THE PRODUCTION OF THE BOAS-HUNT KWAKW'ALA TEXTS
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1. INTRODUCTION.

The Kwakw'ala texts published by Boas look raw and unprocessed. They are printed in prose form, in a single block that is frequently unbroken even by paragraphing. Boas' rather arid and awkward English translations are printed in a separate block, sometimes on the same page, sometimes on the facing page, sometimes in an entirely different volume. Other than the translations, and the occasional introductory note on provenience, the texts are almost completely bare of annotation or commentary. All this combines to lend the texts an air of naked, unbiased ethnographic authenticity. As Codere remarked:

> In a [Boas] text, the ethnographer has acquired data in which he is out of the picture...
> [It has] a high degree of objectivity as ethnographic data... considerable self-
> dependence... It is free of hearsay and is of the sort no witness is led into giving (1966:
> xiii-xvi).

Yet it seems rash to accept any set of documents, no matter how raw and authentic they seem, without examining what precisely those documents are and how they came into being. As we will see, the apparent rawness of Boas' published texts is deceiving. The texts have a complex history, one in which the ethnographers -- and I use the plural advisedly -- were never "out of the picture." A number of issues demand closer scrutiny: the role of the texts in Boas' overall research plan; the processes and personalities involved in producing the manuscripts that provided the basis for the published texts; how Boas processed the manuscripts once he got them; what, in native understandings, was contained in those manuscripts; and, lastly, what role such cultural objects performed in their native context.

In this essay, I will discuss what could be broadly described as the ethnographer's end of the collection process. I will focus primarily on three issues: the researchers and the conduct of the research; the goals and flaws of Boas' research plan; and how Boas processed the original manuscripts. None of these topics will receive the extensive treatment they deserve; this is an overview of the issues rather than a detailed dissection of them.

2. GEORGE HUNT AND THE KWAKW'ALA TEXTS.

The frontispiece of Boas' posthumously published Kwakiutl ethnography is captioned "Kwakiutl field notes by Franz Boas" (1966: vi). The handwriting reproduced there is not Boas',

however, but that of a man named George Hunt.

This error symbolizes how little most scholars have understood of Hunt's central role in Boas' Kwagul research. Much of what anthropologists, linguists and folklorists have taken to be the product of Boas' labor is actually Hunt's work. Of all the thousands of pages of Kwakw'ala text Boas published, only a small percentage of them were actually collected by Boas in the field. These latter are to be found chiefly in the 1910 volume of texts. The bulk of the Kwakw'ala texts was composed by Hunt. Hunt was not simply an informant, not simply Boas' guide and interpreter in the field. Although he might not have perceived of his activities in such a light, he was a fieldworker in his own right, an ethnographer and author. His contribution to the scholarly record on the Kwagul is enormous, but it has yet to be thoroughly evaluated.

Who was George Hunt? His story begins with the arrival in the early 19th century of the Hudson's Bay Company on the coast of what later became British Columbia. The first HBC trading post in the area was established at Fort McLoughlin, present-day Bella Bella, but in 1836 coal was discovered at a Kwagul beach site on Vancouver Island called Tsakhis (Caxis, "stream flowing on beach"). The HBC conceived the plan of supplying fuel for their paddle boat locally, rather than importing it to the coast, and in the course of time sent for miners from Scotland. In 1849, the HBC built a trading post at Tsakhis called Fort Rupert (Holm 1983: 18-19; Boas 1921: 973; Codere 1950: 22-3).

Hitherto the Kwagul Indians of the region had been compelled to canoe the long route to Fort McLoughlin in order to trade furs for such European goods as guns and woolen blankets. Now the Kwagul could obtain such goods at Fort Rupert. The presence of the trading post provided incentive for four closely related divisions of the Kwagul (what I will call "tribes," Kw. lildalaxi?) to move their winter villages to Tsakhis: the Gitala or "Northerners, Foreign Indians" (also known as Kagut); the Qumuyo?i or "Wealthy in the Middle" (also known as the Kixa); the Walas Kagut or "Great Kwagul," and the Qumkutas or "The Wealthy Side" (Boas 1921: 805-820).

Hudson's Bay Company never worked the Fort Rupert coal; when the Kwagul tribes learned it was valuable to Europeans, they became determined to operate the mine themselves, and keep the profits. In the end, richer seams were discovered further south on Vancouver Island, at Nanaimo, and in 1885 the HBC turned over the Fort Rupert post to their factor at the site, a Scotsman named Robert Hunt (Codere 1950: 22-3; Graybill and Boesen 1976: 61; Cole and Lockner 1989: 536-7 f.).

Robert Hunt had travelled from Great Britain to work for the HBC in 1850, at age 22. Shortly after his arrival on the coast, he married a Tlingit girl named Ansnaq, also called Mary

Ebbetts, the daughter of a high-ranking Raven family from Tongass.[1] Initially, Hunt was employed at Port Simpson, near his wife's home village. After a few years, however, he and his wife moved to Fort Rupert, where they remained the rest of their lives -- though Mary Hunt retained close ties to her Tongass relatives and continued to visit them. It was in Fort Rupert, in February of 1854, that Mary Hunt gave birth to George, her second child but her first son (Cole and Lockner ibid.; Barbeau 1950: 651-4; Curtis 1915: 6; letters of Hunt to Boas, 8/2/20, 12/4/21, 4/7/16).[2]

The fact that neither of George Hunt's parents were Kwagul has passed largely unnoticed by scholarly researchers (exceptions are Barbeau 1950: 650-60; Cannizzo 1983; Holm and Quimby 1980: 40). They have been aided in this by Boas' practice of presenting Hunt's autobiographical texts as records of Kwagul experience. Levi-Strauss, for example, has written on the psychological realities of shamans and their patients (1963:167-185), basing his argument on the personal experiences of a "Kwakiutl Indian" -- actually the part-white part-Tlingit George Hunt.

The distinction is not without significance: Hunt was an outsider to the community in which he was practicing as a shaman. George's parents were foreigners in Tsakhis, and everything he knew of traditional Kwagul life he must have learned outside the home. Although Boas called George Hunt a native speaker of Kwakw'ala, this language was the vernacular of neither of his parents, and he did not use it with perfect grammaticality. Moreoever, some Kwagul, who could remember when the Tongass were still launching bloody raids southward, felt prejudice against Mary Hunt and her children. Perhaps because of this, George was frequently derided as a "little Northerner" (Kw. Gitalabidu?; Boas 1897: 556-7, 1930, II: 258; letter of Hunt to Boas 1/6/19; cf. Barbeau 1950: 654).

Nor was Mary Hunt shy about flaunting her wealth, rank, and foreign origins among the Kwagul. She arrived in Fort Rupert with four "coppers" bearing her clan crests, which she sold one by one among the Kwagul chiefs; later she brought a Haida slave down from the north, whom she kept for many years. She was a skilled weaver of Chilkat-style textiles, supplying them for her children but refusing to teach the art to Kwagul women because it was a prerogative of her family. When her mother drowned on the Nass River in 1870, Mary helped pay for a memorial pole in Tongass. This pole was stolen by a group of Seattle businessmen in 1899; Mary then

[1] In 1916 George Hunt gave his mother's age as being approximately 82, by which calculation she was about 16 when she first met Robert Hunt (Hunt to Boas, 4/7/16).

[2] Curtis misidentifies Mary Hunt as Tsimshian (1915: 6). This mistake may have arisen from the geographical and social proximity of Tongass to the Nisga; also, Mary did have Tsimshian relatives (Barbeau 1950: 654). In Kwakw'ala the word g̲itala "northerner" applies to Tsimshian, Tlingit, and, apparently, any other non-Wakashan tribe (Boas n.d.: 295; Lincoln and Rath 1980: 276).

comissioned the carving and erection of a copy at Fort Rupert, as a reminder to the Kwagul, her daughter said, of her noble Tongass ancestry. (Hunt to Boas 11/12/21, 12/4/21; Barbeau 1950: 651; Cole 1985: 309-10; Holm and Quimby 1980: 40).

By the reckoning of the matrilineal Tlingit, Mary Hunt's children were members of her clan. The birth of George, her eldest son, had been a sufficiently important event that his grandfather (great-uncle?) had travelled south from Alaska to see him (letters of Hunt to Boas, 12/4/21, 4/7/16). It seems likely, too, given Mary's pride in her origins, that she would have brought her children up as Tongass nobles. Certainly Mary took her children to visit in Tongass, and her relatives travelled to Fort Rupert in turn. As was customary for a Tlingit nobleman's nephew, George returned to his fellow clansmen, at age 9 (Hunt to Boas, 8/2/20); however, he did not stay to complete his education, for which his Scots father may have been responsible. Tlingit was probably one of George's first languages, despite his growing up in Fort Rupert. He knew his Tlingit crests and family traditions; it was he who wrote out the entire mythical history behind the crests on the Seattle pole, first for the Seattle businessmen and later for Boas (Hunt to Boas 8/2/20, 12/4/21; APS #1927.b).[3]

Nevertheless, George Hunt's Tlingit-ness needs to be seen in context of overall Indian relations on the coast. Intermarriage between different native ethnic groups was not infrequent, especially among those of wealth and status. In the 19th century, Kwagul nobility in fact sought out such marriages with their northern neighbors, because valued political and ritual prerogatives could be obtained in this fashion. Although Tlingit notions of rank, descent and succession were rather different from those of the Kwagul, the Tlingit prerogatives Mary Hunt passed to her children were quite acceptable currency in the political, economic, and ritual transactions of the Kwagul nobility.

The Kwagul were situated on the boundary dividing the northern matrilineal groups such as the Tlingit, Tsimshian and Heiltsuk from the southern patrilineal Salish. Nineteenth century Kwagul descent and succession showed elements of both systems. For example, one class of aristocratic prerogatives stayed "in the house," meaning in the descent group, in the line of preferentially agnatic descent; another class was passed by a man to his son- or brother-in-law in trust for his grandchildren, in other words, for the children of his female consanguines (Boas 1921:1351-6; 1897: 334-6; 1940 [1920]: 367-8). George possessed the right to use Mary Hunt's Tlingit prerogatives by virtue of matrilineal descent; he passed on some of these

[3] Elements of Mary's Tlingit heritage are visible among her descendants a century later. The Kwakw'ala text collected from Thomas and Emma Hunt in 1976-7 (Levine 1977) originated as one of Mary Hunt's Tlingit Raven stories. Other present-day Hunt prerogatives, including the right to use Chilkat blankets, are still considered Tlingit (cf. Barbeau 1950: 660).

prerogatives to his sons, and some to his daughter's husband (Boas 1966: 188-9; Barbeau 1950: 660).

