language

Dream of Lakis

"I dreamed I had been called by a man to go with him to the upper side of our world, the

sky. He took my right hand. Then he went up holding my hand while we were going

straight up. Then we passed through the door in the middle of the upper side of our

world. The man showed me everything that was in the house there. Then he said to

me that we should go on. We went along. Then we came to the hole in the edge of

the world. Then he said "Through this (hole) pass the children when they are born,

when they come from the upper side of the world. Now pass through it and go home. I

am going to help you that it may not be hard for you to pass through," Then I went on,

but before I arrived I awoke. (Boas1925, pp.48-49)

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

In the Kwak'wala language spatial concepts can be expressed both through speech and the use

of metaphor, as well as through the linguistic structure of the words.   The spatial concepts

expressed in language forms can be correlated to alternative cultural expressions such as

public oratory, narratives, rituals, ceremonies and artistic creation. Blevins & Blevins (2009)

describe analogy as "a general cognitive process that transfers specific information or

knowledge from one instance or domain (the analogue, base or source) to another (the target)"

(p.2). This chapter deals with a specific Kwakwaka'wakw emphasis on spatial structural

analogy from the small-scale to large-scale domains, which introduces the micro/macro

expression of body=house=landscape metaphor through the use of the stem form *u-[a´w]* in the

Kwak'wala language. Chapter 4 deals with space in relationship to concepts of the "body/self"

Chapter 5 deals with space in relationship to concepts of the "house." Chapter 6 then deals with

space in relationship to concepts of the "land". Throughout all three topics the metaphorical

relationships between the body, the house, and the land are interwoven.

In Kwak'wala the notion of structural similarity/analogy between objects and the animate body is

manifest on an ever increasing scale from vessels such as boxes and bowls to canoes and

houses, and ultimately extends onto the landscape or the world. Under this system structural

similarity is applied as a primary component of spatial categorization. Structural similarity

becomes a linguistically "marked" characteristic that conceptually links one object to another.

By "marked" I mean that there is a distinct linguistic form that expresses this concept.   In

Kwak'wala, the animate body acts as the primary referential for physical objects in space.   On

the small-scale, a box can be conceived of as conceptually analogous to the body, having a

front and back, two sides, a top and a bottom.   By extension, on an expanding scale, the body

becomes analogous to the house, the house then becomes analogous to the *'na̱'mima*

"family/community group" and, ultimately on the grandest scale, the landscape (world).   Under

this premise the landscape is considered to share the characteristics of the body in the same

way that an object such as a box does.   Structural similarity is emphasized, while difference is

accorded to scale.   Due to the pervasiveness of this system reflected in the Kwak'wala

language what might be considered less animate in English is applied more literal animation in

Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw conceptualization.

Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw traditional art and architecture exhibit visual manifestation of this concept.

For example, a house can literally appear as a being whose doorway acts as a mouth that

consumes the people who enter it.   The following photo (Figure 3.1) was taken by Edward S.

Curtis in Gwayasda̱ms (Gilford Island) village in 1914. It depicts the house owned by Chief

Johnny Scow. The painted house-front depicts a sea-monster, a crest he acquired through his

first marriage with the 'Namgis woman. The doorway is positioned where the mouth opens. In

addition a pole depicting a whale, an inherited crest of the Kwikwasu'tinuxw, whom Johnny

Scow was head chief of, is positioned so that guests must enter through the mouth. Later this

house-front was replaced with the image of a raven inherited from his second marriage. In the

raven rendition of the house a massive raven's beak was carved over the doorway.

Figure 3.1 Curtis, Edward, S. (Photographer). 1914 *At Gwayasdams Village* [Photo],
Photograph courtesy of Northwestern University Library, *Edward S. Curtis's The North
American Indian,"* 2003 http://digital.library.northwestern.edu./curtis/

The visual representation of animate beings as houses is also found expressed in

Kwakw̱aka'wakw historical (mythical) narratives that describe houses as living beings. In the

following narrative not only is the house entrance described as having a mouth which swallows

its guests but the structural house-posts which hold the house up are capable of thought and

speech.

Then Ḵawadilik̠ala spoke: "That is done. Now brother, come to my house. It is

beyond this point." They paddled on, and when they had nearly reached

Ḵawadilik̠ala'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 Ḵawadilik̠ala. They went ashore and walked up to the

house. When they arrived at the front of the house, the mouth of the door of

Ḵawadilik̠ala's house opened. They jumped in all at the same time and it bit only a

corner of Tłutłatsa's blanket. Then the posts at the sides of the door spoke, and

the one on the right hand side said: "You made them come to your house,

Ḵawadilik̠ala;" and the post on the left hand side said: "Now spread a mat and give

your guests to eat, Chief." It is said that the crossbeams over the rear posts were

double-headed snakes (sisi'utł), which were constantly playing with their tongues.

(Boas 1895, p. 387)

While houses are the most obvious form of architectural/artistic analogical representations of

the body, on a smaller scale, storage boxes and food dishes can be depicted as the body of an

animate being whose cavity becomes a container. This feast dish (Figure 3.2) from Gwa'yi

(Kingcome Inlet) is carved in the image of a dzunukwa, a large, often sleepy and slow moving

supernatural creature. This being has been translated as "wild woman of the woods". The large

faces on either side are the lids to other feast dishes.

Figure 3.2 Albert Paull (Photographer). (1926). *Indian men with potlatch bowls, masks, talking sticks and button blankets at Kingcome Inlet*[6] [Photo], courtesy, Vancouver Public Library [VPL1706]

The landscape as well is animate and alive. Rivers and mountains are depicted as having

human characteristics and in some cases having been human at an earlier time. The following

story comes from the now extinct tribe of the Hoyalas, who used to occupy the northern tip of

Vancouver Island but were wiped out due to introduced disease and inter-tribal war. In it Chief

---

[6] Back Row (left to right): Bill Wilson, Sam Webber, Jim Hamdzid, Alec Willie, Dick Webber, Harry Jack, William Webber, Willie Dawson, Jim King, Albert Dawson, Samual James
Front Row: Thomas King, Anderson Williams, Alfred Coon (names courtesy Ryan Nicolson)

`K̲umgusta'els (Wealth-Coming-Up) is transformed along with his attendant into an island by the great transformer `K̲anik̲i'lakw.

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

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

Then, after a long time, `K̲anik̲i'lakw came.  Immediately the great one was invited by Chief Wealth-coming-up.  Then Lord `K̲anik̲i'lakw went to his house, and Wealth-coming-up spoke to `K̲anik̲i'lakw. He said to him, "O great Lord! I invite you that you may turn me into a rock, that I may stay in the water at this river, that I may be prayed to by later generations." Thus he said to him. Immediately the Lord called

him to go to the water, and immediately the great Wealth-coming-up went with his

attendant and behind them went `Kani<u>k</u>i'lakw. Then Wealth-coming-up and his

attendant acted in their own way a little upstream of the place where water is drawn.

Then the attendant lay down on his face, and the great Wealth-coming up sat on his

back. As soon as he had sat down, he was transformed into a rock. Then the tribe

of the past chief just prayed to `Kani<u>k</u>i'lakw, for they were really frightened by what

they had seen being done to their chief. That is the end. (Boas 1910, pp. 336-337)

The transformative power of the land is a pervasive concept in Kwakw<u>aka</u>'wakw thought. The

body can be transformed into a tree, a rock, a river, a mountain and vice versa. Houses are

built or appear on the land in supernatural ways. All is dynamic and animate. These are just a

few examples of the extension of structural characteristics of the body onto feast-dishes, houses

and the land.   The structural analogue is the body, and it becomes the prototype for utilitarian

objects, architecture and the landscape.

3.2 General concept of analogy in Kwakwaka'wakw belief systems

The Kwakwaka'wakw hold a philosophical belief in analogy in general. In relationship to ideas

of "cause and effect" the Kwakwaka'wakw believe that efforts in one domain of existence can

have an effect on other levels.   For example, in order to affect events in the world as a whole

one can through symbolic gesture imitate the desired outcome at a ritualistic level. This gesture

amplifies the probability through analogy that the desired outcome is achieved. Expressing this

belief system are the following examples:

The soil from a land otter slide which is used as a magic means for influencing

weather is called *nawalakw*.   It is said, "do not handle too roughly this supernatural

one (namely the soil), otherwise our weather will be too rough" (gwa'la ałalisaxwa

nawalakwex atłux ałalisants 'nalax R628.7). (Boas 1949, p. 613)

The soil from the land otter slide is thought to have supernatural properties analogous to nature.

If the soil is handled roughly the weather may become rough in correspondence. The belief

expresses the notion that physical gesture at the bodily level can influence outcomes in the

landscape. Through speech and concurrent actions we see the idea of microcosmic and

macrocosmic analogical expansion. Handling soil from the sea otter slide at the bodily level can have an effect on the world. The metaphor of the body as equivalent to the landscape takes on ritualistic significance. Further examples are;

Prayer to the Migratory Birds

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

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

the prayer as the analogical act of sickness leaving the body. The following example regarding

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

> A pregnant woman was cautioned against certain foods; if, for example, she should
>
> eat salmon eggs or chew gum, their stickiness might be imparted to the fetus,
>
> causing it to adhere to her womb and thus rendering her delivery difficult. By
>
> somewhat similar reasoning she refrained from making baskets lest the navel cord
>
> become twisted around the child's neck. To ensure an easy delivery she could carry
>
> out in pantomime an easy birth, taking four pebbles from the beach and letting them
>
> slip through her clothing onto the ground while expressing the hope, "May I be like
>
> these." Shortly before delivery it was thought she might further facilitate her delivery
>
> by opening her braids and drinking certain medicines. (Ford 1940, p. 30)

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

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

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

not yet come to understand the possible psychological and perhaps physical benefits to such

conceptualizations.   Ultimately, through a general acceptance and belief in analogy, which in

this case I shall interpret as "the connectedness of all things", the Kwakwa̱ka'wakw were

especially primed for a highly metaphorical conceptualization of the world.

3.3 Metaphor as a major cognitive process

The difference between metaphor and analogy is slight. An analogy aligns things as being

similar, one object or characteristic being mapped onto another; one 'thing' is like another 'thing'

drawing a connection between apparently different domains. A metaphor maps this similarity

more definitively; one 'thing' in one domain is another 'thing' in another domain. The difference

lies in focus and emphasis and can be subtle; a cognitive leap from comparison to definition.

We could use the visual analogy of drawing a dotted line between things that are alike or similar

to drawing a solid line or an equation sign between things.   Metaphor takes analogy one step

further.   In general linguistic thought, metaphor has traditionally been thought of as a

convention of language and expression. As such, metaphor has been considered as peripheral

or superfluous to conceptual systems.   Lakoff and Johnson (1980), have sought to dispute this

understanding since their initial publication on the subject, "Metaphors We Live By". Lakoff and

Johnson's views emerged from prior studies conducted by Ludwig Wittgenstein (1953) and

Eleanor Rosch (1973, 1975) on 'family resemblances' and 'categorization', as well as early

studies of how language reflects the conceptual systems of speakers explored by Edward Sapir

(1921) and Benjamin Whorf (1956), both contemporaries influenced by the work of Franz Boas.

Drawing from this base of theoretical exploration Lakoff and Johnson propose that rather than

being a simple convention of language, metaphor *is* our fundamental way of understanding our

world. "…metaphor is not just a matter of language, that is, of mere words. We shall argue that,

on the contrary, human *thought processes* are largely metaphorical. This is what we mean

when we say that the human conceptual system is metaphorically structured and defined." (p.6)

3.4 Metaphorical extensions of the body

Examples of metaphorical extension analogous to the body do exist in other languages.   In

English, terms such as 'mouth of the river',' foot of the mountain' and 'head of the family' are

examples but their application has cultural specificity and the resulting conceptualization of

relationships carries different interpretation than that which emerges from Kwak'wala. J.

Douglas Porteous (1986) calls this the body-landscape metaphor, and in relationship to Western

literature he writes:

The metaphorical use of body imagery in relation to landscape is fundamental in the

Western world. The renaissance metaphor that understood the earth to be modeled

on the human body has generally been regarded as a one-way relation, 'landscape

as body.' It finds its expression in generic landscape naming. In imaginative

literature at least, the reverse relation, 'body as landscape,' is of frequent

occurrence and continues well into the machine age. The body in question is

generally female, and the culmination of the 'body as landscape' metaphor is

pornotopia. (p.2)

Porteous considers that in Western societies the concept of feminine gender has been linked to

concepts of nature and that notions around taming and dominating the land are embedded in a

highly patriarchal culture that projects notions of the feminine onto the landscape. He also

concludes that the metaphor while certainly present in art and literature bears little scientific

value; the most highly valued aspect of Western culture along with technology. In contrast the

body-landscape metaphor as it emerges in Kwakwaka'wakw culture and language appears to

be gender neutral[7] and a primary mode of conceptualizing phenomenon in the world. The main

purpose of this chapter however, is not to compare English and Kwak'wala expressions

regarding the body-landscape metaphor but to analyze how this metaphor is manifest in

Kwakwaka'wakw thought through art and architecture. It was found that the "house" was an

integral intermediary between the body and the land so the metaphor, as interpreted for the

Kwakwaka'wakw, is put forward as the Body=House=Landscape metaphor. An analysis of

Kwak'wala linguistic forms in combination with Kwakwaka'wakw cultural practices exhibits a

particular, more pervasive and literal manifestation than English. The concept is emphasized

linguistically through an unusual morphemic stem *u-* [a'w-] through its classification function as

well as with suffixation.

3.5 The Kwak'wala stem *u- [a'w-]*

Kwak'wala is a polysynthetic language. Kwak'wala words are the combination of stems and

suffixes, sometimes several. The amount of suffixes in Kwak'wala is vast and the construction

of words without suffixation is small. It is the combination of stems and suffixes that create

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[7]I found little evidence of Kwakwaka'wakw gender conceptualization applied to the house or the landscape. I thought it interesting also to note that gender does not play a major role in the Kwak'wala pronoun system, as Kwak'wala pronouns are gender neutral. See Chapter 4 for pronoun descriptions.

complex meanings. A single word composed of several morphemes, each carrying distinct meaning, can convey the same amount of information that in English requires a sentence.

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

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[8] Phoneme: perceptually distinct sound sets in language used to create meaning and symbolized by letters in an orthography.

A stem designating an action, state, or noun which receives its specific meaning from

the attached suffix. Before consonantic suffixes it has the form *u-.* It is the opposite

of *way-,* the corresponding negative stem; for instance *u'sta* "to go right into water";

wi'sta "to fail to go into water" (pp. 27 & 32)

The *u-[a'w-]* form lacks the content or obvious "meaning" generally provided by stems in

Kwak'wala words.   For example, the verbal stem *yaxw-* meaning "to dance" by the attachment

of suffixes can form *yaxw-iwe'* "dancing headdress for forehead" or *yaxw-a* " land looms up in

distance (dances)" (p. 42). In acting in opposition to the negative *way-* stem we might consider

that the stem *u-[aw-]* partially takes on the meaning "to be". If one surveys the application of the

u-[a'w] stem across word glosses a pattern begins to emerge of spatial or locative character

The majority of *u-[a'w-]* verbal forms relate to some form of action through space, while the

majority of *u-[a'w-]* noun forms relate to spatial location upon a type of object; these types of

objects being limited to vessels such as bowls, boxes and canoes, animate bodies such as

human and animal, houses, communities and the landscape.   The noun forms can be said to

form categories and these categories act as analogies which emphasize some type of structural

similarity.   That the concept is significant enough to be encoded in the Kwak'wala language is

significant.

The most common form this morpheme takes is *u-* or alternatively *a'w-* It appears as *a'w-, aw-,*

and *o-* in Boas' transcriptions.   These are allomorphs of the same morpheme. Bauer (2004)

defines an allomorph as "one of the realisations of a morpheme" (p.15). For example, the plural

form suffix in English can have the varients "*cat-s*" or "*tax-es*". Both *–s* and *–es* mean the same

thing, "more than one", but take different forms based on the sound of the proceeding

consonants.   For the variant forms of the Kwak'wala *u-* the shifts in vowel quality are influenced

by phonological conditions brought on by the first phoneme of the attached suffix.   When the

introductory vowel form is *e-,* rather than being an allophone of *u-* I suspect that this is a

reduplicated form indicating plurality or distribution.

The following 13 sets are the classes of nouns formed with the stem *u-[a'w-]*. The types of

nouns that are associated together can be said to form a type of class or radial category within

Kwakwaka'wakw conceptualization. For example, in Set 1 it can be proposed that the "bow of a

canoe", "the front of a house" and a forehead are conceptually analogous.   I have arranged the

sets in order of their suffix initial consonants. While initially the words may appear to be

unrelated in their English translation it is my theory that the formal relationships of shared

phonology (letters) will reveal relationships specific to Kwakw<u>a</u>k<u>a</u>'wakw underlying conceptual

understructure that emerge as a radial category of associated meaning as illustrated in (Figure

3.3).

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

Set 1: *u – g[w]iw-*

(1)   u –giwe   "bow of canoe" (Boas 1948:30, Grubb 1977:216)

(2)   u –gwi –we'   "forehead" (Boas 1948:30, Grubb 1977:216)

(3)   u –gwi – wa -liɬ   "front of house (forehead of house)" (Grubb 1977:216)
                                         "forehead of house, [9]rear of house" (Boas 1948:30)

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[9] This apparent discrepancy can be explained by points of orientation.   When perceived from the exterior the front of the house that faces the water is considered the head   Once inside the house the interior shifts to the perspective of the person who has entered.   The rear of the house then becomes the 'head' of the house. (Boas 1909:415)
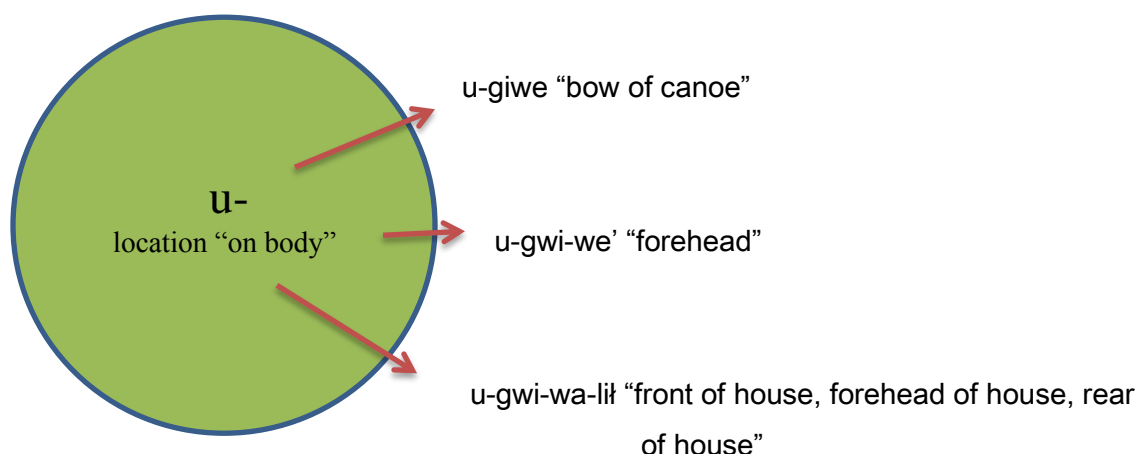
Figure 3.3 *Diagrammatic mapping of u-g[w]iw-*

Using the concept of *radial categories* each set could be configured as in (Figure 3.3). The *u-[a'w-]* stem provides the central meaning as a locative in conceptual relationship to the body as a prototype for spatial relationship. If one applies Boas' interpretation of the *u-[a'w-]* stem as "a stem designating an action, state or noun which receives its specific meaning from the attached suffix" (Boas 1948, p. 27) then this radial category can be interpreted as "a location on an object which is analogous to the forehead" i.e. *ugiwe* "the forehead of a canoe", *ugwiwalił* "the forehead of the house", the *ugwiwe'* "forehead of the human body." As all the example sets begin with the *u-[a'w-]* stem each of the sets are organized by the form of the initial consonants and their meanings compared as somehow analogous. In (Figure 3.4) one can ask the question how is "the body imagined as a long object" similar to the "inside of a vessel" or the "bank of a

river". One could hypothesize that the inside of the vessel is referring to the upper portion of the

interior of that vessel which is similar to the long thin embankment of a river bed which acts like

a vessel, or long container for water in the landscape. The peripheral aspect of position or

location on the body is referred to in the terms for toes and roof which are also peripheral in the

same way that the upper portion of the vessel is i.e."near the edge of the main body of the

river/riverbed". Also, one could say the river itself is imagined as a long body stretching across

the landscape upon which are spatially peripheral features such as "toes". "roof", or "lower end

of belly" or that an island is imagined as a long body with peripheral features such as the "east

end of an island" or what could be referred to as the "head of the island". Example (5) is a

place-name located on the narrow end of Cormorant Island. Hence it is literally named the

"head" of the body of Cormorant Island which is geographically shaped like a long kidney.

Set 2: *u - gw-*

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

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

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

(7)   u –gwamx –sidz-e'   "toes" (Boas 1948:31)

(8) u -gwas   "roof" (Boas 1948:30)

(9) u -gwayog -e'   "lower end of belly" (Boas 1948:30a)

u-gwayoge' "lower end of belly"

u-gwide' "body, a person or long object"

u-gw-
location: peripheral location on long object

u-gwitame' "east end of island, head of body of round thing"

u-gwage' "inside of vessel, bank of river"

u-gwamxsidze' "toes"

u-gwas "roof"
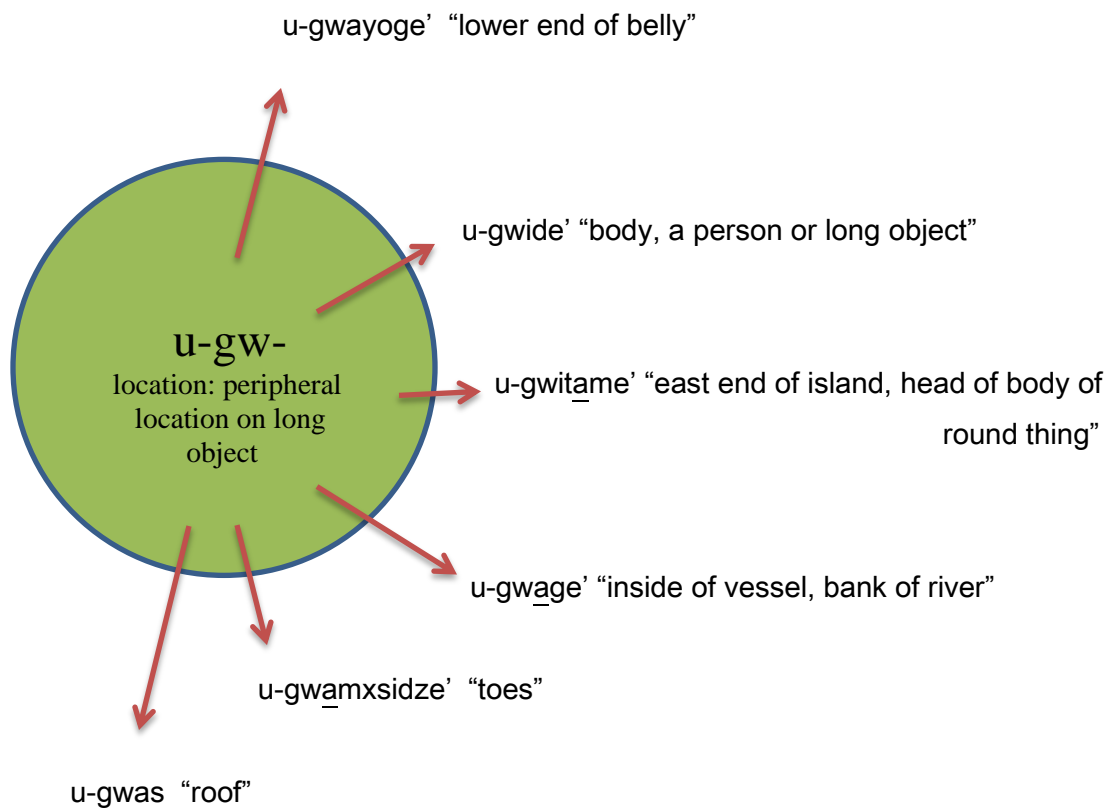
Figure 3.4 *Diagrammatic mapping of u-gw-*

Set 3: *u – xdł -*

(10)   u – xdłe'   "stern of canoe" (Boas 1947:323, Grubb 1977:216)

(11)   u – xdła'   "hind end" (Boas 1947:374)

(12)   u – xdła - x - sidz -e'   "heel" (Boas 1947:374, Grubb 1977:217)

(13)   u – xdłas - xa'y -i'   "lower jaw, chin" (Boas 1947:374, Grubb 1977:217)

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

(14)   u -'xsd -e'   "tail end" (Boas 1948:27)

(15)   u -'xaw -e   "neck" (Boas 1948:31)

(16)   u -'xwdł -e'   "butt end, base, back end of a point of land" (Boas 1948:31)

Set 4: *u – xw -*

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

(18)   u – xwsi –'ya'pi'   "shoulder" (Boas 1947:368, Grubb 1977:216)

(19)   u - xw -tł'   "top, summit" (Grubb 1977:216)

(20)   u – xwi -we'   "top of bank" (Boas 1947:365)

(21)   u -xws   "inside of canoe" (Boas 1948:31)

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

Set 5: *u – xw -*

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

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

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

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

Set 6: *u-ba-*

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

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

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

Set 7: *u - `kw [kw]-*

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

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

(32)   u - kwex' -e'   "knee" (Boas 1947:356, 1948:31, Grubb 1977:216)

(33)   u -`kwalg̱ -e'   "lap" (Boas 1948:31)

(34)   u -`kwe'yi   "top of pile, box" (Boas 1948:30a)

Set 8: *u' – nu-, u – n[u]-*

(35)   u -'nutɬ -a̱m'   "temples –side of face" (Boas 1947:323)

(36)   u - nu`tsax - sd -e'   "corner behind house" (Boas 1947:373)

(37)   u – nus -xsd -e'   "hip" (Boas 1947:373)

(38)   u –na̱y -i   "inside corner of house" (Boas 1948:30)

(39)   u –nig̱w -iɬ   "side of house" (Boas 1948:30)
                    "inside corner of house" (Grubb 1977:216)

(40)   u –na -'ya ('a'wana'ye) "side of round thing, tribe" (Boas 1948:30)

(41)   u –nuɬ - ge'   "hip" (Boas 1948:30)

Set 9: *u' – dz -*

(42)   u -'dza'ye   "flat place" (Boas 1948:27)

(43)   u -'dza'las   "place of flat layer [name]" (Boas 1948:30)

(44)   u -'dzoxsd -e'   "small of back" (Boas 1948:30)

(45) u –xsig -e'   "outside front of house" (Boas 1947:373,1948:31)

                          "in front of house" (Grubb 1977:216)

(46) u –sdłas<u>x</u> -a'   "chin" (Boas 1947:343)

(47) u -'dzaxs   "canoe box" (Boas 1948:30)

Set 10: *u - `tsa-*

(48) u -`tsa   "inside" (Boas 1948: 30)

(49) u -`tsa'la   "rocky bay" (Boas 1948: 30)

(50) u -`tsa<u>k</u>ała   "lengthwise" (Boas 1948:30)

(51) u -`tsa -lis   "bay" (Boas 1948:30)

(52) 'u -'tsa -lił   "place in house near door" (Boas 1948:30)

Set 11: *a – 'w[w]i -*

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

(53) aw –i<u>g</u> -e'   "back" (Boas 1947:326, 1948:27 Grubb 1977:167)

(54) aw –iga<u>ł</u> –sidz -e'   "instep" (Boas 1948:28)

(55) aw –iga<u>ł</u> -to'yi'   "eyelid, upper eyelid" (Boas 1948:28, Grubb 1977:167)

(56)   aw -i'nagw -is   "country, place, land, earth" (Boas 1948:27)

                                        "on ground" (Grubb 1977:167)

(57)   aw -i'nagw -ił   "floor of house" (Boas 1948:28)

                                          "in house" (Grubb 1977:167)

(58)   a'w -iłbe   "point of land" (Boas 1948:28)

                                          "point/nose" (Grubb 1977:167)

(59)   a'w –idłaxaw -e'   "inside of mouth" (Boas 1948:28)

Set 12: *a – 'w-*

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

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

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

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

(64)   a'w - iłbe'   "point of land" (Boas 1948:29)

                                          "nose"

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[10] This is a verb form rather than noun but is included as the ('aw-) appears to provide the connotation of the related land form.

Set 13: *a - 'wa [b, `p]-*

(65) a'w –abedz -e'   "calf of leg" (Boas 1948:28)

(66) a'w –aboyi'   "place underneath" (Boas 1948:27)

(67) a'w –abo -`tsa -xsd -e'   "thigh" (Boas 1948:27)

(68) a'w –abo -sx -a'   "lower side of bow of canoe" (Boas 1947:344)

(69) a'w -a`p -e'   "back of neck, behind" (Boas 1948:28)
                               "back of head including nape of neck" (Grubb 1977:159)

3.5.2 Independent forms

The following *u-[a'w-]* forms are considered independent only because when sorting the *u-[a'w-]*

forms according to the shared initial consonants of the initial attached suffix, these ones were

single examples. They are "independent" only in the sense that there were no other

phonologically similar examples to pair them up with. It does not indicate that other forms don't

exist only that they may not have been listed in Boas (1947).   What they do seem to share

however, is that the majority of them have more than one glossed meaning. For example (75)

can mean "bank of river" or "side of vessel".

(70) e'wa -g̲enisbe'   "nostrils" (Boas 1947:361)

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

Words with (vowel onset / glottal stop) that are directly translated across physical domains

(72)   u -'baɫ -`tsan -e'   "ends of sleeves, or branches" (Boas 1948:29)

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

(74)   a'w -am'y -e   "cheek, side of bow of canoe" (Boas 1948:28)

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

(76)   u -'gwage -lis   "bank of river, rim of basket" (Boas 1948:30)

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

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

(79)   a' – giw -e'   "bow of canoe, headpiece of cradle" (Boas 1948:37)

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

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

(82)   u -'gwaxto'yi   "top, upper end of river" (Boas 1948:30)

(83)   u –baɫ – tsan -e'   "branch of tree, foothills" (Boas 1947:372)

(84) u -'ya'ye   "middle, waist" (Boas 1948:27,28)

(85) u -`pe<u>k</u>   "chief, pole" (Boas 1948:29)

(86) u –gw<u>a</u>m -e'   "head end, head chief, front of mountain"
                                            (Boas 1948:31)

The list of words prefaced with the onset stem *u-[a'w-]* numbers approximately 136 in Boas

(1948) dictionary.   83 of these are nouns which form the 13 sets I have compiled above.   It is a

comprehensive list of words. They are organized based on the initial consonants of the first

suffix since the specific meaning of the word appears to be provided by the initial suffix and then

modified by following suffixes. The extended meaning of the spatial analogy of

Body=House=Land is provided by the *u-[a'w-]* stem. The majority of the 83 examples presented

here refer to the body, the house, or the landscape with the odd one referring to a container or

canoe.

3.5.3 Kwak'wala suffixes that reference the body

The *u-[a'w]* stem is not the only form that can identify parts of the body. An array of *suffixes*

denoting body parts exists in conjunction. These body part suffixes can be combined with

stems other than the *u-[a'w]* stem.   When this occurs, the more concrete meanings supplied by

the stems combine with the suffix to supply more specific information.   The following list I have

compiled from Boas (1947) list of suffixes.   It is most likely incomplete since the morphemes of

the suffixes attaching to the *u-[a'w-]* stem are not all accounted for.

Kwak'wala body-part suffixes (Boas 1947, pp. 229-232)

Boas lists 24 suffixes in his "Kwakiutl Grammar with a Glossary of the suffixes that reference

body parts. The examples are bracketed as they represent the internal structure of the word

and are not full words in and of themselves. For example (98) is represented as *(-xtła).* When

attached to a stem this could appear as *hanxtła* "on top of head [canoe is on top of waves or on

island" or *uxtła'ye* "head of *'naṁima*", or "top of head", referring to the name which represents a

position of social standing affiliated with the top of the head of the *'naṁima* body (Boas 1947, p.

374).

(87)   (-s'anał)   "main part of an object, body house, canoe"

(88)   (-'stu)   "round opening, eye"

(89)   (-kax)   "knee"

(90)   (-[`k]<u>a</u>n)   "body"

(91)   (-`k<u>alka</u>la)   "in front of body"

(92)   (-`ka'es)   "front outside of body, tree, mountain"

(93)   (-abedze')   "leg"

(94)   (-ato)   "ear"

(95)   (-es)   " inside of body"

(96)   (-ek[<u>a</u>la])   "back"

(97)   (-o'yo)   "middle"

(98)   (-xtła)   "on top of head"

(99)   (-xtło)   "top of tree, ends of branches, leaves, body hair"

(100)   (-<u>a</u>xsta)   "mouth, opening, to talk about"

(101)   (-xseka)   "in front of house, body, mountain"

(102)   (-`<u>a</u>m'ya)   "cheek"

(103)   (-`a)   "ear"

(104)   (-[g]iu)   "forehead"

(105)   (-[g]it)   "body as a whole"

(106)   (-[g]iu)   "bow of canoe"

(107)   (-[x]si'u)   "mouth of river"

(108)   (-[x]dza'mo)   "in front of body"

(109)   (-[g]am)   "face"

(110)   (-[x]seka)   "in front of house, of body"

3.5.3.1 Word examples using body part suffixes

The following is a small set of word examples where the stem plus the suffix(es) create more

specific meaning through their combination. I provide these examples to show that the specific

meaning supplied by the *u-[a'w-]* stem is missing the obvious definition supplied by other stems.

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

(112)   'adł - a`p -e'   "behind (the neck of) a mountain" (Boas 1947:314)
         behind neck

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

(114)   'wada' -ato   "to have cold ear" (Boas 1947:316)
         cold   ear

(115)   gwa'w - iłbe'   "raven nose" (Boas 1947:330)
         raven   nose

(116)   ga' – axst –ala   "to breakfast" (Boas 1947:305)
         early   mouth   continuous

(117)   'i'k – axst -a   "to speak nicely, good mouth" (Boas 1947:305)
         good   mouth   nom.

(118)   mag – axsta -'lił   "close to door of house" (Boas 1947:305)
         jerk?   mouth   of house

(119)   nak – axsta -'lis   "middle(entrance) of bay" (Boas 1947:305)
         middle   mouth   of beach (land)

(120)   'na'l - anxe'   " farthest upriver, also most valuable, noblest"
         [11] north   edge of flat or long thing   (Boas 1947:305)

(121)   xwakw - s'anał   "body of canoe" (Boas 1947:341)
          canoe   body of

(122)   baxw - s'anał   "trunk of body" (Boas 1947:341)
          human   body of

(123)   gukw - s'anał   "frame of house" (Boas 1947:341)
          house   body of

From the above sample set of stem + body part suffix forms we see it is possible to reference

body parts without using the *u-[a'w-]* stem form.   It can be deduced then that the *u-[a'w-]* does

not exist simply to express body parts but must perform a broader function that is connected to

the conceptualization of structural cross-over between the body and certain utilitarian vessels,

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[11] This stem is glossed as north in many translations, however the definition is an approximation applied to extend western European cardinal directions onto Kwak'wala cardinal directions.   They are not the same. The literal meaning is 'upriver'.

architecture, and the landscape, the categories which emerged when the nouns formed with *u-[a'w-]* were sorted into sets 1-13.

3.6 The stem *u-[a'w-]* in Kwakwaka'wakw geographical names

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

incorporate body part suffixes.   Combined, it is feasible to say that amongst Kwakw<u>aka</u>'wakw

geographical place names the association of the landscape with the animate body is a viable

component.

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

(124)   u –bał -`tsana   "hand (branches) at end" (Boas 1934:45)
            end   hand

(125)   u –sta -'lis   "beach at small opening" (Boas 1934:45)
            eye on beach

(126)   u –gwit –<u>am</u> -a'lis   "beach at head" (Boas 1934:46)
            body   face   on beach

(127)   u –gwi -wa'lis   "forehead beach" (Boas 1934:45)
            forehead   on beach

(128)   aw –axst –a -'lis   "beach at mouth (of inlet)" (Boas 1934:45)
            mouth   at beach

(129)   aw -a`pa   "nape of neck" (Boas 1934:44)
            neck

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

(131)   a'w -<u>am</u>'y -i'   "cheek, i.e. steep bluff" (Boas 1934:44)
            cheek

3.6.1 Body part suffixes used in geographical names (Boas 1934, pp. 15-17)

Many body part suffixes are used in Kwakwaka'wakw geographical names. The place-names

using the *u-[a'w-]* stem can be found on pp. 44-46 in Boas' (1934) "Geographical Names of the

Kwakiutl Indians."   Boas says:

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

Boas then lists 61 suffixes present within geographical names.   *Out of these 61 suffixes,*

approximately 40 reference the body.   About 20 of the 40 suffixes Boas lists, already appear

under section 4.3 "Kwak'wala suffixes that reference the body" which were compiled from Boas

(1947) "Kwakiutl Grammar with a Glossary of the Suffixes". The following suffixes are the ones

not listed in Boas (1947) but present in Boas (1934) pp. 14-18.   Together with the suffixes listed

under section 4.3, they total approximately forty-four suffixes used in place-names that directly

refer to the body. That approximately 66%, or 2 out of every 3, suffixes used in geographical

place-names has a reference to the body indicates that the conceptual connection between the

body and the landscape is a pervasive one.

(132)   (-`xsd)   "hind end"

(133)   (-`xdła)   "bottom end"

(134)   (-iłba)   "point, nose"

(135)   (-xta)   "on top"

(136)   (-nu)   "side"

(137)   (-nutłame')   "side of head, temples"

(138)   (-xtła)   "top of head"

(139)   (-'is)   "abdomen"

(140)   (-mano)   "head"

(141)   (-'xu')   "neck"

(142)   (-a`p)   "nape of neck"

(143)   (-`bo)   "chest"

(144) (-ege')   "back"

(145) (-`kin)   "body"

(146) (-git)   "body"

(147) (-ak̲)   "crotch"

(148) (-x`tsana)   "hand"

(149) (-x`pega)   "thigh"

(150) (-xsis)   "foot"

(151) (-sxa)   "tooth"

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

(152) da̲`k –is –a̲la   "grave on belly" (Boas 1934:16)
       grave abdomen in position

(153) dza̲'ɫaɫ -bo'yi   "lake on chest" (Boas 1934:17)
         lake   chest

(154) gwa -ge'   "back of downriver" (Boas 1934:17)
         downriver back

(155) 'ma̲xw –sidz –e`   "round thing (island) at foot" (Boas 1934:17)
         round thing foot

The analogy of the body onto small-scale objects such as boxes and bowls, medium scale

objects such as canoes and houses and ultimately the landscape is a conceptual theme that is

given expression through linguistic form in the Kwak'wala language.   The form *u-[a'w-]*, while it

may appear on first inspection to be an empty morpheme because it lacks the specific definition

of other stems, actually acts as a classifier grouping the noun suffixes it attaches to *as a*

category.   In Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw conceptualization this category is important enough to be

marked.   Adding to the significance of this concept in the Kwak'wala language is the large

group of suffixes that in describing locations in relationship to objects, either 'on', or 'in' or as 'a

part of' use body part references.   Ultimately, this concept is further manifest in geographic

names, of which, a significant portion use the idea of the body as a locative or descriptive.

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

Though landscape terminology and house-forms have been focused on up to now, there are

other structures that reflect the extension of the body as a primary spatial conceptualization that

uses analogy to imagine spatial relationships that are represented in the *u-[a'w-]* stem corpus.

It is the graphic and linguistic application of this concept onto canoes, bowls and boxes that

deepens the application beyond the large-scale of the house and the landscape to include the

small-scale.

3.7.1 Canoes

Canoes, in particular, carry linguistic terminology descriptive of the body.   Like, houses, they

also carry names.   They are conceptualized as having a front (bow) and a rear (stern).   When

setting about to build a canoe the canoe builder would send out a series of prayers in

recognition that the tree from which the canoe was to be created from was a living being.   While

he falls the tree he prays, "Do not fall too heavily, else you, great magician, will be broken."

(Boas 1909, p. 344). (Figure 3.5) is a diagram of a canoe and the associated names for its

parts.   Of particular interest are numbers 8, 10, 18, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 33, which are

prefaced by the *u-[aʹw-]* stem.

Figure 3.5 Canoe diagram re-drawn from Boas 1909, (p.349)

(156) – 8   uxdła'e'   "stern" (Boas 1909:349)

(157) -10   ustawiłaxse'   "bailing hole, eye inside of canoe" (Boas 1909:349)

(158) -18   uxdła'atawe'   "nape of neck" (Boas 1909:349)

(159) -22   ugiwe'   "bow" (Boas 1909:349)

(160) -23   a'wabusxa'e'   "under chin" (Boas 1909:349)

(161) -24   uxawe'   "neck" (Boas 1909:349)

(162) -27   uxdłatłalasa `kigame'   "rear end of water cutter" (Boas 1909:349)

(163) -28   a'wanutłame'   "cheek" (Boas 1909:349)

(164) -29   a'wabo'e   "bottom" (Boas 1909:349)

(165) -33   a'wabo`tłaxdłe'   "under side of stern" (Boas 1909:349)

(166) -35   unutłaxdłe'   "side of stern" (Boas 1909:349)

(167) -37   unutḻama'e   "cheek" (Boas 1909:349)

(168) -40   `ka̱dabosxa'e'   "extension under chin" (Boas 1909:349)

(169) -41   u`tsaɫgiwe'   "inside of bow" (Boas 1909:349)

The paintings on canoes imply animation. The canoe is considered a living thing rendered from

a living tree.   Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw mythology is filled with references to canoes that can move on

their own through supernatural means. In (Figure 3.6) the canoe is painted with one side of the

sisi'utɫ "the double headed sea serpent".

>   Then Only-One-On-Beach came in. Then he spoke, and said, "Oh brother! Now
>
>   come and look at your canoe. I will advise you what to do with the canoe." Then
>
>   Head-Winter-Dancer went out of the house of Only-One-On-The-Beach. As soon as
>
>   he had gone out, he saw at both ends the large double headed serpents putting out
>
>   their tongues, and in the middle there was the head of a man. Then they walked
>
>   down to the beach, to where the Paddleside-Serpent-Canoe was. The Only-One-
>
>   On-Beach got into it, and he called Head-Winter-Dancer to go aboard also. Then he
>
>   said, "Oh brother! Now listen to how I speak to the death bringing Paddleside-

Serpent-Canoe, for that is its name." Then he said, "Go, now paddle!" Then the

body of the canoe said "Wo!" as though many men were crying that way.   Then all

the paddles paddled, and it started at once, really going fast, for indeed it was not a

common thing. (Boas, 1902, p. 202)

Figure 3.6 Curtis, Edward, S. (Photographer). 1915 *Crossing the Strait* [Photo],
Photograph courtesy of Northwestern University Library, *Edward S. Curtis's The North
American Indian,"* 2003 http://digital.library.northwestern.edu./curtis/

3.7.2 Bowls & feast dishes

Bowls and *ɬukwala* "dishes" were used in the ceremonial distribution of food.   These bowls

often were elaborate and usually depicted an animate being whose body cavity became the

container for food.   Food was presented in the larger dishes and distributed in the smaller

dishes to small groups of people to eat from.   Figure 3.7 is a staged photo by Edward Curtis

that depicts a giant feast dish in the form of a *sisi'utɬ* "double headed serpent" in the foreground.

Figure 3.7 Curtis, Edward, S. (Photographer). 1914 *A Nakoaktok Mawihɬ* [Photo],
Photograph courtesy of Northwestern University Library, *Edward S. Curtis's The North
American Indian,"* 2003 http://digital.library.northwestern.edu./curtis/

Feast dishes were part of the inherited rights of the *gigami'* "head chief" of a *'na'mima* "house

group". A house was said to carry the rights to four feast dishes. The status of these types of

dishes is made clear in an account of a chief who had the rights to four feast dishes and had

them carved into a *kikw* "totem pole". It was said that the second figure from the bottom was

placed upside-down because the dish was in the back of the man while all the others were in

the bellies (Boas 1911, p. 379) Ordinary everyday bowls and dishes are less elaborate. It is

difficult to ascertain whether differences existed in the linguistic application of components from

feast dishes to everyday dishes as less information has been documented than in the case of

houses and canoes.[12] Two examples of the u-[a'w-] stem related to bowls/dishes are

uxwsgiwe' "short end of dish" "shoulder?, nom."(Boas 1948:31) and *u'gwage'* "bank of river,

side of vessel" (Boas 1947:352). Figure 3.8 shows another example of a feast dish in the form

of a reclined Dzunukwa (Wild Woman of the Woods) at a potlatch in Alert Bay taken in the early

part of the 1900s. Note the massive dimensions of these dishes. Not all dishes were this

large but many were meant to be impressive and monumental in their presentation as a positive

reflection on the prestige of the host.

---

[12] This is not to say that the information does not exist but rather that I have yet to come across it so far in my review of materials.

Figure 3.8 unidentified (Photographer) *Dzunukwa feast dish in Alert Bay* [Photo] c. 1900-1910.
Photo courtesy of Royal British Columbia Museum [PN 1072].

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

3.7.3 Boxes/Chests

The u-[a'w-] stem has been found applied to box/chest terminology. Two example are *u'kwe'i*

"top of pile, box" (Boas 1948:30a) and *u'dzaxs* "canoe box" (Boas 1948:30). Boas'

documentation of canoe terminology that use of the u-[a'w-] stem is substantial I suspect this is

because he specifically asked George Hunt to elicit these terms for him. It is unfortunate that

the terminology of bowls, dishes, boxes and chests were not documented as comprehensively

since I suspect more terms using the u-[a'w-] stem would be have been recorded.   This was

such specialized terminology that it would be difficult to elicit from contemporary speakers

today.

The *xatsam, galdas* or *k̓awat'si* "boxes and chests" used by the Kwakwaka'wakw as well as the

tribes to the north were elaborate and animate.   The structure of the formal images applied to

the outer surfaces of Kwakwaka'wakw boxes have been influenced by the north.   On chests a

variance on a generalized image of a being with a broad face and eyes forms the central

composition on the front.   In the corners appear joints and ears, head feathers, hands, and

stylistic conventions fill the rest of the space.   Smaller boxes had more flexible regulations for

imagery and ranged from a similar generalized facial composition to pure abstraction of formal

elements.   The similarity to northern house-fronts is demonstrated by comparison of the chests

(Figure 3.9) with the version of John Scow's northern style Raven House in (Figure 3.1).

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

Carved bentwood chests were the specialty of the tribes north of the southern Kwakwaka'wakw,

the Haida particularly were skilled at making these objects and they were traded for up and

down the coast.   Figure 3.10 depicts a Kwakwaka'wakw interpretation from Kingcome Inlet.

Figure 3.10 Kyla Bailey (Photographer) *Bentwood Box from Kingcome Inlet Carved by Tom Patch Wamiss* . Photo courtesy of the UBC Museum of Anthropology [A5307].

Figure 3.11 and Figure 3.12 depict a smaller type of bentwood box. Note the frontal animate face which often decorated these boxes. An intriguing movement in the latter part of the 19th century saw the development of an abstract style which broke away from this more standard depiction. (McLennan and Duffek, 2000)

Figure 3.11 and Figure 3.12 Derek Tan (Photographer) *Bentwood Box.* Photo courtesy The UBC Museum of Anthropology [1768/89]

Boxes and chests are containers for all types of articles.   Of primary consideration, are the

długwe "treasures" affiliated with ceremonial practice.   This function in particular is extended as

a metaphor.   The 'box' of a family group chief is said to hold all of the songs, dances and

positions of the 'house'.   In Walens (1977) study of Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw metaphor he considers

the 'box' to be the primary metaphor in cultural conceptualization.

The structural characteristics of boxes as containers – with walls, an internal space,

decoration on the walls and lids – repeat again and again throughout all Kwakiutl

life.   Houses, bodies, costumes and masks, world levels, lineages, numayms and

villages, animal species, names and souls, months and days, cradleboards and

sites, dishes, storage containers, canoes, fishing weirs, and many other items of

Kwakiutl culture are visualized and interpreted as though they were boxes or parts

of boxes.   Different items can be so similarly boxlike as to seem merely variations

on a single visual template (Walens p. 51)

I believe the observations made by Walens to be mostly accurate except that linguistic analysis

reveals that the emphasis lies more with the body and that the box itself is simply an extension

of this.   This would appear to be verified by the combined linguistic applications of the *u-[a'w-]*

morpheme and the large variety of suffixes that are extensions of the animate body.   It is *the*

body which is extended to the house, which is then extended to the landscape that serves as

the prototype for the primary metaphor in Kwakwaka'wakw cosmology.

3.8 Summary

This chapter has examined one component of spatial conceptualization in the Kwak'wala

language that appears to emphasize the extension of the animate body onto both small-scale

and large-scale objects.   This concept in the Kwak'wala language is marked by the stem

morpheme *u-[a'w-]* that, when attached to suffixes, renders words that can be categorized as

bearing structural similarity.   These words relate objects such as bowls, boxes, canoes, houses

and the landscape to the animate body.   Facilitators of further extension are a vast array of

suffixes that are directly related to the body and can be applied to stems other than the *u-[a'w-]*

stem.   Combined, these forms in the Kwak'wala language create a large enough corpus to

consider the concept of spatial extension of the animate body as a prototype for architecture

and the landscape as a pervasive component of Kwakwaka'wakw thought.   In addition to the

linguistic applications are architectural and artistic expressions that express this notion visually.

Canoes, bowls and boxes also visually manifest this concept in their formal compositions and

the naming of their parts.   Ultimately, on the grandest scale this concept is prevalent in the

naming of the landscape. The u-[a'w-] stem form in the Kwak'wala language reflects the

Body=House=Land/World metaphor which emerges as a major concept in Kwakwaka'wakw

culture. In Kwakwaka'wakw conceptualization it can be said "the house *is* a body" and "the land

is a body". Conceptualized this way both houses and the landscape are animate, alive and can

be characterized in humanistic ways. Figure 3.13 shows the relationships of the

Body=House=Land/World metaphor.

The House ⟷ The Body *u-[a'w-] stem* ⟷ The Land
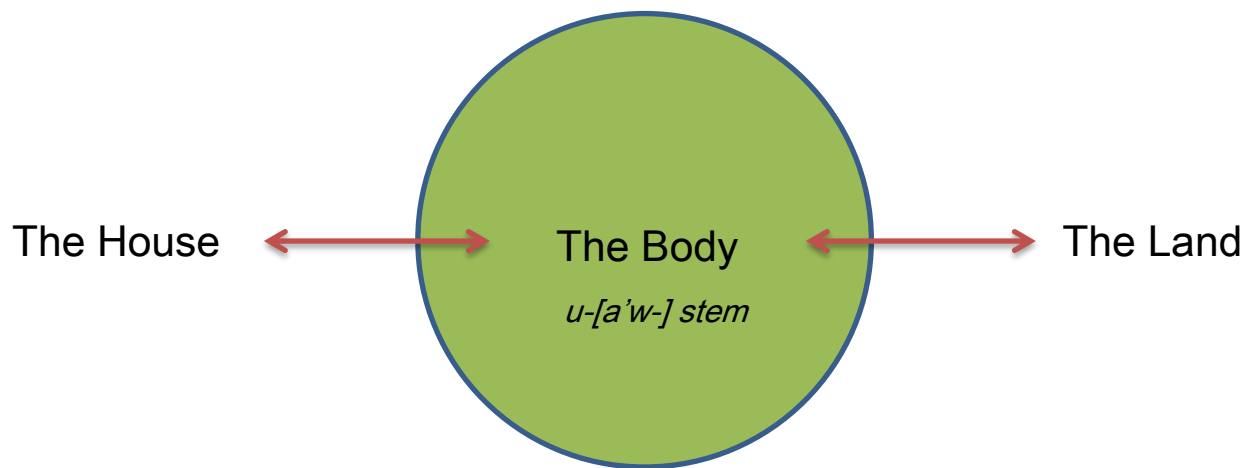
Figure 3.13 *Relationship of the u-[a'w-] stem to the body, the house, and the land*

The u-[a'w-] stem acts as a classifier between the body, the house and the land and is encoded

linguistically in the Kwak'wala language.   The form represents a significant concept which is

reflected in Kwakwaka'wakw culture and can be taken as an indication that in this case,

language and culture are intrinsically linked on the conceptual level. The next chapter will

present spatial terminology and concepts in relationship most closely associated with the body.

Chapter 4: The Body as Point of Origin / the Beginning

"Haha hanani! Now I come to think of my forefathers and of my great-grandfathers. Now

I will tell the story of my house when we were chiefs in the beginning of this our world"

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

4.1 Kwak'wala Pronouns

This chapter outlines the Kwakwaka'wakw spatial relationship to the body as expressed in the

Kwak'wala language. The body is associated with the self and exists in spatial relationship with

others. In English, terms like *I, you, he, she,* and *it* indicate relationships to the speaker (or

self). *I* is the central expression closest to the body; *you* is referring to the person spoken to

which is outside of the self, *he, she,* and *it* are one step further removed. These terms are called

personal pronouns. Demonstrative pronouns in English like *this* and *that* also express notions

of spatial distance from the body/self as a central orientation.

I begin by looking at Kwak'wala suffixes which express the pronouns *I, you, he, she, it* and their

relationships within space, and then engage with the demonstrative forms *ga-, yu-, he-* and their

extended application in constructing space both literal and imaginative. In Kwak'wala, pronouns

are marked by suffixes which attach to verbal stems (an action word). Out of the pronouns

expressed in Kwak'wala speech the most spatially marked is *he/she/it* which is divided into

two forms: *-uxw* "he/she/it [around]" and *–i* "he/she/it [further away/away]"   Figure 4.1

represents the Kwak'wala pronouns *–an* "I", -as *"you"*, -uxw "*he/she/it* "[around] and *–i*

"he/she/it" [further away/away] as a gradual movement away from the speaker who is

considered central.
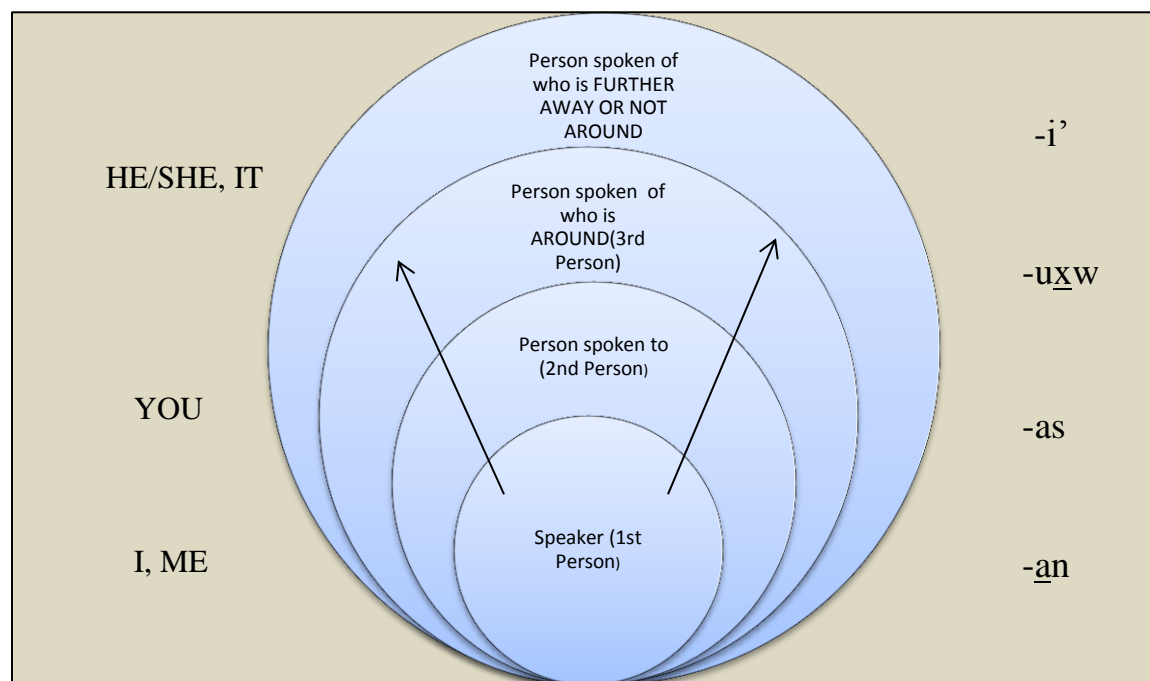
Figure 4.1. *Personal pronouns: I, you, us (2)[you and me], he/she/it (near), he/she/it (away)*

Pronouns are what identify the self and others in relationship to one another. In order to

consider the concept of the personal pronoun as a spatial one consider the idea of "I", or

"myself" as the central subject.   Kwak'wala uses a suffix which attaches to a stem in order to

identify the subject (person being talked about). Similar to English there exists an "I" identifier,

called first person and a "you" identifier, called second person.   Third person is where English

and Kwak'wala diverge. Where English utilises "he/she/it" as identifying the third person,

Kwak'wala does not divide by gender but by distance/proximity. This has in some Kwak'wala

texts been translated as a "here/absent", "visible/invisible" differentiation (U'mista, 1981; Boas,

1947).

Boas describes 1st person as "the speaker", the 2nd person as "the person or persons

addressed" and the 3rd person as "person or persons spoken of." (p.251) Within these

definitions there is the implicit relationship of space with "I" as the speaker being central, "you"

as spoken to as nearest in relationship and "he/she/it" being one step removed. Kwak'wala

divides an ambiguous 3rd person into a more explicit spatial relationship. 3rd person becomes,

3rd person (present/around) and 3rd person (away/absent).   Figure 4.2 compares English and

Kwak'wala pronouns *I, you, he/she/it* in relationship to degrees of space.

(179)   Suffix   Translation   Example (stem+suffix)

   -<u>an</u>   "I" (First Person)   d<u>a</u>nx<u>a</u>l -**<u>an</u>**   I sing.

                                                              verb (sing) + PN (I, me)

   -as   "you" (Second Person)   d<u>a</u>nx<u>a</u>l -**as**   You sing.

                                                              verb (sing) + PN (you)

   -u<u>x</u>w [13]   "he/she/it" **present** (3rd Person)   d<u>a</u>nx<u>a</u>l -**u<u>x</u>w**   He/She is singing.

                                                              verb (sing) + PN (he/she,it) [around]

   -i' [14]   "he/she/it" **absent** (3rd Person)   d<u>a</u>nx<u>a</u>l -**i'**   He/She is singing.

                                                              verb (sing) + PN (he/she, it) [away]

"I" (1st person)
"you" (2nd person)
"he/she/it" (3rd person)

-an (I)
-as (you)
-uxw (he/she/it)[here]
-i' (he/she/it) [absent]
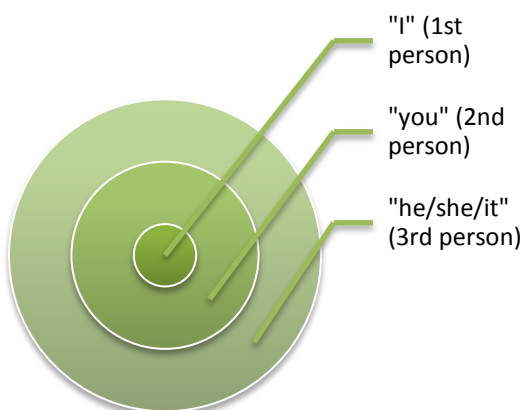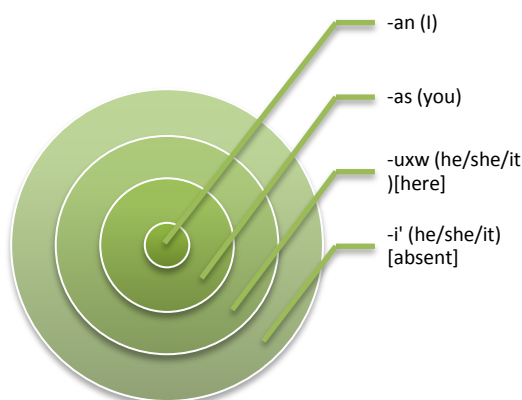
English   Kwak'wala

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

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[13] -u<u>x</u>w is the underlying form of this suffix. Sometimes due to phonological reasons the "w" is eroded and the surface form becomes –u<u>x</u>[w].

[14] This suffix appears as both –i and as –i' (with a glottal stop). Boas 1947:260 indicates that the differentiation was based on the concept of visibility –i (the subject was away but still visible) and invisibility –i' (the subject is invisible.) This delineation is not so clearly marked in modern Kwak'wala speech and in the U'mista texts the –i or –i' differentiation appears indiscriminate (U'mista, 1981, Book 7) . It may be that further research is required to define the underlying reason for this.

In English the single 3ʳᵈ person is less specific than the divided 3ʳᵈ person in Kwak'wala which

marks a type of spatial relationship between subjects. This marking is extended into other

domains where the concepts of presence and absence are further delineated. For example, a

residual effect appears to exist in narrative where names ending with the consonant "d" are

marked with the –*i'* (absent) suffix denoting the subject which while being discussed is considered

absent.

(172)   He'mis lagiɫts 'nix ḱiḱis'sonux̱ws dɫa'wa dɫidɫagam. La'am ɫinamanami

            `Tat'andzid-**i'** dɫu' Siwid-**i'** la dɫidɫagams.

            Therefore it is said they have crests, and the names

            `Tat'andzid and Paddled-to which were taken away.

            (Boas 1910, pp. 82-83)

Kwak'wala divides the pronoun "we" into an inclusive and exclusive form. Figure 4.3 represents

the inclusive form –*an's* "I and you". While Figure 4.4 represents the exclusive form –*anu'x̱w* "I

and he/she/it, but not you".

(a) *-an's*   Example: *danxalan's*   " We (I and you) sing".
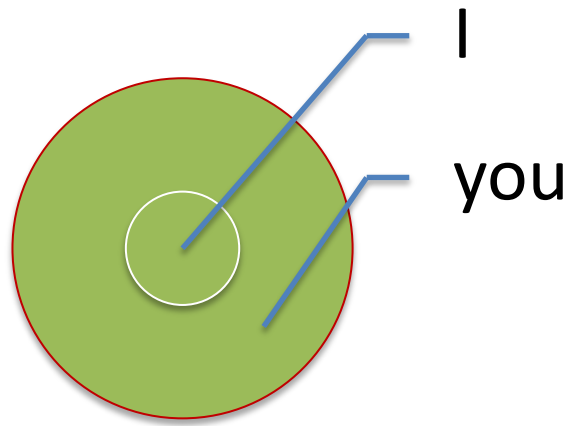
Figure 4.3 *We –inclusive*

The pronouns *–an* "I" and *–as* "you" in combination form *–an's* "we" [I and you]

b) *-anu'xw*   Example: *danxal-anu'xw*   "we (us but not you) sing."

-an "I "

-an's "we"
 (I and you)
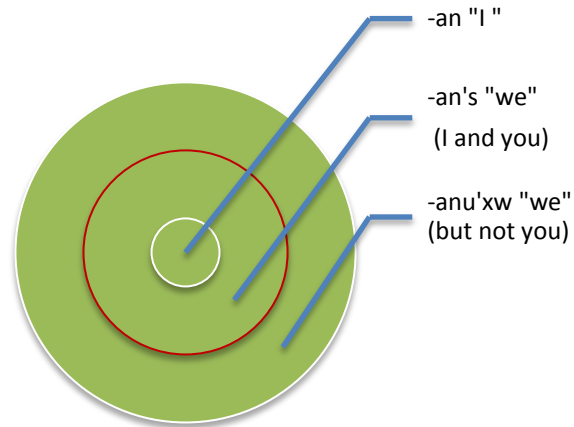
-anu'xw "we"
(but not you)

Figure 4.4 *Diagram of -an "I", an's "we" inclusive and –anu'xw "we" exclusive*

In the exclusive *–anu'xw* , excluding person being addressed "we, I and he/she/it but not you"

it appears that the pronouns *–an* "I" and *–uxw* "he/she/it [present] join to form *–anu'xw* .

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

(174)   -axda'xw**as**   "you all"

                    -axda'xw**uxw**   "they" (present)

                    -axda'xw**i'**   "they" (absent)

To form plurals *–axda'xw-* is suffixed by the pronouns *–as* "you", *-uxw* "he/she/it (present) and *–i'*

"he/she/it (absent). Boas (1947) gives a much more comprehensive and elaborate breakdown

of the spatial relationships between "speaker","spoken to" and "spoken of" in the Kwak'wala

language with more specific degrees of spatial location of whom or what is being referred to. In

a 1932 paper on Kwak'wala language change he observes:

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

The definite issue of visibility and invisibility has proven problematic in modern language

acquisition as the specificity of the prior system has changed. Visibility and presence and

absence are not necessarily the same thing, though there is of course cross-over as to whether

a subject/object is present and therefore visible or absent and therefore invisible. For my

purposes here the division of visible/invisible is dropped for the preferred and more accurate

though generalized "present/nearby" and "absent/away" definitions which are more in line with

contemporary speech. There still exists some nuanced variation in the "absent/away" category

as it can also encompass the concept "further away while still in the vicinity".

