The antiquity of the Northwest Coast Indian pole is the subject of a great deal of controversy. A few viewpoints referring to that topic are given. The symbolic value of the Kwakiutl totem pole is examined with respect to art, style and culture; more generally "primitive" art is considered as being completely integrated with the major aspects of human existence. Theories concerning totemism are described here and totemism among the Kwakiutl is examined with respect to the social structure, mythology, the poles, and their inter-relationships.
The Kwakiutl Totem Pole and Its Symbolic Value

by

Marie-France Mauze

A THESIS submitted to Oregon State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies

Completed August 18, 1975 Commencement June 1976
APPROVED:

Redacted for Privacy
Associate Professor of Anthropology

Redacted for Privacy
Chairman and Professor History

Redacted for Privacy
Professor of Education

Redacted for Privacy
Dean of College of Liberal Arts

Redacted for Privacy
Chairman of Interdisciplinary Studies

Redacted for Privacy
Dean of Graduate School

Date thesis is presented August 18, 1975

Typed by Secretarial Services for Marie Mauze
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction ................................................. 1

I. Northwest Coast Pole Antiquity ......................... 5

II. Iconography .............................................. 11
    Social Analysis ........................................ 11
    Art and Material Symbolism ......................... 13
    Toward a Definition ................................ 15
    Technique ............................................ 17
    Organization of Spaces and Forms .................. 19
    Material Symbolism ................................ 22

III. The Unconscious and Cultural Symbolism ............... 31
    Typology ........................................... 31
    Concept of the Unconscious in Human Reality ...... 34
    Function and Meaning of the Totem Pole .......... 35

IV. Totemism .................................................. 43

Conclusion .................................................. 58
Bibliography ................................................. 60
Footnotes .................................................... 63
Appendix ..................................................... 64
"L'univers, la nature, l'homme... au long de milliers, de milliards d'années n'auront, somme toute, rien fait d'autre qu'à la façon d'un vaste système mythologique déployer les ressources de leur combinatoire avant de s'involuter et de s'anéantir dans l'évidence de leur caducité."

Levi-Strauss, L'HOMME NU. Finale
THE KWAKIUTL TOTEM POLE AND ITS SYMBOLIC VALUE

INTRODUCTION

This paper provides a definition of the symbolic value of the Kwakiutl totem pole. I became interested in this topic through my studies at the University of Poitiers' classes which dealt with American Indian culture. The main reason for coming to the Pacific Northwest was to pursue my interest in this area and specifically to study the Kwakiutl.

To become acquainted with the art of the Kwakiutl I visited the Rasmussen Collection at the Portland Art Museum (Oregon), the Burke State Museum in Seattle (Univ. of Washington). I also visited Chief Lelooska in Areal, Washington. Lelooska is preserving the Indian (Kwakiutl) culture by means of theatrical performances involving masks and dances. He also maintains an Indian museum. In addition, I had the opportunity to interview Bill Holm, Curator of the Burke Museum, an authority in the field of North Pacific Coast art, an artist in his own right, and the owner of a Kwakiutl Chief's name. I travelled in British Columbia, specifically Vancouver and Victoria, where I was able to take photographs of totem poles.

In the first chapter I will discuss the antiquity of the Kwakiutl totem pole and of N.W. Coast totem poles in general. Different points of view will be examined. The second chapter will be devoted to the iconography of the Kwakiutl totem pole. One part will deal with the carver and his social environment, the second part will give a definition of style, examine the technique of Indian carvers, discuss the main stylistic characteristics and the material symbolism of the poles.
in terms of colors and the organization of space and form. The last two chapters will deal with cultural symbolism and totemism. The analytical method will be inspired by Levi-Strauss' structuralism. This is not to say that this paper will meet the requirements of a structural analysis; a more exhaustive treatment on the subject of the two last chapters is indicated. I intend in the future to attempt a more complete analysis.

The Indians of the Northwest Coast inhabited the long and narrow strip of shoreline that extends from the Alaska Panhandle to Puget Sound. This area is more than a thousand miles long. The mainland is indented by fiords, inlets, bays, sounds and is dotted with islands covered with deep forests. Wood constituted the major material for the development of their art. This land, abundant in food resources, was occupied by groups who differed among themselves, but at the same time, shared a number of fundamental cultural patterns. The culture of these different groups constitute what ethnologists call the Northwest Coast Civilization.

The northernmost Indians were the TLINGIT who occupied the coastal region from Yakutat Bay to Cape Fox. The Haida occupied mainly the Queen Charlotte Islands off the British Columbia mainland. Across from the Haida, between the Nass and Skeena rivers, lived the TSIMSHIAN. South of the Tsimshian were the KWAKIUTL who inhabited the northeastern part of Vancouver Island and the mainland opposite it. The BELLA COOLA were mainly located in the lowest part of the Bella Coola River valley. The NOOTKA lived on the southwest coast of Vancouver
Island (Drucker 1955: 11-16). The area occupied by these six groups is called the Totempolar Region.
Northwest Coast Indian Tribes
CHAPTER I
NORTHWEST COAST POLE ANTIQUITY

There is a great deal of controversy as to when totem poles appeared and as to their exact origin. The following questions have been asked repeatedly and answered in numerous ways. Is the totem pole art a genuine art specific to the Pacific Northwest Coast or is it a product of acculturative influences? What is the contribution of iron tools?

Marius Barbeau and Philip Drucker have conflicting viewpoints as to when and how the totem pole came into being.

It is difficult to substantiate totem pole antiquity on archaeological records because of their relatively rapid deterioration by the weather. According to E. Keithan in *Monuments of Cedar*, it is almost impossible to rely on Indians' testimony because they were, "generally reluctant to discuss tribal matters with outsiders" (Keithan: 1945:35). Apparently the only reliable sources for establishing the age of totem poles rests in the accounts of the first circumnavigators sailing along the Pacific Northwest shores. Neither Chirikof nor Bering mentioned the presence of poles in their reports in the 1740's. Cook, who visited the West Coast at Vancouver in 1778, testified to the use of iron and very briefly mentioned carvings in the description of a Nootka house. "The intermediate beam is supported by some thick, cylindrical columns of the same pine, on which are sculptured human faces deformed by the size and the grotesqueness of their features" (Cook, 1784: II, 317). 1
In the same report, Cook gave two different reasons for the presence of iron among the Nootka. On one hand, he asserted that he saw "some metallic veins (running) through these mountains ... (they) are veins of copper, iron, lead and perhaps some silver" (Mozino, 1970: 4-5); on the other hand, when talking about tools, Mozino stated from Cook's reports: "when Cook saw the Nootkans for the first time, he found that they already had a knowledge of iron, and it appears indisputable that they acquired these metals by trading on the continent with other nations which came to make exchanges..." (Mozino, 1970: 65).

Presumably a great deal of exchange occurred between the Bering Strait Eskimo who had iron from the Punuk Period, and the Pacific Northwest Indians. John Meares visited there and confirmed the presence of totem poles in his Voyages to the Northwest Coast of America, published in 1790. He wrote that "enormous trees, rudely carved and painted, formed the rafters which were supported at the ends and in the middle by gigantic images, carved out of huge blocks of timber" (Meares, 1790, quoted from Barbeau, 1948, vol. 2, p. 803). In Voyage Round the World, published in 1792, Etienne Marchand gave the first good description of an Haida heraldic pole (Keithan, 1945: 45). Captain George Vancouver, who visited the Northwest Coast in 1793-94, described various mortuary posts in the reports he left (Keithan, 1945: 41).

Barbeau based his evaluation of the antiquity of totem poles on accounts left by circumnavigators and concluded that the totem pole was a product of acculturative influences and consequently only recently
developed. Barbeau's views are summarized in this passage quoted from Drucker in the Antiquity of the Northwest Coast Totem Pole:

"The art of carving poles is not really as ancient as is generally believed. Its growth to its present proportion is largely confined to the nineteenth century, that is after the traders had introduced European tools, the steel axe, the adze, and the curved knife, in large numbers among the natives. The lack of suitable tools, wealth and leisure in earlier times precluded the existence of elaborate structures. The benefit that accrued from the fur trade, besides, stimulated ambitions and rivalries between the leading families. Their only desire was to outdo the others in wealth and the display of prestige. The totem pole became, after 1830 the fashionable way of showing one's power and crest, while commemorating the dead or decorating the houses" (1948: 389).

Barbeau felt that the recent development of poles was due to the breakdown of social patterns resulting from the decimation of population, and the increase of wealth brought by European trade. He also pointed out that aboriginal tools were not appropriate for the massive carvings such as those of totem poles, and thus needed the introduction of iron and steel tools.

Because of the lack of sufficient evidence, Barbeau was inclined to think that the art was derivative rather than aboriginal. He noticed the similarities between the Northwest poles and those in countries such as Japan, Korea, and New Zealand. He also made reference to the Kanakas (Hawaiian shipcrewmen) brought over to British Columbia by the earliest navigators. According to him, the insertion of abalone shells as elements of decoration was typical of a south sea technique (1950: 832).

Drucker strongly rejected Barbeau's hypothesis since "the Hawaiian
as far as we know did not such elaborate monumental carving" (1948: 395). However, he did not deny the similarity of New Zealand totem poles to those found on the Northwest Coast. He also believed that the lack of evidence in accounts by early navigators was due to the fact that few dared venture into the winter villages where poles stood, for fear of attack. However, in the 1790's when traders visited the Indian villages they acknowledged the existence of mortuary and memorial poles among the Haida and the Tlingit. One of the other points of contention between the two authors was that of the introduction of European metal tools as having any bearing on carving the poles.

