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THE COGNITIVE STRUCTURE OF ART APPRECIATION: A STUDY ON NORTHWEST COAST ART

Abstract

This paper addresses the aesthetic appreciation of indigenous creative practices, with a focus on the mental processes at play in such acts of appreciation. My hypothesis is that to develop an understanding of human cognition through art, it might be useful to look at art more expansively, by considering creative practices that are not usually within the purview of Western philosophical systems. More specifically, I will draw on examples from indigenous societies of the Pacific Northwest that encompass everything from utilitarian objects to ritual artefacts used in ceremonial circumstances and dance performances etc. to argue that aesthetic appreciation is shaped by a shared cognitive repertoire[1] of processes and capacities.

Keywords: art appreciation, indigenous aesthetics, aesthetic cognition, Northwest Coast art

1. Introduction

This paper aims to provide a framework for studying the cognitive structure of art appreciation, i.e., mechanisms and mental processes that shape our encounters with art and with stimuli of potential aesthetic interest, while focusing on indigenous creative practices from the cultural area of Northwest Coast. I argue that to develop an understanding of human cognition through art, it might be useful to look at art more expansively, by considering practices that are not usually within the purview of Western philosophical systems. Ultimately, the paper aims to challenge normative questions of what constitutes art and aesthetic appreciation.

In seeking an alternative to metaphysical systems that usually inform discussions about art and aesthetic appreciation, I begin by setting the discussion within a natural scientific framework, i.e., a framework which

encompasses types of inquiry that are based on explanations derived from natural science such as cognitive anthropology and cognitive psychology. I then provide a brief survey of the artistic expression of the indigenous communities from the Pacific Northwest, mostly from the Canadian province of British Columbia, and look at concepts of spirituality in these art practices. Finally, I give some insight into how a certain type of aesthetic receptiveness of the Northwest Coast art gradually came about and draw some theoretical consequences with respect to the evolution of aesthetic traditions.

2. Converging Methodologies: Cognitive Anthropology and Indigenous Art Studies

My starting hypothesis is that the study of indigenous creative practices may serve to re-conceptualize and refine the cognitive concepts that could accommodate the distinctiveness of aesthetic appreciation, if there is such distinctiveness of aesthetic response. What principles underlie indigenous appreciative practices and, more specifically, what principles of cognition may derive from these practices? In order to find elements of response to this question, it might be useful to draw on natural scientific areas of inquiry, such as cognitive anthropology. If the question of how anthropology relates to the study of art[2] is well documented, less attention has been paid to the ways in which cognitive anthropology might inform aesthetic appreciative response.

At a subpersonal, computational level, which is less "cognitively blind",[3] as some proponents of evolutionary theory would have it, cognitive anthropology is focused on culturally shared intuitive inference systems that act as invariant[4] base modules of human cognition and are deemed to be responsible for capacities

> such as detecting people's line of gaze, assessing people's attractiveness, parsing sentences, telling friends from enemies, detecting the presence of pathogens, sorting animals into species and families, creating three-dimensional visual scenes, engaging in cooperative action, predicting the trajectory of solid objects, detecting social groups in our community, creating emotional bonds to one's offspring, understanding narratives, figuring out people's stable personality traits, estimating when violence is appropriate or counterproductive, thinking about absent people, learning

what foods are safe, inferring dominance from social interactions—and many, many more.[5]

At a personal level, cognitive anthropology studies the structure of collective representations shared within communities which are often radically different from the ones we know. Some examples of shared representations include particular mental constructs, concepts referring to physical properties – this is where native understandings of and interaction with the physical world are highly relevant, such as the idea of transformation from one realm of creation to another and of personification of inanimate objects, substantiated, for instance, by some transformation masks worn during Northwest Coast winter ceremonies –, counterintuitive physical properties attributed to certain persons or creatures – e.g. a shaman, Thunderbird –, particular contents or recurrent features in mental representations[6] – e. g. the presence of spiritual agencies and ancestors in small-scale societies – the susceptibility of these features of being passed on, distributed and disseminated (e.g., common elements of tales and myths[7]), of serving as anchors for particular art forms, concepts related to the situatedness[8] of cognition and its adaptability to contexts etc. Indigenous capabilities to create and appreciate art may also be included here.

Both subpersonal and personal structures can count as "cognitive attractors",[9] or recurrent features in mental representations that people are likely to entertain given their cognitive makeup and the place they occupy in a group or society.

One way to get a sense of the variety of cognitive attractors is through what the anthropologist Pascal Boyer calls "an estrangement procedure",[10] for instance by adopting an evolutionary perspective or by relating to different systems of reference that go against the grain of the ones we are used to. An attempt at multi-perspectivism is exemplified, for instance, by the temporary anthropological exhibition titled "Qu'est-ce qu'un corps", held in 2006 at the newly opened Musée du Quai Branly, in Paris. Building a dialogue around the collections of art from Africa, Oceania, Europe and the Americas, the exhibition confronted indigenous viewpoints with European conceptions of the body,[11] giving equal weight to conceptions stressing the psychophysiological properties of the body, to its subjective interiority, or, on the contrary, to its relational[12] character, when it is defined through the way it is perceived. What resulted was a more heightened awareness of the unsteady divide between mind and

body across communities, as well as the flexibility of the conception of what it is like to be human.

From the outset, the aesthetic recategorization of the indigenous artefacts in the collection of the Musée du Quai Branly, whose functions were deeply embedded in everyday life, has been subject to controversy. In an attempt to strengthen out the problem of aesthetic homogenization, the exhibition "Qu'est-ce qu'un corps?" aimed at reversing the hierarchy between indigenous conceptions of the body and western ones,[13] proposing instead an anthropologic, des-aestheticized[14] viewpoint, which emphasized, on the one hand, the anthropological relevance of western objects, and, on the other, the functional heterogeneity of non-western artefacts.[15] The stress was less on affording a type of experience or affective responsiveness than on conveying knowledge of a wide range of systems of beliefs.

It is important to mention that the objection form aesthetic irreducibility does not apply evenly to all forms of indigenous art since not all conceptions of aesthetics are removed from instrumental function. Northwest Coast art, for instance, if it has a utilitarian purpose, demanding to be used, it does not dismiss as reductive all aesthetic concern, as we can see in the following passage: "The functions of art in Northwest Coast societies are really not so different from those in Western art traditions. Art has both an aesthetic component and a «practical» component, with the emphasis shifting from one to the other in response to the purpose to which it is put. It can bring joy, stir emotions, glorify the past, honor the present, foster pride, evoke spiritual power, and promote knowledge. Art functioned and continues to function in all these ways on the Northwest Coast".[16]

Furthermore, an important cognitive attractor is, according to Boyer, the representation of the distinction between nature and culture. If we look at how the world order falls into place in Native creative practices of the Northwest Coast, we will see a correlation of these practices with the ontology of totemism,[17] which stresses, following Philippe Descola's definition, the continuity between humans and animal species, both on the axes of physicality and interiority. Within Native communities the aesthetic is understood in relation to conceptions of nature, operating in turn in a conceptual framework tied to the mythological past.[18] It would be interesting to see what spirit representations of Native appreciative communities inflected by such conceptions of nature have to contribute to our understanding of cognitive capacities that we all have in common. A possible answer to the question of why indigenous art practices are

significant for cognitive empirical studies is that they might bring forth new cognitive attractors, which remain understudied to this day.