Furthermore, despite Kwagul prejudice against the Tongass, the specific circumstances of George Hunt's birth and background ensured a special place for him at Fort Rupert. His Tlingit grandfather's visit to Fort Rupert had had far-reaching consequences. As Hunt later recalled:

> I was called [to feasts] by the old [Kwagul] chiefs... [starting from] when·I was nine (9) years old. The Reason I was treated so wel By them for they say that Before my Poor mother came to Fort Rupert the northern People use to come and fight with them and killed lots of them off. And when I was born in 1854 my grandfather... came to Fort Rupert to see my Poor mother. and from that time there was no more fight between the tongas and the Kwagots... so the old chiefs say that through me the war was stoped (letter of Hunt to Boas 1/6/19).

The position of George's father should not be overlooked, either. As Hudson's Bay factor and later independent operator of a store and trading post in Fort Rupert, Robert Hunt would have been an important figure in the local community. For many years the Fort Rupert store was the only trading post readily accessible to Kwagul trappers and hunters, and all the Kwagul tribes travelled to Fort Rupert for that reason (cf. Hunt to Boas 3/10/17). Until the salmon canneries came into operation, Robert Hunt would have been the primary source not only of manufactured goods, but also of cash for goods, such as furs, coming out of the native economy.

So if George Hunt remained foreign in Kwagul eyes, he was not a lowly, ignorant, or particularly exotic foreigner. He had grown up in the community, spoke the language, possessed aristocratic prerogatives that were accepted within the Kwagul system, and according to Codere (1966: xxix) was considered a "real man" (Kw. baḵ̌əm), that is, an Indian.

Last, but not least, Hunt had married into the highest ranks of Kwagul society. His first marriage, in 1872, was to the daughter of a chief of the Ha?anaλano n̓əm̓imut (descent group) of the Q̓umuyo?i tribe. His bride's Kwagul name was λ̌aĺiλaĺaḵ̌; in English she was called Lucy (Hunt, CU ms. vol. 14: 2196-2238; 1921: 976-1002). From this marriage Hunt acquired his first "true name" (?oləxλeyu λigəm) among the Kwagul, Wɔɬəwid, and numerous important prerogatives for himself and his children (APS ms. 1927b).

Lucy's children occupied genealogical positions of strategic importance in Fort Rupert society (Figure 1), and her relatives actively resisted the Indian Agent's efforts to "get them to leave the Indians and turn to be White men" (Hunt to Boas, 3/20/05; cf. 3/19/21). Lucy's maternal grandfather, head chief of the Sinλəm n̓əm̓imut of the G̓itəla tribe, had produced only one son, whose marriages had all been childless. Thus Lucy's eldest son David came to inherit the Sinλəm head chieftaincy, along with the chief's name and property. David's two surviving brothers were placed following him in the second and third "seats" (k̓ayi?) of the descent
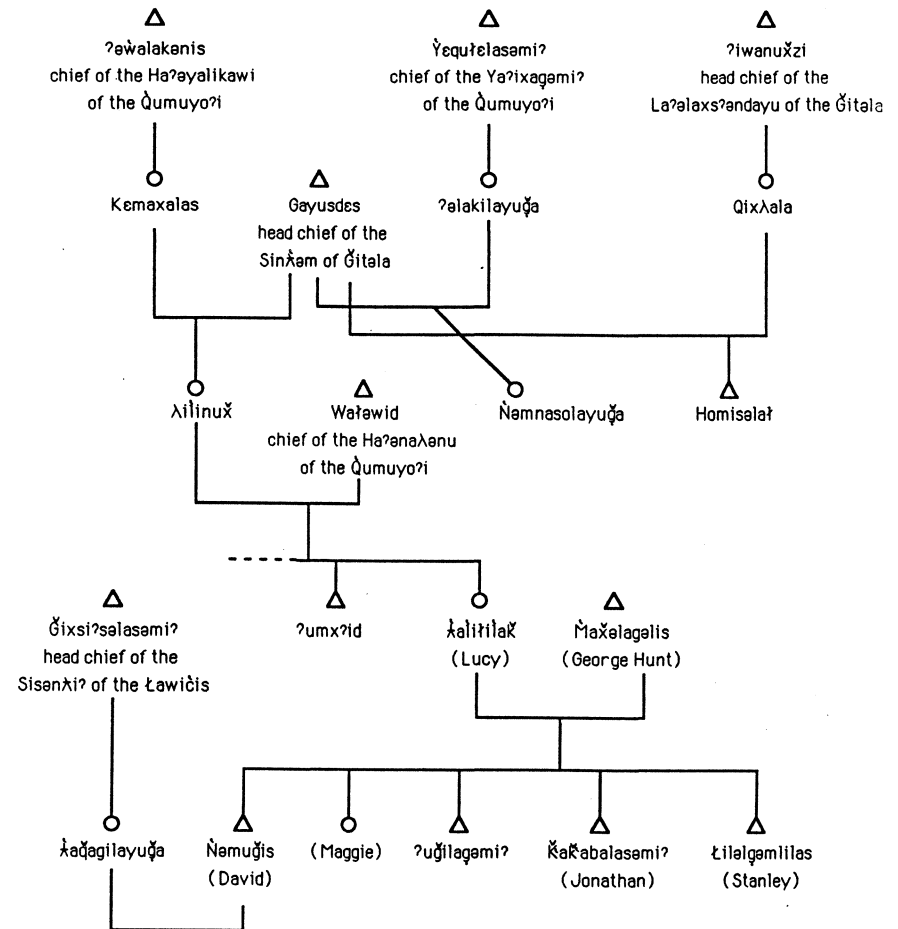

Figure I. George Hunt's affines and children, c. 1890
(from Boas 1921: 763, 788, 976-1002, 1063; 1925: 65-69, 103-107)

group, which had also been left empty, and in addition, through Lucy's maternal grandmother, the middle brother Jonathan inherited the seat of ʔaẃalaskanis, a chief of the Haʔalayalikawi ńaṁimut of the Qumuyoʔi tribe. Through Lucy's maternal grandfather's third marriage, this boy also come to be the heir of ʔiẃanuẋzi, head chief of the Laʔalaxsʔandayu descent group of the Ǧitala tribe (Hunt to Boas 10/4/13; Boas 1921: 788-792; 976-1002). As the father of these boys, Hunt became a kind of honorary chief of the Sinẋam, defended against insult and prejudice by his Sinẋam affines (Boas 1897: 556-7).

After Lucy's death in 1908, Hunt married the sister of the head chief of the Ẃalas ńaṁimut of the Ńaḱaxdaʔẋ tribe (Hunt to Boas 4/24/08 et seq., 10/4/13; Boas 1921: 1063-1073). This noblewoman, ẋaẋalawizamga, had been married four times previously; with her marriage to Hunt she attained the rank of ʔuma, a "Lady," on account of the marriage-debt expenditures, (qutixa) her brother had lavished upon her husbands. Through ẋaẋalawizamga, Hunt gained access to a great deal of family-owned material that otherwise would have been closed to him (Hunt to Boas 2/28/17); not to mention yet another batch of important prerogatives for himself and his first wife's children.

In sum, George Hunt, though remaining to some extent an outsider, had achieved an important position within Kwagul society through a combination of historical circumstance and his own labor in pursuit of status and prestige. His children inherited positions of wealth and leadership within the community, and were in turn sought after as spouses by some of the highest-ranking Kwagul chiefs of their time (Ford 1941: 102; Boas 1921: 783-4; Barbeau 1950: 660). Today, George Hunt's descendants are at the forefront of traditional Kwagul activities in their community.

One suspects that such interethnic assimilation was not unknown in pre-European times. Certainly interethnic marriage must have always been a major pathway for what anthropologists have called "diffusion." In earlier times one supposes that incomers to a Kwagul community like George Hunt and his descendants would have organized themselves into a ńaṁimut (descent group), as did the descendants of a foreigner called Sanẋiʔ (Boas 1966: 42; 1921: 837). However, the depopulation of the late 19th century left gaping holes in the traditional social framework which Hunt's children were positioned to fill. Thus Hunt's children were assimilated directly into existing Kwagul social groups.

George Hunt was a "real man" and the son of a white trader. As he pursued status and identity in the Indian world, he also pursued employment in the European economy, where he had an advantage over most of his Kwagul contemporaries by virtue of being able to speak and write English. In his correspondence with Boas he mentions working at every sort of job through the years, from HBC fur buyer to copper miner to prospector's guide to night watchman in the Alert Bay cannery, and throughout it all trapping, fishing and hunting. What he is most remembered

for, however, is his work as a culture broker.

In this role his relationship with Boas was the longest-lasting but by no means unique. He seems to have been first hired as interpreter and middleman in 1881, at age 27, by Johan Adrian Jacobsen, who had come to Fort Rupert on a collecting expedition for the Berlin Museum für Völkerkunde. Robert Hunt provided Jacobsen with the lease of a sloop and the use of George and his brother William as hands, guides and interpreters (Cole 1985: 55-67; Woldt 1977 [1881]: 4). When Jacobsen returned to collect in Kwagul country in 1885, he attempted also to assemble a troupe of Kwagul to tour Europe under his direction. George Hunt was to have been the interpreter for the troupe. In the end, the Kwagul backed out before the trip began, and Jacobsen took with him a group of Bella Coola instead.

If Hunt had travelled to Germany with Jacobsen, he would almost certainly have met Boas, who was then an assistant at the Museum für Völkerkunde working towards his habilitation (post-doctoral teaching) degree. Boas did study Bella Coola language and music with Jacobsen's group during their stay in Berlin (Cole 1985: 67-72).