Drucker wrote that "it seems evident, in short, that the source of Northwest Coast iron tools cannot be attributed either to Russian or to Hudson Bay Company sources but must have lain in some earlier iron using contact" (1948: 396).

That is to say, at the beginning of the Siberian Iron Age more than a thousand years ago.

In conclusion, Drucker states: "1) Totem poles were seen by the first Europeans who ventured into the Indian villages; 2) the poles set up next to graves in their memorial function constitute a part of the whole burial complex which extended from the Northwest Coast into Northeastern Asia; 3) The tribes most likely obtained their iron from some Asiatic source long before the white contact."

Keithan also questioned whether totem poles could have existed prior to the introduction of iron bladed tools, because soft wood like
red cedar could not be worked with blunt blades. He did recognize that very few heraldic columns had been erected but great quantities of steel brought by Europeans facilitated wood working. Moreover the combination of iron tools such as the adze and the development of the fur trade gave birth to the "Golden Age" of the totem pole which extended from 1830-1880 (1945: 32).

If we accurately read the earliest reports, we notice the existence of large figure carvings, house posts and memorial poles. According to Viola Garfield, "House pillars and short memorial posts antedated the tall, free-standing columns decorated with four or more large figures, generally called totem poles" (1951b: 67).

This leads to the assumption that totem pole art was advanced by the period of European contact. This art's greatest sophistication and elaboration was undoubtably a direct result of massive supplies of tools and at the same time, of a better command of woodworking technology.

In describing the tools the Indians used, Garfield says, "Native tools were used for carving and finishing of the poles...these tools are modern adaptations of the ancient adzes, knives, chisels...adze blades were fashioned to conform to the sizes and shapes of older stone blades" (1948: 10). In this statement, we noticed the underlying hypothesis that the natives did use stone tools to carve figures and poles and might have improved their technique by utilizing iron tools which were mere replicas of the more ancient ones.

We have enough proof to reject Barbeau's theory. Moreover, the
representative art of the Northwest Coast was integrated with mythology and kinship structure; it was the product of a long cultural process which could not have occurred in a few decades or generations.
CHAPTER II
ICONOGRAPHY

Social Analysis

A man seldom, if ever, carved his own totem poles. Instead, he hired a proficient carver, although everybody was to a certain extent an artist. However, not everyone was recognized as a good carver. A carver was not only a skillful man, he "was trained from youth by an uncle or an unrelated man of repute; a talented novice was steeped in the tradition of his clan and tribe" (Wherry, 1964: 110). He first served as an apprentice with an experienced man before he could hope to design and supervise the making of a pole. He also had to familiarize himself with the traditions and crests of the families living in his community so that he could design poles without infringing upon the rights of others (Garfield, 1951: 16). He had to learn all about spirits, medicine songs and dances. He usually knew the most inner secrets of his family. According to Wherry, "Not only was a carver deeply spiritual in the usual sense, but he was supposed to be personally the protege of one or more guardian spirits" (1964: 110). Thus, his role was to perpetuate his own community culture, but at the same time, he was a man of prestige and held in high esteem since wealth provided him with an honorable status. Sometimes he would become as wealthy and famous as many chiefs.

In primitive societies, the artist was usually a professional who worked on commission; thus he was not completely free from restraints in his creation. His work had to meet certain requirements. Since he
was "trained to follow the ideals of representation and expression com-
mon to his village or tribe...the proportions and shapes within the de-
sign...were taught by his patron as 'right', that is, traditionally
correct" (Wingert, 1962: 16).

"It is certain that the primitive artist was so com-
pletely restricted by the traditionalism of his training
that he was a mere copyist and could, because of his soc-
ial restraints, be nothing more" (Wingert, 1962: 16).

However, the Kwakiutl and others in different cultures claimed
that they "dreamed" the sculpture they carved and thus were full cre-
ators. The artist had to solve a dichotomous situation, i.e. tradition/
creation in order to be as creative as possible. Because of this dicho-
tomy, Wingert believes that "the artist could modify his interpretations
of the traditional forms by emphasizing or minimizing those parts to
give a work added force or meaning and to achieve more powerful
aesthetic expression" (1962: 18).

An artist was hired because of his great ability to create, that
it, his success in fusing tradition with creation and thus, innovation.
When a wealthy man wished to have a totem pole carved, he would go out-
side his household and commission an artist. The negotiations might
last weeks or months before a decision could be made. Wherry related
that "the meetings were somewhat analogous to modern conferences be-
tween an author and a publisher." A spokesman was often sent to the
artist to agree on the price. Among the Kwakiutl, the transaction was
publicly carried out. The announcement was made at a large gathering
and a "down payment" was made to the artist. He would then, with his
family and artisans, move into the house of the patron where the work
was being done. Once the pole was erected, and the potlatch or feast was held, the artist would be given the remainder of his fee (Gunther, 1966: 13). "One reason for public transaction is that the audience because witnesses to the agreement but their presence at both occasions, and in a preliterate culture, this served as a form of contract" Gunther, 1966: 13). Keithan states that the Haida paid for the carving according to sections and a different carver could be hired for each section. For each of these divisions, the equivalent of about 50 dollars was paid in blankets² (1945: 108).

The artist had the right to ask as much money as he wanted. One can hypothesize that the better known he was, the more money he demanded. This also increased the prestige of a commissioning chief because it showed that he was wealthy.

The carver worked in great secrecy, perhaps to increase the interest of the public when the pole was inaugurated. He was told exactly what to carve and a "committee of inspectors representing the chief for whom the work was being done had to approve each suggested pattern before the figure was roughed out" (Keithan, 1945: 108). The public was familiar with the art form used in the local community but did not always know the meaning of an object. The chief, his family, and of course, the carver knew fully what was carved into the pole.

**Art and Material Symbolism**

Before getting to the core of the matter, we should define what we mean by style, and also define the two aspects of an art object:
1) "The objective or morphological, consisting of shapes, lines, surfaces, and colors in their particular relationships". This will constitute this part of the chapter termed, art and material symbolism.

2) "The subjective or cultural, containing the answers to such questions as why it was made (ie., the motivations) and how it was used (ie., the function) (Wingert, 1962:75). This part will be discussed under the title, the unconscious and cultural symbolism.

In the broadest sense of the word, style is the sum total of these morphological, or objective features. Style is the result of the relationship existing between shapes, textures and colors. In primitive art we take into account the meaning of an object which is, as we already have indicated, cultural. The art object is also related to a geographical area. Some of the art characteristics are even regional, or they can vary from one village to another. To complete the definition of style, we might take into account the artist's innovation and sensitivity; although he was allowed little creativity, the final product must be a unique creation.

The Kwakiutl totem pole art contains the major characteristics of the "Northwest Coast" art. It is also characterized by specific features which will be contrasted with those of the northern groups. The determination of tribal styles depends upon the recognition of differences which are the consequences of an emphasis or lack of emphasis of certain shared elements. They constitute unique features.
Toward a Definition

The totem art is an example of three-dimensional art as opposed to two-dimensional art. They two types of art are given different names by specialists. It is interesting to explore this wide range of terminology.

According to A. Hawthorne, two approaches were taken in the "Northwest Coast art: this three-dimensional carving eg. house poles, masks, rattles, headgear, is realistic or naturalistic, whereas, the two-dimensional carving and painting -- canoes, paddles, storage boxes, hats, is highly stylized and has symbolic representation" (1967:13).

Covarrubias wrote in The Eagle, the Jaguar and the Serpent, that the Northwest Coast art combines two tendencies which he qualified esoteric and naturalistic symbolism (1954: 93).

Drucker characterized the two major stylistic divisions as "applied design and formalization of representation while the other was more fully sculptural and three-dimensional, combining realism with an impressionistic suppression of non-essential detail" (1955: 177).

Boas distinguished the two styles with regard to sex: he labeled man's style expressed in the art of wood carving and painting, symbolic and woman's style expressed in weaving, basketry and embroidery, formal. He wrote, "The symbolic art has a certain degree of realism and is full of meaning. The formal art has, at most, pattern names and no especially marked significance" (1966: 308; 1951: 183). Boas seem to discriminate between man's and woman's art and attributes little significance to the latter. However, blankets and hats were worn
during certain ceremonies and were impregnated with religious meaning. Yet, in the literature concerning that matter, it is pointed out that the patterns were drawn by men. Women had only to reproduce the designs in the weaving and embroidery.

As for Wingert, he simply qualifies totem pole art as being representative, because the carved forms are easily recognizable, although extraneous details are added to create the total significance of the form.

Bill Holm uses the label "configurative design", a term that he originally used for two-dimensional art. He defines three categories--configurative, expansive, and distributive--according to their degree of realism and their conventional form:

"When the animal to be presented is shown with an essentially animal like silhouette, perhaps occupying a great part of the decorated field, but not distorted so as to fill it entirely, and still exhibits the characteristics of the art style; it can be considered an example of configurative design (1965: 11-12)."