The background assumption that ontological presuppositions are reflected in indigenous artistic expression is equally reflected in museum representations of indigenous artefacts. Conspicuously, the newly renovated Musée de l'Homme in Paris puts on display a cross-cultural mixture of pieces arranged according to a system of classification which illustrates Descola's ontologies of animism, totemism, analogism and naturalism. Another example which reinforces this assumption is the anthropological temporary exhibition *La Fabrique des Images*, hosted yet again by the Musée du Quai Branly in 2010-2011 and curated by the same Philippe Descola.

So much for the relation between cognitive anthropology and the appreciation of indigenous creative practices. At the other end of the naturalistic spectrum, indigenous studies gain prominence and shape contemporary debates on postcolonialism. The term "Indigenous peoples" appears in the 1970s,[19] with the growing consciousness of a native identity, when indigenous communities start asserting and claiming humanity and self-determination,[20] thus mounting a form of resistance to colonial authority; the American Indian Movement (i.e., a militant civil rights organization) founded in 1968 is indicative in this respect.

The idea of Northwest Coast Native art emerges in such a heavy context of colonization and within a scientific paradigm of positivism which has been deeply problematic;[21] not all constructs of anthropology afforded an egalitarian and non-appropriative perspective of indigenous practices, e.g.: a particular type of late nineteenth-century anthropology fostering the idea of stages of human evolution and progress was doomed to fail, since it associated art to a racial status.[22] Many harmful policies were legitimated by this type of research; many fields of knowledge, positivistic in flavor, were subjugating, even dehumanizing indigenous peoples.[23] "Have you come to measure my head?".[24] this is a recurring, arresting question that a famous contemporary art collector had to answer upon his encounter with indigenous communities. The growing interest in non-Western societies raises the question of problematizing Eurocentric frames of reference and the appropriateness of claiming ownership over indigenous ways of knowing, belief systems, creative practices, rituals etc. According to Linda Smith, there are a number of

> critical questions that communities and indigenous activists often ask, in a variety of ways: Whose research is it? Who owns it? Whose interests does it serve? Who will benefit from it? Who has designed its questions and framed its scope? Who will carry it out? Who will write it up? How will its results be disseminated? […] These questions are simply part of a larger set of judgements on criteria that a researcher cannot prepare for, such as: Is her spirit clear? Does he have a good heart? What other baggage are they carrying? Are they useful to us? Can they fix up our generator? Can they actually do anything?[25]

The remaining of this paper will be devoted to finding a balance between frames of reference that, although antagonistic at first sight, might prove to be complementary.

3. Northwest Coast Art Practices and Indigenous Spirituality

This section will provide a brief survey of Northwest Coast art with an emphasis on the spirituality at play in indigenous practices. My hypothesis is that a better understanding of non-western belief systems may serve to unpack the prevailing cognitive assumptions in the study of art appreciation. Here is Ki-ke-in, an "historian, poet and creator of many things", on the importance of having a sense of the traditional belief system that informs native creative practices:

> In our traditional belief system, the known universe is divided into four realms: the under-sea world, the on-the-land world, the in-the sky-world, and the world beyond-the -horizon. Each of these realms is overseen by a great and powerful ch'ihaa or spirit. These four Great Spirit Chiefs affect every aspect of every event in our experience at every moment.[26]

The Northwest Coast cosmology comprises therefore several superimposed realms such as the sky world, the undersea world, land world and spirit world, each inhabited by real and mythic creatures.[27] The mythological repertoire of the Indians of the North Pacific Coast includes, for instance, thunderbird, raven, killer-whale, sea-otter, beaver, frog, grizzly bear or bear mother etc.

The transition between realms is constantly bridged by several creatures; thus, the realms are in constant interaction. Relations with the

non-human world are constantly questioned; human and natural worlds are part of an interrelated universe.[28]

Native art affirms the endurance of Indigenous spirituality[29] in spite of numerous attempts to erase it.[30] To give just an example, the exhibition *Sacred Circles: The Indianness of North American Indian Art*,[31] was meant to testify precisely to the endurance of the system of beliefs of the Indian. Totem poles, masks, animal crests, shaman's paraphernalia etc. are famously known for serving the purpose of reclaiming spirituality and making "the world of supernatural beings visible and present. A masked figure in a Kwakiutl winter dance did not simply symbolize a spirit creature, in a sense it proved that the spirit was actually present".[32] Spirit representations to which such objects give a body, whether guardian spirits lured into alliances or cannibal spirits, are closely tied to ancestor cults and ceremonies.[33] Shamanic objects in particular, such as soul catchers, amulets, speaker's staffs, masks and maskettes, oystercatcher rattles are thought to be embodying the supernatural experience.[34] For instance, a ceremony of soul recovery is described by an early explorer in the following terms:

> Barbeau (1958) describes soul catchers as "one of the most potent charms in a medicine bag". Shamans, who wore them suspended from their necks, used them to recover souls that had left a patient's body and were thus causing illness. With the aid of chanting and trances, a shaman could locate a soul, induce it to enter the container, hold it there by inserting the cedar bark plugs, and finally return it to the host to effect a cure. Soul catchers could also be used for blowing out or sucking away disease and evil. They served other purposes as well. Miller, for example, states that a shaman's spirit helpers occupied the soul catcher's center.[35]

Furthermore, shaman's paraphernalia within Northwest Coast art is often described in terms of "an overpowering beauty",[36] many objects are thought to be of "high aesthetic quality".[37] Nonetheless, their main function is that of giving a body to spiritual agencies:

> Because its purpose is to substantiate a relationship with the supernatural, the art stands somewhat apart from the art made for crest display for chiefs and their families. Where the ceremonial equipment and masks used by secret societies is dramatic, and the art made for prestige display is decorative and often spectacular, the material used by the shaman has

> more of a magical and surrealistic quality to it, serving as it does to give form to an invisible world of spirits and supernatural beliefs.[38]

Thus, what is of primary importance is rather the efficacy and impact of performances, taken as a whole. Moreover, the interaction with spiritual agencies is more of a practical commerce rather than a religious commitment[39] that benefits the individual or the local community. The original context in which these performances unfolded with their chants and dances is of course no longer available to contemporary audiences:

> though it is possible to admire these objects simply as the extraordinary creations they most certainly are, each must also be regarded as part of a more complex totality that combines an ancient belief system with conspicuous display, theatre, and now lost stories of individual encounters with the world of the supernatural. Now that these fine works are no longer in ritual use or the property of their once powerful masters, we must rely on the art itself to convey something of this totality to us.[40]

