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A Global Potlatch: Identifying the Indigenous Influence on Western Thought

Isaiah Lorado Wilner

When we consider the origins of our global society, we rarely discuss the influence of Indigenous people. Natives are seen, *if* they are seen, as victims of Western advance. But Indigenous people found a way to alter the West: they shaped Western thought. When the founder of modern anthropology, Franz Boas, invalidated race as a basis for social division, he articulated a dynamic vision of humanity as a single, varied, and constantly changing global community. Boas's picture of a world beyond boundaries, which countered the problem of difference with the possibility of diversity, did not belong to Boas alone. It emerged from his relationships with Indigenous Americans.

This article reveals the role of the Kwakwaka'wakw people of Vancouver Island, British Columbia, in shaping Boas's seminal yet poorly understood concept of culture—the ineffable totality of thought, action, and reaction expressed by the different individuals who form a social community.[1] In the late nineteenth century, the chiefs of the Kwakwaka'wakw developed a relationship with Boas. They welcomed him into their community, offered him a name, and invited him to take part in their system of governance, the potlatch. Through this process of idea transmission, the Kwakwaka'wakw civilized Boas into a new way of seeing, which he presented in his treatise on the fluidity of identity, *The Mind of Primitive Man*.[2]

Identifying the Kwakwaka'wakw influence on Boas alters our understanding of his culture concept, making it possible to grasp for the first time his deep impact on our global society. Historians and anthropologists view Boas as the founder of

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cultural relativism, a German romantic in the tradition of Johann Gottfried von Herder who employed the concept of *Kultur*, or folk thought and tradition, to explain the static differences between separate groups of people.[3] But Boas's view of culture was dynamic, not static. It focused on the interaction of individuals, not groups. And it sought to explain diversity, not difference.

How did Boas come to his view? The Kwakwaka'wakw showed him culture in motion. When they offered speeches, soldered bonds, or presented public dances, Kwakwaka'wakw leaders performed for Boas the idea that people change—indeed, that the mastery of change, the capacity to reinvent oneself, contributes to the essence of what it means to be human. Potlatch notions of transformation helped Boas grasp culture as a *process* rather than a product, beginning his effort to describe the global population as a single, varied, and changing community—a dynamic humanity with no frontiers.

The history of what Boas learned from the Kwakwaka'wakw challenges the encounters paradigm, which has encouraged scholars and the general public to think of Indigenous people and Europeans as members of two worlds, divided by a border.[4] By the late nineteenth century, as Frederick Jackson Turner so famously observed, borders were disappearing.[5] Indians and Europeans occupied one global world, tied together by transcontinental railroads, telecommunications, and print media.[6] Enclosure and interconnection presented colonized people with an opportunity to influence their colonizers.

Why have we failed to recognize this history of Indigenous influence? Scholars studying the impact of colonialism on Indigenous people have defined Native action as reaction, a response to Western incursions.[7] This myopic focus on resistance to the state grants it the dominant position at the outset, blinding us to competing epistemologies and to a wealth of facts that state elites seek to erase from the public record. In effect, the state wins twice—first with the sword and then with the pen.[8]

If we seek to see past the state narrative, we can begin by studying Indigenous deeds as *actions* rather than reactions. That means extending beyond the colonial archive to consider Native sources in the context of Native thought.[9] An opportunity for such study presents itself in the Indigenous materials collected by anthropologists, whose efforts to find evidence of static cultural types in fact left behind an archive of historical change. Anthropologists did not know it, but Indigenous people spoke—and acted—through the pages of their books, flipping the script of colonial contact.

It is possible today to put this script to a new use. Ethnographies offer more than a chance to read "against the grain." As the static record of a dynamic performance, they provide us with a snapshot of the play of life, and we can pass through this picture—as if through a tunnel in time—to witness the motions of Indigenous actors who influenced Western thought. This mode of work casts aside the assumption of marginal people and marginal places, recognizing each frame of existence as a small world of the imagination. The historian is like Murray Suskind in Don DeLillo's *White Noise*, who moves beyond the text that records life to the action itself, surfing the waves of the local supermarket to capture the interpersonal vibrations: "All the letters and numbers are here, all the colors of the spectrum, all the voices and sounds, all the code words

and ceremonial phrases. It is just a question of deciphering, peeling off the layers of unspeakability."[10]

The point, though, is *speak*-ability: Who speaks? Why do they speak? Who hears? What do they hear? Why do they hear what they hear, and what messages do they carry home with them? These questions of transmission move past the principle of relativity, which emphasizes the impact of an investigator upon his or her "subject" but fails to grasp the situation from the standpoint of the subject itself. If Native people are to be *subjects* of history, if they are to be treated as actors rather than reactors, we must move beyond the kind of critique that only instantiates authority. We must read *inside out*, capturing the performance within the text, seeing the motion that lies beneath the still surface, moving from the social origins of ideas through the relationships that transmit them to their ultimate destination as ingredients of an ever transforming global practice.

What follows, then, is an attempt to move toward a global history of ideas from the inside out. I take an episode of Western objectification of Indigenous people and reveal it as a paradigmatic case of Indigenous influence on the West. But first, caution: No piece of evidence is impartial. Boas's books, like Suskind's supermarket, are a product of the relationships that made them. We are what we read—as we are what we eat—for each social production alters that future state of being of which we now form a part. But a snapshot, however partial, contains a small world of meaning. It is not a memory but a picture: a precise record of a set of social coordinates. We can discover within this richness of detail a portal to the relationships that produced it.

The question prompted by this inside-out approach to global thought cuts to the heart of imperial politics: Have colonized people exerted an influence upon their colonizers? If so, how have they transcended the political controls exerted by expanding empires? And what role have Western travelers played in Indigenous attempts to alter the West? This line of questioning draws attention to two forms of power that historians often fail to consider: first, the power of imagination to inspire new habits and practices; second, the power of personal relationships to transcend structural circumstances.

A Good Law

The potlatch was an Indigenous form of governance, and that is why the colonial government sought to destroy it.[11] Boas could have recognized this in 1886, when he first arrived in Kwak'wala land. The chiefs of the Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw principalities had recently learned that the government of Canada had banned the potlatch. Now rumors circulated that the colonial government planned to send a British man-of-war. Suspecting Boas to be a missionary or Indian agent, the elites of Newittee, a northern Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw village, called a meeting to speak with the interloper and decide whether he could stay.[12]

At the meeting, the leading chief informed Boas that he stood on foreign territory. This was not the British sovereign's land, he said, and the Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw planned to continue living on it in their way. Force did not come into the equation. If the colonists

burned down their houses, the chief announced, pointing to the forest behind him, his people would cut down more trees, build anew, and once again live as they liked. “It is a strict law that bids us dance,” he explained. “It is a strict law that bids us distribute our property among our friends and neighbors. It is a good law.”[13]

The essential word here, thrice declared, is *law*. By describing the potlatch with this term, the chief highlighted the formal political organization of his society. After Boas endorsed Indigenous sovereignty, promising that he would not interfere with the potlatch, the Kwakwa̲ka̲’wakw would name him Heiltsakuls, The One Who Says the Right Thing.[14] But what did Boas think? In 1886, Boas held to a Western notion of government: states make law and laws make the state. Indigenous people, as non-state people, were disorganized by definition.[15] As a result, Boas did not take the word *law* literally, and he spent the rest of his life puzzling over the mysteries of an institution that Kwakwa̲ka̲’wakw people had attempted to clarify for him the moment that they met.

The resulting investigation excited some active imaginations. Boas’s writings on the potlatch influenced, among other theories of behavior, Thorstein Veblen’s concept of conspicuous consumption, Marcel Mauss’s evocation of the gift, Ruth Benedict’s notion of cultural relativism, and some dashing anticapitalist tracts by Georges Bataille and Jacques Derrida.[16] Despite their dissimilarities, these works share a basic inattention to how Kwakwa̲ka̲’wakw people explained their institution. In contrast to those he inspired, Boas at least visited Vancouver Island, witnessed the potlatch, and recorded the words and ways of the people who practiced it. Considering that his Kwakwa̲ka̲’wakw texts remain one of the richest corpuses of Indigenous thought ever compiled, it is strange that the originators of this work have been silenced.[17]

Kwakwa̲ka̲’wakw people of the late nineteenth century did not explain the potlatch as a form of resistance.[18] Evading the state was not their first purpose, nor did they yearn passively for a past that could not be restored. Instead they sought to establish an alternative future: a form of governance that, unlike state capitalism, would limit warfare, distribute wealth widely across their society, and encourage cooperation and active citizenship. These aims developed from long-standing Northwest Coast customs, and they also reflected the people’s interpretation of recent experience.

When Kwakwa̲ka̲’wakw shamans conversed, they would often say, “Short life to you.”[19] These ironic words, carrying a flavor of foreboding entirely opposite to the usual welcome, *Gila’kasla*, noted the central fact of Native life on Vancouver Island: death by infectious disease. The Kwakwa̲ka̲’wakw traced their social conditions not to 1849, when the Hudson’s Bay Company arrived, but to 1862, when smallpox killed up to half the population, including perhaps 70 percent of Fort Rupert, which had quickly grown into a thriving town of trade and exchange.[20] The devastating times that followed, when survivors along the Northwest Coast were forced to pull down the houses of friends and family, stack the corpses, throw them into the sea or set them ablaze, and cast off to seek the remnants of other decimated communities, inspired Kwak’wala-speaking lineages to explore a common identity, giving rise to a new society.[21]

The Kwakwaka’wakw faced the rupture of their life-world with resilience and inventiveness, fashioning from the shards of their broken coast a renewed world of meaning. With the population at four thousand souls and rapidly declining, village patriarchs realized that they would have to share resources and minimize strife in order to reproduce their communities.[22] The potlatch was their survival strategy, connecting the people within an extended network of increasingly peaceful and productive relationships. Although Boas did not recognize this theme, the data he recorded captures the story.[23]

The key principles at work—shortly to influence Boas—were circulation, transformation, and unity. The “gift” at the center of the exchange was not wealth but people. By circulating heirs between families, the elite of about twenty Native principalities, each of which had entered the smallpox epidemic with an independent identity, fostered new connections.[24] Ties grew between individuals, then between descent groups, and at last between principalities. Over thirty years, as the number of exchanges grew, so did the unity of the Kwak’wala-speaking community.[25] By Boas’s arrival, the Kwak’wala-speaking peoples had transformed themselves into a confederation: a family of families.