This definition specifically characterizes the Kwakiutl totem pole art, whereas, according to Holm, the typical Haida pole was an expansive design. Although the silhouette was kept, parts of the animal body -- limbs--were rearranged to fill the space (Personal communication, 1975, Seattle)

To conclude, in this paper, three dimensional art will be labeled symbolic realism because of the resemblance of carved figures to the visual form of the creature in nature; symbolic 1) because design elements or "symbols" ie. joints, eyes, ears are delineated by broad lines; 2) because the various carvings testify a cultural meaning.
The association of carved figures with house construction and burial customs has already been established, but because of a lack of efficient tools and maybe of wealth, only a few of the chiefs could afford carved columns. After white contact, the natives bartered furs for steel tools and, as a result could carve and raise more numerous and elaborate totem poles. Before 1890, the Kwakiutl poles were not always fully carved. Single figures were represented either on the top or at the bottom of the column, or both. Later they became more elaborate. Tall and sophisticated poles were erected until 1935 (Keithan, 1945: 56). When Keithan wrote in 1945, poles had not been erected for a decade, but the practice has since been revived.

**Technique**

Totem poles were invariably carved from logs of red cedar. The tree was felled and trimmed by means of chopping adzes or hammers and chisels; then towed to the village where it was carved with adzes and knives. A log that was to be carved was cut the desired length and the bark removed. Sometimes the whole log was used but most of the carving was done on the front half. However, in contrast to the Northern group, the Kwakiutl were not limited by the cylindrical form. Both the front and the back were often carved. Sculptors attached parts like legs or fins (Holm, personal communication, June, 1975).

A string was stretched down the center from top to bottom. The log was divided into sections. Each section corresponded to a figure. "As many as six figures may be carved on very tall poles. Four large ones are usual on totem poles and there may be several small ones in
addition" (Garfield, 1951: 16). (See also picture #2). The carver first roughed out the head, trunk, legs of the figure and then finished them by adding details. Details were done with knives and chisels, and before they got a large number of metal tools, Kwakiutl carvers worked with shells and beaver teeth (Garfield, 1948: 2). The paint was then applied; one color after another until the pole was considered to be finished. Northwest Coast Indians made durable colors before the Europeans came. These colors were mat and limited in number. Painting was usually considered as an adjunct to carving and was used to emphasize forms. Red was obtained from the earth ochre; white from burnt clam shells; blue from copper oxide or blue clay; black from mud or charcoal ground up in mortars and mixed with salmon eggs to provide an oily base (Hawthorn, 1967: 12). Paint was applied with a brush made of porcupine quills tied on a stick.

The traditional Kwakiutl choices were red, black, white, sometimes yellow instead of white, blue and green. The Bella Coola mainly used pale blue, white, red, and black, whereas the Northern groups only added decorative touches of red and black.

Even after the opening of trade with Europeans, artists kept painting with the same colors; "The conventions of the art were so strong, or the Indian artists were so conservative, that the introduction of paints did not materially affect the selection and use of color" (Holm, 1965: 26). While the commercial paints have replaced the formerly mat native colors, the resulting effect is often rather gaudy.
Organization of Spaces and Forms

Totem pole art is one of the most widely known and typical art forms in the history of the Pacific Northwest. The poles were carved from logs of various sizes and kinds. Their main characteristics, from the viewpoint of space and form composition, are summarized.

Usually the carved forms are adapted to the surface and the cylindrical shape of the log is retained. Wingert (1962), Boas (1951), and Haeberlin (1918) defended the following hypothesis in their writings. Haeberlin wrote:

"The most striking demonstration of the aesthetic sense of the Northwest artist lies in the adaptation of his subject matter to a given surface...the given surface is the primary condition of composition and its utilization as an aesthetic factor presents to the artist ever new problems" (1918: 261).

This is with few exceptions one of the characteristics of the Northern style as opposed to the Southern style. Indeed, among the Kwakiutl, artists had little regard for the cylindrical form. They were not limited by it. The front and the back of the pole were carved. They added parts like fins, legs, wings. They freely modified it, such as flattening it, or shaping it into another form (Holm, personal communication, June, 1975).

Verticality and height were always emphasized. The subject matter was presented by superimposing a number of figures (generally no more than six) or shapes. Sometimes a smaller figure was integrated into a bigger one. Generally, the size of the head was stressed as against that of the body and the limbs (Boas, 1966: 319). "An exaggeration in
the rendering of heads, whether human, animal or composite is fundamental to pole design" (Wingert, 1951: 83). Both the vertical arrangement and the expansive form of the design provided a dramatic and rhythmic expression to the pole which progressively developed its meaning. Animals are represented by means of sections in round carvings. Since the symbols which make them recognizable would most of the time be carved in the rear of the pole, the artist tends to "split the animal along the rear of the totem pole and extends this cut in such a way that the animal is spread along the curved front of the pole" (Boas, 1951: 231). This is one of the major characteristics of three-dimensional art which makes it sometimes more abstract; this is very rarely encountered among the Kwakiutl totem pole art, because it is very naturalistic. The superimposing of figures is more or less the superimposing of various masks. Another striking Kwakiutl feature is the clear cut horizontal separation of two figures, whereas Tsimshian carvers seldom separate them. The naturalistic expression is emphasized by the appearance of a neck which distinctly separates the head from the body (Holm, personal communication, June, 1975). This last feature is also common among the Tlingit. (See Garfield, 1951b: 67).

Generally, eyes, eyebrows, mouths, noses, beaks and legs are given a great prominence. They are carved in high relief on the surface and thus break the monotony of the design. The extensive use of planes creates the illusion of depth. "It is also a device to adapt the flat linear design to fit a partially three-dimensional surface" (Wingert, 1951: 82).
Lines, or as Holm would call them, formlines, are of extreme importance in this art. They can be very delicate or very heavy.

"Formlines swell and diminish, rarely retaining the same width for any distance. Generally, they swell in the center of a given design unit and diminish at the ends. The widths of a formline changes with the major change of direction" (Holm, 1965: 37).

As the term indicates, formlines stress forms and details and give movement, rhythm and dynamism to the carving. They delineate details such as eyebrows, nostrils and teeth. Colors are used within the line delineations to represent or reveal further shapes and details.

The organization of space is characterized by what Wingert calls "over-all design". Each tribe of the Pacific Northwest Coast has its own regional space organization; the Kwakiutl pole combines two characteristics which make it unique:

1) "The superposition of figures arranged in clearly marked off horizontal zones which follow the curvature of the surface; 2) the superposition of separate horizontal shapes which are developed from all sides within the mass of the pole, the original surface counting for little in the final appearance" (Wingert, 1951: 83).

Wingert's characterization of the Kwakiutl over-all design seems convincing, because it exactly defines its features.

Stylistic characteristics are also to be found in the rendering of surfaces. A textural quality is usually given to the surface. Adzing is used as a surfacing technique and has a decorative function. Either a smooth or a coarse surface treatment results from controlled use of the adze. Unorganized geometrical adze cut patterns are noted (See picture #3). Painting is complementary to carving and is used to emphasize details and/or forms. Colors add variety to surface
In his analysis of Kwakiutl totem pole art, Wingert concluded:

"The Kwakiutl totem poles are largely eclectic in style...bird and animal forms, or the bodies of human features, have, in many cases, the strongly sculpted simplified naturalism that distinguishes carvings in the round" (1951: 91).

Another characteristic of the Kwakiutl style is to carve figures as though they were masks, and give them the dramatic expression of those masks.

Wingert uses an art history terminology to characterize the different styles of the Northwest Coast. "Tsimshian culture can be considered 'classical'... Tlinglit largely 'Rococo', Kwakiutl, vigorous 'eclectism'" (1951: 93), because of the various features in its style -- a combination of realistic and symbolic forms --.

**Material Symbolism**

Material symbolism will be examined in terms of the use of colors, organization of space and characterization of forms.

Among the Northwest Coast Indians, colors were used according to conventions. Each color had a determined function with regard to space. The most elaborate theory about this use is to be found in Holm's *Northwest Coast Indian Art*. The major colors used by the Kwakiutl were black, white, yellow, red, green and blue. The three standard colors were black, red, blue or green or blue-green. Three classes of design elements correspond to the use of these three standard colors. Black is termed a primary color, and the elements painted in black are called primary elements. Red is called a secondary color.
and blue/green is called a tertiary color (Holm, 1965: 28).

Black, the primary color is used for the main formlines of the design. "These formlines merge and divide to make a continuous flowing grid over the whole decorated area, establishing the principal forms of the design" (Holm, 1965: 29). "Red, the secondary color may be used in formlines, but is mostly used for details and accents. It is usually the color for cheeks, protruding tongues; legs, feet and hands are red in about half of the examples in which they occur" (Holm, 1965: 30). We mostly find red on convex surfaces or high relief surfaces.

Blue, green, or blue/green are not always used. It can be applied as a ground or as a tertiary element for the outer ovoids of eye or joint design. It is also used between primary and secondary designs in ears, feathers, and fins.

Among the Kwakiutl, white was used as a ground color, especially since the last decade of the 19th century. Yellow was used mainly for eye sockets. Limbs were sometimes painted in brown.

Two patterns frequently occur in the art of paint application. These are hatching, either simple or cross-hatching and dashing. Hatching is used as a ground color in carving. In painting it is used on certain secondary and tertiary forms especially eye sockets. Dashing consists of "parallel lines usually broken at intervals to form groups of aligned parallel dashes in series" (Holm, 1965: 65). They are usually black or red.