We have seen with Boyer that what counts initially as inconsistent, or irrational can ultimately be explained in terms of natural processes. Cognitive attractors such as representations of spirits with which shamans are deemed to interact preserve a number of properties of human-like agents[41] (having minds, perceiving, thinking, feeling etc.), their counterintuitive properties being a reflexive violation of them, which does nothing more than reinforce ordinary cognitive assumptions and background intuitive expectations: "supernatural concepts combine salient violations and implicit confirmation of what are called intuitive ontologies, that is, sets of expectations that we entertain about large domains of reality, such as animate beings, persons, living things, man-made objects, natural things".[42] In this light, the reason why some representations seem to perdure in a community or across groups is that they capitalize on the capacity of shared cognitive systems to inflect experience in a particular direction. Thus, the capacity to entertain representations of mythical creatures or spirits can be integrated as being a part of the human condition: "whether we study the shamanic practices of the Huichol of Mexico, the Eskimos of the Arctic, the Aborigines of Australia, the peoples of Northern Siberia, or the Indians of Northwest Coast (to mention only a few), certain similar basic elements and variations on them will always be found".[43] Here's yet another passage that stresses the robustness of spirit representations as

cognitive attractors: "a unifying factor in Northwest Coast Indian culture is the basic concept of the universe and the relationship with the supernatural as expressed in all the arts. The concept of an individual guardian spirit is found in many American Indian societies, but each group has developed it in a specific local manner."[44] The way explicit violations are codified in creative practices might thus serve to reveal something about invariants of human cognition.

The explicit violations of intuitive ontologies that can be encountered in indigenous creative practices have the function to trigger attention and reinforce salience and memorability[45] of the experience. As Ralph T. Coe remarks, although there isn't a standardized indigenous aesthetics,

> traditional artists depend on their own formula for supernatural recall, based on a highly regularized symbolic design vocabulary made up from the recreation of animal parts – eyes, ears, paws, knee joints, tails, fins, nostrils – and body paint motifs. Each of these existed as a means of psychic recall. This regard for the all-pervading animal past, should, I think, be stressed. The invention of one's own past, especially for purposes of asserting social distinction lineage identification, is an undeniably sophisticated act. The Northwest Coast Indian, who was not primitive, created a past, and a style to go with it, that was quite extraordinary.[46]

The exhibition *Lost and Found Traditions: Native American Art, 1965-1985,*[47] exemplifies the enduring legacy of the past in contemporary Indian art, an art that, while keeping alive the conventions of tradition, aims at creative renewal and change.[48] A question that arises is that of knowing what such "supernatural recall" and retrieval may amount to for western audiences, coming from a different culture with different mental models. The cognitive psychologist Frederic Bartlett[49] addressed precisely this question in a study on the memorability of a Native American folk tale, convincingly proving the great extent to which expectations shape recall and help reconstruct an experience according to a worldview to which one has been previously exposed. As a possible consequence, acknowledging that different audiences have different strategies for classifying and structuring information may overcome perceptualist biases that overstate the central role of sense experience in aesthetic appreciation.

There are further psychological elements in the attempt at understanding Northwest Coast art; we can mention here psychological questions regarding individual creativity and aesthetic appreciation or the

capacity that art has to be illustrative of the psychology of native people. Franz Boas, for instance, famously held that there is a well-developed aesthetic sense in the mind of the native artist, disclaiming the commonly held view of the Indian's "untutored mind" or primitive mentality.[50] Boas dismissed evolutionist schemes, both with respect to cognition and art; he endorsed the idea of a "psychic unity of mankind", which entails that there are invariants in cognition, and similarity of mental processes in all peoples. Nonetheless, in his early studies on the origin and development of the history of artistic forms and mythologies of the North Pacific Coast Indians, he did give equal emphasis to dissemination of customs favored by historical factors and cultural borrowings, as opposed to relying exclusively on an explanation in terms of psychical causes and propensities of the human mind.[51] He thus sought to avoid an essentialism about particular cultural groups,[52] which generally goes hand in hand with racial assumptions. A definition of essentialism goes as follows:

> people are essentialists about a social category when they assume that a) all members share some special quality that is exclusive to the category and need not be defined, b) possession of that special quality is a matter of biological descent, not historical accident or acquisition, and c) that special quality is what makes them behave in particular ways. […] Why is the ideology of essential natural differences so widespread and so compelling? Perhaps it is because our minds somehow mistake human groups for species; using membership to a species to override perceptual appearances.[53]

Such misconstructions and essentialisms were imputed, for instance, to several institutions which chose to display indigenous artefacts. For instance, according to Jean-Marie Schaeffer, the Musée du Quai Branly was considered to be essentializing[54] pre-literate societies and their artistic expression; the works gathered in the museum collection were assumed to share a common essence, that of being "primitive art", subject to the leveling discourse of aesthetic unification. Where the aesthetic attitude was understood as an othering strategy.

There is, nonetheless, aestheticization without essentializing. In comparing the project of the Musée du Quai Branly with the project of the National Museum of the American Indian[55] (a museum in which native communities are actively involved), Jean-Marie Schaeffer observes that the aesthetic appreciation fostered through museography does not

necessarily have to be illegitimate or suspicious if we consider that aesthetic concerns are not unknown to indigenous peoples. A discourse of aesthetic legitimation is held within several Native communities; in many cases, a claim to the aesthetic status of artefacts and their self-expressive character[56] goes hand in hand with a claim to recognition of Indian identity. Here's a telling quote that emphasizes this point: "every minor feature of Northwest Coast art style contributes to one basic quality: its strength and self-assertive vitality… few cultures have so consistently developed these traits while combining them with a marked sensitivity to nuances of form and the highest standards of craftsmanship.".[57] Moreover, there is an appreciative indigenous community acknowledging and highly regarding skilled work:

> It has been popular in recent years to describe Native American languages as "having no word for art", implying that art in those societies was not frivolous and decorative, but was truly functional. One could take that idea to mean that Native American art had no aesthetic component, or at least that aesthetics were of subordinate value. The ideas of skill, craftsmanship, and beauty are all capable of expression in Northwest Coast (indeed in all Native American) languages, and there is, just as there is in English, "a word for art". Clearly, the sophisticated canons could not have developed without an appreciation of the aesthetic component. Nor would renowned artists as far removed from one another in time and distance as the early nineteenth century Tlingit master Kajis'du.axtc and the twentieth-century Kwakwaka'wawk artist Willie Seaweed have been commissioned by chiefs from distant villages to produce the masks and poles representing their treasured heritages.[58]

The boundary between the aesthetic and the functional is no longer operative here given that both uses appear to be involved in appreciating these practices.

A different divide, in terms of "culture areas" (i.e., areas of distinctive culture in distinctive environments), among which we can find the Northwest Coast, was meant to avoid the dangers of essentialization. The notion of culture area, as the definition goes, serves a classification of peoples based on culture or culture traits, norms and rules embedded in behavior and material products, without judgment about intellect or morals.[59] In what follows I will provide a brief survey of artistic expressions that are prevalent on the Northwest Coast.