The marriage politics of the Kwakwaka’wakw created a highly dynamic society distinguished by three kinds of transformations. First, transformations of property: A young man who wished to marry paid a rich price, not for his bride but for her inherited property of resource rights, society memberships, and associated dances.[26] The father of the bride sealed the transfer at a potlatch, pouring property upon his heir, who would symbolically “sink the canoe” and distribute its load of blankets to the guests who witnessed, certifying the exchange.[27] Second, transformations of legitimacy: During the potlatch, the governing elite and commoners had an opportunity to endorse or block bids for leadership.[28] Third, transformations of identity: The major potlatches, which dispensed the most property and exchanged the most highly valued rights, occurred during the winter ceremonials, when leaders assumed ancestral roles to guide a reconciliation of the now dangerously divided spirit, animal, and human worlds.[29]

The law of the potlatch unified the community, which recreated new standards of conduct each year. Giveaways brought prestige to the chiefs who circulated coppers, fabricated metal plates often worth thousands of blankets, but the whole community participated in the elaboration of values. A young man who received a few button blankets might take the opportunity to contribute a play-within-the-play to the group performance, asking what to do with them. This would give his father’s sister a chance to stand up and recite the history of her brother, a magnanimous chief (in her memory, at least) who burned canoes and gave away sea otter skins to express his honor and authority. “This, my son, is the road your father laid out for you and on which you must walk,” she would advise. “Do as your father did. Either tear up these button blankets or give them to our rival tribe, the Kwakiutl. That is all.” The blankets circulated an object lesson—*share the wealth*—that ran as “sweet and strong” as the war of property.[30]

The potlatch challenged capitalism. Both were systems of exchange. Whereas capitalism exchanged everything *up*, the potlatch exchanged everything *down*. Westerners sought to hoard their wealth, but the potlatch mocked the profit motive. The chiefs of the Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw accumulated wealth only to set it free. Gift exchange softened boundaries of rank and kept the commoner class afloat, making the most of each individual's chance to survive, prosper, and reproduce. In what previously had been a hierarchical society, the elite steered a course toward a flatter social structure, maintaining leadership prerogatives while lowering the wealth gap, blurring rank distinctions, and presenting laborers a path toward social mobility. (As the descendants of the powerful families put it to Boas with a knowing smile, "Now everyone is a chief.")[31] If property flowed *down*, public endorsement of elite rights flowed *up*, producing a circuit of sentiments that sketched out a circle of belonging.

People change, they flow, and they come together. These were the core ideas expressed through the potlatch—concepts discovered by Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw leaders when their society stood at the brink of collapse and they looked within themselves to find the resources to move forward. Each of these ideas threatened colonial authorities, and quite understandably so. If things transform, then how might a state control them? If people move, then how can they be stopped? If communities unite, then what happens when they decide, collectively, that they might prefer another way of life?

Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw leaders never intended to mount an existential threat to the capitalist state. An experience-driven wariness and request for distant toleration would better describe their approach toward Canadian colonists in the years after 1862. "We will dance when our laws command us to dance; we will feast when our laws demand us to feast," the Newittee chief had told Boas in 1886. "Let the white man observe his law; we shall observe ours."[32] But Canadian colonists, sharing the paranoia of state architects everywhere, went out in search of monsters to destroy.

Instead of accepting this state binary, which identifies difference as a site of struggle between regimes, we might see the potlatch as a single knowledge regime in a state of constant becoming—a dynamic scheme for the improvement of a global society. Although the Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw intended only to unite their linguistic community by the law of the potlatch, they ultimately invented a method of incorporating outsiders that transcended such boundaries. Overmatched in numbers, resources, and military power, the Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw discovered a mode of fostering relationships that allowed them to exercise control over their own existence, even amid colonial exploitation. They were about to take their project one step further—from agency to influence.

Friends on the Other Side

The man who led this transformation was George Hunt, an Indigenous intellectual who would elevate himself to an unprecedented position as a spokesman for Native ways. The Indian son of the English trader at Fort Rupert and his highborn Tlingit wife, Hunt grew up inside the Hudson's Bay Company fence but spent his life beyond it.[33] He taught himself to read in defiance of his father, made use of the Anglican missionary to practice writing, then promptly rejected his influence, joining

the Indigenous potlatch circuit.[34] As the colony’s local pilot and guide, Hunt might have passed into White society.[35] He chose otherwise, rising to the status of a shaman and marrying a young woman from a prominent Kwakiutl family.[36]

Without Boas, Hunt would have been a notable Northwest Coast fieldworker, travelers’ guide, and political player among the Kwakwa̱ka̱’wakw.[37] He could have sent the same messages but only a handful would have heard them. The odds of transmission increased when Hunt guided Johan Adrian Jacobsen, a Norwegian ethnologist, through northern Vancouver Island. With Hunt’s help he collected masks.[38] The masks, transported to Berlin’s *Museum für Völkerkunde*, captured the mind of a young geographer.[39] Boas sought out work on the Northwest Coast, where he soon became the medium for Hunt’s message.[40] The opportunity to work with an anthropologist who went beyond collecting objects to collecting thoughts took Hunt from agency to influence, relaying his ideas to the West.[41]

In 1894, stimulated by his work with Boas at the World’s Columbian Exposition, Hunt invited the anthropologist to witness a potlatch season.[42] Although Boas attained backing from the US National Museum, he arrived in Fort Rupert under the auspices of Hunt, who met his guest boat-side and hosted him at the family manse.[43] Boas touched shore in mid-November, at the beginning of the sacred season, when the people put down their secular names to assume the winter names of their ancestors.[44] Franz Boas, the reserved scholar, transformed into Heiltsakuls, The One Who Says the Right Thing, at his first Fort Rupert potlatch, choreographed by Hunt.[45] Crowned with a head ring, wrapped in a blanket, Boas dispensed hardtack and molasses, soaked up compliments to his generosity, and accepted invitations to the coming feasts.[46]

The locus of Kwakwa̱ka̱’wakw society—the center of activity and symbol of the wider world—was the great house.[47] The front doors of these homes had no locks. Several families lived in each and they were not always related by blood. Instead they shared a history, which visitors could read on the carved poles raised outside.[48] House poles proclaimed the achievements of heroes in living memory, connected them to stories of the transformers in mythological times, and sometimes made fun of a friend or neighbor who had yet to pay off a debt.[49] They were like a neighborhood newsletter, a dense weave of the topical and traditional, providing context for what went on inside.

During the stormy winter, it made sense to stay where it was warm and dry. The house became the potlatch place and the center of the winter ceremonial. A key figure in the drama was Baxbaxwalanuksiwe, the Man Eater at the Mouth of the River, a spirit who possessed an appetite for human flesh. Much like a smallpox sufferer, whose skin is covered in pustules, each with a dimple in the middle, the Man Eater had mouths all over his body. He was a symbol of the victim as a carrier of the scourge.[50] Another spirit was Winalagalis, Making War All Over the World. His nickname was Pestilence Woman.[51] By making contact with these spirits, Kwakwa̱ka̱’wakw elites reversed the currents, asserting health over sickness, wealth over poverty, feasting over famine. But the ceremonies did not follow an established script; each year was different. In addition to the religious rituals, principalities and descent groups told their stories through dances, playing out an identity pageant through social performance.

When Boas donned his blanket to take part in Fort Rupert's winter ceremonies, the pageant he was about to witness would serve a political purpose. In the winter of 1894, the Kwakiutl were strengthening their alliances with the Naqoaqtoq of Blunden Harbour and the Koskimo of Quatsino Sound, and they had invited these principalities to feast at Fort Rupert.[52] Each group addressed the others as its "friends on the other side of the house," a reference to the feeling of difference within unity negotiated by interdependent peoples within a shared space.[53]

The gathering went on for three weeks. As the show took shape, two concepts of human identity took stage and danced in counterpoint, like chiefs offering speeches at a potlatch. The Kwakiutl presented a diversity drama—cosmopolitan, agglomerative, embracing the new, valuing the exhibition of wealth. The diversity drama defied nuclear histories, stressing commonalities between people, flow across lines, change over time. The Naqoaqtoq and the Koskimo, on the other hand, presented a difference display. The difference display was timeless; it defied story. It placed highest value not on manifestations of wealth but on old names and ways. This anti-narrative challenged paeans to progress with a bracing elegy to what was lost.

Neither plot was right or wrong. Both were true to the sentiments of their makers, now dancing closer, now apart, as three peoples reached for a realm of feeling. There were gains to be had from interconnection. If the Kwakiutl possessed a central position in trade circuits, the northerly Naqoaqtoq owned fishing grounds at Seymour Inlet, while the Koskimo, who lived on the wind-beaten west coast, held the social influence of distinctive dances.[54] Still, especially for the Koskimo, coalescence required consideration. Canadians had arrived only recently to mark off reserves, and the Koskimo had promptly protested the alienation of their lands.[55] A path forward was not clear. As one Koskimo chief expressed his dilemma to the Kwakiutl, "Friends on the other side! . . . I should like to have your dances, but I am afraid to change my ways."[56]

Or at least this was the show Boas recorded, influenced as he was by a story within the story: the stirring ascendance of George Hunt. This would be a decisive potlatch season for Boas's guide, who planned to make a carefully crafted bid for a position of leadership, one that ultimately would fashion an Indigenous dynasty. In previous years, Hunt had served as an attendant to, and danced beside, the Hamatsa, an elite secret society whose initiates claimed they were spirited away each year by Baxbaxwalanuksiwe, returning in a state of frenzy to vivify the ceremonies with spectacular dances representing the supernatural powers that the people hoped to tame.[57] Now Hunt had inherited his own family dances, including a Hamatsa dance for his eldest son, David.[58] After several years of "going through" the dances, David had assumed first rank in the Kwakiutl secret societies.[59] For the father of foreign ancestry, the son's rise to eminence was a personal transformation, and a moment of instability too.[60] During the dances the public would have a chance to validate—or not—his Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw belonging.