At the end of the 18th century, as we have already said, Kwakiutl
poles became more elaborate and decorated. At that time, two main
trends are to be found among the Kwakiutl artists. One trend was repre-
sented by those who were not concerned by design, but who were only
interested in naturalistic carvings, where painting and sculpture were
representational. The other trend included artists who were influenced
by Northern painting. They were aware of negative spaces and used them
carefully (Holm, personal communication, June, 1975). The Northwest
Coast Indian art is characterized by an even balance of weight and move-
ment, and thus space-filling is considered as an important element.

"Essential body parts could be elaborated and empty areas filled with
units that elsewhere in the design had specific and entirely different
symbolism" (Holm, 1965: 91).

This technique is called by Hawthorn "punning" or "kenning" (1967:
12). It consists of a natural space in the carving or painting used
for the introduction of a new form with an independent meaning. Some
authorities on Pacific Northwest Coast art have proposed a more or less
psychological theory to explain this filling of spaces, stating that
Indians could not tolerate empty spaces, but along with Holm we conclude
that it was used for purely decorative purposes and represented a sig-
nificant principle in their art. It is likely to hypothesize that this
technique was first experienced by Northern groups because they mastered
it with a great deal of skillfulness; this technique later spread among
the Southern groups. Holm's following statement sheds light on this
hypothesis: "Among the Haida, legs were as decorative as they were
legs; among the Kwakiutl they are decorated legs" (Holm, personal
communication, June, 1975).
These designs were not only used decoratively; some motifs drawn on a special area may have a symbolic meaning. Thus, an oval design for an eye or a joint may symbolize power. Painted wing motifs symbolize the power of flight; motifs in the ear, the faculty of hearing or comprehension; designs in the eye, the vital force or life principle. (Garfield, 1961: 3). It is interesting to speculate upon whether or not these symbols have a particular significance or a mythological connotation. One may assume that the carver was the only person who could really provide a definitive answer to this problem. The carver was required to meet artistic requirements and had to express as much of the subject as possible.

Another typical aspect of the Northwest Coast art is the symbolism of forms, i.e. what are the characteristics in a design which could be used to identify a given creature? What makes a design represent an eagle? Life forms always served as subject matter in the art of this area. Human, animal, fish, or bird forms appeared simply or in various combinations. Their meaning was variable but was always related to mythology. The forms had various connotations within the different tribes. Certain symbols were used by almost all carvers and could be easily recognized. Claws, wings and beaks of a conventionalized form identify birds; fins and tails identify fish or sea mammals; land animals could be recognized by snout, paws, teeth.

The following are the dominant crest figures among the Kwakiutl:

**Birds**

1) Raven - May be carved with folded wings at its sides or flying;
the beak is straight; usually the eye of the raven is white in the center.

2) Eagle - Has a large curved beak, the point of which is turned downward; its eyes have a white crescent behind the eyeball.

3) Thunderbird - Carved with a very large curved beak; also long and spiral ears (see picture #2).

4) Hawk - Has a large curved beak the point of which is turned backward so that it touches the chin.

**Sea mammals and fish**

1) Sea lion - Has a round nose, large teeth; the eye is near the nose and the ear is small.

2) Sea monster - Has a bear's head, bear's paws with attached slippers; gills, dorsal fins and body of the killer whale.

3) Whale - Has rounded eyes and nose over pointed teeth.

4) Killer whale - Has a large and long head; elongated large nostrils, round eyes and a large mouth with many teeth. It has a blowhole and a dorsal fin.

5) Grizzly bear of the sea - Has a large eye, a very large round nostril, large teeth, and a large ear.

6) Shark or dogfish - Has an oval head. It also has a slender body narrowing into a small tail; a mouth with depressed corners; a series of curved lines representing gills. It has round eyes and numerous sharp teeth.

**Land animals**

1) Beaver - Has large incisors, large and round nose, a very small
ear; a scaled tail is the salient feature of the beaver carvings (see picture #2). Frequently the beaver is represented holding a stick in its forepaws.

2) Bear - Can be recognized by large paws; large mouth filled with teeth and a protruding tongue; a large and round nose, with an abrupt turn from snout to forehead; usually there are carved upright paws (see picture #5)

3) Wolf - Has a slanting long eye; the ear is streamlined close to the neck and points backward; the wolf has many teeth and a long tail

4) Frog - Easily recognizeable because of its wide and toothless mouth, full nose, no tail; a fat little body placed in a diving position

**Mythical Creatures**

1) Double-headed serpent or Sisiutl - has a small eye like that of the wolf, a spiral nose and a spiral plume (Boas, 1951: 202-204; Garfield, 1951: 23-44)

2) Dsonoqua - Has curved and well defined eyebrows; large and round protruding mouth and a crooked nose. She is sometimes represented holding her son (see picture #2)

**Other Figures**

1) People - Usually not carved on totem poles; however, the Kwakiutl are an exception to the rule. People are represented with very realistic features, although sometimes distorted. The eyes, eyebrows, mouth and nose are given prominence.
Among the Kwakiutl, the humanoid face carvings can be characterized as follows: the principle form is a half-cylinder; the forehead is round, the brow is curved and sometimes heavy; the eye socket is sharply defined as well as the forecheek. The lips are drawn back into the cheeks; the chin is projected forward. (Holm, personal communication, June, 1975).

Some of these carvings are very realistic and convey feelings like death, agony, shyness, disease. The challenge or ridicule pole, the aim of which was to put down enemies or debtors, provides real psychological impact.

2) Copper - is also to be found on poles; it is usually carved in a T shape.

Case History - A

The Kwakiutl heraldic pole (photograph #2) was carved by Mungo Martin in 1852 to represent all of the Kwakiutl tribes. It shows crests of four tribes: the Awaitlala, Nakoaktok, and Nimpkish as well as the Kwakiutl proper. The top figure is Tsoona, the thunderbird, a crest of the Tsoo'tsuna clan of the Awaitlala tribe of Knight Inlet. The original ancestor of this clan was the thunderbird who became a man. Later his son returned to the sky to control thunder and lightning. Next is Wa'likin, the Grizzly Bear ancestor of the Wa'walibui clan of the Kwakiutl, then a man representing the bear after he became a human. Next is the Beaver, Tsa'wa, an ancestor of the Nakoaktok tribe, Blunden Harbor. One clan of the Nimpkish has the mythical giantess Dsonoqua (Dzo'no'wa) as its crest. According to the clan tradition,
one of two brothers once pursued the creature, who had been stealing
drying fish. He eventually married her and their son Tsee'lthwalakami,
half man, half Dsonoqua became the founder of the Clan. The bottom
figure shows Dsonoqua holding her son.

Case History - B

Newette totem pole (Barbeau, 1950: II, 696). The crests carved on
this pole belong to a subdivision of the clan Gigilquam. The members of
this group had dishes depicting Dsonoqua, a man split in half, another
man, wolf, beaver, and the sea monster, Tseqic. A man, Qoayalelas,
of this clan was told to unite the dishes and to carve a totem pole.
The story may also explain the fact that all the figures are separated
on this column, although in most other totem poles they overlap.

Case History - C

Raven of the Sea (Barbeau, 1950: II, 682), (qwawis) of the
Kwawrhilanukumi, belonged to John Drable of Alert Bay. It was purchased
for the University of British Columbia from his old wife Lalahlwldzemkae,
Rachel Drable. Mungo Martin, who carved it around 1922-1925, was paid
350 dollars for it. The figures are from the top, Raven or Crow of
the Sea (Qwawis), Sea Lion (Liken), Grizzly Bear (Gyila), You-speak-
through (Yeqandaq), a man.

Case History - D

The Thunderbird of Wawkyas (Barbeau, 1950: II, 673, 674). The
figures on the pole from bottom to top are: Raven (Kwaw'wuil), with
long bill which serves as a door entrance into the communal house; Raven, Heikuk, a mythical bird, wise-one (Ninwakawe) a mythical man, Wolf (Alunem), Killer-whale (Marhenurh), thunder-maker (kwunkwane-kulegyi). All these crests belonged to the Awikyenorh tribe, because Wawkyas the owner, was from there on his father's side. His mother was Ninkish from Alert Bay. This pole was erected about 1899. It was worth 350 blankets which was a large price for those days; the 1899 value of a pair of blankets being 3 dollars.
CHAPTER III

THE UNCONSCIOUS AND CULTURAL SYMBOLISM

This chapter deals with a typology of the various poles erected among the Northwest Coast Indians and specifically among the Kwakiutl. For the natives, these poles were erected under specific circumstances and fulfilled specific functions. However, we should take into account the notion of the unconscious dimension of cultural reality, a topic which has been extensively developed by the French structuralist, Levi-Strauss. The last part of this chapter describes the inherent capability of art to reflect human and cultural patterns.

Typology

Among the Kwakiutl and the other groups of the Pacific Northwest Coast, different kinds of poles are found. Each of them fulfilled a specific function. From an historical viewpoint, house pillars, mortuary poles and memorial poles existed before white contact and were an integral part of their culture. Viola Garfield believed that the heraldic pole and ridicule pole, developed in the early 1900's, were the result of the fur trade and of a new form of wealth. These various poles are commonly labeled "totem poles". According to Wingert, the term itself "is a misnomer for the forms do not present totems" (1962: 352). At this point we will leave this issue open because it will be discussed later.