To start with, totem poles are one of the most prominent forms of indigenous artistic expression. Totem poles are wooden pillars carved from red cedar logs; they represent real and mythic beings, usually in animal form, i.e., beings from mythical times "who became, or were encountered by, the ancestors of a group that later took them as crests".[60] Generally, totem poles reveal stories about human's contact with the spirit world and other supernatural encounters,[61] stories about family origins and acquisition of power etc. They can thus indicate membership group, assert historic lineage and in this case, they are called crests, being associated to clan legends, e.g., the Raven clan, or the Thunderbird clan. They can be erected in honor of deceased chiefs, usually at potlatches, and in this case, they are called memorial poles, participating in acts of tribal recollection; totem poles can thus also be considered as mnemonic devices serving the purpose of honoring ancestors.[62]

Moreover, the act of raising a pole during public events – usually at potlatches – is more significant than the poles themselves, many poles, once raised, are allowed to decay.[63]

Some poles are associated with origin stories, such as Halibut, a totem pole that can be seen in the Great Hall of the Museum of Anthropology in Vancouver; Halibut is more specifically related to a creation story of transformation and change in which he is shedding his tail and fins and skin and becomes the first man.[64]

Another example is Bill Reid (Haida)'s monumental sculpture *Raven and the first Men*, which can also be seen at the Museum of Anthropology. The Haida sculpture carves up an origin story[65] of creation. Along the same lines, further origin stories that we can mention here are "Raven Steals the Sun", "Raven Steals the Moon", with Raven transforming the world into what it has become today. The former tells the origin of daylight and is beautifully illustrated by Box of Daylight Raven Hat-Lkaayaak Yeil S'aaxw, Tlingit, 1850, SAM 91. 1. 124, representing "the grandson of Naas Shagi Yeil reassuming raven form, wearing the sun as a headdress and perched upon his grandfather's box, from which the sun, moon, and stars have just been released.".[66] In Native mythology, there are numerous tales with Raven as the leading character. According to Boas's studies, Raven tales are a tradition found among the Haida, Tlingit and Tsimshian;[67] the tales are representative of a system of beliefs that was animistic rather than being focused on gods: "all living things and the celestial bodies were believed to have indwelling spirits or souls. These had to be respectfully addressed by human beings who needed to win their active help".[68]

Furthermore, Raven is also associated with utilitarian objects that serve a spiritual purpose, such as raven rattles, used more specifically to honor past chiefs.

An important indigenous concept of spirituality is that of transformation, which, along other mythological elements, can be found among art objects from the Pacific Basin[69] cultures. This concept is illustrated for instance by transformation puppets used in shamanic performances; plank houses with totem poles equally reflect concepts of transformation from one realm of creation to another and of personification of inanimate objects.[70] Moreover, transformation masks associated with winter ceremonies and masked dances are interpreted as conveying an experience of human-animal metamorphosis.[71] In the dramatic performances of *winter ceremonies* dancers are transforming into spirits, symbolically recreating the original encounters of ancestors with spirit beings from other realms.[72] An example is the Kwakwa̲ka̲'wawk transformation mask from the former C. Lévi-Strauss collection (inv. 71.1951.35.1), on display at the Louvre's Pavillon des Sessions; when pulling a string, the mask reveals a human face, or slips from the human into a raven: "the transformation mask was constructed so that it could be opened up to reveal the face of another animal, human, or supernatural being on its inside. In this way, the interrelationship of different spirits was revealed with great drama. Such masks were worn to illustrate myths of animal ancestry, to display various crests owned by a chief, or show the interaction of one spirit with another. The added dimension of motion and the dance rendered these works particularly effective [providing] a sense of drama and dynamism".[73] As an aside, Surrealism and abstract expressionism were praising precisely the other-worldly metaphysical qualities of Northwest Coast art, marveling at the transformation of beings into other beings.[74]

Further ceremonial regalia include dancing headdress frontlets[75] and other masks such as Crooked Beak of Heaven[76] (a Cannibal bird), Thunderbird headdresses, used in the Hamatsa dance or cannibal dance, which names a coming-of-age ritual. For the Kwakwa̲ka̲'wawk, the initiation ceremonial of Hamatsa dance tells of "the story of the Cannibal-at-the end of the World; his village is guarded by large cannibal birds, cannibal Raven and the Crooked-Beak, cannibal Grizzly bear";[77] the ceremony takes place when young initiates earn responsibilities and privileges; they are tamed in the process after fasting and through spirit quests. The ceremony is thought to symbolize controlling the world through controlling hunger:[78]

> Animal, bird and fish motifs point back to origins, to the past, as if an invisible but powerful shield intervened between man (present, alive) and nature-inspired myths (past, hovering between life and death). Through dance and the ceremonial season and by the joining of societies like the Kwakiutl Hamatsa Society, or by the display of animal crest frontlets at a potlatch, one could look backwards comfortably to forces which were out of touch with the topical the everyday.[79]

As for the potlatch, it is a ceremony of dance and gift-giving standing for a judiciary system based on reciprocity:[80]

> The potlatch is our supreme court where our laws were established and reaffirmed. The potlatch is a public forum where songs, which are inherited as property, are transferred and sung by their rightful owners. It is where the chiefs claim their position. It is where names, titles, and social privileges are handed down to the rightful person through our mothers, since we are a matrilineal society.[81]

In the French tradition, Marcel Mauss, in his book *The Gift: Forms and functions of Exchange in Archaic societies*, describes the potlatch in terms of "a total social phenomenon",[82] which concerns exchanges and contracts between individuals; it is total, in the sense that exchanges are at once legal, economic, religious, aesthetic, etc.

Interestingly, more recently museum institutions are starting to collaborate with Native communities providing potlatch loans; objects from museum holdings return to indigenous people to be used in memorial potlatches,[83] and, if necessary, to be reconditioned.

4. Modes of Appreciation of Northwest Coast Art

The final section of this paper will be devoted to further conceptualizing the various modes of appreciation of Northwest Coast art. We may schematically organize them into four broad categories: the anthropological stance, the legal stance, the aesthetic stance and the indigenous stance.