David Hunt took center stage six days after Boas's arrival. He summoned his enforcers, the Fool Dancers and Grizzly Bear Dancers, who painted their faces black and stormed from house to house, pushing the people to David's feast. They poured eulachon oil upon the fire until the flames licked the beams. David danced and George

Hunt dispensed blankets, raising the name of his son.[61] The next evening, the father threw a feast, and his son and daughter danced, while the crowd sang Hunt family songs to the "Great, real Cannibal."[62] A Koskimo who had supported David's progress stood up, telling of the coppers he had sold to David, which the young man had given away, and of the copper he himself had thrown into the fire in sake of David's name. "Now look out!" the Koskimo warned. "I may do the same again this year. I want to make him as heavy as I can on my part. His father is doing the same for him."[63]

This endorsement by a Koskimo provided formal recognition of the Hunt family's ascendance. The Kwakiutl crowd recognized as much, clamoring for George Hunt to stand up and speak on his own behalf. "Friends, look at me," Hunt began. "Look at me well, because I want to tell you who I am!" He then presented a brief on behalf of circulation—a political biography of his life in Fort Rupert. He had given David his first Hamatsa ceremony five years before. He had distributed wealth. In his youth, he had been taken under the wing of the chiefs, who taught him their ways. As a young man, he had earned the names Ꞁā′qoag·ila and Qō′moqoē when he received a copper, ermine, and abalone shells from his grandfather. Finally he had opened his box and taken out his dances. So far, so Kwakiutl; this was rights oratory.[64]

Now came the pirouette. Hunt approached the delicacy of identity. Kwakiutl ways were "not my way," he averred, yet by saying so he demonstrated his fluency in those very ways. He then began a testament to transformation. "Do not call me Guētelabidō," he requested, disavowing a diminutive term for a man from the north. "It is well when I live like one of you, and it is well if I act like one of the northern tribe, because my mother was of high blood among her tribe." He then gestured toward his son and daughter. "I do not give this festival that you may call me a chief," he promised. "I give it in honor of these two who are dancing here, that the words of their enemies may not harm them. For this purpose I build an armor of wealth around them."[65]

Though Hunt disclaimed leadership, he exercised a form of rhetorical power founded on a strong base of friendships and alliances. If his style seemed self-effacing, he did not shy from fashioning a legacy for his son and daughter. His rationale was the diversity drama, a one-world theme of variety within unity. Hunt offered an expansive sense of belonging, a hope for a broader human community. The message shocked some listeners, as Hunt's appointed speaker noted when he rose to repeat the theme. "Did you hear what my chief said?" he asked a Naqoaqtoq chief. "He did not speak against you, he did not speak against the Koskimo, and he did not speak against us."[66] The speaker then announced a change in status: Despite his disclaimer, Hunt would serve as a Kwakiutl lineage speaker—normally a hereditary role, now awarded to Hunt on merit.[67] "Now take care!" the speaker warned of David Hunt. "Speak carefully, and see that food is given in the proper way to our great friend. He has many fathers."[68]

George Hunt's diversity drama, a personal history connecting the Kwakiutl, the Koskimo, and the faraway Tlingit, received a rapid endorsement. Hō′ʟᴇlitē, the speaker for the Guetela branch of the Fort Rupert Kwakiutl, praised Hunt's actions. "This is the first time that such a thing is done," he observed of Hunt. "His property runs from him in streams, and if one of his rivals should stand in the way he would be drowned by it."[69] Hō′ʟᴇlitē then distributed Hunt's blankets in honor of David Hunt,

demonstrating his support. Even as the Naqoaqtoq speakers fulfilled their role as witnesses to the transformation, they noted the novelty of Hunt's actions. "No clan has ever been known to do what you have done today, and I am afraid of you," one Naqoaqtoq chief said. "Kwakiutl, you had a chief before this time, but now you have no chief." The Kwakiutl chiefs replied, "True, true; we can not deny it."[70]

The ascendance of the Hunt family—and its inclusive implications—had altered the power structure of the Kwakiutl, spreading authority beyond the lineage chiefs. If an outsider had changed the rules, the keepers of the rules had helped him, endorsing the alteration at the proper occasion, thus meeting change with continuity, incorporating diversity within unity, and balancing an individual act with a communal plan. This drama within a drama epitomized the winter ceremonial, a dynamic interaction through which an entire society considered and ultimately settled upon decisions. By this common law, a guided process that mandated no result, the Kwakiutl opened a door to outside talent.

Their friends on the other side, however, stressed continuity over change, differences between groups over commonalities between individuals, and a connection to place rather than process. The next night, Naqoaqtoq dancers flowed into their house in twos and threes. They were cormorants, and they said their bellies were full, ready to disgorge property upon their rivals.[71] When property flows, so do ideas. Killer whales with wooden fins streamed in, followed in the next dance by women dressed as birds. "Do you know what this means?" the Naqoaqtoq speaker asked. The dances related the story of Kuēkuaxā´oē, a hero figure who had traveled the world in his canoe, meeting the Naqoaqtoq at their present village site and painting colors onto the birds in a nearby cave (except the cormorants and ravens, who received only charcoal). History began when the birds danced out of the cave. "If you do not believe what I said, Koskimo," the Naqoaqtoq speaker said, "come and visit me and I will show you the place."[72]

The cormorant dance valorized place over process, establishing a claim to truth through connection to a stretch of territory. The cave represented Naqoaqtoq identity: the place from which their dances flew. Each such place had its attributes—a beach that sang when stepped upon because Kuēkuaxā´oē had turned some whales into sand, a dark spot by the cave where the hero's canoe had burned.[73] These landmarks were identity spigots, meaning-markers that spouted social stories. They did not establish boundaries but served as a central source of influence. Certainly the Naqoaqtoq incorporated outsiders; their stories told of whales and humans living together. But the dance played out histories of change in mythological times, submerging social conflict within the river of tradition.[74]

This dance provoked the Kwakiutl to hold a secret meeting in the woods, where they planned a riposte. Now they would show *their* traditions, the story of *their* hero, Mink, who killed the wolves, took their dances, and removed his mask to become human. After the dance, a Kwakiutl speaker named Qᴇ´lqēx·âla stood up. "This is done in rivalry with what the Naqoaqtoq did last night," he said. "They showed us their legends; these are our legends. I do not need to tell them to you; you all know how K·ēx·, the Mink, killed the son of the wolves."[75] This was a clear response to the

difference display. The dance of K·ēx· proclaimed that the Kwakiutl retained their connections to their ancestors. The circuit—past, present, future; animal, human, spirit—remained unbroken.

But then the circuit broke. For their finale, the Fort Rupert chiefs had planned to offer a Wind Dance, a fast-paced series of steps incorporating heavy masks with multiple faces, culminating in a transformation. A young boy danced around the fire, then disappeared behind a curtain. When the second song began, a large mask popped up where the boy had been, representing the sunrise. A beat, a pause, and the dancer yanked his hidden string, flinging open the mask to reveal a second carved face within. But he moved too boldly or a part came loose, for one side calved off, revealing the artifice.[76] This was an error, and with it, the dance ruptured. The Hamatsa cried. The Fool Dancers pelted the crowd with stones. A shaman hurled burning coals. "Spirit of the winter dance!" a Naqoaqtoq elder yelled, circling the fire to restore order. But it was no use. The people ran from the house, breaking the ceremonials. The hosts had lost control.[77]

With danger came opportunity, for the healer rides in on death's back—in this case the body of a child. When the house was calm, the Naqoaqtoq stepped in, walking in from the back with the body of a "dead" boy: a metaphor for the blocked ceremonial.[78] T'ō´pēwa, the speaker for the Naqoaqtoq, announced that the Pestilence Woman had killed a shaman's son. "Naqoaqtoq and Koskimo," he said, "you must kick against a high mountain. . . . The supernatural power came and took him away. He is dead. We will try to resuscitate him."[79] The Naqoaqtoq Mamaqa dancers, who specialized in resurrection spectacles, pretended to try to throw the boy into the fire. Instead, he was placed atop a box. The greatest shaman circled the fire. As he circled, he sang, calming the crowd and bringing the room under his control. The boy stirred to life.[80]

The Kwakwaka'wakw always expected mistakes to occur, and they found a way to address this risk through the ceremonies. Spectators scrutinized dancers in case they should trip in tracks that grew more rutted with every dance, slowly bringing on the inevitable accident.[81] Once an error had been noted, a correction made, a change accommodated, the ceremonies would begin again: a metaphor for the Kwakwaka'wakw emphasis on the possibility of incorporating the unexpected within. Still, each slip was unique; it held in its grip a small world of meaning. A Kwakiutl accident expressed to the others Kwakiutl characteristics: headlong change, lax oversight—insufficient orthodoxy. "Friends," the shaman advised his hosts, "if you have a mask for the winter ceremonial which you want to show, do not let a stranger use it; teach your own people to show it, that no mistake may occur. Only because a stranger showed your mask, a mistake happened and brought about our great difficulty."[82]

With diversity trumped for the moment, difference ascended as if in rhythmic balance. The next evening, the Koskimo displayed their history, entering the house wearing balsam pine rather than the Kwakiutl hemlock to signify the purity of Koskimo rituals. "Your ways, Kwakiutl, differ greatly from ours," said Lō´Xoaxstaak^{u}, the Koskimo speaker. "Take care and do not change your old customs, Kwakiutl!"[83] With that, a Koskimo Wolf Dancer appeared, crowned in red cedar bark, white feathers, and a sprinkling of eagle's down. His outfit referenced Ya´xstaʟ, a hero to the

people of the west coast who had received his powers from the wolves.[84] The Koskimo briefly pacified their Hamatsa initiate before heating him up into a new frenzy by singing their wolf song.[85] Just before they released a flood of property, Ā′ʟabala, a Koskimo speaker, arose to address the Kwakiutl. "Take care, friends on the other side of the house," he said. "Your customs . . . differ from ours. They were given to you. I am glad to see that you as well as we are observing our old laws."[86]

Even for the Kwakiutl, who welcomed differences of opinion, this was a little much. How careful were they to be in their hometown? Or perhaps they appreciated yet another chance to syncopate rhythms. The Kwakiutl speakers remained silent throughout the performance. After the calming of the Hamatsa, they accepted their gifts from the Koskimo with customary ceremony, David Hunt receiving first, as the head Hamatsa, then down through the other Kwakiutl men, from the highest position to the lowest.[87] After the blanket distribution, however, Hō′ʟᴇlitē spoke up. "Friends, did you hear what G·ā′sa said?" the speaker asked. "Everything he said is true, except one remark, in which he is mistaken. You said that your customs in regard to dances and festivals differ from ours. Remember, we are all of the same name. That is all."[88]

Difference did not mean division as Hō′ʟᴇlitē saw it. Unity could exist in diversity. Separate peoples bore a common name: in a word, "Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw," the speakers of Kwak'wala. Responding to the challenge of the Koskimo, the Kwakiutl chief presented the idea of a global family—a family of families or unity of peoples. The distinct yet interrelated peoples who spoke Kwak'wala composed an extended community because lines of connection grew between them. All were linked by the lives of individuals who brought their ways with them and changed them as they traveled. By recognizing these cords of connection, the people of Kwak'wala country identified, even before Frederick Jackson Turner, the declining fate of boundaries in a networked world.