It is unclear when precisely Boas and Hunt did meet in person. It is probable that Boas had heard of the Hunt family from Jacobsen when still in Germany -- or read about them in Jacobsen's account of the expedition (Woldt 1977 [1881]) -- and then sought them out on his first trips to British Columbia in 1886 and 1888. At any rate, by 1891 Boas was corresponding with Hunt to arrange for ethnological collections and a live Kwagul troupe for exhibits he was planning at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair (Cole 1985: 105-7,119-123). It was during Hunt's six-month stay in Chicago during the fair that Boas trained Hunt in the Kwakw'ala orthography he had devised. This was the beginning of Boas' and Hunt's epistolary ethnography, which continued until Hunt's death in 1933.

As a result of his work with Jacobsen and then Boas, Hunt became involved with several other major figures in ethnology and museum collection. These included Harlan Smith of the American Museum of Natural History in New York and later of the Victoria Memorial Museum of Canada (Hunt to Boas 1/10/99; Cole 1985: 140, 267); George Heye, founder of the Museum of the American Indian in New York (Cole 1985: 218); and Samuel Barrett, Alfred Kroeber's first Ph.D., at that point working for the Milwaukee Public Museum (Cole 1985: 248). Hunt was also visited by George Dorsey and C.J. Newcombe of the Field Museum of Chicago, but he refused to work for Newcombe, on the grounds that he had already promised his labor to Boas (Hunt to Boas 9/26/99, 1/18/07, 4/12/18, Cole 1985: 177-183).

Hunt's most extensive ethnological employment, outside of his work for Boas, was with the photographer Edward S. Curtis. It may have been in 1910 that Hunt first was contacted by Curtis and his assistants, who were undertaking to shoot a motion picture starring Kwagul Indians. By 1914, Curtis had completed the motion picture, now known as In the land of the war

canoes, in addition to the tenth volume -- devoted exclusively to the Kwagul -- of his ethnographic series on The North American Indian (Curtis 1915). In all these efforts Hunt served as interpreter, special effects man, costume supplier, set carpenter, stage manager, and chief cultural consultant (Curtis 1915; Holm and Quimby 1980).

In this role as cultural middleman, George Hunt had acquired not just skill and experience, but also a reputation and contacts. He was the man anthropologists and collectors came to see. There is reason to question how much of anthropology's view of the Kwagul has been determined by his outlook. Charley Nowell's autobiography (Ford 1941) describes this same period in Tsakhis, and gives a rather different view, not in fact so much as in tone. Nowell's story shows Kwagul culture from the inside out. What Nowell tells about -- whether socialization, traditional residence patterns, descent, succession, rank, marriage, etc. -- is described in terms of what happened to him in his own life. In Hunt's writing, in contrast, there is a certain objectivity, "objectivity" in the sense of seeing Kwagul culture and society as objects outside of and separate from himself. "These Kwaguɬs," he calls his wife's relatives (Hunt to Boas, 2/4/18). With Hunt's work, too, there is sometimes the sense that he knows who his white audience is; he is trying to fulfill certain expectations, arouse a certain kind of reaction.

3. HUNT AS AN ETHNOGRAPHER; HUNT AS A KWAKW'ALA SPEAKER.

At the beginning of their association, Boas complained to his family that Hunt was "too lazy to think" and "unbelievably clumsy" at translation (Rohner 1969: 183, 236). By 1900, after Boas had had the chance to check Hunt's material in the field, he found that in actuality, Hunt "does everything quite properly and ... does not pull my leg. I find him quite dependable" (Rohner 1969: 261).

Over the years, though Boas continued to express some reservations, Hunt won and kept his trust and confidence. In his most extensive comments on the reliability of Hunt's ethnographic material, Boas said,

> After working with me in 1893, 1897, and 1900, during which he gained much practice in writing the Kwakiutl language, Mr. Hunt spent several weeks in New York in 1901. During this time the general plan of work was decided upon, and, following instructions and questions sent out by me, Mr. Hunt recorded data relating to the material culture, the social life, the customs, and beliefs of the Kwakiutl Indians. So far as accuracy and contents are concerned, he is responsible for the material... It will be noticed that a number of the data have been recorded several times, generally at intervals of several years, and the agreement of the statements is a guaranty of the accuracy of the record.

Much of the information in regard to cookery was obtained by Mr. Hunt from Mrs. [Lucy] Hunt, who was born in Fort Rupert, and who was thoroughly familiar with the duties o a good housewife. In 1900 I had the opportunity of obtaining a considerable amount of information from her [in person]... Mr. Hunt has taken pains to make his descriptions a: accurate as possible (Boas 1921 [1916]: 45; see also 1930, vol. I: ix-x).

On the whole, discrepancies are so few in number and the period of recording is so lon that the information as such evidently deserves full confidence. Furthermore, wherev I have been able to check it with my own inquiries among various individuals belongin to various tribes [of the Kwagul], I find the agreement quite satisfactory (Boas 1921: 1467).

Boas' chief reservation with the texts concerned the linguistic data they contained. In general, Boas felt that Hunt's usage seemed to correspond to that of the older generation of Kwakw'ala speakers, and was sometimes influenced by northern Kwakw'ala dialects with whic Boas was not overly familiar. The syntactic lapses the texts contained, he thought, most ofter arose from the constraints of the writing process. Above and beyond this, however, Boas founc Hunt's Kwakw'ala simply idiosyncratic, and in places even ungrammatical. Boas detailed these idiosyncrasies in several places (Boas and Hunt 1905: 3-4; Boas 1921: 1467-9; 1930: x-xi); they include phonological, morphological, and syntactic oddities. Curiously, Boas does not see to have considered the possibility that Hunt's Kwakw'ala suffered interference from Tlingit, probably one of his first languages.

Boas revised some of the published text collections in consultation with other native speakers (e.g. 1905) and some he was able to correct with Hunt's assistance. Others he published with lapses and idiosyncrasies in place. He justified this by saying,

> When the publication of the various collections of texts was started, there seemed to be no prospect of a careful revision and since their value is as much ethnological and stylistic as linguistic, it seemed best to publish them notwithstanding their imperfections. In too many cases material of great value has been lost because the author waited to perfect and complete it and the unpublished manuscripts are lost to science. I present my material fully conscious of its shortcomings.

> It is regrettable that the bulk of the material has been obtained from one single informant. This leaves us in doubt whether we are are dealing with individual or triba style. The collection contained in [Boas 1910]... is so far the only material that can be

used for the comparison of styles of various persons (Boas 1930: xi-xii).[4]

Did Boas collect tens of thousands of pages of Kwakw'ala text from a man who was not a fully competent speaker? Given Boas' stature in the history of American anthropology and linguistics -- given that he initiated the practice of collecting native-language texts in these fields -- this a question that deserves careful consideration.

It does seem that Hunt's Kwakw'ala was at times somewhat ungrammatical. Boas himself noted idiosyncrasies and occasional errors; one recent fieldworker has gone so far as to say that Hunt's Kwakw'ala is so aberrant that it cannot be understood by contemporary Kwagul, even, apparently, those born during Hunt's lifetime (Peter Wilson, personal communication). This suggests that Hunt might not have been fully competent in Kwakw'ala, and that his texts should not be relied upon as linguistic data.

It is not impossible that Hunt acquired Kwakw'ala imperfectly, despite living in a Kwakw'ala speech community from infancy -- neither of his parents spoke Kwakw'ala as their native tongue. Caution needs to be observed in drawing any conclusions concerning any of Hunt's linguistic competencies, however. Hunt's father was a native speaker of English (probably a Scots dialect thereof). Hunt must have learned English in the home, but it is clear from Hunt's letters that he did not speak this language perfectly, either.

It may be that George Hunt was one of those individuals who are fluent in many languages, but speak all of them with some phonological, morphological or syntactical irregularities. Another case may help to illustrate this point. A professor known to this writer was born to Russian parents who had fled from the Bolshevik revolution to Shanghai. This individual grew up in China, received primary schooling in French, dwelt subsequently in various locales in Latin America and Africa, eventually settling in the United States, where he received his university degrees. This individual has been told that he speaks no language, even his supposedly native Russian, without an accent, yet he is perfectly at ease speaking, reading and writing in at least three.

Examined in detail, Hunt's linguistic history is nearly as complex and divided. As it turns out, Hunt may have spoken as many as four or even five different languages, at least three of them from completely different language families.

Hunt's parents spoke two of these languages: his father, English, and his mother, Tlingit. His parents may have spoken English to each other, but it seems likely that George spoke with his parents in their respective native languages.

Now, Hunt was born only five years after Fort Rupert was founded and in his early childhood only a handful of English-speakers lived at the settlement. Thus, as a child, his

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[4] Boas later published more textual material from other speakers in his final volume of texts (1935-43).

opportunities for using English outside the home on a daily basis were somewhat limited. On the other hand, the Fort Rupert employees and dependents included a number of Tlingit who had come down with the factors from Port Simpson when the post was built. George's mother kept company with these Tlingit, some of whom were fellow clanswomen from her home village of Tongass (Barbeau 1950: 654-5). Given Kwagul prejudice against the Tongass, and Mary Hunt's pride in her origins, it is reasonable to suppose that, at least in her first years in Fort Rupert, her day-to-day interaction was largely confined to the Tlingit. It seems likely that in his early years, George heard at least as much Tlingit outside the home as English or even Kwakw'ala. As an older boy, he also spent an unknown period of time with his Tlingit relatives in the north.

As for other languages, Hunt seems to have known at least a bit of one of the Tsimshian languages, which, given family connections on the Nass, and the geographical proximity of Tongass, may have been Nisga (Hunt, CU ms., vol. 12: 3371; Barbeau 1950: 653-5). He may also have learned some Haida from his mother's slave; Curtis gives a report of him conversing with a canoe-load of Haida during one photographic expedition (Graybill and Boesen 1976: 69). Then again, Hunt may have spoken with these Haida in Chinook jargon, which we know he could use: in one of his autobiographical narratives he tells of repeated encounters with Westcoast Indians in which they Zɘnuк̓aɫaḇa, "spoke Chinook [Zɘnuк̓] to each other" (CU ms., vol. 14: 2231-7).

These arguments suggest causes for the oddities in Hunt's Kwakw'ala. They do not, however, prove that any difficulty present-day speakers might experience with his texts is due to such oddities. In Boas' comments on this issue there is never any hint that Hunt experienced the slightest difficulty in making himself understood among the Kwagul of his own day. The conclusion to be drawn is not that Hunt was an incompetent speaker, but that the language has changed considerably. But in what way?