4.1. The anthropological stance

It is generally agreed that the first-hand witnesses of Northwest Coast art were early ethnographers and explorers. The first recorded contact between Natives (more specifically Tlingits) and Europeans appears to have occurred in 1741, when the Russian explorer Alexei Chirikov and his crew reach the Northwest Coast.[84] The period of systematic ethnography and collection is however 1774-1871, when Spaniards and British explorers start investigating the coastal belief systems in which these art practices functioned.[85]

The aesthetic status of the Northwest coast artefacts is perceived from the outset, with a high praise for form and appearance; forms are seen as "elegant, well-designed, well-executed" but also "grotesque in appearance, monstruous, crude"[86] etc. But early commentators such as James Cook and George Vancouver are still adopting a rhetoric of racial purity, wherein indigenous creative practices are seen as indicative of race, of a primitive stage of human evolution. To give just an example, James Cook reports that "their manufactures and mechanic arts are far more extensive and ingenious, whether we regard the design or the execution, than could have expected from the natural disposition of the people, and the little progress that civilization has made amongst them in other respects".[87]

The ethnographical specimens collected by early explorers are seen as an indicator of difference of Northwest Coast indigenous people.[88] Nineteenth century anthropology will rehearse some of such biases with respect to value judgments aimed at indigenous artistic expression. Questions related to indigenousness and standards of authenticity of unacculturated, pre-contact arts that were not influenced by European practices become very pressing.

Franz Boas is one of the most prominent Northwest Coast ethnographers. He starts his field work in this area in 1886, in a Kwakwaka'wawk village in British Columbia. Boas criticized the racial discourse of social evolutionism and evolutionist theories of art development[89] stating that the aesthetic capacity is shared by all human beings, only that it is manifested in different ways. The recognition of Northwest Coast art is thought to properly begin with Boas, who paid close attention to the aesthetic qualities of Native American creative practices. He also considers the art of Northwest Coast as mainly decorative, with carvings serving practical, useful ends.[90] As almost all the early commentators – including Cook and Vancouver –

Boas was able to tease out the basic iconography of Northwest Coast art, identifying representations of humans, animals, birds, and fish[91] by their most representative parts: e.g., large incisors for the beaver, large, curved beak for the hawk, blow hole of the killer whale, large dorsal fin, protruding tongue for the bear.[92] Boas has also devised some principles of representation, such as split representation,[93] or the arrangement of parts of the animal on flat surfaces where the animal is cut through and through, but where the natural relations of the parts are preserved,[94] in "a mixture of formalism and realism".[95]

4.2. The legal stance

The legal stance toward Northwest Coast art practices was initially one of downright denial. An example of policy document aiming to suppress Indigenous art practices was The Indian Act (1884), which criminalized the potlatch (1885-1951), a practice that was deemed contrary to the law, as we can read in the following excerpt:

> This Indian festival is a debauchery of the worst kind, and the departmental officers and all clergymen unite in affirming that it is absolutely necessary to put this practice down. […] considerable wealth is all dissipated in the insane exuberance of generosity which seems to be encouraged by these meetings.[96]

An important piece of legislation is the Native Americans Grave Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), issued in 1990,[97] which allows the return of human remains and cultural items removed from Native lands.

Furthermore, continuing the line of making amends for the injustice caused to indigenous communities, the United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) states that

> Indigenous people have the right to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature.[98]

4.3. The aesthetic stance

With the aesthetic stance, the Northwest Coast art becomes fully appreciated in aesthetic terms. This stance stresses mostly the self-referential nature of works,[99] lying emphasis on the aesthetic quality rather than on the utilitarian character or efficacy of the Northwest Coast art practices in specific ceremonial contexts.

Within this framework, the focus is on the individual achievement of the native artist, who is "believed to solve specific problems of forms relations, by using a repertoire of standardized visual cues",[100] notions related to achievement of works, to virtuosity and technical excellence growing out of craftsmanship are also indigenous aesthetic concepts,[101] only that in indigenous thinking they still require knowledge of legends associated with the ancestral past.[102]

The aesthetic stance comes also with a shift in perceived categories: native creative practices are no longer considered as ethnographic artefacts but as art, whose proper place is in fine arts setting.[103] There are several exhibitions of art which display Native American Art. I will name but a few of them:

First of all, the travelling exhibition *Indian Art of the Northwest Coast* was hosted by the Seattle Art Museum in 1951-1952: "Organized by Erna Gunther for the Taylor Museum, the Colorado Fine Arts Center, and the Seattle Art Museum, it was one of the first exhibitions of Native art to be held in art museum." [104] This said, Seattle Art Museum was a venue for many significant exhibitions of Northwest Coast art.

Furthermore, an important exhibition which laid emphasis on the aesthetic merit of Northwest Coast Indian art, and which included contemporary examples was the Audrey Hawthorn and J. A. Morris 1956 exhibition *People of the Potlatch* at the Vancouver Art Gallery.[105]

Vancouver Art Gallery also hosted in 1967 the exhibition *Arts of the Raven*, which was curated by Wilson Duff, Bill Holm, and Bill Reid. The exhibition is considered to have marked a revival of Northwest Coast Native art and its recognition as high art.[106] *Arts of the Raven* was aiming at marking "an empathic statement of the shift from ethnology to art […] high art, not ethnology, and displaying the aesthetic excellence of forms […] of objects of bright pride",[107] the artefacts were considered to give rise to "aesthetic pleasure" and "enthusiastic appreciation" both on the part of their makers and the receiving audience.

In a contributory article to the art catalogue documenting this exhibition, Bill Reid points to a shared repertoire of "an essential humanity" that would allow such acts of appreciation: "these vanished men and women have emerged through their art out of a formless mass of ancestral and historical stereotypes – warriors, hunter, fishermen, every man his own Leonardo – to become individuals in a highly individual society, differing in every detail of life and custom from us, but in their conflicts and affirmations, triumphs and frustrations, an understandable part of the universal mankind. So, the art, because it embodied the deepest expression of this essential humanity, can be as meaningful and moving to us as it was to them". That we draw on a common repertoire of mental constructs is also a recurrent idea in cognitive anthropology, as we have seen in a previous section in discussing "cognitive attractors".

Finally, other major exhibitions that are worth mentioning are *Sacred Circles: The Indianness of North American Indian Art*, curated by Ralph T. Coe[108] in 1977, which travelled from London to Kansas City and *Box of Daylight: Northwest Coast Indian Art*, hosted by Seattle Art Museum in 1983-1984.[109]

Such exhibitions of art, which display Native artefacts may be symptomatic of the birth of a globalized appreciative audience,[110] characterized by its visual engagement, and taking pleasure in the immediate sensory configuration given in human perceptual experience. Given the recent globalized reception, it is not unlikely that indigenous artefacts will become an integral part of world art history.[111]

4.4. The indigenous stance

The question then arises as to whether there are Native standards for appreciation: are there any indigenous aesthetic criteria? Do these criteria counter an aestheticization process,[112] or is there any overlapping with it?