As the Kwakiutl potlatched with the Koskimo and the Naqoaqtoq, exchanging views across a common ground with their "friends on the other side of the house," a curly-haired gentleman sat in shadow, writing by the firelight. He had paid his way in hardtack and molasses, but even if he said the right things, he could not grasp all of what others said. His gift—a rarity—was a remarkable ear that allowed him to pick up sounds. These he dashed down in a Kwak'wala alphabet he had invented, translating noises into words the next morning with Hunt. *Friends on the other side*—those who are the same yet different, members of your world, welcome within your house, yet somehow strange within it: this was a concept given to Boas by Hunt. Hunt's gift—Hunt's *power*—was the ability to find a receptor, to reach out through the world and grasp hold of one man who, for once, came to listen. Boas was Hunt's friend on the other side. He held the potential to receive Hunt's point of view, relaying the message to the West.

A Dynamic Humanity

The Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw received Boas as a relativist. They sent him home as a universalist. After his visit, Boas turned from the differences between groups of people to the common inheritance individuals share: the experience of diversity. Stimulated

by the potlatch, Boas transmitted to the West an Indigenous vision of human life as a state of transformation. Whereas previous anthropologists saw Native people as drones copying an outdated code, Boas portrayed them as innovators of their own modernity, participants in a living tradition who reinvented their identities through interaction. Turning from culture as a finished product toward culture as an ongoing process, Boas broke the boundaries of Western thought, offering a global vision of a dynamic humanity.

It is fitting that Boas came to champion an Indigenous concept of transformation, for change was the constant of his intellectual journey, a quest for particularity that carried him away from the generalities of his German education. Before he experienced the potlatch, Boas romanticized Native people in the tradition of the German Enlightenment.[89] He derived his outlook from the cosmographic philosophy of Alexander von Humboldt, the linguistic ideas of his brother Wilhelm von Humboldt, and the ethnological ramblings of Boas's mentor Adolf Bastian, all of whom employed Herder's concept of *Kultur* to explain the ways that groups of people think and relate.[90] This was a static conception of difference that imposed borders upon communities to define separate stocks, all equally human but divided by boundaries of identity.

In his early life, Boas conformed to this outlook. He planned his journey to Baffin Island as an epic trip into difference. His year's stay with the Inuit bore the hallmarks of a romantic hero's quest: hunger, privation, sickness (for the Inuit), seal hunting, and, at last, comfort in the strange—a blizzard-blown trek that provoked help from the Natives and a relativist realization from the adventurer.[91] "I often ask myself what advantages our 'good society' possesses over that of the 'savages,'" Boas wrote his soon-to-be wife, Marie, in 1883. "We have no right to blame them for their forms and superstitions which may seem ridiculous to us. We 'highly educated' people are much worse, relatively speaking."[92]

This spirit of relativism, which cast Indigenous people as exotic cousins of Europeans, sundered from civilization by a chasm of difference, continued to define Boas's thinking until he left for Fort Rupert in 1894. For every statement of universalism Boas uttered ("The Eskimo is a man as we are"), he supplied a careful rejoinder ("the character of their life is so rude as compared to civilized life").[93] If anything, Boas's major essays, on sound perception and museum display, emphasized the equation's latter half. Without a strong concept of difference, Boas could not have made his case that all creations, from words to weapons, ought to be studied in the context of the worlds that produced them.[94] This was a forceful argument for tolerance, but Boas made it at a price, trading the universality of humanity for a tidy spatial separation all too accommodating to the "separate but equal" formalism soon made into legal doctrine by the Supreme Court in *Plessy v. Ferguson*.[95]

The idea of difference was an ideological trap that forced Boas to reaffirm the civilization/savagery binary every time he tried to wriggle out. The trip wire that cued the trap was race. Grappling with cranial measurements that made White superiority the regnant fact of modern science, Boas sought an escape by turning from capacity to culture. In an August 1894 lecture to the American Association for the Advancement of Science, he noted that the brain sizes of all races overlapped. Whites were not

necessarily superior, then; they only *seemed* superior because of "the superiority of the civilization of the white race."[96] Boas's answer to the problem of difference . . . was more difference. He had taken out his culture key and turned it, only to meet the teeth of his dilemma.[97]

Boas left for Fort Rupert one month after delivering the lecture.[98] Six months after his return, he delivered a second lecture to the same association. His thinking had undergone a decisive shift. Instead of talking about racial groups or cultural groups, Boas now argued that humanity could not be "reduced to a few types."[99] Instead of talking about difference, he characterized the thoughts of the world's people as "a great diversity."[100] So began a fifteen-year run of papers in which Boas cast aside the relativist gesture of non-blame delivered from a stance of superiority to grasp Indigenous thought processes from within.[101] Boas concluded that there was no difference between the ways that "primitive" and "civilized" people think. The human mind was universal.

The result of this work was *The Mind of Primitive Man*, in which Boas argued that any classification of humanity is arbitrary.[102] All groups—whether defined by race, culture, or language—are the product of movement, mixture, and exchange. Each group is the product of its relationships with other groups, that is, of history. By moving from the *products* of culture to the *process* that creates it, Boas revealed human life as a dynamic interaction, a series of exchanges between people whose flexibility defies boundaries of race or region, culture, language, and even nation.[103] Boas thereby plunged beneath the group to its constituents—the individuals who interact, coalesce, break apart, and reshape themselves as a result of what we all hold in common: the ability to transform.[104]

Boas's thinking had undergone a change during 1894 and 1895, the period that he spent with the Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw. The new ideas he presented bore essential similarities to the ideas he heard at Fort Rupert. The interplay between Lō´Xoaxstaak^{u} ("Do not change your old customs") and Hō´lᴇlitē ("We are all of the same name") epitomized the tension between difference and unity that Boas came to encapsulate in the theme of diversity, a variety so rich that it must be seen in whole. The performances Boas witnessed laid bare the provisional nature of a social group by revealing its constituent elements—the individuals who navigate between place and process, helping the community negotiate a path through the currents of change. The Indigenous theme of transformation echoed throughout Boas's new concept of culture as a process.

This dynamic understanding of humanity departed from a long legacy of thought. Before Boas, Western thinkers, even radicals like Bartolomé de Las Casas who spoke for the rights of Indians, had depicted the world's peoples as a "family of man," a collection of separate groups who lived according to their separate ways. The challenge for such thinkers was explaining group difference—an obsession in Western society. Boas broke out of this binary. He depicted humanity as one, moving Western thought away from its obsession with *difference* toward an embrace of *diversity*. This was a vision of a global humanity for a global age, and it shared more in common with Hunt than with Herder.

In making this leap, Boas was far ahead of his time—so far, in fact, that it would take his fellow scholars nearly a century to catch up. By demonstrating the rationality

of Indigenous actors, Boas broke the racist divide that motivated classic works of Western expansionism, from John Locke's *Second Treatise* to James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, and disproved in advance a shelf of solipsism to come, from Max Horkheimer to Samuel P. Huntington.[105] But Boas also transcended the debate, for his insistence on interconnection invalidated on pragmatic grounds the dehumanizing practice of isolating groups under a microscope—whether relativist or evolutionist, racist or romantic—and serving them up for "scientific" study. In short, Boas anticipated by a century Edward Said's call for an affective study of global relations that would allow people to exercise their humanity.[106]

What took Boas in this direction? What awakened him so many years before others trained in the same tradition? In an unusually personal passage of *The Mind of Primitive Man*, Boas discussed the impact of Vancouver Island on his thinking. The passage took the form of a rebuttal to Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, a former member of British Columbia's Indian Reserve Commission, who had discounted the mental capacities of those he had dispossessed in a travelogue titled *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*. "I happen to know through personal contact the tribes mentioned by Sproat," Boas replied. "Without mnemonic aids, they plan the systematic distribution of their property in such a manner as to increase their wealth and social position. These plans require great foresight and constant application."[107] The potlatch, then, gave Boas insight into the intelligence of Indigenous people and the purpose of Native social systems that a colonist like Sproat, closed to insights beyond his parochial experience, necessarily lacked.[108]

But the potlatch also influenced Boas in ways it seems he did not realize. In his ethnography of the ceremonial season at Fort Rupert, *The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians*, Boas obscured the influence of Hunt, referring to him by his Native names, rather than identifying him as the same man who had researched the book.[109] Boas did not erase Hunt's role. The book's byline explained that it was "based on personal observations and on notes made by Mr. George Hunt," a debt Boas underscored in an account of his research methods:

> The great body of facts presented here were observed and recorded by Mr. George Hunt, of Fort Rupert, British Columbia, who takes deep interest in everything pertaining to the ethnology of the Kwakiutl Indians and to whom I am under great obligations. I am indebted to him also for explanations of ceremonials witnessed by myself, but the purport of which was difficult to understand, and for finding the Indians who were able to give explanations on certain points.[110]

Boas did not mention, however, that the ceremonials revolved around Hunt's own rise to prominence and the dances of his son David Hunt. Boas's study of "social organization" was, in fact, a family affair—a form of collective biography. Because Boas did not wish to reveal the double identity of scientist and subject, observer and observed, he split the public Hunt in half—dividing Ꞁā′qoag·ila from George, the White man from the Indian.[111]

Hunt had shared a truer story with Boas. Hunt had shown that he was not a man in half, trapped "between worlds," but one multifaceted person changing over

time. The fluency Hunt displayed in his daily affairs at Fort Rupert—his facility for the potlatch, his grasp of a language and set of ceremonial practices that he (like everyone) had learned, his rise to responsibility among his people—revealed to Boas the power of individuals to reshape themselves, and ultimately their societies, through social interaction. Hunt's life and his interpretation of it epitomized the shift toward a pan-Kwak'wala society, which itself provided a microcosm of a global society on the horizon.