In evaluating Hunt's language abilities, it is important to note that Hunt's childhood exposure to Kwakw'ala was unusual. Because his birth had brought peace between the Tongass and the Kwagul, he was a regular participant at formal speech situations from a relatively young age: "I was called By the old chiefs of them in there feast which is called gigelkw kiwɘɫ [gigaɫк̓ к̓iɫ, "chief's feast"] when I was nine (9) years old... [because] the old chiefs say that through me the war was stoped" (Hunt to Boas 1/6/19). These "chiefs' feasts" Hunt mentions are feasts in which the guests are "all the chiefs of the tribes" (Boas 1921:1115), "all chiefs in a feast by themselves" (Hunt, CU ms., vol. 14: 2816). This is an age-graded feast; the guests are not just chiefs by rank but are also the elders of the various descent groups. The following gives an idea of the kind of thing Hunt heard at these feasts. The date is 1867, when Hunt was 13 (Hunt's English is distorted here because this comes from an interlinear translation):

they all of them Jokeing to Each other as they Eating. and when they finish then they all of them Drink... and when they done Drink the water then they sang a feasting song[,] the

first People['s] old songs of there forefathers... and when they Done singing the feasting song then Everyone [of] the feasters told the inviter of them for him not to Hurry with his second course. and only they cover up with the mat the second course... and now they telling to Each other the History of there First People [ancestors,] of where they came down [from heaven] to... I feel glad to Hear them try to Beat each other with these storys. and then most of the time they Promise to give away Property in there fight talk [ɢalapa]... and now I was all the time went and called By them when they go to feast the old men all chiefs (Hunt, CU ms., vol. 14: 2193-5).

As a child, then, Hunt sat among chiefs and retired chiefs very much his senior, absorbing formal oratory and myth from the oldest and highest-ranking Kwagul of the day. When Boas wrote that Hunt's usage corresponded to that of the older generation of Kwakw'ala speakers, he was referring to the generation older than Hunt: the chiefs at these feasts were men who had been children at the beginning of the nineteenth century or even earlier. If it is true that in his earlier years Hunt was exposed to Kwakw'ala only in limited contexts, these feasts would have had a proportionately greater influence on his speech.

What is interesting here is not merely Hunt's early and presumably intensive experience with the speech of men from an earlier era; it is also the style of speech that he was absorbing. As noted above, Hunt did not seem to have the slightest difficulty in making himself understood among his Kwagul contemporaries and their children in ordinary matters. Hunt's texts, however, with some important exceptions, do not concern ordinary matters. They are origin myths, formal genealogies, speeches, ceremonial songs. Even today the Kwakw'ala used in such genres is both morphologically more complex and lexically richer than everday Kwakw'ala (Levine 1977: 105).

In other words, "speaking" and "understanding" Kwakw'ala is not and was not an absolute matter. In discussing Hunt's competency, it is necessary to consider not merely grammar and lexicon but also style, genre and context. More than a single style of speaking exists, and even in Hunt's time not all speakers would have been equally competent in all styles. If formal oratory and myth recitation required a distinct, rich and complex style of speaking, it is probable that active competency would have been restricted to the chiefs and high-ranking nobles who were regularly required by their position to participate in the events in which that style was used. Lower-ranking nobles and commoners may have understood that style but not been able to produce it, or may even have understood little.

People learn what they have been exposed to, and become skilled in what they have practiced. By the 1930's, enforcement of the Canadian anti-potlatching laws had severely restricted the staging of the feasts, dances, and other public events at which this "formal" style of speaking would have been used, and thus for decades even the children of chiefs might have had limited exposure to it. It seems likely that the distribution of style competencies would be even more uneven today than it was in Hunt's time. Further, the differences between the most formal and complex speech style in use today, and everyday Kwakw'ala, would be considerably reduced. These questions, however, require further investigation.

At any rate, I do not believe we can dismiss the Kwakw'ala of Hunt's texts as aberrant and ungrammatical simply because it might be difficult for some Kwakw'ala speakers to understand today. Rather, I believe it is strongly influenced by the contexts in which Hunt learned Kwakw'ala -- in formal events in the company of the eldest, highest-ranking chiefs, some of whom may have been born well before 1800. The divergence between the speech in use during these events, and the everyday Kwakw'ala spoken today has been rendered greater by Hunt's idiosyncracies and errors and by the course of language change over the last 150 years.

4. THE PRODUCTION OF THE TEXTS.

Hunt was well aware that he did not always retain Boas' complete confidance. He protested to Boas that the Kwagul of the 20th century viewed him as a person knowledgeable in their culture, in their authentic, pre-European ways. "[L]ots of the midle age men comes to me," Hunt wrote, "and ask about the History of there famely and Even there names" (Hunt to Boas 9/28/18). By his own account, too, Hunt took great pains to ensure the accuracy of his information, frequently consulting elders on doubtful points (Hunt to Boas, 3/9/06, 2/4/20, 10/14/20).

Yet Boas continued to question Hunt's information -- or at any rate to push for corroborative evidence. In one case, Boas requested information on a copper C.F. Newcombe had bought in Fort Rupert. Hunt immediately identified the copper as having belonged to his mother, but Boas refused to take this statement seriously. After some correspondence on the subject, Hunt, exasperated, brought a group of Fort Rupert chiefs together and asked for their judgement. The chiefs agreed with Hunt: the copper was one of the four his mother had brought to Fort Rupert; the designs on it belonged to her family and told the same story as was to be found on the Seattle crest pole; and Charley Nowell, the Kwagul chief who had supplied Newcombe with the original information, had been inventing stories to amuse himself. Hunt gave Boas a list of names of old men who could witness the truth of the matter (Hunt to Boas 11/12/21, 12/4/21).

While Boas worried over Hunt's lapses from good Kwakw'ala, Hunt suffered his own linguistic tribulations. Early on, Hunt, who wrote in mission-school copperplate, tired of trying to decipher Boas' illegible scrawl. He begged, "Explain it in Printed letter so as there will be no mistake Between you and me" (4/21/97).

Other problems arose from Kwakw'ala elements which Hunt viewed as separate words and frequently wrote as such, but which Boas insisted on treating as suffixes. These include the category Boas called "word suffixes" and the person- and case-marking syntactic clitics. Hunt requested, "Put them as I do not two or three word together as you put them [not] âEmlaweise [but] instade âEm-lawisi or [not] gaxeᵋloL [but] gaxe lôL. then it is Easeyer to Read" (1/21/21).

Hunt also had to justify his use of demonstrative forms. Boas never did seem to arrive at a complete understanding of the Kwakw'ala demonstrative suffixes/clitics, and at one point took Hunt to task for the difference between forms found in third-person narrative and the forms used in first-person explanatory discourse. Hunt tried to explain it to him: "in the story it is not me telling it to you it is someone. and about the cooking I am telling it to you, so it is a long ways apart" (8/7/08 [APS 1927c: 414]).

Boas' Kwakw'ala orthography was another source of difficulties, too. For one thing, its complexity prevented the other ethnologists with whom Hunt came into contact from appreciating his achievements. Hunt worried, "Mr Dorsy told me that you and I the only two who can read my writing. for it is not spelled the right way. and also Dr Newcombe told me the same way." (4/12/18). To which Boas replied:

> I do not think you need to worry about what Dr. Dorsey and Dr. Newcombe say about our spelling. Neither of them have ever studied any Indian languages, and they do not know what they are talking about. Of course there are certain very fine shades that even we do not get (Boas to Hunt, 4/29/18).

Hunt received some comfort from the fact that "most of the Indian Boys say that our way of spelling is Better" (Hunt to Boas 4/12/18). However, the complexity of the orthography caused him problems as well. Boas' initial system, devised before he had advanced very far in his phonological understanding of Kwakw'ala, was quite clumsy. During the 1890's Hunt used this orthography, but it was difficult labor. In 1901, following Hunt's visit to New York, Boas and Hunt began to use a revised orthography, the one found in most of their publications. "I am writing great Deal faster in our new spelling," Hunt wrote in that year (4/4/01), "and I like it Better."

Nevertheless, even the revised orthography remained imperfect. Boas' system was devised before discovery of the phoneme, and its chief flaw was that it attempted to capture too many "fine shades" of pronunciation. The dozen or more vocalic characters in his orthography (i, î, e, ë, a, ā, ă, ä, o, u, ŭ, E) numbered far in excess of the five actual Kwakw'ala vowel phonemes (i, ε, a, o, u). While Boas' orthography is far easier for non-native speakers to pronounce than a completely phonemic one, it is clear that Hunt, a speaker since childhood, found it difficult to keep track of the mass of diacritics Boas required him to use. Correct spellings were a frequent topic of discussion in their correspondence. Many of the spelling mistakes Boas

complained about to him actually "err" in the direction of phonemicization, for example Hunt's early substitution of combinations of such combinations of gᵂE. kᵂE for Boas' preferred gŭ. kŭ -- for example, KwEkwakwlEm for Boas' preferred Kŭk̲ak!úm. Boas eventually, much later, adopted Hunt's spelling (cf. letter of Hunt to Boas, n.d., APS 1927c: 412).

Hunt pointed out to Boas that his ability to transcribe some words correctly depended upon the diction of the elder from whom he had obtained the information. One of the old story-tellers Boas and Hunt frequented was particularly hard to understand:

> now I can Pretty near can tell [from the transcription errors] the way way [sic] old Q!aled tell his story the old nEkEmgElisEla History teller. for he use to tell the story without opening his teeth. now Q!omkEnEs the L!aL!asek̲wala History teller use to bring his words out plain and long ways Different from old Q!alede. and that makes it Hard for Both of us (Hunt to Boas, 12/30/17).

The information in Hunt's manuscripts came from a variety of sources. In some cases he was able to supply the information out of his own head. Much of the information on food preparation in the massive 1921 publication came from Lucy Hunt; Hunt was hard-put to continue this work after her death (Hunt to Boas, 9/18/08). Very frequently, Hunt obtained stories and other information from knowledgeable Kwagul elders (2/4/20, 11/12/21). However, such consultation required funds, which he was repeatedly requesting from Boas: "I gots lots of Questions to asks from the old Peoples of things that I Dont know any about. and I would always have to Pay them something" (3/9/06, cf. 9/18/08, 10/27/08, 10/14/20).