Kwak'wala has a complex and sophisticated demonstrative pronoun system. These pronouns

are sometimes called determiners. Determiners are words like "the, this and that", in the English

language. They help "determine" what or who is being talked about. The modern manifestation

of this system in Kwak'wala has changed somewhat from the system that Boas was analyzing at

the beginning of the last century. For my purposes, I will address the spatial relationships as

they are defined today and stick to broad outlines. I will also focus only on the certain features

of this system which are specific to my analysis of spatial relationship in the context of this

thesis.

The Kwak'wala system is more explicit in defining spatial relationships between speaker,

subject and object than English with three required delineations of speaker to subject/object in

space; "right here", "around" and "further away/removed". Such definition makes sense for an

oral culture heavily reliant on the spoken word for accurate transmission of information. It also

makes sense that with the growing influence of English, which lacks such specificity in spatial

relationship, that the details of this sophisticated system would prove difficult for second

language acquisition of Kwak'wala. The main reason I mention this here is to give at least an

impression of the internal visual mapping of events that would occur within the imagination

given such specificity.

Additional research into determiners was conducted with linguist Adam Werle and a more

comprehensive analysis of this topic was compiled into a 2009 unpublished report, *An*

Investigation of Modern Kwak'wala determiner systems.   Our research led us to believe that the

underlying concepts behind the divided third person is one of vicinity, a presence and absence

which we translated as "around" or "not around" which is still retained in the contemporary

Kwak'wala third person. The definition is a spatial one. "He/she or it" is referred to as being

within the vicinity of the discussion or outside of it, either *–uxw* "around" or *–i′* "not around".

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

In a more direct engagement with spatial relationship of subject/object, Kwak'wala employs a

system of referential word initial verbal stems that indicate spatial relationship regarding the 3rd

person "this" or "that", "who" or "what" a sentence is about. They are, in order of degree of

distance, *ga-, yu-,* and *he-. Ga-*[15] can be loosely translated as meaning "this, in close physical

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[15] Sometimes pronounced ge-

proximity, or right here". *Yu-* can be translated as "that", in proximate distance (around), and

he- can be translated as "that", which is away from here (not around).

(175)   ga-   "this"   gada "this one"   ga'sta "these" (all around) [Boas 1948:252]

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

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

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

(176)   ga-   "this"   (near 1st Person)

        ya- (yu-)   "this" (near 2nd person)

        he-   (1) "that, (near 3rd person)

While taking into account the above definitions identified by Boas, the actual application of these

spatial relationships are somewhat more fluid and the concept of "around" or "not around" *can*

expand and contract its boundary according to context. In other words, what is considered to be

"around" or "not around" expands or contracts according to what is being talked about. The

following sentences give an idea of the proximal relationships of *ga-, yu-,* and *he-.* The stem *ga-* is

often accompanied by the nominal proceeding word *gada* which is formed by the spatial referent *ga-*

+ the definitive or specific *–da* which can be translated as loosely as "the." The following examples

were elicited from and cross referenced with two contemporary Kwak'wala speakers.

(177)   **Ge**'m<u>a</u>n ump **ga**da.   "This is my father. [right here, beside the speaker](05/11/12)

      this   my   father here specific

(178)   **Yu**'m<u>a</u>n ump<u>uxw</u>da.   "This is my father. [near person being spoken to](05/11/12)

      this my father-3rd person (near) specific

(179)   **He**'m<u>a</u>n ump**i**da.   "That is my father." [further away but still visible](05/11/12)

      that my   father 3rd person (not near) specific

(180)   **He**'m<u>a</u>n ump**i** Alex.   "Alex is my father." [away from the conversation](05/11/12)

      that   my   father 3rd person (not around) (name).

The next set of examples are taken from "Kwak'walala ga<u>xa</u>n: Speak Kwak'wala to me"

compiled by the Nunwakola Cultural Society (2006) and from the U'mista Learning Kwak'wala

Series (1981).

(181)   **Ge**'<u>a</u>ms ump **ga**da.   "This is your dad." [right here] (Nunwakola, 2006)

      this   your   father here/specific

(182) **Ge**'m<u>a</u>n x<u>a</u>ndzas **ga**da.   "This is my nose. (Nunwakola, 2006)

       this   my   nose   here/specific

(183) **Yu**'mas wak̓w<u>ux</u>da[16]?   "Is this your brother/sister? [close by]

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

(184) **Yu**'m<u>a</u>n <u>aba</u>mp**ux**.   "This is my mother" [talking about someone close by]

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

(185) **He**'m<u>a</u>n <u>aba</u>mp**i**.   "That is my mother" [talking about someone further away]

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

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

       that is your   brother/sister specific

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

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[16] Opposite sex sibling
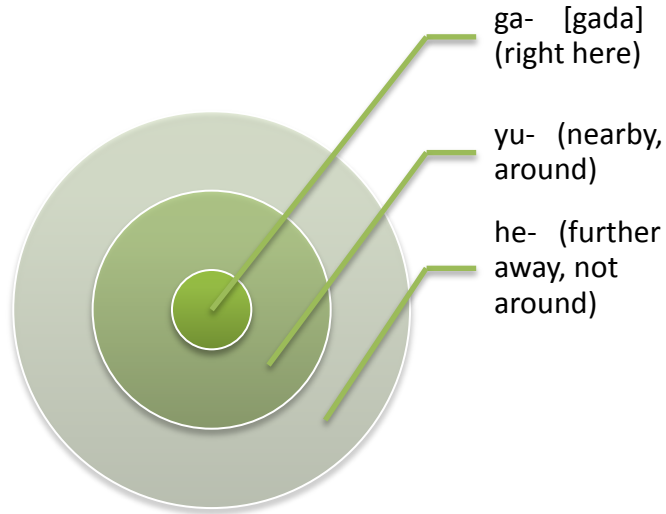
Figure 4.5 *ga-, yu-, and he-*

4.3 *Ga-* "right here", closest degree of distance to self

ga- referring to someone/something "in closest proximity to the point of origin"[17]

(187) Gila's la<u>x</u> **ga**da.   "Come over here. (www.firstvoices.com)
come you to here/specific

(188) **Ge**'m<u>a</u>n ḵas<u>a</u>ne' **ga**da.   "This is my shirt." (Nunwakola 2006)
this is my   shirt   here/specific

(189) **Ge**'m<u>a</u>n 'n<u>a</u>muk̲w **ga**da.   "This is my friend." (23/10/12)
this is my   friend   here/specific

---

[17] Sometimes in pronunciation the (ga-) can shift phonologically to (ge-). There is no shift in meaning however.

(190)   Ga<u>da</u>n le <u>ga</u>da kwaḷasix.   "I am in the bedroom." (Nunwakola, 2006)

        this I am go/at here/specific bedroom

(191)   Ge'm<u>an</u> la<u>x</u>ga gukwas Tom.   "I am at Tom's house." (23/10/12)

        this I am   at/here   house his Tom

When we consider the above examples we see that the location of the speaker/subject in relationship to space is always "nearby" or "close". The shirt referred to is "right here". Your father referred to is "right here". I am located "right here". I "right here" is located in the bedroom. I am "in" Tom's house.   This spatial closeness is not fixed however but can be contextual as exemplified in the following sentence which describes the geography in relationship to "right here".   *Ga-* is translated as proximate to the body regardless of how large the stage or context of the setting is. This is an integral concept to this entire chapter; the delineation of spatial relationship is contextual not fixed. The relationship of what is considered "near" and "away from" while anchored to the body are understood in relationship to the stage or context of the situation. This has relativity to broader cultural understandings which will be addressed further on.

(192)   Gadiganu'xw atḷiga'   "This is what is inland from us." (Boas 1947:258)

        this is near us   inland here

The relation of proximity regarding the subject is defined by "nearby, close, in, or on" is also

evident in some other related stems.

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

The stems, *gay-* "to be somewhere", *gax-* "to come", and *gay(a)-, gax'id* "to move from a certain

place, to come from" have a relationship both formally and conceptually to the base form *ga-.* The

basic premise is spatial orientation of the centre to the subject and these words begin to give a

general notion of how this relationship is conceived of and then expressed in the language.   They

can be said to form a conceptual paradigm.

gay- "to be somewhere" (Boas 1948, p. 246)

The definition refers to something that is located in a place. It could be translated as somewhat

equivalent to the English spatial locatives "in" or "on". If something is "on" or "in" something else

the relationship is one of closeness. The base form *gay-* can change form based on the

phonological relationship of the attached suffix. In the following examples *gay-* is the base form

that shifts to *gi-,* and *ga'-.*

(193) gix'id   "to put down"[18]

(194) ga'es   "to stay in an indian village (=on beach)"

(195) ga'ił   "to be on floor"

(196) ga'etłala   "to be going in"

(197) ga'yas   "place where something is"

gax- "to come". (Boas 1948, p. 254)

Another related stem which refers to the proximate relationship of things in combination with

movement is *gax-* "to come". While referring to movement the movement is defined as heading

towards the subject. While *gay-* "to be somewhere" (Boas 1948:246) refers to stationary close

proximate relationships, *gax-* "to come" adds motion and direction but is related due to the

concept of close relationship or proximity.

(198) **gax-**   "to come" (Boas 1948:254)

(199) **gax**an   "I am coming, to me" (Grubb 1977:168)
      come   I

---

[18] A subject/object is put on a surface

(200)   **gax**us   "to you"   (16/09/11)

   come you

Figure 3. 5 shows the location of *ga-* "to be right here" and the added motion of *gax-* "to be

coming towards right here":

ga- point of
orientation, 1st
person

gax- "to come"
towards point
of orientation
or subject
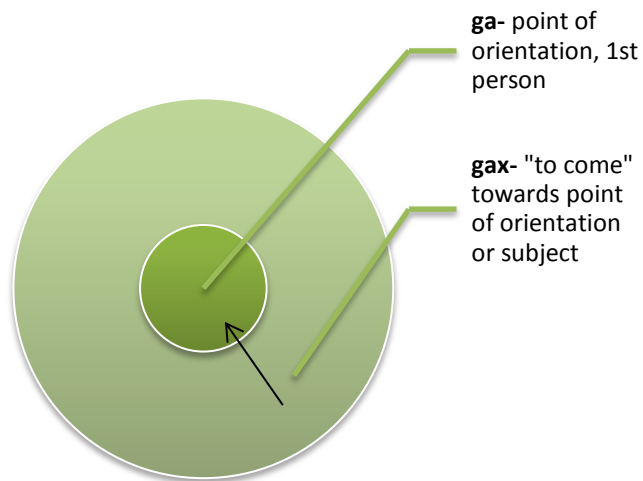
Figure 4. 6 *ga-* and *gax-*

(201)   **Gi**la **gax**an.   "come to me."   (16/09/11)

   come towards me

(202)   G<u>a</u>walalaga' **gax**an!   "help me!" (Boas 1947:267)

   help   now! come/to me

(203)   **Gax**mi' Bob laxa ḱaḱutɬaťsi.   "Bob has arrived at the school." (09/26/11)

   come he   Bob to the school

(204)　Gax̱'manu'x̱w lołstola lax̱ga Bałxe'　　"coming out of Belle Isle" (04/19/13)

       that come　　out　　of Belle Isle

(205)　**gax̱'ił**　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　"coming into a house" (www.firstvoices.com)

       come　into house

(206)　**G̱i**la's lax̱ gada.　　　　　　　　　"Come over here. (www.firstvoices.com)

       come to you　to　here/definitive

4.3.2 *La-* ,*gax-* , degrees of closeness and movement (away & towards)

In order to better understand *gax-* we should briefly consider its opposite in motion the auxiliary

verbal stem *la-* . This stem is literally translated as "to go", meaning motion away or sequential

movement. Berman (1991) translates *la-* as meaning "movement onward on the narrative

journey through time and space"(p. 372).

    The second and third persons indirect object are always formed from la-, because

    the motion is away from the speaker. (Boas 1947, p. 287) *La'man na'nakwex̱sta.*

    "I desire to go home." *La'la'e ḱwagałe umpas.* "Then, it is said, his father cried."

    Nevertheless the feeling persists that la- means a motion away from,

    gax- a motion toward the speaker. (Boas 1947, p. 287)

In the first sentence example below the idea literally expresses the meaning "go". In the second

example the meaning is more general indicating that the action is sequential, or one could say

figuratively the action is "on-go-ing".   Examples (207) and (208) are literal examples of the

meaning "go", while the next two have a more general function of implying events as ongoing.

(207)   La'man latł dux'widtłaxan 'namwut.   "I'll go and see my brother." (Boas 1947:287)

       go   I   go FT to see FT   my   brother

(208)   La'amtłas?   "Will you be going." (www.firstvoices.com)

       go so FT you

(209)   La'mux alak kismist'sanxa.   "It's almost Christmas time." (www.firstvoices.com)

       go   it   almost Christmas time for

(210)   La'mux ṕadaga'nakwala.   "It's becoming dark." (www.firstvoices.com)

       go   it   dark   gradually

In Figure 4.6 *la-* represents "movement away from the centre of focus (subject/object), while *gax-*

represents movement towards the centre of focus (subject/object). The following three examples

(211), (212) and (213) are interesting combinations of the expressing motion and proximity

 in both time and space.

Point of focus

gax- "coming
towards close
proximity of point
of focus

la-" to go,
movement away,
and sequentially
onwards"

la-

gax-
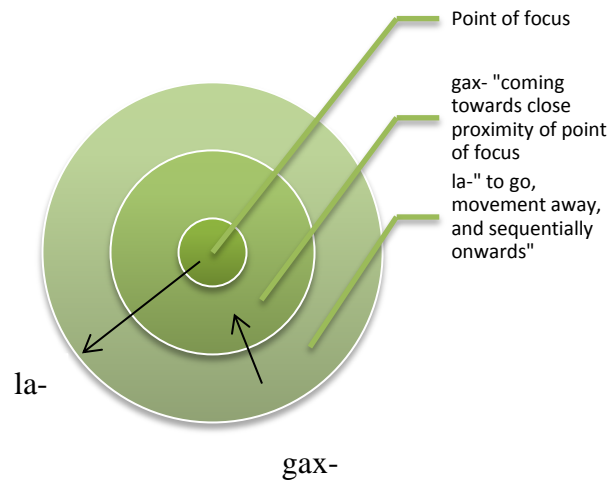
Figure 4.7 *la-, and gax- , movement "away from" or "towards"*

 (211)   la'etł   "to enter"
               go   enter

(212)   laga'a   "to arrive"
               go close proximity

(213)   lalaga   "go now!"
               go   now!

While *gax-* "to come" renders a relationship of close proximity through "movement closer", or

"coming towards" the center of origin, the stem *gay-* "to come from, or descend from", while

closely associated posits the spatial relationship in a more historical, cultural conceptualization.

Gay- expands the notion of close proximity to the centre to notions of ancestry which are

considered central. Embedded in its meaning are culturally weighted notions of descent…or

literally "where one comes from" as in the following examples. The primary shift is that the focus

has now shifted from proximity to the speech event to a more generalized historical concept of

proximity; a proximity which is particular to the Kwakwaka'wakw in their association and

contextualization of the past. Again, the unifying concept expressed by the stem *ga-* is

"closeness in proximity." In this case the proximate relationship is created by shifting focus from a

literal space to an imagined one where the 'self' or 1st person is situated at the site of origin. This

relationship is illustrated in Figure 4.7.

(214) **Gayuṯ**an giga'oł'nukw lax Gwayasdams.   "My parents are from Gilford Island.(16/09/11)

come from I   parents   from   Gwayasdams
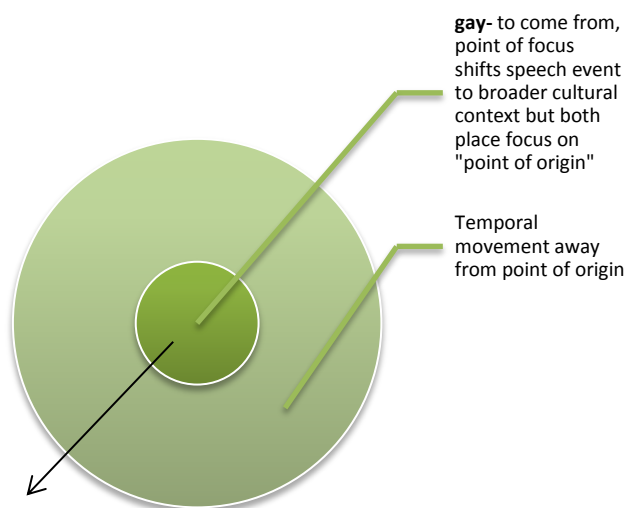
Figure 4.8 *gay-* "to come from"

gay(a)-, gax'id "to move from a certain place, to come from" (Boas 1948, p. 252)

(215) gay<u>a</u>we   "descendant, coming away from"

(216) gay<u>a</u>'was   "place of origin"

(217) gayabala   "to start from"

(218) gayax<u>a</u>la   "to come down" (used for ancestors coming down from the sky)

(219) gaya<u>g</u>as   "road you take, place you walk"

(220) gadza<u>k</u>wa   "to walk from there, the road you take"

(221) ga'g<u>a</u>li'lat's̓i   "place, from which one comes in house, house in which
                                        winter ceremonial is held [Nak]

(222) gag<u>a</u>t̓a'las   "to go along from beginning to end"

It is significant that there even exists a separate yet so closely related stem. In particular the

words *gay<u>a</u>we* "descendant, coming away from" and *gayax<u>a</u>la* "to come down" (used for

ancestors coming down from the sky) are explicit of this focus. *gayagas*[19] "road you take, place

you walk" and *gadzakwa* "to walk from there, the road you take" are metaphors for the imitation

of one's ancestors; the road being the precedent that they have set which one seeks to imitate or

"follow." Finally, *ga'gali'lat'si* "place, from which one comes in house, house in which winter

ceremonial is held [Nak][20]" is a word embedded with cultural symbolism. The ceremonial house is

a symbolic representation of the universe in space and time. The act of entering the ceremonial

house is analogous to the act of original ancestors arriving in the land at the beginning of time.

The stem is an anchoring or "point of origin" to the past which replicates spatial relationship in

ways of thinking about relationships. This crossover between ideas of space and the past leads

into the next topic.

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

 A temporal (time based) example of particular interest is the command suffix –*ga*. This suffix

attaches to action verbs as an imperative. It renders a sense of urgency that can be translated to

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

[20] [Nak] means the word is specific to the 'Nak̕wax'da'xw tribe

mean "now!" Boas (1947) explains:

An imperative demanding immediate action is expressed by the suffix ga',

presumably identical with the demonstrative ga' expressing "present invisible."

Since it implies the immediate starting of an action it is almost regularly attached to

inchoative forms with following <u>a</u> as under the forms 2. (p. 266)

In order to understand this better let us consider the following forms. The first set exemplifies

regular requests, while the second set includes the imperative command suffix -ga.

(223)   dła<u>x</u>w'i   "stand up"   du<u>x</u>w'id   "look"   (25/07/11)

(224)   dła<u>x</u>w'ida**ga'**   "stand up!"   du<u>x</u>w'ida**ga'**   "look!"   (25/07/11)
         stand up   now!   look   now!

I propose that if we consider the formal use of the morpheme *(ga)* whether acting as a stem or

suffix signifier that the common denominator is proximity. In the stem form *ga-* denotes close

proximity in space while the imperative command suffix *–ga* denotes close proximity in time.

"Do it now!"

From these examples one can see that history or temporal flow is also marked by *ga-* indicating

"point of origin". In everyday talk the point of origin is the speaker or subject on a space

continuum where focus is on the present and the proximate relationship is related to the speech

event. Under broader temporal conditions where *ga-* marks the "point of origin" as "the

beginning" the point of focus shifts away from speech event anchored in the present and

focuses on the broader historic culturally embedded notions, of the "point of origin."

The following narratives give cultural context to the idea of "origin". They are followed by a

description of words that are created from the stem *gal-[ga̱l-]* "the beginning", an extension off

the stem *ga̱-* . Culturally, for the Kwakwa̱ka'wakw the historical/temporal point of origin is

where original ancestors "arrive" or "come down" to establish themselves in the land. Amongst

the Dzawada̱'enux̱w, this is marked by the arrival of the original ancestors Ḵawadiliḵala and

Kwalili, who arrive in the form of wolves, with their families in the upper Kingcome Watershed

and are transformed into humans:

    The first man of the Tsawatenok was Kawatilikalla, but before he was a man he

    was a wolf. They lived on the upper course of Kingcome River [at the head of

Kingcome Inlet]. One day a heavy rain was falling and he said: "I do not see why

we should remain animals. We had better leave off these skins and use them only

in dancing. Why should we wander about and have no home? If we had a house

to live in when it rains, it would be well. His wife agreed, so they put off their skins

and laid them away. (Curtis 1915, p.133)

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

Qawadeilakala with his four children and his younger brother *Koleili* lived before

there was light on the earth. They heard the voice of God who said that they were

to go and find a place which they could claim as their own. The voice promised

them the cloak of the wolf for ease of transportation [i.e., transformed them into

wolves]. The two brothers and four children came first to Kingcome. The older

brother claimed *lalaq*, a site up Kingcome River as his own. *Koleili* did not want to

share the same site as his brother, so he moved on to look for his own place. He

travelled to *lax'oh* "clear-water" and then to Wakeman River. (Rohner 1970, p. 86)

For another example from another tribe we can consider an origin story of the Kwikwasuťinuxw,

a brother tribe to the Dzawada̱'enux̱w:

The first Koeksotenok man came from a cedar tree. His name was Hawilqwolas,

'one who comes from a cedar' (from wilEq, 'cedar tree'). Later in life he changed

his name to Ts'eiqami (Tseikami), 'Supreme.' He survived the flood or the

deluge…Tseikami had several daughters, one of whom was Tseikeisilax. After his

trials with Transformer, Tseikami returned to Mitap, Viner Sound. He had his

daughters with him. Qolus, 'Thunder-bird,' was up on the mountain and, looking

down, saw Tseikami's fair daughters. He liked their looks and descended from the

mountain. After making his face human by removing the Thunder-bird headpiece,

he sang a song before Tseikami. He asked Tseikami's permission to marry one of

his daughters and was granted permission. Qolus then removed the Thunderbird

cloak from himself and commanded it back to the mountain. He then became fully

human. It is from the union of Qolus and one of Tseikami's daughters that the

Koeksotenok descended. (Rohner, 1964 p. 47-48)

These stories are of particular significance. They mark the beginnings, the origins of the first

people in the land. The origin stories, called *'nu'yam*, reflect a pattern of arrival, transformation

and establishment in a land base or geographic location. This is the 'point of origin' for history

and for time. The first narrative example explicitly states that this was before there was "light on

the earth."   Other related words are; *galagawe* "in the front, in the lead, first" , *galagawe'tłas* "you

will be the first", *galust'akasu'* "first man to receive potlatch gift" (www.firstvoices.com). Amongst

the Kwakwaka'wakw the concept of the original (the first) and primogeniture are tightly bound in

cultural practice. Rights and prerogatives such as names, songs and dances are passed from the

original ancestors down to descendants ideally through the oldest to the oldest to the oldest.

What is considered the oldest and the most closely connected to the source of origin is most

valued.

In all speeches reference is made to the adherence of old customs. They "walk the

road made by the creator of chiefs" (kasa lax t'axalasa gigamegila R790.62) ; they

walk in "that what results as the groove of the world" (xwalt'alidzam R789:25). The

chief says, "I follow the road made by my late ancestors" (lan nagałtawix

t'axila'yasan wiwump'woła CIII 124.22) ; or "what is laid down by our ancestors"

(ḱata'yasan̲ts galam̲galisa CIII 146:10). Progress in social rank is "walking along on

flat (blankets)" (k̲adzo CIII 130:22), or "walking along" (ka'nakwa̲la R791:71).

Customs are also called "the support of the tribe" (k̲adad CIII 884.10). (Boas 1940,

p. 238)

Gagatła'las "to go along from beginning to end" is also a metaphorical reflection of the concept

of generational descent anchored by the original ancestor and occupation of the land to

contemporary times. *Gayutł* "where you come from" refers to your descent, "where you come

from". *Ga'gali'lat'si* "place, from which one comes in house, house in which winter ceremonial

is held [Nak]" becomes the symbolic re-enactment of descent. The Kwakwa̲ka'wakw winter

house is a ceremonial microcosm of the universe both in space and in time. The literal "place

from which one comes into the house" is a ceremonial metaphor for where one comes from in

life, through one's parents into the world, and one's parents, through their parents and on and

on back to the original source, the original ancestor, which is then re-enacted through symbolic

ceremonialism. In the order of precedence for potlatch gift giveaway the highest ranked

persons are given their gifts first. The closer in line you are to the original ancestors through

descent the higher in social rank you will be; this explains the word *galust'akasu'* "first man to

receive potlatch gift", as it is the highest in rank who ceremonially receive their gifts first. Let's

consider also the next example meaning "first":

gal- (before vowels) *g̱al-* (before consonants) "first" (Boas 1948, p. 255)

(225) g̱aldẕas   "belonging to olden times"

(226) g̱aldẕa'yala   "sound (song) of olden times"

(227) g̱aldzaḵwa   "to speak first"

(228) g̱aldzaḵwalis   "first one to speak in olden times"

(229) g̱algila   "to make first things, to institute"

(230) g̱alnukw   "belonging to ancient times"

(231) g̱alamgalis   "first in world, i.e. first ancestor"

(232) gaxgila'eł   "ancestors"

(233) gali'   "former one, ancestor"

(234) g̱agile'   "first ones"

(235)   ga̱laxalis   "ancestors"

(236)   ga̱lsga̱mlił   "beginning (of time beating)

galgila (*ga̱l*- "first"; *-gila* "to make") "to make things first". This word has a relationship to "the

beginning" as events occur first in the beginning of time. This word refers to how things were

instituted in the land by the original ancestors for the Kwakwa̱ka'wakw. Descendants are to

imitate the ancestors.   *Ga̱ldza̱s* "belonging to olden times" refers to that which is ancient. In

the following contemporary sentence the word denotes the object as old and valuable.

 (237) 'Walasux̱w ga̱ldza̱sus t̓ik̲wax̱awe'   "Your necklace is an antique." (08/11/12)
              great   this/it   old/valuable your   necklace

A closely related word is *ga̱ldas* which can be referred to as a chest where dance masks and

regalia are kept. The dance masks and regalia are used to symbolically re-enact ancient

events. Ideally, the objects are old and have been handed down through generations. The

word *ga̱ldas* (*ga̱l*- "first" + -as "place for") gives the meaning of the chest as "place for things that

come from the beginning or ancient times."   *Gaxgila'eł* (*gax*- "come" + *-gila-* "to make" + *-eł* "in

the house" can be literally translated as "coming to make in the house" which ancestors do

when they come into the world to inhabit it historically and figuratively this is imitated by

descendants ritually in the ceremonial house. A contemporary Kwak'wala speaker translates

this word as "coming to enter" and agrees it can refer to ancestors. This speaker also gives the

following example:

(238) He'mo'łe **ga̱lga̱lis** si K̲awadilik̲ala .   "Kawadilakala was the first in the land." (08/11/12)

The words, *ga̱lnukw* "belonging to ancient times", *gala̱mgalis* "first in world, i.e. first ancestor",

gaxgila'eł "ancestors", gale' "former one, ancestor", *gagile'* "first ones", *galaxalis* "ancestors"

are all self-evident.   Finally, let us consider the last example *ga̱lsgamlił*, which is translated in

Boas' 1948 dictionary literally as a verb, "beginning (of time beating)" but exists also as a noun;

the name of a ceremony whose name is derived from an aspect of its action. It is significant

that this ceremony is conducted at the *beginning* of the winter ceremonial (*t'sek̲a*). The following

is a description recorded in Curtis (1915).

A peculiar pantomime in which none of the regular dancers appears is called

huhsumlilhla[21], and is conducted as follows: On the first night the giver of the

ceremony announces, "We will show our haohtlin[22]."   This refers to all the masks

owned by his family, which have been arranged in rows behind a curtain stretched

across the rear of the room. While the people strike with their batons without

singing, the curtain is raised with three ropes passing over a roof-beam, and every

mask suddenly rises and moves about in its place.   In a few minutes the curtain is

lowered, and with brief intervals the spectacle is repeated three more times. The

maskers are supposed to be carried away by the spirits which they represent, and

hence they remain hidden for the next three days. On the second and third night

there is no dancing, but a feast is given, and on the fourth night the dancing with

masks is repeated in order to recover the maskers from the spirits that have

captured them. (p.171)

The emphasis of the name for the ceremony is its relationship/proximity to the beginning of the

Winter Ceremony. The beginning is a privileged position in Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw thought, as are

---

[21] galsg̱amliła

[22] Unsure of this word

origins. A contemporary speaker also gives the translation for this word as "first to show in the

house" (08/11/12).   The idea of the first is closely associated with the idea of the beginning.

(239)   Gigalgam   "the first ones" (name of 'naṁima)

This is the honorific name given to several *'naṁima* amongst different tribes of the

Kwakwaka'wakw.   The `Tłatłasikwala, the Gwa'sala, the `Kumuyo'i (Kwexa) and 'Walas Kwagu'ł

of the Kwagu'ł confederacy, the Ławit'sis, the Ńamgis, the Aẃa'etłala, the Kwikwasuťinuxw, the

Dzawada'enuxw, the Gwawa'enuxw and the Haxwaṁis of the Musgamakw Dzawada'enuxw

confederacy as well as the Wiweke' of the Ligwiłda'xw confederacy all have 'naṁima named

Gigalgam. In Boas' (1966) description of social organization, six of these tribes rank the

Gigalgam as number one rendering it a significant honorific which breaks from the more

institutionalized process of naming *'naṁima* after original ancestors. Again however, the

emphasis is on "the point of origin." "The first ones" refers to the direct connection to the first on

the land, the first to be served, the first in social rank.

Another association we could consider here is the word for animals, *galga'omas* which is

translated as "animal life" by Grubb (1977, p. 169), and by Boas (1948, p. 250) as "quadrupeds"

or, a more literal translation could be, "those that crawl". This class of beings can be associated

with original ancestors on the land or perhaps there is a remnant of reference to "those who are

first." I am hesitant to apply this meaning too emphatically as this class of beings excludes both

the sky beings and sea creatures who also exist as original ancestors. I merely mention it here

as a point of interest.

The following diagram attempts to explain the ontological (worldview) paradigm created around

the *gal-* stem. This is more broadly applied use of the word "paradigm" which in linguistics can be

used quite specifically to refer to "grammatically conditioned forms all derived from a single root or

stem" (Chrystal, 1999, p. 249).   In this thesis, due to the interdisciplinary crossover of concepts I

define paradigm as a form which functions much like a family which is connected through various

resemblances which has crossover with the specific linguistic definition but is more broadly

applied. Blevins and Blevins (2009) explain it in the following way:

Before turning to the particular role that analogy plays in grammar, it is worth

highlighting some general aspects of those relational patterns. First, although the

analogues in (1) constitute paired objects, strings, and concepts, there is, in

principle, no limit to how internally complex the analogue or base can be. We

recognize human families, as well as language families, with mother tongues,

[23]daughter languages, and sister dialects. In language too, families, often called

paradigms, are a central locus of analogy in grammar.(Blevins & Blevins, 2009, p. 3)

The word family, or paradigm, extended around the stem *ga-* grants us one example of how

language form reflects cultural understanding and belief. The actual repetitive usage of the

language form in everyday life constantly reinforces the ontology (worldview) that is constructed

around it. Figure 4.8 attempts to show the associated meanings that are formed around the stem

ga- which render its meaning more complex than a simple definition as well as culturally specific.

---

[23] Emphasis added by author

gay- "to be somewhere"   *gax-* "to come"

ga-
"point of origin,
self, or subject"

gal- "the beginning,
ancestors, origins"
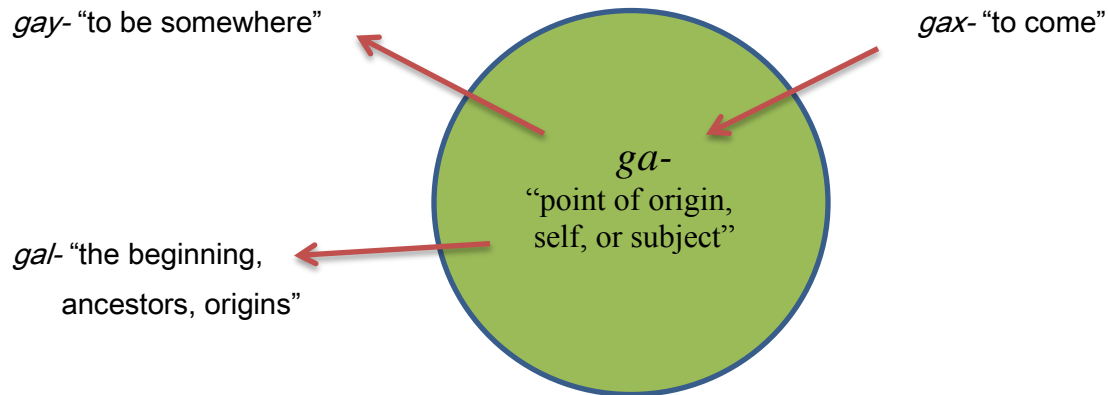
Figure 4.9   *Conceptual associations of ga- "closest in proximity to point of origin"*

If we compare this conceptual paradigm to English we find it surprising. English tends to view

closeness/proximity in time consistently with that which is closest to the present. Kwak'wala

tends to reverse this association at times and in broader contexts deposit proximity/closeness

with the point of origin with the past. In a sense the past is conflated to meet the present. This

concept is enacted over and over within cultural ceremonialism. For example, one of the first

rites of the contemporary winter ceremony *`tseka*, a component of what is today called "the

potlatch", is the *imas*, where the return of the original ancestor is ritually re-enacted. This

ceremony involves a masked dancer entering the ceremonial house from the front, travelling the

floor and exiting out the back. The mask is carved according to the origin story of the particular

family hosting the ceremony. The Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw ceremonially bring the past into the present.

Berman notes this conflation and complete split from and Western based temporal

understanding in her following description:

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

Ga- is the seemingly most semantically complex and heavily associated stem of the three spatial

referential stems *ga-, yu-* and *he-.* Now I will consider *yu-* which as an intermediate appears to

have much more limited associations and then either *ga-* or *he-.*

4.4 *Yu-* referring to someone/something "around"

Yu- seems relatively straightforward in its associated meaning of distance (around). While both

ga- and *he-* have temporal (time based) associations *yu-* seems to primarily refer to space

relations. As with *ga-* phonological influence of the surrounding consonants can cause the vowel

"a" in to shift to "u". Boas actually spells the stem in his 1948 dictionary as *ya-.* While *ya-* may be

the base form the, the surface form which emerges most often in speech is *yu-,* so this form is the

one used throughout the analysis. To reiterate, Boas defines *yu-* as:

y*a̱*-   "demonstrative, something near third person" (Boas 1948:39)

While this is the definition given in Boas' 1948 unpublished dictionary his explanations of the stem

in his 1947 Kwakiutl Grammar seem to indicate a closer relationship to second person which can

be referred to as "near you."   In combination we can take this spatial mapping to encompass "in

the vicinity of 2nd Person and closely around".   The stem can be loosely correlated to the English

"this" (nearby) in opposition to "that" (further away). In the following example sets the *yu-* appears

as a spatial intermediate between *ga-* "closest in proximity" and *he-* "somewhat distant." If we look

at the morphemes in bold in examples (241) and (242) we see that the demonstrative suffix –

ux(w) meaning "around"[24] is used *in correspondence* with the phrase initial *yu-* and is attached to

the subject.   In (241) the subject is the "treasure" while in (242) the subject is the "mother".   In

example (243), with phrase initial *he-,* the corresponding demonstrative suffix *–i'* is attached to

the subject. The use of the corresponding suffixes emphasize the spatial delineation between

speaker and what is spoken about. In the case of *ga-* rather than a single morpheme suffix we

see the application of the phrase ending word *gada*, which is formed from stem initial *ga-* plus the

definitive *-da* which can be loosely translated as "the".   The *ga-* acts as a spatial locator "right

here by me" while the *–da* acts as to make the subject more definite in a similar way that "the" is

more definite than "a" in English.

To compare:

(240)　**Ge**'**a̲ms ga̲na̲m gada**.　　"This is the one who is your wife." (Boas 1947:258)
　　　　　This (right here) your　wife　**this/the**

(241)　**Yu**'**m̲a̲n** długwa'y**uxw**.　　"This (near you) is what is my treasure." (Boas 1947:258)
　　　　　This (around) my treasure **this**

---

[24] See Table 1: Personal Pronouns

Also compare:

(242)   **Yu**'m<u>a</u>n <u>aba</u>mp<u>ux</u>.[25]   "This is my mother." [close by] (U'mista 1981(Vol.2): 5)
    This (around) my mother **this**

(243)   **He**'m<u>a</u>n <u>aba</u>mp**i**.   "That's my mother." [further away] (U'mista 1981(Vol.2):5)
    That (away) my mother **that**

The following set shows the three degrees of distance away from the speaker expressed by the

ga-, yu- and *he-* stems. In particular, note the intermediate distance signified by *yu-.* These

sentences are extremely reliant on context for proper grammaticality. Example (244) can be said,

if someone phoned the house and the speaker answered and was asked *Widi'le Ryan?* "Where is

Ryan?" If Ryan is in the house the speaker can respond *Ga'am la<u>x</u>gan gukwa<u>x</u>*. "He is here, at

my house."   Example (244) can be used when the speaker is just outside the house and is asked

"Where is Ryan?" and example (245) is used when the speaker is away from the house and is

asked "Where is Ryan?" In English, spatial location is ambiguous and the answer to the question

"Where is Ryan?" can be answered by the single response "He is at my house."

---

[25] I have transcribed U'mista's example as they have spelled it. Notice the "w" has been dropped. The underlying suffix form is *–ux̱w*.

Set 1:

(244) **Ge**'m<u>a</u>n la<u>xga</u>n gukwi**x**[26].   He is here at my house." [in house] (23/10/12)

       He (here)   go/at my   house+ (DET)

(245) **Yu**'m<u>ux</u>w la<u>xa</u>n gukw**ex**.   "He is nearby in the house."[nearby] (23/10/12)

      he (around)   at my house + (DET)

(246)   **He**'mi la<u>xa</u>n gukwi'   "He is at my house." [away] (23/101/12)

      he (not around) is at my house + (DET)

Note that the suffixed endings added to the objects referred to in set 1 (-*ix, -e*<u>*x*</u> *–*<u>*i*</u>)[27] , in this

case "house", are appropriate to those used with determiners (DET) which correspond to spatial

distance classes in set 2.

Set 2.

(247)   'M<u>a</u>xwal<u>a</u>n tɬa**x gada** gukwi**x**.   "I admire this house. [I'm in] (11/29/10)

       admire/like I   (DET) this   right here house+(DET)

(248)   'M<u>a</u>xwal<u>a</u>n tɬa**xwa** gukw**ex**.   "I admire this house. [nearby] (U'mista 1981, Vol.7:7)

       admire/like   I (DET)this   house+(DET)

(249)   'M<u>a</u>xwal<u>a</u>n tɬa**xa** gukw**i**.   "I admire that house. [away] (11/29/10)

       admire/like I (DET)that house+(DET)

---

[26] While the suffix is spelled –<u>a</u>x it sounds more like –ix, due to the shortened vowel

[27] See U'mista Kwak'wala Series Book 7

Set 3:

(250) **Ge**'<u>a</u>mxd<u>a</u>n le **ga**da.   I was right here. (U'mista, 1981, Vol. 8:48)

      right here was I   go/at right here/the

(251) **Yu**xd<u>a</u>n **lox**da.   "I was there." [nearby, still around] (23/10/12)

      nearby was I go/at nearby/the

(252) **He**xd<u>a</u>n l**e**da.   "I was over there." (U'mista, 1981, Vol 8:48)

      away was I go/at/away/the

To reiterate, the examples (244), (247) and (250) through the use of *ga-* (+ *ga-da*) indicates that

the subject is right here in close proximity, or right next to the speaker. Examples (245), (248)

and (251) through the use of *yu-* (+ *-ux̱[w])* indicates that the subject is nearby, or in the vicinity of

the one being spoken to. Examples (246), (249) and (252) show that he- (+ *-i)* indicates that the

subject is removed from the speech situation further away than *yu-.*   These are spatial

differentiations which are *required* for proper Kwak'wala.   This spatial definitiveness of *yu-* as

intermediate between *ga-* and *he-* is also expressed in the following examples from both a

historical source (Boas/Hunt) and contemporary sources.   There was no evidence that the use of

ga-, yu- and *he-* has deteriorated in contemporary language use.

(253)   Yu'me' xwanukwas George?   "Is this the child of George (around)." (16/09/11)
             this he/she child his George

(254)   Yu'man amł'wadtux.   "playing with, that's who I am" (www.firstvoices.com)
             this   I   play with he/she

(255)   Yu'manu'xw mixoxda.   "So we slept there." (Boas 1947:258)[28]
             this we (I & he/she) sleep there

4.4.1 Unusual older forms containing a temporal element

The next two sentences are interesting in that they appear to have an extended temporal (time

based) reference. Rather than express intermediate "distance in space" they appear to express

intermediate "distance in time".

(256)   Yud'ekus 'ałex wałdama.   "This is good your recent word." (Boas 1947:258)[29]
             this specific? your recent word

(257)   Yu'am xwanukwa'nakwalas Kwanu'sila.   "These came to be the children of
             this   children   next generation30 of Kwanu'sila   Kwanu'sila"

---

[28] Contemporary speakers would say this means "We are sleeping there."   Past tense would be
Yu'amxda'nuxw mixoxda. "We slept there."

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

[30] The suffix -'nakwala "gradual, continued motion, one after another" (Boas 1947:241)   al 'nakwala "next
generation" (Boas 1948:17)

In example (256), "your recent word" is introduced with the phrase initial *yu-* "nearby/around"

which rather than correspond to a subject/object in space refers to a speech act which has just

recently occurred.   In example (257), the ancestor Kw<u>a</u>nu'sila , is a being from ancient times. In

the context of the narrative, the children referred to, are in close temporal relationship, as

descendants to Kw<u>a</u>nu'sila. This last sentence, in particular provides us with a more complex

interpretation of the use of the *yu-* stem though these examples were hard to find and much more

rare than extended meanings for *ga-* and *he-.*

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

Boas' 1948 unpublished dictionary describes *he-* as having multiple meanings; "that" (3d person

demonstrative), and "in a straight direction to a distant point." In his 1947 "Glossary of the

Suffixes" he describes it as the "3rd person near the 3rd person", meaning he/she/it beyond the

person being spoken to and outside of the speech situation, "He/she/it is over there."   Reiterating

Boas, Berman (1991) defines *he-* as "the verbal form indicating third persons outside the speech

event as in *Hid Sewidi*, "He, over there, is Sewid." (1991:337) *He-* has extended meaning which

while not as pervasive as ga- is more prevalent than yu-. In order to understand this let's

consider the following examples. Expressing the strictly spatial deictic (context based) meaning

we have the following:

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

(259)   He'a̱m gukwa̱s Joe.   "That's Joe's house." [over there] (U'mista 1981 Vol.1:21)
       that is   house his   Joe

(260)   He'a̱m Carolida t'sat'sada̱ga̱m.   That girl is Carol." (U'mista 1981 Vol 2:12)
       that is   Carol (away) def. girl

(261)   Hedi'les `Ki̱ksisalas si gukwas `Tayagila'ogwa.   "`Ki̱ksisalas is at `Tayagila'ogwa's house."
       there at   (name)   of   house   (name)   (16/09/11)

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

(263)   Hedi'leda k̓wa̱dzilas.   "He is in the livingroom." (www.firstvoices.com)
       that def. in the   livingroom31

(264)   Hedi leda.   "it's over there." (www.firstvoices.com)
       there def. in def.

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

---

31 literally, "place for sitting"

It appears that some remnant of the visibility/non-visibility divisions on spatial reference, that Boas

documented 100 years ago, still exists in contemporary speech. This seems to have survived in

the 3rd person *he-* but is no longer present in the 1st person *ga-* and 2nd person *yu-*.   The

difference in meaning between *hedi leda* and *he'mida* is visuality connected to distance. *hedi*

leda is used for topics removed from the speech situation and therefore invisible while *he'mida* is

used for topics within the speech situation but peripheral or "further away", but possibly still

visible. All examples encompass the meaning "away from the speech event" whether that

distance is peripheral to a given location or completely outside of it. The following diagram seeks

to illustrate the crossover, the red line representing the division between visability & "around" to

invisibility and "away".   In Figure 4.9 the red line represents the boundary where the concepts of

around and away are divided. *Ga-* and *yu-* indicate that the subject/object is around. *He-* can be

used when the subject/object is still around but peripheral to the speech situation or more

removed or is used when completely away from the speech situation. The arrows represent the

ability of *he-* to be used in both contexts.
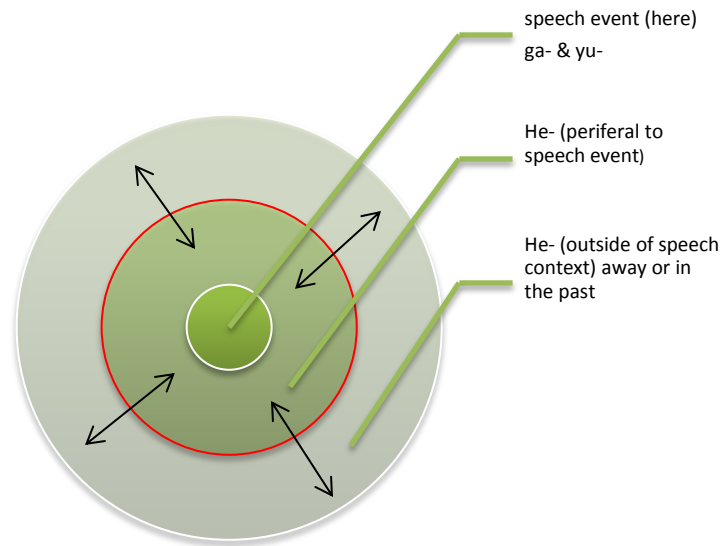
Figure 4.10 *He- "distance away from speech event, proximate or completely outside"*

In the following examples, in the first two sentences the father referred to is not around.   The last

two sentences show that much of the assessment of spatial distance is context driven and not

strictly applied according to a defined spatial distance but is an interpretation of distance

according to the topic and context of the speech event. In example (269) the cup is behind the

kettle but referred to as "over there", but possibly in the same room, while in example (270) the

clam fork is "behind the house" which is obviously outside the vicinity of where the speech is

taking place. This indicates that the encompassing parameters of distance are *relative rather*

than fixed.

(266)   He'ams gwigamus umpus.   "You look like your father. (Nunwakola, 2006)

        that   you   look like your   father (not around)

(267)   He'muxw gwigamis ump.   "He looks like his father. (Nunwakola, 2006)

        that   he(around) looks like his father (not around)

(268)   Hedan abampi _____.   "My mother is _____. (www.firstvoices.com)

        that (DEF) my mother (away)

(269)   He'mida kwastax 'atłaye' sa hanayu.   "The cup is behind the kettle." (09/26/11)

        there is the (DEF) cup   behind   the kettle (away)

(270) He'mida tsigayu lax 'atłano'we' sa gukw.   "The clam fork is behind the house." (09/26/11)

        there is the (DEF) clamfork at   behind   the house (away)

The next examples push the spatial meaning into broader domains that have crossover with time.

When speaking of events in the past it is appropriate in context to use the corresponding spatial

distance marker *he-.* When speaking of the past it is only appropriate to use the corresponding

yu- if the events referred to have occurred in close relationship to one another as in the example

(257).

(271)   He'gamołi gukwas Harry.   "That was the house of Harry." (16/09/11)

        that   long ago (PT)[32] he (away) house his Harry

---

[32] 3rd degree of (PT) past tense…furthest away in time, "long ago"

(272) He'gamoḻan amḻwoḻ'ti'. "He was the one I used to play with."

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

(273) He'moḻe' Bida[33] galsaxa t'samat'si. "Peter was the one who painted the church."

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

(274) Hex'idi ola'kala 'kotḻa ḵas yaxwamḻala'. "He really knew how to do masked dances

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

(275) He'moḻe galgalis si Ḵawadiliḵala. "Ḵawadiliḵala was the first in the land. (16/09/11)

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

(276) Hexdan le 'Yalis. "I was in Alert Bay." (www.firstvoices.com)

    that was(PT) I at Alert Bay

Linguistic marking of distance in space and in time correspond. *He-* indicates distance in space

and is used correspondingly with the past tense forms *–xd* (immediate past tense) "having just

occured, *-x'id* (intermediate past tense) "having occurred awhile ago", and *-oḻ [w'oḻ]* (farthest

degree of past tense) "long ago." This can also be translated as meaning removed from the

speech event by space and/or time. Berman (1991, Chapter 11) explains this by using the

metaphor 'the speech event is a stage', with participants and actions linguistically marked as

being "on stage" or "off stage." I have found this to be a useful analogy when considering spatial

---

[33] Peter

[34] Intermediate (PT) past tense

relationships as relative rather than absolute. Spatial distance in time and space is relative to the

topic being discussed with shifting points of focus and therefore "points of origin" which can be

also described as "focal points" with close associations marked by *ga-* and *yu-* and more distant

associations marked by *he-*.

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

With the meaning "to act" or "to be" we have the following set. We can consider these words and

phrases to represent the idea of "to act like *that*" or "to be like *that*". It is a conceptual abstraction

of "that" as a thing.

(277)   heyak   "to do something" (Boas 1948:97)

(278)   heɫag̱wigili   "act like this!" (Grubb 1977:176)

(279)   'mas'anawis heyakwa̱la̱k̲   "I wonder what did it to him?" (Boas 1948:97)

(280)   he gwixs   "like that" (Boas 1948:97)

(281)   he'yo   "to happen" (Boas 1948:97)

(282)   heda   "it is that" (Boas 1948:97)
        that (DEF)the

(283)   hinuxw   "one who always does that" (Boas 1948:97)
            that someone

(284)   hex'id   "at once" (Boas 1948:98)
            that to begin

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

(286)   hexsa'am   "to be there always" (Boas 1948:98)
            that still/always

(287)   hała   "being that way" (Boas 1948:98)
            that to be

(288)   het'simas   "the right way of doing something" (Boas 1948:97)

This last word is peculiar, and its meaning in relationship to *ga-* and *yu-* not entirely clear. I have

placed it in here due to the opposition that Boas makes that *he-t'simas* refers to "of the kind

belonging to that privilege", or we could say "of the rights or cultural prerogatives of an individual"

vs. the words *ga-t'simas*; *yu- t'simas* and *k'i's- t'simas* which he refers to as meaning "of the kind

not belonging to." If we look at the literal meaning of *he-* "that" and *–t'simas* "something of the

kind belonging to" it would seem that somehow the idea of distance is related with notions of

cultural correctness.   The path this association travels is not clear to me but if we consider the

next set of words referenced in the secondary meaning of the stem, *he-* there does appear to be

a tenuous cultural correlation.

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

The secondary definition given by Boas (1948) *he-* "in a straight direction to a distant point" is

conceptually related to the primary meaning of "that- further away from the point of discourse/

origin or completely removed", in that it implies distance and the concept 'away from'. However in

this definition the meaning is a more literal and defined address of spatial relationship. The

addition of varied suffixes to *he-* render the following words:

(289) heyak̲a, or hek̲a   "to pass, to surprise, to exceed" (Boas 1948:98)

(290) heyaxsa̲ḱa   "to overdo" (Boas 1948:98)

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

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

(293) hebe'   "to be killed at once (to go straight to end)" (Boas 1948:99)

(294)   he'nakwila   "to move straight in that direction" (Boas 1948:99)[35]

(295)   Hexalisala   (name of `Kaniki'lakw) "to set right in the world" (Boas 1948:99)

This last example is a name for the transformer `Kaniki'lakw who in Kwakwaka'wakw histories

went about the world challenging the original ancestors and "setting things right." Hexalisala, an

alternative name for `Kaniki'lakw, is a literal expression of his activities. Referenced in the

following text, Sutil Point is located on the north end of Vancouver Island.

Łaxalixalay, the son of Numasanxa'lis who lived at Tsiłtsakala'lis saw `Kaniki'lakw

coming. He went into the house and said to his father, "There is a man coming

towards our house." His father replied, "I have been expecting him, our Lord, who

is setting the world right. I shall ask him to transform me into a small island on the

point of Na'widi (Sutil Point) and Xusba'lis (Fort on Point). The name of the island

shall be Hanxstalis (Shining on the water), so that I may be seen by the canoes

passing by." (Boas 1935:10)

---

[35] Contemporary speakers translate this as "to hurry" or "hurry up". It is one of the phrases younger people tend to know. Variously pronounced as *hanakwila*

Culturally for the Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw the notion of "setting things right" is a significant one. As

discussed earlier the imperative to follow the path set forward by ancestors requires travelling a

straight road and the one prescribed by ancestors is to imitate and carry out the prerogative

"rights" of the past and to do this as faithfully as possible. We can consider the following words

in this context.

(296)   he'stala   "1, go around repeatedly 2, the world" (Grubb 1977:176)

(297)   he'stalis̲ala   "around the world" (Grubb 1977:176)

In example (286), the act of going around repeatedly is carried out in the ceremonial house on

the dance-floor as a symbolic act. The dancers imitate those before them. In a metaphoric

sense they are repetitions of generations who have lived before them and who have enacted

the same ceremonies. It is a Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw cultural imperative that this symbolic process is

maintained and when these cultural ceremonies were banned by the Canadian government

from 1885 to1951 the Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw fought long and hard against it, in order that this

generational cycle would not be broken (Cole & Chaikin, 1990). Metaphorically, the ceremonial

house is "the world" and in Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw histories (what has been referred to as myths)

original beings such as `Kaniḵi'lakw travel the world. It is in this context that the word *hayigi'*

makes sense.

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

　　　　　　　　Yu'mis la **hayigi**sosoxda ałex b<u>a</u>gwan<u>a</u>ma. (R 626:79)
　　　　　　　　this　is　　go　imitate (DEF) the　　later　　man DET
　　　　　　　　This is imitated by later (generations of) man.

This means that metaphorically travelling in a "straight direction" is following the road set out by

ancestors through imitation. The emphasis is not necessarily linear however, but focussed more

upon the ideas of "purpose, imitation and extensions forward and backwards. As examples (286)

and (287) show, this "straight direction" can be conceptualized as circular. A straight line is not

necessarily conceptualized as a straight line from one point to another but consecutive points

each following the next.   Also consider the following:

(299)　he'la　　　"to inherit" (Grubb 1977:176)

(300)　hiłt'sa　　"to catch up to" (Grubb 1977:176)

(301) hełt'sasu   "1. Great-great-grandparents 2. You have caught up to them"
                  (Grubb 1977:176)

(302) hayulis   "to continue" (Boas 1948:98)[36]

(303) ha'yu's̲ala   "to go right from one to another" (Boas 1848:98)

Additional cultural clues are contained within Kwakwa̲ka'wakw personal names. The name

Ha'yusdis̲alas means "to go straight up from the beach " and the name *Ha'etłalas* means "to go

straight through the door"[37]. This means that when you arrive at the beach you go straight to this

person's house. The reference is to giving feasts and potlatches. Traditional travel by canoe

meant arrival by guests, to coastal villages, by beachfront.

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

The notion of moving in "a straight direction to a distant point" has a spatial dimension which

maps to the verbal *he-* "away, over there, off-stage of the speech event". It may also have a

temporal application in Figure 4.10, where the *yu-* and *he-* stems seem to find expression in a

spatial/time based crossover.   The central green circle represents the concept "today" or "now".

---

[36] Sometimes translated as "to always be doing

[37] Translation of names given by GN & ES, personal communication

The next encompassing circle represents the temporal passage of time the length of a day.

"tomorrow" or "yesterday". The final outer circle represents the passage of another day "day after

tomorrow" and "day before yesterday". These are commonly used terms for situation events in

time in somewhat close relationship to the present. Outside of two days distance from the

present (today) speaking about time based events switches to a different set of temporal locators.

yexoxda'nala (today)

łanstła (tomorrow)

łans'wał
(yesterday)
hi'luxwsa (day after
tomorrow)

hi'luxwsu'ł (day
before yesterday)
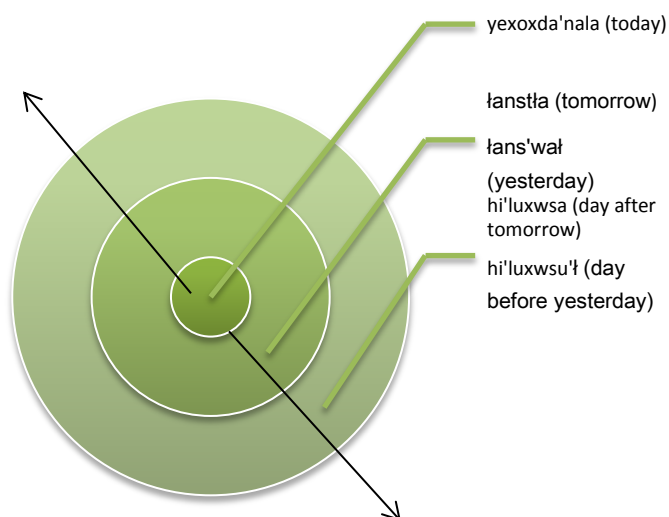
Figure 4.11 *Distance in time, today, tomorrow and the day after tomorrow*

(304)   yexoxda 'nala   "today" (www.firstvoices.com)

(305)   łanstłe   "tomorrow" (Boas 1948:409)

(306)   ɫans'waɫ   "yesterday" (Boas 1948:409)

(307)   hi'lux̱wsa   "day after tomorrow" (www.firstvoices.com)

(308)   hi'lux̱wsu'ɫ   "day before yesterday" (www.firstvoices.com)

If we compare the outer rings of the framing for "a day" as marked by *he-* we could infer that the

stem means outside of, or removed from" by more than a day. In the same way we could

consider the outer ring of the generational Figure 4.11 below and translate the *he-* to mean

"outside of, or removed from" by more than two generations.

Self/me (1st generation)

giga'oɫnukw (parents)

gagamp (grandparents)
hi'lus (great grandparents

hi'luḱwina'i (great grandchild

hi'lusto'i (grandchild, descendant)
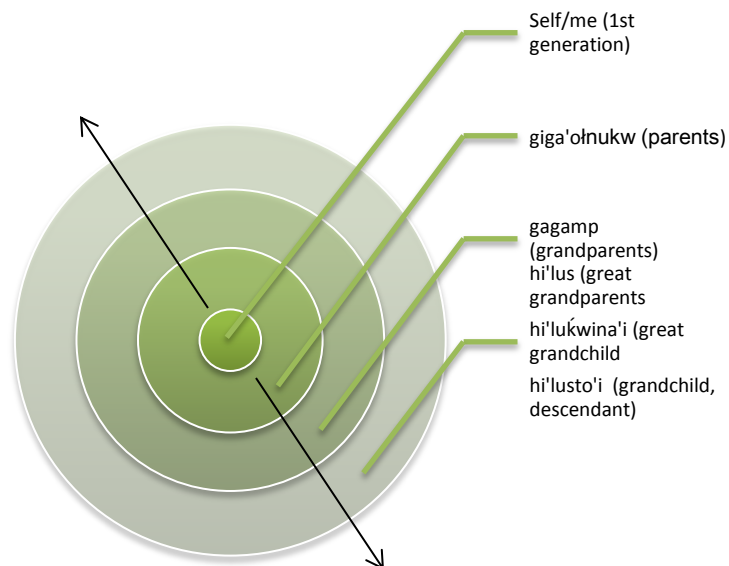
Figure 4.12 *Generational distance*

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

He- has a spatial relationship to la- and gax-. Earlier we discussed the difference in proximate

relationships in motion between *gax-* and *la-*; *gax-* meaning "movement towards close proximity",

while *la-* encompasses the meanings "movement away from close proximity" and "ongoing

sequential relationship onwards". In everyday speech and narrative the *la-* auxiliary is used most

often as the following example from Boas, (1902):

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

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

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

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

las Tawixi'lakwi. Wa, la'la'l'e hantła'eł hołamale Tawixi'lakwaxa 'malxtłu.

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

Wa, la'la'ida tawi'nenoxwi gałakas la xusała. Wa, la'la'e palida galasida

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

Dzawada'enuxwi. Wa, la'la'e axḱali Kawadilikalaxis dłuwalgama'i ka las

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

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

hunt the   mountain goat,   that   be given food of it to his   tribe.   Well,   **at once**   it is said

Tawixi'lakwi xwanał'ida kaxs **la'ma'i latłi** 'nax'idatł.[38]

Tawixi'lakw   made himself ready that he   will go   the (coming) will get day.

Free VerseTranslation:

"The first of the Dzawada'enuxw lived at Sagumbala on the upper course of the river of

Gwa'i. Kawadilikala was their chief.   Tawixi'lakw was the eldest son of Kawadilikala.

Tawixi'lakw killed mountain goats with great ease. Now, the mountain goat hunter

had been resting for a long time, and the first of the Dzawada'enuxw were very

hungry. Then Kawadilikala asked his son to go to hunt mountain goats, that he might

feed his tribe. Tawixi'lakw got ready to go on the following day." (p. 7)

The sentence initial *la'la'e* is a convention used in the narration of ancient type stories such as

the one exemplified above.   It can be translated as "and then...". The primary expression is the

movement (going) along a continuum. It makes sense that this would be more productive and

appear more often in speech than *gax-* as the opposite movement "towards" once arrived can

no longer be continuous. In this 1902 transcript almost every sentence is introduced by *la'la'e*,

indicating the relationship of events as sequential. Only in the final sentence is this pattern

---

[38] Orthographic conversion and bold emphasis by author.

broken and by an introductory phrase using *he-* (*he- x'id-a*) translated as "at once". The

difference between "and then" marked by *la-* and "at once" marked by *he-* is subtle but

significant. Berman (1991) explains that while the *la-* infers sequentiality the *he-* infers an

activity performed concurrently; not in sequence but simultaneously. The difference is a spatial

one; concurrence in time, *distance in space*.   In the following illustration the arrows represent

the use of *la-, gax-* and *he-* as verbal auxiliaries expressing the sequence of events in narrative.

la-   O

Point of Origin

gax-   O

he-   O   O

Event Occurring Here   Event Occurring There
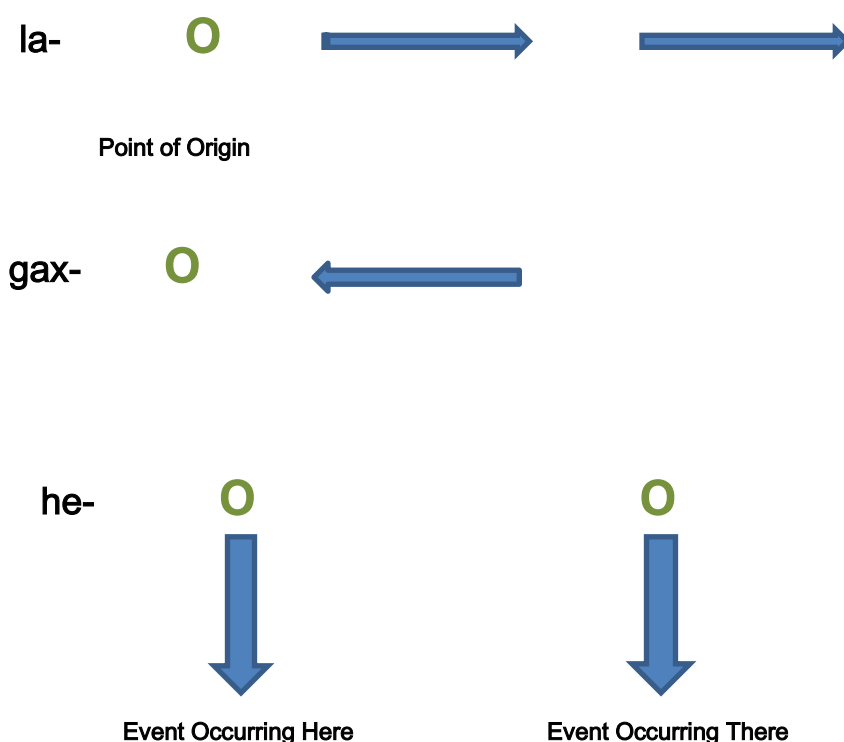
Figure 4.13 *Event relationships*

Berman (1991, pp. 322-336) gives a valuable analysis regarding the use of these verbal stems as

discourse markers in narrative which is detailed and more comprehensive.   The reason I touch

on it here is that, once again, with the use of *he-* there is an implication of spatial distance that is

consistent with a broader application in extended use and meaning than can be literally or

narrowly defined

4.7 Summary

In order to consider the concept of space, and sometimes its conceptual analogy in time, I began

this chapter by looking at personal space in relationship to the body, or self. This I identified as

the subject or "point of origin" of the speech act.   I first considered personal pronouns, which

identify relationships between "speaker", "person spoken to", and "subject/object". In Kwak'wala,

we find that this system still retains much definition which is ambiguous in English. In particular

we find that the 3rd person subject/object "he/she/it" is divided into two spatial arenas which can

be interpreted as "away from the speech event but still *visible*" and "completely away from the

speech event *rendering it non-visible*." From there I considered the verbal auxiliary stems *ga-,*

yu-, and *he-.*   These stems in particular delineate spatial relationships between the location of the

speaker and subject/objects (persons/things spoken about); *ga-* meaning "in close proximity", *yu-*

meaning "around" and *he-* meaning "further away, or removed altogether = distant". Each of

these stems while having a literal formal application in everyday language have extended

meaning beyond the literal. Of the three, *ga-* appears to have the most culturally applied

extensions of meaning. These meanings are anchored to ideas around "points of origins" and

"beginnings" which are not restricted to a single speech event but can be translated into social

historical contexts of cultural "origins" which are highly potent concept in Kwakwaka'wakw

ontology. *Yu-* is the most limited of the three, which is to be expected with an intermediate

application. *He-* has extended meaning beyond the literal which encompasses the notion of

"distance" in various contexts but is not as culturally pervasive as *ga-.* Knowledge and

understanding of these spatial markers in regards to space relationships is an essential

component of proper Kwak'wala speech but in order to have a full comprehension of their

meaning it is important that they are understood not just in their formal application but also in their

extensions into broader contexts. These divisions of space and their extended meanings come

easily to native speakers whose minds have categorized the divisions and their associations

since birth. The next chapter will consider spatial terminology in relationship to the "house" and

the extended conceptual associations manifest in culture.