This was the message of the potlatch. Though Boas obscured the origins of that message, he transmitted its values to the West through his dynamic concept of culture. Potlatch notions of transformation were the opposite of what came to be called cultural relativism. Whereas cultural relativism locked people in place, potlatch transformation set them free. Whereas cultural relativism foundered on difference, the potlatch embraced diversity. The potlatch spoke, like the man who explained it, on behalf of the right to redefine oneself—to earn a name, seek fulfillment through contact with other people, and establish a common future. By converting this culture concept into a form of power, Hunt personified the Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw ideal of transformation. He showed Boas the possibility of transcending boundaries of belonging.

Identifying Hunt's influence on Boas compels us to reevaluate a central moment in Western thought. If Boas emphasized dynamism over stasis, individuals over groups, and diversity over difference, then how could he have created the group-based theory of static difference that was cultural relativism? In fact, he did not. Cultural relativism was developed in Boas's final years and after his death by his successors Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, and Melville J. Herskovits. During his lifetime, Boas held grave doubts about the ideas of his students, who ignored the dynamism fundamental to human experience.[112]

We should therefore think of Boas not as the founder of cultural relativism but as a carrier of *cultural universalism*, an Indigenous vision of unity in change.[113] While a full analysis remains to be completed, Hunt may ultimately be recognized in his own right as a major mind of modern times. It was Hunt, after all, who was the originating source of the Boasian ideal of diversity that is so much a part of global life today. Hunt's speeches, his writings, and his interpretation of culture directly inspired the work of canonized thinkers who have profited grandly from their depictions of "savage" minds and "tribal" lives, ranging from Marcel Mauss to Claude Lévi-Strauss. But their contributions pale in comparison to the sources of their insight, the Indigenous thinkers known as mere "informants" whom they so often failed to name.

In the context of this play between the personal and the political, Boas emerges in a different light, illuminated by the inside-out history of the coast where he worked. Boas could not understand every message the Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw sent him, but his conscientious effort to transcribe the sounds he heard proved valuable indeed. Before the spread of motion photography, the Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw seized Boas as an opportunity to take a snapshot of pan-Kwak'wala governance in 1894. Sending their ideas about circulation, transformation, and unity through the Hunt-Boas medium, the Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw globalized the West.

There is no relationship in which the fine line between influence and appropriation is not difficult to draw. We are dealing with ideas, not artifacts. Beyond museum walls, power flows through personal interaction, and each case must be studied in its broadest context to determine which concepts survived contact to alter social perceptions and which were put to work by a dominant society going global. Indeed, if Marshall McLuhan was correct—if the medium shapes the message—then we must study every human medium of an Indigenous message from the inside out.[114] What was the visitor prepared to hear? Which messages got through, and which were missed, as Indigenous intellectuals attempted to transmit a world of thought to the West?

I have tried to show how an inside-out investigation would move beyond the colonizing study of encounters, which offers up the Indigenous mind as an object of Western scrutiny, in favor of a global study of interaction that accepts all people as speaking subjects and identifies the mutual influence of individuals in an interconnected world. If there is a "Western thought"—a history of connection from the past to the present, recognized and reconceived after the fact—then it is only one bright episode in a still unfolding field of motion, an inheritance of many minds, societies, possibilities. For artists and philosophers, scientists and humanists, the making and meaning of this greater, global world will be the next frontier of inquiry, *the frontier of no frontiers*.

Continuation

Boas did not show emotion readily, except to his closest friends and family, and all but never in his published work. But he allowed himself one exception in an account of the ceremonials at Fort Rupert. At each night's end, Boas wrote, all the members of the community would split the batons they had used to keep the beat during the dances and tie them into bundles to light the way home. The transformation of time-keeping sticks into torches impressed Boas—everything had its place—but it was the vision of the people he knew receding into the distance that moved him. "It is a very pretty sight," Boas wrote, "to see the numerous guests going home, each carrying his torch and lighting up the logs and canoes on the beach."[115]

The anthropologist retained in his mind images of these individuals. He kept track of the dances they owned, the properties they told stories about, the ancestors each family claimed as its legacy, even the histories of potlatches people had given and received and the rise and fall of their reputations. Walking the beach, Boas read the totem poles that provided an insider's view of the society. He knew the stories of personal triumphs linked to the wooden sculptures of chiefs displaying coppers. Later in life, after Hunt passed on, Boas would write Hunt's sisters, asking for news from Fort Rupert.[116] These personal connections have been ignored, as if Boas simply wrote what he thought, spending forty years in dialogue with Hunt without ever being changed.

By presenting their ideas to Boas, the Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw staked a claim to kinship in the global family. Through the Hunt-Boas connection, they gave a global potlatch, creating a "wealth of thought" for an international society.[117] We have made use of some of the goods, while there are others we have yet to unpack and appreciate. But

the point of the potlatch is that it continues; each successive round of repayment inaugurates a new generation of obligations. Speech by speech, dance by dance, we amplify our pacific interests as we carry forward the claims of mutual concern.

Today, in a world that has yet to transcend the binaries of identity crossed by the potlatch, a tradition survives of viewing "the Indian" as a gift-giver, a source of bounty—a form of appreciation that, having justified the theft of Indigenous peoples' land, rights, and resources, now turns them upside down for a postcolonial shake, freeing the loose change of inspiration from their pockets. There is another way to look at gifts, however. From a Kwakwaka'wakw perspective, it is not the giver of property who loses face. The shame belongs to one who accepts a gift and fails to respond in kind. That person—that society—stands dishonored. In this situation, there is no law in Kwakwaka'wakw life about how long it may take to reply to a potlatch.[118] It is never too late to return the feast.

Notes

1. Kwakwaka'wakw means Kwak'wala-speaking peoples, a term for about twenty Indigenous principalities on Vancouver Island, mainland British Columbia, and nearby islands. Franz Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," *Report of the U.S. National Museum for the Year Ending June 30, 1895* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1897), 329; Jay Powell and Gloria Cranmer Webster, "Geography, Ethnogeography, and the Perspective of the Kwakwaka'wakw," in Robert Galois, *Kwakwaka'wakw Settlements, 1775–1920: A Geographical Analysis and Gazetteer* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1994), 7–8; Franz Boas, *Kwakiutl Ethnography*, ed. Helen Codere (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), 37–41. For Boas's definition of culture, see Franz Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man*, rev. ed. (1911; repr., New York: Macmillan, 1938), 159.

2. Franz Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1911), 95–123; 197–243.

3. See George W. Stocking Jr., *Race, Culture, and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology* (New York: Free Press, 1968; Reprint, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 195–233, and "The Basic Assumptions of Boasian Anthropology," in Franz Boas, *A Franz Boas Reader: The Shaping of American Anthropology*, 1883–1911, ed. George W. Stocking Jr. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), 1–20; Matti Bunzl, "Franz Boas and the Humboldtian Tradition: From *Volksgeist* and *Nationalcharakter* to an Anthropological Concept of Culture," in Volksgeist *as Method and Ethic: Essays on Boasian Ethnography and the German Anthropological Tradition*, ed. George W. Stocking Jr. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 17–78; Matti Bunzl, "*Völkerpsychologie* and German-Jewish Emancipation," in *Worldly Provincialism: German Anthropology in the Age of Empire*, ed. Matti Bunzl and H. Glenn Penny (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 47–85.

4. The concept of an encounter frames a binary opposition between two human groups whose meetings unleash the realization of difference. Greg Dening, for example, likens human cultures to islands, bounded totalities that do not overlap, but which may be breached through their beaches. Tzvetan Todorov posits a divide between oral and textual cultures. Richard White's idea of a "middle ground" presupposes the notion that Indians and Whites come from separate worlds. Greg Dening, *Islands and Beaches: Discourses on a Silent Land: Marquesas, 1774–1880* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1980); Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* (New York:

Harper and Row, 1984); Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

5. See the first paragraph of Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1894): "There can hardly be said to be a frontier line."

6. See Richard White, *Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America* (New York: Norton, 2011); Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815–1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Paul Starr, *The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), especially 260–66.

7. See Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982); Edward Holland Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest: The Impact of Spain, Mexico, and the United States on the Indians of the Southwest, 1533–1960* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1962); Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600–1860* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1973). One groundbreaking work that noted the influence of Indians on Europeans is Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (New York: Norton, 1975); see especially 13, 39–41, 85–103, 146–80. Jennings, in turn, was influenced by A. Irving Hallowell, "The Impact of the American Indian on American Culture," *American Anthropologist* 59, no. 2 (1957): 201–17. Mary Louise Pratt's concept of transculturation within a "contact zone" noted the possibility of ideas moving "from the colonies to the metropolis." But Pratt asked only how colonized people might change the stereotypes circulating about them. She did not consider whether the colonized might alter ideas in the colonizers' domain. Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 4, 6–7, 55, 83, 137–38, 143. Recent works of Native history, including Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008) and Ned Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), have pushed the possibilities, examining the agency of Indians in the settling of North America. These works depict Native actors as vectors of capitalism and warfare rather than showing the influence of Indigenous ideas on the making of the modern world.

8. See Courtney Jung, *The Moral Force of Indigenous Politics: Critical Liberalism and the Zapatistas* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 19, 21, 33, 67–75. Jung writes that the "political standing of groups flows not from who they are, but from what has been done to them." Surely what people do is also important, and there are some kinds of action that refuse to pay the state the compliment of resisting it.

9. As Lawrence W. Levine once put it, historians can "expand their own consciousness by examining the consciousness of those they have hitherto ignored or neglected." Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), ix.

10. Don DeLillo, *White Noise* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1984; Penguin edition, 1999), 37–38.

11. As Ed Whonnuck explained to the anthropologist Philip Drucker, "These things among the Indians are just like White people in politics. It is just like a [White] politician running for election—he has to have a lot of friends so he can get a lot of votes." Philip Drucker and Robert F. Heizer, *To Make My Name Good: A Reexamination of the Southern Kwakiutl Potlatch* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 106.

12. Franz Boas, "The Indians of British Columbia," *Journal of the American Geographical Society of New York* 28, no. 3 (1896): 231–32. See also Boas's "Letter-Diary," October 5, 7, 8, and 9, 1886, in *The Ethnography of Franz Boas: Letters and Diaries of Franz Boas Written on the Northwest Coast from 1886 to 1931*, ed. Ronald P. Rohner (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), 30–37.

13. Boas, "The Indians of British Columbia," 232. The chief referenced recent events. In 1850 a British mission undertaken by sailors of the *H.M.S. Daedalus* had destroyed Newittee in scattershot retaliation for the murder, at unknown hands, of some British seamen. The people of Newittee rebuilt, only to be attacked again the following summer by sailors from the *H.M.S. Daphne*. The Newittee then moved to nearby Hope Island, where, if anything, they stepped up their potlatch activities. George M. Dawson, *Notes and Observations on the Kwakiool People of the Northern Part of Vancouver Island* (Montreal: Dawson Brothers Publishers, 1888), 8–10.