Sometimes these consultations brought less than full enlightenment. Hunt more than once complained to Boas, "if you ask ten Indians about one History [myth] not two of them would speak it the same" (11/5/95, also 3/22/21). In some cases, when given conflicting versions or interpretations, Hunt came to conclusions based on his own knowledge and experience. Yet, overall, his faithfulness to the diversity of opinion among the Kwagul gives his work a range and complexity rarely encountered in ethnography, where the outsider-anthropologist typically consults only one or two "informants."

His letters reveal that when he did provide information based on his own conclusions, his judgements were astute. Once, Boas wrote asking him about the translations he supplied for names. "Do you get these meanings from the old people, or do you translate them from your own knowledge of the language?" (Boas to Hunt 9/17/18). To which Hunt replied:

> now about the Indian names I do ask some of my old Friends the meaning of these names. and most of the time there answer. comes Right to my translateing it. and some time I ask another old man. then some times he comes a little Defferent from the other. that is why some times you will find some of the name is translated Different from the other. and if I come to three old men. ask them the meaning of the name

QlomxaᵋlagEles... well one of the old men say. the meaning of this name is <u>Property Rolling Down Mountain</u>. and the other say <u>People Rolling Down from his Highness</u>. and the third one say. <u>all time Property Rolling Down from him</u>. now you will see in this name is told in three different ways By three men. now here when a mountain the stone and trees keeps on comeing Down a landslide. the Indeans calls it qlomxalagElis all times Rocks Rolling Down mounten. this means that the chief is a mountian. and Property that he gives away to the Defferent tribe is the Rock Rolling Down from his Body or Highness. So the Right meaning is <u>all times Property Rolling Down from his Body</u> (the mountian) and if I am not Pleased the way they translate the names then I translate them the way I see it Right way to Put it (Hunt to Boas 9/28/18).

It has been suggested that the texts are the result of Hunt pulling Boas' leg and getting paid for it (Maud 1982: 94). Yet Hunt's descendants bear out his claims of careful and frequent consultation to ensure accuracy. His daughter, Agnes Cranmer, recalled:

> He used to go around each village to find out ... the stories of the first generations of our people. And my father used to come home and write day and night. He used to be tired when he writes. He wasn't well educated, but he learned -- learned how it all goes ... (in Rohner 1966: 214).

Hunt's granddaughter, too, described how Hunt "always went around to various people with questions on some matter about which he wished to be correctly and fully informed" (Codere 1966: xxix).

It is important to note, however, that Hunt did not collect texts from dictation, as Boas did in the field. Rather, Hunt would hear a point explained, a story told, then come home and write it down. The narratives we have are <u>Hunt's</u> tellings of the story, not the words of the Indian who told the story to Hunt and whose name Boas often appended to the text in the published version.[5]

Hunt's attitude toward his work appears to have changed over time. From the beginning he presented himself to Boas as a man earnestly attempting to do his best. "[T]here is so much studying in this work to Do it Right for I Dont want to make mistakes," he wrote Boas (7/23/99). Yet in the first decades of their association, Boas had real cause for impatience and frustration, as Hunt's investigations were held up by other work, by frequent illness, by (especially in winter) the demands of traditional social life, and, perhaps, by lack of

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[5] Hunt's daughter described him at work:
"When he was writing at his table and could not think what to put down next he would get up and take a long walk fast to get it clear in his head, and right -- just like an old woman I once knew who did that when she was weaving a Chilkat blanket and needed to think what came next" (Agnes Cranmer, quoted in Codere 1966: xxix-xxx).

enthusiasm. By the 'teens and twenties Hunt's devotion to their work seemed to be on the increase. Perhaps, as with many, memory and tradition became more important to him as he grew older, as he saw the world changing around him. At this time also his age made a more sedentary life both attractive and necessary; by 1919, when Hunt was 67, he had been forced to give up all active economic pursuits other than some hunting and trapping (Hunt to Boas 5/9/19).

The full contribution of the lives and personalities of Boas and Hunt to the nature of the texts is a topic requiring a monograph in itself. On the one hand we have Boas, a workaholic German-Jewish intellectual, a liberal innovator with a literal, detail-oriented and at times prudish and inflexible mind, a museum collector as well as a linguist and ethnologist; and on the other Hunt, a Scots-Tlingit resident in a novel type of Kwagul community, a professional cultural middleman who did not completely belong to the culture he was brokering, an outsider who was at one and the same time an index of rapid and dislocating cultural change and a "real man" (baȟam) who had achieved status in the traditional system.

Though in this section we have been focusing on Hunt, Boas' influence on their collaboration can be seen by comparing the character of his work with that of Edward Curtis (1915), who also used Hunt as his primary informant. Curtis' work may be less accurate, but it is a lot more lively, and contains some rather lurid stories obtained from Hunt on topics barely even broached in Boas' ethnography, such as the role of sorcery accusations -- and practices -- in 19th-century political life.

Hunt's letters to Boas show flashes of his humor. "Well my Hear is gray all over But this story made it whiter to write it," Hunt once joked, regarding a long and complicated family history he had obtained from his wife's relatives (2/4/20). A few personal narratives, well hidden among the texts, reveal the relish for the lurid and dramatic that is evidenced in Curtis' volume (see, for example, Boas 1921: 713-8, 1363-1380; 1930, II: 257-260). Yet, overall, Hunt's relationship with Boas was imbued with a seriousness that seems to have completely overshadowed his lighter side.[6] Reading Hunt's texts, it is difficult to imagine that this is the man who, when Curtis tried wrestling octopus Indian-style and became trapped in the embrace of a giant, was so incapacitated with laughter that he was at first unable to rescue his employer (Graybill and Boesen 1976: 62-3).

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[6] This seriousness may have arisen from the great respect, trust, and gratitude Hunt seems to have felt towards Boas, expressed on several occasions (e.g. letters of 12/6/99, 4/7/16).

5 BOAS' RESEARCH PROGRAM: ITS GOALS AND ITS FLAWS

In 1897, only a few years after he and Boas had begun their collaborative effort, Hunt had already produced over three hundred pages of myth text and songs (Maud 1982: 87, 89). By the end of his life, no doubt spurred on by the 30 to 40 cents per page that Boas was paying him,[7] he had accumulated perhaps tens of thousands of pages, a good number of which were never published. What did Boas intend with this material?

Some might be tempted to dismiss Boas as a lazy ethnographer who had Hunt do his work for him, or as a collector of endless ethnographic trivia lacking a higher vision for anthropology. In his compilation of Hunt's texts, however, Boas had a serious aim in mind:

> I have spared no trouble to collect descriptions of customs and beliefs in the language
> of the Indians, because in these the points that seem important to him [sic] are
> emphasized, and the unavoidable distortion contained in the descriptions given by the
> casual visitor and student is eliminated (Boas 1909: 309).

Boas has been mentioned as being among the first anthropologists to practice "participant-observation" (Codere 1966: xxiv). Certainly fieldwork occupied an important place in Boas' overall notion of anthropological research, as did scholarly analysis and comparison. Yet, for Boas, to truly capture the Indian's mode of life, such endeavors were too far removed from the experiential world of the Indian. Only the expressions of the Indian's own mind -- whether myths or masks, dreams or dinner menus -- could accurately convey the nature of his world. The Kwakw'ala texts were meant to be a kind of cultural artifact in which Indian mentality was transparently crystallized, and readily accessible.

Hunt was by no means the only native speaker whom Boas encouraged to write texts. Boas seems to have enlisted any Indian with the requisite native-language ability and literacy skills, and the interest in doing it (Boas 1912; Boas 1917; Boas and DeLoria 1939; cf. Sapir and Swadesh 1955). In fact, one of Boas' Ph.D.s, Archie Phinney, was a Nez Perce Indian; Phinney's dissertation was a volume of Nez Perce texts collected from his mother (1934).

Boas saw such Indians as George Hunt, Louis Shotridge, Henry Tate, and Ella DeLoria not merely as sources of ethnographic information but as active gatherers, interpreters and composers of it. In token of this status, DeLoria's name appeared with Boas' on their Dakota grammar, as did Hunt's on the first two published volumes of Kwakw'ala texts. It is clear that along with the "professionally trained fieldworker," Boas had another kind of fieldworker in mind: the "native ethnographer." Since Boas first raised the issue, North American anthropology has been concerned with the problematic relationship between the Observer and the Observed, with the relativity of perception and understanding. This theme appears in yet another incarnation in the "reflexivity" and "deconstruction" of anthropology in the 1980's.[8] Yet Boas' solution to the problem he posed has been all but forgotten: to encourage the native to write ethnography.

Granting Boas' premises, there are some basic difficulties with his method. When Boas writes, "the points that seem important to him are emphasized," to whom does the singular pronoun him refer? Did Boas mean a generic Kwagul, bearer of a conscience collective? Or did he mean a particular Kwagul individual, the one who had produced the texts? The context of Boas' work as a whole, and of this passage in particular, and the nature of the Kwakw'ala texts, suggest the latter interpretation. In other words, the descriptions of Kwagul "customs and beliefs" reflect the experience of an individual. Yet Boas called them Kwakiutl texts, Kwakiutl tales, Kwakiutl ethnology. Boas held up the mentality crystallized in the texts as representative in some way of the Kwagul as a whole. Boas was well aware of the problem of cultural and linguistic variability (for instance, (1940 [1933]: 450), but he never presented his thinking on the relationship between Kwagul individual and Kwagul Culture.

And to complicate this issue, the individual who produced most of the Kwakw'ala texts was not Kwagul. He was part Scots and part Tlingit. While George Hunt seems to have been a conscientious and dependable ethnographer, the extent to which his texts are manifestations of a Kwagul point of view is problematic. Aware as Boas was of Hunt's non-Kwagul identity, the manner in which Boas presented Hunt's material is disingenuous, if not deceiving. This is particularly true of narratives in which Hunt himself is an actor.[9]

The account of Hunt's shamanic initiation and training was mentioned above (Boas 1930, vol. 1: 1-40). Boas included this account, written in the first person, in a publication in which the Kwakw'ala texts were placed in one volume and the English translations in another. A preface mentioning Hunt's origins appears in the text volume; the preface to the volume of translations has a completely different content. Only the very careful reader is going to look at both prefaces.