Native conceptualizations are very important in this respect. According to Daisy Sewid-Smith, who is a Kwakwaka'wawk linguist,

> When non-Indigenous people, and some of our own non-traditionalists, take cognizance of what we now know as "Northwest Coast Native Art", they scrutinize, and they analyze the object of painting as you would a Rembrandt. They study the light, the shade, the brush strokes, and then they proceed to interpret what they are viewing in European art terms. They see the paintings, carvings, and dances as visual art and nothing

> more […] To the traditional indigenous Kwakwaka'wawk, our carvings and representations are not just art objects or paintings. They are alive: they teach, they reveal knowledge of the past. The symbols and carvings cause a spasmodic action in the brain, and torrents of stories and meanings flow to the surface of our remembrance. They explain our existence in the universe. They reveal who we are, where we originated, who our ancestors were, and whom and what they encountered.[113]

A point made in this passage is that for indigenous communities, aesthetic culture is identity involving; it records family history and one's rootedness in a more remote past; such values are fundamental to the native cultures. As we can see, the tensions between a functional and a formalist point of view resurface here. In contrast to a purely formalist stance, the indigenous stance privileges the importance of use and purpose over aesthetic design. Here is Ki-ke-in, in talking about a rattle:

> Do I, as a spiritual being, care whether [someone] calls me with a beautifully symmetrical, well finished, slightly-northern-looking, somewhat-reminiscent-of-the-master-of-the-Chicago-settee's-work rattle or calls me with a snuff can with some pebbles in it? Well, I think that all of those things really don't matter. However, in the process of doing it, of calling a *ch'ihaa*, this stuff, this white fluffy down, has great significance.[114]

Finally, one can then ask whether one should dismiss the possibility of an aesthetic stance and withhold appreciation altogether, setting a limit to what we can experience. While there is no distinctive aboriginal aesthetics[115] and despite the limiting effects of the constructs of Western discourse, my take is that we should not abandon entirely the idea of a genuine experiential encounter with such remote creative practices as long as we avoid appropriative interpretive categories.

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NOTES

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4 Jürg Wassmann, Christian Kluge, Dominik Albrecht, "The Cognitive Context of Cognitive Anthropology", in David B. Kronenfeld, Giovanni Bennardo, Victor C. de Munck, Michael D. Fischer (eds.), *A Companion to Cognitive Anthropology*, Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, 57.

5 Boyer, *Minds Make Societies,* 21; Wassmann et al., 47-48.

6 Boyer, *Minds Make Societies,* 246.

7 Franz Boas, "The Growth of Indian Mythologies. A Study Based Upon the Growth of the Mythologies of the North Pacific Coast", *The Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 9, no. 32, 1896, 3.

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9 Boyer, *Minds Make Societies,* 261-262.

10 Pascal Boyer, *Minds Make Societies,* 7-8.

11 Stéphane Breton, Michel Coquet, Michael Houseman, Jean-Marie Schaeffer, *Qu'est-ce qu'un corps ? Afrique de l'Ouest-Europe occidentale-Nouvelle-Guinée-Amazonie,* Paris, Musée du Quai Branly, 2006 ; Jean-Marie Schaeffer, "Comment rendre étranger le familier ?", in Yolaine Escande, Johanna Liu (eds.), *Frontières de l'art, frontières de l'esthétique*, Éditions Liu Feng, 2008, 29-42.

12 Breton et al., *Qu'est-ce qu'un corps ?*, 201.

13 Breton et al., *Qu'est-ce qu'un corps ?*, 17: "En allant dans le sens de l'indigène devenu anthropologue, l'argument de l'exposition *Qu'est-ce qu'un corps* ? est de montrer que le corps tel que nous le pensons est notre invention, l'invention propre de l'Occident. Dès lors qu'il revêt des caractères exotiques qui n'appartiennent qu'à lui, le point de vue occidental – chrétien – doit être traité comme une théorie indigène".

14 Schaeffer, "Comment rendre étranger le familier ?", 32.

15 Jean-Marie Schaeffer, "Comment rendre étranger le familier?", 39-41 ; Marcus & Myers, "The Traffic in Art and Culture", 4.

16 Bill Holm, "Function of Art in Northwest Coast Indian Culture", in Steven C. Brown, Paz Cabello, Leoncio Carretero Collado, Bill Holm [et al.], *Spirits of the Water: Native Art Collected on Expeditions to Alaska and British Columbia, 1774-1910*, Fundació Caixa de Pensions, Barcelona, 2000, 52.

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18 Ralph T. Coe, "The Grandeur of Northwest Coast Sculpture", in Ralph T. Coe, *Sacred Circles: Two Thousand Years of North American Indian Art*, Nelson Gallery of Art-Atkins Museum of Fine Arts, Kansas City, Missouri, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1977, p. 127.

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21 Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 44.

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24 Ralph T. Coe, Irene Gordon, Bobby Hansson, *Lost and Found Traditions: Native American Art, 1965-1985,* Bobby American Federation of Arts, 1986, 24.

25 Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 9-10.

26 Ki-ke-in (Nuuchaanulth), in Townsend-Gault, *Native Art*, 28.

27 Gary Wyatt, *Mythic Beings: Spirit Art of the Northwest Coast*, Vancouver, Douglas & McIntyre, 1999, 7-8.

28 Wayne Suttles, William Sturtevant, *Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 7: Northwest Coast,* Washington, Smithsonian Institution, 1990, 247-248; Coe, *Responsive Eye*, 25; Townsend-Gault, *Native Art*, 918.

29 Coe, *Responsive Eye*, 5; Townsend-Gault, *Native Art*, 243; Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 78.

30 The most conspicuous attempt is the establishment, around 1900, of the first Indian residential schools in which young Native children were put by force, after being taken away from their homes, in order to learn what it means to be civilized. See Townsend-Gault, *Native Art*, 27.

31 Ralph T. Coe, "Sacred Circles: The Indianness of North American Indian Art", in Ralph T. Coe, *Sacred Circles: Two Thousand Years of North American Indian Art*, Nelson Gallery of Art-Atkins Museum of Fine Arts, Kansas City, Missouri, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1977, 15: "The Raven of the Northwest Coast and the far away Great Lakes Thunderbird both wheel within that [sacred] circle. That this circle still turns in the face of the Western take-over of Indian land -which they hold precious above all

else – is an almost miraculous testimonial to the tenacity of the beliefs of the Indian. Only where that core of belief is preserved does American Indian art exist in a state of heath today".

32 Wilson Duff, "Contexts of Northwest Coast Art", in Wilson Duff, Bill Holm, Bill Reid, *Arts of the Raven: Masterworks by the Northwest Coast Indian*, Vancouver, The Vancouver Art Gallery, 15 June - 24 September 1967, unnumbered pages.

33 Boyer, *Minds Make Societies*, 96.

34 Allen Wardwell, *Tangible Visions: Northwest Coast Indian Shamans and Its Art*, New York, The Monacelli Press, 1996, 8.

35 Wardwell, *Tangible Visions*, 197.

36 Allen Wardwell, *Objects of Bright Pride*: *Northwest Coast Indian Art from the American Museum of Natural History,* American Museum of Natural History, New York Center for Inter-American Relations, New York American Federation of Arts, 1978, 21.

37 Wardwell, *Tangible Visions*, 13.

38 Wardwell, *Objects of Bright Pride*, 17.

39 Boyer, *Minds Make Societies*, 109.

40 Wardwell, *Tangible Visions*, 106.

41 Boyer, *Minds Make Societies*, 96-97.

42 Boyer, *Minds Make Societies*, 95.

43 Wardwell, *Tangible Visions*, 16.

44 Erna Gunther, *Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Exhibit at the Seattle World's Fair Fine Arts Pavilion, April 21 - October 21*, 1962, 13-14.