Chapter 5: *Giga La'etɬax!* "Enter the House!"
The Body=House=Land Metaphor in Kwakwa̱ka'wakw Culture

…did you not see the soul last night which came and sat on my hand? It is the size of

our thumb, when it shrinks and becomes small; then I put the soul on top of our head,

and it grows so that it is the same size as our body ['ukwa̱ni'], for the body is the house

of the soul…(Boas 1921:724)

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

The Kwakwa̱ka'wakw traditional house as an extension of the body is a major metaphor for

Kwakwa̱ka'wakw cultural understanding. Up into the early Twentieth Century the

Kwakwa̱ka'wakw lived in large homes [39]*gukwa̱la* constructed of cedar.   These architectural

structures were expansive, measuring at times 40-60 feet in length and width.   The roof could

rise to approximately 20-30 feet in height.   Several families of a *'na̱ḿima* "extended family

group" could occupy one house.   During daily life the interiors were sectioned off into rooms but

---

[39] In modern times these houses are called *gukwdzi* which translates as bighouse.   However, this appears to be a relatively new word as house terms from the turn of the last century refer to the house as just *gukw* or *gukwa* (Boas 1948:260) but do not list *gukwdzi.*   In iteration of this Charlie Dawson, an elder of the Dzawada̱'enux̱w, born in 1919, relayed the information that the proper term for a house was *gukwa̱m* and that the term *gukwdzi* was simply a descriptive referring to a large house (g*ukw-* a stem referring to a house and the suffix *–dzi* a descriptive of large size.

during the ceremonial season the house would be cleared and transformed into a space of

elaborately performed rituals. The house was considered a living entity, an extension of its

inhabitants.   Houses were adorned with hereditary crests and those acquired through marriage

or warfare. (Easton & Nobokov, 1989) The concept of the house and the lineage it represented

was of more importance than the physical house itself as the concept could be replicated in the

form of a marriage gift. The gifting of a house, with its name and histories from the father-in-law

to the son-in-law was an extremely prestigious act.

In Figure 5.1 the relationship of the house to the landscape is laid out.   On a cosmic level then,

it is possible to conceptualize the traditional Kwakwaka'wakw community house in multiple

ways.   In one way, the house is considered as a microcosm of the world.   The roof represents

the sky, or the heavens; the floor represents the earth.   Under the floor is considered to be the

underground, the place of the ghosts.   During the *'tseka* winter season this conceptualization is

amplified and granted expression through elaborate ritual.   During Kwakwaka'wakw winter

ceremonies all three levels are utilized in complex and varied performances.
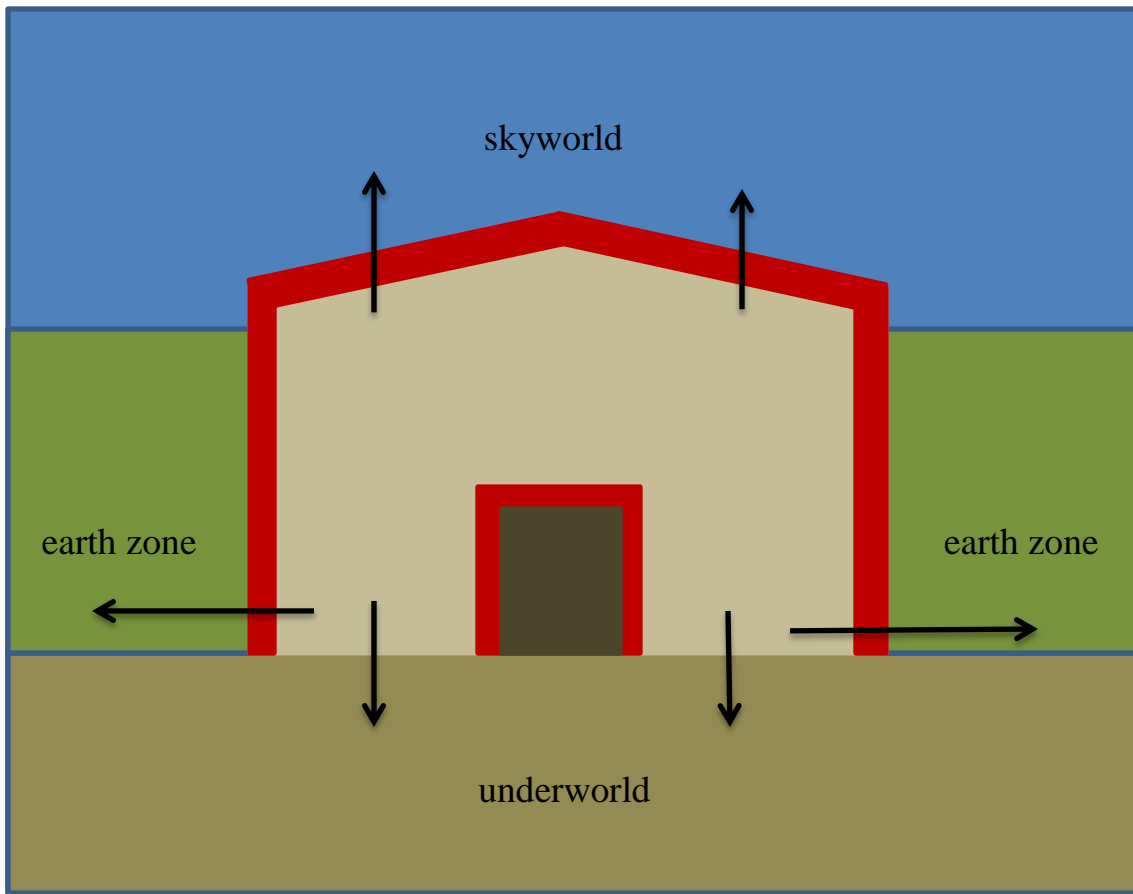
Figure 5.1 *The house mapped to the land, the underworld, the earth and the skyworld*

La'luɫala "ghosts" can rise from below the ground, as do *sisi'utɫ* "the double-headed serpent" and other beings.   Sometimes the reverse occurs and dancers are sucked underground into tunnels dug out for the purposes of such performances.   It is from the roof that the *hamat'sa* appears, dramatically dropping down through the smoke-hole, or through a hole in the roof created by the removal of boards.   In one ceremony he descends down a post that is

considered to be an aspect of the heavens though this was a prerogative that belonged only to

certain families.   By analogy, the house, during ritualistic periods encompassed the universe.

Figure 5.2 Curtis, Edward, S. (Photographer). (1914). *Kwakiutl House-frame*[40] [Photo],
Photograph courtesy of Northwestern University Library, *Edward S. Curtis's The North
American Indian,"* 2003 http://digital.library.northwestern.edu./curtis/

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[40] House of Nage', father of Harry and Dick Mountain

The traditional Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw house is composed of a skeletal framework of cedar posts (see

Figure 5.2) covered by a shell of cedar boards.   The posts were permanently installed and

remained in place while family groups traveling to various locations to harvest food stores, could

remove the outer layer of boards and take them for use on more temporary shelters.   The

skeletal post-work is structurally and conceptually similar to the body.   Like a body, the skeletal

interior structures are more permanent than the outer covering.   Identity is embedded in the

skeletal structure of the house.   The outer covering could be removed and the house would still

maintain its integrity.   Graphic representations could be carved onto the *k̓ik̓w* "primary vertical

posts" of the house and the *k̓atiwe'* "primary crossbeams" that support the roof.   The

secondary vertical posts that are not carved (not animated) are called *dl̲am* "small house post".

The stem *dl̲a-* translates as "to stand". It is applied to inanimate beings, while the stem *dl̲axw*

"to stand" is used for animate beings (Boas, 1948).   The carved primary posts and primary

crossbeams are granted animation through their graphic representation as mythological beings.

In Figure 5.3 a house post carved in the form of a human figure stands in the foreground and in

the background is the skeleton post and beams of Johnny Scow's house depicted in chapter 3

(Figure 3.1).

Figure 5.3 Duff, Wilson (Photographer).(1955). *Gwayasdams Village* [Photo] Image
(PN 2159) courtesy Royal BC Museum, BC Archives [PN 2159]

In a Boas (1888) narrative involving a marriage between the ancestors of the Dzawada'enux̱w

and the Kwagu'ł the representation of a house as a living entity is emphasized.   When

Kawadilikala brings his future son-in-law, 'Umax̱talatłe' to his house, he warns him to be careful

in entering as the doorway is a giant beak that may kill uninformed visitors.   Kawadilikala gifts

the house to his son-in-law.   When it is rebuilt at the village site of 'Umax̱talatłe' the house is

described in the following way:

The two uprights in the front part of the house represent two men: Yakent'e<u>k</u>a

(something talking inside) and Wawe<u>q</u>amitl (the orator).   The uprights in the rear of

the house also represent men: Le<u>q</u>e'laqsta (the braggart) and Hasa<u>k</u>awa'sui

(attempting to talk louder than anybody else).   The uprights in front of the house

support the beams that represent the Sisiutl (a double-headed snake), while those in

the rear of the house are connected by a cross-piece representing a Sisiutl (or wolf?),

upon which the beams rest.   The hinges of the house door are at its upper edge.   It

is very heavy and crushes every bad man who attempts to enter the house.   His

dancing mask was called Olikyen, and represented a wolf; the dance in which it is

used is called Walasaqak (something great coming from above).   When the house

was finished Om'aqta'latle gave a great feast, and the beams and uprights of his

house began to move.   The sisiutl played with their tongues.   The men began to talk

 and told the sisiutl to kill all enemies of their master (pp. 203-204).[41]

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

[41] I have maintained the original spelling of the Kwak'wala names as is presented by Boas in his paper "Houses of the Kwakiutl Indians" 1888 except where the phonemes were presented as backwards.   This occurs with the phoneme (k) where it appears both backwards and up-side down. Where backwards and up-side down (k)appear I have substituted <u>k</u>. This was a very early publication in the corpus of Boas' research and his facility with the language as well as consistent application of phonological forms was less developed then in later publications.

an inheritance to the son-in-law in recognition of the children the marriage will produce and

the promise of maintaining the lineage of the father-in-law through them.   In this sense the

"house" is re-built both literally and metaphorically. Figure 5.4 depicts the interior

houseposts of a contemporary version of the Kawadilikala house which still stands in Gwa'yi

(Kingcome Inlet).

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

---

[42] This house belonged to Jim Hamdzid, head chief of the Kikudilikala clan of the Dzawada'enuxw

While the structural value of a house appears to be invested primarily in its internal structure over the external, the conceptualized social value of a house lies in the accumulated history of the family whom the house represents. Like a living being the house carries the lineage of its occupants and this is represented by the carvings of the house-beams along with the iconography of the house-front.

As well as symbolizing the heritage of the occupants the house is granted an independent bounded identity in the application of a name. The practice of naming houses has been maintained into contemporary times, though not without transition.[43] The interior component parts of a house are given names as well but in a generic sense rather than having proper names. Some of the house component names carry more culturally applied information than others. The following interesting descriptive is given by Boas (1909) in "The Kwakiutl of Vancouver Island":

---

[43] A century ago Kwakw<u>aka</u>'wakw houses were occupied by a single family group (*na'mim*a) and the name given the house was the prerogative of that specific group. Modern *gi'gukwdzi* (bighouses) are built to represent entire communities composed of several family groups. In the case of the *gukwdzi* built in *'Yalis* (Alert Bay) in the nineteen-sixties and re-built in 1999 its original intent was to represent all of the Kwakw<u>aka</u>'wakw nations. As far as I know, it does not carry a name. However, a smaller house built in *Gwa-yi* (Kingcome Village) in 2003 was given the name *Hi'manis*.

The parts of the house are oriented right and left according to the positions they have in relation to a person looking in at the door.   The rear of the house is called its "forehead."   Thus we have the terms 'n̲ake'wa'lił (middle forehead of house) for the middle of the rear part (a); hił`kutiwa'lił and g̲amxutiwa'lił respectively for the right (b) and left (c) of the rear part; hił`kud̲ani'g̲wił and g̲amxud̲ani'g̲wił for right (d) and left (e) rear corners.   The rear part of the sides (f) is called "up river;" the front part (g) of the sides "down river;" and we have 'n̲al`kudo'ya'lił and gwa`kudo'ya'lił, "up-river and down-river middle of house," and more specifically these terms combine with hił`kudo'ya'lił and g̲amxuto'ya'lił  ("right and left sides").   Right and left sides of the door (h, i) are hił`kutsa'lił and g̲amxutsa'lił respectively (pp. 415-416)
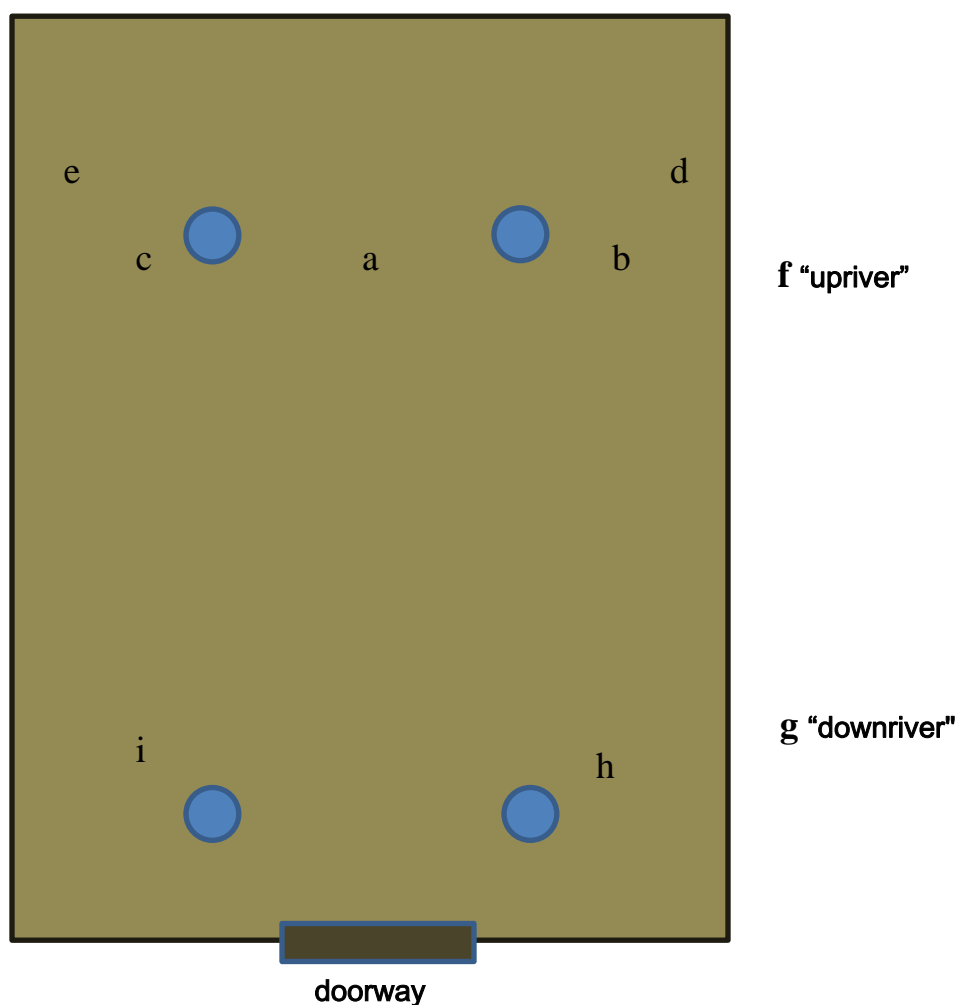
Figure 5.5 *Interior House Diagram (re-drawn from Boas 1909:415 fig 95)*

(309)   'nak -i'w -a'liɬ   "middle forehead of house" (Boas 1948:415)
         middle forehead of house

The term (a) is significant in relating the imagery of the body onto the house in a very literal

way.   Also of significance are the terms (f) up-river and (g) down-river in reference to the

rear and front portions of the sides (this will be re-visited in chapter 6).   These two terms

bring into focus the concept of the house as a metaphor of the landscape.   The application

is conceptual rather than literal as literally houses would face the river and their sides would

correspond to up-river and down-river not their front and back.   The terms focus the interior

of the house as a space that exists independent of its position in the landscape.   It is a

spatial interior that is conceptualized on its own terms, except that however malleable the

conceptualization of the space might be, its structural similarity to a body remains

consistent.

5.1.1 The house as a microcosm of the universe

While the modelling of the house as a microcosm of the universe is manifest in its architecture,

the traditional living arrangements of families within traditional Kwakwaka'wakw houses

reflected deeply embedded analogical conceptualizations of societal and environmental

structure.   The application of the terms "upriver" and "downriver" to the corresponding "back"

and "front" of the interior of the traditional house reflected the social rank and hierarchy of the

community with the chief and those of higher aristocratic standing occupying the back "upriver"

sections of the house and the lower ranked house members occupying the front or "downriver"

sections of the house. Figure 5.6 shows the interior "upriver" view of John Scow's bighouse at

Gwayasda̱ms (Gilford Island) village.   Traditionally the chief of the house occupied the back

portion of the house through an entrance which was situated between the two back house

posts.   Ernest Scow, nephew of John Scow remembers that his uncle maintained this section

of the house as his living quarters (personal communication).

Figure 5.6 unknown (Photographer). (pre-1950's). *Inside view of back of Scow house* [Photo],
"Image (PN 2430) courtesy of the Royal BC Museum, BC Archives"

The symbolism of the "upriver and "downriver" sections of the house interior are situated within

the concept of the house as a microcosm of the land. Once the body is outside of the house the

orientation is no longer symbolic but literal, the upriver component of the community taking its

appropriate placement within the literal physical environment of land and water (sea and river).
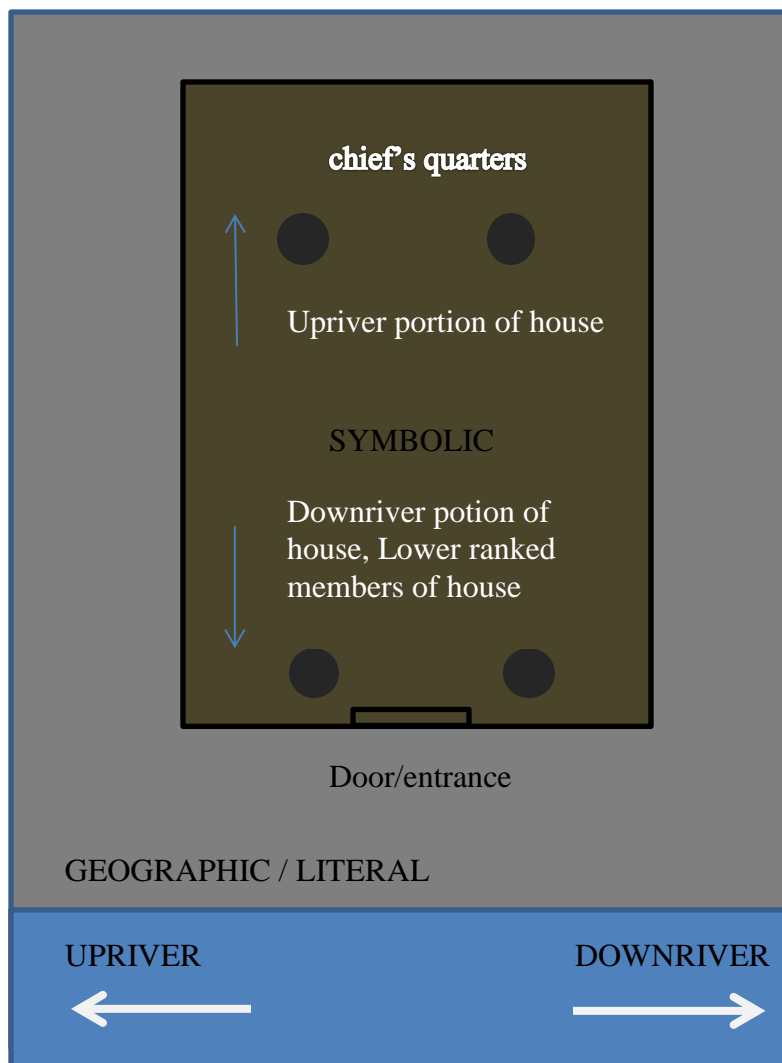
Figure 5.7 Symbolic Divisions of the House Interior

The house symbolically becomes a microcosm of the universe and the universe can also be

considered as an expanded house. Synthesized to this relationship is the conceptualization of

the body as a microcosm of the house and of the land. The house is analogous to both the

body and the land; the body is analogous to the house and the land, and the land is analogous

to the house and the body. The Kwakw̱aka̱'wakw rendering of this analogy as explicit pushes it

into a major metaphorical concept; the body is a house, and the house is a body; the house is

the land and the land is a house.   The body, the house and the land (world) are all reflections of

one another. The spatial relationships of objects within these defined spaces are relative only

to the expansion and contraction of the stage or platform defined by context (body, house or

land) but they maintain their structural relationships.

5.2   *-ił* "inside the house",   *-is* "outside on the land"

The experience of "the house" as intermediary between the body and the land has linguistically

marked significance. Just as the world is divided into regions of the land and sea the house

divides space into inside and outside, interior and exterior.   These are given expression in the

often applied suffixes –ił " in house" and –is "on beach or land".   The following examples are

taken from Boas (1947) "Glossary of the Suffixes" p.239

(310)   (-'s) "on ground" :   ḱwa'es "to be seated on ground" X173.22

lawal̲s "to go out of house" III 19.8

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

ḱwa̲dzis "to sit on beach"

g̲aldis "long breathed"

ṁagwis "round thing in stomach"

(312)   (-ił) "floor of house, in house"

lagwił "fire in house"

kwa'lił "to lie in house"

Also consider:

(313)   -eł   "into house, into inlet"

ʿaxeliła "to put into house"

-dabedłis̲ala "to tow ashore"

In Figure 5.8 shows the division of space into "inside the house" and "out on the land".
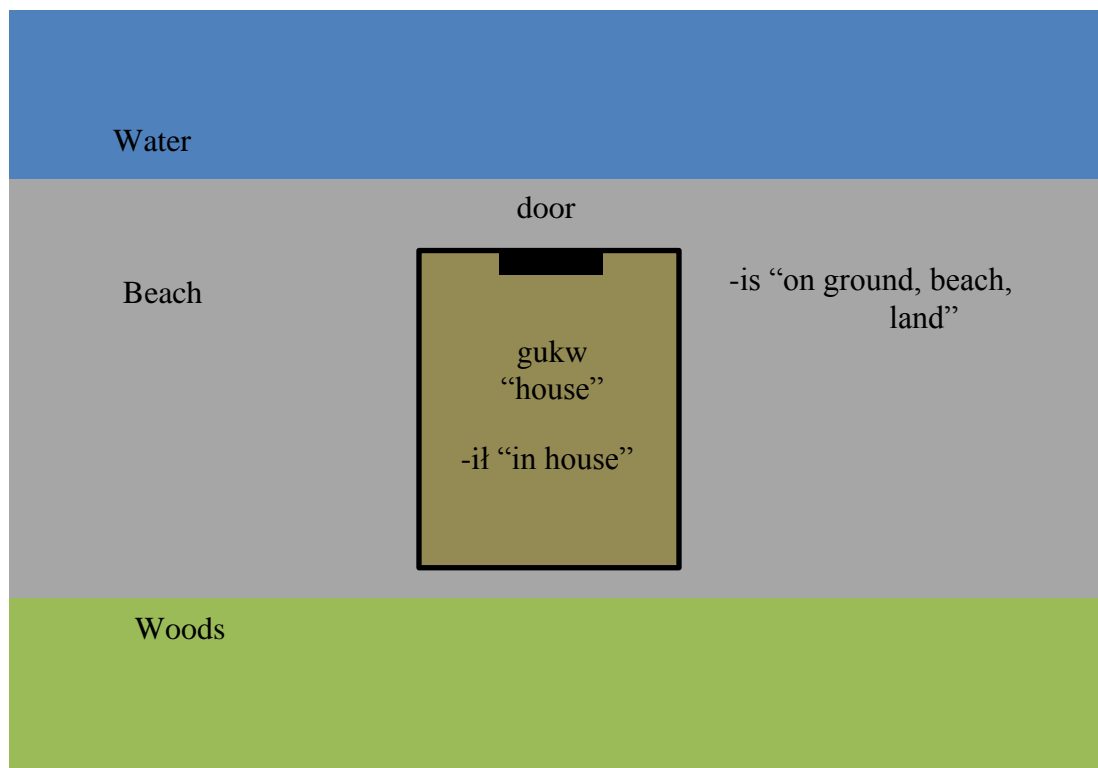
Figure 5.8 *–ił "in the house" , -is "on the land"*

-s' and *-is* are allomorphs of each other, as are *-ił* and *-eł*. We can consider the base forms to

be the meanings *-is* "on the ground outside" or *-ił* "in the house" These two suffixes are used

extensively in Kwak'wala speech and are often compulsory. It is a significant division in the

Kwakw̱aḵa'wakw mindset. If we consider English by comparison we see that the concepts "in

the house" (inside) and "on the land" (outside) are not required delineations in everyday speech.

(314)   ḱwadzisida gangananam   "The children are sitting (outside)
                                        [19/07/12]

(315)   ḱwa' eɬida gangananam   "The children are sitting (inside)
                                        [19/07/12]

(316)   ḱwa'eɬ'mo' abampex ?   "Is your mother home? (in house)
                                        [19/07/12]

(317)   ḱwa'es'mo' abampex?   "Is your mother home? (in the village)
                                        [19/07/12]

The division between the inside and the outside is a significant division in Kwakwaka'wakw

spatial conceptualization that is marked in the Kwak'wala language by the locatives generally

meaning "in the house" and "in the world".   While the definition of the suffix –iɬ appears to be

defined in relationship to interior spaces within the "house" the suffix –is can be defined more

broadly and poetically.   –is can encompass meanings such as "on the beach", "in the world",

"on the bottom of the water", "on the bottom of the body".

(318)   t̓ama'is   "beach" (Boas 1947:328)

(319)   'na'is   "light on beach" (Boas 1947:328)

(320)   bagwis   "merman" (Boas 1947:328)

(321) kwigw**is** "eagle of sea bottom" (Boas 1947:329)

(322) t'sagw**is** "with short breath, somewhat hungry (Boas 1947:329)

(323) t'łasod**is** "land in direction of ocean" (Boas 1947:329)

(324) bagwana'mił "man of the house" (Boas 1947:328)

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

(326) dławił "[person] stands on floor" (Boas 1947:328)

(327) nawiłam "family [house] story [nus=ił=am)" (Boas 1947:328)

(328) ha'nił "vessel is on floor" (Boas 1947:328)

(329) yaḱandił "speaker of house" (Boas 1947:328)

-is indicates the region of the land outside the house. *–ił* indicates the region of the interior. *-ił*

can also act as a locative meaning "on the floor of the house." These regions can have

symbolic significance as well. Kwakwaka'wakw ritualized gestures made on the secular level

can be linked to the sacred through analogy. The act of name giving by the father-in-law

through marriage to his son-in-law ritually mimics the original acts of naming performed by

animal ancestors to humanity (Boas 1935). These marriage rites of naming the son-in-law are

performed in the "house" in the same way that original naming occurred "in the land". The

difference is the setting or stage upon which analogous actions occur. The analogy also has a

temporal quality since the original act in the sacred past is mimicked in the secular present:

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

The intermediary of the house between the body and the land is also given form through

mythological description.   One version of the origins of the 'Wi'womasgam of the

Kwikwasut'inuxw describes how their original ancestor, a *kolus*, younger brother of the

thunderbird, descends to earth through the door of the upper world:

---

[44] C181 refers to Boas' own system for cataloguing his publications.

The Thunder-bird was living in the upper world with his wife; and the name of the

Thunder-bird was Too-Large. Now Too-Large was very downcast. He spoke to his

wife, and said, "Oh mistress, let us go to the lower world, that I may see it." Thus he

said. Then his wife said, "Oh master, do you know about your name, that you have

the name Too-Large, for you will be too large a chief in our lower world?" Thus said

his wife to him. The Too-Large only said, "Just let us get ready to go." Thus he said;

and then he put on his Thunder-bird mask, and his wife also put on her Thunder-bird

mask. They came flying through the door of the upperworld. (Boas 1902, p.165)

The Kwak'wala words for the last sentence are:

> Wa, gax'la'e p̓a̱ltsa lax t̓a̱xa̱lasa iḱadzi̓lisasa̱nts 'nalax.
> Then, came   flying   through door the   upper they   world

The universe is described as a giant house and the division between the land and the sky is

accessed through "a doorway".   In addition to this description we have the following ancestor

story of the `Tła̱t̓la̱lamin of the Ńa̱mg̱is which also describes the original descent of a *kolus*:

Ḵolus was a bird when he came down. He looked for a house. Then the bird

disappeared, and he began to be a man. He became possessed of a house, the

outside of which was cloudless; and stars were on the house that he brought down

with him. Then he married. He had children, and they became many, and they

became the `Tłat'łalamin clan. (Boas 1910, p. 81)

In this version the description of the house is analogous to the land in a more literal sense; the

roof of the house is a cloudless sky. Stars adorn the house as they do the night sky.

Figure 5.9 shows the *kolus* over grizzly bears back house posts from Johnny Scow's house

(see Figures 3.1 and 5.6). The right to use this carving was directly connected to the origin

narratives of the Kwikwasut'inuxw.   While literally the *kolus* forms the structure of the wooden

house of Johnny Scow it is also the *kolus* who form the foundation of origin and lineage which

holds up the "house" of Johnny Scow metaphorically. All material culture manifestations

amongst the Kwakwaka'wakw had to be connected to an origin or source either through lineage

or marriage and that story needed to be validated publicly. The "house" became the ultimate

expression of identity and as such was loaded with symbolism and rich metaphorical extensions

into social structure.

Figure 5.9 Duff, Wilson (Photographer). (1955). *Johnny Scow's kolus house posts* [Photo].
"Image (PN 2171) courtesy of The Royal BC Museum, BC Archives"

5.3 The house metaphor and social structure: the *'naṁima* is a house

The metaphor of "the body is a house" has particular significance in Kwakwaka'wakw social

structure in both literal and symbolic ways. The individual is conceived as a component of a

social whole. The extended family is represented through traditional house architecture and

occupation. Large houses were occupied by both independent and extended families with

independent family groups occupying partitioned and separated spatial sections of the house.

The primary social unit of the Kwakwaka'wakw is not the tribe but the *'naṁima* house groups

which form the tribes. These groups have been variably referred to in English as the "clans"

and sometimes "houses" of the tribe. In Boas' texts there are a few words that defy English

translation to the point that he chooses not to interpret them but to retain them in their

Kwak'wala form. The word *ʼnaṃima* is one of them.

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

Judith Berman in her 1991 dissertation "The Seal's Sleeping Cave" gives a valuable and

revealing morphological analysis of the word and the concept of ʼnaṃima.

> The name for the Kwagul descent group suggests that it was conceived of as in some
>
> way an egalitarian organization. Ńaṃimut derives from a stem ʼnaṃima, which in turn
>
> derives from a root, ʼnaṃ- or ʼnaṃa-. The root expresses notions similar both to English
>
> "one" as a measure of quantity, and "oneness" as a quality of relationship. It appears

in many terms for social relationships, in which both these meanings are combined:

ʼnaṁimut "descent group members", ʼnaṁwut, ʼnaṁwiyut "brother, cousin of same sex,

friend", ʼnaṁukw "friend, person", ʼnaṁaʼił, ʼnaṁaʼiłʼwut "house-mate, " ʼnamgustolut "age

mate," ʼnamxtłała, ʼnamxtłaʼiniʼ "[nuclear?] family," and so on (Boas n.d.:239-40). In the

word ʼnaṁimut, the root ʼnam- is suffixed with –[ˋ]ima "class of thing, kind of thing. "

Ńaṁima literally means "one kind of thing." By itself ʼnaṁima can be used to refer to

"brothers" or "cousins" (e.g. Boas 1897; 682; 1921; 824), as well as to the descent

group as a whole. The ʼnaṁimut, then, is a "group of fellows of the same kind." The

name at least connotes equality, sameness, commonality, unity and fellowship, in the

same way perhaps, that "brother" does in English. In English, Hunt always referred to

the ʼnaṁimut as a "brother tribe," that is, a social group composed of brothers (Hunt to

Boas, 11/12/16 et seq.) [Berman 1991, p. 70]

The *ʼnaṁima* can be translated as "the house". The house is used as a metaphor for the

ʼnaṁima. In the same way a literal Kwakwaka̱ʼwakw house is filled with linked families so the

ʼnaṁima is filled with the social standing of "family" members. Both the domestic household and

the social "house" (clan) are composed by human occupants in ranked order. This order was

represented in the placement of living quarters within the domestic house but became amplified

in the arrangement of seats in the ceremonial house where rank is accorded specific seating

arrangements based on the notion that the most highly considered guests were seated in the

"upriver" sides of the house. The specificity of seating arrangement is no longer adhered to

today.

The *'naṁima* is the fundamental unit of the tribe. When conducting a survey of Kwakwaka'wakw

social organization Boas (1897) lists four tribes under the Koskimo (Guskimukw) subdialect, two

under the Newettee (Nawidi) subdialect, and twenty under the Kwakiutl (Kwagu'ł) subdialect. It

is interesting to note that he defines only the Kwakiutl subdialect tribes as referring to

themselves as Kwakwaka'wakw[45]. Each tribe is composed of two to several *'naṁima*. I

consider the *'naṁima* to be the fundamental unit rather than the tribes as prior to contact the

majority of ceremonial inter-relations occurred amongst smaller less extended groups and only

since the early 1800's onwards do we see the rise of the inter-tribal ceremonialism of today.

This means that prior to contact traditional inter-relations occurred mainly at the *'naṁima* to

'naṁima level. This has shifted to the tribal level only in the last one hundred and fifty years

---

[45] The contemporary application of the name Kwakwaka'wakw to all the tribes is a fairly recent adjustment in self-identification. (1980's-today)

which required the fairly modern development of a tribal ranking system. This is clearly mapped

out in the unpublished notes of the anthropologist Wilson Duff when he recorded Mungo Martin

in the 1950-60s. When we consider the occupation of the coast by the Kwakwaka'wakw to

extend at least over thousands of years we can comparatively identify the *'naṁima* as the

fundamental social unit. To show by example how the *'naṁima* are composed under a tribal

group I have excerpted the following for the Dzawada'enuxw; whom Boas lists as Tsawatainox

(Boas 1897:331) In his notes published after his death Boas(1966:40-41) had added the 6th

'naṁima Gigalgam.

> 10. Tsawatainox (=people of the oulachon country). Kingcombe Inlet
> Clans: 1. Lilawagila (=the heaven makers – mythical name of raven).
>   2. Gigagama'i (=chiefs)
>   3. Wi'ukwama'i (=whom no one dares to look at)
>   4. 'Ka'kakila'ka (=always wanting to kill people)
>   5. Kikudilikala (=the Kawadilikalas)
>   6. Gigalgam (=the first ones)[46]

According to the Kwakwaka'wakw themselves who started to keep written ledger records of

potlatch give-aways as early as the 1880's once members had acquired some literacy the

'naṁima groups were kept track of under their corresponding tribal units confirming much of

---

[46] Ledger accounts list a seventh 'naṁima as the Yiyagadalal (personal communication R. Nicolson).

Boas documentation with some changes. As late as the 1960's the names of the

Dzawada̱'enux̱w *'nam̓ima* groups, their rank in correspondence to each other and the individual

standings of the *'nam̓ima* members were written down in ledger books.

A comparison of household compositions documented by the Canadian Census from 1881,

1891, 1901 and 1911, when the Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw still occupied traditional houses exhibit

evidence that *'nam̓ima* groups, for the most part, corresponded to household memberships.

The *'nam̓ima* family group is both symbolic of and literally identified with the concept of the

"house". The analogy of the body with the house by extension is given example by Boas in the

following way;

> The structure of the numayma ('nam̓ima) is best understood if we disregard the living
>
> individuals and rather consider the numayma as consisting of a certain number of
>
> positions to each of which belongs a name, a "seat" or "standing place," that means
>
> rank and privileges. Their number is limited, and they form a ranked nobility. I am
>
> told that among the thirteen tribes of the region extending from Fort Rupert to
>
> Nimpkish River and Knight Inlet, there are 658 seats (Boas 1925a, 83) These

names and seats are the skeleton of the numayma, and individuals in the course of

their lives, may occupy various positions and with them take the names belonging to

them (Boas 1966:50)

The seats of a *ṅaṁima* form a household, or literally a "house". According to Boas, "The

numayma consist of families embracing essentially household groups and the nearest relatives

of those who married into the household groups" (p. 48). The house is composed of a

membership, who are ranked by what Boas terms a "seat" or "standing place". Literally, once

inside the ceremonial house these seats are arranged in rank order. The membership of the

ṅaṁima form its body while the leadership (gigame') or chiefs form the head. This standing

was symbolized in spatial allocation both within the domestic household and the ceremonial.

The highest-ranking chief of the ʼnaṁimut is the head chief, called by a number of

terms, among them dłaxwamala "standing at the head" and xamagame' "(the one)

alone at the front." Lower ranking chiefs were called by such terms as gigał "second

chief," or gigabo'i "chief at the end" (Berman 1991, p. 71)

The *ḿamima* is conceptualized both as a house and as a body. In the Kwakwaka'wakw

mindset the equation of the two concepts are closely aligned.   A house is an architectural

version of the animate body made up by its occupants. The *ḿamima* groups lived on the

land in distinct locations sometimes associated with encounters with ancestors.

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

A general rule of land occupation followed that these locations were most often occupied

during summer months during what was considered the *baxus*, or season of the profane.

'Namima groups then joined one another for the sacred winter season rearranging the village

collective into a tribe. Sometimes several tribes would gather together rendering even greater

distinction in arrangement of houses in relationship to one another. It might serve our purpose

to consider at this point the linguistic analysis of the words for house and village. The word for

house in Kwak'wala is *gukw*. The word for 'one's own tribe' is *gukwalu't*. Obviously the stem

for 'one's own tribe' is the word for house. "The villagers are called the "fellow inhabitants of

the houses" *gukwalu't* (Boas 1966:37). The formal compositional expansion of the words

gukw and *gukwalu't* mimic the actual spatial expansion of "the house" to the tribe "several

houses".

The concept of expansion and contraction (microcosm/macrocosm) is reversed within the

transition of the domestic house to the ceremonial house.   The large multi-family dwellings of

the Kwakwaka'wakw were cleared of their partitions and emptied for the transition into a

ceremonial house. The ceremonial house was divided into a main central space with a central

fire and a back room reserved for initiates and preparations. Seating was arranged along the

walls, front entrance area and back. During ceremonies seats were deliberately arranged in

order of the rank or position of each *'naṁima* member. Depending on the type of ceremony

being enacted the house seating took on different forms. The attendance of more than one

'naṁima required certain adjustments as the *'naṁima* would be placed in order of rank next to

one another as well as recognizing internal standing. As mentioned before, prior to contact

ceremonial gatherings were more self-contained affairs with single *ʼhaṁima* or multiple

ʼhaṁima gatherings taking place. The occasion of multi-tribal gatherings occurred less often.

After contact, the Kwakwa̱ka̱ʼwakw tribes began to conduct their ceremonies more extensively

with each other forcing them to come up with additional ranking systems and seating

arrangements.   In other words, the seating delegations of the ceremonial house expand to

encompass and include additional *ʼhaṁima* and tribal groups. A single house under

ceremonial conditions expands from the occupation of a single *ʼhaṁima* (house, clan) to the

occupation of several *ʼhaṁima* and even tribes. In contemporary times this expansion now

includes all the Kwakwa̱ka̱ʼwakw tribes and acknowledgement of the individual *ʼhaṁima* groups

of the tribes has been largely forgotten. It has become part of our contemporary exercise to

return the understanding of the *ʼhaṁima* 'houses' to contemporary ceremonialism.   In a

figurative sense then when the *ʼhaṁima* groups gather together within the ceremonial house it

becomes a case of houses contained and arranged within a house analogous to how the

ʼhaṁima houses were at one time contained within the landscape – 'houses within a house'

under ceremonial conditions mimics "houses within the land (the world as a house)" under

geographic conditions. That this same 'house as landscape' can also be related to as 'house

as body' is reflected on by Judith Berman in the following:

Three interrelated metaphors, which were used with particular frequency to talk

about the ʼnaṁimut, embody the notions of "rank" and "substance." These are the

metaphor of the house, the metaphor of the body, and the metaphor of precedence.

3.3.3. Chiefs and the metaphor of the house. The myth that describes the founding

of the ʼnaṁimut, and the origin of ʼnaṁimut seats and prerogatives, is often called

nuyamiɬ, literally "myth in house" or "History of the house." In this trope, the bighouse

is used as a metaphor for the ʼnaṁimut as a whole. (Berman 1991:94)

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

Lexically, the usage of a number of words and morphemes connects houses with

the bodies of animate beings. The somatic suffix =axsta "mouth, at or on mouth, to

do something with mouth," is often used with the suffix =iɬ "in or of the house" to

refer to the door into a house or a room. A door is thus literally a "house-mouth"

(=axstaʼliɬ). Thus we have forms such as ḱwaxstaʼliɬ "to sit at door of room" (ḱwa- "to

sit," =axsta "mouth," =iɬ "in the house, of the house"). A related suffix =itɬ, means,

variously, "to go into house, to go into mouth, to go into inlet."

Not only is the house door like a mouth, the whole house-front is like a face or head.

The suffixes –<u>ga</u>m "face, head" and –[g]iu "forehead, to have on forehead," are used

in this regard. Thus, the planks forming the front façade are called, individually or

collectively, tsa<u>ga</u>mi' "standing on edge at the face" or "face that is a vertical plane"

(tsa<u>g</u>- "vertical plane," –[<u>g</u>]am "face, head," –i' "nominalizing suffix"; Boas 1921:805-

6).   Similarly, a beam supporting carvings on the upper edge of a house-front is

katiwi' "long object [put on] forehead" (kat- "to put long object somewhere," –[g]iu

"forehead, to have on forehead," –i' "nominalizing suffix"; Boas 1921:810). Inside

the house the "front" is reversed. The rear of the house, where the chief's living

quarters are located and where the chief and the highest-ranking nobles sit during

public events, is called 'ugwiwa'liɫ, literally, "forehead inside the house" ('u- "empty

root[47]," –[g]iu "forehead," –iɫ "in the house"; Boas 1921:944. (Berman 1991, p. 77)

The house is decorated in accordance with the *'ha<u>m</u>ima* history. Its' architecture of post and

lintel beams are often, though not always, carved with the images of ancestral encounters and

---

[47] In accordance with Chapter 3, I consider this form to be a categorizer rather than an empty root.

acquired crests through marriage rendering in a figurative way the skeleton or backbone of the

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

> The chief was the 'naṁimut's head; the commoners were 'ugwidi' the "body," or
>
> bagwiłidi', "chief's men of the body," both terms using the suffix –git "body as a
>
> whole, all over surface of body." The chief's official speaker was called, variously,
>
> the "mouth" (sams), "tongue" (ḱalam), the "blood" ('alkw), and the "belly" (taḱi) of the
>
> chief (Curtis 1915:154,176) (Berman 1991, p.81)

The primary social unit of the Kwakwaka'wakw was the 'naṁima, which can be variously

translated as 'clan',' family group', or 'tribal subdivision'.   Boas describes the 'naṁima as "the

ultimate units bound together by strict social obligations." (Boas 1966:37) The most accurate

metaphoric translation of the 'naṁima is the "house". I am proposing that one of the major

metaphors for Kwakwaka'wakw spatial conceptualization is the three level

expansion/contraction of "the body is a structural and spiritual equivalent to the house; the

house is a structural and spiritual equivalent to the land; the land is a structural and spiritual

equivalent to the body."   This conceptualization rendered an empathetic approach to

Kwakwaka'wakw ideas of the community (social life) and of the land.   The community is seen

as an integral extension of the individual body. The land is seen as an integral extension of

both the body and the community. Individual relationships had a higher definition of social

placement in that the individual was seen as being a part of a whole social body. The individual

is surrounded by family which is surrounded by the *ṅaṁima*, which is surrounded by the tribe.

The individual human body is encased within the metaphoric house of the *ṅaṁima*.   The

ṅaṁima house/bodies in turn are symbolically contained within the ceremonial house through

seating arrangements where social obligations are negotiated and played out. More literally,

the ceremonial house is conceptually transformed into the universe with the roof representing

the sky, the floor representing the earth and below the ground representing the land of the

ghosts; all significant domains of the Kwakwaka'wakw cosmos.

The extended metaphor of the house as the land renders an approach to the landscape which

is empathetic in nature. The land is considered an extension of the individual body and family

group. My reiteration of this point may appear repetitive but I place a heightened focus on this

statement as it is the primary proposition of this thesis.   Kwak'wala words introduced in chapter

3 are emphatic of this sympathetic relationship.

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

(331)   u - `kwa'edz -e'   "branch side of a tree" (Boas 1947:323,358)
                             "front part of belly" (Boas1948:31)

(332)   a'w – axst -e'   "mouth of kelp bottle, inlet etc." (Boas 1947:305, 1948:27)

(333)   u -'bał -`tsan -e'   "ends of sleeves, or branches" (Boas 1948:29)

(334)   i -'aw -idz -e'   "front of belly of a person, or mountain" (Boas 1948:28)

5.3.1 Temporal considerations of the social body

In regards to temporal metaphor Berman gives the following analysis of the concept of "the

social body in time".   This analysis renders a structural analogy of the head or front as having

"precedence in time" and the rear or back as "following in time"   The front or head of the

'namima are represented by the chiefs or highest standing nobility who occupy these positions

while the lower standings are occupied by the rear or back. This only makes sense in a

temporal context if the association between the chiefs and nobility is made as the front or head

because they are closest in line to the point of origin of the 'namima (see chapter 3). According

to the rules of descent the oldest family lines based on primogeniture are the closest to the

original ancestor and thus of higher standing. Younger lines are more distantly associated with

the original ancestor and therefore, further away; literally "further away in time." She gives the

following linguistic analysis:

As noted above, many of the terms for chiefs use the suffix –[g]ame' "first, in front of,

ahead" (Boas 1947:360). The common term for "chief", "gigame', derives from gig-

"chief, chiefly," and -[g]ame' "first, in front of." The chief is the one in front, but

before him came the ancestors. Ancestors are called by many different terms.

Some are derived from kin terms, including wiẃump, literally "fathers, uncles

[bilaterally?]" (1910:28) and gagasala, "great-grandparents, and great greatuncles

[?]" (1921:843). Many are derived from gal- "first, to be first," among them gali' "the

first one" (1921:223; n.d. 255), and galdzasi bakwam or galdzasi bagwanam "the

first Indians, the ancient men" (1921:77, 547). Also from the stem gal- come the

terms galnukw "belonging to ancestors" (1921:1247), and galgila "to make first

things, to institute" –what the ancestors did (1909:204). Still other terms derive from

the stem gig- "chiefly." The most common is gigagiwe' "chief at the forehead" or

perhaps, "chief at prow" (1921:842); another is giga'aṅawe' "chief anchor-line, chief

root" (1921:843)…

…In the term gigagiwe' "chief on forehead" we again encounter the analogy

comparing the 'na̱mimut to a body. Here, however, it is a body laid out in time, not

space. In time the ancestor stands at the very front and top. (Berman 1991, p.84-

85)

Much like the spatial character of contracting and expanding frames from the minute to the

grandiose (body, house, universe) temporal character also expands and contracts according to

context. The current head chief is the temporal equivalent in time to the original ancestor. If the

metaphor of the family tree is applied then the chiefs and nobility are those closest to the root

and are formed by the oldest of the oldest lines. Younger lines form the outer branches. In the

words of a song a Chief uses the metaphor of his body as a tree.

I am the only great tree, I the chief! I am the only great tree, I the chief!   You are

right under me tribes! You are my younger brothers under me, tribes! You sit in the

middle of the rear of the house, tribes! You surround me like a fence, tribes! I am

the first to give you property, tribes! I am your Eagle, tribes! (Boas 1921, p.1290)

This speech is imbued with the notion of precedence "that which comes first". In this context it

is the ones who come first *in time* that are granted the spatial equivalence of being "ahead of" or

"in front of." In this regard Berman observes:

The 'naṁimut is portrayed not just as an animal, but also as a tree, which in

traditional thought was also an animate being. The chief is 'uṕik, "post" or "tree,"

and the chief's forebears are 'awa'nawe', the "root" of the tree. Commoners are

bagwaɫidi' which means "men of the body," but also, since the suffix –git found in

this term can refer to various types of bodies, "Men of the [tree] trunk" (Boas

1921:836; Hunt to Boas, 2/4/18). In Hunt's description, the chief "is the body of a

walkw or great cedar tree, and the branches of this tree is the tribe of the oṕek

[,the] chief, Hanging onto the chief body as it is said by the tribes…the

Gusgamuxw use [the word] oṕek for [the] Post of Heaven that holds up the sky]"

(letter of Hunt to Boas, 4/11/180. When a chief and his heir die together, it is as if

"both tree and root were killed" (Curtis 1915:113) (Berman 1991, p. 83-84)

The metaphor is a spatial one in arranging placement of membership in space, but also if we

consider the growth cycles of a tree it is a temporal phenomenon that renders first the root and

trunk and then the branches. It is because they come first that the root and stem (chiefs and

nobility formed by the oldest of the oldest) are considered to be integral and of more importance

in social context.   Consider the following example which is repeated quite often throughout

Kwakwaka'wakw documented histories.

> In some cases we find in a tribe a subdivision which has for its name the stem of the
>
> tribal name with the ending –am, as in the division just mentioned, the Sint'lam and
>
> dłik'am and outside of the Kwakiutl proper, the Mamalilik'am. The meaning of this
>
> ending is "the real ones." According to the statement of the Indians there was, in
>
> former times, in almost each division a noble family that bore a name of this type,
>
> while the rest of the people were designated by the ordinary name of the division.
>
> Mythologically this is explained as meaning that the select group, called "the real"
>
> members of the division, were descended from the ancestor, while the other families
>
> at an early time became associated with the ancestor without being descended from
>
> him.

On the other hand, according to tradition, several pairs of subdivisions of one sept of

the Kwakiutl are considered as the descendants of two brothers, one the elder, the

other of the younger one. (Boas 1944, p. 357)

The concept of primogeniture, or custom of the first born, was so strongly recognized within

traditional Kwakwaka'wakw society that younger branches often broke off in order to form their

own *'haṁima* ; or to create "their own house." The relationship is one of temporal character with

that of the oldest and most ancient taking precedence.   In order to consider the significance of

this concept to Kwakwaka'wakw worldview we need only consider that the reverse has much

more cultural currency in contemporary Western culture where in many contexts youth and "the

new" are infused with more value than the aged.

Consistent with the idea of primogeniture the Kwakwaka'wakw social body in time is not

oriented facing forward to "the future" however, as in many other cultures, but is oriented

towards the past as we saw in chapter 4. The movement is also cyclical rather than linear as

explained by the Kwexa (Kwagu'ł) chief Charlie Nowell (1870-1956). When chiefs give up their

positions at the head of the *'haṁima'* they then occupy lower positions.

When I gave the potlatch with the strap from the copper, I changed my name to

Hamdzidagame, which was the name Lagius gave me, and I gave Alfred the name

Melide, which means "people are satisfied with olachen grease." At the same time, I

put him in third position in my clan, where I was, and I went to the lower one – the

ninth. From then on I received the gifts to him in potlatch myself and took care of

him, but it was his position just the same. The same year, at Alert Bay, Johnny

Whanuk also gave my brother, Owadi, articles for marriage, because my brother

had married his sister. With these articles my brother gives a potlatch, calling all the

same tribes that I called. At the same time he told all the people that Alfred's name

will be "giving away of big coppers," and my brother put him in number one position

in our clan, and my brother went down to his other position lower where he had

another name. This was the sixth position in our clan, but he continued to get gifts

for Alfred in the first position and take care of them until Alfred would be old enough

to take them himself. If my brother had died before Alfred, then Alfred would have

been head chief. (Ford 1940, p. 177)

It is a constantly renewing social body not constantly moving forward in time as we might

attempt to understand it but rather continually self-perpetuating; a moving forward, then

stepping back. Hence, we get metaphoric speeches such as the following:

In all speeches reference is made to the adherence to old customs. They "walk

the road made by the creator of chiefs" (ḵasa lax t'axalasa gigamegila R790.62);

they walk in "that which results in the groove of the world" (xwalt'alidzam R789.25).

The chief says, "I follow the road made by my late ancestors" (lan nagałtawix

t'axila'yasan wiwomp'woła CIII 124:22) (Boas, 1949, p.238)

An interesting observation is that the word for road in Kwak'wala is the same as that used for

doorway.   In an alternative metaphor one could say "walking a road" is "entering a house".

(335)   t'ax (ala)   "door, trail, custom" (Boas 1948:173)

(336)   t'axila[48]   "to make trail, establish custom" (Boas 1948:173)

In order to perpetuate oneself both individually and in the social body one must have a

descendent to replace you; preferably a son, a daughter, or a grandchild but in the case of

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[48] It is quite possible this is the same word as (335). Boas has two different entries (t'axala & t'axila) as does the First Voices Kwak'wala website so I have retained them as separate examples.

absence of these immediate descendants a more distant relative would suffice.   The imperative

however lies in the perpetuation. As membership ages it is replaced by descendants but the

emphasis is that the descendants *are* simply a perpetuation of the social body made up of

individuals from the very beginning.   The importance of this perpetuation is expressed by

parents and grandparents who refer to their descendants in the following ways:

> …children are addressed as "the one who owns (me) like a dog ('wadzid). The
>
> grandfather calls himself "old dog" ('wayoł R1313.3). Parents also call themselves
>
> "slaves" (k̲aku R712:44); and they call the children "treasures" (długwe' R712:44).
>
> (Boas 1944:238)

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

> This animal is laid out in time as well as moral space; the ancestor is the "chief at
>
> the forehead" of the animal. In general, what comes before in time or space is
>
> chiefly, ancestral; what follows is lower-ranking and contemporary…To which animal
>
> is the ʼnaṁimut being equated? One answer is the founding spirit-animal, the "first
>
> one moving in the world," from which the ʼnaṁimut has descended. Present day

'naṁimut members, especially the nobles, are "of one kind" through their descent from this ancestor. They are his children; in a sense they are his perpetuated self, as is expressed in the eponymous descent-group names. The chief in and of himself perpetuates the ancestor. (Berman 1991, p. 88)

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

The Kwakiutl were not much concerned with theorizing about where their children came from; in general, they thought of babies as ancestors who had returned to this world. In accordance with this view, it was customary, when a person died, for those comforting the survivors to say, "after all, the departed one will come again, born to his niece or his granddaughter." Proofs of reincarnation were numerous: the baby might look like the deceased, he might have a birthmark where the ancestor had a scar, or, as an adult he might evince a special skill such as wood carving which could only mean that he was an experienced wood carver reborn. The great

number of births which seemed to follow this pattern reinforced the belief and

insured its persistence. (Ford 1940, p. 29)

In many ways it is difficult to talk about time without making reference to space. Spatial

metaphors are used in order to conceptualize time. The "body in space" appears to be a

fundamental metaphor for time conceptualization. In order to understand the importance of

metaphor for the understanding of societal belief systems Lakoff & Johnson (1999) explain how

the metaphors "time is a resource" and "time is money" operate in contemporary Western

culture:

Our culture happens to have a great many institutions that reify the Time is A

Resource and Time Is Money metaphors. One of them is the institution of paying

people according to the amount of time they work—by the hour or week or year.

Another is the institution of appointment books, by which time is budgeted. There

are also the institutions of time clocks and business hours, which are ways of pairing

income with time worked. And of course, there are deadlines, which define the

limitations of time resources.

Not every culture has such institutions, and not every culture has a Time Is A

Resource metaphor. According to anthropologist Elizabeth Brandt (personal

communication) the Pueblos do not even have in their languages a means of

saying the equivalent of "I didn't have enough time for that." They can say "My

path didn't take me there" or "I couldn't find a path to that," but those are not

instances of time being conceptualized as a resource. The view in which time is

not considered a resource, in which there is no rush to get things done with

maximum efficiency, is sometimes viewed mockingly by those who are not part of

Native American culture as "Indian time." Western businessmen seeking to set up

factories in Third World countries often see Indigenous peoples who do not

conceptualize time as a resource as being lazy. Part of Westernization is the

importation of institutions that reify the Time Is A resource and Time As Money

metaphors (p.165).

To be clear, many cultures exhibit space/time crossover for metaphorical understanding of

temporal experience. What renders the Kwakwaka'wakw experience of time particular in

relationship to its spatial metaphors is the concept of expansion and contraction. While the

physical experience of the body in space is mediated by scale from the minute to the grandiose

reflecting structural similarity, time also expands and contracts based on individual and social

considerations.   The individual life experience is bounded by a single lifetime which can be

metaphorically aligned to the span of "a day" or "a year". However, the temporal experience is

expanded to consciously address the inter-generationalism of one's ancestors and

descendants. The boundedness of the single lifetime is expanded to encompass an almost

infinite experience from the beginning of time through to eternity. This can be spatially

compared to the ideas of the bounded independent body in space outwards to encompass the

expanded social body of the family (*naṁima* = house) in the world. This belief system exhibits

itself through narrative accounts where time (as well as space) is represented as both expanded

and contracted as in the following examples:

Now we will talk again about Head-Winter-Dancer (`Tse<u>k</u>ame'). Now his wife,

Winter-Dance-Woman (`Tse<u>k</u>ama<u>ga</u>), was with child. When she had been with child

for four months, she gave birth to a boy. Head-Winter-Dancer said at once to his

wife, "His name shall be Upper-End ('N<u>a</u>lbe')."

Head-Winter-Dancer washed him always in cold water. When Upper-End was four

months old he was a full-grown man. (Boas 1902, p. 180)

This passage illustrates the compression of time in the growth of 'Na̱lbe'. What would normally

take two decades; the growth of an infant to adult-hood, is accomplished in four months. In

another example a chief refers to his original ancestor and then to himself collapsing the

temporal space between them:

Immediately, `Kumu̱kwa arose and spoke. He said, "True chief, true is your word,

chief Lalaku'tsa. My ancestor, according to the myth from the beginning,

`Nalanukwa̱mgi̱lakw came down with supernatural power. There was nothing that

he went for in vain when he went into the house of `Kumu̱kwa at `Tsigwa'tsi. Then

he obtained supernatural power/ all kinds of dancing paraphernalia, the sea-monster

dance, the killer-whale dance and the /great bullhead, and therefore his name was

`Tła̱kwagila and `Kumu̱kwa. *I am 'Nalanukwa̱mgi̱lakw.* [49](Boas 1925, p. 269)

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[49] Italics added by author

These are only two examples of many where the temporal passage of time is rendered as

flexible rather than fixed.   Like space, time can collapse, be compressed and pass quickly or

can expand.   Rather than being conceptualized as the fixed passage of set amounts, the

Kwakw<u>a</u>k<u>a</u>'wakw perceive time and spatial relationship as flexible and fluid. In spatial terms a

body expands to become a house, the house expands to become the world. In reverse, the

world compresses and becomes a house and a house is compressed to become an individual

body; a body which can swallow guests like food.   Time is equally flexible. A single day is

likened to a year, or to a lifetime. The single lifetime of a chief is stretched to encompass all

time. These concepts of spatial and temporal analogy are the basis of the empathetic

relationship between the body, the house and the land/world. Each are a vital component of the

other and all are conceptually connected as similar, or the same. It is from this belief system

that the rich metaphorical imagination of the Kwakw<u>a</u>k<u>a</u>'wakw emerges into artistic expression.

5.4 The house metaphor in Speech and Song

The Body=House metaphor can found in ceremonial speech and song.   Consider the following

speech:

Ah, this is our name, tribes! Ah, this is the great house of our famous one, tribes! –It

speaks, the great house, your great famous one, tribes! Like hunger sounds this

great house, carrying in one hand the tribes all around the world! It sounds like

hunger for those at the far end of the world, tribes! Go on, chief, invite them to come

to make a turmoil, and to harden the floor of the large house of our chief, tribes!

(Boas 1921, p. 1279)

In this speech the house is given animation through description. The house carries the other

tribes in its hand like a person. The house is hungry like a person. Hardening the floor of the

house is a reference to dancing which packs down the floor. In the next speech a chief refers to

his guests that he looks for to arrive at his beach as salmon and his village/house a salmon

weir:

…and he ran up and stood on the place made for standing on at the top of the

watchman's pole.   Then he shaded his eyes with his right hand and stood looking

seaward. Then he said aloud, "Ha, ha, ha, hu, wa." Then he spoke and said, "My

schools of salmon are coming to my salmon weir here, chiefs." Four times he said

thus. Then spoke one who belonged to the numaym Kukwaḱum of the `Ḵumuya'yi

and whose name was Hawa̲lkwala̱ł and said, "Now go on, chief `Tła̱ku̲dłas, haul in

hard that you may ascertain what kind of salmon it is that your salmon weir, chief,"

thus said he. (Boas 1940, p. 234)

The tribes paddling to attend the "potlatch" of the host chief are descibed as salmon which are

swimming towards the entrance of a fish weir. In another speech the salmon weir is likened to

the ceremonial house and again, the guests as salmon:

> "Stand up, Kwagu'ł, that I may call out of the house this chief that he may come and
>
> look at his guests." Thus he said and then he said aloud, "Come chief `Tłasutiwalis,
>
> now your salmon have come; they have come in great schools," said he. And
>
> immediately `Tła̲kudłas came out of the door of his house and stood outside. The
>
> he put his right hand over his eyes and looked at the canoes that were stopping
>
> outside. Then he put down his hand and he spoke and said aloud, "Come,
>
> `Tłasutiwalis, your salmon has arrived," said he as he told all the men to beat fast
>
> time on the front of the house. (Boas 1925:173)

Like salmon, the guests to a potlatch provide vital sustenance.   The ceremonial exchange between the host chief and his guests is also empathetic in nature. The chief needs his guests as witnesses to validate his ancestral claims, to validate his familial connection to the past, the present, and the future through his descendants. Without them there is no substance to his identity. It is only through communal acknowledgement that his crests and stories carry any weight.   Without an audience his speeches and his stories are only words. It is the validation of his guests that bring these stories and crests to life. The chief and his guests are necessary to each other in the same way that sustenance and those whom consume that sustenance validate one another. By eating prey such as animals and fish, humans are able to continue to existence physically. This is the reason for the various prayers before killing or eating. In exchange for their physical bodies the animals and fish are fed spiritually through prayer. The Kwakwaka'wakw world is one of constant transformations and exchange both physical and spiritual. This is also the reason guests are paid. It acknowledges the social and cultural sustenance provided to the chief by their attendance and validation of his social standing embodied in artistic and oral performance. This is the key to understanding the particular metaphor of potlatch guests as food.