Another account well-known in the anthropological literature is Boas' description of the 1894 winter dances at Fort Rupert, appearing in The secret societies and social organization of

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[7] According to Holm and Quimby the fee was usually 33 1/3 cents per page (1980: 48); according to Hunt's descendants, 40 cents per page (Codere 1966: xxix). From the Boas-Hunt correspondence, it is clear that fees were continually renegotiated. Boas' general policy was to pay Hunt a rate that was competitive with whatever he could get doing other kinds of work.

[8] I would like to acknowledge Igor Kopytoff (personal communication) for this insight.

[9] Boas did acknowledge Hunt's origins briefly in the prefaces to some, but not all, of the text volumes (Boas and Hunt 1905: 3; 1930, vol. I: ix), and he occasionally made somewhat cryptic references to them elsewhere (e.g. 1921: 1001; 1966: 191f).

the Kwakiutl (1897) and Kwakiutl ethnography (1966: 179-241). Though disguised for most readers behind their Indian names, George Hunt and his family are featured rather prominently. George is called both Nuⱡquⱡala (his winter name) and the "father of Yaǧis"; his eldest son David is referred to as Ñemuǧis (his secular name), as Yaǧis (his winter name), and as the "principal Cannibal dancer of the Kwaguⱡ"; the Tongass noblewoman Mary Ebbetts Hunt is called by the Kwakw'ala name Musgamxⱡala. Boas presents the Hunts' activities during the events as typically Kwagul, despite the fact that Mary, George, and many of the prerogatives they displayed were Tlingit (see Boas 1966: 183-191 et seg.).

Or, yet again, in the section on marriage in Kwakiutl ethnography, Boas tells the story of Hunt's marriage to Lucy without ever mentioning Hunt's name or origins. The account begins as follows:

> As an example of the elaborate procedures, I will describe a marriage which occurred in 1872, about which the husband told me in great detail. The wife of the chief, Ten-Fathom-Face, proposed to the young man to marry the granddaughter of Property-Coming-up, "a sensible girl." Since the young man had no relatives but was highly respected, Ten-Fathom-Face took charge of his marriage (Boas 1966: 56-7).

Here, Boas is actually stating an untruth. Hunt certainly had relatives in Fort Rupert; he merely had no Kwagul relatives. While it seems likely that large portions of his marriage proceedings took place according to the usual Kwagul practice of the time, other portions of it were distinctly unusual, if not unique. Given that nineteenth-century Kwagul lived in corporate descent groups, and were capable of reckoning genealogies of up to 20 or 25 generations in depth, it was impossible for a young man to have no relatives. Any young person of noble birth who had lost parents or even grandparents by misfortune would still have had a number of more distant (by our reckoning) relatives willing to act on his or her behalf. One interesting question raised by the account of Hunt's marriage is why Chief Ten-Fathom-Face (Naqaⱡankam, a well-known war leader of the middle nineteenth century) and his wife agreed to sponsor the entry into Kwagul society of the son of a Tongass mother and a white trader. Boas neglects to mention that Hunt's proposed bride was Naqaⱡankam's neice, which is certainly an important factor in the equation. At any rate, it is misleading to present these marriage proceedings as typically Kwagul (The original first-person account by Hunt is to be found in CU ms. vol. 14: 2193-2238).

Other published accounts that feature George Hunt include two family histories, one that ends with the succession of his sons to chief's seats (1921: 951-1002), the other, with George's second marriage (1921:1003-1074); and an account of his son Jonathan's marriage (1925). In these accounts Hunt's identity is mentioned only once, in a footnote, as "the narrator, who by descent is not a member of the tribe" (1921: 1001f).

A third difficulty with Boas' execution of his research goals is his apparent disregard for a set of serious ethnogeneric issues. The primary form in which Hunt embodied his ethnographic information, the written ethnographic text, is not one that was native to Kwagul culture. Boas taught Hunt how to write with his Kwakw'ala orthography and how to put in interlinear English glosses, and then asked specific questions of Hunt which he wanted answered in Kwakw'ala -- Boas did not publish Hunt's English responses to questions. The texts did not originate as spontaneous or even elicited performances of a native oral-literary genre; they were composed by Hunt with the goal of creating written Kwakw'ala texts for Boas. Nothing like these would ever have been made if Boas had not trained and paid Hunt to do it, and guided him with questions as he did do it.

Of course, Hunt, who spent long hours even as a child listening to the narratives and oratory of chiefs, must have drawn in whole or part on the formal rules and proprieties of existing Kwagul oral genres of explanation, description, and narration. However, these rules and proprieties were assimilated into the new, descriptive, written style Hunt was creating for Boas. The limited comparative material we have suggests that this style differs from ordinary oral narration several ways, among them being the redundancy of certain discourse particles (Berman 1983); and in more repetition, wordy emphasis, and greater numbers of dependent clauses than we find elsewhere (Boas had trained Hunt well as an academic writer?). It is hard to say whether this is simply Hunt's personal style, whether it was due to being paid by the page, or whether it reflects his early experience with old-time oratory.

A fourth issue is Boas' neglect of context. The texts are not perfect embodiments of Kwagul culture springing full-grown from the mind of George Hunt. Instead they emerge out of the intersection and interaction of two different personal and cultural frames of reference. Boas and Hunt had a personal relationship of shared labor, losses and triumphs that lasted over 40 years. Boas' questions, and Hunt's answers to them, are each guided and shaped by their own needs as well as by assumptions about the emotions, desires, knowledge and ignorance of the other person. One reminder in the texts of this interactional context, lost in English translation, are Hunt's metanarrative comments which use the Kwakw'ala third-person-near-second-person demonstrative forms yu, yaxux, laxux, "this thing [the text] that is near you." In his Kwakw'ala, Hunt explicitly marked the fact that the texts were communications addressed to someone.

Leaving the personal context of research out of scholarly publications, as Boas did, is hardly abnormal. It is, however, unusual in anthropology to omit the scholarly frame of reference that guided the research, or the cultural frame of reference that informs and gives significance to the collected data. In the case of the Kwakw'ala texts, Boas did both.

Boas paid Hunt to write texts as a way of collecting Kwagul ethnographic material that

would be free of his own perceptual and interpretive bias. Yet the scope, focus and internal order of the textual material arise from the non-Kwagul framework within which Boas was working. Boas' investigations were far more highly structured than one would ever gather from the way in which he presented material in the text volumes.

Boas' investigations proceeded in a logical order. In the '90's, Boas was most concerned with collecting material culture for museums; he moved from this to, in the first decade of the twentieth century, an examination of technology and foodways, and then to ethnozoology and ethnobotany. By the latter part of that decade he had started in earnest on social organization, a subject which he actively pursued until the '20's, when he began questioning Hunt about "the way the Indians think and feel" (letter of Boas to Hunt, 9/29/20).

While studying any one of these topics, he pursued information in an orderly and systematic fashion. For example, Boas began his in-depth investigation of traditional social organization by asking Hunt for a description of the residents of a single bighouse (guk̓), and how the residents were related. When Hunt sent back a diagram and description with much genealogical information (Hunt to Boas 2/9/06; see Boas to Hunt 2/28/06), Boas responded,

> Day before yesterday your description of the people of YaxLEns house came into my hands. While I am very much pleased with what you have given me, I think that your statement might be even a little fuller. Thus I should like to know to what brother tribe (Kw. ṅəmimut, "descent group") YaxLEn and omx[ɛ]it belong by birth, whether it was their father's or their mother's brother tribes, what names they have had since they were children, and to what brother tribes these names belonged, also whether with these names they took their seats in the different brother tribes, then what their winter names were, and where they got them. You have given some of this in regard to YaxLEn['s] children, but I should like to have the whole thing just as full as possible.

Later that year, Boas moved from residence and descent to the topic of marriage proscriptions.

> One of the things in which I am very much interested is to know what marriages are forbidden by the Kwakiutl. For instance, would a man marry his cousin on his father's side? Can a man marry his cousin on his mother's side? Must a man, after his brother's death, marry his brother's widow? May two brothers marry two sisters? (11/5/06).

By 1911, he had begun his study of social organization in earnest.

> There are still a number of points that I do not understand very clearly in the laws of the Kwakiutl; and I believe the best way to make it clear to me is if you will take the trouble to take any one of the families of Fort Rupert, which you know so well, and begin the life of a few particular men and women from the time of their birth... You will see what I should like to have is the real family history of a number of people. We have a good many of the laws, but I shall understand them very much better if I can see how

they really work out in the case of a number of particular men and women.... I hope you will take all pains to... write it out with all possible detail (5/20/11).

Boas has been criticized for his "particularism" (Harris 1968), for the endlessness, obscurity, and triviality of his texts; yet those "obscure" texts are Hunt's responses to perfectly standard anthropological queries on such topics as the use of a particular plant species or the possibilty of parallel-cousin marriage. The family histories were intended by Boas to be case studies, to help him sort out the still-controversial topics of Kwagul descent, inheritance and marriage. They are full of particularist detail because, as he told Hunt (with regard to inheritance and succession),

> You know that the question of position in inheritance among the Kwakiutl is so difficult that you cannot be too detailed in getting information, and I think the best way of straightening the matter out is to get the actual position and the actual changes in position in the case of some people and their families (3/6/06).

The missing scholarly frame of reference explains what is absent in Boas' work as well as what is present. For example, Boas has been criticized for his "neglect of commoners": "A major deficiency in Boas' work with the Kwakiutl was his neglect of the patterns and behavior of the lower classes: his nearly exclusive concern with the nobility and his presentation of this picture as representative of Kwakiutl life..." (Ray 1980 [1955]): 159). This neglect, found in Boas' analytic writings as well as the texts, has a significance which has been completely misunderstood. Boas made a concerted effort to extract such information from Hunt. He wrote:

> If I am to understand the whole matter thoroughly, I ought to know also about the names of some of the chiefs of lower rank...; and also the same for some of the common people. For me the names and the rights of the common people are just as important as those of the people of high blood (letter of Boas to Hunt, 10/13/17).