45 Boyer, *Minds Make Societies*, 104.

46 Ralph T. Coe, "The Grandeur of Northwest Coast Sculpture", in Coe, *Sacred Circles*, 126.

47 Ralph T. Coe, Irene Gordon, Bobby Hansson, *Lost and Found Traditions: Native American Art, 1965-1985,* Bobby American Federation of Arts, 1986, 15, 42: "Retention of the past is necessary to renewal and change. Loss of a sense of the past means that nothing moves forward. This is a fundamental element in the psychology of Indians, which transcends influences while absorbing them. Things can be lost and found anywhere along the line; they continue, lag, and flow into completeness, but is part of everything else, too."

48 Peter L. Macnair, Alan L. Hoover, Kevin Neary, *The Legacy: Continuing Traditions of Canadian Northwest Coast Indian Art*, Victoria, British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1980, 29: "There is a great intellectual potential in this art, once the rules are fully mastered. And, despite the constraints of the rules, certain master artists sought to challenge them, displaying a brilliant intelligence that leaves the knowledgeable viewer in awe of the result. Thus we find examples where red is substituted for the

usual primary formline color, where overpainting occurs, where massive, usually angular, formline blocks dominate a given quarter of a design panel, and where no color exists, thinly incised lines defining the formline instead."

49 Wassmann et al., "The Cognitive Context of Cognitive Anthropology", 52.

50 Townsend-Gault et al., *Native Art*, 140, 192, 207, 210, 218-219, 338; Aldona Jonaitis, "Introduction: The Development of Franz Boas's Theories of Primitive Art", in Franz Boas, *A Wealth of Thought: Franz Boas on Native American Art,* Seattle and London, University of Washington Press, 1995, 6-7.

51 Franz Boas, Randy Bouchard and Dorothy Kennedy, *Indian myths & legends from the North Pacific Coast of America*: a translation of Franz Boas' 1895 edition of "Indianische Sagen von der Nord-Pacifischen Küste Amerikas", translated by Dietrich Bertz with a foreword by Claude Lévi-Strauss, Talonbooks, 2006, 661: "Today nobody ought to doubt that there are elementary ideas, that the human spirit has brought forth certain cycles of ideas again and again and still does so. But nobody ought to doubt either that there has always been borrowing and transmission of ideas, that ideas take root in foreign soil and either develop independently or perish and are preserved for a long time in strange fragments. But nobody is able to say where the border is between what is developed originally from human spirituality and what requires an outside stimulus for its formation". Franz Boas, "The Growth of Indian Mythologies. A Study Based Upon the Growth of the Mythologies of the North Pacific Coast", *The Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 9, no. 32, 1896, 10-11: "It will be necessary to define clearly what Bastian terms the elementary ideas, the existence of which we know to be universal, and the origin of which is not accessible to ethnological methods. The forms which these ideas take among primitive people of different parts of the world, "*die Volker-Gedanken*," are due partly to the geographical environment and partly to the peculiar character of the people, and to a large extent to their history. In order to understand the growth of the peculiar psychical life of the people, the historical growth of its customs must be investigated most closely, and the only method by which the history can be investigated is by means of a detailed comparison of the tribe with its neighbors. This is the method which I insist is necessary in order to make progress towards the better understanding of the development of mankind".

52 On the question of "essentializing a spiritual Other", see also Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies,* 76-77.

53 Boyer, *Minds Make Societies*, 254.

54 Schaeffer, "Comment rendre étranger le familier ?", 31.

55 Schaeffer, "Comment rendre étranger le familier ?", 30.

56 Schaeffer, "Comment rendre étranger le familier ?", 31.

57 Erna Gunther in Allen Wardwell, *Objects of Bright Pride*: *Northwest Coast Indian Art from the American Museum of Natural History,* American

Museum of Natural History, New York Center for Inter-American Relations, New York American Federation of Arts, 1978, 36.

58 Bill Holm, "Function of Art in Northwest Coast Indian Culture", in Steven C. Brown, Paz Cabello, Leoncio Carretero Collado, Bill Holm [et al.], *Spirits of the Water: Native Art Collected on Expeditions to Alaska and British Columbia, 1774-1910*, Fundació Caixa de Pensions, Barcelona, 2000, p. 47.

59 Suttles & Sturtevant, *Handbook of North American*, 94, 204.

60 Marjorie M. Halpin, *Totem Poles: An Illustrated Guide*, Vancouver, Toronto, UBC Press, 2002.

61 Townsend-Gault, *Native Art*, 19, 105, 247, 281, 108, 680, 844, 907.

62 Jackson Rushing III, *Native American Art in the Twentieth Century: Makers, Meanings, Histories*, London, New York, Routledge, 1999, 108, 138, 201.

63 Ralph T. Coe, Irene Gordon, Bobby Hansson, *Lost and Found Traditions: Native American Art, 1965-1985,* Bobby American Federation of Arts, 1986, 23.

64 Wyatt, *Mythic Beings,* 8; Bill Reid, *Solitary Raven*, Vancouver, Douglas & McIntyre, 2000, 94.

65 Here's one among the many legends gathered by Boas, on the "Origin of People" (legend of the Tsimshian):" Once upon a time, a rock near Nass River and an elderberry bush were in labour at the same time. The bush gave birth to its children first. If the rock had been first, people would be immortal, and their skin would be as hard as stone. But because the elderberry bush was first, they are mortal, and their skin is soft. Only fingernails and toenails show how the skin would have become if the children of the rock had been born first." Franz Boas, Randy Bouchard and Dorothy Kennedy, *Indian myths & legends from the North Pacific Coast of America*: a translation of Franz Boas' 1895 edition of "Indianische Sagen von der Nord-Pacifischen Küste Amerikas", translated by Dietrich Bertz with a foreword by Claude Lévi-Strauss, Talonbooks, 2006, 561.

66 Steven C. Brown, Paul Macapia, *Native Visions: Evolution in Northwest Coast Art from the Eighteenth through the Twentieth Century* Seattle Art Museum, University of Washington Press, 1998, 91; Steven Brown, Gail Joice, *The Spirit Within: Northwest Coast Native Art from the John H. Hauberg Collection*, Seattle Art Museum, Washington, Rizzoli, 1995, 32.

67 Franz Boas, "The Growth of Indian Mythologies. A Study Based Upon the Growth of the Mythologies of the North Pacific Coast", *The Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 9, no. 32, 1896, 2.

68 Suttles, *Handbook,* 221-223.

69 Starr Davis, Richard Davis, *Tongues & Totems: Comparative Arts of the Pacific Basin,* Alaska International Art Institute, 1974, 7-8.