The great variety of totem poles can be classified into types
according to their purposes: "House posts" were carved poles which supported the main beams of the massive community houses. Their carvings usually illustrated stories from their mythology and since they did not include more than one or two carvings, sometimes the narrated story was continued from pole to pole. "Mortuary poles" were constructed to hold the remains of the dead, and stood in front of the houses or in special areas at the end of the village, usually it was a plain pole, sometimes painted. At the top of the pole was a box containing the ashes of the dead. "Memorial poles" had a variety of functions. They were "erected much in the manner of tomb stones although generally at a distance from the grave" (Keithan, 1945: 55). They were not raised for the dead alone, but for the living as well. "Heraldic poles" or "family poles" were placed at the center facade of the house and a hole near its base served as the doorway to the house. "It was originally short and broad but as years went on and rivalries increased, it evolved into a tall, stately monument beautifully carved and painted." (Keithan, 1945: 55). It displayed crests of the owner or his predecessor. This type of pole was designed to advertise and exalt the lineage of those who lived within. "Potlatch poles" were erected to increase the prestige of a family group. They were raised during potlatches to validate and proclaim the status of the chief. Apparently this kind of pole appeared in the 1850's, first among the Haida, and spread to the Tlinglit, Tsimshian and Kwakiutl (Keithan, 1945: 55). They were elaborately carved and painted. Chiefs sought to out-do one another in erecting these monuments. Initially they were the exclusive
emblem of the nobility but soon also were raised by the newly rich; they were not developed among the Kwakiutl before 1890. Another type of pole is the "ridicule pole" or "shame pole" or "challenge pole". It was usually carved for the purpose of forcing some person of high standing to meet or recognize an obligation; or carved when the chief's rival was unable to meet his potlatch challenge (Keithan, 1945: 51-57). This type of pole can be seen at the Burke Museum in Seattle. It represents Tsowoqua, a Kwakiutl mythological figure. This pole was raised in a village on Vancouver Island, facing toward one end of the village, to advertize the fact that a certain amount of money had not been paid for a marriage debt. Once the money was delivered, the sculpture was turned to face the sea and coppers were added in each hand and on top of the head. The Kwakiutl carved many life-sized human figures, some to represent slaves owned by the family; others, as "lookouts" on the roof to watch for the arrival of potlatch guests; still others were carved in attitudes of shame or defeat, to ridicule rival chiefs. The differences among these diverse poles lay in their use and the reason for which they were erected. These monuments had one thing in common - viz., they could not be erected without a potlatch, a feast or a ceremony. Their raising validated the claims to the crests shown upon them. Covarrubias sees an evolution in the totem pole's function. He stated that:

"It could be inferred that the totem pole concept evolved from its funerary function to a purely heraldic one during the 19th century, when the culture of the Northwest Coast flourished" (1954: 181).
Concept of the Unconscious in Human Reality

Levi-Strauss' concept of the unconscious in human reality has been influenced by other scholars, among them Boas, Freud, Mauss, Troubetzkoy, Jacobson, Marx, Durkheim (Rossi, 1973: 20-23; 1974: 78). What would seem at first an heterogenous accumulation of concepts, constitutes, in fact, a consistent method of analysis. According to Rossi, Freud and Marx are the two masters who convinced Levi-Strauss of the fundamental importance of the unconscious. The French structuralist is more interested in the value of the collective unconscious rather than in the individual unconscious. Through his major works entitled "Mythologiques", including The Cooked and the Raw, From Honey to Ashes, Origins of Table Manners, and the Naked Man, he has striven toward the discovery of logical categories of the unconscious of the human mind. These categories which are determinant social phenomena (language, beliefs, customs, techniques) have this in common, that their elaboration in the mind is at the level of unconscious thought" (1969: 108).

The term "unconscious" does not mean unresponsiveness or unawareness but this notion is a product of Levi-Strauss' borrowed from structural linguistics, Freud and Kant. In contrast to Freud, Levi Strauss' interpretation of the unconscious is not loaded with emotional content but refers to "a form (or aggregate of forms) empty of any content. Its function is to impose structural laws upon psychic content, which by itself is inarticulate and originates elsewhere" (Rossi, 1973: 29).

Having accepted the significance of the unconscious in culture, we will try to define the unconscious need and motivations in art which
lead to the creation of a symbolic artifact. According to Manuel,

"A symbolic artifact is at the same time an autobiographical product of a society and a shape of time through which the society continues to live on. The artifact is a frozen expression of the state of the accumulated knowledge, values, and experiences of man that give definition and location to a given time-space" (1974: 39).

Function and Meaning of the Totem Pole

In this last part of Chapter III we will explore the Kwakiutl totem pole's artistic, literary, philosophic, religious, social, economic, and political dimensions. No where in the world do any peoples spend all their time only in the acquisition of food and shelter building. All peoples experience aesthetic pleasure and emotions, either viewing works of art or creating them. In other words, aesthetic pleasure is shared by all members of mankind. Moreover, in contrast to the animal, man has the inherent capability of creation which makes him an innovator, an inventor, a tool maker. But at the same time, he also has respect for traditions. The combination of the two provides a balance which can be considered as the clue for the standard in the development of beauty or aesthetic value's concept. Thus, cutting, carving, weaving, singing and dancing are appreciated from the point of view of beauty, i.e. perfection, which is a subjective criterion but also a cultural concept. Most of the time within the community, a masterpiece has to meet certain aesthetic requirements and then becomes a standard work in its form.

Art played a great role in the lives of preliterate people because it was closely associated in many respects with the most vital
experiences of their lives. As Wingert suggests,

"Perhaps the most important single feature of primitive art is its complete integration with all the major aspects of existence, Religious, social, economic, political, and judicial practices or events" (Wingert, 1962: 71).

The totem pole, because of its display of crests representing ancestors, materialized the link between deceased and the living. Continuity was thus assured and the function of security and identity was maintained. This is a perfect illustration of a people's roots and how these roots perform the role of psychological reassurance. Stability among the Kwakiutl was centered around secret societies which initiated the youth into the adult society. It was one of the most powerful institutions in the achievement of this end. The ceremonies have been described by ethnologists as impressive dramas involving mythological characters. The changes of status or "rites de passage" were marked by wearing masks or headrings, and by distributing canoes and blankets. This required from the artists a great amount of carved, painted, and woven objects which "must, therefore, be recognized as powerful cultural motivations for artistic development" (Wingert, 1962: 30).

When we write about the function of an object, we usually mean the utilitarian purpose or use for which an object was made. This connotation refers to the practical aspect of a work, - i.e., the wearing of a mask and the raising of a pole. According to Wingert, these artifacts also have a covert function, if not meaning:
By function is meant what the form does when it is used, what the presence and use of it do in creating an effect or in conveying an idea. In other words, how the work of art serves to implement the motivation that led to its creation. Meaning can be defined as the content or the subject matter, and also in the particular way in which the subject matter is presented, that is the attitude in which it is conveyed such as dramatically or objectively (Wingert, 1972: 63-64).

Wingert made a clear-cut distinction between function and meaning, opposing them respectively to form and content. However, in this paper, we attribute the same meaning to the two different concepts because "meaning" is always underlying the term "function".

First of all, the Kwakiutl totem pole had an AESTHETIC function. For the natives, it corresponded to the standard of art recognized as such in their tribe, village or community. The pole is now recognized as an artistic expression of the culture which produced it. The pole meets the traditional aesthetic requirements. The natives also judged it according to subjective and objective concepts of perfection - ie. cultural. The uninitiated person of today might not experience any aesthetic emotions in front of the pole, but, nevertheless, will remain puzzled by the decorated form. However, in modern art, Northwest Coast Indian art is appreciated because of its simplification of shapes, its surface textures, and its colors.

The raising of a pole was an occasion to narrate the tales referring to the mythological figures embodied in carvings. Once the pole was erected, the chief or his speaker would comment on each crest or figure on the new pole. This is mainly how myths were told from generation to generation and lasted through time and history. The symbols
on the pole were definitely a substitution for printed words. They told important events in the mythological past, as well as in the factual past, since they reported marriages between different lineages and/or clans or even wars, since a successful warrior could appropriate his enemy's crest to himself. It was also the genealogical record of a chief and his family since each member within the family could be identified through the display of crests. It served as a symbol of identification. Thus, totem poles were a form of historical record and story book. As such, they performed a LITERARY function.

Totem poles fulfilled a PHILOSOPHICAL function or, more accurately, painted and carved symbols were the expression of the Indian's "philosophical ideas of the nature and the living things" (Garfield, 1951: 7).

In observing their surrounding world, Northwest Coast Indians and, more specifically, the Kwakiutl were led to develop a philosophical theory where animals, birds, fish and man were an integral part with the elements on the earth—i.e. winds, sky, sea. In the beginning, people and animals were not distinct, but animals were people and some of them retained the ability to think and act as people.

Thus there are tribes of salmon led by their chiefs to the streams each spring or lured by salmon maidens living at the headwaters of rivers and creeks—likewise, there are families and tribes of sea and land creatures (Garfield, 1951: 7).

According to the Northwest Coast Indians, the sky was peopled with birds and other animal creatures —— those were transformed into humans whose descendants inhabit the earth. According to Indian theory, the ancestor of a numayma (which is both a local and a kin group)
appeared at a certain locality by coming from the sky, out of the sea, or from the underground, generally in the form of an animal, and took off his animal mask and became a person (Boas, 1966: 42). One could reject the term philosophical, but these beliefs or attitudes shared by the Northwest Coast Indians present their own conceptualization of the world and the origins of the human being on earth.