14. Boas, "The Indians of British Columbia," 232. There is some confusion about Boas's name. He initially translated it as "The Non-Speaking One." See Michael E. Harkin, "Ethnographic Deep Play: Boas, McIlwraith, and Fictive Adoption on the Northwest Coast," in *Strangers to Relatives: The Adoption and Naming of Anthropologists in Native North America*, ed. Sergei A. Kan (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 67; Franz Boas to Marie Boas, Saturday, Nov. 17, 1894, in Rohner, *The Ethnography of Franz Boas*, 177; Ronald P. Rohner, Interview with Mrs. Tom Johnson, June 17, 1964, in *Pioneers of American Anthropology: The Uses of Biography*, ed. June Helm (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967), 213.

15. E. Adamson Hoebel, "The American Behavioral Scientist," Nov. 1981, E. Adamson Hoebel Papers, American Philosophical Society; N. E. H. Hull, *Roscoe Pound and Karl Llewellyn: Searching for an American Jurisprudence* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 287–88; K. N. Llewellyn and E. Adamson Hoebel, *The Cheyenne Way: Conflict and Case Law in American Jurisprudence* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941).

16. See Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, 4th ed. (New York; Penguin, 1994), 75; John Patrick Diggins, *Thorstein Veblen: Theorist of the Leisure Class* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 96; Marcel Mauss, *The Gift*, trans. Ian Cunnison (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967), 4–5, 31–45; Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share: An Essay on General Economy*, vol. 1, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Zone Books, 1988), 67–77; Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1934; Reprint, New York: Mariner Books, 2005), 173–222; Jacques Derrida, *Given Time: 1. Counterfeit Money* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 24–47, 149; Christopher Bracken, *The Potlatch Papers: A Colonial Case History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 38, 45–46, 100–107, 140–41, 152–65; Joseph Masco, "'It Is a Strict Law That Bids Us Dance': Cosmologies, Colonialism, Death, and Ritual Authority in the Kwakwaka'wakw Potlatch, 1849 to 1922," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37, no. 1 (1995): 41.

17. Historians' failure to record the contributions of Kwakwaka'wakw individuals to Boas's 1890s corpus is especially glaring in light of the achievements of subsequent Kwakwaka'wakw intellectuals, whose publications, films, and exhibits indicate a tradition of cultural persistence characterized by contributions to global scholarship. See Clellan S. Ford, *Smoke from Their Fires: The Life of a Kwakiutl Chief* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941); James Sewid, *The Guests Never Leave Hungry: The Autobiography of James Sewid, a Kwakiutl Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969); *Potlatch: A Strict Law Bids Us Dance*, directed by Dennis Wheeler (Alert Bay: U'mista Cultural Society, 1975), DVD; Daisy Sewid-Smith, *Prosecution or Persecution* (Cape Mudge, BC: Nu-yum-balees Society, 1979); *Potlatch: A Strict Law Bids Us Dance* (Watertown, MA: Documentary Educational Resources, 1983); Harry Assu with Joy Inglis, *Assu of Cape Mudge: Recollections of a Coastal Indian Chief* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1989); Agnes Alfred, *Paddling to Where I Stand: Agnes Alfred, Qwiqwasutinuxw Noblewoman*, ed. Martine J. Reid, trans. Daisy Sewid-Smith (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004).

18. Canada's repression of the potlatch made resistance inevitable for any Kwakwaka'wakw who wished to continue their system of governance. Yet, even at the peak of repression, Kwakwaka'wakw people explained the potlatch not as a form of resistance but as "one of our oldest and best customs," "a good thing for us all," a kind of pension plan, and even a form of enjoyment—in short, a way of life.

Resistance was one means to this larger end. Tina Loo, "Dan Cranmer's Potlatch: Law as Coercion, Symbol, and Rhetoric in British Columbia, 1884–1951," *Canadian Historical Review* 73, no. 2 (1992): 125–65; Douglas Cole and Ira Chaikin, *An Iron Hand upon the People: The Law Against the Potlatch on the Northwest Coast* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990), 63–83; 107–37.

19. Edward S. Curtis, *The North American Indian*, vol. 10 (Norwood, MA: Plimpton Press, 1915), 166, 149, 241; Edward S. Curtis, "Mummy Eating and the Winter Dance," 292, Folder 10, Box 1, and Edward S. Curtis, "As It Was," Chapter V: The Kwakiutl, 149, Folder 9, Box 1, University of Washington Special Collections; Mick Gidley, ed., *Edward S. Curtis and the North American Indian Project in the Field* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 101. Curtis relished the phrase, but given what we now know about the spread of infectious diseases throughout Kwak'wala country at the turn of the twentieth century, we must recognize its tragic dimensions.

20. Robert Boyd, *The Coming of the Spirit of Pestilence: Introduced Infectious Diseases and Population Decline among Northwest Coast Indians, 1774–1874* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 172–95. See also Cole Harris, "Voices of Disaster: Smallpox around the Strait of Georgia in 1782," *Ethnohistory* 41, no. 4 (1994): 615; Robert Boyd, "Commentary on Early Contact-Era Smallpox in the Pacific Northwest," *Ethnohistory* 43, no. 2 (1996): 312–13; Galois, *Kwakwaka'wakw Settlements*, 34–47, 214; John Douglas Belshaw, *Becoming British Columbia: A Population History* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009), 77–79, 83–89, 231 n. 25.

21. Boyd, *The Coming of the Spirit of Pestilence*, 27, 187–90, 264.

22. Helen Codere, *Fighting with Property: A Study of Kwakiutl Potlatching and Warfare, 1792–1930* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1950), 49–61; Boyd, *The Coming of the Spirit of Pestilence*, 264; Galois, *Kwakwaka'wakw Settlements*, 383–87, Table A1.1.

23. The spread of peace was a Pax Kwak'wala, led and implemented by Native people. Yet, since Codere, scholars have ignored the Native role, crediting British wealth or power for limiting violence in Kwak'wala country after 1865. See Codere, *Fighting with Property*, 113, 128–29; Drucker and Heizer, *To Make My Name Good*, 41, 43. To the contrary, Canadian colonists imposed violence through the fur trade, the imposition of reserves, foreign rule by Indian agents, the harnessing of forests and fisheries for White consumption, and the attempt to destroy Native economic and political structures, whereas Indigenous people established transnational work patterns that spread pacific relationships. See Cole Harris, "Strategies of Power in the Cordilleran Fur Trade," *The Resettlement of British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997), 31–67, and *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2002), especially 265–92; Rolf Knight, *Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Indian Labour in British Columbia, 1858–1930*, rev. ed. (1978; repr. Vancouver: New Star Books, 1996), ix, x, 3, 5, 60–61, 69, 70–73, 90, 101, 105, 114; Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 107–113.

24. Heirs displaying their rights and privileges played a central role in the winter ceremonial. Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," 421. On the institution of marriage, see Drucker and Heizer, *To Make My Name Good*, 70.

25. Codere, *Fighting with Property*, 90–97.

26. Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," 358.

27. For the collection of property by the father-in-law, including intricately carved goods ranging from box lids to bracelets and lavish button blankets modestly referred to as "a present to wipe the mouth with," see Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," 518, 542–43. For the giveaway of property by the son, see ibid., 424, 507, 520, 529, 535–36.

28. Ibid., 563–65; Drucker and Heizer, *To Make My Name Good*, 107–17.

29. On the potlatch as a "vital circulation" not only of wealth but "of lives and of life forces," founded on the ideal of reciprocity between humans, animals, and spirits, see Irving Goldman, *The Mouth of Heaven: An Introduction to Kwakiutl Religious Thought* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1975), 124, 138. On the active transformations the Kwakwaka'wakw performed during the winter ceremonials when they established a symbiosis between hunters and game, predators and prey, ensuring a continuing relationship with the salmon, see Judith Berman, "Red Salmon and Red Cedar Bark: Another Look at the Nineteenth-Century Kwakwaka'wakw Winter Ceremonial," *BC Studies* 125–126 (2000), 77–78, 82–86, 92–93.

30. For this conversation, which occurred in the fall of 1894, see Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," 581. The woman's memory of her kinsman's deeds must have been quite particular. Chiefs' achievements were recounted in memorial songs and also recorded in the wooden carvings on mortuary houses, which commemorated notable grease feasts, sales of coppers, and gifts of canoes to others. See Edward S. Curtis, *The North American Indian*, vol. 10 (Norwood, MA: Plimpton Press, 1915), 52, 56.

31. Franz Boas, "Kwakiutl Ethnographic Notes," American Council of Learned Societies Committee on Native American Languages (American Philosophical Society), Microfilm 372, Reel 2, 279.

32. Boas, "The Indians of British Columbia," 231–32.

33. See Judith Berman, "Raven and Sunbeam, Pencil and Paper: George Hunt of Fort Rupert, British Columbia," unpublished manuscript on file with the author, 12–14, 18–20, 23–24, and Judith Berman, "George Hunt and the Kwak'wala Texts," *Anthropological Linguistics* 36:4 (1994): 485–86.

34. For Hunt's account of these events, as related by Edward S. Curtis, see Curtis, Foreword to "As It Was," n.d., Folder 4, Box 2, and "Writings—Miscellaneous," Folder 3, Box 3, Edward S. Curtis Papers, University of Washington Special Collections. See also Berman, "Raven and Sunbeam," 14; and Barry M. Gough, "A Priest Versus the Potlatch: The Reverend Alfred James Hall and the Fort Rupert Kwakiutl, 1878–1880," *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society* 24, no. 2 (1982): 79–80, 84.

35. Berman, "Raven and Sunbeam," 27–29.

36. Ibid., 23–24; Franz Boas, *Kwakiutl Ethnography*, ed. Helen Codere (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), 121–25, 190, 256.