And, months later, when this appeal drew no response:

> There is one thing that I have very much at heart. You always tell me about the chiefs and the highest men in the tribe. If I am to understand the matter clearly, I ought to know also the names of some of the people of low rank -- how they get them, whether they come from father to son, and how they are obtained in marriage. If I am to understand really [sic] the Kwakiutl , the rights of the common people are just as important as those of the people of high blood (Boas to Hunt, 1/16/18).

When Hunt finally replied, it was with the terse statement, "[about] the Poor men... this is hard to get for they shame to talk about themselves" (Hunt to Boas, 2/4/18). The "neglect of commoners" did not arise from <u>Boas'</u> frame of reference, but, apparently, from the <u>Kwagul</u> frame of reference.

As an aside, it should be noted that Boas was not solely responsible for the direction of

the Kwagul research. Hunt sometimes initiated the investigation of topics he thought Boas should learn about. For instance, after Lucy Hunt had been ill for many months, Hunt wrote,

> Now here after I will try to get all the Deffrent kind of Indian mediciens such as wind caller and to stop the South East [wind] and medicens to kill or to take life Back, and all the old fations mediciens for there sick people what was used in the old times. one of this Indian medicien I am using on my wife this last 5 Weeks and it is the only thing that is Doing lot of good. So I think it is good to have all this in you Museum" (12/6/99).

Boas responded to his suggestion enthusiastically.

> I am very glad to think that... you are trying to get all the different kinds of Indian medicines... You know that we have nothing of that kind in our collections so far, and it is a very good thing that you are beginning to get them. I wish... after you are through with the [story] you are sending me now, that you would write down whatever you can learn about these medicines (12/22/99).

Without knowledge of the questions that generated them (or failed to do so), the Kwakw'ala texts not only present a misleading record of Boas' own scholarship, they also fall short in the purpose Boas intended for them, which was to express the Kwagul point of view free of an outsider's bias. The texts are -- if we beg for a moment the question of Hunt's origins and training -- Kwagul answers to questions interpreted so as to have meaning within a Kwagul framework. The way in which Hunt processed and answered Boas' questions tells at least as much about what was in his mind as the subject matter of the texts in and of itself. The texts may seem obscure, endless and trivial to some 20th century anthropologists, but they contain much that was clearly understood and important to Hunt.

As an example, there is the large quantity of myths found among the texts. This is not simply a product of Boas' well-attested interest in oral literature. Hunt responded to many different kinds of questions by offering a myth, or a reference to a myth. When Boas and Hunt were in their museum-collection period, Hunt supplied the origin myth for every mask and feast dish that Boas bought. "You say that you want a good set of LagEkw [red-cedar bark ornaments for the winter ceremonial]. now I will try to get a full set of Each kind. But it will take me more time to Do Buy all this for I have to get the Hole stories of it" (4/3/98). While it is clear that Boas was also interested in fully documenting each piece, Hunt saw the object and the myth of its origin as inseparable. Boas, on the other hand, broke object and myth apart, placing the object in a museum, the myth in a text volume, and never mentioning in the text volume the connection between the two. Over twenty years later, Boas wrote asking for "as clear and systematic a description as possible" of Kwagul cosmography (3/7/21). Despite repeated requests, Hunt never supplied the "clear and systematic description" Boas hoped for. Hunt's response, instead, was to seek out and record myths that contained cosmographic information

(found in Boas 1935-42, vol. II: 189-209).

For Hunt, the myths were not simply stories about the past; they explained the nature of the traditional, pre-European Kwagul present. There were certainly aspects of traditional culture and practice for which Hunt could not discover a mythic explanation, but he always assumed that the myth existed. Thus, when Boas asked him about the Kwagul view of eclipses, he replied,

> Now about the eclipse of the moon and sun. I am trying to find out about the story of the great mouth in the Heavens that swallow the moon or sun. But so far I could not get any one to tell me... in the old time when there is Eclipse of the moon or sun I heard the Indians all cry out, Hoqwä, hoqwä or Vomet, vomet the Indians calls Eclipes nEgEkw. or swallowed. so that there must Be a story about it. or Else the old People would not know about the great mouth of the Heaven that is Right in the Road of the sun and moon (10/20/21).

Thus, while Boas placed all the myths together in his text volumes, the myth texts themselves were actually generated by questions concerning a wide variety of topics. The relationship between the question and the myth with which Hunt replied reveals a great deal about how Hunt thought.

-- All of which brings us to the next point. Not only is the context of Boas' ethnological thinking missing from the published texts: the Kwagul cultural context, within which the texts are supposed to have their original significance, is missing as well. This lack of cultural context makes it unlikely that the reader will understand even the bare subject matter of many texts, much less the point of the exposition as a whole. For example, Boas nowhere indicates that some myth narratives were owned by noble descent lines and some lay in the public domain. Apparently, for Boas both categories were equally expressive of the Kwagul experience and so had equivalent significance. But these two categories of narrative were emphatically not equivalent: they had different functions, different performance contexts, different and even opposing thematic concerns. Some owned myths even had two versions, one short and public, the other long and secret (Hunt to Boas 3/10/17). Hunt obtained some myths in full form only because of his wife's connections (e.g. Boas 1921: 1222-1248; Hunt to Boas 2/28/17). Boas neither mentions that there were separate public and private versions of these myths, nor identifies which is which.

The paucity of explanatory annotation and commentary is perhaps Boas' biggest failing with regard to the texts. Not only are the text volumes themselves bare of annotation that might provide the kinds of context we have been discussing, Boas' comments on the texts in other volumes (1897, 1966: 299-317) are sparse and unsatisfactory in light of modern notions about meaning in expressive culture. Boas' minimalist approach to the texts does not prevent

distortion; it has the opposite effect. Cultural objects draw their significance from their cultural context. When such objects lose their contexts they lose their meaning.

Without annotation and explanation, the main clues to the meaning of the texts lie within the texts. But the average reader does not understand Kwakw'ala. It is to the translations, and only the translations, that the vast majority of readers turn. In fact, every major re-analysis of Boas' Kwagul material thus far published has used the English translations as raw data (e.g. Locher 1932, Müller 1955, Reid 1974, 1979; Goldman 1975; Dundes 1979; Walens 1981; Goldman looked at the Kwakw'ala but made many mistakes in his handling of Kwakw'ala terms). Such work is an act of uncommon faith. Boas, however, was neither omniscient nor infallible, and the translations are far from perfect. The last area we will consider in discussing the origins of the Kwakw'ala text collections is Boas' role as a translator.

6. BOAS AS A TRANSLATOR.

George Hunt supplied interlinear English to all the Kwakw'ala texts that he composed; however, Boas revised this English in sometimes radical ways. The changes are extensive enough to qualify as a new translation.

Sometimes Boas' alterations smooth over the awkwardness of the word-by-word translation, correct a non-standard usage, or change a colloquial turn of phrase to one Boas may have felt was more appropriate for a scholarly publication. For example, Hunt writes "know he... that his Belly Busted open for his guts as it only now scater all onto the Rocks" (CU ms., vol. 14: 2178). For this passage, Boas has "[he] knew that his belly burst, for his intestines were just scattered over the rocks" (1935-43, vol. I: 206).

Other alterations have no obvious purpose, as for instance when Boas, in the same text, substitutes "cave" for Hunt's "hole in rock" -- the Kwakw'ala word is x̌aba, literally, " hole or hollow in rock," and it refers to the entrance to a cave, not the cave itself. Taken together, Boas' alterations render the original interlinear English more intelligible, but they also frequently change both the feeling and even the denotative sense of a passage.

The deficiences to be found in Boas' translations do not stem from a faulty knowledge of Kwakw'ala. The worst Boas' Kwagul contemporaries could say about his command of their language was that he spoke too slowly (Codere 1966: xxv). Boas was a great and innovative linguist for his day, and his Kwakw'ala grammars (1911, 1947), though not without errors and omissions, are still highly usable.

Boas' biggest difficulty seems to be with the cultural categories, concepts and analogies which are expressed in the texts. Since he did not always understand these well, there is sometimes a highly problematic relationship between the Kwakw'ala of the texts and his

English gloss. Scholars search for clues to Kwagul culture in Boas' English, but many vital clues did not survive translation.

Boas often glosses terms for Kwagul cultural categories inconsistently (cf. Goldman 1975: 10). For instance, he translates the Kwakw'ala word nuyam variously as "myth," "story," "legend," and "tradition." Boas' emphasis on the need to record the native's thinking in his own words did not seem to apply to English words. All of Boas' glosses for nuyam differ from George Hunt's gloss, "History."[10] Another important example is the term k̓is?u, which Boas translated as "crest," "privilege," "dance," "mask," and even "name." Hunt also gives more than one gloss for this term, but he prefers "title," apparently in the legal sense, and calls the one in possession of the title, k̓is?unux̌, the "title owner" or the "Hereditry owner."

Conversely, Boas' translations contain Kwakw'ala terms which appear to correspond to Kwagul cultural categories which do not. A particularly troublesome example is "Kwakiutl" (Kw. K̓agut). Consider the following passage:

> The people speaking the K̓agut dialect inhabit many villages, each of which is considered as a separate unit, a tribe... Setting aside the tribes speaking the Bella Bella dialect, whose social organization differs from the K̓agut, we may distinguish two closely related dialects among the K̓agut (Boas 1966: 37)

In the first line of this passage, K̓agut is a language (the old sense of "dialect"). In the third line, it has become, at one and the same time, a group of "tribes" defined according to language (those who speak the K̓agut language, those who speak the two dialects of the K̓agut language which are not the Bella Bella dialect of the language); and a group of "tribes" defined according to type of social organization (the Bella Bella and the K̓agut, both speaking the K̓agut language, are distinguished according to social organization). All three are ethnological definitions of K̓agut, and not native cultural understandings of what the word means. George Hunt uses the term K̓agut for only two referents: for the four tribes living at Fort Rupert, and for the single Fort Rupert tribe that he also, when the sense would otherwise be unclear, called the G̓itala.