The metaphor of "the house is the world" is again prevalent in the following song:

Praise, the killer whale, coming up in the house,

real in the good house, the chief real (Boas 1985, p. 730)

These words are sung in the ceremonial house. During a performance the mask of a whale

would be displayed imitating the breaching motions of whales in the ocean. Literally, this is

enacted in the house, but metaphorically it reference the action of whales "in the world" which in

breaching the surface of the sea are "coming up in the house"; the house floor of the world

being the surface of the ocean.   Figure 5.10 shows a killer whale dancer with other dancers as

a part of Edward Curtis' 1914 silent film "In the Land of the Head Hunters (In the Land of the

War Canoes)" The dancers would not normally be seen together this way. Curtis grouped

them for dramatic effect. During real ceremonies the killer whale mask would be performed by

itself.

Figure 5.10 Curtis, Edward, S. (Photographer). (1914). *Group of Winter Dancers.* [Photo],
Photograph courtesy of Northwestern University Library, *Edward S. Curtis's The North
American Indian,"* 2003 http://digital.library.northwestern.edu./curtis/

In the next song from Boas (1895), wealth is described as a mountain and the importance of the

idea of origins is also reiterated.

Tale from the beginning, your tale from the beginning,

you came up, Your `Kumukwa house came up,

real wealth is moving, real wealth coming ashore,

wealth on his back, making a mountain of property,

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

In this song, the name `Kumukwa refers to the chief of the sea.   In Kwakwaka'wakw histories,

the house of `Kumukwa is located under the sea, and is made of copper. Beings who

encounter this being are gifted with his house and other treasures.   This is the reference to

"mountains of wealth" which is coming ashore. All the treasures come from the sea. In a

metaphoric sense the sea *is* the house of `Kumukwa .   The story itself is considered an aspect

of this wealth and is referred to as "your story from the beginning". Figure 5.11 is an Edward

Curtis image of a `Kumukwa mask.   Note the bird on his head which is most often a loon and

the split whale's tail near the back of the mask emblematic of its oceanic origin.

Figure 5.11 Curtis, Edward, S. (Photographer). (1914). *Kŏmuqi-Qágyuhl* [Photo],
Photograph courtesy of Northwestern University Library, *Edward S. Curtis's The North
American Indian,"* 2003 http://digital.library.northwestern.edu./curtis/

The figurative language used in ceremonial speech and song composition are comprehensible

under the more fundamental metaphoric understanding of the Body=House=Land/World

metaphor.

5.5 The house metaphor and the structure of button blankets

The Body=House metaphor concept emerged in the new form of the button blanket. The

Kwakwaka'wakw were extremely innovative with the new materials that were introduced with

contact with European traders. Prior to contact, clothing and blankets were manufactured by

hand from cedar and wool, either dog or mountain goat. (Jonaitis, 2006)   When wool trade

blankets were introduced on the coast the Kwakwaka'wakw quickly took to wearing them and

using them as a form of ceremonial currency.   In Figure 5.12, a photo taken in Quatsino Sound,

wool trade blankets are hung around the house adorned with buttons and paper currency.

Figure 5.12 Leeson, Ben. W. (Photographer). (ca.1900). *The money potlatch* [Photograph].
Photo courtesy the Vancouver Public Library (14088).

By the latter parts of the 19th century ceremonial trade blankets adorned with trade buttons were

being manufactured as potlatch gifts and ceremonial regalia. Though museum collectors shied

away from these innovations due to their own concerns over cultural authenticity the button

blankets were completely traditional in their conceptualization.   The blankets functioned both as

regalia worn over the body, and as two-dimensional expressions of crest lineages. While

Figures 5.12 and 5.14 show the blankets in two-dimensional display Figure 5.13 shows men

wearing button blankets at the potlatch of Thomas and Charlie Nowell held in Alert Bay in 1900.

Note the particular overlapped way with exposed left shoulder the man on the far left wears his

blanket.

There is a theory articulated by George McDonald, former director of the Canadian Museum of

Civilization that the blankets "replicated housefronts, but they changed the dimensions of

meaning by reversing them…and changing the frame of reference from the social (the painted

housefront) to the personal (articles of clothing). (Jenson, 1986, p. 1) This theory was also told

to me years ago by my uncle Ernie Willie when we started to make button blankets for our

potlatches.   The theory is that the red borders are the sides and roof of a house. The break in

the middle at the top is where the main smoke-hole is in traditional house architecture.   The

crest is considered the spirit of the house and functions much like the crest on the front of a

house or on its house-posts.   The symbols sewn onto the borders of blankets tend to depict

natural elements pertinent to the territory of the *'naṁima* (clan/house) or tribe depicted.   For

example, the triangular forms on the border of the blanket worn by the man with exposed

shoulder symbolize mountains.

Figure 5.13 Newcombe, Charles. (Photographer). (1900). *Photo taken at potlatch of Tom and Tłalis Nowell in Alert Bay*. [Photo] "Image (PN 254) courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives"

The connection between the body and the house is pronounced in the concept of the button

blanket. The blanket covers the body as does the house. Its two-dimensional layout mimics the

architecture of a house. The red color of the border is said to represent blood and the red cedar

bark of the Kwakwaka'wakw winter ceremonial.

Figure 5.14 Leeson, Ben. W. (Photographer). (ca. 1900) *Quatsino ceremonial masks and blankets.* [Photo]. Photograph courtesy of the Vancouver Public Library (14089)

In Figure 5.14 the blanket has been hung upside down but the basic composition of borders along top and bottom and the main crest in the centre is still evident. The invention of button blankets is a significant example where the internal cultural meaning, or concept remains intact but is interpreted in a new formal expression using new materials. The object as a blanket

performs the same conceptual function as the traditional house in providing a cover for the body while simultaneously asserting historical lineage.

5.6 Summary

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

landscape and how the house is conceived of, imagined and perpetuated in Kwakwaka'wakw

culture.   The next chapter will focus on Kwakwaka'wakw conceptualization of the land.

Chapter 6: La<u>x</u>a <u>a</u>wi̇nagwis' "On the Land"
Kwakw<u>aka</u>'wakw Geographic Space

<u>Dream of Malidi</u>

I dreamed I was going to the upper world, which was very beautiful. Then I saw

many people and all of them seemed to be women. One of them came to me and

spoke to me and advised me never to speak a lie, "for I know that you always lie

when you talk about the feasts that you give to your tribe in the country down below.

If you go on talking this way you will fare ill with our chief here when he judges you.

And you shall not steal your brother's property and you shall not hate your fellow

men. If you obey what I tell you will have no reason to fear," thus she said to me.

Then she asked me to go home. She opened the rear door of the house and I went

out, and when I looked up I saw my house. Then I awoke." (Boas 1925, p.51)

6.1 Land and sea / upriver - downriver

When we talk about geography we are talking about the lay of the land. Much of this is

considered to be absolute. Places are fixed in spatial relationship to one another. However,

perspective plays an integral role in our conceptualization of geography. While our physical

bodies can observe from certain points aspects of the landscape it is beyond our human observational capability to observe all of the earth at once. So humans have developed conventions, such as cartography (mapmaking), that allow us to understand space within the landscape. Each culture has developed their own set of conventions to help them both conceptualize the landscape and to navigate it. The conceptualization of geographic space, as described through the Kwak'wala language is based on the division of the land and the sea and the occupation of village sites within the intermediate zone between them. This primary division is given further definition by a secondary application loosely defined as up-river/down-river.

This chapter deals with the primary and secondary geographic orientation systems in an attempt to elucidate the self-contained and high cultural relevance of the Kwakw<u>aka</u>'wakw system. The body and the house are used as a structural prototype for the Kwakw<u>aka</u>'wakw spatial understanding of the land. The body/house is the central location off of which the primary regions of *t̓as-* in front of (seaward), *at̓* "behind (towards the forest)", *'nal-['n<u>a</u>l-]* "upriver" and *gwa-* "downriver" are derived. The body/house is also used to map structural characteristics onto the description of the landscape rendering a culturally amplified animation. The regions the sky, the earth (house) and below the ground are also significant.

6.1.1 Prior Research

Prior research has attempted to translate the absolute geographic orientation words of "north,

south, east and west" onto Kwakwaka'wakw geographic terms with varying results. The earliest

recorded European contact dates for the Kwakwaka'wakw territories are placed within the late

18th Century. In 1786, James Strange, a British ship trader visited what is now called Queen

Charlotte Straight. In 1792, American, British and Spanish ships also travelled the territory

(Codere, 1990; Menzies, 1923, Galois, 1994). These traders documented to some degree the

geographic aspects of the lands they were travelling for their own purposes. It was not until

nearly a full century later that a documentation of the understanding of Kwakwaka'wakw

geographic perspective was attempted by outsiders. In 1885, the celebrated Canadian

geologist George M. Dawson (1849-1901) travelled through Kwakwaka'wakw territory and

collected a small selection of nine geographical terms published in 1885.   Twenty years later,

Edward S. Curtis also recorded a limited vocabulary of what he called "cardinal points" which

was published in 1915.   In some ways, Curtis' work overlaps with Dawson's in relaying primarily

the directions of the wind.

Table 6.1 Dawson (1887:33) and Curtis (1915:331) Early Collection of Geographic Terms

Dawson		Curtis			
	*	**Koskimo	Tłatłasikoala	Wikeno	Haisla
south-east	nul'-tse				
north-west	gwi-na-kw				
out to sea	tłā-sakw				
northwest wind	tsà'-kw	tsá-ḵwa	tsá-ḵwa	tsá-ḵwa	há-a-yu-hla
southeast wind	mat-las	mū-hlás	mū-hlás	mū-hlá-yal	mū-hlái-a-la
southwest wind	tłās'-pa-la	i-yúhs-a	tlás-pa-hla	yúh-sa	ká-gyi-la-la
west wind	keakś-ala				
east wind	HA-iootł				
northeast wind	yoo'yāla	há-yuhl tlás-pa-hle	yū-ya-la hā-yuhl	há-a-yuhl	Gyai-yu-wi-a-la

*Dawson's consultant was [50]Ya'aku̱tłe'aku̱tłas Tom, a member of the Ḵumuya'i, a clan of the Kwagu'ł tribe of Fort Rupert

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

While these minor references represent the earliest published accounts of Kwakwa̱ka'wakw

geographical concepts it is of course, Franz Boas in collaboration with George Hunt who

provided the most comprehensive engagement in the 1934 publication *"Geographical Names of*

the Kwakiutl Indians". This 83 page Boas & Hunt text contains an introductory essay which

outlines the meaning of geographic names and then provides an index of example suffixes that

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[50] This extended name was what Dawson recorded however the name appears to be simply a repetition of the name Yaku̱dłas

express location. This information is followed by examples of names that are significant in the

mythologies. Of these he chooses a few out of the vast amount of mythological texts that he

along with George Hunt collected. This includes a list of origin sites for tribes and *'naṁima*.

Unfortunately, the list is not complete. The body of the publication also includes a list of place

names that is completed by a set of 22 maps to which those place names are attached.

Since Boas and Hunt, the most comprehensive contemporary published text to deal with

Kwakwa̱ka'wakw geography is Robert Galois' (1994) *"Kwakwa̱ka'wakw Settlements, 1775-1920*

A Geographical Analysis and Gazetter". It provides maps, place names and in some but not all

cases origin stories. The impetus for this book came from the combining of the research of

Franz Boas with that of Wilson Duff. As an anthropologist working for the University of British

Columbia and then later the Provincial Museum, now called the Royal British Columbia

Museum, Duff had acquired vast amounts of geographic information on the Kwakwa̱ka'wakw in

the 1950's before his premature death in 1976. Much of his work remained unpublished and in

the 1980's as an initiative of the U'mista Cultural Society, perhaps anticipating future land claims

processes, Robert Galois, a historical geographer, was hired to review the materials and publish

a manuscript.   To quote Galois:

Just as Wilson Duff felt that Northwest Coast Native art could not be appreciated without understanding the cultural logic that motivated it, we have argued that the story of Kwakwaka'wakw land requires an appreciation of Kwakwaka'wakw culture. For the Kwakwaka'wakw, thinking about land involves knowing what group or family claims and has the right to use it, knowing its resources, and finally knowing how to use those resources.   This book can certainly be used without appreciating the distinctive cultural values and thoughts of the Kwakwaka'wakw. But to do so is to pass up a chance to view the story of the lands of the Kwakwaka'wakw through their own eyes. (p. 11)

While the book is a valuable contemporary contribution to Kwakwaka'wakw geography and certainly the idea of a Kwakwaka'wakw perspective was given consideration the actual engagement with that perspective is limited to topical considerations of inclusion. The fundamental structure and delineation of the material remains within Western academic parameters and despite the above mentioned desire to present a Kwakwaka'wakw perspective on land the text falls short of accomplishing this. Galois admits an awareness of this as his introductory statement reveals:

Nonetheless, I came to the study of the contact process as a White male and

sometimes academic. Both my reading of the evidence and my presentation of

the findings have been conditioned by this background. I know that in some

respects the results violate Kwakwaka'wakw sensibilities. The geographical

organization of the gazetteer, for example, makes little sense from a

Kwakwaka'wakw perspective. The tribes of course should be presented in the

rank order of the feast rather than by location. (p.xv)

Despite being 60 years older, Boas' 1934 analysis comes closer to engaging with the internal

Kwakwaka'wakw cultural perspective on land than Galois. Boas accomplishes this through the

inclusion of a linguistic analysis. The linguistic analysis provides invaluable insight into the

conceptualization of the landscape and the occupation of territory than Galois is able to provide

in just delineating territory, mapping it and providing origin stories. Boas applies the idea that

how a people talk about a subject reflects how they think about it and so provides a linguistic

breakdown of how geography is given specific Kwak'wala terminology and hence

Kwakwaka'wakw perspective. That being said, the presentation format of both works are

consistant to the training and interests of both authors and are therefore not unexpected.

When we think of maps we are conditioned in modern times to assume an aerial perspective.

As a convention this is the primary perspective that has been derived of the relationship

between landscape and space. Without the visual interpretation of aerial mapping how would

we perceive of the spatial layout of the land? This is the question I want to engage with most.

What were the conventions contained within the Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw mind that allowed an image of

the land in space to be conceptualized and what forms did that take? These Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw

conventions emerge from both the specific topographic character of the land the

Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw occupy and the lifestyle of the people. The forms ultimately are embedded in

the way that people speak about the land and their place within it. This knowledge, this way of

knowing, is embedded in Kwak'wala linguistic terminology.   Boas prioritized this information in

his collection and analysis of Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw geographic data and then translated it into

modern European style mapping.   I will include here a brief description of the landscape

occupied by the Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw and then move on to describe from a linguistic point of view

the conventions applied by Kwak'wala speakers in conceptualizing and navigating this

geography. I will borrow Boas' description as it covers the basic details of the geographic

terrain quite sufficiently.

The region inhabited by these people is a mountainous coast intersected by

innumerable sounds and fiords and studded with islands, large and small.   Thus

intercourse along the coast by means of canoes is very easy, while access to the

inland is difficult on account of the rugged hills and the density of the woods. A

few fiords cut deep into the mainland, and the valleys which open into them give

access to the heart of the high ranges which separate the coast from the

highlands of the interior, forming an effectual barrier between the people of the

interior and those of the coast. (Boas 1966, p. 7)

6.2   North, south, east or west?

Researchers in the Kwak'wala language encountered variations in conceptual models when

attempting to understand Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw geographic terminology. The conceptual model

expressed by the terms "north, south, east and west" as absolute cardinal points assists modern

geographic comprehension and goes back hundreds of years in Western based understanding.

It seems natural to attempt to map Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw geographic terms onto these fixed

directions and every researcher who has addressed the topic has attempted to do this.

However, this cannot be accomplished because the "north, south, east and west" conceptual

model and the geographic conceptual model that emerges from the Kwak'wala language do not

map accurately and are in fact substantially different. In order to understand Kwakwaka'wakw

geographical concepts it is better to give up the convention of "north, south ,east and west"

altogether and accept that the cardinal concepts for geographic orientation are completely

autonomous and attempt to understand them on their own merits. This being said all of the

texts dealing with Kwak'wala geographic space have attempted to map Kwak'wala terms onto

the "north, south, east, and west" convention, including Boas (1934 &1948), Dawson (1885),

Curtis (1915) and Grubb (1977). The idea within this next chapter is not to toss out altogether

the prior linguistic attempts but to be aware of the process and understand that the English

linguistic terms are not true equivalents but merely attempts by researchers to understand

Kwak'wala terms through an English prototype.   Hopefully by the end of the chapter the

structure of the concept of geographic space as expressed in the Kwak'wala language can

begin to be understood "on its own terms".

6.2.1 "The landscape" in Kwak'wala

A first language Kwak'wala speaker is not born into a world of 'north, south, east and west'.

One needs to throw this concept out and learn the way a Kwak'wala speaker would. As a

Kwakwaka'wakw child, while learning how to speak Kwak'wala the elementary geographic

terms applied to the landscape around the developing individual divided the environment into

the land and the sea. This is the primary orientation for the Kwakwaka'wakw.   This seems

logical given that the Kwakwaka'wakw traditionally occupied the beach areas intermediate

between these two primary allocations. This concept is embedded in the Kwak'wala language.

It is expressed by the stems *atł-* "inland, forest region" and *`tłas-* "seaward, or ocean region".
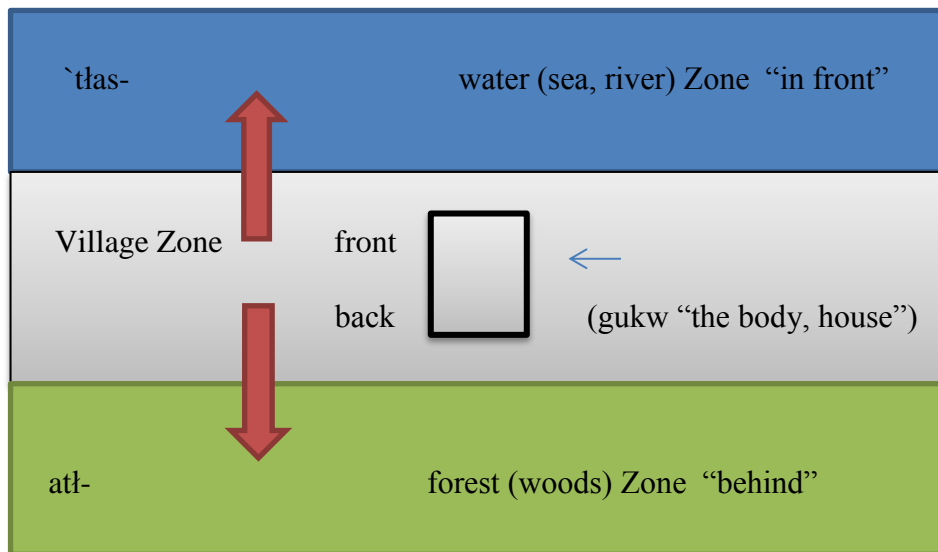
Figure 6.1 *the land, the sea, the village*

The body in space is primarily identified with a house, or community that faces the water. It

could be proposed that it is the body, marked by the *u-[a´w-]* stem that is situated as the central

spatial locator off of which the other four directions are derived in order to conceptualize the

landscape.   The prototype of the body is then marked by the *u-[a'w-]* stem which is then

extended to the house and to the landscape rendering them conceptually analogous or "a

category". This would account for the large body of words having to do with the body, the house

and the land, which are prefaced with the *u-[a'w-]* stem as explained in chapter 3. If we consider

the notion that the body, the house, the land are containers (as are bowls and canoes) then we

could say that the body is a container for the soul, the house is a container for the body, and the

land is a container for houses, or communities.

In Figure 6.1 these zones are diagrammatically mapped.   Figure 6.2 and 6.3 are photographic

illustrations of how Kwakwa̱ka'wakw villages are located within the intermediate zone between

the forest and the sea/river. The first image is of Gwayasda̱ms village situated on Gilford Island,

the second image is of Gwa'yi village located in Kingcome Inlet. Note the position of the houses

facing the river with water in front and woods in behind.

Figure 6.2 Newcombe, Charles. (Photographer).(1900). *Gwayasdams Village* [Photo]. "Image
(PN 235) courtesy Royal BC Museum, BC Archives"

Notes on the back of this image read:

"Mŭl-las[51] house Iakim[52] – figure in front in remembrance of sale of copper (from original print).
House to left of Johnny Scow's painted house belongs to Dick Webber (Chief `Kodi) note from
Ernest Scow Sept 2004, also verified by Jim King on picture PN 10728.

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[51] Malas (one of Johnny Scow's names)

[52] Yakim "sea monster" referring to house-front painting.
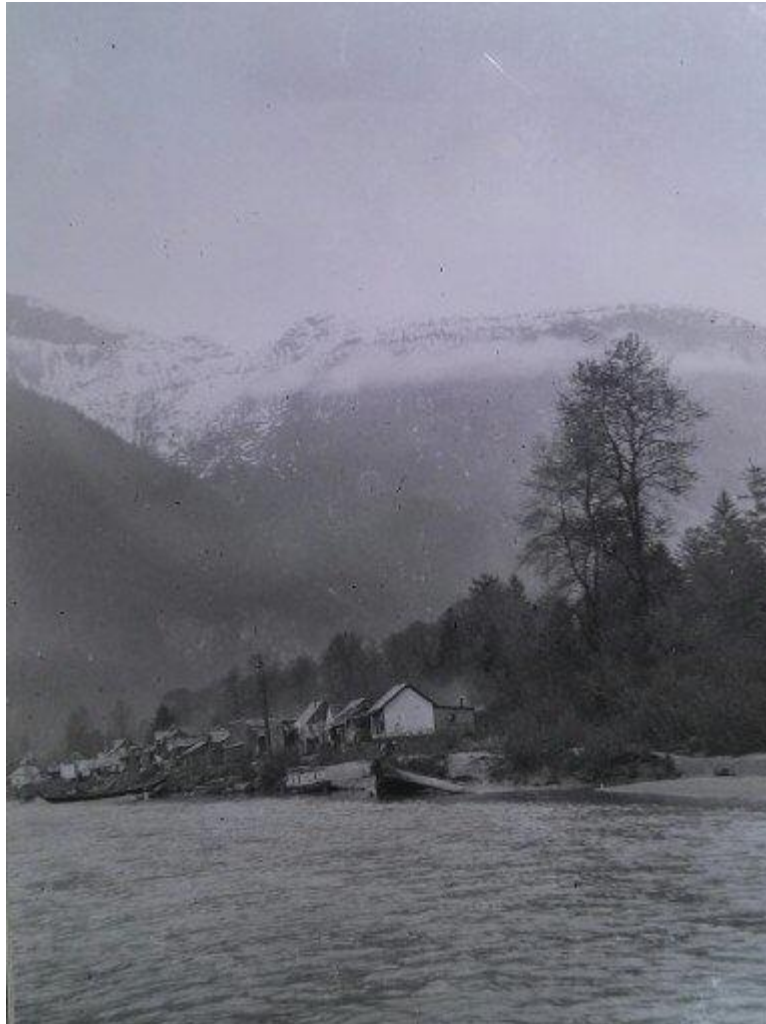
Figure 6.3 Newcombe, Charles. (Photographer).(1917) *Gwa'yi Village* [Photograph]. Image (PN 1691) courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives.

The central zone is occupied by the body (house) with two primary zones extending outwards

from the front, towards the sea/river and outwards from behind, towards the forest. To some

degree this is a locally fixed orientation based on the location of land, sea and beach.   Boas

(1934) has an awareness of this and provides a brief description in his 1934 publication. He

describes it as "…inland, away from sea or river; and seaward, away from land; are the principal

directions which appear commonly in geographical terms" (p. 9). Figure 6.4 shows the

secondary primary orientation stems *'nal-['nal-]* "upriver" and *gwa-* "downriver":
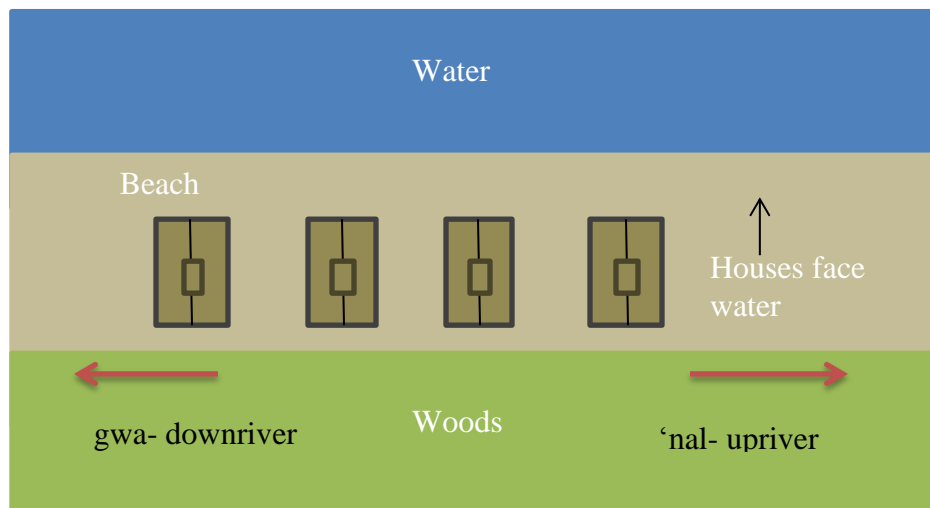
Figure 6.4 *'nal-['nal-] "upriver", gwa- "downriver*
Based on a village residing on right side of river, left side directions reverse

The secondary cardinal orientation can be described as an upriver, downriver dichotomy. It is

expressed by the stems *gwa-* "downriver" and *'nal-['nal-]* "upriver". Boas describes this

orientation in the following way: "Instead of the points of the compass they orient themselves

according to the direction of the coastline or rivers. Down river and down along the coast (in the

sense of northward or westward); upriver and up the coast (in the sense of southward or

eastward)" (p.9) Note that he still attempts to map the orientation onto Western cardinal

direction albeit loosely by applying the preface "…*in the sense of*…".   If we take these two

major principles of orientation from Figure 6.1 and 6.4 and apply them together we get the major

conceptual construction of geographic spatial orientation from a Kwak'wala speaker's point of

view. I cannot emphasize enough however the need to understand these orientation

configurations on their own merit away from any type of attempt to apply them to a Western

'north, south, east and west' prototype; for to do so is to ultimately fail to understand the

Kwakwaka'wakw mindset, literally, *on its own terms*. I will however, explain later in the chapter

why the 'north, south, east and west' prototype does not function well after explaining the

working features of Kwak'wala geographic orientation in and of themselves. Figure 6.5 shows

the four cardinal directions of the Kwakwaka'wakw, both primary *atł-* "towards the woods", *tłas-*

"towards the sea", and secondary, *gwa-* "downriver", *ʼnal-['nal-]* "upriver".
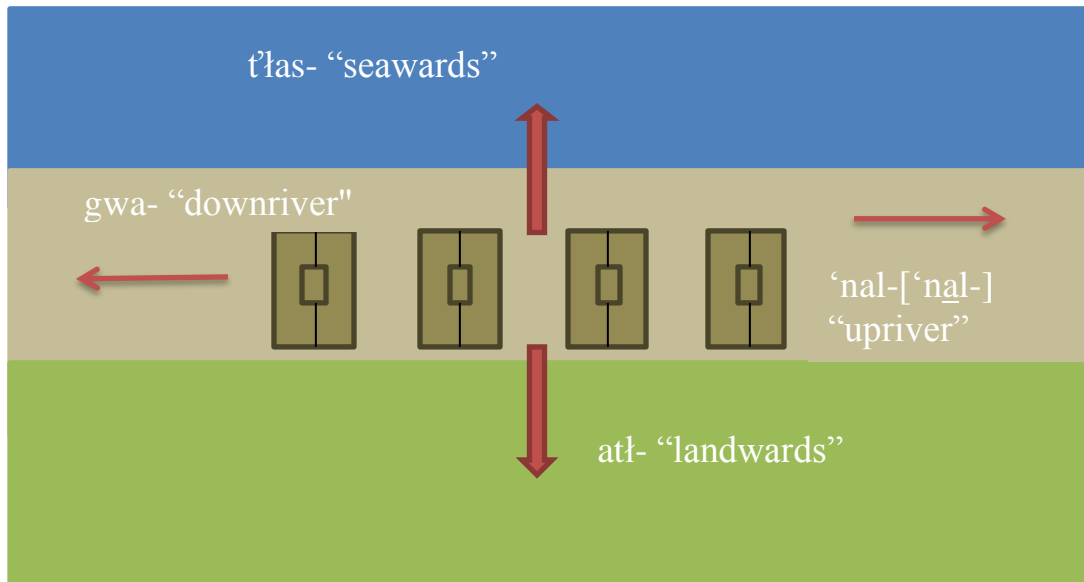
Figure 6. 5 *atł- "towards the woods", tłas- "towards the sea",*
gwa- "downriver", ʼnal-[ˈnal-] "upriver"

While Boas designates the four directional stems as carrying similar referential weight I have

designated the seaward/landward dichotomy as primary and the up-river/down-river dichotomy

as secondary. My reason for doing so emerges from the nature of the Pacific Northwest coastal

typography and the occupational zone of the beach. If you imagine the developing awareness

of a child within this environment the most obvious primary zones are the sea/river and the

forest. The primary orientation of the traditional house is to face the water. This makes

practical sense if one is travelling by water and approaching the home from the beach[53].   The

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[53] Having lived in Gwa'yi Village along the river I fully understand the practical need for the house main entrance to face the river while carrying all my groceries and gear up from the beach. In Kingcome the traditional houses all faced the water. It was not until the replacement of traditional houses with single family western style houses that the format of houses facing a central street began to be implemented. My mother's contemporary house now faces the main road and away from the river. In order to access

sea/river is in front of the home while the forest is in back of the home. The developing

consciousness of space outside the home in the developing Kwakw<u>aka</u>'wakw child can easily

make this division as it remains fixed in relationship to the body and the house. The

upriver/downriver dichotomy is slightly more sophisticated in its application due to a more

relative or flexible application. The application is relative to moveable objects in space within

the community. Downriver is only downriver relative to the subject being discussed. For

example, old villages usually build their homes along a shoreline making for a row or rows of

houses facing the water. If your house is the third house from the lower part of the village then

you are downriver from the remaining seven houses that are upriver from you but you are

upriver from the remaining two houses that exist downriver from you. If your location within the

village is changed to house seven for example, then houses one thru six are down-river from

you and only houses eight to ten are now upriver. Figure 6.6 attempts to demonstrate this

relative positioning.

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the main entrance when arriving home on the river we must walk around to the front of the house which in traditional Kwakw<u>aka</u>'wakw orientation is actually the back (atłana'we').
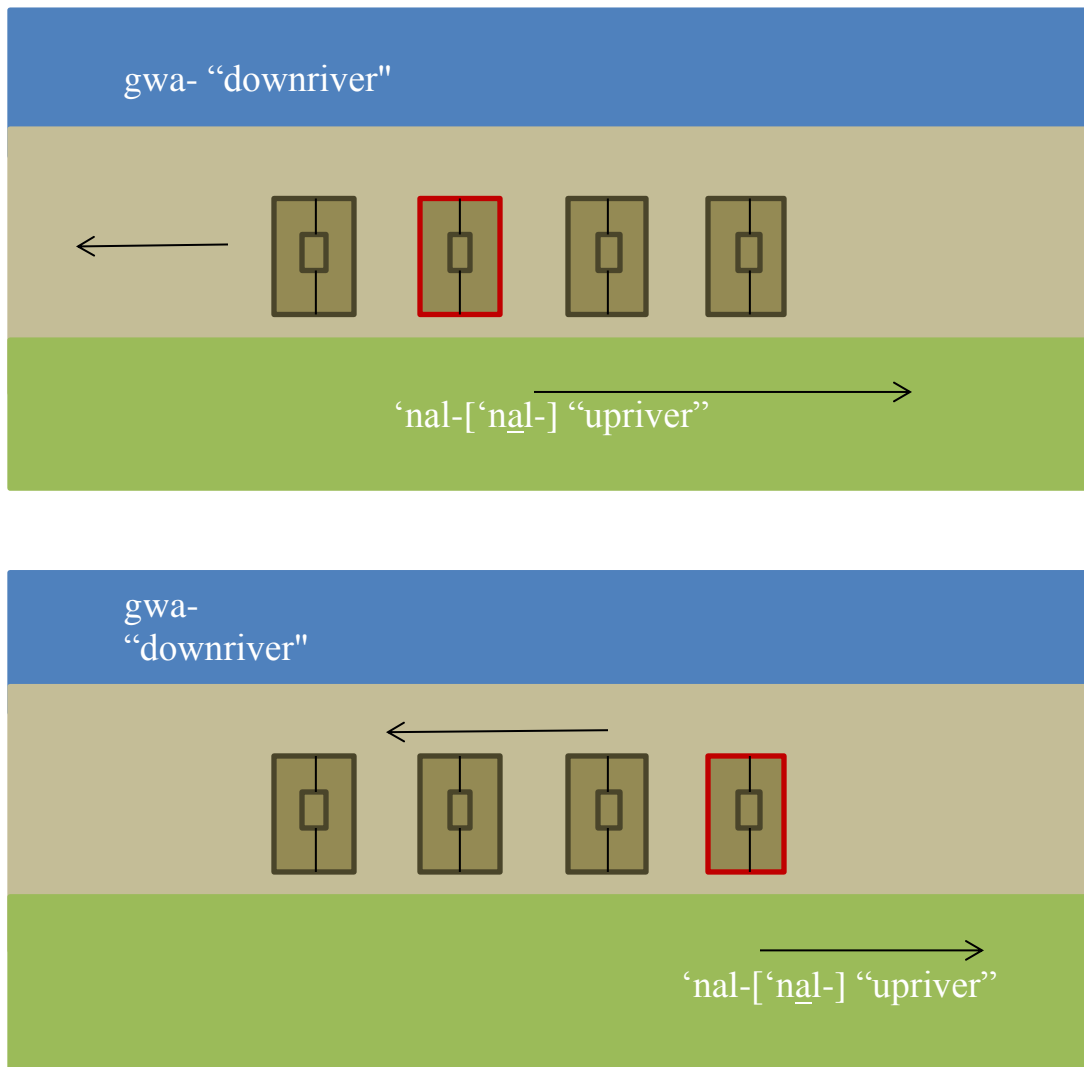
Figure 6.6 *Relative positioning of upriver/downriver*

This relative flexible orientation from within the expanded sphere of the village renders a slightly

more sophisticated application than the more limited location of the body in the house presented

by the front/back orientation of the land/sea dichotomy. In other words the fixed or absolute

nature of the land/sea dichotomy renders it primary while the relative nature of the

upriver/downriver dichotomy renders it secondary. Also, while the terms "upriver" and

"downriver" are specific to river based communities "towards the water" and "towards the land"

are maintained for all communities both river and island based.

To add another layer of understanding to this flexibility in conceptualization of space let us

consider the words for 'house' and 'community' in Kwak'wala.   The word for "house" in

Kwak'wala is *gukw* "to live in a house" is *gukwala* and *gukwa'las* is "house where one lives or

where you live". Another extension of *gukw-* includes the word *gukwalut'* which means 'tribe'. It

is literally the extension from the independent single house to the groups of houses that

represent the village groups living along the shoreline. The extended identification of the term

gukwalut' , with the self, is highlighted by the existence of an alternative term for 'tribe'

lilkwalatłe' meaning "other tribes outside of one's own". *Lilkwalatłe'* literally translates as

"having fires moving on the water" which describes the other tribes arriving on the water to visit

one's own community (Boas, 1966). Addressing the previous discussion of primary and

secondary axis of orientation it follows then that the singular *gukw* facing the water is primary

and the extension of *gukwalu`t* "tribe" to one's own village influences the nature of the

secondary orientation of upriver/downriver.

There is also a degree of expansion and contraction that occurs in conceptualizing the body in

space. The conceptualization of the independent body represented by the house *gukw* is

expanded to encompass the tribe/village *gukwalu't* while maintaining its fixed orientation to the

land and sea. Relationships within this expanded and contracted concept of the body in space

are considered relative under the upriver/downriver axis. In an interesting linguistic formal

analogy the word *gukw* itself exhibits expansion when joined with the suffix *–alut'* expanding the

singular concept of the "house" *gukw* to the plural concept of "the fellow inhabitants of the

house" *gukwalut'.*

Taking this into consideration, the Kwakwa<u>ka</u>'wakw initial geographical understanding is

anchored by the body (independent self) and the house which is then applied to the primary

orientation of land and sea, with the body/house facing the water. The secondary geographical

spatial orientation utilizes an expanded notion of the self "within the community" and is applied

to upriver/downriver concepts.   By this, I mean the upriver/downriver orientation is applied

relative to where one is presently , i.e. located within the village. The cardinal directions for the

Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw are not based on "north, south, east and west" but the stems *atɬ-, tˈas-, gwa-*

and *'nal-['na̲l-].*

6.3 The primary geographical division of the stems *atɬ-* "land region" and *tˈas-* "sea region"

The following are a general selection of words reflecting the geographic notions contained within

the stems *atɬ-* "landwards, forest region" and *tˈas-* "seaward, ocean/water region" from Boas

1948 unpublished dictionary and 1934 *"Geographical Names of the Kwakiutl Indians"*.

atɬ- (adɬ- before schwa initial suffixes[54])

(337)	atɬi	"the woods, forest" (www.firstvoices.com)
(338)	adɬige'	"back of anything" (www.firstvoices.com)
(339)	adɬaba̲ɬa	"pointing inland, trail leading inland (Boas 1948:18)
(340)	adɬabe'	"inland end" (Boas 1948:18)
(341)	adɬagila	"to go into woods" (Boas 1948:18)

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[54] The *atɬ-* changes to *adɬ-* due to the phonological influence of the following shwa (a̲)

(342)   adłagamala   "facing inland" (Boas 1948:18)

(343)   atładzi'   "inland side" (Boas 1934:39)

(344)   atłagam'la   "facing inland" (Boas 1934:39)

t'łas-

(345)   t'łasadzi   "seaside" (Boas 1934:82)

(346)   t'łasa'la   "seaward rock" (Boas 1934:82)

(347)   t'łasbe'   "seaward point" (Boas 1934:82)

(348)   t'ła`tłasa'aka   "to go seaward" (Boas 1948:442)

(349)   t'łasagwił   "bedroom on sea-side of house" (Boas 1948:442)

(350)   t'łasudis   "sea side of world" (Boas 1948:442)

(351)   t'łasułala   "to come from woods going towards beach" (Boas 1948:442)

Of particular interest is the extension of *atł-* to the general meaning of "behind."

(352)   'Angwuxda **atł**a'yex loł?   "Who is behind you? (27/04/13)
         who is that   behind   you

(353)   He'dida gangananam laxa **atł**a'nowe' sa gukw.   "The children are behind the house"
         The DEF   children   at   behind   the house   (27/04/13)

(354) La'am **atł**is'tax gukwas Baba la<u>x</u>a gukwdzi.

       Then   behind moved the house of Baba to the bighouse

                    "They moved Baba's house behind the bighouse" (27/04/13)

(355) He'<u>a</u>m atłaye'da `kwas'ta<u>x</u> la<u>x</u>a hanayu.   "The cup is behind the kettle." (27/04/13)

       There   behind the   cup   the kettle

The extension of *tłas*- to the meaning "in front of" is less prevalent in contemporary speech as

atł- to "behind" but still exists in the older texts collected by George Hunt for Franz Boas.

> Wa, a'mis la axalil<u>a</u>m la<u>x</u> **tłas**axdza'ma'yi sa tłi'lan<u>a</u>mi. Wa, a'<u>a</u>mxa'a'wise la
> hangalil<u>a</u>ma 'ts<u>a</u>ba'tsi la<u>x</u> **tłas**anxiliłtsa ha'mi'tłi.

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

> Wa, gil'misi 'wila la `kunx`ts<u>a</u>wakwixs la'eda b<u>a</u>gwan<u>a</u>me ax'idxa gild<u>a</u>dzowi
> ha'madzu łi'wa'ya <u>k</u>as le tła`paliłas la<u>x</u> **tłas**a'yasis tła'lan<u>a</u>mi.

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

The following are terms pertinent to the structure of the house.

(356) atłanowe'   "back of the house" (09/16/11)

(357) t'łasanowe'   "outside front of house" (Grubb 1977:76)

(358) adłaxsa   "to go through the back door" (Boas 1948:18)

(359) atłala'as   "something behind house" (Grubb 1977:158)

(360) adłabiłt'sa'   "behind inside on floor" (Boas 1948:18)

(361) t'łasagwił   "bedroom on sea-side of house" (Boas 1948:442)

The following are contrasting terms of particular cultural significance. Example (352) "land food"

can be contrasted against example (352) "sea food". Each word relates to the region of land or

sea. These words are a selection of words which emphasize the delineation of the primary

regions of forest and sea.

(362) adłakanam   "land food, i.e. roots, berries" (Boas 1948:18)

(363) t'łat'łasda'nam   "sea food" (Boas 1948:18)

(364) atła'nam   "wolf" (Boas 1948:18) [literally: "one from the forest"]

(365) atłagut   "farthest inland, country of the dead" (Boas 1948:18)

(366) atłaḱam   "an inland ceremonial" (Boas 1948:18)

(367) atłudalalis   "the world of man" (landwards in contrast to
                                   t'łasudalalis "the world of salmon")(Boas 1848:18)

(368) atłu'linuxw   "wolf" (Boas 1948:18)

(369) at'łas̲amk   "inland people" (Boas 1948:19)

(370) atłabala   "to walk in woods" (27/04/13)

(371) t'łat'łasik̲wala   "tribal name" (Boas 1948:442) [of people living at Nawidi]

(372) t'łasudis   "sea side of world" (Boas 1948:442)

(373) t'łasutiwa'lis[55]   "outside of world" (Boas 1948:442)

The relationship between static regions and motion i.e. "direction towards" is complex. Consider

the example (376) which expresses a motion towards the woods from the position of being on

water.

(374) t'łas`k̲inuxw   "tribal name" (Boas 1948:442
       sea-tribe/ people of

---

[55] Also used as a personal name.

(375)   atɬadzas   "coming from the woods" (Boas 1948:19)
       woods- belonging to

(376)   atɬala   "to go ashore" (Boas 1948:19)
       woods- to cause an action

Of particular interest is a ceremonial dance called the *atɬa'kam* "the dance of the woods" (see

example 366). This dance is said to have its origin in the forest and the many characters that

are depicted represent the forest creatures, both plant and animal. A variety of creatures are

called by *Ximsaliɬalas*, the main grouse dancer, out from the back room of a ceremonial house

onto the dance floor. Significant to the metaphor of the House=Land/World is the first creature

called out by *Ximsaliɬalas* which is named `*Tɬatɬapalalagalis* "Door-Keeper-of-the-Woods". In

contemporary versions of this dance performed in Kingcome Inlet I was taught that this being

comes out first and symbolically each creature then passes by "Door-Keeper-of-the-Woods" in

order to take their place on the floor. (Johnny Moon, personal communication). Boas (1921)

gives an account of how this dance was acquired by the Gixsam 'naṃima of the Naḱwaxda'xw

tribe of Blunden Harbour and the Awiḱinuxw of Rivers Inlet. In it the "Door-Keeper-of-the-

Woods is called as the twenty-seventh dancer out of forty who have names such as "Stump-of-

the-Woods", "Laughing-Woman-of-the-Woods", "One-Side-Moss-of-the-Woods".   The

name `*Tłatłapalalagalis* is curious in that the stem tła- refers to the sea. We could interpret this

as meaning "in the direction of the sea from the woods". Figure 6.7 illustrates in a photo the

house that the dancers of the *atłakam* emerge from as well as the caller *Ximsalitalas.*

Figure 6.7 unknown (Photographer).(1946). *Atłakam Dance, Gwayasdams Village.* Image
(PN 15241) courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives.

6.3.1 Place names using *atł-* and *`tłas-* (Boas, 1934)

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

place names prefaced by *`tłas-*:

(377)   atła's   "inland" (Boas, 1934:39)

(378)   atła'dzas   "inland place" (Boas, 1934:39)[56]

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

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

(381)   atła<u>k</u>a   "inland' (Boas, 1934:39)

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

(383)   atłiga'lis   "inland from beach" (Boas, 1934:39)

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

(385)   atłu`ta   "opposite rocky inland side, Vancouver Island entire"[57]
                                         (Boas, 1934:39)

(386)   atł<u>a</u>bi's bo'mix   "inland of bo'mix" (Boas, 1934:39)

(387)   adł<u>aga</u>mala   "facing inland" (Boas, 1934:39)

(388)   adł<u>a</u>ḱani'   "inland body" (Boas, 1934:39)

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[56] Boas situates this place as up-river from the village of U`kw<u>a</u>nalis "sand bar in river"; a village of the Dzawada'enu<u>x</u>w. In modern times the name Atładzi' is used. M<u>a</u>p 13:27 (Boas, 1934)

[57] Map 15:50 (Boas, 1934)

(389) t̓łasi   "seaside" (Boas, 1934:82)

(390) t̓łasadzi   "seaside" (Boas, 1934:82)

(391) t̓łasa'la   "seaward, opposite beach" (Boas, 1934:82)

(392) t̓łasadzi   "seaside" (Boas, 1934:82)

(393) t̓łasut̓axdła'lis   "seaward opposite rear end beach"[58] (Boas 1934:82)

(394) t̓łasut̓a   "seaward opposite rock; point just north of Xumdasbe'
                                            (Boas, 1934:82)

(395) t̓łasutbe'   "seaward opposite point" (Boas, 1934:82)

(396) t̓łasbe'   "seaward point" (Boas, 1934:82)

(397) t̓łat̓łaśkodis   "seaward opposite beaches" (Boas, 1934:82)

(398) t̓łasgas   "place of t̓łaśkinuxw" [59] (Boas 1934:82)

6.4 The secondary geographical orientation of 'nal-['nal-] "upriver" and gwa- "downriver"

Boas describes the phonological conditions for the different forms of "upriver" in his 1948

Dictionary as 'nal- having a full vowel /a/ before vowels and 'nal- having a schwa before

consonants. He gives the general meaning as "upstream, south, east". In Boas (1931) he

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[58] Just north of San Josef Bay Map 2:52 (Boas, 1934)

[59] An extinct tribe that formally occupied territory in the north western portion of Vancouver Island.

describes the stem in the following way; "The Kwakiutl expresses by the stem *'na-* light, sky,

world, dawn, south" In his 1947 Grammar he describes the stem *'nala* as "up river, south,

world" (p.228). The following are a selection of words derived from this stem:

(399)   'naluɬala   "to go south" (Boas 1947:228)

(400)   'nalkila   "to go up river" (Boas 1947:228)

(401)   'naladzi'   "upriver side of a point" (Boas 1947:228)

(402)   'naldzi'   "up river, south" (Boas 1947:228)

(403)   'nalband   "to go up river, to go south" (Boas 1948:242)

(404)   'nalkudo'ya'ye   "upper part of river" (Boas 1948:242)

(405)   'na'nala'aka   "to pass upstream" (Boas 1948:242)

(406)   'nalanxe'   "upper end of river; the best, most valuable" (Boas 1948:242)

(407)   nale'nagwis   "up river, south country" (Boas 1948:242)

(408)   'nalkilatɬ   "going south" (Grubb 1977:201)

(409)   'nalaxstala   "facing south village"[60] (www. firstvoices.com)

(410)   'nalakanwe'   "south side, toward or on the" (www. firstvoices.ca)

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[60] Name of the town of Port McNeill

(411) 'nalbała   "something south" (www.firstvoices.ca)

(412) 'nalaxdłala   "hind end up river i.e. eastward" (Boas 1934:9)

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

(413) 'Nalbalis   "up river point beach"[61] (Boas 1934:63)

(414) 'Nalbe'   "up river point"[62] (Boas 1934:63)

(415) 'Nalgamlis   "beach facing up river"[63] (Boas 1934:63)

Boas(1948) translates the stem gwa- as "downriver i.e. north". The following are a selection of

words derived from this stem.

(416) gwa'yi   "name of place"[downriver] (Boas 1948:291)[64]

(417) gwa'yas   "place down river, northern tribes" (Boas 1948:291)

(418) gwagwa'aka   "going northward" (Boas 1948:291)

(419) gwaba'lis   "downriver side of beach" (Boas 1948:292)

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[61] Located in Knights Inlet Map 22:128 (Boas, 1934)

[62] Located in Knights Inlet Map 22:16 (Boas, 1934)

[63] Located south of the entrance to Nimpkish lake Map 8:40 (Boas, 1934)

[64] Name of current Dzawada'enuxw village in Kingcome Inlet (means "downriver").

(420) gwa<u>g</u>awe'   "further, next down" (Boas 1948:292)

(421) gwe'na<u>k</u>w   "north region, downriver" (Boas 1948:292)

(422) gwolis<u>a</u>la   "go downstream, poetry" (Boas 1948:292)
                                            "going towards mouth of river (www.firstvoices.com)

(423) gw<u>a</u>n<u>x</u>i'   "lowest down river, north edge" (Boas 1948:292)

(424) gwe'nagwis   "down river, end of village" (www.firstvoices.com)

(425) gwe'nagwise<u>x</u>   "something down the beach" (www.firstvoices.com)

(426) gwe'nakola   "up north, in the north" (www.firstvoices.com)

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

(428) gwitala   "highest ranking Kwagu'ł tribe, northerners"
                                            (www.firstvoices.com)

(429) gwoł<u>a</u>la   "heading, going north" (www.firstvoices.com)

Both Boas and Grubb identify the stem *'nal-['nal-]* as referencing the directions south or in some

cases east.   Boas (1934) describes this as "up river and up the coast (in the sense of

southward or eastward)"(p. 9)   The stem *gwa-* is associated with the north and sometimes the

west.   These associations have been applied because in some specific cases it does coincide,

but if *gwa-* north is equated with downriver and *'nal-['nal-]* south with upriver it fails.   North and

south do not always align with the upriver/downriver orientations though east and west quite

often do. For instance, if we take the village of Gwa'yi in Kingcome inlet as an example the

village is situated on the left lower portion of the Kingcome River facing the direction of the inlet.

The village faces the river, giving it a westward orientation.   The fixed compass orientations of

north and south are then opposite to the directions of up river, down-river.   In this particular

case *tɬas-* is west, *atɬ-* is east, *gwa-* as "downriver" is actually heading southwest, and *'nal-['nal-]*

as "up river" is actually heading northeast.   Relatively, depending on the bends in the river

course a good village site could be situated facing any of the four fixed cardinal directions.

Boas 1934 description of *'nal-['nal-]* as "in the sense of southward or eastward" and *gwa-* "in the

sense of northward or westward" references this flexibility in direction.   It is also alluded to in

Dawson's (1885) definitions:

(430) 'naldzi'   "south east" (Dawson 1885:33)

(431) gwenakw   "north west" (Dawson 1885:33)

In Kwakwaka'wakw territory most coastal rivers (Kingcome Inlet, Knights Inlet, Bute Inlet etc.run

from an eastern origin towards a western outflow towards the ocean.   In the case of Vancouver

Island river systems can run in either an eastward direction towards Queen Charlotte Straight (the Nimpkish River for example) or westward toward the Pacific Ocean (Quatsino Sound for example). We can see then that even when the definitions "south" and "north" are broadened to "southward" or "eastward" they remain insufficient definitions to convey the integral meaning of the stems *gwa-* and *'nal-['nal-]*. In order to better understand these stems we must look at the definitions separate from each other. Upriver and downriver must be taken literally as a river based axis and the application of north and south considered independently as a coastal axis.
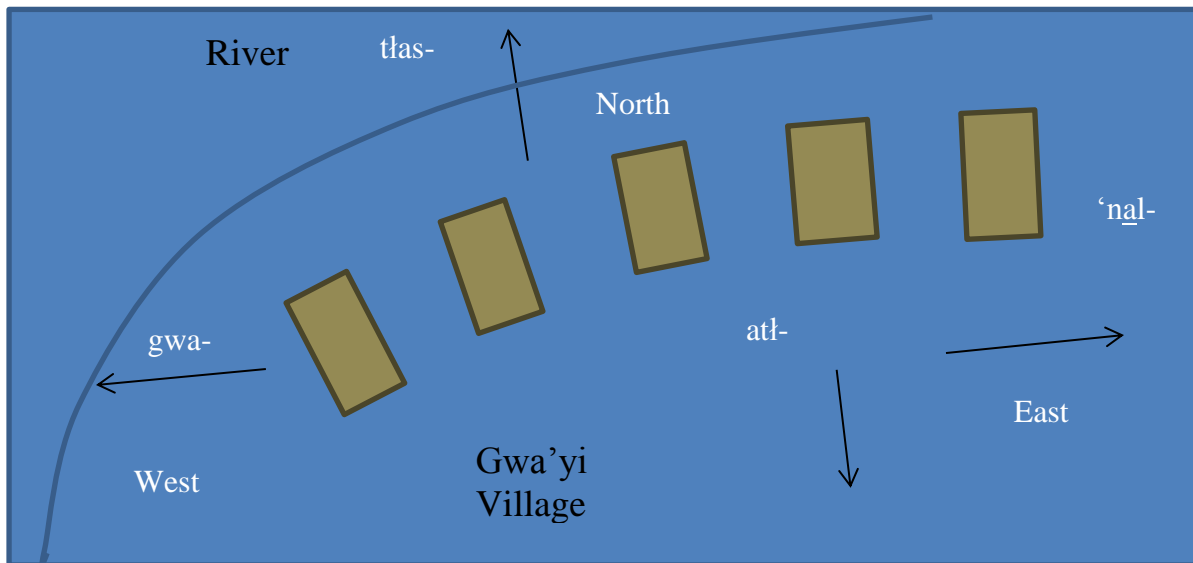
Figure 6.8 *Orientation of Gwa'yi Village in Kingcome Inlet B.C.*

From this example we can see that the Western fixed absolutes of north and south are not a sufficient definition of what *'nal-['nal-]* and *gwa-* mean. In some cases north and south will be

accurate but in many others they will not be. This is why I mentioned earlier in the text that we

must try as best as possible to ignore these definitions and attempt to understand the stem

meanings "in and of themselves".   This seems somewhat difficult given that the above lists are

heavily reliant on the attempt to correlate Western absolute cardinal directions but certainly

possible if we keep in mind that it is merely an *attempt* to map Western concepts onto

Kwakw<u>aka</u>'wakw concepts. In a general sense the concepts of north, south, east and west can

be applied but the conceptual framework that emerges from within the Kwak'wala language will

fail to be understood. Our change of focus is to attempt the reverse and understand the

Kwakw<u>aka</u>'wakw concepts as they are expressed in the Kwak'wala language.

To do this let's consider the two primary meanings expressed by the terms *'nal-['n<u>al</u>-]* and *gwa-* .

We have seen previously that the general definition provided has been *'nal-['n<u>al</u>-]* "upriver,

south" and (gwa-) "downriver, north".   The most broadly expressed definitions for the stem

'nal-['n<u>al</u>-] can be found in Boas' 1931 paper published in the *International Journal of American*

Linguistics " The Kwakiutl expresses by the stem 'na- light, sky, world, dawn, south "(p.165). In

his 1947 *Kwakiutl Grammar* Boas also gives the definition *'na'la* "up river, south, world; before

consonants '*n<u>al</u>-* " (Boas 1947:228).   The extensions alluded to within the broad definition

notably include the concepts of "light", "sky", "dawn" and "world" in addition to "upriver" and

"south".   These extensions give us a better idea as to the conceptualization of the term

'nal-['nal-] in that they provide additional context. In comparison *gwa-* does not appear to have

similar conceptual extension. The definitions are limited to "downriver, north". If we examine

the correspondent meanings found within the stem *'nal-['nal-]* meaning "upstream, upriver" and

the stem *gwa-* what we find is an orientation taken from the fixed location of the village or a

position within the village. It has no direct correlation to any particular fixed direction of north or

south.

However, if the orientation is reconfigured to the coastline of the Pacific Ocean we can

 achieve the definitions of north and south.   Now, the focus of orientation has expanded from

that of a village along a riverbank to that of a geographically broadened coastal occupation.

This change in orientation is emphasized by a contemporary Kwak'wala speaker in the following

way.

"Here we go again with "Where is so and so?" and the reply is *"Li 'nalkila*."[65]

Somebody went to Vancouver and then you ask where this other person is. *"Li*

gwesta li laxa 'Awikinuxw. Li gwakila." And if you're in the village, like Kingcome,

you say the same thing if they were to inquire about somebody *"Oh, li laxa 'naldzi'.*

Upriver. And then this other person "Li laxa 'uxwsiwa'e." Mouth of the river. So we

say *"gwenakw"* when you're going up north. Cause River's Inlet is north of Alert Bay,

Kingcome and Gilford, Port Hardy but you say *"Li laxa gwenakw."* Or if you're going

to Prince Rupert, *"Li laxa gwenakw gwołali.* But when you're in the river like

Kingcome *"gwoła",* you're going south." (08/11)

The name given to the city of Vancouver by the informant is Nalkila. It came to be used as a

proper name though *'nalkila*, in general refers to a southward coastal orientation from

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

Rivers Inlet which is north from Kwakwaka'wakw territory (Alert Bay, Kingcome Inlet, Gilford

Island, Port Hardy). Here he uses the word *gwakila*, meaning "north". He then refers to Prince

---

[65] *Li 'nalkila.* translates as "gone to Vancouver, or in the direction of Vancouver (south). *Li* is an auxiliary with the meaning movement away from the point of focus, or the position of the speaker. It will be dealt with in a later chapter.

Rupert which is even further north than Rivers Inlet. The speaker emphasizes the contextual

distinction between 'n<u>a</u>l- and gwa- usage within a river based axis versus a coastal.

(432)   Li la<u>x</u>a gwenakw gwołali[66]   "Having gone even further north." (08/2011)
          go to the   north   further
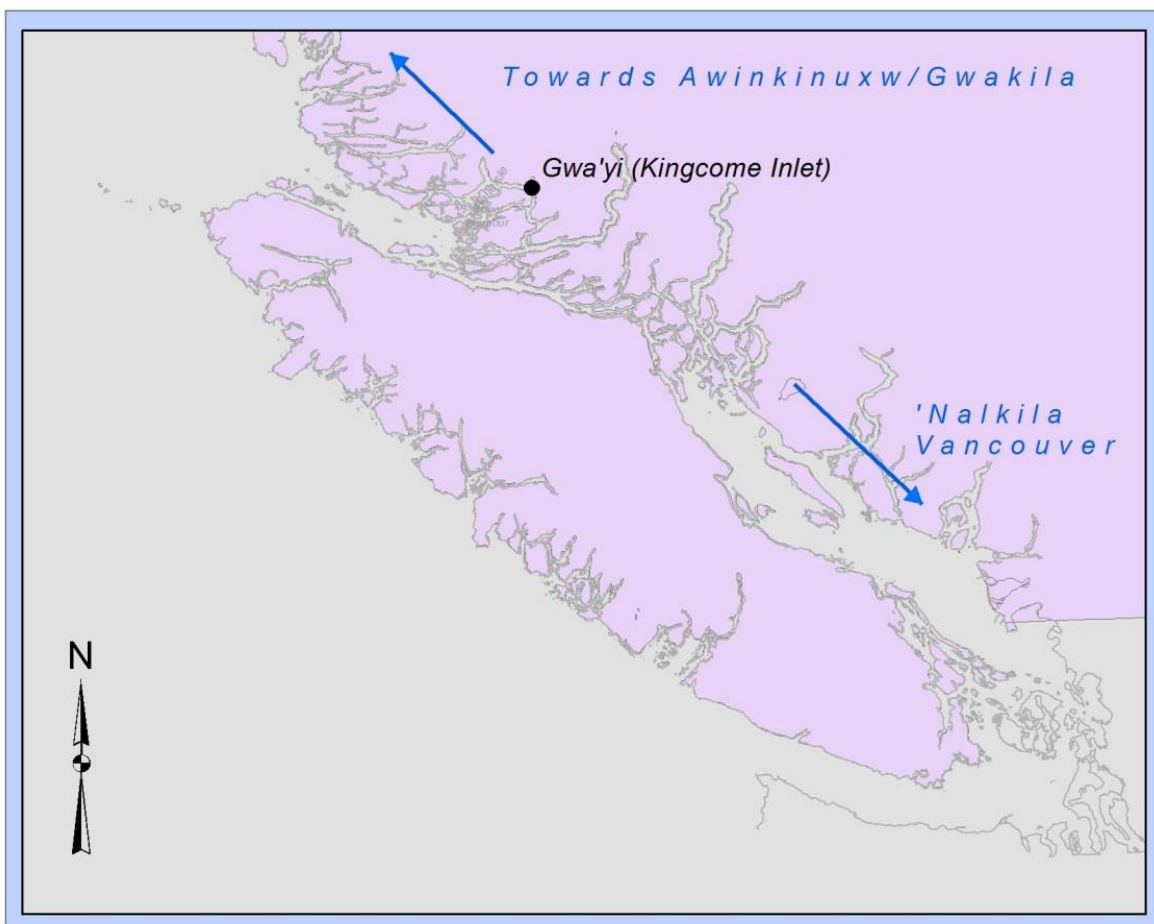
Figure 6.9 Coastal map showing orientations of *'n<u>al</u>kila* and *gwa<u>k</u>ila*

The *'nal-['nal-]* "south" and *gwa-* "north" definitions hold true in the majority of coastal

orientations as in the following examples derived from a contemporary speaker:

Speaker: That's like we say *gwakila* and in my mind I'm right away thinking about

when I used to go up to River's Inlet. Yeah, *gwagawa'i*, like from Smith's Inlet,

River's Inlet is *gwagawe'*, then Smith Inlet, further north. You picture in your mind

what we are saying about going north, you *gwakila*. But in the river it's different,

you're going down the river.

MN: So '*gwenakw*' is a general term. So it can either mean 'north region', so the

northern part of the coast, or down river.

6.5 Proposed theory of downriver descent

I am going to propose that the meanings as derived appear to indicate that the older form is

"upriver/downriver" and that a coastal "north/south" orientation emerged later. This hypothesis

stems from a growing body of evidence indicating Kwakwaka'wakw populations descended from

higher, upriver more mountainous locations as rivers flow from a glacier source towards

downriver locations and ultimately outwards towards outlying coastal islands. This would

support a premise of land occupation following the reduction of sea water levels. Upriver

territory would therefore have a longer history of occupation while downriver territory heading

out towards the islands would have come later as sea-levels receded. As Cannon (2000)

observed while studying archeological core samples from clam middens on the British Columbia

coast:

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

Archeological data would suggest that right after deglaciation, 13,000-8,000 years ago, that

water levels were high along the coast (Andrews & Retherford, 1978). This was followed by a

drop in water levels to a point actually lower than today. The subsequent rise of the water after

dropping may perhaps explain the numerous flood stories amongst the Kwakwaka'wakw.

In accordance we need to jointly consider linguistic analysis and cultural historical context.

Boas (1948) Dictionary includes the words:

(433) gwaltɬala   "next down, lower (in rank)" (Boas 1948:291)

(434) gwigwa'enuxw   "those at lower end of village" (Boas 1948:291)

(435) 'nalanxi'   "upper end of river, the best, most valuable" (Boas 1948:242)

(436) 'nala'las   "side up river, higher rank" (Boas 1948:242)

(437) 'na'lagud   "to get ahead going up river, in rank?" (Boas 1948:243)

Rank is social standing. Primogeniture was a highly valued aspect of the Kwakwaka'wakw

traditional social system. It remains so today.   The oldest members of the branches of a family

are considered to be of higher rank than those lower. In older days primogeniture outweighed

even gender in certain situations. The closer a person was to the original source of the family,

be that through mythological historical narrative or through genealogy, the higher was one's

rank.   The words collected by Boas/Hunt referring to rank equate the concepts of "upriver" with

"higher rank" and "downriver" with "lower rank". This analogy supports a theory of land

population coming from upriver coastal regions and spreading downriver to occupy new territory

as sea waters receded. As populations grew over generations, younger branches of the

families would have left older upriver sites to pursue new sites of occupation downriver,

eventually spreading far enough to leave the river estuaries and establish communities on

adjacent islands.