37. Indeed, Hunt became a fieldworker of heroic proportions. Curtis, who learned of Hunt through Boas's work, said he was the best fieldworker he ever knew. Gidley, ed., *Edward S. Curtis and the North American Indian Project in the Field*, 101. Ira Jacknis outlined Hunt's work with Israel Wood Powell, Johan Adrian Jacobsen, George G. Heye, Samuel A. Barrett, and Pliny Earle Goddard, in *The Storage Box of Tradition: Kwakiutl Art, Anthropologists, and Museums, 1881–1981* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002), 26–28, concluding, "the role of George Hunt in Kwakwaka'wakw studies cannot be overestimated." Hunt was similarly prolific in motion pictures, appearing in four of the first five Kwakwaka'wakw movies. Lynda Jessup, "Marius Barbeau and Early Ethnographic Cinema," in *Around and About Marius Barbeau: Modelling Twentieth-Century Culture*, ed. Lynda Jessup, Andrew Nurse, and Gordon E. Smith (Gatineau, Quebec: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2008), 284.

38. Jacknis, *The Storage Box of Tradition*, 89; Berman, "Raven and Sunbeam," 29.

39. Douglas Cole, *Franz Boas: The Early Years, 1858–1906* (Seattle: The University of Washington Press, 1999), 97.

40. Ibid., 110–12, 115–18; Rohner, *The Ethnography of Franz Boas*, 19–132.

41. On Boas's transition from collecting objects to collecting texts, see Ira Jacknis, "The Ethnographic Object and the Object of Ethnology in the Early Career of Franz Boas," in Volksgeist *as Method and Ethic*, ed. Stocking, 185–214.

42. Hunt began cultivating the relationship immediately after the Exposition, and his early letters to Boas show that he recognized him as an empathetic listener. If initially Hunt saw his work with Boas as a financial opportunity, he also came to see Boas as someone who would deal honestly with Kwakwaka'wakw people and try to portray them accurately. George Hunt, Fort Rupert, British Columbia, to Franz Boas, New York, New York, Jan. 15, 1894, and Feb. 7, 1895, Franz Boas Papers, American Philosophical Society.

43. Franz Boas, Fort Rupert, British Columbia, to Marie Boas, New York, New York, Nov. 15, 1894, and Nov. 17, 1894, in Rohner, *The Ethnography of Franz Boas*, 176–77. Boas also attained funding from the British Association for the Advancement of Science and the American Museum of Natural History. Curtis M. Hinsley Jr. and Bill Holm, "A Cannibal in the National Museum: The Early Career of Franz Boas in America," *American Anthropologist* 78, no. 2 (1976): 308.

44. In 1894, the Kwakwaka'wakw divided their year into two seasons: *ts'ē'ts'aēqa*, the winter season, and *bā'xus*, the rest of the year. *Bā'xus* was the time for fishing, gathering stores, and preserving them. *Ts'ē'ts'aēqa*, or "the secrets," was the time of the winter ceremonial, when the Kwakwaka'wakw enjoyed their stores, shared their wealth, and renewed the natural cycle. The Kwakwaka'wakw also called this season *aik·'ē'gala*, or, "making the heart good." Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," 418–19.

45. Franz Boas, Fort Rupert, British Columbia, to Marie Boas, New York, New York, Nov. 17, 1894, in Rohner, *The Ethnography of Franz Boas*, 177.

46. Franz Boas, Fort Rupert, British Columbia, to Marie Boas, New York, New York, Nov. 17, 1894, and Nov. 18, 1894, ibid., 177, 180.

47. Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," 367–71.

48. The important point to grasp here is the highly organized political structure of the Kwakwaka'wakw. Boas noted that each Kwakwaka'wakw descent group, or *numaym*, traced its history to the founding of a house at a village site. Kwakwaka'wakw principalities were composed of several *numayms*, each composed of individuals from several different houses. Each *numaym* potlatched with the other *numayms*, structuring local politics within a history of reciprocal exchange. See Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," 333; Boas, *Kwakiutl Ethnography*, 37–53. See also Goldman, *The Mouth of Heaven*, 63–65.

49. Interior house posts, exterior house fronts, and settees also told histories. See "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," 371, 376 fig. 16, 377 fig. 17, 378 fig. 18, 379 figs. 19–20, 380 fig. 21, 381 figs. 22–23. On totem poles, see Viola E. Garfield, "Meet the Totem," 7, (unpublished manuscript), Folder 11, Box 2, Viola E. Garfield Papers, University of Washington Special Collections. Garfield noted the singular zest for history expressed in these Kwakwaka'wakw poles. The Kwakwaka'wakw, she wrote, excel in "the portrayal of chiefs and other illustrious men, carving heavy-limbed figures, many of gigantic proportions. Chiefs making speeches, displaying heirloom copper shields or wearing totemic regalia are favorite subjects." Late nineteenth-century Kwakwaka'wakw oratory is similarly vivid, personal, and historically concerned.

50. Kwakwaka'wakw views of Baxbaxwalanuksiwe in 1894 are recorded in Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," 394–95, 398–99, 403, 664. Boas also described the rapid rise to prominence of Baxbaxwalanuksiwe since the 1830s. Ibid., 426–27, 462–63, 472, 512. The Kwakwaka'wakw made the connection between mouths and sickness direct when they described Kanikilakw, a heroic transformer who played a central role in their mythology, as a healer who cured a man covered with mouths by laying a hand on his body. See Franz Boas, *Kwakiutl Culture as Reflected in Mythology* (New York: G. E. Steichert, 1935), 134. Several Kwakwaka'wakw dances, including the Ghost Dance and the Mamaqa dance, a spectacular drama of mass death and rebirth, referenced the prevalence of sickness and the need for healing. Boas noted that "the idea of the existence of a spirit who is killing people is present among all the tribes" of the Northwest Coast.

See Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," 408–9, 482, 485–87, 560–61, 664.

51. G. W. Locher, *The Serpent in Kwakiutl Religion: A Study in Primitive Culture* (Leyden: E. J. Brill, 1933), 27.

52. We know this for one reason. Although he began his ethnography with an abstract description of "Kwakiutl" culture, Boas closed it with a narrative report of the winter ceremonials of 1894–95—the whole series of feasts, dances, potlatches, and ceremonies "as it actually took place and so far as I witnessed it." Boas thereby left an opening for Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw people to speak through his text. For a competing point of view on his working methods, which claims that Boas imposed "modernity" on Hunt through their publishing project, see Charles L. Briggs and Richard Bauman, "'The Foundation of All Future Researches': Franz Boas, George Hunt, Native American Texts, and the Construction of Modernity," *American Quarterly* 51, no. 3 (September 1999): 479–528. Judith Berman, however, found that Hunt shaped Boas's working methods. See Berman, "'The Culture as It Appears to the Indian Himself': Boas, George Hunt, and the Methods of Ethnography," in Volksgeist *as Method and Ethic*, ed. Stocking, 215–56. The notion that Boas imposed "modernity" on Hunt assumes that Hunt was not modern to begin with—the basic fallacy of the encounters paradigm.

53. Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," 574, 577, 580.

54. Galois details the centrality of the Kwakiutl of the Beaver Harbour area in colonial trading networks in *Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw Settlements*, 197–203. On the recent pressures of land alienation and disease upon the Koskimo, see ibid., 355–57, 364, 379. On the remoteness of the Naqoaqtoq as late as the 1880s, their late entry into the White economy, and their refusal to "point out any more places" to an Indian agent who came to mark out reserves in 1882, see ibid., 334–35. See 339–46 for their wealth of salmon and halibut stations. On the influence of dances from the north and also the distinction of Koskimo dances, see Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," 426–30, 462, 466, 472, 474, 580, 582, 592; George Hunt, Fort Rupert, British Columbia, to Franz Boas, New York, New York, Feb. 15, 1896, Franz Boas Papers, American Philosophical Society.

55. Galois, *Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw Settlements*, 357, 364, 376.

56. Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," 577.

57. Boas, *Kwakiutl Ethnography*, 173, 256. Hunt shared his personal history with Boas; in fact, he translated his own speech about it for publication. Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," 556, and Franz Boas, Fort Rupert, British Columbia, to Marie Boas, New York, New York, Nov. 21, 1894, and Nov. 22, 1894, in Rohner, *The Ethnography of Franz Boas*, 182–83.

58. Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," 556; Boas, *Kwakiutl Ethnography*, 256.

59. Franz Boas, Fort Rupert, British Columbia, to Marie Boas, New York, New York, Nov. 19, 1894, in Rohner, *The Ethnography of Franz Boas*, 180. See also Curtis, *The North American Indian*, vol. 10, 159.

60. See Victor W. Turner's comments on the feeling of uncertainty, of being between identities, experienced by leaders ascending to higher office. Turner, "Liminality and Communitas," *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1969; 2d ed., 2008), 105.

61. Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," 549–54; Franz Boas, Fort Rupert, British Columbia, to Marie Boas, New York, New York, Nov. 19, 1894, in Rohner, *The Ethnography of Franz Boas*, 180–81. In a gracious speech, Hunt deflected attention from himself and transferred it to his son: "Look at me; look at my son! You shall not call me chief on

account of what I am doing, but call my son chief, because I am doing it for his sake. I am working for him; I want to make him heavier all the time." Ibid., 554.

62. Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," 555. Hunt's daughter La′stosalas served as David's dancing partner, or K·î′nqalaʟala. This important role, normally reserved for a close female relative of the Hamatsa dancer, fostered socially recognized relationships between brothers and sisters who would ultimately, after marriage, link two different families.

63. Ibid., 556. George Hunt's relationship with the Koskimo was long indeed. He had, for example, guided the anthropologist Jacobsen through Quatsino Sound. See Jeanne Cannizzo, "George Hunt and the Invention of Kwakiutl Culture," *Canadian Review of Sociology* 20, no. 1 (1983): 46.

64. Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," 556.

65. Ibid., 556–57.

66. Ibid., 557.

67. Ibid., 557; Boas, *Kwakiutl Ethnography*, 191. Hunt became the speaker of the Se′nl!ᴇm, one of the seven *numayms* of the Guetela Kwakiutl. On the hereditary position of the speaker, see Bill Holm, Notes on *The Kwakiutl of British Columbia: A Documentary Film by Franz Boas*, "Part I: Dances and Ceremonial Activities," 4, published as Franz Boas and Bill Holm, *The Kwakiutl of British Columbia* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974); Curtis, *The North American Indian*, vol. 10, 154.

68. Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," 557.

69. Ibid., 557. On Hō′ʟᴇlitē, see ibid., 550. Edward S. Curtis spelled the name "Hotluliti," adding that it meant "obeyed by all" and was reserved for a hereditary speaker. Curtis, *The North American Indian*, vol. 10, 185. Boas translated it as Adviser, or, "the one whom one has as listener." Boas, *Kwakiutl Ethnography*, 247.

70. Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," 557.