The RELIGIOUS function of the totem pole has been denied by Garfield (1951: 10) and others, and it takes courage to assert that it does have a religious function. The main argument against it is that carved figures and columns are not and were never worshipped. The Northwest Coast Indian's relationship with supernatural beings was so intimate that he seldom symbolized any part of his religious experience on a pole (Garfield, 1951: 10). These supernatural beings could harm or help man, as they wished. However, these spirits were sometimes associated with social crests and thus shown on a pole. Moreover, certain poles were erected during burial ceremonies for a deceased toward whom one was taught to feel respect and reverence. Thus, it is likely to affirm that they fulfill a religious function, though certainly not at the level that masks do. Masks were considered as sacred and kept hidden from profane eyes except at a ceremonial.

For more convenience, the SOCIAL, ECONOMIC and POLITICAL functions will be examined together because they constitute a whole, and are closely related to one another. Among the Kwakiutl, labor tasks were distributed according to sex and age. Man's leisure time was devoted
to woodworking and painting, whereas women turned to weaving, basketry, and embroidery (Boas 1966: 318, 1951: 183). Boas emphasizes this sex discrimination in art in asserting that man's style is "full of meaning" whereas woman's style has no marked significance (Ibid., 1966: 318; 1951: 183). Women usually copied designs previously drawn on a board as a pattern by men, suggesting that man's art was socially considered as being the most significant. We already have discussed the carver's social status in the Kwakiutl society; sometimes he belonged to a wealthy family but usually a carver enhanced his social status because of his great ability to create. He usually would ask a great deal of money and was rarely refused it. He was an honorable member of his local community and was entitled to privileges. From these two assertions one can hypothesize that among the Kwakiutl, art and, more specifically, totem pole art was a means of gaining prestige not only for the carver but also for the chief who commissioned him. "Social position was expressed through graphic and plastic creations based on the myths and tales connected with the lineages, house groups, and clans" (Gunther, 1966: 1, 2). The art, thus, was intimately related to the social structure.

The raising of a pole represented a very expensive undertaking not only because of its price but also because the chief was required to give a potlatch; that is why middle ranked peoples or commoners who owned little property could not afford so many expenses. Since control of the natural resources was in the hands of the hereditary "upper rank" or nobility, there was little opportunity for commoners to acquire the
wealth necessary for the raising of a pole. However, the potlatch was a ceremonial closely associated with group solidarity. All members of the group, or the household participated in the weaving of blankets and in the collecting of the bulk of food offered for this occasion. It thus, stimulated the economy of the community.

Totem poles were symbols of high social status which was validated by potlatches. Potlatches along with rituals and ceremonies were recognized as having an overt POLITICAL function. They contributed either to a reinforcement of status and prestige or to a redistribution of rights and obligations at every rank level and thus reassured social cohesion and equilibrium. In Fighting with Property, Codere states that "the purpose of the potlatch is to validate the hereditary claim by the position and to live up to it by maintaining its relative glory and rank against the rivalrous claims of the others" (1950: 63). Status was derived from genealogical relationships automatically at birth but it had to be formally assumed; social status, thus, did not depend entirely on heredity or wealth but on the interrelationship between the two. Thus, totem poles are a symbolic materialization of political power validated through the agency of potlatch. The raising of a pole was a social prerogative which distinguished social positions from one another.

In contrast to the pole, it is easy to see the function of utilitarian utensils like spoons, handles, dishes, combs, hat boxes and blankets, although they are used in ceremonials. Their art testifies to another style, which is symbolic in its form. We should not
deny the old cliche "art for art's sake" among the Kwakiutl. The
decoration of these artifacts undoubtedly conveys a meaning which is
related to the Indian's mythology. "It would be foolish to say that
all decorative art among primitives was directly solely toward an
aesthetic effect" (Wingert, 1962: 70). Art, on the contrary, existed
in a "motivation-function-meaning" relationship. According to Boas,
the Kwakiutl style, as well as that of other Northwest Coast Indians,
can only be fully understood as an integral part of the structure of
Northwest Coast culture.

The fundamental idea underlying the thoughts, feelings,
and activities of these tribes is the value of rank which
gives title to the use of privileges, most of which find ex-
pression in artistic activities or in the use of art forms
(Boas, 1966: 338).

Rank and social status give the privilege to use certain animal
figures as paintings and carvings on the house fronts, masks, totem
poles, and utensils. "The most outstanding feature (of Northwest
Coast art) is the intimate association between social standing and art
form" (Boas, 1966: 338).
CHAPTER IV

Totemism

This last chapter is devoted to the origin of totemism as seen by Boas and Goldenweiser and others; then to a definition of totemism by Levi-Strauss whose studies sum up what had been written on that matter for about half a century. Levi-Strauss' criticism is developed in Le Totemisme Aujourd'hui or in its English translation, Totemism. Then we will discuss the totemic phenomena among the Kwakiutl, which will lead us to puzzling conclusions.

A great deal of Levi-Strauss' writings deals with totemism, a subject matter which seems to have been buried for a few decades until the publication of his book on totemism. The French anthropologist's contribution to it is the subject of a great deal of controversy. Peter Worsley wrote in his article "Groote Eylandt and le Totemisme Aujourd'hui" "for Levi-Strauss, indeed, the problem is not to understand totemism, but to abolish it" (1967:142). Undoubtedly, the first chapter of the already quoted book, devoted to "totemic illusion", might have disturbed some anthropologists in their intellectual "Bien-être" and complaisance. Before discoursing upon the matter, he very carefully introduces the term totemism when he writes "it would be very inconvenient to put it always in quotation marks, or to prefix it with the word 'so called'" (1963:15-16). It does not mean that totemism is either a true or a false concept, but that the totemic complex has been partly misunderstood; and like hysteria it was a convenient means for the "normal, white adult" (Levi-Strauss, 1963:3) to categorize people as being
different, alien and thus abnormal or primitive. "Totemism is firstly the projection outside our own universe, as though by a kind of exorcism, of mental attitudes incompatible with the exigency of a discontinuity between man and nature which Christian thought has held to be essential (Levi-Strauss, 1963:3). It is fortunate that there has been enough written about hysteria and totemism to partially restore them to their rightful position as alternative perceptions of reality.

Theories concerning the origin, development and significance of totemism have been brought about by Frazer, Boas, Goldenweiser, among others. Etymologically the term totemism comes from the expression ototeman, which in Ojibwa, an Algonquin language, roughly means, "he is a relative of mine." (Levi-Strauss, 1963:18). The expression ototeman is "composed of; initial o-, third person prefix; t-, epenthesis serving to prevent the coalescence of vowels; -m- possessive, a third person suffix; and lastly -ote- which expresses the relationship between ego and a male or female relative, thus defining the exogamous group at the level of the generation of the subject" (Levi-Strauss, 1963:18). The etymology of the word might have wrongly led authorities like Frazer to write that exogamic division was the dominant idea of totemism; others stress the identification of man and animals which is one of its characteristic features. Frazer distinguished three different categories of totems: the clan totem, the sex totem, and the individual totem. In analyzing clan totemism, he pointed out that it was both a social and a religious system; the religious side consisting of a special attitude of the clansman toward the totem; the social
attitude of the clansman toward his fellow clansmen (Goldenweister, 1933:214). Rivers defined totemism as being the combination of three elements: the social element is contained in the identification of an exogamous group or clan with an animal or vegetable species or an inanimate object; the psychological element, a belief of kinship between members of the group, and the animal, plant or object, is often expressed in the idea that the human group is descended from it; the third element is a ritual element, i.e., a respect for the animal, plant or object and a prohibition bearing upon eating the animal, and plant or thing (Levi-Strauss, 1963:8). Some have contested this definition of totemism and have replaced it by another system, still including three elements described by the Royal Anthropological Institute as follows:

"In the widest sense of the term, we may speak of totemism if: 1) the tribe or group...consists of groups (totem groups) comprising the whole population, and each of these groups has a certain relationship to a class of objects (totem), animate or inanimate; 2) the relations between the social groups and the objects are of the same general kind and 3) a member of these totemic groups cannot (except under special circumstances, such as adoption) change his membership... totem relationship implies that every member of the species shares the totemic relationship with every member of the totem group. As a rule, members of a totemic group may not intermarry. There are often obligatory rules of behavior...sometimes special terms of address, decoration and a prescribed behavior to the totemic object" (1951:192).