The origin story of the Dzawada'enuxw gives us an example. Kawadilikala, the original

ancestor of the Dzawada'enuxw tribe was a wolf. He came from the north travelling down the

Kingcome River with his brother (some stories include a sister and another brother) and their

families. Kawadilikala established his home in the Kingcome Valley. Later on his brother Kwalili

decided to find his own land. He travelled on until he arrived at the river system next to

Kingcome that empties into Wakeman Sound. He made his home there and established the

Haxwamis tribe.   In the Kingcome watershed Kawadilikala's tribe grew. As his tribe grew they

established 'namima or clans who occupied different places along the river.   It is only within

more recent historical times that the Dzawada'enuxw 'namima left their separate village sites

and united at the location now called 'Ukwanalis or Gwa'yi.

According to Lagius (born mid-1800s) the Dzawada'enuxw informant for Edward S. Curtis and

my great-grandfather's brother, the 'namima now called Wi'ukwama'i were originally called the

'Ninalkinuxw, or "upriver people". They descended from Daband, who had been a mountain,

and was one of Kawadilikala's first adopted sons. Also according to Lagius, one of the last

'naṁima of the Dzawada'enuxw to be established was the `Ka`ki`kilaka (those who always wish

to kill) who descend from Kawadilikala's adopted son Halxabo'i. It is said that this clan built their

houses near the mouth of the river. (Boas, 1902; Curtis 1915; Galois, 1994) Figure 6.10 is a

photo taken of Lagius by Curtis.
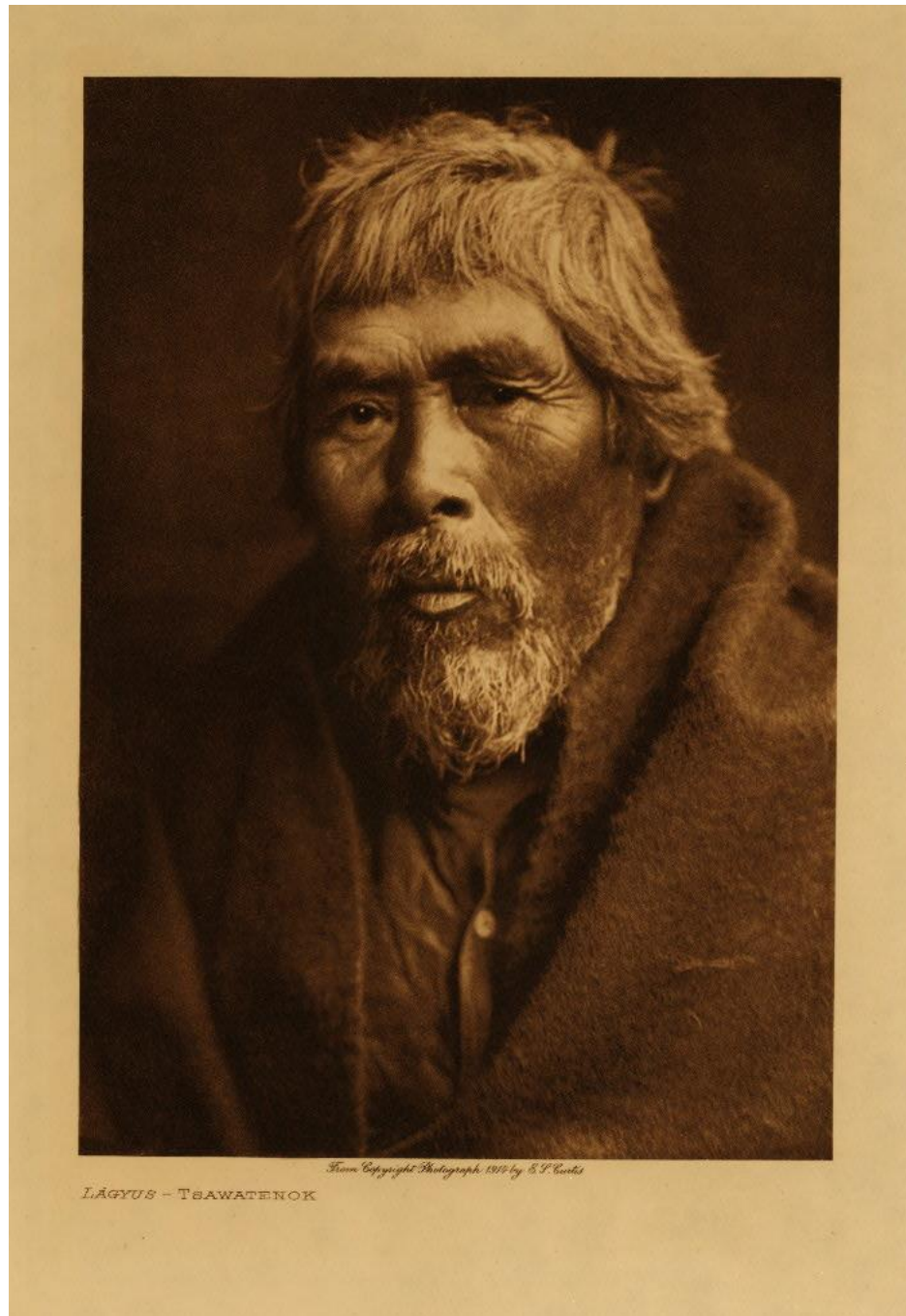
Figure 6.10 Curtis, Edward. S. (Photographer). (1915). "*Lagyus-Tsawatenok*" Curtis'
Dzawada̱'enux̱w informant [Photo]. Photograph courtesy of Northwestern University Library,
Edward S. Curtis's The North American Indian," 2003
http://digital.library.northwestern.edu./curtis/

In Lagius' narrative the oldest branches of the Dzawadaꞌenux̱w ꞌnaṁima occupy the upper portions of the river system and younger branches occupy lower portions. It is hard to estimate the course of time that it would have taken for generations of the Dzawada̱ꞌenux̱w to fully occupy the Kingcome valley as it emerged from the sea but eventually the people came to settle at their current location, approximately 3km up from the mouth of the river.

Another indication of early upriver occupation is contained within six Dzawada̱ꞌenux̱w narratives collected by George Hunt for Franz Boas for the 1902 publication of "*Kwakiutl Texts*". The first three of these narratives begin with the expression that the earliest of the Dzawada̱ꞌenux̱w were living on the upper course of the river Gwaꞌyi. These narratives in particular speak of the experiences of K̲awadilik̲ala and his children. The following three refer to the activities of the descendants of these early people. These three stories are not prefaced with the expression that they were living on the 'upper course of the river Gwaꞌyi'. This tends to confirm that the upper courses of the river *at the very least* are symbolic of the idea of origin.

Gukwalaꞌlaꞌida	galasa	Dzawadaꞌenuxwiꞌ	lax	ꞌna̱ldzas	Gwaꞌyi.
They lived at (it is said the)	first of the	Dzawadaꞌenuxw (absent)	at	upriver	Gwaꞌyi river

"It is said that the first of the Dzawada'enuxw lived in a village on the course of the river Gwa'yi."   (Boas 1902, p. 36)

The Gwawa'enuxw are a sister tribe to the Dzawada'enuxw. Their name has been translated as the "downriver tribe" (RBCM,Duff fieldnotes, 1960). It is possible that the name could have been derived as the "northern tribe" but there remains the question of "downriver from what/whom?" or alternatively "north from what/whom?" The inference is that the Gwawa'enuxw tribe derive their name from a relationship to, either a historical "people" or aspect of geographic occupation. Similarly, the Kwikwasut'inuxw, another sister tribe to the Dzawada'enuxw, have as their name the meaning "people from the opposite shore/other side" (RBCM,Duff fieldnotes, 1960).   Again, the question can be asked, "opposite from whom, or where?"   The symbiotic notion of "to whom or where" is given greater clarity in the following description derived from Boas collection of Kwikwasut'inuxw stories.

Wa,   la'la'e   duxwatɬali `Tsekam'yaxa galasa kwikwasika, laxa
 Then `Tsekame' was seen by the ancestors of the tribe of the other side, that is,

Dzawada'enuxwi' gwo'ya
 the Dzawada'enuxw.   (Boas 1902, p.192)

The Dzawada'enuxw people are described as 'the tribe of the other side'. In positions of

adjacency and reciprocity the Kwikwasuťinuxw and the Dzawada'enuxw are joined by the very

term *kwikwasika* that is used to name the Kwikwasuťinuxw. The Dzawada'enuxw and the

Haxwa'mis on the other hand through origin stories derive their names from the sound of the

birds that occupy their valleys[67]. One theory that supports the notion of original river based

coastal occupation particular to the history of the 'Musgamakw Dzawada'enuxw comes from an

oral history quote from member Ernest Willie (1940-1999).

"Understand the origin or the root word if you like of the Kwikwasu`tinuxw people from

Kingcome, when the man crossed over at Anchorage Cove, over to the other side which

is Bond Sound. And his name was Gwalsalas. *Gwal – sa – las*. It's an interesting name

because what we anchor ourselves to as *Kwi – kwa – su`t – inuxw* people, and we

depict that on our totem which stands beside the church, `Tsekame', but he was not the

origin figure if you like of the *Kwi – kwa – su`t – inuxw* people.   They went in a direction.

The direction again is the *kwisadza'e* of Anchorage Cove which is at the mouth of the

Kingcome or the head of the Kingcome Inlet and it goes overland into the "far side"

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[67] Origin stories say the name of the Dzawada'enuxw comes from the sound of the robin which sings "dzawadzali!"; The name of the Haxwa'mis from the sound of the lark which sings "haxwala!".   Duff gives the meaning of Dzawada'enuxw as "people of the place of eulochons". (Fieldnotes 1960) as does Boas in his notes which Duff may have been referring to.

which you end up at Bond Sound. This is where we as a people began again. You have

to remember that as a family again, they come out of K̲awadilik̲ala. They do not

originate out of nothing. They do not originate from a different source altogether. They

are from K̲awadilik̲ala. They only continued K̲awadilik̲ala's direction, heading, if you

want to use the compass points of today…he headed south, why his name was

Gwa̲ls̲alas. If you were heading downriver, as of for instance, you will *gwa̲lis̲ala*. *Gwa̲– li*

– s̲ala, you refer to the house that is downriver from you. Then you may use the word as

well. *Gwa̲ls̲alasu'. Hedi leda gwa̲ls̲alas lax̲*…similar to the...so you find our people then

have this whole thing around being anchored together. It was Gwa̲ls̲alas who went over

there with his family and began the storyline if you like of the K̲wik̲wasu`tinux̲w people."

(Ernest Willie, personal recording)

The words which I have hyphenated in this transcript were pronounced emphatically

morpheme by morpheme by Ernest Willie within his speech to emphasizes his own

breakdown of the meanings of the names he was trying to explain. When he refers to

Gwa̲ls̲alas, the ancestor who left the Kingcome River system to establish a community at

Hada across from Anchorage Cove, he indicates that this man's name literally means

"going downriver". He also indicates that the name of the K̲wik̲wasu`tinux̲w people is

derived from the act of occupying land "on the other side" of Bond Sound geographically

across from Kingcome Inlet. These were his theories of historical movement and land

occupation based on oral history and his own linguistic analysis of names. The following

are a list of words derived from the stem *kwis-* "far in space or time" (Boas, 1948, p. 343)

recorded by Boas.

(438)   K̲wik̲wasuťinux̲w   "people of the far side" (Boas 1948:344)

(439)   k̲wisadza'e   "far side of a flat thing" (Boas 1947:228)

(440)   k̲wisak̲an'we'   "to be on far side" (Boas 1947:228)

(441)   k̲wis-   "direction towards there" (Boas 1947:227)

Or its opposite:

(442)   gwas-   "direction towards here" (Boas 1947:227)
                                   "this side" (Boas 1931:175)

The stem *kwis-* "direction towards there" is contrasted with *gwas-* meaning "direction towards

here". These stems together give an account of spatial placement in relationship to a subject.

In the case of Willie's narrative it is the historical movement outwards "towards the other side" of

Hada and Bond Sound away from the point of origin within the Kingcome Valley which gives the

K̲wik̲wasuťinux̱w people their name.   He is explicit in saying that the K̲wik̲wasuťinux̱w people

are also descendants of the Dzawad̲a'enux̱w ancestor, the wolf K̲awadilik̲ala.   In this regard in

certain K̲wik̲wasuťinux̱w origin stories the wife of `Tsekame' is transformed from a wolf and in a

story collected by Franz Boas the home village of the Gwawa'enux̱w, Heg̲ams is formed by

ancestors who remove their wolf skins and transform them into land (Boas, 1935). In addition,

in George Hunt's handwritten notes he identifies K̲umugaxto'i as the name of K̲awadilik̲ala. In

"Kwakiutl Texts, Second Series", K̲awadilik̲ala is given the name K̲umugaxto'i along with the

great ghost dance, the *masdik̲a* (*mad̲am*) dance, the dog mask (*'walasax̲a 'wasam̲ł*) and many

wolf masks (*'walasax̲a długwala*). The name K̲umugaxto'i is used as a *`naṁima* or clan name

of the Gwawa'enux̱w[68]. The theme of the wolf as an aspect of origin runs through all four tribal

histories of the 'Musg̲amakw Dzawad̲a'enux̱w. This wolf theme parallels the historical

movement of land population in the Kingcome Valley outwards into the Broughton archipelago

as mapped out in Figure 6.11.

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[68] Derived from 20th Century potlatch ledger analysis (Ryan Nicolson, personal communiction)

Figure 6.11 *Map of Kingcome Inlet and direction of occupational descent*

6.6 Expanding 'nal-['nal-] and gwa- to the British Columbia coastal axis

The river based geographic meaning of *'nal-['nal-]* "upriver" and *gwa-* "downriver" is consistent.

There are no discrepencies. However, on the coastal axis while generally *'nal-['nal-]* can be

taken to mean "south" and *gwa-* "north" there are notable inconsistencies. For instance *gwitala*

is translated as "people from the north" by Grubb (1977:171) and *gwitalabidu'* is a word

translated by Boas (1948:295) as meaning "little northerners". Boas also lists *gwitalaḱala* as

meaning the "Tsimshian language". The Tsimshian live north of the Kwakwaka'wakw.

"However, he also lists *gwi`tala* as referring to the West Coast (Nuu-chah-nulth) language and

gwikwatala as a word for the West Coast (Nuu-chah-nulth) people in general. The Nuu-chah-

nulth people live *south-west* of the Kwakwaka'wakw.   Grubb (1977) lists *gwigweta* as a

Kwak'wala word that refers to the Coast Salish who live *south* of the Kwakwaka'wakw. One

possibility for the variance in interpretation of these terms might be the stem *gwił-* (Boas

1948:295) which means "to scatter, to spread".   If we take into consideration the cultural

historical context of the upriver/downriver dichotomy then the population dispersal in a down-

river direction is also applied to the extension of population outwards to the north, south and

west. This would also be consistent with origin stories which detail how during the great floods

various populations broke away and were dispersed from the Kwakwa̱ka'wakw coastal center

outwards both to the north and to the west.

(443)   gwiłtsi'stala   "scattering things, objects around" (www.firstvoices.com)

(444)   gwiłt`sa̱nd   "take something apart" (www.firstvoices.com)

(445)   gwił'id   "separate (like a couple) or scatter things around, to"
                              (www.firstvoices.com)

The broadening of the interpretation and application of the *gwa-* stem to encompass "a

movement away from the centre" is also evident in the following words:

(446)   gwa`ku`ta̱xdłi'   "lower side of a tree on a river bank" (Boas 1948:292)

(447)   gwa'a`peła̱xs   "second thwart, behind first man in canoe" (Boas 1948:292)

(448)   gwa`kuda̱xtłalisa `tłisa̱la   "afternoon" (Boas 1948:292)

Another example of the mapping of the core concept of *'nal-['na̱l-] / gwa-* upriver/downriver onto

the coastal axis is contained within the words of a song for a Kwagu'ł chief named Naka̱ṕanka̱m

who initiated a war against the Saanich (Coast Salish) people in order to avenge the deaths of

his sister and his niece in the latter half of the 19th Century.   The song goes:

I began at the *upper end* of the tribes.

Serves them right! Serves them right!

I came *downstream* setting fire to the tribes everywhere with my firebringer.

Serves them right! Serves them right!

My name, just my name, killed them, I the great mover of the world.

Serves them right! Serves them right! (Boas 1921, p.1380-81)

The actual war waged by Nakaṕankam was fought in a north to south direction; Nakaṕankam

being based in on the northern part of Vancouver Island and the Saanich people situated on the

southern portion. The poetry of the song commemorating this war describes the location of the

Kwagu'ł as "up" and their movement, as heading "downstream". This use of metaphor in poetic

language supports the hypothesis that the concept of upriver/downriver was the original source

from which a broader coastal axis of "north/south" was derived as populations expanded. This

is also supported by the inconsistency of the north/south meanings rendering them a less stable

application than that of the upriver/downriver axis.   A contemporary speaker when asked about

the use of the *'nal-['nal-] and gwa-* stems in an island based context like Gwayasdạms on

Gilford Island said the terms were still applicable. This indicates that the terminologies from

river based communities was retained despite changes in geography.

6.7 Radial extension of meanings associated with *'nal-['nal-]*

We have discussed previously that *atł-* can be associated with the general meaning of "behind"

and that *tłas-,*at least in the past, was associated with the general meaning of "in front".   Of the

four stems associated with geographic region or direction *'nal-['nal-]* appears to have the widest

extension of applied meanings. While *gwa-* seems to refer primarily to "downriver", a

generalized coastal "north", and of "lower rank", *'nal-['nal-]* is given the additional meanings of

"light", "sky", "dawn" and "world" in addition to "upriver" and "south".

(449)   'na- "light, sky, world, dawn, south" (Boas 1931:165).

(450)   'nala – "up river, south, world; before consonants 'nal- " (Boas 1947:228)

These extensions are key imperatives to understanding a Kwakw<u>a</u>k<u>a</u>'wakw perspective of the

universe more so than any other of the four major roots expressing region or direction. *'na-* is a

reduction of the root *'nal-['nal]-* to the stem *'na-.* It includes the concepts "light", "sky", "world"

and "dawn". If we take into consideration the earlier discussion of cultural context then we can

see how these concepts might map to an "upriver" epistemology and promote the application of

certain metaphorical analogy. If we consider the root *'na-* in the Figure 6.8 it contains within it

the concepts "light, sky, world, dawn and south"

'na- "day, light, sky, world, dawn, south"

'nal- "upriver, of high rank, the best, the oldest"
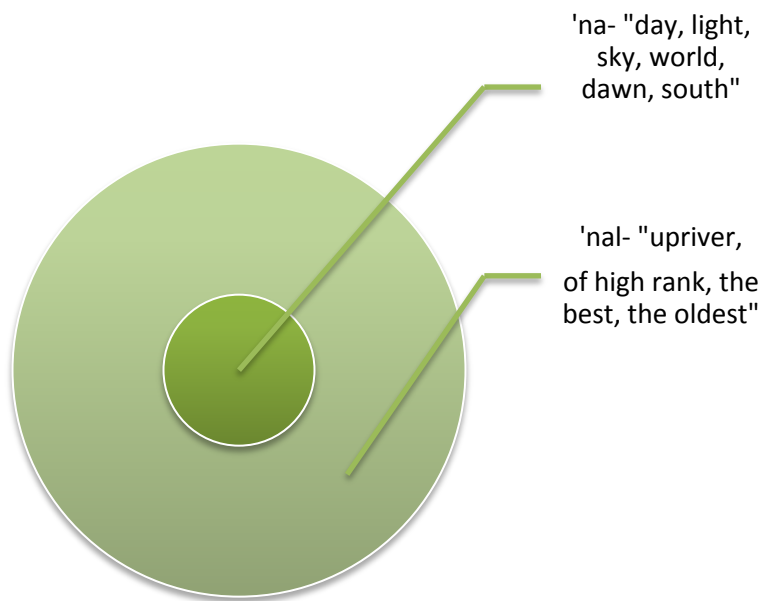
Figure 6.12: *Radial diagram of 'na- stem*

(451) 'nala   "day" (Boas 1948:241)

(452) 'nax'id   "it gets daylight" (Boas 1948:241)

(453) nag<u>a</u>la   "light appears" (Boas 1948:241)

(454) nagila   "to live, act, until dawn" (Boas 1948:241)

(455) 'na<u>k</u>wała   "light" (Boas 1948:242)

(456) 'nak'walis   "light in world, on beach" (Boas 1948:242)

'nala while meaning "day" can also mean the "world" as in the following phrase:

(457) 'na'istłuxda 'nalax   "daytime will be this world" (Boas 1948:241)

In the following phrase the stem *'nala* is used to mean both "best" and "world"

(458) …yu'm<u>a</u>nuxw 'nal<u>a</u>nxa ha'ma laxa i`ka'dzilisa 'nala (Boas 1902:178)
          This is our   best   food   in the   upper   world

If we take these varied meanings and place them within a broader context we begin to see how

the association between meanings starts to unfold as a particular Kwakw<u>a</u>ka'wakw worldview

where the associations make sense. The beginning of a day (*'nala*) is associated with 'the

breaking of dawn (*'na'nakwa̱la*) and the emergence of light (*'nak̲wa̱la*). If we apply the metaphor

of a "day" as equivalent to "all of time" we get:

the emergence of light = the beginning of time.

We can see this metaphor in action with the following narrative told by my grandfather Charlie

Willie to the anthropologist Ronald Rohner[69]:

Qawadeilakala with his four children and his younger brother *Koleili* lived before

there was light on the earth. They heard the voice of God who said that they were

to go and find a place which they could claim as their own. The voice promised

them the cloak of a wolf for ease of transportation [i.e. transformed them into

wolves]. The two brothers and four children came first to Kingcome. The older

brother claimed *lalaq*, a site up Kingcome River as his own. *Koleili* did not want to

share the same site as his brother, so he moved on to look for his

own place. He travelled to *lax'oh* "clear-water" and then to Wakeman

River…(Rohner1970, p. 86)

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[69] Identification from Ryan Nicolson, personal communication

It is the events "at the beginning of time" that set the standard for the following generations to mimic and replicate within their ceremonies. It is also set within an earlier historical time frame that the original tribal *'naṁima* began their gradual descent "downriver" from their "upriver" locations. Literally, within a Kwakwa̱ka'wakw mindset the "day" and the "world" are equivalent in time and space as "where events occur". Events begin with the emergence of light in the day and in the world. Up river is associated with the oldest and the best locations both geographically and historically. In this conceptualization time is compressed or expanded to encompass "a day" or "all time". "Upriver" is associated with the most distant past in time and the most valuable and ancient of land occupation. Because the Kwakwa̱ka'wakw value primogeniture and the idea of the origin/original these associations make sense in Kwak'wala while they appear disparate in English. Another example of this way of thinking can be found in the name of the oldest son of `Tse̱kame', the founding ancestor of the K̲wik̲wasu'tinux̲w Tribe.

> Wa, la'ma̱ns i`tida̱tł g̲wag̲wixsalał lax̲ `Tse̱kama'i.
>   go   we   again   discuss again   to   (name)
> *Now we will talk about Head-Winter-Dancer.*
>
> Wa, la'a̱m'la'e bawikwi g̲ana̱mes `Tse̱kama'i.
>   and then   pregnant she   wife his   (name)
> *Now his wife Winter-Dance-Woman, was with child.*

Wa, lala'e musg̲amgila xa 'makwala la b̲awikuxs la'e mayuɫida yasa babagwa̲me'.

then   four (round) make the   moon   of pregnant she when gave birth   a   boy

When she had been with child for four months, she gave birth to a boy.

Wa, hex'ida'a̲m'la wisi 'nike `Tsek̲ama'i laxis g̲an̲ami, "La'a̲m dɫigamtɫa **'Na̲lbe'**."

That   (boy?) said   (name)   to his   wife   Now then, name will be   (name)

*Head-Winter-Dancer said at once to his wife, "His name shall be **Upper-End**".*

(Boas 1908, p. 179-180)

The significance of the name 'Na̲lbe' lies in the geography of the lands occupied by the

K̲wi̲kwasuťinux̲w tribe that `Tsek̲ame' founded. The K̲wi̲kwasuťinux̲w occupy lands in the

Broughton Archipelago and their main village is on Gilford Island. The name 'Na̲lbe' translates

as "upper end" (Boas 1908) or 'those at the upper end of the river" (Boas 1966). The naming of

`Tsek̲ame's oldest son is significant in two ways. First it draws together the geographic location

of up-river with the symbolic association of the oldest and the best. The second issue of

significance is that the geographic demography where this story takes place and the evolution of

the ancestral lands of the K̲wi̲kwasu'tinuxw is island or inlet based *not* river based. 'Na̲lbe'

builds his house at Wato, near X̲a̲kwikan̲ in Thompson Sound, eastward from the home location

of his parents at 'Mitap. I believe the significance of his name is not so much a direct reference

to an up-river location but the application of an eastern point that runs parallel to the

upriver/downriver axis on the broadened geography of the K̲wi̲kwasuťinux̲w movement

outwards into the Broughton archipelago. This geographic significance is joined to the social significance of being the oldest. This example shows how the original association of upriver/downriver is carried outwards even into a geographic that is no longer situated on the axis of upriver/downriver but inlets and islands.

The following words may represent the presence of a linguistic phonaestheme pattern. According to Bauer (2004) a phonaestheme is:

> …a sequence of sounds which, while it often correlates with a particular meaning,
>
> cannot be analysed as a morph in a word because morphs lead to an exhaustive
>
> analysis of the word but phonaesthemes do not. The *gl-* in words like gleam,
>
> glimmer, glitter is often cited as a phoanestheme whose meaning can be glossed
>
> as 'having to do with light'. (p. 84)

'na- may express a very generalized meaning that reflects the idea of "origin" with that of *'na-* "day, light, world and *'na̲l-* "up river, the best, higher rank". At the very least it

represents a type of radial category that infers a connection between meanings

connected to a minimal remnant of linguistic phonological form.

(459)   'nam   "one" (Boas 1948:239)

(460)   'naṁima'   "clan, of one kind" pl. 'nał'namima   "family group supposed to be
                                descendants one ancestor, but assignable in paternal or
                                maternal line, also including adopted members" (Boas 1948:240)

(461)   'nula   "older brother, sister" (Grubb 1977:202)

(462)   'nulawalił   "first born line" (Boas 1948:245)

(463)   'nulagila   "the highest type of potlatch" (Boas 1948:245)

(464)   'nulagame' gigame'   "chief who has given such a potlatch" (Boas 1948:245)

And also perhaps by extension:

(465)   nugwa   "I" (Boas 1948:236)

(466)   numas   "very old person" (Grubb 1977:200)

(467)   nogad   "wiseman, songmaker" (Grubb 1977:200

(468)   nuyam   "myth of the family story of a 'namim" (Boas 1948:237)

(469)   nuxwnamis   "myth people, animals in human form in mythical times, stories

                                              from way back" (Boas 1948:237)

In a way the stem *'na-* has similar connotation as the stem *ga-* discussed in chapter 3. Both

refer back to ideas of temporal/historical origin; *ga-* in spatial relationship to the self as the point

of origin with references to historical origins, and *'na-* more directly related to the spatial location

of the village with spatial extension into the broader context of geography and referential

relationship to ideas around origin and primogeniture within which these village sites are

contextualized.

6.8 *Iḱi* "above" and *ba'ni* "below"

Boas (1848) Dictionary defines *iḱ-* as "above, up". It tends to denote a more generalized notion

of spatial position with specific extension into the geographic zone of the sky, or heavens

through words like *iḱadza'lis* "upper world" (pp.23), *iḱi* "sky or above, the" (www.firstvoices.com).

In the following line from the contemporary hymn "Abide with Me" the translation refers to the

English word for "heaven":

Dukwalala xan tłaxs ga'yu'yola'os

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes

`Kwaxsłala xa p̓adaka gaxan,

 Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies

 Ka's t'samała'osan laxa Iḱi

 Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee

 Dałaxse'am gaxan ḱi's bowan.

 In life, in death, O Lord abide with me. Amen

 (Kwak'wala Hymnal,Anglican Diocese of British Columbia, p.6)

Boas (1948) Dictionary defines the stem *ba'n-* and words *ba'nała* and *ba'n i'* as "underneath, below". Again these are general spatial orientations. Geographically zoned extensions include words such as *ba'nagawi'* "farthest underneath, the ghost country".
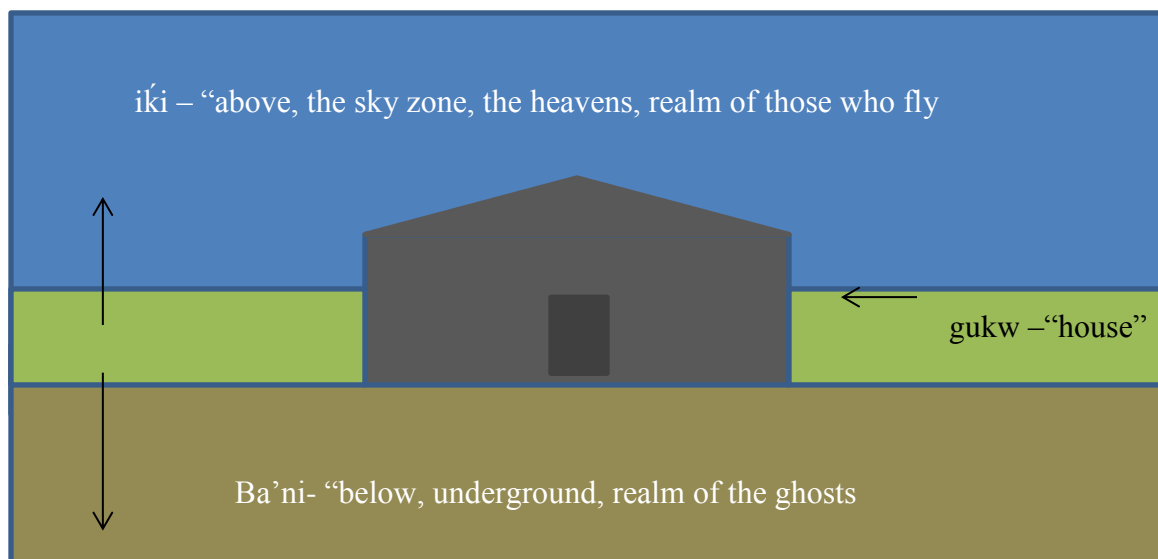
Figure 6.13 *Up in the sky and beneath the earth*

In general the word *iḱi* refers to the sky region and the word *ba̲'ni* refers to the underworld.

Birds and other beings that possess the capability of flight occupy the sky region, while ghosts

are considered to occupy the land beneath the earth.

(470)   iḱi   "sky, or above the" (www.firstvoices.com)

(471)   ba̲'ni   "below, down there, underneath (www.firstvoices.com)

The following lists of words are extensions off the stems *iḱi-* and *ba̲'ni-*

(472)   iḱala   "something high" (Boas 1948:23)

(473)   iḱa̲bala   "slanting rafters of house" (Boas 1948:23)

(474)   iḱadze'lis   "upper world" (Boas 1848:24)

(475)   iḱa̲g̲a̲mała   "to look up" (Boas 1948:24)

The root *iḱ-* can be applied more generally than just the arena of geography or architecture as

in the following examples:

(476) iḱetⱡala   "just above the other" (Boas 1948:24)

(477) iḱodaxste'   "upper lip" (Boas 1948:24)

(478) iḱoⱡ`tsand   "to fill more than half" (Boas 1948:24)

An interesting relationship appears with the phonologically related stem *ik-* meaning "something good".

(479) a'ikas   "fine weather" (Boas 1948:23)

(480) ikadzala   "sky is clear" (Boas 1948:23)

(481) ika   "to overcome, to win [as in a game] (Boas 1948:23)

(482) ixḱasala   "to be happy" (Boas 1948:24)

(483) ixstuḱwan   "bright colored" (Boas 1948:24)

(484) ixt'sam   "abalone" (Boas 1948:24)

The following words correspond to concepts of "below":

(485) ban- (-aⱡa, -i')   "underneath, below" (Boas 1948:111)

(486) ba'naǥawe'   "farthest underneath: the ghost country" (Boas 1948:111)

(487) ba'nga'la   "low sided (box, canoe, vessel)" (Boas 1948:111)

(488) ba'nḱudaxste'   "lower lip" (Boas 1948:111)

(489) ba'nḱułt`si   "lower than half way mark" (Boas 1948:112)

In a contemporary sense the understanding of "below ground" and "in the sky" are given

expression in the disciplines of archeology, astronomy and astrology. They are considered to

be associated, but somehow separate from geography. In the cultural Kwakwaka'wakw

conceptualization of the land they are more intimately associated. While "below ground" and "in

the sky" remain relatively beyond the physical ability to traverse most of the origin stories of the

Kwakwaka'wakw conflate the appearance of an ancestor who comes from "below ground" or "in

the sky" to a certain geographic place within Kwakwaka'wakw territory in order to establish a

community.   In the case of the Dzawada'enuxw, the original ancestor Ḵawadilikala comes from

the north-east and travels south along the Kingcome River meeting new tribesmen who found

the Dzawada'enuxw *'naṁima* (clans). Lawagila, the raven, who meets Ḵawadilikala while

walking the beach, comes out of the sky and forms the Lilawagila *'naṁima*. Daband, who

comes out of a rock, but was originally a mountain forms the 'Wa'ukwama'i *'naṁima*. `Ḵixt'lala

is the sun that comes out of the sky and forms the G̲igag̲ama'i *'naṁima*. Only Ha̲lxabo'i, who

forms the `Kaḱila'ka *'naṁima*, meets Kawadili̲kala while he is already in his human form.

The first man of the Tsawatenok[70] was Káwaṭilikálla, but before he was a man he

was a wolf and his wife was a wolf. They lived on the upper course of the

Kingcome River [at the head of Kingcome Inlet]. One day a heavy rain was

falling and he said; "I do not see why we should remain animals. We had better

leave off these skins and use them only in dancing. Why should we wander

about and have no home? If we had a house to live in when it rains, it would be

well."…His first son was Tláwitsá, his second Kulili and his third Ná'nuwalaq

["miracles"]. Tláwitsā and his father were sad because they had no companions,

and one day as they sat outside the house talking about it, they heard a crying

sound in a large rock. They arose hurriedly and broke it open, and revealed a

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[70] I have kept the original spelling of Curtis as published

U'mista Orthographic Conversion of names from Curtis orthographic spelling:

Tsawatenok (Dzawad̲a'enux̲w); Kawatilikalla (K̲awadili̲kala); Tlawitsa (Dławitsa); Kulili (Kwalili); Na'nuwalaq ('Na'nawalakw);   T̄apunt̄ (Daband̲); Ninul̲k̲inuh ('N̄i'nalkinuxw); Wioqumi (`Wi'ukw̲ama'i); Luwagyila (Luwagila); K̄yakyamutlalasu (K̄a̲kamutłalasu); Kekatilika̲l̄a (Ki̲kadilikala); Kekawatili̲kal̄a (K̲ikawadili̲kala); Liluwagyila (Liluwagila); Kehtlala (`Kix̲t̲lala); Kehtlalatsi (`Kix̲tla̲la`tsi); Kyilupstala (Kilupsta̲la̲); Gyigyīkumi (G̲igig̲ame'); Kekuhtlala (`Ki`katlala); H̄alhapui (Ha̲lxabo'i); G̲yagyikyilagya (`K̲a`ki̲kilaka)

youth. "Welcome!" said the old man. "I am glad to see you. We want someone to come and live with us." "That is why I have come," said the youth. "I heard your wish and decided to come and be a man with you. I am Ṭapŭnt ["helper"]. Now that I have come, you may have all my names. My name is Stone, my name is Mountain, my name is Big Mountain, my name is Increasing Mountain." He repeated many other names of this kind, and concluded, "All these you may have and use when you need them. "His descendants formed the gens which was formally called Ninŭlḳinuh ["people of the head of the river"], but which now is called Wioqŭmi ["irresistible"].

Again, Káwaṭilikálla saw a Raven strutting along the beach. All he could think of was how to get tribesmen. He said to the Raven: "I wish you were a man so that you could come and be my tribesman." The Raven threw back his feather dress and replied: "What am I, after all? You see I am a man when I wish to be." Said Káwaṭilikálla, "Well, you had better put that feather coat away. Come and be a man, and use this feather dress only when we dance. That is what I have done." This the Raven agreed to do. "Tell me your name," said Káwaṭilikálla. And the Raven replied: "My name is Lŭwágyila, and my name is Kyakyamŭtlalasŭ ["folded

up"] "Well, then," said Káwaṭilikálla, "you shall be the rival chief of my son

Tláwitsā, and your children shall be the rivals of the Kékaṭilikálla [abbreviated

form of Kékawaṭilikálla, the plural of Káwaṭilikálla]." So the Raven man was the

first of the gens Lílŭwagyila [plural of Lŭwágyila]. On another day Káwaṭilikálla

and the others heard thunder. He said, "It is a strange time of year for thunder!

Perhaps, he too wants to be a man with us." Now this noise was not caused by

the thunderbird but by the Sun, who had borrowed the wings of *kolus,* a great

bird. Leaving his wings in the mountains he came down in the form of a man,

and Káwaṭilikálla was glad to have another tribesman. Said the Sun; "You may

have my names. I have brought many with me. My names are Kéhtlala ['much

wood in the fire'], Kéhtlalatsi ['much wood in the big fire'] – and he named many

others having to do with fire. He built a house and above the smoke-hole he

made a wooden chimney so that when a great fire was burning the flames shot

up to the sky. This house he called Kyílúpstala. [a chimney is still added to the

house when the Gyígyikŭmi ("chiefs") gens give a feast or a potlatch.] This gens

formerly was called Kékŭhtlala [plural of the founder's name].

One day all the people embarked on their canoes and descended the river to see

what was at its mouth. On the way they found a man living alone with his mother.

His name was Hálhapui ["looking out from under a shadow", such as the rim of a

hat might cast]. He had much to tell them, how he had been captured by the

wolves and had received from them the living water and the magic death-dealer.

After listening to his story Káwaṭilikálla took Hálhapui and his mother and

proceeded to the mouth of the river, where the people built houses. Hálhapui

founded the gens Gyágyikyilagya ["those who always wish to kill"]. (Curtis 1915,

p. 132-134)

The locations of "below ground" and "from above " are significant in that while physical provision

comes from the sea and forest regions through both plant life and animals, spiritual provision is

acquired from "below ground" or "from above". In the case of Dab_and, he emerges from stone

and he embodies the mountains. In later narratives he is associated with the ability to capture

mountain goats; a gift acquired through entering a hole in the mountainside. In the case of

'Ki_xa`tɬala, he emerges from the sky in the form of a bird and is associated with the sun and with

fire. In a later historical time period an ancestor of the Dzawada_'enu_xw is married to a man

named S̲ant'łe' (Sunbeam) who takes her up into the sky world where she is given a house

`Kík̲astła̲n whose house-front is painted with an image of the sun and moon.   She returns from

the sky realm pregnant and with many gifts which are manifest on earth.

…Then S̲ant'łe' spoke, and said, "O mistress, don't feel badly, for I will let you go

home. If you want it, only say, 'I want a house to come,' and my father's large

house will be at once at the place where you want it to be; and if you want

anything, you have only to call my name, for I shall be near you all the time." Thus

spoke S̲ant'łe' to his wife. Then Food-Giver spoke to her husband and said, "Thank

you master, that you do not want to keep me and my younger sisters in this upper-

world." Thus spoke Food-Giver to her husband. Then S̲ant'łe' called Brain-eating-

Woman and said, "Go and borrow the long rope of The-One-Who-Climbs-down,

that is the spider." Brain-eating-Woman went at once, it was not long before Brain-

eating-Woman came, carrying on her arm the long rope of The-One-Who-Climbs-

down. She gave it to S̲ant'łe', who took it and called the four women.

Then S̲ant'łe' said to them, "Don't be afraid. Stand close together." Then he

wrapped his large dressed-skin blanket around the four sisters, and tied one end of

the long rope to the four women. After he had tied them, he opened the door of the

upper world and put his wife and her younger sisters, bundled together through it.

It did not take them long before they reached this (our) lower world. Food-Giver

did not know who untied them. Then she saw our world here. Food-Giver just

arose and sat down and gave birth to a child. (Boas 1902, p. 52-53)

Food-Giver (Hamdzidi) is also gifted with names which refer to light and to abalone which is

equated with light. These names have been passed down to contemporary generation today

and have spread amongst other Kwakwaka'wakw tribes through marriage.   In another

Dzawada'enuxw story, `Kumukwa,  who is also named Copper-Maker (`Tłakwagila) dwells

under the sea and is an intermediary between mankind and the wealth of the ocean realm. In

order to meet him Wealthy (`Kumx̱komgila), the chief of the 'namima Lilawagila (Heaven-

Makers) is pulled underwater in a supernatural canoe prepared by his wife. She turns out to be

the daughter of Copper-Maker and after descending beneath the sea they come upon her

father's village where he is given many gifts.

 …Then the pretty woman got ready. She took the stout rope and tied one end of

it to the bow of the canoe, and then she pulled it tight and tied (the other end) to

the stern of the large self-paddling canoe; then she took eight dressed skins and

threw them over the stout rope, and she pegged them with yew-wood pegs at the

edges of the sides (gunwales) of the large canoe. Now she had made a house of

the canoe, that it should not let in water. Now she had finished her work. Then

the tide [of the sea] was going out. It was very low tide. Then the pretty woman

called her son and her husband and the four attendants, and she said, "Come. let

us start. Only take care! You must all help and paddle, that we go fast when we

pass through the door of the underworld." Then they went into the canoe, and all

the attendants paddled, and the pretty woman steered the canoe. Then they

went into the cave, and the attendants saw that the sea-water ran through it; and

they saw the bones of men, many of them, on each side of the channel. These

are the bones of all who are drowned all around our world. Then the large self-

paddling canoe went down with the tide.

As soon as they passed through (the cave), Wealthy saw many houses.

Then he heard (people) at the houses shouting, and saying, "O Copper-Maker!

Copper-making-Woman is coming in sight here." Then for the first time Wealthy

learned the name of his wife. (Boas 1902, p. 79-80)

Wealthy (`Ḵumxḱomgila), is gifted with his father-in-law's house and his names which he returns

to earth with. The `tła̱kwa "copper" is still considered to be the highest symbol of wealth

amongst the Kwakwa̱ka'wakw. It came to Wealthy (`Ḵumxḱomgila), from beneath the sea.

Figure 6.13 shows a painting of coppers above the tide line at the mouth of Kingcome Inlet.

Figure 6.14 Duff, Wilson. (Photographer).(1955). *Painting of coppers at mouth of Kingcome Inlet to commemorate potlatches held in 1921 and 1927* [Photograph]. "Image (PN 2197) courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives"

The story excerpts I have presented are only a few of many that illustrate the relationship of the

Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw to the geographical domains of "below ground" and "from above" in ways that

are less physically tangible than the geographic zones of "the sea", "the woods", "up-river" and

"down-river" and yet are just as significant within the Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw imagination and ultimate

geographic conceptualization. The zones are inter-related because the regions of "below

ground" and "from above" are the source domains of spiritual wealth which are translated into

the ability to acquire physical wealth in the earthly domains of the forest and the sea. This

connection exists primarily in the mind and in the imagination of the Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw as the

physical ability to traverse these domains was limited to climbing up into the mountains and the

use of existing caves underground. Yet, I highlight its significance as a conceptual interface of

geographic experience inter-related to actual physical experience in the land.

6.9 Spatial and temporal expansion and contraction in narrative

Western European standards of geography tend to approach the concept of land under the

notion of distribution. Under measurement conditions a landscape is given character through

height and distance. For example; a river runs so many kilometres in a northwest direction; a

mountain can be surveyed to reach 3000ft in height. By mapping the formal characteristics of

geography we are able to create maps that take a landscape beyond our ability to humanly

observe in a single setting and collapse that observation down into an image that we are able to

expand and contract. However, as much as the landscape exists as a physical presence in the

world and as much as the map exists as a physical referent to the landscape it is the analogical

conceptual process of contraction and expansion that creates an understanding of the

landscape in the mind by the use of the map. I am using this example to highlight the cognitive

process required to generate an image in the mind that is translated into meaning; a process of

analogy. In this case the map is a contracted analogical derivative of the land in real space

which helps us formulate an impression of the land in our minds which we cannot see under

ordinary biological single perspective observation. I am using this example because the

cognitive process of expansion and contraction is an analogical process which is prevalent in

the Kwak'wala language and reveals itself in Kwakwaka'wakw culture in particular ways.

The particularities of analogy exemplified by expansion and contraction in Kwak'wala reveal

some of the cognitive processes in place for a Kwakwaka'wakw epistemology or world-view. It

begins with our mental conception of our physical selves 'in the world' we inhabit. In this regard,

to a limited extent, we have discussed in this chapter the concept of *t̕las-* "sea region, facing the

water" and *atł-* "forest region, behind" as they relate to the expansion of the independent body to

the home, the village, and the world (geography). In addition we have discussed the further

defined notion of locations of the body within the village, and of the village in the world

(geography) with historicity, ideas of origin and by extension, primogeniture and rank.

The Kwakwaka'wakw concept of geographic space is not limited to just relationships of

geographic forms to one another but is imbued with symbolism and extended meaning through

metaphor, what I have referred to previously as 'the analogy of expansion and contraction'.

Analogical expansion and contraction is not exclusive to Kwak'wala. In the English language,

the notion of expansion and contraction of time is also evident. For example, in poetry, where

the idea of a lifetime is measured metaphorically in the physical character of the passing of a

year; winter is considered the time of old age and spring the time of youth or in the following

example by Dylan Thomas, where the temporal length of a human lifespan at approximately 85

years can be collapsed metaphorically into the temporal span of a single year or a single day.

> Do not go gentle into that good night,

> Old age should rage and burn at close of day;

Rage, rage, against the dying of the light.

(Dylan Thomas, 1951)

While both English and Kwak'wala exhibit the concept of analogical spatial and temporal

expansion and contraction. What I want to point out here are the particularities of analogical

expansion and contraction that relate to the land.   Examples we have reviewed are the

temporal expansion of a 'day' into 'all time' and the spatial expansion of down-river / up-river to

the coastal north and south through historical population movement. An apparent crossover of

the two is the analogy of up-river with greater historical depth. The concept of temporal and

spatial expansion and contraction is also evident literally in Kwakwaka'wakw mythological

histories. In many stories the theme of collapsed and expanded time is made literal, as well as

the themes of collapsed and expanded spaces.   Consider the following excerpts:

When `Tsekame' (Head-Winter-Dancer), the original ancestor of the Kwikwasu`tinuxw has sons

each of them grow up to be men in the space of months rather than years. These events are

conflations of time (months rather than years) and space (growth from small to large). The

following describes the growth of `Tsekame's third son.

`Tsekame' - Head-Winter-Dancer's sons

Then Winter-Dance-Woman was with child again, and after four months she gave

birth to a boy. Head-Winter-Dancer said at once to his wife, "O Mistress, now his

name shall be Cannibal." Thus said Head-Winter-Dancer to his wife. Now Head-

Winter-Dancer always washed his son in cold water, and when Cannibal was four

months old he was a full grown man. (Boas 1902, p.180-181)

In this second example, 'Kala'min', an ancestor of the Dzawada̲'enux̲w is given a supernatural

dog by T̲awixa'xta', a supernatural man who is really a mountain goat. The dog has

supernatural ability to successfully hunt mountain goat. T̲awixa'xta' also gives 'Kala'min' his

name.

'Kala'min's dog

…But he did not walk long [on the ground] then he arrived in front of a large

mountain. Then he saw forty mountain-goats eating the grass of the mountain. At

once, he who had now the name T̲awixa'xta' took off his red cedar-bark and took

out his small dog from the cross-piece in the neck part of his head-ring of red

cedar-bark. As soon as he put it on the ground, it became a large dog. At once it

turned its face towards the place where the forty mountain-goats were, and ran.

When Tₐwixa'xta' saw the dog, it was as though he threw something, therefore all

the forty mountain-goats were at once dead. But it was not long before the dog

came back to the place where the master of the dog was standing. The

Tₐwixa'xta' took it at once in his arms, and spoke to it kindly. Then he pressed it.

The dog at once became small again, the size of a humming-bird. Then he put it

into the cross-piece in the neck part of his red cedar bark. Then he finished. (Boas

1902, p. 39-40)

In the third example, a story from the `Nₐmgis people, a boy has a supernatural experience

where time is expanded. He becomes upset with his parents and leaves the village. Wanting to

commit suicide he throws himself into the river but unsuccessful he continues on and arrives at

a steep rock whereupon he starts to climb a mountain:

He went on and soon saw a mountain top ahead which shone like a light. It was

the Nawalakwa rock, where there was a constant rain of rock crystal. He picked

up four pieces the length of a finger and stuck them in his hair in a row from the

front to the back. He climbed up the mountain and became completely covered

in rock crystal, he had acquired the ability to fly. Thereupon he flew all over the

world. *He thought that he was absent for four days, but it was four years*. At last

he flew back to his home. His relatives happened to be in Ni'nalgas and were

working on the side of the lake by torch light when he appeared in the shape of a

snow-white eagle and caused rock-crystal to rain down. (Boas 2002:336)

In a story relating the acquisition of the hamat'sa ceremonial, objects thrown by boys

fleeing from the cannibal Baxwbakwalanuxwsiwe, expand to block his pursuit. A comb

becomes a thicket of brush, a stone becomes a mountain, hair oil becomes a large pond

and a stick becomes a tree:

Then (the eldest one) threw the comb backward. Immeadiately there was a

thicket of crabapples[?]. Cannibal-at-North-End-of-World was tangled up in it.

Then the brothers crossed the mountain, and again they heard him coming near

behind. Then his brothers ran along level ground, when Cannibal-at-North-End-

of-World approached again. *Then the eldest one threw the stone backwards,*

and it at once became a mountain. (Boas, 1910, pp. 391-393)

Each of these stories provides examples where either time or space has the ability to expand or

collapse. A supernatural child is born within four months instead of nine. This same child grows

into an adult within four months. A supernatural dog can grow and shrink on command. A boy

is gone for what he experiences as days but upon his return is told it has been years. A stone

becomes a mountain. For the Kwakwaka'wakw the concept of analogical expansion and

contraction of time and space is a common theme in narrative. Through these imaginative

expressions it is possible to see how the concept of empathetic expansion of structural

characteristics is repeated throughout Kwakwaka'wakw conceptualization. This acts as both

primer and complement to concepts of spatial expansion and contraction between the

relationships of the body, the house, the village, and ultimately the landscape.

6.10 Summary

Specific to this thesis is the proposal that it is the body within a specific environment that

contributes to particular cultural understandings. Lakoff and Johnson (1999) posit that the most

familiar human experience is that of the body and that metaphorical extensions are derivations

of this bodily experience. These theories have tremendous consequences for how the domains

of space and time are conceptualized. Boas (1935) was able to accurately identify the polarities

of *atɬ-* "landwards" / *`tɬas-* "seawards" and *gwa-* "upriver" / *'nal-['nal-]* "downriver" as major

orientations within the Kwakwa̲ka'wakw conceptualization of geographic space.   It is the

body=house marked by the *u-[a'w-]* stem that is situated as the central spatial locator off of

which the other four directions are derived in order to conceptualize the landscape.   The

premise is that the body/house in space is oriented to face the water with the back to the forest.

This is the primary orientation of the Kwakwaka'wakw as expressed in the Kwak'wala language.

This primary orientation is then further delineated by the secondary orientation of "upriver" and

"downriver". These orientations have culturally relevant association with histories and social

standings.   Geographic terminology in Kwak'wala is determined by the landscape of its origin

and by extension reflects cultural expression. By practical application houses (and the body)

are oriented towards the sea and all physical forays into the world are defined by the movement

into the zone of the sea or that of the land. Transformative spiritual forays into the world are

defined by imaginative movement into the sky or below ground.   Historical movement, the

movement through time, expands the concept of upriver / downriver from simply geographic to

temporal. It operates under the premise of the conflation of space with time. Time and space are marked by analogical contraction and expansion and Kwakw<u>aka</u>'wakw geography must be considered under this primary premise or the engagement remains merely topical. These ideas are expressed in linguistic word based analysis and narrative. By considering how the linguistic forms manifest in stories we are able to begin to comprehend a different and particular way of negotiating one's place in the world, or one's geography that is equally defined in the mind by the physical phenomenon (or form) of the landscape itself as well as language and cultural practice (the meaning or comprehension of that form).

Chapter 7: Time and Space Crossover

<u>Dream of Gwagwadaxala</u>

I dreamed that I had been taken by a man unknown to me to a distant place. We

were travelling in a strange looking canoe. I thought I would ask the man where he

came from. Then he spoke to me and said, "I know your thoughts. You wish to ask

me where I come from. I will tell you. I am the great star which goes down twice

and which you see in the evening," said the man. Then I was afraid on account of

his speech. I awoke and I went to sleep again. (Boas 1925, p. 49)

7.1 What is time?

There is substantial crossover between the conceptualization of time and space in the

Kwak'wala language. This chapter explains what these crossovers are and grants further

insight into Kwakwaka'wakw space through the analysis.   It helps to consider modern time and

how it is constructed and experienced. Then I consider how modern concepts have been

translated into Kwak'wala but are not innate but appropriated. Finally I consider

Kwakwaka'wakw time as it was considered prior to the importation of modern Western

concepts.

Time is a pervasive concept in the modern experience. Time is ever present in our

consciousness. We are surrounded by devices designed to keep track of the time and our

movements in accordance with it. Clocks are everywhere both in the public and private realms

reminding us what time it is and even more intimately, the majority of people wear watches

strapped to our wrists so that we always have access to the time. Our cell phones declare the

time to us every time we use them. Our relationship with time is so much a part of our everyday

experience that we rarely question it. But what is time? How real is it? How much of our

experience of time is innate to human nature and how much of it is culturally constructed? Do

all cultures experience time in the same way?

My research into the concept of time as expressed in the Kwak'wala language and

Kwakwaka'wakw cultural forms indicates that while the concept of time certainly exists cross-

culturally the actual 'conceptualization' of what time is varies considerably (Nicolson, 2005).

This conceptualization is deeply influential on our perceptions and experience of time. Modern

culture and the English language, along with the other Western languages that have been

engaged with the development of modern Western notions of time help facilitate an experience

of time that is particular; it is the one that dominates our experience of time today. In the same

way, the Kwak'wala language and Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw culture also facilitate a particular

experience of time. This experience and understanding of time differs considerably from

modern Western based notions. This indicates that while there are certain fundamental cross-

cultural universals regarding time that the particular expressions and concepts about time can

render the *experience* of time across cultures quite differently. For example, the modern notion

of 'Indian Time' while seen derisively from the modern Western point of view as the inability of

Aboriginal peoples to be punctual can actually be accounted for by the difference in relationship

to the idea of time and its correspondence to the flow of events. 'Indian Time' is not an innate

characteristic of being aboriginal but the remnant of a culturally based conceptualization of our

relationship to time. As we shall see in the following linguistic analysis the highly defined

incrementalism of Western notions of time are particular to Western culture and are reflected in

the English language as such.

Both Kwak'wala and English exhibit conceptual space/time crossover. Boroditsky (2001) states

that "recent evidence suggests that people do not just *talk* about time in spatial terms, but that

they also use their spatial knowledge to *think* about time" (p. 6) Lakoff & Johnson (1999) state,

"All of our understandings of time are relative to other concepts such as motion, space and

events" (p. 137). The relationship between the concepts of space and time is a close one. In

the Kwak'wala language we see similar conceptual structure across the two domains.

> Time is as basic a concept as we have. Yet time, in English and in other language
>
> is, for the most part, not conceptualized and talked about on its own terms. Very
>
> little of our understanding of time is purely temporal. Most of our understanding of
>
> time is a metaphorical version of our understanding of motion in space…and motion
>
> is defined as the change in location over time. (p. 139)

We borrow understandings from space in order to frame our understanding of time. So what

are the crossover metaphors that emerge from the Kwak'wala language regarding time

concepts? We could start with asking what is the word for time in Kwak'wala?   There doesn't

appear to be any directly translatable word for time directly equivalent to English. The word

'wa'wayas is derived from the stem *'wa-* meaning 'to measure'. Boas gives the word

'wa'wasdam as equivalent to *'wa'wayas*.

(490)   'wa'wayas   "time" (Boas 1948:73)

(491)   'wa'wasd<u>a</u>m   "time" (Boas 1948:73)

(492)   'wa'was<u>a</u>liɬ   "time in house" (Boas 1948:73

The conceptual connection between time and space is made apparent by the word for 'length'

which shares the root *'wa-.*

(493)   'was<u>g</u>am   " length" (Boas 1948:73)

(494)   'wadz<u>a</u>k   "measure across" (Boas 1948:74)

(495)   'wadz<u>a</u><u>g</u>as   "diameter" (Boas 1948:74)

The relationship between space and time is further emphasized by the suffix *-as* meaning 'place

of'. Boas states '"While this suffix designates primarily place, it also has many derived

meanings such as time, size, number, way of."

(496)   'waxax'<u>a</u>nxi'las   "number of years" (Boas 1947:305)
         measure time/season place of/time of

(497)   'wa'la'as   "place of stopping" (Boas 1947:318)
         stop   place of

(498)   x<u>a</u>ndzas   " nose , place of sniffling" (Boas 1947:318)

The auxiliary stem *hi-* which can be translated as 'that' attaches to an allomorph of *-as* 'place of'

to form *he'mis* "time of" or "that place". We can see in this construction the delineation of a

'certain time' equated to a 'certain place'.   The following expression is possible:

(499)   He'mis<u>a</u>n ba'was.   "That was the time of my leaving" (Boas1947:319)

The following example also exhibits the conflation of time with space:

(500)   'yaḱaga'las   "time of speaking" (Boas 1947:319)

These examples give us some idea as to how time concepts crossover with space concepts in

the Kwak'wala language.

The next few topics will deal with the introduction of Western time concepts and the Kwak'wala

language forms that have been constructed to accommodate them. My point in making this

delineation and analyzing the following word structures is that the concepts underlying these

new structures arise out of Western cultural practice and industrialization. They are not

intrinsically Kwakw<u>a</u>ka'wakw. That being said, they are part of the process of Western cultural

integration we have been participating in over the last few hundred years. Also, of interest are

the forms that Kwak'wala uses to adopt foreign concepts.

To ask "What is the time?" in reference to a clock is a relatively new concept introduced with

modern Western notions of time increments. This is evidenced in the following morphological

analysis of the sentence.

(501)   Lu*xw* –*ga*n-t'sa*k*ila'?   "What time is it?"
          A round group- how many?- pointed at object

The sentence begins with *luxw-* which Boas (1948) translates as "to roll round thing". (p.404) It

could be translated as a group of things that go together with a circular reference.   Possibly it

refers to the round face of the clock with the numbers forming a circle. The second morpheme,

*ga*n*[s]-* translates as "how many", while *-t'sa*k*ila'* refers to long objects. The long object in this

case may refer to the shape of the clocks hands. So the translation might read loosely as "How

many, or which number is the pointed object (hands) at?"   This is a literal interpretation of the

Western act of counting time with a clock. It is not a concept indigenous to Kwak'wala but one

that adapts Kwak'wala morphological forms and expressions to fit as accurately as possible an

imported concept of incrementing time into hours.

The following basic response pattern also reflects the morphological structure and conceptual

logic of the question: *Luxw gant'sakila'?* "What time is it?" Examples (502)-(513) are cited

from Nunwakola Cultural Society (2006).

(502) La'muxw 'nam-t'sakila. "It is one o'clock." Or more literally; "It is pointed at one."
      It is   one   pointed at

The following times on the hour follow in the same pattern from one to eleven.

(503) La'muxw mał-t'sakila. It is two o'clock. "It is pointed at two"

(504) La'muxw yudaxw- t'sakila. It is three o'clock. "It is pointed at three"

(505) La'muxw mu-t'sakila. It is four o'clock. "It is pointed at four"

(506) La'muxw saḱa-t'sakila. It is five o'clock. "It is pointed at five"

(507) La'muxw ḱat'ła-t'sakila. It is six o'clock "It is pointed at six"

(508) La'muxw adłabu-t'sakila. It is seven o'clock "It is pointed at seven"

(509) La'muxw ma'łgwa'nał-t'sakila. It is eight o'clock "It is pointed at eight"

(510) La'muxw 'na'na'ma-t'sakila. It is nine o'clock "It is pointed at nine"

(511) La'muxw la'stu-t'sakila. It is ten o'clock "It is pointed at ten" or

(512) La'muxw naka- t'sakila. It is ten o'clock "It is pointed at ten"

(513)   La'mu<u>x</u>w 'n<u>a</u>magu-t'sak<u>i</u>la.   It is eleven o'clock   "It is pointed at eleven"

It is not until the twelfth hour marker that we get a response that rather than reflecting the

attempt to map Kwak'wala onto a foreign concept of time we get an indigenous response; a

response which already exists in the Kwak'wala lexicon. "It is twelve o'clock." can be directly

translated either as "It is noon." or "It is midnight"

(514)   La'mu<u>x</u>w n<u>ak</u>-ela   "It is noon."
                  it is   middle

(515)   La'mu<u>x</u>w n<u>ag</u>-ige'   "It is midnight."
                  it is   middle on back

Both words take their root meaning from the stem morpheme *n<u>ak</u>-* which means "straight or

direct" (Boas 1947 p.228)[71] This can be translated as "in the middle" when considered spatially.

If something is directly in front of you it is "in the middle" of the visual field. Noon is in the middle

of the day, straight ahead of us as the sun reaches its' apex. Midnight is somewhat more

intriguing. The suffix *-ige'* is a locative that can be translated as "on the back". Together the

root *n<u>ak</u>-* and the suffix *-ige'* combine to create "middle or straight on the back". These words

are fundamentally Kwakw<u>a</u>'wakw in their conceptualization and map directly onto the English

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[71] In the Kwak'wala words mid-day (noon) to midnight the change from back "k" to "g" is simply phonological.

concepts of 'mid-day' and 'mid-night', unlike the numbered times which are Western in concept with applied Kwak'wala forms.   The word for midnight is particularly intriguing in that it references a spatial location in reference to the body. It is possible that the moon is described as being on the middle of the "back" of the world as if the world was a body.

In considering the concept of hours we find that an 'hour' is an increment of time developed out of a Western cultural framework of time measurement. While contemporary Kwak'wala speakers created a new form that can express the concept of hours, the further reduced increment of 'minutes' is not even attempted. The closest that can be translated is to express that the hands of the clock are either 'approaching, coming up to' the hour or 'just past' the hour. These ideas are constructed from words which reference the movement of objects in space *'alak* meaning "almost" and *heka* meaning "to pass".

(516)   La'muxw **hekak** mut'sakila.   "It has passed four o'clock."

(517)   La'muxw **'alak** mut'sakila.   "It is approaching four o'clock."

There are no minutes or seconds in Kwak'wala. The way of expressing hours is an adopted

concept and only the markers of time 'noon' and 'midnight are indigenous to the language. The

next section outlines the more customary way of marking time throughout the day and their

morphological breakdown is revealing of how the passage of time is conceptualized.

7.2 Temporal markers throughout the day in Kwak'wala

If the hourly markers of time given in the previous examples are a relatively new form of

expressing time concepts in the Kwak'wala language then the following examples document

daily temporal marking as it may have been expressed before the introduction of Western based

time measurement. The words for the most part appear to take their form from the description

of light and the position of the sun.

(518) 'na-x'id   "becoming daylight, bright" (Grubb 1971:61)
          daylight – becoming (inchoative)

(519) 'ne'nakw-ala[72]   "daybreak, going home" (Grubb 1971:61)
          returning home – ongoing action (aspect)

(520) ga'-ala   "morning, early" (Grubb 1971:103)
          early(long ago) – ongoing action (aspect)

---

[72] Possibly two words *'na-'nakwala* "daybreak" or literally "light-gradually" and *'ne'nakwala* "going home"

(521)   nak-ela   "mid-day" (Grubb 1971:102)
     middle – ongoing action (aspect)

(522)   gwał nakela   "afternoon" (Grubb 1971:37)
     finished middle – ongoing action (aspect)

(523)   p̓adaḱala   "dusk, becoming dark" (Grubb 1971:43)
     dark – becoming (inchoative)

(524)   or,   p̓adaka'nakwala
     dark – gradually

(525)   dzakwa 'nakwala   "towards evening" (Grubb 1971:143)
     evening – gradually

(526)   dzakwa   "evening" (Grubb 1971:68)
     evening

(527)   ganutł   "night" (Grubb 1971, 105)
     night

(528)   nag-ige'   "midnight, in middle of back" (Grubb 1971, p.102)
     middle – of back (locative)

This list of words describes the light conditions of the day from dawn throughout the day and

into the night, which then begins again with dawn. Figure 7.1 illustrates this movement. It

should be noted that the "evening" has four different words for its description and that there are

two words for "daybreak or dawn".