71. Ibid., 558–9. "What is in your stomach?" the speaker asked. The birds replied, "Kwakiutl."

72. Ibid., 559.

73. Ibid.

74. If the dance told a history of place, its object of attention—the Kwakiutl—provided evidence that the Naqoaqtoq sought to establish ties with outsiders. All Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw people recognized a dialectic between place and process, unity and diversity, continuity and change. The central, wealthy, frequently trading Kwakiutl expressed a greater desire to forge connections with outsiders, whereas the Naqoaqtoq more often discussed maintaining their traditions, but both peoples ultimately hoped to strike a synergistic balance between these two objectives.

75. Ibid., 562.

76. Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," 565.

77. Ibid., 566. On the importance of avoiding dancing and singing errors—and the role of the Grizzly Bear Dancers and the Fool Dancers in producing a frenzy if performers failed—see Erna Gunther and Franziska Boas, unpublished study of Kwakiutl dance, ca. 1940, 8, 8a, 45, and Erna Gunther, "A Preliminary Analysis of Kwakiutl Dancing," 2–3, Box 1, Franziska Boas Papers, Burke Museum Archives. To redress a ceremonial error, it was usually enough to make a speech and give away some more blankets, which was always the goal in any case.

78. Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," 566–67.

79. Ibid., 567.

80. Ibid.

81. Ibid., 433–34; Erna Gunther and Franziska Boas, "Ceremonial Routine," untitled manuscript fragment, Gunther Notes, Speeches, Correspondence, Box 1, Franziska Boas Papers, Burke Museum Archives.

82. Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," 567, 435.

83. Ibid., 569, 580.

84. Ibid., 569–71. See also Galois, *Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw Settlements*, 361, 370, and Anne Marie Goodfellow, *Talking in Context: Language and Identity in Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw Society* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 76–79. The story of Ya′xstaʟ referenced the destruction of the Xoyales people and was itself told by the Naqomgilisala, showing that Koskimo place stories were also meditations on process, narratives that penetrated fixed identities to reveal histories of interaction on and nearby Quatsino Sound.

85. Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," 576–77.

86. Ibid., 574.

87. Ibid.

88. Ibid.

89. See Bunzl, "Franz Boas and the Humboldtian Tradition," 17–78. On Herder, see Isaiah Berlin, "The Counter-Enlightenment" and "Herder and the Enlightenment," *The Proper Study of Mankind: An Anthology of Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998), 243–68 and 359–435; Charles Taylor, "The Importance of Herder," *Philosophical Arguments* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1995), 79–99; F. M. Barnard, *Herder on Nationality, Humanity, and History* (Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003); John H. Zammito, Karl Menges, and Ernest A. Menze, "Johann Gottfried Herder Revisited: The Revolution in Scholarship in the Last Quarter Century," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 71, no. 4 (2010): 661–84. Herder's work was complex, multifaceted; some of it discussed the individual. But Herder privileged the group, which he viewed as arising from the soil, and he voiced strong fears of deracination.

90. Cole, *Franz Boas: The Early Years*, 122–25, 132–33, 272–75; Bunzl, "Franz Boas and the Humboldtian Tradition," 52–67.

91. See Franz Boas's diary and notebook entries, especially his records of his journey by dogsled to K'ingua, Dec. 14–22, 1883, in Ludger Müller-Wille, ed., *Franz Boas among the Inuit of Baffin Island, 1883–1884* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 152–61, and the entries for Nov. 18 and Dec. 23, 1883, and Jan. 3, Jan. 5, Jan. 20, Jan. 22, Jan. 23, Feb. 15, Feb. 19, Mar. 17, Apr. 5, Apr. 30, 1884, in ibid., 158–59, 164–65, 169, 171–73, 182, 185, 194, 203, 211.

92. Franz Boas, diary entry, Dec. 23, 1883, Arctic Expedition Diary, Franz Boas Professional Papers, American Philosophical Society.

93. Melville J. Herskovits, *Franz Boas: The Science of Man in the Making* (Clifton: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1973), 1; Stocking, *A Franz Boas Reader*, 55.

94. Franz Boas, "Museums of Ethnology and their Classification," *Science* 9, no. 228 (1887): 587–89; Franz Boas, "On Alternating Sounds," *American Anthropologist* A2, no. 1 (1889): 47–53.

95. *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896).

96. Franz Boas, "Human Faculty as Determined by Race," *Proceedings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science for the Forty-Third Meeting Held at Brooklyn, N.Y., August 1894* (Salem: American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1895), 301–27.

97. Ibid., 323. "It does not seem probable that the minds of races which show variations in their anatomical structure should act in exactly the same manner," Boas wrote. "Differences of structure must be accompanied by differences of function, physiological as well as psychological; and, as we found clear evidence of difference in structure between the races, so we must anticipate that differences in mental characteristics will be found."

98. See Rohner, *The Ethnography of Franz Boas*, 133, 175.

99. Franz Boas, "The Limitations of the Comparative Method of Anthropology," *Science* New Series 4, no. 103 (1896): 901–8.

100. Boas, "The Limitations of the Comparative Method of Anthropology," 906.

101. Franz Boas, "The Mind of Primitive Man," *The Journal of American Folklore* 14, no. 52 (1901): 1–11; Franz Boas, "Some Traits of Primitive Culture," *The Journal of American Folklore* 17,

no. 67 (1904): 243–54; Franz Boas, "Psychological Problems in Anthropology," *The American Journal of Psychology* 21, no. 3 (1910): 371–84; Franz Boas, "Introduction," *Handbook of American Indian Languages, Part I* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 11): 5–83.

102. Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man* (1911), 124–39; see also Boas, "Introduction," *Handbook of American Indian Languages, Part I*, 7–14, in which Boas summarized his case in an audacious subtitle: "Artificial Character of All Classifications of Mankind."

103. Boas recognized the nation as the boundary for "altruistic obligations" and "fellowship of man" in his time, but he predicted that human conceptions of belonging would ultimately extend beyond the nation-state, since the "evolution" of sentiments "has not yet reached its final stage." See Boas, "Some Traits of Primitive Culture," 375, and Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man*, 10.

104. See, for example, Boas's comments in *The Mind of Primitive Man* on the dynamism of heredity, the intersecting and often conflicting relationships of race, culture, and language, and the failure of the cephalic index to describe a person's race. Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man*, 52–65, 76–94, 124–54.

105. See Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, *Primitive Mentality*, trans. Lilian A. Clare (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1923); James Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1935); Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966); Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (New York: Aldine Publishing Company, 1972); Max Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason* (London, New York: Continuum, 2004); Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of the Enlightenment* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972); Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

106. See Said's twenty-fifth anniversary preface to *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997; Preface, 2003), xxiv, xxv.

107. Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man*, 111.

108. In 1904, Boas wrote that the opportunity to adapt to another people's way of life—"to take part in the joys and sorrows of their life, to penetrate the motives that prompt their actions, and to share the emotions that fill their hearts"—had led him to believe that "the gulf does not exist that was once believed to separate the mind of primitive man from that of civilized man." Boas, "Some Traits of Primitive Culture," 243.

109. Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," 553–54, 556–57.

110. Ibid., 311, 315.

111. The stereotyped division between Indian and White worlds plagues writing about Hunt a century later. See Harry Whitehead, "The Hunt for Quesalid: Tracking Lévi-Strauss's Shaman," *Anthropology & Medicine*, 17, no. 2 (2000): 149–68, and Harry Whitehead, *The Cannibal Spirit* (Toronto: Penguin, 2011).

112. The paradigm statement of cultural relativism is Ruth Benedict's *Patterns of Culture*, which summoned in its final page the term "cultural relativity" to press for a new and more realistic "social faith." Benedict emphasized the power of social conditioning to shape individual lives, stressed the differences between groups of people, and downplayed the dynamism and variability of thought and expression within Native communities. See Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, especially 3–47, 51, 251–53. In a cool foreword, Boas welcomed Benedict's "desire to grasp the meaning of a culture as a whole," but went on to write that the study of groups can never be an end in itself: "We must understand the individual as living in his culture" and "the culture as lived by individuals." Replacing Benedict's static notion of a cultural configuration with the dynamic idea of social "genius," Boas enjoined scholars to search for the "dynamic processes that have been active in cultural changes." Ibid., xii-viii. Nevertheless, Margaret Mead's *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* would

turn the typology of Indigenous people into a game of attributes (the "aggressive" Mundugumor, the "mild" Arapesh) and Melville J. Herskovits would write in a wartime essay for *Scientific Monthly* that "the concept of freedom should be realistically redefined as the right to be exploited in terms of the patterns of one's own culture." Margaret Mead, *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1935; Reprint, HarperCollins, 2001), 261; Melville J. Herskovits, *Cultural Relativism: Perspectives in Cultural Pluralism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), 9, originally published as "On the Values in Culture," *Scientific Monthly* 54 (June 1942): 557–60.

113. In fact, chapter six of *The Mind of Primitive Man* is titled, "The Universality of Cultural Traits." See Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man*, 155–74.

114. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, 3rd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 7–21.

115. Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," 437; see also Franz Boas, Fort Rupert, British Columbia, to Marie Boas, New York, New York, Nov. 17, 1894, in Rohner, *The Ethnography of Franz Boas*, 179; Gunther, "A Preliminary Analysis of Kwakiutl Dancing," 2.

116. Mrs. W. I. Cadwallader, Fort Rupert, British Columbia, to Franz Boas, New York, New York, Nov. 9, 1930; Franz Boas, New York, New York, to Mrs. W. I. Cadwallader, Fort Rupert, British Columbia, Nov. 25, 1935; Mrs. W. I. Cadwallader, Fort Rupert, British Columbia, to Franz Boas, New York, New York, Mar. 4, 1936, Franz Boas Papers, American Philosophical Society. See also Mrs. H. T. Cadwallader, Port Hardy, British Columbia, to Franz Boas, New York, New York, Feb. 16, 1931; Franz Boas, New York, New York, to Mrs. H. T. Cadwallader, Port Hardy, British Columbia, Apr. 7, 1932, Franz Boas Papers, American Philosophical Society.

117. Aldona Jonaitis, ed., *A Wealth of Thought: Franz Boas on Native American Art* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1995); Douglas Cole, *Captured Heritage: The Scramble for Northwest Coast Artifacts* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985), 104–5.

118. See the story of Lē´ʟēlälak^{u}, a Kwakiutl man who at last managed, with the help of his compatriots, to repay the blankets he owed the Naqoaqtoq nine years after they feasted him. Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," 563–65.