Another example is Boas' use of the word "potlatch" as a generic term for the activity of, as he defined it, "distribution of property" (1966: 77; 1897: 341). The word "potlatch" derives from Chinook Jargon, and it does not correspond to any single named category in Kwagul culture (Curtis 1915: 142; cf. also Goldman 1975: 131-3). George Hunt does not use the term in his interlinear English, preferring general phrases such as "give away."

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[10] In general, one would get the impression from Boas' presentation of the texts that the Kwagul of his time used no English at all. Some did speak English, and some used English names in addition to their Kwagul names. One frustration in trying to make use of Boas' material is the difficulty in matching up the Kwagul names mentioned in the text with the English names given in English-language descriptions of the Kwagul.

The variety of types of social events that Boas calls "potlatches" are in Kwakw'ala
referred to by a corresponding variety of terms. Consider the following passage:

> Wε, la?amla?i Maxa... yax̌?itsa muxsuk̓i ?alagam laxa gigagamayasa Qumuyo?i λawa
> Walasi K̓aguła. Wε, hi?amlawisi Qumk̓ułasi... Wε, la?amlai Maxayalizi wałqisasa
> muxsuk̓i ?alagam... laxis nag̓ampi Maxa... yaxs la?a?al p̓as?idayuwida muxsuk̓i ?alagam...
> laxa galε K̓aguła (Boas 1921: 971).

> "Maxa... gave away [yax̌?id] forty dressed skins among the chiefs of the Qumuyo?i and
> the Walas K̓aguł. And also the Qumk̓ułas... Maxayalizi gave away [wałqisa] forty dressed
> skins... to his son-in-law Maxa... and now he [Maxa] gave away [p̓as?id] forty dressed
> skins... to the old-time K̓aguł [i.e. the G̓itala]."

In this passage each giveaway of forty dressed skins involves recipients of different status
and role, and is described using a different verb. When the chief Maxa gives skins to the chiefs
of other tribes, the verb used is yax̌?id; when his father-in-law gives skins to him, the verb is
wałqisa; and when Maxa gives skins to members of his own tribe the verb is p̓as?id.

Some Kwakw'ala terms for property distribution refer specifically to giveaways of skins
or blankets, others to canoes or coppers, and still others to property in general. Almost all are
tied to specific events in the life-cycle of chiefs. For example, the term p̓as?id, which appears
in the passage quoted above, is linked to the passage into adulthood of a chief's or noble's heir.
When a nineteenth-century chief wished his heir to take up an adult's role, he called together
his tribe to witness (xič̓axala) the child's change of status. The young man or woman was given
a hereditary family name -- in Kwakw'ala called a "house-name" (λagamił) -- and installed in
the ranked "seat" in the descent group that corresponded to it. The chief gave away furs and
skins, or, later in the 19th century, woolen blankets, on his heir's behalf. This was called
p̓as?id or p̓asa; all give-aways thereafter by the heir to his or her own tribe would also be
called p̓asa (Boas 1966:100-3; Curtis 1915: 142; Boas ms. #1927.b).[11] Probably because of this
association between adult status, hereditary house-names, and p̓asa giving, the house-names
were sometimes also called p̓azaxλeyu or p̓acaos λagam, both meaning, roughly, "name used in
p̓asa giving." Misleadingly, Boas translates the terms as "potlatch name." There were, however,
a number of types of property distribution during which such house-names would not be used at
all. For example, when a chief distributed the marriage gifts (qutixa) he had received from his
father-in-law, he would use the name he had acquired through that marriage (Boas 1921: 787).

Sometimes Boas will translate metaphors literally. The Kwagul tend to use a highly
figurative style, especially when speaking on such topics as rank, wealth, and religion, and this

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[11] High-ranking chiefs might give away at this event to several tribes (yax̌?id).

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practice can produce a bewildering effect: giving away blankets is "swallowing the tribes"
(1897: 580), the elder of twin brothers is the "head fish," the assistant to a dance society
novice is a "mouth healer" (n.d. 102-3). Boas does explain some of these metaphors somewhere
in his work, usually in some other volume. However, even in his publication devoted to Kwagul
metaphor (1940 [1929]) there is a paucity of information on the concepts behind the metaphor,
the underlying analogies that his speakers are drawing. Why is giving away blankets like
swallowing a tribe?

More frequently, Boas will replace a rich Kwakw'ala metaphor with a non-metaphorical
term. For instance, one text describes a conflict over control of the weather, fought between
the thunderbirds of heaven and the birds of earth. The chief of the latter is named G̓áldam (Boas
and Hunt 1905: 295-317). On the face of it g̓áldam refers to the bird we call the "flicker" --
either Colaptes auratus or C. cafer, both members of the woodpecker family. However, the
literal meaning of G̓áldam, Flicker, is "Fiery," probably in reference to the golden or salmon-red
wing- and tail-linings visible as the bird flies overhead (Peterson 1961: 138-9). Boas simply
translates the name as "Woodpecker." It must be significant that the chief fighting for summer
and sunny weather is named "Fiery," but the significance is obscured by Boas' failure to
translate the name correctly.

Boas has particular difficulties with the topological specificity of Kwakw'ala. Boas'
grammars and glossaries (1911, 1921, 1947) and his dictionary (n.d.) show that he understood
how such information was expressed from the standpoint of morphology, grammar, and lexicon.
However, his translations do not reveal a similar understanding of its importance in narrative
imagery. In translations, he often treats the precise topological information expressed in the
Kwakw'ala as if it were superfluous. In one of Hunt's texts, the hero reaches what Boas calls
the "edge of the world" (Boas and Hunt 1905: 72). This "edge of the world" is not, as Western
readers would expect, the edge of a horizontal plane which overhangs nothingness. In
Kwakw'ala, the term used is k̓uk̓-, which Hunt translates as "Reast on by the edge" (CU ms., vol.
14: 2180) and means literally "[large] plane stands vertically on edge." The Kwagul "edge of the
world" is a wall that encloses the world.

Another example is Boas' treatment of the spirit name Baxbak̓alanuxsiul?. Boas' gloss,
"Cannibal at the rivermouth," is based on a folk etymology interpreting baxbak̓ala- as "eating
humans," and the suffix -xsiu as "rivermouth." The spirit name actually comes from the
neighboring and related language Oowekyala. In Oowekyala, baxbak̓ala- means "manifesting as
human" and -xsiu means "passing through an aperture" (Hilton and Rath 1982), probably in
reference to the process of initiation (cf. Boas 1966: 173-4).[12] Now, the Kwagul folk etymology

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[12] The Oowekyala suffix -xsiu "through" corresponds to Kwakw'ala -xso "through" but not to Kwakw'ala -xsiu

clearly expresses concepts important to the Kwagul. However, Boas' gloss of this etymology does not necessarily communicate these concepts. A non-human spirit eating humans is not cannibalistic, merely predatory. Further, Boas' gloss of "rivermouth" for -xsiu, while not, strictly speaking, incorrect or inadequately specific, has led to a misapprehension by English-speaking anthropologists, fueling commentary on "orality" in Kwagul culture (Dundes 1979; Goldman 1975; Walens 1981; cf. Sanday 1986). A "rivermouth" in Kwakw'ala is not what we in English would call a "mouth." A "mouth" in Kwakw'ala is the opening into a bag, bottle, house, room, or the entrance to a bay -- the opening into a hollow object or enclosed space. A river, on the other hand, is classed as a long object. Thus, such geographical terms as ?uǧextoi? "headwaters of river," and ?ubaɬċani? "river delta," are literally "bank on top of a vertical long object" and "fingers at end of horizontal long object." A better, if unwieldy gloss of the Kwagul folk etymology of Baxbakalanuxsiui? might be "[the spirit who] eats humans at the river's end."

Another peculiarity of Boas' work which affects his translation efforts is his tendency to focus on detail rather than pattern. This exacerbates all the problems already discussed. For example, the names of Kwagul supernaturals are often descriptive of their attributes, i.e. Miǧatam "Seal face" for a supernatural Seal, Namċaqiu "One horn on forehead" for a supernatural Mountain Goat; Meisila "Fish-maker" for a Salmon-woman who can create fish; Hayalbalisala "Going from one end of the earth to the other in a single day" for a Loon who can do exactly that. If Boas had perceived the pattern in this practice, he might have realized that the Flicker chief's name, "Fiery," is probably intended as description of an actual attribute of this character, a chief who really does burn like the sun. He might have been more likely to give a literal gloss for the name.

These characteristics do not affect all of Boas' translations the same way. In some of Boas' translations, the distortions of the Kwakw'ala originals are relatively minor, affecting only details of interpretation. In others, the general outlines of the story are present, but important elements are missing and invisible, and other, alien features placed to seem as if they belonged. In a very few texts, plot and imagery have been altered out of all recognition (see Berman, in press). Overall, it is important to recognize that Boas' translations need to be approached with considerable caution, and that, while more intelligible than Hunt's word-by-word English, they are not necessarily more accurate.

6. CONCLUSION.

In this essay we have examined how the volumes of Kwakw'ala texts published by Boas came into being. The texts originated in a collaboration between Boas and a "native

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"river's end."

ethnographer," George Hunt. Boas hoped that the texts would form a record of Kwagul culture that was undistorted by the non-native observer's biased perceptions and understandings. However admirable this goal, a number of potential flaws appeared in the execution of his plan. We have discussed a number of problems: the most important issues overall would seem to be Hunt's non-Kwagul origins; the decontextualization of his texts as published; and the unreliability of Boas' translations. The fact that these were composed as written documents rather than transcribed from oral performances is a crucial issue as well.

Despite these problems, I believe Hunt's texts must be taken seriously as ethnographic documents, if not, perhaps, as pure and authentic Kwagul thought. Hunt, though born an outsider to the Kwagul, nevertheless occupied a special place within their community from infancy. He grew up among the Kwagul, pursued status and identity among the Kwagul, married two Kwagul women, fathered Kwagul children who became prominent Kwagul chiefs, and died among the Kwagul at the age of 79. He certainly has a claim to be knowledgeable in the Kwagul way of life. If the point of his texts is not always clear to the 20th century anthropologist, I believe this is because the context within which he was operating is missing from the texts as published. Once known, the ethnological questions he was trying to answer, and the cultural concepts that shaped the answers he gave, show a much clearer picture of his work.

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