'Nala "day"

nak-ela "noon"

gwał nakela "afternoon"

ga'-ala "early morning"

'na-x'id ""becoming daylight"

dzakwa "evening"

nag-ige' "midnight"

ganutł "night"
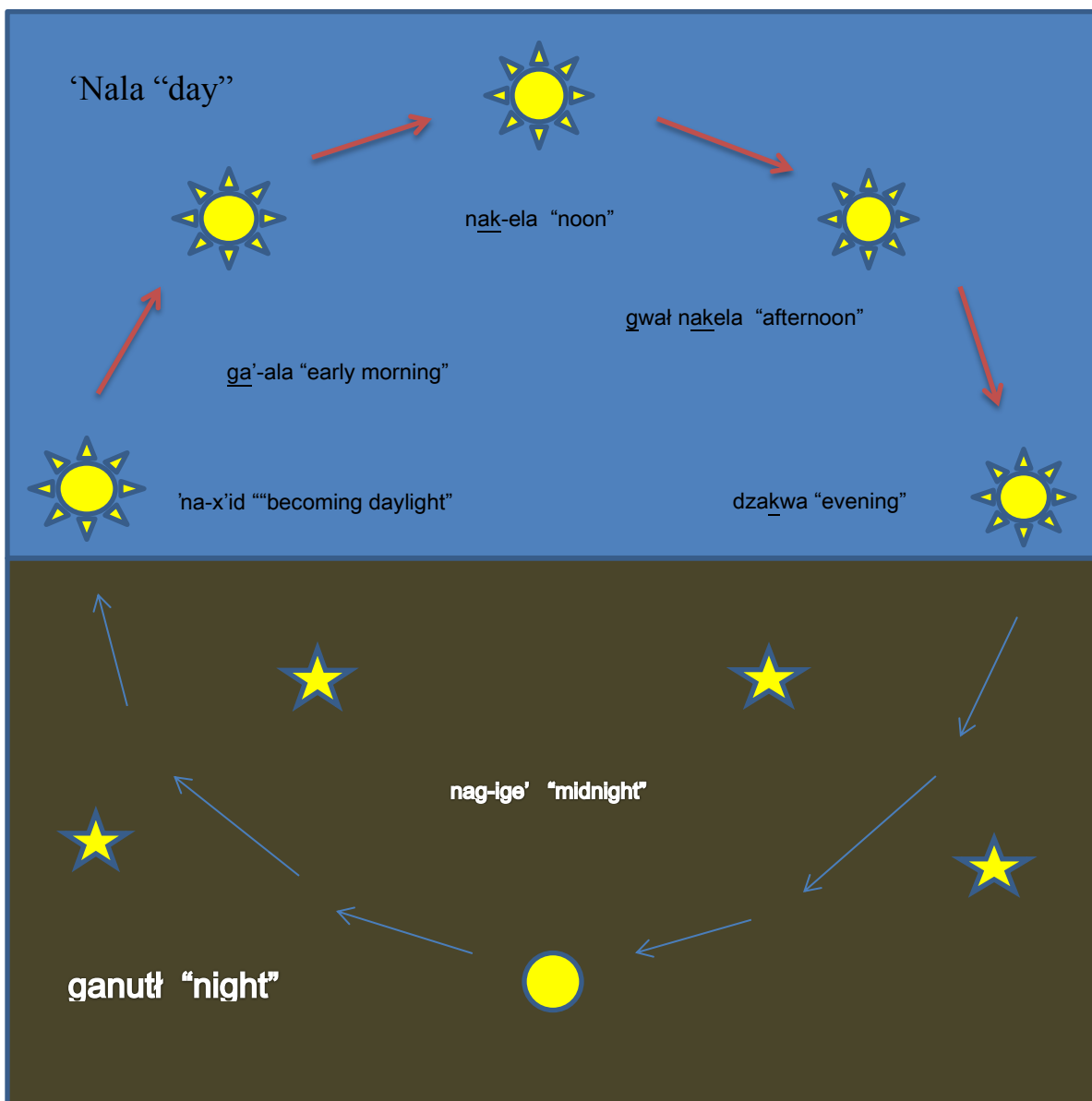
Figure 7.1 *Night and day, the increments of time in Kwak'wala*

7.2.1 'Nala, the word for day, nagige', the word for midnight

It is within the temporal word for "day" that we see a strong spatial connection with "the world".

In the following selection of words connected to the word *'nala* "day", note the diversity of

associated meanings.

(529)   'na-   "stem meaning 'day, daylight, upstream, south, east'"
                     (Boas 1948:241)
                     "light, sky, world, dawn, south" (Boas 1931:165)

(530)   'nala   'up river, south, world (Boas 1947:228)

(531)   'nala   'day, earth' (Curtis 1914:334)

(532)   'nala   'day, sea and heavens' (Barrett 1966:77)

(533)   'nala   'day' (Grubb 1971:61)

Curtis' (1915) vocabulary gives the meaning for *'nala* as both "day" and "earth". The word

'awi'nagwis is listed under the Kwagu'ł and 'Awikinuxw dialects for "earth" but the word *'nala* is

given for G̱usgimuxw and T'łat'łasikwala dialects (p. 334). Barrett's (1966) collection notes give

a linguistic breakdown of the word *'nala* as meaning "day, sea and heavens" (p. 77).

'Nalanukw̱amgi'lakw is the name of a Gwawa'enuxw ancestor. The name translates as "Born to

be Head of the World". These varied meanings for *'nala* provide clues to a broader

conceptualization of *'nala* in relationship to space and time. If *'nala* as 'day' and *'nala* as "world" are compared for similarity we could say that *'nala*, as "day" represents the stage or background (timeframe) upon which temporal activities are defined while as "world" it exists as the background (stage) upon which activities take place. Both contexts provide a bounded region. The day is bounded in time by the cyclical movement of the sun while the earth/world is bounded by physical space. This interpretation might account for Barrett's translation of "sea and heaven" as both these spaces can also be defined as bounded regions within the world where activities take place. This conflagration of time and space might also account for the dual meaning of *nagige'* which can mean "midnight" but also "middle of back". If the day or the world is seen as an entity of bounded space then when the moon is in the middle the sky is conceptualized as the 'back' of that bounded space. In temporal context the word *'nala* as "day", delineates *when* events occur.   In spatial context *'nala* represents "the world"; a bounded area of space *where* events occur. That Kwak'wala uses the same word to represent these two concepts indicates their temporal/spatial inter-connectedness.

7.2.2 *Ne'nakwala*, the word for "dawn, the break of day"

This leads us to consider also *'ne'nakwala*, the word for "daybreak or dawn". This word can

also mean "returning home".   Boas (1948) gives the meaning of the root *'na-* as "day, daylight,

upstream, south, east". If old village sites were situated upstream, then a return home would

require travel in that direction. A poetic possibility is the idea that the dawning of the sun was

considered the return of the day or a homecoming of sorts.   Regardless of the definitive

explanation of these three words and their applied meanings, which remains speculative, the

point I want to make is that these words clearly mark deviations from English or Western

conceptualizations and begin to exhibit extensions of meanings that rise out of a

Kwakwaka'wakw cultural paradigm and hint at a different way of perceiving and expressing the

concept of time.

 One thing to consider is whether it is possible that these are merely homonyms; two words that

are spelled and sound alike but have completely different meanings. While homonyms do exist

in the Kwak'wala language they are not as profuse as in English. The reason for this is the

polysynthetic nature of Kwak'wala. Kwak'wala words are made up of a stem with attached

suffixes. The stem gives the word its' primary meaning and the attached suffixes modify that

meaning. The structural character of Kwak'wala words renders it less likely that words sharing

a stem will not share the stem's meaning. In the case of *'nala* the attachment of suffixes can

create words such as the following:

(534) **'nala**-<u>k</u>ants   "our world" (Boas 1947:296)
     world   our

(535) **'na**-gila   "to live, act, until dawn or to make weather" (Boas 1948:241)
     day/weather – to make

(536) 'na-**'nala**-xsila   "to influence weather with magic" (Boas 1948:241)
     plural[73] – day/weather –to work at

(537) 'na<u>'</u>**nala**-łał   "the weather dance" (Boas 1848:241)
     plural – day/weather – dancer

The association with weather tends to tie together the notions of the 'day' with the 'world'.

Weather is what takes place *during the day* and *in the world*. In this regard there are two

dances in particular that are expressions of "the day". The first one is danced wearing a mask

called *'nax'naka<u>gam</u>ł* "dawning of the day or sunrise mask". Boas (1897) describes the

'nax'naka<u>gam</u>ł as "an immense mask, the mouth of which is made so that it can open wide.

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[73] Plurality, repetition and distribution are expressed by repetition (reduplication) of the first syllable in Kwak'wala. (Boas 1947:219) I have written plural here but it is possible this is a distributive meaning spread out in space which makes sense in relationship to weather.

Therefore it is also called *haxilagam* "the yawning face". The opening mouth means that the

day is yawning when the dawn appears." (p, 484) i.e. the world opens its mouth wide and the

sun emerges from it. Sometimes this mask takes the form of a bird or human face "with "wings"

on either side, which are painted on the outside with a black serpentlike figure. White spots

decorate the outside portion of the "wings" and may refer to the night sky." (Bill Holm, personal

communication in Jonaitis, 1991, p 127). A version of this dance was given to the Guṗinuxw,

who were living near Quatsino Sound when the world was still in darkness. Daylight was kept in

a box by a woman named 'Nenala'at'sega of the Gusgimaxw. A man named Kwixalalagalis was

able to trick her into giving him the box and he released the sun to the world. The sun then

gave him a sisi'utł dance and the sunrise mask called Ikt'samatusalagalis (abalone shell from

one end of the world to another). "In this manner the Guṗinuxw obtained the sunrise mask

(*'nax'nakagamł*) and its red cedar bark." (pp, 410-411) The words to a *'nax'nakagamł* song are

translated as:

    You will rise, you known by all around the edge of the world

    You will rise, famous everywhere at edge of the world

    You will rise, being vanquished, rival chiefs of the world

They say that I beg food from the rival chiefs of the world

(Boas 1897, p. 714)

There appears to be a metaphorical reference to the rising of the sun (dawn at the edge of the

world) and the presence of the chief amongst the people who is likened to "being above" his

rivals.

The second dance that is related to the day is called *'na'nalalał* "day or weather dance" Curtis

(1915) calls this "the embodiment of the personation[74] of weather" (p.158).   This dance has

sometimes been confused with the *'nalalał* "swan dance" perhaps due to the similarity of the

words *'nala* "day" and *'nala* "laughing goose (or swan)" (Boas, 1921, p. 1416).   In a reference to

the daybreak it is said that the dancers "wear a headdress shaped like a bird and dance back

and forth in front of the singers. The dancers cover and uncover their faces, indicating the break

of dawn." (Umista, 1981, Vol 12, p. 41) Figure 7.2 shows the dance outfit for the *na'nalalał*

(daylight/weather dance). The woman has been identified as Sarah Constance Smith (Abaya),

granddaughter of George Hunt, who later in life was married to Mungo Martin.

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[74] Curtis uses the word "personation" which could also be stated as "personification".

Figure 7.2 Curtis, Edward. S. (Photographer). (1915). "*Nu'na'lalahl - Qagyuhl*" [75]Curtis'
[Photo]. Photograph courtesy of Northwestern University Library, *Edward S. Curtis's The North
American Indian,*" 2003 http://digital.library.northwestern.edu./curtis/

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[75] Sarah Constance Smith was also briefly married to Johnny Scow just prior to his death in 1934.

7.3 Temporal extensions beyond the 'day'

'Nala "the day" acts as a fundamental unit of Kwak'wala time.   The time frame of a "day" is then incremented by the list of descriptive words (518)-(528) much like how a "day" in English is incremented by "hours".   Word examples (518)-(528) represent the internal structure of time throughout a day in the Kwak'wala language prior to contact which influenced the innovations that can be translated as "one o'clock, two o'clock etc. listed in examples (502)-(513). The following set of words, refer to or are built off of, the fundamental unit of "a day" and extend outwards. This operates in a similar fashion to how a week is an extension of a day into a larger unit of time measurement in English. What we must be conscious of is that the word "week" is a particular cultural construction. I say 'in particular' because while the concept of 'a day' still references the movement of the earth around the sun, and a month references the cycles of the moon, the unit of a week comes out of Western industrialization, not natural cycles. A week is constructed of five days for work and two days for rest. Similar to the more recent introduction of hourly timekeeping in Kwak'wala we find new constructions for describing the days of the week. These are new constructions. They did not exist in the Kwak'wala language prior to the introduction of Westernization. They are Kwak'wala forms mapped onto a Western concept. If we break down these new words we can see how they function.

7.3.1 Kwak'wala word innovations applied to the foreign concept of "a week"

The following list is the word innovations that contemporary Kwak'wala speakers have come up

with for days of the week.

(538)   iḱila -'anx   "Sunday" (www.firstvoices.com)
          good   season (time of)

(539)   'nam-ṗan-xwaťs-anx   "Monday" (www.firstvoices.com)
          one   time   days[76]   season (time of)

(540)   maɬ-ṗan-xwaťs-anx   "Tuesday" (www.firstvoices.com) (Grubb 1971, p.144)
          two   times   days   season (time of)

(541)   yudaxw-ṗan-xwaťs-anx   "Wednesday" (www.firstvoices.com)
          three   times   days   season (time of)

(542)   mu-ṗan-xwaťs-anx   "Thursday" (www.firstvoices.com)
          four   times days   season (time of)

(543)   saḱa-ṗan-xwaťs-anx   "Friday" (www.firstvoices.com)
          five   times   days   season(time of)

(544)   naxs'andi   "Saturday" (Boas 1948:229)
          half days work

---

[76] I am not completely confident of my translation for this affix. Boas (1947:240) gives (-xwa's) as a suffix for 'days'. The weakening of the back x to x and the hardening of the 's to 'ts may be due to phonological consideration.

The division of days into five working days and two off days is maintained in the new

constructions. From Monday to Friday we have a conceptually simple construction of numeral

stems plus suffixes for "times", "days", and "season of". For Saturday, we have the construction

for a half day's work which indicates an earlier historical time period for the words' inception.

For Sunday the translation of 'good' may refer to the act of going to church and of not working.

Again, within the translation of this word we have an indication of an earlier historical time period

when the Kwakwaka'wakw were beginning to observe Christian belief systems. The

deconstruction of modern Kwak'wala terminology for days of the week, reveal it to be an

introduced system with the advent of Westernization.

The following forms appear to originate prior to Western contact, and the list gives an idea of

how time beyond the increment of a day was conceptualized.

(545)   ye - xwa 'nala   " today" (Grubb 1971, p.142)
             of   the   day

(546)   or, ye - xoxda 'nala
              of   the   day

(547)   łans -tł -a[77]   "tomorrow" (Grubb 1971, p.142)
            one day distant – future tense

---

[77] Sometimes pronounced *łanstłe*

(548)   łans -'wał   "yesterday" (Grubb 1971, p.155)
     one day distant – remote past

(549)   hi'- luxw -sa   "day after tomorrow" (www.firstvoices.com)
     something added - round object

(550)   hi- 'luxw -su'ł   "day before yesterday" (Grubb 1971, p.61)
     something added- round object – remote past

If *'nala* refers to the day as an object bounded by time then *yexwa 'nala* or *yexoxda 'nala* refers

to "today", or "the day" placed within present tense. "It is happening now" within the bounded

temporal frame of a day.   The temporal present of today is then extended outwards in both

directions into the future and the past. The Kwak'wala language includes one and two day

length extensions to 'tomorrow' and 'the day after tomorrow', and 'yesterday' and 'the day after

yesterday'. It is interesting to note that the furthest extensions from the present tense *hi'luxwsa*

and *hi'luxwsu'ł* begin with the stem *hi-* which is defined by Boas as "that, in a straight direction

to a distant point", reinforcing a spatial analogy to distance in time. A possible derivation of this

stem is *hi'lu-* "something added" which refers to ideas around "growth" or "of building up" or

"extending" which are *spatial concepts*.

(551)   hi'lala   "something added" (Boas 1948:104)

(552) hi'lux'wid   "to come to be of right size, to grow up" (Boas 1948:104)

(553) hi'lub<u>a</u>nd   "to extend end" (Boas 1948:104)

(554) hi'lu<u>x</u>wsa (?)[78]   "three days" (Boas 1948:105)

(555) hi'lu<u>x</u>wsu'ł (?)   "three days ago (Boas 1948:105)

(556) hi'lulis<u>a</u>la   "to grow to old age" (Boas 1948:105)

The *hi'lu-* stem has both temporal meaning (the adding on of time) as well as spatial meaning

(the adding on of height or length).   I am not sure why Boas noted the meaning as three days

removed in examples (554) and (555). Other sources Grubb (1977) and FirstVoices, as well as

contemporary speakers, consider the meaning to be an extension of two days. Figure 7.3 is a

construction of Kwakw<u>a</u>k<u>a</u>'wakw time beyond a 'day' in the same way that Western

incrementalism conceives of a week as beyond a 'day'. As we can see the structure is quite

different in how it manifests. A Western structure includes the concepts of 'today', 'tomorrow'

and 'yesterday' but 'the day after tomorrow' and 'the day after yesterday' are not utilized enough

in English to warrant independent words. The temporal framing beyond a "day" which in English

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[78] (?) present in original

is a "week" becomes instead a framed extension of two days outwards from the present

moment which is "today".
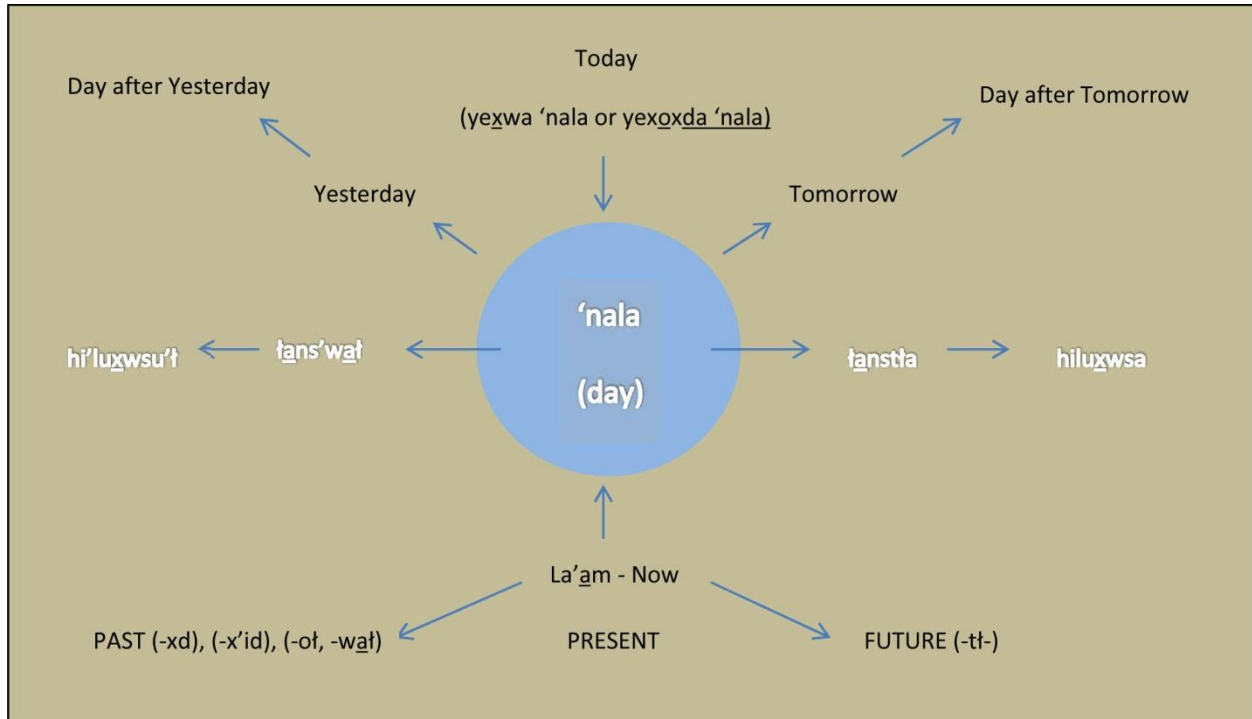
Figure 7.3 *Time diagram: extensions of "a day" and "two days"*

7.3.2 *La'am* "now"

La'am can be translated as "now". It infers the immediate. *La'am* is constructed from the root

auxiliary meaning "to go". In speech *la-* is an introduction to movement along a narrative or

event occurrence. For instance:

(557)   La-tł-an a'edakał la-xa kalwilas   "I'm going back to the store"
                go future I   return   to the   store   (www.firstvoices.com)

(558)   ...la-'a'las 'na-x'ida   " …it began to be light" (Berman,1991:327)
                go   place light began

(559)   la'am lawis gigals kasa   "now, they walked for a long time" (Boas,1966: vi)
                now   there where for a long time walk

(560)   la'am mixił gada babi'x   "the baby is going to sleep (now)"
                now   sleep this here baby   (Nunwakola, 2006)

(561)   la'am iḱuła̲la gada wa'x   "the river is rising (now)" (Nunwakola, 2006)
                now rising high this here river

La'am is a component of event structure. When we talk about time we must also consider

events and how they are situated 'in time'. Boas describes *la-* as a motion away from the

speaker, which contrasts with *gax-* a motion towards the speaker (Boas 1947, p. 287). If we

consider this meaning when applied to *la'am* then we can see how the spatial relationship of

"moving away from" is then applied in a temporal sense to "what is happening now, or

immediately". All other time frames outside of 'the now' are movements away from it. This is

why I have situated *la'am* under the day as the central concept or moment from which events

are extended outwards in Figure 7.3. Berman also addresses the temporal quality of *la-* and

gax- when she states "… that la- and gax- auxiliaries also express a temporal idea. This

temporal idea might be best described as <u>ongoingness</u> or <u>sequentiality</u> in space or time. An

action described by a verb in a clause beginning with <u>la-</u> or <u>gax-</u> , especially in the main clause,

simply follows in time the action described in the preceding clause." (Berman 1991, p. 336)

The connection between *la-, gax-* and *he-* is the movement in space. While *la'am* anchors a

moment in time and space, other sentence initial phrases beginning with *la-* express the

movement away from this position "the position of now".   *Gax-* also signals a movement in

space and time away from an initial position and *he-,* especially in the form *hi'lu-* expresses

extensions in space and time.

7.4 Kwak'wala tense and aspect

'Tense', or the situating of events in time (present, past and future) along with 'aspect', the

description of events in time (ongoing, momentary, inchoative [to begin to] etc.) branch off from

this discussion and are both integral to a full exploration of Kwakw<u>a</u>ka'wakw time concepts.

Both words, *ɬans'waɬ* "yesterday" and *hi'lu<u>xw</u>su'ɬ*[79] "day before yesterday" contain the remote

past tense suffix *–oɬ [-w<u>a</u>ɬ].   Ɬanstɬa* utilizes the future tense marker *-tɬ.*

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[79] Underlying form is –oɬ. The vowel tends to shift between /o/ and /u/.

Past tense: three forms [degrees of temporal distance] –xd , -x'id and –uł [-wał]

(562)   [80]i'axala-**xd**-an   "I was working" (29/04/2013)
         work   was   I

(563)   i'axala-**x'id**-an   "I was working (awhile ago)"
         work   was   I   or "I used to work" (29/04/2013

(564)   gila-**oł**-ex 'nagalis-ants 'nalax   "when long ago first light came into our world"
         come long ago light   our   world   (Boas,1947:289)

Future tense: single form   (-tł-)

(565)   i'axala-**tł**-an[81]   "I will be working" (29/04/2013)
         work   FT   I

Unlike English, which applies tense only to verbs, Kwak'wala tense can be applied to both verbs

and nouns. The final past tense form –oł [-wał] when attached to nouns or names gives the

meaning past, or gone from this world.

(566)   gax-'anga-'an ump **'wał**-a'   "in my dream my late father came" (Boas 1947:289)
         come in a dream my father past

---

[80] I have found that vowel shift occurs between /i/ and /e/ in pronunciation of the word to work. Could possibly be a dialect difference.   I have defaulted to the spelling *i'axala* for "work" rather than *e'axala* because the majority of written sources spell it this way.

[81] Sometimes pronounced e'axalatłan (vowel shift between (i) and (e).

There appears to exist an immediate future tense relationship between *la'am* "now" and *la'mis*

"so now" indicating actions which move forward into the present while closely originating from

the present.

(567)   La'ams loł g̲agwadatłas̲an gukwa k̲an.   Now you will be the house owner of

this my house (Boas 1947:289)

–oł [-waɬ] and *-xd* past tense forms are suffixed to names and objects considered dead or

destroyed (having experienced a fundamental change of state, a change of state from the

'now'). *-xd* means "existing in the past", while *–oł [-waɬ]* means "situated far in the past" which

can be conceived of as meaning "completely off the stage of the present" (here and now), or "no

longer here or now". The intermediate past tense *-x'id* has a complicated relationship with an

aspectual form *-x'id* which is phonetically an exact replica.

According to Bauer (2004), aspect is "a morphological category (usually marked on the verb)

which provides information on the internal temporal make-up of the action denoted by that

verb"(p. 18). An example of aspect in English is *–ing* in the word running. The *–ing* indicates

that the action is "ongoing" or "continuous". Aspect provides information on the internal

structure of an event; whether it is ongoing or complete, a single event or in an ongoing state

that does not change. According to Boas (1947) Kwak'wala has four main aspectual suffixes:

(568)   -a   "single action or continuous state" (Boas 1947:290)

(569)   -x'id   "the change from one state to another" (Boas 1947:290)

(570)   -a̱la   "multiplicity, repetition or continuity" (Boas 1947:291)

(571)   -ała   "to be in the position of performing some action" (Boas 1947:291)

While past tense -x'id has the meaning 'having occurred in the not so recent past", the

aspectual -x'id encompasses the meanings "momentaneous and inchoative". "Momentaneous"

describes an instantaneous or very limited amount of time for the action and "inchoative"

describes a transition of state "to begin to". In order to understand "momentaneous" more

clearly in Kwak'wala we can compare it to another aspectual suffix, (-ala [-a̱la]) which describes

an ongoing or pluralistic action; 'multiplicity, repetition or continuity'.

(572)   da̱nx-ala   "singing" (ongoing, stretched out in time)
         sing   Aspect (ONGOING)

(573)   d<u>a</u>nx-'id   "to sing" (a conceptually singular act, compressed in time)

          sing   Aspect (MOMENTANEOUS)

(574)   d<u>a</u>nx-'id-an   "I sang." (a conceptually singular act, compressed in time)

          sing   Tense I

The 'inchoative' aspectual (-x'id) renders forms like the following:

(575)   t'sax́ka-x'ida   "He began to feel sick." (Boas 1947:290)

          sick   Aspect (INCHOATIVE)

(576)   b<u>a</u>gwan<u>a</u>m-x'id   "to become a man" (Boas 1947:291)

          man   Aspect (INCHOATIVE)

What appears to unify the aspectual *-x'id* and the tense *-x'id* forms is the idea of transformation.

With aspect we see that "something has begun to be". For example, "He became a man." or

"He began to feel sick." Both indicate a marked change of state. To understand the idea of

transformation in the Kwakw<u>a</u>k<u>a</u>'wakw mindset we need to consider it as the sudden

transformation of a thunderbird or a wolf into a man, not the gradual growth of a boy into a man.

The moment marked in time is compressed and instantaneous as opposed to the aspectual *-<u>a</u>la*

which is 'ongoing' and 'repetitive' in character.   All past tense forms carry some indication of a

change of state. Most markedly the *-xd* and *-oɬ* past tense markers when attached to names

indicate that the person referred to has died.   We can extend this application to the tense *-x'id*

suffix as indicating a 'change of state' or a transformation.

As evidenced by the use of three past tense markers that the Kwakw<u>a</u>ka'wakw consciousness

of the past is amplified. This is a cultural amplification of the type discussed prior in chapter 4

with the morpheme *ga-* "close to source of origin" and in chapter 6 with the morpheme

'nal-['n<u>a</u>l-] "upriver, the best, the oldest".   It is also of interest to note that the past tense forms

act like a deictic in time rather than space. In Figure 7.4 the stem forms *ga-, yu-* and *he-*

indicate spatial distance between the speaker (source of origin) and the subject as 'close by',

'around' and further away, removed', the past tense forms correspond to these three divisions

according to distance in time, 'just occurred', 'having occurred further in the past' and 'having

occurred long ago'.
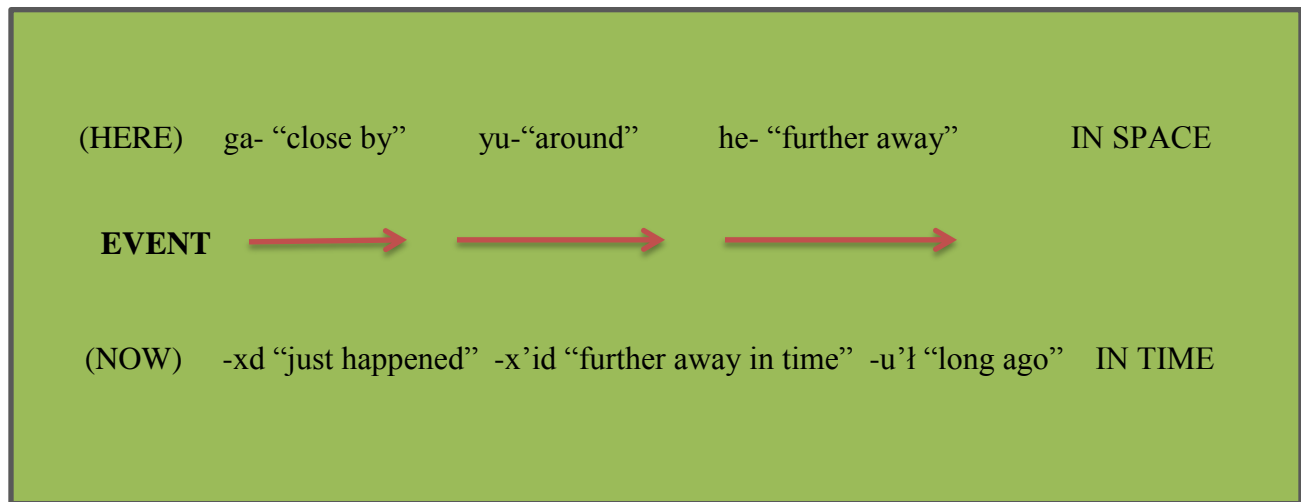
Figure 7.4 *Distance in space, distance in time*

7.5 Months and seasons, the suffix *-anx̱*

Unlike 'hours' or 'days of the week' which take their conceptual structure from Western time

measurement, months and seasons have some conceptual consistency with pre-contact

Kwakwa̱ka'wakw time measurement. This mostly likely is due to the fact that both take their

cues from natural cycles. This being said, they do not map entirely but differ in some respects.

The suffix *-anx̱* means "season, or time of" which can also be extended to mean "years". For

instance, the passing of a winter season and its return can be considered the passing of a year.

The primary seasons are two, *t'sawanx̱* "the winter season" and *hi'anx̱* "the summer season".

These two seasons had extreme cultural significance. The winter season was the ceremonial

season and the summer was considered the time of resource gathering and preservation of

food for winter. These seasons were given the ceremonial terms *t'sit'seka* "sacred" and *baxwas*

"secular". Of less significance are the seasons *hi'anxṕa 'nakwela* "coming summer" or "spring"

and *ło'yanx* "autumn".

(577)   hi'anxṕa 'nakwala   "spring, coming summer" (Grubb 1971;133; Boas, 1947:241)

(578)   hi'anx   "summer" (Grubb 1971:136)

(579)   ło'yanx   "autumn" (Grubb 1977:39)

(580)   t'saẃanx   "winter" (Grubb 1971:152)

7.5.1 Months of the Year

The months of the year are loosely connected to the time frame of a month calculated from the

cycles of the moon but not explicitly. They also utilize the suffix *-anx* "season of, time for" and

most often reflect harvesting activity. An early list surveying the names of the "months" for four

of the Kwakwaka'wakw tribes was compiled by George Hunt and Franz Boas (1909). The

'Namgis and Mamalilikala lists are closely matched from April to September and December but

vary in the other months. The lists provided for the Naḱwaxda'xw and Gusgimuxw tribes vary

considerably; though all four tribes give berry seasons, conditions of the moon, and fishing

conditions as 'months / times for'. Of particular interest are the months which translate as *'nula*

or *'na'nulasnakagila* "elder brother" or tikwabo'i "under [elder brother]" and *i'dabo'i* "next one

under [elder brother]" which may relate to phases of the moon in a culturally specific way.

Figure 7.5 is an adaptation of Boas' 1909 list.

About	'Namgis	Mamalilikala	Naḱwaxda'xw	Gusgamuxw
March	Ḱwa'lanx (Raspberry-Sprouting) Or 'ma'wa'etłanx (Eulachon-Fishing)	Tamḱinx (Tree-Sprouting)	Tikwabo'i (Under [elder brother])	Ḱanu (No sap in Trees[?])
April	Ḱamdzaḱanx (Raspberry Season)		Edabo'i (Next one under)	Gu'lanx (Raspberry Season)
May	Gwaťanx (Huckleberry Season)		Samxwsam (Trying-Oil Moon)	Gwaťanx (Huckleberry Season)
June	Naḱanx (Salalberry Season)		Namnala (Sockeye Moon [?])	Naḱanx (Salalberry Season)
July	Wuliťsanx (Season of?)		A'aťsa'ya (between good and bad)	Małalalasgam(ťsataṕa) (Southeast Wind Moon)
August	Xamsxamsdi (Past[i.e. empty] Boxes[?])		Gu'lanx (Raspberry Season)	Namnala (Sockeye Moon [?])
September	Lixam (Wide-Face)		'na'nulasnakagila (Eldest Brother)	'nula (Elder Brother)
October	'magwabo'i (Round one underneath, i.e. Moon after Wide-Face)		Helaťsa (Right Moon[?])	Tikwabo'i (Under [elder brother])
November	Gwaxsam (Dog-Salmon Month)	Wuliťsanx (Season of?)	Xikwalił (Sweeping Houses, i.e. For Winter Ceremonial)	Dzaxwdzawitsam (Pile-Driving Moon)
December	Ḱax'ala (Cleaned i.e. of leaves)		Maga'ya (Staying in Dance House[?])	Wa'mitsam (Fish-in-River Moon)
Winter Solstice January	`Tsataṕa Wa'anx (Spawning –Season)	'ma'waliťsanx (Season of Floods)	`Tsataṕa Wa'anx (Spawning Season)	`Tsataṕa Wała'wa (?)
February	Tsuxwsam (First-Eulachon-Run Moon)	'ma'mawa'etł'anxi'na (Near to Eulachon Fishing Season)	'nula (Elder Brother)	Ḱaguxwtł (Nothing on it [?])

Figure 7.5 *Months and seasons (adapted from Boas 1909, p.413)*

The following list are the words of the month cross-referenced for definitions with Boas

(1947) and (1948).

(581)   wa'yanx   "January 'spawning season, from [was-] 'spawning''
                                    (Boas 1947:305)

(582)   dzadza'wanx   "February 'start of eulachon season from
                                    (dzaxw-)'eulachon'' (Boas 1947:305)

(583)   ḱwiḱwa'lanx   "March 'salmonberry sprouting season'" (Boas 1947:371)

(584)   'ma'wa'eťanx   "April 'time of going into inlet', from ('ma'wa-) 'to move
                                    away'' (Boas 1948:1480)

(585)   ḱamḱamdzaḱwanx   "May 'salmonberry season' from (ḱamdzakw) salmonberry"
                                    (Boas 1948:340)

(586)   gwagwaťanx   "June 'huckleberry season' from (gwadam) 'huckleberry"
                                    (Boas 1909:413)

(587)   ninaḱwanx   "July 'salalberry season' from (naḱwał) 'salalberry' "
                                    (Boas 1948:228)

(588)   xamsxamsdi   "August 'dry salmon season' from (xa'mas)'dry salmon' "
                                    (Boas 1948:382)

(589)   'lixam   "September 'wide face' referring to the moon"
                                    (Boas 1909:413)

(590)   'magwabo'yi   "October 'moon after wide face' "(Boas 1909:413)

(591) g̱waxsam   "November 'dog salmon month' "(Boas 1909:413)

(592) ło'yanx̱   "December ('autumn')" (Boas 1909:413)
                                    gives (ḵax'ala) 'cleaned i.e. of leaves' for December

Of the four tribes listed only the Naḵwaxda'xw name months which refer to the winter

ceremonial.   These are for November and December which were the height of the ceremonial

season.

(593)   xikwalił   "November 'sweeping houses, i.e. for Winter Ceremonial' "
                                    (Boas 1909:413)

(594)   maga'ya   "December 'staying in dance house?' " (Boas 1909:413)

We cannot take this list to be exhaustive nor comprehensive as seasonal name variety would

have manifested itself across various tribes living in slightly different geographies. We should

consider this list a sample only across four tribal areas of the Kwakw̱aḵa'wakw.

7.5.2 Seasons and Years

The suffix *-anx̱* can be translated as "time for" in contemporary speech in relationship to "season

of". However, the foundation of this suffix is conceptually grounded in the act of harvesting as

indicated by the existence of the related suffix *-x'anx̱ [-xa̱kw]* "place where there is much of

something".   Again, we see spatial and temporal crossover.   We could say that the extension

of "time for" from "season of" is an abstraction of the meaning rendering it less specific.   We

have the following words which utilize this suffix in their construction and we can see how this

abstraction functions in a broader sense.

(595) kwisa'y**anx**'wał   "last year"
       far away time/season long ago

(596) namx'**anx**   "one winter, one year" (Boas 1947:305)
        one   time/season

(597) ma'ł'**anx**   "two winters, two years" (Boas 1947:305)
        two   time/season

(598) yudax'w**anx**   "three winters, three years" (Boas 1947:305)
        three time/season

(599)   mux'w**anx**   "four winters, four years" (Boas 1947:305)
         four time/season

(600)   sakax'**anx**   "five winters, five years" (Boas 1947:305)
         five time/season

(601)   katłax'**anx**   "six winters, six years" (Boas 1947:305)
        six time/season

(602) nakax'**anx**ala   "ten winters, ten years" (Boas 1947:305)
        ten time/season distributive

When we consider the broader application of suffix *-anx* for season we realize that it applies to

a sense of cyclical time period but not necessarily to a set length of time such as a 'month' or a

'year' but actually can refer to both. The true nature of the suffix is the idea of an event that

cycles and returns. It is considered to take up a certain "space" within the temporal stage of a

annual cycle of a year. The most significant markers of these "annual returns" are berry picking,

fishing, and ceremonialism. Figure 7.6 Shows a Gwat'sinuxw (Quatsino) woman picking berries

around 1900.

Figure 7. 6 Leeson, Ben. W. (Photographer) Quatsino woman picking berries [Photo].
Image courtesy the Vancouver Public Library (14078)

7.6 The *t'sit'seka* "winter ceremonial": conceptual extensions and associations

The major ceremony of the Kwakwaka'wakw is the *t'sit'seka*, or as it has been translated "the winter ceremony". This translation is not literal of course. Boas' (1966) attempt at literal translation defined the *t'sit'seka* as "to be fraudulent, to cheat".

The period of the winter ceremonial, which begins in November and last well into the
following year, is called t'sit'se_ka_ or t'sit'sa'eka also iḱi_ka_la, to be good-minded or
happy. The name is curious, for t'sa_ka_ means "to be fraudulent, to cheat." For
instance, when a person wishes to find out if a shaman has real power or if his
power is based on pretence, he uses the term "pretended, fraudulent, made-up
shaman" (t'sa_ga_kw paxala). Even in the most serious presentations of the
ceremonial, it is clearly and definitely stated that it is planned as a fraud. (p. 172)

Boas' translation of the name *t'sit'se_ka_* is very literal. The notion of fraudulent may very well

just refer to the idea that the ceremonies are imitative or reflections of events that originally

happened at another place in time. Regardless of Boas' speculation regarding the meaning of

the name, the non-literal translation of the word *t'sit'se_ka_* as "the winter ceremony" refers to the

heavy symbolism that this season and its accompanying ceremonies are embedded in.

The contrast between the scared and the secular seasons is expressed by the
Indians by saying that in summer the secular quality is on top; in winter the sacred
quality…The theory of the winter ceremonial is based on the belief that in winter,

certain supernatural beings, who reside in summer in distant countries, come to the

village. (p. 172)

The summer months are spent gathering foods in preparation for winter when food is not

as abundant. The summer is associated with the physical and the body. This is

contrasted to winter when the focus shifts from food gathering to ceremonialism. The

winter is the time for spirits and the spiritual. The summer season called *baxwas* "secular

or ordinary" (Boas 1948, p. 117), seasonally cycles with that of the *t'sit'seka*, which is

associated with that which is *nawalakw* "supernatural, extraordinary" (Boas 1948, p. 232).

The summer is associated with the present, while the winter is associated with

enactments of past encounters with ancestors and supernatural beings who bestow

privileges on their recipients; dances, songs, names and ceremonies.   These analogies

and conceptual connections were a pervasive and important component of

Kwakwaka'wakw ontology. Figure 7.7 shows the seasonal associations.
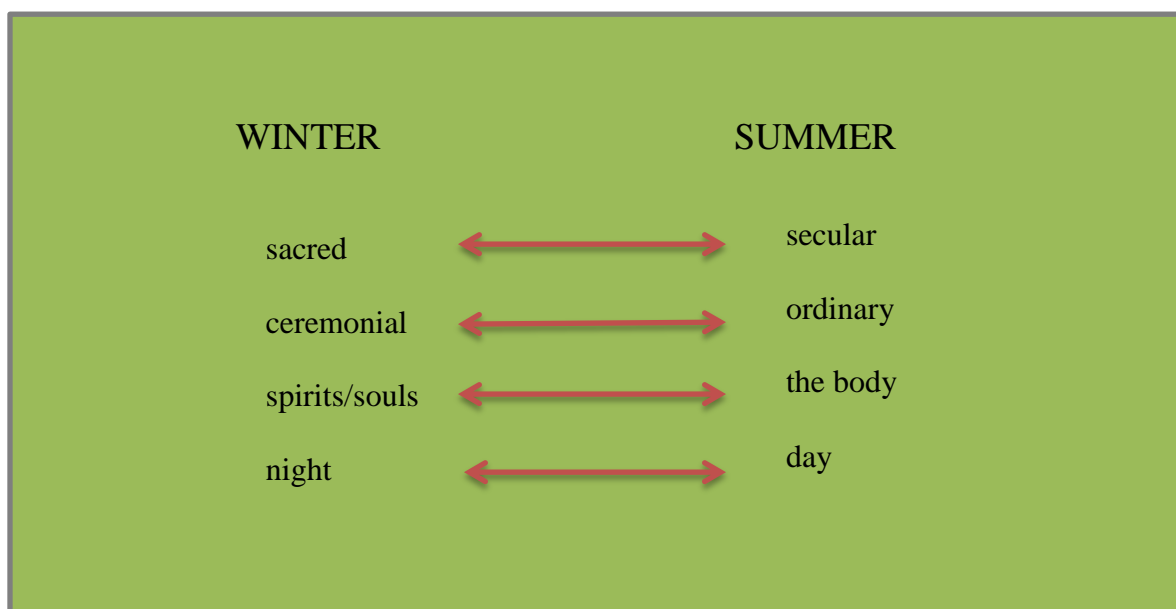
Figure 7.7 *Winter and summer seasons and their associations*

An interesting collusion of the winter ceremonial state with the day/world is expressed in

the following statement:

"Wa, dłax̱wid ḵas la'os 'wiʼla t̕sux̱wstoda ḵa lawayesos babax̱usta'yakus, ḵaxs
la'ma'ax̱ ogux'idans 'nalax, ḵas duxwatⱡala'osaxa t̕sag̱adzux 'nala."

"Now, arise, and wash your eyes, so that the secular season may come off from
your eyes, for our season has changed, and you will see the winter dance
season." (Boas 1921:914)

The orator uses the word *'nala* and it is translated as "season" but could certainly mean

"world"; the summer season being akin to the "world of the ordinary" and the winter

season being akin to "the world of the sacred". The world is where events take place in

time and in space.

The ceremonial house during the sacred season is a microcosm of the Kwakw<u>a</u>ka'wakw

universe and it is during this time that temporal and spatial flow is creatively and

symbolically reconfigured. "Singers and messengers "tell the world" (*niɬaxa 'nala* R789.22)

what is being done. In the sacred winter ceremonial a special messenger is sent out of the

house to tell the world that the ceremonial is beginning…Chiefs, "make the world smoky

(by the fire of their feasts) (Boas 1949, p,234 & 238). Privileges bestowed in ancient

times on ancestors are made animate and alive through contemporary dances and

masks. They present themselves in the house as coming from the sea, from the woods,

below the ground and from the sky. The host chief becomes the personification of all

those who have come before him. He becomes the direct link in time from now back to

the beginning.

7.7 Summary

This chapter has attempted to lay out the conceptualization of time and its interface with

concepts of space in the Kwak'wala language. It begins with a look at concepts which existed

prior to Western contact and how the introduction of Western time incrementalism has been

translated into contemporary Kwak'wala forms. These differences are important to establish as

each category arises out of a particular approach to the phenomenon of time. The concept of 'a

day' is shared by both Western time conceptualization and that expressed by the Kwak'wala

language, after that the concepts tend to diverge.   Western based time incrementalism is highly

defined. A day is divided into 24 hours; an hour is divided into 60 minutes and a minute is

divided into 60 seconds. These components of time measurement are abstracted from nature

and applied according to uniform features of a 'length of time'. These are the concepts which

underlie the existence of modern watches, clocks and scheduling. It is a pervasive feature of all

Western based contemporary existence. In extension the acute awareness of time passage

that this conceptualization of time manifests has become an integral part of Western culture.   In

Kwak'wala, I have attempted to show that the division of the day into hours is not indigenous to

the language but an attempt to incorporate the introduction of the Western workday and its

modes of calculating that workday into a Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw sensibility. In accordance, the

creation of these new forms can most likely be accounted for at the time that the

Kwakw<u>aka</u>'wakw began to engage with Western based industries in the mid-19th Century. Even

so, they did not completely take hold until the early part of the 20th century when their reliance

on natural resource harvesting began to be replaced by reliance on Western wage earning.

Kwakw<u>aka</u>'wakw time concepts appear to have a heavy engagement, not with notions of

abstract measurement, but with natural cycles. The course of a day is delineated not by hours

but by the conditions of light as provided by the sun. Extending from the concept of a day

outwards the concept of a week is shown to be equally imported from Western labour conditions

with 20th century attempt to apply Kwak'wala forms. The concept of a week and its translation

into Kwak'wala is originally Western. Figure 7.1 attempted to show what the extension of time

beyond a day looked like prior to Western influences. Again, it is heavily anchored in the cyclical

condition of the movements of the sun. Two days away from the immediate moment in time is

measured by the alternation of daylight and darkness in the same way that the measurement of

'years' was noted by the cyclical alternation of winter and summer seasons. Words for

yesterday and tomorrow are expressed using tense forms. The tense forms in Kwak'wala have

particular associations which are not found in English.   Both the concept of 'the day' and the

concept of 'a month' do share some conceptual features with English. They both emerge out of

natural cycles. In the case of months, the paramount feature is the condition of the moon.

Beyond this Kwak'wala diverges from English in highlighting harvesting practices that are

particular to the region and to the culture. Ultimately, these differences in time

conceptualization enable us to see that while 'time' exists as a phenomenon in both English and

Kwak'wala the conceptualizations underlying the experience and expressions regarding time

differ in their particularity. These differences should not be underemphasized as the underlying

concepts are heavily connected to other aspects of extended meanings and cultural belief

systems; for example the extended meaning of the word *'nala*. This concludes the linguistic

analysis and cultural comparison component of this thesis. The next chapter will explain the

attempt at translating the concepts discussed in the preceding chapters into a contemporary

visual art format.

Chapter 8: Traditional Concepts in a Contemporary Context

Giga, Lilo'linuxw! Suma'as g̲anutɫida 'nala dɫuwi' 'nalida g̲anutɫi', lax̲gada 'Walas Gukw.

Wosida gax̲a'nux̲w, Ha'yaɫiligas k̲as wa'xidage'os k̲a `k̲wali g̲alitɫe'sa nax̲wa!

Come Ghosts! You, whose night is day and whose day is night, in this Great House.

I beg you, Great Healer, to take pity on us and restore us to life!

(Marianne Nicolson "The House of the Ghosts", 2008)

8.1 Premise for the visual component

The research presented in the written component of this thesis found that the Kwak'wala

language and Kwakwak̲a'wakw traditional cultural forms exhibited in architecture, social

structure, masks, dances and ceremonies were mutually supportive and it could be stated that

they all had strong connections to the same underlying concepts. Hence we see reflected

throughout both language and culture the concept of the Body=House=Land/World metaphor.

This is the analysis which has been presented through chapters 3-7. In order to test the

connections one step further my inquiry led me to consider whether it would be possible to

interpret the underlying conceptual "meanings" in a completely new "form". Hypothetically, the

traditional art and architecture of the Kwakwaka'wakw should reflect the same conceptual

under-structures (which forms Kwakwaka'wakw worldview) as Kwakwala linguistic forms as

they would have developed together over an extended period of time within the same

environment.

Creating new forms for traditional ceremonial settings would be one way to test the

connections between surface forms and conceptual under-structure.   I had witnessed this in

contemporary song composition.   Songs which were composed with an understanding of the

underlying traditional rules and concepts of compositions (the grammar of Kwakwaka'wakw

songs) were successful new introductions into contemporary potlatching and could be

considered consistent with tradition.   Young song composers who attempted to create new

songs using the Kwak'wala language applied to underlying Western under-structures of

melody, rhythm etc. appropriated from over exposure to Western musical canons failed as new

musical introductions within a ceremonial setting. Older people would respond to these new

compositions by saying "It doesn't sound right." This was one example where imposing the

formal surface expression of Kwak'wala onto non-Kwakwaka'wakw conceptual under-structure

created unsuccessful compositions.   It seemed from this example that the success of new

works was more dependent upon maintaining the conceptual under-structure. To test this

theory, could one take the same concepts i.e. "meanings" which underlay traditional

Kwakwaka'wakw language and culture and create new "forms" to express those concepts in a

radically different environment?   Could new forms be adapted to express the same ideas as

long as they maintained consistently a connection to conceptual under-structure?

I decided that the test would be the attempt to create contemporary artworks and situate them

in a radically different context where the emphasis would lie with the underlying concepts or

"meanings" and the form would be adjusted in order to express those meanings.   In these

formal artistic executions I used the traditional Kwakwaka'wakw concepts of space that had

emerged, through the linguistic analysis of Kwak'wala and my comparison with traditional

Kwakwaka'wakw cultural forms, as my premise to create modern formal interpretations.

Figure 8.1 shows the relationship of Kwakwaka'wakw "forms" with Kwakwaka'wakw

"meaning". I have aligned the "formal" with "being in the world" and having a worldly

manifestation be that in words, houses, art, ceremonies, or stories.   I position these as

Kwakwaka'wakw signs or significations of culture.   They are the surface manifestations or

resulting forms derived from Kwakwaka'wakw conceptual under-structure. Conceptual under-

structure I have aligned as "meaning", "existing in the mind", i.e. cognitive, and ephemeral.

They are the underlying belief systems of culture; the signified meanings "in the mind" that the

signs are created to express "in the world". These concepts would be the content of new

formal expressions using new materials.   The "X" in the diagram represents the "new signs" I

would attempt to create to express old "meanings".
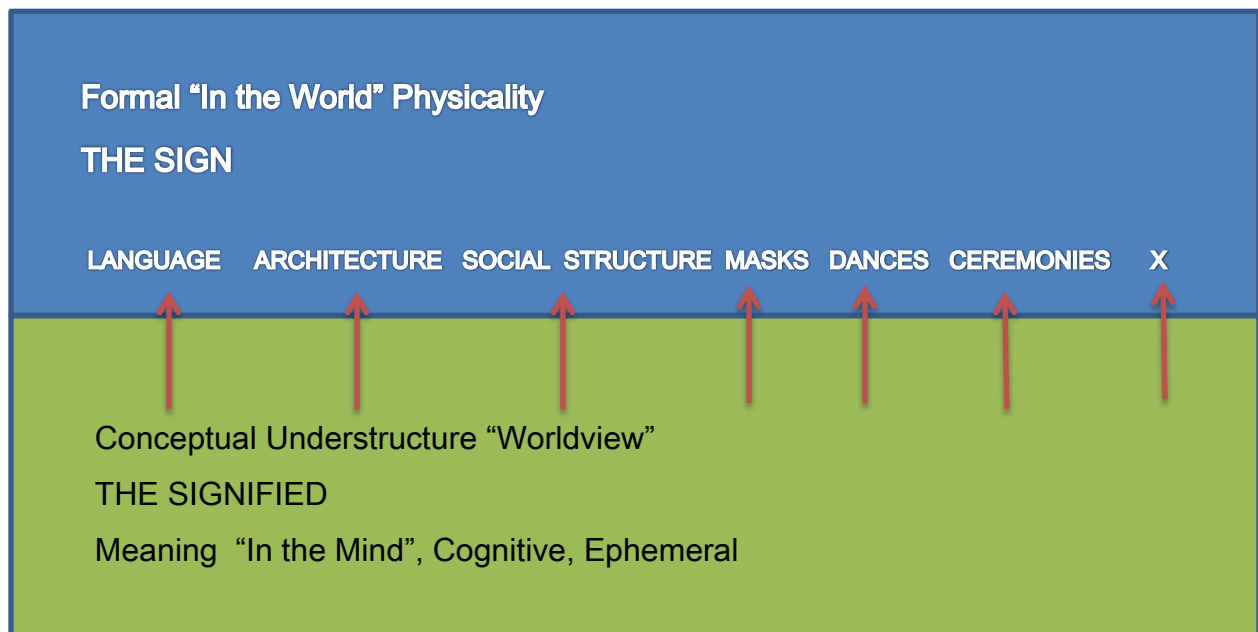
Figure 8.1 *Diagram of "form" and "meaning", the "sign" and the "signified"*

This artistic enterprise became analogous to the history of radical acculturation of First

Nations.   Was it possible to retain traditional concepts, meanings and worldview under

radically changing environments and contexts?   The gallery space became a contracted

analogy or metaphor for the contested and colonized spaces of Pacific Northwest Coast lands

and the contracted temporal span of the exhibition became analogous to a colonial history

steeped in radical cultural change, both linguistic and cultural. If I could strategically occupy

Western framed spaces with Kwakwaka'wakw traditional concepts derived from the Kwak'wala

language and other cultural forms, perhaps it would demonstrate the possibility that these

same concepts could continue to survive within the broader space and history of the colonized

Pacific Northwest Coast. In this context the visual component of this thesis became

decolonizing. It was an indigenous attempt by an Indigenous artist/writer to insert not just

indigenous forms, which are easily appropriated, into Westernized spaces but indigenous

ideas and conceptual systems. In particular I sought to express concepts about the

relationships of the body, the community and the land and how those relationships are

reflected in spatial delineation.

8.2 Context: modernism & post-modernism in the arts, form & meaning

The reflexivity of visual anthropology in its consciousness of contexts or "the frame" can be

mapped onto a parallel critique of Twentieth Century art history through the rise of post-

modern thought. Postmodernism began questioning the hierarchy of dominant Western

discourses during the late 1960s and gained momentum as a critique through the 1970s and

1980s (Arnason & Prather, 1998; Harrison & Wood, 2003).   Prior to this, modernism was

invested in ascertaining reality through scientific inquiry and that this reality was to be found

through physical evidence embodied in the world.   In this sense modernism was related to "

form". Its investment was in the world, or a knowable reality. Modernism covers a broad

spectrum of thought but to contextualize it for its implications to this thesis I will quote Harrison

and Wood (2003), that modernism was invested in ascertaining "one natural 'reality' which is

available to us to explain our beliefs and sensations" (p.1015). Harrison and Wood also

describe modernism as having the following associations:

> Modernism refers to the typical forms of a hegemonic culture. This culture is defined
>
> as Western in its orientation, capitalist in its determining economic tendency,
>
> bourgeois in its class-character, white in its racial complexion, and masculine in its

dominant gender. Others of the characteristics of this culture, such as its

investment of the 'high' from the 'popular' arts, its tendency to forms of specialization

and abstruseness, and its individualism, are seen as following from these. For

those thus persuaded of the character of Modernism – or persuaded, at least, of the

inescapable implication of Modernist art in the values of modern culture thus

characterized – to talk of a postmodern culture or of postmodern forms of art is to

talk of forms of opposition to hegemony. (p, 1015)

As a reaction to modernism the emergence of postmodernism posited that a single scientific

understanding of the world was impossible because all understandings of worldly

phenomenon, i.e. "meaning" were interpreted through particular experience. The particular

experiences of cultures "other" than the West, such as First Nations began to be considered

more centrally and less peripherally. Postmodernism was less interested in "forms" and more

invested in the interpretation of forms.   O'Donnell (2003) states, that postmodernism held the

underlying "belief that all human knowledge is limited and culturally conditioned" (p.6). Reality

did not exist in the world "as is" but was shaped by the human mind.   The interpretation of

 "meaning" was not fixed but relative to culture and contexts. This relationship of "form" and

"meaning" is a familiar argument that runs through the inquiry of this thesis.   "Form", is what

exists in the world and "meaning" is how we interpret "form".   While modernism and

postmodernism are intrinsically connected as reflections of each other, modernism placed its

focus on "form" while postmodernism placed its focus on "meaning" in the same way that

Chomsky's linguistics from the 1960s could be said to be focused on form or surface

understructure of "proper form" or "rules for proper form" while cognitive linguistic inquiry from

the 1970's onward was focused on deep understructure; the concepts, ideas and belief

systems that influence surface understucture "rules for proper form" and of course, ultimately

form itself. Figure 8.2 demonstrates the relationship of modernism and post-modernism. Like

linguistics these intellectual philosophical movements coincided with the belief in a knowable

reality based on rationality and rules such as universalism and the reactionary push against

this within societies which demanded recognition of diversity.

MODERNISM (approx.1850s – 1960s)
Belief that truth exists in FORM, what is real in the world, observable, scientific, a single reality, is progressive

POST-MODERNISM (approx. 1970s-Ongoing)
Belief that truth exists in the mind and is shaped by society and environment, multiple and diverse, based on perception, in the mind=CONCEPTUAL , is relative
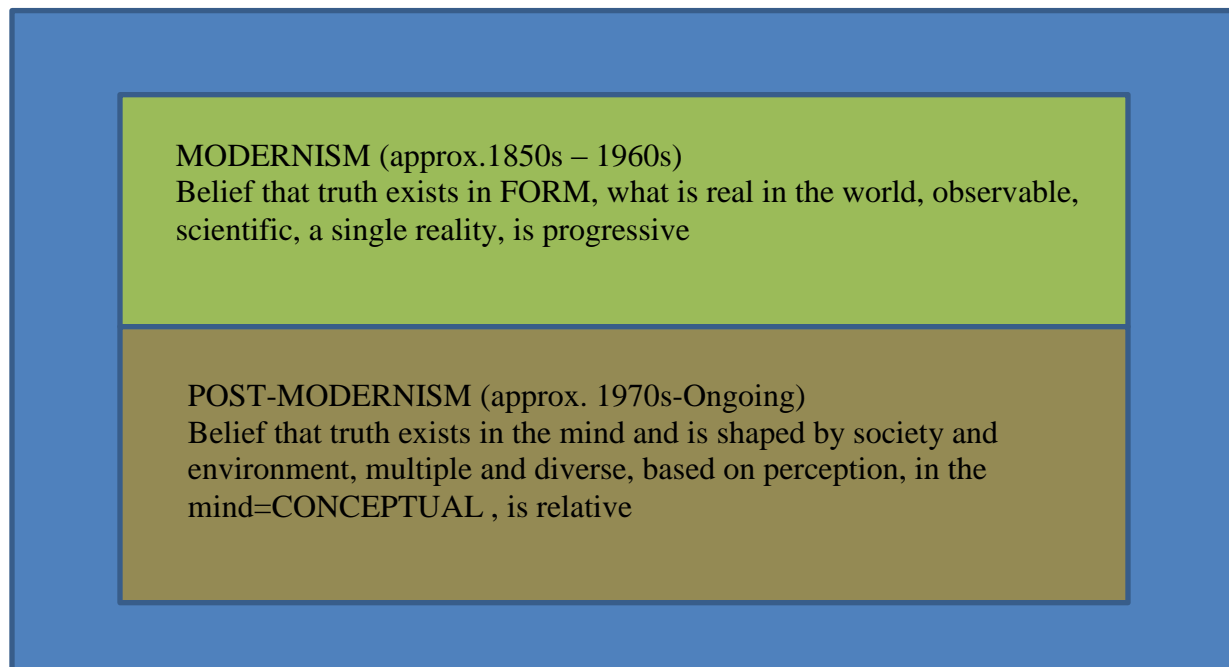
Figure 8.2 *Relationship of modernism and post-modernism, form and meaning*

The ability of myself as a First Nations artist to place contemporary works within gallery and

museum spaces is, in part, credited to the reaction of post-modernism against modernism

which forced these institutions to reconsider the linear, Eurocentric and racist notions of

superiority which underlay their approach to what was art, how it was defined and who made it.

8.3 The museum and the gallery as an experimental space for decolonization

Throughout the 20th Century, in First Nations communities, traditional modes for the production

of art were waning due to cultural oppression and colonization. The forum for traditional art

production and exhibition, the potlatch, was outlawed by the Canadian government and

Kwakwaka'wakw members who participated had become subject to incarceration (Cole &

Chiakin 1990). In 1921, William Halliday, the appointed Indian Agent to the Kwakwaka'wakw

tribes took the unusual step of offering up the physical exchange of potlatch materials for the

suspension of jail sentences for Kwakwaka'wakw members who were being prosecuted under

the anti-potlatch law. For those who gave up their material culture in order to escape jail time

he collected from them their precious masks, coppers and regalia and placed this material on

display in the Alert Bay Anglican Church parish hall, charging a small fee for locals to come

and view. This was an early, extreme and devastating example of the forced appropriation

and display of the material culture of the Kwakwaka'wakw. The objects were then sold and

shipped to various Museums in the east.   For a more complete history of the partial return of

this material see "A Strict Law Bids Us Dance", a film directed by Dennis Wheeler and

produced by Tom Shandel (1975) in collaboration with U'mista Cultural Society. Figure 8.2 is

one of the many photos that Halliday took of the confiscated dance masks on display.

Figure 8.2 Halliday, William. May. (Photographer). (ca. 1922). *A collection of potlatch dancing masks.* [Photo]. Image (H-03978) courtesy of the Royal BC Museum, BC Archives.

The potlatch ban and the appropriation of material culture were conducted under the premise

of assimilation; that First Nations should give up their traditional culture and become

Westernized (Cole & Chaikin, 1990). By appropriating the symbols of the Kwakwaka'wakw

worldview it was hoped that this worldview could be replaced with those of Western Europe.

This included the re-contextualization of those objects/symbols in museums or private collections where they would take on new meanings severed from their original function. In addition to the suppression of cultural practices and the appropriation of material culture Kwakw<u>a</u>k<u>a</u>'wakw children were removed from their families and communities and placed in residential schools.   It was here that the attempt was made to eradicate the Kwak'wala language, another major component of Kwakw<u>a</u>k<u>a</u>'wakw cultural worldview, by forcibly replacing it with English.   To quote Milloy on the strategies employed by the residential school system in order to assimilate indigenous children into European culture (1999):

> A child's ontology, "the symbolic ordering of the world" through which "actions and objects take on meaning", is "inherited from [its] parents" and community from the moment of birth. Thus, for example, the child, parent, and community exist in a landscape – a culture's translation of an environment into a "meaning" filled place. Parts of the programme of studies would disorient children and then attempt to re-orient them in a place filled with European "meaning" (p. 37).

Figure 8.4 illustrates how within the residential school system the traditional symbols of

Kwakw<u>aka</u>'wakw culture were being appropriated into Western canons of artistic/artifact

display.   It is a 1936 photo taken of artwork done by children at St. Michael's Residential

School on display at Pacific National Exhibition.   While their parents and grandparents were

fighting the government over the imposed illegality of their traditions Kwakw<u>aka</u>'wakw children

were being encouraged to display those symbols only under conditions completely

disassociated from their original meanings.   The Pacific National Exhibition had originally

opened in 1910 as an annual public exhibition and fair meant to showcase the industrial and

agricultural achievements of British Columbia. The display of the art of children at the "PNE"

was meant to symbolize, to the colonial general public, the success of the civilizing process of

the "indian" under the residential school system.

Figure 8.4 Leonard, Frank. (Photographer). (1936). *PNE display of artwork done by students of St. Michael's Residential School in Alert Bay*. [Photo]. Image courtesy the Vancouver Public Library (VPL 9359).