This definition is more complete than that of Rivers and does not emphasize the same elements. The psychological element has here disappeared and the last definition stresses the existence of relationships between certain groups of human beings and classes of animate or
inanimate things. At that time, Goldenweiser summed up what he called the main features of totemic "symptoms." It included 1) an exogamous clan; 2) a clan name derived from the totem; 3) a religious attitude toward the totem as a friend, brother or protector; 4) taboos or restrictions against the killing or eating (sometimes seeing or touching) the totem; 5) a belief in the descent from the totem (1933:216). These five points constituted an analytical method which led Goldenweiser to draw conclusions on totemism in Australia and on the Northwest Coast of America. Totemism, according to Goldenweiser, can be gradually designated as "...the tendency of definite social units to become associated with objects and symbols of emotional values" or if viewed from the standpoint of "objects and symbols" it becomes "...the process of specific socialization of objects and symbols of emotional values" and as a final definition, "totemism is the specific socialization of emotional values" (1933:318-319). The last definition contains two distinct elements which are, respectively, the emotional values and the specific socialization. "The former constitutes the content of totemism, the latter the form" (Goldenweiser, 1918:280). Goldenweiser and Boas agreed on the fact that the specific contents of totemism vary according to totemic areas, whereas the form remains analogous. Boas wrote in The Origin of Totemism:

"Common to totemism in the narrower sense of the term is the view that sections of a tribal unit composed of relatives or supposed relatives possess each certain definite customs which differ in content from those of other similar sections of the same tribal unit, but agree with them in form or pattern" (1916:321).
He further defined the customs as "(referring) to taboos, naming, symbols or religious practices of various kinds, and are in their special forms quite distinctive for different totemic areas" (1916: 321). Because the contents of totemism are not identical in various areas, Boas thought that totemism was an artificial unit since it did not come from the same psychological and historical sources (1916: 321) and apparently only existed in the mind of the anthropologist. In fact totemism is a device of classification which was used for the purpose of characterizing exogamic groups. Within the exogamic group, totems, through the implementation of myths became an institution, and "covers relations posed ideologically, between two series, one natural, the other cultural. The natural series comprises on the one hand, categories, on the other, particulars; the cultural series comprises group and persons" (Levi-Strauss, 1963:16). Levi-Strauss developed a model in associating these terms two by two into four different ways and obtained the following combination:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NATURE</td>
<td>category</td>
<td>category</td>
<td>particular</td>
<td>particular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CULTURE</td>
<td>group</td>
<td>person</td>
<td>person</td>
<td>group (Levi-Strauss, 1963:17).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each of these combinations does not constitute a superficial model, but apparently corresponds to observable phenomena. Thus the second combination corresponds to "The individual totemism of North American Indians, among whom an individual seeks by means of physical trials to reconcile himself with a natural category" (Levi-Strauss, 1963:17). Unfortunately Levi-Strauss did not make any further comment.
Indeed this model and statement show that we should get off the beaten track and should not associate only a group to a category when we are talking about totemism; we should consider the different possibilities of combination.

Levi-Strauss’ statement is reinforced by Boas when he states "the essential feature of the relationship of the whole numaym to an animal is either entirely missing or at least very weakly developed" (1920:126). The author implied that only the chief of a numaym had a close relationship with his animal ancestor.

The existence of totemism among the Northwest Coast Indians has been strongly contested. Authorities like Wingert stated:

The best known forms of Northwest Coast art are the totem poles. This term, however, is actually a misnomer, for the forms do not represent totems. Rather, they portray specific family crests and their associated myths (1962:362).

At firsthand this assertion is not entirely wrong but needs to be reconsidered. Furthermore, it seems that Northwest Coast totemism originated from distinct sources according to the tribes it applied to. Boas stated:

"...I do not feel convinced that the substratum of totemism of the tribes of northern British Columbia and Southern Alaska must have been the same. On the contrary there seems to be evidence showing that their beginning may have been quite different" (1916:321).

Totemic customs among the Indians of the Northwest Coast have assumed similar forms because they are modeled on the same idea that is the emphasis of social status linked to privileges, but they differ in content. A comparative analysis of totemic phenomena occurring in the
different tribes of the Northwest Coast would be interesting to achieve, but that is not the purpose of this paper.

Totemism among the Kwakiutl is a very delicate problem to deal with and to encompass because of the complex social structure which underwent many influences. "One of the greatest obstacles to a clear understanding of the social organization of the Kwakiutl is the general confusion caused by the reduction in members of the tribe" (Boas, 1920:111). In this paper totemism will be mostly examined as a social system.

The Kwakiutl are divided into tribes which are in turn divided into "gens" and clans or as Boas prefers to call them "numayma" (1922:115). The Northern Kwakiutl possess animal totems whereas the Kwakiutl proper have no such names. The Heil'suq possess three totems: the raven, the eagle, and the killer whale; the Xa-isla' have six: the beaver, the eagle, the wolf, the salmon, the raven and the killer whale. The Northern Kwakiutl who bear the names of totems do not consider themselves as descendants of the totems. It is rather stated in myths how a certain ancestor of the clan obtained the totem (Boas, 1895:323). It is not our purpose to list the different Kwakiutl tribes and their subdivisions (see Boas, 1895:328-332). But a few of them will be considered to show the origins of tribal or clan names. Three classes may be distinguished, such as the name of the ancestor, a name taken from the region inhabited by the tribe or clan and names of honor. Some numayma call themselves G·i'g'· Elgãm, the first ones, or ewa'las, the great ones, or G·ë'xsem, the chiefs. These names appeared
later, that is, around 1850. Some others are called O'manits'ënox\textsuperscript{u}, people of O'manis, a place on Klaskino inlet. Lastly some took the name of Tso:ö'ts! Ena meaning thunderbirds; Q'amq'a'mtalal, the song dancers, descendants of Q'ämmtala (Boas, 1895:333; 1966:38-41). In some cases a subdivision in the tribe has for its name the stem of the tribal name with the ending -Em-, as for instance the SEnl!Em or Leo!Em. The meaning of this ending is "the real ones". According to the Kwakiutl there was, in former times, in almost each division a noble family which bore a name of this type while the rest of the people bore an ordinary name, that is, the one of the tribe. Boas thought that it was mythologically explained as meaning that those called the real ones were descendants from the ancestor, while the other members of the tribe became associated with the ancestor without being descended from him (1920:114).

These few examples show us the wide range of names that Kwakiutl people could appropriate to themselves. The various numayma composing a tribe were sometimes conceived as having different origins and thus assumed to have originated from distinctive localities (Boas, 1935a:41). According to Indian theory each clan was derived from a mythical ancestory who built his house at a certain place and whose descendants lived at that place (Boas, 1895:333). The ancestor came from the sky, out of the sea, usually in the form of an animal, took off his animal disguise and became a man. However, a few numayma do not seem to have this same origin and are said to have come as human beings from distant countries. The chief of each numayma is conceived
as the descendant of a mythical ancestor. The tale referring to him is called "the house myth" (Boas, 1935a:41). Thus, the other members are not necessarily conceived as descendants of the ancestor. The ancestor is designated as "father" or "grandfather", "root" or "chief root", which implies a descent through the male line. A few examples will be given to illustrate the mythological origin of the numaym, meaning people of "one kind":

a) The Nimkish numaym, "the first ones" or G'i'g· Elgam is said to be descended from two unrelated ancestors, the salmon who became a man, and the thunderbird who once he took off his thunderbird dress, also became a man. The thunderbird man helped the salmon man to build his house (Boas, 1935b:33).

b) Ma'tag·i la came down as a seagull. He took off his mask and became a man. He met Ma'leleqala, the ancestor of the Ma'maleleqala and married his daughter. Their eldest son became the ancestor of the numaym Ma'amtag·i la, their second son became the ancestor of the numaym Lo' yalala wa (Boas, 1935b:55-57). The concept of totemic descent as a part of the totemic system is absent among the Kwakiutl. In the two legends described here, the central figure is human but the ancestor is an animal which becomes a man by taking off his animal dress.

Among the Kwakiutl, the clans or numayma are exogamous and certain privileges are inherited in the paternal line. Goldenweiser seems to reject this statement and asserts that the clans are not exogamous
and a woman is advised to marry into her own clan (1933:221). This might be the case among some noble families whose strong desire is to retain the privileges within their own family. Endogamous marriages were permitted among half sisters and half brothers, that is, between children of one father but of two mothers. Cases of endogamy occurred very scarcely (Boas, 1920:117). Marriages in the consanguinial group was not customary. In the literature concerning this problem, we do not find any further information providing stable and compulsory marriage rules as it occurred among the Tsimshian or the Haida (see Goldenweiser, 1933:220-221).

The clan or numaym has certain rights which differ in content from others' rights. It acquired privileges not only through heredity, but also through marriage. These privileges included the right to perform dances, to sing certain songs, to wear masks and to use crests. Some legends illustrate the way crests were acquired.

a) The legend of O'manits'enox tells how G'e'Xde'n fell in with killer whales which had assumed the shape of men and were repairing their canoes. Their chief gave him a whaling harpoon, and his name and also the right to use the painting of the killer whale on his house front (Boas, 1895:336). Another tale tells how a man obtained the Ho'Xhoq crest when carving this fabulous bird out of yellow cedar. To validate the possession of the crest he gave away cedar blankets and skins. Then he placed the image of Ho'Xhoq on top of a pole outside of his house (Boas, 1895:336). The last part of this
legend shows that when a tribe already has the privilege 
to use a crest, a marriage is necessary for another tribe 
to acquire it.

Accounts of the origin of crests are abundant in the Kwakiutl 
mythology. "In Kwakiutl imagination the interest of crests and 
privileges runs riot. There are tales that consist of nothing else 
than the enumeration of crests and privileges obtained by marriage 
or war; and in other tales also, names, crests and privileges occupy 
an inordinate amount of space" (Boas, 1966:305).

Some animal crests such as the wolf, the bear, the sea lion, and 
the killer whale appear in clan legends, but they do not play a great 
role as protectors of man. Some monsters' or supernatural beings' help 
was obtained from the ancestors and became the crest of the clan.

Sisiutl is a characteristic figure in Kwakiutl tales. It is a double- 
headed snake which has one head at each end, a human head in the 
middle, two horns on the human head and one on each of the others. 
It had the power to assume the shape of a fish. It kills those who 
see it and also can transform himself into a moving canoe. It is 

Dzo'noqwa is a wild woman who inhabits the woods. She is a powerful 
but stupid being. She is also an ogress who eats children. She is 
asleep most of the time and when she awakes she is always shouting. 
Her mouth is pushed forward (Boas, 1895:372; 1966:307).