70 Townsend-Gault, *Native Art*, 110.

71 Suttles, *Handbook*, 83.

72 Halpin, *Totem Poles*, 12.

73 Allen Wardwell, *Objects of Bright Pride*: *Northwest Coast Indian Art from the American Museum of Natural History,* American Museum of Natural History, New York Center for Inter-American Relations, New York American Federation of Arts, 1978, 20.

74 Suttles, *Handbook,* 83; Townsend-Gault, *Native Art*, 273-274, 291-292.

75 Here's an evocative description of a Tlingit dancing headdress frontlet: "The features of the headdress are the same wherever it is worn: a cylindrical frame- often made of strips of whale baleen and covered with cloth – from the back of which hangs a long panel covered with rows of white ermine skins; an upstanding circlet of the long, springy whiskers of the Steller's sea lion; and a spectacular plaque carved of hardwood, painted and inlaid with abalone shell on the forehead. This plaque, or forehead, is carved to represent a crest or a mythical character. The figure in the center is surrounded by a flange that is usually covered with inset plates of brilliantly iridescent abalone shell. Inlays of the same shell flash from the eyes, teats, and joints. Sumptuous materials surround the intricate plaque. Often the crown is covered with a band of swan skin, luxuriant with white down, or ermines flank the frontlet. …

The dancer appears with blanket and apron and often a raven rattle. Knees slightly bent and legs spread, he jumps on both feet to the time of strong beat – short jump, feet hardly off the floor, making the ermine rows covering his back jump in turn. The blanket was spread by the weaver's arms or elbows. The crown of sea lion whiskers holds a loose fluff of eagle down when the dancing begins. The whiskers rustle and clatter as the dancer bobs and tosses his head, shaking white whisps of down though the whisker barrier to swirl around his dancing figure. The white down means peace, or welcome, to the guests at a potlatch. Chiefs dance to greet canoes invited from far villages. … In its rich composite of material, form, and movement, no Northwest Coast object expresses the ideas of rank and heredity, supernatural power, drama, and aesthetics so well as the dancing headdress." Bill Holm, Peter L. Corey [et al.], *The Box of Daylight: Northwest Coast Indian Art* [Exhibition], Seattle Art Museum 1984, 19.

76 See Bill Holm, *Crooked Beak of Heaven: Masks and Other Ceremonial Art of the Northwest Coast*, University of Washington, 1972.

77 Wyatt, *Mythic Beings,* 9.

78 Suttles, *Handbook,* 84.

79 Ralph T. Coe, "The Grandeur of Northwest Coast Sculpture", in Ralph T. Coe, *Sacred Circles: Two Thousand Years of North American Indian Art*, Nelson Gallery of Art-Atkins Museum of Fine Arts, Kansas City, Missouri, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1977, 127.

80 Townsend-Gault, *Native Art*, 29.

81 Robert Davidson, "Reclaiming Haida Culture", in Steven Brown, Gail Joice, *The Spirit Within: Northwest Coast Native Art from the John H. Hauberg Collection*, Seattle Art Museum, Washington, Rizzoli, 1995, 95. See also Audrey Hawthorn, "People of the Potlatch", in J. A. Morris, *People of the Potlatch: Native Arts and Culture of the Pacific Northwest Coast***,** Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, Canada, 1956, 7-45.

82 Townsend-Gault, *Native Art*, 229-230.

83 Stacey O. Espenlaub, "Building New Relationships with Tlingit Clans: Potlatch Loans, NAGPRA, and the Penn Museum", in Sergei Kan, Steve Henrikson, *Sharing Our Knowledge: the Tlingit and their Coastal Neighbors*, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2015, 496.

84 Suttles, *Handbook,* 223.

85 Townsend-Gault, *Native Art*, 26.

86 Townsend-Gault, *Native Art*, 47, 50, 573.

87 James Cook, 1785, as cited in Townsend-Gault, *Native Art*, 58.

88 Margaret Dubin, *Native America Collected: The Culture of an Art World,* Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 2001, 17, 19, 21, 44, 66, 109.

89 Suttles, *Handbook,* 74, 77, 82.

90 Franz Boas, "The Decorative Art of the Indians of the North Pacific Coast", *Bulletin American Museum of Natural History*, vol. IX, 1897, 123.

91 Townsend-Gault, *Native Art,* 52.

92 Boas, "The Decorative Art of the Indians of the North Pacific Coast", 136.

93 Boas, "The Decorative Art", 123, 147.

94 Boas, "The Decorative Art", 175-176.

95 Lévi-Strauss, *The Way of the Masks*, 8.

96 Townsend-Gault, *Native Art,* 653.

97 R. Eric Hollinger, Harold Jacobs, "A Killer Whale Comes Home: Neil Kuxdei woogoot, Keet S'aaxw, Mark Jacobs Jr., and the Repatriation of a Clan Crest Hat from the Smithsonian Institution", in Sergei Kan, Steve Henrikson, *Sharing Our Knowledge: the Tlingit and their Coastal Neighbors*, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2015, p. 484.

98 Townsend-Gault, *Native Art,* 673.

99 Coe, *The Responsive Eys,* 53, Duffek, 4-5.

100 Townsend-Gault, *Native Art*, 978.

101 Townsend-Gault, *Native Art*, 227, 231, 413; Duffek, *Bill Reid and Beyond,* 6.

102 Erna Gunther, *Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Exhibit at the Seattle World's Fair Fine Arts Pavilion, April 21 - October 21*, 1962, 7-8.

103 Townsend-Gault, *Native* Art, 432, 468, 505, 765; Marcus & Myers, "The Traffic in Art and Culture: An Introduction", 4-5.

104 Brown & Joice, *The Spirit Within*, 13.

105 J. A. Morris, *People of the Potlatch: Native Arts and Culture of the Pacific Northwest Coast***,** Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, Canada, 1956; Michael M. Ames, "Museum Anthropologists and the Arts of Acculturation on the Northwest Coast", *BC Studies*, no. 49, 1981, 8.

106 Townsend-Gault, *Native Art*, 349sq, 593sq, 619.

107 Wilson Duff, Bill Holm, Bill Reid, *Arts of the Raven: Masterworks by the Northwest Coast Indian*, Vancouver, The Vancouver Art Gallery, 15 June - 24 September 1967, unnumbered pages.

108 Ralph T. Coe, "Sacred Circles: The Indianness of North American Indian Art", in Coe, *Sacred Circles*, 9.

109 Bill Holm, Peter L. Corey [et al.], *The Box of Daylight: Northwest Coast Indian Art* [Exhibition], Seattle Art Museum 1984; Townsend-Gault, *Native Art,* 685.

110 Townsend-Gault, *Native Art,* 444sq, 510.

111 Townsend-Gault, *Native Art*, 866, 933.

112 Coe, *The Responsive Eye,* 45-46.

113 Daisy Sewid-Smith, Kwakwaka'wawk linguist, as cited in Townsend-Gault, *Native Art*, 15-16.

114 Townsend-Gault, *Native Art*, 433.

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