Figure 8.5 is a photo taken of my uncle Ernest Willie while he was a student at St Michael's

Residential School after he had won an award for his artwork. His traditional Kwakwaka'wakw

drawing of a whale and thunderbird has the words "TB Thrives on Superstition" written on it; a

slogan most likely promoted by the school.

Figure 8.5 unknown (photographer). (circa. 1952). *Ernest Willie with art award* [Photo]. Image courtesy of Gloria Nicolson nee,Willie.

The image is telling in that the symbol of crest lineage has been converted by the influence of

the residential school into a logo that promotes the notion that "tradition" aligned with

"superstition" is detrimental to First Nations health.   For promoting this message while

removing the traditional meaning of the whale and thunderbird image the young boy is

rewarded. The "meaning" of the image has deliberately been co-opted and replaced by the

residential school belief system in order to assimilate young First Nations into Western ways of

thinking.

In the same way that one can see the traditional artwork by children in St Michael's Residential

school and individual drawing of Ernest Willie systematically appropriated by Western

institutions and conceptual frameworks, vast collections of Kwakwaka'wakw material culture

were amassed and appropriated by museums and private collectors. Eurocentric

categorization defined First Nation's art as artifact and anthropological subject and placed it

within "museums". It was separated from Western based art which was exhibited in "fine art

galleries". Both types of institutions operated under different modes of viewership and public

consumption tied into assumed notions of cultural hierarchy linked to Western superiority

By the 1970s, subject to post-modern critique the modern art gallery system began to

reconsider these relationships and open their doors to First Nations art both traditional and

contemporary and museums in turn, began to reconsider the nature of their collections and

their exhibition.   Symbolic of the times, Diana Nemiroff (1992) states, "As the opening

sentence of Ruth Phillips' article, "Indian Art: Where do you put it?" suggests, exhibitions of

First Nations art have raised a variety of theoretical and practical questions for the dominant

institutions of the post-colonial West" (p. 16).

Entrance into the fine art gallery systems of the visual arts brought its own dilemma for

traditional works in that the system exhibited assimilative features rather than maintaining

traditions. A mask on display in a setting completely entrenched within Western constructs

whether that institution was a museum or a gallery was still subject to the curatorial, exhibition

and viewing lens of the institution.   The "meaning" or signification of the same mask exhibited

in a museum or a gallery shifted within institutional contexts in the same way that it was shifted

once removed from its traditional context in a Kwakw<u>a</u>'wakw community made for

Kwakw<u>a</u>'wakw purposes. Douglas Cole (1985) quotes Virginia R. Dominguez and Lumilla

Jordinova in the relationship of cultural objects in museums in the following:

> Virginia R. Dominguez, in the most trenchant comment on captured heritage, wrote
>
> that the museums collected less because of the importance of the objects to Indians

themselves than because of what they told Europeans about themselves.

Everything about these ethnological collections – the way they were collected, why

they were collected, and how they were displayed – points to the process as part of

the European effort at self-definition. To Ludmilla Jordanova, museum objects are

trophies of victory, mastery, ownership, control, and dominion (p. x).

Removed from its original ontology, or relationship to traditional understandings the mask as a

"sign" looked the same but no longer "meant the same thing". As signs they had been

appropriated into Western frames of understanding and value. Figures 8.6 show the

Dzunukwa feast dish which was earlier pictured in Figure 3.7 in the context of a potlatch

display. In Figure 8.5 the dish is displayed with its apparent owner and several other most

likely related men and boys.   This image acts as an intermediate document between Figure

3.7 and Figure 8.6.   This image, taken outside a potlatch setting, still shows a connection to

the people from whom it originated. Figure 8.7 shows the dish today in its contemporary

setting in the Portland Art Museum divorced as an object from both ceremonial context and

personal connection.

Figure 8.6 Paull, Albert (Photographer).(1926). *Indian men and boys with carving at Alert Bay[82].* [Photo]. Courtesy the Vancouver Public Library (1707).

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[82] The man in front is Japanese Charlie also known as Charlie Hunt. His first wife was a sister/cousin to Toby Willie verifying the connection written by Toby Willie's brother Billy Sandy Willie on the back of the picture of the dish in (Figure 3.7) (personal communication William Wasden Jr.)

Figure 8.7 Marianne Nicolson (Photographer). (2013). *Dzunukwa Dish at Portland Art Museum* [Photo] courtesy of the author

I am showing these images as a way of demonstrating how the dish has changed contexts.   In

Figures 3.7 and 8.6 the context is still personal and connected to community while in the

second image it rests under an analytic anonymity within the museum. In both instances it is

the same dish (the same signifier) but under these different contexts its meaning has shifted.

8.4 The strategy of agency," to focus on the concept"

One strategy for dealing with these inherent issues of representation was to attempt to occupy

museum and gallery spaces with "agency". In anthropology the concept of "agency" is most

often associated with the ability of an individual to create meaning within the frames of the

communal or society.   Within the context of my own work I identify "agency" within a broader

framework of the ability of individual communities, or societies, such as the Kwakwaka'wakw to

self-define within the broader and often overwhelming institutional contexts of the Western

European gallery and museum. By this, I mean, not to simply accept inclusion into these

spaces but to actively engage with modern museum and gallery spaces with a critical

understanding of their own history and existence as agents of social meaning born of Western

frameworks.   Rather than accept the overriding narrative of the institution it became an

imperative to attempt to speak from the position of Kwakwaka'wakw communal understanding

while highlighting and remaining conscious of the Western "framing" of meaning that would

occur within the gallery.   With a consciousness of Saussure's relationship of the "sign" and the

"signified" in relationship to the traditional art of the Kwakwaka'wakw I deliberately chose

contemporary art over the traditional in my placement of objects in museum and gallery

institutions. I self-consciously began to compose specific works which attempted to insert not

just Kwakw<u>a</u>k<u>a</u>'wakw formal signifiers into public art galleries but Kwakw<u>a</u>k<u>a</u>'wakw concepts.

In the same way that post-modernism shifted the focus away from the formal considerations of

modernism in order to make more room for interpretation I was attempting to shift the focus

from the formal considerations of Kwakw<u>a</u>k<u>a</u>'wakw material culture collections towards the

meanings and interpretations of those objects. I was attempting to re-assert a particularly

Kwakw<u>a</u>k<u>a</u>'wakw connection between formal objects and their meanings by occupying gallery

and museum public spaces with Kwakw<u>a</u>k<u>a</u>'wakw concepts just as much as with objects.   In

this regard rather than occupy the periphery with a passive acceptance of imposed contexts I

wanted to create agency and occupy spaces conscientiously while acknowledging the histories

and contexts of those spaces. Is it possible for a museum or a gallery space, both major sites

of public representation to be truly made Kwakw<u>a</u>k<u>a</u>'wakw? I could only attempt this if I had a

concrete comprehension of the conceptualization of space and its metaphorical associations.

One strategy was to learn what Kwak'wala had to say about space and having garnered an

understanding from within the language map that understanding into an actual visual/physical

engagement with space.

This brought me back to an engagement with "meaning". I knew from personal experience that the surface explanation accompanying the Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw mask hung on the wall in either a gallery space or a museum was a dislocated fragment of what that mask symbolized to its makers. I knew this because I had experienced "the mask" internally within its own contexts and histories as a Dzawada̱'enux̱w and Ḵwiḵwasut'inux̱w member. I remember questioning why it was acceptable to sell the masks and my uncle replying that the value was in its "meaning", its symbolism, not the object itself…that the mask could always be re-made. So it seems ironic to me that it was the symbol (or form) that was so prized by the Western institutions while its "meaning" was so prized by us. As, I looked at masks in the UBC Museum of Anthropology and in the commercial galleries of downtown Vancouver I felt that they had becomes symbols of something else, high-jacked into a different narrative altogether and I was not sure I liked what they were saying. Townsend–Gault (1992) reflects on this dilemma of signification in the following statement:

How First Nations artists choose to represent themselves, and how they contest the representations of others in a world of cultural disjuncture, fall centrally into what it is that the postmodern queries. There may be little agreement on how to define it and

too much generalising social metaphysics, but what is useful is the querying of

signification, because we need to ask to what extent "meaning" depends on cultural

difference. (p. 79)

If Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw forms had become subject to appropriation within institutional settings was it

possible to maintain the integrity of original "meanings"? My experiment would be a reversal of

the Western institutional trajectory of appropriating forms (signifiers) and changing what they

signified. My artwork would attempt to retain the integrity of the meanings (the signified) while

manipulating the signs (signifiers).

8.5 Entering the gallery space

In order to explore the complexities of the relationship between "form" and "meaning", I

attempted to reverse their priority in the occupation of space within a modern gallery setting.

Prior attempts at inclusion had placed the formal signifiers of Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw culture within

these gallery and museum spaces with varying results.   My strategy was to place

Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw concepts with some recognizable reference to Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw form into

these spaces but the emphasis would be on the "meanings" rather than the "form".   These

meanings were derived from my research into Kwakwa̱ka'wakw space as expressed through

the Kwak'wala language. This act would be consistent with a shift in art historical approaches

from the 1960s onwards where the focus under consideration in the artistic space had shifted

from the form to the concept or idea (Morphy & Perkins, 2006) as postmodernism raised its

critique of modernism. It would also be consistent with the complementary movement within

anthropology to consider the significant social aspects of art production as part of the

emergence of visual anthropology and the converging objectives of art history in addressing

the gap between ethnological artifact and art.

The resulting artworks did not occupy traditional spaces but, like the contemporary

Kwakwa̱ka'wakw, seeking to infiltrate and find a place within a tumultuous context of modern

Western based colonial society, they found expression within the margins of Western

institutional spaces, the gallery, the museum and the outdoor public.   I say margins, because

unfortunately the concept of art has been marginalized in modern Western society as somehow

superfluous. These spaces were occupied initially with the thought that they are neutral spaces

where-in which one could create an expression in a supposed blank space; the minimalist

gallery space of white walls. However, as is the case with all spaces they are demarcated by

their histories of existence; ultimately defined by the Western society which evolved them. In an

attempt to keep alive certain philosophies it appeared strategic to enter and occupy both

academic space (the University) and visual space (public galleries and spaces). Realistically,

the traditional spaces of the Kwakwaka'wakw have become so oppressed and marginalized that

rather than fight to continue to occupy spaces under siege it seemed survivalist to attempt to

occupy the spaces of the occupier; an attempt at decolonization on two fronts one could say.

This was done to create dialog, to simply be, to attempt to maintain tradition in adaptive and

imaginative ways. I had seen the precedent of this attempt in the creative strategies of the

Kwakwaka'wakw in the attempting to maintain their potlatch traditions during the early decades

of the 20th century by mapping potlatch give-aways to the Western notions of Christmas gift

giving in order to still maintain the traditional obligation of paying witnesses in spite of these

practices being outlawed (Cole, 1990) or in the creation and raising in 1936 of a memorial pole

for King George V by the Musgamakw Dzawada'enuxw in Gwa'yi (Kingcome Inlet) which was

also done to bypass the law against traditional practice. The will to maintain tradition fueled

creative thinking, innovation and adaptation in order to facilitate survival.

The following artworks are an attempt by me, as author/artist to express traditional concepts in

contemporary ways; to conflate the past with the present and to honor the process of the visual

and the ritualistic. These works integrate and seek to 'embody' the concepts and ideas of the

previous 7 chapters of this dissertation. They were all composed during the period of time that

the research was being conducted for the written component of this dissertation. In 2006,

Baḵwinat'si – the Container for Souls" was exhibited at the public gallery Artspeak in Gastown,

Vancouver B.C.   In 2008, *The House of the Ghosts"* was exhibited at the Vancouver Art

Gallery. In 2010, *Wanx'id –to hide, to be hidden* was exhibited at the U.B.C. Museum of

Anthropology and in 2012, *The Land is a Person* was installed as a permanent outdoor artwork

in North Vancouver, B.C.

8.6 "Baḵwinat'si – the Container for Souls" 2006

In *Baḵwinat'si – the Container for Souls,* a glass chest was placed in the centre of a white walled

gallery. The chest acted as a formal reference to the traditional chest of the Pacific Northwest

Coast made to house regalia, masks for dance prerogatives, and which sometimes acted as a

coffin for the body. These chests were made of cedar and elaborately painted with a

conventional design that varied in its application. They were utilized up and down the coast

most prominently amongst the Heiltsuk of the Bella Bella area and northwards amongst the

Haida and Tlingit. Through trade and influence they also became objects of possession

amongst the Kwakwaka'wakw. Photos of Kwakwaka'wakw villages taken between 1870-1910

show the northern stylistic influence of these box designs on house-front applications. For

comparison see Figures 8.8 and 8.9.

Figure 8.8 Newcombe, Charles. (Photographer). (1917). Gilford Island (at Gwayasdums) painted house[83] [Photo]. Image (PN 42) courtesy the Royal BC Museum, BC Archives.

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[83] This house was K̲wik̲wasut'inuxw Chief Johnny Scow's house. It is the same house pictured in Figure 3.1 but the sea monster façade and whale pole have been replaced with a raven with large extended beak, a prerogative that came from Johnny Scow's second marriage with a Bella Bella woman. This might account for the northern influence.

Figure 8.9 Haida Chest collected at Masset by C.F. Newcombe RBCM 1295ab

The analogy between the box and the house is clearly manifest in this art installation. The glass

chest is incised with imagery creating a white on clear effect (Figure 8.10).   Lit from the interior

by a single light the incised images are cast as shadows onto the four walls of the gallery

(Figure 8.11). The box, as representative of the body is visually expanded to create the house

on the gallery walls. Viewers are simultaneously inside and outside the chest, inside and

outside "the house".

Figure 8.10 Nicolson, Marianne. (2006). *"Baḱwinat'si – the Container for Souls" Glass Chest from installation*. Photo courtesy the artist/author

Figure 8.11 Nicolson, Marianne. (2006). "Bakwinaťsi – the Container for Souls" Shadow cast wall Installation. Photo courtesy the artist/author

This artwork visually expresses the metaphor of "the body is a house". The glass box is a

stand in for the body and conscientiously references the traditional use of the chest as a

container for inherited prerogatives and ancestry. Referencing the metaphor "the house is a

'naṁima", photographic representations of the author/artist's mother and aunt adorn the exterior

sides of the box implicating family connection within the metaphoric "house". The biological

body is derived from the genealogical "house". As a further reference to the idea of the body

are the incised images of owls on each end of the chest which are a Kwakwaka'wakw referent

to mortality and the belief that the soul, once it left the body after death would enter the body of

an owl for a period of transition before entering the spirit world.   In this work the soul is equated

with the ephemeral while the box is equated with the body. The body is equated with the

material culture of the Kwakwaka'wakw while the soul is equated with the more ephemeral

notions of cultural beliefs and worldview.   By analogy, the ephemeral beliefs and cultural under-

structure of the Kwakwaka'wakw are the soul of the people while the manifestations of material

culture are their body.

By extension the work also engages with analogical relationships between objects and contexts.

The chest represents the body, but also the objects of the Kwakwaka'wakw which have been

objectified as decoration, curio, or trophy within Western frameworks. The original installation

was exhibited in Artspeak Gallery in Vancouver's Gastown, home to some of the most

prestigious Northwest Coast commercial galleries. The work sought to draw the analogy

between Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw material culture, peddled and proliferated and valued under Western

economic constructs and Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw intangible culture; the Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw worldview as

expressed in the concepts and ideas embedded in an endangered Kwak'wala. *"Bak̓winat̓si –*

the Container for Souls" sought to reconfigure a balance between the object/chest (materiality)

with the subjective/shadows (immaterial); a balance more akin to Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw traditions

and belief systems which has become skewed in contemporary times by the imposed and

inescapable economic value systems of the West which tend to revere the object and the

material.

The work operates as a symbol in a space representing a body and a house. It is also literal, in

that the viewer's body becomes part of the artwork and occupies the gallery space in a

heightened state of self-consciousness. The traditional Western experience of viewer observing

an artwork is disrupted and the viewer becomes both the observer and the observed. The

experience parallels the embodiment that Lakoff and Johnson (1999) subscribe to in cognitive

linguistics. The construct of an objective and independent 'reason' (mind) is removed by the

physical participation and engagement of the viewer. This embodiment in artistic practice is

more closely aligned with traditional Kwakwaka'wakw artistic experience in the ceremonial

house/village/world than the constructed viewer/object relationship of the Western gallery.

 By placing the physical bodies of the viewers inside the work, *Baḱwinat'si – the Container for Souls"* mimics the performance based spatial engagement of Kwakwaka'wakw rituals. By

creating physically engaged works, the visual objectification of the fetishized cultural object

would be disrupted and thus make room for Kwakwaka'wakw intent. Figure 8.12 presents some

of the analogies utilised in this artwork.

BOX	HOUSE	SHADOWS
"The Body"		"The Soul"
Physical		Conceptual/Mental
Material Culture		Immaterial Culture
Tangible		Ephemeral
Form		Meaning

Figure 8.12 *Associations in "Baḱwinat'si – the Container for Souls*

8.7 "The House of the Ghosts" 2008

In 2007, I was approached by the Vancouver Art Gallery to compose a site specific work for the

exterior of the Gallery. Using a banner and light projection I transformed the Georgia Street

gallery façade into the interior of a Kwakwa̱ka'wakw ceremonial house in a performance that

spanned the traditional winter ceremonial season from October 2008 to January 2009. My initial

thought was to consider the Robson Street side but upon further consideration I deemed the

Georgia street side more appropriate because it faced the water and as far as referencing

houses went my linguistic research was indicating this to be an orientation of significance. The

installation was a conscientious address of the temporal shift between night and day and the

symbolic treatments of the spatial interior and exterior architecture of a Kwakwa̱ka'wakw house.

In particular, this work utilized concepts of analogical spatial expansion and contraction, the

metaphor "house=world", the primary orientation of *t̓łas-* "seaward" / *atł-* "towards the woods",

and the concept embodied in the word *'nala-* as both "the day and the world"

The art addressed the history of Kwakwa̱ka'wakw cultural oppression through the official

potlatch ban instituted by the Canadian government from1885, until the ban was dropped

in1951 (Cole & Chaikin, 1990). The Vancouver Art Gallery building was originally built in 1906

as the B.C. Provincial Courthouse. As such, it was a symbol placed upon the landscape that

announced the legal authority of the new province of British Columbia; a province in league with

the Federal government in actively promoting the suppression and demise of Kwakw_aka_'wakw

traditional culture in an effort to assimilate the "Indians" and appropriate their lands.   In 1921,

many Kwakw_aka_'wakw were given jail sentences for potlatching (Cole & Chaikin, 1990). The

courthouse building eventually became the home of the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1983 and has

been Vancouver's most popular site of social protest since. In 2001, artist Ken Lum installed a

permanent artwork of four boats, one on each corner of the building roof. On the Georgia street

side is installed a white 'trade' ship, such as those which first brought non-indigenous people to

the coast, and a red Aboriginal style canoe[84]. Taking these visual icons resting on top of what

used to be the Provincial Courthouse, into consideration as markers of the historical events of

Western European contact, the potlatch ban, and of the cultural difference in approach to the

landscape (or stage) of British Columbia the artwork was conceived .

A banner was hung across the exterior façade visually referencing a *ma'wił* "dance screen".

These were traditionally mounted in the Kwakw_aka_'wakw house between the two back (upriver

---

[84] Lum also installed a yellow ship and a black ship on the other two corners of the roof.

associated) posts during ceremonial performances (see Figure 5.5). In Figure 8.13 a dance

screen is stretched between the two rear houseposts during a dance performance of the

Atłakama "dance of the woods", at Gwayasdạms Village (Gilford Island) in 1946.   These

screens were not always there but would be hung for ceremonial purposes. To see the rear of

the same house without the screen see Figure 5.6. In this photo the dancers are assembled in

front of the screen for the sake of the photograph. They wouldn't normally be seen this way.

Figure 8.13 Unknown (Photographer). (1946). *Atłaḵama dancers in front of dance screen at Gwayasdams Village, Gilford Island* [Photo]. Image (PN 15250-35) courtesy the Royal BC Museum, BC Archives.

The screen made for the Vancouver Art Gallery was visually divided into red and grey sections mimicking the divisions of the national flag of Canada. This tied in well with the colors of the white ship and red canoe, amplifying their symbolism as icons of coastal First Nations and colonists. In the centre portion of the image a ghost puppet was portrayed straddling a red cedar ring through which a skull emerges. An owl occupied the stomach portion of the ghost puppet. In the image the hands of the ghost form the owl's wings.   The ghost is referred to as a

puppet because it is associated with the *t'ukwid* performance of puppets in the ceremonies of

the Kwakwaka'wakw where they would rise out of the ground. It is referenced in this installation

as having "the supernatural ability to arise from the dead or come to life." Figures 8.14 and

Figure 8.15 show the daytime ceremonial curtain in place at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Figure

8.16 shows a puppet called *nułamgila* "foolmaker" collected from Gwa'yi Village (Kingcome

Inlet) from Peter Moon. In an older collection of puppets in the *American Museum of Natural*

History collected by George Hunt for Franz Boas from Kingcome Inlet a large ghost puppet has

as her two children two *nułamgila*.   The reference to the "foolmaker" I use in a contemporary

context as a Kwakwaka'wakw perspective on modern Western short-term exploitative

approaches to the land.

Upon the red colored fields are two printed texts; one in Kwak'wala, the other, the English

translation.   These read as:

Giga, Lilo'linuxw! Suma'as ganutłida 'nala dłuwi' 'nalida ganutłi', laxgada 'Wala Gukw.

Wosida gaxa'nuxw, Ha'yałiligas kas wa'xidage'os ka `kwaligalitłe'sa naxwa!

Come Ghosts! You, whose night is day and whose day is night, In this Great House.

I beg you, Great Healer, to take pity on us and restore us to life!

Figure 8.14 Mills, Trevor & Robideau, Henri. (Photograph). (2008.) "*The House of the Ghosts*"
Site specific light projection with banner, dimensions variable approx.. 12 x 12 m. [Photo] Image
courtesy the Vancouver Art Gallery and the artist

Figure 8.15 Nicolson, Marianne (Photographer). (2008). *Daytime view of dance screen hung outside the Vancouver Art Gallery during the winter of 2008-2009* [Photo]. Image courtesy the artist/author.

Figure 8.16 Tan, Derek (Photographer). `Tukwid puppet collected from Peter Moon of Kingcome Inlet. (A4515) [Online Image]. Retrieved from MOA Online Collections, http://www.collection-online.moa.ubc.ca

The text is highly metaphorical. In the text the "ghosts" are "ancestors and spirits", the "Great

House" is "the world, the earth", and the "great healer" is reference to the killer whales who are

referred to as *Ha'yałiligas* which literally translates as "Healing Woman" or "Woman-Setting-

Right", an honorific often used in prayers for healing. Boas (1932) states, "*Ha'yałiligas* is a term

used to designate ghosts as well as all beneficent supernatural beings" (p.210). The reference

to day and night comes from the Kwakwa̱ka'wakw belief that the ghosts (spirits), comes closer

to the physical world at night and in winter. This makes perfect sense in the Pacific Northwest

Coast geography, where in summer the day stretches until 10pm in June and only 4pm in

December, if we remember that the winter is aligned with night and the spiritual, while day is

aligned with summer and the body. In the work the following temporal metaphors are used:

A day and a night is a summer and a winter

Summer and winter are symbolic of the body and the spirit/soul

The text expands the temporal timeframe of a day into the timeframe of a year by drawing the

analogy that day=summer and night=winter. It also expresses the concepts described in

chapter 7 where a day is analogous to the world as the temporal stage where events occur, "in

this Great House". The Kwakwaka'wakw world is one of opposites which require balance. The

ghosts are the spiritual equivalent to humanity and in many ways human prosperity is reliant on

their good grace. The world is divided into day and night, summer and winter, spirits and

humans. They are intrinsically connected but opposite. Together they make a whole. This is

the metaphorical explanation as to why, in the land of the ghosts, day is night and night is day.

In Boas (1935) it is stated, "Everything in the ghost village is the same as in our world, only their

day is our night , our night their day (p.131)." Figure 8.16 shows these analogous relationships.

'nala "the day" the temporal stage where events occur

"the world" the spatial stage where events occur

Day	↔	Night
Humans	↔	Ghosts
Summer	↔	Winter
"Form"	↔	"Meaning"
Physical	↔	Spiritual
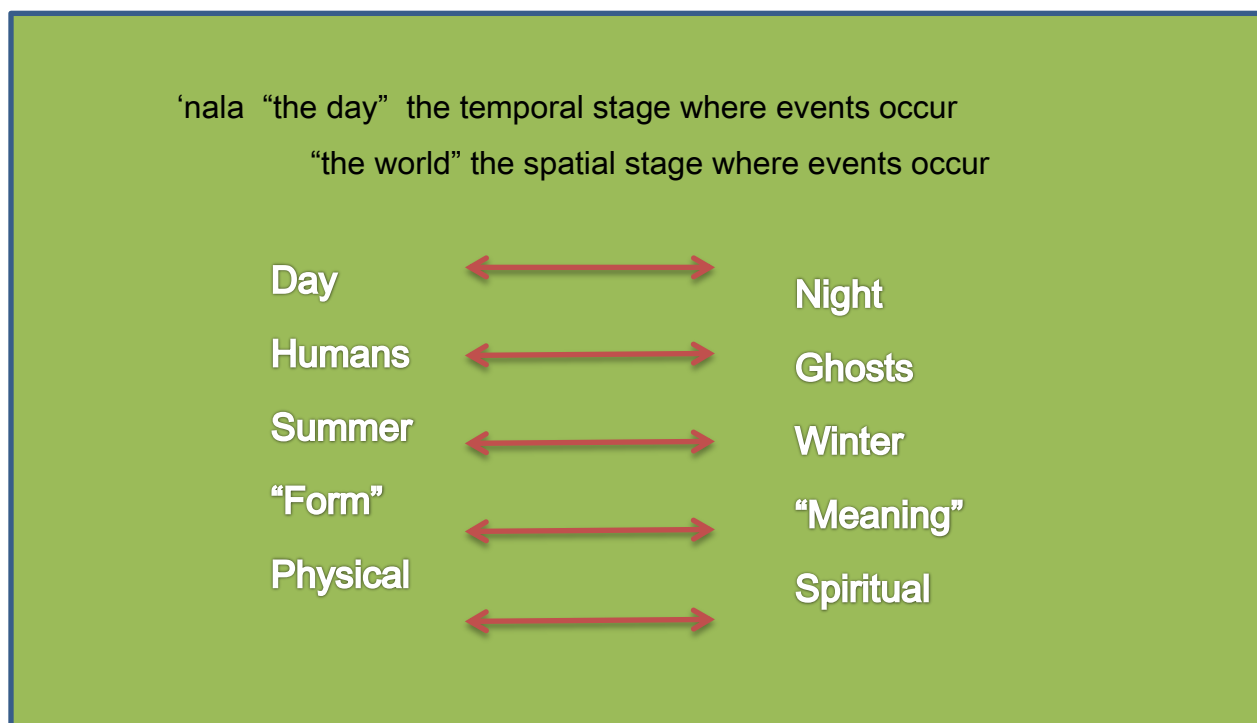
Figure 8.17   *The analogous relationships of "ghosts and humans", "day and night"*

The text printed on the daytime banner is a prayer for assistance in this world with dealing with

the ill health of the planet and the imbalance of the contemporary capitalist based disassociation

of humans from the land (exploitive rather than empathetic) as explained in chapter 6. It points

to the Kwakwaka'wakw concept of balance between the physical world (human body) and

spiritual health. Spiritual health is marked by the concept of respect and acknowledgment of all life forms as animate and equivalent to humanity.   "We are the land and the land is us, if we mistreat it, we will suffer."

In *"The House of the Ghosts"* art installation, as evening fell, a light projection gradually transformed the red printed texts areas into the images of killer whales and the *Vancouver Art Gallery* architectural posts and lintel, which framed the banner (dance screen), were transformed into carved houseposts and crossbeam.   The crossbeam image was a *sisi'utł*, the double headed serpent, which represents balance. The housepost images were wolves (the land equivalent of the killer-whales) overtop of killer whales both considered to have the ability to heal humans. These beings are considered the chiefs of the land and the sea. The wolves are sometimes called *atła'nam* "wolf", literally, "one from the forest" or *atłu'linuxw* "wolf" (Boas 1948, p.18).   Note the use of the *atł-* stem. While I could not find an equivalent *tłas-* name form for whales meaning specifically meaning "one from the sea" I did find that whale names are often derived from the stem *tłas-* "seaward, region of the sea". For example, `*Tłalis* means "whale blowing on beach", or `*Tłalis kasu* "the real whale blowing on beach and `*Tłalili'lakw* "(whale) blowing in house" (Boas, 1925? unpublished manuscript "Personal Names in Kwakiutl",

p. 118). The whale and wolf posts represent the relationship of the land and sea regions. As

houseposts they symbolically hold up the "house of the world".   Figure 8.18 shows "The House
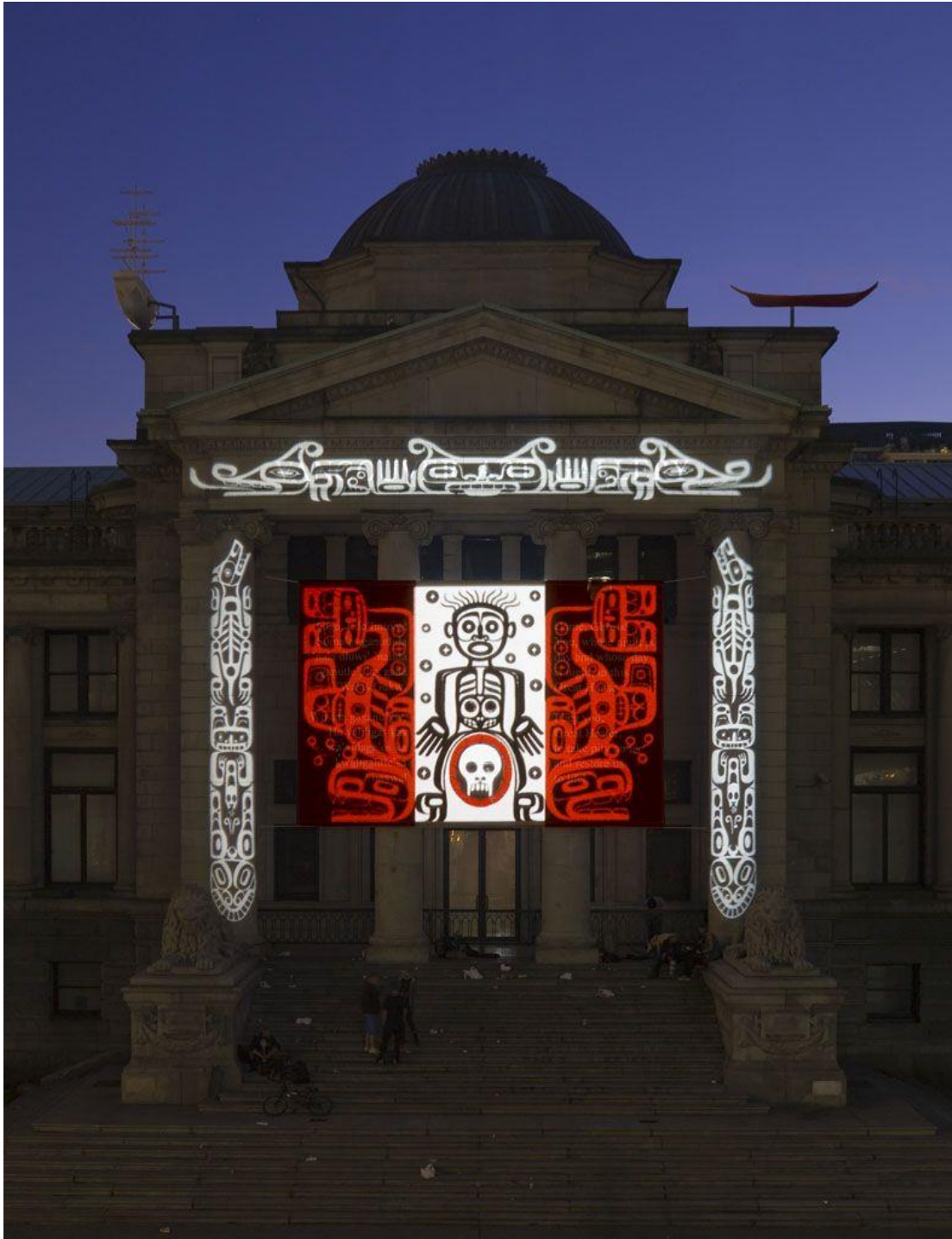
of the Ghosts" at night.

Figure 8.18 Mills, Trevor & Robideau, Henri. (Photograph). (2008.) *The House of the Ghosts*. Site specific light projection with banner, dimensions variable approx.. 12 x 12 m. [Photo]Image courtesy the Vancouver Art Gallery and the artist

8.7.1 Spatial transformation: From outside to inside, exterior to interior

The light projection symbolically transformed the architectural *exterior* of the *Vancouver Art*

Gallery into the *interior* posts and lintel of a Kwakw<u>a</u>k<u>a</u>'wakw bighouse. In doing this the

'outside' space of the viewer became the interior ceremonial floor of the house, the night sky

becoming the ceiling etc. The viewer, by standing within the symbolic ceremonial space while

viewing the work, was now implicated in a ritual performance. Viewers then become a part of

the work and as such are addressed as a participant in the condition of the world which is

questioned by the words on the banner. Figure 8.19 diagrams this spatial relationship.
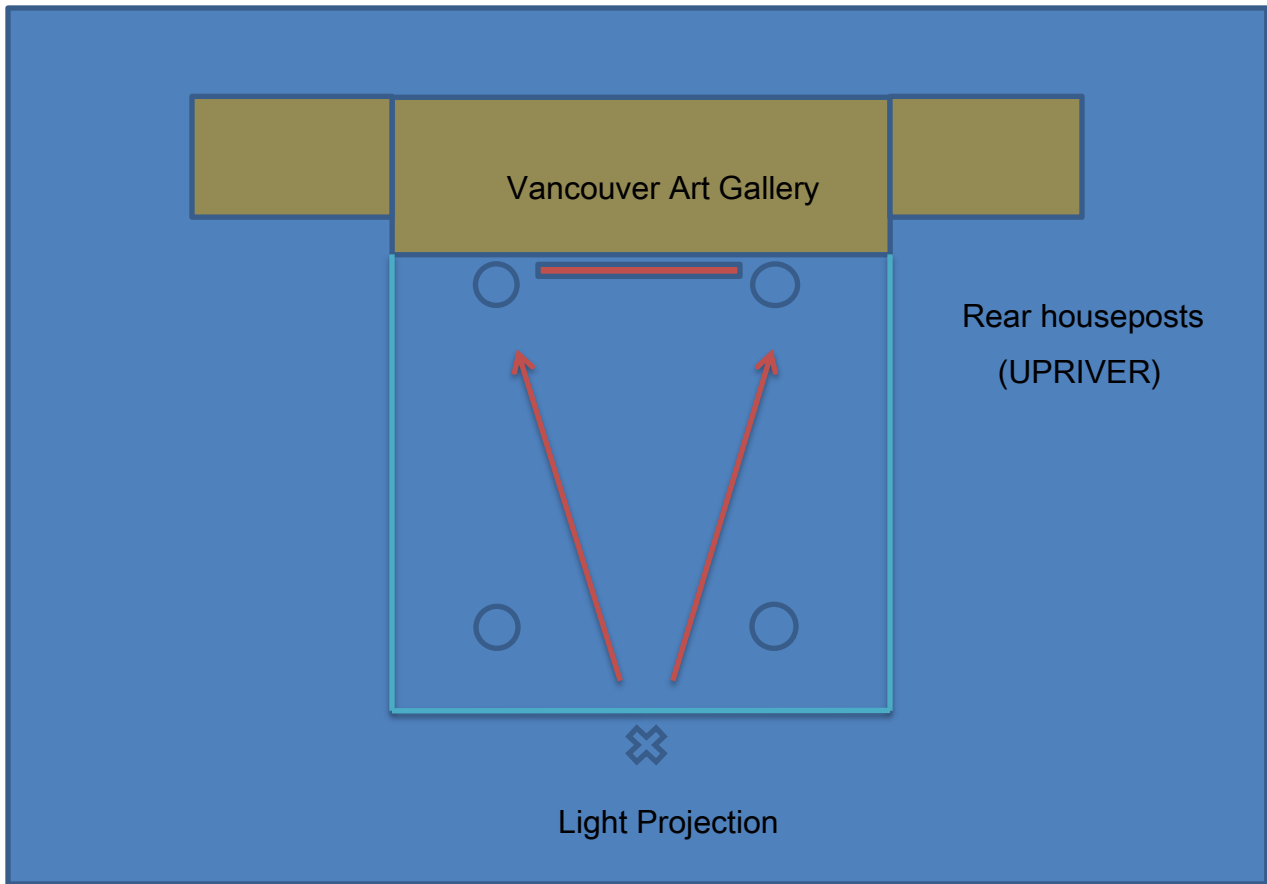
Figure 8.19 *The imaginary/conceptual house created by the light projection*

In *The House of the Ghost's* temporal performance, what is in the daytime, the exterior of the

Vancouver Art Gallery becomes the interior of up-river side of the Kwakwaka'wakw ceremonial

house at night. During the day the Vancouver Art Gallery is a house with a declaratory banner.

At night the façade is now the rear part of a ceremonial Kwakwaka'wakw house. The world has

become a house and the viewers who stand within the symbolic ceremonial floor are the

performers. The witnesses to this ceremony, this potlatch, are the people who walk or drive by

over the course of the installation.

This work had a visual precedent embedded in the history of radical culture change symbolized

by architectural shift at the turn of the last century.   Figure 8.20 is a photo of houseposts in Alert

Bay taken in 1914.   In this image we are looking at the *interior* houseposts of the traditional

bighouse which formerly occupied this space. The modern Western European style house has

been built in the same spatial location where the upriver, chief's quarters would have been if the

exterior of the communal house was still present. Encouraged by the onslaught of Western

based norms the "community" houses were eventually abandoned and replaced by modern

"individual" family dwellings. In this case, the original *interior* houseposts become the *exterior*

model of the now iconic "totem pole" of the Pacific Northwest Coast.   In an interesting and

somewhat tragic aside, from the point of view of the Kwakw̱aḵa'wakw, these same poles

eventually were installed as decorative features around the entryway of the St. Michaels

Residential School, which had been opened in 1929 (see Figure 8.21).
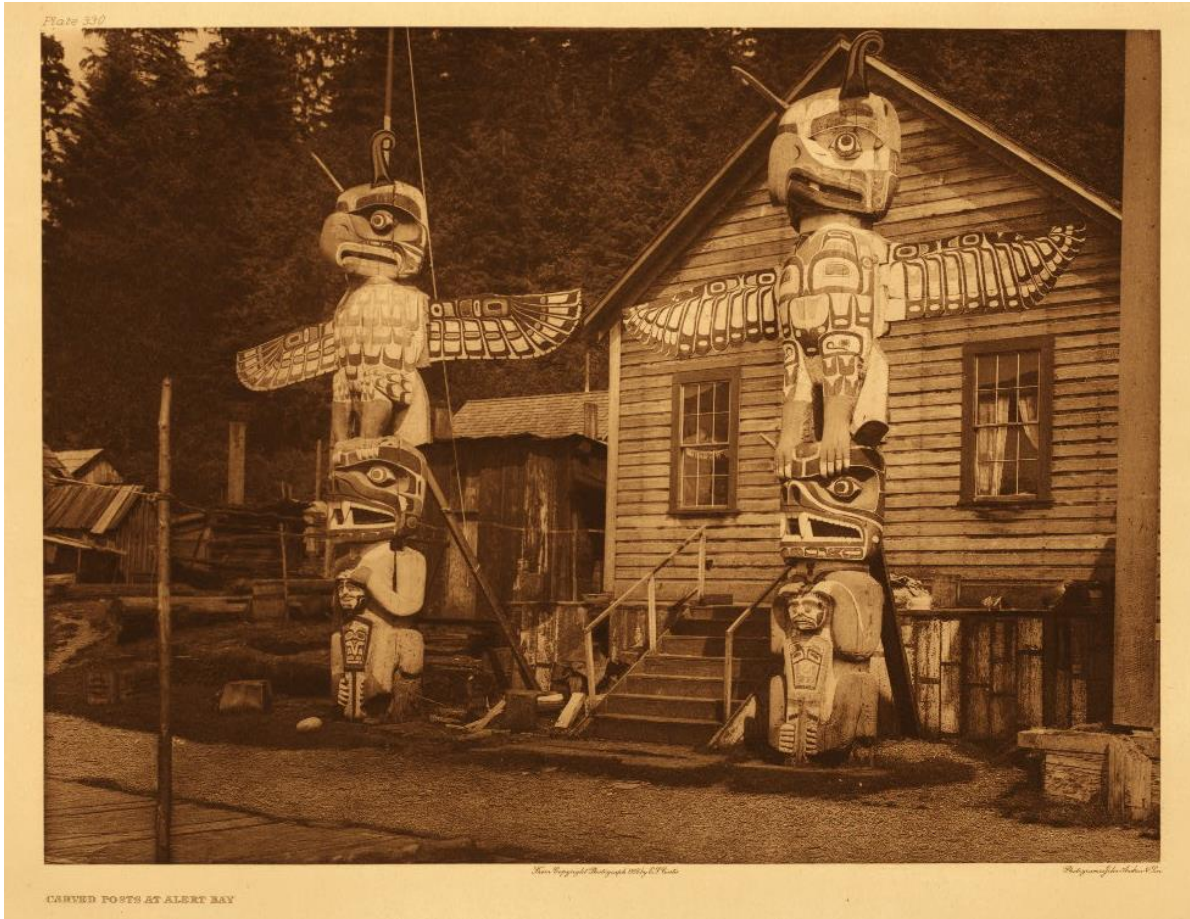
Figure 8.20 Curtis, Edward, S. (Photographer). (1914). *Carved Posts at Alert Bay*[85] [Photo], Photograph courtesy of Northwestern University Library, *Edward S. Curtis's The North American Indian,"* 2003 http://digital.library.northwestern.edu./curtis/

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[85] Back of a copy of the photo in the BC Archives says "Ned Harris house on right, posts are his" (Billy Sandy Willie Dec, 1974) and underneath is also written, "Totems in front of house belonging to Paul Rufus" (W.N. Corker June 1974).

The houseposts originally belonged to Chief `Tłakwudłas of the 'Namgis Tribe.  The house was never finished.  The poles were eventually given as a dowry to Paul Rufus when he married `Tłakwudłas' grandson Ned Harris's oldest daughter Martha Harris Wadzidalaga, 'Maxw'mawidzamga. (personal communication, William Wasden Jr. 05/13)

Figure 8.21 unknown. (Photographer). (circa.1950). *Housepost re-installed in front of St. Michael's Residential School (Gloria Nicolson nee. Willie and Pearlie Weir, students of the residential school.* [Photo]. Image courtesy Gloria Nicolson

8.7.2 Temporal and spatial analogies

The contemporary artwork *"The House of the Ghosts"*, utilized temporal and spatial metaphors

and analogies.   The symbolism of day and night, interior and exterior are grounded in traditional

concepts and used to reflect on contemporary conditions in the light of Kwakwaka'wakw and

colonial history. Both "the world is a house" metaphor, in its approach to architecture, as well as

the metaphor "the house is a body" in its references to sickness and healing, as well as "the

world is a body" are manifest in its formal execution. Strategically the house orientation of *t̕las-*

"seaward" is also used in relationship to its position within the cityscape of downtown Vancouver

"facing the water". The Kwakwaka'wakw ceremonial space is heightened in the winter when

village becomes a sacred site where spirits and ghosts come close and the past is brought

forward to meet the present[86].

To reiterate, the Kwakwaka'wakw traditionally divided the year into two primary divisions, the

summer and the winter. The summer season was aligned with the physical, the body, gathering

provisions and being out on the land. This season was considered *baxus* "the profane or

ordinary". The winter season was its opposite. The winter was aligned with the spiritual, the

soul, ritual enactments (the winter ceremonial), feasting, gathering of *'naṁima* and tribes in a

central location. It was considered *nawalakw* "supernatural". The division and difference

between these seasons were so pronounced that the membership held two names, one for the

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[86] This symbolism has been alluded to throughout this dissertation and is more fully explained in Nicolson (2005).

summer season and one for the winter season. The installation takes place in the winter and

plays with the temporal notions of day and night as a contraction of the summer and winter

seasons. It is at night and in winter that the Vancouver Art Gallery is transformed into "the

house of the ghosts" through symbolism and architectural reference in an expression of dismay

over present concerns over the state of the land/world, of British Columbia and its history of

cultural oppression of Indigenous bodies and ideas.

8.8 "'W̲anx̲'id – to hide, to be hidden" 2010

The artwork "'W̲anx̲'id – to hide, to be hidden" plays with the notion of exterior and interior

knowledge which is aligned with form and meaning, material culture and cultural

conceptualization or ontology.   It visually aligns the idea of the body, the box, the house, the

village and the land.   Eight glass chests mimic in dimension and form eight wooden

boxes/chests on exhibit in the UBC Museum of Anthropology's main hall (see Figures 3.9 and

3.10). This interior installation was made for the UBC Museum of Anthropology and reflects on

the institutional practices of museum collections and display from an Indigenous perspective.

Each chest is blackened from the outside and incised with form-line imagery on their interior

surfaces. The blackened exteriors block the viewer from the visual expectation set up by the

main exhibition hall and open storage displays where everything is well lit and visually

accessible.   It isn't until the viewer comes close that the interior imagery starts to emerge from

inside the box compelling the viewer to stand over the boxes to look inside. The boxes are lit

from below and transparent images taken in the 1930's in Gwa'yi (Kingcome Inlet) are found on

the bottom. Figure 8.22 shows the installation of eight boxes. Figure 8.23 gives a closer

perspective where one can begin to see the carved box interiors.

The inset photographic images refer to a particular time period in Musgamakw Dzawada'enuxw

history. It was in the 1930's that the day school in Kingcome Inlet was shut down in favor of

sending the village children to the newly built St Michael's Residential School which had opened

in Alert Bay in 1929. This act in particular, which was enforced by the Indian Agent, dealt a

severe blow to the passing on of language and culture by separating children from their parents.

The images in each of the boxes are divided into portraits and landscapes. Figure 8.24 shows

the interior photo of a class of young girls posing with their teacher prior to closing of the day

school in Kingcome Inlet.   Some of these young girls I knew as elderly women in the 1990's

when the push was on to record and gather as much oral history as possible before these

elders were no longer with us.

Figure 8.22 Nicolson, Marianne. *"Wanx'id –to hide, to be hidden" art installation at The UBC Museum of Anthropology* (2010). Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 8.23 Nicolson, Marianne. *"Wanx'id –to hide, to be hidden" art installation at The UBC Museum of Anthropology* (2010). Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 8.24 Nicolson, Marianne. *"W<u>a</u>n<u>x</u>'id –to hide, to be hidden" art installation at The UBC Museum of Anthropology, Interior image inside box.* (2010). Image courtesy the artist/author

Figure 8.25 Ms. Arrowsmith? (Photographer). (1936). *Junior WA*[87] . Image (9b) courtesy the Diocese of British Columbia Archives, Victoria B.C.

The title of the work *"'Wanx'id – to hide, to be hidden"* has a double meaning. On one hand, it refers to the deliberate masking or withholding of Indigenous cultural information from the consumption of the public but on the other hand it refers to the cultural distance and confusion created between different generations of the Kwakwaka'wakw by the potlatch ban and the residential school system. It was this systemic oppression that deliberately disrupted and

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[87]Left to Right: Top Row: Ms. Wakefield (teacher), Gertie Willie, Nora Webber, ?
        Middle Row: Malidzi (Mary Coon), Susan Wallace, Jay Dawson, Violet Dawson, Alice Frank
        Front Row: Maggie Howard, Harriet Wilson, Eliza Dawson, Lat'sa (Elizabeth Willie)

"made hidden" cultural understanding between the Kwakw<u>a</u>k<u>a</u>'wakw who experienced this and

their children.

The work also considers the irony in that current generations (such as myself) are now tasked

with researching the vast collections of information and material culture that had been removed

from the communities and placed in museums and archives in order to return it to the

community physically and conceptually.   The people pictured in the images inside the boxes

were in a sense a storehouse of cultural information themselves and the portraits emphasized

the fact that as a living culture this information existed within human beings and within their

interactions and understandings amongst each other rather than as materials in a museum or

archive.

The exterior view of the boxes mimicked the architecture of a village or cluster of buildings. This

reference is simultaneously to both the village community and contemporary institutions. The

use of glass is a particular reference to this. The UBC Museum of Anthropology is a building

made of glass that contains the material culture of the Kwakw<u>a</u>k<u>a</u>'wakw, which are exhibited

behind glass.   Figure 8.26 shows The UBC Museum of Anthropology from the side facing the

water. Based on the post and beam structure of a bighouse the Museum actually faces the

water of Burrard Inlet. Most people don't realize it but according to Kwakwaka'wakw geography

they are entering from the back of the house since this is where the main entrance is situated.

Figure 8.26 *Front (Sea-Facing) view of the UBC Museum of Anthropology.* Photo courtesy the author/artist

Figure 8.27 shows masks on display inside the *UBC Museum of Anthropology.*   Traditionally

these masks would never have been shown except in a ceremonial context. As sacred objects

they would be kept hidden in chests until it was time to show them briefly in the ceremonial

house. *'W<u>a</u>nx'id – to hide, to be hidden"* also refers to this radical divergence in the display of

masks between internal community display and public displays in museums and other

institutions such as commercial galleries.

Figure 8.27 *Kwakw<u>a</u>ka'wakw masks on display inside the UBC Museum of Anthropology*. (Dick Webber's houseposts from Gwayasd<u>a</u>ms Village (Gilford Island) are in the background.) Image courtesy the author/artist.

The form of the boxes most obvious reference is to the traditional cedar container which would

hold foodstuffs and *długwe* "treasures", masks and regalia, the symbols of lineage rights and

histories. An analogy is drawn between the ideas of continuity in lineage, cultural property and

inheritance.   Some of the images are of the land and village (Figure 8.28). Other images are of

the Chiefs from the late 1930s time-period (Figure 8.29).

Figure 8.28 Nicolson, Marianne. *"Wan̲x̲'id – to hide, to be hidden" art installation at The UBC Museum of Anthropology* (2010). Image courtesy the artist.

Inset image originally taken by: Wakefield, Amy. (Photographer). (1937). *The Village Street .* Image (35b?) courtesy the Diocese of British Columbia Archives, Victoria B.C.

Figure 8.29 Nicolson, Marianne. *"Wanx'id –to hide, to be hidden" art installation at The UBC Museum of Anthropology* (2010). Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 8.30 and 8.31 shows Mus<u>g</u>ama<u>k</u>w Dzawada'enu<u>x</u>w hereditary chiefs trained and active

in the traditional governance structure before the imposition of the Department of Indian Affairs

modern governance structure of elected chiefs and councils was imposed in the 1940s. The

first photo was used in the art installation and shows some of the chiefs. The second photo was

taken at the same time and shows almost all of them

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Figure 8.30 Wakefield, Amy. (Photographer). (1937). *Pole with Chiefs[88].* Image (44b) courtesy
the Diocese of British Columbia Archives, Victoria B.C.

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[88] L to R: Frank Dawson, ?, Peter Harris, ?, Jim H<u>a</u>mdzid, Alex Morgan, Percy Frank, George Scow

Figure 8.31 Wakefield, Amy. (Photographer). (1937). *Chiefs in Regalia*[89]. Image (48a) courtesy the Diocese of British Columbia Archives, Victoria B.C.

The people, the village and the landscape and the epistemology, or worldview, they create are

the *długwe* contained within the boxes. These "treasures" are the less tangible aspects of

Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw culture which have been separated from their "material culture" counterparts in

museum institutions. However, the material culture is merely derived from the intangible

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[89] Musg̱amakw Dzawada'enuxw chiefs: L to R: Herbert Johnson, Himas Johnson, Percy Frank, Jim Ham̱dzid, Tom Williams, Tom Dawson, Alec Nelson, Fred Williams, William Dawson, (Bishop de Poncier), Tom Lagis, Peter Harris, Dick Webber, Billy Johnson, Dick Hawkins, Kingcome Joe, Alex Morgan, Hillier Landsdown (friend), Toby Willie, Peter Scow. (a few are absent: Johnny Scow, head chief of the Kwikwasu'tinuxw had died a few years prior)

culture. The masks and poles and regalia are the surface, formal expression of what is

considered in traditional Kwakw<u>a</u>kwʼwakw thought as most important; the ideas and concepts

and lineages which they represent. So in contemporary times through museums one

experiences a reversed engagement. Institutions have inherited a legacy of preserving the

objects of cultures while the conceptual source from which these objects emerged was largely

ignored and misunderstood. It has become the challenge of these institutions to redress this

imbalanced approach.

The blackened exteriors of the boxes disrupt the expectation of the viewer who has become

accustomed to having free visual access to symbols of Indigenous culture. The format of the

boxes forces a physical engagement again mimicking the performance aspect of

Kwakw<u>a</u>kwʼwakw cultural traditions which engage the body in space. Figure 8.32 shows my

nephew, Ryan Nicolson, and my mother, Gloria Nicolson, looking inside the boxes. This image

is symbolic of how I perceive myself as a Kwakw<u>a</u>kwʼwakw artist and author anchored and

accountable to both the generation who comes after me and the generation before me.

Figure 8.32 Nicolson, Marianne. *"Wanx'id –to hide, to be hidden" art installation at The UBC Museum of Anthropology* (2010). Ryan Nicolson and Gloria Nicolson looking inside boxes. Image courtesy the artist.

The title *"'Wanx'id – to Hide, to be Hidden"* hints at the idea of the ephemeral and the intangible, notions of access and inaccessibility. It plays with the notion of interior knowledge and contained spaces which are known only to those who truly occupy them. In a nod at current conditions it also acknowledges the dilemma of contemporary Kwakwaka'wakw to understand and know a culture that they have inherited under duress and disassociated from its origins through colonialism.   The work addresses the awkward reality that many Indigenous communities are now reliant on information and collections documented by the societies which

caused their traditional cultural educations to be broken down.   In a way it is a self-reflection on

my own survivalist strategy to re-cover and revive Kwakw<u>a</u>ka'wakw culture by infiltrating the

academy, the galleries and the museums. The work is a visual analogy of my own process of

entering archives, sourcing material, cross referencing information, analyzing linguistic forms,

reconstructing historical narratives, staring at photographs, listening to the people around me,

witnessing and participating in ceremonies, walking on the land and hoping to understand. In a

sense the work reflects on the process inherent in compiling both this thesis and the motives

and issues behind that act. Taiaiake Alfred (2010) states in regard to this artwork:

Our art is our life, and to me the power of Marianne Nicolson's work is not on display

in drawn designs or shaped forms. What makes her an artist in my mind is her

conscious engagement with the elements of her people's culture and their

homeland. The pieces of wood, the paint on rocks, the arrangements of light all

form a constant chronicle of her continuing journey as a person striving to be a true

human being. The works are affective and beautiful. But her art and that of any

artist is her journey and how she makes us think and feel about our own lives. In

this sense her work is a powerful teaching to those of us who are struggling to find

ways to regenerate ourselves and to re-establish our presence in these homelands

of ours, now called Canada. (UBC MOA Borderzones website,

http://www.moa.ubc.ca/borderzones/features_nicolson.html)

My feeling is that Alfred understands at a fundamental level what I am trying to express; the

ideas, experiences, an often elusive comprehension of life which are framed by a specific

culture.   These ephemeral elements are linked by physical acts which create physical objects

but ultimately the motivation is conceptual. In *'Wanx'id –to hide, to be hidden"* I have returned

once more to the relationships of form and meaning, the physical and spiritual and the metaphor

of the body=house=land in a work which also challenges representation and the social politics

of Indigenous relationships to the colonial spaces of the museum and the gallery.

8.9 "The Land is a Person" 2012

"The Land is a Person", is the last work in the series of four which are presented as the visual

component of this thesis. This work in particular provides the most literal manifestation of the

metaphor, body=house=land as evidenced by the title.   I was approached by the developer of a

retirement home to propose a permanent site-specific installation along Mt. Seymour Parkway in

North Vancouver B.C. Utilising the Kwakw<u>a</u>k<u>a</u>'wakw temporal concepts of value and emphasis

placed upon the past and the connection to ancient beginnings I proposed an artwork that would

complement its physical and social environment. A 22' high hat made of steel, glass and wood

is now permanently installed upon the landscape near North Vancouver's Mount Seymour. The

form of the hat mimics a mountain. During the day it is the form that dominates the work. The

material qualities of steel, glass, wood and concrete are tangible, solid and complementary.   At

night the work is transformed by light, the etched image of a killer whale emerging in the dark.

Like "The House of the Ghosts" this work exploits the alternation of day and night, the physical

and the ephemeral. Figure 8.33 shows the artwork in daytime. Figure 8.34 shows the work at

night.

Figure 8.33 Nicolson, Marianne. (2012). *The Land is a Person*. glass, steel, wood & light installation. 22' x 22' (Daytime View) Image courtesy the artist/author.
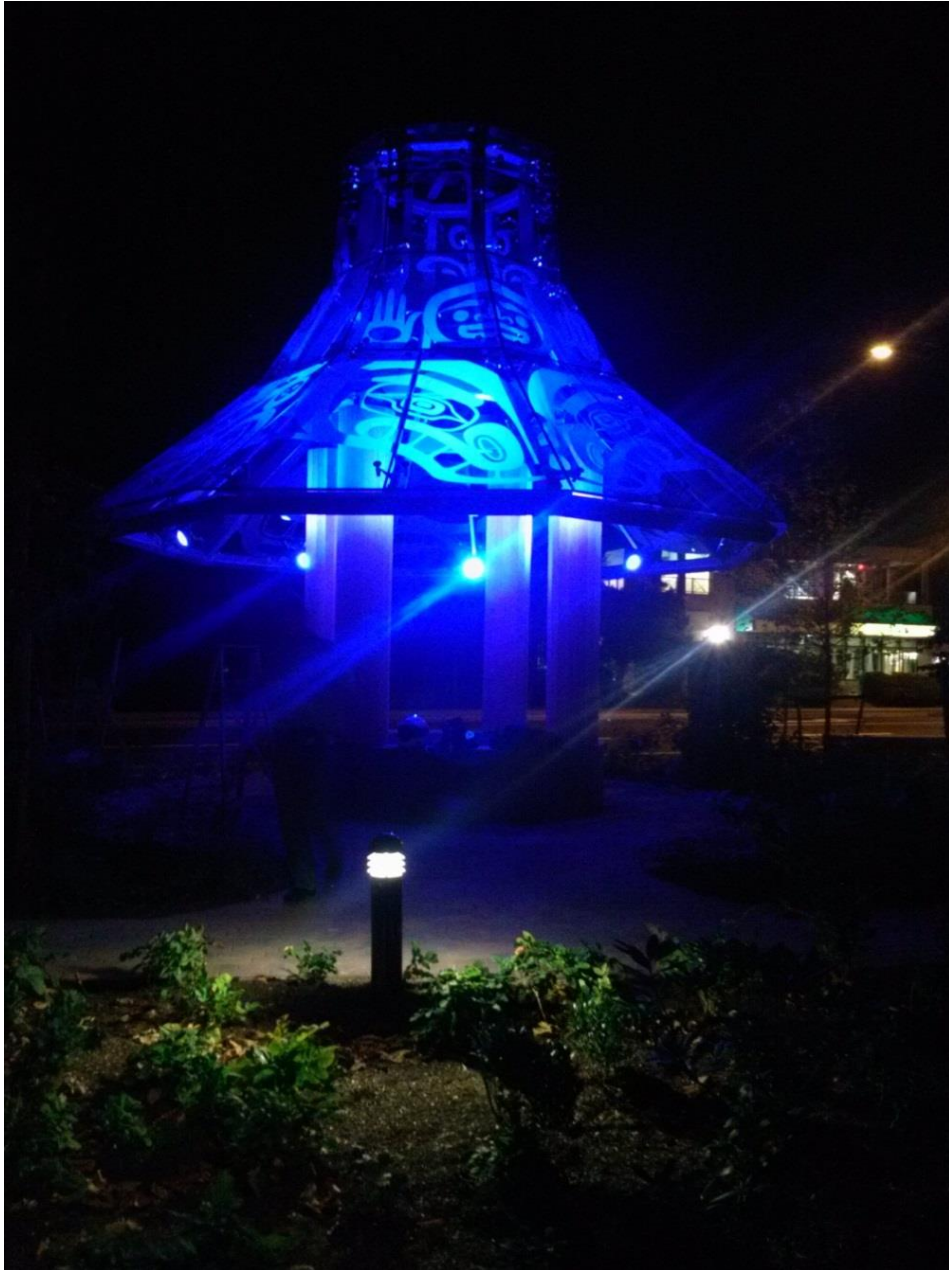
Figure 8.34 Nicolson, Marianne. (2012). *The Land is a Person* . glass, steel, wood & light installation. 22' x 22' (Nighttime View) Image courtesy the artist/author.

The hat is worn by the landscape. The "hat on the land" is literal. It acts to personify and animate the land as equivalent to the human body. The body of the land is the vertical depth of layer upon layer of material built up over thousands of years. It honors a sense of agedness in "place". Figure 8.35 shows a traditional hat made of cedar bark or spruce-root worn by the man on the right holding staffs covered in silver bracelets for a potlatch give-away. Note the stack of hats in the background that visually mimic the stack of blankets behind the men. These can be metaphorically referred to as "mountains of wealth". Boas (1949) states: "The large amount of property given away "stands a mountain of blankets, reaching through the world." (p. 234).

Referring back to chapter 6, in the words of Daband, ancestor to the Wa'ukwamayi *'naṁima* of the Dzawada'enuxw, when he came out of the stone as a human being to become a tribesman of Kawadilikala: "My name is Stone, my name is Mountain, my name is Big Mountain, my name is increasing Mountain." (Curtis 1915:133) These examples show an empathetic and animated perspective of the land. The land is both personified and like a chief, a source of wealth. However, the interpretation of what wealth (value) is, and its means of distribution are radically different from Western capitalist concepts.

Figure 8.35 Cadwallader Collection. (prior to 1912). *Potlatch Giveaway on display in Alert Bay*[90] [Photo]. Image (PN 1098) courtesy the Royal BC Museum, BC Archives.

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[90] Man on left is identified as "O'wadi donor of the material in the background, button blankets, bracelets, per Mrs. Tom Johnson." Is written on the back of the photo card at Royal BC Museum.

O'wadi was the older brother of Charlie Nowell perhaps linking this photo to others in the BC Archives collection which document a potlatch given by O'wadi (Thomas Nowell) around 1900.

After some discussion with William Wasden Jr. the identities of the three men are most likely Thomas (O'wadi) Nowell (far left), Lagiyus (Charlie Nowell's father-in-law), a chief of the 'Namgis People (centre), and Charlie Nowell

In Dzawada̱'enux̱w history the mountain births a man who becomes the ancestor of the

Dzawada̱'enux̱w. His biology, the biology of the mountain becomes a part of the people. When

the people die, their physical bodies return to the land/mountain. The mountain acts as a

symbol of the land and is considered as equivalent to humanity. As demonstrated throughout

this thesis through language and cultural practices the Kwakwa̱ka'wakw perspective of their

relationship with the land is both material and spiritual. This is in contrast to a contemporary

Western based, capitalist economic and philosophical approach to the land which is transitory,

fleeting and focused on the material.

The Land is a Person, was inspired by the legislation of "Pachamama" from Bolivia, in South

America, where the land has recently been recognized by law, with rights equivalent to human

rights (Vidal, 2011). I saw this belief as akin to the Kwakwa̱ka'wakw traditional approach to the

land where the land is considered animate and alive, deserving of respect and a status equal to

that of humans. In addition, after thousands of years of occupying the same landscape, the

land is literally imbued with the remains of one's ancestral biology. This is ideologically

contrasted against the current status within North American legal definitions of United States

commercial corporations as "persons", or citizens (Hall, 2010). The hat built on the land in

North Vancouver is a visual affirmation of the Indigenous perspective of the land and the

approach to the landscape as a partner to humanity rather than subservient.

Again, the killer whale is a referent for healing of the body/land that we saw expressed in *The*

House of the Ghosts. The use of the color blue refers to the sea and to the sky. The visual

transition from day to night is a reference to the idea of the body (day) and the spirit (night) and

the idea of balance between both which was elaborated upon in the section describing "The

House of the Ghosts". One aspect of this work that is less prevalent amongst the others is its

literality. The work literally engages with the land; is placed upon the land. The analogy of the

body with the land is made explicit in the occupation of the space by viewers. When in the

space the hat crowns both individuals present in the space and simultaneously continues to

crown the land. The hat also acts like a house in that it provides shelter for the human body.