Many carvings have reference to the clan totem but it does not 
mean that every animal or human figure has the same meaning. Boas
says "it seems to me that the strong impulse which the art of the
people received from development of totemic ideas must have resulted
in the general application of animal designs for decorative purposes" (1895:392). Thus some animals such as a seal are represented on
dishes and are used by each clan and tribe. The seal is not a totem
symbol, but a symbol of plenty because it furnished a great amount of
fat and meat (Boas, 1895:392). This fact of course adds some com-
plexity to the problem although poles seem to be exclusively deco-
rated with designs representing the totem. It would be likely to infer
that the analogy of totem animals with animal symbols have induced the
natives to "interpret certain animal figures which were originally
only decorative on the principle of totemism". (Boas, 1895:393).

Our purpose is not to talk about the religious side of totemism
which is not very relevant among the Kwakiutl. The living repreSen-
tatives of eponymous species are not always differentiated by the
natives from non-totemic animals. They may be seen, killed or eaten.
Goldenweiser explains this phenomenon by wondering if totemism was
not caught by the Northwest Coast Indians and more specifically by
the Kwakiutl at a very late stage of development. "The totem has be-
come attenuated to a crest, a symbol; the living flesh and blood
relationship with a totem animal has been transferred to the realm of
mythology". (Goldenweiser, 1933:236).

Boas has developed his whole theory concerning the development
of totemism among the Kwakiutl. He sees an analogy between the totem
legend and the guardian spirit tale where the clan totem has developed
from the individual manitou by extension over a kinship group (1916:319). Many ancestors when obtaining their manitou were given the right to perform dances, and were given secret songs. These "spirits" appeared as animals such as the wolf, bear or killer whale or fabulous monsters such as Sisiutl. The manitou acquired by a mythical ancestor has with time degenerated into a crest which was obtained through heredity or maybe even marriage (Boas, 1895:338). However, this tradition was linked with secret societies which duplicate the secular "sphere" since they were provided with the same social structure based on ranking. Invested with supernatural powers, their members were exercising their authority during winter ceremonials. Boas' hypothesis needs to be clarified but one must not conclude that two kinds of totemism parallely developed among the Kwakiutl; or that the above totemic phenomenon is a duplicate of that appearing in the secular society. They are similar in form but might differ in content. Myths and totem poles are related to each other since mythical figures are embodied in the carvings, although we should make an exception for the animal symbol like the seal symbol which has a separate meaning. We have implicitly said that totemism existed among the Kwakiutl but we should consider the different problems inherent to this group. It has been bluntly stated that the different clans or numayma as social groups were not directly descendants from totems. The ancestor descends directly from the animal totem but is used as an intermediary between him and the social unit. More complexity is added by the fact that Kwakiutl society is a ranked society where the noblest line is the
line of the first born which means that the nobles are descendants of the older brothers among the children of the mythical ancestors; whereas, the commoners gradually lower in rank belong to the line of the youngest born. Among the nobles, endogamy is favored to retain as many privileges as possible within the family.

Another problem arises from the fact that only the Northern Kwakiutl have totem names whereas the Kwakiutl proper bear different names. As far as the denomination is concerned, three categories of names have been distinguished: such as 1) the ancestor name which implies that the members of the numaym are descendants of an ancestor; 2) the honor name such as "the real ones" meaning that members of such a division descend from the ancestor while other families just become associated with him without being descended from him; 3) others bear the name of local areas.

Exogamy would be the only feature remaining from our previous definition of totemism, since we have briefly stated that there were no taboos related to the seeing or eating of the eponymous animals unless they are monsters like Sisiutl.

In village communities of the Southern tribes, (south of the Kwakiutl), there is no trace of a crest, whereas among the Kwakiutl, the acquisition of a crest is not only hereditary, but can be obtained through marriage in the female line, in a similar way as the crest of the Northern tribes descends (Boas, 1895:336). We may conclude that the present stage of the Kwakiutl totemic complex has developed through
the inference of the two culture areas and did not reach as complete a
stage of development, and we will agree to call it "semi-totemism".
CONCLUSION

This paper raises questions which unfortunately cannot be definitively answered. The discussion concerning the antiquity of totem poles is still open. It does not seem likely that further archaeological research would shed light on the problem. There are a number of stone sculptures dated as early or even earlier than the 9th century in the Pacific Northwest which seemed to presage the later so-called totem era. Superposition of forms are found, for instance, in several examples and as totem poles do, they convey a dramatic expression. The Indian sculptor's mastering of tools came from a long tradition and, furthermore, art was closely tied with culture as it has already been shown. This art flourished until the middle of the 19th century or maybe until 1889 but later declined very rapidly, for when the society became disorganized because of the impact of white contact, it lost its motivation. There have been recent attempts to revive this art; a restoration program has been undertaken in different museums where Indian or white carvers are striving to carve exact copies of the old decayed poles for the benefit of future generations. However, totem pole art has mostly lost its meaning since only replicas are carved. Visual techniques, such as projecting a slide of a house front onto a large piece of wood, are used to achieve this aim.

This art can be fully understood only as an integral part of the social structure which leads us to wonder whether the "totemic" aspect of the Kwakiutl social life has given an impetus to art development or whether the art impulse has developed totemic life. Totemic life
seems to appear at a late stage of development and seems to have undergone various influences. Not all the features characteristic of what is called totemism are missing among the Kwakiutl but such as are found are at an "abortive" level, be it totemic denomination, totemic descent, taboos, exogamy. Among the Kwakiutl the "totem" may be used as an eponym, as a symbol in art, as a property mark, and above all, as a sign of rank. Another analytical method is required to reexamine the problem of totemism among the Kwakiutl and might lead to a different conclusion.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


1935a - Kwakiutl Culture as Reflected in Mythology, American Folklore Society.


1951 - Primitive Art, Capitol Publishing Co., Inc.


Cook, Jr. - A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean Undertaken by the Command of his Majesty for Making Discoveries in the Northern Hemisphere in the Years 1776-1777, 1778, 1779-1780. 3 Vol., a No. 1 Atlas. 1784

Covarrubias, M - The Eagle, the Jaguar, the Serpent. New York, Alfred A. Knopf. 1954


BIBLIOGRAPHY (continued)

Garfield, V. (cont.)
1951 - Meet the Totem. Sitka Printing Co.
1951b - The Tsimshian Indians. Publication XVIII of the American Ethnological Society.

Goldenweiser, A.

Gunther, E.
1966 - Art in the Life of the Northwest Coast Indians. The Portland Art Museum.

Haeberlin, H.

Hawthorn, A.
1967 - Art of the Kwakiutl Indians, University of Washington Press.


Keithan, E.

Levi-Strauss, C.
1963 - Totemism. Beacon Press

Manuel, J.
Mozino, Jr.  


Royal Anthropology Institute  

Wherry, Jr.  

Wingert, P.  
1951  -  Tsimshian Culture. Publication XVIV of the American Ethnological Society.


Worsley, P.  
1967  -  Groote Eylandt Totemism and le Tote' mismne aujourd'hui in structured study of myth and totemism, ed. by Leach E. Tavistock Publications.
FOOTNOTES

1. See also Nozino in "Noticias de Nutka" p. 18. 1970.

2. This figure may not be completely reliable.


4. The negative spaces are described by Holm as being spaces left by positive shapes; they are, in a way, "holes in a design".

5. Among the Kwakiutl, the kin descent was patrilineal. Drucker characterizes the kin principle as bilateral although with a slight patrilineal bias.

6. Replica carved by Holm, curator of the Burke Museum (Seattle)

7. This Kwakiutl namepost is to be found in Thunderbird Park, Victoria, B.C. The upper figure of this post (which does not appear on this photograph) is a thunderbird carved by Henry Hunt. Carvings of the Sea lion can be seen at either end. The uprights are two replicas of a Kwakiutl housepost, showing the Bear crest. The carving was completed by Mungo Martin.
Here is a list of Kwakiutl totem-pole carvers of Alert Bay and neighborhood.

Charlie James, Yaakutlas, from Fort Rupert was a Kwinksutenog, married a Kwakiutl of Fort Rupert and stayed there a part of his life. He resided at Alert Bay and died in the early 1940's. He was the best known carver there.

Arthur S. Shaughnessy, Hai'maseluk, a Tsaatinurh of the Kingcome tribe, died also in the 1940's. He carved totem-poles, cedar chests, and boxes. He also was a silversmith. His son carved model poles for tourists.

Yurhwayu of the Mamtagyaila tribe was an older carver than the two mentioned above. He was the carver of the tallest Alert Bay totem-pole, the Thunderbird. (Barbeau, II:798:800).

Mungo Martin of Fort Rupert, son of Kwuksutinuk, died in 1962. He received his training from Charlie James, whom he used to assist; he was in charge of the Provincial Museum totem pole restoration program, (Victoria, B. C.) from 1952 until his death. He was a master carver and painter who passed on much of his knowledge to younger Kwakiutl carvers. Some of them have worked under him on this program. At present, the chief carver is Henry Hunt and the assistant carver is his son Eugene "Tony" Hunt.
No. 1 Kwakiutl House Posts. University Park UBC, Vancouver, B.C.
No. 2 Kwakiutl Heraldic Pole. Thunderbird Park, Victoria, B.C.
No. 3 Dsonoqua's Son: Close-up
No. 4 Kwakiutl Name Post. Thunderbird Park, Victoria, B.C.
No.5 Bear: Close-up