This manifests the metaphor Body=House=Land/World and the concept "you are the land",

amplifying the empathetic character of Kwakwaka'wakw land/human relationships.

8.10 Summary

Each of the four works described attempts to express, under contemporary conditions,

metaphorical and analogical concepts that arise from a Kwakw<u>a</u>k'wakw traditional approach to

space and time. These concepts have been derived from language forms and 'ways of

speaking' that emerge from the Kwak'wala language.   One might ask the question, "Why

contemporary works and not a more comprehensive analysis of traditional ceremonialism and

artistic expression?"   The answer to that lies in the purpose of the analysis itself. If the premise

of this dissertation was to further explain Kwakw<u>a</u>k'wakw culture to an outside audience as an

individual pursuit by a student within the academic setting then the logical follow through might

have been that type of explanation. However, I approached this endeavor as a survivalist

strategy to learn about the Kwak'wala language and to consider its relevance to contemporary

Kwakw<u>a</u>k'wakw.   In contemporary contexts the perusal and exploration of the formal aspects

of Kwakw<u>a</u>k'wakw culture have been examined on many fronts and will continue to be, given

the curiosity of the broader society. However, it has been my own concern as a contemporary

Kwakw<u>a</u>k'wakw person, to explore the underlying notions, conceptual associations and the

'ways of thinking' that originally brought forth those creations. While we might imitate what has

gone on before, how much do we understand and think like our ancestors given our current

colonized state of living in a Western styled society while speaking English? The true test it

seemed was to create works that while innovative in material and context would address these

new materials and contexts in a way that had conceptual consistency with that found in the

Kwak'wala language and traditional expressions. To paraphrase, it was akin to approaching the

issues at hand while thinking like our ancestors. If our ancestors had access to the materials

and spaces that I had access to what would they create and would those creations reflect

concepts and ideas that had spatial and temporal familiarity?

It is easy to imitate forms without fundamental understanding but impossible to innovate without

fundamental conceptual understanding. Of course, in the long run it cannot avoid becoming a

hybrid practice but one I thought worthwhile pursuing over the option of placing what appeared

as traditional works in non-traditional settings (galleries and museums) where the works have

the appearance of visual consistency with their past but through re-contextualization have

become more about Western colonial culture than Kwakwaka'wakw culture.   Again, like this

dissertation, it is simply a strategy engaged in by the author/artist because the traditional

channels of cultural transmission were actively supressed and appropriated years ago.   The

discussion becomes one of form and meaning and the attempt to engage with the meanings

and apply the forms rather than just engage with the forms alone. In this sense the work is an extension of the postmodern critique of a single narrative or knowable reality. These works contest the narrow singular understanding of their formal elements previously focused upon in the gallery and museum exhibitions of indigenous works that emerged out of modernism in the first half of the 20th century by attempting to speak from within their own understandings rather than an imposed one. In a sense the artworks attempt to appropriate the Western construct of the exhibition space into one which is intrinsically Kwakwa̱ka'wakw in *its meaning* in addition to its form. As postmodernism has attempted to make room for additional narratives and voices so then do these works take the opportunity to express Kwakwa̱ka'wakw ideas in alternative spaces and in doing so, perpetuate the traditions of the Kwakwa̱ka'wakw in new and innovative ways.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

<u>Dream of Alakilayogwa</u>

I dreamed I travelled across the water in a small canoe. I was not half way across

when a northwesterly gale began to blow. I steered towards N<u>a</u>xa<u>g</u>ad. Then my

small travelling canoe capsized. I climbed out of the small canoe that was drifting

upside down on the water. I lay on it with my chest down. Then a gull came flying

and alighted on the bow of small canoe that was drifting on the water. It took my

hand and told me to walk on top of the water. Thus I arrived at Blunden Harbour.

Then he taught me what to do when a great epidemic should come in summer. He

said so, and spit out a quartz crystal. Then he put the quartz crystal into my body at

the lower end of my sternum and pressed it in. Then he said, "Now make a rattle in

my form (imitate me). Then you will be a great shaman," thus said the gull. "Now

you shall have the name `Ku'l<u>a</u>nt'sis<u>a</u>mega from now on." Then I awoke. (Boas,

1925, pp. 27-29)

9.1 General Overview

Through the exploration of the concept of space, the written component of my thesis has

demonstrated that the Kwak'wala language and traditional cultural forms are mutually

supportive. Language and culture reflect each other because they derive from the same

conceptual source or understructure (worldview) that was developed over thousands of years in

the same landscape.   Reflected throughout the Kwak'wala language and traditional

Kwakwaka'wakw cultural forms such as architecture, social structure, ceremonies and narrative

is the primary metaphoric concept Body=House=Land/World.   This empathetic analogous

relationship is influential in the formal linguistic manifestation of the *u-[a'w-]* stem, the spatial

division of Kwak'wala pronouns and certain required aspects of the determiner system, in

particular, the radial categorization of the stem *ga-* "referring to someone/something in closest

proximity to the point of origin" and *he-* "further away, or removed altogether, distant, (off-

stage)". Relationships of the body are mapped onto the architecture of the house in terms such

as *ugwiwaliɫ* "front of house, forehead of house, rear of house". Terminology referential to the

house, such as *'naldzi'* "upriver" and *gwe'nakw* "downriver" are analogous to social structure

which is also reflected in village and land occupation. All of these are mapped onto orientations

within the landscape which are marked by the stems *atɫ-* "landwards, forest region", *tɫas-*

"seaward, ocean/water region", *'nal-['nal-]* "upriver" and *gwa-* "downriver". These four primary

geographical orientations are anchored by the *u-[a'w-]* stem which is associated with the body,

or site of origin.

Analogical spatial expansion and contraction is used as a method for the conceptualization of

geographic and temporal relationships. The beliefs "the house is an expanded body", and "the

world is an expanded house", are examples of analogical expansion. The belief, "the

ceremonial house is the world" is an example of analogical contraction. It is particularly

through the stem *ga-* "referring to someone/something in closest proximity to the point of

origin" that temporal expansion and contraction are exhibited. *Ga-* can encompass the

meaning "closest to the body as occurring now in time and space" but also "closest to origins

in time and space historically.

Concepts of time appear to share conceptual features with space exhibiting time/space

crossover. This is most evident in the stem *'na-* "the day, or the world". The day is the

temporal time frame *when* events occur, while the world is the stage or space *where* events

occur. The year is divided into two primary seasons which are heavily symbolic of social

relationships in space. The winter village and the winter season are composed of close

relationships both physical and spiritual in that *'ni'naṁima* "clans" come together to winter in a

single location with spirits for the *t'sit'seḵa* "winter ceremonial".   When together in the

ceremonial house, the *'ni'naṁima* are spatially positioned in relationship to one another in a

reflection of social standings. In the summer, the *ni'naṁima* "clans" spatially spread out over

the land for resource based activities. Again, within this movement one can see the concept of

expansion and contraction operating. One could say that the social "body" of the tribe is

brought together in the winter and spread out over the land in the summer. In the winter, the

ceremonial house becomes a microcosm of the universe where temporal and spatial

relationships are imaginatively and symbolically reconfigured. Figure 9.1 demonstrates the

relationship of Kwak'wala forms to understructure. The understructure can be said to form a

grammar that is connected to extended meanings (semantics) which form the ontology of the

Kwakwaka'wakw. Radial categories are part of the relationship between the grammar and the

ontology.

Forms: In the World

Examples of forms: (u-[a'w-]) (atł-, t'łas-, 'nal-['n<u>a</u>l-], gwa-) (ga-, he-)

Grammar (Proper combinations)
Surface Understructure

Semantics/Meaning
Radial Extensions, Associations, Prototypes

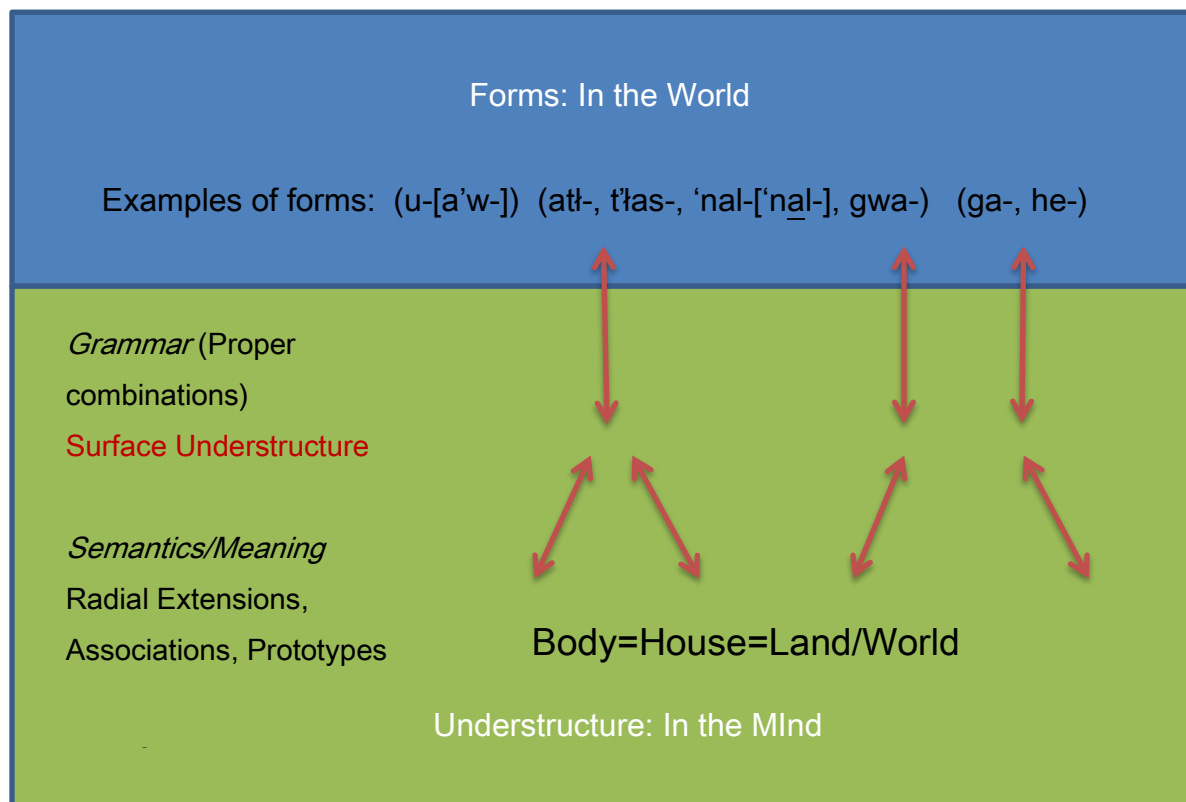Body=House=Land/World

Understructure: In the MInd

Figure 9.1 *Relationship of surface forms and understructures in Kwak'wala*

The underlying systems which are represented by radial extensions, conceptual associations, and beliefs ultimately influence the manifestation of "surface forms" both linguistic and of cultural practice. Surface form and deep meaning are mutually enforcing.   Kwakw<u>a</u>k<u>a</u>'wakw cultural forms stem from the same conceptual substructure[91] that Kwak'wala language forms

---

[91] The words "substructure" and "understructure" are interchangeable; both referring to the base or foundation of an entity. I have used the term "understructure" more often due to its literal expression of spatial relationship.

emerge out of. This deeper substructure can also be called worldview. This worldview has

developed over thousands of years within the same geographic environment and is indeed,

deeply connected to the particular landscape of Pacific Northwest coast land, sea and the

intermediate village zone situated in between. Figure 9.2 diagrams the relationship with cultural
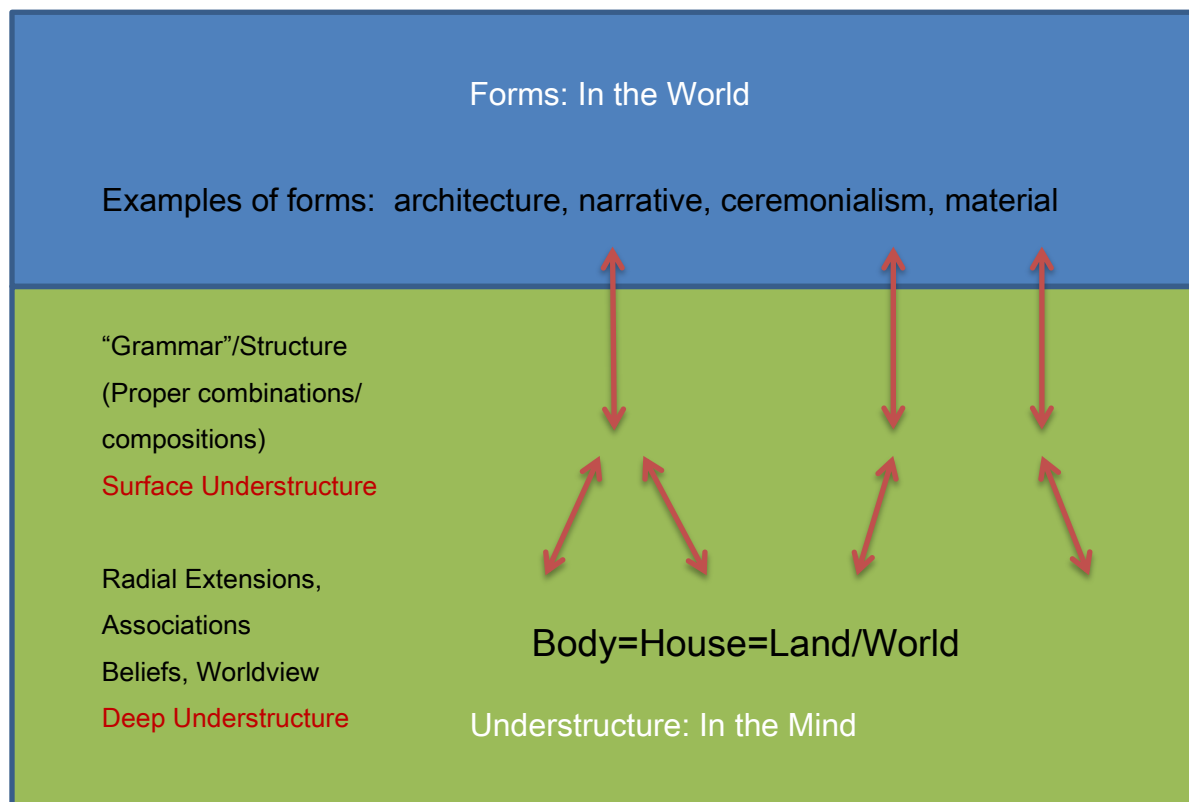
forms.

Figure 9.2 *Relationship of surface forms and understructures in Kwakwaka'wakw culture*

This relationship is a result of relative stability over time and space. In other words it developed

and maintained itself over an extended period of time within a defined geography.   One of the

pivotal questions underlying this thesis regards the effects of radical colonization where

Kwakwaka'wakw culture and language were forcibly suppressed in order to replace traditional

ontologies (worldview and belief systems) with Western ontologies throughout the latter part of

the 19th century through to the 20th century. Kwak'wala speech was actively discouraged and

young Kwakwaka'wakw were encouraged to abandon "old ways of thinking" through an

imposed residential school system. The potlatch was outlawed and participants were

incarcerated.   Massive amounts of material culture were appropriated and interred in

museums. This can basically be characterized as assimilative.   Figure 9.3 demonstrates which

areas of formal manifestations and conceptual understructure were attacked by colonial

suppression and imposed authority.

Forms: In the World

LANGUAGE   (discouraged through the Residential School system)
ARCHITECTURE   (communal houses replaced with single family residences)
SOCIAL STRUCTURE   (traditional hereditary leadership replaced with
                        elected Chief and Councils)
CEREMONIES   (outlawed, participants incarcerated, punished)

"Grammar" (Proper
combinations)
"HOW THINGS ARE
DONE"

Radial Extensions,
Associations
Beliefs, Worldview
"WHY THINGS ARE
DONE"

Body=House=Land/World Metaphor
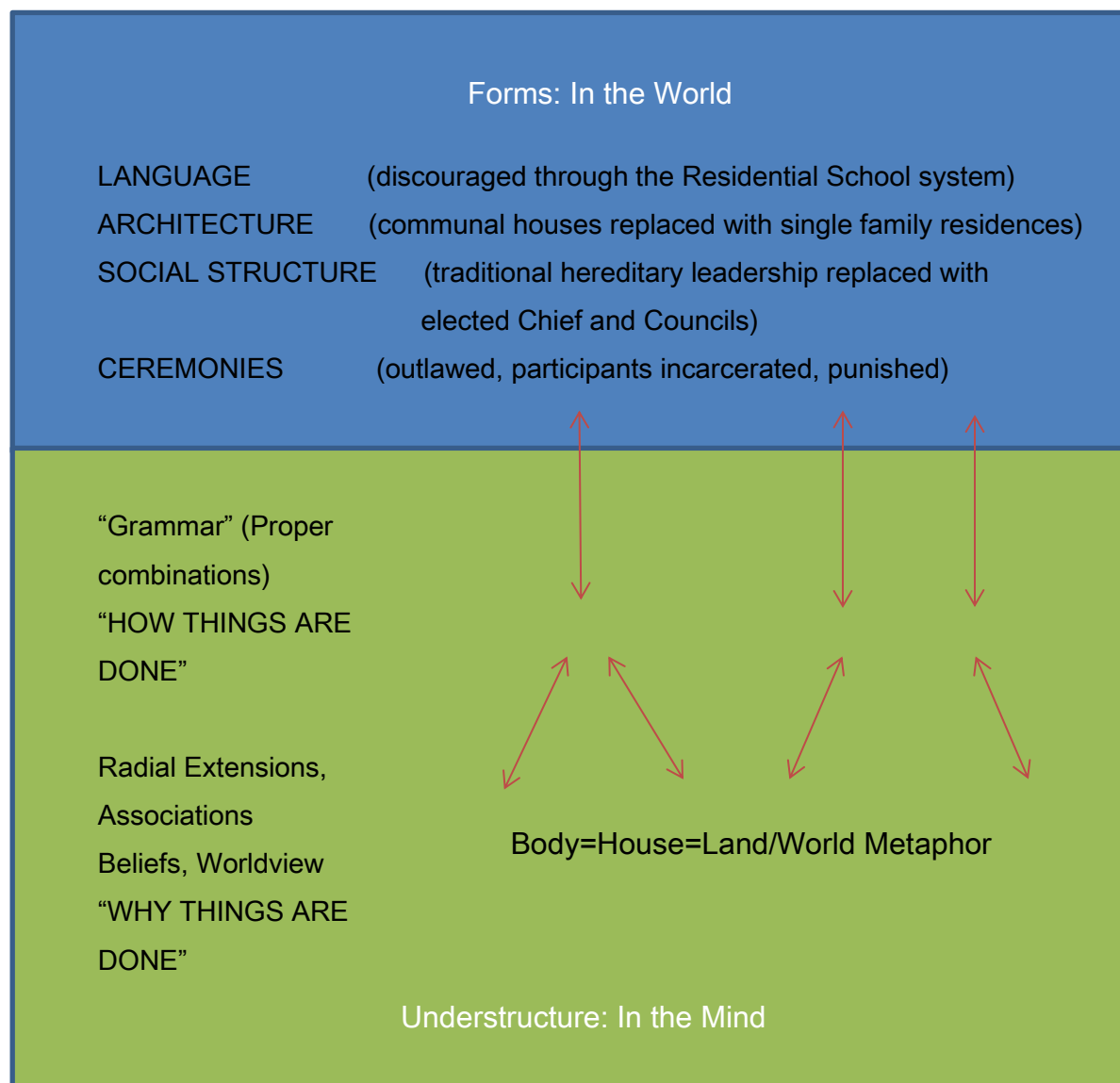
Understructure: In the Mind

Figure 9.3 *Effects on the structure by colonialism*

In Figure 9.3 I have lightened the boldness of the connecting arrows to show that the

connections have become weaker but that they have not disappeared altogether.   The surface

forms of Kwakw_aka_'wakw culture have been appropriated and suppressed by Western

colonialism but the erasure of underlying forms (belief systems) are less easily apprehended.

This thesis has shown that while there are still Kwak'wala language speakers, while there are

still members interested and invested in maintaining traditions and most importantly, where

there are still Kwakw_aka_'wakw living within the traditional landscape of sea, forest and village,

remnants of the traditional ontology are still evident.

9.2 Metaphor of the Kwakw_aka_'wakw "house"

Entering the 21st Century, the traditional Kwakw_aka_'wakw ontology has become weakened but it

hasn't been replaced altogether. I credit this remarkable survival to two factors. First, it is a

testimony to the variety of ways in which a worldview is constructed and reinforced within the

mind and second, it is testimony of the tenaciousness of the Kwakw_aka_'wakw to maintain their

worldview and remain within their territories.   In regards to the first factor, if language and

culture as formal manifestations are mutually supportive then as long as remnants of these

systems remains there is still the ability to relate back to the originating conceptual

understructure. In other words, losing the Kwak'wala language is indeed threatening to a

traditional Kwakwaka'wakw ontology but through the maintenance of alternative forms there still

exists the possibility of maintaining that belief system to some degree. The connection is

definitely weakened but not altogether lost by the replacement of Kwak'wala with English. That

being said I want to still emphasize that losing the language remains a significant threat to

traditional Kwakwaka'wakw worldview. It is as if the Kwakwaka'wakw "house" is held up by a

number of weight bearing posts and with each post that is removed or weakened in its weight

bearing ability, the remaining weight is spread amongst the other standing posts. The

Kwakwaka'wakw "house" is still standing but its structural stability has been weakened.

Eventually if each post is weakened sufficiently it will no longer bear weight and collapse upon

itself.   Using this analogy one can say that the Kwak'wala language is one of the major weight

bearing pillars of the Kwakwaka'wakw house. Figure 9.4 demonstrates this metaphor of the

house.
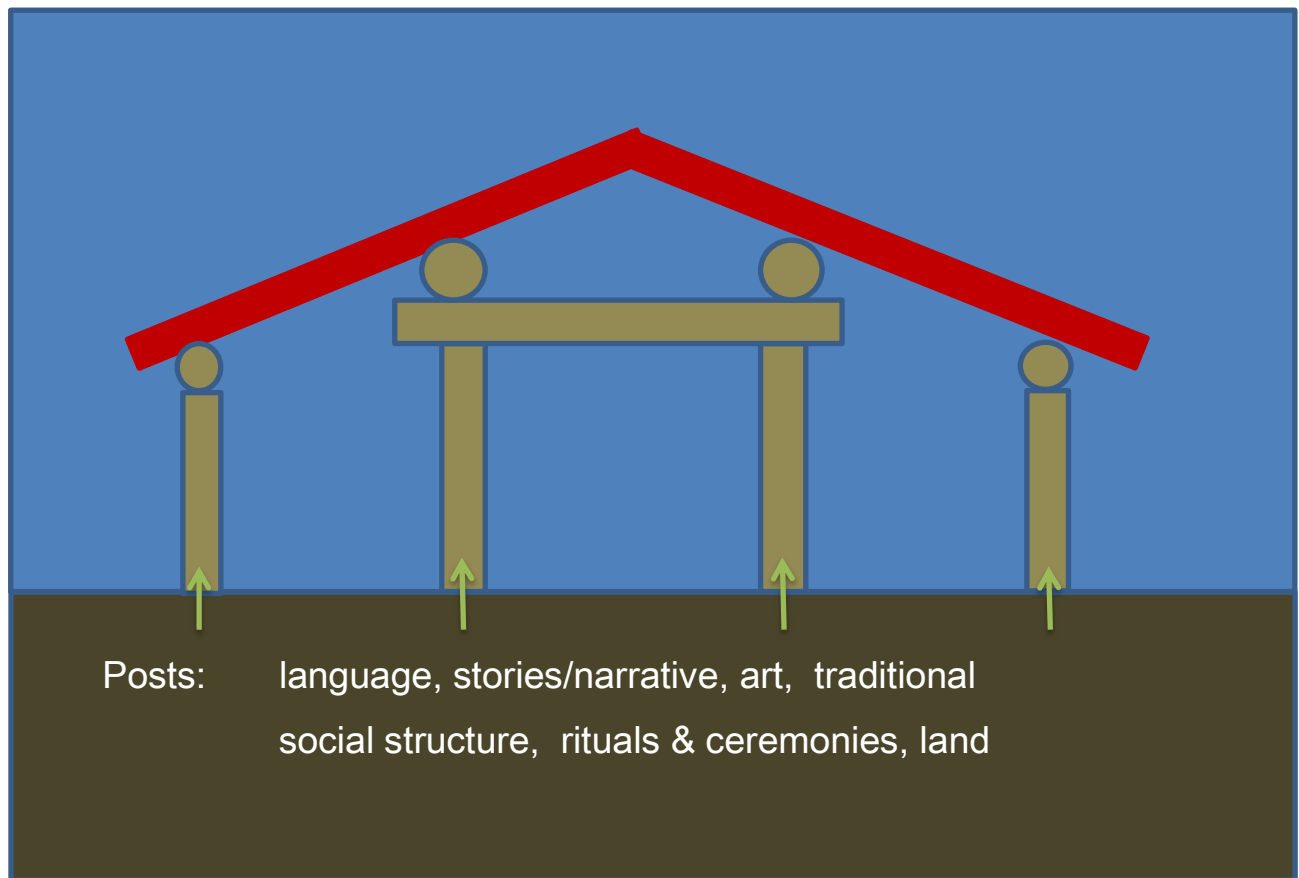
Figure 9.4 *Metaphor of the Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw "house" as a nation*

In order to maintain traditional Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw culture, our contemporary objectives remain in

strengthening each post of the Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw traditional house. This means revitalizing

traditional social structure and governance, rituals, ceremonies and art, knowledge of traditional

narratives and their relationship to our histories, the Kwak'wala language and our traditional

relationship to the land. This revitalization must take place while acknowledging the context of

the radical cultural change of the 20th century.   As Kwakwaka'wakw we must find ways of

adapting and utilizing the introduced modern systems to traditional principles. It is not so much

the technologies of the Western colonial culture which are antithesis to Kwakwaka'wakw ways

of being but the principles and beliefs which guide and apply them.   As examples we can see

how literacy was adopted by the Kwakwaka'wakw into their potlatch system in order to maintain

records in "potlatch ledgers" at a time when much of the traditional means of maintaining oral

histories were breaking down due to population loss and cultural oppression. From a material

standpoint we can see how from the introduction of blankets and buttons emerged a brilliant

new art form that could further express familial and historic relationships through the

development of the *'kangext'ola* "button blanket". If we can firmly ground ourselves within the

traditional principles and beliefs that our ancestors upheld and that is expressed within our

language than we can adapt the institutions of education and social engagement as tools to suit

our understanding of the world.   This is what I have referred to earlier as claiming "agency" and

being active in our engagements rather than passively accepting a status quo which has been

historically imposed upon us.

We have discussed in the previous section how the diversity of ways in which an epistomology

is constructed and manifested has assisted a Kwakwa̲ka'wakw worldview to survive into the 21st

century. The second factor influential in the contemporary survival of the Kwakwa̲ka'wakw

traditional worldview was the tenacity of our ancestors. They fought the potlatch suppression

and found sophisticated ways to get around it (Cole & Chaikin, 1990). They resisted their

children's removal from their homes and placement in the residential school. They also resisted

the removal of their communities from traditional village sites to areas more convenient for the

Indian Agent, or colonial government administration. This is significant, as relocation was being

used as a tactic all over Canada to remove Indigenous peoples from their traditional land base

in order to gain access to resources (Ray, 2010).   As contemporary Kwakwa̲ka'wakw we need

to consider which aspects of our traditions our ancestors felt were most important to hold onto.

Some academic research has posited that it was egotistical grandiosity which fueled the desire

to maintain tradition in the face of opposition (Codere, 1950). While an element of this can be

considered I believe the majority of the impetus to maintain tradition would have come from

social obligation and reciprocity in relationships between both rival *na̲l'nami̓ma* and the

individual family members and their chiefs who made up the *na̲l'nami̓ma*. It was these

relationships that established for the people a sense of belonging and of contributing to a larger

whole that was connected both in time (to ancestors and future descendants) and space (to the

village and to the land).   It was to the basic principle of Body=House=Land/World as

Individual=Community/Village=Land/World that was the impetus for their tenacity, their very

sense of being on the world under a particularly Kwakw<u>aka</u>'wakw understanding as manifest in

the Kwak'wala language. This was the way our old people knew their place in the world, what

was expected of them and the purpose of their life. It is no wonder they held on so hard to their

traditions and under this premise the statement of some of the old people that in being forced to

give up their traditions they would no longer have anything to live for can be understood, not as

a maniacal desire to outdo one another in a game of one-up-manship but in perpetuating a

sense of belonging and of place.

A better understanding of this impetus towards tradition is worth considering.   Modern capitalist

influenced approaches to tradition would have it reduced to exotic spectacles worth paying

money to see or to own, completely divorcing it from its original intent. The magnitude of this

pressure to appropriate tradition into spectacle can be understood in the context of the

Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games where Pacific Coastal First Nations were heavily solicited to

exhibit a viable commercial perspective on their cultures that pointedly avoided the unresolved

issues between First Nations and the Canadian nation state. There is a vast spectrum of

gradation between the objectives of tradition as experienced by our ancestors and the

commercialization of tradition due to modern capitalist objectives for propaganda and profit.

How we as Kwakwaka'wakw manage to find a balance between the two remains one of our

contemporary challenges.

9.3 The Kwakwaka'wakw "house" in the land

As I have attempted to show throughout this thesis, spatial language in Kwak'wala is intimately

connected to a particular landscape. Kwak'wala linguistic forms emerge from the relationships

of land, sea and village and within this context the Body=House=Land/World metaphor makes

sense. Having stated this, it becomes important then for contemporary Kwakwaka'wakw to

maintain their places within their territories and re-occupy traditional sites. This is proposed

against the current movement towards Kwakwaka'wakw urbanization which removes the

Kwakwaka'wakw from physically experiencing their traditional lands. *The metaphoric traditional*

Kwakwaka'wakw "house" is one situated within Kwakwaka'wakw lands. Figure 9.5 shows the

village of Gwa'yi at 'Ukwanalis in Kingcome Inlet. It is one of the last occupied traditional

villages within Kwakwaka'wakw territories. The importance of maintaining these communities

within their traditional locations, within their lands, cannot be understated. This is the

significance of the Kwak'wala formal expression of the spatial relationship between the body

u̓kwine' "body" and the land *aw̱i̓nagwis* "land".

Figure 9.5 *Gwa'yi Village (Kingcome Inlet). Home of the Dzawada̱'enux̱w People.* Photo
courtesy Midori Nicolson

The visual relationship of community within a landscape is made explicit within this aerial photo

of Gwa'yi village "down river place" at 'Ukw̱analis "beach (or place of) body" in Kingcome Inlet

shows the primacy of the landscape as defined by land and water, upriver and downriver (see

Map 13, Boas 1934). It also shows how the individual would be spatially encompassed by the

house, the village and the ultimately, the land.

What does all of this mean to contemporary Kwakwaka'wakw? If we consider the

Kwakwaka'wakw relationship to land under the template of expanding and contracting spheres

of analogous forms; the Body=House=Land/World metaphor as manifest in Kwakwaka'wakw

culture is an empathetic one. The similarity of formal structures is given more prevalence in the

Kwakwaka'wakw mind rendering a conceptualization of objects and the land which emphasizes

equivalence with humanity and similarity.   This is different from modern Western based human-

nature notions which de-emphasize empathy and highlight hierarchy. The Kwakwaka'wakw

conceptual model that emerges is one of expanding spheres on a level playing field while the

Western conceptual model is a hierarchy which places mankind above and nature below. The

investment and engagement of this egalitarian Kwakwaka'wakw conceptual understructure are

manifest in language, ceremonies artworks, storytelling, and actual engagement with the land.

All is animate and granted the equivalent status as mankind, even at times recognizing that it is

humanity that is subject to the land. This empathetic understanding of human/land relationship

facilitates an approach to lands and resources which is mutually nurturing and extended over

time. In particular the Kwakwaka'wakw approach to time is more highly conscious of extensions

into the past and the future. Kwakwaka'wakw social obligation is not to just the current

generation but to both ancestors and descendants. The idea is embodied within the statement

that we have been here since "time immemorial". This statement basically recognizes our

commitment to a particular landscape that we are derived from and are committed to continue to

occupy and nurture. The relationship is symbiotic. We are as much the land as the land is us.

The Kwakwaka'wakw body IS the Kwakwaka'wakw house, which IS the Kwakwaka'wakw lands.

This belief is the very essence of how we have understood ourselves as Kwakwaka'wakw

human beings. As Kwakwaka'wakw people we are bound by this belief system to each other

and to the landscape. In comparison, Western colonial approaches to the land appear

fractured, exploitive and limited. The fundamental conceptual premise of empathy and

reciprocal responsibility between the self (body), society (house) and land (world) is not a belief

system upheld by Western notions of the independent autonomous self which through

capitalism encourages competition over cooperation, individualism over community, and

privatization of lands over communal stewardship (Hall, 2010). Having said all this, the

complexity of the dilemma facing the modern Kwakwaka'wakw is that these beliefs as described

are traditional. They are derived from an ancient way of living and from speaking a language

which enforced this way of living. What happens when the overwhelming forces of colonization

and modern Western capitalism have changed the language and lifestyles of the majority of

Kwakwaka'wakw peoples? Our task becomes the translation of tradition into modern existence.

This is not as difficult as it might initially appear. My suggestion is that as long as we place our

efforts in maintaining the basic principles manifest and expressed by tradition then the surface

forms and technologies of the colonial west can be utilized to meet these ends, reinforcing and

reinventing tradition. This means a shift in focus to the concept of "understructure" and a shift in

consciousness from the importance of "how we do things" which are formal considerations, to

"why we do things" which are conceptual considerations (Figure 9.3).

9.4 Conflicting ideologies: Colonization, capitalism, the house, and the land

The Kwakwaka'wakw do not exist in a static condition of perpetual tradition, despite having a

cultural mandate to attempt this, but have been adapting and adjusting to the massive wave of

change brought on by colonization in the last 200 years. This cannot be ignored. It is the very

reason that the Kwak'wala language has become endangered and cultural practices have

shifted. Negotiating these changes has become the challenge not just to modern

Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw but all of the indigenous peoples around the world.   However, particular to the

Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw and other indigenous coastal nations of British Columbia are the unresolved

and conflicted issues around ownership/stewardship of lands in relationship to the colonial

province of British Columbia and the mostly unsuccessful British Columbia Treaty process

(1992-ongoing). Land ownership/stewardship is the dominant issue that modern

Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw face and the different perspectives on the relationship to land is where the

metaphor of Body=House=Land/World gains in significance. It is into this equation that the

economic system of capitalism which has come with the colonization of British Columbia needs

to be considered.

Capitalism is an economic system based on the premises of private property (individual

ownership of physical phenomena such as lands and resources), commodification (the

assigning of standard values to goods, land and labour) and the establishment of a sovereign

"modern" state which can uphold and enforce these notions (Wallerstein, 1992).   Capitalism

has become the dominant global economic system of the 20th Century. While capitalism, as an

economic system, is not the same thing as colonialism its incentives are bound with those of

imperialism and colonization.

Colonialism in North America emerged from European imperialism and the capitalist based

need of European states to access new forms of both resources and labour. Samir Amin (2006)

states, "colonialism arose out of the economic and social logic of capitalism". Colonization was a

way of gaining access and control over regions and peoples outside of the originating country.

The incentives for initial Western European contact on the British Columbia coast were capitalist

in nature as the Spanish, British, and American traders arrived under the prospect of

discovering and claiming new lands (and hence resources) and continued to return to the coast

upon discovering a lucrative trade in sea otter furs (Gibson. 1992). This introductory enterprise

in a capitalist based relationship with the west based on the over hunting of the sea-otter

brought to the Kwakwaka'wakw and other indigenous peoples of the coast, an initial influx of

material wealth and prestige followed by the decimation of their populations by introduced

disease. As well, the almost complete annihilation of the sea otter disrupted the ecological

balance of the coastal environment. These episodes appeared to go against the concepts of

empathy and balance accorded to traditional conceptual understanding of the relationship of

people to the land. Upon contact, what the Kwakwaka'wakw gained in terms of material wealth,

they paid for in mortality. The trajectory of capitalism would eventually lead to British

colonization and the suppression of Kwakwaka'wakw cultural practices and language for

economic reasons. The traditional social economic system of the potlatch went against the

maximization of labour capital as participants were considered unproductive during the

ceremonial season by the Indian Agents. As well as the giving away, or "potlatching" of goods,

rather than the accumulation of wealth was seen as illogical according to capitalist standards.

Ultimately, the empathetic ideological approach to the landscape successfully practiced for

thousands of years by the Kwakwaka'wakw did not function well with a modern capitalist system

which required the land to be considered as a resource to be exploited for maximum profits.

The emphasis of the Body=House=Land/World perspective lies with notions of collectivity and

joint ownership of lands and resources. The notion of collective stewardship and social

accountability to group identity is anchored in the intermediate metaphor of the "house". The

individual Kwakwaka'wakw "body" is contained within the social and historical "house", which is

contained within the land.   This notion of collective identity does not work well in a modern

Western capitalist economy based on privatization of land and individual ownership.   In a sense

the Western free market capitalist interpretation of the body to both social and geographic

spaces could be considered Body≠House≠Land/World; the antithesis of the traditional

Kwakwaka'wakw approach mapped out in this thesis.

Capitalism, as an economic system, was initially defined as "individualism" or "economic

individualism" (Hessen, 2008). It was called "economic individualism" due to its fundamental

belief in the pursuit of individual self-interest and the individual right to own private property.

Free market capitalism also posits that the role of the state (government) is to protect individual

rights and freedoms in the pursuit of economic profits in order to foster economic growth.

Robbins (2007) explains that *collective ownership* is a barrier to economic growth based on

capital accumulation; the accumulation of wealth based on investment for profits, or "making

money":

> The collective ownership of resources, which supports community solidarity
>
> represents a severe drag on capital accumulation for it inhibits the exchange and
>
> economic development of resources. Value systems that attribute spiritual
>
> significance to objects in nature – animals, trees, plants, mountains, etc. – while
>
> serving important social and ecological functions are barriers to capital accumulation
>
> because they limit the exploitation and destruction of the environment and must be
>
> removed, modified, or ignored for capital accumulation to occur.
>
> (http//:www.faculty.plattsburgh.edu./Richard.robbins/staff/Polanyi.htm)

In order to maximize market potential, limits on resource exploitation must be removed as well as social obligations which might limit this exploitation. In Figure 9.6 I have interpreted this as the capitalist hierarchy of the individual (Body) over society (House) and nature (Land/World). Connected to the notion of the individual is the concept of privatization which is realized in the relationship to land as "private property".   Under the premise of "private ownership" individuals own land and are able to exploit land based resources with minimal regulation from social accountability. In this way one can theorize that under capitalism it is necessary that the needs and desires of the individual "Body/Self" be prioritized over the social obligation and restraint represented by the House/Community (Body≠ House).

BODY (Individual Self)

↓

HOUSE (Society, Community) (Labour)

↓

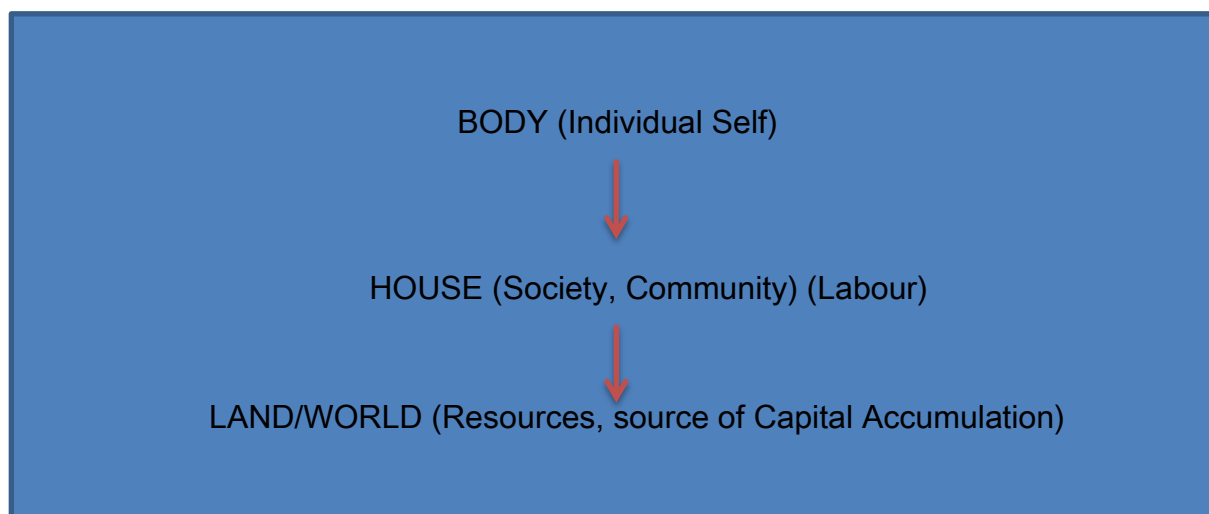LAND/WORLD (Resources, source of Capital Accumulation)

Figure 9.6 *Capitalist hierarchy of the individual over society and nature*

The hierarchical relationship of mankind over nature as an aspect of capitalism is also reflected in general Western beliefs systems. This belief was presented by Boas (1911) as being linked to racist notions of colonial white superiority over localized Indigenous populations. He made the following introductory statement in his book "The Mind of Primitive Man" in order to discredit it throughout the text.

Proud of his wonderful achievements, civilized man looks down upon the humbler members of mankind. He has conquered the forces of nature and compelled them to serve him. He has transformed inhospitable forests into fertile fields. The mountain fastnesses [security or refuge[92]] are yielding their treasures to his demands. The fierce animals which are obstructing his progress are being exterminated, while others which are useful to him are made to increase a thousand fold. The waves of the ocean carry him from land to land, and towering mountain-ranges set him no bounds. His genius has moulded inert matter into powerful machines which await a touch of his hand to serve his manifold demand. With pity he looks down upon those members of the human race who have not

---

[92] Definition provided by author, not in original text.

succeeded in subduing nature; who labour to eke a meagre existence out of the

products of the wilderness; who hear with trembling the roar of the wild animals,

and see the products of their toils destroyed by them; who remain restricted by

oceans, rivers or mountains…What wonder if civilized man considers himself a

being of higher order as compared to primitive man, if he claims that the white race

represents a type higher than all the others! (pp.1-2)

Notions of communal ownership and social accountability are paramount to maintaining a

Kwakw̲ak̲a'wakw traditional worldview.   These are ways of being, or beliefs which are manifest

in the world and conceptually reinforced through the Body=House=Land/World metaphor and

the Kwak'wala language.   The Kwakw̲ak̲a'wakw belief system Body=House=Land/World as a

way of being in the world is under duress due to Western colonial and capitalist expansion.

To the Western mind the Kwakw̲ak̲a'wakw cultural animation of all things may come across as

irrational, fanciful, superstitious, and the product of a primitive mind. To the Kwakw̲ak̲a'wakw

the cultural manifestation of the Body=House=Land/World metaphor formally expressed in the

Kwak'wala language makes perfect sense in maintaining a closely connected network of human

to nature relationships that nurtured our existence for thousands of years with little sacrifice on

the part of the land. In the last two hundred years we have experienced both the demise of the

Kwak'wala language that conceptually reinforced this empathetic conceptualization as well as

the demise of the land itself as Western concepts of hierarchy and exploitation have taken over,

creating clear-cut forests, poisoned rivers, diseased oceans and ultimately global warming. This

brings me back to one of the early questions posed by this thesis. If we lose the Kwak'wala

language how does it affect us as Kwakwaka'wakw? The answer is complex and as stated

earlier, involves primarily our relationship to each other and to the land. An extension of this

question asks; what is the cost to modern society in general if we lose the concepts embedded

in indigenous languages like Kwak'wala?

9.5 Survival of the Kwak'wala language and the Kwakwaka'wakw Peoples

Replacing Kwak'wala with English shifts our relationship to our past, our histories, our lands and

to each other as Kwakwaka'wakw people. A complete disassociation however, is not

completely valid while the landscape which gave birth to the language forms still remains

occupied. In other words, as long as the Kwakwaka'wakw continue to inhabit their ancestral

lands a tenuous connection is still viable. Certain symbolisms rendered through bodily

experience in a specific landscape will still render conceptual associations, which while suffering

from the lack of cognitive reinforcement through language, can still exist. These associations

are like well-travelled paths. The less the path is followed the less defined it becomes. In many

ways, the minds of modern Kwakwaka'wakw are criss-crossed by conceptual paths that were

worn smooth by our ancestors but for us have become overgrown and hard to follow. The

premise is that these paths would become more clear and easier to travel upon through the

reinforcement of Kwak'wala usage.

The other issue at hand which tends to obscure this world-view, way of thinking or metaphorical

"path/road" is that our relationship to our territories is changing. Many of our people through

circumstance have chosen to live in urban cities where the relationship of land and sea,

upriver/downriver, night and day, winter and summer, the sacred and the ordinary are no longer

relevant to modern life. In these new contexts we are more likely to consider roads and cars,

jobs and wages, housing, heat and electricity, work and entertainment to be more relevant to

our internal concepts of navigating the world. In this context, the symbolism, analogies and

metaphors of the Kwak'wala language seem less relevant to a contemporary urban lifestyle.

Given this observation one would think traditional Kwakw<u>aka</u>'wakw ways of thinking beyond

salvage and yet there remains this pervasive, stubborn way of being in the world and on the

land which still has a heartbeat. Within many Kwakw<u>aka</u>'wakw young people there still remains

something of the way our old people thought of things. Perhaps it is that we still occupy our

territories to some degree, that we still travel the waters and that some Kwakw<u>aka</u>'wakw still live

by the sides of rivers and the ocean. It could be that even though translated for our benefit into

English some of our stories that tell us who we are and where we come from still make it into

our consciousness. It is also possible that many of the Kwakw<u>aka</u>'wakw, still retain a memory

trace of the language spoken by our parents and grandparents and the affection they expressed

for family relationship and a sense of community and of place. It could be that we still practice a

broken and severely disrupted version of our traditional ceremonies and it could be that we are

at least considering what it might mean to return to our traditional ways of governance. But it is

all very tenuous and the stakes are high. The pressing influence of Western society is all

around us and the mediation of our ways of thinking through modern media pervasive. Over

and over it is reinforced upon us, a globally promoted generic way of life which would have us

separated from our lands, our histories and our traditional way of being in the world. To relate

to and understand our culture through exterior Western frameworks is to accept our culture as

merely a past-time, a recreational act, or entertainment; a surface cover, an outfit to wear on

special occasions.   To our old people from one hundred years ago this perspective is

completely foreign and yet in the words of Gloria Cranmer-Webster (1991), great-granddaughter

of George Hunt;

> If my ancestors from two hundred years ago were able to be with us today, I often
>
> wonder what they would think of a contemporary potlatch. Would they be able to
>
> recognize what we do as being related to what they did? Would they pity us for
>
> having lost so much, or be proud that we are still here? I think that after recovering
>
> from the shock of seeing so many changes, not only in the potlatch but in all aspects
>
> of our lives, they would tell us that under the circumstances, we are not doing too
>
> badly. They would also urge us to keep on strengthening what we have, if we are to
>
> survive and continue having our good times (p. 248).

The issues are complex and there are no black and white answers for how to proceed. There

are however some guideposts to help us navigate the difficult road we are faced with.   The

Kwak'wala language embodies the traditional Kwakwaka'wakw way of being in the world and

the fact that young people still have the desire to learn it is hopeful. This interest in the

maintenance of Kwakwaka'wakw culture and the Kwak'wala language is the reason why this

thesis exists. The analysis presented in this dissertation seeks to explain why it is so vitally

important, beyond a romanticised reinvestment in Aboriginal identity, to keep this language

alive.   The visual component to this thesis sought to present these ideas in a public space as a

complement to the written component. Both written presentation in an academic setting and

visual presentation in gallery and museum contexts are used by the author/artist as

contemporary strategies for maintaining traditional concepts.   I cannot vouch for how

successful this strategy will ultimately be but it serves as a testimonial to the ways in which the

Kwakwaka'wakw have creatively found ways to perpetuate their ontology despite attempts to

eradicate it.   My artwork and this thesis are my own attempts to perpetuate the traditions that

were taught to me by prior generations. It seemed important to enter the public realm outside of

the Kwakwaka'wakw community and attempt to create dialogue and understanding between

ourselves and the people we now share this land/space with. It is ultimately a negotiation of

space both physical and conceptual.   In considering the wider sphere of global relations and

how the concepts within this thesis relate I am attempting to broaden the interpretation of the

house as village or community to the modern concept of Canadian nationhood. Not all readers

of this thesis or viewers of artwork are Kwakw_a_ka'wakw , and yet I felt that there was relevance

in the analysis for non-Kwakw_a_ka'wakw under this broader application now that we are required

to in a modern sense "share the same house".

9.6 The value of maintaining traditional Kwakw_a_ka'wakw conceptual understructure / worldview on a global stage

The overt colonization of the Kwakw_a_ka'wakw people, our bodies, our society, our culture and

our territories, has gone underground due to international pressure, and is no longer considered

acceptable. What we are fighting is the ongoing, less obvious colonization of our minds. My

presentation of the relationship of "form" and "meaning" throughout this thesis has shown that

while the surface forms of our culture have been appropriated and oppressed the underlying

conceptual understructure of that system still maintains a level of integrity. It is at this level that

we can still "think" like our Kwakw_a_ka'wakw ancestors. Full assimilation will only occur once we

completely accept the conceptual frameworks and ways of thinking of Western colonization and

its compatriot capitalism as the only way of approaching our relationship to each other and to

our territories. For example, if we begin to think of the land as a resource to be exploited for our

immediate economic benefit as individuals, in doing so, we discard our accountability to

community, our ancestors and our descendants. By accepting capitalist individualism as a

viable worldview we sever the connection between the BODY, the HOUSE, and the LAND.

Holding onto our language as indigenous people is the most direct access we have to our

traditional conceptual frameworks and ways of thinking. Maintaining the Kwak'wala language

as a living language strengthens the BODY=HOUSE=LAND/WORLD connection that maintains

we are all equals in the experience of our existence in the world and that we are obligated to

practice both empathy and accountability to our communities and to the lands and territories we

occupy.   It is unfortunate that this perspective of indigenous empathy with the land has been

dismissed as a cliché at times. Rather than attempt to build a thesis off of a perceived cliché or

attempt to avoid it, the findings of the thesis itself re-assert the connection between the

Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw, their communities and the land through an analysis of linguistic forms in

Kwak'wala.

The consciousness of conceptual frameworks is not an easy process to comprehend. It first

takes open-mindedness to understand that there are more ways of thinking about phenomena

than just one.   When we are mono-lingual we take for granted that certain conceptual

frameworks are in fact conceptual; that they are mapped out in the mind just as much as in the

world. Concepts are ephemeral, interpretive and hard to pin down but the understanding that

we perceive just as much with our minds as we do with our physical senses is a valuable one.

Drawing an analogy between biology and intellect is helpful.   Biology requires diversity in order

to thrive, as do 'ways of thinking'. In facing greater and greater global challenges the world

needs intellectual and cultural diversity to help solve its problems.   The world needs indigenous

perspectives as it faces global deterioration in the face of industrialization and mass resource

extraction and land exploitation. The ontology of Body=House=Land/World worked for the

Kwakwaka'wakw for thousands of years. In the two hundred years since contact the Pacific

Northwest coast has suffered serious environmental damage evident in disappearing salmon

stocks and the loss of old growth forests. In Gwa'yi (Kingcome Inlet), the valley has been

completely logged out over the last 100 years and traditional fishing has been seriously

impacted, particularly the annual eulachon run from which the traditional staple *ˋƚliʼna* "grease[93]"

is derived. In 2010 Gwa'yi Village experienced the worst flooding in its recorded history and the

village was evacuated by helicopter and rebuilt. The extreme nature of this flood was due to a

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[93] ˋƚliʼna "grease" is an oil derived from a small fish called dzaxwan "eulachon". The eulachon run up river systems along the B.C. coast in the spring. Amongst the Kwakwaka'wakw the major river systems for eulachon runs are based in Knights and Kingcome Inlet. The annual rendering of the ˋƚliʼna by communities an activity of major cultural significance.

combination of unusually high rainfall, and changes in the river system due to accelerated

glacial run off due to global warming.

While it is obvious that the health of the land has been impacted, so has the health of the

Kwakwa̱ka'wakw peoples, which has become ravaged by startling rates of diabetes brought on

by an imposed change of diet from traditional staples derived from the local environment to

imported cheap foods high in sugar and salt and low on nutritional value. While the

Kwakwa̱ka'wakw lands suffer from ill health and mortality of species so too, does the

Kwakwa̱ka'wakw human body.   These are serious issues requiring solutions and redress that

are affecting, not just the Kwakwa̱ka'wakw, but the globe.   It is not just the Kwakwa̱ka'wakw

who are suffering from the effects of capitalist inspired colonization of their lands and bodies but

considerable global populations (society/house) as well as geographies (lands) as well are

reeling from the effects of exploitation. We see the results of this environmentally in global

warming, diseased oceans, and species in decline.   Human health is experiencing an alarming

rise in global obesity rates in developing countries (Kim & Popkin, 2005) while simultaneously

experiencing an increase in climate related diseases such as malaria in underdeveloped

countries (Patz, Gibbs, Foley, Rogers, & Smith, 2007).   An additional threat to human health

and habitation exists through climate change influenced environmental distruptions such as

hurricanes and massive flooding The effect of climate change (land/world well-being) on human

health (body well-being) was addressed succinctly by Dr. Margaret Chan, Director-General of

the World Health Organization (WHO) in the following remark made at the United Nations

General Assembly on Oct 24, 2008:

> We are meeting at a time of crisis. We face a fuel crisis, a food crisis, a severe
>
> financial crisis, and a climate that has begun to change in ominous ways. All of
>
> these crisis have global causes and global consequences. All have profound and
>
> profoundly unfair, consequences for health. (Chan, World Health Organization
>
> [WHO], 2008)

The health of human populations is intimately tied into the health of the planet. Socially,

as human industry induced stresses continue to deteriorate oceanic health, freshwater

sources and arable land affecting agricultural productivity, competition over food and

water sources may erupt in human conflicts and hinder the ability of governments to

maintain order and authority (Fidler, 2009). This brings into question the health of "the

house" as a social order. In this thesis we have considered the "house" to be the family,

community and village. In a broader interpretation we can call the "house" society.

The Kwakw<u>aka</u>'wakw conceptual metaphor of Body=House=Land/World asks us to consider an

alternative foundation for how to be in the world.   Some aspects of it are of socialist orientation.

Within an increasingly capitalist extreme, this metaphor asks us to reconsider the balance

between the needs of society and those of individuals at a time when socialism has been vilified

by capitalist enterprises and the failures of 20th century communism.   In requiring a people to

consider society and the land on par with the independent human being it at the very least

provides an alternative to a global epidemic which has swept aside the concerns of socialism

and environmentalism under the terms of capitalist expansion. The importance of maintaining

alternative systems cannot be understated. The existence of alternatives helps to ensure that a

single monolithic system does not rise up to dominate global relationships. In addressing the

legacy of Benjamin Whorf and linguistic relativism, Lakoff (1987) addresses the consciousness

of alternative conceptual systems in the following way:

Like Whorf, I believe that differences in conceptual systems affect behavior in a

significant way. It is vitally important to understand just how our behavior is

dependant on how we think. In areas like human relationships, where failure rates

tend to be higher than we would like them to be, an understanding of differences in

conceptual systems, and how behavior depends on them, might well be helpful…

…Conceptual relativism of the sort that appears to exist does not rule out universal

ethical standards of some sort – at least as far as I can determine. Nor does it seem

to tell us very much about what such standards should be. However, a *refusal* to

recognize conceptual relativism where it exists does have ethical consequences. It

leads directly to conceptual elitism and imperialism – to the assumption that our

behavior is rational and that of other people is not, and to attempt to impose our way

of thinking on others. Whorf's ethical legacy was to make us aware of this (p. 337).

Acknowledging that there are equally valid cross-cultural differences in conceptualizing our

relationships in numerous spheres of thought is valuable. Perhaps, this was the root of Franz

Boas' final thoughts on culture difference. Despite that the majority of his academic colleagues

dismissed his copious collecting and publishing of Kwakwaka'wakw texts, he felt that under

their own conditions these thoughts, reflections and observations were valuable both to the

people who expressed them and in and of themselves, and perhaps, just maybe they could

prove to be valuable within Western academic and societal frameworks if those frameworks

could possibly be reconfigured to consider the notion that indigenous voices actually have

something to contribute besides the decorative, quaint or romantic.

Ultimately, as my research suggests the Kwak'wala language anchors us to the land and to

each other as Kwakwaka'wakw people, it reinforces connections in both time and in space.

The Kwak'wala language manifests and reinforces an epistemology appropriate to the lands the

Kwakwaka'wakw nations inhabit. When the language is removed there are still non-linguistic

structures in place to maintain this epistomology to some degree but it becomes severely

weakened. We may hold onto the surface signifiers of our culture but fail to grasp the

underlying concepts from which those forms arose. In a worst case scenario we will no longer

live on our lands, nor speak our language but fight each other over possible monetary profits to

be made from their exploitation from our offices in the city. When it comes time to sign

documents with Canadian federal and/or British Columbia provincial representatives we will pull

out our regalia, dress up and play the part while forgetting all our ancestors believed in; our

symbols, our bodies and our minds completely assimilated.   Or alternatively, it is possible we

will hold onto our principles and values as expressed to us through our traditional culture and

language and uphold a bastion of society where social obligation and environmental

stewardship are prioritized over profits. Perhaps other nations will take notice and from our

example be influenced to consider realignment of their own priorities. Perhaps then, as

indigenous ideas are incorporated into national political policies we will then be embraced as

partners in nation building rather than a marginalized, social problem left over from the failed

colonial policies of eradication and assimilation.

We, the Kwakwaka'wakw live in a tenuous state but not a hopeless one. If we can bring a

consciousness to these issues then we can acknowledge that in order to survive as

Kwakwaka'wakw people we need to retain both our language and our lands. We need to return

to our understanding of our relationship to one another as families and *'naṁima*, we need to

reconnect our cultural ceremonies with the social political structure it used to represent and find

strength in unification and reciprocal obligation rather than individualization. It might also

benefit Western society, to consider our traditional approach to the land in empathetic ways

since their current approach threatens to send us all into deprivation. I would like to quote

Lakoff & Johnson (1999) here in a statement that seems to reflect the same philosophy of

traditional Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw. They arrive at their opinion after questioning the history of Western

intellectual thought and helping to give birth to cognitive linguistics. The Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw

arrived at the same conclusion after successfully living in our lands for thousands of years.

>The environment is not an "other" to us. It is not a collection of things that we
>
>encounter. Rather, it is part of our being. It is the locus of our existence and
>
>identity. We cannot and do not exist apart from it. It is through empathetic
>
>projection that we come to know our environment, understand how we are a part of
>
>it and how it is part of us. This is the bodily mechanism by which we can participate
>
>in nature, not just as hikers or climbers, or swimmers, but as part of nature itself,
>
>part of a larger, all encompassing whole. A mindful embodied spirituality is thus an
>
>ecological spirituality.
>
> An embodied spirituality requires an aesthetic attitude to the world that is central to
>
>self-nurturance, to the nurturance of others, and to the nurturance of the world itself.
>
>Embodied spirituality requires an understanding that nature is not inanimate and
>
>less than human, but animated and more than human. It requires pleasure, joy in

the bodily connection with earth and air, sea and sky, plants and animals – and the

recognition that they are all more than human, more than any human beings could

ever achieve. Embodied spirituality is more than spiritual *experience*. It is an ethical

relationship to the physical world (p. 566).

While the encroachment of the western European culture brought with it to the indigenous

peoples of Canada inconceivable wealth in the form of new materials and technologies, it also

brought disease, population decline, cultural oppression and appropriation. Innovation,

imagination, and perseverance have enabled indigenous peoples to successfully maintain on

some level old traditions in new ways through incorporation.   This thesis has attempted to

incorporate a distinctly Kwakwaka'wakw voice through the Kwak'wala language into a dialogue

within academic and artistic public spaces. I cannot vouch for how successful this strategy will

ultimately be but it serves as a testimonial to the ways in which the Kwakwaka'wakw have

creatively found ways to perpetuate their epistomology despite attempts to eradicate it. The

impetus is that by speaking out perhaps the traditional thoughts and philosophies of the

Kwakwaka'wakw and other indigenous nations have a chance to still influence the trajectory of

Western thought and hence political action. We as Kwakwaka'wakw are not alone in the issues

we face in regards to our relationship to society and land. Canada, as a relatively newly formed

nation also faces decisions on how it will continue to fabricate its social relationships within the

defined geographic region of what is now called upper North America. Is it still possible to have

an effect on how these relationships are mapped? Is it remotely possible that Kwakwaka'wakw

concepts and the concepts of other indigenous nations that now are now contained within the

modern nation state of Canada can influence the principles and hence practices of our

environmental policies?   The technologies of the "West" are brilliant achievements but they are

directed in their application by the principles and beliefs of those who have the power to define

their focus and activity. So far, the Canadian state has not allowed a place at the table for the

voices of indigenous peoples but has continued to deny indigenous agency and abilities while

pursuing less overt policies that are basically assimilationist.   This is only a detriment to the

Canadian state. By considering the incorporation of indigenous concepts, such as the

Kwakwaka'wakw upheld of social and land based obligation the modern state of Canada might

have a better shot at resolving the dilemmas of human health and environmental degradation

which currently are only increasing.   This failure of the state to truly listen to indigenous voices

may become a tragedy for all Canadians.

Throughout this dissertation we have seen how the relationship between the Kwakwaka'wakw

individual, the community and the land is an empathetic one. We occupy our individual body

but it is a body composed of extended relationships to our family, community and our

environment in space, and our histories in time. The traditional Kwakwaka'wakw way of being in

the world is a valuable one with much to offer us as human beings. It is worth our while to

continue to strive to keep this way of life alive but in order to succeed at this we will need to

work hard to keep our language alive, continue to live within our lands, and hope for meaningful

dialogue with other nations in terms of how we negotiate our shared future.   With optimism, the

last word I will leave to one of our ancestors, recorded by George Hunt, many years ago:

Prayer of a Sick man and his Relatives to the Sun

Waga' wax dukwalał gaxan, gigame', umpdzi kas waxa'os damodalaxganu'xw

t'sit'saxḱulam dł'gwan wawaxtusak, kas waxa a'ix'idamas gaxanu'xw, tatusalagilidzi,

yutłaxs axi'lala'akusaxwa 'nalagilayakus latusala gilidzi, ump.

Ha, nanax'ma'ya Tłisala

" Please, look upon me Chief, Great Father, and have mercy and protect us against

our sickness (me) and my relatives, and pray make us well, Great-Walking-All-Over-

the-World, for you are making in every way this world that you made. Great-

Walking-to-and-fro-all-over-the-World, Father."

"Ha," answers the Sun.

(Boas 1930, p. 182)

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Appendix A: Orthographic Conversion

Boas	Grubb	U'mista
a , ā	a	a
ᴇ, ă, î, ŭ	e	a̲
ä, ê	eh	e
i, ī, e, ē, ë	i	i
â, ô	o	o
u, ū, o, ō	u	u

Boas	Grubb	U'mista
b	b	b
d	d	d
Ḷ	dl	dł
dz	dz	dz
g˙	g	g
gw, gᵘ	gw	gw
g.	g̲	g̲
gw	g̲w	g̲w
h	h	h
k˙	k	k
kw, kᵘ	kw	kw
k!	k'	ḱ
k!w, k!ᵘ	kw'	ḱw
q	k̲	k̲
qw, qᵘ	k̲w	k̲w
q!	k̲'	ḱ̲
q!w, q!ᵘ	k̲w	ḱ̲w
l	l	l
ᵉl	'l	'l
ł	lh	ł
m	m	m

ᵋm	ḿ	ʻm
u	n	n
ᵋn	ń	ʼn
p	p	p
p!	p'	ṕ
s	s	s
t	t	t
t!	t'	t'
L	tl	tɬ
L!	tl'	t'ɬ
ts	ts	ts
ts!	ts'	t's
w	w	w
ᵋw	ẃ	ʻw
x·	x	x
x̣w , x̣ᵘ	xw	xw
x	x̲	x̲
xw, xᵘ	x̲w	x̲w
y	y	y
ᵋy	ỳ	ʻy
ᵋ	7	ʻ